

AIR FORCE ONE

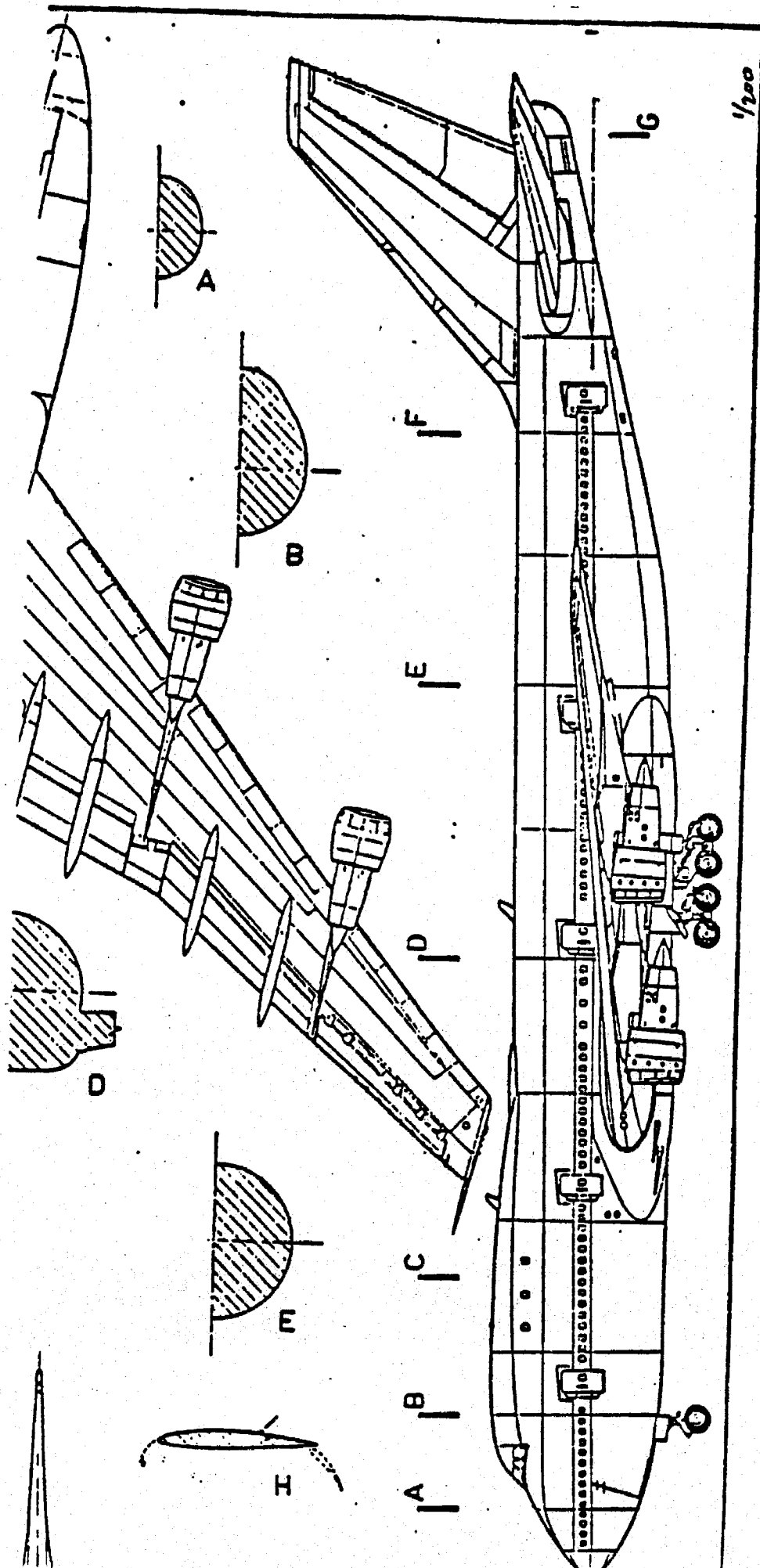
An Original Screenplay

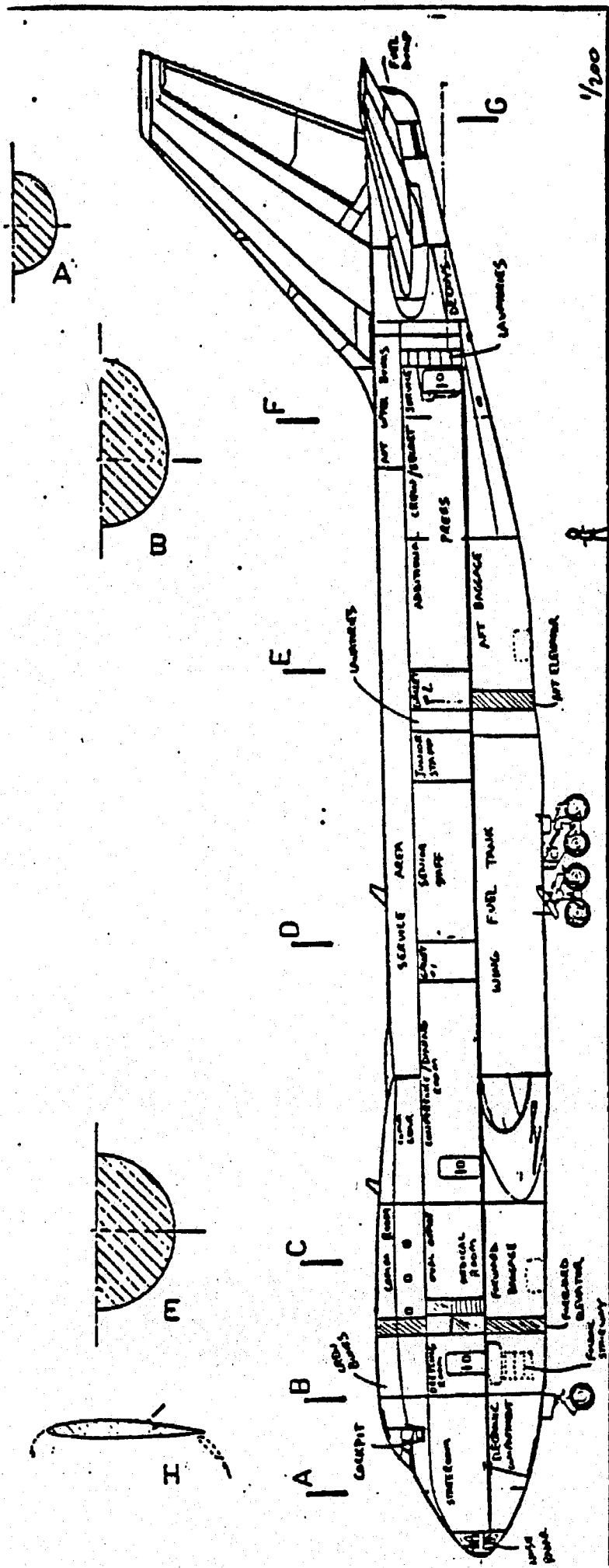
By

~~Robert Boris~~

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1/200

AIR FORCE ONE

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - THE NATION'S CAPITAL - DUSK

BRIEF OPENING CREDITS appear over a HIGH HELICOPTER SHOT above the nation's capital. As a golden sun sets behind a shimmering Potomac, we SUPER:

"DAY ONE — WASHINGTON, D.C. — 19:30 HOURS."

EXT. THE D.C. BELTWAYS - DUSK

CREDITS CONTINUE as people in cars stream home from work. The people of 'The District' call it a day. But the day never ends for the people of Andrews Air Force Base. Especially for the CREWMEN who work in HANGER 31.

EXT. ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE - 89TH AIRLIFT WING - NIGHT

A huge block structure towers over the tarmac. The structure is made all the more imposing by ribbons of razor wire, huge security fences, surveillance cameras, and ARMED GUARDS...all who keep watch over one of the most secure buildings in the world. HANGAR 31.

Not even Fort Knox is made this secure.

In the distance, we TRACK with a Chevy Blazer as it drives through security check points. The DRIVER flashes his I.D., and drives onto the base.

Lights FLARE as the Blazer gets close to Hangar 31. Suddenly, a mammoth door slides open, admitting the big vehicle.

INT. HANGAR 31 - NIGHT

As the Chevy ENTERS the building, we take a closer look at the one and only resident of Hangar 31 -- the most famous airplane in the world -- AIR FORCE ONE.

We REVEAL the plane in pristine condition. The Presidential Seal...the U.S. Flag...the sky blue fuselage...and the Military Personnel who swarm over her, doing their pre-flight checks.

ANGLE - THE CHEVY BLAZER

as the DRIVER steps out of his vehicle, we SEE his I.D. NAME PLATE. It reads;

MASTER SGT. D.F. HARRIS

Harris is 40, rugged, with a friendly smile, and a piercing gaze. He seems quite impressed as he looks at the great plane. A moment later he looks around the busy hangar ... then heads for the AFT CARGO HOLD.

AIR FORCE ONE

TITLES RESUME as JP-4 jet fuel is pumped aboard. Access panels get one last check, then are locked and secured.

Under MASTER SGT. HARRIS'S watchful eye, VIP cargo in aluminum containers travel up a conveyor belt...then into the belly of the gleaming metal airplane.

With a casual move, Harris hops a ride up the conveyor belt, and cruises into the belly of the silver juggernaut.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - NIGHT

The President's plane can be likened to a luxury cruise ship with three separate decks. The Flight Deck, the Main Deck, and the Cargo Deck.

INT. FORWARD CARGO HOLD, CARGO DECK - (AF-1) - NIGHT

Deck #3, is the (Cargo Deck,) the lowest deck in the plane. Harris watches as AIRMEN systematically unload large containers. We SEE fresh vegetables, prime cuts of beef, cases of wine, and cordons of the best champagne.

This doesn't look like an airplane..it looks like the kitchen at Ma Maison.

INT. ORDINANCE BAY - MAIN DECK - AFT AREA - (AF-1) - NIGHT

Deck #2, is the (Main Deck,) or the middle floor of the airplane. As Harris passes through, we observe something that should startle us all.

Okay, Reader, sit back...I'm about to reveal the first secret about Air Force One. Unbeknownst to most of the world, the President's plane is armed with two, advanced, state-of-the-art, heat-seeking, air-to-air ... missiles.

Shrouded under tight security, we SEE two SIDEWINDER MISSILES being loaded into the Ordinance Bay. After the missiles are secured, the bay doors snap shut.

INT. COMBAT MISSION CENTER (CMC) - AIR FORCE ONE - NIGHT

Deck #1, (the Flight Deck,) is the topmost floor of the aircraft. AIR FORCE TECHNICIANS are here, checking the Mission Communication System (MCS).

We SEE 85 telephones, 19 TV's, and 11 video players ... all networking through the MCS computers. Stacked on wall units, we SEE black boxes, LED screens, and hi-tech gear... making this room look like the bridge of the Starship Enterprise.

INT. MAIN COMPUTER BULKHEAD, AFT FLIGHT DECK- AF-1 - NIGHT

Harris moves past computer terminals, main frames, micro-processors, and 514 miles of electronic wiring. This is the guts of Air Force One...the electronic heart that pumps out thousands of impulses, and a million bytes of digital data per second.

TITLE CREDITS CONTINUE as we CLOSE IN on Master Sgt. Harris checking the computer panels, testing wires, and changing some motherboards.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - LOCKER AREA- INSIDE HANGAR 31 - NIGHT

Harris lowers himself from the belly of the plane, then walks over to a bank of lockers in a dark corner of the hangar. As he pops open a locker, a TECH OFFICER comes over to him.

TECH OFFICER

Excuse me, Sergeant -- ?

Harris turns around.

TECH OFFICER

(continuing)

What's your assignment here?

MASTER SGT. HARRIS

I'm assigned to...

TECH OFFICER

May I please see your I.D.

Harris takes off his I.D. badge, and hands it to the Tech Officer. The Officer takes a closer look at the badge.

TECH OFFICER

(continuing)

Wait a minute, you're not...

WHOOSH! Without warning, Harris suddenly whips out his arm.

A KNIFE shoots out from under his sleeve, and with one quick move, he SLICES it across the Officer's neck. The man is too stunned to emit a sound. All that comes from his throat ... is blood.

Before he drops, Harris leans forward, grabs him, and shoves him into the open locker. Then he SLAMS the door shut, and puts a combination lock on the handle.

Harris has been slick and fast, like a cat. And no one has seen a thing. Harris looks around, then calmly shoves the SPRING-LOADED KNIFE ... back under his sleeve.

A moment later, he turns, and walks off. TITLE CREDITS...
END, as Harris gets into his Chevy -- and drives away.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - MORNING

A pretty postcard view of Pennsylvania Ave. Over it we SUPER:

"DAY TWO — WASHINGTON, D.C. — 05:20 HOURS."

INT. OVAL OFFICE - THE WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

WE START CLOSE on a LARGE BLACK ATTACHE CASE. It is sealed, and locked. An LED keypad is activated, and starts to blink.

A PAIR OF HANDCUFFS are opened. One end is attached to the briefcase...and the other end is cuffed to a handsome young Naval Officer in full dress uniform.

LT. CMMDR. JACK REESE

is 28, and a Navy SEAL. He's handsome, rugged, and looks like a recruiting poster soldier. He has taught muscles, an icy expression, deep blue eyes, and a smile warm enough to melt glaciers...when he decides to use it.

But at the moment, he likes melting glaciers.

REESE

Do you have your authenticator card,
Mr. President?

The P. nods, and flashes a small plastic case.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(making light)

...I never leave home without it.

PRESIDENT ROBERT GIBSON

We take a closer look at the young President who is sitting at his desk. The P. is 48, athletic, and charismatic. He's an ex-soldier himself, but the rigors of this new job have taken a heavy toll.

Even though he tries to crack a joke, the President's eyes look heavy. He seems troubled. Too many decisions, and too many problems on his mind. After a moment, he looks up --

PRESIDENT GIBSON

This is your first trip on our flying
Taj Mahal, isn't it, Cmmdr.?

REESE

Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

It isn't exactly the exciting world of covert ops, and Elite-1 insertion teams...but it's a pleasant way to travel.

(smiles)

They also tell me it's a one way trip for you.

REESE

Yes, sir. My White House tour is up, and I'm being reassigned to the SEAL Base in San Diego.

(a beat)

...And I must admit I kind of miss those night maneuvers, and underwater assault ops.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Well, I hope you've found your brief stay in Washington, informative and enlightening.

The President SMILES. But before Reese can respond, the CHIEF OF STAFF, GEORGE FARLEY speaks up.

GEORGE FARLEY

is gruff, in his 50's, and takes no bull shit. He walks over to The President, with an urgency in his steps.

FARLEY

Mr. President, we need to go.

The President finishes signing documents, then heads for the door. As he moves, a WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER shoots some photos, and a SECRET SERVICE AGENT whispers into his radio;

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

...Superfan is on the move.

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE THE OVAL OFFICE - MORNING

The P. and his entourage move down the corridor. VICE-PRESIDENT DAN WELDON steps in the hallway. Weldon is 44, well-groomed, and smooth. Perhaps a bit too smooth.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Good morning, Dan.

V.P. WELDON

Looking forward to your California trip, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT GIBSON
2 fund raisers, and an Economic Conference? I can think of better ways to spend the weekend.

He smiles, and the two men keep walking down the corridor.

PRESIDENT GIBSON
(continuing)
...Any word from the North Koreans?

V.P. WELDON
'State' believes they finally understand your position.

PRESIDENT GIBSON
Or maybe they're just tired of rattling a saber -- ??

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN - MORNING

THWAPA-THWAPPA...the huge Presidential Helicopter is waiting. As the P. steps aboard, he turns to the Veep.

PRESIDENT GIBSON
I'll be back by Monday, Dan.
(smiles)
Keep an eye on the store.

He smiles, and steps in the chopper. He's followed by the Chief of Staff, a Secret Service team, and Cmmdr. Jack Reese, the Man with the "football."

The Veep stands there and watches as the Presidential chopper gets airborne, and heads out over a majestic D.C. skyline.

EXT. ANDREWS AFB - HANGAR 31 - DAY

AIR FORCE ONE stands on the tarmac, her engines REVVING.

INT. COCKPIT - MAIN FLIGHT DECK - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Air Force One's CREW listens as COLONEL KELLY, (the Pilot) goes over a final pre-takeoff briefing.

Col. Kelly is 55, buzz-cut, and tough.

COL. KELLY
Nav, I'd like to get the launch authentication message, at least five minutes prior to takeoff.

The NAVIGATOR nods, and checks his switches.

COL. KELLY
(continuing)
...The crew and I will be on VHF
primary, Button One. You can have
com-three for command frequency.

BAYLOR, the NAVIGATOR is skinny, wired, and very anal.

NAVIGATOR
Com-three...yes, sir.

COL. KELLY
Take-off will be on runway One-
Nine... Left.

ANGLE - MAJOR T.J. MERRICK

The female Co-Pilot now chimes in. T.J. is in her late-20's.
She's a career officer, intense, attractive, and methodical.
She's a highly professional soldier, honed to a fine edge.

T.J.
...Correction, Col. It's runway
One-Nine, Right.
(Col. Kelly looks up)
It's a last minute change from the
tower. I confirmed it myself.

COL. KELLY
Correction noted. Thank you, Major.

He looks at her, flashes a smile..then goes back to his chart.

COL. KELLY
(continuing)
Plan on a reduced thrust take-off
with noise abatement procedures in
effect. EPR settings...

T.J.
...One point four-five. I just
checked it with Ground Control.

COL. KELLY
(looks up again)
You're a full step ahead of me,
aren't you, Major?
(she doesn't respond)
I don't think you'll be in that
co-pilot's seat for long.

T.J.
... No, sir, I hope not. But I
believe that decision is up to you.

COL. KELLY
 Actually...it's up to Superfan.
 (he smiles warmly)
 And here he is.

POV - THE COCKPIT WINDOW

T.J. looks out the cockpit window. The Presidential Helicopter comes into view, and starts to land.

T.J. turns, and without missing a beat...hits her radio.

T.J.
 (into microphone)
 Tower, this is A.F. One ... codename
 Gemstone. Superfan has arrived, are
 we cleared for take-off?

RADIO (ON SPEAKER)
 ...Gemstone, this is Tower Command.
 Take runway One-Nine, Right. You are
 cleared for roll-out, and departure.

They SEE the P. and his entourage heading for the stairway.

COL. KELLY
 Want to hit the short list, Major?

T.J.
 No, sir. Superfan will have to
 wait for the full run-down.

Col. Kelly smiles...begins calling out his entire check list.

COL. KELLY
 (reading manual)
 Flight controls check...speed brakes
 check to zero...

T.J.
 (hitting switches)
 Flight controls check...speed brakes
 (beat)
 ...check to zero.

COL. KELLY
 Set flaps to 20 degrees.

T.J.
 (hitting more
 switches)
 Flaps coming down. Set to 20.
 Set for take-off.

COL. KELLY
E.V.I. -- engage.

T.J.
Eee-Vee-Eye...check. Now engaged.

T.J. appears in full control as the radio SQUAWKS to life.

MILITARY AIDE (OVER RADIO)
The Presidential party is aboard, Col.

COL. KELLY
Then we'll start to taxi, sir.

He hits more switches.

COL. KELLY
(continuing)
Prepare the President for immediate
departure.
(turns to T.J.)
...It's your airplane, Major.

She smiles...eyes filled with confidence.

T.J.
...Yes, sir.

She takes the wheel...then starts to move the throttle.

T.J.
(continuing)
Check your harnesses, gentlemen.
Throttles coming up...here we go.

CLOSE-ON - T.J.

pulling back the stick. In full control. Confident, calm,
professional.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - SPEEDING DOWN THE RUNWAY - DAY

110...115...120....wheels are up...engines accelerate...AIR
FORCE ONE is airborne...banking west...heading for the sun.

EXT. USS BLUEFISH - UNDERWATER - DAY

A tough-looking American submarine cruises underwater at 14
knots. As it heads for the murky deep, we SUPER:

"DAY TWO — 07:30 HOURS

NUCLEAR ATTACK SUBMARINE -- USS BLUEFISH.

SOMEWHERE OFF THE NORTH KOREAN COAST."

INT. CONTROL ROOM - USS BLUEFISH - DEEP WATER - NIGHT

CAPT. BRIAN GRAHAM, 45, leans over a sonar screen, his rough face bathed in a deep red glow.

CAPT. GRAHAM

...Okay, Reiley, what've you got?

SONARMAN

Well, sir, the Keyhole 12 Com-Sat, photographed the destroyer leaving Wonson harbor at 1930 hours.

Capt. Graham leans closer.

SONARMAN

(continuing)

I picked her up at 2120, as she high-balled out of North Korean waters.

CAPT. GRAHAM

Where is she headed?

SONARMAN

If she maintains her course...and we maintain ours?

He charts a course on a map.

SONARMAN

(continuing)

They'll intercept us tomorrow. At 1200 hours.

Capt. Graham steps back. Thinks.

CAPT. GRAHAM

...I'll be damned. High noon. Why does a North Korean destroyer want to sail out here, and play tag at high noon?

He starts down the ships corridor. His rugged, young XO walks with him.

XO

(joking)

Maybe they like American movies?

They both smile...and keep walking.

XO
(continuing)
...Do we change course, sir?

CAPT. GRAHAM
Why? They're coming out here to meet us, so lets roll out the welcome mat. Go to Condition Amber, and maintain present heading.
(smiles)
If the North Koreans want to play... we'll play.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - IN FLIGHT - DAY

Cruising at 33 thousand feet...a magnificent blue and white arrow slicing through the clouds.

INT. FLIGHT DECK - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Col. Kelly checks his instruments, then hits some switches.

COL. KELLY
...On schedule, no turbulence ahead.
(looks at T.J.)
Ready to go back, and update Superfan?

T.J.
Col., I'm still checking the flight plan. Why doesn't Baylor take it this time?

COL. KELLY
Major, we serve at the pleasure of the President.
(beat)
Try to remember that 90 percent of your job is flying, but the other 10 percent is pure politics.
(smiles)
Besides, Baylor did it last trip. Now it's your turn to do the deed.

T.J.
...Yes, sir.

Reluctantly, she unstraps her seatbelt ... and EXITS.

EXT. CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER - DAY

A modern, hi-tech radar center, set against the Cheyenne Mountains. Over it, we SUPER:

"DAY TWO --- 08:12 HOURS."

CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN AIR CONTROL CENTER"

INT. CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER - DAY

A hi-tech radar, and GPS Communications Center built inside Cheyenne Mountain.

We SEE AIR CONTROLLERS, radar screens, and some special electronic control panels. FLASHING red, green and blue lights are reflected in every face.

A SENIOR CONTROLLER paces the room, stalking the radar boards like a cautious cat. The job of this 'Top Secret' command center, is to monitor all V.I.P. aircraft flying across the United States.

SENIOR CONTROLLER

...Did you clear all traffic around Gemstone?

AIR CONTROLLER #1

...She has an open highway, straight through to Edwards.

We SEE a prominent BLIP on his radar screen.

AIR CONTROLLER #1

(continuing)

But there's a low pressure front... due south. It could move their way.

SENIOR CONTROLLER

(matter of fact)

Better contact Col. Kelly, and keep him informed.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - COMBAT MISSION CENTER - (CMC) - DAY

T.J. makes her way off the flight deck, and into the CMC. Flashing lights, monitors, and radar screens surround her. It looks like she's walking past a huge Christmas tree display.

She nods at fellow OFFICERS as she walks. CAPT. HENRY RENO, the OOD (Officer On Duty) walks over to her.

CAPT. RENO

Hello, Major. On your way to see the President?

(she nods)

How come he never asks to see me?

She looks at him, and smiles.

T.J.
(playful)
He knows how you voted in the last election.

CAPT. RENO
Can I help it if I'm a loyal Republican?

T.J.
(teasing)
Don't worry, Henry, I'll give him your best...in spite of your party affiliation.

She looks over at the console, spots some intense activity.

T.J.
(continuing)
Heavy traffic?

CAPT. RENO
Unusual volume. North Korean intercepts. Red Route 1.

T.J. watches for a moment, then walks.

CAPT. RENO
(continuing)
...By the way, Major, how did you vote in the last election?

She doesn't answer. She just flashes a Cheshire cat grin, and keeps on walking.

INT. COCKPIT - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Col. Kelly listens to his headphones....

COL. KELLY
...thank you, Cheyenne.
(to his Navigator)
Looks like they just spotted some turbulence.

The Navigator checks some gauges and monitors.

NAVIGATOR
It's still due south of us, sir. But all clear at 38 thousand.

COL. KELLY
Then let's take her up. I'm going off auto.

He switches the AUTO-PILOT, grips the wheel..and the plane starts to lift.

EXT. ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE - WASHINGTON - DAY

Outside Hangar 31, we SEE parked Hummers with FLASHING red and blue lights. Military Police vehicles have gathered. As we TRACK IN past chaotic activity, we SUPER:

"DAY TWO --- 08:30 HOURS.

ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE."

INT. HANGAR 31 - DAY

In the dark corner of the huge building, TWO M.P.'S stand near a sealed locker -- with their guns drawn. A Third MP pries open the padlock ... with a crowbar. Why are they breaking and entering? Because a POOL OF BLOOD has collected on the floor below the locker.

Suddenly, the door OPENS..and the Tech Officer drops out. His chest is covered with blood...with a dark, gaping hole where his neck used to be.

In his hand he CLUTCHES a bloody I.D TAG.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - IN FLIGHT - DAY

A silver dart, flying smooth and sleek at 38 thousand feet. Suddenly, TWO AMERICAN F-15 FIGHTERS drop out of the clouds.

The two Air Force jets stay behind the Presidents' plane... keeping a safe distance.

(Well, Reader, I've just let my next secret out of the bag. Wherever Air Force One goes, it is constantly followed by two F-15 chase planes.)

INT. "CHASE ONE" - DAY

The PILOT of the first chase plane is nicknamed "RED DOG."

RED DOG

Chase Two, this is Chase One. Drop back a bit and maintain speed.

INT. "CHASE TWO" - DAY

The PILOT of the second plane is nicknamed "TORNADO."

TORNADO

I thought I'd take a peek at Superfan.

RED DOG'S VOICE

You're too close, Tornado. Ease up,
and slide back.

Chase Two begins to reduce speed.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE AND THE TWO CHASE PLANES - DAY

The two chase planes peel off, and drop out of view...while Air Force One keeps cruising along on her own. She banks, and heads straight for the bright yellow sun.

INT. PRESS ROOM - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Reporters are in a luxurious cabin that has 20 lounge chairs. Some Reporters sit at desks, working on laptop computers.

They all look up as T.J. passes through the luxurious cabin. JERRY HAMLIN, a 40 year old UPI reporter gets to his feet.

JERRY HAMLIN

...Maj. Merrick?

(she stops)

Maj., you've been flying with Superfan, for over a year now. Isn't it time you let me angle a story on you?

T.J.

Mr. Hamlin...I'd rather you didn't.

JERRY HAMLIN

A heroine in the Gulf, now the first female co-pilot for Air Force One?? That's damn good copy.

(smiles)

Besides, a little PR can't hurt.

T.J.

... Yes it can. Especially when it comes from a journalist who leans on this administration the way you do.

JERRY HAMLIN

Hey...can I help it if 43 percent of the American people see our new leader as indecisive, and weak?

T.J.

What you call indecisive, some call.. cautious. Now, if you'll excuse me, Mr. Hamlin ... I have work to do.

(cold)

...And even if you won't excuse me.

With that, she turns and walks off in cool defiance.

INT. FLYING OVAL OFFICE - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

The P. sits at his desk, looking over papers with Farley.

FARLEY

...we just got an official response from the North Koreans. They don't like you reneging on the deal.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

In case they forgot...it wasn't my deal to begin with.

FARLEY

...I know, Mr. President, but they're big on continuity. They keep implying that there might be consequences, if they face continued resistance.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

...Another veiled threat?

FARLEY

Yes, but this time..without the veil.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

We've made it clear...I won't be held accountable for any deals made by the previous administration.

(uncertain)

What's your opinion, George?

FARLEY

..Tell them Gates lost the election. You're the new sheriff in town, and you re-open all deals you didn't cut.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Isn't that being a bit too tough?

FARLEY

Check the exit polls, Mr. President. Gates lost 41 states...because he wasn't tough enough.

The President looks up...he's clearly concerned.

FARLEY

(continuing)

You're a decent man, Mr. President. But I read the manual, and decent men make one term Presidents.

INT. NORTH KOREAN COMBAT DEFENSE CENTER - NIGHT

A low-tech, underground complex. The North Korean War Room. Not nearly as sophisticated as the hi-tech U.S. Center.

We SEE computer banks, monitors, and a wall-sized Projection Map. Soldiers, and Technicians move quickly. ALARM BELLS are RINGING. RED LIGHTS are FLASHING. Something 'big' is going on. Over this controlled chaos, we SUPER:

"DAY TWO — 08:50 HOURS."

NORTH KOREAN WAR ROOM

PYON YANG, PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Suddenly, a General steps up to a microphone, and talks to the entire room. When he speaks, everyone stops.

The man is covered in medals, he is obviously the most powerful man in the room. He is GEN. KWAN JING. His dialog is in KOREAN...with ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

GEN. KWAN JING

It is the time for desperate action.
Nothing will be the same after today.
...Take your stations and remain calm.
Follow your orders with speed, and
precision. We have begun our most
important journey...and when it ends,
there could be war, or victory...

(a long beat)

...but either way, the entire world
will tremble.

With that, he HITS a large switch on a console. RED and YELLOW LIGHTS start to FLASH! More ALARMS begin to RING!

A huge panel above a projection map suddenly FLASHES a warning sign. It reads; "FULL ALERT!"

EXT. ANDREW'S AIR FORCE BASE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

An UNMARKED SEDAN pulls up near the "crime scene." Two Men in suits get out. Federal Agents from the National Security Agency, (NSA.)

AGENT FRANK BALMER

flashes his I.D., and moves freely about the busy scene. Agt. Balmer is 45, and looks more like a Yuppi Accountant, than a tough Federal Investigator. He nods at the M.P.'s, then heads into Hangar 31 with his PARTNER.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
(annoyed)
Hey, Frank, what are you doing here?

AGT. FRANK BALMER
When the right people press the 'hot
button,' even the orphans show up.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
Frank, this is a Secret Service show.
We're responsible for The Man.

AGT. FRANK BALMER
And NSA is responsible...for what??

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
(smiles)
You know, I'm still trying to figure
that one out.

He laughs. Agt. Balmer...doesn't.

AGT. FRANK BALMER
...Are you treating this as a threat
to Superfan?

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
... A ranking officer, murdered at
Andrews, in Hangar 31? I'd say it's
worth a Code 1 Priority.

AGT. FRANK BALMER
What about the I.D. tag they found?

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
(playing it dumb)
What I.D. tag -- ??

AGT. FRANK BALMER
Master/Sgt. D.F. Harris?

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
Who the hell leaked that?!

AGT. FRANK BALMER
I don't know, Ed...I'm still trying
to figure that one out.

Balmer smiles, and walks. The Secret Service Agent....fumes.

ANGLE - AGT. BALMER AND HIS PARTNER - LEAVING HANGAR 31

NSA AGT. #2
Should we alert the President?

AGT. FRANK BALMER
Secret Service'll do that. I think
we'd better alert our own man.

NSA AGT. #2
We have someone up there?

AGT. FRANK BALMER
In deep background. In very deep
background.
(beat)
In the meantime, we'd better check
out this Master/Sgt. D. F. Harris.

NSA AGT. #2
Do I inform Secret Service that we
have his location?

AGT. BALMER
(in disbelief)
Yeah...right!

He laughs. They get in their unmarked, and race off.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - (IN FLIGHT) - DAY
gliding through the clouds.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - OUTSIDE OVAL OFFICE - (AF-1) - DAY

A large room with a large mahogany table. 14 chairs...most
filled with STAFFERS, or SECRET SERVICE AGENTS. Cmmdr. Reese
is also here...sitting outside the flying Oval Office.

ANGLE - T.J.

ENTERS the room, then heads for the Oval Office.

SPECIAL AGENT WOODLEY
Yes, Major, what can I do for you?

T.J.
I think I'm expected.

SPECIAL AGENT WOODLEY
Let me see if he's free.

The SENIOR AGENT heads into the Oval Office. T.J. stands
there. She paces back and forth.

ANGLE - REESE

watching her. He clearly likes what he sees. When she
turns, he looks up and flashes her a friendly smile.

ANGLE - T.J.

she looks at Reese, but remains cool. No smile. Nothing. She just turns away, and keeps pacing...back and forth.

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - BETHESDA, MD. - DAY

WHAM! A door suddenly BLASTS OPEN as Agt. Balmer, and his partner SHOULDER their way into a room...guns drawn.

NSA AGT. #2
Looks like he isn't here...

AGT. FRANK BALMER
Let's be sure.

They move around...cautious...slow. Checking every corner of the apartment. Until Agt. #2 stops cold.

NSA AGT. #2
Frank -- over here!

They spot a DEAD BODY on the bathroom floor. A MAN with his throat cut...pools of blood on the floor. Agt. Balmer checks a PHOTO I.D. in his hand. It MATCHES the face of the corpse.

AGT. FRANK BALMER
Jesus, it's him. Master/Sgt. D.F.
Harris! We'd better alert the White
House...and I mean now!

The PHOTO matches the corpse...but it DOESN'T match the face of the man we saw at Hangar 31...the man who was SUPPOSED to be Master/Sgt. D.F. Harris.

Suddenly, and electronic bell...CHIMES. Balmer walks over to a PC Computer on a desk...it's turned on...and the screen is FLASHING a message. The message reads:

"CHECKMATE IN THREE MOVES! "

COOPERATE NOW...OR THE THE PRESIDENT DIES!"

Now the screen has a CARTOON EXPLOSION, deleting the message.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - OUTSIDE OVAL OFFICE - (AF-1) - DAY

T.J. is still pacing, and Reese decides to speak.

REESE
Nervous, Major?

T.J.
I don't get nervous, Cmmdr.

She turns, and continues pacing. He watches her for a moment, then decides to make his move.

REESE

Look, I hope you don't mind a little free advice...

(she looks at him)

He's only human. Don't think of him as the President. Try to think of him as a damn good poker player...and a lousy 3-point shooter.

(he smiles)

We've gone to the hoops a few times, and take it from me...the man can't sink a thing from outside the paint.

Before she can say anything, Woodley opens the door.

SPECIAL AGENT WOODLEY

He'll see you, Maj. But make it quick.

T.J. nods, and walks into the flying Oval Office.

REESE

(whispering to her)

Just remember, Major...he's a lousy shooter. Nothing to brag about.

She looks at him, then rolls her eyes, and heads for the flying Oval Office.

INT. FLYING OVAL OFFICE - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

T.J. walks in, and is approached by Farley.

FARLEY

Just make it short and sweet, Major, we have work to do.

She nods, then stands at attention. The P. finally looks up from his desk.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(warm and fuzzy)

Merrick, isn't it? Maj. T.J. Merrick?

T.J.

Ahh...yes, sir.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(all smiles)

Good to see you, Maj. Merrick. How are things in the cockpit?

T.J.

Fine, sir. We...we're right on schedule. Estimated flight time is 5 hours and 35 minutes.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Is there anything else?

T.J.

No, sir.

FARLEY

Good. Then you can go...

Farley tries to usher her out of the room, but the P. looks up, and Farley backs off.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Easy, George. I remember the first time I met Ronald Reagan. I was a freshman congressman, all thumbs, and a new haircut. I had a terrible case of nerves...

T.J.

It's not nerves, sir.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

No? Then what's the problem?

T.J.

It's just that...well, I'm a pilot, Mr. President, and I like my job. I'm good at it. And believe me, sir, I'm a lot more comfortable on the flight deck. I like making sure everything is under control.

The P. looks at her and smiles. Farley doesn't.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

I appreciate that, Major. It's good to meet someone who's only concern is the job they have now...

(beat)

...Not the one they might get in the future.

He smiles warmly, and dismisses her.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(continuing)

Feel free to go back to your work, Major. And thanks for the update.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - OUTSIDE THE OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Reese looks up as T.J. exits, breathing a sigh of relief.

REESE

Well, did you think of him as a lousy ball player?

T.J.

...Thanks, but the advice wasn't necessary.

REESE

I'm glad to hear it. My name is Reese. Lt. Cmmdr. Jack Reese...

T.J.

I know all about you, Cmmdr. I've heard the scuttlebutt.

REESE

What scuttlebutt?

T.J.

You think you're hot stuff, don't you?

REESE

Me? Hot stuff?? Major, do you have a problem with all Navy SEALS...or am I the only one who hits your buttons?

T.J.

Look, I know SEALS are risk takers, and show-boaters. You guys live by guts and ego, and I guess most women are impressed. But, to be perfectly honest, I'm no fan of hot-doggers. I don't like the breed.

REESE

I happen to agree, and I apologize for my breed. But, Major, I want you to know one thing.

T.J.

What's that?

REESE

I think we're wasting some valuable electrolytes. If you weren't such an up-tight officer...

(a warm smile)

...I'd be pretty damn attracted to you.

T.J.

That's very flattering, Cmmdr. But unfortunately, the feeling wouldn't be mutual. Not by a long shot.

With that, she turns and walks. Reese is forced to smile again, in spite of himself.

INT. COCKPIT - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Baylor, the Navigator is reading his instruments, then he suddenly stops. A RED LIGHT...flashes on his board, and a bell starts to RING.

An instant later...WORDS start sliding across a small LED MONITOR.

NAVIGATOR

Col., we're getting unusual coded traffic over the AF-SATCOM.

COL. KELLY

Operations? Strategic Orders?

NAVIGATOR

No, sir....I -- I don't understand??

They start reading the LED Monitor.

NAVIGATOR

(continuing)

Jesus...what the hell -- ??

CLOSE-ON - THE LED SCREEN ... as these words FLASH across it.

"DO YOU KNOW THE QUEENS GAMBIT DECLINED?"

Col. Kelly leans over, and checks the monitor. Pure confusion in his eyes.

COL. KELLY

Queens Gambit Declined? What the hell does that mean?

Col. Kelly suddenly gets his answer, and he doesn't like it. Not one bit.

BLAM! AN EXPLOSION LARGER THAN MT. ST. HELENS NOW RIPS INTO THE COCKPIT...BLOWING IT APART!

Col. Kelly, the Navigator, and the Radioman are BLOWN out of the air-craft, and right into the ozone!

All three are INSTANTLY KILLED.

The Flight Deck is BLOWN TO DUST, sending human limbs, shattered debris, and a HUGE CHUNK of the airplane straight into the stratosphere.

An instant later...the plane begins to rapidly decompress!

The nose of AIR FORCE ONE looks like a Giant just took a huge bite out of the fuselage. And suddenly, the great plane starts to fall -----

INT. "CHASE ONE" - IN FLIGHT - DAY

Red Dog's eyes go wide with horror.

RED DOG

...Jesus! Mayday...MAYDAY!!! Air Force One is going down! Explosion aboard AF-ONE ... GEMSTONE is losing altitude!!!

Red Dog leans on the stick...dives after the President's falling airplane!

EXT. "CHASE TWO" - DAY

Diving with his partner...both F-15's are taking off after the tumbling 747.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Falling...spinning...dropping out of the sky like a stone.

She's totally out of control, and heading for the earth in a violent death spiral. 32-thousand....30-thousand....28-thousand feet!!!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

The plane spins like a top as it rushes toward the ground. PEOPLE in the Conference Room are thrown from wall to wall -- and from ceiling to floor.

SCREAMS and CHAOS as debris is tossed about in a violent cyclone. T.J. and Reese bounce around like Ping-Pong balls ...they both SLAM into chairs, and then into each other.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - FALLING TO EARTH - DAY

Still spinning and dropping. 25-thousand..20-thousand...16-thousand feet!

The two F-15 CHASE PLANES keep diving...racing after the Presidential aircraft at max speed.

INT. CMC-WAR ROOM - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Lights FLASH...and alarm bells RING. AIRMEN cling to their stationary desks for support. When the plane FLIPS OVER, they hang off their desks on the ceiling...

...the way passengers once hung off all the furniture in an upside-down boat called the S.S. POSEIDON.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - STILL FALLING - DAY

14-thousand....10 thousand...8-thousand feet! On a collision course with the earth...death is seconds away.

INT. AIRBORNE OVAL OFFICE - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

The P. and Farley are tossed about like leaves in a whirlwind. Papers and files rain like confetti inside the dying plane. Rapid decompression continues.

INT. PRESS ROOM - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Laptop computers SLAM into walls. Oxygen masks drop from the ceiling. The 5 REPORTERS are tumbling and screaming -- it's total chaos, and they don't have time to grab for lifesaving air.

Jerry Hamlin, the UPI reporter CRASHES into a desk. With a sickening CRUNCH, we HEAR his collar bone breaking.

Hamlin SCREAMS before he's tossed across the Press Room again...

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

still in free-fall...hurtling toward the ground, and nothing can stop it!

A fiery, cataclysmic impact is only moments away...and it's getting closer. 7-Thousand...6- Thousand...5-THOUSAND FEET ... here it comes!

INT. MAIN COMPUTER BULKHEAD - AF-1 - DAY

Suddenly...we FIND OURSELVES among a huge turnpike of wires. We SEE a gnats-eye view of all the electronic switches that connect the planes computers.

At one end of this electronic highway, we SEE a strange... ORANGE BOX, with terminals, lights, and a MOTHERBOARD.

Lights FLASH, switches come to life, a terminal connection is switched to the ON position. And an electronic signal is suddenly sent from the large ORANGE BOX.

We SPEED with the ELECTRONIC IMPULSE...it seems to travel at 10-thousand m.p.h., and we race along with it through the Main Computer Bulkhead.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - TUMBLING - DAY

Without warning, we SLAM outside the dying plane...suddenly, in a flash, the huge FLAPS START TO MOVE.

With no pilot, no navigator, and no radioman aboard...the FLAPS LOWER ...the engine accelerates...and AIR FORCE ONE begins to level off.

Incredibly, as if in a miracle...Air Force One begins to fly ... at 5 thousand feet!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - AF-1 - DAY

as the huge aircraft levels off, a shaken Lt. Reese gets to his feet.

He hurries to T.J. -- then tosses away a chair that covers her body. She slowly stirs, and comes around.

REESE
You okay, Major?

T.J.
My God...!! What -- what happened?!

REESE
Are you okay?

T.J.
Don't worry about me! Check the President. Check him...! I'll check the flight crew!

T.J. races to pick up a telephone...and Reese moves quickly, throwing open the door to the Oval Office.

INT. CHEYENNE COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER - DAY

In sheer terror...the two Controllers watch their monitors.

SENIOR CONTROLLER
Gemstone is leveling at 12-Thousand!
(yelling out)
...Contact the White House. Now!

INT. THE FLYING OVAL OFFICE - AIR FORCE-1 - DAY

Farley helps the P. to his feet...both are cut and bruised.

FARLEY

What -- what's going on -- ?!

PRESIDENT GIBSON

An explosion! A Goddamn explosion!
Probably an engine...

REESE

No, sir. That was no engine. It was
too damn big.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

I want a full report! Let me know
about injuries, and damage. Move
it, George, check on causalities...

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

leveled, damaged...but now cruising at 12 thousand feet.

ANGLE - THE TWO F-15 CHASE PLANES

zooming down ... closing in on the wounded AF-1.

INT. 'CHASE ONE' - DAY

Red Dog's eyes read amazement. He SQUAWKS into his mic;

RED DOG

Flight-Con, this is Chase One. Gem-
stone has leveled off. I repeat,
Gemstone has leveled. Maintaining
a heading of 270. Speed 300 knots.

AIR CONTROLLER #1 (V.O.)

Red Dog, can you tell me the nature
of the explosion?! Do you see any
damage? Over!

RED DOG

...Damage?! Are you kidding?! The
Goddamn cockpit is blown to shit!

AIR CONTROLLER #1 (V.O.)

If that's true, Red Dog...who the
hell is flying the plane?

RED DOG

Aren't you?!

AIR CONTROLLER #1 (V.O.)

Negative, Red Dog, negative! E.P.I.
is not engaged. I repeat, E.P.I. is
not engaged.

RED DOG
Flight-Con, we'll move in for a
closer look. You copy, Tornado?

TORNADO'S VOICE
I copy, Red Dog ... I just don't
believe what I'm seeing.

AIR CONTROLLER #1 (V.O.)
And I sure as hell don't believe
what I'm hearing!

EXT. THE TWO F-15 CHASE PLANES - DAY

DIVING, moving below AF-1..and flying under the tail section.
The two jets check the bottom of the President's plane before
moving forward.

INT. FLYING OVAL OFFICE - AF-1 - DAY

Reese and T.J. are in the Office with Farley and the Presi-
dent. T.J. gets off the phone...concerned, desperate.

T.J.
Internal communications are out
on this side. I can't reach the
cockpit, sir. I'd better get up
there, and check the flight crew.

REESE
I'll go with you.

They race for the door. But before they exit, the President's
phone RINGS. He grabs it...

CAPT. RENO'S VOICE
Mr. President, this is Capt. Reno...
are you all right, sir??

PRESIDENT GIBSON
Yes, yes! And your people, Capt.??

CAPT. RENO'S VOICE
Alive, but two are badly injured.
(in pain)
Sir, I don't know how to say this..

INT. CIC - WAR ROOM - AF-1 - DAY

We CROSSCUT with Capt. Reno in his disheveled room.

We SEE debris, broken equipment, and broken men nursing their
wounds. Reno holds open a door...only a crack. But WIND
rushes past him at gale force.

CAPT. RENO
Sir...there is no flight deck. The cockpit is gone.

Reese and T.J. look at each other.

CAPT. RENO
(continuing)
The pilot, the navigator, and the radioman...they're all dead.

T.J.
My God....!

REESE
Then who's in control of the plane?

T.J.
Henry, did someone hand us off to Cheyenne?!

Reese is confused by that statement. Before he can ask anything, the P. looks out his window...and SEES the two F-15's.

PRESIDENT GIBSON
The chase planes are moving in...

T.J.
Checking us for damage, sir. It's S.O.P.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE AND THE TWO F-15'S - DAY

The chase planes keep inching up on AF-1.

INT. CHEYENNE COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Air Controller #1 is glued to his radar screen, the Senior Controller is right behind him. They SEE the large BLIP for Air Force One, and TWO SMALL BLIPS for the two chase planes.

TORNADO'S VOICE
I don't see any stress fractures in the aft section...

RED DOG'S VOICE
Cross over and check the cargo deck..

The large BLIP moves forward. The 2 smaller BLIPS accelerate.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - IN FLIGHT - DAY

The F-15 jets swing wide to examine the crippled plane.

TORNADO'S VOICE
The cargo deck looks clean...

INT. ORDINANCE BAY - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

LIGHTS suddenly come on. Missile doors swing open.

TWO LASER BEAMS flare to life. The two AIM 9, SIDEWINDER MISSILES are instantly armed, ready...and hot.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE AND THE TWO F-15'S - DAY

ALARM BELLS suddenly RING.

TORNADO'S VOICE
Jesus, Red Dog...I'm being painted!
They're Locking On Us...They're
Locking!

RED DOG'S VOICE
Who's Locking On Us?! Who ... The
Goddamn President?!

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! Both SIDEWINDER MISSILES --- LAUNCH!

The two F-15 chase planes are instantly BLOWN TO DUST...they vomit fire and debris...and then they're gone.

All that's left is a shower of dust, and a big hole in the clouds -- where the two jets used to be.

INT. CHEYENNE COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Suddenly, the two smaller BLIPS pop off the radar screen!

AIR CONTROLLER #1
Jesus, they're gone! The two chase
planes are gone!

The horrified Controller and a CHIEF SUPERVISOR move closer as the big BLIP accelerates on the radar screen

SENIOR CONTROLLER
Everyone, mark Air Force One! Nobody
lose her...! You hear me...NOBODY
LOSE HER!

And then...suddenly, big blip...DISAPPEARS!

AIR CONTROLLER #1
She's Gone!

CHIEF SUPERVISOR
What -- ?!

SENIOR CONTROLLER

The Presidents' plane, sir, it...it
just dropped below 5 thousand feet,
and disappeared off the radar screen.

(beat)

Sir...Air Force One is down. A catas-
trophic event -- is possible.

INT. FLYING OVAL OFFICE - AF-1 - DAY

The P. looks out the window, eyes still wide with horror.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

...Who in God's name did that?!

Suddenly the Presidential phone RINGS! All eyes turn to the
phone. No one moves. It keeps RINGING. Finally, the President
reaches over, and takes the phone.

VOICE OVER TELEPHONE

(very calm)

Good morning, Mr. President...God
didn't do all this...I did.

The P. is stunned, but tries to control his rage.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Who the hell is this -- ?!

VOICE OVER TELEPHONE

...Mr. President, did you ever play
the King's Fianchetto?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

I said, who is this?! How are you
able to breach the security on this
line?!

VOICE OVER TELEPHONE

Why don't we chalk it up to American
ingenuity?!

(laughs)

Mr. President, the King's Fianchetto
is a classical chess game, designed
to exploit the extreme self-confi-
dence and military superiority of the
enemy. And I'm afraid, sir, that you
and your people aboard that flying
Fort Knox fit the bill.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Once again ... who are you?!

The P. hits some buttons...puts the VOICE on the squawk box.

VOICE OVER SQUAWK BOX

My name isn't important, but I think you should congratulate me, sir... After all, I'm the first man in history to hijack Air Force One, and to successfully kidnap a standing President of the United States. And that simple fact should earn me...

(a beat)

...well, would it be too much to ask for a bit of fucking respect?!

Silence in the room. The VOICE on the squawk box gets calm.

VOICE OVER SQUAWK BOX

(continuing)

If you can't do that, Mr. President, a simple tone of reverence will do.

Reese listens carefully...taking everything in. There's something in this VOICE that's starting to enrage him.

VOICE OVER SQUAWK BOX

(continuing)

For now, let's just say I'm a militant lobbyist, providing an important service for a foreign government. At a huge fee, of course...

Reese looks at everyone in the room; T.J., The President, and Farley. Does the VOICE irritate them as much?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

What foreign government?

VOICE OVER SQUAWK BOX

Does it matter?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

It does to me.

VOICE OVER SQUAWK BOX

Frankly, I just look at the name on the paycheck.

(beat)

And this one is signed, the People's Republic of North Korea. It seems the man you defeated in the last election made a deal with them, and you've decided to renege. I don't mean to be rude, sir, but wasn't that a bit unethical?

The President fumes.

PRESIDENT GIBSON
Now hold on...!

VOICE OVER SQUAWK BOX
...Please, sir, no need to explain.
I just want you to know that I've
been hired to act as a kind of bill
collector, and I take my work very
seriously.

(sarcastic)
Politics, Mr. President, I must tell
you it confuses me. There's nothing
quite like the clarity of combat...or
of chess. Don't you agree??

INT. KANE'S TRANSMITTER ROOM - DAY

We now CROSSCUT with a DARK FIGURE, at a hidden location.
All we SEE is a transmitter, and a MANS' HAND, holding a
microphone...while he fingers a SHARP KNIFE.

We've seen the SPRING-RELEASED KNIFE before...when we watched
someone use it to cut a human throat.

PRESIDENT GIBSON'S VOICE
Tell your employers that I cancelled
the previous deal. I won't be the
first American President to hand
nuclear missiles to a foreign power.

SLOWLY PAN UP TO REVEAL - CAPTAIN MAXWELL F. KANE

We now REVEAL a laughing MAXWELL KANE. But the laughter
doesn't disguise a tough, hard face. Handsome once, but now
twisted by hate and rage.

Just one look at Max Kane tells us that he has the face of a
killer...with the fierce determination to win at any cost.

KANE
I'm afraid it's too late for that.
(calmly)
In case I didn't mention it, I'm
establishing full contact with the
Vice-President, and reopening all
negotiations with our government.
I simply want to inform you of your
current situation, Mr. President.
And the sit-rep is this...
(beat)
...Anything you want is fucking
irrelevant!

We now realize that this is the SAME FACE that pretended to be Master/ Sgt. D.F. Harris, at the beginning of our story.

KANE

(continuing)

And one more thing, sir. I want to thank you. I'm in total control of this airplane, because I've managed to over-ride your new Eee--Vee--Eye System.

(beat)

Very impressive new software, sir.
"Hand of God?" I like the nickname.

Reese listens intently. It's as if this VOICE has a special meaning to him, and in a way it does. But he can't place it.

KANE

(continuing)

It took me a month to crack the code, but the job is done. And now, thanks to your techno-freaks at Livermore... I can fly this plane from any spot on earth.

(stretches out)

So just sit back, relax, and enjoy your flight. Your radios have been jammed, and your parachutes altered. There will be no exit from this aircraft. In short, you cannot communicate ... you cannot retaliate, and you cannot evacuate.

INTERCUT WITH THE PRESIDENT - IN AIR FORCE ONE

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Now listen to me...!

KANE

Shut the fuck up! I'm the commander in chief today...not you!

(beat)

I'm sorry, sir. You really shouldn't punch my buttons. We have your future to worry about ... not mine.

(calms himself)

...I want you to know this plane has started to fly a prescribed course. If the Vice-President complies with my instructions, I will land the plane at an agreed location. If he doesn't, Air Force One will land itself in exactly 11 hours...and 51 minutes...when it runs out of fuel.

Everyone in the room reacts to that. But Reese keeps paying special attention. Something is bothering him.

KANE

(continuing)

In the meantime, please try to sit back, and enjoy your trip. After all...you have no fucking choice!

PRESIDENT GIBSON

What are the North Koreans demanding?

KANE

To keep the deal made by the last administration. They insist on getting their nuclear missiles from a U.S. Attack Submarine, now at sea off the North Korean coast.

(beat)

Isn't it a shame, sir? If you people hadn't fucked with me 5 years ago, I'd still be working for our government ... and not some outlaw nation, with it's head up it's ass.

(beat)

Please, sir, let that be a lesson to you. Never try to target your own employees ... never!

CLICK. The SQUAWK BOX...goes dead.

ANGLE - REESE

He sits bolt upright. The LIGHT suddenly goes on for him! As he's about to speak, the door BURSTS open. Special Agent Woodley charges in the room with 6 Secret Service Agents.

SPECIAL AGENT WOODLEY

We heard everything, Mr. President...
and we're going Drop Kick! Let's move!

The Secret Service team surrounds the P., and hustles him out of the flying Oval Office...at breakneck speed.

REESE

...Where are you taking him?!

SPECIAL AGENT WOODLEY

Stay out of this, Reese!

He pushes Reese back, and charges out the door with the entire rescue team. They race off shouting; "Go....GO....GO...GO...GO...GO!!!"

REESE
What are they doing?

T.J.
I can't discuss that.

REESE
They have a way off the plane, don't they? Listen, Major, the man who planned this...he's good. He considers all possible options. Can't you see that?

T.J.
Easy, Reese...we're handling this according to procedure.

REESE
Where are they taking the President?

T.J.
I can't divulge that.

REESE
Damn it, any man who can blow up that cockpit, can blast any escape route on this aircraft. Now, where the hell are they taking the President?!

T.J.
I have my orders.

REESE
Fuck your orders! Don't go by the book, go by instinct!

T.J.
I can't do that!

REESE
..Try it, Major, it works for me! What have you got to lose, except maybe the President of the United States, our commander-in-chief... and the man on Pennsylvania Avenue who signs your paycheck every week!
(she's like a statue)
...Damn it, don't go on autopilot! Throw the book away...and do the job right!

She looks at him, sincerely troubled by his statement.

INT. PASSAGEWAY BETWEEN DECKS - DAY

Controlled chaos as Woodley and the Secret Service hustles the P. down a debris filled passageway. They run down the winding stairs connecting the Main Deck and the Lower Cargo Deck...shoving the President in front of them as they go.

WOODLEY & THE OTHER AGENTS

Move...Move...MOVE....MOVE!!!

INT. FORWARD PASSAGEWAY - MAIN DECK - DAY

Reese and T.J. **CHARGE** down a different passageway...and jump over obstacles without breaking stride. They move as fast as the President and all his Special Agents..only they **RACE** over catwalks and gratings.

REESE

Where are we going?

T.J.

It's a shortcut.

REESE

... It doesn't look like a shortcut.

T.J.

Maybe not, but I'm the one who knows the plane, remember?

(running ahead)

Next stop...Aft Cargo Hold. EDV-1.

REESE

EDV-1 -- ??

T.J.

Emergency Deployment Vehicle!

She wraps her arms around a large connecting pipe, and slides down the tube at full speed. She lands on the lower Cargo Deck with a loud THUD.

Reese follows right behind her. They both hit the deck, and accelerate...running for all they're worth.

Reese looks awkward -- while trying to run with an attache' case chained to his hand.

T.J.

(continuing)

...It must be tough to run with a "football" on your wrist?

REESE

No tougher than running for Navy with
2 linebackers on my butt.

He smiles as they both hit the deck...running for all they're worth.

ON T.J.

she stops for a moment...GLARES at him...then accelerates.

INT. AFT CARGO HOLD - LOWER CARGO DECK - DAY

Woodley rushes The P. to a large hatch. The hatch is SEALED, until Woodley starts to pop the screws.

ON REESE

charging onto the Lower Cargo Deck.

REESE

Hold it!

Woodley and his team QUICKLY spin around! GUNS IN HAND! All guns are primed, CLICKED...and aimed at Reese.

WIDEN

as Reese FREEZES, and T.J. comes to a stop at his side.

REESE

(continuing)

Mr. President, the man who did this,
he knows what he's doing. He's on
the same page with Covert Ops 101!

Secret Service Agents swarm all over Reese.

REESE

(continuing)

I know the style, and the signature!
(shaking free)
...He's trained for infiltration and
seizure, the same way I was!

The President and Farley look at each other.

REESE

(continuing)

This guy prepares for all contin-
gencies...if he doesn't want anyone
leaving the plane, believe me, sir..
no one evacs.

PRESIDENT GIBSON
What are you telling me?

SPECIAL AGENT WOODLEY
It doesn't matter, sir! Whoever did this, doesn't know about our EDV. If there's even one chance to get you to safety, we have to take it.

Woodley pops the hatch, then looks into a small ESCAPE POD.

REESE
Woody, this guy knew enough to compromise security at Hangar 31! And he knows about this 'Hand of God'... whatever the hell that is!

SPECIAL AGENT WOODLEY
Okay, Reese, you win. I'll check the damn vehicle myself!

He jumps down into the EDV, in the floor of the airplane.

(Yes, Reader, I've just revealed another secret about Air Force One...the existence of the Emergency Escape Module... in the floor of the Lower Cargo Deck.)

INT. EDV-1 - DAY

Woodley drops into the hi-tech pod. In the pod, he is surrounded by gauges, switches ... and monitors.

In the center of the module, we SEE a single command chair with a head rest, and straps.

Woodley looks around. He SEES nothing out of the ordinary, not until he spots a small monitor. And suddenly an LED MESSAGE...FLASHES across it --

"SORRY, BUT YOU FORGOT TO CASTLE ON THE KING'S SIDE!"

BLAM!!! The EXPLOSIVE BOLTS on the pod, ignite!

SPECIAL AGENT WOODLEY
No-o-o-o-o!!!

ANGLE - THE EDV - AS IT DISENGAGES FROM AF-1

The POD suddenly drops from AF-1! As it falls into open space, Woodley grips the walls...pure terror in his eyes.

The EDV is released from the plane, and keeps falling. Other SECRET SERVICE MEN, throw the hapless President to the deck, and cover him with their bodies.

A moment later...Woodley SCREAMS, and the EDV EXPLODES in a violent FIREBALL -- killing Woodley, and blowing the Top Secret EDV into dust particles.

After the debris falls, an angry President gets off the deck, then suddenly turns to Reese --

PRESIDENT GIBSON

What the fuck is going on, Major?!
Talk to me ... who did that?!!

A beat. Reese thinks...the man is clearly troubled. Before he can respond, a LOUDSPEAKER squawks to life --

KANE'S VOICE

(over loudspeaker)

Go ahead Reese! Don't keep the President waiting. Tell him what he wants to know. It's your duty as an officer and a gentleman.

Reese looks up, eyes wide in amazement, and realization.

REESE

(stunned)

Kane?! Is that you?!

KANE'S VOICE

Highest marks! Give that officer a cigar!

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Kane?? Who the hell is Kane -- ?!

KANE'S VOICE

It's Capt. Maxwell F. Kane. U.S. Navy, retired. At your service, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(shouting)

Goddamnit, why did you kill that innocent man?!

INTERCUT WITH MAX KANE - IN HIS TRANSMISSION ROOM - DAY

He looks at a TV MONITOR, with the President on it.

KANE

Why? Because I don't like anyone to fuck with me. I fuck with people who fuck with me. Just ask Cmmdr. Reese.

All eyes turn to Reese.

KANE

(continuing)

This plane is now being flown by the ultimate control freak, and no one bails, until I say so! Is that understood?!

The LOUDSPEAKER...goes dead. And for a moment, no one moves.

EXT. THE PENTAGON - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

ESTABLISH one of the most famous buildings in the world.

"THE PENTAGON, WASHINGTON, D.C. -- 10:22 HOURS"

INT. BUSY HALLWAY - THE PENTAGON - DAY

A white-haired ADMIRAL OLSEN charges out of a crowded office, heading for LT. BLAINE, his nervous, MILITARY AIDE.

ADMIRAL OLSEN

This better be good Lt.

LT. BLAINE

(nervously)

Sir, it...it's about Air Force One.

ADMIRAL OLSEN

What about it?

LT. BLAINE

We've been contacted on Hi Comm-1, with instructions to talk with the Vice President, and only the Vice President. If not, the President will be killed, along with all the personnel aboard his airplane.

ADMIRAL OLSEN

What is this...a damn joke?!

LT. BLAINE

No, sir...it's no joke...

(nervous)

...Someone just kidnapped the President, and hijacked Air Force One.

INT. WHITE HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Start CLOSE-ON the SHOES of the Vice-P., and his entourage. They move down the hallway...hitting a rapid clip.

As we PAN UP, we SEE the Vice-President reading TOP SECRET FILES ... and moving at full speed.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

V.P. Weldon STORMS into the room, and moves to the big chair. He hesitates for a moment, before taking the seat. The Chief of Staff waits...along with several SECRET SERVICE AGENTS.

We also SEE Admiral Olsen, several MILITARY TYPES, and CIA EXECS. Finally, Weldon sits behind the big desk.

V.P. WELDON

All right, now explain why you can't trace the phone call?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

...They're using the INTERNET, sir. Routing digital messages into analog on Hi Com-1...

V.P. WELDON

I don't understand.

ADMIRAL OLSEN

One minute the message is coming from Baltimore Center, the next, it's from downtown Srilanaka. With digital circuitry, they're all over the globe.

(beat)

At the moment, we can't confirm the identity of the negotiator. But we can confirm that a North Korean destroyer is moving to rendezvous with our submarine.

V.P. WELDON

Then the threat is real?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

The President's plane is missing, and an aging World War Two destroyer is bearing down on the most powerful attack vessel in the world.

(beat)

Yes, sir. I'd say they're pretty confident, and the threat is real.

A cold chill runs through the entire room.

V.P. WELDON

We'd better inform 'State.'

ADMIRAL OLSEN

One more concern, sir. The North Koreans have sealed their border, and gone to Full Alert.

More stunned faces. You can hear a pin drop.

ADMIRAL OLSEN

(continuing)

We also have a report of heavy troop movements near the 38th parallel.

V.P. WELDON

Jesus...what is Seoul doing?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

They were heading for a Full Alert themselves, but we convinced them that a Stage Two response was more then adequate.

V.P. WELDON

Damnit, what we don't need right now, is for the two Korea's to shoot at each other across the fucking DMZ!

(beat)

We could barely field 20 thousand troops in Bosnia...the country won't permit us to send another 250 up the Yaloo River!

A beat. The VP is beginning to see the scope of the problem.

V.P. WELDON

(continuing)

We'd better assemble the cabinet, and contact the congressional leadership.

(beat)

... And keep this out of the media! I don't care what it takes, just make sure Larry King isn't taking calls about it on CNN.

The C.I.A. CHIEF looks up. He is incredibly calm.

C.I.A. CHIEF

Any further word on Air Force One?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

No radio or radar contact in 46 minutes. Not since they took out the chase planes.

V.P. Weldon sits back...thinks.

CHIEF OF STAFF

Goddamnit, what are you people doing up there?! Why can't we locate the President's plane?!

ADMIRAL OLSEN

46 minutes below radar? Flying at what speed? In what direction? Care to roll the dice, Harry, and commit all our resources in one area?

There is clear friction between these two. Weldon intercedes.

V.P. WELDON

All right, Admiral, what exactly are you doing?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

A circular search pattern, using the last visual contact point as the hub.

V.P. WELDON

Chances of success?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

One in five. But the odds improve the longer we keep searching.

CHIEF OF STAFF

They also improve for the fucking plane to go down!

V.P. WELDON

All right, gentlemen. The next time this man calls ... I'll talk to him myself.

(beat)

Just find the plane, Admiral. Unless you want to start preparing for a second Inchon invasion.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - IN FLIGHT - DAY

The great plane is now limping through the skies...gaping holes in her fuselage, and underbelly.

INT. CMC - FLIGHT DECK - (AF-1) - DAY

Reese is cutting through the chain on his handcuffs with a small file. It starts to give way.

T.J.

...Why don't you use a key?

REESE

I'd like to, but Agt. Woodley had the only one aboard.

The chain BREAKS, and Reese tosses the ATTACHE CASE away.

He ties the dangling handcuff chain around his wrist.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

All right, Cmmdr., now who the hell is Capt. Kane?!

REESE

(remembering)

An ex-Navy SEAL, sir.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

One of ours -- ??!

REESE

Yes, sir.

FARLEY

And you know him?

REESE

I should, I killed him.

(a beat)

At least, I thought I did.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

This is incredible.

REESE

Kane is an outlaw, and a renegade. He's also the best damn soldier I ever saw.

(beat)

He was my SEAL Team leader, until he went bad. 5 years ago, Capt. Kane received a General Court for rape and murder. After he was convicted ...he killed two guards, and escaped from the brig.

(beat)

I was ordered to find him. I led an assault team who tracked him down... and killed him.

FARLEY

Well, Cmmdr., -- it looks like you missed.

REESE

We dusted his vehicle with a TOW. No one could have lived...not unless our intelligence was wrong, and he wasn't in the car.

A beat. Reese is working this out on his feet.

REESE

(continuing)

I trained with him, Mr. President. I knew him better than any man in the Teams. That's why they sent me to take him out.

(a beat)

If it's Kane, I know how he operates, how he thinks. With any luck, I can pin-point his base, and punch his ticket.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

What are you saying?

REESE

He's hitting us like a SEAL Operation. We ran the same kind of play on drug czars in Colombia.

INSERT - A COMPUTER TERMINAL

A three-dimensional diagram NOW pops-up on a computer screen. We SEE a full, hi-tech layout of the entire plane.

CAPT. RENO

Here it is, Cmmdr., the schematic...

They all step to the computer terminal.

REESE

If someone shows me how Kane took control of this plane, I might be able to stop him.

T.J.

My guess is, he found a way to override our new EVI system.

FARLEY

That's enough, Major!

REESE

...Isn't it a little late to worry about security, Mr. Farley?

(to T.J.)

EVI? That's the 'Hand of God' thing he talked about, right?

FARLEY

Mr. President, can we really be certain what team this man is playing for? Ours, or this Capt. Kane, he failed to kill?

T.J.

Sir, I trust Reese. I may not like him, but I trust him.

(turns to Reese)

EVI is the Emergency Vehicle Interface System. It's a software based control program, designed to work with advanced fly-by-wire aircraft.

(changes the diagram)

Its primary function is to reduce the effects of battle or missile damage, and to compensate for a catastrophic loss of surface control. It's powered by a radio signal sent through a GPS Satellite. That's why they nick-named it "Hand Of God."

(beat)

It's like the hand of God, reaching down from the heavens, just to keep the President's plane airborne.

REESE

Then Kane can fly this thing from anywhere on earth?

Even Farley is anxious to hear the answer to that question.

T.J.

Yes. That's the whole concept behind the software. Operating all flight controls with a bounced radio signal.

REESE

Like some damn cruise missile?

T.J.

Exactly. Your man Kane could have overridden our system by planting his own receiver...and re-routing the circuit boards.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Can we find his receiver?

T.J.

There's 514 miles of wiring aboard, sir. It would take us a month just to locate any re-routing in the avionics section alone.

REESE

Hell, the Air Force lives by redundancy. There has to be another way to control the plane.

T.J.
(she's impressed)
You're right. It's down here...
in the Aft Cargo Deck. A back-up
control panel.
(changes the diagram)
...If I can make it into this room,
I can override anything that's been
done, and fly the plane myself.

She points...and a panel FLASHES on the computer screen.

REESE
You'll never make it. Kane already
figured that move, and prepped for
it.

T.J.
More booby traps?

REESE
Count on it.

FARLEY
Well, we can't just sit here and do
nothing!

T.J.
What about taking an indirect route?
(she got the
spotlight)
Instead of being obvious, and travel-
ing the access corridor ... we could
try the overhead air duct.

REESE
He'd figure that too.

T.J.
What makes you so sure?

REESE
Because I'd figure it.

A YOUNG AGENT from the Secret Service group....now chimes in.

YOUNG AGENT
Maybe. But it's still an acceptable
risk, Mr. President. So I'll do it.
I'll try the air duct.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

ESTABLISH the lawn looking green and peaceful. Over it:

"THE WHITE HOUSE -- 1100 HOURS"

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

VP Weldon, his Chief of Staff, and key members of Congress are in the room, listening to MAX KANE on a LOUDSPEAKER.

KANE

(over loudspeaker)

At 13:30 Hours, the USS Bluefish will rendezvous with the Akaga Kim, a North Korean attack class destroyer.

V.P. WELDON

Go on.

INT. A SMALL TRANSMITTER ROOM - DAY

We can't SEE the entire room, just some hi-tech monitors, transmitters, and blinking computer gear. We PAN OFF the FLASHING LIGHTS, until we find Max Kane, smoking a cigar.

KANE

It's my timetable, Mr. Vice President. We'll do it my way.

(smiling)

Of course, if you don't like the way I do things, you can always hang up, and prepare a new Presidential gravesite at Arlington.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - THE PENTAGON - DAY

A large oval table, with high ranking MILITARY OFFICERS in attendance. All branches of the service are represented. Electronic wall maps, and TV MONITORS line the room. All the OFFICERS listen to Max Kane on a LOUDSPEAKER.

KANE'S VOICE

Everyone listening at the Pentagon?
All the tape recorders running?

The Officers look at each other.

KANE'S VOICE

(continuing)

Do you all have your pens and pencils ready, because I'll only give the instructions once ... failure to comply, will result in 7 days of National mourning.

ADMIRAL OLSEN

Let's not waste any more time.

KANE'S VOICE

It's my show, Admiral. I'll run it my fucking way!

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

V.P. WELDON

Are there any further instructions?

KANE'S VOICE

You will transfer 6, 20 kiloton birds to the Agaka Kim at 16:30 hours.

V.P. WELDON

Anything else?

KANE'S VOICE

When all the conditions have been met, I'll permit Air Force One to land. But not before.

V.P. WELDON

Where will it land?

KANE'S VOICE

When all the conditions have been met.

CLICK. The transmission goes dead. A CRACKLING HISS...and then nothing. The POLITICIANS in the Oval Office look at each other in stunned silence.

INT. AFT MAIN DECK GALLEY - AIR DUCT PANEL - (AF-1) - DAY

AGENT TANNER, the cocky young Secret Service Agent, pops the screws on an access panel to the Main Air Conditioning Duct.

REESE

If Max Kane is out there, he's prepared for this move.

AGENT TANNER

No room for doubt?

REESE

Not in my mind.

The P. ENTERS the Galley.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

What about you, Agent Tanner?

AGENT TANNER

If this works, sir, we'll be on the ground in 15 minutes...

REESE

If it doesn't...we'll all be dead.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Do you have a better idea?

REESE

Actually, Mr. President, I do.

T.J.

...Why doesn't that surprise me?

INT. 'FLYING' OVAL OFFICE - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Reese and the others crowd around one of the President's onboard computer terminals. Once again, we SEE the full schematic VIEW of Air Force-1.

REESE

This is the portside landing gear...
it's just below the Control Room you
want to reach. Right?

(she agrees)

What's the quickest way to drop the
wheels?

T.J.

...There's an electrical override in
avionics. We can cut the wires, and
lower the gear. But it's a one way
ticket...we can't get them back up.

Reese thinks, then steps back.

REESE

If you lower the gear, I can drop out
from the exposed EDV port, move along
the bottom of the airplane, and climb
back up in the wheel well.

FARLEY

Outside the airplane? That's crazy!

REESE

No. It's unexpected. From there,
I can make it to the Aft Cargo Deck.

T.J.

You won't make it. The outside air
temp is minus 30. Factor in wind
chill, and it's more like minus 60.

REESE

But it's a short crawl.

T.J.

We're traveling at 300 knots. The wind'll rip you apart.

REESE

But it'll drop to 200 knots when you lower the landing gear.

T.J.

..True, but there's still a downside.
(beat)

Higher wind resistance will increase fuel consumption, and reduce flight time.

FARLEY

By how much?

T.J.

With all the gear down and locked... maybe 30 per cent.

FARLEY

That's 3 hours less flying time, Mr. President.

REESE

It's your call, sir. But I think it's the only chance we have.

FARLEY

The phones are dead, Mr. President. There are no lines of communication. We can't even notify the Vice President, and tell him he's lost 3 hours of negotiating time!

REESE

Kane is counting on us to sit still. We've got to put him off his game.

(beat)

We can't expect anyone to save us, sir. We have to save ourselves.

FARLEY

And we can't risk 3 hours of flight time on a wild, hot dog play!

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Four hours ago, I was the President of the United States. Now, I'm barely President of this airplane.

(more)

PRESIDENT GIBSON (cont'd)

(to T.J.)

Major, you're the sole survivor of
the flight crew. It's your airplane.
...you make the call.

T.J. looks at Reese, at Farley, then at the P. She thinks
long and hard.

REESE

Trust your instinct, Major. There's
no check list for this problem.

T.J.

Cmmdr., it's too risky.

REESE

You can't play this game by the book!

T.J.

I have to..it's the only game I know.

She glares at him, then walks off.

EXT. UNDERWATER - USS BLUEFISH - TOPSIDE VIEW - NIGHT

The Bluefish cruises a rocky channel...heading to open water.

"THE SEA OF JAPAN. 11:48 HOURS."

INT. CONTROL ROOM - USS BLUEFISH - NIGHT

Capt. Graham is sitting in his chair at the CONN. His XO is
standing over him, holding a sheet of paper.

XO

...The message is authentic, sir.

Capt. Graham reads the document with a disbelieving gaze.

CAPT. GRAHAM

It's authentic, but it's crazy. Tell
me, Paul, how do sane men issue com-
pletely insane orders?

Some questions can't be answered...and the XO doesn't try.

CAPT. GRAHAM

(continuing)

National Command Authority wants us
to rendezvous with the Akaga Kim at
13:30 hours. We're to surface, make
contact ... then await instructions
about unloading missiles.

XO
I ... I don't understand -- ??

CAPT. GRAHAM
Ours is not to reason why...
(beat)
Left full rudder. All ahead flank.
Let's not be late for the party.

As the submarine accelerates, we CUT TO:

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - IN FLIGHT - DAY

The crippled plane limps through the sky at 300 knots.

INT. AFT MAIN DECK GALLEY - AIR VENT PANEL - AF-1 - DAY

Tanner opens the access panel to the air vent. He climbs into the large duct...then crawls forward.

After a few feet, he stops, and switches on his radio mic.

AGENT TANNER
Reese, I've popped the access panel,
and I'm climbing in the air duct.
What should I be concerned about?

INT. MAIN DECK GALLEY - AF-1 - DAY

Reese looks at the others, who crowd around the access panel.

REESE
Gravity.

AGENT TANNER (V.O.)
I have to check it, Cmmdr. I have
no choice.

REESE
All right, Tanner, you win. Watch
for trip wires, or freshly drilled
holes...

INT. AIR DUCT - (AF-1) - DAY

Agent Tanner moves through the darkened air duct on all fours. He uses a flashlight, and his radio mic.

AGENT TANNER
It looks clear...I don't see any
obstructions.

REESE'S VOICE
Watch for detonator terminals...

AGENT TANNER
(inching forward)
Nothing...all clear.

His FLASHLIGHT BEAM falls on the OPEN CORRIDOR at the far end of the air duct.

ANGLE - ALTERNATE CONTROL ROOM CORRIDOR - (AF-1) - DAY

We SEE chairs on their sides, and some paper debris. We also SEE cabinets open with their contents spilled on the floor, a large knapsack ... sheets of metal...

...and the closed door to the ALT. CONTROL ROOM.

AGENT TANNER
I see the corridor...and the Alternate Control Room. The area is empty. I'm moving up...

REESE'S VOICE
Wait...check the side panels -- !
Watch for overhead IR-Beams!

Tanner points his FLASHLIGHT onto the side panel of the air duct. When he does, he FREEZES. His LIGHT breaks a short IR-Beam of laser light.

AGENT TANNER
...Oh shit. He used my own light to trigger it!

T.J.'S VOICE
Trigger what?!

ANGLE - AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

an LED timer with a stick of C-4. The RED LIGHT suddenly FLASHES, and a FEW WORDS crawl across the small LED SCREEN.

"YOU SHOULD HAVE CASTLED ON THE QUEEN'S SIDE!"

Before Agent Tanner can make a move...BLAM!!! A huge concussive EXPLOSION rips through the air duct...BLASTING a gap in the side of the airplane...

...and BLOWING Agent Tanner right through the open hole!

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM - KANE'S LOCATION - DAY

Kane sits in his chair, watching the EXPLOSION on a small B&W T.V. MONITOR. He SEES the people reacting in the Main Deck Galley section...then he sits BOLT UPRIGHT ... grabbing a mic.

KANE

I warned you people not to fuck
with me!

On the TV, a figure struggles to his feet after the explosion.

INT. MAIN DECK GALLEY - AF-1 - DAY

Reese is the figure getting up.

REESE

Max...you crazy sonuvabitch, you
won't get away with this!

KANE'S VOICE

Of course I will. It's the perfect
mission, Jack. I get to make 10
million bucks, and kill an old
friend!

(a loud sigh)

Life is good!

All eyes search for the source of Kane's VOICE.

KANE'S VOICE

(continuing)

Just tell your people to stop trying
my patience. They have 8 hours and
31 minutes of fuel left. If they
anger me again, I'll vent some JP-4,
and kill them all.

REESE

It isn't over, Max!

KANE'S VOICE

(laughing)

Not for us, Reese. Not yet.

Reese listens to Kane LAUGH.

Then he calmly walks over and RIPS the Fiber Optic Cable, and
the Loudspeaker -- OFF the wall!

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Damnit...when does all this stop?!

T.J.

(calm and determined)

Now, Mr. President. It stops right
now.

(turning around)

Okay, Reese...you're on!

EXT. CLEARING ON THE GROUND - ROCKY MOUNTAINS - DAY

A TOUGH SOLDIER stands by a HUMVEE, looking up at the sky. He lifts his binoculars, and scans the heavens. Over this SUPER;

"SOMEWHERE IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES. 12:20 HOURS."

He SEES nothing, but his RADIO suddenly SQUAWKS to life.

KANE'S VOICE

(over radio)

Are you in position, sergeant?

TOUGH SOLDIER

(into radio)

Yes, sir.

KANE'S VOICE

Rendezvous at Point B, after I confirm missile transfer. Contact with the sub will be at 16:30 hours.

TOUGH SOLDIER

I'll be ready, sir. Ready and waiting.

The Tough Soldier clicks off his radio, gets back in his Humvee, and resumes driving along winding mountain trails.

EXT. NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY - MAIN HEADQUARTERS - DAY

ESTABLISH a large, nondescript building in Washington.

"DAY TWO — 12:20 HOURS"

N.S.A HEADQUARTERS. WASHINGTON, D.C."

INT. CHAIRMAN ROARK'S OFFICE - N.S.A. - DAY

Agt. Frank Balmer is holding a private, closed door meeting with the CHAIRMAN of the Agency, CARL ROARK.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

Did you make a positive I.D. on the victim?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

..Yes, sir. Master/Sgt. D.F. Harris. Systems Specialist, Grade 1. Handled avionics maintenance for Air Force One...for the last 10 years.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

Did you learn anything at the apartment?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

We picked up three sets of prints.
Two complete, and one partial.

(beat)

I ran them through BFI, and came up
with a match. Capt. Maxwell F. Kane.
Navy SEAL Team. Special Black Ops
Unit. Based out of San Diego.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

Did you have him picked him up?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

It's not possible, sir. He's been
dead for 5 years.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

Then what are his fingerprints doing
in Sgt. Harris's apartment?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

They were also found on the locker
with the dead Tech Officer.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

How did you learn that?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

Secret Service didn't tell me, but
I have my own sources.

(beat)

Do you want me to be generous, and
tell them about Max Kane?

Roark leans back in his big chair.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

Information is a two-way street...and
our friends at Secret Service seem re-
luctant to share with the rest of the
family.

(beat)

Let's not say anything, until you can
tell me why a dead man's fingerprints
were found at the victims' apartment.

INT. AFT CARGO DECK - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

We start CLOSE-ON a cable junction box. T.J. opens it, then
sticks a pair of WIRE CUTTERS inside.

As she does, we PULL BACK to SEE that Aft Cargo Deck. The
wind blows furiously through the gaping hole left by the
missing EDV-1.

ON REESE

wrapping a length of rope around his waist...while the other end is tied to the bulkhead. Once the rope is secure, Reese checks a Secret Service microphone on his shirt, and the earpiece in his ear.

REESE

You reading me, Merrick?

T.J. adjusts her own mic, and earpiece.

T.J.

5 by 5.

T.J. steps to a junction box, checking a series of wires, and then pulling three of them out. She looks at Reese --

REESE

Let's do it.

T.J.

Mr. President?

The P. looks at Farley, then nods approval.

With that, T.J. CLIPS the last THREE WIRES. A loud CLUNK, and a GRINDING SOUND is heard. The landing gear begins to lower.

EXT. UNDERBELLY OF AIR FORCE ONE - IN FLIGHT - DAY

the landing gear DROPS into position, and locks. The drag on the plane is instantly apparent..it loses speed and altitude.

INT. AFT CARGO DECK - (AF-1) - IN FLIGHT - DAY

Reese cinches his ropes, and drops out of the EDV hatch.

EXT. UNDERBELLY OF AIR FORCE ONE - IN FLIGHT - DAY

Reese falls out of the plane...wind rushing around him, and spinning him like a tea bag at the end of a long string. His body is like a leaf, bouncing around...caught in a violent tornado.

He's buffeted about, SLAMMING into the plane, but hanging on, the way Captain Ahab once hung onto Moby Dick. Reese BANGS into the plane, time and again, but keeps making for the wheel well about 30 feet away.

REESE

(shouting into mic)

Rope! Give me more rope...!

INT. AFT CARGO DECK - DAY

Several OFFICERS and SECRET SERVICE MEN hang firm to the rope ...the wind rushes furiously inside the open hold.

T.J.

More rope...feed him that rope!

They ease more rope out of the hold. Several MEN hold T.J. as she tries to lean out of the EDV hatch for a better look at Reese's progress.

EXT. THE UNDERBELLY OF AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Reese keeps inching toward the rear of the great plane... getting closer to the landing gear, and the wheel well. As he moves, he ties a SECOND HUNK OF ROPE to the airframe.

But he also keeps BANGING into the plane, and bouncing off it again. The beating draws blood, almost makes him unconscious ...but he keeps inching toward the aft landing gear.

REESE

(into mic)

More rope!! Hurry...!!!

INT. AFT CARGO HOLD - AF-1 - DAY

The Officers try to release more rope. Even The P. helps.

T.J.

He Needs More Slack...MOVE IT!

The men move quickly, releasing more rope. Suddenly the BACK END OF THE CORD...RIPS FREE FROM THE BULKHEAD...AND SNAKES ACROSS THE FLOOR.

The rope starts to pull free from the men who are holding it ...the hurricane force wind, and the weight of Reese on his tether is yanking the cord from everyone's hand.

We SEE SIZZLING ROPE BURNS ON HANDS, as the men struggle to hold onto Reese's lifeline.

T.J.

(continuing)

Don't lose it! HANG ON!

SUDDENLY THE HUGE PLANE makes a violent dip, dives at a sharp angle. Officers are THROWN TO THE FLOOR...dropping the rope.

Men look up and SCRAMBLE for the rope as it wriggles across the deck, almost escaping from the hatch.

T.J.
(continuing)
Grab it! Grab the rope!!!

ANGLE - PRESIDENT GIBSON

Diving for the rope as the last hunk SLIDES OUT OF THE OPEN HATCH! WHAP!! HE MISSES THE ROPE...in a flash...it's gone.

EXT. UNDERBELLY - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Reese is REACHING FOR THE LANDING GEAR when the rope FALLS FROM THE HATCH.

With a huge LUNGE...HE DIVES AND GRABS FOR THE BOTTOM OF THE WHEEL ... just as he's about to fall to his death.

WHAM! Reese SLAMS into the wheel with a BONE CRUNCHING THUD! But he manages to wrap his arms around it ... CLINGING to the wheel struts for dear life!

T.J.'S VOICE
We lost him! We've lost him!

Suddenly Air Force One dips, and goes into a steeper dive, heading straight for a huge mountain range. While Reese keeps clinging to the wheel...

INT. AFT CARGO HOLD - AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

While inside the plane -- people are thrown around like stick figures in a whirlwind. They HIT the walls of the Cargo Hold.

KANE'S VOICE
I Told You, No One Leaves The Plane!

PRESIDENT GIBSON
Damnit, Kane...what's happening now?!

KANE'S VOICE
I'm dumping fuel...and crashing an old friend into the Rockies! I warned you people not to fuck with me!

T.J. is enraged. She looks up, spots the LOUDSPEAKER, and next to it, she SEES the thin wires, and the small VIDEO HEAD. She's found a fiber-optic VIDEO CAMERA.

T.J.
Bastard!

In her fury, she reaches for a CROWBAR, and races to the camera! She HAMMERS away at the loudspeaker, and fiber-optic cable ... SMASHING them both to dust.

INT. MAX KANE'S TRANSMITTER ROOM - DAY

suddenly, one of his VIDEO MONITORS goes...BLACK. He leaps to his feet in a rage!

KANE

Bitch!

With that, he HITS some switches on his control board.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - NEAR THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - DAY

The huge plane RACES at full speed toward a vast range of mountains...the great American Rockies. Reese is still clinging to the landing gear, as the President's plane banks, and heads for the rim at snow-peak level.

The 747 makes for a wide pass at the center of the mountain range ... its wingtips practically crash against the rocks.

REESE'S POV - A JAGGED MOUNTAIN PEAK

coming straight at him!

He grips the wheel base as the peak rushes by at 200 knots. The sharp edge of the rock face gouges out a big hunk of the tire, BLOWING THE RUBBER to smithereens.

ANGLE - T.J.

Her face is distraught, showing more concern and fear for Reese than she's ever admitted.

She leans down, and looks on in amazement as Reese survives the CRUNCHING collision.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - BETWEEN THE ROCKIES - DAY

The plane banks, climbs, then turns on its side...almost 90 degrees. It roars between the mountain ridges...only a hair-line away from a fiery death.

CLOSE-ON - REESE

losing his footing, and tumbling from his perch. He dangles over the edge, clinging to the wheel-well with both hands.

CLOSE-ON - T.J.

desperate fear for Reese in her eyes.

T.J.

HOLD ON, REESE...HOLD ON!

ON REESE

straining, struggling...he uses superhuman strength to make it back onto the main strut. Finally, with a huge burst of effort, he catches hold..pulling himself into the Wheel Well.

ON T.J.

hanging through the open EDV hatch...buffeted by the furious winds.

T.J.

He's made it! He's In!

CLOSE-ON - REESE - IN THE WHEEL WELL

straining so hard, the veins pop out in his neck...but he finally pulls, grabs, and muscles himself up into the well.

Then he chins himself up, squirms into the AIR DUCT...pops the ACCESS PANEL...and starts his long crawl towards the Alternate Control Room.

INT. AFT CARGO HOLD - DAY

T.J. ties onto the rope. Out of her mind with sheer determination, she starts to lower herself from the open hatch.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Major...you sure you want to do this?

T.J.

Yes, sir.

(beat)

It's my duty to take responsibility for this airplane...and Reese won't be able to land it without me.

T.J. takes a deep breath...then drops out of the open hatch.

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - UNDERBELLY - DAY

T.J. makes her way under the plane, clinging to the rope that Reese tied to the Landing Gear.

She strains, pulls and fights the 200 knot wind.

INT. AIR DUCT - (AF-1) - DAY

Reese inches along the air duct...moving slow, and cautious.

INT. AFT CARGO HOLD - (AF-1) - DAY

Capt. Reno leans out of the open hatchway.

T.J.
(continuing)
You can't access the control panel,
not without the codes.
(smiles)
Get used to it, Reese. You can't
do any of this without me.

He looks back at her once ... then in sheer exasperation, he
keeps inching forward.

T.J.
(continuing)
You don't think Kane planted any
explosives in here?

REESE
It's an illogical route. Hard
to anticipate. But he likes to
surprise me.

T.J.
(sarcastic)
...Well, that's a confidence builder.

INT. AIR DUCT - AIR FORCE ONE - (IN FLIGHT) - DAY

Reese keeps inching forward. As he does, his FLASHLIGHT BEAM
falls onto the corridor at the end of the air duct.

We SEE all the debris, the ALTERNATE CONTROL ROOM door, some
broken steel panels ... even a large knapsack on the floor.

REESE
It looks clear to me.

T.J.
Since it's my plane, I'll go first.

REESE
(he leans back, and
gets out of her way)
...Be my guest.

She gets up, and starts to move toward the corridor. But she
suddenly stops. FREEZES IN HER TRACKS.

T.J.
Surprise, Reese...he placed a charge
on the Control Room door!

Reese points his FLASHLIGHT BEAM to look where she's looking.
We SEE the C-4 EXPLOSIVE attached to the door.

REESE

He likes to stay one step ahead of me...

T.J.

Make that two steps!

T.J.'S POV - A SECOND EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

in the Air Duct, T.J. finds another LED TIMER with a stick of C-4. The RED LIGHT suddenly FLASHES, and the words start to crawl across the small LED SCREEN.

"LOOKS LIKE YOU FELL FOR THE FOOL'S GAMBIT!"

T.J.

You said Kane wouldn't plant a bomb in here!

REESE

I guessed wrong!

The RED LIGHT stop FLASHING, and starts to HUM! It's only a split second to detonation!

ON REESE

looking around in desperation...then suddenly moving to protect T.J.

He KNOCKS her to the deck, LEAPS into the corridor, and GRABS ONE OF THE STEEL PANELS.

He races back, and SHOVES the panel up against the LED TIMER TO MUFFLE THE EXPLOSION.

WHAMMM!!!! The muffled blast ERUPTS....BLOWING REESE OUT OF THE PLANE... and sending him to his death.

EXT. OPEN SKY ABOVE THE ROCKIES - DAY

Reese is falling, tumbling to certain death, arching his back and using air currents to delay his fall.

This man is thinking...always thinking.

INT. THE CORRIDOR NEAR THE AIR DUCT - (AF-1) - DAY

T.J. looks around, desperate...frantic...she SEES the C-4 EXPLOSIVE on the door, and there's nothing she can do about it. She keeps hoping for a miracle ... then finds one!

That large knapsack, half-hidden under the debris isn't a knapsack at all! She SEES a shiny metal D-RING sticking out!

She suddenly realizes it's a military parachute!

T.J. grabs it, hooks it on...then races for the gaping hole,
LEAPING OUT OF THE PLANE, to save Reese!

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - IN FLIGHT OVER THE ROCKIES - DAY

Reese is still falling without a chute...sky diving and using
the air to stay alive as long as possible. Then he looks up.

ON T.J.

DIVING...with her arms stretched out. She flies straight at
him. 12 THOUSAND...11 THOUSAND....TEN THOUSAND FEET!

Her trajectory is perfect...with a WOOMP, she finally SLAMS
into Reese at 9 thousand feet, catching him, and holding on.

REESE

What kept you?!

T.J.

I had a problem.

REESE

Finding a parachute?

T.J.

Saving your ass! I wasn't sure
I wanted to do it.

With that, she POPS the chute. The canopy billows out, float-
ing Reese and T.J. gently to the ground. And in the distance,
AIR FORCE ONE....continues flying into the clouds.

REESE

(this isn't easy)

Thanks...Major. I like your
instincts.

INT. A NEW CLEARING ON THE GROUND - ROCKY MOUNTAINS - DAY

The Tough Soldier is standing by his HUMVEE again. He looks
up at the sky. Suddenly his RADIO RECEIVER squawks.

KANE'S VOICE

(over radio)

Do you see anything, sergeant?

TOUGH SOLDIER

(into radio)

...I see a parachute, Captain.

KANE'S VOICE

Goddamnit! If they make it to terra firma...kill them. No survivors, sergeant! I want Reese dead!

TOUGH SOLDIER

Yes, sir. Consider it done.

The Tough Soldier quickly LEAPS in his Humvee and ROARS OFF, spitting waves of brown dust.

EXT. ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRAIL - WESTERN COLORADO - DAY

The Humvee races across the lush green woods of a 4WD trail.

The Tough Soldier drives the edge of the Rocky Mountains... and heads for the spot where the chute came down.

EXT. NEW CLEARING - DAY

The Humvee flies over a stream -- airborne for twenty feet. Then it ROARS into a clearing, just in time to SEE T.J. She's groggy... stumbling around ... and working her way free of the parachute.

The Humvee SCREECHES to a dusty halt...and the Tough Soldier climbs out...his Machine Pistol drawn. He inches up on T.J.

ON REESE

LEAPING out of the trees, and falling on the Tough Soldier. The Soldier tumbles back, spinning around to fire! But Reese blocks his arm, KNOCKING the gun to the dirt.

The Tough Soldier dives, reaching the machine pistol...and FIRING A QUICK BURST. It kicks up dust around T.J.

Reese races across the ground, does a spin kick to T.J.'s feet, and knocks her on her ass.

REESE

Stay down!

The Tough Soldier leaps up, with his machine pistol leveled.

Reese moves on pure instinct. He shoves the barrel aside as it ERUPTS...then he double kicks to the groin and kneecap.

Bones splinter with a sickening crunch. The Tough Soldier screams out ... and FIRES again!

A BULLET catches Reese below the ribs, ripping out a chunk of his flesh. Reese GRABS the wound as his blood spurts ... but he keeps moving forward.

He SLAMS into the Tough Soldier, knocking him against a tall tree, then, with a quick move, he head butts the Soldier into oblivion.

The Tough Solder ends up dazed...bleeding...in pain. Reese picks up the machine pistol, and GRABS him.

REESE

(continuing)

Who are you?!

The Tough Soldier is silent.

REESE

(continuing)

Why did you want to kill her?! Not that the idea didn't cross my mind ... but you hardly know her.

TOUGH SOLDIER

Fuck you!

Reese belts him with the butt of the machine pistol.

T.J.

Reese!

REESE

Hey, pal, who sent you?

The Tough Soldier is silent. Reese BELTS him with the pistol again. The guy bleeds.

REESE

(continuing)

Where's Kane?!

TOUGH SOLDIER

...Kane who?!

Reese takes the machine pistol, and places it against the Tough Soldier's skull.

T.J.

Reese -- No!

T.J. is shoving her parachute away. But she's suddenly concerned that Reese may commit cold-blooded murder.

When she SHOUTS, the Tough Soldier LUNGES at Reese...but Reese side-steps his move.

In a flash, Reese WHACKS the Tough Soldier with the BUTT of his gun...knocking him out.

A moment later, Reese goes through his pockets and takes what he needs. He grabs any useful information he can find...but doesn't find much.

He takes the guy's watch, pistol, matchbook, extra clips.... and his radio receiver.

Then he removes the Tough Soldier's boots. With a big heave, Reese tosses the boots into the bushes.

T.J.

(continuing)

What are you doing?

REESE

It should take him a while to come to...and longer to walk out.

Reese climbs in the Humvee, and starts it.

T.J.

Who is he?

REESE

No dog tags. No I.D. What does that tell you?

T.J.

It tells me he's dressed for war.

REESE

I know I missed the news this morning
(sarcastic)
-- but did we just declare war on Colorado?

She looks at him, then climbs into the Hummer.

T.J.

What's going on, Jack?

REESE

...Kane is close. I can feel it.

She suddenly SEES a new intensity in his eyes. Before she can say anything, Reese hits the gas...and ROARS OFF.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NORTH KOREA - DAY

A magnificent Conference Room in the GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE. Military types sit around a huge mahogany desk. Gen. Kwan Jing and GENERAL HYONG MUK are both here, arguing.

"GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE. NORTH KOREA. 13:50 HOURS."

All the Generals speak in their native dialect, but English SUBTITLES appear.)

GEN. HYONG MUK

...I have been against this outlaw operation from the very beginning.

GEN. KWAN JING

You are against all my operations, but this one is working. Before the day is done, our nation will own 6 new missiles with nuclear warheads!

GEN. HYONG MUK

At what price!

GEN. KWAN JING

All things in life have a price. But once we become a nuclear power, no nation will ever threaten us again!

GEN. HYONG MUK

(trying to reason)

This isn't the way to achieve...

GEN. KWAN JING

It's the only way! We kept our part of the current treaty. We destroyed two nuclear facilities. But once again, the Americans have broken their promise ... where are the missiles they were going to send?

GEN. HYONG MUK

The new American President assured me that we could come to a non-nuclear, but equitable agreement.

GEN. KWAN JING

Without the nuclear sword, we have nothing! No power to persuade!

GEN. HYONG MUK

We cannot live on the edge of the world anymore...we must find a way to become part of it!

GEN. KWAN JING

We will be a part of it! At 16:30 hours ...we will leap into the new millennium! My reading of this President tells me he will weaken and crumble. And when he does, we become new members of the Nuclear Club!

Gen. Kwan Jing gets to his feet, and storms out of the Great Hall. As he does, his footsteps...ECHO on the marble.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - AFTERNOON

In the glamorous, but disheveled Presidential Suite, a table is rolled in, some wall units are taken down, and the room is quickly being converted into a Hospital O.R.

The President is sitting back, with his shirt off. A needle is carefully being prepared for him, by Capt. Reno.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Do we train all naval officers to do blood transfusions?

CAPT. RENO

We have to be prepared for any emergency, sir.

Farley walks over to the President.

FARLEY

(incredulous)

Mr. President, do you really have to give your blood to Hamlin?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

They tell me the stored plasma was destroyed in the explosion, and I'm the only one aboard with his type.

(beat)

Unfortunately...he needs it.

FARLEY

(sarcastic)

You might consider letting him die.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

And read about it on the op ed page of the New York Times? No thank you.

(they both smile)

...Any luck with communications?

FARLEY

Nothing, sir. No cell phones, no radio's. Nothing works.

Jerry Hamlin is wheeled in on a gurney.

JERRY HAMLIN

Thank you again, Mr. President. But are you sure you want to do this?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

To be honest, I'm having a bit of donors remorse.

JERRY HAMLIN

Well, I hope you don't expect any favors in return.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Actually, I do. If we get out of this alive...I don't want to see it on the Nightly News. Hell, I don't want to see it anywhere.

JERRY HAMLIN

Are you kidding, sir? This is the greatest story of my life!

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Will it do the country any good to know their President was kidnapped?

JERRY HAMLIN

I'm sorry, sir. But it'll do me a world of good! This is the biggest story I've had in 28 years of reporting. You can't expect me to hush it up. Sorry, sir, not a chance in hell!

A beat. The P. looks at him.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

...I just realized something.

JERRY HAMLIN

What?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

I have a terrible fear of needles.

The President gets up, and puts on his shirt. Capt. Reno stands there ... holding the needle in his hand.

JERRY HAMLIN

You...you're joking?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Me? Joke about my needle phobia?
Not a chance in hell!

The President starts to leave the room, Farley follows.

JERRY HAMLIN

Mr. President -- ??!

The P. keeps walking with Farley. They never look back.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(lightly)

...He always said I was weak and indecisive. What'll he say now?

FARLEY

(teasing)

Are you actually going to let him expire?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(smiling)

Well, it might take care of my wishy-washy image, and boost my approval rating.

They look at Jerry Hamlin, and wave good-bye.

JERRY HAMLIN

(calling out)

Mr. President -- you can't do this... you're a decent guy! Mr. President??

With that, the President simply turns...and EXITS.

EXT. BINYON, COLORADO - DAY

A small, picturesque, one horse town ... at the edge of the Rocky Mts. It's about 200 miles west of Denver. In the town, we SEE a dusty road, and four small buildings. We SEE a gas station, a diner, a general store, and a small, rundown tavern/hotel.

On the dusty Main Street, we also SEE a few pick-up trucks, an old Chevy, a large WHITE TOW-TRUCK..and a state-of-the-art Humvee.

The Humvee is parked in front of the diner. A few TOWNS-PEOPLE glance at it. Especially the TOW TRUCK DRIVER, as he loads a pick-up on his big hook.

INT. BINYON DINER - COLORADO - DAY

A typical country eating house. A couple of COWBOYS at tables, a few at the counter. T.J. is here, having coffee.

As she sips her brew, she keeps glancing at Reese. He's using a wall pay-phone...and he's deep in conversation.

ON REESE - AT THE PAY PHONE

highly animated. Talking to several people at the same time.

REESE (INTO PHONE)
...Yes, sir. He's flying a circular
course in the Western Rocky Mountains
...trying to avoid radar.

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The Veep is here, with his Chief of Staff, and several
cabinet members.

V.P. WELDON
Are you certain, Commander?

REESE'S VOICE
Yes, sir. In fact, after we touched
down, I made contact with a member of
his team.

INT. PENTAGON SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

All the Joint Chiefs are seated around the table, listening.
Agt. Balmer, N.S.A., and C.I.A. Officers are also here.

ADMIRAL OLSEN
Where exactly are you, Cmmdr.?

REESE'S VOICE
Admiral Olsen -- !?

ADMIRAL OLSEN
Yes.

REESE'S VOICE
It's Max Kane, sir. He's alive.

ADMIRAL OLSEN
I've been listening. Where are you?

REESE'S VOICE
A town called Binyon. Somewhere at
the western edge of the Rockies.
Maj. Merrick, the co-pilot of AF-1
.....she got off the plane with me.

ADMIRAL OLSEN
Stay where you are, and I'll have you
both picked up.

He NODS at Agt. Balmer, who quickly heads for the door.

REESE'S VOICE
No, sir. Send me a search team, and
I'll find Kane's location. He's here,
I know he's here.

V.P. WELDON'S VOICE
What makes you so certain?

REESE'S VOICE
My gut, sir.

ADMIRAL OLSEN
We'll need more than that, son.

REESE
I took a radio off one of his men.
It has a short range. 20 miles at
most. He has to be in the area!
(beat)
...I'm still in the game, Admiral.
Don't pull the plug.

INT. BINYON DINER - DAY

After a moment, Reese walks to the counter, sits near T.J.

REESE
They're sending a Rapid Response
team...but you still have time to
finish your coffee.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WASHINGTON - NIGHT

Admiral Olsen, and several CABINET OFFICIALS are with the
Veep and his Chief of Staff.

ADMIRAL OLSEN
Sir, we can scramble the 4 AWACS from
Tinker, and put them over the Western
Rockies. From there, they can locate
Air Force One.

V.P. WELDON
Make it happen.

ADMIRAL OLSEN
And what about the Rapid Response
Team? Do I deploy them to Binyon?

The Chief of Staff cautions the Veep to go slow.

V.P. WELDON
...Yes. But have them take Cmdr.
Reese into custody.

ADMIRAL OLSEN
(stunned)
Excuse me, sir -- ??

CHIEF OF STAFF

Admiral, what do we know about this man? I've checked his file. Don't you find it odd that he knew our hijacker 5 years ago...and let him live?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

Sir, I know Cmmdr. Reese. Believe me, he's one of the good guys.

V.P. WELDON

Perhaps. But on his one and only trip on Air Force One, the plane is hi-jacked. And now, by some miracle, he escapes?

(beat)

Coincidence troubles me, Admiral. It troubles me a great deal.

The Veep keeps rocking in the President's chair ...

ADMIRAL OLSEN

But -- ??

CHIEF OF STAFF

Admiral, what if this man Reese is trying to divert us, and send us in the wrong direction?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

And Maj. Merrick? She's the co-pilot ...you think she's with him?

V.P. WELDON

Detain, and debrief her. I won't take any chances with the Presidents life.

The Veep keeps rocking in the President's chair, back and forth. Back and forth. After a moment --

ADMIRAL OLSEN

Sir, what about the missiles? You don't actually intend to hand them over?

V.P. WELDON

...I'll let you know.

ADMIRAL OLSEN

I assumed it was a negotiating position, and a dangerous one at that.

CHIEF OF STAFF

Dangerous?

ADMIRAL OLSEN
If the South Koreans get wind...

V.P. WELDON
Admiral...I'll let you know my
decision at the proper time.

Admiral Olsen looks at him, then turns and exits. The Veep
and his Chief of Staff are now alone.

CHIEF OF STAFF
He seems a bit on edge.

V.P. WELDON
We have to move slowly. If something
terrible were to happen, I wouldn't
want anyone to think I acted in a
precipitous manner.

CHIEF OF STAFF
You're absolutely right, sir. The
key word, is 'caution.' We should
detain Reese, and anyone with him.
(a beat)
We have to look prudent at all times.

The Veep looks at him...then keeps rocking in the big chair.

CHIEF OF STAFF
(continuing)
Excuse me for being crude now, but
if the President doesn't return, you
can't be held responsible. You have
to be seen as having done everything
to insure his safety. And it's quite
prudent to be skeptical of everyone
around him.

V.P. WELDON
And the missiles?

CHIEF OF STAFF
It wasn't your deal, was it?
(beat)
One thing is certain...if you don't
hand them over, the President dies...
and the American public will hold you
accountable. You'll have to make the
transfer. You can't afford to take
any heat for the President's death.

EXT. THE BINYON DINER - COLORADO - DAY

Reese and T.J. step outside, and look at the town of Binyon.

REESE

Nice little town. Looks like a greeting card I once got.

T.J.

I came from a town just like this.

REESE

And made it all the way to the Air Force Academy?

T.J.

You can come from a backwater town, and still have ambition.

He takes the time to look at her.

REESE

...I heard about what you did in the Gulf.

(she is silent)

A bronze star, and a silver star. Very impressive.

T.J.

I did my job, that's all.

REESE

It was more than that. You kept going back, and rescued six downed pilots in one day.

T.J.

(with pain)

I didn't rescue them all, Cmmdr. Not all of them.

She walks toward the Humvee. He catches up.

REESE

(concerned)

What went wrong?

She turns and starts to walk. He catches up to her.

T.J.

I was diverted to rescue some Navy SEALs. When I hit the LZ, they got in a fire-fight...and I was wounded. That's why I couldn't make my final pick-up ... neither did anyone else.

REESE

The pilot died?

The memory is hard for her. We can SEE it in her eyes.

T.J.

Yes. Standing next to his shot-up
Tomcat...and waiting for me to arrive.

REESE

(this isn't easy for
him)

-- Don't blame the SEALS.

T.J.

I don't. I blame the attitude. It
was a Black Ops mission. They were
supposed to avoid all contact. But
when they spotted an Iraqi squad,
they decided to take them out.

(beat)

You heroes are quite a group. Brave?
Lethal? Without question. But also
reckless, insubordinate, and danger-
ous.

(beat)

You're the Ready, FIRE, Aim Boys!
You throw the book away, and act
on impulse.

REESE

Sometimes you have to act on
instinct.

T.J.

But not all the time. That's why
the book was written.

REESE

C'mon, Major, pilots follow pro-
ceedures, and crash into mountains
all the time.

With that, she spins on her heels, and starts to walk. He
races to her again.

T.J.

...Don't waste your electrolytes,
Reese. We'll never see eye-to-eye.

(beat)

...And that's too bad.

She flashes him a come hither smile, but he doesn't respond.
His mind is elsewhere.

She's amazed at his lack of reaction.

T.J.
(continuing)
What are you looking at?

She turns -- until she spots what he's watching.

ANGLE - THE LARGE WHITE TOW TRUCK
parked in front of a store.

T.J.
(continuing)
What's so important about that truck?

The light goes on, and something suddenly registers in his mind. Reese reaches into his pocket, and comes up with the MATCHBOOK he took from the Tough Soldier's pocket.

On the matchbook, we SEE the words; "BRACE AUTO REPAIRS -- BINYON."

T.J.
(continuing)
What is it?

REESE
I found this in the soldier's pocket.

She's confused. Until he shows her the matchbook cover, and the large White Tow Truck.

The DRIVER is getting in...and his truck door reads; "BRACE AUTO REPAIRS -- BINYON."

Reese looks at her...then walks toward the Tow Truck.

REESE
(continuing)
Hey there, can I ask you a question?

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
What is it?

REESE
(making it up as he goes along)
The man who owned that Hummer...he lives here.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
What about it?

REESE
I bought it from him...

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
You got it from Mason?!

REESE
Yeah...Mason. That's the guy.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
You got took, pal...that thing is
rode to shit! You shoulda' looked
under the hood before you paid him.
The shocks are shot...there's holes
in the fuel line....

REESE
(playing along)
Oh, yeah...don't I know it! I'd like
to get my damn money back.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Good luck. Mason is as mean as a
snake.

T.J.
So is my husband.

She smiles, plays along ... and puts her arm around Reese.

REESE
If you can tell us where he lives,
we'll ruin his day.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
I'd love to see that happen!

T.J.
Then just tell us where he lives.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Sure thing..the McFee place. Straight
up I-9 for 20 miles, then right on
Brasser Canyon...you can't miss it...
It's the place with all those fancy
antennas outside.

The Tow Truck Driver nods...then speeds off.

REESE
Brasser Canyon! Only 20 miles!

T.J.
Fine. But I drive this time.

REESE
Why?

T.J.
Because I'm still the pilot, and I'm
in command of this mission ... until
Gemstone lands.

She smiles, he flips her the keys...they walk to the Hummer.

ANGLE - A BLACKHAWK ATTACK HELICOPTER - DAY

Suddenly ROARING out of the clouds...swooping down over the town, and coming in for a landing. Two choppers right behind it. All three set down smoothly, in formation.

REESE
...It's the Rapid Response Team.

T.J.
Great. They can take it from here.

Reese turns, and heads for the SOLDIERS in their all-black night gear. He smiles warmly, and waves...

REESE
I'm Reese. Lt. Cmmdr. Jack Reese...

The SOLDIERS drop to one knee, priming their weapons, taking aim at Reese...CLICK...CLICK...CLICK!

R.R. SOLDIER
Freeze! Do Not Move! Drop To The
Floor, On Your Belly! Now!

REESE
Are you crazy -- ??

BLAM! A WARNING SHOT IS FIRED!

R.R. SOLDIER
FREEZE! THEN DROP TO THE FLOOR! NOW!

This time Reese does as he's told. The soldiers swarm all over him.

REESE
(struggling)
This is nuts! I have a lead on
Kane...and you're wasting time!

They lift him up, forcefully.

ON T.J.

running towards the scene.

T.J.
Leave him alone! What The Hell
Are You Doing?!

The guns now turn and point at her! CLICK!

R.R. OFFICER
Major Merrick?

T.J.
...Yes.

R.R. OFFICER
We have orders to take Cmmdr. Reese
into custody...and to detain you
for debriefing.
(beat)
Will you please come with us?

T.J.
Where are we going?

R.R. OFFICER
Back to the base, then on to
Washington.

T.J.
But we have a lead on Kane.

R.R. OFFICER
You'll have to take that up with
Washington.

T.J.
But we're running out of time!

R.R. OFFICER
You'll have to take that up with
Washington.

T.J.
(thinking)
All right, let me get something from
the car.

T.J. heads back to the Hummer. Reese is still struggling
with his captors. He's disarmed, but struggling.

R.R. OFFICER
Who put you in these handcuffs, Reese?

REESE
The President! And if you don't let
me go, you'll end up killing him!

Out of the corner of his eye, Reese SEES T.J. getting into the Hummer...so he puts on a little diversion.

He holds up his single HANDCUFF, with the DANGLING CHAIN.

REESE

(continuing)

Hey...has anyone got a key for this thing?

VARRRRROOOOOMMM!!! Suddenly the Hummer ROARS out of the shadows, bearing down on Reese and all the soldiers!

WIDEN

as the Soldiers DIVE out of the way, but not Reese. He trusts her driving....and she validates his trust by stopping on a dime...RIGHT NEAR HIS NOSE!

T.J.

Get In!

REESE

(teasing)

Hold on, Major...aren't you being, a bit impulsive?

T.J.

Get your ass in here, now!

He LEAPS in, and they ROAR OFF..just as Soldiers get to their feet, and open fire!

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - OUTSIDE BINYON - DAY

T.J. drives hard, along a winding mountain road.

T.J.

Why are they trying to arrest you?!

REESE

(sarcastic)

Typical military response...doing everything by the book!

ANGLE - THE BLACKHAWK CHOPPER

ROARING out of the darkness, it's CHAIN GUN CHATTERING! The bullets rip up the road in front of Reese and T.J.

ON T.J.

as she drives with skill and rage, whipping the wheel around, and turning down another road.

EXT. THE ATTACK HELICOPTER - DAY

In pursuit....now joined by the other two Blackhawks!

EXT. THE OPEN MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The Hummer ROARS ahead at top speed, as all three choppers SWOOP DOWN, and close in. They try to slow the vehicle, or wrangle it, the way a cowboy wrangles cattle.

GUNFIRE fills the air..SPITTING lead into the ground in front of the Hummer.

T.J.

Don't worry, they're trying to slow us down...not kill us!

She speeds along the soft shoulder, taking it on two wheels. Shots suddenly RING OUT, plinging off the roof of the Hummer.

REESE

I think they just changed the rules of engagement!

Sound and fury on the roadway. T.J. whips around, and the Hummer accelerates, heading over a hill...suddenly -- more SHOTS blow out the tire!

Reese leans over and jerks the wheel, spinning the Hummer wildly out of control!

ANGLE - THE BLACKHAWK CHOPPER

closing in for the kill.

WEAPONS OFFICER

Closer....move in closer!

EXT. THE OPEN MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Bullets pepper the asphalt with lead! T.J. tries to stay low and drive...as more bullets rip into the vehicle around her.

Shots blow out the windshield...glass sprays fifty yards in every direction. Reese helps T.J. fight the twisting wheel.

ANGLE - A SECOND BLACKHAWK CHOPPER

suddenly RISING over the embankment..like a monster rising from the depths of the sea.

WHOOSH! The chopper FIRES a Hawkeye Missile! Blue flame trails out of the bird...as it heads straight for the Hummer.

ANGLE - T.J.

stunned...that her own military is shooting at her. The Hummer suddenly spins out, bouncing wildly down a 45 degree slope. Reese fights to maintain control of the wheel...as tumbling rocks SMASH into what's left of their windshield.

REESE

Stay Low!!!

WHAM!!! The HAWKEYE MISSILE slams into the countryside! ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE as dirt and trees are blown 100 feet into the sky!

The Hummer drives off under a shower of dirt...but it drives off unhurt.

ANGLE - THE TWO BLACKHAWKS - DAY

RATA-TATTA-TAT!!! They're joined by the THIRD BLACKHAWK.

INT. THE HUMMER - DAY

SWERVING in the road...trying to avoid the bullets that chew the asphalt..and the guns spitting a thousand rounds of death per minute. Up ahead, T.J. spots a TUNNEL.

T.J.

A tunnel, Reese..make for the tunnel!

INT. THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL - DAY

Cut into a hillside, a long, winding tunnel. Reese and T.J. spin the wheel, and RACE into it...full throttle.

The Lead Blackhawk is right behind...flying about three feet off the ground...and it keeps coming...RIGHT INTO THE TUNNEL.

INT. THE DEPTHS OF THE TUNNEL - DAY

Slugs RIP into the wall..sparks fly. But T.J. keeps driving ...oblivious to the bullets that just miss her skull.

ANGLE - THE LEAD BLACKHAWK CHOPPER

flying INSIDE THE TUNNEL. Rotor blades just inches from the wall...skids just inches from the ground.

PILOT

Close in...now!

ANGLE - THE HUMMER

Reese suddenly spots the tunnel EXIT...straight ahead!

REESE
Get Ready To Jump!

T.J.
What -- ?!!

REESE
Jump! now!

T.J.
...Oh shit!!!

T.J. looks at him--she PREPARES TO JUMP near the tunnel exit.

Reese quickly SLAMS ON THE BRAKES...and the Hummer SQUEALS TO A SCREECHING HALT at the end of the tunnel...near the edge of a sheer cliff, with a 1000 FOOT drop.

Reese and T.J. LEAP from the vehicle...but the Blackhawk is closing fast!

PILOT
OH SHIT!

THE PILOT

LEAPS from his side of the chopper!

THE WEAPONS OFFICER

Unbuckles, and LEAPS from his side of the chopper!

WEAPONS OFFICER
OH SHIT!

THE LEAD BLACKHAWK CHOPPER

SMASHES into the parked Hummer at FULL SPEED! WHAM -- !!!
A HUGE EXPLOSION of earthquake intensity! A perfect 10 on the Richter Scale.

We HEAR the SOUND of crumpling metal as a giant FIREBALL rolls out of the tunnel...and mushrooms into the sky. The BLAST is slightly smaller than an A-Bomb...but not by much.

Dirt, rocks, and chopper parts rain down at the edge of the tunnel. Reese and T.J. dive for cover...LEAPING OVER THE SAME SIDE OF A RIDGE...

...Just as the Hummer is BLASTED OFF THE CLIFF with a HUGE, and DEAFENING EXPLOSION.

T.J.
Reese -- !!!

ANGLE - BELOW THE RIDGE OF THE CLIFF

Reese and T.J. are TUMBLING OFF THE MOUNTAIN...Reese CLINGS to a tree...hanging on for dear life...T.J. FALLS TOWARD HIM!

Huge PARTS of the FLAMING Hummer...are following right after her! With a fierce determination...REESE REACHES OUT and CATCHES T.J.'S ARM...before she TUMBLES INTO OPEN SPACE.

But she starts to slide off his arm...as she does, she GRABS for anything she can hold! And all she can catch, is his DANGLING HANDCUFF CHAIN!

ANGLE - T.J.

CLINGING to the HANDCUFF CHAIN, as Reese PULLS her closer.

A second later, the CAR FRAME roars past them ... missing her by inches...then EXPLODING as it HITS the canyon walls.

Reese finally lifts T.J. to safety...slowly raising her... pulling with all his strength while holding a tree limb with his other hand.

When she is level with him, she grabs the limb, and puts one arm around his neck.

T.J.

...Thanks.

REESE

What the hell...I was just hanging around anyway.

Reese and T.J. are hanging there...suspended in space...looking at each other. And then Reese LOSES HIS GRIP.

Without warning, the two of them fall 100 feet...right into the rushing waters of the river down below.

INT. FLYING OVAL OFFICE - (AF-1) - DAY

The P., Farley, and several others in the room. They listen to Max Kane on a LOUDSPEAKER.

KANE'S VOICE

...and I'm happy to announce that the Vice-President will meet all my demands. At exactly 16:30 hours, 6 nuclear missiles from the USS Bluefish, will be handed over to the Akaga Kim.

The P. and Farley look at each other in amazement.

KANE'S VOICE

(continuing)

10 minutes later, this plane will land safely. I hope you enjoyed your flight, and please fly with Kane Airlines again.

CLICK. The loudspeaker goes dead.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

How could Weldon hand over those missiles?!

FARLEY

He's trying to protect you, sir.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Bullshit!

(his rage is building)

...Doesn't he understand what this country is all about?! We don't give away nuclear power like prizes in a Crakerjack box!

(paces)

I don't care if they blow-up this plane with everyone aboard, we don't give away nuclear missiles!

Farley is amazed...almost speechless.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(continuing)

George, how do we stop this thing from happening?!

FARLEY

We have no communications, sir. We can't reach Weldon...or anyone else.

He suddenly spots the attaché case known as the "Football." Part of it STICKS OUT from under the chair, where Reese dropped it.

The President looks at the symbol of his power. It makes him think. Suddenly --

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Wait a minute...the "football?" It's just a fancy telephone, isn't it?

CAPT. RENO

It's an uplink SATCOM, connecting you with 'Looking Glass.'

PRESIDENT GIBSON

But basically, it's a phone. A fucking telephone! Hi-band... digital...and can't be jammed.

CAPT. RENO

But sir, it's a ground based radio, not meant to function in the air.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

What difference does that make? A radio is a radio!

CAPT. RENO

No, sir. It's a SATCOM link. It needs a ground antenna. The walls of your plane...block the signal.

They all look at each other. Gibson paces. Suddenly a LIGHT GOES ON ... and the President spins around!

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Then use the whole plane!

CAPT. RENO

Excuse me -- ??

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Use Air Force One as the antenna! Can't you wire this thing into the frame of the airplane? Just turn our Taj Mahal into the biggest damn antenna in history!

A beat. Reno thinks. He begins to smile. A very big smile.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - DUSK

near the edge of a running stream. Antennas and satellite dishes out front. Reese and T.J. move up slowly...still a bit wet. The place looks empty. No movement.

T.J.

You think Kane is in there?

REESE

There's only one way to find out.

He starts to move, but she stops him.

T.J.

Let's pick the lock.

He looks at her, then KICKS OPEN the cabin door.

REESE

(coy)

You still want to pick the lock?

She looks at him with dismay. He smiles, then walks into the cabin.

A moment later, T.J. follows.

INT. THE MOUNTAIN CABIN - DUSK

Looks like the warehouse for Circuit City. We SEE hi-tech hardware. We SEE dials and needles flashing away.

But otherwise, the place is empty.

ON REESE AND T.J.

moving slowly....awed by some of the top of the line 'gear' they find.

T.J.

Check this out...they have a micro-beam, digital transmitter.

She keeps examining all the gear.

T.J.

(continuing)

It looks like they're re-routing voice communications, straight through the INTERNET.

He keeps looking at the equipment.

REESE

You see this? They have a dedicated receiver over here.

T.J.

Direct to North Korea?

REESE

...Closer than that.

He picks up the radio-phone.

T.J.

...Go ahead, give it a try.

He hits a button. A digital connection is heard...then...

KANE'S VOICE

What the fuck do you want?

Reese and T.J. look at each other.

REESE

Hello, Max. Guess who's sleeping in your bed?

KANE'S VOICE

Reese?! You're still alive, you fuck! Why can't you be a good boy, and die?

REESE

Because, first ... I'm going to fit you for a set of toe tags.

(beat)

I'm coming to get you, Max. And this time, I'll make sure you're dead.

KANE'S VOICE

Jack...you'll never find a ghost.

REESE

Don't count on it. Even if you get away tonight, I'll track you to the deepest hole on earth. I'll find you, Max, and I'll kill you.

KANE'S VOICE

Then do the deed, pal. I'm waiting.

REESE

Just tell me where you are!

INTERCUT with MAX KANE in his Transmitter Room.

KANE

Take a wild guess, old buddy..where could I be? North? South? East? West? Don't waste your breath, Jack, don't look around...

(smiles)

...just look up!

Reese and T.J. look at each other...startled, confused.

REESE

What do you mean?

KANE

Don't you get it? You already found me! Hell, you were closer to me 6 hours ago, than you are right now!

T.J.
The plane -- ??

KANE
Highest marks! Give that lady a
cigar!

T.J. has the wind knocked out of her.

KANE
(continuing)
And there isn't a fucking thing you
can do about it!

CLICK! Kane bellows, and the receiver goes dead. Reese and
T.J. look at each other.

T.J.
My God...if Kane is still on the
plane, he's got to be in the back-
up control room.

Suddenly, the door BURSTS OPEN. Reese, and T.J. look up,
only to find the face of a RAPID RESPONSE SOLDIER.

REESE'S POV - THE RAPID RESPONSE SOLDIER

standing firm. In his hand, an AR-16...cocked and primed.
Behind him, 5 Rapid Response Soldiers...armed to the teeth.

EXT. AWACS PLANE - IN FLIGHT OVER COLORADO - DUSK

The radar plane with the big dish moves into position above
the Western Rockies.

INT. AWACS 1 - IN FLIGHT - DUSK

Computers and radar screens line both sides of the plane.

RADIO MAN
We're at the check point. We'll start
our search pattern in five, and count-
ing.

(beat)
5...4...3...2...1 ... and mark.

EXT. USS BLUEFISH - ON THE HIGH SEAS - DAY

The sub surfaces, and water breaks over her bow. In the
distance, we SEE the AKAGA KIM, a North Korean destroyer.

EXT. THE BRIDGE OF THE AKAGA KIM - AT SEA - DAY

Gen. Kwan Jing is aboard, along with the NORTH KOREAN CAPTAIN.

GEN. KWAN JING

There she is...our prize. Make radio contact with their captain.

The bridge comes alive with full activity.

INT. WHITE HOUSE PRESS ROOM - WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT

The President's PRESS SECRETARY stands at the podium, in front a small, but vocal gathering of the PRESS.

REPORTER #1

Mr. Press Secretary, the L.A. Times is reporting that Air Force One is overdue at Edwards ... by almost 6 hours.

PRESS SECRETARY

That's true, Beverly, but the President made an unscheduled stop in Ohio.

REPORTER #1

For what?

PRESS SECRETARY

(making jokes)

I think it has something to do with an 8 handicap.

LAUGHTER among the press corps.

REPORTER #2

He stopped for a golf game?

PRESS SECRETARY

(more jokes)

Well, we didn't decide to call him Superfan by accident..

More LAUGHTER.

PRESS SECRETARY

(continuing)

Besides, the guy hasn't had a real vacation in 10 months. Cut him some slack, and I'll give you his new ETA later...

REPORTER #3

Sir, there are troubling reports that North and South Korean troops are both mobilizing...

The serious question weighs heavy in the room.

PRESS SECRETARY

Those reports deal with normal troop exercises, but we are looking into it ...that's all for now.

The Press Secretary waves, and walks off the platform, ending the session...and a damn good performance.

INT. PENTAGON SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

Admiral Olsen sits in the room, the big PROJECTION BOARD behind him shows MAPS of NORTH KOREA, and the 38th parallel.

The Chairman Roark of the National Security Agency walks into the large, empty room.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

Admiral, you asked to see me?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

At 14:30 hours, a South Korean spy plane crossed into North Korean territory. It was shot down, and the two pilots aboard were killed.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

Good God...

ADMIRAL OLSEN

South Korea has gone to a Full Alert status. This thing is rapidly spinning out of control. They've heard rumors that the North is about to get their hands on nuclear weapons.

(beat)

And they're thinking preemptive.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

...What about the Vice President?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

He's intractable. This thing is going to get very hot...very fast.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

Won't the South Koreans listen to you?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

Why? We're the ones giving up the Goddamn missiles.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

What do you want from me?

ADMIRAL OLSEN

You have some people and some equipment in place. Unused articles.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

Yes...

ADMIRAL OLSEN

...I think you had better activate them, before it's too late.

CHAIRMAN ROARK

Use it or lose it?

(no response)

Does the Vice President approve?

No response. Chairman Roark looks at him, and understands. A moment later, he walks off.

EXT. PARKED ATTACK HELICOPTERS - MOUNTAIN CABIN - DUSK

The three Blackhawk choppers are still, as the R.R. Team loads it's gear. Reese and T.J. are handcuffed, and waiting.

REESE

...But Kane is back on Air Force One!

The R.R. Team keeps working.

REESE

(continuing)

Damnit, you're wasting time...!

T.J.

(shouting)

We have to move, they're running out of fuel up there!

The R.R. Officer walks over to them.

R.R. OFFICER

Major, you can tell them your story, when you get back to Washington.

REESE

By that time, the only thing that'll be left of Air Force One..is a small 'black box!'

R.R. OFFICER

I'm sorry, sir. I have my orders.

He looks at the extra HANDCUFF on Reese's wrist.

R.R. OFFICER
(continuing)
I'll take care of that later.

REESE
Can't you pick the lock?

R.R. OFFICER
Not on that bracelet. That's teflon coated titanium. Special Issue hardware...

REESE
(exasperated)
Tell me about it.

All eyes look up as a large, DOUBLE ROTOR HELICOPTER roars into view...the CH-47 kicks up dust, then settles for a landing.

Several RAPID RESPONSE SOLDIERS get off the big chopper, along with several CIVILIANS in suits.

One civilian is familiar, it's AGT. FRANK BALMER, of N.S.A. He's all business, and in control.

AGT. FRANK BALMER
Take off the cuffs, Captain.

R.R. OFFICER
On what authority?

Agt. Balmer flashes his I.D.

R.R. OFFICER
(continuing)
You know these people?

AGT. FRANK BALMER
I can vouch for Cmmdr. Reese...
and Maj. Merrick works for me.

Well, now we know the NSA operative aboard Air Force One.

Reese is silent as the new pair of cuffs are removed, but he still wears the single...HANDCUFF WITH THE DANGLING CHAIN.

REESE
(holding up his hand)
Has anyone got a key for this?

INT. AWACS 1 - IN FLIGHT - DUSK

The AIRMEN are checking their radar screens and monitors.

"AWACS SEARCH PLANE. 1600 HOURS."

Suddenly a VOICE squawks over the LOUDSPEAKER.

KANE'S VOICE

This is Capt. Maxwell Kane, aboard
Air Force One. Designation C-25.
Codename Gemstone. I want all
military carriers to stay back. If
any airplane closes within 7 miles of
this aircraft, I will down the
President's plane, with all aboard.
Unidentified AWACS ... please confirm.

The PILOT of the AWACS looks around.

AWACS PILOT

Confirmed, Air Force One. We'll stay
outside your perimeter.

EXT. AWACS 1 - IN FLIGHT - DUSK

as it banks, and turns away.

EXT. BUCKLEY FIELD - AIR FORCE BASE - COLORADO - DUSK

The three Blackhawk Helicopters come in for a landing. Reese
and T.J. hop out. Further back we SEE Agt. Balmer.

REESE

How long have you been with N.S.A.?

T.J.

They've been trying to maintain
security for Air Force One, but
there's too much inter-service
rivalry. So they asked me to
file some detailed reports.

REESE

They turned you into a spy?

T.J.

Things aren't easy for a woman. When
I don't go along ... I'm accused of
having a confidence problem.

REESE

You? A confidence problem??

T.J.

I know it's hard to believe, because
you bring out the worst in me.

REESE

(smiles)

But at least I give you confidence.

She looks at him.

T.J.

Reese, if you weren't such a pain in the ass...

(coy)

...I just might be attracted to you.

He looks at her. A smile almost crosses his lips. Almost. It disappears when Agt. Frank Balmer catches up to them.

AGT. FRANK BALMER

(pressing)

All right you two...follow me.

INT. HANGAR - BUCKLEY FIELD - COLORADO - DUSK

The hangar doors open, revealing an all BLUE PLANE under tight security. It's an experimental STEALTH TRANSPORT called 'ARTICLE 230 - THE BLUE MIRIAH.'

AGT. FRANK BALMER

This is Article 230, the Blue Miriah. It's an experimental transport, using the latest stealth technology.

REESE

Why is it here?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

We know Kane is aboard Air Force One. He says he's going to land at Stapleton, the old, deactivated Denver Airport.

T.J.

But you don't trust him?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

I don't see how he can get away. The airport is empty...we can't miss him.

The light goes on for Reese. All the way...

REESE

(slamming his fist)

Jesus...he's going to crash it!

T.J.

What?

REESE

He's going to crash the President's plane, and make everyone think he died! That's his exit strategy.

AGT. FRANK BALMER

Jesus...that sonuvabitch!

He shoves Reese towards the unique plane. Reese is clearly impressed, but confused.

AGT. FRANK BALMER

(continuing)

I need to put someone aboard the President's plane...and Kane won't let anyone get within 7 miles.

REESE

Even if you can sneak up close enough, how do you put someone aboard a 747, at 300 knots?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

(all smiles)

Major...I'm glad you asked.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - (IN FLIGHT) - DUSK

Capt. Reno finishes making connections, then turns the 'football' over to the President.

CAPT. RENO

I've wired it to the superstructure.
It should work, Mr. President.

Gibson punches some buttons...there is a hum...and then --

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Looking Glass, this is Alice. Do you copy? Looking Glass, this is Alice.. do you read, over?

VOICE OF LOOKING GLASS

Yes, Mr. President...

PRESIDENT GIBSON

I need you to patch me through to the USS Bluefish, immediately. Do you hear me, Carl? Patch me through...immediately!

VOICE OF LOOKING GLASS

...Yes, sir.

The President pumps his fist in victory.

EXT. THE BLUE MIRIAH - IN FLIGHT - NIGHT

The Stealth Transport rips through the night, with its 3 MAN CREW, and its 3 passengers, Reese, T.J., and Agt. Balmer.

INT. COCKPIT - BLUE MIRIAH - NIGHT

Agt. Balmer is up front with the FLIGHT CREW.

STEALTH PILOT

We're closing on Gemstone.

AGT. FRANK BALMER

He has no idea we're out here?

STEALTH PILOT

This plane doesn't leave footprints,
sir. Not even a whisper.

Agt. Balmer heads into the cabin, only to SEE Reese putting on a thick harness. T.J. is helping him.

T.J.

What is this thing?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

It's experimental. Like the plane.

T.J.

That's comforting.

AGT. FRANK BALMER

We needed a form of air-to-air transfer,
in case of terrorists.

Reese locks all the buckles and straps.

REESE

How do I get aboard?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

I shoot you there.

T.J.

(startled)

Come again?!

Balmer picks up a large rifle, looking like a SPEAR GUN.

REESE

This isn't gonna work, is it?

AGT. FRANK BALMER

Look, I'd ask one of my men to do it, but even if he got aboard, he'd still have to deal with Kane's booby-traps, and find that Control Room.

(beat)

...You're the best, Reese. You know the terrain, and you're trained for search and seizure. It has to be you, I have no choice.

REESE

Thanks, I appreciate the confidence.

EXT. CONNING TOWER OF THE USS BLUEFISH - AT SEA - DAY

She rides high on the waves, the Captain peers through his binnocs at the Akaga Kim.

"THE SEA OF JAPAN. 16:30 — ZERO HOUR."

The Captain keeps scanning the horizon, as if looking for a way out of this mess.

RADIOMAN

Another message, sir. The Captain of the Akaga Kim demands transfer of 6 nuclear missiles...according to orders given you by the Vice-President of the United States, and by the National Command Authority.

XO

He's right, sir. The orders have been authenticated. We're supposed to transfer the missiles.

Capt. Graham looks at the message in disbelief.

CAPT. GRAHAM

Damnit, no bird should leave my boat without a flame under its ass.

XO

But, sir, a deal was struck, and we have our orders.

CAPT. GRAHAM

I know...I know! Shit! Prepare to hand over the missiles!

(enraged)

Goddamnit, I hate these fucking politicians!

INT. THE BRIDGE OF THE AKAGA KIM - DAY

The Capt. watches the sub with great activity on the deck.

NORTH KOREAN CAPTAIN
He's preparing to bring the boat
around. He will transfer all
missiles.

GEN. KWAN JING
Excellent! Most excellent!

INT. THE CONN - USS BLUEFISH - AT SEA - DAY

A STARTLED XO turns to Capt. Graham.

XO
Captain, it...it's the President!

Graham is stunned. He turns, and takes the radio.

CAPT. GRAHAM
Mr. President -- ??

PRESIDENT GIBSON'S VOICE
Capt. Graham, this is the President
of the United States, patched through
'Looking Glass.' I order you not, and
I repeat not to transfer any stra-
tegic missiles into North Korean hands

CAPT. GRAHAM
Thank you, sir, that's the best damn
order I ever got.

PRESIDENT GIBSON'S VOICE
Then act on it, Captain. Do it now!

An enthused Capt. Grahm hangs up, then turns to his XO.

CAPT. GRAHAM
Abort transfer, and stow missiles!
Clear the Con, and blow all ballast!
Crash dive, crash dive! Hit the horn
and take her down! Dive, dive!

XO
That Captain is gonna be mad!

CAPT. GRAHAM
Then tell him to bend over, and
spread some jam on his ass, because
as far as I'm concerned, the bastard
is toast!

EXT. THE BRIDGE OF THE AKAGA KIM - AT SEA - DAY

The Captain is wearing a look of pure shock.

NORTH KOREAN CAPTAIN
He's leaving!

GEN. KWAN JING
He can't do that! He Can't Do It!

But one look through his binnocs tell him different.

GEN. KWAN JING
(continuing)
Then fire on him! Open torpedo tubes!

NORTH KOREAN CAPTAIN
But, General -- ?!!

GEN. KWAN JING
He's an invader! He's within our
territorial waters! FIRE...NOW!!!

The stunned Captain turns to his officers. Then he turns
back to face Gen. Kwan Jing.

NORTH KOREAN CAPTAIN
I'm sorry, General. But I have
orders from the Supreme Council.
I was told to follow them, if the
operation failed.

GEN. KWAN JING
What Orders?

Calmly the North Korean Captain pulls his side arm, and FIRES
one quick BLAST into the General's skull.

EXT. BLUE MIRIAH - INFLIGHT - SUNSET

The Blue Miriah begins its turn on the crippled Air Force
One. In a flash, we SEE them both. The President's plane
looks like flying Swiss cheese, and the blue stealth trans-
port looks new and pristine.

INT. BLUE MIRIAH - COCKPIT - SUNSET

The Pilot with the sunglasses looks over the sky. The Co-
Pilot calls out --

CO-PILOT
There she is...three o'clock! It's
Gemstone...and she's hanging on a
thread.

PILOT

Got him! It's going to be tight, I don't want to overshoot. Tell them to get ready back there.

EXT. BLUE MIRIAH - SUNSET

The stealth transport moves closer..as AF-1 slides into view.

INT. FLYING OVAL OFFICE - AIR FORCE ONE - SUNSET

The P. hangs up the RED PHONE, and looks at Farley.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

We stopped the transfer in time.

FARLEY

Yes, Mr. President...yes!

PRESIDENT GIBSON

And as for Dan, I told him I'll be looking elsewhere when it comes to the next convention.

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

V.P. Weldon sits back in his chair. Broken, deflated..wasted.

CHIEF OF STAFF

What did the President say?

V.P. WELDON

He said my next 3 years are going to be very dull and quiet..with a great deal of foreign travel.

INT. BLUE MIRIAH - MAIN CABIN - INFLIGHT - SUNSET

Reese finishes locking all the straps on his large harness, while T.J. wraps an ACE BANDAGE around his single HANDCUFF.

REESE

I can't believe they haven't found a key for this thing.

T.J.

I'm sure there's one back in Washington.

REESE

...Great.

T.J.

But you might never get there.

REESE
(seeing her concern)
I'll be all right, Major. Just give me the codes.

T.J.
(calmly)
...I think you should let me come with you.

REESE
Forget it. It's too dangerous.

T.J.
What hasn't been tonight?

He takes a power screw driver and attaches it to his belt.

T.J.
(continuing)
What if this harness works, and you actually get aboard? If you get busy with your old buddy Max, who's going to land the plane?

He can't argue with that. He looks up, as Agt. Balmer opens the cabin door.

WHOOSH!!!

The cabin is filled with turbulent air and RUSHING WIND. T.J. has to SHOUT at the top of her lungs:

T.J.
(continuing)
Admit it, Reese, you need me!

Reese shakes his head in disbelief. But T.J. is firm... determined, and confident. Finally --

REESE
Okay...hook onto me! Take out all the slack, I don't want us spinning into the ozone!
(beat)
You're just along for the ride.

T.J.
Then make it a helluva ride!

T.J. hooks onto him...they make a tight human ball.

REESE
This isn't by the book, Major!

T.J.
...Fuck the book!

Agt. Balmer takes the HUGE SPEAR GUN, and FIRES an EXPLOSIVE HARPOON DART..INTO THE SKIN OF AIR FORCE ONE!

The dart locks, and holds! On the end of the dart, a WIRE CABLE goes all the way back to the Blue Stealth! REESE AND T.J. hook onto the cable...and begin their slide for life, thousands of feet up!

EXT. AERIAL SHOT - SUNSET

Reese and T.J. reel out from the underside of the Blue Miriah ... like the catch of the day. They bob, then stabilize as they dangle on the cable.

The DART was shot into a section above the nose of AF-1.

Now Reese starts SPEEDING down the CABLE...looking to catch onto the huge open hole in the Presidential flight deck.

T.J. clings to him as the wind WHIPS around them. When they get near the hole in AF-1, Reese shoots a rope into the open cockpit! The rope catches, and a grappling hook secures it's grip.

Reese then pulls on the rope with all his strength, and it carries them both TOWARD the open cockpit of the President's airplane.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - KANE'S HIDDEN LOCATION - AF-1- SUNSET

Kane checks the radar, and his monitors. He SEES a SUDDEN GLIMPSE of cable...and a FLASH of BLUE. Then, from below the cable, he makes out something that looks like a...BOOT.

KANE
Reese, you sonuvabitch!

Kane punches the keys on his control panel...and AIR FORCE ONE starts to DIVE, AND BANK WILDLY!

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - SUNSET

Reese and T.J. fight, struggle..pull with all their strength.

Together...with a YELL that almost bursts their eardrums, Reese and T.J. pull themselves into the HUGE OPEN HOLE in the cockpit of AF-1.

Inside the DESTROYED COCKPIT, their faces go red with the strain and exhaustion. But Reese takes his 9mm, and heads the stairwell...T.J. with him.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE CONTROL PANEL - AF-1 - SUNSET

Reese moves slow...cautious...heading for the door. On it, he SEES the LED TIMER, and the stick of C-4. Reese grabs it.

REESE

It's a decoy...that's all!

KANE (O.S.)

But I'm not!

Kane drops down from his hiding place on the catwalk above...
BOOTS FIRST!

He SLAMS into Reese, knocking him back...and knocking the gun from his hand.

KANE

You're really anxious to fly this plane, aren't you lady? Well...go ahead ... be my guest!

He shoves T.J. into the Control Room.

KANE

(continuing)

But first...take a souvenir.

He puts the LED TIMER in the Control Room with T.J. He primes it, then places it on a wall.

KANE

(continuing)

It isn't a decoy anymore!

He SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT, and locks it. He jams a bar in front of the door, sealing T.J. inside...with the bomb.

ON REESE

as he gets up, Kane kicks him in the face again ... knocking him backwards. The war is on.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SUNSET

T.J. looks at the digital bomb, counting down numbers. She can think about it...or fly the plane. She decides to fly the plane.

INT. CARGO BAY - AF-1 - SUNSET

Wind rushing through the blown out holes in the aircraft. Reese falls to the deck, slammed by Kane..who is relentless. Kane pursues him ... and keeps THROWING PUNCHES.

KANE

You're weak, Jack. You never could beat me. I always beat you at boxing, at wind sprints, at air drops..hell, I was even better at the Goddamn obstacle course!

REESE

There's only one thing you couldn't beat me at...

KANE

What's that??

REESE

...Chess. You suck, Max! That's why you made me your mission planner!

Reese lands a round-house punch...knocking Kane back!

INT. THE CONTROL ROOM - AF-1 - SUNSET

T.J. gets the switches running, and the stick moving. She's got control of the plane, and starts to bank it.

She hits a button, to switch fuel tanks ... but a RED LIGHT FLASHES, saying that she's DUMPED FUEL instead.

T.J.

Sonuvabitch...you rewired the panel!

She glances at the LED TIMER...it's 2:00 and counting down.

INT. CARGO HOLD - AF-1 - SUNSET

Kane head-butts Reese, drawing more blood.

KANE

I studied 5 years, Jack. I read all the books...I know all your moves. I beat you today using Capablanca, Bobby Fischer, and a little Boris Spasky. Could you tell?

Kane does a spin kick, catching Reese on the chin, knocking him into the Aft Cargo Bay. More holes, more debris. But Kane moves in for the kill.

REESE

I can tell it's time to go back to the drawing board. You still suck!

Reese throws a punch that Kane blocks.

Kane then lifts Reese off his feet, throws him against the wall. Reese winces in pain...sees stars...tastes his own blood, and watches the world get dim.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SUNSET

On her forward TV MONITORS, T.J. can SEE Stapleton Airport, the old, abandoned Denver airfield. She heads for it, banking sharply. Her LED TIMER reads -- 59 SECONDS.

EXT. STAPLETON AIRPORT - DENVER - SUNSET

Empty, deserted...looks more like a Ghost Town than airport.

But now that Denver has the modern International Airport, this one has been abandoned.

And it's a good thing... because here comes a crippled Air Force One! Wheels down, coming in too fast...the plane SCREAMS overhead!

INT. MAIN TERMINAL - STAPLETON AIRPORT - DENVER - SUNSET

The huge lobby is silent, and empty...already showing signs of decay. Suddenly, the HUGE TIRES of the jumbo jet BLAST

THROUGH the PLATE GLASS WINDOWS of the Main Terminal ... shattering it, and turning half the roof into rubble!

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SUNSET

T.J. pulls back on the stick, going full throttle, desperate to regain altitude! The plane accelerates, starts to climb, engines straining...T.J. yelling!

INT. CARGO HOLD - AF-1 - SUNSET

The banks sharply, knocking Reese and Kane to the floor. But Kane is up first...ready to finish Reese.

KANE

I won today, Jack. You have to give me credit. I didn't make any mistakes!

REESE

Wrong, pal. You made one...

KANE

What was that?

REESE

You went up against me.

With that, Reese picks up an EXPLOSIVE CHAFF CANISTER. It FIRES anti-missile silver foil under extreme pressure.

Reese turns the switch, and FIRES at Kane!

Kane is blown backwards, sliced-up by the silver shards, and knocked out of a huge GAPING HOLE in the airplane! He tumbles out the opening...holding on for dear life, with both hands.

Reese throws open the door of the Control Room, GRABS the LED TIMER and the C-4. He goes back to Kane, and looks at him.

REESE
(continuing)
Sorry, Max. Now the game is finished..

The LED TIMER reads "03 SECONDS."

Reese shoves the LED TIMER and the C-4 into Kane's pocket, then kicks him in the face.

As Kane falls free of AIR FORCE ONE, Reese calls out --

REESE
(continuing)
Game over. Check...fucking...mate!

Air Force One has CLIMBED, regaining altitude. Kane FALLS ...and tumbles out of the accelerating aircraft.

INT. MAIN TERMINAL - STAPLETON AIRPORT - DENVER - SUNSET

From inside the shattered terminal, we SEE Kane's body falling at incredible speed.

He SCREAMS as he SLAMS into the MAIN WINDOW, and EXPLODES with his own device.

And as he turns into powder, the wheels of AIR FORCE ONE touch down on the tarmac.

INT. RUNDOWN HANGAR - STAPLETON AIRPORT - DAY

We SEE Police cars, Secret Service cars, NSA AGENTS, and several ambulances.

Passengers are being helped, but away from the spotlight of the media. The P. goes to Jerry Hamlin, who's in a gurney, and headed for a med-vac.

JERRY HAMLIN
Mr. President, I want to thank you
for changing your mind...

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(lightly)

Well, I know the Washington Press Corps is always out for blood, and I do my best to cooperate.

Jerry looks up at the devastated wreckage of Air Force One.

JERRY HAMLIN

I...I didn't know we went through all that...

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Neither did I.

JERRY HAMLIN

I...I heard what happened with the missiles. Maybe I've been wrong about you....

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Of course you have. But I'll make a deal, Jerry. If I can keep all this quiet...will you do the same?

(beat)

I think you owe that much for a Presidential pint of blood.

JERRY HAMLIN

You...you can keep this story quiet?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

The other reporters agree. It's in the National interest. There won't be any leaks.

JERRY HAMLIN

(giving in)

All right, Mr. President, you win. If you can keep it a secret...so will I.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Fair enough.

JERRY HAMLIN

But how the hell do you keep that plane a secret?

They both look at the twisted, smoking, broken hulk of AIR FORCE ONE. She's filled with holes...a total mess. But she kept 45 people alive.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Don't worry, Jerry..that's my problem.

The P. smiles, and walks off. Jerry Hamlin is confused... bewildered...but is silent as he's placed on an ambulance.

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. EDWARD'S AIR FORCE BASE - BAKERSFIELD, CA. - NIGHT

A huge crowd of REPORTERS gather near a receiving gate.

They ALL seem agitated...intense...asking questions of White House ADVANCE MEN.

VARIOUS REPORTERS

Why is the President 12 hours late??
WHERE DID HE GO...IS ANYTHING WRONG?!!

PRESS ASSISTANT

Why don't you ask him yourself?

All eyes look up. There, in the clouds, we SEE her. She is gleaming, pristine, and unsullied. Not a hole. Not a scratch. She is blue, white, and perfect ... a magnificent hunk of machinery in the sky.

IT'S AIR FORCE ONE

looking beautiful. It's the President's plane. Gliding through the clouds...like nothing ever happened. And nothing did.

Well, Reader, I'm letting you in on the final secret. When the new AIR FORCE ONE was built...our Government secretly built...TWO. That's right --- TWO DUPLICATE AIRPLANES.

In all it's wisdom, Congress funded a back-up AIR FORCE ONE.

(And now we know why.)

ANGLE - AIR FORCE ONE

as it taxis to a stop on the tarmac. The folding stairway comes down, and the President deplanes...with his entourage. They all look as fresh as their new airplane. The REPORTERS fire questions...The P. answers.

REPORTER

What kept you, Mr. President? Where were you for the last 12 hours?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

Well, to be perfectly honest, my good friend Jerry Hamlin had an emergency medical condition, and we put down in Ohio to get him the proper attention.

The President smiles warmly.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(continuing)

Then I used the extra time to check out that new course at Oakwood Green.

REPORTER

That's it, sir? Nothing else?

PRESIDENT GIBSON

No. I'm sorry. It was a perfectly routine flight. No story here.

Everyone smiles.

ANGLE - T.J.

stepping out of the plane, and joining the P. on the steps. She wears a clean, pristine uniform.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(continuing)

Actually, there is one story. I believe most of you know Maj. T.J. Merrick.

(beat)

...Up until now, she's been our co-pilot. But this was her first flight as the new captain of Air Force One.

REPORTER

... Maj. Merrick, as captain of the world's most famous airplane, how did you feel about your first unscheduled stop?

T.J.

It was no problem. The entire trip was perfectly routine.

(smiles)

The way the President likes it.

ANGLE - REESE

Reese now steps out of the plane. He is wearing a freshly pressed 'dress blue' uniform. The President introduces him.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

And I believe you all know Lt. Cmdr. Jack Reese. This was his first, and only flight on Air Force One.

Reese joins the President.

PRESIDENT GIBSON

(continuing)

The Cmmdr. has been a valuable Naval Aide, and now he's leaving Washington so he can return to his more relaxing duties as a Navy SEAL.

Laughter among the REPORTERS.

REPORTER

Cmmdr., how did you like the stop in Ohio?

REESE

I enjoy watching the President play golf. I even got to play a few holes myself.

(smiles)

Besides a double bogey on the back nine, the flight was boring and uneventful. The way we all like it.

REPORTER

And what about that bandage on your wrist?

Reese looks at the ace bandage wrapped around the hidden handcuff.

REESE

This?? Well, everyone knows...golf can be a pretty dangerous game.

More LAUGHTER as the PRESS keeps firing questions.

Moments later, we PAN UP the magnificent airplane, until the PRESIDENTIAL SEAL on AIR FORCE ONE ... FILLS THE FRAME.

THE MUSIC SWELLS ... and we slowly FADE TO BLACK.

THE END