

RIVER CITY

by

Patricia L. Walsh

adapted from the Patricia L. Walsh memoir

RIVER CITY a nurse's year in Vietnam

The Other Angels medical team documentary

excerpts available at patriciawalsh.com

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FADE IN:

EXT. L.A. FREEWAY, FEBRUARY 1967 - DAY

PAT WALSH (24), with shoulder-length hair, drives '67 Mustang convertible, top down, on clogged freeway. She taps wheel in time to RADIO playing MAMAS AND PAPAS SINGING "MONDAY MONDAY" as car inches forward.

VW bus with MAKE LOVE NOT WAR stickers and flower decals is beside her, occupied by hippies. Their RADIO plays the same song and they sing along with gusto. They flash peace sign at Pat and she smiles and flashes back.

INT. L.A. HOSPITAL O.R. LOUNGE - DAY

Pat, in surgery garb, having cigarette while watching morning news show on T.V. O.R. NURSE with clipboard comes to door.

O.R. NURSE

Pat, they need an anesthetist in
room four. Nose job, followed by
hair plugs.

Nurse leaves and Pat jams out cigarette.

PAT

Real life and death stuff I'm
doing here.

Suddenly terrified Vietnamese children on T.V. SMOKE and EXPLOSIONS in b.g. as they run SCREAMING to older sister about twelve. Sister frantically looks for cover, SHOUTING as she herds them into ditch. Pat transfixed by scene.

T.V. ANNOUNCER

Intense action near Phu Bai as
American and Viet Cong forces
fight for domination...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WALSH HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT (BLACK & WHITE)

Six frightened younger siblings being gathered by YOUNG PAT (12). MOTHER and FATHER shouting and dishes breaking O.S.

MOTHER (O.S.)

This is the last night you'll come
home drunk!

FATHER (O.S.)

If I'm coming home to you, I'm
coming home drunk!

YOUNG PAT
(to children)
Hurry. Bring the blankets.

Children piling out of bed in night clothes. Pat carries toddler as they scramble downstairs.

EXT. BACK YARD JUNKED CAR - NIGHT (BLACK & WHITE)

Young Pat and siblings cower in car wrapped in blankets. Snow outside.

SMASH CUT

INT. L.A. HOSPITAL O.R. LOUNGE - DAY

INTERCOM
Miss Walsh, surgeon's waiting.

Pat startled back to present. As she gets up, sees LA TIMES on table with headline: AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECRUITING DOCTORS AND NURSES. She folds paper and leaves with it under arm.

INT. L.A. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Pat helping O.R. nurse move MALE PATIENT to stretcher. He touches dressings on his head, speaking in medicated slur.

MALE PATIENT
I can't wait to feel real hair up there. You don't know how I've suffered.

Pat rolls eyes above surgical mask.

INT. PAT'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sixties decor. Glass doors show pool where singles drink, barbeque and flirt. Pat having drink with ROOMMATE.

ROOMMATE (shocked)
You joined the military?

PAT
State Department. I'll be taking care of wounded Vietnamese civilians.

ROOMMATE
Get real.

Pat waves at party scene outside glass doors.

PAT

For Christ's sake, we're frying
kids on one side of the world and
partying on the other.

ROOMMATE

But signing up for Nam? That's
crazy, man.

Pat focused on partiers.

PAT

Can't be any worse than this.

INT. AIR AMERICA PLANE IN-FLIGHT, VIETNAM - DAY

Pat, dripping perspiration, fingers small gold cross around
her neck. Only American in small, crowded aircraft.
Vietnamese clutch bundles of clothing, half-naked children.

Rough flight, VIETNAMESE MOAN, hold dirty rags to mouths.
CHILDREN CRY, SOUNDS OF RETCHING. Woman next to Pat holds
basket of SQUAWKING DUCKLINGS.

EXT. DANANG AIR BASE, VIETNAM - DAY

Pat with two bags near shabby DANANG ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES
building. Military come and go. Battered white van squeals
up. SHELLY (28) blond and voluptuous in O.R. gown with
sleeves cut off, hops out in rubber flip-flops.

SHELLY

Hi, sorry I'm late. Shelly
Phillips, anesthesia. Welcome
to River City.

She grabs one of Pat's bags. There is a loud EXPLOSION in
b.g. and Pat jumps. Shelly smiles.

SHELLY (cont'd)

Bad hop from Saigon?

PAT

Ever sit next to airsick ducks?
I think they shit themselves to
death.

Shelly helps get bags into van, then jumps behind wheel.

SHELLY

Casper International Airlines
hauls the locals around to promote
goodwill. They never travel
without their critters.

PAT

Casper International Airlines?

SHELLY

C.I.A. runs Air America. They
have their fingers in everything
over here. That's why it's all so
fucked up.

EXT. DANANG DIRT ROAD - DAY

Van passing shacks made of tin, cardboard and flattened
American beer cans. Shelly drives fast, swerving around
people and potholes.

EXT. DANANG CITY STREET - DAY

Villas with ornate balconies and peeling paint, sandbags
piled against walls, military vehicles in courtyard. Street
filled with bicycles, pedicabs, jeeps, motorcycles, peasants
pulling carts filled with produce. Troop truck ahead, G.I.s
holler and whistle.

G.I.#1

Hey, round-eyes!

SHELLY (waving)

Hi fellas! Nice day for a war!

Van moves along wide river and open-air market. Plucked
chickens hang by necks, old women squat next to stacks of
pilfered M16s, grenades, C-rations and Sunkist oranges.

SHELLY

Black market does a great business
selling what they swipe from us.
Including our medical supplies.

Van stops at bamboo structure built out over wide river.

SHELLY (cont'd)

The Bamboo Hut, our escape from
the mule-shit pie we work in.

INT. BAMBOO HUT - DAY

Pat and Shelly enter room with mismatched tables and chairs. Open veranda over river. Elderly PROPRIETOR hurries to pull chairs out next to railing.

SHELLY
Hai, Coca Cola.

PROPRIETOR
Duc, duc. Hai Coca Cola.

He bows and shuffles toward back room.

SHELLY (to Pat)
Coke and beer are the only safe things to drink off the local economy.

Proprietor returns with Cokes, bows, takes Shelly's money.

SHELLY
Cam An, Ong.

PAT
Washington didn't give me language training. Said you needed me now.

Shelly dismisses Pat's concern and takes long drink of Coke.

SHELLY
We have an interpreter. When the little bastard bothers to show up.

Pat looks to wide, gentle river.

PAT
It's pretty.

SHELLY
Full of rats and sewage. Drink up. You'll need your strength when you see the pan of worms we call a hospital.

PAT
Do you work for A.I.D.?

SHELLY
We all work for Uncle Sam, even the Vietnamese. I signed up when my fiance got sent over. He's a doc at Navy Hospital.

PAT
Oh.

SHELLY

And what form of dementia is responsible for you volunteering?

PAT

I guess I got tired of watching people die on T.V.

SHELLY

So you came to watch in person?

EXT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL COURTYARD - DAY

Van pulls up to walled off compound with sign AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CIVILIAN HOSPITAL. A.I.D. handshake logo and Vietnamese writing beneath.

Old man swings gate open to large, dirt courtyard jammed with patients in bloody dressings and filthy plaster casts, many missing limbs. Dogs, chickens, ducks mingle with people. Laundry hangs from lines strung everywhere.

Hospital dilapidated French-colonial with covered verandas. Shacks around main complex bursting with more patients. Loud Vietnamese MUSIC plays over outdoor speaker. ARTILLERY in b.g.

SHELLY

Vietnam's Mayo Clinic.

Van moves slowly through crowd. Pat looks dazed.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Pat and Shelly walking down hallway when motorbike spewing fumes roars by. Driver is MR. HAI (25), tiny Vietnamese man.

SHELLY (cont'd)

Our interpreter, Mr. Hai. He parks it inside so it won't get stolen.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL O.R. - DAY

Pat in O.R. garb enters surgery suite with Shelly. Hallway contains concrete sink and overflowing garbage can. Shelly leads Pat into O.R. whose equipment is all antique. American nurse JEAN (27), all business, swats flies.

SHELLY (to Pat)

Jean's our O.R. supervisor.

PAT

Pat Walsh.

JEAN
Welcome aboard.

Jean hands Shelly yellow streamer, climbs onto O.R. table and trades one covered with flies for new one Shelly holds up. Jean jumps down while Pat looks from open windows to flies crawling on bloody floor.

PAT
Why are the windows open?

JEAN
Air conditioning.

A disbelieving Pat follows Shelly back to central hallway. Shelly drops fly streamer into now empty trash can. African American nurse KAREN (26), girl next door, mopping floor.

SHELLY
Karen, our new anesthetist, Pat.

KAREN
Glad to have you.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Shelly and Pat move along screened porch where dozens of patients squat. DOCTOR FITCH (38), a man in baggy cotton pants, hurries by. He looks like disciple with long hair and flowing beard.

SHELLY
Doctor Fitch, the protoplasm in charge til Washington finds someone with a brain.

PAT
Is he a surgeon?

SHELLY
Nobody knows, he hasn't done enough to give it away.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Pat and Shelly encounter American G.I.s in muddy combat clothes with M16s slung over shoulders. They carry Vietnamese casualties with bones jutting from torn flesh.

SHELLY
Time to play tug of war with God.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL TRIAGE - DAY

Room has sparse equipment and sawhorses for field stretchers. Casualties MOAN AND CRY as Shelly puts tourniquets on severed limbs and starts I.V.s.

Pat in doorway looking lost and bewildered, staring at casualties. Jean, from behind, physically moves her aside.

JEAN

Get to work or get out of the way.

Jean counts patients and leaves. Pat moves into triage. JIM (34), deeply tanned and muscular American surgeon, enters in combat boots and O.R. scrubs. The sleeves are cut out and pantlegs chopped off above knees.

JIM

Who's ready to go?

Shelly points to young boy Jim picks up and exits. Shelly takes needles from antiseptic to start I.V.s.

PAT

You're reusing needles?

SHELLY

Either that or no I.V.s. We've been out of new ones for days.

Pat distastefully takes needle from antiseptic and starts I.V. Vietnamese lab tech arrives with arms filled with bags of blood. Pat helps Shelly start several on patients.

PAT

This blood is out of date.

SHELLY

Navy Hospital gives me the stuff too old for our G.I.s.

PAT

But that causes jaundice.

SHELLY

So what? They're yellow anyway.

PAT

Forgive me if I fail to see the humor.

Shelly stops working and faces Pat.

SHELLY

Listen, honey, you may have some bleeding heart fantasy of saving the world, but I came here because of Tom. Period.

(beat)

I do the best I can and indulge in some gallows humor to be able to face this pus pocket every day.

Pat, chagrined, hangs blood and moves to next patient.

SHELLY

(continuing)

Roll them over to look for entry and exit wounds. Get an X-ray to locate projectiles for surgeons.

Shelly heads for door.

SHELLY

(continuing)

I'll go back to the O.R. and help my anesthesia students. You stay here and keep the blood and I.V.s running.

PAT (scared)

But who goes to the O.R. first?

SHELLY

The most salvageable. The ones you think won't make it go last.

PAT

I can't make that decision.

SHELLY

Triage is the number saved, not the person.

(beat)

Remember, we didn't shoot them.

Shelly exits and Pat gets to work. Shortly, Mr. Hai enters triage in scrubs, clicking long nail on small finger of left hand. Manner aloof.

MR. HAI (to Pat)

Co Shelly send me interpret.

PAT

Right now, I need an extra pair of hands to carry stretchers to X-ray and the O.R.

MR. HAI

Call if you need interpreter.

Pat hurries after him as he exits triage.

PAT

Hey, you're paid to work and that means whatever needs to be done!

Mr. Hai smiles coolly, clicking his claw.

MR. HAI

I interpret.

PAT (angry)

These are your people! Why wouldn't you want to help them?!

MR. HAI

We live five thousand year, many war, take care of family. Your country not two hundred year. Baby country. Never survive.

He walks away before Pat can respond. There is a series of quick cuts of Pat working on patients and them being hauled out by janitors as the room gradually empties. DAN COWAN (25), tall, handsome Marine sergeant, arrives carrying a small GIRL.

DAN

Excuse me, ma'am. She's bleeding bad.

Pat points to stretcher on floor.

PAT

Over there.

Pat quickly starts IV. Girl cries in pain.

GIRL

Dao quadi. Dao quadi.

Dan kneels over child protectively.

DAN

Can you save her?

PAT

I'll get her to the O.R. next.

American surgeon, RON (36), pale and overweight, in scrubs similar to Jim, enters wiping perspiring brow.

RON
My tongue feels like beef jerky.
Do we have any potable water?

DAN
We've got a couple jerry cans in
the truck.

Dan exits. Pat puts tourniquet on leg and starts blood on girl. Dan returns with jerry can he sets near door. Ron takes a long drink and carries girl out of triage. Pat wipes perspiration from face.

DAN (to Pat)
Would you like a drink?

PAT
Sure, thanks.

Dan removes helmet, revealing short, Ivy League haircut instead of Marine whitewall. He fills tin cup tied to the jerry can. Pat drinks and grimaces.

DAN
We add Kool-Aid to kill the taste
of chlorine tablets. I like grape.

Pat wipes purple from upper lip.

DAN (cont'd)
Do you think she'll make it?

PAT
Probably.

DAN
Great.

He exits as TRUCK ENGINE starts in b.g.

EXT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL E.R. RECEIVING PLATFORM - DAY

Pat and Shelly having cigarette, sweaty scrubs spattered with blood. Pat hesitant as she speaks.

PAT
Shelly, did Americans injure those
patients they brought in?

SHELLY
We don't ask. And they don't ask
who we give the blood they've
donated.

SHELLY (cont'd)
At least our guys bring us the
wounded. The other side never
does.

They smoke, watching boy ride water buffalo in rice paddy.

PAT
Mr. Hai refused to help in triage.

SHELLY
The little V.C. spends most of his
time clicking that claw he flaunts
to prove he's not a peasant.

Shelly grinds out cigarette butt under foot.

SHELLY (cont'd)
Need to make a run to Navy
Hospital so we can open up shop
tomorrow. C'mon, I'll teach you
how to cumshaw.

Shelly and Pat head for beat up white van.

PAT
What's cumshaw?

SHELLY
Smile and beg. It's the only way
we keep this joint running.

EXT. STREETS OF DANANG - DAY

Van headed out of town, Shelly driving, windows down.

PAT
Isn't the U.S. providing
humanitarian aid?

SHELLY
A.I.D.'s spending billions here.
They let Vietnamese unload supply
planes; a lot goes straight to
black market.

PAT
So why don't we unload the planes?

SHELLY
Washington says that might make us
look like we don't trust the
Vietnamese. As it is we just look
stupid.

EXT. OUTSIDE CITY - DAY

Van crossing high wooden bridge spanning river. American sentries FIRE ROUNDS at water. Shelly speaks above shots.

SHELLY

Enemy tries to blow up the bridge with explosives hidden in tree branches and other crap they float down the river. Sentries shoot at it so it detonates before reaching us ... hopefully.

Pat relieved when they reach other side. Shelly turns off main road and approaches cluster of shacks. Scantily clothed children wander, WHORES in western clothing lean against structures. They see van and run toward it flapping dresses.

WHORES

Boom-boom G.I.! Numbah one boom-boom. Ten dollah!

Two run into road, forcing Shelly to hit brakes. When they see van occupied by women, greedy expressions turn to scorn.

WHORES (cont'd)

Numbah ten! No G.I.!

SHELLY

Sorry, ladies.
(to Pat)
Cabbage Patch, the local
whorehouse.

Van moves on, SOPHIE, toothless old woman, flaps dress.

SOPHIE

You lika boom-boom? Numbah one virgin.

SHELLY

Sophie, their talking billboard.

PAT

God. Who'd screw that?

SHELLY

Guys have been killed by grenades lobbed into those shacks while getting their jollies.

PAT

Talk about the earth moving.

Shelly looks at smiling Pat and laughs.

PAT (cont'd)
Who're all the kids?

SHELLY
By-product of the boom-boom
business.

Pat's smile disappears.

EXT. NAVY HOSPITAL - DAY

Van pulls through guarded gates with NAVY HOSPITAL over top. Large red crosses on each quanset building. Shelly stops abruptly when med-evac helicopter lands outside building.

Chopper's blades rotate as corpsmen run to unload AMERICAN CASUALTIES. They are horribly wounded and CRY for loved ones.

AMERICAN CASUALTIES
Mama help me! Medic! Medic!

Shelly holds up hands to shield face from sand pelting van, but Pat staring, stunned by gruesome sight. Chopper departs and Shelly turns van back toward gates.

SHELLY
Bad timing. Let's try the Green
Beret camp out by Marble Mountain.

INT. GREEN BERET MARBLE MOUNTAIN CAMP - DAY

Shelly leans across counter in supply hut talking to pimply-faced SUPPLY CORPORAL (19). Pat observes while RADIO PLAYS Green, Green Grass of Home in b.g.

SHELLY
We need needles most. We've used
ours so much they're duller than
Westmoreland's speeches.

SUPPLY CORPORAL
Special Forces always happy to
help civilian casualties, ma'am.

Supply corporal eyes Shelly's fine bosom resting on counter as he sets boxes of needles on it.

SHELLY
I could maybe arrange a beach
party with our nurses when the
action lets up.

Supply corporal lifts several boxes of I.V. fluids to counter.

SUPPLY CORPORAL
Fuckin' A! Need anything else?

EXT. DANANG - EVENING

Shelly and Pat drive through Danang with back of van full of medical supplies. Shelly stops at old villa where trees and flowering vines decorate courtyard instead of sandbags.

SHELLY
Home sweet hootch.

INT. NURSES' VILLA - EVENING

Pat and Shelly carry supplies into second floor spacious room. Large fans rotate on high ceiling and gekkos skitter over peeling walls. Seedy but homey.

Vietnamese woman TIEN (33), quietly humble, sets table in front of French doors leading to balcony. Small monkey rides fan above table, CHATTERING.

SHELLY (to Pat)
We chip in to pay Tien to do our laundry, clean, shop and cook. She understands English but won't speak it.

Tien smiles, bowing to Pat.

TIEN
Chao Co.

PAT (bowing)
Chao Co.

Shelly pours two drinks over ice and hands one to Pat.

SHELLY
She's married so you call her Ba. But with the wrong inflection you could be calling her a cow.

Jean, Karen and MARGARET (26) enter from various rooms. Margaret, pretty but with a deeply scarred cheek, has a pronounced British accent. She looks up at monkey on fan.

MARGARET (to Shelly)
Remove that wretched beast.

SHELLY (holding up arms)
Come to Mama, Bac Si.

Monkey jumps to Shelly and she puts it on balcony. Tien serves meal. Pat samples skeptically and brightens.

PAT

This is wonderful.

KAREN

She used to work for the French.

MARGARET

Tien and their bread are the only good things the Frogs left behind.

SHELLY

She boils our water and soaks food from the marketplace in Chlorox. Cuts our Ho Chi Minh's revenge to only once a week.

PAT (looking around)

I like this place.

SHELLY

We roast in the hot season and freeze during monsoon. But it's a lot better than the troops have.

JEAN (to Pat)

You can order an electric blanket to keep you warm during monsoon.

(beat)

When the power's on.

MARGARET (to Jean)

I thought your pilot friend did that.

JEAN

Jealous?

PAT

Order a blanket from where?

KAREN

Sears. They'll ship anything but bathtubs. We've tried.

SHELLY

When we don't have water we use the South China Sea. It's nice, except for sea snakes.

Pat shudders.

INT. NURSES' VILLA - NIGHT

Shelly shows Pat to room with bed, dresser, and gekkos on walls and ceiling. Open door leads to bathroom with ancient fixtures. Shelly pulls chain. Nothing happens.

SHELLY

I'll get someone to fix it.

Shelly, in bedroom, indicates crisscrossed taped windows.

SHELLY (cont'd)

Tape keeps glass from flying if we take a close hit. Things heat up at night when the V.C. crawl out of their tunnels. Get under your mattress and wait it out. Washington won't give us bunkers, helmets or flak jackets ... might make us looked scared.

Strange light turns sky orange.

SHELLY (cont'd)

Those are flares to illuminate enemy positions.

Shelly exits. Pat sits on bed and nervously lights cigarette. When ARTILLERY THUNDERS she drops cigarette and crawls under mattress. Shelly enters.

SHELLY (cont'd)

You can use the john in ...

Shelly stops talking, then sees Pat is beneath the mattress. Pat slides out sheepishly.

PAT

How do you know when ...

SHELLY

If it starts out loud and gets quieter it's outgoing fired by our side. Quiet to loud; enemy.

WINDOWS RATTLE from sequence of blasts, which grow quieter.

SHELLY (cont'd)

Outgoing.

INT. HOSPITAL BURN WARD - DAY

Pat and Shelly enter crowded ward, many children. Patients gaze from bloated red and purple faces.

Silver-haired, dignified, American nurse RUTH (52) works with French-Vietnamese nun SISTER FRANCOISE (30).

SHELLY (quietly)
Burn ward. Napalm.

Pat puts hand over nose. Ruth approaches.

SHELLY (cont'd)
Ruth, this is Pat, our new
anesthetist. How can we help you?

RUTH
Hello, Pat.

Pat takes hand from nose and shakes Ruth's hand. Ruth indicates a small child.

RUTH (cont'd)
I can't get an I.V. in.

Shelly waves at Sister Françoise across room.

SHELLY (to Pat)
Sister François's from an
orphanage out by the beach. She
rounds up our stray kids and helps
Ruth when she can.

SISTER FRANCOISE (bowing)
Happy to meet, Co Pat.

PAT (bowing awkwardly)
Happy to meet you, Sister.

Pat takes I.V. needle and quickly puts it in child's ankle.

RUTH
Thank you.

PAT
Any time.

EXT. HOSPITAL VERANDA - DAY

Pat and Shelly exiting burn ward.

RUTH (O.S.)
Careful of my screen-door.

Shelly closes door carefully. Turns to Pat.

SHELLY

Ruth got Navy Seabees to build it.
It was awful before with all the
flies.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL O.R. - DAY

While Jean sets up instruments, Pat watches anesthesia student BECKY (21) put spinal in patient with amazing skill.

PAT

Better than doctors!

BECKY

Co Shelly teach me.

Pat surprised.

JEAN

Becky's marrying a Vietnamese guy
who works at our consulate. Her
English is number one.

Becky bows. Jean preps patient's leg. Jim enters, hands dripping, dries them, whips on gown, gloves, moves to table.

JIM

Everyone ready?

Before anyone can answer, he slices into leg.

BECKY (to Pat)

Bac Si Jim bery fast.

EXT. CHINA BEACH - DAY

Nurses on beach with Green Beret and other men, many minorities. Supply corporal poses for photo with Shelly in bikini beside hand-painted WELCOME TO CHINA BEACH sign.

SUPPLY CORPORAL

Folks back in the world'll never
believe this.

More men line up by other nurses.

MARGARET

Pardon me, Yanks. But I came here
for a bit of R&R, not to entertain
the troops.

Jean with boyfriend RICK (35) and cool pilot buddies in dark aviator glasses. Hundreds of men swim, throw footballs, drink beer and grill hamburgers.

Radios play loud stateside MUSIC. Children hawk peanuts and Cokes, prostitutes hang on men. Shelly joins fiance, TOM (34). Serious professional.

Pat, whose hair is now cut short, looks around at crowd.

PAT

Jeez, who's fighting the war?

KAREN

Guys come here for in-country R&R.

Dan lies on sand drinking a Bud while watching Pat. Swim suit reveals muscular body. BIRD-DOG (30), Australian, lies in boxer shorts, combat boots, bush hat and pistol, drinking Foster's beer. He looks from Dan to Pat.

BIRD-DOG

She's a prime Sheila, all right.
But you don't stand a chance with
those jet jockeys hangin' 'round.

DAN

She works at that dung heap
hospital in town.

BIRD-DOG

So she's brave too.

Dan watches Pat go for swim. She's beyond breakers when CAMERA picks up long snake behind her. Unseen by Pat, it darts forward and strikes back of neck. Pat arches up from water then slips beneath.

Only Dan notices. He runs for water and swims to where Pat disappeared, dives, surfaces alone, dives again. Moments go by. He finally surfaces with unconscious Pat. Her spastic arms kick up water and scratch Dan's face. Dan struggling.

DAN

Don't fight. Can't help if you
fight.

They dip below surface, then Dan up and swimming with one hand under Pat's chin. Pat semi-conscious as exhausted Dan carries her through surf. Pat's friends run to them along with G.I.s and Vietnamese. Dan lays Pat on sand, gasping.

DAN (cont'd)

She had some...kinda'...seizure.

Dan steps back. Shelly and Tom kneel over Pat.

SHELLY

It's Shelly, Pat. Can you hear me?

Pat opens eyes. Tom checking pulse.

TOM

Do you have epilepsy or some other seizure disorder?

Dr. Fitch, in only baggy cotton pants, elbows through crowd.

DR. FITCH

Did she wet her pants? That's how you're sure she had a seizure.

SHELLY

How the hell do you tell if she wet her pants in the middle of a fucking ocean!

Fitch melts into crowd. Pat rubs back of neck.

PAT

Felt like someone hit me.

She turns and WE SEE fang marks on swollen neck.

BEACH G.I.

Oh, oh. Sea snake.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Field ambulance on sand. Dan approaches Pat on stretcher.

DAN

Get better, hear?

Pat looks up, not recognizing him.

DAN (cont'd)

I pulled you out. Used to be a lifeguard on Long Island.

Pat notices scratched face.

PAT

You're hurt.

DAN

It's nothing.

PAT

What's your name?

DAN

Dan ... Dan Cowan.

PAT
Kool-Aid Dan?

DAN
Yeah, Kool-Aid Dan.

Shelly gets in back of ambulance with Pat and it departs.

RICK (to Dan)
Nice save. Let me buy you a beer.

INT. NAVY HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Long ward of cots with wounded G.I.s in blue P.J.s. Several missing limbs or with bandaged eyes. MILITARY NURSE and CORPSMAN care for them. At far end, screens around Pat's cot.

CORPSMAN (O.S.)
I need a surgeon stat! Abdominal
bleed!

Pat sits up, holding swollen neck, and peers out. Personnel gather around G.I. PATIENT as other patients watch silently. Corpsman trying to start second I.V. while military nurse checks blood pressure.

MILITARY NURSE
Sixty over nothing.

CORPSMAN
All his veins are collapsed.

Pat, in large blue P.J.s, moving unsteadily toward patient.

PAT
Maybe I can put in another line.

MILITARY NURSE
Let 'er try. People where she
works can throw one in a charging
water buffalo.

Corpsman hands Pat sizable needle. She moves to head of cot and deftly inserts needle in jugular vein. Tom and OTHER DOCTOR hurriedly enter and examine patient.

TOM (to nurse)
Belly's tight as a tick. Order six
units of blood and notify surgery.

Nurse exits. Tom puts long needle into abdomen; blood gushes.

OTHER DOCTOR
He's got another pumper.

Military nurse returns with bags of blood and forces it into I.V. Pat off to side with hand working small cross around neck. Ashen patient rallies and looks toward her.

G.I. PATIENT (weakly)
Is that a round-eye?

TOM
We're taking you back to surgery,
trooper.

G.I. PATIENT
Doan mean nothin'.

But as he looks back at Pat his bravado disappears.

G.I. PATIENT (cont'd)
Could you hold my hand, ma'am?

Pat moves closer, takes hand and smiles down at him.

PAT
Your docs are the best.

TOM
Let's move 'im out.

Team loads patient onto stretcher. Pat follows to door.

PAT
See you in a while.

G.I. PATIENT (terrified)
Pray for me.

PAT
Of course.

Pat moves slowly back through ward. Patients stare with old soldier eyes: weary, sad, frightened, dazed. Military nurse stripping bloody cot stops to help Pat to bed.

MILITARY NURSE
Thanks for holding his hand. It's
tough being nurse, mother, wife
and girlfriend to so many.

PAT
He looked so scared.

Military nurse shakes head sadly.

MILITARY NURSE (quietly)
He's already been back to the O.R.
twice.

INT. NAVY HOSPITAL WARD, PAT'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

Shelly, Karen and Jean there. Pat rubs swollen neck.

SHELLY

You look like a water buffalo.

PAT

I feel like one.

KAREN

You're lucky. They've found guys
dead in the water with fang marks.

PAT

Yeah. Miss Lucky herself.

SHELLY

Why so down? If you've made it
this long you'll live.

PAT (hesitant)

I care about our Vietnamese
patients ... But this place ...
It's different seeing people who
look like your kid brother.

Shelly's face saddens.

SHELLY

Tom wants me here when he's on
call, but I dread it.

PAT

It makes me feel so...

JEAN

Don't you dare say guilty. We're
risking our lives to help the
Vietnamese. Isn't that enough?

SHELLY

You need to get back to the pig
sty. No time for feelings there.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL TRIAGE - DAY

Pat working on casualties with Ron. Sister Francoise enters
with small boy being carried by his young SISTER.

SISTER FRANCOISE (to Ron)

I find them in courtyard. His
sister say he swallow coin.

Ron palpates child's throat as he keeps trying to swallow.

RON

It's in the esophagus. He'll have to go out to Navy where they have instruments to go after it.

PAT

I can take him when I finish here.

RON

No rush. He's breathing O.K.

Child's sister worried.

SISTER FRANCOISE

Mother, father killed.

Nun and Ron exit with children. Dan appears in doorway in combat gear, removes helmet.

DAN

I was in the neighborhood.
Thought I'd see how you're doing.

PAT

I'm fine.

Dan looks at bloody patients and shifts uncomfortably.

DAN

Guess I oughta split.

PAT

Do you have time for lunch? We have a great cook, and I at least owe you that for saving my life.

DAN (smiling)

I never turn down real food.

INT. NURSES' VILLA - DAY

Dan and nurses at table. Bac Si cavorting on balcony in b.g.

MARGARET

So how's the war going, Sergeant?
Won any hearts and minds lately?

DAN

We're building a school on an island I helped pacify, if that's what you mean.

MARGARET

And how many buildings did you first destroy to pacify it?

DAN (flatly)

None.

PAT

Could we talk about something else?

MARGARET

My, my. I shouldn't think you would have to defend a big brave Marine.

SHELLY (to Margaret)

Pat's already had one snake bite.

DAN

We're busting our butts to give these people a democracy.

MARGARET

And you actually believe that is what they want?

She nods toward Tien, who is clearing plates.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Perhaps they prefer to plant rice and raise their children, without having to dodge bullets.

DAN

You're British aren't you?

MARGARET

And what if I am?

DAN

You should know what freedom costs. Or haven't you heard of the blitzkrieg?

MARGARET

I am quite well aware of the bombing of London. My mother was killed in it.

She gets up from table and touches scarred cheek.

MARGARET (cont'd)

I was more fortunate. Just a few scars and the honor of growing up in an orphanage. Things might have been different, but my mother had the bad taste to have me fathered by a yank flyer who had his fun and skipped.

Margaret exits and all sit quietly until Dan breaks silence.

DAN
Sorry, I didn't know.

KAREN
Neither did we.

EXT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL - DAY

Pat and Dan in Dan's jeep. Sand bags on floor raise his long legs to steering wheel.

PAT
Margaret's a great nurse. She dates an American from our consulate.

DAN
I don't care if she doesn't like me. Just so you do.

Pat is shy as she gets out of jeep. Dan stops her.

DAN (cont'd)
Did that little girl make it? The one I brought in.

Pat smiles and nods yes.

PAT
It's nice you remember her.

DAN
I have a little sister.

Dan puts on helmet and starts jeep.

DAN (cont'd)
Thanks for lunch.

PAT
Sure.

She watches him back away and head out hospital gates.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL O.R. - DAY

Pat enters O.R. with Jean. They are surprised to find Dr. Fitch operating while Becky gives anesthesia.

DR. FITCH
This kid's got a coin stuck in him.

PAT
I know but ...

BECKY (anxiously)
Co Pat, you prease help.

Pat finds air hissing out crude throat incision.

PAT (to Dr. Fitch)
You have to close that incision so
we can breathe him.

DR. FITCH
I'll take a quick look at the
esophagus to see if it's in there.

PAT
You opened his trachea before you
checked the esophagus?

DR. FITCH
I thought that's where it was.

JEAN
This isn't a guessing game, doctor.

Fitch pulls out coin and sutures trachea and throat incisions.

BECKY
Heart stop.

Pat begins to resuscitate. Shelly enters as Dr. Fitch flees.

SHELLY
What's this mule-shit pie?

JEAN
Fitch decided to try surgery.

SHELLY
Surgery? That looks like a shark
attack.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Pat carries body out of surgery. SISTER SCREAMS.

SISTER.
Cam duc chet roi! Cam duc!

EXT. ORPHANAGE ROAD - DAY

Pat drives hospital van down dusty lane. Dead boy's sister
sits stoically beside Becky in back.

Van pulls up to complex on dunes at beach. Sister Françoise comes to door.

BECKY (in Vietnamese)
Another for you, Sister.

INT./EXT. ORPHANAGE - DAY

Sister Françoise leads Pat, Becky and child's sister to courtyard. Old cribs hold dozens of children who CRY or stare sadly through slats. Harried nuns give bottles and change diapers. Children emaciated and ragged. Toddlers play.

SISTER FRANÇOISE
We were school before the war.
Now orphanage with little money.

PAT
You don't receive aid from America?

SISTER FRANÇOISE
Much goes to black market.

Pat stoops to boy's sister, who holds head down.

PAT
(in Vietnamese)
I'm sorry about your brother.

The child turns her back. Pat distressed.

SISTER FRANÇOISE
You must give time.

EXT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL COURTYARD - DAY

Pat and Becky drive into hospital compound. Becky sad.

PAT
It wasn't your fault. Bac Si
Fitch shouldn't have done surgery.
(beat)
And I shouldn't have gone home for
lunch.

Pat and Becky about to enter hospital when food cart arrives with watery broth and fish heads. People, old, young, mothers with children, fight for soup and rice waving cheap bowls. CHILDREN CRY. Pat watches pandemonium, then stomps inside.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Pat walks quickly to triage. Shelly working on patients.

PAT

Can you manage two days without me?

SHELLY

Why, are you running off with your handsome sergeant?

PAT

I'm going to Saigon. I've had it with this supply shit. And Fitch.

SHELLY

Headquarters ignores our cables.

PAT

If they ignore me, I'll quit.

SHELLY

Tell them I'll throw it in too.

INT. A.I.D. HEADQUARTERS, SAIGON - DAY

Pat enters huge room filled with Vietnamese and Americans typing or sorting papers. She asks directions and is pointed to office with PAULA CHAMBERS, MEDICAL LIAISON sign on it.

INT. MEDICAL LIAISON'S OFFICE - DAY

MISS CHAMBERS (32), American with blond hair and dark roots, rises to greet Pat.

MISS CHAMBERS

I can only give you a minute. I have an important appointment.

She sits down at desk and motions Pat to chair.

PAT

I'll wait. We need to talk about conditions in Danang.

MISS CHAMBERS

I won't be back today.

PAT

I'll stay until tomorrow.

MISS CHAMBERS

I won't be in tomorrow.

Vietnamese SECRETARY comes to door.

SECRETARY

Miss Chambers, time for hair appointment.

Supervisor flushes under Pat's steady gaze.

MISS CHAMBERS

Tell them I'll be a little late.

Secretary exits. Miss Chambers gives Pat full attention.

MISS CHAMBERS (cont'd)

So what's the problem in Danang?

PAT

For starters, get rid of Fitch.

MISS CHAMBERS

Doctor Fitch? On what grounds?

PAT

That he's a total incompetent.

MISS CHAMBERS

I'm afraid Washington wouldn't agree. He's going to be transferred.

PAT

I hope to the other side.

MISS CHAMBERS

He'll be returning to the United States to become A.I.D.'s Chief of Medical Affairs.

Pat at first aghast, then brightens.

PAT

Does that mean we get a new chief?

MISS CHAMBERS

He's already been assigned.

PAT

How about a nursing director to improve care on our wards?

Miss Chambers is putting papers in expensive brief case.

MISS CHAMBERS

Things don't happen as easily as you seem to think, Miss Walsh.

PAT
I've been here five months and the
situation is only getting worse.
Here's a list.

Pat takes paper from pocket and hands it across desk. Miss
Chambers glances at it, reading aloud.

MISS CHAMBERS
Surgical supplies, better diet for
patients, food and clothing for
orphanage ... anything else?

PAT
American taxpayers have paid for
all of that and more.

Miss Chambers stands to leave. List on desk. Pat stays
seated.

PAT (cont'd)
Get us our supplies or I quit.
(beat)
The other anesthetist will, too.

Miss Chambers tosses list into briefcase. Pat stands,
extends hand.

PAT (cont'd)
Thank you.

MISS CHAMBERS
(taking hand)
I'm giving a party at my quarters
tonight.

PAT
I'm pretty tired from the flight.

MISS CHAMBERS
The Ambassador will be there.

PAT
Could you give me directions?

INT. CHAMBERS' VILLA - NIGHT

Dozens of well-heeled guests in palatial villa. Ornate tables
hold shrimp, fancy sandwiches and liquor. Vietnamese in white
jackets carry trays of champagne. STEREO SYSTEM PLAYS Petula
Clark's DOWNTOWN.

Miss Chambers in long silk dress, freshly bleached hair in
stiff beehive, introduces guests to AMBASSADOR.

Pat enters in sun dress and sandals, but more alluring than others. KEN MILES (38), one of many men in pressed safari suits, spots her. He takes two glasses of champagne from passing waiter and glides easily through crowd to Pat.

KEN MILES
New in-country?

PAT
No. I'm stationed in Danang.

KEN MILES (shaking hands)
Ken Miles, Associated News.

PAT
A reporter?

KEN MILES
We prefer to be called journalists.

PAT (looking around)
Do you know all these people?

KEN MILES
Most. There's not much action in
Saigon.

Pat indicates French doors open to balcony where we hear distant ARTILLERY. Orange glow hangs in night sky.

PAT
Have you tried looking out there?

Miles glances at distant battle.

KEN MILES
It's not some big knockout body
count.

Pat sees Miss Chambers and ambassador. Hands champagne to Miles.

PAT (to Miles)
Please excuse me.

Pat approaches group around Ambassador, quietly observing while Miss Chambers introduces COLONEL JAMES.

MISS CHAMBERS
Mister Ambassador, may I present
Colonel Andrew James, chest
surgeon at Cam Ranh Bay.

COLONEL JAMES
An honor to meet you, sir.

AMBASSADOR

I trust your mission is going well.

COLONEL JAMES

Very well, sir. All patients
receiving excellent care.

Miss Chambers spots Pat and smile disappears from face.

MISS CHAMBERS

Pardon me, Mister Ambassador,
there's someone else you must meet.

She begins to turn ambassador toward opposite side of room.

PAT

Excuse me, Mister Ambassador.

He looks around and sees Pat moving to forefront.

PAT (cont'd)

Forgive my forwardness, sir, but
I'm sure you'd like to know how
our mission is going in Danang.

Ambassador smiles. Miss Chambers on high alert.

MISS CHAMBERS

Miss Walsh is part of our A.I.D.
team caring for wounded civilians.

AMBASSADOR

Admirable, Miss Walsh. And how is
your work progressing?

PAT

Not very well. But Miss Chambers
has promised top priority to our
supply problems.

Miss Chambers nods eagerly as ambassador turns to her.

MISS CHAMBERS

Remedies already underway.

PAT

Like letting Americans unload
supply planes instead of the
Vietnamese, so our food and
medicine stop going to the black
market.

Miss Chambers nods so forcefully her beehive leans to one
side. She takes ambassador's arm to move him away.

PAT (cont'd)
And doing the same for our
orphanage.

MISS CHAMBERS
Of course. The orphanage.

PAT (to Ambassador)
We take children whose family die
at our hospital to the nuns.

AMBASSADOR
Commendable. Never forget the
children.

Pat extends a hand and the ambassador takes it gently.

PAT
Thank you for caring, sir.

AMBASSADOR
And thank you, Miss Walsh.

Miss Chambers hustles him away and Ken Miles reappears.

KEN MILES (to Pat)
Bravo. Very impressive.

PAT
I have an early flight.

Pat starts toward door.

KEN MILES (calling after her)
I might get up your way sometime.

INT. DANANG NURSES' VILLA - NIGHT

Pat, Karen, Margaret, Tom, Shelly, Rick and Jean finishing
candle-lit dinner. MUSIC in b.g. Tien serves tea.

KAREN
I'll believe Fitch is leaving when
I see him get on a plane.

MARGARET
It makes perfect sense your
government would promote him. If
Hitler applied they'd hire him
because he had experience in
relocating people.

PAT
At least he'll be behind a desk in
Washington, not killing patients.

Rick, dressed in flight suit, gets up from table.

RICK

Got a date up north with Uncle Ho.

MARGARET

Time to drop bombs on children?

JEAN

Don't start, Margaret.

MARGARET

Aah, is it bad luck for aviators
to consider what's blowing up
beneath them?

RICK

Why do you assume we don't?

Jean walks him out, after giving Margaret murderous look.

TOM (to Margaret)

You sure know how to make a guy
feel good.

MARGARET

I didn't come here to ease
anyone's conscience. I came to
care for people being maimed.

SHELLY

You're getting a lot of mileage
out of those scars of yours.

Margaret touches a hand to face, then leaves table.

INT. NURSES' VILLA - NIGHT

Candles burned down. Pat, Karen and Jean drinking wine at
table with darkness beyond French doors in b.g. MUSIC PLAYS.

JEAN

They were separated before we met
over here. Rick wants a divorce,
but she's threatening to hold
their two sons hostage.

KAREN

Sounds like a great relationship.

JEAN

I love him but ...

Huge EXPLOSION blows doors open.

PAT

Incoming!

Pat, Karen and Jean dive beneath table as MUSIC WAVERS AND STOPS. Lights fail. Flares shoot up turning sky orange.

JEAN

They're hitting the air base!

Tom rushes from Shelly's room still buttoning pants. Shelly runs behind in short, filmy nightgown.

TOM

I've gotta get back to Navy
Hospital!

SHELLY

Not without us! We have no bunker!

Pat, Karen and Jean crawl from beneath table. Shelly runs back to room as Margaret appears, pulling on uniform.

TOM (looking out)

God, the whole airfield's on fire.

JEAN

Rick's out there.

Shelly returns in scrub dress. HUGE EXPLOSION.

TOM (running for door)

That's the ammo dump! We'll have
mass casualties!

EXT. DANANG STREETS - NIGHT

Tom drives hospital van through streets filled with tanks, jeeps and troop trucks with headlights off. Boiling orange cloud over air base and THUNDER OF BATTLE.

Flares in sky illuminate frightened faces of van's occupants. Pat runs her gold cross back and forth on its chain.

Van crosses bridge, where SENTRIES FIRE CONSTANT VOLLEYS toward water. As van passes Cabbage Patch whores run into road flapping dresses and shouting above noise.

WHORES

Hurry-up boom-boom! Five dollah!

TOM

Are you shittin' me?

SHELLY

Jesus, they're having a fire sale!

Van's anxious occupants howl. Tom swerves to avoid Sophie.

SOPHIE
Hurry-up boom-boom. One dollah!

EXT. NAVY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Van stops at closed gates. Complex darkened.

TOM
The compound's secured. It'll be
tough talking my own way in.

He kisses Shelly and disappears into darkness.

SHELLY
What ever happened to looking out
for the weaker sex?

MARGARET
There is none in war.

Another EXPLOSION sends Shelly behind wheel.

SHELLY
I guess if the whores aren't
afraid, I shouldn't be either.

MARGARET
Nice comparison.

Van, headlights off, travels short distance when dark shape
steps into fire lit road. Jean touches Shelly's shoulder.

JEAN
Don't stop.

Small man runs toward them. Shelly hits brakes.

SHELLY
Isn't that Mr. Hai?

Mr. Hai breathless as he reaches van.

MR. HAI
My brother hurt bad. I get him.

He darts away. Shelly turns to others.

SHELLY
I vote we get outta here. His
brother's probably V.C.

KAREN
You think everyone's Viet Cong.

Mr. Hai is seen carrying a man across his small shoulders.

PAT

We can't just leave them.

The women help Mr. Hai load wounded man into van.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Nurses and Mr. Hai carry man toward triage. Rats scurry over feet and windows break. Patients run in all directions carrying their I.V. bottles and clutching bandages. Dr. Fitch, in underwear, runs past waving flashlight.

DR. FITCH

We're civilians! They have to
evacuate us!

SHELLY

Grace under fire.

Nurses work on Mr. Hai's brother while he nervously clicks
claw.

JEAN

Pat, stay with him. Karen and
I'll get the O.R. set up.
(to Shelly)
You get a surgeon and blood.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Pat and Shelly haul stretcher from O.R. Hai's brother awake.

MR. HAI (bowing)

Americans number one.

Pat and Shelly take stretcher to ICU. Shelly points to deep
creases over both shoulders of Mr. Hai's brother.

SHELLY

Strap marks from carrying supplies
down the Ho Chi Minh trail. Told
you he's V.C.

Margaret takes over.

MARGARET (to Shelly)

In here he is a patient.

Pat returns to triage, where Jean looks through blown out
window to fires at air base. Pat goes to her side.

PAT
Rick'll be all right.

The two women watch fires, which DISSOLVE TO morning sun through heavy smoke.

EXT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL, E.R. RECEIVING PLATFORM - DAWN

Pat and Jean watch sun rise through smoke over air base.

PAT
Why aren't we getting casualties?

JEAN
The military has Americans to pick up before they can get to ours.

Jean starts for parking lot.

JEAN (cont'd)
I have to see if Rick's O.K.

PAT
I'll drive.

EXT. DANANG AIR BASE - DAY

Pat weaves van through smoldering hulks of planes. Craters pock main runway. Arrival and departure building flattened.

Americans in body bags lie in neat rows outside morgue with large sign over door, UNCOVER IN RESPECT FOR THE DEAD.

PAT
I wonder how they'll report this body count back home.

Jean waves toward group of pilots hurrying to A6 fighters.

JEAN
Rick, over here!

RICK (waving)
Headin' north! Pay back time!

Jean gives thumbs up.

INT. CIVILIAN HOSPITAL, TRIAGE - DAY

Pat attends to badly wounded woman, crying boy on stretcher with her. Pat picks up toddler, balancing him on hip while caring for mother. Dan comes to door.

DAN
You nurses O.K.?

PAT
Just a little busy. Could you
hold this one while I get his
mother ready for surgery?

Dan clumsily shifts squalling child. Shelly enters.

SHELLY (to Pat)
Let's get her to the O.R.

PAT (to Dan)
Be right back.

Pat and Shelly pick up field stretcher and exit with mother.

INT. TRIAGE - DAY

Pat enters to find Dan walking floor with crying child.

PAT
She didn't make it.

DAN
What'll we do with the kid?

EXT. DANANG - DAY

Dan driving jeep across bridge. Pat holds boy.

PAT
The nuns take in our orphans, plus
the babies fathered by G.I.s.

She stops abruptly and looks at Dan, who laughs.

DAN
Don't look at me.

INT. ORPHANAGE - DAY

Sister Francoise greets them, takes them to SISTER MARIE (40).

SISTER FRANCOISE
Sister Marie, our Mother Superior.

SISTER MARIE
How nice you visit.

Sister Francois takes child from Pat.

SISTER FRANCOISE (to Pat)
And how is this one called?

PAT
We don't know. His mother died in surgery.

SISTER FRANCOISE (to Dan)
We give him your name? We use all Vietnamese.

Dan both flattered and uncomfortable.

PAT
How about Danny?

Sister Francoise repeats name to child in French accent.

SISTER FRANCOISE
Dan-nay.

She smiles and puts him at table where children eat.

SISTER MARIE
You will have tea?

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Pat and Dan seated with Sister Marie at table beneath tall Sea Pine having tea. Several children hang around Dan.

SISTER MARIE
Many American visit with sweets.

She indicates American soldiers playing with children in b.g. Dan pulls gum from pocket. Children divide it and run off.

DAN
I'll bring candy next time.

PAT
Maybe you should ask Sister.

SISTER MARIE
Sweets bad for teeth; good for heart.
(sighs)
Some miss family so big they die.

EXT. ORPHANAGE - DAY

Sister Marie walks Pat and Dan outside. Dan suddenly sprints to where children play in his jeep.

DAN
Christ Almighty!

Pat embarrassed by language in front of nun.

PAT
Dan.

Dan grabs objects children are playing catch with and holds them up so Pat can see they are grenades.

PAT (cont'd)
Holy shit.

EXT. LANE LEADING FROM ORPHANAGE - DAY

Pat and Dan head back to town. Grenades now in wooden box on jeep floor between sand bags.

PAT
Do you always carry grenades?

DAN
When I'm driving between Danang
and Hoi An. That's Charlie country.
(beat)
I left money under my teacup. I
hope Sister Marie doesn't mind.

PAT
I did the same. It was nice of
you to give the kids gum.

DAN
I used to carry it for Marnie.

PAT
Who's Marnie?

DAN
My little sister.

PAT
How old?

DAN
Ten. We're pals.

EXT. NURSES' VILLA COURTYARD - DAY

Pat sits with Dan in jeep.

DAN

Maybe you could visit Hoi An. I'll show you the island we pacified.

PAT (indicates floor)

You want me to drive where you need sandbags for land mines?

DAN

I'll arrange for a copter.

PAT

You can get one for sight-seeing?

DAN

My outfit has a few extra perks.

Pat gets out.

DAN (cont'd)

Could you bring a friend? I have a lonely Aussie buddy.

PAT

Him and ten thousand other guys.

EXT. DANANG AIR BASE - DAY

Pat and Shelly at new building with ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES sign. Crowd of G.I.s, many minorities, wait for flight. As transport taxies up, DEPARTING G.I.s talk excitedly.

DEPARTING G.I.#1

Oh, baby! There's our ride back to the world!

DEPARTING G.I.#2

That freedom bird's gonna crap me out right on my hometown! San Francisco here I come!

Men watch women fight to keep dresses down in wind of engines.

PAT

How many are we picking up?

SHELLY

Cable just said meet new arrivals.

Engines stop, cargo door drops. TERESA LANE (35), professional but friendly, is first off, followed by sage, bald DOCTOR OTTO GAUKEL (60).

EXT. AIR BASE - DAY

Pat and Shelly load newcomers' bags into hospital van.

SHELLY

We didn't expect a new medical
chief so soon, Doctor Gaukel.

Otto takes cigar from shirt pocket and lights up.

OTTO

Cut the formality. Call me Otto.

TERESA

Same here. Teresa.

PAT

We really need a nursing director.

SHELLY

Guess we can head into town.

TERESA

Wait ... the anesthetist.

PAT

Anesthetist?

OTTO

Puked her guts out the whole trip.

Pat and Shelly watch as limp, grey-haired woman, GERTIE (54),
helped down ramp by two G.I.s. Nurses take over.

TERESA

You'll be fine, Gertie, when you
get to your quarters.

GERTIE

God, girl, I can't wait for a long
cool bath and air-conditioning.

Pat and Shelly exchange looks. Gertie loaded into van.

INT. A.I.D. TEMPORARY HOUSING - DAY

Pat and Shelly at opened door. Gertie in small room with
bed, chest, sink and commode. Shower head juts from wall.

GERTIE

God girl, you don't expect me to
stay here?

PAT

Just til there's room in permanent quarters next to ours.

GERTIE

But Washington promised me a modern, air-conditioned suite. How could they make me come to such a horrible place?

SHELLY

What do you mean, make you?

GERTIE

When the recruiter came to my hospital in Two Oaks New Mexico he said they needed an anesthetist right away. The other girl was pregnant so that left only me.

PAT

But it was still voluntary.

Gertie grabs chest and collapses on bed.

SHELLY

Nice going, Co Pat.

The two women check Gertie's pulse and respirations.

PAT

Gertie, take a big breath.

Gertie's eyes flicker open.

SHELLY

We'll get this straightened out in the morning. You can go back home.

GERTIE (weeping)

God girl, I don't think I can make that trip again.

Pat puts cold cloth from sink on Gertie's forehead.

PAT

We'll come get you after work. You can have dinner at our place.

EXT. A.I.D. TEMPORARY HOUSING - DAY

Shelly turns on Pat the moment they are outside.

SHELLY

What about our party to celebrate
Fitch's departure? We can't take
old 'God Girl' to the Bamboo Hut.

PAT

I forgot.

INT. BAMBOO HUT - NIGHT

Several members of medical team and military men at party.
FEMALE TAIWANESE TRIO sings: PLEASE RELEASE ME, LET ME GO.
Pat and Teresa haul in weak Gertie.

Gertie sees men, straightens, pushes grey hair into place and
disappears into their midst. Pat and Teresa laugh, take seats.

SHELLY

Where's 'God Girl'?

PAT

She smelled men and ditched us.

Pat sits by Ron and Teresa, calling to smiling proprietor.

PAT (cont'd)

Hai Ba Mui Ba.

PROPRIETOR

Duc, duc. Hai Ba Mui Ba.

He brings bottles with 33 on label, same as others drink.

PAT (to Teresa)

Local beer. Alcohol kills the bugs.

Pat glances across room at Otto, drinking and laughing.

PAT (cont'd)

Hope he works as hard as he
parties.

Ron looks sad watching Jim Ramirez flirt with singers.

RON

Get a load a' Jim. He's 4F 'cause
of a bad knee, and he signs up
with A.I.D. I join Public Health
to try to stay with my wife and
kids, and where do they send me?

Teresa indicates Gertie, boogying with YOUNG LIEUTENANT.

TERESA

Looks like Gertie's found the
ultimate cure for senility. War.

Jean walks by and Pat takes hold of her arm.

PAT

Where's Rick?

JEAN

He's late. How about Dan?

PAT

He's on some recon thing.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Dan, with radio, and Bird-dog fighting through thick
undergrowth. They are being pursued by North Vietnamese
who aren't sure where they are. There is much yelling in
Vietnamese and stacatto bursts from guns.

INT./EXT. BAMBOO HUT - NIGHT

A shaken Rick enters. He talks with Jean and they exit.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Dan and Bird-dog still fighting their way through jungle.
Gun fire in b.g. Two helicopters race toward them at
tree-top level.

INT./EXT. BAMBOO HUT - NIGHT

Party wild with diving contest taking place off railing.

PAT (looking down)

I can't dive!

KAREN (in river)

Then jump!

CROWD

Jump! Jump!

Pat climbs onto railing, hikes up skirt to WHISTLES and
cannonballs into darkness. APPLAUSE and CHEERS. Jim does a
perfect swan dive off rail.

EXT. BOMB CRATER, JUNGLE - NIGHT

Dan, on radio, and Bird-dog come over edge into muddy bomb crater. Distant gunfire. They remove packs. Dan takes rope from his, cuts two 10' lengths and tosses one to Bird-dog. Lines are tied around waist, ends through legs, back up and tied to waist line. Carabiners snapped onto harnesses. Both lie down in crater and cover with leaves.

INT./EXT. BAMBOO HUT - NIGHT

Everyone drenched from river. Trio and tipsy partiers sing WE GOTTA GET OUTTA THIS PLACE.

EXT./INT. CHOPPER #1 OVER JUNGLE - NIGHT

Dan on radio below. Chopper #1 hovers over hole in jungle canopy above bomb crater. Door gunner firing. Chopper #2 blasting jungle as it circles area. Intense return fire.

CREW CHIEF at door, sees two pulses of red light from below. Gives yank on long rope secured to chopper floor, then throws jerry can tied to other end out door.

EXT. BOMB CRATER, JUNGLE - NIGHT

Jerry can slams to ground, followed by rope. Dan ties loop in rope, snaps it through carabiner, tightens lock nut. Bird-dog does same a few feet lower on rope. Enemy gunfire closer.

DAN (into radio)
Sassy Lassie, locked on.

Rope goes taut, Dan rises off ground, followed by Bird-dog and jerry can. North Vietnamese fire toward chopper.

EXT./INT. CHOPPER #1 - NIGHT

Crew Chief pulls on rope.

CREW CHIEF (to others)
Got 'em!

INT./ EXT. BAMBOO HUT - NIGHT

SIRENS sound, growing louder. MILITARY scramble for door.

MILITARY
M.P.s!

Drunk young man with Gertie rubs hand over stubble on head.

YOUNG LIEUTENANT

Whadda they gonna do, shave my
head and send me ta Nam?

M.P.s storm in. Singers run for back room with proprietor.
Pat, Shelly and Karen enter, wet and covered with weeds.

M.P. SERGEANT (to group)

You never heard there're
explosives floatin' down that
river?

M.P. CORPORAL

Besides sewage.

KAREN

We were just cooling off.

M.P. corporal sniffs and backs away.

OTTO (to M.P.s)

I'm in charge of this medical
outfit. What're the charges?

M.P. CORPORAL

Shoulda' known, crazy ass medical
people. Ya love 'em, ya hate 'em.

M.P. SERGEANT (to Otto)

Clear out and no charges.

OTTO (loudly)

O.K. Party's over. Time to sleep
it off and relieve the sober shift.

INT./EXT. CHOPPER #1 OVER JUNGLE - NIGHT

Dan and Bird-dog dangle below moving chopper with jerry can
just above tree tops. Choppers taking gunfire. One round
nicks the rope and remaining strands break bit by bit.

SLOW MOTION Last strands snap, and frayed end recoils into
chopper. Jerry can leads way down through foliage, followed
by rope, Bird-dog and Dan, arms flailing, rifles flying off
shoulders. Rest of rope trails after them.

BACK TO REAL-TIME Pilot fights to stabilize lurching chopper.

CREW CHIEF

They hit the fuckin' rope!

Sister ship starts trailing smoke in b.g.

PILOT #1

They couldn't survive that drop.

PILOT #2 (over radio)
Sassy Lassie, took a hit. Losing
power.

Pilot #1 banks into sharp turn toward sister ship.

PILOT #1
Roger, will cover.

EXT. JUNGLE CANOPY - NIGHT

Jerry can and men fall through trees. Bird-dog's left arm bashes large branch and snaps backwards. Painful expression, but no scream. Extra rope wraps over big branch pulling jerry can back up. Jerry can and rope snag, acting like bungee cord, bouncing Dan through underbrush, tearing at body. They finally stop, Bird-dog above, Dan below upside down, almost to ground.

BIRD-DOG
Bloody hell, danglin' like a
couple a' Christmas balls.

Dan stunned a beat, then pulls knife from belt and cuts himself loose. Covered with cuts and abrasions, he cuts Bird-dog free of rope.

BIRD-DOG (cont'd)
Take 'er easy, mate. Left arm's
got a new joint to it.

DAN (whispering)
Quiet. The NVA think we got away.

Dan lowers Bird-dog to ground, cuts jerry can free. Dan grabs two branches to make splints, puts a third between Bird-dog's teeth. Dan pulls broken arm. Bird-dog bites on branch. WE HEAR CRUNCH.

DAN (cont'd)
That's the tough part.

Dan cuts rope to secure arm to splints, strips to tee shirt, removes it and makes it into sling for Bird-dog.

BIRD-DOG
Good on yer, Mate.

Dan puts on shirt, pulls Bird-dog to feet, picks up jerry can.

DAN
At least we've got water.

They disappear into jungle. Dan limping.

INT. NURSES' VILLA - NIGHT

Pat, Shelly and Karen enter. Jean at table crying.

KAREN

Did something happen to Rick?

JEAN

He had an accident on the way into town. Little boy ran in front of his jeep ... couldn't stop in time.

SHELLY

That's too bad.

PAT

I'm sorry, Jean.

Jean gets up and goes to room.

EXT. A.I.D. TEMPORARY HOUSING - MORNING

Pat KNOCKING at Gertie's door and getting no response. Van waits in b.g. with other nurses.

PAT

Gertie, are you in there?

Door opens crack and Gertie, in sheet, sticks head out.

GERTIE

God, girl, I overslept. Can't wait to start work.

Pat surprised. Gertie accidentally knocks door open revealing stark naked young man sleeping blissfully in her bed.

EXT. HOSPITAL VAN - DAY

Van waiting for Gertie. Nurses laughing.

PAT

Wait til he discovers he's been screwing an old grey-haired lady.

SHELLY

Won't matter. She has round eyes and no grenades.