

THE PLATOON

Original Screenplay by Oliver Stone

©Copyright 1985 Oliver Stone

Ixtlan Inc.
9100 Sunset Boulevard
Suite 355
Los Angeles, California 90069

April 1985

FADE IN:

1. A QUOTATION AGAINST A BLACK SCREEN:

"REJOICE, O YOUNG MAN, IN THY YOUTH..."

ECCLESIASTES

The sound now of a C-130 air cargo plane roaring over us and we cut sharply to:

2. EXT: AIRSTRIP - BASE CAMP - VIETNAM - DAY

As the C-130 coasts to a stop, the hatch rotating down on a hot, dusty lifeless airstrip somewhere in Vietnam. Nothing seems to live or move in the midday sun.

TITLES RUN.

A DOZEN NEW RECRUITS step off the plane, unloading their duffel bags, looking around like only the new can look around, their hair regulation-clipped, crisp, new green fatigues fitting them like cardboard.

CHRIS TAYLOR is just another one of them - as he turns into a tight closeup, to look at a motorized cart pulling up alongside... He's about 21. Newmeat. His face, unburned yet by the sun, is tense, bewildered, innocent, eyes searching for the truth.

They fall now on a heap of BODY BAGS in the back of the cart. Two Soldiers begin loading them onto the plane. Flies - hundreds of flies - buzz around them, the only clue to their contents.

GARDNER (next to Chris, Southern accent)

That what I think it is?

SOLDIER 1 (a look)

I guess so...

An uncomfortable look between them.

SERGEANT

Okay, let's go...

As they move out, Chris' eyes moving with the body bags being loaded onto the plane. Moving over now to a motley HALF DOZEN VETERANS bypassing them on their way to the plane. They look happy. Very happy, chatting it up.

2. CONTD

They pass the newboys - and they shake their heads, their eyes full of an almost mocking pity.

VETERANS

'Well I'll be dipped in shit - new meat!
 Sorry 'bout that boys - 'sin loi' buddy...
 you gonna love the Nam, man, for-fucking-ever
 (etc. ad lib)

Chris looking at them. They pass, except for the last man who walks slower than the rest, a slight limp. His eyes fall on Chris.

They're frightening eyes, starved, hollow, sunken deep in his face, black and dangerous. The clammy pallor of malaria clings to him as he looks at Chris through decayed black teeth. Then the sun flares out on him and he's past. And Chris looks back. Disturbed. It's as if the man was not real. For a moment there. As if he were a ghost.

Chris walking, duffel bag on the shoulder, looks up at the lollipop sun burning a hole through the sky. A rushing SOUND now. Of frightening intensity, an effect combining the blast of an airplane with roar of a lion as we hardcut to:

3. EXT: JUNGLE - SOMEWHERE IN VIETNAM - DAY

The sun matches the intensity of the previous shot as we move down into thick green jungle. We hear the sound of MEN coming, alot of men. The thwack of a machete. Brush being bulled. We wait. They are getting closer.

The CREDITS continue to run.

A sweating white face comes into view. CHRIS - cutting point. Machete in one hand, whacking out a path for the platoon, M-16 in the other, he looks like he's on the verge of heat exhaustion. Breathing too hard, pacing himself all wrong, bumping into things, tripping, not quite falling, he looks pathetic here in the naturalness of the jungle. An urban transplant, slightly neurotic and getting more so.

His rucksack is coming apart as well, about 70 badly-packed pounds of banging noisily.

Behind him BARNES now comes, the Platoon Sergeant. Then the RTO, his radio man, humming lightly.

3. CONTD

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

We cut around some FACES of the Platoon - all to be seen later. Young faces, hard and dirty after weeks in the field, exhausted yet alert, fatigues filthy, slept-in, torn, personalized, hair way past regulation length, medals, bandanas. A jungle army. Boys.

Chris glancing down at his raw bleeding blisters. Transfers the machete to his other, slightly less blistered, hand. The kid cuts on - struggling but trying, on his last reserves of strength, smashing almost straight forward through brush, not even bothering to look ahead. He smells something, looks around, slows his pace, eyes working...around to the base of a tree. He moves past it.

And as he does so, the camera from his PCV comes around on a dead decomposing 10 day-old GOOK - eyes starting from its sockets, worms and flies feasting.



Chris draws his breath in, terrified. Barnes suddenly appears alongside, his hard humorless eyes looking annoyed from the gook to Chris.

BARNES

What are you waiting for? He ain't gonna bite you. Move out.

Chris looks at him with pent-up hatred and crashes on.

4. EXT: COMPANY CP - DAY - MOVING

At the COMPANY CP, CAPTAIN HARRIS on the radio.

HARRIS

Two, Six. What the delay up there, we got a rendezvous at 1800.

5. EXT: PLATOON CP - DAY - MOVING

At the PLATOON CP, LIEUTENANT WOLFE sweats heavily as he speaks in his radio. He is also new to the field, a dark little feisty guy, about 24, very hairy, especially in the eyebrows, an intense get-ahead look.

5. CONTD

LIEUTENANT WOLFE

Two Alpha, Two move it out. Six says
we're jamming em up back there. Over.

Barnes, upfront, turns to SAL, his radio man.

BARNES

Tell that dipshit to get fucked. And
send that other freshmeat up here. Gardner.

As Barnes picks up his pace, irritated now at this
reprimand from the CO - coming up on Chris, who is
soaked now from head to foot in sweat, dizzy, feeling
sick, about to vomit.

BARNES

What the hell's matter with you Taylor!
You are a sorry ass mother. Fall back.

He grabs Chris' machete out of his hand and bulls
his way into the foliage, tearing it apart, setting
a new pace.

Chris being bypassed by the column, their eyes on
him. He is swatting at the red ants that are all
over his neck.

GARDNER, another new recruit, fat, hustling up to
replace him.

A big black MEDIC comes over; with him is Sergeant ELIAS,
concerned.

DOC

You okay?

CHRIS

Ants. I got ants on my neck...
(shaking them out)

DOC (helping him)

Yeah, black ants are killers, you look
sick man. You need a little salt.
(reaching into his satchel)

Sergeant Elias, a handsome, graceful dark-haired
Indian kid of 23, the squad sergeant, is taking items
out of Chris' pack - air mattress, extra unnecessary
clothing, extra canteens, grenades, gas mask.

5. CONTD

ELIAS (shaking his head, amused)
 You're humping way too much, troop,
 don't need half this shit. I'll haul it
 for you but next time you check it out
 with me okay?

Chris nodding, grateful, panting.

The men passing, watching. Chris sorry about this,
 trying to keep up face.

BUNNY, a young 18 year-old with an angel's face, is
 pissing in the dead gook's face.

KING passes, glances at him.

TUBB
 You're a sick mother Bunny.

Bunny laughing about it.

Chris standing there one moment, fighting for his
 breath, suddenly passes out, going over with his 70
 pound rucksack, hitting the ground with a loud bang.

ELIAS (concerned)
 Hold it up.

On Chris - his eyes opening. He seems all right.

CHRIS (trying to get up)
 I'm okay...I'm okay.

Elias helps him.

6. EXT: COMPANY PERIMETER #1 - DUSK

The COMPANY - about 100 men who seem insignificant amid
 the size of the surrounding jungle - is digging into
 a perimeter of some 100-yard radius. A RESUPPLY CHOPPER
 lifts off in a flurry of blowing leaves. Bare-chested
 soldiers chop down trees, clear fields of fire, set out
 claymores, fill sandbags, chow down. Little fires snake
 up against the greying red horizon.

7. EXT: COMPANY PERIMETER #1 - DOCS POSITION - DUSK

We cut close on a pair of grungy feet - the staple of
 the infantry - moving up to DOC, the Medic, bandaging
 them for FU SHENG, a Hawaiian kid.

8. EXT: COMPANY PERIMETER #1 - RHAHS POSITION - DUSK

RHAH sets out a tripflare. CRAWFORD, with him, putting down the claymore.

9. EXT: COMPANY PERIMETER #1 - RODRIGUEZ POSITION - DUSK

Back in the perimeter RODRIQUEZ sets his M-60 in the newly-dug foxhole. SAL, next to him, is shaving in his helmet.

10. EXT: COMPANY PERIMETER #1 - KINGS POSITION - DUSK

KING looks like a king. A lion of a black man but with a sleepy, gentle face, not to be roused, is painfully trying to scrawl a letter home with the pencil held awkwardly, mouthing the words. FRANCIS, a young baby-faced black with long lashes and soft eyes, peeks over his shoulder, shaking his head.

FRANCIS

Shit, King, it ain't d-e-r-e man, it's d-e-a-r, and Sara don't have no two r's in it, fool. Shame on you.

King shrugs, a sleepy stoned voice.

KING

Don't matter, she knows what it means...

11. EXT: COMPANY PERIMETER #1 - ELIAS POSITION - DUSK

Sgt. Elias washes himself, attentive to his body, slender and well-muscled, an extremely handsome youth. Of Indian blood, with long black hair, generous smile, wide facial bone structure, gypsy eyes, and the cleanest white teeth, he could be a young greek god. His is given somewhat to panache, a silver wristband on his arm, a bandanna of black parachute silk hanging from his neck, his fatigues tightened down at the ankle, he pulls his pants down, checking for crotch rot, apply talcum powder to the area, his buttocks facing us.

LERNER, a white kid, 19, with freaky curls, stopping to admire the frontal view.

LERNER

Mumm, any time sweetheart.

ELIAS

Lerner, you'd choke to death on it.

12. EXT: COMPANY PERIMETER #1 - COMPANY CP - DUSK

7.
(Rev 7/18/84)

At the COMPANY COMMANDE POST a beehive of activity with its four radios, personnel, some Vietnamese scouts milling around. CAPTAIN HARRIS is running down a field map with his THREE LIEUTENANTS. Harris, a broad-shouldered fine-looking military specimen with the requisite Southern accent and football coach mannerism, is directing his remarks to 2nd Platoon's LT. WOLFE, who looks a little nervous.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

A.O. just spotted a company of NVA moving across from Cambodia. Here
(indicates a position)

We might catch some of them tonight so I want all of you out with ambushes. wolfe, there's some kind of old buddhist temple here...

X

(tracing it on the map)

...there used to be a rubber-forest trail along here...I want you there...

X

X

X

Hawkins, I
LT. WOLFE (eager to please)

13.

Sure thing. No problem Captain.

EXT: PLATOON PERIMETER # 1 - CHRIS' FOXHOLE - DUSK
Elsewhere, Chris scrapes out a foxhole, his shirt off, bandanna around his head, the work hot and heavy.

TEX is out there setting the claymore as BIG HAROLD and JUNIOR start breaking down their C's.

JUNIOR (a whining high voice)

Hey Big Harold, gimme your peaches for the fruitcake man.

BIG HAROLD (laughs loudly)

Fuck you bitch.

JUNIOR

C'mon man, didn't I do you right that time I give you the turkey loaf for the ham and lima beans shit.

BIG HAROLD

Tricky bitch, reason you gimme dat turkey loaf is nobody else can eat that shit 'cept me so don't start your game playing with me Junior.

They're both black, Junior with huge goggle eyes and a face of pimples and pockmarks, his teeth yellowed and decayed, some of them missing. Harold is about twice his size, about 250 pounds, a baby huey concentrating real hard on preparing his stove to eat with.

JUNIOR

Youse a pig man. I hope Manny get dat laundry gig for' you do.

BIG HAROLD

De fool think he's gonna get it but he ain't known for his thinking.

JUNIOR

He's a fool alright but you a bigger fool. Hey whiteboy, watcha waiting for - dat hole ain't gonna dig itself...

Chris looks up, continues working, as Junior chuckles.

JUNIOR

Hey Taylor, you don't know it but I saved your ass today. I killed a shit-eating dog.

(laughing)

BIG HAROLD (getting up)

That reminds me, I gotta take a shit.

JUNIOR

You gonna wipe your ass dis time?

CHRIS (VOICE OVER, as he digs)

Somebody once wrote Hell is the impossibility of Reason. That's what this place feels like. I hate it already and it's only been a week. Some goddamn week, grandma...

(checking his raw blisters)

...the hardest thing I think I've ever done is go on point, 3 times this week - I don't even know what I'm doing. A gook could be standing 3 feet in front of me and I wouldn't know it, I'm so tired. We get up at 5 a.m., hump all day, camp around 4 or 5 p.m., dig a foxhole, eat, then put out an all-night ambush or a 3-man listening post in the jungle. It's scary cause nobody tells me how to do anything cause I'm new and nobody cares about the new guys, they don't even want to know your name. If you're lucky you get to stay in the perimeter at night and then you pull a 3-hour guard shift, so maybe you sleep 3-4 hours a night if you're lucky, but you don't really sleep. I don't think I can keep this up for a year, grandma - I think I've made a big mistake coming here.

14. EXT: PLATOON CP - DUSK

9.

Towards the end of this voice over, we cut to Sgt. BARNES moving towards the PLATOON CP. A powerful face, a quiet, angry fixed stare, a thick trimmed mustache that helps conceal a network of plastic surgery grafts and scars. The distortion in his face runs in a large sickle-shaped pattern from the jaw up the left side of his face to his forehead, punctuated by a severe indentation above the left eye where a bullet once penetrated his skull.

Walking with him is Sgt. O'NEILL as they join WOLFE, Sgts. ELIAS and WARREN at the PLATOON CP where they're huddled over maps. Warren is a black, thin, tall, paranoid man with untrusting eyes, silent and bitter.

BARNES (to all, almost pleased about it)
We got boo-coo movement. 3rd Battalion
just got hit 15 klicks north of here.
(the MEN react with wary silence)

O'NEILL (eager to elaborate)
Yeah, they had claymores strung up in the
trees, blew a whole fucking platoon to
pieces. BAAD SHIT.

Wolf worried. Barnes inflects his next words at Wolfe.

BARNES
Yeah, they got two Lieutenants and a Captain.

WOLFE
Jesus.

Elias quiet. Barnes studying the map.

WOLFE (to Barnes)
Who do you want on ambush, Sergeant?

Barnes doesn't bother acknowledging the question, barely glancing at the Lieutenant, to him a necessary evil. Everybody knows who's really in charge of the Platoon. Barnes flicks his gaze to Elias.

BARNES
Elias - you take your squad and I'll take
Tex and Francis from your squad.
(to Warren)
We leave here in 2-zero minutes.
(concluding)

ELIAS

I thought it was O'Neill's turn tonight.

X

They all look at each other. O'Neill spits in the dust, a freckled, short red head with a hard worried face, a lifer, 30 going on 60.

O'NEILL

Shit! Morehouse and Sal are short, Fu Sheng's going on an R&R, you don't want to send their asses out on an ambush. You got the fresh meat Elias.

ELIAS (to Barnes)

They don't know shit Barnes, and chances are they gonna run into something.

O'NEILL

So what am I going to do! Get one of my guys zapped so some fuckface fresh from the World can get his beauty fucking sleep!

ELIAS

Hey O'Neill why don't you cool it, you don't have to be a prick everyday of your life you know.

O'NEILL

Fuck you Elias.

BARNES

You get your men ready Elias...

Concluding the debate, no further argument, Barnes rises. The meeting's closed. Lt. Wolfe hasn't said a word, looking as Elias departs, without a word.

O'NEILL (watching him)

Fucking guy's got 3 years in and he thinks he's Cochise or something...

His resentment directed partly at the way in which Elias carries himself, the natural sense of grace - and the dignity it bestows.

CUT TO:

15. EXT: PLATOON PERIMETER #1 - SQUAD ASSEMBLY POINT - DUSK

Later. On the very edge of the perimeter, darkness coming down fast, the men in the ambush patrol rustle into their packs, all of them bitching.

Tex, carrying the M-60, looks up at the glowering sky.

TEX

Shit, looks like rain. All night too.
Gonna grow mushrooms in your bad-ass
crotch Junior

JUNIOR

Goddamn ain't no justice round here,
you break your ass for de white man.

CRAWFORD

What's O'Neill have a nose up the
lieutenant's ass already, how come
we always get ambush.

FRANCIS

Politics, man, politics. We always
getting fucked around here.

Chris is scared, nervous with his last-minute equipment
adjustments, his pack obviously overweight for a
night mission as he hauls it up. X

Gardner, the other new boy, is jovial in contrast, his
wallet extended towards Chris.

GARDNER

Hey Chris, I show you a picture of
Lucy Jean?

CHRIS (not be bothered)

No...

Gardner shows him his girl. She's a real dog - u-g-l-y and
what makes it worse is Gardner's put the standard photo
of Raquel Welch alongside it, tits and all. But he misses
the irony of it.

GARDNER (admiring)

Yeah she's the one all right...that's
Lucy Jean. She's a-waiting for me.

CHRIS (nodding)

Yeah she's real pretty, you're lucky...

Gardner puts it away. Elias appears alongside them,
checking their packs out, takes out Chris' poncho liner
and other items. He carried a modified M-16 with a
short barrel and a collapsible stock. X

15. CONTD

12.
(Rev 7/18/64)

ELIAS (to both boys)
Don't need this or this...you're
doing okay. Just stick close to Tex,
do what he does.

X

(calling out to Tex)
Tex you got Junior and Taylor here on
your position.

Tex is a sour Texas Ranger type, chew tobacco, spits.

TEX
Damn, 'Lias this gun's boss. Put
Taylor someplace else.

Chris feels the words like lashes on him.

ELIAS
You got Taylor...
(to Gardner)
...Gardner you go with me
(to Chris and Gardner)
'Case something happens to you, you get
separated or lost don't yell out okay.
Sit tight. We'll get to you.

X

His eyes. Chris watching them. A smile in them.
Elias moves off, a quality to the man that Chris
admires. A natural sense of leadership.

BARNES
Okay, let's move it out.

As he follows King, on point, out the perimeter.
A single file.

16. EXT: THE AMBUSH NIGHT (RAIN)

Night is coming down. The tone of the jungle sounds has
subtly shifted - mellower, more sinuous and certainly
scarier.

The file stops. King, an experienced point man, listens.

Chris looks around, tense. Behind him is Gardner,
trying to smile, starts to whisper something ("Hey
Taylor...") when he's abruptly shushed.

The file moves on. Gardner's pack rattling a
little too loud. A weird rush of cold wind now
rattles the trees and the MONSOON comes. A hard,
slanting rain, sudden, tropic.

17. EXT: RUINS - JUNGLE - NIGHT (RAIN) X

A piece of an old Buddhist temple, under a sulky moonlight X
now in a state of decay, the jungle surging to engulf it.

The Men are setting up quickly and relatively
quietly in the ruins - alongside a miniscule
trail. The rain is coming down harder than ever.

Chris and Tex setting out their claymore mines,
ravelling back their detonating cords to their
position, drenched. In the far distance, an
ILLUMINATION ROUND brightens the sky for a brief
moment. Various ad lib curses and directions
are lost in the sound of the rain.

18. EXT: AMBUSH - BARNES' POSITION - NIGHT - (RAIN)

At the Ambush CP, Ace whispers into his radio.
A soft hissing sound.

CUT TO:

19. EXT: AMBUSH -CHRIS' POSITION - NIGHT RAIN

Later. Close on Chris being shaken awake.

TEX

Taylor, you're on.

CHRIS (groggy)

Uh hunh.

The rain continuing to pelt them. Tex hands
him an infrared scope.

TEX (suspicious)

You sure you know how to work
the claymore?

CHRIS (offended)

Sure.

Tex curls up as best he can in his poncho to sleep.

TEX

Okay... don't catch no zzz's on me buddy
or I'll sling your motherfucking ass...
You hear me?

CHRIS (grits his teeth)

Yeah.

(looking at his watch)
Hey Tex - you're ten minutes fast.

TEX

Sin Loi.

("tough luck", closes his eyes)

Chris lets it go, scans the jungle and trail with the scope. The POV is greasy and blurred. He puts it aside.

Suddenly a series of resonant SNORES crack through the jungle. Chris starts, then sees it's coming from JUNIOR lying out there, spreadeagled in the rain. Chris prods him.

CHRIS

Junior!

JUNIOR

Unh?...Unh.

CHRIS

Shaddup! You're snoring...Shhh

Bending low into his eardrum. Junior never wakes, rolls over with a growl. Silence.

CUT TO:

20. EXT: CHRIS' POSITION - NIGHT RAIN

Later. A pool of muddy water has formed, in which a pair of buttocks sit. Move up to Chris still on duty, looking at his watch, drawn, drenched, pathetic, rainwater coursing down his face.

CHRIS VOICE OVER (continuing his letter)

... 'Course Mom and Dad didn't want me to come, they wanted me to be just like them - respectable, hard-working, making \$200 a week, a little house, a family. They drove me crazy with their goddamn world, grandma, you know Mom, I don't want to be a white boy on Wall Street, I don't want my whole life to be predetermined by them.

X

A large RIPPING SOUND as the wind blows down a big tree branch onto the jungle floor. He starts, peering out. Nothing. He looks at his watch again.

CHRIS VOICE OVER

...I guess having always been sheltered and special, I just want to be anonymous. Like everybody else. Do my share for my country. Live up to what Grandpa did in the First War and Dad the Second. Well here I am - anonymous all right, with guys nobody really cares about - they come from the end of the line, most of 'em, small towns you never heard of -

Pulaski, Tennessee, Brandon, Mississippi
Pork Bend, Utah, Wampun, Pennsylvania.
Two years high school's about it, maybe
if they're lucky a job waiting for 'em
back in a factory, but most of 'em got
nothin, they're poor, they're the un-
wanted of our society, the bottom of
the barrel - and they know it, maybe
that's why they call themselves "grunts"
cause a "grunt" can take it, can take
anything. They're the backbone of this
country, grandma, the best I've ever
seen, the heart and the soul - I've
found it finally, way down here in the
mud - maybe from down here I can start
up again and be something I can be proud
of, without having to fake it, maybe...
I can see something I don't yet see,
learn something I don't yet know...I
miss you, I miss you very much - Chris.

He moves towards Junior, shakes him, but Junior
seems to be out of the world.

CHRIS

Wake up!

Junior opens one dead eye.

CHRIS

It's your shift...

Junior scowls, swears, looks around for his rifle in
the mud.

Chris crawls back to his position, curling himself
up in his soaked poncho, teeth chattering from the
cold, rain splattering over him. A long beat. He
sighs, the sigh kicking off the next image.

21. EXT: CHRIS' POSITION - NIGHT (RAIN)

FANTASY - a blonde EARTH GODDESS is there suddenly in the bush, her voluptuous naked body glistening with rainwater as she steps forward - the moon catching the smile on her face. A muscular dancer's body, lush in all its proportions. She begins fucking Christopher right there in the mud on the jungle floor. Reaching into his pants, pressing down on him, fucking the life out of him, the rain drowning them out.

22. EXT: CHRIS' POSITION - NIGHT

Chris jerks awake - very suddenly, very frightened. THE RAIN HAS STOPPED. The jungle sounds are loud. Cicadas, night animals, water dripping hypnotically from leaf to leaf. And the whirr of a million mosquitoes out after the rains, chewing at Chris' face. He looks around, startled.

Tex is asleep. Junior is asleep. What happened? He looks at his watch. The mosquitoes are eating him alive. He buries his head in his green towel which he wears around his neck, but he can't see. A beat. He moves again, miserable from the bites. Another beat. Then suddenly the sounds of the jungle shift - some of the animals dropping out. A different tone. A piece of wood is stepped on, a rustle of bush...

Chris sees something, lifts an edge of the towel to peak out.

A shadow of a figure is frozen there in front of him about 15 yards. It looks like a man. But it doesn't move. At all. It listens.

Chris, his heart in his mouth, tries to peer through it. It's a bush. It has to be. No human being could stand that still. His heartbeats are up. The moments take forever. But deep down - somewhere in his psyche - he knows who it is.

The figure now shifts, ever so slightly - and moves. It is a human being. Oh my God!

Chris looks around. Tex seems like a mile away. Why doesn't anyone fire! He casts a desperate look at his rifle, at his grenades encrusted with mud, but in spite of all his training, he is frozen with indecision and fear at the first sight of his enemy.

The figure seems to whisper something back, then turns and comes down the trail. Now a second and third figure appear behind him - all in helmets and packs. All coming right past Chris' position. Ten yards. Nine. X

Chris is rigid with terror. Stark eyes. Pleading with Tex to wake up, but out of reach. He is about to have an anxiety attack, his heartbeats so far up his is sure they will hear him.

130
The first figure is now directly in front of Chris on the trail, looking left and right....A rattle of his equipment, a creak of leather. A smell. The man's face now catches the moonlight and his eyes come around on Chris.

Oriental eyes. Looking right at him. Startled. Chris staring back, hypnotized. It all happens very fast. The figure murmurs something in Vietnamese. A warning. He swivels. X

A flash of muzzle fire. A raking cough of automatic fire. A grenade explosion.

Chris is hurled to the ground, helmet bouncing off, scattered, confused, jarred. All hell breaks loose around him with NOISE and SHOUTS.

Tex, kissing the ground, is yelling at him.

TEX
THE CLAYMORE!

Chris, not knowing what he's doing, is fumbling with the claymore handles, presses them. INSERT: they won't give. He tries again and again to squeeze the life out of them. Tex is screaming at him.

TEX
THE SAFETY! TAKE THE SAFETY OFF YOU...

Lunges over and grabs the handle from Chris. Clicks the safeties off and blows them.

Three EXPLOSIONS rip out into the night - and one of the ENEMY is caught in a brief instant looking like an x-ray, his body lifted and swirling in the air, then enveloped in swirls of smoke.

Chris, trying to keep up, grabs his M-16, lays out a stream of fire. The sound all around him is deafening.

Tex is now on the M-60 machine gun, yelling at Junior who is cringing on the ground.

TEX

Feed me!

He lays out red tracer bullets like laser beams, then suddenly reels back, whiplashed, screaming. A grenade explosion rocks them.

TEX

AAAAGHHH! MY ARM! MY ARM!

His hand and wrist are gone, his face in the dirt. Junior is fumbling around, trying to stay down and help him at the same time. X

JUNIOR

DOC! GET UP HERE! TEX IS HIT!

Chris, looking out to his front, has no clue what's going on. Except the fire is slacking. Relayed shouts of "Medic! Medic!" Other SHOUTS.

SHOUTS

HOLD IT UP! HOLD IT UP!

The firing has ceased. A silence, punctuated by occasional shouts and fast moments, has enveloped once more the cemetery. DOC crashes through the bush, kneels over Tex who continues to howl in deep pain.

TEX

MY ARM! JESUS FUCKING CHRIST!
MY ARM DOC!

DOC

Easy Tex easy boy!

Trying to sound calm but his voice on the edge, examining the mutilation with a pen flashlight, he whips out his morphine in a big hypodermic.

VOICE (next position)
Doc over here! Gardner's hit.

DOC
'Right there.

As he slips the morphine into Tex's arm.

TEX (muttering)
...goddamn! goddamn! dumb fucker, cumb fucker.

Chris watching, suddenly feels himself dizzy, instinctively runs his hands over the back of his neck. Feels the warm blood there. A moan comes from his lips. Junior looks at him.

JUNIOR
Oh shit, Doc he's hit too.

CHRIS (weakly)
I'm hit...

Barnes and Big Harold come hustling up.

Doc finishes tourniqueting Tex, cradles Chris onto the earth, his flashlight probing the wound. Tex in background continues to howl at the top of his lungs, unaffected by the morphine.

Chris waits, tensely for the verdict, his eyes big with fear on Doc, who takes out his morphine.

JUNIOR (to Barnes, pointing at Chris)
That dumb fuck didn't blow his claymore!

Chris hearing this. Barnes looks at him.

DOC (to Chris)
... it's a scratch, nothing to worry about!

CHRIS (suspicious)
Doc...tell me the truth, don't lie to me,

The needle goes in.

TEX (freaked out)
MY HAND BARNES! GODDAMN WHERE'S MY HAND?

Barnes says nothing just stares.

JUNIOR

He let 'em walk right up on us. He was sleeping on his shift.

CHRIS (muttering weakly)

I was not...it was your...

DOC (leaving, to Harold and Junior)

Watch 'em, don't let 'em go into shock.

The Doc runs off. Tex continues to howl, in real pain. Barnes suddenly clamps his hand over Tex's mouth shutting him up and from way down deep in his throat, chokes out the words.

X

BARNES

Shut up! Shut up - and take it! You hear me!

X

Tex's eyes roll widely, uncomprehending. Big Harold looking at Barnes, wondering. Tex is suddenly silent, shocked. Barnes stands, an icy glare, goes. Junior scrambles over to Tex's side.

Big Harold cradles Chris, his big black hands like a mother, reassuring him.

BIG HAROLD

You gonna be okay Taylor, okay, don't you start worrying.

Chris looking up at him, eyes blinking slowly, dazed already by the morphine. He's very scared.

X

CHRIS

Do you...do you know you're gonna die.. Big Harold?...do you feel like...like... everything's gonna be fine and then...

X

BIG HAROLD

Bullshit man, you gettin outta the field, man. Three hots a day, white sheets, dem pretty white nurses give you blowjobs too you pay em enough, I heard tell bout dem white bitches. Better save yo strength Taylor.

JUNIOR (muttering darkly)
Don babytalk him man. Cocksucker
fell asleep. They walked right up on us,
he don do shit.

HAROLD
Shaddup bitch.

Chris is getting woozier, feeling he is dying but starting
to grin, not caring about it anymore. Yet he is nowhere
close to dying.

CHRIS
It's not...so bad...dying. How long...it...

23. EXT: TRAIL - RUINS - POSITION #1 - NIGHT

Barnes stands over a moaning, ripped up ENEMY SOLDIER.
FIRES his M-16 point blank into the head. The soldier
bucks and dies, quivering.

24. EXT: TRAIL - RUINS - POSITION #2 - NIGHT

ELIAS, checking out a blood trail some distance away,
shifts on the shot, looks back.

25. EXT: TRAIL - RUINS - POSITION #3 - NIGHT

FRANCIS, MANNY, BUNNY and KING are huddled over another
mangled enemy corpse.

BUNNY (stripping the corpse)
That's no NVA man. That's a chink - look
at 'em, the cocksucker's six and a half
feet tall. Look at his gear - good as ours.

FRANCIS
Shit I blew my claymore right in one dude's
face and I seen him walking around afterwards.

MANNY
What we fighting here, vampires?

26. EXT: TRAIL - RUINS - POSITION #1 - NIGHT

Elias comes up to Barnes swiftly, indicating the
blood trail leading off into the bush.

ELIAS
Blood trail just keeps going and
going but no body.

BARNES

How the hell did he get away?

ELIAS

They're good, they poured their fire
right back into us.

KING (coming up, to Barnes)

Sergeant - Doc wants you. There's a
problem with the new man.

Elias and Barnes go with King. Past Chris and Tex who are
ambulatory and bandaged, being helped along. As Barnes
passes, the men look at him, everybody quickly sensing
something is wrong.

27. EXT: GARDNERS POSITION - NIGHT

At one of the positions DOC is working feverishly to knock
the life back into Gardner who lies there, his shirt stripped
off on his cottage cheese belly. A huge sucking chest X
wound. He's dying. You know it because he knows it.
The eyes do the talking, numb, terrorized yet strangely
detached, accepting, not protesting or concerned any longer.

Most of the ambush has assembled and is watching, Chris
moving in to see. Doc is mumbling to him, low key.

DOC

Y'all right, Gardner? You have any pain?...
Chopper's on the way, you gonna be okay...

But Gardner seems unconcerned. Things are going on in
his head - who knows what. And in his eyes there are
big tears rolling. Then a morphine smile. A sort of
goofy Gardner smile, maybe thinking about Lucy Jane, who
knows. He's dead. X

BARNES (to all)

You know why this man died, don't you.
He died cause he lost control of himself.
In the middle of a firefighter he stood up
and tried to get back someplace safe. There's
no someplace safe. This man was probably hit
by one of us. The man would be alive right
now if he'd paid attention...Remember that...

(hard eyes shifting to Chris)

...and that goes for dumb assholes who fall
asleep on their shift and fuck with their X
buddies' lives. Next man I see catching 2's
I'm gonna kick his face all over this fucking
jungle, then I'm gonna courtmartial his ass and
send him to Long Binh... X

CHRIS (drowsy)
I didn't fall asleep, Sergeant, Junior...

BUNNY (cutting in)
Shut up your face chicken shit. You
in big trouble boy.

Chris shuts up. Junior harrumphing with satisfaction.

ELIAS
Let's knock it off. We got two men
need attention here.

BARNES
Awright move it back into the perimeter.
Hoyt, Junior, carry Gardner.

As he rises and walks away, his eyes make contact
with Elias who seems furious, follows Barnes out of
earshot of the others.

ELIAS
That man'd be alive if I'd had a few
more days to learn something.

Barnes, registering it, just keeps walking.

28. EXT: BASE CAMP - DAY (WEEK LATER)

CHRIS is driven up in a jeep to his Company's CP.
It's midday on a hot lazy afternoon, few people out in
the 102 degree sun.

Chris' Company is on the outskirts of the base camp,
their barracks regulation wood, canvas, and fine mesh-
screening, red dust everywhere, bunkers down on the
perimeter, reams of barbed wire and concertina, a
sand-bagged MESS HALL and CHAPEL, 81 mm mortar pits,
observation towers, recoilless rifles, 50-caliber
machine guns. Beyond the wire not more than 100 yards -
the Jungle, thick and deep.

Chris gets out of the jeep, stiff-necked, a bandage
around it, still in some pain. The first man he
intersects is KING, the man built like a gentle lion,
carrying crates of beer.

KING
Hey Taylor, how ya doing?

In King's mild tone Chris tries to read his standing
in the platoon.

CHRIS

Okay - got light duty, three days.

KING

Shit, too bad we in base camp anyway.

CHRIS

What you got there - beers?

KING

Yeah, just stole me some from the Top's supply but he's stealing it from us anyway
(sees somebody coming)
Chucks are coming. You better "didi" man.

Too late. Sgt. O'NEILL, the redhead lifer accompanied by Spec 4 SANDERSON, a big handsome blonde kid, not too bright in the face, both slightly drunk, come around a corner, beer cans in hand. O'Neill sees Chris immediately.

O'NEILL

Hey Taylor - watcha got, light duty?

CHRIS (pause)

Yeah.

SANDERSON (spotting King's beer)

Where'd you get that beer King?

KING (a funny look)

I found it...

SANDERSON

You found it?...Bullshit! You going on report. Gimme that shit.

O'NEILL

Awright, come here both of you

(wags his finger)

Got a little special job for the two of you.

They advance towards him reluctantly.

CHRIS

What's that?

29. EXT: THE outhouse - DAY

A wooden cabin with some half-dozen seats built over half barrels cut from empty oil drums. A guy is in there,

pulling up his pants.

Chris, King, and Crawford, a California blond with a handsome honeyed look, are sweating heavily as they roll the barrels out from under the outhouse, the smell of human waste strong. A hot midday emptiness, nobody around except the flies.

KING (pissed)

They keep fucking with us man, no letup!

CRAWFORD (equally pissed)

Politics, man, fuckin politics. That O'Neill man got his nose so far up Top's ass he gotta be Pinocchio...

KING (to Chris)

How the fuck you get over here man, you look like you educated...

CHRIS

I volunteered.

KING

You what? Say 'gain.

CHRIS

Yeah, I dropped out of college and told 'em I wanted infantry, combat, and Nam...

He grins, finding their reactions funny. It's also the first time we've seen Chris crack a smile.

CRAWFORD

You volunteered for this shit man?

KING

You a crazy fucker, givin' up college man.

King has long sleepy eyelids and cat's eyes, a large pink tongue and big white-edged cotton picker's nails - a lazy, gentle nature, content with the world.

CHRIS

Didn't make much sense. Wasn't learning anything...

(hesitates)

And why should just the poor kids go to the war - and the college kids get away with it.

King and Crawford share a smile.

KING

What we got here a crusader?

CRAWFORD

Sounds like it.

They pause, wipe the sweat off. King lighting up a half-smoked joint, hitting a few puffs, eyes shooting around, making sure he's not spotted. Passing it to Crawford.

KING

Sheeit, gotta be rich in the first place to think like dat. Everybody know the poor always being fucked by the rich. Always have, always will.

Noticing Chris is having trouble with his neck, picking at his bandage.

KING

You okay man? Neck botherin' you?

CHRIS

Nah...

KING

Here have some of this. Won't feel a thing.

Chris looking at the joint, a little apprehensive. He's never smoked.

CHRIS

No, thanks...

KING

Go on, whatcha gotta lose, yo' here now...

CRAWFORD

Kills the smell of shit anyway.

The joint proffered. Chris waits a beat, shrugs, takes it, smokes.

KING

Suck it in. Hold it... That's it. Now let it out.

Chris blows it out.

CHRIS

Don't feel it.

29. CONTD

26.

King and Crawford chuckle, go on rolling the cans.

KING

Dat's what they all say

CUT TO:

30. EXT: OUTHOUSE - LATER - DAY

King, Crawford and Chris pour kerosene over the cans at a secure distance from the outhouse.

King lights it. The cans pop and start crackling. A line of burning barrels. Rings of dirty black smoke rise against a soft blue sky.

They watch, stoned. Chris turns to both of them.

CHRIS

...you know that night we got hit...I...
(ashamed)

KING

Fuck it, don't mean nothing, done your best man, next time y'do better.

CRAWFORD

History, man, history.

Chris surprised at their attitude. The joint suddenly hits him, a look in his face, eyes looking around different. Over at King.

CHRIS (deadpan)

I think I'm starting to feel that stuff...

Crawford laughs.

KING (laughs)

Yo gettin there Taylor. You be cool now and I'll introduce you 'round to some of the "heads".

CHRIS

What are heads?

KING (laughs, walks away with Crawford)

Later...

Chris alone, breathes deep, feeling the full effect.

31. EXT. BASE CAMP - NIGHT

A relief against the long harsh, hot day. We see lights on all over the camp, sounds of music, laughter from the barracks.

32. INT. UNDERWORLD HUTCH - NIGHT

King leads Chris down to a specially-constructed cellar-like hutch dug deep into the ground on an isolated edge of the battalion perimeter. Ammo casing and canvas are piled over it, and sandbags surround it. From the outside very little sound can be heard as they go down through a trap door made of ammo crates.

Inside is another world. Chris looking around amazed. It's like a private cabaret for the "heads" who are there cooling out. Boxes of food from the States, beers, whiskey bottles, crates functioning as tables, hammocks hanging from poles, electric fans, tape decks, paraphernalia.

The boys are all dressed up in their saturday night rags. The clothes are clean, the headbands, the medallions are out, anything distinctive and individualistic. On the tapedeck, Jefferson Airplane's "Go Ask Alice."

To Chris it is a new world. And Rhah, the resident head, sitting there in all his finery puffing a huge burning red bowl in a three foot long Montagnard pipe, seems to be the lord of final judgments in this smokey underworld.

Across his naked chest, birds and snakes are tattooed. Around his neck a black skull and a white ivory cross side by side. On his knuckles "Love" and "Hate" are tattooed. In his eyes, a dancing Satanic fire. A poor rural Southern white, in his grizzled late 20's, he could be a Biker King. Giving Chris the once-over.

RAH

Whatcha doing in the underworld Taylor?

KING (smiling)

This ain't Taylor. Taylor been shot.

This man Chris been resurrected...

Chris wondering what he's doing here. His eyes roving over Lerner, Crawford, Manny, flash, Francis, Hoyt, Tubbs, others from the Platoon, about 9 or 10 of them.

Rhah eyes him back, hands him the bowl.

RHAAH
You lame Taylor?

CHRIS
What?

RHAAH
You lame or something?

KING (smiling)
...go ahead on, smoke it man

Chris understands, takes the bowl. Hesitates. Then smokes it. The contact fumes are almost enough to knock him out. He starts coughing. They all laughing.

RHAAH
Your shit's in the wind troop. Baaaaah!

Lerner replies, his tongue hanging out in parody.

LERNER
And Baaaaaaa! back on you

RHAAH (looking at Lerner with distaste)
If you're gonna do it, man, 'least do it right

Building up to it, his eyes shaking with conviction at the whole insanity of the world, he neighs with all the venom he can muster.

RHAAH
Baaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

They all laugh and applaud. King smoking from the pipe passing it back to Chris who takes another hit, doesn't cough this time, looking around, wondering about these guys.

LERNER
I didn't like it

RHAAH
Bah, you're a child, Lerner. Rhah don't
waste time on you

They go on ad-libbing with each other as Chris finishes his hit on the pipe, looks up across the smoke, already dazed, surprised to see Elias suddenly there -- leaning out of his sling in a far corner of the hooch. A Monkey is draped around his neck with silver bracelets, rings, a necklace -- like a sensual little Egyptian whore, Elias playing with it, spaced out in a sleeveless vest, tiger pants. Dancing eyes on Chris, he swings out the hammock, comes over with the monkey.

Meanwhile Manny has broken into a high falsetto snatch of blues directed at Chris, joined by Big Harold and Francis, all of them clicking their hands.

MANNY & FRANCIS & BIG HAROLD
Oooh Chris, you look like you is high
Oh yeah, he looks like he is high
Ooooh Chris, you know you gonna be that way all night
Oh yeah I think that you are...Yeah! up now
and up to par oh yeah

Elias takes the bowl from Rhah and looks over at Chris, smiling that big white-toothed smile of his.

ELIAS
First time?

CHRIS
Yeah

ELIAS
Feel good?

CHRIS (a sense of euphoria now)
Yeah. No pain in my neck now. Feels good.

ELIAS
Feeling good's good enough

As he sucks in a huge mass of smoke off the bowl. His eyes performing a funny little hop, skip and jump, as he holds it, his face turning red.

The monkey jabbars and jumps around on his neck, worried. Elias then blows the smoke out in its face, the monkey hating it.

The Group laughs.

ELIAS
Hey Crutcher. I hear you got a Dear John from your gal.

Hoyt looks up, another Southerner, a good ol' boy type, stoned out of his head, wearing a ring in his ear.

HOYT
Yeah

ELIAS
What'dyou say her name was again?

HOYT (recalling her image)
Daisy Mae

BIG HAROLD
Hey look at Charlotte!

The monkey is sitting quietly stoned, its eyes blinking.
Laughter off.

ELIAS (teasing Hoyt)
Daisy Mae! What Daisy Mae look like Crutcher?

MANNY
She look huge and got freckles on her ass

HOYT
She look beautiful

FRANCIS
How much she weigh man?

BIG HAROLD
She braid her hair under her armpits, Crutcher

FRANCIS (sarcastic)
Daisy Mae what?

KING
Daisy Mae Highway, that's what

They laugh.

LERNER
I knew a girl in Montana named Veronica Big Toe

BIG HAROLD
How 'bout Irma Greasepit?

MANNY
Sylvania Flashbulb

CRAWFORD
Ermalina Esso

ELIAS
Patsy Peeonme --

They're cracking up over every name, stoned out of their heads.
Chris watching this, he's never seen people act like this before.

CRAWFORD

In Honolulu used to be a chick named
Aima Joy, no kidding

TUBBS

Back in Pulaski Tennessee there was this
real ugly gal, pimples y'know all over her
face and her name was Lili Lemealone

BIG HAROLD

Fuck it

MANNY

Whose dat?

ELIAS

Felicia Fuckit

FRANCIS

Felicia Fuckanything

ELIAS

Talking bout Lerner's mother again

LERNER

Leave mommy out of it

MANNY

She out of it. So are you, man. The shape
of your thinking's the shape of your head!
Baaaaaa!

Lerner is obviously the runty white everybody likes to pick
on cause he's a pain in the ass, a smart little Jewish kid
who looks like he wandered into the infantry by mistake.

RAAH

Gonna do it asshole, I told you do it right.
Baaaaaa!

KING (lazy)

Right on, yeah

King a lazy, somnolent quiet man.

LERNER (to Rhah)

That's profound man

KING

The lez from Suez remember her. Wid her
whip, sickle and fuck

ELIAS

I fucked this girl man. In Hawaii.
Couple weeks ago...Ooooooh!
(remembering)

The look on his face ensnares all of them, except perhaps Rhah.

MANNY

What happened man. What whore house
you go to?

ELIAS

No whorehouse man. On the beach.

FRANCIS

Sure.

ELIAS

Yeah, sure. She walked right by me. Long
black hair, tits swinging. Ass like French
bread. Legs don't end right.

CRAWFORD

So what she got, hair on her tits

ELIAS

I just stopped man. My heart's beating like
a hardon right I got a hardon sticking through
my pants, my bathing suit looks like a hutch...

BIG HAROLD

I know dat feeling...

ELIAS

So I'm thinking to myself -- Elias you
walk away from this, you gonna regret this
the rest of your natural life. So I go after
her, follow her down the beach. You know
find out if she is what she is.

They're all hooked into this now.

KING

And?

ELIAS

Well she was picking up her kids

MANNY

Dat's dat

ELIAS

No, dat ain't dat

FRANCIS
Get outta here, she married...

ELIAS
Like two hogs in heat. Boy.

Their throats knotting.

CHRIS (joining in)
...but what'd she do?

ELIAS
What didn't she do. She fucked the living
daylights outta me, that's what she did!

CRAWFORD (sucking in air)
Jesus!

ELIAS
Couldn't get enuff...

CHRIS
But what'd she actually do?

ELIAS (leading them on)
She was a crossbreed, Chinese and Polish

BIG HAROLD
What dat?

REAH (finally hooked in)
And living in Hawaii man?

ELIAS
Yeah -- and had blonde hair and almond-shaped eyes.

FRANCIS
Hey man didn't you say she had black hair?

ELIAS
She had blonde hair, man. And long tan
legs, in those leather sandals you know,
with those thongs up to her knees, this
musky oil on it...mmmmmm smelled good when
they were wrapped around my face...

They groan, dreaming of Hawaii.

TUBBS
Yeah!

CHRIS

God!

BIG HAROLD

Please, somebody hold my dick!

ELIAS (in afterthought)

...and a broken nose

TUBBS

Broken man

ELIAS

Yeah, otherwise she would've been too perfect, y'know what I mean...some woman. Her name was...

He forgets it. A grass blackout. Lerner urging him on.

LERNER

Susan?

MANNY

Tamara?

CHRIS

Elizabeth?

Elias shaking his head, trying to remember.

KING

Merle?

RAAE

Merle? Jesus!...Jackie?

BIG HAROLD

Inga?

CHRIS

Jennifer?

HOYT

Connie?

Elias snapping his fingers.

ELIAS

Dawn! That was it!

CHRIS (repeating it)

Dawn...

King listening to the sound of it.

KING

Dawn?

The others nodding, musing over it.

BIG HAROLD

Yeah, Dawn...

33. INT. THE BARRACKS - NIGHT

In comparison to the darkness of the hooch, a highly-lit atmosphere, attracting bugs...dusty gear lying around a disordered hooch, loud and finger-snapping COUNTRY WESTERN MUSIC playing from a tape deck, a well-known tune, circa 1967.

Bunny, the 18 year-old angel face, totters drunk with a Colt-45 beer in hand, over to Junior, the badass black kid with the zits, who just lies there on his cot sweating, doing nothing.

BUNNY (listening to the music)
Listen to that shit, that's good shit!

JUNIOR (irritated as always)
Fuck that redneck shit, don't compare to
motown sound

BUNNY
Whaddaya know. Hey Junior! Y'ever smoke any shit?

JUNIOR
Nah, makes me dizzy. Go way willya

BUNNY (lonely in his way for company)
Yeah me too. Everything kinda gets sad
y'know? (hiccup, sits)
Y'hear that story the gooks is putting
chemicals in the grass so's we become
"pacifists" so's we don't fight
(to no one in particular)
Where the hell's everybody, theyse gettin
high that's what -- bunch of hopheads,
they think they special...

JUNIOR (turns away, bored)
Don you worry Bunny, youse a killer anyway

BUNNY

Yeah but I still like a piece of puzzy
once in a while -- ain't nothing like
a piece of puzzy cept maybe the Indie 500

JUNIOR

Youse so fucked up man

BUNNY

Y'ever look at yoself in the mirror Junior,
you put bandaids on all dem zits, you'd
look like a fuckin' mummy!
(laughing)

JUNIOR

Yeah, you had a piece of pussy on a plate
in front of you, you'd probably kill it.

BUNNY

Shit, I bet I been laid more'n you have

JUNIOR

Sure, you probably stick it in tween her
knees and think youse there

BUNNY

Yeah?

Lt. Wolfe wanders down the aisle, beer in hand, slightly lonely,
bypassing FU SHENG, the Hawaiian and TONY, a mustached,
hairy-browed Italian kid from Boston, who are playing some
kind of dice game. They hardly acknowledge the Lieutenant
who stops by RODRIGUEZ, the Mexican-American kid who is
on his cot in his neatly-arranged area writing a letter
home with a pencil, forming the words with his mouth, as
always minding his own business. Religious objects comprise
his few decorations.

WOLFE (amiable)

How you doing Rodriguez?

RODRIGUEZ

Good sir

WOLFE

Need anything?

RODRIGUEZ

No sir

Wolfe winks at him, continues on to the POKER GAME going on in the center of the barracks, the main action. Barnes, Sgts. O'Neill and Warren, the quiet sullen black, Sanderson and Sal play as Ace, the tiny radio kid, and Morehouse look on; all of them drinking beer and bourbon chasers from a bottle.

WOLFE (to O'Neill)
How's it going Red?
(using his nickname)

O'NEILL
Shit, cocksucker's got all the cards tonight

WOLFE (to Barnes)
Looks like you're doing all right Sergeant

Barnes, raking in the chips, is the big winner, a light bead of sweat on his forehead and a somewhat glassy look to the eye the only indication he is drunk -- his shirt peeled off revealing a muscular, scarred body.

BARNES
Yeah, and I ain't even cheating yet

SANDERSON (the big, blonde kid)
Have some Kentucky windage Lieutenant
(passes him the bottle of bourbon)

Wolfe takes a nip.

BARNES
Play Lieutenant?

WOLFE
Nah, I wouldn't want to get raped by you guys...

O'NEILL
What are you saving up to be -- Jewish?

Laughs. Wolfe forces a smile, glad to move on. There is a continual worried rodent air about him, an anxiety, a desire to fill the vacuum in his leadership with a false masculinity.

WOLFE
Catch you man later. Enjoy yourselves.

As he goes, O'Neill shakes his head after him.

O'NEILL
Sorry ass motherfucker ain't he. You think he gonna make it Barnes?

Barnes plays a card, glances, a minute movement of the head.

O'NEILL

Yeah that's what I figger. Some dudes
you jes' look in their faces and you
know they just ain't gonna make it.

Barnes looks -- with some irony -- at O'Neill. The Country
Western tune has reached a crescendo whine which now mixes into:

34. INT. UNDERWORLD HUTCH - NIGHT

Francis, the baby-faced black, and Manny, green shades covering
his skinny face, lead with a high blues falsetto.

FRANCIS & MANNY (singing)

"People say I'm the life of the party
cause I tell a joke or two
Although I may be laughing loud and hardy
Deep inside I'm blue..."

The Hutch looks now like a Turkish bath with minimum visibility,
the smoke fumes dense. They are all up dancing on their feet --
King, Tubbs, Big Harold, Hoyt, Lerner, Crawford, Flash Elias --
a few light gestures with their hands above shoulder level,
passing around the grass pipes while they shuffle, fingers
clicking. The song -- Smokey Robinson's "Tracks of My Tears" --
accompanies them from a vintage tapedeck.

ALL

...Since you've left me, if you've seen me
with another girl
seeming like I'm having fun
although she may be cute
she's just a substitute
because you're the permanent one...

King and Big Harold wave Chris into the Circle and he starts
swaying with them, feeling as if he's being accepted into
a new family.

Rhah watches it all, puffing away on his magic dragon pipe,
the shadows dancing on the walls.

It looks like a Saturday night dance party. A yearning for
tenderness, for feminity, for a moment of peace in this
nightmare life. Their eyes closed, thinking of dance partners
that can't be here tonight. Singing their souls out.

ALL

"...So take a good look at my face
You'll see the smile looks out of place
Look a little bit closer
It's easy to trace
The tracks of my tears..."

35. EXT. JUNGLE - NVA BUNKER COMPLEX - DAY

An overwhelming 103 degree heat. Chris is once more on point, a little better now but obviously struggling with a thick unyielding bamboo thicket that forces him forward in a caveman crouch.

CHRIS VOICE OVER

New Years Day. 1968. Just another day. Staying alive. There's been a lot of movement near the Cambodian border, regiments of NVA moving across. A lot of little firefights, ambushes, we drop a lot of bombing, then we walk through the napalm like ghosts in a landscape...

CONTD

The napalm jelly is hanging from the trees like great canopies of spider webs, the jungle stretching up, obliterating the sky. The bombs have torn and twisted the earth - tress ripped from the ground. Chris working his way over twisted, broken stumps, branches.

On the back of his flak jacket he's written: "If I die bury me upside down so the whole world can kiss my ass."

BARNES

Pssst!

The signal for silence. Chris freezes. Barnes edging up to him.

BARNES (whispers)

Bunker...

CHRIS

Where?

Doesn't see it. Following Barnes' imperceptible movement of his head.

The bunker, dug into the ground, and camouflaged with brush, is staring right at him, not more than 20 feet away. Chris is a dead man if...

Barnes, checking the terrain, signals radioman Hoyt.

Barnes edging up to the bunker, eyes everywhere. Chris following. The tension builds. They come up to the edge of it, peer in. Nothing.

Barnes walks around it, slips in from the back. Chris covers him, other guys coming up now, making a small perimeter.

Chris now starts to see things he didn't see. Right in front of his nose - there is a trench from this bunker to another and another. There is now in his view a complex of bunkers and thatched hootches and lean-tos all blending into the forest. A ghost city...

Elias and others fanning out now, careful...whispered conversations in the wind.

Chris moves past a rope with freshly washed laundry stretching between two trees, clothes stirring in the wind. He looks up as King points out a tree house, then looks down as Lerner whispers something and points - NVA rucksacks are laid out on the ground in an orderly platoon-sized pattern.

CUT TO:

36. EXT: NVA BUNKER - TUNNEL POSITION - DAY

Elias goes down into a dangerous-looking TUNNEL, Barnes watching him. We sense Elias loves the challenge, smiling.

37. EXT: NVA BUNKER - COMPLEX - MAIN POSITION - DAY

Lt. Wolfe signals Manny and Chris out onto the two flanks.

38. INT: NVA BUNKER HOSPITAL - DAY

Rhah and King explore a field hospital. Beds, anatomical charts, medical equipment. Rhah, an experienced soldier, seems tense, moves cautiously, expecting booby traps.

39. EXT: NVA BUNKER - WARREN'S POSITION - DAY

Sgt. Warren cautiously explores another bunker, probing a little tunnel in the bottom of it with a stick. Bunny, having a small frame, goes down into it, fearless.

40. EXT: NVA BUNKER - MANNY'S POSITION - DAY

Manny, the skinny black boy with the colored beads, is out on flank - alone, smoking a cigarette, humming.

41. EXT: NVA BUNKER - CHRIS' POSITION - DAY

On the other flank, Chris, also alone, waits, listening to the sounds of the jungle. He too is smoking a cigarette. The eeriness is everywhere. Rays of morning light peaking through the cathedral dome of the jungle. Bird calls. He thinks he hears something. Tenses.

There is a soft rustling sound now. And as he focuses on it he realizes it is coming from very close to him. Something light and sinuous moving over the leaves. He looks down.

A bright yellow and orange-ringed krait viper is crawling right between his two legs. It stops, senses another life standing over it.

Chris frozen with dread.

The snake crawls on, pulling its 25-inch body along, blending once more into the jungle floor.

On Chris, eyes dilated, slowly regaining his breath, looking around everywhere now.

42. EXT: NVA TUNNEL - DAY

Elias climbs deeper and deeper into the hole, a rope attached to his waist leading out to the surface, his flashlight now coming around on a shaftway demarcating a TUNNEL that seems to stretch for at least 100 yards. The light revealing cobwebs all along it, but tall enough for a small man.

ELIAS (excited, whispering up)
A tunnel all right...A big fucker too.
You want me to check it out?

BARNES
Yeah, go ahead.

Elias starts moving down the tunnel, fearless, we expect something any moment to come out and nail him but nothing does.

43 EXT: NVA BUNKER - COMPLEX - SANDERSONS POSITION - DAY

Spec 4 SANDERSON, the big handsome blond kid, is moving through an abandoned bunker. With him is SAL, a tough street kid with an intense face, all whiskered. Sanderson noticing now a metal box of 50-caliber ammo, U.S. markings, half-buried in the ground.

SANDERSON
Hey look at that.

He opens the case. Official-looking documents are inside, they glance through them, lighting cigarettes, the search over, successful, they relax.

SAL (a worried type)
Leave it will ya - it's gook shit.

SANDERSON
Nah this stuff's important.

He puts the documents back in the ammo case,, lifts it. It's the last thing he ever does.

44 EXT: NVA BUNKER - SANDERSONS POSITION - DAY

The ensuing explosion rips the bunker apart, obliterating both boys, sandbags, wood, jungle, branches flying out in a great outward ball of energy, the Jungle floor shaking.

45 EXT: NVA BUNKER - CHRIS' POSITION - DAY

Out on flank, Chris hits the ground, hugs it.

46 EXT: NVA BUNKER - COMPLEX - SANDERSONS POSITION - DAY

Barnes runs up. Black smoke sweeping through the trees. Sal suddenly appears, stepping out of the smoke, stunned. The front of his body is soaked in blood from a thousand shrapnel holes, his clothes shredded, he stares at Barnes, dazed. Both his arms are gone and blood is geysering out like a water fountain. He crumbles - dead or dying.

46 CONTD

BARNES (runs to him)

Doc!

Barnes looking into his eyes. The kid choking on his own blood, his throat clogged with it, trying to get some words out. Barnes reaching for tongue, freeing it. The Doc running up - one look tells us all we need to know.

DOC

Holy Jesus!

47. EXT: NVA BUNKER COMPLEX - MAIN POSITION - DAY

Lt. Wolfe, shaken, is on the radio with Cpt. Harris, words garbled through the air, trying to describe a primal horror.

48 EXT: NVA BUNKER COMPLEX - SANDERSON POSITION - DAY

Barnes moving through the wreckage - sees a hand sticking in sandbag, severed.

49 EXT: NVA BUNKER COMPLEX - MAIN POSITION - DAY

Rhah crouches over a piece of leg tied into a hipbone and a rib.

50 EXT: NVA BUNKER COMPLEX - DAY

Elias coming out of the tunnel, filthied.

51 EXT: NVA BUNKER COMPLEX - MAIN POSITION - DAY

The faces of the platoon - shook, looking at each other. O'Neill, white-faced, starts rounding them up.

O'NEILL

All right let's not stand around here - don't clump up. One mortar'll get everybody.

SGT. WARREN (calling in the two flanks)

Taylor, Dorsey - let's go!

52 EXT: NVA BUNKER COMPLEX - CHRIS' POSITION - DAY

Chris heading in from his flank position. The separation from the main body makes this incident seem even more mysterious to him.

53 EXT: NVA BUNKER - MAIN POSITION - DAY

Elias coming abreast of Wolfe.

54 CONTD

 WOLFE

 They're on their way...

 (consulting his map)

 There's a gook village half a klik from here, he wants us to move in and search it. Here...Where's Barnes?

55. INT: NVA BUNKER - SANDERSONS POSITION - DAY

Barnes is still in the wrecked bunker, squatting there, staring as if his mind has disconnected for a moment - going back to a place and time where he was maimed for life. The look on his face suggests he is deeply wronged by this tragedy, that he is taking it very personally.

56 EXT: NVA BUNKER - MAIN POSITION - DAY

Chris watches him from outside the bunker, curious.

 O'NEILL

 Awright, saddle up - let's go...

 Tubbs you got point.

The men moving into the jungle formation, silently.

Chris walking over into line, stops for a moment - noticing a freshly-severed eyeball partially buried in dirt, staring up at him. He turns away, sickened.

57. EXT: NVA BUNKER - SANDERSONS POSITION - DAY

Barnes pulls himself up. Goes quietly to his place.

58 EXT: NVA BUNKER COMPLEX - MAIN POSITION - DAY

 O'NEILL

 Where's Manny?

 WARREN

 Manny!...hey Buchanan.

There is no answer. The men in the platoon start to look at each other, sensing more trouble.

Elias heads into the bush after him. Barnes watches him go.

Francis, his friend, and Tubbs and King follow.

 FRANCIS

 Hey man whatcha doing...where you at?

(Rev 7/23/54)

59 EXT: NVA BUNKER COMPLEX - MANNY'S POSITION - DAY

Out on the flank position, where he once stood, Elias walks out, looks. The jungle is silent once again. Francis, Tubbs, King follow. The others - Barnes, Lt. Wolfe, Warren, Chris, Rhan...

FRANCIS & OTHERS
MANNY!!!! MANNY!

Their voices reverberating in the distance. Bird cries come back.

Elias combing the ground for clues...nothing...

Chris looking on, can't believe it, none of them can, a collective chill running through the platoon.

60 EXT: JUNGLE - DAY 1

The Platoon moving downslope in the Jungle, their faces grim, quiet, deadly. King is on point. X

CHRIS VOICE OVER

We had to get to the village before dark so we left Elias behind with some men to keep looking and to wait for the engineers...It was King found him...about a 1000 meters down the trail, not too far from the village - alongside a stream...It was the end of the mystery...

A moving shot on Manny. He's trussed with rope, arms behind his back. Shot through the head, eyes startled open, mouth shaped in a scream of terror.

Barnes, the other men looking...Chris. Nothing said. X

(Rev 7/23/84)

61 EXT: VILLAGE - TRAIL - DAY

They come up out of the jungle onto the side
of a CART TRAIL, where a tiny village overlooks the
jungle from a ridgeline. The VILLAGE is poor, a series
of thatched hutches made of C-Ration cardboard and aluminum
beer can sidings, faint whiffs of smoke coming from cook
fires. Pigs and dogs wander about. X

An OLD VILLAGER watches them pass from his tillable plot,
smoking a cigarette, one leg wrapped around his hoe,
resting, no expression.

CHRIS V.O.

...the village, which had stood for
maybe a thousand years, didn't know
we were coming that day. If they had
they would have run...Barnes was at the
eye of our rage - and through him, our
Captain Ahab - we would set things right
again. That day we loved him...

A pig loiters along the trail, rooting.

Bunny coming up on it with a smile.

BUNNY

Hey pig, pig - come here, pig, pig.

61 CONTD

The pig grunts. Bunny levelling his shotgun, fires pointblank. A horrible squeal.

62 EXT: NEAR VILLAGE - DAY

Chris hearing it from across the village, knows what it means.

63. EXT: VILLAGE - DAY

Tony suddenly points, excited, calls to Barnes.

 TONY

 There goes one!

Their POV - a young VILLAGER fleeing down the slope.

Barnes nails him with a short volley of well-placed shots.

 BARNES (to Tony)

 Check him out.

He turns back into the village.

64 INT: VILLAGE HUTCH - DAY

Bunny and Sgt. O'Neill, in one of the hutches, pry open a floorboard, flip it over.

An OLD COUPLE throw up their hands, terrified, muttering in Vietnamese.

 BUNNY

 Hey look what I found? Ma and Pa Kettle here. Look at them - greasy gook motherfuckers!

 O'NEILL (to the Couple)

 Get up out of there!

They climb out, asking for mercy in Vietnamese.

65 EXT: VILLAGE TUNNEL - DAY

In another part of the village, Barnes hovers over a hole leading into some kind of tunnel.

 BARNES

 Get out of there you fuckheads move!
 Move!

Fires a warning shot. Three VILLAGERS climbing out of the spiderhole, arms raised, but not showing any emotion. Barnes turning to his radioman Hoyt and Big Harold accompanying.

BARNES (to Harold)
Put 'em in the pig pen.
(to Hoyt)
There's more down there. Give me your phosphorus.

Hoyt, with reluctance in his eyes, hands over a specially-shaped grenade.

Barnes stands over the hole, the grenade in hand.

The three VILLAGERS who just came out of the hole, yell from the distance, to others still in the tunnel, pleading with them to come out.

Barnes throws the phosphorus in. A muted EXPLOSION. Then sizzling acidic fumes. Frying sounds. A hideous scream from somewhere deep in the hole.

Hoyt, watching, is sickened, Barnes businesslike.

The Villagers, in grief, howl and tear at their faces.

FU CHENG (hustling up to Barnes)
Sarge, we found some shit!

Barnes going with him.

66. EXT: VILLAGE HUTCH - DAY

The OLD COUPLE is nodding affably to Bunny and O'Neill mumbling ingratiating words in Vietnamese.

BUNNY (reacting to their chatter)
Yeah sure you do, you're real sorry ain't you. You're just crying out your hearts about Sandy and Sal - they're laughing at us. Their kids are out there in the fucking bush blowing us up and they're laughing at us.

O'NEILL (checking out the hutch)
Forget it willya, let's go...
(leaving)

Bunny is still staring at the couple who continue to mutter in Vietnamese. He looks at O'Neill, then in one fluid move, swivels and clubs the OLD MAN on the side of

66 CONTD

the head with the butt of his 16.

O'NEILL (shocked)
Hey, what're you doing!

BUNNY
Fucker!

The Old Man is groaning on the floor of the hutch.

BUNNY
That's for Sandy. And this is for Cal.
(hits him again, then looks at
the Old Woman)
Betcha the old bitch knows just where
Manny is too. Probably cut his balls off too...

The Old Woman cowers in the corner. Bunny, nervous,
approaches her, working up the courage to do it.

BUNNY
Don't even look like a fucking woman.
Look at them ugly tits.

He clubs her. O'Neill stunned, puzzled.

BUNNY
Let's zap these motherfuckers!

O'NEILL
I ain't messing with them.

He backs out of the hutch, scared. Evidently Bunny is
temporarily insane. But he spots O'Neill, yells at him.

BUNNY
GET BACK HERE YOU FUCKING COWARD O'NEILL.
THIS IS FOR SANDY...THIS IS FOR SANDY
MAN! AND SAL! AND MANNY!

As he clubs them to death.

67. EXT: VILLAGE - OVER HOLE - DAY

The sun is sitting there hot and high in the sky.

Chris yelling down a Hole, strangling in the heat, a
demented look on his face, no helmet.

67 CONTD

CHRIS
GET THE FUCK OUTTA THERE!!

FRANCIS
Take it easy man, they're scared.

CHRIS
They're scared? What about me! I'm sick of this shit man, I'm sick of this shit! They don't want us here! Who do you think they're fighting for! GET OUTTA THERE!

Francis doesn't recognize him in this rage.

68 EXT: VILLAGE - WEAPONS CACHE - DAY

Barnes stares down at a WEAPONS CACHE buried cleverly in a hole in the pig pen. Ace, Fu Sheng, Sgt. Warren, Lt. Wolfe, others are digging it out. It's in white plastic wrappings - a load of AK-47s, rockets, grenades, claymores, carbines, flares. A real find.

SGT. WARREN (to Barnes)
..and over here there's enough rice to feed a whole fuckin' regiment...

Barnes walking with him over to an underground rice silo being dug out by Tubbs and Junior. Barnes looks it over.

BARNES (to Warren)
...Bring the honcho over here.
(to Tubbs and Junior)
Burn it.

69 EXT: SMALL VILLAGE - OVER HOLE - DAY

A YOUNG MAN with a stupid confused look slowly struggles out of the spider hole as Chris, shaking with his own sort of confusion and rage, cuffs him, hustling him out. The Young Man hauls himself out revealing only one leg, a pair of crutches for the other blown-off limb. He hobbles like a mangy three-legged dog.

CHRIS
You see I didn't wanna hurt you. Why didn't you come out when I said so hunh! Why? WHY! WHY? DON'T YOU LISTEN..WHAT ARE YOU SMILING AT! HUNH? FUCKING ASSHOLE.

69. CONTD

The Young Man, his hands raised, doesn't understand a word, shakes his head stupidly and smiles that impassive Oriental smile which sends Chris even deeper into his rage.

His finger closes on the trigger of his 16.

Francis, the baby-faced black, looks nervously, sensing the danger, but going along reluctantly.

The Young Man continues to grin, not seeming to realize the degree of danger he is in, which is what Chris wants - a token sign of acquiescence.

Chris squeezes off the trigger - but can't quite bring himself to kill him. The bullets exploding in the dirt at the edges of the Man's feet.

CHRIS (demonic)
DANCE YOU ONE-LEGGED MOTHERFUCKER, DANCE!!!

The Young Man is jumping up and down on his crutches in a reflex fear of the sounds of the bullets as they thud into the ground. Yet his eyes remain fixed on Chris.

Chris, firing out the magazine, seems to expend his bloodlust. He ceases, notices - for the first time - the eyes of the young man. They aren't stupid - nor fearful - but filled with resignation and despair - a despair that Chris, in disgust at himself, recognizes.

Chris lowers the rifle, silent.

The Young Man's impassive face shines now with tears. That sad young look - as if death itself would've been a release. Chris turns his eyes away, an awkward sense of shame.

Francis watching quietly, motions the Young Man along, hopping on his crutch, towards the pig pens where the Villagers are being assembled.

70 EXT: SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

A tiny knot of men are ringed around Barnes who is questioning a sturdy-looking older man, who is the Village Chief. He has been stripped of his shirt, scars all over his body, scared. He has his identification papers out, trembling, showing them to Lerner, who speaks pidgen Vietnamese.

BARNES

Where'd he get these wounds?

Lerner translates, the man talking back.

LERNER

He says he was hit in a bombing raid.

TONY

He's a dink fosome.

BARNES

Ask him what the weapons are doing here?

LERNER

He says they had no choice. The NVA killed the old honcho when he said no. He says the rice is theirs.

BARNES

Bullshit... who the hell was the dink we just nailed on the riverbank?

Chris and Francis come up, watch. Others coming from different places - sensing the narrowing drama. But half the platoon is still at work in the village. We hear shouts, grenade explosions, occasionally gunfire.

LERNER

...He says he doesn't know, VC haven't been around in a couple of months. Maybe it was a scout or...

The men around Barnes grumble.

BARNES

Yeah sure it was. What about all that fucking rice and the weapons...who they for?

(looking at the Village Chief)

Cocksucker knows what I'm saying...don't you Pop?

(a blank look)

ACE

You're goddamn right he does!

Lerner translating. The Village Chief's WIFE is now on the scene, a middle-aged hag with angry features, yelling at Lerner, trying to answer for her husband, a high-pitched barrage of indignant words directed mostly at Barnes, and interspersed with the spitting of her betel nuts on the ground.

70. CONT'D

(rev. 9/27/84)

The Village Chief trying to talk her down. But things are definitely getting out of control. And the heat from the sun is only aggravating the situation, pounding down on the actors in the drama, their fatigues soaked in sweat and anger.

LENER (finally)

He swears he doesn't know anything! He hates the VC, but they come when they want and...

JUNIOR

He's lying through his teeth!

TONY

Waste the fucker, then see who talks.

BARNES

What's the bitch saying?

LENER (overwhelmed)

She's going on, I don't know - why are we shooting the pigs, they're farmers...they got to make a living, all that crap...

The Woman is still ranting when Barnes turns to her, quite casually levels his M-16, and puts a bullet in her head. She goes down as if poleaxed.

A stunned pause. The Chief looking at his wife. The Villagers in background reacting.

Wolfe looking...Chris looking, shocked. They are all shocked in some way but do nothing against the power of Barnes. Barnes walks over to the pig pen with the other Villagers, very casually, confronts them.

BARNES (to Lerner)

Tell him he talks or I'm gonna waste more of 'em.

Lerner shaken up, muttering to the Village Chief who is in shock, kneeling next to the body of his wife, muttering in a high whine of pain.

BARNES

Go ahead, Lerner, ask him.

A group of Villagers huddle to one side, five of them, two of them children. Barnes turns his attention on them.

Lerner, shaken, is yelling at all of them, demanding an answer.

70. CONTD

LERNER

They don't know Sarge, they don't know!
(half believes it)

BARNES

All right...

A burst of automatic fire. The Five Villagers slip and slide down into the mud with the pigs squealing next to them, one on top of the other, one kid still moving around. Barnes turns his attention on the others, unperturbed, very much in command of the situation, no rage, no emotions expressed. Except cold satisfaction.

Chris has never seen such a thing before in his life - but can't react. Can't stop it, just watches it like he's not quite there.

The same goes for Lieutenant Wolfe, for all of them. The very outrageousness of Barnes' killing seems to quell all protest.

ACE

Hey Sarge can we get in on this.

Tony advances, the hairy Italian kid from Boston.

TONY

Let's go all the way, let's go for it!

Chris' eyes...Rodriguez next to him, is neutral but willing.

Francis is hesitant.

Fu Sheng and Junior are ready to go for it. Lt. Wolfe is powerless, frozen.

Sgt. Warren stepping up. The massacre is just about to break.

The Villagers know it, kneel in prayer, mutter.

Barnes dragging a woman, the Village Chief's daughter, screaming across the pen, throws her down on her knees, in front of the stunned Village Chief.

BARNES

This is his daughter, right?

Lerner nods. Barnes pulls his .45, puts it alongside her head.

BARNES (to Village Chief)

You lie...You NVA...I bac bac NVA...

70. CONTD

He chambers the .45, the Woman begging Barnes for her life, cradling his knees. He sticks the gun down above her skull.

Chris wanting to cry out, to do something - but can't!!!

A FIGURE suddenly flares out in the sun, advancing on them. It is Elias.

ELIAS
BARNES!!!

Barnes looks around. They all look around.

Elias walks right up to him, followed by his men - King, Rhah, Crawford. He looks around. The corpse of the wife...the Five Villagers in the pig pen.

ELIAS
WHAT THE FUCK YOU DOING!

BARNES (very cool)
Stay out of this Elias. These people are NVA.

ELIAS
YOU AIN'T A FIRING SQUAD, YOU SCUMBAG!!!

The stock of his rifle swings up fast and hard smacking Barnes full in the face, breaking two teeth.

Barnes staggers back, hurt, bleeding. Elias is on him like a leopard. Battering him with his fists.

They struggle in the dust, two titans, their faces equally consumed with rage, clawing, spitting, punching, kicking, pounding each other's skulls in the dirt. A duststorm swirls around them, the men closing around like excited apes at a bloodfest.

Most of the men seem to be pulling for Barnes - but not Chris, who, it is obvious by his body language, is pulling for Elias.

LT. WOLFE
BREAK IT UP! ELIAS! BARNES!

But they roll on, smashing each other's faces in. Both quick, fast, agile, mean fighters. Elias is on top when Sgts. O'Neill and Warren drag him off.

70. CONTD

Barnes is up after him but Wolfe and Big Harold jump in, hold him.

BARNES

You're dead, you're fucking dead Elias.

ELIAS

You - you're going to fuckin' jail, Buddy, you ain't getting away with this one!!!!!!

WOLFE

All right! All right! All right!!!
NOW BREAK IT UP. LET'S GO...

They compose themselves, the Villagers looking on, grieving over their loss.

WOLFE

Alright, Six says burn this place down, blow the weapons, and bring in all suspected Charlies - Okay, let's get going 'fore it gets dark.

ELIAS (to Wolfe)

Why the fuck didn't you do something Lieutenant!

WOLFE

What are you talking about!
(turns away, goes about his business)

ELIAS (spins him around)

You know what I'm talking about!...

WOLFE

No I don't. I don't know what the fuck you're talking about, Elias!
(goes)

Who wants to be reminded? A silence of shame. The Men moving away, Warren, Ace, Tony, Rodriguez, Barnes looking back once, a cold glare.

The Village Chief is a broken-looking man, huddled over his wife's body.

Elias stands there, frustrated, looking around at the bodies.

Chris glances at him, moves out.

71. EXT: SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

A Cigarette Lighter with the engraved insignia: "From Mai Lin to my Bunny Boy." It sparks a thick flare as Bunny lights the dry straw on the roof of the Hutch where he killed the Old Couple.

Their legs sticking out at the threshold. The hooch burning fast, aided by the strong sun.

Bunny watches with awe, O'Neill in the distance.

72. EXT: SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

Sgt. Warren and Rodriguez lighting another hooch on fire.

73. EXT: VILLAGE RICE STORE - DAY

Fu Sheng throwing white phosphorus into the rice stores.

74. EXT: VILLAGE - WEAPONS CACHE - DAY

Barnes and Huffmeister, a big German kid from Texas, are laying the cord to blow the weapons cache.

74. EXT: SMALL VILLAGE - WELL - DAY

Adams and Parker are poisoning the well.

75. EXT: SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

Wolfe, Ace, Tubbs, Warren, Rodriguez are roping the DOZEN SUSPECTED VILLAGERS together to take them back for questioning.

Elias watches the Villagers mourn their dead ones, as he attends - with Doc - to the boy wounded by Barnes. In the background, explosions, hooches popping with flames, the yells of the violation of the Village winding down.

76. EXT: SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

Chris wanders through this wreckage in the sun, like a dazed visitor from another planet, not believing it.

77. EXT: VILLAGE - EDGE OF WOODLINE - DAY

Hidden at the edge of the woodline, King hands back a bowl of grass to Rhah, the chief head. They're puffing away.

78 CONTD

KING

Whew! - where that come from?

RHAH

Found it. Growing in a garden.

KING (smokes)

Sheeit, beats burning hutches anyday...

They meditatively look out at the Village - burning hutches sending up spirals of smoke. Shouts. Shots. Chaos.

RHAH

Yeah - stoned's the way to be...

79 EXT: VILLAGE - DITCH - DAY

In a ditch running alongside the village, partially concealed by foliage and anthills, another atrocity is taking place. Tony, Morehouse, and the ubiquitous Bunny have a 12 year-old Vietnamese girl pinned to the ground, gagged, and squirming naked. They are fucking her to death. Junior looks on, both curious and disgusted, but doesn't take part.

TONY

Take her up the ass...

As they roll her over, like excited dogs in heat, Chris sees their heads dipping up and down on the other side of an anthill, knows what they're doing. He runs over.

CHRIS

LET HER GO! YOU HEAR ME! YOU ASSHOLE!
LER HER GO!

He strides right into them, shoves them off hard. The girl is in tears.

TONY

What the fuck you want - she's a dink.

CHRIS

NO - YOU STUPID FUCK...DON'T...DON'T.
YOU TOO BUNNY. MOREHOUSE. OFF! NO!...
NO! DON'T...DON'T!

79. CONTD

He seems disconnected, dazed by the sun, like he's talking to dogs - loud, repetitive words coming out of an anger he can barely control, trying to restore some sanity to a world gone totally nuts today. Don't they understand? Don't they have any sense of a mind? Any kind of decency?

The Men looking at him as if he's the one who's gone nuts, not them. Bunny looking at Morehouse looking at Tony looking at Junior. The irony is lost on them, as Chris pushes through to help the poor girl put her scanty clothing back on.

CHRIS (to the girl)
It's okay...it's okay...

Elias appears behind Bunny and the others, sees what's happened. He signals them to move out.

ELIAS
Get outta here.

The men grumble and slink off quietly. Elias watching as...

Chris helps her to her feet, wounded in the intestines, she can barely stand, blood soaked in her nether regions. Chris slings her up as gently as he can and carries her.

CHRIS (as if to himself)
It's okay, it's okay...

80. EXT: VILLAGE - PIG-PEN - DAY

Near the pig pen, a DOZEN SUSPECTS are being led away on ropes by Tubbs, Warren, Rodriguez. The others left behind look back at their village in ruins, homes burning, livestock dead or scattered, belongings thrown and broken in the dirt. BABIES wail, the adults squat there on their heels watching with absolutely no trace of outward emotion.

Past this Bosch-like canvas, Chris - carrying the girl - walks dazed by the horrors of this long afternoon.

81. EXT: VILLAGE TRAIL - DAY

The soldiers depart the village. A huge EXPLOSION now rocks the earth and sends a spray of smoke into the blue sky as the weapons cache explodes in stages that sound like the end of the world.

82. EXT: PERIMETER #2 - JUNGLE - LATE AFTERNOON DUSK

The Company is digging into another overnight perimeter on a ridge with a view of the Valley where the Village was. C-Ration fires all around the perimeter.

83. EXT: COMPANY CP - DUSK

At the Company, Elias, Captain Harris, Barnes, Lt. Wolfe, are huddled. Close on Harris, looking from face to face, assuming a judicial attitude.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

...and you Lieutenant?

LT. WOLFE

I didn't see anything sir.

ELIAS

I did.

LT. WOLFE

Those dinks that were dead were reported to me as NVA sir by Sergeant Barnes.

Squirreling out of any responsibility.

ELIAS

My report sir, will include Lt. Wolfe as being witness to the shooting...

HARRIS

All right, Elias. Sergeant Barnes I want a report from you...

BARNES

You got it sir - and I can throw in plenty of witnesses if you want sir...

HARRIS

Not now. We'll get into this when we get back to base camp. Right now I want you men to stick together... Elias? Barnes?...you hear me? This is no time for fighting with each other.

(pause, they nod)

Tomorrow we're going back into that bunker complex - but from the East.

83. CONTD

HARRIS

First Platoon will lead...Brigade thinks they might be back there tomorrow.

...Get some rest. That's all.

(turns away)

Barnes, Elias eye each and move off.

84. EXT: PERIMETER #2 - DUSK

Wolfe walks alongside Barnes.

WOLFE

Don't worry about it Sergeant, he won't be able to prove a thing, he's a troublemaker but...

Barnes is obviously worried, although he doesn't let on.

BARNES

Elias' like them politicians in Washington. Want to fight this war with one hand tied round their balls. Ain't no time or need for a courtroom out here...

Wolfe leaves him as Barnes turns into his foxhole where Bunny and O'Neill await him anxiously.

O'NEILL

How'd it go.

BARNES

Water off a duck's back.

BUNNY

Thataway Sarge, fuckin' Elias man, fuckin' squeal that's what he is. Somebody oughta fix him...

BARNES (fixing his coffee)

Somebody will...

O'NEILL

Gonna be an investigation or something Bob?

Barnes says nothing, a cryptic look.

84. CONTD

O'Neill worried, Bunny slaps him on the back.

BUNNY

Ya worry too much O'Neill...

85. EXT: PERIMETER #2 - CHRIS' POSITION - DUSK

Elsewhere on the perimeter, Chris is digging out a foxhole with Rhah, as King and Lerner prepare the Cs for dinner.

RHAH

I know Barnes six months and I'll tell ya something - that man is mean, he's so mean he'll take his'n and beat your'n and then he'll take your'n and beat his'n.

That gets a chuckle, which Rhah appreciates.

KING

Barnes get killed, his jaws'd go on clacking...

CHRIS

Where's he from?

RHAH

Barnes come from Hell.

LERNER

Tennessee someplace. Hill country.

RHAH

Barnes took a bullet right there. At Ia Drang Valley...

(points to his forehead)

And the cocksucker survived - that's baaad man. That's his high, baby. High on war!

His eyes flare out dramatically. Chris, enthralled in spite of himself.

KING

He done a year in Japan in the hospital, then when he gets out, the first thing he done is re-up. Four years he been in the field...

RHAH

..and you know how many times
he done been shot?

(Chris shakes his head)

Seven times!

(with his fingers)

Seven.

CHRIS

And he still wanted to come back.

RHAH

The Good Lord works his revenge
in strange ways.

KING

Yeah, you done said it. Revenge
on us.

CHRIS

Does he have a metal plate in
his head?

RHAH (smiles)

You mean he's crazy? No more crazy'n
the rest of us been out in the bush
too long.

LERNER

Well he ain't normal that's fosure.

RHAH

That's what he is...Baaaaa!

His hand flashes forward in front of Chris. "HATE"
is written across the left hand knuckle in a sloppy,
purplish-black tattoo. Chris looking at it.

RHAH

...and he's filled with it. He's
roaming these jungles looking for
little yellow devils to kill.
Remember the Devil does God's work too.

(pause)

...and this here's Elias...Baaaa!

The other knuckle is out - "LOVE" tattooed across it.
RhaH smiles his crazy smile. Chris stares fascinated
at the two knuckles side by side. A moment on his face.

85 CONTD

KING

Love, yeah!

LERNER (makes a cuckoo sign)

Here we go again with the crazy preacher stuff. Rhah seen that movie with Robert Mitchum, y'know "Night of the Hunter"? That's where he stole the idea from...

RHAH

Baaa, got no time to go to the movies. Love and Hate too busy fighting for possession of my soul.

CHRIS

Where's Elias come from?

RHAH

'Lias come naturally.

LERNER

Elias from Arizona someplace, one of them Apache Indian tribes, he used to work the oil wells in Oklahoma, made some bread and washed up in L.A.

KING

Yeah, got married to some crazy bitch, an actress or somethin', she blew all his bread - LSD, gurus, all that shit, and then she turns him into the cops on a drug rap.

REAH

Not the only man to meet his Jezebel either.

KING

So he got a reduced and come over here. Nam's his freedom, man, Nam's his pussy. Three years he been here...

CHRIS

Three years, Jesus, he's crazy as Barnes...

KING

Well sometimes a man jes don' wanna go back. People back in the world just don't give a shit, y'know what I mean -

85. CONTD

KING

they don't know what's going on,
and they don't care...

LERNER

You wouldn't even know there's a
war back there. I was home on leave
y'know and everybody's just worried
'bout making money, watching football
games on television, fuck the war...
my sister says why you going over
there to kill people, she says...

RHAH

Baaaa! Fuck it, they sold us out -
so what! What's you'all expect? Pussies.
No war time no grunt never got no
respect. Till he was dead. Goddamn
dead. And even then...fuck it. Watcha
want - recognition? Fuck that. That
ain't worth it. You're fighting for
yoself, man, you're fighting for your
soul. Remember dat. And it's some
fucking battle too - if you're a man,
wrestle with that angel...

(swings his entrenching tool in
a rhythmic chain-gang style)
...Love and Hate - the whole shitbang
show, that's the story then and now and it
ain't hardly gonna change...

86 EXT: PERIMETER #2 - JUNGLE - NIGHT

The stars are out in magnificent splendor. A
breeze rustling through the trees.

87 EXT: PERIMETER #2 - CHRIS' POSITION - NIGHT

FANTASY - The EARTH GODDESS is back. In Chris' poncho
liner, fucking him, her breasts riven with sweat, her
face in shadow, kissing him...nibbling his ear. But
there is something different about her now - a dangerous
whispering coming out of the wind, the calling of his
name "Christopher" as if from deep in the ocean, urgent,
moaning to him. Seeming like the wail of a dead man.
The fantasy seems to turn darker and darker.

88 EXT: PERIMETER #2 - CHRIS' POSITION - NIGHT

Chris is turning in his sleep, perturbed, writhing.
The whispering is more and more urgent. Death is all
around. He shoots up out of his poncho liner as if snct.

88. CONTD

(rev. 9/27/84)

stunned. Scared. Looks around. All is quiet.
Men sleeping.

Elias is huddled in his poncho on guard next to his
foxhole. Chris joins him, sitting, wiping the sleep
from his eyes.

CHRIS

...I can't sleep, why don't you
get some sack time.

ELIAS

...don't feel like it either.

CHRIS

...beautiful night.

ELIAS

Yeah. I love this place at night.
The stars...there's no right or
wrong in them, they're just there.

CHRIS

That's a nice way of putting it.

Elias cuffs a joint, keeping its glow hidden in the dark.
A pause, both of them meditative.

CHRIS

Barnes got it in for you, don't he?

ELIAS (philosophically)

Barnes believes in what he's doing.

CHRIS

And you, do you believe?

ELIAS

In '65 - yeah. Now...

(pause)

No. What happened today's just the beginning.
We're gonna lose this war...

CHPIS (surprised)
You really think so...us?

Elias' eyes seem to go to some inner place, his passion surging.

ELIAS

..we been kicking other people's asses so long I guess it's time we got our own kicked. The only decent thing I can see coming out of here are the survivors - hundreds of thousands of guys like you Taylor going back to every little town in the country knowing something about what it's like to take life and what that can do to a person's soul - twist it like Barnes and Bunny and make 'em sick inside and if you got any brains you gonna fight it the rest of your life cause it's cheap, killing is cheap, the cheapest thing I know and when some drunk like O'Neill starts glorifying it, you're gonna puke all over him and when the politicians start selling you a used war all over again, you're gonna say go fuck yourself cause you know and when you know it, deep down there...

He plants his fist in Chris' gut, expelling his breath such is the force of the blow - like a power passed between them.

ELIAS

...you know it till you die...that's why the survivors remember. Cause the dead don't let em forget it.

His eyes blazing, reliving the deaths in the village, licking the wounds for the platoon, mourning the failure of its heroism. Chris looking at him, a little awed by his intensity. Elias looks away, embarrassed that he has sermonized, looks back at the stars.

ELIAS

Oh shit! Sometimes there's things in my head...man. Grass does that to me, fucks me all up like a crazy Indian...

CHRIS

Do you believe that stuff about... knowing you're gonna die?

98. CONTD

ELIAS

Yeah, those are the guys that live.
I really don't think Death gives a
shit, I think it takes whatever it
can get...you never know where it's
gonna come from anyway...so why spin
your wheels?

He shrugs, a certain bravado masking his own uncertainty.

CHRIS

...You ever think about reincarnation,
all that stuff?

A lightning quick movement follows. Elias' hand passing
over his face like a mime, a click of the fingers and
he leans closer to Chris. A new expression on his
face. Devil's eyes, mocking child, danger in his
soul, excitement, sex - the Elias that Chris saw in
the smoking session in base camp. Chris smiles, sucked
in, almost laughs and then the face is gone again.

ELIAS

Sure, goes on all the time. Maybe a
piece of me's in you now, who knows.
But when you die - really die - that's
a big return ticket

(soft)

I like to think I'm gonna come back
as a ...as wind, as fire, a star maybe,
or maybe just a fox - or a deer

(likes the image)

...yeah, a deer ...

He smiles at the thought. Chris looks at him, looks
away. A shooting star falls suddenly and dryly through
the cosmos. Their eyes.

89. EXT: JUNGLE - STREAM - DAY (RAIN)

The Platoon moves along a shallow STREAM bordering the
jungle. A thick RAIN falls amid cracks of distant
thunder. Chris, Rhah, Francis, Big Harold, others are
at the rear of the platoon, their ponchos pulled over
them like big sad grey tents. There's a holdup ahead
and the Men rest on rocks or stand. The rain makes
a pointilistic pattern, the men collages of grey, their
rifles slung upside down to keep dry.

Barnes is up ahead, out of the stream bank, on the radio.

90 EXT: JUNGLE CHURCH - DAY - (RAIN)

(Rev 7/18/84)

Lerner's on point resting in the shadow of a decaying old French Catholic Church from the 19th Century. The jungle has long ago won the battle, vines creeping into the cracks, remnants of arches layered around the church at the epicenter. Behind Lerner is Sgt. Warren and his radioman. X

91 EXT: JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY - (RAIN)

Elias, further back, is checking out the jungle alongside the clearing, noticing a number of old spiderholes long since abandoned.

92 EXT: JUNGLE - STREAM - DAY - (RAIN)

Back at the stream, Rhah, looking old and whiskered under his poncho hood, lights up a roach, puffs it. Another crack of thunder. Chris comes over, sits with him on his rock. Rhah passes him the joint. He smokes.

Francis, in the stream, holds a leech between his fingers.

FRANCIS

Hey Big Harold, put dis in your turkey loaf it won't come out your back end.

KING (ribbing)

Yeah, big boy, thought you had that laundry gig all laid out?

BIG HAROLD (pissed)

Shit, got to paint myself white get one of dem jobs. Got ma request in for a circumcision.

FRANCIS

Gonna cut your pecker down to size huhh Big Harold?

HAROLD

Dat's okay wid me, better to have a small one den no one at all.

KING

Your girlfriends gonna look for new lovers, man. Best thing a bro's got's his flap.

HAROLD

I'll drink to your flap in Chicago, King. All I gotta do is stretch it out to 15 days and I'll be short 15 and the Beast just wouldn't dare send me back to the bush.

72. CONTD

(Rev 7/18/84)

FRANCIS

You gonna get some for me back
in the World, Harold? whatcha
gonna do?

(dreaming of it)

HAROLD

First I gonna EAT. Then I gonna
PUCK AND SUCK, and den Ise gonna
SLEEP. For days, bro - for weeks.
Den Ise gonna worry bout what
comes next...

The words carry over Chris staring out at the rain, feeling
a leaden, fatigued high. Passes the roach, down to a
millimeter, back to Rhaah who points to his face.

RHAH

...you got one right there.

Chris feels for, finds the leech on the edge of his lip,
cursing under his breath.

LT. WOLFE (in the stream, on radio)

All right move out.

The men start slogging on against the rain.

Junior is drinking from the stream, as Fu Sheng passes.

FU SHENG

Don't drink that asshole. You gonna
get malaria.

JUNIOR

Shit I hope so !

93. EXT: JUNGLE - CHURCH - DAY - (RAIN)

On point, Lerner moves out through a remnant of an old arch, X
somewhat casual in his approach to point.

LERNER

Hey Sarge, you wanna tell me which way
or do I get to figger it out? Baaaa...

Sgt. Warren, reading his compass, points. Lerner moves in.
the new direction.

94. EXT: JUNGLE - DAY (RAIN)

Elias looking around, frowning, falls into the line of march.

95. EXT: JUNGLE - CHURCH - DAY - (RAIN)

70

Lerner moves away from the clearing, working up a slight incline when the MACHINE GUN FIRE erupts out of the jungle, spinning him - throwing him into the dirt like discarded garbage.

The men are down, yelling.

BIG HAROLD
Incoming! Incoming!

Suddenly an RPG rocket breaks out of the bush, sounding like an atom bomb as it devastates the front of the Platoon. Radio Talk is continuous now, back and forth between the three platoon radios, through the ambush.

O'NEILL
DOC, UP HERE! Lerner's hit!...

More machine gun fire.

FRANCIS
DOC! Over here - we got...one...two down.

96. EXT: JUNGLE - STREAM - DAY - (RAIN)

Chris moving up with Rhah and the others out of the stream, they hit the ground next to Sgt. O'Neill, who looks pretty scared.

CHRIS
What's going on?

O'NEILL
Shit they got RPGs on our ass!
Fuck! They was waiting for us!

BIG HAROLD
WATCH OUT!

Another rocket whistling in. A huge roar. Trees shredded, dirt, dust rising.

CHRIS
Who's on point?

O'NEILL
Lerner and Warren

Chris suddenly moves up.

RHAH
Where you Going?

96. CONTD

Chris tearing up. Past Flash - the hip black head with the colored beads. He's dead, torn and shredded, his face and eyes stuffed with dirt. Next to him Doc is frantically tourniqueting Tubbs, shot in the legs. He's screaming.

Chris keeps moving to the front as if compelled.

97 . EXT: JUNGLE - DAY - (RAIN)

Barnes is laying out fire.

BARNES

GET SOME FUCKIN FIREPOWER...

(to Hoyt on radio)

Get the second squad up here. Get me a gun.

(to others)

Spread it out! Spread it out!

98 EXT: JUNGLE - DAY - (RAIN)

Chris comes alongside Francis near the point, throws himself down. Banging his head against his helmet as he falls. The incoming rounds are tearing up the front of the platoon.

CHRIS (to Francis)

Where's Lerner?

FRANCIS (terrified)

Out there man - behind the log.

Looking. A body - moaning, sort of moving.

CHRIS

Oh Jesus!

His eyes moving to Sgt. Warren lying alongside a tree - blood pouring out of his chest, calmly staring down at the bubbles of blood. Another RPG comes in.

Chris moving up - bit by bit, shielding himself with tree stumps, anthills, laying out fire, trying to get closer to Lerner.

Francis looking at him, amazed, Fu Sheng coming up with an M-60 to support the front.

99.

EXT: JUNGLE - NEAR CHURCH - DAY (RAIN)

Lt. Wolfe is struggling with the rainwater washing off his map, reading the coordinates.

LT. WOLFE (on the radio)
...Contact mission, grid six-four-niner,
four-zero-two, direction seven-one hundred,
distance one hundred. Dinks dug in.

RADIO VOICE
Affirmative, three. On its way.

ACE (to Wolfe)
Red Platoon's coming up sir -
about 200 yards down river.

WOLFE
Great!

Elias runs up to him. Gunfire all around, incoming and outgoing, makes them yell to each other.

ELIAS
Lieutenant, lemme take some men out on
the right flank, there's spiderholes
back there...

Grabbing a loose stick, crudely drawing out their position in the dirt and tracing it out for the Lieutenant.

ELIAS
First Platoon's gonna be coming up
here to reinforce us...a couple of
dinks get in here behind us, they'll
get us in a crossfire with the First,
we'll shoot each other to shit.

WOLFE (a hesitant gesture, to Ace
on the radio)
Get me Barnes...
(to Elias)
Sounds pretty far-out to me 'Lias.

ELIAS
Sir I saw it happen in '66 at Ia Drang.
First Cavalry. We...

WOLFE
Barnes...

Barnes hurries up out of the rain. Thunder peals.

BARNES (yelling at Wolfe)
Where's Red Platoon? Tell em to get
their asses up here! Goddamit Elias!
Where the fuck's your squad! Get em up!

ELIAS
Barnes! Listen to me! There's 2-3 spider
holes back there on our right, near the
church. The flank's wide open, they can
walk right in. They got 2 snipers in
there, when Red Platoon comes up, they
got us in a crossfire. We'll be shooting
each other! Give me three men. I can
cover those holes!

BARNES
You seen any gooks in them holes!

ELIAS
No but I seen it happen at Ia Drang
and they cut us to fuckin' pieces.

BARNES
We ain't gonna sit there long enough,
we're gonna roll em up. I want your
squad up there, Elias. Now! We need
every fuckin body. I got five men up
there fighting a goddamn company.
Get going!

(turns to Wolfe)
Get that asshole O'Neill up here will ya!

Elias grabs him, face to face.

ELIAS
That's what they want you to do Barnes!
They're gonna let you move forward, then
when you're strung out far enough and we're
fighting with Red Platoon, they'll hit us
with everything they got. They'll wipe
us out!

BARNES
Don't give me that fancy tactic book
shit, you little fuck, you go crying
to fucking brigade on your time, out
here you belong to me. Now you got
your orders! Move it out!

ELIAS
You're crazy Barnes, you're a fucking
crazy asshole.

CONTD

THWACK! Elias reels as Barnes butts him with his rifle in his back, then slams him around. Elias, the breath knocked out of him, Barnes pressing up close to him. A black rage on him.

BARNES (very quietly)
Who you calling crazy Indian! You be careful, y'hear me!...you been talking a lotta shit around here, but you don't talk to me like that...

His look is quietly deranged. Elias sees it. Wolfe even sees it. They've never quite seen Barnes lose control before - not even at the Village. Except now, this one moment. Then it passes.

WOLFE
All right, break it up.

Barnes holds Elias' look till Elias turns and goes back for his men. Barnes goes forward.

More thunder peals. As the 175 mm howitzers - sounding like deep tom-toms some five miles in the distance - beat out their shells. An ominous sound. Closer.

100. EXT: CHURCH - JUNGLE - DAY (RAIN)

Chris, firing out another magazine, gets closer to Lerner.

CHRIS
Lerner!

Lerner groans. A new burst of fire rakes the area. Lerner is hit again.

Chris spots the sniper. In a hole in the ground. Reloading his AK-47. A live gook!

Chris tears off a volley at him but the gook disappears down in the hole. This is the moment. Chris takes it. Running up. Pulling his grenade, popping it. It's about twenty feet to the hole. That head is going to pop up any second with a freshly-loaded magazine.

Chris won't make it to the hole. The throw has to be perfect, and it is. The golden throw from the outfield nailing that baserunner, the perfect arc of flight. It goes right in the hole. The explosion is muffled but deadly.

Chris running up to it. The dead gook in the bottom.

100. CONTD

Chris hurries over to Lerner. He's in bad shape, hit in several places, vaguely conscious.

CHRIS
Gator! Gator!
(Lerner groans)
You're gonna be okay Gator...okay?

Fu Sheng laying out fire to protect them.

Chris getting Lerner to his feet, dragging him back with all his strength, past Francis, past Barnes.

The Artillery is getting closer. Several Explosions out to the front are now being walked back. Shrapnel whirrs back over their heads, sounding like thrown axes burying themselves in the barks of the trees.

FU SHENG (calling out)
They're gone.

He looks up, suspecting something in that very moment. The artillery shell sounds too close. Getting bigger and bigger on the horizon. Too big, too loud. Panic on his face. Then...a huge EXPLOSION engulfs him.

101. EXT: JUNGLE - DAY (RAIN)

BIG HAROLD
They got Fu Sheng! Our own artillery!
Barnes! OVER HERE!

102. EXT: JUNGLE - DAY (RAIN)

Barnes hearing it. Another huge shell starting to whistle in on them.

BARNES
What the fuck!

It explodes. This is about three times the intensity of the RPG, so that the jungle floor shakes, trees splinter. Hoyt, Barnes' radio operator, screams out in pain as a thick chunk of hot shrapnel sticks in his back. He's screeching, Barnes pulling him down, ripping his shirt off, digging the shrapnel out.

103. EXT: JUNGLE - HAROLDS POSITION - DAY (RAIN)

Big Harold is tearing back away from the front when he stumbles. Sees the wire over which he tripped. It takes a second. He shares a look with Bunny who's on the ground.

103. CONTD

(Rev 7/18/84)

BUNNY
Satchel Charge! GET DOWN!

Harold goes for the ground at the same instant the satchel explodes.

104. EXT: JUNGLE - CHURCH - DAY (RAIN)

Chris, further back, dumps Lerner with Doc who's got more than he can handle.

CHRIS
Take care of him Doc! Please!

Doc looking at him, a dark look of hopelessness. Lerner is a mess, groaning, reaching for Chris' hand. A look between them. Rhah intersecting. X

RHAH
Taylor - get your ass over here. Move!

Chris taking his hand out of Lerner's.

CHRIS
You'll be okay, you'll be okay, Gator,
just hang in there man.

Feeling like a liar, peeling the man's hands off him, leaving him there looking numb. Chris is shaken, Lerner's blood all over him. X

He tears out after Rhah linking up with Elias and Crawford. Elias motioning them to hurry. Another huge artillery round exploding out to the front.

105. EXT: JUNGLE - O'NEILL POSITION - DAY (RAIN)

Sgt. O'Neill, scared out of his mind, hugging the earth, tries to crawl into an indentation in the ground but finds it occupied by a cringing Junior.

106. EXT: NEAR CHURCH - DAY (RAIN)

Barnes rushes up out of the forest like Achilles, towering in his rage, at Lieutenant Wolfe, grabbing his handset from him as the Lieutenant reads off the coordinates off his map.

BARNES
YOU STUPID FUCK - what the fuck
coordinates you giving. You got a
bunch of people dead out there, you
lame-brain asshole! Ah shit.

Disgusted, Barnes grabs the map out of his hand, hunkers
down to read the coordinates into the handset.

BARNES
Eagle Six, Eagle Six, this is Ranger
Two. Walk your artillery out of here.
North zero seven niner.

107. EXT: JUNGLE - NEAR CHURCH - DAY

Elias - a defiant look on his face - moves fast back
across the Church landmarks. Chris following, X
then Rhah and Crawford. The RAIN has now settled into
a mist hugging the ground.

ELIAS
Move it! Move it!

Elias comes to a stop, looks. Behind them we hear the
sounds of battle, gauging their distance from the main body.

The spiderholes are still empty. But he listens, senses
something out there getting closer.

ELIAS
They're coming...

Chris looking at Rhah. How does he know?

Elias points out an imaginary line across the breaking mist.

ELIAS
Stagger yourselves across this line, shoot
anything that moves. They'll be coming
from there.

RHAH (team leader)
Gotcha.

ELIAS
One of them gets through it's curtains.

RHAH
Where you going?

108 CONTD

ELIAS

Follow the line about 200 yards 'case
a couple of em try to end us. First
Platoon's coming up behind you so stayed tuned.

CHRIS

I'll go with you.

ELIAS

No...I move faster alone.
(a grin)

Elias, his pack stripped, is gone, like a fleet leaf,
vanishing into the Jungle.

RHAH (stringing them out)

Okay Crawford - over here. Taylor -
down twenty yards behind that tree.

102 EXT: NEAR CHURCH/JUNGLE - DAY

Back at the ambush, Barnes, finished with his transmission,
hurls the handset to the ground, a wild look in his eyes
for Lt. Wolfe. A lot of outgoing fire still.

BARNES (to Ace)

All right - tell Elias and O'Neill
to move their squads forward, we
gotta get outta here now. Where's
Red Platoon?

ACE

There's no contact with Elias, Sarge.
He ain't answering.

BARNES

What!

Looks around.

LT. WOLFE

I seen Tubbs, Junior and Francis,
they're up there. Maybe he's hurt.

A hungry look of understanding now floods Barnes' face.

BARNES

That fuck! He went back there.

WOLFE

Jesus Christ! He disobeyed orders!
I'll...Where you going?

CONTD

Barnes is stalking off fast in Elias' direction, calling back to Wolfe, admonitory.

BARNES (to Wolfe)
You move those men up, Lieutenant, you hear me - push out! Don't get stuck here!

110 EXT: NEAR CHURCH - DAY

Next to the Church deployed in the jungle, Rhah looks on, silent.

Chris in his position, waits. It is so silent in comparison to the racket from the battle across the forest. The Mist clings to the trees, moist and lovely. Then, a flicker of movement, sound.

Chris hears it, tightens. His POV - at fifty yards. An evanescence of beige and green uniforms moving towards him very fast, scurrying. They look like headless ghosts.

Chris opens fire.

CHRIS
GET EM!!!!!!!!!!

Rhah and Crawford open up. A racket of sound, one of the figures seems to go down, then another but at this distance through jungle it is difficult to say. The firing just as suddenly breaks off and the silence returns.

CHRIS
I got two of them fuckers...

RAAH
I got one...

CHRIS
Crawford...

Crawford, the blond-locked California beach boy, lies on the earth, hit through a lung, having difficulty breathing, moaning in a soft undercurrent. Chris runs up on him.

CHRIS
Oh man!...man!

Attending him. Rhah runs up.

CHRIS
Looks like a lung babe. But you're gonna be all right, you only need one of them fuckers.

CRAWFORD

Oh shit man I never thought I'd
get hit, I was...

(gagging)

RHAH

Stay cool. We gonna carry you out.

Barnes appears, running towards them, looking down
at Crawford, at Rhah.

RHAH

Sarge, 'bout five gooks tried to...

BARNES

Where's Elias?

RHAH

...Came through right over there.
We got three of em, we...

BARNES

I don't give a rat's ass, you're way
outta position, Jackson. Now get your
wounded man in and report to Wolfe.
Right now. Get going...

CHRIS (indicating jungle)

...but 'Lias is still out there.

BARNES

I'll take care of him. You get the
man in, Taylor.

(indicating Crawford)

Now. Or I'll Article 15 both your
asses. Get going!

Chris and Rhah look at Barnes sullenly, then reluctantly
start moving Crawford onto a poncho liner they use as a litter.

BARNES

Move it, MOVE IT!

He's in his blackest rage, the force of his words almost
physically pushing the men to move out with Crawford.
Barnes turns now to deal with Elias.

111. EXT: ELIAS' JUNGLE - DAY

Elsewhere, Elias stands silently, listens to the forest.
In the distance the firefight can hardly be heard. His
helmet gone, his hair hanging free, he is at his best now -
alone. He hears it. Somebody running through the jungle,
about 100 yards, boots on leaves, coming towards him.

111 . CONTD

He begins to move lateral to the sound. His steps unheard, better at this than the enemy.

THREE ENEMY FIGURES now appear, crouched and moving very fast with light equipment through the mist.

Elias swerves up in immediate foreground, his back to us, FIRING. All three Figures fall.

A quick glimpse of Elias, not bothering to stop, moving to his next position.

112.. EXT: BARNES JUNGLE - DAY

Barnes, moving through the jungle, reacts to the fire, resetting his course. Like a hunter stalking a deer. Suddenly there's more firing. Then silence -

113 . EXT: ELIAS JUNGLE - DAY

TWO MORE ENEMY lie dead in the jungle. A rustle of movement, then a CRY - chilling, jubilant, a war cry.

A pair of feet moving lightly over the jungle. A glimpse of Elias. In his full glory. Roaming the jungle, born to it.

114 . EXT: BARNES JUNGLE - DAY

Barnes fixing on him, moving. One man hunting the other.

115 . EXT: ELIAS JUNGLE - DAY

An NVA SOLDIER, jungle-whiskered, dirty, smart, crouches, listens, looks to his PARTNER. What are they fighting here? The First One mutters something sharp and they split fast in the direction they've come.

They get about six steps when Elias suddenly rises up from the bush, not ten yards in front of them, his shots ripping into them, driving the surprised life from them. Elias is gone.

116.. EXT: JUNGLE CHURCH - DAY

Elsewhere, another three NVA stop, turn and flee back from where they came.

117 . EXT: JUNGLE CHURCH - DAY

Chris and Rhah get Crawford back to the church grounds, lay him down. No activity around them. Chris plunges back into the jungle where they left Barnes.

117 CONTD

 CHRIS (to Rhah)
 You stay here.

118 EXT: ELIAS & BARNES JUNGLE - DAY

Barnes moving, stops, listens. Something is running towards him. But it's hidden by the bush. He brings his rifle up smooth and quick, waits, then as the bush parts, Elias is standing there. Looking at Barnes.

Barnes sees him, starts to lower the rifle, but then stops. He raises it back an inch, sights it. Pause. A cold searing look of hatred coming over his face.

In that moment, Elias understands. Quick as light, he makes his move, trying to plunge back into the bush.

Barnes fires. Once, twice, three times - the blast rocking the jungle - a crime against nature.

Elias jerking backwards into the bush, mortally wounded. Bird cries.

Barnes calmly lowers his rifle, and walks away from it.

119 EXT: CHRIS' JUNGLE - DAY

Chris, cutting through the jungle, hears the shots. He stops, listens. Someone is moving through bush towards him, leaves and foliage shaking.

Chris tightens, raises his rifle.

Barnes steps through into his sight - sees him.

Chris lowers his rifle. Barnes walking past him as if he weren't even there.

 BARNES
 Get outta here. He's dead. Move it.

 CHRIS (shocked)
 He's dead! Where?...You saw him?

 BARNES
 Yeah. He's dead, now get going, the
 gooks are all over the fuckin' place.

Moving on quickly. Chris has no choice but to follow, looking back one more time.

120 EXT: CHURCH GROUNDS - JUNGLE - DAY

(3) CHOPPERS are coming into an LZ in front of the Church. The Platoon is being evacuated as quickly as possible, one load (6-8 men, depending on wounded) after the other. The choppers are spraying dust all over the place. A scene of chaos, radio talk layering it.

WOLFE
MOVE IT MOVE IT MOVE IT

Lerner goes by, horribly wounded on a makeshift litter, into the chopper, Doc attending.

Chris catching a glimpse of him, waiting to get on the chopper, turning to look as:

Hoyt and Sergeant Warren, both wounded, are hurried aboard on litters. The chopper lifting off.

Chris and others now running to the corpses of Flash, Morehouse, and Fu Sheng lying under dirty ponchos, their boots sticking out. The ponchos are blown away in a burst of wind off the chopper blades, revealing their faces - dirt stuffing their eyes and mouths, waxen figures.

Chris and the others lifting them and carrying them towards the next chopper now coming in.

They throw the bodies on. Tubbs and Crawford, both unwounded, now move past Chris, into the chopper. Chris running back, with King carrying a litter - their eyes falling on:

Barnes talking with Wolfe and Ace, making signals under the roaring sounds of the chopper. Shaking his head. No. No Elias.

Chris and King looking at each other, mute. They numbly start loading Big Harold (lost his leg) onto the stretcher.

The Third Chopper is down now, waiting, roaring blades silhouetting off the face of the cathedral. A ROCKET BLAST suddenly goes off not too far from the chopper, incoming fire. The DOOR GUNNER signalling for them hurry, laying out fire.

121 INT/EXT: CHOPPER - JUNGLE - DAY

Chris and King hustling Big Harold's 250 pounds into the chopper. Climbing in with him. Wolfe, Barnes, Ace running in with them. The perimeter is bare.

121 CONTD

(Rev 8/20/84)

Chris' eyes flitting over Barnes as he jumps in. The chopper lifting off as another explosion rocks the area. The DOOR GUNNER sees something, opens up.

Big Harold, cursing, looks chalky but happy as a hog as he manages a glance down at the jungle. His right leg is gone.

KING

How you feelin' man, you gonna be in Japan this time tomorrow.

BIG HAROLD (jubilant, to King)
Fuckit mother, what's a leg to get the fuck outta here...Bye motherfuckers!!!

He sinks back, sick. Chris' eyes suddenly fix on something. He can't believe it. He shoves King, points. King sees it. Both stunned.

Barnes is looking. So's Lt. Wolfe, so's Ace. So's the Door Gunner.

Elias is coming out of the jungle. Staggering, blood disfiguring his face and chest, hanging on with all his dimming strength, looking up at them - trying to reach them.

Chris shakes Wolfe, his words drowned out by the roar.

The Chopper Captain looking down, dips. His co-pilot pointing.

The NVA are coming out of the jungle, closing on the spot where Elias is.

Incoming rounds are hitting the chopper. The Door Gunner maniacally firing.

Barnes looking down at the man, can't believe it.

Elias is on his last legs now, obviously being hit by the incoming fire of the NVA. He falls to his knees, still stretching upwards for life.

The Chopper Captain shakes his head at Wolfe.

The Chopper dips one more time and then swoops away, low and fierce over the jungle.

Chris looking back in horror.

121 CONTD

Elias crucified. The NVA coming out now by the dozens from the treeline.

Elias crumbling to the ground. A speck now. In a vanished nightmare.

Barnes drawing in.

Chris looking at him in reulsion. He knows. Barnes sees his look, ignores it, all of them sitting there silent, living with that final horrifying image of Elias.

122 EXT: UNDERGROUND HUTCH - BASE CAMP - NIGHT

The "heads" are assembled - what's left of them. Rhah, King, Francis, Doc, Adams, a quiet black kid, and Chris, who is impassioned tonight.

CHRIS

He killed him. I know he did. I saw his eyes when he came back in...

RHAAH (puffing on his bowl)

How do you know the dinks didn't get him. You got no proof man.

CHRIS

Proof's in his eyes. When you know you know. You were there Rhah - I know what you were thinking. I say we frag the fucker. Tonight.

He looks to King who puffs on a joint, his eyes red.

KING

I go with dat, an eye for an eye man.

RHAAH (to Chris)

Shit boy you been out in the sun too long. You try that, he'll stick it right back up your ass with a candle on it.

CHRIS

Then what do you suggest big shot?

122 CONTD

RHAH (to Chris)
I suggest you watch your own asses
cause Barnes gonna be down on all of 'em.

FRANCIS
How you figger that?

RHAH
Shit, man - human nature.

Flashes the old knuckle - "HATE".

KING
Then you jes gonna forget 'bout Elias and
all the good times we done have? Right in
here.

RHAH
He dugged his own grave.

DOC (correcting)
He dug it.

RHAH
He dugged it too.

CHRIS
Fuck this shit!

RHAH
You guys trying to cure the headache by cutting off the head. 'Lias didn't ask you to fight his battles and if there's a Heaven - and god, I hope so - I know he's sitting up there drunk as an Arizona Indian and smokin' shit cause his pains he done left down here. Baaaaaaaaaaaa!
(a vehement movement of his head)

CHRIS
You're wrong man! Any way you cut it Rhah, Barnes is a murderer.

KING
Right on.

RHAH
I remember you first came in here Taylor you telling me how much you admired that bastard.

CHRIS
I was wrong.

RHAH (snorts)
Wrong? You ain't ever been right - 'bout nothing. And dig this you assholes and dig it good! Barnes been shot 7 times and he ain't dead, that tell you something? Barnes ain't meant to die. Only thing can get Barnes...is Barnes!

Barnes stands there, silhouetted in the trap door, looking down at the men who are stunned to see him here.

He steps down into the hutch, his face now lit by candle light. A bottle of whiskey in his hand, drunk, ugly, sweating, but as always, with dignity, possessive of his silence. He feels their fear in the silence, enjoys it.

172 CONTD

(Rev 7/26/84)

BARNES (soft)
Talking 'bout killing?

He totters slightly as he circles the outer edge of the hutch. No one talks.

BARNES
Y'all experts? Y'all know about killing?
He takes the bowl from Adams, smokes it.

BARNES
You pussies gotta smoke this shit
so's you can hide from reality...
(smokes again)
Me I don't need this shit. I am reality.
Confronting Chris, he moves on, taunting them all.

BARNES
There's the way it oughta be and
there's the way it is. 'Lias he was
full of shit, 'Lias was a crusader -
I got no fight with a man does what
he's told but when he don't, the machine
breaks down, we break down...and I ain't
gonna allow that. From none of you.
Not one...

Walks past Rhah, past King, throws the pot bowl
into the dirt of the floor.

BARNES
What, none you guys got the guts to
fight for Elias. Y'all love Elias,
want to kick ass, Ise here - all
by my lonesome, nobody gonna know.
Five you boys 'gainst me?
(pause, very soft)
Kill me.

:122 CONTD

(Rev 7/16/84)

Almost an appeal - naked, intense. Rhah, Francis,
Doc look away.

King, the biggest one there, is about to say something,
but the moment passes.

Chris waits, his anger on the rise.

Barnes takes a swigger from the whiskey, then turns
away contemptuously.

BARNES

I shit on all 'o you.

CHRIS

KILL YOU MOTHERFUCKER!!!!!!

Chris slams into Barnes, rushing him off his feet.
Pounding his face, solid blows.

KING & OTHERS

.Get that mother, babe, go...Kick
his ass, kill that cocksucker!!!

But Barnes is too quick and very strong and takes the blows, getting inside Chris' arm, twisting and flipping him in a wrestler's grip - throwing him hard onto his back on the dirt floor.

The expression on the Men watching slumps, their hopes dashed.

Barnes springs around on Chris, straddles him, one hand pushing his face back, hits him hard. Once. Twice.

Chris grimaces, groans, helpless now. A flick of sound.

A knife whipping out of Barnes' boot and pressing against Chris' throat. Chris bleeding from the nose and mouth.

Rhah suddenly spinning into action, fast now, realizing what Barnes intends to do.

RHAH
EASY BARNES, EASY MAN!!!

Barnes is on the verge - about to kill again.

Chris waiting.

Rhah coaxing him, moving closer.

RHAH
You'll go nuts in Long Binh Barnes.
Ten years - kill an enlisted.
Ten years, Barnes, just climb
the walls. Don't do it...

Barnes' eyes tremble in the candlelight, his scars ugly, a spasm clenching and locking his facial muscles. Then suddenly he is calm again, very calm. We sense a man of enormous self-control.

Suddenly he flicks his knife across Chris, leaving a mark below his left eye.

Chris gasps. Looking up at Barnes rising off him. The boots alongside his face.

The Men looking on, the tension lowering.

BARNES (contemptuous)
Death? What do you guys know about it?

He walks out. Quietly.

123 EXT: AIR SHOTS - JUNGLE, VILLAGE, CHURCH - DAY

Chris sits at the very edge of a Huey Chopper, bandanna around his forehead, long hair blowing in the wind, Barnes' mark below his eye, slicked-out now like a jungle veteran, looking down at the VILLAGE where the massacre occurred.

The Village is still a smoking ruin, a few peasants and water buffalo straggling like ants to reconstruct.

Bunny, next to Chris, pops his gum, indifferent. Barnes, next to him, shifts, reads a map.

Rodriguez is praying, his mouth moving without audible words, getting ready for the drop.

King is making last minute adjustments in his pack.

Bunny now nudges Chris, points. The Church in the Jungle where Elias was killed is visible. An outline of the Cemetery. Uncomfortable memories play over Chris' face.

CHRIS V.O.

They sent us back into the valley the next day - about 2000 metres from Cambodia - into a battalion perimeter. Alpha Company had been hit hard the day before by a sizable force and Charlie Company had been probed that night. There were other battalions in the valley, we weren't the only ones but we knew we were going to be the bait to lure them out. And somewhere out there was the entire 819th NVA Regiment.

The BATTALION PERIMETER now breaks in the clear ahead. Smoke grenades of various colors are being popped on the cleared LZ. It's not big, its radius 200 yards, heavily sandbagged, deeply dug, rolls of barbed wire protecting it, radio antennas sprouting from the CP - and surrounded on all four sides by jungle.

The First Chopper rocking down, whipping up dust clouds. Chris jumps out, moving out fast as the Second Chopper starts in.

124 EXT: BATTALION PERIMETER #3 - DUSK

The crack between the two worlds. The sun is down and the night hesitates before coming on. The men are digging

124 CONTD

in, last adjustments all along the perimeter, trip flares laid out, food eaten. Filth and garbage is everywhere. The Battalion - albeit one at half strength - seems insignificant in this jungle.

125 EXT: BATTALION CP - PERIMETER #3 - DUSK

At the Battalion CP, the Major confers with Captain Harris and two other Captains. Two NVA PRISONERS are led away by a SERGEANT and a VIETNAMESE SCOUT. The NVA are made to sit on their knees, their hands tied, and questioned.

126 EXT: PLATOON CP - PERIMETER #3 - DUSK

All this is watched from a distance by Ace and Doc and Lt. Wolfe at the Platoon CP. Ace and Doc are digging the foxhole.

ACE

...they caught 'em last night trying to pull some shit on Charlie Company. They found m's on 'em, man - got a friend at Battalion says they had every fuckin' foxhole here fixed on it. Distances, treelines, our claymores, trip wires, everything!

DOC

Shit, so what the fuck are we doing here? Why don't we move...

(no answer)

Bad vibes, man, I got bad vibes here.

Rhah comes up, a walking stick in hand, huge pirate kerchief on his head, semi-naked.

RHAAH

You wanted to see me sir?

WOLFE

Jackson, looks like you got Elias' squad now.

RHAAH

Squad? I didn't know we was still referring to this platoon in terms of squads, sir.

(with a snicker for Ace and Doc)

WOLFE (indicating a rough drawing in the dirt)

These two holes are yours...

126. CONTD

RHAH

Begging your pardon Lieutenant but my holes are far enuff apart you could run a regiment through there and nobody'd see them - I got five live bodies left...

WOLFE

I don't want to hear your problems, Jackson. You'll get new men any day. Time being you make do like everybody else.

RHAH

Hey Lieutenant I didn't ask for this job, I...

WOLFE (leaves)

I don't want to hear about it Jackson.

RHAH (amazed, looking off at him)
You don't want to hear about it?

WOLFE (turns)

That's right. I don't want to hear about it 'cause to tell you the truth, I don't give a shit okay...I just don't give a shit anymore.

RHAH (shrugs, to himself)

Right...

WOLFE (passing Ace digging the
CP hole)

This is one time we sure could use Elias.

ACE (to Doc)

"Some people say I'm wishy washy. Maybe I am. Maybe I ain't."

127. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - CHRIS' FOXHOLE - DUSK

On the edge of the perimeter, King puts out his claymore, unravelling it back towards his FOXHOLE, intersecting MEN from the Third Platoon, who file out on a night ambush, skirting the trip wires, demoralized, silent. Eye exchanges, but no words.

Chris sits on the foxhole watching the ambush go out, smoking a joint by himself, depressed. King comes in with the claymore wires, attaching them to their detonators. Their foxhole - as are all of the Platoon's - is positioned just inside the tree line bordering the LZ, so that they are quite isolated from the center of the perimeter where they first landed.

127. CONTD

KING

Glad I ain't going with 'em. Somewhere
out dere man is de Beast and he hungry
tonight...

The LAST SOLDIER in the file recedes into the foliage.

KING (noticing Chris' silence)

You okay man?...How come you ain't writing
no more? You was always writing something.

He doesn't answer, makes a futile gesture.

KING

What about your folks? That grandma
you was telling me about?...

Chris shakes his head.

KING

Girl?

Chris' eyes answer negatively.

KING

Must be somebody?

CHRIS

...there's nobody.

KING (shifts, uncomfortable)

You been smoking too much shit babe.
Gotta control that. Takes a man down...
I remember when you first come out to
the bush, you was straight as a...

CHRIS

Who gives a shit!

He shifts, annoyed, prepares his grenades along the sandbags.
King shrugs, preparing his meal, sings himself a snatch of
song, a good-natured man.

KING (soft)

"People say I'm the life of the party
cause I tell a joke or two
although I may be laughing
loud and hardy
deep inside I'm blue..."

127. CONTD

CHRIS

Y'ever get caught in a mistake King
and you just can't get out of it?

KING

Way out of anything, man. Just keep
your pecker up and your powder dry,
things change. How many days you short?

CHRIS

Not just me...it's the way the whole
thing works. People like Elias get
wasted and people like Barnes just go
on making up rules any way they want
and what do we do, we just sit around
in the middle and suck on it! We just
don't add up to a rat's ass.

KING

Whoever said we did, babe. Make it
outta here, it's all gravy, every day
of the rest of your life - gravy. Oh
shit, superlifer.

O'Neill comes up, jerks his thumb at King.

O'NEILL

Get your gear together King, your
orders just come through.

KING (stunned)

Holy Mama, you ain't kidding! Cocksucker.
Oh wowww...they cuttin me some slack.
10 days short and they cutting me some
slack Taylor!

(does a soul dance)

O'NEILL

Move your pussy! You got ten minutes
make that last chopper outta here or
yor'ass is mine...

(to Taylor)

Francis' comin over.

(hurries off)

King packing up, doubletime. Chris comes over,
helps him, trying to share his happiness but not
succeeding.

CHRIS

Hey that's great King, that's great...
you take it on home for me, you tell
em King...got your address right? You
know where you can reach me, man. Anytime!

127. CONTD

KING

I gotta didi man. Can't miss that chopper. I'll send you a postcard man. After I get some. I'll get you some new tapes too. This new guy Jimmy Hendryx man, whew... You okay Taylor? Just remember to take it easy man, don't think too much, don't mean nuthin. Jes drive on. Okay buddy.

Chris, fighting his depression, slaps hands with King. A brief moment, they look at each other. A friendship that was forever and is now over. They both sort of know they'll never see each other again.

KING

OK

CHRIS

I'll walk you out...

Francis comes up, hauling his pack into hole, gives King a soul shake.

FRANCIS

Some cats got all the luck... catch you later man. You take it easy now.

KING (shaking him back)

I'll take it anyway I can get it 'bro. Later.

King goes, Chris with him.

128. EXT: PERIMETER #3 RODRIQUEZ FOXHOLE - DUSK

On another foxhole, Rodriguez positions his M-60, brings up his ammo belts (no loaders left). Tony eating, watches him, shakes his head.

TONY

Hey Rodriguez, don't you ever say nothing?

RODRIGUEZ (a thick Mexican accent)

What do you want me to say, it's all the same ol' shit.

Tony shrugs, back to his food.

129. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - JUNIORS FOXHOLE - DUSK

129. CONTD

On another foxhole, Barnes in full pack checks the soles of Junior's bare feet. Bunny and O'Neill looking on. Junior is moaning as if he's dying, overdoing it by a mile.

BARNES

So what's the problem?

O'NEILL

Says he can't walk.

BARNES

Shit. Get your boots on Martin, next time I catch you putting mosquito repellent on your fuckin feet I'm gonna courtmartial your nigger ass.

JUNIOR (cracks)

DEN COURTMARTIAL ME MOTHERFUCKAH, bust my ass, send me to fucking Long Binh, do yor worst but I ain't walking no more.

BARNES (suddenly soft)

Get me that spider O'Neill.

O'Neill is puzzled. What spider?

O'NEILL

Sarge?

BARNES

Yeah that big hairy orange and black bastard I found in the ammo crate. I'm gonna put it in this asshole's crotch, see if he can walk.

Junior's eyes bulge with suspicion and sudden terror, his demeanor totally alert now.

O'NEILL (understanding)

Oh yeah, right away Sarge.

JUNIOR

No! Wait! I'll walk, fuck you I'll walk, I don't need this shit! I don't need this shit!

BUNNY

Fucking pussy, fuckit Sarge, I gotta have him on my hole?

129. CONTD

Barnes going. O'Neill catching up with him.

O'NEILL

Uh...Bob. Like to speak to you.
Take a minute.

BARNES (stops)

Yeah, what is it?

O'NEILL (shuffles, reluctant)

Bob, I got Elias' R&R. It's coming up
in 3 days. Going to Hawaii. See Patsy.

(pause, no reaction from Barnes)

I never asked you for a break, I was hoping
you...you'd send me in on the chopper
with King...what do you say chief?

(a friendly punch)

BARNES

I can't do that for you, Red. We
need every man in the field. Sorry
bout that...

(starts to go)

O'NEILL (grabs him, pleads)

Hey Bob, come one! Talk to me hunh,
it's your friend Red. I'm only asking
you for three days chief...

BARNES

I'm talking to you Red and I'm telling
you no. Get back to your position.

O'NEILL (tremulous, grabs him again,
desperate)

Bob, I gotta bad feeling about this, I...
I'm telling you I got a bad feeling,
man...I don't think I'm gonna make
it...y'know what I mean?

BARNES (quietly)

...everybody gotta die sometime Red...
Get back to your foxhole.

A look in his eyes. Very remote, very cold, silencing
O'Neill. Barnes walks off.

130. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - BATTALION LZ - DUSK

At the LZ, King runs out, gets on the last SUPPLY CHOPPER
with some other men. It lifts off, swirling dust, the
last rays of daylight.

130. CONTD

Chris watches from the Battalion CP area, waves back - the chopper sound receding in the horizon, the comparative silence of the jungle now creeping up on the perimeter. He turns and starts back to his foxhole.

A Man is watching him. He's sitting on a sandbag, face in shadow. It startles Chris, something about him. Something different. A deep West Virginia drawl.

SMOKING MAN

Got a light?

CHRIS

Uh sure...

Goes over reluctantly, flicks his lighter, cupping it from the wind. The flame catches a sudden, uneasy expression in Chris' face as he sees the Smoking Man.

We come around and see what Chris sees in the light of the flame. A face that smiles at him like a death's head, a large, ugly blister on his mouth, whiskered, pale - but smiling. A sick man wouldn't smile like this, but he is smiling too intimately, as if he knows Chris from way back. But he doesn't. Or does he? Perhaps it was the man Chris first saw at the airstrip when he came in-country. The same expression of evil, of a man who has seen too much and died, but still lives.

Chris feels an unnatural fear passing through him.

The Man stands, sucking on his cigarette, stretches. He is thin and very tall, towering over Chris.

SMOKING MAN

...later.

He goes. Chris watches him, wondering. The man never looks back, a leisurely, confident stroll. In that moment, there is an EXPLOSION from way out in the jungle, about a quarter of a mile. Then another, then small arms fire. Chris looks, knows.

131. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - RHAHS FOXHOLE - DUSK

On their foxhole, so do Rhah and Adams.

RHAH

Wo - watch out, there goes the fuckin ambush. They ain't even waiting for later, theyse hungry.

131. CONTD

Adams scrambling his gear together.

132. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - JUNIORS FOXHOLE - DUSK

On his foxhole, Junior listens to the distant firing.

JUNIOR

Fuck, I just knew I shouldna come.

Bunny, on the same hole, lays out his grenade on the edge, expectant.

133. EXT: PERIMETER #3 -COMPANY CP - LUSK

At the Company CP, Captain Harris is talking urgently into the radio.

HARRIS

Three Alpha! Three Alpha! Gimme your position!

A young, inexperienced VOICE screams back into the radio amid intense background FIRING filtered by radio and sounding disembodied.

RADIO VOICE

We're pinned down sir, they're in the fucking tree! The tree -

HARRIS

Your position, son, calm down and gimme your position...

RADIO VOICE (panic)

Lieutenant's dead sir, radioman looks dead sir, I don't know where the map is Captain! They're all around us sir. They're moving! Hundreds of em! I can hear em talking gook!!!Jesus Christ!

HARRIS (calming him)

Awright son, we gonna probe you with some marker rounds. You stay put and dig in tight as you can, we'll get you out. You tell me how close these rounds are...okay?

(signals to his RTO)

134. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - PLATOON CP - DUSK

At the Platoon CP, Barnes stands, legs akimbo, watching the jungle, anticipating the coming fight: as overhead we now hear the 175MM SHELLS whistle from a 10-mile distance - passing above them - then pounding down into the jungle in the near distance. Barnes turns, glances at Wolfe, smiles.

135. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - COMPANY CP - DUSK

At the Company CP, Captain Harris is back on the radio.

HARRIS

Bravo Three, Bravo Three, son,
come in, this is Six, how close
was that...(waits) if you can't
talk, gimme two clicks on your
handset...

(waits)

Silence, then a vague MURMURING - becoming clearer and clearer. It's in Vietnamese. The radio is then bashed in, the sound like thunder in the Captain's ear. He looks at his RTO, both of them sad.

EXT: NVA JUNGLE (DUSK)

In the Jungle itself, the ENEMY is moving. Flurries of movement and sound, blurred visuals. Hands taping a piece of cloth to a tree, moving on - revealing a luminous arrow pointing left...Figures moving past it.

Hands unravelling a thin wire waist-high, backwards.

Hands sliding along another wire. We now see a moving helmet with a luminous plaque on the back on it, leading a file up the wire. To a Jump-Off point about 50 yards outside the U.S. perimeter. Figures crouch. Whispers. Movement. A pen flashlight on a drawing of the foxhole positions. The NVA move out in several directions at once.

136. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - CHRIS' FOXHOLE - NIGHT

On their foxhole, Chris and Francis wait anxiously. Overhead the ARTILLERY keeps pounding into the ambush area. Now SMALL ARMS FIRE can be heard picking up at random spots along the perimeter. The battle, like a tide, is obviously moving closer to them.

136. CONTD

FRANCIS

Oh shit I wish I was back in Memphis
now, ooh baby this is gonna be a
motherfucker!

Chris says nothing. Suddenly off to their right, about
80 yards, a BLUE FIZZLE of light erupts.

CHRIS

Trip flares!...Rodriquer's hole.

Rat-tat-tat-tat, rat-tat-tat. Machine gun, outgoing,
followed by a sharp explosion. A ROCKET!

CHRIS

RPGs! Shit!

VOICE (crying)

MEDIC!! DOC! DOC!

A FIGURE thrashes up through the foliage behind them.

REAH (a fierce whisper)

Taylor! Francis!

CHRIS

Over here!

Rhah jumps into their hole with them, out of breath.

CHRIS

Rhah! What's going on. Rodriquer's
hole just got...

REAH (gets his breath)

Okay - one, there's gooks in
the perimeter.

FRANCIS

Oh shit! Dat's it, dat's it...

REAH

They got through A Company. Anything
don't identify itself, shoot it.
Two -air strike's coming in. They
gonna lay thousands of them butterflies
right along the edge so stay in your
holes and don't leave em...

136. CONTD

FLARES now shoot up over the perimeter. Reds, greens yellows, squeaking as they float down their on their parachute hinges throughout the ensuing battle. The perimeter is illuminated at spotty intervals - sometimes arctic bright, sometimes unexplainably dark till new flares shoot up.

Chris, Francis, Rhah all look up at the light, and hug their holes even tighter, feeling naked in the light. Flares cut both ways.

RHAH

...they're probing us, they gonna go up and down this line all night, trying to get through. Stay cool... I'll be back...

Runs out the foxhole. Chris suddenly reacting to a noise out front, gripping Francis and pointing to the sound.

A BODY is thrashing towards them, about twenty-five yards, not yet visible but a little awkward and lungy in its movement, as if desperate.

Francis, tense, is about to pop his grenade when Chris grabs him.

CHRIS

Hold it!

(loud whisper)

WHO IS IT!

But the body keeps coming, lurching now, falling.

FRANCIS

Come on man!

CHRIS

No!

A POP! - then a FIZZLE of BLUE LIGHT as the Figure hits their trip flare - revealing itself to be large, with no helmet, and gasping, terrified of the trip flare.

TERRIFIED SOLDIER

DON'T SHOOT! DON'T SHOOT!

CHRIS

It's the ambush!

(calling out)

In here, man! Hurry.

136. CONTD

The SOLDIER now runs in like a fullback going down for the tackle, sprawling into the hole, knocking Chris and Francis down beneath him.

He is sweating, terrified, a white boy with an unrecognizable filthy face, no rifle, no helmet, his fatigues torn all over.

TERRIFIED SOLDIER

Water! Water!

Chris gives him his canteen, his shoulder and neck hurting from the collision. The Soldier sucks down the canteen.

TERRIFIED SOLDIER (between gulps)

Theyse all over the place, hundreds of em moving this way! They wiped us out man, we didn't have a chance! Where's the CP?

FRANCIS (points)

Back th re.

The Soldier struggles out of the foxhole.

TERRIFIED SOLDIER

You guys better get outta here, you don't have a chance.

He runs off, leaving Francis in a state of incipient panic. He looks at Chris.

FRANCIS

Taylor, let's go.

Chris adjusting position, facing the front, anger in his voice.

CHRIS

You go.

Francis hesitates, stays.

137. INT: PERIMETER #3 - BATTALION CP - NIGHT

At the Battalion CP, the Major is inside his BUNKER, busy between his radio nets.

137. CONTD

MAJOR (to RTO 1)
Get me Bravo!

RTO 2
Charlie Company reports hand to
hand on the perimeter sir. Three
holes are down. They need help!

MAJOR (looks at his watch, to his XO)
Okay move two squads from Delta down
there. Where's that goddamn air strike,
you bet your ass if we were the First
Cav they'd be here now.

RTO 1 (handing him the transmitter)
Bravo Six sir.

138. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - BATTALION CP - NIGHT

Just outside the Bunker, a MASTER SERGEANT spots
something in the flare light. TWO FIGURES with helmets
running towards him at an angle.

MASTER SERGEANT
Hey you boys! Which Company you...

A sudden burst of FIRE cuts the Sergeant down in
his tracks and the Figures fly by.

Soldiers in the immediate area spot them.

SOLDIER #3
SAPPERS!

SOLDIER #4
THE BUNKER!

A burst of fire. One of the RUNNING FIGURES goes
down. An Explosion engulfs him.

139. INT: PERIMETER #3 - BATTALION CP - NIGHT

But the SECOND SAPPER runs right into the bunker in
a kamikaze charge, the light from inside momentarily
revealing a bulky satchel strapped on his person and
the face of the astounded Major.

RTO #3
SIR!!!

140. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - BATTALION CP - NIGHT

The Bunker EXPLODES with a deafening roar.

141. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - CHRIS FOXHOLE - NIGHT

In their foxhole, Chris and Francis look at the curling ball of flame, stunned.

CHRIS

Oh no!

142. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - COMPANY CP - NIGHT

At the Company CP, Captain Harris has a similar reaction.

HARRIS

Jesus fucking Christ!

RTO (to Harris)

Sir, Brigade is down, you got the Air Net now!

Harris grabbing the handset.

143. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - CHRIS' FOXHOLE - NIGHT

In their foxhole, Chris points.

CHRIS

There!

SHAPES moving in the trees. Chris blows his claymore handles. One explosion on top of the other out front. Then return fire. Flashes from a muzzle, rak-a-tak, rak-a-tak, rak-a-tak, the heavier sound of an AK-47.

Chris opening up with his 16. Then being blown down by a grenade explosion at the edge of the foxhole. Then nothing. A pause. Chris' ears ringing, slightly concussed.

Suddenly from down the perimeter there is the sound of a faulty LOUDSPEAKER crackling out from the jungle. A pidgen English, the words mangled, then a snatch of patriotic North Vietnamese music, played from a scratchy old record.

Chris uneasy, looking at Francis who looks terrified. The SOUND now of a whistle. Two hoots, then a sharp third. Then yelling.

143. CONTD

Chris grabbing Francis' arm, pointing. There is a VOICE directly out to the front of them - muttering something in Vietnamese, no more than 20 yards away but unseen. It's like hearing a casual conversation from another room, then the sounds of several bodies moving in separate directions - encompassing the foxhole.

CHRIS (to Francis, a whisper)
Out of the hole! Fast!

Chris crawls out, stops, looks back. Francis won't leave, hugs the shelter.

CHRIS (a fierce whisper)
Goddamit Francis! Move your fucking
ass. Now!...THEY GONNA BLOW IT!

Reaches in and yanks him with all his strength half out of the hole. Francis, finally sparked, now moves out. Both of them bellying it into the brush behind the hole.

Not a moment too soon. An RPG ROCKET whistling in.

The FOXHOLE takes a direct hit, caving in, whorls of smoke spinning off it.

Chris and Francis look back, covered with debris. They hear movement.

SHADOWS are swarming towards the foxhole, firing into it to finish them off.

Francis grabs Chris' leg, indicating they get out of there. Chris hesitates - a moment, a decision made now in angry passion - rises up and charges the NVA.

SHADOWS scatter and tumble, caught by his surprise closerange fire.

Chris moving forward into them, blasting, agile, his instincts finely tuned, and totally insane in this moment of time, indifferent to his life. He YELLS insanities, pumping himself up with the adrenaline of courage.

143. CONTD

CHRIS
DIE YOU MOTHERFUCKERS!!!!YAAAAAAA!!!!

Screams from the dark shadows, they fall.

Chris smashing a wounded SHADOW with the butt of his gun down into the foxhole. He jumps back into it, reoccupying it. Blasting the dead gook. Opening fire out to the front, driving the Shadows back.

Francis watching this, amazed. After a moment of doubt, he too tears back out to join Chris in the foxhole, unbelieving, as he jumps in with him.

FRANCIS (joining in the frenzy)
YAAAAHHH!!!! KILLLLL!!!!

Then stunned again to see Chris suddenly rise up out of the foxhole and charging forward into the jungle. He is now over the edge.

CHRIS (charging off into the jungle)
DIE YOU MOTHERFUCKERS!!!!!!!!!!!!

144. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - BUNNY'S FOXHOLE - NIGHT

In his position, Bunny is experiencing the same "high" as Chris, yells out at them.

BUNNY
Come on MOTHERFUCKERS, come on!!!!

Junior, huddled in the hole with him, speechless and terrified, looks at him with huge eyes. The guy is nuts. An incoming grenade explosion shakes the hole.

BUNNY (laying out more fire)
Come on you can do better than that!

JUNIOR
You crazy fucking asshole, Ise getting out of here!

Junior freaks out, throws his rifle down and hobbles out of the hole on his damaged feet at an incredible speed.

144. CONTD

BUNNY (yelling after him)
Get back here you gutless shit...

A SHAPE suddenly, out of nowhere, looms up fast behind Bunny, running at him.

Junior, insane now with fear, runs SMACK into a tree, knocked senseless and reeling to the ground.

Bunny turning back too late. The crazy drug-hige Shape is yelling something like:

NVA SOLDIER
Diiiiikaaecececece!

And jumps right into the hole blasting Bunny pointblank in the chest.

Bunny struggling to consciousness at the bottom of the hole. THUCK! A boot in the gaping hole where his chest was. Bunny, his eyes uncomprehending. A Muzzle is jammed into his mouth, breaking his teeth with an ugly sound. Another Yell from the NVA trooper. A flash of orange red light. Bunny's face blown to bits.

Junior, dizzy from the blow to his head, looks up.

A yellow flare somewhere out there and a SHADOW above him digging a bayonet into his belly with a grunt. A long oozing sigh of bellygas.

An Explosion. The Shadow with the bayonet staggering blind without eyes, holding his brains with his hands.

Barnes throws down the empty LAAW rocket casing he has just fired off and charges forward with a yell, cutting down another NVA in Bunny's old foxhole. Jumping into the hole, the bottom of which is a liquid pit of guts, blood, ooze. Another Enemy running in on him. A short burst of fire. Barnes hit. Firing into each other. Barnes dragging him down into the pit with him, grappling alongside the corpse of Bunny. Barnes uses an entrenching tool to finish him off.

145. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - PLATOON CP - NIGHT

At the Platoon CP, small arms fire is all over the place, the NVA closing the ring. Ace, in the foxhole, yells to Wolfe.

145. CONTD

ACE

No contact on Barnes, 2nd or 3rd!

WOLFE

Get me Six!

Nervously aiming his rifle as a man comes running towards them, staggering.

ACE

It's Doc!

Doc plops down, out of breath, drained, bleeding all over his chest.

DOC

They're coming through all over!
I can't...I can't do...

WOLFE

Where's Barnes!

DOC

I think he's dead...it's awful,
they're all dying.

Wolfe is stunned, Barnes his last crutch against the chaos. Ace handling him the handset.

ACE

Six!

CAPTAIN HARRIS VOICE

Yeah!

WOLFE

We've been overrun Captain,
we're pulling back. Over!

'146. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - COMPANY CP - NIGHT

At the Company CP, things are just as bad. A Radioman is sprawled over a smashed radio. Captain Harris is in a bunker working the radios himself, as his Radiomen fire at yelling, running FIGURES scurrying all over the inner perimeter.

WOLFE (furious voice)

Goddamit Two! Where you gonna pull
back to! They're all over the perimeter.

146. CONTD

WOLFE
Stay put goddamit and fight - and
that means you Lieutenant! Out.

147. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - PLATOON CP - NIGHT

At the Platoon CP, Wolfe is astounded by the message.
Ace looking at him straight in the eye.

ACE
You're an asshole Lieutenant,
you know that.

As he abandons his radio, grabs up his 16 and moves
to an adjacent position.

148. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - COMPANY CP - NIGHT

At the Company CP, Harris gets on the radio with the
air strike. One of the RTOs on a separate radio
calls over.

RTO #5
Captain, Third Battalion Armored's
on its way 'bout 2 klicks west!

HARRIS (ignores it, into radio)
Ripper Two, Bravo Six, we're
being overrun. Over.

PILOT'S VOICE (distorted high frequency)
Bravo Six, Ripper Two, we done given you
all over butterflies, Captain. I got
some 250-pounders I can lay on you. But
our fuel's running low. 'Bout five more
minutes we're heading back for base.
Advise. Out.

Harris looking around. The decision made.

HARRIS
Ripper Two, Bravo Six. This is an
order. Drop everything you got right
on top of us. And God help us!
Do you copy, over?

Pilot's reaction. Very calm. A Farmboy twang.

149. CONTD

PILOT'S VOICE

Bravo Six, Ripper Two. That's what
you want you got it. Amen, Captain...
(to his other jet)
Okay boys, you heard the man, let's
go downtown.

The transmission drops out. Harris now looking up
into the darkened skies. The planes in no way evident -
but they're there. And they're coming.

150. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - PLATOON CP - NIGHT

At the Platoon CP, the NVA are sweeping fast, crouched,
using cover, yelling. Small fires are raging all over
the perimeter.

Ace putting out fire, is hit. The NVA are coming over
his sandbags. A burst of fire. Ace goes down.

Doc abandons his medical equipment, grabs up his 16,
starts firing at them. One of the NVA goes down.
Then Doc is hit in the side, wounded, struggles.
Nearby, Wolfe is firing madly at the oncoming NVA.
One goes down. A second is wounded, yelling in pain.

Wolfe reloading his 16, popping up, too late. One of
them is coming over the sandbags. He sees Wolfe.
Wolfe sees him. In the same moment.

Wolfe hesitates, frozen up. The gook unloads his AK-47,
a magazine worth, into Lieutenant Wolfe, who crashes
down, sprawled unnaturally on the jungle floor. A
spasm shakes his body. Then stops. Dead.

Boots run by.

151. EXT: PERIMETER #3 - O'NEILLS FOXHOLE - NIGHT

At his foxhole, O'Neill peeks up out of the hole. Several
NVA are darting through the jungle 20 yards away, coming
towards him, talking loudly to each other. He quickly
slips back down in the hole, entwining himself with the
corpse of Tony, the mustache kid. Sounds of the
approaching NVA, clinking metal.

The NVA stop, glance in the hole. Something is muttered.
They run on.

O'Neill opens his eyes, breathes.

152. EXT. PERIMETER A3 - BARNES' FOXHOLE - NIGHT

BARNES swings his mashed M-16 full into the FACE of an enemy SOLDIER who screams and goes down, Barnes chopping at him with his club. His helmet is gone, his shirt ripped to shreds, his shoulder bleeding, making his last stand against the hated gooks.

Nearby HUFFMEISTER is hit in the shoulder by a running FIGURE, and collapses into the bottom of the foxhole, crying out in pain.

The running FIGURE runs past right into the full force of BARNES' swinging rifle. SMACK! He crumples.

INTERCUT

CHRIS bellies into the area, sees BARNES, recognizes him, amazed.

An ENEMY fires, taking BARNES high in the left thigh. A patch of skin blowing off. BARNES rigidly goes down on his left knee like a wounded horse. Holds there, staring into the ENEMY, waiting for the coup de grace.

A series of SHOUTS and the ENEMY staggers dead as:

CHRIS lays out a curtain of fire. A GRENADE goes off near him, blowing off his helmet. Dazed, Chris rushes forward firing from the hip - sucked into Barnes' suicidal vacuum. He cuts down an ENEMY as:

BARNES, given a new lease, limps angrily forward and tackles a wounded ENEMY trying to crawl away, terrified at the sight of Barnes coming after him. Barnes lets out a vivid scream.

And beats the SOLDIER mercilessly, half the stock of his M-16 flying apart broken.

CHRIS swivels alert on his knees. A pause. No more enemy. Turns to BARNES, his back to Chris still beating at the dead corpse.

CHRIS

Barnes!

BARNES swivels instinctively off the corpse and for a petrifying moment CHRIS sees:

A maddened scar of a face, lips specked with foam. Then the EYES - refracted in a red-green flare overhead - the pupils distorted into the oblong prisms of the viper snake with its angry red points dotted with a network of greenish veins and red nerve endings.

For CHRIS it is no doubt the most frightening single image he has seen in his life. It will be in his nightmares forever. The essence of evil: wrath, obsession, anger, fear, hatred, permanence - he is paralyzed.

BARNES smashes him full across the face with the broken stock of his M-16. Not even consciously, for at this point, his mind has gone over the edge and the entire World is his enemy. American or Vietnamese, it makes no difference as he strikes Chris harder and harder.

Chris struggles, moans, his nose and teeth cracked. BARNES emits another chilling yell and springs like a humpback up on his good right leg, the left bent - set to deliver the killing blow, the mangled rifle pulled back in its highest arc.

CHRIS

oooooooooooo!

The PHANTOM FIGHTER JET comes now like the great white whale. One big beautiful monstrous beat of deafening sound. Its silver and white belly hurtling low over the treeline in one giant leap of sound momentarily illuminated by a flare. Then a monstrous ROAR of anger.

The bomb ripping Barnes off the body of Chris and spitting Chris across the jungle floor -- crashing into a tree some 30 yards away.

FADE OUT

153. EXT. PERIMETER #3 - CHRIS' JUNGLE - DAWN

FADE BACK IN. Vague sunlight. Blurry. CHRIS fluttering his eyes. A moment. He fades back. The desire to die. Easy to die. A light pleasant feeling. It's all over - at last.

A sharp MOVEMENT in the bush. FADE IN all the way. CHRIS' eyes fight their way open. Sunlight. SOFT EYES watching him from behind foliage. A soft furry head, alert but rigidly still.

THEN A FAR OFF SOUND of a big machine moving and the soft furry head bolts in one fluid move. Gone. Like the wind. A deer. A big brown deer. Or was it? CHRIS will never quite be sure. It was so strange. But whatever it was it was a sign of grace; this he knows as he feels himself for the first time alive!

Looking around his garden of eden. A messy jungle floor. Cordite fumes. Burned brush and trees. Torn sandbags. Birdsongs somewhere in the distance.

A huge NAZI FLAG on an antenna looms up in the bush coming towards him, followed by the great belly of a turreted dragon crunching down a tree for its breakfast.

A shadow of fear passes over CHRIS' eyes, followed like a fast tide by the imposing shadow of the ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER.

A big tough GERMAN SHEPHERD comes bounding at him, sniffs, followed by a flak-jacketed monster of a MAN - with an earring in his left ear, a darkly unshaven face and graffiti scrawled over his flak jacket: DEATH CORPS! and a drawing of a death's head.

SOLDIER (to the dog)
Bozo! Get back here!

His eyes passing over CHRIS like so much meat, he bellows back:

SOLDIER
One wounded up here!

VOICE (relaying)
Hey Doc, over here!

The SOLDIER with the DOG bypasses CHRIS, more interested in what's up front.

154. EXT. PERIMETER #3 - FRANCIS' FOXHOLE - DAY

FRANCIS in his foxhole with his M-60 machine gun. Numb, filthy. In the distance SHOUTS, ugly crunching sounds of armored carriers cutting through jungle.

He thinks about it a moment. It must be fast. It must be a hard cold decision. Now!

He jams a magazine into the M-16 belonging to Tubbs, levers a bullet in and in a fluid movement shoots himself in the leg muscle below the left knee.

FRANCIS collapses in his hole.

155. PERIMETER #3 - O'NEILL'S FOXHOLE

O'NEILL alone with the corpse of Fu SHENG, scratch-free but covered with dirt, waits tentatively as SOLDIERS arrive at the hole, awed by the sight of the dead NVA littered around the foxhole and the tough-looking O'NEILL crawling out.

SOLDIER
You alone Sarge?

O'NEILL
Fuck yeah. They all left me, bunch of fucking faggots!

2nd SOLDIER
Man, you gonna get yorself a silver star.

O'NEILL (slimbing out of the hole)
Fuck the silver star. You got any booze?

156. EXT. PERIMETER #3 - REAH'S FOXHOLE - DAY

REAH, alive and well, is poking around the NVA corpses with a long gnarled walking stick looking like a crazy Johnny Appleseed with his pants rolled up on his thin hairy ankles and wearing a red bandana tied in a four-knot over his head.

The reinforcements from the 3rd Battalion Armored loot the enemy bodies. They look like pirates - greasy black unshaven faces, heavy flak jackets without shirts, strings of amputated ears and teeth around their necks, Nazi ensignias like the Hell's Angels.

One of them carves off an enemy EAR as:

REAH works his way through the torn bloody pocket of an erect but dead NVA troop, frozen in rigor mortis like a white plaster statue, one knee crunched to the ground, the other leg bent awkwardly under the back, one arm lopped off and the other arm crooked back stiff like a pitcher frozen in the throw. It is a grotesque parody of a man but it doesn't seem to bother REAH one bit as he extracts a wrapped cellophane of heroin and snorts it with a certain satisfaction over the grim circumstances.

REAH
Yeah, that's good shit...

157. EXT. PERIMETER #3 - LZ - DAY

CHRIS is hauled out on a litter. Morphined, his eyes watching it all from somewhere deep in his brain. Passing:

Groups of SOLDIERS looking like bowery bums and moving like rats through the smoke and garbage snooping for souvenirs with wheezy tired eyes and grunts of greed.

Passing a bulldozed PIT with heaps of NVA BODIES in them. A BULLDOZER pushing another set of bodies in, like photos of a Nazi death camp.

Nearby, two burly SOLDIERS lift a miscellaneous body and with a once-through build for momentum, toss the fresh body into the pit. They lift the body now of a WOMAN, a nurse.

CHRIS, numb, goes by.

RADIO OPERATOR (into radio, exhausted)
-56 U.S. KIA, 122 wounded and still counting. Estimate 500 Victor Charlie KIA, 22 wounded and still counting.
Over.

2nd RADIO OPERATOR
Sir, a television crew's coming in with the General -

CAPTAIN HARRIS doesn't respond; at this point he doesn't give a shit, standing apart from the radios looking numbly at the remnants of his boys filtering by on litters.

CHRIS intersects him now, HARRIS' eyes looking blankly, then nodding sickly trying to give him encouragement. Just coming to the edge of tears, chocking it back and turning away.

Rodriguez, wounded, is lifted up in his litter and moved out to the waiting MEDIVAC CHOPPER, its blades churning, a huge red cross painted on a white square.

Doc goes by on another litter, then Ace, Adams, Huffmeister, etc.

Then Francis is littered by, bandages around his leg, a big smile on his face.

FRANCIS
Hey Taylor, you okay man?

CHRIS
...feeling numb man

157. CONTD

FRANCIS
Yeah, can you believe man, can you
believe this shit! We're getting outta
here man, we're gettin out...
(goes)

The Medic points to the chopper.

MEDIC (to Chris)
That's your ride man, you ready?

CHRIS (tries a smile)
You bet.

Chris starts towards it, the Medic assisting him.

158. EXT. PERIMETER #3 - LZ - DAY

Sgt. O'Neill watches the loading process ofrlornly from
the distance. Captain Harris intersects him.

HARRIS
You got Second Platoon Sergeant.

O'NEILL (reflexively)
Yes sir -

And as Harris moves away, O'Neill is left thinking. Finally
there is a certain frustration to his actions; he has taken
such great pains to stay alive that the tuition he pays
is precisely to stay in this Jungle. Inevitably his
time will come - one way or the other.

His eyes now follow the MEDIVAC CHOPPER upwards, whatever
is left of his shrunken soul yearning to go with it.

159. EXT/INT. PERIMETER #3 - LZ CHOPPER - DAY

As the Chopper rises upwards, CHRIS lies at the edge, spots
REAH off to the side of the Jungle.

160. EXT. PERIMETER #3 - DAY

REAH, at the edge of the treeline, vigorously motions back,
his walking stick held high in one hand, his other hand a fist,
emitting his cry.

RHAH

Baaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!!!!

Defiance. Pride. Dig me, I'm Rhah - and there ain't nobody like me in the world.

161. EXT/INT. PERIMETER #3 - LZ CHOPPER - DAY

The Chopper now rising to meet God. Smashed on morphine, CHRIS looking out at the waving ants below.

Now the trees, the skyline and the chopper is moving fast over the devastation. The jungle forever locked in his memory, Chris looks back, the breeze blowing through.

CHRIS VOICE OVER

I think now, looking back, we did not fight the enemy, we fought ourselves - and the enemy was in us...The war is over for me now, but it will always be there - the rest of my days. As I am sure Elias will be - fighting with Barnes for what Rhah called possession of my soul...There are times since I have felt like the child born of those two fathers...

162. EXT/INT. STILL PHOTO - DAY

The music surges now to its full strength as amateur photographs of the Platoon members run under the credits - some with silly, clowning looks, others sober, haunted. Tubbs, Crawford, Doc, Francis, Big Harold, Manny, Wolfe, O'Neill, Sanderson, Gardner, Bunny, Tex, Ace, Junior, Lerner, Rhah -- all the boys...and then Barnes staring quietly into the camera, and lastly Elias - shirt off, bowl of grass in hand, his big, beautiful smile.

THE END