

It had been a long trip from Akron, Ohio to Cadillac, Michigan for Don Peters and his friend, Eddie Branscum. Having arisen at midnight after a few hours of sleep, Don and Eddie climbed into Don's Ford Ranger pickup and headed west on the expressway toward Toledo. An hour and a half later, they exchanged seats, allowing Don to get some more sleep while Eddie drove north past Detroit and across to Lansing. Stopping for gas at a station just north of Lansing, the two men switched seats again. Don watched the sun come up alone an hour later as his friend still slept next to him. At highway 115, Don turned west again, and thirty minutes later, he pulled the car into the Wal-Mart parking lot on the north side of Cadillac.

Ten other vehicles were already waiting as Don woke up Eddie and announced that they had arrived as scheduled. The twenty or so men unloaded their luggage into the back of another pickup, and then climbed into the back of two maxi-vans, neither of which had windows in the back, which inhibited the men from viewing their destination. To the casual onlooker, a group of rugged looking men meeting to go hunting or camping was a normal occurrence in this area. The driver spoke to the men in the first van as to the potential danger of someone infiltrating the group, and then remembering the route to their destination. With no seats in the back of the vans, it would have been difficult to have noticed any landmarks out the front windshield without being obvious.

Forty minutes, and many curves and dirt roads later, the vans stopped and the men were commanded out of the vehicles. They unloaded their belongings into the nearest building, a make-shift pole building with thirty bunks lined up fifteen on each side, with a five foot aisle down the middle. Don and Eddie picked bunks next to each other at the far end of the room, and deposited the contents of their suitcases into footlockers located at the foot of each bed.

A man followed them into the barracks and announced that their three day training course would begin with a lecture in the main building in fifteen minutes sharp, and to come dressed appropriately. Most of the men decided that what they already had on was appropriate enough for a lecture, and decided this would be a good time to stretch out on their bunks and rest, Don decided to use this time to look around the compound, and exited out the door he had entered.

He noticed five buildings similar to the barracks nestled amongst the trees, all within a hundred yard radius of where he stood. Each building looked as if it had been purposely built in clusters of large trees which overshadowed the building to the extent that nothing could be seen from the sky except for trees.

The beauty of the trees was what captured his eye the most. To his left, starting about fifty yards away, were tall pines, planted in long rows no more than eight feet apart. He could look for more than a half mile down the rows without seeing the end. Behind him, groves of trees, whose leaves were already changing into their Autumn colors held several birch trees with their unmistakable white bark.

As he walked toward what appeared to be the main building, he noticed that the trail changed from pieces of tree bark to some kind of yellow seeds someone had dumped on the trail. These golden cherry pits cushioned his steps and made his approach to the

building nearly silent. The trails leading into the trees were of sand, necessitating the spreading of the substance he now walked on.

Men were coming out of the barracks as Don opened the door to this building and entered. Facing the front of the room, he saw a large chalkboard with the word "DISCIPLINE" written in large letters across the top. There was a simple desk at the front, and eleven tables, with two chairs to a table, facing the front.

Taking a seat behind the front table on the left, Don heard others entering the building behind him. Everyone was quiet. It seemed that he and Eddie were the only two who knew someone else. His friend sat down in the seat next to him.

They had anticipated this training course for several weeks, and now the anticipation grew in their hearts to the fullest. Being trained by experts, becoming a part of a group where a person could fight back at injustice, and the whole concept of being in on the ground floor of a movement which could eventually help bring the nation into subjection to a holy God, were reasons to have both of them excited inside.

After everyone was seated, Don saw a door to his left open, and a man with a familiar face entered the room and moved across to the podium.

"Now that is Colonel Adams," he heard being whispered behind him.

Truly, as he watched the colonel, seeing him for the first time in his full military regalia, a swell of pride came into his heart. Here stood one of the most decorated men during the Viet Nam war, looking much more intimidating than in his businessman's suit he wore at the Monday night meetings back home. Don counted more than thirty ribbons on the colonel's coat. The red, silk scarf around his neck seen inside the collar of his shirt, the matching red beret, and the long, handlebar moustache reminded Don of a role he had seen Clark Gable play in a war movie once.

With the colonel's presence, a hush came over the men.

"Men," started the colonel in his familiar deep, raspy voice. "You know that I am Colonel Adams. I know all of you are anxious to begin your three days of training. By tonight, you'll wish you had never come. We are not here to teach you how to be boy scouts. We are here to teach each of you how to be an intelligent warrior. Some of you will regret you made the decision to come. But, I promise you, at the end of the three days, you'll kiss the feet of your instructors and thank them for helping you be something that you could never be by yourself.

"Now, some of you have been in the armed forces before. I was in the Marines for over twenty years before becoming an arms instructor for the Central Intelligence Agency. I personally led over fifty covert operations for the CIA throughout the world. In other words, I know how to take men to their limits, far beyond where they believe their limits are. For example: if I were to tell you to run one mile and meet back here, some of you would still be jogging a half an hour from the time you started. However, if I were to tell you that if you didn't make it back here in seven minutes, your family would be executed, then you would most assuredly meet your full potential.

"I run approximately ten miles each morning. Actually, after five miles, my body and my mind try to convince me that five miles is my limit. Once I reach that point, something in my spirit deep down inside me, forces me to run five more miles, until I drop from exhaustion. Why can I run an additional five miles, when most of you cannot even think of running that far? Because I reach out for the limit that God has placed upon

me, and I want to reach His limit for me, and not be satisfied with my limit, simply because of my own laziness.

“Enjoy the relaxation of this lecture. It will be the last relaxing moment you will have in three days. When I am through with this session, you will have approximately fifty minutes until lunch time. By the way, the food here is the finest you will ever taste anywhere, all organically grown and nutritious. However, you will not eat a bite of it unless you finish running the five mile course during that fifty minute time period. That figures out to be one mile every ten minutes. As a matter of fact, you’ll run five miles this evening before supper, five before breakfast in the morning, and so on, for the next three days.

“Now, if you will be so kind as to turn to the back of the room, I will introduce you to your instructors. From left to right we have Ray, who will be your exercise instructor, and will run with you. Next to Ray is Sully, who will teach you the art of handling explosives.” Each teacher stepped forward as his name was called and saluted the men. “Drake will teach you all about shotguns, giving individual instruction on the firing range, and shotgun buddy fighting, where you pair off as teams. Bo will teach you rifle marksmanship, including use of our new automatic M-16’s we just got in. And Billy will instruct you in hand-to-hand combat.

“You each will receive five hours of sleep each night, because that is all a fighting man needs. Showers are for those who finish the running course in the allotted time. The same goes for meals. I will meet individually with each of you in the next few days, to discuss your roll in the Northern Ohio Christian Militia, NOC’M, as we call it.

“Let me finish by explaining to you your purpose here. We need you. God needs you. You will learn how to think alone, and how to work in groups. Each NOC’M group is made up of four trained fighters. Sometimes two groups of four each are needed; sometimes three or more groups are used. You will learn this week that three other men in your group are counting on you to come through for them.

“Briefly, let me tell you of some of our accomplishments already. So far this year, twenty families remain on their farms, despite back foreclosures, the IRS, or public auction of their property, because NOC’M stopped it. Five groups went to a farm auction dressed as farmers and businessmen, armed with concealed weapons. These men stood around as the Sheriff tried to auction this fine family’s property off. The strangest thing occurred. No one wanted to bid when one of our men stood close to them, revealing the bulge under their jackets. While the auction was going on, one of our groups paid a visit to the Sheriff’s house. The left word that if he tried to sell that farm again, he would lose his house, too.

“We helped a poor black farmer in Kentucky in a similar way, only the Sheriff there wasn’t about to be intimidated by anyone. He hired extra deputies to go and evict the farmer. When they pulled onto the land, they saw over fifty of our men, brandishing shotguns and rifles, standing around the outside of the farm house, encircling it. That Sheriff decided he had better things to do than evict a poor farmer and his family.

“Well, that is why you are here. You are here to be used of God against those entities who would tear down the very institutions which God ordained and said to leave alone. These are the individual, the home, and lastly, but equally important, the Church. These are the very institutions which made this country great. This wicked Government is

doing everything it can to destroy these institutions. We are determined to stop their destruction, and turn it back upon them.

“That’s all for now. Start running.”

The man called Ray was waiting outside the door, and watched until every man had filed outside. Some of the men started toward the barracks to change their clothes. Suddenly, Ray, dressed in camouflage fatigues and army boots, turned and ran in the direction of the pines. Several immediately followed after him. One man, who had made it all the way to the barracks’ door, turned and called out, “Can’t we even change shoes? I’ve got running shoes in my suitcase!” Realizing he could be left behind, and not know where to run, even this man took off in the direction of the group.

Into the tall pine trees, the group ran, eyeing Ray’s head about a hundred yards ahead. Their footfalls made practically no noise as the pine needles cushioned each step. Several men had already cast off their street shoes, enabling them to run faster, but also causing great discomfort on the needles.

After a male through the pines, the course went up a steep seventy foot ravine and leveled off to a plateau. Men were clawing with both hands to reach the top of the ravine, only to take a step up and slide half a step back in the sand based dirt. From the ravine, nothing could be seen for miles except the tops of trees. The plateau sloped down gradually; a welcome relief to the runners. Another half mile placed them at a stream fifteen feet wide and one to four feet deep. In the middle of the stream, Ray turned upstream and continued his running as his feet splashed the fifty-five degree, spring fed water until he was drenched from head to toe. One by one, the group followed suit, slipping and falling in the deceptive depths of the crystal clear water. Cries could be heard as men hit water much colder than any of them could have imagined.

Fifty yards upstream Ray waited on shore until the first ones of the group which followed him reached his position. Again without speaking, he turned, heading off across a field with grass and weeds to his shoulders. All that could be seen of the men were their heads as they bobbed up and down across the field. Towards the end of the field, the men noticed dark maroon bushes lining the rest of the field. Ray plodded on as the brambles and stickers grabbed his clothing. The men followed him through the wild and thick bushes. Only those with long, heavy pants were delivered from the wrath of the wild blackberry bushes which grew thirty yards deep and a hundred yards across the field in either direction. Men were heard screaming and even cursing as they tried to hurdle as many plants as they could, only to have their legs and arms cut by the long thorns on the bushes.

On and on they ran, trying to keep Ray in their sight. The instructor made a right angle turn into dense vegetation, and forestry with low lying branches. The careless became victim to branches in the face, and one man ran into the trunk of a tree, causing a loud thud. One by one the runners entered a grassy clearing in the middle of the woods where Ray stood with his arms folded, facing the group as they struggled out of the trees.

Collapsing onto the grass, each man gasped for breath. Red faces, drenched with sweat, wheezed and hacked, and several cursed this camp and their instructor.

Don fell onto his back next to Eddie, and gazed at the clear blue sky. He heard his pulse beating much faster and harder than he had ever felt before. Finally catching his breath, he rolled his head in the direction where Ray was standing and smiling.

The instructor finally spoke. "Gentlemen," he said in a high tenor voice, "stand to your feet." One by one, each man stood, as moans and groans filled the open air. "Gentlemen, it has taken you seventeen minutes to reach this place. I congratulate you. You now have the bulk of the time left to get back to the compound, approximately thirty-two minutes. If you make it back in time, you will receive for your efforts a sixteen ounce New York strip steak, a one pound baked potato, vegetables, fruit, a salad bar, and whatever you would like to drink. May I suggest the distilled water. It is much better for a runner than cola drinks or coffee. We are now two and one-half miles from the dining hall, located behind the building where Colonel Adams spoke to you. Now that you know the way back, you can either run, and eat, or walk, and lose you supper privileges. The choice is yours." And with that, he took off back in the direction of the brambles.

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Don and Eddie's entire bodies ached as they sat down in front of their steak, barely able to lift their forks to their mouths. Looking around, they counted five empty place settings. They smiled pitiful smiles at each other, proud that they had both gone what was called "God's limit."