Echoes

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. VIETNAM - DAY (OCTOBER 17TH, 1967)

A fleet of Uh-1 helicopter gun ships fly high over the South China Sea making its way inland. The ships fly furiously through the hot-thin air.

The Uh-1 in it self was a man made war machine. It's only purpose during this war was to kill anything that wasn’t an ally to the U.S forces.

INT. UH-1 GUNSHIP - DAY (MOVING)

COLE STEVENS, (22 years) is a mix between one of those scared shitless guys and one of who who wants to experience war. This is his first mission since coming to Vietnam. He heard all of the stories while back home, guys going out deep into the jungle never to return again.

On the Huey with him are other members of his squad. You can tell that Stevens is a new guy, his face is still considerably fresh compared to the other guys who look like they haven’t showered in days.

STOKES (23 years), his skin is stained with dirt and blood. He was just like Stevens a couple months ago, young and unaware. But now he is foolish and brave both at the same time. A couple months in "Nam" will do that to you.

STOKES
(talking to Stevens)
Hey, loosen up a bit.

STEVENS
Huh?

STOKES
You gotta loosen up, you’re too stiff man.

STEVENS
I’m just trying to focus that’s all.

STOKES
Focus on what? Let me tell you something man... (grabs a pack of cigarettes from his pocket) fuck im all out. Hey Lawson you got any smokes.

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LAWSON (22 years) Short black guy, nappy Afro. Tosses Stokes a fresh pack.

STOKES
Like i was saying, don’t focus too hard, that way you end up making mistakes, and a mistake out here will cost you your life. It’s all about reaction and emotion.

STEVENS
What you mean?

STOKES
Let me show you something.

Stokes pulls open his flak jacket, showing Stevens his wound. He was struck in his chest just inches away from his heart.

STEVENS
Jeez! that thing looks brutal.

STOKES
Yea happened about two months ago, we was ambushed outside of this small village in Saigon, I forget the name. But anyway, this place was basically deserted, all of a sudden I hear gunfire, I look down and two of my buddies were laid out.

STEVENS
Dead?

STOKES
Yea fucking dead, just like that man, so I start fumbling around, I’m looking for cover, it’s chaos everywhere. Guys are screaming for help, but fuck wasn’t much I could do any how.

STEVENS
So what did you do after that?

STOKES
I’m trying to load up my M16, and the fucking clip won’t go in. I was thinking to damn hard. I was like a sitting duck waiting to get shot. Next thing you know I’m on the floor, all I hear is "Stokes is (MORE)
CONTINUED:

STOKES (cont’d)
Down"...I’m thinking to myself who the fuck is Stokes.

Stevens chuckles a bit.

STOKES
Then im like, oh shit that’s me. Woke up about forty-eight hours later.

STEVENS
Damn.

STOKES
I know. But the morale of the story is, when your out there don’t think about what you want to do, just do it.

STEVENS
Thanks for the insight.

STOKES
No problem, here let me give you something.

Stokes reaches into his pocket pulling out a coin. It looks to be from France. It’s old and worn.

STOKES
I got no clue what it says, or where it’s from, but my closes friend gave it to me just before he was killed in action.

Stokes hands it to Stevens, Stevens examines the coin.

STEVENS
Nah that’s alright man, you can’t give me your good luck charm.

STOKES
No, no, you keep it, it should keep you safe.

STEVENS
Thanks.

STOKES
Yea I need no more good luck, just two more weeks and ill be out of this hell whole.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Stokes gazes out of the moving Huey, now making its way towards land.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE - DAY (SAME)

This village is nothing more than some dry land and small bamboo houses. Children play with a deflated soccer ball. The villagers wander about in a slow lifeless motion.

Inside one of the village houses, a group of NVA soldiers talk to a boy.

INT. VILLAGE HOUSE - DAY

IN VIETNAMESE

NVA SOLDIER#1
Listen, we're gonna hold these guns here alright. Is there anywhere you can hide it.

BOY
Yes, put them in here.

There is a hole in the ground.

BOY
Right here is good.

The NVA soldiers stash about three AK-47s and two RPD's in the hole. The boy then covers the hole with some wood, then he puts an old rug to conceal it.

NVA SOLDIER#1
Don’t worry we won’t be gone long, will be back in about a day or two.

BOY
What if the Americans come?

NVA SOLDIER#1
Fuck the Americans, will set some traps outside of the village.

The soldier pats the boy on the head. The boy’s name is CHIEN (17 years) he stands about 5’5. He looks clean considering the fact his village is one big trash heap.

(CONTINUED)
The soldiers exit the house making their way towards the jungle.

Chien doesn’t know his parents, he raises his little brother BAO (6 years) on his own. Bao is all he has left, so he will stop at nothing to protect him.

CHIEN  
(talking to his brother)  
Look at what I got for you.

BAO  
What is it?

CHIEN  
Ahhh!!!

He pulls out an old dusty doll, Bao loves it, he smiles from ear to ear. Chien picks him up giving him a big hug.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE – DAY (SAME)

Chien now works with his friend QUANG (18 years) he is strangely tall for a Vietnamese boy (about 5’9 or so). He and Chien often joked that he was half American and the war was simply a matter of soldiers looking for a lost American child.

QUANG  
So what did those soldiers want?

CHIEN  
Nothing much, just to hide some guns.

QUANG  
Did they pay you?

CHIEN  
They say when they return I will be taking care of.

QUANG  
Hiding weapons for soldiers, what’s next your gonna join the military.

CHIEN  
(gets serious)

(MORE)
CHIEN (cont’d)
Hey, don’t joke like that, ill never fight, who will take care of my brother if I die.

QUANG
I will, you brother loves me.

Bao looks at Quaung with a mean face. Chien laughs.

EXT. FOREST - DAY(SAME)

American soldiers now at their designated LZ, the only way out is to jump. The only problem is, it’s about a 15 foot drop from the Huey into 10 foot high grass.

The helicopters hover over the wet forest.

INT. GUNSHIP - DAY(HOVERING)

STEVENS
Shit we gotta jump this?

LAWSON
Scared of heights white-boy?

Lawson leaps down without fear. Stevens takes a deep breath then he leaps.

FNG McCoy (18 years) scrawny, blond hair, blue eyes. Is almost in tears by now.

MCCOY
I dont think I can do this, I want to go back home.

SGT. HUNTER, (28 years) athletic, even through the dirt and sweat covering his face, you can tell he’s a handsome young man.

HUNTER
McCoy you got two choices. One, you can jump your skinny behind off. Or two I can throw your ass off, pick one soldier.

McCoy jumps, followed by hunter. At least 40 soldiers were helilifted into the forest.

Once in the forest, there visibility was blocked by the grass, they were also standing in about a foot of muddy water.

(CONTINUED)
HUNTER
Awe, fuck these boots were brand new.

ARRGhhhh! A loud scream.

STEVENS
What the fuck?

HUNTER
Freeman check him out.

PAUL FREEMAN (26 years) the medic, he looked more like a scientist, he sported huge glasses that covered the majority of his face.

FREEMAN
Its, McCoy.

HUNTER
Shit!

The squad stands around McCoy examining him to see what wrong.

MCCOY
Its my leg sarge, I dont think I can Walk.

FREEMAN
Let me get a look.

HUNTER
You cant walk, is that right?

MCCOY
No it hurts bad.

McCoy is obviously over exaggerating.

HUNTER
Hand me your weapon soldier.

McCoy reaches for his gun, and gives it to Hunter.

HUNTER
Thanks, now leave this son of a bitch right where he is, the NVA will find him, probably cut his balls off and feed it to him.

McCoy’s face goes from pain to shock.
MCCOY
What! you can’t leave me here, call back in the chopper to come and get me.

HUNTER
I ain’t calling in shit, let’s go boys let’s get a move on we ain’t got all day. The sun’s about to set, and I’m pretty sure will get some rain tonight.

MCCOY
Okay, okay, don’t leave me.

LAWSON
What a bitch!

Hunter hands McCoy his weapon and pulls him up, the rest of the squad continues to move ahead.

HUNTER
Now you listen, don’t be wasting my time out here, you hear me?

MCCOY
I hear you sir.

HUNTER
Good! now haul ass.

McCoy limps forward.

EXT. FOREST - DAY (SUNSET)

The platoon maneuvers its way through the forest. With plans of heading north.

EXT. FOREST - DAY (STEVEN’S POSITION)

Stevens and a big fellow by the name of JACKSON (22 years) are the point men. They cut through the tall elephant grass.

STEVEN’S
This is crazy, it feels like something is crawling on my skin.

Jackson pays no attention to Stevens, he just continues to maul down anything in his way.

(CONTINUED)
STEVENS
So how much longer you got left?

Jackson says not a word.

STEVENS
(confused)
Okay.

JACKSON
Wait, don't move.

Jackson speaks, he cautiously stops Stevens in his tracks.

STEVENS
What?

JACKSON
I said freeze, don't move.

Stevens looks down, he notices a 10 foot snake laying in front of him.

Slowly Jackson raises his machete, then BOOM!

JACKSON
Got ya.

STEVENS
What the fuck!

Stevens is in total shock, he has just seen a man decapitate a snake with one swing, Jackson takes the snake's head off.

He grabs the head, picks it up, raises it as if he had just won a gold medal. The rest of the boys give him a big Whoop-ahh.

HUNTER
Enough half-ass'n Jackson, lets pick up the pace.

Jackson stuffs the snake's head into a bag, which surprisingly is filled with at least 5 other dead snakes.

INT. VILLAGE HOUSE - NIGHT
Chien and his brother lay quietly in a small room, Chien feeds his brother with a piece of bread.

CHIEN
Here now eat up Bao, you’ll grow up and be strong like me.

Bao smiles, he offers piece of bread to his older brother who by the looks of it, has already sacrificed his meal to make sure his brother eats as much as he can.

CHIEN
No im good, you eat.

Bao nods, stuffing the rest of the bread inside his mouth.

CHIEN
Once the war is over we will be alright, and you will get to go to school and see all of your friends. Soon it will be over.

FADE OUT: