

## THE SECRET AGENT

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VETERAN 1: The problem got so severe, I couldn't keep anything in my stomach, I lost a lot of weight. I also developed a rash after I came back from Viet Nam that I didn't have before I went.

VETERAN 2: So when I came back from Viet Nam and this rash wouldn't go away, I went over to my mother's house, and I asked her to take a look at the rash. I was told it was jungle rot. As soon as she saw it, she said, "That's not jungle rot. Your father had jungle rot. I don't know what that is, but it's not what your father had." Words that my mother said then and when Kerry was born almost came back to haunt us, that she had intuitive knowledge that something wasn't right."

VETERAN 3: I cannot remember, these headaches got so severe. My arms and legs, I have numbness with pain. I can't move my hands. They give me sheepskin blankets to sleep on at the hospital. My hands shake.

VETERAN 4: I've got the spine of a 77 year-old man and I'm 33. I cannot have sex with my wife anymore. My wife is 32.

VETERAN 5: In 1975, I started having slight peripheral neurological problems, you know, my hands and feet were starting to tingle. I think it was from March of '77 until January of '78. I lost the ability to walk.

VETERAN 6: It was like looking in a mirror at yourself. Talk to one veteran and he's got the same things wrong with him that you've got wrong with you. All these things are not coincidental; it had to come from somewhere. He might be from New York, and me from South Georgia, the only thing we had in common was we were in Viet Nam.

SONG: THE SECRET AGENT [Country Joe McDonald]

Looking over my shoulder, behind every tree  
I got bad paranoia, everything is trying to kill me.  
Behind every corner, oh, what is it I see?  
I got bad paranoia, everything seems like it's trying to kill me.  
Secret Agent, what can it be?  
The Secret Agent, it's trying to kill me.  
I believe it's going to kill me.

NARRATOR [Max Gail]: Until this century, the damage we could do to each other in war was unlimited: no weapon, we thought, could kill all of our enemies; no war could last forever. But advancing technology has put into our hands weapons and means of fighting wars, which only the gods and heroes of legends have wielded. We

can pour fire from the air like Zeus; poison the earth our enemies use. Like magicians, we can alter the chemistries of life.

The powers we have acquired can continue to do harm even after our wars are over--- to our old enemies and to ourselves. Some of our weapons are so new and so potent that we don't even have the means to assess the damage they do. And yet, we who create them are responsible for every effect they have--- on the battlefield, at home, in years to come. We must learn what we have done.

Chemical and incendiary weapons have long been used in war. But World War I escalated the consequences of chemical warfare. Both sides made use of phosgene, chlorine, and mustard gas, along with many less toxic agents. 1.3 million casualties, including 91,000 deaths were attributed to gas warfare.

Worldwide revulsion over the use of these weapons led to the Geneva conference of 1925, which outlawed the use of asphyxiating, poisonous and other gases. But the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee refused to ratify the Geneva Protocols.

During World War II, researchers in Britain and the United States secretly developed nerve gases and powerful plant-killers that could have military uses. Two of these chemical agents were based on benzene and chlorine--- their names 2, 4-D, and 2, 4, 5-T. They destroyed plant life by imitating the action of plant hormones.

DR. MATTHEW MESELSON (Harvard University): At the gross level, they cause imbalanced growth. Cells that shouldn't grow, or shouldn't divide, do divide, and clog up the channels in plants through which nutrients flow. Root growth becomes unbalanced, the junction between the stem and the branch is disrupted, the leaf falls off, and that's what causes defoliation. The actual mechanism by which the herbicides work, many theories have been suggested, and so far as I'm aware, there is no definitive proof for any of them. We simply don't know exactly how they work.

NARRATOR: These chemical weapons were not used in World War II. But after the war, farmers and foresters hailed the weapons as tools. New insecticides and herbicides reduced the major causes of crop loss and allowed higher yields. Man had never had the exhilarating capacity to control and alter the very nature of life like this before. Few imagined the full spectrum of consequences these new powers entailed.

The first indication that something in the herbicide 2, 4, 5-T was troublesome came in 1949. In Nitro, West Virginia, 228 Monsanto Chemical Company workers making 2, 4, 5-T contracted an extremely disfiguring disease called chloracne. It produces blackheads, cysts, and pustules in all parts of the body. In severe cases it has been known to persist for over 30 years.

In 1957, German researchers isolated a chemical that caused not only chloracne, but also damage to the liver, kidneys, and nerves. It was an unwanted byproduct of 2, 4, 5-T, called 2, 3, 7, 8-TCDD. Tests on animals showed it to be extremely lethal even in tiny amounts. It has since proven to be the most toxic member of a group of chemicals called dioxins. But the use of 2, 4, 5-T as a weed-killer increased on food-crops, rangeland, forests, and lawns. And soon the herbicide would be reconsidered for a war-time mission.

NEWSREEL NARRATOR: United States aid to the Vietnamese and the French in their long war against Viet Minh rebels, is brought sharply into focus in latest news developments. American Air Force technicians are reported servicing U.S. -supplied equipment. Answering critics in the United States, President Eisenhower says, "Every step the government takes in helping to fight the Reds in Indo-China is carefully calculated to keep the country from getting in too deep."

NARRATOR: Our long war in Southeast Asia would be a guerilla war. Our immense advantage in air and firepower was outweighed by an enemy who could attack by night, then by day slip back into civilian population, into the dense jungle, or into underground tunnel complexes. There were few distinct battlefields, few conclusive battles.

American war planners soon realized that new technologies would be required to fight this kind of war.

MAJOR PHILLIP BROWN, USAF: Well, the United States, in the process of entering into Viet Nam, became aware of the problem of ambush, and the inability to detect enemy presence, in Viet Nam. As a result, techniques were developed for detection. One opportunity for doing that was to examine the utilization of herbicides for defoliation, to uncover enemy positions, thereby protecting our own personnel. The Department of the Army had undertaken to examine the herbicides that were commercially available within the United States.

NARRATOR: By the 1960's the Geneva Protocols had come to include herbicides and riot-control gases in its definition of chemical warfare. So when the Pentagon recommended using herbicides in Viet Nam, not only as a defoliant, but to kill crops and thus deny food to the enemy, it provoked secret debate at the highest levels of our government.

In 1962, despite fears of world opinion, President Kennedy approved full-scale crop destruction and defoliation plans for Viet Nam. Initially dubbed Operation Hades, the name of the program was later changed to Operation Ranch Hand. We didn't consider these substances to be weapons; after all, they had widespread domestic uses in the United States.

The Air Force modified C-123 aircraft to dispense 2, 3, 5-T, and other herbicides at as much as 20 times the rate recommended in the US. The herbicides were code-named after the color bands that identified the drums in which they were shipped and stored: Agents White, Blue, Green, Purple, and Pink. But the most widely used herbicide of the war was Agent Orange, a blend of 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T.

Between 1962 and 1971, 19 million gallons of herbicide were poured over South Viet Nam, 11 million gallons of which were Agent Orange. 19% of Viet Nam's upland forests, 41% of mangrove forests, and 8% of its cultivated lands were affected by Operation Ranch Hand.

Civilians and soldiers alike were caught in this chemical storm.

VETERAN: The war was my war. My father had served in World War II. My uncles had served in Korea, my grandfathers had served in World War I, so at the time it seemed that it was my place to be.

VETERAN: But Cam Ranh Bay is so beautiful. Oh, you just can't believe how pretty that place is to fly into. I just wish I had a movie camera and could've gotten pictures of it, it is so pretty, all this country is just really beautiful over here. When you first come in, you'd never think there was a war going on.

NARRATOR: If you went to fight in Viet Nam, you thought you knew what to expect: it was war. You knew you were going to get shot at, maybe injured, maybe killed. But in doing highly technological battle against native guerilla forces, we were using methods and weapons whose consequences couldn't be predicted. In Viet Nam you were in dangers you couldn't know about.

VETERAN: There's something that just went over our heads. I don't know what it was. Something exploded, didn't sound like a mortar. Flares are up all over the place. I don't know where they're coming from; we're not firing them out of here. Here comes a helicopter in to Medivac. Probably dead people they're bringing in. This has been going on all night long, you just can't believe it. All day and all night.

NARRATOR: As the war escalated, the demand for Agent Orange increased. The Dow Chemical Company sped up the manufacture of 2, 4, 5-T. During 1964, 49 men on the production line became contaminated and developed chloracne. An investigation to find the cause revealed dioxin to be the culprit. Dow warned the other manufacturers of Agent Orange, but they never published their test results or passed them on to the largest purchaser of 2, 4, 5-T, the United States Department of Defense.

Criticism of the spray program grew. Some Pentagon experts argued that defoliation of jungles only made Americans easier targets. A 1966 Rand Corporation Report warned that crop destruction was alienating friendly farmers and wasn't limiting enemy food supplies.

In 1967, 5,000 American scientists, including 17 Nobel laureates, petitioned President Johnson to halt the spraying, calling it a "dangerous precedent" that might further the use of chemical weapons. There was no official response. Rather, the spraying was stepped up. By 1968, the U.S. was using the entire domestic production of 2,4, 5-T in Viet Nam. 4.2 million acres were covered--- an area the size of Massachusetts--- some plots 4, 5, or 6 times.

The Air Force advised troops handling the herbicides that they were "relatively non-toxic to man and animals."

VETERAN: We were glad to see the herbicide. You gotta realize it was a weapon to us. Instead of sending a man out into a minefield to cut down the bush, for fields of fire, they'd just spray the herbicide, that would kill the plants, they wouldn't have to send anyone out there. Myself personally I was glad to see it. I was in a thick jungle area, and anything that stopped the Viet Cong from sneaking up on us was welcome. Here we are 15 years later realizing the big mistake.

VETERAN: Being a medic, part of my job was spraying the perimeter of our base camp, and I noticed in Nam I came down with a rash, which I thought at the time was jungle rot, except the rash is still with me today. Since I got out of the service I've had heart problems, I had a liver problem, and the skin problem.

VETERAN: It's over my entire body; this is just a sample of it.

VETERAN: My feet are all scaly, and my left foot is swelled up, from where they sprayed that stop from on top of us. They never told us what that stuff was. I had like gunk, like glue, all over my body, which irrigated me at night.

NARRATOR: In 1969, Dr. E.W. Pfeiffer, a zoologist from the University of Montana, led the first group of independent scientists to Viet Nam, to observe the operation and results of the spray program.

DR. EW PFEIFFER (University of Montana): The inland, upland forest of hardwood trees, triple canopy forest, some of the trees were still alive, but you had these gaunt white skeletons, in masses, scattered throughout this green background. It's sort of like a forest in hell, if you want to put it that way. People's gardens, their manioc, bananas, would turn brown and die. And these were in friendly areas. This was because the spray drifted long distances. All kinds of health problems, animal husbandry problems, agricultural problems, were being attributed at the time to the herbicides and we were first beginning to hear stories about miscarriages, and deformed babies.

NARRATOR: The North Vietnamese released a film in 1969 to document their charges of herbicide damage to people.

In the United States, tests conducted by Bionetics Laboratories, for the National Institutes of Health, showed that pregnant mice fed 2, 4, 5-T produced large numbers of deformed offspring. Despite the Bionetics test result, the Department of Defense announced that it would continue the use of 2, 4, 5-T in Viet Nam.

In December of 1969, Dow Chemical told the government what the company had known for at least 5 years.

DR. MESELSON: I remember very clearly when I got the call from the White House saying, " We don't think its 2, 4, 5-T itself, we've got some new information. Dow tells us that there's something in it called dioxin. And that might be the culprit." By culprit I mean responsible in the Bionetics tests that were done at the time, which showed that it caused birth defects and still births and abortions in rats and mice.

NARRATOR: The Bionetics test results were confirmed in April, 1970. On April 15, the U.S. Surgeon General announced the cancellation of some domestic uses of 2, 4, 5-T.

SURGEON GENERAL: ... Resulting from uses of 2, 4, 5-T around the home, and in water areas, could constitute a hazard to human health.

NARRATOR: At this time the Pentagon announced the suspension of Agent Orange spraying in Viet Nam. That December, an investigative mission to Viet Nam, sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, made it's report.

DR. MESELSON: Here is an intact mangrove association, and here is one that has been treated with herbicides. The trees die, apparently all vegetation is killed, all tree species are killed by herbicides in the mangrove type association. We felt that this was a problem for urgent attention for a number of reasons. It certainly did amount of an effect on the people of Viet Nam. We were led to believe by discussing with the Chemical Corps officers who escorted us on these trips that their criteria, their precautions for avoiding exposure of indigenous civilian populations, were a failure.

DR. JOHN CONSTABLE (Harvard University): We carefully studied one of the provincial hospitals in a very heavily defoliated area, and at this hospital they showed a stillbirth rate that was twice as great as the rest of the country during a comparable period. In addition with carefully analyzed all the congenital anomalies treated at the Saigon Children's Hospital, and there, for two specific deformities, the rates during the years of maximum herbicide exposure were as much as four times as high as they had been before.

NARRATOR: The evidence gathered by the Vietnamese and American scientists and doctors suggested the spray program was injuring the health of Vietnamese civilians. But dioxin contamination is very hard to determine, and the difficulties of gathering statistics are so tremendous, the American fact-finding mission was forced to leave many questions unanswered. If the problems experienced by the Vietnamese population were attributable to the herbicide, what was it's effect on our troops?

VETERAN: But, here we are, people who live here in society, with our children, most our children, what they called at the time "crib-death", of our babies dying. And we were coming home, we were producing our children so we could create our families, to deal with this society--- and yet they're crippled, they're dead.

VETERAN: We thought it was crib death, that's what they put in the paper at the time, and then they did an autopsy, and found all these birth defects inside of her. The doctor said she had twelve spleens, but they were like seed-warts. Her bowel system was turned completely backwards, she had a three-chambered heart.

Well, the doctors told us, we were going through such trauma with that, for the wife to get pregnant again as soon as possible. So we did. Three months later she was pregnant. When this one was born, she was born with a heart condition. But the first one, from before I went to Viet Nam, she was perfectly normal.

WIFE OF VETERAN: When Kerry was born, she was born with multiple birth defects, and Michael had mentioned his mother was a nurse, well she was an obstetrical nurse, and she was in the delivery room when I gave birth. She said to me she had delivered approximately 25,000 children, and never seen the pattern of birth defects--- that there was such an abnormality to the type of birth defects she saw, that you might get a cleft palate and another type of birth defect going together, which would be the norm, but with Kerry, every system in her body was involved.

She was born without a rectum, her intestines were malformed, and there was no opening at the bottom of her stomach. She needed open-heart surgery. Her arm is malformed. Her arm is normal from the shoulder to the elbow, and then her hand is on after the elbow.

VETERAN: The word “normal”, in relation to how a normal family lives, does not apply to Viet Nam veterans who have the children or the cancer. We live Viet Nam day in and day out--- it never goes away.

NARRATOR: In July 1976, an accident in Seveso, Italy drew worldwide attention to the dangers of dioxin contamination. A reactor in a manufacturing plant exploded, and released a toxic cloud over a residential neighborhood. 725 people were ordered to leave their homes, but many of them had already been exposed. Some children were hospitalized immediately with facial swelling and skin rashes. Eventually, 187 would suffer from disfiguring chloracne. Authorities estimated that the toxic cloud that covered Seveso contained one-half pound of dioxin.

By the late 1970s, dioxin had become a target in the emotional debate over toxic wastes.

WOMAN: We feel optimistic about them looking at our whole population, only in terms of finding what other miscarriages may have occurred, because we don't pretend to have found all of them, but also at other possible health problems. We're a population that has been sprayed for a long time.

NARRATOR: In 1979, in a very controversial decision, the Environmental Protection Agency placed an emergency ban on certain uses of 2, 4, 5-T.

MS BARBARA BLUE (U.S. EPA): We're very concerned about these findings, not only for the residents of Oregon, but for all citizens who may be exposed to the herbicide 2, 4, 5-T. We estimate that over 4 million people across the nation may be at risk through the use of herbicide in forestry and rights-of-way and pasture use.

DR. ETCYL BLAIR (Dow Chemical Co): We're extremely unhappy about this. We just think it's an extremely capricious move on the part of EPA, totally unjustified, and I must say that we're greatly disappointed in our government in this.

HOOVER CHEMICAL CO. REPRESENTATIVE: We did find very low levels of dioxin, in the part per billion, one to seven parts per billion...

NARRATOR: The debate over the damage done or not done by 2, 4, 5-T and its by-products, though it turns on difficult questions of dosage and exposure, is a debate over responsibility.

DR. AXELROD (NY State Dept. of Health): Parts per trillion are capable of producing tumors in experimental animals, and parts per billion, over a period of time, could produce severe illness and death.

DR. MESELSON: We must regard dioxin as a carcinogen. To what extent it may be actually causing cancer in the human population, I don't think anyone can put a number on that, that would require knowing what the dose is, which we don't know, what dose people are getting--- not enough work has been done to find out, though we could find out, but it hasn't been done; and we would need to know what is the effect of these low doses, and that's also not known.

MR. DON FRAYER (Dow Chemical Co): We have had 30 years of experience with this material and we have not had these problems in our manufacturing populations. We haven't seen these problems among the people who use our materials in agriculture. We've done a great deal of testing on it and haven't seen any indication that these problems should appear. And we have therefore kind of concluded that there really isn't any reason why veterans should be having these problems.

VETERAN: I died in Viet Nam and didn't even know it.

NARRATOR: In 1978, Paul Reutershan, who had been a helicopter crew chief in Viet Nam, was dying of intestinal cancer at 28 years of age. He brought a \$10 million lawsuit against the producers of Agent Orange, some of the world's largest chemical companies, including Dow, Monsanto, and Diamond Shamrock. He claimed that his cancer resulted from the companies' failure to warn the government that their 2, 4, 5-T was dangerous.

VETERAN: How come the Viet Nam veterans are dying faster than the Viet Cong killed them? How come we're producing birth defects that have never been seen?

VETERAN: I remember very well getting off an airplane at Bien Hoa Airport...

NARRATOR: Paul reached hundreds of other vets who suspected Agent Orange of causing health problems. They began to organize, to teach themselves about Agent Orange, and how they could help each other.

WOMAN: We thought for a long time that he had some kind of problem with his heart, but the last thing, when they discovered the tumor...

NARRATOR: Paul Reutershan died in 1979. By that time, many others had joined his suit. Victor Yannacone, an experienced environmental lawyer who first took on Paul's case, has continued to represent the vets.

ATTORNEY VICTOR YANNACONE: ... it is probably the most toxic made in a laboratory.

NARRATOR: The Federal Courts have certified the veteran's suit as a class action. This means that if the courts eventually decide in favor of the veterans, any veteran injured by Agent Orange should benefit.

DEMONSTRATING VETERANS:

All the profits went to Dow  
We're the ones who are paying now.  
Dow chemicals got to pay

NARRATOR: The Veterans Administration is responsible for the health care of all veterans, but the V.A. refused to acknowledge that there could be Agent Orange health problems. In 1979, the General Accounting Office reported that contrary to Defense Department claims, thousands of vets were seriously exposed to herbicide spraying in Viet Nam and the V.A. was ordered to examine vets who were worried about Agent Orange exposure.

DR. CURTIS: There is no evidence, documented, that individuals, humans exposed to Agent Orange, have any chronic disease entity recognized at the present time, and specifically...

REPRESENTATIVE ALBERT GORE (D, Tenn.): Let me just ask you, you're the chief medical office for the V.A.?

DR. CURTIS: That's right.

REP GORE: You're familiar with the Swedish studies that were the subject of testimony here earlier today, where people exposed to dioxin, a constituent of Agent Orange, resulted in a significant increase in several forms of cancer?

DR. CURTIS: Mr. Chairman, if I may finish, please. I'm talking about validated agreed-upon by experts studies. The only things, the current status of the Swedish studies is there would appear to be some correlation.

NARRATOR: By 1982, 95,000 men had reported to the V.A. for examinations. Over 16,000 had filed disability claims. None of these claims were granted.

VETERAN: My name is Alan Wynn, and this is my mother Merilee. I've been having this problem for 13 years, and it started when I was in Viet Nam in 1968, and it comes and goes, it's been coming and going for 13 years now. I came to the V.A. hospital once in 1979, and I told them I was having ringing in my ears from the artillery, and I was shell-shocked from Viet Nam, and my leg hurts where I was

wounded, and I keep getting sores in my mouth. This is just--- you're seeing just a little bit of it on my lips. It's all inside.

VETERAN'S MOTHER [Mrs. Wynn]: I'm very bitter, very bitter. I feel our government should help our young people, where they can't help themselves, medically and financially. He wasn't sick until he went into the service.

VETERAN: I went to Philadelphia Naval Hospital, because I was in a lot of pain, and I'm continuously in pain. The man put me on 100 mg of Valium a day, OK, I sit and slobber all day long. I don't work. I can't work.

VETERAN: If I were to take these medications, I would be taking 61 pills a day. I get sicker if I take the medication, yet I have to take them to appease the V.A. OK, I have pills here, I take valium 10 mg. four times a day because I've got severe headaches. They've got me on Tylox, which is an opiated synthetic, and this stuff here is supposed to be for my headaches. I have blood thinners that I'm supposed to have been taking for six years. I saw a doctor the other day and she states that if I took these I would have been dead long ago. They write out the prescription, I don't even see the doctor, and this has been going on now for 10 years. What else?

MAX CLELAND (U.S. V.A.): After there's no evidence on the medical record, no evidence at the exit physical, no evidence right afterwards, then ten years later, which is contrary to medical literature at this moment, based on advice that I've been given, then the individual says, "Boom--- I've got a problem." That is the problem, not the question about whether animals, laboratory animals, monkeys, rats, are fed or injected dioxin. We know it's a poison, a very toxic substance, which is what concerns us. But our problem is, it seems to me, this is the crux of the matter, is how does the laboratory situation, of injecting rats and monkeys, or feeding rats or monkeys, how does that equate with an experience in Viet Nam?

REPRESENTATIVE MAGUIRE (R., N.J.): All the evidence is never in. Obviously we're looking not for tying down a precise cause and effect relationship, which is very difficult to do, but we're looking for the best indications that we have. Now, for years we have used animal studies as the best indicators that we have of hazard to human beings, that's why we do animal studies. The animal studies have shown increased frequency of cancers; particularly sarcomas, liver and lung cancers have been documented. Liver, kidneys, lungs, nervous system, blood-forming organs, and the reproductive system have been shown to be at hazard in the animal studies. Abortions, early death, abnormal development of offspring, appeared in laboratory tests on females exposed to dioxin. Why do we have to have, Mr. Administrator, the last bit of cause and effect in the notebook before we take care of these men and their families?

VETERAN: We know we've been involved with sprays being on us. We drank water from the land, we ate off the land. We had to crawl through the land because when they're shooting at you you've got to crawl.

SONG:

VIETNAM VETERAN STILL ALIVE

Didn't take long before I began to tell  
The real thing can be a living hell  
I saw so many lose their bodies and their minds  
In the jungles and mug of Viet Nam.

But I kept on fighting and the Lord spared my life  
I lost part of my body but I never lost my mind  
But the home folks seem to sicken at the sight  
Of a Viet Nam veteran still alive

Well I come home from the war to a war at home  
And I can't help but wonder what it was I done  
I went off to fight the enemy  
Now I'm back home and the enemy is me.  
I said I'm back home and I'm the enemy.

NARRATOR: The Viet Nam war didn't end with our boys' return. A secret agent pursued them. The little that was known about the technologies the Nam war didn't end with our boys' return. A secret agent pursued them. The little that was known about the technologies they had used against the Vietnamese wasn't told to them. At home, they felt themselves to be invisible, their only welcome--- a debate about society's responsibilities to them and for what they had done--- a war of words that ten years later was still unconcluded.

MR. FRAYER: The earliest record we found of identification of 2, 3, 7, 8-TCDD is in a German paper that was written in German by German scientists in 1957. In terms of Dow's knowledge, we identified and determined analytical methods for this in 1964, although we were aware of the existence of some impurity that could cause acnegenic problems when we started producing in 1950.

ATTORNEY VICTOR YANNACONE: There is no longer any question that the chemical companies knew as early as 1962 that their 2, 4, 5-T was contaminated, and the material they sold the government was contaminated with 2, 3, 7, 8-Tetrachlorodibenzo-paradioxin, TCDD, or dioxin, one of the most toxic substances known to man, and they never, ever, told anyone in the government about the contaminant, its danger, and the level of contamination.

VETERAN: They sold these to the US government in the late or early 1960's, 1962, with the knowledge going back into the late 40s, early 50s, that these chemicals do cause serious medical problems. They're using unfortunately what is called the Nuremberg defense in the lawsuit. They say that it's not our fault, we were only following orders.

MR. FRAYER: Basically our feeling in filing the third party complaint is that the government specified the type of material that they wanted, they determined where the material would be used, and they determined where the ground troops would be when the material was used, so in short, all of the incidents of control of the material was in the hands of the government. The reason we were reluctant to take this step is that we feel very strongly that the material probably has not caused any harm, and that being our defense, we didn't really want to raise the inference that something had happened that the government was responsible for.

VETERAN: We're not asking to destroy the chemical companies, we don't want to put them out of business, and we don't want thousands of people to be out of work. We want them to own up to what they did. We're asking the courts to award is a percentage of their profits, to go into a trust fund, a public trust, administered by the courts and overseen by the world. And the money in that trust will be used to repair the damage done to our children, to compensate the men who have become disabled from it, and to do the proper research that is necessary to create the treatment that does not exist at this time.

VETERAN: If we're not telling the truth, take us to court, stop dragging your feet. Take us to court, let our attorneys present our side, and we'll hear your side, but let's get to the bottom; but we're not getting to the bottom, it's going on, and it's going on, and it's going on.

VETERAN: You tell me what am I supposed to do when I reach a point of frustration, that I don't feel that it's necessary for me, I can't, cope with writing a letter.

VETERAN: What can you cope with? What can you do?

VETERAN: Well, you know, we did a lot of violence in Viet Nam, just maybe; just maybe, I ought to resort to some violence.

VETERAN: If you resort to violence, you will blow it for millions of people. If you're frustrated to that degree, channel that energy, and that angry you've got, into some positive energy. Organize the men around you; find out the friends you were with in Viet Nam, bring them together, pass the word, save a life!

VETERAN: Agent Orange has destroyed my brain.

NARRATOR: On March 14, 1981, James Hopkins, a Viet Nam veteran, crashed his jeep through the plate-glass doors of the Wadsworth V.A. Hospital in Los Angeles, California. He fired several rounds of ammunition into the ceiling before surrendering to police. He claimed he was poisoned by Agent Orange and that the V.A. had repeatedly turned him away. Two months later, Hopkins committed suicide.

Reason Wareheim, a handicapped veteran of three United States wars, could understand the stress on Hopkins.

REASON WAREHEIM (Veteran of World War II, Korea, Viet Nam): He was one of many thousands of veterans that are just plain frustrated now that they're not getting the medical help that they were promised; and he was one of the very few I hope that exploded and went back to his, to what he had been trained to do best. And when he drove that jeep through this front door over here and shot up this lobby, it was just a cry for the American people, let's sit up and look, what's happening to us?

VETERAN: If you're on the hunger strike, then don't stay out there. If you've got more than 2 days, come up here on this piece of cement with us.

NARRATOR: The news of Hopkins death inspired a spontaneous gathering of Vets in front of Wadsworth Hospital. Many of these men shared Hopkin's feeling--- an overwhelming sense of impotence and uncertainty about what might happen to them and their children. Within a few days a tent village was erected on the hospital's lawn and 11 veterans began a hunger strike. They asked for immediate testing and treatment of Agent Orange victims, and treatment for the effects of delayed combat stress. In a desperate attempt to make themselves heard, they demanded to speak to the president.

VETERAN: When they asked me as an 18-year-old boy to go to Viet Nam in 1965, I went to Viet Nam, and then I went back to Viet Nam a second time. I didn't ask any questions when I was an 18-year-old boy growing up on Long Island, but I'm asking a hell of a lot of questions now as a 34-year-old man, sitting paralyzed in a wheelchair for the last 13 years, dealing with an insensitive government that could care less whether these people lived or died. What kind of country, ladies and gentlemen, are we living in?

VETERAN: We're going to do this for the cause, if we have to die here, for not having any nutrition; we're going to do it.

MR. ROBERT COY (Chief Attorney, U.S. V.A.): The manner in which they've gone about it, it's just not the way to communicate. You just don't violate the law, and in violating the law, demand a meeting with the president. Now I don't know how a country can function if every time the law is broken, the president is supposed to meet.

MR. NICK LONGSWORTH (U.S. V.A.): I would prefer they not be there because I'm concerned about anyone not eating. I can't address what will end the hunger strike, that's for them to decide. In terms of a meeting with the president, there are none of us here who would be so presumptuous as to speak for the president or the White House, that's up to the administration.

SONG: VIET NAM NEVER AGAIN  
I'd like to be a general in the Pentagon

Instead of a foot soldier here in Viet Nam  
I'd like to be a Congressman in Washington, D.C.  
Instead of in this firebase, surrounded by VC.  
I'd like to be a businessman selling guns and planes  
Instead of in this bunker with rounds coming in.  
I'd like to be the president talking to the press,  
Instead of here in Khe Sanh with shrapnel in my chest.

Oh, Viet Nam you took my heart and my mind  
Oh, Viet Nam, you made me old before my time  
Oh, Viet Nam I never can explain  
Oh, Viet Nam if I should, maybe I could  
Never do it again.

POLICEMAN: OK people let's start taking the tents down.

NARRATOR: On the morning of June 15, seven veterans were arrested and the hunger strikers were ejected from hospital grounds. Not until 12 of the strikers went on to Washington, DC and were granted a congressional hearing, would they end their 53-day fast.

More than 12,000 veterans, including Australians, have now joined the suit being brought against the manufacturers of Agent Orange. It will be one of the largest claims for damages in U.S. history. Undoubtedly, it will also be one of the most difficult claims to resolve. For how do we assign culpability when the ingredients of Agent Orange have not only been used as weapons, but in agriculture throughout the world for the last 30 years?

VETERAN: It initially was Viet Nam veterans' issue; it still is a Viet Nam veterans' issue, but they sprayed millions and millions of pounds of this one chemical all over the U.S., on our rangeland, so when the cows ate the grass, and you order a hamburger or steak, keep that in mind.

NARRATOR: 1971. St. Louis, Missouri. Horses at a riding arena began to die mysteriously. Eventually more than 60 horses died. An investigation revealed that waste oil used to keep the dust down on the arena had been contaminated with dioxin. A decade later, an enormous environmental problem surfaced. The same waste oil had been sprayed all over Southern Missouri.

The town of Times Beach was so seriously contaminated that the Federal Government was forced to purchase the entire town in order to evacuate the residents.

No one knows how much dioxin has spread worldwide, or what damage it is now causing. We do know that the tons of Agent Orange dumped in Viet Nam are only a fraction of the 2, 4, 5-T used worldwide.

Veterans of the Vietnam war who were exposed to Agent Orange have learned at firsthand what we must all learn: when we use technologies—in war or in

peace --- whose consequences are not know in advance--- we are still responsible for everyone of those consequences.

VETERAN'S WIFE: So now when I realized that Kerry's arm didn't have to be malformed, when I realized her intestines could have been whole, when I realized she didn't have to undergo open-heart surgery, now I had to look at the 22 birth defects in my child, and realize that my own government could have done this to me. Now I realize that corporate American, for the love of the almighty dollar, had sacrificed my child.

MR. FRAYER: Well, we think from our experience that 2, 4, 5-T is one of the safest and most carefully studied agricultural products that we have. It is also very clear that there is a real need for this sort of a product, and we think it would be rather unfortunate if an emotional reaction to a problem were allowed to prevail over all of this information. Since there is a need for the product, probably some other product would take it's place, and the likelihood is that that product would be less studied or not known to be more safe than 2, 4, 5-T.

VETERAN'S WIFE: I'm willing to expose myself, I'm willing to let you come into my life, willing to let you view me as honestly as I can show myself, just so that maybe it doesn't happen again, so that you can say to the government that you can't use people like this, that you can say to the chemical industry that this is the Age of Accountability.