

HOME FIRES

By

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HOME FIRES

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Preface

To view the screenplay as a viable form of literature, as significant a genre as the novel, play, or the short story, is not a completely absurd premise. John Gassner believes that the screenplay has "been fashioned out of a body of writing that commands respect as writing: that is, as theme, story, style, and drama." Gassner makes clear, however, that the screenplay is different from other forms of writing, because "its form has been shaped by the requirements of cinematic art, which makes it unique among the forms of writing hitherto familiar to the reader, but it is nonetheless literature that can stand scrutiny."¹ If the screenplay is to be studied, then it must be examined on its own terms, keeping in mind that the screenplay deals with a visual medium, where emphasis is put more on the camera than on the word. Using Home Fires as a basis for my argument, I intend to show how this distinction works, emphasizing how the screenplay functions in relation to other facets of filmmaking such as directing and editing, how structure becomes the most important element in the writing of the screenplay, and how screenwriting borrows from fiction such aspects as verisimilitude, conflict, and point of view to create a medium that is both original and dynamic in the world of literature.

Wolf Rilla defines the screenplay as "the creative blueprint" for a film, a definition not uncommon among other critics and filmmakers.² David Freeman suggests that the screenplay is "the bare bones of a film."³ Ellen Oumano agrees: she believes that the screenplay "serves as a blueprint of theme, mood, and story for those collaborating in creating the film."⁴ Yet without the screenplay, the director has no film. He will have nothing but a screen full of images that have no structure, meaning, or voice. He is left, in other words, with absolutely nothing. In this sense, the screenplay is not only a blueprint, but it is also a guide for the director to follow, one that will express the story in terms both cinematic and dramatic. In Home Fires, for example, I set the period in which the story takes place (World War II), the place (a small army installation in Ohio), and I suggest theme (racism as a destructive and violent disease), while keeping my story (a young officer investigating the shooting of seven black soldiers) firmly planted in the foreground.

If I have done my job correctly, then I have also given people other than the director something to start with. By setting scenes either in the day or night, I am suggesting lighting for the cinematographer; by using such terms as montage and intercut sequence, I am giving the editor an idea of how to cut the film; and by suggesting how characters think, how they emotionally express themselves, I have given the actors an idea of what the characters are looking for,

and whether they find it by the story's end. In Home Fires, George Edwards, the story's protagonist, may appear unmilitary not only in the clothes he wears, but also in his speech. The truth, however, is that Edwards believes very much in the Army; it is the actor's job to find the right balance between surface unconventionality and an inner respect for military tradition.

No matter how brilliant the director's job, or the actor's performance, their work (or anyone else's) would not mean anything if the screenplay was nothing more than a rambling and incoherent mess. True, the director's responsibilities lie with the screenplay, but only if it tells a story in an intelligent and logical manner. Thus, structure plays an important part in the writing of the screenplay, or as William Miller puts it, "structure is the prime element in a film or television script."⁵ William Goldman goes one step further: "screenplays are structure." According to Goldman, a writer can employ the most interesting characters a screenplay can have, have them speak the most colorful and incisive dialogue a writer can create, but "if the structure is unsound, forget it."⁶ Douglas Garrett Winston defines two elements that are important to understanding how film structure works. One is the "external structure" that involves narrative, plot, characterization, and other devices a writer needs to tell a story. The second element is "internal structure." This type of structure derives from the author's point of view, or attitude, toward the

subject matter that he is dealing with in his story.⁷ With Home Fires, I discovered that the writer must treat both structures with equal importance in writing a screenplay; if he does not, he may run the risk of creating an imbalance in his story. In writing the first draft of Home Fires, for example, I made the mistake of letting my attitudes toward racism carry more significance than the plot. The first draft was filled with characters who expressed their feelings on the evils of racism through long sections of dialogue that made the screenplay appear more like a philosophical essay on racism than a story that dramatizes the mistreatment of the black soldier during World War II. The second draft, however, concentrates on the story; the theme is expressed through Edwards' conflict with Bolyn and Steigert; and it is shown visually, as the camera records the inferior conditions of the black soldiers' barracks and weapons.

Whatever structure he employs (and most screenplays include both), the writer's main objective is to create movement; connected with movement is the audience's participation with the film. As Miller states, an audience's "involvement in narrative story is complex and dynamic," while watching a film is not "the monotonic response of a captured, 'sutured' subject," but "rather it is an active process of shifting attention and involvement."⁸ Creating movement, then, becomes tantamount to the screenwriter's craft; the writer must grab the audience's attention as

quickly as possible, or he runs the risk of not having viewer interest at all.

Syd Field believes that the first thirty pages of a screenplay are the most important, because it is within these thirty pages that the audience is introduced to the main character and the conflict in which he becomes involved.⁹ In Home Fires, I follow Field's principle very closely. The story begins with the killing of the black soldiers; this incident introduces us to the only survivor, Pvt. Charles McGuire, and to the two men responsible, Captain Brian Steigert and Lt. Bolyn. After the shooting, we move to the investigation and the man who conducts the inquiry, Major George W. Edwards. Although the audience knows who is responsible for the black soldiers' deaths, Edwards does not have the faintest idea; thus, the first thirty pages establishes the conflict with which the story deals: what will Steigert and Bolyn do to obstruct the investigation, and will Edwards eventually find the truth that the audience already knows? Such a story carries with it suspense and drama that I develop in the course of the screenplay.

Home Fires belongs to a genre that may be defined as the social awareness film; that is, a film that reveals insight into racial, social, or moral problems. Such films include In the Heat of the Night (1967), Coming Home (1978), The Killing Fields (1984), and A Soldier's Story (1984). Such films take a social issue and dramatize it on the screen. The screenwriter must remember, however, that he is telling

it. The theme that racism leads to violence and death is inherent in a story like Home Fires; the problem that I had with the screenplay dealt with how I could show the mistreatment of black soldiers in the Army during World War II without pontificating about the ills of racism. To remedy the problem, I make the investigation the focal point of the story. Through Edwards' inquiry, we see the effects of the black soldiers' mistreatment at the camp. The camera records the inferior condition of the black soldiers' barracks and weapons; what the camera relates to the audience is the only comment needed on what is seen. Camp Ordinance 2213B is another device I use to show how the blacks are mistreated. This ordinance states that black soldiers are not allowed in the white section of camp without the base commander's permission. When the ordinance is violated by a young black private who enters the PX to order a beer, Captain Steigert, who is in charge of the camp's security, takes it upon himself to arrest the private. What happens instead is that seven men are coldbloodedly gunned down because of their refusal to obey an ordinance they feel is unfair.

Although inspired by historical events, Home Fires is a work of fiction. Such an incident in which seven black soldiers were mercilessly gunned down did take place on an army base in Ohio during World War II; however, to my knowledge, there was never an inquiry made into the incident. The investigation in Home Fires is one that I have made up

myself, and all the characters in the story, including Private McGuire, are also fictional. Since I am dealing with an actual period in history, an incident that really did happen, and with characters who could be real, I owe my audience a certain degree of reality in the story. In fiction, according to John Gardner, it is "the writer's first job to convince the reader that the events he recounts really happened, or to persuade the reader that they might have happened (given small changes in the laws of the universe), or else to engage the reader's interest in the patent absurdity of the lie." Gardner calls such fiction "verisimilar fiction," a term that refers to writing which attempts to convince the reader of the authenticity of the world that it is trying to represent.¹⁰ Verisimilitude may be found not only in the story's locations and characters; it may also be found in the writer's use of images to help recreate reality:

He must present, moment by moment, concrete images drawn from a careful observation of how people behave, and he must render the connections between moments, the exact gestures, facial expressions, or turns of speech that, within any given scene, move human beings to emotion, from one instant of time to the next.¹¹

Verisimilitude also plays an especially important role in screenwriting; what appears on the screen must seem believable to the audience or the film will not work.

With Home Fires, it is my task to make the locations,

incidents and the characters as real as possible. For example, I try to make the PX a setting that has its own unique identity, from the juke box that plays popular songs of the 1940s to the people who work there. Its thematic purpose is equally important. The PX is off limits to black soldiers, as Ordinance 2213B makes clear. Thus the black private entering the PX at the beginning of the story incites the action that brings Edwards' investigation into the picture. The ordinance is fictional too, but it carries enough dramatic and thematic weight that the audience may accept its authenticity within the context of the story. The screenplay itself is structured around an actual three week period in 1943, beginning on Saturday, June 12, and concluding on Thursday, July 1. If Home Fires were made into a film, we would see a number of scenes begin in the following manner: a date with a specific time attached to it would flash on the screen. For example, the first scene begins with the logo "Saturday, June 12, 1943: 9:45 P.M." Structuring the film in this way adds authenticity to the story; if the structure succeeds, then the audience will have felt that it has participated in events as they happened, watching them unfold on the day and time that they occurred.

As for characters, I make their physical descriptions brief, because in writing the screenplay, a character's actions often dictate his emotional and moral makeup. With Edwards and Bolyn, we have two characters who are extremely dissimilar not only in their actions, but also in the way

audience may accept its authenticity within the context of the story. The screenplay itself is structured around an actual three week period in 1943, beginning on Saturday, June 12, and concluding on Thursday, July 1. If Home Fires were made into a film, we would see a number of scenes begin in the following manner: a date with a specific time attached to it would flash on the screen. For example, the first scene begins with the logo "Saturday, June 12, 1943: 9:45 P.M." Structuring the film in this way adds authenticity to the story; if the structure succeeds, then the audience will have felt that it has participated in events as they happened, watching them unfold on the day and time that they occurred.

As for characters, I make their physical descriptions brief, because in writing the screenplay, a character's actions often dictate his emotional and moral makeup. With Edwards and Bolyn, we have two characters who are extremely dissimilar not only in their actions, but also in the way that they speak and feel toward other characters in the story. Physically, Edwards is a young officer in his thirties, but in his determination to find the ones responsible for the black soldiers' deaths, we learn that he is a man of courage and compassion. Edwards is also something of an eccentric. When we first meet him, he is whistling a Cole Porter song in a light, carefree manner. Edwards is, in fact, a Porter fan, and throughout the story, he sings, hums, or whistles various Porter tunes. I chose Porter

for Edwards because the composer has always been associated with music that has an upbeat tempo to it; there is something undeniably beguiling and offbeat about such Porter songs as "Begin the Beguine," "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," and "Let's Face It," songs that Edwards becomes associated with through the course of the story. What symbolizes Edwards' character, however, is the old, battered officer's cap that the Major wears for much of the story. The cap becomes a symbol for two reasons: it represents Edwards' individuality, his nonconformist attitudes toward the Army, while, at the same time, it reveals a strong admiration that he has for military tradition. At one point, we discover that the cap belonged to Edwards' father who was once commander at Camp Harrison during the 1930s. What we learn about the father comes from his son; the love that Edwards has for his father who represents military tradition to his son is shown by wearing the cap.

In Lt. Bolyn, however, Home Fires has its antagonist; he becomes the opposing force to Edwards' investigation. His attempts to stop the investigation maintain the conflict that is so essential to a narrative or dramatic structure. Bolyn wields a strong influence in the story. He controls Company E more than Captain Steigert, since the Captain is too involved with political aspirations to really know or care about what is going on within the company. Bolyn's two goons, Geick and Reuss, follow his orders to the letter. Whether it means beating up Edwards in an effort to make

him leave the camp before he discovers the truth, fracturing McGuire's hip that much more so he will not talk, or murdering Private Craig because Bolyn feels that he will tell Edwards everything about the black soldiers' deaths, Geick and Reuss never fail to carry out the Lieutenant's demands. As for being a racist, Bolyn's hatred of blacks stems from an incident in which he saw his older brother killed by a negro. The incident has always stayed with Bolyn, and at one point, he tells Geick and Reuss that one day he vowed to get even. The shooting of the black soldiers tragically represents Bolyn's revenge.

Screenwriting not only borrows verisimilitude and conflict from fiction, but it also makes use of point of view. William Miller states that "film uses uniquely cinematic variations on literary points of view." A film may use first person narration; it may use omniscient, objective, or what Miller calls "central intelligence" narration. This last type of narration combines all three other points of view in that it maintains third person narration throughout the story, the viewer is limited only to that character the film centers on, and the author is often not evident in the telling of the story.¹² In Home Fires, I do not restrict the story to one central point of view; I use a number of different characters to interpret incidents as they happen or after they have taken place. Edwards and Bolyn are two points of view that I make use of; two others would be Captain Halloway, the commander of the black soldiers at the camp, and Colonel

Scott, the man in charge of Camp Harrison. These two men view their positions at the camp in two distinct ways: Halloway has grown angry and discouraged at the mistreatment of his men while Scott would rather ignore that any problem between the white and black soldiers exists. They view Edwards in ways that are different too. Scott sees Edwards as a threat to his chances for a promotion; he resists helping Edwards for much of the story because he feels this way. Halloway, on the other hand, wants to help the Major, but he is not sure if it would do any good. Halloway's mistrust of the white man extends to Edwards as well; it is only at the story's climax, when Edwards has proof of who killed the black soldiers, that Halloway assists the Major. In fact, the story ends with both men sitting down at the bar in the PX; Edwards orders a beer for the two of them, a gesture that surprises Halloway in its sincerity.

George Bluestone believes that "cinema exhibits a stubborn antipathy to novels," whereas, the novel "emerges as a medium antithetical to film."¹³ I cannot help but feel that Bluestone misses the point on a very important factor. The relationship between novel and film is an extremely close one; true, the novel is a discursive medium, while the film is a visual one; yet they share elements instrumental in telling a story. One element they share which is significant is that both media are a form of expression. Again, the forms differ, but literature is made up of genres that are distinct from one another and still have much in common.

The screenplay, then, is deserving of study as an important genre of literature: it should be examined with the same care and treatment that is afforded the novel, play, or the short story. The screenwriter's contribution should not be taken for granted either; he uses the tools of his craft much in the same way as the novelist does. To this extent, the end result of both kinds of writers is the same: to create a work of art that eloquently expresses its story, the memory of which stays with the audience long after it has been experienced.

Thanking people has never been a forte of mine, but a project as ambitious as this one has been, there are a number of people to thank. So please bear with me. To Dr. Leonard Leff, I owe a great deal of thanks for his patience, confidence, and criticism that was fair, objective, and welcomed. To Dr. Jeffrey Walker and Dr. Edward Walkiewicz, all I can say is thanks for putting up with the eccentricities of a screenwriter. (Believe me, it's not easy).

To K. D. Reese, the finest typist I have ever run across, I owe an extreme debt of thanks for a job well done. To the people of Morrill 404, thanks for the support and friendship. And a special thank you to Bill Shute for just being there.

To my parents, Bob and Lorraine Mace, this screenplay is as much yours as it is mine. To Daniel Taradash, whose dedication to the craft of screenwriting is inspirational, thanks for the vote of confidence.

This screenplay is dedicated in loving memory to Carl Mace, my grandfather, my first friend, and my first hero.

Notes

- ¹ John Gassner, "Screenplay as Literature," Twenty Best Film Plays, eds. John Gassner and Dudley Nichols (New York: Garland Publishing, Co., 1977), p. vii.
- ² Wolf Rilla, The Writer and the Screen (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1974), p. 13.
- ³ David Freeman, The Last Days of Alfred Hitchcock (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 1984), p. 229.
- ⁴ Ellen Oumano, Film Forum: Thirty-five Filmmakers Discuss Their Craft (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 159.
- ⁵ William Miller, "The Matter of Screenplay Structure," Journal of Film and Video, 36 (Summer 1984), p. 34.
- ⁶ William Goldman, Adventures in the Screen Trade (New York: Warner Books, 1983), pp. 459-460.
- ⁷ Douglas Garrett Winston, The Screenplay as Literature, (Cranbury: N.J.: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1973), p. 36.
- ⁸ Miller, p. 36.
- ⁹ Field, Syd. The Screenwriter's Workbook (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1984), p. 103.
- ¹⁰ Gardner, John. The Art of Fiction (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), pp. 22-23.

11 Gardner, p. 24.

12 Miller, William, Screenwriting for Narrative Film and Television (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1980), p. 63.

13 George Bluestone, Novels Into Film, 5th ed. (1957; rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 23.

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FADE IN

EXT. - PARADE GROUNDS (CAMP HARRISON, 1943) - NIGHT

Saturday, June 12, 1943: 9:45 P.M.

Small dust clouds swirl around a flagpole, as they are kicked up by a warm summer breeze. The flag RATTLES against the pole, disturbing an otherwise quiet, lazy Saturday night.

From the distance, a young soldier enters the parade grounds. As he approaches the flagpole, we see that the young man is a black soldier. He is PVT. BOBBY STOCKWELL, early twenties, casually dressed in a private's uniform. He walks quickly and determinedly, as he passes the flagpole.

INT. - PX - NIGHT

9:50 P.M.

A soldier sits at the bar, nursing a beer. Two soldiers seated at the front of the PX quietly enjoy their beers, while two soldiers are in the back, playing a game of checkers.

SERGEANT DAVE WALLENSKY, mid-thirties, short, but massively built, calmly tends bar, drying beer glasses as they are handed to him by CORPORAL JERRY DEBBS, a tall, willowy young man who speaks in a slow Southwestern drawl. On the juke box, Benny Goodman's "Don't Be That Way" can be heard o.s.

Debbs is cleaning a pitcher, when he looks up from the wash basin. An expression of surprise comes over his face.

Wallensky has his hand out for the pitcher, but when it does not come, he turns and sees Debbs' incredulous look. He looks at what the corporal has seen, and his face suddenly registers astonishment too.

The two soldiers playing checkers quickly stop the game, as Stockwell enters the PX. His movements are slow, yet

Continued

forceful as he scans the faces of all the soldiers. As he moves through the PX, Stockwell nervously flips a coin through the fingers of his right hand. A CLOSE-UP of the coin reveals it to be a rare Indian nickel that has the buffalo engraved on both sides.

Stockwell walks up to the bar, as he tries to show as little tension as possible. He orders a beer, while he fights back the tenseness in his voice.

STOCKWELL

A beer, please.

Debbs sharply pokes Wallensky in the ribs. No longer surprised at Stockwell's presence, Wallensky smiles, then quickly goes into his friendly bartender's routine.

WALLENSKY

Sure thing, son.

As Wallensky draws Stockwell's beer, the private looks around him. He no longer fights tension, as he is put at ease by Wallensky's jovial manner.

The two soldiers resume their game of checkers. The game quickly comes to a halt, when one of the soldiers jumps the other's remaining five pieces. Both soldiers blankly look at each other, then begin another game.

The two soldiers seated at the front of the PX exchange looks of disapproval at Stockwell's presence. They then return to their beers.

The soldier seated at the bar pays no attention to Stockwell or anyone else in the PX for that matter. He is obviously drunk, the glazed eyes a dead give away.

Wallensky places a beer in front of Stockwell. He then puts the nickel in his pants' pocket as he takes a sip from the beer, while Frank Sinatra sings "This Love is Mine" on the juke box.

INT. - COMPANY C BARRACKS - NIGHT

C BARRACKS is located in the black section of camp. It is on the other side of the flagpole, opposite the white section.

As we move along the center aisle of the barracks, we see that the building is old and worn. The floor has lost its varnish and appears rough and unclean. The walls look equally uncared for. The paint has chipped and the color is a faded gray. Windows have cracks in them, screens are filled with holes, and a few of them have been carelessly repaired with masking tape and cardboard.

Continued

We are now moving along a row of beds. They are immaculately made, but the sheets are faded and stained, the blankets old and tattered. O.S. we can hear showers running from the latrine, and the lighthearted banter of a couple of soldiers.

We come to a bed that is occupied by a young black soldier, PVT. SAME GILBERT, who is dressed in his underclothes, reading the sports section of THE TOLEDO BLADE. A radio playing Ellington's "Mood Indigo" is precariously propped up on a window ledge next to Gilbert's bed.

EMMETT COOK, a handsome, athletic-looking private, exits the latrine wearing a towel wrapped around his waist. He comes out of the latrine drying his hair with another towel, when he takes the towel, and snaps Gilbert's newspaper.

Gilbert continues reading, unfazed by Cook's razzing.

Cook sits on the edge of his bed, then puts on his pants.

MILLER
(o.s.; shouting)
Goddamn cockroach.

Gilbert quickly throws down the newspaper, then jumps off the bed.

GILBERT
Cockroach? All right, gents, the
weekly Company C Cockroach Race
is on again.

Cook laughs, then follows Gilbert into the latrine.

Standing at a sink, shaving, is PVT. MONROE MILLER, a lean, muscular young man with a towel wrapped around his waist. The latrine is misty, and the mirrors, except for Miller's, are fogged up. Like the barracks, the latrine has also seen better days. The tiling on both the walls and the floor has lost its sheen. A brownish grime has formed not only on the sinks, but the toilets as well, a grime that looks as if it has become a permanent fixture of the latrine.

Gilbert rushes into the latrine. He turns to Miller, who is still casually shaving.

GILBERT
(excitedly)
Where is it? Is it a big one?

Miller does not look at Gilbert. He points to the floor in back of him, as he continues shaving.

Continued

MILLER

It's over there.

Gilbert looks over at the floor and sees a cockroach squashed beyond recognition. He gives Miller a disgruntled look.

GILBERT

Well, there goes the cockroach races. The next time you see a cockroach--

MILLER

I'm going to kill it. I hate cockroaches.

As Gilbert exits the latrine, we see a cockroach slithering along Miller's sink.

Gilbert returns to his bed, as PVT. EARL BOWKER enters the barracks. Bowker is a small, but strongly built soldier.

BOWKER

Anyone seen Bobby?

COOK

The last time I saw him, he was heading for the PX.

Gilbert resumes reading the sports section. The radio is now playing "Harbor Lights."

GILBERT

It's his ass, if Captain Halloway finds out.

BOWKER

It's his ass, if Captain Steigert finds out.

GILBERT

(laughs)

You mean Ole Cobass? Hell, he's too busy worrying about being the next President of the United States to care what a little old nigger does.

Cook laughs, but Bowker is not amused.

Bowker crosses over to his bed that stands next to Gilbert's. He sits on the edge of the bed.

Continued

Bowker grabs a section of the newspaper and begins to read it, while o.s. we hear a foot STAMPING extremely hard on the latrine floor, as Miller has discovered the cockroach.

INT. - PX - NIGHT

10:00 P.M.

Stockwell is nearly finished with his beer. Wallensky is now wiping off the counter, while Debbs is putting away the clean glasses. The juke box is quiet.

The two men up front finish their beers. They glance over at Stockwell, then get up to leave.

Both men pass the two soldiers playing checkers. As they exit the PX, the same soldier again takes five pieces in a row from his opponent.

INT. - C BARRACKS - NIGHT

Bowker is in the entranceway looking out. He glances at his watch, then turns to the other man.

BOWKER
(urgently)
I'm going after Bobby.

Miller is dressing, while Cook reads Gilbert's sports section.

Gilbert sings along with Glenn Miller's "Little Brown Jug" that plays on the radio. He stops and looks at Bowker.

GILBERT
He'll be back, Karl.

COOK
Yeah, he's only been gone for less than twenty minutes. You leave right now, and he'll probably show up.

GILBERT
And then we'll have to go look for you.
(playfully)
One crazy nigger lost is one thing, but two? Holy Mother, watch out.

Miller and Cook laugh, but Bowker is serious about his intentions. He sincerely believes that Bobby could be in trouble.

Continued

BOWKER

You don't want to come? All right,
fine. I'll go myself.

Bowker quickly and angrily exits.

Miller turns to Cook, unsure of what to make of Bowker's mood.

MILLER

What's eatin' him?

COOK

Beats me. Maybe he's got a honey
in town that he can't wait to get
his hands on.

GILBERT

(goodnaturedly)
I know I do.

All three men laugh, as Cook throws the sports section at Gilbert, scattering it across Gilbert's bed.

EXT. - PX - NIGHT

10:10 P.M.

Stockwell exits the PX, puts on his cap, and starts to leave.

Stockwell passes an alley, when he hears a CLANKING noise. He stops, then walks up to the alley.

STOCKWELL'S POV

Darkness. He sees nothing, nor does he hear anything else.

RESUME - STOCKWELL

He shrugs his shoulders, then turns to leave.

Standing in the shadows of the alley are the two men who were seated at the front of the PX. They watch Stockwell move off toward the black section. Both men then disappear into the darkness of the alley.

INT. - ARMY TENT - NIGHT

A movie projector, old and battered, stands on top of an equally rickety card table at the back of the tent. Its motor emits a loud WHEEZING noise. The PROJECTIONIST, a young black soldier, obviously bored, sits on the edge

Continued

of his chair, arms slumped across the card table. The projectionist yawns, making no bones about his boredom.

ANGLE ON PROJECTOR

We move away from the machine with the projector's light directed toward the CAMERA.

As we continue moving away from the projector, the tent becomes more visible. Chairs are neatly set up in six rows with ten chairs to a row. The rows are not filled. Only a few soldiers (all of them black) are scattered throughout the tent.

We approach two men sitting in the center of the tent, their faces blurred by the projector's light.

A CLOSE-UP of one of the soldiers, PVT. CHARLES MCGUIRE, reveals that he is intently watching the film.

The film is John Ford's YOUNG MR. LINCOLN, and the scene occurs toward the end of the movie.

OLD MAN

Hurry up, Abe. The crowd's waiting.

A door swings open, and Lincoln, bathed in bright light, walks out to a cheering crowd.

RESUME - MCGUIRE

He smiles appreciatively at the scene, but his enjoyment of the film is hindered by his friend's o.s. snoring.

McGuire sharply pokes his friend, PVT. MIKE FERGUSON, in the ribs. Ferguson wakes up and looks at McGuire. Embarrassed, Ferguson smiles, although weakly, then returns to watching the film.

EXT. - CAMP GARAGE - NIGHT

10:30 P.M.

We move along six trucks that are lined up, single file, as their engines quietly idle. Men dressed in camouflaged, battle-colored fatigues, carbines draped over their shoulders, hurriedly scramble into the backs of the trucks.

Continued

Seven men are lined up behind the last truck. They stand at attention, as LT. KYLE BOLYN, late-twenties, medium height, checks their carbines. He comes to the last two soldiers in line, and as he approaches them, we can see that they are the two men who grabbed Stockwell outside the PX.

Bolyn walks up to both soldiers, PVT. REUSS and CORPORAL GEICK, and hands them each three bullets a piece. They then put the bullets in their pockets.

Bolyn moves away from Reuss and Geick. He goes down the line until he comes to a soldier standing in the center. He draws closer to the soldier, PVT. CRAIG, and while inspecting his rifle, Bolyn secretly hands Craig three bullets. Craig takes the bullets and pockets them.

Coming around the corner of the truck is the soldiers' commanding officer, CAPTAIN BRIAN STEIGERT. Steigert has the look of pure military: he wears his fatigues with pride and walks with the bearing of a true, professional soldier. He enjoys playing officer and takes delight in giving a performance for his men.

Steigert walks up to Bolyn, who has finished inspecting the soldiers' carbines.

STEIGERT

All the men in the trucks?

BOLYN

Yes, sir.

STEIGERT

Very good, Lieutenant. That'll be all.

Bolyn nods, then turns to leave. He quickly moves toward the lead truck, opens the door on the driver's side, and enters.

The soldiers remain at attention, as Steigert walks along the line. The Captain walks with his shoulders straight, his stomach tucked in, and his arms tightly folded. Although he looks professional, there is also an air of composure to his walk and his voice, as he begins to address the soldiers.

STEIGERT

You men have been selected, because you are the finest marksmen my company has.

Continued

The soldiers show no reaction to Steigert's compliment.

STEIGERT

Understand that there is to be no shooting, unless they give us no other choice. Of course, your rifles contain blanks, and not actual bullets. We only want to scare the Negroes. Teach them something about discipline and military law.

Steigert laughs, believing this last remark to be funny. The soldiers stand stoicly, except Reuss and Geick, who laugh along with the Captain.

Steigert quickly composes himself. He clears his throat, mostly for show than anything else, and continues.

STEIGERT

The lead truck's lights--the truck that I'll be in--will remain on. The others are to be turned off.

Steigert begins to pace again. His movements are slow and deliberate. By now, the soldiers are fidgeting, as they have grown restless of the Captain's performance. Too caught up with his performance, Steigert ignores their fidgeting, and continues.

STEIGERT

If the lights turn off, that will be your signal to start shooting. It may not come to that. At any rate, you have your orders, and I expect you to carry them out explicitly.

Steigert momentarily looks over the troops, then smiles appreciatively. He then stands erect, hands behind his back, as he dismisses the soldiers.

STEIGERT

(curtly)

Dismissed.

The soldiers scurry into the back of the last truck, as Steigert moves off toward the lead truck.

Steigert enters the lead truck, picks up a carbine that was laying on the passenger's seat. As he sits, he lays the rifle gently on his lap. He then closes the door.

Continued

STEIGERT
(to Bolyn)
Are we ready?

BOLYN
Yes, sir.

Steigert nods his head in acknowledgement.

Bolyn sticks his arm out the window and gestures toward the other trucks.

The lead truck pulls away from the garage, followed by the other trucks.

EXT. - C BARRACKS - NIGHT

Bowker and Stockwell are tossing around a football that has been lying outside the barracks. Their mood appears playful, as Stockwell casually flips the ball to Bowker.

Bowker falls back a few feet, then punts the ball toward Stockwell. The punt is high and long, as it sails over Stockwell's head.

Stockwell quickly stops, as the ball slams against the side of the barracks, making a loud CRACKING noise.

Bowker laughs, then shouts toward Stockwell.

BOWKER
Way to go, Bobby.

Stockwell smiles, flips Bowker off, as he goes to retrieve the ball.

The ball slamming against the barracks has brought Cook to the front entrance, his presence barely illuminated from the lights inside the barracks. He leaves momentarily, then rushes out of the barracks along with Miller.

EXT. - ARMY TENT - NIGHT

The film is over, and soldiers begin filing out of the tent.

MCGUIRE
Man, that was some movie.

FERGUSON
It sure was.

Continued

MCGUIRE

What the hell you talkin' about,
Fergy. You was asleep most of
the time.

FERGUSON

Yeah, I know, but

Both soldiers quickly stop in their tracks.

MCGUIRE

What the hell?

MCGUIRE'S POV

Miller and Cook have joined Bowker. Gilbert comes rushing
out of the barracks, clumsily buttoning his shirt.

RESUME - MCGUIRE

MCGUIRE

(gestures to Ferguson)
Come on, let's go.

McGuire and Ferguson break into a run, as they cross over
to where the soldiers are standing. They reach Bowker
and the others the same time that Gilbert does.

FERGUSON

What's going on Karl?

Stockwell tosses the ball into the barracks, then begins to
cross over to the group of men.

Bowker smiles, then gestures toward Stockwell.

BOWKER

You guys aren't going to believe
this, but Bobby has just come back
from the PX.

MCGUIRE

(skeptical)
What was Bobby doing in the PX?

Confidently flipping the nickel between his fingers, Stockwell
arrives at the group. He stands to McGuire's side, while
facing the other five men.

Continued

STOCKWELL

Having a beer, listening to Frank Sinatra. What people usually do in the PX.

MCGUIRE

You didn't get caught?

GILBERT

What the hell did Bobby do that's so wrong? He was thirsty, so he had himself a beer. Is that a crime?

MILLER

As long as Ole Cobass doesn't find out.

GILBERT

Ole Cobass can go to hell, for all I care.

As the men continue to argue, a loud RUMBLE can be heard o.s.

The men turn toward the noise and see six trucks crossing a small dirt road that leads to the black section of camp.

BOWKER

(to McGuire)

It's not Captain Halloway, is it?

MCGUIRE

I don't know, Karl. I don't know who it is.

INT. - TRUCK - NIGHT

Steigert rubs his chin, as a look of surprise comes over his face. He was not expecting the black soldiers to be out in the open as they are.

BOLYN

They're making it easy for us, Captain.

STEIGERT

Indeed they are, Lieutenant. Indeed they are.

Steigert quietly laughs to himself, as the trucks continue toward the black soldiers.

Continued

EXT. - DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

10:45 P.M.

McGuire and the other soldiers are bathed in bright light, as the trucks quickly bear down on them.

Before the soldiers can react, the six trucks surround them, creating a circle in which the soldiers have no means of escape, since the trucks have cut off access to the road that leads directly to their barracks.

As ordered by Steigert, the trucks' lights are turned off, except for the lead truck's. Its lights create a blinding glare, as they are turned toward the black soldiers.

The seven soldiers quickly jump out of the last truck. They take up positions alongside individual trucks.

Geick and Reuss kneel beside two trucks situated to the backs of the black soldiers.

Craig stands behind the driver's side of the lead truck. He directly faces the black soldiers, but cannot be seen, because of the glare from the lead truck's lights.

ANGLE ON BLACK SOLDIERS

They begin to move back, away from the trucks, only to discover that they are trapped within the circle.

McGuire crosses over to the lead truck. Although unsure of what is happening, McGuire hides the uncertainty in his voice.

ANGLE ON MCGUIRE

He stands before the lead truck, showing no fear.

MCGUIRE

Hey, look, man, I don't know
what's going on, but this isn't
funny.

There is no answer, only the slow idle of the trucks.

MCGUIRE

(shouting angrily)
You hear me, damn it? This isn't
funny.

Continued

There is silence for a moment. Then the door on the passenger side of the lead truck opens. Coming out of the glare of the lights is Steigert.

In an act of defiance, Gilbert mutters to himself, but still loud enough for everyone to hear, including Steigert.

GILBERT

Ole Cobass.

Steigert stands in front of the glare of the lights, casting a shadow that looms over McGuire. He cradles the carbine in his arms in an attempt to look threatening to the black soldiers, an attempt that completely fails.

MCGUIRE

(unimpressed)

Captain Steigert. I should have known. What the hell did we do this time?

Steigert moves forward, his shadow now falls on all of the black soldiers. He comes to McGuire, and as he is about to speak, his delivery sounds pat, as if he had rehearsed it for hours.

STEIGERT

As officer in charge of this camp's security, I am arresting Private Stockwell.

MILLER

On what charge?

STEIGERT

Entering the PX.

Not sure of what game Steigert's playing, McGuire challenges Steigert.

MCGUIRE

And that's against the law?

STEIGERT

On this camp it is.

BOWKER

White-man's jive. That's all it is.

Continued

STEIGERT

Are you forgetting Camp Ordinance
2213B? Surely your Captain Halloway
has told you about it.

McGuire recognizes what the ordinance is. The other
soldiers express confusion.

GILBERT

What the hell is Cobass talkin'
about? There's no such ordinance.

MCGUIRE

You're crazy, Steigert. You're
arresting Bobby for a law that's
full of shit.

Steigert arrogantly smiles. He knows he is in the right.

STEIGERT

Did Private Stockwell have Colonel
Scott's permission to enter the PX?

MCGUIRE

You know damn well he didn't.

STEIGERT

Then he'll have to come with me.

Steigert moves for Stockwell. The black soldiers surround
the private, forming a cordon around Stockwell.

McGuire moves in Steigert's way. The Captain stops and
attempts to push McGuire out of the way. He raises his
hand against the private, but McGuire grabs it, and pulls
Steigert against him.

A scuffle ensues. McGuire pushes Steigert away, ripping
off a gold medallion that has a capital E engraved in the
center from the Captain's neck. The medallion drops to the
ground, the same time that Steigert does.

As Steigert hits the ground, his men quickly assume firing
positions.

Steigert says nothing. He raises his hand, as a signal
for his men to hold their fire. He stands, slings the
carbine over his shoulder, then approaches the black
soldiers.

Continued

The black soldiers show no signs of backing down. They remain huddled around Stockwell, but they are also aware that their backs are against the wall. If they have to fight, then they will.

Steigert and McGuire exchange looks that are a mixture of anger and determination. There is silence between them, as Steigert turns away from the black soldiers. He then returns to the lead truck.

As Steigert enters the lead truck, the black soldiers express relief that the Captain is going. McGuire is not sure. He looks around him, uncertain of what is going to happen next.

CU - A HEADLIGHT

It abruptly shuts off.

The black soldiers find themselves surrounded by darkness.

McGuire quickly turns to the other black soldiers.

MCGUIRE
(shouting)
Run for it.

No sooner do the men move, when gunfire suddenly erupts.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

Bowker falls, as he is shot in the chest.

Miller and Gilbert are gunned down simultaneously, their bodies fall away from each other.

A bullet hits Ferguson in the neck. He twists and falls to the ground.

Cook rams against the front of the lead truck, as a bullet strikes him in the back.

A bullet slams into McGuire's hip. He falls on his stomach, landing on top of Steigert's medallion.

Already dead from a gunshot to the forehead, Stockwell falls on top of McGuire. Blood trickles from Stockwell's wound onto McGuire's hand, McGuire sees the blood on his hand, then tries to push Stockwell off, an effort that proves painfully unsuccessful.

Continued

END MONTAGE

Bolyn exits the truck and orders all the men back into the trucks. Bolyn turns to Craig, then motions toward the back of the lead truck. Craig enters the truck, followed by other soldiers.

Geick walks among the dead soldiers, turning their bodies over with his boot. He comes to McGuire and realizes that he is still alive.

Geick pulls Stockwell's body off of McGuire, as Bolyn crosses over to McGuire's body.

GEICK

We've got one that's still alive.
(pokes carbine into McGuire's
ribs)
You want me to finish him off?

BOLYN

(sharply)
Get back into the truck.

Geick begins to protest, but Bolyn quickly cuts him off. He angrily motions for Geick to return to the truck. Geick complies and walks back to the truck.

Trucks begin pulling out. Everything is happening quickly and professionally.

Steigert exits the lead truck and crosses over to where McGuire lies on the ground.

ANGLE ON MCGUIRE

His pants are blood-spattered, and he is slowly losing consciousness.

MCGUIRE'S POV

Steigert kneels. As he begins to speak, his voice has lost its bravado. It now has an edginess to it that was not there before.

STEIGERT

If you had given me Private
Stockwell, your friends would
still be alive. I can't
be blamed for your refusal
to obey military law.

Continued

As shouts can be heard o.s. in the distance, other trucks begin to pull away and head back for the camp garage.

RESUME - MCGUIRE

He attempts to move his hip. The pain nearly makes him cry out, but his quickly ebbing strength prevents him from doing so.

Steigert stands, as Bolyne quickly returns to the lead truck.

STEIGERT

I wouldn't tell anyone about this, if I were you. What happened to your friends could easily happen to you.

McGuire watches Steigert run back to the lead truck. The Captain enters the truck, as it begins to pull out.

CU - MCGUIRE

O.S. the shouting becomes louder, and the RUMBLE of the trucks slowly fades, as McGuire sinks into unconsciousness.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. - CAPTAIN STEIGERT'S OFFICE - DAY

Tuesday, June 15: 8:30 A.M.

We move along a neatly arranged bookshelf. The shelf contains various books on war history: American, British, and Teutonic. Among the history books are philosophical and political books such as Paine's Common Sense, Darwin's The Origin of the Species, Nietzsche's Also Sprach Zarathustra, and Hitler's Mein Kampf. We hold on a picture of a rifle company with an inscription that reads "To Company E: The best the Army has to offer. Congressman Steigert." O.S. we can hear Cole Porter's "From Now On" being whistled in a jaunty and carefree manner.

MAJOR GEORGE W. EDWARDS picks up the picture, examines it, then places it back on the bookshelf. In his mid-thirties, Edwards is not attired in an officer's uniform. He is casually dressed in brown corduroys and a beige-colored turtleneck sweater. His only concession to military uniform is a shabby officer's cap that he has carelessly cocked to one side. Under his right arm is a small, leather satchel that looks as worn as the Major's cap.

Continued

As Edwards continues to look around the Captain's office, he comes to a walnut-finished gun cabinet.

EDWARDS' POV

Inside the cabinet are five rifles: an antique Revolutionary War musket, a Civil War carbine, a .22 shotgun, a hunting rifle complete with scope, and in the center, a silver-plated, handcrafted Winchester, with 1876 engraved in the center of the rifle, and with four gold stars surrounding the 1876.

RESUME - EDWARDS

Edwards crosses over to the gun cabinet and inspects the Winchester.

BOLYN

(o.s.)

What the hell are you doing in here?

Edwards turns around. Standing in the doorway is Bolyn.

Bolyn quickly moves toward Edwards.

BOLYN

(sharply)

You didn't answer my question, mister.

Although Edwards is no longer whistling, his manner is still cheerful and friendly. He pulls a wallet out of his back pocket, flips it open, and shows Bolyn an Army Intelligence identification card.

Bolyn scans the card. He quickly realizes that Edwards is a major, and becomes less brusque.

BOLYN

I'm sorry, Major.

Edwards ignores Bolyn's rudeness, as he walks away from the gun cabinet.

EDWARDS

Tell me, Lieutenant, where's Captain Steigert?

Continued

BOLYN

He's on maneuvers, sir. He
won't be back until tomorrow.

Edwards takes a pen from his pants' pocket. He takes a notepad from the Captain's desk, and writes down a message.

EDWARDS

Tell Captain Steigert that when
he gets back, I want to see him
as soon as possible.

Edwards tears the message off the pad and hands it to Bolyn.

EDWARDS

Tell him it's important. All
right, Lieutenant?

Whistling the same Porter tune as before, Edwards walks past Bolyn.

Bolyn takes the message and begins to crumple it in his hands.

Edwards reaches the doorway, stops whistling, then turns around. He catches Bolyn crumpling up the message. The Major smiles goodnaturedly.

EDWARDS

I wouldn't, Lieutenant. Paper
shortage, you know. We all must
do our part to conserve.

Edwards cheerfully tips his hat to Bolyn, then exits, whistling "From Now On."

Bolyn uncrumples the message and places it on Steigert's desk. The scowl on the Lieutenant's face reveals that he is not happy with Edwards' presence at the camp.

INT. - PX - DAY

9:20 A.M.

Business is slow this morning. In the back of the PX, two soldiers sit, drinking coffee, and reading the morning edition of The Toledo Blade. Up front, Wallensky brews

Continued

a pot of coffee, while Debbs comes out of the kitchen carrying a plate filled with donuts. He places the plate on the bar and meticulously arranges the donuts by color in four, neat little stacks. The juke box plays Vaughn Monroe's "Racing With the Moon."

Edwards briskly enters the PX. He passes the two soldiers, but they are too engrossed in their newspapers to pay Edwards any attention. He walks up to the bar, as "Racing With the Moon" ends its play on the juke box.

Edwards sits, placing the satchel on the bar. He rests his elbows on the bar, while swinging back and forth on the stool. He has the appearance of a young man who cheerfully takes life as it comes to him.

Unsure of what to make of Edwards' presence in the PX, Wallensky carefully walks up to Edwards.

EDWARDS

How's the coffee this morning?

WALLENSKY

About the same as it was yesterday.
In fact, it is yesterday's.

Edwards mulls over Wallensky's last remark for a moment.

EDWARDS

What the hell. I'll have a cup.

As Wallensky gets Edwards' coffee, the Major walks over to the juke box. He looks over the selection and makes his choice: Artie Shaw's rendition of Porter's "Begin the Beguine."

As Edwards walks back to the bar, he sings the first few lyrics of the song. While no Sinatra, Edwards can carry a tune, even if he hits a flat note every now and then.

EDWARDS

"When they begin the beguine,
It brings the sound of music
so tender
It brings back a night of tropical
splendor
It brings back a memory of so green."

Debbs comes walking out of the kitchen. He is curious to see where the singing is coming from.

Continued

DEBBS
Who the hell is that?

WALLENSKY
I don't know.
(whispers)
Listen, Debbs, call the MPs.
Tell them we've got a--

DEBBS
A what?

WALLENSKY
I'm not sure. Whatever he is,
he's sure as hell not military.
I'll stall him until the MPs
get here.

Edwards has returned to the bar. He now hums "Begin the Beguine." Wallensky sets the coffee in front of Edwards, as he casually slips into the role of the friendly bartender.

WALLENSKY
You like Cole Porter?

EDWARDS
Love Cole Porter. "Begin the Beguine,"
"Night and Day," "In the Still
of the Night." Now that's music.

Debbs has finished the phone call. He joins Edwards and Wallensky.

EDWARDS
And, of course, "My Heart Belongs
to Daddy."

WALLENSKY
Mary Martin, right?

EDWARDS
I saw her in Leave It To Me
almost five years ago. I've
had a crush on her ever since.

Debbs has become impressed with Edwards' easy-going manner. In fact, so has Wallensky.

Continued

DEBBS
I saw Aunt Jemima once.

EDWARDS
(sincerely)
You didn't?

DEBBS
I surely did.

EDWARDS
(smiling; with no trace
of sarcasm in his voice)
Now there's a person I've always
wanted to meet. Next to Mary
Martin, that is.

Debbs and Wallensky laugh. They have been momentarily
won over by Edwards' cheerfulness.

EDWARDS
Well, gentlemen, I must be going.
I have an extremely busy morning
ahead of me.
(tips cap to Debbs
and Wallensky)
If you'll excuse me, Sergeant
Wallensky. Corporal Debbs.

Edwards picks up the satchel and turns to leave. He exits
the PX whistling "Begin the Beguine."

Wallensky and Debbs suddenly realize that Edwards is gone,
and that the MPs have not yet shown up. Wallensky gives
Debbs a scolding look.

WALLENSKY
(reproachfully)
Aunt Jemima.

Embarrassed, Debbs smiles, although weakly, as he returns
to the kitchen.

EXT. - COMPANY D BARRACKS - DAY

An alley separates the PX from D Barracks, two buildings
that individually house twenty-five men from rifle Company
D.

Continued

A clean-up detail consisting of men from Company D is outside working on the grounds surrounding the barracks. One man sweeps off the steps, and a couple of men are washing windows in front of the building.

A soldier is on his knees clipping grass along the foundation of the barracks, while another soldier is picking dandelions off the grass with a sickle.

Behind Edwards, as he walks past D Barracks, we can see two MPs enter the PX. Oblivious to the MPs, Edwards continues on his way, whistling Porter's "Night and Day."

EXT. - PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

9:30 A.M.

A wind has kicked up, scattering dust clouds along the parade grounds.

Edwards walks through a dust cloud, as he approaches the infirmary. He stops to shake off some dust that has settled on his sweater, when he hears boisterous yelling coming from the black section of camp.

EDWARDS' POV

A group of black soldiers are playing football outside the barracks. The team with the ball has made a touchdown, an event that creates an equal amount of goodnatured cheering and booing.

RESUME - EDWARDS

He smiles, then continues toward the infirmary.

MERRIWHETHER

(o.s.; shouting)

Excuse me. Excuse me, please.

Edwards turns around. He is met by CAPTAIN A.P. MERRIWHETHER, a small, but excitable young man whose glasses are always precariously perched on the edge of his nose.

Edwards greets Merriwhether with a warm, friendly smile.

MERRIWHETHER

May I ask what may appear to be a ridiculous question?

Continued

EDWARDS

By all means.

MERRIWHETHER

How did you get into the camp?
It's sealed off. You know that,
don't you?

Edwards gives Merriwhether a congratulatory pat on the shoulder.

EDWARDS

And congratulations, Captain
Merriwhether. You're doing an
excellent job of keeping it
sealed off too.

Before Merriwhether can react, Edwards has again started off toward the infirmary. He runs after Edwards.

MERRIWHETHER

You still haven't answered my
question.

Again, Edwards turns and faces Merriwhether. He is not irritated by the Captain's incessant questioning.

EDWARDS

What question is that?

Merriwhether's frustration with Edwards is quickly increasing.

MERRIWHETHER

How did you get into the camp?

EDWARDS

You mean you don't know?

MERRIWHETHER

(extremely irritated)
That's why I'm asking you.

EDWARDS

(takes Merriwhether
by the arm)
Well, let me tell you.

ANGLE ON EDWARDS AND MERRIWHETHER

Continued

They begin walking toward the infirmary with Merriwhether completely confused by Edwards' presence.

EDWARDS

There's this old oak tree by
the east gate.

MERRIWHETHER

Where the garage is.

EDWARDS

Well, I climbed up the tree, and

Edwards' voice trails off, as a gust of wind blows dust behind Merriwhether and the Major. We can hear Merriwhether exclaim, "You didn't," over the noise of the wind, as both men reach the infirmary entrance.

INT. - NURSES' STATION (INFIRMARY) - DAY

Edwards completely ignores the on-duty nurse, as he moves past the nurses' station.

Merriwhether reluctantly follows behind Edwards. He then stops at the nurses' station.

The nurse looks up from the Vogue magazine that she has been reading. She stands and gestures for Edwards to stop.

NURSE

Excuse me, sir. Where are you
going?

Edwards turns around.

EDWARDS

To Private McGuire's room.

Merriwhether and the nurse express panic, as they exclaim in unison: "You can't."

The nurse quickly moves around the station.

MURSE

No one's allowed to see Private
McGuire without Colonel Scott's
permission.

Edwards smiles. He speaks with a quiet authority that has not been heard from him until now.

Continued

EDWARDS

Under the circumstances, I think
Colonel Scott will understand.

Merriwhether sighs, throws his hands up in exasperation,
then starts off toward Edwards.

INT. - MCGUIRE'S ROOM (SOUTH WING) - DAY

The south wing is a newly built section of the infirmary.
McGuire's room is one of the few completed rooms on the
wing. However, the room is in the process of being painted,
as the walls have areas that are still unpainted.

McGuire's room faces Colonel Scott's office, which is situa-
ted directly across from the infirmary. A warm breeze
blows through an open window, causing the curtain rope
to RATTLE against the pane of glass.

McGuire's right leg is in a cast up to the hip. He lies
in bed, wearing a light-gray nightshirt. He is reading
Richard Wright's Native Son, when Merriwhether enters
the room.

Suspicious of Merriwhether's presence, McGuire painfully
attempts to sit up in bed. He grimaces at the pain.

Edwards follows Merriwhether into McGuire's room. He
walks over to McGuire and extends his hand.

EDWARDS

(pleasantly)

Good morning, Private. How's
the hip this morning?

MCGUIRE

(cautiously)

You a doctor?

EDWARDS

Un, no, not exactly.

Merriwhether quickly crosses over to McGuire's bed.

MERRIWHETHER

(abruptly)

He's Army Intelligence--

Edwards is completely surprised by Merriwhether's state-
ment. In fact, so is McGuire. He shoots Merriwhether
an angry look.

Continued

MCGUIRE

He's what?

Edwards' cheerfulness has momentarily left him. He moves toward Merriwether, giving him a reproachful look. All Merriwether can do is shy away from Edwards' anger.

MCGUIRE

Hey, look, man, I've got nothing to say to you.

EDWARDS

I don't think that's true.

MCGUIRE

(almost shouting)

I don't care what you think. Colonel Scott told me that I don't have to speak with anyone else, if I don't want to.

Edwards begins to speak, but is sharply cut off by McGuire.

MCGUIRE

You want my story? Talk to the Colonel. He's got my testimony neatly typed.

(a trace of bitterness
has crept into his voice)
And with my signature on it.
So everything's legal and in
the clear.

McGuire violently gestures toward the door.

MCGUIRE

Now get the hell out of here.

Merriwether begins to pull Edwards toward the door. He is suddenly pushed away by Edwards.

EDWARDS

Private, I don't think you understand--

MCGUIRE

(shouting)

Captain, get him out of here.
You go to Scott, but just leave
me the hell alone.

Continued

EDWARDS

Maybe it's about time I should see this Colonel Scott.

MP

(o.s.)

You'll have your chance, friend.

Edwards quickly turns to see two MPs standing in the doorway. He looks at Merriwhether, who can only muster a weak smile.

Edwards does not put up a fight. He crosses over to the MPs, then moves past them. His cheerful manner has returned, as he speaks to them.

EDWARDS

Shall we go, gentlemen?

Edwards starts off down the corridor, with Merriwhether close at his heels, followed by the MPs.

INT. - COLONEL SCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

10:00 A.M.

We move through the front entrance that stands open into the outer office. We come to Edwards, who is seated in front of a desk that Merriwhether stands next to. Edwards patiently sits, waiting for the Colonel to appear, while Merriwhether is nervously gnawing finger nails off of one hand.

COLONEL DOUGLAS SCOTT, the camp's commander, exits his office and walks into the outer office. Scott is middle-aged and slightly graying around the temples. He carries himself in an informal, but professional manner.

The MPs and Merriwhether stand to attention, while Edwards rises from the chair.

Scott walks up to Merriwhether, who quickly stops gnawing at his finger nails.

SCOTT

Before the morning's over, Captain, call Congressman Steigert and tell him that I won't be attending his luncheon this afternoon. And extend my apologies to Mrs. Roosevelt. I'm sure she'll understand.

Continued

MERRIWHETHER

Yes, sir.

EDWARDS

(interested)

The Congressman's having a luncheon?

Scott ignores Edwards' question, as he picks up three crumpled notes from the desk. He turns to Edwards. Although he smiles, there is a tenseness to his voice that can clearly be detected. The Colonel is definitely not impressed with Edwards' presence at the camp.

SCOTT

You've had quite an interesting morning, Major.

(shows Edwards the notes)

Calls from the PX, the infirmary, and Lt. Bolyn.

Edwards turns to Merriwhether, who quickly stops gnawing his fingernails.

EDWARDS

(genuinely impressed)

That's how you knew I worked for Army Intelligence. You were the one that Lt. Bolyn called.

At first, Merriwhether is caught off-guard by Edwards' flattering remarks. He then straightens up in an effort to look confident, an effort that succeeds.

MERRIWHETHER

I'm afraid so, Major.

SCOTT

What I don't understand is why didn't you notify me that you were coming? Why the subterfuge?

Edwards stands and moves toward an open window. He looks out and sees a group of soldiers jogging past.

Edwards turns and faces Scott. As he speaks, he chooses his words carefully and slowly.

Continued

EDWARDS

I thought exploring the camp gradually, unannounced would help the investigation.

SCOTT

(dryly)

It seems to me, Major, that you would draw less attention if you openly announced yourself, instead of carrying on as if you were a poor man's "The Shadow."

EDWARDS

(abashed)

Perhaps you're right, Colonel.

Edwards moves away from the window. He looks around the outer office. Familiarizing himself with the surroundings, Edwards walks over to an old photograph of the camp that hangs on the wall next to Scott. As if lost in some long, cherished memory, Edwards smiles at the picture.

Scott turns to Edwards, and as he speaks, the Major's reverie is quickly broken.

SCOTT

How long will you be staying here?

EDWARDS

Until the investigation is over.

Scott's unhappiness with Edwards' presence increases. He gives Edwards a cold, hard look. The Major, however, is oblivious to the Colonel's look, as he continues to admire the photograph.

Scott turns to Merriwether. The Colonel tries to remain calm, although we see his right hand slowly, tensely ball up into a fist.

SCOTT

Captain, prepare the guest quarters for the Major. Make sure that his stay here is as comfortable as possible.

MERRIWHETHER

Yes, sir.

Continued

Edwards turns from the photograph. He crosses over to Scott's desk, picks up his battered officer's cap, then begins to move toward the front entrance.

EDWARDS

(to Scott)

Well, if you won't be needing me any longer.

SCOTT

Where are you going, Major?
If you don't mind my asking.

Edwards has reached the front entrance. He smiles, then puts on his cap.

EDWARDS

To a luncheon. I haven't been to one for quite some time.

Merriwhether finds Edwards' remark amusing. He shields his mouth by cupping a hand over it so as to hide his laughter.

Scott stiffens up. He is not too happy with Edwards' showing up at the Congressman's luncheon.

Edwards looks out toward the front gate. He then counts off three fingers on his right hand.

EDWARDS

Let's see. It's three or four miles to the Congressman's. It shouldn't take more than a half an hour to walk.

Edwards cheerfully tips his hat to everyone in the outer office, then leaves.

Scott moves to the front entrance. He watches Edwards move toward the front gate. The Colonel then turns to Merriwhether.

SCOTT

Get me that file on Edwards Washington sent me.

MERRIWHETHER

You've already seen it once.

Scott turns back to watch Edwards leave.

Continued

SCOTT'S POV

Edwards performs a slight shuffle as he reaches the front gate. The Major tips his hat to the guard on duty, as he walks through the gate.

SCOTT

(v.o.)

That's true, Captain, but I want to know who he is, where he comes from, and why he knows this camp so well.

RESUME - SCOTT

He moves away from the entrance, as the MPs exit the Colonel's office. Merriwhether moves toward Scott.

MERRIWHETHER

(uncertain)

You think that's necessary?

SCOTT

It all depends. If he's good at what he does, then, yes, I think it's necessary. One more thing, Captain. The tree that Major Edwards climbed up to get in the camp.

MERRIWHETHER

Sir?

SCOTT

Have it cut down. Immediately.

Scott turns from Merriwhether. He walks into his office closing the door behind him.

INT. - STEIGERT'S ESTATE - DAY

11:30 A.M.

The luncheon is in full swing. It takes place in a spacious, ornately furnished living room. Guests are lined up along an expansive buffet table on which a large ice sculpture of the American eagle stands in the center. People are dressed in casual formal wear, as they move from the table to various places in the room to eat their food.

Continued

A small crowd has gathered around ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, who wears a simple, unassuming print dress. Handing her a plate filled with smoked salmon and other expensive delicacies is CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM STEIGERT, a tall, distinguished-looking gentleman in his mid-fifties. As Steigert hands Mrs. Roosevelt the plate, photographers pop up, as if out of nowhere, to take pictures of the exchange. The scene looks rehearsed, as if planned by a press agent's shrewd, calculating mind. Flashbulbs go off, and although the Congressman and the First Lady smile, Mrs. Roosevelt looks embarrassed by the sudden onrush of publicity.

Two men in ill-fitting double-breasted suits approach Steigert. They are secret service agents, and they appear stiff and formal, a direct contrast to the casual atmosphere of the luncheon. They take Steigert aside.

AGENT

Excuse me, Congressman, but we've apprehended a man climbing over a hedge on the back terrace. We're holding him outside on the terrace, away from the guests.

Steigert smiles. He is amused by the agent's story.

STEIGERT

By any chance, is this man wearing a beat-up, old officer's cap, with the front eagle about to fall off of it?

AGENT

(puzzled)

Yes, sir.

Steigert quietly laughs.

STEIGERT

It's all right, gentlemen. George may be a lot of things, but a threat to national security he's not.

Steigert turns from the secret service agents. He then moves to Mrs. Roosevelt's side and politely whispers.

STEIGERT

If you'll excuse me, Mrs. President. I won't be long.

Continued

Mrs. Roosevelt smiles, then nods. As Steigert and the two agents move off, the First Lady goes back to her lunch, while politely listening to an elderly gentleman drone on about his experiences in The Spanish-American War.

EXT. - TERRACE - DAY

Edwards is seated in a wrought-iron garden chair. He is flanked on both sides by two secret service agents. Edwards is quietly enjoying a lemonade, when Steigert enters the terrace.

STEIGERT

I told you climbing over that hedge would get you into trouble some day.

Edwards smiles, then stands. Both men shake hands.

STEIGERT

It's been quite some time.
Not since the last election,
I believe.

EDWARDS

Here tell it, you've got this year sewed up as well.

STEIGERT

If the Military Integration Bill gets passed, there's a good chance that I may be lynched instead of reelected.

Edwards laughs.

The Congressman dismisses the secret service agents. Steigert and Edwards are left alone on the terrace.

STEIGERT

How was your walk?

EDWARDS

(surprised)
You knew I was coming here?

STEIGERT

Colonel Scott called me. I get the picture that he doesn't care much for you.

Continued

EDWARDS
(smiles)
He thinks I'm a flake.

STEIGERT
(amused)
He told you this?

EDWARDS
He didn't have to. He had that
"You mean the Army let him in"
look about him.

STEIGERT
(laughs)
You aren't exactly what I'd call
military.

Edwards looks at his officer's cap, the eagle precariously perched on the front.

EDWARDS
(smiles)
I never said I was.

STEIGERT
You have to understand the Colonel's
situation. He's gone through a lot
of pressures lately. And with what
happened this week--

A secret service agent walks onto the terrace.

AGENT
Excuse me, sir. The First Lady
is looking for you.

STEIGERT
Yes, of course. Tell her I'll
be in shortly.

The agent nods, then leaves.

Steigert takes Edwards by the arm. He leads him towards the living room, as they make their way off the terrace. He remains friendly to Edwards, but it is clear that Steigert wants to get back to the luncheon.

STEIGERT
Listen, George, this luncheon means
a lot to me. If I can get Mrs. Roose-
velt's support, well, that's a big
plus in my favor. And the bill's too.
(more)

STEIGERT (cont.)
 Why don't you come back later this evening, and then we'll talk.

EDWARDS
 All right, Congressman.

STEIGERT
 In the meantime, there's still plenty of good food left. Interesting people to talk to.
 (smiles; pats Edwards on shoulder)
 So enjoy yourself.

Steigert quickly leaves for the luncheon. Edwards pauses, thinks over the Congressman's invitation, and gives a "What the hell" look. He then follows Steigert into the living room.

EXT. - TERRACE (STEIGERT'S ESTATE) - NIGHT

8:45.

It is a warm, clear evening. The terrace is lighted by three lampposts that surround the structure.

We move up to a comfortable, pillow-cushioned lounge chair. Lying in the chair, cap pulled over his eyes, is Edwards. He is not asleep, only relaxing, his hands serenely folded across his chest.

Steigert enters the terrace, crosses over to the lounge chair, and lightly taps Edwards on the shoulder.

STEIGERT
 Ah, George, I trust I haven't kept you waiting.

Edwards sits up. He quietly yawns, as he stretches out his arms.

EDWARDS
 Not really, sir.

Steigert takes a seat across from Edwards.

STEIGERT
 The luncheon came off well, if I don't mind my saying so.

EDWARDS
 You got Mrs. Roosevelt's support?

Continued

MRS. ROOSEVELT

(o.s.)

As a matter of fact, Major, he did.

Edwards turns to see Mrs. Roosevelt on the terrace. She is brightly lit by a lamppost that stands next to her.

Edwards begins to stand.

MRS. ROOSEVELT

You needn't get up, Major. I won't be staying long.

Edwards turns to Steigert, as a look of confusion comes over his face.

MRS. ROOSEVELT

The Congressman has told me a great deal about you.

Edwards smiles at Steigert.

EDWARDS

(facetiously)

Was that wise?

MRS. ROOSEVELT

(laughs)

Your sense of humor included.

Edwards looks at both Steigert and Mrs. Roosevelt. He realizes the purpose of the First Lady's visit.

EDWARDS

I take it you two know about the investigation.

STEIGERT

I was the one who recommended you for the investigation.

EDWARDS

(uncertain)

May I ask why?

STEIGERT

Because of your familiarity with the camp, and your strong, if not unorthodox, military background.

Continued

MRS. ROOSEVELT

You see, Major, I was to tour the camp tomorrow. For obvious reasons, the tour has been cancelled.

The First Lady moves toward Edwards. As she speaks, there is a sense of quiet urgency in the words that she chooses.

MRS. ROOSEVELT

It's imperative that you find the one responsible for this, this massacre. Such a heinous crime cannot go unwarranted or unpunished.

STEIGERT

That's why the bill's passage is so important. It may help to prevent such incidents in the future.

MRS. ROOSEVELT

We have a war to win, Major. And success won't be ours unless the white soldier and the Negro soldier learn to fight as one strong, integrated unit.

Mrs. Roosevelt begins to walk away from Edwards and Steigert.

The First Lady turns to Edwards. Her words have a calm and forceful strength.

MRS. ROOSEVELT

You can see my point, Major?

Edwards smiles. He knows too well what Mrs. Roosevelt means.

MRS. ROOSEVELT

Well, if you'll excuse me, gentlemen. I have a plane to catch.

Steigert stands and crosses over to the First Lady.

STEIGERT

I'll escort you to the door.

Steigert leads Mrs. Roosevelt off the terrace, when she turns and faces Edwards.

Continued

MRS. ROOSEVELT

(smiles)

Oh, and, Major, I like your hat.
It has panache.

Steigert and Mrs. Roosevelt exit.

Edwards removes his hat. He looks at it, then gives a smile that is a mixture of fondness and admiration.

EXT. - TARGET RANGE (CAMP HARRISON) - DAY

Wednesday, June 16: 10:45 A.M.

Although located a few miles outside Camp Harrison, the Target Range is still situated on camp grounds.

We move along a row of black soldiers lying flat on their bellies, as they fire their rifles. The gunfire is constant, the men intense in their shooting.

We pull back to reveal CAPTAIN JOHN "JAKE" HALLOWAY walking among the men. Halloway is Company D's commander, a tall, athletic-looking young man in his late-twenties. As he moves among the men, Halloway barks out orders, while the soldiers continue shooting.

HALLOWAY

Keep your butts down, and you'll
hit the damn target.

Halloway sees one soldier whose butt is not even with the ground. He walks up to the soldier, places his boot on the butt as hard as he can. The soldier's butt quickly flattens, as he continues to shoot.

Edwards arrives at the Target Range casually dressed in an officer's uniform. The cap is still slightly cocked to one side, the eagle about to fall off at any moment. He walks up to SERGEANT JIM SELBY, the company's second-in-command. Selby stands over six feet tall and is built like a ton of bricks. Selby is helping a young private with his rifle. It has jammed up, and the soldier is having difficulty using it. The Sergeant's manner is easygoing and quiet, as opposed to Halloway's loud and tough bravado.

Selby takes the rifle, inspects it for a moment, cocks it a couple of times, then fires a few rounds. The rifle appears old and weatherbeaten, as Selby hands the carbine back to the private. He gives the soldier a reassuring smile, as he continues down the line.

Continued

Edwards approaches Selby, who has noticed the Major's presence at the Target Range the moment he arrived.

SELBY

If you're looking for the Captain,
he's busy right now.

Edwards looks toward the end of the line.

EDWARDS' POV

Halloway is in the process of flattening another soldier's butt.

RESUME - EDWARDS

He gives Selby a friendly smile.

EDWARDS

Well, it is important.

Selby moves away from the men for a moment. He takes Edwards aside, so the two do not have to shout over the gunfire.

SELBY

Are you the man from Washington
we've been hearing about?

EDWARDS

Who's "we?"

SELBY

The camp.

EDWARDS

Word gets around fast.

SELBY

It usually does. You can't help
it from spreadin' sometimes.

EDWARDS

Well, look, if Captain Halloway's
busy, maybe you could answer a few
questions?

SELBY

I'll try.

Selby continues to inspect the line, with Edwards following behind.

Continued

EDWARDS

Did Private Stockwell know about Ordinance 2213B when he entered the PX Saturday night?

SELBY

I can't really say. The soldiers who were killed didn't know about the ordinance.

EDWARDS

Weren't they told about it from Captain Halloway?

SELBY

They knew little about the camp. They had just arrived here a month ago as replacements from another rifle company.

Selby walks over to a soldier who has become entangled in a rifle strap. He helps the soldier unravel himself. The soldier then continues shooting.

SELBY

All that Halloway told them was that they had no business being in the white section, or they'd catch hell from him.

EDWARDS

You mean Halloway?

SELBY

Among others.

Selby changes direction and begins to move past Edwards. The Major follows, unsure of the Sergeant's last remark, when a loud BANG is heard o.s.

A soldier's rifle has backfired in his face, his hands covering his eyes, as blood and black powder have formed around the upper part of the face.

A crowd of soldiers has clustered around the wounded man. Selby pushes aside soldiers, while Halloway rushes through the crowd.

Halloway takes the soldier's hands away from his face. The face around the eyes is smattered with blood and black powder. The eyes have swollen shut, and the soldier's moans can be heard by everyone at the Target Range.

Continued

Halloway stands.

HALLOWAY
(shouting)
Get my jeep.

Halloway turns to Selby, his anger strong and clear.

HALLOWAY
Goddamn it, Selby, I knew this would happen. I told Scott we needed newer weapons. And what does the asshole do: Nothing, not a damn thing.

A jeep swings around from the end of the Target Range. It arrives at the crowd the same time that Edwards does. Edwards is conspicuous because of his color, but it does not faze him. He helps Selby and Halloway carry the man onto the jeep.

Halloway realizes Edwards' color and explodes.

HALLOWAY
You one of Scott's?

EDWARDS
(taken aback)
I, uh--

HALLOWAY
You tell him what happened here. You tell him it's the third time in almost a month that one of my men has been hurt because his rifle backfired.

Halloway sits in the jeep, wiping the blood and powder from the soldier's face. He gestures for the driver to move out.

As the jeep begins to leave, Halloway turns and shouts toward Edwards.

HALLOWAY
You tell Scott that we're not going to take much more of this shit for much longer. You hear me?

As the jeep disappears down the road, Edwards turns to Selby and the other black soldiers. Selby says nothing. He slings a rifle over his shoulder, then slowly moves

Continued

past Edwards. The other soldiers follow Selby. Although they say nothing, the anger on their faces can be clearly seen.

The men file past Edwards, leaving him alone at the Target Range. An expression of anger and confusion comes over his face, as Edwards watches the soldiers leave.

INT. - COMPANY C BARRACKS - DAY

1:20 P.M.

Soldiers are returning to the barracks from maneuvers. Their fatigues are soiled, their faces smudged with dirt. They appear tired, as they lazily drop their gear on beds.

Geick, Reuss, and Craig enter the barracks together. They reach their beds: Geick's and Reuss' adjoin one another, while Craig's stands opposite theirs. They PLOP their army packs on the beds.

GEICK

I am going to sleep for the next
hundred years.

REUSS

You wish.

Geick is slowly and tiredly taking off his shoes, when Edwards enters the barracks. The Major has returned to the casual officer's uniform, along with the battered cap.

Edwards moves toward the three soldiers, his manner quiet and easygoing.

EDWARDS

You guys look like you've had
it rough.

REUSS

(taking off boots)
No worse than usual.

Geick looks up. He is unsure of Edwards' presence in the barracks.

GEICK

Do I know you?

EDWARDS

(smiles)
I've been asked that a lot lately.

Continued

GEICK

You're that guy from Intelligence.
Investigating the incident that
happened Saturday night.

EDWARDS

Very perceptive of you, Corporal.
(turns to Reuss)
You must be Private Reuss.

GEICK

If you've got questions, you're
only wasting your time.

EDWARDS

May I ask why?

GEICK

We weren't on base Saturday night.
We were in town.

EDWARDS

Where?

GEICK

Different places. We didn't stay
at any one place for very long.

CRAIG

Yeah, I mean it was a Saturday
night. You know?

EDWARDS

Anyone who can verify this?

Irritable and tired from the maneuvers, Geick stands, then
moves toward Edwards. Craig and Reuss follow, unsure of
what Geick is going to do.

GEICK

Are you calling us liars?

Geick pushes Edwards up against a post that stands in the
center of the barracks. Other soldiers are watching, as
Geick, Reuss, and Craig have surrounded Edwards.

EDWARDS

You know I think it would be
best if I came back later.

GEICK

Maybe you shouldn't come back
at all.

Continued

Geick is about to take a swing at Edwards, when Captain Steigert and Lt. Bolyn enter the barracks.

STEIGERT
(shouting)

Geick.

Geick sees Steigert, who moves up to where the men have surrounded Edwards.

STEIGERT
Are they giving you trouble,
Major?

Edwards looks at all three men.

EDWARDS
Not really, Captain. Just a
misunderstanding.
(to Geick)
Right, Corporal.

Geick and the two others return to their beds.

GEICK
Yeah, just a misunderstanding.

Steigert takes Edwards by the arm and leads him toward his office.

STEIGERT
Why don't we talk in my office,
Major. It'll be less hectic in
there, I can assure you.

As Steigert and Edwards leave, Bolyn gives Geick a cold, intimidating look. Geick looks at Bolyn, unsure of what to say or do.

INT. - STEIGERT'S OFFICE - DAY

Edwards and Steigert enter the Captain's office. Steigert is wearing camouflaged, battle fatigues. He takes off his helmet and places it on a hat rack next to the doorway of his office.

Edwards follows Steigert into the office. The Captain walks over to his desk, carrying a carbine with him. He takes a rag out of his back pocket, sits down, and begins cleaning the rifle.

STEIGERT
You'll have to forgive my men,
(more)

STEIGERT (cont.)

Major. They've had a long, tiring
three days of maneuvers.

Edwards sits in a chair opposite Steigert's, so that both
men are divided by the desk.

Steigert finishes cleaning the rifle. He walks over to
the gun cabinet and puts it away.

STEIGERT

(returning to the
desk)

Now, Major, what can I do for
you?

EDWARDS

Did you know that Private Stockwell
entered the PX the night he was killed?

Steigert uses the rag to wipe off grease and dirt from his
hands.

STEIGERT

Not really. I heard rumors that
Stockwell entered the PX, but
that's all.

(puts rag away)

You think Stockwell's entering
the PX is connected with his
and the other soldiers' deaths?

EDWARDS

I don't know. Could always be a
possibility.

Steigert stands and walks over to the window. He opens
the window, letting a warm breeze in.

EDWARDS

Let me ask you a question, Captain.
If you had caught Private Stockwell
entering the PX, would you have
arrested him?

STEIGERT

(as he sits behind
the desk)

Well, he would have been in
violation of Ordinance--

Continued

EDWARDS

2213B. Yes, I know. Would you have arrested him?

Steigert pauses, as he carefully chooses his words. He tries to affect a tough bravado that only comes off as arrogant.

STEIGERT

If anyone is in violation of military law, no matter how insignificant that law may appear, I have them arrested.

EDWARDS

Whether the soldier be black or white?

STEIGERT

Military law has no color barrier, Major. We're all equal to the same rules and--

EDWARDS

And punishments?

Steigert has become annoyed with Edwards' sharp, but incessant questioning. He stands, as he forces a polite, respectful smile.

STEIGERT

Will there be anything else, Major?

Edwards stands, smiling goodnatureedly.

EDWARDS

Not at the moment. I'll contact you, if I need anything else.

Steigert leads Edwards to the door. He notices Edwards' battered cap, then smiles at its worn condition. As he speaks, sarcasm can clearly be detected in his voice.

STEIGERT

That's an interesting hat, Major. I don't think I've ever seen anything like it before.

EDWARDS

It was my father's. He gave it to me when I enlisted.

Continued

STEIGERT

My father tells me that your's was commander here in the early thirties. You knew the Congressman and your father served together in the last war.

EDWARDS

And from what father said, he was quite impressed with the Congressman.

STEIGERT

(beams)

Was he?

EDWARDS

I believe he once said, "The Congressman was the best damn mess clerk that ever served under me." Well, if you'll excuse me, Captain.

Edwards exits Steigert's office.

EXT. - E BARRACKS - DAY

Edwards moves past a group of soldiers returning from maneuvers. They pay little attention to him, as he files past them. As Edwards descends the barracks' steps, he is whistling Porter's "Let's Face It."

Shooting from outside the barracks' entrance, we see Bolyn watching Edwards leave. He waits until Edwards has left the building, then enters Steigert's office.

INT. - STEIGERT'S OFFICE - DAY

As Bolyn enters the office, he notices that Steigert is not happy with Edwards' parting remarks. Bolyn, however, does not comment on it.

Bolyn walks over to the window, watches Edwards pass, then turns to Steigert.

BOLYN

You think he knows.

STEIGERT

I don't know. He acts as if he doesn't, but I can't be sure.

Continued

BOLYN

You want me to put a tail on him?
Have one of the men watch him, and
find out what he does know.

Steigert has returned to the desk. He unholsters his pistol and begins to clean it.

STEIGERT

I'd rather you didn't.

Bolyn walks over to the bookshelf, picks up the Company E picture, then turns to Steigert. As he speaks, a cold, intimidating tone creeps into his voice.

BOLYN

You want him to find out the
truth?

STEIGERT

(uncertain)

For Christsakes, Bolyn, the
Major's Army Intelligence.
You lean on him, and you
could only make things worse.

Bolyn puts the picture back on the bookshelf. He then walks past Steigert's desk, as he heads for the door.

STEIGERT

It's not me Edwards wants. You
were the one who had those Negro
soldiers killed. You pulled the
trigger, goddamn it, not me.

Bolyn turns and faces Steigert. His manner toward the Captain is quietly menacing, as he smiles at Steigert.

BOLYN

Maybe, but you think about it,
Captain. The fewer chances Edwards
has to find out anything, the
better for all of us.

INT. - MCGUIRE'S ROOM (INFIRMARY) - DAY

3:00 P.M.

Confined to a wheelchair, McGuire sits at the window, reading Wright's Native Son. A warm breeze blows through the window, causing the curtains to FLAP back and forth. A group of

Continued

soldiers can be heard o.s. performing marching drills on the parade grounds outside McGuire's room.

CU - MCGUIRE'S DOOR

It opens a crack and Edwards peers in. He lightly knocks on the door, then enters. Edwards is wearing an orderly's uniform that is clearly too large for the Major. The shirt hangs clumsily on Edwards, and the pants' legs have been rolled up so that they will not drag along the floor.

As Edwards enters McGuire's room, he is carrying fresh sheets for the bed. He walks over to the bed, placing the sheets on a chair opposite the bed. He then turns to McGuire, adjusting the St. Louis ball cap on his head slightly to the left.

EDWARDS

(smiles)

Just going to change the sheets.
Won't be but a minute.

McGuire looks up for a minute, does not say anything, then returns to his book.

Edwards quickly and haphazardly tears the old sheets off the bed, then drops them on the floor at the foot of the bed. He then struggles to get the pillow case off, and once he has it off, he drops the case at the foot of the bed as well. It becomes quite obvious that Edwards' forte is not changing beds.

As Edwards goes about changing the bed, he hums Porter's "In the Still of the Night." His humming is loud enough that McGuire is distracted from his reading.

McGuire lays the book on his lap and watches Edwards make the bed. At first, he is amused by Edwards' outsized uniform, then becomes more tickled when the Major begins to lay the sheets on the bed.

MCGUIRE'S POV

Instead of the bed sheet, Edwards puts the blanket on first, then lays the sheet over the blanket. He then turns to McGuire.

EDWARDS

(goodnaturedly)

So how long have you been here?

Continued

MCGUIRE
(v.o.)
Not quite a week.

EDWARDS
Nothing serious, I hope.

MCGUIRE
(v.o.)
Just a sprained hip.

RESUME - MCGUIRE

He tries not to laugh, as Edwards makes a feeble attempt at straightening the sheets. It dawns on McGuire that he has seen Edwards before. He wheels himself toward the foot of the bed, as he nearly collides with a mound of piled-up sheets.

MCGUIRE
You know, if I'm not mistaken the sheets were changed earlier this morning.

EDWARDS
Well, we want your stay here to be as comfortable as possible.

McGuire watches Edwards put the pillow case on inside-out.

MCGUIRE
Yeah, you guys in Intelligence are a real caring lot. Aren't you?

The pillow drops from Edwards' hands. The expression on his face reveals that the game is up, and that he has definitely been caught. He gives McGuire a forced, embarrassed smile, as he bends down to pick up the pillow.

The pillow has fallen underneath the bed. As Edwards goes to retrieve it, he sees the door open. All he can see are two pairs of boots entering McGuire's room. Edwards quickly rolls under the bed, so as not to be seen.

Two MPs walk up to McGuire. He does not say anything. He points to underneath the bed, a look of amusement still on his face.

The MPs split up and move around to opposite sides of the bed.

Continued

Edwards looks to both sides of the bed. He sees only boots, but that is all he needs to see. He knows he has been caught once again before he could ask McGuire any questions. He sighs, then in quiet exasperation, he pulls the ball cap over his eyes.

INT. - SCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

3:45 P.M.

Two MPs stand outside the Colonel's office. The door is closed, but we can hear shouting coming from inside the office.

Once inside Scott's office, we find Edwards seated in front of the Colonel's desk. He looks unimpressed with Scott's display of anger.

Scott is standing in front of a window situated in front of his desk. He is the one who has been shouting, his anger coming through clearly.

SCOTT

You had no business being in
Private McGuire's room without
my permission.

EDWARDS

I don't need your permission,
Colonel. I don't fall under
your command. I've got my own
superiors, and, believe me, you
aren't one of them.

SCOTT

(sharply)
Look, mister--

Edwards angrily rises from the chair.

EDWARDS

Major, Colonel. I extend the
courtesy of calling you by
your rank, and I expect you
to do the same with me.

Surprised at Edwards' display of anger and respect for rank, Scott tries to control his anger, although his voice remains tense, as he continues to speak.

SCOTT

Look, Major, you aren't welcomed
(more)

SCOTT (cont.)
here at the moment.

EDWARDS
So I've gathered. No one wants to answer my questions, and the answers that I do get haven't been much help. Except Sergeant Selby's.

SCOTT
(surprised)
You know Jim Selby?

EDWARDS
I met him yesterday at the Target Range. You know one of Halloway's men was hurt.

Scott does not appear to be all that concerned. He looks at Edwards, saying nothing.

EDWARDS
You don't seem all that upset?

SCOTT
Captain Halloway has been a thorn in my side since he was transferred here over a year ago.

EDWARDS
I can't understand why. I guess the fact that his men use weapons that have become obsolete is beside the point.

Edwards moves toward the desk, so that he and Scott are divided by the desk.

EDWARDS
Those rifles are dangerous, Colonel. You're lucky one of his men hasn't been killed yet.

SCOTT
Major, you don't understand--

EDWARDS
Don't I? Does your promotion mean that much to you that you could care less how the Negroes are treated at this camp?

Continued

Scott is caught off guard at Edwards' mentioning of the Colonel's promotion.

SCOTT

My promotion is none of your business.

Edwards gives Scott a hard and intimidating look.

EDWARDS

Let's hope that's true, Colonel. But if I find out that your promotion is connected in any way with the deaths of those Negro soldiers--

Edwards begins to move away from Scott's desk.

EDWARDS

Well, for you and your promotion's sake, let's hope I don't. Afternoon, Colonel.

Edwards crosses over to the door. He opens it and finds the MPs standing guard. He then turns to Scott, his manner no longer intimidating.

EDWARDS

(smiles)

Oh, and, Colonel, tell your MPs to stop following me everywhere I go. It's really getting to be a nuisance.

Edwards nonchalantly walks past the MPs.

The MPs turn to Scott, who is now sitting at his desk. The Colonel nods, then leans back in the chair, angrily throwing a pencil on the desk.

EXT. - E BARRACKS - NIGHT

7:45 P.M.

We begin with a CLOSE-UP of a basketball hoop that is attached to the roof behind the building. A ball comes into frame, hits the backstop, then bounces off.

We move away from the hoop to reveal Geick and Reuss playing a game of one-on-one. Craig stands on the sidelines, joking with both men, as they begin another game.

Continued

Geick has the ball. He quickly moves around Reuss, then goes in for a lay-up. The ball spins around the rim of the hoop, then bounces off. The ball lands at Craig's feet.

Craig picks the ball up, then hands it to Geick.

CRAIG

You're a regular pro. You know that Geick.

Geick takes the ball, then flips Craig off. Craig laughs, as does Reuss.

Geick throws Reuss the ball. He begins to dribble it. He tries to fake out Geick, as he goes in for a shot. Reuss goes up, but Geick quickly tips the ball out of Reuss' hands.

The ball bounces once into Bolyn's hands. Bolyn has come out of the barracks, as both men had begun play.

Bolyn's presence surprises all three men. They are not quite sure of what to say, as Bolyn begins to dribble the ball around Geick.

BOLYN

I used to be pretty good at this game.

Bolyn takes aim, then makes a shot. The ball goes into the basket without hitting the rim.

CRAIG

Hey, way to go, Lieutenant.

The ball comes back to Bolyn. He starts to dribble again, but in such a way that it makes the men feel uncomfortable.

GEICK

You want to see us about something, Lieutenant?

Bolyn suddenly stops dribbling, then sharply throws the ball at Geick, who nearly drops the ball, as he catches it.

BOLYN

You nearly gave everything away to that Major this afternoon.

GEICK

I'm sorry, Lieutenant, I didn't
(more)

GEICK (cont.)
know what I was doing.

BOLYN
That's for damn sure. You're just
lucky the Major didn't think any-
thing of it.

Geick has thrown the ball back to Bolyn. The Lieutenant then throws the ball to Craig, who makes a successful lay-up attempt. Craig then moves toward Geick and Reuss, as Bolyn retrieves the ball.

BOLYN
We don't want the Major to find
out that we killed those niggers.
Do we?

All three men quickly shake their heads.

BOLYN
Granted, they're just niggers,
but the Army may take offense
anyway.

GEICK
What makes a man hate niggers so
much?

Bolyn takes a shot and misses. The ball then bounces back to him.

BOLYN
I've got my reasons.

Bolyn takes another shot and again misses. The ball bounces toward Craig, who retrieves it and throws it back to Bolyn.

BOLYN
I saw them kill my brother ten
years ago in Detroit. It was at
a race riot where my brother died.
Niggers went crazy because a housing
development they were supposed to get
didn't come through.

Bolyn takes a shot, then misses. The ball rolls back to the Lieutenant. As he continues to speak, the tone of his voice takes on a gradual, but strongly intense anger.

Continued

The three men are not sure how to handle Bolyn's anger. Craig slowly moves back away from under the hoop. He is clearly afraid of Bolyn's rage.

Bolyn's dribbling intensifies, as his anger rises.

BOLYN

The police came and the niggers ran. I knew where the street was, so I followed my brother there. Where I got to the street, I saw that my brother had a nigger pinned against a wall. He wasn't going to hurt him, just place him under arrest.

ANGLE ON BOLYN

He stops dribbling. His face hardens, as the memory of his brother's death becomes too vivid for him.

BOLYN

And that's when a nigger came up behind my brother and knifed him in the back. He was dead before he hit the sidewalk, and the two niggers got away.

Bolyn makes a shot, and the violent force of the ball hitting the rim, nearly causes the hoop to collapse.

Bolyn realizes that he has lost control for a moment. He looks at all three men who are too stunned to say anything. He quickly regains his composure.

BOLYN

I want Edwards gone before he finds out anything. We have to make it so that he'll want to leave.

GEICK

(points to Reuss
and himself)

We could rough him up a little.

BOLYN

You do that, Geick. And if it's not enough, then we'll--

Continued

CRAIG

Kill him? Is that it?
What if the Army sends
someone else. Are you
going to kill him too?

Craig looks at Bolyn, then at Reuss and Geick. He no longer wants any part of Bolyn's insanity.

CRAIG

You can count me out then. There
have been too many killings as it
is. I don't want anymore hanging
over my head.

Craig picks the ball up, then sharply throws it at Bolyn. He then turns and goes into the barracks.

GEICK

What if he goes to the Major?

Bolyn moves closer to Geick and Reuss, as he carries the ball under his right arm.

BOLYN

Don't worry about Craig. We can
handle him, if we have to.
(points to Geick
and Reuss)
You just concentrate on Edwards.
He's the one we want.

On this line, Bolyn makes an over-the-shoulder shot, as all three men begin to head toward the barracks' entrance.

CU - HOOP

The ball goes in without hitting the rim.

INT. - GUEST QUARTERS (CAMP HARRISON) - DAY

Thursday, June 17: 9:45 A.M.

The only illumination in the room is the morning sun filtering through a window that has its Venetian blinds opened.

Edwards is seated at a roll-top desk. He is looking at a file marked CLASSIFIED, the contents of which deal with the shooting of the seven soldiers.

Continued

Edwards is reading a biography of Lt. Bolyn, when there is a knock heard o.s. He looks up from the file and sees Halloway and Selby standing in the doorway.

EDWARDS

Sergeant Selby, Captain, come in please.

Edwards rises and meets Selby and Halloway, as they enter the quarters.

SELBY

We aren't interrupting anything, are we, Major?

EDWARDS

Not at all. Just catching up on some paper work.

There is an awkward moment of silence. All that can be heard is Mary Martin singing "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" on a record player that stands in the corner of the room.

Halloway gives Selby a look of uncertainty, as the Sergeant quietly and reassuringly nods his head.

HALLOWAY

(hesitantly)

Uh, look, Major, we came here, that is, I came here to apologize--

Halloway is interrupted by the record that suddenly skips between lyrics. Edwards gives an embarrassed smile, then points to the record player.

EDWARDS

It's an old record.

Edwards walks over to the record player, as Halloway and Selby look on. The silence proves to be uncomfortable for both men, especially Halloway, who begins to nervously fidget. It is clear that Halloway would like to be anywhere else than where he presently is.

EXT. - PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

A FULL SHOT establishes the division of the white and black sections. The black soldiers are in their section playing

Continued

touch football, while white soldiers are conducting yard work around the flagpole.

We move in to see that the white soldiers are comprised of men from Company E. Geick, Reuss, and Craig are among the soldiers who are clipping grass around the flagpole, or who are raking weeds, dead grass, and other debris from the parade grounds.

In the black section, the team who has the ball faces the white section. The quarterback falls back, then throws a long ball. The intended receiver, CORPORAL DEKE PATTERSON, a strong, muscular young man, misses the ball, as it bounces into the white section.

The ball rolls a couple of times, until it lands near Geick.

Geick puts down his rake, walks over to the ball, then picks it up. He flips the ball into the air, catches it, as Patterson runs over to retrieve it.

INT. - GUEST QUARTERS - DAY

Edwards is still tinkering with the record player, as Halloway and Selby have turned away from the Major. They speak in hushed tones, so that Edwards cannot hear them.

HALLOWAY

I don't know why I'm here.
I've got no reason to apologize.

SELBY

I think this man can help us,
Jake, whether you want to believe
it or not.

HALLOWAY

You don't even know if he'll
accept my apology.

Edwards returns to Halloway and Selby, after turning off the record player.

EDWARDS

(smiles)

Well, so much for Mary Martin.
Now what is it that you wanted,
Captain?

EXT. - PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

Continued

Geick and Patterson stand on opposite sides of the flag-pole. Geick still has the ball, tossing it up in the air. He is teasing Patterson with the ball, and enjoying every minute of it.

Patterson faces Geick, unimpressed with his teasing.

PATTERSON

You want to give the ball back?

GEICK

What ball?

(points to ball)

You mean this ball?

Patterson smiles, showing no signs of anger.

Geick continues tossing the ball up into the air.

GEICK

Why not take it from me?

I mean, if you want it
so much.

Craig moves to Geick's side. He is also unimpressed with Geick's teasing.

CRAIG

Give him the ball, Geick.

By now the white soldiers have formed a semi-circle around Geick, while the blacks have done the same with Patterson. Tension can be felt on both sides, as each group is not sure of what is going to happen.

Geick draws a line in the dirt that is even with the flag-pole.

GEICK

All he has to do is come across
this line, and the ball is his.

(to Patterson)

Unless you're afraid of getting
arrested, which I hear happens
a lot with you coons.

Patterson smiles, then turns away from Geick. He is about to walk away with the rest of the black soldiers, but Geick will not leave well enough alone.

Geick turns to the white soldiers. He puts on a tough, arrogant act.

Continued

GEICK

You know that's the first time
I've ever seen a coon turn chicken.

Patterson suddenly stops. He slowly turns and faces Geick, the smile still present on his face. He then begins to walk toward the line, and we see a CLOSE-UP of his boots, as he crosses the line. We hold on the line, as we hear a loud CRACK o.s. What we hear is the sound of a man's fist connecting with the jaw of another man.

INT. - SCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

Steigert is seated in a chair in front of Scott's desk. His hands are calmly folded across his lap. Scott sits behind the desk, his manner pensive, as he nervously plays with a pencil.

SCOTT

I don't know how he knew about my promotion. Hell, he's Intelligence, Steigert. God knows what he knows about me, or anyone else here, for that matter.

STEIGERT

It's not something for you to worry about, Colonel.

SCOTT

What if Edwards gets too close to the truth? It could jeopardize my entire career as a soldier. All I've got is the Army. And I'm not about to have some snotnosed, little Major from Intelligence--

Scott is interrupted by yelling and name-calling coming from outside his office. He gets up from the desk, looks out the window, and sees black and white soldiers surrounding Geick and Patterson, who are on the ground violently wrestling.

SCOTT

(incredulous)
Holy Jesus.

INT. - GUEST QUARTERS - DAY

Edwards leans against the roll-top desk, as Holloway and Selby stand in front of the Major.

HALLOWAY

You see, Major, I had no reason
(more)

HALLOWAY (cont.)
to blow my top yesterday.

EDWARDS
You had every reason. You didn't
know who I was. If I had been the
smart one, I would have introduced
myself.

A black private rushes into the quarters. He catches his
breath, as he nearly stumbles over Selby.

PRIVATE
Captain, in the parade grounds--

HALLOWAY
What is it, soldier?

PRIVATE
A fight. One hell of a fight.

Halloway quickly moves past the soldier. Selby and Edwards
follow along with the black private, as all four men hurriedly
exit the guest quarters.

EXT. - PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

Selby and Halloway rush onto the parade grounds. They
quickly move through a circle of black soldiers and find
that the fight has been broken up by Steigert and Scott.
Steigert holds back Geick, who still has a lot of fight
left in him. His nose is bloodied and his face, especially
his jaw, is smudged with dirt and bruises.

Patterson is held back by Scott, although the Corporal
breaks free when Halloway enters the circle. Patterson's
shirt has been ripped open, and his face, like that of
Geick's, is covered with blood and dirt.

Halloway crosses over to Patterson.

HALLOWAY
What the hell happened here?

STEIGERT
It seems your man here started a
fight with mine.

HALLOWAY
(to Steigert; sharply)
I want to hear it from Corporal
Patterson.

(more)

HALLOWAY (cont.)
 (to Patterson)
 Is what Steigert says true?

Scott joins Steigert on the other side of the flagpole, as Edwards arrives on the scene. He walks into the center of the circle, standing directly on the line that has been almost completely wiped away from the scuffle.

Patterson turns to Halloway, but is reluctant to speak.

GEICK
 Go on you damn coon. Answer him.

Patterson lunges for Geick, but is quickly grabbed from behind by Selby. The grip that Selby has around Patterson's waist is strong and escape-proof.

Steigert's hold on Geick tightens.

STEIGERT
 All right, soldier, that's enough
 of that kind of talk.

Scott moves in front of Steigert and Geick. He tries to put on an air of authority, but only manages to make things worse.

SCOTT
 I think it's safe to say that
 it doesn't matter who started
 it. What I suggest--

HALLOWAY
 (angrily)
 What you suggest? Hell, man,
 I know what you want. You want
 us to forget about this. Go back
 to our barracks as if nothing
 happened. To hell with what you
 want, Colonel.

SCOTT
 (sharply)
 You watch how you talk to me,
 mister.

HALLOWAY
 You want us to be good little
 niggers. Don't you, Colonel?
 You want us to stay on our side
 (more)

HALLOWAY (cont.)
of the camp, so that we won't get
in the way. So that we won't disgrace
your otherwise perfect, all-white
camp.

SCOTT
Now look, Captain--

HALLOWAY
We're tired of playing the good
nigger for you, Colonel.
(points to Scott
and other white
soldiers)
We're as much a part of this Army
as you are. We're fighting the
same goddamn war that you're
fighting. And believe it or not,
Colonel, we're not the enemy. If
you haven't realized that by now--

Halloway does not finish. He realizes that no one is listening, much less caring about what he is saying. He gestures for Selby and the other black soldiers to return to their section.

As Halloway leaves, Edwards crosses the line. As he speaks, there is a sincere tone of urgency to his voice.

EDWARDS
Captain, wait.

Halloway turns and faces Edwards. There is a mixture of defeat and anger in his voice.

HALLOWAY
Major, I'm sorry this had to
happen. I thought maybe we could
help each other, or at least trust
in one another. But I can't talk to
you anymore. I just don't think
it would do any good.

Edwards begins to speak, but is quickly cut off by Halloway.

HALLOWAY
And I'd rather you didn't come
around to the barracks. My men
may not appreciate it.

Continued

Halloway turns his back on Edwards, then heads for the black section.

Steigert's men are slowly dispersing. They are heading back toward E Barracks, as Edwards faces Steigert and Scott.

No words are exchanged among the three men. Edwards gives Scott and Steigert a hard, angry look, then quickly walks past them.

We watch from a WIDE ANGLE Edwards moving away from both men, as he returns to the guest quarters. We can also see white and black soldiers moving toward their respective barracks.

INT. - PX - DAY

Monday, June 21: 8:45 A.M.

Edwards sits at a table near the juke box. He is reading the morning edition of THE TOLEDO BLADE, while a half-eaten donut sits in front of him on a plate filled with bits and crumbs from other donuts that he has eaten. Ella Fitzgerald sings "A-Tisket, A-Tasket" on the juke box.

CRAIG

(o.s.)

Excuse me, Major?

Edwards looks up from the paper to see Private Craig standing in front of him. Although caught off-guard by Craig's presence, he gives the private a warm, ingratiating smile.

CRAIG

I'm Private Craig. I'm from--

EDWARDS

Captian Steigert's company.
Yes, I know.

CRAIG

Is it all right if I join you?

Edwards stands and points to a chair in front of him.

EDWARDS

Of course. Is there something I can get for you? A cup of coffee, maybe.

CRAIG

No, thanks.

Continued

As Craig sits, it becomes clear that his manner is apprehensive. He puts his hands on the table in an effort to look calm that barely succeeds.

Craig nervously clears his throat, then begins to speak.

CRAIG

It's about what happened. The
Negro soldiers? The ones who
were killed?

There is a brief pause, as Edwards realizes the seriousness of what Craig is saying. The juke box is now quiet, adding an eerie feeling to the silence between Craig and the Major.

Edwards gives Craig a friendly smile that manages to relieve some of the private's apprehension.

EDWARDS

Wouldn't you rather talk about
this at my quarters?

CRAIG

(smiles)
Maybe that's not such a bad idea--

Craig's smile slowly fades, as Reuss enters the PX.

Reuss walks up to a magazine rack, ignoring Craig and Edwards. He picks up a NEWSWEEK and starts to skim it.

ANGLE ON CRAIG

His body stiffens at the sight of Reuss. He begins to quickly tap his fingers on the table. His fear becomes so much that he completely ignores Edwards for a moment.

EDWARDS

(o.s.)
Private Craig, is something the
matter?

Edwards' voice startles Craig, as he turns away from Reuss.

Craig attempts a smile, but the effort comes off forced.

CRAIG

I just remembered. I have clean-
up duty this morning. I've got
some windows to wash back at
the barracks.

Continued

Edwards is not convinced of Craig's story, but he does not press the matter.

EDWARDS

I'm free this evening, if you want to talk about it then.

Craig stands, then turns to leave.

CRAIG

Yeah, sure, if I can find the time.

Craig exits without looking at Reuss.

Reuss looks up from the magazine and watches Craig walk past D Barracks. He then smiles to himself, as he returns to the NEWSWEEK.

INT. - LATRINE (E BARRACKS) - NIGHT

Wednesday, June 23: 9:10 P.M.

We move along a row of shower stalls. We move inside one and find Craig showering himself. He is enjoying the shower, as the water quickly glides over him. O.S. we hear the latrine door opening, as Craig continues showering.

Craig drops a bar of soap. As he bends to retrieve it, the shower curtain suddenly opens to reveal Geick and Reuss standing in the stall's entrance. Reuss points the nozzle away from Geick and himself, as they both quickly grab Craig and pin him against the wall.

Craig tries to scream, but Geick shoves a handkerchief into his mouth. Craig's attempts to struggle fail, since Geick and Reuss prove too much for him.

GEICK

(whispers)

What did you tell the Major?
Huh? The Lieutenant wants to know.

REUSS

(whispers)

I think he told him everything.
What do you think, Corporal?

Geick and Reuss move Craig's body toward the corner of the stall, as they continue to speak in hushed tones.

Continued

GEICK

I think you're right, Private
Reuss.

Geick grabs Craig by the arms, as Reuss stands guard outside the stall. He has the curtain half-open. He sees no one coming into the latrine. He then turns to Geick and nods.

We hold on Reuss, as we hear a loud SMACK o.s.

Geick comes out of the stall slightly wet. He and Reuss cross over to the latrine door and exit.

We move away from the latrine door. We approach the stall, then enter half-way. We find Craig's body slumped in the corner, his eyes vacantly staring out. Water is violently hitting his face, as we begin to move along his body. We reach his feet and hold on the bar of soap that lays in the center of the stall.

INT. - INFIRMARY - DAY

Thursday, June 24: 12:20 P.M.

We are in a patient's room. It is quiet, and the silence creates a strange, foreboding atmosphere within the room.

We view Craig's lifeless body, then pull back to reveal Edwards looking at it. A sheet covers the body, except for the face.

Edwards pulls the sheet over Craig's face, then turns to Merriwhether, who stands near the door. Merriwhether looks squeamish, his face a sickly pale color.

EDWARDS

Wait outside for a minute.
Will you, Captain?

Merriwhether nods, then quickly leaves.

Edwards turns to DR. STEVEN KOSLO, a young physician who is in charge of the day shift at the infirmary. As Edwards speaks, his voice has a quiet, but serious tone to it.

EDWARDS

You say it was an accident?

Continued

KOSLO

He slipped on a bar of soap
and cracked his skull open
when he hit the floor. It's
a common enough accident. It
happens in many homes every day.

EDWARDS

Would you say it was an accident?

KOSLO

You want the truth?

EDWARDS

(smiles)

I'd appreciate it.

KOSLO

I could get my ass in trouble
for saying this--

EDWARDS

It won't go out of this room.
(holds up hand in
the shape of a Boy
Scout salute)
Scout's Honor.

KOSLO

The way Private Craig fell and
the position of the soap, there's
no way it could have been an accident.

EDWARDS

You're sure about this?

KOSLO

There's also the position of the
fracture. It's too clean, too perfect.

EDWARDS

In other words--

KOSLO

I'd say he was murdered.

EDWARDS

Thank you, Doctor.

Edwards crosses over to the door, then turns to Koslo.

Continued

EDWARDS

If I need you for anything else,
I'll let you know.

As Edwards exits the room, he is met by a still squeamish Merriwhether.

EDWARDS

You don't like hospitals all that
much. Do you, Captain?

They begin to walk toward the infirmary exit.

MERRIWHETHER

No, sir. They make me sick.

Edwards finds this remark funny. He laughs, as he holds the door open for Merriwhether. Edwards then exits the infirmary.

INT. - BOLYN'S OFFICE (E BARRACKS) - DAY

Thursday, June 24: 12:20 P.M.

Edwards enters the barracks, then crosses over to Bolyn's office that is situated across from Steigert's.

The door is open. Bolyn is kneeling beside the lower drawer of a file cabinet. He is putting papers away in a file clearly marked REQUISITION FORMS. He goes through the job of filing quietly and determinedly.

Edwards is about to knock on the side of the door, when he notices a large bulletin board filled with blue and gold ribbons and with newspaper clippings from THE DETROIT NEWS and THE DETROIT FREE PRESS. The ribbons and clippings have one aspect in common: Robert Bolyn, the older, deceased brother of Lt. Bolyn. The ribbons are for good conduct and excellent marksmanship. The clippings trace Robert Bolyn's career from a rookie policeman on the Detroit police force, praising him for outstanding feats of heroism and his dedication to the force, and finally to his tragic death in a race riot in 1933.

Edwards enters the office, impressed with Robert Bolyn.

EDWARDS

That's quite a bulletin board
you have.

Continued

Bolyn looks over his desk and sees Edwards entering the office. He does not get up, as he continues to file.

EDWARDS

Are all those ribbons your brother's?

BOLYN

Yes, Major, they are.

Bolyn closes the file drawer, then stands. He still has a handful of files in his arms that he proceeds to put in an upper drawer of the cabinet.

As Edwards approaches Bolyn's desk, we see a small black-and-white photograph of Bolyn and his brother. Bolyn is in his early teens wearing a tweed jacket and a straw hat. His brother wears a neatly pressed police uniform. Bolyn's arm is around his brother's shoulders. They are looking at each other. There is clearly love and respect in both of their eyes.

Edwards picks up the photograph, admiring the picture very much.

EDWARDS

Your brother was a fine-looking young man.

Bolyn has become annoyed with Edwards' presence. He slams the upper drawer, letting it BANG against the cabinet. As the drawer connects with the cabinet, the bulletin board RATTLES against the wall.

BOLYN

Look, Major, I'm extremely busy, as you can see. Is there something I can do for you?

Edwards politely ignores Bolyn's brusqueness. He crosses over to the window, watches a couple of soldiers walk by, then turns to Bolyn.

EDWARDS

It's a shame about Private Craig.

BOLYN

It's one of those things. If he had been more careful, he wouldn't have slipped. And he'd probably still be alive.

Continued

EDWARDS

How well did you know Private Craig?

BOLYN

I didn't know him at all. Craig was something of a loner. You know, the type who always kept to himself. I don't think he ever really had a friend in the company.

EDWARDS

Did he ever mention anything about the shooting of the Negro soldiers?

BOLYN

Not that I'm aware of.

Bolyn moves toward the desk. He has suddenly become interested in Edwards' questions.

BOLYN

Why do you ask?

EDWARDS

He came to see me at the PX the day before he died. He wanted to talk about the shooting. As I recall, he was extremely tense, if not frightened--

BOLYN

Frightened?

EDWARDS

Of what, I can't really say.

BOLYN

I wish I could help you, Major. But like I said, I didn't know him. I don't think anyone did.

Bolyn returns to the file cabinet, then opens a middle drawer.

BOLYN

Look, Major, if you don't want me for anything else, I'm extremely busy right now.

EDWARDS

(smiles)

I understand, Lieutenant.

Edwards reaches the doorway, then turns to take another look at the bulletin board.

Continued

EDWARDS

He must have been one hell-
of-a cop.

Bolyn continues filing, as he looks at Edwards. He gives Edwards a snide smile.

BOLYN

You know what they say, Major.
The good always die young.

The sarcasm does not escape Edwards. He smiles, but not angrily or sarcastically.

EDWARDS

(poignantly)
Yes, Lieutenant. They do.

Bolyn watches Edwards leave, slamming the file drawer shut, the force of which causes the bulletin board to again RATTLE against the wall. The shaking of the board causes a ribbon to fall off and hit the floor. Once the ribbon hits, we see that it is a ribbon for excellent marksmanship.

INT. - E BARRACKS - DAY

Friday, June 25: 9:00 A.M.

Men are lined up alongside their beds. They are standing at attention, their beds immaculately made, with footlockers open and perfectly packed.

Bolyn walks along, as he carefully inspects the beds and footlockers. He moves up to one bed, drops a quarter on it. The coin falls flat on the bed. It does not bounce, nor does the force of the drop make a crease anywhere on the blanket. Bolyn picks the quarter up, stuffs it back in his pocket, satisfied that the bed has passed inspection.

Bolyn crosses over to Geick's bed, the last one in the Lieutenant's inspection. He examines the footlocker and then the bed. He moves to Geick's side, slips a piece of paper in the Corporal's pocket, then turns and faces Geick.

BOLYN

Very good, Corporal. Keep up
the good work.

GEICK

Thank you, sir. I'll do that.

Bolyn turns to the other soldiers.

Continued

BOLYN

All right, dismissed.

The men begin to disperse, as Bolyn walks to his office.

Reuss comes over to Geick, who has taken the note out of his pocket. Geick is reading the note, as Reuss moves to his side.

Geick hands Reuss the note. As he reads it, we move to a CLOSE-UP of the note. It reads, "He's gotten too close. He knows about Craig. You know what you have to do."

Reuss crumples up the note. He moves over to the post that stands in the center of the building. He throws the note into a cigarette can attached to the post.

Reuss turns away from the post. He walks toward Geick.

As Reuss passes Geick, they exchange smiles that portray a malicious glee at the prospect of hurting Edwards.

INT. - GUEST QUARTERS - NIGHT

7:15 P.M.

Edwards sits at the roll-top desk, his battered cap lazily perched on his head. He is writing a progress report on the investigation, but he does not appear too excited about doing it. He leans back in the chair. He stretches, then yawns loudly and emphatically. He is definitely bored with progress reports.

We move away from the desk, then approach the record player. The record playing is Porter's "Night and Day." It is about over, when a knock is heard o.s.

Edwards stands and again stretches. He slowly makes his way to the door. He opens it and is met by Merriwhether. The Captain wears civilian clothes, and a jeep can be seen in the b.g. with its engine quietly idling.

EDWARDS

Captain Merriwhether, this is something of a surprise. Come in, please.

Merriwhether walks up the two steps leading to the quarters' entrance. When he sees that Edwards has been working, he stops half-way in the entrance.

Continued

MERRIWHETHER

You aren't busy, are you, Major?

EDWARDS

I am. But believe me any interruption right now is welcomed.

MERRIWHETHER

I was just about to leave. Is there anything I can get you from town?

EDWARDS

You're going into town? I thought the camp was sealed off.

MERRIWHETHER

It is, but I'm going to pick up the mail. It's been stuck at the train station for the last week, so the Colonel asked me--

EDWARDS

And that's where you're going now. To pick up the mail.

Merriwhether nods.

EDWARDS

In that case--

Edwards suddenly disappears behind the door. We hear the record player turn off, then the light goes out. Merriwhether stands in the doorway confused. He begins to completely enter the quarters, unsure of what Edwards is up to.

Edwards quickly reappears in the doorway. Merriwhether begins to speak, but is quickly cut off, as Edwards scurries past him, runs down the steps, then hops into the passenger side of the jeep.

Edwards turns to Merriwhether. The Captain is still unsure of what is going on.

EDWARDS

(smiles)

Are you coming?

MERRIWHETHER

I thought you were busy.

Continued

EDWARDS

I am never too busy to help a fellow officer pick up the mail. You may have more than one bag to bring back, and you know how heavy those bags can get.

As if to say "I give up," Merriwhether sighs, then shrugs his shoulders. He closes the door behind, as he walks down the steps.

Merriwhether enters the jeep. He presses on the gas peddle a couple of times, releases the choke, then pulls away from the guest quarters.

As the jeep pulls away, Edwards can be heard singing "Night and Day."

EXT. - THE GREEN HAT - NIGHT

10:05 P.M.

Located a few miles outside of camp, The Green Hat is a small roadside cafe. The parking lot is empty, except for Merriwhether's jeep. As we move past the jeep, we see two large bags with U.S. MAIL stamped across their fronts jammed into the back of the jeep.

We continue to move toward the diner window. On the window a green neon light boldly flashes the diner's name. Over the title we see a large bowler hat with a shamrock tacked onto the front. Like the diner's name, the bowler also flashes a neon green.

We hold on the window, as we watch Edwards and Merriwhether finish their meals. A large, burly-looking man who wears an extremely stained apron over a faded chef's outfit begins to clear off their table. As the man moves away from the table, he does a double take at Edwards' battered officer's cap, then enters the kitchen with a handful of dishes.

INT. - THE GREEN HAT - NIGHT

We begin with a CLOSE-UP of a napkin that has been completely shredded up into little pieces. A hand comes into view arranging the pieces, as if they belonged to a complex jig-saw puzzle. As the hand continues to play with the pieces, we hear o.s. a radio softly playing Helen O'Connell singing "Tangerine."

Continued

We pull back to reveal Edwards and Merriwether sitting in a booth in which the remains of two hamburger meals can be seen. Both men have been drinking beer and each one still has a glass that they have not yet finished.

Edwards looks down at the puzzle that he has been making. He then looks at Merriwether, whose elbows are firmly planted on the table. By the glazed look in his eyes, it becomes clear that the Captain has had a few too many beers.

EDWARDS

You ever see a jigsaw puzzle,
you know one of those big mothers,
that has hundreds of pieces.

Merriwether nods, then takes a sip from his beer. He belches, then smiles, as he continues to listen to Edwards.

Edwards ignores the belch, as he has become too engrossed in his puzzle.

EDWARDS

Well, that's what this investi-
gation has become. I've got hun-
dreds of pieces and not the faintest
clue of where they all go.

Edwards holds up a small, square piece of paper. He examines it carefully, as he continues.

EDWARDS

For example, take Private Craig.
He's a piece. In fact, he's a
very important piece.
(he shreds the paper
into smaller pieces)
At least, he was.

Merriwether takes a sip of beer, then leans across the table. As he begins to speak, his voice is slightly slurred.

MERRIWHETHER

You think whoever killed Private
Craig has something to do with
the killing of the Negro soldiers?

EDWARDS

I don't think, Captain, I know.
That's another piece to the puzzle
I can't find.

Continued

MERRIWHETHER

What about Private McGuire?

EDWARDS

Therein lies the problem, Captain. McGuire could make the difference in this investigation, if he wanted to talk. But he doesn't, and I, for one, can't blame him. If I were on somebody's shit list, I wouldn't want to talk either.

There is silence for a moment. The man with the dirty apron comes over to the booth and clears off more dishes. He returns to the kitchen, as Merriwhether breaks the silence.

MERRIWHETHER

May I ask what may appear a ridiculous question?

Edwards smiles. He has become amused by Merriwhether's drunken state.

EDWARDS

I don't see why not.

MERRIWHETHER

What does the W stand for?

EDWARDS

You mean in my name? Washington.

Merriwhether hiccups and laughs at the same time.

MERRIWHETHER

You're kidding. George Washington Ed--

Edwards leans back in the booth and laughs.

EDWARDS

Hey, don't look at me. It was my father's idea. You see, he was named after Oliver Hazard Perry, you know, the hero of Lake Erie.

MERRIWHETHER

Wasn't he the one who said "War is hell."

EDWARDS

No, that was Sherman. Perry said,
(more)

EDWARDS (cont.)

"We have met the enemy, and they are--

MERRIWHETHER

us. It doesn't make sense. Those soldiers were on our side. They're fighting the same thing we are. And someone kills them because their color is different--

Merriwhether is about to take a drink, when he suddenly and angrily slams the glass on the table. Beer splashes out onto the floor and table.

MERRIWHETHER

It's not right, George, it's just not right.

Edwards gently puts his hand on Merriwhether's arm. As he speaks, his voice takes on a calming and reassuring tone. He also tries to get the Captain's mind off the shooting of the Negro soldiers, by quietly changing the subject.

EDWARDS

You know, you never have told me what A. P. stands for?

Edwards' ploy has worked. Merriwhether has calmed down, although he is reluctant to talk about his name.

MERRIWHETHER

(hesitantly)
I'd rather not.

EDWARDS

I told you what the W stood for.

MERRIWHETHER

You'll laugh.

EDWARDS

You know I'd never do that, Captain.

Merriwhether fidgets, then looks down at the table.

MERRIWHETHER

(mumbles)
Alfonso Poindexter.

Continued

Unable to make out what Merriwhether mumbled, Edwards leans across the table.

EDWARDS

I'm sorry, I didn't get that.

Merriwhether moves forward in the seat, then whispers the name in Edwards' ear.

Edwards sits back in the booth. He mulls the name over for a moment, then smiles. It is a name the Major truly likes.

EDWARDS

I like it. It has panache, as Mrs. Roosevelt would say.

There is silence for a moment. On the radio, we can hear "My Funny Valentine." As if on cue, Merriwhether begins to sing. His voice is slow, and the words come out slurred, but still unmistakable.

MERRIWHETHER

"My funny Valentine,
Sweet comic Valentine,
You make me smile with my heart--"

Merriwhether's singing is interrupted by the man with the dirty apron. He turns to Edwards.

MAN

Can I get you guys anything else?

Merriwhether thrusts his glass in front of the man.

MERRIWHETHER

I'll have another beer.

Edwards gently takes the glass from Merriwhether.

EDWARDS

I think you've already had too many, Alfonso.

MERRIWHETHER

I've only had three.

EDWARDS

Two and a half. But who's counting.

(to man)

I think we'll have the check now.

Continued

The man shrugs his shoulders, then saunters over to the cash register to make out the check.

ANGLE ON MERRIWHETHER

His elbow is up on the table, while his head rests precariously in the palm of his hand, as he continues singing "My Funny Valentine," even though the radio is now playing Miller's "Three Little Fishes."

EXT. - FRONT GATE (CAMP HARRISON) - NIGHT

11:10 P.M.

We begin with a FULL SHOT of the camp, as the jeep approaches the front gate. Two sentries patrol the gate from inside the camp. They march back and forth, keeping abreast of one another.

We move in closer, as the jeep stops in front of the gate. Edwards is not in the driver's seat, while Merriwhether slouches on the passenger's side. He is asleep. Although the brakes make a piercing SCREECHING noise when the jeep stops, Merriwhether does not wake up.

One of the guards opens the gate, examines Edwards' identification, then lets the Major drive through.

EXT. - SCOTT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

We move along with the jeep, as Edwards drives up to the Colonel's office. He stops in front of the office, then turns off the engine.

Edwards jumps out of the jeep, moves around to the passenger's side, then shakes Merriwhether awake.

EDWARDS

Alfonso, come on get up.

Merriwhether slowly and uncertainly awakens. He is groggy, as he takes his glasses off, and wipes sleep from his eyes.

MERRIWHETHER

Wha-Where?

Merriwhether looks around him and realizes that he is back at the camp. As he tries to exit the jeep, he also realizes that he has a horrendous headache.

MERRIWHETHER

I must have drank like a fish.
(to Edwards)
How much did I have?

Continued

Edwards smiles. He lies, but only to save Merriwhether from embarrassment.

EDWARDS

You put away quite a lot, let me tell you.

As Merriwhether steps out of the jeep, he grabs his stomach, then grimaces in pain.

MERRIWHETHER

The question is how much did I lose along the way.

As much as Edwards finds Merriwhether's condition amusing, he does not laugh at the Captain. He cares about Merriwhether. In fact, he cares very much.

EDWARDS

Look Alfonso, are you all right?

MERRIWHETHER

Am I supposed to be?

Merriwhether walks around the jeep toward Scott's office.

EDWARDS

You need any help?

MERRIWHETHER

I'm fine, George. I'll go into the office and sack out for awhile.

(points to mail bags
in back of truck)

I don't need to distribute the mail until tomorrow. I mean, the men have waited this long.

Edwards begins to move away from the jeep.

EDWARDS

You take it easy, Alfonso. And try to get some rest.

MERRIWHETHER

I will, George.

Merriwhether turns and is about to enter Scott's office, when he stops. He turns around, then faces Edwards, as the Major moves off toward the guest quarters.

Continued

MERRIWHETHER

Oh, and, George?

Edwards turns and faces Merriwhether.

MERRIWHETHER

You won't tell anyone about this,
will you? I wouldn't want the
Colonel to find out--
(grabs stomach, as a wave
of nausea comes over him)
Or anyone else, for that matter.

EDWARDS

(smiles)
Your secret's safe with me.
(raises hand in Boy
Scout salute)
Scout's Honor.

Merriwhether turns, then enters Scott's office, as Edwards continues toward the guest quarters.

EXT. - PX - NIGHT

11:20 P.M.

The area around the PX is deserted. Silence creates a strange, foreboding atmosphere. A small breeze blows leaves and small bits of paper along the alley next to the PX. It should be noted that this alley is the one in which Stockwell was dragged into and beaten up.

Shooting from the alley, we see Edwards walking towards the PX. His movements are light and jaunty, as he is whistling "In the Still of the Night."

Edwards comes to the alley, when a small gust blows Edwards' cap off. The cap flops into the alley. He goes after it, still whistling the Porter song.

As Edwards enters the alley, the silence becomes more pronounced. He pays no attention to the silence, however, as he bends to pick up the cap.

Edwards dusts the cap off, makes sure the eagle is still perched on the front, but as he is about to put the cap on, he is suddenly grabbed from behind by two men wearing black camouflage uniforms. Their faces are hidden by camouflage-colored green masks.

Continued

Edwards is dragged further into the darkness of the alley. He struggles, but the men are too strong for him. As they throw Edwards against the PX wall, the Major's cap falls off, hitting the ground in front of him.

One of the men violently punches Edwards in the stomach. As he doubles over, the other man throws the Major against the wall, then gives him a hard sock on the jaw. Edwards is too dazed to fight back, as everything is happening too violently and suddenly for him.

They work him over a few seconds more, then one of the men grabs Edwards by the arm, pulls it behind the Major's back, and shoves him against the wall. As the man speaks, his voice comes out muffled through the mask, but the voice clearly belongs to Corporal Geick.

GEICK

We don't want you here anymore.
Leave now, or next time you won't
be so lucky.

On the word "lucky," the other man, Private Reuss, gives Edwards a hard, swift punch to the kidney that causes the Major to hit against the wall with a violent force.

Both men let Edwards go. They run off, and as they do, we have a CLOSE-UP of their feet trampling Edwards' cap. The force of their trampling causes the eagle to break off from the cap, landing on the ground next to the cap.

As Edwards turns from the wall, we see his face bloodied and bruised. It is an effort for him to keep himself propped up against the wall, as his movements are slow and painful.

ANGLE ON EDWARDS

As he turns completely around, he sees his cap on the ground. The visor has cracked, and it has been flattened out, as bootprints can be seen on top of the cap.

Edwards moves toward the cap, but the effort proves too much for him, as he painfully grabs the side that has been punched. He grimaces in pain, and as he tries to reach out for the cap, he collapses on the ground next to it, so that the cap is positioned in the center, while Edwards and the eagle lie on opposite sides of the cap.

INT. - EDWARDS' ROOM (INFIRMARY) - DAY

Saturday, June 26: 10:00 A.M.

Continued

Sitting up in bed, Edwards' mood is light and cheerful. His face, however, looks battered: his jaw is swollen with the bottom lip cracked and protruding, his forehead is bruised in the center, and his right eye is black and blue.

A young, attractive nurse with blonde hair styled like that of Veronica Lake's moves around the room performing various chores: she opens the blinds to let the sun in, she fills a glass with water from a pitcher on a nightstand next to Edwards' bed, and she fluffs up the Major's pillows.

Edwards smiles, taking delight in watching the nurse perform her duties.

EDWARDS

Anyone ever tell you that you
look like Veronica Lake?

The nurse does not react to Edwards' freshness. She continues to dutifully fluff the Major's pillows.

EDWARDS

How about Jean Harlow?

The nurse finishes with the pillows, then begins to leave.

NURSE

If you need me for anything,
give me a ring.

The nurse walks to the door, turns around, then faces Edwards.

NURSE

(smiles)

And, yes, I have been told that
I look like Veronica Lake. Quite
often, in fact.

Edwards laughs at the nurse's comeback.

The nurse exits, as Merriwhether enters. He notices Edwards laughing.

MERRIWHETHER

What's so funny?

EDWARDS

Veronica Lake.

Merriwhether moves closer to the bed, as Edwards props himself up against one of the pillows.

Continued

MERRIWHETHER

(confused)

I beg your pardon?

EDWARDS

Never mind. What did Dr. Koslo say?

MERRIWHETHER

You should be out of here in a day or two. Nothing was seriously damaged, so there's nothing to worry about.

Merriwhether stops at the foot of the bed.

MERRIWHETHER

You still aren't sure who beat you up?

EDWARDS

I've gone over last night at least three times in my head so far. And I've come up with nothing every time. All I know is that whoever did it wore masks. It was dark, and I was getting the shit kicked out of me, so at the time it was happening, I really didn't care who was beating me up.

MERRIWHETHER

I guess that means you've become a piece too.

Edwards gives Merriwhether a confused look.

MERRIWHETHER

You know, of the jigsaw puzzle.

Edwards smiles, as he makes the connection between himself and the jigsaw puzzle.

Merriwhether looks at his watch, then turns to leave.

MERRIWHETHER

(to Edwards)

I've got some errands to run around camp. I'll be back in an hour. Maybe we could have lunch together.

Edwards nods, then watches Merriwhether leave.

Continued

There is silence for a moment, then Edwards slowly gets out of bed. He grimaces, as the pain has not completely left him. He puts on a brown-colored robe that was lying on a chair opposite the bed, and moves toward the bed.

Edwards opens the door and peers out to see if Merriwhether has gone. When he sees that the corridor is empty, he exits the room.

INT. - MCGUIRE'S ROOM (INFIRMARY) - DAY

McGuire is at the window, sitting in the wheelchair. He watches a group of soldiers performing marching drills on the parade grounds. In the b.g., we can see Scott enter a car, exchange a few words with Merriwhether, ordering the car to drive away.

McGuire leans back in his chair, bored with what he is watching and with his stay in the infirmary. He yawns, then stretches his arms over his head.

ANGLE ON DOOR

It opens a crack and we can see Edwards peering through.

The door opens wider and Edwards walks in, much to McGuire's surprise.

McGuire sees the battered condition of Edwards' face and lets go with a whistle of exclamation.

MCGUIRE

Man, you look like death warmed over.

EDWARDS

(laughs)

Believe me, that's how I feel.

(sits on edge of
the bed)

You aren't going to call the MPs,
are you?

MCGUIRE

Can you give a reason why I shouldn't?

EDWARDS

To be honest, no, I can't.

(points to his face)

Except for this.

Continued

MCGUIRE

I'm not sure I understand.

Edwards stands, walks over to the window, and sits on the ledge.

EDWARDS

Last night, walking past the PX,
I was attacked. Two men jumped
me and beat the hell out of me.
I can't be sure, but I believe
the men who jumped me may have
also beaten up Bobby Stockwell.

McGuire turns his chair around so that he directly faces Edwards. He has become interested in what the Major is saying.

EDWARDS

You see, someone feels I'm getting
too close to the truth. Whoever
killed your friends had me beaten
up, because they're afraid I might
find out who's responsible.

MCGUIRE

You think you can find out?

EDWARDS

That all depends.

Edwards does not go any further, because McGuire knows what he means. McGuire turns away from the Major and wheels himself toward the bed.

MCGUIRE

No way, Major. I can't give you
what you want.

EDWARDS

You want to tell me why?

MCGUIRE

You should know the answer to that
question as well as I do.

EDWARDS

(moves to the
foot of the bed)

Look, private, I don't know who
these people are, but I know what
(more)

EDWARDS (cont.)

they're capable of. You and I both know.

MCGUIRE

You don't understand--

EDWARDS

I understand that you're scared. Hell, so am I. But I don't intend to leave this camp until I find the ones who are responsible. And not just for your friends' deaths either.

(again, points to his face)

I have my own reasons as well.

McGuire struggles out of the wheelchair, as he tries to climb into bed. He nearly falls, but Edwards runs over and holds him up so that he can make it into bed. The effort proves painful for both men, but with Edwards' help, McGuire finally climbs into bed.

Edwards sits on the edge of the bed, next to McGuire. McGuire props himself against the back of the bed, a pillow resting behind his back.

MCGUIRE

Man, you must think you're clever. Helping me like that. I guess that means I owe you one.

EDWARDS

I could have let you fall, but, hey, there's a war on. We need all the men we can get. Take you and me, for example.

MCGUIRE

Yeah, we make a good team. There's no doubt about that. A gimpy nigger--

EDWARDS

And a lunatic white man.

Both men laugh. They have both earned each other's respect, as McGuire extends his hand.

MCGUIRE

Thanks, Major.

Continued

They shake hands.

As Edwards gets up from the bed and crosses over to the wheelchair, a coin drops out of the breast pocket of his pajama top.

The coin hits the floor. A CLOSE-UP reveals it to be Stockwell's nickel.

Edwards picks the coin up and shows it to McGuire.

EDWARDS

I was over by your barracks the other day, and I found this in the dirt. You know whose it is?

Edwards hands the coin to McGuire.

A look of sadness comes over McGuire's face. He quickly recognizes the coin as Stockwell's nickel.

McGuire begins to flip the coin through his fingers in a poignant effort to imitate Stockwell.

EDWARDS

You want to tell me what happened?

MCGUIRE

I've lived with it this long, and it's been tearing me up inside. I keep thinking about the others, watching them die the way they did.

Edwards moves behind the wheelchair that stands between McGuire and himself. He watches McGuire relive the moment. He listens carefully and sympathetically.

MCGUIRE

And it's the way they died that I don't understand. If it had been in battle, that's one thing. If the enemy killed them, that would have made sense.

ANGLE ON MCGUIRE

He clutches the blanket with both hands. As he remembers the night, the memory becomes painful, anguish being clearly

Continued

felt in his voice.

MCGUIRE

But we killed them. Our own soldiers. I thought in the Army that color didn't mean anything, that the uniform we wore made us equal. Man, was I wrong. You know what I mean, Major?

As McGuire turns to Edwards, we see a tear slowly roll down the private's cheek.

EXT. - EDWARDS' ROOM - DAY

12:45 P.M.

Edwards quickly moves toward his room. His movements show no signs of pain, as he moves with a deliberate and determined force.

As Edwards walks past the nurses' station that stands opposite his room, we move away from the Major and head for the station. We hold on a man reading a VOGUE magazine. As he looks up, we see that the man is Corporal Geick. He watches Edwards enter his room, and once the door closes, Geick puts down the magazine, then moves off toward the infirmary exit.

INT. - EDWARDS' ROOM - DAY

As he enters the room, we move away from Edwards and find Merriwhether sitting on the edge of the bed. The Captain stands, as Edwards crosses over to the closet.

MERRIWHETHER

(excitedly)

Where have you been? We were supposed to have lunch an hour ago.

Edwards has removed his pajamas and is now putting on a pair of brown corduroys.

EDWARDS

Don't tell me you call the MPs?

MERRIWHETHER

Well, it had occurred to me.

Continued

As Edwards continues to dress, Merriwhether suddenly realizes where the Major has been, a realization that does not sit too well with the Captain.

MERRIWHETHER

You went to see Private McGuire.

EDWARDS

I won't tell, if you don't.

MERRIWHETHER

George, I'm serious.

EDWARDS

And you think I'm not?

Edwards enters the closet, muttering "Where are my shoes." Merriwhether moves toward the closet, as the Major disappears inside.

MERRIWHETHER

(confused)

What are you doing?

Edwards pokes his head out of the closet.

EDWARDS

What's it look like I'm doing?
Have you seen my shoes anywhere?

Merriwhether looks underneath and finds Edwards' shoes.

MERRIWHETHER

Here they are.

Edwards comes out of the closet. Merriwhether hands the shoes to the Major. He then sits on the edge of the bed to put them on.

MERRIWHETHER

Where are you going? I mean, do you feel well enough?

EDWARDS

I feel fine, Alfonso. And I'm going to see the Colonel. Now if I could only find my cap.

Edwards searches under the sheets of the bed, but does not find the cap.

MERRIWHETHER

I have it, George.

Continued

EDWARDS
(surprised)

You?

MERRIWHETHER
I'm having the eagle sewed back on.
If that's all right?

Edwards smiles.

EDWARDS
(touched)
That's fine, Alfonso.

Edwards stands and begins to walk over to the door.

EDWARDS
I'm off to the Colonel's.

Merriwhether crosses over to the door in an effort to stop Edwards before he leaves.

MERRIWHETHER
You can't.

EDWARDS
Like hell I can't. The Colonel
will see me all right. This time,
he has no other choice.

As Edwards exits the door, Merriwhether frantically shouts.

MERRIWHETHER
Yes, but, George, he's not here.

We hold on the door, as it closes. A second later, it opens and a disgruntled Edwards enters the room. He walks up to Merriwhether, not at all happy with the Captain's news.

EDWARDS
What do you mean he's not here?

Merriwhether backs up and hits the edge of the bed. He quickly sits, and as he speaks, the words come out in a rapid-fire succession.

MERRIWHETHER
He's attending an American Legion
conference in Toledo. He's one of
the main speakers. It was planned
weeks ago. He had to go. He had
no other choice.

Continued

EDWARDS

When's he coming back?

MERRIWHETHER

In the morning. You can talk to him then.

Edwards angrily moves over to the bed. He violently kicks his shoes off, then props himself up with one of the pillows.

EDWARDS

You know for a camp that's supposed to be sealed off, someone's not doing their job.

Merriwhether stands and looks down at the floor, his feelings clearly hurt by Edwards' remarks.

MERRIWHETHER

It's my job, George.

Edwards realizes that he has been too hard on Merriwhether. He gives an apologetic smile to the Captain.

EDWARDS

I know, Alfonso.

Edwards takes the pillow from behind his back, fluffs it up a couple of times, then lies down.

EDWARDS

I didn't mean to bite your head off. I guess I'm tired.

Edwards yawns, then pulls the blanket over him.

EDWARDS

Maybe I could use some sleep after all.

Merriwhether crosses over to the bed. He moves to the side where Edwards is lying down.

MERRIWHETHER

(softly)

George?

ANGLE ON EDWARDS

He is asleep, his breathing slow and calm.

Merriwhether turns, quietly walks to the door, turns

Continued

off the light to the room, then exits.

INT. - MCGUIRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

10:15 P.M.

The room is dark, while o.s. we can hear the RATTLING of the curtain against the window, as a small breeze blows through.

We move away from the door and circle the room, until we reach McGuire's bed. The private is asleep, half-covered by the blanket.

ANGLE ON THE DOOR

It begins to open. We move to a CLOSE-UP of a pair of army boots entering the room.

McGuire continues to sleep fitfully, when a CREAKING noise is heard o.s.

McGuire is startled awake by the noise, but before he can react, a hand comes over his mouth to prevent him from crying out. Another hand comes around McGuire's shoulder, as it flattens him against the bed.

We pull back to reveal that Bolyn, Reuss, and Geick have entered the room. They stand on opposite sides of the bed. Bolyn is on one side, while Reuss and Geick are on the other. Geick has McGuire pinned to the bed, with Reuss standing to his side, cradling a rifle firmly in his arms.

Bolyn leans down to speak to McGuire. The private tries to struggle, but Geick is too strong for him.

BOLYN

(whispers)

Corporal Geick tells me you've been seeing that Major from Intelligence. Not a very smart move, private.

Bolyn moves toward the foot of the bed. He continues to speak in hushed tones.

BOLYN

You remember what Captain Steigert said? You don't want to end up like your friends. Now do you, Private McGuire?

Continued

McGuire tries to fight Geick off, but the corporal has the private's arms tightly gripped with one hand over McGuire's shoulders.

Bolyn crosses over to the window. He looks out for a moment, and when he sees no one about, he slowly and quietly closes the window.

Bolyn turns and faces McGuire.

BOLYN

You are going to have an accident.
An accident that happens all the
time.

(begins to walk
back to the bed)

You're going to fall out of bed
and do serious damage to your
leg. You may even fracture your
hip all over again.

Bolyn reaches the bed, then looks at Reuss. He smiles, then nods.

Reuss takes the rifle and violently butts McGuire in the hip.

McGuire tries to scream, but the pressure of Geick's hand prevents the private from doing so.

MCGUIRE'S POV

The butt of the rifle again rams into his hip. We hear bone CRACK each time the carbine strikes.

RESUME - MCGUIRE

His face is distorted with pain. Tears can be seen streaming down his left cheek.

Bolyn leans down to speak with McGuire.

BOLYN

You don't talk to the Major anymore.
Understand me? We're letting you
live, private. Consider it a
privilege.

Bolyn punctuates "privilege" by pushing McGuire out of bed. The private hits the floor next to the wheelchair.

All three men quickly exit McGuire's room.

Continued

We move away from the door, as it closes. We again circle the room, until we come to McGuire's bed. We hold on the bed, shooting from the direction of the door, as a lone black hand reaches for support from one of the bed sheets. The hand then disappears, as McGuire falls back on the floor, hitting the wheelchair with such a force that it rolls back against the wall.

EXT. - MCGUIRE'S ROOM - DAY

Sunday, June 27: 11:30 A.M.

Edwards comes around the corner of the south wing. He is wearing brown corduroys and a light-blue turtle-neck sweater. He is humming Porter's "Let's Face It."

Edwards suddenly stops and sees two MPs standing outside McGuire's room. He then continues toward the room.

Edwards tries to act casual, as he approaches the MPs. He resumes humming the Porter song, when one of the guards puts his hand out as a signal for Edwards to stop.

MP

I'm sorry, sir, but we can't let you in.

EDWARDS

May I ask why?

MP

You'll have to ask the Colonel that question. We just have our orders to not let anyone in.

EDWARDS

I see. Well, thank you, gentlemen--

Edwards suddenly rushes past the MPs and into McGuire's room. What he sees takes him completely by surprise.

EDWARDS' POV

The room is empty. The bed has been stripped of its sheets, and the wheelchair stands forlornly in the corner next to the bed.

RESUME - EDWARDS

He still cannot believe what he is seeing, as Dr. Koslo has come up behind him. He takes Edwards by the arm and

Continued

leads him away from the room, while the MPs close the door behind them.

Edwards turns to Koslo.

EDWARDS

(uncertain)

What happened? Where's Private McGuire?

KOSLO

He had an accident last night. He fell out of bed, and the fall caused his wound to reopen. He also fractured two bones along the hip at the same time.

EDWARDS

You still haven't answered my question. Where is he?

KOSLO

We took him to the city hospital, because he began to bleed internally. He needed surgery performed, and we don't have the facilities for such an operation.

EDWARDS

You've got wonderful answers, Doctor. None of which I believe.

Edwards moves away from Koslo and begins to walk toward the infirmary exit.

KOSLO

Major, I don't know what you want.

Edwards turns before he exits.

EDWARDS

The truth, if that's possible.

INT. - SCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

12:05 P.M.

Edwards bursts into Scott's office. The Colonel is taken aback by Edwards' abrupt entrance. He also realizes the Major's extreme anger, as he moves from behind his desk to meet Edwards.

Continued

SCOTT

Major, I heard about your stay
in the infir--

EDWARDS

I don't want bullshit at the
moment. You want to tell me
why McGuire's room is empty,
and why you've got MPs standing
outside it.

Getting nowhere being nice, Scott moves to the door and
closes it. He slowly turns and faces Edwards.

SCOTT

Listen, Major--

EDWARDS

No, you listen, Colonel.
Yesterday, while you were at
some damn American Legion
conference, I had a long and
fascinating talk with Private
McGuire. You know what we
talked about, or do you
already know?

Scott walks back to his desk. The expression on his face
shows that he knows what McGuire and Edwards talked about.

SCOTT

Private McGuire was pushed out
of bed. He didn't fall. And don't
ask me who pushed him, because
I don't know.

Edwards angrily moves toward the desk.

SCOTT

Major, please--

EDWARDS

It's your damn promotion, isn't
it? That's all you care about.
What are you afraid of? That
Captain Steigert may find a way of
preventing you from having it. No
man is that powerful, Colonel,
and certainly not Steigert.

Continued

Edwards violently leans against the desk, the force of which causes a picture of Scott in uniform to fall over.

EDWARDS

Six men have been run down for no reason whatsoever, and you have not done one damn thing about it. Instead, you've let one of your subordinates dictate how you should handle things. Somehow, Colonel, I don't think that's how one runs an army base.

As Edwards backs away from Scott's desk, we see the door open in the b.g. Merriwhether enters, shocked by Edwards' tirade against the Colonel.

Edwards turns and walks away from Scott. He passes Merriwhether without seeing him.

Unsure of what has happened, Merriwhether quickly follows Edwards.

In exasperation, Scott leans back in his chair. He sees the picture that has fallen. The Colonel picks it up and examines it for a moment. He shows no reaction to the picture, as he sits it back up on the desk.

EXT. - DIRT ROAD - DAY

1:30 P.M.

Edwards and Merriwhether are at the site of where the black soldiers were killed. The Major is carrying a metal detector, while listening to small BEEPS on headphones that he wears around his head.

Merriwhether walks behind Edwards, completely confused as to what the Major is up to.

Edwards stops, listens carefully to a few BEEPS, then turns around, and walks past Merriwhether. As the Major continues on his search, he whistles Porter's "It's De-Lovely."

EXT. - E BARRACKS - DAY

Black soldiers have gathered outside to watch Edwards with the metal detector. They are as baffled about what the

Continued

Major is up to as Merriwhether is.

Sitting on his haunches, his shirt off in the afternoon sun, Corporal Patterson turns to a soldier next to him, a look of confusion on his face.

PATTERSON

What the hell is he doing?

SOLDIER

That is one crazy white man.

Both men exchange looks of bemusement, then continue watching Edwards.

EXT. - PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

A small group of white soldiers has gathered around the flagpole. They are entertained by Edwards' actions, although they haven't a clue of what the Major is doing either.

Geick and Reuss lean against the flagpole. They exchange looks of uncertainty, as they watch Edwards conduct his search.

EXT. - DIRT ROAD

Merriwhether moves up to Edwards' side. He then taps the Major on the shoulder.

Edwards turns, faces Merriwhether, then pulls a headphone away from his ear.

MERRIWHETHER

You mind telling me what you are looking for?

EDWARDS

Something Private McGuire told me about. Remember our jigsaw puzzle?

Merriwhether nods.

EDWARDS

Well, this could be our most important piece yet--

Over the headphone, Edwards hears a rapid succession of BEEPS. He looks down at the ground where the metal

Continued

detector is pointing.

Edwards quickly hands the metal detector to Merriwether. He then kneels down and starts digging.

ANGLE ON EDWARDS

He digs for a few seconds more, then we get a glimpse of a small gold chain, followed by a medallion that is attached to the chain. A CLOSE-UP of the medallion reveals that a capital E is engraved in the center. Edwards has found Captain Steigert's medallion.

Edwards stands and shows the medallion to Merriwether. The medallion gleams brightly in the sun, as the Major turns it around in his hands.

EXT. - PARADE GROUNDS

Geick and Reuss recognize Steigert's medallion. They exchange nervous glances.

Geick motions for Reuss to leave. The private turns and runs off toward E Company. Geick remains at the flagpole carefully watching Edwards handling the medallion.

INT. - SCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

We begin with a CLOSE-UP of the medallion as Scott holds it in his hands.

EDWARDS (v.o.)

Whatever proof you need to indict
Captain Steigert is right there
in your hands.

We pull back to reveal Scott sitting behind his desk, with Edwards standing in front of the Colonel on the opposite side of the desk. Merriwether stands to the side of Scott's chair.

SCOTT

You're in charge of this investigation. What do you suggest we do?

EDWARDS

Place the man under arrest,
and whoever else is responsible.

Scott and Merriwether exchange uneasy looks.

SCOTT

I wish it were that simple.

Continued

EDWARDS
(leans against desk)
Which means what?

SCOTT
I'd sit down if I were you, Major,
because you aren't going to like
what I have to tell you.

Edwards reluctantly sits.

SCOTT
Captain Steigert is not here
at the moment.

Edwards shoots out of the chair. He realizes that Scott is serious about what he is saying. He then gives Merriwhether a reproachful look.

EDWARDS
It seems I've heard this before.

Merriwhether sheepishly smiles.

SCOTT
He's in Washington with his
father. It has to do with the
Congressman's reelection
campaign. You know, home-town
hero, captain of an elite
rifle company.

EDWARDS
I take it the Army let Steigert
go knowing full well that the
camp was sealed off.

Scott nods matter-of-factly.

EDWARDS
When does he get back?

SCOTT
He'll be back July 1. You'll have
to wait until then before you can
arrest him.

Edwards sits back down. He is disgusted with the way things have turned out. He looks at Scott and Merriwhether, slumps down in the chair, then lets go with a sigh of exasperation.

NOTE: INTERCUT SEQUENCE

Continued

INT. - STEIGERT'S STUDY (WASHINGTON, D.C.) - NIGHT

Tuesday, June 29: 7:45 P.M.

Captain Steigert sits on the edge of a large, ornate walnut-finished desk. He is on the phone. He speaks softly so that he cannot be heard.

STEIGERT

(into phone)

Let's not talk about blame, Lieutenant. I don't think it really matters at this point. The fact is that Edwards has the medallion. And I want to know what you intend to do about it.

INT. - BOLYN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bolyn sits in a cushioned swivel-back chair, his feet propped up on the desk.

BOLYN

(into phone)

I intend to take it from him.

STEIGERT

(into phone)

Your strong-arm tactics haven't worked yet.

(sarcastically)

If I'm not mistaken, the Major is still there. He hasn't left the camp so far.

BOLYN

(into phone)

The medallion is the only proof Edwards has to implicate us. Without it, he has nothing, and with nothing to show, he'll have no other choice but to leave.

STEIGERT

(into phone)

If it were only that easy, Lieutenant.

BOLYN

(into phone)

It can be, if you leave things to me.

Continued

Steigert hears a knock at the door. He quickly puts an end to the conversation.

STEIGERT
 (into phone)
 All right, Lieutenant, get the medallion. I don't want to know how you do it. Just do it.

Steigert hangs up.

END INTERCUT SEQUENCE

INT. - STEIGERT'S STUDY

The Congressman enters the study. Leaving the door open, he crosses over to his son. Outside the study, o.s., we can hear the sounds of a party going on.

The Congressman is wearing a formal dinner jacket, as he points toward the party.

CONGRESSMAN
 Have you forgotten the party?
 It's as much yours as it is mine.

Steigert smiles, putting on a forced show of casualness.

STEIGERT
 I was just on the phone with Lt. Belyn.

CONGRESSMAN
 Anything wrong?

STEIGERT
 He's having discipline problems with a few of the men. Nothing serious, however.

The Congressman notices the uneasiness with which his son moves. He is about to mention it, when he is quickly cut off by Steigert.

STEIGERT
 Well, father, shall we rejoin our party? We wouldn't want to keep the guests waiting.

Steigert exits the study to join the party. The Congressman looks at the phone, then watches his son

Continued

introduce himself to a man wearing an admiral's uniform.

The Congressman quietly laughs to himself, as he shrugs off his son's uneasiness. He then turns off the light to the study and exits.

EXT. - GUEST QUARTERS - NIGHT

Wednesday, June 30: 9:35 P.M.

Whistling "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," Edwards nonchalantly approaches the guest quarters. He is in a cheerful, light mood, as he performs a slight shuffling movement on his way toward the quarters.

Edwards reaches the entrance. He is about to open the door, when he looks down, and suddenly stops whistling.

CU - DOOR

It stands ajar, darkness and silence coming from inside the quarters.

INT. - GUEST QUARTERS

Upon seeing Edwards approaching the quarters, three dark-clad figures wearing camouflage masks crouch quickly behind the door.

One figure moves to the other side of the door. He gestures for the other two to stay on their side.

As we move away from the figures, we can see that the quarters have been ransacked. The roll-top desk has been cleared of its contents, and Edwards' briefcase lies on the floor at the bottom of the desk with papers littering the floor.

We continue moving around the room, seeing a sofa overturned and records scattered around the record player. We come to the figure nearest the door. He raises his hand as a signal for the other two to get ready and jump Edwards when he enters the quarters.

EXT. - GUEST QUARTERS

Knowing that something is wrong, Edwards slowly resumes whistling. He puts on an air of casualness, as he enters the quarters.

INT. - GUEST QUARTERS

Continued

Edwards enters the quarters. The two figures quickly come from behind, then slam the door in the Major's face. They then rush past him.

The third figure scurries past Edwards, but the Major surprises him by grabbing his leg. Edwards drags the figure into the quarters. He is then kicked in the stomach, an act that causes Edwards to fly against the sofa.

Instead of leaving, the figure continues after Edwards. He grabs the Major, punches him in the stomach, then throws him to the floor.

The figure lunges for Edwards, but the Major grabs his leg and flings him onto the record player. The player falls over, records CRACK, as the figure struggles to get up.

In a quick succession of movements, the figure grabs a fireplace poker and begins to swing it at Edwards. The Major quickly backs away from the poker twice, as it nearly swings into him. The third time, however, as Edwards moves out of the way of the poker, the Major trips over the record player and falls to the floor.

Before Edwards can move, the figure stands over him. The Major looks up and sees the poker about to strike.

Merriwhether rushes into the quarters. He is carrying a rifle with him. He cocks it, then points it at the figure.

MERRIWHETHER
(shouting)

Hold it.

EDWARDS
Alfonso, no--

In the next moment, Merriwhether's rifle goes off. The carbine fires a second time, the force of the bullets sending the figure against the record player. As he is hit, the poker flies out of his hands and hits the roll-top desk.

The figure lies slumped against the record player. Signs of breathing cannot be seen, as he is clearly dead.

Merriwhether quickly moves up to Edwards and helps him to his feet.

MERRIWHETHER
Are you okay?

Continued

EDWARDS

A little shaken. How about you?

The killing of Edwards' assailant comes as much of a surprise to Merriwether as it does to the Major. He nods, although uncertainly.

Both men walk up to the body. They kneel before it, then Edwards lifts off the mask.

EDWARDS' POV

The man who tried to kill Edwards is Lt. Bolyn.

RESUME - EDWARDS

He turns to Merriwether, as both men register shock at Bolyn's lifeless body that lies in front of them.

We move away from Bolyn's body and approach the entrance. MPs quickly move through the doorway, as a small crowd of soldiers has gathered outside the quarters.

We move through the crowd, hearing talk among the soldiers about what has happened, speculation as to who has been killed and why.

We move past the crowd and come to the alley next to the PX. Standing in the shadows are Geick and Reuss, their faces obscured by the darkness, as they watch the MPs carry Bolyn's body out of the quarters.

INT. - STEIGERT'S OFFICE (CAMP HARRISON) - NIGHT

Thursday, July 1: 7:45 P.M.

Captain Steigert is unpacking a briefcase, when Merriwether frantically appears in the office.

MERRIWHETHER

Captain Steigert--

Steigert notices Merriwether, but ignores his nervous state.

STEIGERT

Ah, Captain Merriwether. Good of you to welcome me back.

Steigert walks over to the window and opens it, letting a small breeze blow into the office.

Continued

STEIGERT

You know being in Washington for the last week has spoiled me. Not that I've got anything against Army life, it's just that--

Merriwhether quickly moves toward Steigert's desk.

MERRIWHETHER

Captain, it's Lt. Bolyn. He's had an accident.

Steigert has been untying his tie, but stops when he hears about Bolyn.

STEIGERT

Is he badly hurt?

MERRIWHETHER

I don't know. But I was ordered by Colonel Scott to bring you to the infirmary.

Merriwhether is no sooner finished when Steigert has exited the office. Merriwhether turns and follows him.

INT. - INFIRMARY - NIGHT

We are in a room that is dark and quiet. A door opens and we hear Merriwhether's voice.

MERRIWHETHER

I'll get the light.

ANGLE ON DOOR

The light goes on and Steigert walks past Merriwhether. The door closes, revealing Captain Halloway standing behind it.

Steigert is surprised by Halloway's presence.

STEIGERT

Captain Halloway, I don't understand--

We pull back away from the door and see Edwards and Scott move toward Steigert. They have been standing on the opposite side of the door from where Halloway was, as Steigert and Merriwhether entered the room.

Steigert is confused by what is going on, until he looks at the bed.

Continued

STEIGERT'S POV

A sheet covers a body, the imprint unmistakable.

RESUME - STEIGERT

He walks up to the foot of the bed, as Edwards moves up alongside him.

EDWARDS

(quietly)

Take a look under the sheet,
Captain.

ANGLE ON STEIGERT

He approaches the body, showing no reaction whatsoever.

Steigert reaches the body, pauses for a moment, then pulls the sheet back.

Steigert's face hardens as he sees Bolyn's body. He appears unsurprised to find the Lieutenant dead.

Edwards takes Steigert's medallion out of his side pocket and throws it toward Bolyn's body.

The medallion lands in front of Steigert. He picks it up, then looks at Edwards with a mixture of anger and remorse.

INT. - PX - NIGHT

9:45 P.M.

The PX is crowded this evening. The bar is filled, as Wallensky and Debbs wait on customers. The atmosphere is loud and boisterous, helped along by Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing."

Geick and Reuss are at a table in the center of the building, enjoying beers with two other men.

Edwards enters the PX along with Holloway and Selby. The Major moves toward Geick and Reuss, as the PX has quieted down, when the soldiers have seen Holloway and Selby move through the doorway.

Edwards stands behind Geick. He speaks authoritatively to the Corporal and Reuss.

EDWARDS

Corporal Geick, Private Reuss,
I'm placing you under arrest.

Continued

GEICK
(laughs)

On what charge, Major?

EDWARDS
Murder. On seven counts. And
assaulting an officer. Twice.

Halloway and Selby arrive at the table. The atmosphere in the PX has become quiet and tense. Soldiers begin to move away from the bar toward the back of the PX. Other men exit the building. They quickly file past Corporal Patterson, who has arrived at the PX with two other black soldiers.

Wallensky and Debbs no longer wait on customers. They stop and earnestly watch the confrontation between Geick and Edwards.

Geick stands and faces Edwards.

GEICK
What proof do you have, Major?

Reuss begins to stand, until Selby's hand firmly pressing against his shoulder convinces him to do otherwise.

Edwards smiles, unperturbed by Geick's show of toughness.

EDWARDS
Captain Steigert. If you don't
believe me, ask him. He's in
the stockade.

Geick looks around him. Soldiers stare at the Corporal with a mixture of shock and anger. He realizes that no one will help him, including Reuss, who is still tightly clamped to the chair by Selby's powerful hand.

Geick reaches inside his pants' pocket. He smiles, as he quickly pulls out a switch blade. He begins to wave it menacingly at Edwards.

GEICK
No fucking way.

Once the switch blade is seen, soldiers scatter away from Geick and Edwards. The Corporal takes a swipe at Edwards and almost nicks him on the wrist. He takes another swipe at the Major, causing him to fall back over a chair.

PETTERSON
(o.s.)
Try me, Geick. You think you're
(more)

PATTERSON (cont.)

so tough.

Geick turns and sees Patterson taking off his gunbelt. Patterson wraps the belt around his hand, while using the holster as a shield.

GEICK

What do you know. The coon with the football.

Selby quickly hands Reuss over to two other black soldiers who have entered the PX. Edwards stands, and along with Halloway and Selby, moves to the front of the building away from Geick and Patterson.

Geick takes a swipe at Patterson and misses. He takes another swing, but this time, Patterson catches him by the arm and pushes him into the magazine rack.

Magazines fall on top of Geick, as he hits the rack. He gets up and continues after Patterson.

Geick swings at Patterson. He misses and is pushed into the juke box, the force of which causes the needle to scratch over "Sing, Sing, Sing."

Geick moves in again. Patterson grabs him by the arm that holds the knife. The knife nearly cuts Patterson on the cheek, but the Corporal shoves the arm into Geick's stomach. He then hurtles Geick against the bar.

As Geick begins to rise, Debbs quickly moves along the bar, picks up an empty pitcher, and BASHES Geick over the head. The Corporal crumples to the floor unconscious.

Impressed with Debbs' move, Halloway and Edwards smile.

HALLOWAY

I wonder if that hurt.

EDWARDS

I wouldn't doubt it.

MPs enter the PX and move toward the bar. They pick up Geick's slumped body, then escort him out, his feet dragging along the floor.

Soldiers begin clearing out of the PX, many of them clamoring away about the fight.

Halloway and Edwards move toward the bar. Behind them, we

Continued

see Patterson and Selby exit the PX. Halloway looks around him, then turns to the Major.

HALLOWAY

So this is what a PX looks like.

They reach the bar. Edwards motions for Wallensky.

EDWARDS

Sergeant, a beer for the Captain and me.

WALLENSKY

Coming up, Major.

Halloway looks at Edwards as if he were crazy.

HALLOWAY

Aren't you forgetting about the ordinance?

EDWARDS

(smiles goodnaturedly)
What ordinance?
(to Wallensky)
You know what ordinance the Captain is talking about, Sergeant?

Wallensky crosses over and sets two beers on the bar.

WALLENSKY

Haven't the faintest idea, Major.

Halloway laughs, as both men sit at the bar.

EXT. - PX - NIGHT

10:30 P.M.

Edwards exits the PX, hands in pockets. He is about to turn and walk off toward the guest quarters, when he is met by Merriwhether.

EDWARDS

Alfonso, where've you been?
You've missed all the excitement.

MERRIWHETHER

I heard about it. You okay?

EDWARDS

I'm fine.

Continued

EDWARDS (cont.)

(yawns)

A little tired maybe.

Merriwether brings the battered cap from behind his back. The eagle has been sewed back on, and although it does not look as good as new, it comes pretty close.

MERRIWHETHER

I thought you'd like to have this.

Merriwether hands the cap to Edwards. Edwards is genuinely touched by Merriwether's sentiments.

Edwards puts on the cap, cocking it slightly to one side.

EDWARDS

What do you think?

Merriwether and Edwards laugh, and then the Major yawns again.

EDWARDS

I don't know about you, but I could use some sleep.

MERRIWHETHER

I think we all could.

EDWARDS

I'll see you in the morning,
Alfonso.

Edwards watches Merriwether walk off toward the Colonel's office. He looks up and sees a sky clear and filled with stars. He then turns and moves away from the PX.

Shooting from the PX, we watch Edwards head for the guest quarters. We slowly move away from the PX, until we have a WIDE ANGLE of the camp. It is quiet and deserted, except for Edwards' solitary figure. V.O. we can hear the Major singing the chorus to "Keep the Home Fires Burning" in a jaunty, carefree manner, as we

FADE OUT

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VITA 2

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