



The Saddest Visit

“The omission of the words “hard labor” from any sentence of a court-martial adjudging confinement does not deprive the authority executing that sentence of the power to require hard labor as a part of the punishment.”

—Uniform Code of Military Justice Manual for Courts-Martial,
United States Sect. 858. Art. 58. Execution of confinement

We'd heard nothing official about SPC4 Bill Delany since he was escorted out of the building by the CIDs. Unofficially, it was rumored that he was shipped back to the states for a Special Court-Martial. We were waiting to hear from any of our DC connections.

It was time I paid a visit to Yung Wah. I was upset with myself for not doing it sooner, especially since she lived so close to Yoon Lee. Because I didn't have any news about Bill and wasn't sure what to say to her, I had dragged my feet. But it wasn't fair to her; it was time for a visit.

The first free evening I wasn't going to Yoon Lee's, I walked to Yung Wah's apartment. As I approached, I saw the mamasan landlady sitting in a chair in front of the building, chatting with another lady. She nodded as I walked past and up the stairs. I crossed the roof and knocked lightly on the door. Yung Wah answered with baby Randy Kim in her arms. He smiled when he saw me. Yung Wah smiled too, but it was a weak smile. She invited me in and I kicked off my shoes.

She looked older, more weary and haggard than when I last saw her.

“Sit...please.” She motioned to one of the large cushions next to her small lacquered china cabinet. I sat on the one I usually picked during weekend visits when we played Korean cards.

“Tea?”

I nodded. She moved to lay the baby on his blanket, but I lifted my arms and she gave him to me. He seemed so much bigger, grown so quickly, but since he was the only baby I'd ever held or had experience with, I had nothing for comparison. Maybe that's how all babies grew—fast.

Yung Wah lifted the small round table off the wall hooks and set it in front of me, then went for a cup and picked the tea pot off the charcoal stove, set the cup on the table in front of me and filled it.

“*Kam-sah-nee-dah*,” I said.

After returning the tea pot to the stove, she took the baby from me, slid a cushion to the table with her foot and sat. “Beel?” she asked.

Shaking my head slightly, I answered. “Bill. No. *On-ee-yo*.” It was the only response I could make since Yung Wah understood very little English, matched by my command of Korean. And I had no news about Bill anyway.

Yung Wah bowed her head slightly and nodded. When she looked up, I could see tears forming in her eyes. Baby Randy's small fingers fiddled with the front of her hanbok.

“I'm sorry—*me-in-ham-nee-dah*,” I added. She looked so small and weak and I felt so helpless. After a moment of watching her and the baby, I picked up my tea cup and took a sip.

“Is good?” she asked.

“Number one,” I said.

We both sat silently, the only sounds the occasional baby noises from Randy Kim. I felt awkward sitting there after the comfortable Sundays I'd spent in the apartment with her and Bill. Awkward and

..... **The Saddest Visit**

guilty for not visiting them sooner. I alternated glances between the baby and Yung Wah. She sat quietly, her eyes downcast.

Finally I stood. Yung Wah did also. "Time to go," I said. I walked to the door, opened it, and stepped into my shoes.

"I hear...Bill...I'll let you know. Try to hold on. Keep the faith." She nodded and I hoped she understood. "*On-yong*."

"*On-yong*," she responded. "Thank you."

I brushed the baby's cheek and left.