

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Dear Earth"

Written By

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Episode	3S16
Story	4494
1/15/96	(White)
1/24/96	(Blue - Pages)

Director
Winrich Kolbe

1/15/96 (White)

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Dear Earth"

SETS

INTERIORS

SARATOGA / FLIGHT DECK
COMMAND CENTER
SUPPLY ROOM
CORRIDOR
LOADING BAY #4
REC ROOM
COMMODORE ROSS'S CABIN
SLEEPING QUARTERS
ORIENTATION ROOM
HOSPITAL
CORRIDOR OUTSIDE REC ROOM

EXTERIORS

PLANET LELOUCH
PLANET MEMNON

PORT RISKIN/
AMMUNITION DEPOT
AMMUNITION BUNKER

1/24/96 (Blue)

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Dear Earth"

CAST

VANESSA DAMPHOUSSE
COOPER HAWKES
MCQUEEN
SHANE VANSSEN
PAUL WANG
NATHAN WEST
COMMODORE ROSS

COCHRAN
SUPPLY SERGEANT
LT. JOHN HILL
SHANE'S SISTER ANN
DIRECTOR
ARMED GUARD #1
OPHTHALMOLOGIST
SAILOR #1
SAILOR #2
MANK
BOASBERG

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

TEASER

1 EXT. THE EARTH - SPACE

1

The five oceans are blue. The billowy clouds drifting above it are white. Majestic. It could be a photo in a geography book or Neil Armstrong's point of view once upon a time. The tranquility of space. Then, amidst the stars... WOOSH!

A LONE VESSEL ENTERS FRAME. Leaving Earth far behind. Its insignias and markings aren't yet identifiable.

2 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA

2

The deck is filled with activity. The 58th are working on their cockpits, the canopies raised.

COOPER leans over his plane's cockpit meticulously repairing a dial on his control panel.

A WORKER in overalls pushes a cart full of tools past Cooper. FOLLOW HIM as he passes.

NATHAN

working inside his cockpit. He flicks a switch and his canopy starts to close. It jams halfway. Stuck.

NATHAN

Hey, I need a D-16-A.

The Worker stops pushing the cart and tosses a wrench to Nathan. An OFFICER steps up to the Worker and whispers covertly in his ear. The Worker nods and continues pushing his cart through the area. He stops and whispers to a CREW MEMBER, who reacts, anxious.

3 EXT. SPACE

3

THE VESSEL continues through space. The Earth is no longer visible. Only the millions of surrounding stars...

4 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA

4

The Worker whispers his secret to OFFICER #2.

SHANE

Little help!

The Worker pushes his cart toward SHANE who holds a drill attached to a long electrical cord in the ceiling. She sifts through the tool cart and finds a bit.

(CONTINUED)

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2.

4 CONTINUED:

4

She attaches it to her drill and snaps down a protective visor.

She turns to her cockpit and resumes drilling a gasket.

(X)

5 EXT. SPACE

5

The lone Craft veers toward...

... The SCVN SARATOGA seen off in the distance.

6 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA

6

MCQUEEN stands by as the Command CREW tracks the vehicle.

COCHRAN

Track number 4656 is bearing one-
eight-zero 25 MSKs inbound.

Velocity 75 SKs.

(X)

ROSS turns to McQueen. MCQUEEN turns to Ross and nods.

ROSS

(knowingly)

It's late...

McQueen nods.

COCHRAN

Capra, this is Saratoga. I am
holding a green deck for recovery
on Loading Bay Four.

(X)

COCHRAN

grabs a phone and furtively talks into it. A confidential
whisper.

COCHRAN

Pony on board. Loading bay four.

(X)

7 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - SARATOGA

7

A SUPPLY SERGEANT is on a phone getting Cochran's message.

SUPPLY SERGEANT

Four. Got it.

Excited, the Supply Sergeant rushes off.

8 INT. CORRIDOR - SARATOGA

8

The Supply Sergeant hurries down the corridor. As crewmen look to him, the sergeant holds up "four" fingers as he passes. Everyone knows what it means.

9 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA

9

DAMPHOUSSE wears safety goggles as she solders on her plane's control panel. WANG steps up, checking out her work.

Murmurs of "Loading Bay Four" rifle through the flight deck. Crew Members stop what they're doing and hurry out.

Damphousse looks up. A smile crosses her face.

(X)

DAMPHOUSSE
I can almost smell it...

Damphousse, Wang, Nathan and Shane exit with the others.

COOPER

applies a sticker beneath his plane's canopy. It's a CHIG INSIGNIA representing a kill. He already has several "kill" insignias. He proudly looks up from his cockpit to see...

...the Flight Deck is empty. He's all alone. He exhales, knowing where they've all gone.

10 EXT. LOADING BAY - SARATOGA - SPACE

10 .

The Vessel touches down on the ship's exterior landing pad.

11 INT. LOADING BAY #4 - SARATOGA

11

A CROWD has already gathered. Staring at the loading bay doors. Waiting. Anticipation.

Nathan and Wang finally arrive. Damphousse and Shane are already up at the front.

After a few silent moments of waiting...

THE VESSEL'S DOORS SLIDE OPEN, REVEALING... TWO PAIRS OF ARMED GUARDS. Each Guard carries one end of a body bag stenciled "U.S. NAVY." The Four Guards step into the loading bay, onto the deck and toss the bags to the floor. (X)

THUD! All the Marines and Sailors jerk from the sound. A beat as they stare at the dark bags used to carry corpses.

(CONTINUED)

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4.

11 CONTINUED:

11

The Supply Sergeant pushes through the crowd to the front. Guard #1 hands him a clipboard which he quickly signs. The Sergeant then unzips one of the bags, REVEALING...

MAIL... Envelopes, packages, boxes, etc.

SUPPLY SERGEANT

Mail Call!

The crew of the Saratoga RUSH the Sergeant as if they were at a rock concert. Total CHOAS erupts. On the BURST OF ENERGY...

- FADE OUT:

END TEASER

ACT ONE

12 INT. LOADING BAY #4 - SARATOGA

12

The 58th are huddled around the bags of mail. A strange sight... Mail from home delivered in the bags normally used to send soldiers back home.

SUPPLY SERGEANT

West, Nathan...

Nathan steps up and is handed a lone envelope. Instead of joy he slumps, saddened. He turns to Shane, next to him.

NATHAN

My parents...

Expecting the worst, he walks out, passing...

DAMPHOUSSE

anxiously counting the pages in the letter she just received.

DAMPHOUSSE

...ten, eleven, twelve!

Thrilled, she inhales the smell of the letter... Ahhh, home.

SUPPLY SERGEANT

Wang, Paul.

Wang is handed the largest box yet delivered. He walks back through the gauntlet of jealous Crew Members.

Wang is stopped by LT. JOHN HILL. A young jarhead. Only in his twenties but already a lifer.

HILL

What's the big hoo-ah? It's only mail.

WANG

Let me guess, a replacement newby just off the boat.

HILL

Yeah... I was on Planet only a month ago. Lieutenant John Hill.

WANG

Paul Wang, welcome to the war. You'll know soon enough. Mail call is the only thing we have to look forward to.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

Wang walks off with his box. He passes

COOPER

in the back doorway. Watching the faces light up as they open letters from home. Home. Family. He tries to relate.

MCQUEEN (O.S.)

What are you waiting here for,
Hawkes?

Cooper turns to see McQueen behind him.

MCQUEEN

A letter from Ma and Pa saying
how proud they are?

Cooper shrugs. Silent. Unable to put it into words.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

Mail call is no place for Tanks.
In fifteen years all I ever got
were divorce papers and a letter
of congratulations as a finalist
in the Publisher's Clearing House
Sweepstakes.

SUPPLY SERGEANT

Hawkes, Cooper.

Cooper snaps his head around. Stunned. He looks to McQueen then eagerly rushes to get his mail. A bounce in his step.

SUPPLY SERGEANT (CONT'D)

McQueen, T.C.

Cooper looks back to McQueen. He's also surprised and tries to mask his excitement as he snaps the letter from the sergeant's hand.

13 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA

13

The 58th are like kids on Christmas morning. Silent. Too enthralled with their "presents" - letters, packages, etc.

Wang opens his box and pulls out a hardcover book.

CLOSE - THE BOOK

is titled "Break up the Cubs! A 21st Century Dynasty". Under the main title is: "BACK TO BACK TO BACK!"

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

WANG'S HAND ENTERS FRAME and opens the cover. It's in-scribed:
"To Paul, always thinking of you, Love Mom and Dad."

WANG

smiles. He reaches into the box and pulls out... A PIECE OF
SOD. Thrilled, he puts the sod to his face and inhales.

WANG

Ahhh. Sod from Wrigley field!

Damphousse sits nearby, reading her letter.

DAMPHOUSSE

Grenadine of beef in a bernaise
sauce.

WANG

(like fine wine)
I'd say left center, near the
vines.

DAMPHOUSSE

My favorite meal. My fiance owns
a restaurant and he always wafts
the pages over a plate before
mailing them.

COOPER AND MCQUEEN

read their letters. Cooper definitely looks more pleased. In
fact he laughs with excitement.

COOPER

I never even owned a TV, let
alone be the ...star of a show!

McQueen shoots back a hard stare. He crumbles the letter in
his hand and storms out. Cooper remains, feeling fine.

SHANE

sits at an OPTICAL DISK MACHINE.

SHANE'S POV - AN OPTICAL DISK

of her very pregnant SISTER (ANN) and BROTHER-IN-LAW (ED).

SHANE'S SISTER/ANN

Ed's Mom will come and stay with
us when she's born. That's
right, it's a she.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

SHANE'S SISTER/ANN (CONT'D)

Have to carry on that Vansen
double X chromosome... I've
decided, we've decided, to name
her...

SHANE

Anything but Marian.

ANN

Marian!

SHANE

AH!

She pounds the console, furious.

ANN

It was inspired by you...

SHANE

"Inspired?!" You ripped me off!

ANN

We're naming her after Mom.
You're doing what you need to do
for her memory and I'll do what
I can...

SHANE

You little...you know damn well
that's what I wanted to name my
baby since I was twelve! OH!

As Ann smiles, innocently...

14 INT. TUN TAVERN - SARATOGA

14 (X)

ROSS plays his guitar while a CD of WILLIE DIXON plays. He
tries emulating the licks. McQueen enters, annoyed. The
crumpled letter is held tightly in his hands.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

(X)

ROSS
If you're here to gripe, take it
on out.

McQueen, about to rant and rave, is caught off guard.

ROSS (CONT'D)
The high- ups want it. Ever
since that In Vitro assassinated
Secretary General Chartwell,
there's been unrest back home.
A documentary on In Vitroes in
the war, broadcast over the Armed
Forces Network to a billion
people...will help do its part to
settle things.

(X)
(X)

MCQUEEN
I do my part by everyday actions.
I don't need a camera to give
those actions validity.

ROSS
I know you're a private man, Ty.
But you know as well as I do that
wars aren't just won or lost on
the battlefield. Morale at home
is as important as a hundred
Saratogas.

McQueen knows this is true.

ROSS
A project such as this is the
most powerful way to let the
folks back home see
those..."everyday actions." Think
of it as going into battle and
you'll be fine.

McQueen grits his teeth. It's the last thing he wants to do.

MCQUEEN
I'd rather face an entire Chig
division than one digital camera.

As he drops the letter on Ross' desk and heads out...

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9A.

15 INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - SARATOGA

15

Nathan sits up in his bunk, reading the letter from his
Parents. He stops reading. He's stunned. Livid.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

Nathan hops from his bunk and storms into the corridor.

16 INT. CORRIDOR - SARATOGA

16

As Nathan bursts into the corridor he absently bumps into... McQueen who was moving down the hall. Nathan continues, oblivious in his anger.

MCQUEEN

West...

Nathan pauses, turns back to McQueen.

MCQUEEN

What's your gripe?

NATHAN

Sorry, Sir. My Parents were not notified of my brother's death. Is there anything you can do?

MCQUEEN

(after a pause)

You asking me to write them?

NATHAN

No... I mean, I don't know.

McQueen's tone is understanding.

MCQUEEN

Look, Nathan, the Corps always notifies next of kin with a personal visit to the home. They've probably been told.

(X)

Rattled, Nathan looks to the letter.

(X)

NATHAN

I can't be positive. Its not in the letter. I mean...my parents have no idea...they've lost a son.

(X)

MCQUEEN

Nathan, Parents of Marines have lost their sons for three hundred years. The Corps has experience letting them know. But if there is anything I can do to help you, I want to know.

(X)

Nathan remains unsettled. McQueen reads this.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

MCQUEEN

You alright?

(X)

Nathan nods, upset, but in control. McQueen eyes him and nods. (X)

MCQUEEN

Mission briefing in ten mikes.

(X)

And at that McQueen marches off leaving Nathan with an unsatisfied expression.

17 INT. ORIENTATION ROOM - SARATOGA - LATER

17

McQueen addresses the 58th.

MCQUEEN

In preparation for the massive offensive "Operation Round Hammer" the directive of this mission is to disrupt the Chig's supply line.

He points to a map of the planet on the big board.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

The Planet Memnon is rich in merconzium 5. An ore the Chigs mine for use in their weapons systems. What they've mined they have stored along with other supplies and material in deep underground bunkers. Because of the depth, its considered questionable if bombing would have maximum effect.

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

He points to where the underground bunkers are located.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

Besides, Intelligence reports the Chigs have superior smart missile sentries in orbit, limiting an airstrike. However, there exists a fortuitous window of opportunity to deply a small ground force.

(X)

(X)

(beat)

Therefore, you'll buddy up and strategically deploy explosives directly into ventilation shafts which lead to the underground bunkers which will be detonated once you're airlifted out.

McQueen turns to the troops with a "now hear this" expression.

(X)

MCQUEEN

Now, I've been getting an earful of bitchin' and moanin' 'bout "pilots" being used as ground pounders. Hear this CFB, you are not in the Air Force. This is the Corps. "Air/Ground Combat Element of the 51st MEU. "Every Marine a rifleman."

(X)

He eyes the Marines.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

MCQUEEN

This is not a cozy little war at home, people. Our current theatre extends ten to sixteen light years. Every living human on Earth could not cover that area. Trained personell had been depleted in all branches before the war. Therefore, you will fight on command. Where needed. How needed. Do I make myself clear?

(X)

(X)

THE GROUP

Yes, sir.

(X)

(X)

MCQUEEN

This is a quickie, people. Surgical and precise. Wheels up at 0750.

(X)

(X)

(X)

McQueen starts off. He stops at the door and turns back.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

Listen up, I know many of you just received mail from home. But remember, no personal logs or letters are allowed outside this vessel in case of capture... Let's make it happen.

(X)

18 EXT. SARATOGA - SPACE - LATER

18

The I.S.S.C.V. takes off and descends toward the planet.

19 INT. I.S.S.C.V

19

The 58th wait to disembark. In full battle gear - guns, camouflage uniforms, and night vision goggles.

(X)

WANG

So, G.I. Geequed is going to be on TV.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

Cooper smiles and shrugs as if to say "can you blame them?" The Squad shakes their heads and moan.

SHANE

(to Cooper)

Lieutenant Hollywood, you pair up with Hill and take the Northern point, Wang and 'phousse take the Central. West and I'll take the Southern point.

(X)

Replacement soldier, LT. JOHN HILL sits next to Cooper.

HILL

Uh... Lieutenant Vansen, I'd feel more comfortable with a partner other than Hawkes.

A moment of tension and puzzlement amongst the unit. Hawkes eyes Hill, hard.

SHANE

What's your bitch, Hill?

WANG

Yeah, Hill, if you're with Hawkes you can pop off Chigs no problem when they come up for his autograph.

Everyone laughs. Cooper smiles, pleased. Hill doesn't smile. Vansen studies Hill, not pleased.

The 58th all look to Hill. On the spot. Shane breaks in...

SHANE

You're with Hawkes, deal with it... We'll rendezvous at Grid coordinate...

20 EXT. PLANET MEMNON - NIGHT

20 (X)

The flames from the I.S.S.C.V.'s engine illuminate the Earth size planet which is engulfed in night.

SHANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...088684.... at 0850. It is now 0742...Ready... Ready... Hack.

On her last "Hack" WE HEAR A LOUD OVERLAPPING BAM!

CUT TO:

21 EXT. PLANET MEMNON - NIGHT - A CLOSE - A DRILL BIT 21
rammed into a rocky surface. It starts drilling.

NATHAN

mans the drill while Shane wields her gun, on guard.

22 EXT. PLANET MEMNON - DIFFERENT LOCATION - NIGHT 22

BAM! Cooper drills a hole while Hill is on lookout. As Hill scans the horizon he mutters to himself, disgustedly.

HILL

Can't believe out of a quarter
million Marines, I get buddied up
with a nipple neck.

Cooper looks up, having heard this on his radio microphone.

COOPER

If we weren't in the middle of
Chig country, I'd be stuffin' you
down this hole. Now, keep your
mouth shut and look alive. (X)

As the two Marines glare at each other...

23 EXT. PLANET MEMNON - DESERT - NIGHT- CLOSE - 3 CANISTERS 23 (X)

Damphousse gently lifts one out of the case and inserts it into (X)
the first hole. (X)

Wang steps up to help Damphousse and steps into a pile of slimy (X)
goop. SQUISH! (X)

WANG

Oh, damn! I stepped in... I
don't know what.

Wang hobbles over to her and lifts up one of his boots. It's (X)
covered in green, chunky, slimy gun. (X)

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

DAMPHOUSSE

Whew! That stinks.

(X)

Damphousse steps over to the second hole and inserts another canister. Wang takes out his knife and puts it to his boot.

DAMPHOUSSE

Don't wipe it off. Regulations say any contact with an unknown foreign substance must be checked by The Bio-Techies aboard ship.

WANG

Right...Hope I don't have to sit in quarantine again...

(X)

SUDDENLY...BOOM! BOOM! INCOMING CHIG WEAPONS FIRE.

Damphousse grabs up the now empty metal container and scurries behind a large boulder to take cover.

Wang hits the ground and rolls behind the same boulder. They look to each other. Out of breath and scared. They nod and count together. One, two and ...

(X)

Simultaneously they jump up and open fire. Before Damphousse and Wang can duck...

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

BOOM!

Damphousse and Wang are violently thrown back ten feet by an explosion. THUD! (X)

They slam against a tall flat rock. They both slide down to the ground. Stunned and out of breath.

Wang shakes off the pain. He reaches into his pack and pulls out a SMART GRENADE. He pulls the pin and heaves it.

THE SMART GRENADE

ZIPS through the rocky terrain. ZOOMING in and out of the jagged boulders and finally behind the tall jagged rocks.

WANG

waits... BOOM! EXPLOSION on the other side of the rocks.

Wang clinches his fist in "victory". But by no means does he think this is over. He's still on guard as he heads back to Damphousse. (X)
(X)

Silence. No response from her. Wang gets worried.

WANG (CONT'D)
'phousse?... You ok?! Vanessa?

Wang makes his way through the dust and comes upon...

DAMPHOUSSE

lying up against the flat slab of rock. Unconscious. Both lenses in her night goggles are shattered. Blood trickles down from under the cracked lenses. Wang carefully removes her goggles to reveal blood around her eyes.

He pulls a cloth from his pack and carefully dabs the blood away. She slowly comes to. Still groggy. She gasps for breath. For her, Wang tries to restrain his concern.

DAMPHOUSSE
(realizing)
I can't see. I CAN'T SEE!

(X)

(CONTINUED)

23. CONTINUED: (3)

23

Wang holds up two fingers right to her face.

WANG

How many?

DAMPHOUSSE

How many what?!

Her sightless eyes well up with tears. She panics and tries to stand. Wang holds her back down, trying to comfort her. She takes deep breaths, trying to prevent herself from crying. It's working. She leans back against the rock.

WANG

Hang on. I'll get you extracted out of here ASAP.

(X)

(into his radio mic)

Queen of Diamonds this is Joker...

Wang's RADIO EMITS LOUD STATIC.

WANG (CONT'D)

Queen of Diamonds this is Joker...

(MORE STATIC)

Radio's down.

He reaches over for Damphousse's helmet. Her radio mic is broken off, destroyed in the explosion.

Frustrated, Wang stands. Damphousse grabs out, latches onto his jacket and pulls him down. A human buoy in her darkness.

WANG

Easy, Vanessa, I'm right here...I'm right here...we'll sit tight a second...keep your head...

Damphousse releases her grip on him. Wang produces a first aid kit and tends to Damphousse. Her thoughts drift, panicked.

O.S., APPROACHING INCOMING and ARTILLERY FIRE. Wang cowers, looks back in the direction of the enemy. He looks back at Damphousse, trying to cover his expression of anxiety.

(X)

(X)

DAMPHOUSSE

They sound close.

(X)

WANG

No...No...I ...I can't tell.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

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16A.

23 CONTINUED: (4)

23

She unzips her jacket and pulls out an envelope. She fumbles for the opening and removes her recent letter. She holds it to her face.

(X)

DAMPHOUSSE

(scared)

I wasn't finished. I was making
it last. Read it for me.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (5)

23

WANG

Wait 'til we get back.

DAMPHOUSSE

We might not get back. And I need
to hear "him" him now.

(X)

She holds out the letter. Wang understands she seeks comfort
in the letter. He takes it from her hand.

(X)

WANG

Onions?

DAMPHOUSSE

They're in the sauce.

(X)

She blindly points where to begin.

WANG

(haltingly)

"I finally hired a dessert chef.
You'll never guess who...
Marilyn, your old college
roommate. We had a booth at the
Taste of Rochester and her banana
pudding cream pie was a big hit."

(X)

Wang silently reads ahead. His expression registers shock. He
looks up at his friend, scared and oblivious to Wang's concern.

WANG

Uh...then he says business is
up...

DAMPHOUSSE

I need to hear every word.

He hesitates, sick. He assumes an impatient tone.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (6)

23

WANG

Damphousse, this is really not
the time or place to...

DAMPHOUSSE

Read it!

WANG

"Uh... After Marilyn started
working for me, we became good
friends. We had so much in
common, just like you and me. I
never have to explain myself...as
I do now.

(hesitation)

There is no easy way to express
what I have to say, Vanessa. But
many things have changed...It's
been a year and no end to the war
appears to be in sight. I can no
longer wait..."

(X)

Damphousse can tell what's coming next. She reaches out,
grasping at the air. She finally grabs the letter and rips it
out of Wang's hands.

(X)

WANG

I'm sorry, I -

Damphousse shakes her head, silencing him.

Wang grabs his gun and walks toward the other side of the
clearing, feeling bad for Damphousse. He snaps down his night-
vision goggles and scans the nearby terrain. He then walks
back toward

DAMPHOUSSE

who wipes away her tears.

WANG

Vansen and West are only a half
click from here. We need to get
you some medical attention.

(beat)

If you go with me and it gets
hairy...I'm afraid...you're under
cover...I think you'll...

(X)

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (7)

23

Wang pauses. Damphousse silently builds up her courage.

DAMPHOUSSE (CONT'D)

Go.

(X)

Wang clasps her shoulder. She's a good Marine.

24 EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

24

DAMPHOUSSE is now lodged inside a small crevice between two large rocks. She holds her gun out, ready for anything.

25 EXT. PLANET MEMNON - DESERT - NIGHT

25

Wang makes his way through the darkness. He looks back, thinking of Damphousse, then continues on.

26 EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

26

The clearing is now silent. Eerily silent.

Damphousse looks around. She can't see but it's instinctive. Always on guard. Every sense but one at attention.

The silence is then broken by...THE ALIEN SOUND.

Damphousse's head jerks toward the SOUND. Like a deer caught in headlights. She cocks and readies her gun, hearing...

(X)

HEAVY BOOTS CRUNCH DOWN HARD into the planet's surface.

Damphousse hears them approaching. She gulps down a mouthful of fear. Sightless eyes darting defensively in all directions. (X)

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

Suddenly, there is SILENCE, which is even more frightening. And then she hears... The Chigs FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING ONCE AGAIN.

(X)
(X)
(X)

DAMPHOUSSE has to make a decision. Their FOOTSTEPS ARE FAST APPROACHING. Now's the time. Propelled by fear and adrenalin she jumps up from behind the rocks and OPENS FIRE on the Chigs.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

Although the Chigs had their weapons ready, the split second advantage Damphousse had makes all the difference.

Taken by surprise, the Chigs are riddled with bullets, lifelessly spinning them to the ground like demonic rag dolls.

Damphousse's emotions take over as she mows them down. Even after they're dead and lying on the ground, she continues FIRING. Letting all her frustrations out on the aliens. She continues to pummel them with bullets when... WHAM!

Damphousse is tackled from behind. Her and the TACKLER hit the ground. She's scared the Tackler is a Chig. REVEAL...

The tackler is... WANG. He grabs her gun and takes control.

WANG

It's me... You got them all.

This snaps her out of her trance and she lets go of the trigger. It's over. Damphousse is spent. Breathing heavy.

Wang notices the pages of her letter are scattered everywhere. She stands as Wang, grimacing, picks a page off the dead Chig's bloody chest.

WANG

Your letter's scattered everywhere...

She nods, more than the letter has been scattered.

As he hands her the single page... BRIGHT LIGHTS pierce the darkness from above. Wang looks up to see...

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (2)

26

THE I.S.S.C.V. LANDING on the other side of the rocks.

Wang grabs Damphousse's arm and leads her off. She stops at the top of the rocks and turns back. She lets the letter pages go. They skitter off into the otherworldly night air.

27 EXT. PLANET MEMNON - NIGHT SKY

27 (X

The I.S.S.C.V lifts off into the sky.

28 INT. I.S.S.C.V. - NIGHT

28

Wang wraps a blanket around Damphousse. Who turns, looking blindly out the window.

Shane moves to the radio console. She flicks open a lid, revealing a button. She pushes it.

29 EXT. PLANET MEMNON - NIGHT

29

The DETONATION DEVICES IGNITE one by one, creating a symmetrical line of EXPLOSIONS. Mission accomplished. The area is engulfed in firey explosions.

30 INT. ISSCV - NIGHT

30

Damphousse stares blindly out the window as orange flashes of light on planet reflect across her face. As the planet...and her life...continues to erupt...

FADE OUT:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

31 EXT. SARATOGA - SPACE

31

The I.S.S.C.V. lands on the exterior landing pod. The troop carrier section descends into the ship.

32 INT. LOADING BAY #6 - SARATOGA

32 (X)

The 58th are all on board. The once optimistic faces are gone - their uniforms are dirty, their faces tired. All our concerned (X)
about Damphousse. (X)

Wang sits near Damphousse, her eyes haphazardly bandaged.

The troop carrier LOCKS INTO PLACE. The Squad stands, ready to (X)
disembark. THE DOORS SLIDE OPEN... (X)

33 INT. SARATOGA - LOADING BAY #4 - DAMPHOUSSE -

33

is being carried off the vehicle on a stretcher by the Two (X)
Medics. The 58th make way for the stretcher. Wang walks
alongside Damphousse, holding her hand. TWO ARMED GUARDS
MOVING INTO the bay. They're humorless. All business.

ARMED GUARD #1
Lieutenant Wang?

WANG
What?

ARMED GUARD #1
Your boots, sir.

As Wang continues walking along with the stretcher both the Guards efficiently put on plastic surgical gloves.

WANG
What? Oh, right. I'm going to
sick bay with her, but then -

Each Guard grabs one of Wang's arms. They carry him to a bench and plop him down. With utmost efficiency each Guard unlaces a boot and then yanks it off. Guard #1 snaps open a large, clear plastic bag and they drop the boots into it.

Damphousse is removed from the loading bay. (X)

SUDDENLY...BRIGHT LIGHTS FILL THE SCREEN. (X)

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Keep moving, people.

REVEAL...A TV CAMERA CREW tapes the Squadron exiting the I.S.S.C.V.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

A DIRECTOR barks orders to the Squad. 21st century version of (X)
Mr. Hollywood. Makes Sewell look downright upright. Cooper
finally exits the vehicle.

DIRECTOR

That's Hawkes! Move in close.

The CAMERA MAN moves in close on Cooper. A sun gun/light (X)
contraption practically blinds him. Cooper squints, baffled.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

DIRECTOR

You're just come back from a
combat mission. Act tired. Act
exhausted.

(X)

COOPER

I am tired! I am exhausted!

(X)

DIRECTOR

Then act that way!

This makes Cooper tense up. He wasn't expecting any of this.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Okay cut it! Lieutenant Hawkes,
where would you normally go after
this?

HAWKES

Uh...well...we all hit the
showers.

DIRECTOR

Movin' on. Shower room.

NATHAN & SHANE

What?!

DIRECTOR

Don't worry, we'll black out the
naughty bits.

COOPER

Then, when you show me, most of
the TV will have to be black.

(X)

Shane steps toward the director.

SHANE

Hear this loud and clear, any
camera shows up in the showers
the only thing that will be
blocked out is your head.

Beat. The director eyes Cooper, "help."

COOPER

Uh...after that we kick back in
the rec room.

DIRECTOR

Movin' on. Rec room.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (3)

33

The Director exits with the Crew. An A.D. grabs Cooper and ushers him off.

(X)
(X)

34 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA

34

FOLLOW DOWN A LONG LINE OF SOLDIERS. Waiting in line for the Optical Disk Machine where...

SHANE

sits and watches her Sister's "letter". Almost in a trance she rewinds over the same "sound bite" over and over and...

SHANE'S SISTER/ANN

Marian...
(rewind)
Marian...
(rewind)
Marian...

The Soldiers in line GROAN, fed up. They can't take anymore.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

COOPER

enters, leading the TV Crew. He walks with a swagger. Playing it cool. Cocky. He nods to fellow SQUAD MEMBERS.

COOPER

This is our rec room where we
"wild Cards" relax between
missions. Hey, Preston...
Billy..

SQUAD MEMBERS "PRESTON" and "BILLY" give Cooper strange looks.
They're not even friends.

DIRECTOR

So you definitely feel like just
another member of the squad?

COOPER

Heck yeah. Hey there, Ben,
Charlie...

He waves to TWO OTHER SQUAD MEMBERS he doesn't know.

DIRECTOR

No prejudices or racism?

COOPER

Nope. We're all like one big
happy family.

DIRECTOR

Interesting you say that.
Because you don't have any other
family.

Cooper pauses. He could get angry, but thinks better of it.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

How does it make you feel when
fellow squad members receive mail
and you don't? Does it make you
feel any less loyal to the
Earth's Forces, knowing that you
have nobody back home to fight
for?

COOPER

No, no...not really.

CLOSE - COOPER THROUGH THE CAMERA'S LENS

He's on the spot. Awkward. Squirming.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (2)

34

RETURN

DIRECTOR

Introduce us to one of your
"family."

Cooper bristles at "family" as he approaches...

WANG

who sits at a desk filling out a long form.

COOPER

This is First Lieutenant Paul
Wang. We went through the
Accelerated Flight Training
Program together.

DIRECTOR

Tell us what you're doing now,
Lieutenant.

WANG

(snaps, pissed)
I'm filling out a requisition
form, in triplicate, for a new
pair of boots. They took mine
and gave me a pair two sizes too
small.

Cooper forces an interested smile as Wang stands up to leave.
Wang grimaces and grabs a sore foot.

Cooper shrugs, looks around for something to do. He spots
someone OFF...

COOPER

Oh, hey...there's my buddy
Nathan.

NATHAN

sits at a computer screen.

COOPER

This is First Lieutenant Nathan
West. We've flown many a
dangerous...sorties... together.
Fighting Chigs side by side.

Nathan's so wrapped up in what he's doing he doesn't even
notice Cooper. Nathan speaks, oblivious to the TV Crew.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (3)

34

NATHAN

They sent the notification letter
to the wrong Neil West. It's N-
E-I-L, not N-E-A-L!

(X)

Nathan jumps up and sprints off, leaving Cooper with egg on his face. The director seems to sense Cooper's embarrassment. (X)

Cooper's alone. Awkward. Anxious. The director turns to Hawkes. (X)

DIRECTOR

How about reading news from home?

COOPER

"News?" "Home?" Oh yeah, that'd
be good...

Cooper crosses toward the computer terminals.

As the Cameraman follows Cooper toward the computers they pass LT. HILL. Under his breath the rookie mutters...

HILL

Who cares about some dumb tank?

Cooper stops in his tracks, swallowing anger.

DIRECTOR

(to Cameraman)

Get in close...

Cooper is about to move on. The director goads him...

DIRECTOR

What'd he say?

COOPER

(covering up)

Before the war he worked in a
bank...

Cooper isn't about to let Hill ruin this for him. He shoots the rookie one last cold stare and sits down at the computer.

CUT TO:

35 INT. SHIP'S HOSPITAL - SARATOGA

35

Damphousse lies in bed. Unconscious. Eyes heavily bandaged. A DOCTOR checks her I.V. and then walks off, REVEALING...

MCQUEEN

at the foot of her bed. His silent look tells us everything. Concern and compassion.

Shane, Wang and Nathan step up from behind McQueen.

SHANE

How is she?

MCQUEEN

Fragments of her night goggles were in her corneas. The Doc said he thinks he got them all, but... They'll know more tomorrow...

NATHAN

She'll be alright.

The others nod as Wang moves to the bed, seeing the last remaining page of the letter to Damphousse.

WANG

Its 2064, doctors can do just about anything, but they still can't put together a broken heart.

Wang lifts the letter to his nose. As he softly smells the pages, but the aroma is gone.

36 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA

36

Cooper sits at the computer attempting to bring up his hometown newspaper. Although it's obvious he's never done this before he tries to fake it.

COOPER

Philadelphia. That means "The City of Brotherly Love."

Cooper expects this to be news to the crew, but its not. There is no reaction. Cooper seems puzzled, then returns to the "paper."

COOPER

Hey, how 'bout them Flyers?

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

MCQUEEN

quietly slips in at the back of the room to observe. Hopefully unnoticed. He watches Cooper struggle.

DIRECTOR

Colonel?

McQueen's been spotted. The Director waves him over.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Cut. Colonel come on over. We should get the two of you together. "In Vitros to the Corps."

(re: McQueen)

"then" and...

(re: Cooper)

"now".

The Director ushers a reluctant McQueen over.

MCQUEEN

I'm only doing this because I'm under orders.

DIRECTOR

Fine... Just have fun with it then. We'll start with the usual intro... Name, age, where you're from. Gene pool 13 C, Batch Kappa 9757, Anchorage facility, wasn't it?

McQueen shoots him a withering stare. He doesn't like this schmuck knowing this information. The Director backs down.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Right... Well, we can do all that in a voice over...

The Director has McQueen sit down next to Cooper.

The LIGHTS SNAP ON. Cooper winces. McQueen doesn't flinch.

DIRECTOR

Colonel McQueen, why don't you start by telling us any positive experiences you've had in the military?

MCQUEEN

I'm a lifer, that should tell you it's positive enough.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

The Director was expecting more. Time to drag it out of him.

DIRECTOR

"Lifer"...that's good stuff.
Lieutenant Hawkes said he feels
like the 58th is his family. Is
that how you felt when you first
joined the Corps?

McQueen pauses. Uncomfortable. He'd rather shoot the Director
then talk to him. As he gathers his thoughts...

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Why don't you begin with your
experiences in the A.I. war?

McQueen flinches at this. Tenses up. He looks to Cooper, who
has no idea what this means to McQueen.

The Director nods, frantically making a hurry up motion. When
McQueen speaks the feeling is that he's telling a deep, dark
memory. One he rarely, if ever, brings up. ..

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

In '47 during the A.I. rebellion
Natural Born losses were greater
than anticipated so In Vitros
were sent to fight the
Silicates...

37 EXT. AMMUNITION DEPOT/PORT RISKIN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

37

A truck filled with METAL TORPEDO SHAPED BOMBS is backed up to
a bunker. Under a NATURAL BORN SERGEANT'S supervision a long
line of IN VITROS unload the bombs. Drudge-like.

MCQUEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I was shipped to Port Riskin, the
largest ammunition depot in the
United States.

A 19 YEAR OLD MCQUEEN steps to the front and is handed one of
the heavy bombs. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM as he lugs it past the
line of cold, tired and overworked In Vitros. The Natural Born
Sergeant shoves McQueen into the bunker.

38 INT. AMMUNITION BUNKER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

38

Tile walls. Cold. Dank. Austere. McQueen stumbles in,
lugging the unwieldy bomb through the dimly lit bunker.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

MCQUEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

All of the munitions handlers
were In Vitros. We were worked
around the clock, twenty-four
hours a day, in three shifts...

McQueen carries it over to where SEVERAL IN VITROS neatly stack
the bombs into large, ordered piles. Like a zombie in a trance
McQueen then turns and follows the line back out.

39 EXT. AMMUNITION BUNKER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

39

The Sergeant again pushes McQueen back into the "receiving
line". He bumps into an IN VITRO, who almost drops his bomb.

MCQUEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...Stacking volatile, dangerous
explosives in bunkers... Natural
Borns never went inside those
bunkers.

The Sergeant shoves MCQUEEN back in line to get another bomb.

MCQUEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

One night a faulty electrical
wire caused sparks inside.

40 INT. AMMUNITION BUNKER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

40

SPARKS SHOOT OUT FROM an old metal fuse box. BOOM! The fuse
box EXPLODES, SPIRALING FLAMES out into the bunker.

Scared, the In Vitros inside rush toward the door.

41 EXT. AMMUNITION BUNKER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

41

McQueen hears the In Vitros SHOUTS for help. He jumps out of
line and heads back toward the bunker when...

The Natural Born Sergeant slams the bunker door shut. THUD!
He then throws down the heavy metal latch and locks the door.

Through the door's port hole the In Vitros trapped inside are
seen pounding on the door for help.

MCQUEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I tried to go back inside but the
Sergeant locked the door, saying
it was too dangerous to open it.

42 INT. AMMUNITION BUNKER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 42

The FIRE rages out of control. FLAMES extend out, licking the edge of the pile of bombs. The In Vitros helplessly pound on the door, SCREAMING FOR HELP.

43 EXT. AMMUNITION BUNKER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 43

McQueen watches as the trapped In Vitros crowd toward the door, smashing their faces against the port hole's glass. SILENT SCREAMS for help as the Fire engulfs them.

McQueen can't take anymore. He slugs the Sergeant, knocking him down. Other In Vitros carry the Sergeant away.

McQueen grabs the bunker's metal door handle with both hands. IT'S SCALDING HOT FROM THE FIRE INSIDE. AAAAHHH!

McQueen YELLS in pain. He wants to stay and help but realizes it's hopeless. He takes one last look at his fellow In Vitros pressed against the port hole's glass.

Another IN VITRO grabs McQueen and they run for cover.

44 INT. AMMUNITION BUNKER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 44

THE FIRE rages toward the stack of bombs and finally...

BOOM! THE EXPLOSION FILLS THE ROOM.

WHITE OUT:

WHITE IN:

45 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA - (END FLASHBACK) 45

McQueen is still in the chair, his head down.

The room is now quiet. Everyone's stopped what they were doing and is crowded around McQueen listening...

Cooper is stunned. McQueen avoids eye contact with him. McQueen continues with an intensity that fills the room.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

Twenty-seven In Vitros were killed at Port Riskin... The official statement on the incident was faulty wiring and a jammed bunker door... The Natural Born Sergeant was never disciplined for his actions...

(more)

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

MCQUEEN (Cont'd)

I was brought up on charges for striking my squad leader It started off as a court martial trial, which for In Vitros back then, if convicted, meant death by lethal injection. Maybe the Old Man got a flash of conscience, but I only ended up with 120 days in solitary...

(X)
(X)

(X)

Cooper sits riveted to his chair.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

They say In Vitros, "Tanks" are disloyal, lazy and are unable to dream... The Soldiers that were lost in that bunker loyally died for their country... As for dreaming... I hear the cries of those Soldiers, see their faces screaming for help, begging for their lives, every night in my sleep. But I wouldn't call it "dreams..."

McQueen looks down to his fists. Clenched from all his tension. White knuckles. He looks up, drained.

(X)

DIRECTOR

(a whisper)

Cut...

(to Cameraman)

Did you get that?

The Cameraman nods. The room remains hushed. Respectful of McQueen's emotions. After a pause...business as usual.

(X)
(X)

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Cooper, let's move on to the V.R. game.

McQueen is silent. He still averts eye contact with Cooper.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2)

45

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

I understand you're quite a whiz
on this thing, Lieutenant...

The Director walks Cooper over to the game. Cooper is spent from McQueen's story. He had no idea what he or any other In Vitros had to go through. He feels awkward. Almost guilty.

Cooper walks past John Hill, who mutters under his breath...

HILL

Who cares if a few tanks got
torched?

Cooper hears this. It hits him like a poison dart. But he continues walking with the Director.

Cooper then stops. He can't let this pass. He turns, and slugs Hill right in the chops. POW! Direct hit.

Hill goes down in a clump but Cooper doesn't stop. He drops to his knees and continues pummeling the rookie jarhead.

The Soldiers in the room stand back, watching when...

McQueen runs over and forcibly grabs Cooper. He yanks him off of Hill and drags him out into the hall.

46 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE REC ROOM - SARATOGA

46

McQueen pushes Cooper up against the wall. Cooper is out of breath. Trying to sort out emotions he never knew he had.

MCQUEEN

Got some good licks in there.

Cooper nods. They exchange a look. One with a lot of history behind it.

COOPER

Nobody had ever paid attention to me before. I thought this TV stuff was going to change things. I thought this would make me somebody...

MCQUEEN

Cooper, you're somebody because of what you do every day...

McQueen turns and walks off. As Hawkes looks at his swollen knuckles, the director pops his head around the corner.

(CONTINUED)

"Dear Earth" 3S16 1/15/96 (WHITE)

35.

46 CONTINUED:

46

DIRECTOR
We're all set, Cooper.

The director returns to the room. Cooper pauses, looks to his hand...and walks off...away from the rec room. As he disappears down the hall...

FADE OUT:

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

A47 SCREEN IS BLACK. AS THE DARKNESS LINGERS WE HEAR...

A47 (X)

OPHTHALMOLOGIST (O.S.)

Your eyes will be sensitive to
the light so open them slowly...

DAMPHOUSSE'S POV

of a sliver of white light stretching across the horizon of her
sightline. As if the dawn's peeking over a desert plane.

Her eyes open wider. THINGS ARE BLURRY. FUZZY. REVEAL...

47 INT. SHIP'S HOSPITAL - EXAMINATION ROOM - SARATOGA

47

Damphousse sits in a examining chair. She flinches from the
bright light. The room's lights are dimmed, yet a small night
light is too bright for her.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

It'll take a while to adjust...
Tilt your head back.

Damphousse tilts her head back and the Doctor quickly and
painlessly puts drops in both of her eyes.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

Looks to me like we got all the
glass.

DAMPHOUSSE

But it's all blurry and...

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

It will be for a while. Put
these drops in every six hours
and avoid bright lights for a few
days. And wear these "B.C.G.s.

(X)

DAMPHOUSSE

"B.C.G.s?"

(X)

The Doctor hands Damphousse a pair of sunglasses. Not the
hippest style. She squints at them and makes a face.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

"Birth Control Devices." They're
so ugly no one will hit on you
when you wear 'em. That's all
they sell at the PX.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

Damphousse puts them on. After she does the Doctor flicks on the room lights REVEALING...

WANG

sitting off in the corner. He's been there the entire time.

Damphousse turns and walks right into a cabinet. WHAM! Wang jumps up and runs over to her. He takes her arm.

WANG

I got you.

She smiles. There is an awkward moment between them. Wang holds her arm and carefully leads her out.

(X)
(X)

48 OMITTED

48

49 INT. REC ROM - SARATOGA

49

A line forms up to a PICTAPHONE MACHINE. A Marine sits at it talking to his FAMILY on a SCREEN.

(X)

SHANE

scans a clipboard on the wall near the front of the line.

SHANE

I'm number 154?! I can't wait
that long. My call is a personal
emergency.

The Sailor fourth in line speaks up. He's ENSIGN BOASBERG. A tough, muscular Sailor.

(X)

BOASBERG

"Personal?" Really?
(to everyone in line)
Anyone else got a personal
emergency?

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

SHANE

My sister's baby is due any day now. The disc she sent was three months late so she coulda had the kid by now.

BOASBERG

My advice, send a teddy bear and a fruit basket then get at the end of the line, 'cause by the time you get to use the phone the kid'll have pimples and be wearing dumb clothes.-

The Soldiers in line laugh at Shane's expense. Not amused. She leans in, covertly...

SHANE

How much for your spot, Ensign...
(checking his name tag)
Boasberg?

Boasberg pauses. He eyes her...perhaps somewhat lasciviously.

BOASBERG

Ain't cheap.

SHANE

Name it.

BOASBERG

Anything?

SHANE

Anything.

Boasberg speaks with passion. A sense of importance.

BOASBERG

Strawberries. A bowl of strawberries in heavy cream... rich, thick, heavy cream...

This isn't what she was expecting. Sex, maybe, but this?

SHANE

You want fruit?

BOASBERG

In thick heavy cream...
(checking her name tag)
...First Lieutenant Vansen...
(more)

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (2)

49

BOASBERG

In thick heavy cream...
(checking her name tag)
...First Lieutenant Vansen...
Don't know what kind of groceries
the "Wild Cards" chow down on,
but they serve us Navy personnel
freeze-dried, preserved,
dehydrated, powdered, mystery
meat with a shelf-life of a light
year. So, yeah, I want fruit.

Off Shane's determined expression...

50 INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - SARATOGA - LATER

50

Shane storms in. Cooper is in his bunk. Wang pulls a new pair (X)
of boots from a box.

SHANE

Strawberries! He might as well
be asking for diamonds.

Wang slips on the boots. They're huge.

WANG

Look at this! Clowns have better
fitting shoes.

COOPER

(to Shane)

Talk to Mank. He can get
anything.

SHANE

Mank? That guy's a greasy
weasel.

WANG

Yeah, but came through with a
deep dish Chicago pizza when I
was cravin'.

Shane's interested is piqued. Maybe...

SHANE

Really?... No... This is a
legitimate family emergency. My
parents were Marines, I grew up
on bases... The way to do this is
by going through proper military
channels. Even if I have to go
all the way to the top.

51 INT. ORIENTATION ROOM - SARATOGA

51 (X)

ROSS looks over an official Corps paper. He looks up at...

NATHAN

sitting across from him.

ROSS

As you've discovered, the death notice was sent to the wrong Neil West. The error has been corrected, the other Neal West's family has been notified and the Corps will send this letter to your family.

(X)
(X)

Ross hands Nathan the letter. Nathan reads it over.

NATHAN

"Regret to inform you"... "Sorry for your loss"... "Keep up hope". This is a form letter, sir.

ROSS

It's what should've been sent in the first place.

NATHAN

My brother is not just a number in a book or a statistic for the nightly news, sir. He fought, defended and died for the cause he believed in.

ROSS

I'm sorry for your loss, Lieutenant. I truly am. Your brother was a good Marine. But this is proper Corps procedure.

NATHAN

Proper Corps procedure is not good enough for my brother, sir!

Nathan sets the form letter down on Ross' desk, turns, without saluting, and exits. Ross looks sympathetically to the letter. As the door closes...

(X)
(X)

52 INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - SARATOGA

52

Shane flops down on her bed. Cooper continues reading his book while Wang tries on yet another pair of boots.

COOPER

Got nowhere through "channels", huh?

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

SHANE
"Military channels" suck. Regs
state a pictaphone can only be
used in an emergency of a
military nature

WANG
In other words, "tough luck."

McQueen enters.

MCQUEEN
Vansen, got something for you
from Corps Command.

Shane zealously jumps up. McQueen hands her an envelope.

SHANE
Yes! I knew military channels
would get me to the head of the
line.

Shane eagerly opens the envelope and reads the letter.

SHANE
What's the hell's this? This
says I'm being promoted to
Captain.

Even McQueen smiles, proud. Wang steps over to her.

WANG
You kidding me? Congratulations!

Wang pats her on the back and shakes her hand. Cooper stands
from his bunk and extends his hand.

COOPER
Way to go, Vansen!

SHANE
I don't want to be a Captain I
just want to use the phone!

MANK (V.O.)
Congratulations, Vansen.

Shane and the others turn to see...

MANK

in the doorway. The infamous MANK. Not much to look at. A
bit overweight. Looks more like a bookie than a Marine.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2)

52

MANK
...you'll make a fine captain.

Shane's expression glares with detest, however she needs him...

SHANE
Thanks, Mank.

MANK
Too bad though, not even bein' a
Captain can get you to use the
phone in this century.

He smiles, coy and eases back into the hallway. Shane hands
the letter to Wang then marches after Mank.

53 INT. CORRIDOR - SARATOGA

53

Mank walks down the hall, knowing full well that Shane is about
to appear from the sleeping quarters. She does. Mank doesn't
turn.

SHANE
Mank, you disgusting piece of
black market spooze...what do I
gotta do?

(X)

Off his smile...

CUT TO:

54 INT. CORRIDOR - SARATOGA - LATER

54 (X)

Dark. Empty. REVEAL...

(X)

SHANE

Waiting in the dark. Anxious. A SOUND from the darkness
spooks her. She turns to see

(X)

A DARK FIGURE

in the far doorway. Backlit. The ominous shadowy figure
approaches Shane. It's FOOTSTEPS echoing...

(X)

The Figure strides up to her, carrying a cardboard box. A
security light illuminates their face... A MAN. Nondescript.

DARK FIGURE
Vansen?

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

She nods. The Figure looks around then flips open the cardboard box.

CLOSE - THE BOX

A bowl of fresh strawberries and cream. Picture perfect.

RETURN

Shane's eyes light up. She takes the box.

55 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA

55

Shane dashes in carrying the cardboard box. Past the Soldiers waiting in line. She steps up to the front where

ENSIGN BOASBERG

is now next in line. Shane extends the box to him. He gives her a confused look. She flips opens the box. He's stunned.

SHANE

I made it happen.

Mank stands off to the side eavesdropping on them. Boasberg appears to be having second thoughts...

BOASBERG

Now, I don't know...I'm next in line.

Shane glares at him. She opens the box, producing a strawberry and tautningly places it to her lips.

Boasberg grabs the box from her and darts off.

The SOLDIER at the pictaphone signs off and Shane steps up and sits down at the screen. In quick order she punches in the proper buttons, slides a credit card through a slot and waits for a picture. BEEPING SOUNDS as the line connects. ww As Shane anxiously waits she's gearing up to tear into her sister. On the offensive, she psyches herself up for it.

SHANE

"Nicole" is pretty. "Amy" is a nice name. What's the hell's wrong with..."Rachel?"

As Shane waits, O.S. on the monitor, an OPERATOR speaks.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

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55 CONTINUED:

55

OPERATOR (O.S.)

It has been requested that the
number you have dialed, 6-1-9-5-
5-5-7857, be transferred. Please
wait.

(X)

(X)

Shane sighs, impatient...until...

(X)

(CONTINUED)

A56 CLOSE - PICTAPHONE MONITOR

A56 (X)

A PICTURE CLICKS ON. It's ED, Shane's Brother-in-law. He looks directly at a wall camera/Shane. He wears scrubs and looks tired and frantic.

ED
Hello? Shane! I can't believe
it!

SHANE
(impatient)
Ed, yeah yeah, what the hell is
going on?

(X)
(X)

ED
She's in labor! It's happening!
Hang on!

Shane is disarmed, puzzled, excited...still sort of mad, as...

Ed clicks off and the picture switches to...

B56 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CLOSE- MONITOR

B56 (X)

ANN is in bed. Tired from pushing. She's hooked up to an I.V. Her DOCTOR and a NURSE are by her side. Ed runs in.

ED
Ann, look it's Shane.

ANN
Shane! I can't believe...what
timing!

SHANE

is all eyes, watching her Sister's home birth. Amazed.

SHANE
Yeah, "what."

DOCTOR
Ok, Ann I'm going to need you to
push as hard as you can.

Ed grabs Ann's hand as she pushes hard. Deep breaths.

ED
Big cleansing breaths now.

DOCTOR
Ok, rest.

(CONTINUED)

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44A.

B56 CONTINUED: (3)

B56 (X)

Ann stops pushing. She's tired, out of breath.

(CONTINUED)

B56 CONTINUED: (4)

B56 (X)

ANN

Shane, I was so worried when you hadn't responded. Are you ok?

SHANE

I'm fine. In fact today I was promoted to...

Ann SCREAMS in pain before Shane can finish.

DOCTOR

Ok, now, a big push. Push down towards me.

The Doctor is in position between Ann's legs. Ann pushes hard. She's tired but she digs deep down...

DOCTOR

Come on, one more big push...

Ann pushes extra hard and... THE BABY IS BORN. A daughter.

CLOSE - SHANE

watching her Sister give birth. She's moved. Touched. She's seen war take lives right in front of her eyes and now she's seen a life just beginning.

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON SHANE. As the BABY CRIES OFF SCREEN SHANE'S VOICE OVER COMES UP...

SHANE (V.O.)

Dear Ann, by the time you receive this the baby will probably be walking...

DISSOLVE TO:

56 INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - SARATOGA - LATER

56

Shane leans up against the wall, her overhead light on. She writes in her U.S.M.C. issue personal log. She uses a special pen on the laptop's screen. Like a U.P.S. computer clipboard. A "hand written" letter in a computer.

SHANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I hesitate to call her "Marian" because I'm surprised you're using that name. Since you've always known I was going to use Marian when I had a child.

DISSOLVE TO:

57 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA - LATER

57

Shane sits by herself, off to the side.

SHANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You're married, with a new baby
and I'm wading in mud, fighting
seven foot bugs on other
planets... Did I make the right
decision? Shouldn't I be
starting a family of my own?...
Last month the 58th went on a
recon mission. It was supposed
to be routine...

58 INT. ORIENTATION ROOM - SARATOGA

58 (X

Shane sits against the wall. The bay is empty. Privacy.

SHANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
As I was parachuting down I could
see the rest of the squad backed
up against a mountain... I had to
make a decision in three seconds.
The time it takes to drop the
final hundred feet. I leveled my
gun and fired down at the
advancing enemy... I lost count
of how many I killed...

59 INT. ORIENTATION ROOM - SARATOGA - DIFFERENT DAY (FLASHBACK)

59 (X

MATCH SHOT as the ceremony and those in attendance DISSOLVE
INTO THE LOADING BAY. Shane stands at attention.

SHANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
For my actions I was awarded the
Bronze Star...

McQueen and the rest of the 58th stand at attention. Commodore
Ross steps up and pins the medal on Shane's shirt.

SHANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
During the ceremony all I could
think of was Mom... When I was
eight my soccer team lost the
championship because I let my man
get by me. All the ice cream in
San Diego couldn't make me stop
crying. Then Mom came into...

60 INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - SARATOGA - THE PRESENT

60

SHANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...my room and gave me a medal.
She said it was for trying extra
hard and playing my best. She'd
just tied red ribbon around a
piece of chocolate wrapped in
gold tin foil, but it was better
than the Bronze Star I was
receiving... To me that's what
family is and I don't want to
miss that...

Shane stops and looks over to her Bronze Star in her foot
locker.

SHANE (V.O.)
As I watched your baby being
born...

61 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA (FLASHBACK)

61

QUICK SHOTS OF SHANE WATCHING THE BIRTH, SHANE'S SISTER, SHANE
REACTING, etc. All very emotional.

SHANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I realized that my decision to
join the Corps was the right
one...And that yours, to name the
baby "Marian"..was also.

62 INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - SARATOGA - LATER THAT NIGHT

62

Shane sits up in bed finishing the letter to her Sister. The
rest of the 58th are asleep in their bunks. Shane's overhead
light is the only illumination in the room.

SHANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... This is where I belong...
However...things are different.
Before I was fighting to avenge
the death of Marian Vansen. But
now, I'm fight to defend the life
of...Marian Vansen. Give her a
kiss for me.

CLOSE - THE LETTER

As Shane signs it "Love, Captain Shane Vansen...

FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

63 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA

63

Boasberg sits at a table staring at his bowl of strawberries. Trance-like. Fellow SAILORS and SOLDIERS hover over him.

SAILOR #1

I thought he wanted them.

SAILOR #2

I think he ate one.

MARINE #1

No, I counted 'em. All there.

Man k steps up.

MANK

Boasberg, you going to eat 'em or just stare 'em into your gut?

Boasberg looks up. Blood shot eyes. Looks like a zombie.

BOASBERG

I finally got the nerve to propose to my girlfriend and I coughed up my place in line for some strawberries. Strawberries or marriage? Marriage or strawberries? I chose strawberries, so now I feel guilty 'cause I took the strawberries over her.

MANK

If I were you, I'd be relieved I went with the starwberries...but...I can help you out...with a little deal.

Boasberg looks up at Mank. Can he be saved?

MARINE (O.S.)

Attention on deck!

(X)

Everyone jumps up, standing at attention. REVEAL...

ROSS

enters the room. He does not look happy.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

ROSS

At ease... I'm not here as your Commodore, but as a comrade in arms separated from family, friends and most of the comforts of home.

(beat, stern)

I am missing one bowl of fresh strawberries...in thick heavy cream...

Boasberg subtly turns away from Ross and eats a handful of evidence, stuffing several strawberries in his face, then chewing them quickly, but subtly.

ROSS (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, I am tolerant of temptation. I have no tolerance for thievery. If you know the whereabouts of the stolen fruit you may place them outside my cabin door within the hour. No questions asked. If after an hour the strawberries are not returned I will resume being your Commodore. A shipboard search will be conducted. The guilty parties will be bound, quartered and cast overboard. That is all.

Ross turns and exits, passing Boasberg who, once the Commodore walks by him, swallows the remaining evidence. Mank eyes Boasberg.

MANK

Good move, swabbie. With one swallow you saved your ass twice.

Mank pats Boasberg on the back and moves off, CAMERA FOLLOWS, HOLDING ON...

WANG & DAMPHOUSSE

They then sit back down at a computer terminal. She wears the dark sunglasses.

WANG

I typed it up just as you dictated it to me.

ARMED GUARD #1, seen earlier, steps up. He holds out a clear plastic bag containing Wang's boots.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (2)

63

ARMED GUARD #1
Lieutenant, Wang...your boots.

Wang is thrilled. He eagerly grabs the bag, takes out his boot and puts them on his stocking feet.

WANG
Thank, God.
(slides feet inside)
Ahhh... that feels so good...
What was on them anyhow?

ARMED GUARD #1
(no big deal)
Chig dung.

WANG
Say...what now?

ARMED GUARD #1
Marine, you stepped in an enemy
toilet.

The Guard walks off as Wang incredulously gawks at his boots.

DAMPHOUSSE
Whoo...they still smell.

WANG
(feeling the leather)
You know, they do feel softer...

DAMPHOUSSE
Can we get back to this?

Damphousse looks over a letter on the screen. She reads slowly. Her eyes still a bit fuzzy.

DAMPHOUSSE (CONT'D)
Where'd we leave off?

WANG
Uh..."being in this war has
changed my view of the world...of
life. I see things so
differently. I'm sorry, Kevin
but this includes our
relationship."

Wang looks at her, pen in hand.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (3)

63

DAMPHOUSSE

You should consider yourself free
to see other people, as I
have...frequently. I'm sorry if
I've hurt you...and I know you
would NEVER do this to me...but
I'm different now and we must
move along. If you see Marilyn,
please tell her I said "hello."
With warmest regards, Vanessa.

Wang finishes typing the letter. He eyes her.

WANG

It's a good counter-strike.

DAMPHOUSSE

Now, back date it before his
letter to me.

WANG

Hoo-yah.

Wang wraps up the letter.

WANG

All set. Just hit this key and
its on its way.

Damphousse eyes the key. Her hard expression begins to melt.
She looks at the monitr and squints to read the letter. She
looks back to the keyboard, moving her finger toward the keys.

CLOSE - KEYBOARD

She hits the "delete" button.

MONITOR

(X)

The computer asks..."Are you sure you want to delete?"

(X)

WANG AND DAMPHOUSSE

Vanessa looks sadly to Paul. Wang sighs, nods slightly.

WANG

Drive on, 'phousse. It don't
mean nothin'.

As Damphousse looks to the blank monitor, takes Paul's hand, as
if to say "thanks"...and hits the delete button.

(X)

(X)

(CONTINUED)

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51A.

63 CONTINUED: (4)

63

THE NEXT COMPUTER SCREEN WHERE
Nathan sits at the terminal.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (4)

63

CLOSE - NATHAN'S TERMINAL

A letter. All he's written is "Dear Mom and Dad..." That's it. It stares back at Nathan. Unblinkingly.

RETURN

Nathan stares at the screen. This is a hard letter to write.

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON NATHAN. His face filled with conflicting emotions... HIS VOICE OVER COMES UP...

NATHAN (V.O.)
Dear Mom and Dad, I'll never
forget the first time I saw my
brother...

64 INT. WEST HOME - HALLWAY - MORNING - EARTH (FLASHBACK)

64

NATHAN'S MOTHER holds FOUR YEAR OLD NATHAN by the hand. CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM as they walk down a hallway.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Mom said she had a dream she were
going to have a daughter... That
I was going to have a new baby
sister. But that day you told
me, "the stork fooled us"...

Mrs. West mouths Nathan's VOICE OVER about the "stork".

CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM INTO A BEDROOM...

65 INT. WEST HOME - BABY'S ROOM - MORNING - EARTH (FLASHBACK)

65

The morning light filters in, casting a warm glow. Mrs. West leads Nathan by the hand up to a crib. She reaches in, lifts the baby out and sits in a nearby rocking chair. Nathan is both scared and awed as he stands at a safe distance. Mrs. West nods and Nathan cautiously walks over.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You even formally introduced us.
Twenty years later...I can
remember thinking, "his hands are
so small."

Mrs. West radiates as she smiles to Nathan. Nathan looks upon his brother for the first time with restrained awe and uncertainty.

66 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA - PRESENT TIME

66

CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES IN on NATHAN as he writes.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I can return to that moment in
the time it takes to close my
eyes... And in that instant...no
time has passed. Not a minute of
my life, or Neil's has gone by.

Nathan pauses, closes his eyes...opens them and continues.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Two weeks ago, on April 9th, at
0800 on the planet Mors...

67 EXT. PLANET MORS - (FROM "TOY SOLDIERS")

67

Nathan holds his dead brother in his arms.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Your son, my brother, was killed
in action... Neil was
courageously defending his
position and died valiantly...

68 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA - PRESENT TIME

68

Nathan pauses. Already drained. But he has to continue.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But now...I can never throw him
another football, or share an
inside joke. Today, I'd easily
give my own life just to be able
to argue with him.

(pause)

And yet...it doesn't mean I am
unable to let him know how much
he meant to me, how much I love
him...

DISSOLVE TO:

69 EXT. WEST HOME - EARTH - DAY

69

Rain drops bead up on the window. THE CAMERA PANS DOWN TO
REVEAL a small "Victory" flag hanging in the window. Two blue
stars signify two family members are in the service.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

69

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Because to tell you, Mom and
Dad...is to tell Neil. I can't
express how much I miss him. How
much I miss you both and John.
Keep him safe.

Through the rain splattered window we see MRS. WEST. She's
crying, reading Nathan's letter.

(X)
(X)

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And if one day, you should
receive a yellow envelope from
the Marines...don't bother to
open it. Reread this letter and
know how much your sons loved one
another and you. And that we are
once again together.
(pause)
With all my love, your son,
Lieutenant Nathan West.

70 INT. WEST HOME - DAY - EARTH

70

MR. WEST approaches, trying to console her, through his own
tears. After WE HOLD long enough to understand their anguish,
WE HEAR...

COOPER (O.S.)
This is First Lieutenant West,
another fellow graduate. We've
flown many a dangerous mission
together, fighting Chigs side by
side.

PAN OVER TO THE WEST'S TV, which PLAYS...

CLOSE - TV

The News Story on Cooper and McQueen. SHOTS OF COOPER with
Nathan. Some creative editing has been done.

COOPER ON TV
We're all one big happy family...

CLOSE - DIFFERENT TELEVISION MONITOR

MATCH CUT: The news story now plays on another television.
REVEAL WE'RE...

71 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA

71

Cooper, McQueen, Nathan, Shane, Wang and Damphousse all watch the news story together. Ross stands behind them in the doorway, watching the television from afar.

CLOSE - TV MONITOR

SHOTS OF: McQueen talking to the 58th. Very official. Then talking with Cooper off to the side. Very Father and Son-like. More creative editing has been done on the McQueen's VOICE OVER.

MCQUEEN

Many In Vitros have loyally died
for their country.

McQueen can't take anymore. This is a bullshit snow job. He stands and walks to the door.

He stops at the door where Ross stands. McQueen shoots him an "I told you so" look. Ross can only apologize with his eyes. McQueen storms out. (X)
(X)

COOPER

remains with the others watching the show. Can't turn away from a car wreck. He painfully realizes how far In Vitros have yet to go.

SHANE

(X)

sits away from the others. Mank approaches, with an expression of "time to pay up." Shane checks to see that the coast is clear and hands an object into Mank's hand. (X)

INSERT - MANK'S HAND

(X)

A card key marked "CAPTAIN'S HEAD."

(X)

RETURN

Mank clutches the key.

(X)

MANK

(X)

Ahh...soft fluffy paper. (X)

Having gotten what he wanted, Mank moves off leaving Vansen sitting in the chair. (X)
(X)

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

ROSS (V.O.)
Attention to orders! To all who
shall see these presents,
greeting: Know Ye, that reposing
special trust and confidence in
the fidelity and abilities of
Shane Vansen...

72. INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA - LATER

72 (X

Shane stands at attention facing Ross who reads the promotion
declaration. McQueen is on Shane's right, with Nathan on her
left. The atmosphere is up and positive, not funereal.

(CONTINUED)

73 INT. ANN & ED'S HOUSE - EARTH - DAY

73

Ann holds little BABY MARIAN while Ed pulls Shane's Bronze Star from a newly received package. Ed holds up the military medal on it's ceremonial red ribbon. Baby Marian playfully touches and slaps at it in between gurgles.

SHANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...That I will bear true faith
and allegiance to the same; and
that I will obey the orders of
the President of the United
States and the others of the
officers appointed over me,
according to regulations and the
Uniform Code of Military
Justice... So help me God...

On the image of Ann, Ed and Baby Marian gleefully playing with the shiny Bronze Star we...

FADE OUT

THE END