

**Unpublished Game (The Bonus Army)**  
**Nicholas O'Brien — Dialog Sample**  
**Written using Ink**

ATWELL (V.O.)

There were fires everywhere. ↵

I had just arrived at what the men called Camp McCloskey. ↵

Waters had sent me to check in with Carter[...]↵, though he was staying in town at a hotel.

ATWELL (V.O) (con't)

\*Choice\*

1. He should be here.

2. Must be nice to have a fresh bed.

ATWELL (V.O) (con't)

I think the men would appreciate seeing some leadership. ↵

We were a broken bunch, after all. ↵

Watching Camp Marks burn from Patton's tanks, it was hard to imagine how we would rally. ↵

The rising smoke here was unnerving to look at.[...]↵ I rubbed the singed hairs on my knuckles. ↵

ATWELL (V.O) (con't)

I wonder who was footing the bill. ↵

It's not like our buddies had spare change[...]↵, the BEF never had much of a treasury. ↵

The meals of the camp were being sent from Johnstown. Even though we were invited, I know the mayor said our stay was becoming unwelcome. ↵

ATWELL (V.O) (con't)

Someone approached.

OFFICER

You Atwell?

ATWELL

\*Choice\* man\_of\_the\_people - BOOL

1. I am [False]
2. Call me Eddie. [True]

OFFICER

I've been told by the Chief to escort you around camp.

ATWELL (V.O)

His hole-filled slacks and busted-open shoes were a hallmark of time-served in the BEF.

ATWELL

We'll be fine[...] but send someone to let Carter know we've arrived.

OFFICER

I've got my orders, Eddie...

JOHN (interrupting)

You're dismissed, buddy. You and the boys should be at ease.

IF man\_of\_the\_people is TRUE

ATWELL (V.O)

The man nodded and shuffled back towards a makeshift tent made from poorly sewn sheets.

ELSE

OFFICER

Yessir, right away.

OFFICE EXIT

ATWELL (V.O.)

Even here, discipline hadn't wavered.

ATWELL

Whatdya think John?

JOHN

Well... it's a mess, alright.

(pause)

I'll get our gear.

JOHN EXIT

ATWELL (V.O)

John Kennedy and I were sent by Waters himself. After the rout in Anacostia, our message was clear:↵

(pause)

"Go home." ↵

Waters was still down in Washington trying to negotiate with Governor Pinchot and Willard from the B&O.

\*Choice – SAVED\* news\_answers – enum

1. I hope Carter had good news. [NEWS]
2. These men deserved answers. [ANSWERS]

ATWELL (V.O)

I could see the men needed some uplifting.↵

Rugged tents, soiled bedrolls, and split-open knapsacks were littered everywhere. The men were likewise in bad shape. ↵

The relatively high spirits from Camp Marks were in tatters. We were losing the fight for the Bonus.↵

I headed into the thick of it. ↵

ATWELL (V.O)

Vets had come from every state of the Union to collect what was owed. Now those dreams were dashed.↵

Some had formed splinter groups and Bolshie sentiments were spreading quickly.↵

I needed to rally morale. ↵

ATWELL (V.O) (con't)

As I approached a downtrodden group I heard another car pull up behind me. ↵

The passenger door opened before the car came to a halt. I turned to see someone walking in my direction.

\*CHOICE\* watch\_Sewilla – BOOL

1. I watched her approach. [TRUE]

2. She walked past. [FALSE]

SEWILLA

Eddie.↵

ATWELL (V.O.)

\*Choice\* purpose\_or\_papers - ENUM

1. She moved with purpose. [purpose]
2. She consulted papers midstride. [papers]

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

The overgrowth and muck of the earth didn't slow her pace. She looked as she did when she first came to Camp Marks: a mix of determination and anger.↵

I remembered when she first came.↵

Waters hadn't given her much time of day, but when she started securing meetings with politicians, he grew to admire her.↵

IF man\_of\_the\_people is TRUE

I watched her zig-zag between tents.↵

ELSE

I followed her at a distance.↵

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

I could tell one folded broadsheet was a train map. Probably the Hobo line.↵

The others looked like torn ledger pages or rushed notes.↵

She was drafting a plan.↵

Though Camp Marks was lost, she wasn't about to stop the fight. Or maybe she was planning her exit...↵

IF news\_answers is NEWS

I hoped she wasn't bound for more trouble.↵

ELIF news\_answers is ANSWERS

I hope she hasn't lost sight of our goals. ↵

AWTWELL (V.O.)

She bee-lined to a tent with a torn California flag, the grizzly's torso split apart. ↵

No doubt she was looking for some of the delegation she came with. ↵

Her and a troupe of Gold Star Mothers came to the capital by car originally. ↵

By the time we staged our first sit-in California made up the second largest delegation of the BEF. ↵

At first, she claimed she was a reporter for the California Eagle. ↵

Later I found out she was a sister, widow, and new bride of vets due backpay. ↵

She wanted to go visit her fallen husband and brother, but chartered boats no longer served both whites and colored women. ↵

IF news\_answers is NEWS

That's where Sewilla drew the line. ↵

ELIF news\_answer is ANSWERS

After that, Sewilla became one of us. ↵

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

IF watch\_Sewilla is TRUE

I watched her from afar. ↵

Though some had considered her a spokeswoman for the BEF, it was my opinion it'd be best to give her a wide berth. ↵

ELSE

I figured if she had a plan that involved the BEF she'd let Carter or I know. ↴

I didn't want to muddy the works, besides I was here on my own business. ↴

\*CHOICE SAVE\* john\_or\_not - BOOL

1. John cleared his throat. [TRUE]
2. People started to gather around her. [FALSE]

JOHN

What's *she* doing here?

ATWELL (V.O.)

I could tell John resented her.

\*CHOICE - SAVED\* announcement\_lead\_in - enum

1. She was always charismatic. [CHARISMA]
2. He couldn't see past her skin. [SKIN]
3. Jealousy didn't suit John. [JEALOUS]

ATWELL (V.O.)

Sewilla had pull. It came easy to her to find ways of connecting with all sorts of people. The buddies needed more like her, even if folks like John couldn't see it. ↴

I ignored John's comment.

ATWELL (V.O.)

Jim Crow hadn't prevented men from serving, but it seemed to keep their spouses from honoring their memory. ↴

It was a shame, but a battle I didn't know how to fight.

ATWELL

Shut up, John. ↴

ATWELL (V.O.)

John's pettiness fueled his ambition. He wanted more from the BEF than the bonus. Perhaps a career in politics. ↴

But he needed to keep a lid on this side of him. It showed weakness more than grit. ↵

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

I kept an eye on the crowd as I wandered around camp.

\*CHOICE – SAVED\* announcement\_lead\_in – enum

1. The railway map was spread open[...] [RAILWAY]
2. She periodically pointed, assigning tasks. [TASKS]
3. I thought to move closer. [CLOSER]

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

Rumors of Willard giving safe passage to vets on the B&O were starting to circulate. Sewilla might be coordinating with others their long trip home. ↵

Going to Chicago might be easier, but the southern branch through St. Louis would be more direct. ↵

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

It looked as though Sewilla was giving out orders to the delegation. I hadn't known they were that regimented. ↵

But if Sewilla was planning on marching back on DC, some planning within her contingent was necessary. ↵

SEWILLA

... I'll check in with the others camped in Baltimore and we'll find a way back into the District on foot if we have to!

ATWELL (V.O.)

She quickly folded the map and stuffed the other papers under her arm as the porter she came with opened the trunk and started handing out clean clothes and fresh socks. ↵

IF announcement\_lead\_in is CHARISMA

ATWELL (V.O.)

I tried to ready myself for assembling some of the men for my address. ↵

ELIF announcement\_lead\_in is SKIN

ATWELL (V.O.)

Looking around, I saw families and vets of all sorts. To deliver my news, I'd need someone like Sewilla on my side.↵

ELIF announcement\_lead\_in is JEALOUS

ATWELL (V.O.)

I needed to steel myself for relaying Waters' message.↵

ELIF announcement\_lead\_in is RAILWAY

ATWELL (V.O.)

Either way, I hope Sewilla was planning routes home and not back to the Capital.↵

ELIF announcement\_lead\_in is TASKS

ATWELL (V.O.)

I hate to burst her bubble but the word down from Waters would surely dampen her agenda.↵

ELIF announcement\_lead\_in is CLOSER

ATWELL (V.O.)

It was time to intervene, so I signaled to John to follow me and broke toward the center of camp.↵

IF man\_of\_the\_people is TRUE

ATWELL (V.O.)

I motioned to the man who first greeted us.↵

ELSE

ATWELL

You there!

ATWELL

\*Choie\* gather\_word — enum

1. Gather the men. [GATHER]

2. Spread word around camp... [WORD]

ATWELL (V.O.)



John took my cue and walked toward a campfire to let the buddies know an announcement was being made.

ATWELL

... order from Commander Waters will be issued in five minutes.

ATWELL (V.O.)

He trotted off towards his contingent, his broken shoe soles flapping with every stride.

IF john\_or\_not is TRUE

ATWELL (V.O.)

Sewilla edged her way through the growing throng, not wanting to miss a thing.

ELSE

ATWELL (V.O.)

Sewilla, visibly annoyed by the interruption, led her delegation toward my perch.

BUDDY

What's the word from Washington?

ATWELL

\*CHOICE-SAVE\* ignore\_buddy — BOOL

1. [pause]. [TRUE]
2. Commander Waters sent me[...] [FALSE]

ATWELL

Listen up! ↵

As an officer of the BEF, I am here to tell you: it's over.  
↵

ATWEL (con't)

... to notify you that the official position of the BEF is to stand down and disperse.↵

IF ignore\_buddy is TRUE

ATWELL (V.O.)

The crowd reacted immediately, shouting back at me denials and frustrations.↵

ELSE

ATWELL (V.O.)

The men stood shocked and heartbroken. Many removed their caps in stunned disbelief.↵

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

I outlined the details of the disbandment of the BEF, and the tentative plans to help return folks back home.↵

I noticed Sewilla immediately trek away from the group. She had heard enough.↵

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

\*CHOICE - SAVE\* leave\_or\_continue - enum

1. I watched as she... [LEAVE]
2. I continued my address... [CONTINUE]

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

...marched hurriedly to her previous post. She hesitated a moment, hands on hips, absorbing what she just heard.↵

From this distance I could see her shaking her head furiously while consoling her companions.

IF john\_or\_not is TRUE

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

I didn't bother trying to interpret her actions any further.}

ELSE

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

She seemed to be reassuring others of their original plans.

ATWELL (V.O.)

She quickly packed up. ↵

By this point, I was done delivering my news and descended into the crowd. ↵

I told the mob of inquiring and angry men surrounding me to address questions to Carter once he arrived.↵

While pressing my way past their groping fury, I heard a car motor combust into action and a cloud of dust bloom from spinning tires. ↵

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

... choosing to refocus on the men before me. Their confusion and anger built to a hubbub that drowned out my final statements. ↵

John came to my side and started to assert his rank over the crowd. Shouting down the opposition, his aggression did little to sweeten this sour news.

IF john\_or\_not is TRUE

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

I let him have his piece, shifting the ire of the mob from me to him.

ELSE

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

I didn't want to be here anymore. I made my way toward the car.

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

I'd done my job. ↵

Now it's up to this lot to figure out what's next. I'd leave it in Carters hands. ↵

As I approached the Ford we drove here. I noticed the other car was no longer parked behind us. ↵

Tire tracks in this dusty patch had made a tight u-turn, driving away from Camp McCloskey. ↵

IF leave\_or\_continue is LEAVE

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

Looking around, I didn't see Sewilla anywhere.

ELIF leave\_or\_continue is CONTINUE

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

I looked back toward the California camp. Sewilla had taken off.

ATWELL (V.O.) (con't)

That was the last I saw of her.

EXIT ATWELL

END SCENE