

DRESS BLUES

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by

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### Characters

COLONEL: Plays himself at both 71 and 31. He is a retired (active duty as his younger self) Marine Corps officer.

HIPPIE: Age 20's.

### Setting

The stage of a school auditorium and a doctor's waiting room – both only suggested.

### Time

Veteran's Day 2008  
Veteran's Day 1968

SETTING: The stage is empty except for two chairs facing each other at one side of the stage.

AT RISE: The COLONEL - man in his 30s moving as a 71 year-old - enters. He is wearing a suit and tie. He walks with a cane because age has set in hard on an abused body. He is carrying a brown shopping bag. He walks downstage center, puts the bag down and addresses the audience directly.

COLONEL

(as if reporting for duty)

Good Afternoon Stenwood Middle School. I'm Colonel Joseph Daniel Blackstone, United States Marine Corps.

(pause)

Retired.

(pause, then in a relaxed voice)

I'm also Joey Blackstone's grandfather. And I'm very honored to be speaking at your Veteran's Day program. Miss Carpenter told me she was excited to have a pilot come speak. She asked me to bring in some of my pictures and models of the planes I flew. Guess she thought just listening to an old man ramble for 10 minutes would get boring. So Joey came over this past weekend and helped me pick some things out. But this morning as I was leaving the house, I saw this little blond reporter on TV - I think she's the one on Channel 6, you know the one with the really high voice . . . no you probably don't know. Don't watch much news, I guess. Anyway, she was talking about a of group of protestors at Andrews Air Force Base. They were standing just outside base with large signs with numbers - the body count for the War on Terrorism. And as each hearse passed, hearses carrying flag-draped coffins, they chanted and held up a sign with a number followed by the words, "for what?" Five thousand, eight hundred and sixty-two, for what? Five thousand, eight hundred and sixty-three, for what? Five thousand eight hundred and well you get the picture. And the families of those fallen soldiers were following right behind. And they had to look at those signs. Listen to those voices. Today of all days. Veteran's Day. A day set aside to be honor those who served this country. Not to argue about why they served

COLONEL (Cont'd)

or whether they should have served. So I just couldn't bring in those planes. I'm sorry Joey.

(The COLONEL, leaving the bag behind, turns as if to exit and immediately shifts to the gait of a 31 year-old Marine officer - who will only need the cane until his leg heals. He walks in silence until he reaches the chairs.)

Forty years ago today, I was shot down. I punched out, rode my chute to the ground and prayed like I had never prayed before. Or since, for that matter. God must have been listening that day, 'cause our guys found me. Not the VC.

(He sits.)

So I'm shipped stateside to recuperate . . . and I'm waiting at my doctor's office, when this . . . this . . .

(disgusted)

hippie walks in.

(The HIPPIE enters. He has long, unkempt hair and is wearing dirty jeans and a heavy coat with a large anti-war button on it. He flops on a chair and sprawls.)

He takes one look at me and knows right off who - what - I am. Even out of uniform it shows. And I take one look at him . . . in his "uniform", and I know exactly what he is. I don't remember how it started. Or who started it. All I remember is --

HIPPIE

Fascist Pig!

(The COLONEL rises.)

COLONEL

Ungrateful prick!

(The HIPPIE rises.)

HIPPIE

Baby Killer.