

STEELE/MAN

A PIECE OF MY HEART

75

(*STEELE moves into new area carrying report. OTHERS gather in background, listening.*)

STEELE. (*To audience.*) "50,000 Chinese"! That's what I titled my report. The one I wrote about the Tet offensive. Because I called it. Thirty days before. And it said we had better get our act together because *this* is what is facing us, *this* is what is going to happen, and it's going to happen on Tet—their New Year. Then I ran right in to the J-2 with my report, excited as all get out. And the Intelligence Officer says:

OFFICER. (*Comes to her.*) Yes, can I help you?

STEELE. Look, we need to disseminate this fast! It's got to be told and acted on!

OFFICER. Take it on up to Saigon. Headquarters. MACV. Tell 'em, up there to send *their* J-2 out.

STEELE. (*To audience.*) So I get in my jeep— (*SHE crosses stage.*) And I go on up to Saigon. (*SHE walks over to Sergeant, salutes.*)

SERGEANT. Yes, can I help you?

STEELE. I'd like to see the J-2 because I've got some information here in this report and we need to disseminate it fast! It's got to be told and acted on.

SERGEANT. Just a minute please, and I'll send the captain out! (*HE turns, about face. Salutes Steele.*)

CAPTAIN. Yes, can I help you?

STEELE. I'd like to see the J-2 because I've got some information here in this report and we need to disseminate it fast! It's got to be told and acted on!

CAPTAIN. I'll send the major out. (*HE about faces and salutes as MAJOR.*)

MAJOR. Yes, can I help you?

STEELE. Yes, sir. I've got some information here in this report, and we need to disseminate it fast! It's got to be told and acted on!

MAJOR. I'll send the colonel out. (*Gives Steele back report. HE about faces and salutes as COLONEL.*)

COLONEL. Yes, can I help you?

STEELE. Yes, sir. We need to disseminate this fast. It's got to be told and acted on!

COLONEL. You don't say—

(*STEELE gives it. COLONEL marches away, stands back to Steele other side of stage, reads.*)

COLONEL. Hemmm—haww—hem—haw—

STEELE. (*To audience.*) Now the colonel gives it to the major and the major gives it to the captain and the captain gives it to the sergeant and then they start to huddle. And then they go into a room. And then they shut the door. And my, my, they are gone a long time. And then they all come back.

(*OFFICER marches back with report.*)

ALL THE OFFICERS. Well, we don't know—we don't think we really better—we think “no”—no, no—we guess *not!* No! Sorry. But it is definitely a “no”! (*HE gives Steele report, salutes.*)

STEELE. (*Staggered.*) NO??

OFFICER. No! (*OFFICER salutes again, exits.*)

~~STEELE. (*To audience.*) And I walk out of that office and sit down in my jeep, and first time in nineteen years in~~