

# DUST

*A limit series*

Episode 1

"VISIONS OF JESSE"

by

JUAN A MAS

(Based on Victor Hugo's Hunchback of Notre Dame)

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**EPISODE 1: VISIONS OF JESSE**

Opening Credits play over a timelapse shot as the camera creeps into a building being erected. The structure is the model example of the early pioneering days of AMERICAN steel-frame construction. The footage resembles the panchromatic film from the 1920s as we watch a cathedral of stained glass and steel rise from the ground. It celebrates the Christian God through man's ingenuity and pride to build something that cannot be destroyed.

The camera pushes to the interior as the building is complete, revealing an enormous vault ceiling nave. A silhouette of a man walking towards the pulpit is a shadowy spec. The figure gets to the pulpit.

Close on the pulpit, scarred hands in fingerless gloves lay down a typed sermon next to a bible. The scars are more apparent as the hands press the paper smoothly. We push tighter so we can read: Brothers and Sisters, I come here before you today to speak to you about the language of pain.

EXT. A TRENCH - DAY

Somewhere in France a hot June in 1918. A series of shots all from the same point of view.

The hot mid-Afternoon sun floats in the sky

A shovel burrows deep into rocky terrain.

Sweat drips and glistens down a male's bicep.

A male shoulder under a sleeveless union suit of 1918 flexes and shimmers as the shovel tosses loose dirt to the side.

A strong forearm wipes sweat from a brow under jet black hair.

The edge of shovel digs deep into the hard soil. A russet brown Army boot with canvass leggings presses the shovel deeper.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

What the hell are you two doing?

We now get a clear view of the area. We are in a WW1 trench.

It is part of the many channels of these war ditches. A small portion has collapsed and two young soldiers partially dressed are trying to fix it. One is CLARENCE DE MONI, smaller in stature than other, the dark haired, muscular JESSE WALKER. They stop what they are doing and look to see SARGENT NELSON in full appropriate gear standing there looking in disbelief.

CLARENCE

We are fixing the trench sir.

SGT. NELSON

I can't see that. For the love of God where is your gear.

JESSE

Back in our dugout.

SGT. NELSON

You do realize we are at war?

JESSE/CLARENCE

Yes sir.

SGT. NELSON

You two geniuses have a death wish?

JESSE/CLARENCE

No Sir!

SGT. NELSON

Go get your gear before the Heinies start shelling us again.

They both start leave.

SGT. NELSON

What are you two joined?

CLARENCE

I got it.

Clarence runs off and disappears around the bend of the trench. Jesse looks at the Sargent. The Sargent stares back at him.

SGT. NELSON

What are you doing now?

JESSE

Well...

SGT. NELSON

That is not going fix itself. Get to work.

JESSE

Yes Sir.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE TRENCH - DAY

Clarence races around a corner past other soldiers fully dressed in all their gear including their bag gas masks and armed. A few play cards using a piece of wood on the ground as their table. Others writing a letter home and few just soaking in the bright sun. Many of them enjoying a smoke from self rolled cigarettes. He moves swiftly around them then vanishes around the bend.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Overhead as camera tracks, Clarence makes his way through what is starting to feel like a maze of dugout pathways and weary soldiers.

INT. DUGOUT - CONTINUOUS

A bunker which was more like a narrow dugout. A dusty cramp quarters that sleeps six. The occupants have each chosen an area and tried to make it comfy. In the corner of the room, a young man with a pencil mustache ALLEN MASTERS opens an Army issued tin container. He is about to places it on the makeshift stove that is a hole in the ground as Clarence rushes in a little winded.

ALLEN

You guys done already?

Clarence goes straight to his corner of the bunker and begins to put on the drab green cotton pullover shirt.

CLARENCE

No, its just that Nelson caught us with out the gear.

ALLEN

What a ball buster.

Allen continues to prep his food.

CLARENCE

It just so damn hot for all this stuff.

ALLEN

I know a little breeze would be nice.

Allen tastes his meal adds some salt for flavoring.

ALLEN

Hey taste this?

CLARENCE

Really?

ALLEN

Come on.

Begrudgingly Clarence crosses over as he tosses on his wool stand up collar jacket. He tastes it.

CLARENCE

Still taste like nothing.

ALLEN

Ugh. We got get Burke and Walker to go back to that farm get some supplies.

Clarence goes to the back and grabs his gas mask bag.

CLARENCE

Yeah some of those nice fresh eggs would be nice.

He throws it over his shoulder rushes over to another side of the room.

ALLEN

Better than that some spices and French coffee.

Clarence gathers up Jesse's shirt and gear.

CLARENCE

Yeah. I'm sure it won't take much to convince Burke to go.

ALLEN

Yeah but someone has to go with him. He's got one track mind when see the farmer's daughter.

Clarence head toward the entrance.

CLARENCE

No kidding. See ya.

He heads outside.

ALLEN

Helmets!

EXT. TRENCH RIGHT OUTSIDE THE DUGOUT - CONTINUOUS

Clarence stops and scurries back in.

INT. DUGOUT - CONTINUOUS

He rushes in, grabs his helmet and then Jesse's.

CLARENCE

Thanks.

He leaves. Allen tries his food again. He is disappointed.

ALLEN

Crap.

He ponders what else he could add.

EXT. TRENCH - DAY

Clarence walking through the trench tries to get his helmet on. He has too many things in his hands to make this work. He stops readjusts a few things so that he can get a better hold of his helmet. As he puts his helmet on he notices dust from the top of trench float in.

CLARENCE

Finally a breeze.

Once it is secure he continues to retrace his steps back to Jesse.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

As we follow him we get to see more of the every day life of AMERICAN soldiers of WW1. The mud and dirt. The waiting.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

He follows the bend of the trench when we hear a distant boom. The lethargic soldiers come alive. They begin to prepare themselves for the coming battle.

Clarence hesitates for a moment then he starts to run back to Jesse.

EXT. ANOTHER PARTS OF THE TRENCH - DAY

Dirt covered hands grip a pair of binoculars tight.

The same dirt-covered hand grabs gas alarm rattle.

A series of shots as soldiers grab their gas masks from their pouch and put them on.

Others putting on gloves or trying to cover their bare skin.

A series of shots of the gas rattles get picked up and swung in the air as the alarm relay chases after Clarence.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

A low moving over head shot that follows the signal moving quickly down the trenches till it over comes Clarence who is racing back to Jesse. We continue to hear explosions of more German artillery.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

He dodges the other men rushing through what has turned into somewhat control chaos.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

He rips around a turn and smacks right into Sargent Nelson now wearing a gas mask.

SGT. NELSON

God Damn It De Moni! Put your mask on.

Clarence watches Nelson disappear around the turn of the trench. Then he sees a green cloud starting to float into the trench creating more panic. He quickly buttons up his jacket then turns and goes. In a fast pace walk, he removes his gas mask from his pouch. He removes his helmet and puts mask on quickly. He puts on his helmet and looks back to see the wind is bringing the gas right towards him.

More explosions can be heard. He races off.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Clarence keeps just ahead of green cloud of death that billows down the trench after him. We begin to hear distant machine gun fire.

EXT. A TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Jesse is crouched low at the bottom of the trench unsure what to do as he hears the nearby explosion of the German artillery.

He looks up to see Clarence race around the corner then being overtaken by the green billowing mist. He panics. He has no choice but to run up the side of the trench.

From Clarence smoky point of view and gas mask, we can see Jesse struggling up the side of the trench as the gas engulfs him.

CLARENCE

Jesse Don't! Jesse!

Clarence follows screaming Jesse up the side.

EXT. TOP OF THE TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Clarence reaches the top edge of the trench to see Jesse drop to his knees in agony. His skin already bubbling from the gas.

The thick cloud of killing gas begins to dissipate because of the blowing breeze. Clarence runs through the disappearing mist over to Jesse and quickly tries to get Jesse's mask out of its pouch but he finds it difficult. His hands have been exposed to the gas.

Jesse's blistering hands grab his coat.

Suddenly we hear a series of machine gunfire. Bullets rip through Jesse's back.

Clarence watches the life fade in Jesse's eyes as he begins to fall on top of Clarence. He panics and pushes Jesse's blistering corpse to the side.

More gunfire and Clarence takes two direct shots and falls onto his back. We continue to hear distant gunfire.

A POV through the gas mask of a blue sky and the mid-afternoon sun as the last of the mist is blown away. It was like it was never there.



Clarence on his back is struggling to breathe from the shots he just received. Something in him beckons him to look in Jesse's direction.

We see Jesse's lips move and we hear a distant voice. It doesn't sound like Jesse.

DISTANT VOICE

Clarence. Clarence.

Jesse's oozing hands grasp Clarence's exposed hand. He clutches it tightly and now wide eye yells Clarence's name. We know its not his voice.

VOICE

CLARENCE!

INT. AMERICAN HOSPITAL IN PARIS- WARD 1 - MORNING

Extreme close up of a familiar eye pops open.

A POV of strong masculine hand shaking Clarence's forearm. The POV travels up the masculine hand's arm to reveal scruffy face yet still dashing VICTOR USHER. He is dressed white hospital patient gown. He is left sleeve is pinned up. He is missing most of his left arm.

VICTOR

You're okay.

Clarence with few days growth on his cheeks, looks up to Victor. He sits up and looks around the room a bit in a daze. He too is dressed as patient and is lying in a metal hospital bed with white sheets.

VICTOR

You're just having one of your nightmare.

He looks around to see he is in a large hospital ward. The room feels bright as morning sun spills through a row of tall windows and reflects off all the white. The white walls. The white sheets. The white cloth dividers between beds full men suffering from assortment battle injuries.

VICTOR

Better.

Clarence nods yes. Victor goes and sits on his bed which right next to Clarence. Clarence glance down to his bandaged hands. Reality slowly settles in.

CLARENCE

Thank you.

Victor watches as Clarence closes his eyes and takes a few deep breaths.

VICTOR

They seem to be getting worse.

CLARENCE

A little.

VICTOR

Is it always the same?

Clarence opens his eyes and looks at him.

CLARENCE

No. Parts of it sometimes but not really.

At the other end of the Ward, the large double doors open. Four sets of nurses aides dressed in white nurse uniforms with the very recognizable red cross emblem enter pushing large white metal carts full of dishes with warming covers. They are followed by two older army nurses.

VICTOR

Finally breakfast.

He sits himself fully on the bed and with his good arm slides over a extended tray on wheels over his lap.

The other men that had not woken up by Clarence's earlier disturbance began to stir as the four Nurses with trays spread out into the room. They promptly begin delivering breakfast plates to the men.

The Nurse Aide PAULETTE carries two dishes in between the beds of our boys.

VICTOR

Good morning Paulette.

PAULETTE

(In a French)  
Bonjour Victor.

She places one of the dishes on the tray next to Clarence.

PAULETTE

Bonjour Clarence.

CLARENCE

Bonjour Paulette.

She places the dish on Victor's tray and removes the lid revealing scrambled eggs toast and a slice of ham. She then pulls out of the pocket of her apron silverware wrapped in a cloth napkin. She begins to cut Victor's ham into bite-size pieces.

PAULETTE

It's mail day. Maybe one of you gets good news from home.

The boys look up sure enough the older nurses are handing out some letters and small packages. The mail is received with anticipation and excitement from the wounded men.

PAULETTE

Is this good?

Referring to how she prepped his food.

VICTOR

Perfect. Thank you.

PAULETTE

Beinvenu.

She crosses over to the other tray and slides it over Clarence's lap. She pulls out another set of silverware wrapped in a cloth napkin. She unwraps them and places it on the tray. Gently places her hand on Clarence's shoulder.

PAULETTE

I think it is time for you try it on you own.

Clarence looks from her to the fork sitting on the tray then to his bandaged hand. The bandage is like a gauze mitten.

She tenderly takes his arm and raises his hand closer to her. She removes a pair of medical scissors from her apron. She cuts into the mitten just a enough to free his fingers some. She adds some additional gauze to protect the wounded fingers but giving him more movability.

PAULETTE

Let try this.

Paulette takes the fork and places it in his gauzed covered cleft looking hand. As he tries to handle the fork he winces a bit.

She studies him closely as Clarence struggles to scoop up some eggs onto the fork. He fails.

PAULETTE

(In French)

Patience.

He attempts again. Victor is watching all this from his bed and eating his food.

Clarence manages to get a bit on the fork and then up to his mouth.

PAULETTE

Fantastique!!

Clarence smiles proud of himself and tries for another bit.

VICTOR

Nicely done.

The older nurse MARGARET JOHNSON walks by as she reading to whom the letters are addressed to in her hand. The boys look up in the hopes that she will stop and give a little of home in an envelope. She moves past them.

Paulette sees the disappointment in the boys' faces. She tries to distract.

PAULETTE

Okay Clarence. Let's see how much you remember.

She points to the plate.

PAULETTE

Qu'est-ce que c'est

CLARENCE

Assiette.

She points to fork as he manages another bite.

PAULETTE

Et ça?

CLARENCE

Fourshit.

She giggles.

PAULETTE

Four-chette.

CLARENCE

Fourchette.

PAULETTE

Très bon.

VICTOR

What are you going to do with  
French once you're home?

Paulette looks at Victory and points at him.

PAULETTE

Qu'est-ce que c'est

CLARENCE

Connard.

She laughs and Clarence snickers.

VICTOR

What did he say?

They only laugh more. Paulette goes over pinches his  
check.

PAULETTE

But he is a cute connard.

VICTOR

I'm cute konnerd?

NURSE JOHNSON

Connard yes. Cute is a matter of  
opinion.

Paulette and Clarence laugh even more.

VICTOR

What?

NURSE JOHNSON

Private Usher I have a letter for  
you.

She hands him an official looking envelope. Paulette and  
Clarence stop laughing.

NURSE JOHNSON

I hope its good news Private.

She walks down towards the double french doors. Victor  
stares at the envelope. Paulette and Clarence watch  
Victor. He seems to be frozen in the moment.

He hands the envelope to Paulette. She tears it open. Unfolds the letter inside and hands it to him. He reads it making him smile.

VICTOR

Johnson get back her so I can kiss you!!!

Johnson smiles but does not even stop. She yells back as she disappears into the hallway.

NURSE JOHNSON

Go home you connard!

The room begins to notice what is going on as Victor jumps up from the bed and grabs Paulette. He cheers as he spins her around.

VICTOR

I'm going HOME!!!

Other patients come over to congratulate him. He looks over to Clarence. They share his happiness.

CLARENCE

How soon.

VICTOR

I leave in two days buddy. Two DAYS!!!

The morning sun coming through the window bathing the celebration and eventually flare the lens to bright white.

EXT. SAINT-NAZAIRE COUNTRY SIDE - DAY

With a whooshing sound, a scythe cuts through overgrown weeds on a large dirt path. Followed by the sound of an army trench boot sliding on the dirt. Followed by another scythe, then another boot. It is a procession of scythes and army trench shoes without leggings. Each movement in rhythm creates a beat. Faint humming of a spiritual working song can be heard, followed by a series of cuts:

The blistering sun in the French sky

A Black man's hands tighten the wooden handle of the scythe.

Sweat drips past the eyes of a young black man.

The shadow of a man swinging a scythe.

A scythe cuts through wild weeds revealing dirt and rocks.

We slowly tilt up to reveal a Black soldier. His shirt open, and his t-shirt full of sweat. As the next Black soldier comes through, we see the New York National Guard 15th Infantry insignia on their sleeve. We continue to move up to see...

Two lines of about 10 Black soldiers clearing the weeds. Followed by another team of 20 Black soldiers, in various stages of dress, with aged hickory handle picks breaking the now exposed ground. They are moving as a group and in a cohesive rhythm.

We jump into the middle of the pack as we discover the men of team Alpha the 15th Infantry. As we move down the line we see sweat drip off their foreheads as DAVIS, HENRY, TERRY, BUTLER dig deep into the rocky ground. HICKS the fifth man in the line stops to get his breath. He hesitates to start again. Soft humming of an old field work song. He looks next to him to see Corporal MARCUS DOUGLAS whose look tells him his got this and Hick rejoins the work.

Intercut shots of the soldiers working on the road with shots of scratchy black and white footage of enslaved Black people working in the fields of the pre-civil war south. The humming is joined by vocals from the spirits of this past. Series of cuts:

1860 Tight shot Black Male sings the song.

1918 Tight of Black soldier's ear sweat drips around it.

1860 Pick hits the French soil.

1918 Pick hit the southern earth.

1918 Army shoe gets into position to strike.

1860 A chained enslaved Black man's feet gets into position to chop.

1918 MARCUS looking behind him.

1860 A row of Slaves working on clearing the field. They are singing the song.

1918 A matching shot of Black soldiers from the 15th Regiment doing the same work

1918 MARCUS looks to the side of the road.

1860 A shot of the two armed field bosses in a wagon on the side of the road. One of them drinking water he just scooped from a barrel in the back of the wagon.

1918 A matching shot of two white officers sitting in a jeep on the side of the road. One of them is drinking from a canteen.

1860 The front row of slaves clearing the field. The camera begins to rise...

Up and over the front rows of 1918's soldiers with the scythes. It then moves over MARCUS and the rest of the soldiers with picks, finally revealing the miles of road they have cut into the French landscape. The song slowly comes to an end.

EXT SAINT-NAZAIRE US MILITARY CAMP- LATER

The men of the 15th Regiment, tired from the road work, make their way through a US deployment camp. They walk through a corridor of half wooden structures with canvas tent tops. There are white soldiers near the openings of the tents smoking, others writing letters home, some cleaning their Springfield rifles. White soldiers train their bayonet stabs on burlap straw-filled hanging bags in the clearings in between tents.

A group working on marching drills in double time comes right at the men of the 15th.

WHITE OFFICER

Out of the way!

The men of the 15th split up to different sides of the road to allow the unit drilling to pass. They watched as the white soldiers marched past. Frustration can be seen on the Black soldiers' faces.

MARCUS looks beyond the marching unit to another team of the 15th as they dig a latrine. As the marching men clear, a SOLDIER IN A T-SHIRT and army pants steps away from his tent.

SOLDIER IN T-SHIRT

Hey! Why don't you boys get over there and help them?

He points to the men working on the latrine who stop to look up.



SOLDIER IN T-SHIRT

They are taking so long digging  
out a new latrine.

MARCUS looks at him, then the black group digging.

MARCUS

Let's go.

As the men of the 15th regroup to leave, the Soldier in a T-shirt grabs a shovel. He heads over towards MARCUS followed by several others of his team.

He tosses the shovel at Private Davis who stops as it lands at his feet.

SOLDIER IN T-SHIRT

You Colored boys not hear what I  
said?

Davis leans forward and then feels the grasp of a hand on his shoulder. He turns to look and sees MARCUS. Without a word, Davis completely understands MARCUS's intention. The rest of Alpha team step in close behind MARCUS

MARCUS

You know the process as well as I  
do. Have your Sergeant put in a  
request for additional men.

He bends down and picks up the shovel and hands it back to the Soldier in a T-shirt.

MARCUS

Or Dig it yourself.

There is a moment of tension. This confrontation is beginning to boil.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Corporal Douglas!

MARCUS clocks just past the white soldiers, SGT. MAJOR REESE, a Black man standing next to the 15th Regiment's white commander COLONEL HAYWARD.

INT. TENT TEAM ALPHA- - MOMENTS LATER

MARCUS leads a group of 5 men that make up team Alpha. He is followed by Davis, Henry Terry, Baker and Hicks into their tent. Unlike the tents we saw earlier, this one is all canvas and has no wooden floor.

MARCUS heads for his bunk and throws his shirt down in frustration. Sgt. Major Reese comes flying in after them.

SGT. MAJOR

Did we not learn anything from what happened in Houston?!

He looks around the room at his men and sees the frustrated looks on their faces.

SGT. MAJOR

That uniform does not protect from being stupid.

MARCUS

They took our guns and gave us picks.

DAVIS

We trained to fight, not dig roads

HENRY

They treat us like we are still picking cotton.

Sgt. Major rushes up to Henry.

SGT. MAJOR

Private Henry, do you even know how to pick cotton?

HENRY

No Sir.

SGT. MAJOR

Well, I do! I learned to pick cotton when I was four years old, SON!

The Sgt. Major storms up to Davis next.

SGT. MAJOR

Private Davis, where the hell are we right now?

DAVIS

France Sgt Major.

Sgt Major heads straight for MARCUS

SGT MAJOR

Who brought us here, Corporal Douglas

MARCUS

US Army.

SGT. MAJOR

Yes, sir, the U.S. Army!

He slowly makes his way around the room to the others.

SGT. MAJOR

You men signed up to be in the US Army, not some church social. You do what the Army tells you to do, and you will be the best men at that job because..

He walks up to Private Butler, a skinny youth with glasses

SGT. MAJOR

Where are you from, Private Butler?

BUTLER

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

SGT. MAJOR

Because you have the honor to represent not Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, but your granddaddies that toiled to be treated as equals. And their granddaddies that were captured, chained then sold to work the fields. This is why you men must be better. Better humans, then those ignorant white fools out there!

He turns to leave but stops at tent entrance. Speaks in softer tone.

SGT. MAJOR

And if or when we should see action it will be an honor to have you men there at my side.

He leaves. These last words seem to have calm them down a little except Davis who kicks over his bunk. The others look at him without really reacting but understanding his frustration.

EXT. HILLSIDE OF NOGALES, MEXICO - NIGHT

A handful of simple and crude adobe-type dwellings sit on the arid hillside. Through the small windows, we can see an amber glow from wooden fires inside.

INT. SANCHEZ HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It is a tiny one-bedroom dirt floor dwelling crowded with small beds and an open fire pit with a pot hanging from a rod-iron tripod. Crowded around a small wooden table finishing up a simple meal are MATEO, a 17-year-old, PEPITO, a bit older heavy set Mexican, and RAMON, the oldest looking of the three, with his son XAVIER sitting on his lap. Sitting next to him is his beautiful young wife FLORA, Mateo's older sister. ( NOTE: They all speak Spanish throughout the scene.)

PEPITO

Flora, the food is delicious.  
Thank you so much.

FLORA

It's just simple beans, Pepito.

PEPITO

Yeah, but you haven't eaten the  
Gringo's beans.

RAMON

That is for sure. Nothing like  
coming home to good Mexican food.

FLORA

So you come home for the food and  
not your wife.

All the men at the table know his answer better be good,  
or there will be hell to pay.

RAMON

My Love, I only say that to make  
Pepito jealous because he doesn't  
have such a pretty woman to come  
home to.

He smiles at her and leans in to kiss her.

FLORA

Don't think I can easily be  
influenced by pretty words.

She agrees to be kissed. Then begins to gather the dirty plates.

RAMON

See Xavi, that is the kind of woman you want for a wife. One who will take care of you, love you but not put up with your shit.

Ramon and Flora exchange a smile.

MATEO

Can we please have a serious conversation now?

RAMON

Your older sister is a serious conversation if you want to keep being fed.

MATEO

Seriously. When are we going north?

RAMON

What answers do you think the north has for you?

MATEO

I don't know, but there are no answers here for any of us.

RAMON

Mateo, the north is no holy place. It, too, has its issues.

MATEO

What issues?

PEPITO

The Gringos.

Ramon and Pepito laugh.

RAMON

Trust me. We are better off how we are doing it. We go for a few days. Make a little money, then come back to what we know.

MATEO

To what we know?! Here is what we know.

(MORE)

MATEO (CONT'D)

The great revolution is over, and now our glorious leaders fight each other. Villa hates the AMERICAN'S so much that he continues to raid their lands and companies down here. So they are scared and shut down the mines. Then we have no work. With no work, no money. So why not go up to their land, not for two days but stay. Build something..

RAMON

Build what? They don't like us there. They just use us

MATEO

At least it would be better than drowning in this chaos.

PEPITO

He has a point, Ramon. I don't see any of the promises from the revolution coming soon.

RAMON

Don't encourage him, or we'll be up all night arguing.

EXT. AMERICAN HOSPITAL IN PARIS - MORNING

The morning sun hits the front of the building. There is a lot of activity as several military ambulances pull up.

INT. AMERICAN HOSPITAL IN PARIS- WARD 1 - MORNING

The double doors swinging into the camera as the morning breakfast routine repeats.

Clarence awakens his bed and groggily looks over towards Victor's bed that is empty and fully made. He sits up in surprise. Paulette walks up with his breakfast dish. She reads his disappointment.

PAULETTE

They ordered him to report earlier we have new wave of injured coming in and we need the bed.

Clarence just keeps staring at the empty bed.

PAULETTE

They wouldn't let him wake you before he left. He wanted to but procedures.

CLARENCE

I know.

PAULETTE

They want to change the way we do your dressing.

She takes out rolls of gauze, tape, and scissors from her apron pocket. Places them on the tray near the plate and napkin rolled silverware.

PAULETTE

They want you to have more mobility.

She gently takes his left hand and begins to cut into the gauze wrapped around his hand. Slowly revealing the moist deep scabs caused by the flesh-eating poison gas from the trenches. Clarence winces a few times for his flesh is still very tender.

PAULETTE

Est-ce que ça fait mal?

CLARENCE

Only a little.

PAULETTE

Déplacez-le. Move it. It is importante.

He does as he is told but it is not easy. She lets go of the wounded hand as he tries to flex it slowly while she goes around to the other side of the bed to do the right hand. Clarence studies the wounds on his left hand.

CLARENCE

Will there be....

PAULETTE

In french.

He smiles at her.

CLARENCE

Est-ce que ça cicatrice?

PAULETTE

Oui, there will be a lot of scare tissue.

CLARENCE

Les cicatrices ...can be scary.

PAULETTE

...font peur. True but...

She stops what she is doing and looks at him.

PAULETTE

...also un rappel...a reminder of how you sacrificed for the better good.

With that, a rush of new wounded soldiers is wheeled by additional nurses aides and other male aides. This parade of the horrific outcome of trench warfare is lead by Nurse Johnson. She calls out the last name of the soldiers and points to other empty beds. Clarence and Paulette watch though they have seen it several times can not help but be moved by this procession of pain and sorrow

NURSE JOHNSON

Patterson.

She points to the empty bed next to Clarence and continues to the next empty bed.

Clarence watches as they wheel over Patterson to Victor's old bed. His head is bandaged and missing both legs. He is unconscious and is flopped on the bed like a rag doll by the orderlies.

Clarence looks from Patterson to his hands. A strange feeling of guilt rises in him as looks down to his wounded hands. How lucky is he.

INT. ALPHA TEAM TENT - MORNING

The tent is a bit sparse this time around. All the personal items are gone. Their duffle bags are packed and ready for travel. Henry plays solitaire on his bunk. Terry is writing a letter home on his. Butler lays on his with his eyes closed. Davis and Hicks sit on crates near MARCUS, who reads out loud from the newspaper THE CRISIS from his bunk.



MARCUS

...that are fighting for democracy.  
We make no ordinary sacrifice, but  
we make it gladly and willingly  
with our eyes lifted to the hills.

There is a quiet moment as they all take in these words.  
MARCUS carefully rips the editorial that he was reading  
out. He folds it and places it in the small wooden box  
next to him.

A small pile of letters from home sits in the box, and a  
small picture of his wife and young 4-year-old son.  
MARCUS takes the picture out. Davis notices him looking  
at the picture.

DAVIS

When was the last time you heard  
from them?

MARCUS

Been over a Month.

HICKS

And now that they're moving us  
again, it might be longer.

MARCUS

I know. I wrote my Dad to see if  
he would come up from Mississippi  
and stay with Betty and the baby.  
It might be a while before I can  
reach her.

HENRY

Have any of you heard any rumors  
of where we are going?

DAVIS

(Doing his best  
impression of Sgt.  
Major)

Son, you'll know when you need to  
know.

At that moment, Colonel Hayward and Sgt. Major walks in.

SGT. MAJOR

Attention!

All the men stand at attention.

COL. HAYWARD

At ease. Gentlemen, I'm here to inform you the 15th Regiment will, from this day forward, be called the 369th .

He walks around, handing something to each of the men.

COL. HAYWARD

You will wear this patch as we pull out to Maffrecourt for further training.

The men moan slightly. Col. Hayward steps up to MARCUS and shakes his hand.

COL. HAYWARD

And after that, we will be moving near the Argonne and join the 93rd French Division to fight Germans.

The men cheered as MARCUS looks down to see a blue cloth shield with a silver snake on his palm.

INT. AMERICAN HOSPITAL IN PARIS- WARD 1 - NIGHT

ECU of Clarence as his eyes dart under his eyelid from a nightmare while deep in REM. Clarence eye pop open.

We are back in the ward and there is a male's hand over his mouth. His eyes dart to see to his assailant.

It is from Victor clean shaven sporting cleaned up thin mustache and dressed in his uniform.

VICTOR

Shh.

As Clarence calms down Victor removes his hand from his mouth.

CLARENCE

For God's sake what are you doing?

VICTOR

You didn't think I would leave Paris with out saying good bye. Now lets go?

CLARENCE

Go? Where?

VICTOR

Last night in Paris. We gonna go  
paint the town red.

Victor throws some civilian clothes at Clarence. He looks  
at that the clothes confused.

PAULETTE

Dépêchez-vous deux!!

Clarence sees Paulette at the double doors as a lookout.

VICTOR

Yeah what she said!

Clarence smiles at his precocious friend starts to throw  
on the clothes.

SMASH CUT

EXT. AMERICAN HOSPITAL IN PARIS - NIGHT

Both Clarence and Victor race down a gas lit cobble  
street on the outskirts of Paris. Like two giddy boys  
escaping from school they disappear into the night.

EXT. PARIS SIDE STREET - NIGHT

On a cobbled street somewhere in the center of Paris  
rolls a caravan of Albion Army Trucks. As they pass the  
camera pans then it begins to follow the last vehicle. We  
can see that it is full of Black Soldiers of 369th  
Infantry. We push in to get a clear shot of MARCUS  
sitting next to rest of Alpha Team deep in thought. As  
the truck turns the corner, we land on a wooden door  
under a hand-carved sign for " Le Pichet Cassé" a small  
tavern.

INT. LE PICHET CASSE - CONTINUOUS

Two empty used beer mugs land on the table. Victor and  
Clarence are deep into their celebration.

VICTOR

Mademoiselle another round!

The large woman, TAVERN OWNER begins to pour two more for  
the boys. There is a couple of old Frenchmen drinking at  
the bar. There is another man passed out in the corner.  
At another table, two young French females smoking and  
drinking some Absinth.

VICTOR

Okay, so now that I'm not a distraction anymore you are clear to make your move on Paulette.

CLARENCE

What?

VICTOR

I see how you look at her. Sadly her eyes only see me. But once I'm gone... TA-DA!

He gestures to Clarence.

CLARENCE

Shut up.

The Tavern Owner drops off the two beers. The boys clink mugs and down almost half the mug. Victor whips beer foam off his lips.

VICTOR

Clarence, I cannot thank you enough.

CLARENCE

Don't.

VICTOR

No, let me...

CLARENCE

You helped me too, Victor.

VICTOR

Not the same. I woke you up from your nightmares. You..you talked me off that ledge more than once.

He looks away. Clarence's eyes take in every feature of Victor's as he is lost in thought.

VICTOR

Not sure what I'm going home to.

CLARENCE

You're going home. Victor, you're going home. Faraway of all of this. Someday all this will fade away.

VICTOR

Are you sure?

With that, the Tavern Owner drops off two whiskeys. The boys look up confused and she points to the two young French ladies. They raise their glasses to Victor and Clarence. The boys return the salutation with the whiskey glasses then shoot them down.

CLARENCE

The brunette can't take her eyes off you.

VICTOR

She is keen.

CLARENCE

Go use your Victor charm. Close the deal.

VICTOR

No.

Victor leans in closer.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Not that I couldn't but tonight is about friends.

They down the rest of their beers.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Mademoiselle!

EXT. PARIS SIDE STREET - DAWN

Dawn is creeping into the night sky. As the small side street begins to turn into a market area. Vendors begin to prepare their stands for their morning costumers. The Parisian street begins to come to life with the light traffic of a few wagons drawn by scrawny horses and well used Bugatti cars. There is a sprinkle of locals venturing their way to work. Strangely most of the people we see are women or men too old to serve in the French Army. Other vendors with storefronts raise their iron fences as the lights in the above apartments begin to brighten.

The wooden door of Le Pichet Casse flies open. Victor and Clarence get pushed out by an large women, Tavern Owner Both are intoxicated and highly self entertained.

TAVERN OWNER

Rentrer chez soi! L'heure de dormir!

CLARENCE

(Laughing)  
Oui. Oui.

The Owner slams the door behind them.

VICTOR

What did she say?

CLARENCE

Something about time to sleep.

VICTOR

What! We are far from being done.  
I have 8 hours before my transport  
gets me out of this place. We have  
so much more to do. We gotta go  
see a lady.

CLARENCE

Lady?

VICTOR

Yep but first I'm starving.

They stop by OLDER WOMAN VENDOR selling small portions of  
fresh rustic loaves of bread.

VICTOR

Ask for two.

He reaches into his pocket for money.

CLARENCE

Deux s'il vous plaît.

She place two nice pieces into a single bag. Victor pays  
the Vendor.

VICTOR

Keep the change.

He smiles and waves kisses good bye to her as they head  
down the road.

Victor is famished. He grabs one loaf from the bag and  
tears into it immediately. Clarence holding the bag with  
the other. Clarence is more delicate as he rips a small  
piece of his loaf.

VICTOR

(Mouth full)  
Hmmm. That is good stuff.

CLARENCE

Where are we going now?

VICTOR

On a quest for inspiration my good friend.

He smacks Victor on back. Takes another bite.

VICTOR

This way.

He leads them down another side street and past building that been damaged by the German artillery.

VICTOR

I think.

The two wandering fools head downhill on the side street. A scraggy street dog shows up out of nowhere barking at them. Probably more out of fear than anger.

Victor quickly moves away from the snapping snout of the dog while Clarence stops. He looks at the poor creature then gets on one knee but safe distance from the nervous animal.

VICTOR

What are you doing?

Clarence tears off a piece of his loaf and holds it out for the canine.

CLARENCE

C'est d'accord.

The dog stops yapping unsure of the gesture.

CLARENCE

D'accord.

Clarence places a large piece on the cobblestones. The mutt studies him closely. Then he snaps up the piece of bread and runs off. Victor smiles as he takes a small bite from the bread he has left.

VICTOR

Can we get going there Saint Francis?

All at once we can hear distant bombing. The boys stop singing as the reality of the war invades their merriment. They look off to where the distant muffled explosions are coming from. They look at each other.

They share the reality of the moment as well the truth that they are far from the trenches of death.

Camera slowly rises up past them. It continues up past the small apartments where we catch French families reacting to the bombing through their windows. Eventually, as we clear the buildings the we see the billowing black smoke and the front line just in outskirts of the city. This war is far from over.

As both sides are now sending bombs of destruction the music begins to morph again from quick temp of marching beat of Over There to no lyrics. It is a more haunting rendition. More appropriate to accompany man's in humanity to man. Almost chilling requiem as we focus on patch of blue sky.

INT. NOTRE DAME - DAY

The blue appears to be transparent. We now see it is stain glass. The morning sun illuminates the jewel-like glass with a hand-painted delicate details of an image of Mary enthroned holding the Christ Child. It is a capsule moment of the story captured on the glass canvas surrounded by wedges with the icons of angels, doves, and prophets that stretch out like geometric petals stitched together by lead. As the image expands we see four layers spiraling various glimpse of other moments. Reminders of other stories.

As we continue following the circular arrangement the detail images disappear till the mathematically calculated pattern creates one of the glorious blue and red rose windows of the Cathedral of Norte Dame.

The camera continues back revealing enormous pillars that lined either side supporting the six rim vault ceiling. The silhouette of our two soldiers standing there admiring the beauty and awe of the space. As camera continues to rise the boys become smaller and smaller as the vastness of this holy chamber is fully exposed making any human figure in the space but a shadowy spec. Very similar to the final opening credits shot.

EXT. NOTRE DAME - DAY

Over the rounded winged shoulders of Stryga, the famous gargoyle peering down at the city of Paris we can see almost two hundred feet below two small dots appear from inside the grand cathedral. They make their way into the large court yard in front.



Now down at ground level, we see it is Clarence and Victor. Both walking silently and contemplating what they have just seen. They make their way to a cement block bench and sit down. Clarence glances at the local Parisians who make their way in for morning mass.

CLARENCE

What is it that brings them here?

VICTOR

Faith.

CLARENCE

They looking to find it?

VICTOR

Some. Others recharging it. Others are just sheep who know no better. Are you a believer Clarence?

CLARENCE

I guess so. I never really thought about it much.

VICTOR

I didn't have choice my father is preacher. God was talked about a lot in my house.

CLARENCE

Is that why you wanted to come here?

VICTOR

It was promise I made. The old man might not agree with the Roman Catholics but he sure does respect them. I mean look at it?

He points back the cathedral.

VICTOR

It is testament to passion and acknowledgment both to God and man himself.

Clarence takes this in.

CLARENCE

Do you still have faith Victor?

VICTOR

Faith? Faith in a God that can't seem to even protect me from the war in those trenches. Faith?... I guess I'm one of those who just knows no better.

They both sit in silence. Each in his own reflection of God, Faith and war.

VICTOR

Come on I promised Paulette I would have you back before morning chow.

They both head out as the last of the morning mass attendees make it into the church.

VICTOR

So what does? ...konnrrd mean?

CLARENCE

Connard. Means ass.

VICTOR

Well she at least said I was cute ass.

The boys walk past laughing as the bells of Notre Dame begin to ring behind them. With ever other gong we cut closer

A wide shot of the magnificent entrance of the historical cathedral. Gong! Gong!

A skewed shot of Saint Denis holding his decapitated head as angel watches over him. Gong! Gong!

A Dutch medium shot of Stryga, the famous gargoyle peering down. GONG! GONG!

Low angle of the cluster of bell in the Norte Dame tower. GONG! GONG!

A bells clapper swings to frame. We focus into the deep blackness inside the bell.

EXT. BORDER BETWEEN THE TWO NOGALES - AFTERNOON

It is not like a border crossing like we know them today. An overhead shot shows the two cities, Nogales Sonora Mexico and Nogales New Mexico, split by International Street.

It is basically a dirt road and two small guard shacks with military representing both the U.S. and Mexico on their respected sides of the road. There is a line of Mexican workers waiting to cross back into Mexico. Many are on foot, others on foot pulling carts, and a few are riding on small wagons.

About 25 yards from the Mexican guard shack on a small wagon pulled by a donkey are Mateo, Flora, and young Xavi. Flora waves as she sees Ramon and Pepito on the other side of the border, waiting to return.

IN LINE, Ramon waves back to Flora. They speak in Spanish.

PEPITO

You know when you tell her you changed your mind, she is going to say she has to come?

RAMON

I know. It is going to be a fight.

As they are talking, an older man with a small cart gets waved to pass to the Mexican side after the cart was inspected. This is followed by a small group of Mexicans on foot. As this group begins to enter Mexico US BORDER SOLDIER #1 thinks one of the men is hiding something under his shirt.

US BORDER SOLDIER #1

STOP!

The group stops.

US BORDER SOLDIER #1

YOU! Come back here!

He points at the young carpenter, who is confused about the yelling. The other men continue past the Mexican border guards.

MEXICAN BORDER GUARD #1

(In Spanish)

No, come this way?

(In English)

He is already in Mexico, Gringo!

US BORDER SOLDIER #1

Vuelve aqui NOW!

PEPITO

(In Spanish)

This is not going to turn out well.

The man is frozen, unsure who to listen to or which way to go. Things are getting tense as both soldiers continue yelling at the poor man and each other.

US BORDER SOLDIER

Shut up, you damn Mexican! YOU vena qui!

MEXICAN BORDER GUARD #1

¡Vete a la mierda Gringo! ¡No lo escuches ven aqá!

Both soldiers, in the heat of anger, raise their guns. This panics the Mexican carpenter even more. Other soldiers from both sides rush in closer, their weapons drawn.

Ramon looks at his family on the other side, right in the line of fire.

Mateo looks around, unsure what to do, while Flora moves Xavi closer to her.

Ramon and Flora exchange a look. The distance apart feels like miles.

SUDDENLY there is a gunshot, and both sides open fire. Soldiers from both sides go down. The man in the middle of the road drops dead.

Mateo grabs Xavi and throws him in the back of the wagon just as a bullet hits the seat where Xavi just was. He then snatches Flora as he dives off the cart just as their donkey gets shot in the head.

Ramon moves towards Flora, but Pepito grabs him forcing him away from the border for safety. Behind them, other Mexicans are collateral damage to this gun fight.

More US soldiers take position and fire, only to be met by Mexican civilians returning fire while rushing closer to the border to join the Mexican border guards.

Mateo rises and grabs Xavi as this shoot-out has turned into a battle.

BEHIND THE CART, Flora rips Xavi from Mateo's hands and holds Xavi tightly. Mateo looks to the other side of the border.

Ramon waves for them to come over to them.

Mateo grabs Flora and Xavi

MATEO

Quedate baja!

They begin running toward Roman, who is moving to meet them with bullets raining everywhere.

Just as Ramon is about an arm's length away from his family, a bullet forces his head back. Flora screams as she drops to her knees. Ramon drops to the ground, dead. Mateo looks at his deceased brother-in-law. Out of nowhere, Pepito is next to them.

PEPITO

Vamonos!

He tears crying Xavi from grieving Flora and hands him to Mateo

PEPITO

Vete!

Mateo starts running deeper into New Mexico. Pepito lifts the smaller petite Flora over his shoulder and begins running after Mateo. She kicks and screams as they put distance between them and the gunfight on the border.

INT. WASHINGTON DC TENEMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

A door slowly pushed ajar allowing the early evening October light to wrap around a figure of a man in the doorway. Behind him, the city poverty-stricken life on 3rd Street in the area of D.C. known as, Swampoodle. He steps into the foyer of the tenement and heads to the stairs. He stops at the bottom of the stairs. He reaches into his pocket pulls something out.

Match head ignites as it slides across the side of a small matchbox.

The flame reflects off the glass dome that is removed by a hand in finger-less gloves. Then the match ignites the wick of the gas lamp.

It is a low glow till the hand replaces the dome and turns the knob on the bottom.

As the brightness of the flame increase, we can now see it is Clarence.

He is clean shaven and wears a wool apple cap, collarless buttoned-up shirt and a jacket that has seen better days. Strapped over his shoulder his weather-beaten military canvas bag. He looks tired from a long day of manual labor. He begins to make his way up the flight of stairs.

His wool gauntlet covered hand slides up the banister as we catch glimpses of thin-lined scars coming from under the glove to his fingernails.

The soles of his unpolished shoes scrape the tread of the stairs with every heavy step.

He comes to a dimly lit landing. He walks past several apartment dark wood doors then heads up another flight of stairs.

He reaches the top floor of this three-floor apartment building then makes his way to the furthest door.

As he reaches his residence door we hear muffled yelling. His hand reaches for the doorknob. He stops and listens. The female voice appears to be the dominant one in the heated discussion.

He turns from the door and begins to head down the steps. The yelling gets louder as though the argument came closer to the door on the inside. He hesitates on the stairs and stares back at the door through the wooden and chipped baluster.

Suddenly the apartment door at the landing of the stairs behind him opens. Out steps, a tall thin redheaded woman in a dress that is less than modest for the times. When she sees Clarence she pauses a moment and takes a seductive pose. This young attractive female is IRIS O'DONNELL a 1918 lady of the night.

IRIS  
(In a Irish Accent)  
Hey there good Lookin'

CLARENCE  
Hey.

He continues to stare at the door.

IRIS  
She has been at it for hours.

He leans back against the wall a beat defeated. She comes down and joins him on the stairs.

IRIS

Ahh a mo stóirín.

She places his head on his shoulder. There is tenderness in this moment.

IRIS

She has been doing a lot better lately. Especially with you home.

CLARENCE

She must be out of medicine again.

IRIS

You want to hide in my place till all settles down?

CLARENCE

No I should go in there.

IRIS

Want a fag first love?

CLARENCE

Sure.

She reaches into her pocketbook which is newer and fancier than her outfit. Lets just call it 1918 bling. She pulls out small silver case and removes thin hand rolled cigarette.

IRIS

Remember what they say love. No matter how long the day is, the evening comes.

She gives him a peck on the cheek and starts down the stairs.

IRIS

Or like I always say have a pint and a good fuck. Worrying gets you nowhere. See you in the mornin'.

CLARENCE

Iris.

She turns and looks back.

CLARENCE

Thank you.

IRIS

We, black sheep need to stick together.

CLARENCE

(Laughs)

Be safe.

IRIS

No worries mo stóirín, if a bod tires to get way again with out paying...

She reaches into her delicate pocketbook and pulls out early version of the Preston switchblade.

IRIS

I will not be the only one with somethin' missin'.

Clarence can't help to snicker at this. She pirouettes and disappears down the stairs.

Clarence goes up to the landing and sits down. He takes out the matches and lights up his cigarette. He draws in a big drag and then tries to exhale all his anxiety away.

The barely audible yelling continues as he smokes. After a few drags, he reaches into his satchel and pulls two books. He places them next to him on the landing. He ponders over the books through the smoke of the cigarette.

We see the titles. One is "Learning to Speak French" the other Holy Bible. His hand comes in and grabs the AMERICAN Standard's Version bible.

He flips it open to the inside cover. A stamp that reads "Property of the District of Columbia Public Library.

He commences thumbing through it something catches his eyes. He starts to read.

Insert of the page. It is Job 38 that reads: "Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel By words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; For I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. "

The door of his apartment opens. The yelling has stopped. Out steps LEOPOLD DE MONI Clarence's father putting on his jacket.



A man with soft deep brown eyes bordered by deep wrinkles, the outcome of worry and strife of underprivileged life of the early 20th century. Clarence quickly puts out the cigarette, gathers his books and stands up. Leopold is in deep thought and does not notice Clarence till he fully has his coat on.

LEOPOLD

I need to get more medicine for your mother.

CLARENCE

She seems to be going through it fast.

Leopold stops and spins back to Clarence.

LEOPOLD

Its the only thing helping her!

He takes a moment to recompose.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

I'm sorry just keep an eye on things till I get back.

He turns to go.

CLARENCE

Dad? Do need money?

Leopold stops. He struggles to answer. Clarence reaches into his pocket and hands his father a few dollars and change in his pocket.

CLARENCE

Here.

Leopold swallows his pride and turns back to Clarence. He looks at money in Clarence's gloved hand and scarred fingers.

His eye welt up.

LEOPOLD

Thank you.

CLARENCE

You have your mask?

He takes the money and heads down the stairs with the weight of the world on his shoulders.

LEOPOLD

Yes.

Clarence makes his way to the apartment door but never takes his eyes off his father until he vanishes. Once he reaches the door begrudgingly reaches for the doorknob. Turns it slowly pushing the door open.

As he closes the door behind him we hear the stomping of little feet and the laugh of a small child.

EXT. CROSSROADS - AFTERNOON

The camera floats over a crossroads somewhere in northern Texas. We see a vehicle traveling toward the intersection. We boom down as the small truck slows down as it arrives at the junction. Pepito and Mateo hop off the bed, and Pepito hits the side of the truck.

PEPITO

Thank you. We see you tomorrow.

The driver waves then the truck pulls away with a dust trail following it. Pepito and Mateo begin walking down the intersecting road. They talk in Spanish.

MATEO

Okay, the job is almost over. We need to think about what's next.

PEPITO

You are always thinking about what's next. Can we just be quiet and let me dream about my beautiful Maria.

MATEO

Are you going to marry her?

PEPITO

Why not? She knows how to keep this belly full.

MATEO

But do you love her?

PEPITO

Of course I do. Don't be stupid. She is amazing.

MATEO

Then good. Marry her.

They walk in silence for a bit.

MATEO

We need to find other work besides the farm stuff.

PEPITO

Like what?

MATEO

I was talking to this gringo about railroad work.

PEPITO

Like the Chinese?

MATEO

Yeah, they can't do all the work. Plus, the jobs are longer, and the pay is a little better.

PEPITO

How much more?

MATEO

Enough that we can change things, maybe? Get a little closer to our dreams.

PEPITO

Let's go talk to his gringo.

MATEO

If you are serious, we have to go further north.

PEPITO

What do we got to lose?

Pepito and Mateo continue down the road into the setting sun.

EXT. TRENCH - DAY

A sun backlight figure comes walking in the valley of the trench in slow motion. As it gets closer we see it is a smiling Jesse Walker. He carries a shovel and rests on his shoulder. He smokes a cigarette with his other hand. The sweat glistens on all his exposed skin.

He walks right up to Clarence who is sitting is crouched position on side of the trench and is fully dressed in his uniform and wears a helmet.

JESSE  
Why Clarence?

CLARENCE  
I'm sorry Jesse.

An anger fills Jesse's eyes as he rushes up towards Clarence looks at Jesse confused and scared. Jesse races up to him and leans in and exhales smoke into Clarence's face.

CLARENCE  
(Whimpering)  
No. No Please no.

The smoke unnaturally continues coming out of Jesse's mouth as his now blistering hands hold Clarence down.

The smoke starts becoming an expanding green cloud in no time at all. It fills the frame. Both Jesse and Clarence disappear behind it.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. CLARENCE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Leopold stands there looking down holding a suit on hangers with his hand on Clarence's shoulder.

LEOPOLD  
Son you okay?

Clarence with the early stages of a mustache is lying in a small bed surrounded by books and paper.

CLARENCE  
(A little out of  
breath)  
Yeah.

LEOPOLD  
Another dream.

CLARENCE  
Yeah.

In the wider shot, we see Clarence's small corner of the apartment. Furnished with small dresser and side table. A throw rug under his bed that is more of a cot. A small child about 4 years old leans against the side of the cot. All that separates his area from the rest of the room a sheet strung on cord. Beyond the curtain, we can just get glimpses of a sparsely decorated living room.

LEOPOLD  
Well Jeannette and I have surprise  
you.

He holds out the suit.

LEOPOLD  
Its not new but...

CLARENCE  
Dad how much did that cost you?

LEOPOLD  
Don't worry.

Clarence examines the suit. A definite improvement over  
the clothes we saw him in the hallway.

CLARENCE  
Dad, you need the money take it  
back please.

He tries to give it back to Leopold. Leopold refuses.

LEOPOLD  
No. It didn't cost me any money.  
You know Mrs Robinson near  
Georgetown. I promised her I do  
cabinet work for her in exchange.

CLARENCE  
Whose was it?

LEOPOLD  
Her son's.

CLARENCE  
The one that died in war?

LEOPOLD  
No. The younger one.

CLARENCE  
What happen to him.

LEOPOLD  
He died of that sickness last  
month.

CLARENCE  
You mean the influenza.

LEOPOLD

Yeah. Plus you need it for the interview later this week and it comes with her blessings.

With that Leopold hangs the suit on the knob of dresser and leaves the curtain area.

Clarence looks at the suit. It is a good looking suit.

JEANNETTE tries to grab the half-open book on Clarence's lap. He grabs it first and closes it. We the title reads "Accounting Theory and Practice".

CLARENCE

Oh no, no, no. The library owns this and I don't think they would appreciate all your slobber on it.

Jeannette's eyes begin to tear up because he took away a potential toy.

CLARENCE

Come here you.

Clarence quickly snatches her up and begins to give her raspberries on her neck till Jeannette starts to laugh.

Leopold peaks back into the space to take in this loving moment between brother and sister.

EXT. NORTHERN FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

An aerial shot as the sunshine falls on the lovely French countryside. As we move over a lush green patch of forest we begin to see the scared and charred terrain by the war that is still going on.

EXT. SÉCHAULT, FRANCE - DAY

A handful of men from the 369th attempt to quickly cross down the main street but are cut down by machine-gun fire from German soldiers hidden on the third floor of a partially destroyed building.

The earth explodes from German artillery near and around the main street. Then again and again, as the camera moves toward a pile of concrete rubbish, revealing the Sgt. Major, MARCUS, and CORPORAL WILSON from team Charlie.

SGT. MAJOR  
GOD DAMN IT!

He looks at both the Corporals.

SGT. MAJOR  
Boys, we really don't have a choice. We gotta take out that gun, or eventually, those shells will land on us. Douglas take Alpha, find a back door into that place. Wilson, you take Charlie and draw fire. Keep them busy.

Wilson looks at MARCUS.

WILSON  
We'll keep them occupied but get in there.

SGT MAJOR  
You go on my signal.

MARCUS and Wilson rush back and are forced to zig-zag as a hail of bullets chase after them. They each barely make it back to their teams.

Immediately after the gunfire there is another round of shelling. One falls on top of Sgt. Major. He disappears in an explosion of dirt and blood.

The other soldiers look. There is nothing left of Sgt. Major but a bloody pulpy mess.

MARCUS  
Okay, we have to do this now.  
Alpha with me. Charley with Wilson.

He looks at Wilson.

MARCUS  
We'll be there before you know it.

Wilson offers his hand to MARCUS. MARCUS takes it.

WILSON  
"Don't tread on me..."

The men knowing the odds are against them chant their motto

ALL THE MEN  
"God Damn, Lets Go."

The teams split up and immediately are being shot at. We stay with MARCUS and the Alpha team.

The machine gun decides to focus on the Alpha team. Debris follows and chases after them. The last man in the line is Terry. His body gets torn by a barrage of bullets. The Alpha Team can't stop; they have to keep moving, or they will also go down.

They are able to arrive to cover just as the machine gun fire stops.

DAVIS

We're down one. We lost Terry.

BACK with Wilson and his men. They use the explosions of the shelling as cover to move to their position.

WILSON

On the count of three suppression fire.

He looks out towards MARCUS and counts down with his fingers.

On three, Wilson and his men rush closer to the building while shooting. As they dive for cover, the machine sends two of Wilson's men flying backward.

MARCUS and the Alpha team move to the back of the building as the machine gun concentrates on team Charley.

EXT. BACKSIDE OF THE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

As they get closer suddenly, they are under fire from two Germans with rifles at the back opening of the building. Butler takes two bullets and goes down.

The rest try to return fire as they look for cover. Hicks goes down after being shot in the shoulder. The rest drop safely for cover as bullets ricochet around them.

HICK

Shit! Shit!

Henry crawls over to him.

MARCUS

How bad?

Henry looks at Hick's shoulder and then checks his back.



HENRY  
Through and through. Your lucky  
this one might send you home.

HICKS  
It better. It hurts like a bitch.

Davis crawls closer to MARCUS.

DAVIS  
What you thinking?

They can hear the shelling stop, and then Wilson and his  
men exchanging fire again with the machine gun position.

MARCUS  
We have to get in there. Not sure  
how long Wilson and the boys could  
hold on.

DAVIS  
Hicks, can you shoot?

HICK  
Yeah.

(LOOKS AT HENRY)  
Prop it up for me, and I can shoot  
it.

MARCUS  
I have a stupid idea.

DAVIS  
It won't be the last one. Trust  
me.

MARCUS  
You three shoot the hell out of  
the opening. No matter what, you  
just keep shooting.

DAVIS  
Okay?

MARCUS  
Don't rush the door.

DAVIS  
What?

MARCUS  
Just do as I say.

Henry finishes propping up Hicks so he can shoot.

MARCUS

Alright, gentlemen, everyone shoot  
the hell out of that opening.  
Ready. Fire!

All four start shooting at the door, making the Germans have to take cover. Suddenly MARCUS gets up and rushes to the opening. He is moving fast and is about halfway there when the Germans return fire. MARCUS goes down. The shooting continues for a moment from both sides, then stops.

HENRY

Screw this!

He goes to get up, but Davis yanks him back down. We can hear Wilson's team exchanging fire again with the machine gun position.

DAVIS

NO! We do as he said. Now Reload.

They do.

DAVIS

Ready GO!

The three begin firing. The Germans return fire. Then both sides stop. We can hear the shelling on the other side of the building resumes.

Then we suddenly see MARCUS rise up right near the opening. He shoots the first German that comes up to shoot. As the second one comes up, a bullet rips through his helmet.

MARCUS looks back to see Davis standing with his rifle aimed at where the dead soldier was. Then a bullet whizzes past Davis, making Davis duck.

MARCUS looks up on the second floor. A third German is firing his rifle, pinning down his men. He doesn't hesitate and rushes into the building.

INT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS races through the building. He finds a set of stairs and then runs up.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS gets to the top landing and sees he has an option to go left or right. MARCUS waits and listens then he hears the machine gun on the right. He darts off in that direction.

INT. BUILDING-ROOM WITH THE MACHINE GUN - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS gets there to find two Germans at the machine gun firing at Wilson and his men. MARCUS fires and takes out the one next to the ammo. Before MARCUS can get the other German, the gunner turns the machine gun on MARCUS and opens fire.

INT. BUILDING-JUST OUTSIDE OF THE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS takes cover behind a cement wall that is barely thick enough to semi-stop the bullets. He has to get as low as possible. As cement dust falls on him, he realizes that he has dropped his gun back in the room.

INT. BUILDING-ROOM WITH THE MACHINE GUN - CONTINUOUS

The machine gunner begins to take fire from Wilson and his men and has to turn the machine gun on them. He begins to fire.

In a flash, MARCUS races in, grabs his gun from the floor, and empties it on the gunner. MARCUS stands there, breathing heavily. Suddenly he hears the German with a rifle shooting at his men.

INT. BUILDING- ANOTHER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The German keeps firing at Davis and the others. Unexpectedly there is a guttural scream. The German turns to look up, and to his surprise, MARCUS is rushing at him with a bolo knife over his head. He does not have time to react as, with one swoop, MARCUS brings it down on the German.

INT. LOCAL BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

A raw bloody rump roast lands on the tray of a Toledo Scale. Large masculine hands come in the grab the raw meat. The meat falls on some butcher paper and those same hands begin wrapping the meat. The sound of the hanging doorbell can be heard.

Wide shot of small butcher shop. Behind the counter, the BUTCHER wraps the meet a WOMAN IN HER FORTIES stands there waiting. Through the front door walks in ANOTHER WOMAN wearing a cloth face mask. Through the shop window, we see people cross by dressed for fall and all of them have some type of face covering.

ANOTHER WOMAN

Gosh, I hate this thing.

She removes it.

WOMAN IN HER FORTIES

Hey Mildred

MILDRED

Betsy, how are you doing?

BETSY

Best as one can these days?

MILDRED

How are the kids?

BETSY

Driving me crazy. Especially with school being closed.

MILDRED

I heard. First, mask mandates while we are outdoors and now schools.

BETSY

None of it makes any sense.

BUTCHER

I heard there was a huge protest in San Francisco against the mask mandate. People took to the streets.

The butcher hands Mildred the wrapped roast.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)

Will there be anything else?

BETSY

Yes, can I get a pound of thinly sliced Salami?

BUTCHER

You got it, Mrs. Denny. And for you Mrs. Bryant?

He wipes his hands on his stained apron.

MILDRED

Looking for some nice T-bone steaks. My husband's boss and wife are coming over. I want to impress them. So, let's make sure to trim off that fat.

BUTCHER

You got it mam. Clarence!

Clarence enters from the back room. He has his gloves on and pencil in his hand.

CLARENCE

Yes sir.

BUTCHER

Four nice T- bone steaks for Mrs. Bryant. Clean off the fat.

CLARENCE

Yes, sir.

The Butcher starts preparing the Salami that he is going to cut. Clarence places the pencil in his ear and goes over to the sink to wash his hands. He removes his gloves exposing his scarred hands.

Mildred starts to look uncomfortable as she watches Clarence closely.

His hand turning on the faucet.

The water cascading over his damaged hands.

His scarred tissue fingers grabbing the soap.

The Butcher comes over with a slice of Salami for Mrs. Denny.

BUTCHER

Is this thin enough?

Betsy takes the slice in her hand and examines it.

BETSY

Perfect.

She eats the piece as the Butcher looks over to Mildred. He can't help to notice the look on her face. He looks to see what she is staring at.

The lather covering Clarence's old wounds. Then the water revealing them again.

He looks back at her.

MILDRED

I'm in no rush I can wait.

The Butcher understands her meaning.

BUTCHER

Clarence, I forgot Maxey's order is ready and in the back. I promised I would have it to them before noon. Could you run it over?

CLARENCE

What about the steaks.

BUTCHER

Mrs. Bryant is that okay?

There is an awkward moment as Clarence sees that Mildred is focused on his hands. He hides them behind his back

MILDRED

Of course. I love Maxey's.

BETSY

We had our anniversary dinner there.

Clarence disappears to the back. Mrs. Bryant whispers to the Butcher.

MILDRED

Thank you.

He goes back to finish cutting the Salami.

BUTCHER

They say that we are on the second wave of this Spanish Flu.

BETSY

Did you hear they quarantine everyone that lives in the Brickmore?

MILDRED

Seriously?

BUTCHER

Wow, that's rough. I guess they are trying this new thing with Aspirin.

BETSY

Aspirin?

BUTCHER

Yeah, I heard about it. Doctors are giving those infected something like 30 grams per day.

While he talks the Butcher wraps up the slices of Salami.

MILDRED

Charles believes we are all overreacting. This is nothing more than another version of La Grippe and it just needs to run its course.

Clarence comes out of the back with his jacket on and a large box. He is wearing a face mask.

CLARENCE

Okay Mr. Lansky I'll finish doing the books when I get back

BUTCHER

Sounds good Clarence.

Clarence heads out the door.

CLARENCE

Here you go, Mrs. Denny.

He hands her the package.

BETSY

Thank you, Ralph. My husband will be by tomorrow to settle the bill.

BUTCHER

Not a problem.

BETSY

See ya, Mildred.

MILDRED

Bye Betsy.

She starts to leave.

BUTCHER

Mrs. Denny, you forgot your mask?

She turns around to see that the Butcher has picked up her mask on the counter.

BETSY

Oh, thank you.

He hands her the mask. She slips it on as she leaves.

BUTCHER

Don't want to get the mask Police after you.

BETSY

Is there such a thing?

MILDRED

I'm sure it is coming soon.

EXT. MILITARY CAMP NEAR ASINE RIVER - NIGHT

The camera skims over the Asine River lined by trees on either side. On the moving water of a river is the reflection of a full moon in the French sky. The view slowly rises to reveal on the western bank an Allied Forces camp.

INT. 369TH ALPHA TEAM'S TENT - NIGHT

This tent is much different from the last Alpha tent we saw. It has a wooden floor, and the amenities are much equal to the glimpse we saw in the white soldiers' tents with a bit of personal touch from the creative acquisitions by our characters

Davis smokes a cigarette on his bunk. MARCUS sits on his and reads a letter from home. Henry plays poker with three new members of the Alpha team, Privates Bechet, Marshall, and Williams.

HENRY

Read 'em and weep!

He drops a royal flush on the makeshift poker table. The other men groan as he collects his winnings.

BECHET

You're having one lucky night.



HENRY

Some call it luck. I prefer to call it skill.

DAVIS

Skill my ass.

HENRY

Put up or shut up, Davis.

DAVIS

Boy! I believe, last time I played you cried.

HENRY

I don't remember that.

The other men snicker they do.

HENRY

Are we playing another round or not?

MARSHALL

I'm out.

Bechet gets up and heads to his bunk.

BECHET

Me too.

Marshall gets up as well.

HENRY

Williams?

WILLIAMS

Okay, but Twenty-One and I deal.

HENRY

You got it.

BECHET

Hey MARCUS?

MARCUS

Yeah?

BECHET

You put any stock into these rumors of peace talks.

MARCUS

Maybe.

MARSHALL

I hope so. I mean, what are we at  
160 days?

DAVIS

There is no rest for the Harlem  
Hell fighters. Or any other Black  
outfit.

Williams stops playing cards and looks at his comrades.

WILLIAMS

You Know La Rue. He is thinking  
about staying if there peace.

HENRY

Why?

Marshall hesitates to answer.

DAVIS

What does he have to go back to?

HENRY

What are you talking about?

MARSHALL

He feels like the color of his  
skin doesn't seem to define him  
here.

HENRY

MARCUS, for god sakes, help me  
here?!

DAVIS

He has a point.

MARCUS

Then again,

All eyes fall on MARCUS. He continues to talk, but his  
eyes stay on his letter.

MARCUS

Let's remember why we came here.

HENRY

What did Dubois call it?

MARCUS

Day of Decision.

MARCUS begins to fold his letter.

MARCUS

He wrote, "Let us not hesitate. We make no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the hills. Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and allied nations that are fighting for democracy."

DAVIS

Those are prolific words, but he was not here when our fellow white soldiers treated us no better than slaves.

MARCUS put his letter away in a box which, on top of a stack of letters, sits his French Croix Guerre medal.

MARCUS

True, but I have a beautiful woman and a son waiting for me. What I have done here is for my son. I have to believe, he will not grow up in the same kind of world like I did. Like our Daddies did.

Each man goes into their own thoughts after these words.

INT. LIVING ROOM AREA - DAY

Leopold sits at the small table for four feeding Jeannette some type of mashed food near the one of the two windows in the room. Just outside the window glass the iron of railings of a fire escape and the brick side of building just across the small alley. The corner just behind Leopold and Jeannette is the kitchen area made up of a small stove, single deep sink and wall cabinet that holds the few dishes they owned near a matching second window.

We get a better view of this one-bedroom apartment. It might be sparsely furnished but does have a feminine touch. Oval family photos on the walls. Small settee with doilies on the arms and other modest touches throughout the room. The sheet wall is pulled back as Clarence makes a grand entrance wearing the new suit. It actually fits pretty well. He holds a folder on his hands. His hands in thin cotton finger-less gloves. More fitting than his normal wool ones.

LEOPOLD

It looks good on you.

Clarence stands near the door to his parents' bedroom. He looks inside to see his mother SYLVIA, half-conscious but fully dressed on her bed.

CLARENCE

How is she doing.

LEOPOLD

Today is good Afternoon. She is just resting.

He looks back again to his mother. Her arm begins to slip towards the ground as she falls deeper into her slumber.

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He quickly rushes in. Catches the brown glassed bottle as it falls from limp hand before it crashes to the ground. He holds the bottle on his hand reads the label. Looks at his dear mother. He places the bottle on the nightstand and then leans in so that he can kiss his mother's forehead. As he leaves we can read the writing on the bottle: "Paregoric Female Remedy - Opium.

INT. LIVING ROOM AREA - CONTINUOUS

He enters back into the living room and crosses over to Jeannette kneels down to her level.

CLARENCE

How about smooch for luck

She grabs his face with two hands and gives a peck on the lips.

LEOPOLD

I got a good feeling about this son.

Clarence grabs his hat and heads out the door.

CLARENCE

I hope so.

INT. BUSINESS OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Sounds of a busy office. A familiar shoe shakes with nervousness.

Clarence sits in a chair across a desk as a woman reads the papers that were in his folder. She is MRS. MORRISON a secretary for MR. PETERSON at Lybrand, Ross Brothers, and Montgomery prestigious accounting firm. Mr. Peterson can be seen just behind her through a small office window at his desk talking to another gentleman. She looks at Clarence who smiles back at her. She seems to zero in on his gloved hands then goes back to the papers.

MRS. MORRISON

Mr. Di Moni, your references are excellent but none of them talk about your ability as accounting clerk.

CLARENCE

Well, uhm actually I have never held that position.

MRS. MORRISON

Nor been formally educated.

CLARENCE

No but I did help with the books Lansky's Butcher Shop and the lumber mill.

MRS. MORRISON

Where you worked part time at both.

CLARENCE

Yes.

MRS. MORRISON

I'm sorry the firm has decided that candidates for the position needs to have to have a college degree in accounting.

She holds out his folder to him.

CLARENCE

I understand.

MRS. MORRISON

Got get your degree and come back then.

CLARENCE

Thank you.

Clarence gets up and reaches for his folder and letters. She notices the scars on his fingers. She can't help herself.

MRS. MORRISON

Do you mind if I ask? How did you...

CLARENCE

Overseas.

MRS. MORRISON

You were in the war?

CLARENCE

Yes just recently got back.

MRS. MORRISON

Can you please sit back down. Just give me a minute.

Clarence sits back down and watches as she goes into Peterson's office and begins talking to him. Both Peterson and the man look back at Clarence making him very uncomfortable. He looks away.

He takes in the room for the first time. It is a sizable dark wooded space. A bullpen before cubbies. We can see female secretaries at matching desks in front of smaller windowed offices where their male bosses reside. A row of almost floor to ceiling windows overlooking the DC city scape near the main entrance.

He sneaks a peek back at Peterson's office. Morrison is talking to the man sitting in front of Peterson. Peterson is now reading his file then looks up at Clarence.

Clarence diverts his look before getting caught.

He sees on the other side of the room two enormous wooden doors. Four other secretaries' desks lined up on either side of these grand doors. These desks are larger than the rest in the room but also matching. Behind each secretary a large wooden office door. Each door with a gold plaque bears the name of each partner.

Clarence stands up slowly. Moved by the over-powerful feeling that this was all just a bad idea. He turns to go leaving his hat on the arm of the chair.

MR. PETERSON

Mr. Di Moni

Peterson steps out of his office followed by Mrs. Morrison. Clarence turns back to them

MR. PETERSON

Clarence. Where were you station?

CLARENCE

With the forty third infantry just outside of Paris

MR. PETERSON

My son... my son was with twenty second.

CLARENCE

They're a tough group. Is he...

MR. PETERSON

No didn't make it back.

CLARENCE

Sorry to hear that.

MR. PETERSON

Yeah a lot sons didn't make it back.

Mr. Peterson is bit chocked up.

MR. PETERSON

MRS. MORRISON and I were talking that guidelines are just that guidelines. If your willing to attend some night course I think we should take a chance on you.

CLARENCE

Really? But I don't have the money for classes.

MR. PETERSON

Mrs. Morrison let's coordinate an advance so he can get himself enrolled.

MRS. MORRISON

Yes sir.

MR. PETERSON

Come back tomorrow and we will have it all worked out.

He reaches out to shake his hand. He stops.

MR. PETERSON

Does it hurt?

CLARENCE

Not much still a little tender.

Clarence reaches out to him. Peterson takes his hand gently. They shake hands. Peterson goes back into his office and closes the door behind him before everyone gets to emotional. Morrison smiles at Clarence.

MRS. MORRISON

See you tomorrow, Clarence.

CLARENCE

Yes, Thank you.

He starts for the door. She goes to her desk and notices Clarence's hat.

MRS. MORRISON

Clarence your hat.

Clarence comes back to get his hat just then loud voices can be heard filling the room as the enormous doors begin to open.

Out step all the partners, a SMALL-FRAMED MAN closing his briefcase and a LARGER MAN, Huey Long type character. The partners shake his hand goodbye and everyone seems to be happy with the outcome of whatever was discussed behind those doors. The large man begins to head for the main entrance on the other side of the room allowing us to see debonair Victor. Each partner makes a point to shake his hands. He courteously smiles and nods as he goes from one to the other. He turns to leave and a huge smile grows on his face and eyes.

Clarence shares the same expression as they walk quickly to each other.

VICTOR

Clarence!

Victor gives him a brotherly hug.

VICTOR

How are you?!

CLARENCE

Good. What are doing here?



VICTOR

On business with my father. What are you doing here?

CLARENCE

I work here.

He looks at Mrs. Robinson who smiles back at him.

VICTOR

Come on let me introduce you to the old man.

The two old friends make their way towards the main doors where the two other men from the meeting wait for them.

The sound in the room slowly gets sucked out. From afar we can see Victor introducing Clarence to his father, the larger man and the other smaller man. The greetings are more than cordial, there is a fatherly warm thank you coming from Victor's father the Huey Long like character REVEREND JOHN USHER, towards Clarence. As the men get to know each other.

USHER VOICE (V.O.)

Lord we thank you for the bounty we are about to receive. May it strengthen our minds, our hearts our soul to do your bidding.

INT. LARGE DINING HALL - AFTERNOON

In a glamorous dining hall on the ground floor of the Washington Hotel. The room is full of elites and politicians of D.C. Men of an assortment of backgrounds with the two common factors they are men and white. They sit and conspiring plans for their future wealth as well as the direction of this country in the disguise of amiable lunch conversations.

USHER (V.O.)

To bring this land your scared truth, your love and your blessed will. To drive the devil in man's soul back to flaming depths that you sent him to till man in his weakness invited it back the paradise...

In the center of the room at a round table for is our foursome enjoying a wonderful lunch.

USHER (V.O.)  
 ...here on earth created by your  
 hand and entrusted to us your  
 righteous servants. Amen.

THE GROUP (V.O.)  
 AMEN.

The Huey Long like character that is Victor's Father  
 REVEREND JOHN USHER asks a question as he takes the last  
 bite of blood red piece of steak.

USHER  
 Well Clarence? Do you have  
 siblings?

CLARENCE  
 Yes a sister. Baby sister. She is  
 four.

USHER  
 Your return a gift from God to  
 her. Just like mine was Victor's.  
 Thank God the German's finally  
 surrounded.

The little man with glasses, MR. SMITH raises his glass  
 of water.

SMITH  
 AMEN!

Clarence looks at Victor surprised.

VICTOR  
 You didn't hear. It happen few  
 days ago. It is all over.

CLARENCE  
 Thank God.

USHER  
 Yes thank GOD.

SMITH  
 Amen.

Usher sees just behind Smith, an older men watching the  
 waiter pouring a taster of expensive wine. One of the men  
 swirls the glass of wine then drinks it. Approves and the  
 waiter begins filling their glasses.

He looks around sees others enjoying their alcohol with  
 their conversation and lunch.

USHER

Look at them Smith. Indulging in the devil's brew.

SMITH

The time is near sir be sure of it.

USHER

By God's will.

Clarence look at Victor a bit confused.

VICTOR

My father's ministry brings him here to DC to meet with Mr. Wheeler.

From Clarence's blank look it is clear he has no idea what they are talking about.

USHER

Clarence, Mr. Wheeler is an individual that understands mankind's weakness with liquor is the key to the beginning steps of man's downfall. Those evil spirits are the seed to deviant acts, to acts of crime, to acts of sexual perversions.

He says it loud enough that his comment can not be ignored by the tables around them.

SMITH

Reverend Usher is here to lead a coalition of God fearing leaders to support the work of the Anti Saloon League and Mr. Wheeler.

A waiter comes around to collect their empty dishes as they continue to talk.

VICTOR

Who would have thought I'd see you again.

USHER

Clarence my son knows better. There is a grand plan and only God knows it. But if we pay attention he shares glimpse of it with us. It was not chance that brought us to the accounting firm.

(MORE)

USHER (CONT'D)

I needed to meet the man that man helped my son through his trial and pain.

CLARENCE

I did nothing sir.

USHER

Do not belittle what you have done for him. He made very clear to me how you served God by being there for him.

CLARENCE

I was friend sir that is all. We were friends to each other.

SMITH

Reverend Usher, excuse me.

He points to man that is being escorted to a nearby table.

SMITH

That is Representative Volstead. Should we take opportunity to speak to him.

USHER

Let us not pass up this opportunity for surely it is gift from God.

He gets up to leave and turns back to Victor.

USHER

Clarence I know you starting on new path but if you ever need anything remember you have home with us always.

CLARENCE

Thank you sir.

With that he heads to the table where Volstead is sitting. Smith gets up and hands Clarence a business card.

Clarence looks down at the card it reads: The Pious Congregation of Jehovah, Lesort Oklahoma. Reverend John Usher. Phone: Lesort 4716.

SMITH

It was pleasure to meet you  
Clarence.

With that he leaves to join Usher.

VICTOR

It was not just a gift from God  
trust me. Remember how I told my  
father's respect for the Catholic  
Church.

Clarence nods yes.

VICTOR

It's not only their cathedrals but  
their power and influence.  
Especially their banking and their  
politics. He plans to build his  
own Vatican in Lesort.

Clarence looks at Usher watches him charm Volstead.

VICTOR

And it was my father's will that  
his one arm son, veteran of great  
war be at his side here in DC. I'm  
his ace in the whole. Damn I could  
use a drink right now.

Clarence looks back at smiling Victor.

EXT. DC STREETS - NIGHT

It is late on the more swinging streets of DC. Two very  
attractive females step out of a DC nightclub. They are  
unmistakably inebriated and followed closely behind by  
Victor and Clarence. Victor looks down the street and  
whistles.

VICTOR

TAXI!

One of the females grabs Victor playfully and reaches  
into his jacket pocket. She pulls out a vile.

VICTOR

Leave me some you two.

The ladies giggle as they prepare to snort some cocaine.

CLARENCE

I better get going home.

VICTOR

What no! I only get a few hours  
not under the vulture eye of my  
father.

A taxi pulls up next to them. Victor opens the door to  
the cab.

VICTOR

Ladies your chariot awaits

The ladies get in. Victor smacks the butt of one of  
ladies.

VICTOR

Come play with us.

CLARENCE

I can't tomorrow is too important.

VICTOR

Now is important. Tomorrow may  
never come.

Victor looks at his friend waits for response.

VICTOR

Fine suit yourself.

Victor hops into the taxi. He is offered a snort by one  
of the ladies. He does it and then looks at Clarence.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

It is good to see you, my friend.

CLARENCE

Good to see you too.

Victor slams the door shut.

VICTOR

Drive good man!

The Taxi pulls away. Victor pops out the open window and  
yells back to Clarence.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Come down to Oklahoma soon!

Camera rises as the taxi disappears down the road.  
Clarence walks alone through the pools of amber from the  
street lights in the opposite direction.

FLORA (O.S.)

(In Spanish)

Our Father, we thank you for  
sending to us your son Jesus  
Christ,

INT. TEXAS RAIL ROAD- SHACK - NIGHT

In a small dwelling made of walls from partial canvas and  
wooden material that barely keep the elements outside.  
Homemade Mexican Christmas ornaments decorate the space.

FLORA (O.S.)

(In Spanish)

Who died for our sins so that we  
too could enter heaven and..

There is even a small handmade improvised nativity set  
made of strips of materials and found items from the  
fields

FLORA (O.S.)

(In Spanish)

...spend eternity with you and my  
loving Ramon. I love you, Ramon,  
and miss you dearly.

A sleeping area with straw piled up with a blanket for a  
bed A small fireplace doubles as a stove and heat for  
the space. On a sheet of iron sit four small tamales  
wrapped in corn husk small pot of beans. She shift to  
more Spanglish in her speech.

FLORA (O.S.)

We thank you, Dios mio, for  
watching over us as we travel the  
norte with the suenos of someday  
having a house and tierra of our  
own. We continue to find your  
blessings in whatever the dia may  
bring nosotros.

The camera lands on Mateo on the dirt floor, whose eyes  
are closed in prayer as he holds little Xavi in his arms.

FLORO (O.S)

Please protect mi hermano, Mateo  
que trabaja duro for the railroad.  
Mantener seguro, mi beautiful  
chiquito angel Xavi. As he grows  
to become un hombre fuerte, may he  
always find happiness..

The camera finally lands on Flora kneeling with her hands in prayer and eyes closed shut.

FLORA

But most importante, that he finds ways to show el mundo your unconditional Love. Amen.

She looks up to her family then Mateo speaks still with his eyes closed.

MATEO

And gracias Dios, for both Xavi, and I are so blessed to have FLORA here to take care of us as a hermana y mama. May Xavi and I always have the strength to take care of her how she takes care of us. Amen.

Mateo and Flora share a smile. She begins to serve their small but tasty Twelfth Night meal.

MATEO

Pepito and I are meeting with a new Jefe. We heard about a big job in Oklahoma.

FLORA

Oka que?

She hands him a small bowl with an unwrapped tamale for Xavi.

MATEO

O-Kla-Jo-MA.  
( to Xavi)  
Careful, it's hot.

Mateo blows on it for him, and Xavi does the same. Then Xavi carefully digs his little fingers into the tamale for a bite, ignoring the small wooded spoon.

MATEO

They say it is a two-year trabajo. We could stay in one place for a while.

Flora hands him his plate of food with a small wooden spoon.

FLORA

Me gustraia, eso mucho.



They eat quietly for a moment. Flora keeps looking at her two men and smiles. It is like she has a secret she wants to share so bad and will explode if she doesn't share. Mateo can tell something is up.

MATEO

Ya dale. You know you can't wait..

Flora rises with a huge smile and walks over to the makeshift bed.

FLORA

Lo Se. I know.

She removes two small bundles hidden in the straw and rejoins them near the fire. She hands the larger bundle to her brother.

FLORA

This one is for you.

MATEO

Ahh, Flora, gracias. Me sento malo  
I have nothing for you.

FLORA

You give me something every day  
with how you care for the baby and  
me.

He puts Xavi on the floor next to him as well as his plate. He takes the bundle and unwraps it. It is a beautiful hand-sown linen-type shirt with embroidery.

MATEO

Oh, Flora, this is so beautiful.

FLORA

It's so the chicas can see que  
guapo you are at the dances. Time  
to start thinking about en esposa  
y familia.

MATEO

Tu' and Xavi are my familia. I  
don't need more than that. But  
gracias.

FLORA

Xavi, mi amor, come here. Mama has  
something for you?

Xavi pops up and, excited, goes over to join his mom. He sits on her lap as she puts a smaller bundle in front of him.

FLORA

Why don't you let Mama open it for you? Tu' manos are a mess.

She begins to unwrap the bundle, and Xavi gets impatient. He tries to lick his hand clean so he can help.

FLORA

Patience, mi amor.

Xavi's eyes widen with joy as he sees what is in the bundle.

It is a pair of handcrafted slipper-type shoes with emerald-colored satin laces.

FLORA ( O.S.)

For Sunday, when we go to church.

INT. MARCUS'S HARLEM APT - DAY

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In a small but homey apartment that has a feminine touch in the decor sits MARCUS half undressed in his uniform near an open window, smoking a cigarette. YOUNG SAMUEL, about five years old, plays on the floor with some toy soldiers. MARCUS watches his son as he plays. He looks to a small table nearby and a photo of him, a younger version of his son, and his beautiful wife. A happy moment that is captured in this single frame. He reaches over and grabs the photo

NATE, his father, a skinny man from the south comes in the front door with a brown bag of groceries. He sees his son looking at the picture. He doesn't say a word but heads over to the kitchen area. He begins to put the food in the small refrigerator on a stick. As he finishes putting things away, he keeps an eye on his son.

NATE

You know she'd wan' you to do what's bes' for that little one.

MARCUS does not respond.

Nate opens the two beers and then crosses over to him. He hands a rock candy on a stick to young Cal. He gives MARCUS a beer.

NATE

I talked to yur sister again yesterday. They think they have enuf to open up that hardware sto'.

Still nothing from MARCUS.

NATE

They really want you to come down there and help 'em run it.

MARCUS

I can't even say goodbye to her if we go. She is buried in an unmarked mass grave. How is that right Pop?!

NATE

I'm not sayin' its right but with all those deaths from that sickness what were they suppo' to do?

MARCUS puts down the picture frame and takes a long swig of his beer.

MARCUS

Still don't know if it's right. Is moving to Tulsa the answer.

NATE

Son. I know you've been through a lot with the war and Betty's death, but as lovely as that parade was for you and res' of the boys, do you really think it's going to change anythin' for us colored folks.

MARCUS goes over and picks ups young Cal.

MARCUS

I have to hope so for him. What do you think, Cal, should we move down to Tulsa?

Young Samuel keeps sucking on his candy and nods his head yes. \*

NATE

See, even that yougin' knows it a good idea.

(MORE)

NATE (CONT'D)

Let's go spen' some time with  
family in a place where it looks  
like we can build somethin'.

MARCUS

So you want to go to Tulsa.

Young Cal nods yes again. MARCUS smiles and kisses his  
son on the forehead.

INT. WASHINGTON DC TENEMENT - DAY

A high ankle male shoe leaves a wet shoe print as it hits  
the tread of the stairs.

Clarence flies around the second landing and heads up the  
stairs up to the faintly lit third floor. The snow that  
has gathered on his nice suit but this time his own,  
better fitting. Supporting a Bristol hat slightly moist  
from melting snow and pyramid mustache he stops mid  
stairs to see Iris standing in a loose robe.

IRIS

I'm sorry it was just gettin' so  
bad. I didn't know what to do so I  
called your work.

CLARENCE

It is okay.

IRIS

Its quiet now.

CLARENCE

For how long?

IRIS

Minute or two at most.

He timidly rounds around the banister and passes by her.  
The silent door seems to stares back at him and distance  
seems top grow with every step. The creak of the wooden  
floor with every step fills the hallway.

In what feels like an eternity he finally reaches the  
door to his family's apartment. Under the watchful eyes  
of Iris, he slowly turns the knob of the door of his  
family's apartment. The creak of the door is louder than  
those that came from the floor. The light of the room  
inside invades the dark hallway and wraps around Clarence  
accompanied by muffled sounds of the baby crying.

His POV of inside his family dwelling. His father wide eyed as a small waterfall of blood pulses out his neck due to the fork embedded deeply just below his chin. He sits at the family table cup of tea still hot in front of him. He faces the door. Sees his son as the last breath of life escapes him.

Clarence is frozen at the doorway.

Beyond his father stands his mother holding the baby Jeannette. She holds her so tightly she smothering the baby's cries. His mother's own tears ran down her face.

SYLVIA

Why did you make me do that?

She sits on the window ledge of the open window near the kitchen talking to an unseen person.

SYLVIA

Tell me what to do?

Behind her the brick of the building across the alley and gently falling snow. She takes her weeping eyes from her unseen person to her dead husband then to the statue of her son in the doorway.

SYLVIA

Sorry my love.

Something in how she said those last words he knows her intention. He races towards her. She leans out the open window baby in hand.

Her parallax view of the white powder falling from a grey sky.

Gravity and physics taking hold of her body and pushing her down towards the thin carpet of untouched snow.

It looks like Clarence will not be able to move fast enough to reach them. Iris's face acknowledges the horror as she steps into the door in the background.

Sylvia's legs are about to clear the ledge. Her waist and head disappear from view.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

A gauntlet gloved hand grasps at a loose cotton cloth. With a quick firm grip, it yanks...

... the baby from Sarah's hands. She continues to fall with outstretched arms.

INT. LIVING ROOM AREA - CONTINUOUS

Clarence holds the wailing baby tight as the thud of Sarah's body hitting the ground can be heard. He looks to see...

... Her mangled body below. A red pool of blood staining the virgin white snow.

He turns away from the horror below. He slides down the wall. His mouth opens in a guttural scream but no noise comes out.

There is no accurate sound in the room but a reverberating noise of distant thunder, barely audible artillery. His view of Iris moving toward him speaking but again no words can be heard. As she nears him the room seems to fill up with green smoke. As the cloud starts to engulf her skin begins to bubble.

Clarence still in mid-scream, eyes widen in fear in what he is seeing.

The female figure torso of Iris breaks through the billowing green smoke but as it leans in Clarence it is not Iris but Jesse's face screaming at him.

BLACK OUT

END CREDITS BEGIN. IN BETWEEN CREDITS PHOTOS OF EVENTS OR HEADLINES FROM 1917 THROUGH 1918 SIDE BY SIDE TO EVENTS OR HEADLINES OF TODAY THAT THEY MIRROR.

END OF EPISODE

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