

CHINA
BEACH

"TWILIGHT"

FINAL DRAFT

February 21, 1989



WARNER BROS.
TELEVISION

CHINA BEACH

"Twilight"

Written by
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"Twilight"

CAST

MCMURPHY

LILA

BOONIE

DOCTOR RICHARD

K.C.

BECKETT

DODGER

WAYLOO

FRANKIE

CONGRESSMAN STANTON HOLMES

SWEETNESS

BELLOWS

WHIPLASH

LT. COLONEL REINHARDT

*

MAJOR DECTER

*

CAPTAIN FENTRESS

MP

*

CHINA BEACH

"Twilight"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

PARACHUTE TENT

TRIAGE

JET SET

BOONIE'S QUARTERS

HOLMES' QUARTERS

SWEETNESS'S QUARTERS

EXTERIORS:

JUNGLE

* COMPOUND/VIEWING STAND

* TRIAGE *

* BEACH

* HELIPAD

* PARACHUTE TENT *

JET SET *

RIVER

CHURCH

BRIDGE *

CHINA BEACH

"Twilight"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1 OMITTED (TRANSPPOSED TO SCENE 11A) 1

1A EXT. JUNGLE - DAWN (TRANSPPOSED FROM SCENE 11) 1A

Slow, steady, careful motion.
Soldier's boots sinking deep into mud.
Moisture. The jungle everywhere.
The CLOSE ON the heel of one boot.
A thin wire is tripped.
An EXPLOSION. Whiteness.

SMASH CUT TO:

2 INT. PARACHUTE TENT - DAY 2

BOONIE sits in a chair. Seated directly across behind a long table are LT. COLONEL REINHARDT, MAJOR DECTER CAPTAIN FENTRESS. Fentress takes notes throughout. Reinhardt and Decter refer to their file folders. The orange and white parachute cloth of the tent billows in from a hot, wet breeze.

REINHARDT

We have to know what happened.

BOONIE

It's in the report.

DECTER

There's very little in the official report.

REINHARDT

Let's start at the beginning again, Corporal. About the E.E.N.T.

BOONIE

The end of the evening nautical twilight.

DECTER

That's when your mission began.

BOONIE

Twilight. Yes.

(CONTINUED)

REINHARDT

There were a number of covert operations taking place in that area, weren't there, Corporal?

BOONIE

I'm only familiar with the work of my patrol.

DECTER

Could you tell us the nature of that work?

BOONIE

It's in the report.

Boonie hesitates. Fentress whispers to Decter.

DECTER

It was a S-L-A-M mission, correct? Seek, locate, annihilate, monitor.

BOONIE

Yes, sir.

REINHARDT

The end of the twilight. Your patrol hid near the L.Z. until darkness fell, then moved into the jungle.

BOONIE

That's affirm.

REINHARDT

Heavy rains began to fall. Your patrol became lost.

BOONIE

I felt we were in the wrong place.

CUT TO:

Dense. The rain has stopped but the air is still hot and thick. Visibility never more than twenty feet. The foliage cutting off the last strains of the day's sunlight.

All patrol members wear unidentifiable fatigues; all equipment "sterile," i.e. non-U.S. issue. Boots, ponchos, flesh -- everything plastered with wet mud.

(CONTINUED)

Bush hats or bandanas covering their heads. Grease paint smeared across their faces. All carrying Soviet-made pistols, knives, 9mm Swedish K sub-machine guns.

BOONIE (V.O.)

Dodger was point man, out front.
We were all sterile. Clothes,
weapons. No U.S. issue.

DODGER, cool and intense, his concentration on the jungle, moving slowly forward.

BOONIE (V.O.)

Sweetness was the slackman,
carrying the middle. Then
Whiplash, our radio man.

SWEETNESS and WHIPLASH move through the thick, rain-slicked elephant grass. Whiplash wears a long jet black scarf wrapped several times around his neck; a radio pack on his back.

BOONIE (V.O.)

I brought up the rear. Along with
Bellows, our T.C. -- tactical
commander.

BELLOWS is dressed as the others except for a tribal amulet hanging from his neck and a montagnard bracelet around his wrist... the souvenirs of missions past. His movement is graceful, flawless, almost elegant. A man who could move through the jungle without the insects even knowing.

BOONIE

Dodger, I'm telling you, something's
wrong. We're not within five miles
of that trail.

Dodger says nothing, concentrating on the jungle.

SWEETNESS

We're not even close.

Dodger still doesn't respond.

BOONIE

Dodger, you gonna help out here?!

DODGER

Nothing to do, Boonie-man. We're
out here. Gotta do the job.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

3

WHIPLASH
 (pries a huge leech
 of his neck)

Damn!!

BELLOWS
 Shut up in front.

Whiplash turns, starts walking backwards.

WHIPLASH
 Cut some slack, Bellows. I'm just
 prying a goddamn leech off my --

And BLAM! Whiplash flies into the air, crashing down
 into the mud as he screams in pain.

The force of the EXPLOSION throws Sweetness to the ground.
 Dodger crouches down. Bellows and Boonie move forward.

Whiplash's leg is shredded, bloody. He keeps screaming.

BELLOWS
 Fan out. Fan out. Twenty meters.
 Check for ambush.

Dodger, Boonie and Sweetness move off. Bellows bends
 down over Whiplash.

WHIPLASH
 My leg, my leg. Oh, God...

Bellows gently tugs at Whiplash's black scarf.

BELLOWS
 Gotta shut up, Whiplash. Gotta be
 real quiet. There's a lot of bad
 people out there trying to get us.

Whiplash keeps SCREAMING, trying to grab his leg.
 Bellows pulls the scarf up HIGHER, over Whiplash's mouth,
 stifling sound, but not all. Whiplash's eyes and his
 shaking body.

3A ON BELLOWS (TRANSPOSED FROM SCENE 15)

3A

as the others, hearing the awful choking sound, return,
 gather around Whiplash.

3B THE FOUR MEN

3B

He convulses, and they can't stop it. Each tries...
 their hands joining in a futile dance over Whiplash.
 (CONTINUED)

3B CONTINUED:

3B

Suddenly, without warning, the RTO stills.

BOONIE

Jesus.

BELLOWS

Didn't make it.

SWEETNESS

Was only his leg.

BELLOWS

Shock. Sets in. Nothing you can do. They go that way.

None of them speaks and now Bellows unleeches the leech that remains on Whiplash's neck. Passes it to Sweetness, who passes it to Boonie. Dodger watches.

Bellows looks at him, says nothing, then tosses him Whiplash's scarf.

BELLOWS

Here. Have a souvenir.

Boonie crushes it in his fingers... and now, instead, he takes Whiplash's black scarf.

For the rest of the time in the jungle he wears it.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. COMPOUND/VIEWING STAND - DAY

4

An ELECTRIC SAW blade cuts neatly through a stack of pine wood 2x4s. Sawdust flies through the air. MAJOR LILA GARREAU and PRIVATE FRANKIE BUNSEN stand nearby. Fifteen GIs work on the construction of a viewing stand.

LILA

Nothing like the smell of virgin pine, right, Private?

FRANKIE

(waving sawdust out of her face)

If you say so, Major... Now we've ordered the flags and banners, they'll be shipped in from Da Nang --

WAYLOO (O.S.)

Major Garreau.

(CONTINUED)

WAYLOO MARIE HOLMES approaches briskly, carrying a clipboard, anxiously going over notes.

WAYLOO

A.P. and U.P.I. are covering and possibly two networks. And, best of all, the stringer for The New York Times has malaria. They might want me to file something direct.

LILA

You've done something truly remarkable, Airman. Boonie's going to be so proud.

FRANKIE

If Tightlips Number One, Two and Three ever let him out of that tent.

WAYLOO

Wonder why. Report gave the whole picture.

LILA

No doubt they're working on the medal citation... Have to be very thorough, accurate.

WAYLOO

So do I. My name's on this story.

LILA

(hops in an arriving Jeep)

No time now. Have to make arrangements for the congressman's arrival.

WAYLOO

Congressman? You never said anything about a congressman.

But Lila's gone.

FRANKIE

Gotta get down to the beach. T.D.Y. lifeguard while Boonie's off duty.

And Frankie's gone... leaving Wayloo looking at the outcome of her handiwork. Yet wondering.

CUT TO:

COLLEEN McMURPHY walks toward triage, pushing a laundry cart. DR. DICK RICHARD emerges from inside.

*

McMURPHY

What happened to all the orderlies?

DR. RICHARD

Gave them the day off. Someone had a tip on the seventh race at Hialeah so they all flew over to cash in.

(then)

Don't worry; I put twenty bucks down for you.

McMurphy parks the laundry cart, then leans back against a stack of SANDBAGS. She glances over, sees Lila and Wayloo by the viewing stand, driving off. Dr. Richard follows her glance.

*

DR. RICHARD

I love a parade.

(then)

All right, I'd say I love a medal ceremony, but it doesn't have that ring to it.

McMURPHY

From what they're building, could be a public hanging.

(then)

Boonie's being questioned by three dress uniforms who have capital offense written all over them.

*

*

DR. RICHARD

In the Army, that's called prepping for the ceremony.

*

McMURPHY

Then how come he's been relieved of his duties?

DR. RICHARD

Giving him some time off.

McMURPHY

Giving him last rites.

*

DR. RICHARD

Cheer up, the guy's getting a medal.

*

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

Dr. Richard leaves, pushing the laundry cart into the ward.

McMURPHY

As long as that's all he's getting.

McMurphy remains against the sandbags, looks across, sees K.C. emerge from her room, then lean back against the church wall, lighting a cigarette. Both turn their eyes toward the viewing stand, then back towards the parachute tent.

CUT TO:

5A EXT. PARACHUTE TENT - DAY (TRANSPosed FROM SCENE 17)

5A

Boonie emerges, tired and withdrawn, and Dodger and Sweetness are sitting on a bench. Their reactions are uncertain, their smiles tentative, but he's glad and worried to see them. He plays the first, buries the second.

BOONIE

Guess they're taking this medal thing for real.

(to Dodger)

Looking good, man.

DODGER

Feeling fine, Boonie.

BOONIE

Sweetness. You low-life piece of civilization.

Sweetness smiles, then raises a cigarette to his mouth and we see he's in handcuffs. Boonie notices the cuffs.

Fentress emerges from the tent, sees them talking, stands back a step, lights a cigarette.

SWEETNESS

World's treating me A-okay, Boonie-man. Three square meals and a big yard to exercise in.

(a little irony)

But a little different than the good old days. Out in the boonies.

DODGER

The three of us.

(CONTINUED)

5A CONTINUED:

5A

BOONIE

And Whiplash.

SWEETNESS

And a lot of rain.

They talk in understatement, leaving out the important things, keeping them between the lines.

DODGER

Lot of leeches.

SWEETNESS

That one long, mean sucker biting on me for days. Took all three of us to pry that one off.

DODGER

That's the way I remember it.

SWEETNESS

That the way you remember it, Boonie-man?

Boonie notices Fentress standing behind.

BOONIE

(a beat)

Yeah.

SWEETNESS

Can't let some insect chew up the world right in front of your face.

BOONIE

No.

Dodger glances at Fentress.

DODGER

So, they got you two in private quarters.

BOONIE

(some more irony)

Just don't want me talking to the press or anything before the ceremony.

SWEETNESS

A slammer is a slammer is a slammer.

(CONTINUED)

5A CONTINUED: (2)

5A *

BOONIE

Welcome back, boys.

ON Dodger and Sweetness as Boonie is walked off. *

CUT TO:

6 COMPOUND - ON BOONIE

6 *

As he walks by with Captain Fentress and an MP. *

He passes both McMurphy and K.C. -- doesn't turn his head, doesn't make eye contact with either. Boonie enters "private" quarters constructed off one end of the church.

McMurphy and K.C. watch him disappear inside, then trade a long look with each other. A beat and McMurphy turns, enters the ward.

ON K.C., her face anxious and worried as she squashes her cigarette into the dirt.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. BEACH - DAY

7

Frankie's in the sand by the lifeguard stand. She's wearing some sort of bizarre makeshift swimwear, a whistle around her neck, sunglasses, combat boots, zinc oxide on her nose and a rubber inner tube around her middle.

She's got a deathly armlock around a GI's chest, his arms thrust straight up in the air, dragging him across the sand. A group of GIs watch this "demonstration."

FRANKIE

So, you got it? Anything happens out there, that's what you do.

Some grumblings from the GIs.

FRANKIE

Don't like that, huh? Then go straight to the next step... mouth-to-mouth.

(turns to GI)

So, give your colleagues here a little forewarning; where's your mouth been lately, soldier?

CUT TO:

8 INT. PARACHUTE TENT - DAY

8

Alone now, Lt. Colonel Reinhardt puts his papers in order.
K.C. appears at the tent opening.

K.C.

Hot, steamy bath. Massage.
Little musk oil. Then I'd lean up
real close to your ear and
whisper --

REINHARDT

... K.C...

(slowly)

It was a little stronger than a
whisper.

K.C.

You do remember.

REINHARDT

Hasn't been that long.

K.C.

But I bet it's been too long.

He smiles, continues packing his papers. She moves
closer.

REINHARDT

I didn't know you were here.

K.C.

I get around.

REINHARDT

So do I.

K.C.

Thought I'd surprise you.

REINHARDT

Don't like surprises.

K.C.

Oh, I don't know. I remember a
few you were sort of fond of.

(then)

You were investigating that
private who'd accidentally
murdered a civilian bar owner.

REINHARDT

Accidentally murdered are not
words we normally use together.

(CONTINUED)

K.C.

There are a lot of words here we don't normally use together.

(her innuendo)

A lot of things here we don't normally do.

(then)

You seem to be taking a real interest in this kid, Lanier.

REINHARDT

Boy's going to get a medal.

K.C.

And you're here to make sure it gets polished up real neat and clean.

REINHARDT

Something like that.

K.C.

What act of bravery did he commit to deserve all this attention?

REINHARDT

You'll have to wait for the ceremony.

K.C.

But I'm like you, Colonel. Don't like surprises.

REINHARDT

(the cagey
investigator)

This one sounds a little personal,
K.C.

K.C. shifts her stance, closer still. Little movement, yet provocative.

K.C.

That's why I'm good at what I do. I always make it personal.

REINHARDT

(when he can)

I don't.

(then)

That's why I'm good at what I do.

ON K.C. as Reinhardt picks up his papers, exits.

CUT TO:

9

INT. TRIAGE - DAY

9

*

McMurphy, Dr. Richard and SAMUEL BECKETT sit around one of the desks playing cards as Lila blows in, strides down the aisle towards them. A hesitant Wayloo follows a few beats behind.

*

LILA

All right, everybody up. All able bodies. All less than able bodies. Any kind of bodies. Got a chopper about to land, a U.S. congressman about to step off it.

McMURPHY

(to Wayloo)

All part of the fun and games?

Wayloo turns her head, doesn't answer.

LILA

Need a little bigger greeting committee. Come on, everyone out.

Lila starts heading out, yells back at a couple of corpsmen.

*

LILA

Oh, and bring some of those wheelchair men.

Dr. Richard, McMurphy, Beckett, etc. reluctantly follow Lila on out. Wayloo follows after.

10

EXT. HELIPAD - DAY

10

From overhead, the sound of a CHOPPER as it approaches. Several other officers stand by. Lila ushers McMurphy et al. into place, screaming above the chopper noise.

*

LILA

When we bring this gentleman through on a tour, try and look a little busier than you were just now. He's on the appropriations committee -- I do not want the Vaseline supply getting cut off.

*

*

*

McMurphy, Dr. Richard and Beckett trade glances as the chopper lands; wind, dirt and debris blowing everywhere.

*

The blades are still rotating as the door opens and out steps U.S. CONGRESSMAN STANTON HOLMES followed by a photographer. Lila steps forward, shakes hands, AD LIBS hellos and introductions all around.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

Holmes turns to the side, spots Wayloo and a smile comes over his face. He YELLS over the chopper noise.

HOLMES

Wayloo Marie!!

*

Wayloo smiles, yells back in surprise.

*

WAYLOO

Daddie!

*

McMurphy, Dr. Richard, Beckett, Lila -- all trade quick glances with each other, questioning, mouthing the "Daddie" -- then turn their looks back at Wayloo as she moves towards Holmes and they embrace. Holmes keeps his arm around her; nudges them both face front as the photographer snaps away.

*

*

*

ON Wayloo, a tentative smile on her face as the photo-ops begin.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

11 OMITTED (TRANSPosed TO SC. 1A) 11

11A EXT. JUNGLE - DAWN (TRANSPosed FROM SC. 1) 11A

A grainy image. Black and white. SLOW MOTION.
 The sound of LABORED BREATHING.
 A broken, distorted HEARTBEAT.
 The bloodied face of a young vietnamese woman.
 Her eyes frozen, frightened, intense, open.
 Staring up at Boonie Lanier who kneels over her.
 Torn flesh covered with blood and mud.

ON Boonie, horrified, sweating, helpless.

SMASH CUT TO:

12 INT. PARACHUTE TENT - DAY 12

One side is a vivid white... and Boonie sits in its
 light.

REINHARDT

Was it a problem for you that
 Bellows was not a Marine?

BOONIE

No, sir.

REINHARDT

Was it a problem that Bellows
 worked for the Central Intelligence
 Agency?

BOONIE

No, sir.

DECTER

Sometimes that's a problem.

BOONIE

Yes, sir.

Fentress leans over, again whispers to Decter.

DECTER

You disagreed with Bellows as to
 your exact location. Was he
 responsive to your thoughts, your
 suggestions?

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

BOONIE

That wasn't his job.

REINHARDT

What was the job, Corporal?

BOONIE

Reconnoiter and interdict enemy infiltration along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

DECTER

And then?

BOONIE

Annihilate through air strike.

Reinhardt pauses a beat, takes a sip of water.

REINHARDT

In your opinion, did Bellows have the respect of his patrol?

BOONIE

(a beat)

He had our attention, sir.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. JUNGLE - TWILIGHT

13

The air is still thick with heat, moisture, insects. The faces of the men thick with sweat, tension, cuts and scrapes from the surrounding bush. Pant legs caked with mud. Dodger is still out front.

Bellows glances down the embankment, moves into a crouch, signals for the others to stop. Two Vietnamese, both wearing black clothes and straw hats, sit by a stream. In the murky silver light they look armed. In the murky silver light it is hard to tell anything for sure.

Bellows and Boonie move silently toward them, pulling out their knives, scuttling down the slippery bank. Trying to be quiet, having to hurry.

They reach the figures and Bellows thrusts his knife into one body. The second one turns before Boonie can kill it -- and it's a woman. He freezes, and before he can move, Bellows has his knife in her. Her silent scream is in Boonie's face, her eyes lock his before she slides from sight.

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED:

13

Sweetness and Whiplash scuttle down beside them. Boonie kneels before the two Vietnamese. Both are women. One's eyes are still open, she's still breathing. Bellows stands overhead, knife still out.

BOONIE

Bellows, they're not armed.
They're women.

BELLOWS

Could've been armed. Could've
seen us. Given away our position.

Boonie's pushing his hands against the woman's bleeding stomach, hopelessly trying to help her. Bellows uses his whole body to shove Boonie aside, then drops down, drives his knife into her flesh, killing her.

BELLOWS

There are no innocent people out
here...

(and)

Don't forget the rules, Lanier.
No gooks, no prisoners, no wounded.

ON Boonie as he looks at the face of the dead woman, then down at his own muddy, bloodstained hands.

CUT TO:

14
&
15

OMITTED

14
&
15

16

EXT. COMPOUND/VIEWING STAND - DAY

16

White paint is slapped up against the pine frame of the viewing stand. GIs continue construction as Holmes, Wayloo, Lila and an aide stand nearby. The aide carries a clipboard, making notes.

LILA

Flag poles will be raised there.
Banners across the front. Podium
in the middle.

HOLMES

Excellent, Lila. May I call you
Lila?

LILA

Of course.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

HOLMES

Back when I was governor, we remodeled the State House. Wish you could've been around to handle that.

LILA

Well, Congressman, thank you...

HOLMES

No, I'm serious. Was a mess, wasn't it, Wayloo Marie?

WAYLOO

(laughing to herself)
What a mess!

LILA

Perhaps now we should take that tour of the hospital ward. Wish I could shape that up as easily.

HOLMES

You will. We will. That's why we're here.

WAYLOO

That mess may not be so easy.

Her father and Lila both shoot her a look.

CUT TO:

16A EXT. BEACH - DAY

16A

Wayloo and Holmes walk down the sand. Wayloo looks at her father, starts laughing.

HOLMES

What?

WAYLOO

'Wish you could've been around...'

HOLMES

Wayloo Marie, don't you want to make people feel good about what they do? There's nothing wrong with that.

He puts his arm around her, hugs her tight.

(CONTINUED)

16A CONTINUED:

16A

HOLMES

So how's my little girl?

WAYLOO

Surprised. You didn't tell me you were coming in-country.

HOLMES

Congressional junkets. Send us twelve places in five days, then hope we're too confused to remember any of it. I didn't want to promise to get here, then not have time.

WAYLOO

Cardinal rule of politics, right? Never make promises you can't keep.

HOLMES

(half-joking)

Unless they help you get elected.

WAYLOO

I'm glad you're here.

HOLMES

This medal ceremony is perfect timing. Stateside fallout from Tet has not been good. Folks back home could use a little reassurance.

(then)

Who's going to be covering it besides you?

Wayloo pauses a beat, taking this one in.

WAYLOO

Don't worry, Daddy. We're shipping in some real journalists.

HOLMES

Wayloo Marie, you know I didn't mean that. I'm proud of you, honey. But this war's beating up on everybody. Medal ceremonies help build morale.

WAYLOO

I just didn't realize that's why we were doing it.

(CONTINUED)

16A CONTINUED: (2)

16A

HOLMES

Well, why are we doing it? Just so you can get a good story?

WAYLOO

No.

HOLMES

Of course not. We're doing it so people can feel good about what they do.

(then)

And the fact is, you are getting a good story. Your friend's getting a medal. And the people back home get to see something positive going on over here. Everyone's getting what they want. So what's the problem?

WAYLOO

I guess there isn't one.

ON Wayloo as her father hugs her tighter and they move off down the beach.

CUT TO:

17 OMITTED (TRANSPosed TO SC. 54)

17

18 INT. JET SET - NIGHT

18

It is unlike we have ever seen it... fancy and formal, silverware and gimcracked candelabra, tablecloths and even an attempt to cloak graffiti.

A special table has been formed, everything else cleared away, the remnants of dinner now done remains.

Holmes sits at the head of the table; McMurphy on one side of him, Lila on the other.

Dr. Richard and Wayloo sit next to them. Other officers fill out the table. Holmes taps his knife against his water glass, then stands up.

HOLMES

Wayloo Marie was going to take me to some little roadside restaurant tonight so I could get an authentic taste of Vietnam.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOLMES (CONT'D)

But I wanted to see what her life on the base is like. And, most of all, meet her friends.

(toasts)

So, to all of you, Wayloo Marie's closest friends, thank you for joining us.

*

Everyone joins the toast, tipping their glasses. Holmes sits back down.

HOLMES

It's a big room, Wayloo Marie, you should've invited more.

*

WAYLOO

Some of them are on duty.

*

HOLMES

(to McMurphy)

She always was a little shy about these things.

(to Wayloo)

Can't be shy if you're going to move up in the press corps.

WAYLOO

Daddy, I'm not shy.

HOLMES

You were as a little girl.

(turns to Lila)

Photographers show up after an election, for those casual, at-home family shots. Everything would be all ready, then sure enough, Wayloo Marie'd crawl behind the sofa.

*

*

*

(turns to McMurphy)

One time she even got her head stuck underneath the dining room table.

Lila, Dr. Richard and McMurphy can't help but laugh. Wayloo's used to it, so she laughs along.

WAYLOO

He only likes to tell that story 'cause he went out to...

HOLMES

... the garage, got the saw, came back in and chopped one whole leg off.

(CONTINUED)

LILA

Wayloo?

DR. RICHARD

The table, Lila.

(then)

Sir, I'm sure I'd do the same for one of my boys.

HOLMES

Damn straight you would.

(then)

Best thing about it was the photographer got the whole sequence. Ran it as that funny last page picture in Life magazine. Got more mileage out of that than when I shook hands with the President.

(to Wayloo)

Maybe we should try that stunt again. Make a pretty good team, don't we, Wayloo Marie?

WAYLOO

Sure, Daddy. A great team.

Holmes fills his glass with brandy; then fills McMurphy's.

McMURPHY

Never would've happened that way at my house. Five brothers. I would've been the one getting sawed off.

HOLMES

Five boys. Your daddy must've been going for a hockey team.

McMURPHY

He got it. Made me the goalie.

(then)

A few cuts and scrapes. But I can't imagine growing up alone.

HOLMES

Wayloo Marie's mother and I would've been happy with just one boy, not to mention five.

McMurphy hesitates, glances at Wayloo. Silence comes over the room as the implication sets in, eventually on Holmes himself.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (3)

18

HOLMES

Not to say I'd trade Wayloo Marie for anything in this world. Especially now that her mother's passed on. Brought us closer than ever. Isn't that right, Wayloo Marie?

WAYLOO

Yes, Daddy. Closer than ever.

CUT TO:

18A INT. JET SET - TWO SHOT GLASSES - NIGHT (LATER)

18A

are held up high over the bar. Frankie, still in beachwear, whistle and zinc oxide, studies them with fantastic scrutiny. McMurphy and Holmes, seated close together at the bar, look at them from the other side as they hold the glasses in their hands. The liquor is blue.

McMURPHY

It's blue.

HOLMES

Color of your eyes.

McMURPHY

My eyes are green.

The congressman looks closer, Southern, seductive, and competitive.

HOLMES

Like sherry, I'd say.
(and)
But not for long.

Feeling liquor already, feeling the Southern charm, McMurphy takes a breath, clinks glasses with Holmes and they both throw back the shooters. Both are showing the signs of an entire evening of drinking. In the b.g., Wayloo sits at a table with Dr. Richard.

HOLMES

Damn. Best Klondike cooler I've ever had.

FRANKIE

You guessed.

HOLMES

Set up another. You too, Lieutenant Colleen?

(CONTINUED)

18A CONTINUED:

18A

She's still getting her breath.

McMURPHY

I don't think so.

HOLMES

Of course you do. Two more shooters.

(to Frankie)

Doing a great job, Private.

FRANKIE

Only temporary.

HOLMES

What, you're gonna get bad at it?

Frankie almost falls for it, then laughs. Holmes pulls for a pitcher of some other strange colored liquor, pours shots for himself and McMurphy.

FRANKIE

I was T.D.Y. lifeguard, but...

McMURPHY

She can't swim.

FRANKIE

I can swim. I just can't swim -- well.

HOLMES

We could teach you.

McMURPHY

Yes, we could.

(then)

We could?

HOLMES

Tonight.

FRANKIE

Thanks, but you all are having so much fun...

Frankie slinks off, trying to get away from them. Holmes calls after her.

HOLMES

I like your zinc oxide.

McMURPHY

Yeah, me, too, Frankie.

(CONTINUED)

18A CONTINUED: (2)

18A

Holmes and McMurphy raise their shooters in a toast.

HOLMES
To your blessed Irish ancestors.

McMURPHY
Who are all passed out.

HOLMES
'Course they are. That's why
we're toasting them.

McMurphy laughs as they clink glasses.

HOLMES
I can see why people actually
grow to like Vietnam.
(at shot glass)
Everything's so exotic.
(at McMurphy)
Yet, there's that fresh, gentle,
appealing taste of home.

McMurphy smiles, the two of them looking straight at each
other as they throw back their shooters.

18B ON WAYLOO AND DR. RICHARD AT TABLE

18B

Dr. Richard glances at bar, then back at Wayloo.

DR. RICHARD
Sure you don't want to get in on
the tropical drink identification
contest?

WAYLOO
My daddy taught me to always
drink...

Holds up bottle of bourbon.

DR. RICHARD
Don't think that's what he's
putting down.

WAYLOO
I'm a good daughter. Always do
what your daddy says, but not
necessarily what he does.

DR. RICHARD
Yeah, well...

(CONTINUED)

18C CONTINUED:

18C

WAYLOO

Isn't that what you tell your children?

DR. RICHARD

Yes, I probably have. But --

WAYLOO

Have another drink, Daddy.

She pours him a drink, then takes her glass and bottle and exits, passing McMurphy and Holmes at the bar, still throwing them back.

CUT TO:

19 OMITTED
&
20

19
&
20

21 EXT. COMPOUND/VIEWING STAND - NIGHT

21

The platform is well lit; a bright white against the black hills beyond. McMurphy, carrying a glass and a bottle of scotch, approaches; sees Wayloo atop the platform, TAP DANCING. Resting to one side is a bottle of bourbon and a glass.

Both women are in that late night state of sotten, sometimes funny, sometimes lucid, sometimes quiet drunkenness.

WAYLOO

Know how to tap dance, McMurphy?

McMURPHY

Actually, it was an elective at nursing school, but I never found the time.

WAYLOO

My father taught me.

McMURPHY

The congressman tap dances?

WAYLOO

All congressmen tap dance.

McMurphy climbs up, sits down, pours some scotch.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

WAYLOO

And all congressmen's daughters
drink bourbon.

(then)

You seemed to enjoy the family
reunion.

McMURPHY

Why didn't you ever tell anyone
he's a congressman?

Wayloo stops, joins McMurphy, pours a drink.

WAYLOO

Do you know what it's like to feel
anonymous, McMurphy?

McMURPHY

Five brothers. Remember?

WAYLOO

Feels great. The way I felt when
I first came over here. No one
knew me, knew anything about me.
It was like being able to recreate
yourself. I felt free.

McMURPHY

Coming to Vietnam to feel free.

WAYLOO

I guess all daddies mean well.
Don't they?

McMURPHY

Mine writes me sometimes like
he's sending memos. To: Colleen.
From: Dad. Re: My concern about
your brother, Conner.

WAYLOO

My daddy didn't seem too worried
when I announced I was coming here.

McMURPHY

Mine was. Upset that Kansas
apple cart. Five sons and it's
his daughter who goes off to war.
Only time I ever saw him cry.

WAYLOO

Doesn't want to lose you... or
your brothers.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

McMURPHY

What he doesn't want is for me to steal the thunder. Their thunder. Five boys. They're the ones who're going to be heroes. Why's Colleen have to get in on the act?

WAYLOO

Maybe I should've screwed up more as a kid. Spit at the photographers. Thrown tantrums on election night. But I never did anything he would disapprove of.

McMURPHY

Is that what you want to do?

WAYLOO

I want to stop needing his approval.

McMURPHY

That's your problem; not his.

WAYLOO

(some real edge)
You're so damn smart...

McMURPHY

(some real truth)
No, I'm not... Just the same.

That quiets them. Now:

WAYLOO

I want to stop being afraid of bursting his illusions.
(then)
My mother died three years ago. I think he truly believes it has brought us closer.

McMURPHY

But it hasn't.

WAYLOO

So close that I got on a plane and didn't get off for 13,000 miles.
(then)
I'm afraid someday I might be the one to point that out.

CUT TO:

Light shines in through dark blue stain-glass windows. The only other light is from a strange string of blue, imperfectly colored bulbs strung up and down the walls, across the ceiling. Boonie in fatigue pants, no shirt, is on the floor doing push-ups, sweating hard. K.C. enters. He looks up at her, keeps doing push-ups. Boonie seems oddly calm; K.C. more emotional, anxious.

K.C.

You look like one of those guys
out of some prison movie;
exercising in his cell.

Boonie stops, turns over, lies on the floor looking up at the blue lights.

BOONIE

Someone left these lights around
so I put them up. If you lie here
on the floor, kind of feels like
you're in an incubator.

K.C. crosses to the bed, dumps a stack of cash and a passport onto it.

K.C.

Twelve hundred dollars, and a
passport. I've made some calls,
there are people who'll help you.
Get out tonight, Boonie.

BOONIE

Can't leave yet, K.C. They
haven't given me my medal.

K.C.

I suppose the three guys in the
tent are here teaching you military
protocol, pomp and circumstance,
don't forget to shake hands with
the general?

BOONIE

It's gone too far. I just want to
let the rest of it happen.

K.C.

We both know what happened out
there.

He stops the push-ups at last.

(CONTINUED)

BOONIE

No. You don't know. You don't even know who was out there.

K.C.

But I felt it. When you came back. Skinny. Scared. Just wanting someone to hold on to you.

BOONIE

You took care of me.

K.C.

Every time you looked at me. Every time we made love. I couldn't stop feeling it. I still do.

(then)

When I look at you. When I see that damn scar they gave you.

It's suddenly quiet.

BOONIE

Touch it, K.C.

K.C.

Boonie, you're scaring me.

BOONIE

Touch it.

K.C. runs her hands down his back, touches the scar.

BOONIE

You see. The skin's tough, hard. I'm not skinny anymore, K.C. I'm not scared.

K.C.

I am.

Boonie wraps his arms around her, holds her close.

BOONIE

I know. I can feel it.

K.C. holds on to him tighter, then turns her face up to his. Boonie touches her face, wiping tears off her cheek. Then slowly they come together in a kiss which grows harder, more desperate as they slowly slip onto the bed. ON K.C. and Boonie as they begin making love.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

23 EXT. JUNGLE - DAWN 23

CLOSE again ON a soldier's boots.
 Pushing harder through the jungle.
 The sounds of GUNFIRE LOUDER, CLOSER.
 He stumbles down into the grass, the mud.
 Scraped arms. Torn fatigues.
 Struggling up again. Running. Faster.

SMASH CUT TO:

24 INT. PARACHUTE TENT - DAY 24

REINHARDT

So, you were never able to
 pinpoint the exact location?

25 CLOSE ON WAYLOO 25

sitting in the chair. Curious. Wary.

WAYLOO

Does it matter?

DECTER

What about the other members of
 the patrol?

WAYLOO

What about them?

DECTER

Have you talked to them?

WAYLOO

Why are you talking to me?

Fentress leans his head back, squirts nasal spray up his
 nose, then goes back to taking notes.

REINHARDT

We're interested in your story.

WAYLOO

I thought it was Corporal
 Lanier's story.

REINHARDT

Yes, of course.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

WAYLOO

You seem to be talking quite a lot
with him.

REINHARDT

You're very observant, Airman
Holmes.

WAYLOO

And you're very quiet, Colonel.
(then)

If you were here to give out a
medal, I should think you'd be
a little more excited. Why are
you here?

*
*

DECTER

You ask a lot of questions, Airman.

*
*

WAYLOO

Too many? I'll try and stop if
you give me some answers.

*
*
*

REINHARDT

We'll take that under consideration.
Thank you for coming in.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. JUNGLE - DAWN

26

The runner slows. Moves into a crouch. Boonie.
A trace of black flashes by.
Boonie sees it. The corner of his eye.
Then a knife. A six-inch blade.
Before he can move, deep into his back.
The scream on his face. He lurches in one quick motion.
Grabbing onto the flash of black. Pulling it down.
His own knife driving deep into flesh.
Then pulling back. Staring.
The face. Quiet. Bloodied.
A ten-year-old boy.
Boonie, knife still in hand, looks up.
Another face. Frozen in fear.
An eight-year-old girl.
Their eyes lock. Forever. And she's gone.

SMASH CUT TO:

DECTER

You were attempting to determine
if you were near an enemy
detachment.

*

BOONIE

We weren't. We were in the wrong
place.

DECTER

But just before dawn, you left
your post, during your guard duty,
to make that determination.

BOONIE

Yes. I left my post.

DECTER

Leaving the rest of your patrol...
vulnerable.

Boonie pauses, having trouble getting the word out.

BOONIE

Yes.

DECTER

Is this when you were wounded?

*

*

BOONIE

Yes.

*

*

REINHARDT

The little Vietnamese boy... you
obviously had no sense of him
coming up behind you.

BOONIE

I don't think he was Vietnamese.
I presume he was Laotian.

(then)

We were not in Vietnam. We were
in Laos.

REINHARDT

We're aware of that, Corporal.
Does anyone else know that your
mission was in Laos?

BOONIE

No.

REINHARDT

Airman Wayloo Marie Holmes?

*

*

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

BOONIE

No one.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. BEACH - DAY

28

McMurphy's on the beach. A dot approaches from a distance. She can't quite make it out, sun blocking her eyes. The dot becomes a limping figure, and recognition comes, a smile. She starts toward it, a walk that becomes a run.

Just before she reaches Dodger she stops, joy restrained in uncertainty. Now:

McMURPHY

It took you long enough to come see me.

DODGER

No hi. No how are you? No looking good.

McMURPHY

Hi. How are you. Looking good.

DODGER

You're not glad I'm back.

McMURPHY

I'm glad you're better.

DODGER

They flew me early for Boonie's medal ceremony.

McMURPHY

I know. The Army flies you in from Japan. Springs Sweetness out of jail.

DODGER

Boonie deserves a medal. He'll be fine.

Dodger pulls several .45 bullets from the bag he carries.

DODGER

You have something of mine.

(CONTINUED)

28

CONTINUED:

28

McMURPHY

Dodger is back.

(playing it back)

No time for the, 'Gee, I missed
you, McMurphy.' Just cut right
to the chase.

DODGER

I did miss you.

McMURPHY

And I missed you.

(studies him)

You're ready to go back out.

DODGER

The rain on my face. The mud.
The heat. I can almost feel it.

(beat)

The way you feel the ward. Triage.
Guys needing your help. Blood on
your hands. In the thick of it.

McMurphy looks away; Dodger's touched a chord.

DODGER

Feels good to know where you
belong, doesn't it, McMurphy?

CUT TO:

29

INT. HOLMES' QUARTERS - DAY

29

Wayloo bursts in, surprised to see her father standing
with Reinhardt, Decter and Fentress.

HOLMES

Wayloo Marie, come in. This is
Lieutenant Colonel Reinhardt,
Major --

WAYLOO

We've met.

REINHARDT

We were just leaving.

DECTER

Congressman.

Holmes nods and the three of them leave. Wayloo watches
them exit as Holmes sits at a desk.

(CONTINUED)

HOLMES

Well, Wayloo Marie, what can I do for you? *

WAYLOO

What can I do for you? Dad, I'm not some constituent in for an appointment.

HOLMES

Of course not.

WAYLOO

What were they doing here?

HOLMES

Going over procedure for the ceremony.

WAYLOO

Did they tell you they questioned me this morning?

HOLMES

They mentioned it. *

WAYLOO

Did you ask why? *

HOLMES

No, they just --

Holmes doesn't answer.

WAYLOO

Three military officers pull your daughter in for questioning and you don't even ask them why?

HOLMES

Wayloo Marie, stop getting so excited. *

(likes it though) *

Just like your mother. *

WAYLOO

Thank you, Daddy. That's probably the nicest compliment you've ever given me.

HOLMES

And stop overreacting. *

WAYLOO

Yes, Mother used to do that, too.

(CONTINUED)

HOLMES

What the hell is going on here?

WAYLOO

You tell me. Three guys question me, question Boonie --

HOLMES

They're only looking after his best interests.

WAYLOO

What are you talking about?

HOLMES

There're certain things neither you or I need to know about it.

WAYLOO

Don't pull that Congressional bull with me, Daddy. I've heard the 'plausibility of denial' speech before.

HOLMES

Then maybe you'd better start giving it.

WAYLOO

No. That's what you do. With your daughter, your voters -- same thing.

(then)

But you still don't get it. I started all this. That I found out about Boonie saving his men. That I pushed for him to get this medal.

HOLMES

Well, don't worry. There'll be a ceremony, I'll give a speech, and five minutes later no one will remember.

ON Wayloo, staring back in disbelief.

CUT TO:

Closing the beach, Frankie picks up a towel, duffel bag, inner tube.

(CONTINUED)

29A CONTINUED:

29A

She turns, sees Sweetness sitting alone on the sand, shirt off, handcuffs off. Twenty feet behind him are two MPs. Frankie smiles at Sweetness, notices the MPs.

SWEETNESS

Guess I'm one of those people who can't show their body at the beach without drawing a crowd.

FRANKIE

Something I've always wanted to be accused of.

Sweetness laughs, then looks away.

FRANKIE

Sorry. Maybe that was a bad choice of words.

SWEETNESS

Gone way beyond being accused. Fully signed, sealed and delivered.

A beat and Frankie sits down next to him.

SWEETNESS

China Beach hasn't changed much.
(to Frankie)
And if you can do your whole tour here maybe it won't change you.

FRANKIE

I don't know. So far they've tried to turn me into a construction worker, phone operator, lifeguard, bartender.
(then)
Boonie's mentioned you.

SWEETNESS

Mentioned what I did here? Or what I did back in The World?

Frankie looks at him, doesn't answer.

SWEETNESS

Only made one mistake. Forgot how cool you gotta stay. Jungle teaches you that. Don't move, don't talk, don't breathe. Let it happen around you; not to you.

FRANKIE

But when you got back, something happened to you.

(CONTINUED)

29A CONTINUED: (2)

29A

SWEETNESS

When you go back, you can't remember the quiet. You don't remember the beach. Sunsets are something in a picture magazine. All you remember is the action, the heat, the energy.

(then)

Problem is, the action I found had a knife and a body attached.

FRANKIE

Same way it did over here.

Sweetness looks at her, appreciating her understanding.

SWEETNESS

Don't step into a court of law with that excuse.

One of the MPs starts toward them.

MP

Time to go.

SWEETNESS

Give me five, man.

MP

I said get up. We gotta --

In a flash Sweetness bolts up off the sand, face-to-face with the MP, staring him down hard, flushed, angry.

SWEETNESS

I said, give me five minutes.

The MP backs down, steps away. Frankie takes it all in. Sweetness remains standing, looks back at Frankie. His face a mixture of anger, fear, confusion. Someone trying to hang onto control; almost out of control.

SWEETNESS

(at last)

Don't ever hold anyone responsible but yourself. They'll try and teach you a lot of things here. What you learn is up to you.

(then)

My momma nicknamed her boy Sweetness for a reason. I just gotta find him again.

Sweetness stares at her another beat, then walks off with the two MPs. ON Frankie --

CUT TO:

30 EXT. JET SET - EVENING

30 *

K.C.'s outside having a smoke. Wayloo blows by.

K.C.

Walk a little faster, Wayloo.
Maybe you'll turn into butter.

WAYLOO

I need to talk to Boonie. Or
Dodger, Sweetness. Someone.

*
*

K.C.

Haven't you done enough talking?

*

WAYLOO

Look, I think Boonie's in some
kind of trouble and --

K.C.

Thanks to you.

WAYLOO

I found a report. Boonie saved
his men. And he never got any
recognition for it.

K.C.

What you found was a golden
opportunity for Wayloo Marie
Holmes, star reporter. You
weren't thinking about Boonie.
All you cared about was what that
story could do for you.

WAYLOO

That's not true.

K.C.

Isn't it? What've you done since
the first day you got here?
Stick your nose in everyone's
business. Your microphone in
everyone's face. Trying to dig
up something that would make you
stand out.

*
*

WAYLOO

Just 'cuz I don't have talent like
you do, K.C., so I have to work a
little harder.

*
*

K.C.

I guess having a congressman for a
father can really hold you back.

*

(CONTINUED)

WAYLOO

He's got nothing to do with this.

K.C.

Showed up at a pretty opportune moment. Certain to get your story more coverage.

WAYLOO

I had nothing to do with his coming here.

K.C.

There are no accidents, Wayloo.

(then)

Except for maybe your coming to China Beach. Something along the lines of a major collision.

WAYLOO

I was transferred here because of my job.

K.C.

And your job stinks. Everyone here's just trying to get through this bloody mess. And you go around sucking up all the stuff inside them. Christ, Boonie's odds were better in the jungle.

K.C. stares at her a beat then flips her cigarette to the ground and walks into the Jet Set. ON Wayloo.

CUT TO:

30A INT. SWEETNESS'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

30A

ON Sweetness, in a room like Boonie's. Off the church. Darker stain glass still in different shape. No bulbs here.

SWEETNESS

Sure, there were other people. Jungle's full of heat, insects, snakes -- some of whom are the other people.

WAYLOO

Are you talking about someone in your patrol? Or Viet Cong, N.V.A., whoever they were.

(CONTINUED)

30A CONTINUED:

30A

SWEETNESS
We never really knew.

WAYLOO
What?

SMASH CUT TO:

30B EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

30B

ON Dodger, his face illuminated by candles near the altar.

DODGER
We never really knew.

WAYLOO
Didn't know who they were? Or just
don't want to tell me?

DODGER
They were dead. Couldn't ask them
who they were.

WAYLOO
Did you kill them?

SMASH CUT TO:

30C INT. BOONIE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

30C

BOONIE
Doesn't matter who killed them.

WAYLOO
Seems to matter to the three of
you.
(then)
And maybe to those three guys in
the tent.

BOONIE
You don't need to know.

WAYLOO
What do I need to know?

ON Boonie, staring back at Wayloo for the longest time.

CUT TO:

30D EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

30D

In a heavy wind, Wayloo hurries across, heading towards the parachute tent. Her father is a close step behind.

HOLMES

Wayloo Marie, I am strongly recommending you do not go near this.

WAYLOO

And I am strongly not listening to you. For once.

HOLMES

Your place in this matter is over. You got it all cooking, everyone's pleased, and your name's on the byline, so let it be.

She doesn't stop, right on into the parachute tent. Holmes follows her in.

31 OMITTED
thru
34

31
thru
34

35 INT. PARACHUTE TENT - NIGHT

35

The hot wind blows against the sides of the lit tent, lit by kerosene lamp. A dark pumpkin shade.

HOLMES

Did you hear me?

WAYLOO

I heard you.

HOLMES

Then I want you to --

WAYLOO

(interrupting)

I want you to call it off. All of it. The inquiry and the ceremony.

HOLMES

You're the one who claims he saved his men. That he's some kind of hero.

WAYLOO

It's a fraud, Daddy. The whole thing's a sham.

(CONTINUED)

HOLMES

He didn't save his men?

WAYLOO

No, he did. But other things happened. And giving him this medal is only going to hurt more.

HOLMES

So? You think war stops and thinks about who it's hurting? It's an obscene, filthy, grimy little mess. Like some goddamn prairie wind that whips up and circles round and, ten years later, all you know is you've gone blind and you can't stand the feel of your own skin. War hurts everyone, Wayloo. That's the point.

WAYLOO

So let's stop a little of it now.

HOLMES

You dug up this story. This is your bed to lie in, so get used to it.

(then)

And the less you know about it, the better off you'll be. Trust me.

WAYLOO

Trust you? My daddy who doesn't even tell me he's coming in-country. My daddy who wouldn't have bothered to stop by China Beach if there weren't some medal ceremony to exploit.

HOLMES

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree, does it?

(then)

You've always wanted everything both ways. Now you've got it.

WAYLOO

That's not true.

HOLMES

It's true to this very minute.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOLMES (CONT'D)

You accuse me of 'complimenting' you -- that you're like your mother. When we both know that you're not like her at all. You're like me. A little ambitious. A little glib. And a tad willing to overlook a few facts if it suits you.

*

WAYLOO

I didn't know all the facts.

HOLMES

Then you shouldn't have done the story. Would've saved us both the trouble of my coming to China Beach.

(then)

You've been marching around here for months. And from what I can tell, never told a soul that your father was a congressman.

WAYLOO

I wanted to try and be on my own. For the first time.

HOLMES

And now that you are, what do you do? Try and get your father the congressman to make everything all neat and clean again. To take responsibility for the consequences of your actions. Exploiting me -- so you can have things both ways. Same thing you've always wanted.

WAYLOO

No. All I ever really wanted was your attention.

HOLMES

Well, now you've got it.

WAYLOO

And your approval.

Holmes doesn't answer. MOVING IN ON Wayloo Marie Holmes:

*

WAYLOO

You're right, Daddy, I am like you. And you've taught me well.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

HOLMES

What're you talking about?

WAYLOO

Story's bigger than we originally thought, Daddy. Make a pretty fancy splash back in Washington.

HOLMES

Wayloo...

WAYLOO

You have the power to close your eyes to this. But I have the power to open everyone else's.

HOLMES

To what purpose?

WAYLOO

If nothing more than to watch you squirm. You want to pin a medal on an atrocity, go ahead. I'll make sure you're at the very heart of it.

HOLMES

What the hell am I supposed to do with that?

WAYLOO

Call Life magazine. Tell them to send a photographer.

ON Holmes as Wayloo exits.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

36 EXT. JUNGLE - DAWN 36

Boonie's running, sweating hard. Moving fast through the bush. Carrying his rifle. His shirt off. One hand held up against the badly bleeding wound in his back. The sound of GUNFIRE is CLOSE.

37 CLEARING 37

Boonie... never falters, never hesitates. Ahead, Dodger, Sweetness and Bellows pinned down; the FIRING intense.

38 ON BOONIE 38

running... Tossing a grenade, then a smoke bomb, moving through the clouded air, his RIFLE BLASTING. Bullets ripping through bodies and Boonie now sees the faces. Children. Eight, ten, twelve years old. All children.

The world grows quiet. Boonie turning from face to face. Then Dodger and Sweetness moving forward. Then Bellows, dragging a lone survivor from the attack. An eight-year-old Laotian girl. Boonie locks eyes with her. The same girl from the jungle. Bellows pushes her off, forcing her to run, then aiming his rifle.

BOONIE

Bellows, no!!

Bellows doesn't listen, aims.

BOONIE

No!!!

A BLAST of FIRE.

And in an instant the girl falls and Bellows' own body is shredded with bullets. The force throwing him back and up into the air, then down into the mud.

All is quiet. Boonie, Dodger, Sweetness -- all rifles pointing at Bellows. Boonie looks over at the dead Laotian girl, then turns back toward Bellows.

BOONIE

I killed him.

A long beat and Dodger echoes Boonie's word.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

DODGER

I killed him.

SWEETNESS

I killed him.

SMASH CUT TO:

39 INT. PARACHUTE TENT - DAY

39

SWEETNESS

Bellows was killed by unfriendly
fire.

SMASH CUT TO:

40 INT. PARACHUTE TENT - LATER

40

DODGER

Bellows was killed by unfriendly
fire.

SMASH CUT TO:

41 INT. PARACHUTE TENT - LATER

41

BOONIE

Bellows was killed...

Boonie pauses, sweating, staring down, trembling.

BOONIE

Bellows was killed...

Again he pauses. Decter and Fentress trade glances.
Reinhardt keeps his eyes steady on Boonie.

REINHARDT

By unfriendly fire.

A long beat and Boonie finally looks up; never answers.

Reinhardt slowly walks over, hands Boonie a glass of
water, returns behind the table, closes his file folder.

DECTER

(holding one file)
This official file will be
returned to the personnel office
in Da Nang.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

DECTER (CONT'D)

Where Airman Holmes found it.

(second file)

This file will also be returned.
We appreciate your discretion.

BOONIE

Don't give me this medal.

DECTER

A great deal of attention has been
brought to this ceremony. It
would not be prudent to bring even
more attention by cancelling it.

Boonie remains in his chair. Decter and Fentress rise,
exit. Reinhardt starts to go, turns back to Boonie.

REINHARDT

Corporal, you were right. You
were in the wrong place.

CUT TO:

41A EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

41A

The viewing stand. Nearly ready. Workers putting on
the final touches, hanging banners, setting up the micro-
phone and chairs on the platform. Dodger and McMurphy
stand back, watching for several beats, then turn, walk
across the bridge. McMurphy carries something wrapped
in a small piece of cloth.

41B EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

41B

McMurphy and Dodger stop by the side. McMurphy rests
the cloth on the ledge, then starts to unwrap it, reveal-
ing Dodger's gun inside.

McMURPHY

And so, she carefully unwrapped
the swaddling clothes and lifted
the tiny orphan up towards the
sunlight --

DODGER

McMurphy.

McMurphy stops, then slides the gun over to Dodger. He
lifts it, feeling it again in his hands.

(CONTINUED)

41B CONTINUED:

41B

DODGER

Didn't think you'd give it back.

McMURPHY

I was hoping you wouldn't want it back.

(then)

Do you know what one of the definitions of swaddling clothes is? Restrictions imposed upon the immature... The wonder of Vietnam. Lets you grow old but you never have to grow up.

DODGER

(re: gun)

You think I shouldn't take this?

McMURPHY

Would my answer make a difference?

DODGER

In Japan I watched all day long. Legs that wouldn't move. Arms missing.

(then)

That's what I do, isn't it?

McMURPHY

No, it's what I do. It's the afterthought of what someone asked you to do.

DODGER

Maybe I shouldn't have seen those legs. Maybe I won't be able to do my job.

McMURPHY

Is that what you have to prove?

Dodger looks at her, doesn't answer.

DODGER

I'm not sure anymore.

McMURPHY

Then don't go.

ON Dodger as he looks at McMurphy, then looks out over the river.

CUT TO:

42 INT. BOONIE'S QUARTERS - DAY

42

Boonie packs up the few miserable things he's had here. The light is brighter through the stain glass. The bulbs are off.

WAYLOO

I'm a junior grade reporter. I had no power, no influence, no clout. I wanted people to listen to me. And then they did.

BOONIE

Are you asking for forgiveness?

(and)

They say I didn't do anything wrong.

(and now)

Who will forgive me?

WAYLOO

The scar on your back. I wanted to know how you got it. But I didn't realize I'd have to open it to find out.

BOONIE

I thought if no one ever saw it, it would go away. But it won't. It'll always be there.

(then)

Maybe it's better that it's all come out.

WAYLOO

But the truth isn't out.

BOONIE

There's no truth.

(a sad laugh)

Only what happened; and what people need to think happened. Either way, won't change anything.

WAYLOO

But it's changed you.

BOONIE

Yeah. It's gonna make me famous ... for about five minutes. Couple of days from now, everyone will have forgotten.

WAYLOO

Not everyone.

CUT TO:

Bright. White. Clean. Flags fly. Banners wave. Dress uniforms and polished medals gleaming in the light of a hot, midday sun. Order prevails. A few television cameras are filming. Reporters taking notes. Photographers snapping.

McMurphy, Dr. Richard, Beckett, K.C., Lila and Frankie are seated amongst sixty others in the audience. Boonie, Dodger and Sweetness on one side of the platform; Wayloo, Reinhardt, Decter and Fentress on the other. Holmes is at the podium microphone, halfway through the medal presentation, reading a citation.

HOLMES

... Despite his own grave wounds,
Corporal Lanier fearlessly pressed
forward through enemy terrain,
saving the lives of his fellow
patrol members... For bravery and
gallantry and at the risk of life
above and beyond the call of duty,
we are proud to bestow upon
Corporal Boonwell Lanier the
United States Marine Corps Navy
Cross.

Boonie slowly rises as the applause builds; approaches Holmes who hands him a small blue box containing the medal and a scroll tied with ribbon. They shake hands, then Boonie returns to his seat. Holmes turns back toward the podium; startled to find Wayloo now standing at the microphone. Nervous, not entirely polished, but determined.

WAYLOO

My father, Congressman Holmes,
represents the national goals
which bring us together today.
But even he admits that those
goals are sometimes impersonal.
He's asked that I speak for those
of us at China Beach who know
Corporal Lanier.

Holmes has no choice; smiles, takes his seat.

WAYLOO

I'd... I'd like to read a quote...
'If we had a keen vision and
feeling of all ordinary human life,
it would be like hearing the grass
grow and the squirrel's heartbeat,
and we should die of that roar
which lies on the other side of
silence.'

(CONTINUED)

She pauses again, looking over at Boonie, then back.

WAYLOO

I believe that Corporal Lanier has held that keen vision of human life. Has heard that roar which lies on the other side of silence. A sound so disquieting, so haunting, that it will remain with him forever... But I also believe that his own compassion will protect his heart, and ours, from falling into that silence. I hope Corporal Lanier will accept this medal not just for the lives he saved, and not for the lives he was forced to destroy... but for the values of ordinary human life he now chooses to preserve.

Wayloo stops and everything's quiet. No one on the platform, no one in the audience quite knows what to do. Wayloo leans back to the microphone.

WAYLOO

Thank you.

Before she can return to her seat people begin to applaud. Holmes, all smiles, rises, approaches the microphone and her:

HOLMES

We all have a great deal to be proud of today.

He turns to Wayloo, smiles. She ignores him. He turns back just in time to catch a photographer snapping.

HOLMES

And now I'd like to introduce Private Frankie Bunsen.

Frankie rises, moves to a second microphone. She begins to sing "America The Beautiful," a cappella.

Over Frankie singing, we --

CUT TO:

arrives at the lifeguard stand.

- 43B RIVER - TWILIGHT 43B
 Dodger, now dressed again for the jungle, moving on down the river and away.
- 43C McMURPHY 43C
 watches him go and turns.
- 44 BEACH - TWILIGHT 44
 K.C. approaches and Boonie puts his arms around her. ON their embrace.
- 45 WARD 45
 McMurphy enters and watches a nurse assist a patient; then moves in to help.
- 45A COMPOUND 45A
 Sweetness, again in handcuffs, gets into a Jeep, accompanied by the two MPs. ON Frankie, watching as Sweetness is driven off.
- 46 HELIPAD 46
 A chopper begins to descend. Holmes waits with Wayloo and the photographer. Holmes turns to Wayloo.
- HOLMES
 I would've carried through on your threat. Embarrassed the hell out of all of us.
 (then, smiling)
 Maybe you're not like me.
- WAYLOO
 I didn't do it for you.
 (then, smiling)
 Finally. I didn't do something for you.
- ON the two of them as the photographer snaps a shot.
- 47 OMITTED 47
- 48 JUNGLE 48
 The faces... Boonie, Dodger, Sweetness, Whiplash, the Laotian girl.

Sits on the lifeguard stand, rubbing the medal over and over in the palm of his hand, then turning his gaze out over the water.

*

FADE OUT.

THE END