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Part 1 Many soldiers, Americans, Vietnamese, politicians, and anyone else surrounding the Vietnam War experienced different turning points and experienced them at different times; either turning them towards the war or completely against the war. March 16, marks the date during the Vietnam war when the United States Army sent soldiers from Charlie Company into My Lai on a “search and destroy” mission to locate and a kill civilians. Many innocent civilians including elders, women, children and babies were killed within a few hours. While many Americans were in denial, “65 percent of Americans claimed they were not upset by the massacre,” My Lai turned out to be a definite turning point for most (344). While Americans were coming to the conclusion that the Vietnam War was “fundamentally unjust and immoral,” some of the soldiers fighting in Vietnam were experiencing feelings of guilt. Larry Colburn, a helicopter door-gunner was given the same mission as the other soldiers but his experiences changed his awareness of the what was really happening in My Lai. The pilot, Hugh Thompson and his crew, Larry Colburn and Glenn Andreotta, were sent in beforehand to find armed civilians, on that specific day they only came across one. As they flew around they came across a Vietnamese women who was unarmed and injured; to show the squad they were safe to come near they had marked her with green smoke. “We were hovering six feet off the ground not more than twenty feet away when Captain Medina came over, kicked her, stepped back, and finished her off. He did it right in front of us. When we saw Medina do that, it all clicked. It was our guys doing the killing” (347). This was the exact moment when Larry Colburn became aware of what as happening in My Lai, this was the moment that he experienced his turning point. Larry Colburn felt guilty, he felt that he was “indirectly killing them” by marking the civilians with green smoke (347). Larry Colburn was not the only one that had experienced a turning point at that moment, Thompson and Andreotta also did too. When Thompson spotted a group of women and children, he landed the aircraft and he informed Colburn and Andreotta, “If they open up on these people when I’m getting them out of the bunker, shoot ‘em’” (348). While Larry Colburn took watch, the Americans did not shoot and neither did he. While flying over a ditch full of a hundred dead Vietnamese, Andreotta spotted movement within the group. Thompson landed while Andreotta searched for the child who had been moving around. They did not know if this child was a boy or a girl, but “just a cute little child” (348). This moment had forever changed Larry Colburn, something that he worries about for the rest of his life. Even many years later when returning to Vietnam to participate in the opening of a My Lai Peace Park and the dedication of a new elementary school he was reunited with Do Hao, the young boy who he had once helped save. “I have worried

about Do Hao for thirty-three years. All these years I've prayed he was four or five years old and had no memory of it, that the horror would be erased. Turns out he was eight. He remembers everything.'" These moments were the turning point for Larry Colburn a soldier in the Vietnam War because he experienced and witnessed what the Americans did in My Lai on March 16, 1968. Part 2 When Richard Nixon became president in 1969, he definitely was not handed something pleasant, the Vietnam War had been going on for almost a decade now and was not getting any better. President Nixon was the only president to resign, which may or may not have been because of public pressure. The public pressure began when Daniel Ellsberg, former Defense Department official, decided on what he called "'revolutionary judo'" the persuasion of the public on just how bad President Nixon really was by releasing the Pentagon Papers to numerous newspapers (435). The Pentagon Papers consisted of seven thousand pages of secret documents about the history of the United States decision making towards the Vietnam War, none of the decisions were made by Nixon. Daniel Ellsberg increasingly opposed the Vietnam War, he believed that we were "'stripped away all legitimate rationales for what we were doing' in Vietnam" (432). Daniel Ellsberg tried putting himself in Randy Kehler's shoes, a Harvard graduate who was willing to go to prison for refusal of being drafted. It changed Daniel's viewpoint on the war, because he wondered to himself if he would be willing to go to prison for refusing to collaborate in an unjust war. As Americans we were "eating our young. We're relying on them to fight the war and to end it" (434). Daniel Ellsberg knew that the documents didn't intentionally show what Richard Nixon had planned to do in Vietnam but by releasing them into the newspaper, Nixon's response is all Daniel needed. Because of Richard Nixon's response questions amongst the public, the Watergate incident came to bloom. The Watergate incident consisted of the long list of criminal activities that Richard Nixon was involved with. By releasing the papers, "Its made people understand the presidents lie all the time, not just occasionally but all the time. Not everything they say is a lie, but anything they say could be a lie." Because of the Pentagon Papers being released to the American public, President Nixon's response led to a deeper investigation of his involvement with Watergate and numerous other accounts involving the Vietnam War which then carved the pathway to the ending of the Vietnam War.

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