

"HOT SHOTS!"

An Important Movie

Screenplay by

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and

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REVISED FIRST DRAFT
September 24, 1990

"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" CHARLIE, a ruggedly handsome Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. Riding behind in 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! Charlie!

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 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 figure in a parachute eject and 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 a 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 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. FOUR DEER HUNTERS enter frame and open fire, blowing Farnham away.

HUNTER ONE
Good sized buck.
(to his dog)
Go get 'em, Tighe!

The dog gleefully bounds through the brush. Stops dead in his tracks when he sees Farnham. Tighe turns away in

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

disgust, his face registering, "Ooo." He throws up behind a rock. The Hunters arrive. Stunned at their kill. HUNTER TWO bends over Farnham.

HUNTER ONE

Is that a deer?

HUNTER TWO

(warily)
Better check his wallet and find out.

CUT TO:

12 CREDITS BEGIN

12

The music is clean, important -- Rock. The look is clean, important, high tech. For all we know this could be a Simpson-Bruckheimer production. We are EXTREMELY CLOSE ON:

FRONT OF LEATHER JACKET

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.

CUT TO:

13 INT. GENERAL MAXWELL WILSON'S OFFICE - DAY

13

TV footage. WE ARE TOO CLOSE ON MONITOR to know where we are. Just enough hints -- a shoulder clad in military attire, a Purple Heart sitting atop the television set. The TV picture is of CONNIE CHUNG making a speech.

CONNIE CHUNG

(voice over, from
TV)

...once again the President has implored Congress to take a hard bipartisan look at the swelling deficit and trim equally from both defense and social funding. He continued to say...

CUT TO:

14 MORE ZIPPERS

14

Shoulders, breasts, then a leather pant leg. It runs from the knee to the ankle. Zip.

CUT TO:

15 INT. WILSON'S OFFICE - DAY

15

TV again. This time we have PRESIDENT BUSH addressing the nation.

PRESIDENT BUSH
(voice over, from
TV)

...and it is in this spirit I have asked the Secretary of Defense to compile a list of all air weaponry currently scheduled to go into production for the purpose of possible cancellation.

WE WIDEN to include a hand as it snaps off a TV remote control.

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.

CUT TO:

17 INT. GENERAL WILSON'S OFFICE

17

Despite the fact WE ARE TIGHT ENOUGH TO READ the headline of the newspaper he's reading, we can definitely make out this is a military guy now. The headline reads:

"STALEMATE ON ARMS CUT OFFICIALS SAY
Northwell vs. McDouglas
Jet Fighter Battle Heats Up"

CUT TO:

18 LAST ZIP

18

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

Finally, a man's fly, very snug. But it makes it and CLEARS FRAME, REVEALING a beautiful WOMAN lying alone in bed in a motor home.

WOMAN
Will you be back?

TOPPER
(o.s.)
I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

WOMAN

You're no good, Topper. You never have been. I could tell that the first time I looked at you. You're the kind people are always doing favors for. And all you do is hurt them in return. You threw away an Air Force career with that attitude. Why they'd want you back I have no idea. Everybody you touch you hurt. Your friends. Even yourself. Oh, I suppose you can't help it. You're just no good, Topper.

*
*
*

CLOSE ON A LARGE METAL ZIPPER TAB

It unzips the trailer door, which drops out onto the ground.

TOPPER

(o.s.)

So, what are you getting at?

She's disappointed, but what can she do. Like so many before her, she's hopelessly in love.

CUT TO:

19 A TABLE

19

WE HEAR a door open. Footsteps approach. A newspaper is slammed down. The headline reads:

"5 BILLION DOLLAR JET CONTRACT
AWARDED TO MCDUGLAS
President To Cut Funding Of Northwell's
Quantar Gentrum Super Fighter"

WILSON

(o.s.)

Gentlemen, I've reevaluated the situation. You have my cooperation. I can no longer stand idly by and watch our country lose every strategic advantage.

WIDER ANGLE

We are in a shrouded war 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)

19 CONTINUED:

19

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 GENERAL WILSON'S speech.

WILSON

I've just been in the Situation Room with the President. He has given the go ahead for Operation Gerbil Munch. We're going after Khadafi's chemical weapons plant. The Navy is assembling the elite Hot Shot flying unit as we speak. It's the ideal setup for us.

SUCIK

Welcome aboard, General. We couldn't have asked for better timing.

HEMAK

Gerbil Munch carries the highest security classification. How do we infiltrate this thing?

WILSON

If we're going to do business together, please try not to be insulting. Of course, one of the officers is with us. His loyalty is unquestioned.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. TRAILER - DAY

20

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

WILSON

(voice over)

And as a fail safe measure we've put the last cog in the plan. We've reinstated Buzz Charlie's son, Topper. He's just like his old man...the best flyer in the world...with a personality profile to guarantee the failure of Gerbil Munch. In six weeks, gentlemen, Congress will come crawling to us on its hands and knees to finance our little airplane.

20A ANGLE ON TOPPER

20A *

as he heads for his red Harley, parked at the curb. Heads turn. A Woman slips him a note. Another her house key. He flashes that award winning smile. A Man working on his car waves to Topper. The Man gets hit in the head by a wrench handed to him by a Friend. A Second Friend shoves a funnel into the unconscious First Man's ear and is starting to pour oil into it.

Topper fires up his bike and takes off at blinding speed, causing several People to spin like so many weathervanes.

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.

21
thru
54

OMITTED

21
thru
54

55 EXT. DUDLEY AIR FORCE BASE - DAY (ESTABLISHING SHOT)

55

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.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

COMMANDER

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

He turns to go again.

BLOCK

But sir, this is your command. Gerbil Munch 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 Harley, Topper passes a sign that
READS, "DUDLEY AIR FORCE BASE, 2 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., 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. 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.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

CLOSEUP ON MAP OF LIBYA

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.

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

I don't have a clue what you're talking about, Jim. 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. Why don't you just have a seat over there and I'll have the mess hall bring something up...

COMMANDER

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?

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2)

61

BLOCK

Nothing, Sir. Why are you speaking so loudly?

COMMANDER

I'm excited, Jim. Very excited.

BLOCK

(into phone)

Send up some soup for the Commander on the double.

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 Gerbil Munch one more time.

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

53

The jet taxis to a stop. The name "SUGAR THIGHS" 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.

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 hair, square shouldered, square jawed. Jet pilot extraordinaire. He goes by the book. The consummate team player. And great guy. A narcissist -- and all man.

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

M.P.'s man the checkpoint. Very officious. They check credentials. Raise the arm blocking the entrance. The vehicle drives through. Topper pulls up. The gate is raised for him. It catches an M.P. under his chin, knocking him out. Topper drives onto the base.

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.

68A PARADE GROUNDS 68A

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

ANGLE ON SQUAD

calling out cadence.

DRILL SERGEANT
Left...Right. Left...Right.
Starve a fever.

*

(CONTINUED)

68A CONTINUED:

68A

SQUAD

Feed a cold.

DRILL SERGEANT

To err is human.

SQUAD

To forgive divine.

DRILL SERGEANT

I had a little dradle... *

SQUAD

I made it out of clay. *

DRILL SERGEANT

And when it's dry and ready. *

SQUAD

And dradle I will play...! *

Topper stops at the base PX.

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.

Topper enters and exchanges a few warm greetings. 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, who 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

Are you okay?

WASH OUT

Fine. Sure, I'm okay.

71 ANGLE ON THE BUNK NEXT TO TOPPER

71

PETE "DEAD MEAT" JOHNSON, 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 a tune 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.

TOPPER
Love's too heavy. It strangles me.
I'm too complex to have anyone
hanging all over me. Love's an
anchor that drowns a man.

DEAD MEAT
A loner.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

TOPPER

No. I got the sky. I got the smell
of jet exhaust...

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

TOPPER

My toothbrush, TV Guide, rabbit's
foot, 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 Johnson.
But everyone calls me 'Dead Meat.'

TOPPER

Sean Charlie. Everyone calls me
Topper.

72 ANGLE ON IAN

72

who recognizes the name. He clenches his fists. *

73 BACK TO SCENE

73

Wash Out comes over. He is a very impressionable eager
beaver, baby faced, all-American type. Topper is an idol.

WASH OUT

The real name's Jim Pfaffenbach,
but everyone calls me Wash Out.
I've heard you've got chops the rest
of us only dream of. Throwing you
out was a bum rap.

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. Others of the squad come over,
introduce themselves to Dead Meat and Topper. Topper
greeted them amiably. Among the names we hear:

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

SPREGGS

Harold Spreggs, but everyone calls me, 'Scooter.'

RATLIFF

Chris Ratliff, but everyone calls me 'Rainbow.'

Other nicknames given, Skipper, Cappy, Jonesy, etc. Then:

JOHNSON

The name's Showboat Ice Man, but everyone calls me Johnson.

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 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, boy?

KOWALSKI

No, sir.

Herring steps up, nose to nose with her.

HERRING

What's your name, Mister?

KOWALSKI

Kowalski, sir.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (2)

73

HERRING

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

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 this low-life is God as far as you're concerned. Now drop and give me fifty!

ANGLE ON DOOR

Block enters.

VOICE

(o.s.)

Attenhut!

Everyone snaps to attention. Block has saved Wash Out his ordeal.

BLOCK

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

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

(CONTINUED)

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 break the rules and you'll be tossed out like any wet nosed rookie. I expect total cooperation. A team spirit.

ANGLE ON TOPPER

enjoying the show.

TOPPER

(under his breath)

Rah rah!

Let's out a little laugh. Herring turns to him.

HERRING

Just who the hell are you?

TOPPER

Lieutenant Charlie. Topper Charlie.

Jan can hardly contain his rage.

HERRING

Any relation to Buzz Charlie?

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. 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, Charlie. 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. Charlie. But don't let me hear a repeat of this performance. I am only so patient with my men. That's all, Captain...

He exits.

HERRING

Remember, I'm not as gentle as the Lieutenant Commander. I'm gonna be all over you like piss on a pant leg. Your libido is making mortgage payments that would choke a horse. Screw up...just once...and the whole squadron takes it for you. 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?

He turns to Ian and extends his hand.

TOPPER

We were just saying hello...

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.

A dramatic pause. Topper's walls of defense go up again.

TOPPER

It was a hunting accident.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (3)

74

IAN

Accident my deep blue eyes. It was reckless, irresponsible flying. *

DEAD MEAT

What's that got to do with Topper?

IAN

(to Topper)

Like father, like son. He's already been tossed out once. He's the type who could end up killing every man in this outfit! *

TOPPER

So why don't I start with you...

DEAD MEAT

We're brothers here. We can't fight among ourselves.

IAN

(emotionally)

I can't forgive this man. Dominic Farnham was my father. I was his love child.

He pulls out a locket. Pops it open. A music box version of "Dance Ballerina Dance" comes from the locket. WE SEE a picture of Farnham's head, complete with helmet, branches and mask, obviously mounted above a mantle in a lodge.

Everyone is profoundly touched, but 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.

As you may imagine, this is a most profound moment.

WASH OUT

When it happened he was devastated. Since that day, neither he nor anyone in my family has eaten venison.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (4)

74

IAN

Maybe we should finish this thing
some other time.

DEAD MEAT

Oh no, you won't. Shake hands.
Come on.

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. We're friends again.

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

DEAD MEAT

Feel better?

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

TOPPER
Sure!!!

IAN
Yesssssss!!

75 ANGLE ON HERRING

75

entering.

HERRING

All right. Let's move it! Double
time to Building Forty-three for
medical evaluation. Go! Go! Go!

*
*

As the squad charges out of the barracks, 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.

*

Topper walks away.

DEAD MEAT

He's so complex.

75A INT. BASE PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM 75A *
 Topper is leafing through the swim suit edition of
Psychology Today. *

FEMALE VOICE

(o.s.)

Next.

Topper doesn't think much about this psychiatrist stuff. *
 He opens the door. *

75B INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE 75B *
 The office chair swivels around, REVEALING an acre of well *
 formed thigh. Again it's that vision of loveliness, the *
 luscious Ramada. *

TOPPER

Hey, you're full of surprises.

RAMADA

(sarcastic)

Enjoy the view?

TOPPER

Yeah...I'm thinking about building
 right here on the spot. Those are
 some long legs.

RAMADA

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

TOPPER

Ooo.

RAMADA

That will be enough, Lieutenant.
 I'm in charge of psychiatric
 testing here for the Navy. You've
 been sent to me because of your
 history of insubordination. *

TOPPER *

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

He sits. WE HEAR a dog yelp.

REVEAL a small dog sitting on his chair. He picks up the
 dog and puts it on the floor. Ramada has been going over
 his file.

RAMADA *

I've been reviewing your records.
 I'd like to talk about your father.

(CONTINUED)

75B CONTINUED:

75B

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. *

ANGLE ON TOPPER'S FINGERS

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

RAMADA

(reading)

This incident, the Dominic Farnham death, occurred on...uh...July sixteenth, nineteen seventy-one. *

Topper begins to perspire. His heartbeats become increasingly irregular.

RAMADA

Shortly after that...a court martial...dishonorable discharge...his Visa credit limit was reduced...

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.

He drops the chair arms.

RAMADA

(cautiously)

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

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

TOPPER

I thought you'd never ask. Why don't you add up my score and tell me what I got here.

(CONTINUED)

75B CONTINUED: (2)

75B

RAMADA

So far, you haven't scored at all.

He snickers. She won.

TOPPER

See you around.

He exits. She's concerned. *

ANGLE ON TOPPER'S FILE

She rummages through a pile of rubber stamps, selects the right one and slams it down, next to the heading "DIAGNOSIS" it READS: "PATERNAL CONFLICT SYNDROME." *

76 INT. BRIEFING ROOM

76

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. The crotch of the Commander's pants is wet. Those seated at the table stand up, their heads go into the overhead lampshade. WE HEAR the pop as heads meet and destroy the light bulbs.

COMMANDER

At ease, men.

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

COMMANDER

What I wouldn't give to be twenty years younger...and a woman. Men, and I think I can call you that, 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.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

76

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. Good luck men.

He starts to exit.

HERRING

Attention!

The commander stops, stands rigid at attention.

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

Your training will be long, and hard.

DISSOLVE TO:

77 INT. GYM

77

BLOCK

(voice over)

Your bodies will be honed to perfection.

Wash Out takes a long run, about to mount the balance beam, but misjudges and rams into it with his chest.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

The Commander and Herring are not pleased. Herring makes a notation. WE SEE Wash Out has been getting extremely low marks in everything. Block is more sympathetic.

Topper chalks up his hands, lots of rosin. Then with cue chalk he does the tips of every finger. Ready now. He vaults onto the parallel bars. Does a dazzling display.

A lot of twisting and spinning in the air. One handed stuff. Really impressive. Dismounts with great style and attitude. Topper looks to Ian with a "top that" look.

Ian, confident he can, does a floor exercise, the kind women do with the streamers. Recorded show tune music underscores it. Very inappropriate, but very good. The Commander, Herring and Block are incredibly impressed. Ian is showered with roses. *

78 OMITTED

78 *

79 EXTREME CLOSEUP - DEAD MEAT

79

In full gear, g-forces building on him as he does intricate maneuvers.

BLOCK

(voice over)

Your training will enable you to withstand the rigors of piloting your aircraft to the limit of your tolerance.

80 ANGLE ON DEAD MEAT

80

in the lead car of a roller coaster at Magic Mountain. Seated behind him are the GENERAL PUBLIC. The car comes to a stop. Waiting with the Public is the rest of the squad, ready for their turn.

81 PICTURESQUE BEACH - DAY

81

BLOCK

(voice over)

At the end of the first four weeks, you will be in perfect mental and physical condition.

The squad running gracefully in the shallow water. All but Wash Out. He shakes his head. Oops, Walleye Vision strikes again.

82 WASH OUT'S P.O.V.

82

The Squad looks distorted.

83 BACK TO SCENE

83

Before he can reach for his medicine, Wash Out smacks face first into a pier post. The theme from "Chariots of Fire" underscores the action. It turns into a competition between the two men out front, Topper and Ian. Ian pours on the steam, leaving Topper behind. Topper catches up to him and passes him, while running backward. Ian catching up. But, "Yeow!" A crab has latched onto his big toe. He keeps running, but as he does, tries to shake the unwanted critter from his body. Finally succeeds. After a few yards the beach becomes very crowded. Hundreds of BEACH GOERS jam onto every inch of sand. Loud "ghetto blasters" all but drown out our score. The squad has to dodge frisbees and dogs. Wash Out runs head first into a surfboard that is being carried by a SURFER. Our guys tiptoe through garbage and used hypodermic needles. Oil rigs jam the harbor. Everywhere you look a platform sits in the sea. We next encounter an "Exxholes" oil tanker.

For some time now it has sat dead in the water, hung up on a reef. It is split in half, oil gushing out of its side. Our joggers are now up to their ankles in gooey, sticky oil. Trying the best they can to continue their run.

BLOCK

(voice over)

Now you're ready for the sky.

84 EXT. HANGAR - DAY

84

The Squad's eyes light up. REVEAL the jets sitting on the runway. The sun glistening off the wing tips.

BLOCK

You will be piloting the newest member of a proud American arsenal, the Oscar E W fifty-eight-ninety-four, attack fighter and bomber. Range thirty five hundred miles, ceiling tops off around sixty thousand feet. Bomb capacity twelve thousand pounds. Fully computerized avionics.

85 ANGLE ON A SHOWROOM MODEL

85

styling to all the features.

BLOCK

(C.S.)

The latest Mrs. Halvers radar system, and the series thirty-eight hundred radar jamming devise, 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.

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. A sun roof opens up. 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.

89 JETS 89

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

90 INT. CONTROL TOWER 90

The Commander, Herring and Ramada look on. Ramada is carrying a clipboard, making careful notes. 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 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 Gerbil Munch 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 drops altitude. WE SEE Ian, Dead Meat, Topper, and Wash Out do the same.

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.

BLOCK

(voice over, from radio)

Excellent flying, Gentlemen. Return to twenty thousand feet. Topper, that was vintage Buzz Charlie.

*

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.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED:

98

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

Shutting out the world, he flips off his radic 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.

98A INT. TOWER

98A *

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)
 Hi. This is Topper Charlie. 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.

KOWALSKI
 (voice over, from
 radio)
 Topper! For god's sake, you're
 supposed to be part of a team!

IAN
 (into radio)
 Moves like that could get us all
 killed.

100 INT. TOPPER'S JET 100

WE SEE the answer machine in his cockpit.

IAN
(voice over, from
the tape machine)
Bring it up!

Beep tone sounds, cutting him off. Topper isn't listening. He's chomping excitedly on his gum. He blows a bubble. It bursts against his visor without obscuring his vision.

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.

103 INT. BLOCK'S JET 103

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

104 INT. 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.

104A INT. TOWER 104A *

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. TOPHER'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.	
114A	INT. TOWER	114A
	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.

116A INT. HALLWAY - TWO ELEVATOR DOORS

116A *

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. GENERAL HAHN, a midget in dress uniform, shoulders his way through the crowd and exits the elevator. *

GENERAL HAHN *

Thank you.

(pointing down the
hall)

Oh, Don...

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

(CONTINUED)

116A CONTINUED:

116A

RAMADA *

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 Def Leppard.

(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? *

RAMADA *

You walk him and pitch to the rhino. (fervently)

Don't you 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 recommend that you be grounded. *

TOPPER *

Listen, Doctor. Flying is my life. I've been given a second chance with this mission...and you can't take it away from me. *

Topper exits the elevator. Ramada is perplexed. *

117 OMITTED

117 *

118 INT. BOXING ARENA - NIGHT

118

TWO HEAVYWEIGHTS are in the late rounds of a slugfest. They've both taken an incredible beating. Each power packed punch results in a spray of sweat and blood.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

118

ANGLE ON RING SIDE SEATS

Block is barely watching the match, checking his watch and anxiously glancing at the empty seat next to him

VOICE

(o.s.)

Colonel Block. We meet at last.
It's an honor.

*

Settling into the next seat is his co-conspirator... General Wilson. During the course of the scene, each of them is splattered by a spray of blood from the ring.

WILSON

How are we doing at Dudley?

BLOCK

Right on schedule. Topper Charlie'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, the Eisenhowers, both Dwight and Mamie. They're years away from a vaccine for that.

BLOCK

The mere mention of his father's name will set him off. He'll lose control. The unit's cohesiveness will be destroyed and I'll abort the mission. And nobody gets hurt. Blame will be assessed to outclassed and underequipped aircraft and the Quantar gets funding.

WILSON

You are totally confident?

BLOCK

I'm staking my career on this, sir.

WILSON

Well done, Colonel. Excellent.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (2) 118

They smile smugly. Then they're drenched by an exaggerated bucket of blood.

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 LIVE SINGER is seated at the piano, doing his rendition of "New York, New York..." *

SINGER

Those little town Jews,
Sit readin' th: news.
And then they walk off in
Them little brown shoes.
New York, New York...

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.

At the pool table, an incredibly skillful Ian is putting on a clinic as he polishes off an opponent. He sinks a couple of fancy shots for an appreciative audience. The finale winds up with the cue ball popping into the air and landing in his pocket.

121 ANGLE ON RAMADA 121

She steps up to Ian.

RAMADA

Ian. Darling!

He embraces her. He swings her around. Her legs and the briefcase she carries knock over several men and 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?

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

IAN

Ramada! I'd heard you were on base. I couldn't believe it. These last four weeks have been hell without you. Tell me everything.

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 at Dudley, I felt I had a patriotic duty.

IAN

I'm so proud of you.

RAMADA

There's more good news. I tested negative.

IAN

That's wonderful!
(to the room)
Hey everybody! 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.

121A INT. BAR - THE PIANO (LATER)

121A *

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. She swings around and one of her spike heels enters the Piano Player's mouth, causing a bulge in his cheek. *

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

(CONTINUED)

121A

CONTINUED:

121A

ANGLE ON FRONT DOOR *

Topper enters. He's equally enthralled. He finds an empty chair near the stage and sits. We HEAR a dog yelp. He jumps up and removes the dog. Sits again. *

ANGLE ON RAMADA *

As she swings around to face the piano player, her heel comes out of the pianist's cheek with an accompanying "pop". *

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? *

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

Ramada moves to Topper, 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 and 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 the Pianist'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 coincides with her final note. *

Big applause as Ramada takes a bow and moves to the bar. *

122

ANGLE ON RAMADA

122

as she sits some distance from the pool table where Ian is polishing off another victim. *

GENERAL HAHN *

(O.S.)
Beer, please.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

Ramada looks around. The Bartender sets a beer on the bar. A hand emerges from the bottom of the FRAME and takes the beer. *

GENERAL HAHN *

(o.s.)

Thank you.

The hand reaches up and sets money on the bar. Ramada spots him. *

GENERAL HAHN *

(o.s.)

Keep the change.

(a beat)

Oh, Don...

Topper walks up. *

TOPPER *

So, you sing too. *

RAMADA *

Right now, it's just a hobby. Since I won a Tony for 'A Chorus Line.' nothing much has interested me. *

TOPPER *

I shouldn't have gotten mad in the elevator today. I know you have a job to do, too. It's just when I want something that bad, I get all fired up. Maybe it's the Chippewa in me. Can I buy you a drink? What's your poison? *

Topper is starting to work his magic on Ramada. *

RAMADA

Arsenic.

TOPPER

(to Bartender)

Bartender. An arsenic for the lady. I'll have a strychnine. Straight up.

RAMADA

I am sorry about the evaluation. What I did was for your own good as well as the unit's. Things like that aren't easy for me. Sometimes *

(MORE) *

(CONTINUED)

RAMADA (Cont'd)

I guess it doesn't 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.

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?

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 didn't endanger you
or any of the squad. 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

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED: (3)

122

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 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?

TOPPER

Fine.

(to Ian)

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

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. It turns into a mini production number.

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
runs the table, making difficult shots.
- B. TOPPER
counters deftly, getting into any number of weird positions, cue behind his back, between his legs -- a contortionist would be envious.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

123

- C. IAN AND TOPPER
Shirts are off, torsos glistening as the battle continues.
- D. IAN
sinks a few shots, then misses.
- E. TOPPER TAKES OVER
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. Topper is obviously doing this for Ramada's benefit and the effort is not lost on her.
- F. IAN
is totally nonplussed. Ramada is totally enraptured.
- G. 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.
End MONTAGE.

IAN
I've seen better.

124 EXT. BAR - LATER

124

Patrons are filing out. Ian turns to Ramada.

IAN
I'll see you tomorrow night.

RAMADA
You're going home?

IAN
I have to be back at the base.
Tomorrow's flight is very important.
I can't break training.

He kisses her gently.

IAN
Tomorrow then.

He leaves. She starts to walk home. Topper approaches.

TOPPER
(gesturing forward)
May I?

(CONTINUED)

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. The offer still stands. 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.

RAMADA

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.
(self-effacingly)
When I was at the Rand Corporation, they actually forced me to take a vacation -- a Princess Cruise to Utah. But even then I couldn't seem to unwind. I was on the phone to NASA every day.

TOPPER

How did Ian take it?

RAMADA

Ian? Ian wasn't there. He thinks he owns me, 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. *

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: (2)

124

TOPPER

There you go again. *

RAMADA

But I... *

He lovingly clamps her lips shut with his fingers. *

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.

TOPPER

I don't want to go back.

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 APARTMENT - NIGHT

125

Topper and Ramada enter. Very high tech, modern, Memphisy furniture. One chair in particular looks very weird -- sexual.

RAMADA
(referring to the
chair)
Think of the possibilities.

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. *

MOMENTS LATER

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.

RAMADA
Is this going to hurt?

TOPPER
No.

RAMADA
Then why are we doing it?

Here she comes. Slowly, erotically approaching our guy.

DISSOLVE TO:

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.

(CONTINUED)

125 CONTINUED:

125

- 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.
- 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:

125A EXT. RAMADA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NEXT MORNING

125A

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 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 AIR BASE - DAWN

127

The bugler calls another day.

128 INT. BARRACKS

128

Herring snaps on the lights. Rousts the guys. Block enters.

HERRING

This is it! Scramble for the skies. Move it!!

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED:

128

Ian takes off his sleeping mask. *

HERRING *

Today we take each other on! Let's
give them a show they'll never
forget.

The men hustle to get dressed. Herring notices Topper's
bunk is empty. *

HERRING *

Where's Topper?

DEAD MEAT

(covering for him)

In the shower, sir.

HERRING *

Five minutes.

He exits. Herring keeps stirring the men up. Dead Meat is
concerned for Topper. He never came back from the bar.
Ian, busy tweezing his eyebrows, has overheard the
conversation. Each hair plucked is accompanied by a
"ping."

IAN

If he isn't here in time for takeoff
he's out. It's the best thing that
could happen. Who took my eyebrow
pencil?! *

He puts on his scarf. The breeze kicks up again. He
exits. Dead Meat quickly hustles out of the barracks.

129 EXT. BARRACKS

129

Dead Meat sees Wash Out exiting from headquarters. He
carries his duffel bag. He's forlorn, lost.

DEAD MEAT

What are you doing? 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.

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

129

Dead Meat winces sympathetically.

DEAD MEAT

Isn't there something that can be done?

WASH OUT

Well, there's a delicate corneal inversion procedure, multiopitipupilopty, 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's not here. I'm afraid he's AWOL. As soon as Block finds out, he's a goner.

WASH OUT

But he's the best flyer we've got.

Dead Meat searches his pockets. Wash Out is concerned for Topper.

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!

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

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

130

DEAD MEAT

You here to watch me fly?

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Yes. They let all of us astronauts off early today. It's Dan Quayle's birthday.

DEAD MEAT

Terrific.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

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

DEAD MEAT

Wonderful. When do we move in?

MRS. DEAD MEAT

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

DEAD MEAT

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.

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. LEAD MEAT

I have a pen right here.

Ian is pleased by her persistence.

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED: (2)

130

DEAD MEAT

Ach, there'll be plenty of time for that later.

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

How?

DEAD MEAT

I'll tell you later. Ah, and about this S and L and HUD thing.

(slaps his forehead)

It was so obvious...the answer has been right in front of my nose for months.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

Tell me!

DEAD MEAT

Not now, Lovey-Bumpers. When I get back. *

Ian can't believe this.

DEAD MEAT

And my investigation into the assassination of JFK...

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.

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED: (3)

130

DEAD MEAT

It'll be safe right here. It's not going anywhere.

He gives her a playful chuck on the chin.

Ian is beside himself.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

(lovingly)

We just couldn't be any more perfectly happy.

He kisses her. Ian throws up his hands in disgust.

131 ANGLE ON HERRING

131

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.

Dead Meat is glad to see Topper made it.

131A ANGLE ON COCKPIT

131A

It's Wash Out covering for Topper.

132 EXT. HANGAR

132

The squad gets into their jets. For the first time, Dead Meat climbs aboard without his good luck gum.

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...

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

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!

INTERCUT BETWEEN:

134 THE COMMANDER

134

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

COMMANDER

(into mic)

Those of you that excel during these aerial combat exercises will go on to make up the greatest fighting unit ever assembled. God speed. God love you. God keep 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.

CONTROL TOWER

AIR CONTROLLER

(into mic)

Topper, keep that nose up.

(aside)

He's never done that before.

The jet streaks into the sky.

137 OMITTED 137

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.

140 SKY 140

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

141 INT. WASH OUT'S JET 141

He listens to Block.

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 150

Topper pulls up on his motorcycle. He sees the jets in the sky. He recognizes Mrs. Dead Meat from her pictures.

TOPPER
Mrs. Dead Meat?

MRS. DEAD MEAT
Yes?

TOPPER
I'm Topper Charlie.

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED:

150

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

TOPPER
 How long have they been up there?

MRS. DEAD MEAT
 A couple of minutes.

TOPPER
 Damn.

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 a bogey 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.

155 INT. BLACK'S JET

155

Alarmed.

BLOCK
 (into radio)
 Topper, pull up!

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED: 155

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

INTERCUT BETWEEN:

156 IAN, KOWALSKI, TOPPER AND MRS. DEAD MEAT 156

watching the following:

157 DEAD MEAT'S COCKPIT 157

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.

157A WASH OUT 157A

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 DEAD MEAT'S P.O.V. 164

Nose diving to the ground. A figure is on a mountaintop. It's a Julie Andrews look-alike from "Sound of Music." She pirouettes gracefully. Stops in horror. She hits the dirt, avoiding being hit by Dead Meat's jet.

165 OPEN FIELD ON DUDLEY AIR FORCE BASE 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

Horrified. The ambulance and fire trucks 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. 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.

ANGLE ON AMBULANCE DRIVER

DRIVER

(sheepishly)

Oh, shit.

169 EXT. AMBULANCE

169

A PARAMEDIC gets out of the passenger side and retrieves Dead Meat, pulling him up just as Topper arrives.

Topper cradles Dead Meat in his arms. 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

For God's sake get my friend to the hospital.

The first time he's used the word, "friend." He carries Dead Meat to the rear of the ambulance. As the ambulance doors are opened, they hit Dead Meat on the head again. As Topper is about to put Dead meat into the ambulance, one of the doors is closed by the Driver and Topper 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.

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 a K Mart parking lot. *

170A THE K MART

170A

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. Wallpaper is stuck to him. A Security Guard fires away at him. He's dragged up and down a series of steps. Crossing a highway now. Almost to the other side when 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 cradles Dead Meat's head.

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED:

171

TOPPER
It's Topper. Dead Meat...

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 listens to a barely audible whisper from Dead Meat. He takes the cigarette out of his mouth.

PARAMEDIC
He doesn't smoke.

TOPPER
Oh. He's going to be all right,
isn't he?

PARAMEDIC
Certainly. He's in good shape.
He should bounce back in no time.

TOPPER
You hear that, Dead Meat? You hear
that?

In the b.g., the Paramedic is making the hangman gesture to the Driver. The guy's a goner.

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. WE SEE the parachute billow up behind the ambulance. 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 piccata.

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. 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. As they pass another gurney, Dead Meat's head is klunked into the head of another patient.

TOPPER

Doctor!

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

DOCTOR

What happened?

TOPPER

Plane crash.

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...

DOCTOR

Thank God. It's the leftover Big Mac from his lunch.

The Doctor reaches into the mess and pulls out a squished McDonald's bag.

DOCTOR

But these stains will never come out.

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.

(CONTINUED)

173 CONTINUED:

173

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.

DOCTOR
(looking closely at
face)
These nose hairs will have to come
out.

The Nurse injects the Doctor with the morphine.

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 picks up momentum as he passes a "Fresh Wax" sign. He takes out a cart full of food trays and then out of sight down a stairwell.

174 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 being X-rayed.

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

(CONTINUED)

174 CONTINUED:

174

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 SAME CLOCK

175

Two hours later.

176 WAITING ROOM

176

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 strips of wall paper from his shirt. His parachute sits in a heap in the adjacent chair. They look up at the clock; more hours zipping by.

177 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

177

The Doctor is sitting, reading a magazine. The Nurse enters.

NURSE

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

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.

PHYSICIAN

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

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED:

178

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?

BACK TO SCENE

PHYSICIAN

We'll need a blood donor.

Topper, who has been listening from outside, flings the doors open. WE HEAR a dramatic sting.

TOPPER

You can take mine...as much as you want. I'm A positive.

DOCTOR

Sorry pal, that's not good enough. We need B five positive. It's the rarest type on Earth. There are only three known people with B five.
(checking a chart)
Two of them are dead...And the third is a guy named Pfaffenbach.

All heads turn to Wash Out. He gives a "why me Lord" look and starts into the operating room, his parachute trailing behind him.

ANGLE ON A STILL TATTERED WASH OUT

lying on a table. Nearby WE SEE Dead Meat.

DOCTOR

We're going to need quite a bit. He's lost a lot of blood.

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED: (2) 178

A Nurse is hanging a bottle, the size of a Sparkletts bottle. Wash Out is a bit apprehensive.

179 EXT. OPERATING ROOM 179

A weak, almost ghostly Wash Out exits, buttoning up his sleeve. The Doctor exits.

DOCTOR

His kidneys are failing. We have to do a transplant at once. Lt. Pfaffenbach?

WASH OUT

What?

They drag him back into the Operating Room. The clock on the wall shows an hour of time passing. For Topper, an hour has never dragged by so slowly. Wash Out exits the Operating Room. He's moving mighty slow. The Doctor pokes his head out of the Operating Room.

DOCTOR

We need about eight feet of small intestine.

Wash Out winces. He's really hurting, but he reenters.

180 INT. OPERATING ROOM 180

Wash Out is lying down. He watches as the Doctor measures off eight feet of intestine, the way a seamstress measures cloth. He holds Wash Out's intestine and measures it from the tip of his nose to his outstretched arm.

PHYSICIAN

While we're in here we might as well grab a couple feet of his colon. Better safe than sorry.

Wash Out is beginning to wonder when all of this will end.

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

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?

(CONTINUED)

182 CONTINUED:

182

DOCTOR

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

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.

MRS. DEAD MEAT

How is Dead Meat, Doctor?

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.

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.

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

PHYSICIAN

I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

183 CONTINUED:

183

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

184

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. *

GENERAL HAHN *

(o.s.)

I'm so sorry.

She looks around. *

GENERAL HAHN *

(o.s.)

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

She spots him. *

GENERAL 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...

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
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

184 CONTINUED:

184

TOPPER (Cont'd)
dollars. I wish I could do more,
but...

She opens the envelope. Inside is money.

MRS. DEAD MEAT
Why, Topper, I don't know what to
say. This is wonderful.

(she sniffles)
With the three million I won from
this lotto ticket, I plan to 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.

An HONOR GUARDSMAN escorts her to a seat next to Mrs. Dead
Meat. They 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.

ANGLE ON COFFIN

One by one the pilots each lay a single rose on the coffin
and give it a ceremonial kiss good-bye. On the Commander's
turn he bends a little too far, hitting his head against
the coffin with a LOUD METALLIC SOUND. A bandaged,
cast-encrusted Wash Out, walking on crutches, gets too
close and goes headlong into the grave.

The Commander steps up to the microphone.

(CONTINUED)

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

How frail we are. What a gossamer thing life is. Today we all share the sorrow felt by...

ANGLE ON MRS. DEAD MEAT

CHAPLAIN

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

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.

ANGLE ON TOPPER

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

CHAPLAIN

There is a grand design our father has for us all. And that is...

He continues speaking but his mic intermittantly cuts out.

(CONTINUED)

184 CONTINUED: (3)

184

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!

He storms off.

ANGLE ON HONOR GUARD

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

They rip off a volley skyward.

ANGLE ON COMMANDER

The blast awakens instincts.

COMMANDER

Jumpin' Jesus! They're back.

He throws a revolver to Herring.

(CONTINUED)

184 CONTINUED: (4)

184

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. For the love of God,
have they no respect for the dead?!

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

COMMANDER

(making circles with
his pistol, to
Block)

You circle around them. I'll draw
their fire. God, I love a good
funeral.

185 INT. BARRACKS - THE NEXT DAY

185

There's a lot of chatter, a record player playing. Guys wander around. Ian is shaving his legs with an electric razor. Topper enters. Everyone turns away, ignoring him.

Topper walks over to Dead Meat's bunk. Packs a few of his things into an overnight bag. Hair brush, comb, 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 foamy, stringy saliva comes out. He starts to retch. He tosses it into the bag, "Yuk!"

186 INT. COMMANDER'S OFFICE

186

The Commander, wearing a heavy leather flight jacket with a fur collar and lining, is seated, 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.

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED:

186

COMMANDER

Ah, Blank. Come in. I've been expecting someone.

(to Secretary)

That'll be all, Francine.

The Secretary exits.

BLOCK

You wanted to talk to me about Thompson's death?

COMMANDER

Yes, but first I have something rather shocking to tell you...

He leans in toward Block.

COMMANDER

I have an erection...so rigid you could do high dives off it...

He 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 Charlie 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)

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 Charlie for Thompson's death...

COMMANDER

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

BLOCK

I didn't know...

COMMANDER

Yes, he and a few compatriots were at dinner, arguing over who got the leftover Villenschoben...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 Charlie acted irresponsibly, but his kind lives on the edge...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

(taking it)

No thank you, Sir.

COMMANDER

I like your thinking, Colonel. Topper does remind me a lot of myself at his age. Besides, Dead Meat Thompson wasn't all that good a pilot anyway. He only had a small family. The kids are a pain in the ass. The wife's on the sauce.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED: (3)

186

COMMANDER (Cont'd)

(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 don't remember giving
that to you.

COMMANDER

I know how you feel. The Seventies
are a total blank for me.

They exit.

187 INT. WAR ROOM - NORTHWELL AVIATION - DAY

187

We're CLOSE on a high tech TV monitor showing the face of
Block.

BLOCK

(from TV)

The command is in perfect order,
Sir. You have my personal guarantee
that Gerbil Munch is doomed without
endangering a single life.The CAMERA PANS the faces of Wilson, Sucik, Rosener, and
Hemak sitting around the conference table. We are again in
the same sinister film noir war room as before. They are
seated at a doughnut-shaped table around the Quantar
mock-up in the middle.

WILSON

Well done, Colonel. Excellent.
We'll see you in two days.

BLOCK

(from TV)

I know this is out of order, but
are you sure, sir...are you sure?
Won't this failure damage our image
around the world?

(CONTINUED)

187 CONTINUED:

187

WILSON

You're a good soldier, Block, and as such you know that your job is to obey orders. There's much more at stake here than you know. Don't disappoint me.

Wilson switches off the monitor. The tone becomes even more conspiratorial. One of the suits speaks up.

SUCIK

(angrily)

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

ROSENER

You do have a backup, General? *

WILSON

The sacrifice of human life is always regrettable, but the Quantar will be built. Northwell Aviation will thrive. We haven't informed Block that on the evening before the mission, each of our jets' defense systems will be altered, rendering it totally useless in combat. One way or the other, we'll get our airplane. *

They all somberly acknowledge.

WILSON

Now would someone turn on the lights.

The lights go on and the noir look goes away. We discover SIX ADDITIONAL PEOPLE standing in the room. Wilson turns to one of them:

WILSON

Fred, how long have you been here?

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.

(CONTINUED)

189 CONTINUED:

189

RAMADA'S P.O.V.

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

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 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

Please, let's talk.

190 EXT. BROOK - DAY

190

Ramada and Topper walk along the stream. A reflective Topper is skimming rocks into the water. It's a serene setting: the birds, the soft gurgle of the water.

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED:

190

TOPPER

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

*
*

He skips a stone across the brook: skip, skip, skip, then
out of the water and hitting a cow right between the eyes,
"Mooooo!" It keels over dead. Topper can't believe his
luck.

RAMADA

It's too late to turn back now.
The damage is done. Sure, Dead
Meat is gone...and there's a big
hole out out there, but you've got
to get back in the sky and prove
yourself.

*
*
*
*
*

TOPPER

But you said I should quit.

*

RAMADA

Hey, it's psychiatry. It's not a
perfect science.

*

DISSOLVE TO:

191 ON A RIVER

191

Beautiful water. Caressed by the shoreline trees. Ramada
and Topper are in a canoe. Ramada sits with her back to
the bow. Topper sits at the stern, paddling.

TOPPER

Do you really think a person can
change. Turn his life around.

*

They hit a bit of white water.

RAMADA

As long as he realizes that he's
being chased by a ghost.

Real rough water now.

RAMADA

There's nothing wrong with letting
yourself feel pain or sadness.

They are shooting the rapids. Big boulders stick out of
the water. It is shot with two dummies in the canoe.
Their flopping around does not deter from the calm,
reflective conversation they are having. No hint of the
danger that is all around them.

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED:

191

RAMADA

But you have no reason to burden
yourself with the guilt of your
father's actions.

The canoe ricochets off of rocks.

TOPPER

I understand that, but it's so hard.
I just can't let go.

They go over a falls. It's mammoth. The force of the
falls drives the canoe under, disappearing in the swirling
torrent. Beat. Beat. The canoe pops to the surface.

RAMADA

You'll never find happiness as long
as you're living with the legacy
of your father.

DISSOLVE TO:

192 EXT. RAMADA'S APARTMENT - AN HOUR LATER

192

Topper and Ramada pull the canoe up onto the shore and walk
arm in arm toward the building.

TOPPER

I've never just talked to someone
before...told them things like I've
told you.

RAMADA

You're a good person, Topper. A
very good person. I know you can
do it.

They hold hands tenderly.

TOPPER

You've convinced me. I can't quit.
I'll work through this thing. I'm
going to fly Gerbil Munch.

RAMADA

The strange thing is I still don't
understand why they didn't ground
you after your low flying stunt.

TOPPER

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

192 CONTINUED:

192

RAMADA

After my evaluation I sent the recommendation to Block. He was supposed to take your wings.

TOPPER

(thinking)

Really...

Standing on her porch is Ian, long stemmed roses in hand. *

RAMADA

Ian...

IAN

(hurt and angry)

I came to say goodbye. Our orders just came through. We're shipping out in one hour.

(to Topper)

Are you coming along this time?

TOPPER

Look, Ian...

IAN

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

He goes to this car, throws down the roses, gets in and speeds away. *

ANGLE ON ROSES *

crushed under the wheels of the car. A thorn pierces a tire causing a blowout. As Ian pulls away, one tire squeals, the other flumps. *

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 ANGLE ON COMMANDER BENSON

195

Looking natty in hunting attire.

COMMANDER

Pull!

A skeet is launched.

COMMANDER

Fire!

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 INT. HANGAR

197

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 Mechanic looks up and gives the high sign to Wilson.

WILSON

Keep a low profile, Rosener. We're here only as observers.

198 ANGLE ON RADAR ANTENNA

198

It rotates on its mast, scanning the horizon. A passing ENSIGN is clotheslined.

199 EXT. PLANES IN FLIGHT 199

The Freedom Squadron flashes across the sky in precision formation.

200 INT. BLOCK'S JET 200

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

201 INT. RADAR ROOM 201

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 Foreskin.
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 202

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 crewman
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. They busily prepare for the arriving planes. The catapults are readied. Lots of commands being thrown around.

206 ANGLE ON RUNWAY

206

A jet touches down and comes to a sudden, almost violent stop caused by the restraining harness.

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.

208 EXT. BRIDGE

208

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.

WILSON

Commander Benson, I want you to meet
Michael Rosener from Northwell
Aviation. He'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.

COMMANDER

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

(CONTINUED)

208 CONTINUED:

208

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. 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.

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

The COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER hands the Commander a message.

COM. OFFICER

From the Pentagon, sir. We just decoded it.

COMMANDER

Excellent. Gentlemen, I just received this cable from the Joint Chiefs. I wonder if you'd help me

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

213 CONTINUED:

213

COMMANDER (Cont'd)
 here with this. My eyes are
 ceramic. A bazooka round at Little
 Big Horn...or Okinawa...the one with
 the Indians.

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

COMMANDER
 Eastern or Pacific time? Doesn't
 matter. We'll be there! We'll
 reconnoiter at daybreak.

214 EXT. CARRIER - DAWN OF THE NEXT DAY 214

Serenity at sea. A rooster crows. The morning calm is
 broken by:

215 EXTREME CLOSEUP - BUGLER 215

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?
 (new thought)
 Have I eaten? No. Have I peed?

He checks his pajamas.

COMMANDER
 Yes. Good, that's out of the way.
 Assemble the men.

He gets up and rams his head against the bedpost, "ting".
 Mistaking it for his clock alarm, he turns off the alarm.

216 INT. PILOTS' QUARTERS

216

A siren calls them to duty. *

CAPTAIN

(voice over, from
P.A. system)

All pilots and air crews report to
the flight deck!

MONTAGE

TOPPER AND THE MEN GETTING READY

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.

217 INT. BRIEFING ROOM

217

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

COMMANDER

This is our current position. We
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 jittery.

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.

(CONTINUED)

217 CONTINUED:

217

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!

218 INT. BRIEFING ROOM TWO

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 dangerous and
 too important to let you screw it
 up. You're not flying with us.

TOPPER

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

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.

(CONTINUED)

218 CONTINUED:

218

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! Awwwww!

IAN
My face! He broke my jaw!

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 toast of Libya!

BLOCK
I think that is the COAST of Libya, 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 chemical weapons plant at Falafel Heights.

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

COMMANDER
It is heavily defended with Silkworm missiles and fighter cover. The cream of the Libyan air force. 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
For Christsake, if your plane is hit don't be taken alive. You're not dealing with people
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COMMANDER (Cont'd)
 here...they're animals. They'll convulse your body with massive jolts of electricity until you scream for death. They'll hang you by your thumbs for hours on end. They'll flay the very skin from your bodies and do endless root canal work. So let's go get 'em!

This pep talk they didn't need to hear. The men are stunned with fear. 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!

ANGLE ON BLOCK

BLOCK
 I want Topper Charlie leading the squadron into battle.

Murmur of discontent from the squad. Ian rises.

IAN
 Lieutenant, sir, I know I speak for every man here...we've lost all respect for Charlie. He's poison for the morale of the unit. And a danger to the success of the mission. You must reconsider.

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?

(CONTINUED)

218 CONTINUED: (3)

218

BLOCK

What is it, Mr. Charlie?

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 piece of tail...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 for the rest of their lives.

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.

220 EXT. BRIDGE

220

Rosener, Wilson, and the Captain watch as the mission gets underway. Wilson and Rosener exchange a smug look. The Commander steps smartly out to the observation deck. His hat blows off. He looks over the rail, out toward the stern.

COMMANDER

Hey, I dropped my hat. Swing her around. We'll pick it up.

CAPTAIN

But, sir, we're on the mission.

COMMANDER

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

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. Now where are the damn malted milk balls?

CAPTAIN

We're fresh out.

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?

221 FLIGHT DECK

221

The valet brings up Topper's jet. The valet 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.

An 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. 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. *

231 ANGLE ON FLAGMAN 231

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

231A TWO DOGS 231A

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

232 EXT. TOPPER'S JET 232

As Topper takes off, he gives a big salute to the conspiratorial Air Crewmember. 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.

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.

Wilson and Rosener are confident everything is running smoothly.

233 SKY 233

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

234 INT. RADAR ROOM - SEVERAL HOURS LATER 234

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

CAPTAIN

Two minutes to in-flight refueling.

235 FREEDOM SQUADRON IN FLIGHT 235

A large tanker plane overhead. It approaches Ian's plane from behind. A long hose extends from the tanker and carefully enters Ian's jet from behind.

236 INT. IAN'S JET 236

Ian reacts to the entry.

IAN

(into radio)

Bob, is that you?

237 INT. TANKER COCKPIT 237

BOB at the controls.

BOB

(into radio)

Yesss, yes it is.

238 INT. RADAR ROOM 238

The squad and radar room are overhearing the conjugal visit...a bit puzzled.

IAN'S VOICE

(from radio)

Oh, Bob, oh Bob...

DISSOLVE TO:

239 INT. RADAR ROOM - HOURS LATER 239

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

WASH OUT

(into mic)

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

COMMANDER *

(checking his watch)

Really? Twelve o'clock? That gives us twenty-five minutes. I think I'll step out for a smoke.

(CONTINUED)

239 CONTINUED:

239

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 Charlie would be proud of you, Topper.

242 TOPPER

242

Sweating profusely.

(CONTINUED)

242 CONTINUED:

242

CLOSEUP - TOPPER

We HEAR Ian's voice echoing.

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. He's 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 the Bogies. Bogies at
twelve o'clock.

244 INT. LIBYAN 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 Libyans.

247 INT. CONTROL TOWER 247

Wilson and Sucik 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.

250 BLOCK 250

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

BLOCK
(into radio)
He's frozen. Topper's no good to us. We'll never make it. Abort the mission.

251 SKY 251

But no. They're now inundated by Libyan 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!

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

256

The engines misfire. He loses altitude. Regains control.

IAN
 (into radio)
 My engines cut out!

257 BLOCK

257

Block's guns jam. He's bewildered.

BLOCK
 (into radio)
 My cannons...

258 INT. RADAR ROOM

258

They listen...the drama is heart-quickenning. The Commander is seated in a chair. Riveted to every word from the dogfight. Underneath the scene, WE HEAR a high-pitched WHINING SOUND. WE REVEAL it's the Commander's foot, spinning wildly.

259 KOWALSKI

259

and the others taking on the Libyans. 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, kainbow, bail out!", "There goes that paint job!" 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

WILSON
(grabbing the mic)
Commander, 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 REPRISÉ OF THE TRAINING MISSION AT FLEMNER AIR FORCE BASE - 20 YEARS EARLIER 266

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!

BUZZ
All right. All right. I'm coming.

(CONTINUED)

268 CONTINUED: 268

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. Slowly, however, 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
Charlie 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 Libyan planes riddle the jet with cannon fire. Bullet after bullet. James Caan took less hits in "The Godfather." Various colored liquids gush 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

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 Libyan 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 Libyans 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 Libyan pilots by maneuvering his jet into cartwheels and then walks it across the sky on its tail.

277 INT. LIBYAN COCKPIT 277

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

278 SKY 278

The Libyans abandon the hunt for the whole squad, and focus on getting Topper. He ducks behind a cloud. The Libyans 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. IAN'S JET 279

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

280 INT. RADAR ROOM 280

The Commander and all are hearing our own Libyan 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.

281 DOGFIGHT 281

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

(CONTINUED)

281 CONTINUED: 281

More Libyan 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 a Libyan jet, which in turn swerves to miss him and plows into another enemy jet.

286 SKY 286

Ten Libyan 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. All the Libyan pilots frantically pointing at him. Into more thick clouds. They come out of the clouds. The Libyans 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 Libyans plow into the peaks nose-first.

Topper streaks across the skies, doing victory rolls.

TOPPER

(o.s.)

Aww-haw!

A Libyan 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 Libyan 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 Libyans 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 Libyan 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 chemical 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 chemical 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.

296 TOPPER'S JET

296

He brings his plane down low, as he did in training, the chemical plant in sight. He's seconds from colliding with it. He pulls up at the last second, his craft's belly scraping the rooftop. 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.

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.

KOWALSKI

You're quite a guy.

TOPPER

So are you.

IAN

(pointing to Topper)

You!

There is a moment before the two Hot Shots embrace in friendship and respect.

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.

(CONTINUED)

301 CONTINUED:

301

BLOCK

I've only seen heroism like that one other time. Perhaps you know the pilot...Leland 'Buzz' Charlie...

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)

Anyone would have done the same. Anyone who loves his country, sir.

The Blood Donor is deflating like a balloon.

BLOCK

Topper, you had me pegged right. I was throwing the big game. Bu: I had nothing to do with jeopardizing lives. It was Wilson and Rosener who sabotaged the jets. They duped me, too.

Topper spots Wilson and Rosener standing on the flight deck. He walks toward them, the look of revenge in his eyes. Wilson and Rosener know they're in for trouble. Just as Topper is about to throttle them, Wash Out steps in front of him. 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 runs away. Wash Out is about to chase him when Topper stops him.

TOPPER

I got him.

(CONTINUED)

302 CONTINUED: 302

He 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 arrives.

COMMANDER

Good job, men. Anybody see a hat out there? About my size?

ANGLE ON ROWBOAT - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

We are CLOSE on two men fishing quietly. CAMERA PULLS BACK to REVEAL...

305 EXT. HARBOR - DAY 305

The S.S. Essess pulls into dock.

306 BRIDGE 306

The Commander and the Captain look to the festivities on the dock.

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 DOCK 309

The ship drops anchor and it goes right through the band and on through the dock.

310 EXT. SHIP 310

Gangplank down and, in doing so, takes out a few more innocent bystanders.

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 meets her MAN.

Wash Out meets his WOMAN.

TWO COLLIES are reunited.

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. *

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, Clarkson, mission accomplished. Now let's go buy some pants.

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.

315 TOPPER'S P.O.V. 315

He spots Ramada talking with Ian.

ANGLE ON RAMADA AND IAN

RAMADA

It never would have worked with us.
I'm sorry. I love him, Ian.

IAN

It's all right, my dear. Wasn't
it the Beatles who said 'O-bla-dee,
O-bla dah, life goes on, rah?'

She gives him a final goodbye kiss.

316 TOPPER'S JET 316

He watches the kiss from his cockpit. It looks like he's lost the only woman he's ever loved. 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