

PEACE CRIMES

THE MINNESOTA EIGHT vs. THE WAR

by Doris Baizley

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c/o Morgan Jenness
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WORKING DRAFT
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PEACE CRIMES:

THE MINNESOTA EIGHT vs. THE WAR

An ensemble piece for 8 actors (5 male, 3 female). 4 actors will each play two of the Minnesota 8. The 2 Judges will be played by the other 4 company members.

CAST:

ACTOR 1. (African-American Woman, 20-30's)

Deborah Johnson, Fred Hampton's wife - Draft Counselor - Army Nurse - Raider - Staughton Lynd - Prosecutor - Mrs. Tilton - and others.

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

Diane - Young Woman at the Wall - Father Al Janicke - Judge - Mrs. Beneke - Student Reporter and others.

ACTOR 3. (Older White Woman, 40's)

Court Clerk - Mom in Green Sweater - Judge - Female Guard - Reporter - Mrs. Simmons - Daniel Ellsberg and others.

ACTOR 4. (African-American Man, 30-40's)

Judge - Prison Guard - Reporter - Fred Hampton - Joe, a Young Vet - Earl Craig - Mr. Beneke - Mr. Turchick and others.

ACTOR 5. (Young White Man, 20's)

Mike Theriault - tie-dye t-shirt.
Pete Simmons - blue denim work-shirt & wire rim glasses.
Young Soldier.

ACTOR 6. (White Man, 30-40's)

Frank Kroncke - black frame glasses & black turtleneck.
Bill Tilton - untucked white shirt, old sports jacket & cigarettes.

ACTOR 7. (White Man, 20's-30's)

Brad Beneke - white t-shirt & jeans.
Don Olson - black frame glasses & tie-dye Indian shirt.

ACTOR 8. (White Man, 20's-30's)

Chuck Turchick - polo shirt & stocking cap.
Cliff Ulen - plaid shirt & jeans.

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

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

Trial Version
www.scansoft.com

ACT 1.

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

ACTOR 1

1965. US death toll in Vietnam this year: 1,369.

ACTOR 2

1966. US death toll in Vietnam this year: 5,008.

ACTOR 3

1967. US death toll in Vietnam this year: 9,378.

ACTOR 4

1968. US death toll in Vietnam this year: 14,592.

ACTOR 5

1969. US death toll in Vietnam -

Suddenly CLIFF (Actor 8) comes forward, upset, holding an open letter.

CLIFF

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

THREE WOMEN (Actors 3, 2, 1) approach him from different sides.

ACTOR 3

1-A?

CLIFF

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

ACTOR 3

You can't do that -

CLIFF

I have to -

ACTOR 2

No you don't. You can't.

ACTOR 1

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

ACTOR 2

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

ACTOR 1

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

CLIFF

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

ACTOR 1

So you'd rather go to Vietnam?

CLIFF

NO. It's just -

ACTOR 2

You could burn it.

CLIFF

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

ACTOR 2

You could say no. You could refuse induction -

CLIFF

And get arrested? Go to jail?

ACTOR 3

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

CLIFF

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

ACTOR 1

But we just told you -

CLIFF

THAT ISN'T A CHOICE.

SUDDENLY: ACTORS 5, 6, 7 enter.

ACTORS 5,6, 7

ATTENTION ALL DRAFT AGE MEN OF MORRISON COUNTY!

ACTOR 6

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

ACTOR 2

Do you want your life?

ACTOR 7

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

ACTOR 5

We've done our part to give you back your life. The rest is up to you.

CLIFF (8) joins them:

ACTORS 5,6,7,8

SAY NO TO DEATH. SAY YES TO LIFE!

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

CLERK

The United States of America versus Clifton Ulen....Donald Henry Olson....

DON (7 in glasses and Indian shirt - steps forward)

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

CLERK

Michael Duane Therrault.

MIKE (5 in tie-dye t-shirt steps forward)

I did something that for me was right at the time, that's all.

CLERK

Charles Larry Turchick...

CHUCK (8 in knit cap)

I have no regrets about what we did.

(a smile)

What we didn't plan on was getting caught!

CHUCK exits.

CLERK

Brad K. Beneke...

BRAD (7 in white t-shirt, steps forward)

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

CLERK

William Leo Tilton...

BILL (6 in sports jacket- steps forward)

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

BRAD exits.

PETE (5 in denim shirt & glasses, steps forward)

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

(looks over at the COURT CLERK)

Peter Simmons.

He exits.

CLERK

Francis Xavier Kroncke...

ACTOR 6 steps forward as FRANK. ACTOR 4 puts on JUDGE's robe.

JUDGE

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

(nothing from FRANK)

Mr. Kroncke - ? Guilty or not guilty?

(still nothing)

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

FRANK (softly, to the judge)

No.

DIANE'S VOICE

Frank?

FRANK

For me, it's always there...

FRANK walks into new scene:

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

DIANE

It's Brad. He sounds kinda wound up -

FRANK

Beneke? On the phone?

DIANE

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

FRANK

Right.

BRAD (from phone booth)

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

FRANK goes to phone. DIANE leaves with a knapsack.

FRANK

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

BRAD

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

FRANK

What's happening? You sound weird...

BRAD

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

FRANK

Damn. Silent Knight's at work huh...

BRAD

I hope it's just him.

FRANK

What about the others?

BRAD

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

DIANE re-enters.

DIANE

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

FRANK (to DIANE)

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

BRAD

Frank - ? You there?

FRANK

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

BRAD

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

FRANK

Why wouldn't they?

BRAD

You getting paranoid or what?

FRANK

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

BRAD

Wanna talk about it?

FRANK

I'm ok, Brad.

BRAD

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

FRANK

No. We're not canceling.

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

Little Falls is on.

BRAD

God blesses the peace makers, Francis X.

FRANK

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

BRAD

What?

FRANK

Nothing. Peace, Brad.

BRAD

Peace now, man.

Hangs up. Exits.

DIANE

What was that about canceling?

FRANK

Selective Service is getting busy. Since the Beaver 55 raid they've started putting in alarm systems.

DIANE

Wow. You guys better take an electrician with you.

FRANK

That's not in the plan.

DIANE

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

FRANK

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

DIANE

Is Brad nervous?

FRANK

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

DIANE

Breathe, Frank. It's gonna be fine. Remember when we did the Beaver 55 raid. The Post Office building had alarm systems and we all got out of there ok. And that was like 20 or 30 people...

FRANK

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

DIANE

Don't start getting like that... You know you're not alone in this.

FRANK

That's not what it feels like.

DIANE

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

FRANK

Wow... you're good...

DIANE

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

FRANK

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

DIANE

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

She starts out. FRANK doesn't move.

FRANK (soft, to himself)

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

DIANE

Frank - ? Are you sure you're ok?

FRANK

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

DIANE

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

FRANK

For you maybe.

DIANE

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

FRANK (irritated)

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

DIANE

Ok. Alright. Do the breathing anyway.

FRANK

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

DIANE

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

FRANK

Right. Yeah. Sorry.
(pause)

Diane?

DIANE

Yes?

FRANK

Nothing. Never mind.

DIANE

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

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

ACTOR 4

July 10. Two members of a congressional fact-finding team have condemned conditions in a South Vietnamese Prison -

ACTOR 3

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

ACTOR 1

President Nixon has appointed a new leader for US delegation at the stalled Paris Peace talks -

ACTOR 3

July Corn Crop Estimates predict a record yield for 1970 -

ACTOR 4

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

THE CAR. FRANK at the wheel. MIKE (Actor 5) rides.

ACTOR 4

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

MIKE

Could you please turn it off?

FRANK turns off the radio. COMPANY exits.

FRANK

Better?

MIKE

Yeah.

(pause)

Nice night...

FRANK

Could do without that moon.

MIKE

Beautiful country around here...

FRANK

Yeah.

MIKE

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

FRANK

It's weird, huh...

MIKE

What's weird?

FRANK

So many French names...

MIKE

I guess...

FRANK

So many little villes...

MIKE

Too hot if you ask me....

FRANK

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

MIKE

....so damn humid....

FRANK

Just like over there....

MIKE

Ok. We're getting close....

FRANK

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

MIKE

Five miles to Little Falls.

FRANK

Farm kids from here going six thousand miles to kill farm kids from there...

MIKE

We take the next turnoff...

FRANK

It's like you can see them.... So many faces... So many dead...

(MIKE looks over at him. Says nothing)

"These my body's bones and blood.... These my spirit's breaths and nourishments" ...

MIKE

Frank -

FRANK

Yeah. I know. Talking too much.

MIKE

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

FRANK

Each of those draft cards equals a life.

MIKE

Yep.

FRANK

We're gonna do it no matter what.

MIKE

That's right.

FRANK

No second thoughts?

MIKE

No.

FRANK

How come?

MIKE

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

FRANK

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

MIKE

I don't know. My younger brothers, I guess... I look at them and I think - man, I will do anything to make sure you don't have to go to war if you don't want to. So. That's it. That's what I've gotta do.

Pause. Frank looks over at MIKE.

FRANK (a look over at Mike)

I'd give anything for your calm.

MIKE (looking out)

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

FRANK

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

A smile from Mike.

FRANK

Ok I'll shut up.

MIKE

Let's go over the plan.

FRANK

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

MIKE

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

FRANK

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

MIKE

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

FRANK

Yeah. I'm with you.

(pause)

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

MIKE

Lighter fluid? Damn! You never said -

FRANK

I want those files.

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

ACTOR 1

Creaking wooden steps.

ACTOR 2

Door to the file room...

ACTOR 3

Selective Service Headquarters...

ACTOR 4

Little Falls....

MIKE and FRANK with flashlights, move toward file cabinet.

ACTOR 1

Winona...

BRAD enters Winona area with flashlight.

ACTOR 2

Alexandria...

CHUCK enters Alexandria area with flashlight.

MIKE (stops suddenly)

I think I hear someone -

FRANK

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

SOUND: a crash.

BRAD (in his area)

Damn... this glass is reinforced -

FRANK (in his area)

I can't get this lock open...

CHUCK (in his area)

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

SUDDENLY - COMPANY in silhouette, from the shadows:

FBI VOICE (Actor 4 and others)

BACK AWAY FROM THE DOOR.

MIKE

Frank?

FBI VOICE

BACK AWAY FROM THE DOOR. NOW.

BRAD

Don...? Pete -

FBI VOICE

DON'T MOVE

CHUCK

Bill...? Cliff -

FBI VOICE

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

ALL FREEZE.

FBI VOICE (Actor 4, low)

Looks like we caught us some Beavers...

BLACKOUT.

SOUND: Sirens. Shouts. Flashing red strobes.

OUTSIDE HENNEPIN COUNTY JAIL. A Street Demonstration in progress.

COMPANY

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

ACTOR 1

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

ACTOR 2

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

ACTOR 3

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

ACTOR 1

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

ACTOR 4

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

ACTOR 2

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

Rally sounds continue under

FEMALE GUARD'S VOICE (Actor 3):

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

INSIDE HENNEPIN COUNTY JAIL. CLIFF (Actor 8) nervously pacing.
PETE (Actor 5) quiet in a corner. BILL (Actor 6) reading a newspaper.
DON (Actor 7) looking for his glasses.

CLIFF

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

DON

Where are my glasses? Anybody see my glasses?

CLIFF

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

DON

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

PETE

Reading can be a dangerous weapon, Don.

BILL (with newspaper)

Yeah. Check this out. This is GREAT.

DON

It'd be better if I had my GLASSES.

BILL

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

CLIFF

This is news?

DON

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

BILL

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

DON

That's good. Diane must have called them.

BILL

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

CLIFF

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

BILL

"Further protests are threatened..."

PETE

Cool. Maybe they'll break us out.

BILL

Plus a vigil and a fast to support the protestors -

CLIFF

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

DON

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

BILL (offering a cigarette)

Here you go Cliff.

CLIFF

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

PETE

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

CLIFF

I can't eat that stuff...

DON

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

CLIFF

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

BILL

What? You're the only one with a family now?

PETE

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

CLIFF

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

PETE

I hate it.

CLIFF

No kidding. Did you see those guys in the holding cell? You want to spend the next however many years with them?

DON

I talked to one guy down there. He's been waiting here a year for his trial...

CLIFF (to PETE)

We can talk as high and mighty as we want, what's it gonna be like next year? - or the year after that - ? You hear me, Pete? You hear what I'm saying? Are you ready for that?

PETE

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

BILL

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

CLIFF

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

DON

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

CLIFF

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

DON

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

CLIFF

Very funny.

BILL

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

CLIFF

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

DON

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

CLIFF

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

BILL

I think he's quoting Pope John.

DON

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

CLIFF

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

DON

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

CLIFF

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

BILL

We argue to get the bail lowered.

CLIFF

We can do that?

BILL

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

CLIFF

How do you know they're doing that?

BILL

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

DON (with infinite patience)

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

CLIFF

Right. Trust. Like Brad trusted these raids would work. With a hundred FBI agents out

here...? Probably tapping our phones...

DON (at CLIFF)

Or planting somebody inside the group to inform on us...

CLIFF

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

BILL

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

PETE

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

BILL

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

DON

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

CLIFF

Like you haven't done that already.

PETE

Could you please be quiet?

CLIFF

Maybe I will have that smoke.

BILL

Sorry man, they're gone.

(Shows empty pack)

Looks like the war ate my cigarettes.

DON

Guess the war ate my glasses too...

CLIFF

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

BILL

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

CLIFF

Great...

DON

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

CLIFF

Nothing good about last year. I got classified 1-A....

DON

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

PETE

Just like our flyers told you to...

BILL

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

CLIFF walks into new scene.

1969 TWIN CITIES DRAFT INFORMATION CENTER. DRAFT COUNSELOR (Actor 1) reviews checklist with CLIFF (Actor 8).

DRAFT COUNSELOR

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

CLIFF

Jesus.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Did you play football?

CLIFF

No.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

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

CLIFF

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Take the manual home. Study Army Regulations 40-50l. Peacetime Draft Standards.

CLIFF

Peacetime???

DRAFT COUNSELOR

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

CLIFF

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

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

CLIFF

I was joking.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Oh.

(a look, not sure this is funny)

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

CLIFF

Right.

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

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

CLIFF

Damn.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

What's wrong?

CLIFF

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

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

CLIFF

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Maybe you should talk to another counselor.

CLIFF (starts to leave)

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

Suddenly. JOE steps in, blocks him.

JOE

No.

CLIFF

Huh?

JOE

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

CLIFF

Shit. You've been there?

JOE

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

CLIFF

Ok, man. Right on. I hear you.

JOE (pause; the thousand-yard stare)

No you don't.

CLIFF (to Counselor)

Guess I will take those pamphlets.

DRAFT COUNSELOR

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

CLIFF

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

CLIFF gathers pamphlets & leaves. JOE stays there, watching him go.

JOE

I was 16. I wanted to go. I wanted to serve. I fought for freedom. I did what I was supposed to do. Good work - Right? They all said Good Work. I did good work. RIGHT?

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Joe.. . Are you here to see Frank?

JOE

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

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

JOE

Can he forgive me? Forgive me for killing my family? Can he forgive me for that? Can he stop the nightmares? Can he keep me from killing my family?

DRAFT COUNSELOR

You didn't kill your family, Joe.

JOE

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Remember the prayer Frank gave you?

JOE

I remember everything...

DRAFT COUNSELOR (bows her head)

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

JOE (soft & mean, under the prayer)

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Take fire and burn away our guilt...

JOE

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

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

JOE

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Heal their wounded souls and minds and bodies.

JOE

MAKE THEM BEG FOR MORE -

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Joe - calm down ok -

JOE

Where's Frank? I want Frank -

DRAFT COUNSELOR

Be patient -

JOE

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

DRAFT COUNSELOR

I'll call Frank.

DRAFT COUNSELOR exits as FRANK enters on one side,
speaking at the Newman Center.

FRANK

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

JOE

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

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

MOM IN GREEN SWEATER

Dear Mom and Dad, Good news. I have been reassigned to the 2nd battalion 9th artillery in Chu Lai where I will be working as their forward observer...

JOE

I hate our government now. I hate em.

FRANK

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

MOM

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

JOE

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

FRANK

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

JOE

...lying corrupt bastards ..

MOM

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

JOE

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

FRANK

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

MOM

Keep those chocolate chip cookies coming, folks. Love to both of you..

JOE

It makes me sick all the time.

MOM

Rob.

LIGHTS DOWN on MOM and JOE as FRANK continues:

FRANK

When you take your draft card you are saying This is war. I am willing to go to war. I am willing to commit acts of violence.

TRIAL. Forms around FRANK, now testifying in court. ACTOR 2 enters, putting on the black robe as JUDGE NEVILLE.

FRANK

We contend that among other demonic things, the idea and the acceptance of war, with all of its violence, visible and invisible, is the primary source of the enslavement of man - both physical and spiritual enslavement.

JUDGE (out; to the Jury)

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

FRANK

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

JUDGE

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

FRANK

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

JUDGE

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

JUDGE addresses the jury:

JUDGE

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

BLACKOUT.

GUARD'S VOICE (Actor 4)

Turchick!

PRISON, 1972. A typewriter. CHUCK TURCHICK (Actor 8 in prison uniform and stocking cap) at typewriter table. GUARD (Actor 4) enters.

GUARD

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

CHUCK

You're on.

CHUCK starts typing. GUARD watches.

GUARD

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

CHUCK

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

GUARD

Divide-and-conquer, right?

CHUCK

Right. Five of us got Judge Devitt, two got the liberal Neville, but it didn't make any difference except they got to call more witnesses. Our trials lasted about two days. Juries took about 20 minutes to return the verdicts -

GUARD

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

CHUCK

Just me. The rest got sent all over the place. Pete Simmons to the Youth Center in Colorado - Brad Beneke somewhere in Kentucky - Don Olson to some kind of Medical Center for Prisons in Missouri...

ANOTHER PRISON: DON OLSON (Actor 7) in medical whites and prison khakis, typing at another typing table.

CHUCK

Bill Tilton to Milan in Michigan...

ANOTHER PRISON: BILL TILTON (Actor 6) in prison uniform, cigarette pack folded in shirt sleeve, loading boxes on a dolly.

CHUCK

Our judge never allowed in any defense. No mention of the war. No evidence - books, films, photographs - personal statements only. Then we could talk about anything.

GUARD

And you did.

CHUCK

Tilton and me? Boy did we... and it wasn't easy - the way Devitt ran his courtroom -

GUARD

Tough.

CHUCK

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

GUARD

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

CHUCK

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

BILL (from his area)

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

CHUCK

Which means - for every thousand cards we stole, maybe 234 lives were saved.

GUARD

Good math..

CHUCK

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

DON (from his typing table)

Colonel Robert P. Knight. Don't forget that. He never did...

BILL (from his dolly)

Or as we called him - Silent Knight.

CHUCK

He goes on about how all young males in America must sign up with the Selective Service System regardless of physical, mental or religious condition...How it's the first duty of the citizen at age 18... How the draft system operates etc. etc. On the subject of the draftee death count, he's got nothing to say.

GUARD

"Not my job," right?

CHUCK

Bingo. Then Bill jumps up from the defense table -

BILL

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

CHUCK

The prosecutor declares:

DON

Objection!

BILL

Objection immaterial!

GUARD

Objection sustained!

CHUCK

Right. But Tilton keeps going...

BILL

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

GUARD

We are not asking you!

BILL

It amazes me!

CHUCK

Shit. Tilton was good.

GUARD

Watch the language, Turchick.

BILL

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

BILL & CHUCK & DON

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

All crack up.

GUARD

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

BILL

No more questions.

CHUCK (bitter, to himself)

Yeah, no more questions...

DON

No questions at all. They made real certain of that.

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

FEMALE GUARD

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

DON

Gotta talk to somebody who'll listen.

GUARD (to CHUCK)

Back to your cell, Turchick...

FEMALE GUARD

You can knock off now...

BOTH GUARDS

It's time for count.

CHUCK & DON leave.

BILL (6)

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

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

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

SOLDIER

Ma'am...?

ARMY NURSE

Yes, lieutenant...?

SOLDIER

Rob's ok.

NURSE

You need something, Rob?

SOLDIER

It's depressing...

NURSE

Pardon?

SOLDIER

That song.

NURSE

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

SOLDIER

You know any Beach Boys?

NURSE

That's not really my style..

SOLDIER

Oh c'mon... you know some.
(starts singing weakly)

*Those east coast girls are hip...
I really dig the styles they wear...*

NURSE (takes over, softly)

*And the Southern girls with the way they talk
They knock me out when I'm down there...*

SOLDIER

Yeah...that's it...

DIANE enters at other side, joining in:

DIANE

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

BRAD (7), CHUCK (8) and FRANK (6) join her as NURSE and SOLDIER continue:

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

SONG continues under:

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

A MEETING PLACE. MINNEAPOLIS, 1969. DIANE, BRAD, FRANK and CHUCK gather.

BRAD

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

DIANE

Hi.

FRANK

Hi...

BRAD

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

FRANK

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

BRAD

You'll find out next month. There's a meeting next month in Chicago. Al Janicke's coming, plus maybe the Berrigans and more folks from Baltimore and Milwaukee. We want to plan an action for Minneapolis...

CHUCK

What kind of action?

BRAD

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

DIANE

Beaver 55? That's a pretty awful name.

FRANK

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

DIANE

It's still an awful name.

NURSE/SOLDIER/COMPANY (under)

The West coast has the sunshine And the girls all get so tanned.....

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

NURSE/SOLDIER/COMPANY

*I dig a French bikini - an Hawaiian island
Dolls by a palm tree in the sand....*

CHUCK

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

DIANE

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

FRANK

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

BRAD

We'll be waiting ten hours up there?

DIANE

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

FRANK

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

DIANE

Gotta happen sometime!

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

BRAD

When we get to the office we punch open locks on the cabinets with hammers and screw drivers. Then we take the 1-A files, spray paint out the names - tear em up -

CHUCK

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

FRANK

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

BRAD

God, Frank... give it a rest.

DIANE

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

CHUCK

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

NURSE/COMPANY

*Well I been all around this great big world,
And I seen all kinds of girls
Yeah but I couldn't wait to get back in the states
Back to the cutest girls in the world...*

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

DIANE

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

COMPANY

I wish they all could be California -

REPORTER (Actor 3)

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

COMPANY

I wish they all could be California -

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

COMPANY

I wish they all could be California -

REPORTER (Actor 3)

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

COMPANY

I wish they all could be California - girls...

SINGING fades out. REPORTERS exit. NURSE pulls sheet over SOLDIER's body. Pause, then:

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

FRANK (whispering)

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

DIANE

Security's on the ground floor...

BRAD (handing out supplies)

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

CHUCK

Oh yeah – we're gonna bust it up!

FRANK

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

CHUCK

Like I said – let's not bust it up!

DIANE

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

CHUCK

Ain't easy. You ever tried bending typewriter keys?

BRAD

I gotta piss so bad.

FRANK

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

BRAD

Good. I'll tell the others...

CHUCK

1:59. It's time.

FRANK

Shall we say a blessing ?

BRAD

Come on, Frank...

FRANK

Joking -

BRAD

Ok - it's 2:00 - let's move -

DIANE

Wait -

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

MOM

I am standing vigil before the White House tonight because my son Robert died in Vietnam on December 10. I had a chance to stop him from going and I didn't say anything because I didn't want to do the wrong thing. Now I say it's time to stop being so goddamned right and do something. When there is a flood, when there is a fire, when there is a disaster, Americans send in airlifts to help all the people. Well, I think Vietnam is the biggest disaster that ever happened to America and I want them to send in airlifts and get our children out. This is an emergency. WE ARE KILLING OUR KIDS. Do you hear me, Mr. President? Do you hear what I'm saying? THIS IS AN EMERGENCY.

SUDDENLY: THE RAID. A LOUD CRASH as the filing cabinets are pushed center stage and slammed together.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

February, 1970. Beaver 55 strikes St. Paul!

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

DIANE

Here's at least a hundred not going!

CHUCK

I hereby declare you guys - liberated!

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

ACTOR 1 and MIKE (5) enter, bringing on framed pictures of Nixon and J. Edgar Hoover.

ACTOR 1

Look who we found!

(Spray paints the portrait)

Take this, tricky Dick!

MIKE sprays the Hoover portrait.

MIKE

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

CHUCK

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

REPORTER (Actor 3)

Thousands of 1-A draft cards and draft files along with ledger books and cross references were destroyed. This took out all the records of 45 centralized rural boards housed in the US Postal Service towers in downtown St. Paul.

FRANK

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

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

FRANK

Sun's coming up. Work faster.

CHUCK

Damn. My hands are getting sore...

REPORTER (Actor 3)

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

BRAD

Welcome to the free world, boys!

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

FRANK

Go in peace, guys...

FRANK empties his garbage bag.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

CHUCK empties his garbage bag.

CHUCK

Give my regards to New Orleans!

MIKE

Peace and Love, brothers...

DIANE and ACTOR 1

Peace and Love!

They empty their garbage bags.

REPORTER (Actor 3)

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

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

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

RAIDERS

WOOO HOOO!

BRAD

Everybody's out? Everybody made it?

FRANK

Full count. Everybody's safe!

DIANE

Let's start calling the papers.

They exit.

CONSERVATIVE REPORTER (Actor 3)

They are hoodlums, vandals and thieves. They painted the walls. They defaced the President's portrait. What they are doing is treason pure and simple.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

CONSERVATIVE REPORTER (Actor 3)

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

MEETING PLACE. DON (7), CHUCK (8), MIKE (5)

DON

Ok. So. What's next?

CHUCK and MIKE start at the same time.

CHUCK

I've been talking to Brad -

MIKE

Frank said he thought -

DON

ORDER! One at a time.

MIKE

Cool. Don the Anarchist calls for order.

DON

Chuck, what'd Brad say?

CHUCK

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

DON

Sounds like fun.

MIKE

Yeah, I can just see you - attracting FBI agents like flies.

CHUCK

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

MIKE

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

DON

No. Think about the opposite.

CHUCK

What opposite? Jail?

DON

No. (pause) We surface. We go to the U and hold a press conference. We say that "we accept political and moral responsibility for the Beaver action, but that "we're not saying that we did it." It works on a legal basis. They can't arrest us for that.

MIKE

Sounds good. Scary, but good.

DON

Right. That's the point. If we can risk putting out what we did - and why - we can be read and criticized. We can learn from that. We can change and grow. Whatta you think, Chuck?

CHUCK

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

DON

So?

CHUCK

Let's do it.

DON

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

MIKE

It's still just words.

CHUCK

What's wrong with that? Words have power.

MIKE

Yeah, but they get twisted. Action's where the truth is.

DON

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

BILL (Actor 6) enters.

BILL

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

DON

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

BILL

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

They exit. COMPANY changes set - time passing - as:

ACTOR 2

March - Pete speaks at St. Catherine's... April - Frank speaks at Carleton... Brad at North Dakota State.... Don at the U of Minnesota Duluth... Chuck at St. Cloud -

CHUCK (re-entering)

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

REPORTERS enter.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

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

ACTOR 1 (entering)

Sandra Lee Shreuer, 20 -

ACTOR 3 (entering)

Allison B. Krause, 19 -

ACTOR 2

Jeffrey Miller, 20 -

ACTOR 4

William K. Shroeder, 19

REPORTER (3)

The firing of 16 shots lasted approximately 13 seconds.

REPORTER (Actor 1)

May 14, 1970. Jackson State College. Jackson Mississippi. National Guardsmen open fire on a student demonstration killing -

ACTOR 1

Philip Gibbs, 20 -

ACTOR 2

James Earl Green, 18 - a high school student.

REPORTER (Actor 4)

All persons killed or injured by gunshots were Black.

REPORTERS exit as BRAD (7) enters.

BRAD

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

MIKE

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

BRAD

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

CHUCK and MIKE leave as BRAD walks into new scene.

BRAD

We're gonna light up Minnesota!

A ROOM. FRANK packing. DIANE helping.

DIANE

I thought we vetoed the ring of fire idea.

BRAD

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

FRANK

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

BRAD

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

FRANK

Diane?

DIANE

I can't do it. We've got the Women's Clinic running full time now. You know I'd like you to stay here, but I can't decide for you.

FRANK

What about the others?

BRAD

Tilton's on for sure. Then we get Turchick, Olson, Simmons...I've got a list of new guys ready to join in. Whatta you say, Frank?

Pause. Silence from FRANK.

DIANE

What are you thinking?

FRANK

About that letter from the Bishop. Since I started talking about the Beaver action, he's barred me from speaking from the pulpit. The Catholics haven't said a word.

DIANE

So this would be your final breakaway from the church.

FRANK

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

BRAD

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

FRANK

A spiritual experience.

BRAD

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

FRANK

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

BRAD

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

DIANE

Don't even joke with Frank about that....

BRAD

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

FRANK

Yeah. You're right.

DIANE

You're gonna do it?

FRANK

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

BRAD

Right on. Little Falls is gonna fall big!

BRAD, DIANE & FRANK start out. Stop as: FBI voices are heard:

FBI VOICE

Back away from the door.

ANOTHER FBI VOICE

Back away from the door. Now.

ANOTHER FBI VOICE

Don't move. Or you're dead!

All freeze, as:

GUARD'S VOICE

Turchick!

PRISON GUARD (Actor 4) enters with a broom. CHUCK enters from other side: stops and surveys the mess of paper on the floor.

CHUCK

Clean up on aisle seven...?

GUARD

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

He hands CHUCK the broom and exits.

CHUCK

Oh yeah. This is a real good time.

CHUCK starts sweeping up the paper.

BLACKOUT.

END ACT 1.

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INTERMISSION: As AUDIENCE is returning.

JUDGE (Actor 4) enters.

JUDGE

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

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

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

JUDGE exits. HOUSE LIGHTS DOWN for:

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ACT 2.

LIGHTS COME UP on two areas:

SIMMONS' HOME. PETE (Actor 5) plays guitar & sings something like Phil Ochs, "I Ain't Marching Anymore." MRS. SIMMONS (Actor 3) reads a newspaper.

A ROOM. FRANK (Actor 6) sits on the floor, typing. A pile of pages next to him. JUDGE (Actor 4 in black robe) appears.

JUDGE

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

FRANK stops typing, remembering.

JUDGE

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

He exits. MRS. SIMMONS throws down the paper.

MRS. SIMMONS

God, I can't read this anymore.

PETE

What Mom - ?

MRS. SIMMONS

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

PETE

Molly Ivins called us Idealists.

MRS. SIMMONS

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

PETE

And you believe them?

MRS. SIMMONS

Of course not. But why keep it going longer than you have to? You made your statement with the raids. Why not just plead guilty like that other boy - take the five years probation and get it over with?

PETE

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

MRS. SIMMONS

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

PETE

It's not rhetoric if we can explain it.

MRS. SIMMONS

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

PETE

I think it's worth trying.

MRS. SIMMONS

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

PETE

I can't believe you're saying this. You - I thought you - I mean - You're the one who started this. You always said serve your community - serve your community -

MRS. SIMMONS

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

PETE

You got me against this war. You marched. You protested. I mean god, you went to Washington with Bill and I for the Moratorium -

MRS. SIMMONS

Bill and me -

PETE

Jeez - who cares. You stood there while we turned in our draft cards. You didn't think we were criminals then, did you?

MRS. SIMMONS

I'm talking about your future. Do you know what it's like in prison?

PETE (pause)

Mom. Do you think I'm guilty?

MRS. SIMMONS (riding over)

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

PETE

I asked you -

MRS. SIMMONS

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

PETE

Do you think I'm guilty?

MRS. SIMMONS

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

PETE

Great. Maybe I'll just go enlist.

MRS. SIMMONS

Don't get like that. You know that's not what I mean.

PETE

You don't care what I am. I might as well be guilty.

MRS. SIMMONS

Pete -

PETE

I'm late. I gotta go meet Brad.

He leaves fast.

MRS. SIMMONS

Peter, come back here! (no answer) Pete? I CARE WHAT YOU ARE. I do care. But I care about YOUR FUTURE. Can't you think about that? Doesn't that matter at all?

(no answer; pause)

God damn this war.

She exits.

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

DIANE

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

FRANK

How do you like it?

DIANE

40 pages and you're still not finished?

FRANK

It's my whole life.

DIANE

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

FRANK

I'll stop when they listen.

DIANE

Like Judge Neville's going to listen?

FRANK

He's accepted my witnesses. That's already better than the Devitt trials. He's giving Mike and me a chance here, Diane. And we're taking it. I'll talk til I'm blue if I have to. I'm not gonna stop til we WIN.

DIANE

Yeah but -

FRANK

It's not just me. We're getting great theologians to go on the stand. A radical, a moderate, a traditionalist. Solid men with solid reputations to put everything we're doing in line with a respected tradition of civil disobedience and crimes of conscience.

DIANE

No women on that list, I suppose.

FRANK (sarcastic)

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

DIANE

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

FRANK

Diane -

DIANE

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

FRANK (serious; with the pages)

God. You think that's all this adds up to..?

DIANE

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

FRANK

In love with a Pig-headed Bra Burner.

DIANE

Says the stuck-up Catholic Boy.

FRANK

- to the Nasty Girl Scout.

DIANE

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

FRANK

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

DIANE

Catholic boys love that uniform...

FRANK

...and those little green socks...

DIANE

...quit messing with my socks!!!

FRANK

I'm not quitting anything - !

DIANE

- until you win.

FRANK

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

Their teasing turns into wrestling. He pins her in a hold.

FRANK

Let me hear you say it!

DIANE

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

She pulls him into a kiss. Their wrestling turns into making out.

TRIAL STAUGHTON LYND (Actor 1) testifies to JUDGE NEVILLE.
(Actor 3).

LYND

My name is Staughton Lynd. I am a Quaker and an historian. I would like to address the tradition beginning with Socrates - or in a different way with Jesus of Nazareth - of individuals defying orders of the state which they felt to be in contradiction to conscience or universal human right. In American history this tradition begins very early. For example, in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 17th century -

JUDGE NEVILLE

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

JUDGE & LYND exit. FRANK sits up suddenly, alarmed.

FRANK

God damn shit HELL -

DIANE

What? What happened?

FRANK

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

DIANE

Which "they," Frank ?

FRANK

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

ACTOR 4 enters as FRED HAMPTON.

HAMPTON

To them I am the enemy.

FRANK

Like with Fred Hampton and the Panthers...

HAMPTON

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

FRANK

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

DIANE

Maybe that's where your statement should start.

DIANE exits.

FRANK

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

FRANK walks into scene:

CHICAGO, 1968. FRED HAMPTON greets FRANK. ACTOR 1 is there as DEBORAH JOHNSON.

HAMPTON

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

FRANK

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

JOHNSON

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

HAMPTON

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

FRANK

What about the guns?

HAMPTON

You're reading too many newspapers, man.

FRANK

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

HAMPTON

There will be respect. I can promise that.

(a long look at FRANK)

I'm not getting your answer.

FRANK

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

HAMPTON

Without guns.

FRANK

Yes.

JOHNSON

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

HAMPTON

Wait, Deborah...

FRANK

I am committed to non-violence.

HAMPTON

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

JOHNSON

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

HAMPTON (turn to FRANK)

Can you say that?

FRANK (pause, thinking it out)

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

HAMPTON

And it scares you.

FRANK

Yeah. A lot.

HAMPTON

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

FRANK

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

HAMPTON

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

FRANK

Yeah, I can speak. I just wish I could -

(stops the thought)

Yeah. I'll speak.

HAMPTON

Good.

HAMPTON and JOHNSON exit, leaving FRANK alone.

FRANK

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

FRED HAMPTON'S VOICE (ON TAPE)

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

SOUND OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS' FIRE.

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

CHUCK

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

BILL'S VOICE (Actor 6 offstage)

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

CHUCK

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

(holds up the draft card)

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

ACTOR 6 enters as BILL.

BILL

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

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

CHUCK

"General Hershey Eats Here." Nice work.

BILL

Can you see the arrow? Is it clear enough?

CHUCK

Pointing directly and unequivocally to your butt.

BILL

Excellent.

CHUCK

That should end the war pretty quick.

BILL

More than one way to seize control of the system.

CHUCK

Power to the people man.

They exit.

INDUCTION CENTER 1969. THE YELLOW LINE. MIKE (Actor 5)
enters, facing forward as:

OFFICIAL VOICE (Actor 4, OS)

When your name is called you will declare your branch of the armed services. You will then step over the yellow line and become a member of the armed services.

(pause)

Michael Duane Therriault.

(MIKE doesn't move)

Step forward and declare your branch of the armed -

MIKE (softly)

I would like to declare this.

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

MIKE

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

VOICE (OS)

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

MIKE (to the room)

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

VOICE (OS)

Step aside NOW.

MIKE stays there, holding up the picture as:

TRIAL. ACTOR 4 enters as JUDGE NEVILLE as MIKE testifies:

MIKE

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

He holds up the My Lai picture again.

JUDGE

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

MIKE

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

He exits.

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

DIANE

To 1971.

FRANK

No. To us.

DIANE

Alright -

FRANK

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

DIANE

To us.

She drinks. He doesn't.

FRANK

Are you sure?

DIANE

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

FRANK

I mean about us.

DIANE

We'll get through it.

FRANK

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

DIANE

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

FRANK

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

DIANE

I don't think we should think about that. Not now. Like you said let's not focus on the negative. On the fear. Focus on next week.

FRANK

Chuck and Don and Pete and Bill are CONVICTED. Would you say that to them???

It's different now. If Mike and I don't make it -

DIANE

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

FRANK

Would you marry me?

Pause. then fast:

FRANK

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

DIANE

No. No. It's ok. I get it. It's not stupid. I love you. I support you.

FRANK

But not that.

DIANE

It's just - I don't know - I need to think...

FRANK

It's not about thinking - what do you feel??? Yes or no. Black or white. Something that dumb - that stupid - that clear.

DIANE

I think maybe -

FRANK

DON'T THINK.

DIANE

I've had too much to drink. And I can't - answer you right now. Do you understand that?

FRANK

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

DIANE

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

FRANK

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

THEY exit. MOM IN GREEN SWEATER enters. ARMY NURSE enters from other side. Both with letters.

ARMY NURSE

Dear Mrs. Price, I have never written a letter like this before - but then in my 6 years of nursing I have never met so courageous an individual as your son... He fought hard, terribly hard to overcome his wounded condition. But strong as he was, his body could only endure so much. Although I'm sure he knew what was happening he never lost his courage. I guess I really wanted you to know that Rob did not die alone with no one caring. I cared. We all cared...

MOM (reading)

Be proud of your son.

(pause)

Captain Connie Schlosser, U.S. Army.

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

NURSE

Mrs. Price – I’m not supposed to do this - I told myself I wouldn’t do this - but I have seen things here - Not just the boys, I’ve seen children and mothers - and we’ve done it. I want to believe we’re on the right side. I came here to help. My job is to help. But who am I helping if this is my side?

MOM

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

NURSE

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

MOM

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

NURSE

THAT ISN’T HELPING.

ACTOR 2 enters as FATHER AL JANICKE, testifying.

JANICKE

I am Father Al Janicke and I AM PLEADING, Your Honor - as you hear from my voice - I AM PLEADING along with Pope John and in that tradition that HUMAN LIFE IS IMPORTANT! All people whether Christian or not are human - and as a member of the Human Society PEOPLE ARE IMPORTANT.

OTHER TRIAL BILL TILTON (Actor 6) enters, testifying with confidence, without notes - always moving.

BILL

When our news commentators tally up the weekly war dead have we forgotten that they are talking about bodies??

JANICKE

Let me quote from VATICAN TWO: “Any act of war aimed at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.”

BILL

Every day white Americans go to their businesses - like the Honeywell Corporation right here in Minneapolis - to produce "fragmentation bombs" which are a slow-death-torture weapon aimed specifically at women, children and the aged, yellow, poor people of Southeast Asia.

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

PROSECUTOR (Actor 1, entering)

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

BILL

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

PROSECUTOR

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

BILL

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

PROSECUTOR

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

BILL

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

PROSECUTOR

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

BILL

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

JUDGE (Actor 3)

Irrelevant and Immaterial.

BLACKOUT.

IN THE DARK. Shadowy figures, voices:

GUARD'S VOICE (Actor 4 or COMPANY)

Strip. Bend over. Don't give me that. You know the position.... Stand up. Turn. Report for de-lousing.... Get dressed. Report to Adjustment Committee. You hear me Kroncke?

FRANK'S VOICE

I hear you.

GUARD'S VOICE

I hear you sir.

FRANK'S VOICE

I hear you sir.

GUARD'S VOICE

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

FRANK'S VOICE

Where are we -

GUARD'S VOICE

I said follow me.

FRANK'S VOICE

Yes sir.

GUARD'S VOICE

Take this.

FRANK

What is it?

GUARD'S VOICE

TAKE IT.

SOUND OF ELECTRONIC LOCK CLOSING.

LIGHTS UP ON:

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

FRANK

Steak?

(he calls out)

HEY. What's this for? HEY!

No answer. Holding the steak, he looks around the cell.

FRANK

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

Stares at the steak.

FRANK

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

Looks around again.

FRANK

"We know who you are." Oh yeah? Who? Who do you think I am? Che Guevara? Joe Hill? Like I'm gonna lead a revolt? Organize and break down the walls?

(out)

Well, guess what. You're wrong. You got no Joe Hill here. You got a broken-down ex-monk with a FUCKING STEAK.

(staring at the steak)

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

Suddenly he throws down the steak; then looks at it lying there.

FRANK

Christ...

He kneels down by the steak. Near tears.

FRANK

I wanted that.

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

PETE'S VOICE (Actor 2)

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

ANOTHER PRISON: FEDERAL YOUTH CENTER.

PETE (Actor 5 in prison khakis) hand-writing a letter.

PETE

I've been thinking a lot about what I'm going to do when I get out... I'd like to be an artist - not graphic so much as active. I'm reading a lot about the kind of stuff the Living Theater and so many others are doing. Mind-twisting, guerilla-type didactic stuff. I wouldn't want to mess with normal - conventional theatre... Either way, whether you dance, write, act or fight you're performing for an audience...and I dig that, you know?

The only thing is... Well.... A couple of weeks ago I was reading Camus and he brought me down to earth. He says: "If the mind is strong enough to construct in a prison cell a moral philosophy that is not one of submission, it will be one of domination."

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

A ROOM. MOVING DAY. DIANE enters with TWO WOMEN (Actors 1 and 3), packing bed linens into moving boxes.

DIANE

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

JUDGE'S VOICE (Actor 4)

Mr. Beneke, you may take the stand for your closing statement.

DIANE

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

BRAD (Actor 7) enters. He reads from a paper, shakily at first, then building in strength.

BRAD

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

DIANE

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

BRAD

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

ACTOR 1

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

ACTOR 3

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

BRAD

We have a common struggle as people.

DIANE

I'd like to believe that...

ACTOR 1

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

They carry off boxes as Brad continues:

BRAD

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

He crumples the paper. Exits.

JUDGE 4

I am going to sustain the Objection to any criticism of this administration or past administrations or congress or anything else.

ACTOR 3 enters as other JUDGE

JUDGE (Actor 3)

All of what has been received along this line is immaterial. I now strike all of the testimony which attempts to rely on a justification on account of the Vietnam war or religious oriented reasons.

PRISON YARD. 1972. MIKE (2) & FRANK (6) in prison khakis, walking around the yard.

MIKE

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

FRANK

But he allowed us to show pictures of the napalmed land. That got to the farmers on the jury. I saw tears in their eyes...

MIKE

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

FRANK

Anna Gertner from Westbrook.

MIKE

Yeah. Where is that...? Westbrook.

FRANK

I don't know. Someplace rural.

MIKE

Sounds nice. I wonder if she'll need some good migrant labor about five years from now...

FRANK

You still thinking about that?

MIKE

Nothing sweeter. Ride the rails. Work by the season. Live low to the land.

(pause)

What about you? What are you thinking about?

FRANK

Nothing.

MIKE

Come on Frank...

FRANK

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

MIKE

What about Diane?

(silence from FRANK)

What?

FRANK

It's over.

MIKE

Man... What happened? You wanna talk?

FRANK

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

MIKE

You really think -

FRANK

Let's just walk, ok.

MIKE

Ok.

FRANK

Walking's alright.

TRIAL. ARNOLD BENEKE (Actor 4) enters, testifying.

MR. BENEKE

My name is Arnold Beneke. I'm Brad Beneke's father. I don't want to take a lot of your time, Your Honor. As the Court knows this is pretty close to me. There are many accusations by people saying what kind of parent are you that you a raised young man like this - and I want you to know, Your Honor, I am proud of my boy and I am proud of these other young men too and I say to their parents you should be proud too.

PRISON YARD. CHUCK enters dribbling a basketball. BRAD enters.

BRAD

Charlie Turchick! When the hell did you get to Sandstone?

CHUCK

Yesterday. Kroncke met me at Admission and Orientation. I hear you Resisters have quite a gang ID going around here....

BRAD

Oh yeah. We may not be the biggest or the meanest, but there's a lot of us. Nobody knew there'd be this many resisters from Minnesota.

CHUCK

Must be a conspiracy. Where's Fidel hanging out at?

BRAD

Don't even joke about that or you'll end up in Solitary... But the team's good. We've got Kroncke, Gutenicht, Iron Moccasins the Indian at center, Joe the heroine addict at guard, plus a new mob-type guy from out east. It's the only integrated area in the joint.

They do some moves with the ball as:

MR. BENEKE

When you raised them you didn't raise them to be wheeler-dealers. You didn't raise them to make a fast buck. I am proud of the way these young men think along the lines of decency and honesty - and I hope that you will consider that.

CHUCK quits playing.

BRAD

Come on. Let's get a game going.

CHUCK

No. You go ahead. I don't feel like it now.

BRAD

What about Kroncke?

CHUCK

He's back in the dorm watching Watergate. Getting a big kick out of John Mitchell's indictment. He's thinking now that the The Attorney General who sentenced us could be going to jail, maybe we've got a chance to get out...

BRAD

Maybe he's got a point...

CHUCK

Dream on brother...

Starts out.

BRAD

Hey come back. We gotta practice. Where's your team spirit?.

CHUCK

Gone, Beneke. Look around. We're just "Objects of the Machine" - remember? Objects of that Damn Machine...

MR. BENEKE

Putting these young men in prison, I feel at the bottom of my heart, will not do society one bit of good. It will tear the hearts out of their parents and their loved ones. I was told you were a compassionate person and I am calling upon that, Your Honor.

MR. BENEKE leaves the stand. FRANK enters watches as

CHUCK

You heard what the Judge said: "The criminal acts for which the defendants have been found guilty were not just impulsive, minor transgressions, expressive of youthful nonconformity, but rather were part of a planned and organized illegal effort to cripple the operation of the United States Government in carrying out its Constitutional duty to provide for the national defense."

BRAD tries to take ball from him. He pulls away, anger building.

CHUCK

"Their criminal conduct strikes not just at the pocketbook of others but at the very foundation of government and therefore at the security and well being of all. Those who act out of allegiance to a higher law than the law of the land are making jungle law!"

FRANK steps in and tries to take ball.

FRANK

Hey. Chuck. Cool it.. ok -

CHUCK pulls away and continues.

CHUCK as JUDGE

"These misguided men are wrongly manifesting their opposition to our present state of affairs through rebellion against the law, and that is wrong. That is a crime sanctionable, as are all crimes, by conviction and punishment."

They quit playing, bummed. Pause.

FRANK

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

GUARD'S VOICE (Actor 3)

Lockup and Count. Lockup and Count.

They exit.

ACTOR 4's VOICE

This is "Dialogue" with Earl Craig, coming to you from KDWB, St. Paul. Today three Minnesota Eight mothers talk about their sons and Prison

RADIO STUDIO. EARL CRAIG (Actor 4) interviews MRS. SIMMONS (Actor 3), MRS. BENEKE (Actor 2) and MRS. TILTON (Actor 1).

MRS. SIMMONS (Actor 3)

Look, my son Peter is just an average kid who realized an obvious thing - that he can't kill. He isn't a kook or a weirdo - he's my son.

CRAIG

Has their political development had an effect on yours? Mrs. Beneke?

MRS. BENEKE

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

CRAIG

Mrs. Tilton?

MRS TILTON

I agree with Mrs. Beneke. Bill has made me more aware... the trials have made lots of people more aware. Vietnam is so far away, friends say they don't want to be involved - until it affects their own family - when they're going to lose their own little lives.

CRAIG

One thing people should know is that these political radicals are not in rebellion against their families... it has been the family which has given these radicals their values.

MRS. SIMMONS

Very few people seem to recognize the fact that it is possible to be proud of your son in a situation like this... I don't say to myself I'm glad he did that. I'm not glad he did that. But I'm proud of my son.

(moves away from the studio, looking out at the Jury:)

Can't you people look into your hearts and realize that when kids like my Peter do things like this that something is wrong with this country?

TRIAL. DON OLSON (Actor 7) enters to testify.

DON

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

Puts on glasses to read:

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

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

Takes off glasses to address the Jury.

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

Pause. THE COMPANY enters:

ACTOR 2

Judge Devitt asks:

ACTOR 4

Members of the jury, have you reached a verdict?

ACTOR 1

The foreman answers:

ACTOR 3

Yes, we have.

BLACKOUT.

SOUND OF WIND.

FORT SNELLING NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERY. 1971

Bare stage. Some white paper on the floor as snow. Actor 2 enters as STUDENT REPORTER. She wears a heavy coat.

STUDENT REPORTER (Actor 2)

November (29) 1971. Fort Snelling National Military Cemetery. Five of the Minnesota 8 have announced they will turn themselves here today to begin serving their 5 year prison sentences. At the entrance to the cemetery, about 20 cars are parked. Two or three television camera men line up shots, and a crew of caretakers shovels snow... One and then half a dozen people leave their cars to brave the cold. Frank Kroncke, who is still appealing his case, is handing out flyers.

FRANK (Actor 6 in heavy coat) hands out flyers as COMPANY arrives - all wearing heavy winter coats.

REPORTER

Now there are nearly two hundred people standing on the snow-packed road. None of the five who will turn themselves in today have arrived. Mrs. Tilton is here with her daughter and younger son... Now Mr. & Mrs. Turchick -

MR. TURCHICK (Actor 4)

5 years in prison for a goddamned 10 minutes in a building? I tell you: ask any of these boys what they accomplished. I'll tell you. Nothing...nothing. Now they go to jail and who knows what happens to them. Ask anybody here. Would you do the same thing? No. They wouldn't. Five years in prison for 10 minutes in an office?

CHUCK (Actor 8, entering)

Dad...

MR. TURCHICK (to Reporter)

I told Chuck, You're ruining your life.

CHUCK

Not now, Dad. Ok? Not now.

MR. TURCHICK (continuing to Reporter)

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

(to CHUCK)

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

CHUCK looks at him a beat, then turns to the Reporter.

CHUCK

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

BRAD arrives & embraces group.

REPORTER

How do you feel Brad...?

BRAD

Good. Good at this point...

REPORTER: (looking out)

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

(to Mr. Turchick)

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

MR TURCHICK: (Actor 4)

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

CHUCK

Well... you got that right.

CHUCK and MR. TURCHICK exchange a look and embrace. ACTOR 6 takes off heavy coat to become BILL in the old sports jacket.

BILL

Ok, folks, gather around. Frank asked me to lay on the political rap, so here it is.

He goes to the microphone.

BILL

We have chosen this National Military Cemetery as the place where we will turn ourselves in, to emphasize that Death and Destruction continue at a horrifying rate in Southeast Asia. To pursue his lying policy of "Peace With Honor" Nixon is now conducting an air war which reduces white casualties and increases brown casualties on an automated battlefield. We need to find alternatives to the white markers behind me...or going to jail... We hope that Ultimately the Politics of Life will overcome the Politics of Death!

ACTOR 4 takes off coat to reveal fatigue jacket of JOE, the YOUNG VET.

JOE

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

The men who put our buddies in those graves over there, in wheelchairs for life, in mental wards, in drug wards, and on the streets without jobs, the men who put us on the other side of the world to destroy a country and a people, are the real criminals.

ACTOR 1 takes off coat to reveal uniform of ARMY NURSE.

ARMY NURSE

We have seen the results of criminal behavior on a global scale. We know who the real criminals are and we think the people know who they are. We know that what you did was to try and stop the war machine and the death machine here at home, at the source.

JOE

We demand a full pardon for you, the Minnesota Eight, as well as amnesty for all draft Resisters and deserters who are suffering as a result of their beliefs. Our brothers will be in jail for us, let us remember that we are on the outside for them. HOA BINH! Peace.

BRAD goes to mic.

BRAD

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

PETE (Actor 5) goes to the microphone.

PETE

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

PETE starts singing:

PETE

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

BRAD, BILL and CHUCK join in, goofing on it:

*Happy trails to you, keep smilin' until then.
Who cares about the clouds when we're together?
Just sing a song and bring the sunny weather.
Happy trails to you 'till we meet again.*

BRAD

See you in five years!

A MOTHER (Actor 3)

Before that! Before that!!!

COMPANY sings it again as BRAD, BILL, CHUCK & PETE leave.

COMPANY

*Happy trails to you until we meet again.
Happy trails to you keep smiling until then...*

COMPANY exits as RECORDED VERSION of the song sung by Dale
Evans and Roy Rogers plays.

LIGHTS CHANGE to:

DON's VOICE

May 12, 2006...

KFAI RADIO STUDIO. DON OLSON (Actor 7, now in his 60's)
puts on headphones.

DON

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

Some people wish there were more people in the streets.. but I say, well...it takes awhile to get there... Back during the Vietnam War - when we were trying to stop that - it took a long time before the street demonstrations started to be reflected in congress. It took some time, ya know...

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

ACTOR 8

Chuck Turchick. 36784-11. Federal Correctional Institution, Sandstone Minnesota. Release date: July 23, 1973.

DON

It takes time...

ACTOR 5

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

DON

But ya can't give up...

ACTOR 6

Bill Filton. 28181-117. Federal Correctional Institution, Milan, Michigan. Release date: July 23, 1973.

DON

Ya can't give up hope.

ACTOR 2

Brad Beneke. Federal Correctional Institution, Sandstone Minnesota. Release date: July 23, 1973.

ACTOR 3

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

ACTOR 4

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

DON

Before I go, I wanna mention something that's coming up this week...On Sunday there's the Mother's March for Peace - "Our Children Are Not Cannon Fodder, Bring Our Troops Home Now" - sponsored by the Peace and Justice Coalition, Youth Against War and Racism, Women Against Military Madness, and Attention on Iraq.

ACTOR 1 enters in prison uniform.

DON

This has been the Northern Sun Radio News show with your host...

ACTOR 1

Don Olson. 10329-74. US Medical Center for Federal Prisons, Springfield Missouri -

DON

Release date: July 23, 1973.

(pause)

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

ACTOR 7

Democracy -

COMPANY

NOW!

ACTOR 2

PEACE -

COMPANY

NOW!

ACTOR 6

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME -

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

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

END OF PLAY.