

So Alone
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FADE IN:

EXT. DISNEYLAND - DAY

JACK CUNNINGHAM, a baby faced, athleticly built eighteen year old is clad in white shorts and a tank top. He is standing on line to the Haunted Mansion amusement with his close friend, KEVIN HURLEY. Kevin, tall and lanky, is clad in shorts, a Mickey Mouse shirt and a Dodger cap.

Two pretty teenage girls, KAREN BURNS and PEGGY CAREY are standing on line in front of the two crewcut haired boys, listening to the boys talk about a New York Yankee - Dodger baseball game, AD LIB.

Hurley notices the girls looking at them out of the corners of their eyes. He nudges Jack.

Jack makes an expression of acceptance with his face.

Hurley taps the taller one, Peggy on her shoulder and the both blond girls turn around GIGGLING.

HURLEY

How'd you two pretty young ladies like to go on the ride with two lonely, out of town boys?

Karen glances at Jack and smiles. Jack, shy with flushed cheeks.

PEGGY

How do we know we can trust you? You could be some type of kidnappers or something.

Hurley, confident, alot of body language, imagines himself a ladies man.

HURLEY

I tell ya. I can vouch for me, but my friend here is from New York City. He even scares me at times.

Karen smiles at Jack again. This time, he returns the smile.

PEGGY

So don't your friend talk?

Jack gives Hurley a friendly shove.

JACK

Don't listen to this guy. New Yorkers are the most trustworthy people you can find.

Peggy jokingly shakes her head.

PEGGY

I don't know about that. I've heard a lot of things about them. Being trustworthy isn't one of them.

PEGGY

(to Karen)

What do you think, Karen? Should we trust'em?

Karen looks at Jack. The New Yorker, still a little flushed in his cheeks, jokingly flashes his blue eyes.

KAREN

Well Peggy, they are cute. And they do have funny accents. It might be interesting.

The line moves. The girls are next to get into the carts.

KAREN

I say...yes!

Jack helps Karen into the cart and sits down next to her.

JACK

I was hoping you'd say that.

Hurley helps Peggy into the front of the two seated cart. He then turns around to Jack and Karen.

HURLEY

(to Karen)

Remember what I told you. Watch out for this guy.

Jack leans over and pulls the Dodger cap over his friend's eyes.

JACK

Hurley, shut up and turn around!

SERIES OF SHOTS -

The four teenagers enjoy each others company through many amusements.

Jack buys Karen a set of mouse ears. Hurley buys Peggy a monogramed Goofy shirt.

They stop to eat. Hurley takes Peggy by the hand and rushes over to watch people on a nearby ride.

Jack helps Karen to a seat.

He goes to the food counter to order. There, he looks at a chest of ribbons on the uniform of A PROUD, YOUNG ARMY VETERAN. The soldier looks Jack in the eye. They GREET briefly, AD LIB.

As Jack leaves, he glances back at the teenage Veteran.

Jack returns to Karen with a tray of food for everyone. You can tell by their smiles that they are enjoying each others' company.

Karen takes a quick sip of her milk shake.

KAREN

So Jack tell me a little about yourself.

JACK

Well, I'm Irish, French and Mohawk.

Karen pats her mouth imitating an Indian.

KAREN

Mohawk Indian!?

JACK

Yeah. My mother's grandmother was full blooded Mohawk.

He points to his high cheek bones.

JACK

My brother Joe and I only have the cheek bones, but my oldest brother, Jimmy really can pass for Indian.

Karen rubs the close chopped hair of Jack.

KAREN

Is this an Indian hair cut or are you in the service?

She puts her hand up to stop him from talking.

KAREN

No don't tell me. You're in the Navy.

JACK

Navy! Never!!

He smiles.

JACK

I'm in the Marine Corps.

KAREN

Aren't the Marines part of the Navy?

Jack swallows hard to keep himself from choking.

JACK

The Navy wishes we were part of them. The Marines stand alone. We're the best!

KAREN

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to...

Jack smiles again.

JACK

That's alright. My brother Joe was in the Navy and Jimmy was in the Army. We tease each other all the time.

Karen goes to ask a question, but stops. Jack places his hand on top of Karen's hand.

JACK

If you have a question, ask. Don't be afraid. Marines aren't as bad as people say. We don't bite.

Karen keeps her hand under Jack's hand.

KAREN

Did you go to Vietnam?

JACK

Not yet. We find out our orders on Tuesday.

A look of concern is on the girl's face.

KAREN

Are you afraid?

JACK

I'd be lying to you if I told you I wasn't. It's on my mind...but we got good training.

KAREN

Do you want to go?

JACK

It might sound crazy, but I really do. I think those people can use our help. I wanta do my part.

Hurley and Peggy are walking back to join Jack and Karen.

HURLEY

(to Peggy)

After pumping gas for three years, I decided it was too boring. I went to the recruiter and he told me all about this aviation guarantee if I enlisted for four years. Like an

(cont.)

ass, I believed him. That was the last I heard of the aviation guarantee. They put me in the infantry with the guys who joined for two and three years.

Hurley and Peggy sit down, laughing.

HURLEY

You two look so serious. If I didn't know better, I'd think you were married.

Hurley straddles a chair as if he is getting on a horse.

JACK

I told Karen we might be getting our orders for Vietnam on Tuesday.

The two girls sadly glance at each other.

KAREN

(to Jack)

Peggy and I have to go to the little girls' room. We'll be right back.

Once they leave, Jack and Hurley act as if they have just won a big game. They slit each others' both hands and cheer.

HURLEY

These girls are fine!

JACK

Karen's a doll. She's a lot of fun. It's a shame we'll be leaving them.

INT. LADIES ROOM

Standing before the mirror, Karen is brushing her long blonde hair as Peggy is fixing her makeup.

KAREN

My father's going to give me a hard time about Jack. He doesn't like servicemen.

PEGGY

Don't worry about your father. As long as you like Jack, that's all that matters.

Karen sadly glances at Peggy.

KAREN

I do like him. But what if he gets orders for Vietnam. I don't know if I can handle that. (pause) Knowing he can be killed.

Karen brushes her hair faster.

KAREN

It might be easier to just say good bye today.

When the girls exit the ladies room, the two teenage boys are waiting outside.

Jack hands Karen a Mickey Mouse balloon and she kisses him on the cheek.

The four rush off to another amusement.

EXT. CAMP PENDLETON/PHYSICAL TRAINING FIELD - DAY

Jack, Hurley and THIRTY OTHER MARINES clad in military issue shorts and T-shirts are full of sweat as they exercise vigorously under the direction of A MUSCULAR SERGEANT.

The sergeant YELLS to rest and they collapse to the ground.

Another SERGEANT, who is an American Indian, steps onto the platform that is in the center of the men.

SERGEANT

All right ladies, you have fifteen minutes to get ready for chow. After chow, we march over to building C and find out which of you get to go to my Vietnam. Move!!

The men rush across the grass and into the barracks YELLING, MARINE CORPS and other MOTIVATING SOUNDS.

INT. BUILDING C - DAY

A COUPLE OF HUNDRED MARINES are standing on line with official cards with their names on them. A 2ND LIEUTENANT counts off the men into smaller lines that are in front of four tables. Each table has a STAFF SERGEANT stamping orders onto the men's cards.

After getting his stamped, Jack looks at his card. C.A.G.

Another 2ND LIEUTENANT directs the boys into classrooms based on what orders are stamped onto the cards.

2ND LIEUTENANT

1st Marine Division room 103. Okinawa room 104. Philippines 105. Cag 102.

Jack, nervous about not recognizing anyone, looks around for Hurley, but does not see him.

JACK

(mumbles)

Hurley, where the hell are you?

INT. ROOM 102

When the young Marines get inside a GUNNERY SERGEANT rushes them into their seats. He YELLS for Jack to close the door behind him, AD LIB. There are TWENTY OTHER MARINES seated.

Suddenly, the door opens and Hurley steps in. Jack smiles a sign of relief, and shakes a fist to him in a salute.

GUNNERY SERGEANT
(southern accent)
All you people should have your orders stamped
C.A.G. Anyone don't?

Everyone looks around at each other. One man stands at nervous attention.

MARINE
I don't, sir.

GUNNERY SERGEANT
What's your card stamped, Ass Hole?!

MARINE
1st Marine Division, sir.

GUNNERY SERGEANT
(yells)
Get the hell out of here. You're in the grunts.
Room 103.

In a hurry, the nervous Marine trips over another man's foot and falls to the floor. THE OTHERS LAUGH.

He gets up and almost falls again. He SLAMS the door behind him.

GUNNERY SERGEANT
I hope no more of you people don't belong here!

Another Marine rushes out.

The Gunnery Sergeant shakes his head. He adjusts some papers on the lectern before him.

GUNNERY SERGEANT
You all have been volunteered for the
Combined Action Group. I'm here to tell ya
a little about it. Please hold your
questions until I'm finished.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH OUTSIDE THE PX - DAY

Jack rushes to the phone and quickly dials. He MUMBLES,
AD LIB, for Karen to be there.

INT. KAREN'S KITCHEN

Karen is cleaning up the kitchen as her balding FATHER, is sitting alone at the table, eating his lunch.

The PHONE RINGS. She looks at the wall clock, it's 2:00, and smiles.

Her father rushes to answer the phone. He takes it into the hallway.

INT. BASE PHONE BOOTH

Jack INTRODUCES HIMSELF AND ASKS FOR KAREN, AD LIB. Before he can say anything else, Karen's father hangs up. Jack's dumbfounded.

EXT. PARADE FIELD/ CAMP PENDLETON - NIGHT

Jack and Hurley, clad in civilian clothes, Hurley in his Dodger cap, are walking towards the enlistedmen's club. They GREET an officer, AD LIB, and continue walking.

HURLEY

Peggy said Karen's father's like that. He don't look past his nose.

JACK

He even served in the Army. How can he think all servicemen are no good?

Hurley pats Jack on the back.

HURLEY

Old Buddy, I wouldn't worry about him. Those type of people, you never change. All they think about, is the negative.

Hurley opens the door to the club.

HURLEY

Lets party!

INT. ENLISTED MEN'S CLUB/CAMP PENDLETON CALIF. - NIGHT

The bar area is noisy! MUSIC OF THE PERIOD BLARES from the jukebox. *"Who Will Stop The Rain" by CCR is being sung by a group of MARINES.*

It's crowded, wall to wall. Jack and Hurley are seated at a back table, having a drink and discussing their orders for Viet Nam.

JACK

I tell ya that orientation about CAG was all positive. That Gunny really praised the unit. I hope it's as good as he says.

HURLEY

The way it sounds there's not much free time. He said the Marines in the village fix roads, dig wells, build bridges, work in the fields. There's nothing they don't do. I wonder when they find time to fight Communists.

JACK

Yeah. He really made it sound good. Too good! He answered everyone's questions but the one I asked about the casualty rate. He changed the subject real fast.

HURLEY

It's got to be high. Ten Americans living in a village with thousands of peasants. Anyone of them could be the enemy.

A uniformed VIET NAM VET eddies his way through the throng searching for a free table.

He spots Jack and Hurley and a free chair.

VET

Mind if I sit?

Jack and Hurley, a friendly gesture.

The Vet surveys the bar scene. We can see the hardened exteriors of a man who has been through Hell.

VET

I remember the night before I shipped out to Nam. Eat, drink and make merry, fore the dawn kicks thee square in the ass.

He offers a toast. The three drink.

HURLEY

Where were you stationed?

VET

Hue. TET'68. I prayed to die.
Maybe I did. (pause)

The vet appears to dissolve into the past for a moment. We can see it's an unpleasant reverie. He goes into a cold stare. Insight beneath the hard exterior.

VET

Everyone else did. I should've died too. I wouldn't have to remember it everyday of my life. I wouldn't have to feel this pain.

He's jolted back to reality and takes another drink. Jack and Hurley can feel the icy truth of the moment.

VET

So where did this green stork decide to drop you two boys?

JACK

Da Nang. C.A.G. unit.

VET

Ah yes. The infamous Combined Action Group. The perverbia fly in the Viet Cong's ointment.

HURLEY

Why is that?

The vet, another swig of booze. Jack and Hurley, wide eyed innocence.

VET

The V C and North Vietnamese Regulars don't take kindly to Americans Marines who are dedicated to making the lives of the villagers a hundred times better than what they can promise.

JACK

High casualties?

VET

What do you think? The Peace Corp with rifles is a high impact target group. They're always getting wiped out.

Jack and Hurley, the words hit home. The vet sees they are visibly upset. Jack, flushed introspection. Hurley, nail biting, lights up a cigarette..

VET

You guys volunteered for CAG, right?

JACK
They volunteered us.

VET
Might as well know what's ahead. No
use sugar coating it. Best to expect the
worst, then when it falls below that, it's
no surprise.

The vet, he polishes off the drink.

VET
I made it back with most of the body parts I
left with, so I reenlisted. Pendleton's not
so bad. Anything is better than facing life
outside this green machine. People outside
just don't take kindly to Viet Vets. I don't
know why....

The vet stares into the empty glass. He rises.

VET
Time to empty the monster. Save the seat.

Jack nods.

HURLEY
Did you see his eyes?

JACK
I don't know about you, Kevin, but I'm a
little nervous about this CAG thing. I always
wanted to belong to a unit I can be proud of.
Helping these people is what I dreamed of doing.
But to hear that these units are getting wiped
out...

EXT. CAMP PENLETON/BARRACKS

Clad in utilities, the YOUNG MARINES are milling about with
RELATIVES AND FRIENDS as they wait for buses to take them to
the airport. Their seabags are stacked neatly near the
curb.

Jack and Hurley are standing alone. Hurley, nervous body
language, is smoking a cigarette as he searches through the
crowd.

HURLEY
I can't believe this. Peggy said she'd see
us off.

He looks at his watch.

JACK
Maybe she got stuck in traffic.

Three Marine buses arrive. A BABY FACED 2ND LIEUTENANT with a child-like voice USHERS the Marines on them.

Hurley keeps looking and MUMBLES, AD LIB. The Lieutenant YELLS for him to get on, AD LIB. Jack grabs his friend's shoulder, LETS GO.

INT. BUS

The three buses go along the California highway in line. Hurley is listening to a radio with an earphone. Jack is looking out the window.

A hippie van pulls along side the bus. While TWO LONG HAired BOYS TEENAGES give Jack the finger, a GIRL in the van moons him.

Jack laughs. He gets other Marines to look. They all laugh. The van exits the highway.

EXT. A LARGE MARINE AIRBASE/TERMINAL

A small crowd of FAMILY AND FRIENDS are waiting as the Marines exit the bus. They CALL OUT to each other, AD LIB.

Peggy and Karen CALL OUT to Jack and Hurley, AD LIB.

Hurley rushes over to Peggy and they kiss warmly. Jack ambles over to Karen. They pleasantly greet, AD LIB.

KAREN

I'm sorry I couldn't return your calls. I don't blame you if you're mad.

You can see in Jack's face that he is annoyed.

JACK

I called you about four times. You can't blame it all on your father.

KAREN

I know. I'm sorry. I was afraid of getting close. (pause) With you going to Vietnam.

The 2nd lieutenant YELLS, AD LIB, for the Marines to enter the terminal.

Karen grabs Jack's hands and passes him a folded piece of paper.

KAREN

It's my aunt's address. She'll make sure I get the letters if you decide to write.
(pause) You're not alone, Jack.

The lieutenant YELLS again, AD LIB. Karen kisses Jack's cheek.

Jack and Hurley rush into the terminal.

INT. UNITED AIRLINE FLIGHT

As the plane flies thousands of feet over the ocean, Jack glances at the paper from Karen. He places it in his wallet.

INT. CAG HEADQUARTERS/DA NANG VIETNAM - DAY

The area is located within a high walled old French fort on the beach at Da Nang. The other three sides are surrounded by peasant huts made of discarded ammo crates. Jack, Hurley and 25 RECRUITS are seated in desks as MARINE CAPTAIN FOLEY, a burly Irishman, explains the intent of the Combined Action Program.

FOLEY

I want to welcome you Marines to Cap School. It's going to be a demanding two weeks. And I expect 100% from each one of you. One day dream can not only mean your life but also that of your buddy.

Captain Foley, sits on the edge of his desk.

FOLEY

Cap all started with one village at Phu Bai in 1965. Now we have 114 villages. Our mission then and still is...is to help teach the Vietnamese to help themselves. Get them more involved with their government. We accomplish this through pacification programs. The strategy of pacifying a village from within..leads to our ultimate goal of defeating the enemy at their own guerilla war. (pause)
This all may seem alittle confusing to you now. But through our curriculum of courses everything will become clear. Over the next two weeks, you will be receiving courses on Vietnamese customs, language, politics and history. You will also have some on terrorist organization and infrastructure, their strategy and tactics..along with some on the military sciences.

Captain Foley passes out a complete list of courses which are illustrated by some cartoons.

FOLEY

Read those cartoons during your breaks. Just one thing, (a beat) although they make fun of your enemy, don't ever make light of Victor Charles. He's very determined, experienced and skilled at what he does.

Hurley, an animated question.

HURLEY

Captain, is it true that CAP units see a lot of action?

Foley, all Marine, honesty.

FOLEY

Someone always asks that question. The Combined Action Program has gained much success with the people. The enemy sees us as a threat. We're involved in 'the other war'. As we call it. The V.C. and N.V.A. continue to target our villages and hamlets in hopes of running us out. (pause) That, of course, will never happen.

Hurley, Jack and some of the other recruits appear nervous and edgy. We hear GUNFIRE, MORTARS in the background.

Foley understands

FOLEY

Better get used to it, men. It's our way of life around here.

Jack, a question.

JACK

Captain, is it true that CAP is nicknamed the Peace Corps with Rifles?

FOLEY

Good question Cunningham. CAP has been called that. You, Marines become integrated into the routine of daily village life. You actually become villagers yourselves. This gains the confidence and trust of the peasants. You set up civil action programs that are similar to those of the Peace Corps. And you make friends. The most important thing is...your making friends amongst the people.

The GUNFIRE is getting closer. MORTARS are more defined. The recruits find it hard to concentrate on Foley.

FOLEY

Bunkers out back, men, if we need 'em. But right now, we got more important things to do. You got a lot of information to digest, in a short period of time. I suggest we get busy.

Suddenly the war hits home, in a BIG WAY! MORTARS and ROCKETS find their mark in the village outside the Headquarters.

GUNFIRE is dangerously close. VILLAGERS SCREAM, AD LIB.

Foley, in charge.

FOLEY
Bunkers, now!

The recruits scramble like gerbils to get outside. Jack and Hurley near the back of the group.

EXT. CAG HEADQUARTERS

There is pandamonium, as MORTARS and ROCKETS continue to rip the village.

The recruits run for cover, as they witness villagers blown apart.

Hot shrapnel penetrates flesh, as the recruits and villagers try to find shelter from the onslaught.

Foley SHOUTS ORDERS, AD LIB! The recruits make it to the bunker.

Except for the few rifles of those on guard duty, the recruits are weaponless. They hug the floor.

A few trucks of Marines race up and quickly disperse their men. Some fall and scream immediately. The fighting is intense for a few moments.

INT. THE BUNKER

The recruits are quiet. Jack and Hurley peer out as the attack SLACKS OFF.

JACK AND HURLEY, P.O.V.

Villagers lay dead and dying. Flames and smoke lick the sky. It's almost surrealistic in it's horror.

HURLEY
(unusually rigid)
Is this what Hell's like?

Jack's eyes zero in on two fallen recruits who were sitting next to him in the classroom. They are limp and covered with blood. Jack kneels down on one knee and picks up a Cross and chain that is laying between them. He blesses himself as he grips it between his fingers.

JACK
(quiet)

My God.

Foley walks up behind the two friends.

FOLEY
Welcome to the ugliness of Vietnam, men.

INT. CLASSROOM

The recruits are milling about, silent confusion. Captain Foley enters.

FOLEY
Please be seated in the same seats that you had before.

Foley glances over at the two empty desks next to Jack and Hurley. Jack and Hurley are visibly upset with the loss.

FOLEY
I wish I could tell you this war gets easier. But I'd be lieing. It's going to get harder..much harder. Most of you only knew these men a few days. You got close to them because you had something in common. Once you get out to your villages, your relationships will get even stronger. You'll be going through HELL together. When you lose a buddy out there, it's going to hurt even more. Like a part of yourself has died. They're your brothers. Maybe even closer. (pause)
We'll say The Lord's Prayer now, then get back to work.

The prayer starts and Jack glances over at the empty desks.

EXT. 2ND CAG HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Jack has been in Nam for almost a month. He sits on top of a forty foot guard tower, writing home to his parents. The full moon is his lantern.

We can tell that the reality of war has hit him squarely between the eyes. No more baby faced innocence. Maturity and stress play with his demeanor. He struggles as he tries to keep from exposing it to his parents.

Jack takes out of his camouflaged utilities a small radio and turns it on low. Since he is not allowed to write letters or listen to a radio while on watch, he checks the ladder to insure that no one is coming up.

As Jack writes his letter, we hear it V.O. and see it come to life.

INTERCUT/VARIOUS SHOTS

JACK (V.O.)

3/21/70

Dear Mom and Dad:
It's hard to believe almost a month is gone. Today was a beautiful day. A little hot though. The sergeant said it was 96 degrees. I can't believe it gets hotter. He says it will go over 110 degrees. Today the sergeant took us to the village across the river from 2nd Cag. It was more of a tour than a patrol. It's a quiet, friendly village. I was really shocked how these people were so happy to see us. They are so poor. In Cap school they said that they are almost the poorest in the world. For what I seen today I can understand that. Some of the babies run around with no clothes on. And their mothers were breast feeding them right in front of us. I couldn't believe it. Our Navy Corpsman was handling out clothes, soap and candy to the kids. You should have seen them go crazy over that candy. One kid even threw down his clothes and soap so that he could get another candy bar. A lot of kids were asking me for cigarettes but I still don't smoke. Kevin gave out both his packs. These people live totally different than us. I hope I can help them once I get to my village.

BACK TO SCENE

Jack's reverie is abruptly broken by SNIPER FIRE! The bullets tear into sandbags to his front. He drops his letter and pen.

He lies prone on the floor, as SNIPER FIRE RIPS INTO THE TOWER.

BULLETS RICOCHET dangerously close to him. He blesses himself super fast.

He belly crawls to the radio and calls the command bunker.

FILTERED RADIO CALL

JACK

This is Hightower 3. This is Hightower 3.
I'm taking rounds. Repeat I'm taking rounds.

VOICE

Can you tell where it's coming from?

Jack, very nervous.

JACK

It's coming from the village across the river. May I fire? May I fire?

VOICE

Negative. Keep your head down. That's a friendly village. We can't take a chance of you hitting a friendly.

The rounds continue to hit. LANCE CORPORAL CHARLIE GALLO, a combat veteran, climbs the ladder from the landing below.

GALLO

(thick New York accent)

Homeboy. Did ya call in?

JACK

I don't believe this shit! They told me to keep my fucking head down. I can't even fire back.

GALLO

Stay cool, man. Don't let this crap get ya. You'll face this a lot. Ya hit a friendly, the whole village will be shooting at the tower tomorrow night.

Gallo is about to say something when a round rips open a sandbag sending sand into his mouth. He coughs it out.

Gallo

Shit! That bitch tried to kill me.

Jack, lets out a nervous laugh.

EXT. THE VILLAGE OF PHU DA/MARKET PLACE - DAY

The peasant village sits about three miles from a Marine base, inside the An Hoa Valley. The Song Thu Bon river borders on one side of Phu Da. The valley is surrounded by the Que Son mountains and Charlie Ridge.

The market place's many stalls made from bamboo, thatch, and discarded ammunition crates are crowded with peasants from miles around. Small buses and motor bikes inch their way in and out on the one road leading to the rest of the world.

TWO MARINES, CARLOS CRUZ and JIMMY TUCKER are seated in a hut on the edge of the market place, eating bowls of noodles and Water Buffalo meat. Carlos is a dark skinned, good looking Mexican-American; he's wearing a bandanna. Tucker has a mustache, is all ready balding and is smoking a cigar. Carlos is SPEAKING VIETNAMESE to THREE, TOOTH-LESS PEASANT WOMEN, AD LIB. The women are LAUGHING. Tucker takes a long drink from a bottle of Vietnamese beer. He burps.

Nearby, CHILDREN rush out of their one room, stucco school house. A few older boys KICK around a soccer ball.

At a black market soda shop, THREE VIETNAMESE MILITIAMEN, who are supposed to be on security, are busy talking with two beautiful, long haired girls. One of them notices a Marine jeep inching through the crowd but continues TALKING, AD LIB.

The militiamen belong to a unit called Popular Forces (P.F.) They are not among the elite of the South Vietnamese Forces. Usually, twenty P.F.s are assigned to a CAP unit.

Jack, wearing a bush cover and Hurley clad in his Dodger cap, are passengers inside the jeep.

JACK AND HURLEY, P.O.V.

The buses have screens on their windows. Jack asks about them, AD LIB.

DRIVER

That's a stupid question. To prevent grenades from going in.

Meanwhile, Carlos notices the jeep. He grabs Tucker's arm.

CARLOS

They're here!

Carlos RESPECTFULLY SAYS GOOD-BYE, AD LIB. Tucker grabs a bite out of a hot pepper, then finishes off his beer. Carlos pays for the meals.

TUCKER

I'll catch it next time.

Carlos laughs.

CARLOS

Tucker my man, that's what ya said the last three times.

TUCKER

Well Carlos, you always invite me when I never have the money.

Carlos messes his friend's hair. Immediately, Tucker fixes it.

TUCKER

Hey easy, Carlos! The dammed chemicals in the water got most of them. Leave me a few up there, huh.

A LAUGH between them.

The two Cap Marines wade through the CROWD OF CHILDREN that are surrounding the jeep. Carlos puts his hand out to Jack. The two new men have big smiles.

CARLOS

(soft spoken Mexican accent)

I'm Lance Corporal Cruz from Texas. You can call me Carlos.

He points to Tucker.

This is P.F.C. Jimmy Tucker. He's from Idaho.

Tucker shakes Hurley's hand.

TUCKER

(loud voice)

Boise. Just call me Tucker.

JACK

Jack Cunningham. New York.

HURLEY

Kevin Hurley. Michigan. I was born in Jersey though. We moved once my parents realized we were down wind from New York.

Hurley, Tucker and Carlos laugh. Jack punches his friend in the arm.

Carlos and Tucker pick up the packs of the two new Marines.

CARLOS

We better get back. The jeep was late and Sergeant Davis has been waiting for you.

They walk through the crowded market place. A group of children follow behind them. Jack is smiling. Hurley is smoking.

EXT. DAY PAUSE HUT - DAY

A Day Pause is the day base for the Cap unit. Usually two peasant homes within the village are used. Half the unit uses one hut, while the other half uses the other hut. They are separated from each other by a few hundred yards. Each day a different pair, which have nicknames, is used.

SERGEANT DAVIS, a powerfully built, tall, good looking, nineteen year old Marine exits the hut.

SERGEANT

(Boston accent)

I'm Sergeant Davis. Set your gear down some place and take five minutes to do what you have to do. Then come see me. We got alot to go over.

Jack and Hurley lay their gear inside and look around the hut. Hurley eyes an altar in the middle of the main room. He picks up a statue of Jesus Christ.

NHA BE, a young boy, who is smoking a hand rolled cigarette, enters. The boy shakes Jack's hand.

NHA BE
(heavy accent)
Beaucou Catholic in Vietnam. (pause)
Me Nha Be. Me and other boys work for Marine.
Wash clothes, cook C rat, go market place,
massage back. Do many job. Even tell when V. C.
come near Phu Da.

Jack is surprised how well he speaks English. He ASKS how old he is, AD LIB.

Nha Be waves his hand and two other village boys enter.

NHA BE
Me twelve. They thirteen. They your boys.
You tell me when they no do good work.

HURLEY
Yeah, I can sure use ya, since they wouldn't let
me bring my mother along here.

Moments later, the two new village Marines are sitting in front of the Sergeant. Five militiamen and peasants look on.

SERGEANT
Everybody pulls their weight in Phu Da.
There's alot to do. If you're not helping
Corpsman Eldon treat the peasants, then
you're on patrol, security or some kind of
Civil Action bit around the village. There's
not much free time. We take pride in Cap
2-9-2.

He waves his hand towards some peasants who are watching.

SERGEANT
The people like us here. At least most of them
do. Inside the village, there're a few Communists
sympathizers that keep us busy. Outside, you got
to watch out for booby traps and snipers. In both
places you have to watch out for grenade throwers.
(pause)

His face and voice emphasizes.

The gooks have bounties on each of us. So
you have to be careful no matter where you
are. These people might like us, but always
remember, they're poor. They can use the
bounty money to feed their families.

Jack looks around nervously. The sergeant chuckles.

SERGEANT

Don't worry. There're P F militiamen all around here. They know what they're doing.

Tucker, who has been listening as he cleans his rifle, covers his mouth, fakes a SNEEZE and MUMBLES the words, BULL SHIT.

SERGEANT

Tucker get back out to harvest security. And take Hurley with you, so you don't have to walk alone. Tell Hoskins we'll be there in about ten minutes.

Tucker fakes his BULL SHIT Sneeze again.

SERGEANT

I told you to get out of here!

The sergeant smiles.

SERGEANT

I got a bunch of jokers working for me.

EXT. VILLAGE PATH - MINUTES LATER

The sergeant and Jack are TALKING as they walk. Peasants are watching from their hut entrances.

Jack, enthusiasm in his voice, drives an important point.

JACK

I want to be proud of what I did here in Nam. I made a promise to myself...When I get home, I want to be able to wear my uniform and look everyone in the eye. Let them know I did good.....This promise I'm gonna keep. Cap gives me that chance. I know I can help out.

A SMALL BOY walks up to the two American teenagers with his hand out. The sergeant hands him a couple of coins. The boy runs back to his mother.

SERGEANT

You have good intentions. Most new guys do when they come to Nam. Sometimes that attitude can get you killed. You forget it's a war. You try to save the world and later you find out the world don't want to be saved. (pause) Just do your best... that's what the Marine Corp trained you for. Just keep your eyes and ears open for anything. You'll have a better chance in wearing that uniform proudly once you step off that freedom bird.

Suddenly, a water buffalo charges them. Jack runs behind a hut and the sergeant falls. A YOUNG GIRL stops the animal with a thin bamboo switch. PEASANTS LAUGH.

The sergeant brushes himself off. Jack points his M-16 rifle at the animal as he walks away.

SERGEANT

I hate those things. You got to watch out for them. They hate Americans.

EXT. CROP FIELDS JUST OUTSIDE PHU DA - DAY

PEASANTS are harvesting corn. Tucker is sitting under a tree, his bush cover is over his eyes. Hurley is already helping with the corn harvest by the time Jack and the sergeant arrives.

JOE KISS and HARRY HOSKINS are also helping out. Joe Kiss, nicknamed Farmer, a lanky 6'5, is smoking a hand rolled tobacco leaf. Hoskins, a very dark skinned muscular black, has a military issue towel hanging from his neck. Both men have their shirts off.

Hurley GREETs Jack, AD LIB. Tucker jumps to his feet and grabs his rifle, hoping that the sergeant did not see him resting.

Hoskins and Kiss rush over to Jack and the sergeant.

Hoskins wipes his face in his towel and goes into a James Brown, I FEEL GOOD!

HOSKINS

Sh-i-t, I'll never get use to this farm work.

The twenty two year old black immediately goes into a fist, arm and elbow pounding ritual with Jack. When the New Yorker does not know a move, the black Marine shows him.

The two LAUGH.

HOSKINS

Harry Hoskins, North Phili. Glad to meet ya. You'll like it in Phu Da. We got a good bunch of guys out here.

He points to Kiss.

HOSKINS

Just keep away from this guy. He'll put ya to work out here in the fields.

Joe Kiss, who has filthy hands, wipes them on his pants.

FARMER

Don't listen to this Phili boy. He's just afraid of alittle hard work.

Joe laughs. He looks back at Jack.

FARMER

Joe Kiss. My friends call me Farmer. Cause I come from a Dairy farm in Iowa.

SERGEANT

(to Jack)

Hoskins is yours and Hurley's fireteam leader. You both will be setting up with him tonight on ambush.

HOSKINS

I'll talk to ya later once Serg is finished with ya.

FARMER

(to Jack)

So ya out here to help us with the harvest?

SERGEANT

No. Not today. I got other plans for him.

EXT. SOMEWHERE INSIDE PHU DA - DAY

THREE MARINES and Carlos are digging a drainage ditch. A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG GIRL hands Carlos a drink of water from a nearby well.

When Jack arrives, Carlos YELLS, HI JACK. The sergeant INTRODUCES him, AD LIB, to the other three Marines.

They are not friendly. All they do is give Jack a half-hearted wave.

On leaving, the sergeant explains.

SERGEANT

Don't mind them. They're short. They think new guys are bad luck. You'll understand them when you start getting short yourself.

Jack studies the three Marines.

EXT. SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE VILLAGE - DAY

DONALD ELDON, blond hair and blue eyes, looks more like a California surfer than a U.S. Navy Corpsman. He is treating a long line of PEASANTS.

ROBERT WATSON, a short, sun glass wearing, light skinned black, is helping out.

After a quick INTRODUCTION, AD LIB, Sergeant Davis ORDERS Jack to stay and help them.

Immediately after the sergeant leaves, Watson gathers up his gear.

WATSON
(disparaging tone)
Man, this is your job now. You take care of these people. I got to write a letter.

Watson leaves.

JACK
What's your buddy's problem?

ELDON
(southern accent)
Watson tries to get out of work whenever he can. You'll get use to him after awhile. You might even learn to like him.

The corpsman examines a TEN YEAR OLD BOY. He finds an open sore on his leg and cleans it.

Jack looks on.

ELDON
So you're from New York. I went there once when I was in college. I liked it. There was always something to see, something to do. That's where I got laid for the first time.
(pause) Do you live in Manhattan or one of the boroughs?

JACK
I'm from a town in Queens. Rosedale. Not far from Kennedy Airport. I went to high school in Manhattan though. Maybe you've heard of it. Power Memorial.

ELDON
Yes, I've heard of it. Isn't that the school that Lew Alcinder, the big basketball star went to?

JACK
Yeah.

ELDON
Did you know him?

JACK
No. He graduated the year before I got there. He graduated with my brother though. He was in a couple of classes with him.

ELDON
So when did you graduate?

JACK

Last year, 69.

The Corpsman finds another sore on the boy's other leg. Jack watches. He looks up at Jack as he wipes it clean.

ELDON

So you enlisted in the Marines fresh out of high school?

JACK

Yeah. I thought it would be good for me. I was just a kid. I didn't know any better.

Jack chuckles.

The corpsman applies some medicine to both the sores.

ELDON

I guess you didn't figure you'd be coming to Vietnam.

JACK

I kind of expected it. I wanted the infantry. My Drill Instructor in Parris Island said that they come hand in hand.

ELDON

The infantry would be the last thing I would volunteer for.

Jack hands the corpsman tape and a gauze pad.

JACK

What about you Doc? What made you become a corpsman? It's not an easy job either.

ELDON

My wife wanted me to go to medical school after college. I wanted to join the Navy. So, I thought it would be a good idea to try this. If I like it, I'll go to medical school when I get discharged.

JACK

What do you think so far?

He bandages the legs and gives the boy a lollipop.

ELDON

I love working in Cap. It's the best program our government has for these people. I like it so much I just extended for another six months. (pause) It pissed off my wife a little.

JACK
You extended your tour?

Eldon looks at Jack.

ELDON
It's very common in Cap. They say sixty percent of us extend. Carlos and Hoskins are on extended tours.

JACK
Is there anything ya don't like? There must be somethin'.

ELDON
It's bandaging you Marines after a firefight I don't like. (pause)

Anger in his face, Eldon looks down the line of peasants.

ELDON
I also hate how the corrupt Vietnamese officials do nothing to help their own people. Nothing! These people are on their own.

A FIVE YEAR OLD GIRL runs up YELLING, BAC SI BAC SI as she holds up a bleeding finger. Tears run down her face.

ELDON
You do this one, Jack.

As the corpsman looks on, Jack treats the child. When he finishes, she kisses Jack on the cheek and runs away.

ELDON
You work well with children. In two weeks, I got a job you can help me with. Something I do every three weeks.

JACK
What is it Doc?

ELDON
You'll see then.

A TEENAGE BOY dashes up. The corpsman and the boy SPEAK IN VIETNAMESE.

The corpsman grabs his gear. He TELLS Jack to follow him.

INT. THATCH HUT

As Jack looks on, the corpsman delivers a baby. Eldon hands the New Yorker the baby as he treats the MOTHER.

Jack smiles as he plays with the LITTLE GIRL's tiny hand. He gets excited when the child closes her hand on his finger. He gives the smiling, toothless mother her baby.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - EVENING

The Cap consisting of 12 Americans and 20 P.F. militiamen are staging for the night patrol and the eventually moving into the night's ambush site.

Sergeant Davis CALLS into the hut for Hoskins and Farmer.

Meanwhile, Jack and Hurley are watching four P.F. militiamen horseplaying around. Tucker ambles over. We can see the hardness that's evolved during his tour.

TUCKER

Don't trust 'em if we get any action tonight. Don't even turn your back on 'em. I think some of them are actually working with the Viet Cong.

JACK

Sergeant Davis thinks we have a good P.F. platoon.

TUCKER

He has to say that. He doesn't want you to get nervous if you knew the truth about them. He wants you to see for yourself. This way you'll have a few days under your belt. You won't get as nervous if you see them running away.

Tucker gives a P.F. the finger.

TUCKER

They know I can't stand them.

TUCKER

(to Jack)

I made a vow. I do nothing in this village if I think a P.F. can do it instead. It's their village. Their people. If you live by my rule this place won't be half as bad.

JACK

How'd you get into Cap with an attitude like that?

TUCKER

I didn't have it when I came into Phu Da. I was pretty much like you. I thought I was gonna really make a positive impact here. I even thought, God Bless America and all. (pause)

TUCKER

But as time passed, I began to lose it.
You'll see. The short timers think the same
way I do. See if you leave Phu Da with the
same attitude you have now.

JACK

I ain't gonna change. I think if any thing
happens it's only gonna make me want to help
these people more.

Tucker, a 'Yeah Sure' look.

Hoskins rushes over.

HOSKINS

Be careful tonight. There's an alert on.
Serg wants 100 percent watch until 300 hours.

The black fireteam leader motions to Jack.

HOSKINS

I want you and Hurley to set up with me.
It's your first time out and we got alot of crap
to go over.

After the briefing, Hurley walks over to the DAY PAUSE HUT OWNER
and digs into his pack. The teenage Marine hands the woman
three cans of C rations.

EXT. VILLAGE PATH - NIGHT

After patrolling around Phu Da, the patrol stops. The sergeant
ushers a FAMILY into their family bunker on the side of their hut.

Jack, who is nervous, hears TWIGS BREAK behind a hay stack
and readies his rifle.

Suddenly, a pig runs out and Jack jumps back. P.F's LAUGH.

GRENADES, GREEN and RED TRACERS RIP the darkness along with
RIFLE FIRE.

Sergeant Davis and three P.F. militiamen are wounded.

VILLAGERS SCREAM, AD LIB.

Hoskins SHOUTS orders to the Marines, AD LIB.

Five Militiamen sneak away, cowardice.

Jack shoots high with his M-16 rifle. Hoskins YELLS for him to lower it, AD LIB.

Carlos and Tucker spot movement, YELL, AD LIB.
They rush towards it FIRING ON FULL AUTOMATIC.

Hoskins YELLS to Watson to go with them, AD LIB.

The black shakes his hand in a 'NO WAY expression'.

WATSON

No Bro. I ain't gonna get killed. Send one of the new guys. I'll help Doc treat Serg and the P.F's.

THE FIREFIGHT EXPLODES.

EXT. MARKET PLACE - NIGHT

Trucks take out the wounded.

Jack is standing with Hurley.

JACK

I didn't know what I was doing once the shit hit the fan. I was scared.

HURLEY

I tell ya one thing. It was one hell of an initiation.

Hoskins, over hears.

HOSKINS

Tonight's just the beginning. It won't be the only night you'll be scared. Ya never get over that feeling. Some nights will be worse than others. Sometimes, the fear gets so bad ya can't move. Ya sit there staring. Your chest ready to explode from your pounding heart.

JACK

What can you do? You can't sit there.

HOSKINS

You think about your buddies being without your help. Ya can't let them do it alone. Ya count on your buddies and they count on you.

He emphasizes.

HOSKINS

Ya never let a buddy down. No matter what!
They're all you got out here.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAWN

After a patrol around the village, the Cap splits into two and move into their respected day huts.

Hoskins goes inside one and RADIOS the captain to go over the action from the night before, AD LIB.

The other Americans go into their morning routines of cleaning weapons, cooking C rations, cleaning their gear, taking cat naps. Some Marines talk to the DAY PAUSE HUT OWNERS.

Radio and cassette players BLARE out different tunes. Tucker with his Country Western, Watson has a TEMPTATION tape playing and Jack has the Armed Forces Radio Station, playing an episode of CHICKEN MAN.

JACK

It's a shame about the sergeant. I thought I was going to like him. He seemed like he really cared about what he was doing.

HURLEY

I didn't like seeing him laying in pain. I wanted to help him.

JACK

I wonder how he's doing. Doc wasn't sure if he'd make it last night.

A few yards away, there's an ARGUMENT, AD LIB between the three short timers.

JACK

I wonder what they're arguing about? They were at it last night, too.

HURLEY

I heard them say something about bringing someone into the village. Something about taking a chance on getting people upset or or not.

Meanwhile, the Marine's village boys arrive and begin to help. Nha Be ASKS for Sergeant Davis, AD LIB.

When he hears about what happened, a few tears roll down his face. Farmer puts his arm around him.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

Two short timers are laying on green towels in front of the day pause. Their village boys are massaging their backs and necks.

Jack is finishing up a letter to his mother.

JACK (V.O.)

It's hard to beleive, I been here in Vietnam 45 days. I'm still waiting for my first letter from Daddy. I know he doesn't write, but I still would like to hear from him. Letters from home mean so much to us. I better go now. Keep on praying for me and the guys.

Jack goes into his pack and pulls out an envelop. He also pulls out his calendar. He marks off a calendar his 45th day in Vietnam. A short timer notices and CHUCKLES.

SHORT TIMER

Why bother. You got a l-o-n-g time before you're out of here.

Jack just looks at him as the short timer walks away.

Hurley walks over to Tucker, nail biting, body language.

HURLEY

What tapes ya got?

Tucker points to his field pack.

TUCKER

They're in there.

Hurley sits down next to it and pulls them out one at a time.

HURLEY

They're all Hillbilly shit! Don't you have any rock. Any Doors, Cream, or Beatles? Even Neil Young?

TUCKER

Country's the only music there is. That Beatle crap is garbage. Noone back home listens to it.

Jack sits down next to Hurley and looks through the tapes.

JACK

I like rock but I also like Country. I use to watch Hee Haw with my mother.

Jack pulls out a Hank Williams tape.

JACK
Play this Tucker.

Tucker pops the tape in. The song, I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY comes on.

Hurley shakes his head in disgust.

HURLEY
You call rock garbage. This guy sounds like somebody's got him by the balls.

JACK
Shut up! This is my favorite song by Hank.

Hurley walks over to Hoskins who is trying to teach the Marines' village boys how to throw a football. The boys are clumsy.

Carlos comes over to Jack and Tucker.

CARLOS
Jack, are you Christian?

JACK
I'm Catholic. Why ya asking?

CARLOS
A few of us get together every Sunday and read the Bible. It only takes about fifteen minutes. It's my job to collect everybody. Do you want to join us?

JACK
Yeah. I'd like to.

CARLOS
I have to get Farmer and Hoskins, then we'll start. Do you think Hurley would like to do it?

JACK
I know he comes from a Presbyterian family. Check with him.

Carlos rushes over to Hurley and Hoskins. Carlos catches the football thrown by Hoskins. He throws it back.

JACK
Tucker are you going?

TUCKER
Nay. I don't believe in it. If there was a God I don't think he'd let the world be in the shape it's in. War, hunger, sickness and all the rest. I just don't believe in it.

Moments later, Jack, Hurley, Carlos, Farmer, Corpsman Eldon and Hoskins are sitting in a circle. Carlos is READING A PASSAGE FROM THE BIBLE, AD LIB.

Watson, wearing his sunglasses, is sitting alone under a tree reading his Bible. Jack glances over at him.

EXT. DIFFERENT SITES OF PHU DA - DAY

The three short timers are back at digging the drainage ditch and still ARGUING, AD LIB.

Corpsman Eldon is giving 1st Aid to a line of peasants.

Watson, clad in his sunglasses, is alone on security near the day pause huts.

EXT. OUTSIDE PHU DA

Hurley and Tucker are on security in the fields as Farmer helps some peasants with the potato harvest.

HURLEY
(to Tucker)

I used to help out my father in a Veterans Hospital. Once a month we use to go there to hold a bingo for the Vets. He'd call the numbers and I'd run around checking their cards when they yelled bingo. It wasn't much, but the Vets really appreciated it.

(pause)

They don't have nobody. It's a shame.

Suddenly, a SNIPER'S round SLAMS next to Tucker's leg. Everyone dives for cover. The sniper sneaks into a hole within the jungle treeline.

Hurley, nervous, lights up a cigarette.

HURLEY
That was close.

EXT. VILLAGE SCHOOL HOUSE

Carlos, Jack, Hoskins, TWO PEASANTS, and THREE P.F. MILITIAMEN are there to build an extension to the stucco building for the teacher and his family to live. It replaces a nearby thatch hut that they currently live in.

School is going on inside.

Jack and Hoskins are mixing the cement under the hot sun. Hoskins has his towel hanging around his neck. Jack is wearing his bush cover. Both are covered with sweat.

Carlos and the peasants are laying the bricks. The three P.Fs are laying under the shade of some banana trees.

A LITTLE GIRL keeps smiling at Carlos through the glass-less window. He smiles and waves.

The TEACHER'S WIFE CALLS them over for a lunch of rice and sardines, AD LIB.

When she turns away to feed the peasants, Jack gives Hoskins his sardines. Jack fumbles with the chop sticks. Hoskins shows him how to use them.

JACK

Carlos, how'd ya learn to lay bricks so good?

Carlos puts a sardine in his mouth with his chop sticks. He wipes his mouth with his handkerchief.

CARLOS

My family worked as brick layers and carpenters back in Mexico. It's something we learn as children.

JACK

It's something how a family follows one trade. My father comes from a line of Irish cops. That's what I want to do when I get out. Become a New York City cop.

HOSKINS

My father is a bus driver in downtown Phili. My mother, the night manager of a hamburger place. Neither one of them want me to follow them. They want me to go back to school. I only have two more years before I get my B.A.

Meanwhile the three P.F. militiamen wake up from under the trees. They walk over, looking for their lunch.

The teacher's wife TELLS THEM IN VIETNAMESE, NO. YOU DID NOT WORK.

They laugh. One of them tries to take some food from her. He gets rough.

Carlos and Hoskins look at each other. Carlos takes the bowl of food away from the P.F. The two other P.Fs try to take some. The woman stops them. They YELL at her.

Carlos MUMBLES, I'M TIRED OF THEIR SHIT. He punches one. Hoskins grabs him from punching another, THESE THREE AREN'T WORTH IT.

One of them CALLS Carlos ASS HOLE in English. They walk away.

Moments later, in the classroom, Carlos SINGS A VIETNAMESE SONG with the children as Jack, Hoskins, and the teacher look on.

EXT. DAY PAUSE

When Jack returns, he notices Farmer washing down a pair of cows with a TEN YEAR OLD BOY.

Tucker is listening to his COUNTRY MUSIC while on security.

TUCKER

Ya can't get that farm boy away from his cows.
If he don't have cow shit between his toes
and under his nails, then he's not happy.

Jack doesn't say anything. He walks over to Farmer.

JACK

Do these things bite?

Farmer laughs.

FARMER

She's about as friendly as they come.

Farmer pats the cow on the side. Jack inches up.

JACK

Ya don't see many cows where I live. What
do these things eat?

Farmer shows the Vietnamese boy how to clean the cow's utter.

FARMER

Hay mostly. I just got them started giving
her alittle silage.

Jack touches the cow's side. He backs off when the animal
turns it's head towards him. Again, Farmer laughs.

JACK

What's silage?

FARMER

Chopped up corn stalks, mixed in with dried corn.

Jack looks at the cow's face.

JACK

How much milk does she give?

FARMER

All cows are different. My Dad's Holsteins
produce, on an average, about 44,000 pounds of
milk a year. This one produces about a fifth
of that.

JACK

What's that a day in quarts?

FARMER

She produces about 10 quarts a day. Five at
each milking.

Hoskins CALLS Jack.

FARMER

He probably wants you to get ready for patrol.

EXT. PATROL OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE - DAY

Jack, Hurley, Carlos, Tucker and Farmer along with six militiamen stop to check TWO TEENAGE BOYS' identification cards.

The heat is intense. Jack dowses himself with water from his canteen.

The patrol starts to move out and a sniper SHOTS a P.F. militiaman.

EXT. MARKET PLACE

When the patrol returns, they walk through the crowded market.

Tucker motions to Jack and Hurley.

TUCKER

Let's get somethin' cold to drink.

The three enter a small thatch hut and collapse into chairs. A PRETTY NINETEEN YEAR OLD GIRL, CO MOI, GREETES THEM IN ENGLISH, AD LIB.

TUCKER

Two cold beers for each of us dried out American boys.

JACK

No. Give me two cold cokes. I don't like drinking in the village.

TUCKER

Don't worry man. The captain lets us have two beers a day. You're not gonna get drunk on two.

HURLEY

Jack, don't be such a candyass.

JACK

It's not that. It's, I won't want to stop.

TUCKER

Don't worry. I'll make sure you only drink two.

The three drink their American beer right down in a race. Co Moi is standing there with another round. Tucker finishes his second can without putting it down. Jack and Hurley watch. Everyone LAUGHS. Jack and Hurley quickly drink.

CHILDREN watch from the doorway. Co Moi brings another round. Tucker jokingly goes to pinch her rear. She empties a can of beer on his head. Everyone laughs.

Upon leaving, the table is completely covered with empty cans. Jack staggers. He goes to pinch Co Moi's behind and she slaps his hand away. Co Moi, smiling, is counting her money.

As they walk up the road, they see Hoskins and Farmer coming towards them. Tucker pushes Jack and Hurley off the road and jumps to the ground next to them. He covers Jack's mouth to keep him from talking.

TUCKER

Hoskins good people. But don't let him see that we've been drinking. He'll get pissed if he knows you drank more than two cans.

Hoskins and Farmer pass by without seeing them. The three scramble away, laughing.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - EVENING

The Cap is staging for their night patrol. Jack TELLS Hurley, AD LIB, that he has a hangover.

Hoskins gets off the radio with the captain.

HOSKINS

We have another alert. The 5th Marines heard there's a large enemy force crossing the river. They may try to come into the village tonight.

EXT. AMBUSH SITE - NIGHT

Tucker and Jack are set up near a pig pen. The smell is really foul in the heat. The bugs are going wild on them.

TUCKER

I don't think I'll ever get use to this place. I don't know what's worse. The heat, the stink, the damn bugs or the shitbird P.Fs.

He SLAPS a bug off his cheek. Then Jack SLAPS one off his arm.

A RIFLE SHOT ECHOES around the village.

JACK

What's that?

TUCKER

Viet Cong. They're probeing for the Cap's position. They'll fire at different points outside the village, hoping the P.Fs panic and open up. Give our ambush position away.

JACK

Ain't you scared?

TUCKER

Of course I am. These P.fs are up to something already. Look at them. Ya can't trust them.

Four nervous P.Fs are hiding behind a hut. Two more arrive.

Hoskins comes over and ORDERS them to get back to their positions. Then he comes over to Jack and Hurley.

HOSKINS

Make sure they don't take off. We might need them tonight.

EXT. AMBUSH SITE - DAWN

The Cap is staging to move out to the day pause. Half of the P.F's have shuck away during the night.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - MORNING

The Marines are getting their gear ready for the day.

Hoskins, has his towel hanging from his neck, is cleaning his machine gun as TWO CHILDREN look on. He throws them gum.

Eldon is doing an inventory on his medical supplies.

Watson is brushing his teeth by the well as Carlos is shaving with a small mirror. There's small talk, AD LIB.

A village boy is giving a massage to one of the short timers.

Jack, Tucker and Hurley are sitting in a circle, cooking their C rations. Tucker is smoking a cigar and Hurley a cigarette.

TUCKER

(loud)

There's no Vietnam Veteran Memorials.

JACK

Bullshit. My hometown has one. It was dedicated on Memorial Day '68. I should know, I was there.

TUCKER

What is it, a little plaque?

JACK

I like it. It's small but it has all the names of the guys who served over here from Rosedale. I'll get my name on it when I get back. It even sits in it's own little park. Benches and all.

HURLEY

I tell you, you're lucky. Most towns only have World War 1 and 2 memorials.

TUCKER

I come from a college town. If someone put up a memorial to Vietnam Veterans, the students would tear it down the first night it was there.

HURLEY

No Shit.

TUCKER

A few months ago, some girl from the school got my name and address over here. She started writing me hate mail. Calling me a murderer and baby killer.

JACK

How'd you get her to stop sending them?

Tucker chuckles. His cigar smoke goes in Jack's face.

TUCKER

I had a few of my old girlfriends go and talk to her. She hasn't written me since.

JACK

Not all college students are like her. There's some that support us over here.

TUCKER

You're wrong. If you're not against the war when you start going to college, then the professors will make sure you are in no time flat. They talk more about being against the war than they teach their lessons.

Doc, clad in a U.S. Navy cap, comes over to the three.

ELDON

Jack, are you ready for today's surprise I got for you?

JACK

I don't know if I can do it, Doc.

ELDON

You don't even know what the job is.

JACK

I don't like surprises.

TUCKER

I know what it is. I had to do it a couple of times.

Tucker smiles at the Corpsman.

TUCKER

Doc has everyone do it sooner or later.

Jack follows the corpsman down some village paths. They come to the village school house near the market place.

Jack looks at the school's corner stone, MADE BY U.S. NAVY SEABEES 1966.

Inside the one room school house is a black board donated by a Baptist Church in Florida. The American made desks are lined up in neat columns.

The corpsman takes two wash basins from a small storage room.

CORPSMAN

Jack, will you fill these up. There's a well out back.

Jack goes in the back and does not find the water bucket to the well. A FIVE YEAR OLD BOY hands one to him. Jack THANKS him.

Jack reenters the school.

JACK

They're ready Doc. So, are you going to tell me what we're doing.

The corpsman checks his watch then looks outside the school.

A group of mothers are bringing their young children to the school.

The corpsman goes into his pack and takes out two bars of soap.

He smiles at the New Yorker as the children come in and start to take off their clothes.

Jack eyes widen.

JACK

Don't tell me we're gonna wash these kids.

CORPSMAN

Believe it or not, soap is new to these people. They don't even know how to use it.

The corpsman hands Jack a bar of soap. A two year old boy climbs into his tub.

CORPSMAN

Don't worry about losing the soap in the water. It's Ivory. It floats.

JACK

I don't know if I'll be able to do this Doc. Marine training never prepared me for this. Even Cap school never mentioned anything like this.

ELDON

Don't worry. If you know how to give yourself a bath, then you know how to give these babies one.

The mothers and the other children look on.

Jack watches the corpsman. Then he starts slowly himself.

The corpsman SAYS SOMETHING IN VIETNAMESE. Everyone but Jack laughs.

The boy in Jack's tub splashes and gets water all over him. Again, everyone laughs. This time, Jack joins in.

After the baths are completed, the corpsman hands each of the mothers a bar of soap and a can of C rations. He gives each of the children lollipops.

ELDON

They wouldn't come if I didn't give them something.

Jack is drenched.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

After another day of civil action programs, mail arrives with the day's supplies. The Americans are excited.

The radio's PLAYING "GEORGIA ON MY MIND" by the RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS. Watson is listening very closely.

Farmer sniffs eight pink envelopes, one at a time.

FARMER

(to Hoskins, Hurley, Jack)

Man, when I get home, I'm going to marry the prettiest girl in Iowa.

HOSKINS

She don't want an ugly giraffe like you. She wants something baby faced. Like Cunningham.

Jack smiles.

FARMER

No, this girl loves me. We've been going out since we were both high school freshmen.

He takes out a picture from his wallet showing the two of them at their high school prom.

FARMER

There's not a thing she wouldn't do for me. I'd do the same for her. She really loves me.

Meanwhile Jack is putting his letters from his mother and friends in post mark date order.

Hurley MENTIONS to Jack, AD LIB, that he has received a letter from Peggy, the girl he met at Disneyland.

HURLEY

Her friend Karen is asking for you.

Jack does not answer, instead he reads his first letter and we Hear IT IN HIS MOTHER'S VOICE.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Another day has gone by without you. It's hard to believe you are over there in Vietnam fighting a war. I pray to God every night that he brings you home safe.

I got your letter asking for the package of childrens clothes. People in Church want to send some small toys also. I hope you can use them.

Your father has been telling all who would listen, about what you are doing in the village. He doesn't say it, but I know he's really very proud of you. You know how he is. It's hard for him to show his feelings. But they are there. He says he'll write soon.

Well that's about it for now. I'll send the package right away. I have already gave the women down at Church your address. I hope you don't mind.

Love Mom

Hoskins YELLS for Jack to pick up his packages. There's a stack of five large ones.

Later, there are children wearing colorful summerwear as they play with toys.

Jack hands a Teddy Bear to a five year old girl and she smiles with her two front teeth missing.

EXT. AROUND THE VILLAGE - OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS

Jack and Hurley volunteer for different civil action programs and patrols.

One day, Hoskins ASKS for volunteers for a patrol, AD LIB.

Watson, clad in his sunglasses, laughs.

WATSON

Cunningham volunteers.

Jack is upset. He puts his face next to Watson's face.

JACK

That's the second time this week you volunteered me for something. Why don't you go out on a patrol? I don't remember the last one you went out on.

Again, Watson laughs.

WATSON

Not me man. Patrols are for new guys.

Watwon walks away.

JACK

(angry, to Hurley)

Doc told me, I'd like Watson once I got to know him. I can't stand him more and more. One of these days, I'm gonna end up punching him out.

A short timer standing nearby.

SHORT TIMER

Don't let 'em get to ya. He's just a real mama's boy.

Jack and Hurley go out on the patrol.

During the patrol, a sniper fires harmlessly in the ground nearby.

EXT. MARKET PLACE - MORNING

Carlos takes Jack around to all the selling stalls. A number of TEENAGE GIRLS smile and give them free samples of food.

JACK

Carlos, these girls sure do like you. They don't even look at me.

CARLOS

(soft spoken Mexican accent)

Don't worry Jack. They like you. It's just they know me longer. I've been in Phu Da eight months. You've only been here about a month and a half.

JACK

That's Fifty two days, to be exact.

Carlos smiles. He buys two crucifixes from an OLD LADY and hands one to Jack.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

The three short timers are again ARGUING. They finally agree and decide to act ON IT in the morning.

SERGEANT JACKSON, a black with a mustache and glasses, arrives. Nha Be quickly introduces himself to him.

Jackson CALLS Hoskins into the hut for a meeting which lasts for hours.

When it's over, the sergeant calls a meeting with all the Americans. He orders some P.F's away who want to hear what is to be said.

SERGEANT

(husky voice)

I'm new to this Cap. But I'm not new to the Cap program. I've been a Cap Leader in another village for seven months. I know I'll be of help to 2-9-2 right away. But I'll need help from you people. Lots of help! (a beat, then)

I've been informed in detail about your problems here. Especially, the snipers and our P.F. counter parts. Something will be done about both of them. I am sure you of that. I've already been talking with the captain about them. (beat)

For tonight, we'll be on alert. I hear you get a lot of them...(pause)...Nha Be has heard from a peasant farmer. That a Viet Cong unit has moved into the treeline just outside the village. I want to set up around the village back gate to see if we can catch them moving around.

After the briefing, Jack INTRODUCES himself, AD LIB.

SERGEANT

You're one of the two new men to the Cap. I heard that you're both working out very well. It's nice to hear you're getting involved with the civil action programs. All too often, the programs get forgotten. The men get caught up with everything else. Somehow they forget the good that comes out of them. Peasants trust is one thing.

EXT. AMBUSH SITE - NIGHT

The sergeant and Hoskins are checking positions and find almost half of the P.F's missing.

Jack notices a P.F. taking off his uniform, hiding it and his rifle. He starts to sneak away. Jack stops him.

A shoving match occurs. Everything gets LOUD. Other P.F's, Tucker and Hurley get involved.

The sergeant and Hoskins calm things down by separating everyone.

The Cap moves to a different position.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAWN

The three short timers are busy in one of the huts. They set up poncho liners as curtains around the peasant family's

wooden bed. They lay out two rubber air mattresses on the bed.

Outside, the PEASANT WOMAN OF THE HUT, a few Marines and P.F's look on.

JACK

What are they doing?

Tucker laughs. He whispers something to a P.F., who in turn, talks to the woman of the house.

Suddenly, the woman YELLS, AD LIB. She takes a thatch broom and chases the short timers out of her hut. She starts to throw out their gear.

The American sergeant dashes over.

SERGEANT

What's going on? What's going on?

Tucker is laughing out of control, along with some other Marines and P.Fs.

SERGEANT

(angry)

Somebody tell me what's going on!

The three short timers stand like kids caught with their hands in cookie jar.

The woman is still YELLING as she continues to throw out all the Marines' gear.

Tucker is trying to keep from laughing.

TUCKER

They were bringing in a prostitute from Duc Duc. I guess the woman didn't like them using her house to entertain.

The sergeant rolls his eyes and stares at the short timers, GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE I TAKE YOU UP TO SEE THE CAPTAIN.

A few nearby PEASANTS and P.Fs ECHO, MARINE NUMBER TEN MARINE NUMBER TEN.

The sergeant tries to talk to the woman but she wants no part of him.

Half the Cap has to move their gear to another day pause hut.

EXT. PATROLLING OUTSIDE PHU DA - DAY

The sergeant, Jack, Farmer, Carlos, Hurley, Doc, and two of the short timers along with seven P.Fs patrol the rice patties.

Jack is carrying the M-79 grenade launcher and Hurley has the radio on his back.

Farmer waves to an old man who is working his patty. The man points towards a jungle tree line.

Suddenly, the communists hit from the treeline the old man pointed.

GRENADES and ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADES tear at the Cap patrol. The men dive against a wall of a drainage ditch and return FIRE.

The two short timers and three P.Fs are wounded.

Helicopters take out the wounded.

Once back in the village, the sergeant PRAISES the survivors of the patrol, AD LIB.

SERGEANT

Cunningham, you and Hurley worked well out there today. You got the booper and Hurley keeps the radio from now on. You can be proud.

Jack smiles.

EXT. MARKET PLACE - DAWN

As the Cap arrives, cat size rats dash away. A few of the P.Fs try to catch them for food. The Americans lay their gear on the empty selling stalls.

Sergeant Jackson CALLS a meeting with the Americans.

SERGEANT

I told you when I first got here we were going to do something about the snipers. Well today's the day. We'll getting a little help from the grunts to do it.

Minutes later, two M-60 tanks RUMBLE up the road along with a company of 150 BATTLE HARDENED, GRUNT INFANTRY MEN.

EXT. TREELINE JUST OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE DAY

With the Cap walking right behind in the tread prints of the tanks, the powerful green machines roll over and EXPLODE BOOBY TRAP AFTER BOOBY TRAP.

JACK

I hope these things don't miss one of them.

HURLEY

Yeah, it definitely would ruin my morning.

JACK

Ain't you ever serious?

HURLEY

If I worried about everything that could happen over here, I'd go crazy.

The unit stops and the men break out their C rations.

A BLACK INFANTRYMAN walks around on his own, steps on a booby trap and blows off a leg. He SCREAMS IN PAIN.

Hoskins sees someone crawl into a hole. He YELLS, AD LIB.

The INFANTRY CAPTAIN YELLS, TUNNEL RAT UP.

A short, slim, SPANISH MARINE enters the tunnel with his 45 caliber pistol in one hand, a bayonet in the other. He quickly exits. He throws in two grenades and reenters.

Again, he exits. This time with three Viet Cong, one of them a woman.

Another tunnel is located which contains labeled boxes of medical supplies donated to the Communists by students of Berkeley University.

Jack and the other Marines are angry. They surround the prisoners.

MARINE

Let's beat the shit out of them.

ANOTHER MARINE

Yeah! Let's give them what they deserve.
Make them pay for Lewis losing his leg.

The other angry Marines ECHO them.

A young MARINE 2nd LIEUTENANT rushes up and pushes aside the Marines and yells.

2nd LIEUTENANT

Leave these people alone. You're all a bunch of animals.

MARINE

We're a bunch of animals! Who's side you on!!

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

The Americans are milling around, upset on what happened.

Watson, clad in his sunglasses, is writing a letter. He drops something and Jack hands it back to him as he walks by.

Jack sits down inside the hut and writes a letter to his parents.

The mamasan of the hut gives him tea in a weather beaten cup. He thanks her by nodding his head, showing his teeth and smiling. She does the same. Her teeth are all rotten and red strained from years of chewing beetle nut.

Jack reads the letter out loud.

JACK (V.O.)

Dear Mom and Dad,
 I don't know how to start this. There's so much I don't understand. Everyday, I get more and more confused.
 Today we went on patrol and found medical supplies that were donated to our enemy from American college students. To tell you the truth, it really hurt.
 We hear about the peace demonstrations back home. We hear some people actually condemn us for the war. People have their reasons ever though they don't have the whole story. Whether they are right or wrong is not the question. It's the means how they go about saying it.
 It's one thing to condemn the war. They have their right. But it's another thing to openly give support to your Country's enemy. It makes one feel, so alone.
 I'm sorry that this letter is not more upbeat. Maybe next time, I'll feel better.
 Love Jack

Jack pulls out of his wallet a family picture. When returning it, he notices the piece of paper that Karen had given to him with her aunt's address on it. He flashes back to the airport when Karen said, YOU'RE NOT ALONE, JACK. He lays the paper next to his writing pad and pen.

Sergeant Jackson CALLS him outside. When the New Yorker returns, he can not find the paper. He gives up looking for it and puts his pen and paper in his pack. He goes outside.

Meanwhile in the corner of the hut, a kitten is playing with the paper. A YOUNG CHILD chases the cat. The paper stays there.

INT. PEASANT HUT - DAY

Hurley leans the Cap's radio against the table leg and joins Jack, Farmer, Carlos, Corpsman Eldon, and Hoskins in eating a meal of rice and strips of water buffalo and dog meat. The women of the family are serving them.

The American sergeant arrives and is quickly ushered to a seat by the father of the house.

Jack stares at the dog meat.

HOSKINS

Don't stare at it. It won't bite ya.

JACK

I can't eat it. I liked their dog. He was friendlier than some of you Marines. I wouldn't eat you guys if they cooked you.

ELDON

There's nothing wrong with it. Dog is actually high in protein.

JACK

They say that about worms.

Suddenly, Nha Be rushes in and ASKS to talk to the sergeant.
Outside the hut.

NHA BE

Beaucou V.C. come to night. Maybe 50. Maybe 60.

SERGEANT

(calmly)

Don't worry Nha Be. The V.C. are only trying to play games with our heads. This is the second time this week we got a report they were coming in. They won't be coming.

NHA BE
(nervous)

No. This true. V.C. come. V.C. come.
Marine no be ready for V.C. Maybe many
Marine die.

SERGEANT

Don't worry Nha Be. We'll be ready like
every night. I promise you.

The sergeant continues his meal.

Moments later, A CALL COMES OVER THE RADIO. The sergeant
takes it outside.

VOICE

Make sure the Cap is in the market place at
2000 hours, ready to pull out for the night
ambush. You'll get more details then.

EXT. MARKET PLACE

The men are spread out among the empty stalls. Some P.Fs
are fooling around. One of the P.Fs YELLS for them to stop.
He knocks one to the ground. They listen.

The COMPANY STAFF SERGEANT arrives by jeep. He jumps out
while it's still rolling and falls. Some of the Marines
find it hard to keep from laughing. Sergeant Jackson helps
him up.

STAFF SERGEANT

I'm taking charge for tonight. I want
everyone to take their orders from me.
There will be no exceptions.

The staff sergeant and the sergeant walk off to a nearby
selling stall.

Hoskins walks over to Jack, Hurley, Carlos and Tucker.

HOSKINS

Nha Be was right. We are supposed to be hit
by about 60 gooks tonight. The captain sent
the staff down to coordinate the defense of
the village.

JACK

Coordinate the defense of the village? He
don't know how to coordinate shit. He's a
Remington Raider. All he knows how to do is
kiss the captain's ass. He's gonna get us killed!

HURLEY

He doesn't have combat experience. He's just
a boot.

HOSKINS

Calm down. The sergeant isn't going to let him do something stupid.

EXT. PATROL AROUND THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

As the Cap patrols, the village is strangely silent.

JACK

I can't believe this silence. Usually there's at least a dog barking.

CARLOS

No one wants to be caught outside their bunkers tonight. They probably took their dogs in with them.

Having been split into two separate patrols, the unit comes together on the edge of the village.

The staff sergeant enters a hut and yells at an old woman.

STAFF SERGEANT

Put out that damn candle and get in your bunker!

Unable to speak English, the woman just looks at him. Sergeant Jackson rushes in.

SERGEANT

(noticeably upset)

You can't talk to these people in a tone like that. This woman is very good to the Marines of this Cap. You have to treat her with respect.

STAFF SERGEANT

(snappy)

Get her in the bunker before she gets us killed with that candle!

Carlos slowly and carefully helps her in with the rest of her family.

Jack and Hurley are standing at the door to the hut.

JACK

(whispers)

The poor woman can't even take a crap.

The staff sergeant turns around and sees Jack and Hurley.

STAFF SERGEANT

Get these people outside, now!

SERGEANT

(to Staff Sergeant)

You better lower your voice before we get a grenade in here.

The staff sergeant gives Jackson a dirty look.

Minutes later, there is SHOUTING coming from the hut.

Sergeant Jackson exits, shaking his head.

SERGEANT

Cunningham, you take your booper over there by the gully. Carlos take your machine gun and go with him.

Jack is dumbfounded.

JACK

I don't think it's good idea to set us both up together. One R.P.G. can knock us both out. That's a third of our fire power.

SERGEANT

I'm on report because I argued that point with him already. Just do it.

Later, overlooking the gully, Jack and Carlos are whispering.

CARLOS

I got a letter from my mother saying my brother wants to join the Marines. He thinks I'm some kind of hero. He even wants to volunteer for Cap.

JACK

He reads from your letters the good you're doing. He wants to be like you.

The staff arrives with Hoskins. He slaps a bug off his arm.

STAFF SERGEANT

Stop your bullshitting and pay attention. There're fifty gooks out there someplace, looking for your asses. (pause) Booperman, as soon as the action starts, I want you to send up some illumination. Then put out H.E. as fast as you can.

When he walks away.

JACK

What a shit head.

In another position, three P.F. militiamen are TALKING and LAUGHING.

Tucker, who is set up with them, walks over.

TUCKER

I told you, three times to shut up.

He grabs one and shakes him. Then returns to where he was sitting, FUCKING ASS HOLES.

Moments later, the P.Fs are again TALKING.

Tucker, using a starlight scope, sees five figures moving in on the P.Fs.

TUCKER
(mumbles)

Oh Shit.

He opens up ON AUTOMATIC. GRENADES tear the darkness.

Jack, with a flash from his grenade launcher, sends up an illumination round. He walks a few yards and reloads.

Suddenly, a communist ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADE sends him flying through the air. He CRASHES against a well wall.

Jack's in a daze. He's bleeding from the head, chest, shoulder, and hand. There's a tremendous ringing in his ears. His flak jacket is torn up.

The battle RAGES. There are EXPLOSIONS, FLASHES, GREEN AND RED TRACERS all around.

Corpsman Eldon exposes himself to fire to treat Jack and Carlos, who was also hurt from the R.P.G.

He YELLS repeatedly for Watson to help, AD LIB.

Tucker, the sergeant, staff sergeant and six P.Fs are wounded.

Finally, Watson arrives at Jack's side. Eldon dashes off to help the CRYING Staff Sergeant.

Still in a daze, Jack looks at the black Marine.

JACK
You couldn't hide tonight. This is one action
you couldn't volunteer someone else to do for you.

Watson quickly wipes blood from Jack's forehead and puts a bandage on it. He looks at the New Yorker's bleeding chest.

WATSON
You talk alot man for a guy whose been here
only a few months. You haven't seen shit.
You think you have, but you haven't seen
shit. Talk to me in a few months.

JACK
I've seen and heard enough to know how you are.
You're a coward. You turn your back on your
buddies.

Watson's face tightens in anger. He cleans Jack's chest then looks at the New Yorker.

WATSON

Think what you want, man. You still don't know shit. Talk to me in a couple of months.

Watson puts a bandage on Jack's chest. He runs over to help Carlos.

MORTARS SLAM onto predetermined positions on the communists.

A helicopter gunship arrives and quickly gets into the battle.

Corpsman Eldon is hit.

The communists sneak off, dragging most of their dead.

Help arrives. The wounded are loaded onto the trucks.
Watson SAYS GOOD-BYE to Carlos and Corpsman Eldon, AD LIB.

HOSKINS

Jack, can you wait until morning before you're treated? We need you out here tonight.

Jack, who has been helping with the wounded, picks up his gear.

JACK

Yeah. I can wait. Except for some shrapnel holes and being shook up, I'm all right.

Jack hits his ear with his palm.

JACK

My ears are still ringing.

HOSKINS

Hold on til the morning.

The trucks start to move.

Hoskins wipes his face in his towel. He helps put the radio on Hurley's back.

HOSKINS

Lets get into a new ambush position before they come back.

EXT. SCENE OF THE BATTLE - DAWN

Four Viet Cong bodies and many blood trails are found. One of them is recognized by a peasant as being his nephew, AD LIB

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

Hoskins calls a briefing. Only him, Farmer, Jack, Hurley and Watson are the only Americans left in Phu Da.

HOSKINS

The captain said we won't be getting any replacements for at least another week. He's gonna try and get some from other Cap units. But most Caps need people themselves. (pause) We don't have to run any civil action programs since we don't have enough people for security of the village. He still wants patrols going out though.

The Marines' village boys arrive and look sad that so many Americans are gone.

After the briefing, the men clean their weapons. Jack and Hurley listen to a song by CREEDANCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL, BAD MOON RISING.

JACK

I'm gonna miss Tucker and Carlos. They were the first Marines we met when we came to Phu Da.

HURLEY

I'm not gonna miss Tucker's hillbilly music.

Jack looks like his mind is a thousand miles away. His village boy is massaging his shoulders.

JACK

It seems like we came here years ago. So many faces are gone.

He looks around.

Hoskins is teaching a few P.Fs how to clean a machine gun.

Farmer is washing off some farming tools.

Watson, clad in his sunglasses, is sitting by himself, writing a letter.

JACK

I wonder why Watson is the way he is.

HURLEY

What do you mean?

JACK

You know, such a loner. Never volunteering for patrols or anything.

Nha Be brings over two canteen cups of C ration hot chocolate, AD LIB.

HURLEY

I asked Doc about that two weeks ago. He said that Watson was close to a couple of guys when he first came. They did everything together. There wasn't a thing they wouldn't volunteer for. Especially patrols. About a month before we got here, they went out on one.

(pause)

They walked right into an ambush just outside the back gate of the village. His two buddies were killed instantly. He was the only Marine who didn't get hit.

Jack's shocked. He glances over at Watson.

JACK

So now, he's afraid to get close to anybody, or volunteer for anything.

HURLEY

Yeah Do you blame him.

Jack punches Hurley in the arm.

JACK

You shoulda told me what Doc said. I always thought, Watson was a coward. I even called him one last night. (pause) Now, I feel like a real ass hole.

HURLEY

I felt the same way, before I found out. I was getting tired of taking his patrols. I even wanted to start a fight with him over it.

Again, Jack glances over to Watson. When the black Marine notices, Jack sheepishly raises a hand.

JACK

Watson, thanks for last night. I know I wasn't too friendly.

Watson doesn't say anything; he just continues writing.

Mail arrives for the first time in 18 days. Hurley gets four packages and Jack gets two.

They tease each other about whose Church is more generous,
AD LIB.

Farmer only gets two letters from his girlfriend.

JACK

(whispers)

Did you notice Tara's writing him less and less. He doesn't even notice. I hope she don't pull some crap while he's over here. Farmer's too good a guy.

HURLEY

I hear it happens alot. I don't know
what I'd do if I got a Dear John letter.

JACK

How could ya concentrate on what you're doing?

EXT. PHU DA - DAY

A week passes of relatively quiet. Jack spends most of his free time down at the river, fishing and swimming with the village boys. He tries to be friendly to Watson but the black does not respond.

The other Marines write letters, take naps, visit peasants, go to the market place and play cards-Spades.

Jack marks off the calendar his fifth month.

EXT. VIETNAMESE DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS/2ND CAG 9TH COMPANY
HEADQUARTERS - DAY

TWO P.Fs are standing guard in a small bunker. Jack, Farmer, and Hoskins walk through the gate. A sign greets them in Vietnamese and English. Another sign notifies that the compound is headquarters to the Duc Duc District, 2nd Cag 9th company and the 513 U.S. ARMY Advisors.

Hoskins sees a AMERICAN SOLDIER, clad in shorts and no shirt, playing basketball alone.

HOSKINS

You want to play alittle one on one?

Hoskins lays down his machine gun and the soldier throws him the ball. The tall and powerful black drives on the soldier. Hoskins dunks the ball as the man tries to cover him.

Meanwhile, Jack and Farmer continue walking. Farmer stops at the entrance to the U.S. Army Advisors command bunker.

FARMER

(to Jack)

I just got to go in here for a minute. I'll catch you later.

Jack enters the simple green building used for 9th Company headquarters. He waves to a MARINE POUNDING out a letter on a typewriter. Jack walks into the back room.

Inside, there are three neatly made bunks, a running air conditioner, and a small refrigerator. Jack looks behind him to see if anyone's coming. He opens the refrigerator and finds it packed with goodies.

He shoves two cookies in his mouth, puts onions in his pockets, opens a beer and lays on a bunk. He looks like he is in heaven.

INT. U.S. ARMY COMMAND BUNKER

ONE SOLDIER after ANOTHER GREET Farmer as he winds his way around. He enters the radioroom and sits down next to a ARMY SERGEANT who is just finishing up on a CALL, AD LIB.

The sergeant puts the hand set down, grabs his cigarette and leans back in his chair.

SERGEANT

So how's it hanging, Homeboy? You here for another favor?

FARMER

I need some fertilizer. Can you get me some?

SERGEANT

Fertilizer? Where the hell am I gonna find fertilizer in Vietnam?

Farmer pats his buddy on the back.

FARMER

The same place you got those other things.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

Jack, Hurley, Hoskins and Farmer are playing football with the Marines' village boys. The boys still can not catch the ball.

Farmer tackles Jack.

Watson is watching nearby. Jack ASKS Watson if he would like to join in. Watson doesn't answer. When Jack ASKS again, Watson walks away. Jack raises his hands to Hurley in, I TRIED.

Having been lead by a village boy, SERGEANT CORONA arrives with FIVE NEW MARINES. He YELLS for everyone to get into formation.

He goes down the line. He pulls off Watson's sunglasses, Hoskins towel, Hurley's Dodger cap and Jack's bush cover.

SERGEANT

(raspy voice)

I don't want to see these things again. If my Marine Corps did not issue it to you as part of your uniform, then you don't wear it.

He kicks the football.

SERGEANT

We're not in Vietnam to play football!! Get your gear on, we're going out on patrol. I want to see what's out there.

Jack whispers to Hurley.

JACK

Who is this guy? He's only said a few words and I hate him already.

Hoskins walks forward.

HOSKINS

I'm Lance Corporal Hoskins. I'm the acting Cap Leader. Serg, ain't it a little too hot for a patrol. The announcer on the radio says it's gonna be over 110 today.

The sergeant gives Hoskins a stern look.

SERGEANT

(shouts)

So we stop the war today because it's too hot! I can imagine how this Cap was run since your past sergeant got hurt.

Corona looks at the others.

SERGEANT

This is my Cap now. I expect you to listen. If you can play some grab ass in this heat, then you can go out on patrol.

SERGEANT

(to Hoskins)

I want you to stay here with these new men. Make sure you do something worthwhile with your time.

The sergeant looks around at the empty C ration cans and papers thrown around the area.

SERGEANT

Make sure you police up this area. It looks like a bunch of pigs live here, not Marines.

Farmer looks at Jack and rolls his eyes.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE - DAY

Sergeant Corona leads the patrol of 5 Americans and 6 P.Fs through a corn field.

Farmer is upset how the men are pushing down stalks.

FARMER

You got to be careful, guys. These people need this stuff to feed their families.

Jack trips and knocks a few stalks down. Farmer almost has a heart attack, AD LIB.

Once on the edge of the corn field, Sergeant Corona uses his field glasses and spots three Viet Cong enter a jungle tree line.

He CALLS for Farmer to look.

SERGEANT

I want to go after them. What do you think?

FARMER

Sergeant Corona, that's about 700 yards of open patty. If they don't pick us off by the time we get there,...they'll be long gone. That treeline is about two miles long.

Sergeant Corona thinks a moment. He waves for Hurley to bring up the radio.

SERGEANT

A fire mission would help.

Hurley gives him the radio from his back and walks over to Jack.

Corona CALLS in for mortars, AD LIB.

Five minutes later, the MORTARS finally SLAM into the face of the treeline.

JACK

I hope he doesn't expect those gooks to still be there.

HURLEY

I hate these lifers. You can't tell them shit.

SERGEANT
 (to Hurley)
 What did you say Marine?

JACK
 He told me it's getting hot.

SERGEANT
 (to Jack)
 I didn't ask you, asshole. I asked him. (gestures)
 The last of the mortars hit the treeline.

SERGEANT
 Lets go.

FARMER
 Serg, we're going after them?

SERGEANT
 That's what we get paid for.

Jack picks himself up and wipes the sweat from his forehead with his arm. He looks at Hurley.

JACK
 It's too hot to do this crap.

EXT. OPEN PATTIES

The patrol makes it's way across hundreds of yards of thin rice patty dikes.

They come to a small area with a few trees.

Five of the six P.Fs refused to go farther.

P.F. MILITIAMAN
 No go. Beaucou V.C. Beaucou V.C.

Sergeant Corona grabs one by the arm. The P.F. pulls away, shaking his head.

P.F.
 V.C. ambush. Beaucou V.C.

Jack sits down next to Watson. To his surprise, Watson offers him a drink from his canteen, which he quickly takes.

JACK
 Tucker was right about these P.Fs. That's all they know how to say. Beaucou V.C. Beaucou V.C.

Watson agrees, AD LIB.

Meanwhile, Farmer looks at the sergeant.

FARMER

We can't stay here arguing with them. Either we go back to the village or we continue.

The patrol moves out with five Marines and the lone P.F. walking first. The other P.Fs walk back to the village.

The patrol reaches the treeline and find a path through the thick jungle but no bodies.

Everyone is tense as Sergeant Corona waves them in.

They come upon a small clearing with three huts. Inside one hut, there are bowls of rice which are still warm.

The sergeant YELLS for the men to separate and look around.

Jack finds underground earthen jugs with rice and corn in them.

JACK

Serg! Over here.

Watson and Farmer find tunnels and bunkers. The P.F. finds documents stashed in a corner of one of the huts.

Sergeant Corona is ecstatic, AD LIB.

Hurley locates another hut with the makings for booby traps.

Now, everyone is excited, AD LIB. They forget where they are.

Suddenly, the communists HIT from what seems like every direction.

The sergeant SCREAMS, RADIOMAN RADIOMAN. Hurley rushes up.

The Marines pull themselves into a defensive circle.

GRENADES and RIFLE FIRE are intense.

The Americans do not see the Communists, AD LIB.

Time passes. The enemy fire slackens. It picks up again when the men try to move.

MORTARS from the An Hoa Marine base almost SLAM into the Patrol's position. The men are almost forced to move as the friendly rounds walk towards them. The last round hitting only thirty yards away. The men's faces are covered in fear.

Helicopter gunships arrive along with a spotter plane that coordinates air strikes.

Two F4 Phantom jets drop napalm almost on top of the Cap.

Hoskins and the five new Marines arrive and quickly take up positions.

The pilot of the spotter plane notices a village within the treeline.

The F4 jets drop their 500 pound bombs on the village. There are secondary EXPLOSIONS.

The communist fire goes silent.

The helicopter gunships and jets circle overhead.

SERGEANT

Lets blow up what we can and get the hell out of here!

The sergeant gathers up the documents and stuffs them in all the pockets of his camouflaged utilities.

Jack and Hurley blow up the food bins, bunkers, huts and the hut with the booby trap material.

EXT. RICE PATTIES

On the way back, the patrol crosses a neck deep stream.

A snake skims the surface. It comes straight for Jack's face. The New Yorker stops. Suddenly, the reptile turns away.

EXT. A KNOLL SURROUNDED BY RICE PATTY

The men collapse with their gear on. The sweat is rolling from their hair into their eyes.

Hurley goes to fill his canteen with rice patty water.

HOSKINS

Don't drink that! Don't you know what's in it. You'll end up with dysentery.

HURLEY

If I don't drink something now, I'm going drop from heat exhaustion.

HOSKINS

I'm ready to drop too, but I wouldn't drink out of a dirty toilet.

A new Marine spots a well a couple hundred yards away on another small knoll.

Hurley, Hoskins and the new man take off their gear and go towards it. They take only their canteens, leaving their weapons.

After a short rest, the sergeant stands up.

SERGEANT

All right. On your feet! We're moving out. I got to get these documents to the captain A.S.A.P. *He also thinks the Viet Cong will attack the village if we stay out here any longer.*

Jack stands up.

JACK

We can't leave. Those guys left their weapons here.

The sergeant motions everyone to follow him.

SERGEANT

You ~~stay~~ ~~stay~~ ~~stay~~ But we're moving out now.

JACK

Yeah I'll stay. We can't leave them out there, alone with no weapons.

SERGEANT

They'll be all right.

FARMER

I'll stay with Cunningham.

SERGEANT

I didn't ask for anymore volunteers. You're going back with me. *If they hit the village, we'll need every man we can get.*

The patrol moves out. Farmer glances back at Jack and gives him a thumbs up. Watson offers Jack another drink.

Minutes later, the three satisfied Marines are laughing as they return along a dike. Hurley raises a canteen in the air for Jack to see. He shouts.

HURLEY

It tastes great.

Suddenly, the communists OPEN UP WITH ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADES and AUTOMATIC FIRE on the three weaponless Marines.

They dive into the water filled rice patty.

Jack uses Hoskins' MACHINE GUN on the enemy's position.

Knowing that if they kill Jack, they can capture the three defenseless Americans, the communists direct their intense FIRE on the New Yorker.

BULLETS ZING by Jack's head. EXPLOSIONS throw dirt on him.

He continues FIRING.

Meanwhile, the three pinned Marines pull themselves forward by grabbing stalks of rice and crawling. They are covered in mud and scared.

Farmer and two new Marines return and take up positions next to Jack.

JACK

Thanks for coming back!

One at a time, the three make it back and take their weapons.

The communists break contact.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

Hoskins, Hurley and the new man that went out with them, THANK Jack for saving their lives, AD LIB.

The baby-faced Marine has a big grin on his face. He jokes.

JACK

I should'a left yas out there.

EXT. MARKET PLACE

Sergeant Corona returns from seeing the captain by way of a mechanical mule. He hands Farmer, who is waiting for him, two boxes of C rations. The sergeant carries off a mail bag.

SERGEANT

The Captain is putting me in for a Bronze Star for what happened today. Those documents are going to be a great help.

FARMER

What about everyone else? Is anyone else getting something out of it?

SERGEANT

The Captain feels, since I lead the action, only I should get a medal. The others were only taking orders.

Farmer shakes his head in disagreement.

FARMER

You might deserve something, but so does some of the other guys. If it wasn't for Lance Corporal Cunningham, three Marines could have been killed or captured.

SERGEANT

He did nothing special. Men are doing much more all over Vietnam everyday, and they get nothing.

FARMER

Sergeant Corona, I think you're wrong.

Corona gives Farmer a dirty look.

SERGEANT

I don't care what you think! Just do what you're told. Lets go.

INT. DAY PAUSE

Jack enters the hut with a stack of mail. He nervously fumbles through it and pulls out one letter that's from his father.

As Jack reads it, we hear it V.O. from his father and see it come to life with various scenes from his almost father-less childhood.

A school play with just Jack's mother in the audience. A First Holy Communion with just his mother. A graduation with just his mother. Jack playing in a street baseball game in front of the house, his indifferent father standing nearby. A young Jack sadly glances over at him then looks away.

FATHER (V.O.)

Dear Jack

Son, I know I should have written much sooner. I can't say why I did not. Out of fear, the fear of admitting to myself, you are there fighting, alone in a war. Or maybe being ashamed. Ashamed that I never accepted the things you felt you had to do.

Whatever it is, I know how it must hurt. Believe me when I say it hurts me more. I have the burden of your hurt, plus that of my own. The pain of not being able to show my true feelings towards you. I am not writing this for the months you are there, but for the years I was not.

For years, you tried to be part of my world, doing everything to please me, just to be noticed and given a little time. And me, being the way I am, I blamed you once you gave up trying, and turned towards other things.

Son, I look back and see the demands I placed on your shoulders, especially the one "Fight your weaknesses, and always show strength to others around you." Who was I to make such a demand. I sit here alone, with tears in my

cont.
 eyes. Finally, admitting to myself one weakness you must have seen in me and never questioned. My inability to say the words that I know would have meant so much to you. "Son, I'm very proud of you, and I love you very much." Please Jack, give me a chance to be part of your world now! The world that I should have been part of years ago.

Jack wipes tears from his eyes. Hurley CALLS him outside, AD LIB.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN PHU DA - DAY

Nha Be INTRODUCES two old men with long beards to the sergeant.

NHA BE
 They say V.C. give beaucoup money to people if kill Marine. Maybe enough money for family buy water buffalo. They say V.C. put beaucoup booby trap outside Phu Da. Plan more attack on Marine.

SERGEANT
 Thank them for their information.

The sergeant turns to Hoskins.

SERGEANT
 They're telling us nothing new.

HOSKINS
 Yeah But they think they're helping.

Hoskins shakes their hands and grins.

EXT. NIGHT AMBUSH - NIGHT

The Cap sets up among the small burial mounds in a cemetery outside the village.

The P.Fs are very jumpy.

Communist MORTARS hit.

The P.Fs panic, and open FIRE with their RIFLES from where they lay.

Their action pins the heads of the Marines to the ground.

Jack thinks a panicking P.F., next to him, is about to shoot him. He SCREAMS FOR HIM TO STOP, AD LIB.

Farmer and Hoskins crawl around pounding the P.Fs' helmets and YELLING for them to STOP firing.

EXT. IN A GULLY INSIDE PHU DA - DAWN

The bodies of the two old men are laying face down in the water.
Jack and Hurley lift them out.

HOSKINS
They were killed for nothing.

FARMER
The V.C., killed them as examples. They want
the people to think we can't protect them anymore.

Jack looks up.

JACK
(angry)
Why did they have to pick these two old guys?
They were harmless.

SERGEANT
They're terrorists. They don't care who they
kill as long as they get their point across.

INT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

The radio is PLAYING, CREEDANCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL, WE
AIN'T NO SENATOR'S SON.

Jack is writing his parents.

JACK (V.O.)
Dear Mom and Dad,
It's been six months already. It seems like
six years. I feel six years older. Different.
Life looks different to me. I tell you, war is
nothing like those World War 2 movies I use to
watch on Saturday afternoons. Too many people
getting hurt.
Two days ago, another two peasants got
murdered for just talking to us. They're
the fifth and sixth peasants killed in two
months. It seems the more innocent you are
in this war, the more it hurts you.
It's too bad, the American people don't see
this. All they ever see is the negative
that we do. The guys over here think there
are more communists working for the American
television and newspaper reporting than over
here. Farmer says they are doing more
damage to lose this war than the battles.
I came here to help these people. I felt
good about our Cap mission. The people
back home don't even know what we're doing.
They don't care. Maybe I don't care anymore.
I know one thing, someday the truth will come out.

cont.

People back home will see our side of this mess.
They'll see some good in what we're trying to
do. And they'll see what it was like to be here.

Love Jack

Sempi Fi

EXT. MARKET PLACE - DAY

Jack, Hurley and Hoskins are standing behind a U.S. Army truck. Farmer walks around the back with the driver, who is his friend from the U.S. Army Advisors.

The Advisor unlatches the back to the truck, exposing twenty 50 pound bags of fertilizer and corn seed.

FARMER

Even seed! How'd you get this stuff?

ARMY ADVISOR

Don't worry about where I got it. But if somebody asks ya anything, just say you didn't see it.

Farmer jokingly covers his eyes. Jack starts to unload it.

INT. NHA BE'S HUT - DAY

Nha Be is serving bowls of rice, fish, and tea to Jack, Hurley, Farmer and Hoskins.

Jack SAYS, NO FISH.

Hurley takes Nha Be's baby brother on his lap and the boy cries. The others tease him, AD LIB.

Nha Be shows his mother much respect. Jack watches him and leans over to Hurley.

JACK

I wish I was back home having Sunday diner with my folks.

HURLEY

I know what you mean man. I know what you mean. When I was a kid, probably Nha Be's age, Sunday diner meant my father would be talking about his days in the old Marine Corps. He'd talk for hours.

Hurley chuckles.

HURLEY

He loved the Corps. He was proud of what he did, especially what he did in World War 2.

JACK

Is he the reason why you joined?

HURLEY

Yeah. I wanted to become a Marine when I first saw Dad's pictures. He'd pull them out and have a different story for each one.

Hurley takes a sip of tea.

HURLEY

Ma would yell for him to put them away, but he'd never listen. It was like he wanted to be with his buddies all over again.

Hurley looks at Jack.

HURLEY

It's funny. No matter how much he said he loved the Corps, he really didn't want me to join. He said it wouldn't be the same. The buddies would be the same, their names would change. (emphasizes)
But the war, he said, is so much different.

Hoskins jokingly yells.

HOSKINS

You guys here to bullshit about the good old days or to eat Nha Be's good food?

The two smile then start to eat.

EXT. PATROLLING THE VILLAGE - DAY

The patrol is just about to leave the village, when two women rush up from their fields.

With Farmer INTERPRETING, the sergeant learns about an ambush just outside the back gate of the village.

Sergeant Corona takes the radio.

Watson is noticeably worried.

JACK

(to Hurley)

This must remind him of the patrol that he lost his buddies on.

HURLEY

Say something to him.

JACK

I don't know what to say to him.

HURLEY

Say anything.

Jack starts to walk towards the black Marine but stops. Hurley walks over and they both go.

Jack offers Watson a drink from a can of Coke that he is carrying in a pocket. Watson declines with a nervous smile.

JACK

We're gonna be here a while. Serg is calling for air. He'll make sure there's nothing left of them before we go out.

HURLEY

We're lucky we got some friendly peasants in the village.

Watson agrees, AD LIB.

After the air strike by two F4 jets, the Cap finds two bodies, 5 wounded Viet Cong including two women, and a dud 500 pound bomb that was dropped by the jets.

Jack and Hurley examine the bomb.

Watson and a NEW CORPSMAN treat the wounded communists.

One of the girls, who is laying on a knife, tries to stab the corpsman. Watson takes it away.

A NEW MARINE standing nearby.

NEW MARINE

Use the knife on her. She'll be back in a few days to finish the job on you if you don't.

The corpsman gives the Marine a blank look. He continues to treat her. The Marine is noticeably upset. Hoskins puts his huge arms around the man's shoulders and walks him away.

Helicopters arrive to take out the wounded. When the V.C. girl is carried nearby the angry Marine, he spits on her, I HOPE YOU DIE BITCH.

The sergeant leaves Jack, Hurley and three P.Fs to blow up the unexploded bomb.

Jack is setting the C4 plastic explosive as Hurley stands next to him.

HURLEY

Make sure you do this right. The last time, we had a big one like this, the explosive fell off. All it did was move the bomb a few feet.

JACK

That's because you set the C4. If I would have done it, it would have been done right.

Jack lights the fuse and everyone runs up to a pair of knolls, nicknamed Twin Tits.

When the C4 does not explode, the two close friends look at each other.

JACK

Not again. Another fuse problem?

HURLEY

The batch must be bad. When we get back to the village, we'll get rid of the load of them. (pause) So, who's going to check on this one?

Jack shakes his head in disgust.

JACK

I hate this. We both go.

Looking at the two Americans as if they are crazy, the three P.Fs stay on the ground. The two Marines start to walk back.

Suddenly, it EXPLODES throwing them to the ground.

Jack lets out a nervous laugh.

JACK

I don't believe, we almost killed ourselves.

HURLEY

We got to give this job to one of the new guys. We're getting too short for this.

JACK

We've had too many close calls. I'm gonna tell the serg he's gonna have to give it to one of them. We got this job thrown at us with only a couple of minutes training. We can do the same thing to a new guy.

They start to walk. Jack's foot steps on a booby trap. He SCREAMS, BOOBY TRAP. Everyone dives for the ground.

The explosion does not come. Jack's full of sweat and fear.

On the way back to the village.

HURLEY

Hey man. What was it like knowing you were gonna die?

Fear is still etched in the New Yorker's face.

JACK

I dug my fingers into the ground and prayed.
Prayed like I never prayed before. I
thought I was going to be blown to pieces.

EXT. AMBUSH SITE - NIGHT

Again, half the P.Fs are missing.

EXT. MARKET PLACE - DAWN

The P.Fs are loaded onto trucks under P.F. guard. Another
P.F. platoon arrives within minutes.

The Marines look on.

SERGEANT

I hope these are better than the others. I'm
getting tired of baby sitting.

HOSKINS

They're not all bad. Some are very good. A
few of them are as good as some of the Marines.
Maybe even better.

SERGEANT

Come on. Look at the first day I came.
Five out of six refused to go out on patrol.
That could have gotten us killed. I made up
my mind then, they had to go. (pause) I
wouldn't be a bit surprised if they're the
cause of some of the Cap other problems.
It's funny how that sniper always knew when
the Cap was leaving the village. Then last
week with the ambush set for us right outside
the village. How'd the V.C. know we were
leaving through the back gate...at that time?
There were too many coincidences.

HOSKINS

You're right. There are alot of coincidences.
But I still think there's some really good P.Fs.

SERGEANT

Yeah. Sure.

The Americans greet the P.Fs as they climb off the trucks,
AD LIB.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

Hoskins stops one of the NEW P.Fs from taking C rations. An
ARGUMENT starts. MORE P.Fs join in. Jack and Hurley rush
over. There's pushing. ONE OF THE P.Fs points a rifle at

Hurley. ANOTHER P.F. knocks it away. The good P.F. SCREAMS at the others in VIETNAMESE and they begin to walk away.

Later, Watson arrives with a red bag of mail. Two NEW MARINES carry in the day's supplies.

Farmer receives two letters from his girlfriend.

There are more packages for Jack and Hurley. They open them like if it is Christmas. A crowd of children form, waiting for their toys and clothes.

JACK

It's funny. But I swear these kids sense when these packages are about to come.

HURLEY

I was thinking the same thing.

Moments later, Jack opens up a letter from a friend containing news clippings.

He holds up a picture as he reads the letter.

JACK

I don't believe this shit. My friend said it happened a few months ago. He's just sending it now.

The clipping is about the Kent State incident.

Hoskins motions to it.

HOSKINS

This shit is bad. Now kids back home are getting killed over this place.

JACK

When is this shit gonna end?

Jack pulls out another clipping showing his town's Vietnam Veteran Memorial desiccated with paint.

He is very angry.

JACK

Look at this! You know that Vietnam Veteran Memorial I told you my town has? Someone threw red paint on the name plates of the guys who died over here. It says here, they did it on two separate nights.

Hurley puts out his cigarette in a full can of C rations.

HURLEY

They got to do it at night like terrorists. I wish I was there.

HOSKINS

I'd kill them if I caught them doing it. There wouldn't be enough left of them to put in a shoe box.

Jack passes around the picture of the desiccated memorial.

EXT. AMBUSH - NIGHT

Five of the NEW P.Fs sneak away. Sergeant Corona storms over to the P.F. SERGEANT to demand an answer, AD LIB.

P.F. SERGEANT

P.F. feel war been in Vietnam many year.
Fight French, Japan. Then French again. Now
V.C. and North. Many Vietnam people die.
American come. Fight one year. Go home.
P.F. and people stay. Many more battle
tomorrow.

SERGEANT

So in the mean time, we fight your damn war
for you today. This is bullshit!

Sergeant Corona turns to Hoskins.

SERGEANT

Give the men the order. If they see a P.F.
leaving, they're to shoot them in the legs.

P.F. SERGEANT

You no can shoot P.F.

SERGEANT

You wanta bet I can!

The Marines CHEER their sergeant on, GET SOME SERG. They
MAKE MOTIVATING YELLS.

Later, the Marines move to another position alone.

EXT. THROUGHOUT PHU DA - DAY

Rumors spread among the peasants that the 5th Marines are
pulling out of the An Hoa Valley.

A family turns their back on the Americans.

JACK

(to Nha Be)

What's going on? Yesterday, they invited us
into their house to eat rice. Now, they take
their kids in when they see us coming.

Watson, Hoskins and Farmer listen.

NHA BE

People afraid. They say Americans leave Phu
Da. Go back to America. No more Marine.
V.C. come. Kill peasant.

HOSKINS

That's news to me. No one ever told me we're leaving.

JACK

Nay, it's bullshit. Tell the people that the V.C. are trying to get them scared. We ain't leaving Phu Da. The V.C. are just trying to get ya scared.

INT. DAY PAUSE HUT - EVENING

Hurley is cleaning up the papers, C ration cans and other garbage that the Marines have left during the day. He wipes down the table with his hand.

Jack gives the left over C rations to the WOMAN of the hut. Her poorly dressed CHILDREN are at her side.

Outside, Watson is listening to the FOUR TOPS on his tape player.

Hoskins, TWO BLACKS and a HISPANIC are playing Spades with a deck of cards, AD LIB. Hoskins high signs his black partner.

Sergeant Corona walks over from the other day pause hut with his gear on.

SERGEANT

We're moving out in five.

Immediately, everyone starts getting ready.

Hurley stumps on each of the empty cans of C rations and throws them in a hole that he has dug outside.

The unit starts forming in clusters.

A GRENADE EXPLODES in the middle of one of the clusters.

P.Fs panic and FIRE THEIR RIFLES aimlessly. Confusion.

Peasants SCREAM as they gather up their families and dash for their bunkers.

The smoke clears. Three new Marines are down along with three P.fs. Watson and the corpsman treat them.

A P.F. drags a twelve year old boy back into the group. He throws him and two unexploded grenades to the ground.

All the Marines are VERY ANGRY.

JACK

How'd a kid throw a grenade without one of these peasants not seeing him.

Watson leans over a wounded Marine.

WATSON
(mumbles)

People back home should see this shit.

With blood on his hands, he continues treating the Marine.

Hurley kicks his foot through the thatch wall of a hut.

HURLEY
Maybe a villager did see him. With these rumors spreading around, the people just don't care anymore. (pause) Hell, I don't care either!

EXT. SITE OF EXPLOSION - DAWN

The Marines search the area and find nothing. None of the peasants saw anything.

SERGEANT
(to Jack, Hoskins, Farmer)
I think the terrorist activity is gonna get worse now that the rumors are spreading.
(pause)
Keep your eyes open. I don't need any more people hurt out of carelessness. And no more clusterfucks, understand!!

EXT. AROUND PHU DA - DAY

Jack is fishing at the river by himself. His rifle is nearby. Up the river bank, Watson sits, daydreaming.

Farmer goes to help out in the fields but the peasants leave when they see him coming.

The new corpsman delivers a baby.

Hurley, Hoskins repair a wooden bridge by themselves as peasants look on from a distance.

HOSKINS
This crap is getting out of hand. Don't they believe us when we say we're not leaving.

Hurley, nervous body language, is smoking a cigarette.

HURLEY
The way it looks, I guess not. Somethin' is got to happen. This is crazy. It's gonna blow. I can feel it.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

The captain arrives with two NEW REPLACEMENTS. He COMPLAINS that Jack needs a haircut, AD LIB.

SERGEANT

He was going today, sir.

CAPTAIN

Make sure I don't see it happen again,
Marine.

JACK

Yes sir. It won't happen again.

The Captain talks to Sergeant Corona.

JACK

(to himself)

Shit! A fucking haircut? Don't they know
there's a war goin on?

Corona CALLS A FORMATION, AD LIB.

The Captain sees P.Fs and peasants standing nearby.

CAPTAIN

(annoyed)

Sergeant, move those people out of here.

SERGEANT

Captain, some of them live there.

CAPTAIN

Well, get them inside. Lets get on with it!

Hoskins and Farmer jump up and politely usher the peasants inside and the P.Fs away.

As the Americans talk, the P.Fs steal their C rations from inside the day pause. One P.F. goes through a Marines' pack and steals an expensive looking cigarette lighter.

CAPTAIN

Everyone knows of President Nixon's pullout from Vietnam. Units have been leaving for over a year now. Well now, it's the 1st Marine Division's turn. Starting in one month, all the combat units of the division will be called in around Da Nang. This will be the first phase before they are eventually pulled out to ships in the harbor. The 5th Marines in An Hoa are part of this pullout.

The faces of the Marines drop.

JACK

Captain, does this mean, we'll be left out here in the valley alone?

CAPTAIN

No. Two days prior to their pullout of An Hoa, both Cap units belonging to 9th company will be brought to company headquarters. The following day, some Marines will be sent to other existing Cap units throughout 2nd Cag. While the short timers will be sent home.

Watson raises his hand.

WATSON

Captain, how short do you have to be?

SERGEANT

Sir, I'll answer that. (to Watson) Watson, you're one of the ones scheduled to go home.

Watson, an 'All Right!'

The captain gives him a dirty look.

EXT. CROWDED MARKET PLACE - DAY

The captain's jeep leaves.

JACK

(to the sergeant)

Who are the ones going home?

SERGEANT

Watson's the only one. Hoskins and Farmer missed the cut off date by two days. You and Hurley are going to the same village. Someplace near Dai Loc and Hill 65. The others will be spread out among the other Caps of 2nd Cag.

Minutes later, Jack gets a haircut in one of the thatch shops lining the market place. The VIETNAMESE BARBAR is using a straight razor to shave him. A FEW CHILDREN watch from the doorway. Jack seems nervous about the razor. It is as if the barber knows it and plays on Jack's anxiety.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

Watson is talking to Farmer.

WATSON

I can't beleive I'm going home, man. I'm leaving two weeks earlier because of the 5th Marines pullout. I never thought I'd say it, but thank God for President Nixson!

FARMER

I can't believe I missed the cut off by two days. Why can't they just let me go? I got to get married. Tara's not going to wait much longer.

INT. DAY PAUSE

Hoskins and the sergeant are going over a map of the area. Corona looks up.

SERGEANT

I don't know what to tell the people. They already cut back on supplying intelligence about communist movements. Now if the V.C. step up their attacks like they said they would, we'll be doing it alone.

HOSKINS

I wouldn't tell the people anything. They known about this pullout for about a week now. It's no sense, waving the fires.

Hoskins looks back down at the map.

HURLEY

Do something good for the people. Something that might help them forget we're leaving. Maybe something for the kids.

The sergeant gets an idea and RADIOS the Captain.

EXT. DAY PAUSE

Jack and Hurley are taking a shower at the well using a bucket that has a leak. They are hurrying so not to lose that much water.

HURLEY

It's great that we'll be together in 2nd company. Serg said that the Caps there don't see much action.

JACK

Yeah I know, but I hope no one gets hurt before we leave here. We still have a month in this hell hole.

HURLEY

Yeah. But I think it will be skate. We can always bag a patrol now and then.

JACK

Corona is a smart lifer. He'll probably follow us around to make sure we go out on them all.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAWN

The Marines pull into the huts. Watson, wearing his

sunglasses, sits down next to Hurley and Jack and starts talking about mail, AD LIB.

JACK
(to Watson)
Who are you always writing to?

WATSON
My mother. I write to her every chance I get.
If I got nothing to write about, I make it up.
She still thinks I'm in the rear someplace safe.
I don't like to worry her. She worries alot.

Watson leaves, preoccupied.

HURLEY
He's been talking to everybody. I guess he feels safe now that he's going home.

JACK
Yeah. He's been talking to me alot about going home. I don't blame him.

Jack looks over at Watson.

JACK
(to Hurley)
Eldon was right about Watson. I did get to like him once I got to know him.

HURLEY
I like him now too. (pause) It's funny how people make judgements about others without knowing nothing about them.

Nha Be arrives. He is the only Marine village boy who shows up.

JACK
Nha Be where's the rest of the boys? Ain't they coming? I need my back massaged bad.

Nha Be starts to massage.

NHA BE
Boys beaucou scared. Marine leave Phu Da.
V.C. come. Maybe see boy help Marine. Maybe V.C. kill boy.

JACK
Are the people still thinking the same thing?

NHA BE
People no trust Marine. Marine promise no leave Phu Da. People become friend of Marine. Now V.C. punish people.

The sergeant leaves the hut.

SERGEANT

Listen up everybody. Listen up.

The Marines get closer. Watson wanders back into the group and takes off the sunglasses.

SERGEANT

There's a report that the V.C. have vowed that no American will leave the village alive. I know these reports have come before, but it's too late in the game to start taking them lightly.

(pause)

Between now and when we leave, the captain wants everyone to be on alert. He wants 100 percent watch at night between 2200 hours and 600 hours. Things might change, but for now try and get your sleep during the day. That's it.

The men complain, AD LIB. Concern from Jack and Hurley.

EXT. PATROL OUTSIDE PHU DA - DAY

The Cap is far from the village. The rice patties are dry and have not been used in years.

The Americans and P.Fs are nervous.

JACK

What's this guy trying to prove, taking us out this far. We're not protecting the village from here. Someone should tell him, the V.C. can attack the village.

Hurley, over abundance of nervous body language, cupes his cigarette after a long drag.

HURLEY

Maybe he's trying to get himself another medal to impress his woman back home.

JACK

The Marine Corp's his girlfriend.

Jack thinks a second.

JACK

What's wrong with a chest full of ribbons?

Suddenly, a P.F. stops and points into the jungle following their line of march. He SHOUTS, V.C. V.C.!!

Everyone looks. Birds fly away.

Suddenly, the Cap is caught in an INTENSE CROSSFIRE.

They are pinned in the dry patty. As the others let out a covering fire, small groups dash to the dikes.

Hurley rushes over to the sergeant with the radio.

Jack puts out one round after another with his grenade launcher.

Two P.Fs and one of the new Marines are wounded.

Watson and the corpsman dash through the enemy fire to treat them.

Another P.F. is wounded.

MORTARS SLAM into one of the enemy's positions.

HOSKINS

(to the sergeant)

They'll pick us off one at a time. We can't stay here.

Sergeant Corona ORDERS EVERYONE TO ADVANCE on one of the Communists' positions while the mortars are taking place.

The P.Fs refuse to go.

Another one is wounded. They decide to get in line with the Americans as they advance, letting out an INTENSE LINE OF FIRE.

When the Cap enters the jungle treeline, the communists break contact.

INT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

The men are excited about making it back. Hoskins, Farmer, Hurley and Jack give each other high signs. Hoskins goes through the fist, arm, and elbow pounding ritual with Jack.

Nha Be arrives with an armful of bottled Vietnamese beer.

Jack throws one to each of his buddies.

Hurley turns on the RADIO, HE AIN'T HEAVY, HE'S MY BROTHER by THE HOLLIES is on. Hurley turns it up louder.

Jack raises his arm in a toast.

JACK
I propose a toast.

To the surprise of the four, Watson enters the hut.

WATSON
Can I join in?

Jack throws him a beer and smiles, IT'S NICE TO SEE YOU.

With his hand back up in the air.

JACK
First of all, a toast to God for getting us out of another close one.

The men raise their bottles then drink.

JACK
A toast to the P.Fs for finally getting off their asses.

Again, they drink.

Jack hesitates and studders.

The others TEASE HIM, AD LIB.

HURLEY
Jack tries to get the most out of his words.

Everyone laughs.

Watson raises his bottle.

WATSON
A toast that our remaining time is quiet and we all get home safe.

Everyone echoes him, then drink.

Standing in the entrance to the hut, are a few of the Marines' village boys.

The Marines greet them warmly.

Hurley jokingly offers a drink of beer to one of them but pulls the bottle away when the kid grabs it. Everyone laughs.

Hoskins grabs the football and tosses it to one of the boys. The boy catches the ball and passes it around to the other village boys, who all catch it. The last one throws the ball to Jack and he fumbles it. Again, everyone laughs.

The Americans and the village boys have chicken fights. There are a great deal of smiling and LAUGHING.

Jack with Watson on his back become the champions. They collapse, next to Hurley, LAUGHING.

WATSON

(to Jack and Hurley)

I haven't had this much fun in a long time.
I like you two guys. I feel I can trust you.

HURLEY

(points to Jack)

You can't trust this guy. He's from New York.

Jack playfully kicks Hurley.

JACK

(to Hurley)

That New York crap is getting old and crusty.
You better get a new line.

WATSON

I'm serious. I feel I can trust you two.
I've been watching yas. You've been trying
to be friendly and I haven't given you a break.
(pause) You kept trying. I like that. I
haven't felt that about all the Marines.

Jack gives Watson a high sign.

JACK

Thanks buddy.

EXT. VILLAGE SCHOOL YARD - DAY

The Americans are building a playground for the village's children. A group of Marine engineers from the An Hoa Marine base are doing the actual construction. Their truck is parked nearby which gives their unit's name.

Sergeant Corona is looking on with another SERGEANT from the engineers.

Jack and Hoskins are again mixing cement.

JACK
I'm getting tired of doing this job. When I get back to the States I'm never gonna mix cement again.

HOSKINS
If anything is a motivator for going back to college, this sure is.

Farmer walks over with a wheel barrel.

FARMER
Bitch Bitch Bitch. You two do more complaining.

Watson and Hurley are digging holes to place bamboo posts.

Later, once they are finished the Marines stand in line and look at the confused faces of the children who have been watching the construction.

Corona TELLS the Americans to teach the kids how to use the equipment.

Hurley and Farmer show two straight faced children the seesaw as other children look on.

A NEW MARINE shows a few kids the slide. ANOTHER MARINE shows the bamboo monkey bars.

Jack and Watson teach another two how to use the swings.

The childrens' confused looks soon turn to smiles and LAUGHTER.

WATSON
(to Jack)
I use to love to go to the park with my older sister, Judy. She always took care of me. Pushing me on the swings. Playing on the seesaw. We would stay for hours. I think she loved it more than me.

JACK
My sisters took care of me too. We use to go to the park a couple of times a week.

Watson acts as if he does not hear Jack.

WATSON
When my father died, Judy and me became even closer. We had to. It was just us and Mom.

The boy on Jack's swing jumps off and rushes over to the seesaw. The playground is like a circus. Children are running and LAUGHING all over.

Jack helps a new kid onto his swing.

Watson, takes off his sunglasses, sadness in his eyes. He looks at Jack.

WATSON

My sister Judy died in a car accident when I was in boot camp. The Marine Corp gave me two days to go to her funeral. After we buried Judy, I had to leave Mom alone.

Jack is saddened.

JACK

I'm sorry.

Watson nods and silently walks over to the slide. He leaves the child on the swing.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - A WEEK LATER

The captain is waiting for the Marines when they drag their exhausted bodies in from another long, quiet patrol.

Jack collapses in his gear and takes a drink from his canteen. He pours the remaining water on his face.

JACK

What bad news does the captain have for us today?

The others collapse in their gear.

FARMER

He's probably here to tell me I'm going home with Watson. If he does I'll invite him to mine and Tara's wedding. I'll even make him best man.

Watson and Hurley sit next to them.

WATSON

If he don't let you come home, I'll take you in my seabag.

Hurley shakes his head.

HURLEY

I agree with Jack. It's probably bad news. Look at the Captain's face. It's bad news.

The captain finishes talking with the sergeant. The sergeant YELLS for the men to get into formation.

CAPTAIN

At ease. I'm here to tell you about some important intelligence that's been coming into Division headquarters the past five days.

(pause)

The communists are going to attack the An Hoa Marine base tonight. The initial estimates are 5,000 N.V.A. and Viet Cong will be involved.

The Marines have concerned looks on their faces.

MARINES

(echo)

5,000.

SERGEANT

How can we help, captain?

CAPTAIN

A large portion of the force will be coming across the river not far from here. The route that they will be taking leads them right through Phu Da.

A NEW MARINE

Captain, are we getting pulled out to fight along side the 5th Marines?

CAPTAIN

That's a negative son. This Cap is to stay put. You're to set up in the most defendable position of the village and wait there for them.

THE SAME MARINE

Sir, how are we to hold them. We won't have a chance.

CAPTAIN

(somber tone)

Marine. No one expects you to hold the village. However, the more the Cap can hold out, the more of a warning to An Hoa that they're coming. That means more people will be ready for them. Which means, many lives can be saved.

JACK

(mumbles)

Shit.

Farmer's looking at the ground. He looks at the captain.

Watson rolls his eyes.

WATSON

(whispers to Jack)

I'm so close to getting out of here. Why now?

FARMER

(his voice is shaken)

Captain, what your saying is, we're here to die
so that An Hoa might have a couple of extra minutes.

The captain does not answer. Instead he gathers up his gear.

CAPTAIN

(to the sergeant)

I got to go. There's much to prepare for. Radio
me once you work out where your ambush site will be.

The Americans walk away in disbelief.

NEW MARINE

(to another NEW MARINE)

I feel like I'm about to play Russian Roulette
with six rounds in the chamber.

FARMER

(sotto)

Tara....Tara

Jack starts to fish but lays the pole down. A YOUNG BOY sits next
to him in silence. The New Yorker TELLS him to leave, AD LIB.
Watson starts to write a letter, but gives up.

One of the NEW MARINES cries silently to himself. Hurley
walks over to comfort him, AD LIB. The 19 year old is holding
a picture of his wife and his infant, who he never has seen.

Later, the Corpsman LEADS A PRAYER SERVICE. Watson takes a
small Bible from his pack. Each of the men READ A SMALL
PASSAGE, AD LIB.

A PEASANT WOMAN looks on with a pair of old Rosary Beads.

The sergeant arrives and waits until Jack finishes his reading,
AD LIB.

SERGEANT

You people are going to have to finish this
by yourselves. We have to go over the plans
for tonight.

EXT. AMBUSH SITE - NIGHT

Jack and Hurley set up together. They finish digging a two man
hole then lay out their grenades and extra ammunition in front
of them.

JACK

You scared?

HURLEY

I'm scared every night. To tell ya the truth
I don't know how I feel tonight.

JACK

It's funny, knowing that you're gonna die. I always wondered as a kid what it felt like for the guys who were to be hanged in those Westerns. The last prayers. The last good-byes to their friends. They always seemed so peaceful with themselves.

HURLEY

Maybe that's how I feel. At ease. There must be a plateau after fear. You know you're gonna die but you can't do nothing to stop it. Nothing matters anymore.

JACK

It's sick. But I wish it would hurry up and get over with. I'm tired of all this shit. Booby traps. Snipers. P.Fs. Not knowing if you're going to see the morning. It's all a bunch of shit. All for nothing. (pause)
Nobody really cares if we live or die.
(soft somber tone)
Nobody really cares if we live or die.

The sergeant crawls over.

SERGEANT

Stop the talking. Do you want a grenade thrown on you before you get any of them.

JACK

Serg, how many P.Fs do we still have with us? Most of them are probably gone by now, right?

Under the light of the full moon, the sergeant watches a cat sized rat walk a few yards in front of them.

SERGEANT

Surprisingly, they're all still with us.

JACK

I don't believe it. The night they really should take off they stay with us.

HURLEY

Yeah But where are they going to run? There'll be gooks over every inch of this valley.

SERGEANT

I don't know why they're staying. I'm just happy they are. Keep your eyes open. Don't leave your position for anything. And keep your mouths shut.

Jack glances over at Watson's position and sees him in the moon light. The black Marine is sitting alone.

As the time passes, the darkness plays tricks on Jack's eyes.
 Suddenly, ROCKETS HIT THE VILLAGE, and the An Hoa Marine base.
 The sergeant crawls from position to position.

SERGEANT
 Hold your position. They must be close.

The ROCKETS stop after about ten.

The men are really on edge as they wait for the pending ground attack.

It does not come.

At dawn, the men fill their fighting holes and collect their gear.

HURLEY
 That was the longest night of my life. I don't think I'll ever forget it as long as I live.

JACK
 I wonder why they never hit us.

HURLEY
 Who cares why they didn't. Just be happy we're here.

The sergeant passes.

JACK
 Serg, did you hear why they never hit last night?

SERGEANT
 The captain has no answer. Neither does the 5th Marines. Get your gear together. We're going to check out where those rockets hit.

EXT. SCENE WHERE TWO ROCKETS HIT - DAWN

Rows of huts are burned to the ground. Their remnants are still smoldering.

Fifteen dead peasant bodies are lined up in a row, some of them are women and children.

JACK
 (to Hurley)
 I'll never understand why they got to kill peasants.

The Americans and P.Fs help with the wounded.

EXT. AROUND PHU DA - DAY

A NUMBER OF THE PEASANTS are friendly to the Americans.

Peasants let their children run up to the American boys.

ONE PEASANT MAN rattles off Vietnamese fast, even Farmer can not interpret it.

Jack CALLS over Nha Be.

JACK
What's he saying? What's he saying?

Nha Be smiles.

NHA BE
He say people happy Marine and P.F. stay last night. No leave Phu Da. He say Marine brave. He want Marine to eat in his house.

Hoskins quickly accepts by grinning, nodding his head, and shaking the old man's hand.

Nha Be TELLS HIM IN VIETNAMESE, AD LIB.

Jack whispers to Hurley.

JACK
Do we have to?

INT. PEASANT'S HUT - DAY

Jack, Hoskins, Hurley, Farmer, Watson and the new corpsman are sitting down with the smiling old man at his old weather beaten table. Jack has Watson and Hurley sitting at his sides. They are wearing their favorite items; Jack's bushcover, Hurley's Dodger cap, Watson's sunglasses, and Hoskins' towel. The old man's wife and beautiful granddaughter are serving them.

Nha Be is standing in the entrance to the hut, ready to interpret if needed.

When a bowl of food is placed before Jack, he eyes it with suspicion.

JACK
I can't see any dog. But what's that yellow meat on the side?

Watson and Hoskins laugh.

FARMER
Curry Monkey.

Jack grins as the old man watches him. He talks through his teeth.

JACK
Oh. No. I can't eat this.

Everyone laughs.

HOSKINS
You better. These people paid alot of money
for it.

FARMER
Do you want someone to feed you, little boy.

The Mamasan, unable to understand the Americans, gives each
of the Americans more meat.

Jack smiles at her and starts to eat.

JACK
This stuff's gonna get me sick.

HOSKINS
Just keep eating and smiling.

Jack gets paler with each mouthful. He does not swallow.
Suddenly, he runs outside to spit it all out.

Once he returns, there's more meat in his bowl. The other
Americans have big smiles.

He gives them a dirty look.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

A SMALL LINE OF PEASANTS form at the door to one of the
huts. The sergeant is upset.

SERGEANT
Get them away from the day pause. We don't
need any grenades thrown in here.

The corpsman ASKS Jack if he would like to help him treat the
peasants. Jack declines, AD LIB.

On a bank over looking the river, a NEW MARINE helps the corpsman
treat the peasants. Jack is fishing with Nha Be and another
village boy as Water buffaloes look on.

Farmer is nearby helping A WOMAN herd cows into a field.

EXT. AMBUSH SITE WITHIN THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

The night is silent. Jack and Hurley are sitting together
at the side of a hut. Hurley is smoking a cigarette.

HURLEY
It feels great not having any intelligence
reports tonight.

JACK

Yeah. Feels like a school holiday. I hope the rest of our nights are quiet. But knowing the captain the way he is, he'll probably fuck things up for us.

HURLEY

I wouldn't worry about him tonight.

JACK

I guess you're right.

Jack looks at the clear sky of stars.

Watson sits down with them.

WATSON

Mind if I join ya's. It's a beautiful night. I use to love nights like this back in Georgia. So peaceful. It seems the war is thousands of miles away.

JACK

How is it in Georgia?

Watson leans back on his flak jacket.

An old woman sneaks out of her hut and hands the three a bowl of popcorn. Then she ambles into her bunker.

WATSON

I've been all over the State. It has something for anybody. Mountains, the shore, big cities, small towns. It's beautiful.

He looks at Jack and Hurley.

WATSON

You guys would like it there. When you get back to the world, I want you to come visit me and my mother. She'd love to meet ya's. Yeah. You have to visit. My mother would treat you like kings. She's like that. She's great to anybody I bring home. (pause) Last week, she wrote and told me how much she misses me and my sister hanging around the house. She use to complain back then.

Watson, a sad chuckle.

WATSON

We always left big messes. But she was always happy to see us. She's really looking forward to me coming home in two weeks. She's even painted my room.

He looks down at the ground.

WATSON

With my father dead, ever since my sister died, Mom's been kind of lonely.

Jack tries to cheer him up.

JACK

She sounds great! I'd love to meet her!

HURLEY

Sure, we'll visit you. I always wanted to visit the south. The only parts I saw were Parris Island and Camp Le Jeune. I know there must be something better than them.

The sergeant arrives. He intentionally kicks the bowl of popcorn.

SERGEANT

Get back to your positions. What do you think this is, some kind of picnic we're on.

WATSON

I'll see you guys in the morning.

Watson returns the bowl to the woman.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

The Cap's day pause is near the school. Some of the Marines are watching the children on the playground equipment.

The RADIO IS BLARING. The announcer dedicates a song to the 1st Marine Divison. WE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS PLACE.

Hoskins is playing football with two of the Marines' boys. The boys have improved.

Farmer is smoking a hand rolled tobacco leaf. He and a NEW MARINE start handing out, to each of the school children, kits containing pencils, notebooks, rulers, erasers and other school supplies.

Jack writes his parents about Watson. We see the black Marine going through some activities, ending with helping the corpsman.

JACK (V.O.)

Dear Mom and Dad,
It's been quiet the last few days. I tell you, we can sure use the rest. Watson is still talking to Hurley and me. It feels good that he chose us to come out of his shell. He never talked to anyone. Now, we can't stop him from talking. Most of the time, he talks about Georgia, his mother and

cont.

going home. He says his mother is flying into California to meet him when he gets off the plane. I wish I was going home in his place. I still got another 2½ months to go. I'm marking the days off the calendar that you sent me. 75 days and a wake up. All I think about is getting off that plane at Kennedy Airport and eating a ham on rye at Tom's Deli. I can taste it now. Well I better go. The sergeant's coming. Tell everyone thanks for the packages. The kids really can use the clothes and toys.

Love Jack

The sergeant waves for everyone to come together.

SERGEANT

Starting today, there'll be two patrols going out. One in the morning and one in the afternoon.

The men bitch, AD LIB.

JACK

Why two patrols now. We're too short in this village.

SERGEANT

Cut the bitching. The captain wants to show force to the communists. He doesn't want them to think, we're running with our tails between our legs. (pause)
The patrols will have five check points. He doesn't care where they are, as long as one of them is on the two knolls south of Phu Da. Twin Tits.

JACK

Those two have booby traps all over them. That's where I stepped on one about a month ago.

SERGEANT

Scared Cunningham?

JACK

No. I just think it's not a good idea. Once the Viet Cong know we're going out there everyday, they'll plant even more booby traps.

SERGEANT

Cunningham, we're here to take orders. Not question them.

WATSON

(mumbles)

This is crazy.

SERGEANT

Watson, you have a problem also.

WATSON

Yeah. I don't think we should be doing this with only six days left.

SERGEANT

Well Watson. The captain and I don't care what you think. These patrols are necessary. We leave in twenty minutes.

Corona walks away.

When the patrol returns, mail is waiting for them. Farmer receives only one letter.

Jack, Hoskins, and Hurley notice it and watch him read the letter.

Farmer sadly gets up and leaves it on the ground near a log.

Jack walks over and picks it up.

JACK

I don't think he'd mind if I read it.

HOSKINS

Do it.

Jack reads the letter and gets angry.

JACK

She did! She dumped him for another college student. She has a real pair. She writes she's so sorry and hopes it doesn't bother him too much.

HURLEY

What a load of crap. How can she do something like this while he's still here. She could have waited.

The sergeant CALLS the men again to formation, AD LIB.

Farmer stands, noticeably saddened.

SERGEANT

Hoskins and Farmer, come over here.

He shakes their hands, punches them each in both upper arms and hands them something.

SERGEANT

These two Marines have just been promoted to corporal.

The others let out a CHEER, AD LIB. They surround them.

Farmer silently stands there.

HOSKINS

What's the matter buddy?

Farmer walks away in silence.

EXT. PATROL IN AND OUT OF PHU DA - DAY

Some peasants smile and wave. Most turn their backs on the patrol as it passes their huts.

Jack is nervous.

The patrol is long and the heat is intense.

They return without an incident.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

When the Americans return, they are exhausted and hot.

A couple of the Marines are in bad moods.

One of the new Marines chases some kids. He YELLS, DIDI MAU DIDI MAU!

SHOUTING breaks out between a BLACK MARINE and P.Fs, AD LIB.

Farmer looks on, doing nothing.

Hoskins breaks it up, AD LIB. He walks to his buddy.

HOSKINS

Listen man. What ever is bothering you..you better start talking to someone about it. You're not here man. I don't know where your mind's at. But it's differently not here.

FARMER

I'm all right. I can work it out by myself. It's something I can work out by myself.

HOSKINS

You've been like this for two days now. Something gonna happen. And I don't want you to get hurt.

FARMER

(snaps)

I told you I'm all right!

He goes to walk away and he walks right into Jack. He does not say anything.

Meanwhile, Hurley borrows Watson's cassette player but the batteries are dead.

HURLEY
(moody)

I must have left the fucking thing on before,
when we went out on patrol. I'll get some more.

WATSON

Don't worry about them. I got another set.

Hurley, his rifle over his shoulder, walks to the market place by himself.

A PEASANT WOMAN tries to jack up the price for the batteries.

A Marine village boy walks by. Hurley pulls him over.

HURLEY

Tell this woman, I paid two P's less, three days ago.

The woman insists on the high price. She gets loud. A crowd forms around them. Hurley, very angry, looks around.

HURLEY
(in Vietnamese)

Old lady, you're an ass hole!

Hurley takes the batteries and lays them on the ground.

He SHOOTs at them with his M-16 rifle on FULL AUTOMATIC.

The crowded market PANICS. Peasants SCREAM and run for cover.

HURLEY

Now you can have your fucking batteries bitch!

INT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

Hurley is standing before the angry Marine sergeant.

Outside, Jack is laughing and can be seen by Hurley but not by Sergeant Corona.

SERGEANT

I don't care what your excuse is. You insulted a woman. You shot your weapon in a crowded market place. And you caused a panic. Not mentioning how many people you got upset with us. (pause)

Sergeant emphasizes.

SERGEANT

Now you got me in trouble with the captain. He thinks there's no discipline out here in this fucking Cap.

HURLEY

These people should understand what we're doing for them. Marines are getting hurt every day. They should give us batteries for free.

SERGEANT

Cut the bullshit! What are you trying to do, piss me off more! These people don't owe you a fucking thing. You better remember that. Nobody owes you a thing!

Hurley smirks when he sees Jack imitating the sergeant.

The sergeant turns around.

Jack quickly walks away.

SERGEANT

The captain doesn't want to hear any of your excuses either. He wants to see you first thing in the morning. He wants to see me with you.

He points at Hurley.

SERGEANT

I tell ya. If I get into trouble over this, you're gonna be in a world of shit. You're gonna wish you were dead.

HURLEY

Don't worry Serg. He'll understand my side. The captain knows what's going on out here.

SERGEANT

Get out of here before I do something that I'm sorry for.

When he leaves, the sergeant slams on the wooden table.

The WOMAN OF THE HUT gives him a dirty look.

SERGEANT

(in Vietnamese)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

The woman nods her head and continues sweeping her hard mud floor with a thatch broom.

Outside, Jack and Watson are waiting for Hurley.

Hurley punches Jack in the arm and lights up a cigarette.

HURLEY

You almost got me into more trouble.

JACK
So what Serg say?

HURLEY
I have to see the captain tomorrow morning for office hours. I'm not worried. He's got to go through the motions. Nothin's gonna happen. It's not as if he's gonna send me to Vietnam.

JACK
I don't know about that. He's been off the wall lately. He might bust you.

HURLEY
You'll see. The captain will see it my way.

Watson hands Hurley four batteries.

WATSON
They're on me.

HURLEY
You paid for the last three sets. It's my turn.

Hurley digs into his camouflaged utilities pants.

WATSON
Don't worry about it. It won't kill me.

EXT. AMBUSH WITHIN THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

Peasants bring out rice cakes and tea to the Marines.

Jack, Watson, and Hurley are sitting near a fenced in water buffalo. The animal is restless because of the Americans being there.

The three, move to another position, watching the animal as they walk.

JACK
It's not long now. Only three days left before we're the hell out of here.

He looks at Watson.

JACK
You must feel like a million dollars. I feel good just getting out of Phu Da.

WATSON
That's all I think about. Going home.

The sergeant is coming. Jack imitates Corona's facial expression.

JACK
He always comes when we're having a good time.

SERGEANT

You people better get some sleep. There's two long patrols tomorrow and Hurley, you have to see the captain at 700 hours.

HURLEY

Yeah, I better get some sleep. I got watch in three hours.

Jack and Hurley walk together back to their position.

JACK

I don't like these patrols.

HURLEY

Don't worry. We're too short for somethin' to happen. In a few days, Phu Da will just be a bad memory.

JACK

Just a bad memory.

They come upon the P.F. at their position who is supposed to be on security. He is asleep.

Hurley POUNDS on the P.F.'s helmet and the Vietnamese, not knowing what hit him, jumps to his feet.

Jack and Hurley LAUGH, they slit five. The P.F. CURSES THEM IN VIETNAMESE. The two teenage Americans continue to LAUGH.

Later while sleeping, Jack is sweating, tossing and turning from a severe nightmare. He is dreaming that someone dies on the morning patrol. He CALLS OUT, NO NO.

Hurley, who's on watch, wakes him up, AD LIB.

Jack stares at his friends face.

HURLEY

Buddy, you alright? You still sleeping?

Jack continues staring.

Hurley shakes his friend's shoulder.

The New Yorker wakes, his face still etched in fear.

HURLEY

That must have been one hell of a dream.

Jack does not answer. He rolls over on his side where his buddy can not see his face. His hands are trembling.

He can not sleep the rest of the night. All he thinks about is that dream.

He mumbles, I CAN'T GO OUT.

EXT. DAY PAUSE - DAY

Hurley and the sergeant leave to meet the jeep that will take them to company headquarters.

Jack is still noticeably nervous.

Watson, clad in his sunglasses, notices him pacing.

WATSON

What's up man? You look like you've about to be dragged off to the electric chair.

Jack lies.

JACK

I'm..I'm all right. Just nervous about Hurley seeing the captain.

WATSON

Yeah I know. But why does it got you so nervous? He's the one who should be nervous. He walked out of here as if he was going to a party. You know how he is. As long as he's got his cigarettes.

JACK

Yeah. But the captain could do anything. I don't trust him.

Jack gets an idea.

JACK

Do you think you can take my place on the morning patrol? I'll go out on the afternoon for you. This way, I can be here when Hurley comes back.

WATSON

Sure. If it's that important to you. Don't worry about him. The worse that he'll get is a bust to P.F.C. And I don't think he'd mind a bit. Like he said yesterday, it's not as if they can send him to Nam.

Jack is relieved as if a 100 pound weight is off his chest.

JACK

Thanks man. You don't know how important this is to me.

Watson smiles.

WATSON
I got you covered.

An hour later, the patrol is ready to go out.

Hoskins goes over to Farmer, who is leading the patrol.

HOSKINS
Hey old buddy, you alright with this patrol?
If you want, I'll take this one out.

Farmer pats his black friend on the back.

FARMER
No I'm O.K. today. I'll talk to you when I get
back. It's about Tara Ann.

HOSKINS
You sure.

Farmer nods.

HOSKINS
O.K. We'll talk when you get back. Just
don't think about her until then.

Farmer gives a thumbs up.

A couple of peasants and Marine boys look on.

Jack sits alone as he watches Watson leave. He feels guilty.

Once they are out of sight, he sits over where the other Cap
radio is and starts to write a letter to his parents.

JACK V.O.
Dear Mom and Dad,
I did something this morning that I'm ashamed
of. I lied to Watson about a reason why I
didn't want to go out on morning patrol. The
reason I gave is not important. The fact is,
I was scared to go out. Last night, I dreamed
that someone was going to die. You might think
I'm crazy but it's true. That dream was so
real I could taste it.

Hoskins walks over and Jack puts the letter away.

The RADIOMAN ANNOUNCES the patrol's reaching the 1st check point, AD LIB.

EXT. PATROL OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE

The patrol of Farmer, Watson, the Corpsman, two NEW MARINES and Five P.Fs follow along on a thin rice patty dike.

Peasants stop tending their patties as they pass. Two wave. Farmer does not return the wave.

Two P.Fs horseplay, pushing each other, as they walk. One falls into the rice patty water. The other almost falls off from LAUGHING so hard.

Farmer YELLS IN ENGLISH then in VIETNAMESE for them to stop, AD LIB.

INT. COMPANY HEADQUARTERS/ CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

The office of the captain has few furnishings, a simple wooden desk, small table with a coffee pot on it, two wooden chairs, a picture of President Nixon on the wall and a small American flag in the corner of the room. A Marine Corps flag stands in another corner.

The captain is sitting in his chair behind the desk, with Hurley and Sergeant Corona standing at attention before him.

CAPTAIN
(yelling)

What do you think this place is, a turkey shoot. You're both lucky that no one was hurt. If we were staying in this valley, we'd probably would have at least 5 new V.C. added to their ranks because of this incident. Some of the people in the village are happy to see this type of stupidity.

The sergeant tries to speak.

CAPTAIN
Shut up Corona. I didn't ask you a question!

INT. DAY PAUSE

Jack listens intently as the patrol's RADIOMAN ANNOUNCES another check point.

JACK
(mumbles)

Three to go.

Hoskins sits up from the wooden bed.

HOSKINS

You don't have to listen to that thing so close. I can hear the radio over here.

Jack tries to make it look like he is more at ease.

Hoskins lays back down on his stomach. His village boy massages his back.

HOSKINS

Hurley's right. You worry to much. Give yourself a break. There's only two days left.

EXT. PATROL

The patrol edges the river. The two P.Fs are still fooling. Watson YELLS for them to stop, AD LIB.

EXT. RETURNING JEEP

Sergeant Corona is sitting in the front seat with the driver. He turns around to Hurley.

SERGEANT

Listen Hurley, we don't have much time left together. After we leave here, we both go to separate villages.

The sergeant puts his hand up and turns back to the radio when the patrol's radioman ANNOUNCES CHECK POINT 3.

HURLEY

That's Twin Tits. They're on the way back to Phu Da.

Sergeant turns back to him.

SERGEANT

Do you catch my drift, Hurley. Do I have to spell it out to you. Keep your ass clean and we'll get along.

Suddenly, the RADIO BLARES.

RADIOMAN

We are taking incoming! We are taking incoming! Two men are down.

The sergeant slams the dashboard, FUCK! He looks at the driver.

SERGEANT

Lets go!!

The driver speeds up and beeps through the morning crowd.

INT. DAY PAUSE

Jack is in a panic. He runs around the hut collecting his gear.

Hoskins, who was asleep, wakes up from the noise. He did not hear the radio transmission, so he asks.

HOSKINS

What's going on? Something happened on the patrol?

Jack runs down the road without telling him.

Moments later, the radioman calls.

Hoskins rushes over to it.

PATROL RADIOMAN

There was no incoming. It was booby traps. Farmer and Watson are down.

Hoskins rubs his face in his hands.

HOSKINS

Oh God!

Hurley and the sergeant arrive and the three run down the road after Jack.

EXT. BACK GATE OF PHU DA

They find Jack trying to get SIX P.Fs to go out after the patrol.

The sergeant pushes Jack aside.

SERGEANT

Hoskins tell these shitbirds if they don't go out there with us, I'm going to start shooting them, one at a time. They have a choice.

He chambers a round, raises his M-16 rifle to one of their heads.

HOSKINS

(in Vietnamese)

He's going to shoot each of you who don't come with us. It's your choice.

The P.Fs nod in agreement.

P.F. MILITIAMAN

O.K. P.F. go. Sergeant no shoot.

Hurley walks to Jack, who is looking out towards Twin Tits.

HURLEY

You were right about the booby traps.
Watson and Farmer are down.

Jack looks faint. He holds his forehead with one hand.

JACK

How they doing? How's Watson? Is he
going to be alright?

HURLEY

Doc's with them but we don't know how they're
doing. The new radioman doesn't know what he's
doing out there. He's in a panic.

EXT. BASE OF ONE OF THE KNOLLS AT TWIN TITS

The sergeant stops everyone. He waves to Jack to come to him.

SERGEANT

Cunningham, you and Hurley stay here and set
these P.Fs up in security. We can't take any
more chances.

JACK

Serg, you got to let me see Watson. Please.
I'll come back down. I promise.

SERGEANT

No. I need you here so that the P.Fs don't
take off. We need all the men we have.

JACK

Come on Serg. Just give me a minute with
him. I promise I'll come right down. Hurley
can handle the P.Fs until I get back.

SERGEANT

I told you no. We need the security now. The
Viet Cong can be setting up a ground attack on
us right now.

The sergeant and Hoskins climb the knoll as they watch out
for booby traps.

Jack stares. He snaps out of it and blesses himself.

JACK

(softly to himself)

Jesus I know I haven't been praying too much
lately. I've had alot on my mind. I hope
you can forgive me. You got to do this one
thing for me. You got to let Watson live.
He's up there on that knoll instead of me. I
should have been there. Please God. If you
have to take someone, please let it be me.

An hour passes. A helicopter finally arrives and takes the two Marines from the knoll.

Not worrying about booby traps, Jack runs up the knoll. He grabs one of the Marines who was on the patrol. The BABY FACED MARINE is deeply shaken up by what he has witnessed.

Jack then dashes to the Corpsman.

JACK

Doc, please tell me how's Watson. Is he going to live?

CORPSMAN

I can't tell you that. He's lost a lot of blood and lost both his legs from the knees down.

Jack sits down.

Hurley arrives.

HURLEY

Doc, how's Farmer doing?

CORPSMAN

He was killed instantly. He didn't feel a thing.

HURLEY

How'd it happen?

Hoskins looks on.

CORPSMAN

As far as I could see, when we got here, Farmer walked across the knoll to get a better look at something he saw in the valley. There was an explosion. We thought we were taking incoming. Watson saw Farmer laying on the ground and he ran to help him. He never reached him. He stepped on a booby trap.

Jack looks up.

JACK
(voice breaking)
Did Watson say anything, Doc?

CORPSMAN
He kept asking about his legs. He couldn't feel anything, so he wanted to know if they were still there. After awhile, he started talking about his mother. He said she's already on vacation in California, waiting for him.

The corpsman wipes his face with his hand. Pulling down slowly on his chin.

CORPSMAN
They planned on going to Disney land together. (pause) Just before he was getting on the medivac helicopter, he said, he loved all the Marines in the Cap.

Jack pushes out air from his mouth. His chin starts to shake. He rubs his eyes hard to keep himself from crying.

Hurley watches his buddy. He places his hand on Jack's shoulder.

EXT. PHU DA

When the Americans reach the village, they are silent. Peasants look on from the entrances to their huts.

A YOUNG BOY runs up to Jack and smiles. With his eyes red, the New Yorker passes by silently.

EXT. DAY PAUSE

The Marines sit alone. Hoskins has his face in his towel. His football sits nearby. He looks up and stares. His lips are moving as he says a silent prayer.

Jack continues writing his parents.

JACK V.O.
I know it's hard for you to believe, but I should have lost my legs on that knoll. Watson was going home and I took it away by lying to him. If you could only hear the stories and dreams he had about going home. I'm sitting here by myself feeling alot of pain, not being able to tell anyone but you.

Hurley sits down next to Jack and startles him. The New Yorker crumbles the letter and throws it in a water filled ditch.

HURLEY
What was that?

JACK
Nothing. Just nothing.

Hurley leans back against the side of a hut.

HURLEY
We definitely have to visit Watson when we get back to the world. We'll stay for a week or two. Even if he's still in the hospital.

Jack does not answer. Tears roll down his face and he quickly wipes them away.

The sergeant walks over and places his hand on Jack's shoulder.

SERGEANT
Watson died on the way to Da Nang.

Jack covers his face in his hands. DEEP SOBS.

JACK
(sotto)
I want to die.

EXT. MAIN ROAD LEADING OUT OF PHU DA - DAY

Clad in all their gear, the Americans walk out through the village. Peasants look on with mixed reactions. The Marines' village boys have tears in their eyes.

Some P.Fs are somber. Some P.Fs are laughing.

Hurley, who is wearing his Doger cap, quickly takes it off when the sergeant sees him.

Nha Be runs up to Hoskins and hugs the Black Marine.

A young girl tries to hand Jack a flower. He does not notice her.

The sergeant walks up and down the line of Americans.

SERGEANT
Walk out of here.. Proud! Walk out of here as United States Marines.

EXT. NEW VILLAGE - DAY

There are SIX MARINES, A LARGE GROUP OF PEASANTS and P.Fs waiting for the two new replacements. Jack and Hurley get off the jeep. Children surround them.

Hurley greets them with a big smile. Jack, just wades through the crowd in silence, passing a Marine who has his hand out.

A NEW MARINE asks Hurley.

NEW MARINE
What's your buddy's problem?

With a big smile, Hurley shakes the man's hand.

HURLEY
Don't mind him. He just hates crowds. You'll like him once you get to know him.

EXT. THE NEW VILLAGE - OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS

The monsoon rains arrive and the Americans are drenched.

A Typhoon floods out the village.

Jack develops severe cramps and dysentery. He is helicoptered to a hospital ship off the coast of Vietnam.

INT. HOSPITAL SHIP - DAY

Jack spends most of his time reading magazines, playing solitaire, and writing home.

A FEW MARINES try and be friendly to him but he does not recipicate.

MARINE
He acts like he's the only one who's been through any shit.

A DOCTOR, who is also a captain in the navy, CALLS him into his office, AD LIB.

The doctor is in his early fifties. He has gray wavy hair and is soft spoken.

DOCTOR
Lance Corporal Cunningham, we've been going over your test results and we can not find the source of your problem.

JACK
What you saying Doc, I don't have a problem?

DOCTOR
No. Your records show you definitely have one. You lost another four pounds this week. That's eleven since you've been on this ship. It's just that with the equipment we got on board, we feel that we can't give you the proper tests. You need someplace where you can get that extra care. (pause) I'm sending you to a Air Force hospital in Guam. Hopefully, there they can help you.

The doctor reaches over his desk to shake Jack's hand.

DOCTOR

Your war is over Marine. After Guam, they'll be sending you home. Home to be with your family and friends. (pause)

I hope for your sake, you can learn to relax and forget this war. Stress can be one of the sources of your problem. (pause)

Do you have any dreams son that you want to fulfill now that you're going home?

Jack has a blank look on his face.

JACK

Two dreams Sir. I want to eat a ham on rye in front of my friend Tom's Italian deli. And I want to wear my uniform when I get off the plane in New York.

Doctor chuckles.

DOCTOR

You've definitely earned both things, Marine. Enjoy that sandwich and be proud of that uniform. You deserve it.

As Jack leaves.

DOCTOR

Marine, before you leave I got one question.

JACK

Yes sir.

DOCTOR

Are you leaving any buddies here?

JACK

(his tone is low)

I've left a few, Sir.

DOCTOR

Try and stay in touch with them. You'll need them over the years. The more you think about Nam, the more you wish you still have your buddies with you. They're your brothers!

EXT. DA NANG AIRFIELD - NIGHT

Jack, in a wheelchair, waits his turn to be MEDIVACED out of the country. We can see how ill he is and how much weight he has lost.

Other ILL and WOUNDED are near him on stretchers and wheelchairs, MOANS and BEGGING, AD LIB for help.

AIR FORCE, NAVY CORPSMEN and ARMY MEDICS stand nearby, anxious, as the SOUNDS OF BATTLE RUMBLE in the distance.

We can HEAR SMALL ARMS FIRE getting closer.

A WOUNDED BABY FACED SOLDIER, JEFF DUNCAN, lies next to Jack. Both arms in full casts. He looks towards Jack.

JEFF DUNCAN
Jeff Duncan. 101ST Screaming Eagles.

Jack doesn't respond. He appears deep in thought, emotional.

JEFF DUNCAN
Are you all right, man?

Jack looks towards him with a blank expression on his face.

JACK
Yeah, I'm all right. It's hard to believe I'm getting out of this hell. It's hard to believe it's all over....I hope....

JEFF
I know what you mean, man. I can't believe it either.

JACK
I thought I'd never make it.

Jack glances to his other side and sees a young boy who's staring blindly. A plate is in his forehead. A corpsman cleans the boy's mouth.

JEFF
Yeah man. I had a few times when I thought that too. Especially, the night when I earned my two wings.

Jeff, saddened, glances down at his arms.

JEFF
I don't mean to depress ya.

Jack goes silent.

Jeff tries to get him to talk, AD LIB.

JACK

I was thinking about some of my buddies still out there. They still got time in this fucking hell.

JEFF

Since I've been in the rear, I've been thinking a lot about my buddies too. I feel like I left them out there. Sometimes I even wish I could go back out there and bring them home with me.

JACK

Yeah, me too...

A CORPSMAN TELLS Jack to KEEP IT DOWN.

There discussion is abruptly broken by MORTAR FIRE. It's close.

The boarding of the plane is postponed. The MEDICS and CORPSMEN, TURMOIL AND NEAR CHAOS as they try feverishly to keep their patients calm.

MORTARS ROUNDS and ROCKETS SLAM into the airstrip. A small group of GUERRILLAS make it onto the base. A helicopter is HIT and EXPLODES. MARINES quickly kill them. FIRE ENGINES and REPAIR CREWS RACE to the scene.

An hour later, everything is quiet.

OFFICER

Get'em on the plane. We gotta go fast!

Medics and corpsmen hurriedly carry the men to the large Air Force plane.

INT. PLANE

Jack and Jeff are strapped in, next to each other.

JEFF

I hope this thing gets off the ground. I want to get home.

Jack looks at him in nervous silence.

INT. AIR FORCE HOSPITAL - DAY

Jack's in Guam. He's sitting in a chair, playing chess with the wheelchair bound Jeff. With Jeff's arms still in full casts, Jack is moving the pieces for the both of them.

Jack notices Jeff is despondent. He tries to get him talking.

JACK

I never asked where ya from?

Jeff doesn't answer.

JACK

Jeff!

JEFF

Chicago. Cicero area.

Jack makes his move, taking Jeff's queen.

JACK

I guess people from Chicago can't play chess.

JEFF

I just don't have it. Last night I had another bad night. I keep getting those nightmares.

JACK

I had one too.

Jeff's foot hits the table leg, knocking over some pieces.

JEFF

I don't know why I fucking joined this Army. Nothing went right. If I didn't join....I wouldn't be living this shit every night.

Jeff begins to break, very emotional. Jack tries to comfort him, but we can see that he's hurting also.

At first, Jack's words are those he knows Jeff needs to hear, AD LIB.

JEFF

Don't bullshit me, man. You don't believe that shit just as much as I don't. This war is a waste. Us going was a waste!

Jack puts the chess pieces back in a box. He turns up the radio so that he can hear a song that he likes.

JACK

When I volunteered for the Marines, I was doing it because I was proud to be American. I was taught to be proud just like you. Just like most of the others who came over here.

JEFF

Look at where it got us, man. Look at where it got our buddies that won't be coming back.

Jeff raises his shoulders and tries to move his arms, but he can't. His eyes are reddened.

JEFF

So many kids from the neighborhood went to college to get out of the draft. Two even went to Canada.

He wipes his eyes.

JEFF

I hate them for it! I thought they were fucking cowards. But it turns out, they're the smart ones. They're the ones that America's proud of. Not us! They're the ones who will walk down the streets proud of what they did!!

A NURSE tells Jeff to lower his voice.

JACK

I know what you're saying, brother. But ya not all right. I did some good things in Nam. Damn good! So did you and a lot of other guys. Things we can be proud of. Things we can wear are uniform proudly. Sometimes, it's hard to believe. To be able to see through all the other crap that happened. And probably only Vets will ever hear about the good things. But that doesn't take them away. Nobody can. They happened. Just like the bad. You just got to remember them.

Jeff's eyes are closed. He rolls his head back and tears roll down his cheek.

JEFF

It's just so hard to remember the good things without bringing up the shit.

Jack closes his eyes and fights back his own tears. Very touching as we see Jack's remembrances of his village, Phu Da. He remembers the kindnesses to the peasants, the Civil Action Programs, their friendships, their smiles, especially those of the children. He remembers pleasant scenes with his buddies. He remembers Watson and the invitations to visit him in Georgia. He remembers hearing about Watson's death. He hears Watson saying, "My mother is so alone. So alone."

INT. PLANE(UNITED) - DAY

Jack YELLS, NO NO. He awakens, startled. He realizes that a STEWARDESS has roused him. She's young, attractive, pleasant. She apologizes, AD LIB. Jack, forces a smile.

STEWARDESS

Fasten your seatbelt. You're almost home, Marine.

Jack, a pleasant nod as he adjusts himself. He looks down at his ribbons on his chest.

He gazes out the window to the New York skyline. Tears swell up.

Then, the Statue Of Liberty. This really touches Jack's soul. An ARMY SOLDIER sitting next to him, who is also returning from Nam, comments about it's beauty, AD LIB.

JACK

(sotto)

Home....I'm really home....

INT. KENNEDY AIR TERMINAL

Passengers leave the plane and weave their way through the NOISY building. REUNIONS, AD LIB.

Jack, clad in his uniform, still weak and gaunt, is almost like a child at Christmas as he gazes at the familiar sights in the building.

We can feel his joy, relief and emotion at being back home, safe. A smile for everyone, as he winds his way toward some pay phones. He's bewildered by the lack of return smiles. He remembers, why. He's still a bit shaky.

TWO WALL STREET CLONES approach him from the front, TALKING BUSINESS, AD LIB. Jack notices them, as they spot him.

JACK

(sotto)

These guys are different. They understand.

He prepares to smile, as he fumbles in his pocket for change.

The two are right at him now, he's almost to the pay phones. Jack smiles, looking at them in the eyes. He gives them a GREETING, AD LIB.

They don't stop walking. One turns to Jack and SPITS in his face.

Jack, no words. We can feel the pain, the disillusionment.

A moment, then....

JACK
(quiet, profound)
Welcome home Marine....Welcome home...

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

A huge demonstration segues into FULL BLOWN VIOLENCE! STOP
the war....Get out of Nam....Baby Killers....Baby Killers...
Police use force against protestors. They continue Baby
Killers....Baby Killers...

FADE OUT