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*Deadline*  
4th Printing, 2009  
Printed in U.S.A.  
ISBN 978-1-934962-04-6

# DEADLINE

By Chris Dickerson

**CHARACTERS:**

LEW SCOTT ... Mid 30's, American newspaper correspondent

SAM ... Mid -50s, Vietnamese, owner of Hotel Continental

TAM ... Teenager, Vietnamese, works in the hotel

PARIS BORG ... Late 40's, French magazine reporter

SEAN QUINN ... Late 20's, American free-lance photojournalist

TOM ALLENBEE ... Late 20's, American free-lance photojournalist

MARTHA ("Marty") JOHNSON ... Late 20's, BBC radio reporter

TRAVIS BLAINE ... Late 20's, American wire service reporter

CAPT. HENSHAW ... U. S. Army public information officer

CAPT. LONG ... Vietnamese officer, Republic of South Vietnam

WILLIAM ("Duke") SLOAN ... Late 40's. American newspaper reporter

SGT. CONROY ... Early 30's. African-American, USMC platoon leader

PVT. SATO ... Early 20's. Asian-American Marine combat soldier

PVT. ORTEGA ... Early 20's. Puerto Rican-American Marine combat soldier

LILLY ... Early 20's. Vietnamese, prostitute, works in the hotel

## ACT ONE

### Scene 1

*(In the darkness, The Supremes sing "The Happening." After a moment, we hear the rapid fire clackety-clack of a manual typewriter in action.)*

*(LIGHTS UP -- On the bar-lobby-dining room of the Hotel Continental, Saigon. It's an old place, built long ago by the French. That influence is still apparent: an odd blend of Paris and the tropics. Wicker tables and chairs fill the floor space. There are bottles behind the long, ornate bar, a wide variety of gins, vodkas, rums and whiskeys, and racks of French, English and - mostly - American cigarettes. An old, elaborate, elegant French telephone is on the end of the bar. Dominating one corner is an American jukebox, circa 1955. A large framed photo of John Kennedy hangs over the bar. One door leads to the busy street; another entrance with swinging saloon doors leads back to the kitchen. A flight of steps leads to the second-floor rooms. It's late summer, 1968.)*

*(AT RISE - SAM, the middle-aged Vietnamese owner-manager-bartender, is behind the bar.)*

*(LEW SCOTT sits at a table downstage, over a small portable typewriter, hammering away at it with two fingers on the keys. A stack of typing paper is on the table. As Scott finishes writing on one sheet, he whips the page out and rapidly rolls another sheet in and resumes his typing. He pauses now and then to consult his reporter's notebook, or take a sip from a glass of red wine, or a puff off a joint in the ashtray. As The Supremes start to fade out, SCOTT pauses in his typing to lift a nickel from a stack on the table. He flips the nickel to SAM.)*

SCOTT: Play it again, Sam.

*(He resumes the furious typing)*

SAM: All the time, same song. All the time.

*(SAM crosses to jukebox, drops in the coin, pushes buttons. The Supremes start singing "The Happening" again. LILLY, the young Vietnamese prostitute who lives in the hotel, comes down stairs into the bar. Her sheer robe reveals she is wearing little underneath.)*

LILLY: Good morning, Ong Scott.

SCOTT: Morning, Lil.

*(LILLY crosses behind bar and pours herself a glass of wine.)*

SAM: Hey! How many times I told you? Stay out from behind the bar.

*(He gives her a whack on the ass.)*

LILLY: Yeah, yeah, yeah...

*(LILLY crosses to an upstage table with her drink.)*

SAM: *(to LILLY, in Vietnamese.)* [You expecting customers this morning?]

LILLY: *(Vietnamese)* [No. No reason to get dressed up. It's too hot.]

SAM: *(Vietnamese)* [Just get dressed. I don't want you hanging out in the bar like that. I haven't turned this place into a total whorehouse. Yet.]

SCOTT: Don't make her get dressed on my account, Sam. Nice view.

*(LILLY gives SCOTT a big grin.)*

LILLY: You going out today, Ong Scott?

SCOTT: Don't talk over the song, Lil.

*(LILLY makes a playful sour face at him.)*

SAM: Same song, all the time.

*(TAM enters from kitchen with SCOTT'S breakfast on a tray.)*

TAM: Breakfast, Ong Scott.

SCOTT: Right. Coffee, Sam.

TAM: You go out today, Ong Scott?

SCOTT: Maybe.

TAM: Ong Sean and Ong Allenbee been in bush two days. Miss Marty go into bush yesterday.

*(As SCOTT has breakfast, he continues to type at his story, glancing from time to time at his wristwatch.)*

SCOTT: It's a good thing my nose is shot, Sam. If I could smell this stuff, I'd die of starvation.

*(SCOTT begins to eat.)*

TAM: Ong Duke still in bush?

SCOTT: I don't think he's sunning himself on the beach, kid. Good meat, Sam.

SAM: A jeep hit a pig last night. I got a damn good deal on it. Lucky.

SCOTT: Luck of a burglar.

TAM: Ong Sean come back today? He funny. Tell many funny story.

SCOTT: Yeah, he's the Steve Allen of Indian Country.

TAM: Why you no go bush no more, Ong Scott?

SCOTT: I'm trying to write here, Tam.

TAM: Sorry, Ong Scott.

SAM: Tam, go clean the rooms now.

TAM: I go clean rooms now, Ong Scott.

SCOTT: You do that.

*(TAM pauses by LILLY's table. He grins at her.)*

TAM: *(Vietnamese)* [Would you like some breakfast?]

LILLY: *(indicating wine glass --Vietnamese)* [This is breakfast.]

*(TAM exits up stairs. SAM pours coffee into a cup and puts it on the table in front of SCOTT.)*

SAM: What the hell you gonna do? Sit on your ass all day, suck coffee? Get high, do your crossword puzzle. Play the same song over and over? This is number ten no good, man. You should go out in the bush.

SCOTT: Maybe later, Sam.

SAM: Yeah, yeah, maybe later -- later never gets here. You need to get out there. See what's really goin' on...

SCOTT: I file the damn stories. Fuckin' newspaper gets its money's worth out of me.

SAM: All the stories you write, you get from that asshole Henshaw over at Army Public Info. You think any of that's the truth?

SCOTT: You think anybody back in the world cares about the truth? What do you know about what a bunch of middle-class Americans want to read in their newspapers?

SAM: Hey! USC, Class of '41! Joe DiMaggio, the Yankee Clipper; Glenn Miller, "Moonlight Serenade"; Carole Lombard -- what a classy babe. Wendell Wilkie -- a good man, but no FDR. You think I don't keep current?

SCOTT: My point exactly. America's changed a lot since 1941.

SAM: Not really. What you guys stepped in here is just an extension of the French occupation that lasted 90 years. To the average rice farmer, you heathen round-eye all look alike. The French were a nightmare to us. Mr. Rice Farmer doesn't know, or care, a damn thing about geo-global politics, colonialism, Communism, Capitalism. He just wants his forty acres and a water buffalo. He thinks you guys will take that away. You need to tell your people that.

SCOTT: Right... Fill my dispatches with history lessons on the evils of French colonialism. My editor will love it.

SAM: If you got out and saw what was happening first-hand...

SCOTT: You crazy? They're shooting people out there! There's no intelligent conversation, no nightlife, no TV. And it's too hot. You get sunstroke. The blood in your brain starts to boil. You pass out and fall down and flop around on the ground and the medics have to pick you up. They'd fly me home with permanent brain damage. You know what happens to reporters whose brains cease to function? They make them editors. I hate editors, Sam.

SAM: Wise cracks. All the time. Just wise cracks.

*(SCOTT reads the story he's just written. HENRI "PARIS" BORG, badly hungover, in a silk kimono, staggers heavily down the stairs. He crosses to the bar, sits and puts his head down.)*

SCOTT: Good morning, Paris.

PARIS: I think not.

SCOTT: Stay too long at the well last night?

PARIS: With three officers from the one-one. Very nice boys, but they drink too much.

SAM: Cafe au lait, Monsieur Borg?

PARIS: Non, merci, Sam. Un Perrier, et un packet der Gauloise, sil' vous plait.

SCOTT: Hear anything good?

PARIS: Nothing exciting.

*(PARIS accepts the packet of cigarettes and bottle of water from SAM. He guzzles down the water.)*

SCOTT: Duke's out with the one-one. He'll have details.

PARIS: Oui. Now, Sam. A small cognac.

SCOTT: Starting early. Have some breakfast.

PARIS: It's too hot to eat. I can't stand the heat. Fifteen years in the tropics, and I can't stand the damned heat. Duke is coming back in today?

SCOTT: I guess. He's been out a week.

*(From the street comes the roar of two motorcycles pulling up, their engines being gunned at the curb.)*

PARIS: Oh, God, the children are home. Scott, be my friend. Kill me now.

*(SEAN QUINN and TOM ALLENBEE burst through the front door, laden with camera equipment and loud, high spirits.)*

SEAN: Son of a mother fucking bitch, you shoulda been there, lads!

TOM: Beer cold, Sam?

SAM: Beer's cold. I got ice yesterday.

SCOTT: Good hunting, hot rod?

SEAN: Scotto, it was damn bloody gorgeous. You shoulda been there.

*(TAM hurries down stairs.)*

TAM: Ong Sean! You back!

SEAN: Hiya, kid!

TAM: See much fight? Many VC kill?

TOM: Christ, did we.

SCOTT: Where you been?

SEAN: Dodge City.

SCOTT: Those Green Berets appeal to their boyhood fantasies.

SEAN: It's the only place to be, Scotto. We got some great shots.

SAM: You take food now, boys?

TOM: We ate in the officer's mess this morning. Paris, you look like hell on a stick.

PARIS: An accurate description. This is a good day to lie in the shade and pray for death.

SEAN: See what staying back here gets you? Hangovers and ulcers. You guys need to come out with us. You missed one helluva show. Hey, you got another stick?

*(SCOTT pulls another joint from his shirt pocket, hands it to SEAN. SEAN lights up, takes a deep toke, passes it to TOM, who does likewise. TOM offers the joint toward PARIS. PARIS holds up a deferring hand, raises his drink in a toast. TOM and SEAN pass the joint back and forth as they talk. SCOTT is poised over his reporter's notebook with pen.)*

SCOTT: Okay, go ahead. I'm listening.

SEAN: We heard that a patrol of Rangers and Montagnards were heading into the bush on a search and destroy with three choppers flying forward observation.

TOM: We barely heard about it, too. Those sons of bitches don't want to tell you anything.

SEAN: We hitched a ride on one of the choppers and shit, we hadn't been up, what, five minutes? We make contact. Half a dozen snipers open up on us from the ground.

TOM: We couldn't see the little bastards, you know, just these tiny white flashes on the ground. Hear those fuckin' rounds dinging off the side of the chopper.

SEAN: Anyway, the chopper pilot signals the patrol. They move in with a flame-thrower. Next thing you know, the whole damn bush goes up. These little patch fires all over the place. And out of the ground, right up out of the ground like rabbits, up pop what must've been twenty Cong. They start running like a pack of rats. The grunts wade into 'em. Pop! Down goes one. Pop! Down goes another. The chopper gunner gets into it and starts spraying the little suckers like he's got a fire hose.

TOM: Did you see him waste that Charlie carrying the big Russian machine gun? His arms and legs went flying, I mean he just goddamn exploded. I got a good shot of that.

SEAN: Aw Christ, we had a ringside seat. But all of a sudden, they're gone. They just melted into the ground.

PARIS: They are good at that.

SCOTT: It's their ground.

SEAN: Then, bang! The chopper right next to ours blows up, just rips itself apart, like disintegrates, y'know?

TOM: Rocket launcher.

SEAN: Yeah. So our pilot says fuck this, it's safer on the ground. The two choppers left set down behind the patrol. Only now the grunts are catching hell on the ground. We're all pinned down. A couple grunts are hit and we're up to our asses in dead Montagnards. What's that captain's name?

TOM: Russo, Russell, something like that.

SEAN: Well, this captain says fuck this, I'm gonna lose the whole fucking patrol. He whistles up a squad of jets. They come sliding over in the prettiest V you ever saw. And we spot the napalm cans turning in the air. Problem is, we're all too close. We're gonna have Cong burgers with American fries. Our chopper is lifting off and I barely got my ass on in time, and this Russo is yelling pull back, pull back, and everybody's running like crazy and fucking Cong can't decide whether to smile, whistle, or shit. We just made it off the ground. Damned napalm burnt the chopper's windshield. (*indicating TOM*) This asshole did it again.

SCOTT: All this happened this morning?

TOM: Just after daybreak. It was a beautiful dawn, Scottie. There was a low silver mist hanging over the valley. It turned purple, then blue, then just dissolved against the trees. Beautiful, man.

SCOTT: What was the body count?

SEAN: Russo's filing they got all twenty. I only saw four drop.

TOM: I counted five.

SEAN: I don't know. With the napalm, they might've wasted them all.

TOM: I don't see how they could've missed. When I looked down from the chopper, it was a lake of fire, man.

SEAN: Couple more beers, Sam.

TAM: I get. You have good morning, Ong Sean.

SEAN: Damn good, kid. I shot ten rolls. Caught this one grunt just as he was hit.

SCOTT: Why, Bob Capa, what a long lens you have.

SEAN: Sure. Be a smartass.

*(TAM carries beer bottles to SEAN and TOM)*

TAM: That all, Ong Sean? I go clean rooms now.

SEAN: Where Miss Marty?

TAM: Maybe, she say, come back this morning.

SEAN: Number one okay. *(TAM exits upstairs.)* You know, it's damned easy for you to sit here all day. Then you wander over to the afternoon briefing and file your stories from the handout, like you really were on the missions. You make up half of it!

SCOTT: Hold it, hold it. I invent nothing. It's all factual. I just throw in a few adjectives so the piece won't be boring.

PARIS: Creative license.

SCOTT: The cornerstone of all good journalism.

SEAN: Whatever. You can sit here and be a comedian. I wish to hell I had your job.

SCOTT: Make me an offer, junior. I'll sell it to you cheap.

SEAN: When was the last time you saw a grunt who wasn't in here on a three-day pass?

*(SCOTT looks at the joint.)*

SCOTT: I thought this shit was supposed to mellow you out. Who put the bug up your ass this morning, Swashbuckler?

TOM: Yeah, c'mon, Sean. You're blowin' my high, man. Respect for our elders. Y'know?

SEAN: For all the good you do out there, you should be back here with him.

PARIS: Playing doctor again, Tom?

SEAN: He did it again. I'm there snapping off shots. I look around. Is he taking pictures? Shit, no. He's helping them load wounded on the chopper! And he wonders why he can't sell his stuff, why he never has any money.

TOM: I'll pay you back. You'll get your money. So like fuck off, OK buddy?

*(The telephone rings. SAM answers it.)*

SAM: Hotel Continental. Oui? Non, un moment. Scotty, call for Duke. From America.

SCOTT: Not here.

SAM: Talk to them. The call's coming through.

SCOTT: I don't want to talk to them.

SAM: Talk!

PARIS: It's probably his editor again.

SAM: Come on, come on.

SCOTT: Can't a man go to war in peace? *(SCOTT takes phone from SAM.)* Patch it through... Hello... You'll have to speak up... That's better... Well, he's not here... Probably out covering the war, mister. You know, the war?... Well, I don't know what to tell you, except I'll tell him you called... Hold it, buddy! This call is costing you a lot of money. There's no sense spending it threatening me... I'll tell him you want to get in touch with him... Me? My name's Murrow... Ed... Edward R... Murrow, right, that's right... I'll tell him. B'bye. *(SCOTT hangs up.)* Christ, I think he bought it.

PARIS: To call from America. Must be important.

SEAN: Maybe ol' Duke copped himself another Pulitzer.

SCOTT: That call cost more than the prize money.

TOM: Well, it's bath time for me.

SEAN: You want me to set up your contact sheet?

TOM: That's damned white of you, Mr. Quinn. Thanks.

SEAN: No problem. You shot, what, one roll?

TOM: Two. They're in the bag. Asshole.

*(TOM exits up stairs.)*

PARIS: You children shouldn't fight.

SEAN: I don't know what his fuckin' problem is. Carrying stretchers -- Jesus!

SCOTT: We can't all be your father.

PARIS: You can't even be your father.

SEAN: You guys break me up. Swear to Christ, you do.

*(Captain HENSHAW enters front door.)*

SCOTT: Well, hush my puppies and boll my weevil! It's Captain Thomas Jackson Henshaw. Captain Stonewall, I do declare. Now what has happened to bring you slumming over here?

HENSHAW: Where can I find Duke Sloan?

SCOTT: He's in the bush for a few days. What's the beef?

HENSHAW: I didn't say there was no beef...

SCOTT: *(to PARIS)* How is it he speaks English worse than you?

PARIS: I did not have the disadvantage of an American public school education.

HENSHAW: Boys, I got no time to play funny with you. Where's Sloan in the bush?

SCOTT: What kind of sentence structure is that? Sam, you care to translate?

SAM: He said, where's Duke?

SCOTT: Oh! Tell him he's not here.

HENSHAW: He upstairs?

SEAN: Hell, no. He's been out a week.

HENSHAW: When's he comin' back?

SCOTT: When the shooting stops.

SAM: Believe me, that could be some time.

HENSHAW: Look boys, I got no gripe with the Duke. Any of you read his copy lately?

SCOTT: We only steal from our friends.

HENSHAW: Sloan's finally gettin' on the team -- unlike some of you.

SEAN: You're reading his columns?

SCOTT: Stonewall's got some flunky to read it to him. He's just not reading him the bad parts. Y'know, the facts?

SEAN: Don't you hate it when that happens?

HENSHAW: Facts, hell. Most of the stuff you fellas send back to the world is nothin' more'n Communist propaganda!

SCOTT: Oh sweet Christ, here it comes.

SEAN: Induction speech number twenty-four: Stopping the Yellow Peril.

PARIS: The one about the dominoes has always been my favorite.

HENSHAW: I ain't gonna make no speech at you. I just wish you fellows would get on the team.

SCOTT: Oh, it's that one. "We're all Americans in this together."

PARIS: It sounds much better in French.

HENSHAW: Hell, it's no use talking to you people.

SCOTT: Then get outta here!

HENSHAW: When Sloan gets in, you have him come see me. A cable came through for him.

SEAN: You'll be the first person he'll want to see.

HENSHAW: And there's a new fella supposed to be here today or tomorrow. You make sure and tell him to report to me.

SCOTT: And ruin the whole war for him?

*(HENSHAW exits front door)*

SEAN: Ol' Stonewall's got a bad pattern to his life.

SCOTT: He's okay. He's just a fucking moron, that's all.

SEAN: It's a requirement for military PR staff.

SCOTT: That, and the ability to lie like a rug.

PARIS: They are all dangerous. You should have been in Algeria. That was censorship, my friends. I wrote a story about the torture of Algerian prisoners by the paratroopers. First the military censor killed it. I rewrote the story and had a friend smuggle it out. My magazine printed it. Two days later, all copies of the magazine are confiscated from the stands in France. I am arrested by the paratroopers, thrown in a cell on one meal a day, interrogated for three days, then kicked out of Algeria. Those paras, the Foreign Legionnaires, they had no sense of humor when it came to journalists.

SCOTT: Well, it all comes out in the wash, sooner or later.

SEAN: Wonder what Duke did to get everybody on his ass?

SCOTT: Must've told a general to go fuck himself or something.

SEAN: He hasn't done that in a long time.

PARIS: I once saw him knock cold a Green Beret major. Right here in this room. One punch. Remember, Sam?

SAM: Can do. Big son of a bitch dropped like a tree. Duke was drunk as a fiddler's bitch that night. When he first got here, he was gettin' in a fight all the time. He was moody as hell.

*(MARTHA "MARTY" JOHNSON enters front door, dirty, hot and sweaty from two days in the jungle. She carries two cameras and a canvas bag with her notebooks, tape recorder and pens.)*

SCOTT: There she is, gang. The Roz Russell of Southeast Asia.

MARTY: Gin, Sam.

SAM: Got somethin' special for you, babe. Tonic water.

MARTY: Ahhhh, Sam! Take some money out of petty cash.

SAM: Can do.

*(TAM enters down steps, carrying a bundle of sheets to be laundered.)*

TAM: Miss Marty! You back. Take food now?

MARTY: God, yes.

SEAN: Been out to the orphanage?

MARTY: Yes. Tam, Sister Michael sends her best.

TAM: Merci, Miss Marty. Please send best to her from me.

MARTY: Next time I go.

*(TAM exits into kitchen)*

SCOTT: So how is it over there, Martha J? Still as depressing as ever?

MARTY: Hell yes. All the little cherubs with their big hollow eyes -- just more of them everyday. Some of them with arms and legs blown off, scarred faces, burned backs. Not one of them looking like children. More like broken dolls. Those damn tile halls stinking of Lysol and dried blood. I hate that fucking smell. They got 50 new ones from the Delta just this morning.

SCOTT: War is hell, baby.

MARTY: Now that's catchy, Scott. Let me write that down.

SEAN: Get anything good?

MARTY: Yeah, some great stuff.

SEAN: I'm heading over to the dark room to work up some stuff I shot on patrol this morning. Want me to do your contact sheet?

MARTY: I can handle it.

SEAN: I wasn't suggesting you couldn't, dear. Would you care to go first?

MARTY: Oh hell, Sean. Don't turn into a gentleman on me. I want a bath first.

PARIS: Tom is up there now.

MARTY: Fuck! I'll see if I can hurry him up.

*(MARTY exits up stairs)*

SCOTT: You're getting to her, kid. I can tell.

PARIS: Did you notice how her upper lip curls when she speaks to him? That's passion.

SCOTT: There, you have it from the highest authority on lust: a Frenchman.

SEAN: Go to hell the both of you. Sure, I was interested. But I'm not about to bird dog the Duke's quail.

SCOTT: Kid, I think he could give a damn.

SEAN: He doesn't seem to give a damn, does he.

PARIS: Ah, look at his little eyes light up.

SCOTT: The kid's in heat. No question.

SEAN: Fuck you both. I have work to do.

*(SEAN picks up his equipment and exits front door, passing TRAVIS BLAINE coming in. Travis, dressed in a tropical suit and tie, carries a suitcase and typewriter case.)*

TRAVIS: Excuse me. Is this the Hotel Continental?

SCOTT: No, this is the backlot at Warner Brothers. I'm Humphrey Bogart. *(indicating Paris)* This is Peter Lorre.

PARIS: *(a sinister wheeze)* Hello.

TRAVIS: I'm looking for a Captain T. J. Henshaw. I was told he might be here.

SCOTT: Just missed him.

SAM: He'll be back. Come in and have a drink.

TRAVIS: Thanks. I'll take a beer. Is the manager around? My name's Blaine. I'm with National Radio. My news director reserved a room. I'd like to register.

SAM: I own the place. I don't have any rooms reserved.

TRAVIS: He sent a wire.

SAM: Not to me.

TRAVIS: Just great. Okay. Where I can get a room?

SAM: Relax, I'll fix you up. I got something small on the second floor. Nothing fancy, but it's clean and quiet.

TRAVIS: Great, then. I'd like to register.

SAM: You sign in with Captain Henshaw over at JUSPAO, public affairs office. I'll get you a key. Sit, rest, meet your colleagues.

*(SAM exits to kitchen area.)*

PARIS: What was the name again?

TRAVIS: Blaine, Travis Blaine.

PARIS: Henri Borg. I'm with Le Journal Francais magazine. They call me Paris. That's Lew Scott.

SCOTT: Hi.

PARIS: Pull up a chair, Travis. You must be rather fatigued.

TRAVIS: The jet lag hasn't hit me yet. Only the culture shock.

PARIS: Where have you come from?

TRAVIS: Our New York office. I was there just two days ago. Now this...

*(TRAVIS notices LILLY. She gives him a big seductive smile -- a new potential customer -- and a wave. TRAVIS awkwardly waves back.)*

SCOTT: God, New York... It's going to be autumn there soon. Always loved it this time of year. How are things back in the world?

TRAVIS: Well... Kinda crazy.

*(MARTY comes down stairs)*

MARTY: That son of a bitch is still soaking his ass...

SCOTT: Let him wash, lady. He needs it more than you do. Come meet the new kid.

*(She stops at the bottom of the steps. She and TRAVIS stare at each other)*

MARTY: We've met.

TRAVIS: A year ago in London.

MARTY: Hello again, Travis.

TRAVIS: Hello again, Marty. So... you are here.

MARTY: You still with the AP?

TRAVIS: No. You still with the BBC?

MARTY: Oh yes, always and forever. Same old, same old, you know...

PARIS: Now, Travis, you have met the best of the lot. The rest pale by comparison.

SCOTT: How true. Now, let's see, there's the Swashbuckler. You passed him on the way in.

TRAVIS: Who?

MARTY: Sean. Sean Quinn. His father was Eric Quinn.

TRAVIS: The old film star, the guy who did all those pirate pictures and war movies?

SCOTT: Every boy's hero. Daddy won World War Two for Jack Warner, now little Sean thinks he's starring in the real thing.

MARTY: Blanche Du Bois soaking in the tub upstairs is his Siamese twin.

SCOTT: Tommy Allenbee. The finest photographer this side of the Mekong Delta -- when he remembers to shoot something, instead of playing battlefield medic. He's got the worst luck -- he's been wounded like five times. But he keeps going back out there...

PARIS: You worked for the Associated Press. You must know Duke.

MARTY: Oh, he knows Duke.

TRAVIS: Duke Sloan? Sure, Bill Sloan was my first boss -- AP bureau in Washington. He won the Pulitzer for his coverage of Kennedy's assassination.

SCOTT: That's him. William Bartlett Sloan. Globe-trotting prize-winning columnist, syndicated in over 500 newspapers -- including mine. Defender of the realm, able to leap tall barmaids in a single bound, combat Marine in WW Two, covered Korea for the Boston Globe, now up to his ass in this sorry mess. Some guys never learn.

TRAVIS: He's staying here?

PARIS: Oui. He should be back sometime today.

*(SAM and TAM enter from kitchen area. TAM has MARTY'S food, takes it to her.)*

SAM: Ah, everyone friends. Number one. Tam, this is Ong Blaine. Number one reporter man. This is Tam, Mr. Blaine. He works for me. Sister Michael at the orphanage in Duc To asked me to take him in last year. We'll be partners in this place one day, won't we, Tam?

*(TAM crosses to TRAVIS, bows, then extends his hand for a hearty handshake.)*

TAM: Ong Blaine. Tam. I clean room, shine boots, make food. You want, I get.

TRAVIS: Nice to meet you, Tam.

TAM: You take food now, Ong Blaine?

TRAVIS: Not now, Tam. I'm gonna grab some sleep. The ride is catching up with me.

*(SAM tosses key to TRAVIS)*

SAM: Second floor, first room down the hall. Next to Duke. Sleep good.

TRAVIS: Right, thanks.

MARTY: See you later, Travis.

TRAVIS: Right.

*(TRAVIS starts to carry his things up the stairs. TAM snatches the bags from his hands and leads him up.)*

SCOTT: Well, well! Old boyfriend?

MARTY: Really, Scott, sometimes you are a horse's ass! We bumped into one another a few times in London last year. He was there on assignment. It was a surprise to see a familiar face in this godforsaken country.

SCOTT: Hey, whatever you say, baby -- glad you're not touchy about it. *(SCOTT looks at his wristwatch)* Holy shit! I gotta get this story filed or the next editor on the phone will be mine, throwin' a fuckin' high holy fit...

*(SCOTT grabs his pages and heads quickly for the door.)*

PARIS: Tell Henshaw about the new kid.

SCOTT: Can do.

*(SCOTT exits front door)*

PARIS: The cognac, Sam. I am going to drown this hangover if it takes all afternoon.

MARTY: Drinking is like sex, luv. You have to do it until it feels good.