

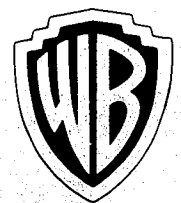
CHINA

BEACH

"TET '68"

FIRST DRAFT

December 15, 1988



WARNER BROS.
TELEVISION

CHINA BEACH

"Tet '68"

Story by
Susan Rhinehart

Teleplay by
Susan Rhinehart and John Wells

Directed by
Steve Dubin

Executive Consultant
William Broyles, Jr.

Supervising Producer
Patricia Green

Producer
John Wells

Co-Producers
Geno Escarrega
Chris Nelson

Coordinating Producer
Fred Gerber

Executive Producer
John Sacret Young

FIRST DRAFT

December 15, 1988

CHINA BEACH

"Tet '68"

CAST

MCMURPHY

BOONIE

DOCTOR RICHARD

CHERRY

K.C.

BECKETT

DODGER

WAYLOO

FRANKIE

MAI

NCO

CAMERAMAN

TRAN

AIDE

BINGO

JESSICA

FITZKEE

CORPORAL

R & R GRUNT

G.I.

SERGEANT

*

CHINA BEACH

"Tet '68"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

MARS

MAI'S HOME

OFFICERS' BATHROOM

FIRE BASE MOSQUITO BUNKER

OR

OFFICERS' MESS

GRU

EXTERIORS:

VILLAGE

COMPOUND

GRU

Bridge

Helipad

VILLAGE ROAD

*

CHINA BEACH

"Tet '68"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

ON A SINGLE CARD

Stark white lettering on a black background.

"With 1968, a new phase is now starting. We have reached an important point, when the end begins to come into view."

General Wm. Westmoreland

DISSOLVE TO:

1 EXT. COMPOUND - PANNING SHOT - DAY 1

FROM a VERY WEIRD ANGLE we've never seen before. Men walk around below, there's general bustle. And there's Wayloo's voice.

WAYLOO (V.O.)

And so, on this, the eve of the annual Tet Holiday --

Now some antennas and a couple of guys sunbathing in beach chairs COME INTO the FOREGROUND.

WAYLOO (V.O.)

The Vietnamese Fourth of July, Christmas and New Year's Eve all rolled into one --

And now:

2 WAYLOO MARIE 2

Her own self. Talking INTO CAMERA. And we suddenly realize we're ON the top of MARS.

WAYLOO (V.O.)

We can sense the magic, the magic of a new beginning, a new year, the year of the monkey.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - LATE AFTERNOON

Pastorally mystic, mist-ridden and myth-ridden, a place Margaret Mead would go to die. Wayloo steps INTO FRAME, her eye on the camera, leaving the sparrows to God.

WAYLOO

(winding down)

Standing before this hamlet of eager, happy villagers hurrying to prepare --

Her mechanical hand gesture indicates the village, caught in a moment of utter, backwater calm -- smoke rises lazily from a fire, a couple of chickens peck at the dirt. Blissfully unaware that there is no frenzy of preparation at her fingertips, Wayloo gushes on:

WAYLOO

For their greatest time of celebration...

(the big finish)

... we can understand the magic that truly makes Tet -- a holiday for all seasons.

A big Wayloo smile. Then she draws her hand across her throat in a "kill it" gesture.

WAYLOO

So? What'd you think?

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)

(the Mojave)

It was magic.

WAYLOO

Seemed a little flat.

The camera drifts down toward Wayloo's assets.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)

Not to me.

She gets it, laughs.

WAYLOO

Stop it, would you? Turn it off.

And as the camera comes off the Cameraman's shoulder headed toward the ground, the screen goes to BLACK.

*

WAYLOO

Where is everybody?

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)

The whole country's gone to Aunt
Pearl's for pot roast.

CUT TO:

4 OMITTED

4

5 INT. MARS

5

The CAMERA GLIDES THROUGH the empty MARS TO FIND FRANKIE
BUNSEN behind the DJ CONSOLE.

FRANKIE

(cues up a record)

And now, to show our appreciation
for our brothers-in-arms in this
great and glorious cause,
A.F.V.N.-A.M. brings you a
selection of the finest in
traditional Vietnamese music,
Southeast-Asian golden oldies to
celebrate the Tet holiday.

It begins, wow -- nobody's going to walk out humming this
melody. Frankie turns to the older NCO working the news
desk behind her.

FRANKIE

Catchy.

NCO

(never looking up)

An acquired taste.

FRANKIE

Are they torturing household pets?

NCO

Winning the hearts and minds.

FRANKIE

Is it working?

NCO

Oh yeah, sure. Gangbusters, lots
of Vietnamese have radios.

FRANKIE

Why bother to broadcast if
nobody's listening? Maybe we can
just put on some Little Richard.

(CONTINUED)

5

CONTINUED:

5

NCO
Perry Como.

FRANKIE
The Drifters.

NCO
Barry Sadler.

FRANKIE
Barry Sadler?

NCO
Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler.
(off Frankie's
uncomprehending
look)
'The Ballad of the Green Berets.'

Frankie stares at him, this isn't working.

FRANKIE
I'll cue up some more Vietnamese
music.

NCO
Yeah, you do that.

And the discordant traditional Vietnamese MUSIC carries us
to:

6 EXTREME CLOSEUP - LION

6

threatening, snarling -- shaking its straw mane. We
PULL BACK to find ourselves in --

7 INT. MAI'S HOME - DUSK

7

The makeshift lion frolics in the middle of the room.
MAI and an elderly Grandma laugh and clap.

MAI
(in Vietnamese)
Frightening, very frightening.

The lion is a homemade, children's version of the lavish,
ceremonial lion dancers. The little boy in Mai's lap is
frightened, begins to cry.

MAI
(in Vietnamese)
Oh, you're alright, little one.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Several of the lion children poke out their heads, worried. Mai points.

MAI
(in Vietnamese)
Look, look at the lion.

The tail-end of the lion continues a solo dance, wiggling and jumping about to the delight of the other children. Now even the little boy laughs. The tail stops dancing, the blanket opens slowly and out peeps -- BECKETT.

BECKETT
(king of the forest)
Ggrrrrrr...

The children jump on him, laughing. Wanting more. Then slowly, everything stops and all are looking toward --

8 DOORWAY - TRAN

8

A handsome intellectual stands in the open door. Grandma hurries to embrace him. He doesn't take his eyes off of Beckett. The children keep their distance, Mai remains frozen.

TRAN
(to Mai)
Hello, Mai.

He takes out a cigarette. Smiles at Beckett.

MAI
(in Vietnamese)
What are you doing here?

TRAN
(hands out fire-crackers to the children)
My sister did not expect me for the holidays, which accounts for her lapse in etiquette.
(extends his hand)
Tran. Mai's brother.

BECKETT
(shaking hands)
Sam Beckett.

MAI
(carefully)
Beckett helped me get a job on the American base.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tiny, POPPING EXPLOSIONS. Beckett jumps. The children squeal and throw FIRECRACKERS around his feet.

MAI

Not inside, go outside with
firecrackers!

(in Vietnamese)

Outside!

TRAN

They should play inside. Today is
a day of celebration, not a day of
rules. Even Private Beckett has
left his weapon behind today.

BECKETT

My part in the war doesn't have
much to do with guns.

MAI

Beckett works in graves
registration. He helped with
our cousin's body.

TRAN

Ah, our cousin the great patriot.

MAI

Not today, Tran.

Tran goes to the small altar, places a cigarette next to
a picture of a man in uniform.

TRAN

For you, Father -- French, your
favorite brand. So, Beckett, how
do you like our country? *

BECKETT

It's very beautiful.

TRAN

And our women, very beautiful,
yes?

He's looking for lascivious confidentiality, Beckett is
embarrassed, laughs politely.

BECKETT

(neutral)

Very.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

MAI
(in Vietnamese)
He's my guest.

TRAN
(shaking his head)
But the men, the men. Cowards,
theives, pimps, lazy --

MAI
(in Vietnamese)
Stop it. You are being rude to
my guest!

TRAN
It's you who are being rude. To
speak a language our guest doesn't
understand.

BECKETT
It's okay, Tran. I get the gist.
Thank you for the invitation,
Mai, I really should be getting
back.

TRAN
(standing)
I'll walk you as far as the road,
we can have a cigarette together,
away from the women and children.
Maybe you'll accept my apology.

Beckett's a bit frozen. Now what? Tran is warm,
apologetic.

TRAN
I can become embittered about my
country.

An EXPLODING noise comes from outside. Beckett starts.
Tran laughs, puts an arm around Beckett, heads for the
door.

TRAN
Fireworks. It's a hard habit to
break, isn't it? We are so used
to the sounds of war.

MAI
(almost frantic)
Don't go, Beckett.

Sister and brother stare at each other. There's a long
beat.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (3)

8

BECKETT

Am I missing something?

Tran takes out a pistol.

MAI

No!

Beckett tries to back away as Tran slams the pistol across Beckett's face. He crumbles. The children cry, Grandma babbles in Vietnamese. More DISTANT EXPLOSIONS. BOOM! BOOM! Tran looks up.

TRAN

Tet.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

CUT TO:

9 K.C.

9

in a mirror, she's combing her hair, dressed to kill. Bang! Bang! Bang!

K.C.

Happy New Year.

WIDEN to McMURPHY at the other mirror, also gorgeous and very unhappy.

10 INT. OFFICERS' BATHROOM - DUSK

10

McMURPHY

Sounds like somebody's shooting.

K.C.

That's the trouble with this country. Somebody's always shooting.

McMurphy finishes, disgusted.

McMURPHY

I hate this. It's degrading, it's stupid --

K.C.

It's the Army.

(CONTINUED)

McMURPHY

An hour ago I was in surgery, now I'm supposed to be Joey Heatherton. I've never been ordered out on a date before.

*
*

K.C.

Enjoy it. Good food, good wine, real linen.

*
*
*

BOOM! In the distance.

McMURPHY

How long does this circus go on?

K.C.

Couple of hours. More if they start drinking.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

McMURPHY

If he calls me 'little woman' one more time I'm going to strangle him with his lobster bib.

Another BOOM! BOOM! Followed by the more persistent KNOCK.

K.C.

Hold your horses!

K.C. steps back from the mirror, dripping with irony.

K.C.

The face that launched a thousand ships.

*

She opens the door to find the General's young AIDE about to knock again; he's balancing a bottle of champagne in an ice bucket and a couple of flutes.

AIDE

Excuse me, ma'am.

K.C.

No problem. It's all yours.

AIDE

Huh? Oh, no, ma'am. This is for field grade officers only.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (2)

10

AIDE (CONT'D)

(officially)

The General presents his compliments
and his most profound regrets.

Hands K.C. the ice bucket; he's very nervous.

K.C.

California champagne?

AIDE

The General's been called away to
deal with pressing matters of the
war and national interest.

McMURPHY

What a shame.

(grabs bag)

Maybe we can still catch a driver.

The Aide gently, but firmly blocks the doorway.

AIDE

Afraid not, ma'am. You're to
stay put.

McMURPHY

On the air base?

AIDE

In this room.

K.C.

You're not serious.

AIDE

Deadly, ma'am.

McMURPHY

There will be casualties, they'll
need me at the hospital.

AIDE

General's orders, ma'am. This
room is the safest place on the
compound.

*

BOOM! BOOM! Outside. He hands the flutes to McMurphy
quickly, salutes and is gone. K.C. sighs, sits on the
toilet, pulls the wine out of the ice.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (3)

10

K.C.
Nothing else to drink.

BOOM! BOOM! They're GETTING CLOSE. McMurphy and K.C.
both look up.

McMURPHY
I should be at the hospital.

K.C. strains at the cork.

K.C.
I'm sure they can struggle on
without you --

McMURPHY
This is it, the very last --

BANG! McMurphy screams, jumps. K.C. smiles. *

K.C.
Little guy didn't want to come. *

McMurphy grins. K.C. pours.

CUT TO:

11 INT. FIRE BASE MOSQUITO - BUNKER - DUSK

11

A Marine, BINGO, lays down a barrage, dull BLASTS with
his GRENADE LAUNCHER. Each pop-off motion is underscored
by a child's song:

BINGO
'B -- (pop) I -- (pop) N -- (pop)
G O -- (pop-pop) an' Bing-o was his
name-o!

CHERRY and JESSICA, cling to the wall in the corner as
stray FIRE and occasional EXPLOSIONS rock the dank sand-
bag walls.

JESSICA
What's going on?

BINGO
We'll get you two outta here
lickety-split.

CHERRY
They're just letting us know
they're out there.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

BINGO

The traditional V.C. Tet holiday
hello. Kinda like shaking hands.

BOOM! BOOM! That seemed PRETTY CLOSE.

JESSICA

Dammit!

Cherry's scared, too, but puts on her bravest face for
Jessica.

CHERRY

Just think about something else,
something nice.

A big, shy kid, FITZKEE, sitting on an ammo box, rocks
back and forth with his M-16.

FITZKEE

I hope they're just screwing with
us, I ain't ready for this today.

BINGO

Fitzkee's short. Ain't that
right, Fitzkee?
(as kid nods)
It'll be okay, man, it's Tet.

Fitzkee's staring at Cherry.

FITZKEE

You look like my sister.

CHERRY

Where you from?

FITZKEE

Grand Island. Nebraska.

CHERRY

Iowa. We're neighbors.

POP! Another GRENADE; Bingo howls.

BINGO

Just another glorious day in the
corp,
Every meal's a banquet,
Every paycheck a fortune,
Every formation a parade.

A dusty CORPORAL leaps into the bunker. Tosses Cherry
and Jessica flak jackets and helmets.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

CORPORAL

Stop your grinnin' and drop your
linen, ladies. V.C. battalion's
working its way up through the
valley. Nothing's comin' in or
out of here tonight.

CHERRY

We have to stay here?

BOOM!!!! The GROUND ROCKS.

CORPORAL

Tonight you are the guests of
the United States Marine Corps.

And he's gone. Cherry pulls on her flak jacket, helps
the terrified Jessica with hers. Bingo loads and cleans.
Fitzkee stands, walks to the window.

FITZKEE

Seventeen days, I've only got
seventeen more days.

Bingo and Fitzkee stare out of the bunker into the
gathering gloom beyond the machine gun. Bingo starts in
a quiet cadence, punctuated by their magazines snapping
into place.

BINGO

I don't want no teenage queen,
I just want my M-16.

Fitzkee joins for a line.

FITZKEE

If I die in a combat zone,
Box me up and send me home.

BINGO

Pin my medals upon my chest,
Tell my momma I done my best.

They're both ready, serious, now distant. Cherry wraps
an arm around Jessica. The final magazine snaps into
place.

FITZKEE

Seventeen more days.

CUT TO:

12 INT. GRU - NIGHT 12 *

Wayloo is smashed against the door -- clutching her microphone, camera rolling. TRACERS SCREAM, MORTARS SLAM. *

WAYLOO

How's my hair? *

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)

Priscilla Presley'd be proud. *

Wayloo motions out. *

WAYLOO

(into mike)

On this, the eve of the traditional Tet holiday, the enemy has, very deceitfully, taken advantage of the ceasefire to launch --

Wayloo pokes her head out the door, the camera follows tentatively, both crouching. *

13 EXT. COMPOUND (SUBJECTIVE CAMERA) - NIGHT 13 *

is chaos. Men running, rounds scooting across the dark sky, yelling, screaming. *

WAYLOO

A major offensive against the hospital and recreation complex at China Beach. *

A BULLET ZINGS into the sandbag by her side, Wayloo continues on, oblivious, brave or stupid -- perhaps all three. The camera isn't nearly so courageous, ducks. *

WAYLOO

As we await the approach of midnight, it becomes apparent that this will be a Tet unlike any other Tet --

The camera finds its way back to Wayloo, a vision appearing beyond her in the compound. Gold lame skirt hitched up to run, combat boots, helmet, flack jacket and weapon -- mortars chasing it across the helipad. It's headed for the GRU. *

WAYLOO

A Tet, for the ages. This is Airman Wayloo Marie Holmes A.F.V.N.-T.V. reporting from --

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

That's as far as she gets before BOONIE sails in, dragging dirt, skirt, and FIRE with him, flinging them all backwards into: *

13A INT. GRU - NIGHT

13A *

BOONIE
Hi.

WAYLOO
Hi.

She's staring at him, the cameraman's staring at him. Boonie reacts slowly. *

BOONIE
It's the neckline, it needs something.

WAYLOO
(nods professionally)
Breasts.

BOONIE
I was thinking --
(hands flutter at his decollage)
-- Maybe a boa?

WAYLOO
(firm)
Too cheap.

BOONIE
Pearls?

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Too much.

BOONIE
A choker?

WAYLOO
Maybe.

BOONIE
You sure?

WAYLOO
About the choker? Definitely.
About you...

(CONTINUED)

13A CONTINUED:

13A

BOONIE

Mardi Gras night at the Jet Set.

A very hung-over GRUNT, wearing a "Fighting Irish" football jersey pulled over ludicrously exaggerated breasts, a green, pleated skirt and a beehive blonde wig, dives through the doors. Wayloo crawls over with her microphone.

WAYLOO

Are you here for the holiday soldier?

R&R GRUNT

Call this a holiday? I don't call this a holiday.

WAYLOO

China Beach is one of the finest R&R centers on the South China Sea.

R&R GRUNT

Call this R&R? I don't call this R&R.

WAYLOO

Do you have faith in General Westmoreland's current assessment of the war? Have we entered a new phase, is the end in sight?

A MORTAR SLAMS to the earth immediately outside. Bodies dive. When the ground stops shaking the R&R Grunt lifts his head.

R&R GRUNT

(deadpanned)

Absolutely.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

14 DARKNESS 14

Hushed VOICES arguing in Vietnamese -- Mai and Tran and their mother. The DARKNESS DISSOLVES, becomes a pale grey as:

15 BECKETT 15

opens his eyes. He is lying on the floor of:

16 INT. MAI'S HUT - NIGHT 16

The children and grandma hunker across the room, staring in silence. The SOUNDS OF the WAR outside are now CLOSER: the curtains drawn; the room lit by a few candles.

Beckett tries to sit up and, for the first time, realizes he is bound -- hands behind his back, ankles tied. Tran notices him and comes over to Beckett. Crouches, pistol still drawn.

TRAN

My sister begs for your life. *

(then)

In my place, what would you do?

Tran smiles, stands, kisses his grandmother and is gone. Mai comes to Beckett, she has been crying but she doesn't cry now.

MAI

I'm sorry, Beckett. This was my fault, hoping we could have a real Tet.

BECKETT

(groggy attempt)

You mean, this isn't part of the celebration?

Mother hands a damp cloth and a bowl to Mai.

MAI

Hold still. It will sting.

She puts the cloth to the side of his head; Beckett winces.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

BECKETT

Mai, why aren't you untying me?

A MORTAR EXPLODES outside, no longer distant. The littlest child cries, starts to run to Mai, looks at Beckett and stops in the middle of the room; fearful.

MAI

Huy.

She goes to collect him, brings him back to Beckett's side. Hugs the child gently, then tightly.

MAI

(angrily to Huy)

You will grow up, too, won't you?

(then tenderly, in
Vietnamese)

Huy, my beautiful baby boy...

(and after a moment)

... We had not seen my brother for almost a year.

Another EXPLOSION rocks the village.

BECKETT

More fireworks?

MAI

I used to hold my brother like this -- when we were children. He was so afraid. After they came for our father.

BECKETT

Mai. Untie me.

MAI

My brother is still afraid.

BECKETT

Your brother is V.C.

MAI

He is political.

BECKETT

He's V.C.! For all I know, this whole family.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

MAI

You helped me bury my cousin, he fought against the communists, he was a hero -- as was my father. You don't know anything about my country.

*
*

(and)

What will you do if I let you go?

He doesn't know. They look at each other for a long time. Mai holds her child.

MAI

My brother --

(unable to lie)

-- has grown up very fast.

(and)

He did not shoot you.

BECKETT

Not yet.

MAI

He knows you are my friend.

BECKETT

I am your friend. So what are you waiting for?

MAI

(feeling her way)

A soldier fights for what he believes. A woman, a child, cannot expect a soldier to stay with them. Even a father, a husband or a friend will have to eventually take a side and fight.

(sets down the child)

I think you are my friend, Beckett. You are also a soldier. I need to know what you will do.

CUT TO:

17 ON AIR

17

The red sign glows. The annoying Vietnamese MUSIC still pours out of the SPEAKERS inside:

18 INT. MARS

18

But nobody's behind the microphone.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

ARTILLERY can be heard POUNDING outside, muted oddly by the thick studio insulation. The CAMERA FINDS Frankie at one of the telephones in the now-deserted MARS, she's frustrated, concerned.

FRANKIE

Nobody's answering.

That's it, she hangs up, heads back for:

19 BOOTH

19

Where the NCO is playing solitaire.

FRANKIE

Did you hear me? Nobody's answering anywhere!

NCO

(not even looking
up)

It's Tet.

She steps back into the hallway, stares at the two silent Telex machines.

FRANKIE

And there's nothing on the telex.

NCO

It's Tet.

FRANKIE

None of this strikes you as a tiny bit unusual?

NCO

It's --

FRANKIE

Tet. Right, I know.
(putting her hand on
top of his card)
Something is wrong!

The NCO's a man who doesn't like to have his card game interrupted.

NCO

Relax, by morning every slant in Vietnam will be banging gongs and visiting dead relatives.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

FRANKIE

Slant?

He looks up from his cards.

NCO

Slant, slope, gook. Greaser,
mick, wop, kike...

(flicks a card)

... Spade.

He plays the card, returning to his game. Frankie stares
at him.

NCO

(not looking up)

You thinking 'cracker'? Forget
it, it's not worth it, there
aren't enough potatoes for you to
peel in this man's army.

FRANKIE

Yes, sir.

NCO

Don't call me sir, soldier -- I
work for a living.

She doesn't say a thing, he looks up.

NCO

Nobody said it was going to be
fair, Private. Now play another
gook record for our boys in the
field.

CUT TO:

20 INT. OR - NIGHT

20

The MORTAR FIRE outside is pretty heavy. Dr. Dick pushes
in the last guy on a gurney. Mattresses have been jammed
against the doors. The dim light gives a surreal
feeling. Patients are crammed in under the operating
tables.

*
*

21 DODGER

21

is trying to get up.

DR. RICHARD (O.S.)

What do you think you're doing?

*

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

DR. RICHARD, wearing flak jacket and helmet, comes in, carrying a heavy canvas pack.

DODGER

They need me out there.

DR. RICHARD

You and your bedpan.

(then)

You had a delicate neurological surgery two weeks ago. Combat's not covered in my limited warranty.

Pain and dizziness force Dodger to lie back down.

DR. RICHARD

I knew you'd see it my way.

A particularly BIG SHELL BURST. Dr. Richard ducks under the table with Dodger, opens his pack, it's full of pistols.

DR. RICHARD

It's hard to believe, but wars have rules. The rules for this one say that 'in case of attack, all personnel capable of handling a weapon shall be issued one for the purposes of self-defense.'

(looks at Dodger)

Under the circumstances, I think you qualify.

Dr. Richard hands a .45 to Dodger.

DR. RICHARD

Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

Dodger doesn't answer. Dr. Richard looks around at the other patients, all more helpless than Dodger.

*

DR. RICHARD

These guys aren't heavily into self-defense.

Digs a .45 automatic out, holds it as menacingly as he can.

DR. RICHARD

Guess it's just you and me.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

DODGER

(pointing)

You need a clip.

(off of Dr. Dick's
blank look)

Bullets.

DR. RICHARD

Oh yeah, right.

He digs into the pack.

CUT TO:

22 INT. FIRE BASE MOSQUITO BUNKER - NIGHT

22

It's quiet, eerily quiet. Fitzkee stands above Cherry and Jessica, nervously fiddling with his M-16, staring off into the darkness. Bingo leans beside him, smoking a cigarette.

FITZKEE

Come on, come on.

JESSICA

Is it over?

BOOM! Fitzkee FIRES into the darkness. Jessica screams.

BINGO

Chill out, Fitzkee.

Her scream turns into a terrified, tight-lipped whimper.

CHERRY

Do you know any show tunes?

Jessica doesn't answer, stares around wildly.

CHERRY

Songs from shows? Jessica?
(nods)

What?

JESSICA

I was in Sound of Music.

Cherry thinks for a minute, smiles.

CHERRY

'Raindrops on roses,
And whispers on kittens.'

(CONTINUED)

Jessica is staring up at the men and beyond. Barely listening.

CHERRY

Come on.
 (singing)
 'Bright copper...
 (trying to remember)
 ... kettles,
 And... warm woolen mittens.'
 (stuck)
 Da, da, da, da, da... I don't
 remember the words --

JESSICA

 (halfheartedly)
 'Brown paper packages...'

CHERRY

... 'Tied up with string,
 These are a few of my favorite
 things.'

Cherry smiles, Jessica doesn't want to, but she smiles.

CHERRY

See, that helps, right?

Jessica nods. It does help. Bingo starts to sing,
 doesn't shift his eyes from the perimeter.

BINGO

'Wild thing...
 (does the rhythm)
 ... You make my heart sing.'

He does the percussion, steps back into the bunker,
 moving a little.

BINGO/CHERRY

'You make everything, groovy.
 Wild thing.'

Cherry claps, gets up. Starts dancing.

BINGO/CHERRY

'Wild thing, I think I love you,
 I wanna know for sure.
 Come on...'

They look at each other, where are the words?

FITZKEE

Hold me tight.

(CONTINUED)

BINGO/CHERRY

(yeah, that's it)

'Hold me tight,
Wild thing, I think I love you!!'

Jessica smiles, applauds. Joins in.

BINGO/CHERRY/JESSICA

'Wild thing,
You make my heart sing,
You make everything, groovy
Wild thing.'

Jessica's clapping out the rhythm, Bingo and Cherry are dancing a cappella in the middle of the bunker. For one brief moment, they could be at a frat mixer, State College, PA. A flare pops up outside.

FITZKEE

Here they come.

The song grinds to a halt. The room is silent, the boys, now suddenly men with guns, move to the ports.

BINGO

Stay down, if anything happens,
just stay put.

It's still silent. Cherry sits, pulls Jessica around her, Jessica's holding her hand so hard it's tough to imagine any blood is circulating. There's a long silence, then Fitzkee lets out a death scream, FIRES into the darkness.

FITZKEE

Die, you bastards!

The shell cartridges fly, the battle erupts. The CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE ON Cherry. Jessica buries herself in Cherry's shoulder, screaming, crying.

CHERRY

(softly)

Wild thing,
You make my heart sing --

BOOM! A bone-jarring EXPLOSION right outside, she grits her teeth, holds Jessica tighter, the dust falls.

CHERRY

You make everything, groovy,
Wild thing...

CUT TO:

23

INT. OFFICERS' BATHROOM - NIGHT

23

INTERMITTENT SHELLING, GUNFIRE. Intimidating. Absurd. K.C. is stretched out in the tub, chain smoking. The empty bottle of champagne is upside down in the ice bucket. McMurphy comes back in from the hallway.

McMURPHY

They locked all the doors. We're stuck in here!

*

BOOM!

McMURPHY

You'd think they'd run out of ammunition.

(no answer)

How long have we been here?

K.C.

A year.

K.C. stands, viciously crushes out the cigarette and heads for the sinks. Yanks open one of the mirrors to find the medicine cabinet, rustles around inside irritably.

K.C.

Aspirin, toothpaste, cough syrup -- Christ, it's a hospital in here except there's enough Old Spice to drown the Sixth Fleet.

She slams the door shut. Moves to the other medicine cabinet.

McMURPHY

What are you looking for?

Her rooting around is getting more frustrated, a BOTTLE of after-shave CRASHES into the sink.

K.C.

Dammit!

McMURPHY

What do you need, I might have something in my purse?

K.C.

I doubt it. Cough drops, nasal spray!

K.C. yanks more stuff out of the cabinet in a fury. Takes a deep breath, calms down for a moment. McMurphy watches, studies.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

K.C.

That's it.

*

She turns just as there's a big EXPLOSION outside. K.C. heads for the door anyway.

McMURPHY

Where are you going?

*

*

K.C.'s out the door and into:

24 INT. OFFICERS' MESS - NIGHT

24

The table is set for twelve -- crystal, china, candelabras burned down to only a few inches, salads still waiting at each setting. It's deserted, half lit and very eerie. Plaster dust hangs in the air, sifts down whenever there's a shell burst. The sudden lightning of the battle sparks occasionally in the terrace French doors.

K.C.'s already rummaging through the silver drawers, pulling them out, checking underneath.

25 McMURPHY

25

stands in the hallway arch. Watching K.C.'s increasingly frantic search through the room.

*

McMURPHY

Are you going to tell me what's wrong?

(no bullshit)

What are you looking for?

K.C.

A cigarette.

(ugly laughter)

Haven't you heard? 'I'd walk a mile for a Camel.'

She pushes past McMurphy to one of the large, ornate French doors. Wrought iron bars have been swung into place outside. It's locked, K.C. begins to hammer on it with her fists.

*

*

*

K.C.

I can't stay here, I've got to get out.

*

*

*

K.C.'s body stiffens. Then a slight relaxation as she presses her forehead tightly against the glass.

*

(CONTINUED)

McMURPHY

K.C...?

K.C. pulls herself together, walks to another French door -- also locked. She laughs, grabs a chair and tosses it, crashing through one of the doors. Shakes the iron bars -- locked.

Again her body spasms. When it relaxes, K.C. slides down to the floor, using the wall for support. She draws her knees up tight against her chest, rocking back and forth, back and forth. A cold sweat beads her face, arms, neck.

McMurphy crouches beside her, all professional, uses her blouse to wipe K.C.'s clammy face, running nose. Checks her pulse.

McMURPHY

What did you have to eat in the last 24 hours?

K.C. laughs.

McMURPHY

You've got a fever? What is --

*

She stops herself, K.C.'s arm. Oh.

*

McMURPHY

How long have you been using?

K.C. tries to stand, pushing herself up, using the wall for support. She doesn't make it very far. Slides back down.

*

K.C.

I'll be alright in a minute.

McMURPHY

Heroin?

K.C.

A little skin-popping. Morphine's better, but heroin's easier to score.

(laughs)

Candy is dandy, but liquor is quickerrrr --

(as McMurphy doesn't say a word)

Don't look at me like that.

McMURPHY

I'll get a blanket.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

K.C.

Don't bother, I'm not staying for
dessert.

McMURPHY

Won't be any dealers standing
around school yards out there
tonight.

BOOM! BOOM! The lights flicker out. K.C. laughs.

K.C.

I must have gotten out on the
wrong side of the bed today.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

26

INT. GRU - PRE-DAWN

26

HEAVY insistent BOMBARDMENT. Small ARMS FIRE. Constant. Numbing. Killing. Boonie moves between the party-groggy grunts and GI's shanghaied out of their cushy R & R berths.

R & R GRUNT

I don't need this. I really don't need this.

The R & R Grunt's eyes are glued to the window in the door, staring off into the compound.

BOONIE

Que tal, Santos?

R & R GRUNT

(eyes never shifting)

Bueno.

(grinning)

But if I have to die, I want it to be in your arms, Boonie-man.

BOONIE

How you doing, Wayloo Marie Holmes?

WAYLOO

I'm okay, Boonwell.

She's not.

BOONIE

I used to be afraid of heights. Couldn't even stand on a chair.

WAYLOO

You got over it?

BOONIE

(all grins)

No. Not really.

R & R GRUNT

Here they come!

All leap into action, shoving their way out and into:

26A EXT. COMPOUND - PRE-DAWN (SUBJECTIVE CAMERA) 26A

Sandbags, wire, EXPLOSIONS, GUNFIRE. Wayloo and the CAMERA dogging along, brave and foolish, increasingly frightened and refusing to show it. *

WAYLOO

(into mike)

The night struggles on, the valiant men of China Beach fighting until the battle-scarred dawn shows it's weary head. *

The R & R Grunt begins firing at the perimeter. The CAMERA PICKS UP a --

27 BLACK-CLAD FIGURE 27

breaching the concertina wire and running toward the bunker to their left, crouched, carrying something. A satchel charge flies.

28 BOONIE 28

leaps on Wayloo, dragging her to the ground as BOOM! The CHARGE EXPLODES in the far bunker. When the dust settles, Boonie sits up cautiously, followed by Wayloo.

BOONIE

You okay?

She nods. The Grunt is still FIRING as a --

29 SECOND SATCHEL CHARGE 29

sails through the air, lands beside Boonie and Wayloo. They stare, frozen for a beat. Then all scramble like crazy to get back into:

29A INT. GRU - PRE-DAWN 29A

Fling themselves to the ground. No explosion. Boonie grins.

BOONIE

Charlie can't get anything right.

Now it EXPLODES, pounding open the doors and showering them with debris. *

R & R GRUNT

They're comin' through the wire!

(CONTINUED)

29A CONTINUED: 29A

There's FIRING, chaos. Boonie races back outside to:

29B EXT. COMPOUND - PRE-DAWN (SUBJECTIVE CAMERA) 29B

Followed by Wayloo. The CAMERA doesn't want to come. Wayloo grabs him.

WAYLOO

Come on!

Boonie raises his M-16, begins FIRING, swinging it back and forth -- spraying death and destruction that systematically rips apart earth and concertina wire. Dark silhouettes fall in the open space between fire and sandbags. Wayloo covers her ears, spent cartridges rain down on the CAMERA.

R & R GRUNT

Que bruta! *

Boonie runs out of ammo, but he continues to sweep the empty gun back and forth, hands tight, white-knuckles wrapped around the now silent machine gun, his face taut with fury and fear. Still fighting. No one says a word, the CAMERA just watches Wayloo watching Boonie. The R & R Grunt STOPS FIRING.

R & R GRUNT

Boonie-man...
(drags him down) *

Boonie!

After a short eternity, Boonie's face drains and he lowers the gun. An M-16 FIRES off random ROUNDS somewhere else. Someone yells "Hold your fire." The sudden silence is frightening. Wayloo looks to the CAMERA, for once at a loss for words, back to Boonie.

Odd green NUMERALS ROLL past the picture, the COLOR FADES and then DARKNESS, followed by the sound of FLAPPING STOCK.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)

Dammit, I ran out of film.

CUT TO:

30 OMITTED
&
31

30 *
&
31 *

32 INT. MARS

32

The ARTILLERY can still be heard POUNDING outside, muted oddly by the thick studio insulation and the MUSIC pouring out of the speakers. Frankie's at the hallway telex, waiting on the droning printer, reads as it prints, doesn't like what she's reading.

FRANKIE

My God...

That's it, she rips it off and heads back into the booth.

FRANKIE

(reading)

'Enemy activity has been reported in all major population centers. Stop. I Corps reports an N.V.A. Division has occupied all of the city of Hue north of the Perfume River. Stop. Reliable sources in Saigon report the American Embassy has been overrun.'

She sets the telex down in front of the NCO at the news desk, he hands her a sheet of paper without looking up.

NCO

The news.

She scans it, confused.

FRANKIE

This doesn't say anything about what's happening out there.

NCO

You heard Westmoreland 'We've seen the light at the end of the tunnel.'

FRANKIE

Was it a train?

BOOM! BOOM! He points to the clock.

NCO

You're on in fifteen seconds, Private.

FRANKIE

We're in big trouble and there's nothing here about it.

He just stares at her. She points at the telex.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

FRANKIE

They're kicking our butts!

The record ends, it's replaced by the SCRATCHING of NEEDLE against record label. A long beat. The NCO doesn't blink. Frankie turns to the microphone, pulls off the needle.

FRANKIE

(into mike)

Oops... What an ending. I don't know about you but I think I preferred that last part with the skipping to the music. It's --

(looks)

04:30 on a lovely Tet morning and you're listening to PFC Frankie Bunsen on AFVN-AM, the sound of the South China Sea. And now for the news.

*

She picks up the NCO's news, looks at him for a long moment. The sounds of the continued SHELLING seeps in from outside.

FRANKIE

General William Westmoreland predicted a speedy end to the hostilities today, relating his belief that 'we have seen the light at the end of the tunnel.'

WHHRRR... the sound of the GENERATOR'S GOING OUT. Flickering darkness then the emergency lights.

*

*

NCO

Power's down.

*

*

FRANKIE

Oh, gee, how will we ever get the news out to the boys?

*

*

*

*

The SHELLING continues as we...

CUT TO:

33 INT. BUNKER - FIRE BASE MOSQUITO - NIGHT

33

The room is now lit by the eeriness of the fire fight raging outside. Cherry holds the terrified Jessica. The only thing we see of Bingo and Fitzkee are their legs, they're fighting in the world above us.

(CONTINUED)

CHERRY

You could have joined the Peace Corps.

JESSICA

I wanted to backpack around Europe, but my parents thought it would be too dangerous.

She laughs, sort of wants to cry, but Cherry joins the laughter.

JESSICA

Thought this would be an adventure, help me figure out what I wanted to do with the rest of my life.

CHERRY

I knew what I wanted to do with the rest of my life -- get married, have kids -- that's what people do in Iowa.

JESSICA

I'm even more confused now.

CHERRY

I'll figure out what it all means when I get home. I feel like I've gone a million miles away -- I can't even remember it anymore, really. It's more like postcards than memories; my parents, high school, college. Think maybe I'll go places, romantic places: the French Riviera, Rio de Janeiro, Africa. Do things, things no one would expect -- learn how to fly.

JESSICA

An airplane?

CHERRY

Sure, why not? Or scuba dive.

A MORTAR LANDS in bone-jarring proximity. Jessica screams, hysterical. Cherry tries to calm her.

CHERRY

Shhhh... shhhh... It'll be okay.
(holds her tighter)
Do you have brothers and sisters?

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

Jessica doesn't answer, a frightened rabbit.

CHERRY

Brothers and sisters?

(as she nods)

I have a brother, Rick. Richard William White. He's older than I am.

JESSICA

Two sisters and a brother.

CHERRY

Rick thought I was a real pain in the backside -- and I guess I was. Tagging along anytime he wanted to go anywhere. He had this paper route, and when it was too cold or snowy to ride his bike, my dad would drive him around in the station wagon, four-thirty in the morning, the neighborhoods still dark, nobody up late, the snow fresh, no tire marks. Rick'd let me sit on the back gate folding papers, with him standing above, holding onto the luggage rack, tossing them into the yards as we passed, no dogs out even. So quiet with all the snow. And I'd just watch him, standing up there, so strong and sure of himself, of everything.

The spent cartridges from the guns above rain down on Cherry and Jessica.

CHERRY

My first date, he was more worried than my dad, I think he maybe even followed us.

JESSICA

Jimmy's like that, always thought they were going to try and rape me.

CHERRY

I found a condom in Rick's room and he was so embarrassed, didn't want me to know what it was.

*

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (3)

33

JESSICA

(her first,
tentative, giggle)I don't think Jimmy ever needed a
rubber -- he's not too cute.

BINGO YELLS above them, FIRING into the darkness. They
both pause, take a moment to get back into their
conversation.

CHERRY

Rick's cute. All the older girl's
wanted to be my friend, figured
I'd put in a good word. It was
great. He was so sensitive, I
don't think any of us realized
that at the time.

(looks off)

Everyone always thought I was the
frail one, but I guess we don't
always know what we think we know.
We think we do, but we don't.

Now it's Jessica's turn to watch.

CHERRY

I miss him, I really miss him.

CUT TO:

34 INT. OFFICERS' MESS - NIGHT

34

The SOUND of FIGHTING outside is clear, intimidating,
absurd. Small ARMS, MORTARS -- a STEADY stream. McMurphy
sits in one of the few remaining chairs, eating one of the
twelve salads. The doors are now barricaded with every
piece of furniture McMurphy could manage to move. K.C.
steps in from the open bathroom doorway, her face and hair
still wet from the sink, surveys McMurphy's handiwork.

K.C.

(dryly)

Great strategy. Home furnishings
Rout V.C.

McMURPHY

How are you feeling?

K.C.

Aces. Number one.

McMURPHY

Eat something.

(CONTINUED)

K.C. lights a cigarette, coughs, sits.

K.C.

No, thanks, I'm not very hungry
right now.

McMURPHY

(the salad)

Amazing. Avocados? Blue cheese?

McMurphy pours herself a water glass tumbler of scotch
from the Waterford decanter.

McMURPHY

This is nothing. One day you'll
wake up, your kidneys and nervous
system will be shot, your hair and
teeth will be falling out, you'll
weigh about eighty pounds -- and
all you'll be thinking about is
your next fix.

(starts another
salad)

You'll do anything, no matter how
disgusting, to fill up that
syringe. And if you're lucky, you
won't be murdered or die of
malnutrition, you'll overdose,
accidentally -- or on purpose.

K.C.

This is like listening to Mary
Poppins lecture you on V.D.

*
*
*

McMURPHY

(still not looking
up)

I don't care if you do kill
yourself, I'm sick of it --
Patients, doctors, officers, my
whole damn family. Do what you
want, I've got enough people to
take care of without worrying
about you.

*
*
*
*

K.C.

Good for you, damn right. Every
woman for herself.

(remembering)

Dammit!

K.C. goes to the breakfront, starts rummaging through the
drawers, pushing aside the silver, pulling out table
linen and napkins.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

McMURPHY

You going to shoot up candlewax?

K.C.

There's one here somewhere. *

McMurphy watches K.C.'s search through the room. *

McMURPHY

Maybe sterno, ought to be quite a high.

K.C.

He keeps a joint around here somewhere. *

McMURPHY

The colonel smokes marijuana? *

K.C.

Works better than oysters. *

No luck, no more drawers to ransack. *

McMURPHY

It won't help you much. *

K.C. gives up, plops down in her chair. *

K.C.

You're very worldly, right? *

McMURPHY

You don't know anything about me.

K.C.

Colleen, I've known you all my life.

(thinking)

You sang in the church choir, grew up in a nice house covered with ivy, Mom did all her own baking, and Daddy didn't pay enough attention to you because of all your brothers. *

McMurphy doesn't say anything. *

K.C.

How'm I doing, Colleen. *

McMURPHY

This is a three Scotch conversation, I'm only on my second. *

(CONTINUED)

K.C.

Pep club, National Honor Society,
student council. You're the girl
who never wanted to share a gym
locker with trash like me. Had
your first beer at a mixer
freshman year of college.

*
*

McMURPHY

(guilty as charged)
Senior year of high school. You
left out pompom squad.

*

K.C.

You were a pompom girl? I was a
twirler.

*

McMURPHY

Oh yeah?

K.C.

Didn't wear much under that little
skirt. Tell you this much,
nobody went out for a hotdog
during halftime.

*
*
*

McMurphy looks around, pulls a large floral stake out of
one of the potted plants. Tosses it to K.C. K.C. shoves
back her chair, this woman was a twirler but she's pretty
rusty.

*
*
*

McMURPHY

Not bad.

K.C.

Damn right, not bad. Couldn't
make it through Algebra II but I
was hell on wheels in a pleated
skirt and pompoms.

McMURPHY

'Two bits,
Four bits,
Six bits a dollar,
All for Frontier,
Stand up and holler.'

McMurphy squeaks through the old routine. K.C. crawls up
on the table kicking stuff out of her way.

K.C.

'Push 'em back
Push 'em back
Harder, harder...'

(CONTINUED)

K.C.

Leave me alone!

McMURPHY

Get away from the window!

K.C. spins, slaps McMURPHY hard. Sends her staggering backwards onto her butt. K.C. tugs at the last large piece of furniture but it's not budging. K.C. rushes back toward the hallway. McMURPHY leaps for the passing K.C., dragging her down in a flying tackle that would have done the five McMURPHY brothers proud. They hit the floor with a thud, McMURPHY wrestling K.C. to her back, straddling her, elbows, pinned to knees.

K.C. bucks and screams like a spurred horse, McMURPHY doing her best just to hold her down.

K.C.

Get off me! Get off me now!

McMURPHY, finally, tired of fighting, pulls back her fist --

McMURPHY

Glad to.

And coldcocks K.C. with her best roundhouse right. Gets off the now inert K.C., collapses against the wall, holding her hand.

McMURPHY

You're welcome.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

K.C. enjoys the "Harder, harder" part, it's pretty lascivious, coughs.

McMURPHY

I don't think I'd have had the guts to do that one.

K.C.

The boys loved it.

McMurphy hops up on the table with K.C. Follows K.C.'s lead.

K.C./McMURPHY

'Lean to the left,
Lean to the right,
Stand up,
Sit down,
Fight, fight, fight.'

They drop down onto the table top, laughing, legs dangling over the edge. K.C. stops laughing first, breaks into coughing, listens.

K.C.

Sounds like they stopped.

She's right.

McMURPHY

Probably just a lull.

K.C.

(hopping down)

I'm gone.

McMURPHY

Where?

K.C.

To find a school yard. Thanks for the stroll down memory lane.

K.C. grabs her purse and heads for the door. Pulling chairs out of the way. McMurphy goes to her.

McMURPHY

You were doing fine.

K.C. just keeps moving furniture.

McMURPHY

It's too dangerous.

*

(CONTINUED)

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

35
thru
37

OMITTED

35
thru
37

38

INT. O.R. - MORNING

38

Dodger is breaking down his pistol, quietly, efficiently. Checking, not even watching what he's doing -- but Dr. Dick is watching, amazed.

DR. RICHARD

You're not even looking.

DODGER

Don't need to.

DR. RICHARD

It's amazing.

DODGER

This is what I do. Can't trust your eyes, have to feel it, let it be part of you. Listen to its sounds, its rhythms. Trust it.

DR. RICHARD

You sound like me.

Snap! The last piece snaps into place as we start hearing SHOUTS from outside and CHOPPERS growing LOUDER. Dodger, alert, raises his pistol -- calm, steady, alive. Dr. Dick raises his pistol unsteadily.

DR. RICHARD

(quietly)

Oh, man.

The doors are slowly forced open, pushing back the mattresses. Dodger is utterly calm, silent. Boonie sticks his head in.

BOONIE

You alright in here?

Dodger lowers the automatic, disappointed?

BOONIE

Anybody in here?!

DR. RICHARD

Yeah, yeah, we're in here.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

Boonie starts pulling the mattresses out of the way. Dr. Dick takes in Dodger, icy, hard. The CHOPPERS are close.

BOONIE

It's starting. Wounded from everywhere --

Dr. Dick watches Dodger click the safety back in place, never looking back.

BOONIE

We'd better move it.

DR. RICHARD

Get these men back to the ward. We'll need room in here.

He runs out toward triage, sneaking one look back to Dodger.

39 DODGER

39

looks at Boonie, then over at Dr. Richard's forgotten pack of guns on the floor. After a beat, grabs several more clips, slips the .45 and the clips under his blanket. Turns back to stare at the watching Boonie. A standoff.

CUT TO:

40 INT. OFFICERS' MESS - MORNING

40

K.C. is curled up in McMurphy's lap, on the floor, almost fetal, awake, callow. The door to the mess is suddenly wrenched open -- someone shoving hard against the piled furniture.

AIDE (O.S.)

What the hell?

From behind the door appears the Aide. His uniform filthy, torn.

AIDE

Sorry it took so long, ma'am. We had a few problems last night.

McMURPHY

Join the club.

She nudges K.C.

(CONTINUED)

McMURPHY
Prince Charming's here.

K.C. bites her lip, tries to sit up.

AIDE
Are you okay?

McMURPHY
I think we need a stretcher.

K.C.
Forget it, I can get up.

The Aide looks from one to the other.

K.C.
I said forget it! Now beat it.
(as the Aide doesn't)
Beat it!

He shrugs and leaves. K.C. pushes herself onto her knees with difficulty. McMurphy reaches over to help.

K.C.
I can do it myself!

And she does, summoning all her strength and dignity. McMurphy stands. They face each other.

McMURPHY
It's going to get worse before it gets better.

K.C.
I can control it.

McMURPHY
You'll need help.

K.C.
Forget it. Just leave me alone.

McMURPHY
I'm not going to leave you alone,
I see too many body bags as it is.

K.C.
Who cares if I end up in a body bag?

They stare at each other, an arm's distance apart that seems like the Atlantic -- the nurse and the unwilling patient. A long beat.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

McMURPHY

I always thought you were smarter
than this.

*
*
*

K.C.

Me, too.

*
*

And K.C. starts for the door, moving on power supplied
from anger -- the depth of which only she can really
know. McMurphy picks up K.C.'s stuff, follows.

*
*
*

CUT TO:

41 INT. BUNKER - DAY

41

Cherry sits, an arm around Jessica, rattling on like a
seasoned China hand:

CHERRY

H-H-H-Heifer was my third blue
ribbon. We named her that because
this little kid down the road
stuttered on his H's and he always
pestered us, wanting to get in the
h-h-h-heifer's stall and pet --

Bingo sticks his head into the bunker, grinning like
Christmas morning.

BINGO

Rise an' shine, ladies, rise an'
shine. We got a break in thee
storm an' a han'some, yella taxi
all set to take you home.

(a grim note)

Best shag it, ladies. No tellin'
when the clouds'll open up again.

Not exactly sorry to be leaving, Jessica scrambles out
of the bunker, hardly waiting for Bingo and Fitzkee to
help her up and out.

Cherry takes time to stoop and gather up a deck of game
cards that Jessica has scattered in her eagerness to be
gone.

FITZKEE

Need some help?

CHERRY

No, thanks.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

CHERRY (CONT'D)

(grins)

Got it covered. You take care
these next 17 days, okay, Larry?

FITZKEE

(grins)

16 now.

Bingo offers her a hand and Cherry takes it, reading from
the top card in her other hand:

CHERRY

Which National League pitcher
refused to play in a World Series
game because of his religious
convictions?

42 OMITTED

42

42A EXT. BUNKER - FIRE BASE (STAGE) - MORNING

42A

Bingo pulls Cherry into the rainy mist, answering
confidently:

BINGO

Johnny Unitas.

There is a fresh, clean breeze blowing and Cherry tries
to smooth her hair, control her skirt and hang on to the
cards all at the same time, laughing at the Marine.

CHERRY

That is a dumb answer.

He grins, a big, ugly jar-head smile -- walking her to
the waiting chopper.

BINGO

Hey... I travel on my looks.

CHERRY

(still laughing)

Yeah, and look where they got you.

Her hand pointedly sweeps the wreck of a fire base and
the wind catches the deck of cards, sending them flying.

CHERRY

Damn...

Without thinking, Cherry chases after the cards, ignoring
the Marine's warning behind her as she follows the
skittering cards into:

43 OPEN FIELD

43

BINGO
 (calling)
 Lady, don't break the perim --

Cherry's hand gestures "Just a minute" as she stoops down to gather in the last few renegade cards. A simple BAM!

44 JESSICA

44

looks back from the chopper, disbelief and horror etched on her suddenly pale face.

45 CHERRY

45

Backlit in a blaze of white, eyes no longer focusing, stands, blood pouring from the wounds ripped open by the shrapnel, caught in that bizarre moment of calm that often follows disaster.

Slowly, inexorably, her body begins to fall... fall forward TOWARD the CAMERA, FILLING the FRAME.

46 BINGO

46

stares, all laughter wiped from his big, ugly jar-head face.

CUT TO:

A46A MAI

A46A

CLOSE ON her face, sitting beside the bound Beckett, child on her lap.

B46A INT. MAI'S HOUSE - MORNING

B46A

MAI
 My father's loyalty was never enough. He had married a peasant girl -- President Diem could not trust such a man. The harder my father worked, the more of a threat he became.

BECKETT
 He was an officer?

(CONTINUED)

B46A CONTINUED:

B46A

MAI

I grew up with money and the chance for school, but with my father's death we fell out of favor. We were forced to move back here to my mother's village and Tran never had these opportunities. The elite families, the government officials here, ignored us. Their boys would not play with Tran. Even games, he was beaten once for scoring a goal against an officer's son. He was spit on in the street.

(hopelessly)

This is strange to you.

BECKETT

No. Not so strange.

MAI

This is the world Tran grew up in. A boy has to choose, at twelve years of age he does not understand philosophies, he knows only that he has to take sides and fight. No boy in my country has the chance not to fight.

BECKETT

Not too many in my neighborhood either.

MAI

I need to know what you will do.

BECKETT

I'm not sure.

She looks away.

MAI

It's morning.

She stands, moves slowly to the table, picks up a knife. Walks back to him, he watches her, she stops in front of him for a long moment, then slices through the ties binding his legs. Then his arms.

MAI

Don't move too quickly, you will be dizzy.

(CONTINUED)

B46A CONTINUED: (2)

B46A

He rubs his wrists, stands.

MAI

It's quiet now, the fighting has moved on.

The child hugs his mother's leg. Beckett looks to the door. A moment passes between Beckett and Mai. She is not happy. In the dark distance, something is aflame.

MAI

Go. Before you are seen.

BECKETT

Will you be alright?

She doesn't answer. A hard moment -- the children, the grandmother, Mai, all follow his every movement. He turns and leaves.

46A EXT. VILLAGE - EARLY MORNING

46A

Beckett walks down the steps into the aftermath of Tet -- damaged, smoking huts; a few dazed villagers, stray chickens -- a tide of Jeeps and infantry. ARVN soldiers are pulling screaming villagers out of their huts. Beckett stops at the bottom of Mai's steps. An angry ARVN SOLDIER heads toward Beckett to go in. Beckett stops him.

BECKETT

What's going on?

ARVN

V.C. here. Whole village.

BECKETT

(not letting him
past)

What?

ARVN

V.C. here! V.C.!

Points his gun at the hut. Beckett looks back at Mai in the doorway.

ARVN

V.C. here! V.C. here!

Beckett looks down the road to other villagers being rounded up. A beat.

(CONTINUED)

46A CONTINUED:

46A

BECKETT
No V.C. here. No V.C.

ARVN
V.C.!

BECKETT
No.

The ARVN Soldier backs up, lowers his gun at Beckett, a short standoff. A voice from behind.

SERGEANT
(in Vietnamese)
Move on. Now.

The ARVN looks back at a large black SERGEANT, standing to the left.

SERGEANT
(Vietnamese)
Now!

The ARVN mumbles, moves off. Mai disappears inside. The Sergeant steps up.

SERGEANT
No weapon, Private?

BECKETT
Left it back at the base
yesterday.

SERGEANT
Where did you think you were
going?

BECKETT
Just visiting.

SERGEANT
(back to work)
Trouble with this mess -- we're
all just visiting.

They start walking. The Sergeant looks at Beckett's face.

SERGEANT
What happened to you?

BECKETT
(breath of a beat)
Family feud.

(CONTINUED)

46A CONTINUED: (2)

46A

Sergeant realizes it's a lie, decides he doesn't give a shit, points down the road.

SERGEANT

There's a colonel down there
giving out medals off the back of
a Jeep, get in line, that shiner
oughta be good for a combat
infantryman's badge or something.

Beckett looks -- a card table with a junior grade officer
pounding a portable typewriter, a Jeep with a CASSETTE
PLAYER on its hood BLASTING patriotic MILITARY MARCHES,
a colonel pinning on medals, and a line of guys waiting
their turn like some sort of crowded supermarket check-
out line.

SERGEANT

Supposed to be good for morale.
Throw yourself on a grenade to
save your buddies -- silver star.
Throw yourself on a grenade to
save your buddies but it's a dude
-- bronze star. Go figure. It's
one hell of a war, huh?

At the end of the village he finds two photographers and
a team of Marines working beside the shallow river.

SERGEANT

(to photographers)
They're all yours.
(to the trench)
Say 'cheese'!

Beckett steps up to the trench to find --

46B BODIES

46B

Maybe a dozen of them -- all Vietnamese, lined up on the
ground. The photographers click away.

SERGEANT

Weird, huh? Seeing 'em lined that
way.

BECKETT

I'm used to it.

CUT TO:

47 BECKETT

47

continues across the bridge into --

The scars of last night's fighting visible everywhere. A small group of people have begun to gather beside the helipad -- McMurphy, Dr. Dick, Boonie -- all staring down the ravine at a distant, approaching helicopter.

Additional men and women are joining them, pouring out of the Jet Set, the hospital, men from Mars. Others jog past Beckett, toward the helipad, Wayloo and her Cameraman rush to join. All watching, waiting, staring at the slowly approaching chopper.

Beckett jogs to the group, pushes his way through to the front. The chopper now near, the assemblage silent. Beckett finds McMurphy, the CHOPPER WASH whipping her hair, the sound overwhelming -- tears, fear -- a force coming too close, much too close.

BECKETT
(yelling over the
 roar of the rotor)
What is it? What happened?

He can barely be heard above the CACOPHONY. McMurphy turns to him, answers -- we can't hear, but we know what she says, a single word, a name, "Cherry," as the stretcher is unloaded onto the helipad. The huge ROTORS SLOWING as the CHOPPER SHUTS OFF. *

The semicircle of faces stand, in mottled shadows of the chopper blade, watching, frozen -- some tears, most too drained for emotion -- McMurphy, Dr. Dick, Jessica, Boonie, Dodger in a wheelchair, Beckett, Frankie, K.C. (looking awful), Wayloo and her Cameraman, grunts, nurses, chopper crew. *

Now SUBJECTIVE CAMERA as we see the faces, eyes turn away. Jessica sobs gently, turns to the outside.

Frankie puts on her cap and goes, followed by Dr. Dick, and Boonie, grunts, nurses. *

K.C. wipes away an escaped tear, is next to leave, followed by McMurphy. *

Wayloo steps INTO FRAME across from Beckett. Looks down at Cherry on the stretcher. *

WAYLOO
Goodbye, Cherry White.

She turns back, looks directly into camera.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

WAYLOO

Turn it off, please, turn it off.

The camera comes off his shoulder, heads for the ground
and he shuts it off.

49 OMITTED
thru
52

49 *
thru
52 *

52A BLACKNESS

52A *

And into this void FADES a single, simple card: *

THREE RED CROSS WOMEN
EIGHT MILITARY WOMEN
AND
AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF AMERICAN CIVILIAN WOMEN
DIED IN VIETNAM

In utter silence we HOLD for a moment too long and --

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END