

CHINA BEACH

(pilot)

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FIRST DRAFT

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CHINA BEACH

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

WOMAN

sets up a rickety chair on a beach and settles into it. She picks aviator sunglasses, a beat-up Thermos, and a dog-eared paperback, The End of the Affair, out of a ditty bag. Her name is COLLEEN McMURPHY and she's a strawberry blonde, one part flax, one part autumn leaf. She wears no makeup, has done nothing special with her hair; she could care less about such things. Her body doesn't get special attention either and doesn't need it -- it's American, athletic, resourceful, resilient. It carries her youth and exhaustion without a seeming dent.

BEACH

is like McMurphy, no nonsense, yet something to look at. The arc of the coast, a lifeguard stand, long, leisurely dunes, and a cobalt sea shuffling up surf. There is a tremendous clarity about everything, almost a disturbing clarity. It is beautiful, yet somehow ominous.

CLOSER ANGLE

It's so hot, McMurphy drags her things toward the water. The lifeguard miraculously appears to help her. His name is BOONIE LANIER.

McMURPHY

Hey, Boonie. Thanks, Boonie.

BOONIE

That's affirm, McMurphy.

He's casual, handsome, there and gone. Colleen settles down a second time, sticks her toes in the water. Pretty close to heaven. The WAVES BREAK with a BOOM a little like artillery, and chatter and die around her in a whisper, ssss. Boom-ssssss. It's quiet, but the waves; you can almost feel you can hear the sand talk. Whisper, whisper. It's beautiful. Yet.

CLOSER ANGLE

A DISTANT RRRRRR, a little like a helicopter, interrupts it. An OUTBOARD. Coming closer, laughter joins it. McMurphy keeps reading. But -- the next thing she knows she's slapped with splash.

HER POV - HOT-DOGGING WATER SKIER

has leapt the wake to get near her. He waves and laughs:

WATER SKIER

Hey there, honey bunch. Party
time!

COLLEEN

looks at the hot-dog, the laughter, the now receding boat. A complicated look. And now she packs up her things and picks up her chair, and starts back up the beach.

SAND DUNES

(NOTE: Steadicam.) As she walks up the first dune a song starts, "STAY" (Just A Little Bit Longer) by Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs -- and buildings appear, some temporary, some tents, some bunkered by sandbags and surrounded by rolls of concertina wire. This is not Malibu, Hawaii, Tahiti, this is not 1987. This is China Beach, Da Nang, Vietnam, 1967.

36TH EVAC HOSPITAL

(NOTE: Steadicam.) Without stopping, the MUSIC RISING, McMurphy walks into a hunk of metal shaped like a tin can plopped on its side. Here there is no quiet. The place is a roar with hustling personnel and the raw notes of an emergency room. Fresh wounded are arriving. Without peeling her bathing suit, McMurphy dons nurse's garb. Fine flesh disappears and busted flesh rolls in the broken, unrepaired, double doors from the chopper pad. With the WIAs comes DAY-GLO, the door gunner on the med-evac dust off. In his helmet and goggles he looks like a visitor from an alien planet -- and he might as well be. The wounded are bloody rags with men inside. Not pretty sights.

DAY-GLO

I thought you were cut some slack.

McMURPHY

(setting to work)

Was.

DAY-GLO

This is not slack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY

Hey, I had an hour off.

DAY-GLO

You were supposed to take the
R & R you never had. Beer, the
beach, beaucoup.

McMURPHY

I don't like water skiing.

Not once does Colleen stop working -- a quick, clean cut, a brief spurt of blood, a tube in, a tracheotomy done, and one grunt no longer sounds like a car engine on its awful last legs. Yet these two have honed to a shorthand the use of irony without inflection. A kind of grace under pressure.

DAY-GLO

Better still. Kick back. Ree-
laxxx. You're short. Beau coup.

McMURPHY

Six days left, 162 hours and 38
minutes. Just a rough
approximation.

DAY-GLO

(as she wheels off)

Man, you're so short I can't even
see you anymore. Take the rest
of the year off.

OPERATING ROOM

is just walls hung to hang things on, and blood everywhere. A surgeon, DOCTOR DICK RICHARD, hands come up from work, like a calf-roper finishing his tying.

RICHARD

Time?

NURSE

(hitting a chess
timer)Three minutes and thirty-eight
seconds.

RICHARD

New record! Next!!

WITH the wounded grunt McMurphy wheels in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD
What are you doing here?

McMURPHY
I love my work.

RICHARD
(a look)
You okay?

McMURPHY
Never been better.

For a second the line doesn't quite fly. The tiniest hairline crack of breakage. He rides over it:

RICHARD
Couldn't stay away from me --
admit it.

He dons new mask and gloves, passes her, and she jumps:

McMURPHY
Don't you think just once you
could pinch the left one?

RICHARD
(jaunty and
undeterred)
What we got here?

McMURPHY
Sucking chest wound, blood
pressure forty over --

RICHARD
Nice trach. Start that clock.
Let's go to work.

And they do. Both he and McMurphy reach toward the grunt, toward the blood. And OVER --

INT. 707 - LOOKING TOWARD TAIL - LATE AFTERNOON

The LANDING GEAR GRINDS down on a crammed airline. Its lights are very dim. Its first class is filled by businessmen arriving because capitalism goes hand in hand with war, and by an ambassador-at-large, LONGLEY WEYMOUTH. With him is ELLIOTT ENDICOTT, who has a sharp razor cut and a sharp briefcase; everything about him is sharp -- his shirt, his suit, his nose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELLIOTT
We're ready for you, Mister
Ambassador. The red carpet --

WEYMOUTH
What?

ELLIOTT
The red carpet, the full
treatment --

WEYMOUTH
I hate that crap.

ELLIOTT
(his turn)
What?

WEYMOUTH
This is no five-day congressional
junket, the same old pogues and
puff pieces. I want to see what's
really going on.

He's a tall, old shark, his face cut and poked by age, a little deaf, a little blind, easy to patronize. But beware -- he still has wits and fangs.

ELLIOTT
(sharper still)
That's why I'm here. To facilitate
for you. Whatever you want. What
no one else has seen. The real
thing.

The seat belt sign blinks on.

STEWARDESS (V.O.)
Please fasten your seat belts. We
will be landing in Da Nang in
approximately five minutes --

Elliott gets up and makes his way back to tourist class, past rows filled by a slew of scared, skinny, young soldiers arriving in country.

STEWARDESS (V.O.)
-- Please make sure your tray
tables and seats are returned to
their fully upright positions.
All lights must be turned off as
we descend in this area and --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Further back there's a girl who is very tense, very blonde, and very clean. Her name is CHERRY WHITE. This is where Elliott nabs a seat.

STEWARDESS (V.O.)

-- Smoking is not permitted until we are safely on the ground.

ELLIOTT

(leans across a quivering young soldier)

I bet you're an entertainer.

CHERRY

Are you talking to me?

ELLIOTT

A dancer. I look at you and I see a dancer.

CHERRY

Really?

She's not dumb, she's just irreducibly innocent. Catnip to many men.

ELLIOTT

A movie star.

CHERRY

(blushes)

No.

ELLIOTT

You're somebody important.

CHERRY

Oh no. I'm just with the Red Cross.

The quivering boy looks back and forth, awestruck at her beauty and Elliott's malarky, and scared shitless.

ELLIOTT

(yawn)

That's interesting. What made you come here?

CHERRY

I have a mission.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELLIOTT

(yawn)
What's that?

CHERRY

I can't tell you.

ELLIOTT

(studies her anew)
Really.

CHERRY

Yes.

Her simplicity has such beauty and such fervor he's halfway sucked in. The rest he feigns, the sharp operator at work.

ELLIOTT

I understand completely. I'm not at liberty to talk about certain things either. But --

(in shared secrecy)

-- But here's my card, you ever have any problems, if there's anything I can do, come see me.

The card is embossed in gold, with eagles, and he makes sure to touch Cherry. The contact might linger if the hips and legs of the STEWARDESS didn't appear:

STEARDESS (O.S.)

Seat backs all the way up.

And she does it for him: up he pops with a lurch.

STEARDESS'S HIPS AND LEGS

move on back and encounter a GIGGLING SOLDIER who stops her and suddenly turns serious.

GIGGLING GRUNT (SOLDIER)

Miss, I can't work my seat belt.
You're going to have to help me.

The soldier next to him is still having a laugh riot. She is still only hips and backside:

STEARDESS

I know that trick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIGGLING GRUNT

Trick? What trick? Really, I need help.

The hips don't move and her hand reaches in her pocket. There's barely room for it in there, not to mention anything else. Something to watch. But... She comes out with a knife. Not very big, but very shiny.

STEWARDESS

If I find anything else hanging around down there I'm cutting it off and taking it with me.

GIGGLING GRUNT

(very high, very fast)

I'll do it, I'll do it.

His partner's still having a laugh riot -- and the hips move on.

FURTHER BACK STILL

They pass three women sardined in with suitcases and instrument cases. They are a motley trio, the Southern Belles. The lead singer is GEORGIA LEE, a beauty queen, teasy and conservative, a Phyllis George; and a well-intentioned, classic American tourist.

GEORGIA

This is a great opportunity for us --

BARBER

To get discovered --

GEORGIA

To serve our country --

BARBER

To meet some hunks --

GEORGIA

Laurette, you stop you hear. We have a duty to perform --

BARBER

And I intend to. For 168 hours, for one week. In and out. Come and gone. Hello, goodbye. Out-a-here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBER (CONT'D)

(and)

Fame, fortune, and --
men-o-rahm-a.

GEORGIA

This is serious business --

BARBER

Nothing is more serious business
than monkey business.

(and)

I am ready to be totally
disgraceful --

The plane lands with a BUMP.

BARBER

-- Willfully and without
forethought.

GEORGIA

Promise me you'll behave, girl.

(and)

Remember, you're back-up.

BARBER

(grudgingly)

I remember, I remember.

(irrepressible)

Soon to be a famous back-up.

GEORGIA

(plane stops)

There is a war on.

BARBER

(different ones)

I know, believe me, I know.

Forget the trio's name -- Lurette Barber's never been south of South Philadelphia. Barbarian is her real name, and her mouth, her figure, her zest are larger than life. She's a force of nature without portfolio. Their third member, Y SACHEEM, is a big, silent Indian who sees everything and says nothing, except on stage.

GEORGIA

Did you come willingly -- or did
you get kicked out of the country?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBER

(getting up)

I would have gone to jail,
anything to get out of the Holiday
Inn in Paoli, P.A.

(getting her things)

George Washington did not become
a star there, George Washington
froze there, Valley Forge, and
nobody's woken up since. There's
a college there, Immaculata, and
they practise immaculate
conception.

(going up the
aisle)

Come to think of it, prison's not
a bad idea -- where else do you
get such a large, captive
audience?

(at the door)

Except Vietnam.

And they go through the door.

STEWARDESS (O.S.)

Have a nice stay.

EXT. CHOPPER PAD - DUSK

A crowd of CRAZIES play softball -- "hummm that seed," "No
batter, no batter," "Pitch it in here." Along comes
Colleen McMurphy and two EVAC attendants, trundling some
men on stretchers. She carries a clipboard and some more
exhaustion with her. Whatever sun she got has bled away.
So has the sun itself; it's slipped into a spectacular
dusk. Still it's hot, still she hasn't had time to
change. She tugs at her chafing suit, wipes her stained
brow on her already stained sleeve.

BOONIE

(one of the crazies)

Hey, McMurphy. It's game time!

McMURPHY

I've hung up my spikes.

BOONIE

You can't do that. We need your
glove.

McMURPHY

Good field, no hit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOONIE

Just a slump. It's a long season.

McMURPHY

Mine's over.

BOONIE

Renegotiate your contract. Reup.

McMURPHY

Are you insane?

BOONIE

Now you're talking my language.

Play goes on around them and a hot liner sings past Boonie. McMurphy one-hands it, causing a commotion. ("Out." "She's not playing -- " "Fair ball," "Foul!")

BOONIE

With those hands --
 (and now)
 Unlike the guys you're with --
 you still can play.

A CHOPPER descends before she can answer, trying to land, stirring up wind and dust and great noise. Undeterred, the players alter their bicker: "Get that thing off our field!" "It's on our team." "Pinch hitter." "Ringer!" But with her clipboard and the men on the stretchers, Colleen McMurphy leaves the crazy game. And --

EXT. GREAT DUST BOWL

A tall, handsome, Southern glass of water in a flight jacket materializes. He sees her, her renewed tug of her suit, and wipe of arm and forehead. His name is NATCH AUSTEN, and he's all zoomie.

AUSTEN

Oh my Lord what's this?
 (as she keeps on going)

A vision --

(as she keeps on
 going)

-- The F-4's parked outside.
 Fresh whitewalls. Aretha on the
 tape deck. Zoom to Saigon.
 Catch a flick. A little dinner.
 C rations flambe.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUSTEN (CONT'D)

Strafe the enemy if you like --
what are we waiting for?

She's gone right past him.

AUSTEN

Where'd you go?

McMURPHY

Where do you guys come from?

AUSTEN

The best and the biggest.

McMURPHY

Don't you ever quit? I'm not
getting involved with a pilot.
(like escaping gas)
Again.

AUSTEN

Forget involvement. Forget him.

McMURPHY

I'm trying.

AUSTEN

I'll help.

McMURPHY

(keeps on going)
But will you still love me tomorrow?

The baseball game roars, the CHOPPER CHOPS and WHOPS.

AUSTEN

Who says there is a tomorrow?

INT. GRU

Colleen makes her way into another plopped tin can. This one has little light, a noisy AIR CONDITIONER and rough, simple racks laid out like bunks with men in them that look wrapped in sleeping bags. They aren't sleeping bags, of course and the men aren't sleeping. This is GRU, The Graves' Registration Unit.

BECKETT, PRIVATE SAMUEL B.

works here. He's a candle burning at both ends; there's not an extra ounce of black flesh on him. He has highways under his eyes and somehow they are pale; lime spread over humus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY

Beckett.

He finishes work on a Marine, zips the body bag. He's a careful zipperer.

BECKETT

Sorry, no room in the inn.

(and)

Do you know the Marines ship you home in a three hundred dollar aluminum box all dressed up like a lifer in a blouse from a set of dress blues? But no white hat. And no pants. They don't give you any pants. Your friends from school and all of the relatives you never liked anyway will be there and they'll call you a good guy, a hero, and you'll lie there like a mackerel with no pants on.

McMURPHY

Beckett.

BECKETT

What's on today's menu?

McMURPHY

(reading)

Traumatic amputation, multiple lacerations, through and through fragment wounds.

BECKETT

(black Walter Cronkite)

And that's the way it is on patrol today in the vicinity of Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam.

McMURPHY

Beckett.

Every time she says his name it's different, quieter, darker: Hi man, how they hanging, Jesus, Oh Beckett. The word, like so much here, is an iceberg: ten percent spoken, ninety percent below the conversation line.

BECKETT

(washes his hands)

Formaldehyde. What if it doesn't wear off?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Won't have to worry about insect bites. No more buying 6-12. No funeral expenses. Already pre-embalmed.

He sure can talk, dark and funny, a bit of a fool, but with a disturbing knack of holding up the truths we don't want to see.

McMURPHY

Beckett.

BECKETT

Always a pleasure sweet Mick Emm, always a pleasure to see you. But one day just once what a pleasure, wouldn't it be to maybe not.

VIEW FROM INSIDE BODY BAG

He looms over the last bag he has and zips, carefully zips, until there is only his face, saint and gravedigger, and then it, too, is gone.

McMURPHY (O.S.)

One day Beckett, Samuel B., one day real soon.

BECKETT

We'll miss you.

Then his face is gone too. There is BLACK.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

SERIES OF FLAGS

PULLING BACK SLOWLY -- hang limp on poles -- one's French, one's Vietnamese, one's from each of the Armed Forces, one's Red Cross, and one very big one is American. A sign above them says: U.S.O. China Beach. A WHIRR starts and the flags perk up, positively whip and SNAP. It's a FAN that does it, the only one in the room. It doesn't cool anyone, it flies the flags -- and LILA GARREAU steps in front of them and into the breeze.

LILA

Hello. Bon jour. Chao ong. This is the moment I love most -- the sight of you young, patriotic Americans coming to help our boys. My name is Lila Garreau and I'm your Special Services officer. I've been here since the beginning of time, I've seen everything, and you don't know how lucky you are. There are half-a-million young fighting men in this country and almost that many civilians. Most are very young and more than twelve thousand miles from home. For many this is their first time away. They need you.

The faces of the women she talks to come INTO VIEW. Laurette Barber, Georgia Lee, Cherry White, Y Sacheem, others. Equally young. Extraordinary faces -- many Irish Catholic, some black, all American.

BARBER

(mouthing silently)

Men-O-Rahma!

GEORGIA

(ditto)

Oh stop it!

LILA

You have a grave responsibility.
You represent home to these boys.
You are the only link to the
world they know.

Lila Garreau has the beauty that ugliness can gather as it gets older. A firm jaw, fierce eyes. She has the crust of Katherine Hepburn, the resolve of Eleanor Roosevelt, and the convinced warp of Doonesbury.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

And as representatives of the United States, the Red Cross, the S.R.A.O., the U.S.O., I'm sure I don't have to mention basic rules of behavior -- but not everyone is as high class of people as you girls obviously are.

(rat-a-tat)

You of course will conduct yourselves as ladies at all times. Appropriate behavior, strict personal hygiene, a clean sharp uniform. You will keep your hair short, your skirts long. No knees. I do not want to see any knees.

Barber can't believe all this, Cherry drinks it in. For Georgia it might as well be another beauty contest.

LILA

Attending officer receptions or embassy events you will wear white gloves before six, black gloves after, curfew is 2200 hours. There are no exceptions. I'm sure you -- we -- we will have no problems. But most of all, girls -- welcome. Have a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful war.

INT. U.S.O. GAME ROOM - LATER

Lights up. Throwing the switch is K.C., short for Kansas City, where she's from and saw some tough times, bad times.

K.C.

Tomorrow this'll be all yours. Cards, Monopoly, Ping-Pong, Kool Aid. Just what the boys want.

CHERRY

What do they like to play most, K.C.?

K.C.

It's not in here.

CHERRY

Where is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

K.C. always talks on two levels, a two-career girl, volunteer and businesswoman, the tough article. She thinks she's being playful, obvious, the antidote to Lila. Cherry of course doesn't get it.

K.C.
Try looking in a mirror.

CHERRY
Why?

K.C.
Are you real?

CHERRY
What do you mean?

K.C.
You'll make a great Donut Dolly.

CHERRY
I'm with the Red Cross.

K.C.
(help)
That's what we're called. Chopper chicks, Kool-Aid kids, Donut Dollies. That's what we do -- bring donuts to the boys. They really like the ones with the holes in the middle. They'll really like you.

CHERRY
I hope so. That's why I'm here.
(and)
And to find my brother.

K.C.
What's his name? I meet a lot of guys.

CHERRY
Richard. Rick.

K.C.
I know a Bob, a Jim, a Ralph. No Rick.
(and)
There's a lot that a girl can do here. Here -- well, not in this room exactly -- you can be a sort of one-stop service center.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

K.C. (CONT'D)

T.C.B. Take care of business.
Make the geetus, the long green,
the folding, the flip out. The
filthy lucre. Well, that's what
we're fighting for. It's the
American way.

CHERRY

Whatever you said, K.C., you sure
can talk. I'll bet the boys love
you.

K.C.

(can't believe it)
You are for real, aren't you?

CHERRY

(blushes)
I try.

This is irresistible force meeting immovable object.
And OVER:

Y SACHEEM - NIGHT (LATER)

There's this HAMMERING, and she looks around and doesn't
know what to make of what she sees and hears.

LILA (O.S.)

This is where you'll perform next
week. A big show. A big day.
Our first one here. We're going
to whip this place into fine shape.
Everybody'll come. In the
meantime --

OTHER SOUTHERN BELLES

look around also.

LILA (O.S.)

-- You'll get ready, fly out, do
a couple of gigs at fire bases.
Warm-ups. Small. But you'll see
-- you'll never have an audience
like you'll have here.

LILA

All her classic conviction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

This is what these boys need, a
place like this and some good,
clean entertainment.

WIDEN TO:

INT. JET SET CLUB

The place is a blizzard of rough framing, great inten-
tions and dreamy dreams and the lack of necessities to
finish them with.

BARBER

(taking in the
sobering sight)

A lot like Paoli, P.A.

GEORGIA

Where's the bandstand?

LILA

Bandstand?

GEORGIA

Where are the lights?

LILA

Lights?

BARBER

A lot like Paoli, P.A.

GEORGIA

Microphones, sound system, speakers,
dressing rooms --

BOONIE

(passing)

Working on it.

BARBER

Who's he?

LILA

(the proud mother)

He's our lifeguard.

GEORGIA

(this is crazy)

The lifeguard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

And remember no two-piece swim suits, dear.

BOONIE (O.S.)

(calling)

Ladies, come take a look.
Magnificent. A thing of beauty.
A wonderment to behold.

He's across the Jet Set, through the open door, outside.

EXT. JET SET - BY POOL

Boonie's hiked out from the side of the diving board, hanging on by toe power, busy with a power drill and screwdriver. The pool itself is dark. Finishing, he squiggles back and stands in triumph, jumps up and down on it.

BOONIE

Hey, hey, whattya say, is this it?
A helicopter blade. I mean is this
it?

The Southern Belles stare at his unique board, the snapped shank of a helicopter rotor blade. The pool is dark.

BOONIE

Care for a swim? The last one in
the pool --

(as no one bites)

-- No. Well. Your loss. What's
next?

BARBER

Who are you?

BOONIE

(hops off the board)
Lanier, Boonwell G. 0135631. At
your service, sir.
(and)

Want something, need something.
Put in your request. We'll take
care of it.

BARBER

(cynical)

Like what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOONIE

You name it.

BARBER

How'd you end up in this place?

BOONIE

I came to get a tan.

GEORGIA

You what?

BOONIE

Great rays.

GEORGIA

You what? There's a war on.

BOONIE

I was misinformed.

He has a tremendous nonchalance and elan.

GEORGIA

(incensed)

Why aren't you out there --
fighting?

BOONIE

I've got a beach to run. Not much
of a beach, but it's all I got.

GEORGIA

Are you a coward? You're a coward.

BOONIE

(a slow take,
a blush)

Thank you, ma'am.

His cowardice may know no bounds -- but he's impossible
to deter or dislike.

BOONIE

(not upset in
the least)And a pool to fix. Sure you don't
want to take a swim?He shines his flashlight into the dark pool: there's
no water, no concrete; it's only a great, dark, dank
hole. What it doesn't lack and is arun with -- are
lizards and rats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA
(jumps back)

Aaah.

Laurette laughs, Y Sacheem looks, and:

LILA
I thought I said no pets in the
pool.

INT. JET SET CLUB - AT BAR

Doctor Dick Richard approaches the bar. Other men and
doctors are already there, unfazed by the conditions
of the place, unfazed by practically anything.

RICHARD
What's there to eat?

The bartender, KIM, is a Vietnamese girl, sensual,
cynical, enigmatic.

KIM
Let me see. Canned beans, canned
beans, and... canned beans.

RICHARD
That's not exactly what I had in
mind.
(maybe the short
menu, maybe not)
What do you have to drink?

KIM
Canned beer, canned beer and...
canned beer.

RICHARD
You're so good to me.

Georgia Lee pulls up beside him, the whole trio does --
and Georgia starts stoking on chips and dip. Fascinating
to watch. This Southern belle has a fantastic figure
and a fantastic appetite.

BARBER
On diet soda I can manufacture
waffles and puckers.

Georgia keeps eating, they keep watching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD

I'm Doctor Richard. Perhaps I
better check your tonsils.

BARBER

A little vertical insertion I'm
sure.

RICHARD

(unfazed)

You know my technique.

BARBER

Careful, I'll cut off your scalpel.

GEORGIA

What do you do?

RICHARD

(the between the
lines; the iceberg)

I have a quiet little practice
down by the beach. Knit a little,
cut a little.

He's like a new kind of material, humanity sneaking in
between the unfazed Teflon when he isn't looking.

FROM BEHIND BAR

Carrying his beer, he passes behind them -- and each in
turn jumps. Goosed. Y Sacheem -- Uh. Georgia Lee --
Oh. Laurette -- Ow.

BARBER

(recovering)

Oh Doctor.

RICHARD

Yes.

BARBER

Thank you so much.

Her hand drops from sight -- and suddenly Doctor Dick
loses his color, practically his lunch, and almost his
power to reproduce.

RICHARD

(when he can)

You're so good to me.

ACROSS ROOM - AT TABLE

are a couple of Doctors and Colleen McMurphy in shorts and fatigue shirt. What she's drinking isn't Kim's canned stuff. It's in a shot glass and of dubious color. Down it goes. Awful stuff. Gasp. Flush. Cleanses the system an iota; clears away the all she has seen an iota.

RICHARD

(joining them)

How now, children?

McMURPHY

Join me, Doctor?

RICHARD

(taking a look)

You stick to your medicine and I'll stick to mine.

McMURPHY

Ay-ay, sir.

Down goes another ounce of dubious color. Another iota.

RICHARD

McMurphy, you keep working that arm you're going to have one like Ted Kluszewski. Of course, you don't know who he is.

McMurphy rolls up her short sleeves, small rolls, until it is very high on her arm:

McMURPHY

I've got five brothers -- you don't think I know who The Klu is? Fifty-two home runs in 1963. You don't think I can hit like The Klu? Well, you're right -- but look at that bicep.

Doctor Dick Richard looks, touches, little klaxon squeezes, lecherous eyebrows flying like Groucho. Yet the edge of tenderness seeps in:

RICHARD

Nice subcutaneous tissue.

McMURPHY

Let's keep the subject on baseball, Doctor Richard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD

(reluctantly)

Guess it's time to hang my mitt
and scalpel up. See you at the
beach tomorrow, kiddies. Same
time, same place. Bring your
suits.

BEHIND HIM

as he goes, Georgia's talking to Boonie Lanier:

GEORGIA

I need backlighting -- for my hair.

BOONIE

Check.

GEORGIA

A baby spot.

BOONIE

Check.

GEORGIA

And an eye light. Like right
there.

The beauty queen is smashing to look at, but becoming
hard to take. Boonie looks at her with wonderment;
Laurette also.

BOONIE

Double check.

TABLE ACROSS ROOM

Laurette wanders over to where McMurphy and the other men
sit.

BARBER

It's gotta be more interesting
over here.

(my name is)

Laurette Barber.

(shaking hands)

Let's see -- Bachelor #1, Bachelor
#2, and Bach-e-lor #3. And --
whoa -- Competition #1.

McMURPHY

I'm just one of the guys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBER
 (looks at her)
 I'm sure. Look at you.
 (and)
 Hair like a wheat field. Body
 like Monroe. Heart probably as
 big as America.
 (imitating Boonie)
 Check. Double check.

Outrageousness and truth all squashed together pink
 McMurphy's manufactured toughness of skin. Right through
 the ounces of dubious color, the iotas.

McMURPHY
 (maintaining)
 I'm -- just -- one of the guys.

EXT. JET SET CLUB - NIGHT

Barber and two of the Doctors come out. One wears sun-
 glasses and Laurette borrows them, and takes both men
 by the arm.

BARBER
 Just a little slice of heaven.

DOCTORS
 Except -- Just one thing --

BARBER
 (quick to catch it)
 Wait a minute. What is this?

DEE
 Our shift starts in ten minutes.

The second Doctor takes the sunglasses from her, puts
 them on.

DUM
 Five minutes.

BARBER
 Shift?

DEE
 As soon as I get off --

BARBER
 When is that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUM

Six A.M.

BARBER

I've never seen six A.M. I don't do six A.M.

DUM

Four minutes.

Doctor Dee grabs up Laurette, a big smooch. Wow. Before she can recover Doctor Dum spins her and gives her a second one. Wow. Doctor Dee takes back his sunglasses -- and they're gone. She's alone.

BARBER

This is not the way it's supposed to work out.

BEHIND HER

as she was with Doctor Dee and Doctor Dum, McMurphy has appeared. She's watched with a mixture of emotions it's easy to mistake for disapproval. It's much more than that -- what she's seen and felt and done and vowed not to do again. Just be one of the guys. It's leaking through, and she doesn't want it to.

TWO WOMEN

Barber sees her, but McMurphy sets off without a word.

BARBER

Hey --

McMurphy keeps on, Barber trips after her.

BARBER

-- You don't like me.

McMURPHY

I don't know you.

BARBER

And you don't want to.

McMURPHY

I didn't say that.

BARBER

But you don't want to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY

... No...

They walk toward a half-bombed out church that has been jim-cracked into a ramshackle hotel. After lights out, it looms like a dark growth in the noisy night: The noise is the quiet that isn't quiet -- ARTILLERY and OCCASIONAL GUNFIRE in the DISTANCE, the war over the hill, Vietnam.

BARBER

Boy, you've got the watertight doors shut down.

McMURPHY

It goes with the territory.

BARBER

You mean -- this isn't Club Med?

McMURPHY

(a sea change)

I hate to tell you -- this is the In Country. China Beach, The 'Nam.

BARBER

I'm here for one week to sing some songs, have some adventures, meet some men.

(playing back the sea change)

Why did you come?

McMURPHY

(deflecting now)

Ah. The big questions. Why are we here? Who made us?

BARBER

Is there a God?

McMURPHY

What's it all about? Birth --

BARBER

Sex --

McMURPHY

Death --

BARBER

Sex --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY

Who put the ram in the ram a lama
ding dong?

BARBER

The dip in the --

McMURPHY

Dip she dip --

BARBER

The bop --

McMURPHY

In the --

BARBER

Bot she bop she bop.

They laugh in the rapid-fire exchange as they reach the church, the surprise of things shared, a way to talk about yet not talk about the deepest things, those that hurt, those that you can't salve. This is what you search for, a way to make it through.

McMURPHY

There you go. The answers to all
your questions.

(awkwardness
returning)

For tonight.

BARBER

(Peggy Lee)

Is that all there is?

McMURPHY

I think I've run out of lyrics.

The levity and shorthand fade now as they reach the church -- they barely know each other and there is the noisy night, the war over the hill, Vietnam.

McMURPHY

Sing some songs, find some
adventure... have a good week...

(walks on)

... 'Bye.

BARBER

You'd better come to a show...

(as McMurphy
walks on)

... 'Bye...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She watches the other woman go, and listens to the noisy night. Somehow this is not what she came for or expected.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Coming in Colleen McMurphy puts the GRATEFUL DEAD on a cheap record player, picking it from a chewed collection of lps. This is where she lives, a few yards of canvas, a few square feet in the hell she has devoted herself to that is hers. Her privacy, her home. She goes to a calendar and puts another X on it, and now she shucks her shirt, drops her shorts. She still wears the bathing suit. It still chafes. From under one haunch, she exhumes a clump of sand. It sits moist in her hand -- that time, that place, that interrupted moment of peace, so close and so far away. She squeezes it in her fist and drops it, but some sticks to her palm, won't fall away. She rubs her hands, rubs them harder. They won't go. Out out damned spot. For a moment for what seems like the silliest of reasons she starts to break down. Dry heaves. Tears won't come. The lamplight fades until there is --

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

CHERRY WHITE - MORNING

wears a starched pink uniform over a white blouse with puffed sleeves and a high hem. A sensual and chaste Little Bo Peep. She carries two bags of donuts and, awkwardly, she tries to turn the door handle to the game room at the U.S.O. It's locked.

CHERRY

Not on my first day. Not on my first --

WIDEN.

INT. U.S.O.

A distracted clerk named HICKENHOPPER appears in crisp fatigues and carrying file folders.

CHERRY

Excuse me.

He keeps going.

CHERRY

Excuse me.

He notices her, a slow take: she is ravishing and round-eyed and so damn clean.

HICKENHOPPER

Where did you come from?

CHERRY

The door's locked.

HICKENHOPPER

(staring)

Red Cross. New girl. I must have your file.

(looking)

AM-2425, CD-1475.

CHERRY

Help.

That gets him staring again.

HICKENHOPPER

Oh. Right. Well. Maybe I can jimmy it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pulls out a panoply from his pockets -- stapler, Scotch Tape, pens, pencils. An office supply store. A couple drop and they both bend to pick them up and almost bump, and a donut tumbles from her bag. He picks up a paper clip, straightens it out, she picks up the donut, and he starts working on the lock. The two of them hunkering there. She looks around -- others are starting to gather, surprising her and staring at her. She can feel the looks, the intensity of them, and it embarrasses her. Already it's hot, already it's humid, her starch wilting, perspiration gathering about the corners of her hair and on her upper lip. Hickenhopper works. She struggles for the donut. Another falls. The power of the looks make her feel like a human pratfall. The men. The looks. Uncertain, she goes to pick up the last donut and it is next to a wet muddy boot. Up she gazes: It belongs to a Bush man, a Lurp, who has materialized. He is called DODGER, and he carries not an M-16 but an M-60. Bandoliers cross his chest and he's hung with grenades. He's a mean-looking mother fucker. His eyes are like the bottom of the ocean.

CHERRY

Hi.

He stares.

CHERRY

We're locked out.

He stares.

CHERRY

What is it?

HICKENHOPPER

The lock seems to be malfunctioning.

The M-60 aims toward Hickenhopper or the door, impossible to tell. It's Cherry's turn to stare.

HICKENHOPPER

Don't... don't! I've still got to change my beneficiary form.

SWEETNESS

(a second Lurp)

Dodger, this is civilization. You can't just blow the door away.

Dodger considers this -- and with the butt of his M-60 instead, he bashes the door open.

INT. GAME ROOM

Those who have gathered filter in passing Cherry, leaving her and Dodger in the doorway.

CHERRY

Did you have to do that?

His stare again. What is it, some button done wrong or come undone, her slip showing, or could it just be the klutziness with the donuts? He eats her with lonely, tough, young eyes. Suddenly she realizes, though not quite why, that for this moment she is somehow the center of the world. Makes her nervous all over again, and determined:

CHERRY

Would you like to play a game?
There are all kinds. Darts in
the corner, some tape recorders.
You can do a message home. A
soft drink? Some coffee? Would
you like to talk? Where you
from?

(he's a tough
audience)

I'm from Iowa. I just got here.
This is my first day.

(one tough
audience)

I don't really know what I'm
doing -- but if I can do anything
for you I'd like to.

She's intrepid, a kind of brave in the face of his
silence. But she's winding down, losing it:

CHERRY

What are you looking at? What is
it?

(and)

I'm running out of things to say.
Please.

DODGER

You have round eyes.
(so elemental)
I haven't seen a round-eyed
woman... in a long time...

CHERRY

Oh, is that all.

He doesn't speak once more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHERRY

Now don't go all quiet on me, not again.

She doesn't get it: he can kill and has, but in his own way, he's having as much trouble as she is.

DODGER

I used to talk.

CHERRY

When was that?

DODGER

Long time ago... When I was a kid...

Even now that his silence is broken, words don't come easy.

CHERRY

How old are you now?

DODGER

Nineteen.

But he's right, he's not a kid anymore.

CHERRY

You couldn't be.

DODGER

What's your name?

CHERRY

Cherry.

DODGER

What's your real name?

CHERRY

That's it.

He can't believe it, he can't believe this place, he can't believe her, so damn clean:

DODGER

Cherry... Cherry... How old are you, Cherry?

CHERRY

Nineteen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DODGER

How'd you get to be such a kid?

The same age and not at all.

DA NANG OPEN MARKET - AFTERNOON (LATER)

is rife with mangosteens, papayas and smelly durian, scallions and ginger, bins of tumeric and cloves, belts of lavender and tangerine silk, black catfish and tiny striped snails, and the stench of meat rotting in the sun. And with Vietnamese. Among them are Laurette and Georgia Lee, the ultimate tourist. She wants to see and experience everything, the sights, the culture, the delicacies.

GEORGIA

(stopping)

How about some of this?

BARBER

It's either for cooking or a cure for cancer.

GEORGIA

Looks good.

BARBER

Could be both.

Georgia opens her mouth.

BARBER

I wouldn't do that.

Too late. It's gone.

GEORGIA

Don't worry. I took all sorts of preventative pills.

BARBER

I think it was still alive.

(and)

Why don't we just go to the PX?

GEORGIA

The PX is like the Safeway in Gary, Indiana. This is real. Look at this.

BARBER

Whatever it is -- I'm not going to look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA

So cute.

That makes Laurette turn.

GEORGIA

How much?

It's a dog.

BARBER

You're not serious.

GEORGIA

Something to take care of.

VIETNAMESE WOMAN

Five hundred piastres.

GEORGIA

Two-fifty.

BARBER

We got half a million men here.
 We're not here for some dog.

(and)

We'll be gone in a week. What
 then?

VIETNAMESE WOMAN

Three-fifty.

GEORGIA

How much is that in money?...
 Never mind. Okay. Yes.

VIETNAMESE WOMAN

Seal bargain.

She takes the dog off.

BARBER

What's she going to do -- gift
 wrap it?

(and)

Watch: the dog will become famous
 and we won't.

GEORGIA

Look at this.

BARBER

Georgia. Don't do it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA

Mmmh. Best yet.
 (and)

I'm going to call the dog Sugar
 Pie Honey Bunch.

The Vietnamese vendor returns.

GEORGIA

Where's the puppy?

VIETNAMESE WOMAN

(in Vietnamese)

Right here.

(pats a wrapped
 sack)

Very good for stew.

Suddenly Georgia doesn't feel so good.

INT. BOMBED-OUT CHURCH - RAMSHACKLE HOTEL - LATER

Cherry knocks on a door. The heat is tremendous, the humidity is worse, there is no starch left in Miss Peep's clothes.

K.C. (O.S.)

Go away.

CHERRY

K.C.

K.C. (O.S.)

Go away.

CHERRY

This is Cherry.

Behind the door there's grumblings like thunder. The door jerks open.

K.C.

Once I knew it was you I knew I had to open the door.

CHERRY

Thank you.

K.C.

Because -- I knew you'd never go away.

CHERRY

Can I talk to you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

K.C.
Isn't that what --

A GI slides between them.

K.C.
-- We're already --

He's leaving.

K.C.
-- Doing?

G.I.
Later.

CHERRY
Who's that?

K.C.
One that got away.

CHERRY
Did I interrupt something?

K.C.
(a snap of sarcasm)
The light dawns. Maybe there is
somebody in there.

INT. ROOM

She turns and walks into her ramshackle quarters. There's a great circular bed, cracks and a gekko lizard on the wall, and a glass display case like a jewelry store might have.

CHERRY
(troubled)
I went to work today and it
wasn't what I expected. There
were some nice boys, some sad
boys, and there was this one.
Filthy, kind of nasty, maybe mean.
He looked old, he looked strange.
He made me uncomfortable. He
made me feel I should take a
shower with a wire brush. He
made me feel like I couldn't
help.

K.C.
(disdainful)
Why'd you come here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHERRY

To do that, to help the decent
boys.

K.C.

(disgusted)

Help the boys?

CHERRY

My brother was here and he wasn't
like that. Not when he came.

K.C.

(disdainful and
disgusted)

With donuts? You make it worse.
In your little outfit. Just a
tease. One more thing they
can't have. Well, I know what
they want, and I give it to them.

(beat)

I don't exactly give it to them.

CHERRY

(recoiling)

You what?

K.C.

Duty. Honor. Country. Well, I
know all about honor. I honor
Visa, Mastercard, American
Express.

CHERRY

I don't believe you.

K.C.

(why stop now)

Hey, want to be faithful to your
girl? Your wife? How about some
stocks, some jade? I sell
whatever sells. I'm a hooker with
a heart of gold. As long as it's
fourteen or twenty-four karat.

CHERRY

That's disgusting.

K.C.

What do you give them?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

K.C. (CONT'D)

Some nice chit chat -- then send them out to be shot at and shat on and maybe begin a lifelong relationship with this green piece of plastic that zips.

(all barrels)

Take off your invisible white gloves. Open your eyes. We do the same thing. Except -- I perform a real service.

Innocence shakes under the onslaught.

EXT. CHOPPER PAD - LATER

Natch Austen walks -- and suddenly develops a severe limp. He passes through the busted-up double doors into the 36th EVAC.

INT. 36TH EVAC

For once it's quiet -- and there's Colleen McMurphy in the corridor ahead of him.

AUSTEN

Nurse. Nurse!

(pretends not to recognize her; oh so tough)

I caught a little shell fragment. Nothing serious.

(winces)

I wonder if you could help me.

It's my leg.

McMurphy's had another bloody day. He's a zoomie and right now she's a bit of a zombie.

McMURPHY

Which one?

AUSTEN

The left.

McMURPHY

Let me see.

He gimps closer and halfway there she comes to, recognizes him, feels his attraction, and then notices something else:

(CONTINUED)

INT. LAUNDRY NICHE (36TH EVAC) - MOMENT LATER

Colleen ducks into the niche and wrestles with her surgical gown. It's wet, blood and sweat in a humid, smelly mix. She's stiff and sore and sad and sore, a different kind of sore, what a year has done, what Austen brings up -- and her gown sticks like a wet bathing suit, like the sand. It won't come, after a certain point up over her head it won't budge, practically a straight-jacket. For a moment she's afraid she'll never get out. "Come on, come on," and in her effort she makes a yelp of fear and panic. At last she's free. She catches her breath, relaxes, straightens herself out, and leaves the gown and the moment behind.

INT. MAIN RECEIVING ROOM

She comes back down the corridor to where the double doors to the chopper pad are. Austen's gone. She stops. A wind blows in -- but it's not that.

HER POV - CHECKOUT COUNTER

It's the corner: there's a retinue of gurneys there and they are not empty. Men are on them. Men who do move. Men who have been forgotten in the frenzy of helping others. Men who are dead. She looks and looks.

DOCTOR DICK RICHARD

sees her standing there, collars an orderly.

RICHARD

Somebody forgot to clean up the
checkout counter. Get those
dead men out of here.

McMURPHY - LATER

Looks up and a wack of water hits her.

EXT. JET SET CLUB ROOF - SHOWER HEAD

streams down upon her.

SHE AND SHOWER HEAD

She lets it, lets it sting and bite into her, do whatever it can. Wants it to. She closes her eyes, she could stay here forever. Practically needs to. A THOP THOP rises above the water. She opens her eyes.

HER POV - CHOPPER

is hovering overhead, a couple of guys taking a look.

SHOWERS ON ROOF

She waves and smiles and without transition or particular rancor she shoots them the finger.

HER POV - CHOPPER

They love it, hoot and holler -- but even more, lowering further, they discover something else to look at. Forget the shower. She throws on a towel, throws open the shower doors until she finds another occupied one. Cherry's inside.

McMURPHY

(throws her a towel)

You're about to start a riot.

CHERRY

What?

(coming out of her daze)

What are they doing?

McMURPHY

What do you think they're doing?
Looking at the eighth wonder of
the world.

Her reaction is big -- she coils herself into the towel, like a snail into a shell.

CHERRY

That's awful.

McMURPHY

Boys will be boys.

Colleen tosses it off flippantly, and turns to find a second big reaction, tears.

McMURPHY

Hey, what is it?

CHERRY

It's silly.

McMURPHY

Don't think you have a corner on
silly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHERRY

I hate crying. It ruins makeup,
it robs the natural oils.

(laughs, cries)

That's not it. It makes me feel
stupid, out of control. Like a
kid.

McMURPHY

You're a new guy.

CHERRY

What do you mean?

McMURPHY

How long you been in The Nam?

Abashed, Cherry holds up a single finger. And in that
digit alone she is already changed.

McMURPHY

Month?

(a shake of the
head)

Day?

CHERRY

(shaky nod)

A donut dollie.

(and)

There is something else: I came
too, to find my brother.

McMURPHY

Where is he? I Corp? What
outfit is he in?

CHERRY

I don't know. He stopped writing
home.

McMURPHY

Try MAC-V or the consulate.
Maybe they can help.

CHERRY

(please)

Could he be on a secret mission?

McMURPHY

(oh please)

Anything's possible here.

Cherry's tears still come. Softens McMurphy:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MCMURPHY

Be glad you can cry. All of us
need a release. Don't steal that
from yourself. Do it --
 (captured by sharp
 sadness)
-- while you can.

SWEETNESS - LATER

The second lurch at the U.S.O. stares straight ahead. He has the thousand yard stare, yet there is something else there now, beyond the rage and anger and fear, besides menacing. He starts walking and he keeps on walking. Sounds start, the FLOP of his FEET, a WIND, VOICES, a RHYTHMIC BEATING like a heartbeat or distant artillery. Breaking waves. Without stopping, he drops his M-60 and keeps on going.

WIDEN

He walks right into the water, boots and all. The waves break around him. He stretches out his arms, crucifixion-style, then slowly falls backwards into the water. He floats like a piece of driftwood, lolling in the surf and a smile comes to his face.

HIS POV

There is the slightly rocking sun -- and now Boonie Lanier's face looms, reflector sunglasses in place, white zinc oxide on his nose. This could be an ugly confrontation.

BOONIE'S POV

Sweetness floats in the water.

BOONIE (O.S.)

This beach is restricted -- human
beings only.

SWEETNESS

(Boonie's life is
coming to an end)

You rear echelon mother fucker,
you're disturbing my swim, you're
bothering me, you're bitin' and
ranklin' and downright chewin'
on me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SWEETNESS (CONT'D)

One more word and -- you're
wasted, you're gone --

This could be an ugly confrontation.

BOONIE (O.S.)

You say one more word and I'll
tear off your head and stuff it
in your neck.

SWEETNESS

You're dead.

He starts to get up, wet and wild, water pouring off of
him.

SWEETNESS

(he chews on his
bayonet handle)
Eeeeeeyhaaaaaa!

BACK TO SCENE

This could be an ugly confrontation. They stand there,
seething and soaked -- and now they hug each other.

BOONIE

Sweetness.
(and)
God you smell bad.

SWEETNESS

I don't smell, I stink.

Together they walk out of the water. Dodger's there
waiting for them:

BOONIE

How's Indian Country?

SWEETNESS

Gettin' hotter, gettin' heavier.

BOONIE

(shot with irony)
Once, remember, it was a sweet,
clean, fine, clean, sweet war.

SWEETNESS

(a lot more irony)
Those were the days.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DODGER

We miss you, Boonie man. Come back.

The unavowed coward isn't so simple after all.

BOONIE

I'm working on my tan.

SWEETNESS

You were the worst.

BOONIE

That was easy. This is tough.

They look at the waves, they don't move. The irony. The between-the-lines, the iceberg. And Boonie puts his arms around the menacing men who look like a vision of Hell.

BOONIE

There it is.

INT. BOMBED-OUT CHURCH/RAMSHACKLE HOTEL - ON LETTERS -
LATER

A pack of them bound by rubber band flips by like cards. All have a return address:

CPL. RICK WHITE.
3rd Battalion, 26th Regiment
3rd Marine Division, Republic of Vietnam

WIDEN:

The fingers that flip through them, the hand that holds them belongs to Cherry. They are precious. She puts them down and crosses the room, a pocket size version of K.C.'s. No silk screens, no display cases, just the cracks and gekkos on the wall. Cherry goes through her pocket book. Out comes everything but the kitchen sink. She is so neat and it is such a mess -- and at last she unearths an embossed card with lots of gold and eagles that says:

ELLIOTT ENDICOTT

CLOSER ANGLE - HER HOPEFUL FACE

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

JEEP

driving like a maniac yanks its way up to the United States consulate in Da Nang, the twister of dust it sends up catching up with it. WIDEN:

EXT. CONSULATE - LATE AFTERNOON

It's a French era stucco villa, red tile roof, green shutters -- and when the dust settles the occupants of the Jeep can be deciphered. One's an MP, one's a mean driver, SMOKY BUNSEN, one's ambassador-at-large, Longley Weymouth. All are sweaty and filthy. Smoky hops out quickly, Weymouth moves much slower. His bones hurt, he looks like a disheveled stork.

INT. CONSULATE - OUTER OFFICE

Smoky Bunsen comes through a reception area, slapping dust off, past a uniformed male secretary who whistles at her. Smoky is a tiny black woman who packs two pistols and filthy-dirty is a condition she detests.

INT. CONSULATE - INNER OFFICE

This office is clean and starched, as is its occupant, Elliott Endicott.

ELLIOTT

How'd it go?

SMOKY

Just like yesterday.

ELLIOTT

Doesn't he ever get tired?

(and)

First I briefed him to death. I thought that would satisfy him. Or bore him to death. I think he turned down his hearing aid.

SMOKY

He wanted to drive today.

ELLIOTT

Where'd you take him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SMOKY

We ran around to every Godforsaken hole we could find without ever showing him a single thing dangerous.

ELLIOTT

What's next?

What's next is Longley Weymouth coming into the room, still rumped, but hair freshly slicked back.

WEYMOUTH

You talking about me?

ELLIOTT

No, sir.

WEYMOUTH

Too bad. I like to be talked about. She's a honey of a driver. We had fun.

ELLIOTT

You saw the worst.

WEYMOUTH

What about further in country?

ELLIOTT

You were there.

WEYMOUTH

What about further in country?

Is his repetition deafness or slyness? Endicott's INTERCOM BUZZES, saves him from having to find out. After listening on the phone:

ELLIOTT

Ambassador, something vital has come up. An emergency. Excuse me just a minute.

INT. OUTER OFFICE

Elliott passes out of the room with relief past the secretary who points and whistles.

INT. ADJOINING CUBBY HOLE

In it is Cherry White.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHERRY

Mr. Endicott, I don't know if you remember me.

ELLIOTT

Of course.

But he isn't sure.

CHERRY

On the plane. You gave me your card.

ELLIOTT

Of course.

It's coming now. Even if it weren't he'd make it up -- her looks, the carefully not-too-short skirt that rides up anyway, the white stockings that look gelatinous. This is the time of eye makeup and lipstick and hosiery that all look like cake frosting. She's quiet long enough that it becomes a force field, wrestling with how and what to tell. She hands him a picture now.

CHERRY

I'm looking for my brother. He was at Khe Sanh, but the letters we sent started coming back. We called the Marines in Washington. They said he was fine. Our letters kept coming back. We called again. They said then maybe he wasn't there. Where was he? Dead? Wounded? They said they had no record. They said they weren't sure. They said they didn't seem to be able to locate him -- though that was impossible. What should we do?

(her pure fervor)

I came to find him -- but I need help. Can you help me?

ELLIOTT

(takes his strategic time)

I'll fly up there myself and see what I can find out.

CHERRY

Would you really?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELLIOTT
(so straight and
razor sharp)
That's what I'm here for.

The whush of gratitude and relief comes close to bringing tears again. She crosses and uncrosses her gelatinous legs as cover. Elliott notices.

INT. INNER OFFICE

Elliott rips back in, inspired:

ELLIOTT
Mr. Ambassador. There is a place
where you can see everything. How
tough it is, how tough we are.
How well we're doing, how much
more we need. Tomorrow we'll
chopper up there. Khe Sanh.

INT. JET SET CLUB - BY HALF-FINISHED BANDSTAND - LATER

Laurette and some workers guess what wire goes in what plug. Georgia stands by, tapping her feet, clicking her nails.

GEORGIA
Come on, come on. We've got to
rehearse.
(there's futility
behind her)
Show time!
(to Laurette)
You see that over there?

BARBER
Where?

GEORGIA
With Miss Garreau.

BARBER
That weebly little skunk?

GEORGIA
That's Manny Hinklefarb!

BARBER
(mock-Southern,
real sarcasm)
Do tell. Good ol' Manny.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA

Don't you know? He came to the
Miss Cotton Gin pageant. He's a
talent scout.

BARBER

(real serious)

That Manny. Good ol' Manny.

There's more futility behind them. Eyeing Manny, Georgia decides to warm up, practice a scale. She opens her mouth to sing and with the first note comes this feeling, this look. Her mouth is not the only orifice that threatens to open.

BEHIND HER

Ah, that's it, there you go -- they think they've got it. Eyeing Manny, Laurette steps to the microphone.

BARBER

Testing, test --

(transformed into an
electronic mantra:

hummmmmmmmmmm)

-- Is it the amp whatchamajigit?

WORKER

(women)

We're trying, we're trying.

GEORGIA

feels gingerly. Strange noises and vibrations are coming from her stomach -- a volcano waiting to erupt. The look comes over her face.

GEORGIA

(very rapidly)

I'll just be a minute. 'Bye.

OTHER SIDE OF ROOM

Beckett comes in, makes for an empty table in the corner.

McMURPHY

(sees him)

Beckett!

(as Beckett
keeps going)

Beckett. Over here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reluctantly, shyly, he does. Everyone except McMurphy stands up, suddenly has to go. "Gotta go." "Nice seeing you, Beckett." "Letters to write." "Sack time." This has happened before. Now only McMurphy and Beckett remain. Bottles litter the table, especially in front of Colleen.

BECKETT

Look at them go. The Angel of Death rides again.

McMURPHY

Oh Beckett.

(gently)

Shut up, sit down, have a hit, hoist one.

BANDSTAND

Georgia is still in the head and everyone's impatience has increased exponentially. MANNY HINKLEFARB wanders over:

MANNY

Where's your singer?

BARBER

I'm a singer.

MANNY

The lead. The looker.

BARBER

(men)

Georgia Lee! Show time!

There's no answer for a second -- and now there's a FLUSH.

GEORGIA (O.S.)

I'm coming.

(and now)

Oh --

(the horror)

-- No.

There's another FLUSH.

OTHER SIDE OF ROOM

With nothing to do but wait, giving glances at Manny, snapping her fingers Laurette Barber comes over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBER
The rockin' pneumonia --
 (half-singing)
-- She needs a shot of rhythm and
blues...

McMURPHY
 (picks up the cue)
Roll over Beethoven, tell
Tchaikovsky the news!

BARBER
 (loves it)
They said you were high class...

McMURPHY
But that was just a lie...
 (out of the doldrums)
... You ain't never caught a
rabbit...

BARBER
You ain't no friend of mine.

TOGETHER
 (a big percussive
 finish)
You ain't nothin' but a hound dog,
crying all the time.

BECKETT
 (shaking his head)
Diddy bopping... white chicks.

BARBER
The one of the guys can sing.

McMURPHY
I just knows some lines.

BARBER
If you could I'd have you up there
right now.
 (semi-mock)
That's Manny Hinkefarb.

McMURPHY
 (maxi-mock)
The Manny Hinklefarb.

BARBER
He can make me rich and famous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY
 (mini-mock)
 What can he do for me?

BARBER
 What do you want?

McMURPHY
 (all mock gone)
 ... My sanity back...

BECKETT
 (shaking his head)
 Too late. Look at this.

McMURPHY
 What am I looking at?

Beckett is studying his hands.

BECKETT
 What color are they?

McMURPHY
 Beige. Sort of beige.

BECKETT
 (wounded)
 Beige?

BARBER
 What color are they supposed to be?

BECKETT
 (mortally wounded)
 Beige! They used to be black.

McMURPHY
 Beckett, what are you talking
 about?

BECKETT
 The formaldehyde. That's what it
 is.

(and)
 Spent my whole life bein' black
 when all it'd get you was a seat
 in the back of the bus and maybe
 a rope around your neck. Black
 through the hard times. Now I'm
 turnin' white just when black is
 beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY
(oh Beckett)
Beckett.

Beckett looks at his hands, and Barber looks at both of them. These two -- they carry the weight of all they have seen and it's something. Right now this minute -- colossal.

BARBER

Somehow it's one more thing Laurette didn't come for or expect.

INT. TENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Colleen McMurphy draws a diagonal line across the date on her calendar. Now she has another drink, one more shot of dubious color, another attempted iota. She looks at the calendar -- but it offers only dates. Now she slashes an opposite diagonal across the first, making an X. Only three days are left.

BECKETT - LATER

it's black and a DOOR SLAMS, and a small bulb comes on, illuminating him. He looks around the darkness, not afraid, but not at peace either.

INT. GRU

The light picks up headlights off the coffins. In the chill -- the one place here that is not intolerably hot -- his breath is visible. Cloud puffs, smoke signals.

BECKETT
You guys doin' okay? Sorry I was gone so long. I didn't want to make you worry. You got enough troubles, right, without having to worry about me.

(runs a hand along
a coffin)

I don't like leaving you guys alone too long.

(and)

So I'm turnin' white. So goodbye Four Tops, hello Beach Boys. Surfin' music and I can't even swim. So what.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKETT (CONT'D)

(and now)

I don't care. You're my men and I've got to take care of you.

(and now)

You don't care about color -- black, white, brown: don't make no difference. Yeah, old grim, old reaper, the first equal opportunity employer. I know there's got to be a reason you're there -- and I'm out here, talkin' to you. Got to be a reason... I just don't know what it is.

(walks to the door)

I'm turnin' in. Good night, good buddies... Sleep well...

He turns the light out and there is --

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. HELICOPTER - NEXT DAY

In bright daylight. It flies by, blue sky. WHOP, WHOP, WHOP. Laurette is dressed in fatigues and looks out the window, the prop wash blowing her hair. Y Sacheem is next to her, looks out also. Not Georgia. Her hands clutching the seat, locked tight, trying by sheer force of will to contain the protest demonstrations marching inside her.

ACROSS HUEY

is the door gunner and Manny Hinklefarb, hanging on, too.

ON OTHER SIDE

Laurette motions Georgia over to see the splendid green land that's turning darkly pitted and awful. Georgia shakes her head. She's not moving, not taking a chance. Still body, still bowels.

EXT. HELICOPTER

tilts and drops down, and --

INT. HELICOPTER

With each bump, Georgia's face vibrates with effort. Please, God. The struggle shows in the lines of her mouth. Tight mouth, tight ass.

LZ FIRE BASE ZEBRA

The chopper lands amidst sandbags and jerry-built bunkers, barbed wire everywhere. ARTILLERY ROUNDS in the distance sound like subway trains going overhead. Laurette gets out and shakes hands with a liason officer who mimes where they are going. Georgia gets down, trying to hold her skirt over her legs and her hair and her insides and there's just too much to hold and the prop wash blows her skirt up and as she brings her hands down to stop it her hair flies straight up.

INT. DRESSING ROOM

A plywood cubicle with ponchos draped across the opening that the Southern Belles can't fit into.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Outside, the BAND (O.S.) tests its INSTRUMENTS. Like sounds of their own nervous butterflies.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Legs wiggle into tight sequined dresses; white boots slip onto well-shaped ankles; hands tug zippers up tanned, muscular backs; straps lift over shoulders. Hair is tightly pinned down and wigs lift on. In a broken mirror three faces crowd up; makeup pencils highlight eyes and lips; rouge reddens cheekbones.

GEORGIA

tries the same, but raising her arm to wave, upsets the delicate balance of her body and her smile is one of desperation.

Y SACHEEM

is the cool, formidable Indian.

MANNY HINKLEFARB

takes a strategic position to watch. Lights a cigarette.

EXT. STAGE

A few sheets of plywood thrown over some ammo boxes -- and the girls take their places. The drummer does a big drum roll -- and his chair falls off.

CROWD

laughs, whistles, applauds.

DRUMMER

grins, picks himself up, gives the peace sign, and begins to riff again.

CROWD

relaxes now, ready.

GEORGIA

steps to the microphone -- so far, so good -- starts to sing. One single perfect note comes out before ARTILLERY begins, both outside and in, EXPLOSIONS and a little, newly-awful sound. Opening her mouth has opened other orifices as well. The ARTY goes off with big BANGS. One hand goes to her face, the other to her belly. A shudder, a whimper. She flees the stage as fast as she can. Even before she's off she's trying desperately to shuck the tight skirt that won't be so easily shucked.

EXT. STAGE

Laurette and the band watch Georgia go. The music winds down with a few drum beats, and then there is silence. Even the ARTILLERY STOPS for a moment.

LAURETTE

looks out into the audience.

FACES

are surprised, disappointed, resigned. Just one more case of getting the short end of the stick. A few men start to leave.

MANNY

is more bored than surprised. Steps on his cigarette.

LAURETTE

comes to life. She's been singing back-up, she hasn't rehearsed -- but this is her chance and she's not going to let these men down.

BARBER

(to drummer)

'House of the Rising Sun' on four.

EXT. STAGE

He looks at the gutsy broad for a moment and -- nods, counts one, two, three, and the band breaks into the beat.

AT MICROPHONE

With Y Sacheem backing her up, Laurette belts out for all she's worth "There is a house in New Orleans..."

CROWD

listens for a moment, relaxes, feels her struggle and come alive and they do, too. They begin to cheer. They rise to their feet, whistling and stomping. More CAMERAS POP.

MANNY

His head comes up. He loses his boredom.

LAURETTE AND CROWD

In their roar, she finds herself and a style, bawdy, all her own. They send a power to her and she sends it back. They give to her and she gives back.

INT. U.S.O. CLUB (CHINA BEACH) - AFTERNOON

Oh, it's hot. Even the red, white and blue crepe seems to sag with moisture, grow soggy. Great circles of sweat girdle the uniforms of the men who wait in line to talk to one of the "Dollies."

LONGEST LINE

waits for this girl who's ashen with wetness yet somehow still looks like freshly baked bread. Cherry.

SADMAN

(with her)

It's crazy -- I always thought I'd fall for, you know, the cheerleader, the Queen of the prom of Helena, Arkansas. Well, maybe I didn't have a chance for the queen... maybe one of the princesses.

(beat)

Sally wasn't like that. She was a mouse, she hardly said a word -- but there was something about her...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SADMAN (CONT'D)

(beat)
 ... Sally...

(beat)
 ... Once she was uncorked, out of
 the bottle, what she looked like,
 what she could say -- I couldn't
 believe it.

(beat)
 Sally.

(beat)
 We were going to get married right
 away but I said, Nah, I made her
 stop, wait. What if... she didn't
 care. But I... It's crazy.

(beat)
 And then she wrote me this...

He unwraps from a packet and a sweaty palm a manhandled,
 many-times handled letter.

SADMAN
 Why? Why did she do it?

CHERRY
 I don't know.

SADMAN
 You're a girl.

CHERRY
 (failing miserably)
 I don't know.

SADMAN
 Can't anyone tell me?

All around them there's hullabaloo. Most especially a
 grunt recording a raunchy, sexy, occasionally fitful,
 occasionally touching cassette to his girl friend. Slowly:

CHERRY
 I have a letter, too. It's from
 my brother Rick. The last letter
 he ever sent us. His girl was
 named Judy, and she wrote him a
 letter... and he stopped writing
 us, stopped writing anybody.

(beat)
 He was such a scamp. Boys. Were
 you like that? Remember what it
 was like in Helena, Arkansas and
 what it's like here. It's easy to
 get lost, huh.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHERRY (CONT'D)

(beat)

I came here to find him. To tell
 him -- whatever happens, whatever
 Judy does -- we love him --

(touches Sadman)

-- Whatever Sally does.

He's touched more ways than one. The cassette grunt has
 quieted, listening to her. Even the hullabaloo's seemed
 to. Still innocent, still apple pie, still so damn clean
 -- it's no wonder there's a line waiting for her.

INT. 36TH EVAC - EVENING (LATER)

McMurphy and Doctor Dick Richard intersect, Colleen unty-
 ing her scrubs.

RICHARD

Where do you think you're going?

McMURPHY

Get it in now, get it in good.
 This is it, the end. Just two
 more nights --

RICHARD

You're not done, they need you in
 tropical medicine.

McMURPHY

That's impossible.
 (off his hard
 look)

All right.

Off she goes, mumble grumble. He looks after her.

EXT. "TROPICAL MEDICINE"

McMurphy reaches the small add-on building put together
 after tin ran out: it's made from crushed Budweiser cans
 nailed together.

INT. "TROPICAL MEDICINE"

Inside are more Budweiser cans and an attendant, NURSE
 BEAVERBROOK.

McMURPHY

McMurphy reporting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEAVERBROOK
What for? You're not on duty.

McMURPHY
I was told -- never mind.

She starts to go.

BEAVERBROOK
Wait a minute. Your golden flow
test.

McMURPHY
What?

BEAVERBROOK
Your urine sample. Can't leave
the country without it.

McMURPHY
(exhausted)
Come on.

BEAVERBROOK
Why do you want to delay this
test?

McMURPHY
I don't. It's just --

BEAVERBROOK
Do you have some substance in
your bloodstream? I'll have to
report you.

Beaverbrook is formidable: even so, she's coming on very
strong, rigid and suspicious.

McMURPHY
(give me a break)
Okay, okay, what do I do?

BEAVERBROOK
Take this cup.

McMURPHY
(in disgust)
Okay, I got the cup.

BEAVERBROOK
Just come along without any
trouble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY
(give me a break)
Come along... trouble...

BEAVERBROOK
I've got to witness the
administering of the test.

McMURPHY
Get serious.

BEAVERBROOK
(haughty)
I should also tell you the test
is not only designed for content
analysis. I must report on your
dexterity. Check for strength,
color, trajectory, spills.

This is unbelievable. Only in the Army, only in Vietnam.

McMURPHY
I'm not going to --

BEAVERBROOK
(very haughty)
Come along.

INT. SECOND BUDWEISER ROOM

Beaverbrook makes McMurphy lead the way into the dark room -- and when she enters, lights blaze on. A banner says "Go With The Golden Flow" and the room is jammed with hospital personnel -- Doctor Dick who set her up, Boonie, Doctors Dum and Dee, even Day-Glo. They all have cups lifted to toast her, beer not urine: it's a farewell party. Cheers and hugs. Congratulations. A crown made out of a surgical cap turned inside-out with syringe spikes. A Miss Golden Flow sign for across her chest. The skin of a gekko as a trophy (ook). Real flowers. McMurphy's overwhelmed.

CLOSER ANGLE

Suddenly, the crowd quiets, parts. Coming through in full regalia -- long hair, moustache, dashiki, love beads, bellbottom trousers, peace medallion -- is this HIPPIE, scattering flower petals from a garland around his neck. He accosts McMurphy.

HIPPIE
Yo, sister!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY

Who are you?

HIPPIE

(giving peace sign)

Peace. Love. Swordfish.

(and)

I love you all.

He reaches out and embraces her, knocking his wig ajar and revealing his short hair underneath.

McMURPHY

(recognizing him)

Take off that moustache -- and that ridiculous wig.

AUSTEN

What wig?

McMURPHY

That wig.

Austen puts his hand tentatively on his head, pulls off the wig, and looks at it as if he had never seen it before.

AUSTEN

(screaming)

Aaaahhhh!

Boonie's laughing; even Beaverbrook is, despite herself.

McMURPHY

Don't laugh. You'll encourage him.

Austen takes off the garland of flowers and puts them around McMurphy's neck.

AUSTEN

For you, flower child.

McMURPHY

It won't work, Austen.

He takes off the wig the rest of the way, strips his moustache and his beads, sobers down. As he does:

AUSTEN

I guess it is time you went home, McMurphy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUSTEN (CONT'D)

(beat)

I know there's someone in there
and I'd like to find them, even
though this Nuts is going on.
The funny person, the sad,
whatever's in there, even,
horror of horrors, the hot or sexy
one... even though this Nuts is
going on.

(beat)

... But you've gone robot...

The celebratory hijinks go on -- but with a hint of a bow,
a tiny doff of a salute, he backs off until he's engulfed.
Gone.

BEAVERBROOK

(coming up)

You ready?

McMURPHY

For what?

BEAVERBROOK

The real test. You do have to
take it to get out of here.

DOCTOR DICK RICHARD

He watches McMurphy go.

INT. LATRINE

McMurphy comes in. It's quiet, she's alone. She stares
at the empty cup.

INT. DA NANG AIRPORT - NIGHT (LATER)

Laurette sits on a sandbag in what comically is called
the "departure lounge." Manny Hinklefarb goes by and now
beats his way back to her.

MANNY

I saw you sing. Not bad. How
long you got left in this dump?

BARBER

Forty-eight hours. One more big
show.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANNY
You're coming back to God's
country?

BARBER
Of course.

MANNY
You do that, you get your buns
back home -- I'll make things
happen for you, kid.

For once Barber is speechless.

MANNY
Got to go.

He does -- and out of the sandbagged women's lounge behind Barber, legs pincered, comes Georgia Lee.

EXT. DA NANG AIRPORT - NIGHT

With Laurette, Georgia walks to a waiting plane, as if she carries a deep, tenuous, fragile, broomstick up her. Not quite the victory walk up the platform that the beauty queen had counted on.

BARBER
You're going to be just fine.

GEORGIA
(lips barely moving)
They loved me, didn't they?

BARBER
Of course they did.

GEORGIA
See you in the U.S. of A.

BARBER
Of course you will.

GEORGIA
Knowing you -- bet you can't
wait to get out either.

BARBER
And miss -- Star time?!

The words are vintage Barber, but something's missing. They seem a little phoned in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

This place, those boys, what she keeps finding, what she didn't expect. Georgia mounts the ramp, trips near the top. Out of a bag she carries flies a roll of toilet paper. Down the steps it comes, bouncing and unraveling, a final indignity.

INT. JET SET CLUB - NIGHT (LATER)

Workmen continue to go at it. Hammers and saws. Kim's behind the bar. McMurphy's there. Oh, it's still hot.

McMURPHY

Hit me again, Kim.

Sand's blowing in from outside, sawdust from inside. One or the other keeps getting in McMurphy's eyes and mouth or sticking about them. Oh, it's humid.

LILA

(coming and going)

This place used to be a pagoda.
The Annamese tore it down before they became South Vietnamese.
What they put up the French bombed. The French built a Catholic school.

(ode Da Nang)

When I first came here Saigon was the Paris of Southeast Asia. These wide boulevards. Huge shade trees. Great resorts. The best beaches. Now we've come -- leveled the school, and are building this...

(tinge of paradox)

... wonderful place.

Lila's never still, McMurphy never moves but her glass. Doctor Dick Richard comes in, sees the bottle Kim pours from.

RICHARD

This is not canned beer, Kim.
You've been holding out on me.

McMURPHY

Pass the I.V. please, Doctor.

Doctor Dick looks at her.

McMURPHY

I'm off duty. I'm through duty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD

Off duty? Through duty? There's no such thing here. There's duty and on the way to duty and on the way back to duty. Since you went 'off duty' and are 'through duty' we got six sucking chest wounds sealed up with trash bags, three mix and matches from booby traps, and a new veggie for the vegetable patch.

(here he comes)

And you're in here feeling sorry for yourself.

MCMURPHY

Ah, yes, the I-am-God doctor routine.

(here she comes)

You see a 'gunshot wound through and through,' a 'third degree burn' -- there's not even a person attached to them. You'll cut off their hand but you don't have to hold it. You don't stick around to see their eyes when they realize what's happened to them.

(and)

You're not the last person they see before they die.

(and now)

... The helicopters never stop coming... I'm going home...

RICHARD

Do it, you've earned it, you deserve it.

(the tough prescription)

Just remember, though, you're not a politician, you're a nurse. I was drafted, you volunteered. You wanted it. Well, you got it.

(this is it)

You found a place where you'll never be more valuable.

(and now)

So get out. Or -- finish sucking on your baby bottle and feeling sorry for yourself and come back in the time you got left and help us save some teenagers.

Doctor Dick can do more than pinch asses.

INT. JET SET - NIGHT (LATER STILL)

Kim's there, McMurphy's there. No one else, not even Lila, not even hammers and saws. Barber comes in, sees the quiet, joins it. Two women, a couple of empty stools between, a bartender -- the essence of life.

BARBER
(after awhile)
Where do you come from?

McMURPHY
Kansas.

BARBER
Auntie Emm, Auntie Emm, my red shoes, where's Toto?...
(the quiet)
You got a family?

McMURPHY
Yup. Mother, father, five brothers. All the usual suspects.

BARBER
Five. Auntie Emm, Auntie Emm, can I come to dinner? Can I stay overnight? Can I stay forever?
(the quiet)
I'm an orphan. No family -- except a couple of nuns and a long list of Pennsylvania piano bar juice heads.

McMURPHY
When are you leaving?

BARBER
Everybody keeps asking me that.

McMURPHY
What else is there?

BARBER
I got a show to do here on my last night -- and I got a problem. I'm short a back-up singer.
(vintage Barber)
You can do it.

Just like that. McMurphy comes up out of herself, looks at her in amazement.

BARBER
You know all the words.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBER (CONT'D)

It's just doo-whop this, say hey
hey that, do doo ron ron, ooo wee
ooh way.

McMURPHY

You are crazy.

BARBER

Everybody thought I was crazy
back in the States. So I came
here. Here, I'm sane.

(and)

I mean, what else is there to say
about all this after you've said
sha na na na na?

McMURPHY

You are completely, totally
crazy.

BARBER

Come on, do it. Just one night.
You won't believe what a huge
dose of unadulterated male lust
will do for your outlook on life.

McMURPHY

(taking her time)

Okay, I'll make you a deal: I'll
do it --

BARBER

All right! --

McMURPHY

On one condition.

BARBER

(that slows her up)

What's that?

McMURPHY

I'll give you one night, you give
me one night. I get up on the
stage and help you. You come and
you help me on my last night.

BARBER

(not thinking about
it)

Great, no sweat, piece of cake.
Deal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY

Deal.

(beat)

I'm not wearing one of those
short skirts. Not with my --

BARBER

(laughing)

Sorry. A deal's a deal. The
boots too.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

FADE IN:

EXT. CONSULATE - NIGHT

Shiny Jeeps let out generals in perfectly starched uniforms and civilians in perfectly starched tropical khakis. Very few women.

INT. CAMARO

Dolled up, K.C. and Cherry pull up in a red convertible.

K.C.

You sure you want to go to this?

CHERRY

He said he had news.

K.C.

You sure you know what you're doing?

CHERRY

I'm not sure of anything.

K.C.

That's a start.

CHERRY

(very sharp
for her)

You're coming.

K.C.

It's a feeding frenzy for stuffed shirts -- and stuffed wallets. I wouldn't miss it for the world.

INT. CONSULATE - RECEPTION LINE

A general or two, Weymouth and Endicott are in the line greeting guests. The atmosphere around them among the civilian advisers is like a preppy Princeton party.

CHERRY

(whispering as
they wait)

Who's that?

K.C.

An ambassador-at-large here to see how we're winning the war.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHERRY

Are we?

K.C.

Would you believe what I told you?

CHERRY

Maybe.

K.C.

Would you believe what they told you?

CHERRY

Maybe not.

K.C.

That's a start.

They reach Endicott. He's shaved and barbered, crisp and clean, dressed impeccably.

ELLIOTT

I'm glad you came. This is Ambassador-at-large Wymouth, Miss White. I took the ambassador to Khe Sanh.

WEYMOUTH

Those boys are up to their chassis in it.

Cherry's impressed at Endicott and he's impressed himself.

CHERRY

This is my friend --

ELLIOTT

(K.C.'s invisible)
Come with me. We have things to talk about.

He whisks her away, pointing out people, introducing her, effortlessly taking command.

INT. CONSULATE - BY PUNCH BOWL

Of all people Boonie Lanier is present. Of all people to be with him is Beckett. Beckett tastes the punch, scowls. Nonchanlantly, Beckett spikes a little something into the punch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUEST #1

Superb punch.

GUEST #2

I'll have more myself.

BOONIE

What did you put in there, anyway?

BECKETT

Gave them a taste of the war.

(and)

A little formaldehyde.

BOONIE

Beckett, my respect for you knows no bounds.

BECKETT

Actually, it looks like it's too late for them. They've already been embalmed for years.

BY PUNCH BOWL

Left alone, K.C. wanders over sizing up prospects.

BOONIE

K.C. from K.C.

K.C.

What are you doing here?

BOONIE

At your service, sir. I always have run of...

(a little Locust
Valley lockjaw)

... the club privileges, don't you know.

K.C.

Offering free swimming lessons?

BOONIE

Only to the ladies.

K.C.

Don't I know it.

A lot's in the line, sparks and some history, and she looks away, after easier quarry. He sees it:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOONIE

When are you going to retire?

K.C.

When are you going to be rich?

BOONIE

When are they going to discover oil on China Beach?

K.C.

Never.

(after a time)

You were something when I first met you -- lying on your back --

BOONIE

A long time ago --

K.C.

Eight months --

BOONIE

Eight years, eighty years --

K.C.

Wounded, skinny, pale --

BOONIE

Somebody stole my sunlamp.

K.C.

I kept you warm.

BOONIE

Except for all that cold cash.

What is this note of softness she's let creep in? She shuts it down:

K.C.

I know. I'm just a one-stop full-service center who went from a bad pimp to a good one -- the U.S. Armed Forces and the war in Vietnam.

BOONIE

Keep telling yourself that. Keep on trying.

(and)

But -- I'll never buy it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Beckett reappears. The reception line is breaking up. He points to Weymouth.

BECKETT

Who's that?

K.C.

He's come to see how we're winning the war.

BECKETT

Bet he doesn't come see me.

BOONIE

Beckett, Samuel B. -- K.C. from K.C.

BECKETT

I'd like to put his name on a body bag.

BOONIE

Who?

BECKETT

Elliott Endicott.

BOONIE/K.C.

That's affirm.

EXT. TERRACE - THROUGH FRENCH DOORS

Elliott's at work, intelligent and seductive, and unoriginal:

ELLIOTT

So it's important that we show we mean business. Every military action must be coordinated to a political objective. It's very, very complicated, really.

CHERRY

What responsibilities you have... what burdens.

ELLIOTT

Yes, it's true. But the torch has passed by my generation. If we fail, the lights will go out all over Asia, and we will not see them lit again in our lifetimes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHERRY

Oh, Mr. Endicott --

ELLIOTT

Call me Elliott.

CHERRY

What did you find out, Elliott?

ELLIOTT

Come with me.

INT. CONSULATE BATHROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Longley Weymouth makes his way into the cramped quarters.
There is one john, its door closed. He knocks:

BECKETT (O.S.)

I'm busy.

Weymouth waits, on tenterhooks, knocks again.

BECKETT (O.S.)

Still busy.

WEYMOUTH

Keep on moving on in there.

(and)

You think we could at least get
some decent toilets.

BECKETT

(opening the door)

That's what it's all about.

WEYMOUTH

What? How's that?

BECKETT

Decent toilets.

He FLUSHES and what power it has. WHUSH.

BECKETT

Victory through firepower.

The old man closes the door, goes to work.

WEYMOUTH (O.S.)

I've been all over the country
since I got here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKETT
How long ago was that?

WEYMOUTH (O.S.)
Three days.

BECKETT
That long?

WEYMOUTH (O.S.)
I do my homework. Villes.
Hootches. Where it's hot, where
it's not. I've talked to everybody
who knows anything -- and let me
tell you there's two things: one
burning question, one solution.
First the question.

BECKETT
On the edge of my seat here.

WEYMOUTH (O.S.)
How come -- there are so many damn
foreigners here?

BECKETT
It is their country.

WEYMOUTH (O.S.)
That's the point. That's the
solution. Outstanding.

WHUSH.

WEYMOUTH (O.S.)
Victory through firepower.
(comes out)
I'm Longley Weymouth.

BECKETT
Beckett, Samuel B.

WEYMOUTH
What do you do, Beckett?

BECKETT
I'm in a special unit. Hush hush.
Nobody talks about it, but -- what
it's all about.

WEYMOUTH
What? What's that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 BECKETT
Code name Zipper Power.

 WEYMOUTH
What? What's that? You can tell
me.

 BECKETT
Body count.

 WEYMOUTH
Outstanding.
 (and)
What's that?

 BECKETT
Have a sip.

 WEYMOUTH
You're a good man, Beckett.
 (takes a drink)
Tasty.

 BECKETT
I knew you'd like it.

INT. JEEP - SHORT TIME LATER

Elliott and Cherry negotiate the rain-swept streets. Water blows in the side flaps on the Jeep. Cherry has to sit close to Elliott to keep from being splashed. Even so, she's getting wet, her clothes plastering to her.

 CHERRY
Where are we going?

 ELLIOTT
You must trust me.

 CHERRY
 (enraptured
 and wary)
Yes.

He swerves intentionally and the force throws Cherry onto him, exactly like he wanted. She disengages.

 CHERRY
What was that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELLIOTT
I'm not sure. A water buffalo.
(skids to a stop)
Uh-oh.

CHERRY
What is it?

ELLIOTT
See.

He points, and uses it to get close to her. She can't see anything and eventually realizes how close he is, pulls away. This time he stops her.

ELLIOTT
Fight me. I love it.

CHERRY
Stop.

ELLIOTT
I love it.

CHERRY
I mean it!

ELLIOTT
You know what we both want.
(up her dress, down
her blouse)
You wouldn't be here if you didn't
want it.

She's surprisingly resistant, tough.

ELLIOTT
Oh, I get it. You want to be paid.
Okay.
(fishes in his pocket)
How much?

She bites him right in what holds the cold cash, gets out, runs.

ELLIOTT
Blood! I'm bleeding! It's
getting all over me. My clean,
white shirt --

CHERRY
You didn't find him, did you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELLIOTT

... No...

CHERRY

You didn't even try.

ELLIOTT

(bleedingly merciless)

He's missing in action. Probably dead.

CHERRY

He's not.

ELLIOTT

How do you know?

CHERRY

I don't. Just -- I'm not going to give up, I'll never give up. I'm going to find him. Or find out what happened to him.

Her innocence, her fervor, her hopes hang on, won't be beaten.

IN RAIN

She gets out of the Jeep, escapes into the night.

INT. JEEP

He drives after her, perturbed by his bloody hand.

ELLIOTT

You can't get away. There's nowhere to go.

She falls in the headlights, freezes like a deer.

IN RAIN

He gets out and starts after her, catches her. Panting with fear, she tries to free herself, can't. The waves are breaking like distant mortars. Ka-THUNK. Ka-THUNK. With a last effort she does get loose, starts to run, stops dead.

HER POV

A vision of Hell appears out of the night in front of her, scaring her the rest of the way to death. It's the menacing LURP, Sweetness.

ELLIOTT

sees it also, stops also, and behind him -- another vision of Hell appears.

DODGER

And before Elliott realizes Dodger's there, Dodger encapsulates the State Department man's throat.

IN RAIN

Cherry turns and sees him.

DODGER

This scumbag hurt you?

CHERRY

(when she can)

... No...

(and)

... He looked so important, so clean.

DODGER

(the ugliest,
sweetest grin)

Looks aren't everything.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN

FADE IN:

JET SET - NEXT EVENING

is completely empty. Everything is still. Everything is ready for the show.

FEET

sound now on the PLYWOOD FLOOR, combat boots with fatigues tucked in the tops. They walk up to the makeshift bandstand. A last shaft of evening sunlight comes through a window. The feet climb up to the bandstand, now stop and turn: WIDEN:

LAURETTE BARBER

holding her costume on a coat hanger, a makeup bag slung over her shoulder. She looks out as if this is Carnegie Hall.

IN EVAC HOSPITAL

McMurphy is still in her scrubs, works on a patient with Doctor Dick. She concentrates, but one eye checks.

HER POV - BIG CLOCK

which reads a few minutes before seven.

DOCTOR DICK RICHARD

pulls another stitch, and:

RICHARD

Knit one, purl two. Just a few more.

(beat)

God, I'm domesticated.

McMURPHY

Dream on.

AT BEACH

Boonie gathers in the umbrellas as the sun settles into its final fire.

LURPS - NOT FAR AWAY

cook over a fire -- the meat impaled on the bayonets at the end of their M-16s. Meat, real meat. Their eyes.

INT. GRU

Beckett fills out a last form, puts down his pen, smells his hands. He walks over to the sink and starts washing them, washing them, washing them. The clock above him says 7:15 and:

IN JET SET

Still at the microphone Laurette starts to mime "Don't You Want Somebody to Love?" practicing her moves.

FROM BAR

There's a NOISE, and Lila sticks her head up from where she's been working -- the last sawing and hammering -- and sees:

LAURETTE

who, surprised she's not alone, stops and:

BARBER

Sorry. Just practicing. I was a little early.

LILA

(Eunice Shriver)

You're going to be great. All my girls are great. And if all this tape and wire and paste hold together -- God willing, my little building's going to be great.

IN EVAC HOSPITAL

Doctor Dick pulls the last stitch.

RICHARD

Ah, a masterpiece. Take a look, McMurphy.

But McMurphy is out of there, shucking her scrubs as she goes.

INT. BOMBED-OUT CHURCH/RAMSHACKLE HOTEL - NIGHT

Cherry comes into her room and begins taking off her Donut Dolly uniform.

INT. BOMBED-OUT CHURCH/RAMSHACKLE HOTEL - IN HER ROOM -

K.C. reads Fortune. A fan blows the pages.

IN HER TENT

McMurphy gathers herself up, leaves, then comes back.

McMURPHY

... Nah...

INT. JET SET CLUB

fills now with people and smoke and noise. Kim, the bartender, moves through the crowd, balancing her tray, taking orders. Lila who has seen everything everywhere, keeps an eye on business.

NEAR BEACH

The Lurps clean themselves down to their amazing standards.

INT. CHURCH/HOTEL - IN HER ROOM

K.C. tosses Fortune across the room.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Cherry finishes dressing.

NEAR JET SET CLUB

McMurphy stops in the afterglow, turns around and starts back toward her tent.

McMURPHY

... Nah...

INT. CHURCH/HOTEL - IN HER ROOM

K.C. prowls like a panther, restless, footloose, but not fancy free.

EXT. CHURCH/HOTEL - CHERRY

comes down to where the Lurps wait for their date.

SWEETNESS

... All right!...

DODGER

... There she is...

INT. JET SET

Hickenhopper sits at a table.

BECKETT

is in the corner alone; the other seats at his table are empty.

ONSTAGE

The drummer and the band test their instruments.

BACKSTAGE

McMurphy comes in.

McMURPHY

... Nah...

She turns -- but before she can leave Laurette has her, and hauls her into a dressing room.

INT. DRESSING ROOM

It makes a telephone booth look big. Laurette hands Colleen an outfit.

BARBER

Try the fit.

McMurphy looks at the alien thing. Y Sacheem sits in the corner in the lotus position.

IN HER ROOM - K.C.

blows out of it.

INT. JET SET

The Lurps and Cherry arrive -- and the joint is jumping. Waiting, anticipating, hoisting a few, finding a little relief and a little blotto. And:

K.C.

comes in, looks at the mob: it's a full house. She considers her fate. She sees Boonie and he sees her, a long look -- and now goes and sits in Hickenhopper's lap. He can't believe it -- what does the manual say about this?

BACKSTAGE - SERIES OF SHOTS

It's madness. Naked light bulbs, sweaty skin, flashing sequins, and -- McMurphy pulls and stretches her costume, trying to make it cover more of her skin. Laurette, applying her eye makeup, steps back (as far as she can step back), looks McMurphy over:

BARBER

Not bad, not bad. Skirt's too long, though.

McMURPHY

Too long? If I wave I'm going to get arrested.

BARBER

Here. Just tuck it --
 (rolls up the
 waistband)
 -- under like this.
 (looks again)

Better.

McMURPHY

I could never show my face in here again.

BARBER

It's not your face you'll be showing -- and besides, this is my last night, your last night. Let's let it rip.

McMURPHY

(after a moment)

Check.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBER

Now, the piece de resistance.

(pulls out a Tina
Turner wig)

Ta ta!

McMURPHY

Oh no, oh no, I'm not --

And:

MIRROR - MOMENTS LATER

McMurphy's transformation is complete. WIDEN:

LAURETTE

checks herself, then looks over at Y Sacheem.

BARBER

On your marks, get set --

(and)

-- Show time.

And out they go, into the spotlights.

ONSTAGE

The band breaks into "Sugar Pie/Honeybunch I Can't Help Myself." There is a roar and the crowd starts whistling, stomping their feet, and yelling.

McMURPHY

is so stunned she stops dead in her tracks.

Y SACHEEM

Break. A. Leg.

With her first words Y Sacheem gives McMurphy a push and she nearly does -- and out she goes.

LAURETTE

starts singing, and suddenly McMurphy, before she fully realizes it, is doing the back-ups and the Four Tops dance steps behind her.

IN JET SET

Everyone is on their feet, clapping and cheering. Even Doctor Dick Richard has arrived, posting himself by the door.

McMURPHY

Slowly, the force of the audience consumes her anxiety and her restraint.

IN JET SET

They are applauding out of need and release and because Laurette is so good. And: One by one they realize it's McMurphy there behind Barber, and the cheering becomes for her too, for being there onstage, for being there for a year, for being all she has been.

McMURPHY

Slowly, she realizes what she's doing and what they are doing for her. In the music and in the din, all that she's seen, all that she's been holding back, all that she's been shutting down, all at last lets go. This is her moment -- and the overwhelming, rinsing release of emotion suffuses and reclaims her. Joy -- and tears.

IN JET SET

Suddenly there is a new sound that transcends all others. WHOOSH-BOOM! WHOOSH-BOOM.

SWEETNESS

yells.

SWEETNESS

Incoming!

INT. JET SET

The lights go out, the whole place dissolves in pandemonium.

ONSTAGE

Laurette is still singing, but the mike has gone dead. What's happening hasn't hit her yet -- but McMurphy knows, grabs her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY

Come on.

The MORTARS start to HIT.

LURPS

have their weapons ready. They head back to the perimeter, back to the bush, ready. Their eyes.

BECKETT

is the only one who remains where he is. He knows what this means -- there is more work for him coming and there is time, no reason for him to rush. His head falls as in prayer, as under the weight he carries.

LILA

watches -- she has seen it all and here is one more. She waits to see if it will hit and finish the unfinished club. And:

LILA

Not my club!

EXT. JET SET - NIGHT

McMurphy and Barber dash through the dark. It's like a 4th of July obstacle course, the sky lighting up with MORTAR FIRE, obstacles that they must dodge appearing and disappearing. Their white boots and short silver mini-dresses wink and their bare flanks flash. The Crumps are no longer Crumps. THUDS now.

BARBER

Where are we going?

McMURPHY

Come on.

THUD, THUD.

INT. 36TH EVAC HOSPITAL

They reach it and the place is alive. McMurphy tosses Barber some surgical gear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY
Here.

BARBER
What is this?

McMURPHY
Try the fit.

BARBER
What --

No thud now -- a WHISTLE, a SCREAMING WHISTLE and a ROAR.
The tin can shakes, the lights dim and come up.

McMURPHY
It's your turn --

The lights go again.

McMURPHY
-- Show time!

And she's on her way down the alley of corrugated tin.
Barber doesn't move. The girl who is never unsure is
now.

HER POV - LENGTH OF HOSPITAL

Meanwhile, McMurphy is on the move and she is something
to see, getting patients on the floor below the sandbag
line, covering the ones in traction with mattresses.

LAURETTE BARBER

All around her is a practiced, professional frenzy, but
the singer is frozen. A WHISTLE, a SCREAMING WHISTLE, a
POWER SAW HITTING a GIGANTIC KNOT, and -- the WINDOWS
IMPLODE, IVs fly and CLATTER, and the lights go out
entirely. There is black, there is SCREAMING, this is
human screaming. There is chaos. The emergency back-up
GENERATOR KICKS IN and illumination returns. It's low,
it isn't much, it's red. The color of watery, trans-
lucent blood.

McMURPHY
(returning)
Come on.

She yanks Barber back to the double doors. They are no
longer broken and unrepaired, they are blown away.

THEIR POV - THROUGH DOORWAY

Outside a dust off, a great jolly green giant settles down -- thronged with wounded. Here comes Day-Glo. Here they come.

INT. 36TH EVAC

McMurphy and Dick Richard greet them: they bend down to each and with amazing speed make determinations, diagnosis.

AMONG THEM

is Natch Austen, supporting a wounded man.

AUSTEN

You got him?

McMURPHY

(taking him)

I got him.

(realizing)

What about you?

He's wounded: it's his blood that is getting on her.

AUSTEN

There's more men out there.

He's all business and lack of concern about himself and he's gone -- and she looks after him, seeing another side of him, worrying about him, and not about to forget him.

CLOSER

Then she goes back to work: This is triage. OR, oxygen, chest pack, IV, blood. Yes, yes, yes, and "over there." There is the corner where the dead men were before and now men wait, while others are wheeled off and others are worked on immediately. There is the checkout counter. Day-Glo watches behind his Darth Vader helmet. Barber, too. Looking up for an instant, McMurphy sees her.

McMURPHY

Laurette, go to the checkout counter.

BARBER

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY
Over there. Go to them. Take
care of them.

BARBER
What do I do? What --

But McMurphy is already busy again. Hesitantly she goes,
and Day-Glo watches her, too.

AT CHECKOUT COUNTER

The first GRUNT she reaches is all torn up. His eyes
are swollen shut. He's burned head to foot, and slapped
with dressings -- yet he's alert. This is the way burns
are.

BARBER
How you doing?

BURNED SOLDIER (GRUNT)
Are you a doctor?

BARBER
Do I sound like a doctor?

BURNED SOLDIER
You sound like a -- girl.

BARBER
Good guess.

BURNED SOLDIER
A nurse.

BARBER
Well --

BURNED SOLDIER
How am I? What happened? Am I
going to make it?

Oh, Jesus. Look at this boy. He is in pain, he's in
shock; he's a crispy critter.

BARBER
You're going to be fine.

BURNED SOLDIER
I can't see.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBER

The doctors'll be right over.
Just hang on. Any minute.

BURNED SOLDIER

I'll bet you're beautiful.

BARBER

Me? I'm a fat old pig.

BURNED SOLDIER

You've got a wonderful voice.

This is getting to her.

BARBER

... I do some singing.

BURNED SOLDIER

I was on fire. I didn't feel a
thing.

BARBER

You're going to be fine.

BURNED SOLDIER

(beat)
Sing me a song.

BARBER

Oh, come on. Now?

BURNED SOLDIER

(beat)
There isn't any other time.

She starts to know what he already knows but sometimes
denies. Burns let you do that, they like to kill you
slowly from the outside in.

BARBER

What would you like to hear, guy?
Requests?

BURNED SOLDIER

I saw this U.S.O. show. There
was this girl. What a voice.
What a set of knockers. Excuse
me.

BARBER

Great big ones, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURNED SOLDIER
Just right ones. I got her
picture.

This is getting to her.

BARBER
You do?

BURNED SOLDIER
It's in my pocket.

BARBER
(the mistress of
understatement)
You don't have many pockets left.

BURNED SOLDIER
There's this one. Inside my pants.
Reach in, get it.

There's no way Laurette's going to do that.

BURNED SOLDIER
Please. I don't want to lose it
when they work on me.

He doesn't say doctors, he doesn't mean doctors.

AMPUTATED MAN
Do it.

The Amputated Man is all blood except for his face.
It's untouched but for great, great pain. She
remembers others are there, also hurting. Others no
longer move. She reaches in to the burned boy's
trousers, gets it out: only to find she's looking
at a photograph of herself.

BURNED SOLDIER
Find it?

BARBER
I got it.

BURNED SOLDIER
See.

BARBER
I see.
(when she can)
Don't you have a girl?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURNED SOLDIER

I had one.

BARBER

And a family.

BURNED SOLDIER

... Yes...

BARBER

You're going to leave here, you're
going home.

(breaking)

Doctor! I'll get the doctor.

I'll be right back.

BURNED SOLDIER

(panic)

Please don't leave me.

She's halfway up when his barbecued arm grabs her. She sits down again. The MORTARS are back down to THUDS again. A star-shell lights up with a metallic flash; it floods through the broken windows like projector throws. A gunship swings above them, hovering protectively, FIRING in one continuous ROAR. She knows now, she knows, they both do, and she starts to sing softly:

BARBER

I know a place. I know a place
where the lights are low. I know
a place where we can go.

She runs down. McMurphy and Day-Glo see her, and only the low red light is left again.

BURNED SOLDIER

Sing "I Believe."

BARBER

I don't think I know it.

It's a child's song, and that's where he's falling back to.

BURNED SOLDIER

I believe... above the storm...
there's a starry sky... I
believe into every night... some
light must fall...

(he's going)

... I don't remember the words, I
don't remember, I can't remember.

(he's going now)

Hold my hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMPUTATED MAN

Mine, too.

She reaches for his and it's gone, it is no more, but she does not hesitate. She takes his other. And:

BARBER

Each night before I go to bed, my baby... I whisper a little prayer to you, my baby... and tell all the stars above... This is dedicated...

(beat)

... To the one I love. This is dedicated...

(beat)

... To the one I lu-uh-uh-uh-uve.

As she sings, and before the burned boy's hand falls away, others still reach up and hold onto her. "At last -- men everywhere."

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

is no nonsense yet something to look at. The arc of the coast, the long leisurely dunes, the cobalt sea shuffling up surf. Colleen McMurphy and Laurette Barber walks along it without a word. At last:

BARBER

(after a while)

Do you ever get over it? Does it ever get better?

McMURPHY

I thought it would, I thought it had to.

BARBER

It can't get worse.

McMURPHY

It can.

(and)

But -- I saw you: you know in your heart you made a difference. It's a good feeling.

(and now)

There's the loss and the guilt that goes with feeling good and still there's the fact: you were there.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY (CONT'D)

He had a mother, a sister, a girl friend and you were there, you were them. You gave him a home before he died so far from it.

She could be talking about herself. She is. A wind blows and lifts the sand to their ankles and to their knees. Like pinpricks. In one gust they have to squint and spit -- and they can't find McMurphy's tent.

McMURPHY

Where is it? Where's my tent?

BARBER

Maybe we took a wrong turn at the last light.

McMURPHY

It's right here, I know it is --

She takes two more steps and encounters a huge sand trap. Somebody should rake it, trashmen should clean it up. There's debris everywhere.

CLOSER - TWO OF THEM

McMurphy realizes what it is -- the remains of her things. Her tent has been hit. It's gone, everything with it.

McMURPHY

It can't be.

BARBER

Oh, my God.

McMurphy slides down into the crevice, onto her knees amidst the blowup. There's nothing left.

McMURPHY

Oh no, no, no...

There's tremendous breakage. There's again what she hasn't been able to do -- tears.

IN SAND TRAP

Laurette comes down, kneels beside her, holds her. But there's nothing to say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McMURPHY

My records, my calendar...
 (trying to lighten
 up)
 ... My makeup, my hairdryer...
 (failing)
 ... My --
 (everything else)
 -- What am I going to do?

BARBER

(after a while)
 Maybe the time has come to go
 back to the world.

Boonie looms over them at the top of the crater.

BOONIE

Far out. This was -- Where'd it
 go? Welcome to Oz.
 (looks at the
 hole, her, them)
 Be back.

BARBER

(after another
 while)
 How long you been here?

McMURPHY

Forever.
 (and)
 A year.
 (and now)
 Just one more wakeup left.

BARBER

And you're out of here. Goodbye.
 So long. I've had you.

McMURPHY

That's the deal.

BARBER

Me, too.
 (and)
 ... Then what?

McMURPHY

(the longest time)
 ... I'll stay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBER

What? But you told me --
 (stares at her)
 -- You got five brothers, that
 family larger than most cities
 in Kansas. Go home.

Boonie reappears: he carries a beach chair and rolls a
 beer keg. Down he slaloms to the two women. Sets up
 the chair, plants the bashed up keg on its end as a
 stool. From under his arm he makes a Thermos appear.

BOONIE

Coffee?
 (pours)
 Not much, McMurphy. But a start.
 What else do you need?

BARBER

How about a man, 6-2, 185,
 muscular, but not all of it
 between the ears? With a sense
 of rhythm.

BOONIE

That's affirm.

McMURPHY

How about a T-bone steak, medium
 rare?

BOONIE

That's affirm.

BARBER

(fast)
 How about a king-size water bed
 and sheets, real sheets --

McMURPHY

(faster)
 Real cotton. How about --
 (stops herself)
 -- How about -- just a little
 cease-fire?

BOONIE

Requests one through three will
 take twenty minutes.
 (the between the
 lines, the iceberg)
 The last may take a little longer.
 (and now)
 Be back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's gone again and the two remarkable women settle into their new, oh so opulent furnishings. They sit, devastated and not showing it, naked and trying to be light about it. They realize suddenly it's quiet, it's completely quiet.

BARBER

He's amazing.

Now a DISTANT CRUMP comes and a THUMP, the war over the hill, the day-to-day reality, the normality.

McMURPHY

(so soft)

I've got an even bigger family here.

(the iceberg)

I am home.

The burned boy's picture is in Laurette's hand. She, too.

BARBER

(soft as soft)

That's affirm.

(and)

Me; too.

They sit and it's quiet again but the waves; you almost feel you can hear the sand talk. Whisper whisper. It's beautiful. Yet.

FADE OUT.

THE END