



FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER

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FADE IN:

5000 feet up, at night. We are looking along the top of a sea of clouds that stretches unbroken beneath us all the way to the horizon. Overhead, a sliver of moon and the limitless starry sky.

HOLD ON THE SHOT:

Miles off in the distance a SMALL OBJECT knifes up out of the clouds, levels off and hurtles toward us. A faint roar can be heard as it approaches, swelling to thunder, louder, louder, until our ears ache. And suddenly we can see it is an A-6 Intruder, the attack bomber of the U.S. Navy. It screams right on by, leaving nothing behind but the troubled clouds.

CUT TO:

Inside the cockpit of the INTRUDER, lit only by the ghostly red glow from the instruments; TWO HELMETED HEADS face us, side by side.

LIEUTENANT JAKE GRAFTON, the pilot, hunches forward intently. Though we can't see much of his face inside the helmet, there is something about the determined set of his shoulders, his sure hand on the controls that says: This is a man who will see things through. To the bitter end.

Next to him is his Bombardier-Navigator, LIEUTENANT MORGAN McPHERSON. Intense, his helmeted head buried in the radar screen hood.

JAKE

Look at the stars tonight Morg.

Morg glances up.

MORG

Yeah.

He hunches back down at his screen.

MORG (Cont.)

I've got an update. I'm cycling
to the coast-in point.

He pushes a button on the computer--giving the pilot steering information--the aircraft banks slightly--correcting to the new course.

JAKE

Did you ever think that maybe you're
too wrapped up in your work? That you're
in a rut?

CUT TO:

WHAT LIES BENEATH THE CLOUDS; the dark, heaving waves of the China Sea. Over it now there appear the words

OFF THE COAST OF VIET NAM, 1972, AFTER
SEVEN YEARS OF WAR

CUT TO:

THE TWO MEN IN THE COCKPIT. A low beep sounds in their earphones.

MORG

Search radar. Looking for company.

JAKE

Time to get on down.
(He pushes the stick
forward. As the nose of
the plane drops.)

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, diving. swallowed up by the clouds, and

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP OF THE INSTRUMENT PANEL, the altimeter unwinding like crazy.

CUT TO:

A VIEW OF THE A-6, wrapped in the clouds, plunging like a rock.

CUT TO:

THE VIEW FROM THE COCKPIT as they suddenly break into the clear night beneath the cloud. Just ahead is the foam of the breakers hitting the beach. As the shoreline flashes beneath them -

JAKE

Coast in.

MORG (keying his mike)

Devil 505 is feet dry. That's 505,
feet dry.

VOICE (over radio)

505, Black Eagle. Roger feet dry.
Good hunting.

JAKE

Leveling at 400. Are you happy Morg?

CUT TO:

IN THE RICE PADDY BELOW, A RAGGED VIETNAMESE PEASANT is standing beside his ox cart--when the sky is suddenly snatched open and the ghostly shape of the Intruder screams by right on top of him. As he cringes, spins to look after it.

CUT TO:

THE A-6 ROCKETING ALONG, barely above the trees, and

CUT TO:

THE VDI (Visual Display Indicator) ON JAKE'S INSTRUMENT PANEL, constantly adjusting to register the changing terrain below, and

PAN UP TO:

THE VIEW AHEAD THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD; the rice paddies shining in the night, flashing past at dizzying speed. Off to one side now there are flickering little sparkles like so many fireflies.

JAKE (over radio)
Small arms fire, Morg--

MORG (over radio)
Every peasant with a rifle--

The low beep in their ears changes sharply to a higher tone.

MORG (over radio) (Cont.)
--Watch it, Firecan! They've got us!

As the sky directly ahead erupts into a thicket of tracers and anti-aircraft fire.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT.

JAKE
Christ, you call that a rifle?
(he rams the stick
sideways; as the cockpit
rotates wildly)

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, on it's side, cutting through the curtain of fire. Then the plane appears again, righting itself--

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT. Silence in the earphones again. The voices of the two men are tense now, strained; you can practically hear their adrenaline pumping--

(CONTINUED)

MORG
--Lost 'em--

JAKE
You hope. Got that river bend--

MORG
--Just picked it up--One more minute
on this heading to the turn point.

They are interrupted by an insane warble in their ears.
Instantly--

--A red light labeled MISSILE flashes brightly on the instrument
panel.

CUT TO:

THE TWO MEN, electrified, craning their heads in all directions.

MORG
--Where is it, you got it? You see
it!

JAKE
--Not yet--

The warble is louder. As they look around frantically--

CUT TO:

OFF TO THEIR LEFT--the white hot flash of a rocket exhaust
zooming up toward them.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT.

MORG (pointing)
Sam! Two o'clock! Jesus--

CUT TO:

THE MISSILE, potent, lethal, blazing right at the Intruder.

CUT TO:

JAKE, IN THE COCKPIT.

JAKE
--Chaff--

As he punches a button and shoves the stick forward.

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, nosing down, releasing a small cloud of metal fibers to give the missile a false target--

JAKE (Cont.) (over)
 --That's it, 200 feet, can't go any
 lower--I think it's stopped guiding.

CUT TO:

THE MISSILE approaching, then veering at the last second toward the chaff, and

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE COCKPIT--as the missile smokes by right overhead at the speed of sound, and detonates a short distance away.

MORG (in relief)
 Boy, we're having fun now.
 (peering at radar)
 This is it, hard left--
 (Jake moves the stick)
 Right--I'm on it. Stepping into
 Attack.
 (as he flicks a switch)

CUT TO:

THE VDI ON THE INSTRUMENT PANEL in front of Jake. The word ATTACK lights up, and a black line begins to move toward the bottom of the screen.

JAKE
 --Arm--

MORG (flicking a switch)
 --Your pickle is hot. Get us up to
 500 feet, unless you want to frag your
 ass.

JAKE
 --Nag, nag, nag--

CUT TO:

A VIEW OF THE INTRUDER, lifting slightly, tearing on through streams of tracers, and

CUT TO:

MORG, bent tautly to the radar that controls the bombing run. The marker line on the VDI is moving steadily down--

(CONTINUED)

MORG
 --Ground lock. Hot damn, we're gonna
 get 'em--

CUT TO:

THE A-6 barreling through a storm of flack, wings rocking, and

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT--both men intense--the marker line almost there.

MORG
 Steadyyyy--

JAKE
 Kiss my ass--

And the line hits bottom.

JAKE
 Bombs released--

CUT TO:

A VIEW BENEATH THE WINGS as the bombs fall away, and

CUT TO:

JAKE IN THE COCKPIT, immediately jamming the stick to the side.
 As the plane banks sharply and both of the men look back--

CUT TO:

THE VIEW BEHIND; a flashing series of explosions lacing the
 ground, wham-wham-wham-wham, erupting like fiery volcanos, and

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, and the crest of the orgasm.

MORG
 If you got the time, We got the beer.

JAKE
 Secondary explosions?

MORG
 None--There's nothing there--

Jake turns in frustration.

JAKE
 "Suspected truck park" --Nothing--

(CONTINUED)

MORG
Nothing--Turn this thing around we
still got the Rockeyes.

JAKE
Arm 'em.

CUT TO:

JAKE banks hard.

--The Intruder making a wide sweeping 180 degree turn over the
dark jungle floor. The tracers start up again.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT--MORG leads in Jake again shifting and evading.

MORG (flipping switch)
Your pickle's hot, Jackey.

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER screaming back low at the burning trees in the
distance.

CUT TO:

POV--COCKPIT--THE DARK GROUND screams by lit by the fires the
bombs started--a large swath is blown out of the forest but it
is clear that there is nothing else there--empty.

JAKE(V.O.)
There's nothing there--there never
was!

CUT TO:

COCKPIT. MORG looks over quickly--

MORG
Firecan--We're painted!

JAKE
23 mike mike--I see 'em.

He turns hard left--drops the nose.

JAKE
Eat some of this--

CUT TO:

WING--Rockeye cluster bombs fall away.

CUT TO:

GUN EMPLACEMENT, trip hammer explosions tearing night, trees, guns, men.

CUT TO:

MORG looking back.

MORG
Adios Motherfucker.

He turns back.

MORG
You do good work Mr. Jake.

CUT TO:

BELOW, IN A RICE PADDY ANOTHER PEASANT crouching in the night. At the roar of the returning Intruder approaching in the distance --he reaches into his cart and takes out an ancient bolt action rifle. Hold as he feeds a round.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT; MORG lounging back.

MORG
Man, when we get back, I'm gonna take me an even strain. Jakey, you are gonna see a horizontal man--

CUT TO:

THE PEASANT below, pointing his rifle into the sky, firing blindly at the onrushing sound--

CUT TO:

The cockpit.

--There is a sudden pop! as a neat hole appears in the canopy beside him, followed instantly by another puncture in the bottom of his oxygen mask. He gags and grabs for his neck.

JAKE (looking at him)
Morg?

Morg just stares, eyes bulging, fighting for breath.

JAKE (Cont.)
Christ, what the hell happened! you all right?

But Morg only gags again. Blood starts to well through the fingers clutching his neck. With the other hand he grips Jake's arm. The blood is welling out of Morg's neck, spreading below his mask.

(CONTINUED)

Flying with one hand, Jake probes beneath the mask with the other.

JAKE

--Where the hell is it! Where'd you get hit!

Morg tries to speak but nothing comes out. As Jake unhinges Morg's oxygen mask to look. What seems like black liquid runs down Jake's arm, Morg's chest. As Jake desperately presses one hand against Morg's neck trying to staunch the bleeding--

JAKE (Cont.)

--Jesus--Hang on, I'll get us home--
(keying his mike)
Black Eagle, Devil 505, over.

MORG (he can barely speak)

--Promises, promises--

VOICE (over radio)

Devil 505, This is Black Eagle.

JAKE (tensely)

Declaring an emergency, my bombardier has been hit. Request a ready deck for recovery.

VOICE (over radio)

We copy that, 505, Your steer to base is 130 degrees--

CUT TO:

THE HUGE SHADOWY BULK OF THE NUCLEAR CARRIER U.S.S. SHILOH plowing through the China Sea in the night--as a voice comes over the deck speaker.

CAPTAIN (on speaker)

This is the Captain. Make a ready deck, we have an emergency inbound--

CUT TO:

A READY ROOM ON THE CARRIER--DOMINATED BY THE PRESENCE OF FRANK CAMPARELLI, the grizzled Squadron Commander. This guy is one of those Navy legends that seem like a giant, with winter in his eyes, hydraulic fluid in his veins and a blood stone for a heart. With him is SAMMY LUNDEEN, another Pilot, bright and brash, chewing a big wad of bubble gum. Both men listen tensely to Jake's voice over the radio speaker.

JAKE (over radio)

This is 505. Repeat, my bombardier has been shot--

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI

Sam, get to the LSO platform, stand
by the radio. I'll be in Air Ops.
(as he rushes out)

CUT TO:

THE ORGANIZED BEDLAM ON THE FLIGHT DECK, as aircraft are moved out of the way and the deck cleared. There are flashes of the rescue helicopter lifting off, a crash crew in asbestos suits taking their station, the Flight Surgeon and a team of corpsmen waiting--

CUT TO:

THE AIR OPERATIONS ROOM. THE RADARMAN is glued to his screen as Camparelli hurries in.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT OF THE INTRUDER, looking through the windscreen. Far ahead in the darkness the ghostly outline of the Carrier starts to emerge. Jake still has his hand pressed to the wound, flying with one hand while Morg clutches his arm.

LSO (over radio)

505, switch to approach on button
three--

JAKE

Button three, Roger. 505, gear down.

LSO (over radio)

On the glide slope, call your needles.

JAKE

Up and right--

(sideways, to Morg)

I gotta let go, for just a sec--Don't
you give up on me--You don't have
permission to quit.

MORG

No strain--

Fighting the stick with one hand, Jake hastily removes the other from Morg's neck so he can grab the throttles. As the blood starts welling from the wound again--

JAKE

Hang in, Shipmate, We're gonna make
it--Keep the faith--

(CONTINUED)

MORG
I'm hanging--
(but his grip is weakening)

CUT TO:

SAMMY LUNDEEN, climbing onto the LSO platform tucked just to the side and slightly below the flight deck, where the LSO(Landing Signals Officer) talks the planes in. Off in the night the lights of the Intruder blink on like two rushing stars. The LSO is joined by a HUGE BLACK MAN, MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER McCRAE, FLIGHT DECK COORDINATOR.

LSO (into radio)
505, watch your line up--

CUT TO:

JAKE, at the controls, fighting to stay level.

LSO (over radio)
Easy on power. Call the ball--

JAKE
Intruder ball, six-point-zero--
(to Morg)
We're gonna make it, we're gonna make it--

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, dropping through the night.

LSO (over)
You're high, get down--Too much power!

CUT TO:

THE VIEW FROM THE PLANE; THE CARRIER DECK rushing toward them at breathtaking speed. But it's too low, they're going to overshoot, and

CUT TO:

THE TWO MEN IN THE COCKPIT.

As Jake works the throttles he does not notice Morg's hand slipping from his arm, and

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI, his eyes glued to the TV monitor in Air Ops, as Jake's Intruder appears on the screen, roaring toward the carrier's stern.

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI

Shit, he's still too high, No--

CUT TO:

SAMMY, yelling frantically into the mike on the landing platform, as the Intruder screams by, wings wagging, like some gigantic bird feeling for the deck with it's tail hook.

SAMMY

Attitude, attitude--get down down,
DOWN--

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, slamming viciously onto the steel deck, engines screaming. Even by the violent standards of carrier landings this one is rough, the plane bouncing wildly, almost careening into the other parked aircraft. Then as the tail hook finally snags the arresting cable and the plane abruptly slows--

PAN TO:

THE DECK, alive with men running toward the plane. A CORPSMAN races up the ladder on Morg's side, Sammy on the other, as the canopy opens.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT. The Corpsman leans in, frantically trying to examine Morg's neck, but Jake has his hand pressed fiercely on the wound again, his face frenzied, while everyone is shouting at once--

CORPSMAN (yelling across the
cockpit to Sammy)

--Get him to turn loose--

SAMMY

--Jake, back off, for Chrissake--

JAKE (unhearing, chanting
to Morg, to himself)

--Didn't I tell you we'd make it?
I told you, I told you--

(as Sammy finally lunges
in, literally wrestles Jake
to one side)

PAN TO INCLUDE:

MORG. Motionless, eyes fixed, unseeing. The Corpsman manages to get a hand in, feels his wrist for a pulse. Then looks across at Sammy on the other side--and shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

SAMMY (gently)
 It's okay, Jake. You can let go.
 (pause)
 He's gone.

As Jake looks at him, almost uncomprehending - his hand is pried loose and Morg's bloody body is lifted out of the cockpit, then lowered to a stretcher, and

CUT TO:

THE DECK BELOW, the men silently parting to make a path, staring wide-eyed as the stretcher goes by with it's bloody burden--then

BACK TO JAKE, Weary, spent, he looks up through the clouds at the stars. The earnest black face of his plane captain, a kid of 19 with the predictable Navy moniker of MAGGOT, appears at the other side of the cockpit.

As Jake climbs down, Maggot flicks on the overhead canopy switch --then flinches, instinctively crossing himself.

PAN TO:

THE COCKPIT, suddenly bathed in the white light. Blood, rich red blood glistening everywhere, covering the instrument panel, the seats, the controls, the inside of the windshield. The place looks like a slaughterhouse. Hold, then

CUT TO:

THE BUSTLING STRIKE operations room inside the carrier, dominated by a giant plexiglass status board listing all the active planes and missions. Camparelli, his face grim, is making notes on a pad; beside him is COWBOY PARKER, the Squadron Exec, with a drawl as dry as his west Texas home. In the background looms the rock-jawed presence of STEVE LOMAX, the CAG, Commander of all eight Squadrons aboard the Ship and Camparelli's superior.

The three of them look up as Jake trudges in, his flight suit smeared with Morg's blood.

CAG
 Jake, we don't want any more of this
 if we can help it--What altitude were
 you at when McPherson was hit?

JAKE
 I don't know exactly--Maybe 200-300
 feet--I'd taken out a gun with
 Rockeyes--

COWBOY
 200 or 300--it makes a difference.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

I don't know--I'm kind a shaken up right now.

CAMPARELLI

You're what?

JAKE

I'm shaken sir--I got Morg's blood all over me.

CAMPARELLI

Listen Mr. Grafton--we all appreciate the ordeal you've been through--but this is combat Mr. Grafton, and in combat men die. For that matter Mr. Grafton you can look at it that combat is a privilege that you have earned. That bullet had Mr. McPherson's name on it and there's nothing we can do about that. It's not the one with your name on it you worry about--it's the one that says "To whom it may concern--". Now you get hold of yourself and tell me what altitude you were flying at. Do we understand each other?

JAKE

Yes sir.

(pause)

Sir I was flying at 200 feet sir. I made a slight dive on the gun sir--then I leveled out put the balls to the wall sir. We had a SAM try us on the way in, so I wanted to come out low and fast.

CAG

You came out by a different route?

JAKE

About 30 miles sir.

COWBOY

Lucky small arms fire--We could go higher--

JAKE

--23 and 37 millimeter guns on the coast--Firecan radar--you go higher, you're dead meat--they can't turn with you that low.

(CONTINUED)

CAG
It's bad luck that's all--ran
out of luck--take Mr. Grafton
off the flight schedule--we
got liberty in Subic in a couple
of days.

Cowboy walks over to the status board.

CAMPARELLI
You need a rest.

COWBOY
What was your target?

JAKE
Suspected truck park.

COWBOY
You hit it?

JAKE
Yeah we hit it--trees. There was
nothing there, again.

CAMPARELLI
What's your problem--spit it out.

JAKE
Trees--suspected truck park--is
that worth a man's life?

CAMPARELLI
Ah--we have it--The targets are
picked for political considerations
Mr. Grafton--From the best intelligence we have.
Do you have trouble with that?

JAKE
I don't think sending Morg to his
wife in a bag is a political consideration.

Camparelli lightens up, breathes--looks at Jake for a moment
almost embarrassing him.

CAMPARELLI
Look--I know losing McPherson is lousy--I don't
like the targets either--I hate 'em! But I like
flying and I like my job and the Navy owns the
planes.

He leans down and gets into Jake's face.

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI

Half the time it isn't the mission you're flying that kills you--it's the one before. Do you read?

JAKE

Yes sir.

CAMPARELLI

I want you to write a letter to Morg's wife--I'll mail it in a few days along with one from me--Write it tonight Mr. Grafton, after the movie. It'll put this thing behind you.

JAKE

Yes sir--Thanks Skipper.

CAMPARELLI

For what? You die Son and I'll piss on your grave.

CUT TO:

THE PASSAGEWAY OUTSIDE. Two passing sailors look curiously at Jake as he goes by in his bloodstained shirt.

CUT BACK TO:

STRIKE OPS. Camparelli, the CAG and Cowboy Parker look at huge Master Chief Petty Officer McCrae.

CAG

Well what about the trap he did catch a 4 wire.

MCCRAE

That was no trap--no landing. It was a crash. God caught the wire as Grafton was on his way over the barrier. This ship should be an inferno now.

CAG

Maybe you oughta think about grounding him.

CAMPARELLI

Christ Steve--He was trying to keep his best friend's life from leaking out. I'd a done the same thing.

MCCRAE

Maybe we oughta ground you.

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI

Yeah--you wanta lose this war--

He turns to the CAG.

CAMPARELLI(Cont.)

He's the best I've got. He'll be okay. I give you my word.

MCCRAE

What can the man say.

CUT TO:

THE HANGER DECK--Jake, in clean uniform, stands staring out at the dark sea. The moon is low and casts a dim silver path across it. Behind him in the muted red lights are the gleaming shapes of the planes: Phantoms, Corsairs, Skyhawks, Vigilantes and Intruders--all parked away with wings folded, waiting. Sammy Lundeen and DR. JACK CATTON, a well meaning Flight Surgeon, walk toward Jake.

SAMMY

There he is--Hey you alright shipmate?

Jake turns.

JAKE

--Mad Jack, the Jungle Quack.

JACK

You weren't thinking of jumping were you?

JAKE

You got a great bedside manner. No, I'll be alright--in time--just need a little air

SAMMY

How'd you guys do before it happened

JAKE

Plastered 'em--made trees into matchsticks, cut the jungle to salad--You know the tree theory--bomb the trees, deny the enemy shade--

SAMMY

I dig it--only God can make a tree--

JAKE

Jack--when you were with the Marines did you get used to it?

JACK

Used to it?

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

People dying--friends--all over you.

JACK

Yeah I got used to it--but I'm a doctor, that's what I do.

MCCRAE

Nobody gets used to it--You can put your job in front of it like the Skipper or you can even joke about it--but nobody gets used to it.

JAKE

Even the old man?

MCCRAE

Maybe you don't know cause he don't like it told--but he was the only original member of his A-4 squadron to get home back in '66--The only one. So when he chews you out son-maybe he figures he might not get another chance.

SAMMY

Skippers' called an officer's meeting before the movie--You still a member of this Squadron?

His face is a mask.

JAKE

Yeah.

CUT TO:

THE READY ROOM, jammed full of pilots. Jake walks in, LITTLE AUGIE, a small Black Bombardier, slaps him on the shoulder.

LITTLE AUGIE

Sure gonna miss him.

JAKE

He was a good guy.

BIG AUGIE, his pilot, is about two inches taller, White.

BIG

How're you really doing Shipmate?

BOXMAN, the Don Juan of the Squadron, named for his prowess with the ladies.

(CONTINUED)

BOXMAN

I hear peace is at hand.

SAMMY

Piece? Piece of what?

BIG

Kissinger said it.

LITTLE

It won't be over 'til the gomers let the
POW's come home--turn of the Century.

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI(O.S.)
Alright! Let's listen up here.

Everyone sits down--Camparelli paces in front of the room. A TV monitor and pull down screen behind him.

CAMPARELLI
I want to introduce a new replacement pilot--Mr. Barlow--How old are you son?

BARLOW, a fresh faced kid stands up.

BARLOW
Twenty four--Sir.

CAMPARELLI
You look like you're 12--Do you shave?
Didn't think so. Razor--Your name's
Razor from now on--sit down.

He does.

CAMPARELLI
Tomorrow at 1000 Hours on the flight deck there will be a memorial service for McPherson. Uniform will be tropical white long.

Sitting with the others, Jake's face is stone.

CAMPARELLI
Also, evaluation of your enlisted personnel. We've been at sea 52 days, but no Evals, no liberty--One more thing--Close the door in back.

It is done.

CAMPARELLI
This matter of the Phantom Shitter--

--A ripple of audible smirks.

CAMPARELLI
Now I know this phenomenon occurs on a carrier in combat--goes back to WW II--but this has gotten out of hand.

Paces up the aisle.

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI

Last night the Phantom left a note saying he would strike and this morning a turd was found in the CAG's ashtray. Now that only means one thing Gentlemen. It is no fighter jock or Recon puke who is doing this thing. It is an A-6 driver because no-one else on this ship could hit the CAG's ashtray.

Tremendous laughter and applause, hoots - Camparelli doesn't break stride.

CAMPARELLI

Someone in this room gentlemen--right here--one of you is the Phantom Shitter. It could be your roommate, pilot, bombardier. Think about it.

They hoot some more--quiet down.

CAMPARELLI

Movie Officer!

Little Augie steps out from behind the projection booth.

LITTLE

Yes Sir.

CAMPARELLI

What is the film tonight Little?

LITTLE

Uh--Two Lane Blacktop Sir.

CAMPARELLI

Any skin?

LITTLE

No Sir.

CAMPARELLI

Cancel it.

He walks out--the men clap and cheer--the room darkens, the movie rolls.

CUT TO:

A WINDY DAY. THE CARRIER dark and gray plows through a heavy sea. The ending words of a eulogy--the orders to fire the salutes, etc.--lost on the wind.

(CONTINUED)

FLIGHT DECK. The last salute fired, the flag draped coffin surrounded by the ranks--the wind blow briskly.

CUT TO:

THE FANTAIL--Jake stands looking out at the long white wake disappearing into the choppy sea. He wads up Morg's bloodstained flight suit and throws it into the wind. It unfurls into the shape of the man missing from it and is soon gone from sight in the churning wake and the sea left behind.

CUT TO

DEVIL 505--Jake's aircraft--sitting in the A-6 repair area--the bright day behind it from the open elevator. Jake walks up to Maggot and MCCRAE. MCCRAE standing next to a young red-neck sailor SEAMAN HARDESTY. MCCRAE takes a request chit from Hardesty--hands it to Jake.

MCCRAE

Real sorry about Mr. McPherson sir--

JAKE

What's this?

On the chit it says--Visit My Wife--

Jake looks at Hardesty.

JAKE

I thought he was single.

MAGGOT

He was--he was four days ago.

JAKE

You know this girl Maggot?

MAGGOT

She's a looker--probably first piece of ass he's ever had.

Jake looks at Hardesty who can't meet his eyes.

JAKE

When did you get married son?

HARDESTY

Last time in port sir.

JAKE

You have to have Navy permission before you can marry a foreign National. How old is your wife?

(CONTINUED)

HARDESTY
Sixteen.

JAKE
You know this is illegal.

HARDESTY
Well, no.

MCCRAE
No Sir--You're talking to an Officer,
Hardesty.

HARDESTY
No Sir.

JAKE
Your folks know?

HARDESTY
No Sir.

JAKE
Do you love her?

A strange silence--everyone looks up. Camparelli who was just walking over, stops--as if it's the strangest question in the world.

HARDESTY
Well--yes--yes Sir of course I
do--I've got a picture.

JAKE
You've violated a general regulation
Hardesty--but I'll sign your chit.

He walks over to Devil 505--Camparelli walks over.

JAKE
You realize that you are legally and
morally--

He starts up the ladder.

JAKE
--obligated to support this woman now
that--

He stares at the bloody handprint he made when he got out of the aircraft--a dried drip of blood that ran down the gray paint.

JAKE
This aircraft--has not--been cleaned.

(CONTINUED)

He pulls himself up into the ladder and stares in--the horror coming back to him. We can't see what he does but we can imagine.

JAKE

This hasn't been cleaned! Why hasn't this aircraft been cleaned!

He comes down the ladder glaring at McCrae, Hardesty, Maggot.

MAGGOT

I'll clean it myself Sir--I'm sorry--

JAKE

You do that Maggot--You get that thing clean!

He turns and leaves--his footsteps clear on the metal floor--Camparelli comes over.

MAGGOT

I'm sorry sir--I--

CAMPARELLI

Don't explain son--just get it done--Mr. Grafton won't hold it against you--Just upset.

MAGGOT

Nobody's ever come back here dead--like that sir--whole ship knows about it lot of 'em come up an look at it. I don't know why we didn't clean it sir. People die sir--They just gone--not like this sir--

CAMPARELLI

It's alright son.

CUT TO:

INTELLIGENCE WARDROOM--Jake wanders in--a young clerk is filing papers.

JAKE

Where's Mr. Duffy.

CLERK

Mr. Duffy.

DUFFY, a slick looking Lieutenant comes in from a green lit room. Jake is looking at the large maps of North Vietnam--many areas are covered with red plastic with the word RESTRICTED in day-glow orange. Jake looks at the city of Hanoi and the port of Haiphong, both restricted.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

You wanted to see me Duffy?--

He lifts up one of the plastic covers.

JAKE (cont.)

You think there's anything valuable
in here-- like we shouldn't see it--
What's the most valuable asset
they have Duffy?

DUFFY

Ho Chi Minhn's grave.

JAKE

Be serious.

DUFFY

I am serious. They don't have
anything worth a damn. If they
did we'd have bombed it.

JAKE

Bullshit--you know that isn't true.
(to himself)

If they had anything it'd be up North--in
Hanoi--What'd you want me for anyway?

He looks behind the red plastic.

DUFFY

You know that day strike you and Morg
flew about a week ago in the south?

JAKE

We refueled at Da Nang?

DUFFY

Yeah--that one-- Army Special Forces
recon team did a bomb damage assessment.
Thirty seven confirmed KIA's. That's some body
count eh' Buddy.

Jake turns sharply on Duffy--glances but controls himself.

JAKE

Thirty seven?

DUFFY

Yep--plastered 'em buddy--thirty
seven--those green beanies counted--

(CONTINUED)

JAKE (cold)
You think I need to know that?
If you did what I do, would you
want to know?

Duffy is taken aback.

JAKE (cont.) (low)
Would you? Look--I do my job but I
don't have to be told things like that--
If you know--then keep it to yourself--
just keep it too yourself.

He leaves.

CUT TO:

SAMMY--walking down a hallway to Camparelli's office at the
end of the hall. The door is open and Lt. Razor is standing
at attention. We can't see Camparelli but we can sure hear
him.

CAMPARELLI (O.S.)
Do you even know who I am, You sorry
sack of shit?

RAZOR
Yes Sir, You're Commander Camparelli Sir.

CAMPARELLI (O.S.)
What kind of name is Camparelli--it is an Italian
American name. My family are third generation
Mafia son. They were forced to make a living in
gambling, extortion, and murder so that their boy
could fly jet aircraft for the U.S. Navy--

Sammy leans against the bulkhead smiling.

CAMPARELLI
I take this job seriously, do you
understand that son?

RAZOR
Yes Sir--I do sir.

CAMPARELLI
Then get out of my sight--Dismissed.

Razor leaves--Sammy steps in.

CAMPARELLI
Don't laugh--he's your new wing man.

(CONTINUED)

He looks down, shuffles--then looks up earnestly at Sammy.

CAMPARELLI (low, to Sammy)
There's a pair of hangar queens going
to Subic tomorrow. You take one, I'll
put Grafton and maybe Mad Jack in the
other one. As soon as you get Jake
off the deck, fly him dizzy, get him
drunk, get him laid, anything to wind
him down--before he does something
nuts and goes up in flames--

CUT TO:

JAKE, staring at his coffee cup, fighting for control.

CAMPARELLI (over)
--All that guy needs is the scratch
on the match. (hold--then)

CUT TO:

MORNING; THE COCKPIT OF AN A-6 being readied for take off. Mad Jack, all rigged out in flight gear, is gingerly squeezing himself into the bombardier's seat beside Jake. The Doctor stares goggle eyed at the instrument panel while Jake checks the controls.

JAKE
Just keep your hands in your lap and
don't touch a thing. The only
exception will be if we have to eject.
Then you grab this--
(pointing to a handle)
--And yank. The command will be
eject, eject, eject. Three times.
Got that?

MAD JACK
Do I say Roger, or just do it?

JAKE
If you even say huh you'll be talking
to yourself, because I'll be gone.

As Mad Jack gulps, and the plane starts to taxi toward the catapult.

CUT TO:

THE TWO INTRUDERS are blasted from the deck in a cloud of steam. Hold as they climb for the distance, then

CUT TO:

JAKE, IN THE COCKPIT as they breeze along. Beside him, Mad Jack is trying to get his breath--and his stomach--under control.

JAKE

Fun, huh? This will be about the most exciting thing you've ever done with your clothes on--
(as Mad Jack nods weakly)

DISSOLVE TO:

THE TWO INTRUDERS, roaring low across the water.

CUT TO:

JAKE'S COCKPIT, as the other Intruder pulls alongside, wagglng it's wings.

SAMMY (over radio)

Hey, Cool Hand, wanna go upstairs and tangle?

JAKE (indifferently)

What for?

SAMMY (over radio)

--MONEY--HARD CASH!

Jake looks sideways at him--then yanks his stick back. As the cockpit tilts sharply and Mad Jack gasps--

JAKE

Five Dollars.

CUT TO:

SAMMY'S A-6, vaulting up after Jake. The two planes blasting up through a vast, curving, sunlit hall in the clouds--like a breathtaking side to side swoop in an uphill slalom, right on toward the sun, until

CUT TO:

JAKE, IN HIS COCKPIT, gauging the distance to the other plane.

JAKE

Now?

SAMMY (over radio)

Anytime, Cool Hand.

CUT TO:

JAKES'S PLANE, banking one way, and Sammy's plane, banking the other.

CUT TO:

SAMMY (over radio)
You're on. I'm gonna wax your
personal ass, Mother.

CUT TO:

FROM JAKE'S COCKPIT--a dot in the sky rushing headlong toward him.

JAKE
Get your money ready--

MAD JACK, closing his eyes, and

CUT TO:

THE TWO PLANES, tearing past each other about fifty feet apart. They flash by us in the wink of an eye, then bank sharply, and

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, Jake craning his head.

JAKE
Damn, I lost him--

MAD JACK
(weakly, pointing to a
gauge)
Does that say--5 G's?

As they slam into another turn,

CUT TO:

SAMMY, IN HIS COCKPIT,

PAN TO:

JAKE'S PLANE, coming at him broadside--

CUT TO:

THE VIEW THROUGH JAKE'S WINDSCREEN--Sammy's plane ahead, plunging down, down, down. Then as the nose comes up and it starts to loop--

JAKE
Here's where we finish him--

(CONTINUED)

Climbing, climbing, clawing upward, almost at the vertical, slowing as it begins to lose flight speed, slower, straining, slower--

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP, INSIDE THE COCKPIT, MAD JACK looking around in alarm, ready to pass out.

MAD JACK
Are we stopping--?

JAKE
Sure. It's the top of the slide.

MAD JACK
The top of--the what?
(as they simply drop out
of the frame)

CUT TO:

THE PLANE sliding backwards, spinning, tumbling toward the earth. Then as it recovers, Mad Jack vomits into his glove.

MAD JACK
Five dollars?--That for five dollars!

JAKE
Give yourself some pure oxygen--

He points to a button--Mad jack hits it--breathes again.

JAKE
What do you think Jack? Is it worth
the final crash?

CUT TO:

SAMMY IN HIS COCKPIT, looking vainly around.

SAMMY
Shit, you see him?
A beat, then:

JAKE (over radio)
I see youuuuuu--

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE COCKPIT, JAKE exuberantly pounding the slumped helmet beside him.

JAKE
Yahoo! We're having fun now, Morg--

(CONTINUED)

Mad Jack turns and smiles at him wanly. A beat while Jake just stares, realizing--as Sammy's plane swoops by them overhead, a perfect target, but--

CUT TO:

JAKE'S INTRUDER. It banks away, breaking off the action.

SAMMY (over radio)
Come on, best two out of three.

CUT TO:

JAKE, IN HIS COCKPIT. The light has gone out of his eyes.

JAKE
That's all you get for five dollars.

CUT TO:

RUNWAY--SUBIC BAY. Jake's Intruder taxis off the runway onto the hardstand where it will be serviced. The canopy slides back and the two men take off their helmets.

JAKE
Well Doc?

MAD JACK
Well Grafton--I can see how you feel--not for me, but maybe it is worth the final crash.

CUT TO:

THE OFFICER'S CLUB AT SUBIC BAY. Sammy, Boxman, Augie, in a happy little liberty group beside the pool with their drinks--except for Jake, who is sitting quietly apart, lost in thought. Boxman has the apple cheeked Razor on the edge of his chair.

BOXMAN (solemnly)
No shit--it's the biggest cathouse east of Port Said.

RAZOR
Are the girls clean?

BOXMAN
You could stress your main spar, shipmate. Really hurt yourself.

(CONTINUED)

RAZOR

But are the girls clean?

BOXMAN

Clean? --Are you afraid of a
few bugs son-- are you afraid
of disease. What kind of aviator
are you?

PAN TO REVEAL: A LIEUTENANT COMMANDER we haven't seen before,
at the bar. His face sharp and chiseled behind aviator
sunglasses. He wears three rows of ribbons, the DFC with two
stars, etc. He has a laconic smile behind a big cigar. He
studies the group--especially Jake--

CLOSE SAMMY looking over at Jake and then at the Lt.
Cmdr.--he sits up-

SAMMY

So who's on for Po City?

(CONTINUED)

BOXMAN

Is the Pope Catholic. It's not my fault that I like women--I'm a driven man and they know it. I'm flying top cover for Razor--it's his first mission--They'll paint you Kid as soon as you get in the door--lock on--But you push through cause you gotta deliver that ordinance.

LITTLE AUGIE

Boxman--if your rod was as sharp as your tongue you'd have to stamp a number on the thing and store it in the ship's safe.

BOXMAN

They don't call me the Boxman for nothing Kid.

JAKE

Checklist

BOXMAN

Yeah--preflight, Kid--Money?

RAZOR

Yeah--I'm cool.

BOXMAN

Prophylactics?

RAZOR

Got a spare?

BOXMAN

I carry twenty five. Earplugs?

RAZOR

Earplugs? What for.

BOXMAN

You don't wanta hear 'em scream. What about a mask?

RAZOR

Mask?

ALL OF THEM

We hate the smell of burning rubber.

(CONTINUED)

They all get up except Jake. Sammy steps over to him.

SAMMY

You coming Jake? Cold beer, hot
women--put the war in perspective.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

I'll catch you later--I got something
to take care of--perspective.

He leaves, Jake looks over--the Lt. Cmdr. is still watching out
of the corner of his eye--Jake leaves--

DISSOLVE TO:

A SMALL BUNGALOW--OFFICER HOUSING. Jake walks up the walkway
through a broken picket fence. The doors and windows are open--
Jake looks in--the place is bare--empty. He hears movement--goes
in.

CUT TO:

THE EMPTY LIVING ROOM. A WILLOWY BLONDE GIRL with long hair is
kneeling over a packing carton--children's toys and looks are
spread around her. She looks up at Jake.

JAKE

--Sorry--I was looking for Mrs.
McPherson.

THE BLONDE

Sharon's gone--I'm Callie Troy.

He doesn't respond.

CALLIE (cont.)

Her husband was killed.

JAKE

I know.

CALLIE

You making a duty call? Did they send
you here to stroke the widow? Well
she's gone-- she went back to the
States.

JAKE

Who're you?

CALLIE

I'm helping pack their stuff--I'm a
friend of hers--not an old friend--the
Navy pays me to help people like
Sharon--but she is my friend--What
am I telling you this for anyway?
I'm talking to myself. Did you know
the McPhersons?

JAKE

Yeah--I knew them.

(CONTINUED)

There is an uneasy silence. She stands and looks at him.

CALLIE

What can I say Mr. Lieutenant--they were here but now they're gone--like a lot of people these days. When you get in your airplane and fly away alone--sometimes you don't come back.

JAKE

He wasn't alone--He came back and
(pause)
I was with him.

He turns and goes. Callie stares at him realizing what she's done.

CUT TO:

EARLY EVENING, JAKE AT THE WHEEL OF A JEEP--but a different Jake now. He's obviously made a few pit stops since leaving Callie, swigging from a can of beer while he drives carelessly almost savagely through the narrow streets near the base. As he careens around a corner,

PAN AHEAD TO:

SAMMY AND BOXMAN, half in the bag themselves, walking with that cool Lt. Cmdr. we saw in the bar, still chewing his cigar. Jake leans on the horn, swerves recklessly in to cut them off.

JAKE(waving his beer)

Alllll right. We got bandits inbound,
let's scramble--

SAMMY

Yo Cool Hand--great, man.

BOXMAN

Hey Cool Hand you know who this
is--our new buddy--gonna join the
posse. What's your name Shipmate?

LT. CMDR.

Cole--Virgil Cole.

The man is tanned with broad shoulders, glinting blue eyes that don't move away--but always the hint of a smile as though he is quietly amused with the plight of man.

JAKE

How do you like to be called--

LT. CMDR.

Virgil Cole.

(CONTINUED)

RAZOR

This is his third tour. He knows
his shit--You got the DFC didn't you?

COLE

Does it matter?

He keeps an eye on Jake. Jake wrenches the Jeep into gear,
scorching off in a squeal of rubber.

JAKE

Hell no. Next stop, Po City.
(crunching his beer
can, breaking open another)
You wanna relax? Let's relax.
(and from his murderous grin,)

CUT TO:

THE FOOT BRIDGE that connects the Naval Base with the honky
tonk slum of Olangapo, better known as Po City. Jake's Jeep
skids to a stop at the base end. As the men climb out and
start across,

WE GO WITH THEM ALONG THE BRIDGE

The river underneath is really nothing more than a large
drainage ditch, filled with sewage and an army of Filipino
children in rickety row boats begging from sailors. Now a
SCRAWNY KID stands in one of the boats, calling to Jake, who
throws him a quarter.

SCRAWNY KID

Thanks Joe. Hope you don't catch the clap.

Jake pauses to look at the boats, the ditch, the garbage, the
tacky dives ahead.

JAKE

Filmed on location in Hell.

CUT TO:

INSIDE ONE OF THE SHABBY JOINTS. As the door opens and
Boxman leads the men in--a garishly painted TEEN-AGE B-GIRL
squeals and throws her arms around him.

B-GIRL

Ah, Box, you are back--

Almost all the girls at the bar and on the floor turn--
All of them saying BOXMAN?--BOXMAN! Girls swarm around,

(CONTINUED)

some are real young, some are real old, fat, skinny--they have all known the Boxman.

BOXMAN

Kerri! How's your baby? Hey Carmen-- you think I wasn't coming back--April you sweet thing, you've been working out-- I can tell.

They all kiss him, laugh and go back to their business--some linger.

JAKE

You know all these girls?

BOXMAN

I love 'em all, every one of 'em.
I'd like to marry all of 'em at once.

JAKE

Some of these are real dogs, Box.

BOXMAN

Any man can fuck a pretty girl-- besides they're all beautiful after being with you guys for 57 days.

PAN TO:

THE OTHER END OF THE JOINT, an open verandah built out over the edge of a small pond. The ugly snouts of two or three crocodiles can be seen protruding above the surface of the water--which actually happens to be one of the prime amusements of the place. Because right now a BURLY LOUDMOUTH MERCHANT SEAMAN is buying a live duckling from a nearby vendor. Holding the squawking bird, he leans over the pond railing.

LOUDMOUTH (thick redneck accent)
Heah you go, chillun, mess call--
(and he tosses the bird in
the pond)

CUT TO:

THE DUCKING,

fluttering it's wings, paddling toward the edge--when the open jaw of an crocodile suddenly emerges from the water, and the hapless bird vanishes in a flurry of feathers.

LOUDMOUTH
Hey duck soup! The menu is duck soup.
(as he laughs inanely--)

--Boxman, Jake and the others are crossing the raucous room filled with drunken sailors.

BOXMAN
--Stay close Razor and don't make a
move without me.

Jake and Boxman, elbowing in beside Maggot and half-plastered Cowboy Parker at the bar, who turns to them cheerfully.

COWBOY
It could be any of you--especially
you Lundeen--You'd shit anywhere.
You're a goddamn pervert.

PAN TO INCLUDE:

NEXT TO THEM--DUFFY, passed out cold, lying buck naked face down along the top of the bar. His bare buttocks are daintily decorated with a maraschino cherry.

JAKE
Is he alive?

COWBOY
Whaddya mean? Everybody knows you
put a drunk face down, so he won't
drown if he pukes. Weren't you ever
in the Boy Scouts?

(CONTINUED)

JAKE
Makes sense

Jake takes a beer from Cowboy and drinks it.

COWBOY
Grafton! That was my specimen for
Mad Jack--Let me know if you want some
more--Ready for the Beast?

PAN TO INCLUDE:

THE BEAST, a mock cockpit set up on rails at one side of the room. The rails run down an incline through an open door and out to another stagnant pool of goop. The only way the passenger can avoid being doused is to manipulate a control in the cockpit that works a makeshift tailhook which grabs a restraining wire across the tracks.

As we watch, a pilot climbs in, a compressed air charge goes off, the cockpit shoots forward. The half buzzed pilot jerks the control--but the hook misses and he ends up in a spray of muddy water to a chorus of hoots and jeers.

JAKE
(turning to the bleary guy
on his other side
Hey, you a fighter pilot?

The man fixes him with a drunken stare.

PILOT
Never ask a man if he's a fighter
pilot, my friend. If he is, he'll
tell you--if he isn't, don't embarrass
him.

BOXMAN (leaning in with a sneer)
Fighter pilots make movies. Bomber
pilots make history.

PILOT
Prove it asshole--night landing 50
bucks.

JAKE
You're on motherfucker--100.

The pilot nods--Jake is grabbed and rushed to the beast and is hoisted and strapped in.

JAKE
Who's gonna launch me?

(CONTINUED)

McCrae pushes through surrounded in girls--little ones, big ones, all holding onto him. He wears a t-shirt that reads "World's Finest Cat Officer".

MCCRAE (booming)
It's my job--I do that.

BOXMAN
Hey Chief where'd you get all the girls?

MCCRAE
They love me--You know there's no substitute for cubic inches--ALRIGHT
NIGHT CARRIER LANDING!

The lights go out.

JAKE
Jesus.

MCCRAE
I don't hear your engine running and
I don't see your salute.

Taking their cue, everyone in the place--including the half-bombed Jake--begins to roar like a jet engine. Jake salutes, whereupon McCrae twirls his hand, then whips it down in a wide arc to the floor, the classic launch signal, and Jake, hurtling forward, water drenching his shirt. He looks like a goner--but at the last instant he flicks the control just right--and the beast stops just short of the goop.

BOXMAN
Watch and weep, Shipmate. It's a pleasure spending your money.

CUT TO:

THE MEN AT A TABLE--with four girls now, not one of whom look a day older than sixteen. Jake is drunk and getting drunker, from time to time adding to his drink from the bottle while his TEENY-BOPPING PLAYMATE nestles next to him.

PLAYMATE
What your name, Sailor?

JAKE
Jake.

PLAYMATE
Hake?

JAKE
No, Jake. With a J.

(CONTINUED)

PLAYMATE

Oh, sure. What you do on you ship,
Hake?

JAKE

I shovel coal.

PLAYMATE

Oh, muy macho.

(then, puzzled)

Why a rich American shovel coal?

JAKE (topping his drink)

Gotta keep the boiler stoked.

SAMMY

You tell her, Cool Hand. So we can
press home our devastating attacks
on the Wham Bhang Tree Farm.

JAKE

Is it worth the final crash?

SAMMY

Man, there's nothing on that frag list
worth it.

CLOSE ON JAKE:

A wild idea flickers in his brain. For a moment he just stares.

JAKE

Sammy. Suppose--there was something.

SAMMY

Like what?

Jake leans closer, instinctively lowering his voice so no one
else at the table can hear.

JAKE

I don't know, something not on the
list, something worth the trip. I
mean, what the hell, nobody knows
where you are after you cross the
beach.

SAMMY (a dismissing wave)

You can't just go barging off without
intelligence, map coordinates, all
that shit. And what if your next
Bombardier didn't feel like playing
John Wayne. You wanna get
court-martialed?

(CONTINUED)

JAKE (a sobering thought)
 Yeah, he'd have to be in on it,
 wouldn't he.
 (beat)
 He'd have to be in on it--
 (as he drinks)

PAN TO:

VIRGIL COLE,

sitting across the table, looking at him, still with that faint smile. Jake looks back.

JAKE
 Something funny?

COLE
 Not yet.

JAKE
 You don't talk much, do you?

COLE
 Nope.

PAN TO:

THAT BURLY LOUDMOUTH from the crocodile pond again, now shouldering up to the bar with a half dozen of his yahoo buddies. He shoves rudely in beside the black kid, Maggot, who is about half his size.

LOUDMOUTH
 Hey, what does a WHITE MAN have to
 do to get a drink around here?

CUT TO: JAKE AND SAMMY, woozily watching the Loudmouth from their table.

JAKE
 Is that an asshole, or is that an
 asshole?

SAMMY
 Asshole. Confirmed.

CUT TO:

THE BAR. As Maggot's beer is put in front of him--the Loudmouth deliberately takes it, chugs half of it down, then belches loudly in his face.

MAGGOT
 Come on, Man, let's not hassle. We're
 all on liberty.

(CONTINUED)

LOUDMOUTH

'Cept you got yours from Lincoln,
didn't you boy?

CUT TO:

JAKE. He rises, eyes fixed on the Sailor.

JAKE

You with me, Sam?

SAMMY

Stepping into attack.

Jake and Sammy, stroll casually over to the Loudmouth, now pawing a Teeny Bopper who looks about fourteen. Sliding up beside him at the bar, Jake flashes his friendliest smile.

JAKE

Hey, Sailor. Lemme see you do that
again.

LOUDMOUTH

Do what? I'm busy man.

JAKE

I mean, the way you handled yourself
at that pond. You're a natural.

LOUDMOUTH (pausing)

No shit, you think so?

JAKE

If I ever saw one.
(taking his arm)
C'mon. Let's feed those gators.

The crowd follows as the Loudmouth allows himself to be led back toward the pond. When they reach the railing, the Sailor turns to the duckling vendor, but Jake takes out his own wallet first.

JAKE

This one's on me.

As the Loudmouth reaches for the bird--Jake nods briskly at Sammy. In perfect unison they reach down together and grab the Sailor's ankles, then lift smartly, and the Loudmouth, going over the rail headfirst. He lets out a startled wail--cut off abruptly as his head goes under water. Jake intends to do nothing more than dunk the guy, of course, and hangs onto the ankle he is holding; but with a flourish--Sammy suddenly lets go.

JAKE

Jesus, whaddya doing--

CUT TO:

THE HAPLESS LOUDMOUTH, halfway under the filthy water, flailing helplessly. An ugly crocodile snout submarining ominously toward him.

CUT TO:

JAKE, straining to hold him back, but it's too much weight.

JAKE

Hey, Christ, it's not funny--

As the Sailor sinks lower, lower--suddenly another hand reaches in and grabs his pants pulling the frantic Sailor back up over the railing. While the loudmouth sputters, slime dripping from his hair,

PAN TO REVEAL:

The other rescuer: none other than Virgil Cole. He extends his hand to Jake.

COLE

I'm your new bombardier-navigator.

(as Jake stares, Cole's eyes
dart to one side)

--Duck.

Jake does--just as a roundhouse right sails over his head, and

PAN TO:

THE LOUDMOUTH, lunging at Jake in a dripping rage. Jake stiffens him with a hammer to the gut, then smashes one to the mouth, his face full of the pent up fury that has been building in him all night. But the Loudmouth simply shakes off the punch and comes right back, plastering Jake with a roundhouse left that sends him sprawling, at which

CUT TO:

BOXMAN, He promptly crunches the nearest man with his beer can--and the crowd erupts in a wild drunken free for all, sailors brawling, B-Girls screaming and loose duckling quacking underfoot. In the midst of the bedlam

WE PICK OUT

ONE OF THE LOUDMOUTH'S MONSTER BUDDIES storming at Cole, who dodges aside in a neat judo twist and sends the guy reeling off balance toward the door to the john--just as it opens.

The Monster's momentum carries him through the doorway, arms flailing, then banging right into a toilet stall--where a startled sailor is sitting on the throne. As they both collapse in a heap and the door bangs shut behind them--

(CONTINUED)

COLE

Nature calls.

(as he melts discreetly
into the crowd)

Jake, still tangling with the Loudmouth. Justice is on Jake's side and it would be nice if he were winning. But forget justice, this guy is simply too big. Every time Jake gets up the Loudmouth knocks him down again, and Jake is just about finished--when the Loudmouth is suddenly straightened by a stiff left, and

--The slender little Maggot wades briskly in. A left, a right, then three quick combinations turn him around into the hands of McCrae--real terror registers on his face as McCrae raises him overhead and towards the crocodile pond--

MCCRAE

Mess Call--Mess Call.

CUT TO:

JAKE just has time to salute Maggot--when suddenly there is the sound of shrill whistles, and

PAN TO INCLUDE:

A DETACHMENT OF THE SHORE PATROL, barging in the front door on the double. Jake takes one look at the blue uniforms and does a Brody out the nearest Window into

CUT TO:

AN ALLEY BEHIND THE JOINT. As Jake scrambles to his feet and dashes toward the street,

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE BAR men spewing out the door in all directions. Razor staggers unsteadily up to one of the gaily decorated Filipino jeep-taxis, which is already packed with drunken sailors trying to get away.

RAZOR (to driver)

Hey, you got room for a six-pack and a pizza?

DRIVER

Sure sailor--Okay--

Whereupon Razor promptly sticks his head in and throws up in the back seat. As the whistles keep blowing,

CUT TO:

A DARK ALLEY--Jake and Boxman run along, taking cover and tripping over trash. Jake falls into someone's garden.

JAKE

Shit--I'm in shit.

Sirens sound--more SHORE PATROL go by in jeeps.

BOXMAN

You tactical Bro?

JAKE

Not yet.

He stumbles to his feet--Suddenly lights catch them--a vehicle is upon them--comes to an abrupt halt. Boxman puts his hand up to see through the light. It's a colorfully painted jitney--seemingly empty.

BOXMAN

Saved man--Hey! Amigo.
Soldators Americano.

The erect figure of Cole steps out from the back.

COLE

Emergency Egress gentlemen--get
to it--buster.

They pile in.

CUT TO:

OFFICERS CLUB AT CUBI PT., Jake and Boxman walk in trying to keep steady. Neither look too good but they have managed to pull themselves together. A small Filipino band plays for married officers who want to dance with their wives and daughters. As Jake and Boxman approach the bar they see the familiar ram-rod straight figure of Cole already there, drinking coffee.

JAKE

I really appreciate you getting
me out there Box. I know how
I spoiled your evening--your
reputation.

BOXMAN

It's not me Cool Hand, it's the
girls, think of them.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

You're going back?

BOXMAN

My wingman, Razor--he's still
out there--alone.

(CONTINUED)

He salutes.

BOXMAN
Adios compadre.

He's gone--Jake turns, Cole gets up--steel blue eyes piercing through him.

COLE
You'll be alright Mr. Grafton?

JAKE
I'm tactical.

He leaves--Jake feels relieved--drinks Cole's coffee.

CUT TO:

CALLIE sitting with another couple. She sees the man at the bar. Is he the one? He is. She says something to the others and excuses herself.

Jake--looks down the bar motions to the bartender and doesn't see her come up next to him. He turns around to find her there.

CALLIE
I know it's foolish of me to come up like this but I'm a little drunk and I made a fool of myself earlier--I was a real shit and--

He puts his finger on her mouth.

JAKE
Slow down--

CALLIE
--and I guess I owe you one.

JAKE
--Owe me one?

CALLIE
I want to make it right by you. What can I do?

JAKE
Dance.

CUT TO:

THEY DANCE--rock and roll--she's pretty good--he's crazy--

JAKE
I make up all my own moves.

(CONTINUED)

CALLIE
Seems like it.

JAKE
I learned when I was a hippie.

CUT TO:

THE TWO DANCE CLOSE to "Help Me Make It Through the Night". They move and listen to the words. They don't hold each other as much as hold onto each other. Neither can look in the other's eyes but the song breaks them down and slowly Jake's gaze turns to her. At first she looks down but then she tilts her head back looking him deep in the eyes. They are riveted by a desperate need and they stare so hard into one another that she gasps. All timidity and fear are absorbed and burned up by the need. Right now at this precise time and place they know each other better than anyone in the universe.

CUT TO:

CALLIE'S APARTMENT on the Base--a small section of a bungalow. Jake and Callie go inside arm in arm. Jake turns off the light but through the windows we see them silhouetted. Jake sits down, Callie walks over to the window stretches, and pulls her dress off slowly over her head. She walks back slowly to Jake, he puts his hands around her hips and pulls her slowly to him. She leans over takes his head in her hands and leans down into a long desperate kiss--devil be damned.

CUT TO:

BEDROOM--in the light of the window they make love. We can't really see them but we can hear them in their ferocity. They spend themselves gasping and then lie sweating and breathing unable to say anything.

CLOSE JAKE--He stares up at the ceiling--he wants to say something. He wants to let it all out, to crumble, to collapse and so he drifts off into sleep.

CUT TO:

MORNING LIGHT POURS THROUGH. Jake's eyes flick open, he's awake. He looks over at Callie--she senses it and wakes up too. Without saying anything both are embarrassed. She covers herself with the sheet.

JAKE
I know how you feel--I'll--I'll get dressed in the other room so you can have some privacy.

(CONTINUED)

She just looks at him. He slips into his pants quietly and grabs his thighs and tiptoes out to the adjoining room.

CUT TO:

IN THE OTHER ROOM which is curtained and dark he closes the door and turns around to find a LITTLE GIRL sleeping in a child's bed.

JAKE

Oh Jesus!

He slips quiet into the bathroom.

CUT TO:

CALLIE--

sitting by the window dressed and combing her hair. She turns around to find Jake standing there.

JAKE

Your daughter?

CALLIE

That's right--

JAKE

Where's her father.

CALLIE

Somewhere all over North Vietnam.
No one knows for sure.

Jake sits down.

CALLIE

He was a Photo Recce Pilot off the Oriskany--F-8's. He went out one day alone and the SAM's got him. He called three of them before he stopped transmitting. Since no one was with him and his body was never found, they have him listed as MIA. Of course it isn't true but it keeps me here until it's straightened out--the Navy gave me a job--

JAKE

Stroking the widows--And I was gonna tell you my problems.

(CONTINUED)

He looks up at her.

JAKE (cont.)
You knew I was a pilot--

CALLIE
I married a pilot.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE
Didn't it make you remember?

CALLIE
Maybe I wanted to remember.

The little girl walks in.

CALLIE
Jake this is Sallie--Sallie--Jake.

JAKE
Sallie and Callie--How old are you Sallie?

SALLIE
Tree.

JAKE
Tree's a good age, I liked it
myself--next to six I liked tree.

He turns to Callie

JAKE
Well we hardly know each other but
I've got a few days left--Could I escort you all to
the beach.

DISSOLVE TO:

Jake sitting on a beach--a banana leaf over his head while
Sallie makes a sand pit at the edge of the water. Callie
appears asleep. Jake watches Sally--the sea stretches away
forever--anything is possible--Jake smiles.

A figure of a stocky young kid runs up the beach, doing his
jogging. As he draws close we see it is Hardesty. He stops
looks at Jake, smiles embarrassed.

HARDESTY
Mr. Grafton sir.

JAKE
Hardesty--how's your wife?

HARDESTY
She's--she's fine
sir--I really appreciate
what you've done for me sir--

Callie wakes up--Sallie struts over.

(CONTINUED)

HARDESTY

Nice to meet you Mrs. Grafton. You have a beautiful daughter sir--A beautiful family--I want to thank you again sir.

JAKE

Think nothing of it Hardesty--enjoy yourself--one day left.

HARDESTY

Yes Sir--and Sir--I'm sorry about any trouble I've caused you Sir.

JAKE

No trouble Hardesty.

He salutes and nods.

HARDESTY

Mrs. Grafton.

He runs off with Sallie chasing him. Jake watches--smiles.

JAKE

Beautiful family--

CALLIE

Don't you have a girl somewhere Jake?

JAKE

Had one--

CALLIE

Where is she now?

JAKE

Probably on Mars--She used to write me letters while she was ripped on acid--but then she found something else to do.

(pause)

But that seems like a hundred years ago--

He looks at her.

JAKE

You know Callie-- I haven't enjoyed myself this much since I was in High School--Don't remember I enjoyed myself as much in High School. I know we don't want to make any more complications than we have to but--well--

(CONTINUED)

CALLIE

What're you trying to say Jake?

JAKE

Well I'd like to write to you--if
that'd be alright.

CALLIE

I'd like that Jake--it would be
fine--I'd like it very much.

DISSOLVE TO:

NIGHT--CALLIE'S APARTMENT--she sleeps next to Jake. He
sleeps fitfully, a wind blows the thin gauze curtains before
a rain. Jake comes awake suddenly. The rain pours down. He
gets up quietly--looks out the window pulling a bathrobe
around himself. He goes out onto the veranda and stands in
the rain.

(CONTINUED)

A moment later Callie appears behind him--draws him back under the shelter of the veranda. But Jake's gaze is far away, looking at: the dark silhouette of the carrier, riding at anchor in the night, waiting to go back to sea. There is the howl of an engine--

CUT TO:

BACK AT SEA: AN INTRUDER with smoke trailing from it's engine limping in to land over the stern of the carrier. As the plane's wheels screech on the deck and the tailhook grabs,

PULL BACK INSIDE A HUGE WINDOW TO: THE HEAD OF FLIGHT known as the AIR BOSS, watching like a hawk from the Operations Center.

AIR BOSS (barking into P.A.)
Get that smoker outta there. Buster,
buster, we gotta strike to launch.
I need a green deck--
(and amid all the bustle--)

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

JAKE, pausing outside the area, then moving quietly on.

CUT TO:

FURTHER ALONG THE PASSAGEWAY: JAKE drifting along, trying to be inconspicuous. Reaching the entrance to another compartment he looks around to be sure no one is watching, then slips quickly inside. The sign beside the door reads MISSION PLANING: LT. WM. DUFFY. Hold, then

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE COMPARTMENT: FILE CABINETS, map drawers, coding machines. An enlisted man acting as CLERK looks up from his desk as Jake enters.

CLERK
Help you, Lieutenant?

JAKE
Maybe...(a casual look). Duffy
around?

CLERK
He went up to Communications for
tonight's frag list. If there's
nothing I can do--

PAN TO INCLUDE:

(CONTINUED)

THE BULKHEAD BEHIND THE DESK, covered with large situation maps of Vietnam. On all of them the cities in the North are marked RESTRICTED; NO TARGETS.

JAKE

You happen to have any large scale maps of Hanoi. Need to see how they lay out the SAM site patterns--gonna be flying IRON HAND--I've got a theory.

The Clerk opens a file cabinet, pulls out a chart.

CLERK

Just this. No buildings, just a few main roads...this is all pretty general, but that's about it, Lieutenant. There's a good National Geographic article--1967

JAKE

Yeah, at least they have pictures.
(as if in an afterthought)
Don't suppose we have any...pictures.

CLERK

Air Force takes all the restricted pictures--We get our frag lists from them--Sorry.

JAKE

That's okay, forget it. I just wondered.

A VOICE (O.S.)

What're you doing here, Grafton?

PAN TO INCLUDE:

DUFFY, coming into the compartment with some papers, stiff and huffy at the sight of Jake.

JAKE

Nothing Duffy--Hey, let's you and I mend our fences--I'm sorry about blowing up at you.

DUFFY

It's alright Grafton--I appreciate that--I guess I shouldn't have told you that stuff.

They shake hands embarrassed--Jake leaves.

(CONTINUED)

HOLD ON DUFFY:

He hands his papers to the Clerk. When Jake is gone,

DUFFY

You wanna watch out for him. He's got a short fuse.

CLERK

Oh, he's okay, Sir. Just looking for some stuff about Hanoi.

DUFFY

Said he was sorry--Wonder if he meant it?

Glancing down at the photos, he suddenly stops, struck by something.

DUFFY (Cont.)

--WHAT did you say he wanted?
(as he looks thoughtfully
after Jake)

CUT TO:

JAKE hurries down the passageway.

A FAMILIAR VOICE

Grafton!

PAN TO SEE:

CAMPARELLI--in his underwear and t-shirt--cigar in mouth sitting in his stateroom. Razor stands at attention.

CAMPARELLI

Get in here--You were part of this too.

Jake smiles, comes in, snaps to attention.

CAMPARELLI

Stand at ease Grafton--What's this crap about you attempting to feed a Merchant Seaman to some crocodiles. Is this correct Grafton?

JAKE

Sir--it is correct sir--as far as I remember it. I was in an advanced state of inebriation Sir.

CAMPARELLI

What happened?

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

I attempted to throw the aforementioned puke to the crocodiles sir, but his belt caught on the railing and I failed. An altercation then ensued Sir.

CAMPARELLI

700 bucks damage--30 men in the brig and you got away.

JAKE

Using escape and evasion techniques I was able to avoid capture sir.

CAMPARELLI

Who was with you?

JAKE

I'd rather not say Sir.

CAMPARELLI (indicating Razor)

That's what he said--Razor were you with this maniac?

RAZOR

I'd rather not say sir.

CAMPARELLI

Alright I'll cover your asses, both of you because you told the truth and kept the faith but if I catch either one of you shitting in some vital area of my ship you'll be keel hauled! Get out of here Cool Hand.

JAKE

Yes Sir.

He steps out and walks smiling down the hall.

CAMPARELLI

As for you Razor--running with known psychopaths--Who am I Razor?

RAZOR

You're third generation Mafia Sir.

CAMPARELLI

Wrong! You rodent--I was built with this ship--I am a weapons system and there were cost overruns. COST OVERRUNS!

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

JAKE STATEROOM

CLOSE UP: PHOTOS of a drab city with large boulevards a communist Paris--Hanoi. Pull back to reveal Jake looking through a National Geographic. There are colorful pictures of children waving red flags, a monument to Ho Chi Minh, large bleak two and three story government buildings.

CUT TO:

THE READY ROOM. The Squadron Duty Officer smiles as he speaks.

DUTY OFFICER

The only A-6B qualified crew,
Jackson and Greves were scrubbed
because they didn't have a day
trap--It's regulations. What can
I do? --So your B/N here volunteered
you for SAM suppression. Ever pull
Ironhand duty? You fly the B?

Jake's mouth hangs open.

JAKE

I'm not B qualified--I've never
sat in the damned thing.

DUTY OFFICER

Well Mr. Cole has--besides you're
all we got.

Jake turns to Cole who has that hint of a smile behind his eyes.

COLE

I used to be an instructor on
the B. Only difference is a few
black boxes and they're all mine.
Relax--Flow with it--

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI. Starring out at us--a briefing in progress.

CAMPARELLI

The Dormier power complex.

Pictures of a hydro-electric facility behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI (cont.)

They know we know and will act accordingly. You can expect anything. A maximum effort. The A-7's are plastering the gun positions right now. Soon as it's dark I'll lead the first strike force which will be Razor, Big Augie, and Sammy. Box will lead the second element. Grafton and Cole have been so nice as to offer to suppress the SAM's for us.

Clapping, everyone turns to look at Jake.

CAMPARELLI (cont.)

Mr. Cole you pretty good at Ironhand I understand.

COLE

I'm into killing SAM's--Ironhand is my thing.

CAMPARELLI

A section of F-4's will be top cover, call sign Mustang. Gentleman let's boogie.

CUT TO:

AN A-6 being hurled into the night.

The A-6B, Devil 511 is loaded for a gunfight with SAM's. Under it's wings hang two huge STANDARD ARM's (anti-radiation missiles) and two smaller SHRIKE's. The plane wings into the last fading light.

JAKE (O.S.)

Supertime.

COCKPIT. Jake and Cole in the light of the panels.

COLE

Just remember--don't look at it--they'll blind you--otherwise it's a simple deal. As soon as the SAM's get high enough, we're locked on their radar and our friends home in. They either have to shut off and lose the missile or eat the SHRIKE. Even if they shut off, the new STARM can remember where they were--mean bastards eh?

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

I never heard you talk so much
at one time.

COLE

Look, I hate SAM's--I get worked up
thinking about them. When I tell
you what to do--Just make sure you
do it.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE
This is gonna be a real love affair.

COLE
BREAK LEFT!

Jake automatically slams the stick over, rams the throttles ahead.

The A-6B--pitches into a hard left rolling turn.

COLE (V.O.)
That's enough--just checking.

THE COCKPIT--Jake glances over at Cole--who seems amused. The shore line passes below.

JAKE (radio)
Devil 511 feet dry.

CONTROLLER (over)
Roger 511, we copy feet dry. Good hunting, Cool Hand.

JAKE
You happy with the altitude.

COLE
Yeah--let 'em know we're here.

A tone begins.

COLE
And it seems they do--

CUT TO:

FROM THE COCKPIT, a small flare of light below.

COLE (cont.) (over)
--I think a SAM just lifted off.

A second brief glimmer

JAKE (over)
Shit, there's another--

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT; JAKE AND COLE.

JAKE (cont.)
Should we let one go?

COLE
Naw, don't wanna get our rocks off
too soon. Relax, let 'em throw up
more of their expensive stuff first.

CUT TO:

THE BRIGHT LIGHTS of the missiles' exhausts, veering, streaking
steadily toward the plane in the night, and

CUT TO:

JAKE, WITH COLE, watching from the cockpit. The missile warning
on the panel is blinking; the warble starts to sound loudly.
As he darts an itchy glance to Cole--

COLE (unperturbed)
The idea is to let the suckers get
real close--then turn right into them.
They can't bank tight enough to stay
with us, that's the trick.

JAKE
Bullshit. The trick is the waiting.

CUT TO:

THE TWO HOT EXHAUSTS, coming closer as they race up through the
dark, and

CUT TO:

JAKE, eyes glued, holding his breath--

CUT TO:

THE SAM's, closing fast. We can see their ominous shapes now,
almost there, and

CUT TO:

JAKE. In spite of himself his hand tightens on the stick--

COLE
Not yet--

CUT TO:

THE TWO MISSILES, looking big as telephone poles now, rushing
right up to them--

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, the missile light warbling like a maniac--

COLE

--NOW!

(as Jake slams the stick over)

CUT TO:

THE PLANE, banking sharply right at the missiles as though it had been yanked by invisible wires, and

CUT TO:

THE SAM's VEERING , trying to reverse and arch down after it, but Cole was right, they can't turn tightly enough, and

CUT TO:

JAKE, in the cockpit, watching the first SAM streak past to detonate in a blazing fireball overhead. With the blast still filling the sky, he instantly reverses the stick, and

CUT TO:

THE PLANE, dinking to the side like a shifty halfback, giving the hip, then taking it away, and

CUT TO:

--THE SECOND SAM, flashing by underneath, exploding harmlessly also. Hold, then

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, Jake drawing a ragged breath.

COLE

Not bad for a novice. You like it.

The beep in their earphones breaks in again.

JAKE

Yeah just fine. They still got us painted.

COLE (cheerfully)

I hope so. It isn't any fun until they send up three at once. Then we give the gomers on the ground our first rocket, while you dive under their babies.

JAKE

Oh, I do, huh. Where'd you get all this confidence in my ability?

(CONTINUED)

COLE (a deadpan look)
I had an uncle with a nose like yours.

Just then the missile warning flashes again, and

CUT TO:

THE VIEW FROM THE COCKPIT; the two hot dots heading in their direction, as the warning warbles again.

JAKE
Well, looks like you got the first pair--

Another glimmer joins the first two. A pause. Then one more.

JAKE (over) (cont.)
--Christ, that's four. You happy now?

COLE
I dig it.

As if that weren't enough--suddenly a voice breaks in over the radio with, "Devil 522, feet dry--"

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, no joking now.

JAKE (cont.)
--Shit, it's the Skipper on his way in.

COLE
Hey, He knows where it's at--Use him as Bait--Pickle's hot. Point at their signal, gimme one five degrees nose up--

JAKE
--This better work, or we're all gonna be hung out to dry--

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, Cole bent to the radar hood.

COLE
--Hold it there--

JAKE
--Come on, come on--

COLE
--Steadee--Interesting!

(CONTINUED)

COLE

--SHOOT!--

(as Jake squeezes the
trigger he can't resist
glancing sideways at)

PAN TO:

THE RIGHT WING, and--WHOOSH! as a brilliant fireball lights off,
outlining Cole against the dazzling glare.

COLE

--Split S, come hard left--

But Jake just sits there almost blinded.

COLE

I told you not to look. Now hang a
left and hit the chaff, goddammit--
(as Jake automatically moves
the stick)

CUT TO:

THE PLANE, clawing left, spraying a trail of chaff, just missing
the first two missiles flashing by, but

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, and through the windscreen here come the last two
RIGHT AT THEM--

COLE

--Two more, dead ahead. Down, get
the nose down--

JAKE (blinking)

--You don't have to shout, I can see--

COLE

--About time--

Jake shoves the stick forward. As the nose drops and the two
men float upwards in their seats, momentarily weightless,

CUT TO:

THE LAST TWO MISSILES, tearing right over the top of the plane,
exploding aft, just as--a distant explosion throw light up from
the ground.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT; the radar warning goes out.

(CONTINUED)

COLE
And that, children, is how it's done.
Feels so good.

In the distance below now, the flashes of bombs can be seen
exploding, filling the night with flame.

JAKE
Just made it. The bombers are in.

COLE
Okay, let's haul ass. I hate SAM's.

But as Jake starts to turn--there is another sound faintly in
their earphones.

JAKE (frowning)
Wait a minute--

COLE
Just another fire-control radar--

JAKE
Bullshit, look at the threat direction--

PAN TO INCLUDE:
THE INSTRUMENT PANEL. Another light is flickering; and with
that sound, a two tone beep growing louder, more insistent.

JAKE (cont.)
Coming up behind us--

COLE
--Maybe a conical missile scan--

Suddenly Jake stiffens.

JAKE
That's no missile--
(on his words)

CUT TO:

BEHIND THEM; A FLASH OF AN OMINOUS SHAPE with an ugly snout,
swept back wings--

CUT BACK TO:

JAKE, electrified, punching the chaff button, jamming the
stick ahead.

JAKE
--THAT'S A MIG, BABY.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE'S PLANE, rolling and diving for the deck, heading back toward the ocean.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT; Jake looking tensely behind.

JAKE

He's lost us, maybe we'll make it--

COLE (peering at the radar)

--Wait a sec. Swing back, gimme two zero degrees nose up.

JAKE

Are you crazy: That's a MIG, man, we ain't even got a lousy cannon.

COLE

We've still got a rocket. There's a radar hole down there, guiding him. I want it--

JAKE

--He'll see the rocket flash--

COLE

--Tough Shit--

JAKE

--We'll never get away--

COLE (fiercely)

Do what I told you!

A beat, then:

JAKE (working the controls)

All right, there's your two-zero degrees.

CUT TO:

THE PLANE, banking, lifting from it's dive, and

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, Cole efficiently toggling switches to arm the rocket.

COLE

Pickle's hot--That's it, right there. Just a sec...Almost...

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

Come on, you crazy bastard. Shoot the goddamn thing and let's get outta here before he figures where we are---

COLE

Close your eyes--SHOOT!

CUT TO:

THEIR PLANE, from a distance, as the igniting rocket goes off in the night. Hold, then

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Just what Jake was afraid of: the MIG pilot, watching. He rolls his plane to follow, firing his own air to air missile at the A-6B. As it streaks off,

CUT TO:

JAKE'S PLANE, diving to escape, and

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE COCKPIT, Jake hastily keying his mike.

JAKE

Black Eagle, Devil 511. We got a bandit crawling up our ass. Get Mustang over here buster--and I do mean BUST YOUR ASS.

CUT TO:

THE MIG, following it's missile, screaming after them. Hold, then

CUT TO:

INSIDE JAKE'S COCKPIT, the missile warning warbling like mad.

COLE

Wait, don't lead him away from the Phantoms--

JAKE

Screw you, his missile's got us locked--

(He chops the throttles savagely, and)

CUT TO:

JAKE'S PLANE, slowing just enough to let the missile flash by, then

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT

JAKE
Now let's get outta here--
(but as he shoves the
throttles again)

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP: THE THROTTLES. Nothing happens.

PULL BACK TO:

JAKE AND COLE, in a sudden eerie silence--as the cockpit abruptly goes dark. A stunned pause.

JAKE
Flame out--Engines shut down.

COLE
That's cute.

JAKE (groping frantically)
Gotta get power for a restart, where
the hell's the emergency
generator--Here goes nothing.
(as he presses the
starter--)

COLE (calling the altimeter)
1000 feet and dropping.
800...600...losing flying speed--

CUT TO:

THE PLANE, dropping, dropping, as the earth rushes up.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT: Jake hunched prayerfully, his finger still clamped on the re-start button.

JAKE
--Light off, you sucker--

COLE
--Airspeed 200 knots--we're gonna drop
like a rock at 180--

JAKE
--Why don't you eject?--

(CONTINUED)

COLE

--Screw it, I came for the ride. 190 knots--

A low moan as the engine finally begin to catch--

COLE

--Down to 100 feet--

JAKE (resetting dials as
the engines build)

--Nag, nag, nag--

CUT TO:

THE PLANE, barely off the ground but recovering, feeling it's
oats again, faltering--then zooming just above the tree tops
and roaring away.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT. As the red glow comes on again, the two
Phantoms blaze past them in the opposite direction.

JAKE

Here comes the Cavalry--

CUT TO:

THE MIG, promptly turning tail and scooting for home, as we

CUT TO:

THE GROUND, and the other radar hut blown to pieces as
Virgil's rocket finds it's mark.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT. Cole yawning.

COLE

You have no idea how good
this makes me feel--

CUT TO:

THE A-6B, coming right at us over the stern of the carrier,
then the screech of the landing gear hitting the deck; home
safe after the harrowing flight. Hold as the plane is jerked
to a stop, then

CUT TO:

JAKE, still a little rocky but covering, walking away from
the plane with Cole. As they pass Cowboy Parker with his
ever present clipboard--

(CONTINUED)

PARKER

Hey, what happened to you guys for a coupla minutes back there? You didn't answer our call.

COLE (carelessly)

Oh, that. There was a MIG after us. we did an engine shut down to throw him off.

PARKER

In the middle of combat?
(an admiring whistle)
Cool move.

COLE (without a blink)

Cool as a jewel.
(as he sails on with Jake following)

CUT TO:

A PASSAGEWAY inside the carrier, as Jake and Cole come in from the Flight Deck. Now that they are safely out of earshot--

JAKE

What bullshit. I cut the throttles too much, that was a royal screw-up and you know it.

COLE

Don't worry. I won't let it affect my decision.

JAKE

Your What?

VIRGIL

If you had turned out to be a candy ass I was gonna ask for another pilot. But I figure you'll do.

JAKE (a look)

Wait a minute. You were checking me?

VIRGIL

Fucking-A. Don't expect me to take chances, do you?

JAKE (a pause, then)

Yeah, I guess a bombardier has to
(more)

(CONTINUED)

JAKE (cont'd)
be pretty careful.
(casually)
Who knows, you might have ended up with
a shit-hot maniac who wants to sneak off
and plaster some big target up North

Virgil keeps walking.

VIRGIL
That would buy the maniac a set
of leg irons--if anyone found out.

Jake looks at him.

JAKE
You mean that?

VIRGIL
It's safer dunking some yo-yo in
an alligator pond.
(on his wink)

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

READY ROOM--All the pilots are filing back in after their strike--some of the intelligence officers debrief them--others are filling out papers attached to clipboards. The usual group surrounds Jake talking about the MIG. Cole looks at him while filing out his intel-- debriefing--that smile again.

CLOSE JAKE

SAMMY

I hear the Mustangs got that MIG--

BOXMAN

No prisoners--Fuck with the Bull--you get the horn man. Hey how about Razor?

Razor looks around embarrassed.

BOXMAN

--Put it right on the money-- got an 85 mike mike on the way out with his Rockeyes.

BIG AUGIE

First time too--The kid's shit hot.

RAZOR

I was just trying to do my job.

BOXMAN

Straight arrow man--I'm gonna change your name to Straight Razor--You're becoming a weapon.

BIG AUGIE (to Jake)

How was Cole?

Jake looks around--Cole is gone.

JAKE

He got two sites--He lives to kill SAM's-- the mother's a tiger.

BOXMAN

Tiger Cole.

JAKE

It fits him.

CUT TO:

STATEROOM--COLE'S--Almost dark--Cole sits on his bed staring one way-- Jake in a chair staring the other. It is obvious they've been talking for some time. A silence--finally Cole looks over--

(CONTINUED)

COLE

You know I could have you court
martialed for even the suggestion
you've just made.

JAKE

That's right.

COLE

You took a big risk.

JAKE

Yeah.

Another silence--Cole looks away then back.

COLE

Why do you want to do this?

JAKE

You know why--this is your third
tour--I don't have to tell you
anything.

COLE

You think it would matter--one plane?

JAKE

It would matter to me--and to Morg
and all the others who ate it. It
would matter to you. You know it.

(pause)

And if we hit something big--something
significant maybe they'll talk a
little different at the peace table.
You put four Snakeyes into Party
Headquarters and you'll get some
results.

COLE JUST STARES AHEAD

COLE

We'd be going right downtown--be no
piece of cake.

JAKE

So what--Hey--the people we bomb are
the wrong ones--Just guys and old
women and kids defending their country
and just trying to live through the
damn thing.

He stands up, puts his hands in his pockets.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE(cont.)

We never get the ones who give the orders. They always get away with it. I say it's payback time. Go for the head motherfucker.

Cole gets up--opens the door.

COLE

No dice--I have a career to think of my friend-- I drop bombs for a living--But I won't tell your secret.

CUT TO:

HANGER DECK--Daylight pours in. Jake strides past the planes with McCrae at his side.

JAKE

Where is he Mr. McCrae?

MCCRAE

Hardesty!

Hardesty clambers down from a ladder, comes forward, he's nervous, guilty.

JAKE

You know what I've got here Hardesty?

HARDESTY

No Sir--

JAKE

It's your marriage certificate.

HARDESTY

Oh--that.

JAKE

It's dated only three days ago. You weren't even married when you asked for that leave. You lied to me Hardesty. I had faith in you and you lied.

HARDESTY

I know sir, but in my heart I was--

JAKE

In your ass! You violated two general regulations and lied to an officer. You lied to the Navy. How do I know you're not lying when you tell me my aircraft is fixed.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

JAKE (Cont'd)

How in the name of God can we trust
you? I'm turning this over to Cmdr.
Camparelli--Now get out of my sight.

Hardesty stalks back to his ladder like a whipped dog. Jake
turns around to find Cole standing there.

COLE

I don't know about that kid but you
sure scared me.

He looks at Cole not knowing what to say--Cole walks away.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE LIBRARY; shelves of books, a sailor LIBRARIAN. Jake
approaches the desk, flips idly through a book.

JAKE

You have anything on North Vietnam?

LIBRARIAN

A look at fantasy land, huh, see but
don't touch. Like what?

JAKE

Oh, I don't know. Like anything with
maps, maybe?

Pause. The Librarian looks around.

LIBRARIAN

Well you might try "Inside Asia" by
John Gunther. A lot of people check
it out--I can only let you have it
for a couple of days.

JAKE

That's cool.

The Librarian reaches behind the desk, slips the book out.

LIBRARIAN

Map's in the back. Keep your mouth
shut, it's not supposed to circulate.

PAN TO REVEAL:

SOMEONE OUT OF SIGHT on the other side of a nearby bookshelf:
Duffy and he's heard every word. As we move right into his cold
eyes.

CUT TO:

HANGER DECK--Jake under the wing of an Intruder. McCrae goes over a checklist with Maggot.

MCCRAE

What's up tonight?

JAKE

The runway at Kep--I'll be carrying a whole load of Mk. 82's--make craters for them to fill in again tomorrow.

MCCRAE

No more Ironhand?

JAKE

Can't have fun all the time--Nope we're back to normal.

MCCRAE

Well--you're taking 503--I been using 505 for a spare--Nobody wants to fly her.

JAKE

I'll fly her--if I have to.

MCCRAE

You take 503 tonight and keep your head straight. I hear the SAM's are thick over Kep.

JAKE

Piece of cake.

CUT TO:

FLIGHT DECK--NIGHT--A SMOKING INTRUDER slows down hard but catches a number three wire. The aircraft Devil 502 is battle damaged. The left engine on fire--frag holes in the tail section and all over the underside. The fire crews spray foam all over the bottom as men climb up to assist the aircrew. The canopy slides open and Jake and Cole are visible.

AIR BOSS (O.S.)

Get him out of there Buster--We have an inbound emergency! Ready Deck!

Jake clambers down as the aircraft is hauled away. McCrae motions to him.

JAKE (indicating plane)

You can write that bird off--

MCCRAE

Clear the deck we got a cripple.

Jack, Cole, McCrae and Maggot rush to the ship's island.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

Who is it?

MAGGOT

Boxman and Little.

MCCRAE

Took a couple 23 millimeters over
target-- lucky to get back at all.

Though everyone is seeking shelter in the island or off the deck--Jake can't tear himself away from watching the wobbling lights as the plane rushes towards the ship.

LSO (over speaker)

--506, call your needles.

The plane is dangerously low--the lights growing quickly.

LSO (over)

Disregard your needles, your are low
and to the right. Come up and left,
left five.

Suddenly the plane comes into dim view it's wing dropping, flaps damaged.

LSO

506 YOU ARE STILL BELOW GLIDE PATH!
Pull up! Pull up!

The plane slams down viciously bounces, the dropped wing tip hits, shears off--The plane cart-wheels spewing sparks and pieces. A hand grabs Jake and pulls him back into the door--Cole--Framed in the door, the Intruder cart-wheels over the deck and off the far side--At the last second a seat ejects firing sideways into the dark--There is a tremendous light from the exploding plane beyond the deck but it dims quickly.

--Jake and Cole--running across the deck with the rest of the crew. They reach the edge--look over--There is nothing, just some small burning fragments of wreckage being left behind on the water. Sirens blare and a helicopter--it's garish lights probing the water beats overhead.

CUT TO:

STRIKE OPS DEBRIEFING ROOM--Cole, Jake, Sammy, Razor--their B/N's are all sitting there. The CAG and Camparelli are going over their stories.

CAG

Alright with Grafton and Cole's story
then it's starting to make a clear
picture. The gomers are willing to
pay a lot in hardware for our lives.

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI

Boxman got it down low--a ZSU-23.

He points to a picture on a board to an ugly tracked vehicle with quad mounted 23 mm guns.

CAMPARELLI

You shoot even a STARM at 'em, they close up and move--Unless you nail him directly he's safe--You almost have to see him.

JAKE

But it's the SAM's that make their game plan. Every time we evade, we trade off altitude and airspeed--

CAMPARELLI

They know it--there's no way to beat the SAM's up high--They're willing to pay the price in missiles to drive you down where this can get you.

He points to the ZSU.

CAG

We gotta figure a way to beat it.

COLE

Kill the SAM's--kill 'em and keep killing 'em until the Russians can't afford to give the gomers any more.

CAMPARELLI

Expensive.

COLE

War always is--but it would make the world safe for precision bombing again.

At this point TWO NEW YOUNG OFFICERS walk in with Cowboy Parker.

COWBOY

Gentlemen--I want to introduce you to Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Young--They are the replacement crew from Cubi--I didn't think we would be needing them so soon.

SAMMY

You guys need a name--Everyone around here has a name.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

How about New Guys--We've used up all the good names.

RAZOR

New One--New Two

SAMMY

That's good Razor--you have a vivid imagination. Anything else Sir.

(to Camparelli)

CAMPARELLI

What else is there to say Movie Officer--What's tonight's film?

BIG AUGIE

No film Sir, just news.

CAMPARELLI

Play it--

He walks up the row of men--He is unusually subdued. A television plays a tape of recent news excerpts.

CAMPARELLI

There will be a memorial service for Box and Little tomorrow--1000 Hours
(tired)

Dress tropical white long. That's all.

He leaves, several of the others do too.

CUT TO:

TV NEWSMAN (on TV)

--A Swiss camera crew in Hanoi, North Vietnam took this footage of a celebration of sorts commemorating the defeat of "American Air Pirates".--

The crews look up at the screen.

NEWSMAN (on TV)

Here in People's Resistance Park, they've set up trophies of their victories. Grim reminders of the losses taken--

The screen shows a VIETNAMESE OFFICER and several PARTY OFFICIALS pointing wing sections of an F-105, tail of an F-4, empty ejection seats, canopies etc.

(CONTINUED)

NEWSMAN (cont. V.O.)
 --in the seven year old Air War over
 the North.

SAMMY
 That's an Intruder nose cone.

BIG AUGIE
 Turn it off.

Jake and Cole are now watching quite attentively. Jake shoots a glance at Cole. The camera position changes and for the briefest of seconds--another building and square is seen--this square containing what seems like rows of rocket tail fins. The Officer steps in front. The camera moves--and someone turns the TV off.

PILOT
 We don't have to see that shit--

JAKE
 Not tonight.

He sees Cole looking at him.

CUT TO:

COLE'S STATEROOM--Only the desk light is on, casting Jake and Cole in eerie shadows. Cole sits looking at Jake.

COLE
 Forget your Party Headquarters--You'd never find it--and you wouldn't know who was in it when you hit.

JAKE
 You've obviously got something better in mind.

COLE
 You see those trucks--those fins behind that display on the news?

JAKE
 Yeah--I think I did.

COLE
 You ever hear of SAM City?

JAKE
 I've heard stories--

COLE
 They're true--you just saw it. It's no story, it's real.
 (more)

(CONTINUED)

I saw it in '67--downtown Hanoi--right in the middle. It's a depot where they put 'em together after they come off the Russian ships. They know we won't touch 'em. It's like flipping us the bird. The Air Force photographs them every day.

JAKE

Then there's data--

COLE

We ain't in the Air Force--there's nothing.

He picks up the National Geographic map.

COLE

Scale's too small--doesn't have longitude or latitude so you can't plot a course. How you gonna construct a radar prediction of a target from this anyway.

JAKE

1967--They said we were gonna win. They were kidding. Here's a picture of People's Resistance Park--but no reference on the map.

COLE

It's still there Jake--SAM City--They take 'em out of there and shoot 'em at us. You want some payback--THAT might be worth a court-martial.

JAKE

I think we need to see that tape again.

CUT TO:

JAKE'S DARKENED STATEROOM, later; Sammy asleep in the lower bunk. Hold to establish his regular breathing, then

PAN TO:

JAKE in the upper bunk, fully clothed, his eyes open. After a moment to be sure that Sammy is dead to the world, he climbs silently down, grabs the intelligence photos and the Geographic and slips out the door.

CUT TO:

THE PASSAGEWAY OUTSIDE THE READY ROOM. Head down, trying not to attract attention, Jake comes along, moves quickly to the door. As he is about to reach for the knob--

A VOICE (O.S.)

Hey man, what're you doing up?

PAN TO INCLUDE:

COWBOY PARKER, clipboard in hand, heading for Strike Ops to post the flight assignments.

PARKER (cont.)

You should be in the sack, you got an Alpha Strike tomorrow.

JAKE

Couldn't sleep, walking it off.

PARKER

Watch out--Skipper's on the prowl. The Shitter posted a strike. Said he was gonna piss--that doubles his capabilities. It's getting very dangerous. He could hit anywhere--steam iron, after shave bottles--think of the targets available.

JAKE

Yeah, what're You doing up.

COWBOY

Hah--Don't lose sleep over it Grafton--the price of peace is eternal vigilance.

As Cowboy laughs and walks on, Jake drifts a few steps--then doubles back and slips inside. As the door closes behind him,

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE WARDROOM, pitch dark. As Jake gropes for the switch, a voice hisses.

COLE

--No lights, you nuts?

The blank TV screen flicks on, revealing Cole bent to the monitor.

RAQUEL WELCH, gyrating in a jungle bikini. They look at each other-- watch for a while.

COLE

Leave her--She's finding her identity.

(CONTINUED)

Cole snaps the tape out, tries another--and this time the crowd of Vietnamese again fills the screen. As THE CAMERA PANS to the corner of that building and the rows of SAM's come into view--

COLE

--That's it--

THE FRAME FREEZES on the array of MISSILE FINS. Row after row after row. The two men gaze for a breathless beat.

JAKE

Look at those mothers. SAM City--it lives. Now just to know where it is.

He presses the button; but the picture reverses, running backward to the cheering throng, then freezes again while both men study it.

JAKE (cont.)

People's Resistance Park--Park of the People--It's there somewhere.

COLE

So this is the Land of Oz--But we don't have a Yellow Brick Road.

(CONTINUED)

PAN TO:

THE DOOR opens a crack and lets the light in. A figure of a man steps in then the door closes again. Jake sees the figure approach Cmdr. Camparelli's desk--He removes an object--Jake freezes knowing the map and National Geographic were up there. The figure places the object on the floor. The object is Cmdr. Camparelli's coffee flask. There is a moment of silence--then the unmistakable sound of a stream of liquid hitting the flask and around it. A puddle quickly forms, Jake looks a Cole.

JAKE

He's missing--can't be one of ours.

Cole lunges up and flicks on the light to reveal:

DUFFY--with his back turned--he fumbles--whirls around. Jake and Cole walk casually over to the table almost ignoring him. Jake picks up the National Geographic and his crude maps. Duffy looks at them, then back at the men.

JAKE

Duffy--your fly's undone.
(on Duffy's strangled look)

CUT TO:

MAPS OF HANOI, beautifully detailed--aerial SR-71 recon shots layed out on a light table. Duffy, Jake and Cole are in the red-lit room. Cole writes coordinates furiously on a clipboard.

DUFFY (points)

People's Resistance Park--It's right across the square--next to the National Assembly--SAM City.

He points to an empty square on a map--

DUFFY

The Air Force won't give me any pictures of downtown--I'd have to send for 'em--That'd be like robbing a bank and using your own car for the getaway.

He points to a large boulevard.

DUFFY

--You follow the main boulevard--go right to it.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

The Yellow Brick Road.

DUFFY

Three nights from now you hit
the Bac Ghiang power plant--

(CONTINUED)

COLE

We'll be carrying 1000 pound Snakeeyes instead of the 500's.

JAKE

Drop 'em retarded and we can go low--200 feet.

COLE

We use 2 on the power plant--8 for SAM City. Where's the other strike going?

DUFFY

Lundeen is gonna look for trucks on Route One--and there'll be no A-6B scheduled.

COLE

We'd be late getting feet wet but we say we made a second pass.

JAKE

We'll never get another chance like this. I think it's worth the final crash.

COLE

Yeah--I get good vibes.

They both look at Cole.

CUT TO:

THE FLIGHT DECK the following night, as the strike on the power plant prepares to launch. Jake and Cole pause a moment before climbing the boarding ladder to their Intruder. Cole catches Jake's glance.

JAKE

You know what plane this is? Devil 505--It's the one Morg died in.

COLE

Wouldn't have it any other way.

CUT TO:

JAKE'S INTRUDER, wings folding down into place, taxiing into position on the catapult.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE COCKPIT, JAKE AND COLE, getting ready.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

You got anyone to say goodbye to--

JAKE

Just a girl and her kid who hardly know me. But goodbye Callie, goodbye Sally--What about you?

COLE

Nope--I used up all my goodbyes--But I could use a wine enema right about now.

(takes a breath)

Let's do it.

Jake salutes the LAUNCH OFFICER.

The Intruder, blasting off the end of the deck--but instead of rising--it just PLUMMETS DOWN OUT OF SIGHT, and

CUT TO:

AHEAD OF THE CARRIER, the plane barely above the waves, struggling to rise, struggling, struggling--

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, Jake nursing the controls.

JAKE

Come on, you Mother, up, up--

Finally, as the altimeter starts to inch upwards--

COLE

I told Orville and I told Wilbur: That thing'll never fly.

(hold as they climb off into the night...then)

CUT TO:

FROM THE COCKPIT, the shore line flashing by below.

COLE

Black Eagle, Devil 505, feet dry.

CONTROLLER (over radio)

505, Roger feet dry. Good hunting--Tiger.

COLE (he looks below)

Initial point. New heading, 287.

CUT TO:

THE PLANE banking sharply.

CUT TO:

JAKE

Okay, when we come outta this, keep
your eyes skinned for the power
plant--

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, straightening out, zipping above the tree tops.

COLE (over)

400 feet--
(we can hear the beeping
of radar trying to pick
them up, and)

CUT TO:

THE GROUND RUSHING BY; here and there random muzzle flashes and
tracers as the usual flak erupts, scattered across the night sky.
Then in the distance a large industrial building begins to
appear.

JAKE (over)

Here she comes--five miles out--

CUT TO

THE COCKPIT, Cole bending to the radar hood.

COLE

--Got it. On the target and into
attack.

PAN TO:

THE VDI DISPLAY in front of Jake, as the hammer and the target
symbol, that little black box, appear over the representation of
the terrain. Jake adjusts the controls; the black square aligns
itself right inside the hollow box, and together they start to
descend toward the bottom-- while Cole flicks the armament
switches.

COLE

Your pickle is hot--

PAN AHEAD TO:

THROUGH THE WINDSCREEN, a web of pulsating tracers reaching up
out of the night. Jake massages the stick gently, and

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, lifting smoothly over the tracers, wings rocking, then settling down again, and

CUT TO:

IN THE COCKPIT, the line on the VDI dropping, dropping, with Cole still glued to the hood.

COLE

Ground lock, ten seconds--

The line on the VDI is almost there--

COLE (cont.)

Steady--

(as it hits bottom)

GO!

(Jake mashes the pickle button, and)

CUT TO:

THE TWO MEN IN THE COCKPIT, watching over their shoulders. Now they turn back and look at each other. Pause.

COLE

Your new vector is 205 degrees--Going North.

CUT TO:

THE PLANE rolling in a tight curve, heading across the darkened jungles of North Vietnam. If there is a drive in the music, determined, building, swelling--this is the place. Hold then

CUT TO:

THE VDI in the cockpit. Suddenly the steering symbol veers off the screen. As Jake moves to correct the stick--

COLE (studying the radar)

Ignore that, cursors running--

JAKE

What the hell happened?

COLE

Ah-h, the velocities went bananas. It's either the navigation system or the damn computer--

JAKE

What do we do?

(CONTINUED)

COLE

Believe it or not, the manual says
to kick the sonuvabitch. Get the
rotors going.

(and he does; then looks
again)

State of the art. No good, it's gone.
We'll have to bomb without it.

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, nudging down, almost right of the carpet, skimming
across the dark countryside.

COLE (over)

200 feet--

CUT TO:

THE VIEW THROUGH THE WINDSCREEN, the ground tearing past at a
blinding pace. Hold for a long swooping moment, then--things are
still flashing by. But buildings are beginning to appear,
rushing past in the dark. Not just trees but houses, then the
first city streets.

CUT TO:

JAKE, catching his breath. Through the windscreen: more
buildings, more streets--AND SUDDENLY A POWER LINE LOOMS UP,
STRUNG RIGHT ACROSS THEIR PATH.

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, whisking up and over and down.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT

COLE

Six miles to target. --Too quiet.
Where's the goddamn flak?

JAKE

Don't worry, the Gomers can't get us.
Nothing gets us now--

--Suddenly a brilliant flash goes off above them, large caliber
tracer shells so bright they light up the cockpit, and

CUT TO:

THE SKY, exploding in a blast of anti-aircraft shells and tracers. There has been a screen of flak before, but this is a thicket, no, a forest of explosions and shrapnel and death that seems impenetrable.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, Jake and Cole wincing at the glare.

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, turning on a knife edge, slicing through the storm of fire, somehow coming out the other side.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, as Jake quickly levels the plane again.

COLE (peering into screen)
Think I have it. Right five--
(as Jake adjusts the stick)

CUT TO:

COMING INTO VIEW AHEAD, the park, the corner of that building--and beyond it the first rows of the SAM's, lethal, waiting and

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, and the flak exploding around them is, if possible, even worse.

COLE
Left one--Into attack, pickle's hot--

JAKE
--No good, we'll have to go under--
(as he inches the stick ahead)

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, incredibly dipping even lower, roaring along the avenues of the City, RIGHT DOWN BELOW THE TOPS OF THE BUILDINGS NOW, and

CUT TO:

THE BUILDINGS flashing by in a blur, so close it seems the men could reach out and touch them. It makes you dizzy to watch, a shoot right through the slot of the city, and

CUT TO:

COLE, eyes riveted to the screen.

(CONTINUED)

COLE
HARD LEFT ONE-FIVE DEGREES. DO IT!

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, banking hard, skidding around a corner, howling into the next street.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT--as the missile warning starts to warble.

COLE
Steady now--

JAKE
God, a SAM just lit off--
(the warble grows louder)
Make it two, Jesus--

CUT TO:

THE FIERY EXHAUST OF THE FIRST SAM tracking right over them, going ballistic.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, as Jake fights to steady the plane back on course, Cole glued to the radar hood while the missile alarm screams in their ears.

COLE
A hair right--hold it--

JAKE
--Do it, do it--

COLE
--Go!

As he mashes the pickle button the warbling is'louder still--

JAKE (yanking desperately on the stick)
Jesus, here comes his brother--

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER scooping out, jerking upwards, but

CUT TO:

THE SAM adjusting, coming right after it, and

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, JAKE, trying to dodge as they climb, rolling the plane. But we stay with his POV and it seems that the ground is moving, not the Intruder, so that the City slides and seems to hang right over their heads.

CUT TO:

THE PLANE, still upside down, abruptly diving, fishtailing as it hurtles down, down, but the SAM is correcting, closing the gap at terrific speed.

CUT TO:

THE BUILDINGS OF HANOI rushing up toward them--

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, pulling out, but it looks too late, and

CUT TO:

THE SAM, exploding overhead with a sickening blast.

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT CANOPY shattering in the concussion, the plane rocking. As Jake gasps,

PAN TO:

HIS THIGHS, peppered with something, breaking out in dots of blood.

COLE

--Right, hard right--

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, skimming the rooftops through another dense forest of flak, then somehow emerging from the City to roar away, clawing for altitude. .

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE COCKPIT, Jake wincing but hanging on.

COLE

Okay, we're in the clear. You all right?

Jake nods through clenched teeth. A brief moment as they look tensely around, then--

JAKE

Well? We hit it?

(CONTINUED)

COLE
I don't think so--

JAKE
But you had it locked--

COLE
--Affirmative--

JAKE
And the bombs fused--

COLE
--Absolutely--

JAKE
Then why not?--

COLE
--Because they didn't drop.

Jake looks at him.

JAKE
You're KIDDING.

COLE
All that jinking around, it threw off
the plot.

A deflated pause.

COLE
They'd never expect us to come back--
No-one'd go through that trip again.

JAKE
Well I came here to bomb.

COLE
I can dig it.

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, coming out of a wide circle--then straightening,
settling down, heading right along the street once more. As the
buildings flow past and flak erupts--

CUT TO:

THE TWO MEN in the cockpit with the explosions bursting around
them.

JAKE (under his breath)
--Though I walk through the goddamn
valley--

(CONTINUED)

COLE (at the screen)
--Three miles--two degrees right--

Another huge explosion outside the shattered canopy--

JAKE (fiercely, concentrating)
--I shall fear no evil--

COLE
--two miles...get it on.

CUT TO:

AHEAD IN THE DISTANCE DOWN THE AVENUE, here comes SAM City, that endless field of SAM's, and

CUT TO:

JAKE AND COLE IN THE COCKPIT, burst after burst all around--

JAKE
--For Thou are with me--

COLE
--One mile, keep on trucking--

CUT TO:

THE SAM's, as the Intruder screams toward them--

CUT TO:

JAKE AND COLE, in the very height of the storm--

COLE
Pickle's hot--

JAKE
--Thy rod and Thy goddamn staff--

COLE
Steady--

JAKE
--They comfort me--

COLE
--Steadeeee--

But a final gigantic screen of flame and flak blaze up right in front of them.

(CONTINUED)

COLE (cont.)
 --And that's as good as it gets! Do
 it!

CUT TO:

A FLASH OF THE BOMBS falling away--then the Intruder

CUT TO:

FIGHTING FOR ALTITUDE, sweeping across the night, and

CUT TO:

THE BOULEVARD, as the first Snakeye with it's retarding fins extended rips into the concrete in slow motion--ripping up a huge crater in the boulevard. The next seven bombs fall in train across the rows and rows of SAM's which are blasted and hurled into the air by the trip hammer blasts. Huge blasts--thousand pounders--turning trucks, launchers, missiles into frag. Now some of the warheads start to go in a cacophony of secondary blasts. For one splendid moment it seems like the whole pack is detonating.

CUT TO:

CLOSE--JAKE AND COLE--banking hard. Cole beyond ecstasy--Jake trying to see in his mirror.

COLE
 PAYBACK--MOTHERS! LET SOME!

JAKE
 Righteous!

COLE
 Look out--

Jake twists the Intruder on it's side.

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER slipping sideways through a curtain of fire at almost street level--over the buildings and into the night.

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER--barreling away from the distant flaming light of SAM City, incinerating itself.

CUT TO:

COCKPIT. JAKE--COLE howling-singing--

(CONTINUED)

JAKE (singing)
 "I got a 34 wagon and we call it a
 Woodie"

COLE
 "SAM City here we come"

JAKE
 "You know it's not very cherry just
 an oldie but a goodie."

He pats Devil 505 affectionately.

COLE
 "SAM City here we come."

JAKE
 "It's not got a backseat or a rear
 window."

He laughs looking at the shattered canopy.

COLE
 "But it still gets us where we want
 to go."

BOTH
 "You know we're going to SAM City
 cause it's 8 to 1--Yeah We're going
 to SAM City gonna have some fun--Two
 runs for every guy--"

CUT TO:

THE CARRIER. As Jake's battered Intruder waggles in over the
 ramp and the wheels screech onto the deck,

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

CAMPARELLI, on the bridge, looking at the riddled plane. Hold
 for a beat on his enigmatic face, then

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE COMPARTMENT WAY leading to the sick bay. Jake limps
 along with Cole. Duffy joins them.

DUFFY
 You hit it?

Jake stops looks at him, grinning like a Cheshire cat.

COLE
 I think so.

Duffy smirks--giggles--turns and leaves. Mad Jack steps out.

(CONTINUED)

MAD JACK

Well Cool Hand, You finally get a new
G-Suit and a Purple Heart.

JAKE

That's what I really need.

MAD JACK

Missiles? Guns?

JAKE

I don't remember.

MAD JACK

Well step into my office.

Cowboy Parker looks in.

COWBOY

Hey--we couldn't raise you for a
while--You shut down the engine again?

COLE

Computer crapped out--Had to do some
recircuting. SAM's had us pegged for
a while.

CUT TO:

THE DIRTY-SHIRT WARDROOM, later. Jake hunches over a
sandwich--Cole paces. Jake's hands shake--The room is empty.

COLE

Relax--we just have to make it through
the first eight hours--You know the
doctrine of eight hours?

JAKE

No.

COLE

Well--it mostly applies to fucking
around on your wife. If you get
through the first eight hours without
compromise--excuses, lies, perfume
etc.--you usually got it beat. Very
few people get caught after the first
eight hours. I never got caught--

Jake looks up at him.

COLE

Neither did my ex-wife.

JAKE

You got kids?

(CONTINUED)

COLE

Yeah--the full disaster.

The door opens. Sammy enters.

SAMMY

Hey you clowns--Skipper wants you in his stateroom.

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI'S STATEROOM. As Jake and Cole enter, Camparelli is standing with his back to them, listening to a tape of a FEMALE ANNOUNCER, who speaks with a French accent:

ANNOUNCER (on tape)

...Cowardly American air pirates in a sneak night raid against the defenseless city last night---

CAMPARELLI (without looking at them)

French journalist--from Hanoi about an hour ago. Nice voice, sexy--Here's the part I really like--

ANNOUNCER (on tape)

The only damage was done was a direct hit on a children's hospital, leaving hundreds of innocent infants dead--

(Jake and Cole freeze, appalled)

As a result of this unprovoked attack, our representatives have of course withdrawn from the Peace Talks in Paris--

Camparelli snaps the tape off. Then he turns, looking the two men coldly from head to toe.

CAMPARELLI

Nice, huh? Withdrew from the Peace Talks. Has a nice round sound to it. Like AROUND a thousand more American casualties. Maybe two thousand, who knows? Two thousand mothers with no one coming home. You got a mother Grafton? She'd be proud of you today.

(shoving a paper at him, tersely)

Know what this is?

JAKE

No, Sir.

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI

A coded message from me to Seventh Fleet, with copies to everyone in the chain of command. Your name is all over it.

(to Cole)

Your's too, Bright-Boy. Any idea why?

COLE

I can make a good guess.

CAMPARELLI

I'll bet you can. You know, I thought it was weird, all that missile damage last night, because they usually don't deploy SAM's at Bac Giang. But that stuff that hit you wasn't from Bac Giang, was it?

JAKE

No, Sir.

CAMPARELLI

Because you weren't around Bac Giang--not for long, anyway. You were over Hanoi weren't you?

Jake stands rigidly with Cole.

JAKE

Yes, Sir.

CAMPARELLI

Yes Sir What?

COLE

Yes, Sir--We bombed Hanoi Sir. It was a good mission.

JAKE

Sir, we blew the shit out of 'em Sir, but we didn't come NEAR any hospital-

CAMPARELLI

You think I don't know that? I know what you hit.

He waves post-strike recon photos at them.

CAMPARELLI

The Air Force knows what you hit--So does Task Force 77--So does General Giap and probably the entire World Communist Union but nobody's gonna admit it.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI (Cont'd)

As far as this Navy's concerned, you didn't kill a rat! What you did do was abuse my trust and the trust of every officer in this squadron.

(thundering)

You disobeyed a clear standing order. I oughta have you shot, what good are you? Even a yellow coward is worth ten of you. I can trust a coward to be a coward. I can't trust you to be Jack Shit!

Jake looks away.

CAMPARELLI

Face front Mister I've just started. Where do you get off Mister--Have you been elected President? Must be--We now have YOUR foreign policy--President Bullshit--You must be Premier or Party Leader--You might be happier where you just came from! And as for you--

He turns to Cole.

CAMPARELLI

--You could lead the Manson family now that Charlie's in jail. You'd like that wouldn't you? Grafton's guilty but you had a big hand in it. You knew better Mr. Cole! You weren't out for hot revenge--You're just a maniac. They ought to study you, Cole.

He takes a breath--steams and gives a withering look.

CAMPARELLI

ARE there times when you have the moral obligation not to follow orders? Of course there are. If you can't stomach it you can quit--we don't kill you for that--You volunteered anyway--but you don't have the right to make up your own orders. You don't go off killing people whenever you feel like it. In this Navy--NOTHING GIVES YOU THAT RIGHT.

A blistering silence.

CAMPARELLI (cont.)

Now get out of here and take that psychopath Cole with you.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI (Cont'd)
 You will be confined to quarters,
 Mister, while the Navy decides what
 to do with you.

As Jake blinks.

CUT TO:

THE FLIGHT DECK: A twin engine transport plane is just winging it's way into a perfect landing. As the plane stops and the cargo door opens, A RAMROD STIFF OFFICER in dress uniform steps out carrying a briefcase, and smartly salutes the watch. His name is CAPTAIN COPELAND, and he looks hard enough to wear flint underwear. As he strides purposefully across the deck.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

JAKE, in full dress, standing in a angle of the flight bridge. He eyes Copeland's every step as though it were the tread of his executioner. Hold for an ominous beat, then

PAN TO:

ANOTHER CORNER FURTHER ALONG: Camparelli and the CAG, both of them also in jacket and tie, watching as well.

CAMPARELLI (his face set)
 All right. Let's get this over with.
 (on his words)
 CLOSE UP; COPELAND, his stern eyes staring right at us. It is like looking into the face of God on Judgement Day.

COPELAND
 I hope you realize that now is the
 time to come to Jesus.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

JAKE, standing stiffly before him in a wardroom that has been set up for a hearing. Camparelli and the CAG sit impassively beside Copeland; at one side of the room Cole waits his turn.

COPELAND (cont.)
 Whether or not the Admiral will
 convene a full court martial will be
 decided after this preliminary
 investigation.
 (pause)
 My assistant here--has in his
 briefcase blank change of station
 orders. They are to places like Adak,
 Alaska or Diego Garcia in the Indian
 Ocean.
 (more)

(CONTINUED)

COPELAND (cont)

Anyone giving me less than 100% truth will find himself in one of these places awaiting court martial or resignation processing. It will take 3 to 4 years to process a resignation--Do I make myself clear.

Silence.

COPELAND

Let's have it Mr Grafton.

JAKE

There was only one mission Sir--

COPELAND

That right Mr. Cole?

COLE (shrugs)

That's about the size of it--we did it ourselves. Normally I'm blabby but I sat on this one.

The CAG snaps a finger at him.

THE CAG

Mr. Cole, you are just one answer away from becoming the Naval Attache to Uganda. Why did you do this Cole--an Officer with your fine record. Did you think you were going to win the War?

COLE

Frankly Sir, I think we're going to lose this one. But I love the work and it seemed like a good idea at the time.

The CAG shakes his head in dismay--Cowboy Parker stifles a laugh with a cough. Jake bites his lip.

COPELAND

You're taking this lightly Mister.

COLE

No Sir--I'm scared shitless Sir.

COPELAND

It's all real funny Mr. Smartass, but you took an oath Mr. Cole and you too Grafton. You took an oath to defend the Constitution and obey the orders of the Officers appointed over you.

(CONTINUED)

COPELAND (cont.)

The same oath every officer in the Navy has sworn for damn near 200 years. For all that time the Military has obeyed the Civilians who were the elected government. They were not always wise or right or even smart--but they were ELECTED.

(pause)

--If it was any other way the United States would be another two bit military dictatorship. THIS IS OUR COUNTRY YOU ARE FUCKING WITH!

He sits down--leans back in his chair.

COPELAND

Well Mister Grafton, you have an attentive audience here. Perhaps you could explain why you thought a one plane war was the way to go

Jake squares away, takes a deep breath.

JAKE

Sir, we bomb worthless targets night after night. Three tents under a tree, sampan repair yards that have been hit ten times already--you know the list better than I do.

(quietly)

My first bombardier and 50,000 other Americans are dead. What did they all die for? Does anybody know? I mean, I'm just Lieutenant Nobody, but I know the difference between dying for something and dying for nothing. I had to take one shot at a decent target--no matter what it does to my career in the Navy.

(pause)

If I hang for it, I hang.

A pause. Copeland gathers his papers.

COPELAND

Hanging, Mister Grafton, is no longer a punishment much in use. A prison term in Leavenworth is--or a dishonorable discharge, if a court martial should so decide.

(looking right at him)

But whatever happens, I think it's safe to say your career in the Navy is over. The only question is how.

(beat)

Dismissed.

(hold, then)

CUT TO:

THE PASSAGEWAY OUTSIDE THE WARDROOM. As Jake emerges, who should be waiting but--Duffy, falling in step with him.

DUFFY
I didn't tell him, I swear.

JAKE
I know, Duffy. It's okay.

DUFFY (a beat, then suddenly)
You know--the whole ship would love
to have gone with you.

JAKE (looking at him)
Thanks, Shipmate. Some of us
appreciate the thought.

He salutes and leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SHIP--the home for better or worse of all these men, steering into another dusk--another night.

AIR BOSS (O.S.)
Clean up this deck--we gotta strike
to launch. Move those A-7's--Let's
Go!

DISSOLVE TO

CAMPARELLI walks briskly down a corridor to the Captain's wardroom. TWO MARINE GUARDS standing at the entrance way come to attention and salute. He returns the salute and goes in.

INSIDE--The Wardroom at a large table--situation maps of North Vietnam are laid out. The Captain, CAG, Chief of Strike Ops, Copeland and his assistant are present.

CAPTAIN
Sit down Commander--

He does.

CAPTAIN
What we're going to tell you may come
as a surprise but you'll understand--

COPELAND
All charges against your boys are
dropped--gone-- never happened.

CAMPARELLI
What--what do you want me to do?

(CONTINUED)

COPELAND

Cover it up--sweep it under--I don't care what you do to those maniacs but THIS affair is over.

CAMPARELLI

May I ask the Captain why?

STRIKE OPS

Because the President of the United States--Richard M. Nixon is quite irritated at the gomers for leaving the table. He's ordered Operation Linebacker II-- the unrestricted bombing of North Vietnam.

COPELAND

We'd look like real idiots court-martialling a 27 year old pilot for doing what the President of the United States has just ordered us to do.

CUT TO:

JAKE'S STATEROOM. Still in dress uniform, Jake is sprawled on the bunk with his tie pulled down, as Sammy comes in from a flight. A sympathetic pause.

SAMMY

Any word?

JAKE

Not yet.

SAMMY

Sweating, huh.

JAKE

Only bullets.

There is a tap at the door. Camparelli enters, his tie loosened, and just stands stiffly. Finally--

CAMPARELLI

Take a hike, Sammy, willya? I want to talk to this shit hot pistol here.

Flashing his roommate a pair of crossed-fingers, Sammy leaves. Then another moment while Camparelli fixes Jake with a look.

CAMPARELLI (cont.)

You are one lucky son of a bitch.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE

I thought I was gonna be keel hauled.
What happened?

CAMPARELLI

It's what's GOING to happen. In about two hours the President will announce a general air offensive against North Vietnam--B-52's, Navy, the works.

A moment while Jake just stares, fighting his anger.

JAKE

Wait a minute. We're now being ordered to do--what I was just gonna be court martialed for doing? Sir, doesn't that make you feel a little silly?

CAMPARELLI

I could care less what I feel. I'm a military man, my only job is to keep the faith with the country and my men.

As he turns to leave--

JAKE (tightly)

Okay, Skipper. You want it by the book, from now on I do it strictly by the book.

CAMPARELLI (sharply)

You, you're doing nothing.

(as Jake turns pale--)

I want you out of my squadron. You're confined to this ship where you will remain under arrest. You'll be transferred out at my convenience.

JAKE

Good men die, but all we care about is following the rules--

CAMPARELLI (lashing back)

--And BETTER men died TO MAKE THOSE RULES.
You still don't understand that, do you?

CLOSE ON CAMPARELLI, past anger now, laying out the bottom line.

CAMPARELLI (cont.)

Don't you know what's going on back home?
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI (Cont'd)

(shaking his head)

Bombs, riots, people spitting on soldiers in airports, the National Guard shooting at college kids--the whole country's tearing itself apart. You think there's anything in this piss-ant war that's WORTH tearing ourselves apart for-- Christ, all we've really got is each other!

(pause; then)

You think about that while we're out there this morning. You'd better pray I don't come back.

(at the door)

Because I'm gonna tie a tin can to your tail that will clank all the way to Leavenworth.

(on his words)

CUT TO:

THE FLIGHT DECK that afternoon, swarming with the preparations for the strike. Every square foot of space seems jammed with a forest of planes, their ground crews swarming over and under them, wheeling missiles, fueling the Intruders waiting to leap into the sky. As a pulse starts to build under scene,

CUT TO:

BELOW DECK, THE CAMERA TRACKING along the stir of Pilots and Bombardiers at their lockers

UNTIL WE REACH

CAMPARELLI, donning his flight suit. Step by step, closing the long zippers, shrugging on the torso harness that holds his chute, checking his emergency pocket radio; each movement part of a hallowed ritual, like a chivalrous knight girding on his armor for the fray. As he continues,

CUT TO:

JAKE, lying on his bunk in his empty stateroom, alone, staring into space, while the preparations for the strike echo all around him. Hold--then.

CUT TO:

COLE, in his stateroom, the other discredited warrior, also alone; packing not guns but toiletries into a small bag.

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI putting on pistol--picking up helmet. At his side is Razor, looking nervous.

(CONTINUED)

RAZOR
Sir--uh Sir.

CAMPARELLI
Get it out son.

RAZOR
Are you ever afraid you're gonna die?

CAMPARELLI
Die--I'm already dead son. Killed
on my first tour--God just
forgot--made a mistake like he did
when you were born.

CUT TO:

READY ROOM--The A-6 Squadron assembled.

CAMPARELLI
Our job--the task of the Intruder is
to Kill SAM's. Watch out for the ZSU
23's, they're what nailed Boxman and
nearly everyone else--But SAM is where
your ordinance goes, otherwise those
B-52's are dead meat. I'll be flying
the first element with Razor as my
wing--Sammy the second--any questions?

Razor raises his hand.

CAMPARELLI
Yes son.

RAZOR
Just one Sir--Why? How'd this come
about.

CAMPARELLI
They walked away from the table--never
turn your back ON BIG DICK NIXON!

CUT TO:

THE BUSTLING FLIGHT DECK; and that pulse is really building now,
as Camparelli leads his flight crews along the line of planes,
pausing for a last word while they huddle around him.

CAMPARELLI
ALLRIGHT YOU MOTHERS--LET'S GO
DOWNTOWN!

CUT TO:

A FLASH OF PILOTS, settling in their cockpits, buckling their helmets, face after face, all the men we know--Sammy, Razor, Big Augie, Cowboy Parker--then suddenly obscured by

CUT TO:

A CLOUD OF STEAM--and through it the first Intruder emerging head on, moving into place on the catapult, the double windscreen and twin airscoops making it look like some giant deadly dragonfly. All the engines on deck are roaring now--pause--then with another blast of steam the Intruder is hurled right at us and away into the sky.

HOLD as the next plane is blasted off, then another, another, another, another, their roar deafening, echoing--until

CUT TO:

JAKE--alone in his room sitting at his desk writing a letter, obviously to Callie.

JAKE (V.O.)

--I used to have assumptions I
believed in, that we all believed in,
and when they were betrayed--

A jet launches overhead with a tremendous metallic clang.

JAKE (V.O.)

--I acted on my own and now I'm the
betrayed--I don't know what's it about
anymore Callie--

CUT TO:

HANGER DECK--DEVIL 505--being worked on--plates of aluminum skin replacing the area holed by frag. New canopy being fitted, etc. Pull back to reveal McCrae and Cole.

MCCRAE

I don't think you got a fair shake
Sir--

COLE

It's academic Chief--
(indicating Devil 505)
You get the computer figured out?

MCCRAE

Men think she's jinxed as a bomber--so
we took out your bomb computer--put
in your B equipment--make a SAM killer
out of her.

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI'S SECTION OVER NORTH VIETNAM. Camparelli at the controls-- Cowboy Parker sitting beside him. Razor's Intruder on his wing. Two F-4's flying MIGCAP rise above them.

CAMPARELLI

--We're well painted Mustang, suggest you orbit at 8000 you'll be good bait--Devil 511 stay close and move when I tell you.

RAZOR (on mike)

That's a Roge, Devil Leader--I've got one--two--uh--three SAM's seven o'clock--in the fog.

The warbling goes wild.

CAMPARELLI

Break left!

They do

CUT TO:

JAKE--alone.

JAKE (V.O.)

Perhaps I'm not suited for it--Damn thing is I love the Navy--

CUT TO:

COLE AND MCCRAE listening to the Strike frequency.

CAMPARELLI (radio)

Watch it--get under him 511--

COWBOY (radio)

Five degrees nose down--shoot!

CAMPARELLI (radio)

On the way. Follow with your Rockeyes 511.

VOICE (radio)

Break left--Split S Mustang 4--

OTHER VOICE (radio)

Bandits Mustang leader--3 o'clock, turn into 'em.

MUSTANG LEADER (radio)

Shoot Mustang 3!

(CONTINUED)

MUSTANG 3 (radio)
I'm not getting a tone.

CUT TO:

JAKE--alone, rips up his letter and walks out.

CUT TO:

READY ROOM, DUFFY AND OTHERS listening to the air battle. Cole walks in and sits down.

RAZOR (over)
511 to Devil leader--You're smoking
Devil Leader! Get out!

CAMPARELLI (over)
I got that one site--there's a gun
down here. ZSU-23. He's got me
painted!

RAZOR (over)
I'll try an get him sir--get out!

CAMPARELLI (over)
My B/N is dead--I'm hit, I can't
eject--

CUT TO:

RAZOR AND HIS B/N-- watching the Skipper's plane at some distance--smoke pouring from it--going down. They are both very low. Camparelli starts a wide turn into a valley.

CAMPARELLI (over)
I'm gonna put her in on that road.

CUT TO:

THE READY ROOM--Jake now seated with the others, his hand clenching a cup of coffee.

RAZOR (over)
Devil Leader down on the road--Black
Eagle--We'll need Sandy's.

VOICE (over)
This is Nomad Leader. I'm the nail.
Give me coordinates?

SAMMY (over)
I'm behind you 511--going down for
a look.

CUT TO:

SAMMY'S A-6--dropping down into the valley.

CUT TO:

JUNGLE--THE EVIL CAMOUFLAGED ZSU with four 23mm guns on a turret and radar disk tracks the low flying Intruder--fires.

CUT TO:

RAZOR'S COCKPIT--He sees Sammy below--suddenly a streak of fire--a blazing explosion that is whisked away behind--gone.

RAZOR (in horror)

SAMMY!

CUT TO:

JAKE--He almost stands up.

RAZOR (over)

Sammy! He's gone!

NOMAD (over)

I can't bring in the Jolly Green until
you get the neighborhood cleaned
up--there could be SAM's still down
there.

RAZOR (over)

I got nothing left--I'm almost Bingo
fuel--

CAMPARELLI (over, weak)

Devil Leader to 511--Get out of here
Razor.

RAZOR (over)

Where's the Sandy's and the
Jolly--Nomad?

NOMAD (over)

About ten minutes out, 511 can you
back it?

RAZOR (over)

No way.

Jake and Cole look at each other, stand up--

CUT TO:

BLACK FRAME--A DOOR SHAPE opens spilling the light of the outer deck in. Jake's silhouette walks through in flight gear carrying a helmet. He walks out into the empty deck, looks to the left and right--nothing. He walks towards the edge as if he's going to fall into the sea when up rises Devil 505 on the elevator--engines running, canopy back. Cole sits inside--Maggot crouches next to him. McCrae stands near.

(CONTINUED)

The aircraft is spotted with unpainted patches of aluminum, huge STARMs hang under the wings along with two SHRIKES. Jake climbs right up and in. Maggot adjusts straps. McCrae stands on the ladder.

MCCRAE

Devil 505.

JAKE

My main rig--will she fly?

COLE

Is there sex in Heaven? I don't know.

CUT TO:

THE CAG--standing at the Air Boss's bridge.

AIR BOSS (over speaker)

Prepare to launch Intruder.

A STRIKE OPS OFFICER pushes in.

OPS OFFICER

It's Grafton and Cole Sir. They're grounded!

CAG

Where--I don't see 'em. Launch Strike--

AIR BOSS (on speaker)

Launch Intruder.

CLOSE JAKE--He looks up, sees the CAG--who nods--Jake gives the salute.

CUT TO:

DEEP IN THE JUNGLE SILENCE, somewhere west of Hanoi. Thick vines, shattered tree limbs; we are looking at a path gouged out of the trees and brush, and at the end of it--the shattered remains of Camparelli's Intruder, a lifeless arm hanging out of the cockpit. Hold, then

Into a frame leans A PATHET LAO SOLDIER, peering ahead at the wreck. Jungle worn, stealthy, he looks like a rough customer.

WE GO WITH HIM

as he creeps through the brush, closer, closer, eyes glued to that lifeless arm--Until he reaches the cockpit. As he peers in over the edge,

(CONTINUED)

PAN TO REVEAL:

In the pilot's seat beside Cowboy's dead body, Camparelli sags, jaw sagging, eyes closed, pistol limp in his lap. As the Soldier grins and reaches in--Camparelli's eyes suddenly open.

CAMPARELLI

Smile, Sucker.
(as the pistol in his
lap explodes)

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI. The recoil has kicked the gun out of his weakened hand beneath the instrument panel. He tries--no good, he can't reach it. He sags a moment, then with the last of his strength manages to pull himself--hand by painful hand--out of the cockpit, slide to the wing, then drag himself a few yards away, where he sags against a low rock. Something inside him seems smashed, he coughs blood--then looks up at

CUT TO:

FAR ABOVE HIM, A LONE INTRUDER, Razor circling in the blue.

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI--can barely extricate his emergency radio--gets it on--static.

CAMPARELLI

Devil 511--this is Devil Leader do you read over.

A patch of static--then

RAZOR (over)

Roger Devil Leader I read.

CAMPARELLI

Where's Nomad?

CUT TO:

CLOSE RAZOR--HIS B/N

RAZOR

Nomad can't get close until some help gets here. They must think I've got a missile cause they won't turn on their radar. Maybe there's nothing down there anymore--

(CONTINUED)

CAMPARELLI (over)
Don't bet on it 511--That gun's still
here--They're waiting for more game.

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI--He's hurting--his legs are broken--soaked in
blood.

CUT TO:

RAZOR--turning over the Valley. His B/N looks up.

B/N
We're bingo fuel--

RAZOR
We're bingo sir--Sorry

CAMPARELLI
Beat it Razor--That's an order!

He shakes his head--levels out.

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI--Razor's plane is long gone. He drops his
head--feeling incredibly alone. In the far distance he can
hear what sounds like voices and the noise of a vehicle. He
slumps down defeated--Suddenly a terrific roar as an Intruder
roars over--

JAKE'S VOICE (over radio)
Hi, Skipper. It's
your old friends from Leavenworth.

CUT TO:

JAKE AND COLE, in the cockpit of the Intruder, looking
happier than they have for some time.

JAKE (into radio)
Just sit tight, Boss. We're gonna take a gander.

COLE
SAM launch! They couldn't stand the excitement--
The SAM arching up at them--not guiding yet.

COLE
Down--Down--

Jake drops under it's trajectory.

(CONTINUED)

COLE
Give 'em the STARM.

JAKE
Eat some!

THE STARM is on it's way. They bank hard going up--climbing, climbing.

COLE
And here's number two!
Roll it--Split S--and--

JAKE
Are we having fun now!

COLE
Shoot.

CUT TO:

INTRUDER--dropping down firing the other STARM.

--SAM SITE--in jungle--incinerated. POV Cockpit--following trail of second STARM--the SAM going off without it's radar guidance--but the STARM remembers and hits in the jungle--followed by a secondary as we sweep over.

COLE (V.O.)
Mean bastards!

COCKPIT--They look around from side to side.

COLE
That's your two SAM sites Nomad--you are clear.

Camparelli is looking bad--He tries to watch but can't turn around.

CAMPARELLI
Listen you criminals--that gun's still down here and there may be more. Soon as the Jolly shows they're gonna chew it up. They're keeping me alive for bait.

JAKE (over)
We can handle 'em Devil Leader--

CAMPARELLI
Don't give me that shit, it's a trap!
Look I'm finished--I'd do it myself but I can't.
Give me the rocket--lay it in--I'd do it for you.

(CONTINUED)

JAKE (over)
 Believe you would Devil
 Leader--(static) But we don't find
 that you have permission to die--so
 that's uh--a negative on your request
 sir.

Camparelli glares up as the Intruder flashes over and banks hard.

CUT TO:

COCKPIT--JAKE AND COLE

NOMAD (over)
 What about that gun?

COLE
 --You spot it?

JAKE (shaking his head)
 --Not yet. Man I hate those mothers,
 got their own radar--

As Jake nudges the controls--suddenly a new voice breaks in:

VOICE (over radio)
 Devil 505, this is Rover three, Do
 you read? Where do you want us, over.

PAN TO INCLUDE:

THROUGH THEIR WINDSCREEN, A GREEN RESCUE HELICOPTER appearing
 over a distant ridge.

COLE
 Why do people always show up for a
 party before you're dressed?

JAKE
 As soon as he comes in, that mothering
 gun's gonna turn on again. We got
 one shot left, if we could just get
 him to light up his damned radar, give
 us a target--

COLE
 He'll never waste it on us--

JAKE
 You're right, for a change--
 (then deliberately)
 Call in the Jolly Green.

Cole looks at him, then

(CONTINUED)

COLE

You miss this shot and lose that
chopper, a court martial's gonna look
like a promotion--

(keying his radio)

Devil 505, Okay Rover, come on over.

CHOPPER PILOT (on radio)

Roger 505, We copy.

CUT TO:

THE JOLLY GREEN, appearing over the ridge, starting toward the
clearing. Two A-1 SKYRAIDERS come in over it.

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI, dazed with pain, looking up, as the A-1's buzz over.

CUT TO:

UNDER THE TREES, that lethal gun tracking the chopper's path--

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, JAKE AND COLE, waiting on pins and needles as the
chopper gets closer, closer--Suddenly their radar warning lights
up.

JAKE

--There's the bastard. You ready?

COLE (bending to his hood)

--I was born ready--

JAKE

Yeah. And you may die that way.
(as he moves the stick and
the cockpit tilts)

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER rolling over and deliberately, almost lazily,
starting down in what may be the dive to end all dives, as

CUT TO:

THE JUNGLE below hurtles up toward us, and

CUT TO:

THE TREES rushing up, faster, faster--and now there is the first
flash from the gun, the first frightening blast of flak--

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, JAKE rigidly grasping the controls like a demon while the shells burst around them.

JAKE

--Get a lock, do it, already--

COLE (at the hood)

--I'm gonna stick this bone--right
up his teeth--

JAKE

--Come on, Big Mouth--

COLE

--Shoot!

Jake punches the button. The SHRIKE flashes off--as the flak around them from the gun swells to a deadly curtain.

JAKE (grimly, hanging on)

Gotta stay with it, give him a target
or he'll turn his radar off, we'll
lose our lock--

CUT TO:

THE INTRUDER, still screaming downward, fighting through the storm of flak--

CUT TO:

THE ZSU UNDER THE TREES, spitting flames like some machine gun from hell,

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, Jake and Cole freeze while the Intruder shakes and shudders from the blows. One, two, then a final crunching blast close aboard, and

PAN TO:

THE WING, as a shell tears right through it. And now we can see liquid pumping out through the hole, washing back in the slipstream...

CUT TO:

THE GUN, still blasting--as the missiles finally flashes in and blow it all away in a jumble of twisted steel and flesh, and

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

THE INTRUDER, leveling off, rocking in the concussion but some how still flying--trailing flame.

CUT TO:

THE RUPTURED WING--still more gas pumping out, streaming back along the fuselage, heading right for

TRACK BACK TO:

THE FLAMING WHITE HOT EXHAUST from the engine, the lighted match just waiting for the fuel. Hold as it creeps closer--closer--

CUT TO:

THE COCKPIT, JAKE fighting a losing battle with the controls.

JAKE

--You ever punch out?

COLE

--Not my trip man. Come on, keep rolling the dice-

But Jake suddenly snatched open his oxygen mask to sniff suspiciously, and

JAKE

Shit, we're on fire. I'm gonna punch out over Camparelli.

VIRGIL

--Not yet--

JAKE

--This is the end of 505--Say Goodbye Asshole--EJECT!--EJECT!

Jake reaches down--twists a handle and--BLAM! Instantly Cole is gone, blown out of the plane in a thunderclap of noise and wind.

HOLD ON JAKE:

He reaches between his legs for the other handle. The flames are all around the cockpit now. Bracing himself, he yanks, and is

CUT TO:

BLOWN OUT OF THE BURNING PLANE into the sky, his chute cracking open-- just as there is the brilliant flash of the plane exploding. The end of Devil 505. Jake, hanging from his chute, dropping, dropping. The trees rushing up toward him, cruel and craggy, and

CUT TO:

JAKE, SMASHING INTO THE TREES, tearing his legs, pounded with one brutal blow after another. As his arms flail and he gasps in agony--

CUT TO:

COLE--GATHERING UP HIS CHUTE, throwing away his helmet, life vest, anything bright. He crouches down and puts mud on his face, draws his .45 auto and pushes through the underbrush--

TO REVEAL:

A CLEARING--CAMPARELLI and the wreckage about 25 yards away. Cole keys his emergency radio.

COLE (into radio)

Nomad--Nomad this is Cole, Devil 505.

I see Devil Leader--I'm gonna get him and pop smoke--You copy?

CUT TO:

NVA OFFICER--SURROUNDED BY PATHET LAO HILL TRIBESMAN. He too has an old yellow Air Force emergency radio. He listens--dispatches his men to either flank. The A-1's buzz over.

CUT TO:

CAMPARELLI--He just stares as Cole runs up with his .45 drawn. He crouches down, the two look at each other.

COLE

Hi.

CAMPARELLI

You think this changes anything you hoodlum. You disobeyed orders again--I grounded you.

COLE (shrugs)

Hey--I'm on the ground--
(into radio)

Nomad--Nomad do you copy? This is 505.

Static--Cole looks around--silence.

COLE

I feel naked without an airplane. How about you?

CAMPARELLI

Hell, I like it here--They shoulda put me on the ground years ago. Whole thing would be finished by now.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

Heavy.

A burst of static.

COLE (into radio)

Nomad Nomad--I'm not getting through.

CUT TO:

NVA OFFICER--Sneaking up to the edge of the clearing--a machine gun crew drags an ancient Chinese heavy machine gun up in front. The Officer crouches down and keys the mike of his radio.

OFFICER (good English)

This Nomad Three--We copy Devil 505.

COLE (over)

Where are you Nomad Three?

OFFICER

We got the Jolly Green standing by--
Pop smoke 505 and stand in clearing.

CUT TO:

JAKE--crawling through the jungle--he can hear voices whispering in Lao nearby.

CUT TO:

COLE--leaning up and looking out--cocking his .45--

RADIO (O.S.)

Devil 505 pop smoke and stand in clearing.

COLE

Is that guy serious?

Camparelli picks up radio.

CAMPARELLI (into radio)

Eat shit and die Charlie.

COLE

Aw you ruined it sir. What a bummer.

RADIO (O.S.)

Fuck You Pilot--John Wayne Fuck You!

Machine gun fire erupts from the trees, rips into the wreckage--rakes the ground.

(CONTINUED)

COLE
Now they're mad--

CUT TO:

JAKE, WATCHING--Three Pathet Lao soldiers crouch, fire and move on the edge of the clearing right in front of Jake. He can see Cole and Camparelli's position. He draws his revolver. Takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

COLE AND CAMPARELLI

COLE
Where the fuck's Jake?

CAMPARELLI
Maybe he bought it.

COLE
Never--Hey sir--

He looks at him.

COLE
I know I let you down and I broke a standing order-but aren't you glad we're here. I mean I know how it bums you about the rules.

CAMPARELLI
Fuck the rules--stay alive--can you shoot that thing?

COLE
Only got two clips.

CAMPARELLI
What's with this hippie language crap anyway?

COLE
Keeps me young.

He leans up--sees a man in the trees--the Lao fires at him he fires back.

COLE
Hey that's about enough of that.

CUT TO:

JAKE--He steps out and faces the three men--they freeze--finally one of them howls and screeches like a monkey, his rifle with a long bayonet and charges. Jake shoots him solidly through the middle. He sits down.

(CONTINUED)

Jake shoots him again then turns and fires at the other two who have fled into the jungle. A bullet comes whizzing back. He bolts out toward Cole and Camparelli.

JAKE

Tiger--Tiger--it's me! Don't shoot.

A bullet zings past him--another. Jake leaps over the rock and thrashes down on top of them.

JAKE

Happy to see me Sir?

CAMPARELLI

Why would I be happy Grafton--I'm still gonna bust you. Why didn't you use your radio?

JAKE

Busted on the trees Skipper.

COLE (on radio)

Nomad--Nomad--Do you read?

NOMAD--THE FAC(Forward Air Control)--A LIGHT O-2A wheels overhead.

NOMAD (over)

I've got you Devil 505. You've got company to your West.

COLE (into radio)

Don't I know it Nomad--Give 'em a smoke rocket and bomb on red smoke--we're getting out of here.

NOMAD (over)

That's a roge--505.

NVA OFFICER (over)

It's a trap Nomad. Do not listen.

Cole hands Jake a smoke grenade. They pull pins--

COLE

You got a good arm?

JAKE

Little League.

They throw--the machine gun barks--a rocket flashes in from the FAC.

JAKE

It's now or never.

(CONTINUED)

They grab Camparelli under the arms and retreat back into the jungle--

CUT TO:

THE SANDY'S--A-1'S turning over the trees.

SANDY ONE

Red smoke--I see red smoke.

He rolls into his run.

CUT TO

JAKE AND COLE--pulling Camparelli through the jungle as fast as they can. Bullets zing over. The A-1's swoop overhead.

CUT TO:

TREE LINE--The A-1's blast and strafe the opposite tree line to oblivion.

CUT TO:

UNDERBRUSH--MUD--Jake and Cole drag Camparelli through a swamp--dark and boggy, a complete canopy shrouds them. They stop--breathing hard. The plane's scream over again--the explosions more distant. Now they hear something more ominous--DOGS.

JAKE

Dogs!

COLE (into radio)

Nomad Nomad--we're popping yellow smoke--send the Jolly to get us.

NOMAD

How will I know it's you 505?

COLE

Do it now--You'll have to trust me!

CUT TO:

THE JOLLY GREEN HH-3, A HUGE HELICOPTER throbbing over the trees--yellow smoke drifts up--the crewmen lower a JUNGLE PENETRATOR--a cylindrical probe with straps and fold-down seats. Other crewmen man door guns--not knowing what's coming back up out of the tree canopy.

CUT TO:

JUNGLE FLOOR--the penetrator coming down near them--the rotor wash throwing up leaves and debris. They rush to it, Cole snags it--pulls it down--They quickly strap in Camparelli--there's only one more strap.

(CONTINUED)

A bullet snaps over through the branches--another. Planes roar overhead--

JAKE
Go--on up! Give me your gun!

COLE
Who do you think you are--Wyatt Earp?
Cole puts his arms through the harness--

COLE
Here hold on!
He grabs Jake's arm.

JAKE
I'll never make it--send it back down.

CAMPARELLI
We go together or we stay. Grab on.

COLE
Do it.

They grab back, wrap their arms around his--another bullet goes by.

CAMPARELLI
Pull on the cable already!

Jake does--it hoists them up--all clinging to each other.

CAMPARELLI
Hold on Grafton--We got you.

They go through the trees out into the light.

COLE
We're gonna make it.

JAKE
How do you know?

COLE
I had an uncle who had a nose like yours--

CAMPARELLI
Keep the Faith Jake.

The Three are hauled up into the dazzling Sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE CARRIER--steaming indifferently through the South China Sea. Yankee Station. A speck turns off her stern, grows larger into the shape of a wayward Intruder.

THE DECK--as the Intruder slams down trapping number three wire. It screeches to a halt--the wire drops and the plane taxis gently away.

THE COCKPIT--with the canopy open, Razor and his B/N sit in the bright sun. They remove their helmets--Maggot jumps up and starts to help with the harnesses. McCrae is below signaling where the planes should be.

AIR BOSS (O.S.) (booming)
Green Deck--Green Deck.

MAGGOT (excited)
They got 'em Sir--they got 'em! The Jolly Green's got the Skipper and Mr. Grafton and Cole Sir!

BELOW--Hardesty scurries about.

HARDESTY
They picked up Mr. Grafton--they made it!

MAGGOT
They're coming home.

Razor looks at him--then off down the deck, and his expression is at once profound and impenetrable. An expression that men might have had before the Gates of Troy. It is only there for a second and then he snaps a glance at Maggot.

RAZOR
What're you sitting there with that stupid look on your face for Maggot? Have you decided to stop the War? Have you decided to take a vacation? Am I sitting here so that my buddies can run into me? Chief McCrae, is this aircraft going to be fueled and armed while there are still enough SAM's to go around? DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME!

MCCRAE
You heard the man--get your asses in gear--
We gotta strike to launch. WE GOTTA JOB TO DO!

--And the Carrier steams serenely through the South China Sea.

THE END