

MY SOJOURN IN HELL

Written by

John Arvai

FADE IN:

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN SOUTH VIETNAM - CHOPPER WRECKAGE - DAY

A nineteen year old US ARMY SOLDIER lies in Vietnam War-era helicopter wreckage entangled with harsh green jungle.

He's in sweat-soaked jungle fatigues with half his face burnt and bleeding and one eye swollen shut.

The Soldier stares helplessly as the barrel of an M16 rifle enters view.

A MAN'S VOICE speaks with a heavy American accent.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Time to do this world a favor.

A hand fingers the trigger when--

FADE TO BLACK:

THE SOUNDS OF A JET ENGINE ON A RUNWAY

EXT. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

A present-day commercial jet taxis down a runway on a cold overcast morning.

INT. COMMERCIAL JET - PRESENT DAY - DAY

A modern interior complete with all the modern bells and whistles.

A cabin full of mostly older VETERANS ages sixty-five and up, some wearing caps and pins branded with their military branch, gather their things.

A tough-looking and foul sixty-nine year old man with a patch over an eye sleeps through the commotion.

This is EITEN CAMACHO.

A friendly and flamboyant MALE FLIGHT ATTENDANT gently shakes him.

MALE FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Sir. Time to wake up. We've
arrived... Sir.

Camacho awakens to see the Male Flight Attendant standing over him with a pleasant grin.

MALE FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Oh good, you're awake. I hear it's quite the turnout. Please let me be the first to thank you for your service.

CAMACHO

Save it. I'm just here for the free food.

Camacho's eye shifts to the Male Flight Attendant's hand on his shoulder. He throws it off.

CAMACHO (CONT'D)

And get your dick-beating hands off me, faggot.

The Male Flight Attendant's mouth is twisted as Camacho shoulders past him towards the exit.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

An ARMY BAND plays celebratory music in a terminal packed wall-to-wall with cheering PEOPLE drenched in USA swag.

A REPORTER talks into a camera as behind her, a stream of Veterans -- some in wheel chairs and some carting medical equipment on rollers -- parade by to a hero's welcome.

REPORTER

History continues to be made in Washington DC this morning as more flights arrive from all over the country transporting upwards of two thousand veterans who served in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam war. Their mission? To not only visit the memorials dedicated to honor their service and sacrifice but on this special day, and at the special invitation of the President himself, all two thousand veterans will attend today's inauguration ceremony to mark the commencement of his new four-year term calling it "his honor to host these American heroes."

CAMACHO

Shuffles pass the Reporter with a straight expression, like he's here on a court order.

He moves through an endless supply of happy faces, giving the occasional nod.

INT. AIRPORT - ATRIUM - DAY

This area is even more packed with cheering PEOPLE including fully uniformed active-duty MILITARY PERSONNEL who salute the Veterans as they pass by.

CAMACHO

Follows the stream of Veterans when he sees a perfectly manicured OLDER LADY in her sixties dressed in formal clothing, not a crease out of place, holding a sign that says, "CAMACHO." He stops.

CAMACHO

I'm Eiten Camacho.

OLDER LADY

It's an honor, sir. As a purple heart recipient you have been invited to a congressional breakfast where you and other distinguished members of this historic honor flight will be recognized for your extraordinary service to our nation.

CAMACHO

Nobody told me about--

OLDER LADY

Your chaperones are aware of this special honor and were asked to keep it a secret for security purposes and as a surprise honor for its recipients. Now if you will follow me as special transportation to the capital building has been arranged.

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT - DAY

Camacho follows the Older Lady towards a fancy shuttle bus with tinted windows. The Older Lady swings the double doors open.

OLDER LADY
After you, sir.

INT. SHUTTLE BUS - DAY

Camacho steps up onto the bus and rounds the corner to see--
--the seats removed with three bodies prone on the floor with
black hoods over their heads.

Before he can react, the Older Lady sticks Camacho with a
needle.

CAMACHO POV -- he spins to see the Older Lady and then his
lights go dark.

FADE TO:

DRILL SERGEANT (O.S.)
WHAT ARE THE TWO TYPES OF SOLDIERS,
PRIVATES?

RECRUITS (O.S.)
THE QUICK AND THE DEAD, DRILL
SERGEANT!

EXT. FORT POLK - PHYSICAL TRAINING FIELD - DAY

The glow of dawn spills onto a training field set in front of
a row of wooden barracks stacked side-by-side that seem to
stretch into forever.

SUPER: FORT POLK, LOUISIANA 1969

On the field are a hundred RECRUITS cranking out push ups.

The sturdy DRILL SERGEANT struts between the Recruits.

DRILL SERGEANT
AND WHAT KIND OF SOLDIERS ARE YOU?

RECRUITS
THE QUICK, DRILL SERGEANT, THE
QUICK!

DRILL SERGEANT
ANYTHING BUT QUICK IN VIETNAM AND
CHARLIE WILL EAT YOUR PUSSIES FOR
BREAKFAST!

Something catches the Drill Sergeant's eye, he swaggers over to a white recruit with a short skinny frame and high-pitched voice.

This is ERIC FORT, age nineteen. You know that odd high school kid that sat alone at the lunch table? This is him.

DRILL SERGEANT (CONT'D)
PRIVATE FORT! WHAT IN THE HOLY
CROSS FUCK IS THIS? A PROPERLY
FORMED PUSH UP IS NOT ACCOMPLISHED
ON YOUR KNEES! THE ONLY THING
ACCOMPLISHED ON YOUR KNEES ARE BLOW
JOBS AND PADDYCAKE!

The Drill Sergeant looks out at the platoon of Recruits who continue to crank out push ups.

DRILL SERGEANT (CONT'D)
PRIVATES, WE ARE GONNA STAY HERE
UNTIL PRIVATE FORT GIVES ME ONE
PROPERLY FORMED PUSH UP!

The Recruits moan collectively giving the sense this is not the first time Fort has extended PT.

DRILL SERGEANT (CONT'D)
YEARS AND TEARS, PRIVATE FORT! WE
GOT ALL DAY!

Fort pushes. His straw arms shake. Veins bulge. Straining with everything he's got when his arms give out.

He collapses to the ground to a chorus of grumbling obscenities.

INT. FORT POLK - BARRACK SHOWERS - DAY

Open bays. Clusters of naked Recruits washing up on double-time.

A handsome chickenshit with blond hair named PRIVATE DEREK WHYBROW, age nineteen, talks and scrubs.

WHYBROW
You see that, gents? Six weeks
into boot and he still hasn't
showered.

ACROSS THE BAY

Fort, still in his sweat-soiled training clothes, uses a rag to wash his pits under his shirt. He then uses it to scrub his fingernails.

BACK TO SHOWERS

Standing near Whybrow are a pair of Alabama hillbilly brothers named PRIVATE EMMIT MILLER, age nineteen, and his older, beefier brother, PRIVATE OXFORD "OX" MILLER, age twenty.

EMMIT

Boy's nuttier than a squirrel turd,
ain't that right brother?

OX

Don't know about ya'll, but I'm
gettin real tired of Private
"kain't do a properly formed
pushup" Fort. I got half a mind to
jerk a knot in that boy's ass.

Hot water pours on a young twenty-one year old EITEN CAMACHO's chiseled face. He's minus the eye patch but still looks as fierce as ever with his ripped physique and permanent sneer. He glares over at Fort.

CAMACHO

You got that right.

FORT

Catches a glimpse of the four guys eyeing him through a mirror. He quickly breaks the look and scuttles out of there.

BACK TO SHOWERS

Ox takes note of two prevalent scars on Camacho's back.

OX

Some purty scars you got there,
Eiten.

EMMIT

Yeah, how'd you'se earn them there
stripes?

CAMACHO

Prison.

EMMIT

Prison? How'd you'se ends up
there?

CAMACHO
Which time?

INT. FORT FOLK - BARRACKS - NIGHT

Moonlight stripes Fort who sleeps in his bunk when he's viciously snatched from his bed by Emmitt, Ox, Camacho and Whybrow then dragged into the--

SHOWERS

The foursome rip Fort's clothes off and force hot water on him.

Fort thrashes as the group violently scrubs him with soap, scouring his eyes.

Fort tries to scream but Camacho cuffs his mouth when Fort bites his hand! Camacho recoils.

CAMACHO
ALRIGHT YOU LITTLE FUCK!

Camacho loses it, starts swinging wildly -- catching Fort with blows to the head.

Fort kicks reactively, connecting with Emmitt's face.

The brothers join in on the beating, kicking him savagely when Camacho looks at a frozen Whybrow.

CAMACHO (CONT'D)
You queer or somethin, Whybrow?

WHYBROW
I'm no queer.

Whybrow joins in as they kick and stomp the hell out of Fort.

LATER

Water drips from a shower head onto Fort who lies naked in the shower unconscious. His blood slowly streams from his face twisting into the drain.

INT. FORT POLK - OFFICE - DAY

A nondescript room with naked walls.

Camacho strides in, passing Whybrow who exits with a covert shake of the head "no."

Camacho stands at attention in front of a stern OFFICER who sits behind a desk.

The Officer reads from a folder.

OFFICER

Private Eiten Camacho. From South Chicago. Got quite the little rap sheet don't you, Private? Assault. Petty theft. And the latest billboard hit, drug trafficking... Fuckin drugs, shit's gonna ruin this country, and ruin you too -- you keep this up.

Eiten stares eyes forward, emotionless.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

So lemme guess -- cell or hell? What the judge offered, right? And you chose hell. God damn they'll take anyone in this war... Well, I suppose someone's gotta fill all those body bags they keep sending me.

(slams the folder shut)

As I understand it you were in the barracks when Private Fort was assaulted and damn near beaten to death in a shower stall -- is that correct?

CAMACHO

I don't know nothin' about that.

OFFICER

Sir. You don't know anything about that, *sir.*

CAMACHO

Sir.

OFFICER

It seems nobody knows anything about that, Private -- including Private Fort -- who refuses to disclose names.

CAMACHO

Seems somebody did this war a favor, *sir.*

OFFICER

Excuse me, Private?

CAMACHO

Private Fort ain't fit to be no
soldier, *sir*.

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - DAY

A large dilapidated room. A few naked light bulbs dangle from ten foot ceilings. Concrete block walls with peeling paint. No windows. Only a steel door with no handle.

There's one table with a sheet covering its contents. By a wall next to a light switch leans a bamboo pole.

In the middle of the room are four unconscious bodies that lie prone on their backs on a long wooden slab.

Their ankles are locked in wooden stocks and their hands are bound behind their backs in crude metal cuffs.

Black hoods cover their heads and they wear 1960s Vietnam era army green suspender-like load vests over their present-day clothes.

ON THE WOODEN SLAB

Three of the bodies move, slowly awakening.

Two of the bodies manage to sit up while the third body, with a big pot belly, struggles to sit up then collapses back to the wooden slab like a beached whale, sucking air.

The upright body on an end wearing a loud pink polo under his vest jerks his hands and feet to realize they are locked in restraints.

This is OLD WHYBROW, age sixty-seven.

OLD WHYBROW

What the hell? What the hell is
this!

Old Whybrow talks nervously through his hood, head swiveling.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)

Hello! Hello? Who's there?
Anyone else here?

OLD OX

I'm here.

Old Ox is age sixty-eight and has on a worn flannel shirt with suspenders visible under his load vest. He struggles to once again get his old pot bellied ass upright and again falls to his back, huffing.

 OLD WHYBROW
Who's "I'm?"

 OLD OX
Ox Miller.

 OLD WHYBROW
Vietnam Ox Miller?

 OLD OX
Yeah. Who are you?

 OLD WHYBROW
It's Whybrow.

 OLD OX
Emmit? You here?

 OLD EMMIT
Yeah, I'm here ya'll.

Old Emmit, age sixty-seven, sits upright. He sports an NRA shirt over a very skinny build.

 OLD OX
You alright?

 OLD EMMIT
I reckon.

 OLD WHYBROW
Anyone else?

The fourth body stirs awake. This is Old Camacho.

 OLD CAMACHO
Eiten.

Old Whybrow pauses, then speaks with a nervous tone to Old Camacho who sits upright.

 OLD WHYBROW
Eiten? Eiten Camacho?

 OLD CAMACHO
Yeah.

 OLD WHYBROW
Thought you were in prison.

OLD CAMACHO

Guess they figured damn near three decades in the clink was enough for parole.

OLD WHYBROW

Parole? And they let you leave Chicago?

OLD CAMACHO

My PO thought it would look good to the board to come here. You wanna know my dick size next, Derek?

OLD EMMIT

Anyones else here?

The four hooded heads swivel, listening for any new voices.

OLD WHYBROW

Seems it's just us four, gents.

At that moment and with a slight limp, a pair of legs in a long black skirt and dress shoes crosses to the group.

The rhythmic tap of heels on the solid surface draws the old vet's attention.

OLD EMMIT

You'se all heard that?

OLD WHYBROW

Yeah. Sounds like...heels. Hello? Someone there?

A hand with painted fingernails removes Old Whybrow's hood to get the first good look at the sixty-seven year old version of this man.

He's got thinning died blond hair and teeth so white they could blind the sun. His wrinkled skin is a bronze leather-like fabric fashioned from his many tours in the tanning bed.

Old Whybrow immediately recognizes it's the same Older Lady from the bus. She holds a straight face as she circles around to the back of him and grabs his cuffs.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)

You. What the hell'd you give me?
What in the hell is all this--OWW!
MOTHERFUCKER!

The Older Lady ratchets down his cuffs so that they bite into his skin.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)
JESUS CHRIST THAT HURTS!

OLD EMMIT
What the hell's goin on Whybrow?

OLD WHYBROW
The bitch's tightening my cuffs,
that's what's goin on!

OLD EMMIT
Bitch? What bitch?

OLD WHYBROW
The same bitch from the bus! She's
doin this!

OLD EMMIT
How do you'se know?

OLD WHYBROW
HOW THE HELL YOU THINK! SHE PULLED
OFF MY HOOD!

OLD OX
Okay. Okay. Easy now. Just calm
down. Everyone remain calm. The
good lord will show us the way.

The Older Lady is now at Old Ox and sits his fat ass up. She removes his hood, he squints, his eyes adjusting to the new tableau.

Old Ox looks like an old farmer with a wrinkled and plump face complete with a bushy grey beard that matches his full head of grey hair.

She ratchets down Old Ox's cuffs one last turn springing blood from his wrists. Old Ox grits his teeth and sucks heavy wind from the pain.

OLD OX (CONT'D)
Lord give me the strength.

Next is Old Emmitt. Off goes his hood to reveal a bald and slender face with discolored and dry wrinkled skin. Teeth a tobacco-stained yellow.

As the Older Lady puts the screws to Old Emmitt's wrists, Old Whybrow takes note of the load vest he wears that has a gym lock clasped to the fasteners so he can't remove it.

Also of interest is a small battery powered LED display that's been crudely sewn into the vest -- it reads: 01:42:31 and counts down.

OLD WHYBROW
 What the hell?
 (to Older Lady)
 Hey! What's this timer? HEY!
 LADY! WHAT THE HELL'S ALL THIS
 GODAMNIT!

The Older Lady ignores Old Whybrow and puts the finishing touches on Old Emmitt's wrists that trickle blood like the others.

OLD OX
 Taking the lord's name in vein is
 the path to darkness, Derek.

Old Whybrow looks at Old Ox like he's a wacko.

OLD WHYBROW
 What? What the hell you talkin
 about, Ox?

Old Emmitt looks at Old Whybrow, ready to chime in, when something distracts him.

OLD EMMITT
 Hey, you've got your ear fixed.

Old Whybrow's aghast. Out of all this, he notices an ear?

OLD WHYBROW
 Yeah. Tissue expansion.
 (Old Emmitt doesn't follow)
 It's a procedure...plastic surgery.
 I, uh, gotta look good in my line
 of work.

OLD EMMITT
 Hm. Interestin. Never even knowed
 you've was burned.

The Older Lady's already moved on to Old Camacho. His hood's been removed and she's in the middle of clamping down his cuffs.

OLD CAMACHO
 Lady, you're makin a big mistake
 you fuckin with me.

She ratchets down his cuffs until blood drips. Old Camacho takes the pain, his face looks like a pissed off bull.

The Older Lady crosses to a wall as Old Whybrow pleads.

OLD WHYBROW

Hey lady, you gotta name?

(she ignores him)

Okay, look, I think you have the wrong guys. This has gotta be just a big misunderstanding. Because if this is political -- some kind of statement for the inauguration -- nobody's gonna care about a few old vets being held hostage. I mean, I'm on your side here. I don't even like this President. I'm a Democrat! Hell, I didn't even want to come on this trip -- it was my news station's idea to do this thing.

The Older Lady picks up a bamboo stick then turns to Old Whybrow.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)

Okay..okay. Just hold on. Before you do anything you regret -- let's just take a time-out to talk this over, okay? Look, just tell me why us four? Is this a Vietnam thing? Because we all served there? Because if it is, just realize I was drafted. I didn't have a choice but to be there. And I think I can speak for all of us when I say we're all ashamed of serving in that war.

OLD EMMIT

I ain't ashamed! We done our patriotic duty tryin to fight off them commie gooks.

Old Whybrow looks furiously at Old Emmitt, says under his breath so the Older Lady can't hear.

OLD WHYBROW

Would you shut the fuck up. I'm trying to get us out of this.

(to Older Lady)

Look, lady. Just tell me what you want and I promise you I'll work this all out.

The Older Lady casually crosses to the back of Old Whybrow.

OLDER LADY

I want your pain.

She strikes Old Whybrow across his back with all her might!
Old Whybrow screams in agony then falls on his back.

The Older Lady hits him again and again! Striking his chest,
his sides, all over!

She pauses for a breath and looks at the backs of the others
like a rabid animal.

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)

I WANT ALL YOUR FUCKIN PAIN!

She strikes Old Ox! Then Old Emmit! Then Old Camacho!
Wildly swinging the bamboo pole like a deranged baseball
player.

All the men scream out in sawing shrieks of pain!

The Old Lady's hair becomes disheveled. Her face is bathed
in sweat, streaking her makeup, as she continues to flog them
over and over.

The pole breaks. She stops holding two pieces of bamboo pole
as the men howl in agony.

She looks at them through strands of hair stuck with sweat to
her wrinkled face. Panting with chilling delight.

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)

I want all your pain...

FADE TO:

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - BASECAMP - DAY

A blistering sunburst roasts a dusty basecamp.

SUPER: SOUTH VIETNAM, 1969

The basecamp's not big with a radius of two hundred yards.
Heavily sandbagged. Deeply dug. Rolls of barbed wire
protecting it. Radio antennas sprouting from the CP. And
surrounded on all four sides by thick jungle.

EXT. COMPANY PERIMETER - CAMACHO'S POSITION - DAY

A bare-chested young Camacho and Whybrow fill sandbags,
looking hard and dirty after weeks in the field.

Whybrow takes a drag from a roach, speaks to Camacho.

WHYBROW

You gotta be shittin me. Thought all we Chicagoans been to Wrigley. South siders. East Siders. All siders. Like a windy city birth right.

(looks at his roach)

Some good shit.

He tries to pass it to Camacho who ignores him.

WHYBROW (CONT'D)

I get it. Baseball's not your thing. Lemme tell ya, it ain't about the baseball, baby... Place is a god damn rabbit factory. The ole Whybrow wood's hit more tail in that park than Ernie Banks. We get home, you and me, we're gonna hit some dingers, yes sir.

EXT. COMPANY PERIMETER - MILLER BROTHER'S POSITION - DAY

Fox hole is dug and sandbagged. A young Emmitt, face full of chew, dumps powder on his grungy blistered feet.

EMMIT

(to Ox)

God dang three months in and you'se feet as clean as a baby's butt. How comes you'se ain't never got no blisters?

Flies swarm around a half-eaten c-ration can as a shirtless young Ox cleans the bolt he pulled from his M16. He takes note of Emmitt's feet.

OX

Quit your yammerin. You wanted 'nam, you gettin it in a bad way now, aintchya?

EMMIT

Yeah, wells, at least I ain't runnin from my patriotic duty like some dang flower powder puffin freethinkin tinker bell. Bunch'a cowards. And I ain't no coward. Sides -- you'se the one should be back home with them there cows you love so dang much.

OX

Drafted men ain't got no choice but
to be here. Volunteers did.
Should be back home helpin paw like
I done told ya.

EMMIT

Maybe you'se right. Maybe I should
be home... Spendin some time with
that purty wife'a yours. She might
could be gettin lonely right'a bout
now.

Ox slaps the bolt back in his M16.

OX

Cross that crik and I'd cut you
some holes so big entire state'a
Alabama walk through. Brother or
no brother.

EMMIT

(spits tobacco)

Then you best find a gun duddint
jam every shot.

Ox slams down his M16. He swats flies away from his c-ration
then shovels in a mouthful as the two trade scowls.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - BASECAMP - LZ - DAY

A resupply chopper sets down spraying dust everywhere.

RECRUITS in regulation-clipped, stiff new green fatigues file
out.

Among them is Eric Fort, his superficial wounds all but
healed. The Recruits look around like only the new can.

EXT. COMPANY PERIMETER - CAMACHO'S POSITION - DAY

Whybrow piles sand in a bag when he nudges Camacho.

WHYBROW

Look. Fresh meat.

The two eye the greenhorns who stride by hauling their
rucksacks when their eyes fall on Fort.

WHYBROW (CONT'D)

You gotta be shittin me.

IN DREAM TIME -- Camacho catches eyes with the scrawny Fort as he passes. His menacing glare sears into Fort's timid eyes. Fort breaks the look.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE - DAY

SOLDIERS plod through dense forest heavy with humidity and mosquitos. Young faces. Tired but alert. Mostly dirty. Slept-in sweat laden fatigues. Hair past regulation. Personalized with bandannas, medals, etc.

Others are behind, the column snaking back deep into the brush.

AT POINT

Is a German Sheppard SCOUT DOG with its soldier DOG HANDLER. The leashed Scout Dog plows forward, setting the pace, as its Handler bulls the foliage out of their way with a machete.

The Scout Dog darts, scurrying through foliage then digs his head into some brush.

The Handler chops down the brush to reveal a deep and dangerous looking tunnel cut into the ground.

DOG HANDLER

Ah, shit.

A nearby RADIOMAN immediately gets on the horn.

RADIOMAN (INTO RADIO)

Get Sergeant Morris on point. Got another one.

The radio crackles as the Dog Handler probes the hole with the machete, sinking it into the darkness.

An irritated Whybrow stands next to Camacho, both caked in sweat. He swats at a mosquito on his neck.

WHYBROW

Fuckin mosquitos... Two days to stand down and we're stuck on god damn tunnel rat detail. What I'd give for a pool and a hard-on right now, yes sir.

Whybrow pulls out two cigs and offers one to Camacho who ignores him.

A cockure SERGEANT MORRIS shuffles up, peers into the hole.

SERGEANT MORRIS
 What's that, third one today?
 Squirrelly dink gophers been busy.

He swivels to his men who are catching a breath, wiping sweat away, lighting a smoke, etc.

SERGEANT MORRIS (CONT'D)
 Camacho. You're up.

Camacho doesn't move.

SERGEANT MORRIS (CONT'D)
 Am I talkin gook, private? Get
 your ass in the hole. Could be
 another weapons cache.

CAMACHO
 I ain't goin in that hole.

SERGEANT MORRIS
 Wudyou say?

CAMACHO
 I ain't goin in that hole.

Fort stands within an ear shot, lightly says--

FORT
 I'll go.

Sergeant Morris goes nose-to-nose with Camacho.

SERGEANT MORRIS
 This ain't a two-way army,
 private. It's a my-way army. Now
 get your ass in that fuckin hole
 before I blow it back to the world.
 (Camacho doesn't budge)
 THAT'S AN ORDER PRIVATE!

FORT
 (harder)
 I'll go.

Sergeant Morris and Camacho swing around to see Fort.

FORT (CONT'D)
 I'll go. I'll do it.

Sergeant Morris considers the situation.

SERGEANT MORRIS
 Make it happen, private.
 (to Camacho)
 You're a god damn embarrassment to
 the uniform.

Camacho's eyes once again sear into Fort who starts his climb
 into the darkness when--

--MACHINE GUN FIRE ERUPTS!

The Dog Handler is hit -- spins around like a top!

SOLDIERS
 FUCKIN AMBUSH! GET DOWN!

The Soldiers reactively hit the deck and grab cover.

SERGEANT MORRIS
 GET SOME FIRE ON THAT FLANK!

Camacho, Emmitt, and Ox open fire when Ox's weapon jams!

OX
 Piece of shit!

Ox frantically tries to unjam his rifle as Fort crouch runs
 past him and a cowering Whybrow who has his steel pot buried
 in the ground.

Fort dashes through the fire up to the shot Dog Handler who
 cradles his wounded Scout Dog.

CAMACHO'S

Eyes go wild at a startling sight.

CAMACHO
 FUCKIN ROCKET!

An RPG breaks out of the bush and devastates a tree, spraying
 shrapnel into two SOLDIERS!

Camacho fires off a clip next to a SOLDIER missing a leg.
 Another grabs his blood filled face.

CAMACHO (CONT'D)
 DOC! GET ME THE DOC GODDMANIT! I
 got one...two hit!

Another SOLDIER rushes forward and hits the deck with a M60
 and opens up a horrific field of fire!

SOLDIER

GET DOWN!

Another RPG whistles in! A huge roar. The impact showering ground chunks.

Rattling automatic gunfire sounds from all directions as Sergeant Morris is on the radio.

SERGEANT MORRIS (INTO RADIO)

I DON'T GIVE A FUCK'S SHIT WHICH
ONE! GET ME ARTY OR AIR ON
COORDINATES...

(checks map)

DEFLECTION FIVE TWO FOUR SIX PRIMED
QUADRANT! LOOK FOR THE WHITE SMOKE
AND DUMP WEST! WE GOT DINKS ALL
OVER THE TREELINE!

FORT'S

At the wounded Dog Handler who bleeds from an arm and leg.

FORT

I got you. You're gonna be
alright. Hang on.

Fort gets him to his feet as the Dog Handler clutches his injured Scout Dog, hauls him out through the shit.

SERGEANT MORRIS

Pops white smoke then waves at his troops.

SERGEANT MORRIS

FALL BACK! GET THE FUCK BACK!
ARTY'S INBOUND!

Camacho grabs Whybrow.

CAMACHO

GET YOUR ASSHOLE OUTTA THE DIRT!
WE'RE PULLIN BACK!

BOOM! Another RPG slams the area!

FORT AND THE DOG HANDLER

Crash to the ground -- rolling on the Scout Dog.

SERGEANT MORRIS

Drags both of their asses up.

SERGEANT MORRIS
KEEP MOVIN! SHIT'S ON THE WAY!

Sergeant Morris and Fort wrap their arms around the Dog Handler and drag him out as he screams.

DOG HANDLER
NO! WAIT! MY DOG! CAN'T LEAVE MY
DOG!

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE - HOT LZ - DAY

Choppers sweep in as Camacho, Whybrow, and the Miller brothers scramble out of the bush to a clearing.

Right behind them are Fort, Sergeant Morris, and the Dog Handler.

The Dog Handler winces at his shot-to-shit blood-soaked arm and leg as they load him in a chopper then pile in after him.

Struck with a shot of adrenaline the Dog Handler shoots up and grabs two hands full of the nearest fatigues which are Fort's.

DOG HANDLER
DON'T YOU FUCKIN LEAVE HIM! YOU
HEAR ME! DON'T YOU DO IT!

His eyes pulse into Fort, begging him to do what he can't. He lets go and collapses back into the chopper.

SERGEANT MORRIS
Who? Someone else out there?

The Dog Handler's on his back staring at swooshing blades.

DOG HANDLER
My fuckin dog, man. We left my
dog.

SERGEANT MORRIS
Sorry Sarge, your dog's dead meat.
Arty's gonna hit any second.
Captain would have my ass.

Sergeant Morris signals to the PILOT to lift off.

Fort looks at the torn Dog Handler then back to the bush -- in a split second he jumps off and tears ass into the jungle!

SERGEANT MORRIS (CONT'D)

What the motherfuck is he--FORT!

GET YOUR FUCKIN ASS BACK HERE!

(Fort disappears into
bush)

FUCK ME!

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE - DAY

Fort's back in the bush. Eerily quiet for the moment. Only the tones of the jungle at play. Rays of light peek through the green dome.

He steps quietly. Head on a swivel. Spots the Scout Dog lying prone on its side. Panting. Blood covered. Unable to move.

Fort moves to scoop him up when the sounds of incoming artillery shell fire flare, whistling inbound and then BOOM! - a huge explosion devastates the forest a stone's throws from Fort.

Then another hits -- BOOM! And another -- BOOM!

Violent blasts erupt ground volcanoes around Fort who pinballs through the destruction, cradling the Scout Dog, until blast fragments completely swallow the frame.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE - LZ - DAY

Chopper's hot, rotors sweep in a fast swoosh. Everyone's eyes on the shelled jungle.

WHYBROW

What're we waitin on! He's fuckin
dead! Let's go!

At that moment Fort emerges from the bush covered in earth clenching the Scout Dog. He plunges into the chopper that immediately lifts off.

Sergeant Morris is ready to rip his head off.

SERGEANT MORRIS

I outta throw your ass out right
now! Pull that shit...for a fuckin
dog!

Fort ignores him -- lays the bloody Scout Dog on the bloody Dog Handler.

The Dog Handler's eyes show he knows it's not good. He holds him, petting his head as the Scout Dog struggles for every breath.

DOG HANDLER

It's okay now. You're gonna be just fine. You and me -- we're gettin outta here. Goin home. Just like I promised we would.

The Scout Dog closes his eyes and stops breathing.

The Dog Handler chokes back the sobs but they fall anyway.

Wind whips against weary Soldier's faces as they look on in silence.

FADE TO:

Cries of pain echo from the old veterans.

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - DAY

Old Whybrow, Old Ox, Old Emmet, and Old Camacho are all still locked in their stocks, hands bound behind their backs in the hell cuffs, squirming in pain.

Old Whybrow leans forward whimpering, his back bleeding from the bamboo beating.

WHYBROW

Why me? God. I don't deserve this...

Old Ox is on his side whispering a prayer to himself, grimacing over heavy breaths.

OLD OX

The lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul...

Old Emmet sits upright, quaking with rage.

OLD EMMIT

God dang bitch! Crazier than a run over dog! I'm fixin to cut your ass right good I get outta here! You best believe that!

Old Camacho's flat on his back. A sweaty pale mask.
Wheezing.

The Older Lady approaches Old Whybrow with a jug of water and offers it to him.

OLDER LADY

Water?

OLD WHYBROW

Water? You gotta be shittin me!
Lady, I've met some fucked up women
in my time -- I mean, some real
looney tunes -- but you're at the
top of fucked up mountain. And
there ain't nobody taking your
crazy crown. Holy shit.

The Older Lady stares at Old Whybrow, her eyes calm, then moves on to Old Ox when Old Whybrow reconsiders.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)

WAIT! Water.

She reverses back to Old Whybrow and gently pours some water in his mouth.

She does the same to Old Ox and Old Emmitt who guzzle it down.

Last stop on the water train is Old Camacho. She helps sit him up and then pours some water in his mouth -- he instantly spits it back at her!

OLD CAMACHO

You're dead!

The Older Lady slowly wipes the water from her face -- smearing her lipstick.

She crosses to a wall and stops at a light box.

OLD EMMITT

Now what's she fixin to do?

The Older Lady flips the switch on the box, only a light doesn't turn on -- instead a winching sound emanates.

The old vets look around.

OLD WHYBROW

What the hell's that?

OLD EMMITT

I dunno but sumpin's goin on.

Old Ox looks up, his eye widen in terror.

OLD OX
Hail Mary, full of grace.

The rest of their eyes follow Old Ox's as they lock onto the disturbing sight of a metal post that stretches the length of the wooden platform lowering straight towards their heads.

Old Whybrow's in full panic mode.

OLD WHYBROW
What the...what..oh my god..w-w-
what is that thing?

OLD CAMACHO
Pain.

As the apparatus lowers it becomes clear that mounted to the bottom of the post are four equally spaced metal hooks.

The post lowers and then stops just below the backs of each man's shoulders.

The Older Lady crosses to the back of Old Whybrow and grabs his cuffed hands.

OLD WHYBROW
No.no.no.no -- you don't have to do
this! Look -- whatever it is...
I'm sorry, okay! WE'RE ALL SORRY!

Old Whybrow screams as the Older Lady jerks his cuffed hands up behind his back and clasps his cuffs on the hook.

One-by-one she does the same to each man until they are all clasped in clear discomfort to their individual hooks.

The Older Lady flips the switch. The motor engages and the wire slowly retracts the bar upwards.

The old vet's arms pull up over their backs at unhealthy angles, like they're being torn from their sockets.

The men bellow out soul-wrenching shrieks! Their faces instantly torn with pain. Breaths go ragged. Bodies cloaked in sweat.

She stops the winch so that their arms are even with their shoulders.

OLDER LADY

When tied up your wind-pipe becomes pinched and you breathe in gasps -- trying to gulp air because your wind passage is being shrunk. It takes thirty seconds for your throat to become completely dry. Then after ten to fifteen minutes your nerves in your arms will be completely pinched off and then your whole upper torso will become numb. It's actually a relief because you'll feel no more pain. You will, for all intents and purposes, be anesthetized.

The Older Lady keenly observes the four old men who heave and thrash in excruciating pain, unleashing profanity-laden shouts for mercy.

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)

The part I find most compelling about this method, is it leaves no signs of torture what-so-ever. Pretty clever, actually.

Old Ox cringes.

OLD OX

My back...

Then he breaks into prayer, spraying saliva that matts his beard.

OLD OX (CONT'D)

I am the resurrection and the life.
He who believes in me will live,
even though he dies.

The Older Lady looks at Old Camacho who's in a daze, his face sweaty and pale -- no longer responding to the pain. She hits the switch so the bar lowers.

OLDER LADY

However, when the rope is released, the procedure works completely in reverse. You will not believe the intensity of pain caused by the recirculation of blood back into your hands and forearms. It truly is a remarkable feeling.

The bar lowers easing the tension.

Old Emmitt, Old Ox, and Old Whybrow grunt as the blood rushes back to their limbs.

The Older Lady crosses to Old Camacho who gasps for air.

 OLDER LADY (CONT'D)
How are you feeling, Private
Camacho?

 OLD CAMACHO
Fuck you.

Old Camacho wheezes, unable to catch his breath. His face goes white pale.

 OLD CAMACHO (CONT'D)
My heart...

He loses consciousness. His head slumps over.

Old Emmitt forgets about his pain for the moment as he eyes Old Camacho.

 OLD EMMITT
LOOK AT EM! HE'S GOD DANG OUT
COLD! HE SAID SUMPIN BOUT HIS
HEART!

The Older Lady lowers the post so that their cuffs become unhooked.

The old vets collapse to the ground grunting and gasping for air as their arms swing back to healthy positions.

Old Emmitt continues to eye the ghost white Old Camacho who doesn't move.

 OLD EMMITT (CONT'D)
HE AIN'T BREATHIN!

 OLDER LADY
That's because Private Camacho has
congestive heart failure that was
diagnosed seven months ago. And it
doesn't react well to stress.

 OLD EMMITT
HELP HIM!

The Older Lady crosses to Old Camacho and checks his pulse, then leans a cheek close to his mouth.

OLD WHYBROW
 (almost cheerfully)
 Is he dead?

Then much to everyone's shock, the Older Lady administers CPR to Old Camacho. Chest compressions. Mouth-to-mouth. The works.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)
 You gotta be shittin me.

She stops CPR. No response from Old Camacho. She goes to back to work when--

--a breath. Followed by movement. His unpatched eye opens, looking right up at the Older Lady.

OLDER LADY
 I'm not done with you yet.

Old Whybrow's face falls then he winces in pain.

FADE TO:

EXT. SAIGON - BACK STREET - NIGHT

The young Camacho, Whybrow, and Miller brothers, cleaned up in 60s era civilian clothes and carrying liquor bottles, stroll down a sketchy back street through pools of street light.

OX
 How far we fixin to go?

Emmit, with a face full of chew, spits.

EMMIT
 The boy said to look fer an abandoned church two blocks from sumpin called the Rex Hotel. Find anything we want. So keep dem sightberries peeled, ya'll.

WHYBROW
 What boy?

EMMIT
 That shoe shinin kid outside the PX.

WHYBROW

You've got to be shittin me! Three days of stand down and I should be watering the lawn of some slant with a pussy tighter than a dolphin's asshole -- instead, you've got me in the middle of the god damn Saigon black market following the directions of some twelve year old shoe shinin slope kid!

They pass a couple VIETNAMESE PROSTITUTES in skimpy dress. They look as sleazy as the dive bar they hang by.

VIETNAMESE PROSTITUTE

You GI want good time? Give you night of dream. Make deal. Give me fifteen dolla. Give you fifteen minute.

Whybrow is instantly captivated.

WHYBROW

Oh, night of dream, gents. Now they're speakin my language. Might haveta dust off the ole Derek dogleg, yes sir.

Ox spots an abandoned church.

OX

Right there, ya'll.

INT. SAIGON - BASE BARRACKS - NIGHT

The well lit barracks are regulation wood, canvas, and fine mesh screening. Bugs swarm around the overhead lights.

There are rows of empty bunks, save for one that Fort sits on. He's drawing on a notepad with his legs crossed.

ON THE NOTEPAD

Is a well drawn sketch of a young woman under the moonlight. Kid's got talent.

BACK TO FORT

He admires his work, then studies his fingers nails. He picks at one of them.

EXT. SAIGON - ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT

Whybrow, Camacho, and the Miller brothers stand in front of the abandoned church, looking uneasy. Well, everyone except Camacho, who looks right at home.

WHYBROW

Now what? Knock on the door?

Emmit looks at the front of the door-less church, dumbfounded.

EMMIT

But there ain't no door.

Whybrow shakes his head as Camacho nods to a couple of SHADY VIETNAMESE MEN hanging across the street in the shadows next to some scooters.

One casually puts out his cig, then crosses to the group.

LEAD VIETNAMESE MAN

You GI in wrong place. We no like GI here.

He flashes a pistol tucked under his shirt in his pant belt.

OX

Easy now, we ain't lookin for no trouble.

EMMIT

Yeah, we was just lookin fer--

CAMACHO

Careful with that slope. You might blow your tiny dink dick off.

Whybrow and the Miller brothers look at Camacho, thunderstruck.

Camacho looks at the Lead Vietnamese Man with a jail yard stare. Clenches his jaw. This is Camacho's world no matter the country.

The Lead Vietnamese Man stares down Camacho. He sprouts a sideways grin, then a slight chuckle. He covers his pistol with his shirt. Shifts to friendly.

EXT. SAIGON - BACK LOT - NIGHT

The group stands in a dirt lot looking at a grungy garbage bin behind a run-down building.

Whybrow spots one of the Vietnamese Prostitutes from earlier across the street -- they catch eyes and she smiles, reeling in the easy catch.

Two Vietnamese Men push the trash bin over a few feet revealing a hidden locked hatch. They quickly unlock it and signal for the foursome to enter as Whybrow rolls off.

WHYBROW

Pardon me, gents. Time to shake the dust off.

The others know it's a lost cause and let him go.

The Miller brothers follow Camacho's lead into the dark unknown passage.

INT. SAIGON - BUILDING CELLAR - NIGHT

Dusty and Dank. Wooden crates filled with used weapons and metal cans stuff this place.

The Lead Vietnamese Man grabs an AK-47.

LEAD VIETNAMESE MAN

Want? Yes?

The Miller brother's eyes sparkle at the candy.

EMMIT

Dang spankin we do!

The Lead Vietnamese Man loads some live rounds in the clip. He points it at the threesome.

OX

Whoa. Easy now.

A sly grin breaks out across the Lead Vietnamese Man's face. He hands it over to Ox and points at a metal tube that stretches deep into the ground.

LEAD VIETNAMESE MAN

Tube. For test. Bang-bang. Test.

Ox catches on then lowers the barrel into the tube and FIRE -- he tears off a couple rounds.

OX

How much?

LEAD VIETNAMESE MAN

One hundred US dolla.

EMMIT
One hundred? Dang, ya'll.

LEAD VIETNAMESE MAN
One hundred or no buy!

Ox and Emmit trade cash for guns.

EMMIT
Ain't gonna lock up in no firefight
now! Ain't that right, brother?

OX
Amen!

The Millers admire their new toys when Camacho's eyes swivel to the wooden crates full of cans. He nods to them.

CAMACHO
What else you got?

The Lead Vietnamese Man reads Camacho loud and clear as the communication barrier is no obstacle in the universal language of the drug trade.

He grabs a can and gives him a taste. Camacho grins.

CAMACHO (CONT'D)
You work stateside?

LEAD VIETNAMESE MAN
We work something. We work
something big time.

The Lead Vietnamese Man writes on a piece of paper then hands it to Camacho when a loud Whybrow SCREAM echoes followed by him shouting.

WHYBROW (O.S.)
YOU BITCH!

Camacho and the Millers barrel out of the cellar to--

EXT. SAIGON - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Camacho and the Millers shuffle up to Whybrow who is holding his bloody arm.

A few feet away stands the Vietnamese Prostitute with a knife.

WHYBROW
THE DINK BITCH STABBED ME!

VIETNAMESE PROSTITUTE
HE NO PAY!

WHYBROW
BULLSHIT! You doubled the price!
15 dolla! 15 dolla! So I gave her
the dick-of-death then she doubled
it -- 30 dolla! 30 dolla! I said
no fuckin way then the bitch
stabbed me!

Camacho assesses the situation, cracks a grin.

CAMACHO
You're both even. Let's go.

The foursome turns to leave when the Prostitute screams
Vietnamese gibberish in Whybrow's face waving her knife!

Camacho grabs the knife, then shoves her violently to the
ground.

CAMACHO (CONT'D)
Get the fuck outta here you gook
whore before I fuck you up.

The Prostitute goes berserk, rushes back to Camacho.

VIETNAMESE PROSTITUTE
YANKEE TRASH! FUCK YOUR MOTHER!
GIVE LIFE TO SCUM!

She spits in his face!

Camacho recoils a bit from the spit wash -- looks hard at her
oriental eyes and then surprisingly, he calmly wipes it away.

And then in a flash, he rips the AK from Ox's grip and
executes the Prostitute with a cluster to her chest!

She drops, grabbing at the red slick.

CAMACHO
No. Fuck you and this entire
fucked up country!

Camacho stomps her lifeless face with his boot with a look of
sheer brutal hatred. Then throws the AK at her and spits.

The Millers and Whybrow are paralyzed with their eyes on the
monster whose rage simmers.

A few VIETNAMESE LOCALS gather at the end of the alley,
pointing at the GIs.

Whybrow is in full panic mode.

WHYBROW

We gotta--we gotta, go. Get outta here. Right now. C'mon!

Whybrow rips Emmitt's AK from his grip and tosses it.

WHYBROW (CONT'D)

Leave it!

He drags Emmitt out of there.

EMMIT

That's a god dang week's pay!

ACROSS THE STREET

The Lead Vietnamese Man watches the GIs scuttle off, catching eyes with Camacho in the process.

MOMENTS LATER

A couple of SAIGON POLICEMEN hit the scene to see the GIs round a corner.

The Saigon Policemen look at the dead Prostitute then at the Lead Vietnamese Man who gives them a cryptic shake of the head no which the corrupt Saigon Policeman interpret as "let them go."

INT. SAIGON - BASE BARRACKS - NIGHT

Camacho, Whybrow, and the Millers flood into the barracks. There are a few more beds filled with GIs however Fort's is empty, except for his notepad.

Whybrow's hysterical.

WHYBROW

Pack your bags, gents! MPs will be here any minute to congratulate us on our one-way tickets to Long Binh, yes sir.

Camacho grabs Whybrow and shoves him into the--

BATHROOM

The Millers follow Camacho and Whybrow in.

The group quickly glances around, it's empty.

CAMACHO

(to Whybrow)

Gonna make you swallow your teeth
if you don't shut the fuck up!

WHYBROW

You mean *lock* me the fuck up!...
You shot her in cold blood! It's
fuckin murder! Those cops. They
saw us!

CAMACHO

Those cops won't do shit.

OX

How you figurin?

CAMACHO

Cause it's the underbelly and I
know how the underbelly works. I
was born in it. And it don't
matter if it's Chicago or Saigon --
it's all the same corrupt mess of
shit. And there ain't no one gonna
miss some dead dink whore... I did
this country a favor.

A NOISE crackles. Like someone slipped. Coming from the
stalls.

Whybrow sighs.

WHYBROW

You gotta be shittin me. Nobody
checked the stalls?

The four quickly converge on the guilty stall. Emmitt whips
the door open to see Fort sitting on the shitter.

WHYBROW (CONT'D)

(to Miller brothers)

You just had to go and buy those
AKs didn't you? Why couldn't you
use the same pieces of shit like
the rest of us!

EMMIT

Don't you'se go placin blame on us
fer this... We ain't the ones
gettin our peckers wet and run our
mouth like some god dang billygoat,
ain't that right brother?

FORT

I-I-I...didn't hear anything. Even
if I did, I wouldn't ever say
anything. I'll just go now.

Fort starts towards the exit when Camacho blocks his path.
His thick frame towering over the bean pole.

Camacho looks at the other three.

CAMACHO

Get the fuck outta here and watch
the door.

(the three hesitate)

NOW.

OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Whybrow and the Millers stand guard in front of the bathroom
door as they hear the sounds of a struggle and muted shouts
from outside the door.

Whybrow cracks the door and leans in to steal a look.

ON WHYBROW'S EYES -- they expand in shock at the sight.

He quietly shuts the door.

INSIDE THE BATHROOM - LATER

Water washes away blood on a naked and beat up Fort who sits
under the running shower, shaking.

EXT. PERIMETER - BATTALION LZ - DAY

Another day, another mission as SOLDIERS in full battle
rattle load into a squadron of Huey choppers.

Among them is Fort, his expressionless face bruised from the
unknown struggle with Camacho.

INT. CHOPPER - DAY

Just as Fort sits the Millers and Camacho, who has noticeable
scratch marks on his face, pile in and crowd around him with
intimidating glares.

Fort, clearly uncomfortable, cocks a quick glance at the
group then resets, eyes forward.

Whybrow straggles uncharacteristically behind and sits a seat away from Camacho. He pulls out two cigs, glances at Camacho whose focus is on Fort, then stuffs one back in the pack.

EXT. PERIMETER - BATTALLION LZ - DAY

The choppers rock off, one-by-one -- then move fast out over jungle.

INT. CHOPPER - DAY

Whybrow's cig is down to the filter, he flicks it out to jungle.

Camacho leans from the back into Fort's ear.

CAMACHO

Now remember to keep that mouth
shut or I'll give you more of the
same you got last night, hero.

GUNFIRE!

Bullets rake the cabin as the men duck! The DOOR GUNNER starts firing maniacally into the jungle dome then takes a hit to the chest! He's gone.

PILOT'S

On the radio.

PILOT (INTO RADIO)

Six Alfa Actual taking fire!
Repeat, taking fire!

CHOPPER

Takes fire in the tail rotor! Smoke billows! The chopper swings wildly out of control!

PILOT

Shouts into the radio.

PILOT (CONT'D)

Mayday! Mayday! Mayday! We're hit!
Goin down two clicks west of Rock
Island East!

PILOT'S POV of the chopper plunging into the jungle with foliage hammering the cockpit window then--

CUT TO:

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN SOUTH VIETNAM - CHOPPER WRECKAGE - DAY

The chopper rests in a tangled twisted snarl, swallowed by the jungle.

The Pilot's body droops half-way out the shattered cockpit -- dead.

Camacho crawls out of the wreckage with some bloody scrapes, but nothing serious. He registers distant enemy gunfire that mixes with the thump of choppers circling above.

Camacho glances up, but can't see the choppers through the jungle canopy. He shifts his attention back to the chopper.

Camacho clears some debris to find a conscious Whybrow -- the side of his head around to his ear is covered in blood and phosphorus burns.

Camacho drags Whybrow out as--

EMMIT

Moves in the cabin stung with pain. He looks at his shot shoulder.

EMMIT

God dang. I'm hit.

Emmit's able to get to his feet and stagger out towards Camacho as the gunfire grows louder.

CAMACHO

They're comin. We gotta DD.

EMMIT

Where's Ox? Kain't leave my brother.

(looks back at the chopper)

OX!

Camacho climbs back in the cabin to see an unconscious Fort with half his face covered with phosphorus and fragmentation burns with one eye swollen shut.

Camacho finds a crumpled up Ox nearby grabbing at his back.

OX
My back. Think it's broke.

Camacho pulls Ox up and drags him out.

BACK INSIDE THE CABIN

Fort regains consciousness. He grabs at his bloody head then at a dislocated shoulder.

OUTSIDE THE CABIN

Camacho dumps Ox off on Whybrow and Emmit.

CAMACHO
Take him.

FORT (O.S.)
Help! Someone... Please help.

The group hears Fort's cry for help but doesn't move.

CAMACHO
Head north til you hit a clearing
and pop some smoke. I'll meet you
there.

WHYBROW
Fort's still in there!

CAMACHO
I'll take care of Fort.

WHYBROW
What're are you gonna--

Whybrow stops mid-sentence at the sight Camacho picking up an M16 rifle as sounds of enemy gunfire draw closer.

WHYBROW (CONT'D)
No. No. No. You don't have to--
there's no way he's gonna talk.
(looks at the Miller
brothers)
Right? There's no way?

Whybrow looks at the Miller brothers who stay silent for a moment.

OLD OX
Ya'll wanna chance it?

Whybrow considers it then shakes his head no.

CAMACHO

Alright. Now get to a clearing.
GO! GET THE FUCK MOVIN!

The three limp off into the jungle.

INSIDE THE CABIN

An armed Camacho angles in to see Fort lying in a tangle of helicopter wreckage. Half his face is burnt and bleeding with one eye swollen shut.

Camacho levels his M16 at Fort who stares back helplessly.

CAMACHO (CONT'D)

Time to do this world a favor.

He fingers the trigger when--

--the crackle of foliage from nearby VC distracts him.

Camacho's eyes shift allowing a brief moment for Fort to use his good arm to reach for his weapon and fire off an unsteady round!

The shot grazes Camacho in the eye! He stumbles back, but the tough bastard doesn't fall.

Camacho grabs at his bloody eye and retreats into the jungle.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

White smoke swirls next to a Huey chopper that has the Millers and Whybrow already loaded.

Camacho lumbers out of the jungle and plunges into the cabin.

PILOT

Anyone else?

Camacho's head is tilted with a hand over his bloody eye, he shakes his head no.

The chopper lifts off. The Gunner looks out to see VC flood out of the jungle to the clearing they just left.

GUNNER

Fuckin'a. Looks like an entire VC
regiment was crawling up your ass.
You boots're lucky to get out.

EMMIT
 (Nods to Camacho)
 Thanks to him.

GUNNER
 How purple hearts are born,
 soldier.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN SOUTH VIETNAM - CHOPPER WRECKAGE - DAY

A dozen VC SOLDIERS surge on the downed chopper with their rifles at the ready.

They inspect the wreckage to find the badly injured Fort. He gingerly holds up a hand, surrendering.

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - DAY

Back in the room, Old Whybrow, Old Ox, and Old Emmitt struggle to sit upright.

Their ankles still locked in the stocks and their wrists still bound behind them in the hell cuffs. They are a bloody, sweaty, exhausted group.

Old Camacho's on his back. The color has returned to his face. His breaths not as labored.

OLD EMMITT
 You alright?

OLD CAMACHO
 I look alright to you? Somehow you got dumber with age.

OLD WHYBROW
 Now what's she doing?

The group's attention turns to the Older Lady who pulls off the table cover to reveal one AK-47 rifle.

OLDER LADY
 The AK-47 assault rifle -- also known as the Kalashnikov. A selective-fire, gas-operated 7.62 39 mm assault rifle. A beautiful weapon.

She loads rounds in a clip in full view then jams the clip in the chamber -- KACHAK.

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)

After seven decades it remains the most popular and widely used assault rifle in the world because of its substantial reliability under harsh conditions...

(looks at the Miller brothers)

Unlike the United State's M16 standard service rifle, this is a weapon that won't lock up in a firefight.

Old Ox and Old Emmitt share a glance as the Older Lady sets the AK-47 on the table then crosses to the men.

She stops at Old Whybrow then removes his hell cuffs. She angles around him and puts the cuff key on his lap.

Old Whybrow looks at his bruised and bloody wrists then instinctively lashes out and grabs the Older Lady by the neck and squeezes!

The Older Lady looks at him, her face turning red, veins bulging -- but she doesn't make a sound. In fact, she grins. A sadistic, barbarous grin.

Old Whybrow is freaked -- he shoves her away to the ground!

OLD WHYBROW

Who...what are you? Why'd you uncuff me?

The Older Lady calmly stands, unphased.

OLDER LADY

Because it's your turn.

The Older Lady unlatches the leg stocks then lifts the top wood slab so that all of the men's legs are free.

She crosses to a wall and flips the switch so the bar raises. She then observes the men without expression.

Old Whybrow, the only one with his hands and feet free, pockets the cuff key and is the first to stand.

He rubs his bruised wrists as he eyes the Older Lady against the wall, then looks at the AK on the table. He shuffles over to it.

Old Ox rolls to his side then is able to pull himself up. He sits calmly on the end of the wood platform grabbing at his back, wincing.

Old Camacho gets to his feet and pulls at his vest, realizing it's locked on. He takes note of the LED countdown clock sewed into it that says: 00:55:43

Old Emmitt also gets to his feet, favoring a shoulder.

Old Whybrow moves to grab the AK then hesitates, looks at the Older Lady who still stands by the wall.

OLD CAMACHO (O.S.)

Uncuff me.

Old Whybrow turns to see Old Camacho nodding to his cuffed hands behind his back. Beside him is Old Emmitt.

Old Whybrow grabs the key from a pocket, moves to unlock Old Camacho's cuffs when he locks eyes with him.

Old Whybrow reconsiders this, then backpedals and grabs the AK.

He steps further away --- keeping his eyes on the other old vets and on the Older Lady.

OLD EMMITT

What're doin? Uncuff us!

OLD WHYBROW

Let's just hold on, gents. Just wait a minute. Need to think this through.

Old Whybrow crosses to the metal door without a handle. He pushes it. Then feels around its edges. Locked solid.

With that option closed, he surveys the room, stopping at Old Camacho.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)

Why'd she bring you back just now?
Why didn't she let you die?
(to Older Lady)
Why would you do that? Why the hell would you do that!

A wave of anger consumes Old Whybrow. He marches over to the Older Lady and points the gun at her.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)

Who in the hell are you? What do you want with us?
(nods to the LED clock)
What the hell is this clock?

The Older Lady stares at Old Whybrow with a vacant expression.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)
 Alright. Alright.
 (puts the gun to her temple)
 You're gonna tell me how I get the fuck outta here or I'll blow your goddamn head off!

The Older Lady's amused, chuckles at Old Whybrow.

OLD CAMACHO (O.S.)
 Hey.

Old Whybrow spins to see Old Camacho's grizzly bull face right next to his.

OLD CAMACHO (CONT'D)
 You a tough guy now, Whybrow? All tough in your pink polo and spray tan. Ready to get your hands dirty instead of your dick?

Old Whybrow back pedals.

OLD WHYBROW
 I was just trying to piece--

Old Camacho gets nose-to-nose with a glare that would melt metal.

OLD CAMACHO
 UNLOCK MY FUCKING CUFFS! I ain't gonna ask again.

Old Whybrow anxiously grabs the key from a pocket and fumbles about -- finally able to unlock Old Camacho's cuffs.

A free man, Old Camacho snatches the AK away.

OLD CAMACHO (CONT'D)
 Gimme that fuckin thing.

Old Camacho immediately swings around and using the butt end of the rifle, pummels the Older Lady in the stomach! She crumples.

He grabs her by the hair and drags her over to the wooden platform and straps her ankles in the stocks.

Finished, Old Camacho falls to a knee. Shallow breaths. Covered in sweat. He grabs at his heart.

Meanwhile, Old Whybrow unlocks Old Emmitt's cuffs who eyes Old Camacho.

OLD EMMITT
You'se ain't lookin so good.

OLD CAMACHO
Gimmie those cuffs.

OLD EMMITT
(grins)
You'se fixin fer some payback,
ain'tchya?

Old Emmitt grimaces, again favoring a shoulder. He glares at the Older Lady now locked in stocks.

OLD EMMITT (CONT'D)
Shoulder ain't never been much good
since I got shot. But you'se
really fixed it right good now,
duddin't ya?
(grabs a pair of cuffs
with his good arm)
Our turn to fix you up right good
now, ain't we Eiten?

OLD OX (O.S.)
That's enough.

Old Camacho and Old Emmitt look at Old Ox who just had his cuffs unlocked by Old Whybrow. Old Camacho still has the AK slung to his back.

OLD CAMACHO
I'll say when it's enough.

OLD OX
Violence is the art of the devil;
the lord our savior will be her
judge.

OLD CAMACHO
Jesus fuckin Christ. You sound
like a goddamn fruitcake.

OLD OX
Taking the lord our saviors name in
vein is the path to darkness,
Eiten, and I WON'T STAND FOR IT!

Old Ox glares at Old Camacho, coiling tightly in anger.

OLD CAMACHO

You've grown softer than baby shit,
Ox. What the fuck happened to you?

The two stand with their eyes surging into one another in a primal rage. Emmitt jumps in.

OLD EMMITT

Years back, he accidental-like run
over his four year old boy with his
tractor. His wife Linda, rest her
soul -- ain't never fergave him.
Then she up'n hung herself... He
got the religion ever since. Ain't
that right, brother?

OLD CAMACHO

Well, Mr. Religion, this bitch is
gonna bleed.

The Older Lady grins at his threat. In fact, her expression is anxious excitement, like she's ready for a thrill ride at an amusement park.

Old Camacho puts the cuffs on her then rachets them down, biting into her wrists.

OLD CAMACHO (CONT'D)

How's that feel?

The Older Lady closes her eyes then grins like some kind of perverted addict craving her pain fix.

OLD OX

I SAID ENOUGH, EITEN! GOD WILL BE
HER JUDGE AND ONLY HE CAN SEND HER
TO HER ETERNAL DESTINATION!

Old Ox grabs Old Camacho's arm when Old Camacho's jolted with a charge of energy! He swats Old Ox's arm off him then unstraps the AK from his shoulder and points it at Old Ox.

OLD CAMACHO

You touch me again, I'll cut ya
down, Ox! I don't care how many
bibles you read... You ain't got
the stomach then turn away.

OLD OX

You will be judged, Eiten. For all
your sins, past and present. We
all will.

The Older Lady watches with gleaming, obsessed eyes.

Old Camacho turns to Old Emmitt and Old Whybrow.

OLD CAMACHO
You two in on this or you wanna
pray with the pope?

Old Whybrow looks at the clock ticking down on Old Camacho's vest -- it says just under 50 minutes.

OLD WHYBROW
I-I..gotta know. As long as we
stop once she tells us.

OLD EMMITT
Let's git on with it.

Old Camacho turns to the Older Lady.

OLD CAMACHO
Time to bleed, bitch.

He rears back and delivers a vicious fist to her face!

Old Whybrow and Old Emmitt cringe at the violence. Old Ox turns away.

OLD CAMACHO (CONT'D)
Who the fuck are you?

The Older Lady's nose has exploded in blood. She looks at Old Camacho and grins through her blood-stained teeth.

OLDER LADY
Name-Rank-Service Number-DOB.

The old men look at her, floored.

OLD EMMITT
What in tarnation?

The Older Lady chuckles devilishly.

OLD CAMACHO
You think that's funny?

Old Camacho hits her with a back hand that snaps her head back.

OLD CAMACHO (CONT'D)
What the fuck's this timer? Is it
a bomb?

OLDER LADY
 (laughing)
 Name-Rank-Service Number-DOB.

OLD CAMACHO
 Yeah, keep laughin.

Old Camacho grabs a half-section of the bamboo pole and whips her hard across the back.

OLDER LADY
 (firmer)
 Name-Rank-Service Number-DOB.

He whips her harder!

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)
 NAME-RANK-SERVICE NUMBER-DOB!
 (THEN HARDER!)
 NAME-RANK-SERVICE NUMBER-DOB!

She continues to shout as Old Camacho strikes her over and over!

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)
 NAME-RANK-SERVICE NUMBER-DOB!
 NAME-RANK-SERVICE NUMBER-DOB!

Old Camacho stops. Breathing hard. Grabs at his heart. He hands the bamboo pole to Whybrow who backs off.

OLD WHYBROW
 M-m-may..maybe she's had enough.

Old Camacho holds the bamboo stick out to Old Emmitt who also hesitates.

OLD CAMACHO
 Fuckin cowards... You protest the
 butcher but you damn well bless his
 feast.

Old Camacho crosses to the light box.

OLD CAMACHO (CONT'D)
 You people wonder why you're stuck
 in your shitty dead-end lives...

He hits the switch and watches the post with the hooks lower.

OLD CAMACHO (CONT'D)
Gotta get bloody to get anywhere in
this world.

FADE TO:

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE - DAY

Fort, with his wrists bound and dried blood glued to his face, is sandwiched between battle-worn VC who lead him through the dense jungle heavy with humidity and mosquitos.

STEEP TERRAIN - LATER

A VC SOLDIER pushes Fort up steep terrain when he slips, squealing in pain as he lands on his dislocated shoulder.

LOG BRIDGE - LATER

Single file, the group crosses a slippery log bridge when suddenly -- Fort jumps from the bridge splashing in the creek below!

Fort lands on his dislocated shoulder, shrieks in pain. He struggles to his feet as VC quickly pursue yelling in Vietnamese.

Fort desperately dashes down the creek in a futile attempt at escape. He's quickly surrounded then dragged to the shoreline.

ON THE SHORELINE

Fort again tries to pull away when a VC SOLDIER clubs him with his rifle butt and in the process he accidentally discharges the rifle!

The rifle fires a bullet through the stomach of a COMRADE, killing him.

The irate VC LEADER shoots the first VC Soldier through both legs for his negligence.

He then grabs Fort by his dislocated shoulder and drags him into the jungle line then shoves his head into an ant nest!

Fort screams as the ants flood from the nest and consume his head.

The VC Leader uses his boot to keep Fort's head buried in the nest with a smirk as Fort thrashes trying to escape the infestation.

Finally, the VC Leader relents and Fort stumbles to the creek and douses his head in the water as the VC laugh and mock him.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - VC CAMP - NIGHT

A sullen moonlight hangs over a temporary VC camp. Punji-staked perimeters. A few roaming SOLDIERS with watch dogs. Other SOLDIERS sleep in parachute nylon hammocks covered with mosquito netting.

AWAY FROM THE CAMP

Fort's tied to a tree, squirming at the swarm of mosquitos tormenting him.

He cringes in pain at his separated shoulder then leans his burnt and bitten forehead on the bark.

FORT
Please god... Kill me.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - VC CAMP - DAY

Early morning sunlight filters through the jungle mesh.

GUNFIRE!

Fort, still bound to the tree, is startled awake.

He angles his head around for the source of the gunfire -- shaking off an ant on his cheek in the process.

A few yards away is the VC Leader who fires off another round into the leg of a defiant ARVN VIETNAMESE PRISONER who screams and then shouts in defiance.

The VC Leader shoots him again. This time in the arm.

The ARVN Prisoner is on his knees, agonizing in pain, still refusing to talk.

Another shot into his side! Then stomach!

The ARVN Prisoner squirms in his own blood when the VC leader aims at his head and -- CLICK CLICK -- out of ammo.

The VC Leader proceeds to stomp his head in with his combat boot.

Fort is sickened. He hangs his head and looks down at his bare feet that look like he's wearing black socks -- the result courtesy of armies of feasting mosquitos.

START MONTAGE

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE - DAY

Fort and his VC escort wind through jungle swamps, leech-infested grasslands, and open rice fields.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - VILLAGE - DAY

A bound and barefoot Fort is guided through a ramshackle village. Thatched hutches. Faint whiffs of smoke coming from cook fires. Pigs and dogs wander about.

VILLAGERS eye the VC file with their prize when Fort's horrified at the sight two naked white-skinned male bodies tied to posts with their throats sliced.

These could be Americans or they could be another nationality -- it's impossible to tell through the dried blood and swarms of insects indulging on the rotten flesh.

Fort scuttles along with his head down, careful not to make eye contact with the locals when an OLD WOMAN with angry features rushes up and spits at Fort then starts beating him with a bamboo cane!

More jeering Villagers crash in, each take their shot at the defenseless American pinata as VC Soldiers try to maintain order.

FORT POV -- a flurry of savage blows delivered by hands, fists, bamboo, boots, rocks!

Finally the VC are able to drag what's left of Fort out of the village into the jungle.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - RIVER - NIGHT

Lit by orange moonlight, VC Soldiers, burdened down by packs and other belongings, have tied themselves in pairs and cross a roaring torrent of water.

Fort struggles with his VC Soldier pair to find footing on the fast-flowing uneven river bed but somehow manages to grapple his way to the other side.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE - DAY

The VC party strings through the jungle foliage with Fort looking on the verge of collapse. Suddenly, the ROAR of a B-52 thunders in! The VC quickly take cover forcing Fort down with them.

Fort eyes a clearing a few yards away then shoulders his captors and makes a run for it!

Fort scampers into the clearing yelling and trying to signal the B-52.

He's quickly recaptured and beaten as the thunder fades and the bomber vanishes into the horizon.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - VC CAMP - NIGHT

Dark forest surrounds another temporary VC camp.

Moving down from the treeline to see a bruised and lacerated Fort who is stripped naked and staked spread-eagled to the ground by his hands and feet. Punishment for the earlier episode with the bomber.

Fort's eyes flash intensely as a venomous snake slithers over his chest.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - CANAL - DAY

A zombie-like Fort struggles to sit upright on a sampan sandwiched between two VC SOLDIERS.

Fort looks more dead than alive. Haggard. Cracked lips. His face covered in bug bites and boils from heat rash.

The VC Soldiers paddle down a watery maze of snaking canals lined by thick mangrove forests, coconut groves, and clumps of banana palms.

Fort sways then passes out and topples over, splashing into the swap. The VC Soldiers grab him and pull him back into the boat.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE - DAY

The group has paused in a tall grassy area.

Sitting alone with his hands bound is Fort who looks with disgust at a bowl full of unidentifiable chunks of meat covered with hair.

He takes a bite, forcing it down -- then pukes it back up.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE HILLS - DAY

The group plods through mud and rocks up steep terrain when Fort's startled at the sight of a menacing tiger that stalks them.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

The sun cooks as Fort and his VC cordon pass through a bombed out village. Burned hutches leak smoke. Livestock, some living, some dead, litter the area.

Fort struggles to keep the pace as he eyes the war-ravaged village like a dazed alien.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - JUNGLE - DAY

VC are encamped on a hillside feasting on an elephant they've slain.

Fort is once again tied to a tree, his gaunt frame looking wraith-like.

A VC Soldier with a mouth full of elephant meat tosses Fort part of a raw elephant foot.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - VC CAMP - DAY

A shirtless Fort tied to a tree as a VC TROOP flogs him in the back with a bamboo stick -- THWACK!

VC TROOP
YOU NO TRY ESCAPE AGAIN. YOU DIE!

CLOSE ON Fort's face, crying out and gritting his teeth against the sharp pain after every loud THWACK. He tries hard to hold in the tears when a few snake down his scruffy, sun-boiled face.

EXT. SOUTH VIETNAM - VC CAMP - NIGHT

Fort's cramped into a small locked tiger cage. He looks at his feet full of jungle rot, blisters, and open sores.

He twists and feels at his back and then with a grimace, pulls on something. He holds what he pulled from his back to see a sliver of bamboo stained with blood.

Then something else grabs Fort's attention -- his rotten fingernails. He stares at them in disgust as if they were yellow grimy insects.

He feels at his scruffy beard with a distressed look. He begins pulling and scraping at it -- harder and harder -- like a cat clawing at a post.

He stops then looks at his hands full of facial hair then rips out a maddening SCREAM that fills the dark jungle.

END MONTAGE

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - DAY

The Older Lady's is the middle of a round of ruthless rope torture with her arms pulled up to a nearly seventy degree angle above her back.

Her head is lowered so all that is seen is dyed black matted hair. A puddle of sweat collects on the wooden platform she sits on.

Old Camacho stands over her.

OLD CAMACHO
You ready to talk!

Old Camacho pulls up her head so we can see her face -- a quite evil lives in her eyes. She says in a pained but controlled tone.

OLDER LADY
Name. Rank. Service Number. DOB.

She squeezes out a cynical laugh through her clenched teeth.

OLD CAMACHO
Alright bitch. I'm gonna rip those
god damn arms off.

Old Camacho marches back towards the light switch. Old Whybrow makes a weak attempt to get in his way.

OLD WHYBROW
C'mon, Eiten. She's had enough.

Old Camacho blows past him like he's not there and then cranks it so the bar lifts further upwards.

The Older Lady's arms bend back to a damn near ninety degree angle.

OLDER LADY
NAME! RANK! SERVICE NUMBER! DOB!

The Older Lady twists her head and bites into her own shoulder, drawing blood. Old Whybrow is horrified.

OLD WHYBROW
Jesus.

Old Whybrow turns away, unable to stomach anymore, as Old Camacho marches back and grabs her by her hair.

OLD CAMACHO
You better fuckin talk bitch.

She looks at him with menacing eyes, the pain obviously consuming her -- then forces out a grin.

OLDER LADY
Okay.

That's plenty enough for Old Whybrow to hear.

OLD WHYBROW
Alright! Okay! She's ready to talk! Let her down for god's sake!

Old Camacho lowers the bar so it's on the ground. The Older Lady cringes as her arms swing back to a natural position.

Her head hangs. Her face remains unseen.

All of the old men look on waiting for her to say something...

Then the Older Lady tilts her head up with a truly demonic expression. Her eyes dance with a satanic fire. Her face glistens with sweat.

This is the face that scared you awake as a child.

OLDER LADY
I've been watching you. I've been watching all of you...for a very long time... Waiting for the right moment.

The old men look at her in disbelief.

OLD OX
What in god's name...

OLDER LADY

You, Private Whybrow, and your inconsequential obsession with Hair Club for Men and lip augmentation -- all in pursuit of your pathetic local weatherman career. A career you only got when you impregnated the station chief's daughter with that toxic polluted penis of yours... Syphilis, Chlamydia, Genital Herpes -- you've certainly got the STD market cornered. It's no wonder your child was born a stillbirth. Tell me, you ever question how your ex wife found out about your excessive infidelity? Or how, on the day of your big career-changing interview with the Weather Channel, you suddenly fell ill from food poisoning?

Her eyes shift to Old Emmit.

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)

You, Private Emmit Miller -- the laziest excuse of a human being on the entire fucking planet. Spend all your time with a bottle in your hand, cashing those government checks, while sucking dry whatever you can from your father's dairy farm like a backwater leech. Yet, somehow, despite your penchant for alcohol, you manage the blood work of a thirty year old. Although I often wonder, given your history with that dirt you put in your mouth, how long you're going to continue to ignore those sores on your inner lip?... And it's too bad about your dog, Bear. Struck by a car and killed. How unfortunate.

Old Emmit boils as the Older Lady's eyes shift to Old Ox.

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)

Now you, Private Ox Miller. Unlike your worthless excuse of a brother, you aren't immune to a hard day's work, despite your bad back, hypertension, and that nagging addiction to Percocet you just can't shake.

(MORE)

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)

I half-admire the way you worked day and night to keep the dairy farm alive during the crash of 2008 when the price of milk barely covered the cost to feed your cows, let alone yourself. It had to be tough when half of those cows got mysteriously sick, and extremely inconvenient when your equipment kept malfunctioning. Thankfully for you, the church you swindled with your self-pity bailed you out. Praise the lord for that. Because without their generosity, you'd certainly have no farm left to sell today.

This point promptly grabs Old Emmitt's attention.

OLD EMMITT

What she mean, sell the farm?

OLDER LADY

(chuckles)

He doesn't know, does he?

OLD EMMITT

What don't he know?

Old Ox is silent as the Older Lady moves on to Old Camacho.

OLDER LADY

And finally, Private Eiten Camacho. You've been the most fun to watch over the years. It was a real shame I didn't have anything to do with your jail sentence but I still had my fun with you during your twenty-eight years of incarceration... It really is amazing how cheap it was to bribe corrections officers for a routine dose of mistreatment. Tell me -- how was your steady diet of beatings? Those random solitary confinements despite your good behavior must have gotten lonely. And I bet missing all those meals over the years wreaked havoc on your appetite.

She looks at all the old vets.

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)

You all should question every bad thing that's ever happened in your puny, nauseating lives... Because chances are, it wasn't chance at all.

Old Camacho's unpatched eye burns into the Older Lady.

OLD CAMACHO

You fuckin bitch. You're dead.

Old Camacho moves towards her with a murderous expression when--

OLDER LADY

Before you proceed, Private Camacho -- I have one more piece of information that you in particular will want to hear. I mean after twenty-eight years in prison, I'd want to know the person who put me there. Especially if that person was standing right here in this room.

Old Camacho stops.

OLD CAMACHO

What'd you say?

OLDER LADY

It was unfortunate to see all those lucrative opiate connections you made in Vietnam come to an end after your incarceration. What an empire you were building... Kingfish Camacho. The White Horse of Chicago. Owned the underground until it all crashed down.

OLD CAMACHO

Bullshit. I know who the informant was and he ain't around no more.

OLDER LADY

You know what the Chicago PD wanted you to know. I know the truth. And so does Private Whybrow.

OLD WHYBROW

What? W-w-why would I know?

OLDER LADY

Busted with a prostitute and a pocket full of heroin... And instead of ruining his life -- he did what he does best, he ruined someone else's to save his own.

Old Camacho casts a fiery gaze at Old Whybrow who shifts nervously.

OLD WHYBROW

What? Eiten. You don't believe--I would never! Not me. Look at her -
- she's a crazy woman.

Old Camacho steps towards Old Whybrow holding the AK-47 with his face locked into a mask of contained fury.

OLD CAMACHO

You did it, didn't you? I may only have one good eye but I can see it all over your no good rat face.

He cocks the AK and points it at Old Whybrow who back pedals into a wall. He raises his hands, pleading.

OLD WHYBROW

Please. Eiten. I had no choice. Look, I'll make it up to you. Whatever you want. Don't do this!

Old Whybrow has nowhere left to go when Old Camacho puts the barrel to his head and fingers the trigger when--

--he's hit over the head with a pair of metal cuffs!

Old Camacho drops to the floor, unconscious. The AK clanks next to him.

FADE TO:

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE JUNGLE - CAMP - DAY

An established camp set in the deepest recesses of Indochina's jungle. It's situated along a creek bank blanketed by thick forest.

The compound consists of various thatched hooches and lean-tos surrounded by bamboo fence that all blend into the forest.

The jungle floor's covered in thick brush and rising ferns. Above that are broadleaf trees of middling height.

And above that are giant hardwoods that rise a hundred feet or more and spread their branches to interlock.

The effect is that of a triple canopy which closes out the bright tropic sun and leaves a damp twilight of perpetual gloom.

FORT

Is shuffled into camp. A man torn and shredded in mind and body but somehow, somehow, he lives on. One more step. One more breath.

What's left of his tattered fatigues are caked in humid sweat. Half his face scarred and covered in boils. He favors an arm still dangling from a socket. Probably couldn't lift a rifle if he tried.

He's led to a bamboo cage and shoved in falling head first to the dirt floor.

EXT. CAMP - BAMBOO CAGE - DAY

This is a small cell with a bamboo slat bed fixed with leg stocks, some hung mosquito netting, a metal pale, and a small kerosene lamp in a corner.

Fort lays prone with his face in the dirt when he hears a voice.

LEE (O.S.)

Hey, troop.

Fort registers the voice that is pure American -- the first American voice he's heard in weeks.

He painfully rolls over to see a bone thin tall and rangy black man in worn back pajamas and sandals.

This is CHRIS LEE, 36.

LEE (CONT'D)

Wouldn't happen to know the name of the New York Giants quarterback who replaced the injured Y.A. Tittle in '56 would ya?

Emotions overcome Fort at the sight of his countryman.

Lee crosses to Fort and offers a hand.

LEE (CONT'D)

Chris Lee.

Fort grabs his hand and Lee pulls him up. Fort instantly embraces him like a lost child would his mother.

Tears of suppressed terror and grief roll down Fort's face as he bear hugs Lee.

Lee stands awkwardly; a circumstance not exactly covered in the survival training handbook. He pats Fort on the back.

LEE (CONT'D)

Whoa. Hey, now, troop -- not even my momma would be this happy to see me.

LATER

Fort stares at his jungle rot feet covered in a solid mass of blisters.

Behind him, Lee reaches into a hole he secretly carved into a bamboo cage post and pulls out some supplies he squirreled away.

He hands Fort a couple of pills and a piece of vegetable that looks like a tuby root.

LEE (CONT'D)

Sulfa's for the boils and dysentery. Manioc's for starch... Now I need you to lean back, away from that rot -- unless you want splashed.

Lee pulls down his pants.

FORT

W-w-what are you--

Before he can get it out Lee is pissing on Fort's feet.

LEE

Gotta disinfect those feet.

FORT

With...pee?

LEE

Pee is sterile on passing. Goes as far back as the Aztecs, troop.

Lee finishes then crosses to some mosquito netting he has draped in a corner and begrudgingly rips off a piece off it.

LEE (CONT'D)

So you know -- if you weren't American I wouldn't be doing this... I hate mosquitos and love me some net more than Wilt Chamberlain.

He tears the piece in half and hands them to Fort.

LEE (CONT'D)

Wrap those feet, troop. And let the maggots wine and dine on those face burns and back wounds -- little fuckers are like mini-hoover rot vacuums. Clean that shit right up.

As Fort wraps his feet, Lee peeks out at the camp.

VC SOLDIERS are on guard duty but smoking with their backs turned -- one has a CAMP DOG beside him.

Lee whistles like a bird. The Camp Dog trots to the cage. Lee gives him a small piece of manioc and pets his head.

LEE (CONT'D)

Man's best friend... Even in Cambodia.

FORT

Cambodia? How do you know we're--

LEE

Supply lines run through Cambodia. And the amount of supplies runnin through this camp's enough to outfit a couple dink brigades. Figure we are right smack dab in the middle of the Ho Chi Minh trail... We wanna win this war -- we're gonna need to wipe places like this off the map. Which means bombs -- lots and lots of big bad bombs... And some day they will fall, troop. Like a big beautiful rainbow from the sky.

Lee crosses to the kerosene lamp.

LEE (CONT'D)

So everybody's gotta story... What's your once upon a time--

(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)
(looks at his faded nearly
unreadable name patch)
Private Fort?

Fort is hesitant to speak, obviously torn on his ordeal.

Lee picks up on the hesitation, tries a different approach as he unscrews the cap to the kerosene lamp fuel container.

LEE (CONT'D)
Which infantry outfit you with?

Fort is confused -- how did he know?

Lee nods to a faded infantry patch on the shoulder of his fatigues.

FORT
25th.

LEE
So tell me -- how did Private Fort,
25th infantry soldier, end up in
Disneyland?

FORT
Search and destroy mission. Mostly
small patrols, lookin for PAVN
supply caches. We were moving in
for another sweep when our chopper
got hit...

Lee hands him part of the lamp that holds the kerosene.

LEE
Sip this. Tastes like shit but
it'll kill the intestinal worms
fore they kill you.

FORT
Worms?

LEE
Trust me they're there, troop.
Even if you don't know it yet.

Fort takes a tiny sip and grimaces. Lee chuckles.

LEE (CONT'D)
So. Any other survivors?

Fort pauses, playing things back in his mind.

FORT
I..uh, yeah.

LEE
Were they captured?

FORT
I, um... Don't know.

Lee dissects Fort's body language like a surgeon -- looks at him with a suspicious scowl.

LEE
You don't know...

FORT
Yeah... I don't know...what happened...

Fort breaks eye contact and takes note of some missing fingernails on Lee's hands. Lee follows his eyes then looks at his digits.

LEE
What two years of captivity and limited protein will do to ya. Believe it or not, I used to have more hair, too.

Fort winces in pain, grabs at his separated shoulder. Lee ends the quiz for now, grabs a short piece of bamboo then crosses to Fort.

LEE (CONT'D)
Alright. Last task for the day. I'm gonna need ya to lay down and bite down on this.

Lee hands Fort the piece of bamboo.

FORT
What? Why?

LEE
Time to relocate that shoulder, troop.

Fort puts the bamboo between his teeth then Lee grabs Fort's wrist and slowly and steadily pulls it away from Fort's body until CLUNK -- the shoulder goes back into position.

LEE (CONT'D)
Touchdown.

Lee takes a seat for a break as Fort lays on his back and closes his eyes.

LEE (CONT'D)
Whew. Been a busy day.

Lee wipes sweat away when he spots a couple of armed VC SOLDIERS approaching their cage carrying a food tray. Lee quickly stands and says to Fort.

LEE (CONT'D)
Get up.

Fort stumbles to his feet as the two Soldiers enter with their tray.

Lee bows and says between his teeth to Fort.

LEE (CONT'D)
Bow.

Fort looks at Lee, not following the barely audible Lee.

The Soldiers yell in Vietnamese at Fort! Lee, still bowing, says in a stronger but still difficult tone for Fort to make out.

LEE (CONT'D)
Bow.

Before it registers to Fort one of the VC has already thumped his stomach with his rifle butt! Fort keels over, gasping.

The Soldiers signal for the two to move towards their bamboo slat bed.

The Soldiers are ready to give it to Fort again when Lee steps in-between them and directs Fort to the bed.

LEE (CONT'D)
Get in the stocks.

Fort watches Lee sit on the bed and put his ankles in the stocks and follows suit.

The Soldiers lock them in, turn on the kerosene lamp, and leave the tray of food.

Fort and Lee sit upright in the stocks with their tray of food in front of them. Lee looks at Fort.

LEE (CONT'D)

Bow or no chow. Sorry. Forgot to pass along that little piece of intel.

Lee reaches back and pulls out a shard of bamboo he had hidden beneath their slat bed. He slyly uses it to pick the lock on the stocks then stretches out.

Fort looks on in amazement.

FORT

You picked it?

Lee nods, no big deal.

FORT (CONT'D)

Why haven't you escaped?

Lee smirks.

LEE

Escaping this cage isn't the problem. I can get out of here any time I want...

Lee loosens a bamboo pole and pulls it out revealing a hole big enough in the cage to squeeze through.

LEE (CONT'D)

Took me about two months worth of piss to loosen that sucker up.

He puts the pole back.

LEE (CONT'D)

Escaping this jungle... Now that's another problem entirely. But I gotta plan.

FORT

What plan?

LEE

In due time, troop.

Lee hands Fort a bowl of murky soup from the food tray.

LEE (CONT'D)

Now's the time to eat.

Fort uses his finger to swirl the contents to see a grotesque hung of hog floating in the soup bowl.

LEE (CONT'D)

Eat it. Only protein you'll get
and the lard will fill those gaps
between your ribs.

Fort grabs at his scruffy beard, agitated.

LEE (CONT'D)

Sorry, troop. Best I got for that
is a sharp rock I used to carve a
hole in the bamboo.

Fort watches Lee take down the vile chunk of filth like a
chicken tender.

Lee licks his fingers then winks at a disgusted Fort.

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - DAY

An unconscious Old Camacho is on the floor bleeding from his
head.

Towering over him is Old Ox who drops the metal cuffs he used
to club him.

Old Whybrow stands nearby in a mask of relief.

OLD WHYBROW

Thanks Ox.

OLD OX

Don't you thank me. Don't you ever
thank me. There's evil in you,
Derek. Always has been. You spent
your entire life swimming in the
devil's sin and you will be judged.

Old Ox glances down at the unconscious Old Camacho with a
guilty expression.

OLD OX (CONT'D)

I ain't proud of my actions. But I
shoulda put an end to this sooner.

OLD EMMIT

Sooner? After all she done to us?
She killed my Bear, brother! We
let her keep goin like she is and
we might could all be dead.

OLD OX
Then the lord will judge us, for
our sins of the past and present.

OLD WHYBROW
Time-out. Can we get a bible break
please?

Old Emmitt looks hard at Old Ox.

OLD EMMITT
What she mean, sold the farm?

Old Ox pauses, running this through.

OLD OX
I sold it. I sold the farm. I
kain't keep up with it no more.

OLD EMMITT
Now how you'se gone and do that
without my say so?

OLD OX
Now ain't no time, Emmitt.

OLD EMMITT
Now ain't no time? Yesterday
wudn't no time. Tomorrow ain't
gonna be no time neither. NOW IS
THE GOD DANG TIME, BROTHER! Now
you'se tell me how you'se gone and
done that without my say so!

The two trade scowls as Old Whybrow tries to play ref.

OLD WHYBROW
Now gents, we aren't gonna solve
this here. I think it's best if we
focus on the problem at--

OLD EMMITT
HUSH YOUR MOUTH, DEREK!
(to Old Ox)
HOW SO, BROTHER!

OLD OX
It's how paw wanted it -- that's
how so! You'd done known if you
weren't too lazy to read his will
after he passed... All your life
you ain't never done nothin to
support this farm while we all
busted our backsides day after day.
(MORE)

OLD OX (CONT'D)

I kain't hardly milk a cow with my crooked back but I'm out there at the crack of dawn every mornin while you're playin possum livin off the government for some disability you ain't never had.

OLD EMMIT

That agent orange got a'hold of me, brother. I kain't hardly breathe some days.

OLD OX

It's that liquor got hold'a you! Sin is a short word with a very long sentence, Emmitt... Farm is sold. What don't pay off debt will go to the church.

OLD EMMIT

You'se and that god dang place... You'se ain't no saint. I knowed what you'se done and you'se a guilty sinner just the same as us... See what the lord thank of that come time to judge.

The Older Lady starts laughing -- almost hysterically. Grabbing's everyone attention.

An enraged Old Emmitt stomps over to her.

OLD EMMIT (CONT'D)

I'm gettin real tired of you'se laughin and laughin. I think it's right time to hush your mouth fer good.

Old Emmitt locates the AK-47 next to a still unconscious Old Camacho when the Older Lady shouts between her belly laughs.

OLDER LADY

WAIT! Just wait.

Old Emmitt turns as the Older Lady's laughs drain to a chuckle then to a gummy grin.

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)

You wanna know what's really funny?... How Ox thinks he could have fathered a son when he's been infertile his entire life.

She looks at Old Ox. The sick chuckles fire back up.

OLDER LADY (CONT'D)

I mean, didn't you wonder how you ever impregnated your wife just one time but couldn't ever again?

(chuckles escalate)

What's even more funny is who his actual father is? Or was...

(chuckles are obnoxiously loud now)

You should tell him Emmet. It's really comical.

Old Whybrow looks at the stunned face of Old Ox and the stone-face of Old Emmet; he quickly connects the dots.

OLD WHYBROW

You've gotta be shittin me.

Old Emmet has Old Ox's full curiosity now, the upper hand.

OLD OX

What she talkin about Emmet?

Old Emmet casts a spiteful look at his brother.

OLD EMMET

Talkin about your son.

OLD OX

What about him?

OLD EMMET

He ain't never been your blood...
He's my blood.

Old Ox shakes his head, no way.

OLD OX

You lie.

OLD EMMET

Your wife, Linda... Well she made me promise to not never say nothin'. Cross my heart... And I hadn't. Not to no one.

(to Older Lady)

I don't know how you'se found out...

Old Emmet crosses to Old Ox, positions his face uncomfortably close to his.

OLD EMMIT (CONT'D)

Your old lady couldn't keep her
hands off ole Emmit, brother...
Seemed I could give her what she
kain't never got from you... And
she couldn't never get enough of it
neither. Over...and over...and
over... Howlin like a banshee.
Oh, it was right good too, brother.
Best I ever had.

A wicked fire burns in Old Ox's eyes, the kind of rage that's
been held in check until now when suddenly, he violently
shoves Old Emmit away!

Old Emmit trips over his feet, then falls backwards right
onto the lowered bar, impaling himself on one of its hooks!

Old Emmit's paralyzed. Slobbering blood. His eyes roll
back.

Old Whybrow rushes over to Old Emmit. Feels for a pulse. He
looks up at Old Ox.

OLD WHYBROW

He's dead.

Old Ox looks at his dead brother in mute shock.

His eyes bounce around. To the somber Old Whybrow. To the
sneering Older Lady. To the unconscious Old Camacho. To the
AK-47.

In a split second he grabs the AK and puts it in his mouth.

OLD OX

Forgive me lord.

OLD WHYBROW

NO!

Old Ox pulls the trigger! Blood and brain tissue splatter on
Old Whybrow's face.

Old Whybrow looks at the dead Old Ox in stunned silence.

ON OLD OX'S VEST the timer reads 00:16:43 and continues to
count down.

FADE TO:

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - NIGHT

Dusk sets as Lee crosses back and forth in the cell counting to himself after each pass as Fort sits and watches.

Fort is now in standard issue prisoner of war black pajamas looking a little healthier than seen previously. He's still thin and scruffy but the superficial wounds have healed and he's using his once separated shoulder.

Lee catches eyes with Fort.

LEE

Ain't gonna do you no good
exercising your butt, troop. C'mon
-- 264 crosses equals a mile.

Fort stands to participate when he spots a big ass tarantula working a web in a corner. He moves to kill it when Lee stops him.

LEE (CONT'D)

Stand down, troop. Those webs
catch more mosquitos than the nets.
Let em go to work.

Fort falls in beside Lee as the two walk in the cell. After a couple of crosses, Fort shoots Lee a curious look.

FORT

Are you some kind of special
forces?

LEE

Makes you say that, troop?

FORT

All this survival knowledge. The
medical. Never taught us anything
like that at tiger. Figure you've
had some kinda special training...

LEE

Called bein resourceful, troop.
Absorb the world around you fore it
absorbs you. It's about the mind.
Yeah, these VC are some little
slippery slope fuckers...and they
can all kiss my black ass right at
my tree knot -- but make no
mistake, the mind's your worst
enemy out here. It'll cut you down
to nothin, you let it. The trick
is to fuck it fore it fucks you...

(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

And don't you dare let it get lost
thinkin about what you don't got
out here, think about what you do
got and where it can get you -- and
that's the fuel you burn to
survive.

Fort gently nods, really taking in this man's advice.

Lee notices too as he breaks a small grin to himself, taking satisfaction in his pet project.

FORT

So how'd they get you?

LEE

You want the truth? The whole
truth? Or the whole so-help-me-god
truth?

FORT

The whole so-help-me-god truth.

LEE

I'm an Agricultural Development
Advisor... Caught some bad luck
when I was en route to pick up a
shipment of rice for some Lao
refugees when I drove smack dab in
the middle of firefight between our
buddies here and an American
armored unit... Had a wad of cash
and some maps on me -- VC think I'm
intelligence. CIA or somethin.

(laughs)

Them slopes got some vivid
imagination.

Fort's face says he's unsure what to think of this story when Lee stops in his tracks.

LEE (CONT'D)

Shit. What pass are we on?

His good natured grin fades as his eyes fall on a group of VC SOLDIERS moving towards their cell.

LEE (CONT'D)

Uh, oh, troop. Buzzard.

BUZZARD is a physically repulsive mid-40s Vietnamese hook-nosed fiend, with watery-eyes and wisps of grey hair.

FORT

Who?

LEE

What I call him. Soulless fanatic. Think his own men would kill em if they could get away with it. Was hopin they'd give you more than a few weeks to heal up.

Lee looks directly at Fort, as serious as we've seen him.

LEE (CONT'D)

Look -- try not to give him more than the standard four. Once you break, and you will break, make something up.

The VC Soldiers are at the cage, unlocking it.

FORT

But I don't know anything. Only been in-country three months.

The VC Soldiers enter the cage and move to grab Fort but not before Lee gets in one more piece of advice.

LEE

And Fort -- bite your shoulder to transfer the pain.

The VC bark at Lee in Vietnamese and push him away then lead Fort out of the cage.

BEGIN MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Detailing the torture between the VC Soldiers and Fort.

INT. INTERROGATION HUT - NIGHT

Fort's in a hut surrounded by VC in the middle of questioning, he looks hard at Buzzard and says with conviction.

FORT

Private Eric Fort. Serial number 10129. Born June 23, 1951.

A VC Soldier slaps Fort with a stiff backhand across the face.

LATER

Buzzard stands behind a kneeling Fort, still surrounded by his VC henchmen. He ratchets down a pair of crude metal cuffs so hard that they cut into Fort's wrists, leaking blood.

He speaks in a menacing broken English tone.

BUZZARD

For your crimes you will experience
the just wrath of the Vietnamese
people.

Fort fights the sharp pain. Wincing hard. Spraying spit as he speaks defiantly through heavy breaths.

FORT

Private Eric Fort. Serial number
10129. Born June 23, 1951.

LATER

Fort is on his knees bent forward, his ratcheted hands still cuffed behind his back, only now a rope is attached that is fed through a hook fastened to the overhead crossbeam in the hut.

Buzzard signals to one of his VC Soldiers to pull.

OVER BUZZARD'S VOICE AS FORT IS ADMINISTERED THE ROPE TORTURE

BUZZARD (V.O.)

You are a misguided innocent
tricked into fighting for an evil
capitalist society in a faraway
civil war. Sooner or later, you
are going to show repentance. You
are going to admit you are a
criminal. You are going to
denounce your government. You are
going to beg our people for
forgiveness.

Fort screams in ear-piercing, excruciating pain as his arms are pulled up to a right angle over his back.

FORT

PRIVATE ERIC FORT! SERIAL NUMBER
10129! BORN JUNE 23, 1951!

Then he bites his shoulder -- drawing blood over muddled grunts.

LATER

OVER BUZZARD'S VOICE

Buzzard stands over Fort who is kneeling on the ground. His sweat drips onto the piece of paper he's writing on. His uncuffed wrists are blistered and bloody.

BUZZARD (V.O.)

You will write, I am a criminal. I am the latest in a long line of invaders who historically had meddled in the affairs and violated the sovereignty of the Vietnamese people. I am a stooge for American interests -- a society itself that is decadent and corrupt and dominated by a small ruling class of powerful and wealthy individuals. This American intervention, which was an external aggression, is unjust, and I, Private Eric Fort, join the chorus of American people in protest against the government of the United States and fiercely call for them to end this criminal aggression against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - NIGHT

The last slivers of daylight peek through the green dome as Fort is ragdolled back into his cell a beaten, broken, ashamed man.

Lee moves to help him when Fort, lying prone on the dirt, says in a distraught tone.

FORT

NO! No... Just..get away.
Please. Just get away from me.

Fort painfully sits up, favoring his right arm that is once again out of its socket. He curls up in a ball, then speaks with his head between his bent knees.

FORT (CONT'D)

I couldn't do it. I couldn't hold out. I signed some propaganda statement. Would have done anything to make the pain stop... All my life I've tried to do what's right. But it's never been right. No matter how hard I try.

(MORE)

FORT (CONT'D)
I've never been right... Just like
they said.

Lee listens with a sympathetic expression.

LEE
Look at me, troop.

Fort doesn't look. Lee shifts to a kinder, more
compassionate tone.

LEE (CONT'D)
Soldier, look at me.

Fort looks at Lee with watery red-cracked eyes.

LEE (CONT'D)
The war within is man's greatest
struggle... But it's a war. And
like any war -- it can be won.

Fort eyes shift to the ground, lost in a far-away gaze.

FORT
He said... You like to play with
girl's toys, then I'm gonna treat
you like a girl.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. 1960'S ERA SMALL TOWN HOUSE - DAY

A young girl's bedroom adorn in 60's era decor.

A scrawny eight year old Fort plays peacefully with a couple
of dolls in a girl's bedroom.

FORT (V.O.)
I was eight and I still remember
those words...

A BURLY MAN in his forties enters the room and closes the
door.

BACK TO SCENE

FORT
It went on like that for a while.
Then one day, my mom came home
early... Caught the monster at
play.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

An eight year old Fort and his nine year old SISTER in the kitchen as FORT'S MOM holds a pistol at the Burly Man who pleads for her to drop the gun.

She fires.

FORT (V.O.)

She shot my dad dead...right in front of me and my sister.

BACK TO SCENE

FORT

She died in prison a few years later... Cancer. And we lived with my grandma until I got drafted.

Lee reaches around to his back side and down his pajama pants to his butt. He pulls something out and shows Fort a gold ring with a noticeable scratch.

LEE

My wedding ring. Keeps me goin. And I do what it takes for it to keep me goin... Ain't gonna let em take it from me... And lemme tell ya somethin, troop -- it takes somethin to make it this far. To get through what you've been through. A whole lotta somethin. And I'm not just talkin about the beatings you've taken in 'nam.. Talkin bout the beatings you've taken in life. Seen guys twice as big think they're ten times as tough fold like a house'a cards at the first sign of struggle... I don't care what you think you are or aren't. You're a god damn soldier. A god damn good one at that. So you stay on point here and here--

(Lee points to his head and heart)

--and you find your somethin to keep you goin. You readin me, troop?

Fort wipes a meandering tear away and gives a faint nod, processing Lee's words that seem to make a dent.

Lee spots the Camp Dog and whistles like a bird.

The Camp Dog trots over and Lee gives him a small piece of food and in return, the Camp Dog gives Lee a small piece of normalcy in this otherwise fucked up world.

EXT. SAIGON JUNGLE - DAY

Humid air under a sweltering sun drapes like a damp blanket over Fort and Lee who are bent over, pulling plants, in a desolate patch of the Saigon jungle.

They are surrounded by VC Soldiers who loosely observe the duo working their detail.

Fort tosses a plant into a straw basket. He eyes Lee who pulls a plant, breaks off part of the manioc root, then cleverly stashes the precious tuber in his pajamas.

Lee catches eyes with Fort and winks.

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - NIGHT

The night is dark as Fort lies on his back on the bamboo slat bed.

Fort looks at Lee who is asleep on his side. Lee opens his eyes as Fort eyes shift.

LEE

You alright, troop?

Fort eyes shift back to Lee. There is a look of gratitude living in them but he can't seem to find the words.

But Lee knows. He breaks a sleep-wracked grin as Fort blinks sweat out of his eyes.

LEE (CONT'D)

Sleep on your side, troop. Sweat won't burn your eyes.

Fort turns on his side and closes his eyes.

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - DAY

Old Whybrow stands over Old Ox's lifeless corps, his face a stunned, blood-flecked mask.

His eyes move to the AK-47 next to Old Ox. Then to the impaled Old Emmet. Then to the unconscious Old Camacho.

He then looks at the clock on his vest that reads: 00:03:03 and counts down.

He snags the AK and points it at the Older Lady who sits calm with her hands still bound behind her back, ankles locked in stocks.

Old Whybrow levels the rifle at her, it shakes from his unsteady hold.

OLD WHYBROW
What's gonna happen in three
minutes? TELL ME DAMN IT!

The Older Lady stares at him with a blank expression.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)
Who are you? What did I do to
deserve this? TELL ME YOU PSYCHO
BITCH! WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU!
HOW CAN YOU JUST SIT THERE!

Still nothing but a cold blank stare.

In view of the Older Lady but behind and unseen by Old Whybrow -- Old Camacho's unpatched eye flutters open.

Old Whybrow lowers the rifle, says pathetically.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)
Will you please tell me? I'll do
anything to end this!

Still nothing as behind Old Whybrow, Old Camacho grabs at his head and gets a palm full of blood. He glances up to see the back of Old Whybrow.

Old Camacho looks at the dead brothers as Old Whybrow's focus stays on the Older Lady.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)
Look, if you let me go, I won't say
a thing. None of this happened,
okay?

Old Whybrow glances at the clock -- it's down to under two minutes now.

Behind him, Old Camacho sits up.

Old Whybrow throws down the rifle, digs into his pocket and pulls out the cuff key. He hastily unlocks the Older Lady.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)

You're free. Now we can both walk out that door and you'll never see me again. All this ends right then and there, okay? We have a deal?

The Older Lady just stares at Old Whybrow, without so much as a blink.

Old Whybrow looks at the timer on his vest -- it's under thirty seconds now.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)

Okay. Okay. How bout money? You want money? I got money!

Old Whybrow feels at his pocket, no wallet.

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)

You took my wallet...but if you let me out -- we'll go straight to the bank! And you can have all of it. Every last penny! I swear to you!

The timer ticks down...10.9.8--

OLD WHYBROW (CONT'D)

Please! I don't wanna die!

CLOSE ON TIMER -- 4.3.2...

Old Whybrow crams his eyes shut and then--

FADE TO:

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - DAY

Sound of rain pattering as Fort drops his pants and sits on the rusty excrement caked metal bucket to crap.

His face is scarred and he's still a beanpole, but from a health standpoint, this is the best shape Fort's been in since his chopper went down.

And in an strange way, this is happiest he's looked since his introduction.

Lee is up pacing, eyes Fort on the bucket.

LEE

Been here eight months now and how many times I gotta tell ya, troop -- sit on your sandals and give your cheeks a break.

Fort takes off his sandals and places each on the edge then sits.

Lee continues his crosses on the well-worn dirt path within their cell with he quickly dashes to the corner and grabs something from the ground.

LEE (CONT'D)

Gotchya!

Lee holds out a jungle lizard about the size of his hand. He snaps its neck, takes a bite, then hands it to Fort.

LEE (CONT'D)

Protein, troop.

Fort takes a timid nibble much to Lee's approval.

LEE (CONT'D)

Now all we need are some bamboo shoots and fruit peels and we'd have ourselves a regular three-course meal.

Fort looks at the dead lizard as he chews on the raw meat.

FORT

You know, we could make it. Survive off the jungle til we find a way home... We could eat roots, leaves, find a few rice paddies. Absorb the world around us just like you taught me... I know we could make it.

Lee looks at Fort who is beaming at the possibilities.

LEE

I like where your head's at, troop. But that jungle -- she's a living breathing bitch and once she grabs you, she ain't ever lettin go. Gonna take more than lizards and leaves to--

At that moment a distant BOOM is heard that instantly grabs Lee's attention.

LEE (CONT'D)
You hear that?

Fort looks around.

FORT
Hear what?

Another distant BOOM echoes. Lee twists towards the sound.

LEE
That's it.

FORT
What's it?

LEE
The sweet sweet sound of US M29A1
81mm mortar fire -- takin out the
supply lines... I'd say about ten
to twelve clicks--
(points)
--that way. What we've been waitin
for, troop.
(to Fort)
They'll be on to this place soon --
gonna wipe it off the map. But it
won't matter, cause we'll be gone.

Lee energetically rips down the mosquito netting as he looks
at a confused Fort.

FORT
But the jungle?

LEE
Now that we've got our heading.
(nods to the rain)
And our cover -- that bitch is shit
out of luck cause we're gonna get
to our boys fore she gets to us...
We go tonight.

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - NIGHT

Sheets of rain drown the dark camp.

Lee's got a sack fashioned from mosquito netting filled with
a paltry supply of food he cobbled together.

He glances out at the dormant scene. The guards have all
taken cover from mother nature in their huts.

Lee looks at Fort.

LEE
It's time.

Lee pulls out his wedding ring, places it on his finger, then kisses it.

LEE (CONT'D)
For good luck.

He winks at Fort who grins.

Lee douses the kerosene lamp then pulls up the loose bamboo pole exposing just enough room for the duo to squeeze out.

Lee is the first to wiggle through.

Fort follows, elbowing through, when DOG BARKS erupt!

Lee see it's the same Camp Dog he befriended barking up a fury across the camp by a hut.

LEE (CONT'D)
Man's best friend my ass. C'mon!

Lee pulls Fort through as a groggy VC SOLDIER exits his hut, yelling at the Camp Dog who won't stop barking.

The VC Soldier kicks the Camp Dog in a lazy effort to shut him up when he spots two dark figures just outside their cage.

He goes ape shit, yelling for his comrades and scrambling for a weapon!

Lee and Fort scuttle off, splashing in the mud, towards the dark jungle when FIRING erupts!

Rounds pepper the foliage and kick up mushroom puddles when Fort goes down near the jungle line.

Lee pulls Fort up.

LEE (CONT'D)
On your feet, troop!

The two hobble off into the forest as the camp awakens in a frenzy.

EXT. CAMBODIA JUNGLE - NIGHT

Hard slanted rain pounds the duo who are held up in a bamboo grove as Lee assesses Fort's bullet wound to his leg.

Lee rips a piece of mosquito netting from his sack and makes a quick tourniquet.

He pulls Fort to his feet who collapses after a step, wrenching hard in pain.

FORT

Go. You gotta go. I'll never make it.

Lee pauses, another assessment -- when something strikes him.

LEE

Earl Morrall. I'll be damned. Knew it would come to me.

FORT

What?

LEE

The name of the QB that replaced Y.A. Tittle.

ANOTHER AREA OF THE JUNGLE

The VC Camp Dog sets the pace as pairs of VC boots move lightly over jungle behind him.

BACK TO LEE AND FORT

FORT

You gotta go. Before they find us.

Lee looks at Fort resigned to the fact he knows he's right.

LEE

Evade as long as you can. Keep pressure on that wound. And you find somethin to keep you goin. You readin me, troop?

Fort nods to Lee as the Camp Dog's barks mix with the monsoon, they're close.

Lee grabs a piece of manioc from his mosquito net pack and gives it to Fort. He's ready to move when he stops.

LEE (CONT'D)

And Fort -- those slopes aren't so dumb. I am CIA... Stay alive. I'll be back with the calvary.

He winks at Fort then vanishes into the jungle.

VC CAMP DOG

Picks up the trail, darts through high grass as his VC HANDLER loses his grip on the slippery leash. He scrambles after him.

BACK TO FORT

Favoring his shot leg, Fort pulls himself through the bamboo grove and rolls over a small ledge, scooting up under some brush.

Fort's eyes are wide, listening to the light steps of VC combing through the rainforest, careful not to make a sound.

The rattle of foliage grows louder, moving right towards him, when--

--the nose of the Camp Dog parts through it. Fort heaves a massive breath of relief when the Camp Dog BARKS!

Fort grabs the Camp Dog and wraps his arms around the snout, trying to silence him.

DARK SHADOWY OUTLINES OF VC SOLDIERS

Register the muffled barks and move swiftly towards them.

BACK TO FORT

Who clamps down harder on the Camp Dog, silencing it as its squirms fade.

Fort's eyes shift to any sound through the rain when--

--the barrel of an AK-47 pokes through the high grass to his position followed by the Camp Dog's VC Handler.

The VC Handler yells at Fort who raises his hands revealing a Camp Dog that doesn't move.

Fort looks down at the Camp Dog -- he's dead.

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS DETAILING FORT'S TORTURE

*Fort is buried upright in a hole with dirt filled to his chin.

*Buzzard puts a cigarette out on Fort's neck who screeches in unbearable pain.

*Buzzard bites at the veins on Fort's neck. Fort heaves and thrashes his head, trying to shake the psycho off him.

*Buzzard puts a pistol to Fort's head and pulls the trigger -- CLICK! It's empty. Surrounding VC SOLDIERS laugh.

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - NIGHT

VC Soldiers throw Fort's mud-encrusted body back in his cage.

Fort grabs at his wounded leg then manages to sit upright, his face etched in pain.

He takes a moment to catch his breath when his eyes fall on a single bowl of food resting on the bamboo slat bed.

Fort slowly inches over to it, looks into the bowl when his eyes flare.

Fort reaches into the bowl and pulls out a severed black finger with a wedding ring with a noticeable scratch on it.

It's Lee's wedding ring.

Fort stares at this finger, numb. A final blow.

His eyes shift to his black fungus-filled fingernails. He pulls one completely off and observes it with a brewing madness.

Fort's eyes shift to some blood from his leg. He digs into his wound in a muted growl, then pulls out the slug.

He stares at the blood on his fingers with a haunting, wild look, then uses the blood to paint his lips.

Fort breaks a nightmarish grin. His pupils look like the entrance to hell.

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - DAY

The LED display sewed into Old Whybrow's vest reads: 00:00:00

OLD WHYBROW

Opens his eyes to see that time has expired, but nothing happened.

He scowls at the Older Lady who sits with her hands uncuffed but her ankles still latched in the stocks.

OLD WHYBROW

What is this? What the hell is this! There's no bomb? Is this some kind of fuckin joke!

The Older Lady's eyes slit down lethally.

OLDER LADY

You're the bomb.

At that moment Old Whybrow is tackled to the ground by Old Camacho!

Old Camacho beats him viciously over and over again in the head with a pair of metal cuffs until Old Whybrow's face is an unrecognizable pool of blood.

Old Camacho's breaths become labored and his swings less powerful until his energy is completely zapped.

Exhausted, he slumps over Old Whybrow's lifeless body, sucking wind. Then he rolls off him, covered in his blood.

Old Camacho grabs at his heart, wheezing. His face again pale and drenched in sweat.

OLDER LADY

Uses her uncuffed hands to reach down and unlatch the ankle stocks.

She crosses to Old Camacho who lies on his back, gasping hard for breaths.

The Older Lady stands over him as a smile plays at her mouth, staring at Old Camacho's ghost white face.

FADE TO:

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

DETAILING FORT'S DECENT INTO MADNESS

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - DAY

Fort is catatonic, leaning against the bamboo cell, watching a beetle on its back being eaten alive by ants.

He grins at the helplessness of it as the ants consume it, eating holes in it.

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - NIGHT

The soft glow from the kerosene lamp falls on Fort who is locked into his stocks alone on the bamboo slat bed. He talks to himself.

FORT

White toilet seats... White pillow cases... White sheets... White toilet paper...

Fort slaps himself in the face!

FORT (CONT'D)

The mind's your worst enemy, troop!
Don't let it fuck ya, troop! It'll cut you down to nothin, troop!
Don't you dare let it get lost thinkin, troop!

He slaps himself some more!

FORT (CONT'D)

Ain't gonna let it fuck me, Lee.
Ain't gonna let it, Lee! YOU HEAR ME, LEE! I AIN'T GONNA LET IT!

Fort cries out a hideous cross between a sob and a laugh.

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - DAY

Rain falls as two VC Soldiers hold Fort down trying to shove food down his throat.

He wrenches, yelling hysterically.

FORT

YOU'RE FUCKIN SPIES! RUSSIAN SPIES! ALL OF YOU! YOU KNOW IT! I KNOW IT! RUSSIAN COMMIE SPIES!

He spits food at them!

Then the VC Soldiers viciously kick and punch Fort as he bellies out an insane laugh -- seemingly immune to the pain.

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - DAY

A steamy day.

Fort's face is a nasty patchwork of scrapes and bruises. He unscrews the kerosene lamp.

FORT
Gotta kill those worms, Lee. Just
like you taught me. I didn't
forget. I'll never forget you,
Lee.

He takes a big swig of kerosene and then vomits.

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - DAY

Fort pulls on a section of facial hair then uses a sharp rock to crudely and painfully saw it off leaving his skin looking like fresh hamburger.

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - NIGHT

The camp is dark as Fort stands, pulling at his pants, yelling madly down at his private's area.

FORT
I HATE YOU! I FUCKIN HATE YOU!

Fort bangs his forehead on the bamboo cage splitting it open. Blood trickles down his face.

He spins slowly so that his back is against the cage.

FORT (CONT'D)
Gotta keep goin, Lee. Stay on
point, troop. Find that something.
I gotta find it, Lee...

Fort slides to the ground to his butt, his back leans against bamboo.

He looks at his rotten fingernails when something strikes him.

Fort glances up with a hellish expression.

FORT (CONT'D)
I'm gonna kill them, Lee... God
watch me kill them all.

Fort grins as his soul spirals into darkness, devoured by the mouth of madness.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - DAY

The Older Lady stands over the pale, blood covered, laboring Camacho who squeezes out--

OLD CAMACHO
Who are you?

OLDER LADY
I'm here to do this world a favor.

Camacho sucks air. His unpatched eye locked on this woman. Taking in her words.

His face contorts to a paralyzed mask of shock.

OLD CAMACHO
Fort?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. SAIGON - BASE BARRACKS - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a young Whybrow's shocked eyes as SOUNDS of a struggle echo from the bathroom which he peers into.

REVERSE POV to see a young Camacho who has Fort pinned up against a stall, raping him.

YOUNG CAMACHO
Fuckin hero showin me up in the
bush. In prison gangs would be
fightin for a smooth tight ass like
you. Close to a woman as we'd get.
And if you'd go tellin about that
dead slope whore, we'd slit you
from your balls to your throat. So
keep that mouth shut unless your
suckin dick.

Fort struggles furiously, trying to tear away from Camacho's grip. He scratches Camacho across the face!

The much bigger and stronger Camacho wrestles Fort back down, then beats and chokes him unconscious.

BACK TO SCENE

The Older Lady, favoring a shoulder, bends down and slowly wraps a hand around Old Camacho's throat and squeezes.

Old Camacho puts up a weak struggle, but he's helpless in his condition. The final signs of life drain from his body.

He's gone.

FADE TO:

INT. CAMBODIA CAMP - BAMBOO CELL - NIGHT

A delirious Fort sits upright, back against bamboo, singing the ABCs out of order in a slow, haunting voice.

FORT

A..Z..S..M..C..F..R...

The HUM from a plane drones from a distance.

Fort stands as the hum grows into a ROAR. Louder and louder.

He looks out at the camp to see VC SOLDIERS scrambling, pointing and shouting, arming themselves.

Fort looks up and through the jungle canopy, he makes out flashes of the white underbellies of B-52 bombers thundering over the treeline.

The VC Soldiers unleash small arms fire at the stampede of iron horses.

Then, an ominous SOUND of a bomb whistling in on them.

BOOM! A monstrous ROAR of anger!

The jungle floor shakes. Huts engulfed in flash red. VC Soldiers ripped apart by shrapnel.

Fort grips the bamboo cage watching the spectacle with a savage glee as explosions rock the camp.

FORT (CONT'D)

HA!...HAHA! RAINBOWS, LEE! BIG
BEAUTIFUL RAINBOWS!

(MORE)

FORT (CONT'D)
FALLING FROM THE SKY! JUST LIKE
YOU SAID THEY WOULD! HAHA!

BOOM! Another blast erupts just a few feet from Fort.

The concussion spits Fort across his cage.

FORT'S POV -- a LOUD RINGING over a sideways view of a decimated camp. Trees shredded. Earth mushrooms. Dirt and dust rising.

FORT

Stands streaked with fresh blood and dirt.

He grabs his ears then staggers with a limp from his gunshot wounded leg through a hole in the bamboo cage ripped open by the blast.

Fort stumbles pass Buzzard who is on the ground, keening in pain, digging at smoking shrapnel melted into his side.

He shuffles into the jungle leaving the devastated camp behind.

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - DAY

The dead bodies of Old Whybrow, Old Emmmit, Old Ox, and Old Camacho decorate the floor.

AT THE DOOR WITHOUT A HANDLE

Stands the Older Lady. She uses her good arm to slowly pull her separated shoulder back into place -- CLUNK.

The Older Lady then reaches out of view down towards her backside and pulls out a thin tube.

From the tube, she removes a ring with a noticeable scratch on it and places it on her finger. She stares at the ring a moment then wipes a smudge from a fingernail.

She then removes a key and unlocks the door.

The Older Lady exits with a slight limp into a shadowy light and closes the door.

FADE TO:

EXT. CAMBODIA JUNGLE - DAY

Fort hobbles through jungle now a safe distance from the bombing.

He hits a clearing to see an American chopper on patrol overhead.

Fort stops at the sight of this chopper when it opens fire kicking up chunks of earth around him!

INT. CHOPPER - DAY

The PILOT is the first to recognize that this figure clad in black pajamas is no VC.

PILOT (INTO RADIO)
FRIENDLY! CEASE FIRE! CEASE FIRE!
FRIENDLY GODDAMNIT!

EXT. CAMBODIA JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

Fort stands frozen as the chopper rocks down, whipping up dust clouds.

The DOOR GUNNER waves for Fort to get on.

DOOR GUNNER
C'MON! WE GOT YOU!

Fort leers at the chopper. His eyes blackened and hollow, body decayed -- a mere shell of his former self.

But here's his chance. His chance to finally end the nightmare. To go home.

Fort hobbles back into the jungle.

FADE OUT.

THE END