

"VIETNAM: AMERICAN HOLOCAUST"

by

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FADE IN:

Dictionary definition of 'holocaust' background of Talon Bay.

VIETNAM: AMERICAN HOLOCAUST TITLE

Guitar strains of "Vietcong Blues" begins, YING-YANG logo recedes into Talon Bay background, pictures from Arlington West, map of Vietnam, then junks, one is blown up, slowly falling bomb hits and explodes, then military funerals, family mourning at cemetery, then Vietnam Wall in DC. SecDec McNamara, Air Force office and planes bombing. Computer, McNamara going to Vietnam in '95.

MARTIN SHEEN

As the War in Iraq enters it's sixth year it's becoming increasingly clear it has much in common with the war in Vietnam. With the passing of more than a generation, many Vietnam Veterans are questioning America's now familiar and repetitive military policies.

Has our failure to fully understand what happened in Vietnam condemned us to repeat it in Iraq, they ask, and for this reason alone, they believe, the reality of the war in Vietnam needs to be reexamined for our own sake but more importantly for the sake of future generations.

CLAY CLAIBORNE

What makes a holocaust besides destruction by fire? How many people have to die? Is a million enough? How about two million? Would that make a holocaust?

MARTIN SHEEN

How many people died in the Vietnam War?

We know the number of Americans with some precision. It is just over fifty-eight thousand. Each with his or her name engraved on the Vietnam Memorial wall in Washington, D.C.

But how many Vietnamese, not to mention Laotians or Cambodians died in the war with the U.S. and who would know? Probably no one could know for certain. In 1995 Vietnam released a figure of four million civilians and one million combatants killed. Nobody has officially challenged those figures.

However Robert McNamara, the longest serving Secretary of Defense, has established a much lower number. Before the Vietnam War was considered Nixon's War or Johnson's War, it was considered McNamara's War. And before Vietnam, McNamara was considered a bomb damage efficiency expert during World War Two and a top advisor to B-29 bomber force commander Curtis LeMay. Did his position and training qualify McNamara to know the true number of Vietnamese killed in the war?

The same year the Vietnamese released their tally of five million souls, McNamara paid a visit to Vietnam. While he was there, he gave them his numbers...

McNamara re-enacts his 1995 meeting with the Vietnamese.

ROBERT MCNAMARA

Do you mean to say that it was not a tragedy for you when you lost three million four hundred thousand Vietnamese killed on our population basis is the equivalent of 27 million Americans. What did you accomplish?

Scenes of happy people in present day Vietnam.

MARTIN SHEEN

Since it was their country, their towns and villages, and the lives of their men, women and children, it is solely for the Vietnamese to determine if their independence is worth the price the U.S. exacted.

Section Break: Television War

Walter Cronkite on screen reporting, but you can't hear him.

MARTIN SHEEN

The Vietnam War was the first so-called television war.

CBS reporter holding mike and talking to camera in jungle.

CBS REPORTER

After 5 years of killing the gears of the Vietnam Death Machine were grinding more slowly in the months before the Cambodia invasion.

Reporter is off screen. Scenes of jets pounding houses by a river.

ANOTHER REPORTER

Almost all restraint is off. For the first time the Vietnamese are now seeing the holocaust of conventional war. The kind that leveled much of Korea and destroyed dozens of cities in World War II.

MARTIN SHEEN

The major western media reported on it from the killing fields.

Bob Simons reports with great emotion. Scene of carnage in the road as RVN soldiers on motor bikes ride by.

BOB SIMONS, CBS NEWS

A truck load of refugees goes up in smoke. Women, children, babies. Some are dead some are not dead. By evening

government spokesman are saying another grand victory has been won in Quang Tri province. The situation is once again stabilized. But there will be more fighting and more words. Words spoken by generals, journalists, politicians. But here on Route One it's difficult to imagine what those words can be. There's nothing left to say about this war. There's just nothing left to say. Bob Simon. CBS News. Route 1

B&W French propaganda film about how good the French are for Indochina with French announcer and English subtitles: "In regions of hostility and misery French civilizers have brought peace, work, prosperity and joy."

MARTIN SHEEN

In order to fully understand U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia it's imperative to examine the history of the region.

Section Break: History

Many B&W scenes from Vietnams history as illustrates the narrative.

MARTIN SHEEN

The Vietnamese had struggled for their independence for two thousand years before it was finally won in 1975. For a thousand years it was directly ruled and occupied by China, and even though it regained formal autonomy in 939 A.D. it remained a tributary state to its Chinese neighbor to the north. In the 19th century the Europeans came to Asia seeking empire. France conquered Vietnam and along with Laos and Cambodia, called it French Indo-China and made it one of their colonial possessions.

For a hundred years the French exploited the people and resources of Vietnam for the benefit of France. Cheap labor and rubber were their chief bounties. When World War II started, the Nazis conquered France and Japan got Vietnam, although they retained the French administrators. Similarly at the end of the war, after the Japanese were defeated, disarmed and imprisoned by the British, they were released from custody and given back their weapons, because the British and the French, having no substantial forces of their own at hand, needed the Japanese help in putting down the Vietnamese revolt.

Governments that fought so bitterly over the division of the world showed a curious unity when it came to keeping the colonies dependent?

President Eisenhower expressed what he felt the loss of Vietnam might mean.

Ike is speaking at the podium.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

If Indochina goes, several things happen right away. The Crall peninsula, the last little bit of end hanging on down there would be scarcely defensible. The tin and the tungsten that we so greatly value from that area would cease coming.

More scenes from Vietnam's history. Young Ho, Marcus Garvey, Ho boarding a French Navy ship.

MARTIN SHEEN

Resistance to the Japanese occupation was organized by a revolutionary national liberation movement formed by many nationalist leaders in 1941 and known as the Viet Minh. By the end of the war, a young French educated communist by the name of Ho Chi Minh, had emerged as the clear leader of the Viet Minh. Years before he became a communist, Ho Chi Minh lived in Harlem, New York, attended lectures of Marcus Garvey and was greatly influenced by the struggle for liberation of Black Americans. On September 2, 1945 Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and he did so with words that will be familiar to all Americans.

Pictures of the U.S Declaration of Independence.

BUDDY CLARK

"All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness"

Ho back on the boat. FDR and De Gaulle, FDR and Truman.

MARTIN SHEEN

Astoundingly, the Republic of Vietnam declared it's independence with words taken from our own. For our part, President Roosevelt declared against allowing the French to re-colonized Vietnam and initially the French did recognize the young republic. But then Roosevelt died and Truman took over.

President Truman saw the situation differently. His focus was on the pending cold war and the struggle against the Soviet Union. Now it was seen as important to rapidly rebuild France as a bulwark against the Soviets and that meant helping France get her colonies back. Accordingly, and with U.S. backing..

Charlton Ogburn Chief, Vietnam desk, State Dept., 1946 is interviewed.

STATE DEPT OFFICIAL

Towards the end of November 1946, when the admiral commanding the French fleet in the Bay of Tonkin in his words, decided to, "Teach the Vietnamese government a hard lesson" and the fleet stood off of Hiapong and shelled the city until between 6 and 10 thousand were dead.

B&W footage of the French IndoChina War.

MARTIN SHEEN

Thus began a 10-year struggle that the Vietnamese remember as the "French War." While the soldiers may have been French, or in many cases, hired mercenaries in the French Foreign Legion, the funding was largely American. The French had just been rescued from one war and were in no position to finance another. As

Lyndon Johnson said in 1964...

President Johnson at the podium.

LBJ

Everyday someone jumps up and shouts "Tell us what is happening in Vietnam." and "Why are we in Vietnam?" and "How'd you get us into Vietnam?" Well I didn't get you into Vietnam, you've been in Vietnam 10 years.

Speaker off camera, scenes of war, Dien Bien Phu

JEAN LACOUTURE

The French began the war as a colonial war. They tried many times to change this very nature of the war. Trying to change it in a civil war, a war between the right and the left in Vietnam and then after that an international war, a crusade against communism.

French troops surrender, French digging up graves, Geneva Conference

MARTIN SHEEN

As the French were decisively beaten at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, they made plans to leave Vietnam. It was the first time an European army had been defeated by an indigenous southeast Asian resistance movement. At the Geneva Conference, Vietnam was divided at the 17th parallel with the French and the puppet government it had set up in 1949, still in control of South Vietnam.

Philippe Devillers is seen speaking before and after scenes of Geneva Peace Conference.

PHILIPPE DEVILLERS

It may be repeated here. There are no two Vietnams. There is only one Vietnam, temporarily divided in Geneva in 54 between a free zone in North Vietnam and an occupied zone in the South, occupied

by the French because the French had still after Geneva the jurisdiction over South Vietnam because they could not hand it over to a regime which did not exist. It is not even mentioned in the Geneva agreement, the regime of Saigon is only a temporary one waiting for elections.

Scenes of victorious Viet Minh coming into town, French leaving.

MARTIN SHEEN

According to the Geneva Accord, the division was to be temporary, with elections in 1956 to settle the matter of re-unification. Those elections never took place.

House Minority Leader Ford at a press conference.

GERALD FORD

The refusal was amply justified if only because the kind of election envisioned by the Geneva Agreement of 1954 could not have been held. Anyone who thinks that a free election was possible in communist North Vietnam would have fallen into a Moscow-Peking trap.

Senator Morse speaks.

SENATOR MORSE

And you ought to have sat with me on the Foreign relations committee in 1900 and 56 when our intelligence force brought in the reports warning that if the elections called for in the Geneva Accord for July 1956 were held that Ho Chi Minh would be elected president in South Vietnam by at least 80% of the vote. And our country that boasts about believing in self-determination used it's power and it's prestige and it's influence really to get our first puppet government under Diem not to cooperate in holding those elections. That's just

a matter of historical record.

Diem being paraded in NYC, greeted by Ike.

Bao Dai Pronunciation: (bou' dī')

MARTIN SHEEN

In 1955 Bao Dai, the Emperor that the French had installed as the head of the "State of Vietnam" was deposed and a new leader, Ngo Dinh Diem was installed as the head of the renamed "Republic of Vietnam". Diem was the U.S. man in Vietnam, and what had been the "French War" was quietly becoming the "American War".

More scenes of Diem being greeted, speaking to congress.
William R. Corson speaks off camera

CORSON

A lot of it was rather skillfully done in public relations I think. There no doubt about that. There was sort of a cult of the little fellow in the sharkskin suit and the little Mandarin that was going to stop the Reds, and there was a great many articles along this line. Ngo Dinh Diem, our man in Saigon.

MARTIN SHEEN

Then as now, the danger was greatly hyped to drive the country towards war.

Senator McCarthy at Senate hearings.

JOE MCCARTHY

If we lose Indo-China Mr. Jenkins we will lose the Pacific and we will be an island in a communist sea

Nixon at a press conference.

NIXON

A retreat of the United States from South Vietnam would be a communist victory of massive proportions and lead to World War 3.

McNamara speaking in South Vietnam. U.S. oil company logos in background.

MARTIN SHEEN

And promises were made to puppets.

MCNAMARA

We'll stay for as long as it takes, we shall provide whatever help is required to win the battle against the communist insurgents.

Kennedy and Ike walk and talk. Kennedy watches military demonstration.

MARTIN SHEEN

While both the Democrat and Republican administrations that proceeded him had provided funding for the fight against Vietnamese independence, John Kennedy was the first president to send U.S. troops to Vietnam in significant numbers. He started by replacing the French berets with Green Berets and had sent more than 16,000 soldiers by the time he was assassinated.

CLAY CLAIBORNE

People like the Kennedy's were use to running countries with names they couldn't even pronounce.

Dulles talks in his office.

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

Vetnam is now a free nation,

Kennedy is giving a speech.

JOHN KENNEDY

My fellow Americans, Lay-os is far away

from America

Map of Iraq, pictures of Saddam Hussein in 1963 and 1983.

MARTIN SHEEN

Earlier in 1963 The U.S. supported a coup in Iraq that put the Baath Party in power. The CIA specifically supported a young 25 year old Baathist by the name of Saddam Hussein, providing him with a list of his enemies including 700 communists and democrats to be eliminated. A blood bath ensued.

CLAY CLAIBORNE

At a White House meeting to plan the overthrow of Diem, less than a month before JFK is himself was murdered, Bobby Kennedy worries that Vietnam might not be so easy and wonders about the wisdom of putting someone they hardly know in charge of such an important country.

Picture from NSC meeting, voice of Robert Kennedy with sub-titles.

ROBERT KENNEDY

Could I, I may be a minority, but I just don't see that this makes any sense on the face of it. Uh, I mean , it's different from a coup in Iraq or South American country; we are so intimately involved in this, and what we're doing really is, uh, what we talked about when we were sitting around the table talking about all this kind of thing we talked about four weeks ago. We're putting the whole future of the country and really, Southeast Asia, in the hands of somebody that we don't know very well, that one official of the United States government has had contact with him, and he, in turn, says he's lined up some others.

KENNEDY PRESS CONFERENCE, December 12, 1962:

JOHN KENNEDY

. so we're not, uh... we don't see the end of the tunnel; but, I must say, I don't think it's darker than it was a year ago -- in some ways, lighter.

Section Break: Puppets

Maxwell Taylor speaks off camera, scenes of different South Vietnamese governments. Much fanfare.

MAXWELL TAYLOR

In the course of my ambassadorship, which had agreed to be, last just one year, I dealt with five governments. In other words the house was cleaned and turned over five times, with the chaos that one can imagine.

Scenes of coups

MARTIN SHEEN

While the National Security Council was busy replacing Vietnamese governments right and extreme right, LBJ acted like he was the victim.

JACK VALENTI

The thing that worried Johnson -- and constantly worried him -- was the instability of the South Vietnamese government. I guess you might call -- the coat of arms of the Vietnamese government was a turnstile, for God's sake. And, and I remember very vividly somebody would come in his office and say, "Looks like there's a coup beginning in Vietnam." There'd be another coup. You know, coups were like fleas on a dog, and Johnson said, "I don't want to hear any more about this coup shit. I've had enough of it, and we've got to find a way to stabilize those people out there."

Scenes of General Kong parading.

MARTIN SHEEN

But Johnson knew it was the CIA that was the source of the problems.

Pictures of Diem and his brother dead.

LBJ

"They started on me with Diem, you remember, He was corrupt and he ought to be killed.' So we killed him. We all got together and got a goddamn bunch of thugs and assassinated him. Now, we've really had no political stability since then."

McNamara leading a cheer in South Vietnam

MARTIN SHEEN

Of course democracy via puppet governments had it's own embarrassing moments.

HOANG DUC NHA (aide to President Thieu) on camera.

HOANG

they gave us the text in English, and at that time I thought I say, if our opposition knew that, that right this moment we were discussing the fate of our country in a text in English, boy, you know, it would be so bad that we shouldn't even think about it! So I ask, I say, where is the Vietnamese text? Oh, we forgot, and I say, what do you mean, you forgot? The other side, I know they don't present a text to you in English. You know between Vietnamese, we know each other, you know, there is something called national pride, and you present your own language. They say, oh this is good translation, and we have our own translators, I don't know what the name, what is the name of the guy he gave; I say, you mean to tell me an American is, you know, understand Vietnamese better

than a Vietnamese?

Prince Sianouk speaks to Dean Russ at press conference.

SIANOUK

There is a contradiction between the declaration of friendship and respect from certain interests on the one hand and on the other, your forces in South Vietnam continue to come into Cambodia and to kill innocence peasants and civilians.

Sianouk is shaking hands with the people then, Sianouk's picture is being taken down.

MARTIN SHEEN

Nixon expanded the war to Cambodia by overthrowing the legitimate government of Prince Sihanouk and setting up a puppet government there.

Prince Sianouk talks to reporters in the street.

SIANOUK

Some officials in our army and many deputies and many members of the government in Phnom Penh, they want to be your allies in order to have your dollars. They don't think about the destiny and the fate of our homeland, they don't mind about it, they are more patriotic for dollars than for Cambodia.

Nixon at a press conference

NIXON

We've made a conscious decision not to send American troops in. There are no American combat troops in Cambodia. There are no American combat advisers in Cambodia. There will be no American combat troops or advisers in Cambodia. We will aid Cambodia. Cambodia is the Nixon doctrine in its purest form. Vietnam was in violation of the Nixon doctrine.

Scene of child soldiers.

MARTIN SHEEN

The Nixon doctrine included secret bombings, the massacre of civilians and paying children to fight.

HMONG BOY/SOLDIER INTERVIEW

QUESTION

What sort of gun is that he's carrying?

ANSWER

M-16. He says can do two things: automatic and semi-automatic

QUESTION

How old is he?

ANSWER

Ten years old.

Scenes of Phnom Phen, piles of skulls, pallets of food being loaded.

MARTIN SHEEN

The expansion of the war into Cambodia and the resulting rise to power of Pol Pot, was to have tragic consequences for that little country. In addition to the estimated 800,000 civilians killed in Nixon's illegal bombing, another 2 million died after the war, as the Khmer Rouge attempted to feed people the U.S. was no longer feeding by forcing millions that the U.S. had moved into the cities back into the countryside.

Section Break: Tonkin

Scene is LBJ cabinet meeting.

MARTIN SHEEN

LBJ wanted to greatly expand the war but the resolution he had put to congress had been shelved for months.

Subtitles for tape of LBJ and McNamara.

LBJ

I want is somebody that can lay up some plans to trap these guys...and whoop the hell out of 'em. Kill some of 'em that's what I want to do.

MCNAMARA

I'll try to bring something back to meet with that objective.

LBJ

OK Bob.

MARTIN SHEEN

After what he called 'an unprovoked attack', he got his resolution.

Cronkite is off camera.

CRONKITE

Congressional leaders of both parties supported the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. In fact only two members of congress voted against the resolution, Senators Morse of Oregon and Greuning of Alaska.

Senator Morse at a press conference.

MORSE

Being in the minority never proves that you're wrong. In fact, history is going to record that Senator Greuning and I voted in the interest of the American people this morning when we voted against this resolution.

And I'd have the American people remember what this resolution really is. It's a resolution which seeks to give the President of the United States the power to make war without a declaration of war.

Cronkite is now on camera announcing. Then film of planes being launched from an aircraft carrier.

CRONKITE

The Gulf of Tonkin resolution was not a Declaration of War. There never was a declaration of war in Vietnam but it served much the same purpose. The president was given broad powers to wage war. But what the congress did not know, what the country did not know is that the second attack in the Gulf of Tonkin may never have happened.

Camera zooms to high lighted words on U.S. Navy website.

MARTIN SHEEN

It is now known beyond any reasonable doubt that an attack did not take place. Even the official U.S. Navy history states "that there was actually no North Vietnamese attack that night."

Senator Fullbright speaks to camera, continues speaking as McNamara is shown giving briefing.

SENATOR FULLBRIGHT

If one telegram, which we later found from Commander Herrick of the Maddox, had been made available to the Committee at that time, I'm quite sure they would have had long hearings, gone into it thoroughly. And if they had been able to discover the facts as they were, I don't believe they'd have passed the Resolution, because it was based on absolutely false, erroneous information. The events that they related then on August 4, 1964, were not true. Our ships were -it was not an unprovoked, deliberate attack; in fact there was no attack at all.

Scenes of the Maddox

MARTIN SHEEN

Did the captains report what they were

ordered to report?

Morley Safer on the Maddox.

MORLEY SAFER

It's also been suggested that Washington was putting a great deal of pressure on you to come up with some positive answers to what happened that night. A positive answer being, "Yes, we were attacked.

Safer interviews Herricks on a ship.

CAPTAIN HERRICK

Well, I'm sure they needed one. And that's what we were trying to obtain for them and we did and sent it in.

Scenes of outside of Maddox.

MARTIN SHEEN

Did the gunners shell an empty gulf?

Guns, radar, sonar panel

MORLEY SAFER

Just above the bridge of the Maddox where Captain Herrick was is the main gun director. And inside the director was a sailor who was in charge of firing those powerful five-inch guns. His job was to open fire once the enemy targets were spotted on radar or sonar. Those are the main methods for detecting targets you can't see directly. The man in charge of the main gun director, August 4, 1964, was a four-year veteran, he was also an expert sonar man, Patrick Park. Park is now a businessman in Los Angeles.

Tell me, do you think that night, August 4, 1964, in the pitch black, in the heavy swell, rain storms, was there anything to shoot at out there?

Safer interviews Park in an office.

PARK

No, I don't-I'm certain that there was not anything to shoot at, right from the beginning. The Captain asked me immediately after the attack, to go down and evaluate all the recordings that had been made of noise that was-that sonar was recording. And I kept myself pretty busy for the next three days really trying to evaluate these things and determine if we had heard anything that might have been even a question mark, that might have been a torpedo or anything else in the water not related to the two ships or noise of either one of them.

MORLEY SAFER

And what was your evaluation?

PARK

Absolutely nothing.

Scenes of air craft carrier.

MARTIN SHEEN

The pilots didn't see anything either. Before James Bond Stockdale became a North Vietnamese prisoner of war, he was flying air cover over the destroyers at the time of the alleged second attack.

Scenes of Stockdale and squad.

STOCKDALE MARTIN SHEEN

In Stockdales words "I flew so low there was salt spray on my windshield and I still didn't see a thing" Meaning he never saw torpedoes or any evidence that the U.S. ships had been fired upon. The captain of the Ticonderoga attack squadron 56, Commander Wesley L. MacDonald concurred. He didn't see anything that night except the Maddox

and the Tuner Joy.

After this flight he and those in his command met behind closed doors and each wrote accounts of what he did and didn't see. Stockdale then locked these in his safe. The next morning Stockdale was ordered to lead the first strike on North Vietnam.

Senator Fullbright speaks to camera, like before.

SENATOR FULLBRIGHT

I personally am convinced, in my own mind, that no attack took place on the 4th. Of course it's impossible, in a way, for me to prove a negative. I'll put it this way. They certainly did not prove the affirmative case that there was an attack.

Scenes of ships in Tonkin Gulf, then many B52s flying in formation.

MARTIN SHEEN

Since there was no second attack, and since that attack was the excuse that the President used to take the U.S. to war in Vietnam, what are we to make of the following recently released White House tape? In it LBJ and McNamara discuss the second Gulf of Tonkin attack before it takes place. How would they know about the attack before it happened and why would they want to keep that prior knowledge a secret, unless they were planning it?

Phone call between McNamara and LBJ with sub-titles.

MCNAMARA

Now this is an action that we might well wish to consider after the second attack. But I think it would be inappropriate, and General Wheeler agrees, and Dean Rusk agrees,

inappropriate to provide the task force commander that authority. There will be ample time for us, after a second attack, to bring this problem to your attention, and you can then decide how far you wish to pursue the attacker into his base area....

LBJ

but I wish we could have something that we already picked out, and uh

MCNAMARA

We'll see

LBJ

and just hit about three of them damned quick. Right after

MCNAMARA

We will have that, and, and I, I've talked to Mac Bundy [national security adviser] a moment ago and told him that I thought that was the most important subject we should consider today, and, and be prepared to recommend to you a response, a retaliation move against North Vietnam in the event this attack takes place within the next six to nine hours. And we

LBJ

All right. Now we better do that at lunch. There's some things I don't want to go in with these other, I want to keep this as close as I can. So let's just try to keep it to the two.

MCNAMARA

I will be prepared to do so at lunch.

NVA General in uniform speaks to camera, fade to single large bomb being dropped on Vietnam.

NVA GEN PHUNG THE TAI

On the night of August 4, the United States made public that so-called "Gulf of Tonkin incident." But the story was a fabrication, created by the U.S. National Security Council. Even as the National Security Council met, American aircraft were being sent to destroy several areas of our country. In reality, the second Gulf of Tonkin incident never happened.

MARTIN SHEEN

Was the whole basis of this war a fraud and a lie perpetrated at the highest levels of our government? We must ask ourselves that as we survey the damage that was done to ourselves and especially to Vietnam.

Section Break: Air Power

Many scenes of bombing occasionally broken by fading in images of the people speaking.

Music: Blues for Late Summer, Mamas Boys

LBJ

...If this little nation goes down the drain and can't maintain her independence, ask yourself, what's going to happen to all the other little nations?

Pause

MARTIN SHEEN

If Kennedy thought he could finesse the Vietnam situation with Special Forces, LBJ's approach was brutally simple. He figured if he killed enough of them, they would cry uncle. The simplest way to kill them was with air power.

Pause With sub-titles

LBJ

We're off to bombing these people. We're over that hurdle. The game now is in the fourth quarter, and it's about seventy-eight to nothing.

Pause

MARTIN SHEEN

The primary tool that the U.S. used in the Vietnam War was aerial bombardment. That is how the most people were killed, both north and south. The U.S. used napalm. They used cluster bombs. They used white phosphorous. They used chemical agents. But most of all they used old fashion high explosive bombs. By the time it was all over, the U.S. government had dropped three times the amount of bombs dropped by all parties in World War 2, more than 8 million tons, or the equivalent of 640 Hiroshima sized atomic bombs.

Pause; Phone conversation between LBJ and MacNamara. Images of Goldwater at RNC.

LBJ

What do you think about, I don't see why we bring Goldwater in on this. Why don't we just say I felt it appropriate just to communicate my decision to the Republican candidate for president.

MCNAMARA

Uh

LBJ

And I'll say he's assured me of his

MCNAMARA

Yeah

LBJ

full support. I think it makes us sound like we're very much together and

buddies and agreein' on bombing
everybody.

Pause, LeMay is speaking at dinner, much laughter and
applause.

CURTIS LEMAY

The power system that fuels every war
making facility. The transportation
system--rails, rolling stock, bridges
and yards. Eliminate them. Every factory
and every industrial installation,
beginning with the biggest and best and
never ending so long as there are two
bricks stuck together.

And if necessary the irrigation system
on which food production largely
depends. We must be willing to continue
our bombing until we' ve destroyed every
work of man in North Vietnam if this is
what it takes to win the war.

Pause; President Johnson is sitting by a fireplace..

LBJ

Congress gave us this authority in
August 1964, "to do whatever maybe
necessary." That's pretty far reaching.
That's the sky's the limit..

Pause; Xuan speaks, scenes of bomb damage.

XUAN EVANS

When the war actually touched my life
the bomb would drop in my house. And
everything we have, all the memory from
my grandmother, my grandfather,
everything go up in smoke and turned to
ashes. I was confused. Why are they
burning down my house, my neighbors
house? It's very confused to me.

Pause; Senator Fullbright appears briefly, looking up.

SENATOR FULLBRIGHT

Mr Roscoe. I remember they had a theory.

They called it 'surgical bombing.' I heard him elaborate on this on various occasions.

Pause; POW speaks at press conference in Hanoi.

POW

My first impression upon observing the area that had been bombed was complete shock. I was extremely surprised at the area that we had actually hit. The fact that I could observe no military targets anywhere in the area.

Pause; Dave Dellinger at press conference, sitting.

DELLINGER

The theory was that they were bombing only steel and concrete. That it was a surgical war. That they were maintaining humanitarian standards. When I get over there I found out that churches, schools, hospitals, houses, entire villages were being wiped out. People just discovered that the United States was fighting an entirely different kind of war than it claimed, and it was violating all the international laws of war.

Pause; Doctor speaks outside hospital. Scenes of people hiding in bomb shelters.

DR. TON THAT TUNG

We always knew when they were about to drop their bombs. For example, in the morning, they usually arrived about ten o'clock, just after breakfast. Then they took a break, and went back to their bases for lunch. Then they came back to drop their bombs again at about three in the afternoon. Since this was the routine, we tailored our schedule accordingly. We began our surgery at about five in the morning, and took a break at nine or ten.

Interview takes place off screen, on screen are various scenes of people, especially children injured and bomb damage.

AIR FORCE BOMB LOADER

It's either them or us. That's the way I feel about it. If the war wasn't being fought here it would be fought somewhere else

REPORTER

You really think the bombs then are keeping the communist away. It is that important?

AIR FORCE BOMB LOADER

I can't say it's keeping them away. It's keeping them beat back to where they should be.

REPORTER

Do you think it's effective

AIR FORCE BOMB LOADER

Of course it's effective or they wouldn't be doing it.

Scenes of planes spraying agent orange, then animated map showing where South Vietnam was sprayed. Finally video and stills of agent orange babies and children in Vietnam.

MARTIN SHEEN

For 10 years the U.S. sprayed more than 19 million gallons of Agent Orange, which contains the lethal chemical dioxin, on Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. Not just jungles were sprayed. 3181 villages and as many as 4 million people were also directly sprayed. This spraying continued long after Vietnamese and American doctors began reporting the destructive effects on humans and for nearly two years after American scientists proved the agent Orange connection to birth defects.

And it wasn't just the infamous Agent Orange that was used. The Vietnamese were also subjected to Agent White, Agent Purple, Agent Pink, Agent Blue and Agent Green, a virtual rainbow of death was rained down on the Vietnamese's. Rice was the specialty of Agent Blue, because the sturdy Vietnamese rice proved resistant to many of the other herbicide. The purpose was to deny the Vietnamese food as well as the protection of the jungle from U.S. air assaults.

CLAY CLAIBORNE

This poison was produced by many major American corporations, including Dow, Monsanto, and Uniroyal. During the war there were many protests against it's production in the U.S. I am today very proud to say that I went to jail in 1970 for my part in a sit-in against Dow.

MARTIN SHEEN

While hundreds of millions have been paid to the U.S. and other victims of Agent Orange by the U.S. government and the companies that made it, not one penny in compensation has been paid to the main victims of these war crimes, the Vietnamese. When Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld visited Vietnam in 2006, he again refused to consider the Vietnamese application for compensation, although he did demand that they do more to find the last 40 year old remains of American MIAs. The Vietnamese still have more than 300,000 MIA of their own, not to mention thousands of little victims of Agent Orange born since the war.

Section Break: The Killing Fields

Air Force Chief of Staff gives a speech.

CURTIS LEMAY

We're fighting a war over there with a commodity most precious to us and held far more cheaply by the enemy, the lives of men.

Man in swamp is being shot from a helicopter.

CLAY CLAIBORNE

They accuse the Vietnamese of viewing life cheaply. Yet it is they that see life as a commodity, and by seeing it as a commodity, a thing to be bought and sold? Precious or not, it seems that they cheapen life by their own words.

General Mark Clark at a press conference.

GEN. MARK CLARK

I don't think it necessary to have an invasion of North Vietnam and it would be just exactly what the enemy wants. He'd like for us to put down a 100,000 men in the field and they put down a 100,000. They are willing to lose half of theirs while ours is a precious commodity and I wouldn't trade one dead American for 50 dead Chinamen.

Scenes of bombing

MARTIN SHEEN

Chinamen?

What does our conduct in the prosecution of this war say about how we value human life?

Scenes of Marines coming on shore. Subtitles for LBJ.

LBJ

What we've done with these B-57's is going to be Sunday School stuff compared to the Marines.

Scenes of air strike and VC killed in street.

MARTIN SHEEN

The official White House story did not betray what was being planned.

Bill Moyer as LBJs press secretary.

BILL MOYER

I do not know of any situation that concerns the President more or causes him deeper personal anguish than the loss of American lives in Vietnam.

Scenes of Westmoreland sitting and talking to LBJ, then Westmoreland getting into a helicopter.

MARTIN SHEEN

General Westmoreland was picked to run the war.

Westmoreland, dressed in business suit addresses the camera.

GEN WESTMORELAND

I can say categorically that never in the history of warfare, certainly never in the use of American arms have more attention been given to the avoidance of civilian casualties than we did in Vietnam.

Helicopters land with troops. Sorely speaks to camera.
Lowell Sorely - Author, "Thunderbolt"

LOWELL SORELY

General Westmoreland was sort of a 'by-the-book' type of soldier. He was in his personal characteristics a proud man. One might say a vain man.

His approach to fighting the war in Vietnam was essentially that if he killed enough of the enemy, the war would be won and he killed an awful lot of them but the war wasn't won.

Pile of dead bodies viewed from helicopter.

MARTIN SHEEN

From the top down the orders came. Enemy
body count became the most important
statistic of the war and Search &
Destroy became the operational method
for increasing it.

Simpson, sitting in chair, address the camera.

PATRICK SIMPSON

If a battalion commander or a company commander figures we're told that everybody's the enemy and we can get this big body count, which was the number one career enhancement statistic in Vietnam. For example, we get this report of a VC KIA but we don't have any evidence that it was a VC. No weapon, no equipment, no nothing, just a suspicious situation. If it's just counted, which it is counted and condoned, then there are those elements of people, down at that level that would figure, hey, this is an easy way to get a body count.

Scenes of soldiers piling up the bodies.

MARTIN SHEEN

Testimony at the Winter Soldier Hearing in 1971 revealed some of the atrocities this policy lead to.

At Winter Soldier Hearings, August 1971 B&W

MODERATOR

You have some testimony here on the burning of villages, cutting off of ears, cutting off of heads, calling in artillery on villages for games, women raped, napalm on villages, all sorts of testimony of crimes against the civilians. Could you go into just a few of these to let the people know how you treat the Vietnamese civilians ?

Scenes of mortar fire, then artillery fire, then houses being shot.

CAMIL

The calling in of artillery for games, the way it was worked would be the mortar forward observers would pick out certain houses in villages, friendly villages, and the mortar forward observers would call in mortars until they destroyed that house and then the artillery forward observer would call in artillery until he destroyed another house and whoever used the least amount of artillery, they won. And when we got back someone would have to buy someone else beers.

Officer directs artillery fire at house across the river.

MARTIN SHEEN

In this video we use testimony from many sources to bring home the ground truths of the war in Vietnam. This is what it was like on the receiving end of an artillery game.

Nguyen speaks on camera, then scenes of rocket attacks on village.

NGUYEN THI HOA

They directed artillery fire into the area where I lived. All the houses and trees were destroyed. They also directed rocket fire against the homes of the people in my neighborhood. The people here use kerosene and gasoline, and so their homes burst into flames when they were hit by the rockets. Old folks -- children and pregnant women who could not flee -- were burned alive in their homes.

Villagers running from fire, crying.

MARTIN SHEEN

U.S. tax dollars went directly to

increasing the body count of the
Vietnamese and ears became the currency
of the kill.

U.S. Navy man Mike Snidow recollects.

MIKE SNIDOW

This guy came in. The most emaciated,
scary looking individual I think I've
ever seen in my life. He was a mercenary
and they got paid by the ears they
produced. Pairs of ears

Scenes of mercenaries and people from Phoenix program.

MARTIN SHEEN

As a Navy SEAL PRU Advisor, makes clear,
these rules were set from the top. PRU
was the enforcement arm of the Phoenix
program and the Phoenix program was the
CIA organized program of assassination
and terror in Vietnam. Among other
things, Americans on these teams would
often carry out operations while dressed
to look like the Viet Cong.

Dick "Gunner" Pearson, SEAL PRU advisor speaks to camera.

PRU ADVISER

If they brought back a gun they got paid
for it. If they brought back a prisoner
they got paid for it. If they couldn't
bring back the whole prisoner they use
to get paid for bring back identifiable
parts, okay? I didn't set these rules
up. These are the rules they played by.
When you try to change these rules you
meet resistance. I didn't want people
bring me back ears and me having to pay
them for it. I didn't want that I want
live people. Dead people don't talk.

More pictures of mercenaries.

MARTIN SHEEN

Here's a story from a CIA agent in Vinh
Long

Sidney Towle, sitting at table, speaks to camera.

SIDNEY TOWLE

There were five of us sitting in there -- and we had an old French villa we lived in. Ah, these irregulars came in with a district village chief just, you know, covered in blood.

They obviously had just come back from a battle. They had five or six weapons and they threw the weapons down. They were just disgusted with the whole situation. They were going to prove something. Came up. Threw a bag on the table and the bag had 11 ears in it. And he just looked at us and he said, "You don't need the twelfth ear," and walked out.

VC prisoner kneeling on the ground, camera zooms to his ear.

MARTIN SHEEN

Americans collected ears too.

Scott Camil speaks at Winter Soldier while showing pictures.

CAMIL

And I t got to be where it was like someone says okay "You come stay on my farm and you can go hunting everyday for free and I'll give you all the ammo you want and you can hunt and there's no limit and you can go and all go out together and just hunt, it was like a hunting trip. The more people we killed the happier our officers were, you know. It got to be like a game. The object was to see who could kill the most people and the different ways you could prove how many people you had killed would be like cutting off ears. Now if you brought back someone's ears, pretty likely you'd have to kill them to get them. And people would, whoever had the most ears they would get the most beers.

You'd trade your ears for beers. And it got to be like a game.

Section Break: POWs

Rusty is being interviewed in kitchen in prep for Winter Soldier.

MARTIN SHEEN

The Winter Soldier Hearings looked into the treatment of Vietnamese POWs.

Pictures of VC prisoners bound and being load onto helicopters.

INTERVIEWER

This one might be apropos then.
Prisoners thrown from helicopters.

RUSTY SACHS

Yeah, I've seen that. I've never seen them thrown out of my airplane because it's behind me. But ah, we had a couple of guys, from Philadelphia, in our squadron who a use to blindfold the guys with safety wire and pull them real tight so that this copper wire is tearing into their eyes and nose and bind there hands with safety wire and use to have contests seeing how far they could throw the bound bodies out of the airplane. Throw one as far as you can, then see if you can get the other one farther.

INTERVIEWER

If you could approximate how many times you have come across this

RUSTY SACHS

Of that? In the.. two digit numbers say somewhere between 15 and 50 probably.

Dead Vietnamese body on the ground.

INTERVIEWER

Some of these people weren't necessarily

cong or NVA. Some could be VCS?

Back to Rusty in the kitchen.

RUSTY SACHS

You never know. You never know. If they're alive they're VCS automaticly. If they're dead, they're confirmed VC.

INTERVIEWER

Where you ever issued orders about taking prisoners?

Blindfolded VC prisoners being lead by Gis.

RUSTY SACHS

We were told do not count prisoners when you are loading them on board the aircraft, count them when you unload them, which the naive young brown bar says "Why, what difference does it make?"

And the wizzer old First Lt. says "Because the numbers may not jive."

VC POW in blindfold appears to be screaming, but no audio.

MARTIN SHEEN

Then as now, the American soldiers that took care of POWs liked to take pictures, so the Winter Soldier Hearings involved a few slide shows.

Nathan shows slides at Winter Soldier.

NATHAN HALE

(Next Slide) Okay, there's an interrogation going on right here. It's a big production. There are all the Marines sitting around giving the various cheers. At all times during these interrogations there were officers present. This man here is a warrant officer.

(Next Slide) this is a typical

Vietnamese, who's bound. --these are National Field Police--this man came over and put a tin spoon, it's a Vietnamese spoon, and he put it in my fire. and he's burning the skin off of the back of the man's neck.

(Next Slide) And finally the man, in fear of his life, admitted that at one time he had given tax to the VC but you can't prove that.

(Next Slide) I heard earlier today that they used CS. Well, the Marines used a lot of CS and this particular man wouldn't come out of the hole and they threw two CS grenades at him. I personally escorted this man back to division and he died. So if gas doesn't kill, I don't know what killed him.

JOHN KERRY

Is there something that you want to say?

Carl shows slides at Winter Soldier.

CARL RIPPBERGER

The first slide you're going to see shows a prisoner of war. The way they tried to get him to talk is by making him stand in front of a pile of Viet Cong bodies that we had picked up.

(Next Slide) The same POW was forced to sit probably from 6 to 8 hours by this pile of bodies in the hot sun.

A shot of five or six GIs going through the bodies looking for souvenirs. In this picture there is a lieutenant and a captain overlooking what's going on.

INTERVIEWER

Officers were present at all times?

CARL RIPPBERGER

We field grade officers were present at
all times.

The next slide is a slide of myself. I'm extremely shameful of it. I'm showing it in hope that none of you people that have never been involved ever let this happen to you. Don't ever let your government do this to you.

Section Break: War means Killing

Westmoreland speaks to camera but no audio.

MARTIN SHEEN

The slaughter was organized from the top.

General Wallace Greene, Jr., Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps
General Greene speaks, while speaking fade to 1st Cavalry putting dead cards on dead Vietnamese.

GENERAL WALLACE GREENE

Ah you can't defend a place like that by sitting on your ditty-box. You've got to get out and aggressively patrol. And that's what our people are doing. And the one thing I emphasized to them while I was out there was to find these Vietcong and kill them.

U.S. Army vet is interviewed.

NICK URHAUSEN

One time I went there to the head quarters for some reason and they had all these boards drawn up showing the kill ratios in each brigade. And it seemed to me it was kind of like going out deer hunting or something like that were you'd go out and search for these people but you weren't going to keep the territory. You're just trying to find them and kill them. And it wasn't a, kind a trading so many of our lives for so many of their lives.

Helicopter flies around shooting Vietnamese while "You Lost That Loving Feeling" plays in cockpit.

MARTIN SHEEN

Vietnam was the first big helicopter war and that's how much of the killing was done.

Dennis Caldwell testifies at Winter Soldier.

CALDWELL

I was a helicopter Cobra gunship pilot. I worked with another aircraft at all times in what is called a hunter-killer team. I was told by the other pilots in the unit how to tell a VC from a civilian--if they were running, they were VC. If they were standing there, they were well-disciplined VC, shoot 'em anyhow. They also told me that when we were flying over a village, or near a village, if people started to leave the village, civilians, it was a good sign that there were VCs in the area, that they were expecting a fight. While speaking with my hootch-mate she says, "When American helicopters come through, people run. They think they're going to be killed." So you put these two things together, and you see civilians are in a kind of bad spot.

Inside Officers Club of a helicopter company, band playing in background.

NARRATOR

The Officer's Club of a helicopter support company. Outside the temperature is 95, inside it is air conditioned. The music is always stateside.

PILOT

Quite an operation we had today.

NARRATOR

After the nightly movie, the talk usually centers on the war, on the action hours earlier.

TIGER SQUADRON CROSSTALK

Voice #2: Good job. I saw you splatter one right in the back with a rocket.

Voice #1: Roger. Got lucky I guess.

IN OFFICERS CLUB

That was a lucky shot really
Blew the other one about 10 feet. I got the other two with a machine gun. It's very satisfying to know that sometimes you do kill people with these things.

RADIO ANNOUCER

Good morning Vietnam.

Two dead bodies on the ground. Then Lenix in uniform, then Lenix at Winter Soldier. Helicopter shooting up river and houses, then back to Lenix.

MARK LENIX

In November of '68, in an area called the Wagon Wheel which is northwest of Saigon, while on a routine search and destroy mission, gunships which were providing security and cover for us in case we had any contact were circling overhead. Well, no contact was made, and the gunships got bored. So they made a gun run on a hootch, with miniguns and rockets. When they left the area, we found one dead baby, which was a young child, very young, in its mother's arms, and we found, we found a baby girl about three years old, that were dead.

Because these people were bored; and they were just sick of flying around doing nothing. Then when it was reported

to the battalion, the only reprimand was to put the two bodies on the body count board and just add them up with the rest of the dead people.

MARTIN SHEEN

Some people fell in love with the technology of death.

Helicopter pilot is interviewed by ABC newsman who is off screen. He shows the camera around the big twin-blade. Helicopter.

BIRTHCONTROL PILOT

The prisoners that we've captured, or have been capture say that this is the most feared weapon outside of the B52s. That because of the amount of ammunition we can carry the various types of weapons we carry and the amount of time we can stay up on station. At the present time we have on this one 40mm. Grenade launcher, two 20 mm. cannon, 5 50 caliber machine guns and two rocket launcher pods consisting of 19 2.75 rockets. And we usually carry inside two additional M60 machine guns and ammunition for them. Occasionally the crew rat holes a few things they don't tell us about until we are airborne.

The one I fly is known as birth control.

Scenes of villagers being rounded up

MARTIN SHEEN

As many U.S. soldiers in Vietnam were infantry. Their main mission was search and destroy.

Soldiers going into villages with guns blazing. Fade to Akers at Winter Soldier. Fade to soldiers blowing up bomb shelter holes.

AKERS

We were given orders whenever we moved into a village to reconnoiter by fire. This means to--whenever we step into a village to fire upon houses, bushes, anything to our discretion that looked like there might be somebody hiding behind, or in, or under. What we did was, we'd carry our rifles about hip high and we'd line up on line parallel to the village and start walking firing from the hip. Now there were times when Vietnamese villages have a man-made bomb shelters to protect themselves from air raids. Well, sometimes when we'd come to a village a Vietnamese would run out of the bomb shelter for fear of being caught, so consequently this surprise would startle any individual and they would automatically turn and fire, thereby uselessly killing civilians without giving them a chance.

Xuan speaks to camera. Fade to bomb blast. Vietnamese villagers running. Bomb destruction.

XUAN EVANS

After our house was bombed, we have to go to the town next to our town and we were hiding in the bomb shelter. And lots of people was hiding in the tunnel. Some people were wounded, some people were dying and women, children, too many people in a small place smelled really bad.

And my cousin he wanted to go get some water. He's five year old, and I'm fourteen. I told him 'No, we can't go get water because it's not safe' He say he have to get some water or he's going to dies. He really thirsty.

He get to the top first, to the ground level and I'm behind him. He walk a

little way and he trip over something I don't see it clear... make some noise.. and then it's so fast, gun was blasting, and all I see is blood and body parts all over the place. I still can't say how can you just see a little boy, just little Pete jump all over the place. Is that true? Is that real? You have to experience it to know for yourself. What it looks like, what it sounds like, what it smells like.

Then I look the opposite direction were the gun comes from and is American soldier was shooting at my cousin. And I remember his eye. The way his eye looked. Unto this day, when I run across an American man who was in Vietnam during the war, I look and see if I can see that eye again.

Akers off camera. Scenes of villagers being abused.

AKERS

They give them an ambiguous order, like something to the extent of, "All right, you're going into an area where there are known Viet Cong. So that when you get there, anything that moves you're going to fire at. So this is one of the mind-taxing things that he does to make you want to attack somebody even though you know that you don't want to kill another Vietnamese because you feel that he might be, in fact, your brother.

Senator Jim Webb on C-SPAN

MARTIN SHEEN

Before he opposed the Iraq war in the Senate, Jim Webb was a combat Marine in Vietnam.

Young Marine Jim Webb interviewed about the war. Scenes of soldiers burning villages.

JIM WEBB

People would flash. You'd have really good people. I had one individual who was a terrific Marine who. We were on this operation and his best friend was killed. And we made a sweep two days later through a village and this guy killed a civilian sort of as pay back. I mean in his own mind he was sort of justifying it.

Vietnamese women with gun to her head. Scott Camil at Winter Soldier.

CAMIL

Another time I had a friend of mine killed and I was very upset and I asked this Vietnamese for his ID card and he says "cum beck" which means 'I don't understand' in Vietnamese and he just pissed me off so I pulled out my knife and I killed him and it didn't bother me at all. I just called it in and I said "One VC killed." and they said "How do you know he's a VC" and I said "because he's dead" and they laughed and said "okay" you know. And I'd come in and people would ask me what's going on out in the front and I'd tell'm. They keep a chart for how many kills you have and I'd come in and they'd show me how many I have and what it is every time you kill someone you have to report it

Sanpan being searched on the river. Charles Stephens testifies at Winter Soldier. B&W scenes of Vietnamese village and people. Boy killed by RVN soldiers in swamp.

CHARLES STEPHENS

In one village, we wounded women and kids going into the village. When we got in there, this was in Tui Hoa also, when we got in the village me and another guy were treating two unconscious babies--not babies but like five and six-year old kids and a woman lying in a hammock. And I told the lieutenant that these people have to be evacuated because if not evacuated (this lady and these kids had shrapnel and they were unconscious) I said if they are not evacuated they're gonna die. And he said, "Well, forget it, Doc; we don't have time to stay and wait."

We went up on the hill right above this same village and we fired down on this village the next day while the people were trying to bury their dead, while they were doing their burial ceremony. And they killed another VC, not VC but another person in the village.

Also we went down that same day to get some water and there were two little boys playing on a dike and one sergeant just took his M-16 and shot one boy at the dike. The other boy tried to run. He was almost out of sight when this other guy, a Spec. 4, shot this other little boy off the dike. The little boy was like lying on the ground kicking, so he shot him again to make sure he was dead.

Ross is off screen. Scenes of evacuation of Ben Suc.

DAVE ROSS, ARMY MEDIC

During the evacuation of villagers from Ben Suc, I was struck by a sense of resoluteness in the villagers. They understood what was happening; they understood that they couldn't really change the situation. They were going to be taken out of their homes. I'm sure that deep down inside they knew that that was the end of Ben Suc as a village -- that we were going to destroy the village. They seemed to accept it with a very special kind of strength.

It was kind of sad in a way because Ben Suc was a pretty village. It was a very old village and the people there seemed to enjoy a little better standard of living than people in many of the other villages.

The villagers were taken out by boat, by helicopter and by truck to relocation centers. Basically, once the people were taken out, the whole thing was just turned into a parking lot.

At the same time the villages themselves would be destroyed -- anything of material value would be eliminated -- mattresses would be slashed, rice would either be taken out or poisoned or dumped in the river, crops would be defoliated. And it made it much more difficult for the Liberation Front to continue.

Dan Rather stands before the camera in jungle.

MARTIN SHEEN

Dan Rather report on these atrocities.

Dan Rather reports from Vietnam.

DAN RATHER

Our troops continue burning every hut they find and all crops, convinced that practically every man, woman, and child in this section belongs to the Viet Cong.

Exchange between Rather and a soldier

DAN RATHER

How do you destroy this much rice?

SOLDIER

Yeah, the demo man usually blows it up.

DAN RATHER

You're going to blow it up are you?

SOLDIER

If we can't get it out they'll blow it up. it's unmilled rice,

Nguyen is interviewed on camera.

NGUYEN THI THE

The Americans came into my house with their interpreters and drove us out. They refused to let us take any belongings with us.

Aero view of Saigon.

MARTIN SHEEN

Many of the refugees created ended up in the squalor of Saigon where Morley Safer opened the CBS News bureau in 1965

Camera focuses on a roof being lit by a flamethrower

MORLEY

It first appeared that the Marines had been sniped at and that a few houses would be made to pay. Shortly after, an officer told me he had orders to go in and level the string of hamlets that surrounds Cam Ne village, and all around the common paddy field that feeds these hamlets, a ring of fire. 150 homes were leveled in retaliation for a burst of gun fire.

Testimony of a soldier, scenes of a village being destroyed, people loaded onto trucks.

LENIX

On the first operation that I was on, in-country, we went into a village called Five Fingers. And it was a typical cordon and search which is you surround the village and then you sweep through it. And hopefully, when you're sweeping, if anybody's running from you, they're going to run into the surrounding troops on the other side and then they'd get wiped out. We received fire as we walked into the village. We took no casualties, but we did end up with a body count. No weapons were found, so apparently they were civilians.

The next day, in the morning should I say, they rounded up the entire village, all of them, and marched them out. You are all prisoners of war, all of them. Men, women, children, made no difference. We filled two deuce and a halves. They were relocated man, just moved away.

Heidtman testifies at Winter Soldier fade to old man with bread, scenes of villagers being harassed and villages being burnt.

HEIDTMAN

I've hardly ever heard the term Vietnamese. They were always gooks. There was no difference between a good one and a bad one except that the good one at the time is carrying no weapon but he's still fair game. The games that some of the Marines in my outfit played, myself included, would be to find older papa-sans with long whiskers, which I guess is the symbol of his identity in their culture, and they would just be cut. They would brutalize anybody who complained. We would move into a village and we would just sit down. We owned the village while we were here. These people would do what we told them, or they wouldn't be allowed to stay in their own house, or would be beaten inside the house.

We were on our first operation and it was an operation so it just followed the procedure. They were used to it and we were just shown how you destroy a village. They just cried and carried on.

We don't know what happened to them. That was the only village in the immediate vicinity so we cleared the area more or less.

Everything is set on fire. My squad leader personally ignited the first two hootches and then just told us to take care of the rest.

When we went out, I would say 50% at least of the villages we passed through would be burned to the ground. There was no difference between the ones we burned and the ones we didn't burn. It was just that some we had time, we burned them

Section Break: Rape & Murder

Lt. Colonel Alexander Haig before the camera.

MARTIN SHEEN

Mike Wallace interviewed Alexander Haig years before he was part of the Nixon White House

Scenes of tractors knocking down trees.

MIKE WALLACE

Each one of these \$70,000 monsters can sweep 15 acres in a 10 hr. day. In lower Ben Wane alone they've cleared more than 3,000 acres to help bring security to 20,000 people. Security, a vital beginning to pacification. But the dozers do more than just knock things down, they help to build too. The man in charge of the operation is Lt. Colonel Alexander Haig of Alrington, VA.

Mike Wallace interviewing Haig in the forest.

AL-HAIG

This is land that was formerly non-productive and of no value at all to the people

MIKE WALLACE

Because it was jungle?

AL HAIG

That is correct.

Fred at Winter Soldier then show pictures of CS victims from

Iraq 2005

FRED NIENKE

I think every person who was in Vietnam who was in the infantry used CS, which is a gas, chemicals, Willie Peter--that's White Phosphorus--and we used these sometimes to clear bunkers and other times to destroy a hooch. Before we'd go into a village or something, if we thought it might be VC infested or something like this, we'd send in Willie Peter mortars, 60 millimeters, and this would burn up the hooch's -they'd explode--throwing white phosphorus on different hooch's in the village. Start the hooch's burning and also kill people. It's probably one of the worst sights I've ever seen is a person that's been burned by Willie Peter, because it doesn't stop. It just burns all completely through your body. The only way you can end this burning is to cut off the air. It's very difficult.

South Vietnamese Officer speaking to villagers, as villagers watch, some smiling, some laughing.

RVN OFFICER

We came here today to begin an operation aimed at clearing this area and mopping up the hidden Viet Cong. To bring security to all of you. We understand that among you there are some who have naively listen the Viet Cong propaganda and have joined the rebels. Among them are some of your husbands, your brothers, so please advise them to come back. We are ready, during this pacification program to admit them back to society and to assist them.

Jamie Henry, 23, Sgt., 1/35 Inf., 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division (August 1967 to August 1968) @ Winter Soldier Investigation.

JAMIE HENRY

19 women and children were rounded up as Viet Cong Suspects--and the lieutenant that rounded them up called the captain on the radio and he asked what should be done with them.

The captain simply repeated the order that came down from the colonel that morning. The order that came down from the colonel that morning was to kill anything that moves, which you can take anyway you want to take it. When the captain told the lieutenant this, the lieutenant rang off. I got up and I started walking over to the captain thinking that the lieutenant just might do it because I had served in his platoon for a long time. As I started over there, I think the captain panicked, he thought the lieutenant might do it too, and this was a little more atrocious than the other executions that our company had participated in, only because of the numbers. But the captain tried to call him up, tried to get him back on the horn, and he couldn't get a hold of him. As I was walking over to him, I turned, and I looked in the area. I looked toward where the supposed VCS were, and two men were leading a young girl, approximately 19 years old, very pretty, out of a hooch. She had no clothes on so I assumed she had been raped, which was pretty SOP (that's standard operating procedure for civilians), and she was thrown onto the pile of the 19 women and children, and five men, around the circle, opened up on full automatic with their M-16s. And that was the end of that.

Detained Vietnamese, sitting on the ground. The Le Thi Ton speaks to camera.

LE THI TON

When they came to my house, there were ten family members inside, including my 14-year-old son. Four or five soldiers came right over. When they came in, I stood up and greeted them. They laughed when I did that, they seemed to hate us. They just turned around and threw a grenade into the house. Nine or ten people were blown to pieces. I was the only one who was wounded and survived. My son and everyone else just fell dead. I was wounded and extremely frightened and crawled quickly into a corner of the house. Although the grenade had already exploded, the soldiers fired their guns at the people to make sure that nobody would survive.

Scott Camil speaks scene fades to villages being burnt. Children huddled, then back to Scott.

CAMIL

In Operation Stone we were sitting up on the rail road trestle with a river on each side. There's another company behind each river. And like the people were running around inside. And we were just shooting them and the newspaper said Operation Stone like World War Two movie. We just sat up there and wiped them out, women, children, everything. Two hundred ninetyone of them.

Vietnamese women outside speaks to camera.

NGO THI HIEN

Wherever the Americans went, they burned and destroyed and killed. I didn't see any guerrillas being killed, only villagers.

Flame thrower tank. Interview in prep for Winter Soldier Investigation. He is showing pictures.

CAMIL

This is a village being burnt. The people were in the village. They wanted time to get their goods out but we just burned down the village. They had to leave their goods there or get burned.

INTERVIEWER

You might be able to come up with that I was trying to find somebody that knew something about that vil wiped out in Qua Tre?

CAMIL

Right..

INTERVIEWER

You got that.

CAMIL

Because we went into the area. It was to set the example. To show that we weren't fucking around. The first thing we do is burn down the village and kill everybody.

Vietnamese woman describes action, B&W pictures of her doing the war.

NGO THI HIEN

The Americans shelled the village as they arrived. Then they burned down the houses, destroying everything. Nine members of my family were killed. I escaped which is why I'm alive today. But my whole family was wiped out.

Young Jim Webb speaks to camera.

JIM WEBB

The military mission became to inflict casualties and the primary reason for existence became to minimize your own

causalities. And you were kind of walking that tie rope the whole time you were there.

Vietnamese woman describes events, makes gesture with hands to show handful of bones.

THUONG THI MAI

After they killed the people, they burned down all the houses so the survivors had no place to live. They burned everything. Even dead children were burned. So I could collect only this much of the remains of three children. It was only a handful of bones.

Antiwar protester hold sign that says "Mothers prefer our boys burn draft cards rather than people." Murphy describes action as Marines destroy another village.

THOMAS MURPHY

At this time some of the Marines used cigarette lighters and the hooches went up, grenades, some flame throwers were brought in and that was one way to quiet the fire from the village.

Akers at Winter Soldier fade to scenes of Vietnamese being rounded up.

AKERS

I'll tell you a trick they'll pull. They'll take a company and pull them back to battalion They'll keep them there for darn near a month with no contact whatsoever with enemy troops. All right. Then all of a sudden, "Hey we found a Vietcong regiment. We're getting ready to move out, tomorrow morning. Stand by." Keys your mind. All of sudden you're getting a chance to get a piece of the action cause you're tired of sitting around in mud holes, you know, going nothing.

Officer rallies platoon before a mission.

OFFICER

Okay today's the day. It's the big one. This is the one we've been waiting for. This is the one you've all been saying to yourselves 'What this company needs is a good fight. By the grace of God we're going to get it.'" From there we're going to S&D - Search and Destroy The thing you guys like.

AKERS

I have yet to have been on an operation were I haven't gone through a village and I have yet to have gone on an operation and when I've gone through that village that village was still standing.

Barbara is off camera. Scenes of Vietnamese countryside.

BARBARA SONNEBORN

Nguyen tell us that out of a 107 villages in this area, 106 there burnt to the ground, some of them many times over This area was a free fire zone. Anything that moved could be shot.

Scenes of Vietnamese countryside as seen from a helicopter. Vietnamese girls retrieve a bomb.

DENNIS CALDWELL

There's a large river that's to the west of Saigon, runs roughly north and south. I can't remember the name of it at the moment, but beyond this river there is absolutely nothing left. There were hundreds and hundreds of villages, marked on the map that I had with me, all kinds of names on the map, but you get over that area and there's nothing there at all. It's all been wiped out

long ago.

Reporter interviews soldiers on the beach.

REPORTER

It looks like this beach has just about everything. Is there anything that it lacks?

SOLDIERS

American girls.

REPORTER

But there are girls down the other end of the beach.

SOLDIERS

They're off limits to me.

SOLDIERS

You know they're gooks, you know slant eyes. They're no good..

Picture of Vietnamese girl with beautiful eyes. Soldiers resting in the jungle, being interviewed by reporter.

SOLDIER

We saw a gook standing about 10 ft. away and we got him.

Vietnamese women being man handled by soldiers on a truck. Galbally testifies at Winter Soldier. Scene from Saigon whorehouse, then Amerasian children.

GALBALLY

These people are aware of what American soldiers do to them so naturally they tried to hide the young girls. We found one hiding in a bomb shelter in sort of the basement of her house. She was taken out, raped by six or seven people in front of her family in front of most of the villagers. This wasn't just one incident; this was just the first one I can remember. I know of 10 or 15 of such incidents at least.

Vet speaks to camera.

FIRST VET

Any thing with slant eyes, any thing
that was a gook was a gook. They were
not human beings

Vet speaks to camera, then rolls off in wheel chair you
couldn't see.

SECOND VET

And we were always told that long as you
don't have human contact with the hand
you will always seen then as the enemy
but once you touch him you're going to
find out that he's flesh and blood like
you do.

Scott Camil testifies

CAMIL

It wasn't like they were humans. We were
conditioned to believe that this was for
the good of the nation, the good of our
country, and anything we did was okay.
And when you shot someone you didn't
think you were shooting at a human. They
were a gook or a Commie and it was okay.

Campbell backs up Scott's testimony.

CAMPBELL

The Vietnamese were gooks. We didn't
just call the VC or the NVA gooks. All
Vietnamese were gooks and they were
slant eyes. They were zips. They were
Orientals and they were inferior to us.
We were Americans. We were the civilized
people. We didn't give a shit about
those people.

Soldier interviewed in the bush.

ANOTHER SOLDIER

You really don't have no feelin' about it you know? You see a dead gook, it don't mean anything. The only time you feel anything is if you see a dead GI. Then it sort of hurts you, you know. But gooks, it don't bother you none.

CAMIL

I saw one case where a woman was shot by a sniper, one of our snipers. When we got up to her she was asking for water. And the Lt. said to kill her. So he ripped off her clothes, they stabbed her in both breasts, they spread-eagled her and shoved an E- tool up her vagina, an entrenching tool, and she was still asking for water. And then they took that out and they used a tree limb and then she was shot.

Soldier standing in prison yard speaks to camera. Picture of dead girl on the ground then footage of villagers being miss-treated.

SOLDIER IN PRISON

I fired a burst of about five or six at her and she hit the ground and rolled over and I knew it was a girl then. It just flashed through my mind all the complications I'd have going over there if she were still alive so I just went ahead and killed her.

We came across civilians a burn their house, take what you wanted out of it, you know, mess with their women, stuff like that. Was a, it was just a nasty way to treat the people.

In Vietnamese with English sub-titles.

PHAN THI THUAN

"...if the wind blew the tree, they chopped down the tree. If the cow moved, the cow got shot... And the chicken, duck, pig--anything alive was murdered."

Section Break: Epiloge

MARTIN SHEEN

In the wake of the Vietnam War there was much talk in the halls of power about what they called the "Vietnam Syndrome" and especially the need to overcome the Vietnam Syndrome. William Safire of the New York Times called "that revulsion at the use of military power" known as the Vietnam Syndrome a "national affliction."

Sadly, most Americans are not aware of how many Vietnamese were killed in the war. In surveys, many have put number at less than a hundred thousand. The shameful facts are that between three and five million Vietnamese were killed in that war and the vast majority of them were civilians.

After the first Gulf War, George Bush senior announced the Vietnam Syndrome was buried in "the desert sands of the Arabian Peninsula." To help us get over the "Vietnam Syndrome", Presidents Reagan and Bush orchestrated a series of quick military victories against small countries in which thousands of civilians died Grenada, Panama, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador.

In reality the "Vietnam Syndrome" is code for a need to induce a kind of national amnesia about the true history and facts of the Vietnam War. As we witness the debacle that the Iraq War has become, we can see that they have been largely successful.

The world and especially Iraq are reaping the results, more than four thousand Americans and more than a million Iraqis, most of them civilians have been killed in another quagmire started with lies and motivated by greed. How long will this war, and the policy that created it continue. Those who refuse to remember their history are condemned to repeat it.

CLAY CLAIBORNE

This war must end now! This policy must end for all times. We must not forget our history. We must learn from it and proceed.

Credits roll over waving Vietnamese flag, end of Viet Cong Blues plays.

FADE OUT:

THE END

PREVIEW VIETNAM: PEOPLE'S VICTORY

MARTIN SHEEN

In spite of the horrific tactics employed by the U.S. military, the war was won by the combined resistance of the Vietnamese and American people. Here is a preview of our up coming video

Vietnam: People's Victory