



BELMONT UNIVERSITY PRESENTS

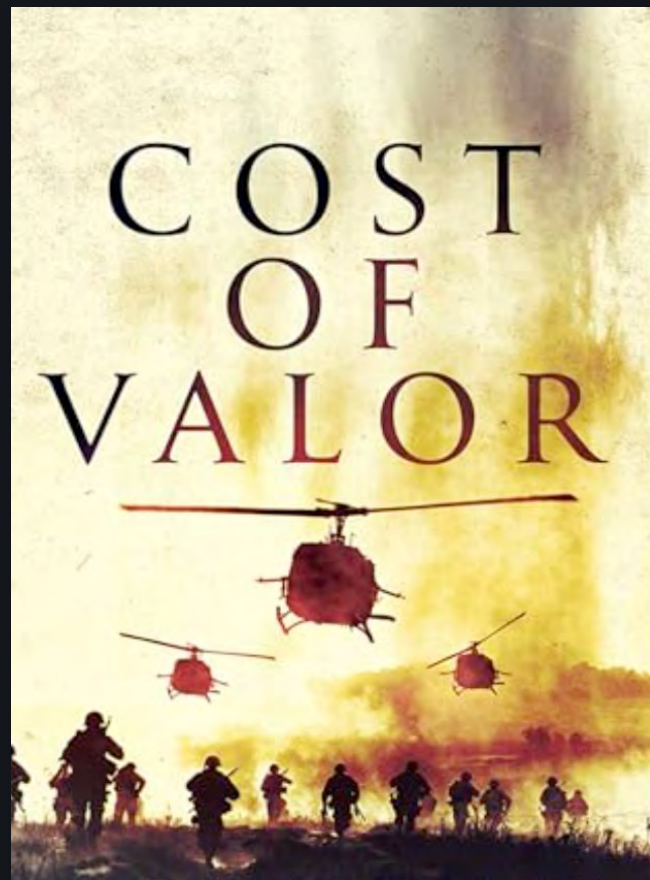
COST OF VALOR

TRAILER PREMIERE

An AI-Powered Filmmaking Showcase Honoring Veterans' Stories

Based on the novel by Colonel Gary Bridges

Operation Lam Son 719 · Vietnam, 1971





Welcome & Introduction

Gary Garrison

- Welcome guests
- Introduce the project team
- Introduce author Col. Gary Bridges



2

Remarks from Colonel Gary Bridges

Col. Gary Bridges

- Reflections on Cost of Valor and the inspiration behind the story
- The significance of preserving veterans' experiences through new media

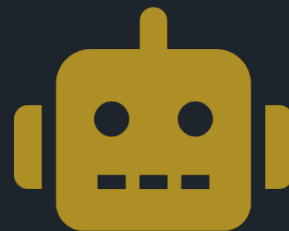


3

The AI Filmmaking Process

Jake Mahaffy & Nathan Adam

- Overview of the creative vision
- AI tools and workflow used to create the trailer
- Lessons learned and challenges encountered





Trailer Premiere

Presented by Nathan Adam



Documentary Trailer



**Motion Picture
Trailer**



Blooper Reel



TOP SECRET

THE COST OF VALOR: NARRATIVE DECONSTRUCTION

Character Arcs, Strategic Plot Points, and Thematic Storylines from Matt Jackson's Lam Son 719 Epic.

*Prepared for: Executive Summary
& Literary Analysis*

TOP SECRET

INTEL CALLOUT 1: THE POLITICAL NEED

President Thieu demands a major victory to boost his 1971 election prospects against rival Gen. Ky, secretly capping acceptable ARVN casualties at 35,000.

SOUTH VIETNAM

A Loui

Lao Bao

Khe Sanh

The narrative tension stems from this loophole. American aviation bears the full brunt of the assault without ground security.

INTEL CALLOUT 2: THE LEGAL LOOPHOLE

The US Cooper-Church Amendment forbids American ground troops in Laos. The loophole: ARVN forces invade relying entirely on 500+ US helicopters for transport and fire support.

92

921



0 5 10
Kilometers

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET



TOP SECRET

MAJOR COURTS (THE BUREAUCRAT)

STYLE: Rigid, insecure, despises warrant officers. Requires wooden blocks on pedals due to height.

ARC: Orders an unnecessary low pass, sustains a severe gunshot to the wrist, and is evacuated.

EVACUATED

TOP SECRET



TOP SECRET

MAJOR BUNTING (THE PROTECTOR)

STYLE: Empathetic and fierce. Welcomes rookies with flaming Blue Star shots. Places immense trust in his men.

ARC: Defies higher HQ to protect downed crews. Earns absolute loyalty before taking shrapnel to the buttocks.

**WOUNDED
IN ACTION**



TOP SECRET

COL. KIRKLIGHTER (THE PRAGMATIST)

STYLE: Demanding battalion commander. Enforces brutal no rescue policies.

ARC: Ultimately recognizes true combat leadership, dressing down his own staff to fiercely defend Lt. Grant Bridger.

**COMMAND
ASSUMED**

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

EMOTIONAL ALTITUDE CHART

PSYCHOLOGICAL ALTITUDE

Strong Start.



TAKEOFF

Returns from leave as a commissioned 1st Lieutenant. Confident veteran mentoring rookies (Winston, Cunicella).

Mission Focus. Resilience.



CLIMB & MAX EFFORT
Cleared of fault. Takes command during the panicked LZ Sophie extraction, forcing his crew through the crucible.

Instability Ahead.



TURBULENCE

Unit relocates to the freezing, austere Dong Ha DMZ. Receives a Dear John letter; faces his father's manipulative IG complaint.

Critical Failure. Morale Zero.

GROUND



THE CRASH

Chip dies in Grant's rigged aircraft. Grounded with acute hyper-vigilance and survivor's guilt.

GRANT'S CORE MOTIVATION:

"I have chosen to be an Army officer... she must understand that I will have a mistress and it will be the Army."

TIME (CHAPTERS I-45)



TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

OPPOSING FORCES DIAGRAM



Col. Bridger
(The Overprotector)

Believes his son's luck will run out. Manipulates the system by filing a MACV Inspector General complaint against Major Bunting, alleging undue command influence to force Grant out of the combat zone.

POWER STRUGGLE

RESOLUTION

Grant shuts down IG investigator Col. Anderson, proving the complaint is baseless overprotective parenting and severing his father's control.



Lt. Grant Bridger
(The Autonomous Soldier)

Deeply resents his father's lifelong interference. Refuses to abandon his unit before a major operation.

SEVERANCE
Commanders H

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TOP PANEL



THE AMERICAN VANGUARD

- Entering the unknown airspace over Laos without Cobra gunship cover or artillery prep.
- Facing unprecedented heavy 14.5mm anti-aircraft traps.

The novel refuses to villainize the ground troops, portraying both sides as victims trapped in an escalating political meatgrinder.

OPPOSING PERSPECTIVES

- Data provided
- Deciphered messages

BOTTOM PANEL



THE NVA DEFENDERS

- Led by Major Phan Cong Vu and Sgt. Nguyen.
- Teenage logistics and supply troops hastily converted to heavy anti-aircraft gunners. Terrified but dedicated, surviving massive B-52 and napalm strikes to re-engage.

TOP SECRET

The USNS Corpus Christi Bay depot accidentally installs the wrong bolts during a rotor hub rebuild.

CAUSE &
EFFECT

The rotor head separates. The aircraft crashes and burns immediately upon takeoff, killing the entire crew in front of a horrified Grant.

Grant, as the standby pilot, lets eager rookie Chip take his mission to build flight hours.

Grant develops severe survivor's guilt and phantom cyclic vibrations. He is grounded by the flight surgeon until the accident report clears him.

Grant's psyche shattered; the true cost of war.

ANNOTATED SCENE DIAGRAM

MAIN ROTOR HUB ASSEMBLY - EXPLODED VIEW

The Environment

Overloaded Hueys landing under heavy NVA machine-gun fire to extract surrounded ARVN battalions.

TOP SECRET



TORQUE SPECIFICATIONS

YES/NO
104.50
79.5
115.54
08.008
176.500
REI DOW

IFICATIONS

TO
12.0000000000
10.0000000000
10.0000000000
10.0000000000

The Panic

Desperate ARVN soldiers, abandoning the perimeter, swarm the helicopters, attempting to load wounded and clinging to the exterior skids.

The Tragic Choice

To achieve liftoff and save the aircraft, American crews are forced to physically beat their allies off the skids at altitude, resulting in fatal falls.

Valor in Lam Son 719 is stripped of glory; it is reduced to the raw, horrific mechanics of sheer survival.

THE POLICY

Battalion command institutes a strict protocol forbidding mission aircraft from breaking formation to rescue downed crews.

TOP SECRET

True leadership in the 48th is dictated by an unwritten brotherhood, not by Battalion regulations.

THE DEFIANCE

Tony Amanzio disobeys direct battalion protocol to dive into LZ Brown and rescue a downed Grant Bridger and Nick Cunicella.

CLASSIFIED

CAUSE & EFFECT

CLASSIFIED

THE MUTINY

Exhausted pilots refuse to board for a suicide lift. Major Bunting prepares to fly solo. Grant refuses to let him go alone, shaming the rest of the unit into mounting up.

TOP SECRET

LAOS AIRSPACE



SETUP:
Capt. Ed Bilbrey
refuses the idea of
being taken prisoner.



CLIMAX:
Joker gunship pilot is
shot down and killed
during the chaotic LZ
Sophie extraction.



SETUP:
Ed makes Karen
promise to accept he
is dead if ever
reported MIA.



CLIMAX:
Casualty notification
officer Capt. Howard arrives.
Karen rejects the Missing
in Action classification,
tragically honoring her
promise: "He's not missing.
He's dead. I know."

ALBUQUERQUE, NM

TOP SECRET

CLASSIFIED

*Two worlds connected
by a tragic promise
and the fog of war.*

TOP SECRET

PHYSICAL TOLL

Fatalities (Bilbrey, Chip, Joe Marshall), debilitating wounds (Courts, Bunting), and extreme exhaustion (eating DDT-laced steaks).

PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL

Grant's survivor's guilt, Hot Shot freezing on the controls, the shared trauma of repelling allies to their deaths.

UNBREAKABLE
BROTHERHOOD

RELATIONAL TOLL

Strained marriages (Dear John letters), fractured family ties (Grant vs. his IG-reporting father).

CLASSIFIED

grease pillet
notes

The 'Cost of Valor' is not fearless heroism, but the grim, mechanical perseverance required to save one's brothers in a doomed operation.

01:13:45:22

LENS FLARE // ANAMORPHIC CINE-MODE

VINTAGE FILM GRAIN // ARCHIVAL TACTICAL MAP

COST OF VALOR

ARCHITECTING THE CINEMATIC AI WORKFLOW



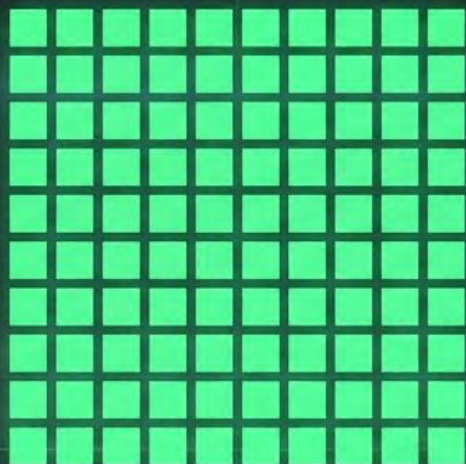
16°28'N 107°35'E // DA NANG, 1968

The Myth of the Magic Generation Button

00:00:03:12

100 Generated Iterations

3 Usable Seconds



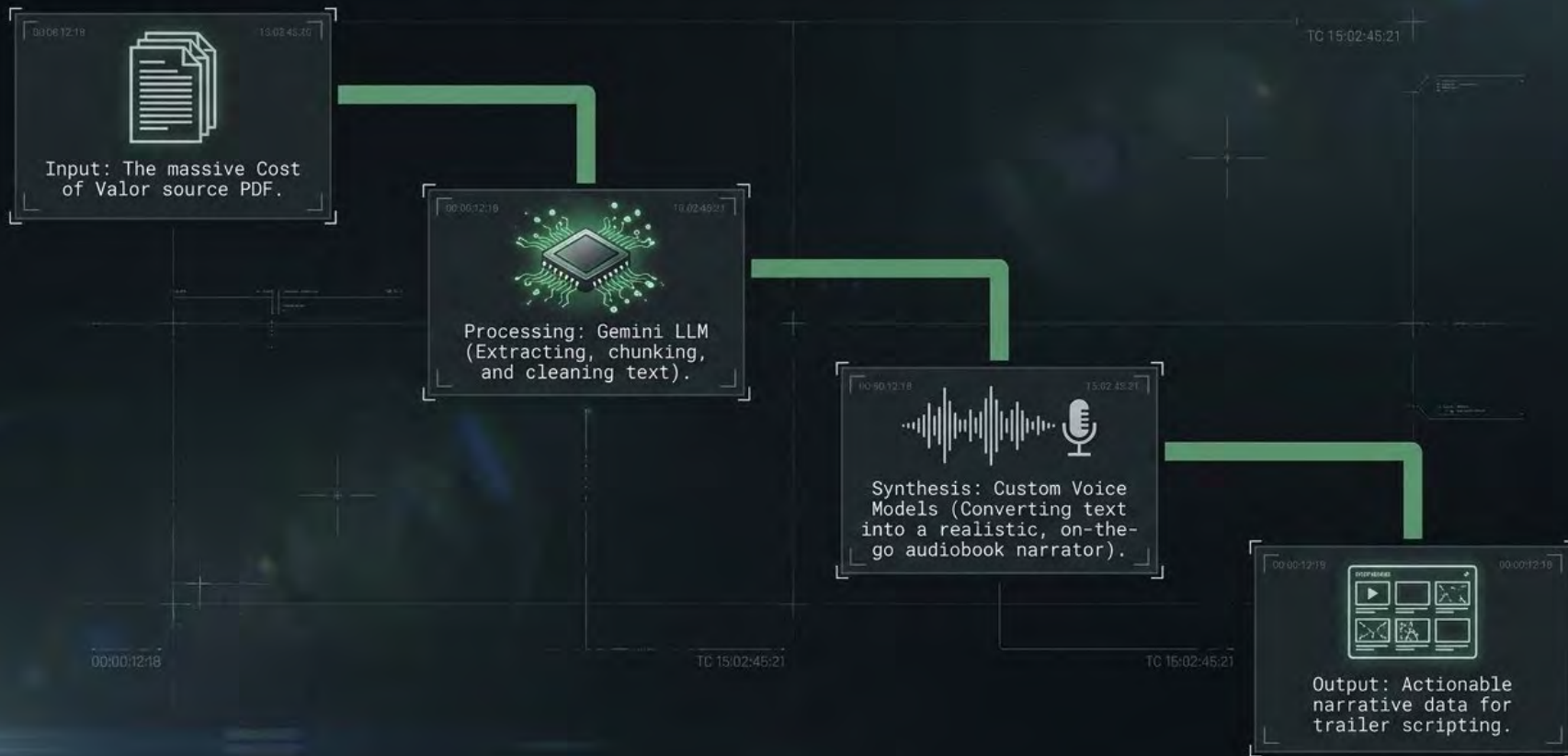
AI filmmaking is an exercise in extreme iteration. Capturing the immense scale of Operation Lam Son 719 requires rigorous workflow discipline. The final film is simply the best 3 seconds salvaged from 100 failed attempts.

One Story Dictating Two Distinct Lenses

00:00:08:12

	00:00:03:12 The Cinematic Cut TC 14:58:30:12	The Documentary Cut
Aesthetic	High-budget, stylized Hollywood short-film.	Archival, historical Vietnam War footage.
Camera Language	Anamorphic focal lengths, strict photographic terms.	Vintage film stock, heavy grain.
VFX	Volumetric red clay dust, distinct green signal smoke.	AI-augmented authentic wartime stills, inserting troop clusters and battlefield damage.

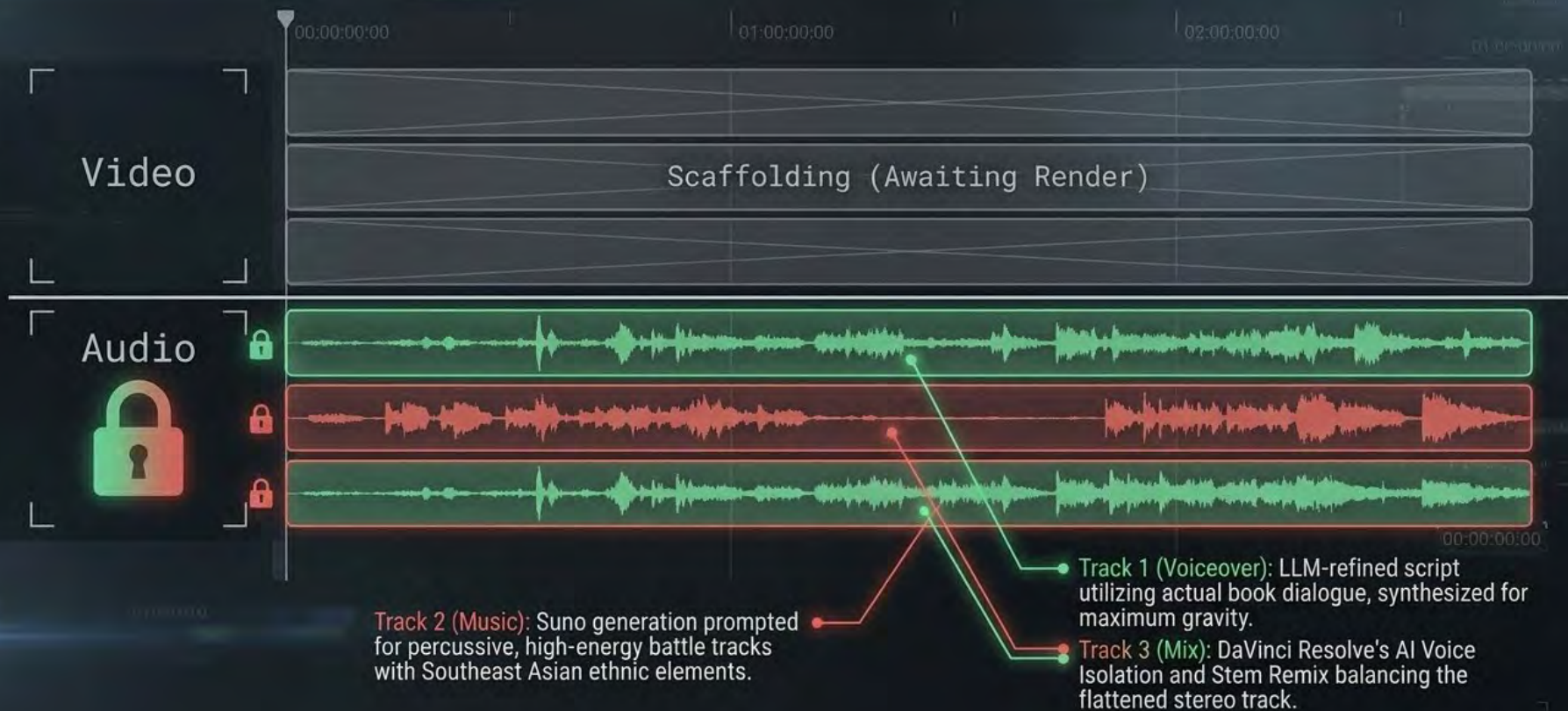
Digesting the Source Material at Scale



Architecting the Four-Part Narrative Arc



Locking the Audio Anchor Before Rendering Pixels



Engineering the Visual Consistency Bible

T00:09:15:00

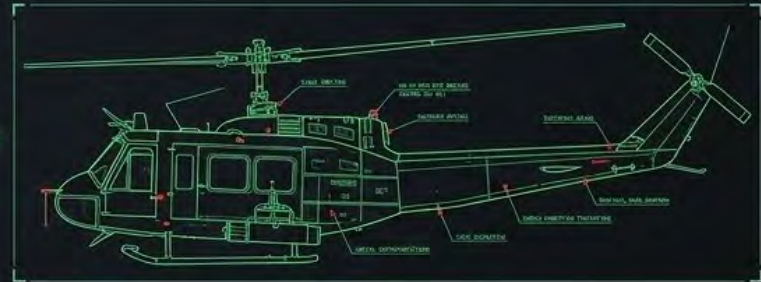
ASSET_CONSISTENCY_CHECK [ACTIVE]

The Framework: Shifting from trial-and-error generation to a rigid, skill-optimized prompting architecture.

```
ASSET_CONSISTENCY_CHECK [ACTIVE]
```

Claude System Prompts

The Output:
Generating highly
descriptive, reusable
storyboards, character, prop,
and location sheets.



00:30:45:22

The Rule:
Actors, historical weapons, and vehicles must match exactly across all disparate scene generations.

```
ASSET_CONSISTENCY_CHECK [ACTIVE]
```

T00:09:15:00

08:38:45:22

BLUEPRINT_RENDERING_QUEUE [PROCESSING]

DIVERGING GENERATION ARCHITECTURES: PROMPTING VS. SEEDING

PROMPTING LIKE A PHOTOGRAPHER

- **INPUT:** STRICT TEXT PARAMETERS BANNING GENERIC WORDS LIKE "CINEMATIC."
- **FOCUS:** LENS FOCAL LENGTH (ANAMORPHIC), CAMERA ANGLES, VOLUMETRIC CLAY DUST.
- **OUTPUT CONCEPT:** FROM RAW TEXT TO STYLIZED HOLLYWOOD FRAME.



T00:12:45:00

IMAGE-TO-IMAGE SEEDING

- **INPUT:** REAL, HISTORICAL ARCHIVAL STILLS FROM THE VIETNAM WAR.
- **FOCUS:** USING LAYOUT CUES TO INSERT ACCURATE HUEYS AND COMBAT ELEMENTS.
- **OUTPUT CONCEPT:** FROM HISTORICAL ANCHOR TO AUGMENTED DOCUMENTARY FRAME.



T00:12:45:52

The Invisible Enemy of Combat Filmmaking

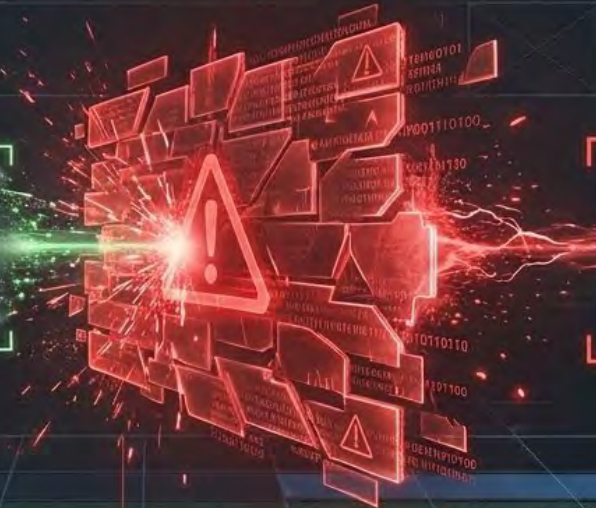
**ACCESS DENIED /
SAFETY GUARDRAIL**

ASSET_SAFETY_CHECK [ACTIVE]

T00:15:30:00



Historical Combat:
Firing Guns



Core Challenge:

Modern AI video and image engines enforce aggressive safety guardrails against violence.

The Reality:

Attempting to animate historical weapons or using real wartime footage as references causes instant prompt failures and generation rejections.

CREATIVE ENGINEERING: FROM EXPLICIT TO IMPLIED

ASSET_SAFETY_CHECK [ACTIVE]

Approved Prompt Syntax:

Muzzle flashes illuminating red clay dust, heavy tracer rounds cutting across a night sky, extreme camera recoil and vibration.

Blocked Prompt Syntax:

~~Soldiers firing guns directly into frame.~~

Takeaway:

Pivot away from violent verbs; prompt for the environmental impact and atmospheric physics of the action.

Breathing Choreographed Motion into Stills

ASSET_MOTION_CTRL [ACTIVE]

T00:15:45:00

Static Base



T00:15:56:60

Selective Inpainting



C-Dance 2.0 Engine



Static Base

SOTA image models generate the primary scene storyboards.

C-Dance 2.0 Engine

Feeding approved stills into video models to generate 15-second clips with dynamic camera movements (pans, dallies, low ground-level 3/4 angles).

THE SLOP FUNNEL AND THE REALITY OF YIELD RATES

100% Generated
Raw Footage

Filtering out the "Slop"
(Bizarre anomalies, floating
objects, single-frame
structural mutations)

15% to 20% Usable Yield

The Manual Labor: Frame-by-frame timeline scrolling to scavenge the
1 perfect second hidden inside a bad 5-second clip.

FINAL ASSEMBLY: SCAVENGING MEETS STRUCTURE



The entire workflow converges here. The aggressive filtering of visual anomalies is only possible because the rigid 4-part pacing and anchored audio timeline dictate exactly which frames are needed.

AI IS THE RAW MATERIAL. WORKFLOW IS KING.

1

T01:06:02:00

Navigating rigid safety blocks requires creative engineering.

RAW_MATERIAL_PHASE_1_FLOW
CONCEPTUALIZATION

2

T01:06:02:00

Achieving visual consistency requires strict prompt architecture.

RAW_MATERIAL_PHASE_2_FLOW
ITERATION

3

T01:06:02:00

Transforming raw generation into a cohesive cinematic experience requires human direction, heavy iteration, and extreme curation.

RAW_MATERIAL_PHASE_3_FLOW
CURATION



Question & Answer Session

Gary, Nathan & Jake

- Audience discussion with Col. Bridges, Jake Mahaffy, Nathan Adam, Emmanuel Saka, and Gary Garrison



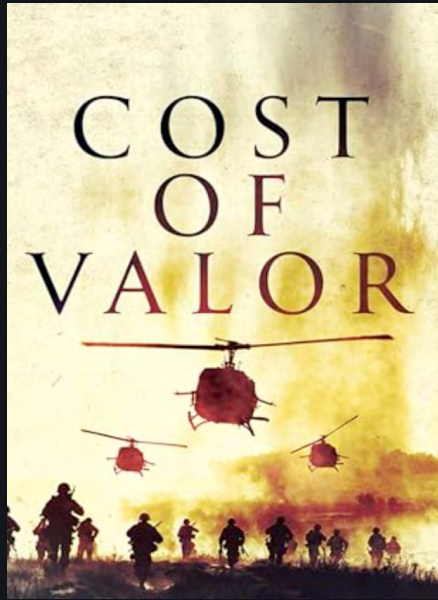


Next Steps

Gary & Colonel Bridges

- Future plans for the Cost of Valor project
- Opportunities for collaboration and continued development





THANK YOU

Thank you for joining us in honoring the stories of those who served.

