

joined CBS as radio reporter in  
Jan 1965 and was sent to Vietnam  
in August

✓ PART 1 - 1	Hue 1968	(88)
PART 2 - 91	65-66	(346)
✓ PART 3 - 431	<del>431</del> 67-68	(88)
PART 4 - 525	1970 TAY NINH	(282)
✓ PART 5 - 807	1970 to Present	(33)

# THE CAT FROM HUÉ

A VIETNAM WAR STORY

Sam Caston - p401 B-day party - later  
conversations about Truth in reporting the war

Caston killed  
at An Khê

John Laurence

Noc Dempsey  
Charlie Beckwith  
J. D. Coleman  
Col. William Ochs  
Lt. Col. Hanna  
Capt. Robert Jackson  
Capt. Rice



PUBLICAFFAIRS NEW YORK

I 1977 left to CBS  
to try to write this book -  
took a year off -  
went to work at ABC

I saw it as a terrible and ironic  
tragedy  
lived in Belfast - most of 71  
then East Pakistan  
Israel in 73  
Libanon 75  
Explosion  
Cyprus  
Ireland

1993 - felt like staying to write  
about Vietnam again.  
each morning at same time

---

Mé and the Trauma of Huế  
What is "Daily Miracle"

Bang - Bang - wanted  
in New York

1st one flying back to AN KHE  
P130

Grew up in Bridgeport  
Saw myself on TV  
1st time Sept 25, 1965

"took Valium to cut down  
on my drinking" 598

---

Grew up in rural Ohio  
went to Fairfield Prep  
in Southern Conn -  
Jesuits  
Roger Crane - pilot  
Storm

Hue - why didn't he shoot p1      Thurs. Jan 17

close combat was not often shot for TV  
I was determined to show people at home what was happening  
to their young men

there were daily miracles p32 - a lot of people didn't want  
to work with me - enough footage - known as lang-lang  
aimed flask of cognac - drank it on way out of Hue on chopper  
YD 481 - Ken pulled me off flight from Hue to Ala Nam - plane  
crashed all dead on way to the bank. p40

The Citadel - I was a short timer after 16 months - 2nd tour  
said a prayer - told em I was from New England

bullet by my head - daily miracles  
Everyone thought J.L. was dead | McNamee, LBS we know  
was while planning strategy

Test - a publicity stunt? p11 V.S. Government consistently lied to Americans  
Meo - fiercely anti American - arrogant and surly -  
journalists went to the bank in daylight - looking for a bear at night  
Hue - today the worst - 10,000 dead

p92 - Arrived in Vietnam 1965 - 25 yrs old a radio reporter for Eyes.  
didn't want to be a TV reporter  
I volunteered for Vietnam - Nha Trang - Jim Wilson, photographer  
said TV news was all pictures

p104 An Khe - Maj. Charles Siler - PTO -  
"I was also scared" - riding in convoy at night  
WETSU - we sat this shit up  
young woman (19 or 20) pregnant in a hole in village killed  
by grenade "I felt distress p117  
writing for television - tried to sound like radio in WWII  
my idol was Murrow

p137 When I arrived I thought it was an honorable cause  
and that success was certain  
Morley Safer - Cam Ne

P180 The Gummy Sargeant and Sakai - War - America Japan  
p181 Helicopter out of control LZ outside of Dunning

P251 - With Lt. Col Suat - fire fight between ARVN  
and PAVN - 30 SVN killed 106 NVA - leaving scene  
"Mad Minute" - only out going from SVN - Newsweek  
reporter pounded on APC door - Please God let me in

P204 Phillipine Volcano - Watson shoots crater  
wait for Kalkin - 3 young girls in room with him  
Did Jim Watson kill the whore who stole his money

209 Largest operation of war (1965) 400 Helos 4500 soldiers  
45 units from Air the - Suoi Ca Valley - Charlie Block  
of Columbia Pa Engineer - 20 reporters - tremendous  
competition among 3 networks - I got to pick my  
battalion - might get Combat Infantryman's Badge  
Operation Shiny Bayonet - 1st time shot at in Vietnam  
Morley Safer show up in same spot as J.L.  
Safer - "How would you like me to punch in the nose?"  
He went back to Saigon took my film and work incorp. (222)  
with his. It went on Evening News - he got awards.

Wilson Funk and J.L. show AIE combat runs out  
of Bien Hoa - Drop bombs on VC village - kill farmers  
in field - Cambodia protests bombing of one of their  
villages - Dan Briondi won't confirm or deny (231)  
I had become a player in the Saigon information game  
through war was honorable cause - fought in real world  
interests of U.S. I was still "with the program"  
met FAC pilot in Red hotel told J.L. that he'd  
hit wrong village

p366 - American shot South VN off helicopter A-Shaw  
Lt. Col House - admitted it on camera. 1966

Shown in State American reacted strongly  
Manning gave House two medals then reprimanded  
him for giving story to the press - and criticized me

How did you remember all the quotes

### THE CAT FROM HUÉ

p 297 - Joe Galloway a Vietnamese House Boy - in his 30's

Frankie's Home - marijuana, opium  
music, sex

Founders - Len Caparas - ITT  
all were born bet 1939-1945

journalists - straights  
V.B.  
crazies

Tim Page -  
Simon Dring - Reuters - Brit  
Martin Stuart - Fox - Aussie  
Steve Northrup

p 315 - Operation Masher -

Valley wounded - "worst situation" in  
Vietnam to that point a reading commander  
Company - as intense Napoleon - Shuloh -  
graveyard attack

p 331 - Back Saigon - drank a lot -  
~~lots~~ bad dreams - rolled on sidewalk  
on Tu Do street because I thought  
I saw tracers

graveyard changed way T.L. thought  
about war

Another turning point for me was black market  
story

p 341

Tim Page and Sean Flynn - Stoned

After I returned to New York for funeral of Sean Costan  
was sent around country Clin. C.D. Mississippi.  
Resigned from CBS - worked at WNEW - lived  
with Reda - began drinking - flashback to war  
Summer of 67 - Vietnam quim - How dishonored our P433  
govt leaders can be - Read R.W. Apple / Michael J. Arles  
shared summer cottage with David Halberstam - called  
CBS asked to go back to Vietnam

Why didn't you tell your CBS audience what men were saying?

P254 - Plei Me - Charlie Beckwith (Major b. 1929)

Charles Mohr. New York Times was there

Senator Kennedy wants to fund of this "shit hole" LBT calls  
reporter stood watch at night - no longer wanted to  
journalists - Ron Nessen shows up 4 days wants film  
out night away - VN colonel fakes injury to try to get  
out American soldiers don't like VN soldier - yards won't  
quit firing mortars.

P286 Nessen didn't deliver our film for a day - Plei Me  
Ja Drang Valley - called a victory - Army informed  
rest of him by telegram

\* Big Question - How could US doubt it did in VN? p 293

Doc Dempsey Show - he died in middle of the night

BOOKNOTES

2002-01-20

BOOKNOTES  
BRIAN P. LAMB  
C-SPAN AIR DATE

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Copyright © 2002 by John Laurence.

Published in the United States by PublicAffairs™, a member of the Perseus Books Group.

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information, address PublicAffairs, 250 West 57th Street, Suite 1321, New York NY 10107. PublicAffairs books are available at special discounts for bulk purchases in the U.S. by corporations, institutions, and other organizations. For more information, please contact the Special Markets Department at The Perseus Books Group, 11 Cambridge Center, Cambridge MA 02142, or call (617) 252-5298.

*Book design and composition by Mark McGarry, Texas Type & Book Works.*

*Set in Monotype Dante.*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

The cat from Hué / by John Laurence.

p. cm.

ISBN 1-891620-31-2

1. Vietnamese Conflict, 1961-1975—Personal narratives, American. 2. John Laurence

I. Title

DS557-7.L376 2001

959.7043'092—dc21

FIRST EDITION

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

650. John Laurence

The Cat from Hue: A Vietnam War Story

Taped: 1/17/02

Aired: 1/20/02

Tape #: 168241

1967 Con Thien

P 441

Kay and I wanted to show Americans how costly the war had become, how brutal and wasteful it was. Soldiers and media had a lot in common - Distrusted high command  
Most came to believe was a failure of logic, a tragic waste of life

Keiths Kay - a 25yr. old photographer  
2nd team for me - no camera men wanted to work with me because of my first tour reputation  
Under fire "I reached inside for my boyhood faith for the will of God to get me out of it."

Winter 1967 - I was seeing the <sup>honor</sup> of the war P 467  
which was affecting my point of view

pot smoking journalist's long hair zacked out of their minds

P 487-2 - Propaganda war - Juso pro - Five o'clock police  
Peter Brauting - When Hawaii all the flowers gone. lying etc.

Room c-2 at Continental - list of Brothers and Sisters  
Some would smell sweet herbal scent of marijuana  
P 486) turned around and left room

Walt Kelly at the bar - we have met the enemy and they <sup>is us</sup> <sub>is us</sub>

Mrs was a Viet Cong cat - Tim Page

left Saigon this time after 9 months - cat followed to stay with Vona, my mother's Dir in Westport, CA.

P 513 "Stones were written by individual content of the decided by a group"

Leslie Hildley - eye producer pour a glass of scotch  
met Jerry Baker in slate bar - flew to Atlantic City with Stan  
Gould drank champagne stayed up all night - 3 months moved in together with the cat.



P695  
Tay Nuts - Charlie Co.

New PIO says he's going to accompany CBS  
crew into field. J.L. troops will be intimidated"  
That's ~~du~~ says the Major

NOV 14 - 1970 Tay Ninh

Going back Nam - Pan Am 1st Class drinking Kay Cleverger  
and me - listening to Johnny Cash at Folson Prison P529  
3rd town in Nam

"Trying to stop the war a burning issue with me" P521

Exchange about air coverage with Jd Duwall

Law on film - people had to feel pain  
stop in Guam lit a joint

P531 Stealing from US was the national sport

Saigon - poisoned heart

New York CBS - They never seem to get enough bang bang - <sup>Daniel</sup> Miller

What was 42 Corps

J. D. Coleman - PIO - took him a bottle of Bombay  
he introduced J. D. to Gen Casey who approved Charlie  
Co. filming

I was reading a book by Ernie Pyle

We had permission to start filming First Cav. Gen Casey to

Colonel Ocker to Lt. Col. Hannas to Capt. Robert Jackson

Soldier at base at night - half stoned on drugs and booze P570

You didn't show us the mixture of war, booze music and  
hope you found at First Cav Joy.

Soldiers were unaware of the big picture

tape for Mike Her

On trip to Saigon in General's chopper to get battens - pilots  
and crew drunk - flew back to Tay Ninh in dark

Kay lit a joint on way

P667 - Sean Flynn and Dana Stone look in Cambodia  
Correspondents code of conduct - never boast or

unspoken  
both opposed the political motives that started war  
and kept it going

Memo to Ernie Pyle for one hour doc.

Revolt airs on Cronkite - Everyone likes it

Tom Mint - Charlie Co. continued p 675

J.P. Coleman leaves for states - warns J.L. keep your head down

Capt Rice tells J.L. no hard feelings over revolt road incident

Sgt. Bunnock - Gook - Killer p 680

J.L. How unpatotic not to report the truth to the public  
Doc Ham interview - why are we killing when we're  
now announced we're withdrawing from Viet. p 683

p 790 In Cambodia first fight - first time for J.L. in combat  
- dreams - saw NVA soldier from behind - the one  
in my dreams always trying to kill me - I yelled Gook!

p 794 - I was a killer - insecure - drank heavily  
Guilt - ashamed - shouldn't have done it. Told no one.

p 741 - Why we were expelled from Char. Co. - no longer can  
crews stay overnight in field - Puget's parents learned of  
his heat stroke -

p 778 - Tom Gook - I never said it - came from Korea  
means person - it was racist

p 792 - I shouted Gook

A visit to Vietnam memorial - ten years after it was  
inaugurated

p 839-40

I have a sense that the expression of my own  
grief may have barely begun

The war about Love?

I hope the Vietnam War has shaken some of the arrogance  
out of America's leaders and taught them caution,  
and prudence maybe even humility when considering  
military action against another country.

I am old now

June 22, 1970 - hospitaliz

28<sup>th</sup> CBS - created a climate of reckless coverage of down  
some colleagues saw me with a death wish - I missed  
the adventures of war.

Spent 12 years at CBS, quit in 1999

Alcohol, drugs, Valium - went to AA - become paranoid -  
couldn't sleep

started book - ran out of money

Rome Culeage found me in London - org. had heart -  
didn't drink for 4 1/2 years.

daughter Jessica and Rebecca - wife Joan

Mic and friend & cat Sefuncter -

Mic dies at 13

We symbolized our 2 countries p 822  
I drank with him (Cognac)

Peter Kalischer

Tim Page

Sean Flynn

John Steinbeck

Keith Kay

James Clevenger

brother (Arthur Lawrence)

Mike Herr

Sam Costan

Helen Stone

Juni Wilson

Bob Frank

---

KHE SANH

Hue

Con Thien

Plei Me

Text

A Shun Valley