

THE PASSION OF THE CHE

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first draft 19 jan 1993

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[THIS SCRIPT WAS WRITTEN FOR A FRENCH COMPANY. WE THOUGHT OUR PICTURE OF ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA PRETTY ACCURATE. "WE WANT THE LAUGHING CHE!" THEY SAID. IT WAS ORIGINALLY TITLED "RESTLESS"]

VALLEGRANDE PROVINCE, BOLIVIA

EXT

EARLY MORNING

30 JULY 1967

In a deep canyon beside a fast-flowing river, about TWENTY MEN are camped. Bearded, skinny, strained. Most are asleep in attitudes of exhaustion. One, awake, stares in despair at the state of his boots. Pack animals are tethered nearby.

MORO, Cuban, thickly bearded, clad in the ubiquitous fatigues, prepares coffee over a smoking fire.

"CHE" GUEVARA, Revolutionary Commandant and leader of this expedition, hunches wheezing over his journal - a cherry-coloured, plastic-covered agenda. Unable to sleep, CHE waits for the coffee to relieve his ASTHMA. CHE is bearded, 39 years old.

A LIGHT flickers on the far side of the ravine.

MORO

Shit. A light --

ANGLE ON RAUL

A Bolivian, picking up his M-1 rifle.

RAUL

Who goes there?

VOICE

Trinidad Detachment --

GUNFIRE BREAKS OUT.

RAUL is firing across the river at the light. Incoming bullets whine through the camp.

EVERYONE is awake and in a panic.

ANGLE ON POMBO

CHE's deputy, a tall Black Cuban, helping the weakened CHE aboard a horse. CHE's asthma worsens as the bullets fly.

CHE

Chino! The supplies!

ANGLE ON CHINO

Chinese-Peruvian, round-faced and bespectacled, rounding up the frightened mounts. OTHER MEN load the horses with supplies - lashing them insecurely in their haste.

It's getting light. SOLDIERS of the Bolivian Army can be seen across the ravine, firing through the trees.

POMBO leads CHE's horse away from the gunfire. CHE, asthma worsening, clutches the pommel, gasping for breath.

ANGLE ON THE HORSES

Crossing the river. ONE MAN slips, losing his pack. He runs forward. Others, seeing how much faster he runs, abandon their packs deliberately.

ANGLE ON A GUERRILLA - RICARDO -

Shot while crossing the river. RAUL runs back to rescue him. He is shot as well.

CHINO grabs RICARDO's body as it rushes past him, down the river. He tries to haul RICARDO aboard a horse. The horse loses its supplies.

ANGLE ON SOLDIERS

Firing as they draw closer to the camp.

ANGLE ON CHE AND POMBO

Reaching the far bank. CHE can hardly breathe.

CHE
Medicine --

ANGLE ON A HORSE, SHOT.

KNAPSACKS spinning down the BLOODY RIVER.

Attempting to fight a rearguard action, another Guerrilla, PACHO, is shot several times.

POMBO

What are your orders, Che?

CHE turns in the saddle, looks back and surveys the scene.

HIS POV -- TOTAL CONFUSION.

The SOLDIERS advancing, horses and men struggling in the water -
- a COMPLETE ROUT.

FLASHBACK

ANTOFAGASTA DESERT, CHILE EXT DAY

12 MARCH 1952

A single lane road winds through reddish-grey desert hills,
devoid of all plant life. The asphalt and the telegraph poles
are the only evidence of man.

In the far distance, a MOTORCYCLE appears.

ANGLE ON CHE GUEVARA riding pillion. He is 23 years old, with a
shaved head which has earned him the nickname of "El Pelado."

The cycle, a 1936 "Garden Gate" TT Norton, is piloted by ALBERTO
GRANADOS, 29 years old. GRANADOS and CHE are Argentinians,
young, idealistic, and well-fed.

The motorcycle, which emits strange noises, has seen better
days.

They approach us out of the fantastic desert landscape.

The motorcycle dies.

ROADSIDE EXT DAY

CHE hauls their rucksacks off the Norton. ALBERTO considers
the oil-dripping engine with disgust.

LATER

CHE sits beside the road. ALBERTO tinkers with the motor.

LATER

CHE kicks a stone. ALBERTO continues tinkering, swearing to himself.

STILL LATER

ALBERTO and CHE heave the defunct Motorcycle into a ditch.

LATER STILL

They walk along the desert highway, carrying their packs. ALBERTO checks a blister on his foot.

The telegraph poles cast long shadows across the road.

ANGLE ON A TRUCK

Approaching, SEVERAL PEOPLE standing in the back.

CHE and ALBERTO put out their thumbs.

The TRUCK stops. It is driven by a middle-aged MESTIZO wearing a straw cowboy hat.

DRIVER

Where you headed, boys?

CHE

Chiquicamata.

DRIVER

Two bucks.

He opens the cab door for them.

ALBERTO

(eyeing the other PASSENGERS)
Why aren't they riding up front?

DRIVER

Them? Indians.

CHE

(stiffens)
We'll ride with them.

The DRIVER shrugs.

HIGHWAY EXT NIGHT

CHE and ALBERTO stand in the back of the pickup, shivering, surrounded by silent INDIANS wrapped in warm ponchos and alpaca hats.

CHE
 (to the INDIANS)
 Cold, isn't it?

No answer.

ALBERTO
 I don't think they speak Spanish.

CHE
 Oh.
 (jumps up and down, indicating
 how cold it is)
 COLD!

The INDIANS do not reply. CHE and ALBERTO huddle together for warmth. Both look sadly at the Cab.

CHIQUICAMATA COPPER MINE EXT MORNING

A huge open-pit mine with many poorly-clad INDIAN WORKERS. Underground explosions can be heard. WORKERS tip raw rock into steaming reservoirs of Sulphuric Acid to extract the copper. OVERSEERS and POLICE look on.

CHE and ALBERTO make their way across a catwalk to an office. A sign says, BRADEN MINING CO.

OFFICE INT MORNING

MR MACKEBOY, the American Administrator of the Quiquicamata Mine, is seated behind his desk. He stares at CHE and ALBERTO in astonishment.

MACKEBOY
 You're WHAT?

ALBERTO

Doctors. That is, I am a doctor.
Ernesto here is a Medical Student
from the University of Buenos Aires,
Argentina. We want to work with
the miners.

MACKEBOY

We already have a doctor.

ALBERTO

Can we speak to him?

MACKEBOY

He isn't here.

ALBERTO

So you do need one. You must have
daily fractures, men with silicosis,
symptoms from the sulfur fumes --

MACKEBOY

Listen. You go down there --

(points)

-- it's a different world. They have
little altars to their gods down there.
They have their own cures, their own
medicines. They're not going to let
a white man stick a needle in 'em.

CATWALK EXT MORNING

CHE and ALBERTO walk back the way they've come.
CHE is in a fury.

CHE

Swine.

ALBERTO is already unfolding a map.

ALBERTO

Want to try some place else?

CHE

That's the way it is with gringos.
And they make lousy motorcycles.

ALBERTO

What about Peru? Bolivia..?

SILLUSTANI, PERU EXT AFTERNOON

CHE and ALBERTO stare in wonderment at the Pre-Inca NECROPOLIS of Sillustani - a series of imposing STONE TOWERS on the shore of a lake.

They are accompanied by an INDIAN GUIDE.

GUIDE

This is the burial grounds of the Great Incas. In each CHULPA, a General is buried. In the white ones over there, are the Priests.

ALBERTO has his camera out. CHE whispers to him.

CHE

This isn't an Inca necropolis.
This is Pre-Inca. 2,000 years old
at least.

GUIDE

The Incas had the power to MELT STONE.
They used a special herb to do it.
There is a bird that uses the same
herb to melt a hole for its nest --

CHE

(whispering)

What a lot of bullshit. They were
just good stonemasons.

ALBERTO nods, not listening. He is powerfully impressed by the strange atmosphere of the place.

LAKE UMayo, SILLUSTANI EXT SUNSET

CHE strides purposefully along the banks of the lake, surveying the majestic BURIAL TOWERS.

ALBERTO

Hey, Pelado. You know that little girl we met last night in Puno? Maria Magdalena - if I married her, since she's a descendent of Manco Capac II, well I'd be Manco Capac III. And then everyone would vote for me, and I could get Tupac Amaru's revolution going again - the INDO-AMERICAN REVOLUTION!

CHE

Make the Revolution without firing a shot? You're crazy!

CHE stops. He's found a bottle on the shore of the Lake.

CHE

Got any paper on you?

ALBERTO produces his journal. CHE tears a page out.

ALBERTO

Careful! That's my journal. You should keep one of those.

CHE writes "ERNESTO GUEVARA DE LA SERNA" and "ALBERTO GRANADOS" on the paper, and inserts it in the bottle.

He places the bottle carefully beneath one of the Ancient Stones...

SAN PABLO LEPROSARIUM, LORETO, PERU INT DAY

CHE and ALBERTO are at work in the Leper's Clinic. ALBERTO is giving shots. CHE is pulling teeth.

PATIENT

You two are pretty brave. Most doctors are afraid to treat lepers.

ALBERTO

Most cases of leprosy aren't contagious. And anyway, it's a doctor's duty to treat everyone.

ANGLE ON CHE

Breaking up coughing, shoulders hunched, gasping for breath.
He clutches at his pockets, looking for something --

PATIENT

What's the matter with Doctor Guevara?

ALBERTO

He's asthmatic.

PATIENT

My brother has asthma. He must be
looking for his inhaler. Here --

He jumps out of his chair and goes to CHE's coat - finds his
ASTHMATIC INHALER. CHE sinks back into the PATIENT's chair and
gratefully inhales. The attack subsides.

PATIENT

This is the worst place for an
asthmatic - the Jungle.

SAN PABLO LEPROSARIUM EXT EVENING

CHE and ALBERTO take their leave of the PATIENTS.

It is an emotional moment. Even the most severely disabled
patients - without legs, arms - have turned out to see them off.
There is even a small ORCHESTRA.

CHE and ALBERTO stare astonished at a RAFT moored at the edge of
the Amazon, JUNGLE all around.

FEMALE PATIENT

We made this for you.

CHE approaches the raft. It bears a sign, "MAMBO TANGO".
He looks back at his PATIENTS, so overcome he cannot speak.

CHE

Thank you...

The ORCHESTRA begins to play as CHE and ALBERTO board the raft.
The strains of a SAXAPHONE predominate.

PATIENTS

Goodbye, Doctors. Vayan con Dios --

ANGLE ON THE RAFT

Moving off slowly, vanishing from sight into the drizzle while the sound of the ORCHESTRA and the CHOIR continues.

FLASHFORWARD

NANCAHUAZU RIVER, BOLIVIA - 1967 EXT DAY

A DRIVING RAINSTORM.

CHE and his small band of GUERRILLAS attempt to ford the River via RAFT. The River is in flood, the crossing disastrous.

ANGLE ON TWO MEN

Swept into the River. One of them, BRAULIO, swims for the bank. The other, CARLOS, grabs for a pack on board the Raft. The pack falls into the River, dragging him down.

POMBO

The Rifles!

Another wave sweeps over the Raft. CHE and the GUERRILLAS cling to it for dear life as more supplies are swept overboard.

ANOTHER GUERRILLA watches in dismay. She pulls her hat off, revealing shoulder-length brown hair. She is TAMARA BUNKE - TANIA.

TANIA

That was the last of the supplies.

FLASHBACK

GUATEMALA CITY EXT DAY

MARCH 1955.

Banners supporting the Revolutionary Government of PRESIDENT JACOBO ARBENZ GUZMAN adorn the modern Ministry of Health Building. Two Army Trucks are parked outside.

ANGLE ON EL PATOJO - JULIO CACERES VALLE -

Younger, smaller, broader than CHE - very Guatemalan, down to his black fedora hat - waiting outside the building.

CHE emerges, furious.

CHE

Bastards!

(turns and shouts at Ministry
of Health Building)

IDIOTS! ELITIST SCUM!

PATOJO

How'd it go?

CHE

They turned me down. I am not FIT
to be a doctor in the service of
the Guatemalan Revolution!

CHE storms off down the street. PATOJO runs after him.

PATOJO

But why?

CHE

Because I'm not a Communist.

PATOJO

I thought you were a Communist.

CHE

Yeah, but I'm not a Party Member, ALL RIGHT?

PATOJO

Oh. Well, why aren't you?

CHE

(fuming, forcing himself
to calm down)

Listen, Patojo. The day that I decide
to join a Party, it'll be because I want
to, not because someone tells me to!

CHE bumps into a YOUNG SOLDIER on the corner.

EL PATOJO pulls him hastily away.

PATOJO

Watch out for those guys, okay?

CHE

Why. They don't know how to shoot.

PATOJO

That's the problem with my country's army. When they do shoot, they can't help but hit you.

CHE laughs. They walk on through a market filled with SOLDIERS, COPS and brilliantly-dressed INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.

CHE

I'm hungry.

ARGENTINIAN EMBASSY EXT EVENING

Guards outside. Lights within indicate a DIPLOMATIC SOIREE.

ARGENTINIAN EMBASSY INT EVENING

A SUMPTUOUS BUFFET lines one wall of the large high-ceilinged room. Some of the GUESTS are extremely well-dressed, obvious diplomats and businessmen. Others are somewhat down-at-heel, itinerant ARGENTINIANS: the most stubbornly dilapidated is CHE GUEVARA.

CHE and EL PATOJO march down the long table of food. Following CHE's example, PATOJO fills his mouth and lines his pockets with as much food as possible.

A liveried WAITER approaches with a bottle of Moet et Chandon.

WAITER

Champagne, Caballero?

EL PATOJO reaches for the tray, but CHE waves him away.

CHE

The Revolutionary must be an ascetic.
To the stoicism imposed by the difficult (CONT.)

CHE (CONT.)

conditions of warfare should be added
an austerity born of RIGID SELF-CONTROL
that will prevent a single excess, a
single slip, whatever the circumstances.

PATOJO

Well... why are we eating all this food?

At the end of the buffet line, HILDA GADEA - a short, fiery, magnetic Peruvian - is arguing with TWO PERONISTS twice her size. She pauses, glances at the MEN approaching, filling their pockets with food.

CHE

Because the Revolutionary eats when he
can, and everything he can. Sometimes
fabulous feasts disappear in an instant;
at other times he fasts for three or
four days without suffering ANY
diminution in his capacity for work.

PATOJO

(mouth full of food)

Absolutely! Couldn't agree more!

CHE sees HILDA looking at him. HILDA returns to her argument, embarrassed.

HILDA

Of course a woman has a place in
politics! She can perform any task
a man can, and more besides! She
has more feeling --

CHE

And more intelligence!

HILDA and the PERONISTAS turn and look at CHE, surprised.

CHE

My own mother is a brilliant
political thinker. Active in
politics since I was a boy.
The Compañera is absolutely right!

The PERONISTAS take a fade. HILDA looks CHE and EL PATOJO

up and down. EL PATOJO tries to conceal the fact that his pockets are full of cream cakes, spare ribs and bread.

HILDA

You look like you are far from home,
Compañeros.

PATOJO

He is. I live just round the corner --

HILDA

(ignoring EL PATOJO;
looking straight at CHE)

Perhaps you could use a home-cooked
meal... sometime.

ANGLE ON CHE

He obviously could.

ANGLE ON TWO GRINGOS

Crewcut, dressed in casual clothes. Clearly American.
One of them writes something in a BOOK.

PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, GUATEMALA CITY EXT DAY

A small plane makes a buzzing pass over several BURNING
BUILDINGS. There is no effective defence.

The plane drops LEAFLETS.

All around, the CITY is in CHAOS.

HILDA GADEA'S BASEMENT APARTMENT INT DAY

The electricity is out. HILDA is cooking stew over a Primus
stove. CHE storms around the small apartment, Mauser Bolo
pistol in his hand. EL PATOJO and a COUPLE OF LEFTIST
ASSOCIATES are present, all visibly agitated.

CHE

This is bullshit! We could have set up
a roadblock! Nobody was interested!

LEFTIST

You can't do by yourself what your
own Government isn't willing to do.

PATOJO

It isn't the Government. It's us.
Guatemala isn't ready for a
Revolution. But some day --

He stares sadly at one of the LEAFLETS, which announce the
imminent arrival of the Military Usurper CASTILLO ARMAS.

HILDA puts plates of stew on the table. Everyone gloomily tucks
in.

CHE

I'm going back to Argentina.
I'm going to fight Peron --

HILDA

No, Ernesto. Not Argentina.
If you want to be a Revolutionary,
Cuba's the place --

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

All except HILDA jump.

STREET EXT DAY

An anxious, well-dressed MAN pounds on the door.

We recognise him from the Party as the ARGENTINIAN AMBASSADOR.
A few streets away, EXPLOSIONS.

CHE opens the door, concealing his automatic pistol.

AMBASSADOR

Guevara?

CHE

Yes.

AMBASSADOR

I'm your Ambassador. Come with me
right away.

CHE

Why? Nothing's going to happen to me. Nobody knows me.

AMBASSADOR

That's what you think. I've been notified that there's an Argentine on the list of agitators to be executed. That Argentine is you.

ANGLE ON HILDA, PATOJO and the LEFTISTS

Behind CHE in the doorway, all frozen.

CHE looks back at them.

CHE

I can't leave without my friends.

AMBASSADOR'S MERC INT DAY

CHE and COMPANY are piled into the back of the AMBASSADOR's Mercedes. They pass a REBEL ARMY TROOP entering the City.

PATOJO

Where are we going?

AMBASSADOR

To the Argentinian Embassy. You'll all get asylum. When things calm down, you'll be able to leave.

PATOJO

But I'm --

(CHE and HILDA simultaneously elbow him in the ribs)

Uh... where do we go then?

He looks at CHE. CHE looks at HILDA.

AMBASSADOR

I'm going to organize a plane to Argentina, naturally.

HILDA
 (firmly)
 No. Mexico.

CHAPULTEPEC PARK, MEXICO EXT DAY

A gorgeous summer's day in the unpolluted Mexico City of the 1950's. BOTH SNOW-CAPPED VOLCANOES visible.

CHE and EL PATOJO sit a well-fed CHILD on the back of a miniature pony. EL PATOJO puts a sombrero on the KID's head, a toy gun in his hand. CHE peers through the viewfinder of a camera. He is clean shaven, hair trimmed, 27.

CHE
 A little to the left --

EL PATOJO leads the pony till it is standing in front of the bust of JOSE MARTI. CHE takes the KID's photograph.

CHE
 One Peso, Señora.

As the CHILD'S MOTHER looks through her purse, HILDA GADEA - pregnant and breathless - runs up and embraces CHE.

HILDA
 Che, Che! He's here! He's here!!

CHE
 Who's here, mi vida?

HILDA
 Fidel Castro.

CHE
 Who?

HILDA
 Fidel CASTRO. The Cuban who just got out of jail. I introduced you to his brother. He led the attack on the Moncada Barracks --

PATOJO
 I know him! That bastard Batista's tried to kill him 1,000 times!

CHE
A REAL Revolutionary...

HILDA
Do you want to meet him?

CALLE EMPARAN, MEXICO CITY EXT NIGHT

CHE, HILDA and EL PATOJO approach an apartment building in the old Downtown Section. A CUBAN, dressed in plain clothes but obviously a tough guy, intercepts them in the doorway.

HILDA confers with him. When he understands who they are, the CUBAN, smiling, ushers them in --

MARIA ANTONIA GONZALEZ' APARTMENT INT NIGHT

Decorated with Posters celebrating the Wrestler AVELINO PALOMO, MARIA ANTONIA's husband.

CHE, HILDA and PATOJO enter a thick miasma of cigar smoke and banter. The small apartment is packed with ANTI-BATISTA CUBAN EXILES, smoking, drinking coffee and rum, and talking politics.

MAMBO MUSIC playing on the Gramophone is almost lost beneath the din.

HILDA and MARIA ANTONIA exchange kisses. CHE and MARIA ANTONIA shake hands. Smiling, she leads him through the throng towards the Kitchen, outside which stand two more heavy-looking MEN, packing pistols.

The BODYGUARDS eyeball CHE but do not frisk him.

They let him enter, keeping HILDA and EL PATOJO outside...

MARIA ANTONIA'S KITCHEN INT NIGHT

Extremely small; made even smaller by the presence of an enormous man - very wide and tall, big without being fat, with very black hair and a moustache - FIDEL CASTRO, 29.

FIDEL peers into a big pot of SPAGHETTI SAUCE.

He pours half a bottle of red wine into it.

FIDEL
You like red wine?

CHE
I don't drink.

FIDEL
(approvingly)
Neither do I. A good Revolutionary doesn't drink. But when I do, I like Chivas Regal. Or Isla de Tesoro Rum. It's the best there is. From my country.

CHE pulls a little bag out of his shirt.
He starts filling a pan with water.

CHE
Yerba Mate. From my country.

FIDEL
Oh yeah? You know why Argentinians go out on the balcony in a lightning storm?

CHE
Because they think that God is taking their picture. That's the oldest joke I know --
(starts boiling the water)
-- and the biggest mistake we all make. Argentine, Cuban, Mexican - what does it matter? We're all the same people.

FIDEL looks at CHE with increased interest.

A CUBAN in a leather jacket enters and hands FIDEL a paper.
FIDEL studies it, makes notes and hands it back.

FIDEL
Don't let anyone else in for now.

CUBAN
For how long?

FIDEL
Ten, twenty minutes. How do I know? I'm busy.

MARIA ANTONIA'S APARTMENT INT NIGHT

EL PATOJO waits patiently. HILDA makes small talk with MARIA ANTONIA. The GUARDS are not letting anyone else into the kitchen.

SECOND CUBAN

How much longer do I have to wait?
It's already been two hours --

The GUARDS shrug.

From the KITCHEN comes the sound of passionate argument and laughter.

KITCHEN INT NIGHT

FIDEL pounds the spaghetti spoon on the kitchen table.

FIDEL

Look. The basic problem I'm facing is --

CHE

No money, no soldiers.

FIDEL

No! I will get money, and I will get soldiers. The basic problem is an entrenched oligarchy. Even when I get rid of Batista, they're going to try and put another stooge in his place.

CHE

The problem's bigger than that.
The struggle in Cuba is part of the continental struggle against the Yankees.
The Revolution in Cuba will be of international significance. Its leader will be a World Leader --

FIDEL

But he'll still have to be PRACTICAL.
You know Colonel Bayo? He's a military tactician, fought in the Spanish War (CONT.)

FIDEL (CONT.)

against the Fascists. One-eyed man.
Told me he'd become a cynic and was
going to charge me for his services.
I said fine. But you know what?

CHE

What, Che?

FIDEL

He's been working for me for six months
and he hasn't charged me a Peso! That's
because he believes in what we're doing
- just like everybody here!

APARTMENT INT NIGHT

HILDA, MARIA ANTONIA, EL PATOJO - everyone except FIDEL's
BODYGUARDS - has fallen asleep, the dinner long forgotten.

Sounds of FIDEL and CHE's debate continue off screen.

KITCHEN INT SHORTLY BEFORE DAWN

It's getting light outside. CHE and FIDEL sit in two chairs,
facing each other, hitting each other on the knee for emphasis.

CHE

But that's the way it's bound to be.
Eventually, in the Revolutionary State,
everyone will work because they want
to. We will abolish money!

FIDEL

Absolutely right!

CHE

The Revolution will create the New Man -
look, I don't have any possessions to
leave to my wife and child, and I don't
regret it. I'm happy it's that way.
The New Man - the Man of the 21st Century -
will be the same. He'll feel anguish
when someone is assassinated in any
corner of the world, and elation when (CONT.)

CHE (CONT.)

in any corner of the world the banner
of liberty is raised!

FIDEL stares into CHE's eyes. They are very close.

FIDEL

When the Revolution triumphs, no one
in Cuba will go hungry or lack for
medical attention. There will be
jobs for everyone, and everyone will
learn to read and write. The only
people who need be afraid are Counter-
Revolutionaries: traitors, moneylenders,
prostitutes and perverts.

CHE

Absolutely right!

FIDEL

You're a doctor, aren't you?
I'm going to need doctors.

CHE

I'm at your orders, Che.

FIDEL

What is it with this "Che" business?
I thought you were called Che.

CHE

Everyone is called Che. It's
Argentine slang, a nickname.
It means "buddy".

FIDEL

Listen to me. It's your name.
(tapping him on the chest)
You are the Che.

MONTAGE - SANTA ROSA RANCH, OUTSIDE MEXICO CITY

CHE, EL PATOJO and other trusted REVOLUTIONARIES - most of them
Cuban - train for the invasion of Cuba under COLONEL ALBERTO
BAYO, 64, eye patch, seasoned military veteran.

The MEN fire rifles, crawl and run with heavy packs, climb ropes, make Molotov cocktails and grenades.

FIDEL's younger brother RAUL, a shorter, stockier version of FIDEL, trains along with the MEN.

SANTA ROSA RANCH EXT EVENING

CHE and the TRAINEE SOLDIERS return from a long march with full packs and rifles. They have obviously forded a river, and are wet, bedraggled and exhausted.

FIDEL CASTRO and COL. BAYO watch as the MEN file in and throw themselves upon the ground.

COL. BAYO

How was your day, Commandante?

FIDEL

Very successful. I think I've found us a boat, and another fifteen thousand dollars. How's my brother doing?

COL. BAYO

Pretty good. But the best of the lot's Guevara.

FIDEL

Really, Colonel?

COL. BAYO

Yes. Watch this.

(shouts to the worn-out MEN)

You men! I want a volunteer to calibrate these rifles!

ANGLE ON CHE

Tired as he is, throwing off his pack and running to the stacked rifles to assist COLONEL BAYO.

ANGLE ON RAUL

Watching.

RAUL

Oh for Christ's sake. Who does he think he is? All we've had to eat today is half an orange.

ANGLE ON FIDEL

Walking over. He addresses the prone and supine MEN, thoughtfully, in a voice of infinite SADNESS.

FIDEL

Men, the struggle ahead of us is very long. If you become exhausted so easily, you will be left behind. And I am personally ashamed that Che, a foreigner, an Argentine, has gone on training, while all of you Cubans - and you, Raul, my own brother - just lie here.

ANGLE ON THE MEN

Embarrassed and ashamed. CHE comes running up.

CHE

I finished the rifles.
Anybody want to play football?

The MEN look at each other. FIDEL stands, waiting. One by one, they struggle to their feet.

CHE AND HILDA'S APARTMENT, CALLE NAPOLES INT NIGHT

CHE coughs and wheezes, suffering an attack of asthma. He breathes from his inhaler.

FIDEL and COL. BAYO sit at a table in the little apartment.

HILDA and CHE's new baby, HILDITA, is in a basket on the floor beside them. She cries.

COL. BAYO

(going through his notes)
I've told the men to throw out their razors and toothbrushes. You won't need them where you're going.

HILDA enters, deposits mending, picks up BABY and laundry.

HILDA

Che doesn't grow much of a beard anyway.

FIDEL

Also, if you calculate 15 minutes a day spent shaving, that's something like 5,000 minutes a year wasted.

BAYO

Precisely --

(lowers his voice as HILDA leaves)

About the sexual matter. I have arranged for a certain house here to provide services for our men. This way they will not risk disease or overindulgence. They must continue to provide us with a written report of their activities. It will be good training for the Sierras.

CHE

There won't be any prostitutes in the Sierra Maestra. The men will have their minds on other things.

FLASHFORWARD

NANCAHUAZU RAVINE, BOLIVIA - 1967 EXT NIGHT

CHE lies in his hammock, coughing. He is very sick and there is no medicine. POMBO watches over him.

His men are worn out; discipline has collapsed.

Beside the camp fire, two of the GUERRILLAS - BRAULIO and JOAQUIN - dance naked in front of TANIA, harassing her obscenely and reducing her to tears.

FLASHBACK

TUXPAN DOCKS, MEXICO EXT NIGHT

25 NOVEMBER 1956

Downpour. BRAULIO - much younger and fitter - hauls crates of

oranges along the dock. He doffs his cap to HILDA as he passes.

HILDA, holding the baby HILDITA under an umbrella, says goodbye to CHE, dressed - as he will be from now on - in military fatigues. She eyes the Rebel Yacht "Granma" - a 38' vessel already loaded far beyond its maximum capacity of 25 persons.

HILDA

Do you have enough food? You have responsibilities, Che. You have to look after yourself. You're a father.

CHE

Revolutionaries often aren't present to hear their children's first words. Their wives must also share in their sacrifice.

HILDA

I know that. How many of you are going on that boat anyway? It only looks big enough for ten.

ANGLE ON FIDEL AND RAUL

On the deck of "Granma", wearing waterproof capes.

RAUL

We're going to have to leave at least 50 men behind.

FIDEL

Can't we leave some food instead?

RAUL points to a pile of crates abandoned on the wharf.

RAUL

We already have.

ANGLE ON EL PATOJO AND OTHER REVOLUTIONARIES.

Climbing the gangplank. FIDEL raises a hand.

FIDEL

I'm sorry, Patojo. I can only take so many men. And I must give priority to Cubans.

ANGLE ON CHE

Hauling himself aboard the crowded vessel, joining FIDEL and RAUL on the deck.

ANGLE ON THE CAPTAIN

Looking extremely concerned.

CAPTAIN

This isn't the ship you hired me to take to Cuba. Where's the real ship?

FIDEL

All will be well.

HIGH SEAS NIGHT

Extremely foul weather. The 82 ARMED MEN are almost all seasick. CHE gives antihistamine shots. The "Granma" lists alarmingly, taking on water. Her pumps are broken, and the sick MEN are forced to bail water by hand...

LOS CAYUELOS, CUBA EXT BEFORE DAWN

The "Granma" is beached at low tide, off the Cuban shore.

The MEN are jumping from their vessel with their personal weapons, sinking up to their hips in mud.

ANGLE ON CAMILO CIENFUEGOS

A handsome Cuban, struggling towards the shore. Though tired and hungry, he urges the other REVOLUTIONARIES on.

ANGLE ON CHE AND RAUL

Still on deck, salvaging supplies. They are the last to leave the boat.

MANGROVE SWAMP EXT MORNING

FIDEL leads his men through waist-deep water. Gnarled tree

roots rise like an awesome obstacle course. Vines and razorlike leaves slash and beat their faces.

Vast clouds of MOSQUITOS attempt to devour them alive.

ANGLE ON CHE

Carrying his rifle, pack, and MEDICAL BAG.

He trips. CAMILO, already heavily bearded and wearing his characteristic Cowboy Hat, helps CHE back up.

HIGH GROUND EXT DAY

FIDEL'S SMALL ARMY has reached a settlement of Charcoal Burners' Huts. Some of the MEN drink from a well. Others, including CHE, reach into a beehive and extract the dripping honey.

FIDEL attempts to pay one of the CHARCOAL BURNERS, but the man shakes his head.

ANGLE ON JOAQUIN

A young peasant, watching the strange group of armed, bearded men.

EXPLOSIONS ARE HEARD.

ANGLE ON A REBEL

Posted as lookout at the top of a tree.

REBEL

Batista's Air Force! They're bombing
the boat --

FIDEL

Move out! And keep your heads down.
They mustn't spot us...

FARTHER AHEAD

They march through sugar cane fields. The HUNGRY MEN break off and suck canes as they walk, tossing the dessicated husks aside.

ANGLE ON THE TELL-TALE SUGAR CANE HUSKS - lying on the ground.

LATER

ANGLE ON A SOLDIER FROM BATISTA'S ARMY

Studying the trail of discarded husks.

ALEGRIA DE PIO EXT DAY

FIDEL has set up camp on unprotected ground at the foot of a rocky hill. The exhausted MEN slumber.

ANGLE ON THE HILL ABOVE THEM

Where a 100-man RURAL GUARD COMPANY takes up positions.

ANGLE ON CHE

Studying the bleeding feet of several REBELS.

CHE

We'll have to feed them.

FIDEL

A piece of sausage, a cracker,
and a mouthful of condensed milk
each. It's all we have.

MACHINE GUN AND RIFLE FIRE

turn the Camp into an INFERNO. A DOZEN MEN are instantly killed. FIDEL fires his rifle at the hillside.

CHE, rifle slung over his shoulder, grabs his MEDICAL BAG. He heads towards a WOUNDED MAN. Before he reaches him --

WHACK! CHE is hit in the shoulder, knocked to the ground.

CHE

AAAAAGH - they fucked me!

CHE lies on the ground, uncertain if he's dead. There is blood on his shirt. His MEDICAL BAG and RIFLE lie to the side. BULLETS whistle overhead.

ANGLE ON FIDEL - enraged, trying to reload his rifle as CAMILO and RAUL hustle him out of range.

FIDEL

Bastards! I'm going to kill you
sons of bitches!

CAMILO

Retreat! Hide in the cane, men,
and regroup!

But it is a disaster. DEAD BODIES lie everywhere.

Only a handful of the original eighty-two are left.

ANGLE ON CHE

Lying on the ground. The pain in his shoulder makes him realise he's not dead. He reaches into his pocket and extracts his THICK CARDBOARD ARGENTINIAN I.D. CARD - dripping with blood - a flattened BULLET lodged within it.

Nearby, JUAN ALMEIDA, the Black Captain, beckons to him --

JUAN

Che! Over here!

CHE abandons the I.D. which saved his life. He rises, discovering he has only one arm to carry with.

BATTISTA SOLDIERS run at him, firing.

CHE stares at his MEDICAL BAG and RIFLE.

He grabs the RIFLE and abandons the BAG.

CANE FIELD EXT DAY

CHE, JUAN and TWO OTHER SURVIVORS run hell-for-leather through the cane, keeping their heads down.

CRANE UP TO REVEAL FIDEL AND HIS PARTY

Running through the cane in a different direction.

ANGLE ON THE SOLDIERS

Setting the cane AFIRE.

CHE, FIDEL and the retreating REBELS disappear into the smoke...

LOW HILLS EXT NIGHT

CHE, JUAN and the OTHER TWO walk into the mountains, under a star-filled sky. They have no compass and use the stars to find their way. One of the MEN stumbles. JUAN supports him.

CHE

Did you see Fidel?

JUAN

No, but I heard him shouting.

(pause)

I'm sure he got away.

How's your shoulder?

CHE

It's fine, but this guy's bad.

He indicates the staggering REBEL, who is wounded in the abdomen, and groaning.

EL MAMEY EXT MORNING

An impoverished village in the foothills. Its largest building is a wretched Seventh Day Adventist Church.

PASTOR ROSABAL O/S

We have heard on the radio that a group of armed men has landed near here. The Government urges us to report any strangers --

CHURCH INT DAY

PASTOR ROSABAL addresses his small CONGREGATION. His voice rises, in passion.

PASTOR ROSABAL

-- but I say to you, these men who come (CONT.)

PASTOR ROSABAL (CONT.)

with a mission to do away with a little of our misery MUST BE SAVED! All of you must take an interest in their lives, and when you learn that there is one or more of them around, take them in. If you have no courage to do it, ADVISE ME --

He breaks off, staring at the back of the little church.

ANGLE ON CHE, JUAN, and the OTHER REBEL, supporting their wounded COMRADE, in the doorway.

PASTOR ROSABAL

As I am a man of God, I say to all of you: this situation is not easy. Let us pray.

The CONGREGATION kneels.

CHE and the REBELS look at each other. One by one, they do likewise. CHE is the last to kneel...

PURIAL DE VICANA, SIERRA MAESTRA EXT DAY

FIDEL CASTRO is in a fury. CHE, JUAN, and the unwounded REBEL stand sheepishly before him. PASTOR ROSABAL, who has brought them here, waits nearby.

The SURVIVORS have regrouped on a small farm. RAUL and CAMILO are present. JOAQUIN, the young charcoal burner, now wears fatigues and practices awkwardly with a rifle.

FIDEL

Where are your guns?

JUAN and the OTHER REBEL look at CHE.

CHE

We had a sick man. Wounded in the abdomen, and feverish. We left him in a farmhouse with our rifles. While we were gone, the Army...

Realising his excuse is insufficient, CHE shuts up.

FIDEL

To leave behind rifles in such circumstances is to pay with one's life for such crime and stupidity.

He indicates a GROUP OF PEASANTS climbing down from an Ox-Cart. One of the WOMEN wears an enormous skirt, from which she shakes MACHINE GUN BULLETS and DYNAMITE STICKS. An OLD MAN lowers a THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN from the Cart.

FIDEL

These people are risking their lives to bring us weapons. And you can't even be trusted with the ones you have! Dismissed.

JUAN and the OTHER REBEL turn to go. CHE follows --

FIDEL

(calling him back)

Che. How's your shoulder?

CHE

(brightening)

Fine.

LOS CHORROS EXT DAY

16 FEBRUARY 1957

The REBEL CAMP is higher in the Sierra Maestra, and more firmly entrenched. At least TWENTY REBEL SOLDIERS, with tents, vehicles and a small open school house where LOCAL PEASANTS are being taught to read and write.

ANGLE ON CHE AND POMBO

A young new Black recruit. CHE, whose beard has grown patchily, peers through binoculars.

BINOCULAR POV --

A JEEP appears on the rutted wagon road which leads the Camp. A WOMAN drives it; a MAN is her passenger.

CHE

Here they come.

POMBO

Is it the army?

CHE

No. The New York Times.

He hands POMBO the Binoculars, walks back towards the Camp. POMBO rushes past him, calling out to the MEN --

POMBO

They're coming! They're coming!

Instantly the Camp is galvanized.

FIDEL emerges from a tent. CHE motions to FIDEL to stick his fatigue shirt inside his pants. FIDEL does so.

ANGLE ON THE JEEP APPROACHING

Driven by CELIA SANCHEZ, 36 years old, the highest-ranking woman member of the Rebels' National Directorate.

At her side is a GRINGO in civilian clothes, the JOURNALIST HERBERT MATTHEWS. He carries a notebook, camera, and tape recorder.

CHE waits until the jeep is almost in the Camp, then sends a column of TEN MEN running across the road.

CELIA slows to avoid the troops, who chant REBEL SLOGANS.

As CELIA pulls up beside FIDEL, the troops disappear behind a tent where CAMILO is waiting.

They quickly exchange hats and alter their appearances.

CAMILO leads them out, marching at a different pace, chanting different SLOGANS, as FIDEL shakes hands with MATTHEWS and ushers him into the largest tent --

As MATTHEWS disappears inside, he looks over his shoulder at the passing SOLDIERS.

TENT INT DAY

MATTHEWS has his tape recorder running. He takes notes.

FIDEL sits magisterially, hands folded confidently across his belly. CELIA sits taking her own notes. CHE sits next to her.

RAUL stands behind MATTHEWS, at the open tent flap.

MATTHEWS

The question the American people
most want asked, Dr Castro, is --

FIDEL

Am I a Communist? Absolutely not!

Behind MATTHEWS, RAUL makes a cross with his two forefingers. FIDEL immediately picks up on it, and shows MATTHEWS the CRUCIFIX which hangs around his neck.

FIDEL

You think a Communist would wear this?
(indicates crucifix)
First and foremost, I am a democrat.
And a big fan of American baseball!

FIDEL and MATTHEWS laugh. RAUL, relieved, gives FIDEL the thumbs up.

FIDEL

I'm here to get rid of a dictator,
not make myself President. I'm not
old enough. I'm 31 years old.

RAUL signals to CAMILO, who is waiting outside the tent flap. CAMILO enters, panting, as if out of breath.

CAMILO

Commandante! The liaison from
Column Number Two has arrived!

FIDEL

Wait until I'm finished.

CAMILO

Yes, sir!

Saluting again, CAMILO exits. The same TEN MEN run past again, outside.

MATTHEWS

How many troops DO you have, Dr Castro?

FIDEL

How many have you counted?

MATTHEWS

Well, at least FIFTY...

CELIA smiles. RAUL heaves a big sigh of relief.

FIDEL

Batista troops work in columns of two hundred. We, in groups of ten to forty, are winning.

LOS CHORROS CAMP EXT DAY

CELIA drives MATTHEWS away.

CHE and FIDEL stand outside the command tent, watching.

CHE

What was all that stuff about you being a democrat.

FIDEL

Just telling them what they want to hear...

UVERO GARRISON EXT DAWN

28 MAY 1957

FIDEL and RAUL watch from a hilltop as eight Guerrilla Combat Units - EIGHTY MEN - approach the Fort, situated on the Caribbean Coast.

VIA BINOCULARS

We see CAMILO CIENFUEGOS in his Cowboy Hat lead the first Combat Unit against the Garrison.

ANGLE ON CHE

On the ground, POMBO and his MEN ranked behind him.

CHE

Are we going to let Camilo beat us?

The MEN cry "NO" and wave their weapons.

CHE

Forward!

CHE and his MEN charge the Fort, CHE opening up with his machine gun, blasting an ARMY SOLDIER from the battlements.

POMBO

This is GREAT!

CHE grins and jams another clip into his weapon --

ANGLE ON CELIA

Firing a rifle with telescopic sights at the Fort.

ANGLE ON A CBS NEWS CREW, behind CELIA, filming --

FLASHFORWARD

LA HIGUERA, BOLIVIA - 1967 EXT NIGHT

The small band of GUERRILLAS is camped. They have no fire. CHE and POMBO listen to the radio. CHE wheezes with asthma. He is hunched over, writing in his journal.

RADIO VOICE

Today, Thursday, the body of Tamara Bunke, alias Tania, was found on the shore of the Rio Grande. It will be taken to Santa Cruz --

CHE

(coughing)

It isn't true. I don't believe it.

RADIO VOICE

With the discovery of Bunke's body, it is believed that the entire group of the bandit Joaquin - second in command to Che Guevara - has been wiped out --

CHE

Propaganda. Joaquin's whole group couldn't have been killed - unless they were asleep.

RADIO VOICE

Found on the body of Tania - who was believed to be pregnant by El Che - were journals containing the names and addresses of their contacts in La Paz. The Police have already begun a round-up of subversives --

POMBO looks pointedly at CHE's cherry-red journal.

POMBO

Maybe you shouldn't be doing that.

CHE

(wheezing)

Is there any more Yerba Mate?

POMBO holds up the pouch and turns it over. EMPTY.

FLASHBACK

LAS VILLAS CAMP, SIERRA MAESTRA EXT DAY

The new Camp is considerably larger than the old - containing, in addition to TWO HUNDRED TROOPS, a hospital, a slaughterhouse with steers in pens, and shoe, cigar and explosives factories.

We CRANE DOWN to find CHE seated beside the Radio Transmitter of "Radio Rebelde" and its co-founder, CARLOS FRANQUI.

CARLOS is small, balding, bearded and agitated.
CHE is writing in his journal.

CARLOS

I told him, you and I had both agreed (CONT.)

CARLOS (CONT.)

to broadcast an evening of poetry -
Beaudelaire, Neruda, Lorca. You know
what he told me to broadcast? Baseball
Scores and Military Victories. Says
that's what the people want to hear.
It's what he wants to hear...

CHE

That's impossible. Fidel agreed with
me about our cultural programme.

CARLOS

He agreed with you till you were outside
the tent. Then he told me to cancel it.

CHE, pissed off, gets to his feet. His foot is bandaged from a
battle wound. He reaches for his cane --

CARLOS

What kind of Revolution is this if
there's no room for POETRY? We're
going to end up like the United States!

This sends CHE into a fury. He stamps across the Camp towards
FIDEL CASTRO, who is bidding goodbye to the team of CBS
REPORTERS.

CHE

Can I speak to you?

FIDEL

(to the REPORTERS)

Gentlemen, of course you know Commandante
Che Guevara - the hero of the Las Villas
Campaign. This is his Camp. The shoe
factory, the munitions factory, the
schools, everything is his. Che is an
administrator as well as a man of action!

FIDEL puts his arm around CHE as the REPORTERS take photos.
The jeep drives off. Impatient to speak, CHE ignores FIDEL's
hyperbole.

They enter FIDEL'S TENT.

FIDEL'S TENT INT DAY

FIDEL takes two fresh CIGARS from his pack, offers CHE one.

FIDEL

You ought to smoke more, Che.

It's one of the few comforts we can carry on our backs. Keeps the bastard mosquitoes away, too.

CHE takes the cigar but doesn't smoke it.

CHE

You told Franqui to broadcast baseball scores.

FIDEL

This is Cuba. Everyone likes baseball.

CHE

Americans like baseball. You think you can make this Revolution behind their backs?

FIDEL

Wait a minute --

CHE

A true Revolution cannot be disguised! You aren't going to keep the Yankees sweet with little gags about CRUCIFIXES and BASEBALL! Once they find out what you plan to do, they'll come down on you pronto!

FIDEL, furious also, yanks his CRUCIFIX from his neck and throws it on the ground.

FIDEL

I know what I'm doing.
Don't be so damn stupid!

CAMP EXT DAY

CELIA SANCHEZ and the beautiful ALEIDA MARCH, 22, head of the local Women's Committee, approach the tent. When CELIA hears the raised voices within, she motions ALEIDA not to enter. They wait outside the tent, listening.

ALEIDA

Commandante Guevara is very outspoken.

CELIA

He can afford to be.

Fidel's in love with him.

FIDEL'S TENT INT DAY

CHE turns to leave. FIDEL is visibly upset.

FIDEL

Wait.

CHE looks back. Extremely emotional.

CHE

I have to ask you to forgive me.

I have no right to criticise you --
the Maximum Leader.

FIDEL opens his arms to CHE. The TWO MEN embrace.

FIDEL

You are the lover of the Revolution,
Che. You see it at its best. It
brings you flowers. But I am the wife.
I have to do its fucking laundry.

CELIA pulls back the tent flap and looks in.

CELIA

Storm over?

CHE looks over FIDEL's shoulder, at ALEIDA.

SANTA CLARA CAMP, SIERRA MAESTRA EXT NIGHT

CHE is hunched over, having an asthma attack.

POMBO brings him a cup of MATE. ALEIDA, now CHE's secretary,
intercepts POMBO and hands the cup to CHE. CHE downs it.

ANGLE ON THE ASSEMBLED TROOP

Nervous on the eve of battle, waiting for CHE to address them.

ANGLE ON CHE

The attack over, rising, lighting a cigar.

CHE

You must strike like a tornado, men,
destroying all, giving no quarter
unless tactical circumstances call for
it. Judge those who must be judged!
Sow panic among the enemy combatants!
But treat defenceless prisoners
benevolently, and show respect for
the dead.

ANGLE ON CHE'S TROOPS

Transfixed by him.

ANGLE ON ALEIDA

Looking at CHE with reverent awe.

CHE

The most interesting event, the one
that carries all to a convulsion of joy,
and puts new vigour in everybody's steps,
is about to occur. It is the climax of
Guerrilla life -- THE BATTLE.

TUMULTUOUS CHEERS.

SANTA CLARA EXT NIGHT

TWO BATISTA SOLDIERS posted on a rooftop stare at the REBEL
CAMPFIRES. When they hear the CHEERS they turn and look at
each other with expressions of despair.

SANTA CLARA CAMP EXT NIGHT

CHE, marching briskly, utterly without fatigue, checks the
perimeter of his camp. He is followed by POMBO, ALEIDA,
BRAULIO, JOAQUIN and a dozen other REBEL SOLDIERS - all young,

all adoring, all working hard to keep up with him.

ANGLE ON A REBEL SENTRY

Asleep at his post.

Chewing on his cigar, CHE glares at the sleeping BOY.

POMBO runs up and kicks him. The SENTRY jumps up, immediately terrified. CHE restrains POMBO.

CHE

What were you doing, asleep?

The BOY is too afraid to speak.

CHE

Where is your rifle?

POMBO

Answer the Commandante!

BOY

They took it away from me, for being careless with it.

CHE considers, aware that all eyes are upon him.

Not far off, the thump of MORTARS begins.

CHE

When the Battle starts in a few hours, you're going in without a gun.

BOY

Yes, sir..?

CHE

Earn yourself a rifle in the front lines. Go there without a gun, and come back with one - if you can.

BOY

Yes, sir!

CHE and his ENTOURAGE move on without another word.

ANGLE ON THE BOY SENTRY

Watching CHE go.

SANTA CLARA TRAIN YARDS EXT DAY

THE THICK OF BATTLE. CHE'S MEN have derailed an ARMY TRAIN and are pelting it with homemade bombs and Molotov cocktails, turning the armour-plated train into a FURNACE.

BATISTA SOLDIERS are surrendering in droves.

CHE'S MEN salvage ANTIAIRCRAFT GUNS, MACHINE GUNS, and VAST QUANTITIES OF AMMUNITION from the burning train.

CHE, absolutely triumphant and seemingly invulnerable, marches through the fray - POMBO, JOAQUIN and BRAULIO at his side.

BATISTA SOLDIERS run at CHE, throwing down their weapons, trying to surrender to him personally.

Above the manic din of battle, a lone voice is heard.

VOICE

Che! Che...

ANGLE ON THE BOY SENTRY

Mortally wounded, covered in blood, lying on the railroad track. He locks eyes with CHE and proudly raises his newly-won rifle. As CHE watches, the BOY dies.

HIGH ANGLE ON THE TRAIN YARDS

CHE'S TROOPS advancing, as resistance collapses, towards the centre of town.

CAMPO COLUMBIA MILITARY AIRFIELD EXT NIGHT

31 DECEMBER 1958

A Cuban Air Force field outside Havana.

PRESIDENT FULGENCIO BATISTA, with his FAMILY and several ARMY, NAVY and AIR FORCE AIDES, boards a small plane bound

for exile in the Dominican Republic...

HAVANA EXT DAY

4 JANUARY 1959

CHE and CAMILO CIENFUEGOS ride in Wills Jeeps along the Malecon, Havana's seafront boulevard. The Malecon is lined with cheering, ecstatically dancing CROWDS who pelt the BEARDED WARRIORS with flowers.

HOLGUIN EXT DAY

FIDEL's convoy on the road to Havana.

The crowds have stopped the convoy moving forward. CELIA SANCHEZ sits atop a tank, talking on the radio.

FIDEL grants an interview to HERBERT MATTHEWS. From this moment on, we will not see FIDEL alone - he is completely surrounded by ADMIRERS, JOURNALISTS, and BODYGUARDS.

FIDEL

There will be an orderly transition.
Foreign investors need fear nothing.
We respect them; we want to work
with them. We will fulfill our
obligations to our foreign partners
and to the World Bank --

LA CABANA FORTRESS, HAVANA INT DAY

CHE lounges on the desk of the Chief of the Military Department of Havana, eating an apple. Behind him is a big framed map of the City, with Military and Police Garrisons outlined.

CHE addresses a group of ADMIRING STUDENTS.

The orderly gunfire of a FIRING SQUAD echoes through the old stone Spanish Fort.

CHE

Public utilities, especially those
owned by American companies, will (CONT.)

CHE (CONT.)

be nationalised. The entire Cuban nation must become a Guerrilla Army to defend itself from aggression by a Power that is almost a Continent --

ANGLE ON THE STUDENTS

Nodding in agreement. GUNSHOTS echo again.

CAMPO COLUMBIA EXT NIGHT

STOCK SHOT of the TENS OF THOUSANDS who have waited for hours to see FIDEL on his triumphant entry into Havana.

Behind them rise huge illuminated billboards for BRANIFF and EASTERN AIRLINES.

FIDEL, with CAMILO CIENFUEGOS at his side, addresses the multitude.

FIDEL

Decent soldiers who have not stolen and have not assassinated will have the right to remain in the Army. I'm also telling you that those who have assassinated will not be saved by anybody from the firing squad!

APPLAUSE. The CROWD yells YES - YES - YES!

FIDEL

For us, principles are above other considerations: we do not struggle because of ambition. I believe we have demonstrated sufficiently that we have fought without ambition. I believe no Cuban has the slightest doubt about it!

MORE APPLAUSE. FIDEL turns to CAMILO.

FIDEL

Am I doing all right, Camilo?

CAMILO

You're doing all right, Fidel!

The CROWD roars its approval - FIDEL - FIDEL - FIDEL!

A CLOUD OF WHITE DOVES is released. One of them lands on FIDEL's shoulder. The CROWD goes wild.

ANGLE ON CARLOS FRANQUI

With his radio equipment, turning to CELIA.

CARLOS

Look, Celia - no one but that dove would dare to shit on Fidel now.

ANGLE ON CELIA

Smiling benignly at the DOVES OF PEACE filling the air.

WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON D.C. INT DAY

10 MARCH 1959

In silhouette, the unmistakable profiles of PRESIDENT EISENHOWER and VICE PRESIDENT NIXON, against the windows of the Oval Office.

Also present are C.I.A. DIRECTOR ALLEN DULLES and DEPUTY DIRECTOR CHARLES P. CABELL, and other members of the National Security Council.

EISENHOWER

It's agreed, then. We eliminate Castro and who else?

NIXON

His brother Raul, and, uh, Ernesto Guevara, also known as, uh, "Chi".

DULLES

That's "Che" Mr Vice President.

EISENHOWER

This "Chi". Is he Cuban, too?

CABELL

He's Argentinian, sir.

EISENHOWER

Good. We could get in real trouble
doing this to Americans.

EISENHOWER signs off on the NSC Castro Elimination Plan.

CRASH OF GUNFIRE OFF SCREEN

LA CABANA FORTRESS, HAVANA INT DAY

THREE FIRING SQUAD VICTIMS fall to the ground.

THREE MORE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES are marched forward to take
their place.

ANGLE ON CHE AND RAUL

Supervising the EXECUTIONS.

SPORTS STADIUM, HAVANA EXT DAY

The Show Trial of JESUS SOSA BLANCO, a Major in BATISTA's Army,
is in progress. The JUDGE is seated on a podium before the
Cuban Flag, eating an ice cream.

JUDGE

Does the Defence Counsel have
anything to say?

ANGLE ON DEFENCE COUNSEL

Clad in Guerrilla fatigues, rising.

DEFENCE COUNSEL

Just this, your honour: I want to
apologise to everybody here for
defending this Batista son of a bitch.

APPLAUSE from the large crowd gathered in the stadium.

ANGLE ON CARLOS FRANQUI - BEARDLESS -

Watching from above. FIDEL, CELIA, and a large ENTOURAGE appear. FIDEL stares at CARLOS in astonishment.

FIDEL

I can't believe it!

CARLOS

Neither can I. The bastard deserves everything he gets, but this looks bad.

FIDEL

I'm not talking about the trial.
I'm talking about your face.
Where is your BEARD?

CARLOS

(taken aback)

I... I cut it off. It was so hot,
and my kid didn't recognise me...

(FIDEL glares at him)

... and my wife didn't like it.

FIDEL

Your beard doesn't belong to you.
It belongs to the Revolution.

FIDEL turns on his heel and leaves, surrounded by his ATTENDANTS. CARLOS stands, astonished, as the TRIAL continues below.

MAIN POST OFFICE, MEXICO CITY INT NIGHT

HILDA GADEA - CHE's wife - talks on the telephone. HILDITA - now three years old - is in her arms.

A line of people outside the booth in the grand Palacio de Correos wait to make international calls.

HILDA

(into phone, excitedly)

I talked to your mother. She wants to
come to Cuba immediately. You know
how she is. When shall I join you, Che?

She listens, and hangs up the phone.
The next CUSTOMER taps on the booth.

CHE AND ALEIDA MARCH'S WEDDING, HAVANA

JUNE 1959

The group - CHE, ALEIDA, best man RAUL and his wife VILMA, CARLOS and other guests - arrange themselves around the cake for the wedding picture.

All the men except CARLOS are still bearded.

CARLOS

You know this joke? A beardless man gets on a bus. He says he's a Revolutionary, doesn't need to pay. The bus conductor says, "So where's your beard?" The guy says, "Secret Service."

All the GUESTS except RAUL laugh.

Laughing particularly hard is CHE's old friend EL PATOJO, who has just arrived - he has begun to grow a beard in sympathy.

RAUL

(to VILMA)

Jokes, half-truths and lies are divisive and Counter-Revolutionary.

An uncomfortable silence. One of the GUESTS speaks up.

GUEST

So, uh, Che - where are you two going for your honeymoon?

CHE

Egypt. Japan. Ceylon. Pakistan.
Sudan. Morocco. Yugoslavia.
Maybe China --

BEIJING, CHINA

EXT

DAY

STOCK SHOT of ITANMEN SQUARE filled with red banners, portraits of MAO ZEDONG, multitudes on bicycles.

PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS, BEIJING EXT DAY

CHE, dressed as always in fatigues, trousers tucked into his boots, waits nervously with a small party of CUBANS in the great hall.

A POLITICIAN is making a long speech in Mandarin.

Suddenly one of their CHINESE ESCORTS tugs CHE on the sleeve.

Increasingly nervous, CHE begins to walk down a LONG RED CARPET towards a dais where CHAIRMAN MAO and the ENTIRE LEADERSHIP of the PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA await him.

Half way down the carpet, the worst thing CHE has anticipated happens - he feels a CRIPPLING ATTACK OF ASTHMA coming on.

Struggling to suppress it, he strides towards the podium where MAO and the other LEADERS wait.

Starting to choke, he mounts the steps, extends a hand. The most famous and powerful Communist in the entire world takes it and begins to speak --

INTERPRETER
(translating MAO's
Mandarin Chinese)
On behalf of the peace-loving
People's Republic of China,
Chairman Mao Zedong welcomes the
representative of the freedom-loving
Cuban Republic, Comrade Commandante
Ernesto Guevara --

Shoulders hunched over, CHE begins to shake and cough. He shudders, unable to overcome the ASTHMA ATTACK.

ANGLE ON CHAIRMAN MAO

Watching his young guest with some concern. He speaks to an AIDE. The AIDE addresses the INTERPRETER.

INTERPRETER
Comrade Che, what is it? Are you sick?

Breathless, CHE cannot speak. POMBO steps forward with his inhaler. MAO nods, speaks to the INTERPRETER.

INTERPRETER

Ah. The Chairman sees you have asthma.

CHE

(choking)

Yes.

MAO steps down off the dais and puts his hand on CHE's shoulder. He speaks to him earnestly in Mandarin, the INTERPRETER struggling to keep up.

INTERPRETER

The Chairman urges you to take a course in the Chinese science of ACUPUNCTURE. In the long term, this is the only PROVEN REMEDY for your unfortunate condition --

CHE wheezes as the CHAIRMAN and the entire CHINESE LEADERSHIP look on sympathetically.

ACCUPUNCTURE CLINIC INT DAY

CHE lies on a gurney with a towel around his waist. He has NEEDLES stuck in various portions of his anatomy. He is still wheezing, correcting the typewritten manuscript of "Guerrilla Warfare" with a pen.

A CHINESE DOCTOR shouts at him.

ALEIDA hovers worriedly.

ALEIDA

I think he wants you to lie still.

CHE

(coughing)

What for? It isn't working.

ALEIDA

You have to do it more than once.

CHE sits up, starts pulling the needles out.

CHE

I don't have time.

NATIONAL BANK BUILDING, HAVANA EXT NIGHT

It is late but lights still burn in the upper floor where CHE has his offices.

A parked CAR on the street EXPLODES.

CHE'S OFFICE, NATIONAL BANK BUILDING INT NIGHT

CHE and FIDEL sit at a big desk covered in papers.

A picture of CAMILO CIENFUEGOS with a black funereal border is on the wall.

Present are POMBO, CELIA, EL PATOJO and various BODYGUARDS and FUNCTIONARIES -- and CHE's mother, DONA CELIA GUEVARA DE LA SERNA, tall, white haired aristocratic Argentinian.

CHE'S MOTHER jumps up from her chair when the explosion rattles the window. She peers fearlessly into the street.

DONA CELIA

What is it? What happened?

PATOJO

A car bomb. They've been going off ever since I've been here, Señora Guevara.

DONA CELIA

It's the Americans, I'll bet. Well, we'll soon put them in their place --

ANGLE ON FIDEL AND CHE

Going through stacks of papers.

FIDEL

This Nickel business really worries me. We said that we'd increase production, and the industry is paralysed. And as for sugar --

CHE

Sugar - sugar --

(going through his notes)

We have a programme in place, but it's
still in its infancy --

CELIA SANCHEZ

I thought we were cutting back on sugar.
Diversifying --

Both men look at her, harassed. CHE consults his notes.

CHE

Oh yes, that's right.

DONA CELIA

(springing to her son's defence)

Che's doing the best he can! If Polish
toothpaste won't come out of its tube
that's not his fault!

CHE

(embarrassed)

Be quiet, Mother --

ANGLE ON DONA CELIA AND EL PATOJO

She turns to PATOJO, nodding gravely.

DONA CELIA

He's right, you know. I shouldn't
intervene. When Che Guevara speaks,
even his mother listens.

ANGLE ON FIDEL

Studying a tube of the offending Polish Toothpaste, which does
indeed emerge from the tube like a SLAB OF ROCK. FIDEL shakes
his head, sadly.

CHE

I will take full responsibility.

TV SCREEN

CHE GUEVARA addresses the Cuban Public in his end-of-the-year broadcast. He looks very tired.

CHE

(ON TV)

Following the Nationalisation of our Nickel Industry, production did indeed experience a slowdown - partially caused by the emigration of certain key technicians to the United States. However, the USSR has promised us technical assistance, so that production of this precious export will quickly reach 70,000 tons per year. Comrades, I have visited the Soviet Union, and can tell you from my own experience it is a CONTINENT OF MARVELS.

FLASHFORWARD

ABRA DEL PICACHO, BOLIVIA EXT NIGHT

CHE and a dozen GUERRILLAS march through mountainous terrain. CHE, smoking a pipe, and POMBO support EL CHINO - whose eyeglasses are broken. Without them he can barely see.

The MARCH is complicated by CHINO's near blindness and the fact that all the men are sick with malaria and liver ailments. Most have bleeding feet.

CHINO

(raving)

Che... Did I tell you? I am authorised to offer the support of 25 Peruvian fighters. Seasoned men, with boots...

CHE

Later, Chino. I will discuss it with the Bolivian group.

CHINO

These are good men. They fought with Hugo... in the National Liberation Army...

CHE

Later, old man... We can use them
for the final push... After our
initial victories.

The delirious men tramp on under the starless sky.

FLASHBACK

PLAYA GIRON, CUBA EXT DAY

17 APRIL 1961

A LINE OF SOLDIERS marches towards the beach, from which gunfire
and explosions can be heard.

A CUBAN TV CREW broadcasts live from the scene of the
Bay of Pigs Invasion.

TV REPORTER

Following their bombing attack
yesterday on Jose Marti Airport,
the Americans today landed several
hundred Mercenaries here at the
Bay of Pigs, where they have been
repelled by the Revolutionary Army --

DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE

Of the BAY OF PIGS INVASION, FIDEL CASTRO supervising the
defence, ANTI-CASTRO CUBANS pinned down on the beach, unable to
advance. The CUBAN AIR FORCE bombs the Invasion Fleet off
shore.

ANGLE ON CHE

Being assisted from a Cabin by TWO CUBAN SOLDIERS, bleeding from
a superficial wound in the cheek.

THE TV REPORTER runs to him, followed by CAMERA CREW.

TV REPORTER

Commandante Guevara!

CHE

I was waiting for those GUSANO BASTARDS
to come along. Suddenly, a shot!
I tasted blood running down my face.
I yelled, "Get him!" thinking it was
an attack. But no. It was my own pistol --
(indicates his PISTOL)
-- it had dropped to the floor, cocked,
along with this double belt I always
wear loosely. It went off when it struck
the ground. The bullet hit my cheek,
but if it had strayed a centimeter, it
would have torn into the base of my brain!

TV REPORTER

A lucky escape, Commander.

CHE looks embarrassed. CUT TO --

STOCK FOOTAGE OF THE BAY OF PIGS PRISONERS BEING MARCHED INLAND.

CHE'S OFFICE, HAVANA EXT NIGHT

CHE is bent over a higher stack of papers than before. His
cheek is bandaged. POMBO and a couple of other GUERRILLAS are
with him, watching a small TELEVISION --

POMBO

Isn't this amazing? Get a load of this --

Weary from the massive load of paperwork in front of him, CHE
looks up.

ANGLE ON THE TV --

-- where FIDEL is seen, leaping vigorously around the Sports
Stadium, microphone in hand. Clearly in his element, he is
surrounded by SCORES OF PRISONERS from the Bay of Pigs Invasion.
He stops by one of them and sticks his microphone in the
PRISONER's face.

FIDEL

(ON TV)

What are you doing here?
Why did you invade our country?

The PRISONER, uncomfortable, mumbles something.

FIDEL

(ON TV)

What? Speak up! Be honest!
Surely you realise that you are
the first prisoner in history who
has the privilege of arguing in
front of the whole population of Cuba,
and the entire world, with the head
of the Government you came to
overthrow!

The PRISONER, stunned, cannot reply.

CHE'S HOUSE, VEDADO DISTRICT EXT MORNING

AN OLD PONTIAC pulls up outside CHE and ALEIDA's place, preceded
and followed by two ARMY JEEPS.

POMBO and TWO BLACK SOLDIERS get out of the Jeeps and check to
see the coast is clear. They escort CHE, carrying a briefcase,
to the front door.

POMBO

When shall we come for you?

CHE

In a couple of hours...

Exhausted, CHE enters his house.

CHE'S HOUSE INT DAY

TWO CRYING CHILDREN greet CHE as he comes in.

ALEIDA, equally exhausted, holds a crying BABY.

ALEIDA

I've been up all night. The dog is
lost. The children won't stop crying --

CHE sits down at the kitchen table, pours himself a cup of
mate from the steaming pot.

CHE

The dog's not lost.

ALEIDA

Poor Muralla. He was the best
watchdog I ever saw --

CHE

He isn't lost.

The CHILDREN stop crying. They enter the kitchen and stare at
CHE. ALEIDA stares at him too.

ALEIDA

Well, where is he?

CHE

I had him drafted.

They continue to stare at him.

CHE

HE WAS SUCH A GOOD WATCHDOG THE
REVOLUTION NEEDED HIM! HE'S
GUARDING CATTLE FOR THE PEOPLE!

The CHILDREN start to wail again.

ALEIDA turns on her heel and storms out.

CHE's head sinks onto the table.

He starts wheezing, reaches for his inhaler.

PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY INT DAY

7 AUGUST 1961

CHE addresses the first conference of the ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS.
Presents are DELEGATES from the United States and all Latin
American Countries.

Representing the United States is DOUGLAS DILLON, Secretary of
the Treasury.

CHE

Two years ago, Comrade Fidel Castro spoke in Buenos Aires before an inter-American committee that was trying to find a remedy for poverty in this hemisphere. His blueprint - the immediate expenditure of THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS. 24 hours hadn't gone by before Under-Secretary of State Dillon answered that the amount was excessive, and the matter was dropped.

ANGLE ON DOUGLAS DILLON, displeased.

CHE

Today, courtesy of Mr Dillon, President Kennedy unveils his new plan to end underdevelopment in this hemisphere. The price tag? 28 MILLION DOLLARS.

(LAUGHTER)

Where do you think he got that bright idea from? Well, Douglas, we Latin Americans say to you, you're TWO YEARS LATE and TWO MILLION DOLLARS SHORT - not counting INFLATION!

MORE LAUGHTER. Several Delegates are on their feet, applauding CHE.

MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY INT NIGHT

CHE addresses a MASS RALLY at the UNIVERSITY.

The STUDENTS display banners, pictures of CHE and FIDEL.

CHE

Since the Triumph of the Revolution, thousands of bombs have exploded in Havana. Hundreds of people have lost their lives. We have been attacked, by air and by sea. Cuban shipping has been sabotaged. Our crops have been destroyed. Who did this? The Russians? No. The Chinese? I don't think so. We all know who (CONT.)

CHE (CONT.)
 did this. My question to you is,
 WHAT ARE THEY SO AFRAID OF --

BANG! BANG! BANG!

ANGLE ON GUNMEN

Opening fire on the stage. A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR is killed.
 SEVERAL STUDENTS are wounded.

ANGLE ON POMBO

Running forward, knocking CHE down and lying across him, to
 protect him. EL PATOJO, excited, hits the ground.

CHE
 (adrenalin pumping)
 I won't die in bed, that's for sure.

PATOJO
 That's not such a bad thing.

ANGLE ON CHE

Contemplating this, PEOPLE SCREAMING all around him.

TROPICANA NIGHTCLUB, HAVANA EXT NIGHT

Chevrolets, Ladas, and Russian Zil Limousines with C.D. plates
 are parked outside Havana's most famous cabaret.

SECURITY is tight.

TROPICANA NIGHTCLUB INT NIGHT

Beneath a huge red banner saying "BIENVENIDOS COMPAÑERO YURI
 GAGARIN" and a picture of the Russian Cosmonaut in his
 spacesuit, draped with Soviet and Cuban flags, the famous
 TROPICANA DANCERS cavort.

The BLONDE DANCERS, wearing the hammer and sickle, are
 exceptionally light on their feet, leaping for a display of
 glittering glass stars.

The BRUNETTE DANCERS, wearing the stars and stripes, try in vain to copy them.

The BLONDES put out their tongues at them.

ANGLE ON FIDEL, CHE, the nattily attired PRESIDENT DORTICOS, and a group of CUBAN DIGNITARIES sitting with YURI GAGARIN and two delegations, one Soviet, the other Chinese.

The CUBAN audience applauds wildly, shouting "Cuba Si, Yankee No!" The RUSSIANS, nervous and bureaucratic, are uncertain how to respond. The CHINESE appear to be asleep.

CHE is arguing with the HEAD OF THE SOVIET DELEGATION.

CHE

Listen, the New Man doesn't care about material incentives. He doesn't work for money, he works for love of the Revolution. In five years we'll be able to ABOLISH MONEY in Cuba -- right Fidel?

FIDEL

(interrupted, talking to another DELEGATION MEMBER)

Ideally, yes.

The TWO DELEGATION MEMBERS exchange a look.

RUSSIAN

Comrade Che, your noble experiment was tried in the early years of our Revolution. We couldn't understand why our industrial growth was so slow. Finally we figured it out, Comrade Che --
(lowers his voice, looks around)
-- people like money.

CHE is offended. The RUSSIAN watches the DANCERS.

RUSSIAN

Beautiful girls you have here.

CHE is more offended still.

TV SCREEN

AN AMERICAN NEWSCASTER addresses us.

NEWSCASTER

(ON TV)

With hours to go before President
Kennedy's deadline, Russian Premier
Nikita Khrushchev has agreed to withdraw
all nuclear missiles from Cuba.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

CHE'S HOUSE INT NIGHT

-- ALEIDA, the KIDS and the NEW DOG all gathered in the kitchen
of their home in Vedado, watching the AMERICAN TV BROADCAST --

SEVERAL NEIGHBORS sit with them, drinking coffee.

Everyone is very quiet, and it is clear they all believe that
NUCLEAR WAR is imminent, and they all expect to die.

NEWSCASTER

(ON TV)

Khrushchev's retreat counts as a
diplomatic triumph for the United
States and a major setback for Soviet
expansionism in this hemisphere.
It is also viewed as a personal
humiliation for Caribbean dictator
FIDEL CASTRO --

MILITARY BASE, ORIENTE PROVINCE EXT DAY

28 OCTOBER 1962

The Base is on full scale alert. FIDEL and CHE are both
furious. FIDEL's German Shepherd GUARDIAN barks incessantly.
(FIDEL is 36; CHE is 34)

CHE

We have to cut 'em off. Get rid of
'em. They're not interested in us.
Their Revolution isn't PURE --

FIDEL

What are you talking about? You're the one that wanted me to go with the Russians in the first place! "Continent of Marvels" - pah!!

CHE

Well, I was wrong. When I'm wrong I admit it. We need to find other allies.

FIDEL

Fine! No Americans, no Russians, who do you want me to go with - the Eskimos?

CHE

It's obvious. Our natural allies are - and always have been - the CHINESE.

FIDEL

What bullshit. That Mao is a senile idiot. You can't trust any world leader over sixty. At that age they act irresponsibly --

CHE

The Chinese are giving us all this rice --

FIDEL

"Giving us"? We have to pay for it! And with what? I have no choice. I'm going to go to Russia, hit 'em up for more money.

CHE

NO!

FIDEL

YES! The Russians owe me. They embarrassed me. I may yet be able to turn this to my advantage --

CHE

You, Fidel? Is this about you or about Cuba?

FIDEL

Fuck you, Guevara. I am Cuba.

FIDEL and CHE glare at each other. FIDEL turns and walks towards his Jeep. GUARDIAN runs after FIDEL, barking.

FLASHFORWARD

VALLE GRANDE, BOLIVIA EXT NIGHT

CHE, sick but determined, squats at the shortwave radio, finishing a broadcast to Cuba. POMBO and the other GUERRILLAS are gathered around.

CHE

(into radio)

When the Black masses of South Africa and Rhodesia began their Revolutionary struggle, when the impoverished masses of any country throw themselves into the struggle for dignity, when little Vietnam stands against the most powerful country in the world, it is the same War.

ANGLE ON CHE'S MEN

In spite of their exhaustion, momentarily uplifted by his words.

CHE

(into Radio)

There must be two, three, many Vietnams - with their daily heroism and their repeated blows against imperialism. In whatever place death may surprise us, let it be welcome - as long as our battle cry has reached even one receptive ear.

FLASHBACK

CANE FIELDS, CUBA EXT DAY

CHE and other GOVERNMENT WORKERS participate in the "Zafra" - the annual trip to assist in the sugar cane harvest.

He wears fatigues and black beret. With him are a couple of old friends - EL PATOJO and ALBERTO GRANADOS - as well as the ever-present POMBO and other bodyguards.

MANY PHOTOGRAPHERS, from the Cuban and international Press, are present, taking CHE's PHOTOGRAPH as he works.

CANE FIELDS EXT NIGHT

CHE and EL PATOJO play chess in an open cabin under the stars. ALBERTO, worn out by the day's exertions, is asleep in a hammock. CHE and EL PATOJO smoke cigars.

PATOJO

I'm going back, Che. To Guatemala.

CHE does not reply. He moves his bishop, boxing in PATOJO's queen.

PATOJO

I missed the Revolution here. Now I'm going to bring it to my own country.

PATOJO takes CHE's bishop with his queen.

CHE's eyes fill with tears of emotion.

CHE

I envy you.

CHE takes PATOJO's queen with a pawn. Enter a PHOTOGRAPHER.

PODIUM EXT DAY

CHE's eyes overflow with tears.

He stands before a bank of microphones. Behind him, a large heroic painting of EL PATOJO, draped in black.

CHE

At the beginning, as always, we refused to believe that he was dead. But when El Patojo's own mother recognised his body, there was no doubt about it.

He pauses, overcome, to wipe away a tear.

CHE

Why did he die? What can we learn from El Patojo's death? He had no formal military training, only a desire to fight. He was sincere, but he failed to follow the THREE RULES that mean life or death to the Guerrilla - CONSTANT DISTRUST, VIGILANCE and MOBILITY. We must make the firm resolution not to commit the same mistakes.

CHE AND ALEIDA'S BEDROOM INT NIGHT

Feminine and comfortable in its appointments; no sign of CHE's presence at all. THREE CHILDREN run in and out, playing Cowboy and Indians.

Arms folded, ALEIDA watches as CHE pulls a suitcase from the closet. He opens it and checks the contents: it is already packed.

ALEIDA

Where are you going this time?

CHE

To New York. I'm making a speech at the United Nations. Then Algiers, Mali, the Congo, Guinea, Ghana, Egypt --

ANGLE ON ALEIDA

Growing increasingly annoyed as the list lengthens.

CHE

-- Beijing, maybe Paris.

ALEIDA

I know the Guerrilla Fighter often doesn't get to hear his children's first hesitant words, Che, but it might be nice if once in a while you heard them say SOMETHING!

CHE

What's the matter with you?
You should be proud.
This is a great honour.

ALEIDA shuts the door.

ALEIDA

Che, I have something to tell you.
Sit down. It'll only take a minute.
They you can go.

CHE sits down on the bed. He looks at his watch, a Rolex GMT Master.

ALEIDA

I know you have a great grasp of
history and world events, but sometimes
I wonder if you see what's going on
in front for you.

CHE

Are you having an affair?

ALEIDA

No. I have four children, and now
I'm taking care of Hildita. Where
would I find the time?

She comes and sits beside him on the bed.

ALEIDA

I'm trying to explain something
important. For a Cuban, to be sent
away from Cuba is not an honour.
It's a disgrace.

CHE

Listen, vieja, I'm not being "sent
away." I'm on a diplomatic mission.

ALEIDA

How many diplomatic missions have you
been on?

(CHE does not reply)

Fidel, Raul, Dorticos - they all want
you out of the way.

CHE thinks about this for a long time. He looks up at her.

CHE

Are you pregnant again?

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK INT DAY

11 DECEMBER 1964

STOCK SHOT of the General Assembly in full session.

CLOSE ON CHE, addressing the REPRESENTATIVES of the nations of the world.

CHE

The Soviet Delegate has just made a pretty speech in favour of "peaceful coexistence."

ANGLE ON THE SOVIET DELEGATE

With earphones, behind a plaque saying U.S.S.R.

CHE

We all saw the American Delegate smiling and applauding at the end.

ANGLE ON THE AMERICAN DELEGATE

With earphones, behind a U.S.A. plaque.

CHE

I'm sorry to say this, but I'm not impressed with your idea of "peaceful coexistence", gentlemen. Was it peaceful to murder Patrice Lumumba? Was it peaceful to invade the Dominican Republic, or to organise a military coup against the President of Brasil? How can you coexist with a nation which drops NAPALM on Vietnamese children? The USSR has a moral duty to end its tacit complicity with the exploiting countries of the West!

CORRIDOR, UNITED NATIONS INT DAY

The U.S. and the SOVIET DELEGATE at the water fountain.
Each one works the water flow for the other.

U.S. DELEGATE

At least we agree on one thing.

U.S.S.R. DELEGATE

Yes. He's got to go.

"REVOLUCION" OFFICES, HAVANA INT DAY

The office of CARLOS FRANQUI's newspaper is being dismantled.
CARLOS talks to ALEIDA, who is there with all the children.
They both look at the latest issue of the Havana Communist
Party daily, "Hoy".

ALEIDA

Look at this. They call Che "the
rotten apple of discord in the
socialist front."

CARLOS

Yes. This is serious, all right.

ALEIDA

Can't you do something? Print an
editorial in his favour?

CARLOS shrugs and indicates what's going on around him.

ANGLE ON HIS PRINTING PRESES

Being carried away.

ALGIERS EXT DAY

Stock shot of a large crowd in a public square.

ALGERIAN PRESIDENTIAL PALACE INT DAY

CHE lectures the SOVIET AMBASSADOR and ALGERIAN PRESIDENT,

BEN BELLA, as other SOVIETS look on.

CHE

From all this, one conclusion must be drawn: the development of the countries who are now starting on the road to liberation should be paid for by the socialist countries.

SOVIET AMBASSADOR

Are you saying that the Soviet Union should make interest-free loans to the Third World?

CHE

Of course not!

The SOVIETS relax.

CHE

I'm saying the Soviet Union should give them the money. Without thought of profit, just as you would at home. We are all one people.

(tapping the AMBASSADOR on the chest)

"From each, according to his abilities. To each, according to his needs."

ANGLE ON THE SOVIETS

Starting to file out.

JOSE MARTI AIRPORT, CUBA EXT NIGHT

14 MARCH 1965

CHE, POMBO and a couple of AIDES descend the steps from the big Aeroflot IL-14. CHE looks tired and fat.

Waiting for him are FIDEL, RAUL, PRESIDENT DORTICOS and OTHERS. They do not look pleased to see him.

DORTICOS

(dryly)

Successful trip?

PALACE OF THE REVOLUTION, HAVANA EXT NIGHT

POMBO waits at the bottom of the steps leading to the modern building. Lights blaze inside.

PALACE OF THE REVOLUTION INT NIGHT

RAUL, DORTICOS, DIGNITARIES and BODYGUARDS wait by the big double doors.

FIDEL and CHE are alone in the centre of the vast, brightly lit space with its live plants, rock displays and mosaics.

FIDEL

Well, Che. What do you want to do?

CHE

Do? Why, carry on. As Minister of Industries.

FIDEL

What industries? We've cut back on all industrial production. Even our agricultural economy is barely afloat.

CHE

I suppose you don't want me to continue as your roving ambassador.

FIDEL

What do you think.

(a pause)

This is very difficult for me, you know.

CHE

I don't know what to say to you. I've always done my best, said what I thought was right for Cuba and the Revolution.

FIDEL

You think I haven't?

CHE

No. But what we thought was right was different.

FIDEL

There can't be two rights here, Che.
The Revolution must follow one path -
the path I choose.

CHE

I know. Hilda and Aleida both say
the same thing. I'm not practical.

FIDEL

You were practical in the Sierra.

CHE

That was a different time.

(shakes his head)

The Russians aren't going to help us
in the long run. There are strings
attached to everything they do. Their
stuff is rubbish. Their tractors don't
work. When we no longer suit their
purpose, they'll abandon us --

FIDEL

I know. But this is my world, and I
have to make decisions in it and live
with the consequences.

(pause)

Where's your world, Che?

CHE

I don't know.

(wistfully)

Maybe Aleida and the children --

FIDEL

Don't be ridiculous. We aren't
family men.

CHE

That's certainly true. I feel like
I have to do something - to be on the
move - you said once you were the wife
of the Cuban Revolution and I was the
girlfriend. Maybe it's time for me to...

FIDEL

To what, Che?

CHE

You know.

FIDEL

If there's some place where you feel you could better serve the Revolution, you'll have my full support. We're all one people. I can supply you with passports, disguises, all the money that you need. Take Pombo and your best men.

FIDEL is walking CHE towards the big doors where the other CUBAN LEADERS wait.

CHE

But you know, Fidel, I've also been thinking, maybe I could inspire people here by working on the shop floor for six months, in different factories. Cutting sugar cane --

FIDEL

That'd be a waste of your extraordinary talents, don't you think?

CHE says nothing. The double doors open, and the GROUP OF DIGNITARIES starts to file through.

FIDEL

You let me know what you decide.

FIDEL disappears into the CROWD OF BODYGUARDS and WELL-WISHERS. The BIG DOORS close.

CHE is alone.

CHE AND ALEIDA'S BEDROOM INT NIGHT

CHE sits at ALEIDA's vanity table, writing.

ALEIDA sleeps.

CHE V/O

Fidel,
 At this hour I remember many things.
 Today everything seems less dramatic,
 because we have matured. But things
 repeat themselves.
 I formally resign from my duties and
 my post as Minister. Other lands
 claim the help of my modest efforts.
 I can do what you can't, because of
 your responsibilities at the helm of
 Cuba, and the time has come for us
 to separate.
 I free Cuba of any responsibility,
 except that which stems from its
 example.

JOSE MARTI AIRPORT EXT NIGHT

Wind and rain whip the tarmac.

TWO MEN wait beside an Iberia passenger plane.

CHE V/O

If the hour of reckoning comes to me
 under other skies, may my last thought
 be for this people and especially
 for you.

ANGLE ON THE TWO MEN

One of them is POMBO, dressed in a raincoat and civilian
 clothes.

The other is CHE GUEVARA, in a dark suit, his appearance
 completely changed. The top of his head has been shaved and
 his remaining hair bleached white. He wears spectacles.
 He looks like a bald, old man, waiting for someone.

CHE V/O

I have many things to say to you and
 our people, but I feel that they are
 not necessary. Words can't express
 what I want to say, and there is no
 sense wasting paper with my scribbles.
 Until victory, always. Country or death.

At the top of the stairway, the STEWARDESS signals to POMBO that the plane is late.

POMBO taps CHE on the arm.

POMBO
He isn't coming.

CHE nods. He turns, his shoulders stooped.

He and POMBO climb the stairs to the plane.

CHE V/O
I embrace you with complete
Revolutionary zeal. Che.

NANCHAHUAZU RANCH, BOLIVIA EXT DUSK

A cattle ranch in the hills near Camiri, Bolivia.

TWENTY MEN AND WOMEN are bustling around an apparently well-run, well-stocked Guerrilla Foco. Several jeeps are parked; boxes and sacks are being carried into a barn; a whole pig is being roasted.

ANGLE ON A JEEP APPROACHING

CHE GUEVARA stands up in the passenger seat, surveying the scene with satisfaction. He is still clean-shaven, but wears a cap to cover his head.

ANGLE ON THE GUERRILLAS IN THE CAMP

Among them, BRAULIO, JOAQUIN, EL CHINO, MORO, RICARDO.

The driver of the jeep - POMBO - parks, and CHE gets down. The GUERRILLAS salute him proudly.

ANGLE ON TANIA - running from the farmhouse. She and CHE embrace.

NANCHAHUAZU RANCH EXT DUSK

CHE, TANIA and the MEN sit around the campfire smoking pipes,

writing in their journals, eating roast pig.

It is a magnificent starry night.

For the first time in a long time, CHE is content.

COCHABAMBA, BOLIVIA EXT DAY

The "garden city" of Bolivia - the second-largest urban centre, filled with buses and agricultural trucks.

JORGE KOLLE'S OFFICE INT DAY

Small, fake wood panelling, Red Flag, and pictures of Marx, Lenin, and Leonid Breshnev. One dusty rubber plant.

CHE, still wearing his cap, his beard growing back, in conference with JORGE KOLLE CUETO, leader of the Communist Party of Bolivia.

The atmosphere is tense. MARIO MONJE, a young Party zealot, leans against the wall, staring at CHE with obvious disapproval.

CHE

Obviously I would appreciate the support of the Bolivian Communist Party. But if the Party cannot give me its support, the operation will continue as planned.

KOLLE

Well, Comrade Che, I think you would find the Party's support highly valuable. We have very good contacts here. My brother, for example. He is a colonel, and an Army Chief of Staff.

CHE

You are the head of the Communist Party and your brother is an Army Colonel.

KOLLE

(nods)

That is the way things are here. Do you speak Quechua or Aymara?

CHE

Not yet, but I intend to.

KOLLE

Ah. Our President, General Barrientos, was born in an obscure village and speaks both languages fluently. As a result, many of the peasants, who are not yet politically enlightened, tend to support him. I am sure, however, that you have supporters in the countryside who can assist you.

CHE

At least half my men are Bolivian.

KOLLE

Yes, but where are they from?
The country, or the city?

CHE

Some of them are miners.
Most are from La Paz.

KOLLE nods. He looks at MONJE.

KOLLE

The Bolivian Communist Party can't commit itself to a Guerrilla War unless there is a substantial Bolivian element. For example, if Comrade Monje here, who speaks Quechua and Aymara, were political and military leader --

CHE

Certainly not. I am the leader.

PAUSE. They all glare at each other.

KOLLE

I'll have to give this matter some more thought.

CHE stands.

CHE

If I fail, it won't mean that the fight can't be won. Many failed trying to climb Everest, but Everest was finally conquered.

HAVANA, CUBA EXT DAY

In the centre of the Vedado District, a HUGE MURAL OF CHE is being painted. On a stage in front of it, dancers from the Tropicana enact revolutionary scenes.

Behind the Mural rises the 23-storey Havana Hilton Hotel -- now know as the HAVANA LIBRE.

KOLLE O/S

My position is very difficult.
As you know, the Bolivian Party
is Soviet aligned --

HAVANA LIBRE INT DAY

FIDEL's informal headquarters in the Penthouse.
Magnificent panorama of the entire city of Havana and the sea.

FIDEL sits with KOLLE and MONJE. People keep coming in with things for him to review and sign.

KOLLE

-- and Comrade Che is generally perceived as being anti-Russian, and pro-China.

FIDEL

I understand.
(he rises, paces)
Nevertheless, I hope you will give Comrade Che every assistance, given the circumstances.

KOLLE

But the circumstances make this very difficult for us.

FIDEL

I am sure they are. And I would never tell you how to run your business.

MONJE

The Government is already aware that Che is in Bolivia. There is a real possibility his group will be destroyed.

FIDEL goes to the wall-length window. He looks down at the HUGE MURAL OF CHE below.

FIDEL

I want you to do the very best you can, given the circumstances.

NANCHAHUAZU RAVINE EXT EVENING

CHE confronts his GUERRILLAS in the thickly-wooded ravine. They are laden with as much gear as they can carry - rifles, shortwave radio, supplies - obviously having decamped in a hurry.

CHE

Why did you abandon the Ranch?

TANIA

The Army showed up.

POMBO

One of the neighbours ratted on us. Because of the jeeps and foreigners. They thought we were running a COCAINE KITCHEN.

BRAULIO

Shall we go back?

ANGLE ON CHE

Starting to cough. He produces his inhaler, takes a hit.

CHE

No. This must be a lesson to us. We must never forget the three rules (CONT.)

CHE (CONT.)
of the Guerrilla Foco - Constant Mistrust,
Constant Vigilance, Constant Mobility.

ANGLE ON THE GUERRILLAS

Nodding in agreement. They advance into the thick of the forest.

FLASHFORWARD

SAMAIPATA, BOLIVIA EXT DAWN

6 JULY 1967

An ANCIENT BUS approaches a crossroads on the main highway between Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. Waiting at the crossroads are EL CHINO and another Guerrilla, BENIGNO, dressed in civilian clothes.

EL CHINO flags the bus down. It stops.

FIVE GUERRILLAS emerge from the roadside ditch, aiming their guns at the DRIVER.

They climb aboard.

SAMAIPATA MAIN SQUARE EXT DAWN

The BUS drives into the small town, passing a Police Post where the COPS are both asleep.

It stops in the little plaza. FARMERS are setting up stalls with local produce. They stare as the heavily-armed GUERRILLAS step down from their hijacked vehicle.

ANGLE ON CHE AND POMBO

Entering town via the back streets.
CHE, sick and wheezing, rides a mule.

ANGLE ON BENIGNO AND EL CHINO

Waking the POLICE and confiscating their guns and clothes.

INFANTA DE PRAGA PHARMACY INT DAWN

CHE and POMBO march the sleepy PROPRIETOR - clad in his dressing gown - through the store.

His WIFE and CHILDREN watch anxiously. SEVERAL LOCALS peer excitedly through the door.

CHE

I need bandages, rubbing alcohol,
antihistamines, adrenalin, an
asthmatic inhaler, Demerol --

PROPRIETOR

You can't get that without a
prescription.

POMBO puts a finger to his lips. He hands the MAN a big wad of Bolivian Pesos.

SAMAIPATA MAIN SQUARE EXT MORNING

The GUERRILLAS pay the FARMERS for their produce.

The entire village has turned out to watch them.
VILLAGERS stare and point at CHE, whisper his name.

RAVINE EXT EVENING

The GUERRILLAS are seated eating fruits and vegetables, painting iodine on the many scratches the forest thorns have left.

CHE is still coughing, going through the medicine bag.

POMBO

Asthma getting worse?

CHE

(wheezing)

It's always bad... When I'm in an
enclosed space...

POMBO looks surprised. He considers the forest, the walls of the ravine, the rising MOON.

ALTO SECO, BOLIVIA EXT DAY

22 SEPTEMBER 1967

An isolated town of fifty households.

CHE, sicker and more exhausted, addresses the POPULACE.

His men, fewer in number, also sick, wearing dirty bandages and torn uniforms, buy provisions and scour the town for medicine.

CHE

You men of this country have lived like foreigners. Any Yankee imperialist has more rights, which he calls his "concessions", in your homeland. He can raze or burn down houses, destroy arable lands.

ANGLE ON A VILLAGER

Turning to his neighbour. They exchange a few words in Aymara. Neither understands what CHE is saying.

CHE

The National Liberation Army of Bolivia will punish in due time the present oppressors and torturers, those who commit injustices against the poor. Popular revolutionary courts will begin to take action, trying and sentencing. We express our faith in the triumph over the Yankees, and the invaders disguised as advisers, Yankees or otherwise.

ANGLE ON A YOUNG VILLAGE BOY

Who obviously understands Spanish. He is entranced with CHE.

CHE

We shall not let ourselves rest until we see the last stronghold of imperialist domination freed, until we see the happiness and good fortune of the (CONT.)

CHE (CONT.)
 Bolivian people shining forth.
 Die rather than live as slaves!
 Long live the Guerrillas!

CHE'S MEN applaud. The VILLAGE PEOPLE remain silent.

ANGLE ON POMBO AND WILLY

Emerging, empty handed, from the ill-stocked pharmacy.

The VILLAGE BOY approaches WILLY, who is red-eyed, sick with fever.

BOY
 Comrade - comrade --

ANGLE ON WILLY

Eyes barely focusing, turning and staring at the boy.

BOY
 I want to go with you. I want
 to join the Liberation Army.

WILLY looks around. POMBO is conferring with CHE, reporting no success at finding medicines. OTHER GUERRILLAS are attempting to buy food.

WILLY
 (sotto voce)
 You're crazy, kid. We're done for.
 We don't even know where we are.

The BOY stares at WILLY, shocked. WILLY shoulders his rifle and goes to join the rest of the GUERRILLA BAND.

LA ESPERANZA EXT DAY

The United States' Counter-Insurgency School in Bolivia.

TWO HUEY HELICOPTERS with Bolivian Air Force markings are parked outside the abandoned sugar mill which MAJOR RALPH "PAPPY" SHELTON has turned into a training center for his Bolivian Ranger Battalion.

BOXES OF AMMUNITION AND UNIFORMS are everywhere, all labelled,

"A Gift from the Alliance For Progress."

Members of the local Rotary Club are handing out brown paper packages to MAJOR PAPPY'S SOLDIERS. The SOLDIERS, opening them, find a set of underwear and a tin of sardines.

PAPPY is being interviewed by the Voice of America.

VOA INTERVIEWER

So, Major Shelton, do your Bolivian trainees have Guevara on the run?

MAJ. PAPPY

Absolutely. Right now, he's boxed in, in the Vado Yeso region. The Rangers of the Fourth Division are converging on him from the north and west, and the Eighth Division has his retreat completely blocked.

VOA INTERVIEWER

How do these conditions compare with those you saw in Vietnam?

MAJ. PAPPY

Let me put it this way: it costs \$400,000 to kill one Viet Cong, but in Bolivia it's much cheaper.

(smiles)

Excuse me.

ANGLE ON TV CREW

Wrapping their equipment.

ANGLE ON MAJOR PAPPY

Walking over to join two colleagues by a helicopter - EDUARDO GONZALES, a CIA agent in battle dress without insignia, and another, plainclothes, CIA man.

CHURO RAVINE, BOLIVIA

EXT

NIGHT

7 OCTOBER 1967

CHE, POMBO, and a few MEN are camped in an inhospitable arroyo.

CHE, coughing, seized with asthma, gives himself a cortisone injection. POMBO is reading aloud from CHE's red journal.

Their numbers are seriously diminished. More deaths and desertions have occurred.

POMBO

(reading from the journal)

"Not a single person has enlisted with us... There is no mobilisation of the peasants, who except for the task of securing information, are something of a bother. They are neither quick nor efficient; we can do without their help."

(puts the book down)

Do you really want people to read this one day?

CHE

It's the truth.

POMBO

Maybe sometimes lies are better.

CHURO RAVINE EXT DAY

8 OCTOBER 1967

CAPTAIN GARY PRADO SALMON of the Eighth Division crouches with his RADIO OPERATOR at the top of the Ravine.

A SMALL PEASANT BOY is next to him.

CAPT. PRADO

Tell me again: how many did you see?

BOY

Ten, maybe more. There were a lot.

CAPTAIN PRADO speaks into his radio.

CAPT. PRADO

Valle Grande, this is Thin Man, via GRC-9. I may have some of Papa's bandits coming my way. Over --

HIGH ANGLE ON THE RAVINE

HUNDREDS OF BOLIVIAN ARMY SOLDIERS are taking up position in the thick scrub on the rim of the Ravine.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RAVINE EXT DAY

CHE and his MEN march slowly uphill, following the stream. Emaciated and exhausted, they are bent almost double by their knapsacks.

A SHOUT.

ANGLE ON SOLDIERS

Descending the Ravine up ahead. They open fire, rifle bullets and mortar shells stripping the leaves from the thin foliage.

The GUERRILLAS return fire.

ANGLE ON TWO SOLDIERS FALLING.

AT THE TOP OF THE RAVINE EXT DAY

PRADO and his MEN hear the gunfire.

CAPT. PRADO

Lieutenant Huerta, take your platoon
and close off that ravine to the east.

LT. HUERTA

(saluting)
Yes, sir!

CAPTAIN PRADO peers through his binoculars into the Ravine. The gunfire has stopped and as yet he cannot see the GUERRILLAS.

IN THE RAVINE EXT DAY

The GUERRILLAS shelter in the thicker foliage which surrounds the stream. POMBO scans the rim of the canyon with binoculars.

POMBO

Soldiers on both sides, moving east.

CHE gives himself another shot of the collyrium/cortisone mixture. His breathing becomes marginally less constricted.

CHE

I want seven volunteers to stay behind...
and cover out retreat.

ALL THE MEN raise their hands.

CHE breaks up, coughing again.

POMBO

I will provide the cover.

ABOVE THE RAVINE EXT DAY

While LT, HUERTA's men block off a potential exit, CAPTAIN PRADO scans the Ravine. Suddenly, isolated rifle shots are heard.

MACHINE GUNNER

Captain, guerrillas coming down the Ravine!

CAPT. PRADO

Fire as soon as you see them.

IN THE RAVINE EXT DAY

POMBO, BENIGNO, URBANO and other volunteers take up positions in the undergrowth to cover CHE's retreat --

CHE, EL CHINO and the remaining GUERRILLAS hike back the way they came, branches slashing at them --

Suddenly, in front of CHE, a MACHINE GUN opens up.

The GUERRILLAS hit the ground, EL CHINO downed by several bullets. CHE is wounded in the right calf. He falls next to EL CHINO --

CHINO

(dying)

Why did you make me come?

CHE stares at CHINO. The Bolivian miner WILLY grabs CHE and hauls him up the canyon wall --

ABOVE

CAPTAIN PRADO's troops strafe the Ravine.
PRADO raises a hand --

CAPT. PRADO
Cease firing!

The gunfire stops. PRADO wakes for the smoke to clear.

IMMEDIATELY BELOW

The GUERRILLAS, realising they are surrounded, break in all directions. WILLY pulls CHE, wounded in the leg and hand, upward. Hoping to outflank the SOLDIERS --

SOLDIER
Halt!

ANGLE ON TWO SOLDIERS

Stepping out of a grove of trees, with M-1 carbines aimed at CHE and WILLY. The SOLDIERS look very scared. WILLY raises his submachine gun --

ANGLE ON A THIRD SOLDIER

Appearing behind CHE and WILLY. He is shaking with fright.

THIRD SOLDIER
(quavering, high-pitched voice)
You're dead, you dirty bastards --

CHE
Don't shoot. I'm Che. I'm worth
more to you alive than --

CHE goes into the Mother of All Asthma Attacks.

CANYON RIM EXT DAY

CHE and WILLY are under guard, seated on the ground, their hands

tied with rope. CHE can't breathe - wheezing convulsively - his hands clutch at the air.

CAPTAIN PRADO examines CHE's leg wound. Behind him, a LIEUTENANT goes through CHE's knapsack.

CAPT. PRADO

I can't give you medical attention right now. Two of my men are more seriously wounded.

CHE

(gasping for breath)

I understand, Captain.

Below them, the battle continues.

CAPTAIN PRADO returns to his RADIO OPERATOR.

CAPT. PRADO

(into radio)

This is Thin Man. Attention, this is Thin Man. I have Papa. Over.

He waits for a long time. HIS SOLDIERS keep their guns trained on CHE and WILLY, determined to kill them should the GUERRILLAS overrun the area.

CHE's asthma becomes unbearable.

RADIO VOICE

This is Saturn. Let me talk to Thin Man to confirm you have Papa.

CAPT. PRADO

(into Radio)

This is Thin Man. Yes, I have Papa. How do you want him?

RADIO VOICE

Alive.

IN THE RAVINE EXT DAY

The gunfire lessens. POMBO is still in position, unscathed. He looks up as a HELICOPTER passes overhead.

AT HIS COMMAND POST EXT DAY

CAPTAIN PRADO speaks to the chopper pilot by Radio. His men set brush fires in an attempt to signal to him. Everyone is very tense save CHE and WILLY, who sit quietly, seemingly resigned to their fate.

CAPT. PRADO
(into Radio)
Can you see us?

RADIO VOICE
Yes. But I can't land.
They're shooting at me --

CAPT. PRADO
Wait for us in Higuera them --

RADIO VOICE
Too late in the day. I'm returning
to Valle Grande --

ANGLE ON HELICOPTER

Circling away.

ANGLE ON CAPTAIN PRADO

Angry and anxious, staring at his PRISONERS.

CAPT. PRADO
Get 'em on their feet.

WILLY gets to his feet, helps the coughing, retching, miserable CHE to his.

CAPTAIN PRADO turns to a soldier.

CAPT. PRADO
This is the famous Che Guevara?

OUTSKIRTS OF HIGUERA EXT DUSK

CAPTAIN PRADO and his MEN proceed painfully towards the small town of Higuera, carrying the seriously wounded and the dead --

SOLDIERS and GUERRILLAS -- on stretchers.

CHE leans for support on WILLY and an ARMY PRIVATE. He is obviously still in considerable distress, both in pain from his wound and unable to breathe from his asthma.

CHE

Captain... can I have a cigarette?

CAPTAIN PRADO produces a pack of Bolivian "Pacific" cigarettes.

CHE

(shaking his head)

No thanks. I don't smoke that light tobacco.

CAPT. PRADO

What brand do Revolutionaries prefer?

CHE

I prefer Astoria. I smoke dark tobacco.

A SOLDIER produces a pack of Astorias. Offers CHE one. CHE halts, but cannot take the cigarette. His hands are tied.

CHE

Look, Captain. Don't you think it's useless to keep me tied up?

(smiles painfully)

The famous Che Guevara.

CAPTAIN PRADO looks at him. He motions to the SOLDIER.

CAPT. PRADO

Untie him.

SCHOOL HOUSE, HIGUERA INT DUSK

The door opens. CHE is thrust into the mud-walled, single-room school house. He eases himself into one of the small, children's chairs, still hunched over from his asthma. Desperate for distraction, he studies the blackboard on which is written:

TENGO FE EN DIOS - I have Faith in God

CHE stakes a drag off his Astoria to calm his asthma. It works momentarily. But then he doubles over, wheezing, overcome.

SCHOOL HOUSE EXT NIGHT

WILLY is under guard in a lean-to adjacent to the School House. He looks up as TWO ARMY JEEPS arrive, cutting a slow path through the crowd that has gathered.

ANGLE ON AN ARMY COLONEL AND TWO CIA MEN

One of them GONZALES, climbing down from a Jeep and entering the building.

SCHOOL HOUSE INT NIGHT

The CIA MEN and the ARMY COLONEL interrogate the ill CHE.

All are seated in children's chairs.

A bright spotlight shines on the PRISONER.

GONZALES

They say that there are major food shortages in Cuba. Is that true?

CHE

There are hungry people in Havana.
There are hungry people everywhere.

SECOND CIA MAN

They say that in Havana a CAT for the dinner table costs 30 Pesos.

(CHE does not reply)

Castro sent you here to die.
You know that, don't you?

CHE

No. It's more complicated.

A PRIVATE SOLDIER enters, salutes the COLONEL.

SOLDIER

Permission to give the prisoner tobacco for his pipe?

CHE
It helps my asthma.

COLONEL
(staring inscrutably at CHE)
Permission granted.

SCHOOL HOUSE, HIGUERA EXT DAY

WILLY, eating from a plate of food, watches as the COLONEL confers with CAPTAIN PRADO and the CIA OFFICERS. Many SOLDIERS are present now, creating a tight cordon around the tiny school house. A HELICOPTER has landed.

ANGLE ON THE OFFICERS

Studying a decoded message on a piece of paper.

COLONEL
Our instructions are clear. Captain Prado, find a Warrant Officer to carry out the orders.

CAPT. PRADO
Yes, sir.

SCHOOL HOUSE INT DAY

CHE sits against the wall, trying desperately to catch his breath.

He puts tobacco in his pipe.

He hears a brief scuffle outside. The BLAST of a machine gun. WILLY's dying cry.

He lowers his head, biting on his knuckles.

When he lifts his head, HIS ASTHMA HAS DISAPPEARED.

He lights his pipe calmly.

The door opens.

An ARMY SERGEANT stands there, holding an M-2 rifle.
 SEVERAL SOLDIERS crowd the doorway behind him, watching.
 CHE raises his head, looks his executioner in the eye.

CHE

Tell my wife she should remarry.

The SERGEANT nods. CHE draws on his pipe.

SERGEANT

I'd like to have the pipe.

CHE

No.

The SERGEANT raises his machine gun and OPENS FIRE.

The smoke clears. FLASHBULBS begin to pop.

Angle on HANDS reaching for CHE's body, taking his pipe, his tobacco, his watch...

PALACE OF THE REVOLUTION, HAVANA EXT NIGHT

FIDEL CASTRO addresses a large crowd gathered in silence.

Beside him are RAUL and PRESIDENT DORTICOS. Behind, vast portraits of CHE, CAMILO, JOSE MARTI.

FIDEL

At first, it was impossible to believe that Che was dead - especially when the Bolivians refused to produce his body. But now, there can be no doubt about it. As a Guerrilla, Che had an Achilles' heel: it was his excessive bravery, his absolute disregard of danger. This was something that was very difficult for us, since we knew that his life, his experience, his value, his prestige, all that he represented --

ABOVE THE BOLIVIAN JUNGLE EXT DAY

An object drops from a helicopter.

It is a BODY, wrapped in a blanket, spiralling downward towards the impenetrable jungle.

FIDEL V/O

-- were worth more, incomparably more, than the evaluation he perhaps made of himself.

CARIQUIMA, CHILE EXT DAWN

At first light, the surviving Cuban Guerrillas, POMBO, BENIGNO and URBANO, heavily wrapped against the cold, cross the border from Bolivia into Chile.

FIDEL V/O

His enemies believe that by destroying his body they have destroyed his ideas, his revolutionary spirit. But I ask the question: how will the poorest people of the world express themselves henceforth? By being like Che! What do we want our future generations to be like? To be like Che! How shall we educate our children?

PALACE OF THE REVOLUTION, HAVANA EXT NIGHT

ANGLE ON CHE'S CHILDREN

The younger ones fidget. The older ones' eyes fill with tears.

FIDEL O/S

We shall teach them to be like Che.

BLACK SCREEN.

SLOW FADE IN:

SILLUSTANI, PERU EXT AFTERNOON

We are back at the pre-Incan NECROPOLIS on the shores of Lake Umayo, which CHE and ALBERTO visited many years before.

The same INDIAN GUIDE conducts a party of SCHOOL CHILDREN through the ruined burial towers of the once-powerful warriors and priests.

The date is not established, but it is obviously during the Revolutionary Regime of GENERAL JUAN VELASCO ALVARADO --

-- the Leftist Government which attempted to re-establish Peru's proud Prehispanic heritage, to integrate the indigenous people into society, and to eradicate the most obvious distinctions between the classes.

Hence all the LITTLE CHILDREN are dressed in traditional Peruvian garb - the boys in blue ponchos, the girls in red.

INDIAN GUIDE

This is the burial grounds of the Great Incas. In each CHULPA, a General is buried. In the white ones over there, are the Priests.

ANGLE ON THE CHILDREN

Most of them of obvious indigenous blood. Fascinated, they follow their INDIAN GUIDE, writing in their notebooks.

INDIAN GUIDE

The Incas had the power to MELT STONE. They used a special herb to do it. There is a bird that uses the same herb today, to melt a hole for its nest --

ANGLE ON A SMALL BIRD

Digging into the solid stone of one of the ancient CHULPAS.

It holds a sprig of herb tight in its beak.

The herb melts the rock.

TILT DOWN TO REVEAL

An old bottle, jammed among the stones.

A piece of yellowed paper within reads,

ERNESTO GUEVARA DE LA SERNA

BLACK SCREEN