

**105 AND RISING:**  
**The Fall of Saigon**

*"The temperature in Saigon is 105 degrees and rising."*

-- Code broadcast on Armed Forces Radio to signal  
the final evacuation of American civilians from  
South Vietnam on April 29, 1975.

Written by  
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October 2, 2015

**CREDITS OVER BLACK:**

**SUPER: The White House. August 3, 1972.**

Damning recordings from the Nixon Tapes:

NIXON (V.O.)

Let's be perfectly cold-blooded about it. I look at the tide of history out there, South Vietnam probably is never gonna survive anyway.

**SUPER: President Richard Nixon**

NIXON (V.O.)

Can we have a viable foreign policy if a year from now, or two years from now, North Vietnam gobbles up South Vietnam?

KISSINGER (V.O.)

If Saigon's collapse looks as if it's the result of South Vietnamese incompetence.

**SUPER: Secretary of State Henry Kissinger**

KISSINGER (V.O.)

If we now sell out in such a way that, say, in a three- to four-month period, we have pushed President Thieu over the brink, it will worry everybody. So we've got to find some formula that holds the thing together a year or two... a decent interval after which no one will give a damn. Vietnam will be a backwater.

**END CREDITS./FADE IN:**

**TIGHT ON: PHOTO of Career Diplomat GRAHAM MARTIN (60's).**

YOUNG AIDE

The guy's a fossil.

**PULL BACK TO REVEAL:**

**INT. KISSINGER'S OFFICE, WAR BUILDING, WASHINGTON DC - DAY**

A dossier with the photo clipped to the front lands in front of **SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER**. Shrewd. Cynical.

Paranoid. With presidential attitude. If any one person "owns" the Vietnam War, it is Kissinger.

He sits at a table with a YOUNG AIDE and a SENIOR AIDE.

YOUNG AIDE

He lost a son there in '68. Word is he never recovered.

SENIOR AIDE

This is Saigon we're talking about. We need someone stronger.

KISSINGER

You're both wrong. Martin is perfect.

SENIOR AIDE

He's old, desperate and emotionally compromised.

KISSINGER

And that gives him his one superlative quality: he is the only man in America who wants to stay in Indochina longer than we do.

(to Young Aide)

Set up a meeting. Make him think he's a long shot.

**INT. BEDROOM, MARTIN HOME, BETHESDA, MD - DAY**

The flesh-and-blood **GRAHAM MARTIN** (60's), tall but slightly bent, looks through his suits. Slightly nervous.

His **WIFE** comes in, selects a tie.

**MINUTES LATER**

He checks himself in the mirror, fully dressed. She admires how he looks. Makes a small adjustment to the tie. Places palms on his lapels.

She gives him an encouraging kiss: "Go get 'em."

**INT. KISSINGER'S OFFICE - DAY**

Martin prostrates himself before an impassive Kissinger and the snot-nosed Young Aide.

**MARTIN**

I get that our continued presence in Vietnam is unpopular. Even distasteful to some.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

But the war's legacy remains in the balance; decisive actions must still be taken. I've made a career of foreign service. These are the moments why, and I can think of no better... no other... way left for me to honor my boy Glenn.

Martin takes a large gulp of water: he's been monologuing. Gauges Kissinger's reaction: quickly disappointed.

KISSINGER

Let's not kid ourselves, Graham. This isn't like your ribbon-cutting work in Italy or Thailand. Whoever they approve, Congress will turn straight around and advocate to shut him down and drag him home.

MARTIN

Casualty Officers have made 58,000 next-of-kin calls in seven years. Not one to politicians on the Hill. They don't appreciate what's at stake. But I do.

KISSINGER

Forgive this Secretary of State, his poor diplomacy skills. I'm saying: maybe you are too old for this fight.

Young Aide turns up one side of his mouth in snide enjoyment.

MARTIN

Sometimes age is an advantage. In my case, it means I'll hold nothing back because I've got nothing else left to live for.

KISSINGER

You understand, even if you perform admirably, the country will want someone to blame.

MARTIN

If being the lightning rod for criticism of those actions takes a personal toll on me, well that pales in comparison to what was asked of Glenn and the others.

Kissinger nods to his aides. "See. I told you."

KISSINGER  
 Thanks for coming by today Graham.  
 I'll get back to you.

**BEGIN MONTAGE:**

A series of NEWSREEL CLIPS featuring the "greatest generation" of Newscasters: Cronkite, Brinkley, etc.:

-- January 1973. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho sign a Cease Fire Agreement in Paris. Nixon declares: "Peace with honor."

-- May 1973. Troops returning stateside. Total number of troops remaining in Vietnam reduced from 200,000 to 100,000.

-- June 1973. Graham Martin appointed the new Ambassador to South Vietnam, replacing Ellsworth Bunker.

-- June 1973. Congress passes the Case-Church Amendment prohibiting US military activity in Southeast Asia.

-- October 1973. Congress approves \$1.1 Billion in aid to South Vietnam. Down from \$2.2 Billion the previous year.

-- August 1974. Nixon resigns over Watergate. South Vietnam loses their greatest advocate.

-- September 1974. Total number of troops remaining in Vietnam reduced from 100,000 to 50,000.

-- October 1974. Congress approves only \$700 million in aid to South Vietnam.

-- February 1975. North Vietnamese Army breaks the terms of the peace accord by crossing the border unchallenged into South Vietnam.

EMBEDDED REPORTER (V.O.)  
 (bombastic)  
 South Vietnamese by the tens of thousands looked to the skies beseeching: "Where are the great American bombers to protect us?"

-- White House Press Room. President Ford walks away from Reporters.

EMBEDDED REPORTER (V.O.)  
 Their pleas met with but a mighty silence from Washington

-- March 29, 1975. NVA attacks coastal Da Nang, South Vietnam's second largest city. THOUSANDS OF LOCALS crush the docks, fighting to escape by boat.

EMBEDDED REPORTER (V.O.)

A silence too soon broken by the  
footsteps of approaching North  
Vietnamese ground troops.

Destination: Da Nang.

Desperate Civilians throw themselves onto BARGES, already teeming to capacity. Many young and elderly fall into the water, crushed to death between steel hulls and stone embankments. Panic-stricken Parents TOSS CHILDREN at retreating boats with catastrophic results.

On the Tarmac at Da Nang Airport, a SWARM of South Vietnamese, on scooters, motorcycles and foot, chase after a taxiing World Airways plane. Men cling to the stairs as the plane gains speed. The Flight Crew helps four of them on board, but two others fall away.

A speeding Motorcyclist drops a GRENADE under the left wing. An EXPLOSION tears away metal. Others hold to the wheel well as the plane takes strenuous flight. At a thousand feet, a final hanger-on drops from the sky.

**END MONTAGE.**

**PULL OUT TO REVEAL:**

**INT. BAR, OFFICERS CLUB, HONG KONG - "CONTINUOUS"**

The DA NANG IMAGES play on the nightly news showing on a TELEVISION above the bar.

Tight on an exhausted **DA NANG CONSULATE GENERAL AL FRANCIS** returning to Saigon's river port from Da Nang via garbage barge. Text under image provides his name. He weakly waves off Reporters' questions.

The set is visible from adjoining

**DINING ROOM**

As **CAPTAIN JIM KEAN** (35), in Marine service uniform, watches from the edge of his chair. Meal untouched.

His wife, **ROSANNE**, returns from the ladies' wash room. "Date Night."

KEAN

The news used to lead with Vietnam.  
Now it's a blurb before sports and  
weather.

Rosanne stifles a sigh and sits down. This is all-too-familiar.

ROSANNE  
Let's talk about something else.  
Less about work...

...then repositions her chair to block her husband's view of the television.

ROSANNE (CONT'D)  
(pointed)  
More about Rosanne and Jim. For example--

KEAN  
(off TV)  
That's what the boys in DC were counting on. If you can't see it, it's not happening.

Rosanne puts her own news in a mental back pocket.

ROSANNE  
And what, exactly, is "happening?"

KEAN  
The country's blowing up. Just because we lit the fuse two years ago, doesn't mean I can't hear the explosion.

ROSANNE  
The war's over. For the rest of us anyway.

KEAN  
We made promises to protect those people.

ROSANNE  
Two tours. Couple purple hearts rattling around your sock drawer. I'd say you did your part.

Kean gets that faraway look so familiar to her.

KEAN  
For all the good that did.

This makes him too sullen for her taste. She gamely pivots:

ROSANNE  
(modeling her hair)  
That's what I'm beginning to think about my new hairdo.

Kean appraises her, brightens somewhat. Rises.

KEAN

Sorry. Gets me worked up. I need  
some air.

ROSANNE

(not fooled/not unkind)  
Make it a double.

He kisses her on the cheek.

ROSANNE (CONT'D)

You want to volunteer for hazard  
duty, there's always the broken  
washing machine.

She watches him head for the bar. Even smiles when Jim  
flashes TWO FINGERS at the BARTENDER.

Rosanne grows more curious when Bartender pours two separate  
shots (not a double). Explained when

#### **BAR - CONTINUOUS**

Bartender walks to other end of bar. Addresses **COLONEL SLOCUM**, finishing a drink with a Colleague.

BARTENDER

The gentleman over there bought  
your next round.

Kean salutes, then displays the whiskey like it's a game show  
prize: "If you want it, come and get it." Slocum shakes his  
head... and capitulates.

#### **DINING AREA - CONTINUOUS**

Rosanne downs her wine. Signals WAITER for the check.

#### **BAR - CONTINUOUS**

Kean points to the television.

KEAN

With Da Nang falling so easily,  
they'll move on Saigon next. And  
that'll be that.

SLOCUM

(deflecting/off drink)  
Poor form, playing to a man's  
weakness.

Slocum enjoys the first sip.

KEAN  
(pressing)  
I should be there, Gil.

SLOCUM  
It's a lost cause.

KEAN  
We've still got fifty Marines  
guarding the embassy. My Marines.

SLOCUM  
Everyone's climbing over each other  
to leave and you want to go back  
in.

Kean doesn't reply. Either can't or won't.

SLOCUM (CONT'D)  
I'll think on it.  
(off Kean's  
disappointment)  
Well, your dad would applaud the  
effort anyway. Saw him pull stunts  
like this in the Pacific.

KEAN  
Guadalcanal. Midway. He came home a  
hero.

SLOCUM  
(downing drink)  
You came home. That oughta be  
enough.

Kean turns to see Rosanne paying check.

SLOCUM (CONT'D)  
What's she think of this?

KEAN  
She knows who she married.

**CUT TO BLACK.**

**AN OVERHEAD LIGHT SNAPS ON...**

**INT. UTILITY ROOM, KEAN HOME, HONG KONG - DAY**

Kean, wearing KHAKIS and a GOLF SHIRT, examines the broken washing machine. He tests the input hose: water from an open tap TRICKLES out...

**EXT. BACK YARD, KEAN HOME - DAY**

Kean digs out a hole to expose the underground WATER LINE.

**INT. LIVING ROOM, KEAN HOME - DAY**

Rosanne watches from behind the curtains of the picture window as

**EXT. BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS**

Kean has now dug a TRENCH, following the pipe to where a ROOT has busted through the clay pipe.

A PORTABLE RADIO plays BBC coverage of the latest events from Vietnam.

**LATER**

The back yard is a disaster area. In addition to the ten-foot trench, an old STUMP that caused the problem has been half-way removed.

Rosanne comes and sits down on the stump.

ROSANNE  
(off the mess)  
It's been nice having a man around  
the house these past few months.

The BEEP of a car horn. Surprising Kean but not Rosanne.

ROSANNE (CONT'D)  
Guess it was too good to last.

**EXT. FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER**

Kean turns the corner and registers a DRIVER picking up a PACKED SUITCASE from the front step. Bringing it to the Jeep.

KEAN  
(grateful)  
This is my last chance to go back.

ROSANNE  
Maybe you never left.  
(beat)  
Just promise me you won't do  
anything foolish. Sock drawer's all  
full.

KEAN  
I promise.

He kisses her good-bye. The kind of kiss that prompts the Driver to turn his back.

ROSANNE

Go on now.

(pushing back tears)

I miss my husband. Do me a favor,  
find him and bring him home.

Kean kisses her one last time. Then heads to the Jeep. Looks back:

KEAN

Your hair. Looks nice.

**INT. HOLD AREA, C-80 CARGO PLANE - NIGHT**

Kean has the entire hold to himself. A Co-Pilot pops his head back:

USAF CO-PILOT

Buckle in, sir.

**INT. HOLD AREA, C-80 CARGO PLANE - DAY**

The ubiquitous rice paddies of Vietnam pass by the window.

**EXT. TARMAC, TAN SON NHAT AIRPORT, SAIGON - MOMENTS LATER**

Kean steps off the plane and into chaos.

TEXT ON SCREEN: **Saigon. April 18, 1975.**

Hundreds of WESTERNERS and SOUTH VIETNAMESE wait and/or fight to board outbound planes.

As Kean walks among them, there's a distinct feeling of a salmon swimming upstream.

A very young looking and gung-ho South Vietnamese Driver, **MUNG**, greets Kean with an enthusiastic, imprecise salute. Grabs Kean's duffel.

MUNG

You have cigarette, Major?

Kean, surprised, fishes out his pack. Offers one to Mung.

KEAN

It's Captain for another week.

MUNG  
Yes, sir...  
(winking)  
Major, sir.

KEAN  
You old enough to smoke?

They reach their car. Mung throws Kean's duffel in the front, gets behind the wheel.

MUNG  
I'm not old enough to drive.

**INT./EXT. SEDAN, STREETS OF SAIGON - DAY**

Mung drives the Embassy vehicle. Sitting on a phone book. Talking a mile-a-minute in butchered English.

Kean in rear, not listening, looks out at the hectic streets.

MUNG  
City very busy.

Locals watch them pass with a combination of grumbling, desperation and undisguised anger. Kean rolls up the window... then down again. Unsure what posture to take.

A FRUIT SELLER leans in window. Shoves papayas in Kean's face...

KEAN  
No. No, thank you.

...as a STREET URCHIN reaches in the opposite window and GRABS KEAN'S SUITCASE. Takes off running.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
Hey!

Mung shrugs with a sheepish smile.

MUNG  
City very busy.

Kean rolls the windows up again.

**EXT. NORTH GATE, US EMBASSY, SAIGON - DAY**

Mung pulls up to the compound. A two-acre square dominated by the 6-story Chancery, a block of smaller administrative buildings, a large parking lot and adjacent swimming pool.

A GUARD leans inside. Checks Kean's credentials.

GUARD

Welcome to America's last foothold  
in Vietnam, Major.

Guard waves to Other Guards, who open the gates.

KEAN

(to self)

It's Captain...

**EXT. PARKING LOT, US EMBASSY - CONTINUOUS**

Mung parks beneath a huge tamarind tree.

**INT. FOYER, CHANCERY - DAY**

Kean ENTERS. Surprised to see nobody guarding the building.

**REC ROOM - DAY**

Kean pops his head in. He exchanges salutes with **NCOIC SGT. JUAN VALDEZ** (30's), the mustachio-ed senior station officer, standing and watching a TELEVISION.

VALDEZ

NCO in charge, Sargent Juan Valdez,  
at your service.

KEAN

Jim Kean. Would've expected to see  
a bit more security, given the  
situation.

VALDEZ

Ambassador's orders. Business as  
usual.

KEAN

Where is he?

VALDEZ

Doing his same tired act.

Valdez nods to the TELEVISION:

**INT. TELEVISION STUDIO, SAIGON - SAME TIME**

Ambassador Martin, looking pale and dyspeptic from a bout of pneumonia, puts on a brave face for the cameras as he addresses an INTERVIEWER's questions.

MARTIN

I want to assure you. We are not  
leaving. Come to my house.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
You'll see my wife and I haven't  
moved a stick of furniture.

INTERVIEWER  
Then why did your Congress not  
approve additional money for our  
country last week?

MARTIN  
It's true, the \$700 million aid  
package was defeated. But President  
Ford will be asking for \$1.2  
billion next fiscal year.

**INT. REC ROOM, CHANCERY - CONTINUOUS**

KEAN  
"Next year?"

VALDEZ  
(unfazed)  
My shift calendar doesn't go beyond  
next week.

**INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS**

INTERVIEWER  
And what of the rumors that  
important Vietnamese are being  
evacuated on American planes.

MARTIN  
No Vietnamese are being allowed to  
leave the country with the  
exception of American spouses and  
their dependents. That's all.

**INT. REC ROOM, CHANCERY - CONTINUOUS**

VALDEZ  
Glad you're taking over, to be  
honest. I can't get through to the  
man.

**INT. WAITING AREA, MARTIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Kean ENTERS. Approaches **SECRETARY**.

KEAN  
Captain Jim Kean to see the  
Ambassador.  
(waving his orders)  
I have orders to serve under his  
command.

MARTIN'S SECRETARY  
(sizing him up)  
He's not in.

KEAN  
Light's on.

MARTIN'S SECRETARY  
You want to make me say it, I'll  
say it. He's not in for you.

KEAN  
I'm Commanding Officer of the  
Marine Security Guard Battalion and  
Ground Support Force Commander  
Southeast Asia.

She's not particularly impressed.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
(sheepish)  
Soon to be Major.

She sighs, lowers her eyes. Returns to her paperwork. Nods  
towards door marked: **AMBASSADOR GRAHAM MARTIN**.

**MARTIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Martin listens to a SPEECH on the radio at low volume. Desk  
littered with cables, coming and going.

KNOCK on door. He ignores it. Kean eventually opens and walks  
in.

KEAN  
Captain Jim Kean.

MARTIN  
(without looking)  
I didn't call you, Captain.

KEAN  
I thought to report as soon as  
possible.

He hands ORDERS to Martin, who drops them in an inbox without  
a glance. Beside the inbox is a framed MEMORIAL PHOTOGRAPH of  
a YOUNG MAN.

Martin looks at Kean for the first time.

MARTIN  
I mean, I didn't call you to  
Saigon.

KEAN

Fifty Marines against the entire  
North Vietnamese Army didn't strike  
me as a fair fight.

MARTIN

(sizing him up)

And you're the one man who can  
balance the scales?

Kean is tempted to say 'yes', but deflects:

KEAN

More like, you can use all the help  
you can get.

MARTIN

I've met my share of military men  
looking for a fight. We don't need  
heroes, Captain. We need diplomacy.  
Understood?

KEAN

Yes, sir.

MARTIN

That means discretion. Not  
headlines. My job, and yours by  
extension, is to resolve things  
quietly. So all you need to know is  
that I've got the situation well in  
hand. And all I need to know is  
that you're not going to stir up  
trouble and you can follow orders.

Martin continues staring at him, demanding a response:

KEAN

Yes, sir.

**INT. SITUATION ROOM, CHANCERY - DAY**

Kean addresses a room full of **MARINES**; individuals we'll get  
to know but for now they feel to us (and to Kean) like a  
single immutable entity. They eye Kean with guarded interest.

VALDEZ

Everyone's here, Major.

KEAN

Thank you, Sargent. It's good to be  
back in Saigon. I'm glad to see the  
embassy in--

A Marine, **BENNINGTON**, raises his hand. Kean nods.

BENNINGTON

We're getting conflicting reports about the fighting up north. Can you fill us in?

KEAN

The Ambassador's military advisor provides you with a daily threat assessment. I refer you to that.

The deflection has the opposite effect Kean hopes, and the floodgates open. Marines barrage Kean with questions:

BAUER

There's a rumor the VC's have infiltrated the White Mice.

NORMAN

Is Bien Tho under attack?

SCHLAGER

If Saigon falls, what are the contingency plan?

FRAIN

What's the sitrep, Major? Just level with us.

Kean can feel all eyes upon him. He dares not meet their collective gaze:

KEAN

We need to focus. Our primary responsibility is to protect the Ambassador and his operations. So let's go over your current protocols. Sargent?

Valdez shares the men's disappointment. Hesitates briefly before complying:

VALDEZ

Yes, sir, Major--

SCHLAGER

(dismayed)

It's Captain Kean.

(to Kean)

Isn't that right, sir?

KEAN

That's correct. Carry on, Sargent.

VALDEZ

Twelve men are assigned to  
Ambassador Martin's personal  
detail...

As Valdez continues, Kean allows himself to scan his  
Marines... and sees the disappointment on each and every  
face.

**INT. HALLWAY, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

Gevers helps Kean set up a COT.

GEVERS

We weren't expecting you, sir. No  
room at the inn, as it were. But we  
can displace one of the Privates.

Kean keeps making up his bed.

GEVERS (CONT'D)

Wouldn't you be more comfortable at  
a hotel, sir?

KEAN

I'm not wasting our limited time  
and resources shuttling to the  
Colonial and back.

GEVERS

Can I at least help you unpack?

Kean pulls out his wallet and slips it under the pillow.

KEAN

Too late.

**LATER**

Kean sleeps uncomfortably on the cot and in his golf clothes.  
Tossing. Cheek to pillow, he feels the lump beneath.

He sits up. Reaches for the wallet underneath. Pulls out a  
PHOTO of Rosanne.

**COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - MINUTES LATER**

Kean stands by as Norman puts through a call.

Out the window, Kean spots a familiar face:

**EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME TIME**

**DA NANG CONSULATE GENERAL AL FRANCIS** waits with a suitcase.

**INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - NIGHT**

Kean heads for the door.

KEAN  
(to Norman)  
Never mind.

**INT. KEAN HOME, HONG KONG - NIGHT**

Rosanne runs to the PHONE. PAPERS in her hand.

ROSANNE  
Jim?

But the line is dead.

ROSANNE (CONT'D)  
Hello?

She hangs up. Key words on the papers in her hand can be read: "**Blood Work**" and "**Pregnant**".

**EXT. PARKING LOT, US EMBASSY - NIGHT**

Francis steps into the back of car. An upbeat Mung behind the wheel.

KEAN (O.S.)  
Al--

Francis turns, drunkenly surprised to see a friendly face.

FRANCIS  
Jim. Didn't know you were in  
Saigon.

KEAN  
You know me and burning buildings.

FRANCIS  
Then you get what a shit show this  
is.

KEAN  
Don't worry. We'll get ours home.

FRANCIS  
Christ, Martin hasn't told you?  
(shaking head)  
Of course not. The intelligence  
reports from Da Nang since evac  
tell the whole story.  
(MORE)

FRANCIS (CONT'D)  
Civilians slaughtered by the  
thousands for working with us. Told  
the Ambassador in no uncertain  
terms: Saigon's gonna be far worse.

KEAN  
What did Martin say?

FRANCIS  
Said I must be mentally exhausted.  
Ordered me stateside. That son-of-a-  
bitch won't let anyone tell him  
what to do. Which would be fine  
only he's not living in reality.

Francis stumbles getting in to the car.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)  
(RE: stumble)  
You missed one helluva going away  
party.

Kean closes the car door for him. Hands another cigarette to  
a grateful Mung.

KEAN  
(to Mung)  
Makes sure he gets on that plane.

Mung gives him a terrible salute, starts the engine...

FRANCIS  
Cable room. Sixth floor.

...and drives out the gate.

**INT. HALL, SIXTH FLOOR, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

Kean tries the door marked: CABLE ROOM. Locked.

**WAITING AREA, MARTIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Kean rummages through the Secretary's drawers. Finds a KEY  
RING.

**TIGHT ON:** Kean's hand, key in lock. Twist and CLICK.

**INT. CABLE ROOM - NIGHT**

Kean, seated, sifts through INTELLIGENCE DOCUMENTS on Da  
Nang. PHOTOS and first-hand accounts of the atrocities:  
summary executions, massive desertions and labor camp round-  
ups.

The full force of the human damage hits him hard.

**INT. MARTIN'S STUDY, AMBASSADOR'S HOME - NIGHT**

Martin listens intently to RADIO, where a man gives a speech in Vietnamese to occasional APPLAUSE.

Martin's Wife leads Kean inside. Kean waits until she's retreated before

THWACK.

Kean drops the large folder on Martin's desk.

KEAN

This is the list of valued human assets in Da Nang considered at-risk in the event of an NVA occupation.

As Kean turns pages, one in three is crossed out with a fresh RED X.

KEAN (CONT'D)

You can see what's transpired in only a week.

(tapping file)

That's Da Nang. One notebook. Saigon is a room of filing cabinets filled with names. 20,000 in all. Men and women who helped the U.S. fight the war. Add their families and we're looking at 100,000 people who, even now, count on our protection from summary execution or rehabilitation camps.

MARTIN

Do you have a point, Captain Kean?

KEAN

I'd like to go over evacuation procedures for these folks.

MARTIN

That won't be necessary.

KEAN

We can't just leave them behind when the time comes.

MARTIN

We won't leave them behind.

KEAN  
Sir?

MARTIN  
Because we won't be evacuating.

Kean studies Martin: "The man's serious."

KEAN  
I've been reading Al Francis' intelligence reports. 100,000 ARVN troops surrendered when their officers cut and ran. The country's second largest city fell in a day.

MARTIN  
I'm well aware of recent events.

KEAN  
Then you understand it's happening, sir. The entire country will belong to the North.

MARTIN  
That is your considered opinion, is it, after a day in-country?

KEAN  
No. That was my opinion after ten minutes. These files only confirmed it.

Martin steadies his gaze on Kean.

MARTIN  
Saigon will never fall.

KEAN  
With all due respect, that's only your opinion.

MARTIN  
No, it's my responsibility. Washington trusts me to make the right call, and I intend to stand my ground. Listen to this:

Martin turns up the radio again. An impassioned Viet voice belonging to GENERAL KHIEM fills the room.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
That's General Khiem. The Silver Tiger. He's admonishing all his countrymen who would turn tail.

Martin listens. Likes what he hears. Turns down the radio again.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

He will hold the Mekong Delta with 200,000 American-trained troops armed with American-made weapons. And if our Communist neighbors to the north still don't get the message, we have 80 SAC B-52s at Utapao Air Base, Thailand to say it louder. They can be flying missions over Hanoi in 12 hours.

Kean struggles to keep his control: "The man has lost his mind."

KEAN

What if Thieu fails to deliver? We made promises to protect these people.

MARTIN

Your job, the primary job of all Marines here is to protect me.

KEAN

Yes, sir, but--

MARTIN

As far as I'm concerned that means helping me do my job, which is to save the country of South Vietnam. To that end, keep your opinions to yourself. There's no need to raise the alarm and it's vitally important we set an example for the remaining Americans and the rest of the city. So it's business as usual. That's an order.

**EXT. AMBASSADOR'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER**

Kean shuts the door behind him. Leans back against it in disbelief: "What the hell just happened in there?"

**EXT. RED LIGHT DISTRICT - ESTABLISHING**

**INT. BAR, RED LIGHT DISTRICT - NIGHT**

Kean, Valdez and **MAY LI**, Valdez's Girlfriend, sit at a table while a DOZEN MARINES flirt, drink and joke nearby, occasionally throwing a skeptical eye in Kean's direction.

KEAN

I get the diplomat thing, but I  
think Martin actually believes what  
he's saying.

VALDEZ

That's the Ambassador.

KEAN

He's making a tough job tougher.

VALDEZ

A job you volunteered for,  
remember?

KEAN

That's me. The good soldier.

VALDEZ

That just might be your problem,  
right there.

Valdez doesn't know how right he is. The point hangs in the air until a WAITER comes over with a DRINK for Kean.

KEAN

I've got one already.

WAITER

It's from your men.

Kean eyes the straw-colored drink with suspicion.

KEAN

What is it?

WAITER

They say it is an Arnold Palmer?

The Marines at the bar all LAUGH. Some mime golf swings. Point to Kean's clothes. Kean puts on a smile, raises the glass to them, but knows he doesn't have their respect yet.

VALDEZ

They figured you were here to make this a military operation. They'll get over it.

Kean consider his Marines more seriously.

KEAN

What're we working with?

VALDEZ  
I'll introduce you.

KEAN  
No time for all that. I can gauge  
enough from a nickname. Every  
Marine's got one.

Valdez points out each guy:

VALDEZ  
(off **STEVE SCHULLER**)  
Steve Schuller. Broke every  
Physical Training score we had. For  
that, he's called PT Monster.

It's obvious why. Schuller is country strong.

VALDEZ (CONT'D)  
(off **BOBBY FRAIN**)  
Frain is the Body Beautiful.

The good-looking Frain, with a physique to match, flirts  
effortlessly with the best LOCAL TALENT.

MAY LI  
(teasing/to Valdez)  
That's what I would call him.

Valdez gives her a soft elbow to the ribs in return.

VALDEZ  
(off **BENNINGTON**)  
Bennington's Black Market.  
Resourceful as all hell.  
(off **BAUER**)  
Bauer's Mr. Clean. Stick Ass when  
he's not around.  
(off **SULLIVAN**)  
Sully. Mike Sullivan. He's Rock  
Steady. I gave him that one.

KEAN  
What do they call you, Top?

VALDEZ  
Just Top.

MAY LI  
What is wrong with Top?

VALDEZ  
(to May Li)  
Every NCOIC's called Top, baby.

KEAN

With a punch line like Juan Valdez?  
 (off Valdez's  
 shrug/encouraging)  
 No, it's good. Means they respect  
 you. And the cherry boys?

Kean refers to a pair of fresh-faced 19-year olds: **JUDGE** and **MCMAHON**, doing their best to catch up on the jokes flying around them.

VALDEZ

Judge and McMahon? No time. Just  
 arrived in-country a few days ago.  
 I'm stationing them at the airport.  
 Simple checkpoint stuff.

KEAN

Why in hell is GenCom still drawing  
 tags for here, anyway?

VALDEZ

Replacements. Had to send home the  
 four Marines from the Da Nang  
 consulate. Night terrors.

They go silent, thoughts turning to the same shit coming to Saigon. May Li rises to end the tension.

MAY LI

Another round?

As she heads to the bar:

KEAN

She should get out of Saigon. But,  
 hey, it's not my place.

VALDEZ

Funny, she told me the same thing.  
 (troubled)  
 Won't leave without her parents.  
 She's stubborn and proud, like the  
 whole damn country. North and  
 south.

**EXT. TARMAC, SAM PAT AFB - NIGHT**

Silver-haired **SOUTH VIETNAMESE GENERAL KHIEM** arrives by Jeep.

He moves toward a waiting helicopter. It takes eight men to carry four bags. Two men to a bag.

An eager **AIR FORCE PILOT** heads across the tarmac to fly the helo. He is stopped by **PILOT BUI**, a dashing, magnetic figure wearing a silk aviator's scarf.

PILOT BUI  
*I will escort General Khiem.*

One bag hits a pole and makes a METALLIC CLUNK. Bag rips open to reveal GOLD BARS.

AIR FORCE PILOT  
*We all want the reward and a place  
 on an American ship.*

PILOT BUI  
*Not me. I will come back.*

AIR FORCE PILOT  
 (skeptical)  
*Yeah? How do we know?*

PILOT BUI  
*Because today South Vietnam needs  
 pilots not gold.*

With that, Pilot Bui hops into the cockpit.

**EXT. BAR, RED LIGHT DISTRICT, SAIGON - NIGHT**

The Marines, their female Companions and May Li stumble out.

Their LAUGHTER drowned out when a group formation of HU-1 "Huey" Helicopters passes low overhead.

FRAIN  
 What the hell?

BENNINGTON  
 That's the Silver Tiger. General Khiem. Bugging out. Heard it from some DAO boys inside.

Kean watches the helos disappear to the east, then pulls Valdez aside.

KEAN  
 The North is coming, whether the Ambassador believes it or not.  
 Inform the men to be in the situation room at 0700.

**INT. SITUATION ROOM, CHANCERY, US EMBASSY - DAY**

The Marines settle, some gingerly/hung-over, into chairs.

KEAN

Yesterday, you asked me several questions regarding the NVA and South Vietnam's defensive preparedness. Unfortunately, and I'm relaying the Ambassador's instructions: I am not to provide you with my personal view of the military situation facing us.

That same skeptical look from the Marines. Kean pauses, makes a mental deal with himself to cross the Rubicon, then LOCKS THE DOOR and plunges in:

KEAN (CONT'D)

So I've asked Frank Sneed to give you the SitRep. His opinion. Not mine.

The Marines perk up.

KEAN (CONT'D)

You might have seen Frank haunting the corridors of the CIA floor-- (deliberate "mistake") I mean the cultural attache floor.

Warming to Kean, the Marines LAUGH. So does **FRANK SNEPP**, a crew-cut Agency veteran.

SNEPP

(relaxed)

Embassy's a cozy place. I don't think I'm fooling anybody. Howdy gents.

Sneed uses a MAP to reinforce his comments. Drawings indicate change in North Vietnamese positions over the past 45 days.

SNEPP (CONT'D)

Charlie was gearing up for a two year campaign. But victories have come so fast, he's looking to take Saigon before monsoon season.

Sneed spots a sheepish Private Judge start to raise his hand.

SNEPP (CONT'D)

(answering)

That's a week from now. Tops.

Judge lowers his hand.

**EXT. OUTSIDE SAIGON - DAY**

COLUMNS of NVA Divisions on the move.

SNEPP (V.O.)

A column of least ten, maybe fifteen, NVA divisions are fifty miles north. Between 100,000 and 150,000 professional, battle-hardened soldiers. They outnumber the ARVN three to one.

BRIDGE in the far distance. This will be our benchmark for NVA's progress.

SNEPP (V.O.)

They're fanning out around the city. By the time they reach Vu Long bridge, they'll have Saigon in a stranglehold.

**INT. SITUATION ROOM, CHANCERY - CONTINUOUS**

SNEPP

Another thing, a significant number of VC cadres and NVA forward artillery observers have already infiltrated the city. Some have been apprehended wearing South Vietnamese army and police uniforms.

BAUER

What about this hammer-and-anvil strategy we've been hearing about?

Snepp flashes Kean a "What the hell?" look as Norman elaborates:

NORMAN

(naively hopeful)

That maybe Thieu let the NVA get this close so he could drop a few divisions behind their lines and crush them against the city's defenses.

Snepp can't suppress a LAUGH before recovering.

SNEPP

If Thieu had the resources, which he doesn't, he would have tried that in Da Nang. No. Saigon's going to fall.

Kean nods to Snepp in thanks then feels the room get quiet before he takes control:

KEAN

But before it does, we're going to be Marines.

There's general positive MURMURING among the Marines. This is what they've been wanting to hear.

KEAN (CONT'D)

That means getting as many at-risk Vietnamese out of here as possible.

Snepp takes the opportunity to unlock the door and EXIT.

KEAN (CONT'D)

I can't and won't make an order of this. So if anyone has a problem, feel free to speak up.

A brief silence before skeptical Schlager pipes up:

SCHLAGER

No, sir, Major. No problems.

With everyone on the same page, the mood changes: "Let's get down to work."

KEAN

Evacuation plans were drawn up two years ago. Code name Flash Storm. The name has since been compromised and the situation on the ground, as demonstrated by the chaos in Da Nang requires a complete re-thinking.

Kean nods to Valdez, who places an overlay on the MAP to show evacuation plans.

KEAN (CONT'D)

As before, signal will go out on Armed Forces Radio. But the new plan is code named Operation Frequent Wind.

SCHULLER

The plan must really stink.

Schuller, the PT Monster, enjoys getting a few SNORTS of laughter from his fellow Marines.

**INT. STAIRWELL, CHANCERY - SAME TIME**

Martin passes Snepp on Fourth Floor landing.

MARTIN

Fourth floor isn't your usual haunt.

SNEPP

Howdy, Graham. Don't tell anyone but spooks have a lousy sense of direction.

Snepp flashes a sheepish grin and heads upstairs. Martin looks down the fourth floor hallway from where Snepp has come...

**INT. SITUATION ROOM - SAME TIME**

KEAN

The operation includes four options. Option One involves commercial aircraft, so that's now out. Two is a continuation of fixed-wing evac from Tan Son Nhut using military C-141 and C-130's only. Three involves a sea lift from the Port of Saigon but after the tragedy on the Da Nang docks, that's a non-starter.

BENNINGTON

You said four options, Major?

KEAN

Option Four is a helicopter lift from the Airport.

Sounds of SKEPTICISM flood the room.

MARINES

Never gonna happen./C'mon, Major./Helos?/etc.

SCHULLER

Might as well empty a tub with a thimble.

Kean displays a MAP on wall that explains Option Four.

KEAN

We'll stage in the World Airways hangar, that's still in good shape.

(MORE)

KEAN (CONT'D)

Then shuttle over to the tennis courts where we can get three Sea Stallions landing at the same time. Helos will rendez-vous with the 7th Fleet, which has already taken up position in the South China Sea, 40 miles off Vung Tau. Embassy personnel will be short-hopped to the airport by birds landing in the parking lot. Any questions?

MARTIN (O.S.)

I can think of a couple.

Kean pivots to see Martin in the doorway. Kean steps more directly between Martin and the incriminating map.

KEAN

Just going over some logistics, sir. Familiarizing myself with operations.

Martin takes a good look around the room. Finally EXITS. Kean addresses his men again:

KEAN (CONT'D)

Put your affairs in order...  
(quietly/off Martin/door)  
...then back here for business.

**INT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - DAY**

Duane Gevers gets married to his SWEETHEART.

**INT. BAR/BROTHEL, RED LIGHT DISTRICT - DAY**

Bobby Frain rounds up PROSTITUTES, including some from the previous evening.

FRAIN

Let's go ladies. Much as it pains me to see you go, the Commies won't treat you with the same affection.

PROSTITUTE #1

How will we live in America?

FRAIN

You'll do just fine. Trust me.

Some of the Prostitutes want to stay. There's a tug-of-war between the two groups, ENTREATIES and a lot of TEARS but Frain eventually leads the evacuating ladies downstairs and outside.

**EXT. BROTHEL - CONTINUOUS**

Frain calls to NGUYEN, the tailor.

FRAIN

You, too, Nguyen. Grab some needle  
and thread. I'm gonna need suits  
stateside, too.

Everybody piles into a MINIBUS. Those staying behind wave and cry.

**EXT. TAN SON NHUT AIRPORT - DAY**

Frain pulls up in the Minibus "brothel on wheels".

Thousands of Vietnamese join the Americans and Third-Party Nationals trying to leave.

US Air Force Cargo Planes land empty and take off full.

**INT. HANGAR, TAN SON NHUT AIRPORT - DAY**

Mike Sullivan waits in a long and chaotic line with his IRANIAN WIFE and their 4 year-old DAUGHTER.

Sullivan checks his watch. Anxious.

SULLIVAN

I've gotta get back to the Embassy.  
(off his Wife's anxiety)  
We'll try again tomorrow.

At the other end of the line, Private Judge fights to keep order as he processes Vietnamese for transport. He spots Sullivan leaving.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Sullivan and his family EXITING.

JUDGE (O.S.)  
There you are!

Sullivan turns to see Private Judge. Judge grabs Sullivan's Wife's suitcase.

JUDGE (CONT'D)  
The plane's waiting.

**PROCESSING DESK**

Judge quickly stamps some papers.

Sullivan and his Wife kiss and embrace. Not wanting to say good-bye.

Judge gives the deeply-moved Sullivan a shy smile then personally walks Sullivan's Wife to the next plane waiting to take off, carrying their daughter on his shoulders.

**INT./EXT. US EMBASSY - DAY**

Kean and Valdez walk the perimeter, instructing Bauer and Bennington where to position machine guns nests.

**EXT. ROOFTOP, CHANCERY**

Schuller stokes an INCINERATOR as Gevers grabs shovelfuls of paperwork from huge piles of Embassy FILES.

GEVERS

Gotta be twenty years of files to destroy before Charlie gets here.

SCHULLER

(mock solemn oath)

No name left behind.

Harder to burn objects are placed into chemical burn cans.

**INT. MARTIN'S OFFICE, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

Martin on satellite phone...

**INTERCUT WITH:**

**INT. KISSINGER'S OFFICE, STATE DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON - DAY**

...with Kissinger.

MARTIN

You assured President Thieu at the time of the accords -- and I have subsequently reiterated the promise on several occasions -- that we would re-commence bombing runs over Hanoi the moment North Vietnam violated the peace terms. We are well beyond that, Henry.

KISSINGER

That was Nixon's promise. President Ford has taken a different approach.

MARTIN

But if he understood the situation  
here--

KISSINGER

The President will not be asking  
Congress to dust off Operation  
Linebacker.

MARTIN

(biting hard)

I was hoping for better news.

KISSINGER

This is where your skills come in,  
Mr. Ambassador. A diplomatic  
solution remains the best possible  
outcome.

MARTIN

There is thought that the Soviets  
can use their influence in Hanoi to  
rein in General Dho. I'll make  
enquiries through the French  
Ambassador.

KISSINGER

God's speed, Graham. The President  
and I are counting on you to avoid  
the embarrassment of a total pull  
out.

The muted CLICK of an overseas disconnection.

Martin lapses into COUGHING until he's distracted by  
COMMOTION outside his window, Martin can see:

**EXT. PARKING LOT, US EMBASSY - DAY**

Kean oversees Marines gathered around the huge TAMARIND TREE. Schuller CHOPS away with an axe. He makes little impression on the ten-foot diameter trunk.

SCHULLER

Shit.

KEAN

If we need to shuttle personnel to  
the airport by helo, this is our  
only landing zone.

Martin, agitated, EXITS the Chancery now using a CANE. Moves as quickly as his frail body allows. Grabs the AXE from Schuller's hand and throws it to the ground.

MARTIN  
What's all this?

KEAN  
(quick to lie)  
Need to keep your transport options open, sir.

Martin suspects there's more going on. Makes a gut call:

MARTIN  
The tree stays. The people of Saigon see us take down this tree, it will be seen as a sign of weakness.

KEAN  
We're past symbols, sir.

MARTIN  
Symbols always matter. The flag. The eagle. And this tree. It's a symbol of American strength. Of commitment to the people. Take away this tree, you might as well remove the flag. The people of Saigon will notice and there will be widespread panic.

Kean and his Men grow uncomfortable as Martin loses himself to bombast.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
Anyone touches that tree, they will be court-martialed.

**EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF SAIGON - NIGHT**

North Vietnamese soldiers make camp. Bringing forward long-range artillery guns and mortars.

**INT. LOCK ROOM, EMBASSY - NIGHT**

Schuller and Frain ENTER and make for a PILE of VIETNAMESE CURRENCY.

FRAIN  
You sure about this?

SCHULLER  
It's not stealing, it's investing in the local economy.  
(off Frain's look)  
(MORE)

SCHULLER (CONT'D)

Okay, it's stealing... but  
nobody'll ever know.

Frain accepts this. Starts grabbing piasters.

**EXT. LOCK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Gevers walks by as Frain and Schuller EXIT, stuffing their pockets with the CASH.

GEVERS

(Vietnamese)

*I don't see a thing.*

**INT. BAR, RED LIGHT DISTRICT - NIGHT**

Schuller and Frain are far-gone wasted. LOCAL GIRLS on their lap. They lavish piasters on everyone until their pockets are empty.

First to notice are the Girls, who abruptly drop their attention. Head off for richer prospects.

SCHULLER

Guess that's it.

**EXT. PARKING LOT, US EMBASSY - NIGHT**

Schuller and Frain pass the tamarind tree. They both look at the tree, and then each other.

Schuller finds the axe, where Martin left it. Goes to the back of the tree, shielded from Martin's windows, and takes a drunken WHACK.

SCHULLER

That's for those bow ties and your  
wife's little dog.

Frain grabs the axe. WHACK.

FRAIN

That's for not letting me date your  
daughter.

WHACK.

FRAIN (CONT'D)

And that's for not letting me date  
the other one.

They look at the tree. Still no progress.

SCHULLER  
C'mon. We've got detail.

**INT. LIVING ROOM, AMBASSADOR'S HOUSE, SAIGON - NIGHT**

An anxious, tight-mouthed Martin reaches into a cabinet. Grabs a bottle of wine. Thinks better of it and pulls out a SPECIAL BOTTLE, wrapped in cloth.

Through a slightly open door, **MARTIN'S WIFE** packs and holds back tears. Her SHIH TZU under her feet.

Martin puts on his "game face" turns to face the **FRENCH AMBASSADOR**

MARTIN  
(French)  
*I have a grave favor to ask,  
Jacques.*  
(English)  
I need you to approach the Soviets.

Martin's Wife knows her cue to exit. She sweeps up the Shih Tzu in her arms and EXITS.

**INT. HALLWAY, CHANCERY, US EMBASSY - 0400 HOURS**

Silence. Kean sleeps on his cot.

The jarring RUMBLE of distant ROCKET ATTACKS jolts him awake.

**EXT. ROOFTOP, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

Burn Squad. Sullivan and Gevers already stare to the northwest, shovels in hand, as Kean ENTERS from the fire stairs.

Together they witness the onset of massive MORTAR and ROCKET BOMBING of Tan Son Nhut Airport. Five miles away.

KEAN  
It's started.

SULLIVAN  
Who we got over there?

Sullivan turns for an answer. But Kean is already GONE.

**INT./EXT. TAN SON NHUT AIRPORT - SAME TIME**

Violent EXPLOSIONS rip through hangars and fuel depots amid the all-night evacuation.

Mortar rounds blast deep CRATERS in the runways. Hundreds of waiting Vietnamese evacuees run for cover of concrete bunkers.

Kean's senior posted Marine, Bauer aka "Mr. Clean", frantically wraps his wire-rim glasses around his ears and screams into his radio:

BAUER  
("incoming!")  
Whiskey Joe! Whiskey Joe!

RADIOMAN  
Took a hit to the staging center!  
We've got casualties!

Bauer adjusts to the chaos, readying his M-16:

BAUER  
(into radio)  
We've got men on the wire...

Another ROCKET hits the roof of a hangar. Splintering wood and corrugated metal.

Bauer runs through smoke-filled air, towards the perimeter of the airport.

#### **CHECKPOINT #1**

Bauer finds Corporal Lamar Holmes splayed on the ground, clutching his knee and bleeding from his head.

BAUER  
Holmes, can you walk? Holmes?!

Holmes just stares blankly. Shell-shocked.

Another BLAST and a FIREBALL as the fuel tank ruptures on an American C-130 plane. Burning oil and debris litter the nearby runway.

The wall of fire lights the scene in front of Bauer. And his heart jumps into his throat as he stares towards:

#### **CHECKPOINT #2**

Now nothing more than a hole in the ground.

Bauer starts tearing at twisted chain link and sheet metal. He spots a pristine MARINE BOOT... holding a leg severed at the shin. Nearby, a singed metal flak jacket burned into a torso with no limbs.

Nearby exploding BULLET ROUNDS send Bauer belly-first to the dirt. What he thought was enemy fire come from a burning ammo dump.

But from his prone position, he spots PRIVATE JUDGE staring back. Lifeless face drained of blood.

**TAN SON NHUT AIRPORT - 0500 HOURS**

Kean jumps from an Embassy vehicle driven by his driver, Mung.

AIRPORT MARINE  
We're two short.

KEAN  
Do a roll call and--

Bauer approaches.

BAUER  
Don't bother. It's Judge and McMahon.

KEAN  
Jesus. The newbies.

A silence fills the space.

Kean turns to make a quick, professional scan of the situation.

A final cargo plane makes a desperate attempt to take off amid the continuing rocket attack. It gets hit; wreckage further blocking the cratered runways.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
Get the Ambassador on the horn.

Kean watches as 100 yards away, across the tarmac, SOUTH VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE OFFICERS commandeer Huey helicopters at gunpoint.

Communications Marine brings Kean a crank phone.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
(grabbing phone)  
Sir. It's no longer possible to fly fixed-wing aircraft.

**INTERCUT WITH:**

**INT. AMBASSADOR'S HOME - DAY**

Martin puts on his boots. Phone cradled to his chin.

MARTIN

Don't give me a conclusion,  
Captain. Just an assessment.

KEAN

We've got cargo planes destroyed on  
the tarmac. Oil fires. And incoming  
mortar rounds. The airport's a shit  
storm.

MARTIN

I better see for myself.

KEAN

The situation's self-evident, and  
leaving the embassy at this time is  
more risk than--

MARTIN

Not a word of this to anyone. I'm  
on my way.

Kean hears Martin CLICK off. CURSES under his breath.

**EXT. STREETS, SAIGON - DAY**

Martin driven in his armor plated Chevrolet Impala.

Three Marines in the car, including Bennington, stare out  
their windows. Fingers on triggers.

**EXT. TAN SON NHUT AIRPORT - 0700 HOURS**

Martin ARRIVES, crosses paths with the BODY BAGS holding  
Judge and McMahon. He's quickly ushered inside:

**INT. DEFENSE ATTACHE OPERATIONS HQ - CONTINUOUS**

Upstairs. With a wide view of the airport. The light is  
better now. Kean can see the full extent of the smoldering  
damage.

Martin, escorted by Bennington, joins him.

MARTIN

(anxious)

Mrs. Martin and Nit Noy?

Kean looks to Bennington: "Nit Noy?"

BENNINGTON  
Mrs. Martin's shih tzu.

Kean bites his lip.

BAUER  
(overhearing)  
They got out safely an hour ago,  
sir.

They all watch one brave South Vietnamese AIR FORCE PLANE circle the airport, laying down protective fire against advanced NVA positions.

MARTIN  
Well, we still control the airport.

KEAN  
The runways are unusable.

MARTIN  
Not once you clear that debris.

KEAN  
That'll only invite another mortar attack.

MARTIN  
But can you do it?

KEAN  
("Yes, but...")  
Frequent Wind. Call it, sir.

Martin seems to be wavering... But they're disrupted by a SQUAWK.

NORMAN (O.S.)  
(on squawk box)  
I've got the Secretary of State for the Ambassador.

MARTIN  
(annoyed/pivoting)  
Your orders were to talk to no one.

KEAN  
("not my fault")  
CoC picks up our chatter.

MARTIN  
(to Norman/into mic)  
Patch him through.  
(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
(into mic)  
Henry.

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. KISSINGER'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON DC - DAY**

Kissinger nods to his Secretary, who shuts his door.

KISSINGER  
Graham. What's going on? I  
understand the airport's been  
attacked.

MARTIN  
(non-committal)  
All is calm at present.

KISSINGER  
(careful)  
I rely entirely on your assessment  
of the situation. If you need to  
call for Frequent Wind, then I will  
accept this distressing news. But  
understand this: the win here is  
the appearance of an orderly  
withdrawal of non-essential  
personnel, and the flag still  
flying over the embassy.

MARTIN  
(into mic/looking at Kean)  
If the runway can be re-opened, my  
men can do it.

Martin hangs up. Kean has his orders. He doesn't like it. But  
there it is.

KEAN  
(to Bauer and Bennington)  
Come with me.

**EXT. GATES, US EMBASSY - 0800 HOURS**

A CROWD has already started to gather. Schuller and Schlager  
eyeball them warily.

Valdez comes over.

VALDEZ  
We've gotta keep the embassy  
screwed down tight. Anyone gets  
in's just another we gotta get out  
again.

SCHULLER  
 (to crowd)  
 Go home. Closed. Closed.

But few in the Crowd move off.

**EXT. OUTSIDE CONTROL TOWER, AIRPORT - DAY**

Kean does his best to attempt clearing the debris. A group of Marines work fire hoses attempting to put out the fiery cargo plane.

Kean gets behind the wheel of a truck. Joins others to push smaller vehicles off the runway.

But SNIPER FIRE opens up from several different positions. Shoots holes in Kean's vehicle. All the drivers flop to the ground, roll under their trucks for safety.

Kean locates the source of some of the shots: an NVA sniper in an advanced position atop one of the neighboring roofs.

Kean uses hand signals to position a Marine Sharpshooter. Then Kean exposes himself, opening fire on the Sniper's position, allowing the Marine Sharpshooter to make a clean hit.

KEAN  
 Let's get back to it.

Kean is the first back behind the wheel of his truck. The others follow suit. One eye on the nearby buildings.

**EXT. FRONT GATES, US EMBASSY - DAY**

Martin returns. Miffed to find the gates closed. The Crowd has increased to several hundred Vietnamese. Some carry suitcases full of possessions.

Martin checks his watch: frowns.

As the gates open for the Impala, Martin taps the Driver on the shoulder with his cane:

MARTIN  
 Stop.

Martin rolls down his window and addresses Schuller:

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
 What's going on?

SCHULLER  
 Top's orders.

MARTIN  
Nonsense. It's just another  
Thursday.

Schuller eyes the large, restless Crowd.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
And put the rifle away. Calm is  
contagious.

SCHULLER  
Yes, sir.

Martin's Impala drives on inside. Schuller and Schlager exchange a look. They keep the gate open and signal the Crowd to come forward.

The Crowd doesn't need to be told twice, as they push inside quickly past the Marines.

**EXT. AIRPORT - DAY**

Kean assesses the scene: smoke rises from the last plane fire finally extinguished. The final vehicle has been pushed off the runway.

KEAN  
Well, that's one clear.

BAUER  
Still pretty rutted.

KEAN  
Let's scrounge some sheet metal or  
plywood. Lay 'em across. Best we  
can do under the--

KABOOM! A new barrage of very accurate MORTAR FIRE rains down. Every ducks for cover.

It's over nearly as fast as it begun. But a fresh round of burning debris and deeper holes have crippled the runway.

Kean surveys the damage: all his work has been erased.

**EXT. AIRPORT PERIMETER - DAY**

Mung practices blowing smoke rings. Jumps into "business mode" when he sees Kean approaching.

KEAN  
We're heading back.

**EXT. STREETS, SAIGON - MORNING**

Mung drives Kean, Bennington and Bauer. They notice the general restlessness and angry stares, each preferring not to mention it out loud.

As they pass a Western Hotel, they spot an American Photojournalist, **JOHN BEINECKE**, laden with cameras, and a VIETNAMESE ASSISTANT flagging them down.

Mung stops.

KEAN  
Where you headed?

BEINECKE  
We're bugging out. Couple of the AP guys picked up shortwave chatter from the airport.

KEAN  
Then you should know that's not an option. Hop in.

As the two men get in:

BEINECKE  
Where are the vans? This is supposed to be an evac pick-up site.

KEAN  
We're not evacuating.

Beinecke has a hard time processing this.

BEINECKE  
( "Am I missing something?")  
The city's under attack.

**INT. EMBASSY VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS**

As Mung drives on.

BEINECKE  
We need to go by the Colonial? The AP guys'll be stranded for sure.

KEAN  
How many are there?

BEINECKE  
No more than three.

Kean sizes up the sedan. It's going to be cramped.

KEAN

Okay.

**EXT. COLONIAL HOTEL - MORNING**

Mung pulls up into a chaotic scene. The AMERICAN JOURNALISTS are being antagonized by a group of YOUNG VIETNAMESE. More Vietnamese Youths are looting nearby.

Mung stops the car. There are SIX Journalists. Three stuff inside the car. The other three stand on the old sedan's running boards.

But the RIOTERS surround the car. A few ROCKS strike the car. The windshield cracks.

Beinecke starts snapping photos. Kean knocks the camera down.

KEAN

You're not helping.

As the Rioters gain confidence and come closer, a NATIONAL POLICE OFFICER in white gloves and white helmet (one of the "White Mice" referred to in the sitrep meeting earlier) emerges from the crowd.

He DRAWS HIS GUN.

BEINECKE

Christ. We heard VC's had penetrated the White Mice...

But the White Mouse swings his gun on the Rioters.

WHITE MOUSE

(to Crowd)

*Stay back!*

(to Kean)

You go to Embassy?

KEAN

That's right.

WHITE MOUSE

You will not make it this way.

He jumps onto the car's running board.

WHITE MOUSE (CONT'D)

I take you.

**EXT. STREETS, SAIGON - MINUTES LATER**

The Embassy car makes slow progress along the streets, getting increasing attention from the local population.

**NARROW STREET**

Mung drives the over-stuffed car down a narrow street. Several vehicles pull up behind them, blocking their retreat. From all directions come another, larger ANGRY MOB.

They are trapped.

The White Mouse gets out of the car. Starts trying to reason with the Mob but, even with GUN DRAWN, it's clear there's no calming them down.

The Mob overruns the White Mouse and surrounds the car.

Some start grabbing at the Americans. Others rock the car. They notice Mung with them.

RIOTER  
(RE: Mung)  
*He works with the Americans! Even now!*

Rioters grab at Mung. Kean does his best to protect his driver but there are too many.

They pull Mung from Kean's grasp and out of the car. A GUNMAN produces a PISTOL.

PFFT. The Gunman shoots Mung in the back of the head. Dead.

The lifeless young Driver consumes Kean's vision.

Then the mob turns towards Kean and the Journalists. They rock the sedan. Grab the Americans. Yank Kean from the front seat. ROPES are thrown over lamp posts.

Then the REVVING of a nearby engine.

**FAR END OF BLOCK - CONTINUOUS**

The White Mouse has hot-wired an abandoned BUS. Leaning on the HORN he blasts into the crowd. Forcing them to scatter.

Kean helps Beinecke and the other Journalists get on board.

The White Mouse reverses the bus, tears down the narrow street clipping parked cars. BULLETS chasing them.

The bus SMASHES through the blockade of cars at the end of the block.

**MAIN STREET**

The White Mouse GRINDS into first gear. The bus lurches forward and away from the furious Mob.

**EXT. FRONT GATE, US EMBASSY - MORNING**

The banged-up bus drives through the gates.

Kean is first out the door. The grounds are already a quarter full with 1,000 Vietnamese and their belongings. More streaming through the gates.

Kean addresses Schuller:

KEAN  
Why's the gate open?

SCHULLER  
Ambassador's orders.

KEAN  
(off crowd)  
That makes them our responsibility now. And there's no getting them across town.

The White Mouse is the last out of the bus.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
Thank you. For everything.

WHITE MOUSE  
Of course, my friend.

KEAN  
Listen to me. There isn't much time. You need to get your family. Bring them back here right away. I'll make sure you get out.

WHITE MOUSE  
Thank you. But no. I can not do that.

KEAN  
You're a South Vietnamese police officer. The NVA will not hesitate to shoot you. Understand?

WHITE MOUSE  
I understand. But this is my home.

Impressed into silence, Kean can only watch as the White Mouse disappears into the crowd.

**INT. MARTIN'S OFFICE - 1100 HOURS**

Martin button-holed by his DEPUTY and Secretary.

SECRETARY  
You've received several cables from Washington.

DEPUTY  
I've run out of ways to stall the Vietnamese. They want to know our next move.

Kean ENTERS.

MARTIN  
If you're back that means the airport's re-opened.

KEAN  
It's pointless.

MARTIN  
I told you to--

KEAN  
Anyone plans on leaving Saigon, it's helos from there and helos from here. No more options. No more time.

MARTIN  
I need you to do your job. Isn't that what you came here to do?

Kean heads for the door. Shaking his head in dismay.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
One more thing: the two dead Marines.

KEAN  
( "They have names." )  
Judge and McMahon.

MARTIN

Not a word to HQ on the matter.  
They'll order our withdrawal and  
Frequent Wind will initiate by  
default.

KEAN

They have families.

MARTIN

And they'll be notified in good  
time. Right now, I need room to  
maneuver. And that means re-opening  
the airport.

Kean puts hand back on handle but can't turn the knob.  
Clearly conflicted. Then turns around. Defiant.

KEAN

I won't do this any longer.

MARTIN

Excuse me?

KEAN

I won't follow more orders that  
make the situation worse.

MARTIN

(to Secretary)

Give us a moment.

The Secretary heads back to her desk.

KEAN

(to Deputy)

You too.

Deputy looks to Martin, who nods wearily.

MARTIN

You will address me with deference.  
I am the United States Ambassador  
to South Vietnam.

KEAN

And I respect your authority, sir.  
I do. But not at the expense of  
reason or compassion. No longer.

MARTIN

You'll do your job or you'll be  
removed.

KEAN

Let me tell you about doing my job. On my second tour here, I was in charge of an artillery battery on Hill 712, above a village called Ah Luoc. Real strategic position. My job was to control the hill at all costs. When the VC attacked, which they did every couple weeks like clockwork, I cut them down. They'd arrive with wire tied tight around their biceps and above the knee, to slow the inevitable bleeding. But cut them down we did. And when we'd find a weapons cache in the village at our back, we did our best to find who was responsible. I did my job. And what I got was a box full of photos back home of former friends who are either dead or unwilling to talk to me. The conclusion I came to was I didn't do my job well enough. So, yeah, I came back for more. To get it right. But I'm tired of being a good Marine.

Kean goes to the window.

KEAN (CONT'D)

Look outside. Really look.

Martin finally does. Sees the rising fear and chaos among the gathered people.

KEAN (CONT'D)

We have lost. And now we are leaving.

Beyond the walls, a group South Vietnamese SOLDIERS strip off their uniforms and toss them away.

KEAN (CONT'D)

All we can do, the only thing left to do, is take as many of these people with us as possible.

Martin looks away from the window. Heads wearily for the door. No acknowledgement of Kean or his words.

Kean watches him go: "I've lost him."

**EXT. CHANCERY BUILDING, US EMBASSY - MOMENTS LATER**

Bennington follows Martin outside and catches up inside

**GATE**

Schuller and Schlager try to keep ARRIVING VIETNAMESE entering in an orderly fashion.

BENNINGTON

I have orders to keep you on the grounds, sir.

MARTIN

And when you can't?

BENNINGTON

To follow you.

MARTIN

(annoyed)

Just stretching my legs.

Martin does an about face. Bennington keeps his eyes on him until the Ambassador disappears around some low-story out-buildings.

**INT./EXT. MAINTENANCE BUILDING, EMBASSY - CONTINUOUS**

Martin ENTERS.

Heads down a hall then fishes out a key and unlocks what looks like a storage closet.

**STORAGE CLOSET**

In the rear of the small room is a METAL DOOR. Martin slides back a heavy bolt and steps into

**EXT. COURTYARD, FRENCH EMBASSY - CONTINUOUS**

French flag on a pole.

**INT. AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE, FRENCH EMBASSY - DAY**

Martin and the French Ambassador. Martin drops heavily off his cane and into his chair.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR

The Soviets have declined to get involved.

MARTIN

They might posture that way but  
their interests go deep here. Maybe  
you missed a signal.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR

(tight)

I don't think so. They were rather  
blunt.

MARTIN

They don't want to overstep the  
Chinese if it means getting tripped  
up.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR

There is nothing left I can do.

MARTIN

You must take another swing at  
them. Pick up the phone, tell them  
you have more--

FRENCH AMBASSADOR

("We're done here.")

There is nothing left.

Martin rises slowly. Painfully.

MARTIN

Nothing but follow your dusty  
playbook, you mean. Find a stronger  
nation to take up a fight you're  
too tired to keep fighting  
yourself.

(reaches door)

Too bad there isn't one.

**EXT. FRENCH EMBASSY - DAY**

Martin steps out onto the street. Walks away from the  
American Embassy. Needs to gather his thoughts.

**EXT. PLAZA, SAIGON - DAY**

Martin sits on a bench. Smokes a cigarette despite his shitty  
lungs. COUGHS heavy.

Two SMALL BOYS across the square LAUGH and chase a pigeon  
around a fountain. Martin watches transfixed until the BOYS'  
MOTHER comes to an open window and calls them inside.

**EXT. FRONT GATE, US EMBASSY - DAY**

With a bit more giddyup in his tired legs, Martin strides past a perplexed Bennington: "How the hell'd he get by me?"

**INT. HALL OUTSIDE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, CHANCERY - DAY**

Norman sees Kean walking past.

NORMAN  
Major, sir.

Kean backs up.

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
I've got your wife.

Kean ENTERS. But is intercepted by:

MARTIN'S SECRETARY (O.S.)  
The Ambassador wants to see you.

Kean turns.

MARTIN'S SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
Immediately.

She's giving him the stink-eye.

KEAN  
(to Norman/RE: Rosanne)  
Guess I'll be seeing her soon  
enough.

Kean follows Martin's Secretary down the hall.

NORMAN (O.S.)  
I'm sorry, Mrs. Kean, I can't track  
him down...

**INT. MARTIN'S OFFICE, CHANCERY - DAY**

Kean ENTERS.

KEAN  
I suppose you're gonna declare me  
mentally exhausted, like Al  
Francis.

MARTIN  
(gentle)  
Sit down.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

My son, Glenn, took shrapnel to the spine in '67. Died in medivac. I vowed to make his death and the fifty-eight thousand other American kids count for something.

KEAN

(off photo on desk)  
Good looking kid.

Martin picks up the PHOTO OF THE YOUNG MAN.

MARTIN

That's my other son. Gaye. Car accident. Wanna tell me which makes less sense?

KEAN

Glenn and the others were fulfilling our promise to help these people.

MARTIN

And that's what I've been trying to do. Find a way to keep the country together.

KEAN

The country is lost. The people can still be saved.

MARTIN

(maybe coming around)  
My superiors aren't interested in saving Vietnamese lives.

KEAN

From here to the end, we do what's right. Not what's ordered.

MARTIN

(all in)  
That will require diplomacy.  
(conceding Kean's role)  
And some heroes, too.  
(punching intercom)  
Get me General Carey aboard the Blue Ridge.

EXT. USS BLUE RIDGE, OFF THE COAST OF VIETNAM - ESTABLISHING

**INT. CONTROL ROOM, USS BLUE RIDGE - DAY**

An agitated **GENERAL CAREY** (50's), by-the-book from his crew cut to his polished shoes, grabs a phone handed to him by a Crewman.

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. MARTIN'S OFFICE - DAY**

MARTIN  
(into phone)  
General Carey. I'm ordering  
Operation Frequent Wind. Option IV.

GENERAL CAREY  
Jesus. Helos from the airport?

MARTIN  
And the embassy as well.

GENERAL CAREY  
(alarmed)  
The embassy? Mr. Ambassador, a  
thousand moving parts make that  
impossible.

MARTIN  
Nevertheless, those are the facts  
on the ground. When can I expect  
evac to commence.

GENERAL CAREY  
(unhappy/off watch)  
1400 hours.

MARTIN  
We'll be ready.

Martin hangs up.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
(to Kean)  
Let's hope this works.

**"WHITE CHRISTMAS" MONTAGE:**

Kean walks down the hall to

**COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Norman jumps to attention.

KEAN  
Frequent Wind. Call it in.

Norman, surprised and excited, grabs a land line.

**INT. RADIO STATION, SAIGON - CONTINUOUS**

A phone RINGS. The American STATION MANAGER picks it up.

STATION MANAGER  
Radio Free Vietnam.

NORMAN  
Christmas has come early.

The Manager nearly drops the cigarette from his mouth. Hangs up. Then flips through a stack of 45's until he finds what he's looking for: Bing Crosby's WHITE CHRISTMAS.

**INT. SITUATION ROOM - SAME TIME**

All the Marines assemble.

KEAN  
When the shit hits, everybody runs  
for the American flag. And that's  
here. We'll be looking out our  
window at an Alamo-type situation.

The Marines go quiet. Digesting the news.

**INT. HALL, RADIO STATION - SAME TIME**

Manager walks down a hall, and stops outside the window below the ON AIR light of

**STUDIO - CONTINUOUS**

A DEEJAY looks through the glass wall and goes pale when he sees the Manager holding the record to the glass.

**INT. SITUATION ROOM - SAME TIME**

KEAN  
I don't know what's coming over  
those walls. Or how it's coming.  
But I can promise one thing: when  
it does, we will fight like  
Marines.

**INT. STUDIO, RADIO STATION - SAME TIME**

The DEEJAY cues up the record with shaky hands on the open, second turntable. He fades down the volume on the first turntable, interrupting a Peggy Lee standard.

**INT. SITUATION ROOM - SAME TIME**

KEAN

And if we have to, we will die like  
Marines.

**INT. STUDIO, RADIO STATION - SAME TIME**

DEEJAY

And now for the weather. It's 105  
degrees and rising here in Saigon.

He starts up White Christmas. Grabs his personal effects and runs out.

**INT. SITUATION ROOM - SAME TIME**

KEAN

(loud)

Every Marine a rifleman!

A ROAR fills the room.

**BEGIN MONTAGE:**

RADIOS all across the city broadcast Bing Crosby crooning WHITE CHRISTMAS.

This signal was an open secret. Not only did the Americans know it, but so did all the Vietnamese. Chaos engulfs the city.

SAIGON SHOPS -- SHOPKEEPERS close abruptly. Locking their doors against the coming chaos.

SAIGON STREET -- A SQUAD of South Vietnamese INFANTRYMEN squabble among themselves. Several throw down their rifles and walk away.

GATES, US EMBASSY -- Schuller, Schlager and Sullivan close the gates against a tide of approaching Vietnamese waving documents and money. PROTESTS go up.

MESS HALL, US EMBASSY -- Frain and Bauer do weapons checks.

ROOFTOP, CHANCERY BUILDING, US EMBASSY -- Gevers shovels PALLETS OF US DOLLARS into the incinerator.

WALL, US EMBASSY -- Norman and Babel establish machine gun nests at strategic corners.

BUNK ROOM, US EMBASSY -- Valdez packs a few belongings, including photograph of May Li.

VIETNAMESE APARTMENT -- May Li, her AGING PARENTS and SISTER with two INFANT CHILDREN gather with a few other families around a RADIO at a Neighbor's House.

PARKING LOT, US EMBASSY -- Marines HOSE DOWN the grounds.

KEAN

Sea Knights on the roof pad for the Americans and Jolly Green Giants down here for the locals. The water'll keep us from choking on kicked-up debris.

ROOF, US EMBASSY -- Schlager and Gevers paint a bright yellow "H" inside a circle on an elevated section of the roof.

SCHLAGER

(off their handiwork)

Why not just put a big bull's eye on there for Charlie while we're at it.

PARKING LOT, US EMBASSY -- Kean oversees the tamarind tree finally cut down in parking lot. Gas-powered chain saws lop off large branches. Chains hitched to two trucks rip away the stump.

Marines CHEER as Martin watches from his office window.

Frain cups his hands, shouts in Martin's direction:

FRAIN

Timberrrrrrrr!

**END MONTAGE.**

**EXT. SAIGON - DAY**

Aerial view of streets. Like ants approaching the embassy from all directions.

**EXT. GATES, US EMBASSY - DAY**

Increasing chaos. Desperate LOCALS climbing over razor wire or slipping in whenever the gate is briefly opened.

Schuller, Schlager and Sullivan do their best to maintain order, but they're on the losing side.

SCHULLER

This is crazy. We should've bugged out months ago. What're we still doing risking our necks for these ungrateful bastards? Look at them. Half of 'em want to slit my throat.

SCHLAGER

Count me among them, if it'll shut you up.

SULLIVAN

They're scared is all.

SCHULLER

I'm only saying, let them fix their own damn mess.

KEAN (O.S.)

And what mess is that, Sargent?

They didn't see him approach.

SULLIVAN

Major.

SCHULLER

Major.

KEAN (CONT'D)

(to Schuller)

One we helped make.

SCHULLER

Yes, sir.

Kean distributes CHECKLISTS to the Marines.

KEAN

Here's the story. We can't save the whole city. But we're going to get out as many at greatest risk as possible. Anyone comes to the gate on this list gets through. Plus immediate family members. These people have risked everything to openly collaborate with us over the past fifteen years. They stay behind, they're as good as dead.

SCHLAGER

(under breath)

Goes for us, too.

**EXT. SWIMMING POOL, US EMBASSY - DAY**

Kean confers with Gevers, who occasionally stops to speak Vietnamese to some of the thousand plus locals gathered already.

GEVERS

Got 'em in sticks of 50, Major.

KEAN

Good. But tell them to ditch the bags. No weight in the birds that isn't breathing.

GEVERS

I've tried explaining, but they won't part with 'em. Some folks are backing their arguments with guns.

KEAN

Toss everything into the pool. Weapons, too.

GEVERS

They're already using the pool to, uh, relieve themselves.

KEAN

All the less likely they'll jump in after their stuff.

GEVERS

Roger that.

They turn skyward at the first sounds of what will become the familiar THRUMMING of incoming HELICOPTERS.

**INT. "LADY ACE 09" CH-46 HELICOPTER, ABOVE SAIGON - DAY**

The TAK-TAK-TAK of small-caliber bullets clipping the fuselage. Relatively young CO-PILOT white knuckles it.

Veteran **USAF PILOT GERALD "GERRY" BERRY** (30's), coolly at the controls.

BERRY

Go ahead. Ask.

CO-PILOT

(distracted by bullets)

What?

BERRY

Everybody asks. I got two.

CO-PILOT  
Captain?

BERRY  
DFC's, man. Distinguished Flying  
Cross. Gold star in lieu of the  
second.

CO-PILOT  
We're taking flak, sir.

BERRY  
That's rifle fire.

Louder EXPLOSIONS ending in smoke puffs near the helo.

BERRY (CONT'D)  
That's anti-aircraft.

Berry deftly puts the helicopter into a steep bank.

BERRY (CONT'D)  
(continuing)  
My brother-in-law's got a second  
star. Never shuts up about it.

**EXT. AIRSPACE ABOVE CHANCERY ROOFTOP - DAY**

Berry brings in his dual-rotor CH-46 SEA KNIGHT heads for the roof. 44 feet long, 7 feet wide and capable of a 12-ton takeoff weight.

**EXT. ROOF, US EMBASSY - CONTINUOUS**

Berry guides "Lady Ace 09" to a perfect landing on the yellow "H".

**EXT. AIRSPACE ABOVE PARKING LOT - SAME TIME**

Another helicopter, this one a massive CH-53 JOLLY GREEN GIANT reaches the parking lot. THUMPING a 78-foot single rotor. 88 feet long, 14 feet wide and capable of a 20-ton takeoff weight.

With remarkable skill, the CH-53 performs a 100-FOOT STRAIGHT VERTICAL DROP landing squarely on the freshly painted "H" next to the tamarind stump hole.

**EXT. ROOF - SAME TIME**

Kean is there to meet Berry. They shake hands through the pilot-side window.

BERRY

Any chance I'm bringing out the Ambassador per orders?

KEAN

In good time. Got some other cargo first.

Berry sees the Evacuees crowding around the pool below.

BERRY

We've got you boys covered.

**INT. MESS HALL - DAY**

Frain addresses the waiting Americans.

FRAIN

First 40! With me!

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY - DAY**

Bauer comes to Berry's open window. Yells over the ROTOR NOISE.

BAUER

Any trouble?

BERRY

(shrugging)

Took some rifle fire. Kid's stuff.

Frain leads the 40 Americans on to the roof. Bauer directs them up Lady Ace 09's lowered skiff.

**EXT. PARKING LOT, US EMBASSY - SAME TIME**

Gevers guides the first "stick" of 50 Vietnamese to the back of the Chinook. They scurry up the opened tail.

The stick is fully loaded. The pilot begins to lift off. But sees Kean burst from the Chancery, frantically waving him back down.

The Pilot drops the helo hard to the ground as Kean, running from the Chancery, and Gevers converge at his window.

PILOT

(frantic)

What the hell's wrong?

KEAN

You took to the air too easy.

PILOT  
(calming/confused)  
Sir?

GEVERS  
We've got 50 on board, sir.

PILOT  
That's my max payload.

KEAN  
(delighted/correcting him)  
50 Americans. These guys live on  
rice and bean sprouts. Not one of  
them breaks 120 pounds. We can get  
another 20 on board. Let's go!

Gevers yells to the next stick of waiting Vietnamese, waving:

GEVERS  
The next twenty.

KEAN  
(to Gevers)  
Re-organize the rest into sticks of  
70. We'll get 40% more out!  
(practically kissing him)  
40%!

**EXT. ROOF - DAY**

Valdez keeps track of overall numbers on a CHALKBOARD.

Helos: 2  
US Remaining: 1,960  
SV Evac'd: 70

And so the evacuation begins.

BAUER  
Any word from your girl, Top?

VALDEZ  
Not yet...

**INT. NEIGHBOR'S APARTMENT, SAIGON - DAY**

May Li and Family talk together while NEIGHBORS have been  
having a conversation in the kitchen.

MAY LI'S FATHER  
*The Communists can't be any worse  
than the Capitalists.*

Elder Neighbor returns to their group.

ELDER NEIGHBOR

*We are sorry but May Li is no longer welcome here. She will bring trouble to those around her when the Communists arrive.*

May Li rises to leave.

MAY LI

*We must leave this place.*

Her family stays put.

MAY LI'S MOTHER

*Saigon is our home.*

MAY LI'S SISTER

*You only want to be with your American boyfriend.*

MAY LI

*I want a place to live without fear. That's not here.*

MAY LI'S MOTHER

*Because the Americans came and destroyed everything.*

MAY LI'S FATHER

*We have no reason to trust them.*

May Li EXITS alone.

**INT. MAY LI'S HOME - DAY**

May Li gathers up clothing. Stuffs a few bags. Artillery rounds SHAKE the building. Electricity goes out.

She lights an OIL LAMP, which gives her an idea...

**EXT. STREET, SAIGON - DAY**

May Li's Sister, Mother, Father and Nieces walk home from Neighbor's House. Two American Chinooks fly low overheard, taking evacuees to safety.

FIREMEN rush past them from behind.

The family follows Firemen around the corner and see:

**MAY LI'S HOUSE - DAY**

A FIRE now under control but the damage has been done. May Li stands in front with the luggage she collected.

MAY LI  
*Now we must make a new home.*

As the family processes May Li's arson:::

MAY LI (CONT'D)  
*I don't trust the Americans either.  
But Juan is a good man. He will  
help us.*

**INT. MARTIN'S OFFICE - DAY**

Kean knocks as he enters. Martin clearly expecting him.

MARTIN  
Where have you been? You need to  
hear this.

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICE, FIFTH FLOOR, CHANCERY - DAY**

CIA Officer Frank Sneed stuffs the last files into a brief case, while Marines gather the rest of the documents.

Kean and Martin ENTER.

SNEED  
(to Marines/off docs)  
Shred the rest.

MARTIN  
Tell him what you told me.

Sneed EXITS to

**HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Kean and Martin in pursuit.

SNEED  
Our intelligence lines are badly  
compromised but we're picking up  
chatter from General Dung's camp.

**STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS**

SNEPP

The sense is that he's planning to enter the city at 6pm and attack the embassy. Mortars. RPG's. Worse than the airport.

Kean and Martin follow Snepp upstairs and onto

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY - CONTINUOUS**

An Air America Huey Helicopter waits. Rotors WHIRRING.

SNEPP

You'll have to be out by then.

Snepp waves his hand "adios" and gets on the helo.

KEAN

I can't clear this place in three hours.

SNEPP

If you don't, Dung will.

They watch the last CIA officer leave Saigon.

Martin looks down below at the swimming pool area. It remains packed with more than 3,000 Vietnamese.

MARTIN

We can't just leave them behind.

KEAN

If there's an attack at 6PM, we need only Americans on every chopper from here out.

Martin can't take his eyes off the Vietnamese: "Still so many to save." Looking at them in daylight gives him a thought:

MARTIN

What if there isn't an attack at 6PM?

KEAN

You heard Snepp.

MARTIN

I heard him say he's got "the sense" Dung is going to attack. He doesn't know for sure.

KEAN

I doubt Snepp wants us to parse his words so closely.

MARTIN

I met Dung once. In Paris. He's vain. And power hungry--

KEAN

There's too much at stake for speculation--

MARTIN

If Dung attacks tonight, that means the city falls during darkness. The world reads of his victory but there will be no photographs. No news footage. The first war to be fought on television, would end on radio. I don't think that's how the General, who wants to announce that he sent the world's greatest power running, sees this playing out.

KEAN

Graham, if you're wrong, hundreds of Americans might die.

MARTIN

Me among them. I understand. But if I'm right, we can save thousands more South Vietnamese.

KEAN

It's your call, Mr. Ambassador.

Martin thinks it over. Making this kind of call is why he joined the foreign service 40 years ago.

MARTIN

Dung wants to maximize the publicity for winning as much as our brass wants to minimize it for losing.

KEAN

Alright. Then we evac as many people as we can before dawn. Deadline be damned.

Martin nods, agreeing to take the gamble.

**EXT. GATE, US EMBASSY - DAY**

Kean approaches his Gate Marines: Sullivan, Schlager, and Schuller. Schlager stuffs the list of high priority evacuees into Sullivan's hands. Annoyed.

KEAN  
What's going on?

SULLIVAN  
The list is shit. Maybe a hundred checked off so far.

SCHLAGER  
List or no list, Major, these folks are flat-out desperate.

KEAN  
Okay, new rule. Use your judgment. But you let 'em through that gate, it's a promise that the US Marine Corps will protect them. So every one you plan on saving better be more worthwhile than the nine you turn away.

He scans their faces. Convinced they get the picture.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
Alright then.

Kean leaves.

SULLIVAN  
Okay, Marines. Time to triage.

SCHULLER  
Time to play God, you mean.

**EXT. GATE, US EMBASSY - DAY**

An old EMBASSY WORKER (seen briefly earlier) arrives.

SULLIVAN  
(recognizing him/waving)  
Diehm Vu. Welcome.

DIEHM VU  
Mister Sullivan, sir.

SULLIVAN  
Get in here.

Sullivan clears a path through the gate. Then Sullivan spots the ROPE tied around his waist.

Tethered behind Vu, snaking through the Crowd outside the walls are his RELATIVES, tied together in a long chain. Sullivan can't see the end.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)  
How many are with you?

DIEHM VU  
Forty-five.

SULLIVAN  
(gently)  
This is too many. You can only  
bring ten.

Diehm Vu looks back at his extended family. Tears well up in his eyes.

DIEHM VU  
Please. I have so many...

SULLIVAN  
It's the best I can do.

Diehm Vu grows increasingly distraught.

DIEHM VU  
I can not live with making such a  
choice. They are all my family.

SULLIVAN  
I'm sorry. There's no other way.

DIEHM VU  
Please. You choose, Mister  
Sullivan.

SULLIVAN  
Me?

DIEHM VU  
Please.

It's Sullivan's turn to look with distress along the string of family members.

SULLIVAN  
(reluctantly)  
Your wife. Your daughters and any  
grandchildren.

DIEHM VU  
Very well. Thank you.

Diehm Vu begins speaking to his Family. CRIES erupt immediately from everyone. Diehm Vu acts as decisively as possible. But Sullivan can't watch any more.

Motions to Schlager to join Schuller running point.

SULLIVAN  
(exiting/making up excuse)  
I need to check on rations.

Schuller opens the gate for Vu and His Family, who enter. But the Crowd reacts and one of Vu's Daughter gets pushed backwards. She SCREAMS for help.

Schuller wades into the Crowd to get her.

An angry ARVN REGULAR gets in Schuller's face.

ARVN REGULAR  
You leave us! You shit! You shit!

Schuller pushes him aside and grabs hold of Vu's Daughter.

Schlager, joined now by Gevers, do their best to maintain security at the open gate, but dozens of people leak past them.

As Schuller turns back towards the gate, he is BAYONETTED by the ARVN Regular. The steel point plunging into the Marine's side.

Gevers surges into the Crowd. He BASHES the ARVN Regular in the head with the butt of his rifle. Blood instantly pours from the man's head as his eyes roll back and he drops into the crowd. Alive or dead, we'll never know.

Bennington grabs Vu's Daughter and Schuller stumbles back inside, as Schlager closes the gate.

#### **PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER**

Schuller, seated, examines his side. He sticks TWO FINGERS up to their SECOND KNUCKLE inside the deep wound.

Kean is now standing over him.

KEAN  
You're out on the next bird.

Schuller pulls a RAG from his pocket and stuffs it inside the hole.

SCHULLER  
I'm good, Major.

Kean eyes him suspiciously.

SCHULLER (CONT'D)  
Got a job to do, sir.

KEAN  
(after weighing it over)  
Alright. But you're off the gate.  
Head to the roof. Report to...  
damnit.

BABEL  
Bauer, sir?

KEAN  
Right, Bauer. You'll help him guide  
in the helos.

Kean's already on to the next fire: another skirmish at the gate. More people slip through. Kean heads over to

**GATE - CONTINUOUS**

KEAN  
Lock it up!

SCHLAGER  
Sir?

KEAN  
New rule! Lock it up, now! We can't  
keep going out there.

Schlager puts a massive BOLT LOCK on the gate, right in front of **LOH PAT**, one of the many desperate to leave but who lack paperwork.

The anxiety of the crowd rises yet another notch.

BABEL  
How're we gonna get anyone else in?

KEAN  
Schlager. Over here.

Schlager meets Kean at part of the fence, where another Marine has spotted a Westerner.

Kean stands on top of Schlager's shoulders and reaches over the top of the fence. The Westerner gets boosted up from the outside and grabs hold of Kean's hands.

Up and over the Westerner scrambles. Drops safely inside the Embassy.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
That's how.

Kean spots May Li pushing her way through the crowd outside.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
Somebody better get Top.

**EXT. FENCE NEAR GATE, US EMBASSY - MOMENTS LATER**

Valdez runs to the fence.

VALDEZ  
May! May!

May Li hears him, redirects away from the gate, fights through a thinner section of the crowd to reach him. But the crowd is still big enough to keep jostling her.

MAY LI  
John!

VALDEZ  
You're alright now. Let's get you inside.  
(to Babel)  
Give me a hand.

Babel approaches...

MAY LI  
No. I can't.

...Babel backs off again, giving the lovers room to work things out.

VALDEZ  
It's easy. We just lift you over.

MAY LI  
But my family.

She cranes her neck to see them. Valdez, taller, has a better view:

**ACROSS THE ROAD, NEAR GATE - CONTINUOUS**

May Li's aging Parents, Sister and tiny Nieces stand back from the edge of the crowd.

## FENCE - CONTINUOUS

VALDEZ

I can't leave the grounds. But  
bring them here.

MAY LI

It is too dangerous for them. They  
are weak and afraid.

Valdez grabs her hands through the chain link. Partly just to  
keep her from being pushed away by the "current".

VALDEZ

Please, May.

MAY LI

I made them come this far. I can't  
leave them now.

VALDEZ

And I can't leave my post. I would  
go with you, baby--

He shakes the chain link in frustration. She strokes his  
hand.

MAY LI

I know, Big John.

VALDEZ

(softly pivoting)

No one calls me that.

MAY LI

(teasing)

You need a good nickname.

(beat)

We will be together again. I  
promise.

Valdez closes his eyes for an anguished beat. Then fishes  
around in his pocket and hands May Li a set of KEYS.

VALDEZ

Take my Jeep if it hasn't been  
jacked. It's out front of Marine  
House. You need to hurry. Don't try  
the port, it'll be worse than here.  
Go to the SV air force base at Lap  
Sam. Find a plane, a helicopter,  
anything.

MAY LI  
I will.

VALDEZ  
When you reach the fleet, you tell  
them to find me.

MAY LI  
Alright.

May lets go of his hand and starts drifting back into the crowd.

VALDEZ  
Lap Sam! Don't forget!

**EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF SAIGON - DAY**

The NVA Army rolls past abandoned and destroyed South Vietnamese military vehicles and equipment.

A road-side sign in Vietnamese advertises for a Motorcycle Store, complete with map to its location Central Saigon and the distance: **6KM**.

**EXT. 7TH FLEET, 40 MILES OFFSHORE - DAY**

Berry pilots the Lady Ace 09 as it reaches the carriers and support ships in international waters.

**INT. LADY ACE 09 - DAY**

Berry spots one of the small four-passenger HU-1 "Huey" helicopters coming upon him. He makes a quick maneuver to find clear space.

CO-PILOT  
(off Huey)  
Air America?

BERRY  
Nope. South Vietnamese pilot with  
an evacuation plan of his own.  
Can't exactly blame him.

CO-PILOT  
How many Hueys they got?

BERRY  
("Things are gonna get  
ugly up here.")  
Hundreds.

**EXT. 7TH FLEET, 40 MILES OFF THE COAST - DAY**

Complete chaos in the skies and on decks.

A constant flow of South Vietnamese Huey Pilots guide their birds on a one-way trip to reach the fleet.

INTERCUT WITH:

**EXT. DECK, USS BLUE RIDGE - DAY**

One of the Huey's BUZZES the deck. SQUAWKING in Vietnamese from its PA system. Carey's EX-O nearby.

GENERAL CAREY

What do they want?

EX-O

I think they want to land.

GENERAL CAREY

They can't land here! We're in the middle of a military operation.

EX-O

They barely have enough fuel for the one-way trip. They're gonna escape or die trying.

General Carey assesses his options then:

GENERAL CAREY

Alright. Set 'em down. They're turning our air space into a demolition derby.

EX-O

Yes, sir.

The first Huey lands. More line-up to follow in her wake.

EX-O (CONT'D)

Get her off the deck!

US DECKHANDS frantically drag the Huey on its skiffs to the ship's edge. Then PUSH IT OVERBOARD.

Soon, Hueys land wherever and whenever possible. The same fate is repeated for each landing Huey.

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY BUILDING - 1759 HOURS**

Kean verifies the time on his watch: one minute to witching hour. 6PM. He and Valdez scan the city limits to his north and west, looking for signs of an aerial attack.

**INT./EXT. US EMBASSY - SAME TIME**

Martin at his desk. Schuller and Schlager at the front gate. The whole place goes completely still. The Marines hold their collective breath.

**EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS**

Kean sees the second hand sweep past the top of the hour... All round him stop and stare at the sky...

The silence maintains. Kean exhales when...

CRASH. Kean jumps out of his skin:

Next to him, Bauer has just reached the roof from the stairwell and slammed the METAL DOOR behind him. Kean and a half-dozen Marines standing nearby stare slack-jawed at Bauer:

BAUER  
(confused)  
What?

While the Marines give Bauer shit, Valdez looks to Kean.

VALDEZ  
Guess that means we've got until sunrise.

KEAN  
By then we'll be gone.

**EXT. FRONT GATE, LAP SAM SOUTH VIETNAM AIR FORCE BASE - DAY**

May Li and her family reach the base in Valdez' Jeep. They all get out.

The gate house has been abandoned.

MAY LI  
Come on.

She ENTERS

**LAP SAM AFB - CONTINUOUS**

The place is already looted and deserted.

There is nothing here. No one here.

MAY LI'S SISTER  
*No way forward. No way back.*

MAY LI  
*I'm sorry.*

But everyone is too tired to leave.

The quiet is cut by a distant ENGINE WHINE, growing louder. The family watches as a JET FIGHTER lands at the distant end of the runway and taxis towards them.

Pilot Bui, scarf waving, hops from the cockpit onto the wing. Then jumps to the ground. He takes a look at the plane: ripped to shreds. Then off the desertion around him:

PILOT BUI  
 (to self)  
*Cowards. I'll fight alone if I must.*

He runs over to a wheeled gas tank. Opens the tap: bone dry. He kicks it in frustration.

He sinks to the ground. Defeated.

MAY LI  
*Excuse me.*  
 (he offers no reply)  
*Excuse me.*

PILOT BUI  
 (ignoring her)  
*South Vietnam is gone.*

MAY LI  
*We are South Vietnam.*

This finally gets his attention. He turns to look at her. Struck by her beauty.

MAY LI (CONT'D)  
*You can still help us to leave  
 Saigon.*

PILOT BUI  
*You and everyone else. The pilots  
 have all left. Everyone has gone.*  
 (skyward)  
*Cowards! The country needed you!*  
 (to May Li)  
 (MORE)

PILOT BUI (CONT'D)  
*They took all the aircraft.  
 Anything they can fly.*

MAY LI  
*What about that?*

Pilot Bui follows her outstretched arm in direction of:  
 An American CH-53 HELICOPTER.

PILOT BUI  
*The ailerons are shattered. They  
 can't fly it or they would have.*

MAY LI  
*What about you?*

PILOT BUI  
 (still proud)  
*I can fly anything.*

**INT./EXT. CH-53, AIRBORNE - DAY**

Pilot Bui, May Li and Family over the Pacific.

Pilot Bui jabs at the FUEL GAGE as it rides empty.

PILOT BUI  
*You said forty miles.*

MAY LI  
*Yes.*

PILOT BUI  
*You better be right.*

**EXT. USS COOK - DAY**

A Destroyer Class ship. All towers and step-back decks with no room to land anything but a single small Huey.

One such Huey, ripped to shreds with one landing skid askew, touches down.

It's hemorrhaging gasoline and oil. Emergency Crews rush over as the evacuating Air America Pilot and his Vietnamese passengers jump from the busted helo.

INTERCUT WITH:

**EXT. DECK, USS BLUE RIDGE - SAME TIME**

Half a mile away, General Carey observes the chaos with powerful binoculars.

His eyes catch sight of something that prompts him to lower the binocs:

GENERAL CAREY  
Who in hell is that?

Into the chaos on the USS Cook storms Pilot Bui's CH-53. It's five times the size of the little Hueys.

GENERAL CAREY (CONT'D)  
He wants to land a Cadillac on a pool table!

The USS Cook's Deck Flagmen wave him off furiously. There's no safe place to land his big bird.

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. PILOT BUI'S CH-53 - SAME TIME**

Pilot Bui struggles to keep the bucking helo relatively stable.

PILOT BUI  
(off Flagmen)  
*No fuel to find another ship.*  
(to May Li)  
*Open the door.*

May Li and her Sister step to the edge of the open helo side door.

USS COOK CAPTAIN  
Get the nets!

**EXT. ABOVE THE 7TH FLEET - DAY**

Berry heading back for another run spots the action on deck of the USS Cook.

BERRY  
Jee-sus. We better see how this plays out.

**EXT. DECK, USS COOK - DAY**

Cargo netting is hustled into place beneath the rollicking Chinook. May Li and her Sister pantomime an argument beneath the SCREAMING ROTORS. May Li finally pushes her Sister out.

She lands safely in the netting.

Then May Li's Parents drop to safety.

Finally, May Li holds her infant Niece above the net. As she releases the child, the Chinook bucks violently. The child arcs through the air... and into the arms of a Marine.

May Li looks to Pilot Bui.

PILOT BUI  
*Go on! I'll be alright.*

May Li jumps into the net.

Pilot Bui guides the Chinook away a safe distance. Balancing a few precarious feet over the waves.

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. LADY ACE 09 - SAME TIME**

CO-PILOT  
What's he doing?

BERRY  
(impressed)  
Stripping off his flight suit while  
on the back of a bucking bronco.

**INT. PILOT BUI'S CH-53 - CONTINUOUS**

Pilot Bui takes his scarf and ties it between the steering stick and the instrument panel.

He cinches it tight, and the huge helicopter banks violently to the left. Pilot Bui slides out the open door.

**EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - CONTINUOUS**

Pilot Bui drops into the water, disappearing from sight as the Chinook crashes into the sea above him. Rotors breaking, sending flying twisted metal in every direction, including broadside the USS Cook.

A POOL OF RED LIQUID gathers where Pilot Bui was last seen.

CO-PILOT  
Fuck.

BERRY  
(off liquid/"It's okay.")  
That's not blood. That's Hydraulic  
fluid.

Sure enough, Pilot Bui finally resurfaces. Offers up a jaunty salute.

**EXT. DECK, USS COOK - CONTINUOUS**

A CHEER goes up from all topside as a Rescue Skiff is sent to pick him up.

A smiling Berry banks his helicopter away towards the mainland.

BERRY

The guy's even better than my brother-in-law.

**EXT. US EMBASSY - DAY**

A CH-53 lands on the roof. A CH-46 takes off from the parking lot.

**EXT. GATES, US EMBASSY - DAY**

Kean oversees the chaos at the gates.

The DISH WASHER from the red light bar (also seen briefly before) reaches the fence. He speaks no English. He hands a grubby, old folded note to Schlager.

DISH WASHER

Please? Yes?

Schlager reads it as Schuller watches.

SCHULLER

What gives?

SCHLAGER

The guy used to bus tables at the officer's club in Da Nang. It's a letter of thanks from some captain.

SCHULLER

Jesus.

SCHLAGER

(to Dish Washer)

I'm sorry. No.

He tries pressing the letter back into the Dish Washer's hands, but the Vietnamese guy won't take it back.

DISH WASHER

Yes? Please?

Gentle pleading on both sides. This back-and-forth could go on forever. Schuller has to intervene, brandishing his M-16.

SCHULLER  
(heart not in it)  
Get out of here! Beat it!

The Dish Washer finally slinks away. Schlager can't watch.

SCHULLER (CONT'D)  
(unsure)  
He'll be alright.

SCHLAGER  
(even less sure)  
Yeah. He'll be fine.

Kean spots Martin, shadowed by Bennington, and walks over to intercept them. Bennington shakes his head for Kean's benefit: "I couldn't stop him."

KEAN  
Sir, where are you going?

MARTIN  
The residence.

Kean glances at the roiling crowd outside the gates.

KEAN  
That's not a good idea.

MARTIN  
Good, bad. Makes no difference.  
I've got sensitive material in the  
house safe. A contact list. A  
hundred names.

KEAN  
(not unkind)  
You should've destroyed them days  
ago.

MARTIN  
I let hope get in the way.

KEAN  
I'll send some men.

MARTIN  
It's my responsibility. I'm going.

Kean nods. Understands where Martin's coming from.

KEAN  
Bennington. Grab a detail. Escort  
the Ambassador.

BENNINGTON  
But the gate...

MARTIN  
Never mind the gate.

**EXT. COURTYARD, FRENCH EMBASSY - MOMENTS LATER**

Bennington and three other Marines escort Martin through the secret door from the US Embassy.

Bennington CURSES under his breath: "That's how he tricked me the last time."

**EXT. STREETS, SAIGON - DAY**

Martin, Bennington and the Marines walk a deadly quiet, abandoned street.

A few curious LOCALS follow at a distance.

They reach:

**EXT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - ESTABLISHING**

**INT. BEDROOM, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - DAY**

Martin opens a combination safe, pulls out the LIST and some other papers. Marines get to work preparing small THERMITE CHARGES.

**LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Martin takes a final wistful look around. Runs his hands over the piano. Even plays the right hand part of a concerto.

Through the curtains Bennington can see a CROWD gathering on the street and heading to the front door.

BENNINGTON  
Sir? Is there a back door?

Martin grabs a small, ivory PAGODA.

MARTIN  
There's something better.

SMASH CUT TO:

**EXT. GARAGE, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - DAY**

Martin and the Marines admire a mint condition 1963 LINCOLN CONTINENTAL. Two small AMERICAN FLAGS flank the hood.

BENNINGTON  
Maybe the flags are a bit too...  
provocative?

Martin sadly snaps off one of the flags.

**EXT. STREET, OUTSIDE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER**

The garage door opens and out rolls the Lincoln, skirting the crowd.

The Thermite Charges BURST into chemical fire inside the residence.

**INT. LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - DAY**

Bennington behind the wheel. The other Marines and Martin, pagoda in lap, squeezed inside.

INTERCUT WITH:

**EXT. STREETS, SAIGON - DAY**

As the Lincoln advances, a new crowd thickens. Gets more hostile.

Someone throws a brick at the windshield. Shattering it.

MARTIN  
(calm)  
Keep going.

Bennington bears down behind the wheel.

Eventually, the car can make no more progress. Rocks the car. Succeeds in ROLLING IT OVER.

Bennington and the other Marines pull Martin from the car. Form a tight diamond around him and manage to rush him inside the

**INT./EXT. FRENCH EMBASSY - DAY**

**REAR COURTYARD**

Martin, clothes roughed up and skin scraped, stands with the French Ambassador. Martin assembles his remaining stamina to present a vestige of his best diplomatic self:

He uses two hands to present the ivory pagoda to his fellow Ambassador.

MARTIN  
You always had an eye for it.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR

Nothing gets by you. Thank you, my old friend.

MARTIN

I'm sorry for my behavior earlier.

I'm not used to losing.

("The US")

We... are not used to losing.

With that, Martin steps through the metal door built into the brick garden wall. Bennington and the Marines have already passed through.

Once through, the French Military weld the door shut from their side.

**EXT. SAIGON - SUNSET**

The under-layers of the growing clouds glow purple as the sun drops in the west.

**EXT. ABOVE SAIGON - NIGHT**

A four-man SUPPORT HELICOPTER lays down suppressive machine gun fire as it escorts one of the evac Chinooks towards the Embassy.

It takes heavy damage from ground fire. The helo, coughing smoke, turns sharply to the east.

SUPPORT PILOT (O.S.)

(into mic)

We are hit! We are hit! Lady Ace 02, you're on your own.

LADY ACE 02 PILOT (O.S.)

(into mic)

Roger that.

**EXT. USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

The Support Helicopter limps for home.

Berry flies in with latest load of embassy evacuees. He watches as the Support Heli loses control and PLUNGES INTO THE ROLLING WATER.

COMMUNICATIONS GRUNT (V.O.)

(on deck loudspeaker)

Launch search and rescue. Repeat.

Launch S and R.

A Rescue Helicopter is dispatched.

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. COMMAND AND CONTROL, USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

General Carey listens in.

PILOT (O.S.)  
Got visual on two men. Repeat.  
Visual on two.

The two men in the water are so busted up, they can't reach for the rescue cradle.

The Rescue Copter Pilot lowers the bird, dangerously, until the skids are COMPLETELY UNDERWATER. His CREW bodily pulls the two men on board; they SCREAM in pain from nasty compound fractures in their legs.

Then the pilot STRAINS the bird to lift it back out of the water.

By the time it's back on deck, General Carey is there as well. The helicopter continues to shed salt water as the two injured men are littered past him.

GENERAL'S AIDE  
Four went down, sir.

GENERAL CAREY  
(RE: darkness)  
We were pushing our luck. Mayhem and darkness don't mix. Send out the word.

A Second Rescue Helicopter searches in vain for the lost Pilot and Co-Pilot.

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY BUILDING, US EMBASSY - NIGHT**

Darkness falls. A CH-53 loads up.

CH-53 PILOT  
I'm last up. We're sitting ducks for Charlie. Either that or we'll crash into each other.

Kean grabs Pilot's Headset.

KEAN  
(into headset)  
This is Captain-- Major James Kean.  
(MORE)

KEAN (CONT'D)  
You let me worry about the  
situation here. Just keep those  
birds coming!

There's no reply. The Pilot gently takes back the headset.

CH-53 PILOT  
It's no good, sir. Everyone's  
grounded.

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY BUILDING - NIGHT**

Largely quiet, except for distant light arms FIRE. Kean kicks at the loose gravel under his feet. Frustrated. Pulls out his wallet. The PHOTO of Rosanne has slipped half-way out, bent and torn.

Valdez taps at the chalkboard with his chalk. Itching to move the numbers up.

**Helos: 30  
US Remaining: 458  
SV Evac'd: 1,552**

They look down at the South Vietnamese by the pool, who remain patiently in their sticks.

VALDEZ  
What now?

KEAN  
I wish I knew.

Bauer approaches Kean.

BAUER  
Sir, you might want to check on the  
Ambassador.

**INT. MARTINS OFFICE, CHANCERY BUILDING - NIGHT**

Kean enters and anxiously watches a DOCTOR looks over Martin, who RASPS, COUGHS and spits phlegm on the couch.

MARTIN  
This is a waste of time. I need to  
get back to work.

KEAN  
(to Doctor)  
How bad is it?

DOCTOR  
Pneumonia. Bronchial infection. He  
needs hospitalization.

MARTIN  
I'll be alright.

DOCTOR  
What you'll be is dead without an  
immediate course of powerful  
antibiotics.

KEAN  
Why don't you lie down for a while?  
Get some rest.

Martin tries to rise.

MARTIN  
Nonsense.

Kean gently but firmly pushes him back down to sitting. He's  
too weak to resist anyway.

KEAN  
Quit trying to muscle in on the  
hero stuff. Stick to diplomacy.  
(Martin's unconvinced)  
Not kidding, sir, if you die,  
you'll only make this situation  
worse.

Reluctantly, Martin lies back down fully on the sofa.

MARTIN  
(stubborn/tired)  
Duly noted. Now beat it.

**EXT. DECK, USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

The chaos of the day has also given way to quiet here.

**INT. OFFICER'S QUARTER, USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

Pilots sleep wherever possible. Some, including Captain Berry  
scarf down C-rations. General Carey ENTERS.

GENERAL CAREY  
How're you boys doing?

General round of "Fine, sir."

BERRY

Sir, if you don't mind my saying,  
we should be in the air.

GENERAL CAREY

You've flown eight straight hours.  
FlightReg says you're done. On top  
of that, enemy fire means running  
lights only. It'd be like flying  
with your eyes closed.

BERRY

One thing that comes from flying  
the same route for eight hours,  
sir: I can do it with my eyes  
closed.

GENERAL CAREY

Mistakes will be made, son. I'm  
sorry but I can't allow it.

General Carey moves on to talk to other Pilots.

BERRY

(to self)

Mistakes have already been made.

Berry shakes awake his Co-Pilot.

BERRY (CONT'D)

Let's go.

**EXT. DECK, USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

Berry and Co-Pilot beeline for Lady Ace 09. A SIGNAL MAN gets  
in the way.

SIGNAL MAN

All birds are grounded.

BERRY

Yeah I heard that.

Berry shoves him out of the way. Gives his helo a loving pat  
on the fuselage and jumps into the cockpit.

Other Pilots see what he's doing. Chug down their coffee and  
food. Prepare to follow Berry back into the night.

**EXT. PARKING LOT, US EMBASSY - NIGHT**

Kean discusses the situation with Valdez.

SCHULLER (O.S.)  
Major!

Kean looks up to the Chancery roof. Sees Schuller waving his hand and pointing to the Eastern horizon.

SCHULLER (CONT'D)  
Incoming birds!

Kean looks around the landing zone.

KEAN  
They can't see shit to land.  
(to Marines)  
Every vehicle. Here. Now!

Kean directs Marines as they scramble all available vehicles. They encircle the landing area and shine their headlights.

**INT. LADY ACE 09 - NIGHT**

The landing zone is impossible to locate. Then suddenly HEADLIGHTS illuminate the "H" from all sides.

**ROOF - NIGHT**

Schuller and Gevers stand on the helipad with flares. Immediately, they are under attack from sniper fire coming in from all directions.

GEVERS  
Shit!

They drop the flares and duck for cover.

GEVERS (CONT'D)  
We need a better plan.

SCHULLER  
You think?

**HELIPAD, ROOF - MOMENTS LATER**

Gevers lies on his back astride the landing "H". As the next Chinook approaches, he strobos a flashlight pointed skyward.

He waits until the copter is a mere feet above him before quickly rolling off the platform. He nearly lands on Schuller, a huge grin on his face.

GEVERS  
Now that's a plan!

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY BUILDING - NIGHT**

Martin tracks down Kean who huddles with Valdez around the chalkboard.

KEAN

What the hell are you doing up,  
sir?

MARTIN

(ignoring him)

How're we doing?

VALDEZ

(unhappy)

Well.

KEAN

Too well.

VALDEZ

(off Kean's puzzled look)

We're running out of Americans.

The chalkboard numbers have been written and erased dozens of times:

**US Remaining: 300**

MARTIN

That's the kind of day it's been.  
Even good news is bad news.

VALDEZ

Another ten helos roof-side and the  
American evacuation will be over.

MARTIN

They'll call me in and shut us  
down.

KEAN

Not with more than 2,000 Vietnamese  
still on our lawn.

**INT. CANTEEN, THIRD FLOOR, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

Kean ENTERS.

Journalists, including Beinecke, mix with Embassy Staff and the remaining Businessmen. These are the last three hundred AMERICAN CIVILIANS.

Kean stands on a table.

KEAN

Can I have everyone's attention?

(room quiets down)

You may have noticed a few thousand folks outside looking to hitch a ride stateside. And I know decent folks like yourself would want to help them out. But the top brass doesn't necessarily see it that way and the only leverage I have is you. So what I'm asking is: help me slow-play our hand.

BUSINESSMAN

That plan works 'til it doesn't.  
Then where are we?

FAMILY MAN

I've got a wife and two kids back home. You want to give them a call and explain why I missed my ride?

KEAN

Most of you have worked side-by-side with these folks for several years. You want to call their wives and their kids and explain why their dads won't be coming home at all?

There's silence until:

BEINECKE

Get us out, Major, but take whatever time you need.

Kean nods his appreciation. Then waves to the door.

KEAN

This should help the time pass quickly.

Marines wheel in all the EMBASSY LIQUOR. A WHOOP goes up.

BEINECKE

If you'd led with the booze you wouldn't've needed the speech!

**EXT. POOL, US EMBASSY - NIGHT**

Gevers barks out orders to the Crowd *in Vietnamese*. Forty Vietnamese follow Kean inside

**INT. CHANCERY - NIGHT**

Kean leads them up the stairs. Kean stops at

**CANTEEN, THIRD FLOOR**

The Vietnamese look inside. Puzzled.

Down to 200 Americans but the place is now RAUCOUS.

Someone's improvised a sign that says "Last Bar". Hundreds of bottles of alcohol cover the mess tables and everybody's drinking, telling war stories, etc.

10 Americans are waiting to join Kean's procession. The rest of the Americans toast to their evacuation.

The 40 Vietnamese and 10 Americans follow Kean to

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

Bauer loads them onto the waiting Sea Knight.

**INT. "LADY ACE 09" - CONTINUOUS**

Berry gets a thumb's up from Kean. Lifts his "Lady Ace 09" into the air.

East he flies across Saigon. Muted STACCATO bursts of small arms fire follow them. Occasional SHRACK of a bullet striking the metal fuselage.

Then QUIET once it reaches the water. Just the sound of the helo blades.

**EXT. DECK, USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

Berry lands. Drops the tail gate.

General Carey is among those watching as Vietnamese burst out onto the deck. Just the 10 Americans among them. His countenance darkens.

GENERAL CAREY  
Where are the goddamn Americans?

**INT. MARTIN'S OFFICE, US EMBASSY - NIGHT**

Martin's Aide hands the half-dead Martin a TELEGRAM.

MARTIN'S AIDE  
From the Secretary.

Martin reads: **This is FINAL evacuation! Americans only!**

MARTIN  
Prepare a reply.

MARTIN'S AIDE  
Begging your pardon, Graham, but I  
don't think Henry's asking for a  
reply.

MARTIN  
Nevertheless...

Martin's Aide grabs a pen and paper.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
(dictating)  
Understood. Will keep Americans  
flowing. Full stop.

Martin enjoys this little moment of statecraft to which he  
was born.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
(to Aide)  
Would you agree the Americans are  
"flowing"?

MARTIN'S AIDE  
(impressed)  
Like molasses, sir.

MARTIN  
Better destroy the cable equipment  
after you send it.

**INT./EXT. CHANCERY BUILDING, US EMBASSY - NIGHT**

Another "stick" of 40 Vietnamese are combined with 10  
remaining Americans and other Westerners, then guided up the  
fire stairs towards the roof.

On the roof, Bauer oversees the filling of the helos. Each  
waiting pilot asks him the same question:

BERRY  
General Carey wants to know how  
many Americans left.

Bauer nods towards Valdez' Chalkboard. Valdez has just  
updated it to read: **US: 200**.

BAUER  
Two hundred.

Valdez POCKETS THE CHALK and walks away.

**QUICK PILOT MONTAGE:**

This repeats itself several times as Sea Knights land.

-- Pilot #1 checks the board: **US: 200**

-- Pilot #2 checks the board: **US: 200**

-- Berry lands again and checks the board: **US: 200**

Berry cracks a knowing smile.

BERRY  
(to Bauer)  
I'll pass it on.

Follow Lady Ace 09 back into the skies towards

**EXT. DECK, USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

Berry stands before General Carey:

GENERAL CAREY  
God dammnit! The number never  
changes!

BERRY  
Must be some stragglers still  
reaching the embassy, sir.

GENERAL CAREY  
Don't play cute with me, son. Those  
Marines are marching to their own  
tune, and I'm pulling the plug.

**INT. KISSINGER'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON DC - 2 PM LOCAL TIME**

Kissinger speaks to General Carey.

GENERAL CAREY  
I share your concern, Mr.  
Secretary. This is the number we  
are getting from our pilots.

KISSINGER  
The President wants this operation  
completed. Right. Now.

**EXT. DECK, USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

An exhausted Berry finishes wolfing down some chow as he  
inspects his Lady Ace 09 and Deck Hands re-fuel her.

General Carey prowls the deck with his Entourage. Grabs Berry by the lapels of his flight jacket.

GENERAL CAREY  
You like to fly at night? Fine.  
Bring out the Ambassador. Now, god-damn-it. If the Corps isn't duly impressed by my stars and bars, you should know this comes straight from the White House.

BERRY  
Yes, sir.

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY BUILDING, US EMBASSY - 0300 HOURS**

Schuller lies flat on his back, lighting the descent of Berry's Lady Ace 09. Schuller rolls out of harm's way -- getting good at the job.

Schuller gets back on his feet. Approaches Berry when he sees the pilot's serious, dour look.

BERRY  
I got my orders. Time for the Ambassador to leave. And the rest of you Marines immediately after.

SCHULLER  
We still got more than a thousand folks downstairs.

BERRY  
If it were up to me... But like I said, I got my orders.

**SFX: POP of a champagne cork.**

**INT. "LAST BAR", FIFTH FLOOR, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

EMBASSY STAFF and JOURNALISTS, led by Beinecke, are getting good and drunk on the remains of the Embassy's alcohol supply.

BEINECKE  
(finishing a bottle)  
Leave nothing for the enemy!

Schuller finishes informing Kean and Martin.

SCHULLER  
Pilot up top's not lowering the gate until he has the Ambassador.  
(MORE)

SCHULLER (CONT'D)  
(to Martin)  
I'm sorry, sir. He means business.

There are still thirty hearty, drunk Americans waiting around, including Beinecke, Martin's Aide and an Older Embassy Worker or Journalist.

Kean looks at Martin, so weak he can barely stand:

KEAN  
(to Schuller)  
Tell him: "The Old Man'll be right up."

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY BUILDING - NIGHT**

Berry watches from the cockpit as the "Ambassador" is escorted by Martin's Aide and an ENTOURAGE of other Drunk Embassy Officials.

Kean gives the "Ambassador" a salute as the Entourage joins the Vietnamese Refugees on board Lady Ace 09.

Then Kean approaches Berry as the bird powers up for flight.

BERRY  
End of the road, Major. Sorry.

KEAN  
Thanks to you and your boys. We had a good run.

Berry gives him the thumb's up and takes off.

**EXT. DECK, USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

Berry brings Lady Ace 09 to ground. He gets out and salutes a waiting General Carey.

BERRY  
I've got the Ambassador, sir.

General Carey stands tall and waits for the Ambassador to disembark.

The Older Embassy Worker/Journalist stumbles down the helo's rear ramp with his drunken mates. General Carey, puzzled, turns to Berry.

BERRY (CONT'D)  
He's a bit in the sauce, I'm afraid.

General Carey turns crimson, seething with anger.

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER, USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

Berry enters sheepishly. General Carey hands him a headset.

BERRY  
(querulous)  
This is Lieutenant Gerry Berry.

PRESIDENT FORD (O.S.)  
(through headset)  
This is President Ford.

Berry stops himself in the middle of saluting his non-visible Commander-in-Chief.

BERRY  
Sir? Yes, sir!

PRESIDENT FORD (O.S.)  
One Gerry to another, you bring me Ambassador Martin. No delay, son.

BERRY  
No, sir. Absolutely not, sir.

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY BUILDING, US EMBASSY - MORNING**

Gray light. Schuller guides in Lady Ace 09 yet again.

BERRY  
The real ambassador this time. No tricks.

**INT. MARTIN'S OFFICE, CHANCERY BUILDING - MORNING**

Martin hunched over his desk. WHEEZING. Gaunt. He should be in a hospital.

He gets up. Takes down the photo of his dead son. Replaces it with a MAP OF HANOI.

Kean KNOCKS then ENTERS.

MARTIN  
(off map)  
Might as well make them feel at home when they get here.

Kean shows Martin more respect now than at any previous moment in their interactions.

KEAN  
It's time, sir.

MARTIN  
There are still evacuees in our care.

KEAN  
About 400. Forty South Koreans, the rest locals.

MARTIN  
Only seven more flights. I'll tell Henry.

Martin reaches for the phone, forgetting it was cut hours ago. Gets the dead line.

Kean gently takes the phone from Martin. Hangs it up.

KEAN  
The Vietnamese, they'll keep coming over the walls and through that gate as long as we're here, Mr. Ambassador. But time's run out.

MARTIN  
We failed them.

KEAN  
We did everything we could with what was left to us. You should be proud.

MARTIN  
I will be hated.

KEAN  
Not by me. Not by my men or anyone else who saw you today.

**"LAST BAR", THIRD FLOOR - NIGHT**

The last Embassy Workers and Journalists shuffle out, including Beinecke. Taking the remaining alcohol with them.

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY BUILDING - MINUTES LATER**

Valdez takes down the EMBASSY FLAG.

As Martin and Kean reach the roof, Valdez hands it to Martin. Salutes.

MARTIN  
Thank you, John.

The last American Civilians board the CH-53. No room for the Marines.

KEAN  
(breezy/off Martin's look)  
We'll be right behind you. Just  
gonna turn off the lights.

Martin's AIDE helps him towards last space on Lady Ace 09. Martin first waves him off, but accepts the assistance anyway when it's needed to get him on board.

Valdez and Kean watch Berry take off.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
(to Valdez)  
Send up the flare. Time to take the  
finger from the dike.

**EXT. U.S. EMBASSY - 0330 HOURS**

A STAR CLUSTER FLARE goes up into the gloaming.

**ON THE WALL - SAME TIME**

Norman and Babel look to the sky, then to each other.

As casually as possible, first Babel, then Norman remove the firing pins from their machine guns and back off the wall.

**FRONT GATE**

Schlager and Frain stagger their retreat. Word quickly spreads through the jittery Crowd.

**SWIMMING POOL**

A couple of Marines leave. Gevers remains posted all alone. The 400 waiting evacuees watch him carefully.

Gevers tries to make reassuring eye contact with as many people as possible. But their fear threatens to sink him.

GEVERS  
(to no one in particular)  
*I gotta take a leak.*

Gevers "casually" heads towards the Chancery. Once out of their sight, his face caves in to guilt and wretchedness.

**CHANCERY**

The 50 remaining Marines form three concentric rings around the entrance.

There's a moment of odd quiet as the Vietnamese, both inside and outside the embassy, digest the situation.

Kean holds his heart in his mouth. Waiting.

A time-bomb goes off inside all the Vietnamese at once. Loh Pat lets out a visceral SCREAM of panic and anger.

**OUTSIDE THE GATES**

The mob crashes through the gates and swarms the compound like World War Z zombies.

KEAN

Inside!

The other Marines retreat into the Chancery.

Valdez, Bauer, Frain, Schlager, Norman and Bennington remain outside to hold back the crowd.

Frain grabs the eight-foot STEEL BEAM used to bar the Chancery door, hoists it on his shoulders and swings it around and around, keeping the crowd at bay.

He knocks over several men.

Valdez and Schlager pull him inside the Chancery, where the beam is used to bolt the mahogany double-doors.

**INT. LADY ACE 09 - MORNING**

Berry flies the CH-53. Martin, sick and exhausted in the cargo hold.

The helo reaches the coastline:

CO-PILOT

And we are wet.

BERRY

(into headset)

This is Lady Ace 09. Tiger. Tiger.  
Tiger. The tiger is out of the  
cage.

**INT. COMMAND AND CONTROL, USS BLUE RIDGE - MORNING**

A CHEER goes up. General Carey takes congratulations.

COMM OPERATOR  
Roger that, Lady Ace 09.

**INT. FIRE STAIRS, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

Marines race upward, locking the security door on each floor behind them.

Norman stops on

**5TH FLOOR - NIGHT**

He sets off THERMITE GRENADES among the communications equipment.

**FIRE STAIRS - NIGHT**

Norman runs up the final flights. Bursts onto

**ROOF - CONTINUOUS**

Where he SLAMS the door behind him. And bolts it shut.

In the commotion, it wasn't obvious but now it is: THERE ARE NO HELICOPTERS.

KEAN  
They'll come for us.

**INT. PRESS ROOM, THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY**

Kissinger heads to the podium to address the gathered PRESS CORP.

KISSINGER  
Ladies and Gentlemen. I am relieved  
to report...

**EXT. DECK, USS BLUE RIDGE - NIGHT**

Lady Ace 09 lands. Carey shakes a weary Martin's hand, before the Ambassador is placed on a stretcher.

KISSINGER (V.O.)  
...that Ambassador Martin has  
safely and successfully left our  
embassy in Saigon without incident.

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY BUILDING - NIGHT**

Kean and his Marines scan the skies in vain.

KISSINGER (V.O.)

There are no more US  
representatives on the ground  
there, and the American presence in  
Vietnam is now officially over.

With no more helos in sight, Kean turns his attention to his men.

KEAN

Okay. Weapons check. Ammo check.  
Inventory the rest.

The Marines inventory their meager ammunition. Valdez checks in with Kean.

VALDEZ

Now I see why you're in those  
civvies. Gonna blend right in with  
that rabble down there when the  
time comes.

KEAN

What, and give you an excuse to  
shoot me for getting you into this  
mess? I don't think so.

VALDEZ

Then I guess we're stuck with each  
other.

KEAN

Guess so.

**EXT. CHANCERY - NIGHT**

The crowd pounds on the mighty doors, unable to bust through.

Loh Pat looks around. Pushes himself out of the crowd. He locates a FIRE TRUCK which he hot wires. He BLASTS the truck's siren. The crowd disperses and he smashes the fire truck straight into, and through, the Chancery doors.

**INT./EXT. CHANCERY - NIGHT**

The mob floods inside and up the stairs.

**INT. FIRE STAIRS, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

The weight of the crowd easily busts the security doors on each floor of their hinges.

**INT. ROOF, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

The mob reaches the steel-enforced door that opens on to the roof.

The door has a glass viewing portal roughly 2' x 1'.

Schuller stands guard on the roof. Makes a big deal of brandishing his rifle.

INTERCUT WITH:

**EXT. ROOF - NIGHT**

Schuller can see their faces: some furious, some desperate, some pleading.

The mob, including Loh Pat, smashes the small window.

HANDS thrust beseechingly and threateningly, through. Some try to unlock the door. Schuller pushes their wrists down onto the broken glass shards.

Hands retreat in pain, only to be replaced by other hands. Schuller throws tear gas grenades through the window, as needed, to temporarily subdue the crowd. It's not pleasant work, and it effects the normally stolid Marine.

**ROOF - 0530 HOURS**

The scene has grown momentarily quiet.

Still no helos.

Valdez works a bulky CNK "Clink" handheld radio.

VALDEZ  
(into Clink)  
Task Force 47, this is the US  
Embassy. Over.

Valdez presses the headphones to his ear,

VALDEZ (CONT'D)  
(into Clink)  
Roger that. Standing by.  
(to Marines)  
They're sending more helos. Just  
had to refuel.

Sullivan looks at Gevers/off Valdez: "What the hell is he doing?"

SULLIVAN

You know that tin can's got a range  
of maybe 5 clicks, right Top?

VALDEZ

Hold a sec...

(pretending to receive  
message)

The fleet says they're coming for  
everyone but you, Rock Steady.  
They're making you the new  
Ambassador.

Schlager LAUGHS. Sullivan doesn't find it so funny.

**ONE HOUR LATER**

The mood has grown somber. Then a distance WHIRRING.

**EXT. ROOF, CHANCERY - NIGHT**

A single CH-46 arrives on the roof.

It's immediately clear to Sullivan:

SULLIVAN

Only one chopper? Not gonna be  
enough.

Kean looks to the skies for another helo. Then back to  
Sullivan, who shakes his head: "I don't think so."

Kean grabs Valdez.

KEAN

Your best nine men. Everyone else  
on board.

As Valdez starts to move off, Kean grabs his sleeve:

KEAN (CONT'D)

Have 'em leave their weapons with  
us.

Marines board the helo. As it takes off, we are left with the  
LAST 11 MARINES:

KEAN, VALDEZ, SULLIVAN, BAUER, SCHULLER, SCHLAGER, NORMAN,  
GEVERS, BABEL, FRAIN and BENNINGTON.

FRAIN

Finally, some goddamn peace and  
quiet.

But nobody laughs.

**LATER**

Everything left with their own thoughts. Scattered across the roof.

Sullivan takes the chalk from Valdez' Board. Doesn't bother erasing the **US: 50**. Just crosses out the "50" and writes "11" next to it.

Valdez gives up his radio act. Chucks the worthless metal over the roof edge and sits next to Kean.

KEAN

I do two tours. Following orders that cost a lot of people their lives. So this time I go my own way, thinking I can save some for a change. Only that makes me just another asshole giving orders that just might cost ten more good men theirs.

VALDEZ

You feel good about those tours?

KEAN

Nope.

VALDEZ

You feel good about what you did today?

KEAN

Yeah.

VALDEZ

So does every Marine on this roof.

Kean looks over the Marines under his command, believing Valdez's words.

VALDEZ (CONT'D)

You're a decent soldier. You're a better man.

At that moment, from his seated position, Kean sees the South Vietnamese flag LOWERED from nearby Do Trang Bridge. Kean jumps up and moves to the roof edge:

**DO TRANG BRIDGE**

The final shreds of the South Vietnamese army scatter as the NVA streams across the bridge and into the city center.

**ROOF**

Frain checks the action on his M-16.

FRAIN

Don't know about the rest of you,  
but I'm not going down without a  
fight.

SULLIVAN

And you figure that's your call,  
Private?

KEAN

No, Frain's entitled to his  
opinion. You all are. This hasn't  
exactly been a chain-of-command-  
type deal from the get-go and all  
I've done is back you all into a  
corner. So you boys take a vote.  
Majority rules.

Frain scrounges some pebbles. Hands them around. Kean walks over to Schuller, after the Private has "voted" with his pebble in Frain's helmet.

KEAN (CONT'D)

(off wound)

How's the pain?

SCHULLER

Nothing next to the idea we've been  
forgotten, sir.

(off Vietnamese)

I get it now. Why we're still here.  
No matter what happens, it's been  
an honor.

Kean gives him a "thank you" pat on the back. Then turns to Frain:

KEAN

What's the damage?

FRAIN

(counting pebbles)

It's unanimous, sir.

KEAN  
 (to Marines/off Frain)  
 You heard him, men.

Everybody prepares their weapons in earnest. Finds a good location to fend off either an attack from the street, roof door or the sky. Options are limited.

**DAWN - CONTINUOUS**

The Marines last shred of protection, darkness, erodes as the sun threatens to rise over the horizon.

**EXT. VU LANG BRIDGE - SAME TIME**

The NVA Army is across. And now but a block away.

**EXT. ROOFTOP - SAME TIME**

Valdez, anxious, looks to Kean: "What do we do?" Kean betrays nothing.

Sullivan hears it first...

The faintest WHIR. Then, a dark speck on the horizon slowly resolves into an incoming CHINOOK.

KEAN  
 How about it, boys? Ready to go  
 home?

The CH-46 lands on the roof. Schuller throws a few more gas canisters through the door window. Buying time to join the others at the helo.

The mob bursts onto the roof. Swarm towards the helo pad.

**INT. CH-46 - CONTINUOUS**

Schuller doesn't have it in him to gas the Vietnamese any more. So Schlager releases the remaining gas canisters, only the ROTOR WASH causes the gas to fill the helo instead.

The pilot struggles to take off. Valdez falls out of helo. Nobody notices. But Kean does a headcount...

KEAN  
 (screaming over rotors)  
 Where's Valdez?!

Valdez's HANDS are spotted clinging to the half-closed ramp. Babel and Bennington pull him inside.

Helo finally takes off, leaving Loh Pat and the mob grasping at air.

**EXT. SAIGON - DAWN**

Over the city the helo flies. Kean sees the city on fire. And an NVA tank crash through the Presidential Palace gates.

**EXT. OVER PACIFIC OCEAN - DAWN**

Kean sees the fuel gage reading EMPTY.

KEAN  
We're running on fumes.

CHINOOK PILOT  
(laughing)  
We've been bare-assing it for 19 hours straight. Low fuel doesn't even register on the white knuckle scale.

**EXT. DECK, USS BLUE RIDGE - DAWN**

The helo comes to rest.

Kean and his Marines set foot on the deck. Met by General Carey.

Kean salutes.

GENERAL CAREY  
Are you Major Kean?

KEAN  
Yes, sir.

GENERAL CAREY  
Not some imposter?

The General betrays no amusement.

KEAN  
No, sir.

GENERAL CAREY  
That was some fine work.

KEAN  
Just doing my job.

GENERAL CAREY  
(pushing)  
"Just following orders."

KEAN  
Something like that, sir.

General Carey gives a slight nod, then heads off as a smiling Captain Berry approaches.

Kean smiles back, extends his hand and... WHUNK. Berry clocks him across the chin with a right hook.

BERRY  
You lying asshole.

Then Berry smiles again. Wraps his arm around him affectionately.

BERRY (CONT'D)  
Now let's go find a drink.

**LATER**

Valdez watches May Li arrive from a Transport Boat. Her Family behind her.

They embrace.

VALDEZ  
Good to see you, baby.

MAY LI  
Good to see you, Big John.

Valdez doesn't protest the name. Now he owns it.

He looks over her family. He's moved to see: they're tired, weak and without possessions of any kind. But they made it.

**INT. SICK BAY, USS BLUE RIDGE - DAY**

Kean finds Martin in bed. Completely spent. On an IV drip.

MARTIN  
How'd we do?

KEAN  
Best we could.

MARTIN  
No. How many we save?

Beat.

KEAN  
More than six thousand souls.

Martin can barely process the number.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
Won't bring your son back.

Martin closes his eyes to rest.

MARTIN  
But not bad for a day's work.

**PHONE BANK**

Kean stands in line with others.

COMMUNICATIONS GRUNT  
Number?

KEAN  
The first is--

COMMUNICATIONS GRUNT  
One call per person.

KEAN  
Well, I gotta make three.

COMMUNICATIONS GRUNT  
One per man. General's orders.

KEAN  
I'm making three.

COMMUNICATIONS GRUNT  
(off long line)  
Fine. You wanna tell them that, be  
my guest.

The Grunt is surprised when Kean takes him up on the suggestion:

KEAN  
(to room)  
I'm going to make three calls.  
First to my wife, who I just found  
out is pregnant and the next two to  
the parents of the last Marines to  
die in Vietnam, promising I'll get  
their bodies home. Anyone got a  
problem with that?

SILENCE fills the room.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
(to Grunt/taking phone)  
I'll make the calls myself. And if  
you wanna tell the General, be my  
guest.

The Marines enjoy a much-needed LAUGH as the Grunt backs off.

Kean finishes dialing.

KEAN (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Hey babe... No, I'm fine. Heard you  
got some big news...

**FADE OUT.**

**TEXT OVER BLACK**

"In the largest helicopter evacuation in history, 1,373 Americans and 5,595 Vietnamese were carried to safety over an 18-hour period."

PHOTOS OVER BLACK of each of the last 11 men out, alongside the actor who plays them. Accompanied by TEXT of their real names and ranks.

**TEXT OVER BLACK**

"Captain Gerald "Gerry" Berry received his third Distinguished Service Cross and second gold star for leadership and bravery during the evacuation.

Master Sergeant Juan Valdez lives in Oceanside, CA and is President of the Fall of Saigon Association.

Ambassador Graham Martin retired two years later. When he died in 1990 at the age of 77, his wife said: 'He started dying that day in 1975. It took fifteen years to finish the job.' He is buried in Section 7 of Arlington Cemetery along with his son.

Jim Kean retired in 1983, achieving the rank of Lt. Colonel. He died in 2008 at the age of 66, survived by his wife and three daughters."

**PHOTO OVER BLACK** of the last 11 Marines in the hold of the helicopter as they left Saigon on that final morning.