

Possession of My Soul

Original Short Story

Written by
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FADE IN:

EXT: OPENING SCENE VIETNAM JUNGLE - SUNSET

SUPER: VIETNAM 1967

Corporal Brandon Goldstein (20's) the nice guy from a small town everybody knows and loves. Brandon was the kind of person that would give you the shirt off his back to keep you warm. He reflects about home, his family and girlfriend. Platoon Sergeant Kirk Williams (30's) a do or die mentality would lay down his life to save his men. Private Billy Simms (19) hales from a very small in town Alabama. Private Donald DEAN Wilson (18) is from Atlanta, Georgia. Private Edward Jones is from Queens, New York. While on patrol, deep in the jungle Brandon and his Sergeant take on heavy fire along with 20 U.S. soldiers in a quick bloody battle.

SGT. WILLIAMS

Wilson, take point and stay alert out there.

WILSON

Yes Sir.

SGT. WILLIAMS

Jones, take the rear.

JONES

Yes Sir.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O

My name is Brandon Goldstein son of proud parents Barry and Maria Goldstein. I am the oldest of four children I have two beautiful sisters Tracey, Stacey, my little brother Peter and me. It has been 18 months since I was home. The days are long and hot. With many rainy nights here in the bush, you do not get a second chance to get it right.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O (CONT'D)

The U.S. combat units were deployed beginning in 1965, that was two years ago. In America, they say we are baby killers, saying we were killing women and children. How sad is it they will never understand the cries in the battlefield. I remember my first day in the village, I saw a little boy carrying explosives and we had to take him down. Our own people do not respect what we are doing here they have no idea how this affects us mentally. President Lyndon B. Johnson our Commander in Chief says we are here for honor and to fight for justice. Our U.S. government views involvement in the war as to prevent a takeover of South Vietnam as part of their own strategy of containment. The North Vietnamese government and Viet Cong views the conflict as a Colonial War. Looks like we are losing this war and we just begun, we've already lost so many young men. When I first received my draft card, I was so excited I felt so proud. To fight for my country or die trying to save the world what an honor that would be. To die for my country for the Red, White and Blue, my little brother Pete and my Dad were especially proud of me. I cannot forget my girlfriend Rosa Lee who thinks the world of me, my first and only true Love. I miss her so much especially on those cold rainy nights. I plan to pop the question when I get back home.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O (CONT'D)

We talked about having kids someday but that will have to wait until later when we are ready. Boy do I miss those good ole days. Thank God, I am scheduled to go home next week, just 7 more days I know I can do this. This is just a routine patrol we've done this a hundred times. My Sergeant is pretty- cool a no-nonsense Sergeant who gets the job done. This is his third tour and you can tell. He has that death stare, too many days in the bush.

Out of nowhere, a Viet Cong sniper takes aim and kills the first soldier on point. The US soldiers attempt to get cover and another soldier is killed. Several shots are fired upon the enemy; many soldiers are now wounded awaiting a slow death.

SGT. WILLIAMS

Wilsons down... Take cover take cover. Corporal Goldstein take some of your men head up that hill, position them accordingly, and get that sniper!

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Yes Sir, all right men you heard the Sergeant. Head out. Stay low stay low.

The soldiers are killed off one by one. Corporal Goldstein and Sgt. Williams are the only ones not wounded or killed. The killing seems so surreal like a bad dream or nightmare.

SIMMS

I am hit I am hit.

JONES

Sniper one o'clock! Sniper one o'clock!

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O

I could see my men hit the ground trying to get out of harm's way. I can hear their cries in the dark in such pain.

Brandon watches his men fall and die in slow motion. Brandon gives a loud yell; killing as many Viet Cong as he can. Sergeant accompanies him in killing the Viet Cong's.

SGT. WILLIAMS

Take cover and pull back, pull back.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

GET DOWN...GET DOWN... Pvt. Jones...Simms. Wilson...Wilson! Harris...Sheppard...Carlson! AHH...AHH!

U.S. soldiers are dropping like flies all around Brandon.

SGT. WILLIAMS

Goldstein...Goldstein are you there? Somebody get on that damn radio now. We need air support.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Sgt. Williams, I am here Sir...I am here. Carlson is dead Sir. He had the radio. The sniper is still out there.

SGT. WILLIAMS

Goldstein, are you hit? Are you all right?

CORPORAL GOLDSTEIN

I am okay Sergeant, I am okay.

Goldstein and the Sergeant are 20 feet apart from each other. The soldiers are all wounded or dead. There is a

sniper out there in the bush just waiting for the final kill shot.

SGT. WILLIAMS

The men Corporal... where are the men? Can anyone get a clear shot on that damn sniper?

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Most of the men are dead a few are wounded. We cannot get to them sir. I can still hear some men screaming from a distant. Damn it I can't see the damn sniper, where is he?

SGT. WILLIAMS

Medic! Medic!

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

The Medic is dead Sir.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS

Damn...some good men we've lost, too young to die, just too young we've got to get out of harm's way. Goldstein get that damn sniper, take him down.

While the Sergeant tries to get closer to Goldstein, the sniper gets the kill shot, killing Sergeant Williams. Now, Corporal Brandon is all alone with just a few wounded soldiers that are near death.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Yes Sir...Be careful Sgt. I will give you some cover fire.

Brandon shoots a rapid fire keeping the enemy at bay still not getting the sniper.

SGT. WILLIAMS

I have to get to the radio
and call in reinforcements.

The radio is on Pvt. Carlson's back five feet from the
Sergeant. Bullets are flying everywhere nowhere to hide.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Stay low Sgt. Watch your back
Sir.

Sergeant Williams crawls on his belly trying to get closer
to the radio. Out of the dark shadows, the sniper takes aim
a direct kill shot to the head.

SGT. WILLIAMS

I am almost there just give
me a minute...I.

Within a blink of an eye, the Sergeant is killed off
instantly.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Sgt. Are you all right Sgt.
Can you hear me? My God, is
he gone, am I the only one
left?

Brandon stays on his belly hidden deep in the bush. A few
men call out in agony and pain.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O

A dead calm covers the field
of the dead. I can still hear
cries from the brave men
still alive. The night was
long and cold. I can smell
the scent of death all around
me. I feel no pain as the
bullets pass my head and
shoulders. I fear even though
it feels like I am the sole
survivor.

Bombs are exploding nearby while the cries for help are getting less and less.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O

The mud is turning red with their blood, it is pouring out of them like a leaky faucet. I can hear some screams from a distance while the bombs explode around me. My eyes are starting to burn from the smoke. It appears that my hearing is slowly fading in and out. It is beginning to sound like an echo in a tunnel. My hands are starting to shake from the frigid cold while I am trying to aim towards an enemy I cannot see. The heavy smoke blinds me as the bombs hit closer and closer to me. I try to scream out to my men but no one hears me. I call out to them many times but no one answers.

The battlefield covered in blood the shooting has stopped.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN (CONT'D)

Is anyone there? Can anyone hear me?

Brandon calls out hoping someone hears him. Brandon is wounded, but does not realize it for quite some time.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O

My mouth is dry I need water; I try to wipe my eyes from all the smoke. My military green looks red for some reason, but I do not know why. I feel okay, but I cannot seem to move.

The Viet Cong soldiers are moving in for the kill, they move in slow in pure darkness. Corporal Goldstein sees them, but they do not appear to see him.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O (CONT'D)

I try to move to help my men,
but my legs will not move,
why do they feel so cold? I
try to crawl on my belly, but
I am stuck in the mud waist
deep. I can see the smoke
clearing as the Viet Cong
pass me by, I cannot believe
they do not see me; it is as
if I was invisible. I still
cannot see where I am but I
can see my men covered in
blood and the cries have
stopped for the first time in
hours. My God, they we're
alive all that time in such
pain, but no help came. I
tried and could not save one,
not even one.

From a long distance, Brandon can hear English-speaking soldiers. Brandon hopes and prays they came to save him.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Can anybody hear me? Hello,
this is Corporal Brandon
Goldstein United States Army.

The faint English sounds fade away into the night the U.S. soldiers do not see Brandon lying in the mud.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O

My body is getting cold but I
feel no pain this is insane.
Where is our back up team? I
am all alone. "My God", "My
God" I pray please forgive me
of my sins and help me,
please help me. The cries
from my fellow soldiers are
even gone; I think they are
dead now. There is a dead
silence in the air.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O (CONT'D)

Did they pray to their maker before they died?" I wondered. I do not want to die like this lying in the mud with no help and no way of getting out. My family, my Mother and Dad, my sisters and brother will I never see them again. I miss them already have I lost them forever and for what? I am laying here; dying for what I believed is for my country. Our great country who believes in me. I fight for justice and the American people. I die today for my country and the honor of my family and friends. I say goodbye and I believe I will see them again in Heaven.

From that moment in time, Brandon can see his whole life pass by. However, it seems to move in slow motion like in a dream world or fantasy.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O

I can see my first Christmas as a young boy. My brand new five-speed bike. We had so many presents I thought we were all rich. Our Christmas tree was small with red, green, blue and white Christmas lights with an Angel on top. I can see the snow falling outside my bedroom window. The town is completely covered in snow. I remember one year just before my high school graduation, that was a great year.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O (CONT'D)

My Dad got this big bonus and
we had the time of our lives
with the extra money he made.

Brandon loses consciousness and finds himself back home in his old neighborhood but his house and family are not there. He walks down the street where his house should be. Looking for the homecoming from his family and friends after an 18-month deployment. Brandon cannot remember how he got home, the plane ride, taking a cab to his old neighborhood is all a blur.

EXT: EAST CLINTON AVENUE ROOSEVELT NEW YORK - DAY

Brandon walks up and down the street looking for his home dazed and confused.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

I do not understand. Where is
our house?

An old woman opens the door and asks Brandon if he was lost and needed some directions.

MRS. OVERTON (60's) nice old woman from the old neighborhood just a few houses away.

MRS OVERTON

Hello, I am Mrs. Overton may
I help you?

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Yes, I am looking for 189
East Clinton Avenue.

MRS OVERTON

Let me see there is 188 and
187 and over there 186. That
vacant lot used to be 189
that was so long ago I
forgot. My memory is getting
bad.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

What happened to the family
that lived there?

MRS OVERTON

Lived where?

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

189 East Clinton Avenue. I don't understand what happened to the house, the family.

MRS OVERTON

I'm sorry son, but again we don't have a 189 on our street anymore that house burned down many years ago. They had a tragic fire one night and lost everything they had.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

This is crazy! Well, do you know what happened to the Goldstein family?

MRS OVERTON

The Goldstein family?

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Yes the Goldstein's, Barry and Maria Goldstein. They had four children in the house. Do they live somewhere else in town?

MRS OVERTON

I'm so sorry they passed away many years ago. The fire was terrible; they lost their three children Stacey, Tracey and Peter. Their oldest son Brandon, he died many years ago in Vietnam.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

What...Passed away! No-no this can't be happening. I was gone just little over a year. The house was right there...right there.

Brandon's face turns pale like a ghost and he feels a little faint.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Say that again!

MRS OVERTON

I'm sorry their oldest boy
Brandon died in Vietnam; they
never could find his body.
His poor old mother just
couldn't take it she died of
a broken heart. The father,
bless soul he tried
everything to keep their
marriage together but the
strain of it all killed them
both.

BRANDON

This cannot be this is a
mistake.

Brandon is pacing back and forth trying to remain calm with
this confusing information.

MRS OVERTON

Can I get you some water?
Would you like to come inside
out of this heat?

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Yes, Ma'am I need a drink of
something, I guess water
would be great.

MRS OVERTON

Yes, come on in you poor dear
come in and rest up a while I
will get you a cold glass of
water.

Mrs. Overton invites Brandon in for a glass of water while
she tells Brandon more about the family.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Thank you Mrs. Overton I
needed that.

MRS OVERTON

Did you know the Goldstein's
are you family?

BRANDON

Yes, they're my family, but I
am confused about this whole
deal. I use to live right
here, right across the street
in this same neighborhood.

MRS OVERTON

You did where?

BRANDON

At 189 East Clinton Avenue
right where the vacant lot
is.

Brandon is trying his best not to tell Mrs. Overton he is
Brandon, but he also realizes Mrs. Overton would never
believe him.

MRS OVERTON

Are you going to be okay?

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

No Mrs. Overton but thanks
for the water.

Brandon decides to leave and walk to the local park to
regain his thoughts. As he gathers his thoughts, he tries
to figure what really happened to his family and to him.

Brandon is sitting at the park feeling as if he is living
in a state of confusion.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O

I know I am in the right town
why is it that no one
recognizes me. Everything
looks familiar to me I am so
confused. I have only been
gone just over a year.

Brandon decides to walk in town hoping someone will
recognize him.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN V/O

I know I will see Gus at the local gas station. He knows everyone.

GUS STANTON (50's) is the gas station owner/mechanic who has lived in town for over thirty years. Loved by all and knows everyone in town.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Hey Gus, how are you doing?

GUS

Howdy, young man what can I do for you.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Gus, it's me Brandon... Brandon Goldstein don't you recognize me?

GUS

Do I know you sir?

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Gus it is me... do you recognize me?

GUS

Cannot say that I do.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

I use to live on 189 East Clinton Ave.

GUS

Is this some kind of joke?

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

What do you mean?

GUS

The Brandon Goldstein I knew was 22 years old. That poor soul died over in Nam over 8 years ago. The Vietnam War just ended on April 30th this year.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

This year, we are still over there fighting, we are losing thousands of soldiers every day. I just got back yesterday that cannot be.

GUS

Look Son, I do not know what you are smoking, but Brandon is dead rest his poor soul.

Brandon just stands there staring out an open space totally in shock.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

What...this cannot be. Gus, do you remember a Rosa Lee Baily?

GUS

Yes I do.

BRANDON GOLDSTIEN

Whatever happened to her and her family?

GUS

Yeah, I remember she got married and moved out of state somewhere not sure where. You know she was dating Brandon for many years. I think they had plans to get married.

Brandon starts to feel his world has come to an end and he's in a state of shock with all this information.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Gus, just one more question.

GUS

Sure.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

What year is it?

GUS

What!

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

I said what year is it.

GUS

You young kids and those
drugs you use are something
else.

BRANDON GOLDSTEIN

Tell me what year is this.

GUS

Okay, okay the year is 1975!
Why?