

## ***Foster's Store* – Why the book? Why the Movie from the book?**

*In this book, there is a compelling, unifying and worthwhile theme that creates here a powerful truth. That truth is the heart of this book. It is not preached, not acted out like in some scripted formula for a book or a play. It is portrayed simply in an eloquence that can only come from the hearts of such men who lived these lives.*

*Wayne Eliot Lankford*

### **Premise**

A small town country store is remodeled by its owners, who then rent it and the shed behind it to college age men attending West Georgia College one mile down the road during the years of the Viet Nam War. See the world through the eyes of these young men, who stand dead center in the cross hairs of Uncle Sam's rifle, loaded with the bullets of war—sex—drugs—rock n roll.

### **The local world**

A college town and county seat where everybody knows everybody else, informal. But new ideas, experimentation inspire reaction from the area power structure, which tries to instill fear into town and gown relations.

### **The Larger World**

Buddhist monks set them selves on fire to protest a war. National Guardsmen kill students at Kent State. Young men face being called to soldier in a cause they don't believe—or that they believe is wrong. Many sympathize—believe more in the cause of the “enemy”. . . More sex, drugs, rock n roll—Woodstock.

### **Universality**

There were a lot of Foster's Stores back then, where college students lived in off-campus, in rural communities like Carrollton and in large cities.

### **Classical Echoes**

The futility of war. Leaders who've lost their way, who've lost their compass. The immorality in war. Escapism. Alienation.

### **Situation**

The American idyll of the groves of academe at the end of the forties and through the fifties and early sixties morphs. Civilian undrafted students find ourselves interacting with veterans returning to college from Vietnam at a time when there are more people back from the war than will ever go. We learn about the war first hand from guys who'd been there.

### **Behind the scenes**

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Things that never show up in history books, like the puke chapter, show what really happened when we were in college. It was not about studying all the time. It was never about football—except to release steam. It **was** about friendships—what they are all about—trust—depending on each other: for food, clothes, pot, studying together, picking each other's brains, exploring each other's souls.

### **Good title**

Foster's Store is simple and direct.

### **Concept - Can not be done again.**

This story is told by the people who were there. It can't be told again. The art is specific. The music is specific.

### **Known Elements**

People already believe they understand war, the draft, college life, off campus housing, parties, doing drugs.

### **Big Pluses**

- 1) It's a true story. It's part of our History. It really happened. Truth will always resonate with an audience. It is funny. It is sad. It is tragic.
- 2) The book is written out of friendship, passion, and love. What shines through here is the love these guys shared with each other that never faded over the years. We never forgot about "those times." Yes, we told our wives and kids, but, by ourselves, no one of us could ever do our stories justice. The many tellers layer the colors and detail to that love.
- 3) A "successful" book like *Foster's Store* sets its script apart from 95% of all other screenplays.

### **Optional Material**

- 1) Movie
- 2) Television Series
- 3) A series of Book Sequels – Son of Foster's Store, etc.
- 4) Cartoon series based on "Milo". Potential Title: "Miloville".
- 5) Clothing with Foster's Store and with Milo logos
- 6) Trademark, endless merchandizing possibilities: clothing, school supplies . . . on and on
- 7) Broadway Play

### **Naturally Intriguing Premise**

Watching people living something real is intrinsically absorbing. More so is feeling the complete alienation of college kids under the influences of passion and available chemicals, augmented by their fears—being blown apart by an atomic blast or skewered on bamboo sticks in a tiger trap. Imagine killing someone. Then imagine being really free.

### **Target Audience**

Over 17 years old and above – R rated.

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### **What is the need-to-know hook?**

Determining which characters will survive. Being fascinated by the transformation process. Not everybody does survive. What does a person going through transformation look like? Feel like? What is reality? What does non-reality look like? Hallucinations? Challenge for the actors?

### **Is this an Original Concept?**

The book was written by the actual people who lived through the unique in-breaking of the larger world on their innocent isolation, forcing them to grapple with life and death issues like war and the frivolous at the same time. The grim-frivolous juxtaposition was captured in classic films of the 1970's, like M.A.S.H. as it looked back to the 1950's and the Korean War as lived by the staff of a mobile combat hospital. Unique to the Foster's Store is the rural Southern world broken into.

### **What is the Goal of this Movie?**

Foster's Store is a message in a bottle to us and to a new generation. We have dropped the ball again and find ourselves at war, adrift, without an end or an achievable goal in sight. The generation of peace and love hasn't figured it out yet. It needs to beware! The draft can come back. When politicians start using phrases like "peace with honor" or, "drawing down our forces," it is only code for "we don't know what we're doing again."

### **What is at stake in this movie?**

Survival, individual and global.

### **Is all this worth saying?**

Yes. We are at war again and can't figure out how to get out of it. Smoking marijuana is still illegal. We spend our treasury on laws we will never be able to enforce, and at the same time allow the sale of alcohol that kills thousand of people every year. We have all these problems and more, but the real problem is that we are not even looking for real solutions to our problems. We are stuck! Nothing mean spirited here at all, the audience will draw their own conclusions. They always do.

### **Does the book or screenplay transport the audience?**

Yes, from the first line "Be there then." Each progressive scene builds the atmosphere.

### **Is there a decisive, inevitable set-up ending, that is none-the-less unexpected?**

The ending that is not an ending is inevitable: Whenever, wherever, Fosterians gather, there will be that kinship, deep relationships celebrated and revived, that will naturally breed others, and one day we will find what we have been searching for. Peace on Earth, and life without fear.

### **Is the book believable?**

Much in the book is real history. Believability is at the heart of the storylines. These are real people in real events. When somebody says they saw something happen, it really happened just that way.

### **What changes do the characters go through?**

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Evolution of attitudes is well exhibited in the book. Early residents of Foster's Store had much different outlooks than later ones. A major point of the story is that it was a time of major change, locally, nationally, globally, individually.

**If you had the chance to create a rolling message that would precede the movie itself, what would say?**

**Foster's Store  
A subculture of the  
times and of  
West Georgia College**

**Some partied like there was no tomorrow  
And for some,  
There was no tomorrow.**

**Semi-sociological déjà vu  
by  
The surviving lab rats**

The movie you are about to see is about a coming of age. It is as much about wild parties and college life as it is about a place in history where a generation had it all, but at the same time, "all" turned out to be so fragile and fleeting for so many. It wasn't just another generation discovering its collective consciousness, but a "new" generation fully equipped with new flavors of knowledge and circumstances. We searched for or stumbled into realities, which put the truths we were fed and raised on by loving parents from the Greatest Generation into question. Almost every truth we'd ever known was now in doubt.

We were a generation raised on fear, taught to dive under school desks to survive a nuclear Armageddon and to trust in God if nothing else worked. We grew up with it, we towed the company line, but we didn't like the feeling. The churches said it was OK to kill a commie for Christ, but for some reason love ended up feeling better to us than hate. Where did our parents go wrong? Something had to give and a lot of things did.

Birth control pills made the sexes equal. The ways we got our kicks were constantly changing. At some point out there at Foster's store there were more people back from a war than would ever go. That had never happened before. The luck of a draw could kill you or save you. There were things that were inspiring to some and downright dangerous to others.

Then . . . some say it's all a bunch of nonsense.

But you decide.

Be there then.

Wayne Lankford