

Good morning, vietnam

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Good Morning, Vietnam follows disc jockey Adrian Cronauer as he is reassigned to the Armed Forces Radio Saigon airwaves in Saigon, Vietnam in 1965. Throughout the film Cronauer experiences the bombing of a G. I. bar, and attempts to start a relationship with a Vietnamese woman. However, he runs into trouble as he finds the Vietnamese culture to be very different from his own. He experiences first hand the civilian attacks as buildings are blown up without warning or reason, and the tactics behind guerilla warfare as he befriends Vietnamese citizens who he doesn't know are actually Vietcong. His radio shows provide comic relief to all the soldiers, but infuriates his superiors as he wants to report actual news about the war to the soldiers and not just what is approved to be aired (Good Morning, Vietnam). This movie is set during the Vietnam war so, it is crucial to understand the war in order to understand this movie. In 1963, Lyndon B. Johnson took office and had to make a crucial decision on America's limited military involvement in the Vietnam conflict. This was because of the naval incident in the Gulf of Tonkin. North Vietnamese gunboats supposedly shot at U. S. warships in the Gulf of Tonkin allowing Johnson to persuade Congress that this was an act of aggression. Thus, Johnson received a blank check to take "all necessary measures" needed to aid the United States in Vietnam (Newman). Communist leader Ho Chi Minh led the Vietcong guerillas in the North. He developed an elaborate 9,940 mile network of roads built from the North to the South to aid North Vietnam troops and the Vietcong. This network of roads was referred to as the Ho Chi Minh Trail and was the target of numerous American air strikes (Ho Chi Minh Trail). However, the creation the Ho Chi Minh trail crossed the demilitarized zone, which had been established

at the 17th parallel as a combat-free zone during the Potsdam Conference (DMZ Vietnam). With tensions increasing, especially after a car bomb detonates outside the U. S. embassy in Saigon wounding two-hundred and killing two Americans and twenty Vietnamese (Vietnam War Timeline: 1965). Johnson approved the deployment of an additional 18, 000 to 20, 000 men and, a few months later, increased the number of U. S. troops in Vietnam to 125, 000 men (Vietnam War Timeline: 1965). In protest, Buddhist monks set themselves on fire and the Vietcong used guerilla warfare tactics (Newman). In February 1965, the United States mobilized Operation Rolling Thunder, an air war against North Vietnam in an effort to stop their movement South (Vietnam War 1965-1968). Air strikes were coupled with napalm, sticky fuel-gel fire bombs which severely burn their targets, and plastic explosives, a chemical bomb which produces an explosion that is impossible to outrun (Napalm, C-4 Plastic Explosives). By the end of 1965, U. S. troop levels approached 184, 300 men, while South Vietnam soldiers abandoned the cause as the North infiltrated and captured Saigon in February of 1968 in the Tet Offensive (Vietnam War Timeline: 1965). This was a surprise attack on many of the South Vietnamese capitals and American bases. The chaos and destruction seen on television on the home front caused much controversy over the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War (Newman). The United States at this time was not just at war abroad, but also faced conflict on the home front. Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was leading demonstrations against racial discrimination, especially at the polls (Newman). Anti-war movements also gained momentum in 1965 and peaked in 1968. The first march to Washington took place in 1967 and 1968 and

were the largest anti-war movements of the time. This led to extreme pacifists following the Buddhist monk's public burnings, as well as the public burning of draft cards, an act punishable by law (Vietnam Protest Movement). President Johnson faced dramatic opposition to the war on the home front, which only increased as the war progressed. Some argued that this was due to the relative freedom of television reporters to broadcast whatever they wanted about the war; thus, not only showing the positives, but also the downfalls in the war (Vietnam Protest Movement). Good Morning, Vietnam is entirely focused on the war as seen by those experiencing it first hand in Saigon. Therefore, the film does not greatly reflect any of these home front issues. It does however, contradict the idea of little censorship of war facts. Although on the home front journalists may have been able to report whatever they felt they wanted to share, this was not true on military airwaves (Newman). The film depicts Cronauer constantly fighting to get the true events of the war out for his listeners to hear; however, heavy censorship by the Armed Forces Radio Saigon prevent this from occurring. This creates a source of great conflict especially after a Vietcong bombing. The movie, therefore, reflects the element of surprise which was employed by the Vietcong through their guerilla warfare tactics (Good Morning, Vietnam). Before viewing this film, I knew that unusual war tactics were utilized and that people had strong opposition to the war. Yet, I felt that it was much like every other war the that the United States was involved in. This film reinforced my views as it showed the true devastation which the guerilla tactics cause through the killings of innocent civilians. When the bomb went off at Jimmy Wah's G. I. bar, Cronauer was lucky to

have been tricked into leaving by his new Vietnamese friend (Good Morning, Vietnam). All the innocent people inside, both American and Vietnamese were just unfortunate bystanders in the wrong place at the wrong time. Not only did it reinforce my view but it also altered my perceptions. This film added to my views just how much was being kept from the soldiers. This was illustrated through the identical twins who had to officially announce and approve all news which came in to the radio station before it could be read on air by Cronauer (Good Morning, Vietnam). Also, just the complete Americanization that was forced upon many of the Vietnamese was shocking to me. Although they may have been taking English classes from the American troops by themselves, just the presence of so many foreigners in their country and potentially clashing with their culture amazed me. There was no better way to feature this than with Cronauer's love for Trinh, a Vietnamese girl. The first date with her entire family is something that would never happen in America, yet there it was totally normal (Good Morning, Vietnam). Overall, I did enjoy watching this film. It was a refreshing, yet eye opening view of the Vietnam conflict as it used humor to get the events of the war across, but also highlighted the intensity and chaos of war. It was an unusual way to see war portrayed and I found it very enjoyable. It helped me to feel the anxieties and frustration surrounding the war without focusing on just combat alone. Good Morning, Vietnam showcased the more social component to the Vietnam War which provided a fresh angle. Works Cited " DMZ Vietnam." United States History. Web. 17 May 2011. . Good Morning, Vietnam. Dir. Barry Levinson. Perf. Robin Williams. 1987. DVD. " Guerilla Warfare." Web. 17 May 2011. . " Ho Chi Minh Trail." United States History.

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