

FADE IN:

North Vietnamese Army (NVA) tanks and infantry advancing.

CG:(white letters over images)
South Vietnam. (lower $\frac{1}{3}$)
1975

NVA tanks open fire infantry runs forward firing

Civilians running for cover

Battle images continue as words are typed across the screen:

CG: **By GEORGE ESPER, Associated Press, SAIGON, South Vietnam, March 10, 1975 - North Vietnamese tanks and infantry blasted into the central highlands capital of Ban Me Thuot today...**

CG: **...heavy shelling and fighting continued as night fell...Many of the city's 150,000 civilian population fled during the night...**

GEORGE on camera
CG: **George Esper**
Associated Press (lower $\frac{1}{3}$)

NVA attacking Quang Ngai, more refugees trying to escape

CG: **GEORGE ESPER, AP, SAIGON, March 20, 1975 - The Saigon government abandoned two more provincial capitols, Tam Ky and Quang Ngai... extending communist control to 50 percent of South Vietnam.....**

CG:Newspaper Map of South Vietnam showing land lost by SVN gov't

GEORGE on camera

FADE IN:

NATS: Tank wheels squeaking

NATS: Tanks firing small arms firing begins

Human voices yell and scream
Weapons continue firing

NATS: Battle sounds continue as manual typewriter keys bang rapidly over the continued chaos of battle.

NATS: Sound of typewriter's bell and carriage moving to next line. Typing continues.

GEORGE: **Ah, you know they ran out of food and water in evacuating Ban Me Thuot. A lot of people died on that highway trying to get out of there.**

NATS: Tank wheels squeaking gun fire
Civilians crying and screaming

NATS:Typewriter keys banging

NATS: Tanks firing small arms firing
Human voices yell and scream.

NATS: Battle sounds continue

GEORGE: **Everyday the South Vietnamese lost a provincial capital or a district town.....with no resistance.**

Major roadway crowded with refugees and vehicles as far as the eye can see.

CG:.....hundreds of thousands of refugees were streaming south along Highway 1, toward the safety of Da Nang

GEORGE on camera

Refugees as far as the eye can see.

CG: GEORGE ESPER, SAIGON, (AP) March 31, 1975 The military debacle of the last three weeks—including the loss of Da Nang without a fight—has allowed the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong to extend their control over almost three-quarters of the country, and well within 100 miles of Saigon.

GEORGE on camera

Ships at sea, helicopters parked on flight deck

CG: GEORGE ESPER, SAIGON, (AP), April 5, 1975 A U.S. Navy task force began assembling in the Western Pacific for possible evacuation of Americans and South Vietnamese from Saigon.

GEORGE on camera

NVA tanks, trucks and troops advancing rapidly flying Viet Cong and North Vietnamese flags.

NATS: people chattering, yelling, crying...automobiles, trucks, motorbikes

NATS: Rapid manual typing

GEORGE: It was obvious that Saigon was going to fall.

NATS: people chattering, yelling, crying...automobiles, trucks, motorbikes

NATS: Rapid manual typing over continued sound of civilian panic and gunfire in the background

GEORGE: I was in constant touch with New York and Wes Gallagher, the president and general manager of the AP. And Wes said he only wanted volunteers there.

NATS: Interior of helicopter, garbled voice over intercom. Sound of helicopter engines revving up

NATS: Rapid manual typing.

GEORGE: You know, I'd been there ten years. I'm not about to leave a big story like that, no way.....That small town kid has never left me and I said, God, this.....I've got to cover this.....

NATS:NVA tanks and vehicles filled with troops speeding by, weapons firing into air.

CG: GEORGE ESPER, SAIGON, (AP), April 22, 1975 - North Vietnamese forces overran several government positions south of Saigon today...

GEORGE on camera

Quiet early evening countryside outside Saigon. North Vietnamese military vehicles parked, troops relaxing

CG: GEORGE ESPER, SAIGON, South Vietnam (AP), April 22, 1975 -Intelligence sources say North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces have been in position to overrun Saigon since Monday...

GEORGE on camera

South Vietnamese troops inside Saigon ripping off their uniforms in the streets and running away in underwear.

Chaos at the gate of the U.S. embassy as Vietnamese try to climb over the wall. U.S. Marines and civilians push them back.

Helicopter lands on embassy roof.

CG: GEORGE ESPER, SAIGON, (AP), April 29, 1975 - U.S. helicopters swooped down on Saigon rooftops today and began evacuating the remaining Americans.....as Vietnamese tried to claw their way over the 10-foot wall of the U.S. Embassy...

NVA tanks, trucks and infantry moving quickly through the streets of Saigon

CG: GEORGE ESPER, SAIGON, South Vietnam (AP), April 30, 1975

NATS: rapid manual typing

GEORGE: The AP has entrusted me with this story. I would be letting them down, I'd be letting down thousands of newspaper members down.....Sometimes you have to take risks in your life.

NATS: Soft evening sounds in the countryside outside of Saigon.

NATS: Slower, more deliberate manual typing

GEORGE: The North Vietnamese had surrounded the city.

NATS: Sounds cars and trucks speeding through city, and of a mob out of control, panicking

GEORGE (VO):The fear was overwhelming. People were panicking. It was incredible.

NATS: Helicopter noise in background
Sound of Crowd panic continues

NATS:Rapid manual typing

NATS: Tank and truck engines, as Saigon maintains an unusual silence

NATS:Fumbling stop and start typing

GEORGE on camera

NVA tanks entering presidential palace compound.

CG: (words typed slowly, in sync with George's VO) **The South Vietnamese government today announced an unconditional surrender ending 30 years of warfare.....**

The Provisional Revolutionary Government flag is raised over the palace.

CG: (teletype typing).....and 112 years of French colonialism, Japanese occupation and American military intervention came to an end.

GEORGE on camera

Celebrations in the streets

GEORGE on camera

EFX: Dissolve to:
Photo of elementary school children c.1940 with hands over hearts.

CU of George as a boy

EFX (Title):
George Esper: All-American

EFX: Dissolve to
Photos, c.1945, Uniontown, PA

Steel and coke industries, rail roads, churches, schools,

GEORGE: I'm really nervous and my hands are kind of shaking and I'm...I'm typing out this bulletin...

NATS:The sound of tanks entering

NATS:Deliberate typing

GEORGE (VO): ...**The South Vietnamese government today announced an unconditional surrender ending thirty years of warfare...**

NATS: Sounds of celebration, loud speakers, radio broadcasts, etc.

NATS: Sound of teletype machine

GEORGE (VO):.....and 112 years of French colonialism, Japanese occupation and American military intervention came to an end.

NATS: Teletype machine suddenly stops

GEORGE: ...and I got, you know, as much as I could get out on the wire, thank God, especially the surrender...and then the North Vietnamese cut our wires.

NATS: Street sounds of celebration

GEORGE: I was the last AP person out.

NATS: Street sounds of celebration

Cross Fades to:
Elementary school children reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

MUSIC: Quiet background music, TBD

The quiet background MUSIC continues through this section

NATS: heavy industrial machinery, rail road cars, muted voices, etc.

Photos: George's parents

GEORGE (VO): My parents were immigrants from Beirut Lebanon, and my family owned a Mom & Pop grocery store and a neighborhood bar. And, ah, they didn't really speak good English, and people made fun of us, ah, ridiculed us, called us names.

Photos: Grocery store & Bar Exteriors

NATS: Bar interior

Photos: Interior of old bar, steel workers and railroad workers drinking at the bar.

NATS: Heavy Industrial and RR sounds

Photos: Coke ovens; railroad yard

GEORGE (VO): We lived right along the railroad tracks in Uniontown. And we had steel and coal, and coke ovens there. And in those days, the cargo trains would stop in front of our grocery store and the crewmen would come in and buy cigarettes and tobacco.

(Pause)

Photos: Grocery store at night

Even at ten years old I was unloading cases of beer and putting them in the basement of the bar. And even though I was underage, I was working tending bar.

Photos: Bar interior

NATS: Grocery store interior

Photos: Esper parents

GEORGE (VO): And then in the grocery store, I'd work there until midnight. And I can remember in the winter I would be so tired I put my head on the radiator to keep warm.

Photos: Grocery Store

GEORGE: I always wanted to have friends, and playing sports then was part of that. So I went out when I could get a few minutes away from work.

GEORGE on camera

NATS: boys playing sandlot baseball

Photos: 10 to 12 year old boys playing sandlot baseball c. 1945

GEORGE (VO): Ah, these were more kind of pickup games with other kids in the neighborhood. I really enjoyed that when I had a chance because playing sports gave me a feeling of belonging.

GEORGE on camera

Memorial Day parade on Main Street in Uniontown c. 1945 Marching Band, pretty girls twirling batons, military marchers and plenty of families lining the parade route

GEORGE on camera

Interior of grocery store

Interior of bar

GEORGE on camera

Railroad tracks locomotives moving cars around in front of coke factory sunrise

GEORGE on camera

George: I had no confidence in myself, ah, in the sense of coming from an immigrant family.

(Pause)

I was ashamed of my family which I shouldn't have been.

NATS: Marching Band Parade Music

GEORGE (VO): My parents worked so hard. They did speak English, but not fluently. My father had the same suit on for a year, and my mother wore old clothes

(Pause)

People, at that time, sometimes made fun of my parents and they'd call my father names.

NATS:Parade Music continues

GEORGE: There was always that underlying feeling that they see us as foreigners. You didn't have the the same opportunities if you were a foreigner. You were not accepted. The impact it had on me, ah, it made me feel very insecure and very tentative.

NATS:Parade Music begins a slow fade out as industrial sounds fade in

GEORGE (VO): I often felt angry and used to say to my mother, "I hate this place." I hated these long hours of being in that store and being in that bar atmosphere. I just wanted out of there. Let's get rid of it!

(Pause)

GEORGE: She said, "This place pays for our lives. This is...pays for our food."

NATS: Heavy industrial sounds, railroad cars being moved.

GEORGE: I was really frustrated, I wanted to be going out for the football team but I never really had a chance.

Football stadium at West Virginia University c.1950. WVU player scores a touchdown and the stadium erupts.

GEORGE on camera

West Virginia University football team practice--coaches barking, blowing whistles, players blocking and tackling hitting hard.

GEORGE on camera

Team practice--coaches barking, blowing whistles, players blocking and tackling hitting hard.

GEORGE on camera

End of practice, players and coaches walking off the field

GEORGE on camera

WVU Football Stadium Kick off of a new game

NATS: Cheering in the stadium, and Marching Band playing rousing music

GEORGE: The only escape I could see was to go to WVU.

NATS: whistles blow, coaches bark commands, hard hitting tackling and blocking

GEORGE: The first thing I did when I enrolled here in 1950 as a freshman... ah...I went out for the football team as a walk on...and I weighed about 150 pounds

(Pause)

GEORGE (VO): And the first day of practice I was in there trying really hard.

(Pause)

I wasn't afraid and I ran very hard and I hit some people head on...I wasn't hurt (But) I wanted so badly to make the team

GEORGE: After that practice, the coach, he said "I'm going to have to let you go kid" And I said, "What do you mean, Coach." I was in tears And, he said, "You're gonna get killed out there, and I said, "I'm okay," and he said, "Well I don't want to take that chance of you getting hurt."

GEORGE (VO): Again, I felt really that I'd been a failure.

GEORGE:...and he said, "Ya know, how about being football manager? I know you love football and I know you want to be a part of it"

GEORGE (VO): Even though they only knew me for a day, they liked the way I got along with the players. They liked my hustle, my spirit.