

"An Exquisite Corpse"

First, only the sounds of the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race.  
And darkness.

CUT TO:

1 EXT. THE INDY 500 SPEEDWAY - EMPTY

The straight asphalt strips of the Indianapolis 500 Mile Speedway, home of the greatest spectacle in racing. Empty.

The CAMERA plunges toward the surface of the track, coming closer until it happens..

2 EXT. TRACK - OVERHEAD - THE RACE

OUT OF NOWHERE, the first car screams past, just inches below the camera. The pack follow the lead car.

3 INT. INDY CAR #1 - DRIVER'S POV

Inside the lead car (CAR #1), the wall throws the sound back to our ears. The wall calls out to us. On the straight, another car attempts to overtake us. The turn comes, we brush off the challenger with the wall. Then, a DEAFENING ROAR from the CROWD.

4 EXT. THE TRACK - CROWD'S GENERIC POV

It is as if these cars had been shot from machine guns.

5 INT. INDY CAR #1 - DRIVER'S POV

We see Car #1's gauges and steering wheel, and the blurred ground. Finally, we pass a PIT BOARD. There was no way to read what it had said. The car's engine PAUSES, then RACES with down-shifted vigor toward an off ramp. Walls and legs pass, dangerously close.

6 EXT. INDY CAR #1 PIT

Car #1 careens into the pit--too far. Several of the PIT MECHANICS are thrown into a wall as Car #1 hits the car ahead of it in the pits. Invisible flames blur the EMERGENCY FIRE TEAM. The crowd ROARS with remorse..

7 EXT. THE BLEACHERS - THE CROWD - INTRO JAMES

For the first time, we see our main character: JAMES WRIGHT. He is a middle-aged man. His light-brown skin is weathered and his hair is short. He wears a light yellow windbreaker, buttoned up to his neck.

8 EXT. THE TRACK - CROWD'S POV

JAMES (V.O.)

THE SOUNDS. Sounds of the race always excited me. Now, I see it. What do the sounds mean? How does the sound fit? See and smell.

(pause)

I can't see at all... better on the radio..

9 EXT. THE BLEACHERS - THE CROWD

NOW SILENT, the cars pass a stretch of advertising. WE HEAR a RADIO in the b.g. As the cars move from one turn to the next, the ANNOUNCERS VOICES describe the action. Then, the silence is broken by the sound of

10 INT. INDY CAR #2 - DRIVER'S POV (SANDERS)

A different car (CAR #2) now leads the race. Over the sound of the car, ANNOUNCERS refer to the former leader, and to the accident in the pit. They refer to the new leader, KEVIN SANDERS. His Car #2 tears in and out of turns, up to and away from walls, ahead of and in front of other challengers for his position.

The radio announcers become LOUDER AND LOUDER.

11 EXT. THE CROWD

The crowd's collective ROAR rocks the foundations of the stadium. The announcers continue.

12 INT. INDY CAR #2 - DRIVER'S POV (SANDERS)

A challenger pulls inside of Sanders's car. The wheels of the two cars entwine, then untangle. Sanders's car pulls ahead, unmercifully.

13 EXT. CROWD - CU JAMES'S EYES

His eyes are fixed to the Car #2. He follows it to the straight in front of his turn. Squinting.

14 INT. INDY CAR #2 - DRIVERS POV (SANDERS)

The steering wheel jerks. Sanders regains control.

Then, ALL IS SILENT again--except for the announcers.

15 EXT. TRACK - LEAD CARS

Inexplicably, Sanders's INDY CAR #2 swerves from the inside of the track into the outer wall.

16 INT. INDY CAR #3 - DRIVERS POV

The new leader passes the yellow flag being waved by the flagman. This new car, too, tears in and out of turns, up to and away from walls. His position is safe under the yellow. He veers for the pits. Still we hear the announcers only.

17 EXT. TRACK - MONTAGE

The silent race becomes further and further removed from our once singing ears. All sounds have drained away, even the announcers' voices.

- A) PIT CREW MEMBERS with tools in the pits
- B) the legions of CROWDS
- C) the screaming ENGINES of the cars All have become silent.

DISSOLVE TO:

18 INT. AIR-CONDITIONED SUITE

High above the proceedings, we gain a new vantage point. The view is static, and behind plate glass. Below, the cars buzz around unannoyingly. The stench of the crowd is far away; the sounds of the announcers are barely audible over the suite's ELEVATOR MUSIC. All is calm..

#### CREDIT SEQUENCE

Three alternating levels of  
horizontally split screen:

- A) the top third contains always one head (of a crowd member, pit crew member, or main character);
- B) the middle third contains one middle or thorax (of drunken female crowd members, vendors, etc.);
- C) the bottom third contains legs of one of the above.

At no time should there be a screen with all of one person's body on it. Always there should be three parts of three individuals to make up one fictional character on the screen--

AN EXQUISITE CORPSE, like the drawing game of the Surrealists in 1920s cafés.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

We should see the main character several times, and become acquainted with his face and demeanor within this sequence.

FADE TO:

19 INT. JAMES'S GTO - PARKING FIELD

A POLICEMAN who takes this weekend's work very seriously whistles cars forward into a sea of metal and fiberglass and rubber. James sits in his parked 1970 GTO as other cars move around him. A car honks its horn. James turns and rubs his eyes. Several more cars make their ways around his stubborn stance.

ECU JAMES'S EYES

He searches the area around his car. The lot is not so crowded now. He turns the key in the ignition and the car begins to rumble. The car makes its way out of the empty lot, avoiding trash and mattresses and deep tire trenches.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. MOTHERS INDIANAPOLIS HOME - DAY - DRIVEWAY

The GTO pulls into a driveway and stops behind a 1988 Ford Escort. Part of its rear bumper is detached from the frame.

JAMES

I thought I got rid of that.

James stops behind the Ford, looking toward the house. Slowly, he climbs out of the car and walks past a row of sickly bushes toward the front door of the brick ranch house. He pauses.

FADE TO:

21 INT. LIVING ROOM

Moments later, he opens the door and ducks his head as he enters the room with its console piano and plastic carpet runners. We follow him through the living room and into the dining room, set for three. On the table is a yellowing, white lace-crochet table cloth. In the middle of the table, a modest plastic flower arrangement. Beneath the table cloth, more plastic. Through the dining room there is an entry to the kitchen.

MOTHER (O.S.)

James? Come and see who I've got here.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

JAMES  
(stopping)  
I know who you got there..

22 INT. KITCHEN

Inside the kitchen, James's mother MARY, and his ex-wife MELISSA stand side by side waiting for James to enter.

MISSY  
Remember me?

James walks into the kitchen, surveys the food coldly.

JAMES  
I remember that car out front.

Mary approaches James and puts a freshly washed hand on his shoulder.

MARY  
Happy day to you, my son.

She hands him a can of beer and the relish tray.

MARY (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
How was your day at the races? Want  
to sit down?

Her head is spinning in the midst of preparing this large Memorial Day meal. Missy has more of an opportunity. She is drying the dishes. Her green eyes stare at James blankly.

JAMES  
Ma, It's nice of you to do this for  
me.

He stares at Missy, then turns away.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
The food, and all... The race was boring  
and I couldn't see a damn thing.  
Just...

MARY  
We heard a bit of it on the radio,  
didn't we Missy? Who won?

James is drinking his beer instead of answering the question. He swallows. Missy tries to answer.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

MISSY  
Oh, it was... that Italian guy.

MARY  
(absent-mindedly)  
Mario Andretti...

We follow James as he walks into the family room and sets the tray of food on the coffee table.

JAMES  
No, he never has a car. Never lasts.  
I don't know who won... Doesn't matter.

KITCHEN

MARY  
(surprised)  
I remember when he was a boy, that's all he'd talk about. When that race scorecard came out in the paper, he'd always put it up on the fridge. Got me excited about it! He even taught me the names of the drivers.

MISSY  
(to James)  
You never saw it before?

MARY  
(correcting)  
He'd stay up late and watch the delayed broadcast the night after the race.

JAMES (O.S.)  
Not tonight.

MARY  
(distractedly)  
Dinner will be ready in about ten minutes.

FADE TO:

23 INT. FAMILY ROOM - COUCH

James stares at the ceiling, still on the couch.

JAMES (V.O.)  
When I woke up, I smelled the food my mother was cooking.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And that's all I thought about. I felt the arm of the couch numbing my head, I felt neither warm nor cold, I felt thirty years younger. I felt like nothing had ever happened to me, like nothing had ever gone wrong for me... like I'd just come home from school, dinner was ready--

Missy leans over the couch, tentatively.

MISSY

Dinner's on the table.

JAMES

Okay. Thanks.

James sits up and walks back to the dining room. On the table is a model midwestern meal: pork roast, green beans, baked potatoes with butter and chives and sour cream, apple sauce, a plate of fruit, and salad. There are two bright candles flickering beneath the weak orange ceiling lamp. And the basket of plastic flowers has been replaced by a vase with one orchid.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Beautiful.

Missy cranes her head to see James. She watches as he sits at the head of the table. There is an uneasy silence as all three pause before the meal.

Mary looks up to James with her head still tilted downward.

MARY

It's okay. I'll say it.

(pause)

Dear Lord, thank you for this day. Thank you for allowing us to gather in your name. We know that you are with us because you tell us that whenever there are two or more gathered in your name, you are there. Lord, thank you for giving me back my son, thank you for delivering him from the hands of evil, and into my loving arms. Thank you for allowing us to have Melissa join us today, and share in our happiness. Thank you for our memories, with which we celebrate Memorial Day. In Jesus's name, Amen.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2)

James is silent. Mary passes the elements of her feast.

MARY (CONT'D)

James gave grace at every meal before he went away.

JAMES (V.O.)

I'm not even here..

James takes the salad bowl. He forks out some of the leaves onto his plate.

MARY

Did you notice the flower? Missy brought one of the most expensive flowers in her shop... it's an orchid, you know.

JAMES

Yes, Mother, I know. I noticed it the moment I walked in.

MISSY

But, I just put it up--

JAMES

When I just now I walked in.  
(pause)

The most expensive flower, huh?

MISSY

You know that's not why.

JAMES

Yeah?

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(parodying)

Dear Mother who art in Heaven, why did you give grace like that? How could you have turned my virgin mind back to the gutter? And caused me to doubt and to question? Dear Mother, why have you set this woman before me? Why has she come to our little celebration? Why, when I have been so wrong to her? When I have driven her away so many times before?

(pause)

Dear Wife, why do you return, and bear me tidings and flowers, er flower, er whatever?

(CONTINUED)



23 CONTINUED: (3)

The CLINK of the silverware against the dishes echoes in the dark room.

JAMES (*CONT'D*)

This is a wonderful meal, Ma. And thank you for the flower, Missy.

(pause)

Please pass the applesauce.

MARY

I wish you'd enjoyed the race.

JAMES

(honestly)

All I could think was where I had heard the race before. I remembered Whitestown. What's that park? Who else was there? I don't know. Just listening to the radio. The race didn't compare to that.

MISSY

Where's Whitestown?

MARY

Off I-65. James played some baseball there. A long time ago.

JAMES

But why did we go there for a picnic on Memorial Day?

MARY

I don't remember going to Whitestown. Are you sure, James?

JAMES

I'm sure, Ma.

JAMES (*V.O.*) (*CONT'D*)

Now it begins. Even you question me, Mother. Sweet mother. So far away from me, and careful.

MISSY

You know she didn't mean it that way.

MARY

No, what I meant was, I might have forgotten it myself. That's what I meant James.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (4)

JAMES

I know it. I'm jumpy, that's it.

James serves himself some more food to keep himself busy. To avoid talking. He begins to choke back his tears.

MISSY

I didn't mean to spoil your celebration. I wanted to see you.

JAMES

(crying)  
No, I know it.

MISSY

...I thought it would be okay.

MARY

(adding)  
I told her it would, James. Isn't it? Isn't it nice to have Missy back with us?

He looks to Missy.

JAMES

Yeah, it's "okay." I just don't know why--

MISSY

(quickly)  
No, I guess not. Why would I come and see you? Mary, it's not going to work.

MARY

What are you talking about? We don't want you to leave.

JAMES (V.O.)

If I told you what I want, Mother, you wouldn't believe me. And I felt so good after that nap.

MARY

We just started. James...?

JAMES

(yelling)  
I want her to stay--!

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (5)

MISSY

Well you have a real funny way of showing it.

Missy begins to walk toward the kitchen. She is trying to find her purse.

JAMES

(yelling after her)

Damn it, I want you to stay, okay? I said the flower was nice, didn't I?

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Oh shit. The whole thing is slipping away, out of my hands. I'm trying, aren't I? It's all wrong. Maybe it was all wrong from the start?

Mary has walked into the kitchen to Missy. James is still seated at the table, picking at food.

MISSY (O.S.)

No. He doesn't want me here, Mary. Look at him! Look at his face! I have to go--

MARY (O.S.)

He's down right now, that's all. I think you're helping. Can't you see?

As the two talk a bit too loudly.

MISSY (O.S.)

I make him act like an asshole!

JAMES (V.O.)

Do they think I can hear this or not? Little boy won't understand if you s-p-e-l-l it. So far gone it doesn't really matter anyway. Poor kid, wonder what happened to him? I wonder if it was my fault.

Missy returns from the kitchen with her purse, en route to the front door.

MISSY

(business)

I didn't mean to upset you. But I have to go. Can you move your car so I can get out?

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (6)

JAMES

You don't have to, you know. I liked seeing... It's just that I'm... I'm trying--

MISSY

You probably are. It's just too difficult right now. Please, I need to go. Maybe some other time--

James heads straight for the front door. Missy waits a bit and follows him out. Mary edges toward the door.

MARY

(calling out the door)

Please, you two. This is all my fault. Come back and talk about it. Missy don't go away mad.

24 EXT. DRIVEWAY

James has reached his car; the V8 roars to life as Missy looks into her purse. In a low rumble, the GTO creeps into the street. Missy finds her keys and opens the squeaky door to the Escort. She tries the engine, but it strains to turn over.

25 INT. ESCORT - MISSY

MISSY

Come on, you bastard. Start. Don't do it to me now. NOT NOW. NOT NOW!

Missy's panic is evident through her dirty windows. James has left his car. He approaches the Escort and motions for her to roll down the window.

JAMES

Hey, you okay?

Missy starts to cry. Half from frustration.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Shh. Come on, now. Shh.

He reaches through the window to wipe away a tear running down her cheek. He tilts up her head. She won't look at him.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Missy. I'll take you home.

He opens the door of the Escort and holds out his arm, not his hand. She takes it to help herself out of the car, then releases it.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

Mary calls from the doorway, shading her eyes.

MARY

Let James take you home, honey. It'll be okay. I'm sorry, honey.

MISSY

I just want to go home...

Missy ambles to the parked GTO while James opens the passenger side door from the inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

26 EXT. INTERSTATE

The RUMBLE of the GTO on the interstate. Suburbs along the cement. Apartments, condos. Smoothly flowing traffic of the holiday evening.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Today, the Greatest Spectacle in Racing, marred by one of the worst accidents in racing history. Though Teo Fabi, this year's winner, clocked laps at over 230 mph, the deaths of two men will forever remain the most remembered fact about today's race.

The first tragedy of the day came on lap 134, nearly three-quarters of the way to the winner's circle. At that time, the current leader, rookie Jonathan Harrold in the yellow and blue #36 Menard's car, overshot his pit during an emergency pit stop, severely injuring two members of his crew. En route to Methodist Hospital, one of the men, Scott McMann, died from his wounds. The other is listed in critical condition.

Only twenty laps later, on lap 154, car #23, piloted by another rookie, Kevin Sanders, suffered a fatal crash in Turn Four. Crowd and wall and bleachers were sprayed with the shrapnel of his disintegrated machine. Sanders's body was flown to Methodist via lifeline helicopter, where he was pronounced dead on arrival. Some of the spectators in the first few bleacher rows of turn four received minor burns and lacerations, but most were released several hours after their arrival at Wishard Memorial.

Horrified onlookers noticed pieces of Sanders's tattered fire suit clinging to the protective chain link fence--

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

WOMAN INTERVIEWEE (V.O.)

..Well, I thought he was gonna come right through the fence and the wall and everything. All-of-a-sudden, he hits the wall and flies up against it flat like a paper bag --but I thought that paper bag was comin' to get me for sure..

The announcer continues in the b.g., summarizing the news and details of the better, happier portions of the race.

MISSY

Did you see those wrecks?

JAMES

No. I was sitting on the other side.

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

No. I wasn't anywhere close.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - SPEEDWAY - DRIVER'S POV (SANDERS)

From inside we watch as INDY CAR #2 hovers against the streaming ribbon of wall.

27 EXT. INFIELD - STATIC VIEW OF TURN FOUR

Car #2 approaches its point of impact. It swings out, jumps up, and flattens itself into the wall, sending its grated shards through the fence. Into the crowd.

28 TRACK - OVERHEAD

The car behaves like a gasoline bomb targeted on the fence. Spectators scream and dive behind any possible shelter.

29 EXT. TURN FOUR

An invisible racing fuel flame mushrooms over the bleachers. Tom Carnegie does his best to avert panic on the PA.

30 EXT. BLEACHERS - CROWD

In full view of the accident, James appears in his yellow windbreaker with racing slogan on sleeve. He smells the fumes from the explosion and the now-burning wreckage. He lowers himself to one knee beside his seat and feels the back of his waist.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

In the distance, the LIFELINE HELICOPTER makes its way to the scene of the accident.

DISSOLVE TO:

31 INT. THE GTO

MISSY

I knew some people who would go to the race just to see the wrecks. Suppose they got their money's worth today.

JAMES

Suppose.

MISSY

Do you think it happened because they were rookies?

JAMES

(thinking)

Hmm.

32 EXT. INTERSTATE

Their car exits to a dimly lit intersection. It stops at a light. It continues.

33 INT. GTO - STREET NEARING SUBDIVISION

MISSY

It's nice of you to do this for me.

James smiles with the muscles of his jaws.

MISSY (CONT'D)

I got a bit nervous back there, huh?

JAMES

Leetle beet.

MISSY

Kinda silly.

JAMES

Kinda.

34 EXT. MISSY'S STREET

The car turns onto a narrow, cement street. The grass strains between the joints in the cement, barely visible in the summer twilight.

(CONTINUED)





37 CONTINUED:

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
If I never had it again!

MISSY  
I did offer.

James slides into a dim corner of the room next to the kitchen. He slips off his windbreaker, lays it across his lap. Missy makes COFFEE SOUNDS in the kitchen.

MISSY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Your mother told me you got a new job.

JAMES  
She has a kind way of putting it:  
NEW.

MISSY (O.S.)  
What happened at GP?

JAMES  
How's this Gary guy?

Missy appears at the corner of the kitchen alcove.

MISSY  
I don't see him anymore.

JAMES  
I heard Mom talking to you on the telephone about him once.

MISSY  
You know how I met Gary?

She slips around the corner and back to the kitchen. Then, she reappears with a cup and saucer. The coffee is blond. She carefully, but nervously, hands it to him.

MISSY (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
He said you told him it was okay to take me out. You gave him permission. So I went out with him.

Nothing.

MISSY (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
Jim.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

JAMES

What else?

MISSY

He told me what you said he could do to me.

Nothing.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Jim?

JAMES

What did you do?

MISSY

I told him to do everything. He said he didn't want to. But you said it was okay.

JAMES

(amusedly)

Everything, huh?

He takes a sip of his coffee. Puts it down.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It's good. I'd better go.

MISSY

I don't see him anymore. He doesn't show up anymore.

JAMES

I'd better go.

He rises and begins toward the front door.

MISSY

Wait.

He continues. She follows. She reaches out to the door he is opening.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Wait. Tell me one thing.

JAMES (V.O.)

Did I or did I not?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (3)

MISSY  
James, did you--

JAMES  
...or did I not?

MISSY  
Yes. Lately, I get the feeling maybe  
you didn't--didn't say anything to  
him.

He puts on his windbreaker.

MISSY (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
That he made the whole thing up.  
(pause)  
Did you, Jim?

Nothing.

MISSY (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
I don't think you can answer--either  
way, huh?

She moves to him. He remains still.

MISSY (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
I missed, I miss you.

She raises her hand to touch his cheek.

MISSY (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
Are you okay, Jim?

She touches his hand tenderly. Almost petting it.

MISSY (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
I love you, Jimmy.

The telephone RINGS. Time stops. Missy stops. James starts  
toward the telephone.

JAMES (V.O.)  
I don't even know a Gary.

Missy stays in the open doorway. He walks into the darkness  
of the living room, back to his coffee in the cup and saucer.  
He reaches out to the receiver.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (4)

JAMES

Behind him, near the door, there are murmurs in a foreign language. The open doorway is dark, James turns about and watches. There is a .45 cal. pistol against Missy's temple.

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Gary...?

ANGLE ON MISSY

Missy's eyes plead for James as he stands near the telephone table. The phone is ringing. The barrel of the pistol is at her temple. The attacker's arm comes from the shadows. A car passes on the street.

MISSY

J-a-m-e-s.

How could everything be so quiet?

JAMES (V.O.)

James!? What are you doing!?

Suddenly, Missy is hysterical. Another arm enters from the darkness, pushes her neck against the door frame. She freezes. The pistol tenses in the hand--

MISSY

(finally)

JAMES!

JAMES/MISSY

But, James is frozen where he stands. Only his eyes make a move for the gunman.

VOICE

Wat Arun--

And that's all. The pistol goes off. Pieces of Missy are scattered in the entryway. James instinctively flattens himself against the floor, behind the chair.

JAMES (V.O.)

Oh-my-god.

38 ENTRYWAY

Now there is silence in the little house. The door is still open. Another car passes swiftly, unsuspectingly, in front of the house. Things are beginning to take too long.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

No sound of the gunman making his getaway. Is he still in the house?

JAMES (V.O.)

Mis-sy.

James moves toward the body. Watching the door. No sign of the gunman. The pistol remains on the floor. James reaches for it. He empties the spent round from the chamber. He stares out the door.

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Let's see. Like an idiot, I pick up the gun. So my prints are on it. Cops come, find a crazy nigger on the scene.

He looks down to Missy.

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

A crazy nigger VET. He has the murder weapon in his hand. The young white woman was screaming his name at the top of her lungs, just before she got it.

The telephone RINGS again.

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

She was screaming my name. It's late, the neighbors are home. "GUILTY."

He puts the pistol into the back of his waistline. His jacket comes down over it. He gently begins to pull the door shut from the outside. The telephone is still ringing.

JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

And who would be calling at a time like this?

39 EXT. HOUSE

He walks quietly to his car. Gets in without shutting the door. Rolls the car backward down the driveway, slips it into gear to start it. He pulls the door shut. Brakes out onto the street, and rumbles back toward the main road.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

And away.

DISSOLVE TO:

40 INT. GTO

James is traveling smoothly in his car. He approaches the interstate.

JAMES (V.O.)

Now what? You leave the scene of the crime, with the murder weapon, with the blood on your jacket. You might as well have killed her yourself-- just turn yourself in now--why wait? Where am I going, anyway? Am I running? Making a detour? There is one more thing I need to do before I leave. Only one more thing...?

An OLD CHEVY VAN with a FANTASY VISTA painted on its side slowly passes the GTO. The van pulls in front of his car. In the rear windows of the van, there are curtains swaying gently in the breeze. The light illuminating the curtains grows GREENER and brighter.

DISSOLVE TO:

41 EXT. VIETNAM (20 YEARS EARLIER) - A PERSONNEL CARRIER

makes its way along a jungle highway. We see only a GREEN TARP covering the contents of the truck, gently blowing in its wake. The vehicle pulls away and turns down one of the winds of the road. When the truck is far enough away, WE HEAR some YELLING in the distance.

Then, there is a WOODEN CRACK, like the sound of a single shot rifle.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Get out of here...!

ALAN (O.S.)

He got all of that one!

GEORGE (O.S.)

Now, run the bases, motherfucker!  
Doesn't count unless you run the bases.

This is an artillery installation, a firebase. Big guns, camouflage and netting, graying tents, thinning grasses--and an informal baseball game.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

There are only about seven players evident, no gloves, no uniforms, no real baseball or bat--something on the order of jungle stickball.

The truck has putted to a halt on the other side of the playing field. One of the infielders, JEFF WARREN, a wiry, nervous Oklahoma boy, suspiciously eyes the truck.

JEFF

Now, that is the food..

The pitcher, ALAN, responds to his obsessive friend.

ALAN

And you have worms! Probably in your head, too.

JEFF

They promised us food, man.

The NCO, GEORGE, yells from the other side of the field.

GEORGE

And you'll get it. After the game.

The outfielder has finally retrieved the makeshift baseball and makes his way out of the trees. He walks slowly back to the playing field.

JEFF

Jimmy!

ALAN

It's about time.

For the first time, we see the YOUNG JAMES. He is the outfielder.

JIMMY

Fuck you.

JEFF

No, man, the food. Can you see it?

JIMMY

I know that's what you meant, man.  
Fuck you. Do I look like your forward  
observer?

The others laugh at this not completely friendly exchange.

JEFF

Okay, forget it. I'm going to eat.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

He bolts for the chuck wagon. Twelve other eyes crank after him.

GEORGE

Hold it, motherfucker.

JEFF

(over his shoulder)

You call me that like it's my name..

Now, Jimmy bolts from his more advantageous position toward the truck.

GEORGE

HEY! Don't move! We are finishing this game, Okie or no Okie. The money has not changed hands yet.

Alan bolts next, then the rest. Then George.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Alright. Fall in according to rank! Seventh inning stretch!

THE TRUCK

The radio. Someone's little Japanese transistor radio from the PX. Now it plays, like a boy's crystal radio set, breaking in and out. Then, there are sounds we've heard before. This time they come from the radio. THE RACE. The boys are celebrating Memorial Day, with baseball and picnic. They eat ravenously: hamburger-inspired soy patties, hot dogs (what else?), green beans, apple sauce, cole slaw, baked beans, corn, fried chicken (though the pieces are suspiciously small), rolls and butter, watermelon and Coke.

RADIO CHAPLAIN (V.O.)

On this 30th day of May, we remember the deaths of others who have given their lives for our country rather than for racing, and the men who serve now, men who stand for freedom, and give no quarter to the world's dictators or the specter of Communism. Somberly, we remember their sacrifices, and we give our prayers for those in Vietnam to return to us safely.

(CONTINUED)



41 CONTINUED: (3)

ALAN  
(mouth still full)  
Just send me a real hamburger.

George tries to speak before he has swallowed.

GEORGE  
(finally)  
Get some respect, shithead. And hurry  
up and eat.

Jimmy silently eats his cache of baked beans, corn and  
chicken. Jeff is viciously stuffing food into his mouth. The  
rest of the group eats with determination.

JIMMY  
Can we eat a little slower, sir?

George simply shakes his head and full mouth.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Can I get a doggie bag, then? Sir?

GEORGE  
Knock off that "sir" shit, private.  
What you don't eat now won't keep.  
The jungle is like a big mouth, you  
leave something in it long enough  
and you don't even have to chew. It  
just swallows--so eat now or fucking  
forget it.

ALAN  
Swallows? Jimmy, how's your  
girlfriend?

Jimmy shoots his eyes toward the blaspheming soldier. Then,  
a slow smile gently forms on his lips.

JIMMY  
Good.

ALAN  
I know that already. When are YOU  
gonna find out?

JIMMY  
(ready with lingo)  
Fuck you, squid. Got a letter from  
her on that last slick from the rear.

GEORGE  
This is the rear, rookie.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (4)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(pause)  
What did it say?

JEFF

I thought we had a game to play.

CUT TO:

42 EXT. THE BASEBALL FIELD

The teams half-heartedly watch the action at the plate, most of their attention is focused on the food they have carried with them to their positions.

Jimmy has resumed his position in leftfield.

JIMMY

(yelling)  
So she tells me that she loves me--

George is at home plate.

GEORGE

Aw shit, Jimmy, you're making me blush!

Laughing, George misses the pitch.

JIMMY

No, you see this really means something! Before this letter, she never said anything about love, you see, and I... well you know...!

GEORGE

Clear like crystal--

George swings and misses again. He puts the bat on his shoulder and yells out to Jimmy.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(continuing)  
Could you wait a second?

The next pitch comes in and George hits it to leftfield.

JIMMY

He nonchalantly shifts his position and makes an effortless catch.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

JIMMY

So, like I was saying, she writes this big old letter telling me that she loves me and that she'll wait for me. And, you know, before I left, there was nothing.

Jimmy fires the ball back to Alan.

ALAN

(from the "mound")  
We know this part, playboy.

JIMMY

Well, that too. But, I mean she didn't even see me off. She told me that we have to "reexamine" our relationship when I get back.

43 INFIELD

George growls with chicken hanging from his mouth.

GEORGE

"If", motherfucker!

JIMMY

Have you ever read "Beetle Bailey", sir?

GEORGE

(spewing chicken)  
I said cut that "sir" shit, rookie!

The next batter steps to the plate.

ALAN

(to Jimmy)  
You're up next, champ.

The batter is a tall, skinny, pink Kentucky boy. JERALD.

JEFF

Come on, Jerald. Try to hit the ball. You ain't even holding the bat right.

Jerald smiles. His bushy hair forces his hat unreasonably high on his head.

JERALD

Jeff, you know I can hit.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Aw shucks, you know it, Jeff!

Jerald swings at the pitch with all his might, missing horribly. The wadded ball rattles into the makeshift backstop.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Crank up that ol' chopper, Jerry!

JERALD

(feverish)

Don't ever call me Jerry!

ALAN

Relax and try to hit the ball.

The second pitch tails inside. Jerald pulls his head away and swings for Kentucky. And misses. Big. Jimmy wants to say something. He can't. The guy is too serious.

JEFF

Let's go, Jerald.

Aw, go ahead...

JIMMY

(in his best drawl)

Aw, Jeff, ya know he kin hit!

The pitcher releases the ball. Jerald grunts. The air parts in front of the hit pitch as if the ball had been fired from one of the Howitzers that stoop silently in the shade. Needless to say, it is a home run. It flies over Jimmy's head and into the bush.

JERALD

(cockily)

I'll run the bases. You don't have to call me a motherfucker.

JIMMY

Just run out and get that ball, motherfucker.

Jerald rounds first base.

JERALD

Watch who you're calling a motherfucker, boy.

Jimmy runs toward home plate, to hit. George bristles.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE

(to Jimmy)

Private. Get that ball!

JIMMY

(still running)

Forget it. I got the last one. He can get his own balls. Besides, I'm up.

JERALD

Hell, I'll get it.

JIMMY

Damn right...

Jerald starts to amble through the outfield toward the bush.

JERALD

Not because you told me to!

JIMMY

Just get it.

Jerald reaches the edge of the bush. He slows and peers into the still jungle.

JERALD

Did any of you guys see where it went?

ALAN

(from the mound)

See that little guy with the long rifle?

GEORGE

Just get it!

Jerald tentatively walks out of the clearing. He breathes a little faster. His steps are too slow and too deliberate.

GEORGE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Move it, private!

Jerald quickens his pace. He is telling himself that he is not frightened. He searches every inch of his path. He is not looking for the ball.

44      INFIELD - JIMMY

                          ALAN  
                          (laughing)  
                          He thinks we're mined out here.

                          JIMMY  
                          He's right.

Jimmy coolly swings the bat to warm up. Jerald yells from the trees.

                          JERALD (O.S.)  
                          Hey, did it make it this far?

                          JIMMY  
                          Yeah! Right around there somewhere!

45      THE BUSH - JERALD

Jerald is sweating more than the normal Anglo-Saxon in a jungle. Cold sweat.

                          JERALD  
                          (to himself)  
                          Where are you? Damn it.

He trips and falters. His boot kicks a thick bush. He swallows and won't breathe. Finally, he realizes that he is not going to explode. He moves again, beginning to smile at his own antics. He sees the ball. Bends over to pick it up.

                          JERALD (CONT'D)  
                          Here it is...!

He begins to jog back toward the clearing. We see the TRIP WIRE just before he does. Too late. He trips it. PING!

46      CLEARING

The group hears Jerald's scream. Surprisingly, no explosion.

                          JERALD  
                          (from the trees)  
                          SHIT! Oh God! Goddamn it! Shit!  
                          Goddamn it!

Jimmy smiles a little bit.

JERALD

Two of the fielders have already reached the edge of the clearing. Jerald staggers out. Pale, wet.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

JERALD (CONT'D)  
It didn't go off..

Jerald hands the ball to one of the other men who throws it in.

FADE TO:

47 INT. JIMMY'S TENT - NIGHT - HAMMOCKS

A weak light dances on the faces of several soldiers ready for sleep. They prepare themselves for a night of rats and mosquitoes. Jimmy is reclining in his hammock.

JIMMY  
She sends me this letter. She's there,  
I'm on fucking Mars. And now she  
wants to wait for me. Wait for me.

ALAN  
What choice does she have? She gonna  
come here?

JIMMY  
You don't get it. She never told me  
anything about after. Now she's making  
plans. She told me she's going to do  
it with me.

ALAN  
She wants to fuck you?

JIMMY  
(smiling)  
Yeah. She said it.

ALAN  
Why?

JIMMY  
Shut up.

ALAN  
What's her name again?

JIMMY  
Georgia.

ALAN  
Georgia's doing it with someone right  
now. In broad daylight. Right on her  
parents' sofa. Huffin' and puffin'.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

ALAN (CONT'D)

She's lying to you, man. Chicks don't change their minds all of a sudden.

JIMMY

Go to sleep and shut up.

ALAN

You can't let yourself think about her.

(pause)

Jimmy?

JIMMY

Yeah.

ALAN

You thinking about it?

JIMMY

Yeah.

ALAN

About her?

JIMMY

Yes, idiot.

ALAN

Okay, good night.

(pause)

Jimmy?

JIMMY

Yeah.

ALAN

You thinking about her creamy skin?

JIMMY

I'm thinking about her chocolatey skin.

ALAN

Huh?

JIMMY

I'm thinking about her chocolate-colored skin. Get it?

ALAN

Chocolate...colored...skin.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



47 CONTINUED: (2)

ALAN (*CONT'D*)  
 (facetiously)  
 Oh my god. Is she black! Jimmy?

JIMMY  
 Alan, shut up.

ALAN  
 They go for this mixed racial thing  
 in Indiana?

JIMMY  
 My parents did.

ALAN  
 What do you mean? Are you black?  
 Fellas! Did you know Jimmy's black?

From the dark, other half-asleep voices tell Alan to shut up.

ALAN (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 No shit. I thought you were Puerto Rican or something.

JIMMY  
 Shut up and go to sleep.

ALAN  
 Fuck you, I'm really surprised here.

Jimmy pulls his mosquito netting down over his bedding. Someone else turns out the last light. Finally, he pulls his bedding up over his face--as the others have done. Except for Alan.

ALAN (*CONT'D*)  
 Hey, Jimmy. Where'd you meet her?

Nothing.

ALAN (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 She's not in school is she? What does she do? I still don't think she's going to make it the whole year. She's gonna fuck somebody.

Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: (3)

ALAN (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 Hey. Jimmy. Jimmy.

JIMMY  
 (muffled)  
 Knock it off.

ALAN  
 How far have you gotten with her? At  
 least tell me that, Jimmy..

FADE TO BLACK.

ALAN (*V.O.*) (*CONT'D*)  
 Jimmy? Jimmy..

In the dark WE HEAR the sounds of SLOWLY MOVING BEDSHEETS. A  
 BREATH. Then, all is bright.

FADE TO:

48 INT. SQUARE ROOM - THE BED

Jimmy and GEORGIA, a beautiful, dark-skinned young black woman appear in a white and nest-like bed. Somewhere within the cool, enveloping folds of the comforter and pillows and sheets, all swirled, they are naked. They have begun to touch each other tentatively. He disappears into the folds. His body moves slowly. Her eyes open suddenly.

GEORGIA  
 Did you hear that?

JIMMY  
 (hushing)  
 No, no.

GEORGIA  
 Really..

Her eyes close again. He moves again, lower.

GEORGIA (*CONT'D*)  
 Are you sure? I think they're back.

JIMMY  
 (from her legs)  
 It's okay.

Her face is anxious. Her eyes are still closed.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

JIMMY (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 They're gone.

He resurfaces, kissing her neck and face.

GEORGIA  
 Are you sure...?

He doesn't answer.

GEORGIA (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 Ow. Careful.  
 (pause)  
 There. Did you hear that?

JIMMY  
 No. It's too early. They're still  
 fanning themselves and A-MEN this,  
 AMEN that...

He leans into her slowly. Carefully. He kisses her, tries to, almost... THEN SUDDENLY she starts to scream and thrash. At first, we are unable to hear her words. Her words appear from the OVERPOWERING AMBIENCE.

GEORGIA  
 ...JESUS CHRIST! DIDN'T YOU HEAR  
 THAAAAT? FOR GOD'S SAKE WHAT'S WRONG  
 WITH YOU?!

She pushes him away with extreme urgency. She runs to the open windows. A strange light pours in through them.

GEORGIA (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 GET UP! ARE YOU DEAF?!

She now wears a BLUIISH GOSSAMER GOWN that clings to her body, pushed by the stiff breeze through the open windows. Flashes come from one direction. She screams at him in disbelief.

GEORGIA (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 GET YOUR GODDAMN CLOTHES ON! YOU  
 WANT TO GET CAUGHT LIKE THIS?!

Dumbfounded, he sits on the edge of the bed. She opens the door to the exterior. She screams back to him through the wind.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGIA (CONT'D)  
 (continuing)  
 COME ON!

She runs onto the airfield of some sort of dream airbase.  
 His eyes follow her.

CUT TO:

49 INT. FIREBASE - NEARLY DAWN - HUT

A heavy hand slams him to dirt floor reality. Jimmy is wearing his fatigues and bush hat.

VOICE  
 (from above)  
 GET DOWN MOTHERFUCKER! WHAT ARE YOU  
 LOOKIN' AT?

Mortar fire shakes the entire installation. By this time, Jimmy is fully awake. The voice and the arm pressing Jimmy's head into the dirt belong to George. After a mortar round explodes nearby, George releases his life-saving grip.

GEORGE  
 Where is your weapon, soldier?! Fetch  
 it now and follow me! Move! I never  
 should have let you guys smoke pot!

Jimmy brings his rifle to back up the sergeant.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 (continuing)  
 We haven't spotted the shit yet! You  
 see it, you mark it! Got it?! Then,  
 well, you know what then...

George readies to leave what he knows is the deceptive security of the hut. He points to the bunker near the edge of the encampment.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 (continuing)  
 Get over there, now!

The two run crouched to the bunker. They must dodge bodies along the way.

JIMMY  
 Where's Alan?!

GEORGE  
 Get in there!

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

He shoves Jimmy into the hole.

THE AIR SHRIEKS. Trees split directly in front of them. THEN, ALL GOES SILENT. The rubble continues to fall around them. George has been hit. Part of this rubble is George's RIGHT ARM AND LEG. The skin has been peeled from his right side. Layers of it cling to Jimmy's clothing. Jimmy's face is bleeding from little pore-like holes. George's scream falls on Jimmy's deaf ears. Jimmy barely can hear his own scream.

A white hand grabs Jimmy's collar and turns him around. He sees Jeff. Jeff is yelling. Jimmy pounds his own ears in frustration. Jeff motions them to an area left of their position. Jeff glances at the still-screaming sergeant with impatience. He drags Jimmy with him. They stop behind a splintered howitzer.

The drumming sounds of incoming mortar rounds return, muffled in Jimmy's deafened ears. Rhythmically. This time, the two of them can see the flashes of the launchers in the bush. Jeff takes a white phosphorous grenade from his harness and throws it in the direction of the flashes. A RADIO MAN addresses his radio. Jimmy scans the jungle battlefield.

Jeff mouths and motions for Jimmy to get down. He screams something else.

JIMMY  
(garbled)  
What?!

Jeff mouths it again. Then, he leans to Jimmy's ear and screams.

JEFF  
(barely)  
We can make it till dawn!

JIMMY  
What?!

JEFF  
DAWN! We'll make it!

50 THE SKY ABOVE THE FIREBASE

The sun creeps over the tropical horizon. From the sun come several Huey gunships, low and swift. White phosphorus looms above the enemy's position like fog. Suddenly, the gunships train their tremendous firepower upon the white cloud. Red tracer fire pours into the trees like molten lead. The helicopters seem to be tethered to the ground by the stream. Then, more drumming: land-clearing bombs from unseen jets.

## 51 THE BUNKER

The radio man turns Jimmy around, pointing to the tree line in front of the bunker. Jeff, who can hear the radio man, readies his rifle and turns. Jeff pulls the corner of his eye - to slant it - then points to the trees.

Jimmy finds his position next to the radio man and levels his rifle in the direction of the trees. And waits. He leans toward Jeff.

JIMMY  
(too loud)  
Where's Alan?

JEFF  
(quickly)  
Shut up!

Jeff tenses. His finger dances on the trigger. Jimmy watches it. Suddenly, Jeff is firing. Jimmy pulls his own trigger as he turns toward the trees.

## 52 THE SKY ABOVE THE TREES

In the distance, the gunships flush the few remaining Vietnamese into the compound below. And here they are: they are ripped to shreds. Arms, foreheads, eyeballs, hats, teeth and fragments of bone. A jet streaks over the trees. A napalm bomb falls in the woods.

## 53 THE BUNKER

We see Jeff hit one man in the legs, then fire on him as he falls slowly to the ground. The body dances with each bullet's momentum. Jimmy's eyes are fixed upon the steady but manageable stream of soldiers rushing out of the woods. Jeff's head jerks toward the rear of the bunker. He is yelling. Jimmy turns to see what has stopped Jeff.

## 54 ALAN

Firing into the woods from his hip, Alan saunters toward the bunker. Jeff yells and motions for Alan to get down. Alan waves at the bunker and toward the woods. Jimmy prepares to follow. Jeff doesn't. ANOTHER VIETNAMESE SOLDIER exits the woods. Alan swings and levels the man with a short burst.

## 55 THE BUNKER

Alan continues toward the trees.

56 THE BUNKER

Jimmy begins to climb out, but Jeff trips him. Jimmy slips, his chin strikes the ground. Stunned, Jimmy falls back into the hole. Once he regains composure, he lunges at Jeff.

ALAN

Alan is blown limb from limb.

57 THE BUNKER

Jeff cradles Jimmy's head in his arms. Jimmy can hear him yelling.

JEFF

Are you John Wayne now?! Are you  
goddamn John Wayne now?! Fucking  
rookie! You fucking rookie!

Jimmy is straining to work his head out of Jeff's arms. Finally, he doesn't strain at all.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(continuing)  
Roo-kie! Roo-kie!

FADE TO:

58 INT. MEDEVAC HELICOPTER

Aloof CHOPPER PILOTS coolly lift their machine from the landing zone into the air. Below, the base is completely devastated; the ruins of huts and bodies smolder and disappear from sight. Jimmy and Jeff stare unfocused into the tropical sky.

Inside, a SOLDIER wearing WIRE-RIMMED GLASSES leans toward Jimmy.

WIRE-RIM

(over the rotors)  
Hey! We got some mail here for your  
people! What should I do with it?

JIMMY

(too quiet)  
Shove it up your ass.

WIRE-RIM

Huh?

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

JIMMY

I'll take it!

Jimmy reaches out to the stack of air mail envelopes. He looks at the top letter.

WIRE-RIM

We were on our way to deliver it anyway! That's why we got here so fast!

Jimmy looks up at the guy. Then, looking away, he lets the letters slide out of the helicopter's open door. The letters stream out like propaganda leaflets.

JEFF

(following with his eyes)

Anything for me?

FADE TO:

59 EXT. RURAL SO. VIETNAMESE VILLAGE - AFTERNOON - GIS

Jimmy and Jeff are joined by several surviving comrades from the base: GREG, RYAN and FISK. They silently stride into the village.

JEFF

Good as any.

The group enters an open hut. An eating establishment.

60 INT. QUIET HUT - EMPTY TABLES

It is still early. They find seats as the owner, MOMMA, an older Vietnamese woman, emerges from a back room.

MOMMA

No girls now, GIS. Not here.

She returns to her room. Greg follows her.

GREG

Come on, now, ma'am. Just want some food.

He motions to his mouth. She fans him out the door with her hands.

MOMMA

They not here.

(CONTINUED)



60 CONTINUED:

Greg makes eating and drinking motions to her. She studies him and chuckles at his pleading eyes. She waves him back to his friends.

TABLE

The men slowly are being lifted out of depression. Traditional Vietnamese food fills the table. Bowls of noodle soup, rice, fish, leaves and sauces. Momma sternly explains to the men how to use their chopsticks. Then, she laughs at them. Jeff seems somewhat proficient. The rest are hopeless. Jimmy might starve, but, he is laughing. Momma reappears from her back room with two ornate, silver forks. Jimmy grabs one. The rest of the men grapple for the last fork.

FADE TO:

61 EXT. HUT - LATER

They drink their warm beers. It has become DUSK. The light from the house spills out into the dirt street. There are SMALL GASOLINE ENGINES in the distance.

TABLE

Ryan hears them first. He cocks his head and squints. Then, he smiles. Jimmy turns toward the sounds. There is high-pitched, female conversation over the engines. The headlights of motorscooters waver as they approach the restaurant.

The men stand to get a better view of THE ARRIVAL.

ANGLE ON PROSTITUTES

Once stopped, the women still speak loudly to each other. About SEVEN WOMEN PROSTITUTES in non-traditional dress clamber up the narrow wooden steps and into the restaurant. They address the men on their way to the rear of the hut.

PROSTITUTES

(together)

Ha-llo dere!

PROSTITUTE #1

(in their direction)

Ooh, dey handsome! Look like movie stars!

The women laugh. Momma speaks to the women in Vietnamese, all-the-while pointing to the men. One by one, the women approach the table and sit with a man. A strikingly beautiful FRENCH-VIETNAMESE WOMAN approaches Jimmy. Her slight smile curls as she stops by his side.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

Momma addresses her sharply in Vietnamese. The French-Vietnamese woman moves nimbly past Jimmy to sit by Ryan. Stunned, Jimmy follows her with his eyes. Another woman, JIMMY'S ESCORT, arrives at Jimmy's side. Her features are more traditionally oriental. She has short hair, a wide nose and slight gaps between her teeth.

JIMMYS ESCORT

(explaining)

I looks like you. They give me you.

Jimmy can't help but glance toward the French-Vietnamese woman. Momentarily, she looks up at him--away from her man.

Jimmy's escort pours beer into his glass.

JIMMY

ALAN (V.O.)

Are you thinking about her creamy skin, now?

He drinks his beer from the bottle. His escort takes a drink from his unused glass. She watches him, and as he glances at her, she smiles uncertainly.

TABLE

GREG

Momma? Momma! Just how old are these ladies?

Jimmy's escort smiles at him again.

GREG (CONT'D)

Momma?

Momma moves toward the table. She seems confused.

MOMMA

Beer? More beer? She get it.

She indicates his escort.

FISK

That just might do it.

Jeff looks to Jimmy. They smile.

JEFF

(to his escort)

How old are you?

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2)

She smiles and pours more beer into his glass.

FISK

I used to wonder what we're fightin'  
for. I'm fightin' for this.

JEFF

Momma, how old are you?

He pinches his escort, she squeals. The French-Vietnamese woman leans toward her GI and asks:

FV WOMAN

Parlez-vous français? Parle pas  
anglais.

RYAN

What? What the hell is she sayin'?

GREG

She's trying to talk to you.

RYAN

(to her)

I don't know gook. Don't you speak  
English?

GREG

Hey Momma! How are we supposed to  
talk here?

Jimmy is anxious. His escort tries to take his hand. The French-Vietnamese woman laughs at her own mistake: misjudgment. She hurries to serve her GI. She doesn't try to speak any more. She only smiles. She touches Ryan.

RYAN

She sure is pretty for a gook. Almost  
makes you wonder.

JIMMY

About what?

GREG

If it matters one shit she can't  
speak a word of English.

RYAN

Yeah.

She smiles at Greg.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (3)

GREG

She is pretty. Better than mine.  
How'd you get her, anyway?

RYAN

Momma's good to me.  
(to Momma)  
Momma, would you be good enough to  
show me to the restroom?

MOMMA

What you say?

GREG

You see that bush out there?

RYAN

Don't get me sidetracked.

Jimmy rises from his seat to allow Ryan to pass. Jimmy's  
escort rises, too. As they sit, Jimmy moves between his escort  
and the French-Vietnamese woman.

JEFF

Watch it, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Relax.  
(to FV woman)  
Votre maman est française?

FV WOMAN

(laughing)  
Mais, non. Mon père, bien sûr.

GREG

You speak gook, Jimmy?

JIMMY

It's French, idiot.

GREG

Where'd you learn French? Wait,  
where'd she learn French?

JIMMY

(to FV woman)  
Il sont fou.  
(to Greg)  
You ever tried high school?

FV WOMAN

C'est un enfant. Pas fou.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (4)

Greg babbles loudly in fake French until Ryan returns.

GREG  
Hey, buddy. You got an educated gook  
whore on your hands.

RYAN  
How's that?

GREG  
She speaks French.

Ryan sits in his former seat. He stares at Jimmy.

RYAN  
But do you speak the language of  
love, darlin'?

There is the sound of ANOTHER SCOOTER arriving at the restaurant. Suddenly, there is a CRASH. The men look down through the front window.

62 EXT. RESTAURANT

It is another, LATE PROSTITUTE. She has crashed her scooter into the front wall of the hut. Momma squawks as she peers out another window at the accident. Jimmy and Jeff arrive at the scene to help the woman.

JIMMY  
(arriving)  
Oh shit.

JEFF  
Just a little crackup, Momma.

Momma is yelling and pointing at the young woman. The prostitute is reeling. She has a working knowledge of English.

LATE PROSTITUTE  
Oh, help me, GI.

She staggers into Jeff's arms.

JEFF  
(overwhelmed)  
Give me a hand, here.

FROM THE WINDOWS...  
GREG Can't you handle it, you big  
strong ol' GI?

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

Jimmy takes her other arm. She is drunk. They lift her through the doorway.

JEFF  
Ooh, Momma. You got a live one here.

FISK  
(to Jeff)  
Looks like you gotta live one here.

LATE PROSTITUTE

She glances up at Jeff with pitiful eyes. With the old eyes of a veteran.

JEFF (O.S.)  
But I gotta go..

TABLE

Jeff walks back to his escort and extends his elbow. She pulls herself up.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
She's okay.

Momma begins to shriek at the drunken woman again. She responds viciously--apparently unaffected by the accident.

RYAN  
Yeah, we gotta get going, too.

He lifts the French-Vietnamese woman to her feet.

RYAN (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
We have some business to attend to.

She smiles and giggles without having understood one word. Only the touch.

The drunken woman cleaves to Jimmy.

LATE PROSTITUTE  
Help me, GI. You handsome man.

Ryan and the French-Vietnamese woman slip past Jimmy.

RYAN  
Later, man.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2)

The French-Vietnamese woman doesn't look up as she passes. The rest of the table begins to clear out.

LATE PROSTITUTE

looks up to Jimmy. Her lip is bleeding. He takes a cloth from the table, dips it in a beer and dabs away the blood.

MOMMA

screams. No doubt something about blood stains, drinks and HER napkins. The drunken woman breaks away from Jimmy and raises her voice to Momma.

JIMMY'S ESCORT

Jimmy returns to his sullen escort. They hurry to the door. The drunken woman notices the evasion. Momma holds her back. Jimmy's escort indicates her scooter.

JIMMYS ESCORT

Do you drive it?

JIMMY

(quickly)

No, you drive it!

The little scooter strains under their weight. The drunken woman has broken away. She finds a BAMBOO POLE, picks it up and strikes Jimmy on the back of the neck. His escort screams in panic. Though hurt, Jimmy holds onto the scooter, as they pulls away. The drunken woman attempts to kick start her broken scooter. To no avail.

FADE TO:

63 EXT. ROAD - SCOOTER

ESCORT

You hurt much?

JIMMY

(stunned)

Your legs... look like chicken legs.

ESCORT

What?

FADE TO:

64 EXT. HUT

The scooter slows as it approaches a small family compound.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

ESCORT  
Be quiet, okay?

JIMMY  
Okay!

ESCORT  
Shh.

She quietly opens a door to the back of a small hut which adjoins a larger one.

ESCORT (*CONT'D*)  
Here...

65 INT. HUT

The woman enters behind Jimmy. She takes off her sandals at the door. He removes his boots as she lights an oil lamp which reveals the mirror stand against a wall. As she turns to face him, we see a wicker chair and a wide mat on opposite sides of the small room. There is a closed door which leads through a reed wall into the adjoining, larger family hut. There isn't a sound from the larger hut.

ESCORT  
We early, okay?

She takes the lamp to the side of the bed. She places it on the floor.

ESCORT (*CONT'D*)  
You want me help you?

She approaches Jimmy and helps him take off his shirt. She folds it and lays it on the chair near his hat. She begins to unbuckle his belt.

JIMMY  
I can do that.

She continues.

JIMMY (*CONT'D*)  
(continuing)  
DON'T!

ESCORT  
Okay! Shh.

She lifts his boots from the floor.

(CONTINUED)



65 CONTINUED:

JIMMY  
 (too loud)  
 What are you doing?

ESCORT  
 Boots outside. They dirty.

JIMMY  
 NO! Leave 'em here.

ESCORT  
 (pleading)  
 They're dir-ty. Please.

JIMMY  
 No. Bugs. Animals. Rats.

He puts them in the corner behind the door.

JIMMY (*CONT'D*)  
 There, okay?

She smiles painfully. He peels off his socks and looks at her as he neatly folds them and places them on his hat and shirt. She snatches them and throws them onto his boots.

JIMMY (*CONT'D*)  
 Whoa, they gotta dry.

ESCORT  
 (impatiently)  
 Over there.

JIMMY  
 (closing his eyes)  
 Jesus.

He sits down in the chair to remove his pants. Here he is: government issue. A soldier in a tank top and his boxers.

JIMMY (*CONT'D*)  
 How much?

ESCORT  
 What?

JIMMY  
 Don't you charge? Free sample?

ESCORT  
 No free! For money!

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (2)

JIMMY  
(impatient)  
How much, then?

ESCORT  
Shh.

JIMMY  
STOP SHHING ME!

He walks over to the mat.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
How much?

ESCORT  
Six, okay-

JIMMY  
SIX?!

She cringes.

ESCORT  
Please, you.

JIMMY  
SIX IS OUTRAGEOUS! NO WAY!

ESCORT  
Okay okay, Five. Five for you.

JIMMY  
FIVE?! For chicken legs?

She glances at the door to the larger hut.

ESCORT  
Please... five too low. Too sheep.  
Four, okay?

JIMMY  
This better be good for four. Four,  
Jesus. Four whole piasters..

ESCORT  
No piasters, DOLLARS DOLLARS DOLLARS!

JIMMY  
SHH! Cool it, I was only joking.

He moves toward her and sits in the chair.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (3)

JIMMY (*CONT'D*)

You going to take that off?

She stares at him. Here she is, standard issue: black silk dress, button flap above the left breast, red embroidered rose, black lace around the neck and arms. Straight cut bangs too high above the forehead, and long hair straight to the shoulder. Too straight. Penciled-in eyebrows. Too high. Red, sharp lips coming to a point like a bird's beak. And the most beautiful hands. Strong. Four dollars.

She removes her dress with her back to him. Her panties fit like a trash bag pulled up to her navel. She removes her bra to reveal what was supposed to be holding it up.

She drops the bra to the floor. She gently reaches out. He pulls her closer to the chair. She sits on his knee. He puts a finger on the point of her upper lip. She retracts it. He leans toward her face. She looks into his eyes. He kisses her lips. She points to the mat.

ESCORT

How about over there?

He kisses her again.

ESCORT (*CONT'D*)

Over there, okay?

He stops.

JIMMY

What is your goddamn hurry?

She puts her hand up.

ESCORT

Shh.

He pushes her from his knee and stands up.

JIMMY

I'm not paying you to shh me!

ESCORT

Please...

She looks toward the door to the bigger hut.

JIMMY

What's in there? Your family live in there? Papa san? Hold on a second.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (4)

He fixes his hair and straightens his undershirt. He knocks on the door.

ESCORT

NO!

JIMMY

I just thought I'd...

She points to the mat.

ESCORT

Please, go there.

JIMMY

Don't shh me!

He turns back to the door. She sits down at the mat and pulls the blanket over her waist. Beneath the blanket, she pushes down her panties. Jimmy knocks on the door.

ESCORT

No! Hey, you. What's your name?

He turns.

JIMMY

Aren't we past all that?

ESCORT

You tell me.

JIMMY

What's your name?

ESCORT

Malee.

He comes closer.

JIMMY

Malee?

ESCORT

Ma-lee.

He takes off his tank top.

JIMMY

(laughs)

Malee?

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (5)

ESCORT

Ma-dee.

JIMMY

Marie... Mary.

ESCORT

What's your name?

JIMMY

Joseph.

ESCORT

Joshef.

He kneels down at the side of the mat. He peels back the blanket. She puts her arms straight down at her side.

JIMMY

You got any bugs down there?

She looks at him.

JIMMY (*CONT'D*)*(continuing)*

You're pretty much bald.

He moves closer. She puts a hand on his shoulder. He brings her legs up at the knees.

ESCORT

You very handsome man.

He kisses her. He touches her breast. He looks down to her breasts. Then, their eyes meet.

ESCORT (*CONT'D*)

You like my titties?

He leans in to kiss her.

JIMMY

Where did you learn English?

ESCORT

I learn English good, go to university. My uncle was very rich man. In Saigon.

She smiles.

JIMMY

Okay, okay.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (6)

ESCORT

You handsome, even though your skin  
black.

JIMMY

You like black men, black GI?

She pauses.

ESCORT

Yes.

JIMMY

You love black GIs?

ESCORT

Yes.

He digs his fingers into her sides below her ribs. She  
giggles.

JIMMY

I'll bet. You think I look like a  
movie star?

ESCORT

Yes.

JIMMY

Which one? You say Sidney Poitier  
and I'll kill you. WHICH ONE?!

She smiles.

ESCORT

Crark Gaber.

JIMMY

That's what I thought.

ESCORT

(continuing)  
And John Wayne.

She touches his shoulders. He lifts her hips from the bed.  
He begins to push his hips forward, into her.

ESCORT (CONT'D)

Wait a little bit, okay?

He puts his hand between her legs. He leans into her again.  
And sighs.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (7)

ESCORT (CONT'D)

Oh. You big man.

She begins to push into his thrusts. A bit harder. A little faster. She moves with determined vigor. She has a job to do. He realizes.

JIMMY

Slow down.

She keeps moving. He pulls back sharply. She pulls him down to her.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Knock it off.

ESCORT

I love you, Joshef.

He closes his eyes. His jaw muscles flex.

ESCORT (CONT'D)

(continuing)

I love you.

He takes one of her ankles from the mat and brings it up, twisting her hips. She is surprised, she thought they were finished. He turns her over onto her stomach.

JIMMY

(to the wall)

Hey! Mary loves me!

She tries to turn over, but he holds her as she is. He pushes into her hips from behind. She is more concerned with the noise he is making.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

You love me, Mary?! Do you?!

ESCORT

Hey, you...

JIMMY

Tell me! Tell me!

ESCORT

(raising her voice)

I love you.

JIMMY

Louder!

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (8)

ESCORT

I LOVE YOU.

JIMMY

Louderrrr! How do you say it?

ESCORT

I LOVE YOU!

JIMMY

In Vietnamese! Say it in gook.

She pauses. Then, into her pillow...

ESCORT

(Vietnamese)  
([I love you.] )

JIMMY

(waning)  
Louder.

ESCORT

(Vietnamese)  
([I love you.] )

Breathing hard, he pushes away. He leans his back against the wall.

JIMMY

(to the wall)  
So your daughter loves a #10 BLACK GI! At least that's what she says, anyway. Maybe your daughter's a fucking liar! Ah, what the hell do I care?

She still lies face down on the mat. He puts his hand on her side. She flinches and brushes it off.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I guess that's it, huh? I didn't even come.

She lifts herself up from the bed without looking at him. She puts on an OLD, LIGHT BLUE ROBE. She pours water into a bowl and brings the bowl to the side of the mat where Jimmy now lies. She unfolds a rag and wets it with the water from the bowl. She first wipes his thighs and his genitals. She rinses the rag and vigorously scrubs the area where they were on the mat.

(CONTINUED)



65 CONTINUED: (9)

ESCORT

Please, go now.

He doesn't move. She walks to an opposite corner of the room and places the bowl on the floor. With her robe fully obscuring her body from view, she lowers herself in a squat over the bowl and begins to wash herself. She stares at Jimmy indignantly. She begins to yell at him in Vietnamese. No more English. He rises and slowly puts on his clothing. He walks to the corner where his boots and socks lie. He pulls out his wallet and thumbs through the contents. He shrugs.

JIMMY

All I have is a five. Here you go.

He drops the bill near the mirror stand. He takes his boots and socks outside. She stares at the mat.

66 EXT. HUT

Jimmy sits in front of the door of the hut. The moon shines down through the trees. As he stands up in his boots, he hears leaves rustle beneath an adjacent tree. Jimmy whirls in the direction of the sound. There is a YOUNG VIETNAMESE MAN, head bowed, leaning against the wall of the hut. He will not look up.

JIMMY

Hey. You V.C.?

No reaction. Jimmy ambles away. The door closes as Jimmy turns his back. Once he is thirty yards from the hut, he hears Mary wailing from within the hut's walls. No sound of violence, only Mary's cries.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That was the first time I remember talking to myself.

FADE TO:

67 EXT. JUNGLE FLOOR (WEEKS LATER) - NOON - PATROL

A twelve man patrol slogs through typical Vietnam jungle. Jimmy is here. Toward the back.

JIMMY (V.O.)

Transferred. I wouldn't be a sitting duck any more, no matter how far away I was supposed to be from the Cong. Take the shit by the horns.

HIGH ANGLE ON PATROL

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

Below, the group moves through the bush like a drunken centipede.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And here it is. My new platoon. Southeast Asian chapter of Beta Theta Pi. Told me before I got here, on the way here, that there had been a previous racial incident. The pressure out here and the temp is supposed to breed them. Anyway, there had been a fight between a black soldier and a frat boy. White boy got his ass kicked. His brothers came by later and beat the guy within an inch of his life. Then, five fraternity brothers woke up to a grenade. Fragged. That's inflation.

Following a faint path, they move back into the cover of the trees overhead.

POV BUSH

From the interior of the jungle, beside the path, we see the patrol moving ahead.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

So the bottom line is, the blacks got traded out of here and I... well, here I am. A new member of the brotherhood. No one has spoken a word to me, yet. I've been with them two weeks. Few people speak here at all.

One of the soldiers wears a huge radio on his back.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Except Radio Man, he talks to me. And through him, I get what I need to know. I could make it. Not too long 'til I would be up for R&R, then short time, watch my ass, and back on that fucking Braniff jet.

FADE TO:

68 EXT. JUNGLE - RICE PADDIES

The men slog forward through the elephant grasses.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

JIMMY (V.O.)

Funny thing is, I remember everyone who went on the hump with me that day.

BACK ROW

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

In the rear, Bataan and Gilligan.

We see BATAAN, a stoop-shouldered 19 year old with a drooping pack and huge boots. He walks with legs which seem to be full of sand.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

It was "Bataan" because he could make a walk in the park seem like the Bataan Death March. He always added 20 degrees to the heat and 10 miles to the hike. It became known as "the Bataan factor". He was always put in the back.

Next we see GILLIGAN, a crazy-looking Italian who wears a white sun hat under his helmet.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

They called him "Gilligan," because... oh well.

In the middle of these two is RADIO MAN. He is a tall 22 year old with a tremendous radio pack and coke bottle bottom glasses. His green t-shirt sleeves pull gently into his biceps. He smiles a sarcastic smile in the deadly heat.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Radio Man. That was one, big, fuckin' radio. Didn't matter to Radio Man. He didn't carry a rifle because he couldn't see to shoot it. Don't ask me how he got in in the first place. Don't ask me how I got in.

SECOND ROW FROM THE REAR

In front of Bataan and Gilligan walk ROPE, WARREN, and Jimmy. Rope, a true Indiana farm boy, is 18 years old with a wiry, sunburnt frame. He is quiet and attentive to the sounds of the jungle.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (2)

To his right is Warren, a 17 year old kid who looks more like Ichabod Crane than a soldier. He, also, is quite red. His eyes are too big. He walks directly behind the LIEUTENANT.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

My boys. Rope and the human shield, Warren. Rope is from Indiana, too. And still worlds away from me. "Rope", uh, could be from anything. "Smoke a rope, throw a rope, rope tricks (he's a funny guy), calf roping... lynching."

(pause)

Warren is little more than a flak jacket for the Lieutenant's ass. I knew he never had a chance.

MIDDLE ROW

Ahead of Jimmy is a row which contains PETERSON, the LIEUTENANT, and BORIS. Peterson is 20 years old and looks like an officer. The Lieutenant is a 25 year old southern gentleman in jungle fatigues. He and Peterson seem to be striding to some sort of campus mixer.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Peterson, "Lieutenant Jr.", is bound to get a promotion for just looking like an officer. His boyfriend, the Lieutenant is trying to disprove the nine second shelf life of a Lieutenant in a firefight. The trick? Insulation, human armor and Warren.

To the Lieutenant's right is Boris, a little, aggressive man with an abundance of body hair.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Then there's Boris. I think Boris eats his prey.

FRONT ROW

In front of the Lieutenant walk NICK and THE TROLL. Nick is a 19 year old comic book character. His jaw was machined from a steel block, his shoulders are twice as wide as his waist, and he probably has that embossed aphid pattern over his abdominal muscles all superheroes have. The Troll is a troll. Like some progenitor of Boris's, the Troll is a silver ape with a bush hat. The brim of the hat never comes above his eyebrow.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (3)

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Nick and the Troll. Our forward wings are matter and anti-matter. Our formation looks like some evolutionary diagram. Of course, I am on the Troll's side. But no matter which side you're on, you end up like either Gilligan or Bataan.

POINT MAN

The Point man is LEW. He is 19 years old and seems to have just stepped in country from out of suburban Chicago. He is apple pie, drive-in movies and little league baseball. There is a scar that lies around his collarbone like a necklace.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

And our usual point man, Lew. I would never understand this man.

Lew stops.

LEW

Okay, Lieutenant. We're just outside of it.

(like a cheerleader)

Come on, guys. Get ready.

Most of the patrol bring their muzzles down. Boris locks and loads.

LIEUTENANT

Take it easy, Boris.

Boris grunts.

DISSOLVE TO:

69 EXT. JUNGLE - EDGE OF VILLAGE

JIMMY (V.O.)

It was going to get hot, today.

The sun streams through the tops of the trees surrounding the trail to a small village. It is quiet. 104°F. The rustle of the grasses seems like ocean waves. Suddenly, the trail widens into a CLEARING, and the entire VILLAGE is revealed. The village holds NINE HUTS: two large and seven small. They are organized around one MAIN PATH, the extension of the trail.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

Additionally, footpaths are worn from each hut toward the rice paddies the patrol had passed earlier. The attention of the men adapts to their new surroundings. There is no movement in the village.

From the left, two young VIETNAMESE BOYS pop out from the edge of the trail. They stop as Boris and the Troll react to the intrusion. They look into the eyes of the men. Driven by a fear greater than their fear of the GIs, the boys scatter toward the rice paddy trails.

LIEUTENANT

(southern drawl)

That's the first time I've ever seen little gook kids who didn't require anything of us.

Deserted road. At the end of the village, a hut is burning.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

(continuing)

You know, fan out a little bit. We'll get a handle on this fire here.

(to Boris)

You and the Troll see where those kids went, and what kind of mischief they're up to.

The Troll and Boris veer off to the right, after the boys.

JIMMY (V.O.)

I knew the Lieutenant thought more of those kids than he let on when he sent Boris and the Troll to investigate.

LIEUTENANT

(continuing)

Now, we are going to do this in the correct manner. We'll work our way through the huts to the end. Nick and Rope, you'll move off to our left. Wait at the fourth, by the road, and we'll meet up there and investigate this house afire together. Peterson, you take Jimmy here to these three huts on our right. Once again, you'll meet us back at the road. The rest of us will mosey up this way and keep an eye on you all.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (2)

JIMMY (V.O.)

It seemed that everything was taking too long. Too much talking, too little attention. Too many idiots.

LIEUTENANT

Move out.

Jimmy and Peterson break off to the right.

PETERSON

Come on, Jimmy.

The two head silently toward their first hut, a small one. There is no one in sight.

70 EXT. HUT #1

Peterson and Jimmy scan the area around this hut. Feeling safe, Peterson enters it by kicking open the door.

PETERSON

Watch us out here, Jimmy.

JIMMY

His eyes shift about in anger. WE HEAR Peterson inside, kicking things.

PETERSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

No one in here, man.

Peterson exits Hut #1 and the two of them head cautiously to a larger hut further from the road.

71 EXT./INT. HUT #2

Jimmy arrives first. He approaches the door. Peterson begins to speak.

JIMMY

(interrupting)

I'll get it.

Jimmy slams the butt of his rifle into the door, bouncing it off an inside wall. He steps in with the weapon at his hip. Calmly, he surveys the cool, dark emptiness of the space. There is nothing. No one. Peterson stands in the blinding doorway. They don't speak.

72 EXT. HUT #3

Nick and Rope amble from their third hut toward their last. The very last hut they will ever investigate. They cross the road and approach the front door of HUT #4. The group of men with the Lieutenant are waiting in the area.

LIEUTENANT  
Where are they, Nick?

NICK  
(chuckling)  
They left in a hurry. Left all their cooking stuff. No signs of a struggle, though.

LIEUTENANT  
Carry on, then.

The Lieutenant and his entourage trudge up ahead of HUT #4 and wait at the MEETING POINT before continuing to the BURNING HUT. Nick enters HUT #4.

73 INT. HUT #5

Jimmy and Peterson arrive at HUT #5. Peterson walks into the hut with silent determination. Jimmy waits at the door.

JIMMY  
(to Peterson)  
Well?

From the direction of the burning hut comes the MUFFLED CRY OF A BABY.

PETERSON (O.S.)  
What was that?

Peterson exits the hut. A bullet from the right passes through his thigh. He screams and crumples to the ground. Jimmy is shielded from sight by the walls of HUT #4 and HUT #5.

74 EXT. HUT #4

At the sound of the shot, Nick exits the hut to meet Rope.

NICK  
(to Rope)  
Where did that come from?

ROPE  
To the right, man.

(CONTINUED)



74 CONTINUED:

They begin to position themselves on the left side of the hut. A MACHINE GUN opens up behind them, to the left. Nick is hit in the head and neck. Virtually decapitated, he twists to the ground. The contents of Rope's chest pour into the dirt around HUT #4. He can scream only for a moment.

75 EXT. MEETING POINT

There is heavy fire coming from both sides of the village, all trained upon the men with the Lieutenant. Bataan is killed immediately. The others open fire into the thick brush on either side of the village.

LEW  
(looking left)  
Gilligan, how many on your side?

GILLIGAN  
(looking right)  
I don't know!

LEW  
Count flashes! I have two here!

WARREN  
Too many, man. Too many!

76 EXT. HUT #5

Jimmy is keeping his eye on the meeting point group, but he is keeping quiet. Radio Man has been hit, but he will live.

77 EXT. MEETING POINT

LEW  
Move back to the last hut, this side.

LIEUTENANT  
No! Move it up to that burning hut.  
Take cover! Gilligan, take Bataan.  
Warren, help Radio...

He stops speaking as he notices a LOCAL WOMAN running from the burning hut. Her skin is dark. She runs away from the village and from the shooting.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)  
Get her!

His group struggles to the burning hut.

78 EXT. HUT #5

Jimmy sees the young woman running. He sees Radio Man struggling. Peterson rolls over to watch her run.

PETERSON  
You heard him, waste that thing!

JIMMY  
Radio!

PETERSON  
He's done, man. Waste her!

79 EXT. MEETING POINT

Warren ineptly tries to help Radio Man. Radio Man kicks him away.

RADIO MAN  
Get off!

The Lieutenant yells back from his cover near the burning hut.

LIEUTENANT  
Warren! Come on! Now!

Radio Man is stranded and waning. From the burning hut, Gilligan fires alternately at the woman and the right side attackers. Lew throws a grenade at the location of the left side gunner. Jimmy edges out from his cover to grab Radio Man and his radio. He drags him toward temporary safety between HUTS #4 and #5.

80 EXT. THE RIGHT

One guerrilla breaks out of the brush and advances toward the rear of HUT #5 and Peterson. He attempts to close the lid on the ambush.

LIEUTENANT (O.S.)  
Get her!

81 EXT. HUT #5

Peterson has regained enough composure to aim his rifle at the escaping woman. The flanking guerrilla moves in behind Peterson and kills him instantly. Suddenly, from behind, the guerrilla is shot. By the Troll.

82 BURNING HUT

The Lieutenant has lost it.

LIEUTENANT

Do I have to do this myself? I'll  
get her.

TROLL (O.S.)

Leave her! Watch your right! What's  
his problem, Lew?

The Lieutenant moves out from the burning hut to get a line  
on her.

LEW

Lieutenant!

83 EXT. HUT #5

TROLL

Goddamn it!

The Troll swings out and aims at her to prevent further  
idiocy. Jimmy reaches up from Radio Man.

JIMMY

No!

Jimmy turns to see the woman. The Troll fires. Headshot.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

(sinking)  
Just let her go, man.

TROLL

That's what I said.

84 EXT. BURNING HUT

The Lieutenant is hit by three or four slugs simultaneously.  
The woman falls forward and slides through the grass into a  
depression. Only meters from the safety of thick vegetation.  
The attackers from the left and right sides both fall silent.

85 EXT. HUT #5

The Troll throws a grenade into the area of the right side  
attackers.

JIMMY

Where's Boris?

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

TROLL

(blinks)

Huh uh. Get that radio up. Can we  
get support?

Radio Man painfully picks up the radio and tries to contact  
the nearest base. He fumbles.

RADIO MAN

I can't see.

TROLL

Jimmy, come back here with me.

Jimmy and the Troll step back from HUT #5, still shielded by  
HUT #4.

TROLL (CONT'D)

We got four or five guys in the trees  
to the right and one machine gunner  
to our left. They have us nailed.  
And they'll rush us any time.

86 EXT. BURNING HUT

Gilligan watches the left side gunner as Lew surveys the  
right. Warren kneels, watching the fallen Lieutenant.

WARREN

He's still moving.

The Lieutenant's body twitches with the brain's final  
impulses.

GILLIGAN

He's dead.

WARREN

We gotta get him, don't we Lew? Should  
I get him?

LEW

Stay here, Warren. You'll get yourself  
killed.

GILLIGAN

You get him, that's a laugh.

A hail of bullets pick away at the Lieutenant's downed body.

WARREN

(to the right)

Stop it! We gotta get him, Lew.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

GILLIGAN  
 (mocking)  
 Stop it!

LEW  
 He's dead. We want to stay alive,  
 don't we? Leave him there.

WARREN  
 But look what they're doing.

GILLIGAN  
 Wait 'til you see what they do to  
 you.

LEW  
 Warren, you need to concentrate on  
 helping us, now.

WARREN  
 You're not my boss, Lew.

GILLIGAN  
 Shut up, shit head.

WARREN  
 (to Gilligan)  
 Make me!

Lew lowers his rifle at Warren and fires. Gilligan is  
 paralyzed by the act.

GILLIGAN  
 What did you do?

Lew brings back the butt of his rifle hard against the bridge  
 of Gilligan's nose. Silenced, he falls backward. Lew swings  
 his rifle and fires into Gilligan's head. Lew YELLS. Animal,  
 fearful, wicked.

87 EXT. HUT #5

TROLL Lew! What's up?

RADIO MAN  
 I have someone on the way.

JIMMY  
 (to Radio Man)  
 What is it, man?

TROLL  
 Lew!

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

RADIO MAN

Chopper. Spooky. But it'll be at  
least ten minutes.

TROLL

I think they're gone.

JIMMY

(to Troll)

No loss.

TROLL

(rage)

Shut up, motherfucker or I'll skin  
your motherfuckin' black ass!

JIMMY

(scoffing, but waiting)

Shit.

RADIO MAN

Troll, what are we gonna do for ten  
minutes?

JIMMY

I'm going to take out a goddamn  
machine gun. Troll, you cover me  
from here if you want to. I'll go to  
this hut back across the road.

He indicates HUT #3.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Then, draw some fire and I'll can  
his ass.

TROLL

I'll cover you, but I won't come and  
get you. Radio Man, we gotta have  
you on guard to our right.

RADIO MAN

I can't see.

TROLL

I know. Just yell when you see any  
movement. I'll come when I hear that,  
okay?

Radio Man shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (2)

LEW (O.S.)  
Troll, is that you?

TROLL  
Lew!

LEW (O.S.)  
What is up, man?

TROLL  
Help on way. Gotta wait. Help us  
lean on the right side, okay?

Jimmy runs to the backside of HUT #4. The Troll nods. As Jimmy runs for HUT #3, back across the road, the Troll opens up on the machine gun position. The machine gun returns fire.

88 EXT. ROAD

Jimmy reaches the road at top speed. His boots begin to make pounding sounds in the dirt. The machine gun tears through the hut and walks toward Jimmy on the road. Jimmy dives for the shelter of HUT #3. The bullets blow past Jimmy's ears with the whine of engines.

89 EXT. HUT #5

More bullets come from the right side brush.

RADIO MAN  
Getting some heat here, Troll.

TROLL  
Wait 'til they move.

Radio Man rubs his eyes. Refocuses.

RADIO MAN  
I think... no. Never mind. Never mind!

90 EXT. RIGHT SIDE COVER

Two guerrillas swing wide and spread out. They want to approach Lew from another angle. Lew's bullets rip into the leaves and grass.

LEW (O.S.)  
They're moving on me, Troll!

91 EXT. HUT #5

TROLL Hang on there, pal! Got something in the works here!

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

TROLL  
 (to Radio Man)  
 I told you to let me know!

RADIO MAN  
 And I told you I can't see for shit.

TROLL  
 Fuck, man. Look hard. I can't come  
 now.

JIMMY (O.S.)  
 Where the fuck are you, man?

The Troll opens fire on the machine gun. It resumes.

92 EXT. HUT #3

Jimmy sees the fire from the left of HUT #3.

JIMMY  
 Eat up.

He lobs a grenade into the vicinity of the machine gun. It  
 stops. He runs out of his cover toward the silent gun.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
 (to Troll)  
 Keep it up!

TROLL  
 Can't man! I think you got him.

93 EXT. HUT #5

The Troll swings to his right to intercept two running  
 guerrillas. They fall. Too close.

94 EXT. BURNING HUT

Propped on Warren's body, Lew fires his final bullets at the  
 two attackers.

95 EXT. LEFT SIDE

Jimmy enters the tall grass at a lope. As he reaches the  
 site of the enemy gun he finds a BOY. The boy's legs have  
 been amputated by Jimmy's grenade. The fabric from the boy's  
 fatigues hangs on the wire of a nearby fence.

JIMMY  
 Wow.

(CONTINUED)



95 CONTINUED:

The gun has been blown off its foundation. The boy moves. And stares. The helicopter is audible in the distance.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
(to the boy)  
You're not going anywhere.

96 EXT. HUT #5

Radio Man hears the helicopter.

RADIO MAN  
Troll, I gotta get on the radio.

TROLL  
He's early. Do it. Here give me a frag.

He takes a grenade from Radio Man's vest.

TROLL (CONT'D)  
Jimmy, mark the landing over by you!

JIMMY (O.S.)  
Got it!

97 EXT. BURNING HUT

Lew is out of ammunition. He discards his last clip and throws it at the right side in frustration. He rips a smoke canister from his chest and flings it in the same direction. Red smoke.

TROLL (O.S.)  
What the hell is going on, Lew?

98 EXT. LEFT SIDE

Jimmy is standing by his own red smoke.

JIMMY  
What the hell, Troll? What are you doing?

99 EXT. HUT #5

Radio Man leans back.

RADIO MAN  
It's a slick. One gun. And they're confused, man. What's going on?

LEW (O.S.)  
I marked 'em. Let 'em have it!

100 EXT. BURNING HUT

Lew turns around to see Jimmy's red smoke.

LEW

Oh, shit.

101 EXT. HUT #5

TROLL

Just tell 'em to land in the grass,  
not the trees.

RADIO MAN

(to radio)

Smoke in trees is position of enemy.  
Unknown. Negative. More than zero  
and less than ten, okay?! I don't  
know!

(to Troll)

They're really anxious.

(to radio)

Small arms, only. Land that bird!

JIMMY (O.S.)

What's the holdup?

LEW (O.S.)

(at helicopter)

Come on, chickenshit!

102 EXT. BURNING HUT

Lew inches out to grab Warren's rifle. He fires off several rounds into the enemy's smoky position. Then he runs behind the burning hut to HUT #4 and back to the Troll.

LEW

Shit, man! Is he gonna land?

The helicopter passes over Jimmy's smoke.

TROLL

(to Radio Man)

Where's he going?

RADIO MAN

He's just going to see if he draws  
any fire!

103 EXT. LEFT SIDE

JIMMY  
 (to passing helicopter)  
 Bye.

There is no fire from the trees on the right. The helicopter banks sharply and comes in for a landing near Jimmy.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
 (to HUT #5)  
 Come on!

104 EXT. HUT #5

The Troll takes one of Radio Man's arms.

TROLL  
 (to Lew)  
 Take the other, man.

They must drag Radio Man. His legs won't work. The right side has opened fire again.

TROLL (CONT'D)  
 Pick 'em up, Radio!

RADIO MAN  
 I'm trying!

They pass the bodies of Rope and Nick. They can only shake their heads.

LEW  
 Shit.

TROLL  
 Is there anyone else?

LEW  
 Not even close.

The helicopter's rotors begin to gain momentum.

105 INT. HELICOPTER

PILOT  
 Are they in yet?

SIDE GUNNER  
 Get your heads down!

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED:

The SIDE GUNNER fires over their heads into the trees on the right side. Jimmy helps the radio and Radio Man into the back. The Troll and Lew both fire from the prone position once inside the helicopter. Lift off. Bullets hit the metal skin of the machine.

SIDE GUNNER (CONT'D)  
What about your dead and wounded?

LEW  
You wanna go get 'em?.

SIDE GUNNER  
(to himself)  
Guess I'm used to Marines...

LEW  
(defensive)  
What's that? What'd you say?

And then they are away. In the distance is a sheer stone mountain. And jungle.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
I found out later about Lew.

106 FLASHBACK

In the relative safety of the helicopter, Jimmy remembers the dark skinned village woman running from the burning hut.

GEORGIA (V.O.)  
Did you hear that?

JIMMY (V.O.)  
(hushing)  
No, no.

GEORGIA (V.O.)  
Really?  
(pause)  
Are you sure? I think they're back.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
It's okay, they're gone.

The woman is hit by the Troll's bullet, changing her momentum. Her legs are knocked out from under her. She falls to her side and slides to a halt.

GEORGIA (V.O.)  
Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

The sounds of the HELICOPTER return.

FADE TO:

107 EXT. BANGKOK CITY STREET - NIGHT - JACK RABBIT SIGN

A pink neon sign spits in the steamy Bangkok night. The sign spells out J-A-C-K, followed by a bright pink bunny. The Jack Rabbit Club is a club for black American servicemen.

108 INT. JACK RABBIT CLUB - MCU - DANCER'S BREASTS

A topless woman writhes around a pole.

JIMMY (V.O.)

In Bangkok I met a man named Monty. He was from Alabama. He asked me what I was doing in a club for negroes. I told him that my father was black, that I had grown up with black people.

109 DANCER'S EYES - ECU

JIMMY (V.O.)

(continuing)

I bet the women are better in the white clubs." He asked me if I had ever been in the white clubs. I said that this was my first R&R in Bangkok.

Her eyes are bloodshot and twitching.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

I wasn't black enough for him and I--

DISSOLVE TO:

110 EXT. BANGKOK CITY STREET - NIGHT

It is raining. A sort of steamy, temporary, rainy season rain. Jimmy emerges from the shadowed crowds. He is moving swiftly toward shelter. He is wearing a once-pressed uniform. His shoes are shiny like patent leather. He awkwardly smokes a cigarette which somehow evades the extinguishing rains. On the fly, he enters a new club.

111 INT. BRAIN CLUB

The "Brain Club" is an anomaly. There are singers and dancers on stage. The lighting gives it a feel of Vaudeville, but there is something else.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

Smart looking Thai waiters hustle in between the closely arranged tables. The general hubbub amidst the military audience suggests that the acts on stage are merely warm-ups. The present act finishes. There is applause. The lights dim. Jimmy finds a seat at a table near several white GIs.

THE DARK STAGE

The Brain Club's small, brassy band begins a sarcastic theme song. An enormous spotlight hits the burgundy curtains as they part to reveal the SINGER, a tall, beautiful oriental woman. She is dressed up in billowy, Victorian petticoats and bustle, wide-brimmed sunbonnet and parasol. She animatedly pushes an oversized baby carriage – with the power of a truck driver – back and forth on the stage. When the introduction to her song is finished, she stops. She begins to sing the song "HES JACK AND I'M PAT." The song is about an incestuous relationship between a woman and her baby.

SINGER

He spits up, when I'm feelin' down/  
He sits up, when I'm aroun'/ With  
just one smack (kiss), he can knock  
me flat/ This boy's Jack and I'm  
Pat...

Suddenly, a large, hairy GI sits up in the carriage. He is dressed as a baby, and animatedly chews on a cigar. The crowd goes wild for tonight's chosen GI. A group of his buddies sit at the table next to Jimmy. Each GI has a bargirl seated next to him, tending to him.

GROUP MEMBER #1

Mikey! Hey, hey, hey! Mi-key!

STAGE - CU BABY

The GI baby turns to his friends, chews, winks, and gives them the thumbs up. Immediately, his "mother" whips the carriage around, roughing him up. He recovers and smiles deviously.

BUDDIES' TABLE

A BARGIRL from the GIs' table looks at Jimmy. She is young and Thai, but her hair is lighter than the others. Her skin is paler. The JEALOUS GI she is with notices her lack of attention. She looks away from Jimmy.

STAGE - MOTHER

Mother carries on with the routine. The song continues to become more suggestive of the woman's sexual desire for the

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (2)

baby. The GI paws her every chance he gets, but she goes on with the act (indeed, this is part of it). Some of the woman's clothes begin to weaken at the treacherous hands of the GI. As he sweeps off her outermost skirt, the crowd howls.

JIMMY

drinks from a bottle of beer at his table. He seems a bit unsteady from alcohol already. He wipes his mouth with his sleeve and leers back at the attentive bargirl. A waiter approaches him. Jimmy waves him off with a straightened arm, like Frankenstein's monster.

STAGE - MOTHER AND CHILD

Much of her legs now show from beneath the innermost skirt. Her white, lacy blouse is flapping and untucked. The song is nearing its end and the GI is in a frenzy. The woman successfully evades his steel trap hands.

BUDDIES' TABLE

Mikey's buddies are on their feet.

BUDDIES

Get it, Mikey. Hey he's a natural!

The bargirl glances back at Jimmy.

STAGE - MOTHER

finishes her final notes just as the GI makes his last desperate grab--and connects. He pulls her to him and buries his head in her open blouse. She gracefully pulls the sides of the blouse around the GI's head, effectively shielding her breasts from sight as the GI ravages them. The crowd roars as the curtains close on the Edipal couple.

BUDDIES' TABLE

They scream for their triumphant Mikey. The lights come back up. The jealous GI stares back over his shoulder at Jimmy.

JIMMY

(Through the din of  
the crowd)

What are you lookin' at dumb ass?

THE BARGIRL

looks at Jimmy again.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (3)

JEALOUS GI  
 (to the bargirl)  
 What are YOU looking at?

She looks back to the GI. She doesn't understand. Jimmy comes to their table, in a moment of drunken valor.

JIMMY  
 (to the bargirl)  
 Come on, let's go.

Jimmy reaches out to take her hand. She shrinks away from him, shocked. The GIs laugh.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
 Let's get out of here!

He reaches for her hand again. She lets out a little squeal. All the men laugh. Then, MIKEY arrives. He still wears some of his baby makeup.

MIKEY  
 What's this nigger doing in the club?

JEALOUS GI  
 Yeah Mikey, that's what we're trying to find out. Scared my girl.

MIKEY  
 Why aren't you at your own club, soldier boy?

Jimmy approaches Mikey. The other patrons sense the impending brawl.

JIMMY  
 Well... that is a good question. You see someone told me that I just had to see this big fuckin' idiot baby. And you know they don't have these kinds of idiots at "our" clubs.

The GIs start to bolt toward Jimmy until they hear Mikey's laugh. Mikey holds out his arms to slow his buddies. A few more white GIs crowd around the table.

MIKEY  
 (still laughing)  
 Oh. You are funny. Maybe you could get up on stage with me.

JIMMY  
 Yeah and you could suck my dick.

(CONTINUED)



111 CONTINUED: (4)

Mikey is about to explode. As he prepares to pounce, there is the CLICK of a .45 cal. pistol.

CU MIKEY

The barrel of the pistol rises to Mikey's temple.

VOICE (O.S.)

(Oklahoma accent)

You wanna keep that baby face of yours in one piece, GI, you just relax.

TABLE

It is Jeff. Jimmy hasn't seen him since they left Momma's place in Vietnam.

JIMMY

Jeff! This is my fight, man!

JEFF

(to Mikey)

Okay, we're leaving now. Oh, and we're taking the girl.

He indicates the bargirl who had been staring at Jimmy.

JEALOUS GI

What do you mean?

JEFF

I mean she's with us. Get her, Jimmy.

Jimmy slides into the frozen mass of angry GIs.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Let's go, Jimmy.

Jimmy reaches out to her with his hand. She takes his arm instead.

JIMMY

(to the Jealous GI)

I swear I washed 'em.

Jimmy and the bargirl back away from the table. Jeff pulls back a bit. Mikey moves. Jeff replaces the pistol to his temple.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (5)

JEFF

Now we could do this all night. But sooner or later I'll get tired and impatient and you know...

Mikey's eyes shift to Jeff. Mikey doesn't speak.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Good. Okay fellas. Clean up your act a bit and we'll be back.

The three of them back out the front door. Outside, they blend into the weekend crowd.

112 EXT. ROADSIDE - AROUND THE CORNER

Jeff waves at two bicycle taxi or SAMLOR DRIVERS. They put out their cigarettes and pull their two-passenger bicycles away from the curb. Jeff puts Jimmy and the bargirl into the second taxi. He climbs into the first.

JIMMY

Jeff, I'm so drunk!

JEFF

Just enjoy the ride, Jimmy. You're in one piece!

Jimmy's driver turns to smile at the young couple. Slowly, they move into the street. The driver says something over his shoulder to the bargirl. She laughs and, in Thai, briefly tells him the story of her adventure. He turns around again, laughs hoarsely and points his finger like a gun at Jimmy. Then he laughs again. Finally, Jimmy laughs, too.

113 EXT. IMPERIAL HOTEL - DOORMAN

The samlor stops near Jeff in front of the blue-green façade of a hotel. At the front door stands a DOORMAN in white silk, traditional Thai garb. He opens the door for them and bows warily. The bargirl wais the doorman. He doesn't return the gesture.

114 INT. LOBBY

As they enter the lobby, the HOTEL MANAGER glides from behind the desk and attempts to intercept the threesome.

MANAGER

Mr. Jeff, excuse me. Mr. Jeff?!

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

JEFF  
 (to the manager)  
 Just having some friends in.  
 (to Jimmy)  
 Keep moving.

They enter the elevator. The door slams shut. The operator stares ahead.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
 Three, please.

The manager has reached the closed door to the elevator. He pounds on it. The operator turns to them and smiles.

MANAGER (O.S.)  
 Wait, please.

He addresses the operator in Thai as the elevator rises. Finally, the elevator stops on the third floor.

JIMMY  
 How do you afford this?

The door opens onto gaudy red and gold carpet.

JEFF  
 My mother sent me some money.

They walk out to the left and down the corridor.

JIMMY  
 What do you mean? Did she strike  
 oil?

JEFF  
 (weakly)  
 Not exactly.

They arrive at the last room. Jeff opens the door.

115 INT. SUITE

A living room, a wet bar, a huge bedroom. An open closet shows Jeff's dress uniform. The bargirl gawks.

JIMMY  
 (too drunk to realize)  
 Oh, man, you're doing alright.

JEFF  
 Thanks, man.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED:

The bargirl turns to look at Jeff.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
 (to bargirl)  
 What is your name, my dear?

JIMMY  
 I don't think she speaks English.

She pats her chest.

BARGIRL  
 Miaow.

JEFF  
 Meow?

BARGIRL  
 No. Miaow.

His tone is incorrect. This could take all night.

JIMMY  
 Miaow.

She raises her eyebrows and nods. She moves toward the bar in order to make drinks for the two men. She searches for the ice box.

JEFF  
 I'll do that. Sit down.

He gently pushes her onto the couch.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
 Sit down, Jimmy. We have whiskey,  
 whiskey and more whiskey.

MIAOW  
 Whis-key.

She smiles her infectious smile. Jimmy sits down.

JEFF  
 You got a real doll there, Jimmy.

JIMMY  
 Are you okay, man?

Jeff brings their drinks to the coffee table. He bows and offers Miaow a drink as if she were a monk in a Buddhist ceremony. She laughs and slaps his arm.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF

Ow. Jimmy, I'm just glad to see you.

Jeff places the whiskey, soda and ice bucket on the table. Miaow adjusts herself on the couch and rearranges the bottles out of habit. She pulls on Jeff's arm.

MIAOW

(to Jeff)

Sit down!

JEFF

No, no, you two need some time to yourselves.

JIMMY

Come on, I haven't seen you in months.

JEFF

(solemnly)

I need some food, brother. I'll come back. But don't wait up for me. We can talk tomorrow.

Jimmy chuckles at the increasingly absurd nature of Jeff's kindness. Jeff leans down and surprises Miaow with a kiss on the neck. She screams and wipes it off.

MIAOW

Bad man.

JEFF

(continuing)

A living doll, Jimmy.

He winks and walks back into the corridor.

JIMMY

Hey.

JEFF

Yeah?

JIMMY

Keep that gun in your pants.

JEFF

(smiling)

See ya.

The door shuts.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: (3)

MIAOW  
 (laughing)  
 Your friend too crazy. Gangster.

Jimmy is quiet, but stares at her.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
 Yeah, he was crazy. Too crazy.

She shrugs and makes a face at him. He reaches out to pour himself more whiskey.

MIAOW  
 (sharply)  
 NO!

She expertly tongs out more ice into his glass and refills it. As she gives it to him, she sits on his knee.

JIMMY  
 You are one small girl.

MIAOW  
 What?

JIMMY  
 You are small girl.

MIAOW  
 No. You giant. Yahk.

He takes the glass out of her hand and places it gently on the table. He stares into her eyes. Then, he bends around and playfully bites her side. She screams and kicks. One small foot rakes the glasses off the table. Both stop, giggling.

JIMMY  
 Oh, shit.

MIAOW  
 Oh, sheet.

She picks up the ice and glasses. Jimmy begins to mop up the orange soda water from the carpet, stepping on the towel. She slaps his foot away and begins to mop it up herself-- with her hands. He steps down on her hand. She can't move it away. She looks up to him. He slowly releases it. He kneels down and takes her hand. He rubs it.

MIAOW (CONT'D)  
 (frowning)  
 You bad man.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: (4)

He kisses her hand.

JIMMY

I'm sorry.

She takes a piece of ice and drops it down his shirt, then looks up like Harpo Marx into his eyes. She runs.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

AHH!

He chases her around the table, catching her at the bar. He leans down and kisses her on the cheek. She kisses him on his cheek. More like exhaling than a kiss. He stares at her.

MIAOW

You crazy man. All GIs crazy.

He touches her lips.

FADE TO:

116 INT. BEDROOM

The blanket for the bed has been neatly turned down. Only a sheet covers Miaow and Jimmy. Groggily she awakens in Jimmy's arms. She cautiously slips out of his grasp and replaces his arms in a natural position. He stirs.

JIMMY

Where are you going?

MIAOW

I go home now.

JIMMY

No. Wait...

She sits on the edge of the bed and runs her hand over his brow.

MIAOW

Yes, darling.

JIMMY

(chuckling)

What?

MIAOW

Dar-ling!

JIMMY

Where do you come from?

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

MIAOW  
 What?

JIMMY  
 Your home. Where is it?

MIAOW  
 Udon Thani.

JIMMY  
 Where?

MIAOW  
 Isaan. Northeast.

Still too groggy.

JIMMY  
 Whatever. I have no idea what you  
 just said.

He tries to focus.

MIAOW  
 I go now.

JIMMY  
 Do you know that you are the most  
 beautiful creature I have ever seen?

She is almost completely dressed. She takes a postcard from  
 her purse, writes on it and leaves it on the dresser.

JIMMY (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 I'll come back tonight.  
 (remembering)  
 Oh... wait. Well, we'll work something  
 out.

MIAOW  
 Goodbye.

JIMMY  
 Bye.

He falls back into the pillow as she opens the door into the  
 dark living room.

117 INT. LIVING ROOM

Miaow quietly shuffles across the floor. The sound of ICE  
 CUBES FALLING INTO A NEARLY EMPTY GLASS comes from the couch.

(CONTINUED)



117 CONTINUED:

She flinches. She can barely see Jeff sitting on the couch.

MIAOW

You. You drunk. Where's my money?  
You pay me?

There is no response from Jeff. He bites into an ice cube. A piece of it CLINKS into his glass.

MIAOW (CONT'D)

I go now. I get my money?

Jeff pulls out his wallet and fans through the bills.

JEFF

You leavin'? You got to go?

He takes out a few of the bills and lifts them toward her.

MIAOW

Got to go.

JEFF

Take it, then.

MIAOW

Thank you very much, sir.

She wais and courtesies as she approaches the money. He retracts it.

JEFF

You like my friend?

MIAOW

What?

JEFF

Was Jimmy good to you?

MIAOW

Ji-Me?

JEFF

Jimmy! That's his name! The guy in there, remember? It hasn't been that long!

Hearing the volatility in his voice, she takes a step back. There is the CLICK of his .45.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 Don't step away from me.

She doesn't understand.

JEFF (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 Come back here.

Calmly, she moves closer to the couch. He grasps her forearm.

JEFF (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 Don't you like Jimmy?

MIAOW  
 Chai - yes. But you not polite.

JEFF  
 No, I'm not polite. I wish I was  
 polite. But I am not a bad man. Like  
 you said.

She doesn't speak. He puts the money down on the coffee table.

JEFF (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 I don't think I am.

He lifts her hand to his mouth and kisses her palm.

JEFF (*CONT'D*)  
 (continuing)  
 I'd take you in a minute little  
 sister, but I'm out of commission  
 here a little while.

MIAOW  
 You drunk. You sleep now.

JEFF  
 (protesting)  
 I'm not tired.  
 (pause)  
 Does your Momma know what you really  
 do? What you do here in Bangkok?

She is pulling away. He rises from the couch, still grasping  
 her arm. He stumbles and falls to his knees.

MIAOW  
 Jimmy!

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: (3)

He struggles to his feet and pushes her to the doorway.

JEFF  
Would she be proud of you?

MIAOW  
Jimmy!

The telephone rings. Jeff continues.

JEFF  
Are you doing this for her?

The telephone rings again. Jeff holds her neck up against the doorframe.

MIAOW  
(barely)  
Jimmy.

JEFF  
Did you lie to her?

118 COFFEE TABLE - PHOTO

A photograph of Jeff's MOTHER lies beside the \$5 bills he offered to Miaow.

CUT TO:

119 INT. BEDROOM

The telephone rings again. Jimmy jumps out of bed and into his boxer shorts. He stabs at the door. It creaks open. He walks out into the living room.

120 INT. LIVING ROOM

JIMMY  
Oh no, man! What are you doing?

Jeff is mopping up blood with his bar towels. One towel is covering Miaow's face. She lies on the floor.

JEFF  
Holy shit, Jimmy, you scared me.

JIMMY  
Wha...

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

JEFF

Yeah, I've never had to clean up after a gook before. I should have put down plastic.

JIMMY

Not a fucking gook!

JEFF

Well... She was leaving you, man. You'd never see her again. These girls are like that. Yeah, check your money, too. I think she took some.

Jeff reaches over and picks up the bills.

JEFF (*CONT'D*)

These yours? I wonder who that was on the phone?

JIMMY

God damn it, Jeff.

JEFF

Well, what was I supposed to do? Tell me that! Let her go? You never would have seen her again!

JIMMY

So what? So kill her? Where's the gun?

JEFF

It's right here, but...

Jimmy takes it from his hand, pulls out the clip and throws the bullets into the bar. Jeff ducks.

JEFF (*CONT'D*)

Watch it! Shit! You're crazy!

JIMMY

No, you're fucking crazy! You just shot her? Look man. She can have all my money, okay?

Jimmy throws the bills at Jeff and walks back into the bedroom.

JIMMY (*O.S.*) (*CONT'D*)

What are you going to do now?

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF

Well, the first thing is to get you out of here. You had nothing to do with this. I know that, Jimmy. And I'd testify to that, I would. That call was probably from the desk. I think he'll understand.

BEDROOM

JEFF (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

But, believe me, Jimmy: whatever she said to you, man, she lied. That's part of their trade. Why do you think they call them tricks?

Jimmy picks up the postcard Miaow left on the dresser. There is a temple on the front. "WAT ARUN - THE TEMPLE OF DAWN." He turns it over. "14.30, okay? Darling." He folds it and puts it into a pants pocket. He is dressed. He walks for the front door, stepping around the blood.

JIMMY

How do I get out of here?

Jeff There's a back stairway. Go right.

Jimmy opens the door. The hall is quiet.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Next time, let me get my ass kicked, okay? Okay?

He waits for the answer. Jeff looks away.

JEFF

Okay.  
(pause)  
You better go.

Jimmy begins down the corridor toward the stairs.

JIMMY

(over his shoulder)  
Thank your mom for me!

As he reaches the stairs, the elevator doors open.

121 EXT. ALLEYWAY EXIT

Jimmy pops out the door and into the middle of the night. He makes a turn down another narrow alley. He turns again.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

Instant life. Little clubs line the street. In front of each club stand two bargirls. Each has long hair and a short skirt. They wave and blow him kisses.

BARGIRLS

Hallo deer!  
 Hey you!  
 Hallo!  
 Hey you, sit down!  
 Han-some!  
 Pussy show!

He looks. She laughs.

BARGIRLS (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Hey, you want pussy show? Hey, you  
 crazy GI!

He blinks. The voices continue.

FADE TO:

122 INT. BANGKOK GUEST HOUSE - DAYS LATER - JIMMY

The sun pours into a small, cell-like room. A fan lists from side to side. Jimmy lies in a damp bed, never having cooled off during the night. There is a knock at the thin door.

WOMANS VOICE (O.S.)

Excuse me. Sir. You get up now. Leave  
 one half hour, okay? Okay?

She knocks again.

JIMMY

Yeah, yeah.

He rolls over.

DISSOLVE TO:

123 EXT. DON MUANG AIRPORT (BANGKOK) - DAY - SIDEWALK

Overhead, a blurry-hot troop transport floats back toward Vietnam. On the wide brick sidewalk in front of the main entrance to the terminal stands a man wearing civilian clothes. His face is the color of crude oil. He opens his mouth to speak. Inside his mouth, there are two rows of beautiful, white teeth, a blood-red tongue and inner cheeks. He is a DEMAGOGUE. As he speaks, a small crowd gathers. The Demagogue checks over his shoulder every chance he gets. He is confident, but extremely aware of his surroundings.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

WE HEAR Jimmy's VOICE instead. He quotes the speech verbatim.

JIMMY (V.O.)

WHO are we really fighting here? In one fell swoop, I ask all the questions, I cover all the ground. I am asking you a question right now, so do me the favor of answering it to the best of your ability. Who are we REALLY fighting here? Not why, but WHO!

(pause)

I'll tell you right now, I'll give you a hint: it's not Lord Buddha, it's not Karl Marx. It's not Ho Chi Minh, it's not Jane Fonda. No baby, this "police action" is a fight between flattops and naturals, Cameros and Cadillacs, Lawn Jarts and horseshoes, badminton and basketball. It's a fight between Al Jolson and Billie Holliday (and that mammie is kicking his ass!).

(pause)

It's a fight between Chicago and Watts, between Dallas and Atlanta, Heaven and Harlem. Let me just take time out for a moment to find out if you're with me - YEAH! or if you're lost - NO! if you're with me - YEAH! or if you're against me - NO! If you have un-der-stood a thing I've been saying, because I'm not talking about a fight between the Whites and the Blacks. Is that what you thought I was alluding to? No, brother. I am talking about YOU fighting ME, I'm talking about a one-time, main event, worst out of three falls, TEXAS FUCKING DEATHMATCH. I'm talking about you fighting me, I'm talking about you killing me, I'm talking about a score that we are settling on the field of dishonor, a fight which will follow us home like the plague.

(pause)

I ask you: who are we REALLY fighting here? Now you know because I told you. But, you know, I don't see why we can't take this fight home and settle it like a family? Let's go home.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: (2)

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Let's solve our own problems at home.  
 It's time for the policemen to go  
 home.  
 (no longer quoting)  
 ..That was the last place I wanted to  
 go.

FADE TO:

124 EXT. EXPLOSION - POV JIMMY

From the darkness comes a brilliant light and the sound of  
 an explosion. Too close. In the dark, Jimmy screams in agony.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
 Thirteen days before I was scheduled  
 to rotate out of Vietnam I was on a  
 night ambush and something, a mine,  
 went off directly in front of me.

DISSOLVE TO:

125 INT. ARMY OPHTHALMOLOGIST'S OFFICE - JIMMY'S PUPILS

Jimmy's irises close down to mere pinpricks. He strains to  
 see something. A PENLIGHT is directed toward his left iris.  
 He blinks. His eyelashes are singed.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
 (continuing)  
 For a while, they thought that I  
 would go blind.

DISSOLVE TO:

126 INT. THAI BUS - NIGHT - JIMMY'S EYES

The penlight becomes the HEADLIGHTS of oncoming automobiles.  
 His eyes follow the beams as they cross his face.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
 (continuing)  
 But the nerves seemed to recover.  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)



126 CONTINUED:

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I spent the last days of my tour in  
 bed. When I was well enough, I left.  
 I left. I left.

FADE TO:

127 INT. BUS - DAY - SMALL CITY OUTSKIRTS

The bus's drive train strains against an incline. A tired Jimmy leans forward in his undersized seat. The bus pulls into the city limits of the Thai town of Udon Thani. Overhead, an American B-52 bomber floats toward its nearby base.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
 (continuing)  
 I would stay in Thailand. Udon Thani,  
 Isaan, Northeast.

Jimmy rises from his seat, ducking beneath the bus's ceiling. He lowers two overstuffed duffel bags from the upper shelf.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 (continuing)  
 She had grown up here. She had taken  
 this same bus to Bangkok. The bus I  
 was riding in on. This was a round  
 trip.

Gradually, he pushes through the crowd of the moving bus toward the door. The TICKET TAKER stares at him. Jimmy drags the heavy baggage with him through the unforgiving crowd.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
 (to ticket taker)  
 I get off, here.

The ticket taker stares at him, confused.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
 My stop, okay?

The ticket taker's face lights up. He tugs on the cord strung above the windows. A bell DINGS.

TICKET TAKER  
 Stop?! Okay, stop!

The bus pulls to the roadside and stops. Jimmy must push even harder to make it to the door. As he nears the exit, the bus jerks and begins to roll.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

JIMMY (V.O.)  
 (continuing)  
 I guess I could have waited.

Jimmy reaches the door and jumps. When he lands, the unexpected momentum of his bags drags him down to the street.

128 EXT. ROADSIDE - JIMMY

The bus's poor brakes squeak to a halt.

JIMMY  
 (to himself)  
 Shit.

The passengers from the entire left side of the bus peer out the windows at him. In the front, a GIRL hangs her head out of the window.

BUS GIRL  
 Hey, you!

Jimmy smiles politely and brushes off his torn clothing.

BUS GIRL (CONT'D)  
 Hey, look!

She points to the ground and his pair of sunglasses. He waves, then bends over to retrieve the glasses. The bus jerks again and pulls away.

129 EXT. UDON THANI TOWN

He walks toward a series of shops. There are many signs in English here, as well as Thai. There are a few American families amidst the crowd of Thais. The Americans are loud. He tries to avoid them. An AMERICAN BOY and his MOTHER see Jimmy's bleeding leg.

BOY  
 (to his mother)  
 Mommy, that man is bleeding.

MOTHER  
 Yes, he needs to take care of that.

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

She smiles ingenuinely at Jimmy as they pass.

FADE TO:

130 INT. TELEPHONE OFFICE (WEEKS LATER) - DAY - UPSTAIRS ROOM

Sparse but spirited traffic passes below the window. This is Jimmy's rented room.

JIMMY (V.O.)

I slept a lot at first.

He stares through the bars on the window.

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I didn't want to think about why I came to Udon. I knew one thing: I had to come here. I had to see evidence that she had existed before me. And maybe evidence that...

DISSOLVE TO:

131 EXT. WATTANA ROAD - DAY - JIMMY

He walks out of the telephone office and onto the street.

JIMMY

35/6 Suphakit Janya Road.

132 EXT./INT. U.S. CONSULATE

Jimmy enters the building at 35/6 Suphakit Janya Road. Inside, the office is a model of early 1970s American efficiency. Flattops, wing tips, widening ties. One of the wider ties, a consulate officer named REID BLUME approaches Jimmy.

BLUME

Hello son. Welcome home.

JIMMY

"Welcome home"?

BLUME

Standard office procedure. You are American, are you not?

JIMMY

Yes, sir.

BLUME

You can cut the "sir" shit, soldier.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Okay.

BLUME

What can we do you for?

JIMMY

Yeah. I am new to Udon.

BLUME

Udon Thani.

JIMMY

Right. Look, can we speak privately?

He motions Jimmy toward a room which adjoins the main office.

BLUME

Sure. This way.

The room holds faux leather arm chairs and a dark-stained wooden desk. Blume shows Jimmy a chair and then sits behind his desk.

BLUME (CONT'D)

I appreciate it, I don't get many chances to sit down. Now, what is your name?

Jimmy is puzzled for a moment.

JIMMY

Uh... Ji... James Wright. W-R-I-G-H-T.

BLUME

I'm Reid Blume. B-L-U-M-E...

(laughs)

Nice to know you. Okay, Jimmy. What do you need?

JIMMY

I have a strange request.

BLUME

Does it involve LOVE there, buddy?

JIMMY

What? Well...

BLUME

I must remind you that we are not a lonely hearts club. But go on.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED: (2)

JIMMY

It's not like that. I need to find a family, a Thai family, that lives here in Udon.. Udon Thani.

BLUME

Okay, what's their name?

JIMMY

I don't know their last name, only the name of the daughter.

Blume rolls his eyes.

BLUME

First name? Of a daughter?

Jimmy nods.

BLUME (*CONT'D*)

(continuing)

Real name or nickname?

JIMMY

I don't know.

BLUME

What is it?

JIMMY

Miaow.

Blume pauses.

BLUME

(coldly)

That's a nickname. Why do you want to find them?

JIMMY

Like I said, I knew their daughter in Bangkok. I just wanted to meet them.

BLUME

Why don't you ask this Miaow to introduce you?

JIMMY

I've heard she's dead.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED: (3)

BLUME

Really? Is that right? Well, my friend, you're in luck. There is a Thai family who has been inquiring about a daughter who lives in Bangkok. They have been frantically requesting information from any governmental office Thai or American on the whereabouts of a young woman named, named..

JIMMY

Miaow.

BLUME

Yes, I can't remember her full name. But the interesting thing is, they don't know that she's dead. Can you believe that? I mean, you heard it already, you'd think they would've. It seems like they're a little behind in current events.

JIMMY

Well, it is a long way from Bangkok.

BLUME

You got that right, Jimmy. Too far sometimes, and others, not far enough. You know what I mean?

JIMMY

Yes.

BLUME

Well Jimmy, enough double-talk. I'll speak my piece here. You seem like a square enough guy. I guess that's the wrong term nowadays. Straight, you know. Anyway, from what you've said, I know that you know Jeffrey Gary Warren, PFC. And that you are THE Jimmy Wright he claims murdered a young lady in the Imperial Hotel on February 20th of this year. Now, we both know Warren's a wacko. He was AWOL in Bangkok for about a month before the incident. He talks to himself. I would imagine he is a SCHIZO. His mother died and he was given liberty to go to her funeral. And, well, you know... he didn't show.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED: (4)

BLUME (CONT'D)

(pause)

So, they find him in the Imperial with a smoking gun, but one thing doesn't fit. The prints aren't his on the gun. HA, can you believe that? And now, right out of the mind of a homicidal, insane, shell-shocked, I-don't-know-what Okie walks you.

He leans back very content with his performance.

BLUME (CONT'D)

(continuing)

The man with the prints. He was telling the truth.

He laughs and shakes his head.

BLUME (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Of course, everyone involved wanted to keep this thing under wraps. I mean the assumption here is that we kill Communists, not Asians. So an American boy kills a little Thai girl from upcountry. Who cares if she was a whore, it doesn't look good. It doesn't look American, does it?

Jimmy still stares at Blume across the desk.

BLUME (CONT'D)

(continuing)

I mean these people are allowing us to occupy their country, Jimmy. And they give it with their love. And we kill one of their beautiful daughters? You should have come to us, Jimmy. Private Warren needed to be put away. For goodness's sake.

Blume steps from behind the desk to the door. He looks out at the office.

BLUME (CONT'D)

(continuing)

We do many jobs here, Jimmy. Our most important job is community relations. As an American, I welcome you into our community.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED: (5)

BLUME (CONT'D)

As a resident of Thailand, knowing what I know, I demand retribution.

JIMMY

Jeff... Where is he now?

BLUME

You tell me. We couldn't hold him. But, at least you didn't rat on a pal. Huh?

(pause)

Why did you want to see her family?

JIMMY

I wanted to make sure they were okay.

BLUME

They'd be much better off with Miaow alive.

JIMMY

I had nothing to do with that.

BLUME

That's where you're wrong. Wrong again. She is dead and you could have prevented it.

Jimmy looks away. Blume shuts the door.

BLUME (CONT'D)

(continuing)

What are you going to do about it, Jimmy? One of you is responsible. Which one? I'm beginning to think you did.

Jimmy stares at Blume.

BLUME (CONT'D)

(continuing)

As far as I'm concerned, you did it. Those were your prints.

JIMMY

Less than twelve months ago, the man saved my life. More than once.

BLUME

He said you killed the girl.

(CONTINUED)



132 CONTINUED: (6)

JIMMY

Yeah.

BLUME

Did you do it? Or did you watch him do it?

JIMMY

No.

BLUME

No what? You didn't do it?

JIMMY

I didn't watch him do it.

BLUME

Then what are you saying no to?

JIMMY

I didn't do it.

BLUME

Then how do we get your prints on the gun, Jimmy?

JIMMY

I took the pistol away from him after he shot her.

BLUME

(incredulous)

But you didn't witness the killing? This is a bit strange, huh? You're gonna have to convince me better than that. Do you know why he did it?

JIMMY

What difference does it make?

BLUME

It makes a difference.

(pause)

I am going to arrange for you to meet with Miaow's family. We'll go together--today. You busy?

CUT TO:

133 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY - CHEVY IMPALA

A white consulate car barrels down a sparsely inhabited road.

134 EXT. POLE HOUSE

There is a small, old Thai woman working in the yard. She is Miaow's AUNTIE. The house is raised from the ground by poles. There are chickens flapping about. Jimmy and Blume walk toward the house. Auntie calls out to the house.

BLUME

Hello there!

There is a voice from inside the house. It is Miaow's sister, TANQUA, perhaps nineteen years old. She is taller than the normal Thai woman. She emerges from the house with her MOTHER. They both descend the stairs and approach their guests.

TANQUA

Mr. Blume, sawatdee ka.

BLUME

Hello. I would like you to meet Jimmy Wright, from Bangkok.

TANQUA

Sawatdee ka. This is my mother. Khun Mer.

Mer laughs.

TANQUA (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Please come inside.

135 INT. POLE HOUSE

Inside the dark home is a low table and several mats. The wooden floor is immaculate. The table is filled with Isaan (Northeast) style food. A basket of leaves, bowls of chili paste and shrimp paste, dried pork, papaya salad, grilled chicken, rice.

TANQUA

Please, sit down.

Mer and Tanqua bring the remaining items to the table. Auntie sits and motions for the men to do the same.

BLUME

Have you ever eaten Northeastern food, Jimmy?

JIMMY

No.

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED:

BLUME

Well, hold on to your hat.

TABLE

The group eats with their fingers.

BLUME (CONT'D)

(to TANQUA)

Mr. Wright is from a private university in Bangkok. He has been doing research here in Udon Thani.

Jimmy slowly turns to Blume.

BLUME (CONT'D)

(continuing)

As a favor to the US Consulate, he has agreed to take on a research assistant. The position would pay a small stipend and would cover living expenses.

Mer speaks to Tanqua.

TANQUA

Khun Mer wants to know if you have any word about Pee Miaow.

Blume reaches his hand to Mer's arm.

BLUME

Dear woman, we have no word yet about your daughter. I understand the pain you must be experiencing. It bothers me deeply to ask you to be patient, but I don't know what else to say.

Blume looks to Tanqua to translate.

BLUME (CONT'D)

(continuing)

This is quite an opportunity for you, Tanqua. You should give it great consideration. I have told Acharn Wright that you have extensive experience in the field of education.

JIMMY

You speak English very well.

TANQUA

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED: (2)

BLUME

This is the offer we make in front  
of your mother.

(smiling as a facade)

Actually, we have a very different  
reason for you to go to Bangkok. A  
very important reason.

Enthusiastically, Tanqua raises her voice as she speaks to  
her mother. Her mother responds in a lower tone.

TANQUA

(to Blume)

How can I leave two old women alone  
to do all the work here? She's right.

BLUME

(to Mer)

She needs to come to Bangkok for a  
test and to give the offer full  
consideration. Surely you can spare  
her for a week?

Tanqua translates Blume's request.

BLUME (*CONT'D*)

(continuing)

And I can send my maid to stay here  
while she's gone. I'll send her  
tomorrow morning.

Blume takes a bite of the chili paste with rice. He sighs.

BLUME (*CONT'D*)

Khun Mer, you are the best cook in  
the Northeast. Aroi dee.

Mer smiles and looks to Jimmy. She speaks to Tanqua who  
laughs.

TANQUA

She asks how does Acharn Wright  
survive in the Northeast if he never  
eats?

JIMMY

The chicken is delicious.

BLUME

Tanqua, we will wait here while you  
get your things together.

(to Mer)

Okay?

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED: (3)

MER

Okay.

Tanqua moves to the rear of the house.

JIMMY

You don't waste any time.

BLUME

We've wasted enough time.

DISSOLVE TO:

136 EXT. TRAIN STATION (UDON THANI) - DAY - TRAIN

A narrow gauge passenger car is nearly loaded. The ticket taker addresses Tanqua.

TANQUA

(to Jimmy)

He says that your ticket is for the next car.

137 INT. TRAIN - TROPICAL SUNSET

Jimmy puts his duffel on the overhead rack. The train begins to jolt as Jimmy sits. It passes through a miniature rail yard on its way south. He watches the sun as it sets in the west. The city is transformed into a countryside of pole houses and rice fields. Night is falling.

FADE TO:

138 INT. TRAIN - MORNING - HUALAMPHONG STATION (BANGKOK)

The heat and pollution of Bangkok lie in wait for the train's passengers. The train screeches to a halt. Jimmy retrieves his bag and moves toward the exit.

139 EXT. HUALAMPHONG STATION (BANGKOK)

Beneath the station's outdoor shelter, Jimmy waits for Tanqua. This wasn't part of the plan. He cranes his neck to locate her within the crowd. She has gone.

140 EXT. RAMA IV ROAD - DAY - JIMMY

He ambles down Rama IV toward Chinatown. Aimless. A TUK TUK, or motorized tricycle taxi, honks as it passes him. He waves. It stops. As he reaches the Tuk Tuk, he pulls a folded postcard from a pants pocket.

141 INSERT - POSTCARD

Wat Arun: the Temple of Dawn. The postcard Miaow gave him the day she died. WE HEAR the TUK TUK drive away.

142 EXT. CHAO PHRYA RIVER DOCK - RIVER FERRY

Jimmy walks down the wooden dock to a RIVER FERRY. The ferry crosses the grand river to the grounds of Wat Arun.

143 EXT. WAT ARUN GROUNDS

One of the tallest monuments in Bangkok, Wat Arun's main tower reaches 82 meters into the sky. It is boxed in by four smaller, similar shaped spires. Near the entrance is an old and twisted tree. Jimmy walks into the grounds of the temple. He is slow and reverent.

144 EXT. CHAPEL - SHOE RACK

Jimmy approaches the shoe rack in front of the chapel. There is a bench here. He sits down and rests his bag. He removes his shoes. He leans his bag against the rack. He climbs the stairs into the darkened chapel.

145 INT. CHAPEL

The serene image of the Lord Buddha presides over the worshipers below. One woman has prostrated herself before the image. She sits up. It is Tanqua. Jimmy raises his eyes to the mural on the chapel walls. Tanqua rises to her feet and turns to leave the chapel. She looks at Jimmy as she passes him. He follows her outside.

SHOE RACK

Tanqua calmly slips into her shoes. She squints as her eyes adjust to the light.

TANQUA

I had a dream on the train. I am sorry I had to leave you, but I know that Pee Miaow is dead.

JIMMY

Yes.

TANQUA

You knew this?

JIMMY

I know the man responsible. The man we're looking for.

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

TANQUA

Did you know Miaow?

Jimmy hands her Miaow's postcard. She flips it over to read the handwriting.

TANQUA (CONT'D)

She did learn English. Yes. She liked you.

They walk away from the chapel. Toward the towers.

TANQUA (CONT'D)

(continuing)

We came here on our first trip to Bangkok. Two little country girls, an upcountry family. Our parents told us the story of the temple. Do you know it?

JIMMY

No. Tell me.

She looks upon the five towers.

TANQUA

This is a model of the universe. Each of the small towers represents one of the four corners of the Earth. The layers of the tall tower represent the stages from Earth to Heaven. The top is Heaven, the center of the universe.

She points to the base of the main tower.

TANQUA (CONT'D)

(continuing)

This is the part of the Earth above Hell. See how it is held up?

There are human forms that hold up the lowest level of the Earth.

TANQUA (CONT'D)

(continuing)

They are soldiers.

(pause)

The Chinese merchant ships used to use broken pottery as ballast.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED: (2)

TANQUA (CONT'D)

When they arrived in Bangkok, they would dump the pottery and replace it with goods. The Thai took that pottery and decorated every surface with it. I am proud of this temple.

Jimmy is silent.

TANQUA (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Do you want to try to climb to Heaven?

They both ascend the first level of stairs. The stairs become steeper as they progress. The final steps are mystifyingly steep. They end at an observation level nearly one-half of the way up the monument.

JIMMY

The stairs don't go all the way to Heaven.

TANQUA

Should it be so easy?

He smiles. The wind blows. On the observation level, they look out at Bangkok and the Chao Phrya River. Jimmy breathes a bit uneasily.

TANQUA (CONT'D)

How will we find him?

JIMMY

It will be easier than this.

Two YOUNG THAI BOYS dart by the couple, flashing smiles, unaware of the monument's intimidating height. Tanqua offers a warning to them in Thai. They respond politely.

FADE TO:

146 EXT. PATPONG (BANGKOK) - NIGHT - STRIP OF BARS

Bankgok's most famous section of night-life. It is said that one can see anything here. The signage supports this claim. Pussy Show, Pussy Ping-Pong, Pussy Galore, ad nauseam. Amidst the drunken crowd walks Tanqua. She wears a long crocheted vest, t-shirt and tight jeans. About five meters behind her walks Jimmy. It is difficult to tell that he follows her.



147 EXT. SOI COWBOY

Jimmy follows Tanqua down another little side street. The crowd is rougher. Louder. The GIs are as aggressive as the bargirls. Tanqua is determined.

TANQUA (V.O.)  
You'll notice him?

JIMMY (V.O.)  
When I see him, I'll recognize him.

TANQUA (V.O.)  
My mother needs me.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
I won't let anything go wrong.

TANQUA (V.O.)  
Is he dark like you?

JIMMY

WE HEAR "SEARCH AND DESTROY" by Iggy Pop and the Stooges. This is a new form of ambush for Jimmy. Search and Destroy. His eyes are tuned to his new mission. He is aware of each false movement. But no Jeff.

148 EXT. SUKHUMVIT ROAD

They pass the boarded up Brain Club. Nothing. They dart back into the weekend crowds of Americans. For a brief moment, JEFF APPEARS. Then, he is gone. Jimmy tries to follow. Too much friction, too many people. Jimmy and Tanqua flow with the crowd in Jeff's general direction.

149 EXT. LUMPHINI PARK

Tired, the two enter Lumpini Park, Bangkok's Central Park, and amble toward a bench.

JIMMY  
I don't feel like you were that close to Miaow.

TANQUA  
Why do you say something like that?

JIMMY  
You find out that your sister is dead and it doesn't seem to affect you.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

TANQUA

You're not a very sensitive man. I must do work for you. I am not allowed to feel now.

They sit.

JIMMY

Don't you wonder about her? How she died?

TANQUA

From this place and that man, I know how she lived. Even from you. Can questions make her death easier? Can the answers you give help me?

A couple of GIs pass. Drunk, they pretend to be serious.

TANQUA (*CONT'D*)

(continuing)

I don't think she felt pain. Was it sudden?

JIMMY

Yes.

TANQUA

That's all, then.

(pause)

She didn't love you, Jimmy.

She puts her hand on his arm.

DISSOLVE TO:

150 EXT. WAT ARUN - DAWN - THE TOWERS

The early morning light seeps over the city and onto the main tower in Wat Arun.

FADE TO:

151 EXT. PATPONG - MORNING - CAFÉ

In the morning light, Patpong is naked. It requires the clothing of night. There is an all night café which holds the stragglers remains of the night's melee. Uniforms. Civilians. Through the bay window, there is Jeff. As we see Tanqua meandering toward the café, Jimmy's shoulder comes into view. Both have focused upon Jeff's unexpected position.

152 CAFE FACADE

Stumbling, Tanqua strikes her head against the glass door to the café. She falls inside, crying.

153 INT. CAFE

She reaches out to the nearest booth.

TANQUA  
Oh, help me, GI.

Jeff swivels in his seat to see the commotion.

VOICE (O.S.)  
She's okay.

Suddenly, she reaches out to Jeff.

TANQUA  
(to Jeff)  
Help me, GI. You handsome man.

He helps her to his booth.

VOICE (O.S.)  
You got a live one, there.

Jeff smiles at the gentle warning.

TANQUA  
Ouch. Hurts.

She touches her bleeding lip.

JEFF  
(coldly)  
Are you okay?

He dabs at the blood with his napkin.

TANQUA  
Hungry.

JEFF  
Oh, is that it? Well if you're hungry enough to hit your head against a wall then I should buy you something.  
(to the voice)  
Hey, I'm fuckin' UNICEF!

Tanqua bows and wais.

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

TANQUA  
Kawp khun mahk, ka.

JEFF  
You'll earn it.

154 EXT. CAFE- POV JIMMY

Jimmy watches from a distance. Tanqua eats ravenously. Jeff moves to her side of the booth. He looks around the café. He walks to the counter and pays. They walk behind an interior wall. And disappear.

JIMMY  
Oh shit.

Jimmy flies down an alley. The alley opens onto a bright street.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Please please please..

Jimmy stops at the end of the alley wall, cocks his pistol and peers around the corner. Jeff steps right into the line of fire of the barrel. He is alone.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Wait a minute.

JEFF  
Jimmy.

JIMMY  
Where's the girl?

JEFF  
She yours? I saw her with you last night.

JIMMY  
Where is she?

Jimmy punches Jeff in the face with his free hand.

JEFF  
Shit. Relax, man. I let her go.

JIMMY  
Where is she?

JEFF  
I don't know, man. But put the gun down.

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

JIMMY

No.

JEFF

Look, I've cleaned up my act, I really did. I'm in big trouble, Jimmy. Not just about the whore. I've been AWOL all this time. You know that. They'll court martial me.

JIMMY

You killed her Jeff, not me.

JEFF

Believe me, Jimmy, I won't do anything like that ever again. You know how I felt about my mom. You know about her? I couldn't even tell you. We're even right now. You gave me up, didn't you? And I told a lie about you to save my ass. I thought you were gone, man. Just say we're even, okay? If you let me go they'll never see me again. I swear that to you, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Where will you go?

Tanqua appears at the opposite end of the alley. Her face is beaten. She staggers against a wall.

TANQUA

Jimmy!

Jimmy turns toward her voice. Jeff bolts.

JIMMY

(to Jeff)

Hold it!

Jimmy aims and fires in anger.

TANQUA

(hysterical)

NO NO NO NO! NO MORE! MAI DEE.

Jeff keeps moving. Tanqua crumples. Jimmy runs to her. He takes her head in his arms.

JIMMY

You're okay. You're okay. Shh. I'll take you home. That's all, okay?

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED: (2)

JIMMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I wish I could tell you that's what  
 happened. That I took her home. That  
 I stayed in Thailand. That I had a  
 Buddhist wedding ceremony and was  
 married to Tanqua and held her hand  
 in the temple. That I had little  
 Thai-American kids with wavy black  
 hair, and beautiful dark eyes.

FADE TO:

155 EXT. MISSY'S HOME (INDIANAPOLIS) - NIGHT

Quiet.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
 (continuing)  
 That I built a house on the Maekhong  
 with my own hands.

156 EXT. THE GTO

Rumbles down the exit ramp.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
 (continuing)  
 And bought a boat.

157 INT. HOUSE - MISSY'S EYES

Waiting.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
 (continuing)  
 That... But I can't. I didn't. I lied

The telephone RINGS.

158 MONTAGE - THE EXQUISITE CORPSE

A) Within the Imperial Hotel, Jeff aims his pistol at Missy's head.

B) Missy's head becomes Jeff's.

C) Jerome makes contact with the baseball. CRACK!

D) Vietnamese village woman falls to the grass, shot.

E) The Troll ejects the cartridge with which he killed the woman.

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED:

F) Missy's arms push against the Troll in her Indianapolis home.

G) "Mary," the Vietnamese prostitute, stands naked before Jimmy.

MARY

You like my titties?

H) Mary's legs become Missy's, standing in her doorway.

I) George screams, having been hit by a mortar round.

J) "Mary" holds the sweating Jimmy close to her on the mat.

MARY (CONT'D)

I love you, Joshef.

K) Mary's husband leans against the exterior of their hut.

JIMMY (O.S.)

In Vietnamese. Say it in Vietnamese!

L) Tanqua falls to her knees in the Bangkok alley, beaten.

TANQUA

Jimmy!

M) A Vietnamese soldier fires a mortar round.

N) Mikey buries his head in the Brain Club showgirl's open blouse.

O) The mortar round explodes. Nick's decapitated head lies in the grass.

LEW (O.S.)

Gilligan, how many on your side?

P) Sanders's tattered firesuit clings to the chainlink fence. A car shrieks past.

Q) The Vietnamese boy machine gunner's legs lie in the tall grass.

JIMMY (O.S.)

You're not going anywhere.

R) Missy stands in her doorway.

MISSY

Are you okay, Jim? I love you.

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED: (2)

S) Georgia's head screams.

GEORGIA  
Are you deaf?!

T) Radio's legs drag through the dirt en route to the chopper.

TROLL (O.S.)  
Pick 'em up, Radio!

U) Tanqua speaks to Jimmy in Lumphini Park.

TANQUA  
She didn't love you, Jimmy.

V) The Jack Rabbit dancer writhes around a pole.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
(quoting)  
"I bet the women are better in the  
white clubs."

W) Miaow stares. Jeff is poised to kill her in the Imperial.

JEFF (O.S.)  
Are you doing this for her? Did you  
lie to her?

X) Georgia's transparent blue gown flaps in the breeze blowing through her bedroom.

Y) Lew fires at Miaow's head.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
I would never understand this man.

Z) Alan falls in the firebase meadow, killed.

AA) The Jack Rabbit dancer stares in close-up.

BB) James kneels beside his Indy 500 seat.

CC) Rope bleeds from his chest into the dirt.

WARREN (O.S.)  
Too many man, too many!

DD) A very famous South Vietnamese POLICE CAPTAIN prepares to execute a very famous SUSPECTED VIET CONG in the streets of Siagon.

EE) The Viet Cong's head. His eyes.

(CONTINUED)



158 CONTINUED: (3)

FF) Jimmy steps onto Miaow's hand as she cleans up the mess in the Imperial Hotel. The Police Captain prepares to fire a very famous bullet.

159 INT. MISSY'S INDIANAPOLIS HOME - POV MISSY

James raises the pistol to her head.

MISSY'S EYES

tense with the expectation of the shot.

DISSOLVE TO:

160 INT. GTO - JAMES

rumbles down the highway. James cries. There is blood on his jacket.

161 EXT. EXIT RAMP

The GTO signals and exits the highway.

162 EXT. MOTHER'S HOME - NIGHT - GARAGE

James parks in the driveway. He walks up to Missy's Escort and opens the hood.

163 EXT. DRIVEWAY - ESCORT'S HOOD - SPARKPLUGS

James's hand replaces the caps on the sparkplugs. Then, the hood slams.

164 SIDEWALK

James walks toward the front door as WE HEAR the sound from HIS MOTHERS TV. JIM NABORS sings "BACK HOME AGAIN IN INDIANA." The beginning of the delayed broadcast of the INDY 500.

JIM NABORS

Back home again, in Indiana/and it  
seems like I can see/the gleaming  
candlelight/still shining  
bright/through the sycamores at me/the  
new mown hay/and all its fragrance/in  
the fields I used to roam/when I  
dream about the moonlight on the  
Wabash/then I long for my Indiana  
home.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED:

He enters the house.

FADE OUT.

Darkness. The sounds of the INDIANAPOLIS 500 MILE RACE. Or  
are they jets?

THE END.