While scholars have paid considerable attention over the last forty years to Melvin Van Peebles’ 1971 film, *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song,* generally crediting it with establishing the Blaxploitation genre and opening Hollywood to the influence of the “L.A. School” of black filmmakers, little has been written on Van Peebles’ first feature length film, *Story of a Three-Day Pass* (1968). Unlike the radical, political, violent and hypersexual *Sweetback,* *Story* offers a simple tale, following the military promotion and demotion of Turner, a black soldier stationed in France who has sex with a white woman during his three-day pass to Paris. An experimental film released first in 1967 in France as *La Permission,* *Story* employs the avant-garde strategies of the *Nouvelle Vague* to depict its protagonist’s transgression as part of his larger psychological struggle to negotiate the political and cultural imperatives of the two-race systems of two different nations. In this paper, I argue that *Story of a Three-Day Pass* thematizes not only the problems of black second-class citizenship within the United States and its military, but also the added challenges of black soldiers who lived abroad, in nations shaped by very different race legislation and cultural mores.

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