

60 MINUTES

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With CBS News Correspondents

Mike Wallace, Morley Safer, Harry Reasoner and Ed Bradley

"HELP WANTED" - Produced by David Burke

"LEST WE FORGET" - Produced by Tom Bettag

"STING WITHIN A STING" - Produced by Harry Moses

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ED BRADLEY: According to their ads, National Executive Search in Washington, D.C. is the oldest and finest of the career-counseling firms. They promise to act as a sort of talent agent to market you, and you pay them, up front, 10% of the salary you expect to receive.

JOHN: A well-oiled, professionally-run business scam.

WOMAN: A smooth con job.

BRADLEY: How many job interviews did you get?

JOHN: Absolutely no interviews.

MAN: No interviews.

WOMAN: No interviews.

ROSS PEROT: This is an appropriate memorial to the Marines who fought in World War II; and, believe me, they love it. Give us an appropriate memorial for the men who fought in Vietnam.

MORLEY SAFER: Was it the design that provoked such controversy or the designer, who was a student, a woman, an American, a Chinese-American.

MAYA LIN : There would be some people who fought in that war who would really hate the idea that someone of my descent would have designed a memorial, the Vietnam memorial.

MIKE WALLACE: This portly gentleman is con-man Joe Meltzer, currently serving 15 years in prison. In 1978, Joe Meltzer went to work for the FBI to lure some members of organized crime into the FBI sting operation that was to become famous under the code name Abscam. To help establish Meltzer as legitimate, an FBI agent gave him a letter. What the FBI didn't anticipate was that Joe Meltzer would use that letter to set up his own sting.

I'm Mike Wallace.

SAFER: I'm Morley Safer.

HARRY REASONER: I'm Harry Reasoner.

BRADLEY: I'm Ed Bradley. Those stories and more tonight on 60 MINUTES.

ANNOUNCER: This portion of 60 MINUTES is sponsored by . . . .

(Announcement)

BRADLEY: We should emphasize that we haven't been talking about regular employment agencies. They are, for the most part, licensed and get a fee only if they find you a job. Career-counseling companies like National Executive Search are generally not regulated. But in New York City, at least, they soon may be. The city's Consumer Affairs Department called attention recently to what it termed "deceptive practices" by career counselors, and it has asked the city government to adopt strict rules regulating companies in that field.

(Announcements)

"LEST WE FORGET"

MORLEY SAFER: Lest we forget the Vietnam war, a group of veterans began a movement a few years ago to collect money for a memorial to the men and women who served in what was probably America's least popular war. Provided there are no last-minute hitches, that memorial, which doesn't look like this or any other memorial you've ever seen, will be dedicated next month in Washington, and a quarter of a million veterans are expected to be present to head the parade that an indifferent or angry nation has so long denied them.

The idea for a memorial began to take shape when millionaire Ross Perot got things going with a check to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund for \$160,000. The American Legion pledged a million dollars. Finally \$7-million was collected. The federal government donated the site. But instead of healing the wounds of Vietnam the memorial issue renewed the bitterness, bitterness no one anticipated back in 1980 when the ground was consecrated.

CLERGYMAN: For those who yet suffer wounds, for those who are not yet home, let this place be a mecca for healing.

(Music: "Battle Hymn of the Republic")

SAFER: Such a mecca, a memorial that would truly heal, would surely be something most Americans would welcome, a memorial that would be neither of the right nor of the left—no doves on it, no hawks.

The search for a suitable design had been conducted in the most American of ways, a nationwide competition open to everyone, just like the Vietnam war itself.

Some of the entries were interesting—a gigantic steel helmet with bullet holes front and back—1400 in all from prestigious architectural firms to rank amateurs, to be judged by some of the finest architects and sculptors in the country.

There were several conditions. The memorial must have inscribed into it the name of the 57,692 men and women who died. Because it was situated so close to the Washington Monument with its circle of flags, the use of a flag was discouraged. And most important, there was a condition that a number of entrants did not heed, that the memorial make no political statement about the war. The contestants would be anonymous. The judges would not know their names or their reputations.

And so a winning design was chosen. It was number 1,026. We'll show you the designer in a moment.

But the design itself was very, very simple: two black polished granite walls that would reflect the park on their surfaces and would point to the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. The names of the dead would be inscribed, not in alphabetical order, but in the order in which they were lost.

The architectural community hailed the design as a triumph—elegant, understated, contemplative, simple—so remarkably unpolitical that it won the support of Barry Goldwater, William Westmoreland, the American Legion, and George McGovern. But, like anything that Vietnam touches, not so simple; for, in the eyes of a few beholders, the design was an insult.

ROSS PEROT: You have two choices—start all over again, or modify the design.

SAFER: Ross Perot, who helped bankroll the competition, was not pleased.

PEROT: This is an appropriate memorial to the Marines who fought in World War II; and, believe me, they love it. Give us an appropriate memorial for the men who fought in Vietnam.

SAFER: The war has suddenly come to the forefront again. It's being fought down the street here on that memorial site.

PEROT: I— I— I think you are making a— I— I would be dishonest if I downplayed the fact that I think you've made an excellent observation. I think that we are—that's exactly what we're talking about.

SAFER: Congressman Don Baily of Pennsylvania, Company Commander, Silver Star.

REP. DON BAILY: We're talking about a mixture and a conflict of ideas and perceptions, based again upon whether or not America should have been involved in Vietnam. Absolutely.

SAFER: Was it the design that provoked such controversy or the designer, who was a student, a woman, an American, a Chinese-American.

MAYA LIN: I think it is, for some, very difficult for them. I mean they sort of lump us all together, for one thing. What is it? There is a term used. I first heard about it maybe two years ago. It's called a gook. (Laughing) I guess it's a very derogatory comment towards Vietnamese. But yes, I would say if— if you were being rational and logical, there would be some people who fought in that war who would really hate the idea that someone of my descent would have designed a memorial, the Vietnam memorial.

SAFER: The winner of the competition turned out to be Maya Lin, a 21-year-old Yale undergraduate from Athens, Ohio, the daughter of Henry Lin, who heads the Fine Arts Department at the University of Ohio. Professor Lin was born in China, but fled when the Communists took over, long before Maya was born.

SAFER: Let me ask you a silly question. How Chinese are you?

MAYA LIN: As apple pie. (Safer laughing) Born and raised in the Midwest, surrounded by non-Chinese people. I just really never looked at myself as a minority. I looked at myself as just any other kid.

JAN SCRUGGS: I've talked to Vietnam veterans who, you know, they like the design or they're indifferent towards it; they says, "Gosh, it just really upset me a little bit when I found out that the designer was a— you know, a young girl who hadn't been through the war itself."

SAFER: Jan Scruggs heads the Memorial Fund.

SCRUGGS: I think, with the same design, if it were designed by an Anglo-Saxon male, I think the difficulties that we had would have been considerably less.

TOM CARHARDT: I don't see how a black ditch, underground, no flag, no inscription, a jumble of names, I don't see how that honors anyone. It's a black sarcophagus.

SAFER: Tom Carhardt, West Point infantry platoon leader, was the first veteran to speak out. He triggered a campaign against the design.

CARHARDT: I want to have the public accept my conception of myself and my brothers and sisters, that we served honorably in what President Reagan called a noble cause.

MAYA LIN: It's like people read political statements into what really is a very pure thought, and those political statements reflect more what they're about than what the form is about.

SAFER: Still, it was a heady time for a student who was being hailed as a genius.

MAYA LIN: I wanted something that would make people, tomorrow, yesterday or a hundred years from now, remember and honor their— those who died, those who served. What I've given, I hope, to people is a living park. And for me, I felt that was the most beautiful way to remember.

SAFER: Last winter the granite began arriving and was shipped up to Vermont for cutting and polishing. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund had gotten all the right signatures and approvals, satisfied the various commissions—no small feat. But Maya Lin soon found herself in the center of other peoples' problems.

Conservative columnist James J. Kilpatrick loved the design; but conservative columnist Patrick Buchanan wrote that she had designed, quote, "a wall of shame." He said that none of the judges were Vietnam veterans, and that one, quote, "had a long-standing association with the American Communist Party," unquote. Buchanan declines to name names or to be interviewed, but less than a week after that column appeared, 27 Republican congressmen asked President Reagan to invalidate the competition and start another one.

Maya Lin went back to her parents in Athens, Ohio, a bit confused and a bit angry. Enter the full weight of the federal government, Secretary of the Interior James Watt, who can have the last word on the use of federal land. He did not like her design and demanded some changes.

INTERIOR SECRETARY JAMES WATT: Unless they approve of those three changes, there will be no Vietnam memorial here in Washington, D.C. (Applause)

SAFER: Before ground-breaking began, Secretary Watt got the Memorial Fund to agree to his three modifications: the addition of a statue, a flag and an inscription. Maya Lin protested and hoped that the Washington Fine Arts Commission, which has the absolute last word on the esthetics of memorials, would support her. The commission said it would reserve judgment on the additions, depending on their design and placement.

It was the recommendation of the project architects that flag and statue be place over there somewhere, near the entrance to the park, where they would not conflict with Maya Lin's design.

But the critics said no, they wanted flag and statue front and center where they would be the focal point for the memorial, and Maya Lin's design would merely be a backdrop. Last month, with much fanfare, the memorial committee presented its modified plan.

SCRUGGS: We are here today, though, to unveil perhaps the most extraordinary piece of sculpture that the world has ever seen. Have a look, everyone. There it is.

SAFER: The statue, certainly not offensive, but perhaps superfluous to so simple a memorial. This time, no open competition. The Fund, bending to Watt's and Perot's demands, went out and commissioned an heroic statue and announced flag and statue would stand front and center.

SAFER: The head of the American Legion, who originally supported Maya Lin's design, grudgingly went along with the compromise, saying it was necessary in order to satisfy the demands of a small group of vocal critics who claimed to speak for all the veterans.

REP. BAILEY: Don't you think that I have an obligation to try to see that a memorial to friends and comrades that I had who died, to a country that I believe in because of what it stands for—because of what it stands for—that I should express myself on this memorial?

SAFER: There are those who might say, "Look. You fellows," meaning those critics of the— of the— her design, "you set these— we have these rules, and everybody agrees to them; and then, when something comes along that isn't quite the way you want it, you want to change the rules."

PEROT  
REP. BAILEY: No. It's not— it's nothing to do with rules. But the— I think maybe the main thing is that everything we do in this country, we arrive at through debate, through controversy, and we finally work out a plan.

CARHARDT: The license of Congress is not to heal the wounds of Vietnam. the license of Congress is to honor and recognize those who served in Vietnam, not those who went to Canada, not Jane Fonda and her friends.

SAFER: You really think— you really feel that's what it leaves it open to?

CARHARDT: I don't know. (Laughing) I— I— I'm emotionally caught up in this, obviously, and so perhaps I can't see the great splendor and so on. Well, most of us aren't artists. We want something that will make us feel a part of America.

SAFER: From an artistic point of view, does tacking on the flag and the statue detract from it?

PEROT: Probably.

SAFER: Ross Perot, the millionaire who financed the competition.

PEROT: This is a special situation. This is a case of taking a beautiful design and trying to modify it so it becomes an effective memorial. Now, I have met Miss Lin, I've visited with Miss Lin; and if there had been anyway for anyone to explain to Miss Lin what the veterans wanted, I— I'm convinced she can produce anything.

MAYA LIN: He really felt that, you know, okay, we've given them something peaceful; now— now what do we do for the heroics? What do we do for the—? He couldn't see the sort of quiet dignity that underlies the whole design. He really couldn't. He really looked at contemplative as being passive, almost, I would say.

And I just, I mean, we— we interpret the design, we interpret the form differently, and everyone is entitled to their opinions.

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SAFER: So who wins the battle of the Vietnam memorial? Maya Lin's design is nearly complete. On Wednesday, the Washington Fine Arts Commission must decide if the statue is appropriate and where flag and statue should be placed. Ross Perot and Secretary Watt promise big trouble if they're not happy with that decision. As for Maya Lin, she feels that not only has her design been violated but her integrity as an artist and the rules of fair competition.

But all that may be secondary—for, in life, it could be argued, the 57,000 were the pawns of those fighting political battles on the home front. It is worth noting that, in death, they are still being thus used.

SCRUGGS: You live in Washington, everything is up for grabs and for compromise, and we were in a situation in which either we made a compromise with this group of individuals, or Secretary Watt was not going to give us a construction permit.

SAFER: What happens if the Washington Fine Arts Commission says, yes you can have the flag and statue, but not right in front, not right there, put it off a hundred or two hundred yards?

PEROT: If anybody ever even raises that point and tries to change that, it is the worst kind of bad faith, it is the worst kind of double-dealing. And if that should even begin to occur, I will intend to spend whatever time, money and energy is necessary to see that people keep their words, because we owe that to the Vietnam veterans. And I'm going to have a lot of powerful allies. \*

SAFER: Maya, how do you feel about the compromise?

MAYA LIN: The compromise? Oh, it becomes a question of who's doing the compromising. Right now, I would never be a party to something that would ruin that design, and yet you don't know if you have any power to prevent it. You just sort have to watch, and sort of cry.

(Announcements)

ANNOUNCER: 60 MINUTES, a CBS News weekly magazine, will continue.

(Announcements)

"STING WITHIN A STING"

ED BRADLEY: As you may recall, the FBI Abscam operation centered around a bogus outfit known as Abdul Enterprises, which promised certain congressmen large payoffs in return for helping fictitious wealthy Arabs in various schemes. "Sting Within a Sting" is the tale of a low-level informer named Joe Meltzer, who, while employed by the FBI in the preliminary stages of Abscam, used Abdul Enterprises stationery—given him, incidentally, by the FBI—to swindle a group of businessmen out of \$150,000. With that stationery as his bait, Meltzer convinced some 20 businessmen that he could steer Arab loan-money their way if each would give him five or ten thousand dollars in "good-faith money". That was the sting—for Meltzer knew what the whole world would eventually know, that there were no wealthy Arabs, no loans to be had. Now the question is: what did the FBI know about Meltzer's sting within a sting? As Mike Wallace reports, there seems little doubt they knew just about everything.

MIKE WALLACE: This portly gentleman is con-man Joe Meltzer, currently serving 15 years in prison, after pleading guilty to his fraudulent scheme. In 1978, Joe Meltzer, to evade a 30-month jail term for another fraud, went to work for the FBI to lure some members of organized crime into the FBI sting operation that was to become famous under the code name Abscam.