

CHINA BEACH

"A Hundred Klicks Out"

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FINAL DRAFT

November 19, 1990

CHINA BEACH

"A Hundred Klicks Out"

CAST

McMURPHY

K. C.

DODGER

POL FAT

EMBASSY CLERK

O'BANNION

THAI WOMAN

JOEY (NON-SPEAKING)

AMERICAN

CAM NOI

HECTOR ZAPATA

JOAQUIN

INNOCENCIA

TRIEU AU

KAREN

CLERK

MARINE

CHINA BEACH

"A Hundred Klicks Out"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

NIGHTCLUB/RESTAURANT

SAIGON AIRPORT HANGAR

CATHOLIC ORPHANAGE
Chapel

JOAQUIN'S GENERAL STORE

TRIEU AU'S HOME
Closet

U.S. EMBASSY
Lobby
Stairwell

JET SET

WARD/TRIAGE

U.S. EMBASSY
Lobby
Office
Stairwell

JET SET

WARD/TRIAGE

EXTERIORS:

CATHOLIC ORPHANAGE

DESERT BACK ROAD

JOAQUIN'S GENERAL STORE

JUNGLE

RIVER

COMPOUND

SAIGON STREET/ALLEY

BOMBED-OUT CHURCH

COAST

U.S. EMBASSY
Gates
Roof

CHINA BEACH

"A Hundred Klicks Out"

ACT ONE

IN DARK

A man sings "New York, New York."

MAN IN DARK

'Start spreading the news
I'm leaving today...'

FADE IN:

1 INT. NIGHTCLUB/RESTAURANT - NIGHT 1

Classic Manhattan. Understated elegance. Savoy de
rigueur. Chanel. Balenciaga. Harry Winston on Parade.

ON SCREEN: BANGKOK - APRIL, 1975

A Frank Sinatra wanna-be, Thai style, POL FAT, Bangkok's
"Old Blue Eyes," croons -- black tie, EO-II slick, Lucky
Strike trailing blue smoke under the single spot -- not
bad, just a slightly-skewed view of the inscrutable East:

POL FAT

'... I want to be a part of it
New York, New York...'

K.C. sips a glass of claret, looks across the linen-covered
table at JACKIE O'BANNION, a textbook rogue in black tie,
who fills his own goblet with claret, finishing with a
Donegal brogue:

O'BANNION

It's the deal of a life time.

K.C., as elegant as her surroundings, laughs, shakes her
head.

K.C.

It's a crock. Remember what
brought you to Bangkok, O'Bannion.
the political theory of plastique.
Four dead paratroopers. Her
Majesty's finest.

O'BANNION

Which explains the fall of the
British Empire.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

K.C.

Which pretty much sums up your idea
of negotiating a business deal.

O'BANNION

(indicating club)

You haven't done so badly in this
partnership, ocushla.

A THAI WOMAN, pencil-thin chic interrupts them, whispering in K.C.'s ear, while K.C. answers O'Bannion:

K.C.

Because I control the purse
strings, ocushla.

(to Thai Woman)

Tell her I'm out.

THAI WOMAN

It's the sixth call.

K.C.

Then tell her I died.

O'BANNION

Jealous wives... I've warned you,
K.C..

K.C.

Interpol. I warned you.

THAI WOMAN

She sounds... upset.

O'BANNION

Trouble?

K.C.

(stands, reluctant)

Loose ends.

O'BANNION

Can I help?

K.C.

Nothing to bomb.

K.C. walks to the bar, the Thai Woman winding off to the far end of it. For a moment, K.C. looks at the phone, the flashing "Hold" button, then picks up the receiver.

K.C.

So?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

K.C. (CONT'D)

(then, bitter)

Paint me a picture then. After
six years names and faces all run
together.

Whatever else K.C. says is lost under the skewed image
of Pol Fat crooning:

POL FAT

'If I can make it there, I'll
make it anywhere...'

CUT TO:

2 INT. SAIGON AIRPORT TERMINAL HANGAR - DAY

2

K.C. enters, flight bag in hand. Alone. No arrival
crush. No lines. No waiting. She does a solitary
stroll through Customs. Glances --

3 ACROSS TERMINAL

3

To a different story. Departure lines snake and coil.
No, that's a joke. There are no departure lines -- only
a Get-A-Way-Mass of Americans and Vietnamese desperate
to blow Saigon before the fall.

ON SCREEN: TAN SON NHUT AIRPORT - APRIL, 1975

K.C. moves into the press, bucking the tide, going the
wrong way as usual. The mood is anxious, ugly. No one
wants to give ground for her to pass. She stumbles a
little. A hand reaches out, steadies her, she looks up
into a Western face, AMERICAN, civilian.

AMERICAN

You lost?

(at her look)

In country's definitely out. The
direction of choice.

K.C.

I've got business in Saigon.

The American looks at K.C. like she's lost her mind, then
offers mildly:

AMERICAN

Really ought to take a paper,
miss.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

K.C.
Why? Isn't ignorance bliss?

CUT TO:

4 EXT. CATHOLIC ORPHANAGE - DAY

4

CAMERA PANS mute testament to violence. Bullet-riddled walls. Communist slogans scrawled on stucco. "Mi hay cut kaoi Vietnam!" "Ho Chi Minh muon nam!" "Muon nam bac va dang!" A bludgeoned Pieta.

ON SCREEN: VICINITY OF DA NANG - APRIL, 1975

5 INT. CHAPEL - DAY

5

Empty. Desecrated. Broken crucifixes. The altar shattered, shredded tags of embroidered vestments. Missals ripped apart, pages wadded, thrown about. We PAN ON THROUGH, STOPPING ON:

UPSIDE-DOWN BODY OF VIETNAMESE NUN

Tied at ankles, knees and arms, a bundle nailed to the chapel wall.

BOY (O.S.)
She waited for you.

And now DODGER, spins around, M-16 hammered down, comes face to face with CAM NOI, 13, horribly disfigured leper. Cam Noi grins, enjoying the effect he has on Dodger, the way the big American has to fight to mask his revulsion at Cam Noi's appearance.

CAM NOI
Big faith. Big mistake. You
never came. Only the N.V.A.

DODGER
Couldn't you even bury her?

Cam Noi grins, arms wide, a Julie Andrews' "The Hills are Alive" kind of bravado. He has no hands. Only rag bound stumps. The remains of a thumb, the last two joints of an index finger.

CAM NOI
No hand with tools, GI. You be
the hero. Better late than never.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Cam Noi and Dodger huddle around a stub of candle. Dodger opens C-Rats, uses his boot toe to nudge a can over to Cam Noi, keeping a careful gap between them.

Cam Noi, close to starvation, attacks the C-Rats, deformed hands scooping, talking all the while, his mouth full:

CAM NOI

Sister managed to get some of the orphans out. One here. One there. The pretty ones. She knew you'd keep your promise and come for the rest.

DODGER

N.V.A. bottled me in.

CAM NOI

Bad times all over.

DODGER

Why was Sister here when the N.V.A...?

CAM NOI

(that ass-bite grin)

Me. Our Marines took others. No me. They're all afraid of me. A.R.V.N. N.V.A. V.C. Even big Yankee-Bravo-Yankee.

DODGER

Sister wasn't afraid.

CAM NOI

(shrugs)

Big faith. Big mistake,

(then)

You going to save me? Like Sister said?

(a stump out)

Wanna shake on it?

Dodger considers the leper kid. He wants to trek out with him like he wants to fight a loose sphincter across the Central Highlands. But, what real choice does he have?

Snubbing out the candle, he rolls over, putting his back to Cam Noi.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. DESERT BACK ROAD - DAY

7

A rearview mirror -- a souped-up "Jimmy" pickup with three figures in the cab --

Reflected in the mirror, bearing down, HORN BLASTING, drawing closer -- almost menacing. OVER this: the EAGLES' "Takin' it Easy." "Well, I'm standin' on a corner in Winslow, Arizona/Eyein' such a fine sight to see/It's a girl, my Lord in a flatbed Ford..."

The "Jimmy" gears down and in on a '68 red Camaro, then cuts over, passing, drawing on and ahead, swerving back into its lane -- The driver's hand out the window, a mock salute.

ON SCREEN: SANGRE DE MUJER, NEW MEXICO - APRIL, 1975

8 EXT. JOAQUIN'S GENERAL STORE/BAR - DAY

8

Joaquin's shimmers in the heat of desert spring, sitting just off the two lane blacktop. A one-stop wonder, it sells everything from tack, to tampons, to tequila.

The wrap-around porch is littered with saddles, sheep-dogs, a few Indian kids, a lot of Indian men -- killing time by killing off longneck beers.

The storefront yard is cluttered. Pintos hitched to a lodge pole rail. Down-and-out pickups. Rust-racked Jeeps. The souped-up "Jimmy" shines among the riff-raff.

A 20 foot slick side trailer is parked beside Joaquin's. Pitted, pinged, decked out with dozens of windchimes.

The Camaro pulls off the blacktop, noses in among the pickups, draws alongside the "Jimmy." The driver's door opens.

COLLEEN McMURPHY, old Levis, chambray shirt, dusty boots and straw Resistol -- gets out.

The only woman on the porch, INNOCENCIA ZAPATA, a very pregnant Zuni, hums at Joaquin's door as the Camaro pulls in. She frowns slightly, then quickly urges her 6-year-old son, JOEY, barely visible, the rest of the way into the store. With a last worried look at McMURPHY, she follows the boy.

HECTOR ZAPATA sits astride the porch rail, longneck in hand, watching as McMURPHY moves onto the porch.

HECTOR ZAPATA
Hey, McMURPHY, you drive like a
white girl.

(CONTINUED)

Laughing, McMurphy moves in on him, takes his beer and drinks thirstily, admitting:

McMURPHY

I am a white girl, Hector.

HECTOR ZAPATA

Say it ain't so, Joe!

McMURPHY

(hands back the beer)

Besides, you drive like some --

HECTOR ZAPATA

Likkered-up Injun?

The hostile challenge hangs between them until a beaded necklace drops over McMurphy's head, draping over her breasts.

JOAQUIN (O.S.)

Whatta you think, McMurphy? Genuine authentic Indian beadwork. Handmade by a genuine authentic Taiwanese Sioux.

Joaquin Two Horse, a White mountain Apache, puts himself between McMurphy and Hector. He holds up a hank of beaded necklaces, adding:

JOAQUIN

Beaded in the sacred Corn Woman pattern. According to Billy Chu, my man in the East. Think they'll play in Peoria?

Before she can reply, Hector hikes a leg over the rail and drops from the porch, crossing to the "Jimmy" and climbing inside the cab.

McMurphy watches the "Jimmy" roll out of the yard in a spray of dirt and gravel, gunning down the blacktop.

CUT TO:

Groceries -- the canned, dried, packaged American Dream -- circle a braided rug, a few small tables, ladder-backed chairs, a fireplace.

A sheepdog nurses her litter in the middle of the floor.

(CONTINUED)

At the register, Joaquin rings up dozens of single-serving boxed raisins, trying to keep ahead of the next stack McMURPHY piles on the counter.

JOAQUIN

Bribery's an ugly crime, Nurse.

McMURPHY

(steps over the litter)

Protection. Ever been bitten by a croupy five-year-old who doesn't want to 'open wide'?

Her glance falls on a stack of newspapers beside the register. HEADLINES PREDICT THE FALL OF SAIGON. She looks away. Joaquin studies her. A beat. Then:

JOAQUIN

Last Health Inspector the B.I.A. sent out here lasted a week. But, then, he was too cheap to spring for raisins.

McMurphy spots Innocencia, cradling canned peaches against her stomach, partially-blocked by a postcard carousel. Oblivious to the Zuni woman's attempt to be "invisible," McMURPHY joins her, indicating the postcards.

McMURPHY

Bad time for traveling, Innocencia.

(reads a card)

'Taste Tucumcari...?'

(eyes her stomach)

Baby's dropped all right.

(and)

I wish you'd reconsider the hospital, Innocencia. You can't have a baby alone and you can't count on Hector to be...

(as Innocencia moves to the pop machine)

He drinks too much, Innocencia.

INNOCENCIA

All the men drink. You drink.

McMURPHY

Not like...

(holds up raisins)

Where's Joey? I owe him from my last visit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ignoring her, Innocencia turns down into an aisle. McMurphy watches her go, then shrugs, returning to Joaquin at the register. After a moment, Joaquin offers:

JOAQUIN

So... your boss, Corbett, tells me I'm losin' my favorite tenant at the end of the month. I warned you the trailer leaked.

McMurphy points to a bottle of Jim Beam on a shelf behind Joaquin.

McMURPHY

It hasn't rained in the seven months I've been here, Joaquin.

JOAQUIN

Seven, huh? Seems like only six.
(rings up the JB)
Hell, I was working up the guts to ask you out.

McMURPHY

(gathers up raisins)
Gotta go. There will be measles and rumor of measles.

JOAQUIN

(sacking the J.B.)
I could take it into my head to follow you, **you** know.

McMURPHY

Nancy Blue Feather would cut your throat.

Laughing, her attention is caught by a slight scuffle and her eyes turn to a pyramid of Saltine boxes.

ONE BRIGHT BLACK-EYE

-- not quite at waist-level -- peers through the stacked boxes at McMurphy.

Grinning, McMurphy takes two boxes of raisins from a sack and moves in on the Saltine pyramid.

Whoever is hiding quickly ducks down the closest aisle. McMurphy follows. Too late. The aisle is empty. A NOISE on the other side of the shelves widens her grin.

(CONTINUED)

9A CONTINUED: 9A

Whistling one of those too-nonchalant to be nonchalant whistles, McMurphy trails the NOISE down her aisle, removing groceries from the shelf along the way to look through and check her progress.

9B McMURPHY'S POV - THROUGH GROCERIES 9B

A black-eye, raven bright. The curve of a child's cheek. A shock of black hair. The features move along the aisle, mirroring her movements. Until --

9C McMURPHY 9C

reaches the end of the aisle and jumps around, catching up a tiny six-year-old boy in a bear-hug.

McMURPHY

Gotcha!

At the sound of McMurphy's voice, Innocencia turns from her shopping, sees McMurphy holding her son.

At the same time, McMurphy gets her first good, full look at Joey Zapata. One eye is raven bright. The other is swollen shut. His lower lip is split. One cheek is a dull wine. Bruises mottle his thin arms.

McMURPHY

Joey? Joey, what --

INNOCENCIA

(moves to take
him)

He plays too hard. Sometimes he hurts himself.

(defensive)

I can't watch him all the time.

McMURPHY

(holding Joey)

Joey did this?

INNOCENCIA

He fell.. running sheep.

McMURPHY

Hector did this.

INNOCENCIA

He's a good man.

(CONTINUED)

9C CONTINUED:

9C

McMURPHY

A good man did this?

McMurphy takes Joey to the register counter, sets him up on it, hands gentle, caring, trying to assess the damage and still comfort -- words dredge up from another war zone:

McMURPHY

It's all right, Joey. You're gonna be fine.

(her anger)

You'll be fine.

Like someone drugged, Joey remains passive, eyes fixed on a distant point. Joaquin looks to Innocencia, then back to McMurphy.

CUT TO:

10 OMITTED
thru
12

10
thru
12

13 INT. TRIEU AN'S HOME (SAIGON) - DAY

13

K.C. stands by a piano, now facing TRIEU AU, older, worn by hard years and the fall of empire.

K.C.

All right. I'm here. You tell me why.

TRIEU AU

Karen.

K.C.

Karen? Oh yes. The child you stole from me six years ago.

TRIEU AU

How could I 'steal' what you never valued?

(mimics K.C.)

'Six months at the outside. Just 'til I get my finances together. Then I'll take the kid.'

(to the point)

Two years, K.C. 'The kid' became my daughter. Your finances never came together somehow.

(CONTINUED)

K.C.

(the best defense)

You disappeared. Took her and ran.

TRIEU AU

How far did I run? Bangkok to
Saigon? How far, K.C.?

(and)

And you knew where we were. I
left a trail a blind woman could
have followed.

(the point)

If she wanted to follow.

K.C.

(regrouping)

So now what? Air fare to Bangkok?
A reference?

TRIEU AU

Listen to me. Saigon is lost.
Citizen Committees already single
out their targets. Government
workers. American sympathizers.

(and)

Karen will not be safe here when
the fall comes.

K.C.

What about you?

Trieu Au's face, an open book. She wants out of Saigon.
She wants to be with her daughter.

TRIEU AU

I... I want... the best for Karen.

K.C.

Give 'til it hurts. So why me?
I figure I wasn't number one on
the hit parade.

TRIEU AU

There was a man. An A.R.V.N.
Colonel. I thought he would be
able to help.

(and)

He thought -- **because** of Karen --
I had American contacts.

(and)

We were both misinformed.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

Before K.C. can respond, the door opens on a JANGLE OF brass BELLS and eight-year-old KAREN bullets in, dressed in a parochial school uniform. She aims straight for Trieu Au, jabbering in Vietnamese, French and English:

KAREN

Ma oy! Ma oy! Nguo tha dan nhau
o ngoi, epouvantable mais tres
captivant, crazy, stone crazy!

Trieu Au manages to turn her about to face K.C., saying:

TRIEU AU

Karen, this is my American... friend.
K.C.

KAREN

American? Fantastique! Doi ten
la Karen? K.C., oui? Crazy!

Without a trace of shyness, Karen moves in on K.C., reaching.

K.C. stiffens.

Karen's hands reach, touching K.C.'s gold hoop earrings, her voice all quivering excitement.

KAREN

I love these! Ma says I am too
young.

(doing Trieu Au)

'When you are twelve, Karen. And
only small pearls.'

(a face)

Pearls. These, these are...

(then, remembering)

May oy, I have a picture for you.
Sister called it...

(with flair)

Significant.

K.C. relaxes a little as Karen goes to Trieu Au to deliver her "significant" masterpiece.

She watches them, mother and child, sharing a moment that effectively cuts her out.

Her face reflects it all. Anger. Loss. Isolation. The real desire to get the hell out.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

14 EXT. JOAQUIN'S - SUNSET 14

Happy hour, powwow style. DYLAN'S "Lilly, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts" plays over the parked trucks and Jeeps, the hitched Pintos and crowded porch: "... The festival was over and the boys were all headin' for a fall..."

The Camaro turns in, noses up to the porch. McMurphy, furious, barely in check, gets out, slamming the car door.

15 INT. JOAQUIN'S - SUNSET 15

Another door slams. McMurphy enters, looks around the busy bar, doesn't see Hector. Spotting Joaquin serving drinks, she moves in -- a thunderhead set to rip.

Before she can, Joaquin steers her away from the curious Zunis he serves, sets her at a small corner table, pours a shot of whiskey and slides it across to her, says calmly:

JOAQUIN

Wipe off your paint. He isn't here.

(at her look)

He was here. He drank a six-er, bought a six-er, an' split.

(at her look)

The Spirit Drums told me everything.

(at her look)

Nancy Blue Feather called. Said you were tearing up her whole reservation looking for him.

McMurphy tosses off the shot, pours a second, looks square at Joaquin.

McMURPHY

I reported him to the High Sheriff.

JOAQUIN

You shouldn't have done that.

McMURPHY

(downs the shot)

That's what the High Sheriff said.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

McMURPHY (CONT'D)

Said he had no jurisdiction, not on reservation land. Hector should've been more considerate and beat the hell out of Joey in the middle of Santa Fe.

Her voice has risen. People are watching. Joaquin tries to quiet her, offering:

JOAQUIN

Hector's got some... problems.

McMURPHY

(picks up whiskey bottle)

Yeah. He gets drunk and abuses children.

JOAQUIN

He gets drunk to forget.

McMURPHY

(fills shot glass)

Oh Christ, Joaquin, that's the single biggest cop-out yet.

JOAQUIN

You should know.

McMurphy stares at him, then challenges:

McMURPHY

That sounds very profound.

JOAQUIN

I look at you an' Hector an' I see --

McMURPHY

(standing)

What? Wounded doves?
Blood-brothers-in-arms?

JOAQUIN

(rises; hands it back)

Two drunks on a downhill slide an' neither one willing... you're not even listening, are you?

McMURPHY

No.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

JOAQUIN

Stick to reporting ringworm,
McMurphy. Less room for
soul-searching.

CUT TO:

16 OMITTED

16

16A EXT. U.S. EMBASSY GATES (SAIGON) - DAY

16A

A small crowd of Vietnamese press at the gates. A short detail of Marines weld sheet metal to the ornamental gate bars. An armed sentry cracks the gate enough to let K.C., Karen and Trieu Au through.

16B INT. U.S. EMBASSY LOBBY (SAIGON) - DAY

16B

Trieu Au waits to speak with a VIETNAMESE CLERK. K.C. and Karen sit off to one side. The room is packed, stifling, full of desperation and despair.

KAREN

(jabbering)

... of course Nyep is jealous
because I can stand on my hands
and she can only --

(squirms uncomfortably)

Can we go? It's too hot.

(slyly)

Would you like a Pepsi?

(then)

Ma says to tell anyone who asks
that you're my mother.

K.C.

That's the game plan.

KAREN

But, that you're not really my
mother.

(fishing)

Are you?

(at K.C.'s wary
face)

Ma told me my real mother is an
American. I like Americans.

K.C.

Great. But I'm nobody's mother.

(CONTINUED)

16B CONTINUED:

16B

KAREN

I think my mother is Jackie Kennedy. Or Barbara Stanwyck. Who would you pick? I love 'The Big Valley.' Who do you like more, Nick or Heath?

K.C.

(really at sea)
'The Big Valley's' okay... Nick's a jerk... Jackie's bow-legged... I think we should play the Quiet Game.

KAREN

(petulant)
Em toi kong tich ba.

K.C.

In your ear.

Surprised by the nonsense, Karen gapes, then giggles.

Trieu Au, now at the counter with an officious Vietnamese CLERK, motions K.C. over, obviously worried. K.C., shadowed by Karen, paints on a smile, asks with vague cheerfulness:

K.C.

Everything ho-kay?

CLERK

This woman is your employee?

K.C.

My nanny.

KAREN

My nanny.

CLERK

Nanny?

KAREN

Ma ba. Ma ba.

K.C.

Ma ba. Ma ba.

CLERK

This woman is a diva. Famous through all Vietnam.

K.C.

But I needed a nanny.

(CONTINUED)

16B CONTINUED: (2)

16B

CLERK

How much you need? All foreign
employers must stand security --
(a sniping sneer)
-- for those leaving Vietnam.
Now.

K.C.

How much security?

The Clerk glances delicately down at the stack of bills Trieu Au has already placed before him. K.C. immediately adds another. No response. Another. Nothing. Another. The Clerk begins gathering up Trieu Au's papers, slipping them into a folder, making a show of ending the interview. K.C. scoops up the money.

K.C.

Let's go. There'll be another
clerk tomorrow. We'll buy him.

TRIEU AU

But my papers...?

K.C.

(shepherding them
away)

Tomorrow.

TRIEU AU

But I must have --

K.C.

Forget it. Plan B. General Minh.

CLERK

Wait!

K.C. turns, slowly, deliberately, letting him stew, then:

K.C.

Change of heart, slick?

CUT TO:

17 EXT. JUNGLE - RIVER - MISTY DUSK

17

Alone, Dodger fords the river, catches the glint of a trip wire, follows it, finds the charge. That worries him less than the beaten grass, the tiny scar of charred ground suggesting a cook fire, an empty shell casing. He crouches down, palms the charred ground, tests for warmth. Not good.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

He looks back to the river, then slices through the elephant grass, working his way back to Cam Noi through ground-hugging mists. He reaches, parts the thick jungle with the M-16's barrel, sees:

18 CAM NOI AND THREE NVA SOLDIERS

18

Through a blur of grass and mist, he watches an NVA soldier fish through his pack, thrusting articles at CAM NOI, demanding in Vietnamese:

NVA #1
(holding a K-Bar)
How did you get this?

Cam Noi, frightened, shakes his head. A second soldier gun-butts him. Not hard. Just enough.

NVA #1
(now the U.S.-Aid cop)
And this? Where did you get this?

Again, Cam Noi shakes his head. Again, the second soldier strikes him.

The third soldier has lit a small fire. They drag Cam Noi to it and thrust one of his stumps out so the flames can lick at it. Eyes fixed on his blackening skin, Cam Noi is silent as the soldier questions:

NVA #1
The American? Where is the --

The M-16 BARKS once, TWICE. Two of the soldiers fall. The third spins, about to lock with Dodger, as he rams a knife into the NVA soldier's sternum base, lifting to hit a lung.

Dodger lets the soldier fall, turns to Cam Noi, who still stares at his smoking stump, saying calmly enough as he holds it out to Dodger:

CAM NOI
Dead meat. Never felt a thing.
(at Dodger's silence)
I didn't say anything.

Dodger wipes blood from Cam Noi's face, asking:

DODGER
Why not?

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

CAM NOI
Code of the West, John Wayne.
Yankee-Bravo-Yankee. Right?

Dodger's face. New respect for the loud-mouthed kid.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. DESERT BACK ROAD - SUNSET

19

The Camaro, covering ground, passes Hector's "Jimmy," brakes, backs up to where it has spun off the road and nosed into a clump of pinon, settling deep in the soft sand. Tires spin. Stuck. End of the line.

McMurphy parks, gets out, moves to the truck. The windshield is cracked, front bumper tweaked, chrome racked, but the radio still works. LIGHTFOOT'S "Sundown" PLAYS OVER: "I can see her lyin' back in a satin dress/ In a room where you do what you don't confess..."

Hector GUNS the ENGINE, digs himself a deeper hole as blood from a gash on his forehead stripes his face. McMurphy pokes her head in the passenger window and he grins, polishes off a longneck, offering:

HECTOR ZAPATA
Whoa, Kimosabe, I was am... wait a minute. I'm Kimosabe. An' that must make you the --

McMURPHY
You lousy sonovabitch.

HECTOR ZAPATA
No, I'm Kimosabe. I told you.

McMURPHY
You could've killed Joey.

HECTOR ZAPATA
I don't wanna talk about it.

McMURPHY
That's your problem, 'cause I do.
I want --

HECTOR ZAPATA
Want in one hand an' piss in the other. See which gets filled faster.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

McMurphy pulls back, turns in disgust, as Hector peers out the cracked windshield at the darkening sky.

HECTOR ZAPATA

Look at that. High sky lightning over Bloody Woman. No rain. But pretty like that. Like gunships a hundred clicks out.

McMURPHY

(around to his window)

What did you say?

HECTOR ZAPATA

Oughtta climb Bloody Woman, McMurphy.

McMURPHY

What about gunships?

HECTOR ZAPATA

1877. One hundred Apache women slaughtered in a box canyon up there. They say the blood turned the rocks red.

McMURPHY

You were in 'Nam?

HECTOR ZAPATA

Everybody who was anybody.

McMURPHY

Were you... wounded?

HECTOR ZAPATA

Shrapnel here --
 (touches his heart)
 -- an' here.
 (touches head)
 I think it's probably just iron oxide in the sediment.
 (to McMurphy)
 What about you?

McMURPHY

(touches heart)

Here.

Their faces. A bridge.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

20

Dodger leads Cam Noi up the river... through the mist. The boy stumbles, Dodger reaches back, steadies him. Cam Noi is exhausted, panting, the journey taking its toll on his frail body -- but still pushy, demanding:

CAM NOI

Are you sure about this place?

DODGER

(a grin, quickly gone)

Shut up.

He leads Cam Noi from the river and up an incline, hunkering in the cover to point ahead.

21 DODGER'S POV - CHINA BEACH

21

The compound is deserted. A ghost town. Mist and wreckage. It has been nearly eight years since Dodger last saw it.

22 BACK TO SCENE

22

CAM NOI

Will we be safe here?

(at the look)

Right. Shut up.

DODGER

I knew a kid here.

CAM NOI

A friend?

DODGER

I think I killed him.

CUT TO:

23 INT. TRIEU AU'S HOME - NIGHT

23

K.C., Karen and Trieu Au sit on the floor around a coffee table, the remains of their dinner before them, the mood is relaxed, almost celebratory. The dice all rolling their way.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

(finishing a joke)

... but then, the water buffalo shakes his head, saying, 'You must be mistaken. I have never been to Paris.'

(off their laughter,
to K.C.)

Do you like 'Clue'? Nyep and Father Bishet and I play it all the --

Karen is off and running, opening a louvered closet door, rummaging for the game:

KAREN

Ma oy, have you seen -- you must have moved -- K.C., can you help me? It's too high to --

TRIEU AU

(loving her energy)

Karen, no... K.C. is tired. We'll play some --

But K.C. is already on her way to the closet.

K.C.

It's okay. I haven't played anything in a long --

There is the sound of angry Vietnamese VOICES just before the front door is BATTERED upon:

CITIZEN #1 (O.S.)

(in Vietnamese)

Citizen? Citizen Trieu Au!
Open in the name of the people!

More POUNDING. Angrier voice. Trieu Au, terrified, looks to K.C. A message. A plea. The door gives way as K.C. shoves Karen back inside the closet, following as she pulls the door shut.

Karen tries to break free, wanting Trieu Au, but K.C. clamps a hand over her mouth and holds on tight, listening to Trieu Au's "arrest," a babble of VIETNAMESE accusations and denials:

CITIZEN #1 (O.S.)

Citizen Trieu Au, you have been found guilty of collaboration.

(CONTINUED)

TRIEU AU (O.S.)

I am innocent. I have done
nothing wrong.

The sound of a BLOW. Karen whimpers.

CITIZEN #2 (O.S.)

You are a whore for the Americans.

Another BLOW. Trieu Au MOANS. Karen cries silently.
Her eyes huge, she backs into K.C.'s comforting warmth.

TRIEU AU (O.S.)

I am loyal to Vietnam.

Another BLOW. Now K.C. flinches. Begins rocking Karen.

CITIZEN #1 (O.S.)

You have a child. An American's
child. Where is she?

TRIEU AU (O.S.)

There is no child. I have no
child. I am innocent of all
crimes.

The sound of a BEATING. K.C. peeks through cracks in the
wood door, catches glimpses of Trieu Au being "tried" by
the Citizen Committee. But only in bits and pieces that
fit into the tiny crack she peers through. Disjointed
images. Confusing. Frightening.

After a moment, there is only silence. Karen tries to
see, but K.C. covers her eyes, not wanting her to witness
Trieu Au's beating.

The only sound is the POUNDING of their HEARTS.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

25

INT. U.S. EMBASSY LOBBY (SAIGON) - DAWN

25

The place is swamped with Americans and Vietnamese, every chair taken. K.C. and Karen sleep on the floor, huddled together. As the NOISE of the waking EMBASSY starts, Karen yawns, sits up. Face pale, eyes red-rimmed, tear streaks dried upon her cheeks. She looks around, frightened by the strangeness and nudges K.C.

KAREN

K.C.? K.C.?

(as one eye opens)

I need to go to the bathroom. And I'm hungry. We didn't eat last night.

K.C.

We were a little busy last night. Remember?

That does it. The button. Karen's denial-shell cracks and the tears spill through.

KAREN

Trieu Au... I want Trieu Au. We have to find her... find maman... Ma... have to --

Awkwardly, K.C. tries to comfort Karen, but the little girl is beyond a kiss and cuddle -- even if KC was up to it. Her attempts at comfort ring like bribery:

K.C.

(fishing in purse)

Hey? Hey, you want some... uhm... gum! You want some ---

(the pack is empty)

What about a breath mint?

MARINE (O.S.)

Here. Try this.

K.C. turns as an Embassy MARINE crouches beside them, extending a Snoopy doll. For a moment K.C. freezes, remembering another Snoopy, another K.C.

MARINE

(to Karen)

My girl sent it to me. But, I'm a Woodstock kinda guy.

Karen takes the Snoopy, cuddles it, and the Marine turns back to KC.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

MARINE

Anything else I can do?

KAREN

They took Trieu Au.

K.C.

A friend of mine, last night a
Citizen Committee took her away.
We need help finding --

MARINE

They took an American?
(relieved when she
shakes her head)

A slope.

(then)

Lady, look around you. We're up
to our nuts in tame slopeheads.
No way we'll get 'em all out.
Sure as hell, nobody's gonna go
looking for more.

He stands, shrugs, already gone.

MARINE

Bad luck. Sorry.

CUT TO:

26 INT. U.S. EMBASSY LOBBY - DAY

26

More lines and more lines. Embassy Marines maintain
order. K.C. and Karen stand before a counter, facing
a harried EMBASSY CLERK.

K.C.

But she had her exit papers. She
was out of here. Then the
Communists took her. They beat
her --

(to Karen)

Don't fidget.

(to Clerk)

Someone has to do something.

EMBASSY CLERK

The country's falling apart, the
Communists -- the real Communists
-- will be in Saigon this time
tomorrow. There's no one left
to do anything.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EMBASSY CLERK (CONT'D)

Look, I'm sorry, but you've got bigger problems closer to home.
 (at K.C.'S look)
 You've got no proof of your kid's citizenship.

K.C.

I gave you her birth certificate.

EMBASSY CLERK

(drowning in red tape)

You gave me a hospital birth registration. That's unofficial documentation.

(off her confusion)

No official certification was ever recorded. I can't issue a passport without official documentation.

(over her protest)

Do you understand what I'm saying?
 You need --

K.C.

(off-stride)

But I gave you --

The Embassy Clerk looks over his shoulder as if expecting the wrath of some superior, repeating quickly:

EMBASSY CLERK

I'll spell it out. Official documentation. Find it. Buy it. This is Saigon, for Christ's sake.

K.C.

But --

EMBASSY CLERK

Next!

(over K.C.'s protests)

Next!

K.C. and Karen are shunted aside by the nervous American couple behind them. Stunned by this new complication, K.C. turns a wooden face to Karen who clutches her hand, saying from an eight-year-old's perspective:

KAREN

I'm hungry.

K.C.

So am I? So what?

26A JOAQUIN'S - NIGHT

26A

Joaquin is closing down. A last swipe at the bar, chairs up-ended. The bar TELEVISION is ON, but turned down low. The late news, the Johnny Alternative. Some one POUNDS on the door.

JOAQUIN

We're closed!
 (more pounding)
 Closed!

More POUNDING. Irritated with the demanding drunk, he unlocks the door, pointing to the "CLOSED" sign.

JOAQUIN

Can't you --

It's McMurphy. She brushes past him to the bar, slipping behind it to pour herself some Jim Beam.

JOAQUIN

Guess you found Hector.
 (at her silence)
 Hungry? I can fix you something --
 (takes the bottle)
 -- to eat.

Her eyes drift from Joaquin to the television.

26B McMURPHY'S POV - TELEVISION

26B

NEWS FOOTAGE of South Vietnam's fall.

26C BACK TO SCENE

26C

She watches, silent, rapt. Joaquin glances at the screen, less compelled, cursory America, admitting:

JOAQUIN

Goodbye, that's all she wrote.
 (at her look)
 One for the books, right?

She turns her back on the fall of Vietnam, walks over to the tourist curios, fingers them, dismissing the news:

McMURPHY

Before my time.
 (holds up a Kachina)
 Oughtta buy something. To take
 with me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

26C CONTINUED:

26C

McMURPHY (CONT'D)

(tries on a squash
blossom necklace)

To remind me. People do that all
the time. The Yellowstone shirt.
Miniature cable cars. Statue of
Liberty erasers. Stuff that says
I was here. I was there. I want
to remember.

(re: the necklace)

How much?

JOAQUIN

Too much. Stick around. I'll
let you borrow it for special
occasions.

McMURPHY

(a shared look, then)

Ever climb Bloody Woman, Joaquin?

JOAQUIN

Sure. Why?

McMURPHY

Is it iron oxide?

27 INT. JET SET - DAWN

27

Cam Noi sleeps on the floor of the ramshackle club. Dirt
has seeped in, covers everything. Mold and moss have
taken hold. Rats scuttle. One pauses, nuzzling the
leper's open sores.

Cam Noi stirs, wakens, sits up. The alien surroundings
confuse him at first and he looks around quickly. He is
alone. Confusion becomes fright. He calls out, voice dry:

CAM NOI

Hey... hey, John Wayne...?
(silence, more fear)
Dodger...?

A rat studies him from atop the cracked bar.

28 INT. WARD/TRIAGE - DAWN

28

Alone, Dodger wanders through the remains of the hospital.
Touches everything, sees everything, remembering too much.
Voices crowding in from the past:

McMURPHY (V.O.)

Why are you telling me this?

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

DODGER (V.O.)

Because I tell you everything.

BOONIE (V.O.)

Remember when it was a sweet,
clean, sweet war?

McMURPHY (V.O.)

Why are you telling me this?

DODGER (V.O.)

Because I tell you everything.

BOONIE (V.O.)

Remember when it was a sweet,
clean sweet war?

DODGER (V.O.)

See the show. You be the show.

Dodger pauses before the remains of a scrub sink, bends forward, considers his warped reflection in a scratched piece of stainless steel splashboard.

DODGER (V.O.)

How'd you get to be such a kid?

BOONIE (V.O.)

Remember when it was a sweet,
clean, sweet war?

29 EXT. COMPOUND - DAWN

29

Dodger makes his way toward the chopper pad, oblivious to Cam Noi's relieved approach.

CAM NOI

There you are. I thought you'd...
Never mind.

Dodger says nothing and Cam Noi falls in beside him, watching the way Dodger studies the abandoned base site, finally asking:

CAM NOI

Why'd you kill him? The kid.
The one you killed.

DODGER

'Cause he was stupid. Knew
everything.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

DODGER (CONT'D)
 (begins pacing off the
 faded peace sign)

'Cause he came ten thousand miles
 to be a hero. Anyone that stupid
 deserves to be shot.

Cam Noi is beginning to understand and asks carefully?

CAM NOI
 So you killed him?

DODGER
 Here. In the Highlands. The bush.
 Indian Country. The whore houses
 in Da Nang. Texas.

CAM NOI
 Hard guy to kill.

DODGER
 Heroes usually are.

CAM NOI
 Maybe he should have gone home?

DODGER
 He tried.
 (off the look)
 It didn't take.

ON Dodger and Cam Noi as they trace peace amid the ghosts
 of China Beach.

30 EXT. JOAQUIN'S - DAY

30

The front yard is empty except for the Camaro and
 Hector's battered "Jimmy." The front porch is abandoned.
 The front door shut tight, a "CLOSED" sign in the screen.

31 INT. JOAQUIN'S - DAY

31

Negotiations in progress. McMurphy, Hector, Innocencia
 and Joey Zapata sit at a table. Joaquin doubles as
 host and arbitrator, handing out peanuts, raisins and
 soda pop, stepping over puppies.

On the JUKEBOX, LIGHTFOOT'S "Walls" plays over: "I'm
 just a name that's all/Scratched upon your wall/You
 used it well, but what the hell..."

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

INNOCENCIA

Can they take his benefits? For
being crazy?

McMURPHY

(exasperated)

He isn't crazy! Nobody's crazy...
We're all crazy.

She stands, paces, trying to think of a way to describe
a condition the military and U.S. Government won't
even admit exists.

McMURPHY

He's got... battle fatigue.

INNOCENCIA

(totally baffled)

After seven years?

Furious, Hector stands, jabs a finger at McMurphy:

HECTOR ZAPATA

You're the crazy one here.

(to the others)

I'm not crazy!

JOAQUIN

(trying to calm him)

But you are an alcoholic, old
hoss.

(to McMurphy)

What about A.A.?

McMURPHY

(dubious)

It's a start.

JOAQUIN

(eyes her)

Glad you think so.

McMURPHY

But it's not enough.

Hector rounds on her, demanding in baffled fear:

HECTOR ZAPATA

What d'you want from...?

(as something
passes between
them)

You're like all the rest of them.
You think I'm nuts, too. Just
some crazy redskin.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2)

31

McMURPHY

I think you've seen things to
make you crazy.

(as he turns away,
jerks him around)

But that doesn't give you the
right to hurt Joey. He can't
pay. I can't let that happen.

HECTOR ZAPATA

You can't. You can't? Who the
hell are you, white girl? What
d'you know about --

He stops. She knows all about shrapnel in the heart
and he knows it. Hector is boxed in. No where to run.
But he still tries. Pushing McMurphy aside, he hits
the door, running.

31A EXT. JOAQUIN'S - DAY

31A

Hector bolts for his truck, but McMurphy is on his heels.
The others follow, but remain on the porch, uneasy with
this confrontation that has taken on a new edge.

McMURPHY

You can't run from this, Hector.
You have to face --

(a new tack)

Go on, then. Run. Buy a bottle.
Run as far as it'll take you.

(as he turns,
fist raised)

Well? Go on. Do it.

(at the hesitation)

Or do you only hit babies?

(mind gearing)

You're like your truck, Hector.
Lots of chrome an' smoke. But,
nothin' under the hood.

HECTOR ZAPATA

(fist still raised)

You... you just... you just shut
up.

McMURPHY

(works her agenda)

Tell me I'm wrong. No. Show me.

(touches the Camaro)

Quarter mile. Flat out. You
beat me. She's yours.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

31A CONTINUED:

31A

McMURPHY (CONT'D)
 (off his surprise)
 Maybe I should just let you hit
 me?

HECTOR ZAPATA
 I'll take your car.

McMURPHY
If you win.
 (at his snort)
 I win -- you got to Gallup. The
 V.A. You get help. Deal?

Hector stares at her, knows he's been manipulated,
 hates it, but is too proud not to take her challenge --
 and still arrogant enough to think he can win. Finally,
 he nods.

HECTOR ZAPATA
 Deal.

McMurphy smiles. Hector frowns.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. STREET (SAIGON) - NIGHT

32

K.C. and Karen step out of an alley door into a crush
 of Vietnamese.

K.C.
 All right, instant 'official'
 documentation.

KAREN
 I want to go home.

K.C.
 Too risky.

KAREN
 I don't care. I want --

K.C.
 I'll get you whatever you need
 in Bangkok.

KAREN
 But what about --

K.C.
 What the --

(CONTINUED)

