

CAPRICORN ONE

by

Peter Hyams

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T-212:00.

The morning sun is beginning to rise, like an orange lollipop, over the Atlantic Ocean. It is one of those dawns when the horizon is so definite, when the clouds are so obedient, you can look out and swear that you feel the earth rotating slowly on its axis. There is just enough of a breeze to gently swell the water, so the waves can catch tiny yellow pinspots of reflection.

There is no sound except for the morning itself, the FAINT WHISTLE of a WIND, and the LAPPING of the WATER. We are no more than three feet above the sea, the waves rushing by us.

We HEAR a CLICK, then a HIGH-PITCHED TONE. It lasts for five seconds. Then there are FIVE SHRILL BEEPS, followed by a CLICK. Then a VOICE:

VOICE

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.  
This is Paul Cunningham...  
Capricorn Control. The time is  
three minutes after six...  
Eastern Daylight time. We are  
coming up on T-minus two hundred  
eleven minutes, twenty-five  
seconds... mark.

We are GLIDING OVER the water, directly at the unbroken line of the horizon. We are MOVING FASTER now, the ocean racing past.

VOICE

To facilitate the broadcast  
media... we will precede each  
announcement with a five second  
tone... a one second pause...  
followed by a five second  
countdown. Anyone who has not  
been furnished with a press kit  
can pick one up at the information  
trailer.

Our SPEED is still INCREASING. The waves are blurring TOWARDS US in the f.g. The sky is turning from orange to yellow, as the sun is slowly rising.

VOICE

At the present time all systems  
are go, and all lights are green.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

VOICE (CONT'D)

At T-minus four hundred eighty-five minutes... Launch Complex thirty-nine was cleared... and we began to load the liquid propellant in the launch vehicle. The loading was completed at T-minus two hundred eighteen minutes.

For the first time, there is something on the horizon. It looks like a tiny dot. We cannot really distinguish exactly what it is, as we are RACING towards it.

VOICE

The crew was awakened at T-minus two hundred seventy minutes... without any major complaint. At T-minus two hundred forty-five minutes they were taken to the medical complex. They were examined by Doctor Burroughs... and he pronounced them all fit. The examination lasted until T-minus two hundred twenty-five minutes.

The tiny dot on the horizon has now taken shape. It looks like a needle, growing out of the ocean. We are still accelerating towards it. The ocean, flat and shiny, is flashing by us, giving off yellow sparks. The needle grows larger and larger. We can now SEE that it is white.

VOICE

At the present time... as they have been since T-minus two-twenty... the crew is having a breakfast consisting of half a grapefruit... a ten ounce steak... twelve ounces of orange juice... two eggs... and toast. This is Capricorn Control.

The white object is looming larger and larger in the horizon. Our SPEED is FASTER and FASTER. Soon we SEE a line across the horizon. It is a beach. The white object is standing on it. A reddish object is next to it. Since it is alone on the beach, we have no idea how large it is.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

That is until after racing towards it, it keeps growing taller. We can MAKE OUT tiny black markings on it. It is taller now. In a rush we are near enough to SEE what it is. A Saturn 5-B rocket, weighing six million pounds, 35 stories high, with its spider reddish gantry next to it. White smoke from liquid oxygen is curling around the first two stages. The sun is glinting off the nose cone. The letters "USA" are sternly printed across the middle of the third stage. We are almost next to it now, this titanic white obelisk, yawning in the morning sky. It is so tall, we cannot see the top.

2 INT. BREAKFAST TRAILER - DAY

Five men are sitting in a prefabricated room around a dark table. They are all eating. Three of them are wearing long thermal underwear. They are all athletic looking, except for one older, rather pudgy man, whose glasses are resting precariously on his sloped nose. He is DOCTOR ROGER BURROUGHS.

The three men in the thermal underwear are: Air Force Colonel CHARLES BRUBAKER, called "BRU" by most people. He is the command pilot, 43 years old, a graduate of both the Gemini and Apollo programs. The second man is Air Force Lieutenant Colonel PETER WILLIS. WILLIS is younger than BRUBAKER, and is known to be a bit of a flake. The third man is Navy Commander JOHN WALKER, a Negro, who is known as "BLACK JACK" by most people, except in his official N.A.S.A. biography, where they list his nickname as "BIG JACK." The fifth man at the table is the chief of flight operations, CARL SALTER.

SALTER

Weather is good. Scattered clouds until noon.

BRUBAKER

You already told us that.

SALTER

Oh.

WALKER

This toast tastes like cardboard.

WILLIS

It was left over from a previous mission.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

SALTER

You wait. In a few days you'll miss food like that.

WALKER

Dynamite.

DR. BURROUGHS

It tastes all right to me.

BRUBAKER

I hope nobody ever finds out that on the morning of man's first venture to another planet... all we could talk about was toast.

WALKER

I hope nobody finds out that on the morning of man's first venture to another planet... they gave us lousy toast.

DR. BURROUGHS

It tastes all right to me.

WILLIS

What do you want to talk about?

BRUBAKER

I don't know.

WALKER

How about the weather? I hear it's good... scattered clouds until noon.

WILLIS

No kidding... really? That's good news.

SALTER

You've got fifteen more minutes.

BRUBAKER

I'm not too hungry anyway.

WILLIS

I am... as a matter of fact...  
I... I... I...

Suddenly WILLIS stiffens. His eyes are glazed.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2)

His mouth opens, however no sound comes out. He clutches his throat with his hands, then he lurches back. He falls off his chair and writhes on the ground for a second.

DR. BURROUGHS

Oh, my God!

DR. BURROUGHS and SALTER leap to WILLIS, who has gone completely still, his head twisted back, his face contorted. DR. BURROUGHS scrambles to his medical bag and frantically takes out his stethoscope. He puts it to WILLIS' chest. He listens for a heartbeat, while looking at his watch. WILLIS silently takes the diaphragm of the stethoscope from his chest and puts it to his lips.

WILLIS

It must have been the toast.

BRUBAKER, WALKER and WILLIS are convulsed with laughter.

DR. BURROUGHS

You guys are schmucks... you know that?

3 EXT. GRANDSTAND AREA - DAY

A section of metal bleachers has been constructed for visiting dignitaries. Some people have already begun to file in. The bleachers are enclosed in wire fencing. All around the fence, military police are patrolling the area. There are also a noticeable number of Secret Service men, conspicuous in their close-cropped hair and tiny lapel pins. There are ushers from N.A.S.A. who are escorting the guests to their seats. The wives of the three astronauts are sitting in a roped-off area.

A short, portly man in his sixties, accompanied by his wife, who has a matching figure, is walking with an USHER. He is Representative HOLLIS PEAKER of Tennessee, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. The young USHER, knowing who PEAKER is, is being terribly attentive to him.

USHER

We've reserved two of the best seats for you and your wife, Congressman Peaker.

PEAKER

That's very thoughtful of you.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

USHER

Right next to the Vice President.

PEAKER

Is he here yet?

USHER

No, sir. He's due any moment.

PEAKER

The asshole probably figures they'll delay the launch for him. Someone should tell him this is not a bridge opening.

They arrive at their seats. The USHER hands a small leather bag with a shoulder strap on it, to PEAKER.

USHER

I hope you and Mrs. Peaker will be very comfortable. The Agency would like you to have these commemorative binoculars... to help you watch the launch... and to remember this day.

PEAKER

(examining the  
binoculars)

Why, thank you. Look, Emily... they have the date and the Capricorn seal in gold on them.

MRS. PEAKER

They're very nice.

USHER

I'm glad you like them.

PEAKER

We need another pair... for my wife.

USHER

I beg your pardon, sir?

MRS. PEAKER

Hollis, there's no need to fuss.

PEAKER

I said we need another pair... for my wife.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. PEAKER

Oh, Hollis, really...

USHER

Uh... Congressman Peaker... there are only... uh... a limited amount...

PEAKER

I don't believe I clearly heard you, son... would you mind repeating that?

USHER

Uh... there's no problem... I'll get another pair right away.

PEAKER

That's very thoughtful of you.

4 EXT. OPERATIONS BUILDING - DAY

The three astronauts, who are now wearing their silver and white space suits, stride smilingly out the door, and walk towards a waiting metallic van. They are accompanied by DR. BURROUGHS and SALTER. Each astronaut is carrying a small case that is attached to his space suit by a plastic tube. This is a life support system. Their appearance is greeted with the popping of flash bulbs, and the whirring of newsreel cameras.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. The time is T-minus one hundred sixty-five minutes, thirty seconds. The crew is now leaving the Manned Spacecraft Operations Building for the Transfer Van. They will arrive at Launch Complex thirty-nine at T-minus one hundred fifty-one minutes. The flight crew is being accompanied by Doctor Burroughs and Carl Salter... the chief of flight operations. Flight Crew ingress will be at T-minus one hundred forty-nine minutes. This is Capricorn Control.

5 SLIDE - PLANET MARS

We SEE the giant red hazy globe in the black sky, against a carpet of stars.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

WEAVER (V.O.)

Capricorn... man's first flight  
to Mars.

6 BROADCAST BOOTH - DAY

WEAVER

Good morning, everyone... this is Roy Weaver, CBS News Space Headquarters... Cape Canaveral. At this time... Colonel Charles Brubaker... Lieutenant Colonel Peter Willis... and Commander John Walker are riding up the Gantry Elevator at Launch Complex Thirty-nine... thirty-six stories high... and will soon enter the spacecraft on top of the giant Saturn Five rocket. The crew has been up for almost two hours. They had breakfast... they were examined and pronounced fit... and they are now preparing to embark on a four-week journey... that will take them farther than any human being has ever been... the planet Mars. They carry with them the future of the manned space program. This flight comes at a time of intense pressure from a Congress that does not want to appropriate any more money to an endeavor that the public may not care as much about as they once did. It is generally agreed... that if this flight is not totally successful... there will be no more support for a program that simply may not have the public fancy... as it once did. We are a little more than two hours from lift-off. Mission control reports that everything is proceeding smoothly. CBS News live color coverage of the flight of Capricorn One will continue... in a moment... after this message.

7 READY ROOM - DAY

The Ready Room is directly outside of the space capsule, on top of the third stage of the Saturn Five.

(CONTINUED)

7

CONTINUED:

It is not totally dissimilar from those moveable passageways we use to board 747's. The hatch to the capsule is open at the far end of the room. On the other end is the outer entrance to the Ready Room. BRUBAKER, WILLIS, WALKER, BURROUGHS, and SALTER walk through the outer entrance from the gantry elevator. There are three other men in the Ready Room, all wearing sterile white caps and gowns. One of them, a tall, very thin man in his fifties, is HORACE GRUNING, the Chief of the Rocket Firing Division. He is in charge of the launch. He is not known for his warmth. He greets the crew's arrival with great attention, not exhilaration.

GRUNING

Good morning, gentlemen.

BRUBAKER

Good morning, Horace.

WILLIS

Are we late?

WALKER

Traffic was terrible...

GRUNING

I see you are all in good spirits.

DR. BURROUGHS

Yes, they are.

BRUBAKER

Have you done the EDS tests yet?

GRUNING

They are almost complete.

BRUBAKER

Do you want us to enter?

GRUNING

Yes... in a moment.

BRUBAKER

What's up?

GRUNING

(pause)

I'm not very good at things like this.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

The crew looks at him.

GRUNING

Ah... I have known you...  
especially Colonel Brubaker,  
for some time...

BRUBAKER

Yes?

GRUNING

Ah... what you are about to do  
today... I've spent my life...

(pause)

... I just want you to know that  
I feel as if all I have ever  
worked for... it all has meaning  
today... and I am very proud...  
proud of the program... proud of  
what I have been able to contribute  
to it in some small way... proud  
of you...

GRUNING hands a leather-bound Bible to BRUBAKER.

GRUNING

I would like you to take this  
with you... from me... from  
all of us.

There is a moment of stone silence.

WILLIS

Why, Horace... I don't know what  
to say.

SALTER

Try saying nothing for a change.

BRUBAKER

Horace... Thank you. We'll be  
honored to take this with us.

GRUNING

(regaining his  
composure)

Well, gentlemen... let's go to  
Mars.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (3)

WALKER

Mars? Are you kidding? I thought we were going to New York.

BRUBAKER

Mars is safer.

SALTER

Will you guys please shut up... and let's get started.

The three astronauts proceed to the hatch and enter the spacecraft.

8 GRANDSTAND AREA - DAY

A large brass band blares "Ruffles and Flourishes." Ten Secret Service agents enter the area, followed by VICE PRESIDENT ROBERT PRICE and his wife PHYLLIS. He is greeted by the USHER, who escorts the party to the seats next to CONGRESSMAN PEAKER and his WIFE.

PEAKER

Good morning, Mr. Vice President... Phyllis...

PRICE

Good morning, Hollis... Emily.

The two wives exchange greetings. The VICE PRESIDENT and his WIFE sit down next to the PEAKERS.

PEAKER

How is the President today?

PRICE

He's just fine, thank you. He asked me to personally express his regrets for not being able to attend the launch today... however, there were some matters that required his attention in Washington.

PEAKER

Like getting re-elected.

USHER

Mr. Vice President... I hope you and Mrs. Price will be very comfortable.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

USHER (CONT'D)

The Agency would like you and your wife to each have a pair of these commemorative binoculars... to help you watch the launch... and to remember this day.

The USHER hands two souvenir binoculars in their leather cases to the VICE PRESIDENT and his WIFE.

PRICE

Thank you very much.

PEAKER

What's your name, son?

USHER

Hughes, sir... Mark Hughes.

PEAKER

You learn pretty quick... you'll do all right.

USHER

Thank you, sir.

9 SATURN ROCKET - DAY

The giant arm that links the spacecraft to the gantry is silhouetted against the bright blue sky. Liquid oxygen is still smoldering around the top of the first stage. There are a number of thick tubes from the rocket to the gantry, all carrying telemetry data to Mission Control.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. We are now at T-minus seventy-five minutes and counting. Mission Control reports that all systems are go... all lights are green. The weather is reported to be good... scattered clouds at five to ten thousand feet... the wind is from the east at eight knots... the sea is reported calm... with swells of less than two feet. The spacecraft is still on external power.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

VOICE (CONT'D)

The switch to internal power will occur at T-minus fifteen minutes. Colonel Brubaker has reaffirmed the completion of the E.D.S. test checks. The launch escape system will be armed at T-minus forty-two minutes. This is Capricorn Control.

10 INT. COMMAND MODULE - DAY

The three astronauts are sitting in their flight couches. Because the Command Module is pointed upward, they are seated so their backs are horizontal. They are secured by a number of harnesses. They are each checking the maze of switches and gauges, and they are all talking through throat microphones to each other and to Mission Control.

BRUBAKER

T.A.R.S. reference check.

WILLIS

Stage one is green.

BRUBAKER

Stage one is green.

WILLIS

Stage two is green.

BRUBAKER

Stage two is green.

WALKER

Malfunction Detect System on second panel.

BRUBAKER

Roger... M.D.S. on second panel.

VOICE

Capricorn One, we confirm T.A.R.S. and M.D.S. We have green on both. You are go for Inertial Guidance and O.A.M.S. checks.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

GRUNING sticks his head in the hatchway.

GRUNING

Gentlemen... we are ready to close the hatch.

BRUBAKER

Anyone want to get out... this is your last chance.

WILLIS

Hey, Horace... Is Mars the red one or the green one...? I forgot.

GRUNING

Twenty-four billion dollars to put crazy people in space.

WALKER

Keeps us off the streets.

GRUNING closes the hatch.

11 INT. LAUNCH CONTROL CENTER - DAY

The Launch Control Center is better known as the "Block-house." It is a thirty-five foot square room, manned by more than one hundred technicians working on various display consoles.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. We are at T-minus fifteen minutes and still counting. All systems are go... all lights are green. The flight crew has completed the final launch vehicle range safety check. Mission Control has reported the spacecraft is now on full internal power. The Launch Vehicle will transfer to full internal power at T-minus fifty seconds.

12 INT. MISSION CONTROL CENTER - DAY

This is a room five times the size of the Launch Control Center. There are 384 television display consoles, each manned by a shirtsleeved technician.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

Every system in the spacecraft has a readout panel. At the far wall of this Orwellian room is a giant screen. On it is projected a television picture of the launch site. Throughout the flight all television transmissions from the spacecraft and from the Martian surface will be on the screen. On either side of the screen are maps with different colored lights tracking the orbits and flight path of the spacecraft during flight.

VOICE

Both the Ascencion and Canary tracking stations report clear reception. The prime recovery ship in the event of a terminated flight... will be the U.S.S. Kittyhawk... which is located three hundred and fifty miles south southeast of Bermuda. In the event of an abort before orbital insertion... the secondary recovery ship is the U.S.S. Oriskany... in the Indian Ocean.

We SEE a CLOSEUP of a thin... rather distinguished looking man in his fifties. He is DOCTOR JAMES KELLOWAY, the Director of N.A.S.A.

VOICE

Doctor James Kelloway... the Director of the Manned Space Program... is in Houston at this moment. He is in full voice contact with the flight crew.

13 INT. COMMAND MODULE - DAY

BRUBAKER

Landing Module O.I. shutdown.

WILLIS

O.I. shutdown complete.

VOICE

Capricorn One, you should have full C.M. internal power.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston... we have internal power.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

WALKER  
Vehicle final status check.

BRUBAKER  
Begin status check.

We can SEE the hatch lock begin to swivel. Suddenly, the hatch slides open. A MAN with close cropped hair, wearing a business suit, sticks his head in the module.

MAN  
Bru... Would you and your men  
please follow me?

The three astronauts look at him in disbelief.

MAN  
Please, Bru... This is an emergency.

BRUBAKER  
Gerry... What the hell is this?

MAN  
There is no time to explain...  
please follow me.

BRUBAKER  
Are you nuts?

MAN  
This is no time to explain...  
Please... this is critical...  
please, follow me, now.

The three astronauts remove their harnesses and climb out through the hatch. They walk through the Ready Room, and continue through the passageway of the Access Arm. There is an elevator at the end of the arm, which is in the main body of the gantry. The door is open, and the four men enter the elevator. The door closes.

14 EXT. GANTRY - DAY

We SEE the giant Access Arm slowly swinging away from the body of the rocket, the sun glinting off its skeleton.

VOICE  
This is Paul Cunningham...  
Capricorn Control.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

VOICE (CONT'D)

We are coming up to T-minus five minutes and counting. The space vehicle final checks have been completed... and the Access Arm is swinging into a full retract position. This means that the destruct system is now fully armed. This is Capricorn Control.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

T.L.R. pressure reading is 45-point-two.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, Houston. 45-Point-Two.

15 INT. GANTRY BOTTOM - DAY

The elevator at the bottom of the gantry opens. The three astronauts and the MAN get out. They are led to another door at the back of the gantry. It is hidden from view because it is on the back side. As the door opens, we SEE a waiting van backed up to it, the back doors are open, so the men walk directly into it. As soon as they are inside, the doors slide shut, and the van skids away.

16 INSIDE VAN - DAY

BRUBAKER

Gerry... this is nuts... what the hell is happening?

MAN

Bru... I can't tell you now.

17 EXT. LAUNCH PAD - DAY

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. We are at T-minus three minutes six seconds... mark. The launch officer has given a go to begin the Firing Command Automatic Sequence. From now until T-minus fifty seconds... the system is pre-set.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

VOICE (CONT'D)

At T-minus fifty seconds... the Launch Vehicle will be on full internal power... that begins the actual launch sequence. All systems are go... all lights are green. This is Capricorn Control.

18 EXT. STRIP AREA - DAY

There is a large paved strip, normally used for V.I.P. and cargo aircraft at the Center. In the b.g., we can SEE the white Saturn Five and the red gantry.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Initial stage thruster check is normal.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, Houston... we copy.

In the f.g., at the end of the strip is a UH-18 helicopter ... its rotors already turning. The van races across the strip and stops in front of the helicopter. The back doors of the van open, the three astronauts are escorted out of the van and led to the helicopter. BRUBAKER looks around. The MAN motions to him to get in. WILLIS and WALKER are looking to BRUBAKER for guidance. There is a moment when it looks as if BRUBAKER will not enter the helicopter. We cannot hear what anyone is saying because of the DRONING of the ROTOR; however, we can SEE BRUBAKER'S lips are moving. So are the MAN'S. Finally, BRUBAKER gets in, followed by WILLIS and WALKER. The MAN remains on the strip, as the helicopter pitches forward and flies away. The MAN walks back to the van and gets in, and it drives away. We HOLD on the strip, and the rocket in the b.g.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. We are coming up on T-minus one minute thirty seconds. The final range safety checks are completed. The launch safety officer reports all systems are nominal... and we are Go at this time. All lights are green. This is Capricorn Control.

19 GRANDSTAND AREA - DAY

VICE PRESIDENT and MRS. PRICE, CONGRESSMAN and MRS. PEAKER are all looking through their binoculars.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

VICE PRESIDENT PRICE is the only one of them whose gaze is wandering from the actual rocket. He is scanning the crowd. He focuses his binoculars on a pretty young blonde. PEAKER notices that PRICE is looking the other way.

PEAKER

It's that big tall white thing over there... you can't miss it.

PRICE turns around and glares at PEAKER.

20 INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER are alone in the helicopter, except for the pilot and the co-pilot. They are all speechless. BRUBAKER looks like a caged leopard, his face a mixture of apprehension and anger. WILLIS is as sober as we have ever seen him. WALKER is staring out the window. The helicopter is flying extremely low, barely over the treetops.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Capricorn, give us your A.L.C.S. update.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, Houston. We read nominal A.L.C.S.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

We copy, Capricorn.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, Houston.

21 EXT. ROCKET - DAY

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. We are at T-minus one minute and still counting... all systems are go... all light are green. We should have Launch Vehicle Power Transfer right about now...

(pause)

... the flight director has confirmed launch vehicle power transfer... we are at T-minus fifty seconds and counting.

22 EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

The helicopter swoops in over the horizon and lands at the end of a runway, directly next to a military jet Falcon. BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER step out of the helicopter. Two men in civilian clothing are standing next to the waiting jet. They motion to the three astronauts to hurry up. Dumbfounded, the three men climb aboard the jet.

23 EXT. ROCKET - DAY

VOICE

We are at T-minus thirty seconds.  
All on-board systems are nominal.

24 EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

The Falcon jet races down the runway, the nose lifts up, and the aircraft takes off.

25 EXT. ROCKET - DAY

VOICE

T-minus twenty seconds... all  
systems are go... we are twelve  
seconds from ignition...

26 GRANDSTAND AREA - DAY

All of the souvenir binoculars are trained on the rocket.

27 LAUNCH CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Everyone is poised over their respective consoles.

28 INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Everyone is silent.

29 EXT. ROCKET - DAY

VOICE

T-minus fifteen seconds.

30 SKY - DAY

The Falcon jet is flying AWAY FROM CAMERA.

31 EXT. ROCKET - DAY

VOICE

T-minus ten seconds... nine... eight  
... we have ignition.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

Smoke is beginning to pour from the bottom of the rocket.

VOICE

... Seven... six... five... we have  
outboard engines... four... three...  
we have inboard engines... two...  
one... zero...

Flame so bright that the morning sky around it appears to  
darken, envelopes the launch pad, accompanied by an ear-  
shattering ROAR. The rocket slowly lifts its six million  
pound weight with a terrifying deliberateness.

VOICE

We have liftoff... we have liftoff...

The titanic rocket appears to hover a few feet off the  
ground, a ball of white and yellow flame spewing from the  
bottom, a grey-black cloud of smoke rolling over the area.

32 GRANDSTAND AREA - DAY

Everyone is gaping through their binoculars.

33 MISSION CONTROL - DAY

The television picture of the flaming rocket is projected  
in the far wall.

34 LAUNCH CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Everyone is holding their breath.

35 SKY - DAY

The Falcon jet is flying off in the distance.

36 EXT. ROCKET - DAY

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Looking good, Capricorn.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, we are starting yaw.

VOICE

One degree yaw maneuver started...  
Launch officer reports everything  
looks good... T-plus seven seconds  
... eight... nine... one degree yaw  
complete... we have begun roll maneuver  
to seventy-two degree launch azimuth...  
all systems are go... everything is  
reported nominal.

37 INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - DAY

WEAVER

It looks good... it looks good.

38 EXT. ROCKET - DAY

VOICE

T-plus twenty seconds... the vehicle is on target... everything looks nominal... roll maneuver is in progress. Liftoff was at zero zero point four.

39 SKY - DAY

The Falcon jet is heading over the Gulf.

40 INT. LAUNCH CONTROL CENTER - DAY

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Looking good, Capricorn.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roll maneuver complete.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, Capricorn.

There is jubilation, some of the usually reserved engineers are literally jumping up and down.

41 INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Everyone is staring at the television screen.

42 EXT. GRANDSTAND AREA - DAY

Everyone is craning their necks upward, as the rocket rises higher and higher. CONGRESSMAN PEAKER is ecstatic, and he slaps VICE PRESIDENT PRICE on the back. PRICE looks at PEAKER and bristles.

43 EXT. ROCKET - DAY

VOICE

We are coming up on T-plus one minute... mark... Range officer reports everything nominal... the roll maneuver was completed at T-plus forty-two seconds. The vehicle is one mile down range... at an altitude of eighteen thousand feet...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

VOICE (CONT'D)

... traveling at a velocity of twelve hundred seventy-three miles per hour. We are coming up at Max Q... which is the maximum dynamic pressure felt by the flight crew...

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Max Q., Capricorn.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

We copy, Houston.

VOICE

T-plus one minute twenty-three seconds... we are at Max Q... vehicle is two point six miles down range... eight miles high... the velocity is eighteen hundred twenty-eight miles per hour.

44 INT. FALCON JET - DAY

BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER are pacing around the small passenger compartment. They look at each other with total helplessness. BRUBAKER walks to the door leading to the cockpit. He tries to open it; it is locked.

45 EXT. ROCKET - DAY

VOICE

We are coming up on T-plus two minutes. The vehicle is twenty-four miles down range... altitude is thirty-nine miles... velocity is forty-six hundred miles per hour... staging should be in the next thirty seconds...

(pause)

... We should have center engine cutoff.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

C.E.C.O., Capricorn.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

We copy C.E.C.O.

VOICE

... We have it... we have C.E.C.O. at T-plus two minutes nineteen seconds ... outboard cutoff should be in ten seconds...

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

Pause.

HOUSTON (V.O.)  
O.B.E.C.O., Capricorn.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)  
Roger, Houston.

VOICE  
... We have outboard cutoff...  
O.B.E.C.O. at T-plus two minutes  
twenty-nine seconds... we are go  
for staging...

The rocket is streaking upwards and getting smaller; it is being tracked by long range telescopes, and we are SEEING it through the same transmission that is being beamed to Houston.

HOUSTON (V.O.)  
You are go for staging, Capricorn.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)  
Roger, Houston... five, four, three,  
two, one... We read staging.

HOUSTON (V.O.)  
We copy.

There is a brilliant puff of white smoke between the first and second stages, a pause, then the huge first stage tumbles back toward earth.

VOICE  
We have separation... it is confirmed;  
we have separation at T-plus two  
minutes forty-three seconds.

The second stage floats upward for two seconds, then there is a flash, and flame pours out from the second stage.

HOUSTON (V.O.)  
S-two ignition.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)  
We have S-two.

VOICE  
We have second stage ignition... we  
have second stage ignition...  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

VOICE (CONT'D)

... S-two ignition at T-plus two minutes forty-six seconds. The vehicle is forty-seven miles down range... altitude is forty-three miles... velocity is sixty-one hundred miles per hour.

46 EXT. GRANDSTAND AREA - DAY

People are beginning to file out of the V.I.P. area, holding their binoculars, talking animatedly to each other. The Astronauts' wives are being escorted from the grandstands. CONGRESSMAN PEAKER and VICE PRESIDENT PRICE, trailed by their wives, are walking out of the gate.

PEAKER

Well, Mr. Vice President... you please give my regards to the President?

PRICE

I'll be glad to, Hollis.

PEAKER

I hope whatever matters that were so important he couldn't be here... I hope he finds success in dealing with them.

PRICE

That's very sporting of you, Hollis. The President will be most pleased to learn of your support.

PEAKER

The President might receive more of my humble support... if he would be a bit more helpful to the program, here.

PRICE

Now, Hollis, you know the President is most interested in the program.

PEAKER

I'm most interested in a lot of things ... including my wife's bridge game. That's not the same as supporting something.

PRICE

There are a number of people who feel that we have some problems here on Earth that merit our attention... before we spend more billions of dollars on outer space.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

PEAKER

There are a number of people who feel that there are no more important problems than our declining position in world leadership.

PRICE

It was nice seeing you again, Hollis.

PEAKER

The pleasure was mine, Mr. Vice President.

47 EXT. DESERT - DAY

The Falcon jet screams low over the desert, shimmering in the heat. The plane's landing gear drops down, and the aircraft settles on an isolated runway, tiny puffs of smoke coming from the tires as they hit the pavement. The aircraft taxis down the runway and then turns to its right. It rolls to a stop next to a huge hangar. The hangar is painted exactly the same color of the desert sand which makes it almost impossible to see from any distance, especially from the air. Two men are waiting as the plane's ramp folds out. They wait as BRUBAKER walks out, followed by WILLIS and WALKER.

MAN #1

Welcome, Colonel Brubaker... could you please come with us?

BRUBAKER

I'm not going anywhere until someone tells us what the hell has happened.

MAN #1

Everything will be explained to you.

BRUBAKER

Bullshit... I want to know now... right now.

MAN #2

If we were in a position to explain everything to you, we would... however, we are not. If you'll just be patient enough to come with us... I promise you will understand.

BRUBAKER

Are we kidnapped?

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

MAN #1

Colonel... I know this sounds strange  
... however, we are all working for the  
same thing... we are not your enemy...  
we promise you will understand everything  
if you will just come with us.

BRUBAKER

I don't think we have a hell of a lot  
of choice.

The three astronauts follow the two men from the plane.  
They walk to the hangar. There is a metal door. One of the  
men opens the door, and everyone enters the hangar.

48 INT. HANGAR - DAY

The five men are walking down a shiny prefabricated corridor.  
The corridor is long and thin. There is no sound except for  
the clattering of their footsteps. They come to a door.

49 INT. ROOM - DAY

The room has the same partition-like white walls. There are  
no windows. Fluorescent slabs hang from the ceiling, which  
is acoustical tile. In the middle of the room is a large  
formica conference table, surrounded by some functionally  
modern chairs. The door opens, the three astronauts enter.  
The two other men wait by the door.

MAN #1

Please wait here.

The two men leave, closing the door behind them. BRUBAKER,  
WILLIS and WALKER look at each other. BRUBAKER goes over to  
the table, looking for something on it that might give him  
some information. It is bare.

WILLIS

I suppose you're wondering why I asked  
you all here.

BRUBAKER paces around the room. He looks like he is going to  
explode. BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER take turns staring at  
their room, and then at each other. Not a word is spoken.  
Suddenly, the door opens. The three men spin around and  
stare at DOCTOR JAMES KELLOWAY, the head of N.A.S.A. He  
closes the door behind him, strides across the room, and  
sits down at the table.

KELLOWAY

Good morning.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

WILLIS

Hi there, Doctor Kelloway... it's nice to see you. A funny thing happened on the way to Mars.

BRUBAKER

You want me to say good morning... like this is a goddamn tea party... or are you going to cut the crap and tell us what happened?

KELLOWAY

Why don't you all sit down.

WILLIS and WALKER look to BRUBAKER, who makes no effort to sit down. Finally he walks to the table. The others follow and sit down. BRUBAKER remains standing.

KELLOWAY

This isn't so easy for me, either.

BRUBAKER

That's really a shame.

KELLOWAY

Okay. Here it is.

(pause)

I have to start by saying that if there was any other way... if there was even a slight chance of some other alternative... I would give anything not to be here with you now... anything.

He looks at the three men.

KELLOWAY

Bru... how long have we known each other?

BRUBAKER doesn't answer.

KELLOWAY

Sixteen years. That's how long... sixteen years. You should have seen yourself then. You looked like you had just walked out of a Wheaties box. And me... all sweaty palmed and deadly serious. I told everybody about this dream I had of conquering the new frontier. They all looked at me like I was nuts... and you looked at me and said yes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (2)

KELLOWAY (CONT'D)

(pause)

I remember the talks we would have... about making this a better world by finding out about other worlds. We were going to reach so high... even the spectators would feel better.

(pause)

I remember when you told me Kay was pregnant... and we went out and got crocked. I remember when Charles was born... and we went out and got crocked again.

BRUBAKER looks at his feet.

KELLOWAY

The two of us... Captain Terrific and the Mad Doctor... talking about reaching the stars... and the bartender telling us maybe we had had enough. Sixteen years... then Armstrong stepped out on the moon and we cried, we were so proud.

(pause)

Willis... you and Walker... you came in around then... both bright and talented wise-asses. You looked at me... in my wash and wear shirt... carrying on this hot love affair with my slide rule... and even you guys were swept up in what we had done.

KELLOWAY folds both his hands on the table.

KELLOWAY

So... what happened... Armstrong climbed back up his little ladder... some more guys followed... and that was it. I remember when Glenn made his first orbit in Mercury... they put up television sets in Grand Central Station... and tens of thousands of people missed their trains to watch.

(pause)

You know... When Apollo seventeen landed on the moon... people were calling up the networks and bitching because re-runs of 'I Love Lucy' were cancelled. Re-runs ... for Christ sake... I can understand if it's a new Lucy show... I mean what's a walk on the moon... except re-runs... Jesus...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (3)

KELLOWAY (CONT'D)

(pause)

... Presidents... they used to dislocate their jaws making speeches about how vital we were. Their favorite way to spend a morning was clattering around an aircraft carrier during recovery... they loved the hats, I think. Then... I don't know... people suddenly began talking about how much everything cost. Is it worth twenty billion to go to another planet... what about cancer... what about the slums... how much does it cost? How much does any dream cost, for Christ sake... since when is there an accountant for ideas?

(pause)

You know who was at the launch today? Not the President... the Vice President ... that's who... the Vice President and his plump wife. The President was too busy. He isn't busy... he's just a little bit scared. He sat there two months ago... put his feet up on Woodrow Wilson's desk and said... 'Jim ... make it good. Congress is on my back. They're looking for a reason to cancel the program. We can't afford a screw up. Just make it good. You have my every good wish.' His every good wish... I got his sanctimonious Vice President... that's what I got. The only way he agreed to make the phone call to Mars during the landing was when I convinced him he could make it collect.

KELLOWAY looks around the room.

KELLOWAY

So... that's where we are now... after all that hoping, and all that dreaming ... he sits there with those flags behind his chair and tells me we can't afford a screw up.

(pause)

And guess what... we had a screw up... a first class... bona fide... made in American screw up.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (4)

## KELLOWAY (CONT'D)

The nice people from Con-Amalgamate delivered a life support system cheap enough so they could make a profit on the deal. Works out fine for everybody. Con-Amalgamate makes money... we get our life support system... everything's peachy. Except that they made a little too much profit... because we found out two weeks ago it won't work. You guys would all be dead in three weeks. It's as simple as that. So all I had to do was report that... and scrub the mission ... and Congress has its excuse... the President still has his desk... and we have no more program. What's sixteen years? Your actual drop in the bucket.

KELLOWAY stands up.

## KELLOWAY

Speech is over. We are getting to what they call the moment of truth. Come with me... I want to show you something.

KELLOWAY goes to the door and opens it. BRUBAKER follows him. WILLIS and WALKER get up and follow.

50 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

The four men walk further down the long corridor. There is a door at the end. KELLOWAY opens it and they all walk through.

51 INT. MAIN AREA HANGAR - DAY

The main area is cavernous, with a gridded ceiling, wooden scaffolding knitted all across, pocked with bare hanging metal work lights. KELLOWAY leads the men through a series of partitions and into another area, bordered by a metal door. They enter a Control Room. It is a dark large cubicle. One wall is covered by rows of television monitors. In front of it is a switching panel, with rows of lighted red, yellow and blue buttons and switches. There are five men seated behind the panel, each responsible for different areas of the switches, all wearing headsets. The only light in the room is the glow from the mixing panel, and the light from the television monitors. On one of the monitors we SEE the interior of the Mission Control Center in Houston. On another we SEE the spacecraft. Three of the monitors have test patterns. Three others are carrying the three major television networks.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

On one of them we SEE ROY WEAVER and DAVE McDONNELL. The other two networks have matching pairs of commentators. OVER this we HEAR the STATIC-FILLED TRANSMISSIONS that are being piped into the control room. (This is all VOICE OVER.)

VOICE

Your system analysis looks good, for T-M-I.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, Houston... T-M-I burn time will be five minutes forty-five seconds.

VOICE

Capricorn One, five forty-five is correct. Carnavon advises you are in tracking.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, Houston.

VOICE

Your E-O-I is nominal... you are go for two more. Please advise us of CSM fuel.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, Houston. CSM fuel forty-five seconds better than nominal.

BRUBAKER is staring at the control room, hearing the SOUND of his own voice coming through the SPEAKERS. WILLIS and WALKER are equally at a loss.

KELLOWAY

There's a door here... I'm going to open it... and then walk into another area. If you follow me... you'll see a bit more... and I'll answer some questions... and you're going to... ah... why don't you just follow me?

52 STUDIO AREA

It is a giant sound stage. There are two main sets. The first is a complete mock-up of the Command Module and the Landing Module, both exterior and interior. They are both suspended from the scaffolding, and are floating by the use of cables. The entire background is a cyclorama, painted black, with the stars illuminated in white light. The second set is the surface of the planet Mars, every ridge, every crack, perfectly duplicated.

(CONTINUED)

52

CONTINUED:

It is the landing site, with the same starlit cyclorama background. The sight of both of these incredibly elaborate and life-like sets is nothing less than astounding. There are four television cameras on their pedestals, standing on the floor of the stage. Throughout this and all other scenes that take place in the studio, we HEAR the CONVERSATION between BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER... and Houston... even while BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER are not talking.

KELLOWAY leads them into the area... they look around. BRUBAKER looks at KELLOWAY like a man who has been betrayed. It is a look that KELLOWAY can't escape from.

BRUBAKER

You don't think you're really going to get away with this... do you?

KELLOWAY

I don't know... It's a chance. Maybe it's not a very good one... however, it's a chance.

BRUBAKER

Who knows about this?

KELLOWAY

Almost nobody. Houston is monitoring the actual flight. All the telemetry is coming from the command module. Only your voices and medical data are being patched in from here. We recorded everything from the practice simulations. They don't know.

(pause)

All we need from you is the actual television transmissions during the flight and the Mars landing. That's all... just the television transmissions.

BRUBAKER

That's all... only the television transmissions.

KELLOWAY

We inserted a change in the on board computer... so that the spacecraft will land two hundred miles off target. You will be flown to an island near that point. From there you will be transferred to a helicopter.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2)

KELLOWAY (CONT'D)

The helicopter will fly you to the capsule... and you will be put inside. It will take the recovery forces a minimum of an hour and a half to reach the splashdown site. By that time you will be inside. When the prime recovery carrier arrives... they will take you out of the spacecraft.

BRUBAKER

You thought of everything.

KELLOWAY

I don't know; I hope so.

BRUBAKER

You're sure we'll go along... right?

KELLOWAY

No... I'm not.

BRUBAKER

What if we say no.

KELLOWAY

I don't know... don't say no.

WILLIS

When does Allen Funt come funning in and tell us this is 'Candid Camera'?

KELLOWAY

Oh, Jesus... do you think I like this? You think I believe I'm really standing here in this craziness telling you about patching in tape recordings and telemetry, and an island two hundred miles from the target zone? I don't know what the hell I'm doing, either. I just care so goddamn much... I think it's worth it... I'm not even sure of that... I just think it.

WALKER

I think I'm going to puke.

KELLOWAY

That will solve everything.

BRUBAKER

What's this going to solve?

(CONTINUED)

KELLOWAY

It will keep something alive that shouldn't die. Before you all begin to moralize... take a look around. You look at what we've done... and how much more we can do. You look at what we've meant to this country. Nobody gives a crap about anything anymore... People close their garages... triple lock their doors and hide under their beds. They're even afraid to turn on their television sets because of what they might find out on the evening news. There's nothing more to believe in. You want to blow this whole thing wide open... God knows what it will do to everybody. I'm sorry... I'm so goddamn sorry... I just don't know what else to do. I'm hanging on by my fingernails... so is everyone else. Go on... you be the ones who give everyone another reason to give up... go on...

BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER don't answer. They continue to hear the SOUND of their own TAPE RECORDED VOICES squawking through the SPEAKERS in the sound stage...

BRUBAKER

This is really wonderful. We go along with you... and lie our asses off... and the world of truth and ideals is protected. We don't want to take part in some giant rip-off of yours... and somehow or other we're managing to ruin the country. You're pretty good, Roger ... I'll give you that.

KELLOWAY

You're twisting my words.

BRUBAKER

Don't sell yourself short.

KELLOWAY

Don't sell the program short.

BRUBAKER

Don't oversell it. I'm not so sure that cancelling a flight... or cutting off appropriations means America folds up.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (4)

KELLOWAY

It's not that simple... and you know it.

BRUBAKER

I don't know... if the only way to keep something alive is to become everything I hate... I don't know if it's worth keeping it alive.

KELLOWAY

Please don't talk like that, Bru.

BRUBAKER

What the hell is the matter with you, 'please don't talk like that, Bru...'  
I don't think this is right. The rest is all bullshit.

KELLOWAY

You have to help.

BRUBAKER

What do you mean I have to?

KELLOWAY

You have to.

BRUBAKER

What if I don't?

KELLOWAY

Please... for God's sake... don't put me in a corner.

BRUBAKER

(shouting)

You're crazy... you know that? You know that? You're crazy. You've got us standing here in the middle of this nut house... and you don't want to be put in a corner.

KELLOWAY

Your families.

BRUBAKER's eyes widen.

BRUBAKER

What about our families?

KELLOWAY

Please... you have to help.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (5)

BRUBAKER  
(shouting)  
What about our families?

KELLOWAY  
Please... you have to.

BRUBAKER grabs KELLOWAY by his collar... and shoves him against the wall of the room.

BRUBAKER  
(shouting)  
What about our families!

KELLOWAY  
They're flying back... from the Cape...  
to Houston... they're all together...  
on the... plane...

BRUBAKER holds KELLOWAY against the wall... staring at him in abject horror.

BRUBAKER  
No... you're not serious...

KELLOWAY  
Please, Bru... don't make me...

BRUBAKER  
You crazy son of a bitch...! Tell me!

KELLOWAY  
They're on the plane together, goddamnit!  
You want it in writing? There's a device  
... it's on the plane, too! There are  
some people... if I don't give them the  
all clear signal... they'll explode it!  
It doesn't have to be like this! Don't  
you understand me? You have to help!

BRUBAKER  
You wouldn't... tell me you wouldn't...

KELLOWAY  
I can't tell you that, Bru.

BRUBAKER gapes at KELLOWAY. Slowly... he loosens his grip on KELLOWAY's lapels. The two men stand there... facing each other.

53 EXT. BRUBAKER HOME - DAY

A cluster of reporters is milling around one of those aluminum snack trucks, buying coffee and sandwiches. Most of the cameramen have laid their cameras sideways on the ground. There is a lot of card playing by many of the still men, who are sitting on the pavements. One familiar face is the earnest, blonde JUDY DRINKWATER of CBS News. She is sipping coffee out of a paper cup. BOB CAULFIELD, a slightly ruffled, lean Irishman, who works for NBC News, is sitting next to her.

CAULFIELD

This coffee is horrible.

DRINKWATER

It's not that bad.

CAULFIELD

Yes, it is... it's that bad.

DRINKWATER

Don't drink it.

CAULFIELD takes the small plastic cover off the coffee cup.

CAULFIELD

I'm always unwrapping things. I wake up and take the cellophane off the drinking glass... the soap is in a Holiday Inn wrapper... even the toilet has a paper band on it... with a nice note from the hotel telling me they put the band around the toilet for my protection.

(pause)

I'm always afraid that if I stay in bed too long... the maid is going to come in the room and wrap a paper band around me, and the bedspread.

DRINKWATER

I don't mind.

CAULFIELD

You wait. After a while, you don't know what city you're in. I defy anyone to tell me the difference between the Holiday Inn in Houston... and the Holiday Inn in Cincinnati. The rooms are the same... the music in the elevators is the same... the ladies with too much makeup in the coffee shop are the same.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

CAULFIELD (CONT'D)

You never know where you are until after breakfast... when you read the paper.

DRINKWATER

I don't mind it.

CAULFIELD

(a bit too tenderly)

I really wouldn't mind it too much either. It's just that I would like it all to be with someone I care about. Someone who I could share it with.

DRINKWATER

Bullshit.

CAULFIELD

You're so damn cynical.

DRINKWATER

I'm not cynical. It's just that your act could use a little polish.

CAULFIELD

What do you mean by that?

DRINKWATER

Liz Haller, for starters. It was during the California Primary. I believe you used the one about both of you being witnesses to the unfolding of history. You have to admit that's a bit better than soap wrappers.

CAULFIELD

You think all I want to do is jump you.

DRINKWATER

Yes.

CAULFIELD

You wouldn't know sincerity if it ran over you.

DRINKWATER

Not if you were driving it.

CAULFIELD

I'm glad I'm not like you.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: (2)

DRINKWATER

I have better legs.

CAULFIELD

All right... I give up.

DRINKWATER

Don't give up so easy. Just change your approach.

CAULFIELD

What kind of approach would you like?

DRINKWATER

How about something like... 'I would like to jump you'...?

CAULFIELD

You think that would work?

DRINKWATER

It stands a better chance than wanting to share a meaningful life together.

CAULFIELD

I would like to jump you.

DRINKWATER

Go jump yourself.

Suddenly there is a commotion. The cameramen scramble with the problem of mounting their bulky cameras on their shoulder harnesses. Reporters grab their microphones, the radio people fumble with their tape recorders.

The front door to the house opens and MRS. BRUBAKER walks out. There is a fireworks display of flashbulbs, and the network cameramen are yelling at each other to get out of the way. DRINKWATER and CAULFIELD have thrown their coffee cups on the ground and run over to MRS. BRUBAKER, taking their microphones from their sound men. A flurry of questions, all shouted at the same time, accompanies MRS. BRUBAKER as she steps in front of a battern of microphones.

REPORTER #1

Good morning, Mrs. Brubaker.

REPORTER #2

How are you feeling?

REPORTER #3

Are you excited?

(Simultaneous)

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: (3)

MRS. BRUBAKER

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm sorry you have to wait outside the house all day like this. There's not that much I can say... except that I am very excited... and proud. Everything seems to be going smoothly. Doctor Kelloway called me to say that Bru and the crew are in excellent spirits.

DRINKWATER

How has all this disrupted your family routine?

CAULFIELD

(whispering)

Oh, terrific question.

DRINKWATER

(whispering)

Shove it.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Well... the children will continue to go to school. We will try as hard as we can to have a normal existence. Now if you will excuse me... I just came out to say hello... I have to get back inside. Thank you all for being so patient.

MRS. BRUBAKER turns and walks back inside her home... as the flashbulbs go off again... and a few more reporters vainly shout some additional questions.

54 INT. MISSION CONTROL, HOUSTON

All of the consoles are manned. On the TV screen at the end of the room is a test pattern.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. We are at T-plus twelve hours, thirty-one minutes into the flight... some nine hours since T-M-I. The Command Module is still linked with the Landing Module... on top of the S-4B third stage. At T-plus twelve hours, thirty-two minutes... Lieutenant Colonel Willis will activate the on board television camera... that should be in about thirty seconds.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

VOICE (CONT'D)

At T-plus twelve hours thirty-three minutes... Colonel Brubaker will detach the Command Module from the S-4B... turn it around so it faces the Landing Module ... and then perform a docking maneuver. After that... the Command and Landing Modules will jettison the S-4B. We're coming up on T-plus twelve hours thirty-two minutes.

The screen still displays a test pattern.

VOICE

T-plus twelve hours twenty-three minutes ... mark.

The test pattern disappears, and the screen is filled with what looks like snow.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Capricorn One... this is Houston.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, Houston.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

We have hash.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

We're turning the camera on now.

The snow on the screen is replaced by wavy lines, that gyrate up and down.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Houston... do you have anything now?

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, Capricorn One... we have transmission.

The wavy lines speed up, then a picture appears... it is fairly sharp, not razor sharp. We SEE BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER, strapped in their couches. Their helmets are off and they are wearing the soft material headgear that is worn during flight.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

We have a good picture now.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (2)

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, Houston.

WILLIS (V.O.)

How do we look, Houston?

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Pretty clear... Capricorn.

WILLIS (V.O.)

CSM on nominal azimuth.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Houston, we are ready for CSM-S-4B separation.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

We read you, Capricorn... you are go for separation.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger... I will fire separation thrusters.

Pause. BRUBAKER reaches two toggle switches over his head.

WALKER (V.O.)

Separation thrusters on.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

We have them now.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

We are reading.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

We show separation.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, Capricorn... you have separation.

WALKER (V.O.)

One hundred twenty feet.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

One hundred twenty feet.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Begin pitch program.

WILLIS (V.O.)

O.A.M.S. on.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (3)

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Houston... we show O.A.M.S. on.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, Capricorn... you have O.A.M.S.

WALKER (V.O.)

I see it.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Houston... we see the LM.

WILLIS (V.O.)

O.A.M.S. off.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

We show O.A.M.S. off.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Houston... we're going to turn the camera out the window for the docking.

WILLIS reaches toward the screen, his hands loom large in the f.g. The picture PANS PAST the three men in a hazy whirl, it scans the wall of gauges, and settles on the small window which frames the image. We can SEE the stars in the b.g., and in the distance we SEE the white third stage attached to the Landing Module.

The third stage in the distance slowly begins to draw closer to the camera. We are still looking at all this through the TV transmission.

WALKER (V.O.)

One hundred eighty feet.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

One hundred eighty feet.

The TV picture shows the third stage getting closer.

55 INT. COMMAND MODULE

We are now inside the module, we are not looking at it through the TV transmission. We SEE BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER, working at their couches, on the various controls and displays. We SEE the small portable TV camera pointed out the window.

WALKER

One hundred forty feet.

BRUBAKER

One hundred forty feet.

56 MISSION CONTROL

We SEE the third stage getting closer on the TV screen.

WALKER (V.O.)

One hundred feet.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

One hundred feet.

57 INT. COMMAND MODULE

WALKER

Eighty feet.

BRUBAKER

Eighty feet.

58 EXT. COMMAND MODULE

We SEE the Command Module in space, the stars in the b.g., and the third stage closing in. As the ANGLE WIDENS we also SEE cables supporting both the Command Module and the third stage. We then SEE stage hands on top of the wooden scaffolding, slowly moving the cables on hydraulic winches, bringing the Command Module and the third stage toward each other.

59 MISSION CONTROL

We are LOOKING at the TV screen. We SEE out the window of the Command Module as the yawning Landing Module attached to the third stage is now FULL FRAME.

WALKER (V.O.)

Forty feet.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Forty feet.

60 EXT. COMMAND MODULE

The stage hands are moving the cables closer together.

WALKER (V.O.)

Ten feet... nine...

61 INT. COMMAND MODULE

WALKER

Eight... seven...

## 62 MISSION CONTROL

The Landing Module is so close, we only SEE part of it, specifically its windows.

WALKER (V.O.)

Six... five...

## 63 INT. COMMAND MODULE

WALKER

Four... three...

## 64 EXT. COMMAND MODULE

The stage hands have brought the two mockups together.

WALKER (V.O.)

Two... one...

## 65 MISSION CONTROL

The Landing Module window is FULL SCREEN against the Command Module window.

WALKER (V.O.)

Zero.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

We have docking.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, Capricorn... we show docking.

## 66 INT. MISSION CONTROL

We are MOVING THROUGH endless rows of read-out monitors... a shirt-sleeved technician sitting in front of each one. The CAMERA COMES TO REST at the console of ELLIOT WHITTER... a young, slightly sallow engineer. He is studying the digits on his monitor. Like all of the other faces staring at monitors... his is deep in concentration. However, there is something a bit more in his expression. It is as if he does not completely understand the digits he is seeing.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

APS burn is nominal.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

We copy.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Capricorn, you are go for LM inspection.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Roger, Houston.

WALKER releases the restraining straps on his couch. He gently pushes down on the couch and he begins to float weightlessly up, slowly. WALKER keeps his arms outstretched, tenderly fending off the protruding surfaces of the Command Module as he floats upward.

67 INT. COMMAND MODULE

BRUBAKER

Houston... LM Depressurization is green here.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

We read green here.

WALKER

I see the hatch here. I am going to open it.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, you are go to open.

As the CAMERA GETS CLOSER AND CLOSER TO WALKER, as he floats farther toward the hatch, we SEE that he is in fact being supported by cables.

68 EXT. MODULES

The cables run through the Command Module, through the Landing Module, and up into the scaffolding, where two men are operating them on hydraulic winches.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

TDR is nine point three.

WILLIS (V.O.)

Roger, I have nine point three.

69 INT. COMMAND MODULE

WALKER, supported by the cables, is at the ceiling of the Command Module.

WALKER

I have the hatch, Houston.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, Capricorn.

69 CONTINUED:

WALKER

I am pulling the LM Depressurization rings.

70 INT. MISSION CONTROL

WHITTER punches different numbers on his keyboard... and watches the read-out on his screen. He rubs his cheek with his hand.

71 INT. COMMAND MODULE

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, Capricorn.

WALKER pulls two red levers.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

You are go to open LM hatch.

WALKER turns the hatch one complete clockwise rotation and it opens downward.

WALKER

LM hatch is open.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Looks good.

WALKER grabs hold of the hatch opening and gives a slight pull. He then proceeds to float up through the hatch.

72 EXT. MODULES

The two men on the scaffold are pulling in more cables, pulling WALKER into the Landing Module.

73 INT. LANDING MODULE

WALKER floats into the module. It is smaller than the Command Module, with room for two instead of three.

WALKER

I'm in the LM, Houston.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, Capricorn... how does it look?

WALKER

Everything looks nominal. CRL lights are green. O.A.M.S. panel is on.

WALKER proceeds to check all of the various controls and gauges in the Landing Module.

## 74 INT. MISSION CONTROL

WHITTER is leaning forward at the console... as if by staring with more concern at it... the numbers would change. He tries once again to re-type new data... again he looks at the read-out... and again he is troubled by what he sees.

On the television screen we SEE the Command Module with BRUBAKER and WILLIS, as there is no camera inside the Landing Module.

WILLIS is writing some of the information down on a small slate on his couch.

WILLIS

We read fifty-five minutes of RCS fuel.

WALKER

Fifty-five minutes here.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

We copy fifty-five minutes. That is five minutes better than nominal.

We SEE on the television screen, as WILLIS writes more information down on his slate, and lets go of his pencil. It floats stationary by his shoulder.

## 75 INT. COMMAND MODULE

We SEE a CLOSEUP of WILLIS, close enough to SEE the small filament that is hanging from the top of the Module. Hanging from the filament is the pencil, making it float.

WALKER

LM is functional.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, Capricorn... it looks good here. The Flight Director advises you are go for landing.

WALKER

I am coming back now... inspection complete.

HOUSTON

Inspection complete. You may return. Well done, Capricorn.

## 76 INT. MISSION CONTROL

The television screen goes black for a second... and then it returns to its hash.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

There is a relaxation in the room... as the television transmission is complete. The men at the consoles begin talking with each other. WHITTER still stares at his. He is not talking.

He gets up... resting his headset on the console. His walk is hesitant... down the row of other men. They don't look radically different from one another... except they are all animated. He is not.

He walks to an older, more authoritative-looking man who is wearing a suit, and bifocals.

WHITTER

Doctor Bergen... may I talk to you for a moment?

DR. BERGEN

Yes, Elliot... what is it?

WHITTER

Uh... there's something... uh... something...

DR. BERGEN

Are you feeling all right, Elliot?

WHITTER

Yes, sir. It's the read out.

DR. BERGEN

What about the read out?

WHITTER

Well... I can't figure something out.

DR. BERGEN

Perhaps I can be of some help.

WHITTER

Yes, sir. I was running a check on my own, on the transmission signals.

DOCTOR BERGEN's face tightens almost imperceptibly.

DR. BERGEN

On your own?... I like your dedication.

WHITTER

The read out... the television signals are coming in ahead of the spacecraft signals. It's like they're closer. Much closer.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: (2)

DR. BERGEN

That's not possible. There must be a malfunction in your equipment.

WHITTER

I don't think so, Doctor Bergen... you see, I double checked the console by...

DR. BERGEN

(interrupting)

Which console are you on?

WHITTER

Uh... thirty-six, sir.

DR. BERGEN

(smiling)

Well, that's the answer... we've been having some problems with the circuitry on thirty-six... we've had trouble with it before. I'll make sure it's repaired. Thank you for bringing the problem to my attention, Elliot. You show initiative... I like that.

DR. BERGEN turns and walks away. WHITTER stares after him... a look of disbelief on his face.

77 INT. DANNY'S

DANNY'S is one of those bars with brand new sawdust on the floor... and amber cut glass lamps hanging over a few pool tables... the ones with leather webbing in the pockets. The menu... which is basically over-priced hamburgers... is chalked in script on a blackboard. A lot of politicians hang out at DANNY'S... because the place is dark, and nobody can see them. A lot of reporters hang out at DANNY'S because they know a lot of politicians are there somewhere in the gloom.

CAULFIELD is playing pool by himself... his shirtsleeves rolled up over his elbows. A drink is resting precariously by the corner pocket. WHITTER enters the bar, like someone who has been there many times before. He looks around... sees CAULFIELD... and walks over to him.

CAULFIELD

I have decided... after careful deliberation and painful soul-searching... to give you a chance to win your fifty dollars back.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

WHITTER

I don't feel like playing.

CAULFIELD

Eight ball... five dollars a game.

WHITTER

I don't feel like it.

CAULFIELD

Ten dollars a game.

WHITTER

I'm serious.

CAULFIELD

So am I. I'll even let you break.  
How much more serious can a person be?

WHITTER

You're drunk.

CAULFIELD

I knew there was a reason I felt  
this good.

WHITTER

I need a drink.

CAULFIELD

Underneath your wash and wear shirt...  
you have some heart. It may be  
sanforized... but it's a heart.

WHITTER goes over to the bar... while CAULFIELD racks up  
the balls. WHITTER returns... with a double scotch on the  
rocks. He takes his jacket off. CAULFIELD places the cue  
ball... and starts to aim.

WHITTER

You said I break.

CAULFIELD

I must have been drunk.

WHITTER replaces CAULFIELD by the cue ball. He hits a  
terrible shot.

CAULFIELD

Hard day at the office, dear?

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

WHITTER

(gulping his drink)

I don't want to talk about it.

CAULFIELD begins to shoot. He is not bad. Not brilliant ... however, not bad. WHITTER drinks with a vengeance.

CAULFIELD

Did you break your slide rule?

CAULFIELD misses... and WHITTER goes to shoot. CAULFIELD is almost happy he missed... so he can pick up his drink.

WHITTER

I don't really know. I ran a check on my own of the transmission signals. The numbers came up screwy. I told Doctor Bergen about it... and it was like he was pissed at me for running a check. He said it must be the console malfunctioning.

WHITTER shoots unconsciously and misses. CAULFIELD regretfully parts with his drink and lines up his shot.

CAULFIELD

Big deal. Did you want a merit badge?

WHITTER

I guess so... He must know what he's doing. Those numbers couldn't have been right anyway.

(he takes a swallow  
of scotch)

No way.

CAULFIELD

If you know the numbers couldn't have been right... then why the hell are you so upset?

WHITTER

It was the way Bergen reacted. No double check or anything. Just looked at me like I was a kid, and gave me a cookie...

CAULFIELD

What were the humbers?

WHITTER

I have to admit... it is ridiculous.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (3)

WHITTER takes a shot and makes it.. He walks around the table.

CAULFIELD

Good... let's play pool.

WHITTER

Those signals couldn't have come from three hundred miles.

CAULFIELD

Which signals?

WHITTER

The television transmissions.

CAULFIELD looks up.

CAULFIELD

I think I just sobered up. Tell me what you just told me again.

BARTENDER

Hey, Caulfield! Telephone!

CAULFIELD looks at WHITTER for a moment. He walks over to the bar... where the BARTENDER, a very fat man with a beard, is holding a telephone receiver. CAULFIELD takes it... and nods his thanks.

CAULFIELD

Hello... yes, this is Caulfield.

(pause)

What?

(pause)

I'm sorry... you'll have to speak more clearly... we have a bad connection or something... I can't hear you.

(pause)

Who?

(pause)

I don't understand what you want.

(pause)

Look... if you call the assignment desk, they'll be glad to send someone to cover that for you.

(pause)

Yes... ask for the assignment desk... assignment... that's right.

(pause)

You're welcome.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (4)

CAULFIELD leans over the bar and hangs up the phone. He shrugs and walks back across the room to the pool table. WHITTER is gone. So is his jacket. CAULFIELD stands there.

78 INT. COMMAND MODULE

BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER are seated on their flight couches. They are not wearing their restraining harnesses. There is utter silence between them. It is long and pregnant.

WILLIS

Is anybody hungry?

WALKER

No.

BRUBAKER doesn't answer.

WILLIS

The marvels of science. Here we are... millions of miles from earth ... and we can still send out for pizza.

Nobody speaks.

The hatch opens up and a MAN in civilian clothing looks in.

MAN

Colonel Brubaker, would the crew like something to eat?

BRUBAKER doesn't answer.

WALKER

No, thank you.

MAN

Uh... Colonel... Doctor Kelloway wanted to know if all of you were comfortable... if your rooms were suitable. I told him that you... that all of you didn't want to stay in the rooms... that you... ah... haven't left the module.

(pause)

Doctor Kelloway thinks that perhaps you would all be more comfortable if you slept in your rooms.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

There is no answer.

MAN  
Colonel Brubaker?

BRUBAKER  
We prefer to stay here.

MAN  
Are you sure?

There is no answer.

MAN  
Well... if there's anything I can  
do for you... ah... excuse me.

The MAN leaves and closes the hatch. There is silence again.

WILLIS  
Now how do you suppose he did that?  
Open a hatch from the outside... in  
the middle of outer space.

WALKER  
I told you we weren't the only ones.

BRUBAKER is staring at his hands.

BRUBAKER  
I'm not going to do it.

WALKER  
Do what?

BRUBAKER  
Tomorrow... I'm not going to sit  
here and talk to my wife and tell  
her everything is going well.  
(pause)  
I'm not going to do it.

WILLIS takes a deep breath.

BRUBAKER  
I tried.  
(pause)  
Shit.

WILLIS  
That's the best thing anybody has  
said in the past three weeks.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (2)

WALKER

What's the best thing?

WILLIS

Shit.

Pause.

BRUBAKER

I got two little kids... with big bright eyes. I used to tell them that their daddy was going to make them proud of him, as he is of them. Then I'd tickle them and put them to sleep.

(pause)

Now I'm supposed to go home and kiss them and look at their eyes... and tell them I really did it.

(pause)

I don't know... that may be worse than going home and telling them I really didn't do it.

They sit in silence.

WILLIS

I wish I knew what's right. I really don't.

BRUBAKER

We've been sitting around for three weeks with our thumbs up our behinds. I don't want to do it any more.

WALKER

Okay... so we blow it all up tomorrow... on nationwide television ... what have we done?

WILLIS

We'll screw up a lot of people's dinners.

BRUBAKER

We've screwed ourselves already.

WALKER

What do we accomplish by screwing everybody else?

BRUBAKER

You sound like Kelloway.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (3)

WALKER

Thank you very much.

WILLIS

He's got a point there, you know. We went along with this because of you. Now you want to go out in some terrific blaze of glory... and we get pulverized in the process... along with our families. What about our families!

Nobody says anything for a moment.

BRUBAKER

I know... I know.

79 INT. CONTROL ROOM

The MAN whom we saw earlier in the spacecraft is sitting in the Television Control Room in the hangar. He is listening to the conversation between BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER.

WILLIS (V.O.)

I think I'm going to puke.

WALKER (V.O.)

Wonderful.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

I just don't think I can do it tomorrow.

The MAN picks up a telephone on the control room console.

MAN

Get me Doctor Kelloway.

WILLIS (V.O.)

Hey, how come all of a sudden we're defending the bad guys... and you're on the side of truth and justice.

MAN

Doctor Kelloway... we may have a problem with Brubaker tomorrow.

80 INT. COMMAND MODULE

BRUBAKER

I wish I had the words.

(CONTINUED)

WALKER

Kelloway's capable of anything.  
We've got families out there. We're  
in it.. and I think we're in it too  
deep to stop.

BRUBAKER

You spend your whole life trying to  
do something... and it comes to  
this. What a crock.

(pause)

No one of us will decide. It's got  
to be all of us.

INT. N.B.C. NEWSROOM

CAULFIELD is sitting at his cluttered metal desk. He is  
on the telephone... sipping a cup of black coffee.

CAULFIELD (873-3657)

Operator... I've been trying a  
number for over an hour... and it's  
busy. Could you please check to  
see if it's out of order?

(pause)

I know you don't do that...

(pause)

Yes... it's an emergency.

(pause)

Thank you.

(pause)

No... three-six-five-seven...

Mister Elliot Whitter.

(pause)

Out of order? Thank you very much,  
Operator.

CAULFIELD hangs up the telephone.

BLACK SCREEN

We SEE black, then in giant white block letters: "SPECIAL  
REPORT... SPECIAL REPORT... SPECIAL REPORT... SPECIAL  
REPORT" appears on the SCREEN. OVER this we HEAR:

VOICE

'Search For Tomorrow' will not be  
seen today... so that we may bring  
you the following special report  
from CBS News.

## 83. TELEVISION STUDIO - NEW YORK

ROY WEAVER and DAVE McDONNELL are sitting in their elaborate set in New York.

WEAVER

Good Afternoon. This is Roy Weaver, CBS News, New York. In just a few moments... we will be switching to Houston... for one of the most remarkable moments in our history. A human being will set foot on the planet Mars. He will be joined by another man... while the third orbits thirty-six miles above. Then their three wives will talk to them ... in what is undoubtedly the longest distance conversation ever held.

## 84 EXT. MANNED SPACE CENTER - HOUSTON - DAY

We SEE the black limousine pull up to the front of the building.

WEAVER

Twenty minutes ago... Mrs. Kay Brubaker... the wife of the flight commander Colonel Charles Brubaker ... Sharron Willis... the wife of the Command Module Pilot, Lieutenant Colonel Peter Willis... and Elizabeth Walker...

We SEE the three wives get out and enter the building.

WEAVER

... the wife of the Landing Module Pilot, Commander John Walker... arrived at the Manned Space Center in Houston. They are now inside Mission Control... waiting for the historic television transmission to begin.

## 85 INT. MISSION CONTROL

The three wives are seated at a special table, facing the giant television screen on the far wall. They are surrounded by the forest of consoles and men working on the various computerized read-outs. Standing behind them are three N.A.S.A. OFFICIALS. Seated behind them at a row of consoles is DR. KELLOWAY.

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

Next to him is the Capsule Communicator, who is the voice of Houston that we hear in all conversations with the spacecraft. Both KELLOWAY and the Capsule Communicator (referred to in these scenes as "Houston") are wearing headsets.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. We are at T-plus thirty-one days, four hours, fifteen minutes into the flight. The Flight Director reports that all is going well. The Landing Module has been successfully checked and the crew is in excellent health.

We can SEE that the three wives are tensing, as they are looking at the test pattern on the screen.

VOICE

In just a few moments... we should be receiving a television signal from the spacecraft. The wives of the flight crew arrived at Mission Control at two thirty-one Eastern Daylight Time. This is Capricorn Control.

The test pattern on the screen turns to hash. The faces of the three wives grow more expectant.

86 INT. MISSION CONTROL

The CAMERA TRAVELS DOWN the endless rows of consoles. We HEAR STATIC. On the television screen there is blackness.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... this is Houston.

We HEAR STATIC.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... this is Houston.

We HEAR STATIC.

HOUSTON

This is Houston... Capricorn One, do you read?

The static gives way to a GARBLED TRANSMISSION.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

HOUSTON

Capricorn One, this is Houston...  
we are not getting a good signal.

The GARBLED TRANSMISSION IS REPEATED.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One, could you change to  
your secondary frequency.

CAULFIELD is sitting in the press section... packed in with  
the other reporters. His eyes scan the rows of consoles.  
Console number 36... WHITTER's console is unmanned... and  
there is a cover over the screen. He starts to chew on a  
pentel pen.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston... we are on secondary  
frequency. Do you read?

HOUSTON

We read you five by five.

There is a noticeable growing of excitement at Mission  
Control.

BRUBAKER

CM-LM separation was nominal. I  
have LM in visual contact through  
port window. Delta-V burn time  
three point three seconds.

HOUSTON

Very good, Carpicorn. Capricorn  
CM, do you read us?

WILLIS

Roger, Houston.

HOUSTON

Can you see the LM?

WILLIS

Roger, I have him twenty-two  
degrees starboard.

HOUSTON

Can you see the undercarriage?

WILLIS

Roger, Houston... Undercarriage  
looks good.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: (2)

HOUSTON

Very good, CM. Capricorn One, you are Go for Descent Orbital Initiation. DOI time should be four minutes, thirty-five seconds.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston. We'll start DOI.

There is some MUFFLED APPLAUSE at Mission Control.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... here is your verbal update. Pitch angle seventy-three degrees... altitude seven point five miles... rate of vertical descent sixty-four point nine feet per second.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston... we copy.

HOUSTON

The Flight Director advises you are Go for Power Descent Initiation.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston. We have PDI.

Again, in the Mission Control room, there is the swelling of excitement. We SEE the faces of the hundreds of technicians, all showing the strain, all showing the anticipation. We MOVE CLOSER to ONE of the TECHNICIANS. He is studying his console. The expression on his face is different than almost everyone else's. His brow is furrowed. He is studying the data before him. Something appears to be wrong. Nothing like an emergency... just something that should not be.

87 INT. RAYBURN OFFICE BUILDING - WASHINGTON

A fire is glowing in the Colonial office of CONGRESSMAN PEAKER. The walls are a mosaic of black and white framed photographs of PEAKER and at least four Presidents, three Chief Justices, and most of the prominent Astronauts. He is watching the television coverage of the landing, while sipping coffee from white and gold bone china. There are five other men in his office, all watching. Two of them are PEAKER's aides, three other are Congressmen. PEAKER is beaming with pride.

PEAKER

You wait.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

PEAKER (CONT'D)

Five minutes after the landing...  
that asshole Price is going to  
call and tell me how pleased the  
President is.

88 INT. MISSION CONTROL

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... your verbal update  
is: altitude two point two miles...  
pitch angle twenty degrees... vertical  
descent forty-four point six feet per  
second. One minute forty seconds to  
landing.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston... we copy.

89 INT. BAR - DAY

A neighborhood bar, one of those long, dark rectangles  
with a long, polished wooden bar glowing with neon beer  
brand name signs, and model airplanes hanging from the  
ceiling. All of the patrons have put down their drinks  
and they are watching the television set.

90 INT. OFFICE - DAY

A large, stark room, filled with metal desks. Secretaries  
and clerks have turned off their electric typewriters.  
They are all watching a portable television set that is  
on a metal stand in the front of the room.

91 EXT. STREET - DAY

Taxi cabs are pulled over to the side of the street, their  
doors open, and crowds of people are gathered around,  
listening to the RADIO.

92 INT. BRUBAKER HOME - DAY

We are CLOSER on the faces of the three wives.

93 INT. MISSION CONTROL

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... your final verbal  
update: You have passed Low Gate.  
Altitude nine hundred fifty feet.  
Pitch angle twelve degrees. Rate  
of vertical descent, nine point two  
feet per second. Thirty seconds to  
landing. Looking good.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

The TECHNICIAN in Mission Control is still puzzled by the data on his console.

94 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO

WEAVER and McDONNELL are watching the monitors. They are as intense as any spectators.

McDONNELL  
(to himself)  
Come on, Bru... Come on...

95 INT. RAYBURN BUILDING, WASHINGTON - DAY

CONGRESSMAN PEAKER is leaning forward on his oak desk.

96 INT. BAR

The patrons are leaning forward on the bar.

97 INT. MISSION CONTROL

DR. KELLOWAY is taut, as he absent-mindedly bites on his fingernail.

HOUSTON  
Fifteen seconds...

BRUBAKER  
Fifteen seconds.

The television screen is blank. All we can SEE is the huge digital clock, ticking off the seconds.

HOUSTON  
Ten seconds...

BRUBAKER  
Ten seconds.

There is silence. Everybody is holding their breath. No one in Mission Control moves a muscle. We HEAR nothing except the normal STATIC coming over the speakers. It seems like much more than ten seconds.

BRUBAKER  
Houston... this is Capricorn One.  
We have landed.

There is absolute pandemonium. It is as if all of the tensions of the past five years have been released in one second. Men who have been trained to be calm are cheering.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

DR. KELLOWAY is observing the scene. He is showing no outer signs of emotion, unless you look closely at his eyes.

The three wives explode; they hug each other, and then they burst into tears.

98 INT. BAR

The patrons all slap each other on their respective backs.

99 EXT. STREET - DAY

The clusters of people around the various car radios congratulate each other. Cars on the street begin BLARING their HORNS.

100 INT. OFFICE - DAY

The secretaries and clerks are embracing each other.

101 INT. RAYBURN BUILDING, WASHINGTON - DAY

CONGRESSMAN PEAKER sits beaming at his desk. The INTERCOM BUZZES. He pushes a button.

PEAKER

Yes?

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Vice President Price on the line.

All of the other men in the room look at PEAKER, who looks like he just swallowed a canary. PEAKER picks up the telephone.

PEAKER

Hello?... Hello, Mr. Vice President.  
(pause)

Yes... it's wonderful, isn't it... a proud moment for all Americans.

(pause)

You can tell the President that's very gracious of him. I appreciate it... I really do.

(pause)

I thank you. My best to your lovely wife. Yes... goodbye.

PEAKER hangs up the telephone.

PEAKER

Asshole.

## 102 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO, NEW YORK

ROY WEAVER and DAVE McDONNELL are studying a model of the Landing Module. Behind them, the hundreds of lights are flashing, and the digital clocks are ticking off various and sundry seconds.

WEAVER

The camera is near the bottom of the ladder... here.

McDONNELL

No... actually that's the camera housing. The camera is on the other side of the ladder. It is activated from inside the LM. Walker will turn it on when Brubaker opens the hatch.

WEAVER

When Brubaker and Walker are on the Martian surface... the camera will be able to track them... after Walker activated the remote control.

## 103 MISSION CONTROL

The television screen has gone from black... to hash.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. The Flight Director advises that the LM crew has been given a 'Go' for the first EVA on the Martian surface. This is Capricorn Control.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... this is Houston.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston. I have the hatch...

WALKER

Camera activated.

The hash on the screen slowly gives way to a picture. All the people in Mission Control stare at the giant screen in awe. There before them, a little blurry, is the surface of the planet Mars. In the f.g. is the spindly Landing Module. Slowly the figure of BRUBAKER, fully suited and helmeted, gently lowers his bulk out of the hatch and down the ladder. He stops at the bottom step. Not a word is spoken.

BRUBAKER

I am on the bottom step. Do you have a picture, Houston?

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

HOUSTON

We do, Capricorn... and it's beautiful.

104 INT. CONTROL ROOM, HANGAR

The MAN we have seen before in the Control Room is talking to his Director and Technical Director, who are at the switching panel. On the monitors, we SEE the studio camera picture of the fake Martian surface and BRUBAKER on the Landing Module, the picture that they are feeding back to Houston.

MAN

Ready slow-motion... slow motion.

105 INT. MISSION CONTROL

Everyone is watching the screen, except for that one TECHNICIAN who is still trying to work out the problem. BRUBAKER is poised at the bottom step.

BRUBAKER

I take this step in the journey of peace for all mankind.

106 INT. CONTROL ROOM, HANGAR - DAY

MAN

Take slow motion.

On the monitors, we SEE BRUBAKER hop down to the surface rather quickly.

107 INT. MISSION CONTROL

On the screen, BRUBAKER floats down to the surface in SLOW MOTION. Once again, there is APPLAUSE.

BRUBAKER

Houston... I'm on the surface.

HOUSTON

Roger, Capricorn... we copy.  
Looking just fine.

108 HANGAR STAGE

We SEE WALKER climbing out of the LM mock-up and descend the ladder at normal speed. He hops to the surface and joins BRUBAKER.

109 MISSION CONTROL

We SEE the same maneuver on the television screen, except in SLOW MOTION, giving the appearance of weightlessness. The three wives are sipping coffee.

110 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

There is a huge crowd of pedestrians gathered around an appliance store, watching television.

111 INT. BAR - NIGHT

It is the same bar as before, with different patrons, except for ONE MAN, who is now a bit drunk, watching television.

112 INT. MISSION CONTROL

That one TECHNICIAN is punching various keys in the computer and not getting the answers he wants. He takes off his headset and walks down an aisle. He goes over to DR. KELLOWAY, who is watching the screen.

TECHNICIAN

Dr. Kelloway... can I see you for a moment?

KELLOWAY

Certainly, Bill... what seems to be the problem?

TECHNICIAN

Well, sir... there's something I can't figure out.

KELLOWAY

What's that?

TECHNICIAN

I don't really know for sure. It's something in the read-out. I would like you to take a look at it.

KELLOWAY

What console are you on?

TECHNICIAN

Telemetry, sir. Forty-six.

KELLOWAY

Oh... ah... is this your first day on the console?

TECHNICIAN

Yes, sir.

KELLOWAY

We've been having trouble with it all week.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

KELLOWAY (CONT'D)

I'll have it shut off for a few hours  
... and we'll have it serviced. Thank  
you for bringing the matter to my  
attention.

TECHNICIAN

You're welcome, sir.

On the screen, we SEE BRUBAKER and WILLIS bouncing slowly  
across the Martian surface. BRUBAKER reveals an American  
flag. He takes the small flagpole and sticks it firmly in  
the ground.

BRUBAKER

We do not claim this planet in the  
name of America. We claim it in the  
name of all the people of the planet  
Earth. We hope that our visit will  
increase the understanding of the  
human race.

There is more applause.

HOUSTON

Capricorn... There are three anxious  
ladies here who would like to talk to  
you.

WALKER

We'd like to talk to them.

HOUSTON

Okay... go ahead... only don't make  
it too long... remember this is long  
distance.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston.

ELIZABETH WALKER stares at the screen.

MRS. WALKER

Jack... Jack... it's Betty.

WALKER

Hello there, Betty.

MRS. WALKER

You look fine.

CUT TO:

113 INT. FAKE SET

WALKER

Thank you. We can't see you, you know.  
All I can tell you is you sound terrific.

MRS. WALKER (V.O.)

I miss you, Jack. So do the children.

WALKER

How are the kids?

MRS. WALKER (V.O.)

They're fine. They miss you.

WALKER

I miss them. More than any of you  
know.

WALKER is touched by the exchange. BRUBAKER is uncomfortable.

114 INT. COMMAND MODULE

MRS. WILLIS (V.O.)

Peter... it's Sharron.

WILLIS

I told you never to call me here.

MRS. WILLIS (V.O.)

Are you feeling well?

WILLIS

I'm feeling very well. How's Sandy?

115 INT. MISSION CONTROL

MRS. WILLIS is talking to the television screen.

MRS. WILLIS

She just got the part of Wendy in her  
school's play. They're doing 'Peter  
Pan.'

WILLIS

That's terrific.

MRS. WILLIS

You sound so close. It's hard to  
believe you're really that far away  
in space.

WILLIS

It's hard for me to believe it, too.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Bru?

116 INT. FAKE SET

Small muscles in BRUBAKER's cheek twitch.

BRUBAKER

Hello, Kay.

MRS. BRUBAKER (V.O.)

We're all so proud of you.

BRUBAKER winces.

MRS. BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Bru? Can you hear me?

BRUBAKER

Yes.

WILLIS

(interrupting)

Hey, Sharron... who's going to play  
Captain Hook?

MRS. WILLIS (V.O.)

Andy Frawly.

117 INT. CONTROL ROOM, HANGAR

This is the control room on the sound stage. The MAN who was there during the last transmission is there again. He is talking into a red telephone.

MAN

I'm not sure of Brubaker.

118 INT. MISSION CONTROL

DR. KELLOWAY is listening on his headset, while he watches the screen.

KELLOWAY

Keep watching.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Bru?

BRUBAKER

Yes.

MRS. BRUBAKER

I love you.

BRUBAKER

I love you.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

MRS. WALKER

Jack... your parents called. They want you to know they are thinking of you all the time.

WALKER

Thank you.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Bru... I have a surprise for you.

BRUBAKER

What?

MRS. BRUBAKER

I said I have a surprise for you.

BRUBAKER

What is it?

MRS. BRUBAKER

Charles wrote a composition in school. It won a prize. I would like to read it to you.

119 INT. FAKE SET

BRUBAKER closes his eyes.

MRS. BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Bru... can you hear me?

BRUBAKER

Yes... please read it to me.

120 INT. CONTROL ROOM

MAN

It doesn't look good.

121 MISSION CONTROL

KELLOWAY

Be prepared to cut off the transmission. Not until I tell you.

MRS. BRUBAKER

'My Father... by Charles Brubaker, Junior.'

(pause)

'My father is far away from me now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

MRS. BRUBAKER (CONT'D)

'He is flying to Mars. I miss him very much. I always miss him when he goes away.'

122 INT. FAKE SET

Every word is registering on BRUBAKER's face, like tiny darts piercing his skin. He is in obvious pain.

MRS. BRUBAKER (V.O.)

'I'm not sad though. I used to be sad when he went away. One day he told me something. He said that people can't live only for themselves. He said that he was trying to do something that would be good for everybody. I know that is what he is doing now. He is doing something for everybody... to give them a better life. That means he is doing something for me, too. So even though he is far away... he is thinking about me... and I am with him. That is why I am not sad. That is why I am so proud of my dad... and I love him so much.'

There is stone silence. BRUBAKER's eyes are welling with tears. WILLIS and WALKER cannot say a word.

123 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The people are gathered around the appliance store.

124 INT. FAKE SET

BRUBAKER gathers his breath. He looks at his hands.

BRUBAKER

Kay... I... I want...

125 INT. CONTROL ROOM

The MAN tenses forward. He puts his hand on a switch on the control panel. It is marked: "INTERRUPT."

126 INT. MISSION CONTROL

KELLOWAY

Not until I tell you.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Bru? What is it?

127 INT. FAKE SET

BRUBAKER

There's something I want to say. I know this hasn't been easy for you and the kids.

Pause.

128 INT. CONTROL ROOM

The MAN is poised over the button.

129 INT. MISSION CONTROL

KELLOWAY is leaning forward, watching the screen.

130 INT. COMMAND MODULE

WILLIS and WALKER are looking at BRUBAKER. He looks around at both of them, staring at their faces. He turns around to face the camera.

BRUBAKER

I want you to know... I love you. I ... Thank Charles for the composition for me... please. Tell him when I get back, I'll take him to Yosemite again ... like last summer.

WILLIS and WALKER look at BRUBAKER.

131 INT. MISSION CONTROL

KELLOWAY's face relaxes. CAULFIELD is watching MRS. BRUBAKER who appears momentarily confused, all of a sudden. CAULFIELD sees this.

132 INT. CONTROL ROOM

The MAN takes his hand off the switch.

MRS. BRUBAKER

I... I will, Bru. I love you, too.

HOUSTON

Time's up, gentlemen.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston.

HOUSTON

The next time we'll be seeing you... you'll be on the way home.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED:

BRUBAKER

Roger.

HOUSTON

Well done, Capricorn.

133 INT. BAR - NIGHT

The patrons, including the rather DRUNK MAN, are watching.

DRUNK

I think the whole thing is a goddamn  
fake.

134 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

CAULFIELD drives up in his car... which is a four-year-old Mustang. The apartment building is part of a complex of amorphous three-story structures. Many of the people who work at the Manned Spacecraft Center live in the complex. It has tennis courts, a small grocery store... and a swimming pool.

CAULFIELD gets out of his car... and walks to one of the buildings.

135 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

CAULFIELD walks up a flight of synthetic carpeted stairs... down a hallway... and stops in front of an apartment. CAULFIELD rings the doorbell.

After a pause... the door opens and a middle-aged WOMAN peers out... wearing rubber dishwashing gloves.

WOMAN

Yes.

CAULFIELD

Is Whitter in? Tell him it's Caulfield.

WOMAN

Who?

CAULFIELD

Whitter... Elliot Whitter.

WOMAN

There's nobody here by that name...  
you must have the wrong apartment.

CAULFIELD steps back and looks at the number over the door.

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED:

CAULFIELD

This is 2-A... isn't it?

WOMAN

It certainly is. What building are you looking for? They all kind of look alike, you know.

CAULFIELD

Yes... they do. This is 1284 Claridge ... isn't it?

WOMAN

Yes... it is.

CAULFIELD

Elliot Whitter lives at 1284 Claridge ... apartment 2-A.

WOMAN

Is this some kind of joke?

CAULFIELD

Look... I've been here a million times ... Elliot's a friend of mine. He lives in this apartment.

WOMAN

Young man... I have an oven to clean. My oven. It is in my kitchen... which is in my apartment. I have no more time for this.

She begins to close the door. CAULFIELD wedges his foot in the door.

CAULFIELD

Wait! Wait a minute... Look... I'm not a crazy person... and I'm not a mugger. I'm looking for my friend... and he lives here... I swear it.

WOMAN

Get your foot out of the doorway... or I'll call the police. This is not funny anymore.

CAULFIELD

I can prove I've been in this apartment before. I'll describe it for you. It has two rooms... a living room... with a dining area... and a bedroom.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED: (2)

CAULFIELD (CONT'D)

They are white. The furniture is modern. There is a brown leather couch and a glass coffee table. And beige carpeting... or off-white... or something like that.

The WOMAN looks at him for a long suspicious moment... and then steps back... opening the door. CAULFIELD enters the apartment.

136 INT. APARTMENT - DAY

CAULFIELD looks around him and stands rock still. There is no carpeting... the floors are a dark parquet. The walls are a chocolate brown. The furniture is feminine and anything but modern. The coffee table is pine. The couch is a print... not leather. On the coffee table are magazines. CAULFIELD numbly walks over and picks some of them up. They have the little subscription tags on them... which read:

MRS. ALVA LEACOCK  
1284 CLARIDGE  
APT. 2-A  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 80044

The dates on the magazines go back more than a year. The WOMAN glares at CAULFIELD. He blinks back at her. He stares at the magazines... then back at her.

137 EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

CAULFIELD gets into his Mustang... and starts the engine. He looks back at the apartment building... which sits benignly on its manicured lawn. He turns away... and drives off.

138 HIGHWAY - DAY

The dowdy little Mustang is shimmering on the baked asphalt of highway... stretching in an endless straight line toward downtown Houston. CAULFIELD lights a cigarette... and turns on the RADIO. We SEE the speedometer... it reads 55 miles per hour. The traffic is fairly light. The heat from the highway in the Houston afternoon rises in pale yellow waves.

The speedometer is slowly climbing... it now reads 65 miles per hour. CAULFIELD is passing other cars now. He realizes his speed... and looks down at the speedometer. It now reads 70 miles per hour. He takes his foot off the gas pedal. The car does not slow down. The speedometer reads 75 miles per hour. CAULFIELD puts his foot on the brake. The car does not slow down. CAULFIELD slams the brake to the floor. The speedometer reads 80 miles per hour. CAULFIELD frantically stomps on the brake. The speedometer reads 85 miles per hour.

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED:

The Mustang is beginning to careen and shake... as CAULFIELD desperately swerves to avoid the other cars on the highway, cars he is passing as if they are standing still. The tires are smoking... and the wheels leave the road two at a time... every time CAULFIELD goes into a skidding turn. He pulls on the emergency brake. There is no effect.

CAULFIELD slams the gear shift lever into "low." The speedometer reads 90 miles per hour. CAULFIELD pushes the lever into neutral. There is no effect. He puts it in park... in reverse... back in neutral... again... there is no effect. The speedometer reads 95 miles per hour.

CAULFIELD frantically tries to turn the ignition off. The key won't move. He pounds on the ignition column. He tries to turn the key again. It won't move. The speedometer reads 100 miles per hour. The car is shaking like it is going to fall apart.

The Mustang is now going almost fifty miles per hour faster than the other cars on the highway... smoke pouring up from the tires. The car sideswipes another car and starts to fish-tail. The speedometer reads 105 miles per hour.

There are two cars... driving side by side... occupying both lanes ahead of CAULFIELD. CAULFIELD sees them... and starts blaring the horn... first in short bursts... and then he just keeps his hand on it... in one long, panicked wail. The speedometer reads 110 miles per hour.

The drivers of the two cars ahead can't believe what they see in their rear-view mirrors. Neither of them knows exactly what to do... and there is no place for them to go. One slows down... then the other... and then the first car speeds up, leaving barely enough room for CAULFIELD to pass through.

CAULFIELD sees the narrow opening. The Mustang skids... bounces off the first car... passes it at an angle... and then caroms off the front of the second car. Both of the passed cars begin to spin and then slide off the road. CAULFIELD'S car, with the speedometer now reading 155 miles per hour, turns sideways... and starts to skid.

CAULFIELD sees that the highway is running along the murky bayous. He jerks the wheel around... pointing the car toward the water bank. The momentum of the car propels it along the highway, perpendicular to the road. The balding tires scream up rubbery smoke... as they try to gain some traction on the hot asphalt.

Finally they begin to hold... and the Mustang heaves diagonally across the safety island, cutting a dark brown swath in the grass.

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED: (2)

It roars across the two oncoming lanes on the other side, narrowly missing an oncoming car. The oncoming car veers into a skid... and spins into the safety island grass. CAULFIELD'S car continues across... past the oncoming lanes... digs into the grass on the bank... and vaults into the air.

The rusted underbelly of the Mustang shows itself, as the car appears to yaw in slow motion. It flies ten feet in the air ... noses down... and plunges into the brown water of the bayou. The splash is thunderous, as beige water spouts upward in a fountain. The Mustang is engulfed in bubbles. The engine HISSES steam as the water drowns it. The water pours through the open windows... filling the passenger compartment and covering CAULFIELD, who is slumped dazed in the seat. The car quickly sinks.

The car goes down through the translucent muddy water... and finally settles on the bottom. CAULFIELD is jolted awake by the water. He tries to open the door and has difficulty. He didn't have time to take a breath before the car went down, so he is running out of air. He is fighting to keep his mouth closed... his eyes bulging with pain. He pulls himself through the open passenger window. His trouser leg gets caught on the door handle. He desperately kicks out, trying to free himself. He is almost losing consciousness because he is out of air. His trouser leg rips, freeing his leg. He pushes off with all his waning strength... and he floats up to the surface.

The first rush of air into his lungs is spiced with muddy water... and he gags as he swims to the bank. He almost doesn't have the strength left to make it; however, his hands grab onto the slimy bank. CAULFIELD rests his head against the bank, heaving and coughing. He looks back at the bayou. It is calm... giving no hint that it has swallowed a car just moments before. Some of the cars on the highway have come to a stop. People are running to the bank to see if they can be any help. CAULFIELD still can't believe he is still alive, much less believe what has happened. He lies there... his head against the bank, trying to catch his breath... his eyes closed.

139 EXT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER DECK - DAY

The U.S.S. ORISKANY is lumbering through the gentle roll of the Pacific Ocean... the mid-morning sun glinting off its freshly washed decks. The crew is standing under the bright triangular flags billowing in the wind. The crew is dressed in whites, instead of the normal work denims.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn  
Control.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED:

## VOICE (CONT'D)

We are fifty-nine days, twenty-three hours, twelve minutes into the flight. All systems are nominal. The prime recovery ship, U.S.S. Oriskany, is in position. The flight Director advises that the prime recovery helicopter is tail number 2665... and the secondary recovery helicopter is tail number 2664. An on-target landing should result in a recovery time of eighteen minutes from splashdown... to the opening of the hatch. After the crew delivers its speech on the Oriskany deck and is welcomed aboard by Captain Earl Moorer... they will be taken below decks for a medical de-briefing. Tonight... at 0800 hours Pacific Daylight time... the crew will attend a victory banquet, topped by a special dessert ... a forty-foot red cake... depicting the Martian surface. We are twenty-three minutes twelve seconds from the beginning of re-entry phase. This is Capricorn Control.

140 INT. MISSION CONTROL

HOUSTON

Capricorn One, this is Houston.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston.

HOUSTON

You are go for CSM-CM separation.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston.

141 INT. HANGAR STUDIO CONTROL ROOM

A reel of audio tape is slowly turning in the control panel.

HOUSTON

You are seventeen minutes, forty-four seconds from Entry Interface.

BRUBAKER

We copy.

## 142 INT. HANGAR STUDIO

BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER are following two MEN in civilian suits across the Martian surface.

HOUSTON

We are reading ECS of fourteen twenty-four.

BRUBAKER

Fourteen twenty-four ECS.

HOUSTON

Guidance should be set for Spica and Numa.

WILLIS

Guidance on Spica and Numa.

BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER follow the two men to a door.

## 143 EXT. HANGAR - DAY

The five men walk into the brilliant desert sunlight. A matter of feet from the camouflaged hangar is a Falcon Jet, with its door open and its ENGINES WHINING.

HOUSTON

ISR on.

WILLIS

ISR on.

HOUSTON

Give us your ISR reading.

WILLIS

ISR on two-eight-seven-twenty, Greenwich Eastern.

HOUSTON

Two-eight-seven-twenty GET. We copy.

The five men walk up the stairs, enter the plane; the stairs swing up, the door closes and the plane taxis away.

HOUSTON

We are thirty seconds from separation.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston... thirty seconds.

HOUSTON

All lights are green.

BRUBAKER

Roger, all green.

144 EXT. U.S.S. ORISKANY - DAY

The rotary blades of the helicopters are turning and both aircraft are beginning to leave the deck.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. The prime recovery helicopter and the backup aircraft are leaving the Oriskany now. They will take up positions ten miles port and starboard of the ship... and continue in a slow orbit. Aboard the prime recovery helicopter is Doctor Burroughs. The red carpet is being brought up from the hangar bay at this moment. This is Capricorn Control.

145 INT. FALCON JET - DAY

BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER are sitting together in the airplane. The two MEN in civilian clothes are sitting behind them.

HOUSTON

Separation thruster checklist.

WILLIS (V.O.)

Separation thruster checklist.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Outboard thrusters.

WILLIS (V.O.)

Outboard thrusters armed.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Inboard thrusters.

WILLIS (V.O.)

Inboard thrusters armed.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Separation thrusters armed.

HOUSTON

Roger, Capricorn, we copy.

One of the civilian MEN leans forward in his seat to be closer to BRUBAKER.

MAN

We have a chopper waiting on the island to take you to the spacecraft when it splashes down.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

MAN (CONT'D)

It will take the Oriskany more than an hour and a half to reach you... so there won't be any rush.

BRUBAKER

I know.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

Thrusters, guidance, navigation check list complete.

HOUSTON

Roger, Capricorn. You are GO for CSM-CM separation.

146 INT. MISSION CONTROL

DR. KELLOWAY is nervously chewing on a pencil. The rows of consoles are being studied by their respective technicians. The tracking console shows a lighted blip, revealing the position of the spacecraft. KELLOWAY has left his normal observation position, and is walking down the aisles of consoles. He goes to the tracking console. The TECHNICIAN who is manning it turns to him.

KELLOWAY

How does it look?

TECHNICIAN

I'll be sure in a moment.

He punches a few keys. We SEE the blip in the middle of the read-out screen.

TECHNICIAN

They may be a little off target.

KELLOWAY

How far?

TECHNICIAN

Two-fifty, three hundred miles.

KELLOWAY

Keep me posted.

TECHNICIAN

Yes, sir.

147 EXT. U.S.S. ORISKANY - DAY

White-suited sailors are rolling out the red carpet on the flight deck. A microphone is also being set up.

148 INT. BRUBAKER HOME - DAY

Once again, the three wives are gathered in the BRUBAKER paneled den, watching the television set.

149 INT. FALCON JET - DAY

BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER are showing the strain of their two-month ordeal. None of them are even looking out the airplane window. They are just staring straight ahead.

150 INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

HOUSTON

Capricorn... we are ten seconds from interphase.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston.

HOUSTON

Eight... seven... six... five... four...

We SEE the blip on the tracking console.

HOUSTON

... three... two... one... interphase.

BRUBAKER

Roger, Houston... we have interphase.

We SEE another console... marked "HEAT SHIELD." The light is green.

151 INT. U.S.S. ORISKANY - DAY

We are LOOKING IN the galley. The ship's COOK is finishing the red icing on the forty-foot cake, depicting the Martian surface.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. The flight Director advises that we have a successful interphase. This is Capricorn Control.

152 INT. FALCON JET - DAY

153 INT. BRUBAKER HOME - DAY

154 - INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

The lighted blip on the tracking console is pulsating in the middle of the read-out screen.

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

The heat shield console has a green light. Suddenly the green light flickers. An amber light glows for a second. Then a red light starts to flash, along with a warning BUZZER. It is as if there is no other sound in all of Mission Control except for the buzzer on the console and no other light in the room except for the red flashing light.

DR. KELLOWAY whirls around. A number of other heads turn around.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... this is Houston.

We HEAR STATIC coming over the speakers, and we HEAR the BUZZER on the console.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... this is Houston.

STATIC.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... we have a red on the heat shield. Do you copy?

The blip on the tracking screen is still glowing.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... this is Houston.  
We show red... do you copy?

The blip on the tracking screen suddenly disappears.

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)

Dr. Kelloway.

The STATIC on the speakers changes to a HUM.

Everyone in Mission Control looks up at the speakers. HEAR the HUM and the WARNING BUZZ.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... this is Houston.

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)

Dr. Kelloway.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One... do you read?

The tracking screen is blank.

154 CONTINUED: (2)

KELLOWAY rushes back to his normal desk. He picks up his headset, and begins to give some rapid instructions that we cannot hear.

HOUSTON

Capricorn One...

155 EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

We SEE the Falcon Jet sharply bank, then turn 180 degrees. It roars back in the direction it was coming from.

VOICE

This is Paul Cunningham... Capricorn Control. We are advised that there appears to be a malfunction. We do not know what the specific problem is. We will keep you advised. This is Capricorn Control.

The Falcon Jet is now a speck on the horizon, heading back toward the desert.

156 INT. BRUBAKER HOME - DAY

The three wives are nothing less than horror-struck, and on the verge of hysteria, as they watch the television. The little BRUBAKER boy is wide-eyed.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Charles... go inside.

CHARLES

Mom... what's...

MRS. BRUBAKER

Go inside, Charles.

CHARLES

Mom...

MRS. BRUBAKER

(screaming)

Charles! Go inside! Now!

157 INT. RAYBURN BUILDING - WASHINGTON - DAY

CONGRESSMAN PEAKER sits at his desk, staring at the television.

158 EXT. DESERT - DAY

The Falcon Jet extends its landing gear and touches down on the runway. It quickly taxis back to the camouflaged hangar, the door opening even before it comes to a stop.

159 INT. N.A.S.A. AUDITORIUM - HOUSTON

The auditorium is a large, modern affair where all of the mass news conferences are held. It is the one where the three astronauts were to be interviewed as soon as they got back to Houston. Now the room is jammed with reporters. A large table is at the front with glasses of water, pads of paper and sharpened pencils. All the reporters are seated. In the back of the auditorium, all of the networks have their film and tape cameras. On the table, in the center, is a cluster of microphones. Sitting on the floor, between the table and the first row of seats, are the still men.

The door opens and DR. KELLOWAY walks in, accompanied by other N.A.S.A. officials. His entrance is the signal for all of the still men to spring up and start their shower of flash bulbs popping. All of the film and tape cameras begin to turn. DR. KELLOWAY sits behind the table, directly behind the group of microphones. The other N.A.S.A. officials take the other chairs behind the table. The commotion in the room dies down to an occasional cough. KELLOWAY pauses. It is difficult for him to speak. When he does, it is in carefully measured tones.

KELLOWAY

Ah... ladies and gentlemen... I have a brief statement... then I'll answer your questions.

There is quiet, as KELLOWAY looks at a piece of paper he has prepared.

KELLOWAY

At T-plus sixty days... one hour eleven minutes in the flight of Capricorn One ... which is two minutes, eighteen seconds after interface... the heat shield warning light on the Mission Control monitoring panel turned red. We tried to establish radio contact with the spacecraft... and we were unsuccessful. Fourteen seconds later ... two minutes, thirty-two seconds after interface... the tracking monitor lost its signal. Contact was never re-established... and all of the other monitoring data confirmed the loss of the spacecraft.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

159 CONTINUED:

KELLOWAY (CONT'D)

The heat shield evidently separated from the Command Module... and as you know... the heat shield is the only protection the Module has against the heat buildup on re-entering the Earth's atmosphere. The spacecraft disintegrated within twelve seconds after the loss of the heat shield.

(pause)

We do not know the cause of the heat shield failure. This has never happened before. I cannot adequately describe how we feel. These men were an integral part of a family here in the program. I do not have to tell any of you what kind of personal qualities they possessed.

(pause)

This was the only malfunction that occurred in the two months of the flight. We don't know why.

(pause)

That is the end of my statement.

The reporters all begin raising their hands and shouting questions at the same time.

160 INT. HANGAR ROOM - DAY

This is the original room where the three astronauts were taken in the beginning, the room where DR. KELLOWAY came in and talked with them. BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER are once again in the room, alone and pacing.

BRUBAKER

It must have been re-entry. Something went wrong with re-entry.

WALKER

How come they're telling us nothing?

BRUBAKER

They don't want us to know what went wrong.

WALKER

What went wrong?

BRUBAKER

Where the hell is Kelloway?

WILLIS

Where the hell are we?

(CONTINUED)

160 CONTINUED:

BRUBAKER paces around the room some more. He turns back to the other two men.

BRUBAKER

We're dead.

WALKER

What?

BRUBAKER

We're dead.

WILLIS

Shit... I was such a terrific guy.

BRUBAKER

Whatever happened during re-entry... could only be one of a couple of possibilities. Either trajectory was wrong... and it landed who knows where... hundreds maybe thousands of miles from target... or it never landed at all. If it landed off target... why hasn't anybody said anything to us? If it never landed... either the heat shield separated... or the chutes never opened. Either way... we are dead. Right now... Kelloway is making a speech about what brave, wonderful guys we were.

161 INT. N.A.S.A. AUDITORIUM

KELLOWAY

They knew that something like this could happen. It is a possibility that everyone in the program has always had to live with. No one likes to admit it... however, it's always there.

REPORTER

Have you spoken to the families?

KELLOWAY

Yes.

162 INT. HANGAR ROOM - DAY

BRUBAKER

Anybody ever sees us again... and all those dominoes begin to fall. It's as simple as that. They can't afford to have us around.

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED:

WALKER

Well... we can't afford to stay around.

163 INT. N.A.S.A. AUDITORIUM

REPORTER

When was the last time the heat shield was checked out?

KELLOWAY

All during the re-entry phase there were a series of status checks. All of them gave us every indication that the shield was in place. The system was checked out by the flight crew and by Mission Control.

164 INT. HANGAR ROOM - DAY

BRUBAKER

Somehow or other, I don't see Kelloway marching us back to Houston and telling everybody that it was all a little joke... nothing to get upset about. It doesn't look like we have a lot of choice in the matter. I say we get the hell out of here. Anybody disagree?

165 INT. N.A.S.A. AUDITORIUM

KELLOWAY

No... I have not spoken to the President. I'm sure I will very soon. I would like to say that the President has been a source of constant encouragement to us in the program. This mission meant as much to him... as it did to us.

166 INT. HANGAR ROOM - DAY

WALKER goes to the door. It is locked.

167 INT. N.A.S.A. AUDITORIUM

REPORTER

Do you think this will end the Manned Space Program?

KELLOWAY

I don't know.

168 INT. HANGAR - HALLWAY

The door splinters and bursts into the hallway, as BRUBAKER, WALKER and WILLIS hurl themselves against it. They scramble to their feet, and begin racing down the hall.

169 INT. N.A.S.A. AUDITORIUM

KELLOWAY

You can't reach that far....without stumbling somewhere along the way. That doesn't mean that your goal wasn't worthwhile. So many people have given so much.

170 INT. HANGAR - HALLWAY

The three astronauts running wildly down the hall. They come to one of the sliding outer doorways.

171 INT. N.A.S.A. AUDITORIUM

KELLOWAY

In 1967 we had the Apollo One fire. Grissom, White and Chafee died. We were all crushed... however, we didn't just give up.

172 EXT. HANGAR -- DAY

The three astronauts partially slide open the door and look out.

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

We went on... as they would have wanted us to. Two years later... Neil Armstrong walked on the moon.

Less than one hundred yards away from the hangar is the Falcon Jet that brought the men to the desert. The stairway is in the down position, the cockpit door is open. There is a man in civilian clothing standing at the bottom of the stairway.

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

That certainly didn't in any way alleviate the pain of the Apollo One tragedy...

The three astronauts walk casually across the runway towards the airplane. Their walk is so nonchalant, the man guarding the airplane just watches them approach.

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED:

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

... however... it certainly did give some purpose to what had happened.

The three men saunter up to the man guarding the stairway. BRUBAKER smiles hello to him. The man smiles back. BRUBAKER slams the man in the stomach, doubling him up, and then follows with both fists on the back of the man's neck. He crumbles on the ground. The three men dash up the stairway into the Falcon Jet. Four men in suits run out of the hangar.

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

Now these three remarkable men have given their lives... in their efforts to expand the horizons of their species.

The four men realize that the astronauts are in the plane. The fans on the Falcon begin to turn, and the plane swings away from the hangar.

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

They died striving for a goal.

The four men break for two cars. The tires skid, and the cars screech away, before the doors can even close. The airplane is moving into taxi position, the staircase still hanging down. WALKER is hanging out of the airplane, wrestling with the staircase, as it is moving.

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

They gave their lives for something that meant more to them than their personal survival.

The two cars are trying to head off the airplane on the runway.

173 INSIDE COCKPIT

BRUBAKER is at the controls... not even strapped in.

174 EXT. HANGAR - DAY

The airplane is winding its engines... WALKER is still frantically trying to close the stairway... the cars are heading on the runway.

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

I ask you... I ask all of you here...

The jet begins its trip down the runway. WALKER now has hold of the end of the stairway. The cars are heading towards it.

(CONTINUED)

174 CONTINUED:

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

You be the ones to tell me...

The plane is speeding down the runway now... the cars speeding towards it. WALKER is pulling up the stairway. The plane is fifty yards from the cars. It is obvious that neither of them is going to quit.

175 INT. COCKPIT

BRUBAKER is pulling back on the stick... trying to lift the nose of the airplane up.

176 EXT. HANGAR - DAY

They are twenty yards from each other.

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

... How could we best serve these men?

The airplane begins to rise as it reaches the cars. It lifts off the runway. WALKER gives one last pull... and the stairway folds up into the fuselage... as the plane is now no more than six feet off the ground. The stairway clears the roof of the car by inches.

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

By giving up on their dream? By saying it was all for nothing?

The plane passes over the cars... and is off. It roars up into the sky.

KELLOWAY (V.O.)

You give me the answer.

The jet is now growing smaller and smaller... leaving a grey contrail... as it recedes over the desert.

177 INT. FALCON JET

WALKER is resting, exhausted by the door, sitting on the floor of the aircraft. He gets up, and gingerly walks to the cockpit, where BRUBAKER and WILLIS are sitting.

WILLIS

You have any idea where we are?

BRUBAKER

No.

WALKER

Which way are we heading?

(CONTINUED)

177 CONTINUED:

BRUBAKER

West... once we hit the coast we'll go north. All we have to do is get to any city... anyplace there are people ... a newspaper... a television station ... anyplace we can show up and be seen. Then it's over.

WILLIS

I don't know if it's exactly over.

WALKER

Our families... our kids... they think we're dead.

BRUBAKER

I wonder... when we show up... when everybody finds out... I wonder if they'll be happy... maybe it would be better for them if we were dead.

There is a BUZZING SOUND from the cockpit dashboard... and a flashing light. The three men jump at the sound... and look at the various gauges.

BRUBAKER

Oh, Christ... fuel... there's no goddamn fuel.

WILLIS

I told you whenever you take a trip you should always fill the tank.

WALKER

What about the reserve?

BRUBAKER

It's on reserve.

WALKER

Wonderful.

BRUBAKER

I'll start to circle... look for a flat area.

178 EXT. DESERT - DAY

The plane is flying lower and lower over stretches of yellow sand, pocked with crevices, jagged rocks, and rimmed by reddish cliffs.

179 INT. COCKPIT - DAY

The men are looking around for a landing site.

WILLIS

There... over there... on the other side of those cliffs.

BRUBAKER

Looks like we have about 4,000 feet... I think that's enough.

180 EXT. DESERT - DAY

The landing gear on the plane is extended. The aircraft banks sharply to the left, skims over the chiseled mountain ridges, and settles over the desert basin. The airplane swoops lower and lower.

181 INT. COCKPIT - DAY

BRUBAKER

Everybody, strap in. This is not going to be smooth.

WILLIS

You sure you know how to land this thing?

BRUBAKER

No. I said I can fly it... I never said I could land it.

WALKER

Wonderful.

182 EXT. DESERT - DAY

The aircraft is a few feet off the ground. BRUBAKER picks the nose up slightly. The back wheels touch the sand, sending off clouds of yellow dust. The wheels begin to dig in the soft sand, the nose touching down, kicking up a giant rooster tail of sand. The nose gear digs in, spinning the plane around. Everything disappears in a cloud of sand.

Slowly the cloud begins to disperse. We SEE the Falcon is in one piece. The starboard gear has collapsed; however, the port gear and the nose gear are intact. The plane is tilting on its starboard wing. The engines have shut down. The stairwell door opens. There is not enough room for the stairs to fully extend, because the plane is listing so acutely.

(CONTINUED)

182 CONTINUED:

BRUBAKER, WILLIS and WALKER wriggle out of the door and survey the desert around them. The sun is reflecting off the sand with such intensity that the horizon is shimmering. On one side is the mountain ridge that they flew over. To the other side is nothing except more desert. The terrain is ridged with cracks and a dried-out riverbed. What life there is consists of a dried, wiry kind of brush that grows in kind of arid clumps. There is not even a hint of a breeze of any kind.

WILLIS

I think we're on Mars.

The three men walk around the airplane.

BRUBAKER

We have about a twenty-minute head start on them. It's not going to be hard to spot this plane from the air. We've got two choices. We can stay together... or we can split up and go in different directions.

WALKER

We probably have a better chance if we split up.

None of them believe it.

BRUBAKER

Yes.

WALKER

We could go in three different directions.

BRUBAKER

Yes.

WALKER

Would triple the odds of one of us getting through.

BRUBAKER

Yes.

WILLIS

There must be a survival kit in there somewhere.

183 INT. PLANE - DAY

The three men are searching through the plane. WILLIS finds the emergency kit in the back of the cockpit.

(CONTINUED)

183 CONTINUED:

WILLIS

I got it.

He opens the kit. There are three cans of water, a flint, a .38 caliber pistol with twelve rounds of ammunition, four flares, a first-aid kit, a small tin of water-purifying atabrine tablets, a transistorized signal radio, an inflatable life raft, a mirror, a flashlight, and a small box of matches. They lay everything out on the floor of the fuselage.

BRUBAKER

There's a can of water each.

They each take a can of water.

BRUBAKER

A flare each.

They each take a flare.

BRUBAKER

John... you take the flint... Peter  
and I will split the matches.

They divide the atabrine tablets.

BRUBAKER

Anybody want the gun?

WILLIS

I'd shoot my foot.

WALKER

I'd shoot his foot.

BRUBAKER takes it. He takes the mirror and breaks it in half. He gives half to WALKER, keeps half for himself, and takes a pocket knife and gives it to WILLIS.

184 EXT. DESERT - DAY

The three men climb back outside the airplane and stand together on the desert.

BRUBAKER

Remember... if anybody is caught...  
or he can't make it... set off a  
flare... so the others will know.  
I'll continue west. John... you go  
north... Peter, you go south. We  
came from the east... so we know  
that's the wrong way.

(CONTINUED)

They stand and look at each other for a moment.

BRUBAKER

There's not a lot of time... and  
there's too much to say. Let's just  
go.

(pause)

If any of us make it... just...

WILLIS

Did I ever tell you about the one  
where this guy has a job giving  
enemas to elephants... and...

BRUBAKER looks at WILLIS. He smiles.

BRUBAKER

Thanks.

He turns and starts to walk away. WILLIS and WALKER exchange brief looks, and then start off in opposite directions. They are walking toward three different horizons, the tilted airplane in the middle. Soon, they are shimmering in the distance, indistinguishable from the white, hot sand and the white, hot sky.

185 MARTIAN SURFACE (T.V. MONITOR) FROM SCENES 130, 133 AS INDICATED)

BRUBAKER and WALKER are standing next to each other... next to the American flag... the Landing Module behind them. The picture is a bit fuzzy.

BRUBAKER

There's something I want to say.  
I know this hasn't been easy for you  
and the kids.

(pause)

I want you to know I love you. I...  
thank Charles for the composition  
for me... please.

186 MISSION CONTROL (FILM)

MRS. BRUBAKER is sitting with MRS. WALKER and MRS. WILLIS.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)

(DIALOGUE FROM SC. 133)

Tell him when I get back I'll take  
him to Yosemite again... like last  
summer.

MRS. BRUBAKER looks confused. (FROM SC. 134)

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED:

MRS. BRUBAKER (V.O.)  
 (FROM SC. 135)  
 I... I will, Bru... I love...

CAULFIELD (O.S.)  
 Right there... run it back...

The picture becomes hash. We HEAR SQUEAKY NOISES, then a BEEP. Then we SEE the same picture again.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)  
 ... I'll take him to Yosemite again...  
 like last summer.

MRS. BRUBAKER (V.O.)  
 I... I will, Bru... I love you, too.

CAULFIELD (O.S.)  
 One more time, please.

We SEE CAULFIELD in a darkened screening room, looking at a television monitor. His face is flickering in the light from the monitor.

BRUBAKER (V.O.)  
 Like last summer.

MRS. BRUBAKER (V.O.)  
 I... I will, Bru. I love you, too.

187 INT. BRUBAKER HOME - NIGHT

CHARLES BRUBAKER'S room has a red, white and blue trundle bed; red, white and blue wallpaper done in an airplane motif; model airplanes and rockets hanging from the ceiling; and a gumball machine next to his desk. KAY BRUBAKER is sitting on Charles' bed. CHARLES is dressed in his pajamas with rockets on them. He is lying with his head under one of his mother's arms. Little SANDY is a cotton vision in pink Dr. Denton's. She is lying with her head tucked underneath her mother's other arm. MRS. BRUBAKER is reading a Dr. Seuss bedtime story to the children.

MRS. BRUBAKER  
 (reading)  
 Look, sir. Look, sir.  
 Mr. Knox, sir.  
 Let's do tricks with  
 Bricks and blocks, sir.  
 Let's do tricks with  
 Chicks and clocks, sir.

(CONTINUED)

187 CONTINUED:

MRS. BRUBAKER turns the page, and SANDY stops her, pointing to the drawings.

SANDY  
Blocks... look, blocks...

MRS. BRUBAKER  
Right... there are the blocks...  
and those are the...

SANDY  
Clocks!

SANDY giggles, as MRS. BRUBAKER hugs her. She turns the page.

MRS. BRUBAKER  
(reading)  
First, I'll make a quick trick  
brick stack.  
Then I'll make a quick trick  
block stack.  
You can make a quick trick  
chick stack.  
You can make a quick trick  
clock stack.

SANDY  
(pointing)  
Chicks!

MRS. BRUBAKER  
And...

SANDY  
Clocks!

SANDY laughs, MRS. BRUBAKER hugs her again. She hugs CHARLES, who is silent through the whole affair. She notices this. She turns the page again.

MRS. BRUBAKER  
(reading)  
And here's a new trick,  
Mister Knox.  
Socks on chicks  
And chicks on fox.

She looks down at CHARLES again. He is sullen. She gently strokes his head.

(CONTINUED)

187 CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. BRUBAKER

(reading)

Fox on clocks  
On bricks and blocks.

MRS. BRUBAKER hugs CHARLES tighter to her. Her voice begins to falter.

MRS. BRUBAKER

(reading)

Bricks and blocks  
On Knox and box.

She has difficulty turning the page.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Now we come to  
Ticks and tocks, sir.

Her voice is breaking. She is finding it difficult to hold back the tears.

MRS. BRUBAKER

(reading)

Try to say this  
Mister Knox, sir...  
Clocks on...

She is crying now... desperately trying to hide it from the children.

MRS. BRUBAKER

(reading)

Clocks on fix tick.  
Clocks... on... Knox tock.

The tears are flowing freely. She can't go on. CHARLES has squeezed his eyes shut... and buried his face in his mother. She can no longer speak.

SANDY

Clocks!  
(pause)  
Clocks!

MRS. BRUBAKER desperately fights to regain herself.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Right, Sandy... very good.

Her face is wet with tears.

MRS. BRUBAKER

(reading)

Six... sick... bricks... tick...

CHARLES is holding on to his mother.

88 EXT. DESERT - DAY

Heat vapor is rising off the sand in 135-degree heat.

BRUBAKER is slowly making his way TOWARD CAMERA, a hazy figure, walking with difficulty. BRUBAKER's face is crusted with sand. His lips are parched, and his tongue is swollen.

He stoops down to pick up some small pebbles. He puts the pebbles in his mouth, picks himself up, and continues walking. He is obviously dizzy from the sun. He touches the back of his neck and winces. He stumbles to the sand again.

BRUBAKER unzips one of the pockets on his flight suit. He takes out the half of the mirror. Using the jagged edge, he cuts away one of the layers of nylon from his flight suit trouser leg. Then he cuts a slim strip from the fabric.

With terrible slowness, he takes the larger piece of material and ties it over his head, shielding his scalp, draping the rest of it over the back of his neck for more protection.

Then he takes the thin strip and cuts two small slits in it. He then takes the strip and ties it behind his head, over his make-shift hood. The front of it is over his eyes, like a Long Ranger mask, the two slits enable him to see.

He takes the mirror and puts it back in his zippered pocket.

He rests on all fours for a moment, then he pushes up. He stumbles back on all fours again. He pushes up again and rises wobbly to his feet. He resumes his walk.

189 EXT. BRUBAKER HOME - DAY

The carnival of television and radio equipment that had sprouted around the Brubaker home is mostly gone. There are still some rather bored men rolling up cable... and some others who are cleaning up the litter. Otherwise, the grounds are clear... like a football field the morning after the Rose Bowl.

CAULFIELD drives up to the home and gets out of his car. He walks to the front door and rings the bell. He waits for a few seconds and then the door opens.

190 INT. BRUBAKER HOME - DAY

A POLICEMAN is standing in the doorway.

POLICEMAN

Yes?

CAULFIELD

I would like to see Mrs. Brubaker.  
My name is Caulfield.

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED:

POLICEMAN

Mrs. Brubaker is not seeing anyone at the moment.

CAULFIELD

I telephoned this morning. I believe I'm expected.

The POLICEMAN looks at him.

POLICEMAN

What was the name?

CAULFIELD

Caulfield.

POLICEMAN

Wait here.

The POLICEMAN turns and disappears... leaving CAULFIELD in the doorway. He looks in the house. Everything appears quiet. There is nothing to even hint at what must be going on... except, of course, for the Policeman.

The POLICEMAN returns.

POLICEMAN

Mrs. Brubaker is in the study. Through that door.

CAULFIELD

Thank you.

191 INT. BRUBAKER STUDY - DAY

MRS. BRUBAKER is seated on a dark couch... in the paneled den of the Brubaker home. The coffee table is covered with stacks of cards and letters... many of them still unopened.

CAULFIELD enters the study. MRS. BRUBAKER has been smoking a lot.

CAULFIELD

Mrs. Brubaker?

MRS. BRUBAKER

Yes... Mr. Caulfield. Won't you sit down.

CAULFIELD sits. He is obviously uncomfortable.

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED:

CAULFIELD

Uh... Mrs. Brubaker... first of all...  
I'm really sorry... everyone is so  
sorry... I... uh...

MRS. BRUBAKER

(interrupting)

I know... and I thank you. Don't be  
too uncomfortable around me. I don't  
think I can put up with that right now.  
You phoned that something was important.  
I understand that you think you are  
interrupting me, or something. You are  
... and I welcome the interruption.  
Now... what is so important?

CAULFIELD

Uh... Mrs. Brubaker... it may not be  
important to you. I'm looking for  
something that may be important to me.  
It's personal.

MRS. BRUBAKER

You're a reporter, aren't you?

CAULFIELD

Yes. As I told you... I'm not looking  
for an interview. I would like to ask  
you about the last time you spoke with  
your husband... after the landing.

MRS. BRUBAKER

What about it?

CAULFIELD

This might sound strange, Mrs. Brubaker  
... please don't get upset with me...  
just before the conversation ended...  
Colonel Brubaker said something to you  
about going on a vacation... and your  
reaction was... it was like you didn't  
understand what he was saying.

MRS. BRUBAKER looks at him. She is studying him. CAULFIELD  
is looking straight back at her eyes.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Why do you want to know?

CAULFIELD

I told you, Mrs. Brubaker... it's  
something personal.

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. BRUBAKER

Well... it's personal to me, also.

CAULFIELD

Please... I'm not trying to embarrass you, or anyone else.

MRS. BRUBAKER

I don't understand why any of this is any of your business.

CAULFIELD

Please... trust me.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Why?

CAULFIELD

You ask really good questions.

There is a silence between them. MRS. BRUBAKER is studying CAULFIELD. Finally:

MRS. BRUBAKER

It's all so silly. There was nothing all that dramatic. Bru just forgot something... that's all... and I don't think anything would be served by your broadcasting the fact that my husband got mixed up about a vacation when he had all of those other things to think about.

CAULFIELD tries to suppress his excitement.

CAULFIELD

Oh... no... no... I'm not looking for anything to broadcast.

MRS. BRUBAKER

What are you looking for?

CAULFIELD

It has to do with a friend of mine.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Is there something I should know?

CAULFIELD

If there was anything... I would tell you.

There is a pause.

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED: (3)

MRS. BRUBAKER

Oh, it's nothing. Bru said we would go back to Yosemite... like last year ... and last year we went to Flat Rock ... not Yosemite. That's all. I don't think it's of cosmic significance.

CAULFIELD sits in silence. Then he gets up.

CAULFIELD

Mrs. Brubaker... I truly thank you. I know you had better things to do than put up with a bunch of stupid questions.

MRS. BRUBAKER

No, I didn't. Have I been any help at all to you?

CAULFIELD

I don't know. May I call you again sometime?

MRS. BRUBAKER

Yes.

CAULFIELD tries a wane smile... and leaves.

192 EXT. OTHER PART OF DESERT - DAY

The abandoned Falcon jet, still lamely resting on one wing, is collecting a coat of hot desert sand. The air is completely still. Not even a grain of sand is moving.

Slowly, two tiny black dots appear in the sky on the horizon. We SEE them THROUGH THE HEAT VAPOR. They grow larger, and larger. We can SEE that they are heading TOWARD us.

In a few moments, we can begin to HEAR a SOUND. It is mechanical, an ENGINE of some kind. The twin black dots become objects. The SOUND grows LOUDER. The two black objects begin to take shape. Added to the crescendoing sound, we HEAR a FLAPPING NOISE. Soon we SEE that the two things are Cobra turbine helicopters. The SOUND is now a ROAR. The two helicopters have spotted the downed airplane. They circle the aircraft, swooping lower. They hover over it and face each other. It looks like the helicopters are talking to each other, as if they have a life of their own, as if they are shiny, metal creatures. They both settle down together on the desert sand, on either side of the airplane, blowing up a cloud of dust.

193 N.A.S.A. HEADQUARTERS - HOUSTON

DR. KELLOWAY is seated in his spacious, stark office. A telephone on his desk RINGS. He picks up the receiver.

KELLOWAY

Yes.

194 DESERT - DAY

The helicopters next to the airplane.

195 N.A.S.A. HEADQUARTERS - HOUSTON

KELLOWAY

There's no one inside?

(pause)

You're sure.

196 DESERT - DAY

The helicopters next to the airplane.

197 N.A.S.A. HEADQUARTERS - HOUSTON

KELLOWAY

All right. Use that as the center.

Start a series of concentric circles from that point. Get more personnel.

They can't go too far on foot.

198 DESERT RIDGE - DAY

It is one of those deep red walls that span hundreds of miles. Sometimes as much as two and three hundred feet high. The walls are reddish-veined rock and clay. It is pocked with ridges, and occasional rubble and brush.

WILLIS is climbing the ridge. The descent is painful, and slow. WILLIS is baking in the sun, his head wrapped in a protective strip of cloth. He has a two-day growth of beard. His lips are blistering. His hands are caked with clay and dried blood. Some of his fingernails have cracked off.

The ascent consists of searching almost blindly with his hands for something to hold on to. Then he gingerly tests the strength of what he is holding on to by pulling with both hands. When he is secure enough, he moves one foot, sliding it both ways until he can feel a protrusion. His foot catches it, and then he tests the strength of that. When it is not large enough or strong enough, his foot slides off, sometimes taking some of the surface of the ridge, and sometimes scraping off some of the skin on his calf or ankle. Finally finding a footing, he pulls up with both hands and pushes with his foot. He has spent three minutes and gone up another three or four feet on the ridge.

198 CONTINUED:

The perspiration is pouring down his forehead and over his eyes; however, he can't let go to clear his vision.

199 EXT. FLAT ROCK, ARIZONA - DAY

CAULFIELD'S dusty Mustang wheezes to a stop at a decayed wooden sign, which reads: "FLAT ROCK, ARIZONA, AUTHENTIC FRONTIER TOWN. FLAT ROCK WAS FIRST SETTLED IN 1858. IT WAS ABANDONED IN 1889... WHEN THE RAILROAD BUILT A ROUTE TO FLAGSTAFF. FLAT ROCK REMAINS INTACT... AND IS PRESERVED AND PROTECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR."

CAULFIELD gets out of his car and walks down a strip of dust that was once the main street of the town. The slatted wooden buildings appear to be leaning against each other for support. The air is completely still, and ferociously hot.

At the end of the street... is the proverbial General Store. Everything is closed... including the General Store... which had BankAmericard and American Express decals in its windows. Also in the window is a sign which reads:

"GUIDED TOURS DAILY \$5.00  
CHILDREN UNDER 12 -- \$2.50  
CHILDREN UNDER 5 ADMITTED FREE.  
CLOSED FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST."

CAULFIELD stands by the door. He looks around. Perspiration is seeping through his shirt. There is absolutely nothing there. He leans against an old hitching post and lights a cigarette.

The window behind him shatters with a CRASH. CAULFIELD dives into the dirt, and the wood on the hitching post splinters with another CRACK of a high-powered rifle. A third bullet EXPLODES in the dust by his head. CAULFIELD rolls over two times... and then scrambles for cover behind the corner of a building.

He lies behind the building... panting... waiting for the next shot. It doesn't come. CAULFIELD gathers his breath, and listens. In the distance he can hear the SOUND of a CAR starting up... the SQUEAL of TIRES... and the ACCELERATION of an ENGINE.

Slowly... he peers around the corner of the building... and squints toward the direction the shots came from. In the distance... he can see the receding dust trail of a car speeding away from him.

200 HELICOPTER - DAY

The Cobra turbine is SNARLING directly AT THE CAMERA. It is hovering about one hundred feet over the sand.

(CONTINUED)

200 CONTINUED:

Another helicopter slides in from the RIGHT of the FRAME and hovers a few feet from the other one. They pause for a few seconds, communicating with each other. Then they both pitch forward and start to move. After a few hundred yards, they bank in opposite directions and fly off.

The CAMERA BEGINS TO LOWER itself, floating down, slowly to the sandy ground. This is slightly different terrain, rougher, with deep gouges and a greying, greenish kind of bramble marring the surface.

There is a slight mound swelling in one of the crevices, directly under where the two helicopters had hovered. It is about six feet long, and of irregular shape. All we HEAR is the SOUND of the two HELICOPTERS receding.

We SEE part of the mound move almost imperceptibly. A tiny rivulet of sand pours from a crack in the sand. There is more movement. The form heaves and cracks some more. More sand spills from the surface, revealing a boot underneath. Then we SEE another boot, then a shoulder. Finally, BRUBAKER sits up, the coating of sand camouflage being brushed away by his hands. He is soaked with sweat, and the sand has stuck to his face. He struggles to wipe as much away as he can, which is not a great deal.

It is plainly evident that BRUBAKER is not in very good condition. There are blisters on his sand-caked lips. His hands are an atlas of cuts and scratches. His unshaved face is shadowed.

BRUBAKER looks over his sandy shoulder and sees that the helicopters are two dots on opposite ends of the horizon. He rests on all fours for a while, and then gets to his feet. He starts to trudge away. He stumbles, falls to all fours, and then gets up again.

201 TURQUOISE BLUE

The screen is a rich turquoise. It is shattered by a shape of different colors, and we HEAR the SOUND of a SPLASH. We SEE young CHARLES BRUBAKER, who has just jumped in the cool water of the modest swimming pool in the back yard of his home. His three-year-old twin sisters are splashing and laughing at the other end of the pool. They both are wearing bright orange life vests.

CHARLES turns and swims by his sisters, making sure that his kicking splashes them. MRS. BRUBAKER is sitting on a lounge chair.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED:

MRS. BRUBAKER

Cut it out, Charles. You know you're bothering them... I know you're bothering them... and they know you're bothering them. If you want to stay in the pool... just cut it out.

CHARLES ends his strafing run, and retreats to the other side of the pool.

The glass door to the back of the house slides open, and DR. KELLOWAY walks out. He crosses the patio and goes over to MRS. BRUBAKER. CHARLES is the first to spot him.

CHARLES

Hi, Uncle Jim.

KELLOWAY

Hello there, Charles.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Jim.

KELLOWAY

Hello, Kay... you're looking just fine.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Thank you. Can I offer you something to drink?

KELLOWAY

No, thank you.

He sits down next to her.

KELLOWAY

The kids... how are they?

MRS. BRUBAKER

Charles is strong. He's been very much to himself. He's strong, though.  
(pause)

The girls don't know.

They sit for a moment.

KELLOWAY

Uh... There's going to be... a memorial service on Tuesday... in Washington... at Arlington.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. BRUBAKER doesn't answer.

KELLOWAY

The President... ah... the President  
will be there. He's going to speak...

MRS. BRUBAKER

That's very nice. Will I get a  
folded flag?

KELLOWAY

I would like you to be there.

MRS. BRUBAKER doesn't answer.

KELLOWAY

Please.

She doesn't respond. Instead, she watches her children in  
the swimming pool.

KELLOWAY

I know how difficult everything is  
right now. I feel like Jack the  
Ripper even asking you. It's just  
that it would be good for everyone  
if you would go with me to Washington.

MRS. BRUBAKER

What a horrible way to die.

KELLOWAY

No. Absolutely not. When the heat  
shield separated... it was over in  
less than five seconds. I know how  
grizzly that sounds... except you have  
to know that he never suffered. He  
died doing what he wanted to do.  
Something he felt was important enough  
to die for.

MRS. BRUBAKER

I know.

(pause)

I don't think it was important enough  
to die for.

KELLOWAY

I understand.

KELLOWAY rises.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED: (3)

KELLOWAY

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I have no  
right to intrude on you like this.  
I'll talk to you tomorrow.

KELLOWAY walks back to the house.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Jim.

KELLOWAY turns to her.

MRS. BRUBAKER

I'll go.

KELLOWAY

You're a very special woman.

MRS. BRUBAKER

He was a very special man.

KELLOWAY

Thank you.

CHARLES

Hey, Uncle Jim!

KELLOWAY

Yes?

CHARLES

My dad went to Mars.

KELLOWAY

Yes... he did.

202 DESERT - DAY

WALKER is staggering, looking weaker, and more dehydrated.  
His tongue is swollen and some of the skin on his lips has  
peeled off. He is having difficulty keeping his balance, and  
his vision is beginning to fail. He is mumbling to himself.

WALKER

De... hy... drat... ing.

He stumbles on some more.

WALKER

De... hy... dra... ting...

He keeps on going.

(CONTINUED)

202 CONTINUED:

WALKER

Look... for signs... signs...  
manual says... signs of water...

He falls down.

WALKER

Got... to... look... for... manual...  
says... signs... look...

He staggers up again.

WALKER

... water... signs...

He slips and tumbles down a crusted edge, and sprawls on the sandy bottom of a dried, ancient riverbed.

WALKER

Dried... river... bed... outside...  
of... bend...

WALKER crawls on the bottom of the riverbed on his hands and knees.

WALKER

... lowest part... outside... of bend...  
look for... bend...

He finds a bend.

WALKER

... lowest... part... of... the...  
bend...

He crawls to lowest part. He takes out the jagged half-mirror. He starts to dig.

WALKER

... gonna... find... water... manual...  
said... here... gonna... find...

He keeps digging; there is nothing except more sand.

WALKER

... gonna... find... not... gonna...  
de... hyd... rate... not... gonna...  
be... dried... up... spook...

Nothing except sand. WALKER digs with every remaining ounce of strength. He keeps finding nothing.

(CONTINUED)

202 CONTINUED: (3)

WALKER

... gonna... find... got... to...  
find...

More sand. He collapses, his head in the sand, clutching the mirror so tightly it is cutting into his fingers. He starts to cry.

WALKER

(crying)

Elizabeth... it's not here...  
Elizabeth... it's... not... here...  
Elizabeth...

The sun is glinting off the mirror.

203 EXTREME WIDE SHOT - DESERT - DAY

We SEE the flash of sunlight off the mirror, from a great distance, and a great height. We are so far away, and so high, all we can SEE is the desert, and a flash of light.

204 ANGLE - WALKER

WALKER

(crying)

E... liz... a... beth...

WALKER tries to pick his head up. He squints at the almost-blinding sky. He sees something, and he becomes more alert.

205 WALKER'S POV

We SEE two birds, gently flapping their wings, flying TOWARDS us.

206 BACK TO WALKER

He is brightening.

WALKER

Birds... Elizabeth... birds...  
manual says... birds circle...  
around... water...

He desperately struggles to claw his way up the side of the riverbed, to get to the birds.

WALKER

Eliz... a... beth... get... to...  
the... birds... manual...

207 WALKER'S POV

The two birds are coming closer and closer.

208 BACK TO WALKER

He is making slow progress, scratching at the sand, trying to pull his way farther up. He winds up with handfuls of sand, and makes no headway.

WALKER

... got... to... get...

The CAMERA MOVES AROUND BEHIND WALKER, so we can get a better view of the birds. We SEE that they are two Cobra turbine helicopters, closing in on him. WALKER hears the SOUND of the HELICOPTERS. He realizes what they are. With what little coherence he has left, he knows he has been caught. He lies on his back.

WALKER

Oh... E... liz... a... beth...

WALKER unzips one of his pockets, and takes out his flare.

209 DESERT - DAY

We SEE the horizon. Rising into the sky is the flare.

210 DESERT RIDGE - DAY

WILLIS is clinging to a ledge, his face flush against it. He sees the flare off in the distance.

211 ANOTHER PART OF THE DESERT - DAY

BRUBAKER is walking toward the sun. Off to his right, he sees the flare, low in the sky. He pauses for a moment. Then he continues on.

212 INT. N.A.S.A. HEADQUARTERS - HOUSTON

The TELEPHONE RINGS in DR. KELLOWAY'S office.

KELLOWAY

Yes.

(pause)

He was alone?

(pause)

Which direction was he heading from the airplane?

(pause)

Look south and west only. Call everybody off from east and north. The other two are south and west.

213 INT. BRUBAKER HOME - NIGHT

MRS. BRUBAKER goes to the door... and CAULFIELD is standing there.

CAULFIELD

Hello again.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Hello again.

MRS. BRUBAKER starts to walk to the study... CAULFIELD following.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Would you like something to drink?

CAULFIELD

Very much.

They walk to the study... there is even more mail piled up on the coffee table. MRS. BRUBAKER goes to a small bar area.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Scotch?

CAULFIELD

Straight, please.

She pours a drink for him... and one for herself.

MRS. BRUBAKER

You haven't found what you are looking for... you feel embarrassed about bothering me again... however, there are just one or two more questions you would like to ask me... it's something personal... and you won't bother me any more.

CAULFIELD

I haven't found what I am looking for... I feel embarrassed about bothering you again... however, there are just one or two more questions I would like to ask you... it's something personal... and I won't bother you any more.

MRS. BRUBAKER

You're up to something... and you want my help... and you won't tell me. Why?

CAULFIELD

You're a very smart lady... you know that?

(CONTINUED)

MRS. BRUBAKER

Yes.

CAULFIELD

I drink too much... and I get in trouble a lot because I talk too much. I sometimes have an imagination that's a bit too vivid. Something is wrong... and I don't know what it is. Believe me... I would never do anything to harm you or your husband... I swear I wouldn't.

MRS. BRUBAKER

What are you after?

CAULFIELD

I'm taking a terrible risk telling you this... you may throw me out of here... and I don't want to be thrown out.

(pause)

I don't think your husband is the kind of man who makes mistakes... no matter how far away he is. I think he wanted to tell you something.

MRS. BRUBAKER

Tell me what?

CAULFIELD

What did you do at Flat Rock?

MRS. BRUBAKER

Nothing much... besides rush home after one day because Charles was sick.

CAULFIELD

What did you do that one day?

MRS. BRUBAKER

I don't remember... we took a tour of the town... they have tours... I don't... we took some home movies.

CAULFIELD'S eyes light.

CAULFIELD

Do you have them?

MRS. BRUBAKER

Yes.

CAULFIELD

May I see them?

(CONTINUED)

213 CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. BRUBAKER is looking at CAULFIELD... growing a bit edgy.

214 BLACK SCREEN

Dots of white strobe upward... and then we SEE hand-held 8-mm crude color film. The first shot is of the "FLAT ROCK" sign. We SEE the two BRUBAKER children in cowboy hats standing uncomfortably in front of it.

The next picture is of the town. The streets are filled with people and horses... all in period costume and gear. It is a western scene. A stage coach pulls up. The driver is wounded. Townspeople rush up to him. He falls off. The camera wobbly pans to the right... and we SEE a full movie company... crew in T-shirts and Addidas... reflectors... lights... cable... a Panavision camera on a crane... arcs smoking to one side.

MRS. BRUBAKER (O.S.)

Bru got a big kick out of it. He never knew it took so much time to just do one simple scene. He told me he would never have the patience for it.

A bad guy is standing on a roof... firing a rifle. He gets shot... and falls off the roof. The camera is a bit late following his fall. We SEE him falling into foam pads... surrounded by the camera and crew.

MRS. BRUBAKER (O.S.)

Charles loved that one. He wasn't in the greatest mood, though... we didn't know it but he was sick. Bru was impressed with the detail... how something so fake could look so real.

CAULFIELD'S face is rivetted... trying to suppress his growing excitement.

215 DESERT RIDGE - DUSK

WILLIS is losing strength. Each time he tries to grab hold of some protrusion on the ridge, the pain becomes more and more evident. His hands are badly blistered and bleeding. There are cuts on his face from scraping against the rocks. His trouser legs are shredded and flapping over his boots. He is talking to himself, and his voice is resembling a wheeze. His lips are so dried out that when he talks, he is not moving his lips. The sun is setting, and the light on WILLIS is more of a reddish glow, getting darker and darker.

WILLIS

This guy... see... he takes... a trip to...

(CONTINUED)

215 CONTINUED:

WILLIS squeezes on a branch to try to pull himself higher.  
It hurts him terribly.

WILLIS  
(gasping)  
... Europe...

He catches his breath.

WILLIS  
... It's his... first vacation...

He tries again to pull up.

WILLIS  
... anyway... it's his... first  
vacation... in... a long... time...

He raises himself a few feet.

WILLIS  
... He... sees... the sights... you  
know... the... museums...

WILLIS loses his footing. He slips. He grabs the branch.  
with all his might. He hangs from the branch; his feet  
swaying off the ridge. His blistered hands are bleeding so  
much that they are becoming slippery. WILLIS' voice is a  
muffled scream.

WILLIS  
... He has a...  
(pause)  
... real good... time.

He slowly pulls his body up, just with his arms.

WILLIS  
... After... a while... he...  
decides... to... call... home...

His feet touch the ridge. He starts sweeping them from side  
to side, looking for a footing of some kind. His hands  
begin to slip. It is getting darker.

WILLIS  
... He... gets... his... brother...  
on... the phone...

WILLIS finds a footing.

(CONTINUED)

215 CONTINUED: (2)

WILLIS

... He... says... 'How... is... every...  
thing... at... home?'...

He starts to make some more progress up the ridge.

WILLIS

... His... brother... said....  
(taking a breath)  
... 'Your cat died'...

He is getting closer to the top of the ridge.

WILLIS

... The... guy... says... 'You...  
shouldn't... tell... me... bad...  
news... like... that... I'm... all...  
the... way... here... in... Europe...  
you...'

He can almost reach the top; he is just a few feet from it. His eyes are glazed. It is obvious that nothing is going to stop him from reaching the top -- nothing. The pain is unbelievable.

WILLIS

... His... brother says... 'What...  
should... I... say?'

He is getting closer.

WILLIS

... He says... 'You... should break...  
it... to... me... gently... you know...  
like... you say... something like...  
'the cat... crawled out... on... the  
roof... chasing... a... squirrel...  
and... got...

WILLIS is no more than an arm's length from the top. He is straining with all his might to reach it.

WILLIS

... stuck... and we... had... to...  
call... the... fire... department...  
and... it... took... them... an... hour...  
to... get... there... and... when... they  
... finally... arrived... the... fireman  
... who climbed up... the... ladder...

WILLIS' hand grabs hold of the top.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIS

... he... grabbed... the... cat...  
only... on... the... way... down...  
he... slipped... and... fell... and...  
the cat... dropped... to... the...  
ground...

His other hand is now on the top, and he is pulling himself up for the last surge.

WILLIS

... and... they... had... to take...  
the... cat... to... the... vet... the  
fireman... was... all... right...

He swings one leg up.

WILLIS

... and the... vet... tried... to...  
save... the... cat... they... even...  
operated...

He is trying to get his other leg up.

WILLIS

... it... was... too... late... they...  
couldn't... save... the... cat.  
(pause)  
That's how... you... should... tell...  
me... bad... news... like... that.'

His boot is on the top now. He is pulling with his last reserve. His body is swinging up.

WILLIS

Then... the... guy... says... to his  
... brother... 'How's Mom?'

WILLIS has made it. He is on the top. Waiting in the dark at the top are two Cobra turbine helicopters, their rotary blades still. WILLIS sees them.

WILLIS

And... the... brother... says...  
'She's... on... the... roof.'

WILLIS stares at the two helicopters in the darkness. He lies on his back and starts to laugh, only he can't move his lips because they are so severely cracked and blistered. We HEAR this laugh coming through an almost-closed mouth.

WILLIS

(to the two helicopters)  
Get it?... she's... on... the... roof...

## 216 OTHER PART OF DESERT

BRUBAKER is staggering through the darkness. His shoulders are stooped, and he cannot pick his legs up. As he walks, he is dragging his feet on the sand.

We SEE one side of his face start to glow. He turns to the direction of the light source. He sees WILLIS' flare burning in the evening sky. He sits down and slumps over.

## 217 N.A.S.A. HEADQUARTERS - HOUSTON - NIGHT

The TELEPHONE RINGS in DR. KELLOWAY'S office.

KELLOWAY

Yes.

(pause)

Which one?

(pause)

What direction was he going?

(pause)

Brubaker is going west. Put everybody west.

## 218 INT. NEWSROOM - NIGHT

CAULFIELD is pouring over a stack of oversized atlases. There is a map on his desk... and he is drawing a large circle with a compass. Houston is at the center of the circle.

The TELEPHONE on his desk RINGS... and he picks it up.

CAULFIELD

Caulfield.

(pause)

Right now? Okay.

CAULFIELD gets up... and walks through the newsroom to the Assignment Desk. An older, rough-looking man is sitting behind the large circular desk... carefully balancing a pot belly behind a teletype machine. His name is WALTER LOUGHLIN. There are few things in the world that upset him as much as cheerfulness. He looks up at CAULFIELD.

LOUGHLIN

So nice of you to join us here.

CAULFIELD

Listen... I think I got something.

LOUGHLIN

You need a dermatologist?

(CONTINUED)

218 CONTINUED:

CAULFIELD  
Don't tell me... I'll get it...  
(snapping his  
fingers)  
George Raft, right?

LOUGHLIN  
Where the hell have you been?

CAULFIELD  
I've got to talk to you. I think  
I'm onto something. It could be  
your actual ball game. I mean it.

LOUGHLIN  
Golly gee, scoop... that sounds  
really interesting.

CAULFIELD  
Something is wrong... something big.  
They know I'm onto it... and they've  
tried to kill me.

LOUGHLIN  
Who is they?

CAULFIELD  
I can't tell you.

LOUGHLIN  
Why not?

CAULFIELD  
You wouldn't believe me.

LOUGHLIN  
You don't think so?

CAULFIELD  
Listen to me. I got a tip... from a  
friend... a good friend... Then he  
disappeared.

LOUGHLIN  
He disappeared.

CAULFIELD  
Like he never existed. There's an old  
lady living in his apartment. His  
apartment is all different. The old  
lady says she has been living there  
for more than a year.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAULFIELD (CONT'D)

I checked with the building rental office. They have receipts from her for more than a year. I checked with N.A.S.A. personnel. They have no record that my friend ever worked there. They say they never heard of him.

LOUGHLIN

So this friend of yours... who works at N.A.S.A. gives you a tip... and then he disappears... and it turns out he never lived in his apartment, and he never worked at N.A.S.A.... and this is the guy who gave you the tip on your cosmic scoop... and you think I won't believe you.

CAULFIELD

My car... someone tampered with my car.

LOUGHLIN

The one you decided to go swimming with?

CAULFIELD

They did something to it. I couldn't stop it.

LOUGHLIN

Can you prove that?

CAULFIELD

... Uh... the police said... they said there was nothing... wrong...

LOUGHLIN

And you think I won't believe you?

CAULFIELD

Somebody took a shot at me.

LOUGHLIN

When?

CAULFIELD

Yesterday.

LOUGHLIN

Thank God I have an alibi.

(CONTINUED)

CAULFIELD

I'm telling you the truth.

LOUGHLIN

Listen to me... and listen good. I don't like you, Caulfield. You're ambitious. You think the way to get ahead is to come up with the scoop of the century. Woodward and Bernstein were good reporters. That's how they did it. Not by telling me you've located Patty Hearst three times... like you did... or that brilliant piece of investigative journalism you pulled off, by finding an eye witness to the second gunman in the Kennedy assassination. The small fact that the man had been in a mental institution at the time never deterred you... not scoop Caulfield. Most reporters are like me... they're plodders. They spend a lot of their time checking little things like facts. They cover mundane stories like wars, and trials, and hearings. You never seem to have enough time in your busy schedule to stoop so low as to cover a story. You occupy your time with tips from people who never existed... driving your car into water and then claiming it was not your fault... and getting shot at by unseen gunmen.

LOUGHLIN leans back on his chair... stretching his hands behind his head.

LOUGHLIN

Now I really hate to interrupt your meteoric career with something as plebeian as a legitimate story... however, a trainload of propane gas had the bad taste to derail near Galveston... and there is a whole town that just might blow up. It would be really peachy of you if you would join the film crew that is waiting for you on the plane... at this very moment... while we speak.

CAULFIELD

That was some speech.

(CONTINUED)

218 CONTINUED: (4)

LOUGHLIN

I thought so.

CAULFIELD

I can't go to Galveston right now.

LOUGHLIN

I don't think I heard you.

CAULFIELD

Look... when a reporter tells his assignment editor that he's working on something that may be really big ... the assignment editor is supposed to say, 'I'll give you forty-eight hours... and you better have something, or it'll be your neck. That's what he's supposed to say. I saw it in a movie.

LOUGHLIN

Get your ass on that plane.

CAULFIELD

I can't. I've got to follow this.

LOUGHLIN

And you won't tell me just what this earth-shattering story is.

CAULFIELD

It sounds too crazy. If I told you ... I'd be in more trouble.

LOUGHLIN studies him for an endless moment.

LOUGHLIN

You're not crazy... I'm crazy. I'm crazy for listening... and I'm crazy for saying what I'm about to say. I'll give you twenty-four hours to come up with something... not forty-eight. I saw the movie, too... it was twenty-four.

219 INT. CAULFIELD APARTMENT - NIGHT

CAULFIELD is lying on his unmade bed... studying his maps. He has drawn a circle with a three-hundred mile radius around Houston. The apartment is a sea of clutter. CAULFIELD is the kind of man who thinks that beds make themselves, and dishes somehow or other manage to get washed by some unknown force.

(CONTINUED)

CAULFIELD has been working on this map for a long time... and he begins to show the signs of fatigue. His eyelids start to close heavily... and he snaps his head back as he wakes up. The ashtray next to him is filled with cigarette butts. He yawns... and starts to fall asleep again.

He gets up groggily... and goes to the bathroom. He turns on the bathroom light... and opens the medicine chest. We SEE an empty medicine chest... except for a half-squeezed tube of toothpaste... and bottle of mouthwash... and a bottle of Old Spice.

CAULFIELD takes a swig from the bottle of mouthwash... and he then splashes Old Spice on his face. He closes the medicine cabinet... and returns to his maps on the bed. He lights a cigarette.

There is an EAR-SHATTERING CRASH... and his front door splinters open. Four large MEN are in the room... before CAULFIELD has a chance of getting up. They all have guns. One of them whirls and points his gun directly at CAULFIELD'S head.

MAN

Freeze!

CAULFIELD'S hands shoot upward in terror.

CAULFIELD

I'm not moving an inch.

MAN

Robert Caulfield?

CAULFIELD

Yes... who the hell are you?

MAN

Federal Agents. We have a warrant to search your apartment.

CAULFIELD

You have a warrant? What for?

The three other men begin tearing through the apartment... emptying drawers on the floor. They ransack the kitchenette. CAULFIELD sits there dumbfounded. One of them goes to search the bathroom.

CAULFIELD

I don't understand...

(CONTINUED)

MAN

Just don't move.

CAULFIELD

I promise... just tell me what this is all about.

MAN #2 (O.S.)

Hey... come here... look at this.

The MAN with CAULFIELD motions to him.

MAN

Could you come with me please, Mr. Caulfield?

CAULFIELD gets up and follows. They walk into the bathroom. The medicine cabinet is open. Sitting on the top shelf is a small plastic bag... filled with something that resembles powdered sugar, or salt. NOTE: We saw this medicine cabinet before... and that bag was not there.

CAULFIELD blinks at the bag in the medicine cabinet. One of the agents takes it out... and opens it. He smells the contents, and fingers the substance. He hands it to the first MAN... who also smells it, and feels it.

MAN

Mr. Caulfield... I'm sorry... however, you are under arrest, for possession of cocaine.

CAULFIELD

I don't believe it. I don't believe it. You guys put it there... you know you did.

MAN

You have the right to remain silent. You have the right to an attorney.

CAULFIELD

I don't believe it. You put it there.

MAN

Anything you say may be held against you.

CAULFIELD stares at them for a moment... and then his expression changes. It is as if he recognizes an obvious fact.

(CONTINUED)

219 CONTINUED: (3)

CAULFIELD

You're part of all this, you mothers.

One of the agents grabs CAULFIELD... throws his arms behind his back... and starts to handcuff him.

CAULFIELD

Ow! That hurts. You don't have to handcuff me.

MAN

Please, Mr. Caulfield. These are serious charges against you. Don't add to them by resisting arrest.

The other agent snaps the handcuffs on. CAULFIELD is silent.

CAULFIELD

I don't believe it.

220 INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

CAULFIELD, who looks a wrinkled mess, is being led down a grimy corridor... past a row of cells, by a POLICEMAN whose gun appears to be growing out of his hip. The POLICEMAN opens a barred door... and they walk into a large cluttered room... filled with desks and POLICEMEN. LOUGHLIN is sitting there.

LOUGHLIN

Well, hello there, Caulfield... so nice to see you.

LOUGHLIN begins to walk out of the police station... CAULFIELD following.

221 EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

LOUGHLIN

It is at this point when Alan Hale says to... Richard Conte?...

CAULFIELD

Jimmy Stewart.

LOUGHLIN

Jimmy Stewart, thank you: 'Look, scoop, I can't keep bailing you out of trouble ... the front office is on my neck... I don't know how much longer I can hold them off.'

(CONTINUED)

221 CONTINUED:

They are approaching LOUGHLIN'S car.

LOUGHLIN

Right?

CAULFIELD

Right.

LOUGHLIN

Wrong. I got you out of here to avoid embarrassing the Network... and it wasn't easy. You're a schmuck. I don't trust you to cover a fire. You'd fall down and get burned. You probably would be the cause of it.

LOUGHLIN gets in his car. CAULFIELD tries to open the passenger door to get in with LOUGHLIN... however, it is locked.

LOUGHLIN

(smiling)

You're fired. Oh... I love how that sounds. I'm going to say it again, I love how it sounds so much. You're fired... you're through. Oh, I love it.

CAULFIELD stares at him pleadingly.

CAULFIELD

It's not what it looks like... really...

LOUGHLIN

(beaming)

Frankly, Scarlett... I don't give a damn.

The car drives off... leaving CAULFIELD... arm outstretched for a door that isn't there.

222 INT. CAR - NIGHT

CAULFIELD is slouched in the passenger seat of a Pontiac Firebird... gliding through the downtown streets. The car is being driven by JUDY DRINKWATER... who looks like she has been waked up not too long ago.

DRINKWATER

You see... I told you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DRINKWATER (CONT'D)

You tell me about the lonely plight of a dedicated journalist... I tell you to stuff it. You tell me about a meaningful relationship... I tell you to stuff it. You tell me you're in trouble, you just got fired, and you're out on bail... I tell you I'll be right over.

CAULFIELD

My head hurts.

DRINKWATER

You look awful.

CAULFIELD

Thank you very much.

DRINKWATER

You're quite welcome.

CAULFIELD

Did you find out what I asked?

DRINKWATER

At one o'clock in the goddamn morning I get a call from an unemployed junkie, to find out all of the military installations in a three hundred mile radius around Houston, Texas.

CAULFIELD

You do have a way with words. Did you find out?

DRINKWATER

Yes, and it wasn't easy. It took exhaustive research.

CAULFIELD

I'm proud of you. How many?

DRINKWATER

One. White Bluff. It's a S.A.C. base. My father used to be stationed there.

CAULFIELD

That's exhaustive research?

(CONTINUED)

222 CONTINUED: (2)

DRINKWATER

You call your father at one o'clock in the morning... that's exhaustive.

CAULFIELD

White Bluff... that's too big.

DRINKWATER

Too big for what?

CAULFIELD

Too big for what I want.

DRINKWATER

What do you want?

CAULFIELD

I'm thinking of enlisting.

DRINKWATER

They'll never take you.

CAULFIELD

That's why I'm thinking of enlisting.

The car pulls up to a small, attractive garden apartment complex.

DRINKWATER

You're on a story, aren't you?

CAULFIELD

I was fired.

DRINKWATER

You're on a story... and I'm helping you. This can't be happening.

CAULFIELD

I really appreciate it.

DRINKWATER

The only reason I'm doing it, considering your track record... whatever story you're on will turn out to be garbage.

CAULFIELD

You shouldn't mince words.

(CONTINUED)

222 CONTINUED: (3)

DRINKWATER

I'll fix you some coffee, then you can jump me.

CAULFIELD

There's no other one besides White Bluff?

DRINKWATER

No... except for one abandoned base they used for training during World War Two... uh... Jackson... there's nothing there now. Don't you want to jump me?

CAULFIELD

Of course I do. Where is Jackson?

DRINKWATER

About three hundred miles directly East; I think I'm going to get angry with you.

DRINKWATER gets out of the car... CAULFIELD remains inside.

CAULFIELD

How much money do you have on you?

DRINKWATER

You want me to pay you?

CAULFIELD

How much?

DRINKWATER

About a hundred. You want me to leave it on the dresser in the morning?

CAULFIELD

Give it to me now.

DRINKWATER

In advance? That's the height of conceit.

CAULFIELD

Please... and your car keys.

She takes her money out of her purse... and her car keys and gives them to Caulfield.

(CONTINUED)

222 CONTINUED: (4)

CAULFIELD

You're really being terrific... why?

DRINKWATER

You're not as obnoxious when you're helpless.

CAULFIELD

Thank you very much.

DRINKWATER

You're quite welcome. Also, Liz Haller said you were super.

CAULFIELD grins.

CAULFIELD

When I get back... let's jump each other.

DRINKWATER

Maybe.

CAULFIELD

I'll get arrested again.

DRINKWATER

It's a deal.

CAULFIELD drives off.

223 EXT. DESERT - DAY

BRUBAKER'S peeled and cracked hands are pulling his aching body across the desert floor. BRUBAKER'S mouth is a swollen blister... lips so cracked they are caked with blood. His clothing is shredding... his eyes are caked with sand. There is no protection from the sun. It is obvious that he is beginning to seriously dehydrate.

He is losing his orientation. His staggering is becoming circular... first going in one direction... and then starting back in the opposite direction... making no progress.

There is a vertical sculpture of red rock... jutting into the sky. It at least offers the promise of some shade. BRUBAKER squints at it... and then starts for it.

As he grows nearer and nearer... he begins to hear a SOUND. It is the distant WHINE of a JET ENGINE. BRUBAKER looks up.

(CONTINUED)

He sees a black dot on the horizon... heading his direction. He tries to scramble faster; however, his body is resisting. He stumbles... and flails at the sand. The speck is growing larger. BRUBAKER is crawling more desperately toward the rocks.

We can begin to SEE the shape of the helicopter. It is low over the desert. BRUBAKER is getting closer to the rocks. The helicopter is getting closer. We don't know if BRUBAKER has been spotted... however, he surely will be if he doesn't find some place to hide in a few seconds.

The SCREAM of the HELICOPTER'S ENGINES is ominously LOUDER... we HEAR the FLAPPING of the ROTOR BLADES. BRUBAKER is groaning as he desperately lunges for the cover of the rocks.

He reaches the rocks. They are sheer. There is no place to hide. The helicopter is almost there. BRUBAKER crawls frantically around the larger of the rocks... looking for some kind of cover. The helicopter is hovering over the other side of the rock... looking for some kind of movement.

BRUBAKER is clawing at the sheer rock... as if he is trying to dig a hole with his bare hands. The helicopter is beginning to come around the side of the rocks where he is. He keeps crawling. He sees an opening! It is not too large... however, it is just large enough and deep... a jagged space between two rocks. Just as the helicopter rounds the corner... BRUBAKER dives head first into the space.

## 224 INT. CAVE - DAY

BRUBAKER is face down in the dirt... the sun burning through the narrow opening. We can SEE the helicopter slowly hovering near the opening. BRUBAKER can't move... or he will certainly be spotted. We HEAR a RATTLE. BRUBAKER'S head d looks up... his eyes wide.

Inches from his hand... is a large, coiled rattlesnake... its dark thin tongue sliding in and out of its closed mouth... its eyes piercing the darkness.

BRUBAKER realizes he cannot move back out... the helicopter is directly outside the opening. Millimeter by millimeter... BRUBAKER slides his hand along the dirt... away from the snake.

The snake strikes! Right at his hand. BRUBAKER pulls it away just as the snake... mouth wide open, fangs bared... strikes at it. It misses by a quarter of an inch... and then recoils. The helicopter is hovering by the opening. The snake is rattling with fury.

(CONTINUED)

224 CONTINUED:

BRUBAKER is lying dead still... his hands now close to his body. He shifts his weight and the snake strikes again... again missing only because BRUBAKER has slipped a little to his right. BRUBAKER'S feet have moved... causing a trickle of sand to fall out of the opening.

225 EXT. ROCKS - DAY

We do not know if the helicopter has seen any of the dust come out of the opening. It begins to move. It moves around the rock formation. It does a complete lap... then ... as if with a shrug... it lifts straight up... banks forward... and goes on its way, out toward the desert.

226 INT. CAVE - DAY

BRUBAKER hears the HELICOPTER RECEDING. He waits longer than he knows he has to... just to be sure... even though the snake is looking at him with rage. Finally, he is free to move. He cautiously picks himself up. The snake is watching. BRUBAKER reaches for a small rock. The snake follows his movement. The rock is too small. He gropes for a larger rock. He finds one. The snake moves his eyes.

BRUBAKER takes the rock in his right hand... and, inch by inch... he raises it over his head. Then he slowly extends his left hand... toward the snake. The snake tenses. BRUBAKER'S hand freezes. Then suddenly, BRUBAKER thrusts his hand toward the snake. The snake responds by striking at it. BRUBAKER anticipates this... and pulls his hand back... the snake misses his target. However, for the split second that the snake is recoiling, he is vulnerable. BRUBAKER crashes the rock down on the snake... crushing his head.

BRUBAKER slumps in relief. He is panting. He removes the bloodstained rock. The snake's head is pulp. BRUBAKER takes the piece of mirror out of his pocket. He uses the jagged edge to rip into the snake's skin. He cuts it open. With his hands... he removes the insides. He skins it... and cuts the raw flesh into strips. He looks at the translucent flesh in horror. He is dying of starvation and dehydration... yet it still looks like a nightmare. He takes a strip of raw snake meat and brings it to his blistered lips. He closes his eyes in revulsion. He touches it to his lips. His mouth does not want to open. He forces the meat into his mouth... and clamps his jaws on it. He shudders... and then starts to chew. He swallows... and then picks up another piece.

227 EXT. JACKSON BASE - DAY

It is the base where all of the transmission emanated from...

(CONTINUED)

227 CONTINUED:

... however, it is almost unrecognizable. It is totally deserted. There is no one around... no activity... no aircraft on the runway... nothing.

CAULFIELD drives up to the gate... which is a decaying series of barbed wire fences. There is a sign which reads:

"JACKSON ARMY AIR BASE  
CLOSED DECEMBER 12, 1947.  
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY."

Even the sign is faded.

CAULFIELD gets out of his car. He gingerly climbs under one strand of barbed wire and over another. He walks across the parched grounds to the large hangar... where the three astronauts had been.

CAULFIELD walks up to the hangar. He tries to open one of the doors. It is locked. He walks around the corner... there is another door. He tries it... and it, too, is locked. CAULFIELD looks up at the roof. He looks along the walls. Everything looks locked tight, and unused. He rounds another corner. There is a small ventilating vent with a louvered cover. The cover is loose. CAULFIELD leans down next to it. He starts to pry a corner loose. It CREAKS... and then falls out. CAULFIELD peers through the opening. He can't see anything. The vent looks big enough... so CAULFIELD wedges himself into the opening... and starts to crawl through.

228 INT. HANGAR - DAY

It is completely different. CAULFIELD spurts through the vent and finds himself in a totally empty hangar. There are no partitions... no hallways... no rooms... no control room... no elaborate sets. It is nothing more than an old deserted hangar. CAULFIELD walks along the vast empty floor, his footsteps ECHOING in the cavernous hangar.

He stands in the middle of the floor... looking around, obviously more than just a bit disappointed. He scuffs the floor with his feet. There is nothing except for an old floor under the dust.

CAULFIELD walks across the hangar... discouraged. He approaches the open vent he had crawled through. The streaks of sunshine are knifing diagonally from a few cracks in the wall. They are deep yellow as they pick up the dust in the air. As CAULFIELD is about to crawl back in the vent, he stops. He has spotted something.

(CONTINUED)

228 CONTINUED:

One of the shafts of sunlight is picking up a tiny reflection on the floor near the corner. CAULFIELD walks toward it. He gets down on his hands and knees. Something is shining a bright yellow. CAULFIELD picks up a minute, metallic object. He studies it in his hand. It is a gold ring. It is a wedding band. CAULFIELD turns it around in his hands. He squints to read a faded inscription on the inside:

"BRU FROM KAY  
5/16/62"

229 EXT. BRUBAKER HOME - DUSK

A black limousine turns down the street and comes to a stop in front of the BRUBAKER home. The front door of the home opens, and MRS. BRUBAKER walks out, carrying a small suitcase. A CHAUFFEUR opens the car door for her, takes her bag, and she gets in. The CHAUFFEUR puts the bag in the trunk, returns behind the wheel, and the car drives away.

230 EXT. DESERT - DUSK

CAULFIELD is driving... away from the military base.

231 AIRPORT TERMINAL - EVENING

MRS. BRUBAKER, MRS. WILLIS and MRS. WALKER, accompanied by an escort of officials, walk through the main lobby of the airline terminal. There is a large pack of cameramen, popping flashbulbs and holding portable floodlights for their newsreel cameras. In marked contrast to the earlier scene involving reporters and the astronauts' wives, this time the reporters and cameramen are not saying anything to them. The entire tableau is very quiet, almost somber. The inaudible FEMALE VOICE announcing flight arrivals over the public address system is the only DIALOGUE we HEAR.

232 EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

CAULFIELD is driving through the nearest town. It is a sleepy mixture of cinderblock, and low frame buildings. Nothing is open. Not a store... not a diner... nothing.

233 EXT. HOUSTON AIRPORT - NIGHT

A sleek, silver and white Boeing 707... with "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" painted in blue... lifts off the runway... and heads into the night. A number of PHOTOGRAPHERS are taking pictures of the takeoff. When the plane is OUT OF SIGHT... they shut off their cameras... and turn back toward the terminal.

## 234 DESERT - NIGHT

BRUBAKER is trying to go on; however, his strength is ebbing. He tries to walk, and then stumbles to his feet. He tries to get up, and then stumbles again. This is his last effort, and it is becoming increasingly obvious to him that this effort may fail. He takes a few more steps and falls down again.

He lies on his stomach for a few moments. Then he tries to get up. He fails. He brings his knees up, and then groans with fatigue and pain, and he pushes his chest up with his arms. He tries to make progress on all fours. He goes a few yards, then his arms give out. He rests for a moment and tries to get up into a crawling position again. He manages to do this.

He crawls for a few more yards and then his arms collapse again. He tries just using his legs, pushing himself through the sand with his arms dragging limply by his sides. His face is being pushed against the ground, contorting his features.

Even pushing with his legs becomes harder and harder. He has to stop every few feet to summon more strength. The pauses become longer and longer, and the amount of distance he can cover becomes shorter and shorter.

Finally, his left leg gives out. He still won't surrender to his exhaustion. He keeps pushing with his right leg. He travels a few more feet, and then his right leg starts to spasm and eventually collapse. He lies there, motionless, on the desert ground, except for an occasional twitch from one of his limbs.

He literally tries to move forward by just using his fingers. They claw at the sand. Then they, too, cease to move. BRUBAKER closes his eyes. He is beyond the point of caring. He is going to sleep at last.

## 235 EXT. DESERT FIELD - EARLY MORNING

CAULFIELD is tired... and his car doesn't look in too much better shape. White smoke is beginning to curl out from the radiator. He drives up to what looks like a combination barn with a tin roof... an airplane hangar. Painted on the side ... in chipped faded red letters, is:

"A & A CROPDUSTING SERVICE."

Parked half in, half out of the hangar is a decrepit World War One biplane. The wings are lashed with spindly struts... and you can SEE where the struts have been repaired. The single engine has a wooden propeller.

(CONTINUED)

The open cockpit has two seats... one behind the other. There are unpainted patches all over the fuselage.

There is a MAN, loading chemicals that the old plane will spray on some kind of crop. The MAN is about who-knows-how-many years old. He has a face of cracked leather skin... a beak of a nose... two grey eyes that peer from underneath a matching set of bushy eyebrows. His mouth is in a constant pucker... that comes from a pronounced absence of teeth. His right cheek is bulging with a chaw of soggy tobacco. Every few seconds... he spits a browning fountain of tobacco juice. He is wearing a bright red jumpsuit that is stained with errant spits of tobacco juice. His crewcut white hair is topped with a Houston Astros baseball hat.

The MAN sees CAULFIELD get out of his car. He looks at him and spits. CAULFIELD walks over to him..

CAULFIELD

Good morning.

MAN

'Morning.'

CAULFIELD

Are you in charge here?

MAN

See that sign there?

CAULFIELD looks at the "A&A CROPDUSTING SERVICE" sign on the building.

CAULFIELD

Yes.

MAN

Read it.

CAULFIELD

I did.

MAN

Out loud.

CAULFIELD

A and A cropdusting service.

MAN

You know who I am?

(CONTINUED)

235 CONTINUED: (2)

CAULFIELD

I bet you're one of the A's.

MAN

Which one? Hah! Bet you don't know the answer to that one, smartass.

CAULFIELD

The first one.

MAN

Wrong!

CAULFIELD

Give me one more guess.

MAN

You got it.

CAULFIELD

The second one.

MAN

Wrong! Hah! I'm both, smartass. A and A. My name's Albain. I have a son. The other A was for him... 'cept he didn't want to fly. Became a lawyer. I think he's a fruit. So I took the A away from him. So you lookin' for someone in charge... you got both of 'em.

CAULFIELD

My name is Caulfield.

ALBAIN

I can't help that.

ALBAIN spits a thin brown stream.

CAULFIELD

Mr. Albain... how much do you charge to dust a field?

ALBAIN

Twenty-five dollars.

CAULFIELD

I would like to hire your plane.

ALBAIN

That'll cost you a hundred.

(CONTINUED)

235 CONTINUED: (3)

CAULFIELD

You said you charged twenty-five dollars.

ALBAIN

Twenty-five to dust a field.. You ain't got no field 'cause you ain't no farmer, which means you ain't poor, and I think you're a fruit.

CAULFIELD

All right... one hundred.

ALBAIN

A hundred twenty-five.

CAULFIELD

What?

ALBAIN

You said yes to a hundred too quick, which means you can afford one twenty-five.

CAULFIELD reaches into his pocket... and takes out all the money he has. He gives all of it except for about five dollars to ALBAIN... who takes it... spits... and gets in his plane. CAULFIELD climbs in the back seat with difficulty.

ALBAIN

Where you want to go, smartass?

CAULFIELD

I'm not sure. I'm looking for someone who's lost.

ALBAIN

It's your money.

The rickety plane sputters... rolls out of the hangar... bumps along the dusty ground... and then, foot by foot, leaves the ground.

236 DESERT - MORNING

The sun is rising a brilliant yellow in the eastern sky. BRUBAKER is lying motionless in the sand, which is beginning to heat up. A pale scorpion is patiently making its way over the terrain.

It arrives at BRUBAKER'S boot.

(CONTINUED)

236 CONTINUED:

Undaunted, it climbs up the boot. It marches across his calf, trying to keep a firm footing on the nylon fabric of BRUBAKER'S trousers. The scorpion continues over his back and pauses at his collar. It places a tentative foot on the back of his neck. Gaining confidence, it ventures onto his neck and blazes a trail through the forest of his hair. It emerges triumphant on his forehead and begins the perilous journey down the smooth surface of his face.

BRUBAKER'S cheek reacts to the feeling of something on it. His face muscles tighten, and then loosen, in an effort to shake the intruder off. The tickling sensation wakes BRUBAKER up, in time to see the scorpion slide off his face and return to the safe footing of the sand. His eyes follow the scorpion as it ambles away from him, walking off, away from the rising sun. BRUBAKER'S eyes widen. The path of the scorpion leads to a road. There is a road, a seemingly endless straight stretch of road. And right next to the road is a small, white, dilapidated, one-pump gas station.

BRUBAKER blinks in disbelief. He wants to make sure he isn't seeing a mirage. However, the gas station is too run-down to be a mirage. His cracked lips form a smile. He sits up.

237 ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

Leafless trees are pointing to a grey sky. Across the rolling hills, pocket with white grave markers, there are Police and Secret Service Agents. A line of limousines stretches from the entrance to the cemetery to the Arlington Bridge.

238 EXT. DESERT - DAY

CAULFIELD and ALBAIN are flying over barren desert. There is nothing below. They are flying fairly low. ALBAIN spits... and the wind blows it right by CAULFIELD... who ducks.

CAULFIELD

Do you have to spit when I'm right behind you like that?

ALBAIN

You know how to fly?

CAULFIELD

No.

ALBAIN

Then I can't spit when you're in front of me, smartass.

## 239 EXT. DESERT - DAY

BRUBAKER is flailing away at the hot air as he careens to the tiny gas station. His movements aren't overly productive and his progress isn't very rapid.

He eventually reaches the creaky clapboard building. He falls against it for support and leans on it as he makes his way to the screen door. The pump is covered with dust and sand. There is not a car to be seen, from horizon to horizon.

BRUBAKER looks inside. It is one room. There is a makeshift counter. On top of the counter is an old cash register. There are some wire racks on the wall. The racks are half filled with cans of car lubricant. There is no one in the room.

BRUBAKER leans against the screen door. It is locked. He pushes against it. It CREAKS. He steps back and lunges at it. The rusted hinges come loose, and BRUBAKER, along with the door, falls into the room on the floor.

## 240 ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

A large, stage-like platform, draped in black bunting, has been set up in the area not too far away from the Kennedy memorials. On the stage are a number of chairs. Seated on the chairs, dressed in black, are MRS. BRUBAKER, MRS. WILLIS and MRS. WALKER. Seated next to them is DR. KELLOWAY. Next to DR. KELLOWAY is CONGRESSMAN PEAKER. Next to him is VICE PRESIDENT PRICE. There is a huge crowd seated on chairs facing the stage. Behind the seated guests, spectators are standing. In the middle of the spectators is a television camera platform. All three networks are represented. The crowd is silent.

## 241 EXT. DESERT - DAY

CAULFIELD and ALBAIN are flying... looking for some sign... a sign that they don't see.

ALBAIN

What the hell's your friend doing out here?

CAULFIELD

He's lost.

ALBAIN

He rob a bank or something?

CAULFIELD

No.

(CONTINUED)

241 CONTINUED:

ALBAIN

I get a third.

CAULFIELD

What?

ALBAIN

We find him... I get a third of the  
loot. Duck.

CAULFIELD ducks... as ALBAIN spits. The biplane flies over  
the rock formation that BRUBAKER was in earlier.

242 INT. DESERT GAS STATION - DAY

BRUBAKER picks himself up and sees the pay telephone. He  
goes over to the cash register. He pushes different keys;  
the drawer does not open. He bangs on them with his fist.  
The drawer still doesn't open. He attacks the register. It  
falls from the counter, landing on its side, shattering the  
glass in it. The drawer springs open. There are two single  
dollar bills, and some loose change. BRUBAKER picks up a  
dime and looks at it like it was pure uranium. He goes to  
the telephone.

243 INT. BRUBAKER HOME - DAY

The TELEPHONE is RINGING. There is no one home. The TELE-  
PHONE KEEPS ON RINGING. Finally, it STOPS.

244 ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

We HEAR a military BAND play "Ruffles and Flourishes,"  
followed by "Hail to the Chief." The assemblage stands.  
The PRESIDENT walks to the stage and stands at a podium with  
the Presidential Seal on it. Everyone sits down.

245 INT. DESERT GAS STATION - DAY

BRUBAKER slumps against the wall... underneath the pay  
telephone. He sits on the floor... leaning his head back  
on the window behind him. In the window... we can SEE two  
tiny black specks. They are coming toward the gas station.

246 EXT. DESERT - DAY

CAULFIELD and ALBAIN are flying low. CAULFIELD is showing  
the signs of tremendous frustration. ALBAIN is enjoying  
himself.

CAULFIELD

Maybe we should try another direction.

(CONTINUED)

246 CONTINUED:

ALBAIN

Suits me.

The little plane banks to the left.

ALBAIN

Hey!

CAULFIELD

What?

ALBAIN

Over there.

Farther to the left... just off the horizon... are the two black specks.

ALBAIN

Helicopters. I seen 'em flyin' around here the past couple a days.

CAULFIELD

Follow them.

ALBAIN

Duck.

CAULFIELD ducks as ALBAIN spits.

247 ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

The PRESIDENT clears his throat, as he stands at the podium.

PRESIDENT

Ladies and gentlemen... Mrs. Brubaker ... Mrs. Willis... Mrs. Walker... my fellow Americans. I come here today to talk of unfinished hopes... and of unfulfilled dreams; Charles Brubaker, Peter Willis and John Walker left this Earth for their dream, a little more than two months ago. They were never able to return to us.

248 INT. DESERT GARAGE - DAY

BRUBAKER is leaning against the window. His eyes are closed with fatigue. The two black specks have grown... and we can SEE the clear forms of the two Cobra helicopters looming larger... and coming toward the gas station. We can also begin to HEAR the WHINE of the JET ENGINES... BRUBAKER begins to hear it also.

(CONTINUED)

248 CONTINUED:

His eyes open, with the recognition of the sound. He turns around and looks out the window. He sees the helicopters. He pulls his head back from the window.

249 EXT. DESERT - DAY

CAULFIELD and ALBAIN are following the two helicopters... they are far behind. They are close enough, however, to see that there is some kind of small building near a road that the helicopters are approaching.

ALBAIN

They're goin' down over there.

250 EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

PRESIDENT

Their dream was part of a tremendous collective effort by thousands of men and woman... people who shared their vision. It was a dream that was able to grow and flourish, because of the support of millions of citizens all across America. At a time when cynicism was a national epidemic... they gave us something to take pride in. It is a dream that should not be allowed to die.

251 INT. DESERT GARAGE - DAY

BRUBAKER is leaning with his back to the wall... looking over his shoulder at the window. The two helicopters are landing ... kicking up a cloud of sand as they do. Their rotors slow down... and then come to a stop.

One MAN gets out of each helicopter. They are wearing green flight suits and helmets. Their sun visors cover their faces. They have no features. They kneel on the ground together... looking at footprints... They look at the gas station. They stand up... and reach into their flight suits. They take out guns... and they carefully begin to walk toward the window.

252 EXT. DESERT - DAY

CAULFIELD and ALBAIN can see the two men getting out and walking toward the gas station... off in the distance.

CAULFIELD

He must be in there! We've got to go down.

(CONTINUED)

252 CONTINUED:

ALBAIN  
They got guns, sonny.

CAULFIELD  
You wanted a third of the loot.

ALBAIN  
Half.

CAULFIELD  
Okay... half.

ALBAIN banks the plane... and they start to descend.

253 EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

PRESIDENT  
A nation is built on the spirit of its people. The test of the greatness of any nation is how that nation pulls together in a time of crisis. We have been suffering a crisis of the spirit in America. The only limits on what we can achieve, are the limits we place on our hopes. These three men reminded us of the limitlessness of our hopes.

254 INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Two helmets and dark green visors look in the window. BRUBAKER is pressed against the wall so he cannot be seen.

The two featureless faces look around. They leave the window... and walk around the front of the gas station. BRUBAKER creeps around the inside of the station... so he is flush against the wall where the doorway is.

255 EXT. DESERT - DAY

The rickety biplane is a few feet off the ground... heading toward the gas station.

256 EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The two MEN see that the door has been smashed. They motion to each other.

257 INT. GAS STATION - DAY

BRUBAKER is waiting for the two men to enter. He stands to one side and coils... the first MAN is about to enter...

(CONTINUED)

257 CONTINUED:

... the second, right behind him. First, the gun enters the room... followed by an arm... then a tentative step... the FIRST MAN is almost inside. He is looking the other way. He starts to turn toward BRUBAKER. BRUBAKER uncoils. He lashes a savage chop to the FIRST MAN'S arm... his gun clatters to the floor. He drives his shoulder into the MAN'S stomach, doubling him over... and then brings his knee into the MAN'S face. The MAN flies back into the SECOND MAN. They both sprawl backward.

BRUBAKER leaps across the small room and dives through the window.

258 EXT. GARAGE - DAY

CAULFIELD and ALBAIN have touched down as BRUBAKER comes through the window... and rolls on the ground.

259 EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

PRESIDENT

There was a moment... these past few days when we were all one people. All of us... rich... poor... black... white... we were all one. We were all hoping. We were all a little bit taller, a little bit prouder. We were all feeling the same fears and the same exhilaration. These three men brought us together. We knew together that there are no goals we cannot reach... if we just reach for them together.

260 EXT. DESERT GARAGE - DAY

There is a short BURST of MACHINE GUN FIRE from the two helicopters. The sand bursts by BRUBAKER, who is rolling away from the window. One of the MEN inside the garage is starting to climb through.

The biplane is racing along the sand... its back wheel bouncing... heading toward BRUBAKER. He sees the plane and scrambles to his feet. He makes a mad dash toward the plane. The plane is speeding toward him. There are two more BURSTS of MACHINE GUN FIRE from the helicopters. Two thin lines of bullet hits splash in the sand... gaining on BRUBAKER... until he dives out of the way... and the trails go past him.

The rotors on the helicopters begin to turn slowly again... the WHINE of their ENGINES STARTS.

(CONTINUED)

260 CONTINUED:

The SECOND MAN is now through the window and running toward BRUBAKER... and he is in better shape... so he is gaining. BRUBAKER... who is on the ground... wheels around and FIRES his PISTOL. The MAN drops.

The two helicopters are gaining power and are turning around to get an angle of fire on BRUBAKER. The biplane is nearing him. He gets up and runs with his last burst of energy to the biplane. The biplane reaches him as the helicopters are up to speed and spin around.

ALBAIN jams on the brake and pulls the rudder left. The biplane wheels in place, just as BRUBAKER reaches it. The helicopters OPEN FIRE. BRUBAKER lunges for one of the wing struts. He grabs it with one hand and holds on. The biplane continues wheeling around... kicking up a cloud of sand... and heads away. BRUBAKER keeps hold of the strut, and the biplane pulling him away causes him to leave his feet... a trail of MACHINE GUN hits in the sand where his legs were. BRUBAKER grabs hold with his second hand. The tiny biplane is taxiing away, the rear wheel bouncing, BRUBAKER holding onto the strut. The two helicopters pitch forward and start to give chase. The biplane takes a painfully slow time getting up to speed. The helicopters are gaining. CAULFIELD is reaching out to BRUBAKER, who is hanging from the strut on the tip of the right wing. The biplane goes faster. The helicopters go faster and are gaining. The rear wheel of the biplane bounces once... twice... and doesn't come down again. The biplane is airborne... one foot off the ground... two feet... three feet... four feet... the right wing dipping from the weight of BRUBAKER on the wing tip. The nose of the biplane tilts upward... and the biplane goes up. The helicopters are in the air. BRUBAKER is hanging from the wing.

261 EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

PRESIDENT

There is no adequate way we can ever express our gratitude to the men themselves... because they are no longer among us. However, we can serve their memory... what they stood for... what all of the men and women who worked with them worked for. We can pay homage to them in a way that is not mere oratory. We can see to it that what they gave their lives for... was not an abandoned dream.

262 EXT. DESERT SKY - DAY

ALBAIN is cackling with delight...

(CONTINUED)

262 CONTINUED:

... as he is maneuvering his cropduster through a series of loops... spins... and dives. It is a World War One dogfight ... between the rickety cacophony of struts and patched wood ... and two jet cobra helicopters.

BRUBAKER is hanging from the wing. He pulls himself up... so that he can lie on the lower wing. CAULFIELD reaches out to him. The helicopters make a pass. The biplane loops... BRUBAKER slides off the wing and catches the strut... hanging on by only his arms... his body dangling hundreds of feet over the desert.

The helicopters are trying to maneuver into position to fire again. Every time they do, and start to fire a short burst, the biplane twists and dives out of the way. It does a 360-degree loop over and under them. BRUBAKER painstakingly pulls himself back up on the wing again.

The helicopters make another pass. The biplane banks left. ALBAIN shrieks with delight. BRUBAKER is lying flat on the wing again. CAULFIELD looks like he is about to throw up.

It is a series of dives... and loops... and dodges... machine gun FIRES in SPURTS... and then stopping. The biplane swoops straight down at the ground... one hundred eight degrees straight down... and then just at the last second... it levels off and then groans upward... straight upward. BRUBAKER is thrown from one side of the wing to the other.

The two helicopters veer off in opposite directions... and then they both turn on the biplane. They are coming at it from different sides. The biplane heads for the rock ridge. It darts at it, almost crashing into, turns straight on its side... and then skirts along its jagged edge. The two helicopters give chase. They approach the ridge. All three are flying around and over the ridge. One of the helicopters is on the tail of the biplane. It OPENS FIRE. Bullet holes break two of the struts. Some more tear into the fuselage.

The biplane dives, then soars straight up. The two helicopters join together. They smell the kill. The little propeller engine begins to sputter. The biplane is stalling... pointing straight up again. It starts to fall. BRUBAKER is watching the engine... hanging on the wing. CAULFIELD is terrorized.

ALBAIN

Duck.

CAULFIELD ducks... ALBAIN spits... the biplane rolls and dives... the ENGINE CATCHES.

(CONTINUED)

262 CONTINUED:

The two helicopters are above the biplane, diving at it, the biplane skirts the desert... soars upward again... toward the ridge. The two helicopters... side by side... start to climb and race toward the ridge. The biplane is racing toward the ridge also. It is like a game of aerial chicken. ALBAIN twists and maneuvers the biplane directly over the two helicopters for a moment... as they are all heading for the ridge. He reaches under his instruments and pulls a lever.

The cropdusting chemicals pour out of the belly of the biplane in a blinding white cloud. The thick cloud descends on the helicopters. The pilots have no vision... and are momentarily blinded. The moment proves fatal. Both HELICOPTERS CRASH headlong into the ridge... and EXPLODE in orange balls of flame.

ALBAIN steadies the biplane. BRUBAKER rests on the wing.

ALBAIN  
(looking down at the  
two crashes)  
Fruits! Remember... I get half.

The little plane is flying steadily.

PRESIDENT (V.O.)  
Therefore, I am proud to announce today  
... that I have asked the leaders of  
both Houses of Congress... to increase  
the appropriations for the Space  
Program for the next two fiscal years.  
We shall redouble our efforts. We  
shall redouble our resolve. We shall  
continue this program... in the memory  
of those three gallant men... so that  
their tragic deaths shall not have  
been in vain.

The rickety biplane is heading east. The sun is full in the desert. The horizon is shimmering.

THE END