

OCEAN OF STORMS



ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY
BY
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OCEAN OF STORMS

EXT. BEACH--NIGHT

SILENCE. In the dunes behind the beach. It is barren, almost lunar. There are footprints in the sand, which we FOLLOW. In the BG we hear a dim, not yet identifiable POUNDING of the surf.

BEGIN CREDITS.

We come upon a pair of shoes.

At the top of a dune, salt grass waves in the sea breeze. Here, a pile of a man's clothing, neatly stacked. As we come over the top of the dune we see the ocean gleaming before us in the moonlight. The BOOMING CRASH of the surf is suddenly loud ... insistent.

In the distance, the form of a naked man standing on the glistening sand. He takes off his watch and drops it on the beach. Then he begins to walk forward into the water.

CLOSE on the large, elaborate watch, as the surf foams around it and draws it away.

CREDITS END.

EXT. MIDGET AIRPLANE RACETRACK--DAY

A high-pitched ROAR as a wildly colored pack of midget airplanes races around the pylons marking the course of the race. They are like a swarm of maddened bees--incredibly fast, obviously dangerous. The voice of an ANNOUNCER calls the progress of the race over a loudspeaker.

ANNOUNCER VO

Pretender moving up inside--whoa!
Here comes Baby Cakes looking for a
hole. . . it's Pretender again on
the straightaway. . .

Beyond a small grandstand where several dozen PEOPLE watch the race, MECHANICS are working on the planes entered in the

next heat. A middle-aged NASA WOMAN dressed in a business suit (out of place here), carrying an attache case wanders among them. She speaks to one of the MECHANICS, who points to the planes racing overhead. The NASA Woman looks up and shades her eyes.

ON THE PLANES

Jockeying for position -- a sport for madmen. With wingspans of only 8 feet, the tiny aircraft don't look like they'd support a child, let alone a full-grown man. Yet they hurtle around the aerial course at over 200 MPH, pilots jockeying for position.

CUT TO:

Later, TOMMY LORD, in the parking lot, strapping his midget airplane ("Pretender") onto a trailer attached to the back of a well-used pickup truck. Casually placed in the seat of the plane is a large silver trophy.

He's in his early fifties, greying, but still taut and fit, with bright intense eyes -- pilot's eyes. It is enough to see him once to know he is more comfortable with physical danger than he is with the emotional demands of ordinary existence. He is a man who has accomplished great things, but he's paid a heavy price in terms of a broken marriage and neglected relationships. Now those great achievements have begun to pale, and Tommy finds himself alone in life, not so much by choice as by default.

A careful viewer might notice a heavy watch on Tommy's wrist, identical to the one we left in the surf.

INTO FRAME comes the NASA Woman, hesitant. She delivers her news, but her words are lost in the DRONING of the airplanes in the next race. Tommy's face is blank, but the news hits him somewhere very deep and unprotected.

INT. TOMMY LORD'S LIVING ROOM--NIGHT

CLOSE ON TELEVISION SCREEN

On the screen, footage of two Astronauts bounding about on the moon.

NEWSCASTER VO

. . . drowned while swimming near his home in Chula Vista. Admiral Pruitt, or Jimbo as he was known to his colleagues in the astronaut corps, spent a brief career in politics, culminating in an unsuccessful bid for the U.S. Senate. He is still remembered by sports fans as the pitcher who gave up history's longest home run, a lunar line drive by his partner, Colonel Thomas Lord.

On screen one of the Astronauts throws a slow-motion curve ball toward the batter, who strikes it awkwardly and sends it soaring across the moonscape.

ASTRONAUT'S VOICE

(through a crackly radio transmission)

Okay, first little green man who brings that ball back gets a free snow cone.

NEWSCASTER OS

At his ranch outside of Houston, Colonel Lord remembered his friend and fellow moonwalker

Tommy appears on the screen.

TOMMY

(on television)

He always knew what he wanted. The thing about Jimbo was ... you knew nothing was going

to keep him from standing on the Moon.

Tommy sits on a couch, draining a beer and watching himself without reaction.

NEWSCASTER VO
(over still photo of man
in the surf)
James "Jimbo" Pruitt, dead today at
the age of fifty-five.

A commercial appears on the screen advertising denture cream. Tommy stares at it for a moment then switches off the set and leaves the room. HOLD on a wall filled with astronaut memorabilia: medals, plaques, caricatures, et cetera. There is a large framed photograph of two spacesuited astronauts (Tommy and Jimbo) standing beside an American flag in the stark monochrome landscape of the Moon.

As we HOLD we hear the sound of a REFRIGERATOR being opened, followed by the SNAP of a pop-top can.

EXT. TOMMY'S RANCH--NIGHT

Tommy stands in front of his house. The Moon is just rising ... it hovers hugely above the horizon, illuminating the shapes of cattle grazing on the flat coastal prairie land near Houston.

Tommy's face silhouetted in the still light of the Moon.

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY--DAY

PAN across the gravestones--solemn memorials to American heroes. Over this, we hear the VOICE of the VICE PRESIDENT.

VICE PRESIDENT OS

I'm going to tell you today about an American hero. His name was Admiral James Ridley Pruitt, a name perhaps only dimly remembered by the world at large. But on the roll of great explorers his name stands with Magellan and Balboa, with Columbus and Marco Polo.

WIDE SHOT of the funeral crowd, largely military. At the edge of the crowd is a television crew. Jimbo's relatives (his wife, a couple of stony-faced brothers, no children) sit in folding chairs to one side of the grave.

Opposite the grave, facing the family in a special roped-off gallery, a contingent of astronauts (former and current).

Some of the older Apollo astronauts are wearing uniforms with lots of brass, others in dark business suits -- all showing signs of age and prosperity.

As we PAN across, we see amongst the younger contingent, a rather plain young woman, DREW BROUSSARD. Her long dark hair is pulled back in a severe, almost grandmotherly, roll behind her head ... a prim grey suit over simple white blouse. Were it not for mirrored aviator glasses, she might be taken for the administrative assistant of a congressman from some small farm town in the Midwest.

Yet amongst all the serious faces of Pruitt's old colleagues, and the new generation of space explorers in the special gallery, hers is the only one wet with tears beneath inscrutable lenses which reflect the image of the flag-draped coffin. She stands at attention, like a member of the honor guard at the passing of a beloved leader.

ON MRS. PRUITT holding a folded American flag in her lap.

ANGLE

VICE PRESIDENT OS (CONT.)

He was an Apollo astronaut.
Who were these men? Like the
explorers of old they crossed the
unknown ocean and stood on the
distant shore.

PAN across the faces of the Apollo astronauts: old heroes now, more accustomed to board rooms and golf courses. Tommy stands among them, wearing a dark, expensively tailored suit. What is striking about him now is the intensity with which he listens to the eulogy of Jimbo Pruitt.

VICE PRESIDENT OS (CONT'D)

They took us to the Moon, the first
giant step for mankind. Now, as
you know, the President has set us
on a course that will take us back
to the moon--only this time we will
be going back to stay. In the
very near future America will have
a permanent

VICE PRESIDENT OS (CON'T)
base on the Moon, a base which will
serve as a stepping stone for an in-
ternational mission to Mars. But just
as we did not stop at the Moon, nei-
ther will we stop at Mars. Mankind
will continue to travel throughout the
galaxy, reaching the stars, carrying
the fire. And it all started here
with Jimbo Pruitt and the men who
stand before us: the Apollo astro-
nauts.

ON THE VICE PRESIDENT ...

VICE PRESIDENT (CONT.)
Thank God for these men.

There is a sudden ROAR as five Blue Angels pass overhead in
the missing man formation. FOLLOW them as they part in a
cloverleaf ... in the center, a single jet SCREAMING
vertically skyward on its frozen plume, to disappear in high
fleecy clouds.

INT. HOTEL SUITE, WASHINGTON D.C.--DAY

Jimbo's wake, featuring many of the same people we saw at his
funeral. Everyone is drinking steadily, making LOUD CHATTER.
Most of these people knew each other well in the past, so
this is a reunion for them, despite the occasion. A few of
the current Shuttle crewmembers are also in attendance.

Important people here: notice the stars on the uniforms, the
SECRET SERVICE MEN guarding the Vice President, who
approaches Mrs. Pruitt to offer his condolences. Two EX
ASTRONAUTS watch this from a distance. Tommy stands on the
periphery.

EX-ASTRONAUT 1
What I want to know is, where's the
President?

EX-ASTRONAUT 2
At least we got the Vice President.

EX-ASTRONAUT 1

He should be here. Unless he's got
a damn good reason.

EX-ASTRONAUT 2

Maybe he knew Jimbo personally.

Ex-Astronaut 1 LAUGHS -- a little guiltily, considering the
occasion.

INTO FRAME comes another Ex-Astronaut. He is DAVEY TORRANCE,
a handsome, tremendously magnetic figure, easy and confident.
His voice projects with commanding timbre and resonance, yet
he speaks softly, like a professor emeritus ... confident of
his subject, but without a trace of arrogance. A man at
peace with himself ...

EX-ASTRONAUT 1

Good God, don't you ever age,
Davey?

DAVEY

You listen closely, Gil, you can
hear every joint squeaking.

ON Jimbo's widow, PAULINE PRUITT, engaged in small talk with
a group of ASTRONAUT WIVES. She looks up and spots Tommy
across the room, talking to Davey. They're clearly old
friends. Excuses herself and begins to make her way toward
him ...

ON TOMMY AND DAVEY

DAVEY

Only twelve of us walked on another
world, Tom. If we're honest with
ourselves, we'd all have to admit
we felt it.

TOMMY

Felt what?

DAVEY

Design, for lack of a better word.
An intelligent design. Our voyages
to the Moon simply represent
another small step in that
continuum.

TOMMY

(with a referee's time-out
signal)
We talking God here?

DAVEY

(smiles)
Interesting question. What do you
think we're talking about?

INTO FRAME comes Jimbo's widow, who lays her hand on Tommy's
wrist.

PAULINE

Excuse me, Davey. Tommy, may I see
you a moment?

ANGLE

Ex-Astronauts 1 and 2 are talking
with ED DRUMMOND, the head of the
Astronaut Office. Tall, ruddy,
still freckled in his middle age,
Ed is only Apollo astronaut to stay
in the program.

EX-ASTRONAUT 1

So we're finally going back, Ed.
(Ed nods) Not to the Sea of
Tranquillity, I hope.

ED

No, we learned our lesson. We
picked a nice little spot in the
Taurus-Littrow. Great place for a
lunar outpost.

EX-ASTRONAUT 1

How's the view?

ED

I guess Walt could tell us. That's
your old stomping ground, right?

WALT

I'll never forget it. Standing on
the rim looking down. Hell, it's
deeper than the Grand Canyon.
(pause) God, I'd like to go back
there.

ED

(patting Walt's belly)
We'll try to find room for you.

ON TOMMY AND MRS. PRUITT

Sitting on a couch and talking privately

MRS. PRUITT

I'm glad now we never got divorced.
(pause) Isn't that a strange
thought? I don't mean because of
the pension.

TOMMY

I know.

MRS. PRUITT

It's important to feel a connection
at a time like this.

(pause)

He had a house somewhere in
California.

TOMMY

Chula Vista. They said on the
news.

MRS. PRUITT

Did he have a girlfriend or
something?

Tommy shrugs.

MRS. PRUITT (CONT'D)

I hate to think of him being completely alone. The lawyer said the only beneficiaries are me and you.

TOMMY

(stunned)

Me?

MRS. PRUITT

I took the liberty of bringing you your inheritance. Jimbo left it in his lock box.

She reaches into her purse and pulls out a baseball. Tommy is taken aback; his eyes well up.

TOMMY

(taking the ball)

Son of a gun.

LATER

Drew and a handsome shuttle pilot, MIKE VAUGHN, stand near the refreshments, taking the whole scene in ...

MIKE

You see the guy with the white hair ... he was the second man on the moon. Never got over it.

DREW

Going to the moon?

MIKE

No ... being second.

Small knots of Astronaut Wives stand around the room. Two distinct types -- some older, more experienced, while others look younger and brassier. A pair of the 'Original Wives' are staring hard-eyed at one of the prettiest members of the other group, who's surrounded by four ardent Ex-Astronauts.

FIRST WIFE

How many years do we have to put up
with this shit!

SECOND WIFE

Don't worry darling, she's number
four for Bud. And you know Bud ...
his brain never wanders far from
his crotch. You can bet number
five's waiting in the wings.

Tommy stands by himself, looking out a window, with the ball
in hand. Ed Drummond notices him. He walks over and puts an
arm on Tommy's shoulder.

TOMMY

How are things at the center, Ed?

ED

Never better. You should come out
sometime -- I'll introduce you
around. We got a great group of
young people.

TOMMY

Can any of them fly?

ED

Some of 'em. But we've got a fair
number of specialists too ...
planetary geologists, plasma
physicists, you name it. How bout
you? I hear the company bought you
your own private jet.

TOMMY

(ironically)

You've got it bass-ackwards. They
bought their own private astronaut.

EXT. AFB - LATE AFTERNOON

Outside an immense hangar. Two figures in flight suits walk
briskly towards a line of T-38 jets -- slim needle-nosed
craft built for speed ...

DREW

We're gonna have to hustle to make
our take-off slot.

MIKE

(annoyed)

You go ahead. I may be stuck here
for a while.

DREW

How come?

MIKE

One of the old guys at the funeral
needs a ride back to Houston.
(pause) At least he's on time.

Tommy, waving goodbye to an Air Force officer, walks out of
the hangar to join them.

TOMMY

Who's my driver?

MIKE

We're both going to Houston.
(extends his hand) I'm Captain
Mike Vaughn ... this is Captain
Drew Broussard.

Tommy notices one of the pilots is a girl.

TOMMY

(to Drew)

How many hours you logged on this
machine?

DREW

Over 600 hours, sir.

TOMMY

I know how the boys drive ... I'm
all yours.

They pile into the jet, Tommy taking the back seat.

DREW
(now over cockpit radio)
Would you like to fly, sir?

TOMMY
Naw, I'm just along for the ride.
But feel free to show me around.

Both aircraft taxi to the end of the runway

MIKE VO
NASA 7 ready on 21.

TOWER VO
NASA 7, say direction of departure.

MIKE VO
Straight out.

TOWER VO
NASA 7, clear for takeoff.

Mike's jet roars off in a smooth shallow climb.

DREW VO
Tower, NASA 26 ready on 21.
Straight out departure any
traffic overhead?

TOWER VO
Negative ... NASA 26, clear for
takeoff.

The T-38 HOWLS down the runway, rises gracefully. But instead of gaining altitude, Drew stays low. Tommy glances at the airspeed indicator ... needle skating rapidly around to 400 knots.

Suddenly Drew SLAMS in the afterburners, pulls the jet into a vertical climb, and shoots straight up like a rocket. Tommy's smashed back into his seat under the weight of 8 G's. From outside we see her execute a perfect 4-point roll followed by a roll in the opposite direction ... all in the same vertical aspect. She finally levels off at 10,000 feet.

MIKE VO
NASA 26, this is NASA 7 ... state
your position.

DREW VO
this is 26. I'm at your 6 o'clock,
level at one zero zero.

MIKE VO
feet! Holy Shit! You didn't waste
any time.

TOMMY VO
(cutting in on the radio
circuit)
She was takin me back to the Moon.

MIKE VO
(exasperated)
If you two are finished burning the
taxpayers' kerosene, we might think
about getting on down the road ...

DREW VO
Roger that, 7. Let's head for the
barn.

EXT. ELLINGTON AFB - EVENING

The two T-38's taxi to a stop in front of another hangar at
Ellington AFB in Houston. All the pilots clamber out. Tommy
shakes hands with both.

TOMMY
I appreciate the ride.

DREW
It was an honor, Colonel.

As he walks away, Mike turns to Drew ...

MIKE
(trifle sarcastic)
And it was an honor flying
formation with you today, Captain.

DREW

Get off it Mike. You know I don't
brown-nose anybody.

MIKE

What do you call it then ... Hero
Worship?

DREW

Don't you have any heroes, smart
ass?

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER -- DAY

An immense Saturn 5 Rocket -- as long as a skyscraper -- lies
on its side at the entrance to the Johnson Space Center, an
awesome memorial to the days of the Apollo program. Tommy
and Ed Drummond stand beneath the rocket's nose, looking up.

ED

Can you believe how primitive it
was?

TOMMY

It was a pretty good ride, though.

ED

Are you kidding? Damn thing shook
so much it knocked a filling out of
my tooth.

TOMMY

Still, it was a pretty good ride.

ED

We actually thought about tuning
this baby up for another trip, but
there's hardly anybody here who
remembers how to shoot it off.

TOMMY

You could have called me.

ED

Now it sits here like an abandoned
water heater.

INT. SPACE CENTER HALLWAY

Ed and Tommy are locked in intense conversation.

ED

The Russians, God bless 'em, saved us ten years. They already had a space station. All we had to do was agree to make the hardware compatible, and take a cosmonaut with us when we go back to the Moon.

Tommy nods, taking this in. But at the same time he's distracted by a wave of nostalgia at being back in the familiar hallways of the Space Center. He searches a sea of young faces, looking for someone familiar.

ED (CONT'D)

It won't really be a lunar outpost for a long time. The first mission is still five years away, and that one won't do much more than build a construction shed. But at least we'll be back on the Moon.

They stop at an elevator. Ed punches the button. A MAN walking by sees Tommy and does a double-take.

MAN

Tommy?

Tommy turns. It takes him a moment to recognize an old colleague.

TOMMY

Mac!

The elevator doors open.

MAC

I thought that was you. Good to see ya.

They shake hands as Ed holds the elevator doors open. Then Tommy enters the already crowded elevator. Before the doors close, we see Drew at the rear. She's noticed Tommy, but doesn't intrude. Just the same, she's listening ...

INT. ELEVATOR

TOMMY

I bet I haven't seen Mac in fifteen years.

ED

He's leaving next month to consult for Rockwell. Pretty good deal.

TOMMY

(pause ... then quietly)
I admire you for hanging in here
Ed. We were all here together
for the good times ... damn few of
us stayed to see this outfit
through the bad.

Ed smiles his appreciation as the elevator doors open. They walk together past the security guard at his desk, out into the bright glare of coastal prairie sunlight. In the distance the most powerful and sophisticated rocket ever engineered lies exhausted in the grass like a beached whale. They both stand a moment in silent contemplation

TOMMY(CONT'D)

I've missed this place. Thanks.

ED

You're always welcome here,
Colonel.

EXT. HELEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A handsome Tudor home in the university section of Houston. Tommy knocks at an elaborately carved door ...

It's opened by HELEN, Tommy's ex-wife. A few years younger than Tommy, Helen has a stable intelligence, a composure, that is difficult to separate from physical beauty.

She wears a robe and house slippers. Her bearing is that of a woman who has reached an agreement with herself, who's found the functional center of her life. She gives Tommy a wary look, then opens the door wider and admits him.

INT. HELEN'S KITCHEN

Helen stands braced against the counter, watching Tommy. She's trying to keep her distance, but her former husband is a particular weakness for her.

Tommy looks at a child's painting, affixed to the refrigerator door by a magnet. The painting is a crude depiction of an astronaut in the void of space.

TOMMY
Katie do this?

HELEN
It's supposed to be you.

TOMMY
How's her momma?

HELEN
Why don't you call her and find out.

TOMMY
She doesn't want to hear from me.

HELEN
Tommy, she's your daughter. (no answer) You want some gingerbread?

TOMMY
Did you make it?

HELEN
I might have.

TOMMY
Then I might have a slice.

Helen opens the cabinet and takes out two plates. She slices

the gingerbread. Tommy opens the refrigerator and pours two glasses of milk.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Jimbo left me the baseball.

Helen looks up, surprised. She sets the two plates down on the kitchen table.

HELEN
I thought it was still on the Moon.

TOMMY
(taking a seat)
So did I. What do you think I should do with it?

HELEN
I don't know. Put it in a safety deposit box.

TOMMY
Maybe the Smithsonian would want it.

HELEN
Maybe.

TOMMY
Ed's been filling me in on the new Moon program.

HELEN
(jokingly)
Thinking about going back?

TOMMY
You know what they're gonna to do? They're going to mine oxygen out of the rocks for fuel. They're going to build a damn nuclear power plant. They're gonna stay this time, Helen.

Helen hears the note of longing in his voice. It worries her.

HELEN
Are you doing all right?

TOMMY
Sure.

HELEN
Really?

TOMMY
Hey ... I'm the company's main attraction at the Paris Air Show next month. I get to fly the new plane around Le Bourget while every photographer in Europe takes my picture.

HELEN
Tommy! That's wonderful!

TOMMY
Yeah ... it was wonderful 16 years ago when I did it the first time.

HELEN
Oh c'mon ... you love your job.

TOMMY
(unconvincingly)
Yeah.

HELEN
You're Vice-President and Chief Pilot for one of the biggest private aircraft manufacturers in the world.

TOMMY
Helen, I'm a very expensive long distance taxi driver...

Helen takes Tommy's hand.

TOMMY (CONT.) (CONT'D)
I better go.

HELEN
(without rancor)
What happened to all those girls
you used to see when we were
married?

TOMMY
They all died of old age.

HELEN
(grinning)
You mean we're the only ones left?

TOMMY
You and me, darlin. (he kisses her
gently) See you.

She watches as he exits ...

INT. COCKPIT - DAY

Amid the WHINE of jet engines, Tommy and DORRANCE SMYTHE, Cessna's top corporate aircraft salesman and Tommy's copilot, are seated in the gleaming cockpit of a top-of-the-line Citation V jet. They've just landed, and through the cockpit windows we see them taxi to a stop outside a General Aviation terminal. As they efficiently run through turbine shutdown, occasional bursts of RADIO CHATTER are heard beneath their conversation ...

DORRANCE
You're gonna love this guy.
(laughs)
Name is Newt Gustafsson.
He owns 26 McDonalds franchises,
scattered all over Chicago.

He makes a few quick notations in his logbook.

DORRANCE (CONT'D)

While you were flying to the Moon,
old Newt here was playing for the
Bears. At one time or another he
musta' rearranged the skeletal
structure of every wide receiver in
the league. And get this he
married a cheerleader.

TOMMY

From when he was playing?

DORRANCE

(sarcastic)

Right.

They're out of their harnesses now, heading for the door.

DORRANCE (CONT'D)

Now here's how we do it. You just
lay back and smile. Got your
pictures?

(Tommy nods)

Ok. I'll warm him up, then you
give him a few autographs for his
buddies ...

CUT TO:

EXT. CORPORATE JET - DAY

Dorrance and Tommy step down the jet's stairway. Rows of
expensive corporate aircraft line the tarmac. NEWT
GUSTAFSSON, a huge, hulking figure in a polo shirt and shiny
silk slacks walks up with a fluffy 25-year old platinum
blonde at his side. She's poured into a bright red cat
miniskirt accented with black belt and boots. We see Tommy
look briefly skyward, as if praying for deliverance.

DORRANCE

(under his breath)

He looks like he ought to live on a
diet of bananas.

(now full voice)

Hey Newt, lookin' good pal.

Dorrance is all smiles and bonhomie -- the perfect salesman. From a distance now, we see them meeting, exchanging handshakes and names. The hamburger magnate has draped a proprietary arm around Tommy's shoulder while his wife SUKI takes pictures with an auto-everything camera and beams at the two heroes. Newt offers his back as a writing surface and Tommy signs one of his astronaut photos.

CUT TO:

INT. GUSTAFSSON HOUSE - DAY

In an expensive, but tastelessly decorated dining room, the Gustafssons and their two guests have finished an ornate luncheon. A ponderous gilt chandelier looms overhead, threatening to crush the remnants of a huge turkey squatting in the middle of the table. Suki JINGLES a little cut glass bell and an older uniformed Hispanic servant appears to clear the table. Newt grins over a plate piled high with bones from the ravaged bird ... while under the table, Suki's stockinged foot is lazily stroking Tommy's leg. He gingerly pulls it away ...

SUKI

How bout dessert, boys.

TOMMY

(avoiding her eyes)

Thanks Mrs. Gustafsson. I don't have any place to put it.

NEWT

Hell, little Newt eats more than you do, and he's only 4 years old.

SUKI

Pay attention darling ... that's how Colonel Lord keeps his youthful figure.

DORRANCE

(breaking in to cover

Tommy's embarrassment)

You ready to look this contract over, big guy?

NEWT

(nods)

Let's go to my study. Suki, why don't show Tommy around the mansion.

TOMMY

I'd better walk through the legal documents with you.

DORRANCE

No need partner. Enjoy yourself.

They all get up and Newt and Dorrance exit. Suki is watching her prey with undisguised glee.

SUKI

I'll bet you've seen plenty of big old houses.

Tommy doesn't know how to respond ... she takes his arm, guides him out of the room ...

SUKI (CONT'D)

I have a better idea.

CUT TO:

INT. CORPORATE JET - AFTERNOON

Back inside the plane, the two pilots are firing up the engines. Dorrance waves goodbye to the Gustafssons, standing outside on the tarmac near the terminal. Turns back to Tommy with a leer ...

DORRANCE

Well how was she buddy?

For a moment, Tommy faces Dorrance in cold, stony silence. As his fingers flex on the handles of the control yoke, Dorrance flinches.

TOMMY

(very quietly)

I wouldn't know Dorrance ... But don't you ever pull that again.

He turns back to the controls and begins the pre-flight check sequence in clipped military tones.

EXT. TOMMY'S RANCH - NIGHT

WIDE SHOT of the ranch. A light is on in the kitchen of the low, rambling house. The faint STRAINS of a haunting melody play in the BG.

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

EERIE MUSIC

Moving through the kitchen, we see the remains of a single once frozen dinner on the breakfast table. In the darkness beyond, dim flickering light. In the next room a figure silhouetted against the screen of a large television. The image is of the Earth, tiny and distant. The camera (on TV screen) PANS across the darkness of space to the strange looming majesty of the MOON as seen from lunar orbit. (SCENES FROM FOR ALL MANKIND)

VOICE (TV)

It didn't seem like a very
welcoming place

PAN to Tommy's blankly impassive face, washed by the pallid light of the screen ...

CUT TO:

INT. ED DRUMMOND'S OFFICE - DAY

Ed is an old Navy man. His office is furnished with replicas of ancient sailing ships, pictures of dreadnoughts and caravels. Overlooking the entire Johnson Space Center -- a splendid view

ED

It's a nice thought, Tommy. It'd
be great having you back here. But
I wouldn't know what to offer you.

TOMMY

Offer me Mac's job.

ED

He's the Crew Training Chief,
Tommy. We've got a whole new
technology that you don't know
anything about. The competition's
fierce.

TOMMY

I can learn it.

ED

You've been out in the sun too
long, pal. You're making what, a
half million bucks every year?

TOMMY

More.

ED

You know what the government pays
Mac?

TOMMY

It's not the money, Ed.

ED

(quietly now)

No ... I guess it's not. No use
bullshittin'. We both know what you
really want ... and I've got 140
highly trained astronauts who want
the same thing. They're not like we
were, Tommy. They're not just
fighter jocks. I've got
crystalline matrix engineers,
quantum physicists. Hell, I got a
pilot with a PhD in Exobiology, for
Christ' sake --

TOMMY

How many people you have that've
been to the Moon? You got anybody
who's set a Lander down on the
surface -- with five seconds of
fuel left! -- on the rim of a

crater that wasn't supposed to be there?

ED
No, but --

TOMMY
I've been there! I know what it feels like! Those kids are going back someday, and I can teach them things you haven't got in your briefing books.

ED
Tommy, I know you'd do a great job. They could learn a lot from you, no question. But you're my age! We're supposed to be playing golf and looking after our investments.

TOMMY
I want back in, Ed.

Ed sinks resignedly into his chair.

ED
This won't be easy. (reaches an internal decision) Alright. You can have a shot at Crew Chief ... on a provisional basis only. You'll have to start somewhere. What do you think about working with the group we'll pull the next mission crew out of.

TOMMY
Fine.

ED
(cautionary)
They've already been training together for almost a year.

TOMMY
I'll catch up.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, ASTRONAUT OFFICE - DAY

Drew and her friend, SHARON BLACKWELL, enter a roomful of ASTRONAUTS who have gathered for their regular Monday morning meeting. They are all dressed in casual civilian clothes. Some of them are drinking their morning coffee.

As Drew enters, she notices Tommy standing next to Ed at the front of the room.

ED

Okay, folks, let's get started.
Will the secretary please read the minutes?

LAUGHTER

ED (CONT.)

We've got reports on the TVC Actuator and the Orbiter Transfer Vehicle, but first I've got an introduction to make. (reads from a sheet) Colonel Thomas H. Lord, U.S. Air Force, retired, still active Air Force National Guard. He has logged over eight thousand hours of flying time, including fifty-eight hundred in jet aircraft. He holds two Distinguished Flying Crosses, the NASA Exceptional Service Medal, the Space Trophy, the Yuri Gagarin Medal, the Kitty Hawk Award, the Goddard Trophy -- (looks up) I don't need to go on with this. You know Colonel Lord as a veteran of the Gemini and Apollo programs, and that's why he's here. At my request, he's returning to active duty as Crew Training Chief.

There is a BUZZ in the room as the Young Astronauts stir and cast glances at each other.

ED (CONT.) (CONT'D)
Now, it's going to take Colonel
Lord a few months to get up to
speed, but when he does, watch out.
In the meantime, I want you all to
make him feel at home here.
Because this is his home.

INT. CAFETERIA, JOHNSON SPACE CENTER--DAY

Drew is seated at a lunch table with several other Young
Astronauts,

including veteran shuttle pilot Mike Vaughn, Drew, CLIVE
THOMPSON, a black aeronautical engineer, ALLAN PATOSKI, a
systems specialist, and SHARON BLACKWELL, a physicist.

MIKE
I don't care if he went to the
Moon. There were other people in
line for that job -- people who
knew a lot more about the program.

SHARON
Tindall asked him for his
autograph.

MIKE
Maybe we oughta build a shrine.

CLIVE
Chill out ... the guy's a legend.

Allan's peeling a big orange, and grabs another off Sharon's
tray. Stuffs both inside his NASA jumpsuit. He stands and
leans over Sharon to get Clive's attention ...

ALLAN
(indicating his 'breasts')
Go ahead, feel 'em.

Clive grins, feels the breasts. Sharon's shaking her head ...

ALLAN (CONT.) (CONT'D)
Now ask me if I'm offended.

CLIVE
Are you offended, honey?

ALLAN
(falsetto)
Course I'm not offended.

Meantime, Sharon has positioned a serrated steak knife between Allan's legs, holding it close against the seam of his jumpsuit.

SHARON
Don't move Patoski ... the family
jewels are at stake.

With her other hand, she coolly grabs a hot dog off his plate ... pushes one end down against her own plate so the dog peeks out obscenely from the bun

SHARON (CONT'D)
(addressing the wienie)
Hey little fella, you're
not offended are you?
(she takes a big bite)

Tommy's standing in the cafeteria line with DANIEL
TAWAKWAPTIWA, an American Indian in his early thirties.

TOMMY
I'm sorry -- would you repeat that?

DANIEL
Daniel Tawakwaptiwa, Colonel. It's
Hopi.

TOMMY
(noticing Vernon's flight
jacket)
You Air Force?

DANIEL
Was ... now I'm a civilian.
Astrophysicist.

TOMMY
(to himself)
A Hopi astrophysicist.

CUT TO:

Tommy and Daniel approach the table where Drew and the others are sitting. Mike Vaughn is in the middle of telling a story.

MIKE
Okay, so they put him in a cave.

Seeing Tommy arrive, Mike abruptly stands up, as do all the others at the table. Tommy is a little embarrassed by this show of respect.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Mike Vaughn, Colonel Lord.

TOMMY
Sure, I remember you you flew
STS 27 with a military payload
(Mike nods) and it's Captain
Broussard, right?

DREW
Yes sir.

TOMMY
May I join you?

MIKE
Sure. Have a seat.

They all sit down. The others introduce themselves in turn.

CLIVE
Clive Thompson.

TOMMY
Clive.

ALLAN
Allan Patoski.

TOMMY

Tommy Lord. Don't let me interrupt. You were telling a story.

MIKE

(embarrassed)

Oh, well, it's not really....

TOMMY

Something about a guy in a cave.

DREW

Come on, Mike.

MIKE

Okay. It was Thurgood.

DANIEL

Uh-oh. I've heard this story.

MIKE

He's in this cave, and he's supposed to be in there for two weeks so they can study his circadian rhythms. So he's got sensors all over his body, right? And he's got this anal probe.

SHARON

A what?

MIKE

A wire up his kazoo.

Sharon SNICKERS. Tommy glances at her.

MIKE (CONT'D)

It's a superconductive wire that goes all the way to the control panel on the surface.

ALLAN

That's what I call an invasion of privacy.

MIKE

Wait a minute. So one night he's
in the cave reading a book and
there's a thunderstorm outside.
And this bolt of lightning --

CLIVE

No!

Pause. Drew looks a little horrified, then CRACKS UP.

DREW

That's not a true story, Mike.

MIKE

It is! Why do you think he walks
like that?

Mike indicates another Astronaut -- THURGOOD -- at the other
end of the lunchroom. He is holding a tray and walking
awkwardly with his legs spread far apart.

The whole table, including Tommy, breaks into LAUGHTER.

LATER

As the lunch group breaks up, each
carrying a tray towards the cleanup
area, Mike sidles up to Tommy ...

MIKE

I wanted to let you know what I'm
doing with this group.

TOMMY

Stands to reason you're not a baby
sitter.

MIKE

No ... Mac wanted someone with real
time experience running the show.
Current real-time experience.

They each dump trash off their trays, then set them down on
the wash line ...

TOMMY
Well from now on mister, you'll get
your current real-time experience
watching me run the show.

MONTAGE (MUSIC)

A. INT. OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on a model of the Space Shuttle Orbiter. INTO FRAME a human finger, which opens the Payload Bay doors.

SHOT WIDENS to find an ENGINEER pointing out features inside the Payload Bay. On the blackboard behind him are set of complex astrophysics glyphs.

ON TOMMY, taking notes. He's lost.

B. INT. COMPUTER TRAINING ROOM--DAY

Tommy watches four young astronauts sitting at computer consoles, entering programming. Mike Vaughn is explaining what the other astronauts are doing.

CUT TO:

Tommy sits at one of the consoles, tentatively punching the keyboard. After a moment the screen flashes a message: SORRY, CHARLIE. YOU CRASHED.

C. INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE -- DAY

Tommy is bent over a stack of books, deep in study. He has a pencil behind his ear, and makes occasional notations.

D. INT. CANTEEN

Tommy puts coins into a vending machine and gets peanuts. He is already holding a bottle of Coke.

E. INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Tommy opens the package of peanuts and pours it into the Coke. He takes a long swig, then returns to his studies. He looks exhausted.

F. INT. AFT CREW STATION, PAYLOAD BAY MOCK-UP

In the aft station of the Orbiter mock-up, Drew operates the controls of the of the Remote Manipulator Arm. Tommy and two other Astronauts stand behind her. Drew is intense, completely focused. It's tricky.

In response to her controls, the Remote Manipulator Arm inside the Payload Bay grips a giant balloon from the cargo hold and sets it outside the spacecraft. Drew relaxes, then moves aside for Tommy to take the controls. With some difficulty Tommy guides the arm down to the balloons. Drew and the others are impressed.

The arm begins to grip one of the balloons.

Tommy, concentrating, closes its hold.

ON Drew, watching him intensely.

ANGLE

Suddenly, the balloon BURSTS.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Other astronauts exchange looks, stifled laughter. Tommy starts over.

G. INDECIPHERABLE BLACKBOARD

On a blackboard covered with arcane mathematical calculations, an EXPERT is going over complicated computational algorithms, necessary in the event of a software crash.

EXPERT

Your Delta release point will be defined by several heat factors as you re-enter.

ALLAN
(whispering lasciviously
to Sharon)
Your delta's burning down my
heatshield ... request immediate re
entry.

SHARON
(LOUD, pissed off and
laughing in spite of
herself)
You NASTY FUCKER!
(looking around the room
as everyone but the
expert breaks up))
You should hear what he said to me!

INT. TOMMY'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Tommy's face, covered with shaving cream, is staring out of his bathroom cabinet mirror. Against his naked chest, we notice a small gold medallion hanging on a thin gold chain around his neck. He is lip-synching the words of the FEMALE TAPE VOICE playing in the BG...

FEMALE TAPE VOICE
Grapple capture can be effected
both manually and automatically.
Once the Orbiter has maneuvered to
capture position, turn the mode
switch on the manipulator arm
control panel to Orbiter Unloaded
position and...

Tommy begins to shave as the recorded Voice continues.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Three ENGINEERS sit in front of a bank of computers, sharing a box of donuts and sipping coffee. Before them is a large box on hydraulic legs; it is the Shuttle Simulator, and it is rocking back and forth, assuming different positions.

Tommy wanders into the room. He takes a donut from the box on the table.

TOMMY
Who's in the box?

ENGINEER 1
Drew Broussard. She's been in
there all night.

DREW'S VOICE
(over intercom)
Guys? Can we run through this set
again?

The Engineers GROAN.

INT. SIMULATOR

Drew sits in the pilot's seat in the Simulator when Tommy
comes up through the hatch, carrying a couple of donuts.

TOMMY
Mind if I come aboard?

DREW
(surprised)
Oh -- hello sir.

Tommy sits in the co-pilot's seat. He offers her a donut.

TOMMY
Can the 'sir'. I feel old enough
already. Had breakfast yet?

DREW
(taking one)
Mmm, thanks.

TOMMY
I was reading one of your papers
this morning. "The Detection of O2
Lines in the Martian Spectrum."
(pause) I made it through the
first two paragraphs.

Drew watches as Tommy lovingly fingers the instruments on the
control panel.

DREW
Your kind of place, huh?

TOMMY
Must be a thousand switches --

DREW
Fourteen hundred and forty.

Tommy's face lights up at this prospect.

TOMMY
My kind of place.

Drew LAUGHS despite her natural reserve.

DREW
Want to take it for a spin?

Tommy looks at her: It's obvious.

DREW (CONT'D)
(through the intercom to
the Engineers)
You guys mind if Colonel Lord takes
it around the block?

ENGINEER VO
No problem.

DREW
Why don't you start us out at OMS
one burn.

ENGINEER VO
You got it.

DREW
(to Tommy)
Put on your headset.

The windows of the simulator grow dark and are filled with abstract computer images that race by at accelerated speed, like a videotape running on fast-forward. Finally the correct point in the program is reached, and in the windows of the Simulator appears a computerized image of the rim of the

Earth.

DREW (CONT'D)

Okay, we've just dropped our
External Tank. We need a burn to
get us into orbit.

TOMMY

Give me a hint.

DREW

(indicating a switch on
the control panel)

Here.

ENGINEER VO

This is Control. You are go for
OMS-one burn, over.

TOMMY

Roger. OMS-one, out.

The Simulator begins to rumble, in approximation of the
increased velocity of the orbital burn.

DREW

Push the DAP switch there.

TOMMY

This one?

DREW

Right. Then log it in on the
keyboard.

Tommy does so.

DREW (CONT'D)

We're ready for cut-off.

TOMMY

(noticing the read-out)

There. Control, we have OMS cut
off, over. (to Drew) Okay, what do
I need to shut down? Fuel Feed
Controller?

DREW
(pointing to panel)
There.

TOMMY
APU Control.

DREW
(impressed)
There.

TOMMY
What else? Umbilical doors?

Drew punches a command into the keyboard.

DREW
We'll let the computer handle it.

ENGINEER VO
Welcome to orbit, Colonel.

The Simulator coasts above the curve of the idealized Earth.
Tommy and Drew look at it wistfully.

DREW
I always like to see the sunrise
coming over the Bahama Banks.
(pause) Of course, you've seen the
real thing.

TOMMY
You're ready to go, aren't you?

DREW
I'm beginning to wonder if it'll
ever happen. I've been here four
years and I haven't gotten a crew
assignment yet.

TOMMY
I don't think you have anything to
worry about.

Caught off guard by this unexpected compliment, Drew looks out the window.

DREW

Can you see Ponca City, Oklahoma,
from space?

TOMMY

I don't remember looking for it.
That your home town?

Drew nods, studies him for a moment.

DREW

Why'd you get back in the program?

Tommy considers long enough for Drew to feel uneasy.

DREW (CONT'D)

I mean, you don't have to tell me --

TOMMY

You know how Yuri Gagarin died?
First man in space?

DREW

A plane crash?

TOMMY

He was drunk on vodka. Chasing a
moose in a jet trainer over the
Siberian tundra.

Drew looks at him, intrigued, a wee bit tempted to be amused
... until she sees the sadness in his eyes.

ENGINEER VO

Drew, this is control. Start your
de-orbit burn in five seconds.

DREW

Roger. (to Tommy) Time to head
home.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE CENTER - LATE AFTERNOON

A group of young astronauts are leaving for the day en masse.
Behind the main group, Drew walks alone.

ALLAN

We still on at Captain Benny's
tonight?

MIKE

o'clock. Oyster orgy.

SHARON

You guys could use a few.

ALLAN

Oooh ... Blackwell was Marines
wasn't she ... sounds like she's
still looking for a few good men.

MIKE

Sharon, did you ask Drew if she
wanted to join us?

SHARON

You wanna have a good time or you
wanna lecture on the fine points of
orbital mechanics.

ALLAN

Oral mechanics sounds like a good
time.

SHARON

You are so fuckin nasty!

As the group disperses to their various cars, a preoccupied
Drew brings up the rear, arms loaded with books and papers.
We follow as she approaches a beat-up old Chevy convertible
where she dumps her load in the back seat. She climbs in,
and abruptly backs out of her parking place, never noticing
Tommy behind her. He literally has to jump up and over her
trunk to avoid being run down ... and winds up sprawled in
her back seat. Drew is aghast

DREW

Oh my God, oh my GOD ... are you
ok!

Tommy's a little dazed at first ... then grimaces. Still
horrified by what she's done, Drew is speechless.

TOMMY

I can hear it now ... "He was an
Apollo astronaut ... distinguished
pilot, a credit to his nation ...
and today we commit his mortal
remains to Space....Space number
37, Parking Lot 3A".

She begins to giggle ...

DREW

I'm really sorry.

TOMMY

That's alright. I planned on
aerobatics this afternoon ... maybe
not so close to the ground.
(pause) Say, you want to see how
the older generation flies?

DREW

(still a little flustered)
Yeah, sure, of course. You ...
want to go in my car?

TOMMY

Do I get to ride in the front seat?

He climbs forward and they drive away.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL AIRPORT - LATE AFTERNOON

In front of a small hangar, a beautiful fire-engine-red
biplane. Tommy lowers the engine cowling after completing
his preflight inspection, while Drew stands nearby admiring
the sleek little craft.

DREW
It's a Pitts isn't it.

TOMMY
Yep.

DREW
Is it yours?

TOMMY
Belongs to a friend of mine. A few
of us kinda swap off on airplanes
around here. Go ahead and climb
aboard up front.

She nimbly springs into her seat in the open cockpit and Tommy takes the seat behind her. Both don radio headphones and he cranks up the engine. The prop THRUMS into life and the plane taxis to the runway. With a short burst of speed, they're airborne.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. BIPLANE - LATE AFTERNOON

SERIES OF SCENES ... VARIOUS ANGLES, INSIDE/OUTSIDE, AND ON
THE AIRCRAFT

They gain altitude, first out across the coastal tidelands, then south, now skimming along a few feet above the green water of the busy ship channel ... dodging barges and monstrous freighters like some madcap seabird.

Finally out over sandbars and tidal marsh, Tommy pushes the little plane straight up in a WHINING vertical climb ... until its motion is suspended at the top of its stall, pushes the nose over to race straight down in the maneuver aerobats call the Hammerhead. Then into a series of snap rolls, inverted spins, loops, and rolls.

During each maneuver, in RADIO VO, we hear Tommy describing the figure, then checking to see how his passenger is holding up ...

TOMMY

OK ... this is a hammerhead ...
dive for airspeed ... about 200
knots ... level off ... pull to the
vertical ... about 4 G's here
wings level ... airspeed bleeding
off ... now we're near stall and
we'll kick hard left rudder ... and
straight vertical downline. Now
power back and pull to level.
Hammerhead ... how do you feel.

Drew signals 'thumbs up'.

After a series of exotic figures

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Are you up for something a little
different?

DREW

How different?

TOMMY

Only thing we haven't tried is a
Lomcevak.

DREW

I've read about it. Go for it.

TOMMY

You might wanna hang on.

Lomcevak ... the most amazing figure in aerobatics. From
level flight, the Pitts suddenly goes crazy in the air,
seeming to tumble out of control ... looking for all the
world as if it's going to tear itself apart. Nevertheless
... the aircraft recovers and resumes level flight.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Lomcevak means headache in
Czechoslovakian.

DREW

I believe it.

TOMMY

What do you say we call it a day.

Once again skimming low over the golden water, setting sun behind them...

EXT. SMALL AIRPORT - DUSK

The plane taxis up to the hangar and Tommy cuts the engine. He jumps out, then notices Drew is struggling a bit to get out of her seat. He reaches up to steady her and catches her as she stumbles out of the plane. She's limp in his arms and both are aware of their closeness ...

DREW

Excuse me.

She disengages, disappears behind the hangar, and throws up. Tommy's concerned, but when she returns, she's all smiles.

DREW (CONT'D)

That was fucking fantastic!

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - EVENING

At a table in a restaurant/bar overlooking Galveston Bay, Tommy and Drew are relaxed like old friends.

TOMMY

We really thought we were gonna lose 'em. Most of their power was down ... the only way we could get 'em back was to slingshot the capsule around the Moon.

DREW

Apollo 13 ... not a lucky number.

TOMMY

Fred Haise told me it was the coldest he's ever been in his life. Cause of course they couldn't spare any power to heat the capsule. The newspapers never got hold of it ...

but they almost froze to death up there.

DREW

How bout you? How close have you come?

Tommy thinks about this, face serious as if contemplating the ultimate danger ...

TOMMY

(grim)

I had a few close calls
the one that really sticks in my
mind I was walking through a
parking lot ...(breaks out
laughing) as he watches her face
When they've both managed to settle
down, he looks at her with a
curious longing ...

TOMMY (CONT.) (CONT'D)

There's no audience for an old
warrior like a pretty young maiden.

Drew looks around the room, pours the rest of her beer into her glass ...

DREW

(looking up at Tommy)

Am I blushing?

INT. TRAINING POOL - UNDERWATER

WIDE SHOT: WET-F (Weightless Environment Test Facility) A full-scale model of the Orbiter Payload Bay rests in thirty feet of water at the bottom of an enormous indoor pool. Two Astronauts in space suit diving gear drift about in the distance, practicing weightless tasks. MUSIC.

UNDERWATER ... FROM BELOW, INTO FRAME: Drew, wearing a bathing suit and conventional scuba gear, carrying a wrench. FOLLOW HER as she moves toward the Orbiter.

INT. TRAINING POOL

Drew comes up from the bottom of the pool. FOLLOW her toward the surface.

EXT. POOLSIDE

Drew pulls herself up to the side of the pool and begins to take off her equipment, as Tommy continues his discourse
INT. POOLSIDE

Several Astronauts are standing beside the pool wearing bathrobes, including Daniel and Clive. Tommy is among them. He is holding forth ... clipped military cadence.

TOMMY

Apollo One, you had a short circuit
in the wiring. Apollo Thirteen,
defective oxygen tank. The
Russians in the Salyut Space
Station died because of some glitch
in the pressure valve. The point
is, there's always going to be
something ready to bite you. Nine
times out of ten, it's going to be
something you never thought of.

CLIVE

So what do you do about it?

TOMMY

You learn to trust your instincts.
The trouble with you scientists is
you think too much with your heads.

MIKE

What do you think with?

TOMMY

My nerves, my gut, whatever's
handy.

DREW

You make it sound like anybody who
dies has done something wrong.
Challenger had a great crew.

TOMMY
(softer)
Well, there is such a thing as bad
luck. The important thing is to be
good and lucky.

INT. CHANGING ROOM - DAY

Back in the women's locker room, Sharon, and a couple of other women are dressing after the session at the pool. Clad only in bra and panties, Drew leans over the counter at the edge of a line of wash basins. With her usually severe clothing off, she's nothing short of smashing.

She peers into the mirror, studying her face from different angles. Raises her hair up and holds the gleaming pile on top of her head with a Bardot moue. Pulls out a lipstick. Sharon notices ...

INT./EXT. KC 135 - DAY

A wide-bodied cargo plane, the KC 135, dives for speed, then climbs steeply into the upper atmosphere. Zero-G is simulated as the plane begins to arc over the top of its loop. The WHINE of its jets is distant.

PILOT'S VOICE
OK boys and girls, here we go.

Inside the plane, the walls are padded, and the young astronauts begin to float, free of gravity.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF WEIGHTLESSNESS

Daniel is smiling like a child whose dreams have come true.

Drew rises, paddling her arms, laughing.

Tommy floats, holding himself off the ceiling with his hands, watchful and amused. Sharon passes by smiling.

Drew tucks herself into a ball and Mike and Clive play catch with her. As Mike catches her, he holds her a moment til she wriggles free.

LATER

From EXT. we see the big jet climbing again. Inside, a couple of astronauts sit on the floor holding their stomachs, nauseated. Others, especially Tommy and Drew, are unaffected.

TOMMY

Buck up gang ... only sixteen more to go. (aside to Drew) You ok?

A smile and thumbs up

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(smiles in return)

Must be your aerobatic training.

Mike watches their exchange with a jealous frown ...

CUT TO:

EXT. JSC CAMPUS - DAY

Tommy, walking across the campus, finds Drew sitting on a bench, eating a sandwich and writing on a legal pad. He hesitates a moment, then walks up to her.

TOMMY

Working picnic? (Drew looks up, smiles) Whatcha got there?

DREW

It's personal -- it's a list.

Tommy sits on the bench, not too close.

TOMMY

A list?

DREW

It's -- okay, it's some ideas about how to be less structured.

TOMMY

Less structured.

DREW
And more spontaneous.

TOMMY
What'd you come up with?

DREW
How about dinner at my house?

TOMMY
I have a date tonight.

DREW
Oh.

TOMMY
With my granddaughter. But I'm
free tomorrow.

DREW
Great ... see you about seven?

TOMMY
I'll be there with bells on.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Tommy and KATIE exit with the theater crowd -- many children.
A precocious eight-year-old, Katie's a pretty little flaxen
haired maiden, the apple of her grandfather's eye. The
marquee advertises Dumbo.

TOMMY
Did you notice how he was wagging
his ears, Katie? That creates
lift. When the air pressure
beneath his ears is greater than
the pressure above his ears, the
elephant rises from the ground.

KATIE
But elephants can't fly, Grandpapa.

TOMMY
Let's get some ice cream, princess.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - NIGHT

Tommy and Katie are seated, eating ice cream.

TOMMY

Your boyfriend? I didn't know
girls your age had boyfriends.
What's his name?

KATIE

Joshua Billings. He's seven.

TOMMY

So he's in the, uh, third grade?

KATIE

(scandalized)
Second!

TOMMY

Oh, yeah.

KATIE

(brightly)
We French kiss.

TOMMY

You do?

KATIE

He's the best French kisser in the
school. The other day he did it to
the teacher.

TOMMY

A teacher!

KATIE

Here, I'll show you.

She walks over to Tommy and takes his hand and smooches it
noisily.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Ooo la la!

Tommy is relieved and charmed.

TOMMY
Merci, mademoiselle.

Katie GIGGLES.

LATER ...

EXT./INT. MARGARET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Carrying a sleepy little girl, Tommy RINGS the doorbell at the entrance of his daughter's house. MARGARET opens the door. She's a pretty young woman, perhaps 28 years old, but the tight set of her mouth suggests tension, perhaps unhappiness.

Seeing Katie is only half awake, she motions Tommy to follow her quietly back to the little girl's room. Where she turns down the covers, pulls her daughter's shoes off, and Tommy gently lays Katie in her bed with a kiss. They stand a moment regarding the sleeping child in the dimness of a nightlight ... then, moving together like spirits, they slip soundlessly out of the room.

In the kitchen ...

MARGARET
Would you like a cup of coffee.

Tommy nods.

TOMMY
Where's Brad?

MARGARET
(a little uncomfortably)
He had to stick around San Antonio
an extra day for meetings.

As she makes a fresh pot, she glances at her father. For once, not the room-rocking Air Force Colonel/Apollo astronaut ... he's silent, peaceful ...

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You look like you've been to church, Colonel.

TOMMY

(hesitantly)

I had the strangest feeling a minute ago. (pause) Katie reminds me so much of you when you were a little girl. Standing there in the dark it sounds crazy I found myself wondering what year it was, who was President ... when I'd get to go to the Moon.

Margaret pours two mugs of coffee, suddenly realizes what all this means ... nods at her discovery ...

MARGARET

Mom told me you signed up again. You're actually trying to go back aren't you.

TOMMY

(avoiding her eyes)

It's what I do best, Margaret. It's what I know.

MARGARET

(bitterly)

You never change, do you. Colonel Thomas M. Lord ... bound for glory.

They stare at each other in outraged silence for a moment ...

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(quietly now)

There's a little girl in there who thinks you're Superman. But just like the rest of us, she'll never know whether you're a human being.

They stare at each other another beat ...

TOMMY

I promised Katie I'd take her out
to the ranch Saturday morning if
that's still ok.

Margaret nods ... Tommy quietly leaves.

EXT. DREW'S HOUSE - DUSK

Seabirds CALL as low clouds, pink in the dying light, scud
above the broad waters of Galveston Bay. Here and there, the
placid surface is broken by the rotting piers of old gas
wells and on the nearest, a solitary cormorant stands
sentinel, wings held outstretched to dry ... sharp featured
predator, still as a pterodactyl in a museum diorama. PAN
ACROSS to a beach house, raised up on stilts near the
shoreline. In the distance, the lights of refineries and
fishing boats.

INT. DREW'S HOUSE

Inside ... kitchen, small dining area, and living room all
occupy the same long, high-ceilinged space. The walls are
lined with shelves overflowing with books, journals, and
technical reports.

Above the couch in the living room, a Viking photo of the
Martian surface, and ranged around the room are artists'
depictions of other planets, other galaxies. The place has a
comfortable feeling, layered by the soft SUSURRATION of the
tides outside.

Drew is busy in the kitchen. At the sound of a KNOCK at the
door, she turns ... and we see almost a different person.
Long shimmering hair down below her shoulders, flowery
printed sundress draped over tanned shoulders, brown feet in
delicate sandals. She takes a moment to gather herself ...
then walks to the door and opens ...

DREW

Hi.

TOMMY

(taken aback by her
transformation)

Hello.

DREW
Come on in.

Turns to lead the way, then notices he hasn't followed ...
and looking back, sees him still standing transfixed in the
doorway ...

DREW (CONT.) (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

TOMMY
Nothing only I'll never be
able to picture you as one of the
boys again.

EXT. DREW'S DECK - NIGHT

They've finished dinner. Out on the deck, Tommy sits in a
wicker couch, staring at the lights across the bay. Drew
comes out bearing a tray with two cups of coffee and a bottle
... sits down next to him. She hands Tommy a cigar and a
book of matches. He lights it, then notices she has a cigar
in her mouth and is waiting for him to light it. He does so
without comment.

DREW
Would you like a shot in your
coffee?

TOMMY
What is it?

DREW
Yukon Jack.

TOMMY
(holding out his cup)
You sure have a lot of bad habits.

DREW
Comes from being around men all the
time.

TOMMY
(noticing the telescope on
the deck)
Did you always want to be an
astronomer?

DREW
Thanks to my Dad. He used to take
me and my brothers camping on the
Cimarron River. On clear nights,
we'd lie on the grass and he'd
point out the constellations.
He knew a story about every
mythical hero in the sky. Perseus,
Hercules, Andromeda.

TOMMY
(a little guiltily)
Sounds like a great father.

DREW
He made us feel like we could do
anything we wanted.

TOMMY
I'll bet he's feelin' pretty good
about the way things turned out for
his little girl.

DREW
I know he's proud of me. But he
still finds time to worry.

TOMMY
That's how fathers are. Maybe
cause we're enough older than our
kids to know that bad things happen
even in the best of times ... even
to the best of kids.

DREW
It's not so much about my safety --
he takes it for granted I'm in a
dangerous business. I think it's
more he wonders if I'll ever find
time for the kind of happiness he

and my mother have together.

TOMMY
Will you?

DREW
Maybe. How bout your dad ... he
must have been the proudest man on
Earth.

TOMMY
He wasn't around on Earth when I
went to the Moon. (pause) But
he'd have taken a dim view of
spending billions of dollars to
pick up a few rocks and take a few
pictures.

DREW
(lays her cigar down)
It was so much more than that.

TOMMY
For some people.

DREW
For alot of people for me.

Tommy puts his arm around her, a friendly gesture.

TOMMY
Thanks pal.

As they look at one another, her arms reach out around his
shoulders ... she pulls him to her and kisses him
passionately. He gently disengages ... and she realizes he's
not playing. She turns away ... humiliated, embarrassed ...

DREW
Oh God, I'm sorry. I didn't mean
... oh shit ...

She rises and walks away from him to the railing at the edge
of the deck. He follows

TOMMY
(firmly)
Drew, listen. It's not you ...

DREW
(interrupting)
You don't have to explain anything.

He tries to turn her around to face him ... she resists ...

TOMMY
I care about what happens to you.
And I don't want to wind up makin'
a godawful mess of things.

DREW
(turning to face him, eyes
flashing)
You got the wrong address if you
were expecting a back seat, rubbers
and tears, Tommy. Do I look like a
schoolgirl to you?

TOMMY
(taken aback)
Not hardly.

DREW
Well then goddammit, don't treat me
like one. I was only the third
woman ever accepted to the Air
Force Academy. And I still had to
bust my ass for six years to get to
fly the same planes you do. And
I'm still bustin my ass trying to
be the first woman on the Moon.
That hasn't left me a whole lot of
time for any kind of social life.
So if you want to fuck around and
play mind games, you oughta join
the Junior League.

TOMMY
(slow grin)
Whew. When you get goin, you
really lean into it.

Beat ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

You wanna know how I honestly feel
... my knees are still shakin from
that first kiss ...

Drew tries to stay mad, but can't hold on to it. She watches him envelop her in his arms ... no hesitations now. Long languorous kiss ... over their shoulders, the lights of fishing boats dance on the black surface of the bay.

DISSOLVE TO:

Early light ... the bay is empty and calm. The sun's first deep crimson edge shimmers on the watery horizon.

INT. DREW'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Tommy's sleeping form is sprawled across the bed as Drew enters with two steaming cups of coffee. He's awakened by her kiss ... looks up to see her seated beside him, completely, unself-consciously naked.

TOMMY

I've died and gone to heaven.

DREW

And don't you forget it.

A shadow crosses his face ...

DREW (CONT'D)

What is it?

TOMMY

Trying to remember my dream.

DREW

You called out for Jimbo. I guess
that's Admiral Pruitt?

Tommy doesn't answer, but she knows she's right ...

DREW (CONT'D)
You two were pretty close, huh.

TOMMY
Not really.

She looks at him, confused ... he considers a moment ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)
But we went to the Moon together.

DREW
I saw you on TV. I was watching
when you climbed down that ladder.

He pulls her down to him, kisses her ...

DREW (CONT'D)
When you reached the surface, you
turned and looked around and I told
my Daddy, "I'd give anything to see
what he sees."

TOMMY
Take it from me, the view's better
from right here.

More kisses ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)
You got anything on today?

DREW
(sultry pout, gracious
Southern accent)
Why I'm not ready to put
anything on just yet, Colonel.

TOMMY
I see. Well do you 'spose after a
while, you might put something on?

DREW
I'm listenin.

TOMMY

I told my granddaughter Katie I'd
take her out to the ranch this
morning. You want to come with us?

DREW

Momma always told me, 'first things
first'.

She covers him ...

EXT. MARGARET'S HOUSE - DAY

Tommy's at the door when Katie opens it. She jumps into his
arms.

KATIE

Grandpapa!

Margaret appears with a small pink duffel, sees Drew sitting
in Tommy's pickup ...

MARGARET

Who's your friend?

TOMMY

She works at the Center. Come meet
her.

Margaret's reluctant, but her curiosity wins out ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Margaret, Katie, this is Drew.

DREW

Pleased to meet you.

MARGARET

Hi.

Katie is tugging on her grandfather's arm ...

KATIE

Come see the new puppies,
Grandpapa.

He's drawn back towards the house, leaving the two women alone ...

MARGARET

(guarded)

The Colonel says you're in the space business.

DREW

About as deep as you can get ...
I'm trying to buy a ticket off planet.

MARGARET

Astronaut? (Drew nods) There was a time I thought I wanted to follow in the Colonel's footsteps ...

Tommy and Katie return ...

TOMMY

Pile in, princess. (turns to Margaret) I'll have her back after supper.

Father and daughter's leave-taking is all stiff formality ...
Tommy climbs into the pickup, waves, and they're off.
Margaret stands looking bleakly after the departing truck ...

EXT. TOMMY'S RANCH - DAY

FOLLOW a Great Blue heron as it flies over a murky creek.
FIND Tommy standing waist-deep in the water while Katie and Drew watch from above on the bank. Tommy's groping under water.

TOMMY

They like to hide way back under the bank. Deep back in the holes.

KATIE

What about snakes, Grandpapa? I wouldn't put my hands under there.

TOMMY
You have to keep an eye out for
water moccasins.

He continues to probe the muddy bank with his hands.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
This is how we used to fish back in
Missouri. . . Whoop! . . . No,
false alarm.

KATIE
Nana says you're trying to go back
to the Moon.

TOMMY
Did she tell you that?

KATIE
I heard her tell Mama on the phone.

TOMMY
Wait a minute I feel
something. (he's intent and moving
very carefully) You want to catch
him behind the gills.

All at once he yanks hard and pulls a good-sized catfish up
out of water. It shakes violently in his hands. Katie
SCREAMS and almost loses her footing . Tommy skillfully
tosses the fish up on the bank and the little girl dances
away.

KATIE
Ooh! He's so big. Come up here
and catch him before he gets away!

He scrambles up on the bank, kneels, and picks up the
squirming catfish. Katie moves close to look and touch ...

KATIE (CONT'D)
He's so smooth ... look at his
whiskers. (pause) But he can't
breathe.

TOMMY

You're right ... he's havin' a hard time. But old man Catfish has been around almost since the dinosaurs. He's able to live longer out of water than most fish.

KATIE

But he's not happy.

TOMMY

Let's ask him. (brings the fish up close to their faces) Mr. Catfish, how y'all be doin today?

CATFISH

(bad ventriloquism)
It's a beautiful day, isn't it.
Who's this purty little girl here?

TOMMY

Her name's Katie.

CATFISH

Does she eat fish?

KATIE

Only when mama makes me.

CATFISH

Well, it's been nice talkin to ya.
But if you don't mind, I'll be
runnin along now.

TOMMY

Think we should let him go,
princess?

Katie's enchanted and nods enthusiastically. Tommy lays the fish across her open arms and she pitches him back into the creek. Drew watches their antics with a smile, but doesn't intrude ...

EXT. TOMMY'S RANCH - DAY

They walk along a flower-bordered path, cattle grazing contentedly in the BG.

KATIE

What's it like to be a fish out of water?

TOMMY

A little scary. It's bein' where you don't belong.

KATIE

Like in space?

TOMMY

Uh huh. But some folks get used to that too. People go places the other animals can't go. We take everything we need with us ... like taking air into space so we can breathe. We learned how to make wings to fly and boats that swim under water

KATIE

Summarines.

TOMMY

(smiles)

Right. Some of us just have to be fish out of water. Alot of folks don't understand that. Maybe your mama and your grandmother don't.

KATIE

I do, Grandpapa.

A cottontail darts across the road ahead of them and Katie delightedly gives chase ...

DREW

She's a happy little girl. (Tommy smiles) What's the matter with her mama?

Tommy face hardens as he looks intently off into the distance...

DREW (CONT'D)

Sorry, it's none of my business.

TOMMY

No it's no secret the way
Margaret feels about her old man.
I wasn't around alot of the time
she was growing up. I guess we
never really got to know each
other.

DREW

It's never too late.

TOMMY

Sometimes it is too late.

EXT. MARGARET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Back from the ranch, we hear happy SINGING from Tommy's truck
as it pulls into Margaret's driveway. Katie takes Drew's
hand as they head for the door ... RING the doorbell. After
a moment, Margaret opens ...

MARGARET

(distracted and visibly
upset)

Come on in I'm on the phone.

They troop inside, following Margaret into the kitchen where
she's already picked up the telephone again ...

MARGARET (CONT'D)

That's what you said yesterday,
Brad. (pause) So when will you
get back? (pause) Alright
call me. (hangs up the phone)

TOMMY

What's goin' on Margaret?

MARGARET
Go to your room, Katie.

KATIE
But mama!

TOMMY
Go on darlin. I'll see you real soon.

He gives her hug and she exits ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Look Margaret, if you and Brad are having problems, maybe I can help.

MARGARET
(dripping sarcasm)
Don't you make the perfect marriage counselor.

TOMMY
That's not fair.

MARGARET
(furious)
Fair! How fair were you to Mother?

DREW
(heading for the door)
I think I better sit this one out.

MARGARET
No -- you seem like a nice person.
If you're involved with my father,
you have every right to hear about
America's hero. (pause) Well he
was my hero too. Not that Mom and
I saw that much of him.

TOMMY
(quietly)
Margaret, that's over and done with.

MARGARET
Not by a long shot, Colonel.

TOMMY
(angry)
How long are you gonna wallow in
the past?

MARGARET
Wallow!? Lemme tell you about
wallowing, Pop. It's when a
seventeen-year-old girl walks into
a downtown Houston restaurant and
sees her old man, who's supposed to
be out of town, wallowing in a
leather booth with some bimbo who's
not her mother. You didn't see me
- but I saw you alright.

Pause ...

MARGARET (CONT'D)
And she wasn't the only one was
she, Colonel. You had your choice
didn't you ... you could pick and
choose.

Tommy's shaken by this revelation ... for a moment, dead
silence.

TOMMY
(quietly sincere)
I made my share of mistakes, honey.
I'm sorry I made you and your
mother suffer for 'em. I hope I've
learned something since then.

MARGARET
(cold fury)
I'll just bet you have.

She turns to the kitchen counter behind her, pulls out the
micro-cassette in the answering machine next to the telephone
... inserts another she's retrieved from a drawer beneath the
counter ...

MARGARET (CONT'D)

When I heard the news about Admiral
Pruitt, I thought you might want a
little keepsake from your old
partner.

Presses the message button on the answering machine ...

MESSAGE BEEP

JIMBO PRUITT VO

(desperate-sounding)

Margaret, this is Jim uh
Jim Pruitt. Margaret, I gotta talk
to Tommy. I keep leaving messages,
but he doesn't maybe he's out
of town. Cause Tommy's my friend
..... we were on the Moon
together. He'll understand the
..... (PANTING) it's hard to
understand hard to explain.
But something happened
..... not just to me happened
to all of us. Margaret, I
gotta tell Tommy. He's the only
one who can help (pleading)
Please talk to him. I'm at
..... uh 805 ...
640-7397. AUDIBLE CLICK

Tommy's face is dead white eyes glassy, trying hard to
swallow. Margaret sees the effect on her father, buries her
face in her hands and bursts into tears.

Drew is stunned, but takes Tommy's arm, leads him out the
door.

EXT. MARGARET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

They walk out to the pickup and he opens the drivers-side
door. His movements are wooden. Drew slides in, but he
closes the door without getting in himself, hands her the
keys.

TOMMY
(lifeless voice)
Take the truck.

DREW
Tommy, everyone knew about Jim's
mental problems ... it wasn't your
fault.

TOMMY
Take the truck. I'll get it later.

He turns and walks off down the darkened street. She starts
the truck, backs out, drives along next to him ...

DREW
Tommy ...

TOMMY
(roars)
TAKE THE GODDAMN TRUCK AND LEAVE ME
ALONE!

She drives away ... we see his silhouette against a
streetlight, shoulders squared like an infantryman ...
marching off into darkness ...

INT. ED'S OFFICE - DAY

Ed Drummond is poring over manning charts on his cluttered
desk when Tommy steps through the door.

TOMMY
I'm glad it's not me behind that
desk.

ED
Do I take that to mean you're
enjoying your work, Crew Chief?

TOMMY
I like it fine.

ED
(suddenly grave)
Sit down Tom. (Tommy sits down
with some trepidation) I hate to
be the one to tell you this -- I
know how hard you've been training.
(hesitates)

TOMMY
Go on Ed -- spit it out.

ED
(still perfectly serious)
You know the physical you took last
week? The bad news is ... you're
in a hell of a lot better shape
than I am. (beginning to smile)
The good news is ... I'm returning
you to active status. You'll have
your shot, Tom.

Tommy's speechless, then grins like a 10-year-old rounding
the bases after his first home run.

ED (CONT'D)
(serious again)
Now don't get your hopes up too
high ...
The odds of you being assigned a
mission are damned slim. Remember,
I'm only one vote on the Selection
Committee and there are plenty of
qualified people who've been
waiting for years.

Tommy nods, but we can see he's still confident he can make
the grade...

ED (CONT'D)
Atlantis is scheduled to fly
October 7 ... that's only 10 weeks
away. The committee meets around
the first of September, so be
thinking about which of your people
you want to recommend.

MISSION TRAINING MONTAGE

Now in active mission mode, the group from whom the next flight crew will be chosen moves into an accelerated, grueling training sequence ... Tommy's grimly pushing himself to the limit ...

PHYSICAL REGIMEN

On the humid coastal plain, under a searing Texas sun, a long string of astronauts run in loose formation down a Space Center road. T-shirts and shorts are drenched in sweat. Drew jogs up next to Tommy.

DREW

I take it you picked up the truck
sometime last night.

TOMMY

Yeah.

DREW

You feel like talking about it?

TOMMY

It's not going to work between us,
Drew. I'm sorry.

Breathing heavily, Tommy sprints ahead and Allan moves up to take his place ...

ALLAN

(in Viennese accent)
Duss he remind you uff anyvun?
Your father, perhaps?

DREW

Cut it out, Allan.

She begins to run a bit faster, he tries to keep up ...

ALLAN

Do not be ashamed, Fraulein. It
iss natural you having these

drives. Iss not healthy, but iss natural.

DREW
Fuck you, Allan.

Now she literally sprints away like he's standing still ...

HIGH ALTITUDE CHAMBER

Barometric pressure and oxygen content are being lowered to simulate high altitude conditions. Drew and Mike are seated next to one another. We sense a new attraction between the two.

TOMMY
Remember the signs, people. When Patoski starts sounding funny, you know you're suffering oxygen deprivation.

HIGH 'G' CENTRIFUGE TRAINING

In EXTREME CU, we see the unrecognizably stretched face of Tommy as he whirls around the centrifuge ... crushing his body under a force of 8 G's. His lips are drawn back in a painful rictus ...

MIKE
How long has he been on there.

SHARON
I don't know exactly; but he looks like he trying to set the record.

MIKE
(near the technician's panel)
Shut it down.

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

In near-darkness, a figure tosses and turns restlessly in the sheets. An alarm clock BUZZES insistently and a hand gropes to shut it off ... then reaches out to turn on a bedside lamp. Tommy sits up blearily, stands and lurches painfully

towards the bathroom. The physical regimen is taking its toll on a 55-year-old body.

In the bathroom, he leans heavily on the wash basin, shakes several aspirin out of a bottle, downs them hastily and splashes water on his face. He looks drawn ... haggard.

INT. CONTROL ROOM/SIMULATOR/HALLWAY - VARIOUS CUTS

The three Engineers are seated at their stations in front of a computer bank and the Shuttle Simulator. Tommy stands behind them, holding his clipboard. The VOICE of Daniel Tawakwaptiwa comes over a speaker.

DANIEL VO
Control, I have SRB burnout, ready
for SRB sep, over.

TOMMY
(to Engineers)
What's the program?

ENGINEER 1
Ascent mode.

SIMULATOR
A confident Daniel checks his
readouts.

DANIEL
I have SRB sep, over.

ENGINEER 2 VO
You are negative return. Copy?

DANIEL
Roger, negative return.

CONTROL ROOM

TOMMY
Start a little fire.

The Engineers look at him in puzzlement.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Let's just see what happens.

ENGINEER 2
A little fire.

He presses a button on the control panel. An ALARM sounds.

SIMULATOR
Lights are flashing on the flight
deck.

DANIEL
(still in control)
I have a fire in avionics.
Pressing Agent Disch for Av Bay
Two.

CONTROL ROOM
The Engineer's finger presses
another button.

SIMULATOR
Another light appears on the flight
deck.

DANIEL
Smoke in cabin.

ENGINEER 2 VO
Assume POS.

Daniel starts to put on the Portable Oxygen System mask. He
is a little rattled now. Another ALARM sounds. Then
ANOTHER.

DANIEL
Roger. Fire now in Av Bay Three!
Pressing--

ENGINEER 2 VO
Assume POS!

DANIEL
Wait, I --

He presses several other buttons. There is a sudden curious SILENCE.

ENGINEER 2 VO

Uh, our sensors tell us we have an inoperative pilot.

DANIEL

What happened?

ENGINEER 2 VO

You're dead, fella. Next!

HALLWAY

Daniel with an angry set to his jaw passes Clive, who is waiting in the hallway.

SIMULATOR

Clive, with a look of surprise on his face as ALARMS light up all over the board. He fumbles for the right switches.

Gleeful looks among the Engineers as Engineer 2 presses more buttons. ALARMS in the BG.

Sharon is now in the Simulator facing the same problems.

Engineer 2 looks up at Tommy. Tommy nods dispassionately.

Mike Vaughn at the controls; he's doing better, but he can't make the ALARMS shut off.

A grim-faced Mike passes Drew in the hallway.

MIKE

They're turning us into French fries.

Drew frantically switching controls.

DREW

I have a fire in APU fuel tank!

ENGINEER 2 VO

Abort AOA.

Another ALARM sounds.

DREW

No abort! Orbiter does not
respond! Oh, crap!

The alarms suddenly SHUT OFF. Drew stares at the controls in
a fury.

CONTROL ROOM

The three Engineers lean over the
microphone and begin to SING:

ENGINEERS

"Happy trails to you!
Until we meet again . . ."

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The Astronauts have gathered for their regular Monday
meeting, which is chaired by Ed Drummond.

ED

I've got a memo from Marty
concerning abort procedures.

A general GROAN from the Astronauts.

MIKE

(angry)
Colonel Lord's creating some rather
far-fetched scenarios.

ALLAN

He finds the one spot where we
can't abort -- then he sets us on
fire.

ED

You can't abort to orbit?

SHARON

He catches us right after we've
separated the Solid Rocket Boosters
so we can't return to the launch

site. And if you try to abort once around you'll burn up before reentry.

ED

That's Tommy's job, to find our weak spots. Anybody got any thoughts on this?

Pause.

DREW

I wonder what Colonel Lord would do.

She turns to look at Tommy. Tommy approaches the blackboard and draws a globe. Around that, using the side of the chalk, he draws another circle indicating the atmosphere.

TOMMY

Now Allan's right about the abort once around. Takes too long.

Tommy draws a trajectory that goes from the launch site at Cape Canaveral and travels around the planet. He marks this trajectory AOA.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

You take the long way around ... the main engine has failed and the crew has died of smoke inhalation. If you try to return to launch site -- (he draws an arc from the launch site to just above the atmosphere, then down) -- either you burn up in the atmosphere or you land in the middle of the Atlantic.

MIKE

So what's your suggestion?

TOMMY

I was thinking about Morocco.

MIKE

Come again?

TOMMY
We've got a U.S. Naval Air Station
in Marrakech.

MIKE
How are you going to get there?
You've got main engine failure.

TOMMY
Here's the Orbiter, just above the
atmosphere, and instead of trying
AOA maybe we just flatten out and
sorta bounce --

He sketches a trajectory that makes three bounces above the
atmosphere and then descends in the approximate location of
Africa. A few people in the room roll their eyes ...

MIKE
Bounce?

TOMMY
Yeah, like a rock skipping across a
pond, only the pond is the
atmosphere and you're riding the
rock.

The room is SILENT.

ED
Could somebody run a program on
this?

TOMMY
I've already run the program.

ED
And?

TOMMY
(looking directly at Drew)
The only problem I found was
clearing customs.

EXT. JSC CAMPUS - DAY

Drew catches up with Tommy as he walks briskly towards the Admin Bldg. she's obviously put out ...

DREW

You're pushing pretty hard, aren't you.

TOMMY

I'm just making sure none of you bet your lives on state-of-the-art computer systems. Cause none of 'em are guaranteed save your bacon in an emergency.

DREW

So that beautifully choreographed performance had nothing to do with moving your own name to the top of the mission list.

Tommy stops abruptly, gives her a hard look -- then just as suddenly, turns on his heel and walks rapidly away.

INT. NASA GYMNASIUM

WIDE SHOT of the empty gymnasium, a solitary figure in the distance performing push-ups. We hear his LABORED BREATHING.

CLOSER ... The figure is Tommy. His t-shirt is soaked with sweat.

CLOSER. His face is hard and determined.

INT. SHARON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sharon's exhausted figure slumps, head buried in her arms, fast asleep in the pool of harsh light from her desk lamp. Across from her, Drew blearily takes notes from a thick technical manual.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

In the distance, the huge Saturn 5 lying in the grass, surrounded by crowds of tourists. PULL BACK through window into a small conference room, hung with photos of astronauts, shuttles, rockets. Ranged around a table, 6 men finger their pencils, jot notes on their pads, decide who gets to go

ED

Next Daniel Tawakwaptiwa.
Pilot, astrophysicist, Air Force
background, no prior mission
experience.

COMMITTEE MAN 1

What clearance level?

ED

Redline Top Secret. Put in several
years on Star Wars at Los Alamos.

COMMITTEE MAN 2

What do think, Crew Chief?

TOMMY

Daniel's top notch ... works hard,
gets along with everybody. He's
ready to go.

ED

Lord, Colonel Thomas M. how'd
he get in here?

Committee members exchange smiles ...

ED (CONT'D)

Tommy, what do you think about this
guy?

TOMMY

I think I'll take a break here so
you guys can badmouth that old son
of-a-bitch.(he gets to the door and
turns) I will say this about him --
he flies like a bandit.

INT. SHARON'S OFFICE - DAY

Sharon's making notes. Drew drops in through the opened door.

DREW
Congratulations.

SHARON
Is the memo out?

DREW
You, me, Mike, Daniel, and Allan.

She jumps up and the two girls hug, bouncing around the office like children.

SHARON
We did it!

DREW
We did it.

SHARON
That's a great crew. Holy shit!
we're finally getting to go.

Sharon hugs her again.

SHARON (CONT'D)
(serious now)
The old man didn't make it, huh?
(Drew shakes her head) Alternate?

DREW
No.

SHARON
Too bad.

DREW
Yeah.

The two women fall silent ...

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE

He's dejected, slumped in his chair. Picks up the baseball, rolls it around in his hand, looks up at a photo of two space suited figures on the Moon ...

INT. AUDITORIUM --NIGHT

Projected on a large screen at the front of a darkened auditorium at Rice University, FILM of the lunar surface: a starkly pale, desolate landscape set against the blackness of space.

In the BG, we hear the voice of Davey ...

DAVEY OS

It seems a place of apocalyptic
desolation, doesn't it...

The scene on the screen changes to a spectacular lunar mountain range.

DAVEY OS (CONT'D)

... yet, somehow majestically
beautiful.

PULL BACK to see a rapt AUDIENCE of several hundred people in the darkened room and the powerful figure of Davey illuminated by the light of the projector. Tommy Lord is sitting in the crowd of students and faculty. The images of the moon are dreamlike ... two astronauts bound about joyfully.

DAVEY (CONT.)

People often ask me, "What was it
like?" And I am reminded of a
passage in the Bible that mentions
a 'peace that passeth all
understanding'.

The rover drives beneath the eaves of a startlingly high range of lunar mountains ...

DAVEY (CONT'D)

But in the middle of this arid,
supposedly dead satellite, we felt
a rush of life. Perhaps we sensed
the thoughts and prayers of
millions of people whose messengers
we were. Or perhaps we felt the
presence of other beings ... beings
much wiser and more ancient than
we.

CLOSE on Tommy: He's relaxed, enjoying Davey's
unconventional commentary.

On the screen now, a spectacular Earthrise above the lunar
landscape.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

When I looked up at the Earth I
felt a curious reluctance to
return, as if our beautiful planet
were no longer my home.

INT. BAR--NIGHT

Tommy and Davey sit in a booth. Tommy's drinking beer, Davey
is sipping a club soda.

DAVEY

You think maybe your old buddy's
gone round the bend, don't you,
Tom?

Davey grins.

TOMMY

Well, to be honest, podner, the
only ancient astronauts I know are
you and me.

DAVEY

The truth is, I feel more sane than
at any time since I got back. It's
ironic isn't it. We never lost a
man on the Moon. Just the
same, not all of us made it back.

Pause, as Davey takes a sip of his drink.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

He came to see me before he died.

TOMMY

Jimbo?

DAVEY

(nods)

He seemed in good spirits. He told me, "This time I'm going to get it right, Davey." He'd been in a VA hospital in San Diego for six months. Psychiatric ward. (pause) They gave him shock treatments.

TOMMY

Oh shit.

DAVEY

It actually seemed to help. But afterwards -- he lost all memory of going to the Moon.

INT./EXT. TOMMY'S PICKUP -- NIGHT

SHOT of the truck parking in front of a baggage check-in at the Houston International Airport.

INSIDE TRUCK

DAVEY

Thanks for everything.

TOMMY

You bet.

They shake hands, Davey opens his door and climbs out ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Davey ... (Davey leans back into the open door) I know what he meant about tryin' to get it right this time.

DAVEY
(smiles)
You know something else, Tom ...
you probably never even realized it
.... we all wanted to go to the
Moon with you ... every last man in
Apollo.

TOMMY
(surprised)
Yeah?

DAVEY
We knew whoever flew with you, was
gonna get back home. (pause) Take
care, Colonel.

As Tommy watches, Davey walks into the crowded terminal and disappears.

EXT. MARGARET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tommy's sitting in the pickup outside his daughter's house.
He makes up his mind, climbs out and walks to the door.
Another moment of hesitation ... then he KNOCKS softly.
Margaret opens. She's not expecting her father, doesn't know
what to say

TOMMY
Bad timing?

MARGARET
(nervous)
I just got Katie down. If she
hears you, I'll have to go through
the whole battle again.

TOMMY
I need to talk to you.

She hesitates ... finally nods, places a finger to her lips,
and leads him quietly through the house, out a screen door to
the backyard. Patio furniture gleams in the moonlight ...
they stand apart ...

MARGARET

(embarrassed)

I don't know what got into me the other night.

TOMMY

You have nothing to be sorry about. I learned a long time ago, my mistakes have a way of catching up with me.

MARGARET

But what I did was ... vicious.

TOMMY

Honey, I knew Jimbo was trying to reach me. I don't know for a fact I could've helped him ... but I never shoulda left him swingin' in the wind.

Long pause ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Guess I've done that all my life. When I got into the program, I let you and your mama go. I knew what I was doing, but I did it anyway.

MARGARET

It's the way things are, Daddy. I'm grown up. I can deal with the way things are.

TOMMY

I know. (pause) Sometimes I wish you weren't grown up. I wish you were my little girl again.

Margaret LAUGHS hopelessly. Tommy approaches, puts his arms around her. She begins to SOB. There's more pain inside her than Tommy has ever allowed himself to realize. He hugs her tight.

MARGARET

Daddy. . . I think Brad's left me.

He holds her close, rocks her in his arms ...

TOMMY

Well darlin, whatever happens, I'll
always be here if you need me.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sharon, Drew, Mike, and several other astronauts are leaving
a popular Mexican restaurant. The mood is celebratory ...

SHARON

I swear ta God, if I had anything
to say about it, the Camacho
brothers would get the first fajita
franchise on Mars.

MIKE

(to Drew)
Where'd you get the dress?

DREW

From my closet. I do have dresses,
Mike.

MIKE

Do you have nail polish?

DREW

I have perfume. I have pearls. I
have Tampax. All the usual girl
stuff.

People are starting to scatter to various cars ...

SHARON

Have a good weekend y'all. Allan,
get your fucking hands outa my
pockets ...
(she starts to giggle as Allan
leans her up against an old Ford
... the others move on)

MIKE

I don't suppose you'd take that
dress off

DREW

You and Patoski been comparing
notes?

MIKE

Trust me. I'll give you the ride
of your life.

INT. HANGAR ELLINGTON AFB - NIGHT

Beneath brilliant xenon arc lamps, an Air Force maintenance
crew work on a NASA T-38 inside a huge military hangar. Two
flight-suited figures walk past ...

MIKE

You guys got a hot one on the line?

The maintenance crew chief looks at his watch ...

CREW CHIEF

You're sailin' kinda late, aren't
you.

MIKE

Technical exercise.

It's clear the astronaut pilots are used to having their
way...

CREW CHIEF

(turning to one of the
enlisted men)
Warnocki ... run the start cart
over to 36. (back to Mike) Have a
good one.

EXT. ELLINGTON AFB - NIGHT

A high pitched WHINE of powerful jet engines idling. Four
needle-nosed T-38's glimmer like monstrous prehistoric
insects in the bright moonlight. Mike and Drew are already
strapped into one of the high performance trainers as a

shadowy figure removes connections from the battery cart and pulls chocks from beneath wheels.

Mike gives him thumbs up, closes the canopy, and the ENLISTED MAN directs the jet out of the line with flashlight batons.

RADIO VO

DREW

I never had a boyfriend pick me up
in an 800 mile-an-hour jalopy.

MIKE

Stick around ... in a coupla weeks,
I'm having a little coupe delivered
that'll do around 25,000.

TAKEOFF

The jet THUNDERS into the air and
skims out over Galveston Bay, the
long causeway glittering with late
night traffic bound for the 40-mile
town. Mike hugs the deck and
ROCKETS under the bridge ...

DREW

Yes! Yes!

EXT./INT. T-38 - NIGHT

SERIES OF SCENES

SOARING skyward til the Texas coastline shines like a string
of pearls in the darkness below. Zooming south, each pilot
taking turns rolling, diving. Looping offshore to reach Mach
1.4 ... sound barrier CRACKING over startled shrimpers
dragging their nets through phosphorescent waters.

Then back inland, cruising at 18,000 feet over the seemingly
endless landmass of South Texas. A ways ahead, a flickering
orange speck on the horizon ...

DREW

What do you see at 2 o'clock ...
range, maybe 20 miles?

MIKE

The fire? Probably a gas field
flare.

DREW

I don't think so ...

MIKE

Let's go see.

Moments later

MIKE (CONT'D)

It's just a big campfire. I got an
idea ...

DREW

(wary)

Nothing dangerous Mike.

MIKE

I promise.

He kills the plane's running lights and pulls back on the power. The sleek aircraft noses down into a steep dive, airspeed building rapidly. Mike scans his instruments ... speed approaching Mach 1. He deploys the speed brakes and the jet shudders like an crazed stallion -- HARD BUFFETING, the plane SHAKING VIOLENTLY. Plummets down to the deck, no more than 300 feet above the ground, racing towards the firelight like an invisible banshee.

EXT. PASTURE - NIGHT

In a mesquite and cactus choked pasture 50 miles from the nearest town, a group of Mexican cowboys mill around a roaring bonfire, SINGING, eating cabrito, drinking tequila. After a long day of gathering and shipping cattle, the barbacoa is in full swing.

SMASH CUTS:

INT. T-38 & EXT. PASTURE

MIKE

I wish I could see their faces.

ON THE GROUND

A strange eerie WHISTLING growing LOUDER by the second. The singing wavers ... dies. Anxious looks are exchanged.

FROM T-38 POV

The shimmering blaze is rushing up ... at the moment it's directly below, Mike KICKS in the afterburners, pulls the nose up to vertical, and EXPLODES skyward on a towering pillar of flame.

ON THE GROUND

Suddenly, like a phantom freight train, a HOWLING shadow is upon them ... and before they can even run, ROARING, CRACKLING GOUTS OF FLAME ARE MOUNTING DIRECTLY OVERHEAD - AN APOCALYPTIC VISION.

INT. T-38

Back in the plane, Mike is LAUGHING, hooting at the spectacle he can imagine below. They're still SCREAMING straight up, passing through 8,000 feet when both pilots simultaneously spot another set of aircraft lights -- dead ahead on their trajectory.

INT. PRIVATE PLANE - NIGHT

Inside the twin-engine King Air, the two corporate PILOTS are gradually descending for a landing in Corpus Christi. Behind them in the passenger cabin, a wealthy Texas RANCHER, his WIFE, and three CHILDREN. Two of the kids are asleep, wife reading a magazine, husband pouring over work papers ...

Both pilots see the bonfire ahead ... then out of nowhere, bright orange-blue flames blossom, shooting upwards like a terrorist missile launch. They're stunned -- almost don't react in time

PILOT 1
What's that!

PILOT 2
Goddamn! OH SHIT!

Each plane banks precipitously ... the family in the back of the King Air is panic stricken, wife SCREAMING.

INT. T-38

DREW
JESUS MIKE!

The two planes barely avoid a catastrophic collision ... the King Air jolted by the jet's wash. The civilian pilots finally manage to get their airplane under control ...

INT. KING AIR - NIGHT

PILOT 2
Fuck, that was close!

RANCHER
(screaming from the rear)
LEON! WHAT WAS THAT!

PILOT 1
We were almost hit by another plane, Mr. Cliburn. (to his copilot) Get on the horn to Houston Center. Tell 'em what happened. (the copilot immediately begins talking to Houston)

RANCHER
WHO THE FUCK WAS IT!

INT. T-38 - NIGHT

In the T-38, Mike levels off at 10,000 feet, banks around to the south, looking for the lights of the King Air ...

MIKE
Do you see him!

DREW
(still shaken)
Oh God, Mike.

MIKE
SNAP OUT OF IT BROUSSARD! DO YOU
SEE A TARGET!

DREW
No joy ... wait a minute ... ten
o'clock, range under 5 miles.

MIKE
Ok, I got him. He's alright
everybody's alright. It was just a
near miss.

DREW
IT WAS NEARLY THE FUCKING END, YOU
ASSHOLE!

MIKE
Take it easy, Drew. We're going
back down to the deck ... out to
sea ... go around and make our
approach from the north.

DREW
What's this approach shit! You
mean sneak in under radar, don't
you.

MIKE
Don't forget we're both in on this,
kiddo.

INT. NASA CORRIDOR - DAY

Mike and Clive, in civilian clothes, are walking purposefully
down the hall of the administration building and turn into
the Crew Chief's office. Tommy's secretary is away from her
desk so Mike KNOCKS at his door ...

TOMMY OS
Come.

Mike opens the door to see Drew seated in front of Tommy's
desk ...

TOMMY
What is it?

MIKE
(unhinged at the sight of
Drew)
Uhh not important. We'll stop
by later.

He quickly closes the door and beats a retreat ...

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

TOMMY
(with a dry chuckle)
He looked a might surprised to see
you.

Drew sits rigidly at attention ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)
So to the best of your knowledge,
the Air Force is unaware of your
moonlight sleighride.
(she nods assent) Well, suppose we
keep it that way.

DREW
It won't happen again.

She gets up to leave ... turns back at the door ...

DREW (CONT'D)
Thanks.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT/NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Aldo's is a ramshackle, noisy place with reliable food.
Tommy and the Astronauts sit at a corner table. The group
has eaten and a WAITER is taking away the dishes. Empty beer
bottles have accumulated on the table faster than the
waitress can retrieve them.

ALLAN
No, I swear to God. It's been
done.

SHARON
I don't believe it.

ALLAN
Seriously, sex has been performed
in zero-g.

VERNON
Who did it?

ALLAN
Fruitflies.

The young astronauts LAUGH and HOOT in derision.

ANGLE
Mike Vaughn is standing at the far
side of the restaurant, studying a
wall of publicity photos of the
early Astronauts dressed in their
spacesuits, standing on the Moon,
etc. A sign above the photos says
"Welcome to Johnson Space Center,
Home of Manned Space Flight." When
Drew appears, it's apparent he's
been waiting to intercept her ...

MIKE
Why did you do it?

DREW
Because I can't live with something
like that hanging over my head.

MIKE
(sarcastically)
And you think this washed-up
astronaut with delusions of
grandeur is going to put his own
ass in a sling to protect our
careers?

DREW

You know something Mike ... you'd be a better pilot ... and a better man, if you had half the class of that washed-up astronaut.

ANOTHER ANGLE

ON the table as Mike returns.

TOMMY

Two flights - one Gemini, one Apollo. That's my whole space career. You guys will be going up all the time.

ALLAN

Aw, we're just the bus drivers of the future.

DANIEL

Yeah, who's going to remember our names?

ALLAN

Daniel, I hate to be the one to tell you, but even your best friends have trouble remembering 'Tawakwaptiwa'.

More LAUGHTER

TOMMY

Let me tell you about that. There was a quiz show a few years back. One of the questions was, "What did Colonel Thomas Lord and Admiral James Pruitt do?" Somebody said we led the Boston Tea Party.

DANIEL

Ah, fame.

TOMMY

I really did have the idea I was going to be a celebrity when I got back.

SHARON

You are a celebrity.

TOMMY

I was, for a little while. (pause)
You know, I met Elvis once. I met a lot of famous guys. He had amazing hair.

DREW

Who -- Elvis?

TOMMY

Yeah, I couldn't take my eyes off it. We were just standing there talking and his hair was whooshing around all by itself. I remember thinking: a guy with hair like that has gotta be famous.

MIKE

He was the king, all right.

CLIVE

Chuck Berry's the king.

TOMMY

I met Chuck Berry too.

CLIVE

Really? What'd you think?

TOMMY

Amazing hair.

TITLE ... TWO WEEKS BEFORE LAUNCH

EXT. TARMAC, PATRICK AFB, FLORIDA - DAY

Tommy deplanes from a NASA Gulfstream in the company of a dozen young Astronauts, including Mike, Clive, Drew, Sharon,

Allan, and Daniel. They're met by a bevy of photographers and press. A group of die-hard space groupies have been permitted onto the grounds with a banner proclaiming ... WELCOME ATLANTIS CREW STS 36 -- ONE GIANT STEP BACK TO THE MOON.

INT. SPACE VEHICLE PROCESSING FACILITY, KSC

A small door opens, exposing an immense room filled with a network of scaffolding and catwalks that nearly obscures the prototype of the Orbital Transfer Vehicle. An OFFICIAL is showing off the facility to Tommy and the other Astronauts.

OFFICIAL

This is the prototype for the Orbital Transfer Vehicle. When our tests are completed next month, production will begin on the real thing. Some of you people will be riding this baby to the surface of the Moon in the next few years.

PAN across the faces of the Young Astronauts as they animatedly talk about the OTV amongst themselves. The sight of this machine moves them, fills them with expectation ...

Drew goes up to the OTV and strokes it, as if it were a huge, skittish beast. The official grins.

ON TOMMY

He's nostalgic, envious, filled with longing.

EXT. PAD 39-A--NIGHT

The launch pad is empty, except for a massive gantry that looms against moonlit clouds.

ANGLE

Tommy's standing alone at the base of the pad, dwarfed by the immense firewall. The pad is a spectral, powerful structure. Drew quietly approaches to stand beside him ...

DREW

This was the place, right?

TOMMY
(nodding)
Pad 39-A. Most of the Apollo
missions left from here.

DREW
What did it feel like?

TOMMY
Sort of like a train wreck. But,
man! It was -- (long pause, he's
at loss for words)

DREW
Were you afraid the first
time?

TOMMY
(long pause they're
walking now)
I guess I worried some about what
might happen to my wife and
daughter if I didn't make it back.
But afraid ... I don't think I was
ever scared, so much as ...
excited. (pause) I remember
sitting in the Lander at the end of
our time on the Moon ... we were
strapped in, ready to go home.
Jimbo was calling the countdown to
liftoff and I was thinking,
"What'll we do if the engines don't
light?" That was exciting.

INT. NASA MUSEUM - NIGHT

Sound of a DOOR UNLOCKING AND OPENING. Tommy switches on a
light. He and Drew are alone in the Visitor's Center Museum,
which is still only partly lit. He watches as she walks past
the exhibits. She stops at one titled HANDS OF APOLLO, in
which forty pairs of plaster hands are displayed inside a
glass case. The names of the Apollo astronauts are written
on them. We see Borman, Cernan, Duke, Young, Armstrong,
Aldrin, Cunningham, Mitchell, Irwin, Collins, Bean, etc.--
and, of course, Lord.

In the glass are the reflections of Tommy and Drew.

TOMMY

That's how they used to measure us
for gloves.

Drew moves on to a diorama with two astronaut mannequins
standing in front of a Lunar Module on a simulated moon.

DREW

Is that you? (Tommy nods) And
that's Pruitt.

TOMMY

Yeah, that's Jimbo.

They move along. Tommy's lost in thought ... staring at a
huge photographic mural of the deep valley of Taurus Littrow,
blacker-than-black sky on the horizon ...

DREW (CONT.)

Tommy ... ?

TOMMY

I had a dream up there.

FLASHBACK ... scenes from the film FOR ALL MANKIND -

EERIE MUSIC

Dreamy, verité -- actual Apollo footage from the Moon ...

TOMMY VO (CONT.)

In my dream, we were driving the
Rover along the edge of a deep,
deep crater. We crossed a ridge
and out in front of us we saw
another set of tracks. I asked
Houston if we could follow the
tracks ... they said yes.

Actual scenes of the Rover, tracks visible up ahead
spacesuited figures approaching a Rover in slow motion ...

TOMMY VO (CONT'D)

We followed the tracks for a long time, until we found a vehicle ... it looked just like the Rover inside, there were two people, looked just like me and Jim. Only they'd been there for thousands and thousands of years. (pause) It wasn't a nightmare-type situation it was probably the most real experience of my life.

NEWS FOOTAGE ...

Spashdown, then ... Ticker tape parade down Wall Street ... three figures seen from the rear, sitting in an open convertible, waving at the crowds, the centerpiece of the parade ...

TOMMY VO (CONT.)

(longingly)

When we got back, everyone wanted to touch us. Guys wanted to shake our hands, slap us on the back women wanted to see what we were like in the sack.

Tommy and Drew are still standing in front of the huge lunar photo ...

TOMMY (CONT.)

I couldn't hold onto that feeling I had on the Moon it washed right out of me.

DREW

(she's watching his eyes,
so far away)

What feeling?

TOMMY

I don't know what to call it. It was like I was part of an enormous puzzle, right down to the molecules in my hands. I felt pure. We looked back at the Earth, and it

was the most precious jewel in the
heavens ... calling us home.

Long pause

TOMMY (CONT'D)

When they told me Jimbo had
drowned, I thought to myself, 'We
should never have come back.
Neither one of us. We both should
have died up there ... while we
were still young and honest and
true.'

He seems to return, as if from a long journey reaches up
to pull the thin gold chain with the medallion from around
his neck ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

I want you to take something with
you. He may not be a real saint,
but he's always looked after me.
(he puts it on her) When you get
up there think of us old guys.

DREW

(quiet fire)

Old guys, my ass. I'll be thinking
of you.

She reaches out to hold his arms ... looks him full in the
face.

DREW (CONT'D)

And you better be thinking of me.
(pause) The night you left me, you
hurt my feelings and it's the only
time since we met that I've known
you to be dishonest.

He starts to say something ... she holds up her hand for
silence ...

DREW (CONT'D)

Yes, dishonest. When you left that night, I kept asking myself, "God, how could I be so dumb ... here I thought we were building this closeness and intimacy and I totally misunderstood. But I didn't misunderstand -- you did.

He's starting to smile ...

DREW (CONT'D)

And you better wipe that smile off your face Colonel -- this is serious.

He puts his arms around her and they embrace.

EXT. VEHICLE ASSEMBLY BUILDING, KSC - DAWN

An immense building silhouetted against the sunrise. In the dim light two enormous doors slowly part. From inside, almost like an apparition, the Space Shuttle emerges, Solid Rocket Boosters and External Fuel Tank attached. It creeps out of the building on top of the Crawler Transporter.

LONG SHOT of the Shuttle being transported to the Launch Pad. The nearly full moon is still visible as the dawn begins to color the sky. The marshes on Cape Canaveral glint in the dawn. We can just see a line of surf breaking on the shore.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAWN

Tommy's sitting alone at a table reading the paper over a cup of coffee when Ed Drummond walks in ...

TOMMY

(surprised to see him)
Mornin' stranger. Somebody leave the barn door open? I didn't expect to see you til launch day.

ED

Hi Tom.

TOMMY

You want some coffee? (motions to the waitress)

ED

(sits down)

We got a problem. One of our people almost caused a mid-air collision a couple weeks ago. Never reported it.

TOMMY

Mike Vaughn.

ED

You knew about this? (Tommy nods)
Why the fuck didn't you tell me.

TOMMY

He's a good pilot ... I figured he'd learned his lesson.

ED

(angry)

Goddammit! That's not good enough.

TOMMY

(mildly)

Now climb on down your high horse Ed. I seem to recall hearing about a young astronaut who smuggled, not one, but two beautiful women into the Apollo simulator years ago. They might have even done a little damage while they were flounderin' around in there.

ED

(sheepish)

Alright, we all make mistakes.

TOMMY

I know I did.

ED

He says he was flying alone, but the maintenance crew chief says someone was with him. (no response) Well, if he wants to take all the heat, that's fine with me.

TOMMY

What's gonna happen to him?

ED

He'll have to sit this one out. But I think I can hold his suspension down to 6 months. He'll fly again.

TOMMY

That's good. So McBride steps in as commander this time.

ED

He would have. The committee met all day yesterday. We have kind of a ... ticklish situation with the media. They're gonna jump all over Vaughn's highjinks unless they have a better story to chew on.

TOMMY

What story?

ED

(grins like a fox)
Legendary Apollo Commander leads the first step on America's journey back to the Moon.

No response ...

ED (CONT'D)

(confused by Tommy's silence)
Well, what do you say?

TOMMY
Can't do it.

ED
What do you mean, you can't do it.
It's everything you've been busting
your hump for.

TOMMY
I didn't want to tell you til the
mission was up and I got these kids
back safe on the ground I'm
quittin', Ed. It's their turn now.

ED
(shaking his head in
disbelief)
For Christ's sake Tommy, if
everything goes right, you could be
back on the Moon a couple of years
from now. They need you, you said
so yourself.

TOMMY
I've given 'em the best I've got.
They're smarter than I'll ever be,
podner.

ED
What are you gonna do with
yourself.

TOMMY
Ahh ... relax, spend some time with
my family. I think I'll teach
Katie how to fly like a bandit.

ED
Well do me a favor. Think about it
... just this one mission. You owe
me.

He stands and exits.

INT. KSC MEDIA ROOM - MORNING

The Mission astronauts are seated at a long table, Tommy in the center. In the FG, a phalanx of cameras and journalists...

JOURNALIST 1

Colonel Lord, with all our budget deficits and the current economic slowdown, how can we justify expensive manned missions, to the Moon or anywhere else?

TOMMY

Let me ask you a question. Can you think of more than a handful of things this country does better than any other nation on Earth?

JOURNALIST 1

What does that have to do with anything?

TOMMY

It means America's still a nation of pioneers, not just a consumer market for junk food and Japanese electronics.

JOURNALIST 2

Colonel Lord, a number of rumors have been circulating concerning the whereabouts of Commander Vaughn. Can you give us any information.

TOMMY

The astronaut office will have another briefing this afternoon. That's all we have time for now, folks. Thanks for coming.

Groans and more questions called out as Tommy hastily leaves the dais...

EXT. KSC MEDIA ROOM - MORNING

Outside in a hallway, Drew brushes past other astronauts and security personnel to catch Tommy as he hustles away from the press conference...

DREW
(whispers)
Tommy, I need to ask a favor.

TOMMY
Shoot.

DREW
I have a couple of girlfriends
flying in this afternoon while I'm
still tied up with the pre-launch
physical. Would you pick 'em up
for me?

TOMMY
(smiling)
Are they pretty?

She slugs him on the arm ...

DREW
Yes, and you keep your hands to
yourself.

VOICES trail off as they walk away down the hall ...

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - AFTERNOON

Tommy's standing around nonchalantly at the gate area. Crowds of people mill around the terminal as arriving flights disgorge their passengers. A young MAN and his WIFE have noticed the famous astronaut...

MAN
Say, you're Colonel Thomas Lord,
aren't you?

TOMMY
Yep. But it's just Tommy.

MAN

Well it's a real pleasure to meet
you sir. I'm Michael Sullivan
this is my wife Ellen. We've come
all the way from Minneapolis to
watch the launch this weekend.

Several other PEOPLE have gathered around as they recognize
Tommy. He is relaxed and friendly, but keeps looking around
for Drew's friends.

In the BG, we see Margaret and Katie as they exit the gate.
Margaret sees her father, surrounded by admirers. A slow
smile spreads across her face. She bends down to point him
out to her daughter, and Katie races over ...

KATIE
GRANDPAPA!

Tommy's taken totally by surprise. His face lights up, and
as the urchin plows through the crowd of well-wishers, he
sweeps her up over his head, into his arms. He looks through
the mob, sees Margaret, and beams. She joins Katie in his
arms.

MARGARET
Oh Daddy, we're so excited to be
here.

TOMMY
How long have you ladies been
scheming?

MARGARET
None of your business.

TOMMY
Well, for a change, we'll all watch
a launch together.

MARGARET
(serious)
That's not why we're here Dad. We
came to see you off. (he starts to
object) Now don't start. I know

you want to go and I want you
to go. You've worked hard for it.
Mom and I talked about it and she
feels the same way.

TOMMY

But ...

MARGARET

(interrupting)

Daddy, you're the best. You belong
up there ... I guess I've always
known it. (tears begin to well in
her eyes) I love you, Daddy.

There are tears in the old astronaut's eyes as he hugs his
daughter and whispers ...

TOMMY

I love you too, darlin.

LAUNCH MONTAGE

A. EXT. LAUNCH PAD, KSC - DUSK

The Space Shuttle is poised on the pad, ready for launch.
Vapor from the liquid oxygen fuel curls off the External
Tank. There is NO SOUND.

From the top of the launch pad, we see the Cape and a crowd
of SPECTATORS below. the wind HOWLS faintly around the nose
of the Orbiter.

B. EXT. NASA VAN - NIGHT

Through the window of the van we see Drew's face. The other
crew members -- Allan, Daniel, Tommy, and Sharon -- are
visible in the BG. Drew looks out the window, silent and
pensive.

MUSIC begins, over COUNTDOWN COMMENTARY

COUNTDOWN COMMENTATOR VO

At T minus one hour and thirty four minutes and counting,
weather continues to be favorable for our scheduled launch at

midnight . . . etc.

INTO FRAME, reflected on the window--the floodlit shuttle on the launch pad.

C. EXT. ORBITER - NIGHT

At the base of the Orbiter the Main Engines swivel into launch position. We see the vents close on the External Tank and smoke rising from the metal skin.

GROUND VO

Atlantis, this is Control. Main Engine gimbal complete. You are go for launch.

TOMMY VO

Roger, Control.

We see the vents close on the External Tank, and smoke rising from the metal skin.

GROUND VO

H-two tank pressurization O.K. You are go for launch, over.

TOMMY VO

Roger, go for launch.

D. EXT. OCEAN -- NIGHT

A flotilla of boats is anchored offshore; the Shuttle is in the BG, as the COUNTDOWN COMMENTARY continues ...

GROUND COMMENTATOR VO

At T minus one minute, Commander Lord will close the External Tank oxygen vents. Management of countdown is now switching to on-board computers....etc.

E. BANANA RIVER - NIGHT

A family of raccoons makes its way along the overgrown bank of a canal. The Shuttle is reflected in the water.

F. INT. ORBITER CABIN

Tommy and the Daniel sit in the front of the Orbiter, facing upward toward the narrow windows in the nose. They're wearing blue NASA overalls with headsets and gloves. Drew is strapped into one of the Mission Specialist seats with the other Crew Members in the aft section. MUSIC ENDS.

GROUND VO

Atlantis, this is Control. APU
start is go. Initiate on-board
computer sequencing control, over.

TOMMY

Roger.

GROUND VO

Sixty seconds and counting 57
... 56 ... 55

We continue to hear the countdown in RADIO VO. Tommy places his hand over his headset and speaks over his shoulder to his crew.

TOMMY

Everybody set? (thumbs up)

Daniel murmurs a few words in Hopi ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Come again?

DANIEL

I asked the Kachinas to watch over
us as we ride the Winds.

GROUND OS

T minus 20 19 ...18 ...17 ...

SERIES OF CU'S OF ASTRONAUTS ...

Each lost in private reverie, intense concentration ...

GROUND OS

10 ... 9 ... 8 7 ... 6 ... 5

... 4 ... 3 ... 2 1

INCREDIBLY POWERFUL IGNITION of the engines.

G. EXT. SHUTTLE ENGINES

SHOTS FROM ALL ANGLES of engines firing, the huge ship lifting off.

H. BANANA RIVER CAUSEWAY - NIGHT

The entire scene is transformed into brightness. It is almost like a nuclear explosion. There is an enormous ROAR as the Shuttle rises into the night sky.

I. INT. SHUTTLE - NIGHT

VARIOUS CU's of astronaut faces, intense vibration and G stress shaking their features, illuminated by the eerie glow of instrument panel lights. Tommy's expression is rapturous...

EXT. SPACE

SILENCE ... THEN MUSIC

The Russian Mir Space Station drifts above the luminous surface of the Earth.

ANGLE

The Space Shuttle Atlantis moves slowly toward the Space Station, its payload bay doors opened, revealing a docking chamber and the Remote Manipulator Arm (RMA), which extends outward toward the station. A small flare from one of the Orbiter's thrusters propels it toward a docking position.

TOMMY VO

Pre-docking sequence complete.

MISSION CONTROL VO

Roger that, Atlantis.

TOMMY VO
Switching to manual DAP.

INT. ATLANTIS

The crew floats about in shorts and t-shirts. It's a casual, sweaty atmosphere. Tommy is eating M & M's as he and Daniel maneuver the orbiter toward the station.

TOMMY
Coming in like a dream. Very nice,
very nice. . .

ANGLE
The Aft Crew Station, just behind
the Flight Deck. Drew and Allan
stand at computer consoles
operating the remote manipulator
arm.

DREW
(to Tommy)
Sequence complete. We have
capture.

TOMMY OS
Roger. Good work, guys.

INT. MISSION CONTROL--NIGHT

Ed Drummond walks in. A dozen ENGINEERS, including Clive, who has the job of Capcom (the chief communications link to the shuttle), are seated at various stations.

ED
Ready for a cup?

CLIVE
Yeah.

Ed pours a coffee from a nearby machine, hands it to him.

ED
Everything okay?

CLIVE

Docking went fine. There were a few electrical problems in the station, but they got them straightened out.

ED

How's the crew?

CLIVE

Just finished breakfast. They're about to repair the power module. Drew's suiting up for the EVA.

INT. ATLANTIS AIRLOCK

Drew is dressing for her EVA. She already has the bottom half of her space suit on, and now she wriggles into the top, which is attached to the wall of the chamber. Sharon helps her screw the helmet on.

DREW

Okay, here we go.

Drew moves into the airlock bay and the door is sealed behind her. She activates the Airlock Control Switch on a nearby panel.

INT. ORBITER FLIGHT DECK

The crew watches as Drew drifts past the cockpit windows seated, in the Manned Maneuvering Unit (MMU).

EXT. SPACE

CLOSE ON Drew's face as she heads away from the Orbiter. She's ecstatic.

TOMMY VO

What do you think?

DREW

(laughing)
Fabulous!

Drew maneuvers above the Space Station, inspecting for damage.

DREW (CONT'D)

Houston, you guys were right.
Looks like meteor damage.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Clive is talking by radio headset to Drew. Another Technician stands over his shoulder. On a large TV monitor mounted in front of the Capcom's station, we see Drew working on the side of the Russian Space Station. Cameras mounted in the Orbiter Payload Bay follow her every move ...

CLIVE

Roger that. Does your visual
correspond to our projection?

DREW VO

Negative. Two modules out for
sure. No wonder we couldn't power
up the lab bay.

Clive turns to the Technician.

TECHNICIAN

We'll have to switch 'em out.

CLIVE

This is Houston. Did you hear
that, Drew?

EXT. SPACE STATION

DREW

Roger, Houston. I'm pulling the
panels now.

Drew takes a wrench from her spacesuit and unscrews a bolt from the first panel.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - LATER

It's a casual atmosphere. The mission seems to be going well. Ed stands in the back of the room, idly talking to

some ENGINEERS.

DREW VO

This last panel is pretty twisted.
Hard to get a good grip on it.

TECHNICIAN

(to Clive)

Tell her we don't need it.

CLIVE

Two will do the job, Drew. Come on
in.

EXT. SPACE STATION

DREW

Give me a second, guys. I think I
can get it.

Awkwardly, Drew reaches to unscrew a bolt beneath a bent and twisted panel. She places the wrench in position and pulls hard on it. Suddenly the wrench slips and Drew is catapulted backward. She CRIES OUT in surprise, then lands hard against the scaffolding of the Space Station. Her MMU smashes against a metal panel. We see -- but do not hear -- a jet of nitrogen propellant, which launches Drew helplessly into space. We hear her audible GASP.

CLIVE VO

Drew! Is something wrong?

DREW

My thruster! I can't stop it!

INT. SPACE STATION

Through the cockpit windows, Tommy and Daniel watch in horror as Drew tumbles wildly past them.

TOMMY

Jesus Christ! Houston! We've got
an MMU going crazy here!

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Bedlam. The accident is being played out on the big monitor screen. Personnel are rushing to their consoles. Clive, Ed, and the Technician are engaged in urgent conversation.

TECHNICIAN

Tell her to shut it down.

CLIVE

She can't! The unit's stuck on thruster.

More EXPERTS crowd around.

EXPERT 1

Shit! She's flying into another orbit!

EXPERT 2

Tell her to fire her lateral jets.
She's gotta stabilize.

DREW'S POV - THROUGH HER HELMET.

Intermittent glimpses of the Space Station and the Earth's horizon as Drew tumbles wildly through space. We hear her excited BREATHING.

CLIVE VO

Drew, use your lateral jets!
You've got to get Y-Axis under control!

WIDE SHOT of Drew falling helplessly through space.

DREW

Can't . . . They won't fire!

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Clive and the Experts stand around thinking, anxious looks on their faces.

EXPERT 2

We're gonna lose her.

TOMMY VO
Drew! Get out of that thing!

CLIVE
What . . . ?

INT. ORBITER FLIGHT DECK

TOMMY
(deadly serious)
Drew, get out of the MMU!

EXT. SPACE

LONG SHOT of Drew still tumbling in the distance. We can see the blinking lights of the MMU. Drew looks very small.

TOMMY VO
Drew, do you read me? EJECT NOW!

CLOSE ON DREW. We can see the fear in her eyes as she considers Tommy's suggestion.

DREW
Roger you sure about this,
Tommy?

TOMMY VO
I'm sure. GET OUT NOW!

Drew struggles to free herself of the MMU. When she finally breaks loose, the backpack unit rockets away soundlessly, its blinking lights growing smaller in the darkness. Drew floats alone, miles away from the Orbiter, a helpless satellite. The only sound is her RAPID BREATHING. She's nearing blackout from hyperventilation ...

TOMMY VO (CONT'D)
Drew, are you still there?

DREW
Okay, it's off.

TOMMY VO
Good girl. Now settle down,
breathe slowly ... deep breaths.
Don't worry, we're coming to get
you.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

EXPERT 3
Now she has no control at all.

ED
But she's stabilized. That's the
important thing.

Clive pulls off his headset, hands it to Ed, tacitly giving
him command.

ED (CONT'D)
Atlantis, do you read me?

INT. ORBITER

Tommy and Daniel are on the Flight Deck.

TOMMY
Roger, Control. We're preparing
for rescue.

ED VO
How long will it take you guys to
power up and decouple?

TOMMY
At least two hours. And we're a
little low on RCS propellant.

ED VO
You may have to transfer from OMS.
I'll get back to you.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

A NASA PR official hesitantly edges up to the Capcom's
station ...

PR MAN

Ed, the media are crawling all over us.

ED

Fuck 'em. No ... tell them there's been an accident -- we'll brief them later. (turns back to the technical discussion)

EXPERT 1

(looking at calculations
on his console)

They can't make it. They'll use up all their propellant trying to reach her. They won't have enough fuel for a de-orbit burn.

ED

(keying in his headset)

Drew, how much oxygen do you have left?

DREW VO

(crackly transmission)

About four hours.

EXT. SPACE - LATER

Drew floats alone.

TOMMY VO

How you doin, darlin?

DREW

I'm cold . . . I guess I'm a little scared.

TOMMY VO

What do you see down there?

Below, a panoramic view of the Pacific ...

DREW

It's all blue . . . the Pacific.
There's New Zealand.

TOMMY VO
It's a beautiful country.

DREW
Big storm headed there.

TOMMY VO
Atlantis will be on its way in an hour.

DREW
Do you have enough fuel?

TOMMY VO
Let us worry about that. You just sit back and watch the world go by.

Drew LAUGHS to calm her terror.

TOMMY VO (CONT'D)
I'm going to get off now and talk to the geniuses.

DREW
Are you . . . coming back on soon?

TOMMY VO
Hang in there. I'll be back in five minutes. Over.

DREW
Roger . . .

INT. ORBITER

Tommy and the Daniel are at the controls.

TOMMY
Helium pressure?

DANIEL
Closed.

TOMMY
Vapor isolation?

DANIEL
Closed.

TOMMY
(over his shoulder)
Allan, what's the holdup on the
decoupling?

ANGLE on Allan in the Aft Crew Station.

ALLAN
Five minutes, Colonel. We're still
depressurizing the resource node.

BACK TO TOMMY

TOMMY
Goddammit! Let's get this sucker
loose! Control, do we have a
rendezvous profile yet?

INT. MISSION CONTROL

ED
Negative, Atlantis, we're still
working on it.

ANGLE
A microphone sits in the middle of
the Capcom's station. Tommy is
patched in by radio, as the Experts
continue to throw out ideas.

EXPERT 1
We can't do a low-Z mode. We don't
have the fuel. Maybe we could
approach her on the R-bar.

EXPERT 2
(shaking his head)
She only has a couple hours of
oxygen left. She'll be dead before
we get to her. We just don't have
the fuel or the time to back up and
reach her.

TOMMY VO
What about going around the other way?

ED
Explain.

TOMMY VO (CONT.)
Drop the Orbiter down to a lower orbit and go around the Earth. The lower the orbit, the faster we'll go, right?

EXPERT 1
Yeah, but we'll be going away from her.

TOMMY VO
We'll save fuel and catch up with her on the other side.

EXPERT 1
I don't know . . . Let me think.

ED
Well, think fast.

EXT. SPACE STATION

Atlantis pulls away from the space station. Its payload bay doors begin to fold closed.

INT. ORBITER FLIGHT DECK

TOMMY
Control, this is Atlantis. Payload bay doors closing. Ready for de orbit burn.

ED VO
Negative, Atlantis. You have to give us a little more time for simulation.

All the crew are gathered around the flight deck, waiting to see what happens ...

TOMMY

She doesn't have any more time, Ed!
Feed us the best trajectory your
eggheads have computed, or by
Christ, we're goin on our own.

ED VO

Roger that, Atlantis. Don't get
excited. We'll send you data in
two minutes.

SHARON

(to Tommy)
Is this gonna work?

TOMMY

We'll get her.

EXT. SPACE

Drew is alone above the cloud-shrouded Earth.

TOMMY VO

Drew, do you read me?

DREW

I read you.

TOMMY VO

We're on our way. But it's going to
take a little while.

DREW

I don't have much air left. An
hour and a half, maybe.

TOMMY VO

That's plenty of time. Just keep
talking to me while we wait.

ED VO

Atlantis, this is Houston. Prepare
to receive trajectory data in 10

seconds.

DREW VO
(separate radio channel
audible in the control
room)
OK, Tommy. I went over the Rockies
a few minutes ago. I'm out over the
Great Plains now.

EXT. SPACE

Beneath Drew, the North American landmass slowly revolves.

DREW (CONT.)
Oh God, I'm passing into night.

An immense shadow steals over the continent. In a moment,
Drew is swallowed by the darkness. She keeps talking to stay
in control.

DREW (CONT'D)
Tommy . . . are you still there?

TOMMY VO
I'm here.

DREW
I can see the cities all lit up.
Like campfires.

TOMMY VO
You must be almost over Ponca City
now.

DREW
Did ever see the statue they have
there -- the Pioneer Woman?

TOMMY VO
I never made it to Ponca City.

DREW
When I was a kid we used to climb
up and crawl under her skirts. She
was so huge and strong, looking out

over the prairie. . . I wanted to
be like that.

For a long moment, she's silent.

TOMMY VO
Drew?

DREW
I'm still here.

But he can hear the growing fear in her voice.

TOMMY VO
I wish I was with you.

DREW
I wish you were, too.

INT. ORBITER FLIGHT DECK

Tommy, moved, struggles to control his emotions.

TOMMY
I have to go now, Drew. Ed is here
with you on your com circuit.

DREW VO
Tommy? ...

TOMMY
Keep your eyes on the eastern
horizon. We should be coming along
just behind the sunrise. (to
Allan) You finished loading the
computers?

ALLAN
We're all set.

TOMMY
Daniel, initiate burn sequence.

A GROWL from the engines and the craft begins to accelerate.

VARIOUS SCENES

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Ed Drummond paces restlessly. Engineers huddle to talk quietly about possible scenarios in the unfolding crisis.

INT. KSC MEDIA ROOM

Electronic journalists are arriving by the droves, elbowing one another out of the way for the best camera angles.

EXT. SPACE

Drew is rolled into a foetal position ... moonlight silhouetting her inanimate figure, drifting miles above the dark shadow of the Earth.

INT. OVAL OFFICE

The most powerful man in the world sits with his back to the camera, listening to the briefing he's receiving from the Director of NASA.

EXT. SPACE--LATER

The dark rim of the Earth begins to brighten.

DREW'S POV

A tiny glint against the sunrise-
it's the Orbiter.

DREW

I see you! I see you!

INT. ATLANTIS

TOMMY

Phase deceleration burn complete.

ED VO

Roger. Do you have a visual yet?

TOMMY

Negative. She's still in the dark.

(to Daniel) You're in command,
Daniel.

He pushes out of his seat and expertly floats back past Allan's computer console into the crew bay, where he hurriedly suits up. Sharon helps him secure his helmet and he enters the airlock ...

EXT. ATLANTIS

Tommy carefully makes his way out of the airlock, moving hand over-hand to the Remote Manipulator arm. He climbs up to the end of the arm and attaches a short tether from his belt to a fitting on the arm. The Arm unfolds from the payload bay doors, extending as far as the mechanism can reach.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

The Experts are crowded around a computer console, anxiously plotting orbital scenarios.

EXPERT 1

She better be where we think she
is. We've only got one pass.

Expert 2 sinks back into his chair, demoralized.

EXPERT 2

Christ, she's only got eight
minutes of oxygen left.

INT. ATLANTIS

Daniel and the rest of the crew are peering through the windows, searching the void for any sign of Drew.

DANIEL

Still no visual, Houston.

Then Allan, looking out the starboard window, spots a distant glistening white figure.

ALLAN

There she is!

DANIEL
Where? Oh, no! Control, she's in
the wrong lane.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

ED
How far away?

DANIEL VO
Estimate. . . twenty nautical miles
to starboard.

Ed and the experts exchange troubled looks.

ED
Can you get closer?

INT. ATLANTIS

DANIEL
I'll throw all the reserve I've got
left into a co-elliptic burn.
Allan, get that arm at full
extension. Ready for grapple
capture.

EXT. SPACE

Drew sees the Orbiter in the distance, drifting toward her.
There is a small rocket flare as the vehicle attempts to
maneuver into her orbital plane.

EXT. ATLANTIS

DANIEL VO
We're short! We're short! We're
gonna be short!

DREW VO
Tommy?

ON TOMMY, helpless at the end of the Manipulator Arm.

EXT. SPACE

Drew looks down upon the approaching orbiter, unable to close the gap.

INT. ATLANTIS

Allan exchanges a frantic look with Daniel.

ALLAN
Goddammit! We're gonna miss her!

EXT. SPACE

DREW
Tommy, is that you you're too far away.

TOMMY
I know.

There's a moment of deathly silence.

Drew watches the Orbiter approach, her face tight with anxiety and concentration.

Tommy makes a sudden decision ... he detaches the tether from his suit and, carefully gauging his trajectory, he gently pushes off the Arm, free-falling out from the Orbiter in a desperate attempt to reach Drew.

REVERSE ANGLE from Drew's POV as he gets closer, both of them reaching out ... their hands meet, hold ... then they're clutching one another tightly.

DREW
(near hysteria)
What are you doing! Now you'll never get back either!

TOMMY
Easy darlin. I'm gonna get you back.

We hear Drew's LOUD RAPID BREATHING slow a little as she struggles for control ...

INT. ATLANTIS

ALLAN
What's he doin?!

DANIEL
Suit up! Whatever he has in mind,
he's gonna need a hand.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Clustered around monitors in Mission Control, the crowd of
NASA engineers silently watch in dismay ...

EXPERT 1
It's suicide.

ED
How much oxygen does she have?

EXPERT 2
Calculate no more than 2 minutes,
maybe less.

EXT. SPACE

TOMMY
I'm gonna turn off your com
circuit. (she looks terrified and
he gives her a reassuring smile)
Just for a minute.

He presses a button on each of their respective chest panels
... Then he presses his faceplate against hers ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Can you hear me? (she nods) Good.
We don't have much time I want
you to promise me something.

Drew nods ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Tell Margaret ...

DREW
What ...

TOMMY
Listen to me. Tell her I wrote her
name ... Margaret Mason Lord ... in
the dust on the Moon.
It's there 'til the end of time
.... where we landed in the Ocean
of Storms.

With icy clarity, Drew suddenly understands. He holds her
close and she begins to weep ...

DREW
No Tommy, I love you ...

TOMMY
Listen to me ... when you reach the
Orbiter, hold on. Grab anything,
but hold on.

Tommy gestures at the Earth wheeling majestically below ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)
It's so pretty, isn't it.

He holds her close again, touches her faceplate as if
stroking her cheek. Now faceplate to faceplate again ...

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I love you, princess.

He takes a deep breath, then rips his own oxygen hose out of
his chest console. He angles the sudden stream of released
gas like a tiny jet so it propels them toward the spacecraft.
Drew is beginning to GASP as her oxygen supply fails.

EXT. ATLANTIS

Outside the airlock, Allan's spacesuited figure is cautiously
edging across the floor of the Payload Bay ...

ALLAN
(horrified)
My God! What's he doing ! He's

venting his suit. Daniel! You see them?

DANIEL VO
Roger! I've got 'em!

EXT. SPACE

Tommy's oxygen is depleted and their approach angle is still slightly wrong. With his last effort he thrusts her directly towards the Payload Bay, sending his own body reeling off in the opposite direction ... out into space.

DREW
NOOOOO!

She flies into the bay -- the impact knocks the last breath from her lungs as Allan's arms close around her.

EXT. ATLANTIS

ALLAN
I've got her!

DANIEL
She's out of air. Get her inside -- now!

In awed silence, Daniel watches Tommy's body, arms and legs akimbo, turning slowly, receding into the distance. For a moment it seems one arm waves farewell

INT. ATLANTIS

Allan pulls Drew into the airlock and hurriedly attaches an oxygen tube to her chest console.

ALLAN
Drew! Drew!

She's unconscious. A light comes on, indicating the airlock is fully pressurized. The door opens and Sharon anxiously takes off Drew's helmet, places an oxygen mask over her face. After a long moment, her eyes flutter open.

SHARON
She's breathing! She's alive!

INT. MISSION CONTROL

As the Experts and Engineers CHEER, Ed remains silent.

HOLD on him, tears welling in his eyes as his colleagues hug him and slap him on the back.

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - MORNING

On a sunny day in Houston, a huge crowd overflows around the Administration Building. A memorial service is drawing to a close. Seated in the first row of chairs, Helen holds a folded American flag. Next to her, Margaret, and Katie. On a raised dais studded with microphones, Ed Drummond is speaking

ED
A lot of people misunderstand.
They think a hero is someone who
makes more money than anyone else.
Or stars in a blockbuster movie.
Or sings in a rock and roll band.

PAN around the throngs of people ... young and old,
distinguished and commonplace ...

ED (CONT'D)
But from ancient times, a real hero
was someone who gave his life
willingly to save another. The
gods smiled on these brave
champions ... and sometimes, even
lifted them up ... and cast them
into the heavens. Where they look
down on the Earth as immortal
constellations ... until the end of
eternity.

Ed takes a moment to look off into the distance and regain
his composure....

ED (CONT'D)

(rather softly)

So I ask you all to remember Tommy the way I think he would want to be remembered. Look up this evening, into the night sky ... at the Moon and the planets ... and all the billions of stars shining through the darkness of time. And dream Tommy Lord's dream ... Of the generations of men and women to come, whose insatiable curiosity and adventurous spirit will compel them to explore new worlds, always anxious to see what's just around the next corner ... in this magnificent and inexhaustible mystery we call the universe. Thank you all for coming.

The gathering begins to break up and numerous friends and dignitaries flock around Helen, Margaret, and the rest of the family. From a distance, we see Drew approach with Daniel, Sharon, and Allan.

ON DREW ...

As we see her shake hands with Helen ... and move on to Margaret. She bends close to Margaret's ear and whispers a moment, then withdraws. The two stand transfixed, each looking at the other as if the crowd around them has melted away ... Margaret's crying. Then she reaches out to hug Drew. Katie watches intently.

When the two women part, Drew walks silently away, lost in thought. Some inner voice prompts her to turn around, and she sees Katie has followed her. The child is clutching a manila envelope in her hand

DREW

Hi Katie.

KATIE

Hi. Will you sign my picture for me?

Drew nods as Katie removes a glossy photo of the Atlantis crew from the latest mission. After a long look ... Drew pulls out a pen and signs. The little girl studies the picture.

KATIE (CONT.) (CONT'D)

Drew?

DREW

Yes honey.

KATIE

Do you know how to fly?

DREW

Uh huh.

KATIE

My Grandpapa said he would teach me
how to fly.

The little girl's eyes have filled with tears and Drew kneels down next to Tommy's granddaughter hugs her close ...

DREW

Tell you what Katie, when you're a
little bit older, if it's ok with
your Mama, I'll teach you how to
fly. That's a promise.

The family has noticed Katie's absence and we hear MARGARET calling ...

MARGARET OS

KATIE?

KATIE

I'M OVER HERE MOMMY.

She's still crying softly ...

DREW

Now don't be sad, darlin, your
grandpapa's home was always in the
stars.

KATIE

I know. He was like the
fish.

DREW

The fish?

KATIE

When it's out of water.

For just a moment, Drew's at a loss for words ... then she
nods, tears welling up in her eyes.

MARGARET

KATIE. WHERE ARE YOU, BABY?

KATIE

COMING, MOMMY.

The little girl pats Drew on the arm reassuringly ... then
dances away into the crowd as we RISE UP above the multitudes
... to see the huge Saturn rocket in the BG and a full Moon,
setting low in the morning sky.

THE END