

Lt. Col. Joshua Chamberlain, from Maine, was an officer in the Union army during the Civil War. He had no prior military experience before the War Between the States.

In this clip from "Gettysburg," a film based on *The Killer Angels* (by Michael Shaara), Chamberlain discusses the meaning of the war (and equality) with Pvt. Buster Kilrain.

Although an educated man, who became President of Bowdoin College, Chamberlain has things to learn from Kilrain (an immigrant from Ireland).

In this conversation, taken from the book (and used in the film), we learn Kilrain's view of equality. We also discover the source of the novel's title:

... Colonel, darling, you're a lovely man. I see a vast great difference between us, yet I admire you, lad. You're an idealist, praise be. The truth is, Colonel... There is no "divine spark." There's many a man alive no more of value than a dead dog. Believe me.

When you've seen them hang each other the way I have back in the Old Country. Equality? What I'm fighting for is to prove I'm a better man than many of them.

Where have you seen this "divine spark" in operation, Colonel? Where have you noted this magnificent equality? No two things on Earth are equal or have an equal chance. Not a leaf, not a tree. There's many a man worse than me, and some better ... But I don't think race or country matters a damn. What matters, Colonel ... Is justice. Which is why I'm here.

I'll be treated as I deserve, not as my father deserved. I'm Kilrain ... And I damn all gentlemen. There is only one aristocracy ... And that is right here [Kilrain points to his head]. And that's why we've got to win this war. (The Killer Angeles, by Michael Shaara, page 188.)

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[Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg](#)

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Credits:

Clip from the 1993 film "Gettysburg," based on *The Killer Angels* (a book by Michael Shaara), online courtesy YouTube. Copyright, Turner Pictures, all rights reserved. Provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the film.

Directed by:

Ronald F. Maxwell

Produced by:

Moctesuma Esparza

Robert Katz

Screenplay by:

Ronald F. Maxwell

Starring:

Martin Sheen - General **Robert E. Lee**

Tom Berenger - Lieutenant General **James Longstreet**

Jeff Daniels - Colonel **Joshua Chamberlain**
Stephen Lang - Major General **George Pickett**
Joseph Fuqua - Major General **J.E.B. Stuart**
George Lazenby - General **Johnston Pettigrew**
James Patrick Stuart - Colonel **Edward Porter Alexander**

Musical Score by:

Randy Edelman

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

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