

THE ROCK APES

Written by

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FADE IN

EXT. SKY OVER JUNGLE - NIGHT

An old propeller-driven C-130 airplane RUMBLES through dark sky.

SUPER "Viet Nam 1967"

INT. AIRCRAFT

Armed soldiers stand in line. A Ten man Special Forces A-team. CAPTAIN ROBERT CHAMPAGNE, 25, team leader and jump master, stands in front.

CHAMPAGNE

Green Berets! Are you ready to jump?

GREEN BERETS

No, Sir!

CHAMPAGNE

Why not?

GREEN BERETS

We don't wanna die, Sir.

Champagne smiles, gets the joke. He wrenches open the door. THUNDEROUS ROAR of wind and propeller.

SERGEANT CLARENCE BAILEY, 32, a chain-smoking old bulldog steps forward and stands in the door.

EXT. AIRCRAFT

Bailey hurls himself out of the airplane and soars down toward the jungle.

The other jumpers follow.

At low altitude they yank their ripcords, POPPING open their chutes.

They land, gather up their canopies and melt into the

JUNGLE

Champagne crawls up to CORPORAL TERRY SAPPER, 18, a wiry boonie rat.

CHAMPAGNE

(whispers)

Take point. Find a place to spend
the night.

Sapper nods and moves forward into the trees. The team follows, crouching, clutching their weapons. They move like rats sniffing their way through a dark dangerous sewer.

LATER

With a hand signal Sapper stops them. Champagne moves up beside him.

SAPPER

Clearing. I'll check it out.

He crawls forward, moments later returns.

SAPPER

Good spot.

CHAMPAGNE

Okay.

(gestures for others to
follow)

Let's catch some zzz's.

They move into the clearing, circle like a wagon train

BAILEY

Boys, dig in. Quietly.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

A soldier, BILL HEATON, 20, crouches in his foxhole. DAN ANDERSON, 19, sleeps beside him.

Heaton is sleepy, his eyelids flicker; he hears RUSTLING to his front and snaps awake,.

More RUSTLING. Closer.

HEATON

Dan, wake your ass up.

ANDERSON

What?

HEATON

Somethin' out there.

Anderson sits up, listens.

ANDERSON
I don't hear nothing.

HEATON
Wait.

Something BARKS twice.

ANDERSON
It's just a damn dog.

More BARKING now, closer.

HEATON
Should I shoot it?

ANDERSON
No, you'll give away our position.
Throw a rock, scare it away.

Heaton finds and hurls a large rock.

Suddenly the rock soars back. WHIZZ! Just misses their heads.

ANDERSON
What the hell?

HEATON
Use the scope.

Anderson looks out the night vision scope.

The screen is an eerie green circle. He sees an indistinct shape. Moving.

ANDERSON
I see it! Throw a grenade!

Heaton pulls the pin on a grenade and lobs it.

They GASP as the grenade flies back and EXPLODES with a blinding flash.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

Heaton's corpse lies outside his foxhole. The medic, DOC TACKER, 19, works on wounded Anderson.

CHAMPAGNE

Did he say anything, Doc?

TACKER

Gorilla tossed a grenade into da foxhole.

BAILEY

Ain't no gorillas in the Nam.

Anderson groans, tries to sit up.

ANDERSON

I saw it.

TACKER

He's full of morphine. He don't know what he sayin'.

Tacker eases Anderson back down, readjusts the I.V. in his arm.

ANDERSON

Bill threw a grenade, the gorilla threw it back. I saw it through the scope.

Bailey reaches down into the hole and pulls up the wrecked night-vision scope.

BAILEY

God damn gorilla gonna pay for this.

CHAMPAGNE

Anderson, why throw a grenade?

ANDERSON

Cuz it barked at us.

BAILEY

A barking gorilla that throws grenades. I think you boys was smoking pot.

CHAMPAGNE

Sarge, take Sapper out and look around.

BAILEY

Okay, Skipper.

CHAMPAGNE

Don't go too far. We need to move,
after the Colonel leaves.

BAILEY

The Colonel?

CHAMPAGNE

He's in the air.

BAILEY

Let's go, Sapper. I likes the
gorilla better than that prick.

EXT. JUNGLE NEAR CLEARING

Bailey and Sapper stare down at a giant footprint.

BAILEY

Big feet.

Sapper shrugs, reaches up and pulls a clump of hair off a
branch. Smells it.

SAPPER

Yech.

Sapper holds the hair so Bailey can sniff it.

BAILEY

Smells like yo underwear.

SAPPER

How do you know what my underwear
smells like?

BAILEY

Shut your face. Let's go back.

Something unseen pulls away tree branches and watches them.

EXT. THE CLEARING

CHAMPAGNE

You find anything?

BAILEY

Just a weird, big footprint. And
some hair.

Sapper shows him the hair.

CHAMPAGNE

Sapper, you're the tracker. What was it?

SAPPER

Some smelly ape with big feet.

FRANKE

Maybe it was Bigfoot.

They stare at SPECIALIST DOUG Franke, 22, the team know-it-all nerd.

CHAMPAGNE

What is "Bigfoot?"

FRANKE

You know, a big ape creature that lives in the north woods, back home.

BAILEY

You from New York City, boy. What you know about north woods?

FRANKE

I can read books, can't I?

BAILEY

(scoffs)

Books. What the hell is this Bigfoot doing in the Nam?

FRANKE

Maybe he got drafted.

A distant THROBBING, gets closer. The soldiers look up.

Like a whirlwind a helicopter descends.

FRANKE

Uh oh, here comes God. And he is pissed.

The helicopter lands and the soldiers gawk at the garish "Sky Commander" nose art. They load the casualties.

COLONEL HOWARD GODFREDSON pops out. Age 45 and overweight, buffoonery incarnate.

He stomps toward Champagne.

COLONEL
So you sneaky Petes are trained to
throw grenades at monkeys?

CHAMPAGNE
A new guy made a mistake.

COLONEL
(lowers his voice)
Captain, if you screw up this
mission, I will relieve you.

CHAMPAGNE
I understand, Sir.

COLONEL
By the way, how do you like my nose
art?

Champagne leans forward, studies the Colonel's nose.

COLONEL
God damn it, on my chopper. Oh,
never mind.

CHAMPAGNE
Sorry, Sir.

COLONEL
I never wanted Green Berets for
this mission, but MACV Headquarters
insisted.

CHAMPAGNE
Yes, Sir.

COLONEL
Quit playing grab ass and go recon
that Montagnard village, then build
my damn base camp.

CHAMPAGNE
(salutes)
Yes, sir.

COLONEL
Don't salute me, you idiot. Now any
VC snipers know who to shoot.

CHAMPAGNE
Yes, sir.
(salutes again)
Sorry, I forgot.

The Colonel shakes his head in disgust, returns to his helicopter, zooms away.

BAILEY

What did he say, Skipper?

CHAMPAGNE

He said make sure everyone salutes him.

EXT. JUNGLE TRAIL - DAY (LATER)

Sapper walks point. The soldiers move quietly through the trees.

Something unseen watches, follows.

PFC REFUGIO RAMIREZ, 20, the team grenadier follows Tacker.

BAILEY

Keep your damn intervals.

RAMIREZ

Tacker is fat. I like to hide behind him.

TACKER

Shaddup, fool.

BAILEY

How'd you two morons get in the Green Berets?

TACKER

Affirmative action.

EXT. JUNGLE TRAIL- DAY (LATER)

Sapper holds up a hand, stops the column.

Champagne moves forward.

CHAMPAGNE

Taking a break?

SAPPER

(points)
Village.

Champagne squints, looks through the leaves, fumbles in his pack for binoculars.

He sees primitive huts, a few people, animals.

CHAMPAGNE
Let's take a closer look.
Sarge, put out security.

Champagne and Sapper creep forward, lie down just inside the tree line.

Champagne scans the village.

SAPPER
Any bad guys?

CHAMPAGNE
I don't see any. Fetch the team.

EXT. RICE PADDIES - DAY

In line, the soldiers step out of the woods and advance toward the village.

SPECIALIST NICK DAMATO, 22, totes a M-60 machine gun.

DAMATO
Damn, I stepped in shit.

BAILEY
Well, dumb ass, watch where you step.

Excited voices and shouts from the huts. People rush around. A bell RINGS.

BAILEY
Don't shoot 'less they shoot first, boys.

Angry men and boys armed with crossbows form a line to block the soldier's path.

A frightened water buffalo splashes through a rice paddy.

The team stops twenty feet from the Montagnard militia.

CHAMPAGNE
Green Berets... smile.

They contort their faces into foolish grins.

A Montagnard boy, KLONG, raises his crossbow and WHOOSH, shoots off Champagne's green beret.

CHAMPAGNE
So much for smiling.

He picks up his impaled beret, and flips the arrow back to Klong.

CHAMPAGNE
Nice shot.

The CHIEF, an ancient man wearing a French flag as a cape, shambles forward.

A European woman, DOCTOR MARIE PETITE, 30s, accompanies him.

The Chief makes an rambling speech in Montagnard.

MARIE
(translating)
Go away. Whatever you are selling,
we do not want.

CHAMPAGNE
We are here to help.

MARIE
No one wants your help.

CHAMPAGNE
Who are you, anyway?

BAILEY
She look like a damn hippy.

MARIE
I am a French Citizen. I have
papers.

Doc Tacker points to a steeple poking up in the village.

Champagne raises his arms as if in benediction.

CHAMPAGNE
Lady, tell the chief this: We have
been sent by The Pope to bless and
reward this village.

Marie shakes her head, translates. The Chief raises his eyes, makes a dismissive gesture, whispers to Marie

MARIE
(translates)
He says you lie poorly. You can
come into the village for one day.

If you stay longer, they will eat
you.

The Chief turns and Marie helps him back toward his hut.

MARIE
Capitaine, they are Lutherans.

INT. CHIEF'S LONGHOUSE - NIGHT

Champagne and Marie eat dinner with the Chief. Meat,
vegetables, home-made wine. Wives and daughters wait on the
chief and guests.

CHAMPAGNE
Pass the dog, please.

MARIE
(passes a platter of meat)
It is not dog. It is chicken.

CHAMPAGNE
Tastes like dog.

Bailey knocks, enters.

BAILEY
We set up four guard positions.
This place is gonna be hard to
defend.

CHAMPAGNE

We won't be here long. Tomorrow We
hump to the mountain. Wine?

He offers his goblet to Bailey, who pushes it away.

BAILEY
Smells like bug spray.

CHAMPAGNE
You've hurt the Chief's feelings.

BAILEY
I'll check the guards.

Marie rolls a cigarette and shares it with the Chief.

MARIE
What mountain are you talking
about?

CHAMPAGNE
(suspicious)
Never mind.

MARIE
Pardonnez-moi, Capitaine.

CHAMPAGNE
Speak English. By the way, we need
you to interpret for us--

MARIE
--I will not help drag these people
into your war.

CHAMPAGNE
The war is coming, whether you like
it or not.

EXT. NORTH GUARD POST - NIGHT

DAMATO and THOMPSON peer out over the rice paddies. The guard post is cobbled together from sandbags and trash.

PFC JERRY THOMPSON, 21, the team sniper, looks like a high school freshman.

DAMATO
What ya think of our new Captain?

THOMSON
He's all right. Second tour, so he
ain't no cherry.

BARK! BARK! From the distant treeline.

DAMATO
You hear that?

THOMSON
A dog?

DAMATO
Don't throw a grenade.

THOMSON
It ain't a dog. They ate the dog.

DAMATO
So what the hell is it?

THOMSON
Probably that big foot thing that
killed Heaton.

More BARKING.

DAMATO
What should we do?

THOMSON
Nuthin'.

DAMATO
I can do that.

INT. CHIEF'S LONGHOUSE - NIGHT

CHAMPAGNE
So, Dr. Petite, why are you here?

MARIE
None of your business.

CHAMPAGNE
You're a do-gooder, a missionary
doctor, helping these Montagnards?

MARIE
I am not a medical doctor.

CHAMPAGNE
What are you, then?

Marie looks away, evasive.

The Chief grunts, waves the dirty wine bottle.

CHAMPAGNE
(holds out his goblet)
Sure, fill'er up.

CHAMPAGNE
Is there some reason I shouldn't
know?

Bailey bursts into the room.

BAILEY
North guard post's taking incoming.

CHAMPAGNE
I don't hear anything.

BAILEY
The incoming is rocks.

EXT. NORTH GUARD POST - NIGHT

A barrage of rocks has battered the guard position into rubble. Damato and Thompson lie flat.

DAMATO
Get down, Captain.

CHAMPAGNE
What the--

A bowling ball sized rock soars out of the jungle and SLAMS into a tree.

BAILEY
Strike one.

THOMSON
Here comes another one.

WHOOSH! SLAM!

The rock barrage continues. The soldiers stay low.

CHAMPAGNE
Thompson, get my blooper man.

Thompson slithers away, returns with Ramirez holding his M-79 grenade launcher.

RAMIREZ
You want me to kill that rock
thrower?

CHAMPAGNE
Load a tear gas round.

WHOOSH! SLAM! Another rock.

CHAMPAGNE
Thompson, get a pop flare ready.
Ramirez, if you see this damn ape,
hit it with the gas.

WHOOSH! BAM! Another rock.

CHAMPAGNE
Flare.

Thompson launches a flare that POPS open over the paddies, illuminating with an eerie green light.

BLOOP! Ramirez fires a grenade that arches up and explodes in the tree line. HISS. The gas releases.

RAMIREZ

Suck on dat, big foot.

Suddenly the fizzling tear gas round sails back and lands in front of them. They GAG, rub their eyes.

CHAMPAGNE

Everyone fire full auto.

The soldiers BLAST away with their M-16s. A hail of red tracers slice into the trees.

CHAMPAGNE

More.

They reload and fire again. Tremendous CLAMOR of gunfire.

CHAMPAGNE

Cease fire.

They wait.

No more rocks.

CHAMPAGNE

We'll go see what we killed in the morning.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Champagne, Sapper, Damato and Thompson search the tree line. The branches have been ripped apart by bullets.

SAPPER

Blood trail.

Champagne looks down, sees a puddle of blood.

CHAMPAGNE

Well, it won't bother us any more.

THOMPSON

Why you think it was stalkin' us, boss?

CHAMPAGNE

I don't know, kid. Weird things happen in the Nam. This was just one of them.

DAMATO

Rock throwin' ape. What next?

CHAMPAGNE

Let's go back.

EXT. VILLAGE - LATER

Tacker holds sick call for the villagers. Champagne and Ramirez watch. Each patient gets an m&m candy.

CHAMPAGNE

How's it goin', Doc?

TACKER

Lots of bug bites, jungle rot on the kid's laigs. Old people just old. I wish I could talk to 'em.

RAMIREZ

You the one who is supposed to speak Montagnard.

TACKER

Shaddup, fool. There's thirty different dialects, ah can't know them all.

CHAMPAGNE

Why is the Chief cutting in line?

TACKER

He afraid we gonna run out of m&ms.

Franke approaches.

FRANKE

Sir, the Colonel is in the air, on his way here.

WHUP. WHUP WHUP. Helicopter approaching.

CHAMPAGNE

Sapper, guide the Colonel's chopper into the shit field.

Sapper pops green smoke, directs the pilot where to land.

The Colonel jumps out, steps in shit, curses, and shakes his fist at Sapper.

COLONEL
I'll have you shot!

Sapper salutes.

The Colonel charges at Champagne, who starts a salute.

COLONEL
I have ordered my pilot to shoot a
rocket up your ass if you salute
me.

CHAMPAGNE
(lowers his hand)
Good morning, Sir.

COLONEL
Why aren't you reconning that
mountain?

CHAMPAGNE
We've been delayed, Sir.

COLONEL
Get your ass moving, Captain. We
need the base built before the
rains start.

CHAMPAGNE
Yes, Sir.

COLONEL
The North Vietnamese Army is on
their way here. We need that base.

A huge rock soars out of the jungle and CRACK, slams into the helicopter.

The Colonel gasps.

COLONEL
My nose art!

He rushes back and jumps into the chopper.

Another rock SMACKS the windshield.

COLONEL
Up, up, get us out of here!

The engine ROARS as the chopper climbs away.

MINUTES LATER

Franke hands the handset to Champagne

FRANKE

Colonel on the horn, Sir.

CHAMPAGNE

This is Sneaky Pete, over.

COLONEL (V.O.)

God damn it! Who threw rocks at my chopper?

CHAMPAGNE

An ape, Sir,

COLONEL (V.O.)

Kill it, then get on with the damn mission.

CHAMPAGNE

Yes, Sir.

EXT. VILLAGE - LATER

The team load bullets, sharpen knives, prepares to hunt the Rock Ape.

Doc Tacker loads his medical bag. Franke puts a fresh battery in his radio.

Children giggle and beg. Villagers watch stoically. Crossbow militia scowl. Marie scowls.

MARIE

So you are leaving. Très bon. Do not come back.

CHAMPAGNE

We'll be back after we kill this ape.

MARIE

Why not just leave him alone?

CHAMPAGNE

It killed one of my men. We have a mission; I can't have this ape stalking us, interfering.

MARIE

He is territorial, and you have
invaded his territory.

CHAMPAGNE

I'm sorry, but it's our territory
now.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Point man Sapper follows an easy trail. Giant footprints,
broken branches, clumps of reddish hair.

Sapper halts.

CHAMPAGNE

What's up?

SAPPER

I hear running water.

The Captain listens, nods.

SAPPER

Big apes need lots of water.
It might be close.

CHAMPAGNE

We need to watch for VC, too. We'll
wait here. Go recon the stream.

Sapper crawls forward alone. The others wait silently. The
Captain checks his compass and map.

CHAMPAGNE

Ape seems to be heading east. I
wonder where it's going.

BAILEY

Maybe it's got a girlfriend.

CHAMPAGNE

I've been wondering... do you think
there are more than one of these
critters?

BAILEY

Sure. Where ya think it came from:
a space ship?

CHAMPAGNE

Where are the rest of them?

BAILEY

I dunno. Maybe this one is leading
us away from them.

EXT. JUNGLE-STREAM

Security out, the team enjoys the cool water.

RAMIREZ

Good drinkin' water--

TACKER

--Yeah, if Big Foot didn't take a
dump in it.

Sapper points to footprints in the mud.

SAPPER

Captain, he entered the stream
here. We need to search the east
bank to find where he came out.

CHAMPAGNE

Tricky ape.

Bailey lies submerged in the cool water, only his face poking
out.

CHAMPAGNE

Sarge, up periscope. Order the team
to search for more footprints.

BAILEY

This is the first bath for me in a
month.

TACKER

We knows.

BAILEY

Shaddup, pecker checker.

Sapper finds where the ape left the stream. They continue the
chase.

LATER

Sapper stops, bends to examine a footprint. Champagne
comes forward.

SAPPER
It's circling behind us.

REAR OF COLUMN

Damato hears BRANCHES BREAKING in the vegetation to his left. He pauses, points his M-16...

Suddenly the ROCK APE burst out of the brush, grabs Damato's head, twists...

CRACK! Damato's neck snaps.

The ape drops the corpse and pushes back into the vegetation.

Ramirez rushes forward.

RAMIREZ
Damato!

He hears RUSTLING, FIRES his rifle. The Ape howls in pain, but escapes.

Bailey kneels beside Damato's body.

BAILEY
Everyone! Mad minute to the left.

RATTLE of gunfire as they fire into the trees.

Champagne looks at Damato, shakes his head.

CHAMPAGNE
Doc, make a litter. We need to take him with us. Can't get a chopper in here.
(to Sapper)
Find the trail. It's wounded and should be moving slow. Let's finish this.

EXT. JUNGLE - LATER

The jungle thins into low grassy foothills as they trail the wounded ape.

The soldiers take turns hauling the litter.

The foothills lead to the edge of mountains.

CHAMPAGNE

What do you think?

SAPPER

We need to be careful. Beaucoup
rocks for this prick to throw.

CHAMPAGNE

We gotta find and kill it, get back
to our real mission.

The slope is steep; moving is hindered by the awkward litter.
They stop on a narrow ledge, hear a RUMBLING above them.

A ROCK SLIDE, boulders bouncing down the cliff.

CHAMPAGNE

Hug the wall!

Rocks SMASH the ledge, roll down the mountain. No one is
injured.

CHAMPAGNE

Let's keep moving.

They follow the shelf as it winds up to a wide
plateau. They stop; Champagne scans
with binoculars.

CHAMPAGNE

Cave up ahead. Take a
look.

Sapper sees a rocky cliff with a cave opening.

SAPPER

I think it's in there.

CHAMPAGNE

Sarge, let's move forward slowly,
line formation. Stretcher in
the rear.

BAILEY

Okay, you heard, boys. Form
line. Keep good intervals.

The soldiers click off safeties, advance cautiously.

WHOOSH! A rock zooms out of the cave, SMACKS the ground with
a THUD.

BAILEY

Too high.

Now they crawl. Another rock hits and bounces between two men.

BAILEY

It's adjusting it's aim. Next one's gonna hit someone.

SAPPER

Let use a rocket.

CHAMPAGNE

No, we'll save them for the NVA.
Mad minute with the 'sixteens, Open fire!

Everyone BLASTS the cave entrance. The rounds pepper the cliff face, scatter rock fragments.

CHAMPAGNE

Cease fire.

They wait. Silence.

BAILEY

We killed it.

A rock is lobbed out of the cave with little force, PLOPS down short.

A moving shadow in the entrance, the ROCK APE limps out.

It is wounded, red fur soaked with blood, torso perforated, one giant arm hangs mangled.

Seven feet tall and a human-like face. It clutches a rock in it's good hand. Ready to fight.

CHAMPAGNE

Hold your fire.

They all stare at the impossible creature.

The ape drops the rock.

FRANKE

It's surrendering.

BAILEY
No, it's a challenge. Single
combat.

He lays down his M-16.

BAILEY
I got this.

He strips off his web gear.

The Rock Ape clenches his ham-sized fists.

Champagne grabs Bailey.

CHAMPAGNE
I can't let you do
this.

BAILEY
Why not?

CHAMPAGNE
It would be cruel to beat to death
a dumb, wounded animal.

BAILEY
That ain't just a dumb animal.

The Captain hands him the M16.

CHAMPAGNE
A wounded enemy. Put it
out of it's misery.

Grumbling, Bailey approaches the Rock Ape.

He points to the rock.

The Ape's face shows understanding; he is to be given one
last throw.

The Rock Ape picks up the rock, circles Bailey.

CHAMPAGNE
Do it, Sarge.

Suddenly the ape draws back his arm, hurls
the rock at Bailey's head.

Bailey ducks beneath the throw, charges forward and
SHOOTS the Ape in the chest.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

The bullets knock it backward to collapse in a heap.

BAM! One last shot, in the head.

The soldiers silently circle the corpse. Their faces blank, not sure if they should be happy or sad.

CHAMPAGNE

Okay, we'll spend the night
here. Tomorrow, back to the ville.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Lazy day, even the chickens nap.

But now someone RINGS the church bell. Villagers shield their eyes and gaze out at the rice paddies.

More soldiers coming. Different soldiers.

Militia men grab their crossbows.

Marie hoes her vegetable garden. She hears the clamor and sets down her tool.

A water buffalo lifts it's head, sniffs the breeze, goes back to sleep.

In single file, the soldiers march along a narrow paddy dike.

They carry Russian AK-47 assault rifles and a rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

Lean, hard young men in North Vietnamese Army uniforms.

The NVA soldiers stop and form line facing the militia.

Their leader, LIEUTENANT HANG, 30s, steps forward and barks commands to the militia.

The Chief and Marie step to the front.

MARIE

(IN FRENCH)

Sir, they do not understand
Vietnamese. Let me interpret,
please.

A chunky scowling soldier, Sergeant TUAN, 25, rushes forward and slaps Marie.

Klong swings his crossbow at Tuan's head, but Tuan parries and smashes his fist into Klong's face, knocks him out.

Marie rushes to Klong's side.

The Lieutenant barks at Tuan.

HANG
 (to Marie)
 Please do not speak French,
 Mademoiselle. It enrages Sergeant
 Tuan.

MARIE
 (stand up)
 The Sergeant is a brute.

Tuan steps forward again, jabbering angrily, points to the French flag worn by the Chief.

MARIE
 The Chief means no harm. He does
 not know what a flag signifies. It
 is just a colorful cape to him.

HANG
 I am sorry, Madam, but he must
 remove it.

Marie speaks in Montagnard to the Chief, who is confused by the problem. He shrugs, removes the flag and hands it to Hang.

One of the soldiers opens his rucksack and pulls out a red flag with a yellow star. He presents it to the Chief, who smiles and ties it around his neck.

HANG
 Now, instruct these men
 to lay down their weapons.

Marie translates. The Chief says a few words to the militia. Reluctantly, they drop their crossbows.

HANG
 We will give you real weapons after
 you join our cause. Now, bring me
 to the Chief's house.

The chief mumbles to Marie.

HANG
 What did he say?

MARIE
 He asked if the Pope sent you.

INT. CHIEF'S LONGHOUSE - LATER

Wearing spectacles, Hang sits at an improvised desk and reads a letter.

Marie sits on a stool.

HANG

So this professor at the University of Hanoi requests the People's Army not interfere with your research.

MARIE

Qui.

HANG

What exactly are you researching, Doctor?

Marie hesitates.

HANG

Well?

MARIE

Primates.

HANG

Monkeys?

MARIE

No, primates. Apes.

HANG

Ah, So you have come all the way from Paris, in the middle of a war, to study apes?

Marie fidgets. Hang stares at her, waiting for an answer.

MARIE

Qui.

HANG

Ah. What kind of apes?

MARIE

Gibbons.

HANG

What kind of gibbons?

More hesitation.

MARIE

The black-crested gibbon. *Nomascus*
Concolor.

Hang stands up stretches, lights a cigarette.

HANG

Doctor Petite, before the war I
studied biology. I know that a
field researcher must have notes,
measurements, drawings.

MARIE

S'il vous plaît....

HANG

Go to your little hut and gather
your field notes. Bring them to
me. Now.

EXT. TREE LINE - DAY

Champagne and Sapper lie concealed in brush, watch the
village through binoculars.

SAPPER

How many little pricks do you see?

CHAMPAGNE

I count seven. More might be
inside the huts.

SAPPER

Sounds like a squad. Maybe advance
scouts.

CHAMPAGNE

Let's go back. We'll radio the
Colonel, see what he wants us to
do.

INT. CHIEF'S LONGHOUSE - DAY

Hang sits at his desk, shakes his head in disbelief as he
reads Marie's field notes.

Marie sits dejected on her stool. A student busted for lying.

HANG

This cannot be true. These Ape-men have been extinct for thousands of years. How can a tribe of them live in this valley?

MARIE

I have seen them. I know where they live. For three years I have been observing them.

HANG

Take me there. Now.

INT. COLONEL'S TENT - DAY

Naked, Colonel Godredson relaxes in his hot tub. He sips a martini as a young Vietnamese woman massages his shoulders.

COLONEL

Ah, that feels good.

PRIVATE GOMEZ, radio on his back, pushes through the tent flap, startles the Colonel.

COLONEL

Damn it, Gomez. I told you not to bother me. Get out.

GOMEZ

But it's that Green Beret captain on the radio, sir.

COLONEL

Oh, Sneaky Pete. I'll talk to him.
(to the girl)
Take a break. Come back in ten minutes. Bring me a cigar.

She kisses his bald spot and slips outside.

The Colonel sips his martini, takes the handset.

COLONEL

Sneaky Pete, this is Sky Commander. Over.

CHAMPAGNE (V.O.)

This is Sneaky Pete. We have eyes on a squad of NVA scouts in the ville. What are your orders?

COLONEL
Do your job! Kill them and
reoccupy the village.

CHAMPAGNE (V.O.)
Do you want a prisoner?

COLONEL
Of course I want a prisoner.

CHAMPAGNE
A live prisoner?

COLONEL
What good is a dead one? Smart-ass.
Out.

The Colonel hurls the handset back at Gomez.

COLONEL
Gomez, tell me, what do you think
of these Green Berets?

GOMEZ
What do you want me to think, Sir?

COLONEL
Ah, good answer. I despise this
"special" forces nonsense.

GOMEZ
Yes, sir.

COLONEL
If they are "special," what does
that make the rest of us? Ordinary?
Are we ordinary, Gomez?

GOMEZ
No, Sir.

COLONEL
What will my grandchildren think if
they hear I served in the ordinary
forces?

GOMEZ
I don't know, Sir.

The Colonel drains his martini, gulps the olive.

COLONEL

When I run this Army, there will be
no more Special Forces. No more
Green Berets,

GOMEZ

Yes, sir.

COLONEL

Now go get my girl back, and tell
her to bring me another martini.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The Captain gives the handset back to Franke.

The team prepares for another night in the jungle.

Sergeant Bailey yanks off his boots and massages his feet.

BAILEY

Why you always mess with the
Colonel?

CHAMPAGNE

I just can't help myself. He seems
so... hostile to Green Berets.

BAILEY

I know why. Few years back, after
Korea, I was cadre at Fort Benning
jump school.

CHAMPAGNE

I remember. You were an asshole.

BAILEY

Thanks. The colonel was a captain
tryin' to get his wings so he could
train for Special Forces.

CHAMPAGNE

Ah, he wanted a green beanie.

BAILEY

Yup. Remember, every mornin' we'd
run ten miles, anyone who stopped
runnin' was tossed out.

CHAMPAGNE

I remember.

BAILEY

The Colonel was fat, fell out the first day. So, no jump wings.

CHAMPAGNE

Which meant, no Special Forces.

BAILEY

Yup, no Green Beanie for the Colonel.

EXT. VILLAGE - THE NEXT DAY

Lieutenant Hang and Marie, plus two NVA soldiers pack for a jungle hike.

Klong with bruised face and crossbow stands beside Marie, begs to go along.

MARIE

No, you can not come.

Klong sulks away.

Sergeant Tuan rushes up, agitated.

TUAN

Lieutenant, there is a church in this village. I will have it torn down today.

HANG

If you must.

MARIE

Please do not destroy their church.

TUAN

Quiet, woman. Our orders are to end all this superstitious nonsense.

HANG

(ponders a moment)
Sergeant, Let us just rename this church. Put a sign above the entrance: "Ho Chi Minh Comradeship Hall."

Tuan clenches his fists, his cork ready to pop.

TUAN

When the political officers arrive,
they will not be happy.

HANG

They never are. Go
get it done.

EXT. TREE LINE - DAY

Champagne and Sapper lie in the weeds, spying on the
village.

SAPPER

That French woman is going on a
picnic with some commie prick.

Champagne snatches the binoculars.

CHAMPAGNE

Where in hell can they be going?
Go get Thompson and Franke. We're
gonna follow them.

EXT. JUNGLE TRAIL-LATER

Sapper walks point followed by the Captain, Thompson and
Franke. They tail Marie and the NVA.

CHAMPAGNE

(reads compass)
They're heading west. Laos?

SAPPER

What do we do if they cross the
border?

CHAMPAGNE

Stay with them. We need to
know what they're up to.

They follow the trail through jungle, tall grass, swamps.

Sapper holds up an arm and kneels down.

SAPPER

(whispers)
They're taking a break.

CHAMPAGNE

Okay, we'll wait here until they
move again. No noise.

MARIE'S GROUP

Lieutenant Hang and Marie squat in the trail. The two NVA grunts BONG and SONN stand guard.

HANG

How much farther, Doctor?

Marie points to a mountain.

MARIE

That is our destination. We will be there in thirty minutes. May I smoke?

HANG

Of course not. Do you smoke when you study your ape men?

MARIE

Sometimes. I gave one of them a cigarette once. He ate it.

Bong unzips his pants to urinate, looks at Marie, decides to hold it.

MARIE

Tell him to relieve himself. The villagers pisse in front of me all the time. I don't care.

Hang speaks in Vietnamese and Bong steps off trail into the brush. His urine SPLASHES.

HANG

Do ape-men urinate in your presence?

MARIE

No, they are bashful.

HANG

I find this all difficult to believe.

MARIE

Soon you will believe. Then you tell your army to leave this valley alone.

CHAMPAGNE GROUP

Champagne studies his map. Franke and Thompson face the rear, weapons ready.

CHAMPAGNE

Sapper, look at this.

(points to map)

This trail we're on leads to the mountain where the Colonel wants his base camp.

SAPPER

Why are they goin' there?

CHAMPAGNE

We'll find out.

Sapper hears something, slithers up trail for a moment then returns.

SAPPER

They're moving again.

CHAMPAGNE

Let's go.

EXT. MOUNTAIN STREAM - LATER

The mountain rises up out of the trees like an ancient rock fortress, jungle-shrouded, solitary.

At it's base, a burbling stream of clear water.

Hidden in brush on the east bank, Marie and her companions wait, watching the stream.

Unknown to them, Champagne and his group hide up stream, watching them.

MARIE'S GROUP

MARIE

(whispers)

If we are patient and wait, we will see a Batutut use the stream.

HANG

Is that what you call them, "batutut?"

MARIE

It is what the villagers call them. It means "forest people."

HANG
What are they?

MARIE
I am not sure. The professeur in
Hanoi thinks they are Neanderthals.
I think not.

HANG
Why?

MARIE
I have never seen them hunt. I
believe they are vegetarian.

HANG
Vegetarian hominids?

MARIE
Yes, Possibly Paranthropus
robustus. Possibly Homo Erectus.

Bored, restless, Bong and Sonn twitch and fidget.

MARIE
Send these two away. If they see a
group they may become violent.

HANG
Violent vegetarians?

MARIE
Yes, to defend their hill.

Hang whispers to Bong and Sonn who grumble and move to a
position twenty meters away.

Marie and Hang wait, watch the stream.

CHAMPAGNE'S GROUP

SAPPER
(looking through
binoculars)
The two grunts moved.

CHAMPAGNE
Where'd they go?

SAPPER

I don't know. Wait, I see them...
down stream. What's going on here?

CHAMPAGNE

Maybe they're meeting more NVA to
guide them to the village.

SAPPER

What does the French woman have to
do with it?

Champagne shakes his head.

MARIE'S GROUP

BONG raises his canteen to drink, finds it empty.

Sonn snores softly beside him. Bong steals his
canteen; it is also dry.

Bong gazes down at the clean water in the
spring.

Quick glance to see if the lieutenant is watching. No, he is
blabbering with the French woman.

Bong slings his AK-47, grabs both canteens, slides on his
butt down to the

SPRING

Bong lies in the sand and slurps cool water.

GRUNTING sound from the far bank.

Bong looks up and GASPS, sees a huge

ROCK APE

glaring at him.

Bong backs away in terror, tries to unsling his rifle.

The Ape charges and with one huge arm bats away Bong's AK-47.
CRUNCH, breaks him over a knee.

The noise awakens Sonn. He scrambles down,
looks in horror at his dead companion and the huge Ape

He raises his weapon and fires.

BAM BAM!

The rounds slice into the Ape making it HOWL in pain.

The Ape pummels Sonn with fists, knocks him down, stomps on his head.

Blood gushes from the Ape's wounds as it collapses.

Marie and Hang splash through the water, rush toward the BELLOWING Ape.

MARIE

Oh no, no--

HANG

It killed my soldiers!

Hang yanks his Russian pistol from it's holster, chambers a round,

But he hears SPLASHING behind him and whirls around, sees

SAPPER

who executes a perfect spinning roundhouse kick to his face. CRACK. Hang is knocked out and falls backwards.

CHAMPAGNE

Pick him up, Sapper. We've got to get out of here. Thompson, grab the woman.

Marie attempts to help the dying Ape, which BARKS weakly.

CHAMPAGNE

Listen.

A distant answering BARK, and then another, and another, all getting closer.

The Rock Ape cavalry is coming.

CHAMPAGNE

We need to get out of here.

Thompson scoops up Marie, pulling her away from the Ape.

MARIE

Get your hands off me.

Sapper and Franke drag the unconscious Lieutenant Hang,

BARKS from the hill are closer, closer.

CHAMPAGNE

Run!

EXT. JUNGLE TRAIL - LATER

Champagne and his group collapse.

Thompson dumps Marie on the ground.

MARIE

Do not ever touch me again.

The radio squawks, Franke gives the handset to Champagne.

FRANKE

Colonel is in the sky and on the
horn. He wants to
talk to you, Captain.

CHAMPAGNE

(into radio)

Sky Commander, this is Sneaky Pete
actual. Over.

COLONEL (V.O.)

God damn it. What's happening down
there?

CHAMPAGNE

NVA prisoner needs a ride.

COLONEL (V.O.)

Okay, give me your position, I'll
get him.

Champagne flips the handset to Franke.

CHAMPAGNE

Figure out where we are and tell
the Colonel.

Marie marches over to the Captain.

MARIE

I will not be man-handled by your
soldiers.

CHAMPAGNE

Sit down, Doctor. Why were you with
the NVA?

MARIE

They made me go with them.

CHAMPAGNE

Why?

MARIE

Oh, this is all so awful. You soldiers just need to stay away from that hill.

CHAMPAGNE

We're going to build a base camp there. Tomorrow.

LATER

The Colonel's chopper lands. Lieutenant Hang is loaded and the chopper WHUP WHUPS away.

MARIE

What will happen to him?

CHAMPAGNE

His war is over.

MARIE

Will he be... mistreated?

CHAMPAGNE

Not by us, but the National Police are not nice.

MARIE

I do not want to even think about it.

CHAMPAGNE

Then don't.

(to Sapper)

Let's move. We've got a long hump back to our perimeter.

EXT. PERIMETER - NIGHT

The team digs in for another night.

BAILEY

What's she sulking about.

He points to Marie who sits under a tree, sucking an unlit cigarette.

CHAMPAGNE

One of her Rock Apes was killed. It took two NVA with it.

BAILEY

Maybe we should let the monkeys and commies fight, leave us out of it.

CHAMPAGNE

Sounds good.

Marie stomps over. Bailey offers her a pinch of chewing tobacco.

MARIE

What good is that...ca-ca?

BAILEY

You get a little buzz. Hold you over till you can smoke.

Marie places a pinch in her mouth.

BAILEY

Better than nuthin'.

MARIE

I are going to walk back to the village.

CHAMPAGNE

You can go back tomorrow. Tonight we clean it up.

MARIE

What do you mean?

CHAMPAGNE

Get rid of the NVA.

MARIE

Kill them?

CHAMPAGNE

That's the plan.

MARIE

So much killing.

CHAMPAGNE

We are soldiers, it's what we do. Go back to your tree. We have to make plans, and I don't trust you.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Bailey hides under an abandoned longhouse, face smeared with mud.

His only weapons: a Colt forty-five automatic and a bowie knife.

He sees an form slithering toward him. Too big to be a snake.

BAILEY
(whispers)
You are a sneaky little prick,
Sapper.

SAPPER
Thanks, Sarge.

BAILEY
Did you find 'em?

SAPPER
They're in the Chief's house.

BAILEY
Doing what?

SAPPER
The Chief is poisoning them with
wine. And they're gambling.

BAILEY
This gonna be too easy. Let's go.

Bailey cannot slither as well as Sapper, but he tries. They low crawl between the buildings and animal pens.

The only light is an orange sliver of moon.

The only noises are chickens fussing and some old mama-san bitching at her papa-san.

Across from the Chief's house, they hide, listen to drunken voices.

BAILEY
One of 'em will come out to piss.
We kill him. Then the others... one
at a time.

They wait, and wait.

LATER

The door opens. Sergeant Tuan steps out, begins a foot patrol, armed with his Chinese sidearm.

Sapper and Bailey follow.

Anticipating his route, they find a dark path. They wait.

Tuan walks past their hiding place, Bailey steps behind, lifts his pistol like a club....

Tuan whirls around, parries the blow, knocks the pistol loose.

Sapper draws his pistol, steps forward.

Tuan assumes a karate stance, faces Sapper, smiles.

BAILEY

He's mine.

SAPPER

Don't do this. Let's just kill the prick.

Bailey ignores him, keeps his eyes on Tuan, clenches his fists, circles like a boxer.

He throws a fake leg kick and then a quick combination of punches at Tuan's head.

Tuan disregards the kick and sidesteps away from the punches.

More kicks and punches from Bailey, but Tuan dodges and parries them all.

Suddenly Tuan attacks, a whirlwind of kicks and punches that pummel Bailey, knocks him down.

BAILEY

(wheezing)

Shoot him, Sapper.

Sapper raises his pistol, but before he can fire, Tuan kicks it away, fast draws his own pistol.

He mutters something in Vietnamese, aims at Sapper, pulls the trigger,

Suddenly a crossbow arrow slices through Tuan's forehead.

For a moment he looks confused, then crumbles, the arrow point sticks out the back of his head.

Sapper and Bailey turn around, see the arrow was fired by Klong.

Klong steps forward, spits on Tuan's body, wrenches the arrow out of his forehead.

BAILEY
Our first recruit.

Bailey searches the body, finds a silver whistle.

BAILEY
Okay, let's go get the others. I got a plan.

EXT. CHIEF'S HOUSE-LATER

Sapper hides next to the front door, holds a wooden club. Makes a few practice swings.

Bailey crouches behind a tree, whistle to his lips.

He blows, SCREECH.

Sapper yanks his club back, waits for the door to open.

No one comes out.

BAILEY
Damn lazy Commies.

Bailey blows the whistle again.

Cautiously, Sapper opens the door and looks inside. A pause, then he beckons for Bailey to join him.

Bailey runs over and looks.

INSIDE CHIEF'S HOUSE

Three NVA soldiers and The Chief passed out on the floor. The cask of wine is half empty.

BAILEY
Tie 'em up. We'll spend the night here.

Sapper checks the NVA.

SAPPER
One of them is dead.

BAILEY

Well, go easy on the wine.

INT. MARIE'S HUT - DAY

Champagne sits at the portable desk, reads Marie's notebooks. He looks bored.

Marie smokes a hand-rolled cigarette.

CHAMPAGNE

Are you a nun?

Marie gasps, flicks her cigarette at his head.

MARIE

How dare you say that to me?

CHAMPAGNE

I'm sorry. It's just this room, it seems nun-ish.

MARIE

We do not have time for this. The Apes must be protected.

CHAMPAGNE

Put them in a zoo.

MARIE

A zoo? They must be observed in their natural habitat. Do you not understand anything?

CHAMPAGNE

I flunked science. I did real good at basketball.

MARIE

This is not funny. What is the matter with you? Why is everything a joke?

Champagne becomes thoughtful.

CHAMPAGNE

Don't you see, I have no choice.

MARIE

Yes you do. Build your base on some other hill.

CHAMPAGNE

The Colonel will relieve me. The Apes have to live somewhere else.

MARIE

They may have lived there for thousands of years. They will fight to the death to keep that hill.

CHAMPAGNE

Well, we'll try to scare them away without hurting them. We go back there tomorrow.

MARIE

I'm going with you.

CHAMPAGNE

No way.

MARIE

I can take care of myself.

Champagne sighs, moves across the room and sits next to Marie.

CHAMPAGNE

Why are you here. You should be in France, married.

MARIE

I was married, to a soldier. He was blown to pieces at Dien Bien Phu.

CHAMPAGNE

(stands up)

I'm sorry about your husband. Was he--

MARIE

--Why are you here... sneaking around in the jungle, killing people?

CHAMPAGNE

I come from a military family. My father was a big deal in World War Two.

MARIE

So you had to join the Army, too?

CHAMPAGNE

It was either that or Dental School. Who wants to deal with smelly mouths all day?

MARIE

What does your father do now?

CHAMPAGNE

Nothing. He shot himself last year. Two many ghosts.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The Team prepares to march back to the hill.

The smokers burn one last cigarette.

Bailey blows his new whistle, annoys everyone.

The villagers gather to see them off. The Chief wears his new People's Republic flag for the occasion.

Marie is packed, ready to march. She lights a cigarette.

Klong pleads with her to take him along.

MARIE

No! You stay here.

CHAMPAGNE

Guess what, Doctor, you're not coming either.

MARIE

I do not take orders from you. I go where I want. I have papers.

CHAMPAGNE

If the Rock Apes don't abandon the hill, things could get real ugly.

MARIE

They will not leave without a fight.

CHAMPAGNE

Then they're going to get hurt.

(to Sapper)

Let's go. I want to arrive before dark.

Sapper cocks his M-16, leads out into the paddies,

Marie tails them.

EXT. JUNGLE - LATER

They set up a perimeter across the stream from the mountain. No fires, no cigarettes, little conversation.

BAILEY

Boys, no grenades. If the Apes attack tonight, shoot 'em.

The sun sinks into the trees. The soldiers sink into their foxholes. They CLICK off safeties.

BAILEY

What we gonna do bout the French woman?

CHAMPAGNE

Where is she?

BAILEY

Out in the trees about fifty meters. I can smell her cigarette.

CHAMPAGNE

I told her not to come.

BAILEY

If we gets hit we might shoot her by mistake.

CHAMPAGNE

All right, send Sapper out to get her.

A few moments later, Sapper dumps squawking Marie on the ground.

EXT. JUNGLE - NEXT DAY

The soldiers break camp, load their weapons. Time to climb the hill.

FRANKE

Colonel on the horn, Sir.

CHAMPAGNE

Tell him I'm dead.

(to Marie)

Doctor, how many apes on this hill?

MARIE

I do not know. They have tunnels.
It is difficult to keep track of
them.

She pulls out a cigarette.

CHAMPAGNE

No smoking. Get some chewing
tobacco from Sarge.

Bailey flips her a plug.

CHAMPAGNE

What's your guess?

MARIE

Oh, perhaps one hundred, two
hundred.

She chokes on the tobacco.

BAILEY

Don't eat it. Chew it.

CHAMPAGNE

That's a lot of apes. But If they
don't mess with us, we won't mess
with them.

MARIE

They will mess with you.

CHAMPAGNE

Sarge, let's move out. Where's
Sapper?

BAILEY

In the latrine

He nods toward the bushes.

CHAMPAGNE

When he's finished, we go.

MARIE

Where do you want me?

CHAMPAGNE

In France.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

At the spring, the soldiers fill canteens.

Through his binoculars, Champagne scans the far bank and the hillside beyond.

The mountain top, their destination, is obscured by dark clouds.

BAILEY

So what's the plan, Skipper?

CHAMPAGNE

We hump up to the top, cut a LZ;
they drop in the Sea Bees
to do the hard work.

BAILEY

What about the Apes?

CHAMPAGNE

I saw what they did to those NVA.
We can't let them get close.

BAILEY

Maybe if we kill a few, the others
will leave us alone.

CHAMPAGNE

I hope so. I came here to
fight communists, not Ape-men.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

The column moves uphill through jungle, elephant grass, rocky trails, narrow ledges.

They stop before a steep rock face.

SAPPER

We ain't going up this way.

CHAMPAGNE

The Apes get up somehow. Let's
keep moving until we find a path to
go higher.

MARIE

I told you: they have tunnels.

CHAMPAGNE

I ain't going in a tunnel.

At a waterfall, they rest. Champagne and Sapper confer over the map. Franke changes the radio battery.

They continue moving up the slope, follow a path that leads to a

CORRIDOR

with cliffs on both sides, and a rock wall at the upper end.

CHAMPAGNE

Wait, Sapper. Do you think these apes are bright enough to set up an ambush?

SAPPER

Maybe. Looks like they cleared the rocks out and piled 'em on the cliffs.

CHAMPAGNE

So when we walk through they can bury us.

SAPPER

Yup.

CHAMPAGNE

Where are the damn apes?

BAILEY

Right there.

He points uphill. They see a large Rock Ape standing in the corridor, a hundred feet away.

The Ape makes a series of threatening arm gestures accompanied by barks.

BAILEY

What the hell does that mean?

MARIE

It means "go away".

CHAMPAGNE

Get the blooper man.

Bailey fetches Ramirez.

CHAMPAGNE

Shoot a smoke round over it's head.

Ramirez loads the grenade launcher, adjusts the sights, BLOOP, fires a round that sails over the Ape.

Purple smoke rises behind it.

The Ape picks up a rock.

BAILEY

Down on your bellies, boys. And
girl.

The Ape winds up and hurls the rock high over their heads.

BAILEY

Now what?

MARIE

This is all pointless.

She stands and walks up toward the Ape.

CHAMPAGNE

God damn it, get back here.

BAILEY

She is nuts.

THOMPSON

Should I shoot it?

CHAMPAGNE

No, you might hit her.

THOMPSON

No, I won't.

Marie reaches and stands beside the Ape, facing the soldiers.

BAILEY

What's the plan, Skipper?

CHAMPAGNE

Who's our best shooter?

BAILEY

You.

CHAMPAGNE

Who's second best?

BAILEY

Thompson.

CHAMPAGNE

Okay, kid, get over here.

Thompson steps forward.

CHAMPAGNE

Sarge, I'm going up to get her.
One minute after I get there, blow
your whistle.

Bailey pulls out the whistle.

CHAMPAGNE

Kid, when you hear the whistle,
shoot the Ape in the head, about
six times.

Champagne strips off his gear, hands his M-16 to Bailey.

CHAMPAGNE

If you miss the shot and the Ape
kills me, I will haunt you. Every
night. Understand?

THOMSON

Yes, Boss.

Slowly, hands raised, Champagne walks up the corridor.

He stops in front of the Ape.

The Ape growls.

MARIE

Go back.

CHAMPAGNE

Damn, this big boy stinks, let's go
run it through the waterfall.

MARIE

Why is he an "it?" Look in his
eyes. Is that an "it" looking back?

CHAMPAGNE

Are you saying it's human?

MARIE

Not human, but a close cousin.
What's so good about being human?
What good has it done you?

CHAMPAGNE

You are going back with me.

MARIE

So you can murder him? Look
behind us.

He looks, sees angry Apes behind the rock wall, watching.

MARIE

Are you going to murder all of them? And their families?

CHAMPAGNE

I don't want to--

MARIE

--but you will, To follow orders? We have heard that before. That's what smells bad.

CHAMPAGNE

I don't--

Bailey blows his whistle, SCREECH!

Thompson shoots, BAM BAM!

The Ape is blasted backward.

Champagne scoops up Marie under one arm and drags her back down the corridor.

Dozens of rocks SLAM the ground behind him.

The soldiers FIRE their weapons at the rock throwers, then retreat with Champagne.

Champagne hands Marie to Thompson.

CHAMPAGNE

Take care of her

THOMPSON

Okay, Boss.

CHAMPAGNE

I'm calling in a fire mission. Let's show these apes what we can hit 'em with.

EXT. HILL-PERIMETER - LATER

The Team sets up on a grassy slope below the cliffs.

CHAMPAGNE

(into radio handset)

Redleg, redleg... Sneaky Pete Actual. Fire Mission, Grid six eight four...nine one eight. NVA bunkers.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
Roger, Sneaky Pete. Solid copy.
Stand by for shot. Out,

A ROAR like a comet passing over head. A white phosphorous marking round smashes into the cliffs above them.

CHAMPAGNE
Redleg, on target. Fire for effect.
High explosives. Out.

Artillery shells slice through the treetops.

MASSIVE EXPLOSIONS up near the hill top.

CHAMPAGNE
Redleg, give them everything you
got. Over and out.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

A hairy hand pokes out of the ground, attached to a Rock Ape, climbing out of a hidden tunnel.

He reaches back to pull out another Ape.

A small army of Apes emerge.

A silver-haired APE LEADER watches the artillery rounds pass overhead.

He makes a gesture for the others to follow him.

Like a tidal wave they CRASH through the trees.

Someone is going to get their ass kicked.

EXT. ARTILLERY BASE - DAY

Just a routine, fire mission, no big deal.

KABOOM! KABOOM!

Load the cannons, fire the cannons.

GUARD TOWER

The GUARD writes a letter home; his M-16 leans against the sandbag wall.

He hears BARKING. Just wild dogs. Back to his letter.

Dogs getting closer, he looks up, GASPS at an impossible sight.

A swarm of giant Rock Apes charge toward him.

Trip flares POP as they leap over the wire fence.

CRACK! A large rock bounces off the guard's steel helmet, knocking him senseless.

The Rock Ape army over-run the base, killing, smashing everything.

The ammo dump catches fire. KABOOM!

The tremendous EXPLOSION destroys the cannons and the soldiers manning them.

Some try to fight back, fire their M-16s as they retreat.

A few survivors limp into the jungle.

The Rock Apes head back to their hill.

EXT. MOUNTAIN- PERIMETER - DAY

All quiet on the hill now. The team cleans weapons, cook C-rations.

Marie chews tobacco, sulks.

BAILEY

What happened to your fire mission?

CHAMPAGNE

Maybe they ran out of powder. It's okay, we showed the Apes what they're up against.

EXT. PERIMETER - NIGHT

Dark, quiet, on the hillside. Drizzle soaks everyone.

Champagne sits wrapped in his poncho, lost in thought.

MARIE

I am cold.

He opens his poncho, makes room for her.

CHAMPAGNE

Come in, I will be a gentleman.

She slides in beside him.

MARIE

I am not concerned with that. It is obvious you do not like women.

Awkward silence.

CHAMPAGNE

I like women.

Marie laughs.

MARIE

I just wanted revenge for that "nun" comment you made.

CHAMPAGNE

Sorry about that. It's just... I don't understand you. Why not go home? Your husband died...a long time ago.

MARIE

I stay because of my son, Klong.

CHAMPAGNE

(confused)

But you said your husband was a soldier?

MARIE

His name was Phan Van Tran, a soldier in the Viet Minh. Killed by a French gunship.

An angry pitchfork of lightning slices the sky. The wind moans.

CHAMPAGNE

Was he a communist?

MARIE

No, a biology student. He was an idealist; He just wanted Viet Nam to be independent.

CHAMPAGNE

But how--

MARIE

--Capitaine, I am tired, good night.

She pulls the poncho open and strides away.

EXT. PERIMETER - DAY

BAILEY

Skipper, let us smoke. No one knows
or cares where we are.

CHAMPAGNE

All right, smoke.

Zippos flash.

Ahhh, say the smokers in unison.

FRANKE

Sir, the Colonel wants--

CHAMPAGNE

--Tell him I'm still dead.

FRANKE

I told him, Sir. He said drag your
corpse to the radio.

CHAMPAGNE

(takes the handset)
Franke, you disappoint me.

COLONEL (V.O.)

Sneaky Pete, are you on the hill
top?

CHAMPAGNE

That depends on what you mean by
"top."

COLONEL (V.O.)

The hill top means the top of the
hill.

CHAMPAGNE

Well, we are near the hill top.

COLONEL

God damn it. I am in the sky and
inbound to your location. Cut me an
LZ. Over and out.

LANDING ZONE - LATER

The helicopter hovers above the uneven ground. The Colonel
hops out.

COLONEL

Poor excuse for an LZ, Captain.

CHAMPAGNE

I apologize, Sir. I wish the sides of these mountains weren't so slanted.

The Colonel spots Marie, squatting under a tree, smoking.

COLONEL

Who in hell is that woman?

CHAMPAGNE

She's a French Scientist doing research on the Apes. She has papers.

COLONEL

Well, she's got no business here.

CHAMPAGNE

I will tell her, Sir.

COLONEL

So, Captain...why the hell can't you Green Berets get up this hill?

CHAMPAGNE

There is only one way up, and the Rock Apes have it blocked.

COLONEL

Do you mean to tell me that you can't build my base because a few monkeys throw rocks at you?

CHAMPAGNE

Sir, these "monkeys" are seven feet tall, throw rocks at ninety miles an hour. And they bite.

The Colonel looks up at the mountaintop.

COLONEL

Well, I'm not afraid of monkeys. I'm flying up there myself, right now.

CHAMPAGNE

Sir, they threw rocks at your chopper before. Think of your nose art.

The Colonel chuckles as he walks back to his helicopter.

COLONEL
They have rocks, I have eight
Hellfire missiles.

INT. HELICOPTER COCKPIT-A FEW MINUTES LATER

COLONEL
(to pilot)
If you see any monkeys, use the
missiles.

The chopper wobbles its way up the

MOUNTAIN SIDE

Suddenly a line of Apes rise behind a ledge. Each holds a
large rock.

In unison they wind up and throw.

COLONEL
Look out!

The pilot swerves, attempts to evade, but it's too late.

Several rocks smash the tail rotor, knock it loose.

The chopper spins wildly, losing altitude, The pilot
desperately works the controls to stay aloft.

COLONEL
We're goin' down!

The chopper cartwheels through the sky above

CHAMPAGNE'S POSITION

And CRASHES into a grove of trees.

CHAMPAGNE
Let's go help them.

The Team rushes down to the

CRASH SITE.

The Colonel and Pilot are both alive.

COLONEL
God damn it! My leg is broken! Get
me out of here before the missiles
blow.

They disentangle them from the smoking wreckage and hustle to cover behind a rock pile.

Tacker checks them out. The Pilot is bruised and unconscious, the Colonel moans in pain, holds his leg.

TACKER

They'll live, Cap'n, but we need a medevac, ASAP.

CHAMPAGNE

Okay, Doc.

(to Franke)

Get on that. Tell them it's the Colonel.

Tacker splints the Colonel's leg and sticks him with a Morphine syringe, pokes an IV needle into the Pilot.

KABOOM!

The chopper blows up with a TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION. The soldiers squash against the ground to avoid shrapnel.

COLONEL

My nose art!

EXT. MOUNTAIN-PERIMETER-LATER

The medevac chopper soars away. The soldiers and Marie smoke.

BAILEY

Now what, Skipper?

CHAMPAGNE

Let's take a break, relax. I need to think.

Marie sits beside Champagne as he cooks C-rations over a small fire.

MARIE

I am sorry about your Colonel. Is the mission cancelled?

BAILEY

No, they'll just replace him with another moron.

MARIE

What are you cooking?

CHAMPAGNE

Ham and lima beans. You want some?

MARIE

Qui, you eat the ham; I will eat the beans.

Champagne scoops beans into a cup and hands it to her.

They eat without conversation. Awkward.

MARIE

So, you are like all the others. I married a "gook" so I am...tainted?

CHAMPAGNE

No, I don't think that. I just can't have any distractions now.

MARIE

I am ...distraction?

CHAMPAGNE

Yes, all this talk about Apes and...other things. I need to keep my team alive, that's all I wanna think about.

Marie stands.

MARIE

Excusez-moi, I will distract you no more.

(slams down her cup)

Keep your beans!

She stomps away.

Franke hands Champagne the radio handset.

FRANKE

Colonel on the horn, Sir.

CHAMPAGNE

What? I thought he'd be in Japan by now.

FRANKE

No, sir. He's in Da Nang in a MASH unit. He's still in command.

CHAMPAGNE
 (into handset)
 Sky Command, Sneaky Pete. How's
 your leg, Sir?

COLONEL (V.O.)
 Never mind my leg. Get your ass up
 that mountain or you are fired. I
 have a Lurp Team ready to take your
 place.

CHAMPAGNE
 What about the Rock Apes?

COLONEL (V.O.)
 Kill all the damn rock-throwing
 assholes. Out

Champagne holds his head in his hands.

CHAMPAGNE
 Oh, I don't want to do this.

BAILEY
 We've got no choice. Let's get it
 done.

Champagne stands, picks up his rifle.

CHAMPAGNE
 Let's go.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - CORRIDOR - LATER

BAILEY
 What's the plan, Skipper? If we run
 through, they bury us with rocks.

CHAMPAGNE
 How much smoke do we have?

They yank smoke grenades out of their packs.

BAILEY
 We got plenty of smoke.

CHAMPAGNE
 So we all throw smoke grenades at
 the same time, use it for cover
 until we get to the wall.

Champagne walks back to Marie and Thompson.

CHAMPAGNE

Kid, your job is to stay here,
protect the Doctor. If things go
badly, get her back to the village.

THOMSON

Okay, Boss.

CHAMPAGNE

(to Marie)

We'll hurt as few of them as
possible.

Sapper scans the rock wall.

SAPPER

The pricks are there, with rocks.
Waiting.

Bailey snaps his bayonet onto his rifle.

CHAMPAGNE

Okay, let's do this. Safeties off.
Get ready to pop smoke. On three.
One... two... three!

They all hurl their smoke grenades.

The cannisters POP open releasing a cloud of red, yellow,
green and purple smoke.

The seven soldiers charge through the rainbow mist.

A dozen Rock Apes leap down from the rocks and charge through
the smoke, SMASH into the soldiers.

Red tracers from the soldier's M-16s slice through the air,
ricochet wildly off the rocks.

SCREAMS, GUNFIRE, BARKS echo off the corridor walls.

Bailey lunges at an Ape with his bayonet; the Ape slams a
rock against the blade, knocking it aside. It raises the rock
over Bailey's head...

BLAM! Sapper kills it with his shotgun.

BAILEY

Damn it, he was mine!

Ramirez swings his blooper like a club.

An Ape charges, swinging giant arms. Ramirez FIRES a
cannister round into the Ape's face.

The dying Ape grabs and crushes his throat.

CHAMPAGNE

Medic!

But Doc Tacker fights for his life against an Ape trying to batter his head.

Franke SHOOTS the Ape in the back with his rifle.

As the smoke dissipates, the melee results become visible.

Several Apes are down.

Ramirez lies twisted and broken.

CHAMPAGNE

Fall back.

Dragging their casualties, both the soldiers and Apes retreat.

Champagne leads his limping, bloody Team back to

THE PERIMETER

The soldiers are all exhausted,

Tacker dresses bloody wounds. Marie assists him.

Bailey sets up security.

LATER

Champagne sits alone, dejected.

Ramirez's corpse lies wrapped in a poncho.

Marie sits down beside Champagne.

CHAMPAGNE

Roll me a cigarette, please.

MARIE

You do not smoke.

CHAMPAGNE

I'm going to start.

Marie takes out papers and tobacco. Rolls one.

MARIE

Maybe you should get one from
Sergeant Bailey.

CHAMPAGNE

What's the matter with yours?

MARIE

Well, my tobacco has a little ...
marijuana mixed in.

CHAMPAGNE

Good.

She rolls a big cigarette dooby, takes a hit and passes it to
Champagne.

CHAMPAGNE

Don't tell the Sarge.

He takes a deep hit, hold it in his lungs, exhales slowly.

They share the joint, then sit quietly.

A helicopter lands, WHIRS away with the body.

CHAMPAGNE

I have to write his family. What do
I say, killed in action by a Rock
Ape?

MARIE

Why is that worse than being killed
by a human soldier?

CHAMPAGNE

I don't know why, it just seems
more... meaningless.

Bailey approaches.

BAILEY

What's the plan, Skipper?

CHAMPAGNE

If we don't go up the hill again,
the Colonel will relieve me....

BAILEY

So we try again.

CHAMPAGNE

... But if we do that, more of us
die. For what?.

BAILEY
I hear something.

They listen. A BUZZING, getting closer. And a FIZZLING.

An AIRCRAFT slowly ZOOMS overhead, giant sprayers attached to it's wings.

A noxious white mist floats down, soaking the mountain side, and the soldiers.

SAPPER
What the hell! We been slimed.

CHAMPAGNE
Gimme that radio....

INTERCUT: MOUNTAIN/HOSPITAL ROOM

CHAMPAGNE
Sky Commander, this is Sneaky Pete.

The Colonel lies in bed, his leg in a cast. He sips a martini.

COLONEL
(into radio)
This is Sky Commander. What do you need, Sneaky Pete?

CHAMPAGNE
Some fool of a C-123 pilot just sprayed a chemical on us, what the hell is going on?

COLONEL
Oh, don't worry 'bout that, it's just herbicide... Agent Orange. It won't hurt you--

CHAMPAGNE
--Herbicide?

COLONEL
Yes I've decided to defoliate the whole valley, starting with the mountain.

CHAMPAGNE
Why?

COLONEL

To deny the enemy cover and food.
If the NVA invades, they better
pack a lunch.

CHAMPAGNE

But what about the village? You'll
ruin their crops, gardens,
contaminate their water--

COLONEL

--We'll just move them out of
there, put 'em in a resettlement
camp somewhere.

CHAMPAGNE

Radio the Air Force... tell that
damn pilot to stop spraying--

COLONEL

-- you stop whining, and stop
bothering me. Out.

They watch as the spraying aircraft makes a wide turn and
ZOOMS back for another pass.

CHAMPAGNE

Franke, can you contact the Air
Force?

FRANKE

I'll look up the their net in the
code book

CHAMPAGNE

Hurry. Sarge, arm a LAW for me.

Bailey SNAPS open a LAW, hands it to Champagne.

FRANKE

Here it is... Ranch Hand this is
Sneaky Pete--

VOICE ON RADIO

--get off this net, you are not
authorized to--

Champagne grabs the handset.

CHAMPAGNE

(into radio)
Listen to me, asshole...

we are at grid nine seven six...
three five oh... we just been
sprayed by one of your damn planes--

VOICE ON RADIO
--get off this net!

CHAMPAGNE
I have eyes on your aircraft coming
back for another run. Do you know
what a LAW is?

VOICE ON RADIO
(hesitates)
Anti-tank rocket launcher?

CHAMPAGNE
Yup. I got one aimed at your
aircraft. If he sprays us again, I
will blow him out of the sky.

VOICE ON RADIO
But--

CHAMPAGNE
(clicks off the safety)
--here he comes, tell him to stop
spraying and stay the hell out of
this valley!

The plane approaches, still spraying...

BAILEY
You really gonna do this, Skipper?

MARIE
Please don't....

The plane is almost overhead....

Champagne FIRES the LAW, WHOOSH!

The rocket soars up and EXPLODES against the plane's left
engine. The plane wobbles out of sight over the trees,
trailing smoke.

BAILEY
Nice shot, Skipper, they might even
make it back to Da Nang.

CHAMPAGNE
Fuck'em. I told them to stop
spraying.

EXT. WATERFALL-LATER

Champagne and his Team scrub off the chemical. Some strip down, look at Marie bashfully.

MARIE

I am going down stream, for some privacy.

CHAMPAGNE

Thompson, go with her--

MARIE

--I said I want privacy.

CHAMPAGNE

Go with her, and don't peek.

Fully dressed, Bailey floats face-down in the pool, blowing bubbles.

Franke brings the radio to Champagne,

FRANKE

Colonel on the horn, Sir.

COLONEL (V.O.)

Damn it, Sneaky Pete... did you shoot down an Air Force plane?

CHAMPAGNE

No, Sir, that wasn't me, must have been the NVA.

COLONEL (V.O.)

They said you threatened them.

CHAMPAGNE

Wasn't me, maybe they got a stolen radio.

COLONEL (V.O.)

Yeah, right. You ain't gonna talk your way out of--

Champagne drops the handset into the water, when he yanks it out there is only STATIC. He hands it back to Franke.

CHAMPAGNE

Disappointed in you again, take it away.

Sapper climbs a tree, scans the lower mountainside with the binoculars.

CHAMPAGNE
See anything?

SAPPER
Yeah, the North Vietnamese Army
headin' our way.

BAILEY
I hope they brought beer--

THUMP! WHOOSH! BOOM!

SAPPER
Nope, but they brought a mortar...

The shell SLAMS into the rock face, the soldiers dive for
cover.

WHOOSH! BAM!

SAPPER
And rockets...

BAP BAP BAP BAP!

SAPPER
And a Chinese machine gun....

Through the binoculars Sapper watches

NVA SOLDIERS

on line, moving rapidly uphill.

SAPPER
Here they come.

CHAMPAGNE
Sapper, get outa the damn tree.

The Team CLICKS off safeties, point weapons downhill.

CHAMPAGNE
Hold your fire.

BAILEY
This is a bad place to defend, we
should di-di outa here.

CHAMPAGNE
And go where: Up?

BAILEY
We can't stay here!

MARIE

Why don't we go behind the waterfall?

CHAMPAGNE

That's the dumbest thing I ever heard.

BEHIND WATERFALL - MOMENTS LATER

The six soldiers and Marie squat in a tight dark space. The only sound is the continuous SPLASHING as falling water hits the pool.

Marie tugs on Champagne's arm, points up.

He looks, realizes there is no ceiling to the little cave.

Marie grabs a rock hand hold and climbs up, out of sight.

CHAMPAGNE

Huh?

MARIE (O.S.)

Come.

He follows her up into a dark chimney-like tunnel.

CHAMPAGNE

(grabs her foot)

Wait.

He lowers himself down and then kicks Sapper in the head.

SAPPER

What the hell!

CHAMPAGNE

Get up here, Bring the others.
Hurry.

TUNNEL

Marie leads as they crawl upward. The waterfall noise recedes, replaced by weapons and equipment SCRAPING against the rock walls.

CHAMPAGNE

Marie, where're we goin'?

MARIE

Top of hill.

CHAMPAGNE

Why didn't you tell us about this tunnel before?

MARIE

I told you the Apes used tunnels. You did not pay attention.

TACKER

I hates climbin' this damn chimney. Ah can't breathe.

BAILEY

It's better than bein' dead.

TACKER

Not much better.

Thompson is last man in line.

THOMPSON

Someone's followin' us. Gimme your flashlight, Doc.

BAILEY

Frag em'.

CHAMPAGNE

No, wait... quiet.

Everyone is silent. They hear the sound of someone crawling up the tunnel toward them.

CLICK. Thompson cocks his .45 automatic.

RED LIGHT, he clicks on the flashlight, and sees

KLONG

In the tunnel behind him.

THOMPSON

It's that village kid.

MARIE

Don't hurt him.

CHAMPAGNE

All right, keep movin'.

EXT. TOP OF HILL - LATER

After a long arm-torturing ordeal, they climb out of the tunnel.

GUNFIRE, EXPLOSIONS, SCREAMS

A fierce battle rages at the

ROCK WALL

Apes hurl rocks at attacking NVA soldiers climbing over the top. Green tracers SLICE into Apes, ricochet wildly.

Hand to hand fighting. Several NVA with long bayonets attack the Ape Chief who swings giant fists.

MARIE

Help them!

Klong fires his crossbow, WHOOSH, the arrow RIPS through an NVA soldier's neck.

Champagne raises his M-16 and BAP BAP BAP shoots a few more. The confused Ape Chief stares at Champagne, then continues defending the wall.

BAILEY

(snaps bayonet to rifle)
What's the plan, Skipper?

CHAMPAGNE

Looks like you already got a plan.

BAILEY

No point hauling 'round a bayonet
if I never use it?

CHAMPAGNE

All right, anyone wanna help the
Apes, follow me.

Champagne sprints to the wall, gets on line with the apes and fires at the charging NVA.

All his men follow him.

Tacker blazes away with .45 automatics in both hands.

Franke fires M-79 cannister rounds into NVA faces.

CHAMPAGNE

Kid, kill the officers.

With his sniper rifle Thompson POPS away.

Sapper throws grenades. BOOM BOOM BOOM!

Klong cranks up his crossbow to fire again. Marie tries to pull him back, but he pushes her away.

A NVA with a bayonet charges Klong, but BLAM! Champagne shoots him in the head.

Bailey jumps up on the wall, waving his bayonet.

BAILEY
C'mon, ya bastards!

CHAMPAGNE
Get down, Sarge!

The barrage of rocks from the Apes and withering GUNFIRE from the Team force the NVA to retreat, dragging their wounded with them.

Bailey charges down hill in pursuit.

CHAMPAGNE
No!

A fleeing NVA soldier whirls around and CRACK CRACK CRACK! fires his AK-47 into Bailey.

Tacker holsters his pistols and scrambles over the wall, races down and grabs Bailey, hauls him back.

He tears open Bailey's shirt to expose sucking chest wounds, blood and air bubbling out.

Bailey GASPS for breath.

Tacker unzips his bag, reaches for dressings, but suddenly with a final rattling expiration, Bailey dies.

Champagne kneels beside him.

CHAMPAGNE
Sarge....

LATER

The Ape Chief and his warriors cluster together, growling softly, barking, glaring at Champagne and what's left of his Team.

Bailey's body lay wrapped in a poncho.

The Team gather around Champagne, watching the Apes, weapons ready.

The Ape Chief drops a rock in front of Champagne.

CHAMPAGNE

What the hell?

MARIE

He wants to fight you, to see who is boss.

CHAMPAGNE

Oh, damn... I don't wanna hurt him?

MARIE

Fight or submit, that's all they know.

THUMP WHOOSH BOOM!

A mortar shell explodes in the trees. Champagne and the soldiers drop to the ground. The Apes stare for a moment, then laugh like hyenas.

TACKER

What's funny? They too dumb to get down. They're the fools!

MARIE

They think you all just submitted.

THOMPSON

Hell no.

SAPPER

Sapper sits up, scans downhill with the binoculars.

SAPPER

We ain't got time for this, kids. Beaucoup NVA forming up to attack.

CHAMPAGNE

All right, get ready. How much ammo we have left?

FRANKE

Not much.

Another mortar shell EXPLODES, closer this time.

The Ape Chief uses hand signals and short barks to position his warriors at the wall.

CHAMPAGNE
Gimme the glasses, Sapper

He scans down hill and sees NVA troops marching forward.
Behind the line, officers and sergeants BELLOW orders.

CHAMPAGNE
Kid, I told you to kill their
officers.

THOMPSON
They were all hiding behind rocks,
way back from the fighting.

CHAMPAGNE
Well, they're brighter than me,

Now Champagne scans the cliffs above the corridor.

CHAMPAGNE
How many LAWS we got left?

Six.

CHAMPAGNE
Open 'em up, gimme one.

They CLICK open the LAWS, hand them out.

Champagne points his up at the cliff.

CHAMPAGNE
I'll launch first, try to hit the
same spot as me.
(clicks off safety)
Wait 'till they're right in the
middle. I wanna get them all.

The Apes watch silently, now the Chief BARKS an order and
they start throwing rocks.

CORRIDOR

The line of NVA soldiers begins to move faster, bayonets
flashing. One soldier kneels and FIRES a rocket that WHOOSHES
over the wall and SLAMS into a copse of trees.

CHAMPAGNE
Get ready....

PHOOSH KABOOM!

Champagne fires his rocket and it ZOOMS upward, CRASHES into
the cliff above the advancing NVA troops.

Immediately the others LAUNCH their LAWS and five more rockets SLAM into the rock face.

A LOUD CRACK, now the cliff crumbles and begins to slide.

The NVA soldiers watch in horror as an landslide of granite falls toward them.

They try to escape but it's too late.

SCREAMS, CRUNCHING as they are buried by the slabs of rock, boulders and dust.

A few lucky soldiers scramble away down the hill.

Thompson points his sniper rifle.

CHAMPAGNE

Let 'em go, kid.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP-DAY

The soldiers look around at the Ape Village.

Rock structures, walls, cisterns, fire pits.

FRANKE

Who lives here...the Flintstones?

The women, youngsters and old Apes come out of the stone huts to gawk at the humans.

FRANKE

What do they think we are?

MARIE

I do not know. Perhaps strange little monkeys.

The radio CRACKLES.

INTERCUT: MOUNTAIN TOP/HOSPITAL ROOM

The Colonel sits up in bed, martini in one hand, radio handset in the other.

COLONEL

Sneaky Pete, Sky Commander. The choppers are flying. Have you cut my LZ?

CHAMPAGNE

No, Sir, there are...complications.
I think we need to build the base
somewhere else.

COLONEL

Oh, bullshit! You've been dawdling
all along. Well, I don't need you
anymore.

CHAMPAGNE

You don't understand--

COLONEL

--Those damn monkeys like to throw
rocks, I am going to throw a big
one back at them.

CHAMPAGNE

What're you talking about?

COLONEL

We're gonna drop a DAISY CUTTER on
the mountain. Should clear out the
monkeys and make a nice LZ.

CHAMPAGNE

You can't do that.

The Colonel checks his watch.

COLONEL

The bomb drops in...thirty two
minutes. You all better get off the
hill. Now.

CHAMPAGNE

There is a village here. You can't
do this.

COLONEL

A bunch of monkeys? Bullshit. Get
your ass moving. By the way... you
are fired. Out.

Champagne gives the handset back to Franke.

MARIE

What is "Daisy Cutter?"

CHAMPAGNE

It's a giant bomb, fifteen thousand
pounds. It will kill everyone up
here.

MARIE

You must do something.

CHAMPAGNE

Can we get these Rock Apes outa here... in thirty minutes?

MARIE

No, They will not leave their wounded behind.

CHAMPAGNE

I need a moment to think.

Champagne sits down, closes his eyes.

CHAMPAGNE

Here's the plan. Sapper, you're a corporal, so I'm making you Team leader.

SAPPER

Why?

CHAMPAGNE

Take the Team and Marie as far down the mountain as possible.

SAPPER

What you gonna do?

CHAMPAGNE

Damn it, Sapper, I gave you a direct order to get out of here--

SAPPER

That ain't gonna happen, and you disobey direct orders all the time.

CHAMPAGNE

(to Thompson)

Get Marie and the boy down the hill for me

MARIE

We are not going anywhere.

Champagne sighs, shakes his head.

CHAMPAGNE

All right, Kid, give me your sniper rifle.

THOMPSON

What you're goin' to do with it,
shoot down the plane?

CHAMPAGNE

No, the plane will be too high. I'm
gonna shoot down the bomb.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Champagne lies on his back, points the sniper rifle straight
up, scans the sky through the scope. Thompson lies beside
him, looking up through the binoculars.

Tacker smokes silently.

Marie sits, embracing Kloug.

Franke fiddles with the radio.

THOMPSON

How exactly do you shoot down a
bomb?

CHAMPAGNE

Well, this bomb is so heavy that it
comes down on a parachute.

THOMPSON

You kiddin'?

CHAMPAGNE

No, for real. I'm going to shoot
the risers, make it fall crooked so
it misses the mountain.

THOMPSON

Will that work?

CHAMPAGNE

Of course.

Everyone hears a BUZZING sound in the clouds, they look up.

CHAMPAGNE

You see it?

THOMPSON

Yeah, comin' in from the northeast.

CHAMPAGNE

Okay, I see it, too.

Through the binoculars Thompson watches the

C-130 AIRPLANE

as it approaches.

The crew push out a GIANT DAISY CUTTER BOMB that falls away from the aircraft. A parachute canopy POPS open.

THOMPSON

Here it comes.

The soldiers watch silently as the bomb, nose down, suspended beneath the parachute, drifts down toward them.

Klong sits beside Marie, her arms wrapped around him.

The cross hairs of Champagne's scope center on the risers connecting the bomb to the canopy.

He squeezes the trigger.

BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!

The bomb jerks violently to the left.

SNAP SNAP SNAP!

The risers fail and the bomb tumbles head over heels toward the mountain top.

TACKER

Uh oh.

With a mountain-shaking THUD it SMASHES against the ground in a BELLY-FLOP, kicking up a whirlwind of dust.

But it does not explode.

THOMPSON

Nice shooting.

LATER

The Team gawk at the bomb wreckage.

TACKER

Why we so close to this thang?

CHAMPAGNE

If it blows, anywhere on this hilltop is too close.

FRANKE

Why didn't it blow when it crashed?

Champagne points to a three foot rod poking out of the bomb's nose.

CHAMPAGNE

That's the detonator. It's designed to hit the ground first. It didn't.

APE VILLAGE-LATER

FRANKE

Captain, some new Colonel on the horn.

CHAMPAGNE

What now?
(into radio)
This is Sneaky Pete.

COLONEL BRILEY (V.O.)

Sneaky Pete, this is Smokey Dog. I am your new Commanding officer.

CHAMPAGNE

What happened to Sky Commander?

COLONEL BRILEY (V.O.)

We'll talk about that later. What do you need, right now?

CHAMPAGNE

I need someone who can disarm a daisy cutter.

COLONEL BRILEY (V.O.)

I'll find someone. Your team has been through a lot. You just hang tough a bit longer, we'll get you some help.

CHAMPAGNE

Thank you, sir.

COLONEL BRILEY (V.O.)

Smokey Dog, over and out.

EXT. MOUNTAINTOP-DAY

A long sad column of Rock Apes tramp down off the mountain, led by their chief. Some carry infants, others their worldly goods.

CHAMPAGNE

Where are they goin'?

MARIE

They are refugees now, they need to find a new home.

FRANKE

They are tough, they'll do okay.

MARIE

They did not change for so long because they did not have to. Now they must adapt or die.

They hear the WHUP WHUPPING of an approaching helicopter.

CHAMPAGNE

I need to adapt to a new Colonel, here he comes.

LATER

The chopper descends, Sapper POPS green smoke, guides it to land away from the bomb.

Colonel Briley and two Air Force bomb nerds jump out and walk toward Champagne.

COLONEL BRILEY

No salute, Captain?

CHAMPAGNE

Wouldn't want a sniper to pick you off, Sir.

COLONEL BRILEY

Yes, that would ruin my day, wouldn't it. So where's this bomb?

CHAMPAGNE

Sapper, take the Air Force to their bomb.

Sapper leads the two away.

COLONEL BRILEY

(tips his hat to Marie)
And who is this?

CHAMPAGNE

She's a French Scientist, Sir. She's been studying the... villagers.

COLONEL BRILEY
Bonne après-midi, mademoiselle.

MARIE
Bon après-midi monsieur.

COLONEL BRILEY
Captain, where are the villagers?

CHAMPAGNE
They are leaving.
(points downhill)
You can see them.

Briley shades his eyes, sees the Ape column tail end moving off the mountain.

COLONEL BRILEY
Hmm, odd looking people. And these stone huts... primitive.

CHAMPAGNE
Yes, Sir.

COLONEL BRILEY
I need to speak with you in private, Captain.

Marie takes the hint and wanders away.

CHAMPAGNE
Sir, what happened to Colonel Godfredson?

COLONEL BRILEY
You told him there were civilians here, and he said he would bomb anyway.

CHAMPAGNE
But--

COLONEL BRILEY
--His career is over. Not all the people running this war are lunatics.

CHAMPAGNE
Just most of them?

COLONEL BRILEY
Careful. I need to ask you a question, and I give you permission to lie to me.

CHAMPAGNE

I understand, Sir.

COLONEL BRILEY

Did you shoot down an Air Force plane?

CHAMPAGNE

No, Sir, I did not.

COLONEL BRILEY

(pats his shoulder)

Good answer, I can tell we are going to get along.

EXT-MOUNTAIN TOP-NIGHT

Clear sky, a billion stars, magnificent view of the valley and beyond. Green and red tracers crisscross silently at the horizon.

Champagne and Marie sit together, sharing a smoke, cupping their hands to cover the light. Kloug sleeps, his head on Marie's lap.

CHAMPAGNE

Are you cold?

MARIE

No, I am fine, merci.

CHAMPAGNE

So, what will you do now that the Apes are gone?

MARIE

I will dig around up here, the huts, the tunnels.

CHAMPAGNE

Maybe you should wait till after the war. They're gonna put a battalion of marines up here.

MARIE

Are these marines... bad people?

CHAMPAGNE

No, but they are really dumb.

Marie laughs, gives him a curious look.

CHAMPAGNE

If they don't lock me up, maybe
I'll visit you. Would that be okay?

MARIE

Yes, that would be... okay.

SUPER: TWO MONTHS LATER

EXT. VILLAGE-DAY

A Rock Ape squats in a garden, stealing vegetables.

An old woman waddles out of her hut. She SQUAWKS, swings her broom, chases him away.

A BUZZING sound makes the old woman look up. In the clouds, a moving dot, an airplane.

Now another dot, falling rapidly toward the ground.

Someone RINGS the church bell. The militia scramble.

Marie helps the Chief put on his new cape, a Marine Corps flag.

Everyone looks up.

POP. The dot becomes a colorful parachute canopy with a man swinging below it. He steers the parachute to land in the village square.

A sudden gust of wind blows him into the pig pen.

OINKS, SNORTS, from the startled pigs.

CURSES, GROANS from the man as he flails in the mud and pig shit.

The villagers laugh.

It is Champagne.

The Chief mutters, points at him.

MARIE

(interprets)

Did the Pope tell you to land in
the pig pen?

Champagne climbs out of the slime. He wears stained civilian clothes.

MARIE

You must wash before dinner

THE VILLAGE WELL

CHAMPAGNE

No, I will not take off my pants.

Two village boys draw buckets of water, dump them on Champagne, who scrubs himself with dried grass.

Marie supervises.

CHAMPAGNE

On my way down, I saw a Rock Ape. I thought they were all gone?

MARIE

A few are still around. They throw rocks at the Marines.

CHAMPAGNE

Good.

MARIE

You cannot wear soiled trousers to dinner tonight. I will ask the Chief to lend you one of his old loin cloths.

CHAMPAGNE

Oh, boy! What's for dinner...dog?

MARIE

No, boiled lizard. And the Chief has cooked up another barrel of wine.

CHAMPAGNE

Let the good times roll!

FADE OUT.