

**THE SYMPATHIZER**

Episode 101

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1

**EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - SAIGON - DAY**

1

A VOICE in Vietnamese over BLACK:

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
 Sit straight, it's not over.  
 Now, start again. "Starting  
 again" is our very motto:  
 restart, recollect, reeducate  
 and revolution.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
 Ngồi thẳng lên, chưa xong  
 đâu. Bây giờ, bắt đầu lại.  
 "Bắt đầu lại" chính là khẩu  
 hiệu của chúng tôi: khởi  
 động lại, hồi tưởng lại, cải  
 tạo lại, cách mạng lại.

CHYRON: "THE SYMPATHIZER"

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
 (wearily)  
 I am a spy, a sleeper, a  
 spook, a man of two faces.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
 (wearily)  
 Tôi là một gián điệp, một kẻ  
 mai phục, một con ma, một kẻ  
 hai mang.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
 No, no, from the cinema!

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
 Không, không, bắt đầu từ rạp  
 chiếu phim!

QUICK FADE IN:

A mustached MAN aims his gun at the CAMERA, point-blank. It's a  
 larger-than-life standee of CHARLES BRONSON, hand-painted on  
 plywood.

The standee tilts and hoists straight up to reveal a real-life  
 figure hidden behind it: the CAPTAIN, a handsome young man,  
 Vietnamese genes with a hint of Caucasian, intelligent-looking,  
 currently somewhat anxious.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
 Already, something's  
 different. Last time you said  
 the movie was a French film.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
 Lại khác nữa rồi. Lần trước  
 cậu nói đấy là một bộ phim  
 Pháp.

The image FREEZES, then REWINDS quickly. Charles Bronson comes  
 back down, hiding the Captain. And a large painted billboard  
 featuring Sylvia Kristel's face slides in from frame right to  
 cover Charles Bronson.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
 Right. *Emmanuelle*.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
 Đúng. Phim *Emmanuelle*.

The picture FREEZES a moment, then plays forward at NORMAL SPEED.  
 The WORKERS carry *Emmanuelle* off frame right. And Charles Bronson  
 is, once again, hoisted to the heavens, revealing the Captain.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
But they were in the middle  
of changing the sign.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Nhưng lúc đó họ đang thay  
bảng hiệu.

Charles Bronson comes to rest above a marquee, upon which it  
is emblazoned, in big letters: *DEATH WISH*.

The *EMMANUELLE* billboard leans against the wall by the street.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Continue.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Tiếp tục đi.

The Captain looks around, checks his watch, when a VOICE from  
behind startles him:

CLAUDE  
Do you know what that is?

The Captain turns to find CLAUDE (jocular, smiling, Caucasian).

CAPTAIN  
Jesus, you stand out like a sore  
thumb in this town, but still you  
manage to surprise me every time.

CLAUDE  
Training, my friend, training. You'll  
get there. By the time I'm through  
with you, you'll be able to blend in  
with the Harvard rowing crew.

CAPTAIN  
Do I know what what is?

CLAUDE  
A "death wish", a "death wish." Mean  
anything to you?

But before the Captain can even answer, we PAN AWAY to a pair  
of PASSERS-BY heading to the ticket booth. A sketchy  
ATTENDANT curtly waves them away.

ATTENDANT  
Closed.

ATTENDANT  
Đóng cửa rồi.

The frame FREEZES.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Not so fast. What was your  
answer to him?

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Đừng lướt qua nhanh thế. Thế  
cậu đã trả lời câu hỏi của  
lão ấy thế nào?

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

The picture visibly REWINDS, reversing until once again we LAND ON the frozen image of Claude and the Captain.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Don't edit yourself.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Đừng tự biên tập.

The action starts again, but this time we don't pan away to the passers-by:

CLAUDE  
A "death wish". Mean anything to you?

CAPTAIN  
My wishes are all for life, despite everything.

CLAUDE  
(patting the Captain's shoulder, reassuringly)  
Keep your chin up, chin up -- this war's not over yet.

His tone is both reassuring and dismissive. He ushers the Captain inside.

2 **OMITTED**

2

3 **INT. SCREENING ROOM - MOVIE THEATRE - DAY**

3

Claude babbles on as he leads the Captain inside.

CLAUDE  
I saw it Stateside: crude to say the least, but a primer for Existentialist philosophy. And a score by Herbie Hancock! You don't hear that everyday!

A shabby, partly dismantled room: the hulking projector has been moved downstairs to the middle of the orchestra. Its arc lamp beam is focused on a stage in front of the screen. On the stage, a CRAPULENT MAJOR, who's presiding over the proceedings, lounges on a smoke break, giggling with a PETULANT CAPTAIN and TWO SPECIAL POLICE SOLDIERS. Near the Major is a Coleman cooler, and a table dressed with a variety of snacks, including a cracked-open durian. A WOMAN sits center stage, facing the audience, her head drooped, exhausted.

Hearing Claude, the soldiers turn to acknowledge him. They shake the woman's shoulder to wake her. She lifts her head and the Captain shudders to see her face.

(CONTINUED)

<p>PETULANT CAPTAIN (to the Woman) It's not over. Sit straight, start again!</p>	<p>PETULANT CAPTAIN (to the Woman) Chua xong đâu. Ngồi thẳng lên, bắt đầu lại!</p>
--	--

Claude ushers the Captain to a center seat, midway back. The Captain makes a gentle protest, pointing at the woman --

CAPTAIN  
I thought she was under my charge...?

CLAUDE  
This is my preferred seating --  
optimal sound, picture large enough  
to fill your field of vision.

The Captain is used to Claude's selective obliviousness, and he lets the matter hang.

ON STAGE:

<p>PETULANT CAPTAIN (to the Woman) Where did you get the list?</p>	<p>PETULANT CAPTAIN (to the Woman) Mày đã lấy danh sách từ đâu?</p>
--	---

The Woman, whom we'll now call the COMMUNIST SPY, doesn't answer.

IN THE AUDIENCE: The Captain is sitting now. Claude takes a seat directly behind him. A YOUNG TRANSLATOR slides in next to Claude and starts to whisper simultaneous translations in his ear. Claude leans forward to speak. This is his roundabout answer to the Captain's earlier challenging question.

CLAUDE  
I think you'll appreciate this. Not  
at first you won't, you'll lock all  
of this up in a little box. But in  
the future when you look in that box  
again -- and you will -- it will  
remind you that your contribution to  
this war has been substantial. So  
keep your eyes glued to the action.  
Be proud of yourself. At least half  
as proud as I am of you.

CAPTAIN  
(self-deprecating)  
Half proud is about my maximum.

The Captain lights up a cigarette and takes a swig.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

"Half..." Exactly. I am half and half, bi-racial, bi-lingual. A synthesis of incompatibles. A priest's son and an atheist, a communist and a capitalist -- cursed to see everything from both sides. Claude was a key figure that shaped my Occidental side. And just then, about to enter, was one of the key figures that shaped my Oriental side.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

"Một nửa..." Chính xác. Tôi là kẻ nửa này nửa kia, mang hai dòng máu, nói hai ngôn ngữ. Một sự tổng hợp của những thứ không tương thích. Tôi là con trai của một linh mục và một người vô thần, vừa là cộng sản vừa là tư bản - tôi bị nguyên rủa vì thấy mọi sự việc từ cả hai phía. Claude là nhân vật quan trọng giúp định hình tính cách phương Tây của tôi. Và ngay sau đó, người sắp bước vào, là một trong những nhân vật chủ chốt đã định hình nên tính cách Phương Đông của tôi.

The SOUND of the lobby door opening. The soldiers turn to see the new arrival. When they see him, they stand and salute. A compact but confident Vietnamese man with excellent posture enters: the GENERAL. Nonchalantly, he waves the soldiers back to work and trudges down the centre aisle until he spots the Captain, and walks in his direction. The General takes a seat behind the Captain next to Claude.

GENERAL

(to the Captain)

I didn't expect you to be here? You never come.

CLAUDE

I thought it would be good training for your ambitious aide-de-camp.

CAPTAIN

(purposefully sulking)

It wasn't my idea. She was under my charge, and I obviously --

GENERAL

(cutting him off)

You obviously did very well in capturing her. But you're too soft on the follow-through with someone as pigheaded as she. Dumpling is an old hand. Let him show you the ropes.

(CONTINUED)

GENERAL

(yelling at the Major in Vietnamese)  
 Hey, Dumpling! I told you, if you're gonna eat durian, do it when you're alone! It stinks of shit, even up here!  
 (flapping his arm)  
 And this place is fucking huge!

GENERAL

(yelling at the Major in Vietnamese)  
 Ê, Bánh bao! Tôi đã nói với chú, chú mà tính ăn sầu riêng thì canh lúc nào chỉ có mình chú. Mùi cứt thúì tận trên đây.  
 (flapping his arm)  
 Mà chỗ này đụ má nó rộng vậy mà vẫn nghe mùi.

The Crapulent Major, alarmed, stops eating and stows his plate of durian. The Petulant Captain and other subordinates snicker.

Any more protest is obviously futile, and the Captain resigns himself to handing over the reins.

The Crapulent Major signals the soldiers to get on with it, and the interrogation reconvenes.

PETULANT CAPTAIN

Where did you get the list?

PETULANT CAPTAIN

Mày đã lấy danh sách từ đâu?

ON STAGE: the COMMUNIST SPY musters the strength to speak --

COMMUNIST SPY

I don't know anything about your stupid list.

COMMUNIST SPY

Tao không biết gì về danh sách ngu xuẩn của tụi mày.

PETULANT CAPTAIN

We're not asking you about the list. We know its contents because it was graciously offered to us by your ass. Here's what we want to know: where did it come from? Who was your contact?

PETULANT CAPTAIN

Tụi tao đâu có hỏi mày về danh sách. Tụi tao biết quá nội dung của nó vì mày đã trịnh trọng dâng nó cho tụi tao qua lỗ đít của mày. Cái mà tụi tao muốn biết là: danh sách đó đến từ đâu? Ai là đầu mối liên lạc của mày?

IN THE AUDIENCE: the Captain is rapt, but the General, barely paying attention, continues to address him.

GENERAL

I read your notes. Excellent quotations. How do you know that Communist stuff so well?

CAPTAIN

I study, sir.

(CONTINUED)

GENERAL

One thing you can say about the Commies -- they are not hesitant to use forceful rhetoric. It's very seductive. Why do we shy away from such things? Like that quote from Trotsky: What is to be done? What is to be done?

CLAUDE

Pretty sure that's Lenin.

GENERAL

They teach you that in Langley, Claude?

CAPTAIN

(looking ahead, addressing no one in particular)

To be accurate, it was Chernyshevsky; Lenin was quoting him.

CLAUDE

Ah-ha!

Claude exclaims over-dramatically, which alerts the Communist Spy to the men in the seats watching her.

CRAPULENT MAJOR

That's right, we have an audience. They've come to see your performance. Stand up. They are interested in hearing your lines. STAND UP.

CRAPULENT MAJOR

Đúng rồi, chúng ta đang có khán giả ở đây. Họ đến để xem màn trình diễn. Đứng lên nào. Họ muốn nghe màn nói. ĐỨNG LÊN.

She struggles to her feet. Even in her haggard state, there is a defiance and beauty in her stance as she stares out into the dark theatre. For a moment her eyes seem to lock with the Captain's. The Captain averts her stare.

GENERAL

Do you have plans for after this? Could you pick up my dry cleaning? I need a pressed shirt for a dinner.

PETULANT CAPTAIN (O.S.)

WHERE DID YOU GET THE LIST?

PETULANT CAPTAIN (O.S.)

MÀY ĐÃ LẤY DANH SÁCH TỪ ĐÂU?

The face of the Communist Spy tightens with anger and resolve.

(CONTINUED)



3 CONTINUED: (5)

PETULANT CAPTAIN  
Who was your contact?

PETULANT CAPTAIN  
Ai là đầu mối liên lạc của  
mày?

The Petulant Captain grabs a bottle of Coke from the cooler and pops the lid. It fizzes over, obscenely.

COMMUNIST SPY  
My contact?  
(staring straight into  
the audience)  
His first name is "Viet,"  
last name "Nam"!

COMMUNIST SPY  
Đầu mối liên lạc của tao?  
(staring straight into  
the audience)  
Họ của anh là "Việt," tên của  
anh là "Nam"!

Unlike the soldiers on the stage snickering, the Captain is impressed by the Spy's fighting spirit. Claude leans forward and whispers into his ear.

CLAUDE  
See what I mean? Better than the  
movies.

The picture FREEZES. "Low Rider" by War begins to play.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
You say she looked at you  
with particular "vehemence"?

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Cậu nói cô ấy đã nhìn cậu  
bằng ánh mắt đặc biệt "mãnh  
liệt"?

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
She had every reason to.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Cô có mọi lý do để làm vậy.

The video REWINDS.

4 **EXT. STREET 1 - DAY (SOME DAYS EARLIER)**

4

The Communist Spy strolls down the sidewalk looking youthful and very different at this earlier date.

A5 **INT. HALLWAY - COMPOUND - DAY**

A5

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1 ducks out of a wiretapping room and hustles to the Captain's office.

5 **INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - COMPOUND - MOMENTS LATER**

5

Secret Police Officer 1 opens the Captain's door, without knocking, and enters. The Captain raises his head from some paperwork.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
Sir, the wiretap paid off.  
I've got intel on a drop-off.

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
Báo cáo đại úy, việc nghe lén  
đã có kết quả. Tôi có thông  
tin về việc chuyển giao tài  
liệu tình báo.

The Captain puts down his pen, takes a second to process this breakthrough.

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
What do we do, sir? Should I  
report it upstairs?

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
Chúng ta làm gì bây giờ, thưa  
Đại úy? Tôi có nên báo cáo  
với cấp trên không?

The Captain frantically racks his brain.

6 COMBINED WITH 7

6

7 INT./EXT. UNMARKED CAR - STREET 2 - PARKED - DAY

7

The Communist Spy stops at a streetside multi-unit mailbox outside an APARTMENT BUILDING (1). She locates a particular box, opens it and takes out a small manila envelope.

ACROSS THE STREET: Inside a car disguised as a taxi, the Captain and TWO SECRET POLICE OFFICERS watch the Spy as she pockets the envelope.

CAPTAIN  
Follow her.

CAPTAIN  
Đi theo cô.

The Spy continues down the street as the car eases forward.

The American Radio Service plays on their radio ("Low Rider"); the Captain voicelessly sings along to pretend all is well in front of his subordinates.

8 INT. STAIRWELL - APARTMENT BUILDING 2 - DAY

8

But now the music has STOPPED. We only hear the Captain's footsteps as he climbs the stairs as slowly as possible, buying time to conceive a plan.

9 INT. SECOND FLOOR - APARTMENT BUILDING 2 - DAY

9

A modest apartment: the living room is empty. Furniture overturned -- signs of a struggle.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

The kitchen is empty too. Bangs, shouts draw him to a balcony door.

10 COMBINED WITH 9

10

11 EXT. BALCONY - SECOND FLOOR - APARTMENT BUILDING 2 - DAY

11

The Spy is pinioned by the two Secret Police Officers -- flailing, gagging.

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
She's trying to swallow something. It looks like a roll of film.

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
Nó đang cố nuốt cái gì kia.  
Nhìn như cuộn phim.

The Captain reaches down and picks up the empty manila envelope, torn open. As one of the Officers presses on her throat to block her esophagus, another slides a jackknife blade between the Spy's clenched teeth and wedges it like a lever to pry open her jaws. The Captain squeezes her mandible joint. Tears in her eyes. The Captain rams two fingers inside and struggles to grab the object in her mouth. She bites. Blood. The Spy swallows. Opens her mouth wide to show that it is now empty. She stares at the Captain and mutters under her breath, staring at him. The Captain puts his ear by her mouth to catch what she's saying.

COMMUNIST SPY  
Hit me, comrade.

COMMUNIST SPY  
Đánh tôi đi, đồng chí.

The Captain retreats, stunned to learn that she knows who he is.

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
(to the Captain)  
What's she saying?

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
(to the Captain)  
Nó nói gì vậy!

Seeing the Captain fumbling for words, the Spy spits on him.

COMMUNIST SPY  
You want me to say it louder?  
Filthy bastard!

COMMUNIST SPY  
Mày muốn tao nói lớn hơn hả?  
Đồ con hoang dơ bẩn!

The two Secret Police officers snicker at her well-aimed burn, even in the presence of their superior, the Captain.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Bastard, mongrel, half-breed... I wasn't impressed by the originality of her insult. People have spat on me and called me "bastard" all my life, since my childhood. Although sometimes, for variety, they called me bastard before they spit.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Con hoang, chó lai, tạp chủng... Mấy từ xúc phạm của cô chẳng có gì là mới mẻ. Từ nhỏ tới giờ, người ta đã phun nước miếng vào tôi rồi gọi tôi là đồ con hoang. Mặc dù đôi khi, để thay đổi không khí, họ gọi tôi là con hoang trước khi phun nước miếng.

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
What do you say, Captain?  
She's asking for a kiss.

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
Đại úy, anh trả lời sao? Nó muốn hôn anh kìa.

The subordinates smirk as they wait on the Captain's next move.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Couldn't you have left it at that?

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Lúc đó cậu không lẽ họ đi được sao?

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Of course not. I was Secret Police... and not alone at the time.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Dĩ nhiên không thể. Tôi là cảnh sát mật... và lúc đó, có nhiều người ở đó.

Impulsively, the Captain slaps the Spy hard across the face. The Secret Police Officers snort their approval. The Spy's cheek is smeared with blood from the Captain's wounded finger.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
I confess that in that moment, her cheek was stained with my blood.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Tôi thú nhận là khi đó, gò má cô dính máu của tôi.

The Captain, Claude, Petulant Captain, Crapulent Major and a PRIVATE sit around bored, waiting. In the center of the room the humiliated Spy, skirt hiked, squats over a bucket.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Were you not humiliated to force her to swallow laxatives, to stand in front of her while she was squatting in the presence of men?

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Cậu không thấy nhục nhã khi ép cô ấy nuốt thuốc nhuận tràng, rồi đứng đó nhìn cô ấy ngồi chồm hồm trước sự chứng kiến của đám đàn ông sao?

CLAUDE

You cool, man? You look queasy. Am I making you uncomfortable?

Indeed the Captain is not cool, but he answers sharply (in Vietnamese to the Commandant, in English to Claude):

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Of course.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Đĩ nhiên rồi.

CAPTAIN

No.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)

And did you take responsibility? Or did you tell yourself it wasn't your fault, her capture was inevitable, you were following your duty?

COMMANDANT (V.O.)

Và cậu có nhận trách nhiệm không? Hay cậu tự nhủ rằng đó không phải là lỗi của mình, rằng việc cô ấy bị bắt là chuyện không thể tránh khỏi, rằng cậu đang thực hiện đúng nhiệm vụ của mình?

CLAUDE

Come on man, this is your fucking assignment. See it through! You afraid to get your beak wet? Then show me. Show me, precious! Get your nose in that shit and nuzzle. This is just damp, man. It's damp. It's moist. This is counterintelligence -- it gets wet down here!

The Captain is at a loss for words.

CLAUDE

You should want this. You should want to taste the interrogation.

Just then, the Spy moans.

PETULANT CAPTAIN

Here it comes. I can smell it.

Everybody but the Captain gathers around the mortified Spy.

CLAUDE

YooHoo, there she is. A chocolate covered treat.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)

Enough!

COMMANDANT (V.O.)

Đủ rồi!

(CONTINUED)

The picture FREEZES.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
I think we have the picture.  
What did you do while those  
dogs pawed her shit?

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Tôi tưởng tượng được cảnh đó  
rồi. Cậu đã làm gì khi mấy  
con chó đó vồ cút của cô ấy?

The picture stays frozen as it PANS to the agonized face of  
the Captain who stands apart from the rest.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
I tried to think of something  
else. Something beautiful and  
hopeful.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Tôi đã cố gắng hướng tâm trí  
về việc khác. Về một điều  
tươi đẹp, đầy hy vọng.

TRIPLE-SPEED REWIND, all the way back to:

**INT. CAFÉ - LUNCHTIME**

A BABY'S FACE -- it's Bon's son, DUC.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
What is it that makes this  
struggle worthy of enduring  
such sacrifice? That's right,  
I am talking about "Hope".

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Điều gì khiến cho cuộc tranh  
đấu này xứng đáng với những  
gì chúng ta phải hy sinh?  
Đúng, tôi đang nói về "Hy  
vọng".

A crowded café, festively decked. A perfunctory X-mas tree. And  
boisterous SOLDIERS taking refuge from combat, their rifles  
tucked under their stools. Amongst them, we find MAN, BON, Bon's  
wife LINH, and the Captain.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
The hope I feel when I'm with  
my family. Not my birth  
family, but brothers. Blood  
brothers.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Niềm hy vọng mà tôi cảm thấy  
khi đang ở giữa gia đình.  
Không phải gia đình nơi tôi  
được sinh ra, mà là giữa  
những người anh em. Anh em  
cắt máu ăn thề.

Indeed, the friendship between the three friends is so long  
and deep that they do behave almost like a real family.

The subject of the toast seems to be baby Duc, who mouths  
silently in the stroller next to his proud mother. Linh  
smiles encouragingly. Her humour and warmth justify Bon's  
obvious love for her.

(CONTINUED)

But right now, all eyes are on the baby, in anticipation -- and finally, after much concentration, Duc's little lips and tongue conspire to produce a tiny vocalization.

BON  
(overjoyed)  
"Dad"! I told you. You heard it!

MAN  
(academically)  
I heard something. But more like... a vocalised belch --

LINH  
It's definitely a word, but is it "Dad" or "grandma"?

CAPTAIN  
Or "avocado"?

MAN  
It did sound like "avocado".

LINH  
Nobody's first word is "avocado".

BON  
All that matters is that it's a word.

The Captain squeezes his friend's shoulder affectionately and raises his glass.

CAPTAIN  
Why are we having a coffee on this historical day when Duc has said his very first word, "avocado"?

LINH  
It was not "avocado"!

BON  
Got it, let's get some beer!

He waves down a waiter.

BON  
(overjoyed)  
"Ba!" Tao đã nói mà. Mà nghe rồi đó.

MAN  
(academically)  
Tao có nghe. Nhưng tiếng đó... giống tiếng ợ hơi --

LINH  
Đúng là con nói một từ, nhưng chữ đó là "Ba" hay "bà"?

CAPTAIN  
Hay "bơ"?

MAN  
Ừ, nghe cũng giống "bơ".

LINH  
Ai mà nói tiếng đầu đời là "bơ".

BON  
Điều quan trọng là con trai tao đã nói được tiếng đầu đời.

CAPTAIN  
Tại sao tụi mình lại uống cà phê vào cái ngày lịch sử này khi bé Đức nói được chữ đầu tiên, "bơ"?

LINH  
Không phải là "bơ"!

BON  
Được rồi, tụi mình gọi bia đi!

LINH

(to the Captain)

I thought you were on your way to mass. Don't use my baby as an excuse to get drunk in broad daylight.

LINH

(to the Captain)

Em tưởng anh đang trên đường đến nhà thờ mà. Đừng có lấy con trai em làm cái cớ để say xin giữa ban ngày ban mặt đó nha.

CAPTAIN

Like we need an excuse. Right Duc?

CAPTAIN

Mình đâu cần cớ để say. Đúng không, Đức?

He leans down, picks up the smiling baby and sits him on his knee.

CAPTAIN

Come sit with your uncle.

CAPTAIN

Qua đây ngồi với chú.

MAN

I have a patient waiting, in great pain, he says. Little Duc, Uncle Man's taking off! Good work with your belch!

MAN

Tao có bệnh nhân đang chờ, ông ấy than đau lắm. Bé Đức ơi, chú Mẫn đi trước nhé. Cháu ợ giỏi lắm.

LINH

Good grief!

LINH

Trời ơi!

The friends wave a half-hearted goodbye as Man leaves down the street.

CAPTAIN

(to the baby)

Duc, now let's try "durian".

CAPTAIN

(to the baby)

Đức, bây giờ cháu nói thử nha: "sầu riêng".

Linh swats the Captain.

The Captain exits a stairwell and comes out onto a vast, open roof. Man has arrived ahead of him. He is admiring the view when the Captain joins him.

MAN

How did you manage your escape?

MAN

Mày thoát ra bằng cách nào hay vậy?



CAPTAIN

Bon kept bugging me to stay and drink so I said, "I'm on my way to mass, wanna join?" and he was off at about 100 kilometers per hour.

(pointing at the street below them)

Look, he's still running.

CAPTAIN

Bôn cứ ép tao ở lại nhậu rồi tao hỏi nó, "Tao phải đi dự lễ, mày muốn đi cùng không?" Nghe xong nó chạy mất dép luôn.

(pointing at the street below them)

Đó, nó vẫn còn chạy kia.

MAN'S POV OF THE STREET BELOW: Bon pushes the stroller with Linh by his side.

Man smirks. The Captain jumps right into business --

CAPTAIN

What is it this time?

CAPTAIN

Lần này mày cần gì?

MAN

A complete staff list for the Secret Police.

MAN

Toàn bộ danh sách cảnh sát mật.

CAPTAIN

I don't think I've ever seen a full list right down to the privates.

CAPTAIN

Tao không nghĩ tao từng thấy danh sách nào có đầy đủ kể cả tên các binh nhì luôn.

MAN

They want everyone.

MAN

Cấp trên yêu cầu danh sách có tất cả mọi người.

CAPTAIN

Including me?

CAPTAIN

Có cả tao?

MAN

Including you. They will all need re-education when we retake the city. Everyone.

MAN

Có cả mày. Tụi nó cần phải đi học tập cải tạo khi chúng ta giành được thành phố. Tất cả bọn chúng.

CAPTAIN

Except for me?

CAPTAIN

Trừ tao ra?

MAN

(slyly smiling)  
Except for you.

MAN

(slyly smiling)  
Trừ mày ra.

15

**INT. ANCILLARY ROOM - GENERAL'S OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY**

15

On his way to the General's Office with a hefty folder of military briefings, the Captain stops off at a middle-aged SECRETARY's desk and deposits a box of chocolates, casually, as if he's done it a million times before.

SECRETARY  
Oh Captain, you spoil me.

SECRETARY  
Ôi Đại úy, anh cung em quá ha!

The Captain walks by without turning, pleased with himself, waving his hand as if to say "*Don't mention it*".

Then he stops in his tracks as if he just remembered something and retraces his steps --

CAPTAIN  
Khanh, do you have a staff list? A complete staff list?

CAPTAIN  
Khanh, cô có danh sách nhân sự không? Danh sách đầy đủ?

SECRETARY  
Why?

SECRETARY  
Anh cần để làm gì?

CAPTAIN  
I dunno. The General asked for it.

CAPTAIN  
Tôi không biết. Tướng Trọng kêu tôi đưa.

SECRETARY  
He has one already.

SECRETARY  
Ông có rồi mà.

CAPTAIN  
Of course, he does. Typical.

CAPTAIN  
Ờ, đúng rồi. Ông quên trước quên sau đó mà.

He turns, heads to the General's office.

CAPTAIN  
(over his shoulder)  
And where is it? Let me remind him.

CAPTAIN  
(over his shoulder)  
Danh sách đó ở đâu? Để tôi nhắc ông.

SECRETARY  
File cabinet, bottom drawer, left.

SECRETARY  
Tủ đựng hồ sơ, ngăn kéo dưới cùng, bên trái.

16

**INT. GENERAL'S OFFICE - COMPOUND - MOMENTS LATER**

16

The Captain is waiting while the General, at his desk, peruses the daily current affairs briefings.

(CONTINUED)

Taking his time, he sips cognac and smokes as he reads. As required, the Captain empties the ashtray and tops the General's glass -- all while checking out the filing cabinet.

GENERAL

How am I supposed to sound  
"encouraging" considering the imminent  
collapse of the entire Northern front?

CAPTAIN

General, the American Congressional  
delegation isn't expecting *military*  
updates. They know the situation all  
too well.

GENERAL

There is irony in who is to inspire  
whom...

CAPTAIN

What they want to hear, Sir, is that  
we still share a purpose: the Mission  
Civilization, a faith in the good  
fight, the American way, et cetera. A  
sophomore debate theme for a Fort  
Leavenworth alum like yourself.

GENERAL

That's true. And my English is more  
and more impeccable since I hired  
you. Is that not correct?

CAPTAIN

"Impeccable"... Tough word.

GENERAL

(getting up)

Let us show it off! Write up some  
notes for the speech.

CAPTAIN

Understood, sir. And once again I  
will argue vociferously against the  
American withdrawal --

GENERAL

(cutting in)

America's not going anywhere.  
Secretary Kissinger confirmed that.  
He is a man of his word.

(walking out)

And a laureate of the Nobel Prize.

The Captain follows.



CAPTAIN

This is it.

GENERAL

(reading the cover)

*Asian Communism and the Oriental  
Mode of Destruction?* Richard Hedd?

CAPTAIN

A gift from Claude. He says it's all the rage at Langley and the Pentagon. If we pull a couple of choice quotes and you casually tear them apart, everybody will be impressed by your intellect, sir. Who else but you would have such authority to speak on the Oriental mode of destruction?

*Uh-huh* -- the General flips through the book, pleased.

CAPTAIN

I'll make some crib notes.

They pull out of the compound.

21      **INT. CAPTAIN'S CHAMBERS - GENERAL'S VILLA - EVENING**      21

With the door closed, the Captain removes the film cartridge from his Minox camera and puts it in a small manila envelope. He inserts the unloaded camera into the secret compartment in the bottom of his trusty rucksack.

22      **EXT. STREET 2 - EARLY MORNING**      22

He drops the envelope in the multi-unit mailbox we saw before.

23      **OMITTED**      23

A24      **INT. HALLWAY - COMPOUND - DAY**      A24

Once again, we rewatch the moment the wiretap news came through: Secret Police Officer 1 ducks out of the wiretapping room and hustles his way to the Captain's office.

24

**INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY**

24

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
What do we do, sir? Should I  
report it upstairs?

SECRET POLICE OFFICER 1  
Chúng ta làm gì bây giờ, thưa  
Đại úy? Tôi có nên báo cáo  
với cấp trên không?

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

The Captain racks his brain for his next move, suppressing all external evidence of panic.

CAPTAIN  
Requisition a car.

CAPTAIN  
Cho điều một chiếc xe.

The Officer rushes off and the Captain picks up his phone, dials and waits for a few beats. Someone has picked up on the other end of the line. The Captain speaks urgently and yet softly --

CAPTAIN  
We have ourselves a problem  
in the garden...

CAPTAIN  
Vườn của mình có chút vấn  
đề...

25 INT. OFFICE - MAN'S DENTAL CLINIC - SAME TIME

25

Man is on the phone in his private office apart from the treatment room.

MAN  
Hold on.

MAN  
Đợi tí.

He is dressed for work with his shirt sleeves rolled, obviously interrupted mid-consultation. Mindful of a nervous PATIENT in the dental chair overhearing, Man closes the door to his private office, and switches to English --

MAN  
(patient but stern)  
It must be a very serious gardening  
problem for you to call me at the  
office.

26 INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY

26

The Captain quickly surveys the office to make sure no one is paying attention.

CAPTAIN  
It looks like the cat is  
about to pounce on the  
pigeon.

CAPTAIN  
Có vẻ con mèo sắp vồ con bồ  
câu.

MAN (O.S.)  
When?

CAPTAIN  
Soon.

CAPTAIN  
Sắp rồi.

27 **INT. OFFICE - MAN'S DENTAL CLINIC - SAME TIME** 27

Man squeezes his eyes closed.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)  
Did you hear me...?

CAPTAIN (O.S.)  
Mày nghe tao nói không...?

But Man just hangs up, grits his teeth...

28 **INT. TREATMENT ROOM - MAN'S DENTAL CLINIC - DAY** 28

And returns to his patient. He switches on the dental drill --

MAN  
Open your mouth, please.

MAN  
Hả miệng ra nhá.

The drill spins with a WHIRR.

PETULANT CAPTAIN (PRELAP)  
Who dropped off the roll of  
film in the mailbox for you?

PETULANT CAPTAIN (PRELAP)  
Ai thả cuộn phim vào hộp thư  
cho mày?

A HYGIENIST flicks on a powerful lamp.

29 **INT. SCREENING ROOM - MOVIE THEATRE - DAY** 29

With a WHIRR of its fan, the projector's blinding white light blanches the Communist Spy. She opens her eyes. Her irises reflexively contract, but instead of turning her head, she glares at the Captain with terrified eyes.

CRAPULENT MAJOR  
(possibly sincere)  
How very disappointing.  
You're centre stage, in the  
spotlight, and this is your  
performance? We treat you  
like a diva -- perform like  
one.

CRAPULENT MAJOR  
(possibly sincere)  
Thất vọng thiệt. Trung tâm  
sân khấu là của cung, ánh đèn  
sân khấu dành trọn cho cung,  
vậy mà cung chỉ có trình diễn  
vậy thôi sao? Tụi anh đối xử  
với cung như một ngôi sao mà -  
hãy trình diễn như ngôi sao.

IN THE AUDIENCE: the Captain, Claude and the General watch.

The Communist Spy SCREAMS, full force, banishing her fear with superhuman resolve.

COMMUNIST SPY  
I know that nothing is more  
precious than independence  
and freedom.

COMMUNIST SPY  
Tao biết rằng không có gì quý  
hơn độc lập tự do.

(CONTINUED)



PETULANT CAPTAIN

(scoffing)

Really? Do you know that, or are you just quoting Uncle Ho?

COMMUNIST SPY

And I know that your days are numbered.

SPECIAL POLICE SOLDIER 1

Oh, are they?

COMMUNIST SPY

The day is soon when Saigon will fall and all of you traitors who have carried a snake into your own home will be on your knees, begging for a coward's flight. But even then we will follow. Our Katyusha rockets will chase you in the skies, strike you in the bellies of your war planes, and fry you like stuffed pig's intestines.

The theatre falls silent. The Captain's eyes are glazed, almost like he is seeing the future.

The Communist Spy's eyes shine with pride.

PETULANT CAPTAIN

(scoffing)

Vậy sao? Mà biết, hay là mà chỉ biết lặp lại lời Bác Hồ?

COMMUNIST SPY

Và tao biết những ngày sống sót của bọn mày chỉ đếm được trên đầu ngón tay.

SPECIAL POLICE SOLDIER 1

Ừa, vậy sao?

COMMUNIST SPY

Sài Gòn sẽ sớm thất thủ. Lũ bán nước chúng mày, những thằng công rấn cắn gà nhà, sẽ vừa cụp đuôi chạy vừa quỳ lạy van xin lên máy bay di tản. Nhưng tụi bây sẽ không bao giờ được tha thứ. Tên lửa Ka-chiu-sa của tụi tao sẽ theo tụi bay đến cuối trời, rạch nát bụng máy bay, rồi nướng thui tụi bây như lòng heo cháy đen.

CUT TO:

**EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT (4 MONTHS LATER)**

The movie signage has now been changed to *THE COMBINATION 2*.

The marquee is lit, but the theatre itself looks deserted and quiet...

Until a large caliber mortar bomb with a high explosive round STRIKES the building, topples the hand-painted posters and shakes the plastic letters off the marquee and onto the street.

**OMITTED**

A MAID is clearing the last of the dishes from dinner when she drops a plate and shatters it. MADAME and LANA are so engrossed in the news that they don't even bother to look over. Madame sits at the dining table in an upright wingback, sipping a cup of tea. Lana slumps over her own cup. Both watch a portable TV that has been temporarily set on the table. Their postures may be different, but their faces share the same concern. The Captain plays a game of Chinese Chess with the General, who sits on a lounge chair.

NEWS: The North Vietnamese under General Dung on the outskirts of Saigon, his bombs falling on the suburbs. A panicked city.

The General, who's been concentrating on his game and painstakingly ignoring the news, can't take it anymore --

GENERAL	GENERAL
TURN THAT OFF!	TẮT ĐI!

Lana, who is nearest to the TV, reaches for it. But immediately --

MADAME	MADAME
DON'T!	KHÔNG TẮT!

GENERAL	GENERAL
OFF!	TẮT!

Madame glares at the General. Lana, stuck with her arm stiff, outstretched, looks to the Captain for help. The Captain shrugs his shoulder, playfully, suggesting she's on her own. Lana pouts.

The DOORBELL RINGS and the Captain springs to his feet, glad to escape the awkward scene.

CAPTAIN	CAPTAIN
Claude is here.	Claude đến rồi.

Lana, also relieved, retreats to her room. Madame also stands --

MADAME	MADAME
You mean our plane is here.	Ý cậu là máy bay của chúng ta đến rồi.

We hear the front door open and a familiar, upbeat VOICE. Claude walks in, greeting the BUTLER --

CLAUDE
How's it hangin', Hien?

(CONTINUED)

MADAME

(to her husband)

I trust that you will make  
the right choice for your  
family.

MADAME

(to her husband)

Em tin là anh sẽ quyết định  
đúng cho gia đình mình.

Claude enters with a bottle of Jack Daniels.

CLAUDE

Nothing is more enticing than the  
taste of Madame's pho, but it's  
madness at the Embassy.

The General receives the gift with a forced, courteous smile.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

The General liked to impress  
Claude with his English  
skills, but sometimes he  
wanted me to translate.  
That's when you knew things  
were serious...

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Tướng Trọng muốn gây ấn  
tượng với Claude về khả năng  
tiếng Anh của ông, nhưng  
thình thoảng ông nói tiếng  
Việt để tôi dịch. Những lúc  
đó, tôi biết mọi việc rất  
nghiêm trọng...

Prompted by Madame's insistent glare, the General turns to  
the Captain:

GENERAL

Ask the question.

GENERAL

Chú hỏi đi.

CLAUDE

(to the Captain)

I've got a gift for you too, my  
friend.

(hands him an LP)

Here's the new Isley Brothers.

CAPTAIN

(politely)

Ah, amazing.

CLAUDE

You know it's got to have a little  
funk in the blood.

(to the General)

You do remember, I am one-sixteenth  
Negro.

(CONTINUED)

GENERAL  
(to the Captain)  
Why do these Ivy league brats  
always insist they're part  
Black?

GENERAL  
(to the Captain)  
Sao lũ khốn học Ivy league  
luôn khăng khăng tụi nó có  
gốc da đen vậy?

CLAUDE  
Same blood as Beethoven, by the way.

Madame silently mouths the word "PLANE" to her husband. The  
General's patience has run out --

GENERAL  
(this time in English)  
The plane!  
(to the Captain)  
Request the plane!

CAPTAIN  
(translating, unnecessarily)  
We need a plane. To America.

CLAUDE  
So do we all. So do we all. But I'm  
afraid all we can offer is a black  
flight, off the books, a C-130.

GENERAL  
(to the Captain)  
That's 92 seats. My extended  
family alone is 58. And then  
there's...  
(glancing towards  
Madame)  
Madame's family.

GENERAL  
(to the Captain)  
Máy bay này chỉ có 92 chỗ.  
Đại gia đình của riêng tôi đã  
lên tới 58 người rồi. Thêm  
vào đó...  
(glancing towards  
Madame)  
Còn gia đình của bà nữa.

CAPTAIN  
(to Claude)  
That's not enough.

CLAUDE  
If word gets out that you're fleeing  
the country, there will be riots.

GENERAL  
I'm not fleeing. I'm retreating!  
Temporarily.

CLAUDE  
And Americans are not withdrawing  
either, at least not yet.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

So keep this strictly confidential.  
You must limit your passenger list.

GENERAL

(to the Captain)

Remember, when the Americans  
try to sell you short, they  
look you straight in the eye.

GENERAL

(to the Captain)

Nhớ nè, khi tụi Mỹ đánh giá  
thấp mình, tụi nó nhìn thẳng  
vào mắt mình.

Claude waits for the translation, but instead the Captain faintly shakes his head -- "*let this one go.*"

Madame slowly unfolds two fingers for the General's eyes. Summoning his full authority, he stands and faces Claude.

GENERAL

Do you plan to abandon us  
after all we've done for you?  
We Vietnamese are not  
Americans' chewing gum!

GENERAL

Ông có định bỏ rơi chúng tôi  
sau tất cả những gì chúng tôi  
đã làm cho ông không? Người  
Việt Nam chúng tôi không phải  
là kẹo cao su của nước Mỹ!

CAPTAIN

(to Claude)

Please do not abandon us.

The General overlooks the Captain's feeble translation. All that matters is that his wife heard his commanding language. Claude nods along as if in agreement, but his words are not deferential:

CLAUDE

Don't forget to destroy the  
documents. Contact me directly,  
when you're done.

His look is calm, but his words are stern.

The General, with another fast glance to his wife, unfolds two fingers just as she had, and declares, resolutely, in gallant Vietnamese:

GENERAL

We need two planes!  
Understood?!

GENERAL

Chúng tôi cần hai chiếc máy  
bay! Hiểu không?!

Claude looks between the General and Madame, then makes his decision. He unfolds two fingers and nods melodramatically --

CLAUDE

I'll get you two planes.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: (4)

Madame permits herself a small smile victory, but the emptiness of Claude's promise lingers in the air.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
The General knew as well as I did that there would be no additional plane. Claude knew that we knew, and we knew that Claude knew.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Tuống Trọng cũng như tôi biết rằng sẽ không có thêm máy bay nào hết. Claude biết rằng chúng tôi biết, và chúng tôi biết rằng Claude biết.

GENERAL  
I am tired. I think I will call it a night.

The General puts his arm around his wife, and retreats to their bedroom. Claude ushers them off with his eyes. Then:

CLAUDE  
And you'll like that album. They cover that Todd Rundgren tune --

CAPTAIN  
(sighing)  
Please. Enough of that shit!

33 INT. GENERAL'S OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY

33

The General pulls a file from the bottom left drawer of his desk and hands it to the Captain.

GENERAL  
That's the full list. Select the passengers.

The Captain is stunned. The General gives an order, but the SOUND has faded and it is unheard under --

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
You risked so much to get that list.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Cậu đã mạo hiểm rất nhiều để có được danh sách đó.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
And the General himself just handed it over!

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Rồi Tuống Trọng tự giao nó cho tôi!

34 INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY

34

The Captain spreads the papers on his desk. Sure enough, they are exactly the same as the pages he secretly photographed. He gets out a ruler and, one by one, starts crossing off names.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

The General was secretly soft on the inside, so he left it to me to choose the evacuees. Instead of selecting ten to take, I began by crossing off those we could leave behind. A name with a line through it would almost certainly face death... I mean, I'm sorry... face trial.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Nhìn bề ngoài vậy thôi, nhưng bên trong Tướng Trọng lại là người rất dễ mềm lòng, vì thế ông ấy để tôi chọn người di tản. Thay vì chọn tên mười người cho đi, tôi bắt đầu bằng cách gạch bỏ tên những người mình bỏ lại được. Tên ai bị gạch khỏi danh sách gần như đồng nghĩa với việc họ chắc chắn phải đối mặt với cái chết... Ý tôi là, tôi xin lỗi... phải đối mặt với tòa án xét xử...

**INT. CAPTAIN'S CHAMBERS - GENERAL'S VILLA - NIGHT**

An LP is playing some late night soul as the Captain packs. There is a KNOCK on his door. Since the house is asleep, the Captain quickly gets up to answer it --

CAPTAIN

(hushed)

General.

The General stands there, in his pajamas, with the gifted bottle of JD and a glass in his fist. One-third of the bottle is already gone.

GENERAL

It tastes cheap. But I better get used to it. Do you have a glass?

CLOSE-UP on the General's bare feet as they step into the room, uninvited. He is wearing a pair of sandals that reveal the mangled and missing toes of his left foot.

GENERAL

The President has resigned. That coward, that foolish, no... I can't think of the English word.

CAPTAIN

There are many colorful options, but let's just go with "chicken."

(CONTINUED)

The General wanders over to the window and looks out into the courtyard where two AIDES are stoking a bonfire with armfuls of paperwork. Stacks of fileboxes are waiting nearby.

GENERAL

Half of those confidential documents concern the U.S. Those Americans started these Crusades, but now they're bored. And we've been taken for suckers. Saigon is not the New Jerusalem after all. Just a dirty jungle, littered with rotting corpses.

Maybe it's the alcohol, but the General is stewed in uncharacteristic melancholia. The Captain joins his superior with a glass from his bedside, and the General pours from the bottle.

GENERAL

Final list?

He strolls over to the typewriter, pulls out the paper and reads. He sits as he takes it in.

CAPTAIN

Yes. Made the selection based on loyalty and ability.

As the General reviews the list, the Captain puts his record albums and books into a cardboard box, then packs a framed photo of his MOTHER into his trusty rucksack.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

In fact, it was far from simple. To select the most qualified and culpable officers, those who actually deserved execution, and to help them escape would be counterrevolutionary, but to select the most incompetent would naturally raise the General's suspicion.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)

So what was your solution?

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

To select those incapables who appeared capable.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Thật ra, việc đó không hề đơn giản. Chọn những sĩ quan có năng lực và nhiều tội ác nhất, những kẻ đáng bị xử tử, và giúp bọn chúng trốn thoát là việc làm phản cách mạng, nhưng chọn những người bất tài nhất thì đương nhiên Tướng Trọng sẽ nghi ngờ.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)

Vậy giải pháp của cậu là gì?

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Chọn những kẻ không năng lực nhưng tỏ ra có năng lực.

The Captain pours himself another shot.

(CONTINUED)



CAPTAIN

And General, I have one personal request: could we spare three seats for my friend Bon? His son is my godson.

He removes a black-and-white PHOTO of the THREE MUSKETEERS from his wallet and points his finger at Bon to jog the General's memory. The General responds almost instantly --

GENERAL

If all of our soldiers were as brave as the Airborne, we'd have won this war.

CAPTAIN

(quickly, to put the question to rest)

Thank you, sir.

GENERAL

We will live to fight again, but for now we are well and truly...

CAPTAIN

"Fucked" will work just fine.

GENERAL

Do you know any toasts from your college years in America for a future that looks... unclear?

CAPTAIN

(after some thought)

Here's blood in your eye.

GENERAL

(cocking his head)

I have no idea what that means...

(but nevertheless, he raises his glass)

Here's blood in your eye.

They toast and down their glasses.

36

**OMITTED**

36

37

**OMITTED**

37

38

**INT. HALLWAY - COMPOUND - MOMENTS LATER**

38

A DOOR OPENS and the crying SKINNY TIMID RTO exits the office, wiping his tears.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

Without a word, he passes the other selected OFFICERS who are waiting as if for their dentist appointments.

39 INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY

39

CRAPULENT MAJOR  
What about my mother?

CRAPULENT MAJOR  
Còn má tôi thì sao?

CAPTAIN  
No additional family.

CAPTAIN  
Không ai có thêm người ngoài gia đình.

CRAPULENT MAJOR  
My mother is not  
"additional".

CRAPULENT MAJOR  
Má tôi không phải là người ngoài.

CAPTAIN  
Only "wife and a child."

CAPTAIN  
Chỉ đem theo "vợ và một đứa con."

Their quick exchange abruptly halts. The Crapulent Major agonizes, then makes a difficult decision:

CRAPULENT MAJOR  
I will leave my daughter behind with her nanny. You can always have another kid.

CRAPULENT MAJOR  
Tôi sẽ để con gái lại với bà vú. Con thì để thêm được.

CAPTAIN  
(sincerely)  
No one can take the place of one's mother.

CAPTAIN  
(sincerely)  
Chứ má thì làm sao thay thế được.

40 INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - COMPOUND - LATER

40

PETULANT CAPTAIN  
No, it's not "satisfactory". Do you know who my late father was?

PETULANT CAPTAIN  
Không, không chấp nhận được. Mà biết ba tao là ai không?

CAPTAIN  
That's why you were chosen in the first place.

CAPTAIN  
Anh được chọn là nhờ có họ đó.

PETULANT CAPTAIN  
He went to law school with President Thieu's brother in Paris --

PETULANT CAPTAIN  
Ba tao học trường luật cùng với anh của tổng thống Thiệu ở Paris --

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN  
The President, in case you missed the news, fled the country to Taiwan last night. You are welcome to send him a postcard there asking for assistance.

CAPTAIN  
Tổng thống, nếu anh chưa nghe tin, đã từ chức và bỏ trốn đi Đài Loan từ tối qua. Anh cứ tự nhiên gửi bưu thiếp cho ông, nhờ ông giúp đỡ.

41 INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - COMPOUND - LATER

41

GRIZZLED SERGEANT  
Please, just five more seats, or I swear I will KILL MYSELF RIGHT NOW, IN YOUR OFFICE.

GRIZZLED SERGEANT  
Xin anh, chỉ năm chỗ nữa thôi, nếu không, tôi sẽ TỰ SÁT NGAY BÂY GIỜ, NGAY TRONG VĂN PHÒNG CỦA ANH.

The Captain opens a drawer, pulls out his pistol, stands and offers it to the Sergeant, handle first.

CAPTAIN  
I'll give you some privacy. Make it fast.

CAPTAIN  
Vậy tôi sẽ để anh tự do một mình. Làm nhanh nhanh ha.

He leaves, closing the door behind him. The Sergeant, whose performance had been quivering with high intensity, immediately slumps his shoulders. He spots some snacks on the Captain's desk, and pockets one.

42-46 OMITTED

42-46

47 INT./EXT. GENERAL'S CAR - CHECKPOINT - PULL UP - DAY

47

The Captain drives the Citroën up to a MILITARY ROADBLOCK at the edge of the downtown core. He pokes his head out the window to berate the GUARDS --

CAPTAIN  
You morons! Don't you see the stars on the plate? It's an emergency counterintelligence op!

CAPTAIN  
Mấy thằng ngu! Tụi mày không thấy ngôi sao trên biển xe hả? Đây là chiến dịch phản gián khẩn cấp!

The cowed GUARDS wave him through.

The Citroën crosses a bridge. Midway across, a string of successive bombs pummels the river on either side.

47 CONTINUED:

The Captain is behind the wheel and from his POV we see in the distance: the edge of town. The assault on the perimeter is crowned by a billow of black smoke that expands indefinitely.

From the rear, the Citroën crosses the bridge and shrinks into the horizon. The Captain seems to be heading into the cloud.

48 OMITTED 48

49 COMBINED WITH SCENE 47 49

50 COMBINED WITH SCENE 51 50

51 EXT. PATIO - BEER GARDEN - DAY 51

The General's Citroën enters the courtyard and parks. The Captain gets out and ventures onto the crowded patio, looking for his friends.

BON/MAN  
(drunk and slurring)  
Hey, Twice-of-Everything!

BON/MAN  
(drunk and slurring)  
Ê, Gấp-Đôi-Tất-Cả!

The two friends raise their hands in sync and both stagger to their feet. The Captain arrives and quickly takes in the table, which is already littered with American beer bottles --

CAPTAIN  
What, how many have you had already?

CAPTAIN  
Khoan, mà đã uống bao nhiêu lon rồi?

BON  
(sitting down again)  
We saw smoke over District Four and thought you might chicken out.

BON  
(sitting down again)  
Tụi tao thấy khói bốc lên rần rần từ quận Tư nên cứ tưởng mà sợ rụt vôi rồi chứ.

CAPTAIN  
Dung has the city in his fist and he's bored, so he's lobbing pot shots into the slums.

CAPTAIN  
Dũng nắm được thành phố rồi nên nó chán, vì thế nó bắn vu vơ vào khu ổ chuột.

BON  
I'm sick of those fucking commies!

BON  
Tao quá chán mấy thằng Việt Cộng!

Man and the Captain discreetly exchange a knowing look. Bon pours a glass of beer for his friend.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

Glad you guys are flying out tomorrow.

BON

(to the Captain, re: Man)

Don't worry about this fucker. In exchange for extracting a rotten tooth for General Phu, he's got a seat on a MEDEVAC the day after tomorrow, bound for America.

MAN

(pointing around)

There won't be anything like this in America. Soak it in, boys -- the smell of stale beer, the band with only three songs on their playlist, these drunken marine goons looking for a fight whenever you catch their eye...

BON

The commies can take the beer and replace it with commie piss, they can shit on everything beautiful and classy about this town...

Man gazes at Bon with sad eyes.

BON

But they can't take our memories.

Bon, choking up, raises his left hand and locks eyes, alternately, with both friends --

BON

Blood brothers.

CAPTAIN

Les Trois Mousquetaires.

MAN

All for one and one for all.

MAN

Tao mừng là tụi mày tối nay bay.

BON

(to the Captain, re: Man)

Đừng lo cho thằng này. Đổi lại cho việc rút mù từ ổ viêm răng trên của tướng Phú, nó sẽ có chỗ trên chuyến bay giải cứu y tế ngày mai.

MAN

(pointing around)

Ở Mỹ chẳng có không khí này đâu. Hãy tận hưởng đi tụi mày -- mùi bia thiu, ban nhạc chỉ biết chơi ba bài tù, đám thằng lính say khướt tìm có đánh lộn với bất cứ ai nhìn tụi nó...

BON

Tụi nó có thể thay bia bằng nước đái cộng sản, tụi nó có thể làm ô ứ những gì tươi đẹp và sang trọng của thành phố này...

BON

Nhưng tụi nó không thể cướp được ký ức của chúng ta.

BON

Cho anh em cắt máu ăn thề.

MAN

Một người vì mọi người, mọi người vì một người.

(CONTINUED)

All three raise their left hands and spread their fingers, REVEALING identical scars that run like man-made life lines down their palms. With their right hands, they clink glasses.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

In defense of this corny moment, I would like to clarify that we established this tradition when we were fourteen years of age.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Đề bào chữa cho khoảnh khắc sến đó, tôi muốn nói rõ lại là từ hồi mười bốn tuổi, bọn tôi đã lấy câu nói này làm phương châm truyền thống.

Man, suddenly, grabs Bon's head, pulls it close and kisses him on his forehead. Bon, protests as he wipes the saliva off of his brow --

BON

Ugh, what the hell, homo?

BON

Gì vậy, mà bị bê dê hả?

But before he can recover, the Captain charges in with a kiss on the cheek. Bon parries to face the new opponent --

BON

You fucking bastard --

BON

Cái thằng khốn này --

But it's a feint, and, in a quick riposte, he kisses Man square on the lips. Next, he grabs the Captain's head and loudly pecks him on the cheek. Then Man jumps in and kisses the other cheek. Bon rushes the pair and the three friends tussle as they kiss, hug, and fall to the ground in a lump. PATRONS watch and laugh.

But the bass THUNDER of a nearby BOMB STRIKE stops the horseplay dead. The air shudders, and beer glasses TINKLE. A foreboding silence fills the shaken garden. The Three Musketeers separate and gather themselves. Bon instantly switches to soldier mode. He lifts his beer glass and chugs it.

BON

Sounds like the Central Market. That was a 250 kilogram load...

BON

Nghe như nổ ở Chợ Bến Thành. Tải trọng 250 kí...

CLOSE ON: Bon's glass as he puts it on the table.

A52

**EXT. PATIO - BEER GARDEN - NIGHT**

A52

CLOSE ON: A forest of empty glasses on the Three Musketeers' table.

It's dark now, when another BOMB strikes. Nearer. The glasses rattle like a warning. The patrons react with involuntary vocals. Some, who can no longer stand it, quickly settle and leave.

(CONTINUED)

The BAND, a duo with a long-haired guitarist and an equally long-haired female singer in a crimson áo dài, gallantly starts into a popular, sentimental Trịnh Công Sơn tune:

SINGER  
CANNONS RESOUND IN THE CITY  
EVERY NIGHT  
THE ROAD CLEANER STOPS HIS  
BROOM AND LISTENS.  
CANNONS PASS HERE, MOTHER  
WAKE UP  
CANNONS PASS HERE, BABIES  
SORROW  
MIDNIGHT ROCKET SPARKS OVER  
THE MOUNTAIN...

SINGER  
ĐẠI BÁC ĐÊM ĐÊM DỘI VỀ THÀNH  
PHỐ  
NGƯỜI PHU QUÉT ĐƯỜNG DỪNG  
CHỖI ĐỨNG NGHE.  
ĐẠI BÁC QUA ĐÂY ĐÁNH THỨC MẸ  
DẬY  
ĐẠI BÁC QUA ĐÂY CON THƠ BUỒN  
TỬ  
NỬA ĐÊM SÁNG CHÓI HÒA CHÂU  
TRÊN NÚI

BON  
Shit, I was trying to hold  
back the tears, but this damn  
song gets me every time.

BON  
Má, tao không muốn khóc nhưng  
bài hát này này lần nào cũng  
làm tao không cầm lòng được.

The Captain spots Man also dabbing his tears.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
You're saying that your  
handler cried?

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Cậu đang nói rằng cấp trên  
của cậu đã khóc?

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
I was surprised too. Because  
his intellect was cold. I  
didn't know if they were  
tears of joy over our  
imminent victory, or grief  
for the parting of friends.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Tôi cũng ngạc nhiên. Vì tính  
ảnh rất lạnh lùng. Tôi không  
biết đó là nước mắt vui mừng  
về chiến thắng cận kề, hay  
nỗi buồn chia tay những người  
bạn.

The Captain is crying now too.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
For me, I know it was both.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Tôi rơi nước mắt vì cả hai lý  
do.

Conquered by bittersweet nostalgia, almost every head turns to the stage and starts to sing along with the band. It's an anthem to a disappearing nation.

Then, out of nowhere, a far-off table of DRUNKEN MARINES spring to their feet --

MARINE 1

Enough! We don't wanna hear  
this damn commie song!

MARINE 1

Đủ rồi! Tụi tao không muốn  
nghe bài hát cộng sản chó  
chết này!

The music stops. The rest of the patrons are audibly  
disappointed. The Captain intercedes, diplomatically --

CAPTAIN

Take it easy, soldier. The  
song's anti-war. It doesn't  
take sides.

CAPTAIN

Bình tĩnh đi, anh lính. Bài  
hát này là nhạc phản chiến.  
Nó không đứng về phía nào.

He cautiously signals the band to continue. The music resumes  
and the patrons relax. But the Marines do not back down easily.

MARINE 2

Excuse me, Captain...  
(the music stops again)  
But you do know that when the  
commies take over, bastards  
like you will be the first to  
face the firing squads?

MARINE 2

Xin lỗi, Đại Úy...  
(the music stops again)  
Nhưng anh có biết rằng khi  
cộng sản tiếp quản, những  
thằng khốn như anh sẽ bị xử  
bắn đầu tiên không?

BON

(instantly sober)  
What did you just say,  
Sergeant? Why don't you say  
it again?

BON

(instantly sober)  
Mày vừa nói gì vậy, Trung sĩ?  
Ngon nói lại coi?

Without waiting for a response, Bon rushes the three Marines  
and starts throwing punches. The Captain and Man light their  
cigarettes as they take in the action.

CAPTAIN

(to Man)  
He's fighting for me,  
shouldn't I maybe help him?

CAPTAIN

(to Man)  
Nó đang chiến đấu vì tao, tao  
có nên giúp nó không?

Man smiles quizzically and signals the band to continue. Used  
to this kind of nonsense, the band wearily obliges. Once  
again, the Patrons sing along as they watch the fight unfold.

The Captain hands a roll of film to Man.

CAPTAIN

The complete personnel of the  
Secret Police. As of today. I  
reshot it.

CAPTAIN

Toàn bộ nhân sự của Cảnh sát  
mật. Bản mới chính hôm nay.  
Tôi chụp lại nó.

Man takes the film and pockets it.

(CONTINUED)



CAPTAIN

That woman I saw in the movie theatre, make sure she's safe.

CAPTAIN

Cô gái tao gặp ở rạp chiếu phim, mà phải đảm bảo an toàn cho cô.

MAN

Let us worry about that.

MAN

Để tổ chức lo chuyện đó.

CAPTAIN

When do we arrest the General's men?

CAPTAIN

Khi nào tụi mình công tay lũ của Tướng Trọng?

MAN

(smiling)  
We're winning, but we haven't won yet.

MAN

(smiling)  
Chúng ta sắp thắng, nhưng chưa thắng.

CAPTAIN

But you're not going to let them escape, are you? The General deserves to be punished. He's not just going to stop fighting when he gets to America. He's going to lobby, agitate, and organize for counterrevolutionary action.

CAPTAIN

Nhưng mà sẽ không để họ trốn thoát, phải không? Tướng Trọng đáng bị trừng phạt. Ông sẽ chẳng chịu thua khi đến Mỹ đâu. Ông sẽ vận động hành lang, kích động mọi người, rồi gây dựng làn sóng phản cách mạng.

MAN

That's precisely why we need someone with the General, to keep an eye on him and report back.

MAN

Đây là lý do chúng ta cần người đi theo Tướng Trọng, để theo dõi ông ấy và báo cáo về cho tổ chức.

There is a pause while this statement sinks in, although to the Captain the implications are immediately clear. The Captain blanches.

CAPTAIN

No. No. I'm not going.

CAPTAIN

Không. Không. Tao không đi.

MAN

We're not debating this.

MAN

Chuyện này không có bàn.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN

I've been living underground for three-and-a-half years, fighting, yearning for the day of victory. I want to be here to celebrate. And to help build our future! When the plane arrives and everyone's on board, I'm going to walk up to the General and say, "Bon voyage, I'm staying home."

CAPTAIN

Tao đã sống dưới lòng đất ba năm rưỡi, chiến đấu, khao khát ngày toàn thắng. Tao muốn ở đây để ăn mừng. Và để giúp xây dựng tương lai của chúng ta! Khi máy bay tới và mọi người lên máy bay xong, tao sẽ đối mặt với Tướng Trọng và nói "chúc thượng lộ bình an, tôi sẽ ở lại."

MAN

That's a nice dramatic scene for a movie, but it's not going to happen. You can do more for the revolution there than you can here.

MAN

Cảnh đẩy lên phim thì kịch tích hấp dẫn đấy, nhưng nó không diễn ra như thế đâu. Ở đây, mày có thể phục vụ cho cách mạng nhiều hơn là ở đây.

The casual delivery of this rehearsed line pushes the Captain's buttons -- he explodes in anger.

CAPTAIN

Why? Because I'm a better mole than a human?

CAPTAIN

Tại sao? Vì tao làm gián điệp giỏi hơn làm người?

But now Man is pissed too, and he answers in a tone we've never heard before, callous -- the final word.

MAN

You wanna go. When you were at college your letters back were like fan letters. You love America. Admit it.

MAN

Muốn đi. Hồi học ở Mỹ, thư mày gửi về như thư của kẻ cuồng si vậy. Mày yêu nước Mỹ. Thừa nhận đi.

CAPTAIN

I was fascinated and repulsed.

CAPTAIN

Tao vừa mê hoặc vừa cự tuyệt nước Mỹ.

MAN

That's what it means to love America. And you know what, my friend? Home is overrated.

MAN

Vậy tức là yêu nước Mỹ đó. Và mày biết gì không, anh bạn? Mày đánh giá "nhà" cao quá.

The Captain clenches his jaw, then resigns himself to his fate.

(CONTINUED)

A52 CONTINUED: (5)

CAPTAIN  
I'll leave you my books and my record collection. In my bedroom.

CAPTAIN  
Tao sẽ để lại cho mày những cuốn sách và bộ sưu tập đĩa hát của tao. Trong phòng ngủ tao.

MAN  
(nodding)  
Tell him my flight was cancelled due to fighting.

MAN  
(nodding)  
Nói với nó là chuyến bay của tao bị hủy vì chiến sự ác liệt.

The Captain glances over to check in on Bon's progress: he is wiping the floor with the three Marines.

52 OMITTED

52

53 INT. RECEPTION ROOM - FIRST FLOOR - GENERAL'S VILLA - DUSK

53

Madame stands with a single suitcase, in the center of the foyer. She surveys the empty living space for one last time. As a farewell gesture, she kisses her hand and touches it to the wall. There's a danger her emotions might get the best of her, but she keeps them reined in. From upstairs, she hears faint music.

MADAME  
(calling upstairs)  
Lan, Sweetheart, let's go!  
We're going to America. We'll get new clothes there.

MADAME  
(calling upstairs)  
Lan, con yêu, đi đi con!  
Chúng ta sẽ tới Mỹ. Ở đó con sẽ có nhiều quần áo mới.

54 INT. HALLWAY - GENERAL'S VILLA - DUSK

54

The Captain strolls down the hall with his rucksack in hand.

MADAME (O.S.)  
Lan, please! They're waiting for us!

MADAME (O.S.)  
Lan, làm ơn! Mọi người đang đợi!

He walks to Lana's bedroom. The door is open...

55 INT. LANA'S BEDROOM - GENERAL'S VILLA - DUSK

55

Lana is curled up on the bed, sulking like a child. Beside her, a transistor RADIO is playing a naive French pop song.

The Captain announces his presence with a polite RAP on the doorframe. Lana doesn't move.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN

(gently)

Better listen to your mother.  
Everyone's ready to go. You're  
holding them up.

(pause)

At least turn off that silly song.

This gets to her -- she jerks her head with an angry glare, reaches over and actually *turns up* the volume. She sits with theatrical effort, once again looking very much her age. She sighs with teenage agony.

LANA

Why can't we go to Paris?

LANA

Tại sao mình không đi Pa-ri  
được?

*Tut!* -- the Captain playfully wags his finger. Lana sighs. The Captain lowers the volume and waits for Lana to correct herself. Reluctantly, she switches to English:

LANA

Why can't we go to Paris?

CAPTAIN

(laughing, affectionately)

In Paris you wouldn't be able to use  
all those handy English expressions  
I taught you. Come on. You'll like  
America. Young people do. I did.

She looks to the Captain, her eyes moist with genuine trepidation. He smiles reassuringly.

56&57 **OMITTED**

56&amp;57

A58 **EXT. FRONT STEPS - GENERAL'S VILLA - DUSK**

A58

Two buses and a motorcycle wait in the front yard.

58 **INT. BUS ONE - GENERAL'S VILLA - PARKED - DUSK**

58

The Captain hops into the entry well next to the driver and quickly scans the passengers. The anxious EVACUEES and their FAMILIES are seated, all in civilian dress, each with one bag. Some of the smallest CHILDREN clutch dolls or toy companions. Bon and family are in the first bench.

The Captain inserts a pre-selected 8 track cassette into the sound system --

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN  
(to the Driver)  
The General chose the  
soundtrack.

CAPTAIN  
(to the Driver)  
Tướng Trọng chọn nhạc nền  
rồi.

Rousing MARTIAL MUSIC plays over the vehicle's tinny speakers.  
The weathered DRIVER flicks his cigarette butt out the open door.

A59 **EXT. FRONT STEPS - GENERAL'S VILLA - DUSK**

A59

The General, a jacket over his civies, spiritedly starts his  
motorcycle. The bike FRAMES OUT, followed by the buses.

59 **INT./EXT. BUS ONE - DOWNTOWN SAIGON - MOVING - DUSK**

59

Following the General's motorcycle, the bus turns toward  
downtown.

DRIVER  
Why is he taking this route?  
The curfew! We're all going  
to get shot.

DRIVER  
Sao tướng Trọng lại đi đường  
này? Có lệnh giới nghiêm mà!  
Chúng ta sẽ bị lãnh đạn.

BON  
(sighing, amused)  
He's the General.

BON  
(sighing, amused)  
Ông là Tướng mà.

THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW, we watch the motorcycle recklessly  
lead on, past Central Market -- empty, with some stalls  
crashed, scattered in rubble -- and onto Le Loi.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
This entire leave-taking  
parade is grotesque. Each  
time we get to this part in  
the narrative I feel the  
phlegm rattle in my throat.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Cuộc diễu hành tiễn biệt này  
thật tởm lợm. Mỗi lần đồng  
chí miêu tả tới đoạn này, tôi  
thấy đờm dâng lên đầy cổ  
họng.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
No matter what you say about  
the General, he loved Saigon.  
He wanted to see it all one  
last time before he said  
goodbye.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Dù gì đi nữa, Tướng Trọng  
cũng say đắm Sài Gòn. Ông  
muốn chiêm ngưỡng thành phố  
thêm một lần nữa trước khi từ  
biệt.

The sights of the city flash by -- the boulevard cafés, Lam Son  
Square, the Central Station, and the movie theatre -- all  
abandoned, scattered with helmets and discarded khaki clothes...

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Of course that meant a selective tour, ignoring the portents of what was to come, like the frequent piles of uniforms and guns abandoned by deserters, as if their owners had been vaporised on the spot by alien ray guns.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Tất nhiên điều đó đồng nghĩa với một chuyến tham quan chọn lọc, bỏ qua những điem báo về sự sụp đổ của Sài Gòn nhan nhản dọc đường, ví dụ như những đồng đồng phục, súng ống mà những kẻ đào ngũ bỏ lại, như thể những kẻ đó đã bị những khẩu súng lazer ngoài hành tinh tia vào người và bốc hơi ngay tại chỗ.

Then the convoy rolls to a stop...

60 **EXT. MARINES MONUMENT - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - NIGHT**

60

The General has pulled up by the ARVN monument on the grassy median leading to the National Assembly. He gets out and stares reverentially at the super-sized Marines, their heroic charge preserved in concrete. An OFFICER is upended against the base of the pedestal, his head on the ground in a pool of blood, temple cracked, a gun in his flaccid hand. The General regards the officer mournfully, gives him the once-over, and salutes in his general direction. He lowers his hand, stares up at the monument and salutes once more.

The soldiers, including the Captain, line up behind the General. They all salute.

A61 **INT./EXT. BUS ONE - MARINES MONUMENT - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - SAME TIME**

A61

Linh anxiously watches the back of her husband as he salutes with the rest of the men. Duc WHIMPERS in his mother's arms. She whispers --

LINH  
Shhh, we're going on a trip. To a better place... to America.

LINH  
Shhh, nhà mình đang đi chơi. Tới nơi đẹp lắm, tới nước Mỹ, con à.

Behind her, the CRAPULENT MAJOR'S WIFE and his MOTHER are also watching the sad ritual outside. The older woman wipes away tears.

(CONTINUED)

A61 CONTINUED:

CRAPULENT MAJOR'S MOTHER  
(to her daughter-in-law)  
Why is your husband bringing  
me to America in place of his  
daughter? There is nowhere in  
the world better than my  
homeland.

CRAPULENT MAJOR'S MOTHER  
(to her daughter-in-law)  
Sao thằng Oanh nó đòi đưa mẹ  
sang Mỹ thay cho cháu nội của  
mẹ? Với mẹ thì chẳng có đâu  
tốt hơn quê hương mình.

61 **COMBINED WITH SCENE 60** 61

62 **OMITTED** 62

63 **INT./EXT. BUS ONE - CONG LY ROAD - MOVING - NIGHT** 63

The convoy decelerates as they approach the airport gates. On either side WOULD-BE EVACUEES cling to the high fences in a vain attempt to scale them.

All chatter has ceased on the bus and an eerie silence allows the distant staccato of machine guns to dominate the soundtrack.

64 **OMITTED**

64

65 **EXT. GENERAL'S MOTORCYCLE - AIRPORT COMPOUND - NIGHT**

65

The General has parked his motorcycle nearby the runway. He unpacks the side bag, when Claude approaches...

CLAUDE

Well Sir, I guess this is where we part ways. I trust that, under your able leadership, your group will get away just fine. You're at the front of the line.

GENERAL

Thank you, Claude. And thank America.

CLAUDE

I'll pass that along.

GENERAL

What about you? Do you have an escape plan?

CLAUDE

We got choppers and shit. The details are unclear. But we're CIA, we'll figure things out.

The General extends his hand for a gentlemanly farewell. Claude shakes it and, upon release, finds the keys to the General's motorcycle in his palm.

CLAUDE

Gosh, I think I'll take you up on that.

(CONTINUED)



GENERAL

Leave the keys in the ignition when you leave it. I wouldn't want them to damage it when they steal it.

The General wanders off, at the same moment the Captain arrives.

CLAUDE

I drove the President to the airport yesterday. He had lots of baggage. Hea-vy baggage. It made a clanking sound when you dropped it. Pretty sure you'd find a lot of your country's gold reserves in Taiwan today. My point is, relatively speaking, the General's a good guy.

CAPTAIN

(self-deprecating)

You're right, he forked out a lot of his personal stash to bring along a lowly subordinate like myself.

CLAUDE

We should have slipped out in the night before we had to run away. It makes me blue. It's like that Dion song --

(half singing)

AS I WALK ALONG, I WONDER  
WHAT WENT WRONG WITH OUR LOVE  
A LOVE THAT WAS SO STRONG...

(then)

My Little Runaway, I guess that's you.

CAPTAIN

Del Shannon. That was Del Shannon.

CLAUDE

Teacher's pet.

(he gets on the bike and  
starts it up)

See you stateside.

Claude rides off.

Americans and Vietnamese, SOLDIERS and CIVILIANS, stand by to get on a plane. All are sweaty and tense.

(CONTINUED)

## MARINE WITH BLOWHORN

Buses will come to transport you to the plane. When you hear your group number, line up in an orderly fashion. If you can't understand what I'm saying, ask someone who can. And quit asking the U.S. Marines for food and drinks. This is not a Burger King...

The Captain and Bon stand side by side, smoking, passing the time by gazing up at the dark sky, which is periodically lit by flares.

BON  
Indirect artillery has  
ceased.

BON  
Pháo tầm xa đã ngừng bắn.

CAPTAIN  
That's good. I guess.

CAPTAIN  
Vậy là tốt rồi.

Bon rolls his eyes.

BON  
It's a reposition. They don't  
want to give away their gun  
teams.

BON  
Bọn chúng đang di chuyển vị  
trí thôi. Bọn chúng không  
muốn bị lộ.

Behind them a haughty VIETNAMESE MAN argues with a GI,  
demanding access to real toilets instead of the swimming pool.

BON  
Listen to this guy! He's been  
so spoiled all his life, he  
doesn't realize how lucky he  
is to be here.

BON  
Nghe nó kìa. Nó sống phè phỡn  
cả đời nên không biết mình  
may mắn thế nào khi vào đây  
được.

CAPTAIN  
That's who we are, my friend.  
Even in Heaven, we'd complain  
that it wasn't as warm as  
Hell.

CAPTAIN  
Người Việt mình là vậy, bạn  
ơi. Cả khi đang ở Thiên đàng,  
chúng ta cũng than thở nó  
không ấm áp như ở Địa ngục.

Bon snickers and takes a long drag of his smoke.

BON  
I knew this day was coming,  
just never said so aloud.  
That's denial, right?

BON  
Tao biết ngày này sẽ tới, chỉ  
là không dám nói ra. Mà vậy  
là chối tội, phải không?

The Captain nods.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN

All of us were like swimmers doing the backstroke toward a waterfall. We all knew what was coming, but couldn't stop it. Worse still, we kept hoping that something good would come of it. The ancient Greeks used to argue about why Hope was left in Pandora's box. Why was it even in that fucking box where they kept only bad things? Could it be that hope itself is bad, or even worse?

BON

You pathetic bachelor, don't be slandering hope like that.  
(he points at his son, restless in his wife's arms)  
My hope is thick as blood.  
(he looks back to the Captain)  
But hey, you've got my blood too, remember?

CAPTAIN

Cũng y như mấy người đang bơi ngửa về phía thác nước. Tất cả tụi mình biết điều gì sắp xảy ra, nhưng đâu thể ngăn được nó. Tệ hơn nữa, tụi mình còn hy vọng sẽ có điều tốt sau khi mọi thứ kết thúc. Người Hy Lạp cổ đại từng tranh luận vì sao Hy vọng bị bỏ lại trong chiếc hộp Pandora. Mà đù má tại sao nó lại ở trong một chiếc hộp chỉ đựng những thứ xấu xa thôi? Có thể nào bản thân hy vọng là xấu, hay thậm chí còn tệ hơn nữa?

BON

Thằng độc thân đáng thương này, đừng có mà bôi bác như vậy chớ.  
(he points at his son, restless in his wife's arms)  
Hy vọng của tao đặc như máu.  
(he looks back to the Captain)  
Nhưng nè, mày cũng có cả máu của tao nữa, nhớ chứ?

He points to the scar on the palm of his hand. The Captain answers by holding up his.

MARINE WITH BLOWHORN (O.S.)

Plane 34! Plane 34 now loading!

CAPTAIN

That's us.

CAPTAIN

Máy bay của tụi mình tới rồi.

In the distance, a C-130 Hercules, approaching from the South, touches down on the runway. A shuttle bus pulls in.

Evacuees rush aboard the bus. The General peers in and erupts with rage. He yells at an American LOADMASTER.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

GENERAL

Plane thirty-four was reserved for my group only! WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

LOADMASTER

There ain't no First Class, General. Two in every seat. A lotta you Vietnamese ain't too big anyhow.

GENERAL

You bastard, who bought you off?!

The General is outraged and humiliated, but the urgency of the situation forces him to hold back. The Captain crams in next to him.

CAPTAIN

Let it go! Just get on board!

CAPTAIN

Bỏ qua đi! Lên máy bay đi!

68 INT./EXT. SHUTTLE BUS - AIRPORT COMPOUND - PARKED - NIGHT

68

The Loadmaster pushes the group up the stairs, pushing them past the STAMPEDE OF STRANGERS who have already occupied the front half of the bus. The Captain takes care of Bon's family, while the General looks out for his own.

At the top of the stairs, Madame looks back to make sure Lana is inside.

LOADMASTER

Don't be shy, lady. Back of the bus. Nut to butt, nut to butt!

The bus is too packed for the doors to close, but it pulls away regardless.

69 INT./EXT. SHUTTLE BUS - AIRPORT COMPOUND - MOVING - NIGHT

69

The overstuffed bus is sweaty and drenched in anxious silence; the passengers too scared to speak. Angry GUNFIRE rages beyond the fence.

Then BOOM -- a missile drops directly in front of the bus, shattering the windshield. The bus jerks to a stop, skids forward, and topples. MOANS and pained WHIMPERS signal the extent of the damage inside.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

From out of the wreckage and blood, Bon's arm emerges and grabs the emergency release on the back door.

70 **EXT. RUNWAY - AIRPORT COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS**

70

The door is jimmied open and Bon lifts out his stunned family, the General's, the Captain, several other OFFICERS and INJURED STRANGERS.

Without speaking, they collect on the runway, assessing the extent of the damage. They look frighteningly exposed, unprotected on the open field. But in the distance their salvation awaits -- the C-130, with its access ramp in place and beckoning.

Then from behind piles of sandbags bordering the tarmac, OTHER FIGURES dart from the shadows -- swarming the plane.

CAPTAIN  
(spotting the  
competition)  
Who are those people?

CAPTAIN  
(spotting the  
competition)  
Mấy người này là ai vậy?

Another EXPLOSION -- caterwauling at an even higher pitch -- galvanizes the group into action.

BON  
Come on. Let's move --

BON  
Nhanh lên. Chạy đi --

Bon rushes toward the plane, clutching his son with one arm, dragging his wife by the other.

The General and his gang run ahead of them, including some of his Officers.

In the distance, the first of the shadow figures have made it to the plane. It's a race now --

Ahead of the Captain: an eerie hiss of a rocket and, with a splash of blood, one of the OFFICERS running with the General falls dead.

With a protective arm around his wife, Bon pulls the Captain behind a sandbag barrier. Bon, his family, and the Captain all take refuge behind it and, momentarily, catch their breath.

A barrage of Katyusha rockets pelters the tarmac. Duc cries, wildly, and Linh hugs her son firmly.

Bon looks ahead -- the Hercules is still out of reach by 50 meters.

(CONTINUED)

BON  
(to Linh)  
Whether we die here or die  
running, it's just the same.

BON  
(to Linh)  
Mình chết ở đây hoặc chết khi  
chạy cũng giống nhau thôi.

Linh nods. Bon reaches out to grab Duc; Linh won't let him go.

BON  
Trust me. We need to run  
fast.

BON  
Tin anh đi. Mình phải chạy  
thiết nhanh.

Linh stands firm, and Bon finally relents, entrusting the child to her.

BON  
Okay, then. Let's go.

BON  
Thôi được, chạy đi.

The Captain, Bon and family run toward the plane, zig-zagging beneath the bark of the AK-47s.

SOUNDS OF: the Captain running, panting. Then the HISS of Katyushas in flight and an EXPLOSION.

The General and family have made it to the ramp, a small CROWD in front of them blocks their way in.

The Captain turns to look behind him, Bon and Linh are keeping up. Then his focus is back ahead, running to reach the plane, running faster...

He's at the ramp when a Huey helicopter thumps by with its doors wide open, REVEALING more than a DOZEN SOUTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS squeezed inside...

The General pushes on the backs of the evacuees in front of him, making room for his family to scramble inside.

The Captain is at the General's heels when a THUNDERING CRASH spins him around: the Huey has been STRUCK BY A ROCKET and its two halves clatter to the runway like pieces of a clay pigeon.

But where is Bon's family? In a confused panic, the Captain scans the field for his lost friends.

From inside the plane, the CREW CHIEF readies to close the doors. The engines are engaged, the props turning --

CREW CHIEF  
GET ON THE PLANE. YOUR FRIENDS ARE  
GONE, MAN.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (2)

The Captain looks back along his path: 30 meters back Bon is kneeling on the tarmac clutching Linh to his breast, a red heart slowly swells on her white blouse.

Bullets dust the ground between them and the plane.

The Captain throws his rucksack onto the plane and runs back to help his friend.

As he nears him, Bon's cries rise above the guns -- deep guttural moans. The Captain pries the husband and wife apart, finds Duc between them, a wet bloody mess.

From the door of the plane, the General and the crew chief yell, loud but inaudible, beckoning for the Captain with wide, full arm sweeps.

The Captain looks from his friend to the plane, the plane to his friend, and back...

FREEZE.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Okay. Let's stop there and pick up tomorrow.

COMMANDANT (V.O.)  
Được rồi. Dừng ở đây. Chúng ta sẽ tiếp tục ngày mai.

71-74 INCORPORATED INTO SCENE 51

71-74

75 COMBINED WITH SCENE 70

75

END OF EPISODE ONE