

# Still in Saigon

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## Chapter One

1967

**LA** Rehab Center was the first stop for all GIs returning from Vietnam in the late 60s. If they succeeded based on “readjustment tests,” they were transferred to Arlington, Virginia. If not they stayed in LA and sometimes were given a general discharge. Corporal Kragshaw was determined not to have to stay in LA. He knew how much he would miss Budd (his good friend who was now stationed in Arlington Virginia.) He thought he should be able to succeed and he knew it would be a moral failure if he did not. He had cut back to two beers a night (When he ran out of beer he limited himself to one shot of bourbon the next night or two glasses of wine) He still had to have alcohol every night, but he had stopped the grass altogether. “Never mix, never worry” he said to himself. Sometimes he wished he could be more like his friend, but then he thought: “What a dull existence!”

One night he had trouble sleeping. He got up and starting thinking about how this former bar maid from Saigon had actually placed an ad in “GI News” asking for help with a personal project. Kragshaw had sat down with her in a place called Karl's Bar. When he found out what she had in mind he immediately told her he wanted no part of it. She had said, “OK you will have to excuse me now; it’s almost time for my next applicant.” Kragshaw could have sworn that as he was leaving he saw a guy who looked a lot like someone he had known from his time at Than Son Nhut Air Force Base - a Rodney Chillingworth. He also kept thinking about a soldier and a bar maid he knew from Saigon. He finally remembered her name; Mai Lung. He knew her as a malcontent, often complaining how she did not get the attention the other bar maids received.

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“How come you GIs never hit on me like you do the other girls.”

More and more he thought about his friend William Budd and how he would much rather be more like him than his other friend Jon Nelson. He and Nelson drank too much and got into bar fights. He decided he would have to have more discipline about his life and not let things get him down. He only had two months left in the army and he did not want to screw up in any way. In fact why not try to enjoy his last two months with more discipline, but still enjoy every day. He thought he should be able to enjoy himself without getting high or starting a fight. So... He decided to concentrate on two things: less booze and more exercise. So be it. Thinking these thoughts, he fell asleep.

## Chapter 2

### LA Detective Agency

“The truth will be revealed to the righteous.”

unk

Ross Perry felt like he had been a detective all his life. Ross Perry felt like he had been a detective even before he was born; say maybe in some other life. He was thinking these thoughts when he heard the knock at the door. It was Will Budd. Ross had been expecting Budd. He smiled, realizing that he was due for some excitement and money. It had been 3 weeks since his last case. As Ross opened the door he realized he had left his notes about Budd's phone call and problem in his car. He walked over to the screen door and told Budd to come on in.

“Have a seat, let me run out to my car and get my note book.”

They talked for a while and decided they would meet again. The problem they discussed had to do with crank phone calls he and his friend Kragshaw had been getting – sometimes from a man, and other times a woman. They decided they would meet again if the calls kept coming.

Budd got up from his recliner and went outside. The rain and wind hit him hard. He decided he would run anyway. He could taste the rain – more of a drizzle than rain – and he loved it. As the wind picked up he looked up at tree branches bending and twisting.

It was as if they were saying: “OK we're getting our asses kicked, but so what?”

Losing himself in the moment, he thought about his time with Ross Perry. It did not seem like a very thorough interview. The guy did ask a lot of questions, but they did not seem very relevant, at least

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most of them. Of course it was just one meeting; he was sure there would be... Suddenly Budd was being over taken by another runner. They both stopped and he realized she was reaching down to unstrap a knife strapped to her calf. He realized she was just close enough for him to immediately go into his karate stance. Turning sideways he put all his weight on his left foot and struck directly out with his right. His sickle foot caught his would-be assailant just where he hoped – on the back side of her knee, sending her sprawling. Right after she landed on her back he pounced on her chest with his knees pinning her to the ground.

As she lay on her back smiling with blood trickling down her chin from the corner of her mouth, she said, “Oh you big strong man; you can take a girl, wow!”

“You’re the same bitch from Club Saigon. Did Chillingworth send you?”

“Chillingworth works for me not the other way around.”

“I want to know why you keep attacking soldiers.”

“It would be easier to show you than tell you.” She said, still smiling.

“Then show me.”

“Not today. Let me up.”

As he let her up, he realized she was cross-eyed. His mind went back to Saigon wondering if it was the same waitress he knew from the EM club? He decided to let her go and went back to his apartment.

Night after night, the same thoughts would go through his head.

“Go ahead kill me, I have no reason to live.” And “It would be easier to show you than tell you.”

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Budd could not believe it! This was the same screwed up bitch he knew from the EM club at Davis Station. He remembered the last time he talked to her she said she was going to start working off base where she could make more money. (GIs tipped better in Saigon than Than San Nhut)

That was the last time he saw her, and he did not think he would ever see her again since he was going back to the states that month.

## Chapter 3

Kragshaw, riding his bike towards the river, was being overtaken by two other riders – only they were on motor scooters. As they approached on either side, he could make out “Vespa” on the saddle bags draped across the scooter on his left. One rider was backing off, but he could see a Vietnamese woman approaching fast. He immediately recognized her from his days in Vietnam – a place called Davis Station – a local watering hole for GIs. As she leaned over to try to put a thick long stick into his spokes, he grabbed the stick and jerked her off her bike. He hit his brakes, doubled back to where she lay on the pavement.

When he reached her, she was sobbing in pain. There was blood on the ground and a torn place on her jeans. The jeans were torn where she had landed and scraped her leg.

Staring down at her, he asked “Why?”

“Because you GI. I hate all GI.”

“Why?”

“It would be easier to show you than tell you.”

Just then another rider pulled up.

Kragshaw immediately recognized him from his Vietnam days. It was Rodney Chillingworth – one of the guys he served with over 3 years ago at Than Shan Nhut Force base just outside of Saigon. Kragshaw remembered Chillingworth as a nerd who never fit in and was often ridiculed for his obsession with a Vietnamese girl who worked at the Davis Station Em club.

Kragshaw looked at Chillingworth and shouted,

“Are you two a team or what?”

“None of your business.” sneered Mai Lung. “Let’s get out of here. I’m getting sick just smelling and looking at this piece of shit GI!”

## Chapter 4

**I**t was assessment time. Little did either man know, it would be one of many? Kragshaw and Budd were sitting at their favorite table. It was a coffee house called, Cafe LA.

Kragshaw didn't seem to care; he enjoyed the excitement. Budd wanted to figure out what was going on and why.

"At least we always win against them" said Kragshaw smiling.

"Yeah, but wouldn't you like to find out what the hell is going on."

"OK, but I'm not going to worry about it."

"You are such as asshole."

"I know you are, but what am I?"

Budd smiled and said, "I just would love to know their motives. She always says the same thing; how she hates all GIs."

"I know and then she always says it would be easier to show you than tell you."

They both agreed that there was a good chance they would have to get police help if these things kept happening. But after discussing the matter further, they decided it would be better to keep working with Ross Perry.

## Chapter 5

### A McDonalds

Mai Lung and Chillingworth looked very serious as they plotted their next attack. “There is no way you are going to talk me into killing these guys”

Chillingworth had a determined look on his face.

“OK, maybe I will start doing it myself.” Mai Lung actually smiled while saying this.

“That's it I'm done.” He stood up and started to walk out.

“Wait,” she said. “OK, OK, we will just keep making them suffer. The more I think about it, how can we make them suffer and get our revenge if their dead?”

“OK, so when's our next attack?” asked Chillingworth.

“We meet at 0800 at the parade field before the 0830 formation. As soon as the first GI shows, we attack.” She was again smiling as she said this.

“That's about the dumbest idea I have ever heard of.”

“OK, then you plan the next attack.”

“Let me think about it. I'll meet you here again tomorrow.”

“When?”

“I'll call you later.”

She pushed in her chair and as she was heading for the door turned around to see how many guys were checking her out. She knew she

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had nice hips and enjoyed guys looking at her. But she also knew they could see each of her eyes pointing towards her nose.