

The Rain In Spain

written by
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All of this actually happned.

(More or less)

THE RAIN IN SPAIN

FADE IN:

THE SEA - MORNING

When blue saturates the senses, in color and mood, when the water and sky seem as one.

Out of this stillness creeps an aging SHRIMP TRAWLER, its barnacled hull creaking with strain, its christened namesake peeling in thick layers from a rotting bow - "LA MANUELA"

Captain SIMO ORTES is ruggedly handsome but sun-aged beyond his years. His gaze sweeps in movement of the sea, coming to rest on the SHRIMP NET being tended to by his firstmate.

Ten year old MIGUEL braces himself against the transom, lets a thick rope feed through his callused hands. The net drifts lower, causing a rippling pattern that almost hypnotizes the young boy.

But the sound of a distant BELL snaps him awake, its haunting echo reverberating over the water like a Siren's call. It brings a longing smile to the young boy's face, one that fades when he sees his father's stern expression. Miguel returns to work, his mood drifting off with the net.

Simo gazes toward the sound, past rival BOATS to the shoreline many miles away - a half-circle of rugged peaks that melt into a beach of stunning white sands.

"VERA BAY, SPAIN"

TOMATO VINEYARDS

stretch along the coast. Row after row. Plot after plot. A dense, unrestrained jungle of rich red bulbs held high by the will of bowing cane poles. An entire year's harvest.

PEDROS studies a particularly large tomato, drops it in a basket hanging from his COW. Behind him, a figure in black - FATHER FRANCISCO -- glides past on his donkey cart. They wave to each other and the Father continues on - past a valley of RICH COLOR and into the outskirts of a simple adobe

VILLAGE

JOSE SANCHEZ pulls the rope to the handmade BELL as the last of the children flood into the school. Across the dirt path, Jose's WIFE lifts the hand of their BABY to wave "bye bye" to daddy.

Father Francisco's cart hobbles past into the main PLAZA of the village. He has to duck under several ROPES strung between clay walls. Homemade LANTERNS of all types hang from the ropes. Each has been signed by a different family name.

Two VILLAGERS sweat to hang a lantern far larger and heavier than all of the others. It threatens to pull down the entire line. They give up, set it on the ground.

VILLAGE MAN (IN SPANISH)
She's overdone it this time, Father.

FATHER FRANCISCO (IN SPANISH)
Our Patron Saint has shined very brightly
on us this year. Maybe this is just her
way of returning the favor.

VILLAGE MAN (IN SPANISH)
But why can't she ever do things simply,
like the rest of us?

The Father can't believe he's even suggesting as much.

FATHER FRANCISCO (IN SPANISH)
Like the rest of us? Maria?

THE BEACH - WIDE

Silhouetted at sea's edge is a young WOMAN, hands gripping the
reins of a full grown mule, one that very much wants to remain
dry. Through fiery determination and sheer stubbornness, this
slight 108 pound female manages to pull the half-ton animal into
the surf where she proceeds to douse it with seawater. Meet
Maria.

THE VILLAGE
Postcard shot. Wonderfully authentic,
absolutely timeless.

"JANUARY 17TH, 1966"

Then a FLASH of light radiates high in a cloudless sky --
followed seconds later by a violent crack of THUNDER that sends
a stomach churning shudder straight into the earth below.

JOSE SANCHEZ stops his teaching.

HIS WIFE stops her nursing.

PEDROS stops his harvesting.

And MARIA stops her washing, stares straight up in awe.

Part of the sky has just caught fire.

It's a spectacular sight, complete with brilliant multi-color
embers fanning out against a crystal blue canopy. Breath
taking.

In fact, several of the villagers stop to say a prayer to this
heavenly image.

But expressions change as the sight is overtaken by an expanding
black cloud. Wonderment now turns to concern.

SIMO ORTES

bolts up to his boat's top deck. Still miles away, the embers
now look like chunks of metal, their polished surfaces
flickering as they tumble.

Thick black smoke outlines their descent and Simo quickly tries to determine where most of this radiant display might land. Miguel steps up next to him, realizes at the same time.

THE VILLAGE

Villagers suddenly realize this is not a sign from God. Fear sets in. JOSE barely steps outside when the first wave of molten rain SLAMS into the village. Deceptively small in the sky, these flaming chunks are monsters when viewed up close.

JOSE (IN SPANISH)

To the floor!

The children drop as debris whistles in at an alarming rate. Nondescript shrapnel quickly becomes familiar, especially when the twisted remains of a full size HYDRAULIC LANDING GEAR buries itself right outside.

THE VILLAGE

is being pelted by the hail storm of flaming aircraft debris. Rudder panels, elevators, chunks of fuselage. An 85 foot section of wing -- slamming into the hillside - its trapped fuel erupting in a grand EXPLOSION.

MASS PANIC

as plane pieces rocket in like wartime projectiles, some explosions sending shockwaves that sheer doors off hinges - roofs off stalls. Livestock scatters.

MARIA

stands in the surf, dismayed by the sight of a fireball mushrooming up from the village a half mile away. Frantic, she starts sprinting TOWARD the village, right into the war zone.

PEDROS

runs as two truck-sized JET ENGINES careen down - turbines spinning - exhaust belching flame. One explodes on impact, the other bounces across the vineyard, spreading a trail of fire.

JOSE'S WIFE

is curled under the dinner table, clutching her baby tight as the world turns to hell outside her windows. Each fireball seems brighter than the last - each impact stronger. Dishes crash to the floor. Baby cries.

JOSE

stands in the schoolhouse doorway, paralyzed by the sight of a monstrous lump of WRECKAGE tumbling from the sky. Its trajectory is right over his house - his family.

He runs to save them - won't make it - watches in horror as the debris crashes right in front of him - but miraculously misses his house.

High pitched WHINE spins him around to see --

HALF OF A HUGE JET

--charred black - enveloped in flame, spiraling down in a death glide. The jet leapfrogs over the church, cartwheels on one wing tip before slamming onto the other side of Cemetery hill - turning the horizon into a wall of flame.

This is just too much to believe.

SIMO AND MIGUEL

can see plumes of flame billowing up from the village. Hot metal fragments plunge from the sky, some splashing down a mile off the coast, turning water to steam. Miguel yells -- points up.

Simo follows his gaze, squints in the sun and spots --

PARACHUTES

floating down from the blackened sky. Suspended at the ends are military MEN. Several touch down near the boats closer to shore. But one has drifted further out. Simo throttles up his boat, races into the sun to meet it.

MARIA

runs through a hailstorm of nuts and bolts, reaches the schoolhouse, pushes in and scoops up 7 year old ISABEL, hugs her tight.

THE VILLAGE

As the last of the rain settles. Maria joins a rush of villagers up Cemetery Hill to a burnt and smoking COCKPIT. Inside are the still burning bodies of several uniformed MEN. Villagers grab on, pull the remains from the wreckage but it's hopeless.

MARIA

is dazed by the event, walks further up the hill and as she does, her number one question is answered. There on the other side of the hill is a three story high TAIL SECTION sitting upright, completely intact. And printed in huge black letters across the top is --

U.S.A.F.

EXT. U.S. AIRBASE - DAY

The identical markings on three KC-135 fuel tanker jets parked on standby. Same as a 707 except the 200 passengers have been replaced by 40,000 gallons of jet fuel. Behind them several F-4 fighters take off in a ROAR.

"TORREJON AIRFORCE BASE - 400 MILES NORTH"

We now hear the heavily accented VOICE of a Spanish WOMAN.

WOMAN (V.O.)

I always said it was a bad idea to let America put its war machines in our country, but politicians never listen.

INT. BUNGALOW OFFICE

The door says U.S. AIR FORCE LEGAL CLAIMS DEPARTMENT. On a vinyl couch sits the middle-aged Woman, her HUSBAND and their 17 year old fully developed daughter.

WOMAN

They promise us great things, try to convince us how much better our lives will be and then something like this happens.

LIEUTENANT DOUG SMITH (30) looks up from a Claims Form. It's rolled into the carriage of a YOUNG CORPORAL'S typewriter. The Corporal is distracted, smiles at the daughter.

DOUG SMITH

I understand your anger, Mrs Allegro, but this is just a temporary situation. As soon as the winds shift back, our fighters won't be taking off over your house and your TV reception will return to normal.

WOMAN

And what are we supposed to do until then?
(gestures her husband)
Talk?

Her husband doesn't say a word. Habit? Maybe fear. The Mother grows impatient, rants to her husband in her native tongue.

MOTHER (IN SPANISH)

These two are not going to help us. Americans just don't care. That boy there has only one thing on his mind...
(she smacks her flirtatious daughter)

And this one here has no compassion at all, probably never even calls his mother.

Doug surprises them all with perfect Spanish.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)

Actually, I call her twice a week, on her birthday and all major holidays except Mother's Day which she considers useless since we already have Labor Day, which always reminds her she has no grandchildren because I haven't found the right girl. Yet.

Mother stares right at him, speechless and embarrassed.

DOUG (CONTÍD)

Look, I'm not supposed to do this but what if I got you official passes to the base theater so you could see all the movies they're showing this month for free.

The daughter grins but the mother squelches her excitement.

MOTHER

What movies?

DOUG

Well, there's Dr. Zhivago...

(checks sheet)

... The Longest Day and Beach Blanket Bingo.

The husband speaks up for the first time.

HUSBAND

I love Annette Funicello.

DOUG

Who doesn't. Then I can tear this up?

Doug pulls the legal claims form from the Corporal's typewriter.

MOTHER

When we get our Official Free Passes.

DOUG

Of course. Corporal, could you get me three official passes? The free ones.

The Corporal looks up, dumbfounded. Huh?

DOUG (CONTÍD)

Corporal? In my office..?

The Corporal goes along with it, glances at the daughter again as he steps into the adjacent office. Doug follows.

ADJACENT OFFICE

CORPORAL

I'm sorry, sir, but when did we get official free passes?

Doug finds some cardboard, cuts it into three squares, holds them up.

CORPORAL (CONTÍD)

I'm never going to get this...

Doug grabs a RED MARKER.

DOUG

Not when you're drooling all over yourself. What have I told you about staying focused?

CORPORAL

She was flirting with me, sir.

DOUG

I don't care if her face was in your lap and she was whistling Dixie, Corporal, you can't get distracted, understand?

CORPORAL

That would be something.

Doug writes OFFICIAL PASS on the squares.

DOUG

Distraction is a negotiator's worst enemy. You gotta be clear headed to see any opportunity for a quick deal. You do remember my golden rule?

CORPORAL

Ah... doesn't matter who's right or wrong, kiss everyone's ass to get them to deal?

DOUG

Why?

CORPORAL

Cause if you take a side, you've become distracted and distractions lead to involvement and once you're involved you're dead in the water.

DOUG

A student who listens. My lord.

A SERGEANT MILTER knocks on the doorjamb.

SERGEANT

Lt. Smith, I need you to follow me.

DOUG

Not now, Sergeant, I'm finishing a class here.

Doug licks several GOLD STARS, sticks them all over the cardboard passes. They look pretty official now.

CORPORAL

I'm going to miss your style, sir.

The no-nonsense Sergeant picks up a briefcase.

SERGEANT

This yours?

DOUG

Yeah. Why?

The Sergeant simply walks out with it. Doug has no choice but to chase after him.

INT. HALLWAY

DOUG

Hey, that's filled with legal forms!
What're you doing?

SERGEANT

I'm getting it and you on a C-130 taking
off in... (checks watch)... six minutes.

DOUG

Do we get to ask why?

They walk toward a JEEP idling outside.

SERGEANT

One of our tankers just had a midair
collision, went down 400 miles to the east
in the Mediterranean.

DOUG

That's terrible, really, but what's it have
to do with me? Fish don't usually sue.

SERGEANT

Not all of it fell in the water.

Doug is speechless for a second, stops short of the jeep.

DOUG

Hold on, there's been a mistake here. I'm
a desk clerk, not a field officer.
Problems come to me, not the other way
around.

SERGEANT

My orders are to get one "Lt. Doug Smith"
on that plane.. one way or another.

The Sergeant unclips his sidearm cover.

DOUG

You'd shoot me if I refuse?

SERGEANT

Yes, sir.

DOUG

And what good am I with a bullet hole in
me?

SERGEANT

What good are you without discipline?

DOUG

Sergeant.. Milter, let's be realistic here.
In seven days I won't even be in the
service.

SERGEANT

How unfortunate for you.

DOUG

Yeah, well I've got a pretty great job lined up in the states and I can't be delayed or they'll give it to someone else.

SERGEANT

Then I suggest you get in the jeep quickly.

DOUG

Look, I've got connections with the supply manager, I can get you anythin--

SERGEANT

-Get in the jeep! Sir.

Doug gives up, gets in, reluctantly. Sergeant pumps the gas.

DOUG

So who's heading up this disaster? No, let me guess - knowing my luck, they've probably reactivated Patton.

SERGEANT

Close.

INT. HELICOPTER - FLYING

Focus on THREE GOLD STARS on the shoulder of GENERAL DEMAR WILSON, a 65 year old ex-bombardier, now in his last post before retirement - commander of the 16th Airforce.

He and the PILOT stare out the bubble window as they graze over rough Spanish terrain. They're following the only man-made feature - a thin dirt path. It threads up a rock strewn hill and when they rise over the top- they see it.

THE VALLEY

stretched out to the sea. And scattered at points far and wide are thin trails of smoldering wreckage.

GENERAL WILSON

We have liftoff.

Behind him sit three Airforce officers. Col. Giles, Lt. Payne and Major Young. He's the kid with all the maps.

They make a pass through the valley, following a trail of wreckage that leads right into the sea. Pieces can be seen floating, some already washed on the shore.

GENERAL WILSON

Looks like we're going to need a dance partner on this one, Col. Giles.

COL. GILES

I believe Admiral Guest's fleet is doing maneuvers in the northern Mediterranean.

GENERAL WILSON

Get him here quick.

Col. Giles nods, jots notes. The Pilot swings them back toward a dry river bed that stretches for a good three miles. That's when they spot the huge tail section.

LT. PAYNE

Tail of the B-52. And there's the cockpit of the KC-135 tanker.

General Wilson notes something odd, points.

GENERAL WILSON

And what are those white specs between all the wreckage?

All stare out. Col. Giles is the first to realize.

COL. GILES

Those are adobes.

GENERAL WILSON

Adobes?! Major Young?

Major Young unfolds one of his maps. He shakes his head.

MAJOR YOUNG

Can't be. According to the map, this is all unpopulated shoreline.

GENERAL WILSON

(to the Pilot)

Give me the stick.

Pilot hesitates, doesn't like anyone flying his bird, but this is a three star General. Wilson immediately puts the helicopter in a steep bank. Everyone grabs on.

THE VILLAGE

As the helicopter swoops in overhead. It causes major commotion. Almost as much as the metal rain.

INT. HELICOPTER

The men note the crowds running in the streets.

MAJOR YOUNG

They act like they've never seen a helicopter before.

LT. PAYNE

I suggest we set down on the beach, General, to avoid causing mass hysteria.

Giles wishes he hadn't said that. The General pitches the stick forward and brings this chest thumping monster down right in the MIDDLE OF THE PLAZA, sand blasting the structures and causing the villagers to duck for cover. The tissue lanterns scatter everywhere.

INT. HELICOPTER

Everyone but Col. Giles is dumbfounded by the General's actions. Wilson exits the chopper. Col. Giles looks up from his notepad, offers the others an explanation--

COL. GILES
Descending Gods always get cooperation.

All exchange looks of disbelief. The radio CRACKLES as home base transmissions filter through.

EXT. THE PLAZA

The Villagers stare out as the helicopter's blades spin down. From the wall of swirling sand appears the imposing figure of General Wilson. He walks toward the villagers - arms outstretched - voice booming over the helicopter whine.

GENERAL WILSON
GREETINGS - I AM GENERAL DEMAR WILSON,
COMMANDER OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'S
16TH AIRFORCE. DO NOT BE ALARMED - WE HAVE
COME TO HELP YOU.

And just as the Villagers start to come out -- Col. Giles appears in the dust behind, yelling.

COL. GILES
General, sir! We have bomber survivors!
Fishermen have them up the coast!!

General Wilson is very pleased, turns back to the villagers.

GENERAL WILSON
WE'LL BE BACK!

HELICOPTER

rises, swings around and heads down the coast. From up here you can see over the mountains and valleys and there's a fishing village eight miles away.

EXT. TARMAC - 2 PM

A bloated C-130 cargo transport brakes hard at the end of a short runway. It dwarfs the small airport facilities of -

"SAN JAVIAR AIRFIELD - 60 MILES EAST"

INT. CARGO PLANE

Four dozen helmeted airmen can't wait to get their asses off the cushion-less seats welded to the airframe. Doug's fingers are blood-flushed from sitting on them for two hours.

The plane comes to an abrupt stop and the DOOR hatch is quickly opened. The Sergeant yells instructions -

SERGEANT
 FILE OUT AND PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO GROUND
 TRANSPORTATION! YOUR EQUIPMENT WILL CATCH
 UP TO YOU!

Doug gets to the hatch, sees the ground transportation - a quickly assembled armada of local vehicles.

There's a school bus, four sedans, a 16 year old station wagon and a beat-to-crap orange Taxi with snow tires so fat they're scraping the wells. The parade is ready to go but the lead car won't start. It just cranks and cranks...

DOUG
 What am I doing here?

EXT. THE FISHING VILLAGE - AFTERNOON

General Wilson and Col. Giles are led like kings to a tin-covered shack right across from the DOCK where the town's fleet of fishing boats is moored.

"AQUILAS FISHING PORT"

Outside this makeshift hospital stand the hero fishermen. The General quickly shakes their hands, then enters the tin-shack.

SIMO ORTES has seen enough, walks right past the General toward the dock. Every fisherman actually steps back to allow Simo and Miguel to pass. It's a show of deep respect or even deeper fear.

INT. THE TIN SHACK

Lying on surprisingly sanitized bedding are three American AIRMEN. Each man has a different limb bandaged. A broken leg here, a fractured skull there. The only one conscious is young Lt. ROONEY. He perks up, salutes.

AIRMAN
 Capt. Michael Rooney, sir!

General Wilson walks over, returning the salute.

GENERAL WILSON
 At ease, son. I'm General--

ROONEY
 --Wilson, commander of the 16th. You flew some of the first B-29s over Japan.

GENERAL WILSON
 I'm impressed, Lt., but I was only a lowly bombardier back then.

ROONEY
 Nothing lowly about the job, sir.

GENERAL WILSON
 Don't tell me, you're the bombardier.

ROONEY

Actually, they call us radar-navigators these days. Supposed to make us feel better about releasing the mighty H--

GENERAL WILSON

--Lt.

General Wilson gestures to the hefty village NURSE.

ROONEY

It's okay, sir, she can't understand a word of English. No one here can.

The General's taking no chances.

GENERAL WILSON

Giles?

Col. Giles understands, escorts the woman out.

LT. ROONEY

So I guess you wanna know what happened up there, huh sir? Well, we were cruising at 35,000 on the leg back from the fail safe line...

General Wilson leans down to Rooney, puts a hand over his mouth. Rooney of course shuts up.

GENERAL WILSON

Just answer me these two questions.

Rooney can only nod.

GENERAL WILSON

Did you jettison the armaments?

Rooney shyly shakes his head - no.

And the General leans even closer, almost whispering.

GENERAL WILSON

And what about the Captain's key?

Rooney looks at him, knows how important this is.

ROONEY

I suppose it's still around his neck, sir... wherever that is.

EXT. THE TIN SHACK - LATER

General Wilson walks with Col. Giles back to the helicopter. The fishermen follow close behind.

GENERAL WILSON

I want you to take the chopper and make a quick round trip to Madrid. Assure Franco and his matadors that we have everything under control out here.

(MORE)

GENERAL WILSON (cont'd)

Last thing we need now is a bunch of foreign politicians snooping around.

COL. GILES

But, General, it is their country.

GENERAL WILSON

Geographically. But under the present circumstances, as long as I'm the man in charge of this operation, I own this country.

Col. Giles understands. All too well.

COL. GILES

I'll get someone here to take you back to the village.

GENERAL WILSON

Make sure they know what village you're talking about. If it's not on our maps it may be too small to have a name.

COL. GILES

Sir, every town has a name.

EXT. SPANISH LANDSCAPE - DUSK

Headlights skirt across a rickety sign -- "PALOMARES".

The caravan of sedans and station wagons weave their way across darkly shadowed landscape. At center pack is the ORANGE TAXI, those oversized snow tires bouncing the car wildly over a road made of potholes.

AMERICAN (V.O.)

Pal-lo-ma-na-res...

INT. THE TAXI

The DRIVER is a Spanish local, corrects pessimistic Capt. BIDDLE.

DRIVER

Pal-o-mares.

BIDDLE

What does that mean? "Out In The Middle of Nowhere" or at the "End of The Worst Road on Earth?"

Shocks bottom out on another deep rut.

DOUG

It means "peace." Well, the exact translation would be "Place of Doves."

Biddle turns to Doug hanging on in back.

BIDDLE

What are you, the team interpreter?

DOUG

Team lawyer. Spanish is just a hobby.

BIDDLE

Never had a reason to learn it.

DOUG

Well it's certainly opened doors for me.

BIDDLE

Oh yeah, what kind of doors?

Doug pops open his briefcase, finds a POSTCARD, hands it over. It's a wide view of a decadent LUXURY HOTEL.

BIDDLE

What is this, a castle?

DOUG

It's the Fountainbleau.

BIDDLE

That hotel in Miami?

DOUG

The hotel in Miami.

BIDDLE

I hear Sinatra used to vacation there.

DOUG

Oh yeah, so did Howard Hughs and Marilyn Monroe. Everybody that's anybody eventually stays at the Fountainebleau. And starting next week, I'll be greeting them all as the new bilingual manager of public relations.

BIDDLE

Huh. All that because you speak Spanish.

DOUG

Well, that and a few dozen gifts to the proper personnel, but Spanish was my ticket in.

BIDDLE

(handing the postcard back)
Lucky bastard.

DOUG

Hey - never too late to learn. I've got a whole set of tapes if you wanna try.

BIDDLE

Thanks, but I don't think knowing Spanish is going to help my career much.

DOUG

What's your specialty?

Biddle hesitates, instinctively taps his hefty briefcase.

BIDDLE
Insurance.

Doug laughs, shakes his head in disbelief.

DOUG
Only in the military....

THE TAXI

moves over the final hill. Windows are stabbed by a flashlight beam that almost blinds the Driver. It's LT. PAYNE standing in the road. We met him earlier with General Wilson. The Taxi slows.

LT. PAYNE
Is a Lt. Becker or a Lt. Smith in there?

DOUG
I'm Lt. Smith.

LT. PAYNE
Colonel Giles has been looking for you.

DOUG
Colonel Giles? Where is he?

LT. PAYNE
Just stay on this road and make a left at the bomb bay doors. He'll find you.

He waves them on.

DOUG
The bomb bay doors?
(realizing)
Jesus, the midair was with a B-52.

Biddle offers nothing.

EXT. PALOMARES

A dark landscape of silhouetted SHAPES. The Taxi's headlights reveal some of the shapes to be ADOBES but that odd one in their path turns out to be a huge JET ENGINE, its turbine blades freewheeling in the breeze like a high tech windmill.

Everywhere is plane debris. From the twisted blackened chunks to the blanket of nut-n-bolt hardware.

DOUG
I'm going to need more forms.

With no light and no signs of life, it looks very bleak.

BIDDLE
(points)
I think that's them.

They turn left at the Bomb Bay Doors, head toward the glow of a bewildering sight.

THE MAIN PLAZA

is alive with the entire population, lit by the hundreds of tissue lanterns now propped up everywhere. And it's not an atmosphere of gloom, but one of jubilation. People are smiling, laughing. Kids are playing in the street. And the bars are doing brisk business.

DOUG

Must be shell shock.

EXT. THE PLAZA

The Taxi pulls up and parks next to other vehicles from their caravan. The men get out. Now the villagers spot them, break out running at them, shouting - AMERICANS!

DOUG

Oh god, they're gonna lynch us.

But the villagers greet them with hand shakes and pats on the back. One drunken farmer thrusts a bottle of COGNAC into Biddle's hand, gestures to drink. Biddle obliges, takes a shallow swig.

Doug talks with the villagers as they lead them to the main bar. All crave to tell their stories to the only American that can understand them. They make wild hand gestures of falling debris. They all enter-

INT. "GARCIA'S" BAR

An atmospheric dive if there ever was one. Every inch is crammed with big drinkers and bigger story tellers. Several other Accident team AIRMEN at the bar spot the new American arrivals - wave them over. Doug and Biddle squeeze through, have to shake twenty hands before they get to them.

AIRMAN

Can you believe this?

DOUG

You mean the fact that not one person was injured or that this is the day of their patron saint, the god they say watches over them?

BIDDLE

Now that's luck.

DOUG

It certainly is. Hello Miami!

Patrons all cheer with Doug. The Americans get a kick out of it.

DOUG

Look at them, their town is almost flattened and they're able to laugh about it. Imagine if this happened in the states. Everyone would be crying "law suit" before the last piece hit the ground.

BIDDLE

I think you're confusing tolerance with ignorance.

DOUG

Are you saying they're stupid?

BIDDLE

No, but they seem totally unaware of the dangers of the modern world.

DOUG

Wonder what that feels like.

The bar's door swings open and Major Young calls out in the crowd.

MAJOR YOUNG

Lt. Smith! Is there a Lt. Smith in here?!

Doug raises his hand. Major Young waves him over.

MAJOR YOUNG

Follow me!

EXT. PALOMARES

Doug follows Major Young up Cemetery Hill toward a scattering of flashlight beams at the top.

EXT. TOP OF HILL

General Wilson is arguing with the town's BAKER while his flashlight darts back and forth from an old two cylinder truck to a bunch of tomato crates.

Col. Giles sees Doug approaching.

COL. GILES

General, hold up. This is Lt. Smith. He might be able to help. He speaks Spanish.

Doug wonders - how did he know? He centers on the General.

DOUG

It's an honor to meet you-

The General is livid, points at the Baker.

GENERAL WILSON

--Tell this stubborn son of a bitch that I'm about to kick his ass off this hill.

(MORE)

GENERAL WILSON (cont'd)
 He's got the only truck in the entire
 goddam valley and he's refusing to take
 these crates to San Javiar!

Doug is a bit surprised by the General's attitude.

DOUG
 Have you offered to pay him, sir?

GENERAL WILSON
 Of course! But he just stands there
 mouthing off like he doesn't even know what
 these are!

The General points to the three STARS on his shoulder.

Doug speaks to the man in Spanish.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
 Sir, do you know who this man is?

BAKER (IN SPANISH)
 I don't care who he is. I will not let him
 put those crates on my truck.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
 But he's offered to pay you.

BAKER (IN SPANISH)
 This truck is my life. I use it to deliver
 the bakery goods I make. If I carry those
 crates on it I will be out of business
 forever.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
 Why?

BAKER (IN SPANISH)
 Because no one will buy bread from a
 hearse.

Doug is confused, looks closer at the seven crates. They are
 filled with human remains. These are the bodies of the dead
 airmen. Doug looks back to Major Young.

DOUG
 Tomato crate coffins?

MAJOR YOUNG
 Best we could do under the circumstances.

GENERAL WILSON
 So what's his problem?

DOUG
 Superstition, sir.

GENERAL WILSON
 What?

DOUG

I think the only way this man is going to carry corpses on his truck is if you agree to buy him a new one.

GENERAL WILSON

That's ridiculous! I will not be bribed by a peasant.

DOUG

Then consider it a trade. Services for merchandise. It wouldn't even have to be a new vehicle...

But the General isn't listening, turns to Major Young.

GENERAL WILSON

Major, get as many men up here as you need. These crates are going on this truck with or without his permission.

(gestures the Baker)

I will not have the bodies of these brave airmen rotting on this hill all night.

Major Young nods, runs down the hill. Col. Giles steps up closer to the General.

COL. GILES

General, there are some older surplus trucks at San Javiar...

GENERAL WILSON

I won't kiss their asses, Giles. You do it once and before you know it you'll be supporting the whole lot of them!

COL. GILES

Yes, sir.

Doug has summed up the General quickly, is now on guard.

Another AIRMAN comes running from the other direction.

AIRMAN

General, I found it! About a mile up the coast! Looks like about a 6 room hotel with hot water tank, a phone line...

GENERAL WILSON

Great. Sounds like a perfect headquarters.

AIRMAN

Well, except the owner wouldn't even open the door. I think she's closed the place down.

GENERAL WILSON

Did you try and make her understand why she has to reopen?

AIRMAN
No I didn't, sir.

GENERAL WILSON
And why not, Major?

AIRMAN
Because I don't speak Spanish, sir.

General Wilson turns and settles on the only man who does.

EXT. A DOOR

Doug knocks on it. It opens and 7 year old Isabel appears, wearing a ballet tutu, balanced on her toes. The gang of uniformed Americans has her backstepping.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
Hello. Is the owner in?

Isabel runs in screaming MOTHER -- A second later Maria appears in the doorway. The men are struck by her healthy beauty, are about to be stung by her bull-whip personality.

DOUG (SPANISH)
Hello, ma'am, I'm sorry if we're disturbing you-

MARIA (IN SPANISH)
--No you're not. You say so but you still come here even after I sent the other soldier away.

DOUG
Well you are the only hotel around.

MARIA
And I am closed for the festival month.

Doug leans closer to her, gestures the men behind him.

DOUG
Ma'am, I strongly suggest you alter your vacation plans and reopen.

MARIA
No.

DOUG
No?

MARIA
No.

DOUG
Why not?

MARIA
Because you're rude.

SLAM. Right in Doug's face. The men stand there in mild shock.

GENERAL WILSON

Good job, Lt.. Col. Giles, prepare your men to take this establishment by force.

DOUG

Sir, I do have to warn you that any act of aggression toward these people could be considered an act of war on Spain itself.

GENERAL WILSON

Who's side are you representing here, Lt.?

COL. GILES

General, out of diplomatic courtesy, maybe we should give her another chance.

Wilson glances at his advisor, thinks about it a moment.

GENERAL WILSON

Fine, but this time I'll do the talking. You just do your job and translate.

Doug nods, knocks again. Maria reappears holding an old RIFLE. Most everyone ducks. General Wilson is unflinching, addresses her with the commanding tone of a man of power.

GENERAL WILSON

I am General Wilson of the United States Air Force and under the authority of our countries' joint emergency action plan I command you to allow us the full use of this facility.

Wilson looks to Doug, who takes a breath and translates with the same authority.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)

This is General Wilson of the United States Air Force. He is an aging egotistic ogre that wants us all to tremble when he speaks because it makes him feel like a God.

Maria is shocked by Doug's statement. He's certainly got her attention. Wilson continues.

GENERAL WILSON

If you do not comply with this request we will use force to remove you and take possession of this hotel and all of its contents.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)

Since he is in charge and has these men kissing his ass, it would be wise to allow me to offer you and your equally beautiful daughter the best vacation you've ever had.

Maria knows a flirt, but is definitely intrigued. Her daughter pirouettes around the corner, curious with this crazy talk.

GENERAL WILSON

And finally, if you do not lower your weapon, I will have you and your daughter arrested for attempted assault and obstructing a military operation. Now you can do it the hard way, Miss, or you can open this door and let us do our job. You have thirty seconds to decide.

Wilson gestures to Doug.

DOUG (SPANISH)

I will get you first class tickets to Madrid and a full month at a five star hotel. You'll have round-the-clock room service, complete head to toe body massages...

(scans her entire figure)

... and your daughter can get ballet lessons from a seasoned pro.

Isabel is very interested. Maria wonders who's conning whom.

DOUG (SPANISH)

This dream vacation will start as soon as we're done here and all you have to do to receive it is to act real frightened and pretend you respect the pompous star-shouldered gentlemen behind me. I'll give you thirty seconds to decide.

Doug backs up next to the General. Both men check their watches. Isabel looks to her mom and after ten seconds Maria's hardened expression slowly changes to one of fear and as she lowers the rifle she retreats, bowing to the General and apologizing profusely.

GENERAL WILSON

You have to be tough with these people.

DOUG

I see that, sir.

The General leads the small army inside their new headquarters. Maria looks over at Doug, shares a wicked smile. He's impressed her.

COL. GILES

(stepping up to Doug)

You know, Lt., I took a little Spanish in high school.

Doug tenses. Col. Giles isn't smiling. This can't be good.

DOUG

Really? Ah... how far did you get, sir?

COL. GILES

Far enough to know I picked the right man.

What? Col. Giles gestures Doug to follow him.

EXT. NEAR THE BEACH

The Mediterranean reaches out to a sky brimming with stars.

COL. GILES

General Wilson is a great commander, Lt., and in another time he'd be everything a president could want but we're not at war here. I'm afraid his win-at-all-cost attitude is going to create a lot of problems. At the least his actions could cause a mutiny of cooperation from the area. At the worst they could seriously threaten our entire partnership with Spain. That's where you come in.

DOUG

Me? How am I supposed to stop him?

COL. GILES

Stop him? We're not going to stop him. This mission must be completed.

DOUG

Then what are you asking me to do?

COL. GILES

Fix what he breaks.

(off Doug's confusion)

Lt., you have the reputation for being able to solve any problem with these people and after seeing your performance tonight I think it's well deserved.

DOUG

It's nothing special, sir, I just smooth out the bumps.

COL. GILES

Bullshit.

DOUG

Excuse me?

COL. GILES

The word, Lt., your gift, your unique talent. It's bullshit.

DOUG

Bullshit?

COL. GILES

Don't be naïve, it's what's gotten you so far so fast. You're very good at it.

DOUG

Thanks.... but I don't think bullshit alone is going to keep these people happy.

Giles takes out a notepad, tears off a blank page.

COL. GILES

Take this sheet of paper, Lt., number it from one to whatever and make out your wish list. Everything you'll need to bullshit an entire village into submission. I'll assign you an assistant to fill it out immediately.

Doug knows he can't argue out of this, takes the paper.

DOUG

Is there anything else I should know before I start bonding with these people?

COL. GILES

You know everything they need to.

DOUG

I know one of the planes was a B-52. They've been known to carry ... bombs?

Col. Giles takes the bait.

COL. GILES

Are you asking for a higher security clearance, Lt.? Because if you are and I give it to you then I don't believe the General's going to want you wandering off until this entire mess is cleaned up. Can the Fountainebleau wait that long?

Doug reacts. How did he know?

DOUG

You're right, sir, I know everything they need to.

EXT. VERA BAY - EARLY MORNING

Morning magic hour. When even the waves move quietly. The hotel sits up from the beach, silhouetted against what looks like another perfect morning coming.

Someone is already up at this hour. It's Maria. Half asleep, still wrapped in her bed sheet. She pulls the rope of a small GENERATOR at the side of the hotel. Once, twice - generator coughs blue haze, then starts. A porch light fades up as the generator revs to speed.

INT. BEDROOM

Doug hears the drone, looks out, sees Maria in the sheet moving back to the hotel. An intriguing image.

INT. BATHROOM

Doug pulls the chain to a bare bulb, watches it slowly pulsate from dark to darker. He lathers up and tries to shave, only attempting a stroke when the bulb is at its brightest.

He reaches over to rinse, cranks the iron faucet and nothing comes out. But you can HEAR the water coming down from the roof. To the right, to the left, down a pipe that vibrates against the wall and SPLFFF - water finally pours out in a thin stream.

There's a KNOCK on the door. Doug opens it to reveal -- the young CORPORAL on the other side, his arms full of boxes, etc.

DOUG
Corporal, what are you doing here?!

CORPORAL
Getting everything on your Wish List as ordered, sir.

Corporal drops a few boxes. Doug unloads his arms.

DOUG
Jesus, the Colonel must have had you traveling all night.

CORPORAL
Yes, sir. But I must say it's an honor to assist you again. Whatever you need, I'm here to do it.

The Corporal is left holding a REVEL model kit of a jet plane.

DOUG
You ever build one of those, Corporal?

CORPORAL
Sure, when I was a kid.

Doug looks him over. He's still a kid.

EXT. PALOMARES SKY - MORNING

A plastic MODEL of a four engine jet is raised into frame. It's been hastily assembled. USAF decals are still wet.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
This is a Boeing KC-135 jet airplane.

Doug holds the ten inch model up in front of 300 villagers. Farmers. Merchants. Kids. Babies. Even a few goats and cows.

DOUG
And that is a B-52 Stratofortress.

Doug points to the Corporal who holds up another, larger model airplane. Maria joins the group near the back, watches.

DOUG
These are what fell on your town yesterday morning.

Stares shift from the toys to the overwhelming amount of wreckage scattered around them. Pedros, the farmer, speaks up.

PEDROS

All this from just two of those?

DOUG

Well these are just models. The real things are much larger. The B-52 is almost as long as a football field!

A football what? Doug changes metaphors.

DOUG

.. a hundred pigs.

The crowd seems impressed.

DOUG

Most of the burning came from the smaller plane, though. That's because it's actually a huge flying gas station.

They're trying to understand.

DOUG

This one can fill the other's gas tank without landing. It's called "aerial refueling" and that's what was happening yesterday morning, way up there, so high the two planes may have looked like doves about to mate.

The villager's eyes follow the model as Doug holds it high.

DOUG

At 8AM, the B-52 was on its final approach to the KC-135 tanker....

The Corporal moves the B-52 toward the toothpick taped on the model tanker's backend and FLASH --- Toys turn into--

THE REAL THING

The hulking mass of a B-52 rises toward the silver Tanker floating in front and just above. Their target is a fifty foot tubular BOOM ARM jutting from the tanker's aft end. INTERCUT between real and the model.

The hulking mass of a B-52 rises toward the silver Tanker floating in front and just above. Their target is a fifty foot tubular BOOM ARM jutting from the tanker's aft end. INTERCUT between real and the model.

DOUG (V.O.)

This is something they had done many many times and it seemed to be going normally...

"CAPT. WENCHELL" calmly guides the B-52 into range. Around his neck hangs a CHROME KEY. GREEN LIGHTS flash on the tanker, indicating a perfect "Lineup".

DOUG (V.O.)
Then something happened that made one of
the pilots lose concentration....

FLAME

vomits from a B-52 engine. GAUGES spin into RED. Cockpit is
harried as crew flick buttons, trying to shut down the engine.

DOUG (V.O.)
Seconds later something went terribly
wrong...

Capt. Wenchell looks up, sees ALL the lights on boom arm
flashing RED. They're overrunning the tanker. He takes action,
thrusts the wheel forward. The B-52 dives under the Tanker's
wide stabilizer but its boom arm strikes the B-52 on the
fuselage's spine, snapping it in two.

DOUG (V.O.)
The two planes must have made contact and
only God knows what happened after that..

The flaming engine EXPLODES, shredding aluminum from titanium,
igniting fuel from the boom arm and sending a shockwave of flame
up the tube toward the vast sloshing tanks of the KC-135...

DOUG (V.O.)
There was an explosion...

--40,000 gallons of jet fuel ignites. The back half of the
tanker DISINTEGRATES in a fiery explosion, fragments
obliterating the blue void - one large chunk sheering off the
entire left wing of the B-52.

DOUG (V.O.)
And the planes fell from the sky.

THE TWO MODELS

drop onto the ground, break apart. The Villagers stand silent.
Maria moves up closer.

DOUG
Now you know all I know. The how and why
of this tragedy will be mysteries the
experts will have to solve. That's not my
job. It's not what I'm trained for. You
see, I'm here for one reason and one reason
only...

And right then Doug spots Maria in the crowd.

DOUG
... you.

A bit unsettled. A bit curious.

DOUG
Your discomfort is mine. Your
inconvenience I share.
(MORE)

DOUG (cont'd)

Your way of life something I'll slave to restore. I am here to help you in whatever ways I can. All I ask is for your patience and trust and the belief that the worst is behind you.

They almost believe him. Even Maria.

EXT. VERA BAY

Simo's boat, the "La Manuela", drifts in still waters. Simo and Miguel stand on the top deck, watch as-

THE U.S.S. ALBANY

crosses their bow. ADMIRAL GUEST and his sailors stare down from plated steel twenty feet higher. A PA speaker blares from the CRUISER, reverberates over the water.

ADMIRAL GUEST (OVER PA)

I AM ADMIRAL GUEST OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY. YOU ARE NAVIGATING IN RESTRICTED WATERS NOW CONTROLLED BY THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

The ship's slow moving wake is deep and wide -- tosses the shrimp trawler about like a kid's boat in a bathtub.

Simo and Miguel hang on.

ADMIRAL GUEST (OVER PA)

ALL VESSELS IN THIS BAY ARE TO BE CLEAR BY NINE HUNDRED HOURS AND REMAIN CLEAR UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

The ship passes, heads toward the other shrimp boats closer to shore. Miguel turns his attention toward that familiar RINGING now filtering across the water.

EXT. PALOMARES

Schoolmaster Jose Sanchez rings the bell like always.

CHILDREN

run from their homes, but slow as they approach the large pieces of wreckage around the school. All are now guarded by MILITARY POLICE. The Police won't let them near the pieces and consequently the school.

The old bell is pulled off its beam by the hand of another MP.

MP

No school today.

PEDROS

the farmer, heads toward his tomato fields but stops short when he sees a bright RED RIBBON suspended in front of his crops. "DO NOT CROSS" repeats along its length.

THE HOTEL

A flurry of activity. Everyone is setting out for what appears to be a trek. Doug and the Corporal walk up. Giles sees them.

COL. GILES

How did the bonding go, Lt.?

DOUG

Like superglue and a helmet, sir.

COL. GILES

Then I assume you're prepared to solve some problems?

DOUG

Who could have a problem on a morning like this?

COL. GILES

The schoolmaster is irate because his classes have been postponed indefinitely. The farmers are enraged that they're not allowed on their land to harvest and the fishing community is pissed as hell because the entire bay has been ruled off limits.

Doug can't believe it, checks his watch.

DOUG

How did he do all that?

COL. GILES

He's a three star general. He can pretty much do anything he wants. Here ya go. Your starter kit.

Col. Giles holds out a briefcase. Doug looks at it curiously, opens it a crack. Filled with cash.

COL. GILES

Make sure you get receipts.

EXT. PALOMARES - LATER

Helicopter ROARS over several trucks and jeeps starting the search. They blur past Doug walking along the fields. He covers his mouth as the dust clouds choke the air.

He notices Pedros walking away from his tomato field with his cow. Doug changes his course to intercept.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)

My my, sir, you have a lovely crop. How do you grow them so big?

The elderly Pedros turns toward Doug.

PEDROS (IN SPANISH)

I just plant the seeds. God decides how big they'll become.

DOUG

Well he's certainly smiled on yours.

PEDROS

Yes, but if I'm not allowed to work I will not have time to harvest the entire crop before most of it dies.

DOUG

Then let me provide assistance.

PEDROS

Extras hands?

DOUG

Something even better.

Doug stops and opens the briefcase. So much cash.

DOUG

Any of your crop that dies is a crop that I will buy. It's the least we can do.

Pedros seemed offended by the offer.

PEDROS

Profiting from disaster is not what our Patron Saint preaches, a Patron Saint that reached out and protected us in our greatest time of need. What kind of man would I be to trade that miracle of faith for money?

Pedros pulls on the cow's harness, marches away. Doug is surprised he struck out.

The HELICOPTER suddenly appears from behind the hill of tomatoes, swoops in right overhead. Doug is startled, quickly shuts the case as the chopper's turbulence threatens to scatter its cash into the field.

INT. HELICOPTER - FLYING

General Wilson is again at the controls. Major Young looks like Dramamine would be useful.

MAJOR YOUNG

General, sir, we might be able to get a better view with a bit more altitude?

GENERAL WILSON

Damn tomato patches are too thick to see anything higher up.

They buzz across the valley twenty feet off the ground, pass over Col. Giles and his team, trekking across the ancient landscape, trying to cover too much land with too few men.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE

Doug looks in, sees the NAME plate on the door - MR. FERRER.
Jose Sanchez erases the blackboard.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
Hello, Mr. Ferrer?

Jose surprises Doug with broken but understandable English.

JOSE SANCHEZ
It's Mr. Sanchez. Jose Sanchez. Mr.
Ferrer left for greener pastures.

DOUG
Hey, you speak English.

JOSE SANCHEZ
It is wise to know the language of your
enemy.

DOUG
Look, I'm sorry they canceled your classes.
The General was just worried about the
safety of the children.

JOSE SANCHEZ
Where was he yesterday morning?

Doug gets the point, places the briefcase on top of a desk.

DOUG
Well, I can assure you that the United
States does not want anyone to be hurt by
this incident, physically or financially.
Can I ask how much you're paid a day, Mr.
Sanchez?

Doug opens the briefcase and Jose sees all the cash.

JOSE SANCHEZ
You want to pay me for not teaching?

Doug's seen that look already.

JOSE SANCHEZ
Then I suppose you will also want to pay
the children for not learning?

Strike two.

INT. HELICOPTER - FLYING

The landscape drops away into a crevice. The General dips them
down, passes over a field of crumbling WOOD STRUCTURES.

GENERAL WILSON
Major?!

Major Young checks his maps which have grown in number.

MAJOR YOUNG

Old mine shafts, sir. This entire valley used to be one big copper mining field.

GENERAL WILSON

Great, more places a bomb can hide.

Suddenly the Pilot spots something ahead, points excitedly.

PILOT

General sir, over there! That looks like a-

GENERAL WILSON

- a parachute. I see it.

General Wilson turns the helicopter on its side, is over the spot in seconds. They circle and the helicopter's wake billows up the gray fabric, causes it to wrap around the cover of dead trees until it reveals a ten foot long object with blunt metal ends now glinting in the sun.

EXT. THE CAMP -- CLOSE ON DOUG'S NOTEPAD

FARMER'S CROPS GOING TO WASTE
KIDS NOT ALLOWED IN SCHOOL
FISHERMEN BANNED FROM FISHING

Doug taps the pad with his pencil, trying to piece together a plan.

An Airman interrupts, holds out two BOX LUNCHES.

AIRMAN

Ham or chicken, Lt.?

DOUG

Whichever... Any of you know how far that fishing village is? I have to get over there today.

AIRMAN

I heard about twenty miles, probably an hour by bus on these roads.

DOUG

Well I'm not going by bus.

AIRMAN

You are if you're going today.

Doug follows his gaze to the only vehicle left - one BUS.

An Airman slides over a boxed lunch. Doug opens it, is faced with a slab of indistinguishable meat and something that looks like an uncooked vegetable.

DOUG

So which is this?

The Airman pokes his head over - takes a look.

AIRMAN

That's ham.

DOUG

How can you tell?

The Airman points at the side of the box - HAM is stamped on.

DOUG

I hate these In Flight lunches.

AIRMAN

Yeah, well you better get used to them. I have a feeling the Palomares Steak and Shrimp House is a few years off.

The airmen laugh. But Doug is suddenly struck by an idea. He glances at the BUS, then back to his pad.

INT. THE SCHOOL HOUSE

Jose is startled by an AMPLIFIED VOICE from outside.

DOUG (OVER PA)

Mr. Sanchez, may I please have your assistance outside at once?!

Jose is curious, walks outside, is surprised to see -

THE AIRFORCE BUS

idling in the road. Doug's holding the bus' PA microphone.

DOUG

The General said no kids could come to the school, right, but he didn't say anything about the school going to the kids.. ?

Jose looks at him like he's nuts.

JOSE

You want me to teach in a bus?

PALOMARES STREET

Children run out to the street toward the Airforce BUS wobbling along narrow paths. Doug drives, waves them in. JOSE'S voice blares from the PA speaker.

JOSE (OVER PA)

Juanita! Butrose! Come to school! Ztero!
Emily!

The bus slows to let another load of kids on.

Jose waves at one of the mothers -- they trust him.

THE BEACH

The Bus meanders down the coast, tires slicing lines across pristine white sand.

Last stop is the Hotel where Isabel stands waiting. Doug's focus shifts to something odd out in the waves, two figures outlined by a shimmering reflection. It's Maria, pulling that mule out to sea again.

DOUG
What in the world is she doing?

JOSE
Her animal is sick.

DOUG
So she's drowning it?

JOSE
No, she's healing it. Some people think the sea has medicinal powers. Maria is convinced.

Doug thinks she's nuts. Maria has spotted them, stops splashing sea water onto the half submerged mule.

MARIA (IN SPANISH)
What is going on?!

JOSE (OVER PA)
It's school, Maria. Mr. Smith's idea.

Maria now spots Doug behind the wheel. He waves. She starts walking back toward land.

MARIA (IN SPANISH)
Can he be trusted?

Jose glances at Doug, who rolls his eyes.

JOSE (IN SPANISH)
I think so.

Maria studies Doug, finally gestures to Isabel to go.

She dashes into the Bus with her classmates. Doug throttles up the engine and edges out.

MARIA (IN SPANISH)
But I want her back here to help with dinner, Mr. Smith, understand?!

Doug salutes politely but mouths off in English.

DOUG
Certainly, Ma'am, and then I'll help you wash your sick Ass.

Doug laughs to himself until Maria retorts in broken ENGLISH.

MARIA (IN ENGLISH)
It's a mule, not a donkey, Mr. Smith. Any half-ass would know that.

Doug is flabbergasted, can't help but look back at Maria as he drives away. She returns his sarcastic salute.

THE BUS

of 80 children moves back onto the mainland.

JOSE
So where are you going to park?

DOUG
I'm not. I have to run an errand.

JOSE
An errand?

DOUG
I have to deliver this ...
(gestures the Box Lunch)
... in Aquilas.

JOSE
Aquilas?! You can't take these children to
Aquilas!

DOUG
Hey, you need teaching time, right? Just
think of this couple of hours as a field
trip.

Doug shifts into gear.

JOSE
You don't understand. Palomares and
Aquilas are not friends. Not since the
feud began.

DOUG
Feud? What in the world do you people have
to feud about?

JOSE
It's complicated.

DOUG
They sell you bad fish or something?

JOSE
That sounds right.

DOUG
You don't know?

JOSE
I'm sure that was it.

DOUG
Jesus.

JOSE
It's been eight years!

DOUG
 (to the kids in Spanish)
 Do you kids want to go to Aquilas and see a
 bunch of big fish?!

All of them CHEER -- YES!

DOUG
 The children have spoken.

Doug shifts into gear.

JOSE
 Okay.. but we're not getting off the bus.

EXT. PALOMARES OUTSKIRTS

Col. Giles and his troops stop searching the landscape to watch
 the Airforce Bus of children heading out.

SPANISH KIDS (IN SPANISH)
 ... take one down, pass it around.. 82
 bottles of beer on the wall...

The helicopter blasts in overhead, makes a beeline toward a
 FLARE arcing skyward on the far side of the valley.

THE MOUNTAINS

The Bus winds its way along a narrow path, one that slices
 across the face of a mountain. Boulders the size of barns seem
 to mark the way, some perched precariously on end, others split
 by the roots of a flowering tree.

The Bus slows as it approaches Father Francisco's donkey cart
 going the other way. Doug moves as far as he can to allow him
 to pass. The Father thanks him with a two fingered PEACE sign.
 Strange.

EXT. AQUILAS - DAY

Steam floats from several corrugated huts, makes the air
 actually seem heavier. Villagers stare out in disbelief as the
 Airforce Bus of farm children heads through town.

JOSE
 Is stopping absolutely necessary?

DOUG
 I'll just be a minute, Jose.

Doug stops near the docks, steps off and smiles at the
 onlookers. The children all crowd the windows and gaze at the
 fishing village as if it were another world.

THE DOCKS

Doug spots a crowd of FISHERMEN inside the open-air TAVERN but
 ignores them and walks out on the dock. Rooted at the end, on
 both sides, are two massive iron STATUES. A pair of enchanting
 SEA SIRENS.

Doug notes the large buckets of fresh SHRIMP in the docked boats. The fishermen watch him, curiously.

SIMO ORTES is also there, eating alone in a corner.

Doug gets a little too close to the boats and ROLDAN, one of the bolder fishermen finally steps outside.

Doug walks back toward the Tavern.

DOUG

Hello, I'm Doug Smith. I came to meet the heroes that saved our airmen.

ROLDAN

We've already been met by your General and look where it's gotten us.

DOUG

I know, the fishing ban. I'm sorry, but maybe this will help.

Doug holds out the box. Roldan takes it, opens it. All the fishermen look in. Noses scrunch up.

ROLDAN

What is it?

DOUG

Lunch.

ROLDAN

You call this lunch?

DOUG

No, the Airforce calls it lunch. You should see dinner.

One of the fishermen takes a taste of the ham. Like biting into a raw lemon.

FISHERMAN

Tastes like dog shit.

DOUG

And it costs a dollar.

FISHERMAN

A dollar?!

DOUG

Well there aren't any places out here to get food Americans will eat.

FISHERMAN

What will they eat?

DOUG

Oh you know, ham - steaks. Potatoes. Ribs. Hot dogs. Shrimp. Chicken--

FISHERMAN 2
Shrimp?

DOUG
Oh yes, but only shrimp cooked a certain way.

FISHERMAN 2
What way?

DOUG
Fried.

FISHERMAN 2
Fried?

DOUG
In a special sauce.

FISHERMAN 2
What kind of sauce?

Doug plays his trump card.

DOUG
Tomato.

There's a pause as the men look at each other. Roldan turns back.

ROLDAN
You just came from Palomares.

DOUG
Well... yes.

The men groan, go back to drinking.

ROLDAN
Sorry, we're not interested.

DOUG
But you haven't even heard the deal.

ROLDAN
If it concerns Palomares, then there is no deal.

DOUG
All I'm asking you to do is trade services with them, fish for tomatoes, maybe give them a hand harvesting some of their crops.

The men laugh.

DOUG
In return I'll get the Airforce to buy your fried shrimp meals for a dollar fifty each.

They stop laughing.

DOUG

It's a way to take the shrimp you've already caught and make ten times what you normally get! Come on, what do you say?

-- SCREEEECH --- Simo slides his chair back, stands. All eyes are on him as he walks over to Doug.

SIMO (IN SPANISH)

What you say is bullshit.

Doug flinches when Simo gets nose to nose.

SIMO (IN SPANISH)

We are not farmers. We are not cooks. We are fishermen. That's what we do.

Simo walks out. The others shake their heads.

ROLDAN

That is Simo Ortes, he is still very upset because he was unable to retrieve the airman that landed near his boat.

FISHERMAN 2

He is a very stubborn man.

Doug watches as Simo hauls his SON away from the bus of kids.

ROLDAN

But he is right. We are not farmers. Especially Palomares farmers.

Strike three.

EXT. PALOMARES - LATER

The school bus heads back up to the Hotel. Maria is outside, busy hand washing what looks like a thousand tomatoes. She sees the bus, uses a wet tomato to wipe the dirt from her face. Cleans up nice. Doug parks the empty bus, looks beat.

DOUG

Okay, Isabel, last stop.

Isabel sneezes behind him. Door opens and Isabel grabs the pole, twirls down the steps. Maria catches her before she falls.

ISABEL (IN SPANISH)

That was so much fun, mother! I hope we can have school in Mr. Smith's bus every day!

Maria looks up at Doug who feigns total fear.

MARIA (IN ENGLISH)

You see what you've started?

DOUG

Why didn't you speak English last night?

MARIA
Why didn't you?

DOUG
I was trying to be polite.

MARIA
You were trying too hard.

Doug can't figure her out. Isabel sneezes again. Maria instinctively places a hand on her forehead.

MARIA (IN SPANISH)
So, did you learn anything today?

ISABEL (IN SPANISH)
Yes, Aquilas smells bad.

Maria is shocked, centers on Doug. Uh oh.

MARIA
You took our children to Aquilas?

DOUG
I had to talk with the fishermen...

MARIA
--Who told you could do this?!

DOUG
I know, I know, "the feud", but the kids didn't seem to mind--

Maria quickly climbs the steps, is right in his face.

MARIA
--Never take my daughter there again!
Those men are dangerous drunks!

DOUG
(laughs)
Dangerous? Because they sold Palomares a few bad fish?--

MARIA
--Bad fish?! You think I joke with you?!

They are very close and the quickness of their breathing has them both staring a bit longer than necessary.

DOUG
So the feud wasn't over fish...?

Maria spins to Isabel.

MARIA
Come, Isabel, we have sauce to make.

Doug watches dazed as they head back to the tomatoes. He grinds the bus into gear, motors out.

THE PLAZA - EVENING

Doug drives the bus back toward camp. Up on a small HILL sit most of the locals, their well worn chairs all positioned to face west.

Doug pulls over to see what's so captivating, walks up on to

THE HILLTOP

and suddenly spots the largest SUN he's ever seen, a rippling GIANT taking its dying breaths, turning the Mediterranean into liquid fire.

Doug can't help but watch. As it disappears, the villagers actually "ooo" and "ahhh", then clap. This is obviously a daily ritual. Doug turns around when it's over, notices the townspeople are now watching him. He claps for their benefit.

DOUG

Very nice.

The villagers simply fold up their chairs and start home. Doug feels abandoned, then spots someone even more ignored.

EXT. THE BAKER'S ANTIQUE TRUCK

is full of bread but no one will stop to buy a single loaf. Villagers avoid him like the plague.

Doug makes sure everyone sees him as he marches over.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)

I'll take three - no FIVE loaves.

The Baker recognizes Doug, knows what he's doing.

BAKER (IN SPANISH)

It won't matter. I will still be cursed.

DOUG

You're not cursed. Sell me the bread.

BAKER

You really don't want it.

DOUG

Yes I do - I love bread. Now take this.

He hands him money. The Baker won't take it.

BAKER

I can't accept your charity.

DOUG

It's not charity! Jesus - I don't believe you people!

(to everyone-in Spanish)

I'm here to help you! You have a problem - you come to me! That's my job. No -- it's my life!

He's not getting through, turns to the scattering crowd.

DOUG

Come on -- isn't there anyone here that will take this offering?! Anyone?!

VOICE

I will.

Doug turns, is startled to see it's Father Francisco. He plucks the bills from Doug's hand, speaks ENGLISH with a French accent.

FATHER FRANCISCO

My cart needs a new wheel.

The Father walks back toward his donkey cart. Doug hesitates, then catches up to him.

DOUG

Father, you know these people, right?

FATHER FRANCISCO

Palomares is just one of my parishes, but yes - I know them.

DOUG

Then can you tell me what's wrong with them?

FATHER FRANCISCO

Wrong with them?

DOUG

They won't let me help them.

The Father smiles, gets to his cart, tends to his donkey.

FATHER FRANCISCO

How old is America's oldest city - Two hundred, three hundred years old?

DOUG

I suppose...

FATHER FRANCISCO

Well Palomares has been here forever. Phoenicians roamed it, Carthaginians settled it, Romans mined it, Moors were expelled from it - thousands of generations walked on this soil.

He thumps the ground.

FATHER FRANCISCO

You can't expect a people with that much history to easily accept help from outsiders. Their trust in each other is the only thing they believe keeps their village from dying.

DOUG
Well they trust you and you're not from here.

FATHER FRANCISCO
Yes, but I'm a man of God. They trust God.

DOUG
Then maybe you and God could help him.

Doug gestures the dejected Baker.

DOUG
You know, a little holy water, a few chants...?

FATHER FRANCISCO
(laughs)
Some things are beyond a quick fix, Senor Smith. They have to run their own course.

DOUG
Yeah, like this infamous feud... You know what that's about?

FATHER FRANCISCO
I believe it had something to do with a goat.

DOUG
A goat?

FATHER FRANCISCO
Or a cow... Yes, it was a cow.

EXT. HOTEL MARICEILO - NIGHT

Doug lugs a bag bursting with bread along the beach. He barely notices how incredible the view is just beyond the surf. Planetariums aren't even this clear. Doug starts up the Hotel's steps, then sees someone crouched in the shadows, peeking behind the building.

DOUG
What's going on?

The young Corporal is startled, whispers and points.

CORPORAL
Owner's making sauce, sir.

DOUG
What?

BIDDLE (O.S.)
Shhhhhh.

Doug spins, sees Biddle kneeled behind his own shrub. Caught.

BIDDLE
No TV.

Doug leans down, sees Maria standing in a large metal WASHTUB moving slowly to a castanet beat while crushing tomatoes with bare feet.

CORPORAL
Is that sanitary?

DOUG
Who cares.

BIDDLE
Look at her move.

Isabel dumps more tomatoes into the vat and Maria speeds up the tempo.

CORPORAL
I'm looking. And I'm trying not to be distracted, sir, but I have admit, it's hard...

Maria goes into overdrive, starts moving with a sensual passion.

DOUG
I know what you mean, Corporal.

Someone comes up behind the three men.

YOUNG BOY (O.S.)
Senor?

All turn, somewhat embarrassed being caught by a young local BOY. He rattles off excitedly in Spanish.

BIDDLE
What is it?

DOUG
He says he found something important...

BIDDLE
How would a child know what's important?

Doug talks to him more. The Boy suddenly gets flustered, waves his arms - then runs off toward the beach.

BIDDLE
What did you say?

DOUG
I just asked him to describe it.

BIDDLE
Maybe you don't know Spanish as well as you thought.

They look over. The Boy has picked up a stick, is now dragging it through the beach sand.

DOUG
 (realizing)
 ... he's drawing. He's drawing it.

Biddle and Doug rush over, stare down at what the Boy has done.

DOUG
 What the hell...

It's crude, but unmistakable - a torpedo shaped object - twice as long as a man. Doug faces Biddle.

DOUG
 Is that what I think it is?

BIDDLE
 Tell him he has to take me to it. Tonight.
 Right now.

DOUG
 You mean "us." Take us to it.

Biddle hesitates, has no choice. He nods.

Doug tells the Boy in Spanish. Biddle steps back as a wave comes in and begins to wash away the outline of a bomb.

EXT. TOMATO PATCHES - NIGHT

Two flashlights move rapidly through the dense foliage.

THE TOMATO PATCH

The Boy is in good shape, flies through the bushes. Keeping up is tough. Doug and Biddle make the attempt. Tomatoes blur past.

DOUG
 Ten megaton! Ten? That's like ten times
 Hiroshima!

BIDDLE
 Actually fifty.

DOUG
 Fifty?! What the hell are we doing flying
 that kind of weapon around?

BIDDLE
 It's a deterrent. Keeps Ivan in line.

DOUG
 And who's keeping us in line? I mean,
 besides gravity?

They fight their way through the thick bushes, come to a clearing where the Boy has stopped, tries to get his bearings, rattles off in Spanish.

BIDDLE

It's the barrel, right? He's talking about the barrel again, isn't he? Unbelievable. This kid is just as lost as we are.

Boy takes off running again.

BIDDLE

Tell him to reduce his speed!

The chase continues. They come over a rise and spot the Boy on top of another hill.

TOP OF HILL

Boy pauses to catch his breath. Doug and Biddle catch up, see the BARREL the Boy's standing next to.

BIDDLE

Well I'll be, he found it.

DOUG

Ah... he certainly did.

Biddle follows Doug's gaze down the other side of the hill. Below lies a gray and white parachute draped across the rocks. Only part of the bomb can be seen glimmering in the moonlight.

BIDDLE

Bingo. Number three is found.

DOUG

Number three? There were three hydrogen bombs on that plane?

BIDDLE

No...

(starts down)

There were four.

Doug stands frozen for a moment.

DOWN HILL

Doug carefully navigates the rocky hillside, catches up with Biddle who's stopped at a rock, opens his hefty briefcase. Three cylindrical instruments lie in dense foam, each with a label - ALPHA -- BETA -- GAMMA. Radiation monitors.

DOUG

This is what you call insurance?

BIDDLE

It's a very technical field these days.

Biddle switches on GAMMA - swings it forward. Doug now notices that the bomb is in the center of a fifty foot shallow crater.

DOUG

Whoa. Quite an impact crater for something with a parachute.

BIDDLE

It's not an impact crater. Hold up.

Biddle's sudden concern has Doug a bit unnerved. Especially when Biddle slips on rubber gloves and a breathing mask.

DOUG

What's going on? I mean it didn't go off. Even I know the crater would be somewhat larger.

BIDDLE

Somewhat.

The totally focused Biddle takes his instruments out of their protective foam. First up is Gamma. He turns it on, aims it at the bomb and the surrounding crater.

BIDDLE

This was formed by the conventional explosives detonating.

DOUG

Conventional?

Nothing on Gamma. Biddle switches to the Beta detector.

BIDDLE

A nuclear reaction is like a bonfire. All of that incredible spectacle and destructiveness is started by striking a single match.

DOUG

(looking at crater again)
That's some match.

BIDDLE

It's some bonfire.

Nothing on Beta. Alpha is last. To use this one Biddle has to get a lot closer to the bomb itself.

DOUG

So why didn't this match start a bonfire?

Biddle leans down right next to the bomb's casing.

BIDDLE

Because as long as the bomb isn't armed with the key, that can't happen - not even if it were dropped five miles onto a rock.

DOUG

Great, then there's no danger.

Biddle isn't answering. His probing has stopped.

DOUG

There's no danger. Right?

BIDDLE'S
face has drained of color. Eyes are fixed on the meter of the Detector. It's swinging up and down erratically - pegs at one point. He raises the probe a few inches off the sand and it goes to zero. Back to the sand and the needle pegs.

DOUG
Biddle?

BIDDLE
(walks back)
You were right, Smith.

DOUG
There's no danger?

BIDDLE
No, you're gonna need more forms.

INT. HOTEL HEADQUARTERS - LATER

Col. Giles is there with Biddle and Doug. All stare at General Wilson across the room. There's a very long pause.

GENERAL WILSON
We can't tell them.

BIDDLE
What?

GENERAL WILSON
Not yet.

DOUG
Isn't that kind of risky, sir?

COL. GILES
Smith, Alpha rays are so weak they can be blocked by a sheet of paper. At the most we're looking at watering down the area, right, Lt.?

BIDDLE
Well yes, but the danger really depends on how the wind was blowing when the explosives went off. We won't really know what the plutonium concentration is until we get better readings of the spread zone. All I know is I can't do it all by myself.

GENERAL WILSON
(sits up)
Okay. I get the message. We need more help. Well gentlemen, you'll soon have all the help you need. But this information doesn't leave this room, understand?
(all nod)

(MORE)

GENERAL WILSON (cont'd)

And Smith, since you now are privy to classified information there are two words you need to brand into your brain...

EXT. PALOMARES OUTSKIRTS

A muscular TEC-SERGEANT towers over a dust-covered VOLVO.

TEC-SERGEANT

No comment.

A pair of BRITISH JOURNALISTS sit inside the car. One has a CURLED mustache, the other is a number of pounds OBESE.

CURLED

We understand one of the planes was carrying nuclear devices?

MP

No comment.

CURLED

So then it's OK to go in there?

Car starts to advance. MP blocks it, touches his sidearm.

MP

Please turn your vehicle around.

OBESE

You can't seal off an entire village.

Two more heavily armed MPs step up. Curly understands, backs up.

CURLY

This is not over. There will be more of us. A lot more!

The MP's share a look. Especially when Curly parks his car a mere hundred yards away and WAITS.

EXT. PALOMARES - EVENING

Another fiery sun sinks to a capacity crowd.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - LATER

It's now filled with Officers - lounging, reading, playing cards.

Doug is on the only public phone in Palomares, can barely hear with all the noise. He glances at the postcard of the Fountainebleau.

DOUG (INTO PHONE)

No, no, no, it's just a minor complication, that's all, just a day or two at most... John Wayne? Next week? Wow... Well of course I still want the job. I was born for that job!

Maria walks through lugging two full buckets of hot water. She kicks an airman's feet off a table as she passes.

DOUG (INTO PHONE)
 Look, I'll be there on time.
 (John Wayne impression)
 That's a promise, pardner.

Doug hangs up, runs to Maria, offers to take one of the buckets.

MARIA
 I've got it.

DOUG
 You don't need to do all this yourself,
 Maria.

MARIA
 I'm used to it.

DOUG
 You mean you've always run this place by
 yourself?

MARIA
 No.

DOUG
 Then you had some help at one time?

MARIA
 Questions - questions - questions. Always
 talking. Can't you do anything else?!

DOUG
 It's how I get to know people.

MARIA
 You think what someone tells you is who
 they are?

DOUG
 Well it's all I have time for.

MARIA
 Then you really never get to know anyone.

Maria starts up the stairs, the buckets making it tough.

DOUG
 Well I just met you and I already know
 you're stubborn as hell. Give me one--

Doug steps past her, grabs one of the buckets away.

The sudden weight shift causes Maria to lose her balance and she drops the other bucket. Doug manages to catch her from falling but she's pissed, pushes off him--

MARIA
 I told you I had it!

But Doug can only grimace in pain. Maria stops, now sees that most of the boiling water fell on his shoes.

THE KITCHEN - LATER

Doug's bare foot is red and already blistering. Maria prepares something at the counter.

DOUG

So whose cow started the feud?

MARIA

Cows, fish, where do you get these stories?

DOUG

So it wasn't a cow?

MARIA

It was a pig.

DOUG

A pig?

MARIA

An Aquilas Pig was to blame. Now shut up and raise your foot.

Maria walks over...

MARIA

This might sting a bit at first.

... holding the head of an EEL.

DOUG

Whoa! My foot's burned, not cursed.

MARIA

It'll take the blistering away.

He looks at the eel's beady black eyes.

DOUG

And give me nightmares.

MARIA

Then look up here.

Doug switches his gaze to her eyes. They are truly captivating. She takes his foot gently in one hand.

MARIA

Don't think of anything else.

It's not hard but Doug makes the mistake and glances back at the eel closing in on his foot. He suddenly breaks away.

DOUG

I'm sorry, I can't do this.

MARIA

Why?

DOUG

It's unnatural.

MARIA

It's completely natural.

DOUG

Yeah, well.. maybe for you.. but we've got a doctor with all kinds of tools just for this kind of thing... you understand?

MARIA

Certainly. How can I compete with your technology. It has served you so well.

Her sarcasm doesn't go unnoticed. She tosses him his sock and shoe.

EXT. THE BEACH

Almost sinful that another day has to break this mood. But it does. We HEAR the generator cough and REV up to speed.

INT. BATHROOM

Doug shaves again. But this time he's a bit more in sync with the pulsating light. And he turns on the faucet way before he needs the water. It flows from the roof, through metal pipes, from the left to the right. Finally spits out, vibrating the wall by the sink.

But the vibration continues to build. Doug turns off the faucet. Rumbling doesn't stop. Sounds like it's coming from outside. He sticks his head into the HALLWAY just as Maria walks back toward her room. Like before, she's wrapped in her bedsheet.

MARIA

What did you do?

DOUG

I just turned on the faucet.

MARIA

You must have broke something.

DOUG

I did not.

She pushes by him, checks the faucet herself, then the pipes underneath. She sees Doug's foot now bandaged in a shoe that's been surgically altered. And Doug can't help staring at her sheet, wondering if there's anything on underneath it. Now the rumble becomes a DRONE. Both stop to listen.

DOUG

That's not your pipes.

MARIA
Sounds like locusts.

Drone turns to THUMPING - like the wings of some great bird.
Doug suddenly realizes what this is.

DOUG
... they're here. They're here!!!

Doug runs out. Maria is left holding his razor.

EXT. PALOMARES - DAWN

SHADOWS pass across the landscape. And just as the sun cracks the peaks - the INVASION begins.

Four Vietnam style HUEY helicopters lead the charge. The military GUNSHIPS thunder through the valley ahead of a barrage of heavy ground vehicles, all forging their way along Palomares' only road.

Trucks, Carriers, trailers, a communication rig, a collapsed crane, a bulldozer on a flatbed -- more transports, more buses of Noncoms, more security.

PALOMARES CHILDREN

stand in their doorways, squinting through the dust, watching the onslaught with wide eyes. The Circus has definitely come to town.

A C-130 cargo plane dips into the fray, thunders in over the village, dropping several huge CRATES out the back. Small chutes open and the cargo disappears behind Cemetery hill.

A VILLAGE WOMAN

scrubbing dirty clothes on a rock, watches as a cargo helicopter swoops in overhead, dangling brand new WASHER and DRYERS below it. Next one carries gleaming ELECTRIC RANGE OVENS. And there goes a stainless steel SHOWER STALL.

PALOMARES CHILDREN

run from their adobes up Cemetery Hill, crest the peak and are treated to the spectacular sight of military inefficiency on a grand scale.

THE DRY RIVER BED

has become a major organizational nightmare. Lt. Payne and Major Young try to shepherd the various forces into some kind of structure. And standing in the middle of it all is General Wilson. He grins widely, obviously enjoying the colossal operation he has given birth to.

DOUG is still wiping shaving creme from his face, catches up with Biddle. Both watch in disbelief.

BIDDLE

Look at him, he's loving this.

DOUG

Probably his last time to stage a war.

Biddle spots a small group of men with Red coveralls and AEC printed on their arm patches. They carry silver cases.

BIDDLE

(moving toward them)

Those are for me.

A CRATE lands behind Doug. He spins, watches it spill five hundred box lunches onto the dust strewn ground.

Col. Giles yells through the cacophony of noise.

COL. GILES

Lt. Smith! Over here!

Doug steps around the boxes, meets Col. Giles. A young Navy man follows him - SEAMAN BISHOP.

COL. GILES

We've got a situation in the Bay! One of those fishermen you talked with is having a standoff with the Navy.

SEAMAN BISHOP

Refuses to leave the waters, even tried to ram the Admiral's boat.

DOUG

Does this fishermen have a boy onboard?

SEAMAN BISHOP

Yeah, tough little tike.

DOUG

Simo Ortes.

COL. GILES

You know of him?

DOUG

He didn't hang around with the other fishermen. They said his ego was bruised because he couldn't retrieve the airman that sank near his boat.

Col. Giles is suddenly interested.

COL. GILES

This man saw one of the airmen sink?

DOUG

That's what they said.

COL. GILES

And why have you waited until now to tell me this?!

DOUG

Col., I thought all the men were accounted for.

COL. GILES

No - there's still one missing.
(leans closer)
The B-52 Captain.

Doug realizes what he's saying.

DOUG

Jesus --the one carrying the arming key?

COL. GILES

(nods)
Go out and talk to this guy, see if he can tell you where this airman went down.

DOUG

And why is he going to listen to me now?

COL. GILES

Because he has no choice. Either you talk him down or they take him down.

Doug understands, runs with Seaman Bishop toward the beach.

General Wilson steps up to Giles.

GENERAL WILSON

Col., I want you to start organizing the rest of the men into six search teams. I want each team to draw abreast in one line close enough to touch fingertips. They are not to break the line no matter what the obstacle. Nothing is too tall. Nothing is too thick. In short, I want every square foot of this valley walked on by American souls, is that understood?

COL. GILES

Perfectly.

GENERAL WILSON

And make sure they mark it so we don't have to walk it again.

The General marches off toward a lowering JEEP. Giles is left to survey a valley of 20 square miles. A daunting task.

EXT. THE BEACH

Doug and Seaman Bishop break from the tomato patch onto the beach. FROGMEN are scattered along the shallow waters, have already created a pile of dug-up wreckage.

But what's amazing is the six large NAVY vessels now parked just a mile off shore. Cruisers. Destroyers. Mine Sweepers.

DOUG

Where did all these come from?

SEAMAN BISHOP

That's just the front line. Your General's got my Admiral bringing in the entire 6th fleet.

DOUG

My god.

They run to a powered RAFT, get in. Seaman Bishop guns the outboard and they're away, becoming a speck amongst the waves.

EXT. THE VALLEY

The horizon - a hill top - is overtaken by a line of SOLDIERS - side by side - looking like Apaches ready to descend on Dodge.

Each carries a BAMBOO CANE, tapping the ground for holes. As they march across the rock strewn landscape, the men mark their progress using TOILET PAPER. It spills from rolls, is tagged to the brush.

VILLAGERS

look down from another hill as these Americans make their way across their valley - dividing it with these long white fluttering trails. Crazy men.

MARIA joins the party.

EXT. H-BOMB NUMBER 3

is approached by Biddle and his new TEAM. All wear red radiation coveralls, gloves and masks. Each holds an Alpha radiation detector. They start down the crater sides looking like Astronauts approaching the Monolith.

EXT. A RED FLARE

rockets over the water - SLAMS harmlessly against the plating of the Admiral's cruiser. Guest and his men rise back up and stare at SIMO perched defiantly on his shrimp boat, reloading. One of the Sailors grabs the handles of a 100mm rail mounted cannon.

SAILORS

Should we return fire, sir?

The Admiral gives the overzealous sailor an incredulous look.

ADMIRAL

How 'bout we wait a few more minutes before declaring war on Spain, son.

THE NAVY RAFT

makes its way around a destroyer. A gap opens up and Doug can finally see the shrimp boat. The destroyer is flanked by a mine sweeper and the Admiral's cruiser, effectively boxing in Simo.

DOUG

Jesus, no wonder he's pissed. You people got him caged in like a rat.

SEAMAN BISHOP

He's the one who broke the rules.

Doug can see Simo on the top deck, standing his ground, firing another FLARE at the Admiral's cruiser.

SEAMAN BISHOP

Guy is certainly brave, I'll give him that.

DOUG

Yeah, well that's not all you're gonna give him.

Doug takes the Seaman's Navy hat.

SEAMAN BISHOP

That's my hat!

DOUG

Do you have any medals?

SEAMAN BISHOP

Medals?

DOUG

-Of honor, purple heart, medal of valor...?

SEAMAN BISHOP

Sir, I'm just a 2nd year seaman.

DOUG

How about a badge, an I.D. button...?

None of them. Doug looks him over, sees something.

DOUG

Give me your belt.

SEAMAN BISHOP

What?

DOUG

Your belt! Take it off!

Doug looks over his shoulder at Simo's boat getting closer. Seaman Bishop takes off his belt, is shocked when Doug proceeds to RIP the BUCKLE off.

SEAMAN BISHOP

That was a gift from my fiancée! The wedding's in a month!

Doug holds up the silver buckle - two interlocked ANCHORS.

DOUG
If she's Mrs. Right, she'll understand.

SIMO

turns to the approaching raft, the only vessel lower than him. Miguel stands below, scared but holding his own.

DOUG
keeps his eyes on Simo, talks quietly to Seaman Bishop.

DOUG
I want you to do whatever I tell you to or this man has no chance, you got it?

SEAMAN BISHOP
What do I have to do?

Doug stands up in the raft, letting Simo see him clearly.

DOUG
Senor Ortes!

Simo recognizes him.

SIMO (IN SPANISH)
Ah, the tomato man. I must not be very important for them to send you.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
Actually, you are very important to us.

SIMO (IN SPANISH)
I will be if they shoot me.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
They have no intention of shooting you.

SIMO (IN SPANISH)
Then they should leave me to make my living.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
They can't. You see, we just found out that the airman that sank near your boat was the most important man on the aircraft.

SIMO (IN SPANISH)
I tried to save him.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
I'm sure you did all you could but this man's body is as important dead as it was alive.

Simo wonders - what?

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
 He carried information that is so important
 that I have been ordered to come out here
 and ask you to join our Navy in this
 search.

SIMO(IN SPANISH)
 I don't believe you.

DOUG(IN SPANISH)
 I understand but I can assure you that as
 soon as Seaman Bishop here performs the
 Navy Assistant Civilian Indoctrination, all
 of these ships will be following your lead.

SIMO(IN SPANISH)
 (scans the ships)
 Indoctrination?

DOUG(IN SPANISH)
 Yes, all civilians who assist the Navy must
 take a vow of service to become honorary
 members.

Simo isn't sure what to believe. Doug holds out the hat.

DOUG(IN SPANISH)
 The official honoree head gear.

Doug tosses the hat. It lands in the stern of the La Manuela.
 Miquel fetches it, runs it up the stairs to his father as --
 Doug turns to Seaman Bishop, whispers.

DOUG
 When I tell you, start talking with
 authority.

SEAMAN BISHOP
 What do I say?

DOUG
 Anything that sounds official. He can't
 understand English.

SEAMAN BISHOP
 But I don't know anything official.

DOUG
 There's gotta be something official
 sounding that you've memorized.

Doug turns back to Simo who now has the hat.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
 And now Seaman Bishop will start the
 swearing in procedure. Seaman Bishop?
 Bishop?

Seaman Bishop takes a breath and begins to BOOM OUT -

SEAMAN BISHOP

"I Craig Bishop take thee to be my lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward... "

Doug glances back - "that's the best you could do?" The Sailors on the ships are totally confused.

SEAMAN BISHOP

"... to love and to cherish, to honor and obey, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, 'til death do us part."

Doug nods - "very nice".

DOUG (IN SPANISH)

And with that said, I now present to you, Simo Ortes, the symbol of international cooperation on the high seas, a badge that officially recognizes you as a representative of the United States Navy.

Doug holds up the belt buckle - the interlocking anchors a perfect symbol.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)

It is yours if you accept it.

Doug and Simo lock stares, then Doug tosses the buckle toward the shrimp boat. Every sailor follows the gleaming trinket as it sails SLO MO through the air - over the water - high and wide - until it's SNATCHED out of flight by Simo.

Doug claps, elbows Bishop who also claps, causing a ripple in the hundreds of confused sailors perched on the ships. All finally join in a rousing APPLAUSE. Simo Ortes beams, allows his son to proudly place the Navy hat on his head.

DOUG

Alright, let's get this show on the road.

EXT. PALOMARES

That Line of Soldiers approaches a TOMATO PATCH. A WHISTLE blows and the line stops just at the crop's edge. All turn toward the newly arrived JEEP following close behind. General Wilson rides high in the back jump seat.

GENERAL WILSON

BAYONETS!

In unison, the soldiers all pull out long KNIVES from their belts, slide them on the ends of their cane poles.

GENERAL WILSON

FORWARD MARCH!

The Villagers watch in horror as the line of soldiers slowly push through the crop by HACKING DOWN the tomato plants. An entire harvest of bulbous red bulbs is about to be reduced to weeds.

MARIA stands paralyzed like the others. But unlike them - she's seen enough, breaks from the pact. Heads down the hill.

EXT. H-BOMB NUMBER 3

There's a tree BRANCH stuck in the sand forty feet from the impact point. Biddle's technicians point their PROBES at the stick. When they get within an inch - all needles PEG. Not good.

BIDDLE

Okay... let's start at the impact point, work our way out in all directions. We have to see how far this goes.

EXT. AQUILAS

Tavern is full. An excited FISHERMAN runs in from the docks - yells and points outside.

FISHERMAN

Simo Ortes!

ROLDAN (IN SPANISH)

I knew it, the Navy arrested the fool.

The regulars follow the man out onto the dock - look at where he's pointing. All are shocked to see Simo's diminutive shrimp trawler leading a parade of huge Navy ships across the horizon.

ROLDAN

I don't think he can outrun them.

EXT. THE MEDITERRANEAN

Simo guides his trawler out to sea, constantly scanning the features to either side. Doug stands next to him, watching.

Following close is the CRUISER. The Admiral stands on the top deck with his crew. All look back at the receding shoreline, shake their heads.

SEAMAN BISHOP

Where's this guy going? We're already six miles out.

FIRST OFFICER

What do you expect, he has no directional indicator, no depth finder, not even a radio.

ADMIRAL

I wouldn't count him out just yet, men. Some of these guys have a sixth sense when it comes to finding their favorite fishing spots.

The parade continues out to sea.

EXT. PALOMARES

General Wilson stands in his jeep like Washington crossing the Delaware, BARKS orders to his troops, presently flattening a crop of ripe tomatoes. ONE - TWO - SWING - CHOP!

MARIA marches up from behind, tries to yell over his chant.

MARIA

HEY!! (broken English & Spanish) YOU HAVE
NO RIGHT TO DO THIS! YOU MUST STOP! HEY!!

The General ignores her, continues his chant.

MARIA

LISTEN TO ME! YOU CAN'T DO THIS!

Still no response. Maria is livid, picks up a few ROCKS and heaves them toward the General. The first one misses by a mile. The second one whizzes right past him - SMASHES through the jeep's windshield. That's got his attention.

The General stops his chant. The troops stop their chopping and all one hundred soldiers turn their attention toward Maria. Oops.

EXT. SIMO'S BOAT

drifts in calm water. Simo stands on his top deck, scans the rugged features of the Bay. Finally he nods. Doug is there with him, stares out at the shoreline which is very far away.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)

You sure?

Simo just looks at him. Doug lifts his Naval walkie-talkie.

DOUG (INTO WALKIE)

Admiral, this is it.

The Cruiser settles in behind the shrimp boat.

Simo points at the peaks across the water. Doug listens to the story, TRANSLATES it into the walkie talkie.

DOUG (TRANSLATING)

The sun was lower - eye level, but as the
parachute got closer he could see the
man...

FLASH -- We're there. That morning. And here comes the parachute, drifting right toward us - SUN streaking through it. Dangling at the end of the lines is a silhouette SHAPE.

DOUG (TRANSLATING)

Actually, he says he was only half-a-man.

The shape of half-a-man. Looks like a head and torso.

DOUG (TRANSLATING)
His lower body was gone, his insides
trailing where his legs once hung...

Below the torso dangles a tangled mess of stringy limbs. The Man splashes down a hundred yards from Simo. Simo runs to pull up the net but Miguel grabs his arm - points. Simo looks and the MAN sinks, taking the chute down with it.

DOUG stands there with Simo as he stares out at the water.

DOUG (TRANSLATING)
But before he could get to him, the sea
grabbed hold and took the man away.

The walkie-talkie BLIPS back.

DOUG (INTO WALKIE)
Yes, sir?

ADMIRAL (OVER WALKIE)
Look, Lt., it was a vivid story but we're
almost eight miles off the coast. Now I
don't want to call this man a liar but the
other airmen were rescued five miles closer
to shore. I just don't think there's any
way Captain Wendorf could have drifted this
far out.

Doug looks back at Simo and Miquel.

DOUG (INTO WALKIE)
Could you at least print out the
navigational coordinates and maybe drop a
few scuba divers over to take a look.

ADMIRAL (OVER WALKIE)
We've got the coordinates but dispatching
divers would be a waste, our depth gauges
are showing over 2000 feet to the floor.

Doug sighs, doesn't have any ideas.

DOUG (INTO WALKIE)
Okay. I'll let him know.

The Admiral gives the cue and the Cruiser's engines throttle up. They move out. Simo looks a bit confused.

SIMO (IN SPANISH)
Aren't they going to look?

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
They don't have the equipment right now.
But we've got the coordinates thanks to
your keen observations.

Doug tries to be reassuring but Simo isn't buying it.

SIMO (IN SPANISH)
Miguel, set the net. We might as well get something out of this trip.

Doug senses Simo's frustration.

THE ADMIRAL

feels odd about ignoring this man. Gut instinct tells him he shouldn't. He turns to his First Officer.

ADMIRAL GUEST
Lt., put out the word. See what's available in a working vessel that can dive down a half a mile. I don't care where it comes from, if it exists, get it here.

EXT. THE VALLEY

Biddle crawling - his Alpha probe hovering an inch off the ground. Pauses to look back at how far he's come, is unsettled to see that the hill he started from is now just a bump on the horizon.

Then -- a low SNORT. Biddle slowly turns and sees a --

--full size BULL standing 60 feet away. Its black eyes are focused on the Radiologist - the one dressed from head to toe in BRIGHT RED.

Biddle starts to stand but his movement causes the Bull to tense - snort louder. Hoof digs into soil. Nostrils flare. This animal is ready to charge.

BIDDLE
Ah crap...

Then a young voice --

YOUNG VOICE (O.S.)
Bertili.

Biddle's eyes flit to the side, spot of all people ISABEL, Maria's seven year old budding ballerina. Wearing her tutu in the field is especially odd. She yells at the Bull.

ISABEL
Bertili!

Biddle is horrified to see this thousand pound animal turn its rage toward the child. Hoof is still digging in - nostrils still flaring--

BIDDLE
Get out of here! Go!

But the girl is fearless - stands her ground. Proceeds to STARE DOWN the beast. After a few tense moments, the Bull finally settles. Isabel points and the defeated animal eventually moseys away.

Biddle can't believe it, looks at the little girl. She coughs, wipes her nose on her sleeve. One of Biddle's crewmen comes running up.

RADIOLOGIST

Lt. Biddle, I found the cut off about half a mile back but it's spreading.

Biddle is still trying to regain his normal heartbeat.

BIDDLE

It's the ocean winds. I'm afraid they're pushing the dust right into...

Biddle turns back to Isabel and she's dancing her way home.

BIDDLE

... the town.

RADIOLOGIST

Then it's official?

BIDDLE

Yes. Palomares is contaminated.

EXT. OFF THE BEACH - EVENING

Miguel picks through a small mound of shrimp, tosses the good ones in a bucket. Simo stops the boat way off the coast right in front of the hotel. Doug turns back, curious.

SIMO (IN SPANISH)

This is as close as I get to Palomares.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)

Oh come on, that's like half a mile!

Simo throttles up, threatens to move out further. Doug gets the message, stares down at the water, realizes he's going to get wet.

DOUG

(taking off shoes)

No pig is worth all of this anger.

SIMO

What pig?

DOUG

The one your stupid feud was started over.

SIMO

Who told you that?

DOUG

Maria Rodriguez. She said an Aquilas pig was to blame.

Simo laughs.

DOUG
So it wasn't?

SIMO
Oh no, I won't be caught disagreeing with
that woman. You can't win with her.

DOUG
You sound like you know her.

SIMO
A long time ago.

DOUG
Well she hasn't changed.

SIMO
Still stubborn as her mule.

DOUG
Which she drags out to sea every day.

SIMO
That woman is not normal.

DOUG
You wouldn't believe how she reacted to
this...

He pulls off the open-toed shoe, reveals the blistered foot.

SIMO
She showed you her eel?

DOUG
She wanted to rub it on me!

Simo looks him over, seems concerned.

DOUG
But I have to admit she does makes great
sauce.

SIMO
You've seen her make sauce?

DOUG
Oh yeah...

So has Simo.

DOUG
A man could do a lot worse, right?

Simo snaps out of the memory.

SIMO
Good-bye, Tomato Man.

DOUG
Wait...

Simo pushes the throttle forward. Doug loses his balance, falls right over the transom into the surf.

Doug comes up soaking wet, realizes he's only in waist high water. Simo cracks the thinnest of smiles as he steers for home.

DOUG

slops up onto the beach, empties pockets of water, shells. He looks up notes two airmen hanging the General's laundry on the clothes line. And the Young Corporal is scrubbing sheets on a washboard.

DOUG

Corporal, what's going on?

CORPORAL

We're doing the laundry, sir.

DOUG

I see that. Where's Maria?

CORPORAL

She's been relieved of duty.

DOUG

She's a civilian, she can't be relieved of duty.

CORPORAL

Apparently she attacked the General.

DOUG

What?!

CORPORAL

MP's had to haul her back here. General doesn't want her handling anything he wears, touches or eats. I think he thinks she'll poison him or something.

EXT. BEHIND HOTEL

Maria moves a brush across her mule. Doug approaches.

DOUG

Maria -- what were you thinking? I mean your passion is admirable but trying to stone a three star General? That's... irregular!

Maria continues the brushing, says softly...

MARIA

Have you seen the fields?

DOUG

I thought I'd made it clear that if anyone here had any problems, they would come to me and I'd handle it -- the right way.

(MORE)

DOUG (cont'd)

My god, you're so lucky you didn't injure the man!

MARIA

(louder)

Have you seen the fields?!

DOUG

No! I haven't seen the goddam fields!

Maria steps past him and points beyond the trees.

MARIA

Go. Look at them.

Doug has no desire to play her game. But she's not backing down. So just to placate her he tramps up the small hill, gets past the trees and suddenly freezes.

THE VALLEY

has lost its color. Tomatoes have been flattened into a pulpy red mess branded with thousands of military boot prints. Hillside crops have wide swatches completely missing as if swept away by the hand of God. In their place are long trails of white toilet tissue.

MARIA

(stepping up)

So I threw a rock. What would you have done?

THE DRY RIVER BED

Doug marches through the newly formed CAMP WILSON, a city of five hundred quickly pitched YELLOW TENTS. Corner signs are already being erected. One points to the LAUNDROMAT tent, another the SHOWER tent. Doug stops an Airman walking toward the KITCHEN tent carrying more box lunches.

DOUG

Where's Col. Giles?

AIRMAN

(pointing)

Saw him down Thunderball drive at the end.

Doug heads down the cracked dirt path, spots Colonel Giles and the General. There are two other men walking with them. Men in suits. Spanish men.

As Doug approaches, Giles sees him.

COL. GILES

Ah, here he is. Gentlemen, this is Lt. Smith. He's handling the villagers' claims.

The men in suits turn to Doug. The tall one is AMBASSADOR RAMOS.

AMBASSADOR RAMOS
He must be a very busy man.

COL. GILES
Lt. Smith, this is Ambassador Ramos and
General Pascual. They just arrived from
Madrid.

Doug has no clue as to what has been said here.

GENERAL WILSON
It's okay, Smith, they've been briefed on
the situation.

Doug knows what this means, turns to Giles. He nods.

COL. GILES
It spread.

DOUG
So what're we going to do?

COL. GILES
That's what we're deciding now.

AMBASSADOR RAMOS
There is no deciding necessary. Every
villager must be tested for Plutonium
contamination immediately.

GENERAL PASCUAL
Especially since you still haven't found
the forth bomb. It too could be leaking
this poison into the air.

GENERAL WILSON
That's highly unlikely.

GENERAL PASCUAL
But you don't know!

GENERAL WILSON
No, but the plutonium concentration is so
low that there's no reason to rush into
this and cause a major panic.

GENERAL PASCUAL
Since when have you been worried about
disrupting these people's lives?!

He gestures the HILLSIDE in the distance - the ravaged tomato
fields.

GENERAL PASCUAL
Your actions border on criminal.

GENERAL WILSON
I'm looking for the most destructive
weapons ever made and you expect me to
worry about a few lousy tomatoes?!

GENERAL PASCUAL

Those lousy tomatoes are Spanish tomatoes.
Tomatoes grown by my people.

GENERAL WILSON

Your people? This town's not even on your
maps!

GENERAL PASCUAL

You can't just trample over everything in
your way here!

GENERAL WILSON

And who's going to stop me? You?

General Pascual may be short, but he makes up for it in gall.

GENERAL PASCUAL

You don't think I can?! You don't think I
can match you man to man, face to face?!

GENERAL WILSON

You'd need a chair to stand on first.

GENERAL PASCUAL

How dare you!

Fists are ready to fly. Something has to be done.

DOUG

Annette Funicello!

Both Generals freeze for a beat -- what? You'd think for a
second they actually believed she was there. Doug shifts into
high gear.

DOUG

She and Frankie were in this movie where
someone yells shark and all the surfers had
to get out of the water even with these
really great waves.

General Pascal gives Doug a look like "Are you crazy?"

GENERAL WILSON

Giles, you want to take your boy away here?

COL. GILES

Lt...?

DOUG

No one was hurt and they never did see the
maneating beast but they couldn't take the
chance, they had to be sure. I mean what
would America do if Annette was bitten in
two by a great white?!

GENERAL WILSON

This isn't a movie, Lt!

DOUG

I know, but we may have a shark here, Sir.
A real one. Shouldn't we at least get
these people out of the water?

His tact is now obvious to everyone, even Wilson himself.
Everyone turns toward him. He's on the spot.

GENERAL WILSON

Fine. Test the surfers.

COL. GILES

Villagers, sir.

GENERAL WILSON

Whatever.

AMBASSADOR RAMOS

I will send experts from our nuclear
commission to assist.

GENERAL WILSON

You mean to spy.

AMBASSADOR RAMOS

Call it whatever you like but we will be
part of this. Sooner or later.

He gestures Pascual to follow. He and Wilson have a stare-down
that only ends when Pascual turns to leave. They head to a
helicopter.

Giles gives Doug a "good save" gesture. Wilson sees it.

GENERAL WILSON

Next time you want to make an ass out of
me, Lt., give me a bit of warning.

DOUG

Sir?

GENERAL WILSON

Oh I know, you stand there and see me as
this senile old war-monger, ready to spill
blood if my gigantic ego is even slightly
bruised.

DOUG

No, sir, I just think cooperating with
Spain is to our advantage...

GENERAL WILSON

Is it to our advantage to allow a fascist
dictator the possibility of becoming a
superpower? Because that's what we're
talking about here, Lt..

(MORE)

GENERAL WILSON (cont'd)

Franco put himself in power, he doesn't give a crap about these people but if he sees a way in here he'll exploit it and if he starts running the show, then we'll have bigger problems than my ego to deal with. We could end up with a Hitler sympathizer packing an H bomb in his back pocket. I don't know about you but I don't think I could sleep well at night knowing I was part of that.

Doug never realized this.

GENERAL WILSON

Now you go do your so called humanitarian duty and put the fear of death in these people, but just remember I'm trying to save them too, by protecting them from their own country.

Wilson starts to leave, turns back --

GENERAL WILSON

Oh, and the next time you use a Frankie and Annette movie as an analogy, pick one that's actually been made. Shark attack my ass...

Wilson walks off leaving a stunned Doug.

COL. GILES

I'll get Biddle's men to start converting the schoolhouse. You start spreading the word.

DOUG

What, that the town is radioactive? The General is right. We'll just cause them to panic.

COL. GILES

Then find another way to get them to the school. Bullshit them if you have to.

DOUG

That's just it, none of my bullshit works on these people. I think I'm losing it.

COL. GILES

Now is not the time to reevaluate your career choices, Lt. You're going to have to think of something. Something an entire town of simple farmers can't ignore.

EXT. A SHIP

cuts through ocean waves at full stroke. On the deck are several objects covered by flapping YELLOW TARPS.

EXT. PALOMARES - DAY

Mounds and mounds of overripe tomatoes line the edge of Palomares. An airman sprays them with a water hose. Another loads many in a truck.

TRUCKER

Same dropoff?

AIRMAN

Yeah. Better hurry, diner's in an hour.

The truck drives off.

A PA speaker echoes in the valley.

DOUG (O.S. ON PA)

Attention! Attention! Citizens of Palomares!

DOUG

drives a jeep down the main street, yells into a PA mike.

DOUG (SPANISH - OVER PA)

Attention - Please lend me your ears!

Men, women and children look up, intrigued. Doug gives it his all, almost going too far in his desperate act to bullshit the town.

DOUG

Put aside your troubles and grief and come get tickets to the big giveaway where you're sure to win a fabulous prize!

The young Corporal stands amongst a trailer load of YELLOW TARP covered objects, gestures like a gameshow assistant.

DOUG

Prizes like this brand new model 305-

The young Corporal gracefully rips the first tarp away, revealing a--

DOUG

--Jon Deere tractor! It has 35 powerful horses to make any job easier.

Crowd is awed. Pedros drops the reins to his cow and gawks.

DOUG

Or one of these Sears and Roebucks Riding Lawnmowers with the exclusive Easy Back cushion seat!

Corporal uncovers each item as Doug announces it--

DOUG

You could also win a Kodak instamatic, an Easy Squeeze Mop, a Lady Remington Shaver or even a years supply of refreshing Coca Cola!

CORPORAL

(holding up a case)
Things go better with Coke...

DOUG

So don't delay - get your tickets now and you could soon be the proud owner of this name-brand battery powered television set!

That gets the biggest reaction. Corporal pulls up the RABBIT EARS to sighs. Everyone crowds the jeep, holding up their hands for a ticket.

DOUG (OVER PA)

One ticket per family member. One ticket. But remember, all members must be at schoolhouse when the lucky number is drawn! And just for showing up, everyone gets a free health exam! So you're all winners!

Tickets are handed out. Pedros holds up nine fingers, impressing Doug. Gobs of tickets are handed out. Doug looks up and spots Father Francisco sitting on his cart. Watching him.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF PALOMARES

That truck we saw with the tomatoes ambles over the last hill of Palomares and slows at the MP outpost. MP gestures the truck on to the PRESS HOLDING GROUND.

The one car and two journalists has now grown into a chain-link fenced parking lot crammed with irate newsmen from all over the world.

Curled paces behind the fence as Obese eats.

CURLED

This is bloody unfair, it is. We were the first ones to arrive and now we'll never get the scoop.

OBESE

Just calm down and have some dinner.

He offers out a plate of tomatoes.

CURLED

Salad again?!

OBESE

No, these are cakes. Quite tasty.

CURLED

Tomato cakes, tomato salad, tomato pie -
I'm sick of tomatoes! I've had it - we're
not staying in this cage any longer.

OBESE

We're going back?

Curled studies the MP's positions, the chain link fence gate.

CURLED

No, we're going over.
(Obese's eyes bulge)
At dawn.

EXT. THE JON DEERE TRACTOR - DAY

sits in front of a festively decorated schoolhouse. A line of
villagers stretches clear through town. Only the day of the
Patron Saint draws this many people.

Doug and Col. Giles walk the line. Doug can't believe the
turnout.

COL. GILES

Congratulations, Lt., looks like your
talents are still intact.

DOUG

But these people were like rocks.

COL. GILES

Even rocks can be moved.

They pass Pedros and his seven kids. His wife is pregnant
again.

DOUG

(numb)
I am the God of bullshit

COL. GILES

So be it.

DOUG

You're not going to let me go, are you?

COL. GILES

Let's just get through the day, Lt.

Doug spots of all people Maria and Isabel at the head of the
line.

DOUG

I don't believe it...

Giles grins as Doug leaves him and steps up to Maria.

DOUG

Hey, you came!

MARIA
And why wouldn't I?

DOUG
You didn't strike me as someone who wishes
for things... you know, like prizes.

MARIA
I won a wagon when I was Isabel's age. It
was a good feeling.

DOUG
Must have been a beauty contest.

Maria gives him that devious look again.

MARIA
Truth is I need a tractor. I'm afraid I'm
about to lose Milagro. Even the sea isn't
giving him back his strength. That's very
unusual.
(looks at Doug oddly)
It's like there's something in the air.

Doug is unsettled by her remark.

BIDDLE
(interrupting)
Who's next?

Maria holds up their tickets. Biddle recognizes Isabel.

BIDDLE
Whoa! It's you! Smith, it's the girl that
stared down the bull!

MARIA
I keep telling her not to tease those
animals.

BIDDLE
Come on, "Fearless," let me escort you in.

He gestures for her to follow but Maria holds her back, stares
inside. The view is blocked by sheets of black plastic. Maria
turns to Doug.

MARIA
Can't we just give you our tickets?

Biddle turns back, locks on Doug.

DOUG
What, and miss out on the free checkup?

MARIA
We don't need checkups. We need a tractor.

DOUG
It'll only take a second.

Isabel breaks away from her mom, follows Biddle in. But Maria is apprehensive, hesitates at the door.

MARIA
Maybe I should just wait out here...

DOUG
--Come on, Maria...
(holds out hand)
I'll go with you.

Maria finally reaches out, takes his hand and they enter the schoolhouse together.

INT. SCHOOLHOUSE

Like entering the Haunted House at a circus carnival. Dark plastic sheeting hangs across the windows. A curtain of cloth cordons off a corner. And grouped about the room are teams of men in brightly colored coveralls, wearing gloves and masks. There are Red men. Yellow men. Blue men. The BLUE men are Spanish, have arm patches with "JEN" on them - the Spanish Nuclear Association.

A RED man holds up a radiation PROBE, waves it around a villager. Meter readings are read off to a man in YELLOW who jots it in a MASTER LOG. A GRAPH shows the number 22 to be far down on the chart.

MARIA steps into the room, hesitates at the sight of so much technology. Doug feels her grip tightening on his hand.

MARIA
This is unnatural.

The Red man approaches with the probe and Maria starts to turn but Doug won't let her.

DOUG
Maria, look up here.

She finally does. His eyes are reassuring.

DOUG
Don't think of anything else.

Doug gestures for the RED man to scan her. Maria tries to keep her eyes fixed on Doug's but when that metal probe gets real close she almost bolts.

DOUG
(holds on tight)
No, no, not yet.

RED man reads the meter readings to YELLOW.

RED
Thirty seven point four.

YELLOW marks the spot on his GRAPH. Her count is just above a WIDE ORANGE line.

DOUG
You see, you're done.

Yellow looks up at Doug, shakes his head - "no she's not." He lifts a PLASTIC CUP from a stack, hands it to Maria.

Maria has no idea what to do with it. Doug whispers in her ear. She pulls back, shocked and embarrassed --

MARIA
In this?! You're crazy!

She tosses the cup, heads for the exit but Doug catches up.

DOUG
Maria, I know it seems stupid but believe me, it's very important.

MARIA
How is toileting in a cup important?!

Doug points at something behind Maria.

DOUG
See, Isabel had no trouble doing it.

Maria turns, aghast to see her child stepping out from the curtained area. Isabel waves happily as she's escorted outside by Biddle. Steamed, Maria grabs the cup from his hand.

MARIA
I will do this on one condition.

DOUG
Name it.

INT. THE CURTAIN

is flung open, revealing a stool and a bucket. Maria walks in, angrily, then turns --

MARIA
Well?!

DOUG stands in the entrance with his OWN CUP.

DOUG
You really don't want me in there...

She grabs his arm and pulls him in, then gives the men watching a FIERY look and FLINGS the curtain closed.

Doug isn't sure what to do. Maria has no problem. She pulls her pants down right in front of him.

DOUG
Oh god...

Doug diverts his eyes to the ceiling.

MARIA

What, is this embarrassing to you?

DOUG

You've made your point. Now can I please give you some privacy?

MARIA

No - you can do as you promised.

OUTSIDE

Biddle and several of the coveredalled technicians lean to hear what's going on behind the curtain. Silence is broken with the sound of one cup being filled. A moment later, two.

DOUG AND MARIA

keep focused on the only allowable place - each other's eyes. Losing ones concentration would mean giving the other a moment to steal a look.. elsewhere. The SOUND from the cups rises in PITCH as each nears capacity... then surprisingly, Maria and Doug finish at the same time.

That gets a slight smile from both.

BIDDLE (O.S.)

Hey, we're getting backed up out here!

Mood is broken. Now it's awkward. Even for Maria.

EXT. A ROCKY RIDGE - DAWN

Two forms make their way in the dim half light. One is struggling with his weight, stopping again to catch his breath.

CURLY

Come on, we're almost to the top!

Obese clambers up the last few feet, wheezing heavily. Curly stops at the top, laughs with discovery. Obese finally catches up.

THEIR VIEW

Of a valley under military siege. Hills of ravaged crops. Lines of distant soldiers. And two miles away - the overblown spectacle of Camp Wilson.

Obese takes out a snack, a tomato cake, munches on it.

AIRFORCE (O.S.)

Hey you!!

The Journalists freeze, center on the voice. Belongs to a Noncom airman standing down in a partially flattened tomato field. First instinct for the reporters is to run.

AIRFORCE

Can either of you speak Spanish?!

CURLY

Ah... I can.

Airforce points at a FARMER standing in his field, trying to salvage some of the stripped tomatoes.

AIRFORCE

Then could you tell that farmer to leave the tomato field. There's radioactivity there and I'm supposed to keep everyone out!

Both the Journalists break into huge grins. They've just stumbled onto the biggest scoop of their careers. Then Obese realizes what he's eating, starts spitting it out.

EXT. FORT LAUDERDALE - DAY

Past a row of slender palms is a hanger-like warehouse. Rattling the metal walls is that lively optimistic anthem -- "EVE OF DESTRUCTION."

INT. SPANISH DOUBLOONS

vibrate on top of a grill-less SPEAKER BOX. 15" woofer is aimed toward the center of the warehouse where a bus-long EXPERIMENTAL submersible named the "Aluminaut" rests.

A team of young technicians are sprawled out all over the bright Orange sub. Legs here. Arms there. Music is abruptly turned off.

MAN'S VOICE

Arthur McManus?

The Faces of the team pop out from nooks and crannies. Team head - MCMANUS - sporting hair way past his shoulders -jumps down and faces two very serious CIA MEN.

MCMANUS

It's Art, not Arthur.

CIA MAN

Mr. McManus, Art - Uncle Sam needs you.

Four budding hippies and two future bra-burners step down behind Art.

CIA MAN

All of you.

EXT. THE PALOMARES VIEWING HILL

The SUN puts on its spectacular dive into the sea to a full house. Chairs are folded and everyone starts home. Pedros drives off on his new tractor. Kids cover every square inch.

INT. GARCIA'S BAR - CLOSE UP

on the screen of the battery operated television. Snow and static fade in.

Empty channels flick one after another, then -- success! The first transmitted image seen in Palomares - the sexily clad star of "I Dream of Jeannie."

WIDER as a standing room only crowd GASPS at the sight. Men slap GARCIA, the proud winner of the TV, on the back. Then Jeannie crosses her arms, blinks and disappears!

The crowd screams.

DOUG sits at the bar, laughs. He turns back to Garcia.

DOUG

So?

GARCIA (SPANISH)

If Maria says it was a pig, then it was a pig.

(Doug sighs)

But you know, a pig isn't always a four legged animal.

That's got Doug thinking. The Young Corporal steps in, hands over a manila envelope.

DOUG

The test results?

CORPORAL

No, those tickets you ordered.

Crowd erupts in laughter again when Jeannie turns Captain Healy into a goat. Farmers face the men of the hour, raise their glasses.

DOUG

Smile, Corporal, and they'll buy you drinks all night.

He does and they slide him a free SHOT of Cognac. The Farmer who sent it raises his own glass - gestures to race the kid.

DOUG

No, don't do-

--Corporal downs his in one gulp, GAGS. Doug slaps him on the back, yells at the laughing Farmers.

DOUG (SPANISH)

Not fair. This boy's stomach is still pink as a baby's behind.

FARMER (SPANISH)

And how is your stomach, senor Smith?

Someone slides a bowl in front of Doug. It's full of PEPPERS.

DOUG

(laughing)

Oh, you don't think I can eat one of these?

They don't. Doug takes one, bites into it. Twinge of pain shoots through but somehow he manages to hide it. He chews the rest while staring right at the crowd. They're impressed.

Then this OLD FARMER is pushed forward next to Doug. The Old Farmer takes one pepper from the bowl and consumes it in three seconds flat.

Everyone turns to Doug. This is a challenge.

Doug rolls up his sleeves. Bar cheers as the challenge is met.

Garcia counts out 6 peppers to each man.

CORPORAL

Six?! Sir, you're gonna kill--

--Garcia SLAMS a hammer against the bar - GO - Corporal hits the deck.

DOUG and OLD FARMER dive into their respective lots, eating peppers as fast as they can.

Hoops and hollers. Monday Night football has nothing on this.

Two- three-four peppers. Old Farmer is solid as a rock. Doug's eyes are tearing up but he continues to shovel it in.

Number 6 for both. Doug is crying now. Mouth is on fire. Old Farmer pulls the final stem from his mouth, slams it on the table. Doug is a second late slamming his own.

DOUG

Ahhhhhh!!!!

Bar CHEERS for their resident Dragon Slayer. But Doug is embraced for his effort. Garcia hands him a towel and some BREAD. Doug devours it. Crowd laughs. A bonding moment.

Everyone turns back to the TV and the laughter fades to a solid "Huh?"

TV's Jeannie has been replaced by a less attractive NEWS REPORTER.

Doug can't quite hear what she's saying but he certainly recognizes a MAP OF SPAIN when it appears. And then the name -- PALOMARES - fills the screen and the patrons go completely bonkers - CHEERING and clinking glasses. How could this night get any better?

Then the little screen WHITES OUT and patrons look on curiously as the white fades to STOCK footage - The MUSHROOM cloud of a NUCLEAR DETONATION.

More stock footage shows test structures blown to bits by the explosive blast wave. Then the Newscaster talks about "radioactivada", the invisible disease. Farmers scratch their heads. No one has ever heard the term.

And finally the images of humans with RADIATION POISONING fade in and out on the B&W tube. Graphic especially in the 60's. The name "PALOMARES" repeats again. This time to silence.

Everyone turns and settles on Doug.

PEDROS

Is what that woman said true? Is our town filled with this invisible disease? This.. radioactivida?

Hesitation says more than words.

DOUG

Ah... well... that's complicated.

His new friends just switched sides. Several move closer to him.

PEDROS

Then make it simple for us.

DOUG

Well I don't really know much...

Doug backsteps but there's nowhere to go. He's trapped.

PEDROS

Tell us the truth!

The others agree. Doug hesitates again. Shot glass flies past, smashes against the wall.

DOUG

Okay.. okay... there is... some radioactivity in Palomares.

Not good news. Fear struck eyes turn even angrier. Doug shifts into high gear, edges his way toward the door.

DOUG

But it's not much, not enough to hurt anyone-

PEDROS

--then why the check ups?

DOUG

--I..I wanted to be sure because you're all my friends and I didn't want any of you to get sick in anyway, so yes, I kind of lied about the health checkup but we did the tests and the good news, the great news is that you're all A-okay!

Eyes want to believe him. But he's lost a lot of trust.

DOUG

And to top it off you all won some wonderful exciting prizes!

FARMER
We want more.

DOUG
Well you'll get more. Much more!

Doug spots Biddle by the door holding an envelope.

DOUG
I'll set up a claims booth tomorrow. Come see me then! Gotta go--

Doug makes his break, leaves with Biddle. Farmers are left unsure.

EXT. THE BAR

Doug catches his breath, grabs Biddle. He has to know--

DOUG
Please tell me I didn't just lie to those people again.

BIDDLE
What did you tell them?

DOUG
That they were all okay.

BIDDLE
You lied.

DOUG
Shit.

He hands Doug a sheet.

BIDDLE
Fortunately, the kidneys do a fairly good job filtering out plutonium dust. Otherwise we'd be looking at more than five serious cases here.

Five? Doug scans down the sheet, stops at a name he recognizes - then totally deflates.

INT. A DOOR

Doug knocks on it. A moment later it opens. Maria is very surprised to see Doug.

MARIA
What, now you want my blood?

Doug forces a smile, shakes his head. He holds up the envelope the Corporal brought him. She looks at it curiously.

DOUG
Your time off.

Maria rips open the envelope. Eyes brighten when she sees the four color tourist brochures of the hotel she'll be sunbathing in. She fans her face with the plane tickets.

MARIA

Oh my...

Maria is so excited she runs in, leaving Doug in the doorway. She yells into another room.

MARIA

Isabel! Look, our first class tickets!!

Come in, Mr. Doug - come in!

Doug slowly walks in, shuts the door behind him. Maria runs to the kitchen, yells out.

MARIA

What would you like? Cognac or wine?

DOUG

Surprise me.

Doug walks through the warmly decorated room, then turns the corner. Eyes center - then he walks slowly across the bedroom toward-

-- Isabel.

She's sitting on the floor cleaning her ballet slippers. Doug leans down to the seven year old and pulls out a book.

DOUG (IN SPANISH)

Isabel, this is for you.

He flips it over -- COMPLETE DANCE. Isabel lets out a squeal of delight. She takes the book, starts flipping through it, excitedly.

Doug just stares at her, this little innocent thing of beauty. Brushes hair off her sweat soaked forehead. Tears well in his eyes.

KITCHEN

Maria scans the brochures on the counter as she fixes the drinks. Just before she walks out, she takes a bit of the cognac and rubs it behind her ears.

MARIA

You don't know how long its been since anyone waited on me, cleaned my towels, fluffed my pillows...

Maria turns the corner, stops cold in her daughter's doorway. Emotion hits her hard.

DOUG

is now seated on the floor next to Isabel, reading to her from the book. Isabel hangs on his every word.

Isabel spots her mom, gets excited.

ISABEL

Look, it shows all the moves!

Isabel gets up and tries one but has to sit down. She just doesn't have the strength.

MARIA

Oh, Isabel, that's enough dancing for one day. You need your rest to fight this cold.

She helps Isabel to bed. Doug keeps his distance, steps back into the living room, trying to get up the courage to tell Maria her daughter is sicker than she thinks.

MARIA

(walking out)

It hit her hard today. I'm surprised I haven't caught it yet.

Doug looks at her seriously. She doesn't see it, offers out the cognac. He takes it, gulps down half in one swallow. Now Maria sees his tense look.

MARIA

Is everything okay?

Doug tries to find the words.

DOUG

Maria, you were right. There is something in the air.

She looks at him, takes it a different way.

MARIA

I know what you mean.. I feel it too.

She steps toward him, eyes inviting him in.

DOUG

No, that's not what I mean.

MARIA

Then you don't feel it?

DOUG

Well.. yes.. I mean.. but this is not--

He backsteps and his face contorts as he puts his weight on his injured foot.

MARIA

What..? You're still in pain.

DOUG
No, it's the shoe. I'm fine.

He tries to fake it but she can see it in his face.

MARIA
Sit down.

DOUG
Maria, we have to talk...

MARIA
SIT!

Doug sits on the well worn couch. Maria leans down, gently removes the shoe. The gauze bandage is soaked with dried blood.

MARIA
This is the result of your modern medicine?

DOUG
It's not an exact science.

She shakes her head, unclips the bandage.

DOUG
Maria, you don't have to --

MARIA
Shhhh!

Doug doesn't have the energy to fight her. So he lets her unwrap the bandage. Layer after layer, slowing as it nears the actual damage. The final layer is almost scabbed into the infected skin.

Doug fears she'll pull it off but she stops his hand - looks up at him. He sits back, downs the rest of the cognac, fearing the eminent pain but it never comes.

With the gentleness of a child and the precision of a surgeon, she manages to coerce the fabric from the wound without causing Doug one moment of discomfort. He looks down, is amazed the bandage is off.

DOUG
How did you do that?

MARIA
Will you trust me now?

Maria reveals the eel's head. Doug should get up. He should. But he doesn't. This time he stays focused on her eyes. He flinches only a bit as the cold slickness of the dead fish makes contact to his pain. And in seconds, that pain is gone. In fact, the feeling is quite pleasurable.

Doug is bewildered and Maria can see the confused revelation in his eyes. It makes her smile.

MARIA
Welcome to my world.

This time neither break the mood. Maria keeps the eel on his wound, leans closer to his face. Doug can't believe he's letting this happen. He can't. He won't. He does.

They kiss. Once. Then again. Longer.

The eel slides down his foot, drops to the floor.

Doug's EYES pop open.

EXT. MARIA'S DOOR OPENS

Doug rushes out, leaving Maria still kneeled in front of the chair. Bewildered.

EXT. THE CAMP - MORNING

Doug is setting up his claims tent. The Young Corporal assists, shakes his head in disbelief.

CORPORAL
I can't believe it.

DOUG
I just couldn't tell her.

CORPORAL
No, I mean I can't believe you didn't sleep with her. She's so hot.

DOUG
Is that all you ever think about, Corporal?

CORPORAL
Well no offense, sir, but it seems that's what you were thinking too.

DOUG
I kissed her lips!

CORPORAL
Yeah, well you'll be lucky to kiss her ass once she finds out the truth.

DOUG
I know, I know, I'll tell her the truth the very next time I see her.

CORPORAL
Turn around.

Doug spins, spots Maria as she storms up toward him.

MARIA
Where is she?

DOUG
Where is who?

MARIA

Isabel! I returned to the hotel and they said she was taken here by your doctors! They said she was very sick.

Doug's face can't hide the truth.

MARIA

Where is my daughter?!

EXT/INT. THUNDERBALL DRIVE

Doug and Maria walk toward the main HEADQUARTERS tent.

DOUG

Let me handle this, Maria.

MARIA

You had your chance. The whole night. But instead you chose to be a coward.

Biddle steps out of the tent.

MARIA

Where is she?!

BIDDLE

Ma'am, we're just trying to help her.

Maria pushes into the tent.

DOUG

By snatching her from her mother?

BIDDLE

Maria wasn't there, Smith, and we have a schedule to meet. Besides there isn't room for her on the helicopter.

Maria barrels back out.

MARIA

Helicopter?

Maria and Doug turn toward a HELICOPTER way off on the landing area. Maria marches toward it. Doug and Biddle chase after her.

DOUG

Where the hell are you taking her?!

BIDDLE

Away from this village.

ISABEL

is seatbelted into the crowded helicopter by the no-nonsense Sergeant Milter. Four other villagers are crammed in around her. Isabel grips her Dance book as the ENGINE powers up. The blades start to turn.

DOUG AND BIDDLE

follow Maria, yell above the rising noise.

BIDDLE

You see the cup was the problem, Smith, it's fine for drinking but it's useless for collecting urine samples.

DOUG

That doesn't explain kidnapping, Biddle!

BIDDLE

Everything above it settles inside. The sample liquid - yes, but also dust, dry skin particles, clothing threads...

Doug starts to understand, slows.

BIDDLE

Since the percentage of plutonium excreted in the urine is so slight even in the worst cases, it is possible that the readings were grossly distorted by the air itself.

Doug stops - looks hopeful.

DOUG

You're saying Isabel might be okay?!

BIDDLE

Well there's only way to find out.

DOUG

Take new tests in another city. Jesus...

Doug turns back toward the helicopter, sees Maria is already there. He breaks toward her.

NEAR HELICOPTER

Maria is right in the SERGEANT's face.

MARIA

I want her out of there!

SERGEANT MILTER

She's sick ma'am, this is her only chance.

MARIA

Then I will go with her!

SERGEANT MILTER

There isn't any room.

MARIA

Isabel goes nowhere without me!

Maria pushes past him, tries to board the packed chopper. The Sergeant grabs on, has to hold her back. She fights him.

MARIA

She's just a child!
 (elbows the Sergeant)
 Let me go! I can squeeze in there.

SERGEANT MILTER

They're already over the weight limit,
 Miss! You get on and they could crash. Do
 you want that? Now if you have to go, fine
 - but then someone has to stay. Tell me
 who -who do I pull off and leave behind?
 Point them out!

Maria scans the villager's faces. A teen boy. An elderly woman. A seasoned farmer and the Baker. All look frightened, their futures totally up in the air.

SERGEANT MILTER

C'mon, ma'am, pick one and let's move!

How can she do this? Doug steps up next to her.

DOUG

You have to left her go, Maria.

All of her anger is suddenly directed at him. She touches the plex window by Isabel's face, then steps back from the helicopter. Biddle climbs into the co-pilot's seat. Sergeant locks the hatch.

SERGEANT MILTER

Clear the blades!

HIGH ANGLE

The helicopter rises above the camp. Maria walks away, never looking back at Doug. This hasn't been his best day.

EXT. THE VIEWING HILL - EVENING

Doug sits alone. Two equally alluring sights captivate him. The Fountainbleau on the postcard and that glorious setting sun.

Right now, its warmth is very much needed.

AMBASSADOR RAMOS (V.O.)

"The government of Spain hereby demands that specific actions be taken immediately by the United States. Failure to comply will result in a reduction or elimination of all U.S. military operations in Spain."

INT. HOTEL HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Ambassador Ramos reads forcefully from an official DOCUMENT.

In his audience are General Wilson, Col. Giles, Major Young, Col. Payne and Doug. Only Ramos and General Pascual are enjoying this.

AMBASSADOR RAMOS

"Starting today, Plutonium count readings will be gathered for the entire village and farming areas by American technicians overseen by the Spanish Nuclear Commission. Any top soil with a reading above 100 micrograms per square meter will be washed and plowed to the depth of ten inches. Any top soil with a reading above 400 micrograms per square meter will be completely removed and replaced. The disposal of this contaminated soil will be left up to the United States with only one stipulation - that it not be buried in Spain."

GENERAL WILSON

And our President agreed to all of this?

AMBASSADOR RAMOS

In ink.

He holds up the document. The General can't believe it. General Pascual gloats.

GENERAL PASCUAL

You might want to use this, General.

Pascual gestures a chair. General Wilson fights to keep his cool.

AMBASSADOR RAMOS

And you still haven't found the forth bomb.

No one feels the pressure more then the General.

EXT. PALOMARES

General Wilson rides high in his jeep. Major Young maneuvers past rows and rows of coveralled airmen. They're sampling, digging, tilling and replacing top soil all over the valley. The contaminated soil is being dumped into hundreds of 55 gallon barrels. Lines of trucks take the barrels out of town.

It's a massive undertaking consuming every military resource.

GENERAL WILSON

Goddamn waste of time.

He blurs past --

THE CLAIMS BOOTH

surrounded by open-palmed Farmers. The Young Corporal is trying to be fair, handing over money from Doug's old briefcase. But the Farmers are impatient, yell and argue. They want more.

DOUG watches, shakes his head. One Farmer is particularly loud. Doug starts over to help the Corporal. The Farmer turns as he arrives, his hands holding a stack of CASH.

It's Pedros. He freezes in front of Doug. They share a look. Pedros averts his eyes, walks away.

Doug just stands there.

A HUGE BULLDOZER

moves carefully around landmarks, fence posts. The General's jeep approaches. He's had enough.

GENERAL WILSON
Pull over, Major!

Wilson jumps out, moves into the field, waves the bulldozer to stop.

GENERAL WILSON
Are you trying to get us thrown out of this country, soldier?!

DRIVER
No, sir!

GENERAL WILSON
Then quit weaving all over this field like it was a goddamn obstacle course!

DRIVER
I was trying not to damage anything.

GENERAL WILSON
No, you were leaving behind dangerous hot spots. Our orders are to remove ten inches of topsoil over this entire valley and by god I'm not going to be accused of doing a half-assed job. You understand, soldier?!

DRIVER
I'm not sure...

GENERAL WILSON
Christ!

General Wilson climbs up on the Bulldozer, shoves the airman to the side. He shifts into gear and moves out, keeping the bulldozer on a straight course. Fence posts are MOWED down. There goes an old stable. Onlookers can't believe it.

The General slows to a stop, returns control to the Driver.

GENERAL WILSON
Understand now, Soldier?

The Driver is afraid to speak, just nods.

EXT. DIG ZONE

Doug walks past a line of chairs where several farmers watch their land be re-tilled by soldiers. He spots Col. Giles, catches up with him.

DOUG

Sir, I have to get to get out here.

COL. GILES

We've talked about this, Lt..

DOUG

But my job is done. You said make the people here happy. Well, look at them. They're getting rich. How much happier can they be?

COL. GILES

Guilt doesn't wear well on you, Lt.

DOUG

It's NOT guilt, goddamit!

Col. Giles stops. It is. The General's jeep approaches.

COL. GILES

You wanna leave, Lt.? Ask him.

The jeeps slides up in front of them.

GENERAL WILSON

Lt., why are we paying able bodied farmers to sit on their asses while our men are out there busting theirs?

DOUG

Because they have no crops to work in, sir, you destroyed them all.

GENERAL WILSON

Exactly, which means the men that most know this land are making a fortune for doing nothing.

DOUG

Are you suggesting we ask for the money back?

GENERAL WILSON

No, I'm suggesting we put them to work.

DOUG

Doing what, sir?

GENERAL WILSON

Finding the last bomb, what else!

DOUG

And I suppose you want me to talk them into it?

GENERAL WILSON

You see the short hand we're starting to develop here, Lt.?

He drives off. Col. Giles hates to say it-

COL. GILES

Well, I guess you got your answer.

EXT. THE VALLEY

Major Young steers the General's jeep around tumble weeds, trying to avoid the field of mine shafts. The General sits in the back - turned around to address his new troops.

GENERAL WILSON

In a line! Stay in a straight line! Lt., talk to them!

Doug walks ahead of the troop of FARMERS. All carry the cane poles, tap the ground for holes. Doug speaks to them in Spanish but it really doesn't help.

DOUG

General, I doubt any of these men have ever been in the military.

GENERAL WILSON

I don't care, I don't want to have to cover this ground again. Without proper formation we could walk right past ground zero. Like that numskull there--

The General points and yells at a Farmer out of step.

GENERAL WILSON

You! You missed that mine! Turn around and look in! No you! You! Turn around!

General Wilson is gesturing to turn around but the anxious Farmer misunderstands, starts spinning in place.

GENERAL WILSON

No! Christ! Major, turn us around--

DOUG

I'll handle it, General.

But the General isn't listening, points the way for Major Young.

GENERAL WILSON

I'd take combat over this any day.

The Major quickly turns the Jeep around, looks back, not paying attention when WHAM -- the front left tire suddenly dips, plunges into the mouth of a brush-covered MINE SHAFT.

The tired Farmers LAUGH at the overbearing General but the humor turns as the ground gives way and the entire Jeep FLIPS - the rear end pitching sky high --the nose diving.

Chassis bottoms out - KICKS Major Young right out of his seat and onto the hood. General Wilson is thrown too, but manages to wrap his leg around the seat. He tries to grab the Major but the weight is too much and Major Young slides down the jeep's hood and disappears right into the shaft.

Doug and the Farmers quickly grab on to the Jeep before it and the General follow the Major down into oblivion.

Shock fills the air as they realize Major Young's gone.

MAJOR YOUNG (O.S.)
General!! Hey!!

He's still alive! All move to the shaft hole, peer down.

MAJOR YOUNG

is twenty feet below, hanging from the silk canopy of a parachute caught on a protruding beam.

GENERAL WILSON
Jesus Christ, Major, you found it!

MAJOR YOUNG
Get me out of here!!

A Farmer quickly appears with a ROPE, makes a slip noose in one end. The General feeds it down into the shaft.

MAJOR YOUNG

is hyperventilating, waiting for the rope to reach him. He makes the mistake of looking down. Never ending blackness.

MAJOR YOUNG
Hurry up!!

GENERAL WILSON
Slip your foot in!

Major Young snags the rope, pulls it down toward his foot.

THE GROUND

shifts under the Jeep and the Farmer's are jolted. A few let go and run. General Wilson looks at Doug.

GENERAL WILSON
We could lose it.

DOUG
And the Major with it if we don't pull him up quick.

GENERAL WILSON
But we have to be sure.

DOUG
Sir?

MAJOR YOUNG

has his foot in the noose, is terrified to let go of the parachute, finally does and is now suspended from the relatively thin lifeline.

MAJOR YOUNG
Okay I'm on! Pull me up!!

But to his horror, he's not pulled up - he's lowered.

MAJOR YOUNG
HEY!!!! You're going the wrong way!!

The General's face appears in the shaft above.

GENERAL WILSON
Sorry, Major, but I need you to make a positive ID on the device.

MAJOR YOUNG
Oh god...

Major Young is lowered into the frightening hole, past the shredded canopy, then down the tangled lines...

THE FARMERS

are running out of rope. And the Jeep shifts again.

DIRT

falls onto the Major. He shakes it off, looks down. Hardly enough light to see the large shape hanging down there.

MAJOR YOUNG
A..another t..ten feet!

He is lowered right next to a large metal casing.

MAJOR YOUNG
IT LOOKS LIKE A BOMB!

GENERAL WILSON
ARE YOU SURE?!

Major Young figures he's gone this far -- He reaches out a trembling hand, grabs onto the burnt metal casing and pulls. It slowly spins on the lines and Major Young suddenly finds himself face to face with a rotting, spider infested corpse.

He SCREAMS.

GENERAL WILSON
WHAT?!!!

MAJOR YOUNG
SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!

GENERAL WILSON
WHAT IS IT?!

Major Young tries to get his nerves in check -- scans the dead man strapped to the blackened EJECTION SEAT, sees a chrome ARMING KEY hanging from his neck and then the name tag sewn on his chest - WENDORF.

MAJOR YOUNG
Jesus.. IT'S CAPTAIN WENDORF!!

UP TOP

DOUG
Captain Wendorf?

GENERAL WILSON
Well if he's down there, then what did your fisherman see?

Both realize it at the same time.

EXT. VERA BAY - MOVING

We're on the CRUISER - ripping out to sea as fast as we can. General Wilson and the Admiral stand up on the poop deck.

DOUG and COL. GILES walk the deck toward SIMO on the bow tip.

DOUG
You see, the parachute for the bomb is much larger than a man's and if it opened right after impact it could have drifted pretty far out. Simo may have thought it was man because of the angle of sun or the way the small drogue shoot hung below it...

COL. GILES
Well it's all wild speculation unless he can nail the spot twice.

Doug keeps walking, joins Simo on the front-most spot of the ship. The two men stare out at the sea breaking below them. Then Simo turns to look at the peaks of the Bay and Doug sees the ANCHOR BADGE, not pinned to his jacket or on his neck chain, but of all places - on his BELT. As a buckle.

Simo catches his look, smirks.

SIMO (IN SPANISH)
You really think I'm that simple?

DOUG (IN SPANISH)
(embarrassed)
Then why did you go along with it?

SIMO (IN SPANISH)
I always wanted to be in the Navy.

Simo adjusts his Navy hat. Doug likes this guy.

The cruiser slashes through the chop.

SIMO suddenly raises one arm - motions SLOW.

ADMIRAL GUEST turns to his Helmsmen.

ADMIRAL GUEST
Slow to one third.

As the ship slows, Simo STANDS UP on the front-most railing, leans way back, the water RUSHING a full thirty feet below. He looks at the Bay's PEAKS on both sides. Not yet... not yet... slowly both of his HANDS rise high above his head-

SEAMAN BISHOP

You gotta be shitting me...

Simo waits.. waits.. then drops both hands.

ADMIRAL GUEST

Cut all power!

The Helmsman pulls back the throttles. And now the moment everyone has been waiting for. The RADAR TECHNICIAN looks up from his CONSOLE, shakes his head in disbelief.

RADAR TECHNICIAN

One hundred fifty five feet from the original spot, sir.

GENERAL WILSON

Son of a bitch! How did he do that?!

ADMIRAL GUEST

He's got the equipment, the Mark One Eyeball.

The Admiral pulls the plunger on the AIR HORN.

Two BLASTS are the signal. Now to start the search.

EXT. A C-135 CARGO PLANE

sits on the dry river bed, its nose lowering back down over an empty cargo hold.

Dust kicks past from the BLADE CHOP of a hovering TWIN ROTOR cargo chopper. Resting below it is the ALUMINAUNT, that Florida submersible we saw earlier. McManus, its long-haired Captain, oversees the lifting process. Cable slack is taken up as the chopper rises.

General Wilson, Col. Giles and Doug yell above the noise.

GENERAL WILSON

Well, we'll know soon enough if that fisherman of yours is for real, Lt.. We should be in the water by oh-seven hundred tomorrow.

DOUG

Has Simo Ortes been notified, sir?

GENERAL WILSON

And why would we notify him?

DOUG

To include him in the recovery.

GENERAL WILSON

Lt., he saved us a lot of time, but this is now a state-of-the-art operation. I'd say he's a little out of his league here.

DOUG

But he's a native of the area - a local hero. Including him in the search could help boost America's image which has lost a lot of luster since this whole thing started.

GENERAL WILSON

Save your sales pitch for the movie stars, Lt., I've got more important things to consider here.

DOUG

Then your priorities are totally fucked!

Oh boy.

GENERAL WILSON

The next words you say will determine the outcome of your entire future. Choose them wisely.

Doug looks at his feet, finally--

DOUG

Can I be excused, sir?

GENERAL WILSON

Perfect, Lt. Yes, you can be excused. Your involvement with this project is officially over. You can change into your civvies now.

How come Doug doesn't look happy?

The SUB is lifted into the sky, looking like a manmade UFO. It heads out toward the ships on the horizon.

INT. THE HOTEL MARICEILO

Doug wears his civvies, packs the small amount of things he's collected since arriving. Last item is the postcard photo of the hotel.

He slips his shoes on, is careful with the burned foot, then notices that it's almost completely healed. Huh.

HOTEL - VARIOUS

As Doug looks in the lobby. The kitchen. No Maria.

EXT. THE HOTEL

Doug steps out, bag in hand. He scans the area, finally looks out at the ships and there she is--

--MARIA - standing in ocean, still trying to heal that mule. And like a sixth sense, she turns and locks on Doug a football field away, but in that brief moment, they're as close as they've ever been.

Doug checks his watch. He walks off toward camp.

MARIA watches him go, then suddenly feels the mule's reins go limp. She turns as the animal's strength gives out and it simply collapses in the sea. Maria tries desperately to keep its head above water, but the weight and the waves are even more than her stubborn determination can bear.

The animal dies in her arms.

EXT. THE CAMP

Doug sits on his bag, watches all of the military activity with an odd detachment. He couldn't miss this, could he? He spots a lone helicopter coming in over the mountains.

The helicopter swings in overhead, settles down on the dry river bed. Doug picks up his bag, waits for it to empty.

Doors swing open and Biddle is the first to climb out. Doug's heart races as one by one, the stricken villagers file out. Three adults, one teen and --

--Isabel, still holding the book Doug gave her.

Biddle sees Doug, knows what he's looking for. One smile is all it takes.

Doug's relief couldn't be stronger. Isabel spots Doug. Face brightens as she runs to him.

ISABEL (IN SPANISH)

Mr. Doug! It was so wonderful! I saw everything like a bird - and the city was so beautiful! All the lights. I can't wait to tell mother all about it! Come on! Let's go tell her! Let's go home!

She pulls on his hand. Doug looks over to the Helicopter Pilot who's holding up two fingers-- TWENTY MINUTES TOPS!

MARIA

sits in the sand, just out of reach of the lapping waves. She holds the removed reins of her mule, stares out to sea. A voice calls out from behind her.

ISABEL

Mother?!

Maria is almost afraid to turn, can't believe her eyes when she sees her daughter - healthy - smiling, holding Doug's hand, almost skipping up the path. Maria is choked up, drops the reins into the surf.

MARIA

Isabel!!

The girl breaks from his hold, runs to her mother. Maria washes her up into her arms, just about hugs the life out of her. Doug approaches slowly, can't help but get caught up in the moment.

After a long embrace, Maria's attention shifts. She peels her arms from her daughter, wipes away tears and starts toward Doug. He stands a bit taller, a bit prouder.

DOUG

I knew she would be alright.

Maria steps up in front of him, then SLAPS him hard.

MARIA

Liar! You knew nothing! Your eyes betray your mouth, they're the only things truthful about you. Everything else is deceit! Everything!

She turns away.

DOUG

Maria, I've only lied to give people here hope.

MARIA

The only hope you give us is that this disease that came with you... leaves with you.

Maria rejoins her daughter. Doug stands paralyzed.

THE HELICOPTER PILOT

checks his watch, is getting anxious to leave.

DOUG

stalks back to camp through fields devastated by General Wilson's latest attack. Only a few adobe shacks jut up from the Mars-like landscape. It's just another reason to get out of this place.

PEDROS comes running up, flanked by several other irate farmers.

PEDROS

Senor, Smith - come - come - follow us!

Doug tries to ignore him, keeps walking.

PEDROS

The bulldozer is trying to remove Senor' Rancho's land marker. It's been there for centuries!!

DOUG

I'm sorry.

PEDROS

But you said to come to you if we needed help. You said you'd protect us.

DOUG

I'm not working here anymore. If you need help, talk with Col. Giles.

PEDROS

But he doesn't care about us.

DOUG

And what makes you think I do?!

PEDROS

Because you said...

DOUG

--I said? That's my job, Pedros - to say whatever you need to hear and hey, it's worked out okay, right? You got your cash, a new tractor. No one's going hungry here.

Pedros is hurt by the remarks, turns and leads the others back across the field. Doug continues on, looks out and spots the crowd--

of FARMERS. All are gathered behind a huge BOULDER that a bulldozer is threatening to crumble. Only problem is there's someone on the rock and they're not moving. That someone is the Old Farmer that beat Doug eating peppers.

But Doug keeps walking.

Airmen yell at the Old Farmer. The Bulldozer GUNS its engine - taps the rock, but he's not backing down.

Doug keeps walking.

Now the bulldozer RAMS the boulder. The Old Farmer is knocked off balance, lands hard on top of the rock. Pedros rushes the bulldozer but an Airman shoves him back.

Doug keeps walking.

And now here comes a JEEP, racing across the barren landscape - It slides up and GENERAL WILSON gets out. But he doesn't yell at his men for such reckless behavior - he yells at the Old Farmer.

Doug steps off the path.

NEAR BULLDOZER

Tempers are ready to ignite as Doug walks up. Pedros sees him, points. General Wilson and the airmen turn.

GENERAL WILSON

Great, you haven't left yet. Maybe you can convince this imbecile to get down from there so these men can finish their work.

DOUG
General, this is the marker that defines
his land.

GENERAL WILSON
It's in the way, Smith.

DOUG
So go around it.

GENERAL WILSON
You know our orders - ALL topsoil must be
removed.

DOUG
You're taking this too far, General.

The General steps up into Doug's face.

GENERAL WILSON
Tell him to get off the rock. Tell him
right now.

DOUG
Sir, this is a landmark that has been here
for centuries--

GENERAL WILSON
TELL HIM!!!

DOUG
--you can't keep pushing them aside, this
is their land, this is--

GENERAL WILSON
--Goddamit!!!

The General pushes past Doug and steps up on the rock --
GRABBING the old farmer's arm.

GENERAL WILSON
Get - the - hell - off!!

He starts to pull. The Old Farmer resists. It's almost an even
match which makes the General seem that much more pathetic.

Pedros steps up, grabs the old farmer from the other side,
pulls.

GENERAL WILSON
Son of a bitch! Major!! Hicks!!

The airmen move to help the General, more farmers join Pedros.
Now it's a game of tug-a-war with the Old Farmer as the rope.
Strain. Tension. Something has to give.

DOUG grabs the General from behind - surprises everyone when he
pulls him away from the rock.

DOUG
Stop this!

Wilson charges but Doug stops him cold with a single PUNCH right in the face.

There's a collective GASP as the General goes down. No one can believe it. Not even Doug. But to the farmers of Palomares, a legend has just been born.

More humiliated than hurt, the General levels a gaze on Doug that can only mean one thing.

GENERAL WILSON

Doug Smith, consider yourself under arrest.

And to top it off, Doug's ticket out - the HELICOPTER - roars past overhead.

EXT. THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Aluminaut is lowered into frame, sways above the water. Radio chatter punctures the air. McManus can be seen in the bubble window, gives a thumbs up. Cable latches EXPLODE open, freeing the vessel. It drops ten feet, creates an enormous splash and in a matter of seconds, it disappears into the depths.

INT. HOTEL

Sergeant Milter sits outside in the hall, making sure Doug stays put.

MARIA comes up the stairs, holding a tray of food. These two have met before. No love lost here.

SERGEANT MILTER

No one's allowed in or out.

MARIA

He has to eat.

SERGEANT

Set it down. I'll take it in.

Maria has no choice, sets down the tray, huffs off.

INT. DOUG'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Doug sits on his bed, stares out the window - numb. The photo of the hotel is in the trash.

Something THUMPS the bed from underneath. Doug leans over, looks under. Nothing. He leans back up and THUMP - there it is again. Another glance and nothing again.

Doug waits a second. A piece of the FLOOR hinges up, thumps against the bed springs.

Doug jumps off the bed, quickly pulls it over to one side. The TRAP DOOR hinges up again. Doug grabs hold, swings it open - revealing MARIA. What a look these two share.

She holds up a bowl of black peppers.

MARIA
A gift from Pedros.

DOUG
He's trying to kill me.

MARIA
He says any man who would punch a General
should be able to handle the king pepper.

DOUG
That was stupidity, not bravery.

MARIA
You'll need a little of both to eat these.

Doug smiles, takes the bowl. She starts back out.

DOUG
Can you stay a while?

Maria scans the room, almost fear struck, shakes her head.

MARIA
Not in this room.

DOUG
What's wrong with this room? It has a
great view...

MARIA
The best.

Doug points at the coming sunset.

DOUG
And the sun is about to set.

MARIA
I've seen it.

Doug looks right at her.

DOUG
But not with me.

Maria sees that look in his eyes.

DOUG
Maria?

She can't. As she turns, Doug grabs her arm, pulls her right
into his lips. It's some kiss. And after it's over...

DOUG
Stay.

A MAGNIFICENT SUN

begins the Big Show as--

DOUG and MARIA

make love.

And before you know it, it's night.

MARIA (O.S.)

It doesn't burn if you go slow.

Doug and Maria lie on the floor near the window. Both have watery eyes, contorted faces. They're eating the black peppers.

DOUG

So why do you hate this room?

MARIA

I didn't say that.

DOUG

You were afraid to come in. Or was it just me?

Maria wipes her eyes on the sheet.

MARIA

When I was a girl, this room was for storage. Pappa kept it locked but I would sneak in and pretend it was a castle. I would bring food and hide for hours.

DOUG

Hide from what?

MARIA

Laundry, dishes, cooking..

DOUG

Responsibility.

MARIA

Yes.

DOUG

So being here makes you feel a bit guilty?
(she nods)
And your father never knew about the door?

MARIA

No... Not until I was nineteen.

DOUG

Why then?

Maria hesitates, then leans over, kisses him.

MARIA

This is not the time...

DOUG

It's the only time. Who knows where the General will be sending me tomorrow.

Maria doesn't like the thought.

DOUG

Maria?

MARIA

He caught me in here.

DOUG

You were still hiding in the store room at nineteen?

MARIA

It wasn't for storage anymore. It was like it is now. Except the bed was over there. And you weren't the one in it.

Doug suddenly feels uncomfortable.

DOUG

Hey, everyone has a first time.

MARIA

But it only took that one time.

DOUG

(realizing)

Isabel?

MARIA

(nods)

It was to be a big wedding. Carmen Sanchez made me a beautiful dress. But I couldn't leave Pappa. He was getting too old to run this place.

DOUG

So why couldn't you just live here?

MARIA

That man wouldn't change his life. He cared nothing of what I needed. Only thought of himself. When I refused to leave, he started calling me and Pappa names. People got angry. Some said it was the bottle talking but I call him what he really was. A selfish pig.

Pig? Doug's stares at her, now putting together the pieces.

DOUG

(delicately)

Does Isabel know her father is a fisherman?

Maria is stunned by the implication.

She lies back, looks out the window.

Doug eventually lies back with her.

Both stare at the stars over the water.

For a long time.

MARIA

No.

EXT. UNDERWATER

Like a firefly in the night, the Aluminaut floats down, trailing a thin cable behind. Closer and closer it gets--

ART MCMANUS (OVER RADIO)

The little treasure is in sight again.

Caught in the dim light of the sub is a dark torpedo-shaped object resting on a slope. Parachute lines drape off one end, disappear into the murky bottom.

ART MCMANUS (OVER RADIO)

We're groovin' into position...

The sub swings around the projectile, its lights sweeping across foot after foot of smooth titanium - until it crosses an abnormality - a fracture.

POUNING ON A DOOR

Doug jolts awake. It's morning. Maria is gone and the trap door is closed. More POUNDING on his door. Wasn't a dream.

SERGEANT MILTER

Smith, unlock your door at once!

Doug slips on his pants, unlocks it.

SERGEANT MILTER

We're evacuating everyone. Now.

DOUG

Why?

Like before, Sergeant Milter just grabs his bags and walks out.

DOUG

Hey... !!

HOTEL - VARIOUS

Everyone is leaving. A few Airforce buses are loading out front. Doug tries to keep up with the no-nonsense Sergeant.

SERGEANT MILTER

The Navy found the forth bomb this morning - right where your fisherman said.

DOUG

Great, but why the evac?

SERGEANT MILTER

General wants everything out of range.

(he looks out)

Everything.

Doug stops cold, can't believe his eyes. The horizon is almost clear. Most of the ships are gone.

DOUG

Sergeant - what is going on?!

SERGEANT MILTER

I can't divulge that information to a civilian.

DOUG

(realizing)

Come on! I found one of the goddam things!
Sergeant!! Pretend you're human for once.

Breaking protocol is criminal to this man. But he is human.

SERGEANT MILTER

The arming key assemblage was compromised
on impact...

Sergeant makes his point with his eyes.

DOUG

It could go off? You're saying a ten
megaton hydrogen bomb could actually
detonate?!

SERGEANT MILTER

No comment.

Implications run rampant.

DOUG

(scanning area)
I have to find Maria and Isabel.

SERGEANT MILTER

They're probably already at camp. This is
the third bus out. Now let's go!

DOUG

(climbing on)
What's going to happen to Palomares?

INT. ADMIRAL'S CRUISER

A map of VERA BAY lies on a planning table. Red marker CIRCLES radiate around GROUND ZERO. The coast of Vera Bay is inside the circle labeled - LEVELED BY TIDAL WAVE.

Admiral Guest, General Wilson and Col. Giles hang on every word from the sub crew.

ART MCMANUS (OVER RADIO)

We're about to thread the cable around the
damaged section now. Hold your breaths...

Seaman Bishop walks in, his voice causing the listeners to jolt.

SEAMAN BISHOP

Admiral sir, the Boston is set to clear the area. She's asking for final boarders.

ADMIRAL GUEST

General, you might want to con--

GENERAL WILSON

-I'm not going anywhere.

ADMIRAL GUEST

Colonel?

GENERAL WILSON

He's not going anywhere either.

Giles looks wounded, glares at the General. The Admiral waits for his reply, but it never comes.

ADMIRAL GUEST

Tell the Boston to make like the wind.

SEAMAN BISHOP

Aye aye, sir.

THE FRIGATE - "BOSTON"

moves out under full power leaving the Admiral's cruiser the only man made object remaining in the entire Bay.

EXT. UNDERWATER

Follow the manipulator arm from the sub as it drags the cable end toward the bomb.

ART MCMANUS (OVER RADIO)

Cable is scratching the belly now...

The cable end is being pushed under the bomb's casing. Bottom dust is kicked up, makes it hard to see.

The Pilot tries to hold course in the shifting currents. The Arm tech strains to see if the cable is coming out the other side.

ART MCMANUS (OVER RADIO)

Almost got it through...

Suddenly one of the crewman yells - points out a porthole.

CREWMAN

Art!

It takes a second for the others to see it - but through the dust can be seen an undulating gray mass of silk kicked up by the currents, now floating right toward them.

CREWMAN

It's the parachute!!

McManus PULLS BACK both sticks to their max - reversing thrust but the PARACHUTE is moving faster -- grows larger in all the portholes.

EXT. THE CAMP

Everything is in motion. Tents are flattened as trucks move out.

In one area is a group of VILLAGERS hobbled together awaiting evacuation. Doug jumps off the bus as it stops, pushes toward the villagers. No Maria. No Isabel. He spots the Young Corporal.

DOUG

Have you seen Maria and Isabel?!

CORPORAL

No, sir, but I've been kind of busy.

He gestures the villagers.

DOUG

I need to catch a ride back into town with you.

CORPORAL

I'm not going back. This is it.

DOUG

What?! That's not even fifty people!

CORPORAL

It's all I could talk into leaving. Everyone else said their Patron Saint would protect them. Can't argue religion.

DOUG

Dammit! I just pray those submariners pull that sucker up in time.

CORPORAL

(reacts)

You didn't hear?

DOUG

Hear what?

EXT. PALOMARES - MAIN STREET

Doug runs breakneck through a ghost town. Garcia's bar gets checked -- empty. The schoolhouse - empty. Where is everyone? And then he spots it - the obvious -

INT. THE CHURCH

Full of kneeling villagers. Pedros and his family. Jose Sanchez and his. Father Francisco leads them all in prayer. Doug runs in. He's gestured to sit but instead pushes to the front.

DOUG
I'm sorry - this is an emergency.

FATHER FRANSISCO
That's why we're all here, Senor Smith. To
pray for the safety of Palomares.

DOUG
That's great, Father, but praying isn't
going to do it this time.

Doug centers on Maria near the front.

DOUG
Maria, I need you to come with me.

MARIA
I'm not abandoning my home.

JOSE SANCHEZ
None of us are.

Jose turns and tells the others in Spanish. All agree.

DOUG
I'm not asking you to abandon your home,
I'm asking you to try and help save it.
And Maria...
(he reaches out a hand)
.. I can't do it without you there.

MARIA
Where?

DOUG
Aquilas.

Sacrilege. Maria backs away from his hand.

MARIA
Never.

DOUG
Maria, we need their help and they're not
going to listen to me but they know how you
feel and they know you'd never go there
unless there was a life or death reason.

MARIA
No!

FATHER FRANSISCO
Surely, Senor Smith, you must have some
faith in your people's ability?

DOUG
Father, the rescue vehicle that was to pull
the bomb up has become stuck on the bottom.
They're running out of air.

The Father is visibly unsettled.

DOUG

(to everyone)

Now I know I've been a big talker since I arrived here and I apologize for abusing your trust in me, but I'm here now and I'm telling you this is for real. What lies out there is a weapon that is truly hell on earth and even if your faith is unshakable, you cannot afford to rely on a miracle to stop it. Like it or not, God needs your help.

Silence. Father focuses on Maria. So does everyone else.

FATHER FRANCISCO

Maria, maybe it is time to forgive.

EXT. SEA FLOOR

The parachute has completely covered the Aluminaut, its lines wrapped around the antennas and arms. The bomb rests a bit higher up, the crack in its side now plainly visible.

EXT. AQUILAS - NIGHT

Doug drives the Baker's truck as fast as the antique engine will move it. Maria and Isabel sit up next to him. In the bed rides the Baker, Pedros, Jose and Isabel.

THE DOCKS

The fisherman sit in the tavern as always, note the truck pulling up outside. They laugh when Doug gets out-

ROLDAN

Save your tall tales, we're not leaving!

DOUG

Good!

Laughter turns to anger when Maria and the farmers step out into view.

ROLDAN

What is she doing here?

DOUG

She's here to ask you for help.

ROLDAN

Maria Rodriguez ask for our help? You are a storyteller, Mr. Smith.

MARIA

Believe me, just being here makes me sick to my stomach.

ROLDAN

Maybe you're pregnant again.

The other fishermen laugh, gestures "Don't look at me."

MARIA
Bastards.

ROLDAN
Bitch.

DOUG
Stop it! We don't have time for this!
There's a bomb out there that can destroy
Palomares and Aquilas if we don't act now.

ROLDAN
Nothing but lies. Only Neptune has that
kind of power.

DOUG
I'm not lying.

ROLDAN
And why should we believe you now?

MARIA
Because I would never come here if what he
said weren't true. You know that.

They do know that.

ROLDAN
And what do you expect us to do, catch this
bomb with our shrimp nets?

The men chuckle.

DOUG
Yes.

ROLDAN
Impossible! Even our longest nets are not
a quarter of the depth out there! And the
amount of weight to pull down a net of that
size does not exist! You waste your time
here, woman, we couldn't even help if we
wanted to.

SLAM - the screen door closes behind them.

SIMO
I've netted swordfish almost that deep.

Simo steps in. The other fishermen back off.

Maria and Simo lock stares.

SIMO
Maria

MARIA
Simo.

Doug can't help but notice the intense look they exchange. It's
only broken when Simo spots Isabel behind her mother.

SIMO

Isabel?

Maria nods. Simo steps closer to Isabel. Maria tenses as he kneels before her, looks into the seven year old eyes. Isabel doesn't flinch. Neither does Simo. The sudden realization hits Doug like a ton of bricks.

Simo is Isabel's father. The Pig.

Isabel reaches out to the Cognac bottle Simo holds.

MARIA

No, Isabel!

Maria snatches the bottle away.

SIMO

(looking up)
It's only water.

Maria looks closer, sniffs it, sees he's right.

SIMO

The bottle is just a reminder.

Maria looks at him differently.

Simo stands, stares out past the pair of Siren Statues framing the sea. His eyes gleam with the sense of adventure.

SIMO

This will be our greatest catch.

INT. THE SUB

The men sit in darkness, only a single indicator bulb lit.

All take shallow breaths. The sub's hull creaks as each current causes it to sway.

EXT. THE SEA - MORNING

The Admiral's Cruiser rests quietly in still water.

General Wilson and Col. Giles stand on the upper deck, stare out to a horizon of morning haze. Nothing.

COL. GILES

We're running out of time.

GENERAL WILSON

Admiral- what's the Sweeper's position?!

Admiral checks with his radio man.

ADMIRAL GUEST

Still forty miles out.

GENERAL WILSON

What is that, like twenty minutes?

ADMIRAL GUEST
Try two hours, General.

GENERAL WILSON
Hell, my B-29 taxied faster than that.

Col. Giles squints at the horizon, thinks he sees something.

COL. GILES
General?

He points. The General looks out, spots a dot coming out of the haze. Then two - then a whole line.

EXT. THE SEA

We're moving across it at a good clip - letting the first boat slide into frame, then SIX others - all moving at full throttle in a V formation - the La Manuela at the head. Simo's perched on the bow while Miguel steers from up top. Doug and Maria stand in the stern hold, grip a monstrous pile of NET.

EXT. THE ADMIRAL'S CRUISER

GENERAL WILSON
What the hell are those?

Seaman Bishop sights through binoculars.

SEAMAN BISHOP
They're fishing boats, sir!!

GENERAL WILSON
Fishing boats? How many?

SEAMAN BISHOP
I think all of them, sir!

GENERAL WILSON
Christ, that's all we need now. Rubber neckers. Admiral!

The Admiral blasts a warning HORN but the boats keep coming. He picks up a mic - switches on. His voice reverberates over the water.

ADMIRAL GUEST (OVER P.A)
YOU ARE IN DANGEROUS WATERS. PLEASE TURN
YOUR VESSELS AROUND AND LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!

DOUG waves to Miguel to keep going. He nods. Isabel stands behind him. Maria glances at Simo again, sees Doug watching. She brushes against Doug, lovingly.

MARIA
What are you thinking?

DOUG
Oh, about this new TV show in America where a city man moves to the country but has a hard time fitting in.

MARIA
Does he stay?

DOUG
So far.

MARIA
I like him.

DOUG
Yes.. but the real interesting thing is
this animal on the show that's smarter than
everyone in the town, even the city man.

MARIA
I have known animals like that. Like
Felicia.

DOUG
Well this one's named Arnold and he's a
pig.

Maria stares at him, knows what he's implying. Shakes her head.

MARIA
You Americans really have too much time on
your hands.

ADMIRAL GUEST (OVER P.A)
PLEASE TURN YOUR VESSELS AROUND NOW!

SEAMAN BISHOP suddenly recognizes Doug through the binoculars.

SEAMAN BISHOP
Sir - on the lead boat - it's Lt. Smith!!

GENERAL WILSON
Lt. Smith?!

The La Manuela heads right for them. They can see Simo gesture
to Miguel - who slows the boat, then spins them completely
around. Doug is revealed in the back, waves up at the men.

GENERAL WILSON
Lt. Smith - what are you doing here?!

DOUG
Trying to save this Bay, sir!

GENERAL WILSON
With shrimp boats! What can a bunch of
shrimp boats do?!

DOUG
Watch!

Two boats slide in beside Simo's. Resting heavily on their
transoms are the two IRON SIREN STATUES.

Doug and Maria toss thick ropes to Jose on one boat - Pedros on
another. The two farmers lash them to the statues.

Simo signals and the Sirens are rolled off. Huge splashes start their descent. Rope slack snaps away. And there goes the net - unraveling off the La Manuela in a blinding blur.

COL. GILES

You have to admire their effort, sir.

Maria and Doug watch as the net spool gets smaller and smaller until it suddenly goes slack. The weights have hit bottom. Relief.

Boats move in a circle around Simo. Maria throws ropes one way, Doug throws ropes the other. Each Captain lashes the rope to their boats.

Simo signals again. Each starts taking the slack out - pulling the net - widening it out to cover a huge path.

Now Simo holds his arms up - signals all the Captains to throttle up. Slowly the boats begin to move out as one, pulling a thousand yards of netting through the sea.

GENERAL WILSON

I'll be a son of a bitch.

EXT. UNDERWATER

The iron statues kick up clouds of dust as they drag across the ocean floor.

EXT. PALOMARES

Father Francisco is on the viewing hill, unfolds a chair and sits. He looks at the fishing boats way out at sea.

EXT. THE SEA

The strain on the La Manuela is immense. The boat creaks and moans as thirty year seams stretch.

The Americans are starting to see the genius behind this.

COL. GILES

This could actually work.

GENERAL WILSON

Yes, but how are they going to pull it up?
Did they even think of that?

COL. GILES

They were probably expecting we would help, General.

He gestures the huge CABLE WINCH on the cruiser.

INT. THE SUB

The radio crackles weakly. It's Admiral Guest.

Someone turns the volume up. That's all there is.

ADMIRAL GUEST (OVER RADIO)
Men - we need you to signal us, any way you
can, if and when the net catches you.

ART MCMANUS
The net?

THE SHRIMP BOATS

continue their pass --

--dragging the statue weighted net across the floor. They miss
the sub by a hundred yards.

EXT. PALOMARES

Father Francisco is now joined by more and more villagers. All
unfold their chairs and watch. One passes out chewing gum.

THE SHRIMP BOATS

make a wide turn, start back toward the Admiral's cruiser--

-- pulling the net through the sea like a sail. One statue
drops off a slope, floats downward --

-- pulling the ropes TIGHTER on Simo's boat. Maria and Doug
grab on as the boat lists severely to one side until --

-- the statue finds the floor again but this time a floor
sloping upward. Pulling the massive weights uphill causes even
more strain on the boat above.

But the Aluminaut is on this slope and when the net finally
makes contact, it continues without stopping - rolling the small
vessel completely over, dragging the bomb with it.

INT. SUB

The men are tossed and slammed. McManus keys the transmit
button on their radio, has no idea if anyone can hear him.

THE RADIO TECH

listens in, can hardly make it out. But the light on his
receive console is blinking in precise intervals. Morse code?
He quickly jots down the repeating letters --

RADIO TECH
(reading it aloud)
P..S..T..O..P..S Psto? Tops.. Stop.
Stop?! Jesus --!!
(jumps up)
Admiral -- tell them to STOP - they hooked
them!!

The Admiral hits the air horns -- two blasts for stop.

GENERAL WILSON
I don't believe it.

The fisherman and farmers CHEER. Doug and Maria are ecstatic.

ADMIRAL GUEST (OVER P.A.)
STAY IN POSITION. WE'LL MOVE OUR CABLE TO
YOU.

The Admiral's cruiser sets in motion, heads toward them.

Doug walks up to the bow where Simo stands.

DOUG
You are an excellent fisherman, Simo.

SIMO
Yes, but it's not enough. Is it?

He glances toward Maria. Doug understands. They share a look.

BOAT suddenly jerks and the transom RIPS RIGHT OFF. Maria falls against it - her head hitting hard and she's pulled into the sea.

DOUG
Maria!!

Doug runs toward her but the boat is practically ripped apart in his path, ropes SNAPPING boards as they pull through rotted wood. Simo yells at Miguel to help Isabel and jump to the front. He does as the entire bulkhead folds.

Simo goes after the kids. Doug dives off the side as it collapses, goes after Maria.

And just like that, the La Manuela is no more.

ADMIRAL GUEST

is shouting at the helmsmen to give the cruiser more juice.

ADMIRAL GUEST
We're going to lose it!!

It is the main end of the net, now starting to go under, taking an unconscious Maria with it. Doug dives down and grabs on to her hand. But her foot is caught and both are now pulled deeper. Doug tries desperately to free her but seconds tick off with no success.

Deeper and deeper they drop but he won't let go. Never. Finally, the foot is freed and now Doug faces an incredible swim to the surface.

Every molecule of air is needed for the journey and the surface comes just before blackout.

THE SURFACE

Doug gasps for air - screams out.

DOUG
SOMEONE -- HELP HER! HELP HER!!

A set of strong hands reach in and pull Maria from the water.

ONBOARD ADMIRAL'S CRUISER

Doug is helped aboard, pushes toward a gathered crowd. He breaks through, sees Simo giving Maria mouth to mouth. Doesn't look good but Simo presses on.

Maria finally coughs up a lung of water - thrashes about as she comes to. Eyes flutter open and the first thing she sees is Simo, hovering over her, happy she's alive.

Doug watches but doesn't intrude. And when Maria scans the crowd, Doug conveniently disappears. And now she's forced to look at the fisherman.

And accept his affection.

Farmers and Fishermen cheer, congratulate each other, dissolving the feud then and there. Doug nods. This is the way it should be.

EXT. PALOMARES

The hill is now full of villagers in chairs, all watching the action out on the horizon. There's food and drink. One Farmer has a telescope.

TELESCOPE OWNER

.. it looks like a long silver balloon.
People are getting out of it. Oh, and
there's something else tied to it, a black
cigar thing in the water.

EXT. THE CRUISER

Flash bulbs POP to record the event, several aimed at the powerful hydrogen BOMB, now lifted from the water. Fishermen and Farmers get a portrait shot they'll never forget.

FLASH pictures of Pedros and Roldan, Col. Giles and Admiral Guest, even Doug and General Wilson.

Doug turns, is face to face with Maria. Just by her eyes, you know she knows her savior was Doug.

MARIA

Thank you... for getting involved.

EXT. PALOMARES

TELESCOPE OWNER

It must be good news because the people are
jumping up and down on the boats.

FARMER

Then it's over? We're saved?

TELESCOPE OWNER

It looks that way.

A collective SIGH on the hill. A beat later...

GARCIA

Great, Bewitched comes on in five minutes.

Everyone folds up their chairs and follows Garcia.

For the first time in ages, the sun sets alone in Palomares.

EXT. HIGH ANGLE - LATER

Of Camp Wilson as it fades away, returning the riverbed to its natural state. In fact the entire valley has almost returned to normal. Even a hint of green in several freshly plowed fields.

A final caravan of military vehicles threads out of town.

A TRUCK BLURS PAST

Reveals Doug walking on the side of the road. Longer hair. Relaxed clothes. A Nomadic look in his eyes.

The General's JEEP slows and keeps pace.

GENERAL WILSON

You gonna walk all the way to San Javiar, Smith?

DOUG

Good day for it, but no - I got a ride.

Wilson stays with him. Can't seem to say it-

GENERAL WILSON

It was a good thing you being here, seeing this project through to the end.

DOUG

Is that a "thank you," sir?

GENERAL WILSON

Close as you'll ever get from me.

DOUG

I'll take it.

GENERAL WILSON

So where to now?

DOUG

Any place where the words No Comment aren't needed. Kind of tired of the bullshit. Especially my own.

GENERAL WILSON

Well good luck trying to find it. I don't think that place exists anymore.

The jeep pulls out, leaves Doug at the edge of the main street.

DOUG
Neither do I.

PALOMARES

There's a POWER TRANSFORMER now in town. TV antennas have sprouted up on many homes. Garcia's got a color TV along with a neon MILLER sign in the window. The church has BINGO on Wednesdays. There's a new AQUILAS FISHHOUSE grill. The movie theater has been renamed the LA BOMBA and is showing THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING.

But the most prominent display is in front of the much expanded Bakery. The truck that was once scorned has now been elevated onto a pedestal and has been eulogized as "The Truck that saved Palomares".

And everyone who passes, touches it for good luck.

JOSE

rings the new GOLD BELL and here come the kids. They yell out "Hi, Senor' Smith" as they pass, some skating, others riding new bikes.

Doug takes it all in for the last time.

FATHER FRANCISCO (O.S.)
She'll never forget you.

Doug turns to see the Father sitting on his donkey cart.

DOUG
She?

FATHER FRANCISCO
Palomares.

DOUG
Right. Well it's a mutual feeling.

FATHER FRANCISCO
And the change is truly for the better.

DOUG
In Palomares?

FATHER FRANCISCO
In you.

Doug likes the thought. He throws his bag on, climbs aboard and offers out a box of cigars.

DOUG
For the ride. One for each mile.

The Father opens it.

FATHER FRANCISCO
Ah... cubans. Excellent.

Father Francisco whips the reins and his mule starts its slow walk out of town. Doug suddenly spots someone who's never been here before.

MIGUEL

walks toward the school, hesitates and glances back to a truck. SIMO waves to "go on" from the passenger seat. Miguel finally does, catches up with Isabel and enters a new life as a child.

THE TRUCK

pulls out. Doug seems anxious as it moves to pass them.

Maria drives, stares out at him and keeps the two vehicles aligned, side by side. In sync for just a moment.

But things change, time moves on and that inevitable fork in the road always looms ahead. One last look between them and then she's gone, turning on to another path, disappearing forever in a cloud of dust.

The cart wobbles out of Palomares into an ancient landscape.

FATHER FRANCISCO (V.O.)

The new soil is a little redder in color,
don't you think? I hope it wears as well.

DOUG (V.O.)

I'm sure it will.

FATHER FRANCISCO (V.O.)

So where did they take all of the old
diseased soil anyway?

DOUG (V.O.)

God only knows, Father.

A 55 GALLON BARREL

is unloaded from a truck. It's carried to a deep DITCH where its lowered down next to several others. And when you get a better look, you see that this ditch runs clear to the horizon - is being filled with over 6000 barrels. And those barrels are being buried with truckloads of dirt. And that dirt is being SODDED with acres of grass. And there's a mile of chain link fence bordering the area complete with "NO TRESPASSING" bolted on. And running alongside this mile of fence is a two lane blacktop. And right next to this two lane blacktop is a pole. And on this pole is a sign -- --"WELCOME TO CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA".

FADE OUT:

THE END