

# CONFLICTED

## By Christy Fredrickson

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**CONFLICTED****By Christy Fredrickson**

**SYNOPSIS:** Set against the turbulence of the 1960s, "Conflicted" follows Cal, a young hippie torn between love, conscience, and duty after receiving his draft notice. While his girlfriend urges him to flee, Cal chooses Vietnam—where laughter, friendship, and tragedy collide. Haunted by war and the loss of his best friend, Cal returns home to scorn and silence. Years later, with his daughter's help and a reunion with an Army nurse, Cal finally visits the Vietnam Memorial. In a powerful, healing moment, he touches the name of the friend who saved his life.

**DURATION:** 30 minutes.

**TIME:** 1960s.

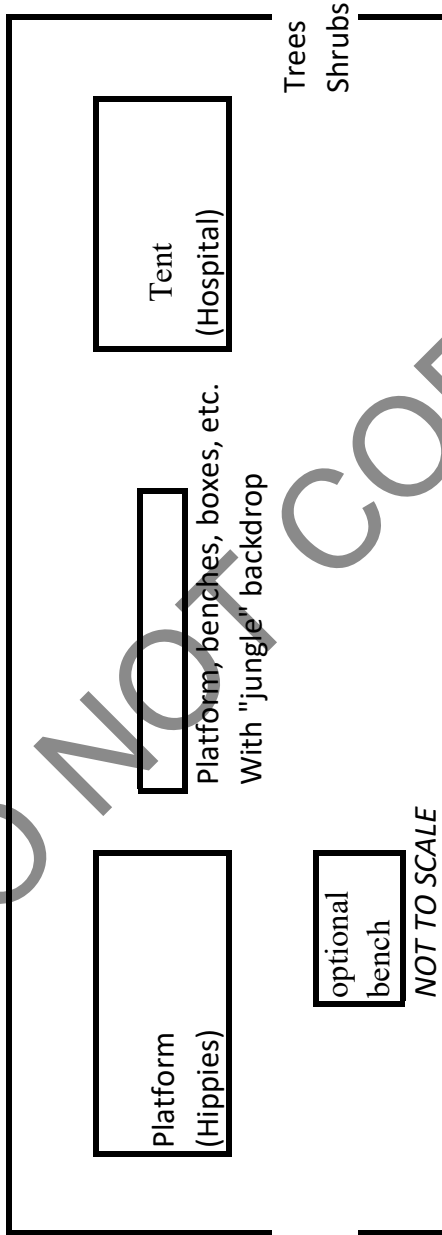
**PLACE:** Various locations, single set.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(7 females, 6 males, 2-4 either, extras)*

JUDY (f) .....	Army Nurse in Vietnam. <i>(38 lines)</i>
MOONBEAM (f) .....	Hippie girlfriend of Cal. <i>(35 lines)</i>
DIANE (f) .....	Army Nurse in Vietnam. <i>(29 lines)</i>
SUSAN (f) .....	Cal's daughter. <i>(24 lines)</i>
NANCY (f) .....	Army Nurse in Vietnam. <i>(18 lines)</i>
CLOVER (f) .....	Hippie, Moonbeam's friend. <i>(14 lines)</i>
SPARROW (f) .....	Hippie, Indigo's girlfriend. <i>(7 lines)</i>
CAL (COYOTE) (m) .....	Hippie/Soldier/Veteran with PTSD. <i>(76 lines)</i>
INDIGO (m) .....	Hippie leader. <i>(33 lines)</i>
JOE (m) .....	Soldier, Cal's friend. <i>(38 lines)</i>
FRANK (m) .....	Soldier, hothead, likes music. <i>(17 lines)</i>





**AUDIENCE**

*THIS PLAY IS DEDICATED  
TO THE MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN  
WHOSE LIVES WERE FOREVER CHANGED  
BY THE VIETNAM CONFLICT.*

DO NOT COPY

**SCENE 1**

*SOUND CUE: Any 1960's era music, perhaps sung by a cast member "The Sound of Silence" if possible. LIGHT CUE: Low lights or spot on CAL and singer (if applicable.)*

*As music plays, CAL enters left, dressed as older man, stumbling, confused, wanders right, kneels, holds his head in pain, rises, exits right as music ends. Sound Cue: Music ends. HIPPIES enter, chanting, hold signs saying "make love not war", "love is all you need" etc.*

**HIPPIES:** Hell no, we won't go! Hell no, we won't go! *(Continue.)*

**INDIGO:** What do we want?

**HIPPIE #1:** Free drugs! *(HIPPIES cheer, laugh.)*

**INDIGO:** We want peace!

**HIPPIES:** Peace!

**INDIGO:** We want justice!

*CONSTRUCTION WORKERS enter right.*

**HIPPIES:** Justice!

**INDIGO:** We want truth!

**HIPPIES:** Truth!

**CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1:** You want truth? The truth is, the USA is the only thing standing between you and communism!

**CONSTRUCTION WORKER #2:** Yea, try doing this in Russia!  
*(Indicates rally.)*

*HIPPIES boo.*

**CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1:** What're you going to do when the commies take over? *(Shoves INDIGO.)* Love them to death?

**INDIGO:** *(Shoves back.)* The Vietnam war is not our war!

*HIPPIES cheer.*

**CONSTRUCTION WORKER #2:** Fighting communism is everybody's war!

**INDIGO:** *(To CONSTRUCTION WORKERS.)* Hell no, we won't go!  
*(Exits right, chanting.)*

**HIPPIES:** Hell no, we won't go! Hell no, we won't go! *(Exit right, chanting.)*

*CONSTRUCTION WORKERS exit right after HIPPIES.*

## SCENE 2

*MOONBEAM and CAL enter right CAL is dressed as hippie.*

**MOONBEAM:** Coyote, wasn't that groovy? The power of peace and truth!

**CAL:** *(Not excited.)* Oh yeah. Power, truth and free drugs. Far out.

**MOONBEAM:** What's wrong baby? You seem sad. You need a hit?

**CAL:** Later. Later. I need to tell you something.

**MOONBEAM:** What is it?

**CAL:** Let's sit down. This is heavy. *(They sit.)* I don't know what to do.

**MOONBEAM:** Coyote, I've never seen you so down. You on a bum trip?

**CAL:** You could say that. *(Takes out draft letter.)* This came today.

**MOONBEAM:** *(Reads, jumps up.)* They're drafting you? *(Laughs.)*  
Oh man, you had me worried! *(Tears letter in half, throws it.)* There! Problem solved!

**CAL:** What do you mean problem solved? *(Picks up pieces of card.)*

**MOONBEAM:** We'll go to Canada, baby! You ain't goin' to Vietnam!  
We don't even know what they're fighting for over there!

**CAL:** *(Pacing.)* But I could go to jail! And they're fighting communism.  
Communism is horrible...

**MOONBEAM:** *(Stops him.)* Coyote, didn't you hear? This is not our war. It's the politicians trying to control the world! Communists have as much right to exist as anyone, right?

**CAL:** *(Hold head in his hands.)* I don't know. I don't know.

**MOONBEAM:** (*Hugs him.*) I know what you need, baby. A little love... a little grass... and everything's groovy again!

**CAL:** (*Pulls away.*) No, it's not! Don't you understand? You can't just hide from life!

**MOONBEAM:** It's not our war!

**CAL:** Right! It's someone else's problem, right? It's their war!

**MOONBEAM:** Right on!

**CAL:** Did you know they burn villages? The Commies, and those Viet Cong... they burn houses down with people in them! Men, women, children... they burn them, Moonbeam!

**MOONBEAM:** (*Gasps, covers her mouth.*) No! I don't believe you...

**CAL:** It's true!

**MOONBEAM:** No. (*Walks around, freaking out.*) This is too heavy. You are freaking me out, Coyote, I gotta go. (*Begins to leave.*)

**CAL:** (*Catches her hand.*) Moonbeam, please... I... I don't know what to do...

**MOONBEAM:** (*Turns back.*) Yes you do! Peace is right. War is wrong! It's wrong, Coyote. Don't be a part of it! It's not our war! (*Exits right.*)

### SCENE 3

*CAL looks at pieces of draft card, sits, dejected, on platform center stage. SOUND CUE: Music with driving beat. CAL stands, exits behind "jungle", center stage changes to soldier costume. JOE, GEORGE, TOM, FRANK, and EXTRA SOLDIERS enter left and right dressed as hippies or civilians, all wear white t-shirts and army pants, carry jackets and boots. SOLDIERS sit or stand around center platform, take off civilian clothing, put on soldier clothing. CAL enters left, now wearing white t-shirt, carrying boots, jacket. Sits center platform, begins to dress.*

**JOE:** Hey man, how's it going?

**CAL:** I think I'm about to take the worst trip of my life.

**JOE:** (*Laughs.*) Ain't that the truth! Where you from?

**CAL:** Ohio. You?

**JOE:** Indiana! Hey man, we're neighbors! I'm Joe.

**CAL:** Far out! I'm Coyote... I mean... Cal. *(They shake hands.)*

**JOE:** *(Laughs.)* Coyote? That your hippie name, man? *(CAL nods.)*

They used to call me "Journey", 'cause I took a lot of trips! Never thought I'd end up here though...

**CAL:** Me neither. I should've burned my draft card.

**JOE:** Not me, my old man fought in World War 2. He would've killed me with his bare hands!

**CAL:** Yeah, but that war was different.

**JOE:** Huh! Tell me about it.

**TOM:** Ah, it wasn't so different.

*CAL and JOE look at each other, then at TOM.*

**JOE:** Say what?

**TOM:** We're still the good guys, we still get to kick the bad guys' butts.

It ain't so different. And we got better hardware this time.

**JOE:** You're crazy, man. What's your name?

**TOM:** Tom.

**JOE:** You're crazy, Tom.

**TOM:** *(Laughs.)* That's what everybody said when I enlisted.

**GEORGE:** You enlisted?

**TOM:** Yeah, I even lied about my age. I was only seventeen when I signed up. *(Proudly.)* I'm eighteen now, though!

**GEORGE:** What are you, nuts?

**TOM:** Nope, but my mom went nuts when she found out. Whoooooeee!

Did she throw a fit!

**CAL:** Why'd you do it, man?

**TOM:** A guy from our neighborhood was a Green Beret. He came over to our house one day and he was the toughest, coolest guy I'd ever seen. I decided I wanted to be just like that.

**JOE:** *(To GEORGE.)* What about you... uh...

**GEORGE:** George. I enlisted too. I wanted to be a doctor, but we didn't have the money. *(Shrugs.)* I joined up so Uncle Sam would pay for college. Maybe I can be a medic, get some on-the-job training.

**FRANK:** *(Smoking cigarette.)* Oh, you'll get plenty of that. More than you want.

**GEORGE:** How do you know?

**FRANK:** This is my second tour. I know.

**JOE:** Why'd you re-enlist?

**FRANK:** When I got home, I had all this energy and... buzz... in my head. I couldn't sit still, couldn't concentrate. I drove everybody crazy. Then when I tried to get a job, there were none. No jobs anywhere. So... here I am.

**JOE:** You're as crazy as he is! *(Indicates TOM. Everyone laughs.)*

**FRANK:** We're all crazy! Cause we're here and not in Canada! *(SOLDIERS laugh.)*

**SOUND CUE:** Siren. SOLDIERS exit left, running.

#### SCENE 4

*HIPPIES enter right, sit on or around platform, stage right, talking, smoking, playing instruments, etc. INDIGO and SPARROW enter right, excited, cross to center stage.*

**INDIGO:** What a rush, man! What karma!

**SPARROW:** Yeah baby, far out!

**INDIGO:** Outta sight. Our next rally will be even bigger...

**SPARROW:** Umm... *(Moves away.)* Yeah... Indigo, I wanted to talk to you about that.

**INDIGO:** What?

**SPARROW:** The next rally. *(Turns.)* It's a rush! It is! But... it takes a lot of energy... and you get bad vibes from people.... like those guys...

**INDIGO:** Hey, don't let the bad vibes get you down. We're winning, Sparrow! We're making a difference!

**SPARROW:** Yeah, I know but, well... *(Turns to look at him.)* You're just so INTENSE, baby! You never want to just hang out and BE anymore! You're always thinking about the next rally!

**INDIGO:** *(Puts his arm around her.)* Sparrow, we can change the world, you dig? But we gotta keep going. We gotta get more people. It takes work...

**SPARROW:** *(Moves away.)* You sound like my father. Work, work, work, that's all he ever cared about.

**INDIGO:** (*Follows her.*) Yeah, but he worked for money. We work to make the world better!

**SPARROW:** (*Moves away, angry.*) Better for who, Indigo? 'Cause it's not better for me. (*Exits right.*)

**INDIGO:** Wait! Sparrow, wait... (*Exits right.*)

*HIPPIES exit right except MOONBEAM and CLOVER who move down right.*

**MOONBEAM:** (*Thinking, may carry paper and pen.*) Dear Coyote, I am so sorry... no. (*Thinks, tries again.*) My dearest Coyote, can you ever forgive me.... No... oh! (*Crumples paper and throws it, frustrated.*)

**CLOVER:** (*Enters right.*) Moonbeam? Hey, what's happening girl? You look sad.

**MOONBEAM:** I'm trying to fix a mistake, Clover. The biggest mistake of my life.

**CLOVER:** (*Dreamily.*) There are no mistakes in life... only turns in the path!

**MOONBEAM:** Coyote got drafted, Clover. He went to Vietnam!

**CLOVER:** Drafted? But he was against the draft! We all are!

**MOONBEAM:** I know! I even tore up his draft card! I told him we could go to Canada! But... (*Sobs.*) he went anyway!

**CLOVER:** Whoa, baby. These are some bad vibes.

**MOONBEAM:** But...

**CLOVER:** He chose war... over you. That's super heavy, Moonbeam.

**MOONBEAM:** Yeah, but...

**CLOVER:** I have to tell you, girl, he's lost.

**MOONBEAM:** But I love him!

**CLOVER:** You can't love someone when they're wrong! War is wrong! Peace is right...

**MOONBEAM:** That's what I told him! But he... he was weird, Clover. Why would he go?

**CLOVER:** He embraced the madness. This is so heavy. I gotta think. (*Sits, thinks for three seconds, jumps up.*) I got it! A Dear John letter!

**MOONBEAM:** What?

**CLOVER:** Write him a Dear John letter!

**MOONBEAM:** What's that?

**CLOVER:** A letter that breaks up with him! Tell him the truth, Moonbeam, tell him you can't be with a guy who believes in war... and killing... and all that.

**MOONBEAM:** But...

**CLOVER:** You said you love him, right?

**MOONBEAM:** Yeah...

**CLOVER:** You know what they say, (*Dreamily.*) "If you love something, set it free. If it comes back to you, it's yours. If it doesn't, it never was."

**MOONBEAM:** (*Anguished.*) Are you sure it's the right thing to do?

**CLOVER:** I'm sure. Come on, I'll help you. (*Picks up crumpled paper.*) "Dear John,"

**MOONBEAM:** His name's not John.

**CLOVER:** Okay, "Dear Coyote,"

**MOONBEAM:** Actually, his name's not Coyote either.

*CLOVER and MOONBEAM exit right. SOUND CUE: Helicopters fading off then end.*

## SCENE 5

*JUDY, DIANE and NANCY enter left.*

**NANCY:** Wow, a whole morning off! No I.V.'s, no bandages...

**DIANE:** No bedpans...

**JUDY:** Yeah, but it's too quiet. Makes you worry about what's going to happen next.

**NANCY:** Hey, did you hear they're showing an Audrey Hepburn movie tomorrow night?

**DIANE:** I love Audrey Hepburn! So... we'll probably get lots of casualties tomorrow.

**NANCY:** (*Laughs.*) Yeah, that's usually how it works. Say Diane, I saw you reading a letter to Private Garcia. Did that poor kid finally get some mail?

**DIANE:** Oh, that was from my mom.

**JUDY:** Your mom knows Private Garcia?

**DIANE:** No, the letter was to me, but I pretended it was from his sweetheart.

**NANCY:** Why?

**DIANE:** (*Sad.*) We all know he... he's not going to make it, the gangrene.... (*NURSES nod.*) And he's been so worried... he hasn't heard from her in all this time... it's heartbreaking.

**JUDY:** (*Gently.*) So what did you say... in the letter?

**DIANE:** I just told him she loved him and she was waiting for him. He actually smiled.

**NANCY:** You're a good nurse, Diane.

**DIANE:** Thanks. I felt sort of guilty, lying to him. But that smile was worth it.

**JUDY:** Sometimes we have to treat hearts and minds, as well as bodies.

*SOUND CUE: Helicopters. NURSES look up, stand, begin to move left.*

**DIANE:** (*Sighs.*) Incoming.

**NANCY:** Time to treat more bodies.

*NURSES exit left.*

## SCENE 6

*FRANK, TOM, GEORGE, CAL, and JOE enter left. JOE, FRANK, and TOM are tossing a baseball or football to each other. GEORGE is checking his medical equipment, CAL is reading a letter.*

**JOE:** We got some leave coming. Want to go to Saigon and.... (*CAL is reading letter, sits on platform, does not respond.*) Hey. (*Waves hand in front of CAL'S letter.*) Hey, what gives?

**CAL:** Guess you can call me John now. (*Indicates letter.*) Got a letter... (*Crumples letter, throws it.*) from my "soul mate"!

**JOE:** Awww... sorry about that, man. That happens too much around here. (*Pause.*) But hey... we'll go to Saigon... maybe meet some girls. You'll forget about her...

**CAL:** Moonbeam. Her name is (*Sarcastic.*) Moonbeam. Can you dig that man? They're all about enlightenment, peace and love, but they're just as screwed up as the rest of us.

*NANCY and DIANE enter left.*

**JUDY:** Hey, guys.

**DIANE:** (*Shyly.*) Hi Joe.

*SOLDIERS greet NURSES.*

**NANCY:** Hey George, I need to change a burn dressing. You want to help?

**GEORGE:** Sure. (*NANCY and GEORGE begin to exit left.*)

**NANCY:** So, you still think you want to be a doctor?

**GEORGE:** I'm just a medic, but I've set broken bones, treated for malaria and done I.V.'s in the dark. I think I can handle it.

**NANCY:** Good. Maybe I'll ask again after you've done an amputation...

*NANCY and GEORGE exit left.*

**DIANE:** Joe, I want to check that bug bite.

**JOE:** Why? It's just a bug bite.

**DIANE:** It might be a centipede. People die from those things. (*Begins to look at his arm.*) Did you know they're showing a movie tomorrow night?

**JOE:** Really? You should go with Cal!

**DIANE:** (*Looks incredulous.*) Uh... Cal?

**CAL:** (*Rolls eyes.*) I'll talk to you later, Diane.

**DIANE:** Um... okay. Well, see you guys... (*Exits left.*)

**FRANK:** (*To JOE, forcefully.*) Way to go, numbskull!

**JOE:** What'd I do?

**CAL:** A pretty girl asks you to a movie and you throw her at me? What an idiot!

**JOE:** Yeah but... you're the one who just got... um...

**CAL:** Dumped? So what? She doesn't like me, she likes you!

**JOE:** (*Surprised.*) She does? Why?

**CAL:** Well it's not because of your brains! We've all got bug bites, how come you're the only one she's worried about?

**JOE:** No kidding. Maybe I should... *(Grabs CAL, pulls him down.)* Get down!

*SOUND CUE: Volley of gunfire. SOLDIERS return fire to left, hide behind set props, etc. JOE falls, injured. CAL and GEORGE exit left, shooting. JOE, FRANK, TOM freeze in battle positions. SOUND CUE: Gunfire stops.*

## SCENE 7

*HIPPIES enter right, wave signs, etc.*

**HIPPIES:** *(Shout.)* Stop the killing! End the war! Stop the killing! End the war!

**INDIGO:** They're dying on the battlefield! They're dying at Kent State! What good is war?

**HIPPIES:** BOO!

**INDIGO:** *(Gestures for quiet.)* But people are waking up! Protests, all across the nation! More and more people are saying "Stop the killing! End the war!"

**HIPPIES:** Stop the killing! End the war!

**INDIGO:** They ask what we want to accomplish. I say it's this! *(Indicates rally.)* We're getting louder!

**HIPPIES:** Louder!

**INDIGO:** We're getting stronger!

**HIPPIES:** Stronger!

**INDIGO:** They can't ignore us any longer! Stop the killing! End the war!

**HIPPIES:** Stop the killing, end the war! Stop the killing, end the war! Stop the killing, end the war!

*HIPPIES freeze.*

**SCENE 8**

*SOUND CUE: Helicopters.*

**CAL:** *(Dressed as OLDER MAN, enters left, looks up, shouts.)*

Choppers! Take cover! *(Drops, crawls.)* Ambush! Aaa!

**SUSAN:** *(Enters right.)* Dad? *(Rushes to him.)* Dad! Hey! It's okay, it's okay! *(Shakes him.)*

**CAL:** *(Sitting, covers head and rocks.)* Joe! Where's Joe?!

**SUSAN:** *(Shakes him.)* Joe's not here. Dad, you're not there, it's okay!

**CAL:** *(Stops rocking, blinks.)* Susan?

**SUSAN:** Yeah, it's me. Come on Dad, we need to get you home. *(Helps him up.)*

**CAL:** I heard choppers...

**SUSAN:** It's the Flight for Life. The hospital helicopter.

**CAL:** Is... is Joe okay?

**SUSAN:** *(Gently.)* Your buddy Joe? From Vietnam?

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