

THE PACIFIC

Episode One

by

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FOURTH DRAFT
(1st Yost Revisions)
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Scene numbered for scheduling purposes

He who fears he shall suffer, already suffers what he fears.

Montaigne

BLACK SCREEN

We hear the famous speech WINSTON CHURCHILL gave to the Joint Houses of Congress on December 26, 1941. A speech broadcast all over America and relayed to the British Isles. *

CHURCHILL (O.S.)

For the best part of twenty years the youth of Britain and America have been taught that war is evil and that it would never come again, which has been proved false. *

FADE IN ON:

1 INT. SLEDGE HOME - PARLOR - LATE AFTERNOON - DAY 1 *

EDWARD SLEDGE, 22, in an ARMY LIEUTENANT'S UNIFORM sits next to his father, DOCTOR SLEDGE, late 50s. Doctor Sledge cleans his pipe as he and his oldest son listen to a rebroadcast of Churchill's speech over the radio. *

A Christmas Tree stands in the corner. And a small pile of opened presents still lies around its base.

CHURCHILL (OVER RADIO)

For the best part of twenty years the youth of Germany, Japan and Italy have been taught that aggressive war is the noblest duty of the citizen, and that it should be begun as soon as the necessary weapons and organisation had been made... *

1A INT. SLEDGE HOME - EUGENE'S ROOM - SAME 1A *

A slim hardcover volume lies on a bed, near it a coonskin hat. HANDS grab the book and the hat and FOOTSTEPS run out of the room. *

1B INT. SLEDGE HOME - PARLOR - SAME 1B *

Churchill continues on the radio. *

CHURCHILL (O.S.) *

We have performed the duties and tasks of peace. They have plotted and planned for war. The forces ranged against us are enormous. They are bitter, they are ruthless. They have a vast accumulation of war weapons of all kinds. *

FOOTSTEPS hurry down the stairs. Dr. Sledge and Edward look up as a FIGURE glides past the doorway. *

EDWARD SLEDGE *

(slightly disparaging) *

Y'all might want to hear this. *

The figure stops, comes back. This is... *

EUGENE SLEDGE, 18. He has a sensitive, intelligent face. He fixes Edward with a look, but says nothing. Dr. Sledge puts a quieting hand on Edward's arm as Eugene continues on out of the house with his book and coonskin hat. *

2 EXT. SLEDGE HOME - FOLLOWING - DAY 2 *

Eugene pulls on the hat as he runs to his BIKE outside GEORGIA COTTAGE, the Sledge's impressive antebellum home complete with forty acres of land. *

CHURCHILL (V.O.)
They have highly trained, disciplined armies, navies, and air services. They will stop at nothing that violence or treachery can suggest... *

A black man, the Sledge Major Domo, TEE, 50s, is fixing the wiring on an outdoor Christmas light. *

Eugene comes by, pushing his bike, the book stuck down the back of his pants. *

EUGENE
Don't electrocute yourself, Tee. *

TEE
I'll try not to, Mr. Eugene. *

Eugene pushes his bike and mounts it running. *

Tee sees something, calls out, just for Eugene's ears. *

TEE
Not too fast. You've got an audience. *

EUGENE
Too bad. *

Eugene pedals off, fast as he can, down the long drive. *

A DIMINUTIVE WOMAN *

Is at the door. This is MARY FRANK SLEDGE, Eugene's mother, five feet tall and the definition of a Steel Magnolia. *

MARY FRANK SLEDGE
Eugene! *

Eugene's faithful Spaniel, DEACON, runs out the door. *

MARY FRANK SLEDGE

Don't pedal so hard!

*

Eugene ignores her, keeps pedalling fast.

*

EUGENE

Deacon! Come on!

*

*

Deacon chases Eugene down the drive. As Eugene rides, the Christmas lights lining the drive come on.

*

*

CHURCHILL (O.S.)

After the outrages they have committed upon us at Pearl Harbour, in the Pacific Islands, in the Philippines, in Malaya, and in the Dutch East Indies, they must now know that the stakes for which they have decided to play are mortal.

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SUPER: December 26, 1941

*

3 EXT. MOBILE COUNTRYSIDE - SUNSET - DAY

3

Eugene rides down a country road, by a line of trees, Deacon keeping pace.

*

*

CHURCHILL (V.O.)

*

What kind of a people do they think we are? Is it possible they do not realise that we shall never cease to persevere against them until they have been taught a lesson which they and the world will never forget?

*

*

We hear the O.S. CLAPPING and CHEERING of Congress as Churchill finishes his speech.

*

*

3A EXT. MOBILE - SPANISH FORT - SUNSET - DAY

3A

*

Eugene rides up to the EARTHEN BULWARKS of SPANISH FORT, the site of one of the last battles of the Civil War. He gets off his bike, looks around, surprised.

*

*

*

VOICE (O.S.)

You looking for me?

Sledge turns to see SID PHILLIPS, 17 (looking 15), step out from behind a tree. He is tall, irrepressible and Eugene's best friend. He grins, holding something in his hand and it is sparking. Before Sledge can react, the thing starts shooting out balls of fire -- it's a Roman candle.

*

PHILLIPS

Merry Christmas, Ugin!

Sledge dodges the fireballs. Sid tosses Sledge another Roman candle and a box of matches.

4 EXT. MOBILE BAY - COUNTRYSIDE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY 4 *

Sledge and Phillips are dodging behind trees, having a battle with the Roman candles.

5 EXT. MOBILE BAY - COUNTRYSIDE - MINUTES LATER - DAY 5 *

Sledge and Phillips toss the still-smoldering blackened husks of the Roman candles into the bay. They hit the water with a hiss.

PHILLIPS

You get anything good?

EUGENE

Just a shirt. Mother laid down the law.
Only one present each with the war and all. *

PHILLIPS

My brother got a terrier puppy. Named him
Semper Fi. Can you believe that?

EUGENE

Here.

Eugene pulls a paperback out his back pocket, hands it to Sid, who takes it, reads the cover.

PHILLIPS

"The Collected Poems of Rudyard Kipling."
Thank you, Gene. But I didn't... *

EUGENE

(waves him off)

It's not for Christmas. It's just if you
need something to read, on the train or
wherever.

PHILLIPS

You'll be going soon enough. *

A moment. Eugene sits down on the bulwark. Crestfallen. He
takes off his coonskin hat. Sid sits by him. *

PHILLIPS

He say no again? *

(Sledge nods)

He listen to it or just say no? *

EUGENE

He listened to it. *

PHILLIPS

Your father is a good doctor and all, but I still don't see how you can have a weak heart, the paces I've seen you put it through.

*
*
*

EUGENE

He says Edward can fight for the family.
(beat, bitter)
I swear he wears his uniform in the bath.

*
*
*

PHILLIPS

You're eighteen, Eugene. You don't need your father's permission.

EUGENE

I can't go against him, Sid.
(beat)
Write me as soon as you get to Parris Island.

PHILLIPS

I will.

The two friends sit in an awkward silence. Already, there is distance between them. A gap that will grow deeper and wider.

Eugene looks through the trees at the BAY, glowing in the dying light. Deacon is by his side. From the depths of his soul:

*
*

EUGENE

Damn Sid...I'm gonna miss it.

Sid doesn't know what to do or say, or, really, where to look, so he looks down.

*
*

CLOSE ON THE KIPLING BOOK

*

In his hands.

*

MATCH CUT TO*

CLOSE ON THE KIPLING BOOK

*

In Sid's hands. SOUND rises -- a chugging diesel, far off. Dozens of VOICES, activity. PULL BACK to reveal we are...

*
*

6-8 OMIT

6-8

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8A INT. GEORGE F. ELLIOT - BELOW DECKS - NIGHT

8A

*

SID PHILLIPS is among a **HUNDRED MARINES**, by their bunks, packing their rucksacks. Cigarette smoke hazes the air. Most of the "Men" are under the age of TWENTY.

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*
*

We see a few older "Old Breed" Marines. Sid looks a little older *
himself, and a lot fitter. He's looking at the Kipling volume, *
trying to decide whether or not to pack it. *

SUPER: **Eight months later.** *

HOOSIER (O.S.) *
What is that? *

RUNNER (O.S.) *
That's what they call a book, Hoosier. *

Phillips looks over at three Marines also packing gear. *

BUD CONLEY ("RUNNER"), a stocky, dark-haired kid from Buffalo; LOU*
JUERGINS ("CHUCKLER"), a big, blond and beefcake from Chicago; and*
BILL SMITH ("HOOSIER"), a whip-thin, acerbic mid-Westerner. *

HOOSIER *
(sarcastic) *
Is that what that is? I've heard of 'em, *
but I've never actually seen one. *

CHUCKLER *
Johnny Reb. Give it here. *

Phillips hands it out to Chuckler, but Runner takes it. *

RUNNER *
You wouldn't be interested, Chuckler. It *
doesn't have pictures. *

Chuckler laughs. Runner flips open the book. Hoosier eyes the *
pages. *

HOOSIER *
You brought a book of *poems*? *

RUNNER *
It's Kipling. *

CHUCKLER *
Rudyard Kipling? *

HOOSIER *
No, Chuckler, Billy Bob Kipling. Yes, *
Rudyard. *

Chuckler laughs. Runner looks at Phillips. *

RUNNER *
"Gunga Din" in here? *

Phillips nods. *

CHUCKLER

Helluva movie.

RUNNER

What's that other poem? His other famous one?

VOICE (O.S.)

"If."

They all turn to look at their Alpha Male. A 21-year-old Marine, lying on his bunk, stuff still unpacked. This is...

ROBERT LECKIE

Nickname "Lucky." A stocky 5'8" with reddish blond hair, Leckie is cocky and quick tempered. He acts like a blowhard to cover up a sensitive poetic soul.

LECKIE

(from memory)

"If... you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs... then for God's sake stay down."

They laugh. Leckie gestures for the book. Runner tosses it to him.

LECKIE

(to Phillips)

You gonna pack it?

HOOSIER

Pack it?

LECKIE

Who knows when we're gonna see this tub o' junk again, and who the hell knows how long we're really gonna be there. Nothing wrong with having something to read. Beats just sitting around picking your nose and scratching.

(to Phillips)

You don't want it, I'll take it.

Phillips thinks about it. And then, from over the loudspeaker, there's the sound of a bosun's whistle and then:

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Attention all hands. Attention all hands.

Everyone quiets, but continues packing. Leckie holds the book out to Phillips, takes it back -- well?

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Stand by for an address by Father Keogh.

Phillips looks at Leckie, nods and reaches for the book.

FATHER KEOGH (V.O.)

Good evening, men. I'd like to read to you on this night from the 144th Psalm.

Leckie hesitates for a second, then tosses the Kipling to Phillips.

FATHER KEOGH (V.O.)

"Praise be to the Lord my Rock,
who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.

Phillips puts the book into his rucksack.

FATHER KEOGH (V.O.)

"He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.

Leckie sighs, gets up and starts packing.

8B INT. GEORGE F. ELLIOT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

8B

A NAVY COOK, lit cigarette in his lips, works his way through a five-foot stack of egg crates, breaking the eggs into a huge steel mixing bowl.

FATHER KEOGH (V.O.)

"O Lord, what is man that you care for him,
the son of man that you think of him? Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.

8C INT. GEORGE F. ELLIOT - ORDNANCE MAGAZINE - NIGHT

8C

NAVY CREWMEN are loading artillery shells onto transport carts. No one's smoking here.

FATHER KEOGH (V.O.)

"Part your heavens, O Lord, and come down;
touch the mountains, so that they smoke.
Send forth lightning and scatter the enemies. Shoot your arrows and rout them.

8D INT. GEORGE F. ELLIOT - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

8D

A NAMELESS NAVY LIEUTENANT has stopped, alone, eyes closed, head bowed in prayer, mouthing the words.

FATHER KEOGH (V.O.)

"Reach down your hand from on high;
deliver me and rescue me from the mighty
waters, from the hands of foreigners
whose mouths are full of lies,
whose right hands are deceitful.

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8E INT. GEORGE F. ELLIOT - BELOW DECKS - NIGHT

8E *

Leckie is now packing his rucksack. He, too, mouths the words of
the remainder of the Psalm.

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*

FATHER KEOGH (V.O.)

"I will make music to you, to the One who
gives victory to kings, who delivers his
servant David from the deadly Sword." Amen.

*
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*

Leckie crosses himself.

*

FATHER KEOGH (V.O.)

God Bless and stay safe tomorrow.

*
*

The speakers go silent and the room noise picks up.

*

CORP. SMOOTHFACE (O.S.)

Leckie. Didn't know you were Catholic.

*
*

Leckie looks up to see CORPORAL SMOOTHFACE, called that because of
his absurdly young visage. Next to him is PFC JONES. Smaller
than Smoothface, he is his loyal factotum.

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*
*

LECKIE

Who said I was Catholic?

*
*

CORP. SMOOTHFACE

You know the words.

*
*

LECKIE

Hell, I know the words to "O Canada,"
doesn't make me a Canuck.

*
*
*

RUNNER

What's wrong with being a Catholic? Hell,
I'd be an Aztec if it'd help.

*
*
*

LECKIE

You would, wouldn't you. Probably cut my
heart out given half a chance.

*
*
*

RUNNER

I'd go for your brain. You wouldn't miss
it.

*
*
*

CORP. SMOOTHFACE

(won't let it go)
Isn't that a St. Christopher's medal around
your neck?

*
*
*
*

Leckie reaches into his shirt, feigns surprise, pulls out a St.
Christopher's medal.

*
*

LECKIE

Will you look at that? Where the hell did
that come from?

*
*
*

CORP. SMOOTHFACE

We already got here, guess you won't need it
any longer.

(off Leckie's look)

He's the patron saint of travelers.

*
*
*
*
*

LECKIE

Among other things.

*
*

CORP. SMOOTHFACE

Such as?

*
*

LECKIE

Let's see...
(racking brain)
Bachelors.

*
*
*
*

CHUCKLER

That fits. Mostly bachelors in this tub.

*
*

RUNNER

You married, Corporal?

*
*

CORP. SMOOTHFACE

(ignoring, to Leckie)
What else?

*
*
*

LECKIE

Uh... Hailstorms.

*
*

RUNNER

Don't get a lot of those, this part of the
world.

*
*
*

HOOSIER

Then I guess it worked.

*
*

LECKIE

And... toothache.

*
*

CORP. SMOOTHFACE

So, you're a bachelor afraid of getting a toothache in a hailstorm?

Jones laughs.

LECKIE

No, there's one other thing. See, Corporal, St. Christopher is also the patron saint of sudden death.

That wipes the smile right off Smoothface. There's absolutely nothing he can say to that. Leckie just smiles, puts the medal back into his shirt.

AIDE (O.S.)

Ten-HUT!

The MEN all stomp to attention as one organism...

...except Leckie who stands just a bit slower than the rest. His nonchalance is intentional; he hates all officers on principle. Smoothface and Jones glare at him, which only makes him straighten up even slower.

Into the hold strides Company CO CAPTAIN JAMESON. A bit of a dandy, he is carrying a RIDING CROP and has his pants tucked into his boots Jodhpur style.

CAPTAIN JAMESON

Men, I've got some good news. For the invasion tomorrow, Colonel Gates has decided that our battalion should wear our khakis and not our dungarees. The Colonel wants to be able to distinguish us from the other battalions during the landing. I could have told him that we won't need different colored uniforms to distinguish us, that we will be distinguished by our actions.

Jameson thought that was a pretty good line and he gets a few cheers, but not as much as he expected. He plows on.

CAPTAIN JAMESON

Nonetheless we will wear our khakis proudly, and we will be the smartest, sharpest-looking Marines on that beach tomorrow.

8F INT. GEORGE F. ELLIOT - BELOW DECKS - NIGHT - LATER

8F

The Marines are all trying to sleep. A few have managed it -- we hear a couple snores -- but most are wide awake.

Phillips is lying on his side. He has a pencil out and is scribbling on one of the blank front pages of the Kipling book.

PHILLIPS (V.O.)

To whoever finds this book, please get it to my family in Mobile, Alabama. Tell them I love them and did my best to make them proud and not embarrass them.

Phillips finds tears running down his face. He is suddenly ashamed of his emotion and what he's doing. He tears the page out of the book and crumples it up.

We MOVE OFF Phillips and come to the sleeping form of Leckie, also on his side. His body moves in slow rhythmic breathing. But when we come around to see his face, we see his eyes are open. All his easy bravado and devil-may-care attitude is gone.

And as we hold on him we hear a sound, coming in from a distance, quickly overwhelming the low rumble of the diesel, building into the shrieking fury of a Naval artillery barrage.

SERGEANT STEWART (V.O.)

SECOND WAVE! H COMPANY! FIRST PLATOON OVER THE SIDE!

9 EXT. GEORGE F. ELLIOT - DAWN

9

ANGLE ON THE NETS

Hanging down the side of the ship. Phillips, Chuckler, Runner, Corporal Smoothface and Hoosier are already on the nets. It's hellishly difficult to go down them with fifty pounds of gear.

Navy shells are screaming overhead, headed for a destination we do not yet see. There's the regular percussive WHOOMP as the Elliot's big guns fire.

Marines keep coming over the top.

LECKIE

Appears, looks down.

LECKIE'S POV

Phillips and the other Marines slowly moving down toward their Higgins boat.

Twenty feet along, a Marine slips from the net and falls into boat below him, breaking his leg. He SCREAMS in agony.

A RATTLED LECKIE

Hoists the machine gun over one shoulder, and like an old crab, slowly turns and starts down the net. *

His movements are awkward. His boots scabble to find the net. *

LECKIE'S POV

Of his HANDS gripping the net, knuckles white. *

He looks down over his left shoulder at Phillips right below him, descending with his Mortar Tube. Chuckler is below Phillips. *

Runner reaches the bottom of the net and jumps down into the rising and sinking Higgins Boat to join Hoosier, Smoothface and the others already down in the boat, rising toward him, then falling away on the ocean swell. *

LECKIE

Continues down. He almost loses his balance and has to GRIP the net tightly for a second. His feet dangle... then find a purchase on the net. *

Jones STEPS on Leckie's FINGERS.

LECKIE
MY HAND!

JONES
HURRY UP!

Jones' boot lifts momentarily, and Leckie continues down the net. Focusing hard on his hands and feet. He pauses four feet above the Higgins Boat. *

ANGLE ON HIGGINS BOAT

Those four feet seem like fifty. The Higgins boat heaves in the early morning swell, so that sometimes it's two feet from us...and sometimes six or seven feet. *

LECKIE JUMPS

His boots clumping down on the wooden deck. Chuckler stabilizes him. He shoots a relieved grin at Runner as Jones clumps down. *

10 EXT. HIGGINS BOAT - LATER - DAY

10

Leckie, still holding his Machine Gun, is standing next to Chuckler who holds the tripod. Their boat is CIRCLING. *

Hoosier and Runner are behind Leckie with the rest of First Platoon of H Company.

Phillips is behind Leckie, packed in with THIRTY other Marines. The oldest of them is 22. The youngest is 16.

Leckie looks out to his right from his circling boat. He sees... *

THE INVASION FLEET *

FIFTY SHIPS are anchored in the Channel. The *Elliott* rides low in* the water.

They have to yell to be heard over the noise of American DIVE BOMBERS plastering the beach and strafing the Island.

LECKIE

LEAST WE'RE OFF THAT RUST BUCKET. *

Chuckler smiles. Leckie sees Smoothface looking at him, his eyes * hard and bright, the panic very close to the surface.

Smoothface reaches back for his canteen. Jones gets it for him, * hands it to him. Smoothface takes a swig and hands it back to * Jones, who returns the canteen to the back of Smoothface's belt.

Phillips looks back at Runner who is trying to skip SILVER HALF DOLLARS into the waves. Runner sees Phillips staring at him. He carefully and deliberately flings another coin overboard.

A RED FLARE arcs up into the sky from a nearby CRUISER. *

LT. CORRIGAN *

FIRST WAVE! *

The noise from the Higgins flotilla increases. Leckie sneaks a * peak over the Marines in front of him.

LECKIE'S POV *

The FIRST WAVE of attackers peels off from the circling boats and * deploy in a STRAIGHT LINE. *

Leckie catches a glimpse of an AMERICAN FLAG on the back of one of* the First Wave's Higgins Boats, snapping backward, His eye takes * in the sight of hundreds of those flags, in a line, as the First * Wave heads in. *

LECKIE *

(forced bravado) *

HERE COME THE MARINES YOU SONSOFBITCHES! *

The others are too absorbed by their growing apprehension to join * in. *

LECKIE

Cranes to get a better view as their boat continues to circle.
And now, finally, he and the others see their destination.

11 EXT. SHORES OF GUADALCANAL - DAY

11

The palm trees catch the morning light and sway in the breeze.
Greasy columns of SMOKE rise into the air.

SUPER: Guadalcanal, August 7, 1942

12 EXT. HIGGINS BOAT - DAY

12

Leckie can't take his eyes off the sight. LIEUTENANT CORRIGAN
yells out:

LT. CORRIGAN
GET DOWN! GET YOUR HEADS DOWN!

Leckie and the others duck down. Leckie looks up, sees...

ANOTHER RED FLARE

Arcing through the sky.

LT. CORRIGAN
HERE WE GO!

Leckie and the others can feel their boat straighten out and its
engine surge. A MARINE starts to peek out over the front ramp.

LT. CORRIGAN
KEEP YOUR GODDAMN HEADS DOWN!

The Marine obeys, hunkers down.

All Leckie can see is the back of the guy in front of him.

LT. CORRIGAN
GET OFF THE BEACH AS FAST AS YOU CAN! WATCH
OUT FOR GAS ATTACKS!

The men nod, hunkering down without hearing anything he says.

Chuckler's jaws rapidly chew on a stick of gum.

Phillips closes his eyes. Murmurs a prayer.

Runner leans close to Leckie. Yells into his ear.

RUNNER
I COULD USE A STIFF ONE 'BOUT NOW.

Leckie grins...but it quickly turns into a grimace. *

CLOSE ON LECKIE

He starts to take deep breaths. Trying to psych himself for the carnage he imagines waiting for him on shore. He tightens his helmet strap. *

His eyes widen as he hears the burp of A BROWNING AUTOMATIC RIFLE (BAR) coming from the beach to their right. They hear three rifle shots. Another shot. *

Leckie reaches down and takes out his St. Christopher's medal. It suddenly seems woefully inadequate. He snorts, shakes his head, shoves it back into his shirt. *

WIDER

Corporal Smoothface continues licking his lips. *

Chuckler chews his gum, his knuckles white on the machine gun tripod. *

Runner hums a POPULAR TUNE quietly and mechanically. *

Phillips tries hard not to vomit. *

LT. CORRIGAN

GET READY!

The men all around Leckie heft their '03 Springfields. Tamping down their rising terror. Many breathing in shallow little gasps. Whatever is coming is coming now. *

CLOSE ON LECKIE'S FACE

He reaches up to tightens his already tight helmet strap. He realizes what he's doing and stops, just as they all jerk forward as their Higgins Boat grinds up on the sand. *

13 EXT. HIGGINS BOAT/BEACH - GUADALCANAL - DAY 13 *

WITH LECKIE *

The boat ramp SLAPS DOWN. *

Leckie is among the first ten off the boat. He jumps into the surf and falls. Dragging the barrel of the .30 Machine Gun out of the water, he gets up and runs after Chuckler. *

Phillips is to his left, humping the Mortar Tube up the beach.

LECKIE'S POV

DISJOINTED IMAGES of sand. Coconut trees. Greenery. Men jumping*
out of Higgins Boats. A plane streaking overhead. *

Men are running on all sides of Leckie.

We hear: a GUNSHOT. Leckie's RAPID BREATHING. Yells. Another *
BAR fires. *

LECKIE

Flops down into the sand next to Chuckler and Phillips. *

Runner and Hoosier dive down to his left. Leckie looks up, *
squinting in terror at... *

THE COCONUT TREES

Expecting to see Japanese machine guns spitting death at them. *
Banzai charges. Tanks. Anything. *

But all he sees is... *

THE FIRST WAVE OF MARINES

Sitting in the shade. Many on their helmets. Several have cut *
open COCONUTS. Some are laughing at the Second Wave flopping down*
into the sand. *

There is no opposition.

LECKIE

Looks around. Sees more Marines milling around. He stands up, *
feeling stupid. *

A Marine in the First Wave approaches, tosses him a coconut. *

MARINE

Welcome to Guadalcanal.

CHUCKLER

Where the hell are the Japs?

The Marine shrugs and walks back. *

CORPORAL SMOOTHFACE

Comes by in a crouch with his weapon at the ready, Jones right *
beside him like a loyal terrier. *

CORPORAL SMOOTHFACE

Get off the beach! Get up in the trees!

(sees Leckie's coconut)

You wanna get poisoned!? They coulda pumped
'em full of poison!

*
*
*

LECKIE

I have no doubt the Japs poisoned a billion
coconuts.

*
*
*

Smoothface and Jones give him a look, move on.

*

Leckie moves off up the beach with Chuckler and the others. They
see Lieutenant Corrigan kneeling with the Company Commander
Jameson, still replete with Jodhpurs and riding crop, examining a
small hand drawn MAP. Corrigan leaves Jameson, comes up to Leckie
and the others.

*
*
*
*
*

CHUCKLER

Where're the Japs?

*
*

CORRIGAN

That's what we're supposed to find out. You
have three minutes to clean the sand out of
your weapons then we're going inland.

*
*
*
*

14 EXT. LEVER BROTHERS COCONUT PLANTATION - LATER - DAY

14

Spread out, H Company walks through the Lever Bros. Coconut
Plantation, the trees planted in tidy rows.

*

Behind the skirmish line, we see Leckie, the machine gun perched
on his shoulder. Chuckler carries the tripod. Hoosier carries
BOXES of AMMO. Runner humps the WATER CAN and HOSE for the water
cooled machine gun.

*
*
*
*

Corporal Smoothface walks slightly ahead with Jones.

Phillips lugs the MORTAR TUBE behind them with the rest of his
Mortar Squad.

*
*

PHILLIPS

(whispers)

This must be the coconut plantation on the
map.

*
*
*
*

HOOSIER

(whispers, sarcastic)

Really? How do you figure that? Maybe
coconut trees naturally grow in rows.

*
*
*
*

LECKIE

(terse whisper)

And right now there could be a Jap behind every one of them listening to you idiots. *

CORPORAL SMOOTHFACE

(hiss whisper)

Quiet!

They do as they're told as Corporal Smoothface raises his hand. They stop to look at a hastily abandoned Japanese MESS AREA. The tables still have bowls of rice on them.

Jones goes over and touches a bowl of rice. *

JONES

(whispers)

Cold. *

Smoothface nods. Motions them forward and forward they go. *

15 EXT. KUNAI GRASSLAND - DAY 15 *

The Company walks through tall SIX FOOT KUNAI GRASS that sighs and waves in the breeze. Not yet seeing the enemy is starting to work* on their strung out imaginations.

PHILLIPS *

His seventeen year old eyes warily move back and forth. *

SMOOTHFACE *

Licks his lips. He reaches for his canteen. Jones gets it for him. Smoothface takes a swig. Hands it back. *

LECKIE *

Sweats heavily, fighting down a sense of dread. *

16 EXT. GUADALCANAL JUNGLE - LATER - DAY 16 *

Leckie, Phillips, and the others come across a clearing and stop. *
In front of them is... *

THE JUNGLE *

An IMPLACABLE GREEN WALL of vegetation. *

They all look up at the looming TRIPLE CANOPY OF TREES. They are dwarfed by the green mass. Their unease is atavistic, as old as the human species itself. *

Corrigan motions them forward and they head into the jungle. *

17 EXT. JUNGLE - HOURS LATER - DAY

17

Leckie slips and staggers uphill under the weight of his pack and the .30 machine gun barrel. He is on a narrow "path" behind Chuckler as they move single file through the jungle. *

Runner and Hoosier struggle with their Boxes of ammo behind Leckie. All four have soaked through their dungarees with sweat. The jungle has swallowed up the rest of the Company. We can hear them, though, as they make an unnerving racket. *

Only a few shafts of light illuminate the creepers, huge twisting vines and leaves of the jungle. Giant tree trunks tower above them. The air is thick and hot. Everything is moist and rotting. *

The column STOPS. *

Leckie looks around nervously at the thick primeval undergrowth. The Japanese could be five feet away... and completely invisible. *

Leckie takes his canteen and drinks the last of it up. They are all exhausted and dehydrated. Swarms of mosquitos attack the men, who slap at the bugs. *

More men crowd in behind them, including Phillips, who, like all of them, is trying hard not to show his fear. *

Smoothface joins them, his eyes darting back and forth uncomfortably. Jones is not next to him. But he doesn't notice. *

CORP. SMOOTHFACE
(whispers)
Why'd we stop? *

Shrugs and head shakes -- no one knows. *

All along the line the exhausted men start to throw superfluous items of gear out into the Jungle. Mess kits. Boxes. Ammo.

Leckie shucks off his pack, unties his GAS MASK and throws it into the Jungle. Leckie hisses out a whisper to Runner.

LECKIE
Sure is good we got to wear our khakis. We blend in so well. *

A few look up at the jungle canopy above them, expecting the Japanese to drop on them like spiders. *

And then, for no discernible reason, the column starts moving again. Everyone gears up, starts walking. And then they notice the men in front of them are running, so they start running, too. *

Excitement and dread flow down the line -- why are they running? *
 What the hell is going on? And, then, from ahead of them, they *
 hear, incongruously, some muted whoops and SPLASHING. What the *
 hell...? *

18 EXT. RIVER - JUNGLE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY 18 *

Leckie comes through the dense foliage to find the company running*
 into a jungle river. Like the others, Leckie drops his gear on *
 the bank and falls FACE FIRST into the cool sunlight-dappled *
 stream. *

All around him the men wade in and drink deeply.

Lt. Corrigan drinks out of his Helmet as he HISS-YELLS at the men
 to stay alert.

LT. CORRIGAN

Quiet! Stay alert! Spread out!

Leckie turns over onto his back and lets the water flow into his
 mouth. The relief is blessed. He stares up at the sunlight.

Corporal Smoothface is crouched by the water, staring out at the *
 jungle with his rifle ready, his eyes darting back and forth. He *
 looks around for Jones but doesn't see him. *

CORP. SMOOTHFACE

(annoyed)

Where the hell is Jones?

CHUCKLER

Where the hell are the *Japs*? This goddamn
 island is so important why aren't they *
 fighting? *

LT. CORRIGAN

We didn't land on this hump to fight *
 mosquitoes. *

(staring into the jungle) *

They're out there. *

19 EXT. JUNGLE TRAIL - LATE AFTERNOON - DAY 19

The exhausted Company climbs a steep muddy slope. The jungle is *
 thinner here. Smoothface slides back down the line of men. No *
 longer annoyed, his face is tight with worry. *

CORP. SMOOTHFACE

Anybody seen Jones?

They shake their weary heads. *

20 EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

20

Leckie and Chuckler are hunkered down in a FOXHOLE. The .30 MG is*
set up between them. *

Both are straining to listen to the Jungle. Both as unnerved as
small boys on their first camping trip.

Chuckler feels something by his feet. He scoots back in terror,
whips out his BAYONET and jams it into something.

He lifts up an IMPALED SCORPION. He flings it into the Jungle.

They strain to decipher the sounds of the jungle. A BIRD calls *
out in the trees. Something RUSTLES below them. *

A RIFLE CRACKS

In the distance. Then two more shots in quick succession. *

ANGLE ON PHILLIPS

With wide open eyes, he moves to the edge of his foxhole and peers
out into the gloom, gripping his .45.

BACK TO LECKIE AND CHUCKLER

SOMETHING breaks out of the trees below their position. *

Chuckler racks a round into the gun and FIRES into the trees. *

More Marines around them FIRE indiscriminately. The jungle *
explodes with the sound of ordnance. *

SERGEANT STEWART

Runs down the line to their foxhole. *

SERGEANT STEWART
WHAT IS IT!

Both Leckie's and Chuckler's eyes are round with fear as they keep
firing their machine gun. Leckie feeding him the belt. *

CHUCKLER
SOMETHING'S OUT THERE!

Chuckler burns off a few more rounds. We hear calls for "cease- *
fire!" up and down their position. It is silent. *

They all listen for a moment. Nothing. *

SERGEANT STEWART

Goddamnit! I want fire discipline! Don't shoot at anything 'less you see it. Understood?

Chuckler and Leckie nod. Stewart clambers back up hill. *

They stare out again into the darkness.

They hear a RUSTLING in the jungle below them. *

They peer harder into the jungle. Hyped up and on edge. *

The RUSTLING gets louder. Chuckler swivels the gun just as *

SMOOTHFACE *

Crawls out of the Jungle. *

Chuckler and Leckie visibly slump with relief.

LECKIE

Jesus Christ! *

It is only now that they notice that Smoothface doesn't have his helmet on. His rifle is gone. He looks panicked.

CORP. SMOOTHFACE

Jones? *

He looks in their foxhole, then crawls past Phillips. *

It begins to RAIN. They pull out their ponchos and put them on. *

We can hardly see them in the dark. After a moment:

CHUCKLER

Lucky...

LECKIE

What? *

A beat. Chuckler whispers.

CHUCKLER

Maybe the Japs lit the hell out. All the shells we were pounding in. Maybe keeping the airfield just wasn't worth it to 'em and they got themselves the hell off this shithole. *

LECKIE

Well, all I can say is, if they did scoot,
it was pretty damn rude of them not to tell
us.

Chuckler snorts, grins. The two of them PEER OUT into the rainy
dark.

21 EXT. MARINES' LINE - LATER - NIGHT 21

The rain has stopped. Half of the platoon are asleep in their
foxholes. The other half stares into the Jungle.

PHILLIPS

Is asleep. He looks no more than twelve years old.

LECKIE AND CHUCKLER

Are both asleep. Their young faces are illuminated by a faint
reddish glow. There's a distant thunder.

Leckie stirs. Opens his eyes. He sits up and looks north.

22 EXT. NORTH SKY - NIGHT 22

LECKIE'S POV

The northern sky glows RED. A few WHITE STABS of FIRE light up
the clouds. GLOWING ARCS of shells cut red hot parabolas through
the night sky.

23 EXT. MARINES' LINE - LECKIE'S FOXHOLE - NIGHT 23

LECKIE

Elbows Chuckler. As he gets up and watches with Leckie, we hear
VOICES in the dark: "Look at that!" "Holy Shit..." etc.

24 EXT. NORTH SKY - NIGHT 24

LECKIE'S POV

The FLASHES OF LIGHT are more frequent. Red. White.

The BOOMS of distant explosions reach us as two WHITE SEARCHLIGHTS
STAB out into the night.

Then the sky gets VERY BRIGHT for a few moments, then dies.
Seconds later comes the CONCUSSIVE BOOM of a HUGE EXPLOSION.

25 EXT. MARINES' LINE - NIGHT 25 *

Leckie sees the leaves around them rustle from the shockwave. He and Chuckler look at each other -- what the hell? OTHERS are CHEERING quietly. *

26 EXT. JUNGLE - DAY 26 *

The exhausted Company staggers single file down the hillside. *

26A EXT. JUNGLE - DAY 26A *

Moving back down the narrow trail. The column is slowing. Leckie looks ahead, sees, in a clearing... *

A KNOT OF MEN GATHERED AROUND CORPORAL SMOOTHFACE *

He is on his knees, screaming. Sgt. Stewart and Lt. Corrigan restrain him. *

What he is screaming at becomes visible as Leckie walks closer: *

THE HEADLESS TORSO OF JONES *

Tied to the bottom of a tree. His arms are hacked off. His severed HEAD lies in his lap, the eyes staring out. His TESTICLES* AND PENIS have been stuffed into his mouth. *

LECKIE *

Forgets his own exhaustion. His shocked gaze goes from the screaming Smoothface back to the grisly mutilated marine. *

HOOSIER

Sweet Jesus...

Sid Phillips stops to stare. It is beyond his comprehension. Leckie pulls him away as Sgt. Stewart bellows at the men.

SERGEANT STEWART *

Keep moving. *

They walk on in grim silence. Leckie and Chuckler exchange a look. *

CHUCKLER *

They're here, Lucky. *

Then they look away from each other and back into the impenetrable* green hell. *

27 EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - LATER - DAY

27 *

Leckie, Phillips and the others stagger toward camp and drop their gear. They run for SLEDS OF WATER and FOOD that most of the Company is already gathered around. *

Leckie fills his canteen. Then takes a long drink.

Leckie stops however, when he notices several SAILORS being treated by Navy Corpsmen.

Chuckler stops by his side. They stare at wounded Sailors. *

CHUCKLER

What the hell are swabbies doing here? *

They approach a CORPSMAN treating a wounded Sailor, covered in oil. *

LECKIE

What happened? *

CORPSMAN

You hear the battle last night? We lost four Cruisers. *

PHILLIPS

We thought we won. *

CORPSMAN

We didn't. And to top it off, chickenshit Fletcher took our air cover and ran for open sea. *

LECKIE

He take the Elliot? *

CORPSMAN

Nothing to take. Jap bomber flew into the her hold yesterday. She went under. Took half the battalion's ammo down with her. Most of our grub and medical supplies. Lots of other stuff. Including all our toilet paper.

The men are shocked. Muttering, the Corpsman goes back to the wounded oil soaked Sailor who stares up at them in silence.

28 *

28 OMIT

29 *

29 EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - DUSK

Hoosier, Leckie and Chuckler are digging their foxholes. Hoosier is exercising his God-given right to bitch and moan. *

As he does so, Leckie shakes out his last cigarette, thinks about saving it, figures "What the hell" and fires it up. *

HOOSIER *

We gotta get that island, boys! We gotta get that airfield! Keep the Japs from going to Australia! Keep those shipping lanes open! This isn't gonna be like the Philippines, boys! This isn't gonna be like Guam! This is different! We're going on offense, now, boys! *

Runner saunters up, wanting to say something, but there's no way to break into Hoosier's rant. *

HOOSIER *

And then the Navy screws off to God knows where and takes our air cover and we're waist deep in the same damn shit the poor bastards on Corregidor and Bataan were in. *

LECKIE *

We got a bigger problem than losing our air cover. *

(off their looks) *

You heard that corpsman -- we got no toilet paper. *

Hoosier snorts. *

CHUCKLER *

What're we supposed to use? Our hands? *

LECKIE *

I know what I'm using. *

He starts taking off his khaki shirt. *

RUNNER *

Before Lucky gets to wiping his ass with his shirt, I think you all better come with me. *

They look at Runner. He motions to them to follow him. *

RUNNER *

Quietly now. Just going for a little evening stroll. *

They don't know what's up, but they follow him, heading farther back into the Coconut Grove past dozens of Marines digging foxholes. *

29A EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - JAPANESE "WAREHOUSE" - DUSK

29A *

They walk fifty yards away from the encampment. *

RUNNER

(nodding at Hoosier)
If Chicken Little is right, and they really
have screwed off and forgotten about us, at
least we'll be smiling.

They look at him -- what the hell are you talking about? He stops*
them in front of a primitive coconut log hut. After a
conspiratorial look around, Runner opens the door. *

30 INT. LOG WAREHOUSE, COCONUT GROVE - DAY

They step inside to find DOZENS of large, magnum-sized balloon-
shaped SAKE BOTTLES and cases of QUART BOTTLES of BEER lying in
the sand. And, stacked in one corner, BOXES of JAPANESE
CIGARETTES. *

CHUCKLER

What is it? *

RUNNER

What is it? It's booze. Jap booze and Jap
cigarettes. *

LECKIE

We find a box with some Jap girls in it and
we're set. *

31 EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - NIGHT

Leckie, Chuckler, Runner and Hoosier are sitting in a GUNPIT, lit
by the moon. All are in dungarees now, khakis stowed away. And
all are drunk. Empty C-Ration cans litter the pit. *

Chuckler, sitting with a huge Sake Bottle between his thighs,
rocks back as he puts his mouth over the top.

Some of the liquid sloshes out. The men laugh. Too loudly.

CHUCKLER

What's this swill made from? *

LECKIE

Rice.

HOOSIER

Rice? Whoever heard of booze made from
rice. *

LECKIE

Human ingenuity, Hoosier. We humans love
the booze. If they figured out a way to
make booze out of piss, we'd drink it. *

HOOSIER

Funny, 'cause that's kinda what this tastes like.

*
*
*

LECKIE

You don't want it, give it to me.

*

As Chuckler pushes the bottle through the sand to Hoosier, Leckie reaches for it. Hoosier slaps his hand down. Then follows Chuckler's technique: he grips the bottle in his thighs, leans his head forward over the mouth and rocks back.

*

Leckie looks up and sees Sid Phillips watching them.

*

LECKIE

Johnny Reb. Aren't you glad you brought your book? It'd be at the bottom of the briny if you'd left it on the Elliot.

*
*
*
*

PHILLIPS

Haven't really been thinking about reading much.

*
*
*

LECKIE

(re: sake)
You want some?

*
*
*

PHILLIPS

What is it?

*
*

RUNNER

Mother's milk.

*
*

LECKIE

You know, people always say that something's like mother's milk, but would you really want to drink milk from your mother's tit?

*
*
*
*

HOOSIER

I guess it depends on your mother.

*
*

LECKIE

(to Phillips)
It's Sake. Jap rice wine. It'll make your eyeballs sweat.

*
*
*
*

PHILLIPS

No, thanks.

*
*

LECKIE

You got a better offer? Meeting Lana Turner for a moonlight stroll?

*
*
*

PHILLIPS

It's just, uh... I'm seventeen.

They laugh at this.

LECKIE

So? You're old enough to hump a mortar for Uncle Sam, you're old enough to get lubricated.

Phillips thinks about it, then decides "what the hell" and slides down into the pit.

31A EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - GUN PIT - NIGHT - LATER

31A

Phillips is drunk. Leckie is shit-faced. Hoosier, Runner and Chuckler are only slightly less gone.

PHILLIPS

Why would they do that?

HOOSIER

They're evil.

RUNNER

Just trying to scare us.

LECKIE

Hold on, hold on, hold on. Are you telling me we are going to waste this otherwise fine drunk talking about Japs? Is there nothing else we can talk about? Movies? Music? Books? Hey, Johnny Reb -- aren't you glad you didn't leave your book on the Elliot? Be fish food by now, my friend--

HOOSIER

Shut up, Leckie. You wanna talk about something else, find another pit. We're on an island in the back of beyond and it's crawling with Japs and that's what we're talking about.

LECKIE

First off, it is not crawling with Japs. Have you even seen one?

HOOSIER

Oh, no? Then who cut Jonesy's dick off and stuck it in his mouth? If that wasn't done by a Jap, then who? Was it you?

LECKIE

Yeah, that was me. Sorry.

Hoosier lunges at Leckie. Runner and Chuckler stop him. *

RUNNER
Forget about him, Hoosier. He's just being
an asshole. *

LECKIE
'Sides, you don't wanna fight me, you wanna
fight Japs, right? *

(rising) *

So, let's go. Let's go find us some Japs. *

HOOSIER
You first. *

LECKIE
Come on! *

Just then they hear SOMEONE running through camp, yelling. *

VOICE (O.C.)
CONDITION RED! CONDITION RED!

Then the men hear the sound of an AIRCRAFT ENGINE approaching. *

CHUCKLER
What is that? *

RUNNER
Not ours. *

Marines around them run for cover and dugouts. *

But Leckie -- being Leckie, and being drunk -- climbs up and out
of the pit. *

HOOSIER
Hey, you idiot. *

LECKIE
You wanna see a Jap? Come on. This is our
first Jap. *

He shakes his fist up at the sky. *

LECKIE
Come on, you bastard! Let's see you! *

The others laugh with/at Leckie. The airplane engine gets louder,
closer. *

LECKIE

What is that? One plane? That's all you
got is one plane? Here I am, you slant-eyed
bastard! Take your best shot!

And then...

A BOMB WHISTLES DOWN THROUGH THE DARK

The others dive for cover. But Leckie continues yelling.

LECKIE

I'm not moving. Come on.
(hits chest)
Put one right here.

That dropping bomb seems to be coming awful close, so Chuckler
grabs Leckie and yanks him down into the pit as the BOMB EXPLODES
with a WHITE FLASH about a quarter mile away.

As the plane retreats into the distance, Leckie notices that he
has landed on the Sake Bottle, which is now SHATTERED.

RUNNER

Aw... Look what you did, Lucky.

32 EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - DAY

32

Phillips is walking back into camp. He slows when he sees Leckie,
Runner, Chuckler and Hoosier and five other MARINES talking to an
odd group --

MARTIN CLEMENS AND HIS NATIVE SOLOMON ISLANDER COASTWATCHERS

Clemens, 20s, is a Scotsman. He wears a white shirt gone to
tatters and a slouch hat that is eaten through. His feet are
bare. The islanders wear equally tattered clothes.

As Phillips approaches, Leckie sees him, goes to him.

LECKIE

Go get a bottle. For our guests.

PHILLIPS

Who is he? Who're--?

LECKIE

Name is Martin Clemens. He's a Coast
Watcher.

PHILLIPS

What's that?

LECKIE

Someone who watches the coast. He and his
fuzzy wuzzies are the reason we're here.

Phillips looks at him, wanting to ask another question. Leckie
just pushes him.

Phillips heads off. Leckie goes back to the group around Clemens
and his men.

CLEMENS

There was just a couple dozen Jap engineers
at first. They burned the grass then
started working with bulldozers. Smelled
like an airfield to me, so I radio'ed it in.

HOOSIER

When was this?

CLEMENS

June.

RUNNER

Whatcha been doing since then?

CLEMENS

Well... watching.

HOOSIER

How many are there?

CLEMENS

On the island? Hard to be sure. Not more
than a few thousand.

The guys look at each other.

CHUCKLER

Shouldn't be too bad.

CLEMENS

Not unless they decide they really want it
and send more.

Phillips hurries up with a bottle of sake, gives it to Leckie.

PHILLIPS

Last bottle.

Leckie shrugs, offers it to Clemens.

LECKIE

For you and your men.

CLEMENS

Oh, that's very generous of you, but I'm not about to take your last bottle, and, to be honest, I'm not really much of a sake drinker; nor are they. We found a whole stash of whiskey back in July and it's still holding up. I was really hoping you might have some food. I kept telling them you Americans were better than the Japanese and that you would have a great deal of food.

LECKIE

We had a lot, but it's all at the bottom of the ocean.

CHUCKLER

They sank our supply ship.

RUNNER

If we hadn't found a Jap rice warehouse, we'd be chewing bark.

Clemens sees someone approach. It's a Solomon Islander with orange frizzy hair -- JOSEPH VOUZA.

CLEMENS

This is Joseph. Joseph Vouza. Joseph, these are... American Marines.

Nods all round.

CLEMENS

Joseph was particularly helpful in rallying the others to our side. He was a Sergeant Major in the local constabulary.

VOUZA

May I speak with you, Martin?

CLEMENS

Excuse me one moment.

Clemens steps aside with Vouza. Vouza says something to him. Clemens' eyes widen. Clemens turns to Leckie and the others.

CLEMENS

Apparently the Japs do want this island.

Leckie and the others look at him -- what does that mean?

33 EXT. BEACH - DUSK

33

Leckie and the others come out of the trees and down to the beach.*
Clemens and his Coast Watchers are with them.*

More MARINES come down -- word has spread. Everyone stands there,*
in silence, looking out. *

REVERSE ANGLE - THEIR P.O.V.

FOUR JAPANESE DESTROYERS sail by with impunity. Only half a mile
off shore.

BACK TO THE MEN

In the silence you can almost hear the bow of the ships cutting *
through the water. *

The Marines are finally seeing the enemy. *

LECKIE

Where they headed? *

CLEMENS

Probably put ashore up beyond Lunga Point. *
(off their looks) *

Ten miles up. *

CHUCKLER

Wish we had some airplanes. *

Runner hefts his .03 Springfield. *

LECKIE

Save the bullet. They're too far away. *

Runner lowers his rifle. *

HOOSIER (O.S.)

Fuckers are looking at us. *

Leckie looks over, sees Hoosier is looking at the Japanese ships *
through binoculars. *

LECKIE

Gimme a look. *

Hoosier gives Leckie the binoculars. Leckie takes a look. *

LECKIE'S BINOCULAR POV *

His view is tight on the rail of one of the destroyers. The rail *
is lined with JAPANESE SOLDIERS, all staring back at the Marines. *
As Leckie pans his view along the line of Japanese he finds one of *
them, his rifle up, pointing, it seems, straight at Leckie. *

LECKIE *

Unnerved, lowers the binoculars. He hands them to Runner. Leckie*
glances over and sees... *

MARTIN CLEMENS AND JOSEPH VOUZA *

Deep in discussion. Vouza nods, corrals three other Islanders and runs off. *

LECKIE *

Grabs the bottle of sake from Phillips and takes a swig as he watches the Japanese Destroyers sail on by. *

34 EXT. TIDAL CREEK - AFTERNOON - DAY 34 *

Chuckler is shoveling out a half dug MACHINE GUN EMPLACEMENT at the top of a steep eight foot bank above a stagnant 20 yard wide body of water to their east. This is Alligator Creek. Or what the Marines mistakenly called...The Tenaru.

A ragged and shirtless Leckie sits in the hole, taking out tracer bullets from the cloth belts folded up in their wooden ammo boxes. There is an air of urgency to their actions.

Leckie looks over and sees... *

CAPT. JAMESON, LT. CORRIGAN AND MARTIN CLEMENS *

In discussion, fifty yards away. *

Leckie looks over, sees, closer to the creek, Hoosier and Runner stringing up a single strand of BARB WIRE in front of the emplacement. *

WIDER *

Hundreds of Marines are hurriedly finishing their emplacements, gun pits and foxholes on the Western banks of the stagnant creek. *

Across the greenish water lies another COCONUT PLANTATION. The trees here are also aligned in neat rows. *

Lt. Corrigan walks up. *

CORRIGAN

Leckie. Why aren't you helping Juergens dig your pit? *

LECKIE

We only have one entrenching tool. Sir. *

CHUCKLER

What'd that Coastwatcher guy say? *

CORRIGAN

Nothing. He hasn't heard back from his men. *

(darkens)

(MORE) *

CORRIGAN (cont'd)

But we heard from "A" Company. They made contact. *

Anyone who heard Corrigan say that is now looking at him. *

CORRIGAN

I want you dialed in by dusk. *

Corrigan starts off down the line. *

CHUCKLER

How many did "A" Company see? *

LT. CORRIGAN

(by way of an answer) *

Division wants you to destroy any letters you have with any dates or addresses. *

They all stare at him. They all know what that means.

DISSOLVE TO*

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: August 21, 1942. 1:00 AM. *

35 EXT. ALLIGATOR CREEK - PHILLIPS' FOXHOLE - NIGHT 35 *

Phillips is wide awake in a FOXHOLE about a hundred yards behind the line. He strains to see into the dark. *

36 EXT. ALLIGATOR CREEK - LECKIE GUNPIT - NIGHT 36 *

Leckie and Chuckler are standing in the unfinished GUNPIT, staring* across the water at the far shore. The rest of the squad is sleeping behind them.

CHUCKLER

Hey. What's that? *

THE CREEK - LECKIE'S POV *

A slowly moving "V" of RIPPLES glides downstream through the water. At the point of the "V" we see two GREENISH LIGHTS.

CHUCKLER

Lucky! What the hell is that?

Chuckler picks up a Rifle and starts FIRING at the moving "V". *

The "V" disappears.
Runner and Hoosier wake up and join them.

HOOSIER

Japs?

LECKIE
Alligators.

The men share a look.

HOOSIER
Alligators?

Leckie stares across the Creek. Trying to penetrate the gloom.

FROM ACROSS THE CREEK

They hear A SPLASH in the water.

LECKIE AND CHUCKLER

Stare out. On edge. Chuckler shoulders his '03, aims it.

LECKIE
Hold it!

ANGLE ON THE CREEK - LECKIE'S POV

A few yards to their right, a MAN staggers through the water.

LECKIE
Not a Jap.

The man struggles up the embankment. He is bleeding profusely from his side and a SLASH in his neck. His face has been beaten.

It's Vouza.

Marines rush down to help him up.

VOUZA
Japs... Coming... Now.

The Marines hustle him off to Regimental CP.

CHUCKLER (O.C.)
Lucky! Look!

Leckie turns. Chuckler points.

ACROSS THE CREEK - LECKIE'S POV

We see LIGHTS swinging faintly through the trees.

CHUCKLER
WHO'S THERE?!

The lights go out.

The men are spooked. They continue staring out, as if they sense something their eyes cannot see, their ears cannot hear.

AMERICAN MACHINE GUN FIRE SUDDENLY RATTLES OUT

To their left. We see RED TRACERS arcing out from the Marine's Line into the far Coconut trees. *

Leckie and Chuckler peer into the dark. *

The Marine Rifle and Machine Gun Fire GROWS in intensity to their left.

An American 60 MM MORTAR shell THUNKS out over their heads to the left. *

The Marine firing to their left becomes continuous. *

LECKIE *

Strains to see what is going on. More mortars fire. *

The intense wave of FIRING and NOISE rolls up the line toward them. He ducks down as... *

BLUE JAPANESE TRACER FIRE ZIPS PAST THEM

We hear the distinctive BURPS of the NAMBU light Machine Gun.

LECKIE
(to Chuckler)
GET BACK TO OUR GUN! *

Leckie and Chuckler crawl behind a BERM OF DIRT shoveled out of several foxholes and head for their gun. *

THE BATTLE RAGES

Hundreds of Rifles POP. Machine guns and BARS RATTLE. Mortars whistle down and explode with a CRUMP. We hear the sharp WHAM! of Cannister shot. 75 MM Howitzer shells shriek in.

The Japanese ordnance has its own distinctive sounds: Their rifles have a ping. Their machine guns fire faster. *

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLOR CRISSCROSSES THE CREEK

Flares, mortars, shells and grenades all blossom with different hues that explode or streak through the night.

Streams of American RED TRACERS zip across into the Japanese.

BLUE TRACERS snap back from the Japanese, the bullets whining and zinging around Leckie as he continues to crawl.

A JAPANESE GREEN FLARE *

Pops over Leckie as he and Chuckler crawl. Leckie looks over the berm to see... *

DOZENS OF JAPANESE SOLDIERS *

Wading into the water, their rifles held above their heads. *

LECKIE

Takes out his .45 and, still crawling blindly behind the Berm, FIRES OUT AN ENTIRE CLIP without looking. *

Leckie reaches their .30 MACHINE GUN in a shallow depression with only two rows of SAND BAGS (made out of empty JAPANESE RICE BAGS) in front of it. A bullet slams into the sand bags. *

Chuckler crawls up behind him. He hurriedly jacks a round into the chamber and swings the gun toward the water. *

ANGLE ON THE WATER - LECKIE'S POV *

The dim shapes of the Japanese moving toward the Marines' side of the Creek about forty yards to their left. Several are mowed down by rifle and Machine Gun fire. *

CHUCKLER

Depresses the gun and FIRES (their gun does NOT have tracers). The gun kicks off its tripod. The barrel slams down into the dirt, spraying bullets into the bank. *

CHUCKLER
SONOFABITCH! *

Leckie crawls up and re-tightens the clamp connecting the tripod to the gun just as the Marines in the foxhole next to him are both hit by machine gun fire. Bullets whip by Leckie's head. *

LECKIE
TIGHT! *

Chuckler begins firing again. Sweeping his gun back and forth in controlled bursts to their left. Leckie holds the ammo belt. *

The flares have died down now. It is hard to see. *

The firing tapers off. The relative silence punctuated by single shots... a moan... cries for "Corpsman!" *

A machine gun to their left burps out. RED TRACERS ARC across the Creek toward the Japanese lines. *

American 60 MM Mortars continue to THUNK out over their heads and land in the coconut trees across the Creek. *

Sgt. Stewart runs up in a crouch. He has no helmet and clutches a .45. He still has to yell as Chuckler fires another BURST. *

SERGEANT STEWART
YOU SEEN CAPTAIN JAMESON?

LECKIE
ISN'T HE AT THE COMPANY CP?

Stewart curses, runs back. *

A JAPANESE KNEE MORTAR lands to their left. The sound is like two 2x4s being slammed together with a flat CRACK!

An extended burst of BLUE TRACERS hoses across the water into a Marine machine gun emplacement to the right of Leckie. *

The American Red Tracers suddenly rise up into the sky in a long aimless burst. Then the gun goes silent. *

A third Knee Mortar CRACKS nearby. A Marine SCREAMS in agony. *

LECKIE
THEY GOT OUR RANGE! WE GOTTA MOVE!

Chuckler nods. His eyes wide with fear. He unclamps the tripod bolt. Leckie quickly dons TWO ASBESTOS GLOVES, takes the Barrel and rolls over on his back, so the barrel is across his chest. He grabs the two-gallon water can and hose. *

Chuckler takes the tripod and flops down onto his back. With his left hand, he grabs a BOX of AMMO. *

The two of them SHIMMY out of the depression and, still on their backs, slither away, paralleling the Creek. Japanese mortars continue to fall. *

Blue tracers zip above them. An AMERICAN FLARE blooms white over the Creek. Leckie takes a quick look east. *

FIFTY MORE JAPANESE SOLDIERS *

Are wading toward them through the creek to the North. Japanese Officers, their SWORDS waving about, cajole the men. *

LECKIE *

Rolls over to his knees. There is no time to be afraid now. His adrenaline is flowing. *

LECKIE

HERE!

Chuckler slams the tripod down. Leckie jams the gun home, and while Chuckler is still tightening it, Leckie FIRES into the shadowy form of the Japanese wading downstream from him. The gun bucks up. He fights it down again as his bullets CHURN through the water.

CHUCKLER

DON'T BURN OUT THE BARREL!

The belt of ammo runs out.

LECKIE

AMMO!

Chuckler pulls up another Cloth belt as Leckie flips open the top cover. Chuckler slaps the next belt down into the tray. Leckie smacks the lid down, drags the bolt back and...

FIRES INTO THE DISTANT MASS OF JAPANESE

In the creek.

Several Japanese Soldiers crawl up the bank of the Creek and charge toward the Marines to Leckie's left.

Leckie curses, stops firing.

LECKIE

I'LL HIT OUR GUYS!

Leckie's POV

A Japanese GENERAL with a SAMURAI SWORD slices into a Marine. Another Marine hits the Japanese Officer in the throat with the blade of a shovel.

ANOTHER GREEN FLARE

Arcs above the battle.

36A EXT. ALLIGATOR CREEK - PHILLIPS' FOXHOLE - CONTINUOUS

36A

From his position two hundred yards behind the Main Line of Resistance, Phillips watches the same flare drop. He stares at the dying flare with wide frightened eyes. The sounds of combat are quieter here, but not much.

Blue Japanese tracers zip through the trees, even this far back.

He grips the TUBE of a 81 MM Mortar.

SERGEANT STEWART
HEAVY MORTARS! FOLLOW ME!

Carrying their gear and ammo, Phillips and his squad follow the Sergeant toward the battle.

More Blue Tracers zip into the trees. A man behind Phillips is hit in the chest and drops.

A MORTAR explodes ahead. Phillips is terrified. He runs past...

A DUGOUT

in which we can see CAPTAIN JAMESON, alive, breathing, lying on his side in the FETAL POSITION. His face is blank. His eyes wide open, staring at nothing. His pants are soaked with urine.

PHILLIPS

Runs past Jameson. They reach the back of the Main Line of Resistance.

SERGEANT STEWART
SET'EM UP HERE!

Steward points down at the ground. Then RUNS along the line. He passes...

LT. CORRIGAN

Firing the .37 MM CANNON across the Creek. Several DEAD MARINES lie in various grotesque positions around the gun. More DEAD JAPANESE litter the ground on the approach to the cannon.

The barrel of the cannon glows red.

FOLLOWING SGT. STEWART

As he moves in a crouch, past several foxholes with Marines in them, firing, until he sees...

LECKIE AND CHUCKLER

Leckie, draped with several belts of ammo, carries the tripod. Chuckler, wearing the ASBESTOS GLOVES, carries the gun. Stewart yells at them over the guns and explosions.

SERGEANT STEWART
WHY'D YOU MOVE?

LECKIE
THEY'LL THINK THERE'S MORE OF US!

Stewart nods. And then...

SEVERAL BULLETS SMACK INTO HIS RIGHT ARM AND HAND

He falls backward. He stares down at his shredded arm. Then he looks up at Leckie and Chuckler, who are ogling his wounds.

SERGEANT STEWART

GO!

LECKIE AND CHUCKLER

Run until they find an empty foxhole. They jump into it and position the gun. As they rake the far shore, the SOUNDS of combat begin to FADE.

A mostly silent MORTAR explodes in the middle of the Creek.

A COCONUT TREE falls with stately grace into the briny water.

A SILENT FLARE arcs through our frame.

As the sounds of the battle disappear altogether we...

DISSOLVE TO:

37 EXT. ALLIGATOR CREEK - DAWN

37

CLOSE ON LECKIE

His face pale, exhausted. PULLING BACK reveals:

ALLIGATOR CREEK

Leckie and Chuckler are hunched down in a shallow foxhole. Each looks ten years older. Spent shell casings litter almost every square inch of ground.

Leckie takes out a PACK of JAPANESE CIGARETTES. He takes one out, lights it takes a puff and coughs. Then hands it to Chuckler. All sound is distant and vague.

A SILENT TABLEAU - LECKIE'S POV

Across the Creek, we see a Japanese SNIPER, hanging dead from a tree.

A few other bodies are visible under the coconut trees.

Forty JAPANESE BODIES float in the water of the creek. Others lie on the banks.

Behind them, in the Japanese coconut grove we see, but hardly hear, a MORTAR BARRAGE pulverizing the trees.

The SOUNDS of COMBAT return to us. We hear the MORTARS. Gunfire.*

LECKIE

Looks up in surprise. *More Japs?* He can't believe it. He throws*
down his cigarette and moves up to his machine gun. *

LECKIE'S POV *

DOZENS OF JAPANESE SOLDIERS emerge further out of the trees and
rush toward the creek. *

CHUCKLER AND THE MARINES *

Open fire. *

THE JAPANESE *

Are cut down in a FUSILLADE of cannister shot, small arms fire and*
machine guns.

It's over less than thirty seconds. As the firing dies down
Leckie sees... *

A LONE PANICKED JAPANESE SOLDIER

Who slides down to the bank directly across from him. He looks *
like a hunted stag, running one direction, then turning and *
running another, his terror evident even from 40 yards away. He *
wades into the brackish water.

LECKIE *

Watches the panicked Japanese soldier. He can't take his eyes off*
of him. As if they were the only two men in a private drama.

THE PANICKED SOLDIER

Begins to SCREAM. There are no words. Just an existential wail *
of rage, fear, hatred and anguish.

LECKIE

Continues staring at the man. *

THE PANICKED SOLDIER

Continues to scream. *

THE MARINES

Near Leckie laugh at the panicked soldier. Several SHOOT at him, *
intentionally missing to prolong his agony.

THE PANICKED SOLDIER

Screams again as shots kick up mud and water around him. *

LECKIE

Watches the man. He can feel the man's terror. He grabs a '03 *
Springfield from one of the Marines. Aims the Rifle...and FIRES. *

THE JAPANESE SOLDIER

Slumps into the water. Dead. *

LECKIE

Stares at the dead Japanese soldier for several seconds. Then *
hands the rifle back to its owner. Leckie turns his back on the *
carnage by the Creek and sits down, utterly exhausted. *

38 EXT. ALLIGATOR CREEK - DAY

38

Leckie, Hoosier, Chuckler and Runner walk along the line. They *
stop by PHILLIPS, who is staring at Marines dumping DEAD MARINES *
into a pile under a tarp. They all stare for a moment.

LT. CORRIGAN (O.S.) *

Juergens. *

Lt. Corrigan limps up. *

CHUCKLER *

Yes, Lieutenant. *

LT. CORRIGAN *

Sergeant Stewart tells me you moved around *
last night. Kept the Japs guessing about *
our positions.

(Chuckler nods)

I'm promoting you to Corporal.

Corrigan limps off.

RUNNER *

(holds up a canteen)

Congrats, Lew.

LECKIE

(snatches the canteen)

It was my idea.

(takes a swig)

Shavetail Ivy League bastard...

Chuckler grins.

HOOSIER

(seeing something)

Jesus Christ. Why don't they just put him
out of his misery.

They follow Hoosier's eyes to see...

A GUTTED JAPANESE SOLDIER

On the opposite bank of the Creek, holding in his entrails with
both hands, moaning in pain.

Two CORPSMEN move down the bank to treat him. The dying soldier
pulls a bloody hand away from his stomach. It holds a GRENADE.

BOOM!...the dying Japanese blows the American Medics up.

DOZENS OF ENRAGED MARINES

Immediately begin FIRING into the dead and wounded bodies of the
Japanese.

ANOTHER MARINE callously FIRES into a JAPANESE SOLDIER on a
stretcher being carried by two Navy Corpsmen.

LECKIE, PHILLIPS AND THE OTHERS

Watch impassively.

39 EXT. ACROSS ALLIGATOR CREEK - DAY

39

The Japanese side of the Creek. SCORES of Japanese bodies litter
the ground amidst the coconut palms.

Leckie, Phillips and Chuckler are rummaging in the PACKS of the
Japanese. They have CIGARETTE BUTTS stuffed into their noses.

Black flies by the thousands buzz all around them.

Several dozen more Marines pilfer the dead nearby.

Hoosier pulls out a FLAG. Holds it up. It has a RED MEATBALL on
it, along with Japanese writing.

HOOSIER

Hot Damn!

Chuckler holds up a PISTOL.

CHUCKLER

Look what I got!

LECKIE

Pulls out a FLAG. A Book. Three packages of CONDOMS. *

He stares at the Condoms...a sign of shared humanity.

Then he sees A PHOTOGRAPH of the JAPANESE SOLDIER and a WOMAN in a kimono as it falls out of the Book. He looks it, then notices... *

A BAMBOO CIGARETTE PACK HOLDER

With GUAM printed on it. *

LECKIE *

Curious, picks it up. He opens the holder and takes out... *

THREE U.S. MARINE CORPS EAGLE, GLOBE AND ANCHOR EMBLEMS

He finds a folded up PHOTOGRAPH of a Marine and his family.

LECKIE

Look at this. *

Hoosier, Chuckler and Phillips walk over.

Leckie shows the pilfered American objects to them.

Phillips has his own "Guam" cigarette Holder. He looks inside and* pulls out two more EMBLEMS and a "Pisscutter" Marine Cap.

PHILLIPS

I'll be damned.

CHUCKLER *

(oblivious to the irony)

These bastards must have stripped the
Marines on Guam! *

Leckie gives him a look. *

Runner opens another nearby Japanese pack. He pulls out another
PHOTOGRAPH of a young CAUCASIAN WOMAN. *

RUNNER *

Sonofabitch! Look what this guy took.

Leckie looks down at the PHOTOGRAPH of the Japanese Soldier and
his wife. *

LECKIE, PHILLIPS AND SEVERAL OTHERS

Have built a bonfire on the beach. They are throwing all the books, letters, blouses, caps, photographs, etc. the Japanese pilfered off the Guam Marines into the fire.

Leckie looks down at...

THE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE JAPANESE SOLDIER AND HIS WIFE

He throws it into the flames. It begins to brown and curl.

40A EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - DUSK

40A

Leckie, Chuckler, Runner and Hoosier are walking through the COCONUT TREES toward their main camp. Lots of activity as RESERVES are hustled up to the Creek. Leckie and his friends slow down when they see...

A HUNDRED PRISONERS

Small-statured KOREAN LABORERS armed with shovels marching to bury the dead. HUGE SERGEANTS armed with Thompson machine guns guard them.

HOOSIER

Nips don't look so tough now.

HUGE SERGEANT #1

They're not Nips. They're Koreans. Japs made'em slaves. You wanna see Japs...

(waves behind him)

...head that way.

(to the prisoners)

In cadence...COUNT!

The entire column of Korean PRISONERS begins to chant in hastily learned English.

KOREAN PRISONERS

Roos-ah-vert good man...Tojo eat shit! Roos-ah-vert good man...Tojo eat shit!

Leckie and friends laugh, then move on.

40B EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - PRISONER PEN - DUSK

40B

Leckie and the others cut through a grove of coconuts. From behind them comes the continued chant. They stop when they see...

A WOODEN AND BARBED WIRE PEN

It contains only TWO JAPANESE PRISONERS.

The men walk up to the pen. One of the prisoners looks down in mortal shame. The second stares straight ahead as he squats on his haunches. Stoic. *

Leckie and the others stare down at the Japanese. Their first glimpse of the vaunted enemy up close.

HOOSIER
Like I said. Don't look so tough. *

CHUCKLER
(wrinkles his nose)
They stink. *

LECKIE
Must be all the worms and grubs they eat.
(calls out to the stoic)
Ain't that right, Tojo?

The Stoic continues to stare. His face lit by the dying sun.

Runner picks up a coconut and THROWS it at the fence.

RUNNER
We're talking to you, monkey!

The Stoic turns slowly. He stares at them. Then he slowly stands. He is big. Six feet. Four inches taller than Leckie. About Chuckler's size.

He stares at them, giving them the full benefit of his dignity.

Leckie stares back. Then, unable to hold the stare, he looks away. *

LECKIE
Come on.

They walk away. Leckie casts a glance back.

THE PROUD JAPANESE SOLDIER

Squats back down. *

41 EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - LARGE BUNKER - EARLY EVENING 41 *

Leckie and Chuckler sit in a foxhole outside a LARGE BUNKER they have dug with a coconut log roof. Their dungarees are in tatters. * They look sallow and hollow-eyed, with open sores on their hands and unshaven faces. *

SUPER: One month later *

Leckie is SHIVERING with the onset of Malaria.

CHUCKLER
You should go back to the hospital.

LECKIE
What for? They just send you back to the line. *

CHUCKLER
My mother used to brew up cabbage soup when I was sick. *Kohlsuppe*. Recipe from the Old Country. *

LECKIE
(teeth chattering)
My mother ignored me when I was sick.

CHUCKLER
Yeah?

LECKIE
She pretty much ignored me all the time. Can't say I blame her. She was pushing fifty when she had me.

CHUCKLER
Fifty?! Jesus.

LECKIE
I wasn't exactly what my father had in mind for his retirement.

CHUCKLER
What he do?

LECKIE
Pencil pusher. Literally. He's an exec at the Ticonderoga pencil company. Came up with the name in fact. *

CHUCKLER
So, you're one of them rich kids?

LECKIE
Yeah. That's me. Heir to a pencil fortune.

Leckie is hit by a particularly severe bout of shivering. Chuckler takes off his poncho and WRAPS it around Leckie.

LECKIE
Thanks.

CHUCKLER
Wish we had some soup. *

They both hear the noise of MARCHING MEN approaching. *

CHUCKLER
(calling out)
PASSWORD!

The Marching grows louder.

CHUCKLER
WHO'S THERE?!

A gravelly VOICE booms out in the night. *

PULLER (O.S.)
THE BEST GODDAMN BATTALION IN THE UNITED
STATES MARINE CORPS! *

Leckie and Chuckler share a look. *Who the hell is this asshole?* *

Hoosier, Phillips and Runner crawl out of the bunker, joining other the H Co. Marines who poke their heads out of foxholes and shelters to watch *

THE FIRST BATTALION OF THE SEVENTH MARINE REGIMENT

March past their position. At the head of the column we see a BARREL-CHESTED man with a granite slab of a face. CHESTY PULLER, the Commander of the 1st Battalion. He has a PIPE clenched in his teeth. *

The fresh Marines behind him carry boxes of supplies and gear. They look more like porters instead of Marines. Their uniforms are worn, but compared to the vets, relatively new. Many sport the old "soup plate" World War One Helmets. *

A SERGEANT

Strides alongside a squad of MACHINE GUNNERS, carrying the same .30 water cooled gun Leckie and Chuckler have. *

He is 26, five eight, with jet black hair, jug ears and a leonine face. This is JOHN BASILONE of Dog Company. He projects an easy aura of charismatic authority. Uneducated like so many Depression boys, he is, nevertheless, highly intelligent. *

Walking near him is a short, squat sergeant, J.P. MORGAN. No relation whatsoever to the gazillionaire. Morgan would fight anyone and anything. Except John Basilone. *

As Basilone, Morgan and their men pass, the tired, emaciated Marines of H Company call out. The banter is sharp, but good-natured, as they are damn glad to see fresh Marines. *

HOOSIER *
 Hey, look! Someone let the kids come! *

CHUCKLER *
 You guys forget to set an alarm? *

MORGAN *
 You boys can go back to sleep. The real *
 Marines are here. *

RUNNER *
 Make a wrong turn at Hawaii or something? *

PHILLIPS *
 Yeah! Where all y'all been? *

BASILONE *
 Screwing your women. *

Even the sick and shivering Leckie grins at that. The Seventh *
 marches on. *

A JEEP pulls up. *

DRIVER *
 This H-Two-One? *

RUNNER *
 If you wanna know who bagged the Captain's *
 whiskey, it wasn't us. *

DRIVER *
 You want your friggin' mail or not? *

The men of H Company VAULT out of their holes. All of them
 clamoring for their mail.

Two CLERKS in the back of the Jeep throw two heavy CANVAS MAIL
 BAGS down as they drive past.

WITH BASILONE AND MORGAN *
 Walking away from H Company. *

MORGAN *
 You see those guys? They've been through *
 the ringer. *

BASILONE *
 You nervous in the service, J.P.? *

MORGAN *
 Fuck you, Manila. *

Basilone grins.

The Column stops and Officers and NONCOMS bellow out orders for the men to hunker down for the night.

Basilone yells out to his Squad.

BASILONE

Okay! Square your shit away right here! I want light discipline. And keep those rifles clean!

Basilone starts to walk among the men of his Platoon, checking on them. None of the men are in foxholes.

Mountains of gear and equipment are strewn all over.

Basilone reaches a LOG. MORTAR SHELL BOXES lie behind it.

He sees a private, KENNETH PERKINS, lying down near the ammo. His*
rifle lays in the dirt, the muzzle covered in sandy soil. *

BASILONE

Perkins. *

Grabs Perkins' Springfield. *

BASILONE

Get your head out of your ass. I said keep your rifles clean. *

PERKINS

Sorry, Sarge.

Basilone sighs. Then turns to Morgan.

BASILONE

You got a rubber?

MORGAN

What?

BASILONE

A condom. I used all mine on Samoa.

MORGAN

I got one left. *

BASILONE

I don't think Cupid's gonna make an appearance anytime soon. *

Morgan reaches into his pack. Pulls out a condom. Basilone snatches it, hands it to Perkins, who is unsure what Basilone wants him to do. *

BASILONE

You unroll it, Perkins, and put it over your muzzle. After you clean the damn thing. *

Perkins nods. And just then... *

A JAPANESE NAVAL SHELL

Shrieks in from the sky. *

Basilone and Morgan hit the deck as the SHELL EXPLODES 100 yards away. Morgan looks at Basilone. *

BASILONE

Jap navy. *

A DOZEN MORE SHELLS *

Shriek in and land all over the coconut grove. Shrapnel whines all around them, shredding the trees. *

ANGLE ON BASILONE

As he experiences his first shelling. The GROUND shakes. He lies* on his elbows and toes, his torso not touching the ground.

MORGAN *

Takes cover behind a coconut tree, sits, leaning against it. *

BASILONE *

Grits his teeth as the shells pour down around them. We hear a SCREAM. Then ANOTHER. *

Basilone makes a decision. He gets up. Amid the explosions he runs among his terrified men.

BASILONE

STAY DOWN! ON YOUR TOES AND ELBOWS! STAY DOWN!

Basilone comes back to the STACK of MORTAR SHELL BOXES behind the coconut log. *

Artillery shrapnel passes close enough to his face to ruffle his hair. He yells down at the men hunkered down behind the log, including Perkins. *

BASILONE
GET OUTTA HERE! GET AWAY FROM THE AMMO!

Perkins and the others get up and RUN, Basilone with them. *

And then, as suddenly as it began...the shelling stops. *

The men gingerly rise and take stock. We hear voices. Moans.
Cries for "CORPSMAN!" *

Perkins looks at Basilone. *

PERKINS
Where the hell is our Navy, Sarge?

BASILONE
What do I look like, an officer?
(he calls out)
EVERYBODY DIG IN! *

Basilone moves among the frightened and stunned men, making sure they are safe and okay.

He reaches Morgan who is sitting, leaning against a coconut tree. He points to a spot on the tree, right by his head. *

A STILL SMOKING PIECE OF SHRAPNEL *

Is embedded in the tree. *

BASILONE AND MORGAN *

Share a look. *

42 INT. COCONUT PLANTATION - LARGE DUGOUT SHELTER -- NIGHT 42 *

Leckie, Chuckler, Hoosier, and Runner are all huddled under BLANKETS, each using a lit CIGAR to read their mail. *

The CAMERA MOVES from one to the other. They are quiet, almost reverent as they parse every word from home.

CHUCKLER
(reading a newspaper)
Hey! Says here we sunk four of the carriers that attacked Pearl! *

RUNNER
Where? *

CHUCKLER
Uh... off Hawaii. Island called... Midway. *

RUNNER

Midway? Where the hell you been,
Chuckhead? We heard that weeks ago.

Despite the onset of Malaria, Leckie is avidly reading a letter.

LECKIE

My father wants to know if I want my Dress
Blues sent to me. Can you believe that?
Must think we got a lot of fancy dress
balls.

RUNNER

If we have one, will you be my date?

LECKIE

You're ugly. I want Hoosier.

HOOSIER

Take a number.

42A EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - NIGHT

42A

Sid Phillips is outside, sitting on a log, reading a LETTER in the
moonlight.

EUGENE SLEDGE (V.O.)

Dear Sid. I hope this gets to you before
your birthday. The papers say the Marines
might have landed on an island in the
Solomon Islands called Guadalcanal. It sure
sounds exotic.

Phillips smirks.

DISSOLVE TO:

43 EXT. GEORGIA COTTAGE - MOBILE - ALABAMA - MORNING - DAY 43

The CAMERA MOVES IN on GEORGIA COTTAGE. We see EUGENE SLEDGE
staring out of an open window on the second floor.

44 INT. SLEDGE'S ROOM - GEORGIA COTTAGE - MOBILE - SAME - DAY 44

Sledge is in his room, hand is on the head of his dog, Deacon.
Sledge is looking at...

A FINCH

Making a nest in a nearby tree.

CLOSE ON SLEDGE

There's something about that look -- curious, yet peaceful.

SLEDGE (V.O.)

But then again, you wouldn't recognize home
either. Thousands of workers are pouring
into the shipyards. Sleeping in hot bunks
and tar shacks out by the railroad.

*
*

Behind Eugene, his family's black maid ROSE is packing his
suitcase as his mother comes up to him holding a shirt.

*

MARY FRANK SLEDGE

I don't think one long sleeve collared shirt
is sufficient, Gene, so I put in two. And
extra sheets. I sewed your name into your
undergarments as well as your pillow cases--

SLEDGE

You put my name on my underwear? Mother,
I'm not nine and I'm not going to camp.

Tee pokes his head into the doorway.

*

TEE

Doctor Sledge says it's time.

MARY FRANK SLEDGE

You tell the Good Doctor we'll leave when
Eugene is packed and not a moment sooner.

Tee and Eugene exchange a brief, knowing look.

*

45 INT/EXT. CAR/COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

45

*

DOCTOR SLEDGE drives Mary Frank and Eugene up an ALABAMA COUNTRY
ROAD. Eugene, in the back seat, is content to watch the pastoral
fields and trees of north central Alabama flash past.

SLEDGE (V.O.)

Everything's rationed. Gas, tin, rubber.
Father gets around the gas because of his
medical practice. Mother has gotten into
the spirit of things by saving bacon fat for
glycerine.

*
*
*

MARY FRANK SLEDGE

Your father has written the Commandant a
letter explaining your condition--

SLEDGE

(turning; horrified)

What?

*

MARY FRANK SLEDGE

If you have any problems with exertion, or drilling, or whatever they make you do, you go straight to the Commandant.

DOCTOR SLEDGE

He'll be fine, Mary Frank.
(to a mortified Eugene)
He needs to know, Eugene.

SLEDGE

(very unhappy)
Yes, sir.

They drive on.

SLEDGE (V.O.)

The Gulf is blacked out now, because of the U-boats. Your sister and I went down to see the wreckage of a ship they sunk. She's worried about you, of course. But I told her a greaser like yourself is too crafty for the Japs.

46 EXT. MARION MILITARY INSTITUTE - DAY

46

Doctor Sledge stops the car in front of stately red brick Georgian buildings arrayed in a horseshoe around a GREEN FIELD.

BOYS are marching in close order drill on the Field.

SLEDGE (V.O.)

The big news is that I finally left home for school. Mother is in her usual state. Father is just happy about my deferment and that I'm not putting my health at risk.

A GREY UNIFORMED MAN

Walks up to the car. He carries a clipboard.

DOCTOR SLEDGE

Eugene Bondurant Sledge.

The Uniformed Man checks his clipboard. Smiles at Eugene.

UNIFORMED MAN

Welcome to Marion Military Academy.

Eugene nods, trying to smile. He looks out past the man at

THE CADETS

Drilling on the Green. Boys playing at warfare. *

DISSOLVE BACK TO: *

47 EXT. COCONUT PLANTATION - DUGOUT LOG SHELTER - NIGHT 47 *

By the dim light of the moon, Phillips continues to read.

SLEDGE (V.O.)

Truth is, you're the lucky one, Sid. You'll never have that nagging thought that you let your family, your friends and your country down. Because that's what I'm afraid of. *

Phillips hears a MACHINE GUN chatter away. A few random shots. Back to the letter. *

SLEDGE (V.O.)

Take a gander at the photograph I enclosed. *

Phillips pulls a photograph out of the envelope. *

SLEDGE (V.O.)

Mother sent it to me here at Marion, in case I got homesick, I suppose. I don't know. It's often hard to tell with Mother. *

CLOSE ON PHOTOGRAPH *

SLEDGE and PHILLIPS stand on an old earthworks rampart of the SPANISH FORT CIVIL WAR BATTLEGROUND in Mobile. Phillips is wearing Eugene's COONSKIN CAP; Eugene a British Raj-style PITH HELMET. Both boys sport CIVIL WAR UNIFORMS. They both hold muzzle loading Civil War rifles. *

SLEDGE (V.O.)

At any rate, I decided to send it to you. Thought you might like a laugh. *

Phillips smiles, but it's not a smile of mirth. It's wistful. Like an old man looking at his high school yearbook. *

SLEDGE (V.O.)

Taps just sounded, so I'll leave you knowing that, like the poem says, you're a better man than I am, Gunga Din. Your humble and obedient servant, Eugene Sledge. *

Phillips folds the letter and reaches into his rucksack by his feet. He pulls out the volume of Kipling and tucks the letter inside it.

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*

FADE TO BLACK*

END OF EPISODE ONE

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