

# Operation Jungle Joe

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FADE IN:

EXT. JUNGLE FLOOR - DAY

A dank narrow trail, heavy rain, and a sloppy mess of mud.

Tall thin yellow weeds and beautiful blue wild flowers illuminate the dreariness of this place.

A set of weathered COMBAT BOOTS sprint through the mud, pounding down against the sloppy earth. Each step sends mud and water darting into the air.

O.S. a MAN huffs rapidly. His breathing pattern jittery, fearful. It belongs to the man in the combat boots.

CUT TO:

Winds howl through the heavy jungle.

Palm trees are whip sawed back and forth like twigs. Weeds and wild flowers bend, nearly flat to the ground. Palm branches rip away and fly free.

Meet U.S. Marine, JOE SPAZZIO (19), a drenched string bean clad in full battle gear. Combat helmet too big for his head.

Joe sprints down the muddy trail. His helmet bobs all around his head, held only by a frayed strap.

He snaps his head back over his shoulder, looking for the enemy. Nothing there. Wide frightened eyes stare forward.

JOE

ANDERSON!... WORLEY!... O'MALLEY!

Rain rolls off his forehead, into his eyes. Wipes away excess water from his brow with his water logged arm.

JOE

Where the hell are you guys! ENGAGE!  
ENGAGE!

CUT TO:

Joe's combat boots. Sprinting. Up, down. Up, down.

A giant palm tree branch lands right in front of his next step. He mis-steps, attempts to leap over the branch. A boot digs into the muddy ground, toe first.

Joe crashes to the ground face first. His helmet is jolted free from his head and his M16 shakes free of his grip.

It lands a few feet away.

He rolls over to face whatever lurks behind him. Pushes up onto his butt. Powerful legs shoving him backward to escape...

NOTHING.

Squints hard to make sure. Takes a deep breath, calms down. A cautious smile and snicker.

JOE (V.O.)

Get a grip Marine. There's nothing. Just your imagination. Look, it's safe.

Grabs hold of his M16. Uses the butt of the rifle as a crutch to stand.

JOE (V.O.)

Probably just lost. It's a big jungle.

Snaps a finger.

JOE

Hey, wait a minute. Wait just a minute... Road 535. Yeah 535.

Frantically pats his flack jacket pockets. Feels a hard object. Pulls out a compass. Pokes it out in several different directions.

JOE (V.O.)

Gotta be south.

The zipping sound of a bullet rips into Joe's shoulder, separating flesh and blood from his body. The impact nearly twist his body around.

Joe drops to his knees, hand pressed against his wound. Slowly turns his head, looks at his shoulder. Blood leaks through his fingers.

Snaps to attention, stoic and staunch.

JOE

(teeth clenched)  
Semper Fi Marine

A bullet rips his earlobe clean off his ear. Joe cries out in severe pain. He scurries behind a wild flower bush, taking some cover.

Searches through the wild flower bush for a hidden enemy, M16 ready. No dice. There is nothing.

JOE

Come on... Show yourself.

Joe lowers his M16, unscrews the cap on his canteen. Eyes scanning out into the heavy jungle. Tips up the canteen for a gulp.

A bullet rips through the blue wild flower bush, slicing limbs like a Ginsue knife. It takes out Joe's canteen and severs two fingers from his hand.

Joe winces. Squeezed the two nubs tight to stop the pain. He gasps and slobbers.

Joe Slaps his three fingered hand over his mouth to hold back a scream. Two streaks of blood marks are left from the nubs as he lowers his hand.

Another bullet zips inches past his head, slams into a rubber tree plant ripping it apart.

He snaps to his feet and sprints off into...

HEAVY JUNGLE - CONTINUOUS

Joe jumps over fallen tree branches. Running on. He stops, out of breath.

Silence, except for palm trees, tall grasses, and wild flower bushes rustling in the fierce wind. Rain slams down on his head, steam rises.

Joe sits on a log. Picks up a palm leaf filled with water, dumps it over his blood soaked shoulder. Sucks in air from the pain.

Closes his eyes, sticks out his tongue, collects falling rain.

Roots around in a pocket, comes out with a rubber band. Stretches it out around his two shaking nubs, clamping them together.

He picks up a stick, draws a map in the mud. Looks at his map. Looks out into the distance. A flag waves.

JOE

Home. I'm home.

EXT. ROAD 535 - DAY

Dashing toward the flag. Joe smiles, laughs, and cries.

Joe steps down on a claymore mine.

CLICK.

His foot steps off the mine, and...

CLICK.

KA-BOOM.

A stream of red blood zigzags through the mud. The stream grows wider.

Lying face up. The whites of Joe's eyes are the only thing separating the Marine from the mud. His mouth wide open, blood stains his entire mouth, and teeth. Gasps for air.

Eyes big as flying saucers. Pupils darting side to side, up and down. Head doesn't move.

JOE (V.O.)

It can't be that bad. I don't feel any pain. Nothing... I'm so close to home. Maybe I could crawl home.

He clinches his eyes shut, blinks a few time. Mouth tightens up, then back to wide open. More gasps for air.

JOE (V.O.)

No don't. Remember basic training. Stay still.

Blood runs out of Joe's nose.

JOE

Sure sure O'Malley will be right here. See... nothing to worry about.

Wide eyes dart side to side.

JOE (V.O.)

Hey what if they're all dead. Oh my God! Who's gonna save me?

Tears trickle out of each eye and roll off the side of Joe's head.

JOE

Stop it. Just stop it. Focus. O'Malley will be here in a flash.

Eyes and facial muscle relax and freeze. Death.

In the distance. An American flag waves violently through the heavy rain and wind.

Joe lies dead in a muck of mud and bright red blood - wasted. Chunks of flesh cling to palm trees and blanket the beautiful blue wild flower bushes.

His legs are torn away above the knees. Bone and blood exposed.

Slow fade to black.

FADE OUT:

THE END