

ASSIGNMENT HOME

UNITED STATES NAVY TRAINING FILM

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ASSIGNMENT HOME

“Well, Doc, I guess they’re on their own. Think they’ll make the grade in civilian life?

- There’s no reason in the world why they shouldn’t.
- Some have the idea they’ll be discriminated against because they’ve been nerve cases.
- If they just go about their business the normal way, they’ll soon forget about nerve. And so will people around them.
- That’s right, Doc. Because when you come right down to it, they really haven’t any tougher problem to face than any other returning serviceman.
- No, the one thing they have to remember is that we wouldn’t turn them out of here unless they were fit to face anything they might run into.”

“You know, I kinda hate to leave the old gangs.

- They’re swell guys back there.
- I’m gonna keep in touch with them.
- Me too.
- So am I, but... Alright, now I’m wondering what’s gonna happen to us.”

“It’ll sure seem good to see the wife and kid. Two years is a long time.

- Yeah, but you got a lot to go back to, Hank. I wish I knew what I was gonna do.
- I’m going to college. You know, you, you get a good break going to school under the GI bill.
- Damn, I have to find where or how to start looking for a job. I wonder how much difference it’s gonna make when our trouble’s been nerves.
- Shouldn’t make much. After all, the doc said we’re OK or we wouldn’t be discharged.
- I know what George is worried about. What are people gonna think of us? Suppose they think we’re nuts or something.
- Exactly what I’m talking about.
- Hell, from the very first day we checked in there, they kept telling us over and over again that we weren’t nuts. Now, just what does it take to convince you two there?
- Well, I’m convinced but is anyone else? It’s just I don’t know how to explain my medical record when I ask for a job.
- You have no worries. You’ve got nothing to be ashamed of. Feel OK, don’t you ?
- Never better.
- OK.
- One thing I know, it didn’t make any difference when I applied for entrance to engineering school, cause as a matter of fact, all they asked for was reason for discharge. I put down medical and that’s all there was to it.
- Well, that’s the least of my worries. What I’m worried about right now is my wife, my kid and my farm. Geez, I bet there’s a lot of work to be done there.

- That's a laugh. You're worried because you've got a job. I'm worried because I haven't got one. And you, Joe, what's worrying you? Oh, you're all set, aren't you?
- Well... I guess so. But, of course, it's going to be kind of tough going back to school with a bunch of kids. An old guy like me.
- Get a load of that. Junior at 20 thinks he's an old guy."

"This is it. This is where I jump ship. Take it easy, boys.

- So long, Hank.
- Yeah, see you, Hank.
- Good luck."

BUS STATION

"Henry! Oh gee, you're looking swell. How are you feeling?

- Fine, Mary.
- Hello, Pa.
- Well, hiya, son. Come here. Gosh.
- Have you seen my sore finger?
- Oh, hurt much?
- Not now, but it did at first.
- Ah. It'll be alright.
- Sure, it will.
- I've got the car round the corner.
- Good. Hey, you're getting heavy."

"Hope you're not too disappointed in the way the place looks, Henry.

- Let's take a look around. "

"Oh, you've done a good job, Mary. Awfully good. Specially considering how hard it must have been to get help when you needed it.

- There was so much I wanted to do while you were away, Henry. Like painting and fixing up the fences but... Everybody just seemed so busy.
- Yep, sure a lot to be done."

"Well, hello, boy. He looks good.

Pretty rusty.

- I know it.
- Well, I might as well get started if I'm ever gonna get caught up."

"Come on, get back where you belong."

"One damn thing after another.

- What's the matter, neighbor?
- Oh, this damn plow. You got a wagon wrench?
- No, I ain't even got a wagon. Hey, got a nice plot of land here.

- Yeah, nice and tough.
- Good, rich dirt. What are you gonna plant?
- Oats. Wheat maybe next year.
- Morgan's my name. Just moved into the next place.
- Moore is mine.
- Find the going a little tough?
- Yeah... Running into all kinds of trouble.
- Yeah. Farming never was easy. Looks like you're set up pretty good here though.
- So much fixing up to do. Everything's run down.
- Glad to lend a hand if you need help.
- Thanks. Can't get anything done until I get this plow fixed. I think I got a wrench back at the house.
- Well, holler if you need me. I won't be too busy until I can get some equipment.
- Yeah, OK.
- So long.
- Thanks."

"Hello, Henry.

- Hello, Doctor Whitley.
- Heard you were back.
- What's wrong?
- Oh, the doctor was just going by and dropped in to look at Junior's finger.
- Nothing serious. Be well in a couple of days. There. Doesn't hurt, does it?
- Can't shoot my rifle with that, Doctor.
- Now run along, will you? Well, Henry. I've been wanting to see you. How ya been?
- Well, running into a lot of trouble. Just broke the doubletree on the plow.
- You've got to expect things like that.
- Yeah, I know.
- Doctor, I'm just done fixing lunch. Will you stay and have a bite with us?
- Thanks, Mary. But I'm afraid I can't.
- Oh, some other time.
- Sure. Glad to get back, Henry?
- Yeah. Awful glad. Sure looks like I got a lot of work to do.
- I guess you have at that. I understand Mary had quite a time keeping the old place up. Couldn't get any help.
- Well, you know how a farm runs down. I figured I'd get a nice long rest when I came home but... Looks like I'm not gonna get it.
- You've been to hospital, haven't you? Rested up there, didn't you?
- Yeah, but...
- Work's the best thing for you fellows coming back. It gets you back into the swing of being a civilian again.
- You might have something here, Doc. But I feel more like a torpedo than I do a farmer.

- That's just what I mean. Taking up your responsibilities as a civilian again is just as difficult as it was to change from being a civilian to being a sailor.
- Yeah, but I hardly know how or where to start: more damn trouble.
- Yeah, I know how it is. But you've begun your job, that's the important thing. Well, I remember your place here before you left. You had it neat and in shape. You did it then, and you can do it now.
- Things are so different though. Everything's changed since I've been away.
- You've changed too. And it's up to you to readjust yourself. Henry, we've got a little local club around here that meets every Wednesday night. A bunch of the fellows get together and discuss plans to improve the community. Like to have you come over.
- I don't know, Doc. I'm not very interested in meeting a lot of people yet.
- Oh, it'd do you good. Lots of ex-servicemen meet with us now. We get some good ideas from you fellows. We meet over at my house at 8:00 o'clock. I'll expect you over.
- Maybe.
- Well, I got to run along now. Yeah, I'll be glad to see the old place when you get it all fixed up, Hank.
- Yeah. If I ever get it all done.
- You know, Henry, you're lucky you can come home to a job that's all laid out for you. Lots of fellows are coming back with nothing to do and no immediate prospects. Now, you've got your job and you've got the experience. That means a lot. Some of your buddies are probably wondering right now what they're going to do, cause they haven't got a job and they haven't had any experience."

"Haven't had much experience. I don't know, I guess I haven't had much. But Ma, you got to start somewhere. I think I could do machine shop work alright if they'd just give me a chance. But that's when the rub comes in. Some of those employers are kind of leery about hiring guys with medical discharges. Particularly like mine.

- Let's not worry about getting a job just yet. Just take it easy for a while. A nice long rest and good home cooking will do you good.
- This is the life all right.
- That's right. Now, I'm going to get you a bowl of soup. Just something to tide you over until lunch.
- I'm not hungry yet. You've been bringing me stuff all morning. Let's wait until lunch.
- But this is a special kind of soup. A bowl of it three times a day will give you all of the vitamins you need. You should have one an hour before each meal if possible. The directions say so.
- Ma, let's get this straight. I'm not sick. I don't need any special diet or vitamins or any other stuff.
- But you just got out of the hospital, didn't ya?
- Yes, but I got out because I was well.
- Maybe so. But it still takes your old Ma to build you back up again. Now, you lie still and I'll be back in just a minute.
- Well, George. What are you doing?
- I'm going out to look for a job.

- But... But we talked that over and decided that you wouldn't get one until you had a chance to get rested up.
- I decided I got all the rest I needed in the hospital. What I need now is a job.
- Well... I could find you some little job to do around the house here. I don't believe the Navy would let you if you were ready for work just now.
- Ma, that's where you're wrong. Just like the doctor said. It didn't work out in my Navy job because... Well, I guess it was my nerves. I got all tied up and I didn't know whether I was coming or going. But I've got things a little straighter now. If I had a job, I'd feel better.
- Oh, I wish you'd take my advice. Stay here.
- I just need a job, that's all. I don't know exactly how I'll go about getting it. But I'm gonna give it a try.
- You'll have to tell them you were in the hospital.
- Sure, why not? I've got nothing to hide. All I want is a chance. I'll show 'em."

SCHULTZ
MACHINE SHOP
EMPLOYMENT OFFICE

BUY MORE BONDS
INVEST IN DEMOCRACY
IT'S UP TO YOU

"So you see, I'm just out of the Navy and I haven't had much experience. But I like machine shop work and I thought I maybe would get a job as an apprentice or something.

- Sit down. What did you do in the Navy?
- I was a gunner's mate.
- Didn't learn much about machine shop work there, did you?
- No, but I've always liked mucking around with shop work. I took a couple of courses of it in high school.
- Why did you leave the Navy?
- Medical discharge.
- What was wrong?
- I've been through a lot. I don't exactly know. Well, everything began to get on my nerves. Guess the Navy thought I'd had about enough. But I'm well now and the doctor said there wasn't any reason why I couldn't handle a job in civilian life.
- Nerves case, huh?
- Yes, but I'm well now and I know I could handle the work here.
- Right now we're pretty well manned. Suppose you come back in a week or so?
- Look, Mister. I know I could do the work here. All I need is a chance to prove it. Put me on for a trial period, see how I work out. All I want is a chance.
- Well..."

"I like the way you handle (...), George. You're doing nice work.

- It didn't take me long to find out you have be careful working in a such close (...).

- I noticed that. How about a smoke?
- I could use one.
- So you were in the Navy, huh?
- Yup. Got a medical discharge a few weeks ago.
- Glad to be home?
- I'll say I am. Hell, I've got a job, that's even better.
- A lot of the boys will be coming home now. And I wonder where they'll all go.
- Some to old jobs. Some just starting out like me. Some to school. One guy that was discharged with me was going back to school. College, I think."

"Hey, Joe, I need a fourth for bridge, how about it?

- Sorry, no time, busy.
- Hi, Joe. I've been looking for you. Let's get together in my room and bone up on tomorrow's math exam. Some of the other fellows are up there.
- I'm boned up already. Anyhow, all you guys do is shoot the breeze. I got to see the Dean.
- OK, wise guy."

"Come in.

- I'm Joe Harrison, Dean Williams.
- Oh, yes, yes. Have a chair. Your faculty advisor, Dr Avril, has informed me that your grades have been falling off during the last quarter. What's wrong?
- I don't know, Sir.
- Your marks used to be the highest in the class. Anything happen?
- No.
- Do you like it here?
- Well... I don't know, Sir. Seems like I don't belong or something.
- Why?
- The other students. They seem so much younger or different than me.
- They're not unfriendly, are they?
- No, I just feel out of place, that's all.
- How do you spend your time? Do you take part in any of the campus activities?
- No Sir, they don't interest me.
- Harrison, there's one thing you've got to remember. You and some of the other servicemen here have been through a lot that the other students haven't. That may be why some of your fellow students, they seem young, different. But there's something you can learn from them. They are adjusting themselves to college life. Making the most of it. Apparently, you're not. That's keeping you from doing your best work. I wouldn't be a bit surprised that's why your grades are falling off.
- I am sorry about my grades, Dean. I, I've always wanted to study engineering and I wouldn't wanna bust out. But I can't get interested in anything here. I just feel like I don't fit with all the rest. Students and everything else.
- But you've got to learn how to fit in. That's part of going to school. I suggest you round out your program with some extra activities. Meet people half way. Give it a try, Harrison. Nobody can tell how things are going to go by sitting back in a

comfortable armchair. You've got to live it. You servicemen certainly found out. But getting on at school or any other place for that matter, is mostly giving yourself a chance. So try it, and feel free to drop in any time.

- OK, Dean. Thanks.”

“Hello Joe.

- Hello, Irene.
- I'd heard you were back and was wondering why you didn't come around.
- I've been busy. I was gonna get around.
- Oh yeah? When?
- Well... Some time.
- How's school?
- Fine, I guess.
- Do you really like it?
- Yeah, it's alright.
- You gonna play ball for us this year?
- Hadn't thought about it.
- What are you doing for excitement these days?
- Nothing much.
- Been to any of the Friday night dances?
- No.
- So you're missing something. Why don't we go to the one this Friday?
- Oh, I don't know.
- Well, I won't beg. I've got to get home now. Call me if you change your mind, it's the same old number. Bye.
- Bye.”

“Hey, Joe Harrison.

- Whoa Sammy, for God's sake, how long have you been here?
- Oh, about a year. Ever since boot camp.
- I often wondered what happened to you.
- Well, do you remember those chest X-rays they gave us just before we were to be shipped out? Well, they found something wrong with my lungs.
- And you were discharged?
- Yeah. How about you?
- I got a medical too.
- Wounded?
- No, it's a long story.
- Well, I was just going over for a coke. What do you say you come along and tell me all about it.
- Swell...”

“So, here I am.

- It's quite a story, Joe. How do you like it here?
- OK.

- What school are you in?
- Engineering.
- Yeah, I heard the engineers threw quite a party last week. Were you in on that?
- No, I wasn't.
- Well, you belong to their club, don't you?
- No.
- Why not?
- I've been sticking pretty close to home.
- Don't you ever get out?
- Not much. It's these kids here. They all seem so damn young. I feel out of place when I'm around them.
- You know, Joe, you're missing something. There are a lot of good guys around here. You only have to get to know'em. Have you met many of the girls since you've been here?
- No, I'm not interested.
- Just a lone wolf, hey?
- I guess so.
- Well you know half the fun of going to school and getting around.
- Even if I wanted to, I wouldn't know where to begin.
- Well, there is a dance in the gym Friday night.
- I heard about that. Irene, a friend of mine asked me to take her.
- Well, there you are. Come along with me and my girl, huh?
- I guess it's no use. I just don't feel right.
- OK. If that's the way you feel. Guess you've made up your mind and that's all there is to it. Well, I've got to beat it, Joe. I'll see you around. If you get a chance, drop in and see me.
- Hey, wait a minute, Sammy. Maybe I'll call Irene.
- Swell. Got her number?
- Yeah. Where's the phone booth?
- Over there."

"Well, I did it.

- Swell! Everything OK?
- Yes. But I haven't been to a dance for so long, I'll probably step all over Irene's feet.
- Nah, you ought to be able to stand on your own feet."

"You're going to have to stand on your own feet. You're going to have to make your own opportunities and there's no reason why you can't. You're all OK and fit to carry on a normal civilian life. You don't need special favors and you shouldn't try to get them. Now, when you get back home, get to work as soon as possible."

"Work's the best thing for you boys, coming back. It gets you back into the swing of being a civilian again."

“No one owes you anything except you, yourself. And you owe yourself the best. You’re being discharged from the Navy at this time. It has no bearing whatever on your ability to handle a job in civilian life.”

“Just like the doctor said. It didn’t work out in my Navy job because... Well, I guess it was my nerves. I got all tied up and I didn’t know whether I was coming or going. But I’ve got things a little straighter, now. If I had a job, I’d feel better.”

“Learn to mix with people. Don’t hide away. If people seem different or strange to you, try to understand them and they’ll understand you.”

“Harrison, there’s one thing you’ve got to remember. You and some of the other servicemen here, have been through a lot that the other students haven’t. That may be why some of your fellow students seem young and different. But there’s something you can learn from them.”

“The veterans’ administration stands ready to give you further medical aid if you should ever need it. But most of you won’t require it. You have to remember that you can’t get pat answers or finished solutions for every problem which may arrive in life. In all honesty, neither I, nor any other doctor can attempt to solve your problems for you. That’s your job. We can’t tell you what to do or how to do it. Because you can’t live your life according to someone else’s directions or according to a fixed set of rules or regulations. We doctors, have tried to give you an inkling on how to set about solving your own problems. The rest is up to you. OK, fellows, good luck.”

THE END
MN3428d – 1945

Transcript: Thibault Riegert