

A PIECE OF MY HEART - CALLBACK INFO

NOTE: Please familiarize yourself with these sides, however be aware that all may not end up being used in callbacks.

CALLBACK MATERIAL BY SIDE

SIDE	CHARACTER(S)	DESCRIPTION
#1	MARTHA	Opening Monologue
#2	MARYJO	Opening Monologue
#3	WHITNEY	Opening Monologue
#4	LEEANN	Opening Monologue
#5	LEEANN, SISSY, and STEELE (as Officer, Chief Nurse)	Leeann in training
#6	MARTHA and WHITNEY (as Head Nurse)	Touring the wards
#7	MARYJO and SISSY	Maryjo opens up
#8	WHITNEY and AMERICAN MAN (as Bruce)	Whitney shuts down
#9	LEEANN (as Bien), WHITNEY and MARYJO	Bien scenes
#10	STEELE and AMERICAN MAN	Tet warning
#11	MARTHA and AMERICAN MAN (as Corpsman)	Martha at Tet
#12	SISSY, STEELE (as Doctor), MARYJO (as Danielle), and MARTHA (as VA Spokesperson)	Agent Orange Disease

CALLBACK MATERIAL BY CHARACTER

CHARACTER	SIDES
MARTHA	#1, #6, #11, #12
MARYJO	#2, #7, #9, #12, Song*
SISSY	#5, #7, #12
WHITNEY	#3, #6, #8, #9
LEEANN	#4, #5, #9
STEELE	#5, #10, #12
AMERICAN MAN	#8, #10, #11

*MARYJO'S SONG - Please prepare a one minute song selection to sing and play on guitar. Songs in the style of the show are preferred—think 1960's popular music such as Janis Joplin, Patsy Cline, Dusty Springfield, Tammy Wynette, etc. You *may* be asked to perform a second song. This song can be any style.

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CALLBACK #1

MARTHA

MARTHA. I was an Army brat. Matha O'Neil. Dad a career man. Mom a Navy nurse. World War II. I was born at Ft. Benning, grew up at Ft. Bragg. I remember one day in junior high a girlfriend came in crying: her Dad was going to Vietnam. Crying and crying and they sent her home... must've been around—oh I don't know, 1961 ...so I knew early on about Vietnam. Americans there... Americans being killed there. Something very wrong there. Back of my mind was: *I want to go there.* Be a navy nurse and serve my country and protect our men. August. 1966. I take my oath, graduate from women's officers school, go to Quonset Point, Rhode Island for two years. Head nurse in the Dependents' Unit. Then I tell my folks I'm volunteering for Vietnam. And they are proud!

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CALLBACK #2

MARYJO

MARYJO. I was the lead singer and rhythm guitarist in the Sugar Candies All Girl Band. Maryjo Kincaid from Beaumont, Texas. We'd come to LA to get discovered and did Country and Rock and were about seventeen years old and thought we were the livin' end! We hadn't gotten too far *yet*, but one day in '67 an agent told us he could book us—miniskirts and little white go-go boots—to go over and entertain half a million boys in Vietnam! Well, I was out of my mind! Half a million American boys groovin' on *my* music and lovin' *me* 'cause I'd be liftin' the worries of war right off their shoulders with *my* love for them? "A thousand dollars a month apiece and airfare and all expenses paid," he said. "Oh boy! Book me on!?"

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CALLBACK #3

WHITNEY

WHITNEY. (*To audience.*) I was graduating from Vassar in primary education. Provisional Junior League. Sleeves right down to my elbows. Prim, high proper collars. Already been offered a boarding school position for the fall term when I saw a Red Cross form on the Placement Board. I went to an interview, and they said: "Red Cross has two groups going overseas early summer. Korea. And Vietnam." "Well—Saigon's a sophisticated, cosmopolitan city, they say—diversity of people to meet—all walks of life—and they speak French! I took my junior year in Paris you see—besides—it snows in Korea, doesn't it? Whereas Vietnam has this wonderfully warm climate I'm told"— I went home for the weekend to tell my parents. "But Dad—mother—Vietnam will be my year of service. Besides— if I'm ever going to do anything in my life besides be an old maid boarding-school teacher, I'd better do it now." It grew very quiet in the breakfast room. Sunday morning, Mother's coffee cup rattling in its Dresden saucer. "Look Whitney—if you insist on running off like this to the ends of the earth, do be aware you're making a decision of some consequence. There will be repercussions on your life—not necessarily for the better—so please, dear—please, do think it carefully through—" "But Mother, don't you see, I already have!"

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CALLBACK #4

LEEANN

LEEANN. I was anti-war! I hated Nixon! Knew he was a liar and evil! So did my friends. We were hippies–Woodstock, bell bottom jeans, headbands, the long hair, the pot. Then I remember Kennedy going, “What can you do for your country?” Well, I was twenty-one when an Army recruiter comes to my nursing school dressed in her uniform–and she is showing us this wonderful film about the glamour of being an Army nurse and all these gorgeous hospitals all over the world with all this modern equipment–we didn’t have zip at my nursing school! And I was very impressed! After the film I ask: “But do nurses *have* to go to Vietnam?” “No!” she goes. “Women *volunteer* for Vietnam.” My friends are mostly thinking I am crazy but there are two others who are willing to sign up at any minute and I’m thinking: “It is perfect for you Leeann. It will pay for this last year of nursing school–because money for me is very tight–and you can express your feelings about the war by taking care of Nam soldiers when they get *back* from Nam–maybe Hawaii or something. I had been born and raised in New York and am half Italian and half Chinese and went through a lot of prejudice in New York! I wanted to go to Hawaii–where everybody looks like me!

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CALLBACK #5

LEEANN, SISSY, and STEELE (As OFFICER and HEAD NURSE)

STEELE. *(As OFFICER.)* This morning we are going to march! Hut-2-3-4! Hut-2-3-4!

(They ALL march in place except LEEANN who dances a hula to the beat.)

STEELE. *(As OFFICER.)* Well, well. Welcome to the U.S. Army, Miss Noo Yawk! March!

LEEANN. *March?* I'm a nurse!

STEELE. *(As OFFICER.)* You're an Army nurse! And you are going to march!

(LEEANN marches.)

SISSY. Captain? How come you don't teach us to shoot a gun?

STEELE. *(As OFFICER.)* We do not teach you to shoot weapons or carry weapons because women do not go into combat. *(OFFICER sees that LEEANN has stopped marching. To LEEANN.)* March! Miss Noo Yawk!—march!

LEEANN. Say captain—how come we're pretending to march through the jungle full of punji sticks?

STEELE. *(As OFFICER.)* Because you will probably end up in the jungle, Miss Noo Yawk! March!

LEEANN. Vietnam? Oh, no ma'am. My recruiter said Hawaii!

(ALL stop marching.)

STEELE. *(As OFFICER.)* Hawaii, Miss Noo Yawk?

LEEANN. Honolulu—Waikiki— *(SHE does a little hula gesture.)*

STEELE. *(As OFFICER.) (Suppressing a smile.)* Well, you must have been slightly misinformed. You have orders for "Southeast Asia."

LEEANN. "Southeast Asia?"

STEELE. *(As OFFICER.)* Dismissed!

(STEELE crosses away, turns facing upstage.)

SISSY. *(To LEEANN.)* She wouldn't even say Vietnam.

LEEANN. I'm going to my head nurse—

(STEELE turns around as HEAD NURSE. LEANN crosses to her.)

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STEELE. (*As HEAD NURSE.*) Don't worry, Leeann, the hospitals are safe—miles from the combat zone—

LEEANN. But I'm anti-war.

STEELE. (*As HEAD NURSE.*) So are a lot of the injured boys!

LEEANN. I'll take care of them in Hawaii.

STEELE. (*As HEAD NURSE.*) They're overstaffed there. And you're special. Top of the line. You can make a real contribution for your country in Vietnam.

(*LEEANN looks at her.*)

STEELE. (*As HEAD NURSE.*) And the credit will do wonders for your career—after the war—

LEEANN. (*Attracted by this idea.*) Yeah? Yeah.

(*STEELE exits.*)

SISSY. (*To audience.*) We buy little black lace bras and bikini panties. A nurse who'd been to Nam says: "Whatever you do, bring sexy underwear! A year in boots and fatigues and that dirt and you forget what sex you are."

LEEANN. I get to Travis Air Force Base early. I look around.

SISSY. Hi Leeann! Hey—

LEEANN. (*To audience. Astonished.*) They're from Ft. Sam! Women I *know*! I'm not special! *Everybody's* here!

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CALLBACK #6

MARTHA and WHITNEY (As HEAD NURSE)

HEAD NURSE. Now here, on the wards, since you will have a lot of corpsmen to assist you, you will be responsible, Captain, for three hundred to three hundred and fifty patients in all. And, as supervisor, you will be expected to care for the sickest patients yourself.

MARTHA. (*Staggered.*) Three hundred and fifty patients?

HEAD NURSE. Night duty is the hardest, of course. People die at night. And wounded people, Captain, get very frightened at night. They moan, they cry out. Here—here—this way, please—

MARTHA. (*To audience.*) She was right—my chief nurse stateside—I don't have the experience for this.

HEAD NURSE. Now, your job will include all the routine things, of course—reading the charts, checking the IVs, the dressings, the casts—

MARTHA. (*To audience.*) Suction! Respirators! Infusing fluids! Catheters! Tubes! Drains! I don't know what I'm looking at! I can't find the patient here!

HEAD NURSE. Don't think about it in that way! What you must do is focus on the facts. And write the data down.

MARTHA. But I've never seen anything like this in my life!

HEAD NURSE. Captain please! Just keep on checking the charts, the dressings, the IVs and the casts. Think only of what you're checking. Shut out all the rest! Build a psychological wall! Now, come on Captain—we'll go to the next ward—

MARTHA. (*To audience.*) Please God—don't let there be so many horrible things wrong in the next ward.

HEAD NURSE. Here are the more seriously injured men—our intensive care unit—

MARTHA. (*Stops.*) I can't take anymore!

HEAD NURSE. Stuff it, Captain! Behind that wall! Or you will never function or be of use!

MARTHA. But there are so *many* injuries—and the *kinds* of injuries—and the—

HEAD NURSE. (*Interrupting.*) The Medical Corps motto is: "Conserve the Fighting Strength!" Your work is to patch up the soldier so he can get back to the battle field. Walk and don't think. Write and don't think. Don't think! Don't think! Don't let those thoughts come through that wall! Stay behind your wall!

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CALLBACK #7

MARYJO and Sissy

SISSY. You know, I always think no matter what you're going through, the guys have got it worse—so we have to be there for them after hours— partying, socializing—

MARYJO. I don't think that anymore— when I first got here— I thought that— but I learned— I mean, sex is a physical urgency for them— and I love them. But I have to protect *myself*— survival level! Because, I mean they project on to me—

SISSY. Huh?

MARYJO. I'm up there singing—and they're seeing me—thinking about me—in detail—physically. But if it gives them something they need—to keep them going—I don't care. And they're gentlemen— mostly.

SISSY. Dancing, drinking, talking— the soldiers are always polite. We're just their friends—
“Round-eyed American Girl from home!”

MARYJO. Look, the men have respect for you. You're Army—there're rules— I'm different—I mean after the gigs—if we stay overnight where they are—

SISSY. What are you talking about?

MARYJO. Some— some crazy stuff's happened— stuff that never would've happened at home

SISSY. What are you talking about?

MARYJO. But I wasn't forced... not really... *(beat)* A coupla weeks ago we got stranded— up the coast near Nha Trang— then the grunts— but they apologized— well, one apologized—

SISSY. Oh God!

MARYJO. It—it doesn't matter—

SISSY. Of course it matters—

MARYJO. Whole place is so unreal it doesn't matter—no consequences—nothing matters.

SISSY. Ever talk to the chaplain?

MARYJO. *I'm* not religious—

SISSY. You could lead out in choir I bet—Sundays?

MARYJO. *Me?*

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CALLBACK #8

WHITNEY and AMERICAN MAN (As BRUCE)

WHITNEY. *(To audience.)* Well, I started drinking over in Vietnam. *(SHE pours herself a drink, then sips it.)* To make it all go away for awhile— We used to go to these marvelous Basque restaurants and stay ‘til the wee hours drinking French champagne—whole gang of us—Red Cross gals—military guys—officers. I remember one night we were all pretty mellow and a Marine gave me a bunch of things on a string—and I say: “Oh, gosh, apricots for me! Here I am in a war zone and you got me apricots!” And he goes: “Those are Gook ears, ma’am!” *(SHE laughs and drinks. Beat.)*

I fell in love. Bruce. A pilot. But I wouldn’t sleep with him because it was against the rules. Now wasn’t that something when they said Red Cross girls charged a fee? Bruce was flying a mission next morning and we were at the officer’s club when he gets very drunk— *(SHE goes to BRUCE who sits on a bench with empty bottle.)*

BRUCE. I’m not coming back tomorrow.

WHITNEY. What?

BRUCE. I’m gonna get another scotch— *(HE starts to go.)*

WHITNEY. Look—Bruce—let’s go—

BRUCE. *(Interrupting)* Where? Your place? “Oh Brucie of course not!” I’m getting another scotch. *(HE starts out again.)*

WHITNEY. Come on—you need to sleep it off—

BRUCE. Sleep it off where?

(WHITNEY looks around at OTHERS listening.)

WHITNEY. Bruce, I just can’t—

BRUCE. God damn cock tease! “Oh Brucie, want a doughnut? Let’s hold hands!” Shit! Friggin’ Doughnut Dollie! You shouldn’t be in a fuckin’ war! Now will you just get yourself the fuck off my back and out of my life?

WHITNEY. Bruce—

BRUCE. I never want to see you again! *(HE staggers away.)*

WHITNEY. *(To audience.)* And he didn’t. Next morning he got shot down. And I never got involved—again. Stay in your room drinking alone and they think you’re mistress for a married doctor—or lesbian for another Red Cross girl. I don’t care what anybody thinks anymore. My personal life is my affair.

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CALLBACK #9

LEEANN (as BIEN), WHITNEY, and MARYJO

WHITNEY. *(To audience.)* It wasn't just the soldiers that tore us apart—

MARYJO. *(To audience.)* But the Vietnamese too—

WHITNEY. *(To audience.)* 'Cause they were smart—funny—hardworking—

MARYJO. *(To audience.)* And we were fighting on their land—

WHITNEY. *(To audience.)* They'd come to work at the Red Cross Center early mornings—

MARYJO. *(To audience.)* Smiling—whistling—singing while they cleaned—

WHITNEY. *(To audience.)* My housekeeper Bien works at The Red Cross Center too— *(LEEANN enters as BIEN. To BIEN.)* Oh, good morning Bien—

LEEANN. *(As BIEN.)* Good morning Miss Whitney. What I do this morning please? File Paper? Run errand headquarter please?

WHITNEY. *(To audience.)* In the afternoon when we leave the Center, Bien takes me to market. And I show *her* American cooking. *(To BIEN.)* Then you pour the milk gravy over the meat, Bien, and serve with sauerkraut. It's called sauerbraten.

LEEANN. *(As BIEN.)* Sauerbraten?

WHITNEY. Here. Taste.

LEEANN. *(As BIEN.)* Oh Miss Whitney—you eat this? Oh no Miss Whitney! Oh no!

MARYJO. *(To audience.)* Then Bien brings Peanut to the Center—cutest little Vietnamese boy! *(To BIEN)* He's adorable, Bien! And know what? He loves American music. I'm gonna teach him to play my guitar!

LEEANN. *(As BIEN.)* Oh you very nice American lady to Peanut. To all Vietnamese.

(MARYJO exits.)

WHITNEY. *(To audience.)* I'm starting to be troubled by the Vietnamese guards outside our villa at night.

LEEANN. *(As BIEN.)* Oh Miss Whitney—guards beat up Cho and Lu—

WHITNEY. Our maids?

LEEANN. *(As BIEN.)* Guards beat up Cho and Lu good!

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WHITNEY. But the guards are our friends—aren't they?

LEEANN. (*As BIEN.*) Oh they not friend Miss Whitney. They not friend—

WHITNEY. (*To audience.*) Then the guards come back again. Bien's cousin Nguyen who works for us is with them! Emptying my desk—taking documents—holding a gun— (*To BIEN*) Bien? Your *cousin*? I have to report this—

LEEANN. (*As BIEN.*) Oh Nguyen no cousin Bien! You big mistake! Nguyen no cousin Bien! No report nothing! You understand?

(*MARYJO enters.*)

MARYJO. I can't find Peanut! I want to teach him to sing "Proud Mary." (*To BIEN*) Hey—where's Peanut gone?

LEEANN. (*As BIEN.*) Oh—He dead Miss Maryjo.

MARYJO. What?

LEEANN. (*As BIEN.*) Find him by airfield. American soldier shoot Peanut! Bang! He Dead!

MARYJO. They shot Peanut?

LEEANN. (*As BIEN.*) Oh, he VC!

MARYJO. He's eight years old!

LEEANN. (*As BIEN.*) Oh you no trust Peanut! He VC! All his friend, family VC! (*SHE smiles*) You want *Bien* sing song with you today?

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CALLBACK #10

STEELE, AMERICAN MAN (all other characters)

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 into the J-2 with my report, excited as all get out. And the Intelligence Officer says:

OFFICER. Yes, can I help you?

STEELE. *(To OFFICER.)* 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 and I go on up to Saigon.

SERGEANT. Yes, can I help you?

STEELE. *(To SERGEANT.)* 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, becomes CAPTAIN.)

CAPTAIN. *(HE salutes Steele.)* 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 turns, about face, becomes 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.

(HE turns, about face, becomes COLONEL.)

COLONEL. Yes, can I help you?

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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 the report to the COLONEL who marches away, stands with his back to Steele, 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.

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 the report, salutes.)

STEELE. *(Staggered.)* NO??

ALL THE OFFICERS. No!

(HE 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 the Army, I *cry*! They knew I had the truth! Why wouldn't they listen? Because I called the enemy by an unacceptable *name* in the damn report? “50,000 Chinese” instead of “50,000 Vietnamese”? Or “50,000 Vietcong”? Is that what was wrong at Headquarters? Calling it like it is? They *are* Chinese. Or have I got the wrong names? Enlisted Specialist instead of Lieutenant? Woman instead of Man? Black instead of White? Black Woman Specialist announcing that The Chinese are going to clobber the bejesus out of us in thirty days? Well, Tet happened—on the nose—turning point of the war—and Tet is history—hundreds—thousands—lost—wasted lives.

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CALLBACK #11

MARTHA *and* AMERICAN MAN (As CORPSMAN)

MARTHA. Corpsman! Lock the door! Get your gun and guard the door! QUICK!

CORPSMAN. I can't! Conscientious Objector, Captain. I can't!

MARTHA. Do it! Quick!

CORPSMAN. I can't, Captain! I CAN'T!

MARTHA. DIRECT ORDER! COWARD! DO IT I SAID!!

CORPSMAN. *You'll* have to do it, ma'am!

MARTHA. I don't know how to shoot the God damn thing! Get that patient out of bed! Move! Give *him* the rifle!

(EXPLOSION. HE falls.)

MARTHA. *(To audience.)* THE WARD IS HIT! Shrapnel flying through his head! *(Long pause. SHE moves downstage.)* I'm heading into the operating room the fourth day? The fifth? And the tile floor here slopes. And I see water coming out of the scrub sinks splashing on the floor—and patients lying on the floor with blood coming out of them—and then I see the water mixing with the blood and running down the hall—a river! Tet! Nightmare River of Blood! I run out! Oh God! Help me stay behind my wall! God in heaven help me just to walk along.

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CALLBACK #12

*SISSY, STEELE (as DOCTOR), MARYJO (as DANIELLE)
and MARTHA (as VA SPOKESPERSON)*

STEELE. *(As DOCTOR.)* Yes, something is wrong. But it's not "*subclinical* rheumatic fever"! That's nonsense!! There's no such thing! Either you have it or you don't. And she doesn't. Let's watch her for a while.

SISSY. *(To audience.)* Six months and I go back– *(To DOCTOR)* She's breaking out in rashes now—and complaining of pains in her knee join when she runs—

STEELE. *(As DOCTOR.)* That's growing pains! Bring her back next year—kids outgrow these things!

(STEELE turns away. SISSY turns to DANIELLE)

SISSY. Danielle?

MARYJO. *(As DANIELLE.)* What Mommy?

SISSY. Look, Danielle—way over there—far end of the field—see?

MARYJO. *(As DANIELLE.)* Where?

SISSY. All those colts, sweetheart—running—the little brown colts—near the barn—

MARYJO. *(As DANIELLE.)* I don't even see the barn.

(SISSY turns to STEELE.)

SISSY. Doctor, how are the eyes this year?

STEELE. *(As DOCTOR.)* 20/200 in both eyes!

SISSY. They were 20/40 just last year!

STEELE. *(As DOCTOR.)* Mystifying, isn't it?

SISSY. And two years later?

STEELE. *(As DOCTOR.)* 20/350 left eye, 20/375 right eye! Amazing situation here!

SISSY. *Do something!* Her stomach hurts all the time! And she's got headaches every day. What's wrong with her?

(STEELE exits. SISSY runs to an imaginary doctor.)

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SISSY. Doctor, I'm having knee pains too. (*SHE runs to a second imaginary doctor.*) Doctor, I'm getting skin rashes too. (*Another imaginary doctor.*) Doctor, I had two breast tumors removed. (*SHE now turns to the audience.*) Doctor, what is Agent Orange Disease.

(*WHITNEY enters as VA SPOKESPERSON*)

MARTHA. (*As VA SPOKESPERSON.*) There is no such animal as Agent Orange Disease. Here at the Veteran's Administration we are doing exploratory studies *only*. And obviously there is no medical treatment I can offer you, madam, since the disease simply does not exist. Besides, it sounds like you've got an inherited family problem on your hands, madam.

SISSY. There is no history on either side of the family of anything remotely resembling this! Her father and I both served in Cu Chi! This is Agent Orange Disease!

MARTHA. (*As VA SPOKESPERSON.*) But I've told you madam, there is no such animal as Agent Orange Disease! (*SHE looks in a new direction.*) Client 3529? This way please—