

# COMBAT MEDIC BLUES

EXT. VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL -- DAY

Cherry blossoms drift through the spring air as CARL, 50, and his WIFE walk toward the left apex of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (THE WALL). Both dress casually and Carl wears a ball-cap with a Combat Medical Badge (CMB) emblem on it.

They stop six panels from the end, turn and Carl reaches out to touch a name. He starts to cry and his wife puts her arm around him.

CARL

He's my first patient. Now I know who he is.

He walks away from her toward the Washington Monument.

INT. CARL'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

Carl opens an e-mail and stares at a picture of a soldier dressed in Vietnam jungle fatigues on the computer screen.

CARL

Now I know what you look like, too.  
All I knew was ....all I saw of you  
was that terrible hole in your face.

Carl is interrupted by TED, 50's, entering his office.

TED

I'm sorry, were you on the phone?

CARL

No, no ... just thinking out loud.

TED

Who's that?

CARL

Just a guy from Nam.

Carl hits a key on the keyboard, returning to a spreadsheet on the screen. He stares at it.

TED

Oh. Well. Hey, about this report you just finished. We'll send it out because it's late. But it's not up to your usual standards.

CARL

Yeah, I know. Sorry, but I've been distracted lately; hard to get going. Maybe the day off for the 4th of July will help.

Carl glances out the window then looks at a small framed display of military awards (Purple Heart, Vietnam Service and Campaign, Army Commendation Medal and National Defense ribbons underneath a silver CMB). He finally turns to Ted.

TED

Speaking of the 4th, got any big plans.

CARL

No, actually I hope it rains. Keeps the fireworks fires down.

TED

I thought you volunteer fire guys liked action.

CARL

Well, its really the fireworks I don't like. The noise and all, you know.

TED

Yeah, I know some other vets like you who aren't too partial to firecrackers. You know, I have a brother-in-law who won't leave his basement on the 4th.

CARL

Yeah, I resemble that remark.

TED

Well, have a safe one at least and I'll see you in a couple of days.

Ted turns and leaves and Carl returns to the computer.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Carl and his wife are asleep. She snores quietly and Carl tosses and turns. Fireworks light up the window curtains and morph into a night sky full of machine gun tracers.

Carl dreams.

EXT. JUNGLE - VIETNAM -- MORNING

SUPER: 1970

A dozen SOLDIERS, age 18 to 22, move around halfheartedly packing sleeping gear and food into large rucksacks. One man has a field radio on his rucksack.

Uniforms are dirty, worn and varied and the men are battle tested except one. DOC, stands out in a clean uniform and shiny jungle boots.

The location looks out over a large dry rice paddy with a lumpy dirt surface and a dike about 100 yards away covered with waist high brush and small scrub trees. Other SOLDIERS are moving on the dike.

A staff sergeant, 22, approaches Doc. He speaks first to the others.

SERGEANT

Saddle-up gentleman, 1st platoon is already moving out.

(to Doc)

What'd you think of those gun-ships last night, Doc? An exciting first night in the bush, eh!

DOC

Amazing. Sure as hell wouldn't want to ....

A GRENADE EXPLOSION

Doc dives to the ground while the others kneel or stand with weapons ready. Everyone is quiet. Then the radio crackles.

VO RADIO 1

Alpha 2, Alpha 2. Send your medic to Alpha 1's position. Repeat: Send your medic to our position, ASAP.

Staff sergeant reaches for the microphone on the field radio.

SERGEANT

Alpha 1-6, roger. Doc on the way.

VO RADIO 1

Charger 5, Charger 5, this is Alpha 1-6, over.

VO RADIO 2

Go ahead Alpha 1-6.

VO RADIO 1

Request urgent dust-off, location 157168. Booby trap; grenade size.  
(MORE)

## VO RADIO 1 (CONT'D)

2 US WIA.

Doc kneels, fumbles to detach an aid bag from his rucksack, and stands up.

## VO RADIO 2

Roger, Alpha 1-6. Dust-off requested.

The staff sergeant grabs Doc's shoulder and points across the rice paddy.

## SERGEANT

See the smoke and those guys over there. Get going. We'll bring your ruck.

Doc runs across the rice paddy with his aid bag and M-16. He falls on the uneven ground, stumbles back up and keeps running.

## EXT. PATCH OF BRUSH

Breathing hard, Doc climbs the dike towards a SOLDIER waving his hand and pointing toward the ground a few feet away, where a few soldiers stand looking down. Others stand in defensive postures, scanning the scene.

## WAVING SOLDIER

Over there, Doc. Hurry up.

Doc kneels beside a wounded SOLDIER on his back. There is a large bloody entry wound under his right jaw and his face is a bloody mess with teeth exposed and features masked by the gore. He does not move or breath.

## DOC

Shit.

Doc looks quickly towards another downed soldier a few feet away and the 2 men kneeling beside him providing aid; one is the Alpha Company SENIOR MEDIC, 19.

Doc returns to his patient, pulls a field dressing from his aid bag, covers the wound, and tries to tie the dressing on.

The senior medic is suddenly kneeling on the other side of Doc's patient, feels for his pulse with one hand and places his other hand on the patient's chest.

SENIOR MEDIC

Jesus man, he isn't breathing. Didn't they teach you new guys anything.

DOC

I ...

SENIOR MEDIC

Just help me. Hold his head back.

Doc holds the wounded soldier's head back while the senior medic pulls out a scalpel, feels the throat and makes a small incision. The senior medic removes a ball point pen from his pocket, takes it apart, and inserts the barrel of the pen into the throat incision.

SENIOR MEDIC (CONT'D)

Breath into this between compressions.

Doc breathes into the pen barrel while the senior medic performs chest compressions.

THE SOUND OF AN APPROACHING HUEY HELICOPTER

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

A radio pager trips; 4 loud beeps then a loud warble. Carl wakes from his dream, flushed and sweaty.

VO RADIO 3

Aid 4432, Engine 4412, Medic 4431, Medic 4433. Gunshot victims. 2720 245th Street. Use caution; situation unknown. County is enroute.

As the pager repeats its message, Carl turns on a bedside light, rolls out of bed, his wife still asleep.

He reaches for a fire department jump-suit, with lieutenant insignia and EMT patch visible, laid out neatly on a chair. He slides into the jump-suit and shiny low cut black boots. He grabs the pager from its charger and his keys on the way out of the bedroom.

His wife rolls over and speaks sleepily as he leaves.

WIFE

Be careful. I love you.

EXT. MIDDLE-CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD -- NIGHT

A late model small pick-up quickly pulls away from a well kept two story house and speeds down the street.

A green revolving light flashes on the dashboard and alternating green lights pulse from the grill.

INT. PICK-UP CAB -- NIGHT

Carl drums on the steering wheel waiting for a slower car in front of him in the narrow semirural road to pull over for him to pass.

CARL

C'mon, c'mon, what the hell do you think the lights are for? You'd move you ass if they were blue or red. Stupid law; that volunteers can't have blue or red lights.

The car pulls over and Carl drives quickly around it.

EXT. FIRE STATION -- NIGHT

Carl pulls into the parking lot next to the apron where the aid car sits idling. Behind the wheel is ANDY, 30's, fit, slightly balding. He's nervous and excited.

ANDY

Carl, your gear is already in the back. We're ready to roll, looks like its just you and me.

CARL

On my way. Calm down, Andy, calm down.

Carl runs to the passenger side, jumps in, fastens his seat-belt, and reaches for the radio microphone as he closes the door.

INT. AID CAR -- NIGHT

The aid car races down the semirural road. Carl speaks calmly into the microphone.

CARL

Central dispatch, Aid 4432 is responding with two. Do you have a short for us?

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