

AMERICAN PATRIOT

A Screenplay By

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"An Oscar-caliber script...A FEW GOOD MEN meets TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD."

- The Black List

The following is a true story.

Fade into...

EXT. JAPANESE COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN

Winter. A single white bus rolls through a ravine blanketed by a thin layer of snow. The engine whines as the battered bus climbs the icy hill surrounding a frozen pond, spitting clouds of black smoke in its wake.

Chyron: Kochi Prefecture, Japan. 1949.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

The lone passenger, GWEN BUCHANAN, 30s, a striking pale brunette fatigued beyond her youth, huddles near the back. She studies a map as a DRIVER guides the old bus down into a wide valley where scattered wooden homes come into view.

EXT. ROAD - RURAL VILLAGE - DAY

She braves the barren road, bracing against the cold when she notices a gray FIGURE in the distance. It distracts her as a gust of wind whips the map from her hands and...

...she falls on the ice fumbling to retrieve it.

The Figure hovers over her, silhouetted by the sun. It's an elderly Japanese BEGGAR who offers an arm to her--his only arm.

GWEN (JAPANESE)
Thank you.

The Old Beggar helps her to her feet and continues down the road.

GWEN (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Excuse me. 371?

Gwen follows the neat stone path leading to a modest cottage. She reaches for the door but stops herself. She surveys the silent town. Exhales. Turns. Knocks...

FADE OUT AS...

EXT. EMPTY SKIES OVER THE SOUTH PACIFIC - DAY

...knocking bleeds into the roar of a B-24's engine as the bomber's young PILOT whispers over the radio.

Chyron: Peleliu, South Pacific. 1944.

B-24 PILOT (RADIO)
90 seconds from Peleliu. Here it is,
gang. Sights, Williams?

His CO-PILOT surveys the rocky island formations below.

INT. B-24 BOMBARDIER PIT - CONTINUOUS

WILLIAMS'S, 26, POV: The young bombardier peers through his
viewfinder at fleeting blue water.

WILLIAMS (RADIO)
Sights checked, Captn'. Should be
firin' true as yesterday.

B-24 CO-PILOT
Amen. Liked yesterday.

B-24 PILOT
Let's have it same as, huh?

B-24 CO-PILOT
Roger that, sir.

B-24 PILOT (RADIO)
Ok. Final check, team: Engine?

Engineer "WASH" WASHINGTON, 30, runs a finger along the
instruments side-panel behind the two pilots.

WASH
Engines fine, sir.

B-24 PILOT
Thanks, Wash. Ball turret?

TURRET GUNNER (RADIO)
Turret, check.

GUNNER 1 (RADIO)
Right hip, check.

GUNNER 2 (RADIO)
Left hip.

B-24 PILOT (RADIO)
Good having you onboard, kid. Our
left-waist gun had to go and crack
his ankle on the O-Course.

GUNNER 1
Lucky sumbitch, Nalty. Musta fell 30
feet.

B-24 PILOT (RADIO)
Tail gun? Tail gun...? Ned?

NED, 18, busies himself in prayer before -

NED (RADIO)
 Fixin to fuck somethin' back 'ere, Capn'.

Laughter over the radio.

B-24 PILOT (RADIO)
 Tokyo Rose again?

NED (RADIO)
 I keep tellin' that darned bitch to
 keep 'er tiny Jap mouth shut. But
 just like em', Jap women.

Williams's bomb sight POV: Dark veins of the atoll's outer rim.

WILLIAMS (RADIO)
 Reef.

B-24 PILOT (RADIO)
 30 seconds.

The plane falls silent, into a stillness punctuated only by the predictable, mechanical rhythm of pulsating engines when a sequence of orange flares flash along the distant coastline.

It's too late as...

The cockpit erupts in flame. Anti-aircraft flak screams into the pilots killing them instantly and severing the top half of the cockpit from the aircraft.

NED (RADIO)
The 'ell was that?!

Wash grips the controls and yanks the plane out of a plunge as wind floods the cockpit at 200 mph and anti-aircraft fire peppers the pale blue sky.

Sweat drips in beads on Williams's brow, his eyes locked to his sight. He finds a clustered military installation in his cross-hairs and releases the payload with his right arm. He slips into a parachute with his left as the plane careens sideways.

WILLIAMS (RADIO)
 Bombs away.

GUNNER 1 (RADIO)
Talk to us, Capn'!

A second shell collides with the plane's underbelly spraying shrapnel into the legs of the two waist gunners.

WASH (RADIO)
Chutes! Abandon ship! Mayday! Mayday!
Mayday -

EXT. LAGOON - CONTINUOUS

The plane unfolds as the Flyers--those alive--leap from plane to sky, deploy chutes and splash into the crystalline lagoon. Wash and Williams watch from a hundred yards as a patrol boat and a PLATOON of armed Japanese fish the entangled Ned from the water.

INT. TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Bound with rope, the three surviving Flyers are conveyed via inside of a truck to the main island.

NED

What're they goin' do to us, Wash?

WASH

I don't know, Neddo.

EXT. IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY HEADQUARTERS - DUSK

Two KEMPEITAI--identified as the secret police by red kanji armbands--drag the Flyers onto the grassy perimeter of Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) Headquarters.

Past THOUSANDS of Japanese preparing for their final stand.

They march the Flyers along a dirt path lined by rusting barracks where Wash sees her--the piercing dark eyes of a tan-skinned CHILD. A door opens and a Catholic FATHER hurries her inside.

INT. IJA HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

A soft light glows in the window of the central HQ barracks.

Inside, an ailing General INOUE, 60s, Commander of the storied Japanese 14th Division, hunches over a map. His solemn and bespectacled Chief of Staff, Colonel TADA, 60s, directs the General's attention to various red markers.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)

They've conquered Saipan...

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)

Six submarines.

(moving a marker)

Twelve P-40s and Three B-24s. Twenty-two casualties reported from our Air-Defense Crew--here. Seven civilians injured. Two deceased. Thirteen cruisers comprise the blockade, General.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
Are we prepared to move to the
mountain?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
I'm finalizing the preparations now.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
I cannot go with you.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
I know.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
See that it's done.

Tada rolls the map and tucks it under his arm.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
And the prisoners?

INT. IJA BRIG - NIGHT

Traces of moonlight fall through the rafters. Below, the three Flyers are manacled to a wooden beam above their heads. The door to the brig swings open.

Intelligence Officer YAJIMA, late 30s, noticeably shorter, steps inside with several GUARDS. He grips a leash collaring a sickly, feral DOG. He approaches Wash, fingering the non-com patch on his shoulder.

And releases the dog to sink its teeth into his leg.

He tethers the frothing animal once he's seen enough, pressing a clipboard against Wash's stomach.

YAJIMA
English ok.

Wash scribbles something and falls limp: *"Name: DiMaggio"*.

The squat Yajima looks at Wash. Then at the others.

He blinks the sweat from his eyes. Before releasing the dog to tear into Ned's face.

INT. IJA BRIG - DAY

Wash dangles from his arms. He notices that Ned hasn't moved.

WASH
(wheezing)
Ned? Ned?

Rivulets of blood drip from Ned's face.

WASH (CONT'D)
Williams...?

WILLIAMS
My legs don't work, Wash.

WASH
Yeah.

WILLIAMS
My legs don't work.

An air raid siren whirls.

WASH
I'ma carry you. They're. Coming. Neddo...?

Yajima enters with his Guards. He's short of breath.

EXT. IJA HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Yajima leads the prisoners through camp and into the white afternoon sun, into the jungle, into the chaos of SOLDIERS clawing at one another to survive the bombs detonating all around them.

Ned and Williams lean on Wash as Yajima and his Guards prod the injured Flyers through camp, past the treeline and into the belly of a camouflaged bunker hidden beneath the jungle canopy.

Through a passing HQ window Wash spots Colonel Tada, unbeknownst to him, disappear out of sight.

INT. JUNGLE AIR RAID SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

The bunker shakes as Yajima secures their restraints and Wash watches him approach the barrel-chested, perfectly-postured Colonel MIYAZAKI, 40s, commander of the Kempeitai.

One day Colonel Tada will have to answer for this...

EXT. IJA HEADQUARTERS - DUSK

Black clouds roll over the island. Fat drops of rain. Yajima drags the prisoners through camp. He blindfolds them and loads them into a truck.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

A downpour. Wash's hood is removed.

Headlights illuminate a jungle clearing surrounded by a SQUAD of IJA Soldiers. The Flyers are made to kneel alongside TWELVE civilians: MISSIONARIES and their TWO children.

The barrel-chested Miyazaki steps forward in the rain.

Wash recognizes the young dark-skinned girl with the deep brown eyes beside him, a Catholic Father praying in her ear. He listens to the twelve gunshots ring out in the night.

Wash finishes the Lord's prayer over the scratch of metal as Miyazaki draws a saber from its sheath.

FADE OUT.

Chyron: March, 1949. Five Years Later.

INT. CHAPEL - GUAM - DAY

Commander MARTIN CARLSON, late 40s, winces in the back pew as a Chamorro CHOIR--the indigenous people of the Mariana Islands--croon an off-key, discordant "Amazing Grace".

When parishioners line for the Eucharist Carlson stands, faded briefcase in hand, olive fatigues pressed into crisp running lines.

His practiced exit obscured by the standing faithful.

EXT. CHAPEL - GUAM - DAY

Outside a PLATOON of Marines jog past Carlson in formation.

UNKNOWN MARINE
Jap lover.

Carlson keeps walking. He's heard it before.

INT. CLASSROOM - GUAM - DAY

Carlson navigates the chaos of twenty screaming Chamorro CHILDREN inside a cramped wooden shack.

Beautiful, elegant and pious, RUTH CARLSON, 40s, narrates tirelessly from a children's bible to a room full of disinterested brown children. Carlson plants a kiss on her mouth.

RUTH
(surprised)
The service over, Martin?

CARLSON
I'm late as it is.
(exiting)
They don't speak English, honey.

RUTH
They needn't.

She sees the communion processional in the glass window and sighs. Left early. Again.

E./I. COURTROOM HUT - GUAM - DAY - ESTABLISHING

High above Adelup Bay, overlooking the Philippine Sea, a corrugated military quonset sits perched atop a verdant hillside littered with palms, a steel monument to justice.

Chyron: United States Navy War Crimes Commission. Nimitz Hill, Guam Tribunal.

Inside the makeshift courtroom prosecuting Judge Advocate JOSEPH REGAN, 28, tall, entitled, waspy, levels histrionics.

REGAN
Commander Carlson would have you believe Mr. Kakaji's confession is merely the deranged rambling of an insane Japanese.

Carlson sits at the table opposite Regan. Next to a disheveled DEFENDANT staring absently out the window and a lanky JAPANESE attorney translating quickly in his ear.

In front of them, seated along an elevated dais, the heavy, ruddy-faced Rear Admiral ARTHUR G. ROBINSON, 50s, presides over a SEVEN-OFFICER commission.

REGAN (CONT'D)
Let me remind you, gentlemen, of the singular depravity exhibited by the accused--perhaps a more evident display than any seen in the 48 preceding trials overseen thus far on Guam -

CARLSON
(exhausted)
Opinion.

Carlson eyes the much younger Regan from his chair.

ROBINSON
Sustained.

CARLSON
Motion to strike.

Regan shakes his head as Admiral Robinson nods to ARCHIE HADEN, 19, the court's stenographer.

Outside the window MARINES obscure the defendant's view of an oddly-shaped thatched hut in the distance.

REGAN

Ingesting the viscera of an American service member.

(beat)

Finding murder alone unable to satiate an appetite for wickedness. Supreme avarice confessed. The judge advocate asks that the relevant charges be found proved--and further suggests capital punishment as the only appropriate form of justice.

Robinson leans forward, two fingers supporting his temple. A Japanese with a conspicuous spinal deformity likewise leans forward in his pew--the sole audience in the makeshift courtroom.

ROBINSON

Commander Carlson?

Carlson stands. He's done this well over a hundred times before and he wears the effort in his voice.

CARLSON

It was Paine who wrote, "He that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from oppression --"

Regan yawns.

CARLSON (CONT'D)

"For if he violates this duty he establishes a precedent that will reach himself."

You can tell he might have even believed it once.

INTERCUT:

INT. STOCKADE - SAME

Empty rooms behind steel doors. Vestiges of the machine that once housed hundreds.

CARLSON (IN COURT)

I concede some of the relaxed standards of evidence collection which have been necessarily outlined by Supreme Allied Commander MacArthur.

Only three non-contiguous cells remain occupied:

That of the bespectacled Colonel Tada.

Of the sickly, bearded General Inoue.

Of Miyazaki--banging his head against the concrete wall.

Colonel Tada hears the BANGING. The echoes of Miyazaki's face becoming a bloodied mess of bone and tissue, his wailing louder with each collision.

COLONEL TADA

Guards!

Miyazaki reaches down for a dislodged tooth, rotten with decay. He digs into his forearm as Carlson approaches the bench.

CARLSON (IN COURT)

(perfunctorily)

Though, I suggest that Article 2, Section 1 of the 1929 Geneva Convention be applied also to ourselves. That we might retain in memory the conditions under which Mr. Kakaji's 'confession' was produced. That we would hold a lens to the multifarious objectives of the captors to whom it was ultimately submitted--Japanese, or American -

REGAN

Objection. *Admiral* -

ROBINSON

Overruled. Go on, Marty.

CARLSON

Three years Mr. Kakaji's held without warrant in Sugamo Prison--the origin of this self-incriminating document. Finally, even those suffering from the most debilitating myopia will surely recognize the benefits of a designed collusive effort on behalf of the witnesses. Nothing further, Admiral.

ROBINSON

Mr. Oto -

The lanky Japanese translator rises.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)

The professionalism our Japanese volunteers have exhibited these last three years has not gone unnoticed.

(beat)

(MORE)

ROBINSON (CONT'D)
Commission adjourned for
deliberation.

The Commissioners file into an office behind the bench as a BAILIFF whispers into Robinson's ear.

Carlson's seen that look before on Guam.

OTO
Commander Carlson--what happens next?

CARLSON
Now they decide, Mr. Oto.

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Seven hands are raised high around a circular table.

ROBINSON
Get SCAP on the wireless, Arch.

The baby-faced Haden fires a telegram across the world to...

E./I. PENTAGON - WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A concrete monolith obscuring an illuminated Washington Monument across the Potomac...and a SOLDIER who receives the telegram and navigates through an empty, nondescript office.

Chyron: Third Floor, E-Ring, Pentagon.

INT. MACARTHUR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

General DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, 69, changes into his dress uniform behind an antique mahogany desk. He does so with a quiet urgency while reviewing a color map of the Korean Peninsula. The Soldier enters with the Guam dispatch in hand.

SECRETARY
Guilty, General MacArthur. Seven of
seven.

MacArthur nods, pinning another ribbon on his jacket. He's exhausted--overworked, but managing. A thick stack of leather folders reminds him he won't be sleeping later.

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - GUAM - DAY

Haden hands MacArthur's reply telegram to Admiral Robinson.

INT. GALLOWS - GUAM - LATE AFTERNOON

Carlson sits alone on a stool in a cavernous room; before him looms the gallows. Regan enters. Leaving one stool between them, he checks his watch.

REGAN
Civy soon.

CARLSON
Two more.

REGAN
One more.

Carlson looks down.

CARLSON
Yes. Suppose so.

Regan sticks two fingers in his own mouth, attempting to wiggle a tooth.

REGAN
Home sooner than we thought they keep
killin' themselves.

FOUR armed guards and the WARDEN, 40s, stocky and unshaven, enter with Carlson's Defendant--shaking in khaki shirt and trousers.

WARDEN
Marty.

CARLSON
Warden.

Guards lead the prisoner up the steps, ready the noose around his neck and read something in Japanese--the preparations mechanical.

GUARD
Witnesses ready?

Regan flicks his thumb.

CARLSON
I am.

WARDEN
My go isn't it, Sammy?

Carlson watches the Warden jump in front of the guard to initiate the door and the prisoner drops, his legs kicking wildly.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Little jitter-bug this one, eh,
Marty? Jitter-jitter, jitter-bug.

He pantomimes a puppeteer pulling imaginary strings.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Leaving us, huh, Marty?

The prisoner is still alive...

WARDEN (CONT'D)
If you would, Commander. I'm going to
miss having you 'round. We all are.

He hands Carlson a document. Carlson waits until the man's legs have stopped kicking before signing:

"Witness: Commander Martin Emilius Carlson, USNR." He exits the thatched structure that earlier had so transfixed his client.

VOMITING...

INT. CARLSON'S QUARTERS - GUAM - NIGHT

...Carlson heaving into a toilet.

He wipes his face as he trudges through a bedroom--spartan and immaculate, save for the moving crates stacked high in the corner.

Thousands of documents are strewn across his desk. He pushes them aside and takes out a knife, carving a mark in the wood alongside hundreds of other cuts tallying the dead...

INT. CHOW HALL - GUAM - NIGHT

A pale young Marine, ERIC BREEN, 22, sits alone at chow. SAILORS, MARINES and SOLDIERS file past, keeping their distance.

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER (O.S.)
Breen.

Breen stands at attention. Slowly. Detached. Mechanical. Something's off...

BREEN
Yes, Staff Sergeant.

A NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER shoves a folder in Breen's gut and makes for the chow line, glad to be rid of him.

INT. CARLSON "DINING ROOM" - GUAM - NIGHT

A simple, candle-lit meal. Ruth's done what she could.

RUTH

We pray that you might deliver to Betty a healthy baby whom she might anoint to the service of your eternal kingdom. We pray for our country. For our leaders. For our enemies. And Lord I pray for my husband, Martin-- your servant.

Carlson eyes the soggy noodles in his bowl.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Father I lift him up to you and pray that your grace might fill his spirit in this valley in our lives. Just get us through these next two weeks. Bring us home safely, Lord. In Christ's holy name, amen.

CARLSON

Looks delicious, honey.

RUTH

I spoke with Nancy Sullivan this morning. Remember her? She and Bill want to host us.

CARLSON

Why don't we wait 'til we're settled.

RUTH

I told her I'd speak with you.

CARLSON

It was kind of them to offer.

They eat in uncomfortable silence.

RUTH

Betty's due any day. Spoke earlier. How was the service this morning?

CARLSON

Tenor could use some work.

RUTH

What's wrong, Martin?

He looks up from his noodles.

CARLSON

Miyazaki killed himself today in the stockade. I'll have to phone his wife. After Kakaji's.

RUTH

Jesus...

Ruth bows her head. Another ocean-sized silence disturbed by a fat mosquito touching down on the table.

CARLSON

Robinson's expedited the Inoue/Tada case. MacArthur's eager to dissolve the commission. He's all tied up with this fiasco in Korea.

RUTH

The ones who killed those Christians?

He eyes it crawling towards his hand and onto his plate.

CARLSON

That's what Joe thinks.

RUTH

What do you think?

He watches the insect fly through a hole in the screened window. Next to THOUSANDS like it dancing against the screen.

INT. STOCKADE - GUAM - NIGHT

Perfect Katakana characters spill onto white parchment and dissolve into...

EXT. HONG KONG HARBOR - DAWN (FLASHBACK, HONG KONG)

Viewfinder POV: Sandbags. Buildings reduced to rubble along the sea wall. Rotting corpses of the forgotten dead.

The stunning young woman from the prologue, Gwen, lowers her camera, indifferent to a buzzing machine gun rupturing the quiet morning air. A British MACHINE GUNNER blasts away from a perch three stories above her, raining spent shell casings.

Chyron: Hong Kong. 13 December 1941.

A flash from the distant Kowloon lighthouse pulsates in the fog and Gwen follows the tracer bullets to their target--a small boat flying the flag of the rising sun, motoring in the mist with its white banner: "*Peace Mission*"

Gwen runs towards the pier. A British SOLDIER stops her, his shining bayonet ready.

BRITISH SOLDIER

Piers off limits, lady. The fuck are you doing 'ere?

GWEN (AMERICAN)

It's a peace envoy, you ass. Call off the gun. What? Are you going to stab me?

She hands him the camera. Bullets fly.

BRITISH SOLDIER

Cease fire!!

GWEN

Idiot.

She hurries past.

BRITISH SOLDIER

Stop!

The boat bangs into the pier and a pregnant WOMAN, 30s, white, lurches up the gangplank. Two Japanese OFFICERS trail behind her as a PLATOON of British Soldiers encircle them.

One of the two is Colonel Tada; he's a younger, different man.

BRITISH SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Halt. Halt!!

Gwen's camera cracks a bulb. The soldiers grip their rifles, moving in to restrain her. But she steps closer, mere feet from Tada who watches on. *Studying her.*

COLONEL TADA

Reporter?

GWEN

Gwen Dew. *Detroit News*. Who the hell are you?

BRITISH SOLDIER

Hands! Let me see your hands dammit!

Tada nods and the heavier Officer hands Gwen a folder before offering the same to one of the British--who retreats in fear.

JAPANESE OFFICER

From the Emperor. Please see that the Governor-General receives it. You are free to publish our terms of surrender in the press.

COLONEL TADA

The people should know it is a fair deal.

GWEN
Who is she?

COLONEL TADA
This woman needs a hospital. I recall
there is one not far from here.

INT. STOCKADE - GUAM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Now an older, bearded, withering Colonel Tada sits in his cell addressing a letter by candlelight.

INT. CARLSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A woman sobs on the other end of Carlson's telephone.

FEMALE VOICE (JAPANESE, V.O.)
How did he die, Commander?

Carlson rubs the tally mark dug into the wood when the phone's red light begins to blink.

CARLSON (PHONE)
(Japanese)
Excuse me for just one moment, Maiko.
Just one moment.
(English)
Carlson. Yes, Danny...what?

INT. TADA'S CELL - NIGHT

The hunchback from the courtroom, SANAGI, 30s, sits next to Tada on a low stool. The other half of Tada's defense team.

The two men hear the General coughing in an adjacent cell.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
General? General Inoue? Are you
alright, sir? *Sadae*?

The General grips the red prayer beads dangling from his neck and rolls over in his cot. Eyes open. He heard him fine.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
His condition deteriorates.

SANAGI (JAPANESE)
Even now he doesn't speak to you?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
The General is a holy man.

SANAGI (JAPANESE)
Do holy men testify?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Never disparage a man's faith,
Sanagi. Especially when it is not
your own. If I've taught you anything
let it be that.
(beat)
The law is much different here. Are
you finding this?

SANAGI (JAPANESE)
I'm finding a lot of things about my
American colleagues, Colonel.

Carlson enters carrying a bag. And something almost a smile.

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
(cautiously)
He may have found her.

Tada locates an envelope on his driftwood desk and hands it to
Carlson.

CARLSON (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Colonel, the woman he tracked...she
wrote a book. There's a 'Tada'
mentioned therein. Said he saved her
life.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Is it too late, Commander Carlson?

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
No. No it's not. We'll have to
verify, of course. But no. I don't
think so.

SANAGI (JAPANESE)
(suspiciously)
What of the jury?

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
That doesn't look so good. They all--
all of them--lost men at Pel.
(beat)
A lot of men.

SANAGI (JAPANESE)
Shocking.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
(rebuking)
Sanagi.
(MORE)

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
(to Carlson)
And my wife, Commander?

Tada looks hopefully at the bag Carlson dropped on his cot.

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
(exiting)
Letters will be in from Tokyo next
week. I'll make sure they're considered-
-whatever happens. You have my word.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Thank you, Commander.

Carlson gives a silent nod before exiting.

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
It isn't over.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Not tonight. No.
(beat)
Commander you forgot -

Inside the bag is a bottle of sake and more stationary.

INT. OFFICER'S CLUB - GUAM - NIGHT

Carlson enters the crowded O-Club. OFFICERS clear as he
approaches the bar, where nearby Doris Day's "Sentimental
Journey" competes with static from a zenith radio.

CARLSON
Whiskey.

He spots Robinson through a crowd of imbibing SAILORS and
Carlson pushes past, a pariah amongst his own.

CARLSON (CONT'D)
Sir there's something I need to
discuss with you -

ROBINSON
(tipsy)
Take a seat. How do you think Ruth's
doing, Marty?

CARLSON
Fine, sir. And Ethel?

ROBINSON
Guam's a small island. She's ready to
get the hell out of here.
(MORE)

ROBINSON (CONT'D)
I think we all are.
(barking)
Joe! Marty's looking for overtime.

Robinson summons Regan from a conversation--face flushed with drink.

REGAN
Sir?

ROBINSON
Have a seat. Marty's about to try n'
stick it in your ass.

REGAN
California, sir.

ROBINSON
Get him while he's on the sauce,
Marty. What do you have?

CARLSON
Gwen Buchanan. Née Gwen Dew. Tada's
reporter. That's why we couldn't
locate her. She took her husband's
name after the war.
(beat)
She also wrote a bestselling memoir,
if you can believe that, sir--
Prisoner of the Japs. I'm told
there's a Colonel Tada referenced
three times, possibly authenticating
my defendant's testimony.

REGAN
Doesn't authenticate a goddamned
thing, sir. Did he, or did he not,
relay the General's order to murder
fifteen people on Peleliu? That's the
case, Admiral. Everything else is bird
shit.

ROBINSON
Jesus it's hot in here...this woman,
her phone's no good?

CARLSON
Correct, sir. Disconnected.

ROBINSON
What'd she write about her Tada?

CARLSON

That he saved her life. If her testimony validates that our Colonel once conspired to keep Americans out of a Jap death camp, then I find the precedent encouraging--considering that's exactly what he claims to have done three years later. Don't you?

REGAN

We don't know anything about this woman, sir -

CARLSON

My classmate in Chicago edits the *Tribune*, sir. He assures me her timeline in Hong Kong matches the Colonel's service record.

(to Regan)

How many other females do you think covered the siege of Hong Kong for the *Detroit News*, Lieutenant Regan? I assure you even you can count that high.

Robinson chews on this.

CARLSON (CONT'D)

Her publicist says she's traveling but I'm told she has a speaking engagement in Dallas in two days. I had someone dispatched from Worth to check on her house. Said it doesn't look like anyone's lived there for some time. Still, Post Office delivers mail. Someone collects it...

REGAN

Just tragic that the one Jap that could have validated Tada's tale had a toothache. Tell ole Fish Eyes to get his story straight.

Robinson sighs and loosens the tie around his neck.

ROBINSON

I haven't seen you worked up like this in a while, Marty. I'm intrigued.

CARLSON

Isn't that why you dragged me here, sir?

ROBINSON

Though, you know as I do that you can't throw a stone in Tokyo without hitting a fucking 'Tada'. We'd need her to ID him. Convince me this has legs.

Carlson takes a long pull from his whiskey.

CARLSON

The Colonel alleges that back in '41 he secretly hid her in some hotel after the Japs took Hong Kong. And, that as a gesture of good will, for some reason he decided to save the life of an elderly man in her care by trafficking him to a hospital in Shanghai.

(beat)

Now Tada contends that he tried to give safe harbor to our three airmen by hiding them with the Kempeitai--after General Inoue allegedly ordered their execution prior to the amphib on Peleliu.

ROBINSON

Like hiding Jews with the Gestapo.

CARLSON

Correct, sir. It's almost laughable--unless there's a record of him having done it before.

ROBINSON

Was he fucking her?

CARLSON

I don't believe so, sir.

ROBINSON

Why'd he do it?

CARLSON

Do you want my personal opinion, sir?

ROBINSON

I've known you long enough, Marty.

CARLSON

Tada's an academic--not a soldier. Hell, he wrote the textbook for their West Point.

(MORE)

CARLSON (CONT'D)

He would have known full well the ramifications of murdering POWs--in fact he dedicates a whole chapter to it. I think Ms. Dew--Mrs. Buchanan--at the very least needs to be made aware to help answer your question herself. But it's not up to me, sir.

REGAN

Admiral -

ROBINSON

How long? 'Til your processed out?

CARLSON

Sixteen days, sir.

ROBINSON

Evidently, then, it doesn't particularly matter what I think.

(beat)

Does it, Marty?

Carlson nods. Satisfied. For now.

CARLSON

I'll look into it.

REGAN

I don't want to just be fucking around when you get back. What're your terms, sir?

A drunken JUNIOR OFFICER is shoved into the radio by the bar, busting it open and killing the music.

CARLSON

Life--for Inoue. Tada does twenty years. They each plead guilty and we all get to go home early.

REGAN

Fuck that.

CARLSON

I'll remind you Lieutenant Regan that you're speaking to your superior.

ROBINSON

Watch your mouth, Joseph. I'm not sure the commission would go for it, Marty. Even if Joe here bent over for you. What do you have, anyway?

CARLSON

Tada confessed to relaying the order, sir--not issuing it. It's the General you want. Twenty years in Sugamo--that is life.

ROBINSON

Has the General opened his mouth?

CARLSON

...No, sir.

REGAN

We have the bodies and Tada's own affidavit. Who cares if he *didn't* agree with the order? What about our men we pulled out of the dirt--sir? There were children in that ditch. Fucking animals. I'd like to crucify 'em.

ROBINSON

You know the feelings on Pel. Men'll want Tada to hang. A lot of shame born on that island--a lot of things most would rather soon forget.

CARLSON

How was it that the jury materialized the way it did, sir?

ROBINSON

Write another letter to MacArthur's office, Marty. And don't ever look at me that way again. You know I've nothing to do with it.

(beat)

Forty years. Inoue hangs.

A long beat as Carlson thinks this over. He nods.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Joe?

REGAN

Tada's how old?

CARLSON

He's fifty-four. He'll die elderly and alone in prison.

REGAN

Fifty years. Forty spent in solitary.

CARLSON
Including the two he served before
his trial?

REGAN
Hell is it to you? Honestly?

Carlson stands and makes for the exit.

CARLSON
Twenty-five in confinement.

REGAN
Bit of an awkward conversation with
the General, huh?

CARLSON
He knows what this is.

ROBINSON
Marty...MacArthur's opening this one
up to the men on island. Something
about closure.
(sincerely)
You can find this woman and we'll
have a different conversation.

Carlson's about to leave when -

REGAN
And Commander. No visitors.
(beat)
Ever.

He disappears in the rain. A pleased Joseph Regan gulps too
hard on his beer and froth runs down his neck.

ROBINSON
We were in Europe together before you
were born. Remember that, asshole. It
would do you well to recall that you just
got here. Even better why we're here.

REGAN
We're stationed on a pile of rocks
cleaning up their mess, sir.

ROBINSON
We've made the most of what we had.
And I'm proud of that. I pray you can
say the same one day.

He hands him a napkin.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)
Now get the fuck away from my table.

INT. CARLSON BEDROOM - GUAM - NIGHT

Carlson packs a suitcase with clothes from one of the moving crates. Ruth enters with a small bouquet of bougainvillea.

RUTH
Will these do?

CARLSON
They're lovely.

RUTH
I couldn't decide. It's been so long...Could this Colonel be telling the truth, Martin?

CARLSON
It's possible.

RUTH
I've heard her, you know. On the radio. Gwen Buchanan. She's famous.

CARLSON
Dear?

He takes a hardcover Bible out of his suitcase.

CARLSON (CONT'D)
They'll have one at the hotel.

He sets it on the dresser and tucks a folded dress shirt neatly into his bag--next to a revolver.

RUTH
(looking at the bible)
And if the trial runs beyond your contract, Martin?

CARLSON
That's why we're leaving tonight.

RUTH
But what would -

CARLSON
A civilian cannot practice in a military court. Lieutenant Regan would serve as both Judge Advocate and Counsel for the Defense.

RUTH
Surely not that horrid young man?

CARLSON

There's no one left, Ruth. Everyone's been transferred. Even the JAGs.

RUTH

What if it's real?

CARLSON

Have they ever been real?

She embraces him and he stops packing, leaning her head against his chest.

RUTH

Why are you the only one still fighting this war?

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

A vast emptiness far as the eye can see--an endless expanse of opaque marble. Then...splashing. Waves splashing loudly against the steel bow of a hitherto unseen WWI cruiser, idle in the sea.

A crow darts past the legs of a corpse, dripping wet in the hot sun and rotating on a long rope suspended from the bow. The frayed rope creaks as it unfurls, twisting slowly, revealing the face to be that of Martin Carlson.

DEEP MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Swim...swim fuckers...

INT. TRANSPORT AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Carlson twitches in his sleep. He awakens from his dream drenched in sweat and carefully inspects Ruth's flowers. A concerned Sanagi sits on the mesh netting opposite him.

SANAGI

You do not sleep like a lawyer, sir.
Where were you stationed?

He tries closing his eyes.

CARLSON

On a ship.

SANAGI

Which war?

CARLSON

Have you finished it?

SANAGI
(reading)
"General Inoue conveyed -"

CARLSON
Stand up. They'll make you stand.

The plane rattles. Carlson closes his eyes, paralyzed by fear.

SANAGI
"General Inoue conveyed his intention
to have the prisoners executed, but
Colonel Tada did not desire to carry
out his order - "

CARLSON
(barking)
Bull shit!

INT. IJA HEADQUARTERS - DAY (FLASHBACK, SOUTH PACIFIC)

Bombs rain down on the Pacific island recognized from the
prologue. On the table is the map covered in red markers.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
They'll be here tomorrow.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Yes, sir.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
So it's Peleliu.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
The men know what is expected of
them.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
The execution of the prisoners cannot
be postponed further. Bring them here
and do it before you go.

INT. TRANSPORT PLANE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Sanagi's frightened.

CARLSON
Don't stop.

SANAGI
..."In two subsequent conversations
Colonel Tada expressed his opposition - "

CARLSON
Bull fucking shit he did.

SANAGI
"but--but--was finally placed in a position where he had to relay the General's intention to Kempeitai Officer Miyazaki."

FLASH: Miyazaki handling a saber in the rain.

CARLSON
Fuck you, you Jap cock sucker. Murderer. Louder. Louder.

SANAGI
 (over Carlson)
"But Colonel Tada requested his furtive support to protect the prisoners from harm."

CARLSON
Ooooooooooh! That what he did?

SANAGI
"The same way he protected American Gwen Buchanan in Hong Kong in 1941."

CARLSON
What about the General, huh? What about the one who killed him a couple thousand Marines? What about him?

Sanagi stops. Carlson is manic. A man possessed...

SANAGI
"The General will testify - "

CARLSON
No he won't. Our General's hot for Buddha now--vowed to silence.

SANAGI
"The General will testify as to why his conscience led him to that decision. And that these executions were carried out by the South Seas Kempeitai--a unit never actually integrated with his 14th Division."

The plane stops shaking. Carlson gazes at the infinite black clouds passing outside, dabbing the sweat away from his face.

CARLSON
Pray he gets the chance.

EXT. RUNWAY - MILITARY BASE - MORNING

Carlson steps on U.S. soil for the first time in three years.

EXT. BAY BOOKS - SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

An OLDER COUPLE scowl at Sanagi as Carlson exits the shop--flowers in one hand and two copies of *Prisoner of the Japs* in the other. He hands one to Sanagi and checks his watch.

CARLSON
I want to show you something.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY

They trudge across the newly-constructed suspension bridge shrouded in clouds rising up from the Pacific.

Sanagi sees Carlson clinging to the guardrail. He notices, too, the sharp glances of disgust from every white oncoming PASSERBY--the life of a Japanese in California in 1949.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

THOUSANDS of American flags flap against the wind.

SANAGI
I will wait here, Commander.

Carlson walks past the flags to a small headstone:

"Jacob Emilius Carlson. A Child Dedicated Unto Him. 'Whoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.' John 11: 26."

He sets the bouquet on the grass. His eyes wide open.

EXT. COLONIAL HOME - DAY

The sun hides overhead as Carlson stops in front of a white colonial home surrounded by a low picket fence. He closes his eyes and inhales deeply.

CARLSON
This was ours.

SANAGI
You had a beautiful home.

They listen to the birds. To the waves crashing in the bay. Carlson sets off abruptly...but Sanagi lingers. He catches a LITTLE GIRL staring at him through a window.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Carlson glances up from his book.

CARLSON
174.

SANAGI
I am reading page 211.

CARLSON
Seriously?

An innocent nod.

CARLSON (CONT'D)
Enlighten me then. Since you read my
language better than I do.

SANAGI
He hid her in his hotel. He even gave
her some of his own money. Exactly
how the Colonel described it to us.
This is the same woman, Commander.

CARLSON
Or maybe he just read the book?

Sanagi notes the cover: a three-headed dragon poised to
strike, its narrow eyes a deep red, waiting. Scored by the
violent hum of the planes engines.

EXT. MASONIC LODGE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

HUNDREDS of civilians loiter along the exterior staircase
outside the neo-classical limestone lodge. The doors open and
the crowd flood inside.

Chyron: Fort Worth, Texas.

INT. GREENROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gwen Dew Buchanan polishes off a bottle of gin and tosses it
in the garbage. She's aged--small lines now cut across a
sallow, tired face.

She hands a glass to her husband, Major JAMES BUCHANAN, who
hides beneath a wide-brimmed cowboy hat. He shakes his head.

GWEN
Just one?

JAMES

Take it up with Doctor Greene.

He strains to get off the sofa and Gwen drops her glass trying to help. It fractures into a thousands pieces.

GWEN

Let me, James. *Shit*. I'm sorry -

JAMES

I'm just glad you're home.

Leaning on his cane he hobbles out of the room.

Gwen digs into the garbage and tips the empty bottle to catch the last droplet of booze on her tongue. A sudden knock causes her to drop it; *it* shatters.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

Three minutes, Mrs. Buchanan--oh, shall I call the custodian?

EXT. MASONIC LODGE - NIGHT

Carlson and Sanagi arrive in an Army Jeep. They follow a MOTHER wheeling an AMPUTEE underneath the marquee:

"Author and Survivor Gwen Buchanan. Victory Bonds Sold Here".

INT. AUDITORIUM - MASONIC LODGE - NIGHT

The two men inspect the crowd: mainly working class citizens--every third guest in military dress; amputees on crutches; children; a rambunctious melange of veterans and jovial wives--obvious pride abounds.

The Mother of the Amputee approaches.

MOTHER

My son is a Marine.

Carlson nods to the young man; he doesn't return the gesture. Instead he turns, and Carlson sees scars covering half his face.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Who's the Jap?

CARLSON

He works for the United States Government.

MOTHER

I'll bet. Excuse us.

GUEST after GUEST glares at Sanagi--hatred in their eyes, potent and protracted.

CARLSON
I should have realized -

SANAGI
I know why I am here.

The lights dim.

CARLSON
Some things never change.

The curtain rises and an MC in masonic garb takes to the podium at center stage.

MASON MC
Ladies and gentlemen, Masons, welcome
to Lodge 148. Tonight we have the
distinct pleasure...

Backstage, chipped nails drum nervously against the spine of a book--*Prisoner of the Japs*.

MASON MC (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Six months in a Jap prison camp... Good
citizens of this fine state-- the Lone
Star State--it is our supreme pleasure
to introduce Gwen Dew Buchanan. A true.
American. Patriot.*

The Elderly Mason practically drags Gwen to the podium.

GWEN
Thank you. Some of you may know
already but Texas is home now. My
husband, Major James Buchanan is here
tonight. Would you--wave to everyone,
dear.

(beat)
James flew a B-24 over the Pacific.
We met after the war. When I was
speaking at Carswell Air Force Base--
of all places.

Scattered cheers.

GWEN (CONT'D)
Take it from a woman who's been
around the world one too many times--
this is the greatest state, in the
greatest nation on earth.

(MORE)

GWEN (CONT'D)
 Our Lord's blessings are upon the
 United States of America, and anyone
 who suggests otherwise...well, I
 guess they can live somewhere else,
 can't they? Men bled for that
 freedom. Good men. Our men.

The room falls into a somber reverence. She looks at James.

GWEN (CONT'D)
 Before I get into why Victory
 Securities are so essential, in
 uncertain times, to the defense of
 this country, I've been asked to
 share something.

She coughs into the microphone, trying to steady her voice.

GWEN (CONT'D)
 "We were each taking back memories
 that time can never blot out, for
 they are etched with acid."

INTERCUT:

INT. OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK, PEARL HARBOR)

Her speech takes her through time, to an incredulous State
 EMPLOYEE studying her passport: *Brazil; Malaysia, Australia;*
British Mandatory Palestine.

STATE EMPLOYEE
 You know where you're goin' lady?

GWEN
 I know you're wasting my time.

He shakes his head - *Approved for Journalistic Work: Japan;*
China; British Hong Kong. She lugs her camera past the crowd
 of MEN waiting in line.

EXT. SUN DECK - OCEAN LINER - SUNRISE

Gwen captures the sun washing Kowloon Peak and its heavy
 artillery guns in the fiery light of morning. THOUSANDS OF
 Sampans crawl like insects across the bay.

INT. CUSTOMS OFFICE - DAY

An amused Sergeant HUGH BANNISTER, late 30s, British, handsome,
 watches from afar as Gwen berates a British Custom's OFFICER.

GWEN

It says it right here. *Hong Kong*. You do read English?

BRITISH OFFICER

Indeed, madam.

GWEN

So what on earth is the issue?

BRITISH OFFICER

It's no good coming 'ere, miss. The only women being admitted are those with essential service status. The Japanese -

GWEN

Let me tell you something about the Japanese. At this very moment the Japs are raping and kidnapping and running opium with their white slaves all through the Yangtze Valley. They surround Chungking in numbers estimated near 200,000 with their tanks and other instruments of war. Thousands have perished all through China--including those in American Hospitals paid for by the Red Cross. They've bombed the *USS Tutuila* and *still* my country sells them gasoline and iron. I'm here to find out why.

Hugh moves in closer.

BRITISH OFFICER

I have my orders.

GWEN

Fuck your orders.

Hugh can't help a grin.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Call the State Department. Call the UPI. Call the *Detroit News* for God's sake if you think it'll help, but right now this passport says journalism *is* an essential service and last I heard through the wire is that the Japs are less than 50 miles from Kowloon. Are you going to protect me when they get here? Huh? Stamp the damn thing and let me do my job before it's too late.

Hugh reaches for Gwen's arm. She swivels and levels him with her suitcase. She sees the badge.

GWEN (CONT'D)
 (sotto)
 Shit.
 (V.O.)
 "Punishment will be meted out to
 those who created those memories: of
 hungry American and British children
 digging for fallen rice kernels in
 the dirt..."

EXT. REFUGEE SLUMS - NIGHT

A night sky raining fire. Gwen climbs out of a limousine. THOUSANDS of homeless Chinese sleep scattered in a makeshift village on a small hill outside the city. The flash of her camera illuminates a young GIRL in rags, pleading in Chinese.

GWEN
 No Chinese, little one. Here -

She hands the girl a British pound. The child tugs on the hem of her nightgown.

GWEN (CONT'D)
 I haven't got anything more. I'm
 sorry.

She tugs more vigorously. Gwen wrestles to free herself.

GWEN (CONT'D)
 I'll be back tomorrow.

OTHERS emerge from darkened alleyways and jagged crevices in the sunken maze of slums. She pushes one of the older girls, her bony arm wrist-deep in Gwen's pocket. She has to run for the car.

To escape the night before it swallows her.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Gwen looks down at trembling hands. The car is nearly to her hotel when an artillery shell blasts the limousine off the road.

She struggles to climb out of the overturned car lodged in a ravine, gasping for air amidst the smoke when she is momentarily jarred back to the present--hacking at the podium in Fort Worth, Texas. But her words take her back to...

The front of the car engulfed in flames where she finds the driver's charred corpse still ablaze, twisted, upside down, staring at her with hollow, charcoaled sockets.

She hurries to her feet and spots the hotel in the distance. She starts to run, crying hoarsely -

GWEN
Don't shoot.

A bullet flies past her. Then another. She fights for air...

GWEN (CONT'D)
DON'T SHOOT.

She drops and crawls to the porch where Sergeant Hugh Bannister hurries her inside as an entire BATTALION of Japanese emerge on the hillside, silhouetted by a storm of streaming flares.

GWEN (IN TEXAS) (CONT'D)
*"Things we'll never forget--nor
 forgive. Torture: made in Tokyo. Even
 during the prisoner exchange, above
 us still flew the flag of the rising
 sun, that hate-symbol of men who have
 gone power mad."*

INT. CABIN - TRANSPORT SHIP - DAY

An EMACIATED Gwen rummages through a drawer. She grabs three scarves: one red; one white; one blue.

EXT. TRANSPORT DECK - DAY

Gwen gazes over the ocean at an approaching U.S. Cruiser, stars and stripes waving from the mast. She cries wildly to the wind and tosses the scarves into the air.

GWEN (IN TEXAS)
*"We, who had been in human bondage,
 prisoners of the Japs, were now free
 men and women once more."*

The swelling applause crescendoes, shaking the lodge until -

INT. GREENROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Silence. Gwen gathers her belongings when she hears a knock at the door. She opens it to find Carlson.

GWEN
 Yes?

CARLSON
 Mrs. Buchanan, Commander Martin
 Carlson, United States Navy Reserve.
 How do you do, ma'am?

GWEN
 How'd we do, Commander?

CARLSON
Excuse me?

GWEN
Did we have a good night?

She sees Sanagi lingering in the hallway, and realizes.

GWEN (CONT'D)
You're not USO.

CARLSON
No I'm not, ma'am. I apologize for the abruptness but we need to speak to you tonight if you're agreeable to it.

GWEN
My husband will be waiting in the car.

CARLSON
It concerns Tada, Tokuchi. This is Mr. Sanagi. We represent Mr. Tada's counsel at the Guam War Crimes Commission.

GWEN
I hadn't heard of any such commission. Tokyo. Nuremberg of course...

CARLSON
Commission's been classified since '46, ma'am.

GWEN
Why?

Carlson doesn't have a good lie. But he does have a photograph.

CARLSON
Do you recognize this man, Mrs. Buchanan?

Gwen stares at the scruffy, incarcerated Colonel Tada.

GWEN
I have to go.

CARLSON
They're going to hang him, Gwen. He saved your life, didn't he?

She turns around, book in hand.

CARLSON (CONT'D)
Didn't he?

Stepping towards him -

GWEN

Mine and Admiral Halsey's opinion are
one in the same, commander: That the
only good Jap is a dead one.

Her footsteps echo down the corridor.

E./I. DIVE BAR - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A local dive lit by flickering neon.

Carlson and Sanagi sip beers at the bar. COWBOYS toss darts.
YOUNG PEOPLE shoot pool. A group of boisterous MARINES swap
stories in the corner.

CARLSON

You have kids?

SANAGI

My wife is pregnant with our first.

CARLSON

(aloof)

My sister-in-law's due any day.

SANAGI

We will go to her home.

A Cowboy on the far end of the bar sets down his darts.

CARLSON

What'd you think would've happened to you
if Tada had let the man who did that to
your spine go on a few more minutes?

SANAGI

I would have died.

CARLSON

Are you *sure*?

SANAGI

Yes...

CARLSON

Would you feel differently about the
Colonel if you couldn't walk?

SANAGI

Why do you ask me this?

CARLSON

What if Tada's not the saint you
think he is.

SANAGI
We must go to her home.

CARLSON
You think *that* woman's going to get on the stand for a Japanese? After pumping out that populist garbage for the last two hours? Like hell. We needed Miyazaki; not some psuedo-celebrity demagogue pedaling government bonds.

The Marines burst into laughter over something.

SANAGI
Can Admiral Robinson subpoena her?

CARLSON
The majority of the commission would need to vote in favor for it to be issued -

Sanagi slams his beer on the counter. The Cowboy approaches.

CARLSON (CONT'D)
Take it easy.

SANAGI
I will not.

CARLSON
That's procedure.

SANAGI
144 defendants. 136 found guilty. That's a conviction rate of 94 per cent--in any country, sir.

CARLSON
Go on.

SANAGI
36 death sentences. I need to know if you are serious about defending Colonel Tada and the General or--if you need to excuse yourself.

Carlson sips his beer.

SANAGI (CONT'D)
You have sacrificed much. More than most. I know this. But I, too, have sacrificed. This woman--she is the Colonel's final chance.
(beat)
I fear the fate of the General has been decided...

CARLSON

You need to be open to the possibility that your affection for him has clouded your reason. How long have you been on Guam?

SANAGI

Three weeks. Long enough to know how it works--procedurally.

CARLSON

To realize then most of your boys actually did it? Have you ever defended a man accused of eating someone, Mr. Sanagi? Or injecting his eyes with streptococcus?

COWBOY

Excuse me.

SANAGI

Long enough to know that the Colonel rejected the order of a superior officer under penalty of death. The Colonel who's been in solitary confinement for two years. The same man I defended in Japan long before I came to Guam.

(beat)

And yes, to whom I am greatly indebted.

CARLSON

I'll have to remember to admit you as evidence.

COWBOY

Excuse me.

(beat)

Can you read, sir?

He points to a sign above the bar: "*No Niggers. No Japs.*"

COWBOY (CONT'D)

He's gotta wait outside.

The other dart players have stopped throwing.

CARLSON

Let him finish his drink. He's with me.

COWBOY

Not in here.

Sanagi sulks out of the bar.

Carlson moves to follow but the Cowboy grabs him, handing him a cold beer.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

Those men over there bought you a
round. Round 'ere ays somethin' bout
a man in a uniform don't drink it.

FOUR young hard-looking twenty-somethings hold their glasses
high. Carlson notes the swinging entrance doors and sighs.

He approaches the Marines reluctantly, tall draft in hand.

MARINE #1

Good to be in good company,
Commander.

He clinks glasses. Doesn't want to be there.

EXT. FORT WORTH STREETS - NIGHT

Meanwhile Sanagi passes sign after sign: "*No Japs*". Men and
women--even children--jeer at him. One YOUNGSTER whistles,
using his hands to gesticulate nuclear warfare. He bends at
the waist to mock Sanagi's deformed curvature.

YOUNGSTER

'So solly'.

His FATHER pats the boy on the head approvingly.

INT. BOOTH - DIVE BAR - NIGHT

A WAITRESS sets down another round. She does her best to
ignore the lecherous commentary while the men play cards.

CARLSON

It's a joint exercise then?

MARINE #2

Yes, sir. We're with them Army boys
for 'nother two weeks jump trainin'
before headin' down to Ft. Pierce.

MARINE #4

Hopefully get us some spear fishin' in.

He deals a new deck.

MARINE #2

And leave down in Key Largo. Think
we're all lookin' forward to that, eh
fellas? Hope we get it. Things are
gettin' crazy. Seems like we've just
been goin' and goin' recently...

MARINE #1
What about yourself, sir? Haven't
seen a Navy man here this whole time.
What do you do?

MARINE #4
Same 'ere.

CARLSON
Communications.

The quiet one picks his head up from his draft.

MARINE #3
Who was that Jap you was with?

All eyes fall on him.

CARLSON
That's...classified.

They howl with laughter.

CARLSON (CONT'D)
(diffusing)
Whose round is it anyway? I think it
was yours -

MARINE #3
Who is he?

MARINE #1
Easy, Schmitt. He's an officer.

MARINE #3
I know what he is. And I know what a
Butterhead is.

Carlson stands, sliding out of the booth. Marine #3 follows.

MARINE #3 (CONT'D)
What were you doin' with that Jap,
huh? I'm talking to you.

Marine #3 is a foot away when Carlson brandishes his revolver and points it at the young man's face. The Cowboy behind the bar produces a shotgun. Nearly every man in there places a hand on his weapon.

MARINE #3 (CONT'D)
You gonna shoot me, Commander? You
gonna shoot me on 'counta 'im?

Carlson's arm shakes. The pistol looks heavy in his hand. Marine #3 inches towards him.

MARINE #3 (CONT'D)
Over a butterhead sushi-fuck...?

CARLSON
Back. Back up.

Marine #3 lifts up his shirt: shrapnel wounds run the length of his torso. Tears streaming down his blotched face.

MARINE #3
Where's he stayin' tonight?

MARINE #1
Schmittty that's enough -

MARINE #3
WHERE THE FUCK'S HE STAYIN?! HUH?!

He's howling now. When he comes closer Carlson comes down on his forehead with the pistol grip and Marine #3 collapses. The collision discharges the pistol, putting a hole in the ceiling. A dusty powder rains down as he retreats--out of the bar and onto the street, sprinting down the sidewalk.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Sanagi's in bed reading the *King James Bible*. He hides it in the drawer when Carlson stumbles in drunk.

SANAGI
What happened to you?

CARLSON
A dog. A stray...

SANAGI
(tapping a phone book)
1921 Corpus Christi. I go tomorrow.
With or without you.

Carlson pulls the cord on the only lamp.

CARLSON
(in the dark)
Regan has fifteen bodies exhumed on site. Led there by Yajima who says he personally got the execution order from Tada. He also has the man who tried cutting off the head of an American serviceman; and when that didn't work out, watched Miyazaki shoot him in the mouth. A man whose sentence I had commuted. You tell me, Mr. Sanagi--are you convinced yet or should I excuse myself?

A long silence, punctuated by the occasional passing car.

SANAGI

"Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life for his
friends." If that stray bit you, you
will need iodine.

CARLSON

Why do you do it, Sanagi? What the
hell are you doing in
Texas?...Sanagi?

(mocking)

"Going with or without you."

(beat)

You're one tough little son of a
bitch after all, aren't you?

They share their first laugh in that small Texas motel room.

E./I. BUCHANAN HOUSE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

An old Ford veers off the main highway onto a dusty road. It parks
in front of a two-storied adobe home a few hundred yards off the
main drag. Plywood on the windows. Paint peeling off the porch.

Gwen helps James through the front door and up the stairs,
under the cross nailed above their bedroom door. She gets him
in bed; feeds him medication and places an oxygen mask over
his mouth. She puts his cowboy hat on the nightstand. He's
completely bald.

JAMES

Aren't ya comin' to bed?

GWEN

I'll just read a moment.

JAMES

Won't disturb me.

GWEN

You need rest.

JAMES

I need my wife.

She kisses his head.

GWEN

We should leave before six if we want
to be on time.

JAMES
You'll drop me at the barber's after,
hun?

GWEN
That's not funny, James.

JAMES
Sure it is.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Gwen reads her book at the counter while nursing a glass of liquor. She pours another...and another...and another.

She plugs a telephone into the wall. It rings immediately.

GWEN (PHONE)
...Hello? This is she. Yes. In Los
Angeles? Yes. Yes. No, of course. God
bless you, too, Darlene.

She stumbles to the fridge and scribbles a sloppy:

"Los Angeles"

INT. BASEMENT - BUCHANAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She's had too many to find the lights and nearly loses her footing on the steps. Staggering, she finds a trunk; she opens it and produces a brown sack...

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK, HONG KONG)

...Gwen pulls her camera out of the same sack from beneath the floorboards. She loads it with a fresh roll of film.

Downstairs the lobby is a triage center:

WOUNDED men cry out; WOMEN improvise. An elderly WOMAN and her paralytic HUSBAND tend to a young SOLDIER, writhing in agony, clutching to his DOCTOR, the elderly LEWIS ARLINGTON, 85.

Gwen approaches Hugh, exhausted and resting against the main door--rifle on his lap. She takes his photograph.

HUGH
Johnny took one through the eye about
an hour ago.

GWEN
You should sleep. You've been at it
nearly 36 hours. The others rotate.

Exhausted MEN lean similarly against windows and columns.

HUGH
Officers don't lead in their sleep,
Gwen. Come 'ere.

He pulls her in close and presses her lips to his.

HUGH (CONT'D)
See if he needs anything, will you,
love?

She returns to the injured young man. He's still screaming.

GWEN
May I help with anything, Mrs.?

Blood pools on the white marble floor beneath him.

ELDERLY WOMAN
He's no opiates left. Doctor says if
he doesn't get the bullet out he'll
surely pass, but the operation itself
will probably kill him. He's taken
about a liter of sherry...

Gunfire erupts outside the hotel.

HUGH
(screaming)
Again lads!! Lines!!

Gwen ducks for cover. The wounded soldier's bloody hand dangles over the operating table. She takes it in hers as a shell blasts a crater in an adjacent room killing everyone inside. The soldier's arm falls limp--severed from the torso. Gwen faints...

A hand nudges her awake.

HUGH (CONT'D)
I need you to listen carefully, Gwen.
The men are going to Fort Stanley at
dawn. It's the only way now.

GWEN
What? No. No no no you mustn't.

She hits him. Hugh covers her mouth. He's whispering now.

GWEN (CONT'D)
You're surrendering?

HUGH

When the Japs come through those doors tomorrow morning they'll find only women and civilians. They won't hurt you. They'd no reason to.

GWEN

And what'll they do with us then? Tell me that, Hugh?

A SOLDIER enters, a Union Jack folded in his arms.

HUGH

You pray for mercy. But if we stay they'll kill everyone. They've moved their artillery clean through to the south side of the island. If we hold out any longer they'll blow us into the sea. Stanley's where we regroup.

SOLDIER

Ma'am, if you would deliver this to my fiancé for me?

He hands her a wrinkled sheet of paper. OTHERS follow.

HUGH

I told them they could depend on you. That I depend on you to lead these people tomorrow--and thereafter. Whatever happens.

GWEN

When?

HUGH

Ten minutes. They're just having a bit of rest.

Some HUNDRED soldiers are strewn about the lobby. He takes a turquoise ring from his pocket and places it on her finger.

HUGH (CONT'D)

When I see you next we'll be married, yes?

She nods. The tears come easily. He pulls the ring off her finger and closes her hand around it.

HUGH (CONT'D)

Maybe then you'll kick the habit of hitting me. This is just a piece of metal. Use it--for whatever you might need, ok? I'm not a boy; it won't hurt my feelings. I have to go.

He kisses her for the last time.

HUGH (CONT'D)
Chin up, yeah?

He brings the men to attention and they slither into the darkness. Hugh's the last to disappear.

Gwen sits by the front door in silence--along with FIFTY others, including Lewis Arlington beside her. She hears them first. Footsteps. Then whispers.

A rifle through the window. Aimed at Gwen. The old man Lewis takes Gwen's hand and slides in front to shield her from the muzzle.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAWN

FORTY Japanese sort the men from the women. Gwen hides Hugh's ring in her mouth before a JAPANESE frisks her body.

JAPANESE LIEUTENANT
No fight?

PARALYTIC MAN
Polio.

JAPANESE LIEUTENANT
You walk.

PARALYTIC MAN
No.

JAPANESE LIEUTENANT
You walk.

ELDERLY WOMAN
He can't.

PARALYTIC MAN
Please, dear.

The LIEUTENANT takes a SOLDIER's bayonet and digs it into the Old Man's thigh. His Elderly Wife screams as the Lieutenant slides the bayonet into her husband's heart.

Lewis Arlington steps forward, only to be beaten into the ground by a pack of JAPANESE. Beaten close to death.

The Elderly Woman is forced to wheel her dead husband up the sinuous hillside pocked by craters. The other prisoners march in two otherwise distinct lines, past the war zone -

Chyron: Hong Kong. 26 December 1941.

Lewis Arlington wheezes up the steep incline.

GWEN

Lewis?

He collapses, crawls, and falls back in line.

YOUNG CHINESE GIRL

Where are we going?

GWEN

(whispering)

It doesn't matter little one. The only thing that matters is how you respond to it. Don't let them see your fear, Sugar. You have to decide, right now, to bury it. Forever. Put it in a little box. In the basement of your heart. Understand?

They scale the hill and set eyes on an occupied Hong Kong Harbor: Japanese Machine Gun Nests. Mutilated corpses. A scorched wasteland running into the black sea.

EXT. HONG KONG HARBOR - DUSK

SOLDIERS dump the paralytic man's body in the harbor.

From high above, Colonel Tada watches the prisoners cue for registration. By blind chance he recognizes Gwen.

INT. BEDROOM - PENINSULA HOTEL - DAY

SOLDIERS dump Gwen in a surreally well-furnished hotel room. A Young Woman, DIANA, 30, sits in the room across the hall with her back to Gwen.

GWEN

Do you have any water?

Diana turns. She's thin, with eyes so swollen she barely passes for human.

GWEN (CONT'D)

What'd they do to you...?

INT. BASEMENT - BUCHANAN HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Gwen cradles the brown sack against her breast. She puts it back in the trunk where something else catches her eye:

A faded green journal contained therein.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

She laces James's boots and helps him manage the stairs.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

She watches DOCTOR GREENE examine an x-ray; produce a syringe; fill it full of clear fluid and inject the contents into James's throat.

DOCTOR GREENE

You aren't responding to the aminopterin, Major Buchanan. I'll need to remove the tumors manually. By end of this month at the latest.
(to Gwen)
See Sue on the way out to schedule it. She'll coordinate with the hospital.

GWEN

How dangerous is the procedure?

DOCTOR GREENE

It'll be more dangerous if we do nothing.

GWEN

That's not what I asked.

JAMES

Gwen.

DOCTOR GREENE

There's a very real risk.

James takes Gwen's hand.

INT. ARMY JEEP - TEXAS HIGHWAY - DAY

Sanagi turns over a map. He points in the distance and Carlson pulls off the highway and onto a dusty road.

EXT. PORCH - BUCHANAN HOUSE - DAY

Carlson knocks on the door. No answer. He knocks again.

CARLSON

She's not home.

SANAGI

I will look.

Sanagi moves around the back of the house.

CARLSON

Don't.

A '49 Ford Shoebox veers off the main road. It comes to a stop and Gwen leads James to the porch.

GWEN

What did I tell you?

CARLSON

Mrs. Buchanan -

JAMES

Who's this, Gwen?

CARLSON

Commander Martin Carlson, sir. United States Navy Reserve.

JAMES

Been activated, huh? How long?

GWEN

James get inside -

CARLSON

Actually still going sir.

JAMES

Good man. I was Army Air Corp myself.

(beat)

We at war again?

CARLSON

Not that I know of, sir.

James tries extending a hand but Gwen pulls him to the door.

JAMES

How'd ya know my wife?

GWEN

He doesn't.

CARLSON

If I could, sir. I just need a moment of Mrs. Buchanan's time -

GWEN

Get the fuck off my porch!!

Sanagi finishes circling the house.

JAMES

Who the hell are you? *What is this?*

SANAGI
Mrs. Buchanan, please -

Gwen storms inside with James, slamming the door behind her.

CARLSON
(knocking)
Please let us explain, sir.

No use. They're walking towards the Jeep when the door opens.

JAMES
The Jap waits outside. Nothing
personal, Commander.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

A slender antique grandfather clock ticks away a measured metronome. James sits opposite Carlson at the kitchen table, reflecting on whatever was just revealed to him.

JAMES
You served in the first war when you
was a kid, Commander?

CARLSON
Navigator on the *South Carolina*.

JAMES
And the last one?

CARLSON
Base commander, San Francisco.

JAMES
Stayed in or snuck in some school
somewhere in between? School I
reckon'.

CARLSON
Chicago. John Marshall Law. Met Ruth.
We got married. This was all before
Pearl.

(beat)
Signed my name again the next morning.

JAMES
Me too.

CARLSON
When it was finished, an Admiral I
knew phoned. Said he had put in a
request to get me out to Guam.

(MORE)

CARLSON (CONT'D)
Said he couldn't tell me the details,
only that there was something
important left we needed to do.

James removes his cowboy hat and scratches his bald head.

JAMES
(re: his head)
The cancer.

CARLSON
You've seen worse I reckon.

James bellows over the table. Laughing first. Then hacking.

JAMES
You're goddamned right 'bout that.
(catching his breath)
Why'd ya say yes?

Carlson looks at the grandfather clock. At Sanagi waiting on the porch outside. At the folded American flag encased in glass on the mantel above the fireplace.

At the faded green journal on the table in front of them.

CARLSON
He promised the courtroom would have
air conditioning.

James smiles.

JAMES
Didn't. Did it?

CARLSON
Hotter than fucking hell.

James taps the journal, noticing it for the first time.

JAMES
My wife's been in some dark places,
Commander Carlson. She's tough as
coiled steel. But everything breaks.
After a while. Parts of us just
break. Best leave her be.

James begins flipping through the notebook page by page. When Carlson notices a portrait he grabs James by the arm.

As he does, he sets Tada's photograph on the table next to a near-perfect charcoal sketch of Colonel Tada in full military regalia. Carlson nearly falls out of his chair.

Instead he stands and offers him Tada's letter.

CARLSON

May--I leave this with you, sir?

JAMES

That nip you're with. The hunchback.
He a soldier?

CARLSON

Not anymore. Knew the defendant
personally before the war. Name's
Sanagi.

JAMES

What is it happened to his back?

CARLSON

His own people.
(beat)
He's one of the good ones.

JAMES

Was he at Pel?

CARLSON

No.

James eyes Gwen's calendar on the refrigerator. Next to the
mountain of empty bottles in the trash.

JAMES

We all need somethin'. Don't we?

He takes the letter.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Anything else ya'd like me to tell
her?

CARLSON

Please tell her we can only go so far
on our own.

(beat)

That sometimes you have to get off
the wrong train if you ever want to
make it home.

JAMES

I'll speak to my wife. Think it's a
good thing ya'll are doin'. 's why
you and I signed our names.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gwen's lying on their bed when James makes it upstairs.

GWEN
They gone?

JAMES
Yeah.

GWEN
It's something or other to do with
that little Jap in Hong Kong.

JAMES
Told me. Same Jap was Chief of Staff
at Peleliu when Doug died....and
Sammy. This Carlson says he might've
saved your life.

GWEN
Why are you looking at me that way,
James?

JAMES
I never read your book. Never asked
you details. Same as you. And it's
worked pretty good. Now you're my
wife. And I love you. And I'm dying.

GWEN
Don't say that -

JAMES
I'm dying, Gwen. But ya know what? I
had a chance to serve my country.
Marry the woman I love. Get myself
right with the Lord. I ain't afraid.
Of anythin' anymore.

GWEN
I am. Afraid, James. You didn't
answer my question.

JAMES
We each did what we had to do.

GWEN
What the hell does that mean?

JAMES
You're my wife. All there is to it in
my mind.

He hands her Tada's letter and rolls onto his side.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I think I'll rest some.

GWEN
What is it you think I did?

JAMES
You goin' to California next week?

She shakes his oxygen tank.

GWEN
How do you think we pay for this,
James?

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Gwen holds Tada's letter and pulls from a flask on the table.

COLONEL TADA (V.O.)
*"Often I think of you and your old
friend..."*

INTERCUT:

On Guam a tempest unleashes torrents of rain from heavy,
swollen clouds. Tada kneels in his cell, lost in prayer.

COLONEL TADA (V.O.)
*"I told you once about a belief I
hold, Ms. Dew. Despite my philosophy,
incidents happened to prisoners of
war for which I have come to stand
trial. I feel a grave concern and am
greatly humiliated because such an
incident did take place in spite of
my efforts to prevent it."*

INT. BEDROOM - PENINSULA HOTEL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK, HONG KONG)

Gwen hears a thud across the hall.

Through the peephole she eyes a Japanese SOLDIER buckling his
pants. A second JAPANESE goes into the young disfigured
Woman's room--with THREE others. Then she feels it. Her own
door opening.

GWEN
No...

INT. LOBBY / PRIVATE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A SOLDIER carries her screaming down the stairs, through the main lobby of the opulent hotel and into a private dining room. He sits her down in front of a feast.

Colonel Tada sits alone at the end of the same long table.

GWEN

Monster. How long have your men used her like a toilet?

COLONEL TADA

Whom do you speak of?

GWEN

The woman whose face looks like it's been through a meat grinder. Across the hall.

Tada looks at his Subordinate. Confused.

COLONEL TADA

My men know that so long as we conduct ourselves with the virtue of His Imperial Majesty, we will live a high moral life. The floor is yours alone.

GWEN

Ask your boys about that, Colonel. Why am I here?

He nods and the Subordinate exits. He takes a seat directly across from Gwen. At the empty table that seats fifty.

COLONEL TADA

You impressed me that day on the pier. You did not know what we would do... And still you did your job. Without a shadow of fear.

He produces a copy of *The South China Morning Post* with Tada's face splashed across the cover.

GWEN

Fear you'd expect from a woman?

COLONEL TADA

Fear I'd expect from a soldier. Japanese admire bravery very much.

GWEN

So do Americans. They'll be here soon. Have you ever met a United States Marine, Colonel?

COLONEL TADA
 (sincerely)
 I am told your sailors were very
 brave.

GWEN
 That was your mistake. Hong Kong.
 Singapore. It might not have been
 enough for Americans to see it
 through to the end.

COLONEL TADA
 We took a chance.

His tone more poignant than boastful.

GWEN
 While your peace envoy posed for
 photographs in the White House. In
 time history will tell a different
 story. Let's set a date for twenty
 years from now and see if you regret
 that chance.

COLONEL TADA
 I should very much like to meet you
 again, Ms. Dew. Under different
 circumstances.

GWEN
 So I'm being rewarded, is it? For
 taking your picture?
 (beat)
 And not pissing down my leg?

COLONEL TADA
 Hearts are softened and minds are
 changed with compassion--not with
 warplanes.

He slides a green journal across the table. The same one that
 will end up locked in her basement.

COLONEL TADA (CONT'D)
 You're a journalist.

The Subordinate reenters and Tada quickly covers the journal
 with a napkin. Gwen's quick to notice.

SOLDIER (JAPANESE)
 Excuse me, Colonel Tada -

COLONEL TADA
 We are not an evil people.

GWEN

Then I have a request. He's an elderly doctor. Well into his 80s. He stayed in Hong Kong when others fled. He's dead in a week unless you bring him to me.

(adding)

Show me you're not monsters.

COLONEL TADA

I'll think on it. Good evening, Ms. Dew.

GWEN

His name is Lewis Arlington.

INT. LOBBY / BEDROOM - PENINSULA HOTEL - LATER

Gwen walks with the same Guard through the hotel lobby. Past the rapists who assaulted Diana, now lined up on the ground in handcuffs. They glare as she passes.

Gwen discovers Diana hiding under sheets stained with blood. She brings a washcloth to her forehead.

GWEN

I've a washroom.

JAPANESE GUARD

The Colonel did not know...

INT. GWEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The faucet turns off and Gwen watches Diana emerge from the bathroom. She produces a delicious stolen pastry.

GWEN

Have dinner with me?

The two women dine on Gwen's contraband.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Gwen.

DIANA

Sister Diana.

GWEN

We'll stay together, yes? Where are you from?

DIANA
Wales. Three of us. From St.
Cecilia's. The nurses...

GWEN
Where are the others?

Diana chews painfully. Gwen opens her journal.

EXT. BENEATH THE OCEAN SURFACE - NIGHT

Carlson's drowning.

All around him MEN swim for the light. Gasping, he finds the barrel of a rifle waiting for him as he breaks the surface.

EXT. GUAM AIRFIELD - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Landing jolts him out of another nightmare as the plane rolls to a stop on Guam. Robinson waits on the tarmac drenched in sweat.

ROBINSON
Well?

CARLSON
It's not our guy, sir.

Robinson stares incredulously.

ROBINSON
We tried then...didn't we, Marty?

INT. CHAPEL - GUAM - NEXT DAY

Carlson sits with Ruth listening to the Chamorro Children's Choir grind through "Amazing Grace". Not far them Lieutenant Regan thumbs a hymnal, bored to death.

Eric Breen props an arm on a white column much like...

INT. 1ST BIBLE CONGREGATION - TEXAS - NIGHT

...another like it near where Gwen and a PASTOR stand before an all-WHITE congregation moved to tears.

GWEN
...her name was Diana. She came to Hong Kong with several of her sisters in Christ. They were gang raped for twenty-four hours on Christmas Day. Lord as my witness--He's the only reason she got through it long as she did.

PASTOR
Praise Jesus. Praise God.

The congregation gives Gwen a standing ovation. James is in the front pew. He's heard it before.

GWEN
Yes--you, ma'am. There in the back.

WILMA
Wilma Galtin. Thanks for comin' out here to First Bible, Gwen. Bless you.

GWEN
Bless you.

WILMA
I have a question.

GWEN
Yes, ma'am?

WILMA
I only ask because you was really livin' with your enemies and such. Most of us've probably never been in a position where our faith was tested in such literal fashion. When Jesus says in Matthew that "If you only love those who love you, what reward will you receive?"--well, I don't think I coulda done it. How did you, ya think?

GWEN
How did I what exactly, Wilma?

WILMA
Ask Christ to help you forgive those people for what they done to you?

James picks his head up. He looks directly at Gwen.

GWEN
It wasn't easy.
(beat)
But God is good.

Scattered 'amens'.

WILMA
Did ya' ever think of tryin' to find a way to share the Lord with that little Jap who was kind to you?

GWEN

Which Jap was that now?

WILMA

The one who looked after you and that
old man.

GWEN

Never had the chance, Wilma.

INT. TWO-DOOR FORD SEDAN - NIGHT

Gwen barrels down a deep Texas highway in their '49 Shoebox.

GWEN

Why are you looking at me that way?

James wheezes on his oxygen.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Say something if you've something to
say, James.

James points. She doesn't see the headlights.

GWEN (CONT'D)

What should I have done? Oh *Christ!!*

She swerves off the road.

James cracks his head against the passenger glass and the car
comes to a dead stop in a deserted field.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Oh God. Are you hurt?!

He waves her off.

GWEN (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you?

He pulls off his mask, laboring for each word.

JAMES

There a man--on the other side--of
the world--'bout to die for somethin'
he didn't do--Gwen?

She tries the ignition but James holds her arm.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 I heard--that story 'fore.
 (beat)
 In church.

She shakes free and tries the starter. The car breathes to life.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 Lord knows--I ain't a saint. But
 something like that just don't sit
 with me. Wouldn't sit--with the woman
 I fell in love with neither.

GWEN
 Get your fucking hand off of me.

The old Ford jumps out of the ditch and onto the road.

INT. TADA'S CELL - GUAM - DAY

Carlson throws a copy of *Prisoner of the Japs* on Tada's cot.

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
 She spent six months at Death Camp
 Stanley after you left Hong Kong.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
 You delivered the letter, Commander?

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
 It's probably in the trash.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
 Commander, I -

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
 You have to convince the General to
 testify. Otherwise they're going to
 kill you, do you understand?. *Hey, do*
you hear me? They're going to kill
 you. He's the only one who can
 corroborate your testimony that you
 objected. Talk to him about Nikka.
 About your children.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
 Do you think I have deceived you?

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
 I don't know anymore.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
 The General, too, has children. Six.
 Five of them boys.

(MORE)

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Did you know he would not let any of
them grow to be soldiers?

EXT. GARDEN - GENERAL INOUE'S HOME - DAY (FLASHBACK, JAPAN)

From inside the General's home Tada watches Inoue kneel in
the dirt beside his YOUNG DAUGHTER.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
Remember, Michi. When I am not with
you. "An orchid is fragrant even in a
valley visited by no admirers."

He holds its long stem. She brushes its white petals.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
So must you be. Remember.

TADA (JAPANESE)
General. It's time, sir.

Inoue hugs his little girl.

INT. TADA'S CELL - GUAM - DAY (PRESENT)

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
"Even in a valley visited by no
admirers..." Death affects people
differently, Commander. For the
General, for his temperament, this
vow may be the only beautiful pursuit
left. I will not ask him to violate
that for me.

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
Without her testimony anything
positive we can extract from the book
is inadmissible. And without the
General...

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Why did you lie to Admiral Robinson?

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
If it's how you say it is, that it
was you there in Hong Kong and she
still chose not to come...then we
give Regan the crowning centerpiece
of his argument.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
It is not an easy thing for an honest
man to lie to one's superior. Is it,
Commander?

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
Talk to him, Tokuchi. It's the only
way now. My discharge is set for ten
days from tomorrow.
(beat)
What color was it?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
What?

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
The journal you gave her.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
I wonder if Lieutenant Regan would
have told the truth.

Carlson closes the cell. Through the bars -

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Green.

Carlson walks past General Inoue's cell where the old man
kneels in prayer, clenching his red beads.

Tada meanwhile finds a sheet of paper. He takes in the faded
photograph on his desk of his FOUR children: TWO boys and TWO
girls. Closes his eyes and inhales deeply, remembering...

EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAWN (TADA'S MEMORY, JAPAN)

A YOUNGER Tada, 20s, watches a beautiful Japanese WOMAN, 18,
organize plums on a street cart. When she flips her wooden
sign from "Closed" to "Open" he approaches.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
One please.

Two nervous smiles.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Thank you.

She watches him run off. Around the corner where out of sight
he greets a HOMELESS man.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
 Good morning, Kenzo. See you
 tomorrow, my friend.

Tada hands the beggar the fruit and climbs the marble steps leading into an ornate government building.

INT. AUDITORIUM - IMPERIAL WAR COLLEGE

Tada lectures to HUNDREDS of fellow students.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
 (reading)
 "Warfare predicated, not on
 traditional espionage but on the
 virtues of the Emperor: magnanimity,
 righteousness--love. The Soviets are
 nothing more than corpus; mens; cor--
 body, mind, and heart." The battles
 of the 20th century will be won in
 the latter two arenas. Communication
 and mass transit condense both space
 and time. We cannot--we will not--be
 an island for another thousand years.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Tada hunches over a stack of books. He gazes out the window overlooking the street and admires the Woman selling plums.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (V.O.)
Mens. Cor. My thesis--the paeon to
 unity. The love poem. I thought
 surely the War College would expel
 me. That I would waste my scholarship
 and return to my father disgraced
 begging for a post at the police
 station.

Tada buys another plum on his way out. He rounds the corner and hands it quickly to the same homeless man, Kenzo.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

General Inoue sits in the front row, listening intently to this peculiar student as he hits his stride.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
*This is the true spirit of Japan.
Expose our enemies to that spirit,
and win their allegiance by their own
volition. Prisoners of war must
therefore never be killed; no matter
how difficult the situation becomes.*

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Tada gazes outside. In his hands he holds an official letter covered in red characters.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (V.O.)
With my teaching position secured, I
made plans to win your heart.

He watches an OLDER Man approach the Woman.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (V.O.)
It would be the most terrifying
experience of my young life. More
terrifying than war.

EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY

Tada follows the Man from the fruit stand and approaches him.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Excuse me, sir -

INT. TEA HOUSE - TOKYO - DAY

They share a pot of tea.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (V.O.)
My heart stopped when your father
agreed.

FATHER (JAPANESE)
Nikka. Her name is Nikka.

EXT. TOKYO STREET - NEXT DAY

Tada approaches the cart. The Woman smiles, as usual. She hands him his two plums but this time Tada doesn't release her hand. She takes him in, his intention clear, pure.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Tada watches his bride walk towards him. LOVED ONES surround them. A SHINTO PRIEST presides over the ceremony. In the bedroom, Tada undresses his bride and lays her down gently.

INT. HOUSE 371 - RURAL VILLAGE - DAY

Nikka answers the door--of the house from the prologue--holding a BABY on her hip. An Imperial MESSENGER hands her a dispatch in the rain.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (V.O.)
War broke into our lives like a thief
at midnight.

Years have passed and Tada, mid-50s, plays with a TODDLER on the carpet. Nikka hands him the dispatch. He falls serious.

NIKKA (JAPANESE)
You're to report to the 14th Division
to serve as Chief of Staff to General
Inoue. General Inoue... This is a
great honor, Tokuchi.

Another LITTLE ONE runs by. Nikka disguises her sadness well.

NIKKA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Excuse me -

Tada takes her arm.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Did you ever notice I am allergic to plums?

She falls to his feet, with their children playing around them, with thoughts of their future in the open doorway.

EXT. GARDEN - GENERAL INOUE'S HOME - DAY

Tada approaches Inoue embracing his daughter by the lone orchid.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Excuse me, General. It's time, sir.

INT. CARLSON'S OFFICE - GUAM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Sanagi reviews a file opposite Carlson at his desk. Ruth enters and sets a tray on the table. She exchanges smiles with Sanagi but doesn't linger.

SANAGI

We tell the commission the truth.
Issue a subpoena.

CARLSON

And she fights it. An American
citizen drags her heels and Regan
wins because I'm a civilian. A piece
of paper isn't going to change that
woman's heart.

SANAGI

Then there is only death. And life in
Sugamo for the Colonel?

CARLSON

That's if we don't bring it to trial.
(beat)
Is it true that you can't cross-
examine a witness?

SANAGI

In Japan the judge interrogates the
witness. We may only 'suggest'
questions.

CARLSON

Were you ever burning so badly--just
itching--to hear a question that you
gave serious consideration to
approaching the bench and stomping on
his balls?

SANAGI

Such recourse is generally ill-
advised. What kind of man is Admiral
Robinson?

CARLSON

He's a man. I'd like to think like you or
I. Trying to do his job and go home.

Sanagi bites into a pastry.

CARLSON (CONT'D)

Tastes better with sugar.

Sanagi forces it down and spots a "*Death Certificate*".

SANAGI

Who is 'Emilius'?

CARLSON

I inherited it from my father. Don't
think he even knew where it came
from.

Carlson runs a finger over the tallies.

CARLSON (CONT'D)
Each time I sign off on another man's
death I try to remind myself, 'how do
I feel about my father's name
appearing next to what I've done'?

SANAGI
Martin Emilius Carlson--do you want
to kick Admiral Robinson in the
balls?

INT. BEDROOM - CARLSON'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Carlson and Ruth lie on opposite sides of the bed.

RUTH
What was she like?

CARLSON
Angry.

RUTH
Beautiful?

CARLSON
Yes.

RUTH
Is she a believer?

CARLSON
She wears a cross.

RUTH
You haven't been sleeping. You used
to sleep. Even out here.

CARLSON
No.

RUTH
Why not?

CARLSON
We've killed a lot of bad men. But
shame on us if one of them was
innocent.
(beat)
Shame on all of us.

RUTH
Do you still pray about it, Martin?

INT. MARINE BARRACKS - GUAM - NEXT DAY

Eric Breen spits. He's on a bed in the deserted barracks, finger wrapped in an old cotton shirt, polishing the toe of his boot. He sticks a tin in his locker. Behind a horsehair brush is a photograph. He reaches for it. Unfolds it. Stares.

INT. COMMUNAL CELL - STOCKADE - GUAM - SAME

Inoue considers the term sheet.

CARLSON (JAPANESE)
It's as far as the U.S. Government
will go. Do you understand the
implications, General?

The General closes his eyes. He reaches for a pen. Tada leans over the table and rips the agreement in half.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Not before the battle, General.

E./I. COURTROOM QUONSET - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Wind throws rain against the Warden and the two prisoners as they trudge into the courtroom. Regan approaches Carlson, who shakes his head--*no deal*.

REGAN
Beautiful.

Inside Robinson presides over a NEW COMMISSION.

The Young Marine Eric Breen stands in uniform as bailiff.

Soaking wet, the prisoners enter to a militant chorus of derision from the onlookers. SAILORS and MARINES have packed in tightly. It's a full house.

ROBINSON
Order.
(waiting)
The Charge: murder in violation of
the law and customs of war.
(MORE)

ROBINSON (CONT'D)

That Inoue, Sadae, then a Lieutenant General, and Tada, Tokuchi, his Chief of Staff, in the Palau Islands, on or about September 4, 1944 did willfully, feloniously, and with malice aforethought, kill by beheading with swords and by shooting with firearms three unarmed American prisoners of war and twelve missionaries, names unknown, held captive by the armed forces of Japan. Mr. Inoue, Mr. Tada, you have heard the charge against you. How do you plead?

COLONEL TADA

Not guilty, sir.

Inoue stares silently at the tropical storm outside.

ROBINSON

Let the record show Mr. Inoue's refusal to speak will be hereby interpreted and entered as a plea of 'not-guilty'. It is customary to inquire as to whether there are any Americans unbeknownst to this commission who might attest to your character?

COLONEL TADA

Mrs. Gwen Buchanan in Texas, Admiral. She was a newspaper woman. She took my photograph in Hong Kong.

Tada looks to Carlson amidst the festering jeers.

ROBINSON

Cool it, fellas. Marty?

Carlson shakes his head.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)

You'll keep me abreast if that changes, yes? Judge advocate Regan?

Regan stands, confident. He walks the line of commissioners.

REGAN

Sometime in September of 1944, three American aviators were taken prisoners in the Palau Islands...

INT. TADA'S OFFICE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK, SOUTH PACIFIC)

Yajima stands rigidly at attention as Tada reads a report behind his desk. He studies Yajima behind his glasses.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
You've followed protocol?

YAJIMA (JAPANESE)
I have, Colonel.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Yet you were unable to ascertain any actionable intelligence as to an amphibious landing. This is paramount to General Inoue. I shall join you tomorrow and interrogate these flyers myself.

YAJIMA (JAPANESE)
That will be most unnecessary, Colonel Tada. Please allow me the opportunity to rectify my mistake. How is the General, sir?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Occupied.
(beat)
You will report back to me tomorrow at 9 am. Dismissed.

Yajima bows and exits. But not before Tada notes the droplet of blood on his boot.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Binoculars betray an otherwise seemingly normal cluster of fallen palms. Beneath the vegetation a Japanese SOLDIER surveils an American submarine's exposed periscope--some three miles from shore.

INT. INOUE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Prostrate on a straw mattress, Inoue strains to rotate his head. His cheeks are sunken, his skin white.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)(O.S.)
Tada, General.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
Enter.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Five more P-40s were spotted this morning, sir. In addition to an American submarine approximately three miles off Beach-Three.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
They'll come this week.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
That is my assessment, sir. The three flyers have yielded no remarkable information. I've asked Staff Officer Yajima to try again tomorrow.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
When the Americans invade you are to dispose of them. Do you understand?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Why, General?

Inoue rolls onto his back. He winces.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
To save them from the shallow-minded among us.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
I'll report tomorrow at noon, sir.

Tada turns to leave. He notices Inoue's empty glass and fills it from a basin.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
Ensure the Americans have enough to eat, Tokuchi.

INT. IJA HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Two white eyes track Tada as he exits.

Veiled in darkness, Yajima watches on, quietly, as Tada retires to his quarters.

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - DAY (PRESENT)

In the courtroom, it's Tada who now stares out the window. At the unmistakable thatched hut in the distance.

REGAN
The 14th Division was supposedly the most storied fighting force in the entire Imperial Japanese Military.
(MORE)

REGAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

But apparently they were simply
baffled by the presence of a handful
of prisoners.

Regan's argument dissolves in booming explosions. The courtroom
of the present disappears into the past...

INT. IJA HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK, SOUTH PACIFIC)

Inoue hunches over a map while Tada directs his attention to
various red markers.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)

They've conquered Saipan...

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)

Six submarines.

(moving a marker)

Twelve P-40s and Three B-24s. Twenty-
two casualties reported from our Air-
Defense Crew--here. Seven civilians
injured. Two deceased. Thirteen
cruisers comprise the blockade,
General.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)

Are we prepared to move to the
mountain?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)

I'm finalizing the preparations now.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)

I cannot go with you.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)

I know.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)

See that it's done.

Tada rolls the map and tucks it under his arm.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)

And the prisoners?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)

I've taken no specific steps, sir.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)

Do you remember my conversation with
General Obata?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
General -

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
It is one of the saddest truths of war, Tokuchi, that when fighting commences on a small island a commander cannot depend on the psychology of his lower-ranking officers. It will be better for the prisoners--more honorable--to do it before. This is Bushido. In this case it's also a direct order from your commanding general.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
General Obata's dead, sir.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
And I trust that if I should perish, my orders would not perish with me.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
I need time...to think on this.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
Time better spent stockpiling munitions in the jungle.

Night turns to day. Red markers now litter that same map. The explosions--closer now--knock Inoue's glass off the nightstand.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
We'll move at dusk. Radio communications will cease but I'll send a private to confirm we're in position. Someone we trust.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
They'll be here tomorrow.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Yes, sir.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
So it's Peleliu.

TADA (JAPANESE)
The men know what is expected of them.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
The execution of the prisoners cannot be postponed further. Bring them here and do it before you go.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
No.

Inoue looks at him with bloodshot eyes.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
I won't have them tortured.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
I cannot issue that order.
International law forbids it -

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
I know.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Then rescind it. I beg you.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
I recognize your position, Tokuchi.
But you've never seen combat.
(beat)
Call Kempei Miyazaki. Ask that his
unit sees to it.

Tada stands at attention, motionless, sweating.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE (CONT'D))
Or send him to me and I will
personally explain the situation.

A long beat.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
I will speak to Kempei Miyazaki.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
Tokuchi...he must execute the
Christians, too.

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

Regan rests his boot on his chair. Smirking at Inoue, waving
a sheet of paper in his face.

REGAN
Colonel Tada's words. Not mine. Now,
here's where things get interesting.
Where Mr. Yajima and Colonel Tada
have a difference of *opinion*. See,
the crux of this, Admiral, is what
exactly transpired in the jungle
bunker, wherein, Intelligence Officer
Yajima alleges -

INT. JUNGLE AIR RAID SHELTER - DAY (FLASHBACK, SOUTH PACIFIC)

From the prologue: After securing the Flyers, the squat Yajima approaches the barrel-chested Miyazaki and...

...an originally unseen Colonel Tada, engaged in furtive conversation obscured by storage containers. The entire subterranean bunker vibrating with each blast from above.

YAJIMA (JAPANESE)

Excuse me, sirs. Colonel Tada, I have not been able to finish my report on account -

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)

Prepare transfer of the flyers to the Kempeitai.

YAJIMA (JAPANESE)

Sir?

MIYAZAKI (JAPANESE)

Do it tonight when it is safe to do so. And keep absolutely silent.

Yajima returns to the prisoners but hides behind one of the storage containers, listening surreptitiously.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)

I need a favor, Captain Miyazaki.

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

The door to the courtroom opens and Yajima takes the stand. Unshackled, in civilian dress. A free man.

REGAN

What was the favor?

In broken English, on the witness stand -

YAJIMA

Colonel Tada asked Captain Miyazaki if the Kempeitai would execute the three prisoners of war as a personal favor. To protect General Inoue in the event the Americans overran the island.

SANAGI

Objection -

ROBINSON

Reel him in, Marty.

REGAN
What was Miyazaki's answer?

YAJIMA
"Very well."

The young Breen seethes purple. Robinson bangs a gavel and the pounding transmutes into...

INT. GALA ROOM - WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT

...applause from THOUSANDS of well-dressed society players. General MacArthur towers behind a podium in the spotlight. He wears his formal jacket with a chest full of ribbons.

MACARTHUR
...We're here tonight, not to listen to the tired musings of a chronically cranky old man-

Scattered laughs and silverware-rattling applause.

MACARTHUR (CONT'D)
But from someone who has lived through evils like those posturing this very moment in Eastern Europe and Northern Korea.

Gwen clears her throat in the warm glow of a stage mirror backstage. She takes a long draw from her flask.

MACARTHUR (CONT'D)
Mrs. Gwen Buchanan, ladies and gentlemen, is not here to sell you defense bonds. That's my job. No, I asked Gwen to come tonight to describe to you, in detail, what the world looks like without American intervention in the affairs of the Far East--a tableaux inspired without American victory in palette.

SOLDIERS drop off "*Victory Forms*" at the tables.

MACARTHUR (CONT'D)
I have met evil where evil dwells and I have sent the young men of this nation into said theaters cognizant that some of them would not return.

A HUSBAND clasps his WIFE's gloved hand.

MACARTHUR (CONT'D)
But I have never been a slave. I know not what it feels like to be deprived of my liberty.

(MORE)

MACARTHUR (CONT'D)

The remarkable young woman whom I have the pleasure to introduce to you tonight went through this very crucible--and she emerged better for it. Ladies and gentlemen it is my honor to introduce to you the bestselling author, the Michigan spirit who refused to capitulate, an American patriot, Mrs. Gwen Buchanan.

Gwen crosses the stage as a thick, flooding applause nearly drowns MacArthur out. He embraces her.

MACARTHUR (CONT'D)

You're a patriot, Gwen.

GWEN

Thank you, General.

She grips the podium trying to steady her trembling hands, eyes belying her lips cold smile.

INT. BACKSTAGE GREENROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Gwen stares at her reflection. Once again the applause has faded and a rap on the door startles her.

GWEN

I'm decent.

A HOTEL MANAGER enters with a note on a silver tray.

HOTEL MANAGER

A telegram for you, Mrs. Buchanan.

She unfolds the note:

"Remember always to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism." Sincerely, Commander Martin Carlson...and President George Washington.

Post Script: The Colonel has a wife and four children."

INT. BOXCAR - TRAIN - NIGHT

Gwen stares out at the passing lights. She drinks alone, Carlson's telegram in hand. She goes into the bathroom, locks the door and takes Tada's letter out of her purse.

INT. CARLSON'S OFFICE - GUAM - NIGHT

Sanagi nurses a whiskey with Carlson in his office.

CARLSON

Screw her.

SANAGI

(thinking)

I did not think we would see Yajima here.
For what gain?

CARLSON

His word against Tada's--the
architect at Peleliu. He plays it
right he never looks over his
shoulder again.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - GUAM - NIGHT

The Warden is sound asleep when a hand reaches for his keys...

INT. TADA'S CELL - NIGHT

A masked ASSAILANT unlocks his cell.

He shoves a rag in Tada's mouth and overwhelms him. Hearing
Tada being jerked onto the floor, Inoue awakens.

ASSAILANT

(whispering)

*Did you fuck 'em in the ass before
you cut their heads off?*

The Assailant brings the driftwood desk down on Tada's head
and the pieces fracture. He yanks Tada's pants around his
ankles and picks up the splintered wood.

Tada wails.

Inoue mutes his cries. He grips his necklace tighter. The
chain breaks and beads scatter across the uneven stone floor.

INT. BATHROOM - TRAIN - NIGHT

Gwen reads Tada's letter by an open window, pages fluttering in
the wind. She stares at his photograph. Gaggling on muted sobs,
straining to keep quiet as the train races in the night.

INT. CARLSON'S OFFICE - GUAM - NIGHT

Carlson sets his drink on the desk. He may have something.

CARLSON
Yajima said he received the order
from Tada in the bunker...

SANAGI
Tada insists he asked Miyazaki to
harbor the flyers in his office.

CARLSON
Where was Kempeitai Captain Nakagawa
during that last salvo...? When
Yajima claims he was with Tada in the
bunker? He'd have been there, too,
presumably? Your boys questioned
Yajima in Tokyo, didn't they? Before
we got to him?

Carlson's lost in thought when the phone rings.

SANAGI
I will make a call.

It rings, and rings...finally Carlson answers -

CARLSON (PHONE)
What?!

INTERCUT:

INT. PHONE BOOTH - TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - NIGHT

Gwen leans against the glass.

GWEN (PHONE)
It's him.

CARLSON (PHONE)
Gwen?
(beat)
Did he help you? *Dammit did he help
you?!*

GWEN (PHONE)
My husband's very sick, commander.

CARLSON (PHONE)
I know. I'm sorry. A letter then?

A CONDUCTOR corrals the last passengers. He checks his watch.

GWEN (PHONE)
Can--can you put him on the phone?

CARLSON (PHONE)
 I'm afraid I can't.
 (beat)
 Are you there?

GWEN (PHONE)
 Ask him something.

CARLSON (PHONE)
 What?

GWEN (PHONE)
 Ask him what he did with it.

Stenographer Archie Haden bursts into the room.

CARLSON (PHONE)
 With what? Hello? *Hello?*

With that look Carlson's seen before on Guam...

INT. SICKBAY - GUAM - NIGHT

Tada lies semi-conscious in a hospital bed. A gash runs between his eyes. Dried blood peppers his silver beard.

His body is broken.

CARLSON
 No. No no no no *no no no no*.

Sanagi falls to his side. Carlson holds his hand.

COLONEL TADA
Do-not-worry-Nikka.

Carlson storms out of the hospital.

HADEN
 Commander -

CARLSON
 Don't move a fucking foot 'til I get back, Arch.

EXT. MARINE BASE - GUAM - NIGHT

Carlson runs through the base, his lungs on fire.

INT. ROBINSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Robinson's dressed in a robe sitting with the Warden.

ROBINSON
Fucking hell, Marty.

CARLSON
WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU DO TO HIM?!

Robinson stands but it's too late--Carlson's already on top of the Warden, both hands around his throat.

ROBINSON
Marty get the hell off of him -

The Warden's eyes bulge in his sockets. Robinson has no choice. He brings an elbow down on Carlson's back and he collapses, leaving the three men sprawled on the carpet.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)
For Chrissake he tried to stop him, Marty. He turned on him and ran into the jungle. I've two platoons with dogs out searching.

CARLSON
How the hell do you know?

Carlson turns. General Inoue's chained to a radiator.

WARDEN
I'm a soldier...not a fucking faggot.

CARLSON
There's to be an investigation.

ROBINSON
It's been initiated.

CARLSON
And a goddamned retrial, Arthur, for fuck's sake. On U.S. soil. Open to the press.
(beat)
Gwen's real. I met her in Texas. It's the same Tada.

ROBINSON
You lied.

CARLSON
She's a drunk. Her husband's dying. She's fucked up and she didn't want to come. She didn't want to put her life on hold for some Jap. I don't know why, but I believe she does now. In fact I just got off the phone with her and I'm convinced of it. I'd bet my life on it. But I need your help.

ROBINSON
I already spoke to MacArthur.

CARLSON
And...? And?!

ROBINSON
It's not going to happen, Marty. We are to proceed as planned. On schedule. On Guam. Between us, things are worse than we thought in Korea. He can't spare the officers.

CARLSON
Are we going to war?

ROBINSON
I don't know...looks that way.

Carlson goes to Robinson's desk.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)
Don't fucking do that. Don't you fucking do that -

Carlson throws a piece of paper at him and storms out.

CARLSON
(turning)
Remember what it feels like to hit me, Arthur?

INT. CARLSON "DINING ROOM" - NIGHT

Ruth sits across the table. She's a wreck.

CARLSON
I can't let him die.

RUTH
When you don't *truly* know?

CARLSON
It's done, Ruth. I signed ten minutes ago.

RUTH
And...if there's a war? *What will I do?* You've given your *life*, Martin. Your whole life.
(beat)
Four more years...

CARLSON
It's not the infantry, Ruth...

RUTH

So we can die out here, too? Or on some other island? I pray every day for Godly patience. But--if I'm honest with you--if my heart is honest with you--sometimes I don't know what to feel.

CARLSON

About me.

RUTH

Are you even a Christian anymore?

He stands and walks to the door.

CARLSON

Are you?

RUTH

Don't. Don't you dare.

CARLSON

Hell, you don't *truly* know either? Do you?

RUTH

Stop it. Please stop it.

CARLSON

You really think that some Jew who's been dead two days got up and walked out of a tomb two thousand years ago?

RUTH

Martin. Please.

CARLSON

This is this man's life, Ruth.

RUTH

It's your soul, Martin. And I'm your wife. Why do any of it if not for Him?

CARLSON

I DON'T KNOW!! To do--good. To do good...out here, in the middle of nowhere, out of sight. Isn't that enough? To know that we mattered once. That maybe I didn't change the world. But maybe I'll have changed it--just enough. Without deluding myself about a God who sanctions genocide.

RUTH

I don't know if I can do it, Martin. This. Go on with you like this.

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)
Anymore...You won't let your past
die. You can't accept His grace.

He opens the front door.

CARLSON
You think that's why I volunteered
for this? Hell, Ruth, you don't know
me at all.

RUTH
May I ask you something? Where does
that 'good' come from? Is it just of
the world? Like everything else?
(beat)
Where did Jacob come from?

He walks onto the porch.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Betty had her baby.

CARLSON
Good for Betty.

He slams the door and sits on the porch listening to Ruth's
cries. Swatting at the mosquitos picking at his neck.

INT. INOUE'S CELL - NIGHT

Carlson enters General Inoue's cell.

CARLSON
Why don't you say anything?!

He jerks him by the collar and Inoue grips the few prayer
beads that remain.

CARLSON (CONT'D)
*Answer me, dammit. Do you know what
the bastard did to him? Huh?! Fuck
your religion. Fuck your vow.*
(beat)
Fuck all of it.

EXT. BEACH - GUAM - NIGHT

Carlson stumbles through the jungle to the ocean. He kneels
on the sand and listens to the waves breaking on the rocks.
Relentless, one after the next...

DEEP MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Swim...Swim fuckers...

INT. CABIN - WWI CRUISER - NIGHT (CARLSON'S MEMORY)

A YOUNG Robinson shakes a TEENAGED Carlson awake.

ROBINSON
All hands, Marty. Come on. We got
some em'.

Carlson leaps out of bed and follows his friend through the labyrinthine mechanical underbelly of an early-1900s cruiser.

He follows Robinson to the deck where he sees it: rain pouring on a disabled German U-boat, its crew waving white towels.

A stocky American OFFICER calls out to them.

OFFICER
Robinson -

ROBINSON
Sir?

OFFICER
What the fuck? Get down there.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Carlson and Robinson climb the cargo netting onto a landing craft with their Officer and FIVE other sailors. The cruiser from which they launch is the same one haunting Carlson's nightmares.

They approach the submarine guns raised. A German CAPTAIN shouts to them. He and his crew of TWENTY have their hands raised. Even in the rain Carlson can tell they're emaciated. Living corpses.

CAPTAIN (GERMAN)
*No water, please. Safe quarter.
Water. Please. Water...*

SAILOR
*'s all of 'em, sir. Looks like their
engine kicked out on 'em.*

OFFICER
Tell them to get in the water.

The Germans splash hysterically--more skeletons than men.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
I want you to tell them to dive.
(beat)
Eh--sailor.
(MORE)

OFFICER (CONT'D)
I want you to tell them to dive, and
wait for my order to surface.

The Sailor shouts the order in German. The Captain looks at the American Officer and blurts something unintelligible.

SAILOR
He wants to know how he will receive
such an order, sir?

The Officer loads a flare and fires it into the sky. The German Captain seems to understand. One by one they disappear beneath the surface.

OFFICER
Weapons.

Robinson charges his rifle's bolt. Carlson fumbles with his.

SAILOR
Do you need another flare, sir?

OFFICER
(sotto)
Swim...swim fuckers.

The first GERMAN surfaces and the Officer blows his head off.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Roast 'em all, men. That's an order.

As the Germans surface the Americans murder them one by one. Carlson steadies his gun and pulls the charging handle--three times. His rifle jams.

Robinson fires until his magazine runs empty.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Cease fire!!! Last few're for
Carlson.

The Officer tosses Carlson his rifle. Bubbles...as...

...the last German surfaces.

He can't do it. So the Officer does it for him.

INT. MESS HALL - NIGHT

Carlson's strung up to a steam pipe. The crew stand around. Dead quiet.

OFFICER
Robinson. You first.

Robinson steps forward and punches Carlson in the stomach.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Robinson. Get back over there. I have
it on good faith that you academy
guys are always doing gay shit to
each other. I told you to hit him.
Not jerk him off. Hit him.

Robinson looks Carlson in the eyes, torn. Then his fist
collides with his left eye and Carlson cries like a child.

He is a child...

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Do it again.

Again he hits him. Harder.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Again.

Carlson passes out.

EXT. SHIP DECK - NIGHT (CARLSON'S MEMORY)

TWO Sailors dangle Carlson over the edge and he awakens to a world
upside down: waves banging against the bow fifty-feet below.

OFFICER
Sailors disappear, Carlson. Accidents-
-accidents happen, don't they?

The Officer nods and Carlson's tossed onto the deck. He
kneels to eye level.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Don't. Be. A faggot.
(beat)
Understood?

EXT. BEACH - GUAM - DAWN (PRESENT)

Carlson dusts off the powdery sand sticking to his shirt.

INT. BEDROOM - CARLSON'S QUARTERS - MORNING

He finds his bed perfectly made. With a note on his pillow:

*"I'm to be with Betty and the Baby in Torrance on the first
transport tomorrow. I'll pray for you the whole way. May the
Lord bless you, Martin - Ruth."*

INT. SICKBAY - MORNING

Archie Haden hasn't moved. He snores from a rocking chair beside Tada's cot as Carlson approaches, bag under his arm.

CARLSON
You're relieved, Arch.

Carlson's unpacking when Haden wipes the sleep from his eyes.

HADEN
Thank you, sir.

He exits as -

CARLSON
Arch.

HADEN
Sir?

CARLSON
I'll need a copy of the transcript.

HADEN
Don't you have -

CARLSON
When it's finished. With the signatures. All of it.

HADEN
I'm--not authorized to provide you with that, sir. I'm not to part with those documents under any circumstance.

CARLSON
(re: Tada)
Think that was authorized? Look at him. *Look at him*. That authorized? We never had this conversation.

A long beat before...

HADEN
I'll get you what you need, Commander.

Carlson squeezes Tada's hand.

CARLSON
How are you, pal?

COLONEL TADA
It--hurts--Commander.

Regan enters, concern on his face. Carlson looks at the drawer now home to his few belongings. To the revolver hidden amongst his dress shirts.

REGAN
 Christ...we need to talk.

CARLSON
 I'm right here.

REGAN
 This is fucked.

CARLSON
 Sure is, Lieutenant.

REGAN
 Marty--I'll second a retrial.

CARLSON
 MacArthur's already killed it.

REGAN
 Fuck that was fast. What should we do, Commander? This shit--it's not right.

Sanagi enters excitedly with a courier bag.

SANAGI
 The Yajima file from Tokyo, Commander -

REGAN
 Did you really re-up?

Sanagi's stunned.

CARLSON
 I'll tell you what you can do, Joseph. Tomorrow. When we're in that Quonset. Just give a shit, ok?

REGAN
 Marty -

CARLSON
 I'm not kidding. Open your mind but open your heart. For God's sake, man. You see this? We did this to him, Joseph. You, me, Robinson. All of us. I'm asking you to try this man like a human being--at least until that commission says otherwise.

(MORE)

CARLSON (CONT'D)
I think you capable of it. Have
courage enough to care.

Carlson holds out his hand.

CARLSON (CONT'D)
It was him who helped that female in
Hong Kong.

INT. INOUE'S CELL - DAY

Sanagi now has a cot in Inoue's cell. He kneels alongside him
on the cold floor as the General meditates.

SANAGI (JAPANESE)
Do you know what Carlson did when he
heard? He reenlisted to defend you,
sir. If America should go to war--he
will go, too. He writes to Michi. To
your sons when you do not write. This
is your choice--your prerogative. You
are a holy man, General. But I know
that you love the Colonel. And he
needs more than your prayers
tomorrow. He needs your voice, sir.
Commander Carlson needs it. 144
Japanese, General. This man defended
every single one of us. I beseech
you, sir, to testify. For Commander
Carlson. For Colonel Tada. For your
family. For yourself.

Inoue raises his head. Sanagi bows his. The two men kneel,
praying in the dark. Praying as they each know how.

INT. SICKBAY - DAY

Carlson sits in his rocking chair with a phone to his ear.

INTERCUT:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BETTY'S HOME - NIGHT

Ruth sits on a sofa in her sister's modest living room in
Torrance, California. She's devastated.

RUTH (PHONE)
I wish you hadn't told me...It's so
terrible, Martin. I'm so sorry. God,
I'm so sorry. Jesus help him...

CARLSON (PHONE)
I didn't mean what I said.

RUTH (PHONE)
Martin -

CARLSON (PHONE)
I can't lose you.

RUTH (PHONE)
I--have to go.

CARLSON (PHONE)
I love you -

The line's dead.

INT. BEDROOM - BETTY'S HOME - TORRANCE, CA - NIGHT

A baby wails down the hall. Ruth climbs out of bed.

EXT. TORRANCE STREETS - NIGHT

She walks off the insomnia down a deserted Torrance Boulevard when something catches her eye.

It's Gwen's face...

EXT. ANGELUS TEMPLE - NEXT MORNING - ESTABLISHING

...stapled to a mural on the facade of a large stone church:

"Gwen Dew Buchanan. Bestselling Author. Survivor. Believer in Christ Our Savior."

Chyron: Angelus Temple, Los Angeles.

INT. CHURCH ANNEX - DAY

Gwen is uncomfortable holding hands in a PRAYER CIRCLE.

PASTOR
We lift him up to You, Lord. Father,
we lift up James...

INT. SANCTUARY - ANGELUS TEMPLE - SAME

As Ruth Carlson takes a seat alongside THOUSANDS of others gathered inside the cavernous sanctuary--copies of either The Bible or *Prisoner of the Japs* on every other lap.

INT. SICKBAY - GUAM - DAY

Rain drums on the window sill. Gun on the table, Carlson rocks in his chair reading Tada a letter. Sanagi enters.

SANAGI
From his son?

Carlson sets the letter down. Tada's fallen asleep.

SANAGI (CONT'D)
Why did you never have children,
Commander?

CARLSON
I was a father. For two months. One
morning Ruth looked in the crib. She
swears he was smiling. Like he had seen
God. I was overseas. I never met him.

SANAGI
What was his name?

CARLSON
My son's name was Jacob.

SANAGI
A strong name.

Carlson stops rocking.

CARLSON
Infants can't smile. Not at that age.
Are you a Christian, Sanagi?

SANAGI
Why do you ask, Commander?

CARLSON
Because I want what you have--
whatever that is.

Sanagi looks at the injured Tada, asleep in his cot.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK, JAPAN)

SANAGI, 18, is in searing pain. His torso contorted on a gurney.

He reaches for a syringe on a nearby cart, and pulls it full
of air. The needle brushes the hairs on his arm when he
notices it--a small black book on the nightstand.

INT. SICKBAY - GUAM - DAY (PRESENT)

SANAGI
I did not know who put it there. But
I opened it to Matthew: Five. I
thought, 'If there is a God, He
sounds like *this*'.

CARLSON
'If'.

SANAGI
'If'. But 'if' was enough. Ruth is a
good woman. And you are a good man,
Martin Carlson. Marriage is precious.
I will pray for yours.

CARLSON
Pray for him.

SANAGI
I have prayed for the Colonel
everyday for twenty-two years.
Nothing from Gwen?

CARLSON
One day this will make sense to her.
And she'll wish it didn't. We should
wake him.

SANAGI
I pray for her, too.

INT. SANCTUARY - ANGELUS TEMPLE - DAY

Gwen walks the stage sending the church into a manic frenzy.

E./I. COURTROOM QUONSET - DUSK - ESTABLISHING

The sun begins to set on Guam. Inside the courtroom, Tada can
barely sit upright.

FLASH: Barking. A canine tearing into human flesh -

CARLSON
Did you testify as a witness in this
courtroom on the 19th of February
1948?

Carlson looks like he hasn't slept in months.

YAJIMA
I did.

CARLSON

You testified that General Inoue did not have authority over the Kempeitai--the Secret Police--is that correct?

YAJIMA

In the strictest sense he did not have command authority, but -

CARLSON

Who were present when you entered the jungle air raid shelter?

YAJIMA

I clearly recall that Colonel Tada and Colonel Miyazaki were there.

CARLSON

Was Captain Nakagawa there?

Yajima blanks.

CARLSON (CONT'D)

(reading)

Because in your affidavit to investigators in Tokyo you were pretty 'clear' in your recollection: "Captain Miyazaki and Captain Nakagawa were present in the bunker. General Inoue was ill in bed." No Tada...Do you recall *this*?

YAJIMA

This matter is not clear in my recollection, however I am definite -

REGAN

Objection, Admiral -

CARLSON

Isn't it true that Colonel Tada actually told you to summon Miyazaki to headquarters?

FLASH: Yajima leading Miyazaki into Tada's office.

YAJIMA

I do not know of such fact.

CARLSON

Yesterday you said the POWs were kept at headquarters for two days before they were executed the following evening, is that correct?

YAJIMA

That is what the report said.

CARLSON
(reading)
"Four or Five days after I had questioned them, these three aviators were executed at the Kempeitai." Your testimony--given in *this* court at the trial of Kokubo et al in answer to question number sixteen.

YAJIMA
My recollection is not clear...

CARLSON
No kidding.

INT. OFFICE - KEMPEITAI HQ - DUSK (FLASHBACK, SOUTH PACIFIC)

Sergeant KOKUBO, 20s--armband of the Kempeitai--sits at his desk when Captain NAKAGAWA, 50s, enters.

NAKAGAWA (JAPANESE)
Kokubo. Let's go.

The clumsy Kokubo stumbles over his chair and slams his head on the desk. He exits, only to return for his sword.

EXT. KEMPEITAI HQ - DUSK

A Kempeitai PLATOON load onto trucks and the caravan sets off towards the jungle.

NAKAGAWA
Kokubo -

Kokubo fumbles with his belt, his forehead bleeding.

NAKAGAWA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Get in the truck.

KOKUBO (JAPANESE)
Yes, Captain Nakagawa.

He takes the only seat available--between a FELLOW SOLDIER and the three American Flyers.

The truck lurches forward...

INTERCUT:

Now, on Guam in 1949, a gaunt Kokubo trembles on the stand recounting the...

Rain...as Kokubo prods the prisoners down an overgrown path to a clearing where headlights reveal Miyazaki and Nakagawa.

MIYAZAKI (JAPANESE)
Bring them here.

Kokubo escorts the Flyers by leash to Miyazaki, who strips them of their blindfolds. They see the holes. The missionaries.

MIYAZAKI (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Ok.

Nakagawa nods. Twelve gunshots ring out in the night...

CARLSON (IN COURT)
And the Americans?

MIYAZAKI (JAPANESE)
Kneel.

Miyazaki pulls the trigger on his pistol.

KOKUBO (IN COURT)
(stuttering)
The second was made to squat in front of a hole and--and--then Captain Nakagawa--decapitated him.

REGAN (IN COURT)
What happened to the third one?

Two JAPANESE pin Ned to the earth. He squirms.

MIYAZAKI (JAPANESE)
Take his head.

Hesitant, Kokubo takes in the American writhing in the mud.

NAKAGAWA (JAPANESE)
Sergeant Kokubo, kill the foreigner...

MIYAZAKI (JAPANESE)
TAKE HIS HEAD, KEMPEI!!

KOKUBO (IN COURT)
I did not know how to use a sword and...help me, Commander Carlson -

REGAN (IN COURT)
Look at me. How did it end?

KOKUBO (IN COURT)
...the sword--was blunt. I brought it down--but it struck his collar. It did not cut at all. So--so--Colonel Miyazaki shot the prisoner.

Rainwater runs into the ditch. It's over.

Kokubo weeps--his olive fatigues covered in blood. The Kempeitai pounce on *him*, kick his face in and bury it deep in the mud. They encircle him, swarming him as...

INT. ANGELUS TEMPLE - DAY (PRESENT)

...Gwen pushes through a frenzied crowd of wild parishioners clawing to get close to her. She feels a hand on her shoulder.

RUTH
Ruth Carlson, Mrs. Buchanan.
Commander Carlson's wife.

EXT. BENCH - ECHO PARK LAKE - DAY

Gwen sits next to Ruth on a bench in Echo Park. They watch the ducks swimming in the lake. The families kicking and laughing in their paddleboats.

RUTH
It was Martin led me to Christ when
he came back from Europe.

GWEN
I left God in Asia.

RUTH
Fortunately, Gwen, he never left you.
The Gospel is His faithfulness to us.
Everything else is just bells and
whistles. Pretty bells. Beautiful
whistles. But ornaments. People
forget that. Good people.

A duck swims past.

GWEN
How badly did they hurt him?

RUTH
Martin spared me most of it, I'm
sure. I know they broke his jaw.
MacArthur's making them go through
with it regardless.

GWEN
General MacArthur?

RUTH
The Supreme Commander. My husband's
boss for four more years.
(beat)
Is he innocent?

GWEN
*Why would your husband do a thing
 like that?*

Ruth takes her hands.

RUTH
Is he innocent, Gwen?

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - GUAM - DAY

Eric Breen escorts Kokubo from the stand.

CARLSON
 Ready, pal?

Tada nods. He stands, only to collapse on the floor.

CARLSON (CONT'D)
Help me dammit -

It's Breen who helps Tada into his seat, his eyes rolled into his head. Conscious, but delirious with exhaustion. He locks eyes with Breen, but fails to make the connection...

COLONEL TADA
Com-mander -

CARLSON
*Admiral, defense requests an
 immediate recess.*

MARINE COMMISSIONER
 If he can sit in that chair I don't
 see a justified reason in hell for it.

REGAN
 Sir, this man is not well...

MARINE COMMISSIONER
 When this court wants to hear you
 open your mouth we'll say so,
 Lieutenant. Give him some water. He's
 dehydrated. Hell, it's hot in here.

CARLSON
 Admiral?

Robinson looks to the commissioners. A collective, tacit "no."

ROBINSON
 We have his affidavit. Does the
 defense have any other witnesses?

Sanagi whispers in Inoue's ear. He stands and bellows -

SANAGI
Defense will call the accused General
Inoue, Sadae.

The quonset falls quiet.

The Old Warrior hobbles the twenty-some-feet to the stand.

ROBINSON
Do you, Inoue, Sadae, swear to tell
the truth before this commission and
before God?

GENERAL INOUE
...Yes.

CARLSON
Why did you order the execution of
fifteen people in September 1944?

GENERAL INOUE
General Obata had conducted an
unscheduled inspection...

EXT. DOCK - DAY (FLASHBACK, SOUTH PACIFIC)

Inoue stands with General OBATA, 70s. A boat in the distance.

OBATA (JAPANESE)
We'll counter from Guam.

The small craft ties up to the dock. Obata climbs into the boat.

OBATA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
The Emperor didn't trust anyone else
with these islands.

He hands General Inoue a dispatch.

OBATA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Should Palau fall...so too Japan.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
(reading)
General...?

OBATA (JAPANESE)
If transport to the rear is severed
the prisoners will meet atrocious
deaths from our own. Dispose of them.
Under your supervision. While the men
are not yet blinded by hate. This is
an Imperial Decree.

Inoue runs a finger over the envelopes wax seal.

OBATA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Is there an issue, Sadae?

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
No, General.

INT. INOUE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Inoue shares the order with Tada, without Obata's conviction:

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
It will be better for the prisoners--
more honorable--to do it before. This
is Bushido. In this case it's also a
direct order from your commanding
general.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
General Obata's dead, sir.

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - CONTINUOUS (PRESENT)

GENERAL INOUE
Submarines were in our sight. I told
Colonel Tada that under these
inexorable conditions the prisoners
of war must be executed.

CARLSON
What did he say?

Inoue looks at Tada--a shadow of the soldier he once knew.

GENERAL INOUE
That he could not bring himself to do it...

INT. INOUE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK, SOUTH PACIFIC)

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE)
Call Kempei Miyazaki. Ask that his
unit sees to it.

Tada stands at attention, sweating.

GENERAL INOUE (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
Or send him to me and I will
personally explain the situation.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
I will speak to Kempei Miyazaki.

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - DUSK (PRESENT)

Regan approaches General Inoue on the witness stand.

REGAN
Did Tada request the audience with
Miyazaki?

GENERAL INOUE
He said he would.

REGAN
In the air raid bunker?

GENERAL INOUE
I do not know. I never saw him again.

REGAN
What kind of man is Mr. Yajima?

Inoue looks at Yajima--unshackled, in the front row.

GENERAL INOUE
Never a man to be trusted.

Regan sits. With Yajima directly behind him. Carlson looks at Tada slumped over in his chair.

ROBINSON
If the defense has no one else -

CARLSON
Admiral I call volunteer counselor
Sanagi, Sadamu to the stand in place
of the incapacitated Colonel Tada.

MARINE COMMISSIONER
To *testify* for him?

CARLSON
Tada signed over the legal authority
to speak as his proxy this morning.
Sanagi's known the Colonel for over
twenty years, sir.

MARINE COMMISSIONER
This is ridiculous.

ROBINSON
Judge Advocate Regan--do you object?

Carlson looks to him. A seemingly hopeless proposition until -

REGAN
No I don't, sir.

MARINE COMMISSIONER
Arthur? Are you serious?

ROBINSON
I'll allow it.

Sanagi takes the stand. He passes Inoue.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)
Do you, Sanagi, Sadamu, swear to tell
the truth before this commission and
before God?

SANAGI
I do.

CARLSON
Why do you love that man?

MARINE COMMISSIONER
This court is turning into a clown
show, Arthur.

CARLSON
Why?

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK, JAPAN)

A PROCTOR patrols rows of desks. Sanagi, 18, finishes an exam
early. His NEIGHBOR shakes with crippling anxiety. Sanagi
pushes his answers into view. The Proctor jerks him forward.

PROCTOR (JAPANESE)
Kneel.

He brings a wooden sword down on Sanagi's back. His spine
cracks. Another strike and more bones snap...

INT. LIBRARY - SAME

Tada's staring out the window at Nikka when he hears it.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Again the Proctor raises his sword above his head.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
Lieutenant Ido. Step outside!!

Tada lifts Sanagi's shirt. He sees the fractured spine, the
vertebrae sunken into the skin.

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE) (CONT'D)
 You don't have to be a soldier to
 serve your country, son.

Sanagi writhes in pain, in so much agony...

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

...as he sits on the stand, now a confident older man.
 Carlson holds up Tada's thesis.

CARLSON
 (reading)
*"Prisoners of war must never be
 killed; no matter how difficult the
 situation becomes."* Did Tada write
 this?

SANAGI
 He did.

Carlson steps towards Sanagi.

CARLSON
 Is that man capable of murder?

SANAGI
 No.

He steps closer.

CARLSON
IS THAT MAN CAPABLE OF MURDER?

SANAGI
NO!

INT. GWEN'S SUITE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK, HONG KONG)

Gwen opens her door. Colonel Tada stands in the hallway with
 the old man Lewis Arlington, flanked by their Guard. She
 throws her arms around him.

GWEN
 Lewis...

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
 Go downstairs, Hondo.

The Guard disappears and Tada reaches into his pocket.

COLONEL TADA (CONT'D)
 With Hong Kong secured I am to be
 transferred to Canton.
 (MORE)

COLONEL TADA (CONT'D)
This is goodbye, Ms. Dew.
(smiling)
For twenty years, at least.

He hands her a wad of cash.

COLONEL TADA (CONT'D)
I'll see that Mr. Arlington arrives
at the hospital in Shanghai by this
time tomorrow. I could not, however,
secure your release. Too many people
know. They assure me you will be
safe here.

GWEN
Why?

He steps towards her and places a gentle hand on her temple.

COLONEL TADA
Mens. Cor.

EXT. BENCH - ECHO PARK LAKE - DAY (PRESENT)

Ruth takes Gwen's hand as she starts to heave.

GWEN
*They came--for us--the next
morning...*

FLASH: SOLDIERS flooding into their room at the hotel. Blood
pooling between Diana's legs in the backseat of a truck. Her
head falling limp. Soldiers leading Gwen and Diana into the
death camp beneath a faded sign, "*Camp Stanley*"...

RUTH
What did his letter say?

Gwen holds it crumpled in her fist.

SANAGI (V.O.)
June 26. 1947.

INT. HOUSE 371 - DAY (FLASHBACK, JAPAN)

Nikka watches fearfully from behind a lace curtain as a car
barrels towards their home.

INT. POLICE HOLDING CELL - DAY

Tada, now shackled, overhears an argument outside his cell.

AMERICAN OFFICIAL (O.S.)
Tada. Tada, Tukachi. That's what I
just fucking said...

The door opens and an AMERICAN OFFICIAL looks at him.

E./I. SUGAMO PRISON - TOKYO - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The same car rolls under a sign: "*Sugamo Prison*". A GUARD
leads Tada to his cell. The door closes.

Screaming...

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

CARLSON
Was he ever shown a warrant for his
arrest?

SANAGI
No.

CARLSON
When did the Colonel arrive on Guam?

SANAGI
January 20. 1948.

CARLSON
Was he shown extradition papers?

SANAGI
No. He was taken to the stockade and
placed in solitary confinement.

CARLSON
*When was the first time Colonel Tada
actually saw the charges against him?*

SANAGI
March 18th. 1949. Nearly two years
after his arrest.

CARLSON
And when did this commission appoint
him legal counsel?

SANAGI
Three weeks ago. When you first wrote
to your colleague looking for Gwen
Buchanan, Commander.

INT. GWEN'S SUITE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK, HONG KONG)

Gwen's back in the Peninsula suite. She omitted something...

GWEN
What became of the British--at Fort Stanley, Colonel?

Tada pulls his hand away from her temple.

COLONEL TADA
(saddened)
I regret to say the 3rd division did not take prisoners.

Gwen holds it in. She keeps quiet her broken heart.

LEWIS
Oh, Gwen...

COLONEL TADA
There will be an investigation.

She takes Hugh's cloisonné ring off her finger. Almost by reflex.

GWEN
Have you a wife, Colonel?

COLONEL TADA
Nikka.

GWEN
It's all I have to give. I hope she likes it.

Tada takes the ring.

EXT. BENCH - ECHO PARK LAKE - DAY (PRESENT)

GWEN
"Sorry." That he was sorry. For what his people did to me.

RUTH
He saved the old man?

She nods.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Did he try to save you?

GWEN
I don't--know...

RUTH
Dammit did he try, Gwen?!

A final nod. There in the sun by the lake, a duck at her feet...

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - GUAM - AFTERNOON

CARLSON
 What really happened on that island,
 Mr. Sanagi?

INT. TADA'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK, SOUTH PACIFIC)

Miyazaki and Yajima stand at attention in front of Tada.

MIYAZAKI (JAPANESE)
 These are General Inoue's orders?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
 Yes. But orders in violation of
 international law. Colonel Miyazaki
 you are not technically in a position
 to receive orders from the General.
 You must decide what happens next
 independently.

MIYAZAKI (JAPANESE)
 What are you suggesting, Colonel?

COLONEL TADA (JAPANESE)
 You know exactly what I am
 suggesting, Aritsune...

A long beat as Miyazaki thinks it through.

MIYAZAKI (JAPANESE)
 I will deal with it in my abdomen.

The air raid siren. Yajima bolts. Miyazaki follows him.

EXT. IJA BRIG - DAY

Yajima drags the prisoners towards the jungle and through a
 window Wash sees Tada disappear in his office.

Where he buries himself in a foxhole underneath the floorboards.

INT. JUNGLE AIR RAID SHELTER

Yajima secures the prisoners and approaches Miyazaki and an
 initially unseen Captain Nakagawa.

Tada's absent. It's Yajima who -

YAJIMA (JAPANESE)
I need a favor, Miyazaki...

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

SANAGI
Tada was never in the bunker. The alleged conversation wherein he asked Miyazaki to murder the prisoners as a personal favor never happened. By the time the raid was over the prisoners were gone. There was nothing he could do.

CARLSON
What does the expression mean?

SANAGI
'I will deal with it in my abdomen' represents a tacit understanding that a man will handle something at his own discretion, without notifying a third party.

CARLSON
Meaning what?

SANAGI
That Colonel Tada sincerely believed Miyazaki would protect the prisoners and keep the matter secret from the general. Only Yajima would not stand for this.

Carlson sits. The courtroom is silent. Breen looks at Tada, then at Yajima. The horror of his retribution sinking in.

ROBINSON
Joe?

Regan stands.

REGAN
Three prisoners of war among 35,000 Japanese troops. In every single case the persons tried stated "It wasn't my fault." Now, when we finally try the commanding officer he states it was the fault of his commanding officer. Tada was the only person on the whole island who could have said "no".

Regan looks at Carlson.

REGAN (CONT'D)

And today I'm inclined to believe he did.

He takes his seat and Carlson rises.

It's a long while before he delivers his closing statement:

CARLSON

The principles of justice are substantial and eternal and nowhere else in all the world is there such a great concern as there is in the United States of America that justice be done in the trial and punishment of men--of all men--brought to trial in our courts, be they citizens or not.

(beat)

For our philosophy is one of universal law.

(beat)

What General Inoue did is a crime. But was it murder? Was his intent murderous? Was Colonel Tada's?

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - DUSK

ROBINSON

Get SCAP on the wireless, Arch.

Haden turns, slowly, and fires a telegram...to the same soldier who receives it in the Pentagon just as MacArthur walks past.

When Haden's machine clicks to life he unplugs it with his foot.

He doesn't have enough time...

HADEN

General MacArthur's on a plane to Manchuria, sir.

Robinson sees the cord on the floor.

HADEN (CONT'D)

He'll--be unreachable for the next three days.

The Admiral stands over him. Towering. Inscrutable.

INT. COURTROOM QUONSET - AFTERNOON

The Commissioners have filed back to the bench.

ROBINSON

Inoue, Sadae -

The prisoner stands.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)
We find the charge: of murder in
violation of the customs of war--
proved. I therefore sentence you to
be hanged by the neck until dead.
Tada, Tokuchi -

Carlson helps him to his feet and steadies him.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)
Majority finds the accused guilty. I
therefore sentence you to no less than
fifty years spent inside Sugamo Prison.
You will await further notice at the
stockade. Court hereby dismissed.

Yajima walks past them. Out of the courtroom. A free man.

EXT. COURTROOM QUONSET - DUSK

Carlson steps outside. Behind the quonset where he falls to
his knees and weeps.

After a while a hand taps him on the shoulder.

ROBINSON
I bought you three days. Make them count.
I'm sorry, Marty. For striking you.

CARLSON
It's in the past.

ROBINSON
Why do it? Any of it?

CARLSON
Because I'd like to think justice is
more than just some words in a book
most people never read.

ROBINSON
Do you still have nightmares?

He nods. Robinson turns. The sun setting beyond the trees.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)
I missed, Marty. That night when we
were kids. I missed. It should have
been me tied to that pipe.

CARLSON
Maybe it was. Maybe that's why we're
both here.

(MORE)

CARLSON (CONT'D)

(beat)

Do you know why none of them ever
begged, Arthur?

ROBINSON

Why not, Marty?

CARLSON

Because an orchid's fragrant even in
a valley visited by no admirers.

Carlson walks away. But not before placing a hand on
Robinson's shoulder.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BETTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The phone rings. Ruth takes it in hand.

RUTH (PHONE)

This is Ruth.

She thrusts a wailing INFANT onto Gwen's lap.

RUTH (PHONE) (CONT'D)

There's someone here wants to speak to you.

Ruth hands the phone to Gwen. She hesitates.

RUTH (CONT'D)

You can't love God and hate your
neighbor.

INT. INOUE'S CELL - GUAM - DAY

The Warden unlocks the cell.

CARLSON

Nothing personal.

WARDEN

It's all bullshit, Commander.

CARLSON

Or none of it is. Huh, Warden?

INT. SICKBAY - GUAM - NIGHT

Carlson leads Inoue to the medical ward, a bottle of sake
tucked under his arm. He pours four glasses.

The tired men sit around Tada's cot nursing their drinks in silence when Admiral Robinson enters...

FADE OUT.

INT. FURNISHED OFFICE - DAY

Carlson sits behind a different desk. He glances at his watch.

Chyron: Six months later.

INT. MACARTHUR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

MACARTHUR (PHONE)
Send her in.

He pulls a string and a topographical map of Asia disappears into the wall. Gwen enters carrying a folder. MacArthur rises to greet her.

MACARTHUR (CONT'D)
Hello, Gwen. Been a while. Please,
have a seat.

She stands.

GWEN
General--I need Tada, Tokuchi
released from prison...

He eyes her. Gwen offers him the folder. He doesn't take it.

GWEN (CONT'D)
...as a personal favor to me.

MACARTHUR
This is about the commission.

GWEN
He's dying, General. Let him die
surrounded by people who love him.
Not criminals in a dark cell.

MACARTHUR
Both their sentences were commuted.
Your letter was considered. Wasn't
it?

The folder's getting heavy.

GWEN
It -

MACARTHUR
Gwen.

Calm, commanding, he doesn't look at what's in her hand. He looks at her.

MACARTHUR (CONT'D)
(smiling)
That was rhetorical. Unfortunately,
you picked an inopportune night. The
commission already ruled on this.

GWEN
Please--please don't make me go on
the radio.

She surprises even herself. At first he glares at her, but his scowl curls into another warm grin.

MACARTHUR
You're not threatening a general in
the United States Army, are you,
Gwen?

She digs in.

GWEN
General, I'd hand deliver this to
Edward R. Murrow himself if I thought
it would get him out of there.

A long beat as MacArthur towers over her.

MACARTHUR
Do you blame me, Gwen?

GWEN
(earnestly)
Not in the slightest.

MACARTHUR
What is it you really want?

GWEN
For you to be the patriot I know you
to be.

MACARTHUR
He's just one man.

GWEN
An innocent man.

MACARTHUR
(hollering)
Walter. Show Mrs. Buchanan out.

MacArthur takes the folder. He's grinning again. Walter enters and MacArthur nods to him.

WALTER

Ma'am?

MACARTHUR

Good night, Gwen.

Gwen backs out of the room, all the while MacArthur's still smiling at her. Walter escorts Gwen through the office. She can breathe now, finally.

GWEN

What the hell just happened?

INT. FURNISHED OFFICE - DAY

Carlson's phone finally rings. He listens, hangs up and dials. Gwen is waiting by the phone in a crowded hotel lobby.

INTERCUT:

GWEN (PHONE)

Hello?

CARLSON (PHONE)

You did it.

She sinks into the sofa, tears streaming down her cheeks as GUESTS pass in front of her, occupied with CHILDREN, luggage.

CARLSON (PHONE) (CONT'D)

He had asked, a while back, if you would come say goodbye. So his family could thank you. Without betraying your privacy I told him that you're dealing with your own difficulties -

Ruth Carlson pauses on the staircase, not wanting to interrupt.

GWEN (PHONE)

James passed two weeks ago.

CARLSON (PHONE)

I didn't know. I'm sorry.

GWEN (PHONE)

I'll go. If that's what he wants.

CARLSON (PHONE)

I'll arrange it.

GWEN (PHONE)

How's Ruth, Commander?

CARLSON (PHONE)

Captain now, actually.

GWEN (PHONE)
(smiling)
I'd forgotten.

CARLSON (PHONE)
She's getting ready for church. I'm
sure she'd like to hear from you.

GWEN (PHONE)
I must get going. Please tell her
I'll write from Tokyo.

CARLSON (PHONE)
I'm confident Mr. Sanagi would host
you, should you need accommodations.
Though I'll warn you he and his wife
just had their first child. A little
boy.

GWEN (PHONE)
What'd they name him?

Carlson stares at a framed photo on his desk: of Sanagi and
his WIFE cradling their NEWBORN.

CARLSON (PHONE)
They named him Emilius.
(beat)
Why'd you change your mind?

Ruth brings a handkerchief to her eyes.

GWEN (PHONE)
Sometimes you need to get off the
wrong train if you ever want to make
it home. Good night, Captain. And
thank you. This country needs more
men like you.

Carlson spots his wife, dressed in Sunday white. She smiles
at him and he follows her through the front door. Outside an
American flag waves wildly in the wind. High above the turbid
waters of San Francisco Bay below...

EXT. ROAD - RURAL JAPANESE VILLAGE - DAY (PROLOGUE)

GWEN (JAPANESE)
Excuse me. 371?

The one-armed Beggar turns. She sees his face:

It's the same homeless man, Kenzo, with whom Tada shared
his plums, who points to a modest cottage where Gwen
reaches for the door. Stops herself. Surveys the white
ghost town.

Exhales. Turns. Knocks...

INT. HOUSE 371 - SAME

While inside Nikka stares at this strange woman from behind a lace curtain. When she finally opens the door she bows low to Gwen. Sobbing, she can't help throwing both arms around her.

But all Gwen sees is the turquoise ring on Nikka's left hand...

GWEN (V.O.)

We, who had been in human bondage,
prisoners of the Japs, were now free
men and women once more.

FADE OUT TO...

Over Black:

General Inoue, Sadae was released early from Sugamo prison in 1953. He died in Japan in 1961.

Gwen Dew Buchanan resumed her celebrated career as an international correspondent at a time when women were virtually barred from the profession.

Tada, Tokuchi was ultimately acquitted of all wrongdoing. Shortly after Gwen's visit, he succumbed to complications from an infection contracted during his internment.

For exceptional service on Guam in the wake of World War II Captain Martin Emilius Carlson was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal.

He passed away in 1977, aged 79. With Ruth at his side.

An Episcopalian.

CREDITS OVER:

Chief of Defense
War Crimes Commission,
Guam

Dear Sir:

I have been asked to give testimony as to anything I know of Colonel Tada who is being tried as a war criminal under your jurisdiction.

Although on general principles I do not like to testify on behalf of any Japanese, I do feel it only fair to give what evidence I can under the specific American principle that every man be given a fair trial.

I feel indebted to Colonel Tada for what he did for me and for Mr. Arlington in Hong Kong. If this letter in any way repays that debt, incurred under the worse possible conditions, I am very happy. It is easy to do such things with war so far in the background. What Colonel Tada did was in the heat of war, while Japan was very victorious, and when general Japanese policy seemed to be mistreatment of prisoners. He went against this policy to be decent to me and to those within my immediate orbit.

It is my personal belief that Colonel Tada wished to do everything according to military protocol, and under the approved regulations of international warfare. At least he followed such procedures in Hong Kong, during the days when other Japanese officers throughout the Far East were disregarding every rule of decency and humanity. He did not expect any return from me nor from the 83-year old American, and I am sure he never expected to be a prisoner himself. In view of all that, I do hope this will prove of value to him now.

If I can be of any further service, please let me know. There are only a few Japanese on whose behalf I would be willing to say good things--as far as their conduct during the war--but Colonel Tada is the exception to this rule. I do so on the American principle of justice towards all people.

Very Respectfully Yours,

Gwen Dew Buchanan
El Paso, 1949