

"HOT SHOTS!"

An Important Movie

Screenplay by

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and

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SECOND DRAFT

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"HOT SHOTS!"

FADE IN

1 BLUE SKY

1

SUPER: FLEMNER AIR FORCE BASE TEST SITE, JULY 16, 1971

A couple of beats pass. A flock of geese gently, gracefully, wing their way south.

GEESE

Honk. Honk. Honk.

Suddenly from out of nowhere, a jet streaks by, scaring the bejeezus out of the geese. As they scatter, their squawking sounds like people screaming.

GEESE

Awk! Lookout! Jeez!

The jet does fancy rolls. Loops, spins, figure eights, steep dives, and steep climbs.

2 INT. JET - DAY

2

Piloted by LELAND "BUZZ" HARLEY, a ruggedly handsome Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. Riding behind in the navigator's seat is DOMINIC "MAILMAN" FARNHAM. Each man's nickname is stenciled across his helmet.

BUZZ

Yee-haaa!

3 EXT. JET

3

It rolls and is now flying upside down.

4 INT. JET

4

They are upside down. Change and things are falling out of Farnham's pockets.

FARNHAM

That's enough of that, Buzz.

Buzz rights the plane.

FARNHAM

This is a combat exercise, not an air circus. I'm picking up a bandit on radar. Three o'clock.

Buzz loves it. He's in mock combat. He and Farnham strap on their oxygen masks.

5 EXT. JET

5

Buzz opens up the throttle. The jet roars across the sky. He's in pursuit of the bandit who is some distance away. He closes in at breakneck speed.

6 INT. JET

6

FARNHAM

Buzz, this bag of bones isn't rated past Mach Two. It can't take the stress.

Buzz is too far gone. He's caught up in the speed, and the excitement.

FARNHAM

Buzz! Harley!

Buzz SEES his air speed indicator. Mach Two, Mach Three... the jet vibrations increase as the speed increases. Mach Four...clouds zipping by...closing in on the Bandit's jet.

FARNHAM

You've made your point. Head back to base.

7 INT. BANDIT'S JET

7

Lights flicking on and off from behind. A horn honking. The PILOT turns around. His face is hidden behind his mask, but on his helmet is stencilled the nickname, "EYEWITNESS." He sees:

8 EXT. BUZZ'S JET

8

Flicking its headlights from high to low in the "passing" indication. The Bandit banks and lets Buzz pass by. Adding a thrill to the moment, Buzz deftly skims over the top of the cockpit. It works. The guy is petrified.

9 EXT./INT. BUZZ'S JET

9 *

FARNHAM

Goddamn it!!

10 EXT. BUZZ'S JET

10

The craft streaks even faster...Mach Five...then Mach Six... Mach Seven, Mach Eight! Buzz is still into it.

Suddenly the plane begins to vibrate. Very violently. The jet starts to shake apart around them. It affects their speech. When they talk it sounds like speaking while running your finger over your lips.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

FARNHAM
We're tearing apart!

BUZZ
Mayday...Mayday!

A wing starts to peel off. Buzz tries to control the plane but can't. Farnham sees the wing from his window. The jet starts to plummet to the earth.

BUZZ
(o.s.)
Mailman...eject!

Farnham's ejection seat jams!

FARNHAM
I can't. Seat's jammed! Nothing works! My harness...

From a distance, WE SEE one helmetless figure in a parachute float downward as the plane descends.

11 EXT. JET

11

A forest ahead. The jet crashes into the trees, then hits nose first into the ground. Farnham is catapulted out. Propelled a half mile deeper into the forest. Hits the ground. Tumbles ass over head for several more yards. Ends up on his hands and knees. Farnham is all right, but shaken. We SEE his helmet, which still reads "MAILMAN", has a large branch jammed into each side. And he is still wearing his oxygen mask. Together they give the impression of a six point buck. He's lucky to be alive. He hears something in the brush. He perks his head up. Looks around, to the right, the left, then back to the right again. Then cocks his head as he hears a twig snap. He reads a sign nearby, "Deer Hunting Season Starts Today at Noon." Farnham's watch beeps. A churchbell chimes twelve. A factory whistle blows.

ANGLE ON FARNHAM

From here he's the spitting image of Bambi's dad. TWO DEER HUNTERS enter frame and open fire, blowing Farnham away.

HUNTER ONE
Good sized buck.

HUNTER TWO
(to his dog)
Go get 'em, Tighe!

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

The dog gleefully bounds through the brush. Stops dead in his tracks when he sees Farnham. Tighe turns away in disgust, his face registering, "Ooo." He throws up behind a rock. The Hunters arrive. Stunned at their kill. HUNTER TWO bends over Farnham.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

HUNTER ONE
Is that a deer?

HUNTER TWO
(warily)
Better check his wallet and find out.

CUT TO:

12 OMITTED

12

13 INT. NORTHWELL AVIATION'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

13

TV footage. WE ARE WATCHING A MONITOR in a well-appointed conference room. The TV picture is of A NETWORK NEWS ANCHOR. Chroma keyed behind him is a picture of Ronald Reagan, with the dates: "1733-1994".

NEWS ANCHOR
Ronald Reagan, 1733-1994, the end of an era...In other news, the President announced further reductions in military expenditures today. He singled out Secretary Cheney when he said...

PRESIDENT BUSH
(over actual news footage)
"I salute our Secretary of Defense who's made some important cuts in the defense budget that have not been easy."

NEWS ANCHOR
He then went on to drop a bombshell that sent shock waves through the defense industry when he slashed the heavily maligned Quantar Gentrum Super Fighter from the military arsenal.

CUT TO:

A14 OMITTED

A14 *

14 EXTREMELY CLOSE ON - FRONT OF LEATHER JACKET

14 *

The music is clean, important -- Rock. The look is clean, important, high tech.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

Fingers. Strong fingers. Purposeful fingers. They grasp the pull tab and zip it up with authority. The fingers move to the right forearm of the jacket and pull another zipper down to the wrist. Then the left forearm. Another zip. In the background on a cheap television, the same news story continues.

NEWS ANCHOR

(continuing)

He cited cost overruns that nearly doubled the \$20 billion budget and delivery nearly a year behind schedule in making the decision...

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

MORE ZIPPERS

Shoulders, breasts, gloves. The news story drones on.

CUT TO:

15 INT. NORTHWELL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

15

TV again.

NEWS ANCHOR #2

A spokesperson from Northwell Aviation, the manufacturers of the Quantar Gentrum Super Fighter, expressed total shock at the announcement and went on to blame inaccurate initial cost estimates, inflationary pressures and faulty parts from subcontractors for the spate of setbacks and failed test flights over the past several years...

WE WIDEN to include more of the room.

CUT TO:

16 YET MORE ZIPPERS

16

These are on heavy leather boots. One on the sides. One around the toes. Zip. Zip. Zip. Zip.

NEWS ANCHOR #2

(continuing)

Speaking from his Rancho Mirage estate, Stuart Wilson, chief executive officer and leading stockholder of Northwell...

CUT TO:

A17 OMITTED

A17

17 INT. NORTHWELL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

17

NEWS ANCHOR #2

(continuing)

...dismissed as insulting and humiliating any and all accusations of wrongdoing or kickbacks with regard to the billions of dollars of overruns.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

As the CAMERA CONTINUES TO PULL BACK, the monitor snaps off. Rather than go to black, the graphic design of the Quantar Gentrum superfighter appears.

A TABLE

The Northwell Aviation name and logo are emblazoned on it.

WE HEAR a door open. Footsteps approach. A newspaper is slammed down over the name and logo. The headline reads:

"PRESIDENT TO CUT FUNDING OF
NORTHWELL'S QUANTAR GENTRUM SUPER
FIGHTER"

WILSON

(o.s.)

These are desperate times. This is
a 20 billion dollar contract.
Northwell Aviation simply cannot
survive this kind of a hit.

WIDER ANGLE

We are in a shrouded conference room. The focal point of the room is the mockup of the Quantar Gentrum Super Fighter. In the b.g. is the impressive logo for Northwell Aviation.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

There is a film noir feeling that casts an ominous tone. Several CIVILIAN MEN -- ROSENER, HEMAK and SUCIK, dressed in expensive business suits -- look pleased with WILSON'S speech.

SUCIK

But you know our prototypes have never performed up to specifications. The plane's too big...too clumsy. How do we convince the Pentagon to build the damn thing?

WILSON

We won't have to. They'll convince themselves. Rosener...

ROSENER

The Navy has been quietly assembling an elite squadron of fighter pilots for a top secret mission... code name Sleepy Weasel. It's exactly what we need. And we have a man on the inside.

WILSON

We simply see to it that the mission fails.

ROSENER

They've played right into our hands by reinstating Buzz Harley's son, Topper.

CUT TO:

18 LAST ZIP

18

A leather glove. Each finger has a zipper. Zip. Zip. Zip. Next, armpit of jacket. Ziiiiip.

ROSENER

(voice over)

He's just like his old man...the best flyer in the world...with a personality profile to guarantee the failure of Sleepy Weasel. Gentlemen, in six weeks Congress will come crawling back to us on its' knees to put the Quantar Gentrum will be back in production.

Finally, a man's fly, very snug. But it makes it and CLEARS FRAME, REVEALING MARGE, a beautiful woman, lying alone in bed in a motel room.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

MARGE

You're not coming back. Are you Topper? I told myself last night was going to be last night. But I've never met a guy so deep...so sensitive. Oh, cut through the crap, Marge. I love you...damn it. I love you big time. You opened up just long enough for me to see through that tough veneer. I know you hurt inside. I know you feel pain. Let me help. Oh, what am I? Dreaming?

TOPPER (O.S.)

They called me back. This is my last chance. I gotta go.

CLOSE ON A LARGE METAL ZIPPER TAB

It unzips the motel room door, which drops out onto the ground.

CUT TO:

19 OMITTED

19

20 EXT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

20

A black leather clad SEAN "TOPPER" HARLEY emerges. Handsome, charismatic, a smile that melts, an intensity that freezes, and very, very complex.

21 ANGLE ON TOPPER

21

as he heads for his red Norton, parked in the lot.

Marge, wrapped in a bedsheet, stands in the doorway.

MARGE

(calling out)

Wherever you go. You'll always be mama's little pile driver.

He fires up the bike and tears out of the lot. As he pulls away, the sign over the motel comes into view.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

It features a picture of a swallow with wings spread, and reads, "The Big Swallow Motel."

ANGLE ON HIGHWAY

Topper heads for the horizon, appearing briefly at the rise of each hill. In a matter of seconds, he's out of sight.

22
thru
54
55

OMITTED

22
thru
54
55

EXT. DUDLEY NAVAL AIR STATION - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

Highest security. A military transport plane makes a perfect landing, revealing the massive base. A high brass RECEPTION COMMITTEE awaits the plane as it taxis to a stop. The whining of the jet engines subsides. The door opens and COMMANDER THOMAS "TUG" BENSON, 50, distinguished military leader and hero, appears in the doorway.

The Greeting Committee salutes. He crisply returns the salute and, before the portable stairs can be put in place, strides smartly forward and falls twenty feet to the tarmac.

He gets up and shakes hands with LT. COMMANDER JAMES BLOCK, 40. Calm, steady, fair, just, and kind.

BLOCK

Commander, it's good to see you again. It's been too long.

COMMANDER

And so it has, yes, yes, yes.

BLOCK

How are ya, Commander?

COMMANDER

Hawaii? I'm in Hawaii? Goddamnit, Bill, I'm supposed to be at Dudley.

He turns back to the plane.

BLOCK

No, no. This is Dudley. We've been awaiting your arrival for a fortnight.

COMMANDER

Yes, of course. Fortnight. I've always admired that in a man, Walt. Well, gotta run. Good luck.

He turns to go again.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

BLOCK

But sir, this is your command. Sleepy Weasel has been on the drawing boards for ten months. The President handpicked you.

COMMANDER

You're damned right he did. There's no stopping us now, Ted. Let's get down to business. What do you hear from home?

BLOCK

Everyone's fine sir. Why don't I show you to your offices and I can bring you up to date.

COMMANDER

You've always been a fine soldier, Scott. Just lead the way. Good God, I've got to pee. Had the better part of my bladder blown off at Guadalcanal.

They start to walk off, but the Commander is low-bridged by one of his plane's wings. The impact of his head on the wing makes a very metallic sound. The Commander goes down.

BLOCK

Are you all right, sir?

COMMANDER

(a little insulted)

All right!? All right!? Why hell, I've never felt better in my life. Why don't you go on ahead. I'll stay here and hold them off. Later I'd like to organize a big parade.

56 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY

56

Speeding along on his Norton, Topper passes a sign that READS, "Dudley Naval Air Station, 10 Mi."

57 ANGLE ON A WHITE LIPPIZANER STALLION

57

cantering in a corral near the side of the road. Astride this magnificent animal is the blue-jeaned RAMADA, mid-twenties, gorgeous, sexy, classy. Riding gracefully.

She and Topper exchange glances. Ramada coolly dismisses him and, to the sound of classical music, puts her horse through his paces. Topper hits the brakes. Ramada majestically brings her horse up on his hind legs. In the f.g.,

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

Topper ENTERS FRAME, pops a wheelie, and EXITS FRAME.

She deftly maneuvers her horse in and out between a series of posts set up as obstacles in a training course. In the f.g., Topper, matching her move for move, ENTERS FRAME, weaves between fenceposts, and EXITS FRAME.

Ramada puts the horse through a classic sideways Lippizaner prancing routine. In the f.g., Topper ENTERS FRAME, dances his bike sideways, his arms gesturing like a Broadway chorus dance routine.

He stops the bike, does a fancy dismount, and gives her a stylish "top that" bow. .

She takes the challenge.

58 ANGLE ON HORSE HOOVES

58

tap dancing on a wood surface in the corral. It leads to an Astaire-type routine. Tapping up stairs, onto a chair, etc.

59 ANGLE ON TOPPER

59

damned impressed. Rock music now.

60 HOOVES

60

doing the moon-walk. Splits, spins, incredible. The horse ends up on his hind legs, his front legs spread out in a "Ta Da" pose as the music ends.

Without so much as a glance at Topper, she rides off, but not before completing an uneven parallel bars routine on a tree branch, re-mounting her horse, and jumping a fence. Topper, thoroughly impressed, knows when he's been beaten, but we have the feeling this has only been round one.

61 INT. COMMANDER'S OFFICE ~ DAY

61

We are several stories up. Out the window in the b.g. troops are marching in formation.

CLOSEUP ON MAP OF THE MIDDLE EAST

BLOCK

(o.s.)

...every aerial photo and recon report indicate a defensive arsenal in the D and perhaps negative C categories...

PULL BACK TO SEE Block briefing the Commander.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

BLOCK

There's also a nest of anti-aircraft and Nagagina squadrons. They can send up an AK-AK umbrella high enough to make any attack ineffective.

COMMANDER

(beat)

I don't have a clue what you're talking about, Phil. Not a fucking clue. I have a shell the size of a fist in my head. Pork Chop Hill. Only way I can get this goddamn toup to stay on is by magnetizing the entire upper left quadrant of my skull. You just go ahead and do what you do. Do you have any soup?

Out the window in the b.g. troops are marching in formation.

BLOCK

Of course, sir. I'll have the mess hall bring something up...

COMMANDER

(sitting)

I love soup. I mean I think I like soup. Son-of-a-bitchin' shell. It's either soup or duck. Which one can you shoot?

BLOCK

Duck, sir.

The Commander ducks, smashing his head against the corner of a metal desk, making a "clang" noise.

BLOCK

Are you all right, sir?

COMMANDER

Of course I'm all right. Why? What have you heard?

BLOCK

Nothing, sir. Why are you speaking so loudly?

COMMANDER

I'm excited, Jim. Very excited.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2)

61

BLOCK
(into phone)
Send up some soup for the Commander
on the double.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (3)

61

The troops in the b.g. are now doing formations like the June Taylor dancers.

COMMANDER

God bless you for that, son. Let's go over this Sleepy Weasel one more time. I want to familiarize myself with as much as I can. Let's not stop for a moment.

BLOCK

But sir, I thought you had to pee.

COMMANDER

I am. God I love this country.

62 INT. CONTROL TOWER - DAY

62

An AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER is bringing in a jet fighter.

AIR CONTROLLER

(into radio)

Roger, Alpha Bravo Niner. You're cleared for landing.

IAN

(voice over, from radio)

Affirmative, Echo Lima Benchpress.

63 EXT. AIR FIELD

63

The jet taxis to a stop. The name "PALM BEACH" written on the fuselage.

64 INT. COCKPIT

64

The Pilot dramatically removes his helmet. His hair is in curlers. He shakes the curlers out. Now his hair is perfectly coiffed. A miniature bust of Shakespeare with a bobbing head is perched on the instrument panel.

65 EXT. JET

65

The canopy opens. The Pilot stands, tall in the cockpit. Strikes a heroic, manly pose. His aviator scarf blowing in the breeze. A ray of sunlight breaks through the clouds and shines down on him. This hunk of gorgeous man is IAN CARMICHAEL. Blue eyed, blonde, square shouldered, square jawed. Jet pilot extraordinaire. He goes by the book. The consummate team player. And great guy. A narcissist -- and all man.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

IAN
(to himself)
Once more into the breach, dear
friends.
(aside, to camera)
Once more.

66 AIR CONTROLLER

66

Looking at Ian through his binoculars. He turns to a co-worker.

AIR CONTROLLER
(taken with Ian)
What a guy!

67 BASE ENTRANCE

67

Topper roars past on his bike.

68 BASE

68

WE SEE a backlit Topper from the waist up as he rides along. A sign READS: "SPEED LIMIT 20 MPH -- SPEED BUMPS AHEAD." A jet takes off in the b.g. Topper's heart fills with excitement as he races it, keeping up with the jet as long as he can. The jet finally passes him.

TOPPER
Ya-hooo!

In mid "Ya", before he gets to "Hoo", his bike, traveling at 60 miles per hour, hits speed bumps. Topper and his bike shake violently. Combs and change fly out of his pockets. The lenses pop out of his sunglasses.

A69 PARADE GROUNDS

A69

Uniformed men are marching. Topper, back to normal, drives by.

ANGLE ON SQUAD

calling out cadence.

DRILL SERGEANT #1
I don't know but I've been told.
Starve a fever.

SQUAD #1
Feed a cold.

DRILL SERGEANT #1
To err is human.

SQUAD #1
To forgive divine.

Another squad passes in the opposite direction.

DRILL SERGEANT #2
I had a little dradle...

SQUAD #2
I made it out of clay.

(CONTINUED)

A69 CONTINUED:

A69

DRILL SERGEANT
And when it's dry and ready.

SQUAD
Then dradle I will play...!

69 INT. BARRACKS - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

69

Typical army barracks. The men are settling in. Every one of them has the rugged look of a male model. These guys are just plain handsome.

When Topper enters, the place lights up. He exchanges many warm greetings. High fives, low fives, head-butting, Oakland A's forearm-bashing, frat handshakes.

TOPPER
(greeting friends)
Bruno, MoonDog, Scooter, Jazz,
Cowboy, Rabbi...

He high fives a Hassidic rabbi. He passes several normal bunks, followed by Ian's, which is canopied. Ian is putting a down comforter and a nice fluffy pillow on his bunk. His scarf is still blowing in a nonexistent breeze. Ian gives Topper a cold stare.

Topper's attention is drawn to JIM "WASH OUT" PFAFFENBACH, a very impressionable, eager-beaver, baby-faced, all-American type. He is attempting to put toiletries on a shelf but keeps missing. Jars and bottles smash at his feet. He shakes his head, trying to clear it, and then goes to sit on his bunk. He misses and falls to the floor. Looks to see if anyone is watching.

70 WASH OUT'S P.O.V.

70

The scene in the barracks is distorted, as seen through a fish-eye lens. His hand reaches out for a bottle of pills which becomes enormous as he pulls it close. A huge label READS "MAXIHYDROCLOROSPORIN -- for treatment of Walleye Vision. Whenever you fly, for god's sake take this stuff." The bottle drops from frame REVEALING Topper.

TOPPER
Hey, buddy. Are you okay?

WASH OUT
Fine. Sure, I'm okay. You're Topper Harley, aren't you? I've heard you've got chops the rest of us only dream of. Throwing you out was a bum rap. My name's Jim Pfaffenbach, but everyone calls me 'Wash Out'.

*

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

They've been attempting to shake hands but Wash Out keeps missing Topper's hand. Topper takes it in. He knows the kid's got problems.

71 ANGLE ON THE BUNK NEXT TO TOPPER'S

71

PETE "DEAD MEAT" THOMPSON, a Steve Garvey at his straightest type. Nice guy. But too straight. Topper catches a glance at Dead Meat putting out pictures of his wife, kids, and a framed ultrasound readout of a baby in the womb.

Plus photos of his and her mother and father, and of most everyone in his family tree, as far back as an obvious cave man type. Then pictures of his dog, and her puppies. And finally a picture of all these pictures. He pulls a harmonica out of his pocket. Plays "There's No Place Like Home" off and on through the following dialogue.

*

TOPPER
(about the kids)

Cute.

DEAD MEAT
I like to stay in shape. Thanks.

TOPPER
These all at home?

DEAD MEAT
The dogs, wife, and kids...

He opens his locker, vapor pouring from a metal container.

DEAD MEAT
And the one we got frozen away here
and ready to implant just as soon
as we can.

Closes the locker.

DEAD MEAT
You got pictures of your family, I'd
love to see them.

TOPPER
I'm my family photo.

DEAD MEAT
But everybody needs a family to love.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

TOPPER

I could never find time for love.
It's too heavy. It's an anchor that
drowns a man. Besides, I got the
sky. I got the smell of jet exhaust.
I got my bike...

DEAD MEAT

A loner.

TOPPER

No, I own it.

The following items Topper pulls from his pockets and plops down on his bunk:

TOPPER

(continuing)

My rabbit's foot, Pez dispenser,
dental floss, urine sample...
(turns to Dead Meat)
...you never know. The warm bed of
a lady, any lady, and my intimate
knowledge of over thirty-eight sexual
positions.

DEAD MEAT

There is much more to life than lying
on top of women...

TOPPER

Thirty-nine sexual positions.

Dead Meat extends his hand.

DEAD MEAT

I can see I am going to have to work
on you. The name's Pete Thompson.
But everyone calls me 'Dead Meat.'

TOPPER

Topper Harley.

DEAD MEAT

(shaking his hand)

Just a pleasure.

72 ANGLE ON IAN

72

who is thumbing through a copy of "GQ". His own picture is on the cover. He dramatically lowers the magazine, and as he speaks, his Craftmatic bed raises.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

72

IAN
(to himself)
Bloody, bawdy villain! Remorseless,
treacherous, lecherous, kindless
villain!
(aside, to camera)
Christ, I'm really, really pissed.

*
*

73 BACK TO SCENE

73

HERRING
(o.s.)
ATTEN-HUT!

They all snap to attention, lined up in front of their bunks in various stages of undress. CAPTAIN ARNOLD "RED" HERRING, an instructor as tough as this man's Navy has ever seen, is moving down the center aisle, inspecting them. On his chest a name tag READS: "RED HERRING."

HERRING
I don't care how many missions you've flown. I don't care how good you think you are. Starting today your psyches are shopping for a new line of credit. You're nobody. I'm the resident asshole around here and for the next six weeks, nobody in this outfit takes a crap unless I say! Got it?

He walks up to KOWALSKI, who is obviously a woman. Gorgeous, very feminine...a fact everyone is oblivious to. She is in her bra and panties, her bra barely containing her well-endowed endowment.

HERRING
You lookin' at me, mister?

KOWALSKI
No, sir.

Herring steps up, nose to nose with her.

HERRING
What's your name, son?

KOWALSKI
Kowalski, sir.

HERRING
Next time I see your ugly face I want it to be clean shaven. You read me?

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

KOWALSKI

Yes, sir.

HERRING

Suck in that chest!

She tries. Herring turns to Wash Out. He is staring strangely at Herring and still blinking his eyes.

HERRING

Pfaffenbach!!

Wash Out snaps to a salute, but misses his forehead. He squints his eyes, gives it another shot. He's closer this time.

HERRING

Who you lookin' at, Boy!

WASH OUT

No one, sir.

74 WASH OUT'S P.O.V.

74

Herring is distorted, seen through a fish-eye lens.

HERRING

Oh, I'm some unworthy low-life that's not good enough for you to talk to! Well, that attitude is short on collateral. This low-life is God as far as you're concerned. Now drop and give me fifty!

TOPPER

Hey, back off.

HERRING

Who the hell are you talking to, scum?

ANGLE ON DOOR

Block stands there, artfully backlit.

BLOCK

Captain Herring, I'd like a word with the men.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

As Block talks, everyone feels they are not only in the presence of a superior, but of one of them, a regular guy.

BLOCK

At ease, gentlemen. I am Lieutenant Commander Block. You men have been selected to write a page in military history. You're the best our Navy and Air Force have to offer, and will be treated that way. But I expect total cooperation. A team spirit. One man fails...our mission fails.

He turns to Topper.

BLOCK

Have I made myself clear, Lieutenant....uh..."

TOPPER

Harley. Topper Harley.

Ian recognizes the name and fumes.

BLOCK

Any relation to Buzz Harley?

The mention of his father makes Topper begin to sweat. The CAMERA PUSHES IN on Topper. The lighting becomes dramatic. WE HEAR his heart begin to beat rapidly.

TOPPER

(defensively)

He was my father, sir.

BLOCK

You know you've got some big shoes to fill, son. He was in a league with the greatest aviators in history: Yeager, Lindburgh, Glenn. I would have flown into Hell with Buzz. Until the incident, your father was idolized by every man who ever climbed into a jet.

Topper breaks his tension by popping the top on a beer he is carrying.

TOPPER

Let's have a beer and discuss it.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (2)

74

Herring flies into a rage. He knocks the beer out of Topper's hand.

HERRING

Don't push it, Harley. Your ego's writing checks your body can't cash.

Block stops him.

BLOCK

I'm going to chalk this up as opening day jitters, Mr. Harley. But don't let me hear a repeat of this performance. I am only so patient with my men. Remember, team spirit. That's all, Captain... *

He exits.

HERRING

I'm not as gentle as the Lieutenant Commander. Your libido is making mortgage payments that would choke a horse. Now you got five minutes to stow your gear. Get moving!! *

Herring exits. Glaring at Topper.

Topper turns to the guys.

TOPPER

Whoa this guy, huh?

IAN

I hope you were paying attention.

Topper turns to Ian and extends his hand.

TOPPER

I don't think we've met...

IAN

Ian Carmichael. Excuse me if I don't shake the hand of a certain hot shot whose father caused the death of someone very special to me, Dominic 'Mailman' Farnham.

TOPPER

You mean...

IAN

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (3)

74

A dramatic pause.

IAN
(continuing)
Dominic Farnham was my father. I
was his love child.

TOPPER
It was a hunting accident.

IAN
Accident my deep blue eyes.
(aside, to camera)
I do defy him and I spit at him.
(to Topper)
It was reckless, irresponsible
flying.

Wash Out is taking this unusually hard.

KOWALSKI
(to Wash Out)
You okay?

WASH OUT
This is an incredible coincidence,
but the hunter who mistakenly killed
your father was Henry
Pfaffenbach...my father.

He produces a photo. WE SEE a picture of Farnham's head,
complete with helmet, branches and mask, obviously mounted
above a mantle in a lodge with the Pfaffenbach family gathered
around. The flyers are profoundly touched.

WASH OUT
(handing the photo
to Kowalski)
I feel terrible.

KOWALSKI
Isn't this Henry Alva Pfaffenbach?
My mother was a Pfaffenbach.

SCOOTER
Not Doreen Pfaffenbach? From
Minnesota?

KOWALSKI
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (4)

74

SCOOTER

Then...we're cousins. Remember, we
used to spend our summers in Eagle
River.

BRUNO/COWBOY/JAZZ/MOONDOG

(in unison)

Eagle River?

WASH OUT

(to Ian)

I hope you can forgive me for this.

IAN

It's not your fault. Or your
father's. Anyone could make that
mistake.

(to Topper)

But you, you're the type who could
end up killing every man in this
outfit.

TOPPER

What does this have to do with me?
I didn't eat your father.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (5)

74

IAN

Like father, like son. You've
already been tossed out once.

Topper's heart begins to pound. They exchange icy stares.

DEAD MEAT

Hold it. We can't fight among
ourselves. We're family. We're on
the same team. Shake hands.

Dead Meat brings their hands together. They grip each other's
hand, tight, tighter, it's gotta hurt, but no one is showing
pain. WE SEE their hands are literally squished like putty.
Now, tears of pain roll down each of their cheeks. Their faces
grimacing from the agony. Emitting little whines.

DEAD MEAT

There now.

Topper and Ian let go of each other's hand. Both want to scream
out. This hurts bad.

DEAD MEAT

Doesn't that feel better?

Topper and Ian let go of their pent-up pain.

TOPPER

Sure!!!

IAN

Yesssss!

DEAD MEAT

We're friends again.

Topper takes Dead Meat aside.

TOPPER

We fly together, sleep next to each
other, but that's all. Let me handle
my own affairs. Don't get too close.

As Topper walks away, Wash Out steps up to Dead Meat. They
watch him leave.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (5)

74

WASH OUT
He's so complex.

A75 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BASE PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE

A75 :

The door is slightly ajar. A sign reads "Back in 15 Minutes". Topper is leafing through the swim suit edition of Psychology Today. An Electrician has set up his ladder and keeps looking up out of frame. He straps on a tool belt, throws another over his shoulder. He looks up again, then grabs a coil of rope and climbs the ladder, revealing the humblest of light fixtures. Through the open door Topper notices the luscious Ramada. She is reaching into a file cabinet, revealing an acre of well-formed thigh.

75 INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE

75 *

Topper enters and watches her for a beat.

RAMADA
(noticing him)
Enjoy the view?

TOPPER
Those are some long legs.

RAMADA
I just had them lengthened. Now they go all the way up.

TOPPER
Ooo. I'm glad we ran into each other again. I was really impressed with the way you handled that stallion. You know, when I saw you dig your heels into his sides, tighten up the reins, and break his spirit, I never wanted to be a horse so much in my life. After I finish off this shrink, let's go out for a quick canter in the meadow.

RAMADA
Lieutenant. I am the shrink.

TOPPER
You're a psychiatrist?

RAMADA
That's what the diploma says.

She points to a diploma. It reads "She's a psychiatrist".

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

TOPPER

I've never been to a psychiatrist before. You will be gentle?

He sits. WE HEAR a dog yelp.

He picks up the dog and puts it on the floor. Ramada has been going over his file.

RAMADA

Lt. Harley, I've been ordered to review your records. You were discharged from the service 18 months ago for willful insubordination. You disobeyed a direct order and lost a 30 million dollar fighter in the process.

TOPPER

Yeah, okay. But I'm paying it off. Ten bucks a week. And I wouldn't be doing that if I'd gotten that extra collision coverage.

RAMADA

Seems this sort of thing runs in the family. Wasn't your father involved in a similar incident?

Topper's lightheartedness suddenly takes on a dark tone, followed by the lighting. Once again WE HEAR his heart start to pound. Ramada picks up on his tension.

TOPPER

What do you mean?

ANGLE ON TOPPER'S FINGERS

as they clutch the arms of his chair. His heartbeats quicken.

RAMADA

(reading)

Leland "Buzz" Harley, commissioned June seventh, nineteen sixty-nine...three purple hearts, Presidential commendation. Then this incident, the Dominic Farnham death, occurred on...uh...July sixteenth, nineteen seventy-one.

*
*
*
*

Topper begins to perspire. His heartbeats become increasingly irregular.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2)

75

RAMADA
Shortly after that...brought up on
charges...dereliction of
duty...reduction in rank...a court
martial... dishonorable discharge...

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2)

75

WE CAN SEE Topper's heart beat through his shirt.

RAMADA

1975...a broken man...suffocated
while working the night shift in a
Fotomat booth...Tell me how these
events affected you.

The heartbeats become a Gene Krupa solo. She looks up and is shocked to see a rigid, sweating Topper. Suddenly he rips the arms off his chair. We no longer HEAR the heartbeats.

TOPPER

I don't think about it much. I mean,
that was a long time ago.

He drops the chair arms. Ramada shows her concern. Looks to his file.

ANGLE ON TOPPER'S FILE.

Several diagnoses are listed: "Schizoid Manic Depressive", "Tax the Rich". She makes a check mark by "Paternal Conflict Syndrome".

Topper realizes how far out he has gone and quickly regains his composure.

TOPPER

(heading for the door)

If you'll excuse me, I have guns to
grease.

RAMADA

(cautiously)

Lieutenant, have you thought about
seeing a psychiatrist on a regular
basis?

TOPPER

I thought you'd never ask.

RAMADA

I mean professionally. You need
help.

TOPPER

Thanks for the advice.

Topper, still facing Ramada, opens the office door, revealing several live electrical wires dangling from the ceiling. The wires sway, crackling and spitting a shower of sparks as they brush against each other. The electrician, his back to Topper, is rummaging through his toolbox.

(CONTINUED)

*
*

75 CONTINUED: (4)

75

Topper is oblivious to the danger.

Ramada spots the wires.

RAMADA
Be careful out there, Lieutenant.

TOPPER
Don't worry. I can take care of myself.

RAMADA
But Lieutenant...

TOPPER
Look, I've been on my own since I was a kid. I know what's going on.

RAMADA
No, you don't. You're going to get hurt...You don't understand...

TOPPER
No, you're the one who doesn't understand, Doctor. I don't need your help. I don't need anyone's help. I'll be just fine.

Topper pulls the door shut as he exits. We hear a loud, sputtering hum. Through the translucent glass we see the outline of a skeleton light up. The office lights dim.

RAMADA
(wincing)
Oooh.

We see the skeleton blink off and drop out of sight.

Ramada opens the door.

RAMADA
Are you okay?

Topper jumps up, his hair smoking and standing up Don King style.

TOPPER
Yeah. Fine. Uh-huh.

Ramada watches him walk away.

76 INT. BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

76

The Commander, wearing jodphurs, bustling with excitement, concentrates on the big wall map.

COMMANDER

Gentlemen, this will be our position.
We will change course to here...and
steam full ahead to our objective.
It's the big one, Men. We hit a
target that has the whole world on
edge.

Block has been looking for the Commander. He enters.

BLOCK

We're in Room Two, sir.

REVEAL the Commander has been briefing an empty room.

COMMANDER

Of course. I see that now. Good
thinking. Keep the enemy guessing.
Yes. Well. Well. Remind me to have
my car washed.

They exit into hall. Block turns left, the Commander turns right.

BLOCK

This way, sir.

COMMANDER

You're right, Ned. As you were.
God, I wish I had an Oriental woman.
God, I wish you were a woman!

77 INT. BRIEFING ROOM TWO - DAY

77

The squadron is assembled. Some men standing, others seated at the long conference table. Topper and Dead Meat enter. Take a front row seat.

HERRING

Attention!

The Commander and Block enter. Those seated at the table stand up. Wash Out's head goes into the overhead lampshade. WE HEAR the pop as his head meets and destroys the light bulb.

COMMANDER

At ease, men.

The men strike casual fashion model poses. Coat over shoulder, one foot up on chair, hand in pocket, etc.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

COMMANDER

Many of you are asking, what's wrong with my pants. They started running short of material right before they got to the knees...so don't give me any shit.

(beat)

The name's Benson. Tug Benson!

(responding to his

name)

Yes? Yes? What is it? Somebody call my name?

BLOCK

No, sir.

COMMANDER

I'm busy up here. Sounds like a familiar voice. Yes? Hello? Hello?

(beat)

Men, I wish I could be up there with you. I've personally flown over a hundred and ninety-four missions and I was shot down on every one. Come to think of it, I've never landed a plane in my life. Who of you will not be among us after these six weeks, hell I don't know. I don't have a...

(lost for the word)

...a...damn this head...that thing a fortune teller looks at.

BLOCK

You don't have a crystal ball, sir.

COMMANDER

No I don't. But I do have a plastic hip. Took a mortar at Iwo. Son of a bitchin' thing...

(paces)

This mission will be special.

The push pins on the big map behind him jump off the board and stick to his metal plate, "tink, tink, tink, tink." The sound causes him to look up to the roof.

COMMANDER

Good lord, sounds like hail the size of golf balls. Damn it all! My roses will be ruined. Block, take over. Carry on, men. Good luck. Carry on, men. Or did I say that?

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

77

He starts to exit.

HERRING
Attention!

The commander stops, stands rigid at attention.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (3)

77

BLOCK
Not you sir.

COMMANDER
Good, I have too much to do.

As he exits his head strikes an overhead pipe, making a loud
"bong."

COMMANDER
I'll get that. It's probably for
me.

He exits.

BLOCK
You will be piloting the backbone
of our proud American arsenal...

DISSOLVE TO:

78
thru OMITTED
83
84 EXT. HANGAR - DAY

78
thru
83
84

The Squad's eyes light up as they walk out onto the tarmac.
Several are carrying parachutes over their shoulders. Bruno
carries a western saddle. Scooter has a burlap sack of
potatoes. REVEAL the jets sitting on the runway. The sun
glistening off the wing tips.

BLOCK
(voice over)
...the Oscar E W
fifty-eight-ninety-four phallus
lightweight tactical fighter bomber.
It's designed for speed, combat
acrobatics, and the ability to fly
below enemy radar. Range thirty five
hundred miles, ceiling tops off
around sixty thousand feet. Bomb
capacity twelve thousand pounds.
Fully computerized avionics.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

84

BLOCK

(voice over, continuing)

The latest Mrs. Halver radar system,
and the series thirty-eight hundred
radar jamming device, anti missile
system. Wing and nose mounted
cannons, armor piercing bullets, and
complete with radial tires, anti-lock
brakes, and factory air.
Gentlemen...mount your crafts.

85 OMITTED

85

86 EXT. TARMAC - DAY

86

The guys scramble to the jets. Ian gets on board. WE SEE the
classic window sticker listing all options, list price, and the
EPA mileage sticker which reads: "1000 feet per gallon cruising
speed. 500 feet per gallon while engaged in combat."

87 ANGLE ON DEAD MEAT

87

Sticks his gum on the side of the jet. Kisses his fingertip,
presses the finger to the jet, all for luck. Climbs into his
jet. Hangs pictures of his family all over the cockpit. Puts
on his helmet.

88 INT. TOPPER'S JET

88

Looks over the intricate control panel. Flicks a gaggle of
switches. Pops open the glove compartment. Closes it. *
Adjusts the seat. Getting it just right. It assumes a lot of
bizarre tilts and angles. Finally settling in on just the right
one. Then manually adjusts the rear view and side mirrors.
Turns on the radio. The antenna rises automatically.

89 JETS

89

Engines screaming, "Oooooooooaaaaaeeeeee!" Ready to take-off.

90 INT. CONTROL TOWER

90

The Commander, Herring and Ramada look on. Ramada is carrying a
clipboard, making careful notes. Herring is reading the Wall *
Street Journal. The Commander takes off his cap. A nearby
water pipe attracts his metal plate. His head slams up against
it. After a good struggle he finally pulls himself free.

TRAFFIC CONTROLLER

(voice over, from radio)

Freedom Squadron, you're cleared for
take off.

91 IAN'S JET'S WHEELS 91

From the underbelly of the jet as it lifts off. The wheels fold up into the belly of the plane.

92 EXT./INT. DEAD MEAT'S JET 92

He reaches into the sky. All the pictures impair his vision.

93 EXT. WASH OUT'S JET 93

His jet leaves the ground. Soars to the heavens.

94 INT. BLOCK'S JET IN FLIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 94

The Squad flying around him.

BLOCK
(into radio)
Operation Sleepy Weasel is going to involve flying below enemy radar; therefore, I want a major display of low level flying. Topper you take the lead.

TOPPER
(voice over, from radio)
Right!

95 JETS 95

Block banks left and loses altitude. WE SEE Ian, Kowalski, Dead Meat, Topper, and Wash Out do the same, one at a time.

Jets at low level. Ian and Topper side by side. Topper has one of those waving Garfields suckered to the interior of his cockpit. Topper gives Ian a wink. Flies lower. Ian follows him, the look of cool, calm determination in his eyes. Their squads imitate their move.

96 INT. BLOCK'S JET 96

BLOCK
(into radio)
Watch it you two. Hold it there. Level off at five-hundred feet.

97 JETS IN FLIGHT 97

A perfect formation at 500 feet, with Topper in the lead.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

BLOCK
(voice over, from radio)
Excellent flying, Gentlemen. Return
to twenty thousand feet. Topper,
that was vintage Buzz Harley. You
and your dad are two of a kind.

98 INT. TOPPER'S JET

98

Topper begins to sweat and tense up. The same cinematic effects
as earlier take place: CAMERA PUSHES, lighting changes, heart
beats are audible. Through the cockpit WE SEE the other planes
returning to 20,000 feet.

TOPPER
(into radio)
I thought you wanted to fly low, Sir.

Shutting out the world, he flips off his radio and brings his
plane down even lower. He is literally feet off the ground,
passing cars on a freeway. A lot of astonished looks from the
drivers.

BLOCK
(voice over, from radio)
Topper, you're too low! Pull up.

A beat. Topper is not responding.

A99 INT. TOWER

A99

Ramada, looking concerned, makes a note.

99 INT. IAN'S JET

99

IAN
(into radio)
Topper acknowledge...you're
disobeying an order...

*

TOPPER
(recorded; voice over,
over radio, accompanied
by bad, cheery music)
Hi. This is Topper Harley. I'm not
in right now. At the sound of the
tone, state your name, rank, and time
you called. Wait for the...

Beep tone.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

KOWALSKI
(voice over, from radio)
Moves like that could get us all
killed.

IAN
(into radio)
Pick up, Topper. I know you're
screening your calls. Don't do
this to me.

*
*

100 INT. TOPPER'S JET

100

WE SEE the answer machine in his cockpit.

IAN
(voice over, from the
tape machine)
I know you're there, Topper.

Beep tone.

IAN
Shit.

Topper isn't listening. He's chomping excitedly on his gum.

101 ANGLE ON TRAFFIC COP

101

Directing traffic. LOOKS OFF CAMERA. Casually blows his
whistle, holds up traffic. WAVES OFF CAMERA. Topper rockets
on by. A lot of smoke fills the intersection. The cop blows
his whistle, gets traffic moving again.

102 INT. TOPPER'S JET

102

He flips his radio back on.

TOPPER
Just checkin' the traffic.

He blows a bubble. It bursts against his visor without
obscuring his vision.

103 INT. BLOCK'S JET

103

BLOCK
(sarcastic, into radio)
At your convenience, if you wouldn't
mind joining the rest of us, Mr.
Harley.

104 INT./EXT. TOPPER'S JET 104
 Pleased with himself. He climbs back to 20,000 feet.

TOPPER
 (cocky, into radio)
 Can I get you anything on the way
 up?

The rest of the squad is not amused.

A105 INT. TOWER A105 *
 Ramada, shaking her head.

105 INT. BLOCK'S JET 105
 He pulls his mask away and smiles. The dissension oddly pleases him.

106 SQUAD FLYING IN FORMATION - HALF HOUR LATER 106

107 INT. BLOCK'S JET 107

BLOCK
 (into radio)
 Our landing objective is to use a
 third of the runway we normally use
 to bring her down. Your aircraft
 should come to a full stop before
 you reach the yellow line.

108 EXT. RUNWAY 108
 Dead Meat overshoots it by a few yards.

109 ANGLE ON IAN'S JET 109
 Ian brings his plane in. It stops right on the yellow line.

110 INT. IAN'S JET 110
 Smiles.

111 EXT. TOPPER'S PLANE 111
 He lands, stopping a foot behind the yellow line.

112 IAN 112
 Isn't happy he's been bested.

113 INT. WASH OUT'S JET 113
It's his turn. But he is severely hampered by another case of Walleye Vision. He tries to clear his head. He slaps his face. Shakes his head, tosses water in his face. Nothing works.

114 WASH OUT'S P.O.V. 114
The runway is terribly distorted. Again it's Walleye Vision.

A115 INT. TOWER A115
The Commander and the Traffic Controller watch the jet fly past.

115 EXT. RUNWAY 115
Wash Out overshoots badly.

116 WASH OUT'S JET 116
It finally touches down and comes to a stop. He takes off his helmet and heaves a sigh of relief.
WE REVEAL Wash Out is in a supermarket parking lot. Getting a lot of astonished looks from a lot of people.

117 INT. HALLWAY - TWO ELEVATOR DOORS 117
Topper pushes the "UP" button. The "DOWN" light over one elevator goes on and the door opens. It's packed.

VOICE
(o.s.; deep, very male)
Out, please.

Everyone looks around.

VOICE
(o.s.)
Excuse me.

Everyone's still puzzled, trying to figure out who wants to leave. ADMIRAL HAHN, a little person in dress uniform, shoulders his way through the crowd and exits the elevator.

ADMIRAL HAHN
Thank you.
(pointing down the hall)
Oh, Don...

The "UP" elevator arrives and opens, Ramada its only passenger. Topper enters.

(CONTINUED)

*

117 CONTINUED:

117

TOPPER
(turning on the charm)
Going up?

The doors close.

RAMADA
I heard what happened up there this
afternoon. You are extremely
dangerous, Lieutenant.

TOPPER
(flirting)
So I'm told.

RAMADA
Please be serious. Until you can
get your emotional life together,
I'm urging you to stay out of the
sky.

TOPPER
You've got to be joking.

RAMADA
(frustrated)
Look, if I were joking I would have
said this: There were these two
Japanese guys. They walk into a bar.
And they buy it.

Topper a little bewildered.

RAMADA
(passing it off)
I was the opening act for Wayne
Newton.
(resuming her passion)
Can't you see that you're
jeopardizing the safety of your
entire squadron and the mission if
you don't resign from the unit?

TOPPER
You're kidding!

RAMADA
No, see, if I was kidding I would
have said: What do you do with an
elephant with three balls?

Topper shrugs?

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: (2)

117

RAMADA

You walk him and pitch to the rhino.

(passionately)

You don't understand what I'm
saying. You can't fly while you're
like this. If you don't handle the
problem yourself, I'm going to have
to recommend that you be grounded.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: (3)

117

TOPPER

Listen, Doctor. Flying is my life.
I've been given a second chance with
this mission...if you think you can
take it away from me, you're crazy.

Topper exits the elevator. As the doors close, Ramada tries
desperately to make him understand.

RAMADA

No! No! If I were crazy, I'd say...

The doors slam shut. We hear crazy "Jerry Lewis" babbling.

A118 INT. BOXING ARENA - NIGHT

A118

Excited fans are crowding into their seats.

RING ANNOUNCER

From the beautiful Pontius Pilate
Palace in downtown Las Vegas... it's
twelve rounds of boxing for the WBA,
WBC, WPA, RSVP HeavyWeight
Championship of the world!

ANGLE ON RING SIDE SEATS

BIG APPLAUSE. Block is barely watching the proceedings,
checking his watch and anxiously glancing at the empty seat next
to him.

BACK TO RING

RING ANNOUNCER

Introducing celebrities at
ringside...Ray "Boom-Boom" Mancini,
Mancini. His Holiness Pope John
Paul the Second, Second...The mass
murderer, Mr. Helter Skelter himself,
Charles "Chuck" Manson,
Manson...hailing from Philadelphia,
the original freedom fighter, master
of invention, Benjamin Franklin,
Franklin.

*

*

ANGLE ON RING SIDE SEATS

VOICE (O.S.)

Lieutenant Commander Block. We meet
at last. It's an honor.

Settling into the next seat is his co-conspirator...Wilson.

(CONTINUED)

A118 CONTINUED:

A118

WILSON

How are we doing at Dudley?

BLOCK

Right on schedule. Topper Harley's attitude is creating incredible dissension in the unit.

He hands Topper's file to Wilson.

BLOCK

Here's his evaluation. A clear cut case of Paternal Conflict Syndrome.

WILSON

Ah. P.C.S. I ran across an article on that in 'People' magazine. Struck down some of the great ones...Joan Crawford, Nellie Fox, both Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower. They're years away from a vaccine.

BLOCK

The mere mention of his father's name will set him off. He'll lose control. The unit's cohesiveness will be destroyed. I'll abort the mission. Blame will be assessed to outclassed and underequipped aircraft and the Quantar gets funding. And the best thing--no one gets hurt.

WILSON

You have no second thoughts?

BLOCK

We have to take matters into our own hands. The President doesn't understand. Congress doesn't understand. The Pentagon needs your plane, Mr. Wilson. America needs your plane.

WILSON

Well done, Lieutenant Commander. Excellent.

118 ANGLE ON RING

118

A sexy girl displays a card reading "Round One". The CROWD CHEERS. The BELL SOUNDS. The fighters converge in the center of the ring. One throws a light jab. His adversary drops to the canvas unconscious.

(CONTINUED)

- 118 CONTINUED: 118
- RING ANNOUNCER
That's it. Drive safely. Good
night.
- 119 INT. BAR - NIGHT 119
- Start on a dartboard -- a dart hits -- bull's-eye.
- A PATRON
- Celebrates his accuracy. Takes aim again.
- 120 BACK ON THE TARGET 120
- The door on which the dartboard is hung opens and, as a SOLDIER enters, he is killed by the next dart.
- WE now SEE the rest of the local hangout. Boisterous, packed with civilians, members of the Hot Shots and pretty girls. A PIANO PLAYER is seated at the piano, singing his rendition of "Tie A Yellow Ribbon 'Round The Old Oak Tree". He has a phlegm attack.
- At the bar, Dead Meat is showing family pictures and slides to a bored MOTHER THERESA. The good Mother slugs down a boilermaker and slinks away.
- 121 ANGLE ON WASH OUT 121
- As he sits at the bar.
- ADMIRAL HAHN
(o.s.)
Beer, please.
- Wash Out looks around. The Bartender sets a beer on the bar. A hand emerges from the bottom of the FRAME and takes the beer.
- ADMIRAL HAHN
(o.s.)
Thank you.
- The hand reaches up and sets money on the bar. Wash Out spots him.
- ADMIRAL HAHN
(o.s.)
Keep the change.
(a beat)
Oh, Don...

At the pool table, an incredibly skillful Ian is putting on a clinic as he polishes off an opponent. He sinks a couple of

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

fancy shots for an appreciative audience. The finale winds up with the cue ball popping into the air and landing in his pocket.

122 ANGLE ON RAMADA

122

She steps up to Ian.

RAMADA

Ian. Darling!

He embraces her. He swings her around. Her legs and the briefcase she carries clear off a table top. His bulging pocket catches her eye.

RAMADA

Oh, is that a cue ball in your pocket or are you just glad to see me?

Ian tosses the cue ball in the air and catches it. Evidently, he is glad to see her. Ramada is impressed.

IAN

Ramada, why didn't you call? I thought you were in Brussels.

RAMADA

Didn't you get my note? I resigned my presidency of the World Bank to take an appointment to the Supreme Court. Then when the President asked me to take a leave of absence to run the psychiatric department here at Dudley, I felt I had to come.

IAN

So we could be together again?

(warmly)

You haven't forgotten my offer, have you? A little house in the country...a white picket fence... Stairmaster...the whole nine yards.

*

RAMADA

Sounds tempting. But I'm just not ready for marriage. Not yet. Besides, we were only hurting each other.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED: (2)

122

IAN

I'm not saying things were perfect.
Even the best relationships need
work. But I'm sure you can change.

RAMADA

Fine. But I do have some good news.
I tested negative.

IAN

That's wonderful!
(to the room)
Hey everybody, be large in mirth!
Drinks are on me!

A loud cheer. The bar suddenly fills with lots more people.
They come in through doors, windows, trapdoors, paneling --
they're literally coming out of the woodwork. Some reel down
the walls on ropes.

IAN

Geez. .

A123 INT. BAR - THE PIANO (LATER)

A123

Onstage, artfully lit. We HEAR a sultry FEMALE VOICE singing
"The Man I Love." The CAMERA SLOWLY PANS UP two incredibly
long, shapely female legs, REVEALING Ramada, mike in hand,
standing on top of the piano in a close-fitting dress.

As she sings, she lowers herself, reclining on the piano.

The Soldiers in the audience are enraptured. One Guy's mouth
opens and two feet of tongue slaps down on the table.

She swings around. With her derriere now facing the audience,
we SEE the men in the b.g. focusing their binoculars on her.

She seductively changes her position on the piano, but rolls
off it and falls out of FRAME.

Slowly she rises into view, none the worse for her fall, and
moves into the audience, still singing. As she wanders among
the patrons, her microphone cord gets caught in the legs of
people, chairs and tables, upending one of each. During the
musical bridge, she pauses:

RAMADA

Anybody here from out of town?

(CONTINUED)

A12 3 CONTINUED:

A123

An ESKIMO in a sealskin parka raises his hand, as do an AMISH COUPLE.

RAMADA

(continuing)

I see the man with two heads is here tonight. Nice to see you. Nice to see you. Great ties.

As she plays the room, no matter where Ramada looks, Ian is there.

*
*

ANGLE ON FRONT DOOR

Topper enters. He's equally enthralled. He ambles up to the piano and motions politely for the Piano Player to slide over. The Piano Player is reluctant to give up the keys. Topper gives him a light karate chop to the back of the neck and lets him drop from the bench. Ramada is oblivious to the fact that Topper is now accompanying her.

Ramada moves to a MAN in the audience, takes his glass from his hand and takes a sip as her singing (clearly to playback) continues.

Ian looks on jealously as she winks to the audience. Topper plays an Eddie Duchin flourish on the piano. Ramada turns and sees him. The electricity flows. It's magic. Ramada returns to the piano.

Ramada leans against the piano and we HEAR a dischordant sound as she lands on the piano keys. Making her way back to the top of the piano, she impales Topper's hand with her spike heel. He reacts painfully. She takes another step and the key cover crashes down on both of his hands. His cry of pain is in perfect harmony with her song.

She swings around and one of her spike heels enters Topper's mouth, causing a bulge in his cheek. The song ends. BIG APPLAUSE. Ramada's spike heel comes out of Topper's mouth with a champagne cork pop.

TOPPER

So, you sing too.

RAMADA

Not really. Not anymore. Since I won a Tony for 'A Chorus Line', nothing much has interested me.

TOPPER

We make a pretty good team.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

A123 CONTINUED: (2)

A123

RAMADA
Pretty good.

*
*

TOPPER
(puts out his hand)
Friends?

*

RAMADA
Friends.

They shake hands. They hold just a moment too long. The electricity is beginning to flow.

TOPPER
Dance?

RAMADA
Sure.

They stand up, still holding hands. Ian steps between them.

IAN
(to Ramada)
I see you've met God's gift to the art of flying.
(to Topper)
I never thought you'd be foolish enough to shine around here after today's exhibition.

TOPPER
Get a life! I was just stretching my wings.

IAN
Why don't you stretch your legs and take a hike.

He shoves Topper toward the door.

RAMADA
Ian!

TOPPER
Don't push me.

IAN
I'll do as I please.

They push and start to go at it. THE MUSIC STOPS. They get into a school yard pushing match. The other guys step in, like hockey teammates to the rescue. As they try to separate them the crush causes other little flare-ups. Doing a good deal of

(CONTINUED)

A123 CONTINUED: (3)

A 123

pushing is The Detroit Pistons' Bill Laimbeer, and the 76ers Charles Barkley. We HEAR voices warning "Cool it." "Take it easy." Wash Out is pulling on a post, restraining it from entering the fight. Dead Meat manages to separate everyone.

RAMADA
Stop it. Can't you act like
civilized human beings? What is this
macho thing?!

TOPPER
He started it.

IAN
Did not.

TOPPER
Did too.

IAN
Did not.

RAMADA
You're behaving like children.

TOPPER
He's being a jerk.

IAN
Am not.

TOPPER
Are too.

IAN
Am not.

TOPPER
Too. Too. Too. Too.

IAN
Not. Not. Not. Not.

*
*

TOPPER
Are too. Times ten.

IAN
(annoyed)
Ooooh.

RAMADA
Quit it.

(CONTINUED)

A123 CONTINUED: (4)

A123

TOPPER

Fine.

(to Ian)

Tell you what. One game of pool.
To make it interesting, you beat
me...I quit the squad.

(CONTINUED)

A123 CONTINUED: (5)

A123

IAN
Rack 'em up.

Topper puts a coin in the jukebox. Picks a song. It's Jeannie C. Riley singing, "HARPER VALLEY PTA." Topper sings along. He's being cool and hip. The other guys join in. Dead Meat plays along on his harmonica.

123 BILLIARD BALLS RACKED UP

123

Cue ball breaks them. The balls scatter into pockets. The cue ball flies backwards.

ANGLE ON CUE BALL

as it flies back to Topper, he butts it with his head. It's all part of the trick shot. WE SEE the cue ball land back on the table, cushion around, and sink the last remaining ball. Topper blows the smoke off the tip of his cue stick.

The song continues on as score for the following:

MONTAGE

- A. IAN
looks on, chalking his cue stick.
- B. TOPPER
deftly sinking shot after shot. Getting into any number of weird positions, cue behind his back, between his legs -- a contortionist would be envious.
- C. IAN
Still chalking his cue stick.
- D. TOPPER
Shirt off, torso glistening as he runs the table. Using the pool table as a trampoline, he cartwheels behind the bar. He continues dropping shots as he mixes some drinks. Tossing bottles in the air. Catching them. Juggling them, using a lot of ingredients, throwing things over his shoulder and kicking them back up with his feet. Then back for another fabulous pool shot, his cue stick smoking. Topper is obviously doing this for Ramada's benefit and the effort is not lost on her. He jumps around on the cue as though it was a pogo stick.
- E. A PAIR OF SHOES
A mound of fine blue powder all but covers them. More is falling from above. CAMERA PANS UP to reveal Ian, shirt off, still chalking his cue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

123

F. TOPPER

as a capper, he sinks the eight ball. The cue ball jumps off the table and rolls down the bar, knocking six tumblers of mixed drinks into their appropriate glasses. Everyone applauds. Ian is clearly defeated. Topper hands Ramada one of the drinks and toasts her. End MONTAGE.

*

*

*

IAN

I've seen better.

EXT. BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

124

Patrons are filing out. The Amish couple emerges. The man is tipsy, humming "Harper Valley PTA". As they approach their horse and buggy:

AMISH WOMAN

(scolding, pointing a
finger)

If thou shouldst ever embarrass me
again in front of all those people...

He lets out a belligerent grunt and stumbles trying to get into the buggy.

AMISH WOMAN

(continuing)

Ezekial, thou art not driving. Give
me the whip.

Ian turns to Ramada.

IAN

I'll see you tomorrow night.

RAMADA

You're going home?

IAN

I am sworn, woman, sweet, to grim
necessity...

(aside, to camera)

and he and I will keep a league till
death.

(back to Ramada)

Anyway, I have to be back at the
base. Tomorrow's flight is very
important.

*

*

He kisses her gently.

RAMADA

Tomorrow then.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

124

He leaves. She turns to walk home. Topper is there.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: (2)

124

TOPPER
(gesturing forward)
May I?

RAMADA
Shouldn't you be getting back to the base?

TOPPER
I suppose. If I played life by the rules. But you know I don't. It's dark out. You never know who or what might be lurking in the shadows.

RAMADA
All right. You can walk me to my apartment.

They start to walk leisurely.

TOPPER
I shouldn't have gotten mad in the elevator today. It's just when I want something that bad, I get all fired up. Maybe it's the Apache in me.

*

RAMADA
And I'm sorry about the evaluation. Things like that aren't easy for me. It may not seem like it, but I'm just like any other woman...even though I make more money and I'm a lot more important than they are. I'm concerned about you, you know. You're obviously a very talented guy who would be a lot happier if he could solve one problem.

TOPPER
Don't you ever take a break?

Ramada shrugs.

RAMADA
You're right. I guess I've always been this way.
(self-effacingly)
When I was at the Rand Corporation, they actually forced me to take a vacation -- a Princess Cruise to Nebraska. But even then I couldn't seem to unwind. I was on the phone to NASA every day.

*

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: (3)

124

TOPPER
How did Ian take it?

RAMADA
Ian? Ian wasn't there. I do care
for him a lot, but I'm a bit of a
free spirit.

TOPPER
Then we do have something in common.

RAMADA
I guess that's why I worry so. Maybe
more than I should. Something
terrible could happen. You must...

He puts his finger on her lips.

TOPPER
There you go again.

RAMADA
But I...

TOPPER
Shh. Shh. Shh.

He gently places his finger over her lips.

TOPPER
Don't worry. I can control this.
I promise. Everything will be fine.

She speaks through lips still held shut.

RAMADA
(muffled)
Boy, I hope so.

They take a few more steps and reach her apartment building.
It's next door to the bar.

RAMADA
Well, this is it.

TOPPER
Nice place.

RAMADA
It's okay. The only problem is I
have a nosy landlady. Well, I guess
this is good night.

She gives him a peck on the cheek.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: (5)

124

RAMADA

You don't have to.

(sweetly, enticing)

I don't want to be alone. And, by
the way, I can go all night like a
lumberjack.

She turns her back to him and starts to lead him into the
building. Topper TURNS INTO CAMERA with a big "Pay Day"
expression and starts to follow her into her building.

TOPPER

But what about your landlady?

RAMADA

You can do her, too.

Topper stumbles slightly. They enter.

125 INT. RAMADA'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

125

Topper is going through Ramada's refrigerator. He looks up.
Ramada's standing in the kitchen doorway. This is the model
for the "come hither" look.

TOPPER

Then I take it you've been with a
man before?

RAMADA

I'm a virgin. I'm just not very good
at it.

(beat)

Is this going to hurt?

TOPPER

No.

RAMADA

Then why are we doing it?

Here she comes. Slowly, erotically approaching our guy.

DISSOLVE TO:

(CONTINUED)

125 CONTINUED:

125

MONTAGE OF RAMADA AND TOPPER

All very tight angles, artily backlit by refrigerator light.
Think: "9 1/2 Weeks."

- A. TOPPER
starts to slowly feed Ramada stuff from her refrigerator. A grape, a strawberry. Ramada is aroused. Topper notices and slows down.
- B. A TWINKIE, AN ECLAIR
A little cream sits on the corner of her mouth. She licks it off.
- C. A BANANA
washed down by milk shot from a basting syringe. Finally a pizza rolled into a long tube.
- D. INTERCUT BETWEEN RAMADA'S AROUSED FACE AND TOPPER'S APPRECIATIVE RESPONSES
She's lying down now. He unbuttons her shirt, revealing a perfect midriff and tummy.
- E. TOPPER PLACES A PIMENTO OLIVE
in her navel and loads it like a flintlock rifle. Then he presses down suddenly on her belly, launching the olive, which she catches in her teeth. She sucks out the pimento and then eats the olive.
- F. TOPPER SHOWS HER A CELERY STICK
Next he pours salt in her navel. He dips the celery into the salt. Takes a bite out of the celery. This is soooo sexy to Ramada.
- G. TOPPER TAKES AN ICE CUBE
and runs it along her. She reacts like it's nirvana. The ice cube poises above her navel. A cold drop melts from it and drops into her navel. WE HEAR a sound as though a pebble as been dropped into a deep well.
- H. TOPPER
slides the ice cube along her tummy. It begins to sizzle as though it was on a hot pan.

(CONTINUED)

125 CONTINUED: (2)

125

- I. TOPPER -- WOW
He takes an egg, cracks it open and puts it on her belly. It fries.
- J. RAMADA
She loves it.
- K. TOPPER
This girl is really hot.
- L. MORE
Next, hot cakes, hash browns, and bacon.
- M. RAMADA AND TOPPER
They kiss and make love. End MONTAGE.

DISSOLVE TO:

A126 EXT. RAMADA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NEXT MORNING

A126 *

A Paperboy passes on a bicycle, throwing a newspaper onto the front stoop. He is followed by a Milkman in his truck, throwing bottles of milk.

126 INT. RAMADA'S BEDROOM - DAY

126

To the sound of an answering machine, the CAMERA PANS. An empty champagne bottle and glasses in front of the embers of a dying fire. The shredded remnants of their clothes. Leather goods and traditional sexual paraphernalia. An exhausted wheezing gerbil in a cage.

RAMADA'S VOICE

(from machine)

Hi, this is Ramada. Please leave your message at the beep. And I'll get right back to you.

WE MOVE UP to the ceiling to see a trapeze and a diving board. The windows are steamed over.

Beep.

RAMADA'S MOM'S VOICE

(from machine)

Ramada...this is Mom...Daddy's here too...

RAMADA'S DAD'S VOICE

(from machine)

Hi, Princess. How's my little girl? Surprise! Nanna's here, too, and we just flew in from Duluth with
(more)

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED:

126

RAMADA'S DAD'S VOICE (Cont'd)
Pastor Streufert. We just called
to say hello.

TOPPER
Oh, my god, I'm late. I gotta go.

He pulls back the covers and kisses Ramada good-bye. We SEE her
body is embedded in the mattress, only her face protruding above
mattress level.

He gets out of bed and runs o.s. She reaches across and pops
open a Michelob Light.

RAMADA
Ufda. That's as good as it gets.

127 EXT. DUDLEY NAVAL AIR STATION - DAWN - ESTABLISHING

127

WE HEAR a bugler call another day. He is flattened by the
troops as they exit the barracks at full speed.

*
*

128 OMITTED 128*

129 EXT. BARRACKS 129

As our guys rush out of the barracks, Dead Meat sees Wash Out exiting from headquarters. He carries his duffel bag. He's forlorn, lost. *

DEAD MEAT
What are you doing? Get into your flight suit. We're ready to go up. *

WASH OUT
I just got my discharge from the unit. I'm through, Dead Meat.

DEAD MEAT
What happened?

WASH OUT
It's my eyes. I've got Walleye Vision.

Dead Meat winces sympathetically.

DEAD MEAT
Isn't there something that can be done?

WASH OUT
Well, there's a delicate corneal inversion procedure, multiopti-pupilopty, but in order to keep from damaging the eye sockets, they have to go in through the rectum...and ain't no man gonna take that route with me.

Dead Meat understands.

WASH OUT
Is Topper around? I'd like to say good-bye.

DEAD MEAT
He never came back last night. I'm afraid he's AWOL. As soon as Block finds out, he's history. *

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

129

WASH OUT

But flying's his life. He's the best pilot in the world...and we need him as much as he needs us.

Dead Meat searches his pockets.

DEAD MEAT

I can't find my lucky gum. You have any?

Wash Out is gone.

DEAD MEAT

Wash Out?

130 EXT. TARMAC - DAY

130

MRS. DEAD MEAT spots her husband as he heads for his plane.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Dead Meat!

DEAD MEAT

Mary! Mary!

She rushes up to him. Hugs and kisses. Ian is nearby putting on his parachute. He overhears.

DEAD MEAT

You here to watch me fly?

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Yes. There was a meltdown at the plant, and they gave us the afternoon off.

DEAD MEAT

Terrific.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Good news! We just closed escrow on our little dream house.

DEAD MEAT

Wonderful. When do we move in?

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Tuesday. I got the kids stripping the asbestos off the pipes right now.

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

130

DEAD MEAT

That's great. Things have never been better for us. I'm so happy. I've got so many great friends here. I got you and the kids. I'm so blessed.

A black cat crosses in front of Dead Meat. He walks under a ladder. Ian feels this is a bad omen.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Oh, your life insurance policy came for you to sign.

She takes it out and a pen. He tries to sign but the pen is out of ink.

DEAD MEAT

Oooh.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Oooh.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

I'll get another pen.

DEAD MEAT

No need. I'll sign it when I come back.

Ian knows this is a bad move.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

You know best.

Ian slaps his forehead in a "what a dope" gesture.

DEAD MEAT

Oh, honey, you know that global warming problem. I've discovered how we can reverse it.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Tell me!

He gives her a playful chuck under the chin.

DEAD MEAT

Not now, Lovey-Bumpers. There'll be plenty of time for that later.

Ian can't believe this. Dead Meat gets into his plane.

DEAD MEAT

And my investigation into the JFK assassination...

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED: (2)

130

MRS. DEAD MEAT

You found the evidence you've been looking for?

DEAD MEAT

Yes. I have proof. It's right here in my pocket. It's big, honey. Really big. It goes all the way to the White House.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Can I see it?

He starts to reach into his flight suit, then changes his mind.

DEAD MEAT

It'll be safe right here. I'm in a jet. What could happen? It's not going anywhere.

Ian is beside himself.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

(lovingly)

We just couldn't be any more perfectly happy.

He blows her a kiss. Ian throws up his hands in disgust.

131 ANGLE ON HERRING

131

Ticking off a roster.

*

HERRING

Where the hell is Topper!

Topper comes running past him. He's in his helmet and flying suit, his head kept turned away.

HERRING

Thanks for joining the party. Your cerebellum was about to file for Chapter 11.

(yelling after him)

If your frontal lobe doesn't diversify, you're going to find yourself leveraging your entire psychological portfolio.

Dead Meat is glad to see Topper made it.

A132 ANGLE ON COCKPIT

A132

It's Wash Out covering for Topper.

132 EXT. HANGAR

132

The squad gets into their jets.

133 CONTROL TOWER

133

The Commander is looking on.

AIR CONTROLLER
(into mic)
Freedom Squadron, start your engines.

There's a loud whine as the engines rev up.

COMMANDER
God, that's loud! My ear canals are
very sensitive. They're stainless
steel. Took a bullet at Corregador.
Passed straight through. Look at
this...

He pulls out a hankie, stuffs an end in one ear and pulls it out the other. It now dangles from both ears. He slides it back and forth, impressing the man. Then turns to the radar screen.

The Air Controller takes out the soft foam earplugs he is wearing and hands them to the Commander.

AIR CONTROLLER
We have these to hold down the sound,
sir.

COMMANDER
Yes, thank you.

He pops them in his mouth. Downs them with a glass of water.

COMMANDER
Let's hope they do the trick.

For the duration of the scene, the hankie remains draped from the Commander's ears. He looks like a beagle.

COMMANDER
Give me the mic, boy.

A combination of the Commander leaning forward and the Air Controller passing the mic, the result being the Commander is hit on the brow with the thing.

COMMANDER
For the love of God man. Be careful!
(indicating his brow)
Ever since Normandy, this is Corning
ware, for Christsake!

134 THE COMMANDER

134

speaking into the mic and the men in their jets listening.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED: 134

COMMANDER
(into mic)

Those of you who excel during these
aerial combat exercises will go on
to make up the greatest fighting unit
ever assembled. God speed. God love
you. Goddamn it take off!

135 OMITTED 135

INTERCUT BETWEEN:

136 EACH COCKPIT 136

as they take off: Block, Ian, Dead Meat, Kowalski, and Wash Out
posing as Topper. His take off is shaky.

137 CONTROL TOWER 137

AIR CONTROLLER
(into mic)
Topper, keep that nose up.
(aside)
He's never done that before.

The jet streaks into the sky.

138 INT. BLOCK'S JET 138

BLOCK
(into radio)
Red team leader break off, prepare
to engage.

139 INT. IAN'S JET 139

Gives the thumbs up.

IAN
(into radio)
Roger. Red team ready for combat.
Stiffen the sinews. Conjure up the
blood. Then imitate the action of
the tiger.

*
*
*

A140 INT. TOWER A140*

The Air Controller and the Commander react quizzically to the
Shakespeare.

*
*

140 SKY 140*

Ian's team, among them Kowalski, breaks away from the others.

141 INT. WASH OUT'S JET
He listens to Block.

141

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED: 141

BLOCK
(voice over, from radio)
Blue leader, prepare for action.

Wash Out leads his group, Dead Meat among them, into a sharp left bank.

142 AERIAL COMBAT 142

Jets swooping down on one another. Trying to shake the bandits off their tails.

143 INT. WASH OUT'S JET 143

He shakes his head. It's another attack of Walleye Vision.

144 WASH OUT'S P.O.V. 144

Again his world is distorted, as seen through a fish-eye lens.

145 ANGLE ON WASH OUT 145

He searches frantically for his bottle of pills. He finds it, but to his dismay, it's empty.

146 IAN 146

Chasing a blue team member. He gets him in his sights. It's a kill.

147 INT. BLOCK'S JET 147

BLOCK
(into radio)
Confirmed kill. Nice shooting.

148 INT. CONTROL TOWER 148

From behind, WE SEE the Commander and several TECHNICIANS are anxiously monitoring the exercise. Panting excitedly and with the hanky dangling from his ears, he looks even more like a dog enjoying his ride in the family Le Baron.

149 INT. DEAD MEAT'S JET 149

He bags a kill also.

BLOCK
(voice over, from radio)
Dead Meat, one kill.

Dead Meat's pleased with himself.

150 RUNWAY IN FRONT OF HANGAR

150

Topper pulls up on his motorcycle. He recognizes Mrs. Dead Meat from her pictures.

TOPPER
Mrs. Dead Meat?

MRS. DEAD MEAT
Yes?

TOPPER
I'm Topper Harley.

MRS. DEAD MEAT
Dead Meat has talked about you. He thinks the world of you. But shouldn't you be up there with the squad?

TOPPER
(looking to the sky)
Damn.

CAMERA TILTS and we see jets fly overhead.

151 COMBAT

151

Jets stalking one another.

152 INT. WASH OUT'S JET

152

Faulty eyes are to blame as he is tracking down a duck.

WASH OUT
(into radio)
I've got him in my sights.

Wash Out's jet is dangerously close to Dead Meat's.

153 INT. DEAD MEAT'S JET

153

Wash Out's wing tip is inches from his.

DEAD MEAT
(into radio)
Topper, watch your right side.

154 INT. WASH OUT'S JET

154

WASH OUT
(into radio)
Moving in for the kill.

He pulls the trigger on the duck, but misses. Banks right.

A 155 INT. BLOCK'S JET
 Alarmed.

A155'

BLOCK
 (into radio)
 Topper, pull up!

155 TOO LATE.

155

WE SEE Wash Out's jet collide with Dead Meat.

INTERCUT BETWEEN:

156 IAN, KOWALSKI, TOPPER AND MRS. DEAD MEAT
 watching the following:

156

A157 DEAD MEAT'S COCKPIT

A157*

starts to fill with smoke. The smoke alarm hanging overhead goes off. He's having a hard time reacting to the emergency because of all the smoke. He's choking.

157 WASH OUT

157*

Wash Out ejects. Unfortunately, he is right under Dead Meat's jet. The result, Wash Out ejects into the underbelly of Dead Meat's craft, his lower torso dangling from it.

158 INT. DEAD MEAT'S JET

158

Wash Out's head is sticking through Dead Meat's cockpit floor. The helmet cracked open, REVEALING who it is.

DEAD MEAT

Wash Out!

The plane, out of control, is heading for earth.

159 TOPPER

159

He grabs the dumbstruck Mrs. Dead Meat and turns her away from the sight.

TOPPER

No, don't look.

But she is now facing a truck that was transporting a big rehearsal hall mirror. The men had stopped to watch the drama in the skies. Through the reflection in the mirror, Mrs. Dead Meat witnesses every gory detail of this disaster.

160 INT. DEAD MEAT'S JET

160

He manages to stomp on Wash Out's head, forcing him out of the plane, saving his life.

161 SKY 161
Wash Out falls free. His chute opens. He starts to flutter to earth, none the worse for wear.

162 INT. CONTROL TOWER 162
The Commander is riveted to the action, leaning intently across his desk. Supported on one arm, the other tucked up in front of him. With the hankie still hanging from his ears, he resembles a pointer who's spotted his prey.

163 INT. DEAD MEAT'S JET 163
He's plunging to the earth.

164 OMITTED 164

165 OPEN FIELD AT DUDLEY NAVAL AIR STATION 165
Dead Meat's plane hits the earth at an incredible speed, in a fiery, metal grinding, horrific crash. The screen is filled with flames, smoke, and metal parts.

166 ANGLE ON TOPPER 166
Horrificed. The ambulance, fire truck, ground crew and CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICEMAN all race to the scene of the crash.

167 FIELD 167
Topper and others running to the accident sight. Sirens screaming. He stops. He can't believe what he sees.

168 ANGLE ON A MAJOR CRATER 168
Carved out by the crash, it lies just ahead. A whiff of smoke coming from the center of the hole. Topper for the first time shows emotion. He's shaken. They'll be lucky to find any of Dead Meat's remains.

Dead Meat emerges from the rim of the crater and removes his helmet. He's tattered and shaken but miraculously intact.

DEAD MEAT

Whew!

The ambulance screams to the scene, but the enthusiastic DRIVER hits the brakes too late. It smacks into Dead Meat, throwing him violently back into the crater.

(CONTINUED)

168 CONTINUED:

168

ANGLE ON AMBULANCE DRIVER

DRIVER
(sheepishly)
Oh, shit.

A169 EXT. AMBULANCE

A 169

Topper rushes into the crater, retrieves Dead Meat and carries him to the ambulance. Too damn close to the Ambulance Driver's door. As the Driver gets out of the cab, the door hits Dead Meat on the top of the head.

Topper carries Dead Meat to the rear of the ambulance. As the ambulance doors are opened, they hit Dead Meat on the head again. As the Paramedic is about to put Dead meat into the ambulance, one of the doors is closed by the Driver and the Paramedic rams Dead Meat's head into the door. The door is quickly opened, catching Dead Meat in the head. Finally he is put into the ambulance. Topper and the Paramedic get in with him. Dead Meat's head protrudes just a bit out of the back of the ambulance. As the Driver closes the doors, they slam on his head. The Driver gets in the ambulance and drives off over very rough terrain.

169 INT. AMBULANCE

169

Medical supplies fall off shelves. As valiantly as Topper tries to catch them they pummel Dead Meat. The Paramedic keeps trying to install an I.V., but misses his arm again and again.

170 WASH OUT

170

Reaches the earth. A soft, good landing. A gust of wind kicks up. It fills the chute and carries Wash Out off with it. Throughout this wild ride WE HEAR him, "Oh shit. Oh no. Oh Jesus. Ow!" He's dragged across the rocky ground, through fresh concrete, a cactus garden. Through a K Mart parking lot.

A171 THE K MART

A171

We lose him as he enters the K Mart. WE HEAR him, though, and the havoc he is causing. He reappears as he exits out the back door of the K Mart. Merchandise is tangled around his body. A Security Guard fires away at him. He's dragged up and down a series of steps.

ANGLE

*

The ambulance leaves the rough terrain and enters the highway...just as Wash Out blows across it. The chute gets caught on the back of the ambulance. Wash Out is dragged at speeds of 70 miles per hour, "Yeow!"

171 INT. AMBULANCE

171

The Paramedic is listening to Dead Meat's vital signs. Out the back window WE SEE Wash Out being dragged along.

PARAMEDIC

He seems to be suffering from massive head injuries.

TOPPER

It's Topper. Dead Meat...

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED:

171

DEAD MEAT
Hello my...friend.

Topper smiles.

TOPPER
Relax buddy. We'll have you at the
hospital in no time.

He lights a cigarette and puts it into Dead Meat's mouth.

DEAD MEAT
Topper I...

TOPPER
Don't talk.

DEAD MEAT
But...

TOPPER
No. Save your strength.

Dead Meat begins to choke, cough and sputter.

TOPPER
Do something. He's dying here!

The Paramedic looks, takes the cigarette out of Dead Meat's
mouth. It was in ash first.

172 EXT. BASE HOSPITAL - DAY

172

The left front bumper of the ambulance screeches to a halt just
before it hits the camera. WE HEAR a thud as Wash Out's
momentum is halted. Wash Out struggles to his feet. He is
torn and bruised. His parachute in shreds. *

TOPPER
(oblivious to Wash Out's
condition)
Wash Out. You made it.

WASH OUT
(totally disoriented)
Why thank you, Andre. I'll have the
veal piccatta.

He passes out.

Dead Meat is taken out and wheeled to the hospital emergency
entrance. The Paramedic, who is pushing the gurney through the
hospital electric-eye sliding door, stops; Dead Meat's head is
just inside the door. The Paramedic turns back to the Driver.

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED:

172

All during this the emergency entrance doors are trying to close, banging against Dead Meat's head. Topper tries to get their attention.

PARAMEDIC

Don't forget to bring in the cardio read-out I did on him.

TOPPER

Fellas...

DRIVER

Where is it?

TOPPER

Hey...

PARAMEDIC

Inside there on the left.

TOPPER

Move it!

They enter the hospital.

173 INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM

173

They rush in.

TOPPER

Doctor!

The DOCTOR and a NURSE rush over and start to check Dead Meat.

DOCTOR

What happened?

TOPPER

Plane crash.

The Doctor takes his pulse and checks his watch.

DOCTOR

We've gotta work fast, I've got a lunch.

The Doctor opens Dead Meat's flight suit. WE SEE a huge mess. What appears to be an unnerving sight of blood, yellow matter and chunks of charred flesh.

TOPPER

Oh my God...

(CONTINUED)

173 CONTINUED:

173

DOCTOR
(tasting it)
Thank God. It's the leftover burger
from his Happy Meal.

The Doctor reaches into the mess and pulls out a squished
burger.

DEAD MEAT
(weak)
I can't feel my legs.

DOCTOR
May I feel them for you?

TOPPER
You're missing the big picture here,
Doc.

DOCTOR
Nurse, check his penis. Is it longer
than mine?

NURSE
Ah, no Doctor.

DOCTOR
Good.
(to Dead Meat)
Now, this is going to hurt.

He bites Dead Meat's nose. Dead Meat whimpers in pain.

DOCTOR
Nurse, fifteen cc's of morphine,
quickly!

The Nurse prepares the shot.

TOPPER
Do you think you can save him?

DOCTOR
I can't be sure. I'm not a very good
doctor.

The Doctor checks Dead Meat's eyes, ears and nose. The Nurse
injects the Doctor with the morphine.

(CONTINUED)

173 CONTINUED: (2)

173

DOCTOR
That should do it, thank you.
(to Topper)
You'll have to wait here.

Topper watches as the gurney is rushed down the corridor by the doctor and nurse. They take a right turn too sharply and the centrifugal force causes Dead Meat to fly off the gurney. He hits the floor and takes out a cart full of food trays.

174 INT. WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

174

Ian, Kowalski, Mrs. Dead Meat, and the others of the Squad, enter. Ian is consoling Mrs. Dead Meat.

MRS. DEAD MEAT
My husband, where is he?

TOPPER
He's in surgery.

IAN
Topper, if you had been where you
were supposed to be, this wouldn't
have happened. Wash Out was trying
to cover for you.
(to the others)
I told you he was trouble.

The others nod in agreement.

KOWALSKI
Ian's right. You're no better than
your father.

Ian has a wise ass smug look on his face. Topper knows this is his fault. He looks to the grieving Mrs. Dead Meat. It hurts. The CAMERA PANS UP TO a clock.

DISSOLVE TO:

175
thru OMITTED

175
thru
176
177

176
177 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Start on another clock, ten hours later. The Doctor is sitting, reading a magazine. The Nurse enters.

NURSE
Doctor, we've been waiting for you
for hours now.

(CONTINUED)

177 CONTINUED:

177

DOCTOR

Oh, right. The operation. Sorry,
I got engrossed in this article on
Alaskan fishing. Let's get going.

They exit.

178 INT. OPERATING ROOM

178

As Topper watches through the window of the operating room doors, Dead Meat is being prepared for the operation. The Nurse is laying out the instruments on a tray. Among the medical tools is a child's sand shovel and a tire iron. Some of the tools are being placed around a plate, as if it were a table setting. The Doctor enters.

DOCTOR

How are we doing, Doctor?

PHYSICIAN

It's strange. His condition has
stabilized. The Aaksnevad Procedure
may not be necessary.

The Doctor bristles.

DOCTOR

For God's sake, woman, what are you
thinking! This screams for
Aaksnevad!

He steps up to a large chart on the wall.

ANGLE ON CHART

with random, multi-colored lines criss-crossing it. There is
no rhyme or reason to it.

DOCTOR

Now look here. Here's the blue line!
Here's the yellow line! The red line
goes way way beneath them. You're
a doctor, for Christ's sake. Do I
have to spell it all out for you?

He pounds on the prepped body for emphasis.

DOCTOR

(continuing)

Good Lord, are you still in Medicine
101?

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED:

178

He spits into his surgical gloves and rubs them together.

DOCTOR
(continuing)
Let's get cracking!

179		179
thru	OMITTED	thru
180		180
181	EXT. DUMPSTERS OUTSIDE HOSPITAL	181

A leg flies out a window and lands with a thud in a dumpster.

182	INT. WAITING ROOM	182
-----	-------------------	-----

Ian, Kowalski, Mrs. Dead Meat, and the Squad are worrying over their friend and husband. All the men isolating Topper from themselves. He's an outcast. Some of the men are pacing. Kowalski checks her watch. Mrs. Dead Meat wrings her hands. A dissheveled Wash Out picks K-Mart debris and cactus spines from his shirt. His parachute sits in a heap in the adjacent chair.

The Doctor and the Physician enter. Everyone's heart quickens a beat. The Doctor leans against the doorway, as though he's exhausted.

IAN
How did it go, Doctor?

DOCTOR
The most complicated and dangerous surgery I've ever been through. I lost a leg in there.

MRS. DEAD MEAT
How is Dead Meat, Doctor?

He hops over to Dead Meat's wife, resting his stump in a standing ashtray. Through the rest of the scene, he walks with the ashtray attached, like Long John Silver.

DOCTOR
How he survived the operation is a miracle. We dropped him five times. Mrs. Dead Meat, you can see your husband now, but be careful. His condition is extremely unstable.

Dramatically, Mrs. Dead Meat enters a room. The Squad anxiously awaits her report. She comes back out.

MRS. DEAD MEAT
(perplexed)
It's a girl.

We hear an infant cry. This isn't right.

DOCTOR
Nurse, take her to one-oh-five, the Dying Man's Room.

(CONTINUED)

182 CONTINUED:

182

NURSE

Of course.

She takes her into Room 105. When she's out of earshot:

DOCTOR

He doesn't have a chance.

All heads turn to Topper. Everyone shuts him out of their lives.

183 INT. DEAD MEAT'S ROOM

183

Mrs. Dead Meat enters. A forest of flowers.

The Physician is checking the vital signs. A NURSE stands by.

PHYSICIAN

I'm sorry.

Mrs. Dead Meat sobs gently. The Physician gestures to the Nurse. She pulls the blanket over Dead Meat's head. This exposes his feet. She pulls the blanket over his feet. Exposing the head. She does this a few more times. The Physician has grown weary of all this.

PHYSICIAN

Nurse, please.

Mrs. Dead Meat approaches her husband. Sits on the bed next to him. As she sits, WE HEAR a dog's yelp. The Nurse removes a small dog from the bed. Mrs. Dead Meat take Dead Meat's hand in hers. Cradles it against her cheek.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

At least his watch still works.

184 EXT. CEMETERY GRAVE SITE - DAY

A184 *

A lone BUGLER sounds out taps. A full dress MILITARY GUARD drapes an American flag across Dead Meat's metal coffin. The bereaved widow is receiving the other Pilots.

ADMIRAL HAHN

(o.s.)

I'm so sorry.

She looks around.

ADMIRAL HAHN

(o.s.)

There'll always be a place in our hearts for Dead Meat.

She spots him.

ADMIRAL HAHN

(o.s.)

Don and I wish to extend our condolences.

Topper approaches Mrs. Dead Meat.

TOPPER

Mrs. Thompson, I know you must hate me right now, but there's something I want you to have...

(CONTINUED)

A184 CONTINUED:

A184

He pulls an envelope from his jacket pocket.

TOPPER

I've been putting a little away every year for the past ten years...it's twenty five hundred dollars. I wish I could do more, but...

She opens the envelope. Inside is money.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Oh, Topper, I don't know what to say. This is so sweet.

(she sniffles)

Why, with the three million I won from this Lucky Lotto ticket, I can buy a bigger home and prime real estate in Manhattan and that Lamborghini I've always wanted. And the twenty-five hundred you gave me, why I'll just blow it on hats.

Topper, dumbfounded, moves to join the other Hot Shots at the gravesite. They want nothing to do with him. Topper looks for another place to sit. Ramada approaches him.

TOPPER

You don't know what it feels like to at last find a friendly face.

RAMADA

If you had quit when I asked you, we wouldn't be here now.

She slaps him in the face over and over again...too many times. Gee, Topper is really curious about when this barrage will end. Her right hand tires. She starts in with her left.

A hand reaches in from O.S. and stops her.

IAN (O.S.)

Ramada, he's not worth it.

ANGLE ON IAN

We see him lift a black veil from his face.

IAN

Come.

RAMADA

Oh, Ian. I've been such a fool.

(CONTINUED)

A184 CONTINUED: (2)

A184

IAN
(disappointed)
You never slapped me before.

As they turn away, Ian gives a victorious glance toward Topper. He escorts her to a seat next to Mrs. Dead Meat. The women tearfully embrace. Topper is surprised to see their relationship.

She sits. WE HEAR a "Yelp!" She removes the dog from her chair and sits again.

CUT TO:

B184 ANGLE ON COFFIN

B184

The Commander steps up to the microphone.

COMMANDER
(to the assembled)
It is at moments like these, my dear friends, that we must ask ourselves: How can this not be part of some larger plan? Do good men like Dead Meat Thompson just blink out one day like a bad bulb? Are we all destined to have our carcasses tossed into an open pit like so much landfill? Or is there some other purpose? I mean, one minute, you're in bed with a knockout gal -- or guy -- and the next you're a compost heap. Doesn't that bother any of you?! Because it scares the living piss out of me!! I mean...I...can't do this...

Mrs. Dead Meat rises to the occasion, takes his arm and helps him to a chair. She offers him a Twinkie and resumes her position.

The CHAPLAIN next steps up to the mic.

CHAPLAIN
Pete "Dead Meat" Thompson is dead. So is Mo Green, Tataglia, Barzini, the heads of all the five families. Today we all share the sorrow felt by...

ANGLE ON MRS. DEAD MEAT

CHAPLAIN
(o.s.)
...both the bereaved widow...

(CONTINUED)

B184 CONTINUED:

B184

The CAMERA PANS TO a weeping Ramada sitting next to Mrs. Dead Meat.

CHAPLAIN

(o.s.)

...and the dearly devoted sister of
Dead Meat Thompson.

(CONTINUED)

B184 CONTINUED: (2)

B 18:

ANGLE ON TOPPER

Shocked, horrified that his negligence has led to the death of Ramada's brother.

CHAPLAIN

There is a grand design the Almighty
has for us all. And that is...

He continues speaking but his mic intermittantly cuts out.

CHAPLAIN

In John Twelve...

The mic goes dead, but he keeps on speaking. He realizes there is a problem with the sound. He becomes increasingly upset. He yells o.s. to the Technician.

CHAPLAIN

...ey!...ats wrong with the...ic?

He goes back to his eulogy. But the mic kicks in off and on. He throws up his hands in disgust.

CHAPLAIN

...it!

(to Technician)

...ey!...ats...ong...ith the
...uking...ic?

We HEAR the faint sound of the Technician yelling back angrily. The Chaplain loses it totally. The defective mic catching pieces of his tirade.

CHAPLAIN

...low me...shole!

VOICE

(from the crowd)

Louder!

Chaplain really pissed.

CHAPLAIN

...ey!...ou...ink you can do
...etter? Then...ome on up
...here...ou...piece...o...it!

C184 WIDE ANGLE OF FUNERAL

C184

BLOCK (O.S.)

I never thought something like this
could happen. Don't we have what
(more)

(CONTINUED)

C184 CONTINUED:

C184

BLOCK (Cont'd)
we need now, Mr. Wilson? This should
be enough to
(more)

(CONTINUED)

C184 CONTINUED: (2)

C 184

BLOCK (Cont'd)
 prove that our planes need to be
 replaced.

WE REVEAL that a clandestine meeting is being held in a nearby
 limousine.

D 184 INT. LIMOUSINE

D 184

The passengers are Block, Wilson, Rosener and Sucik.

WILSON
 No. Those planes have to fail in
 combat for the world to take notice.
 This is a minor incident.

BLOCK
 (bristling)
 Minor? I just lost one of my best
 men.

ROSENER
 You're not having second thoughts,
 are you Block?

BLOCK
 I'm staking my career on this
 mission. I'll carry it out.

Block exits the car.

SUCIK
 This guy isn't getting religion on
 us all of a sudden? You told us we
 could count on him.

WILSON
 There's too much at stake here.
 Rosener, we'll need the backup.

*

They all somberly acknowledge.

CUT TO:

184 ANGLE ON HONOR GUARD

184

Seven GUARDSMEN with rifles prepare to fire a salute. Their
 leader unintelligibly barks out the "ready, fire" commands.

They rip off a volley skyward.

ANGLE ON COMMANDER

The blast awakens instincts.

(CONTINUED)

184 CONTINUED:

184

COMMANDER
Jumpin' Jesus! They're back.

He throws a revolver to Herring.

COMMANDER
Find cover, people!

The Commander grabs Mrs. Dead Meat and they dive for cover under the coffin, rolling for the open grave like Butch and Sundance. He begins to return the fire.

COMMANDER
Battle stations! Battle stations!
Fire at will. Damn the torpedoes!

He picks off a couple of the Honor Guard as everyone else runs for cover, screaming.

COMMANDER
Circle the wagons! For the love of
God, have they no respect for the
dead?

A185 EXT. BARRACKS - THE NEXT DAY

A185

Topper drives up and enters.

185 INT. BARRACKS

185

There's a lot of chatter, a record player playing. Guys wander around. Ian, dressed in a spandex exercise outfit, is working out on a cross-country exerciser.

TOPPER'S POV

Two guys turn away as he passes. One guy pulls a blind down in front of his face. Another puts a waste basket over his head. Two more climb into a footlocker and close the lid.

Topper walks over to Dead Meat's bunk. Packs a few of his things into an overnight bag. Hair brush, comb, sperm canister, a kitten, then pictures, one of which is of an elderly couple. The inscription READS: "WE LOVE YOU SON. WE'RE WITH YOU ALL THE WAY. YOUR DEAD PARENTS, GENE AND EMMA." He finds a harmonica. He smiles. Puts it to his lips and sadly starts to play it. But lots of saliva comes out. He tosses it into the bag, "Yuk!"

186 INT. COMMANDER'S OFFICE

186

The Commander, wearing a heavy leather flight jacket with a fur

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED:

186

collar and lining, sits into the shot, giving dictation to his SECRETARY. He sips from a mug.

COMMANDER
(to Secretary)
Now, read that back to me, Francine.

SECRETARY
(reading)
And if you ever put your goddamn
hands on my wife again...

Block enters.

BLOCK
You wanted to see me?

COMMANDER
Ah, Blank. Come in. I've been
expecting someone.
(to Secretary)
That'll be all, Francine.

The Secretary exits. The Commander takes a sip from his mug. When he lowers it, his mouth is ringed with something shiny and brown.

COMMANDER
Pudding?

Block is lightly spattered by this word.

BLOCK
No thank you, sir.

COMMANDER
I'll put it to you straight then,
Colonel. Thompson's death was a
shock to us all and that hot shot
Harley is responsible. I want that
smirking little wise ass out of here.
The morale on this base is shot to
hell. Just look out there...

The Commander turns to a large painting of an airfield on the wall.

COMMANDER
Quiet...hardly a man moving...

The Commander waves at one guy in the painting.

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED: (2)

186

COMMANDER

ROY! ROY!

(to Block)

I even went to school with that man. He's just not the same. Been ignoring me all day. Remind me to send him a note. God, I could use some cole slaw right now!

BLOCK

Sir, I realize the men are blaming Harley for Thompson's death...

COMMANDER

Look, I know how the men feel. I lost a brother once myself. He was killed over Villenschtoeben.

BLOCK

I didn't know...

COMMANDER

Yes, he and a few compatriots were at dinner, arguing over who got the leftover Villenschtoeben...one thing led to another...he was shot by a Mormon, of all things.

BLOCK

Sir, may I say something? I don't argue that Harley acted irresponsibly, but his kind lives on the edge, always willing to take a chance. We need Topper for this mission for just that reason.

The Commander, thinking it over, reaches into a pocket. Takes out a cigarette case. Offers the contents to Block.

COMMANDER

Carrot?

BLOCK

No thank you, Sir.

The Commander helps himself to one.

COMMANDER

(gesturing and chomping)

I like your thinking, Colonel. Besides, Dead Meat Thompson wasn't all that good a pilot anyway. He only had a small family.

(more)

*

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED: (3)

186

COMMANDER (Cont'd)

The kids are a pain in the ass. The wife's on the sauce.

(gazing down
remorsefully)

Hell, the poor bastard's better off dead. What size shoes do you wear?

BLOCK

Well...a nine.

He gets up. Walks Block to the door.

COMMANDER

By the way, I want to thank you for sending over this lovely jacket. Very nice gift. Virgin marmoset, I believe.

BLOCK

But sir, I didn't give you that.

The Commander takes off the jacket.

COMMANDER

Why the hell didn't you say something? I've been wearing it for weeks.

He hands the jacket to Block. They exit.

187 EXT. STREET - DAY

187

As Topper drives by on his bike, the town reacts negatively. A newsstand closes; children are shielded and hastened away by parents; a bishop, a minister and a rabbi, walking together, turn away; the Pope, strolling reflectively, recoils in horror; Dr. Joyce Brothers, who is on every TV screen in the window of an appliance store, gets up and walks off camera.

188 EXT. RAMADA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

188

Topper arrives on his motorcycle.

189 INT. RAMADA'S APARTMENT

189

WE SEE a welder, complete with welder's mask, finishing a graceful modern art sculpture. The mask is flipped up, REVEALING Ramada.

RAMADA'S P.O.V.

She gazes out the window and SEES a remorseful Topper setting Dead Meat's belongings on the stoop.

(CONTINUED)

189 CONTINUED:

189

BACK TO SCENE

She softens and rushes to the door to catch Topper.

RAMADA

Topper...where are you going?

TOPPER

I'm handing in my resignation. You were right. You said I was dangerous and I was. I thought you'd want some of Dead Meat's things.

Their eyes meet.

TOPPER

I'm sure going to miss him.

RAMADA

So am I. We'd both been so busy we hadn't seen each other for almost ten years.

TOPPER

Ten years?

She interprets he doesn't understand what ten years are. She holds up her fingers.

RAMADA

These many.

TOPPER

I see.

Topper turns to go again.

RAMADA

Topper, wait. I've been unfair. I'm as much to blame as you for what happened. I should never have let you stay the night with me. Please, let's talk.

190 EXT. PICTURESQUE OCEAN BEACH - DAY

190

Ramada and Topper stroll along a quiet stretch of beach. A reflective Topper is skipping rocks in the water. It's a serene setting. The gentle waves, the seagulls soaring in the breeze.

TOPPER

They're right. I'm no better than my father. It seems no matter what I do, I end up hurting someone.

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED:

191

He skips a stone off the water. Skip, skip, skip. It hits the driver of a motorboat that is pulling a water skier right between the eyes. The driver falls into the drink and the boat heads out to sea.

RAMADA

You've got to stop comparing yourself with your father. You're two different people.

TOPPER

We both killed a man.

RAMADA

That's just a coincidence.

TOPPER

He couldn't get close to women. Neither can I. He was a loner, just like me. For God's sake, I've even got my father's eyes.

He pulls out a small jewelry case, and shows her the contents. She's convinced.

TOPPER

(continuing)

They're just for luck.

RAMADA

You've got to make your own luck...rely on yourself. Sure, Dead Meat crashed...and there's a big hole out there, but I know now, you've got to get back in the sky and prove yourself. It's that whole confidence thing.

TOPPER

Hold the phone here, Doctor. You've been telling me to stay out of the air, to resolve my problems...all that psychoanalytic stuff.

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED: (2)

190

RAMADA

Topper, we're not hanging wallpaper here. This is psychiatry. You don't just get the seams right and everything's okay.

TOPPER

But...

RAMADA

Come on, it's not a perfect science. I mean Freud was free-basing for years. Let's face it, there's room for error.

TOPPER

Gosh, I never looked at it that way.

RAMADA

When I was growing up as a teenager in Sicily, my mother would wake me up every morning at 6:00, even though my restoration of the Sistine Chapel didn't start until 8:00. It made me so mad. I thought I needed that extra hour of sleep. Finally we had a big argument. I told her to stay out of my life. The next morning I slept in. It was August 18, 1981, the day of the terrible hailstorm. My mama couldn't find her umbrella. Only I knew it was in the back of the broom closet. I don't have to tell you what happened.

TOPPER

(after a couple of
beats)

Yeah...well, what does this have to do with me?

RAMADA

Why does everything have to be about you? Can't I have problems, too? Everything is Topper this...Topper that...

(beat)

Besides, there's something else. Something I didn't want to tell you. But after

(more)

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED: (3)

190

RAMADA (CONT'D)
our first meeting in my office I sent
my evaluation to Lt. Block. I
recommended you be grounded. I was
afraid someone might get hurt.

TOPPER
What are you saying?

RAMADA
If I learned nothing more during my
tenure at Scotland Yard, I learned
about conspiracy. I'm afraid
something is terribly wrong.

TOPPER
But what?

RAMADA
I'm not sure. I think someone
wants Sleepy Weasel to fail.

TOPPER
That's heavy.

(CONTINUED)

*
*

190 CONTINUED: (4)

190

RAMADA

Totally. That's the other reason why you need to fly. Topper, this could well be your only opportunity to save the mission and solve your personal problems all in one fell swoop.

TOPPER

But what if I get hurt?

RAMADA

There's a promising world out there, Topper. A world full of beauty and goodness. It's worth fighting for--you can help preserve it.

They embrace. As CAMERA PANS DOWN, we hear a SUCKING NOISE. She raises her leg in that cliché girl-is-being-kissed way. CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal they are standing ankle deep in oil. The beach is strewn with garbage and hypodermic needles. In the background, oil rigs jam the harbor.

A 191 WIDE ANGLE - POV

A 191

Topper and Ramada still embrace.

191 REVERSE ANGLE

191

WE SEE now that this is IAN's POV from Ramada's apartment. He drops his binoculars and WE SEE a tear trickle down his face.

IAN

Hath not a Jew blood? If you prick me, do I not bleed? If you tip me over, do I not fall? If you hack off my feet, do I not waddle? And if you throw acid in my face, do my features not run?

A GUY waxing his surfboard nearby moves away apprehensively.

DISSOLVE TO:

192 EXT. RAMADA'S APARTMENT - AN HOUR LATER

192

Topper and Ramada walk arm in arm toward the building. They see Ian walking out of her apartment.

(CONTINUED)

192 CONTINUED:

192

RAMADA

Ian...

IAN

(hurt and angry)

I came to get my chafing dish. Our
orders just came through. We're
shipping out in one hour.

(to Topper)

Are you coming along this time?

RAMADA

The chafing dish is not yours.

IAN

Yes, it is.

RAMADA

No, it isn't.

IAN

Okay, I don't want it.

RAMADA

JUST TAKE IT!

TOPPER

Heck, I'll take it.

RAMADA

You stay out of it.

IAN

This isn't the time or place, but
I've got a big score to settle with
you, my friend.

He goes to his car, and opens the door angrily, breaking a nail.
He bites the nail, spits it out.

IAN

Oh. That's all I need.

He gets in the car and pulls away.

RAMADA

I've hurt him again. Topper, you'd
better go.

- 193 EXT. OCEAN - MORNING (EIGHTEEN HOURS LATER) 193
- An aircraft carrier glides through the sparkling waters. The MUSIC is powerful, dramatic -- promising big stuff ahead. Over this WE SUPERIMPOSE:
- "SOMEWHERE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN"
- ANGLE ON BOW OF CARRIER
- as it cuts through the waves. WE READ the name "S.S. ESSESS" on the bow.
- 194 FLIGHT DECK 194
- A beehive of activity in preparation for arrival of the Freedom Squadron. MEN painting, swabbing decks. A JAPANESE GARDENER is clearing leaves off the deck with a leaf blower.
- To stay loose, SEVERAL MEN are playing touch football. The quarterback throws a long bomb. The receiver makes a beautiful Raymond Berry grab, touching his toes down just on the edge of the ship and falls into the drink. OTHER PLAYERS rush to the edge to see.
- OTHER PLAYERS
The ball! Toss it up here! We gotta game here! Huddle up!
- 195 INT. BRIDGE 195 *
- Looking natty in hunting attire, is the Commander, peering intently through a pair of binoculars. He grabs a mic and barks a command. *
- Pull! COMMANDER *
- A skeet is launched. *
- Fire! COMMANDER *
- A ship's cannon fires. The skeet is exploded out of the sky. The Commander gives a thumb's up sign.
- 196 ANGLE - A BATTER 196
- strokes a pitch to deep centerfield and the OUTFIELDER goes back, keeping his eye on the ball. Looking over his shoulder, he races full bore off the end of the ship.

197 EXT. FLIGHT DECK

19

Wilson and Rosener walk among the planes being repaired. MECHANICS are working. When the pneumatic wrenches start up, they say, "Wieeeesenthal. Wie. Wie. Wiesenthal."

One AIR CREWMAN looks up and gives the high sign to Wilson.

In the background we see Jim Abrahams fly fishing.

198 OMITTED

19

199 EXT. PLANES IN FLIGHT

19

The Freedom Squadron flashes across the sky in precision formation.

200 INT. BLOCK'S JET

20

BLOCK
(into radio)
Lima Delta Tango November Niner.
We have you in sight. Request
permission to land.

201 INT. RADAR ROOM

20

CAMERA MOVES from Plexiglass tracking map. On the other side, a RADAR MAN plots movement.

RADAR MAN
(o.s., into mic)
Ah, Roger, Foxtrot Zulu Milkshake.
Welcome to the Mediterranean.

BLOCK
(voice over, from radio)
Read you loud and clear, Yankee
Doodle Floppy Disc. Our E.T.A. is
three minutes.

202 INT. IAN'S JET

20

IAN
(into radio)
Wash Out, is that you?

203 INT. RADAR ROOM

203

WASH OUT
(into mic)
You bet. They put me in charge of
radar.

CAMERA NOW RESTS on his face. Radar Man is indeed Wash Out.
He is wearing enormous coke bottle glasses.

WASH OUT
I'll be your eyes on the ground.
It's the next best thing to being
up there with you guys.

204 INT. IAN'S JET

204

He is horrified at the news.

205 EXT. FLIGHT DECK

205

P.A. SYSTEM
(voice over)
Incoming aircraft. All air crewmen
to the flight deck.

ANGLE ON FLIGHT DECK

A flurry of activity as men pour out of hatches, including a
COOK dressed in apron and chef's hat, stirring batter with a
big spoon, a SAILOR wearing a Lord Nelson-style uniform with
a three-cornered hat, a ringer for Gregory Peck as CAPTAIN AHAB
carrying a harpoon, and CAPTAIN HOOK from "Peter Pan". They
busily prepare for the arriving planes. A typical airline
baggage train, loaded with luggage, moves through the
background. The catapults are readied. Lots of commands being
thrown around.

*
*
*

A206 ANGLE ON FLIGHT DECK

A 206

The jet restraining net is raised.

206 ANGLE ON RUNWAY

206

A jet touches down and comes to a sudden, almost violent stop
as it hooks the catch wire.

207 INT. COCKPIT

207

The pilot's head whacks against the inside of the windshield.
"Woof!"

WE VIEW two more landings with the same results. The third
pilot is Kowalski. The impact squishes her oxygen mask against
her face. She struggles to pry it free, distorting her face.
The mask finally comes loose with a toilet plunger "POP".

208 OMITTED 208

209 ANGLE ON SIGNALMAN 209

Standing on podium, straightening the incoming plane's wings with flags. Signalman leans too far and falls overboard.

Another plane lands, another smashed head, grunt.

210 ANGLE ON ANOTHER SIGNALMAN 210

A new guy, in a white body stocking and ballet slippers, signals the jets by doing the dying swan routine from "Swan Lake." Signal flags flutter in his hands.

211 JET PARKING AREA 211

A jet taxis to a parking spot which is clearly marked with a handicapped sign. As the pilot deplanes, a man in a wheelchair rolls up and chews him out.

Another pilot is deplaning. WE SEE the rear seat is full of grocery bags -- he unloads them.

212 ANGLE ON TOPPER'S COCKPIT 212

He parallel parks his jet into a space. Pulls off his mask and surveys the ship with a smile. This is the real thing.

213 EXT. BRIDGE 213

Wilson, Rosener, and the SHIP'S CAPTAIN, whose hordes of decorations are flashing like sequential Christmas tree lights, all watch the planes land.

The Commander emerges from the doorway on a level three steps above them and takes a deep breath.

COMMANDER

Ahhh...the open sea...God I wish I could smell...had my nostrils fried in Panmunjom.

CAPTAIN

Commander Benson, I want you to meet Mr. Wilson and Mr. Rosener from Northwell Aviation. They'll be observing the operation.

COMMANDER

Ah yes...

He begins to descend the stairs to shake hands, but slips and falls out of sight behind the railing. He quickly gets back onto his feet.

(CONTINUED)

213 CONTINUED:

213

COMMANDER

I slipped on a carp. Who put that carp there?

CAPTAIN

Carp? I didn't see any carp.

COMMANDER

Don't tell me. There were two carp. They work in pairs. I went to Annapolis, for Christ's sake.

The COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER hands the Commander a message.

COM. OFFICER

From the Pentagon, sir. We just decoded it.

COMMANDER

Good.

(to the Captain)

I wonder if you'd help me here with this. My eyes are ceramic. A bazooka round at Little Big Horn...or Okinawa... the one with the Indians.

CAPTAIN

It's the final orders. We strike tomorrow at oh-six hundred.

COMMANDER

Excellent! We'll reconnoiter at daybreak. Now, I want those carp found and shot. This is war, dammit. Where's my cotton candy? Good to have you aboard, gentlemen. But take care...these fish...a crafty lot.

214 EXT. CARRIER - DAWN OF THE NEXT DAY

214

Serenity at sea. A rooster crows. The morning calm is broken by the sound of a bugler blowing reveille.

215 INT. PILOTS' QUARTERS

215

A siren calls them to duty.

CAPTAIN

(voice over, from P.A. system)

All pilots and air crews report to the flight deck!

(CONTINUED)

215 CONTINUED:

215

MONTAGE

TOPPER AND THE MEN GETTING READY

Ian takes cucumbers off his eyes and switches
off his sunlamp.

The men are slipping into flight boots.

Putting on their flight suits.

Grabbing their helmets.

Grabbing their gloves.

Grabbing muskets from a rack.

Taking fruit from a fruit vendor stand.

Ian enhancing a beauty mark. God, this is exciting!

End MONTAGE.

The men rush out of their quarters. Topper is determined to fight his problem. He's taken enough crap from everyone. The sky is where he belongs. Ian gives one final check in the mirror. Makes a crucial decision on which scarf to wear. He's out the door.

216 EXTREME CLOSEUP - BUGLER

216

playing reveille. CAMERA PULLS BACK and we SEE he is playing into the Commander's ear.

COMMANDER

Thank you, Ensign Billsby.

The Bugler salutes and exits. The Commander runs a comb through his hair. We hear the comb teeth scrape over the metal plate. Paper clips fall to the ground like so much dandruff. The Commander looks around for the source of the sound.

COMMANDER

Yes? Hello? Assemble the men.

217 OMITTED

217

218 INT. SHIP'S BRIEFING ROOM

218

The squad is clustered together, talking. As Topper enters, Ian steps out from the group.

IAN

Get out of your flight suit, Mister!
You're not going anywhere!

TOPPER

What are you talking about?

IAN

This mission is too risky and too
important to let you screw it up.
You're not flying with us.

(CONTINUED)

218 CONTINUED:

218

TOPPER

Am too.

IAN

Are not.

TOPPER

Sounds to me like a guy who's pissed
because his girl dumped him.

The squad "ooohhhs".

*

IAN

(hurt)

That was low.

TOPPER

It was supposed to be.

Ian's had enough of this crap. He slips in a mouthpiece. It
hinders his speech.

IAN

(barely intelligible)

Let's go at it.

Topper slips in his mouthpiece.

TOPPER

A pleasure. You...

They spew profanities at one another but no one, not even them,
can understand what they are saying because of the mouthpieces.

TOPPER

What?

IAN

Huh?

They start circling one another. Topper with that cocky look of
determination on his face. Ian, the picture of a hero at work.
The squad gathers around. Egging on Ian, "Get him Ian", "Teach
him a lesson", etc.

Ian throws a punch. Topper blocks it. Hits Ian with a right
to the jaw. Ian grabs his cheek. Topper his hand. Both cry
out in agony.

TOPPER

My hand! Awwww!

IAN

My face! He broke my
jaw!

(CONTINUED)

218 CONTINUED: (2)

218

They follow up with, "Oh, Jesus, this hurts", "God the pain", "Oww!"

Block and the Commander enter.

BLOCK
Attention!

Everyone snaps to.

COMMANDER
Be seated. We've waited a long time to hear this. In five hours we hit the enemy toast!

BLOCK
I think that is the enemy COAST, sir.

COMMANDER
The coast...well that will take a little more planning...but it doesn't matter...

(to the map)
Our assignment is to knock out the nuclear weapons plant at Falafel Heights. The plant goes on line in twelve hours and is heavily defended.

Stirring among the men. Everyone is gung-ho to knock this factory out of commission.

COMMANDER
If you have trouble hitting your objective...your secondary targets are here and here...an accordion factory and a mime school.

The men agree those are good targets too.

COMMANDER
Good luck, gentlemen. Blink, take over.

The Commander exits. Being especially careful not to ram his head into anything. He is successful. Proud of himself he struts out the hatch. Then "flangggg." He runs head first into a girder that's being carried by two sailors.

COMMANDER
(o.s.)
Aww! Savior of us all!

(CONTINUED)

218 CONTINUED: (3)

218

ANGLE ON BLOCK

BLOCK

I want Topper Harley leading the
squadron into battle.

Murmur of discontent from the squad. Ian rises.

IAN

Lieutenant Commander, sir, I know
I speak for every man here...we've
lost all respect for Harley. He's
poison for the morale of the unit.
And a disaster for the success of
the mission.

*

Words that are music to Block's ears. It's time now to stir the
hornet's nest a bit more.

BLOCK

You're out of line, Carmichael.
You'll obey orders and like it.

Topper is suspicious of this reaction.

BLOCK

Now get to your planes.

As the others scramble for their planes, Topper turns to Block.

TOPPER

Lieutenant Commander?

BLOCK

What is it, Mr. Harley?

TOPPER

I hope I'm wrong about this...

BLOCK

And what would that be?

TOPPER

Nobody likes playing for a coach who
throws the big game.

BLOCK

What is that supposed to mean?

TOPPER

My uncle used to tell me that not
playing to win, is like sleeping with
your sister. Sure she's a great
(more)

(CONTINUED)

218 CONTINUED: (4)

218

TOPPER (Cont'd)
piece of tail, with a blouse full
of goodies...but it's just illegal.

*
*

BLOCK
(a putrid thought)
Jesus, Topper, come on.

TOPPER
(on a roll)
Then you get into that whole inbred
thing. Kids with no teeth...who only
play the banjo. Eat applesauce with
a straw...pork farm animals...

*

BLOCK
Topper stop it.

TOPPER
I think you get my point. I just
hope you're playing straight with
us.

Topper walks away. Block is apprehensive.

219 FLIGHT DECK

219

BIG MUSIC. Topper, Ian, Kowalski, the rest of the squad, the
look of all-American determination on their faces. This is
their big moment.

Topper hands a valet claim check to the red vested valet, PEDRO.
He gives a set of keys to PABLO, the valet, who runs off to get
the jet. Ian hands his ticket to Pedro.

TOPPER
(checking his watch
impatiently)
Pedro...oh-six-hundred hours...

*
*
*
*

220 OMITTED

220

221 FLIGHT DECK

221

Pablo brings up Topper's jet. Pablo exits the jet, Topper
climbs inside. Ian's jet is brought up by another valet.

*

222 INT. TOPPER'S JET

222

His radio is on a Spanish station. He changes it instantly.
Has to re-adjust his seat.

223 ANGLE ON SIGNALMAN 223
signaling for the jets to rev up the engines.

INTERCUT BETWEEN:

224 TOPPER, IAN, KOWALSKI, BLOCK 224
opening up the throttle.

225 REAR VIEW OF A JET 225
Flames pour from the exhaust. A FLIGHT CREW MEMBER is using the
fire to roast wieners.

226 INT. IAN'S JET 226
He listens to his engines. It doesn't seem right.

IAN
(calling out)
Did you hear that left engine miss?

227 ANGLE ON FIVE YEAR OLD GIRL 227
in a pinafore holding a balloon.

GIRL
I dunno.

The conspiratorial Air Crewman steps in. *

AIR CREWMAN
Sounds fine. Don't worry about a
thing.

AIR CREWMAN

By his thin smile, we sense he is the one who has sabotaged the
jets. The engine is part of his handiwork. He looks up to the
bridge. Gives a conspiratorial nod to Wilson.

228 INT. RADAR ROOM 228

WASH OUT
(into mic)
Alpha Hotel Wallet, Velveeta,
Knuckle, Underwear, cleared for
takeoff. Fellas give 'em one for
me.

229 INT. BLOCK'S JET 229

BLOCK
(into radio)
Honky, Lugnut, Onion, Scab... Roger.

230 FLIGHT DECK

230

From their cockpits, Ian, Kowalski, Block, and the others give the thumbs up sign. Moon Dog and Cowboy do "rock, paper, scissors." We SEE a NEW YORK PANHANDLER squeegeeing Kowalski's window. Topper is excluded from the camaraderie. A surge of power, a belch of smoke, and one by one the fighters are airborne. Cheerleaders and tumblers wave them on. One of the jets passes a man and woman hitchhiking. One is holding a sign reading "San Francisco".

231 ANGLE ON FLAGMAN

231

dressed as a matador. Does a flourish with his cape as a jet goes by.

232 TWO DOGS

232

chase at the wheels of one of the planes as it takes off.

233 EXT. TOPPER'S JET

233

As Topper takes off, he gives a big salute to the conspiratorial Air Crewman. Topper's jet screams by him, and as luck would have it, singes the shit out of him, giving him his just desserts. He's a blackened, burnt cinder. The wrench he holds is now melted over, looking like the end of a spent match. Now the pain hits. He dives overboard, never to be seen again.

234 EXT. BRIDGE

234

The Captain watches as the mission gets underway. The Commander steps smartly out to the observation deck.

COMMANDER
(thoughtfully)
Half these people won't come back.

CAPTAIN
The defenses are that tough?

COMMANDER
No. Frankly, I just don't think they
like me.

A gust of wind comes along. The Commander's hat blows off. He looks over the rail, out toward the stern.

COMMANDER
Holy cow, my hat blew off. Swing
her around. We'll pick it up.

CAPTAIN
But, sir, we're on the mission.

(CONTINUED)

234 CONTINUED:

234

COMMANDER

Good thinking. We'll pick it up on the way back. We've got to mark the spot, though. Put Rabinowitz in a life raft. Have him row in circles until we return.

CAPTAIN

It could be days.

COMMANDER

Then put some food in the life raft. For God's sake man, do I have to think of everything? We'll tape his favorite shows. He won't miss anything.

CAPTAIN

But sir, there's no time.

COMMANDER

Okay, okay. Can't you see I'm not wearing a hat? It's out there somewhere alone and I'm powerless to do anything about it.

He slams his fist down onto the rail.

COMMANDER

Where the hell's Rabinowitz?

235 SKY

235

Jets enter formation. A glorious sight for Uncle Sam... Americans about to kick ass.

236
thru OMITTED236
thru238
239 INT. RADAR ROOM - SEVERAL HOURS LATER238
239

The squad is being tracked by Wash Out. The Commander, Captain, Wilson, Rosener follow the progress.

Suddenly, blips appear on Wash Out's radar screen.

WASH OUT

(into mic)

Pencil, Cheese, Microwave,
Shirtsleeve, enemy aircraft at twelve
o'clock!

(CONTINUED)

239 CONTINUED:

239

COMMANDER
 (checking his watch)
 Really? Twelve o'clock? That gives
 us twenty-five minutes. I think I'll
 step out for a smoke.

Tension mounts. Wilson and Rosener's plans will soon come to a head.

WASH OUT
 Sir, there are six of them. Position
 coordinates, two-one-five-two.
 Bearing one hundred and fifty miles.

Wash Out sneezes onto the radar screen.

WASH OUT
 Oh, God! A dozen more! And a blimp!
 A big, shiny blimp! And it's slowly
 moving south!

COMMANDER
 (into mic)
 Block, do you have them?

BLOCK
 (voice over, from radio)
 I got 'em.
 (implementing his plan)
 All right. Attack formation Delta
 Niner. Topper in lead. Just like
 your old man, Son.

240 INT. TOPPER'S JET

240

Paternal Conflict Syndrome sets in. WE HEAR his heart begin to pound. Topper fights it and tentatively takes the lead position.

241 INT. BLOCK'S JET

241

BLOCK
 (into radio)
 Enemy fifty miles and closing.
 Prepare to engage. Old Buzz Harley
 would be proud of you, Topper.

242 TOPPER

242

Sweating profusely.

CLOSEUP - TOPPER

We HEAR Ian's voice echoing.

(CONTINUED)

242 CONTINUED:

242

IAN
(voice over, echoing
from an earlier scene)
He's poison for the morale of the
unit. Poison...poison..

KOWALSKI
(voice over, echoing
from an earlier scene)
Ian's right. You're no better than
your father...No better than your
father...No better...

IAN
(voice over, echoing
from an earlier scene)
Like father, like son. You're the
type who could end up killing every
man in this outfit. Killing...
killing...

PRESIDENT BUSH
(voice over)
Read my lips, no new taxes...no new
taxes...

Bush's voice fades out as:

243 INT. IAN'S JET

243

IAN
(into radio)
I've made a Bogie. Bogie at twelve
o'clock.

244 INT. ENEMY JET

244

A trench coat, snap-brimmed Humphrey Bogart look-alike is
piloting.

IAN
(voice over, from radio)
Topper, do you read?

245 INT. TOPPER'S JET

245

He's still battling the syndrome.

246 EXT. SKY

246

Ian, Kowalski and the Unit prepare to duel with the enemy.

247 INT. BRIDGE 247
Wilson and Rosener smile confidently.

248 INT. IAN'S JET 248

IAN
(into radio)
Topper, what are you doing?

249 TOPPER 249
Trying to gain control over his affliction. The heartbeats slow down and finally stop. His face first registers victory...and then concern. WE HEAR a heart monitor "flatline" tone. Topper pounds on his chest, reviving his heart.

A250 INT. KOWALSKI'S JET A250

KOWALSKI
(into radio)
He's frozen. Topper's no good to us. He'll never make it.

250 BLOCK 250
He's victorious. He's pulled it off.

BLOCK
(into radio)
Abort the mission.

251 SKY 251
But no. They're now inundated by enemy jets.

252 IAN 252

IAN
(into radio)
We can't. They're all over us.

253 BLOCK 253
He didn't count on this.

254 DOGFIGHT 254
A lot of hyper chatter over the radio from everyone except Topper: "He's on your tail," "Look out!" "Three o'clock!" "Bandit at three," "We're there!" "He's yours!" "Looking for the sweet spot!"

Ian, Block, et al have the enemy jets in their sights.

255 KOWALSKI

255

KOWALSKI
(into radio)
Say good-bye, baby...bye bye!

(CONTINUED)

255 CONTINUED:

25:

She fires. Her rockets miss by a mile. She can't understand it. Another quick shot. The same results.

KOWALSKI
(into radio)
My sights are off. I had 'em. I
had 'em!

256 IAN

25:

The engines misfire. He loses altitude. Regains control.

IAN
(into radio)
My engines cut out!

257 BLOCK

25:

Block's guns jam. He's bewildered.

BLOCK
(into radio)
My cannons...

258 INT. RADAR ROOM

258

They listen...the drama is heart-quickenning. Riveted to every word from the dogfight. We hear the whine of a small motor. CAMERA TILTS DOWN to the Commander's foot slowly rotating.

259 KOWALSKI

259

and the others taking on the enemies. Their cannons, missiles, or guidance systems malfunction.

KOWALSKI
(into radio)
What's wrong? We've got no defenses!

260 JETS

260

The enemy has the upper hand on our pilots. Our planes are being hit. One goes down. "Look Out!", "Oh geez!", "Whoa!", etc.

261 INT. RADAR ROOM

261

The anxious Commander and Captain. Wilson and Rosener secretly congratulating themselves...this is working perfectly. Tears welling up in Wash Out's eyes. His pals are getting the living shit kicked out of them.

The speaker pouring out the drama: "They got Scooter!", "Rainbow, Rainbow, bail out!", "There goes that paint job!"

(CONTINUED)

261 CONTINUED:

261

Among the gunfire and frantic talk we hear one of our pilots sneeze: "Gesundheit. Sounds like you're getting a cold"... "It's allergies. This time of the year is always rough for me..."

262 INT. BLOCK'S JET

262

He's seeing his people being cut up. He starts searching his mind for a reason.

BLOCK
(to himself)
This is insane.

It dawns on him.

BLOCK
(into mic)
Wilson, Rosener, this was you, wasn't it? You said no one was going to get hurt.

263 INT. RADAR ROOM

263

The Commander looks suspiciously at Wilson and Rosener.

CAPTAIN
(grabbing the mic)
Block, call your men back. It's hopeless.

264 INT. BLOCK'S JET

264

BLOCK
(into mic)
Like hell I will. I got the best pilot in the world up here. Topper. Topper, do you read?

265 INT. TOPPER'S JET

265

Still frozen.

BLOCK
(voice over)
I was there that day. I was there with your father and Mailman Farnham. I was an eyewitness.

DISSOLVE TO:

266 A REPRISE OF THE TRAINING MISSION AT FLENNER AIR

266

FORCE BASE - 20 YEARS EARLIER

Buzz's jet streaks through the sky. Mach seven, mach eight!
The plane is vibrating violently and begins to come apart.

267 INT. BUZZ'S JET

267

FARNHAM
We're tearing apart.

BLOCK
(voice over)
I was piloting the bandit plane.

BUZZ
Mayday...mayday!

A wing starts to peel off. Buzz tries to control the plane but can't. Farnham sees the wing from his window. The jet starts to plummet to earth.

BUZZ
Mailman...eject!

Farnham's ejection seat jams.

FARNHAM
I can't. Seat's jammed! Nothing works. My harness...

Farnham tugs at his seat restraints.

268 EXT. BUZZ'S JET

268

Buzz blows their canopy and climbs out of the cockpit. He valiantly fights the wind, reaching in to help Farnham. The harness won't give. A big piece of the nose section starts peeling back. Buzz crawls forward, rolls the metal back in place like linoleum, whips out a staple gun and reattaches it. Then he heads back to Farnham.

FARNHAM
Buzz! The engine...we've got a flame out!

Buzz makes his way to the tail of the plane. Hanging on to the fuselage with one hand, a Bic lighter in the other, he reaches around and tries repeatedly to relight the engine. Not a chance.

FARNHAM
Buzz! The wing!

(CONTINUED)

268 CONTINUED:

266

BUZZ

All right. All right. I'm coming.

Buzz, near exhaustion, struggles forward again. A stray newspaper wraps around his face, blinding him momentarily. He tears it away and crawls on. The wing is ripping off. He grabs it with both hands and locks his feet into the cockpit, becoming the human glue between wing and plane. His body stretches, causing his pants to ride up, revealing his argyle socks. Hydraulic fluid squirts him in the face. Slowly, his feet slip loose and he and Farnham part company forever.

269 SKY

269

Buzz's chute opens. As he drifts down...

BLOCK

(voice over, from radio)

He did everything humanly possible
to save Farnham's life. Buzz Harley
was a hero.

270 TOPPER

270

These are the words he needed to beat his affliction. He's back
to normal.

271 EXT. BLOCK'S JET

271

Two enemy planes riddle the jet with cannon fire. Bullet after
bullet. James Caan took less hits in "The Godfather." Blood
gushes from the holes in the fuselage.

272 INT. BLOCK'S JET

272

The windshield is shattered. The cockpit a sieve. He grabs his
shoulder. It's the only wound. And a minor scratch at that.

TOPPER

(voice over, from radio)

Block, are you all right?

BLOCK

(into radio)

Yes, yes...give 'em hell!

273 INT. TOPPER'S JET

273

Look of sheer determination in his eyes, he kicks the jet into
high gear.

TOPPER

This is for you, Dad.

(CONTINUED)

273 CONTINUED:

273

He takes aim at an enemy jet, pulls the trigger,...nothing.

TOPPER

Guess I'll have to do it the hard way.

All through the following moves we INTERCUT between Block, Ian, Kowalski, and the Squad -- all taken by Topper's superior flying.

274 SKY

274

The two enemy fighters who shot up Block are closing in on Ian. Topper flies just over and between them. He dips his wings left, then right, slapping the top of the enemy cockpits with the bottoms of his wing tips. The enemies veer off.

275 INT. IAN'S JET

275

Ian is relieved to have them off his tail. Topper flies by Ian. Ian is amazed at Topper's ability to handle the jet.

276 SKY

276

Topper flies in and out between the enemy and his squad. He distracts the enemy pilots by maneuvering his jet into cartwheels and then walks it across the sky on its tail. On the vertical stabilizer of Topper's jet is a bumper sticker which reads "How am I Flying? Call 555-3535".

*
*
*

277 INT. ENEMY COCKPIT

277

The PILOT speaks enemy gibberish, ending with, "Camel, Falafel, Burnoose, Ayatollah!"

278 SKY

278

The enemy jets abandon the hunt for the whole squad, and focus on getting Topper. He ducks behind a cloud. The enemies fly by. Topper's jet peeks around the clouds. He flies after the two jets. Banks his wings into a Six and Twelve o'clock move. Then comes up between them. It scares the shit out of them.

279 INT. RADAR ROOM

279 *

The Commander and all are hearing our own enemy gibberish... an occasional intelligible word tossed in, such as "Ho, boy!" It's obvious to everyone in the Radar Room something spectacular is happening in the skies.

280 INT. IAN'S JET 280 *

IAN
(into radio)
Topper, look out, they're on you!

281 DOGFIGHT 281

Topper is rolling, spinning, zigging and zagging circles around the enemy. Two fighters bank to engage Topper. They bank right into one another.

More enemy fighters take up the scent. Through it Topper is digging through a bunch of junk just behind his seat. He's frantically searching. He tosses aside a tennis racket, baseball glove, moose head, etc. And then seems to have found what he wants.

A fighter takes a shot at Topper. Smoke pours from Topper's cockpit. He's been hit. He starts to spiral to the earth. The enemy planes, confident they have done him in, fly off to take on the rest of Topper's unit.

282 INT. IAN'S JET 282

Ian looking over his shoulder to Topper.

IAN
(into radio)
He's hit. He's been hit! Topper!!

283 BLOCK AND KOWALSKI 283

look on in horror.

284 TOPPER'S JET 284

Out of control.

285 INT. TOPPER'S JET 285

It's all a trick. The smoke is coming from a couple of burgers cooking on a hibachi.

Topper rights the plane, climbs upward, cutting off an enemy jet, which in turn swerves to miss him and plows into another enemy jet.

286 SKY 286

Ten enemy jets ahead and coming his way. Topper hits the brakes. We HEAR screeching tires, and SEE a black skid mark in the thick clouds. Topper brings his jet to a complete stop. Turns. Takes off. All ten in pursuit. Into a cloud bank. We lose sight of them all. They come out. Topper is in the middle of them.

(CONTINUED)

286 CONTINUED: 286

All the enemy pilots frantically pointing at him. Into more thick clouds. They come out of the clouds. The enemies are out in front. Topper is behind them, giving chase. Into the clouds again.

287 TOPPER'S P.O.V. 287

In the thick clouds, visibility is zip.

TOPPER

Wooooo!

288 BACK TO SCENE 288

Twin mountain peaks just ahead.

Topper brings his craft between them. The ten enemies plow into the peaks nose-first.

Topper streaks across the skies, doing victory rolls.

TOPPER

(o.s.)

Aww-haw!

An enemy fighter surprises him, gets off two missiles. The missiles trail Topper.

289 INT. TOPPER'S JET 289

TOPPER

(into radio)

I've got two heat-seeking missiles on my tail.

290 SKY 290

Three other enemy fighters get off missiles. Topper now has six trailing him.

291 INT. TOPPER'S JET 291

TOPPER

(to himself)

I spoke too soon!

292 EXT. TOPPER'S JET 292

Trying to outrace the missiles. Then attempting to shake them off. He wiggles his tail vigorously. It looks like someone shaking their butt. The missiles stay right on him.

293 SKY

293

Topper sees two enemies ahead. He edges his jet to give him more power. It shakes and rattles...but gives him what he wants. In a move reminiscent of the low flying sequence, he flies behind, up and over the two enemy jets. Two of the missiles in pursuit of Topper end up striking the enemy.

That leaves four missiles bearing down on Topper. They seem to be catching up to him. Topper goes into a steep kamikaze dive. The heat-seeking missiles closing in. Topper is heading for the nuclear weapons plant.

294 INT. TOPPER'S JET

294

TOPPER

(into radio)

Block, Ian, Kowalski -- get the hell out of here!

IAN

(voice over, from radio)

You're committing suicide!

TOPPER

(into radio)

Get back to the ship. I got me a nuclear weapons plant to blow up.

BLOCK

(voice over, from radio)

Do as he says.

295 SKY

295

The other jets peel off and head for the carrier.

A296 TOPPER'S JET

A296

He brings his plane down low, as he did in training, the chemical plant in sight. In quick succession he passes the following signs: "Food, Lodging, Nuclear Weapons Plant, 10 Miles", "5 Miles to Nuclear Weapons Plant", "Next Turnoff Nuclear Weapons Plant", "Last Chance! Next Nuclear Weapons Plant 523 Miles", "You Missed It". Topper slaps his forehead and banks his plane, heading back.

B 296 EXT. CHEMICAL PLANT - DAY

B296

A ribbon cutting ceremony. SADDAM HUSSEIN is cutting the ribbon. HE HEARS Topper's jet closing in, and looks up in fear.

296 TOPPER'S JET

296

The missiles are inches from his tail. He's seconds from colliding with the plant. He pulls up at the last second, his craft's belly scraping the rooftop.

(CONTINUED)

296 CONTINUED: 296

The missiles slam into the plant. Topper's jet is lost in the horrific explosion that levels the building.

297 EXT. CARRIER (LATER THAT DAY) 297

The crew looks to the sky, awaiting the return of the Hot Shots. Anxious scanning of the skies. Fire crews at the ready. A Dalmatian bays at the sky.

CREW MEMBER

There they are!!

The ship's company on deck, cheering, waving their caps. Then a collective sudden realization, "Shit, they're going to land where we are standing!" They all run for cover.

Crippled but triumphant, the Freedom Squadron makes its heroic return. As each plane lands, pilots crash heads on windshields. The ship's crew is ecstatic, greeting their heroes. Ian, Kowalski, et al, abort their celebration.

KOWALSKI

Where's, Topper?

They turn their gazes to the sky. Another anxious moment.

298 THEIR P.O.V. 298

Several quiet, anxious moments as they scan the empty skies. Then:

IAN

There he is!

Huge, heroic music. A celestial chorus sings. The remnants of Topper's jet comes into view, a glowing ember with gnarled, smoldering, twisted wings.

299 INT. RADAR ROOM 299

TOPPER

(voice over)

Pencil, Wainscoat, Blowfish.

Permission to land.

WE SEE several guys tearing up. Wash Out is awashed with tears...they stream down his face. His coke bottle glasses have filled with tears. Gold fish swim back and forth within the lenses.

(CONTINUED)

299 CONTINUED:

299

WASH OUT
 (into radio)
 All right, Topper. Ease her in...
 Looks good. Easy...easy. Nose up.
 Doin' fine.

300 FLIGHT DECK

300

All at once Topper's mangled jet drops with a thud onto the deck from above like a sack of rocks. Topper climbs out, unscathed. Big cheers ring out as flyers rush to Topper. *

KOWALSKI
 You're quite a guy.

TOPPER
 So are you.

IAN
 (pointing to Topper)
 You!

TOPPER
 You! *

There is a moment before the two Hot Shots embrace in friendship and respect. As they hug:

TOPPER
 (sincerely)
 I've got a question for you. What's
 a chafing dish? *

The celebration around them continues.

IAN
 It's a traditional serving piece used
 at cocktail parties and brunches for
 keeping food warm.

TOPPER
 I thought that was a crock pot. *

IAN
 No, that's for cooking all day.
 A chafing dish has a silver bracket
 that you put sterno in, and then you
 set a pyrex dish with your entree
 on top... *

301 ANOTHER ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

301

Block's gurney is being loaded onto an awaiting helicopter. Topper rushes to it. A HARDY SAILOR is donating blood via a transfusion to Block.

TOPPER

You're gonna be all right.

BLOCK

I've only seen heroism like that one other time. Perhaps you know the pilot...Leland 'Buzz' Harley...

Topper is touched.

BLOCK

I carried this secret for twenty years. I never spoke up. I wanted him to fail...I wanted to be number one...and I was in love with your mother.

TOPPER

(a new humility)

It's not important now, sir.
Please, save your strength for the court martial.

*

*

The Blood Donor is deflating like a balloon.

BLOCK

Topper, you had me pegged right. I was throwing the big game. I really thought we needed that other airplane.

*

*

He laughs and grimaces.

*

BLOCK

(continuing)

But now I realize that American planes will always be superior as long as they have wonderful men like you in the cockpit, and German parts. And you must believe I had nothing to do with jeopardizing lives. I was such a fool.

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

(chuckles, then grimaces
in pain)

I thought I knew it all.

*

Block points to Wilson and Rosener standing on the flight deck.

(CONTINUED)

301 CONTINUED:

301

BLOCK

(continuing)

It was Wilson and Rosener who
sabotaged the jets. They played
me like a two-bit piccolo.

*
*

Block laughs at himself and then grimaces in pain. Some blood
squirts in the air. He laughs again, then feels pain, then
realizes that his grimaces control the blood squirting, and
this makes him laugh, and then grimace in pain.

*
*
*
*

Topper walks toward Wilson and Rosener, the look of revenge
in his eyes. They know they're in for trouble. Before Topper
reaches them, they break and run. The Commander steps in front
of Wilson.

*
*

COMMANDER

You dare call yourself an American!
It's scum like you that put a taint
on our military. You risked the
lives of some damn fine pilots.
Well, that's my job.

He decks Wilson with a solid shot to the chin.

Wilson stumbles backwards and tumbles down a lot of stairs.
Down every level of the ship...the mess...rec room... laundry...
etc. Several SAILORS, about to climb the stairs, see him. They
stand at attention.

SAILOR ONE

Attention!

Wilson tumbles through. The Sailors walk up the steps.

302 FLIGHT DECK

302

Rosener is running away.

Topper pulls a lever which activates the jet restraining net.
Rosener runs into it. In cartoon-like fashion, it pulls tight,
strains, and sling-shots him into the sunset.

303 WILSON

303

meanwhile falls on and on. Last stair, he bounces up and ends
seated in a dentist's chair, just as a SAILOR WITH A BAD TOOTH
is about to sit down. The DENTIST turns and begins to drill
Wilson's teeth with a humongous drill.

304 FLIGHT DECK

304

More congratulations to Topper. The Commander shakes his hand.

(CONTINUED)

304 CONTINUED: 304

COMMANDER
Good job, son. Anybody see a hat
out there? About my size?

305 ANGLE ON ROWBOAT - SEVERAL DAYS LATER 305

We are CLOSE on two men fishing quietly. CAMERA PULLS BACK to
REVEAL...

The S.S. Essess pulls into dock.

306 BRIDGE 306

The Commander and the Captain look to the festivities on the
dock. The Captain's hordes of decorations are flashing like
sequential Christmas tree lights.

307 DOCK 307

A MILITARY BAND greets them with "Stars and Stripes Forever."
A CHEERING THROG throws confetti.

308 SHIP'S DECK 308

Topper and the squad, looking smart in their dress whites, wave
to the crowd.

309 EXT. SHIP 309

First off the ship is Wilson, nursing a swollen jaw as he
sneaks down the gangplank. *

310 OMITTED 310

311 FLIGHT DECK 311

The ship's company races for the gangplank. Topper stays back.

312 EXT. SHIP 312

The crew rushes down the plank to be reunited with loved ones.
One PORTLY SAILOR gets up a good head of steam coming down the
steep incline and bowls his FAMILY over.

Kowalski runs past an incredibly handsome MAN, and bends over *

to pick up her special man, who turns out to be Admiral Hahn. *

She greets him gleefully, and lifts him up for a kiss. *

ADMIRAL HAHN *

Oh, Dawn... *

Wash Out meets his WOMAN.

TWO COLLIES are reunited.

A313 DOCK

A313

Wilson is getting into his car.

B313 BRIDGE

B313

VOICE OVER INTERCOM
Commander Benson, your jeep is
here.

CLOSE UP on two adjacent buttons. One says "INTERCOM" and the other says "DROP ANCHOR". The Commander inadvertently pushes the "DROP ANCHOR" button and speaks into a nearby heating duct.

COMMANDER
Thank you.

C313 DOCK

C313

The ship drops anchor, and crunches Wilson's car.

D313 EXT. SHIP

D313

A MAN WITH A BIG BEARD is holding a THREE YEAR OLD CHILD who is eating cotton candy. In the excitement, the Child takes a bite of the Man's beard.

(CONTINUED)

D313 CONTINUED:

D 313

A SAILOR is pushing a WOUNDED SHIPMATE in his wheelchair, down the gangplank. The Pusher sees his family, lets go of the wheelchair and waves. The Wounded Sailor flies hell bent into the crowd.

A MAN is using a periscope-type device to see over the heads in the Crowd. He lowers the periscope to REVEAL his eyes are in a single vertical slit on his face.

313 ANGLE ON THE COMMANDER

313

The Commander gets into his waiting staff car.

COMMANDER
Slide over, I'll drive.

The DRIVER lets the Commander behind the wheel.

COMMANDER
(to Driver)
Well, Rabinowitz, mission
accomplished. I've been at sea too
long. God, it feels great to get
my feet back on dry land.

He throws it in gear. Looks over his shoulder in preparation to back up. He lays a patch of rubber and drives forward off the end of the pier.

COMMANDER
(o.s.)
Sweet Jesus!

He's history.

314 ANGLE ON TOPPER

314

Standing next to his plane, he scans the crowd, looking for Ramada. He sees her making her way through the throng. He smiles. His heart soars.

A315 DOCK

A315

Ramada is running, making her way to the ship. Ian spots her, takes her by the arm.

IAN
Ramada!

He takes her in his arms. Gives her a kiss.

B315 TOPPER

B315

Sees Ramada and Ian embracing. His heart sinks. He's sure he's lost the only woman he's ever loved. He heads for his jet.

315 DOCK

315

Ramada is anxious to get to the carrier and see Topper.

IAN

Ramada, you must put me out of your mind. There's a certain flyboy on board that ship that needs you far more than I. Forget me.

RAMADA

I will. No problem.

She heads for the ship. He's still holding onto her arm. She is literally dragging him along. Finally, her coat comes off in his hand.

IAN

Please, not a tear.

He lets go. She runs to the ship. He calls out to her.

IAN

Don't look back!

Ain't no way this lady is going to give him a second look. Her head is down and she is digging hard for the ship.

IAN

That's the brave girl.
(aside, to camera)
She masks her hurt so well.

Ramada runs up the gangplank.

IAN

Don't worry, little one. As long as I have me, I'll survive.

A316 OMITTED

A316

316 TOPPER'S JET

316

The engines burst into life and he starts down the flight deck.

Ramada sees him leaving. She gives chase, waving her arms, her eyes filled with tears.

RAMADA

Topper...wait...!

317 INT. TOPPER'S JET 317

He checks his rearview mirror and SEES Ramada waving.

318 FLIGHT DECK 318

Topper's jet suddenly screeches to a halt, inches from the end of the carrier. WE HEAR a grinding of gears as he throws it in reverse. The plane begins backing up to the approaching Ramada. She jumps up on the wing as he opens his canopy. They embrace.

She climbs in behind him and together they rise into a magenta sky to the strains of the "Theme from Exodus." As his jet barrel rolls and disappears into the sky, WE SUPERIMPOSE the faces of all the squad members who died in combat. Big smiles. "Everything's fine in Heaven" looks. They are followed by the faces of Elvis, Billy Martin and Abe Lincoln.

FADE OUT

THE END