

CHINA BEACH

"A Rumor of Peace"

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FINAL DRAFT

December 14, 1989

CHINA BEACH

"A Rumor of Peace"

CAST

McMURPHY

LILA

BOONIE

DOCTOR RICHARD

K.C.

BECKETT

FRANKIE

SARGE

HOLLY

MAJOR GENE GOLDMAN

GRUNT

CHACON

HANOI HANNAH (V.O.)

RADIO (V.O.)

ANSWER MAN

CHINA BEACH

"A Rumor of Peace"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

WARD

MARS STATION
Phone Room

JET SET

LILA'S QUARTERS

SARGE'S QUARTERS

GRU

O.R.

EXTERIORS:

CHOPPER PAD

MARS STATION

FIREBASE

COMPOUND

GRU

WARD

CHINA BEACH

"A Rumor of Peace"

ACT ONE

IN BLACK:

We HEAR MUSIC, an over-orchestrated Musak version of "FLY ME TO THE MOON," dripping with strings.

FADE IN:

1 MONTAGE - CHINA BEACH (MOS) (STOCK SHOTS) 1

The MUSIC carries us through the activity of the war, a brief glimpse from the field, the fire bases, the faces of the men and women... MUSIC FADES.

FRANKIE (V.O.)

You've been listening to Armed Forces radio in Viet Nam... and now, here's today's news highlights from the overseas press network...

2 EXT. CHOPPER PAD - DAY (MOS) 2

BECKETT helps some medics load body bags onto the chopper. As Beckett sets a body gently in place, the pilot signals that's it. Full house. The others will have to wait.

FRANKIE (V.O.)

In local news, fighting continued today in the delta and central mountain regions of South Vietnam. Combined efforts of U.S. combat forces inflicted heavy losses on enemy battallions.

Beckett and his crew watch as the CHOPPER LIFTS OFF, caught in the rotor blast.

FRANKIE (V.O.)

The official body count of enemy killed in action was 156. American casualties were described as light.

3 INT. WARD - DAY (MOS) 3

CAMERA MOVES thru the ward. We see the beds are full, the wounded, the dying, the survivors of a terrible battle.

(CONTINUED)

FRANKIE (V.O.)

In national news, President Johnson met in Washington today with Wisconsin dairy farmers and promised to continue price supports for their industry.

McMURPHY

works on another GRUNT. He's got a small transistor radio balanced on his chest, an ear plug in his remaining ear. Both his hands are bandaged.

McMurphy says something to him, but he can't hear her, and neither can we.

FRANKIE (V.O.)

A series of new storm fronts moved into the Midwest states today. Weather experts were predicting...

McMurphy gently pulls the plug from the Grunt's ear.

Suddenly we HEAR the SOUNDS of the WARD, the CHOPPERS, the MEN, the WAR.

McMURPHY

Hi. How you doing?

GRUNT

My plug. Put it back...

McMurphy picks up the radio. It's a hunk of war weary plastic wrapped in black tape, battered, chipped, but still working... amazing. She studies the plug, then looks in his ear.

McMURPHY

Don't you guys ever take these out?
(his look)
You've got an infection. You could lose your hearing...

GRUNT

Please... put it back.

She considers, then puts the plug in his ear.

GRUNT

You mind finding some rock and roll?
This station sucks.

McMurphy adjusts the dial, watching his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dr. Richard ENTERS SHOT, observes over her shoulder for a moment... the Grunt keeps shaking his head back and forth, grimacing at the music he hears.

DR. RICHARD
Torturing patients again?

The Grunt nods.

GRUNT
That's it. Hanoi Hannah. Thanks.

She's found a station. McMurphy hands the Grunt his radio. He smiles.

LILA enters the ward, sees them.

LILA
(looking about)
I don't understand it. They've been meeting in Paris, the delegates have started talking... why are we still fighting?

DR. RICHARD
Because they're not really talking-talking... they're talking about talking-talking. Which is not the same as talking.

McMURPHY
They can't even agree on the shape of the table.

It's a flippant remark, but for a brief moment, it wounds all of them, strikes deep in the secret place where hope resides.

LILA
McMurphy, I need someone for the P.M. shift. The scheduled nurse is sick.

McMurphy is torn for a moment.

McMURPHY
All right.

Lila nods, exits. McMurphy looks at Dr. Richard who is consulting his watch.

DR. RICHARD
Five seconds... what took you so long?

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

She burns him with a look... shakes her head, turns to minister to another patient. We hear MUSIC -- "FRANKIE'S THEME."

5 INT. MARS STATION - DAY

5

Frankie at the microphone. A S/4 lifer, RICHARD CHACON, has picked up a stack of albums from the console, flips through them, sorting out a few.

FRANKIE

Well, that's it for today... this is Frankie Bunsen, signing off, asking you to stay tuned for more music, sports, and weather on Armed Forces Radio... good day from Vietnam.

She hits a switch, cues a local COMMERCIAL tape, takes off her headset...

CHACON

Here. These are banned from airplay. 'Detrimental to troop morale.'

Frankie gets up, takes the albums. Chacon sits down at the console. He sets out an alarm clock, sets a wakeup time.

FRANKIE

The Stones? The Cowsills? Why do these idiots in Saigon keep doing this? There's nothing wrong with this music.

CHACON

It's their station. They can do what they want.

He gestures for her to be quiet, then flips on the mike switch...

CHACON

Good evening. This is Richard Chacon with five hours of uninterrupted listening pleasure. So sit back, relax and mellow out.

He flips a switch. A long play reel to reel starts. He puts his feet up on the desk, ready to take a nap.

FRANKIE

It's not right. I'm not gonna put up with this...

(CONTINUED)

5

CONTINUED:

5

CHACON

Take it easy, Bunsen. It's only
radio.

He pulls his hat down over his face. Frankie frowns at
him, tucks the albums under her arm, walks out.

6

INT. JET SET - NIGHT

6

Dr. Richard, SARGE, BOONIE, GRUNTS gathered around a
table with K.C. She's got a clipboard, jotting down
scores, paying off bets... the RADIO SIGNAL has static.
Dr. Richard adjusts the dial to hold it in tune while
they listen.

HANOI HANNAH (V.O.)

(radio)

And in college games, Ohio over
Oregon, 21-6, Arkansas defeated
Tulsa, 56-13...

BOONIE

All right!

Dr. Richard obviously lost all bets. He winces after
every final score.

HANOI HANNAH (V.O.)

And Purdue defeated Notre Dame, 37
to 22.

The grunts moan, walk away. K.C. pays Sarge, Boonie.
MUSIC on the RADIO. ("JET PLANE") K.C. packs up.

K.C.

I'll have the new point spreads
tomorrow.

HANOI HANNAH (V.O.)

(radio)

We hope you GI's are enjoying our
broadcast. We are sorry if it
makes you homesick...

SARGE

I'm up ten bucks. How'd you do,
Doc?

DR. RICHARD

Batting a thousand. Missed every
one.

(CONTINUED)

HANOI HANNAH (V.O.)

(radio)

... if it make you think of loved
ones who worry for you, who cry
for you.

Sarge picks up the radio, changes the channel to AFVN.
We HEAR the elevator music of Chacon's tape show.

BOONIE

I'd listen to Hanoi Hannah all
the time if she didn't do that
other crap.

SARGE

Wonder how she gets the game
scores before anyone else?

DR. RICHARD

She has a deal with Nick the
Greek.

The MUSIC carries us to...

EXT. MARS STATION - NIGHT

an antenna reaching up into the night sky. We TILT DOWN
the antenna, ARRIVING AT its base in the MARS station to
discover...

FRANKIE

holding a small cable in her hand. She disconnects one
cable, attaches the other one.

There's a flash of sparks that make her jump back...no
fire... it's ok, she checks her set of connections, looks
at her watch... that the hell... it's show time. Frankie
picks up a radio telephone, clicks on.

FRANKIE

China one, this is Miss Wizard,
you copy?

VOICE (V.O.)

(radio)

This is China one. What's
happening?

FRANKIE

We were experiencing technical
difficulties... all systems are go
now, China one. Stand by...

(CONTINUED)

VOICE (V.O.)

(radio)

Miss Wizard, I've been thinking...
about tonight...

FRANKIE

You're not getting cold feet, are
you?

VOICE (V.O.)

(radio)

More like frostbite.

FRANKIE

Then we better start a fire.
Coming to you in five, four,
three, two, one... you're on the
air.

Frankie puts an ear plug in, from her portable radio.
There's a long pause.

FRANKIE

Come on, baby. Do it.

We hear the opening notes of the DOORS hit, "Light My
Fire." Frankie smiles. Mission accomplished.

VOICE (V.O.)

(radio)

This is Pirate Radio, Vietnam,
coming to you live somewhere in
I-Corps.. I'm your host, Dr. Dark.

Frankie moves OUT OF FRAME as we HOLD for a moment ON the
wires... we MOVE ALONG one WIRE...

VOICE (V.O.)

(radio)

I tell it like it is, play the
music you want to hear... from
rock to classics, show tunes and
jazz... whatever the Good Doctor
is in the mood for... and the
doctor is always in the mood.

DISSOLVE TO:

snaking along a concrete floor. The CAMERA FOLLOWS the
wire at foot level, under some equipment, around metal
table legs... We have no idea where we are, but it's
dark, moody... and now we're hearing the voice live
in person.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE

A couple of quick announcements...
There's going to be an M.P. raid
of the Happy Face Riding club
tonight at 2200 hours, that's ten
o'clock for you cherries, so leave
your boots on. And my consumer
report says the long-haired dude
in front of the Panda Bear Lounge
is selling some bad stuff. Stay
away and stay alive.

CAMERA ARRIVES at a chair, MOVES UP to see there's a body
in it, LOOKS over the BODY'S shoulder to see black hands
putting a record on a turntable. We also see the make-
shift console, bank of tape players, all contained in
a medical cabinet.

VOICE

Tonight, we're amping out with
4000 stolen watts of power,
courtesy of my engineer, the
Wizard, bringing you a special,
program. We've been working on
this one for weeks, oh, my
brothers and sisters...

to see Beckett is Dr. Dark. We're in GRU. He cues the
record.

BECKETT

Remember, everything you hear
tonight is not real, but an
incredible simulation... including
me, Dr. Dark.

MUSIC carries us to...

McMurphy at a desk, writing a letter. A small RADIO
tuned to DR. DARK'S program. Dr. Richard enters.

McMURPHY

I was about to send for you.

She gets up, crosses to one of her patients. He joins her.

McMURPHY

B.P.'s been dropping.

(CONTINUED)

She hands Dr. Richard her scope. He listens as he palpates.

DR. RICHARD

I just stopped by to see if you want to bet on the Notre Dame game?

McMURPHY

No, thanks.

DR. RICHARD

(Barry Fitzgerald)

McMurphy... Colleen... don't tell me you have no faith in the Irish?

McMURPHY

I have no money.

DR. RICHARD

I'll wager for... personal services.

McMURPHY

Such as?

DR. RICHARD

If I win, you stimulate my soft muscle tissue, stroke my nerve endings to the point of physical release... you win I'll do the same for you.

McMURPHY

I don't like the odds.

DR. RICHARD

I'm talking about a back rub. Come on, I'll even give you points. Two touchdowns.

McMURPHY

I win, I want a foot rub.
(he nods)
Half-hour. With lotion.

DR. RICHARD

You got a bet.

Dr. Richard listens to the patient again. There's concern in his face. Something's not right.

McMURPHY

Think we have a bleeder?

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

DR. RICHARD
Maybe... the final scores should
be coming on the radio in an hour...
why don't I stick around...

McMurphy nods... she thinks it's a good idea.

12 INT. LILA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

12

Lila sits down at her mirror, starts to brush her hair,
then TURNS ON a RADIO, TUNES it. We hear MILES DAVIS.
The MUSIC transports her to another time, another place.

13 INT. SARGE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

13

In the motor pool. Sarge is playing a game of two-handed
poker. His RADIO tuned to the SAME SONG. CAMERA MOVES
to reveal that his playing partner is the bear he won in
"Magic."

He lays down his hand, turns up the radio.

SARGE
They're playing our song.
(stands, bows)
May I have this dance?

He takes the bear, begins to slow dance with it as the
MUSIC carries us to...

14 EXT. FIREBASE - NIGHT

14

Some grunts at ease. CAMERA MOVES THROUGH the half a
dozen men, some eating, one man reading by flashlight,
some playing cards, ARRIVING ON ANSWER MAN. Listening.
The MUSIC continues under as...

BECKETT (V.O.)
(radio)
That's my man... Miles Davis.

15 SEVERAL VC AND AN NVA OFFICER

15

gathered about a small fire, cooking dinner, listening to
a portable RADIO. One of them translates Beckett. He
puzzles them.

BECKETT (V.O.)
(radio)
Well, enough of reality...

(CONTINUED)

15

CONTINUED:

15

Another record starts, MUSIC plays for a few more beats... there's an EFX of a TELETYPE, some STING MUSIC...

BECKETT (V.O.)

(on radio)

We interrupt this program for a special bulletin.

We hear STATIC, then HORNS HONKING, CHEERS...

CUT TO:

16

INT. GRU - NIGHT

16

Beckett and Frankie, both on mikes on stands. They have a prop table behind them, some things to make effects, as if producing an old radio show. Beckett fades the pot, nods.

FRANKIE

(network voice)

This is Nancy Trotta coming to you live from Paris. As you can hear in the background, there's a celebration in the air tonight... it appears that peace has come to Vietnam.

Beckett turns a couple of rattles, blows a whistle.

FRANKIE

Rumors of peace broke out late this afternoon when a bus boy working in the Majestic hotel said he saw Xuan Thuy kissing Averell Harriman. Now, with more on the story, here's Walter Cronkite in Washington.

Frankie handles some SOUND EFX while Beckett talks.

BECKETT

(a la Walter)

Thank you, Nancy. We're waiting for a statement from the President ...he's expected to join us in the rose garden momentarily... we're all wondering, Nancy, what today will be called in the history books.

FRANKIE

Probably Wednesday, Walter.

(CONTINUED)

BECKETT
(as Walter)
That's not what I meant, oh,
someone's coming out...

CUT TO:

17 INT. LILA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

17

Lila at her mirror, all ears.

BECKETT (V.O.)
(on radio as Walter)
It's the President... no, it's
Lady Bird. Lady Bird Johnson is
going to speak to the press...

FRANKIE (V.O.)
(on radio as Lady Bird)
Thank you... Lyndon will be
joining us shortly. He's having a
hard time getting his boots on...
but we're both just tickled to
death that this damn war is
over... our boys will be coming
home to nail that coonskin on the
wall.

There's STATIC over the RADIO... Lila adjusts the dial...
We hear what sounds like a LOUD RACKING BELCH, maybe a
FART.

BECKETT (V.O.)
(as Walter)
I believe the President is
coming...

More STATIC on the radio or is it another BELCH?

BECKETT (V.O.)
(as Walter)
It is the President... about to
share the news with us that the
war in Vietnam is over... it's
over over there.

We hear APPLAUSE on the tape... and then STATIC and then
NOTHING... Lila tries to adjust the dial, find the
station again, but all she can get is the MUSIC of the
AFVN channel.

18

INT. GRU - NIGHT

18

Frankie and Beckett are beating out a small fire in the cabinet.

BECKETT

Looks like it's over, over here, too.

FRANKIE

I'll fix it...

(off his look)

Hey, can do, Dr. Dark. I'm the Wiz. We'll be back on the air in no time...

BECKETT

I shouldn't have listened to you. I had a nice little thing going... 'Need to expand our operation,' you said... 'think big.'

Frankie starts digging in the smoking radio ruins.

FRANKIE

We're too good to stay on the B.S. channel, broadcasting to a few grunts in a foxhole. There's almost half a million soldiers here now... they need us, they need someone to tell them what's going on... keep them entertained...

She finds a blown tube, holds it up to him, grins.

FRANKIE

Someone to tell them the truth.

19

INT. LILA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

19

Lila is getting dressed, her eyes filled with a sense of purpose... she looks around her room, suddenly everything has changed. We hear the first HORN honking in the compound. SHOUTS outside of "It's over!" Lila dresses a little faster.

20

INT. JET SET - NIGHT

20

They're already toasting, drinking. The JUKEBOX PLAYING. HOLLY enters with some grunts.

HOLLY

Did you hear?

(CONTINUED)

BOONIE

Yeah. Cool.

HOLLY

Who won?

BOONIE

We did... didn't we?

Boonie kisses Holly, there's a collective whoop from the crowd as more people run into the Jet Set, spill out into the compound, shouting, cheering, HONKING HORNS.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

21

INT. WARD - NIGHT

21

McMurphy and Dr. Richard working on the patient, performing team CPR, trying to keep him alive. Dr. Richard doing chest compressions while McMurphy provides his air... We can hear the SOUNDS of the celebration out in the compound.

They complete a cycle, Dr. Richard listens to his heart... nothing... he shakes his head.

DR. RICHARD

I'm calling it.

McMURPHY

Not yet.

DR. RICHARD

McMurphy...

McMURPHY

I'm not gonna lose this one.

Dr. Richard starts the chest compressions again...

McMURPHY

You believe it.

DR. RICHARD

No... do you?

McMURPHY

Everybody thought the war was over when we stopped the bombing.

DR. RICHARD

It's got to be some kind of mistake.

McMURPHY

Something like that.

Dr. Richard stops compression. McMurphy checks.

McMURPHY

(a smile)

Bingo. Got a pulse.

Dr. Richard listens. Unspoken hope in their eyes.

CUT TO:

Frankie is digging around for a tube in a box of supplies. We can hear the sounds of the CELEBRATION outside... what the hell is going on? She looks over to see Chacon is still asleep at the wheel.

Suddenly we hear LOUDER NOISE from outside, Frankie looks up to see something... then punches him.

FRANKIE

Chacon... wake up!

Chacon snaps out of a deep sleep, stands up just as Lila enters. Frankie and Chacon salute her. Lila has an odd look on her face. A big case of nostalgia. She embraces them.

LILA

You'll both remember this moment
the rest of your life.

FRANKIE/CHACON

(nonplussed)

We will?

LILA

And you broke the news to us all.

CHACON

I did?

LILA

You were on the air weren't you?

CHACON

(hides alarm clock)

Yeah, I was...

LILA

I was in London when I heard the
war was over in Europe, San
Francisco when the war was over
in Korea... and I was in my own
little hootch when I heard the war
was over here. You never forget.

Frankie's reaction changes from puzzled to horrified realization to 'Oh my God!'

FRANKIE

What if it's not true... what if
it's a... you know, a joke...

(CONTINUED)

LILA

Who would joke about something
this serious...

CHACON

It's over, huh?

FRANKIE

Major, I uh, I have something I
really want to tell you.

LILA

It's always like this. Once we
know it's over, we're not afraid
to bare our souls, admit past
transgressions, to tell everyone
what we really think of them, but
before you do, let me offer some
advice... some things are better
left unsaid.

Holly enters.

HOLLY

Isn't it far out! I gotta call
Cincinnati.

Holly picks up a phone.

LILA

Now what did you want to tell me.

HOLLY

Operator... operator? Hey!
Anybody there? Operator? I want
to call Ohio.

FRANKIE

It's not important.

Lila smiles knowingly.

HOLLY

It was working and now it's not.
The line went dead.

Chacon goes to the phone, tries to find one that works.
They continue talking in the b.g.

LILA

I'll bet everyone's trying to call
home. Circuits are overloaded.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

LILA (CONT'D)
(to Frankie)
When you can get through, see what
headquarters in Saigon has to say.
I need to know how to proceed.

She exits. We HOLD ON Frankie watching Chacon and Holly
beat on the phones.

HOLLY/CHACON
Hello... operator... hey...
hello...

23 EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

23

The celebration starts to accelerate. People are heading
for the Jet Set. Jeeps driving by, shouts, MUSIC.

24 EXT. GRU

24

Beckett stands in the doors, looking out into the
compound. What have they done?

25 INT. JET SET - NIGHT

25

A loud cheer from the gathered troops. Boonie is pour-
ing champagne for everyone at the bar, Lila is on stage,
at the microphone, trying to get them to pipe down so
she may continue. There's MUSIC on the JUKEBOX.

LILA
Please... if you'll just... may I
have your attention...

Then she puts her fingers in her mouth and lets out a
sailor's whistle. That stops them... sort of.

LILA
Because of this historic event,
I'm ordering the bar kept open
after hours...
(cheers)
And the champagne you're drinking
is on the house... actually on the
officer's club... it's from their
storeroom...

Cheers.

Boonie pops another cork, pours a glass for K.C. at the
bar.

(CONTINUED)

LILA

And lastly, I just want you all
to be aware that this night, this
wonderful, auspicious night is
something that you will all
remember.

But she's drowned out by the cheers. There's a spray
of champagne that catches Lila. She doesn't mind.
She shakes her head, steps down off the stage. Sarge
ENTERS SHOT, holding two champagne glasses. He offers
her one. All around them people are shouting, cheering,
kissing.

For a moment the world just stands still between these
two old soldiers. Lila accepts the glass, and in doing
so accepts a new peace between them. He raises his
glass, they clink rims, then down the hatch. A long
look... then Sarge SMASHES his GLASS on the floor. Lila
smiles, SMASHES hers.

CUT TO:

K.C. AND BOONIE AT BAR

He refills his glass. She's making furious notes on a
pad, consulting some paperwork, adding figures.

BOONIE

You really think it's over?

K.C.

Why couldn't they have waited?
Two more months and I'd be in fat
city.

(totals a column)

My Wheels of the World is about
to have a fatal head-on collision
with history.

BOONIE

What's gonna happen to China Beach?

She starts packing up.

K.C.

(drinks up)

Five weeks, six weeks, this
place'll be a ghost town.

K.C. exits. We HOLD ON Boonie...

27

INT. MARS - NIGHT

27

A zoo. CAMERA MOVES THROUGH the room. People on every line, shouting, pushing. Nobody is getting through.

GRUNTS/NURSES

Working here... over... I can't
hear you... say again... it's
dead, it keeps going dead...

CHACON

(on phone)

Hey, I got through... I got San
Francisco.

Everyone gets very quiet. Chacon holds the phone out
so everyone (us included) can hear.

CHACON

Hey, man, you hear about the war?
Over.

RADIO (V.O.)

War over? Over.

CHACON

Repeat. The war is over. Over.

RADIO (V.O.)

The war is over. Over.

CHACON

You heard it, too?

(to room)

He says it's over, too.

(into phone)

Yeah, we just heard. Over.

RADIO (V.O.)

Far out! I'm gonna tell my dog.

We hear the line CLICK OFF. He hung up.

CHACON

Hello? Hey... hey!

Everyone picks up the phones again, starts yelling.
The noise level quickly returns to chaos.

28

ANOTHER ANGLE

28

Holly is on the phone. K.C. beside her. Frankie ENTERS
SHOT. She's got some tubes and wires in a box.

(CONTINUED)

HOLLY

Hello? Hawaii? Oahu? I was
calling Ohio...

K.C.

Fifty bucks.

HOLLY

No...

K.C.

A hundred...

(Holly's look)

I've got some important calls to
make...

HOLLY

It's dead...

Holly and K.C. both look at Frankie. Holly continues
banging on the line, trying to get reconnected. K.C.
pulls Frankie aside.

K.C.

There's gotta be a phone I can
use.

FRANKIE

There isn't.

K.C.

I have to reach Hong Kong, Manila,
and New York tonight. You help me
do that and I'll make it worth
your while.

FRANKIE

I think you better wait...

K.C.

Wait? I'm gonna lose my shirt if
I don't pull the plug on a couple
of deals.

FRANKIE

K.C., listen to me... the war's
not really over. It's just a
rumor. I know. I started it.

K.C.

(a look; then)

You don't want to help me, fine.
I'll find someone to drive me to
Da Nang.

(CONTINUED)

28

CONTINUED: (2)

28

FRANKIE

No, it's really not over. This
is just a big mistake... see,
Beckett and I...

CAMERA CARRIES K.C. as she exits, FINDING Beckett at
the door, staring at Frankie. He motions to her with
his finger. They gotta talk.

29

INT. WARD - NIGHT

29

McMurphy and Dr. Richard are changing the chest bandages
on the patient they revived. Outside in the compound,
the celebration continues. McMurphy works a BP cuff.

It's madness. There's vehicles going by, people
fighting, couples kissing, GUNS FIRING in the compound.

DR. RICHARD

I wonder where the next war will
be?

McMURPHY

Let's finish this one first, okay?

DR. RICHARD

(musing)
The Middle East? Cambodia?
Berkeley?

There are shouts and screams in the compound.

McMURPHY

Somewhere. Men like making noise.
War is the loudest noise you can
make.

(re: bp)

Still dropping. He's going into
shock.

Dr. Richard removes the bandage, looks at the wound,
the distended abdomen.

DR. RICHARD

Who did this?

McMURPHY

(consults chart)
Major Goldman.

DR. RICHARD

It's so hard to get decent help
these days. We gotta go back in.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. RICHARD (CONT'D)

You prep him. I'm going to find
Major Goldman and invite him to
join us in the O.R.

Dr. Richard goes out the door. McMurphy grabs a glucose
bottle, then another door opens, a grunt and a nurse
enter, not seeing her, they're so consumed with passion...
tearing off their clothes as they climb onto one of the
beds. McMurphy watches... just long enough to approach
the voyeur line...

McMURPHY

Uh, excuse me... excuse me...

The nurse sees her. She screams, runs out. The grunt
grabs their clothes, runs after her. McMurphy turns back
to the patient, hooks up an I.V.

Frankie is working on the radio. Beckett holds a
flashlight on the repair.

BECKETT

I don't care what you say. I'm
going back on the air and tell
them.

FRANKIE

They won't believe you. It's too
late.

BECKETT

We can't let this go on any
longer.

FRANKIE

They find out we did it, I can
kiss my career in the green
machine goodbye.

BECKETT

They won't.

FRANKIE

You want to spend the rest of your
life in Leavenworth?

BECKETT

I figured us for a firing squad.

(CONTINUED)

FRANKIE

We don't do anything, they'll find out soon enough. Until then, what's wrong with letting everyone have a good time?

BECKETT

A good time? People are acting nuts out there. They're fighting, they're getting drunk --

FRANKIE

It's a typical night at China Beach --

BECKETT

(seriously)

It's wrong to let people believe in things that can hurt them.

Frankie adjusts a last wire, wipes her hands.

FRANKIE

Okay, go ahead... I just hope there's a nice view from my cell window.

Beckett picks up the mike, hits a power switch. There's a small shower of sparks from the cabinet. Beckett gives her a look.

FRANKIE

It was an accident... I'll fix it.

BECKETT

No, this time I'll do it.

He takes the tools from her, wades into the wires. We HOLD ON Frankie.

The celebration continues. Three grunts are lined up at the bar, holding out their dog tags for Dr. Richard to inspect.

DR. RICHARD

O positive. Great. Report to the ward. One more to go.

The grunt exits. He steps to the next one, reads his tag.

(CONTINUED)

31

CONTINUED:

31

DR. RICHARD

Have you given blood in the last
thirty days?

(shakes his head)

How many fingers?

He holds up two. The grunt smiles drunkenly, holds up
three.

DR. RICHARD

Why don't you sit this operation
out? Next.

He steps to the last grunt, takes his tag and shakes it
like a dice player, blows on it...

DR. RICHARD

Come on, O positive...

He turns the tag over, reads it.

DR. RICHARD

We have a winner! Report to the
cashier and drop a pint.

(sincerely)

Thank you, and tell Lt. McMurphy
to keep the body warm. I'll be
home in a few minutes.

The grunts leave. Boonie's been watching.

DR. RICHARD

Boonie, you seen Dr. Goldman?

Boonie nods, points to a nearby table. Dr. Richard looks.

32

THEIR POV - DR. GOLDMAN

32

passed out on the floor, two bing cherries in his eyes
and a pair of swizzle sticks up his nose.

33

BACK TO SCENE

33

Dr. Richard looks at Boonie, shakes his head.

34

INT. WARD - NIGHT

34

McMurphy is unhooking the blood bag from one of the
grunts.

McMURPHY

That's it. You stay here for half
an hour, then you can get up.

(CONTINUED)

Lila enters, carrying a bottle of champagne. She's a little tipsy.

LILA

I understand you need blood. I'm here to volunteer my corpuscles.

McMURPHY

Thanks for the offer, but I've got a full tank, Major. Looks like you do, too.

McMurphy carries the blood bag, moves to check on her serious patient, the one she's prepping for the OR. Lila follows.

LILA

I admit, I have been celebrating... hard to believe.

(a beat; then)

I keep pinching myself since I heard the news.

McMURPHY

Don't pinch too hard.

LILA

Don't you believe it?

McMURPHY

When the wheels of my freedom bird lift off, I'll believe it. Not before.

Lila watches her work for a moment...

LILA

You're a wonnerful nurse, McMurphy. I know. I've seen 'em come and go... most of the time I've really liked you... except when you acted like Sister McMartyr...

McMURPHY

Sister McMartyr?

LILA

Oops... that's what the other nurses call you...

McMurphy is hurt by the comment.

(CONTINUED)

LILA

Sister McMartyr... our Lady of Perpetual Duty... I personally liked that one..

McMURPHY

Major, if you'll excuse me. I have work to do.

LILA

Not for long. War's over. What's left to do?

McMURPHY

I just thought I'd straighten up a bit before we go home, empty the ashtrays, turn out the lights.

Dr. Richard enters.

DR. RICHARD

We ready?

McMURPHY

Let's do it. Grab that end.

McMurphy and Dr. Richard wheel him towards the OR.

DR. RICHARD

Major, they're looking for you back at the Jet Set. They've run out of champagne.

They exit. Lila looks lost for a moment, then she turns to one of the grunts who gave blood.

LILA

Carry on.

She exits.

as Lila walks back towards the Jet Set. She stops when she sees something startling... she squints. Is this real?

of the road going up the hill to the trailer area. Ten VC, holding torches, are marching down the hill, led by Answer Man and a couple of grunts.

as she watches, amazed. CAMERA WIDENS to include Frankie standing beside her, not only amazed, but completely dumb-founded with the turn of events. Lila shakes her head, smiles at her.

FRANKIE

I know... I know.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

38

INT. OR - NIGHT

38

We can hear the faint sounds of the CELEBRATION continuing at China Beach. We're below the OR table, seeing only legs. SLOW RISE...

DR. RICHARD (O.S.)

A little to the left... that's good.

McMURPHY (O.S.)

More pressure?

DR. RICHARD (O.S.)

Put your hand right here... that's got it... yeah, that's it.

CAMERA REVEALS Dr. Richard and McMurphy operating on the patient.

McMURPHY

I still can't believe Notre Dame lost by one point.

DR. RICHARD

I still can't believe Dr. Goldman didn't kill that guy. Clamp that, please. You thought about what you're going to do when it is over? For real?

McMURPHY

I try not to think about it.

DR. RICHARD

I imagine I'll show up at the airport, and there'll be this big red banner, with something sentimental on it, like, 'Welcome home, Richard.'

McMURPHY

Who's gonna be holding the banner?

DR. RICHARD

I try not to think about it. Sponge.

(CONTINUED)

McMURPHY

I don't have a clue about what to do next.

DR. RICHARD

He could use another quart.

She changes the bag.

McMURPHY

(a smile; then)

It's been like summer camp. I know the rules, I know what's expected of me.

DR. RICHARD

Don't you want to go home? Suture, please.

McMURPHY

No. Nobody cares about what happened over here. The world's gone on without us. They'll never know what it was like.

DR. RICHARD

But we'll spend the rest of our lives trying to tell them. What are we going to say? What are we going to tell our children when they ask what we did here?

It's rhetorical, unanswerable at the moment, something McMurphy can't contemplate anyway... she changes the subject. Dr. Richard sutures him up.

McMURPHY

(re: patient)

Wonder what he's going to do?

DR. RICHARD

Go home, try to remember what a 19-year-old should feel like.

(beat; then)

One day on the bus, he'll see this girl...

McMURPHY

Fall in love and get married?

DR. RICHARD

They'll live together at first... her parents will object, they'll get hitched to please them.

(CONTINUED)

McMURPHY

A small ceremony. Double ring. Honeymoon in Miami. They'll get matching tattoos on their left buttocks. Little hearts. Size of a quarter.

DR. RICHARD

On the second try, he'll pass his civil service exam, take a job with the post office. He'll work there for twenty years, raise his kids, fight with his wife, mow the lawn on weekends, go drinking with the boys at the V.F.W.

McMURPHY

When the kids are grown, they'll sell the house and buy a camper, hit the road, see America. They'll spend their summers on the highways, winters in Tuscon, playing cards, a couple of grey snowbirds taking naps together in the sun. They'll see the grandchildren at Christmas, but most of the time, they'll be together. Just enjoying each other.

DR. RICHARD

Sounds like a good life.

McMurphy clips the stitches. They drop their surgical masks.

McMURPHY

(to patient)

You better stick around. We've got it all figured out.

K.C. at the bar. Boonie is mixing drinks. The sounds of the CELEBRATION in the b.g., the JUKEBOX plays MUSIC.

K.C.

What's with these people? I can't get anyone to drive me to Da Nang.

BOONIE

They don't want to get shot. Do you?

(CONTINUED)

K.C.

Boonie, it's over. Who'd shoot us?

BOONIE

Maybe there's some guy out there that hasn't gotten the word yet. Like those Japanese they keep finding in the jungles.

K.C.

Can you get me a jeep? I'll drive myself.

BOONIE

If you can wait until dawn I'll drive you.

K.C.

My working capital is at risk here, you understand? My plans, my whole future...

BOONIE

Hey, hey... it's only money.

K.C. laughs. They look at each other.

BOONIE

You've made it this far. I don't think you ought to take any more chances.

K.C.

First light, we drive.

BOONIE

(a nod; then)

You know something... I'm gonna miss you.

K.C.

We'll stay in touch. Christmas cards, news letters, class reunions... you'll bring your family to Bangkok on vacation, stay in my hotel...

BOONIE

(the truth)

Never happen.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2)

39

Bittersweet. Boonie smiles. They kiss. He picks up a tray with drinks he's been mixing, walks OUT OF SHOT. We HOLD ON K.C.

40 ANOTHER PART OF THE JET SET

40

where Holly, Sarge, Answer Man are sitting.

HOLLY

I have no idea. I haven't even thought about it.

ANSWER MAN

You can't be a donut dolly the rest of your life.

Boonie ENTERS SHOT with the drinks, passes them out.

HOLLY

Well, maybe I'll travel around for a while.

BOONIE

Why don't you all come to New Zealand with me? Great Waves, great fishing, great beer.

ANSWER MAN

All I want to do is go home and get my hands on Gloria Valenzula.

SARGE

(a grin)

She your welcome home party?

ANSWER MAN

She's the bitch that talked me into enlisting. I'm gonna kill her.

SARGE

I got a little one pump gas station picked out back home. It's off the main highway. Hardly a car goes by all day. Doesn't do much business.

HOLLY

Sounds kinda boring.

SARGE

Yeah, don't it?

(CONTINUED)

Beckett ENTERS SHOT.

BECKETT

Boonie, you have any zipcord?

BOONIE

How much you need?

BECKETT

About three feet.

Boonie nods, goes OUT OF SHOT.

SARGE

What are you gonna do, Beckett?

BECKETT

What?

SARGE

When you get home? The war's over. Haven't you heard?

BECKETT

I don't know.

HOLLY

You going to reup?

BECKETT

No. No that stupid.

(a beat; then)

I've thought about going to school.

SARGE

Good idea. There's always work for morticians.

BECKETT

I was thinking about medical school.

SARGE

(a look; then)

There's always work for them, too.

HOLLY

(to the rescue)

You know what we oughta do? Make a time capsule. We did it every summer at Camp Weeniehawken. On the last night. We'd have a big bonfire and then bury it.

(CONTINUED)

It takes a moment for the idea to sink in, and they all like it, except Beckett.

SARGE

What do we put in it?

HOLLY

Something that will tell people what it was like at China Beach when they dig it up in a thousand years.

Boonie ENTERS SHOT, hands Beckett the zipcord.

BOONIE

Here you go.

HOLLY

Boonie, what can we use for a time capsule?

BOONIE

Time capsule? Great idea.

SARGE

What about a fifty gallon drum?

BOONIE

Or a blood plasma case?

Answer Man suddenly gets up, pulls a Division medallion off the wall.

ANSWER MAN

You don't mind, do you? I want something to remember this place by.

Sarge gets up, grabs something off the wall.

SARGE

Me, too. I've always liked this one.

BOONIE

Guys, don't... Hey, wait!

And then another grunt grabs something. It's a ground swell. Even Holly grabs something. Beckett doesn't. He'd like to tell them right now... but he can't. He walks out.

BOONIE

Guys, stop it... stop it!
(looks)

Major, can you help me? Major?

41 ANGLE - LILA

41

pulling on medallion herself, ripping it down.

42 BACK TO BOONIE

42

helpless as he watches the souvenir hunters destroy the Jet Set. He grabs something just before a grunt gets to it.

BOONIE

Hey, this is mine. Shove off.

43 INT. GRU - NIGHT

43

Beckett is working on the radio. SOUNDS from the compound filter in. There's a puff of solder smoke.

44 INT. LILA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

44

Lila's packing away the souvenir she took from the Jet Set. There's a KNOCK at her DOOR.

LILA

Come in...

Sarge enters carrying a small rumpled paper bag.

SARGE

Saw your light on. Figured you were up.

An awkward beat.

SARGE

This is for you.

(she takes it)

I was going to wrap it... I didn't have any paper...

She unwraps a beautiful jade bracelet.

LILA

I can't accept this.

SARGE

I know it's against code, but if you don't say nothing, I won't.

LILA

It's not that... I know what it cost.

(CONTINUED)

SARGE

I promised I was gonna get you one... please, I want you to have it.

LILA

It's very beautiful. Thank you.

She puts it on: A beat. Sarge is just about to leave...

LILA

Would you like a drink?

He nods. Lila grabs a bottle, pours a drink for them.

SARGE

Thought about what you're gonna do?

LILA

No.

SARGE

You'll do fine at whatever you try. You're the kind of woman that lands on her feet.

LILA

You believe that?

SARGE

I know that. I know you.

LILA

You do? Tell me what you know.

(his look)

I'd like to know what you think of me.

SARGE

(a beat; then)

I admire you. I admire what you've done as an officer in this man's army. You were born to have brass on your shoulders, Lila, you've got that God-given sense of command that's rare in men and seldom seen in females. And if they'd let women into combat, men would follow you, they'd trust you with their lives... if you could do one thing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

44

CONTINUED: (2)

44

SARGE (CONT'D)

(her look)

...if you could let someone love you. Because love's the only thing I know worth fighting and dying for. Every great general knows that. Nothing else matters. All the battle ribbons and welcome home parades and war stories don't mean much in the end.

(a beat)

I'm proud to have known you, Lila. I wish you a good life. I hope you find what you're looking for.

He drains his glass. He starts to leave...

LILA

(stopping him)

Please stay. We can talk some more.

SARGE

I got some stuff to do... and besides I already know what you think of me. Good night.

He exits.. We HOLD ON LILA.

45

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

45

People are stacking up a bonfire near the helipad. Anything that burns. Holly is directing traffic.

HOLLY

Over here... no, no C-rations... they'll explode...

There's some furniture from the Jet Set, empty ammo boxes, OD underwear... quite a collection.

46

INT. WARD - NIGHT

46

McMurphy watches from the window beside the remaining patient's bed. Dr. Richard enters, holding a flashlight and a Mason jar.

DR. RICHARD

How's he doing?

McMURPHY

Fine now.

(CONTINUED)

DR. RICHARD

I can't remember the last time I stayed up all night.

McMURPHY

Two weeks ago. We did eleven cases in a row? You fell asleep during the last one and we had to give you oxygen?

DR. RICHARD

How could I forget?

McMURPHY

The first three days I was in country, I didn't sleep. Twenty-two hours on a plane, a bad bus ride to a noisy hotel in Da Nang, waterbugs the size of Buicks crawling on me all night, then reporting for duty the next morning. I was so wasted.

DR. RICHARD

I remember the first time I saw you. Orientation lecture. You were asleep. I assumed it was a sign of disrespect for authority. I think that's when I fell for you. Beauty, brains, and anarchy all in one swell package.

McMURPHY

A long time ago.

DR. RICHARD

Everything good I remember seems like a long time ago.

McMURPHY

Has there been anything else on the radio?

He sets his jar in the window, takes a look at the patient, shining the light on him.

DR. RICHARD

No. And the phone lines are still down.

(a beat; then)

What was it like going home?

(CONTINUED)

McMURPHY

When my father was sick?

(he nods)

It was raining hard, cold when we arrived at Travis. You walk in the terminal, there's this big sign. "Welcome home Soldier. America is Proud of you." After I got through customs, got sprayed for lice, I went into a latrine. There were uniforms stuffed in the trash cans, in the toilets. When I went outside, people were calling me a baby killer and spitting, throwing things.

(a beat; then)

The trip sort of went downhill from there.

She picks up the jar.

McMURPHY

What's in here?

DR. RICHARD

It's my shrapnel collection. I was thinking of putting it in the time capsule.

McMURPHY

You are?

DR. RICHARD

McMurphy... I cheated on the Notre Dame bet. I knew the score ahead of time... Hanoi Hannah broadcasts the results earlier than we do.

McMURPHY

Why are you telling me now?

Dr. Richard turns the flashlight up into his face.

DR. RICHARD

I've had this overwhelming urge to speak the truth ever since I became one of them.

McMURPHY

No, not you.

DR. RICHARD

I'm sorry. I tried to hold out.

(CONTINUED)

McMURPHY

No...

DR. RICHARD

Don't struggle anymore. Give in.
Become one of us.

McMURPHY

Never. Never. Never.

She moves away from him. He follows. She puts her fingers in her ears.

McMURPHY

I'm not listening to you.

DR. RICHARD

Accept the inevitable. Let yourself believe... walk on the sunny side of the street, forget your troubles, come on, get happy for a few hours. What have you got to lose?

Suddenly, the bonfire ignites in the compound. A huge billowing ball of flame, rising high into the night sky. The CROWD CHEERS.

McMURPHY

Don't you dare ask for my address.
Or tell me you'll write. Don't even think about saying good-bye.

McMurphy is fighting tears.

DR. RICHARD

I'm not going to say good-bye because I know we'll meet again.

McMURPHY

(doubtful)

Sure.

DR. RICHARD

I thought Buddhists believe in reincarnation.

McMURPHY

(a beat; then)

They do.

DR. RICHARD

Maybe we should agree on some signal, so we'll know it's us.

(CONTINUED)

McMURPHY

We'll know. We knew this time.

DR. RICHARD

Come with me... I'll get someone to cover.

McMURPHY

You don't understand. I'm afraid...

(his look)

I know it's crazy, but I keep thinking he's going to be the last man to die in Vietnam.

DR. RICHARD

He won't be... not if you're looking out for him.

(a beat; then)

I will miss you, McMurphy. Every day of my life.

He exits. We hear MUSIC. McMurphy looks out the window.

of the people dancing around the bonfire. Dr. Richard joins them. Frankie is standing on the edge, watching. She's got her portable radio tuned to Beckett. She hears him.

BECKETT (V.O.)

(on radio)

I don't know if anyone's still listening... there's a rumor going around that the war's over.

(a beat)

Don't believe everything you hear. Someone I know said the first casualty of war, is truth. Same thing's true about peace.

to see the body bags in the b.g.

BECKETT

The real truth is that this war ends every day for someone we know. And one day, if we're lucky, it will end for us. We'll stop having those going home dreams and start living them.

49

EXT. COMPOUND

49

Frankie listening, watching the dancers, the flames.

BECKETT (V.O.)

(on radio)

I believe that. The Wiz believes
it, too. I guess everybody's got
to believe in something.

50

INT. WARD

50

McMurphy mops the brow of the patient, looks out the
window...

BECKETT (V.O.)

(on radio)

It's what gets you through the
night.

(a beat)

Keep the faith, baby. Keep the
faith.

ON her, holding on, holding out as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

51

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

51

The bonfire burns. The troops gathered about the burial pit and the time capsule. We hear MUSIC coming over the LOUDSPEAKERS of the compound. Boonie is putting some items into the nearly full capsule. Some men are drumming on tubs and makeshift bongos... a very tribal feeling. They keep a beat going throughout. Some grunts are mixing cement up in a boat. Boonie, Sarge, Lila, Holly, Dr. Richard are there. So is Frankie. Not sure what to do.

BOONIE

A surfboard would have been perfect, but a little big, so here's a piece of one I wiped out on... and pair of sunglasses, some zinc oxide, and a cocktail napkin from the Jet Set.

Boonie drops the last item into the capsule. There's a drum flourish and cheers from the crowd.

HOLLY

Okay, who's next?

ANSWER MAN steps up.

ANSWER MAN

Here's an M-16. It's jammed up as usual. Good riddance.

Drops it in. Drums and cheers.

Frankie cringes, turns to Dr. Richard.

FRANKIE

Uh, maybe he shouldn't do that. Government property...

DR. RICHARD

It's okay. It's not his gun. He stole it.

ANSWER MAN

C-rat of lima beans with ham. And here's the little pills I had to take every time I ate a can of lima beans and ham.

(CONTINUED)

51

CONTINUED:

51

Drums and cheers!

HOLLY

Next.

Kass steps up. She's sober now.

KASS

Here's my dog-earred copy of Lord of the Rings, and the Army's Guide to Vietnam I was given when we stepped off the plance. Two great fantasies.

Drums and cheers.

HOLLY

Dr. Richard?

Dr. Richard steps up.

DR. RICHARD

I was saving my shrapnel collection for the Ripley museum in San Francisco, but believe it or not... I think it belongs here. It's mostly their stuff anyway.

He tosses it in.

Drums and cheers.

HOLLY

Anybody else? Okay, I'm the only one left. I've got some pictures, a couple of maps of my program runs, a copy of Playboy... and a package of reconstituted eggs that will still be good when they open this thing up.

Drums and cheers as she drops them in.

HOLLY

That's it. Bury the sucker and let's party!

A cheer from the crowd. Drums. They begin dancing in a conga line, around the fire. The men place the top on the capsule, start shoveling cement on it. Frankie can't stand to watch. She walks OUT OF SHOT. We HOLD ON them, dancing, cheering, primitive celebrations in the firelight.

Beckett is dismantling the radio. Frankie enters, sees him pull out some tubes.

FRANKIE

You taking it apart?

BECKETT

Seems like the right thing to do.

FRANKIE

That's it? You're quitting?

BECKETT

You hear that music? You saw those people. We are responsible for that.

FRANKIE

What we are responsible for is giving those lives some hope, some music, some laughs....

BECKETT

Some disappointment?

FRANKIE

Fine, give me the stuff. I'll set it up in the motor pool.

BECKETT

I didn't say I'm quitting... I'm shutting down for a while.

(her look)

In about two hours, somebody from headquarters is gonna start trying to figure out what happened. Dr. Dark thinks a low profile is in order.

FRANKIE

(a beat; then)

The Wiz agrees... but, we shall return?

BECKETT

Oh, we shall, McArthur. We shall.

Her hands her a piece of the radio.

We can hear the DRUMS in the DISTANCE. Sarge is sitting in his silk kimono, drinking a beer. There's a KNOCK.

SARGE

Yeah?

Lila enters. She has a book with her.

LILA

Your light was on... I thought you might still be up... I was going through my locker and I found this book of English poets. I recalled you liked them... so I thought I'd give it to you...

Sarge lights his cigar, blows smoke her way.

LILA

(a beat; then)
You're wrong, you know? You don't have any idea of what I think of you.

(he stares at her)
I think... you're the kindest man I ever met... You're gentle, and good-natured, and... I admire the way you take pride in your work...

SARGE

For crying out loud, woman, stop giving me a damn eulogy. I'm not dead yet.

LILA

I didn't come here to be made fun of.

She starts out. He stops her.

SARGE

And you didn't come here to bring me that book.

(he takes the book)
I hate poetry. But I loved the sound of your voice. I still do. I could listen to you read the Sears and Roebuck catalogue.

(throws the book down)
Now let's get something straight. Why'd you come here?

(CONTINUED)

LILA

To say good-bye.

SARGE

(a look; then)

You came here because you wanted
to see me. Say it. Say it!

LILA

I came here because I wanted to
see you.

SARGE

And you wanted to tell me
something. Say it!

LILA

I wanted to tell you something.

SARGE

You wanted to tell me that you
liked the way I kissed you.

LILA

I liked the way you kissed me.

SARGE

And you liked the way I held you.

LILA

I liked the way you held me.

SARGE

And there were some times, in a
certain light, that I looked like
Robert Mitchum.

LILA

You did... you do.

He moves close to her, takes her in his arms.

SARGE

We could make a go of it, Lila.
Some part of you believes that or
you wouldn't be standing here.
I've always felt there's this
little corner of your heart that's
holding out, surrounded by pride,
afraid to let go, to make a mistake,
to hurt, to be liked the rest of
us, struggling along here on the
ground. Show it to me.

(a beat)

Show it to me.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: (2) 53

A beat, then he kisses her. She returns the kiss.

54 EXT. COMPOUND 54

The bonfire has burned down, the conga line half its size. People are pairing off, moving away. The first glimpse of daybreak on the horizon.

55 ANGLE - JEEP 55

K.C. is waiting in the jeep. She's looking in her briefcase, reading some papers. Major Goldman ENTERS SHOT. He's drunk. He's wearing his formal dress blouse over a pair of pajamas, scrambled egg hat askew on his head.

MAJOR GOLDMAN

Buy you a drink?

K.C.

Sorry, Major. I've got business in Da Nang.

MAJOR GOLDMAN

How about we do some business here.
One for the road.

Goldman takes out his wallet, pulls out some bills.

K.C.

Sorry. Not interested.

MAJOR GOLDMAN

What's the matter? Old Genie
Weenie's money was good enough for
you last night.

K.C.

Last night was last night. World's
changed a lot since then.

MAJOR GOLDMAN

How much you want? A Hundred?
Two hundred?

56 ANGLE - BOONIE 56

coming to meet K.C., carrying a gas can.

K.C.

It's not the money, it's you
Goldman. You're clumsy in bed,
you got bad breath, and you got
zits on your ass.

Major Goldman takes a SLOW MOTION backhand slap at
K.C., but she blocks it with her briefcase.

K.C.

Hey!

And then Boonie ENTERS SHOT and is all over him,
flipping him onto the hood of the jeep, slugs him.

BOONIE

You son of a bitch!

Goldman blocks the next blow, screams at him...

MAJOR GOLDMAN

Get off of me! That's an order.

DR. RICHARD (O.S.)

Boonie...

Goldman pushes Boonie back as Dr. Richard ENTERS SHOT.

MAJOR GOLDMAN

You saw it. You saw him hit me.
I'm going to have you court-
martialed. You're my witness, Dr.
Richard. You saw this man hit me.

DR. RICHARD

Yes, I did... but I'm a little
confused, did he hit you like this?

Dr. Richard slaps him. Goldman is shocked.

DR. RICHARD

Or was it more like this!

He slaps him again.

MAJOR GOLDMAN

Are you crazy?

DR. RICHARD

No, the army is crazy for letting
you practice medicine. You're
beyond incompetent, Major Goldman.
You approach criminal negligence.
Your sutures look like football
laces.

(CONTINUED)

MAJOR GOLDMAN

I'm reporting you both.

DR. RICHARD

Good. Be sure and tell them I
did this, too.

He slaps him on top of the head, pummels him in a quasi
Three-Stooges manner that's more humiliating than harm-
ful, then kicks him in the butt, knocking him down into
the dirt. Goldman struggles to his feet.

DR. RICHARD

When I get to work this morning,
I want to find your request for
transfer to a non-surgical status
on my desk. If it's not, I'll
have you up on charges.

(off his look)

I know where the bodies are buried.

Goldman believes that.

MAJOR GOLDMAN

Who cares? War's over.
I'm outta here.

He exits. Dr. Richard straightens his clothes. K.C.
and Boonie look at him with new eyes.

DR. RICHARD

What a night.

K.C.

You could say that.

He exits. Boonie climbs into the seat.

BOONIE

We can't leave just yet.

K.C.

Why?

BOONIE

We need gas, and the pumps are
locked, and the only guy with a
key is Sergeant Pepper and he's
occupied right now, if you know
what I mean...

K.C. shakes her head, laughs.

K.C.

What a night..

58 EXT. COMPOUND

58

The conga line continues, but the bonfire is almost out.

59 EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

59

The conga line snakes toward the hospital ward. The bonfire is almost out.

CUT TO:

60 INT. WARD - NIGHT

60

McMurphy prepares the surgical patient for transport. She looks up as the doors to the ward open and the conga line comes in, moving through the ward. The dancers move past her, begging her to join them, but she shakes her head no.

Dr. Richard passes, drops out of the line to check on the patient, catch his breath. The conga line continues out, leaving them alone.

McMURPHY

If my children ever ask me...

DR. RICHARD

Yes...

McMurphy looks out the window at the dancers.

McMURPHY

I will tell them I did the best I could. That's all any of us knew how to do. I will tell them I survived because I had the love of good friends. I will tell them that in the face of death, I learned to cherish life. I will tell them that I was proud to have known each and every one of these people. I was proud to have been part of China Beach.

DR. RICHARD

And what will you tell them about me?

McMURPHY

I will tell them that we had the last dance together...

McMurphy and Dr. Richard make their own conga line. Dancing around the ward.

(CONTINUED)

61 EXT. COMPOUND 61
Bonnie is pouring some gas into the tank. The sun breaks over the horizon. Boonie STARTS the ENGINE, and then he sees it.

62 THEIR POV - CHOPPER 62
in the distance, coming their way.

63 CROWD 63
keeps dancing, but gradually more of them see the chopper, stop dancing, point to it.

64 CHOPPER 64
banks and turns, dropping to the helipad. The dancers scatter to make room for it.

65 CHOPPER'S POV 65
as we descend, the prop wash extinguishing the last of the bonfire, blowing up a cloud of ashes and smoke.

66 DANCERS 66
surrounded by smoke, looking at the chopper... It's not what they expected.

67 CHOPPER 67
as the smoke clears, we see the wounded on it. The war has returned with a vengeance.

68 IN VARIOUS ANGLES 68
We see a few faces as the hope fades from them, dropping away, shaken loose in a gust of rotar blast... and then people begin to spring into action.

69 INT. WARD 69
McMurphy and Dr. Richard look out at the choppers. They see the war has returned...

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

69

The sounds of the WAR start to FADE OUT as we begin to hear the AFVN radio MUSIC FADE IN until we only hear the MUSIC playing.

70 BOONIE AND K.C.

70

Boonie and K.C. exchange a look as people race by them to help. Boonie goes to join them... K.C. lights a cigarette, gets out, starts walking slowly back to her hootch.

71 ANGLE - CHOPPER

71

as the wounded are off loaded.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

(on radio)

Good morning from Armed Forces
Radio in Saigon. This is Dawn
Buster, and I'm your host, Sam
Leroy. Sunrise this morning is at
0630 hours. High today in the mid
90's, a slight chance of showers...

McMurphy and Dr. Richard ENTER SHOT with the one patient from the ward as the last wounded is off loaded.

Dr. Richard and McMurphy lean over the patient's stretcher. He opens his eyes. They exchange a look.

DR. RICHARD

War's over son, you're going home.

Medics put the stretcher on the chopper...

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

(on radio)

We have a live interview later
with Joey Heatherton... I know you
guys will be looking forward to
that... I know I am...

McMurphy and Dr. Richard move away as the CHOPPER TAKES OFF.

72 CLOSE ON McMURPHY

72

watching it go. McMurphy's been granted a reprieve.
There's work to do.

as the chopper departs. McMurphy and Dr. Richard run for the OR.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

(on radio)

Stay tuned throughout the day for
the latest weather, sports, and news
on Armed Forces Radio... Hey, it looks
like another beautiful day in Vietnam.

We HOLD ON the compound... the MUSIC... the sounds of
a CHOPPER... the sun shining gloriously as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END