

OE2 Potential Storyline, draft A

Opening Cutscene:

A small house, made of adobe painted blue and white, and weathered as if many years have passed since its construction, sits on a hilltop overlooking a vast expanse of farmland. A strong wind blows ripples in the crops, and tiny, nearly invisible raindrops drift down from an overcast sky, barely even moistening the landscape. Around the front yard of the house is a rickety old fence, and a simple stone path leading from the front door to the gate, where stands a man of about 35 in the uniform of a Colombian regular. He carries an olive-drab duffel bag. He stands almost at attention, looking at the house.

A young boy opens the front door and comes running up the path, letting it slam behind him. When he reaches the man, he stops, folds his hands in front of him, and stares up, curiously. The man looks back at him, calm.

(Spanish follows)

BOY: “When will I go in the army?”

SOLDIER: “When you are a man”

BOY: “When will I be a man?”

SOLDIER: “Some day”

(long pause)

BOY: “Is it scary?”

SOLDIER: “Sometimes, but you will be brave, and fight hard, and your country will be proud of you.”

BOY: “Who will I fight?”

(long pause)

SOLDIER: “I don't know”

At this, the boy's expression begins to change, first a smile, then a giggle that escalates into a laugh that doubles him over. The soldier smiles too, and begins to laugh. He steps into the yard and picks the boy up. They go laughing toward the front door. Behind them, An American in full US Military combat gear, with a rifle slung over his shoulder, looks on, complacent and studying. As they reach the door he

starts after them.

The Kitchen: Furnished sparsely with old appliances and furniture that appears handed down from the early sixties or earlier. A stout Latino woman, perhaps pretty in her day, but dressed as though she doesn't much care, stirs a pot on the stove. The room is dimly lit, primarily from a yellowish light over the stove vent and what little haze gets in through the filthy windows. The only sounds are the gas in the stove and the distant rumble of thunder. The soldier carries the boy in through the door.

WOMAN: Rico!

The woman leaves the spoon in the pot and runs to him, throwing her arms around him and the boy.

SOLDIER: How are you my beauty?

WOMAN: I'm glad to have you home

The American slips through the door just before it closes. Nobody seems to notice his entry. He seems uncomfortable with the scene before him. He stands in the corner quietly.

The woman releases the soldier, steps back and looks at him. As she does the soldier puts the boy down, who clings to his hand.

WOMAN: You look alright. Was it ok this time?

SOLDIER: I've had worse tours. I'll be glad to get some rest. A warm bed would do me good.

The woman moves back to the pot.

WOMAN: So would chicken noodle soup.

SOLDIER: Hmm?

WOMAN: I spent all day making it so it would be ready when you came home.

She lifts the spoon and tastes it.

WOMAN: I don't care how tired you are, you're going to have some before you pass out on us.

The soldier looks at the boy, who smiles back.

SOLDIER: Sure.

(Time Cut)

The woman, the boy, the soldier, and the American all sit around the table. The first three have bowls of soup in front of them. The American sits before an empty place. He seems even more uncomfortable than before, He seems even to be in fear. In the center of the table is the pot with a ladle in it, and some extra bowls and spoons.

WOMAN: Jorge started going to the school.

The soldier swallows his mouthful.

SOLDIER: Oh?

The American swallows. His fear seems to be growing noticeably. He begins reaching toward the stack of empty bowls. His hand moves slowly, and shakes a little.

WOMAN: He's been practicing his writing.

BOY: I can spell all the animals on the *hacienda*.

SOLDIER: That's good.

The American is able to lift a bowl from the stack with some difficulty. He reaches for the ladle. His hand bumps it the first time. He now seems in considerable terror, and intensely focused on what he is doing.

SOLDIER: You won't be like me. They only want people who can read for the good jobs. I'm always stuck digging. The illiterates dig, and haul equipment and pitch tents and never even see any action.

The American is able with great difficulty and a little spillage to fill the bowl with soup. He is shaking considerably as he begins bringing it back.

WOMAN: Enough about the army already. Isn't there something else you want to talk about?

SOLDIER: What can I? I am a soldier. We don't have time to keep up with much else. I've been busy being a soldier for months. The least I can do is talk about it.

At length the American's bowl reaches his place. He places his arm around it, almost cradling it, and

stares at its contents. His fear seems dominated now by sadness, as if he almost might cry into it.

WOMAN: Can't we have a nice dinner?

SOLDIER: This is a nice dinner.

(pause)

WOMAN: Thanks. I'm glad you're home.

Glass shatters off screen and a grenade lands in the pot of soup, exploding almost immediately. The effect on the family is unseen. We see only the destruction wreaked upon the room, and the American, who somehow seems completely unaffected by the blast. He does not look up from his soup. All is quiet.

As he stares, a drop of blood falls from an unseen source and lands in his bowl. He reacts only slightly. Another drop. Gradually his strange melancholy is replaced by a growing rage as drop after drop tumbles. Soon he is shaking in his seat

BANG BANG

Another American soldier raps on the front door frame. The door is propped open, and outside it is sunny. The second American leans into the room.

SECOND AMERICAN: Finish clearing and move out, we're heading up river.

Over his shoulder we can see more Americans and various military vehicles moving past. Behind them are more houses, forming a small village. The second American turns to leave, then stops. He looks back in at the scene one more time, then walks off, puzzled.

At the table, the American soldier sits with the bodies of the family, who appear to have been dead at least 3 days. Flies buzz around the bodies and decaying remnants of soup. An empty, chipped bowl sits in front of the soldier.. He looks around as if surprised at where he is, then stands up. He brings his rifle around to his front, and moves cautiously to behind Father's chair. On the floor is his hat, blown off from the explosion. The American flips it over with his rifle barrel. Shards of a photograph soaked in blood fill it. It may have been a family photo at one time, but it is now nearly unrecognizable. With a calm expression the soldier turns and leaves.