

PEACE CRIMES

THE MINNESOTA EIGHT vs. THE WAR

by Doris Baizley

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**THE EIGHT:**

CLIFF - plaid shirt & jeans. Student. (Also FATHER AL JANICKE.)

FRANK - black frame glasses & black turtleneck. Oldest of the 8. An ex-monk, lay preacher.

BRAD - white t-shirt & jeans. Recent grad, musician, activist. (Also DANIEL ELLSBERG.)

MIKE - tie-dye t-shirt. Dropout. Commune member.

PETE - blue denim work-shirt & wire rim glasses. Youngest of the 8. Freshman student. Musician.

BILL - untucked white shirt, old sports jacket & cigarettes. Vice-president of Student Government. (Also DR. WESTING.)

DON - black frame glasses & Indian shirt. Ex-grad student. Anarchist book seller. (Also STAUGHTON LYND.)

CHUCK - polo shirt & knit cap. Recent grad. Social worker. Athlete.

**THE WORLD:**

ACTOR 1. (African-American Woman, 20-30's) Draft Counselor - Army Nurse - Deborah Johnson, Fred Hampton's wife - Selective Service Worker - Prosecutor - Mrs. Beneke - and others.

ACTOR 2. (White Woman, 20-30's) Diane. And others.

ACTOR 3. (White Woman, 40's) Court Clerk - Mom in Green Sweater - Female Guard - Reporter - Selective Service Worker - Mrs. Simmons - and others.

ACTOR 4. (African-American Man, 30-40's) Judge - Reporter - Joe, a Vet - Fred Hampton - Mr. Turchick - and others.

ACTOR 5. (Young Man, 20's) Young Soldier - Prison Guard - Induction Officer - Judge - Father Bill Hunt - Student Reporter - and others.

(A larger company can double these parts in other ways.)

PEACE CRIMES is based on court transcripts, press reports, interviews and Frank Kroncke's memoir "Patriotism Means Resistance"

TIME: 1968 - 1973 moving back and forth between draft board raids, trials, imprisonment & release of the Minnesota 8 - and now.

SET: Institutional metal. Rolling file cabinets, typewriter tables and typewriters, and chairs to define various areas. No courtroom furniture: trials will happen wherever a Judge and a Witness take stage.

ACT 1.

THE COMPANY enters, pushing on set pieces:  
institutional metal filing cabinets, typing  
tables, a hospital gurney. A low ROAR (like  
aircraft engines) pulsing underneath:

ALL

1965.

ACTOR 1

US death toll in Vietnam this year: 1,863.

ALL

Hell NO!

ACTOR 2

1966. US death toll in Vietnam this year: 6,144.

ALL

Hell NO!

ACTOR 3

1965. US death toll in Vietnam this year: 11,153.

ALL

Hell No, We -

ACTOR 4

1968. US death toll in Vietnam this year: 16,589.

ALL

Hell No, We Won't -

ACTOR 5

1969. US death toll in Vietnam this year: 11,614.

ALL

Hell No, We Won't Go!

Hell No, We Won't Go!

ACTOR 1

1970. US death toll -

Suddenly CLIFF comes forward, upset, holding an  
open letter.

CLIFF

1- A! God.... 1-A.

THREE WOMEN (ACTORS 5, 2, 1) approach him from different sides. Urgent. Intense.

ACTOR 3

1-A?

CLIFF

I got my draft card. I've been classified 1-A. Available for military duty. Report for Armed Forces Physical - next week.

ACTOR 3

You can't do that -

CLIFF

I have to -

ACTOR 1

No you don't. You can't.

ACTOR 3

What about a doctor's letter? A doctor can get you out.

ACTOR 5

That's not working anymore. As soon as he takes the physical, he'd be in.

ACTOR 1

You could go to Canada. I've got friends in Canada -

CLIFF

And do what? If I do that, I can't come back.

ACTOR 1

So you'd rather go to Vietnam?

CLIFF

NO. It's just -

ACTOR 3

You could burn it.

CLIFF

Then they go back to their files and send me another one.

ACTOR 5

You could say no.

ALL (chanting under)  
Hell No, We won't go... Hell no, We won't go...

ACTOR 5  
You could refuse induction.

CLIFF  
And get arrested? Go to jail?

ACTOR 3  
You can't go. There must be another way.

CLIFF  
WHAT WAY? There isn't a way. I don't have a choice.

ACTOR 1  
But we just told you -

CLIFF  
THAT ISN'T A CHOICE.

Chanting stops. SUDDENLY: FRANK, BRAD, DON, MIKE,  
PETE, BILL and CHUCK are heard entering:

CHUCK  
ATTENTION ALL DRAFT AGE MEN OF MORRISON COUNTY!

BRAD  
*We, the Minnesota Conspiracy to Save Lives, have destroyed  
all the 1-A files for your county.*

MIKE  
*Do you want your life?*

PETE  
*If you do, then use this opportunity to take control of it.*

DON  
*If you don't, then go down to the draft board and give it  
back to the selective service system so the government can  
use your body as a tool to keep this war going.*

BILL  
*We've done our part to give you back your life.*

FRANK  
*The rest is up to you.*

CLIFF joins them:

CLIFF

*SAY NO TO DEATH. SAY YES TO LIFE!*

ALL

*SAY NO TO DEATH. SAY YES TO LIFE!*

*SAY NO TO DEATH. SAY YES TO LIFE!*

A GAVEL sounds. Everyone freezes. COURT CLERK  
(Actor 3) steps forward.

CLERK

The United States of America versus Clifton Ulen...

CLIFF steps forward as CLIFF.

CLERK

Donald Henry Olson....

DON

(steps forward, putting on glasses)

Our price is nothing compared to what the Vietnamese people  
have had to pay.

CLERK

Michael Duane - (mispronouncing it:) Therriault..

MIKE (correcting her)

Therriault. (steps forward) I did something that for me was  
right at the time, that's all.

CLERK

Charles Larry Turchick...

CHUCK (steps forward)

I have no regrets about what we did. (a smile) What we  
didn't plan on was getting caught!

CLERK

Brad K. Beneke...

BRAD

I see my job as being an iconoclast, breaking down beliefs  
in gods and certain authorities. The trouble is -

CLERK

William Leo Tilton...

BILL

The trouble is a lot of people are still blind to the manipulations practiced against them.

PETE

I feel exactly the same way about the raids now as the night we did them.

(looks over at the COURT CLERK)

Peter Simmons.

CLERK

Francis Xavier Kroncke...

FRANK steps forward. ACTOR 4 puts on JUDGE's robe.

JUDGE

Alright Mr. Kroncke, it's your turn. How do you plead?

(nothing from FRANK)

Mr. Kroncke - ? Guilty or not guilty?

No answer from FRANK.

JUDGE

Mr. Kroncke, do you need to be reminded of the events of July 10, 1970...?

FRANK (softly, to the judge)

No.

DIANE'S VOICE (Actor 2)

Frank?

FRANK

For me, it's always there...

PHONE RINGS. ALL exit as FRANK walks into new scene:

JULY 10, 1970. TWO PHONES. DIANE (Actor 2) on a home phone, holding out the receiver to FRANK. BRAD in a phone booth.

DIANE

It's Brad. He sounds kinda wound up -

FRANK

Beneke? On the phone?



DIANE

A pay phone. It's safe. You talk. I'll take your stuff to the car. Your mom's Chevy, right?

FRANK

Right.

BRAD (from phone booth)

Hey Diane? It's ok. If he's already started, I'll get off -

FRANK goes to phone. DIANE leaves with a knapsack.

FRANK

Brad? What's wrong? I thought you were at the Winona board.

BRAD

We are. I mean we were. Right now I'm lookin at a cornfield in Wisconsin. Knee high, I'd say. Yeah - knee high by the tenth of July...

FRANK

What's happening? You sound weird...

BRAD

It's weird alright. It's freakin Steamboat Days in Winona! We got here to case the draft office and find out there's a party going on. The whole town's out on the street. So we drove across the river to wait it out... But listen, the big news is they're canceling out of the Fairbault raid. Somebody got a report the draft board there installed a new alarm system.

FRANK

Damn. What about the others?

BRAD

They're on. You and Mike are still set for Little Falls, right?

DIANE re-enters.

DIANE

The car's ready, but it's kinda low on coolant - if it stays this hot -

FRANK (to DIANE)

Right, coolant... I'll get some after I pick up Mike.

BRAD

Frank - ? You there?

FRANK

I'm here - Hey Brad, we better get off - I'm not sure about this phone...

BRAD

Man, it's your mother's phone. You think they're tapping her?

FRANK

Why wouldn't they?

BRAD

You getting paranoid or what?

FRANK

No. I'm ok. Just - I don't know - kinda numb...

BRAD

Wanna talk about it?

FRANK

I'm ok, Brad.

BRAD

We agreed: when there's fear we talk about it. The fear's real. If you've got a bad feeling about Little Falls, it's ok to cancel.

FRANK

No. We're not canceling.

(a look over at DIANE, then back to BRAD)

Little Falls is on.

BRAD

God blesses the peace makers, Francis X.

FRANK

Yeah. I just wish he'd bless my knees a little extra.

BRAD

What?

FRANK

Nothing. Peace, Brad.

BRAD

Peace now, man.

Hangs up. Exits.

DIANE

What was that about canceling?

FRANK

Selective Service is getting busy. They've started putting in alarm systems.

DIANE

Wow. You guys better take an electrician with you.

FRANK

That's not in the plan.

DIANE

Joking. (a look at Frank) What's wrong? You getting nervous?

FRANK

Alert, just alert. I'm still not sure about this "ring of fire" plan.

DIANE

Is Brad nervous?

FRANK

He's always nervous. That's what makes him so damn brave.

DIANE

Breathe, Frank. It's gonna be fine. Remember the St. Paul raid? The Post Office building had alarm systems and we all got out of there ok. And that was like 20 or 30 people.

FRANK

I'd like to have 20 or 30 people with me right now.

DIANE

You know you're not alone in this.

FRANK

That's not what it feels like.

DIANE

Then forget about your feelings for a minute. You're part of a community. Like we said at our first meeting: lone-wolf, macho-style action doesn't change anything. Resistance is our step by step, day by day, work. It doesn't all depend on you tonight.

FRANK

Wow... you're good...

DIANE

I'm serious. If you're not ready for this raid, don't do it. You won't be helping anybody.

FRANK

No. We're ready. We've practiced. We've cased the place. We know what we're doing.

DIANE

So let's get going. Drop me off at the Women's Clinic on your way to pick Mike up. I've got two new volunteers to check up on.

She starts out. FRANK doesn't move.

FRANK (soft, to himself)

Jesus, what am I doing... I could be on my way to California right now...

DIANE

Frank? Are you sure you're ok?

FRANK

Cold is all. You know what it's like - how your skin kinda tingles when it's getting near frostbite...?

DIANE

That's bad. It's gotta be 90 degrees out.

FRANK

For you maybe.

DIANE

Do the breathing. And let Mike drive. You don't want to get busted before you even get there.

FRANK (irritated)

Don't wanna get busted period. And Mike doesn't drive - unless it's a freakin bicycle.

DIANE

Ok. Alright. Do the breathing anyway.

FRANK

Yeah. You're right. (deep breaths) You're right. (more breaths) I'll be better in the car. Diane...? Stay near the phones ok?

DIANE

I'll be where I'm needed, Frank.

FRANK

Right. Yeah. Sorry. (pause) Diane...?

DIANE

Yes?

FRANK

We are so damned lucky...

They kiss. Warm, cosy; almost forgetting, then:

DIANE

Come on it's late. Mike's gotta be wondering where you are.

DIANE exits. COMPANY brings on 2 chairs for the CAR as they voice RADIO REPORTS:

ACTOR 4

July 10. Two members of Congress condemn conditions in a South Vietnamese Prison -

ACTOR 3

This week's heat wave expected to continue through weekend -

ACTOR 1

President Nixon appoints new leader for US delegation at the stalled Paris Peace talks -

ACTOR 5

July Corn Crop Estimates predict record yield for 1970 -

ACTOR 4

Defense Secretary Laird states that US troop strength in Vietnam is below 450,000 for the first time since 1967....

THE CAR. FRANK at the wheel. MIKE rides.

ACTOR 5

The number of US war dead since 1965 has now reached 43,692-

MIKE

Could you please turn it off?

FRANK turns off the radio. COMPANY exits.

FRANK

Better?

MIKE

Yeah. (pause) Nice night...

FRANK

Could do without that moon.

MIKE

Beautiful country around here...

FRANK

Yeah.

MIKE

Albertville... St. Cloud... Mille Lacs....

FRANK

It's weird, huh...

MIKE

What's weird?

FRANK

So many French names...

MIKE

I guess...

FRANK

So many little "villes"...

MIKE

Too hot if you ask me....

FRANK

Rice fields in the moonlight... the river beyond...

MIKE

....so damn humid....

FRANK

Just like over there...

MIKE

Ok. We're getting close.

FRANK

Chu Lai... Quang Ngai... Quang Tri....

MIKE

Five miles to Little Falls.

FRANK

Farm kids from here going half way across the world to kill farm kids from there...

MIKE

We take the next turnoff.

FRANK

It's like you can see them.... So many faces... So many dead... "These my body's bones and blood. These my spirit's breaths and nourishments..."

MIKE

Frank -

FRANK

Yeah. I know. Talking too much.

MIKE

Stop the body counts. That's what we're doing.

FRANK

Each one of those 1-A draft files equals a life.

MIKE

Yep.

FRANK

We're gonna do it no matter what.

MIKE

That's right.

FRANK

No second thoughts?

MIKE

No.

FRANK

How come?

MIKE

How come what? Why we're doing this? You know. It's in all your speeches.

FRANK

But you don't speak. I was just wondering. What makes you so certain...?

MIKE

I don't know. My little brothers I guess. I look at them and I think: man, nobody's gonna make you fight if you don't want to. So. That's it. That's what I've gotta do.

Pause. Frank looks over at MIKE.

FRANK (a look over at Mike)

I'd give anything for your calm.

MIKE (looking out)

Cool. There's the road we'll take on the way back to dump the files in the river.

FRANK

Good Ole Mississippi... We're going to drop all those death dealing files into your churning middle, for your patriotic consumption....just like your twin, the Good Ole Mekong...

A smile from Mike.

FRANK

Ok I'll shut up.

MIKE

Let's go over the plan.



FRANK

Park in the alley behind the building - leave the keys behind the front tire on the driver's side - leave our wallets in the car - get up to the roof - break in through the insurance company window & go down to the second floor filing room -

MIKE

No. The roof's too exposed in the moonlight. We'll have to go up the fire escape and break into the office directly from there.

FRANK

Yeah but that's on the street. We practiced the roof plan.

MIKE

And now we're changing it. Are you with me?

FRANK

Yeah. I'm with you.

(pause)

Listen, Mike... Just in case tonight might be different - I brought lighter fluid and matches. If somebody's there we can burn the files in the cabinets, create a distraction and run.

MIKE

Lighter fluid? Damn! You never said -

FRANK

I want those files.

THREE RAIDS. LIGHTS dim. COMPANY moves chairs, pushes file cabinets to three areas, narrating:

ACTOR 1

Creaking wooden steps.

ACTOR 2

Door to the file room...

ACTOR 3

Selective Service Headquarters...

ACTOR 4

Little Falls....

MIKE and FRANK with flashlights move toward file cabinet.

ACTOR 5

Winona...

BRAD, DON and PETE enter Winona area with flashlights.

ACTOR 1

Alexandria...

CHUCK, BILL and CLIFF enter Alexandria area with flashlight.

MIKE (stops suddenly)

I think I hear someone -

FRANK

It's just the bakery. You start on the files over there. I'll open this one....

SOUND: a crash.

BRAD (in his area)

Damn... this glass is reinforced -

FRANK (in his area)

I can't get this lock open...

CHUCK (in his area)

Hey Tilton, you cased this place. Where the hell are the files? I -

SUDDENLY - COMPANY in silhouette, from the shadows:

FBI VOICE (Actor 4 and others)

BACK AWAY FROM THE DOOR.

MIKE

Frank?

FBI VOICE

BACK AWAY FROM THE DOOR. NOW.

BRAD

Don...? Pete -

FBI VOICE

DON'T MOVE.

CHUCK

Bill...? Cliff -

FBI VOICE

DON'T MOVE... OR YOU'RE DEAD.

ALL FREEZE.

FBI VOICE (Actor 4, low)

Looks like we caught us some traitors.

BLACKOUT.

SOUND: Sirens. Shouts. Flashing red strobes.

OUTSIDE HENNEPIN COUNTY JAIL. A Street  
Demonstration in progress.

COMPANY

FREE THE EIGHT - SMASH THE STATE - POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

(Chant continues under:)

ACTOR 2

They're on the Inside for us! We're on the Outside for them!

ACTOR 1

We are joined with our brothers in protest against an  
immoral and illegal war!

ACTOR 3

For the civilians massacred at My Lai by the US Army!

ACTOR 4

For the kids killed at Kent State and Jackson State by the  
National Guard!

ACTOR 1

For Fred Hampton of the Black Panthers murdered in his sleep  
by the Chicago pigs!

ACTOR 5

We are doing this because the law is against the law in this  
country today!

SOUND OF JAIL DOOR CLOSING.

GUARD'S VOICE (Actor 4):

Ulen - Tilton - Olson - Simmons. Follow me. You're being moved upstairs to Tier B.

INSIDE HENNEPIN COUNTY JAIL. CLIFF pacing. PETE quiet in a corner. BILL reading a newspaper. DON looking for his glasses.

CLIFF

Why did they move us? How come they separated us? Why are we up here?

DON

Where are my glasses? Anybody see my glasses?

CLIFF

How come the others are still down on the lower Tier? What's that mean?

DON

Why'd they take my glasses is what I want to know. Ya think anybody ever got hurt by a PAIR OF GLASSES?

PETE

Reading can be a dangerous weapon, Don.

BILL (with newspaper)

Yeah. Check this out. This is GREAT.

DON

It'd be better if I had my GLASSES.

BILL

"Eight Arrests in Draft Raids Spur City Demonstrations. July 11. By 2:30 AM Saturday morning, all eight raiders were captured, transported to the Twin Cities, and processed into Hennepin County Jail" -

CLIFF

This is news?

DON

So it's still just eight? They didn't catch any of the others? That's great! At least some of those other draft boards got ripped off.

BILL

"By Saturday evening, former priest and nun, Charlie and Pauline Sullivan, formed The Committee to Defend the Eight."

DON

That's good. Diane must have called them.

BILL

"Over 500 protest outside Hennepin County courthouse." And look. Here's a woman breaking the courthouse window with a flag pole -

CLIFF

We know that Bill. We've been hearing it all night...

BILL

"Further protests are threatened..."

PETE

Cool. Maybe they'll break us out.

BILL

Plus a vigil and a fast to support the protestors -

CLIFF

So what?? Who cares? That's not helping us is it? They're charging us with Sabotage. Sabotage of the National Defense!

DON

Give him a cigarette, Bill. Maybe that'll calm him down.

BILL (offering a cigarette)

Here you go.

CLIFF

Hell no. There's not enough air in here as is...

PETE

I saved some extra rolls from breakfast. You want one?

CLIFF

I can't eat that stuff...

DON

Think like Frank does. He says it's not much different here than it was in seminary.

CLIFF

Yeah right. Frank. What's he care - he might as well be a priest. He hasn't got a job waiting - a family - a reputation.

PETE

We've all got families. That's not the point.

CLIFF

What about the future? I mean god, Pete - you're what? Not even 20. Going to prison doesn't bother you?

PETE

You're not gonna get anywhere trying to scare me. I'm already there. Ok? So - if you really want to help - what I could use is some quiet.

BILL

Look Cliff. These procedures can take a long time, ok? They'll call a grand jury. Then we'll find out what the real charges are -

CLIFF

Oh come on... Ever since the Beaver 55 raid - you guys have been running around, practically been BRAGGING about doing it.

DON

No. We never said we did it. We said we took "moral and political responsibility for it."

CLIFF

Well I DIDN'T do it. All I did was hang out on this one and now look.... "Conspiracy"? "Sabotage"? Frank said they were giving him some shit about us being part of some Catholic Conspiracy - with the Berrigans - and Castro.

DON

Castro's gone Catholic??? That is news. Wait'll the soviets hear about that.

CLIFF

Very funny.

BILL

Think about the bigger picture. We'll be out on bail. Then we've got time to plan our defense.

CLIFF

What defense? We did it. They caught us and we're guilty.

DON

Of what? "Committing Peace with Intent to Save Lives?"  
Breaking man's law to obey a Higher Law -

CLIFF

Ok. Alright. I've heard enough Yippie shit from you guys.

BILL

I think he's quoting Pope John.

DON

One heck of a Yippie, though. Big guy in a white dress and those little red slippers....

CLIFF

Hilarious, Olson. Go ahead and laugh... laugh all you want...

DON

Come on. You knew this could happen. You knew it wasn't gonna be some kinda frat house panty raid.

CLIFF

What about 50 thousand dollars bail? You didn't know that, did you? 50 grand for a first time offense? Where are we supposed to get that kind of money?

BILL

We argue to get the bail lowered.

CLIFF

We can do that?

BILL

That's what a Defense Committee is for. They get the lawyers, raise the bail -

CLIFF

How do you know they're doing that?

BILL

That's what defense committees do. I just told you.

DON

Who's to know? Maybe another big demonstration on Thursday will pressure them to lower the bail.

CLIFF

You don't KNOW that.

DON (with infinite patience)

Ya know what, Cliff? Let's say we don't know anything, ok? Let's just say we - trust.

CLIFF

Right. Trust. Like Brad trusted these raids would work. With a hundred FBI agents out here after the Beaver Raid? They probably tapped your phones.

DON (at CLIFF)

Or planted somebody inside the group who told them what we were doing.

CLIFF

Or maybe it was somebody in the group who wanted to get arrested to make a bigger statement.

BILL

Ok ok. Enough who-struck-john. We should start planning right now. We'll have to decide who goes first when we get the bail money.

PETE

You're the best speaker to get the word out. Everybody knows you from running the mic at the Strike .... You're the one they listen to - vice president of Student Government -

BILL

But Mike's family won't be able to raise the cash. Or yours either, right Don?

DON

Yeah, but I don't give a rat's rear end. I'll hang out here long as it takes... Join the prisoner class and work from the inside. Convert a few dealers and dopers to our side ...

CLIFF

Like you haven't done that already.

PETE

Could you please be quiet?



CLIFF

Maybe I will have that smoke.

BILL

Sorry man, they're gone. (Shows empty pack) Looks like the war ate my cigarettes.

DON

Guess the war ate my glasses too...

CLIFF

Fuck it. FUCK the WAR. FUCK the FUCKING WAR.

BILL

Right on. Now you're making sense. You want to know why we're here. That's it.

CLIFF

Great...

DON

Seriously. If you wanna feel better, go back to the source. The future doesn't exist in here, man. Waste of time to worry about it. Go back to the good stuff - what you wanted in the beginning. Why you joined us in the first place...

CLIFF

Nothing good about last year. All my buddies got classified 1-A....

DON

And went right over to the Twin Cities Draft Information Center...right...?

PETE

Just like our flyers told them to...

BILL

And they didn't get drafted, did they...?

CLIFF walks into new scene.

1969. TWIN CITIES DRAFT INFORMATION CENTER. DRAFT COUNSELOR (ACTOR 1) reviews checklist with CLIFF.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Limitation of motion in elbows...ankles...knees...? Recent or unhealed fractures...? Torn cartilage? Weak knees?

CLIFF

Jesus.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Did you play football?

CLIFF

No.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

How about hepatitis...? Any hernias, ingrown toenails, flat feet, allergies...? Acne, eczema...?

CLIFF

God. Are you going to give me the physical right here?

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Take the manual home. Study Army Regulations 40-501. Peacetime Draft Standards.

CLIFF

Peacetime???

DRAFT COUNSELOR

They haven't used Wartime since 1945. It's not officially a war.

CLIFF

So maybe I could be "Not Officially" required to go...

DRAFT COUNSELOR

You might be able to argue that. There's a test case in Boston, I think. If you want to check it out I could send you to one of our lawyers.

CLIFF

I was joking.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Oh.

(a look, not sure this is funny)

Read this pamphlet on How to Lower Your Blood Pressure and do everything the opposite. At least it can get you a re-examination. Either you fail the exam at one of the medical stations or you can pass the exam and refuse induction by not stepping over the yellow line, but that'll get you prosecuted. It's safer if you fail.

CLIFF

Right.

JOE, A RETURNED VET (Actor 4) enters and watches from a distance. He wears a faded fatigue jacket covered with Peace symbols.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Really work on the blood pressure. It's been good for a lot of my guys. You stay up all night before the exam with whisky, coffee and cigarettes... Then right before the doctor takes your blood pressure, squeeze the chair real hard and keep squeezing. That should get it up to unacceptable.

CLIFF

Damn.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

What's wrong?

CLIFF

I don't know. "It's safer if you fail.." It sounds so - humiliating.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Maybe it feels that way for awhile, but it really isn't.

CLIFF

Yeah it is. Shit. Why can't there be some hero's way out of this war??? That's why they go, you know. It makes me want to go more than anything.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Maybe you should talk to another counselor.

CLIFF(starts to leave)

Yeah. You're right. I'll come back some other -

Suddenly. JOE steps in, blocks him.

JOE

No.

CLIFF

Huh?

JOE

You don't need another counselor. Do what she says, man. Forget "humiliating." Squeeze the chair. Stuff a rat up your ass. French kiss the sergeant at the door. You don't want to go.

CLIFF

Shit. You've been there?

JOE

Ain't about me. You. Don't. Want. To. Go.

CLIFF

Ok, man. Right on. I hear you.

JOE (pause; the thousand-yard stare)

No you don't.

CLIFF(to Counselor)

Guess I will take those pamphlets.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Work on the blood pressure. After you get your 4-F you could come back and work with us. Join Students Against Selective Service. It may not be heroic or anything, but it feels a lot better when you're involved.

CLIFF

That's good. Yeah that's a good idea. I will come back.

CLIFF gathers pamphlets & leaves. JOE watches.

JOE

I enlisted. I wanted to go. I wanted to serve. I fought for freedom. I did what I was supposed to do. Good work - Right? They all said "Good Work." I did good work. RIGHT?

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Joe... Are you here to see Frank?

JOE

Yes, sir. We did it, sir. Secured the village. Burned the hooches. Thirty gooks dead, sir. 13 VC and North Vietnamese. Yeah. And the Father, the Mother, the kid... No. It was two kids... It wasn't a hootch, it was a home. It wasn't gooks, it was people. It was a family - like mine.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Frank'll be here soon. He's coming right over after he speaks at the Newman Center.

JOE

Can he heal me? Can he stop the nightmares? Can he keep me from hitting my wife - killing my family?

DRAFT COUNSELOR

You didn't kill your family, Joe.

JOE

You don't know what I did. And I thank God you don't know - I don't want you to know - I don't want anybody to know - and I don't know what to do about it.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Remember the prayer Frank gave you?

JOE

I remember everything...

DRAFT COUNSELOR (bows her head)

*God: Take water and wash away our brothers blood which we have caused to be shed...*

JOE (soft & mean, under the prayer)

*Watch them scream, watch them cry,  
Use your M-16 -*

DRAFT COUNSELOR

*Take fire and burn away our guilt...*

JOE

*Watch them wiggle, watch them die,  
You're a good Marine.*

DRAFT COUNSELOR

*Take hot sunlight and dry the tears of those we have hurt -*

JOE

*See the children begging, see the women whore,  
See the men embarrassed, make them beg for more -*

DRAFT COUNSELOR

*Heal their wounded souls and minds and bodies.*

JOE

MAKE THEM BEG FOR MORE -

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Joe - calm down ok -

JOE

Where's Frank? I want Frank -

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Be patient -

JOE

Go away. Go save your guys and leave me ALONE.

FRANK enters on one side, speaking at the Newman Center.

FRANK

This is not just another war.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

I'll call Frank.

FRANK

This is not just a brush-fire or a police action or World War Three. Vietnam is the first spiritual War.

JOE

To hell with Peace. I want a war now - and our side loses.

JOE starts tearing peace buttons off of his jacket as FRANK continues at Newman Center and as MOM IN GREEN SWEATER (Actor 3) enters on the other side, reading a letter.

MOM IN GREEN SWEATER

Dear Mom and Dad, Good news. I have been reassigned to the 2nd battalion 9th artillery in Chu Lai -

JOE

I hate our government now. I hate em.

FRANK

Wars are always brutal and by-standers sometimes get killed, but in this war it is no accident that civilians are killed and that everything - every idea, person, place, custom and institution - is the Enemy.

MOM

In this area 6,000 enemy have died compared with 3,000 in the other three areas. These statistics reflect the caliber and proficiency of the unit.

JOE

If I could have killed the President I would have done it... Westmoreland... MacNamara... Any of them that made those decisions...

FRANK

If there is any one thing that destroys my preaching Christianity, it's this war.

JOE

...lying corrupt bastards ..

MOM

The men here are extremely proud of their record, resulting in a very high esprit de corps.

JOE

They could give a shit about you and your soul. But they'll gladly send you off. They'll send you off to lose yours and never think a thing about it.

FRANK

How do I serve communion to a kid who's going to war to kill or be killed - and say "Here share this bread and wine, and we will understand what Life and Love is?"

MOM

Keep those chocolate chip cookies coming, folks.

FRANK

How do I heal the spirit of a returning vet who has been given the power to kill men, women and children?

MOM

Love to both of you...

JOE

It makes me sick all the time.

MOM

Rob.

LIGHTS DOWN on MOM and JOE as FRANK continues:

FRANK

The answer is right here. (he raises a draft card) When a young man takes his draft card he is saying: This is war. I am willing to go to war. I am willing to commit acts of violence. No, not willing, he is bound. He is condemned to kill.

TRIAL. Forms around FRANK, now testifying in court. ACTOR 4 puts on the black robe as JUDGE.

FRANK

How do we save the lives and the souls of those young men? We get rid of the draft cards. That's all. It's that simple.

JUDGE (out; to the Jury)

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I want to talk to you about the testimony you have heard about the Vietnam War and the Selective Service System. You have a very limited responsibility in this case. You have no philosophical or religious or theological responsibility at all -

FRANK

Your Honor - this is difficult for me to say because in some sense I am naming you as an immoral person... but somewhere the problems of society go on, and somewhere people have a moral responsibility.

JUDGE

Well Mr. Kroncke, I don't have to defend myself, but I took an oath to enforce the law when I was made a judge.

FRANK

And I was baptized before God to live a free life.

JUDGE

The law as I see it is what I read, and I'm sorry, but that's the way it is.

(addressing the jury:)

A Jury is the judge of the facts. A Judge is the judge of the law. Together we administer Justice. Your duty is to solely determine whether these defendants are guilty or not guilty of what occurred on the night of July 10th, 1970.  
AND THAT IS ALL.

BLACKOUT.

GUARD'S VOICE (Actor 5)

Turchick!



PRISON. 1972. A typewriter. CHUCK (in prison khakis and stocking cap) at typewriter table. GUARD (Actor 5) enters.

GUARD

Type that report as fast as you say you can and the prize is you get to mop and buff that office floor and get Good Time Credit. Take a few hours off those five years you got..

CHUCK

You're on.

GUARD (watching as CHUCK types)

You looked taller on the tube, man. I saw all of you on there. "Five years for the Minnesota 8."

CHUCK

It wasn't exactly 8. It was more like the Minnesota two - plus six - minus one. Cliff Ulen pled guilty. Then they separated our cases for three trials.

GUARD

Divide-and-conquer, right?

CHUCK

Right. Our trials lasted about two days. Juries took about 20 minutes to return the verdicts -

GUARD

- and send you here to lovely El Reno, Oklahoma.

CHUCK

Just me. The rest got sent all over the place. Simmons to the Youth Center in Colorado - Beneke somewhere in Kentucky - Olson to Missouri...

ANOTHER PRISON: DON in medical whites & prison khakis, at another typing table.

CHUCK

Tilton to Milan in Michigan...

ANOTHER PRISON. BILL in prison uniform, cigarette pack folded in shirt sleeve, loading boxes on a dolly.

CHUCK

Our judge never allowed in any defense. Personal statements only. Then we could talk about anything.

GUARD

And you did.

CHUCK

Me? No, man. I didn't say anything. But Tilton and Olson? Boy did they... And it wasn't easy - the way Judge Devitt ran his courtroom.

GUARD

Tough.

CHUCK

And mean. Like ya know how Sergeant Perkins gets on a bad day in chow line - ?

GUARD

Don't be disrespecting staff, man. That's a yellow slip.

CHUCK

Yeah. Just like that. He sits up there - cold as you are right now - and we're sweating like pigs, trying every trick in the book to get across our point. We had this article from the National Journal -

BILL (from his area)

"Of all soldiers being sent to Vietnam 88% are draftees. While only 31 out of every 1,000 enlisted soldiers in Vietnam are being killed or wounded, 234 draftees out of every 1,000 are meeting the same fate."

CHUCK

Which means - for every thousand 1-A files we destroyed, maybe 234 lives were saved.

GUARD

Good math.

CHUCK

Yeah, but you're not thinking that cause you're the judge now. And Robert Knight, Director of Minnesota Selective Service, has just been called to the stand as a hostile witness.

DON (from his typing table)  
Colonel Robert P. Knight. Don't forget that. He never did.

BILL (from his dolly)  
Or as we called him - "Silent Knight."

CHUCK  
He goes on about how all young men in America must register regardless of physical, mental or religious condition. How it's the first duty of the citizen at age 18. On the subject of the draftee death count, he's got nothing to say.

GUARD  
"Not my job," right?

CHUCK  
Bingo. Then Bill jumps up from the defense table -

BILL  
I have one question: Colonel Knight, do you at all care about the people you send to die in Vietnam?

CHUCK  
The prosecutor declares:

DON  
Objection!

BILL  
Objection immaterial!

CHUCK  
And Tilton keeps going...

BILL  
I don't see how anybody that is a reasonable man or a human being can sit here and try to say that stuff is irrelevant. How can he look me in the eye and say that??? It amazes me!

CHUCK  
Man, Tilton was good.

GUARD  
Quiet, Turchick.

BILL

Chuck was the best. He says, "Ok, it's The United States of America versus Charles Larry Turchick and William Leo Tilton, right? Now if we lose, we go to jail. But if we win ....

BILL & CHUCK & DON

...does the Government go to jail???

All crack up.

GUARD

ORDER! If you keep asking questions like this I am going to have to find you in contempt of court.

BILL

No more questions.

CHUCK (bitter, to himself)

Yeah, no more questions...

DON

No questions at all. Judge Devitt made real certain of that.

FEMALE GUARD (Actor 3) enters DON's area.

FEMALE GUARD

Olson? You needs meds or what? You're talking to yourself.

DON

Gotta talk to somebody who'll listen.

GUARD (to CHUCK)

Back to your cell, Turchick...

FEMALE GUARD

You can knock off now...

BOTH GUARDS

It's time for count.

CHUCK & DON leave.

BILL

It still amazes me. But it doesn't erase what we did. Two hundred and thirty-four lives saved...maybe more. Two-hundred and thirty four...

He exits prison area, pushing the dolly, as:  
A WOMAN'S VOICE (Actor 1) is heard singing  
something like Amazing Grace, as scene changes to:

CHU LAI FIELD HOSPITAL, VIETNAM. YOUNG SOLDIER  
(ACTOR 5) lies on a gurney under a sheet. ARMY  
NURSE (Actor 1) hums softly as she attends to him.

SOLDIER

Ma'am...?

ARMY NURSE

Yes, lieutenant...?

SOLDIER

Rob's ok.

NURSE

You need something, Rob?

SOLDIER

It's depressing...

NURSE

Pardon?

SOLDIER

That song.

NURSE

I could sing something else. Have you got a favorite?

SOLDIER

You know any Beach Boys?

NURSE

That's not really my style.

SOLDIER

Oh c'mon... you know some...

(starts singing weakly)

*Those east coast girls are hip...*

*I really dig the styles they wear...*

NURSE (takes over, softly)

*And the Southern girls with the way they talk*

*They knock me out when I'm down there...*

SOLDIER

Yeah...that's it...

DIANE enters at other side, joining in:

DIANE

*The Mid-West farmer's daughters  
Really make you feel alright....*

BRAD, FRANK, and CHUCK join her.

*And the Northern girls with the way they kiss  
They keep their boyfriends warm at night...*

REPORTER (Actor 4)

April 1969. Liberation News Service. Draft board raids are becoming more frequent as the war drags on. Following the Catonsville 9 and Milwaukee 14 raids, the pace has been stepping up...

A MEETING PLACE. MINNEAPOLIS, 1969.

BRAD

Ok, people, Welcome to the Minnesota Conspiracy to Save Lives. Frank, this is Diane... Diane, Frank....

DIANE

Hi.

FRANK

Hi...

BRAD

This is Chuck Turchick. He's been working with VISTA in Milwaukee. Chuck went to the trial of the Milwaukee 14 - he met Al Janicke and -

FRANK

Father Al Janicke? Cool! What's he like?

CHUCK

You'll find out next month. There's a meeting in Chicago. Al Janicke's coming, plus maybe the Berrigans and more folks from Baltimore and Milwaukee.

BRAD

We want to plan an action for Minneapolis.

FRANK

What kind of action?

BRAD

A draft board raid. Bigger than Catonsville and Milwaukee. We hit Selective Service Headquarters in St. Paul. To make it look even bigger, we call it "Beaver 55" - same as the group that raided the Indianapolis draft board last month

CHUCK

And Dow Chemical in Maryland before that - zapped their Agent Orange files.

DIANE

"Beaver 55?" That's a pretty awful name.

FRANK

No... I like it.... Busy Beavers, eating away at the roots of the establishment...

DIANE

It's still an awful name.

REPORTER (Actor 3)

May 21, 1969 - the Silver Spring 3 invade a draft board in a suburb of Washington DC -

CHUCK

Ok. Frank and I cased the Post Office tower. We'll send people in separately through the day...

DIANE

We'll dress straight so we don't get noticed...

BRAD

And meet on the top floor. The whole floor's vacant so there's room for all of us. Security changes shifts at midnight... Then we go down to the offices.

FRANK

We'll be waiting ten hours up there?

DIANE

Yeah, we'd better bring snacks. You know those things the Astronauts eat? Space Sticks? That's what I'm bringing.

FRANK

Far out. I can just see you as the first woman astronaut.

DIANE

Gotta happen sometime.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

May 25, 1969. The Chicago 15 invade a South Side draft board - take files down a fire escape, burn them, and wait to be arrested.

BRAD

When we get to the office we punch open locks on the cabinets with hammers and screw drivers.

CHUCK

Jeez Brad, I don't know how to do that stuff.

FRANK

Same here. Breaking and entering isn't something they teach you in seminary.

BRAD

We'll practice. You'll learn. Then we take the 1-A files, spray paint out the names - tear em up -

CHUCK

Then what? Burn em? Dump em in the river?

FRANK

Baptism by fire, by water, by desire, by blood...

BRAD

God, Frank... give it a rest.

DIANE

It's true though. The Catonsville 9 poured blood. The Milwaukee 14 used napalm...

CHUCK

Who cares. As long as we do it. It's happening, man. It's happening everywhere!

REPORTER (Actor 4)

July 4, 1969. The New York Five shred 6,500 1-A files -

DIANE

So cool! They removed all the 1 and A keys from the typewriters!



REPORTER (Actor 3)

October: The Cleveland 2 set fire to draft board records in Akron.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

November: The Boston 8 invade and shred files in eight draft boards.

REPORTER (Actor 3)

December: The Pasadena 3 invade the Los Angeles Induction Center and take 600 1-A files.

REPORTERS exit. NURSE leans over the SOLDIER.  
LIGHTS FADE on them, then:

ST. PAUL. POST OFFICE TOWERS. Four file cabinets at opposite sides. FRANK, BRAD, CHUCK, MIKE, PETE DIANE and COMPANY waiting in the dark. Whispering.

FRANK (whispering)

Ok. It's midnight. The janitors are leaving...

DIANE

Security's on the ground floor...

BRAD (handing out supplies)

Plastic bags... flashlights... screwdrivers... pry bars...

MIKE

Oh yeah - we're gonna bust it up!

FRANK

No. We've been over this. We're not goddam Weathermen. We limit the damage & fear. The important thing is the cards and files -

CHUCK

Like he said - let's not bust it up!

DIANE

Right. We only destroy the 1 and A keys on the typewriters.

BRAD

Man... I gotta piss so bad.

FRANK

We'll stop at the restrooms first. Then we go down to the offices...

BRAD

Good. I'll tell the others...

CHUCK

1:00. It's time.

FRANK

Shall we say a blessing?

BRAD

Come on, Frank...

FRANK

Joking -

BRAD

Ok - let's move -

DIANE

Wait -

All freeze as: MOM IN GREEN SWEATER enters at one side, in winter coat, holding a candle.

MOM

I am standing vigil before the White House tonight because my son Robert died in Vietnam on December 10. I had a chance to stop him from going and I didn't say anything because I didn't want to do the wrong thing. I have never done the wrong thing. Now I say it's time to stop being so goddamned right and do something. When there is a disaster, Americans send in airlifts to help all the people. Well, I think Vietnam is the biggest disaster that ever happened to America and I want them to send in airlifts and get our children out. This is an emergency. WE ARE KILLING OUR KIDS. Do you hear me, Mr. President? Do you hear what I'm saying? THIS IS AN EMERGENCY.

SUDDENLY: THE RAID. A LOUD CRASH as COMPANY slams the filing cabinets together center stage.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

February, 1970. Beaver 55 strikes St. Paul!

COMPANY rifles through file drawers, taking out papers; ripping and stuffing them into plastic garbage bags.

DIANE

Here's at least a hundred not going!

CHUCK

I hereby declare you guys - liberated!

REPORTER (Actor 4)

Over the weekend St. Paul, Minnesota was the scene of a massive action to destroy U.S. ability to wage war in Vietnam....

ACTORS 1 and 5 enter, bringing on framed pictures of Nixon and J. Edgar Hoover.

ACTOR 1

Look who we found! (Spray paints the portrait) Take this, tricky Dick!

ACTOR 5

(spraying the Hoover portrait)

How's your little sailor boy like you now, J. Edgar Hoover??

CHUCK

Quit that. This isn't play time ok? Work on the FILES.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

Thousands of 1-A draft cards and draft files were destroyed. This took out the records of all Minneapolis and St. Paul draft boards.

FRANK

DAMN! Here's a whole drawer full of Completion of Service stamps. Send these to Canada and we can bring home hundreds of AWOL soldiers and resisters.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

This is also the office of the State Selective Service Director, Colonel Knight. It is the first State Director's office ever raided.

BRAD

Sun's coming up. Work faster.

CHUCK

Man. My hands are getting sore...

REPORTER (Actor 4)

These actions will probably stop any possible induction from these local boards for up to a year. This will cripple almost 50% of the entire Selective Service System in the state.

BRAD

Welcome to the free world, boys!

BRAD empties a garbage bag full of ripped up pieces of white paper.

FRANK

Go in peace, guys...

FRANK empties his garbage bag.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

Hundreds upon hundreds of blank draft cards and official Selective Service stamps were seized and destroyed. Some were spray painted, some were ripped, some dumped in the Mississippi River.

CHUCK empties his garbage bag.

CHUCK

Give my regards to New Orleans!

DIANE

Peace and Love, brothers...

ALL

Peace and Love!

They empty their garbage bags.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

The Post Office building was supposed to be impregnable with 24-hour security - yet the group made it in and out without ever being caught, as snow began to fall.

COMPANY empties more bags. White paper flies through the air like confetti - like snow.

ALL

WOOO HOOO!

BRAD

Everybody's out? Everybody made it?

FRANK

Full count. Everybody's safe!

DIANE

Let's start calling the papers.

They exit as: 2 SELECTIVE SERVICE WORKERS (ACTORS 1 & 3) enter the wrecked office. WORKER 1 and 2 on their knees trying to salvage files. as REPORTER (ACTOR 4) enters with PHOTOGRAPHER (ACTOR 5).

REPORTER (Actor 4)

The so-called "Beaver 55" raid is now the largest draft board raid of its kind -

WORKER 1

It's a violation. This is a VIOLATION. All of our work has been ruined.

REPORTER

...there is no way of knowing how many individual records were involved, but it appears that the number would be in the thousands.

WORKER 2

These are my personal photographs... They think this is a JOKE? This is my FAMILY!

REPORTER

Minnesota's Selective Service Director Colonel Knight says it will be difficult to carry out any inductions after March.

WORKER 1

These arrogant kids... They don't have jobs. Do they know what this feels like?

REPORTER

...file records and draft registration cards were ripped, scattered and strewn in piles that were more than a foot deep in places.

WORKER 2 (to PHOTOGRAPHER)

DON'T TAKE MY PICTURE. Don't take ANY of us.

REPORTER

Among the spray painted slogans: "Remember Fred Hampton."  
According to one worker -

WORKER 2 (to REPORTER)

Don't use our names. They'll come after us.

WORKER 1 (to REPORTER & PHOTOGRAPHER)

I don't care. Use my name. Take my picture. I'm not afraid.  
I'm proud of my work. I'm serving my country.

WORKER 2

All of our families are serving. One of our co-workers  
inducted her own son. He was shot and wounded in Vietnam. He  
died there, and she never got to say goodbye.

WORKER 1

We are people with feelings. Do they understand that?  
(to REPORTER) Will you report that?

DIANE enters another area with newspaper.

DIANE (calling OS)

Frank? Have you read this?

WORKER 1

They talk about "Peace" and "Freedom" - but they are taking  
away OUR freedom.

DIANE

God...

REPORTER

The scale of the January draft board raid in St. Paul has  
prompted J. Edgar Hoover to order 100 agents to Minnesota...

WORKER 2

We're not safe. Nobody's safe now.

REPORTER

The Willmar VFW and American Legion have announced a \$10,000  
reward on the heads of the uncaught raiders.

WORKER 1

Good. See how they like it when somebody takes away THEIR  
freedom.

DIANE

You should see this. Somebody should see this. Frank - !

MEETING PLACE. DON, CHUCK, MIKE & PETE enter.  
DIANE meets them.

DON

Ok. So. What's next?

CHUCK

I've been talking to Brad -

DIANE (overlapping)

Wait - you've got to read this -

DON

ORDER! One at a time.

PETE

Cool. Don the Anarchist calls for order.

DON

Chuck, what'd Brad say?

CHUCK

He's so high on Beaver 55 he wants to do a "ring of fire action" - hitting rural draft boards all over the state. Or really freak out the Feds and drive across country raiding all the way.

DON

Sounds like fun.

DIANE

NO. Fun isn't the point. Read what people are saying. If our next action looks like some kind of prank or vandalism we defeat the purpose and hurt the whole movement.

PETE

I can see him in that car - attracting FBI agents like flies.

CHUCK

It beats staying underground - using fake names and IDs - waking up every day wondering how many times you're going to be nervous. Hiding out's no way to live.

MIKE

It's the only way to live now. Underground's the only free place.

DIANE

That's right. And it gives us time to plan so we don't lose public support.

DON

Maybe... But what about the opposite?

PETE

What opposite? Jail?

DON

No. (pause) We surface.

DIANE

Now? with FBI agents everywhere?

DON

You're right about public support. People need to know why we're doing this. We have to keep communicating.

CHUCK

How do we do that?

DON

We go to the U and hold a press conference. We say that "we accept political and moral responsibility for the Beaver action, but that "we're not saying that we did it." It works on a legal basis, right Chuck?

CHUCK

Well... They can't arrest us for that.

MIKE

Sounds good.

PETE

Scary, but good.

DON

Right. That's the point. If we can risk putting ourselves out there in public, we can be understood - and criticized, ok... But we can learn from that. We can change and grow.



DIANE

Right on.

DON

Whatta you think, Chuck?

CHUCK

It's the most hare-brained maneuver I ever heard of.

DON

So?

CHUCK

Let's do it.

DON

After the press conference we go around speaking at colleges, schools, churches. We heat up the debate - let people know there's a way to take control of this war machine.

MIKE

It's still just words.

PETE

What's wrong with that? Words have power.

MIKE

Yeah, but they get twisted.

CHUCK

Right. Action's where the truth is.

DON

Action doesn't mean anything if people don't know it's happening.

BILL enters.

BILL

Hey - Olson! Whatever you guys are doing next, I'm in on it!

DON

You're in, Tilton. As of right now.

BILL

Excellent. 1970's gonna be the year, man!

DIANE

March - Frank speaks at Carleton -

ACTOR 3

April - Pete speaks at high schools...

DIANE

Brad at North Dakota State....

ACTOR 3

Don at the U of Minnesota Duluth...

DIANE

Bill in Minneapolis...

ACTOR 3

Chuck at St. Cloud...

CHUCK

Colleges are going nuts! They're striking everywhere to protest the invasion of Cambodia -

REPORTER enter.

REPORTER (Actor 5)

Monday May 4, 1970. Kent Ohio. National Guardsmen open fire on a student demonstration at Kent State University killing:

DIANE

Sandra Lee Shreuer, 20 -

ACTOR 3

Allison B. Krause, 19 -

MIKE

Jeffrey Miller, 20 -

PETE

William K. Shroeder, 19.

ACTOR 5

The firing of 16 shots lasted approximately 13 seconds.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

May 14, 1970. Jackson State College. Jackson Mississippi.

REPORTER (Actor 1)

State police open fire on a student demonstration killing -

DON

Philip Gibbs, 20 -

PETE

James Earl Green, 18 - a high school student.

REPORTER (Actor 1)

All persons killed or injured by gunshots were Black.

BRAD enters.

BRAD

Speaking isn't enough. Beaver 55 is ancient history now. We have to keep acting. The war is escalating. We've got to escalate too.

DON

Yeah but how do we escalate our actions and stay non-violent?

BRAD

We do what we're best at. More raids. We hit some rural boards. 4 or 5 actions at the same time. Places like Winona - Fairbault - Alexandria - Little Falls... Hit 'n split ... Like Beaver 55 - but all over the state in one night.

ALL exit as BRAD walks into new scene.

BRAD

We're gonna light up Minnesota!

A ROOM. FRANK packing. DIANE helping.

DIANE

I thought we vetoed the ring of fire idea.

BRAD

We can't lose momentum. If Frank goes now we'll lose it...

FRANK

Yeah, but people are moving on their own now. I've finally got time to get out to California and do what I've always wanted - to write about the changes, the communes - the counter-culture -

BRAD

One more raid. We pull off the ring of fire, then you can go wherever you want. What do you think?

FRANK

Diane?

DIANE

No more raids for me. We've got the Women's Clinic running full time now and the new shelter getting started. I'd like you to stay here, but I can't decide for you.

FRANK

What about the others?

BRAD

Tilton, Turchick, Simmons and Olson are on for sure. And I've got a list of new guys ready to join in. Whatta you say, Frank?

Pause. Silence from FRANK.

DIANE

What are you thinking?

FRANK

About that letter from the Bishop. Since I started talking about civil disobedience and the Beaver action, he's barred me from speaking at the Newman Center or any Catholic schools.

DIANE

So this would be your final breakaway from the church.

FRANK

Yeah... it's just... That night in the draft office...in St. Paul... It wasn't a breakaway. It was more like - No. You're gonna think I'm nuts.

BRAD

We're all nuts, man. What was it?

FRANK

A spiritual experience.

BRAD

Right on. Like an exorcism! (goofing on it) Get thee behind me Satan....!

FRANK

No. You know what it was like. In that office, that night - the way the entire group moved to act in concert... It was a celebration. Like mass is supposed to be. A connection... a celebration of being true to something - I don't even have words for it.

BRAD

So let's celebrate again. Make July 10th our next holy day.

DIANE

Don't even joke with Frank about that.

BRAD

So think about Fred Hampton. Kent State - Jackson - Cambodia - My Lai. Two hundred dead a week. You think running off to some hippie commune's gonna change that?

FRANK

It might change me. If I can't preach I'm nothing.

BRAD

Ah, Francis. The wisdom of 200 years of injustice must be understood. If you think you're powerless, you always get smashed. Don't you see? They create the illusion we take as reality. Unless of course, we seize the power and....

FRANK

We do another raid.

BRAD

We've got to keep acting. We can't let down.

FRANK

Yeah. You're right.

DIANE

You're gonna do it?

FRANK

California can wait. I'll call Mike. We've cased Little Falls pretty good. My mother's on vacation. We can use her car...

BRAD

Right on. Little Falls is gonna fall big!

BRAD, DIANE & FRANK start out. Stop as:

FBI VOICE

Back away from the door.

ANOTHER FBI VOICE

Back away from the door. Now.

ANOTHER FBI VOICE

Don't move. Or you're dead.

FRANK and MIKE freeze, up against the wall, as:

GUARD'S VOICE

Turchick!

PRISON. GUARD (Actor 5) enters with a broom. CHUCK enters from other side: stops and surveys the mess of paper on the floor.

CHUCK

Clean up on aisle seven...?

GUARD

Don't get smart. You got Good Time credits waiting.

He hands CHUCK the broom and exits.

CHUCK

Oh yeah. This is a real good time.

CHUCK starts sweeping up the paper.

SELECTIVE SERVICE WORKERS (ACTORS 1&3) enter.

WORKER 1 (Actor 1)

I don't like to say this, but that raid changed me. It changed many of us. It put fear in us.

WORKER 2 (Actor 3)

It took something away from us that we didn't deserve to have taken away.

WORKER 1

I'm not a violent person. But when I saw that sign: "HANG THE MINNESOTA 8" - I agreed with that. What they are doing is treason pure and simple.

BLACKOUT.

END ACT 1.

ACT 2

HOUSE LIGHTS still UP. JUDGE (Actor 4) enters and addresses the audience.

JUDGE

May I say to our spectators that the Marshall reported to me yesterday that he had a fair amount of trouble trying to keep some of you *Quiet from Talking*.

He advised me that he talked with you about it in the hall afterwards, and that *you were not appreciative* of the *Admonitions* he was giving to you, and some of these spectators have been kept out of the courtroom today.

I urge you all to be *q-u-i-e-t!* *Not to talk in the courtroom.* I admonish you all not to express either approval or disapproval of what transpires by *laughing! Oohing! Aahing!* or anything else. This is not a public meeting. This is a judicial proceeding and it will be conducted as such.

JUDGE exits. HOUSE LIGHTS DOWN.

LIGHTS COME UP on three areas:

SIMMONS' HOME. PETE plays guitar as his mother, MRS. SIMMONS (Actor 3) reads a newspaper.

A ROOM. FRANK sits on the floor typing; a pile of pages next to him. ANOTHER JUDGE (ACTOR 5) appears behind him.

JUDGE

I'm waiting, Mr. Kroncke. Guilty or not guilty..?

FRANK stops typing, remembering.

JUDGE

12 minutes of silence is enough. Since you seem to be incapable of speech at this time, the government will enter a plea of "not guilty" on your behalf.

JUDGE leaves. FRANK resumes typing.

COURTROOM. CLIFF, PROSECUTOR (ACTOR 1) and JUDGE (Actor 4).

PROSECUTOR

The next case on the calendar, Your Honor, is the United States of America against Clifton Ulen. Mr. Ulen was charged back in 1970 with a violation - one count - of Interference with the Administration of the Military Selective Service. He entered a plea of not guilty and I am now informed that he intends to move the Court for permission to change his plea to that of guilty.

JUDGE

And that's what you want to do Mr. Ulen, plead guilty?

CLIFF

Yes, Your Honor.

MRS. SIMMONS throws down the paper.

MRS. SIMMONS

This is infuriating. I can't read anymore of this.

PETE

What Mom - ?

JUDGE

A guilty plea will be entered. Make sure you arrange it with the probation officer.

CLIFF

Thank you, Your Honor.

PROSECUTOR

Thank you, Your Honor.

They exit.

MRS. SIMMONS

I can't pick up a paper without seeing somebody call you traitors... mindless vandals... misguided young men...

PETE

Molly Ivins called us Idealists in the Tribune.

MRS. SIMMONS

She's the only one. The rest are just - hateful.

PETE

And you believe them?



MRS. SIMMONS

Of course not. But it's only going to get worse when you go on trial.

PETE

Maybe not. We've got a big support group -

MRS. SIMMONS

Listen Pete. Please. I want you to think about this: You don't have to go on trial.

PETE

What... You want me to change my plea to guilty? Like Cliff did?

MRS. SIMMONS

Yes.

PETE

But we're not guilty! Mom - Do you think I'm guilty?

MRS. SIMMONS

It doesn't matter what I think. Right or wrong, you did it. Now all you have to do is tell the judge you did it, you're guilty, you'll serve your time on probation - and it's over. You made your statement with the raids. Why keep it going longer than you have to?

PETE

Because we fight back. We resist. We defend ourselves. Look, there's such a thing as a "defense of necessity" ok? We prove that some crimes can be justified to prevent worse crimes from happening. Ok, maybe we were breaking and entering, but how does that compare to the enslavement and deaths of all those draftees? - to the crime of war itself.

MRS. SIMMONS

Nice words, Pete, but it's rhetoric. Anybody can say those words - and anybody can see right through them.

PETE

It's not rhetoric if we can explain it.

MRS. SIMMONS

You think Judge Devitt is going to sit back and let you explain anything in there???

PETE

I think it's worth trying.

MRS. SIMMONS

So you'd risk being convicted of a felony? Going to prison? For what? A chance to explain?

PETE

I can't believe you're saying this. You - You're the one who taught me. I got my understanding from YOU. From your work with the teacher's union. You always said "serve your community - serve your community" -

MRS. SIMMONS

How will you serve your community by going to prison? What good will that do?

PETE

You got me against this war. You marched. You protested. I mean - you went to the rally at Coffman Union with Bill and I -

MRS. SIMMONS

With Bill and me.

PETE

Ok - right right - But you stood there while we turned in our draft cards. You didn't think we were criminals then, did you?

MRS. SIMMONS

I'm talking about your future. Having a felony record for life. Never being able to vote, to hold a government job -

PETE (pause)

Mom. Do you think I'm a criminal?

MRS. SIMMONS (riding over)

Do you know what it's like in prison? Do you have any idea what happens to young people in there? I can tell you it isn't rehabilitation - not by a long shot.

PETE

I asked you -

MRS. SIMMONS

I know you're being brave. But you're not a tough guy. Not like the men in there. And you're so - I don't know - young...

PETE

AM I A CRIMINAL?

MRS. SIMMONS

I don't care WHAT YOU ARE as long as you're not in prison.

PETE

Great. You don't care what I am, I might as well be a criminal - go underground - become a fugitive -

MRS. SIMMONS

Stop it. You know that's not what I mean. Pete -

PETE

I'm late. I gotta go meet Brad.

He leaves fast.

MRS. SIMMONS

Peter, come back here!

(no answer)

Pete? I CARE WHAT YOU ARE. I do care. But I care about YOUR FUTURE. Can't you think about that? Doesn't that matter at all?

She waits for an answer as:

A ROOM. FRANK types. DIANE enters, picks up pages.

DIANE

Hey Frank.... Your personal statement's getting kinda long, don't you think?

FRANK

How do you like it?

MRS. SIMMONS

God damn this war.

She exits.

DIANE

40 pages and you're still not finished?

FRANK

It's my whole life.

DIANE

I know. But this is page 36 and you're not even up to 1968. This could take hours to deliver in court. You'll have to stop sometime.

FRANK

I'll stop when they listen.

DIANE

Like Judge Neville's going to listen?

FRANK

He's accepted our witnesses. That's already better than the Devitt trials. This is the first time a judge has allowed expert witnesses to testify about the war. He's giving Mike and me a chance here - and we're taking it. I'll talk til I'm blue if I have to. I'm not gonna stop til we WIN.

DIANE

Yeah but -

FRANK

It's not just me. We've got professors, writers, government officials, theologians. Solid men with solid reputations to put our actions in line with a respected tradition of civil disobedience and crimes of conscience.

DIANE

No women on that list, I suppose.

FRANK (sarcastic)

Yeah. Sure. Maybe bring Joan of Arc back from the dead...

DIANE

Oh great, here we go with the sarcasm. The guy who thinks he can control everything with his words - 40 pages of words!

FRANK

Diane -

DIANE

But a woman speaks and you don't listen. So go ahead. Let the big boys talk all they want. Replace one oppressive regime with another.

FRANK (serious; with the pages)  
You think that's all this adds up to?

DIANE  
No. I don't. I support you with all my heart. But I still think - sometimes - you can act like the original Pig-headed Chauvinist.

FRANK  
In love with a Pig-headed Bra Burner...

DIANE  
Says the stuck-up Catholic Boy.

FRANK  
- to the Nasty Girl Scout.

DIANE  
Ooooo....you go for that don't you...

FRANK  
Oh yeah... in that little green uniform...

DIANE  
Catholic boys love that uniform...

FRANK  
...and those little green socks...

DIANE  
...quit messing with my socks!!!

FRANK  
I'm not quitting anything - !

DIANE  
- until you win.

FRANK  
That's right. And we will! We will win.

Their teasing turns into wrestling. He pins her.

FRANK  
Let me hear you say it! WE WILL WIN.

DIANE  
No more words, ok Frank? No more FUCKING WORDS!

She pulls him into a kiss as:

TRIAL. STAUGHTON LYND (DON) testifies.

LYND

My name is Staughton Lynd. I am a Quaker and an historian. I would like to address the tradition beginning with Socrates - or in a different way with Jesus of Nazareth - of individuals defying orders of the state which they felt to be in contradiction to conscience or universal human right. In American history this tradition begins very early. For example -

ACTOR 5 enters as JUDGE.

JUDGE

Excuse me, Mr. Lynd, but this is exactly what I did not want to get into. It is a discussion of history. We are not trying the Boston Tea Party. We are here about July 10 and two people who came into the draft board -

FRANK sits up suddenly, alarmed.

FRANK

God damn shit HELL -

JUDGE & LYND exit.

DIANE

What? What happened?

FRANK

What if they don't listen...? What if they don't see...?

DIANE

Which "they" Frank?

FRANK

I keep thinking about the judge - when we entered the plea. Something about his eyes...the way they kept moving. He wouldn't look straight at me. Wouldn't make contact. It was like I wasn't there at all. I was just a piece of business. A case to move on. Another criminal to lock up and get off the streets...

ACTOR 4 enters as FRED HAMPTON.

HAMPTON

To them I am the enemy.

FRANK

Like with Fred Hampton and the Panthers...

HAMPTON

Our Free Breakfast Program serves 3,000 kids in Chicago every week. We started a free clinic - a testing program for sickle cell anemia... But I fight in the streets for my right to be a man. And that means only one thing...

FRANK

To Nixon and Hoover - to the press and public opinion - he wasn't a person, he was the enemy. And you can do anything to an enemy.

DIANE

Maybe that's where your statement should start.

FRANK

Yeah.... Chicago '68 changed everything I ever thought.

DIANE exits as FRANK walks into scene:

CHICAGO, 1968. FRED HAMPTON greets FRANK.  
Hampton's wife, DEBORAH JOHNSON (Actor 1) is there watching them.

HAMPTON

Come in, man. It's alright. I've been to that coffee shop you run. Heard you teach those kids about how to get that Conscientious Objector status - politics and theology and all that. So I want you to come and speak at a Panther meeting some time.

FRANK

Well you know, I'd like to do that, but -

JOHNSON

A white man? You think he's got anything to say to the brothers?

HAMPTON

I think we've got the same cause. It's time black people understand they aren't the only un-American subversive pinkos to show the Vietnamese Government we want peace.

FRANK

What about the guns?

HAMPTON

You're reading too many newspapers, man.

FRANK

You know I'm preaching non-violence. Can you promise there won't be guns?

HAMPTON

There will be respect. I can promise that.

(a long look at FRANK)

I'm not getting your answer.

FRANK

Look, I want to make it clear that I am committed to your cause. Better housing, education, medical care. These are things worth fighting for.

HAMPTON

Without guns.

FRANK

Yes.

JOHNSON

Oh yeah? And how's a black man supposed to do that with armed pigs on every street?

HAMPTON

Wait Deborah...

FRANK

I am committed to non-violence.

HAMPTON

Alright. But you hear what Sister Deborah is saying? You come from the church, ok - the university. You have your teach-ins and your sit-ins... You commit your civil disobedience and resistance and all, ok. Maybe you go to jail... But it doesn't get you killed. When a young black man resists like that, he has to be willing to die.

JOHNSON

Don't even say that Fred... I don't want to hear that.



HAMPTON (turns to FRANK)

Can you say that?

FRANK (thinking it out)

Honestly - No. This is the first time I've ever thought - for real you know - that something like that could happen.

HAMPTON

And it scares you.

FRANK

Yeah. A lot.

HAMPTON

That's how we live. Every day. And that's why we believe it's our right to defend ourselves by whatever means necessary. Do you understand that?

FRANK

I do. But I don't think I could live like that.

HAMPTON

Not asking you to. You'll speak at our meeting?

FRANK

Yeah, I can speak. I just wish I could -  
(stops the thought.)

Yeah. I'll speak.

HAMPTON

Good.

HAMPTON and JOHNSON exit, leaving FRANK alone.

FRANK

I'm a speaker. That's what I do. Sometimes I think that's all I do... Words.

FRED HAMPTON'S VOICE

I am a revolutionary. I am the people. I am not the pigs. You can kill a revolutionary but you can't kill the revolution.

SOUND OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS' FIRE. Then SILENCE.

1969. A ROOM. CHUCK enters with his draft card and an envelope.

CHUCK

Hey Tilton! Listen to this. I'm sending my draft card back with a note.

BILL (entering)

You're always sending your draft cards back. How many times has it been - ?

CHUCK

I'm not counting. But this is the best one. Listen:

(holds up the draft card)

I regret that I have but one card to give for my country!

BILL

That's pretty good. But I've got a better one. Look what I'm doing for my draft physical...

He takes off his shirt and shows his bare back.  
In dark Magic Marker written on his back it says:  
GENERAL HERSHEY EATS HERE - with an arrow  
pointing down to his butt.

CHUCK

"General Hershey Eats Here." Nice work.

BILL

Can you see the arrow? Is it clear enough?

CHUCK

Pointing directly and unequivocally to your butt.

BILL

Excellent.

CHUCK

That should end the war pretty quick.

BILL

More than one way to seize control of the system.

CHUCK

Power to the people man.

They exit.

1969. INDUCTION CENTER. A YELLOW LINE. MIKE  
enters, facing forward as:

INDUCTION OFFICER (Actor 5)

When your name is called you will declare your branch of the armed services. You will then step over the yellow line and become a member of the armed services. (pause) Michael Duane (mispronounces:) Therriault.

MIKE

(corrects him, but doesn't move)  
Therriault.

INDUCTION OFFICER

Step forward and declare your branch of the armed -

MIKE (softly)

I would like to declare this.

He holds up a big color photograph of the victims  
of the My Lai massacre.

MIKE

On March 16, 1968 a company of U.S. infantry slaughtered more than three hundred Vietnamese inhabitants of My Lai village -

INDUCTION OFFICER

Step aside. Sign the form at the door and leave. The U.S. Attorney will be notified.

MIKE (to the room)

Nobody here has to go. Nobody here has to do this. Come to the Twin Cities Draft Information Center! Join Students Against Selective Service! Learn what you can do. Say no to Death. Say yes to Life!

INDUCTION OFFICER

Step aside NOW.

MIKE stays there, holding up the picture as:  
ACTOR 4 enters as JUDGE at trial & MIKE testifies:

MIKE

I think there is a distinct difference between the laws which I feel the United States Government has broken and the law which Frank and I have broken. The U. S. Government is violating laws in spite of the consequences upon people in general, and especially upon civilians. The law which Frank and I broke was because of the consequences upon the people, especially the civilians. These civilians.

He holds up the My Lai picture again.

JUDGE

Irrelevant and Immaterial. Photographs of war casualties will not be brought in as evidence.

MIKE

In American society today, you are either a peace criminal or a war criminal. The choice is yours. That is all I have to say.

He exits as:

OTHER TRIAL. BILL enters, testifying with confidence, without notes - always moving. ACTOR 5 as JUDGE.

BILL

When our news commentators tally up the weekly war dead have we forgotten that they are talking about bodies?? Every day white Americans go to their businesses - like the Honeywell Corporation right here in Minneapolis - to produce "fragmentation bombs" which are a slow-death-torture weapon aimed specifically at women, children and the aged, yellow, poor people of Southeast Asia.

PROSECUTOR (Actor 1) enters, moving and addressing the jury along with BILL.

PROSECUTOR

I don't like the Vietnam war any more than Mr. Tilton does. And I am sure not one person on the jury does....

BILL

There are only 17 million people in Vietnam, and one million of them are casualties. That's the entire Twin Cities Metropolitan area...

PROSECUTOR

If there is a way to get out of it tomorrow we should get out tomorrow. The only question is: How do we get out?

BILL

We have to find some way to pressure a change in society.

PROSECUTOR

Are they right? There is disagreement, isn't there? You may have an opinion, and I might agree with Mr. Tilton. There is only one thing -

BILL

It isn't just this war we're talking about -

PROSECUTOR

If you don't get your way at the ballot box, that doesn't give you the right to break the law no matter how high your motivation may be.

BILL

We want to make this into a society where not only the Vietnam War but ALL WARS will stop.

GAVEL SOUNDS. BLACKOUT.

NEW YEAR'S EVE. DIANE and FRANK. Drinking champagne. She raises her glass.

DIANE

To 1971.

FRANK

No. To us.

DIANE

Alright.

FRANK

I'm not sure about 1971. I am sure about us.

DIANE

To us.

She drinks. He doesn't.

FRANK

Are you sure?

DIANE

Well... It's not going to be like any other year.

FRANK

I mean about us.

DIANE

We'll get through it.

FRANK

Yeah, but what does that mean? If I thought - if I knew - if I was certain -

DIANE

I'll be there Frank - for the trial - the defense committee.

FRANK

Not that. I mean us. You and me. I've ministered in prisons. I've seen what it's like. To be there without any connection - any hope...

DIANE

Let's not think about that. We can't focus on the negative - on the fear. Not now. Focus on next week.

FRANK

Chuck and Bill - Pete, Don and Brad are CONVICTED. Would you say that to them??? It's different now. If Mike and I don't make it -

DIANE

I'm going to support you, Frank. I'm here to support you no matter what.

FRANK

Marry me.

(pause; then fast:)

You don't have to say it now. I know it's not the way we live. It's so stupid. I feel like - I don't know - the soldier's last night or some shit - SHIT. I shouldn't have said it.

DIANE

No. No. It's not stupid. I love you. I support you. It's just... (pause) Why?

FRANK

"Why" -? That's your answer? WHY?

DIANE

Look, we've had a lot to drink...and I think -

FRANK

Don't THINK. What do you feel??? Yes or no. Black or white. Something that dumb - that stupid - that clear.

DIANE

You know what I feel. Marriage has nothing to do with it.

FRANK

Ok. Alright. But this is different, isn't it? With us.

DIANE

You talk about questioning the system, challenging authority... Marriage is part of that. God - for a woman - it's the biggest one.

FRANK

It doesn't kill people.

DIANE

It can. Come to the womens' shelter sometime and find out. Look Frank, I love you. Nothing can change that. But marriage is not the answer. Can you love me and understand that?

FRANK

Yeah. Yes. I do - But GOD I'm sick of UNDERSTANDING.

DIANE

Come on. Let's go home. We'll keep talking - we'll get through this -

FRANK

I don't want to TALK. I want to be an ANIMAL. I want to take a side and fucking KILL for it.

THEY exit as MOM IN GREEN SWEATER (Actor 3) enters.  
ARMY NURSE (Actor 1) enters from other side. Both with letters.

ARMY NURSE

Dear Mrs. Price, I have never written a letter like this before - but then in my 6 years of nursing I have never met so courageous an individual as your son...

MOM (reading)

He fought hard, terribly hard to overcome his wounded condition. Although I'm sure he knew what was happening, he never lost his courage.

ARMY NURSE

I guess I really wanted you to know that Rob did not die alone with no one caring. I cared. We all cared...

MOM (reading)

Be proud of your son. (pause) Captain Connie Schlosser, U.S. Army.

As she starts to put the letter away, NURSE approaches her, urgently.

NURSE

Mrs. Price - I'm not supposed to do this - I told myself I wouldn't do this - but I have seen things here. It isn't just our men - I've seen women and children napalmed, shot, murdered - and we've done it. I want to believe we're on the right side. I came here to help. My job is to help. But who am I helping if this is my side?

MOM

You are helping, Connie. I swear to god, you must believe that.

NURSE

Can you tell somebody, Mrs. Price? Can you tell them what's going on here?

MOM

I don't know who to tell, Connie. I'm just - I mean - if I knew who would listen - I've written letters - I've signed petitions - I've marched -

NURSE

THAT ISN'T HELPING.

TRIAL. ACTOR 4 enters as JUDGE. WITNESSES converge from all sides, testifying with urgency.

FATHER BILL HUNT (ACTOR 5)

I am Father Bill Hunt -

FATHER AL JANICKE (CLIFF)

I am Father Al Janicke and I AM PLEADING, Your Honor -

HUNT

I swear to tell the truth,



JANICKE

as you hear from my voice -

HUNT

the whole truth, and nothing but the truth -

ELLSBERG (BRAD)

My name is Daniel Ellsberg -

HUNT

- so help me god.

WESTING (BILL)

I am Arthur H. Westing, Professor of Biology -

JANICKE

I AM PLEADING along with Pope John that HUMAN LIFE IS IMPORTANT!

ELLSBERG

In 1964 I became attached to the Department of Defense to study decision-making on Viet Nam going back to 1940 -

WESTING

I directed a study on the ecological impact of herbicides in Vietnam -

JANICKE

All people whether Christian or not are human -

ELLSBERG

I have been trying to understand how we had gotten where we are in Vietnam -

WESTING

The magnitude of the destruction of forest and farmland you can't possibly get -

JANICKE

When Christians are confronted by authorities who commit abominations they must rise up against them.

WESTING

125,000 tons of rice destroyed. In terms of what this does to people -

HUNT

Let me quote from Vatican Two -

ELLSBERG

In April 1970 I felt I had to abandon my government career -

HUNT

"Any act of war aimed at the destruction of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself."

ELLSBERG

I realized that a great deal of my analysis had come to revolve around the deception of Congress and the public -

JUDGE

Mr. Ellsberg. I am going to sustain my objection to any criticism of this administration or past administrations or Congress or anything else.

WITNESSES

Your honor -

JUDGE

I now strike all of the testimony which attempts to rely on a justification on account of the Vietnam war or religious oriented reasons.

GAVEL. BLACKOUT.

PETE'S VOICE

Greetings from the "Federal Youth Center." Sounds like a fun place, huh..?

ANOTHER PRISON: FEDERAL YOUTH CENTER. PETE in prison khakis, writing a letter.

PETE

I've been thinking a lot about what I'm going to do when I get out. I'd like to be an artist - not graphic so much as active. I'm reading a lot about the kind of stuff the Living Theater and so many others are doing. Mind-twisting, guerilla-type stuff. I wouldn't want to mess with normal - conventional theatre. Either way, whether you dance, write, act or fight you're performing for an audience...and I dig that, you know? The only thing is... A couple of weeks ago I was reading Camus and he brought me down to earth. He says: "If the mind is strong enough to construct in a prison cell a moral philosophy that is not one of submission, it will be one of domination."

(Continued)

(PETE)

Observations like that make it clear that this whole country is becoming - or already is - a prison.

IN THE DARK. Shadowy figures, voices:

GUARD'S VOICE (Actor 4)

Strip. Bend over. You know the position...

GUARD'S VOICE (Actor 5)

Stand up. Turn. Report for de-lousing....

GUARD'S VOICE (Actor 4)

Get dressed. Report to Adjustment Committee. You hear me Kroncke?

FRANK

I hear you.

GUARD

I hear you sir.

FRANK

I hear you sir.

GUARD

We know who you are. We know your type. You better not organize in here or you'll regret it. Follow me.

FRANK

Where are we - ?

GUARD

I said follow me. Take this.

Hands him a plastic box.

FRANK

What is it?

GUARD

TAKE IT.

SOUND OF ELECTRONIC LOCK CLOSING.

A CELL. FRANK stands alone in a BRIGHT BLUE LIGHT. He holds a plastic meal box with a thick steak on it.

FRANK

Steak..?

(he calls out)

HEY. What's this for? HEY!

(no answer. Holding the steak, he looks around.)

Jesus. They put you in Solitary and give you a steak?

(stares at the steak)

It's a good steak. A fucking great steak.

(looks around again)

"We know who you are." Oh yeah ? Who? Who do you think I am? Che Guevara? Joe Hill? Like I'm gonna lead a revolt? Organize and break down the walls? Well, guess what? You're wrong. You got no Joe Hill here. You got a broken-down ex-monk with a FUCKING STEAK.

(stares at the steak)

What kind of punishment is this? Eat the steak and be their boy...? Eat the steak and show your submission..?

(throws down the steak; then regrets it)

Christ...

(kneels down by the steak; near tears)

I wanted that.

Picks up steak and tears off a piece with his teeth.

A ROOM. MOVING DAY. DIANE enters with 2 FRIENDS (ACTOR 1 and ACTOR 3).

DIANE

To see him there - without an idea - a plan - any kind of thought to express. We sit in two chairs that we're not allowed to move. Kids are running around everywhere. You're allowed one kiss when you meet and another when you leave. Then it's just hand holding - with guards watching every move. We're turned into kids. Worse than that - because I know he's been stripped and cavity searched before he comes in and it'll happen again when he leaves. What can I say that will erase that? I want to talk about my life - the new life we're building here with the womens' commune - but I feel so damned selfish. Here we are moving forward, changing our lives - and he's back where women were in the old days - locked in - helpless - body and soul at the mercy of his keepers....

BRAD'S VOICE

I'm Brad Beneke. This is my personal statement.

DIANE

In that room, we're not a man and a woman anymore.

WOMEN continue packing as: BRAD enters. He reads from a paper, shakily at first, then building in strength.

BRAD

We have lost the Passion for Life. We have become Objects of that damn Machine. And we keep being told to be Objects - to be slaves of that Machine and this courtroom.

DIANE

Every visit feels like an act of cruelty. So - we stopped.

BRAD

What Vietnam has shown our generation is that it's time for us to control that Machine - not by improving our warfare, not by sending more killing machines into Cambodia - but by trying to feed and clothe and house people in Southeast Asia, in Latin America, Africa, India and the United States -- for the many of us who don't have and the few of us that have so much.

FRIEND 1 (ACTOR 1)

God... Frank in prison... Two of my best friends dead in Vietnam... My brother-in-law hiding out in Canada... It's like nobody can have a life anymore.

FRIEND 2 (ACTOR 3)

But that's what we're working to change, right? With the commune - the clinic - the food co-op... If we can change our lives, maybe we can change the rest of this country too.

BRAD

We have a common struggle as people.

DIANE

I'd like to believe that...

FRIEND 1

We better believe it. If we don't, who will...?

They carry off boxes as Brad continues:

BRAD

We have to look at one another as community and then we can we can start developing love and respect - respect for human lives - which I guess we really lost in this generation and this time of history.

He crumples the paper. Exits.

PRISON YARD. 1972. MIKE & FRANK in prison khakis, walking around the yard.

MIKE

No history. No religion. No criticism. No photographs with people or blood or unpleasantness. God knows we can't have that in a war...

FRANK

But he allowed us to show pictures of the napalmed land. That got to the farmers on the jury. I saw tears in their eyes. They wanted to get us off. They were looking for a legal hook. They just got intimidated.

MIKE

I don't know. It's all a blank to me. I just remember the woman afterwards. The one from the jury who said "I'm sorry..."

FRANK

Anna Gertner from Westbrook.

MIKE

Yeah. Where is that...? Westbrook.

FRANK

I don't know. Someplace rural.

MIKE

Sounds nice. I wonder if she'll need a good migrant farm worker like me about five years from now...

FRANK

You still thinking about that?

MIKE

Nothing sweeter. Ride the rails. Work by the season. Live low to the land. (pause) What about you? What are you thinking about?

FRANK

Nothing.

MIKE

Come on Frank...

FRANK

Seriously Nothing. Don't read. Don't write. Don't talk.  
Don't want visits.

MIKE

What about Diane? (pause; silence from FRANK) What?

FRANK

It's over.

MIKE

Man... What happened? You wanna talk?

FRANK

I told you, Mike, I don't do that anymore. I talked and  
talked and talked and where did it get us? We lost. We lost  
everything.

MIKE

You really think -

FRANK

Let's just walk, ok.

MIKE

Ok.

FRANK

Walking's alright.

MIKE

You know... I got a letter from a guy in St. Paul. He said  
his draft card must've been one of the ones we stole because  
he never got called up. He thanked us for saving his life.

They walk.

LIGHTS fade on them, up on:

TRIAL. DON OLSON enters to testify.

DON

People of the jury.... I don't know if you were sequestered last week when the bombing of North Vietnam started again. But one of the assistant secretaries of defense was asked to testify about the bombing raid - and it came out later in the day that he had lied. When he was asked why, he said something to the effect that "sometimes you have to do that." Now this is a thing which stretches back - it has happened again and again - and sometimes people forget...

Puts on glasses to read:

Last week President Nixon declared the war as "one of America's finest hours because we took a difficult task and we succeeded." Before that - in 1969 Defense Secretary Laird declared "We have turned the corner in the war." And before that, in 1967, General Westmoreland says: "We have reached an important point when the end begins to come into view...We can see the light at the end of the tunnel." This is the type of thing we were told just before the Tet Offensive! And before that, President Johnson said: "We are very sure we are on the right track." And Defense Secretary McNamara in 1964: "The United States hopes to withdraw its troops from South Vietnam by the end of 1965." This goes all the way back to 1955. General Navarre, the French Commander saying: "I fully expect only six more months of hard fighting!"

It has been a series of statements - it covers a fifteen year period - the whole decade of the sixties. This is what we come out of! We didn't come from Mars - the long-haired weirdos...or whatever people think of us. I went to college. I was the first one in my family to go to college. My father was a machinist and my mother was a waitress and I was in International Relations. I was going to go into the State Department until I started finding out about this war and what was really going on.

Takes off glasses to address the Jury.

Now, the judge is going to tell you that you are not supposed to take into account how we feel about the war, and that you are not supposed to decide on the war. But I am telling you that you can and you should - that as Americans we have got to! We cannot allow ourselves to be lied to by our leaders.

Pause. THE COMPANY enters:



ACTOR 1

The judge asks:

ACTOR 4

Members of the jury, have you reached a verdict?

ACTOR 5

The foreman answers:

ACTOR 3

Yes, we have.

BLACKOUT.

SOUND OF WIND.

FORT SNELLING NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERY. 1971

Bare stage. Some white paper on the floor as snow.  
STUDENT REPORTER (ACTOR 5) enters wearing a heavy coat.

STUDENT REPORTER

November (29 ) 1971. Fort Snelling National Military Cemetery. Five of the Minnesota 8 have announced they will turn themselves in here today to begin serving their 5 year prison sentences.

FRANK hands out flyers as COMPANY begins entering - all in heavy coats. Some as HECKLERS.

HECKLERS

America! Love it or Leave it!

REPORTER

Frank Kroncke, who is still appealing his case, is handing out flyers.

HECKLERS

Draft dodgers! Traitors!

REPORTER

Mrs. Simmons - anything you'd like to tell us -

MRS. SIMMONS (ACTOR 3)

I'm proud of my son. Peter isn't a kook or a weirdo. He's ordinary kid who found out a simple thing - he can't kill.

HECKLER

He's still a criminal.

REPORTER

Mrs. Beneke -

MRS. BENEKE (ACTOR 1)

Well. I'm still a Republican, but now I'm a radical, non-violent Republican. I was radicalized in Judge Devitt's courtroom.

HECKLER

Your sons are guilty!

MRS. SIMMONS

Don't you people understand??? When kids like my son do things like this, SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THIS COUNTRY.

MR. TURCHICK enters to REPORTER:

MR. TURCHICK (ACTOR 4)

5 years in prison for a goddamned 10 minutes in a building? I tell you: ask any of these boys what they accomplished. I'll tell you. Nothing...nothing. Now they go to jail and who knows what happens to them.

CHUCK (entering)

Dad...

MR. TURCHICK (to Reporter)

I told Chuck, You're ruining your life.

CHUCK

Not now, Dad. Ok? Not now.

MR. TURCHICK (continuing to Reporter)

If only he had gone to law school it would have kept his mind busy and he wouldn't have had time for other things.

(to CHUCK)

You know it's true. You know that don't you?

CHUCK turns to the Reporter.

CHUCK

Brad Beneke's here. You should talk to him.

BRAD arrives & embraces group.

STUDENT REPORTER

How do you feel Brad...?

BRAD

Good. Good at this point...

DON, BILL and PETE join the others.

STUDENT REPORTER: (looking out)

They're all here now: Brad Beneke, Chuck Turchick, Don Olson, Bill Tilton, Pete Simmons. They were ordered to turn themselves in five days ago, before Thanksgiving, so technically they could be called fugitives.

REPORTER (to Mr. Turchick)

You know the FBI could pick you up right here for aiding fugitives. How do you feel about that?

MR TURCHICK

The FBI? Oh heck, they don't need a reason.

CHUCK

Well... you got that right.

BILL

Ok folks - gather around. (To crowd) We have chosen this National Military Cemetery -

HECKLER

How dare you stand on this sacred ground!

BILL (shouting over)

- as the place where we will turn ourselves in, to emphasize that Death and Destruction continue at a horrifying rate in Southeast Asia.

HECKLER

Commies! Pinkos!

BILL

To pursue his lying policy of "Peace With Honor" Nixon is now conducting an air war which reduces white casualties and increases brown casualties on an automated battlefield. We need to find alternatives to the white markers behind me ...or going to jail.

HECKLER

You belong in jail! How are you come here and disrespect veterans who gave their lives for this country. How dare you -

ACTOR 4's VOICE

LISTEN UP PEOPLE!

ACTOR 4 takes off coat to become JOE, the Vet.

JOE

We of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and Veterans for Peace salute the Minnesota 8 in a most anti-military manner: We love you. The fact that you are considered criminals is stranger than fiction.

ACTOR 1 takes off coat to become ARMY NURSE.

ARMY NURSE

The men who put our soldiers in those graves over there, in wheelchairs for life, in mental wards, in drug wards, and on the streets without jobs - they are the real criminals.

BILL

We hope that ultimately the Politics of Life will overcome the Politics of Death!

BRAD

It's hard to shout when I really want to whisper - but... WE SHALL WIN!

PETE

We'd like to leave you with a song that meant a lot to us at one time as former members of - The Roy Rogers Riders Club!

(starts singing:)

*Happy trails to you until we meet again....*

(BRAD, BILL, DON and CHUCK join in, goofing on it)

*Happy trails to you, keep smilin' until then.*

*Who cares about the clouds when we're together?*

*Just sing a song and bring the sunny weather.*

*Happy trails to you 'till we meet again.*

BRAD

See you in five years!

A MOTHER (Actor 3)

Before that! Before that!!!

COMPANY exits as BRAD, BILL, CHUCK, DON & PETE  
leave.

DON'S VOICE

May 12, 2008...

KFAI RADIO STUDIO. DON OLSON (now in his 60's)  
puts on headphones.

DON

Ya know... I've heard from so many so-called Peace and  
Progressive people... So many times I've heard - "If we  
brought back the draft, that would get those young people  
riled up and then we could end the war." But I say that is  
so stupid. If you could hear what you said - you wouldn't  
believe what just came outta your mouth!

Don't put the burden of stopping this war on young people.

COMPANY begins to enter one at time. Each in  
prison uniform.

CHUCK

Chuck Turchick. 36784-115. Federal Correctional Institution,  
Sandstone Minnesota. Release date: July 23, 1973.

DON

It's gonna take all of us.

PETE

Pete Simmons. 12505-102. Federal Youth Center, Englewood,  
Colorado. Release date: July 23, 1973.

DON

It's gonna take time...

BILL

Bill Tilton. 28181-117. Federal Correctional Institution,  
Milan, Michigan. Release date: July 25, 1973.

DON

It takes time...

BRAD

Brad Beneke. I don't remember the number. Federal  
Correctional Institution, Sandstone Minnesota. Release date:  
July 23, 1973.

DON

But ya can't give up...

MIKE

Mike Therriault. 8874-147. Federal Correctional Institution,  
Sandstone Minnesota. Release date: July 23, 1973.

DON

Ya can't give up hope.

FRANK

Frank Kroncke. 8867-147, Federal Correctional Institution,  
Sandstone Minnesota. Release date: July 23, 1973.

DON

This has been the Northern Sun Radio News show with your  
host... Don Olson. 10329-176. US Medical Center for Federal  
Prisons, Springfield Missouri. Release date: July 23, 1973.

Alright then. Have a good week - and stay tuned here for  
Democracy Now.

ACTOR 4

Democracy!

COMPANY

NOW!

FRANK

PEACE!

COMPANY

NOW!

ACTOR 3

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME -

SUDDENLY: LOUD BLAST of a fighter jet flying over.  
COMPANY stands silent, looking up as it passes and

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

END OF PLAY.