

A BRIGHT SHINING LIE

Screenplay By
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Rewrite by Terry George

Based on the book by Neil Sheehan

SHOOTING DRAFT (Pink) 10/6/97
Revised Green 10/12/97

BLACK AND WHITE VIDEO FOOTAGE: SEVERAL CAMELOT IMAGES OF THE YOUNG HANDSOME PRESIDENT KENNEDY, FOLLOWED BY A COMPILATION OF EARLY SIXTIES B & W NEWS FOOTAGE, BERLIN WALL, NUCLEAR ALERT SHELTERS, JOE MC CARTHY, JOHN F. KENNEDY DEBATING NIXON. MAO TSE SUNG, JAMES DEAN, A MODEL AMERICAN KITCHEN, LVIS PRESLEY, FIDEL CASTRO WITH CHE GUEVARA - ALL PLAYED OUT OVER A VOICE:

KELLY (V.O.)

You are the finest we have to offer,
in the finest military force the
world has ever seen. You have studied
and prepared for a world that our
fathers could not have imagined.

THEN MORE NEWS FOOTAGE - THE U.S. MILITARY ON PARADE - A RECRUITING FILM, TO AN EXTERIOR OF A MILITARY ACADEMY.

KELLY (V.O.)

(continuing)

A world where American values and
American commerce have triumphed. But
it is a world where those very values
are under assault. Along the plains
of Europe, across the jungles of Asia.

1 INT. GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE, BRIEFING ROOM DAY 1 *

on screen: **COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE, FORT
LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS 1962** *

A WIDE SHOT : leather and oak officer's reading room, battle flags and military memorabilia adorn the walls. A group of majors and lt. colonels, all late thirties/early forties, military crisp - a gungho group, sit before a general listen to Kelly, a young white house official - handsome, well dressed, (a clone of his boss JFK) as he reads. *

close on: Kelly.

KELLY

To the very edge of this country. An
assault that threatens, our homes,
our commerce and our God.

PAN ALONG: Officers listening.

KELLY

(continuing)

It falls to you to lead our armed
forces in the battle for truth, and
prosperity and faith. I know you will
win.

(more)

CONTINUED

1 CONTINUED:

1

KELLY. (cont'd)
Signed the Commander in Chief John
Fitzgerald Kennedy, president of the
United States.

CONTINUED

Close On: Kelly looks up from the page as the officers applaud.

A general steps up to the mike, a buzz of anticipation in the room as he reads from a list.

CLOSE ON :

ASSIGNMENT GENERAL

(reads)

To Nato Command, West Berlin. Majors
Barber and Molineau, Lt. colonel
Lauper, Colonel Tally -

REACTION SHOTS: officers, anticipation

These men are delighted. Tally can barely restrain himself, he's pumping the air.

ASSIGNMENT GENERAL

(continuing)

To Quick Reaction Force, Guantanamo,
Cuba. Lt. Colonel Franklin, Lt.
Colonel Walshe, Major Lopez -

All are pleased.

ASSIGNMENT GENERAL

(continuing)

to Military Assistance Command,
Vietnam Major Ellby, Major Conroy,
Lieutenant Colonel Vann.

REACTION SHOTS Conroy looks pissed whereas Vann now sports an ear to ear grin. Kelly shakes hands.

2 INT. OFFICER'S CLUB, FORT LEAVENWORTH. NIGHT

2

WIDE SHOT: Groups of officers at the bar of the club. Vann is gathered with four of the officers we saw previously including TALLY AND CONROY.

Conroy raises his glass for a toast.

TALLY

Gentlemen, to West Berlin, and next
year in Moscow.

CONTINUED

2 CONTINUED:

2

Tally lifts his glass.

WIDE OF:

All toast - "next year in Moscow."

Vann toasts but doesn't join in the chant, instead laughs.

CONTINUED

CLOSE ON

VANN

West Berlin. You guys are full of
shit. You'll never fire a shot.

TALLY

Listen to this guy, top of his field
and he pulls Vi-et-nam. You must have
done something pretty bad, Vann.

VANN

I'm going into combat, boys.

TALLY

(laughs)

Combat, a bunch of Gooks with
shotguns.

VANN

These gooks whipped the French.

Several officers, join Tally in his ridicule.

CONTINUED

TALLY
Oh, they whipped the French.

They all laugh.

CONROY
For that you get the drinks.

CUT TO:

Vann at the bar where he talks to a young attractive waitress.

VANN
We'll have the same again, darling.

Vann watches the waitress bend over to get beer. She turns, smiles again, sets out the drinks.

WAITRESS
Two whiskies, two beers.

VANN
And a coke.

WAITRESS
Oh yeah you got a good boy over there.

VANN
(smiles)
That's me honey. I don't drink, I
don't smoke.

As Vann walks away with the whiskies

TWO SHOT:

WAITRESS
So what else do you not do?

As Vann walks, he hears her, slows, a wicked smile, and a half turn ...

CUT TO:

3 EXT. VANN HOME NIGHT

3

A suburban street. It's 2 a.m. Vann's car pulls up, in a driveway.

CONTINUED

He gets out of the car, bangs the door, walks up the driveway, stops, smells his shirt, wanders over to the neighbours garden, pulls some flowers from the flowerbed, beats them against his shirt.

4 INT. VANN HOME NIGHT

4

Vann walks into the living room.

A light comes on. An angry woman's voice from behind. Vann turns to see a woman (mid-thirties) in a housecoat, she stubs another cigarette out in a full ash tray.

MARY JANE

You might at least have the decency
to creep around.

He turns to her.

VANN

Creep? What the hell for? Here honey.

He hands her the flowers, she tosses them aside. He tries to pull her up, even though she resists.

MARY JANE

Get away from me.

VANN

You don't want to kiss a future three
star general?.

Her attitude changes.

MARY JANE

(excited)

You got it? You got The pentagon?

VANN

Better again, darling, I pulled
Vietnam.

MARY JANE

(dismayed)

Where?

VANN

South East Asia. The commies are
trying to take it over.

MARY JANE

(disappointed)

I should have known.

VANN

What?

CONTINUED

4 CONTINUED:

4

MARY JANE
They're never gonna promote you.

CONTINUED

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

VANN

I'm going to fight a war, honey. You
know what happens in war?

(pause)

The warriors take over.

He has pulled her up.

VANN

(continuing)

Those West Point lick-asses won't be
able to stop me now.

She tries to pull away. He begins to dance, squeeze her close.

MARY JANE

No! Where were you?

VANN

The guys had an assignment
celebration?

MARY JANE

With perfume?

Vann looks shocked at the accusation, smells.

VANN

That's the flowers, darling. Come
here.

He pulls her in, kisses her.

5 EXT. TAN SON NHUT AIRPORT BASE DAY

5

(stock footage) A D.C. 3 comes in to land

ON SCREEN:

March 22, 1962.

Tan Son Nhut airport, Saigon, South Vietnam

CUT TO:

The tarmac of this makeshift Vietnamese air strip. A few
fighter planes, ARVN forces around a ramshackle building -
everything is ad hoc, small scale.

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED:

5

Several American military advisors, led by Vann walk across the air strip from a (just-arrived) plane. An American Admin. soldier with a clip board checks names.

CUT TO:

Vann returns the soldier's salute.

VANN
Lieutenant Colonel Vann.

The soldier looks up in amazement.

CONTINUED -

BUREAUCRAT SOLDIER

Are you sure sir?

VANN

(laughs)

What do you mean, am I sure soldier?
you think I'd forget my god-damn name?

BUREAUCRAT SOLDIER

You were supposed to be on
yesterday's plane.

Vann marches off toward his jeep.

VANN

I missed it.

The tall young guy behind - STEVEN BURNETT - watches Vann
march off, shows his pass to the soldier *

BURNETT

Hey!

Burnett hurries to catch up.

BURNETT

(continuing)

Hey.

He gets alongside Vann.

BURNETT

(continuing)

Yesterday's flight went down with no
survivors.

VANN

Damned glad I missed it.

Vann walks on as though he's just been told the weather
forecast. Burnett is shocked. *

BURNETT

You should be dead.

VANN

Son I should be dead long before
yesterday. *

CUT TO:

CONTINUED

An ARVN soldier/driver beside a jeep. He salutes Vann. Vann throws his hat in the back, walks to the driver's side.

VANN

Move over soldier, I'll drive, you tell me where to go. You want a ride. *

Burnett nods.

VANN

(continuing)

Who the hell are you anyway?

BURNETT

Steven Burnett, from the Times. *

The soldier is about to object, but Vann has pushed him over, to the passenger side.

VANN

You don't say. Hey, get in the back, let the man from the Times up front. *

They take off.

A dirt road. Vann, Burnett and driver pass an idyllic scene of women tending rice in the paddies. Vann pulls to a halt. He gets out, walks to the burm at the edge of the rice paddy. Burnett and ARVN soldier driver follows.

VANN

Look at this place.

ARVN DRIVER

Something wrong sir.

VANN

What are they doing?

ARVN DRIVER

They plant the rice sir. *

CONTINUED

6 CONTINUED:

6

VANN

Where the hell do they get all the water from?

BURNETT

The fields are all built at slightly different levels. There are hundreds of miles of canals and dykes to control the water to every field.

VANN

It's fantastic, who planned it all?

ARVN DRIVER

I do not know sir, it is this way for many many centuries.

7 EXT. SAIGON BOULEVARD DAY.

7

Vann's jeep travels along a busy boulevard.

7A EXT. TUC DO STREET. SAIGON DAY.

7A

On a narrower street Vann's jeep is stuck in a traffic jam of vendors and cyclists. The place bustles with life. Most of the Vietnamese are clad in their traditional dress. There is very little western influence an occasional ARVN soldier. He vaults out.

VANN

(to Burnett)

Let's walk.

CUT TO:

VANN

Look at this place, the color, the life. My God, just look at these women.

The exuberance of Vann's voice is infectious. Burnett looks around, the women are indeed beautiful, and the place is a riot of color and noise. The stop at a flower stand.

CONTINUED

VANN
(continuing)
This is what it's all about.

BURNETT
What?

VANN
This war. Could you imagine this place if the commies get it? They'd destroy it. This is a place worth fighting for.

The young woman vendor smiles politely and bows to Burnett. Vann slaps Burnett on the back.

VANN
(continuing)
See what I mean.

8 EXT. MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND H.Q. SAIGON DAY 8.

A sign beside an American flag reads Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

9 INT. HARKIN'S OFFICE. DAY 9

Vann and some 10 military advisors are seated in Harkins office A door opens, A soldier snaps to attention.

SOLDIER USHER
General Harkins. Sir! Gentlemen, the commanding general.

All in the room snap to attention as General Harkins marches in.

HARKINS
At ease gentlemen. You will each be assigned to a division of the South Vietnamese Army to act as their senior advisor. The South Vietnamese soldier is a magnificent fighter, highly motivated, tough, and intelligent. The body counts they have presented to this office have been nothing short of magnificent. Take a look.

CONTINUED

The aide distributes photos of smiling ARVN officers and men standing over the bloody bodies of V.C.

HARKINS

(continuing)

It's a splendid effort and it's our job to support them. We have what they need, the three M's I call it, Materiel, Money and Men.

(pauses, thinks)

We could call it the four ms' - mountains of materiel, money and men -

(laughs heartily)

One thing to remember, men. This is an advisor mission. I know you are all experienced soldiers but the president has sent us here as AD-VIS-ORS Their President Diem, as decent and God fearing a man - our God by the way

(laughs again)

- as you're likely to meet is emphatic that this is a war between the legitimate Vietnamese government and the communist invaders. We all know Red China and Moscow are behind this and so we have every right to supply and support these people. But it's their fight and they are in charge. Give them your best men, because they are giving us their very best.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. RURAL ROAD DAY

10

Vann races along the dirt road in his jeep, his driver clings on for his life.

11 EXT. 7TH DIVISION ADVISORY DETACHMENT, MY THO DAY

11

Vann pulls up beside a military compound. The place also has a makeshift look to it, a small village of sandbagged huts, storage sheds, occasionally a vietnamese laundry woman washes clothes outside a makeshift shack.

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED:

11

Vann's P.O.V. - some ARVN soldiers are gathered for a group photo. They are clustered around their leader Colonel CAO, - They stand behind a pile of bloody V.C. bodies in torn black pajama tops. The photographer snaps photos,

Vann watches while two American officers, who have been watching, spot Vann and rush toward him.

Cao waves his swagger stick and the photo shoot ends.

As the group break up several of the corpses begin to move, they stand up leaving only three bodies. They laugh and joke with the ARVN soldiers, they are clearly comrades. Cao marches off.

Vann is dumb struck. The American advisors captains DRUMMOND and DRAY see Vann's insignia sir.

DRUMMOND

Sir.

VANN

What the hell's going on here?

DRUMMOND

It's aahh

Colonel Cao approaches.

CAO

Welcome, welcome Colonel Vann.
Yesterday we kill many many V.C. but
somebody drag away the bodies. Still
I must send photos to my president.
It is good for morale, No? Come I
will show you my command.

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

Cao gestures to a line of a gathering of farmers and peasants recruited by lined at a storage shed. Two American advisors stand with clipboards beside ARVN soldiers who bend down to boxes to distribute and demonstrate M1 carbine rifles to the men at the head of a line of peasants. Behind the advisors a wall of similar new wooden crates - identical to the opened ones - (just one of Harkin's mountains of materiel).

CAO

(continuing)

As you can see we are arming the people to fight alongside us against the Vietcong.

CAO

(continuing)

Tomorrow we will fight a battle you and I. We will share a victory.

Vann looks back at two apologetic looking advisors.

12 EXT. 7TH DIVISION ADVISORY DETACHMENT, MY THO DAY

12

It's morning. A sense of preparation for combat all around Cao's bunker. M113 Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) fire up, the sound of helicopters, the place swept with wind

Vann, Dray, Drummond enter the bunker.

A sandbagged bunker, on the walls a series of maps on boards, some radio equipment. ARVN soldiers talk into radios and chatter loudly in Vietnamese with Colonel Cao who leans over a tray shaped table - 6' x 4' . The three inch tray is filled with sand. At the side of the tray, tiny toy tanks, helicopters, little model houses, little flags - VC and ARVN.

Colonel Cao leans over his sand table. He has constructed a small village of model huts. and marked rivers and streams on the sand. He salutes the Americans.

CAO

Good morning gentlemen,

A peasant stands in the corner. Drummond gestures to him.

DRUMMOND

This man says a Vietcong instructor
has infiltrated Bin Vin hamlet and is
teaching recruits.

*
*

Cao shows markings on his sand table.

*

CAO

This is Bin Vin, we will attack here
and engage the enemy.

*

VANN

Excellent commander, but shouldn't we
send a team around behind the village
to cut cut off any retreat.

CAO

All in good time, colonel. Shall we
commence battle.

Vann and the other Americans begin to move out. Cao calls out to Vann.

CAO

(continuing)

Colonel, I thought we fight a battle
together.

VANN

Yeah.

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED:

13

CAO

(laughs)

No, no, we must command, from here.
This is where I fight many battles.

CONTINUED

VANN

That's not the way I do it colonel.

CAO

Please join me, by my side.

Vann can barely control his disappointment

14 EXT. VIETNAMESE HAMLET, BIN VIN, DAY

14

Two APCs advance, soldiers are scattered around them.
Drummond behind the APC talking on the phone.

Between the palm and stick huts, black pyjamas clad figures
move about.

DRUMMOND

We have movement ahead.

An ARVN soldier goes down hit in the leg.

The .50 caliber machine gun opens up.

15 INT. CAO BUNKER DAY

15

Vann leans over the sand table, exasperated.

VANN

Shouldn't we cut off their retreat
sir.

CAO

Patience colonel we must not hurry.

Cao raises his hand to stop any argument as Dray's voice
breaks in from the speaker.

DRAY

(from speaker)

We have contact here, one man down

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED:

15

Cao is suddenly very worried.

CAO
(now worried)
I said no casualties commander. Halt
the advance I send helicopter now.

Cao turns and talks in Vietnamese to his assistant as Vann
rushes toward the door.

VANN
I'll take care of that, Colonel.

Cao turns, calls out angrily.

CAO
Colonel Vann ...

But Vann is gone.

16 EXT. 7TH DIVISION ADVISORY DETACHMENT, MY THO DAY

16

Vann hurries to the helicopter pad where a chopper is heating
up. Vann jumps on board.

17 INT. HELICOPTER DAY.

17

The pilot is studying a map. Vann shouts in his ear.

VANN
Change of plans son, I want you to
swing south of the hamlet, and
circle in.

Vann pulls on headphones, as he gestures to the pilot.

VANN
(continuing)
Let's go
(into speaker)
Hey, Frank what's the status on
wounded ...

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED:

The helicopter takes off.

18

18 EXT. DELTA SKYLINE DAY

A helicopter rises fast and banks high over the green paddy fields and vegetation far below.

19

19 INT. HELICOPTER DAY.

Van shouts into the pilot's ear.

VANN

Go lower.

The pilot pushes the rudder control down.

19A

19A EXT. DELTA SKYLINE DAY.

The helicopter swoops low.

19B

19B INT. HELICOPTER DAY.

Vann sees five figures running along a canal between rice fields.

VANN

There they are. Let's go, low and fast.

He braces himself against the open door, takes aim with the rifle and fires.

VANN'S P.O.V. Bullets zip around the fleeing figures, one falls.

19C INT. PADDY FIELD DAY

19C

One of the V.C., - the RECRUITER - a wiry man in his fifties, grey hair, ho-chi-minh beard, turns, stands on the edge of the canal and begins firing at the helicopter.

19D INT. HELICOPTER DAY.

19D

The metal bullet clip on Vann's rifle springs out of the chamber, he loads another, as he yells to the pilot.

VANN
GET DOWN BESIDE HIM!

The helicopter drops toward the Recruiter who now stands defiant on the earth mound, firing into the open doorway of the helicopter.

19E EXT. PADDY FIELD DAY

19E

V.C. RECRUITER'S P.O.V.

The helicopter is about twenty feet away hovering about three feet off the ground. Vann is in the doorway, firing his rifle.

19F INT. HELICOPTER DAY.

19F

VANN'S P.O.V. The Recruiter is twenty feet away emptying the magazine of an M1 carbine toward Vann, as Vann fires back at him.

Vann hits the recruiter, twice in the chest, he falls dead. Three fleeing V.C. recruits put their hands up.

20 OMITTED

20

21 EXT. 7TH DIVISION ADVISORY DETACHMENT, MY THO DAY

21

The helicopter has landed. Vann strides across the landing strip.

VANN'S P.O.V. An angry Cao, followed by Dray waits for him. *

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED:

21

CAO

This is no good colonel, I am in charge, you hear, I am in charge.

Vann has his hand out, takes Cao's hand.

VANN

Congratulations commander, a great victory, your plan worked.

CAO'S P.O.V : three V.C. prisoners are led off the helicopter, then two bodies hauled out onto the ground, followed by the wounded ARVN soldier.

VANN

(continuing)

You've killed the communist recruiter, commander.

Cao is excited.

CAO

I will radio headquarters about this great victory.

Cao marches off.

VANN

I've something to show you.

Vann leads Dray toward the helicopter, lifts two captured M1 carbines.

VANN

(continuing)

These are our goddammed guns. Cao gives them to the peasant militia and they are give them straight to the V.C.

He rolls over the recruiter's body.

VANN'S P.O.V.

It is a fifty year old Vietnamese man, grey hair, straggly grey beard. Vann pulls up his black pajamas top. There are two fresh bullet wounds, but Vann points to other scars.

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

VANN

(continuing)

Look at these old bullet scars, these
are years old.

CLOSE ON Dray.

DRAY

Holy shit, this old guy has had more
holes in him than swiss cheese.

CLOSE ON: Vann

Vann rummages through the dead man's clothes, finds a small
canvas wrapped book, like a diary. Vann studies it.

VANN

This man was a warrior, he's been
fighting all his life. The japs, the
French and now us. We better get our
shit together.

22 INT. HARKIN'S BRIEFING ROOM. SAIGON. DAY

22

A press conference, the press in seats including Burnett, who
smiles at Vann. Cao is there in full dress uniform, along
with Vann, and Drummond, as Harkins strides in.

HARKINS

In recognition of his outstanding
victory at Bin Vin, President Diem
has awarded Colonel Cao the
Vietnamese Cross. We are honored to
have his sister-in-law Madame Nhu who
will make the presentation.

MADAME NHU - later thirties, the Dragon Lady of Vietnam,
beautiful but macabre - high lacquered hair, long scalpel
finger nails, steps forward.

MADAME NHU

I am so proud of Colonel Cao. I hope
he will kill many many more of these
Communist traitors and together we
will kill them all.

Burnett joins Vann at the back of the room.

CONTINUED

22 CONTINUED:

22

VANN
One tough lady.

Mild applause from the Vietnamese. Cao steps up to take the medal.

23 OMITTED

23

BURNETT
I hear their men aren't so tough?

Burnett looks Vann square in the eyes.

VANN
Bullshit.

BURNETT
I've heard these guys don't want to fight.

VANN
(laughs)
These men are kicking the vietcong's ass, take it from me.

Behind them Madame Nhu and Cao show the medal for the photogs.

24 EXT. SAIGON STREET. DAY.

24

Vann drives along Tuc Do street in his jeep. He passes a crowd of young girls at a gateway. The sign above the gateway reads English school.

Vann's P.O.V. - the girls are gathered around one strikingly beautiful Vietnamese girl. This is LEE.

Close on: this girl as she smiles.

The sound of the jeep's brakes.

The girl continues to talk to the other girls in Vietnamese.

VANN (O.S.)
Excuse me ladies, do any of you speak English?

reveal Vann smiling.

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED:

24

LEE

We all speak English.

VANN

You're pupils at this school?

LEE

They are pupils. I am their teacher.

VANN

You're their teacher! Well I sure
hope this is my lucky day. I need to
hire a good translator.

Lee studies Vann.

VANN

(continuing)

I'd be honored if you'd help me.

25 INT. SAIGON RIVERSIDE RESTAURANT. DAY

25

A restaurant overlooking the Mekong, a mix of Vietnamese and
colonial clientele. The maitre 'd shows Vann and Lee to a
table. Lee sits opposite Vann at a table. She looks around
nervously.

LEE

Who is it you want me to translate?

The waiter arrives.

VANN

Here he is.

Lee looks at the waiter, for a moment she is annoyed, then
she laughs, is about to get up.

VANN

(continuing)

Please order the best food your
country has to offer.

LEE

Mr. Vann.

VANN

John.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED:

25

LEE

John, I am not for sale.

VANN

Please don't think that of me, I really do have something to translate, but first I'd like to know a little about you.

LEE

You are an American officer, you can get anyone to translate for you.

VANN

I don't want anyone. I want somebody I can trust so that I can understand something that's important to me.

Vann takes the old V.C. trainer's canvas wrapped notebook out and places it on the table.

LEE

What is it?

VANN

It's a diary.

Lee goes to pick it up. Vann reaches over holds gently holds her hand on the book.

VANN

(continuing)

First, we must talk. Please, order some food.

Lee orders quickly in fast vietnamese. the waiter smiles.

CUT TO:

Wide shot: The meal is spread out before them. Vann talks, gestures with his hands. Lee laughs a lot.

25A EXT. SAIGON RIVERSIDE RESTAURANT. DAY

25A

Waiters pass by in the garden as Lee laughs at Vann's jokes in the restaurant.

26 INT. SAIGON RIVERSIDE RESTAURANT. DAY

26

Lee looks at Vann. She is clearly charmed by Vann.

LEE

Soon I must go. Can I see the book?

Vann hands her the canvas book. She opens it, reads a little, senses it's source.

LEE

(continuing)

Who does it belong to?

VANN

A man I had to kill.

CONTINUED

26 CONTINUED:

26

Lee look. up at him, then looks at the book.

VANN
(continuing)
Read the last entries.

Lee opens at the back, reads, then hesitates.

VANN
(continuing)
Please read.

LEE
(reads)
"The Americans are here. They have brought tanks and helicopters. The young men are afriad, but I have told them not fear because the Americans are ... muap" -

Lee stops reading, looks up to explain

LEE
(continuing)
It's a word that means ... soft, no not soft but ah ... decadent. Do you understand?

He nods. She reads on.

LEE
(continuing)
They can never win because they use only those of our people who are also muap. The people are with us because they hate the muap.

Vann leans in to her.

VANN
Is this true?

Lee studies Vann, doesn't answer

VANN
(continuing)
You can tell me the truth.

CONTINUED

26 CONTINUED: (2)

26

LEE

You did not bring me here just to
translate, did you?

CONTINUED

26 CONTINUED: (3)

26

VANN
No.

He takes her hand again.

VANN
(continuing)
Please stay.

She studies him, nods yes, he leans over, kisses her.

27 INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

27

Vann is on the bed, Lee takes her my lai dress off. Her naked body is stunningly beautiful.

28 EXT. 7TH DIVISION ADVISORY DETACHMENT, MY THO DAY

28

Cao wears his medals, proudly displaying them to his men. Vann approaches with Drummond. Vann has his Brownie camera in hand, slaps him on the back

VANN
Here he is, the Tiger of the Delta.
I must have a photo.

Vann hands his camera to Drummond.

He lines up beside Cao, arm around his shoulder, smiles
click: The first of a series of black and white photos.

Vann, Cao, and his soldiers gathered together.

Vann, Drummond, Dray.

Sound bytes over the photos

opening bytes of the Cuba crisis leading up to the embargo
speech which bleeds into the next scene.

29 EXT. 7TH DIVISION MY THO DAY

29

* Cao stands by the airstrip watching the troops board. Vann *
and the other Americans approach.

CONTINUED

29 CONTINUED:

29

VANN
* Colonel Cao, what is the mission? *

CAO
* A very important assault on Bin Vin. . *

VANN
* But we cleared Bin Vin. *

CAO
* No no, We must cleanse the village
thoroughly, Please commander. *

Vann goes to walk away, shaking his head muttering. Cao follows.

CAO
(continuing)
* Colonel, you have to understand I
must follow the orders of my
president. If I do not then my family
will be in danger. He has told me no
casualties. *

VANN
But you are at war with the Vietcong.

CAO
You want us to fight the Vietcong,
and so we fight them. My president
needs your money and your guns
because he has many enemies. Things
are not as simple as in America.

Cao walks away. Drummond shrugs his shoulders.

VANN
* Jesus H. Christ, we're eyeball to
eyeball with the communists all over
the world and these guys are firing
in the air. *

30 OMITTED
AND
31

30
AND
31

32 INT. HOTEL ROOM, SAIGON, NIGHT

32

The naked Vann lies on Lee's naked body as she looks at the V.C. diary.

VANN

Read it again.

LEE

General Giap's instruction for us to steal back the rice on behalf of the peasants has paid great dividends ...

CONTINUED

32 CONTINUED:

32

VANN
* This General Giap is one clever
man. *

Lee looks up from the book.

LEE
Tell me about your wife?

VANN
We're separated.

LEE
What does that mean?

VANN
She lives on one side of the ocean,
and I live on the other.

LEE
But is your heart with her?

Vann stares at her.

VANN
Open your legs.

She looks at him, gives nothing away with her eyes. Beneath the thin sheet that runs from their hips down to their feet we see Lee's legs spread out.

Close on Vann's face, then Lee's as he slides inside her in an almost effortless motion.

He doesn't move, he looks at her, his eyes have a soft, ecstatic glaze.

VANN
(continuing)
You feel that?

LEE
(soft)
yes.

VANN
I belong to you

33 INT. HOTEL ROOM, SAIGON, NIGHT

33

Vann has dressed, Lee lounges on the bed. He kisses her.

LEE

You have two lives John. Soon you
will choose.

VANN

I live where I fight, anywhere else
I'm not alive.

The radio crackles in the background, a voice in Vietnamese.
Lee listens, suddenly interested.

VANN

(continuing)

What does it say.

LEE

The Russians are taking their
missiles out of Cuba.

Vann punches his hand in celebration.

VANN

I knew it.

LEE

These are dangerous times, John.

Vann is buzzed by the news, a soldier who smells war. He
slaps on his belt and holstered pistol

VANN

But they're exciting times, Lee.
Exciting times.

He kisses her and leaves.

PAN TO:

34 OMITTED

34

35 INT. CAO'S COMMAND POST. DAY

35

On screen: Jan 2, 1963

Vann enters Cao's bunker. Cao smiles

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED:

35

CAO

We have great news. We have located
the Vietcong radio transmitter.

They stand over the sand table, a battle plan is being drawn
up on the sand.

CAO

(continuing)

It's here at Ap Bac.

CAO

(continuing)

We will have a splendid battle.

Vann looks at the sand table. There are some model huts a
bunch of twigs for tree line. and a little channel to show an
irrigation canal. and two arrows in the sand straight along
toward the village.

Vann draws pincer movements in the sand - rudimentary battle
plan stuff. Cao looks at Vann, likes the idea but always
caution.

VANN

* How about this? *

CAO

All in good time. Colonel

36 EXT. 7TH DIVISION ADVISORY DETACHMENT, MY THO DAY

36

Vann emerges with the other Americans.

CONTINUED

36 CONTINUED:

36

* DRUMMOND
* Cao's waiting. *

* VANN
* To hell with him, I'm gonna go up in
* the scout plane check this one out. *
* Frank, take the lead tank, Ron take
* the first infantry chopper. *

36A EXT. MY THO DAY

36A

A spotter plane takes off.

A line of APCs rev up.

Three helicopters take off, one after the other

37 EXT. AP BAC. DAY

37

A series of rice paddies up to a dense tree line.

A small spotter plane flies over.

38 EXT. TREE LINE. DAY

38

Beneath the thick foliage of the tree line. a long line of
vietcong guerrillas. They are completely hidden. There is an
urgency about the V.C., they check old weapons, several group
around two WW II soviet machine guns.

V.C. commander's P.O.V. - a small spotter plane flies by low
and fast.

39 INT. TROOP HELICOPTER DAY

39

Inside the troop helicopter, the doors are closed, (an
enclosed capsule) Dray listens on headphones to Vann's voice.

VANN (O.S.)
There's a thick tree line here, tell
the pilot to stay away from that.

39A EXT. SPOTTER PLANE DAY

39A

Vann looks down on two helicopters hovering towards rice
paddies.

40 INT. M-113 TANK. DAY

40

Another enclosed capsule - this time the interior of a M-113 tank. Drummond is inside with a eight ARVN infantry. Drummond also has headphones.

VANN (O.S.)

Frank you get those machines up on the left, and be ready to move fast.

41 OMITTED

41

42 INT. TROOP HELICOPTER DAY

42

As this helicopter hovers in to land, inside Dray listens to Vann's voice.

VANN (O.S.)

Goddamn it Ron he's too close.

43 EXT. TREE LINE. DAY

43

The V.C. commander watches with binoculars. He points toward something. All the V.C. turn as one and point their weapons in the direction their commander indicates. He shouts the word for fire in vietnamese.

44 INT. TROOP HELICOPTER DAY

44

Inside Dray's helicopter an almighty fusillade peppers the walls, holes, shafts of light, pieces of shrapnel fly about the capsule. The infantry panic, as the helicopter lurches.

DRAY

May Day, May Day. We're going down.

45 EXT. AP BAC. DAY

45

A helicopter goes down, smoking.

46 INT. M-113 TANK. DAY

46

Inside the tank. Drummond is listening carefully, as the sound of heavy gunfire filters in from outside.

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED:

46

VANN (O.S.)

Get those tanks up to the rice paddy
and get Dray out of there.

Drummond shouts to the driver.

DRUMMOND

Let's go.

As he shouts he pushes the gunner up through the hatch.

DRUMMOND

(continuing)

Start shooting.

The Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) lurches forward. The machine gun above opens up. There's a god almighty rattle, the sound of hundreds of bullets pinging off the armor, and suddenly the gunner flops back into the inside of the tank, his head throat pierced by a bullet. As he hangs upside down blood sprays the interior of the APC like a sprinkler.

Panic breaks out among the ARVN inside.

Drummond grabs another infantry man but he refuses to go up the hole.

VANN (O.S.)

Move that goddam tank Frank, we've
two helicopters down and men dying in
that field.

Drummond clambers up to the driver.

DRUMMOND

Move up to the treeline now.

The driver yells back in Vietnamese, pretending he doesn't understand English. All the while the bullets ping off the armor.

46A EXT. AP BAC. DAY

46A

Dray is behind his downed helicopter, trying to pull men out,
bullets strike the ground around him.

46B INT. M-113 TANK. DAY

46B

VANN (O.S.)
Jesus Christ Frank ...

DRUMMOND
Now the driver doesn't understand
english.

CONTINUED

46B CONTINUED:

46B

VANN (O.S.)

Take out your pistol and shoot him in
the head.

The driver turns in fear, having heard the order through his
headset.

VANN (O.S.)

(continuing)

Shoot him in the goddam head and
throw him out.

The driver suddenly starts to drive, tank lurches forward.

47 EXT. 7TH DIVISION ADVISORY DETACHMENT AIR STRIP. DAY. 47

The spotter plane lands. Vann jumps out, races across the
field.

48 EXT. 7TH DIVISION ADVISORY DETACHMENT, MY THO DAY 48

Vann runs across the post, past lines of ARVN, rushes into
Cao's bunker.

49 INT. CAO BUNKER DAY 49

Vann bursts in. Cao looks lost, bumbling.

VANN

What the hell's going on here.

CAO

(frightened,
perplexed)

We have lost helicopters?

Cao is still studying his sand map.

VANN

Yes we've lost helicopters now get
those infantry up into that field
before we loose more.

CAO

We must withdraw.

CONTINUED

49 CONTINUED:

VANN

We've men down out there. Hold the
goddamn line.

Vann tips the sand table over and marches outside.

50 EXT. 7TH DIVISION ADVISORY DETACHMENT, MY THO DAY

50

It is late afternoon (the battle is over) casualties and
fearful men unload from helicopters. The area is littered
with the debris of a wounded army - bloody bandages, torn
uniforms, plasma bags, Frank Drummond's m-113 arrives back,
the doors open. The ARVN begin unloading body bags from a
chopper.

DRUMMOND

What the hell happened?

VANN

Charlie kicked our ass. They knew
these guys wouldn't fight, so they
stood their ground.

Some South Vietnamese soldiers, haul a bodybag toward them.

Vann and Drummond bend over it, unzip the bag and stare at
Dray's bloody body.

VANN

(continuing)

What a waste, a awful stupid waste.

*protruding
goddamn
stupid
waste*

51 INT. AMCV H.Q. SAIGON, A BRIEFING ROOM. DAY

51

Vann is there with Drummond, he pins a sketch of Ap Bac
beside a large map of the Delta region on the easel, spreads
notes out in front of him, marks in red the areas that the
Vietcong control.

The door opens, Harkins and an aide walk in, he smokes a
cigarette from a white holder, he's in "suntans" - short-
sleeved shirt, tan trousers

HARKINS

Gentlemen, you wanted to see me.

CONTINUED

51 CONTINUED:

51

VANN

Well sir given the disaster we suffered at Ap Bac I thought I'd better outline ...

But Harkins is not listening, he's looking at the map that Vann has pinned on the easel.

HARKINS

What the hell is this!

Harkins strides over toward the easel, sees the red and black markers Vann has just used to illustrate V.C. (in red) and South Vietnamese controlled areas (in black). Harkins snatches a black marker and begins furiously coloring over the red.

HARKINS

(continuing)

Have you gone mad, man? We control these areas.

VANN

I beg to differ sir.

HARKINS

Who have you talked to about this?

Vann just watches.

VANN

No-one, but ...

HARKINS

You get this straight. Ap Bac was a victory, we took the objective, we drove off the enemy.

Harkins snatches the papers.

VANN

We lost 88 men ...

HARKINS

How dare you lecture me. Vann, if you dare spread this defeatist nonsense outside this room, I'll have you court-martialled, and this time the charges will stick.

(more)

CONTINUED

51 CONTINUED: (2)

51

HARKINS (cont'd)
(to his aide)
Take that map!

CONTINUED

51 CONTINUED: (3)

51

He storms out, followed by his aide who closes the doors.

Drummond looks at Vann.

DRUMMOND

What the hell was that about.

52 INT. BAR SAIGON ST. DAY

52

A small bar on Tuc Do Street. Burnett waits, Vann enters.

BURNETT

Congratulations.

VANN

For what.

BURNETT

Another noble victory.

Burnett hands Vann a press clipping of Harkins story. Vann reads.

VANN

"An important victory, one hundred
and one V.C. dead."

Vann laughs in disbelief.

BURNETT

You're not here to tell me more
bullshit about the ARVN.

VANN

I'm here to tell you the truth this
time. I'm not going to lie for these
fools any longer. Get your pen out.

BURNETT

Listen I can keep your name out but
they'll probably know it was you.

VANN

Start writing.

Burnett gets his pen out.

DISSOLVE TO:

CONTINUED

52 CONTINUED:

52

Burnett writing fast, as he does the sound of bells and chants, then a buddhist protest passes by. Burnett gets up, Vann follows.

52A EXT. STREET, SAIGON. DAY.

52A

Vann and Burnett walk briskly down the street, alongside the protest.

CONTINUED

52A CONTINUED:

52A

BURNETT

Madame Nhu and her gang are
 repressing the Buddhists.

VANN

Why?

BURNETT

They're afraid of them, now the monks
 have called their people onto the
 streets.

They reach a square. The protest halts.

As they hustle to the front of the crowd, the buddhist monks
 split apart, an elderly wise looking monk sits down into the
 lotus position. Two young monks rush out and douse him with
 liquid from basins. They rush away.

The elderly monk ignites a zippo lighter in his hand.

CUT TO:

The horrified look on the faces of Vann, and Burnett, and the
 other Americans as...

CUT TO:

* The buddhist monk ignites in a great ball of flame. Burnett*
 * whips out his camera and begins snapping. He's a newshound *
 * onto a huge story. *

Pandemonium in the crowd. Saigon police try to intervene and
 are fought by the other monks as the fire rages. Some in the
 crowd, shout at Burnett who snaps away oblivious.

Vann drags Burnett away as thing start to get nasty.

Clear of the crowd, weeping women pass, and young men scream
 at the two foreigners in Vietnamese.

* Burnett's excitement is a mix of jornalism high and horror. *

BURNETT

Can you believe that, can you?

Vann meanwhile is shocked.

VANN

We don't have a fucking clue.

53 INT. AMCV H.Q. SAIGON, HARKINS OFFICE, NIGHT

53

Harkins is at his desk, reading the press clipping.

CONTINUED

53 CONTINUED:

53

HARKINS

Good God! Good holy God!

His aide comes over.

CLOSE ON: New York Times headline. " Vietnam - A strategic
Mess, says U.S. officer."

HARKINS

(continuing)

"miserable damned performance." It's
Vann, I can hear him say it.. I want
him busted out. Get him out now.

AIDE

General, he has a month to go. Let's
not stir the press any more. Let him
finish out then we can deal with him.

54 OMITTED

54

55 INT. HOTEL ROOM, DAY

55

Vann sits with Lee at a breakfast table. His bags are packed
by the gate. He puts down his napkin, leans over and kisses
Lee. Lee reaches into her bag, pulls out the dairy, sets it
before Vann.

VANN

Keep it for me. I'll be back.

LEE

Is that what you've told all your
girls?

VANN

I belong here.

* Vann kisses Lee. *

55A EXT. TAN SON NHUT AIRPORT, DAY

55A

Vann walks through the doors of the airport onto the tarmac.
He's dressed in his tans, wears a cap, carries his kitbag.

CONTINUED

55A CONTINUED:

55A

A horn sounds, its a taxi. Burnett and two other reporters climb out. Burnett is laughing.

BURNETT

Boy can you cause a shitstorm. We're getting calls from Washington, The Pentagon.

VANN

It's only just begun boys, when I get back there. I'm going to put them straight.

Vann shakes hands with the reporters then with Burnett.

BURNETT

Here.

Burnett presents him with a engraved lighter.

BURNETT

(continuing)

Give them hell John.

*

*

Vann smiles walks off.

56 EXT. VANN HOME, ANYWHERE CALIFORNIA, U.S.A., DAY

56

CLOSE ON: Vann's hand on a car radio dial turning the tuner, the radio crackles through early rock 'n roll, 1963 ads, news reports of civil rights marches, to the weather for downtown Sacramento(?).

CUT TO:

Vann driving down the street

His home has a Welcome Home sign, he pulls into the driveway. Mary Jane emerges with her children. Vann get's out they gather around him, Mary Jane, come over, kisses him.

MARY JANE

You look great.

VANN

It's good to be home.

MARY JANE

It's good to have you home.

Vann kisses her then looks around at their garden is unkempt, overgrown in comparison to the manicured lawns of the neighbors, turns back to Mary Jane, he's excited.

VANN

Boy have I got work to do.

She smiles.

VANN

(continuing)

I'm going to give them the clearest, most kick-ass report in the history of the U.S. army.

He strides into the house.

57 INT. VANN'S OFFICE, U.S. ARMY BASE. DAY.

57

Vann works feverishly among piles of reports, folders books and maps. A young woman army cadet brings in more piles, as Vann studies a chart, then looks at a slide.

VANN

Thank you, corporal.

The woman smiles.

FEMALE CADET

Do you want me to work late tonight?

CUT TO:

Vann slaps a book closed, he's finished.

58 INT. LECTURE HALL, U.S. ARMY BASE.

58

Vann on a stage. He has an audience of some ten junior officers, he holds the button of the projector in his hand. He clicks. A map of South East Asia appears.

VANN

South East Asia. Rubber, oil, timber, man-power. The Communists want it.

He hits China.

VANN

(continuing)

And we want to stop them

He holds up his clenched hand.

VANN

(continuing)

And here, in this hand I have the secret weapon to beat the communists in South Asia.

He holds something tiny between his index finger and thumb.

VANN

(continuing)

Rice. To the Vietnamese peasant it is everything. For a thousand years invaders have been stealing their rice.

CONTINUED

58 CONTINUED:

58

Vann holds the his finger and thumb in front of the projector, a tiny rice grain is magnified in silhouette over the v.c. cadre.

click a map.

VANN

(continuing)

A thousand years of peasant rebellion.

59 INT. LECTURE HALL, U.S. ARMY BASE. DAY

59

The audience has changed to more senior officers.

VANN

They fought the Chinese, they fought the Japanese, they fought the French, for their rice fields. The communists have hijacked that rebellion. These men Ho Chi Minh - Uncle Ho, the peasants call him - and his general Giap have told the peasants they will give them back their rice fields. While our man, president Diem, goes on stealing their rice.

Click a picture of French colonial forces., click again, picture of Japanese army. Click: click a picture of Ho Chi Minh. a photo of General Giap.

59A INT. OFFICERS LECTURE ROOM, U.S. ARMY BASE.

59A

A plush room with leather chairs, three Major-Generals listen along with several civilian CIA and pentagon types.

Click: photo of dead V.C. click: photos of an artillery barrage. photos of air strikes, villages burnt, rice paddies destroyed.

VANN

To win the war in Vietnam we must
steal back the rice revolution. We
must win over the peasants. We must
take control in Saigon, throw out
the rice stealers and give them back
their rice. Wage war for them, not
against them, build their houses,
don't bomb them. Kill the enemy with
this

(a knife)

instead of this

(a bomber)

Harness the peasant revolution to
defeat the communist revolution

CONTINUED

59A CONTINUED:

59A

Lights up. The majors general applaud, One comes up to Vann,
slaps him on the back.

MAJOR GENERAL
Outstanding Colonel Vann.

*
The tall stringy guy in civilian clothes comes up -This is
Daniel ELLSBERG.

ELLBERG
Brilliant, brilliant briefing
colonel. I've been waiting a long
time to hear this.

MAJOR GENERAL
I'm happy to inform you that the
Joint Chiefs have agreed to your
request to present the briefing.

Vann shakes the major general's hand.

VANN
Thank you sir, thank you very much.

It is the morning of the Chief of Staff briefing. Vann is in the bathroom shaving. (In the background, the radio sports program plays the voice of a young boxer. "He knocks them all out in the round he's called. And that's why he's called the greatest of them all.")

Mary Jane calls from the other room.

MARY JANE

Honey, I ironed your dress shirt.

(Radio: "Cassius Clay, Cassius Clay are you saying you're going to defeat Archie Moore." Didn't you hear me before. Archie Moore will fall in four.")

Vann laughs.

We see Mary Jane appear in the mirror as Vann shaves, suddenly she stops, stares at Vann's back.

Mary Jane's P.O.V: Vann's lower back, just above his trouser line has three big love-bites and along the shoulders are several nail marks.

Mary Jane drops the shirt, picks up a bottle from the bath, hurls it at him, he ducks, it smashes the mirror.

MARY JANE

(continuing)

you liar, you lousy goddamned cheat.
you'll never change.

He rushes after her.

MARY JANE

(continuing)

Get away, we're finished.

VANN

Wait, wait.

MARY JANE

I'm not putting up this front for you anymore. You have no career, you're screwed your way out of a career years ago. Do you hear me you son of a bitch.

Vann stares at her hard and cold, she realizes she has overstepped her mark.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED:

60

VANN

What did you say?

Mary Jane doesn't answer. Vann is suddenly shaking with anger at Mary Jane's last words.

VANN

(continuing)

What did you call me?

MARY JANE

I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

VANN

Tomorrow is the most important day of my life! Nothing can mess that up. Once I've briefed the joint chiefs, things will be better. I promise.

61 EXT. THE PENTAGON BUILDING, DAY

61

An exterior shot of the Pentagon.

On screen: **Pentagon, July 8, 1963**

62 INT. JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF OFFICE, THE PENTAGON. DAY

62

The outer offices of the seat of all military power. A crisp efficient place. Vann in perfect dress uniform passes through a glass door, through the door we Vann smile at the receptionist, see the Joint Chiefs of Staff protocol officer approach shake Vann's hand, smile, then talk.

Vann's face shows disbelief.

The protocol officer appears apologetic.

Vann faces now reads shock.

The protocol officer appears definite, he has his hand out again, a farewell handshake.

Vann's face is now controlled anger.

The protocol officer opens the door.

63 EXT. VANN HOME DAY.

63

The moving truck is outside. Mary Jane is helping the movers load up. She is frantic to get out before Vann returns.

CONTINUED

63 CONTINUED:

63

MARY JANE
Come on kids, hurry up.

Vann's car appears further down the street. Mary Jane spots it.

MARY JANE
(continuing)
Oh my God, don't listen to anything
he has to say kids. Come on, come on,
get in the truck.

Vann pulls up in his car. The kids stare.

JESSE VANN
Geez, look at Dad.

Vann is in civilian clothes. (this is the first time we've seen him dressed like this). Even Mary Jane stops.

VANN
What's going on?

Mary Jane looks at his civilian clothes.

MARY JANE
What happened?

VANN
I'm out.

MARY JANE
What happened at the briefing?

VANN
They wouldn't even let me in the
door, cancelled it before I got
there. I resigned.

MARY JANE
You resigned!

VANN
What's going on?

MARY JANE
We're leaving John.

CONTINUED

63 CONTINUED: (2)

63

VANN

Please Mary Jane, we can work this
out.

CONTINUED

63 CONTINUED: (3)

63

MARY JANE

You've said that before.

VANN

I'm out Mary, I quit. I'll change.
What more can I do to prove it to you.

64 EXT. MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE, ANYWHERE CA. DAY

64

Vann and his wife enter a doorway that reads FAMILY
COUNSELLING SERVICES.

65 INT. MARRIAGE COUNSELLING BUREAU. DAY

65

Mary Jane sits in an armchair. The marriage counsellor sits
opposite. She talks, she's animated, almost frantic.

MARY JANE

I'm just so sick of his playing
around. He promises me he'll change
but he lies. I've tried to ignore it
because of his career, for the good
of us and our children but now he has
no career. He has to promise he will
change. I want a life for me and my
kids.

MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR

Very good Mrs. Vann, I think its time
I had a word with him.

Mary Jane nods, she gets up, as she is about to head for the
door she adds:

MARY JANE

He's very charming, you won't be
charmed by him.

MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR

Now Mrs. Vann, I'm a professional.
I'm not here to take sides.

66 INT. MARRIAGE COUNSELLING BUREAU. WAITING ROOM. DAY

66

Vann is there, the door to the counsellor's office opens.
Mary Jane emerges.

MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR

Come in Mr. Vann.

Vann smiles as he passes her. She stops him.

MARY JANE

Be honest John.

He touches her arm, then strides in, his usual confident
military stride. He smiles at the marriage counsellor.

Mary Jane sits down. She smokes a cigarette nervously. The
secretary types.

CUT TO:

67 INT. MARRIAGE COUNSELLING BUREAU. WAITING ROOM. DAY

67

The clock ticks on the wall. Laughter is coming from the
counsellor's room. Mary Jane fidgets more and more, as more
laughter filters from the room. Then the door opens, and the
counsellor who appears to be in very good humor, sticks his
head out.

MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR

Come in, Mrs. Vann.

68 INT. MARRIAGE COUNSELLING BUREAU. DAY

68

Mary Jane walks in, Vann has his leg folded, appears relaxed.
There's an air of camaraderie about the room that Mary Jane
dislikes, she looks at the counsellor nervously.

MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR

Well Mrs. Vann, your husband is quite
forthright ...

Mary Jane looks at Vann, bewildered.

MARY JANE

(pleased)

Oh good.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED:

66

MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR

... about his lapses. Can I just explain, often when military men are put in stressful situations they find themselves in a very difficult position, adrenaline is pumping, they see sexual release as an outlet, almost unconscious, and at the same time they seem to attract females, so ...

Mary Jane's face changes.

MARY JANE

You bought it ... the whole line. Momentary lapses, risking his career is like life on the edge, chance encounters in stressful situations. You think I haven't heard all this?

Mary Jane turns to John.

MARY JANE

(continuing)

I thought we came here to be honest with each other.

VANN

I am being honest.

MARY JANE

Did you tell him about the maid in Japan?

The marriage counsellor is slightly embarrassed for he has indeed bought it.

MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR

We don't have to go into every specific case, Mrs. Vann.

Mary Jane looks at Vann.

MARY JANE

Not every specific case? Okay how about the baby-sitter.

(pause)

Go on.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED: (2)

66

Vann sits silent.

MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR

Please Mrs. Vann, this is not ...

CONTINUED

68 CONTINUED: (3)

68

MARY JANE

There's a very specific case. He
slept with the baby-sitter. She was
fifteen. She told the army and they
were going to court-martial him until
I lied to get him off.

She turns to Vann

The marriage counsellor is silent

MARY JANE

(continuing)

Please John, no more lies, tell him
about your mother.

Vann is suddenly very angry.

VANN

That's enough.

MARY JANE

Please John, that's where it all
comes from. Tell him about Myrtle,
let's talk it out.

The counsellor looks toward Vann.

MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR

Perhaps you'd like to ...

CONTINUED

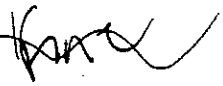
VANN
(to marriage
counsellor)

Shut up.

He storms past Mary Jane, takes her by the arm.

VANN
(continuing)

Come on.

~~69 OMITTED~~ 

69

69A EXT. CALIFORNIA ST. DAY

69A

Out on the pavement Vann confronts Mary Jane.

VANN
I can't do this. Tell me what it will
take to make you stay.

MARY JANE
I want a life for me and my kids. I'm
sick of being warehoused in any army
base you can find while ...

VANN
You got it. Don't bring up Mrytle's
name again do you understand?

Mary Jane knows he's serious. She nods.

70 INT. VANN HOME DAY

70

Vann sits at the breakfast table. He's dressed in suit and tie. The house is chaos. His youngest son, Jesse, is running continuous hyper-active circles whooping like an Indian, around the dining table where his father sits reading the paper.

The radio has news on.

RADIO VOICE
In South Vietnam, a military coup has
resulted in the death of President
Diem and his brother

CONTINUED

70 CONTINUED:

70

Vann suddenly attentive, tries hard to listen.

CONTINUED

VANN

HEY!

MARY JANE

Calm down honey, he's just enjoying himself.

By now the radio has moved on, by now the radio program has moved on. the song "Where have all the Flowers Gone" filters out. Mary Jane notices.

MARY JANE

(continuing)

Oh my God I love that song.

She turns the radio up, the song fills the room.

Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing

Vann sits among this dysfunctional bliss,

71 INT. VANN OFFICE. MARTIN MARIETTA. DAY

71

A boring cubicle in this military hardware factory. Vann fills in figures, works diligently on a bunch of ledgers. It's boring stuff. As he works, a woman worker hurries up to a man, who is checking freight numbers with another woman. The first woman has a startled, fearful look on her face. She tells the man and woman some news, both gasp in shock. The other woman begins to cry.

72 INT. VANN HOME DAY

Vann, his wife, all their children are gathered round the t.v. Mary Jane and her daughter are crying. Vann is sits upright, serious. They are watching President Kennedy's funeral on the television.

73 OMITTED

73

74 INT. VANN OFFICE. MARTIN MARIETTA. DAY

74

Vann reads a newspaper on his desk. The headline screams "Tonkin Outrage. Johnson sends combat troops to Vietnam." Vann reads it intensely.

His door opens, he doesn't look up

MARTIN MARIETTA EMPLOYEE

John your supposed to be at the productivity and procedures meeting. figures ..

VANN

Sorry, sorry ...

75 OMITTED

75

OK
Dan's
mic
re maines

A picnic in a park, several other families at barbecues, cooking, kids play, women talk and sunbath. Vann cooks, the radio plays the Colonel Boogie theme from "The Bridge Over the River Kwai". As he cooks Vann whistles along.

Then he hears something, he looks around, no one else notices, he looks up in the sky, nothing, then slowly to the whistles of Colonel Boogie, the slow deep pounding of Huey helicopters begins to intrude on the music.

The sound grows and grows until a Huey appears low over the trees, Some of the kids stop and watch, others continue, uncaring. Vann watches the Hueys drift off toward the horizon.

Vann is in his cubicle. He's on the phone.

VANN
(on phone)
General Weyand please. Lieutenant
Colonel John Vann.
(more)

CONTINUED

77 CONTINUED:

77

VANN. (cont'd)

(waits)

Hello sir. No, no I have retired but I knew I wouldn't get through ...'m doing fine, well no I'm not, Fred, I'm dying here, I need to be in on the action. Anything Fred, anything at all.

78 EXT. VANN'S HOME, GARDEN. DAY.

78

Mary Jane is in the garden, on her knees pulling weeds. Vann's car comes racing along the street, pulls into the driveway. He gets out of the car, bounds up the driveway, (he doesn't see her

MARY JANE

John.

He looks round, startled for a moment, then composed, he walks toward her. She gets up.

MARY JANE

(continuing)

What's up?

She sees the light in his eyes.

MARY JANE

(continuing)

My God, they let you back in.

Vann shakes his head no.

VANN

No, but they offered me a job with the civilian advisor program in Vietnam.

She looks at him.

MARY JANE

Vietnam! So that's it. We're dumped, again.

CONTINUED

78 CONTINUED:

78

VANN

I know how to win that war. It's my
big chance, I can't let it pass me by.

MARY JANE

Well I have to say you tried.

Her voice cracks, he reaches out to her, holds her.

He goes to say something, Mary Jane puts her finger to his
mouth.

MARY JANE

(continuing)

Please, no lies.

Vann's youngest boy comes riding up on his bike.

JESSE VANN

Hi dad.

MARY JANE

I though maybe you could have been
the father that you never had.

(a beat)

Just make sure I can be a decent
mother to them. Promise me that.

He nods yes. She kisses him.

79 EXT. TAN SON NHUT AIRPORT BASE DAY

79

ON SCREEN: March 20, 1965

Tan Son Nhut now transformed into the main staging post for
the arriving American army - crop-haired G.I.s, rock n' roll,
Marine drill sergeants barking orders, some loaders screaming
like New York cabbies.

A soldier on a fork lift shouts at Vann.

FORKLIFT SOLDIER

Hey, I'm working here.

* Vann walks past, to an M.P. talks to him (we don't hear) *

* The soldier points. *

79A EXT. GENERAL WEYAND'S OFFICE, AIRBASE. DAY

79A

Vann enters

79B INT. GENERAL WEYAND'S OFFICE, AIRBASE. DAY

79B

Vann enters Weyand's office.

WEYAND

John.

Vann salutes.

VANN

Lieutenant Colonel John Paul Vann,
retired, reporting for duty, sir.

WEYAND

Well you haven't changed a bit.
This is Dan Ellsberg John, for some
crazy reason he wants to work with
you.

VANN

Yeah, I remember you, you got any
experience?

ELLSBERG

I've worked for the Pentagon, the
state department, the white house.

VANN

I meant combat experience.

ELLSBERG

U.S. marine corp.

WEYAND

Hold on here John I'd a hell of a job
getting you back here John, so let's
take it easy for a while. Take over
the civilian aid program in Bau Trai
province, see if we can't win these
people over.

VANN

Okay, Let's go.

WEYAND

Wait up, there's a welcoming ceremony

CONTINUED

79B CONTINUED:

79B

VANN

I'm not much for ceremonies Fred,
Weyand raise a finger.

WEYAND

John.

80 EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY COMPOUND GROUNDS DAY.

80

A welcoming reception for the new civilian advisors who make up the program known as AID. A banner reads the Agency for International Development. A group of AID men, white 40s, civilian clothes, white shirts, beige pants, hover around. The press group are also there. An officer checks a mike at a stand.

Three of the press rush over to Vann.

BURNETT

Holy Shit! I thought they buried you.

A helicopter appears over the treeline, hovers toward them.

BURNETT

(continuing)

Are you part of this AID thing.

VANN

This is my partner, Dan Ellsberg. Mr. Burnett from the Times.

Westmoreland's helicopter lands.

BURNETT

Yeah, Ellsberg, - counter-insurgency, hearts and minds - I know you. What's going on here boys.

VANN

I guess we're gonna hear from the boss now.

PROTOCOL OFFICER

Gentlemen, General Westmoreland.

General Westmoreland marches in with some officers, walks up to a mike, he's followed by five ARVN colonels.

CONTINUED

80 CONTINUED:

80

They look like a Vietnamese version of the Mafia, crisp uniforms but highlighted by yellow neck scarves and aviator sunglasses. One of them, CHINH, wears mirrored aviator glasses.

WESTMORELAND

At ease, Gentlemen. The AID program is a noble effort to bolster the civilian population in the hamlets and help them resist Vietcong infiltration. Each of you will be assigned a regional area to work hand in hand with the local South Vietnamese commanders who have come here today. You are part of a great mobilization. We now have at our disposal the best army the world has ever known. We have the men and the material and we are going to stomp the enemy into the ground. Thank you.

Chinh, the ARVN colonel with the mirror glasses approaches.

CHINH

Welcome Mr. Vann, I am your regional commander. We have a very good region, you and I, we will do well together.

81 EXT. TUC DO STREET. SAIGON DAY.

81

Vann is back on Tuc Do street. He's in civvies but once more his stride is powerful, his head is up, he's smiling. Tuc Do street has changed. There are more soldiers, more civilians wear western clothes, a black marketeer comes up to Vann.

BLACK MARKETEER

What you want, you want cigarettes, medicine, I got everything.

The black marketeer pulls out medicines, all marked "supplied by U.S. aid". Vann looks at them.

At the doorway where he met Lee the sign has also changed. It no longer reads English school - the sign is jazzier - "Learn English Fast - Madame Lee. Vann enters.

82 INT. LEE'S CLASSROOM. DAY

82

Vann enters a small classroom filled with adults, some ARVN soldiers, several bar girls, dressed in mini-skirts. Lee writes on the blackboard. She is also dressed in tight-fitting western clothes. Vann sits in a desk at the back. Lee turns, says something fast in Vietnamese, then translates.

LEE
(slowly)
How can I help you?

They all say.

CLASS
How can I help you.

Now she sees Vann, stops, then a smile, then dismisses the class in Vietnamese. They get up and leave, some studying Vann. One of the bar girls hits him with a come on smile as she passes.

VANN
What happened to the school girls?

LEE
Time's change. They
(the departing
students)
have more need.

She mimics the bar girls.

LEE
(continuing)
'You are number one. Me do anything.'

VANN
Well is that right.

He walks up to her. Runs his finger down the western blouse.

LEE
You like?

VANN
I'm not sure.

CONTINUED

82 CONTINUED:

82

He unbuttons the blouse, to reveal a black bra. She watches him, then grabs him round the neck kisses passionately as he lifts her up by the ass, she wraps her legs around him and they fall against the wall.

OMITTED

CONTINUED

80 CONTINUED: (2)

80

CUT TO:

80 OMITTED
THRU
84

80
THRU
84

CONTINUED

80 CONTINUED: (3)

80

CUT TO:

85 EXT. BAU TRAI ROAD VIETNAM. DAY

85

Vann drives a jeep along a road between paddy fields.
Ellsberg is in the passenger seat holding on for grim death.

CONTINUED

85 CONTINUED:

85

ELLSBERG

Harvard ... Cambridge... MIT, seven
all together.

VANN

Seven degrees, you're a goddamn
genius. Dr. Dan the thinking man,
that's what I'm going to call you.
You married?

Ellsberg shakes his head no, he's now more concerned with
wreckage of military vehicles that they pass.

ELLSBERG

Divorced.

VANN

Are you getting any?

ELLSBERG

What?

VANN

Sex.

ELLSBERG

Today do you mean?

VANN

Well as close to today as you can
remember.

ELLSBERG

It's been a while.

VANN

I get this here headache, right here.

He takes his hand off the wheel, and holds the back of his
neck at the hairline.

VANN

(continuing)

If I don't get it at least once a day.

ELLSBERG

Have you tried aspirin?

Vann laughs hard.

As they get closer to the Hau Nghia province capital of Bau Trai - they pass a blown up jeep. There are charred corpses still inside. Ellsberg and Vann look at each other.

Vann and Ellsberg pull up at the village center, the place is makeshift, falling down. The US AID hut is makeshift. ARVN soldiers lounge around. There's a sense of decay about the place. The current AID advisor, PIKE, emerges from the warehouse hut. He's unshaven, demoralized, behind him the warehouse is a mess of flour sacks, tools, aid containers.

PIKE

Howdy, I'm glad to see you boys.

VANN

There's a jeep outside town with bodies in it.

PIKE

Yep.

ELLSBERG

Nobody buries them?

PIKE

(nods to the ARVN)

They're too afraid to go out there.

Pike smiles.

PIKE

(continuing)

I hate to discourage you guys but this place is gone. You see those bunch of kids over there.

Pike points to a bunch of teenagers hanging around a straw hut cafe. They are cocky, strut and laugh.

PIKE

(continuing)

They're Vietcong.

Ellsberg looks at the teenagers then at the bunch of ARVN lounging around the trucks at their tent.

CONTINUED

PIKE

(continuing)

Our defenders here either work for them or pay them off. As for their commander Chinh, I'm not sure if they work for him.

(Pike nods toward the

V.C.)

Or he works for them. Don't matter much cause nobody works for us.

Vann is angry at Pike's defeatism.

VANN

Maybe we should hand it all over to the communists right now.

PIKE

Mr. Vann, these people don't have any money, they don't drink coca-cola, and they don't get the chance to vote. Sounds communist to me.

Pike shows them the ramshackle warehouse.

PIKE

(continuing)

Here it is. Now if you don't mind, it cost me fifty bucks to get Colonel Chinh to rustle up a military escort to get me out of here, so I'd better go before the price goes up. Stay alive guys.

88 OMITTED

88

*bugar
winca7*

88A INT WAREHOUSE DAY

88A

The warehouse has been re-organized, Ellsberg instructs peasant workers, as Vann mobilizes some ARVN soldiers to hand out supplies. It is raining outside, the sound of children calling out chants in Vietnamese, fills the air. It is raining outside. Ellsberg sees a little girl emerge from the school and empty pots filled with rain water.

89 EXT. BAU TRAI HAMLET SCHOOL. DAY

89

Ellsberg sees a child emptying a pot. Ellsberg calls Vann over. Vann and Ellsberg walk across and look in at the school. The children sit in little pockets to avoid the rain falling through into clay pots.

Some of the children stop when they see Ellsberg and Vann look at how they are avoiding the rain.

The teacher admonishes them, determined to ignore Vann.

90 EXT/INT. BAU TRAI HAMLET SCHOOL. DAY

90

Vann and Ellsberg arrives at the school with several troops equipped with ladders and corrugated iron sheeting.

He places the ladder and sends a soldier up onto the roof. The soldier begins ripping off slates. The children look up at the sudden head appearing and laugh.

The teacher stops, comes outside and argues in Vietnamese with one soldier. The soldier points to Vann. The woman speaks again in Vietnamese.

SOLDIER TRANSLATOR

She says to stop she cannot pay.

VANN

Tell her she does not have to pay.

She walks away muttering.

90A EXT. SCHOOL DAY.

90A

The soldiers have made progress, Ellsberg appears with a box under his arm, enters the school. Vann here's the kids laugh..

* 90B INT. SCHOOL. DAY

* 90B

* Vann enters, Ellsberg is giving out chicklets and small *
* balckboards to the teacher. Ellsberg holds up a chicklet*

ELLSBERG

* Gentlemen, what we need is a chicklet *
revolution ...

* Vann laughs, then the sound of jeeps pulling up. *

91 OMITTED

91

92 EXT. BAU TRAI HAMLET SCHOOL. DAY

92

* Vann, followed by Ellsberg emerge to see Chinch shouting at *
* the worker soldiers.. *

VANN

What's up?

CHINH

You have used my material without
paying.

VANN

I'm sorry colonel but this is AID
material.

CONTINUED

92 CONTINUED:

92

CHINH

You have used my material without
paying.

VANN

I'm sorry colonel but this is AID
material.

CONTINUED

92 CONTINUED: (2)

92

CHINH

Yes. My aid material. This is my region. It is my AID material, and you must pay.

Ellsberg laughs out loud.

ELLSBERG

Do you believe this guy?

Chinh nods to some of his soldiers to take away some wood.

VANN

Hey. Hey.

Vann shoves a soldier away.

Vann turns to one of the translator soldiers who helped fix the school.

VANN

(continuing)

Translate into Vietnamese.

Vann turns to Chinh

VANN

(continuing)

If you do not leave I will disgrace you in front of your men and the village.

Chinh laughs. The soldier is fearful but Vann nods for him to translate.

He translates, Chinh turns to his soldiers who laugh with him, as he turns back toward the Americans.

Vann slaps him hard across the face.

The colonel is stunned, the soldiers behind him are stunned, no one does anything.

Vann slaps him again.

The colonel reaches for his pistol. Vann watches defiantly.

The colonel stops half way through pulling it out, stomps off to his jeep, they drive off.

CONTINUED

Ellsberg looks at Vann.

ELLSBERG

Well.

92A EXT. BAU TRAI HAMLET. NIGHT

92A

A deadly still night, a dog barks, crickets fill the night. A single shadowy figure turns the corner. It is a V.C. youth, carrying an A.K., several others follow.

A gate creaks. An ARVN soldier approaches. He bows to them, subserviently, fearfully. They move past him.

93 INT. VANN AND ELLSBERG'S BILLET, BAU TRAI. NIGHT

93

Vann sleeps. His M-16 and a belt of hand grenades on the floor beside him. Ellsberg is opposite on another cot.

A hand appears, through the small gap in the sand-bagged window. The hand drops something.

The object falls on Ellsberg's chest, he wakens instantly, springing from the bed.

ELLSBERG

Aaahh!

Vann wakens, picks his pistol up, pulling Ellsberg back.

They shine a torch on the floor, light glimmering off something pink and red.

ELLSBERG

(continuing)

What the hell is it?

Vann lifts his rifle cocks it.

VANN

Get your rifle.

ELLSBERG

What is it?

VANN

It's a tongue.

94 EXT. ARVN BILLET. NIGHT

94

Vann and Ellsberg are outside, covering as they move.

The gate of the ARVN camp creaks on its hinges. It's open.

95 INT. ARVN BILLET. NIGHT

95

Vann enters slowly, Ellsberg follows.

Vann shines the torch:

an empty bed, then another, then a soldier lying perfectly still, his throat slit. Another the same, then an empty bed, another throat slit, and then

in the end bed, the severed head of the soldier/translator, his tongue cut out, rests on the chest of its body.

Ellsberg is frozen, Vann pushes him.

VANN

Let's go.

95a OMITTED

96 EXT. CHINH'S H.Q. DAY

96

Vann's jeep screeches to a halt. He jumps out runs to the entrance as two guards stand in his way. He pushes past them, Ellsberg points his rifle at one who goes to raise his weapon.

Madame Chinh appears in dressing gown, muttering and shouting.

VANN

Where is Chinh?

ARVN GUARD

Not here.

He points up in the sky.

ARVN GUARD

(continuing)

Operation?

CONTINUED

96 CONTINUED:

96

VANN
Where?

ARVN GUARD
Bau Trai.

97 EXT. BAU TRAI ROAD VIETNAM. DAY

97

Vann drives like a maniac along the road. There's an American Army APC and a Jeep blocking the road.

AMERICAN SOLDIER
ARVN says Charlie's in there, we're going to zap the place.

Vann pulls around the APC.

AMERICAN SOLDIER
(continuing)
Hey!

ELLSBERG
Call it off!

Bau Trai village is ahead.

The jeep races down the road.

Ellsberg hears a roar overhead, he looks up,
a jet screams down toward the village.

A Ball of flame in front of them.

Close on Vann and Ellsberg.

CONTINUED

97 CONTINUED:

97

Women and children come running from the great ball of smoke.

CUT TO:

98 EXT. BAU TRAI HAMLET. DAY.

98

Vann and Ellsberg pull up before the remains of the school and the wreckage of the village.

There are wounded everywhere, many of them are children.

A young child has run into a coil of barbed wire to escape the fires and is now stuck there.

Vann runs to free her, reaching in and unhooking her.

His arms now run with blood.

Ellsberg sees the teacher tending to an injured child. He rushes to her.

She stands up, beating him with her hands and screaming at him in Vietnamese.

Vann pulls him off, some of the other women throw rocks at them.

Vann drags Ellsberg away.

WEYAND (V.O.)

What the hell do you want me to do?

98A INT. WEYAND'S H.Q. CORRIDOR . DAY

98A

Vann and Ellsberg follow Weyand along a corridor which buzzes with activity, soldiers shouting, carrying memos.

Weyand has just come back from the front, his face is covered in dirt, his uniform is dusty.

VANN

I want that bastard arrested.

WEYAND

I'm just back from Ia Drang.

CONTINUED

98A CONTINUED:

98A

WEYAND
(continuing)

Do you know what went on there.

He opens his office door, takes them inside.

98B INT. WEYAND'S OFFICE DAY

98B

Weyand flops down at his desk.

WEYAND
Four companies of Air Cav. ran into
the North Vietnamese Army up at Ia
Drang. They lost 230 men, hundreds
more wounded. Westie's carpet-bombing
with B-52s all over the place. So
don't be coming here telling me about
one corrupt ARVN colonel.

ELLSBERG
He's a war criminal

VANN
* If we don't throw these guys out, *
* take control in Saigon ... *

WEYAND
* Look, it's all over out in the *
Boonies. Move back into Saigon, work
out of here. You know the locals. Put
together your own squads and clean
out these villages. I'll give you all
the authority you want.

Vann nods, recognizing he's been bought off with a hefty
promotion.

CONTINUED

98B CONTINUED:

98B

WEYAND

(continuing)

Now excuse me gentlemen, I need a
shower and a beer.

Weyand leaves. Ellsberg looks at Vann.

ELLSBERG

That's it.

VANN

He's right, we're fighting a bigger
war now.

ELLSBERG

* What about winning over the peasants,
* denying the enemy a base. *

VANN

We have to fight our way back to
that.

CUT TO:

STILL PHOTO MONTAGE

A rapid series of stills.

(black & white) similar in style to the photos in sc. 28.

Vann posing with his officers including Ba and some other
Vietnamese figures from Cao period) outside H.Q.

Vann and Ellsberg guns in hand with various Village agents, .

Vann with housekeeper and Chinese lady landlord in front of
his new house.

Vann with village agents in front of dead NVA.

Vann doing a walk and talk with reporters, including Burnett
and his guys.

Vann and Ellsberg at Vann's place around a table with
reporters.

audio V.O. :

CONTINUED

98B CONTINUED: (2)

98B

of LBJ announcing further bombing, Chronkite stating casualty figures for the year so far, Rather reporting from the field. etc. etc.

99 OMITTED	99
AND	AND
100	100

101 EXT. SAIGON BOULEVARD. DAY.	101
---------------------------------	-----

Vann drives in his jeep along a Saigon boulevard, cycle and motorbike traffic is heavy, his journey is slowed by a rickshaw in front as he slows a motorbike pulls along side, One girl in au Dai dress drives, another, particularly beautiful in white au dai sits side saddle on the back, Vann looks at her, he can't take his eyes of her. This is ANNIE The traffic slows to a stop, Vann looks her up and down, she smiles - a luminous smile.

101A EXT. TUC DO STREET. SAIGON DAY.	101A
--------------------------------------	------

Vann buys Annie and her friend flowers from a flower vendor.

101B INT. VANN'S HOME, GARDEN. NIGHT	101B
--------------------------------------	------

(please note, an ext. establishing shot first - no principles)

Vann sits in the garden, his housekeeper serves food to the table. Vann makes Annie laugh.

102 OMITTED	102
-------------	-----

103 OMITTED	103
-------------	-----

104 OMITTED	104
-------------	-----

105 EXT. 111 CORPS REGION H.Q. DAWN	105
-------------------------------------	-----

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED:

105

Vann pulls up in his jeep. He has a smile as big as California.

He sees Ellsberg, calls out.

VANN

I'm in love.

Ellsberg's sombre look doesn't crack.

VANN

(continuing)

What the hell's wrong with you.

* Ellsberg hands Vann a piece of paper. *

ELLSBERG

* Your mother's dead, John. *

106 INT. VANN'S HOUSE, NIGHT

106

Vann has lay on the bed all day. Ellsberg comes in.

ELLSBERG

If you go now you can still make the Tokyo connection.

(pause)

Come on John, this is your mother?

Vann stares at him, a lost stare, we have never seen Vann like this. He sits up.

ELLSBERG

(continuing)

You can't just lie there. You owe it to her.

CONTINUED

106 CONTINUED:

106

* VANN *
I owe it to her. My mother was a two
dollar hooker who give head to
sailors back in Norfolk.

He thinks back.

VANN
(continuing)
I used to watch her screw them in
their cars, the springs creaking, her
legs up in the air. I remember the
smell of her after she screwed them

He looks at Ellsberg,

VANN
(continuing)
I can still smell it all the time,
that stink. My mother was a whore and
I'm her bastard son. That's why those
goddamm wasps at West Point wouldn't
let me in. It's why I never got
stars. Because my birth certificate
read John LeGuy - a son of a
bitch....Do you know how she died?
Somebody cracked her skull with a
whiskey bottle.

ELLSBERG
Go home and bury her, John.

107 EXT. CEMETERY, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA. DAY

107

Vann, Mary Jane, his kids, other family stand around
Myrtle's coffin as a pastor speaks.

PASTOR
She was a good woman, a loving and
caring mother to her family and she
will be sorely missed.

John looks at his brother and sister and smiles.

CUT TO:

John and Mary Jane walk away with their kids. Jesse trails behind them.

VANN
What's up with Jesse.

MARY JANE
He's against the war.

VANN
(laughs)
You don't say. What does he know about the war?

MARY JANE
He knows you're fighting it.

VANN
I should talk to him.

A camera crew are waiting at the gate.

NEWS REPORTER
Mr. Vann.

VANN
I promised these guys an interview, you go on honey.

Mary Jane stops him.

MARY JANE
I want a divorce John.

He looks at her.

VANN
Why?

She laughs

MARY JANE
I need to free myself from you.

She keeps walking as he stops with the crew.

NEWS REPORTER
I hope this isn't a bad time ...

CONTINUED

108 CONTINUED:

108

VANN

No, no, I'm going back tomorrow,
we'll have to do it now.

Vann looks at Mary Jane, she has walked away with the kids.
Jesse looks back.

NEWS REPORTER

I'd like to talk to you about the
President's decision ...

Vann watches as they get into a car.

NEWS REPORTER

(continuing)
to grant General Westmoreland's
request for more troops. Okay.

VANN

(watching Jesse)
Sure, sure.

The family drive off past them, Jesse looks out the back
window.

109 EXT. TUNNEL COMPLEX NEAR PEASANT FARM. DAY

109

Vann walks along a dirt lane, Ellsberg, Ba, (the ARVN
lieutenant) away from a helicopter, he is dressed in his own
hybrid mix of civilian and military clothing, it clearly
denotes rank and power.

BA

There are many tunnels Mister Vann.
Over here is where we found the
papers.

Vann, Ellsberg, Ba, one American soldier and another ARVN
officer study papers laid out on the hood of a jeep. Beyond
them, American soldiers drag V.C. bodies out of a tunnel
mouth.

*

VANN

What do they say?

Ba draws a crude map on the ground with a stick.

CONTINUED

109 CONTINUED:

109

BA

Here is Saigon. Until now just one
V.C. sector, here,
(points)
has had responsibility for Saigon.
These new orders say that all these
sectors.

He draws a circle round Saigon and then divides it up like a
pizza pie, with the Saigon dot at the center.

BA

(continuing)

All must include Saigon as
operational area.

VANN

That's one hell of a concentration on
the capital.

As Ba talks - Close on: Ellsberg,

Ellsberg's P.O.V. he sees an AVRN soldier drag the body of a
woman from the tunnel.

Close on: Ellsberg, a spark of recognition, shock.

Track Ellsberg as he leaves the meeting walks toward the
mouth of the hole.

Close on: the mud covered dead body. It is the Bau Trai
teacher.

The soldier drags the body toward a hole where some other
bodies have been covered with lime powder.

Close on, Vann talking. He hears a commotion

Vann's P.O.V. - Ellsberg is pulling the body away from the
soldier arguing.

Vann runs over.

VANN

(continuing)

Hey, Hey.

Ellsberg stands over the school teacher's body.

CONTINUED

109 CONTINUED: (2)

109

ELLSBERG

* Fuck it, John. Fuck it. *

VANN

* Let it go. *

The ARVN soldier grabs the body pulls it toward the pit, as he does the top of her pyjamas suit pulls off exposing her breasts. An ARVN cracks a joke in Vietnamese. The dragging soldier laughs.

Ellsberg looses it runs at the soldier, screaming.

ELLSBERG

LEAVE HER HER DIGNITY! YOU HEAR ME!

He's completely lost it. Vann drags him away.

110 EXT. WEYAND'S H.Q. DAY

110

Weyand's H.Q. at Tan Son Nhut.

111 INT. WEYAND'S OFFICE. DAY

111

Vann is addressing Weyand and his senior staff. He has the pizza pie diagram drawn around a map of Saigon, along with an assortment of aerial photos.

VANN

* Until now, the fifth division of the
* Vietcong had sole control of the
* Saigon operational area. *

* As Vann speaks the door opens. It's Westmoreland and his
* entourage. *

A soldier calls out "Attention", everyone snaps to.

Westmoreland takes a seat.

CONTINUED

111 CONTINUED:

111

WESTMORELAND

Keep going Mr. Vann.

VANN

I was saying general that the fifth division of the V.C. had Saigon as their base of operations. But intelligence we have captured shows that divisions, formerly positioned in the parrot's beak area on the Cambodian border, have been moved Here, here, here and here, and now share the Saigon theater of operations.

Weyand hands around aerial photos.

WEYAND

Here's some aerial evidence of increased movement here.

WESTMORELAND

What's your conclusion.

Westie gets up.

WEYAND

The enemy are about to hit the capital.

WESTMORELAND

Gentlemen that's exactly what the enemy wants us to think because ...

Westmoreland gets up goes to the map.

WESTMORELAND

(continuing)

They're going to lay siege to the Marines here at Khe Sanh with regular forces, trick us into believing they are going to attack the capital. We hold back our forces. They overrun the marines just like they did to the French, well its not going to happen on my watch. Fred I want every available man you have ready to move up to Khe Sanh at a moments notice.

CONTINUED

111 CONTINUED: (2)

111

VANN

Sir I don't believe a strategist like
General Giap would risk his forces
against us.

WESTMORELAND

I appreciate your input, Mr. Vann,
you can go now.

112 INT./EXT. VANN'S HOME & GARDEN. DAY

112

A thanksgiving party 1967 - Turkey, trimmings laid out on a
table, . an informal party in the garden with Vann,
Ellsberg, Burnett and the other press men sitting around.
They are arguing heatedly.

REPORTER

Cassius Clay's ...

Ellsberg is knocking back the booze, he's slightly drunk.

CONTINUED

ELLSBERG

Munammed Ali. His new names Muhammed Ali.

VANN

I don't care what he's called if he dodges the draft no negro soldier is going to fight. Lock his ass up.

BURNETT

Hey John, this is quite a pad you've got here.

ELLSBERG

Yeah, it's called Harnessing the best houses in Saigon.

VANN

What do you mean?

BURNETT

Yeah John, you don't talk about rice too much anymore. Now its meeting with Weyand and arguments with Westie. You're in big star country.

VANN

(very angry)

What the hell do you mean? It's you guys who've sold out. You're damned near ready to surrender.

At the heat of the argument Ellsberg sees the cleaner lady at the gate to the garden, then a small Vietnamese man, in traditional clothes, he looks very stern, behind him, stands Annie. Her head is bowed, she looks very frightened and very pregnant.

ELLSBERG

John.

Vann looks away from Burnett, heads for the Vietnamese man (ANNIE'S FATHER) and Annie.

ANNIE'S FATHER

What sort of man are you? She was a good student, now she is pregnant. Have you no honor.

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED: (2)

112

The old man goes to slap Vann who catches his arm in midflight.

VANN

I love your daughter. I will take care of her.

113 EXT./INT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE. DAY

113

A pathetic little Vietnamese wedding ceremony. Vann and Annie stand in front of an altar to Annie's ancestors. John gives her jewelry and a small box of betel leaves and areca nuts - sign of unity and faithfulness.

Vann places a ring on Annie's finger, then takes a josh stick and kneels before a polished brass urn. He then shakes hands with the members of Annie's family. It is a cold and formal moment except for the final kiss to Annie, who smiles with joy.

A series of still photos outside the temple while

in V.O. a radio reporter describes the beginning of the siege at Khe Sanh.

114 OMITTED

114

115 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

115

Ellsberg lies in bed, jaundiced, very weak. Vann is at his bed.

ELLSBERG

I'm going home, John.

VANN

For God's sake Dan, you'll be better in a week or two. Something big is getting ready to go down. I need you with me out there.

Ellsberg reaches across his bed for a newspaper

ELLSBERG

Did you see this shit?

It is the NYT photo of a G.I torching a peasant's home.

ELLSBERG

(continuing)

Those are marines John. Now we're burning them out.

VANN

It's one damned photo, Dan. We can change it. We can win this thing.

Ellsberg shakes his head.

ELLSBERG

Winning, is that what its about, John.

Vann goes to speak. Ellsberg raises his hand.

CONTINUED

115 CONTINUED:

115

VANN

It's one damned photo, Dan. You think
I agree with it?

ELLSBERG

It's more than one photo, we're
loosing our soul here.

Vann goes to speak. Ellsberg raises his hand.

CONTINUED

115 CONTINUED:

115

ELLSBERG
(continuing)

I don't want to fight with you John.
I'm going home.

Vann nods, shakes his hand,

116

116

116A EXT. VANN'S HOME. DAY

116A

Lee sits in Vann's jeep. Kids play with firecrackers

LEE
I want to go away for Tet, to my
family's home by the sea. Please
come with us.

VANN
I can't, there is too much to do here.

She kisses him.

LEE
Be careful.

117 EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY COMPOUND GROUNDS NIGHT

117

Close on: a lounge piano player playing

Vann walks through the embassy patio. There's a Tet party on the lawn complete with band, chinese fire crackers. the crowd is a mix, embassy people, press, Vietnamese government types, the all powerful wives of the Vietnamese generals. From beyond the walls the flashes of fire-crackers and revelry. A chinese carnival dragon dances through the crowd. The pianist plays "Who shall I turn to." Firecrackers explode, people laugh.

Vann spots the ambassador, makes his way to him.

VANN
Good evening Mr. Ambassador.

The ambassador acknowledges Vann, then a middle-aged American admin. official passes with a stunning young Vietnamese woman on his arm. He nods to the ambassador.

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED:

117

JACK CONROY
Evening, ambassador.

The ambassador turns to Vann.

AMBASSADOR
There's a lot of plain and fancy
screwing going on around here, John
but I suppose it's all in the
interest of the war effort.

VANN
Could I have a minute, Ambassador.

John takes the ambassador aside.

VANN
(continuing)
Did you receive General Weyand's
alert?

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED: (2)

117

AMBASSADOR
(puzzled)

No.

VANN
We've received intelligence that the
enemy is planning a major offensive.

AMBASSADOR
Where?

VANN
Here.

AMBASSADOR
(laughs)
What here? At the embassy? Come on
John!

VANN
Around Saigon, Sir.

AMBASSADOR
Why didn't General Westmoreland tell
me this?

VANN
Well General Westmoreland doesn't
agree with our analysis, sir

The ambassador's attitude becomes frosty.

AMBASSADOR
I'll take this up with you in the
morning. Try to relax, John.

The ambassador walks off. A voice from behind.

BURNETT
(cynical)
Nice party, all we need is Nero with
his fiddle.

John turns to Burnett.

BURNETT
(continuing)
Do you see who's here?

Burnett nods toward a corner.

CONTINUED .

117 CONTINUED: (3)

117

Vann's P.O.V. CLOSE ON - It is Colonel Chinh , now a general.
He raises a glass and toasts Vann.

BURNETT

(continuing)

He's a general now, a rising star at
the palace. Inspiring, isn't it.

Vann, controls his temper, heads for the gate.

118 EXT. TUC DO STREET NIGHT.

118

Vann wanders this once quaint street. It is now a cesspool of
corruption.

CONTINUED

118 CONTINUED:

118

Hookers line the street, competing with legless beggars, tiny kids saying the only words they know in American "loose joint" as they hold out rolled joints. A group of GIs sit outside a bar sharing a joint.

Firecrackers explode all around. On the street a long Chinese dragon seems to move straight and fast, not in its usual winding, playful fashion.

A young hooker hits on Vann.

HOOKER

You number one. Me do anything.

Vann walks past her.

119 INT. VANN HOME NIGHT

119

Vann is in bed, a restless sleep, firecrackers still pop, then almost distinguishable between them a burst of gunfire, more firecrackers, now more gunfire, different calibers, through the curtains a flash of light, a thunderous explosion and the wicker curtains fly in. Vann sits up, pulls a big magnum revolver from under his pillow.

The noise outside is now a cacophony, explosions, helicopter blades, screams, sirens.

VANN

Holy shit.

He pulls on his flak jacket, straps a belt of grenades around his waist, cocks the mini-AR 15 rifle, and takes off out the door.

119A EXT. VANN'S HOME, GARDEN. DAY.

119A

As Vann approaches the gate, he hears gunfire very close. He opens the gate very carefully.

120 EXT. SAIGON STREET DAWN

120

Vann's P.O.V. - a vietcong guerrilla fires an AK 47 up the street toward an APC.

Vann steps out behind him, walks up and shoots him in the head.

CONTINUED

121 CONTINUED:

121

VANN
Head for the Embassy compound soldier.

122 INT. M-113 TANK. DAY

122

Vann inside, as the Army sargeant looks out the periscope.

122A INT. /EXT. M-113 TANK DAY

122A

The Sargeant's P.O.V. - Several Military Police are firing into the embassy

DRIVER/CAPTAIN
Holy shit, our guys are firing into the embassy, Charlie's taken the fucking embassy man!

123 EXT. STREET U.S. EMBASSY. DAY

123

Vann gets out, rushes to the embassy wall. There are GI's and CIA men lying on their bellies, taking cover beneath the two foot high brick foundation of the railed embassy fence. Several of them fire, over the wall into the embassy. Vann crawls along behind those at the wall, shouts to a CIA man.

VANN
Where's the ambassador.

The CIA man points to an APC at the end of the wall.

Vann crawls toward it.

124 INT. AMBASSADOR'S M-113. DAY

124

Vann climbs into the Ambassador's m-113. The ambassador is sitting in his pajamas and slippers. He has a scorched Brooks Brothers leather briefcase on his lap. He looks shell shocked.

AMBASSADOR
My God John.

VANN
Get General Weyand on the line?

An aide holds up the m-113's handset (radiophone).

125 EXT. ROOF OF WEYAND'S H.Q. DAY

125

A soldier runs with a field radio across a rooftop where a line of GIs fire hundreds of rounds out toward the airfield, where a Vietcong assault force tries to advance. Weyand is among his troops.

WEYAND

John. We're holding them here, what about there?

126 INT. AMBASSADOR'S M-113. DAY

126

VANN

They're in the embassy, the radio station, at the palace. Looks like they're trying to capture the city.

The ambassador looks even more shocked.

VANN

(continuing)

Have we any troops to fight them, Fred.

127 INT. WEYAND'S BUNKER, AIRBASE. DAY

127

WEYAND

I kept six battalions in reserve. I'm going to send four into the city.

128 INT. AMBASSADOR'S M-113. DAY

128

VANN

(delighted)

Great! Great news.

WEYAND (O.S.)

Good luck.

Vann goes to get out of the APC. The ambassador grabs him.

AMBASSADOR

What's going to happen, John?

CONTINUED

128 CONTINUED:

128

VANN

We're going to win Ambassador and you
can thank General Weyand for that.

129 MONTAGE OF FOOTAGE OF TET.

129

Gun battle at radio station.

ARVN dragging V.C. bodies across the street.

Saigon police chief executes Vietcong infiltrator.

129A EXT. REFUGEE CENTER, SAIGON. DAY

129A

A rubble strewn street. A jeep full of armed M.P.s pull up.
Vann gets out, his arms laden with supplies.

129B INT. REFUGEE CENTER, SAIGON. DAY

129B

A mass of families huddled together, men and women
frightened, children crying. ARVN soldiers are questioning
one man in a corner Vann walks through to Annie's family,
they are huddled together.

Annie's grandmother holds Annie who is very pregnant.

Vann goes over kisses Annie on the head, pats her belly,
gives the supplies to Annie's mother.

VANN

Everything's going to be just fine
Gran. I'll take care of you all.

He hurries out.

130 EXT. U.S. EMBASSY SAIGON. DAY

130

The embassy has been retaken. Vann meets Weyand, they hug,
both are exhuberant.

VANN

We did it. They threw their best at
us and we beat them.

CONTINUED

130 CONTINUED:

130

As they talk Westmoreland appears with the ambassador, he is surrounded by press.

He starts to talk but is startled by an explosion off screen.

WESTMORELAND

That's just our guys clearing up some
unexploded m-79 rounds
(another bang)

CONTINUED

130 CONTINUED: (2)

130

REPORTER

General, the enemy appears to be
 trying to take over South Vietnam.

WESTMORELAND

The vietcong has very deceitfully
 used the Tet ceasefire to try to
 mount an offensive ...

The ambassador looks at Westmoreland - a look that says
 you're finished pal.

131 EXT. VANN'S STREET. DAY

131

Vann arrives back in the M.P. jeep. The street is shrouded in
 smoke. ARVN soldiers herd Vietcong suspects along the street.

As Vann gets out of the jeep, Lee appears through the smoke.

LEE

John.

Vann takes her, ushers her inside his garden.

132 INT. VANN HOME DAY

132

LEE

I was afraid you were dead John.

He throws off his flak jacket, his gun belt. He holds her.

VANN

* Did you know about Tet. *

LEE

No.

* *

VANN

We won.

* *

He takes hold of Lee, kisses her voraciously.

CUT TO:

Full screen: President Johnson TV address: "I will not run
 nor will I accept the nomination..

(With Johnson speech playing over) Vann and Annie, the baby and her family are gathered together. They head into the temple.

A MONTAGE OF STILL PHOTOS TAKEN AT A BUDDHIST CHRISTENING:

VANN STANDS WITH ANNIE AND THE BABY.

VANN, ANNIE AND HER FAMILY AND BABY.

ANNIE, AND BABY ON THE MUSTANG.

VANN AND HIS FATHER-IN-LAW WHO LOOKS DECIDEDLY UNHAPPY.

Vann, Weyand, several embassy officials stand behind a podium bearing the ambassador's seal. The press are gathered in front of the podium. The ambassador arrives.

AMBASSADOR

I am pleased to announce that the President has appointed General Westmoreland as army chief of staff. He has returned to Washington. General Abhrams will replace him here in Saigon, the new second in command General Weyand, will address you.

Shouts from the press.

PRESS

Ambassador, was Westmoreland's policy a failure. - Why was he called back?

WEYAND

Questions later Gentlemen Given the success of the South Vietnamese troops in wiping out the Vietcong throughout Vietnam.

PRESS

What about Tet. Are you saying Tet was an American victory?

CONTINUED

Lee kisses the sweat off him, a multitude of kisses, Vann responds, he can barely speak, he whispers into his ear.

Lee stops kissing.

LEE

What?

VANN

Marry me.

LEE

How?

VANN

I want you to get your family and stand before your ancestors.

LEE

You cannot do this.

VANN

I can do whatever I want.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF STILLLS:

The Vann/Lee ceremony.

The altar; the gifts; including the two stars; poses in front of the temple, kisses.

audio V.O. of

Nixon's speech announcing the gradual withdrawal of American troops, the decision to invade Cambodia, the peace talks. *

137 OMITTED

137

138 EXT. VANN HOME DAY

138

Vann is dressed in his own ad hoc general's uniform, combat trousers, white shirt, two stars on the collar. He packs his little shoe box of personal items. Burnett bangs the gate.

BURNETT

I'd like an interview.

CONTINUED

138 CONTINUED:

138

VANN

I don't have time.

BURNETT

I'll make this quick. I've heard you intend to carpet bomb around Kontum.

VANN

That's operational information.

BURNETT

Man, did you sell us a line. All that shit about hearts and minds, and the peasants and the revolution. And I bought it.

VANN

I still believe it.

BURNETT

How can you say that. You're calling in the B-52s. It's wrong.

VANN

It's the same bloody war we got into back in '62. You were here. Why didn't you say it was wrong then? Now you come to me and say it's wrong. You and the fucking Kennedys and the good old boys from Texas who sent us here.

(Laughs)

You all want to change your mind because there's blood and guts on the TV. Well I don't have that luxury, no sir. I got fifty thousand people in Kontum whose lives are on the line because of us. They can't change their mind can they? And neither can I. I gave my word to the people of Kontum and I intend to keep it.

Vann gets in the jeep with his driver.

VANN

(continuing)

Let's go.

139 EXT. KONTUM ROAD. DAY.

139

Refugees stream along a road. As Vann's chrevolet war wagon pulls in. Vann walks quickly with an aide, his stride shouts that he is in charge.

AIDE

I guess they don't think we can hold it sir.

VANN

Then they'll bury us here soldier.

140 INT. KONTUM COMMAND BUNKER. DAY

140

Vann strides in, the command post is packed with ARVN and U.S. military officers. They all stand to attention and salute.

VANN

At ease men.

Vann takes the platform by a blackboard marked with a chalk map of the central highlands. The place crackles with tension and excitement. Vann picks up the pointer.

VANN

(continuing)

Listen up everyone.

VANN

(continuing)

we know there are three NVA divisions, are about to try to cut the country in half And that gentlemen is exactly what I want them to do.

He slaps the board.

CONTINUED

VANN

(continuing)

I want to hold the line here at Tan Canh, then mount a staged retreat back to where we are, Kontum. This will pull these North Vietnamese divisions down from the hills. And when they do.

Vann gets chalk divides both sides of the road between Tan Canh and Kontum up into squares.

VANN

(continuing)

We're going to call in the b-52s and carpet bomb each of these squares until no life exists there.

Some of the Americans look at each other. Vann looks to two U.S. captains in the front row.

VANN

(continuing)

Majors Drummond and Jones along with y good friend colonel Ba will conduct the forward command defense and withdrawal.

Vann snaps his fingers at his aide. The aide hands him a photo. Vann pauses, thinks, then holds up the photo.

VANN

(continuing)

This here is General Giap the commander of the NVA. He's a genius. He's never been beaten. Until now. I've studied this guy for ten years, and we are going to whip his ass. You know why? Because he wastes his men. He pours them away like piss in the wind.

(pauses, looks around)

There's not a man in this room, not a man on that line out there, that I wouldn't die for. I will not waste a hair on your heads, not a drop of blood more than we have to, and if there's blood to be spilled, then it's going to be mine first.

CONTINUED

Vann looks around at his men, who are enthralled.

VANN

(continuing)

No matter what we've done with our lives, you and I can be proud today, because we have the noblest of all tasks. We are soldiers, men. The good lord said it all about us. He said 'no greater love has a man than he lay down his life for another'.

VANN

(continuing; emphatic)

And by God, this day won't pass but I'll see you all safely through it. AND WE WILL HOLD THIS GROUND. WON'T WE?

loud and as one.

ALL

YES, SIR

VANN

Let's go.

*
*

141 OMITTED

141

142 EXT. FORWARD COMMAND POST. DAY

142

The two forward command majors are crouched down, behind sandbags, under tremendous fire. Jones is speaking into the phone.

MAJOR JONES

The enemy are about 500 yards up the road and we're holding them with artillery.

143 INT. KONTUM COMMAND. DAY.

143

Vann is there studying the board, listening.

CONTINUED

VANN

Good, can you hold them for another hour and then we'll pull back to rocket ridge.

As Vann talks Colonel Ba enters the command post. Vann stops talking on the phone.

VANN

(continuing; shouts)

Ba, why the hell aren't you at your post?

BA

The prime minister has replaced me with a general.

VANN

(on phone)

Who the hell's in charge of the ARVN?

144 EXT. FORWARD COMMAND POST. DAY

144

Major Jones looks over toward ARVN commanders crouched behind an M-113. General Chinh is giving orders in the middle of them

MAJOR JONES

It's a general Chinh sir. Hello ...
hello.

145 EXT. KONTUM COMMAND. DAY.

145

Vann runs out.

146 EXT. FORWARD COMMAND POST. DAY

146

Jones turns to Drummond.

MAJOR JONES

Kontum says Vann is on his way ...

In the middle of his speech, a shell different from the mortar blasts whizzes in and explodes.

MAJOR JONES

(continuing)

What the fuck was that?

147 INT. HELICOPTER DAY.

147

Vann is listening on his head set.

VANN

Jones, what's going on.

MAJOR JONES (O.S.)

A loud bang on the headset. Vann is startled.

MAJOR JONES

There's a tank cutting off our
retreat.

148 EXT. DIRT ROAD FORWARD COMMAND. DAY

148

A tank fires.

148A EXT. FORWARD COMMAND POST. DAY

148A

One of Vann's aides talks to the mike.

AIDE (O.S.)

There's no tanks in this sector.

DRUMMOND

Fuck you.

Major Jones voice cuts in.

MAJOR JONES (O.S.)

HEY! HEY! YOU COCKSUCKING BASTARDS.

149 INT. HELICOPTER DAY.

149

Vann on the mike

VANN

Will someone tell me what the hell is
going on.

149A EXT. FORWARD COMMAND POST. DAY

149A

Chinh and many ARVN abandon their foxholes and run into an
open field, past skull and crossbones mine signs.

CONTINUED

149A CONTINUED:

149A

DRUMMOND.

General Chinh is running, we can't
hold it here.

Hundreds of NVA appear at the top of the hill.

150 EXT. MINE FIELD DAY

150

Chinh and the ARVN are in full flight. As Chinh runs, a mine
explodes underneath him, another explodes ten feet away, but
the ARVN keep running.

151 OMITTED

151

AND

AND

152

152

153 EXT. MINEFIELD. DAY

153

*

Jones and Drummond back into the minefield firing back
towards shadowy figures.

154 INT. HELICOPTER DAY.

154

Vann looks down sees figures running across a field, as they
do, one, then another and enveloped in an explosion of dust.

PILOT

Jesus Christ, that's a mine field.

VANN

Take her down!

PILOT

General!

VANN

Take her down, I said.

155 EXT. MINEFIELD DAY

155

Jones and Drummond are crouched in the middle of the field.

The helicopter hovers beside them, as they scramble on board
the helicopter, a ARVN soldier tries to run toward them

CONTINUED

155 CONTINUED:

155

He sets a mine off.

He lies in the field screaming.

Vann jumps from the helicopter, and walks toward him,

Vann picks the man up, pulls him to the helicopter.

156 EXT. HELICOPTER PAD KONTUM DAY.

156

Vann's helicopter lands, laden with fleeing soldiers unloads.

156A EXT. KONTUM ROAD DAY

156A

Vann and Drummond drive towards the bunker on a road littered with abandoned ARVN uniforms.

157 INT. KONTUM COMMAND BUNKER. DAY

157

Vann enters a semi-hysterical command post. Men are shouting from radio headsets, others are burning documents on the floor.

At the blackboard map, Vann's aide marks large Xs for advancing NVA units.

AIDE

They're three miles away, moving fast, we should withdraw now.

VANN

Who has bomber command?

A soldier comes with a hand phone set.

AIDE

It's too late, they're past the co-ordinates.

Vann goes to the board.

VANN

Change the damn co-ordinates.

He grabs a piece of chalk, draws a square right up against the spot that says Kontum.

CONTINUED

AIDE
Si , that's us.

VANN
Phone them in damn it..

Everyone in the room, has stopped and is watching him.
The bomber command contact speaks into the phone.
The contact listens.

BOMBER COMMAND CONTACT
They want to speak to you.

Vann grabs the phone.

VANN
We don't have time for this
horseshit, we're about to be over-
run. Do it.

CUT TO:

158 INT. KONTUM COMMAND BUNKER. DAY

158

Everyone in the bunker listens.

158A EXT. FIELDS KONTUM DAY

158A

Vann looks out with binoculars through the slit.
Vann's P.O.V. hundreds of NVA are advancing across the fields.

VANN
Come on.

Then as he looks a huge blast, another and another, stepping
toward him.

158B INT. KONTUM COMMAND BUNKER. DAY

158B

He turns, looks at his men, as the explosions step toward him
ever louder.

Boom.

CONTINUED

158B CONTINUED:

158B

Boom

The sound is repeated every second, growing louder each time reverberating towards them like a marching giant. The bunker shakes, the blackboard falls from the wall, great bellows of dust and dirt fly in from the doorway and the air vents. Several officers crouch down.

A huge blast

Then silence. No one breathes.

More silence.

One man yells with relief, another joins him. they all yell and scream with delight.

CUT TO:

159 OMITTED

159

160 EXT. KONTUM COMMAND BUNKER. DAY

160

There is dust and smoke everywhere.

Vann emerges, like Lazarus from the tomb, followed by his men.

Then the sound of helicopters over head.

The men cheer, hug each other.

VANN

Okay, let's go, let's go, get those
apc's out there and see what the hell
is left. Let's go.

Men hurry into the smoke and dust

CUT TO:

161 EXT. HELICOPTER PAD MILITARY H.Q. NIGHT

161

Vann's helicopter has landed. It's raining.

*

161A INT. HANGAR NIGHT

161A

Inside an aircraft hangar, a ragtag ceremonial guard of very young ARVN soldiers, some look just twelve or thirteen.

CONTINUED

A group of press watches as the South Vietnamese prime minister stands beside Weyand.

A helicopter lands just outside the hangar.

Vann disembarks as a tiny band strikes up.

Vann walks into the hangar. Weyand hugs him joyously.

Vann marches up to the podium.

The prime minister presents him with a medal As thunder rumbles off in the distance.

162 INT. HANGAR NIGHT

162 *

Weyand stands beside Vann.

VANN
I gotta get back.

162A EXT. HANGAR NIGHT

162A *

Vann leaves, walks out into the pouring rain. Burnett follows.

Burnett catches up to him.

BURNETT
General, you sure kept your word.

VANN
Well thanks.

BURNETT
I thought you'd like to see this.

Burnett takes out a folded newspaper page it's the front of the New York Times. He hands it to Vann.

Vann opens it.

CLOSE ON: The headlines: Ellsberg leaks Pentagon Papers.

CONTINUED

VANN

(reads)

The FBI charged that former Vietnam veteran Daniel Ellsberg was guilty of leaking the top secret pentagon papers which reveal a consistent pattern of government misinformation and underreporting on war casualties.

(laughs)

Well I'll be damned.

BURNETT

At least someone's not prepared to keep on peddling the lie.

VANN

Well now what lie would that be.

BURNETT

That we're here to help solve Vietnam's problems. **We** are the problem, and that's the truth.

VANN

Well there's your truth and there's my truth and they're two different things, son. All I know is that up that road is old general Giap and when he and I speak to each other, we never lie.

BURNETT

But war's aren't about warriors anymore, they're about women and children and rice paddies. it was you told me that.

Vann is about to answer, changes his mind.

VANN

I gotta go. I got men up there holding the line.

163 INT. HELICOPTER NIGHT.

163

The rain pours down. The pilot turns to Vann as lightning cracks off in the distance.

CONTINUED

PILOT (PLEADING)

Boss...

VANN

Up the road.

He holds his thumb up indicating.

CONTINUED

VANN
(continuing)
Let s go.

Freeze-frame on Vann smiling, his thumb pointing forward.
As taps sounds over then

CUT TO:

164 OMITTED

164

165 EXT. ARLINGTON CEMETERY. DAY

165

A quiet grove, a freshly dug grave, around it a Marine color party, behind them a military band. Vann's flag draped coffin. On one side of the grave, The camera pans across all the key military and political figures in Vann's life: Westmoreland, Weyand, Harkins, the Ambassador, a Vietnamese general and a line of distinguished politicians. *

Camera pans to a canvas canopy, Mary Jane sits with Jesse, and Paul and the rest of her family. Daniel Ellsberg stands directly behind Mary Jane, Burnett is beside him.

As dignitaries begin to file toward Mary Jane and the family to offer condolences.

As the first dignitary approaches Mary Jane is about to get up, Dan Ellsberg puts his hand on her shoulder, as though to console (but he exerts a little pressure, to tell her to stay seated, make the dignitaries bend)

She looks back at him, stays seated.

Westmoreland passes, leans and shakes her hand.

WESTMORELAND
A great soldier.

He stares at Ellsberg.

HARKINS
My deepest condolences.

He doesn't look at Ellsberg.

CONTINUED

General Weyand comes up, she stands kisses him on the cheek.
He whispers to her.

MARY JANE

Thanks Fred.

Weyand smiles at Ellsberg.

CUT TO:

The guard of honor fire the volley over the coffin and it is lowered into the grave. As it is lowered, Mary Jane nods to the band conductor. He turns raises his arms and the band strikes up: The Kingston Trio's "Where have All the Flowers Gone."

Close on General Weyand's flicker of a smile.

As the music plays pan across the American military and political figures who led the country to war.

Then freeze on the U.S. Ambassador.

The band music turns to the original Kingston trio song:

"Where have all the young men gone, long time passing ...

On screen:

John Paul Vann died on June ninth, 1972 when his helicopter crashed in a thunderstorm. Three years later he U.S. Ambassador fled by helicopter from the roof of the embassy in Saigon as the Vietcong entered the city.

Freeze on Ellsberg:

All charges against Daniel Ellsberg where dropped when the supreme court ruled that the publication of the Pentagon Papers was in the national interest.

Freeze on General Westmoreland:

CONTINUED

165 CONTINUED: (2)

During his tour of duty General Westmoreland 500,000 tons of explosives were dropped on Vietnam, twice the amount of explosives dropped by all the allies during World War II. In 1985 he unsuccessfully sued CBS news for accusing him of falsifying body count reports during his tour of duty.

Freeze on Mary Jane:

President Nixon presented Mary Jane Vann with the Presidential Medal of Freedom he awarded to her dead husband.

Fade to a still of Lee:

Lee was held for four years in a detention camp for collaborators. She now works as a seamstress in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon).

still of Annie and baby

Annie lives in the Vietnamese countryside with her family. Her daughter, Thuy Van, is a cadre in the Vietnamese People's Army.

The old Picture of General Giap.

General Vo Nyugen Giap died in his bed a national hero. He is considered one of the greatest military strategists of the 20th century.

As the song continues to play cut to

A pan along the Vietnam wall, find the name of John Paul Vann on the wall, see him in reflection staring at the name.

John Paul Vann was one of 58,000 Americans who died in Vietnam.

Roll credits.

38

BLUE REVISIONS - OCTOBER 22, 1997

MAIDA

What's he doing now?

*

76. INT. ENTRANCE. VLADO'S APARTMENT BLOCK. DAY.

VLADO and MAIDA are safely home: they both turn and look at ZIJAH as he distributes the rifles. VLADO looks, realizing that this could affect him.

*

VLADO

He must be setting up an army...

Volunteers. If you want to control the

black market, run the army. That's what he's doing.

*

He turns to go up the stairs

No one else knows what to do.

* *

77. INT. VLADO'S APARTMENT. DAY.

MAIDA clears up the glass in the bedroom as VLADO places plastic sheeting across the window. NADJA switches on the journalist's recorder she picked up and starts nattering into it.

NADJA

(In a reporter's voice) Dear Lejla, best friend ever in the whole world, this is my first report to you from the front line. The electricity and water is still off but dad has found some useless plastic stuff to put across the windows. Old Teddy has a cut on his nose but otherwise the Selimovic family is just fine.

VLADO looks out of the window and sees ...

78. EXT. VLADO'S POV. STREET BY VLADO'S APARTMENT. DAY.

In the rubble-strewn street below, in an area concealed from the hills, ZIJAH training up twenty Volunteers. The Volunteers include MALIK, the callow 17 year-old we met in scene 4, hopelessly holding a rifle for the first time in his life. He accidentally fires the gun, shooting someone else in the foot. It's an almost comical scene as the injured man hops around ...

*

Double white revisions - November 3 1997

38a

NADJA

Where are you sleeping? I'm not allowed in my bed any more but we are not going down to the basement because dad says we will be safer where we are. So we're sleeping in our hallway. Great! He better be right - or we're dead! Anyway, more important matters, as we are not going to school...

79. INT. VLADO'S APARTMENT. DAY.

VLADO turns away from the window and gets his coat as NADJA continues her message into the recorder.

NADJA

... what are we going to do about seeing Zeljko? You say he hates you but I bet he doesn't. I think that's just Sivi spreading rumours. He's just saying that cos he fancies you himself and he's jealous. I tried calling Zeljko but there was no one at home. Maybe they've moved to his gran's in the old town. Anyway, I'm working on it cos I know your life isn't going to be worth living now that you can't see him in the science lessons any more...

MAIDA

(To Vlado) Where are you going?

Double white revisions - November 3 1997

39

VLADO

Bruno's kid is out there with a rifle - he
doesn't have a chance.

MAIDA looks at him - she realizes the consequences of Vlado going down to join
them

NADJA now begins to suspect what's going on. She stops talking into her recorder.

80. INT. VLADO'S APARTMENT. DAY.

NADJA sits in a corner of the room, refusing to acknowledge the world. MAIDA looks
out of the window.

81. EXT. MAIDA'S POV. STREET BY VLADO'S APARTMENT. DAY.

She sees VLADO teaching MALIK how to shoot a rifle.

82. INT. VLADO'S APARTMENT. EVENING.

VLADO wears jeans and a dark top. MAIDA (trying not to show how upset she is)
blackens his face with charcoal as NADJA looks on, worried (she has become the
little girl again, holding her teddy, which has a plaster on its nose).

MAIDA

(Finishing) That should do it.

VLADO

Thanks.

MAIDA gives him a brave smile - they both turn to NADJA. We see the image of the
photo-montage of Slavko and Vlado on the wall

(Giving Nadja a hug) I'll be all right.

darling... I will... I'll be back... Okay?

VLADO picks up his rifle and goes.

40

BLUE REVISIONS - OCTOBER 22, 1997

83. EXT. ALIPASINO HOUSING ESTATE. EVENING.

As another missile bombardment starts, VLADO, carrying his rifle, runs away from the Estate and to the front line. He is now a man on his own and his face betrays the terror of a novice soldier going into the unknown.

84. EXT. 53 RADIC STREET. DOBRINJA. EVENING.

Vlado's high-rise apartment block can be seen in the background. VLADO runs to the house where a VOLUNTEER is directing them in. The last families are fleeing from the front line. One of the fleeing men, an elderly man, thinks he recognizes Vlado. His dog walks beside him. (This dialogue comes over Vlado running to the house).

NEBOJSA

Vlado?

VLADO

Nebojsa!

NEBOJSA

Good luck!

85. INT. 53 RADIC STREET. DOBRINJA. EVENING. * *

VLADO hurries in as the couple who own the house quickly gather up a few items before fleeing.

The living room is like any ordinary living room in peacetime: family photos and ornaments on the mantelpiece, television and video, three piece suite. This is suburban Sarajevo.

As he goes into the living room - and faces the other twenty Volunteers (including DURANOVIC and OROZ) - he realizes he's the only one with boot polish on his face. As they stare at him, ZIJAH appears from another room with a machine gun.

DURANOVIC

Everyone's in.

ZIJAH

(Noticing Vlado) Hell of a way to hide
your zits.

The others all laugh, hiding their nerves as ZIJAH pulls out a crumpled piece of paper and lays it out on the coffee table *

Double white revisions - November 3 1997

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you take the next house up from them.
Dino and Shijan ...

86. EXT. 53 RADIC STREET. DOBRINJA. NIGHT.

VLADO and the other Volunteers run out of the rear door of the house, out of the backyard and into the street. They scatter as they run across the intersection to the front-line houses of Nevinova Street, dodging in and out of the parked cars. They are met with a volley of deafening and incessant gunfire.

VLADO has no idea where the fire is coming from - all he knows is that the Serbs must have been waiting for them.

VLADO dashes to the backyard wall of one of the forward houses and tumbles over it.

87. EXT. BACKYARD. HOUSE. NEVINOVA STREET. DOBRINJA. NIGHT.

VLADO, now the other side of the wall, picks himself up and runs to the back door, kicking it open with his foot as gunfire is all around him.

88. INT. HOUSE. NEVINOVA STREET. DOBRINJA. NIGHT.

VLADO finds himself in another nice living room. The TV is still on, showing some comedy programme with loud canned laughter. A small forgotten family dog comes to him, wagging its tail. Hell is outside in the street - but in here, it is someone's sweet little paradise.

BLUE REVISIONS - OCTOBER 22, 1997

89. INT. BEDROOM. HOUSE. NEVINOVA STREET. DOBRINJA. NIGHT.
From the bedroom we see VLADO appear up the stairs. He comes into the bedroom and takes up a position by the window. The dog follows him and jumps up onto the bed. We hear the sound of a mortar falling close by the house. The windows shatter in on VLADO. He takes a peep through the shattered window.

90. EXT. VLADO'S POV. HOUSE OPPOSITE IN NEVINOVA STREET. NIGHT.
We see movement in the house opposite. Maybe the glint of a rifle moving by the window.

91. INT. BEDROOM. HOUSE. NEVINOVA STREET. DOBRINJA. NIGHT.
VLADO leans against the pretty curtains: inside this room is a cosy, intimate bedroom. VLADO now looks out on to the street again.

92. EXT. VLADO'S POV. NEVINOVA STREET. DOBRINJA. NIGHT.
VLADO sees MALIK crouching behind a car, too terrified to move. We hear ZIJAH's voice shouting in the blackness. *

ZIJAH (OOV) *

Come on, forward, for fuck's sake!

93. INT. BEDROOM. HOUSE. NEVINOVA STREET. DOBRINJA. NIGHT.
VLADO sees that MALIK doesn't know where the voice is coming from.

94. EXT. VLADO'S POV. NEVINOVA STREET. DOBRINJA. NIGHT.
MALIK is somewhere between going forward and being frozen with terror.

ZIJAH (OOV) *

Malik, get forward you fucking idiot! You
have to get forward into the house!

MALIK now runs out into the road - and is immediately shot.

95. INT. BEDROOM. HOUSE. NEVINOVA STREET. DOBRINJA. NIGHT.
VLADO stares at him for a moment.

96. EXT. VLADO'S POV. NEVINOVA STREET. DOBRINJA. NIGHT.
MALIK writhes in pain.