



The Pentagon Wars

by Martyn Burke

with polish by

Ross Parker

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A famous playwright said it best: Fiction has to be believable. Reality does not. The following story actually happened.

Voices of News correspondents, tense, agitated, scared, reporting from the Persian Gulf war.

FADE UP ON:

CNN NEWS FOOTAGE/PERSIAN GULF WAR.

The final moments of the war. The U.S. Armored Brigades are moving through the desert. CORRESPONDENTS' VOICES roll over one another in a montage.

1 EXT. PERSIAN GULF DESERT. DAY.

1

As TROOPS and ARMORED VEHICLES race past, one of these vehicles, a BRADLEY, takes a direct hit. A HUGE EXPLOSION. It is stopped dead in its tracks. Smoke, dust and sand swirl everywhere.

FADE OUT

2 BLACKNESS

2

Silence. Into a tightly lit area, surrounded by black, steps MAJOR GENERAL JOHN PARTRIDGE, U.S.ARMY. Partridge is used to being in complete control, a consummate military professional. He sits behind a polished wooden table, and talks directly to camera.

PARTRIDGE

If I may, ladies and gentlemen, I think it would be useful to clarify a few things right off the bat. By simple definition we are in the business of winning. What else do you need an army for?

(beat)

Look at the Cold War. Simple. No question about it: We won. Why? First of all, we just flat-out outspent them. The Russians couldn't shovel money into the fire as fast as we could. And secondly -- and this is where my command comes in -- we as a nation possess one true genius beyond any other: nobody shapes nature like we do. We start with atoms and molecules and before we're finished they're everything from combat boots to bombs -- the kind of bombs that no one on the other side'll ever see until the damn thing's plowing down their chimney like some Santa Claus from hell blowing the place to pieces.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE (cont'd)

(beat)

But make no mistake about it: the shaping of nature into a technological fist that'll flatten every rag-headed army that needs flattening is not easy and is not cheap. It's--

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

General. If you don't mind.

PARTRIDGE

...Of course.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

This is not the first time you've been here.

PARTRIDGE

We've been down this road before, that is correct.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Several times, infact.

PARTRIDGE

I haven't been keeping count.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Let me refresh your memory. You have before you a list

PARTRIDGE

I do.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Care to run through it with us please?

The General picks up the briefing document in front of him.

PARTRIDGE

With all due respect, I think it's important to recognize that since this list was drawn up, our weapons testing procedures have been refined and I'm not sure this forum optimizes the--

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

General Partridge, the list.

The General scans the document.

PARTRIDGE

(reading)

The Sensor Fused Antitank Weapon.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2)

3

2

PARTRIDGE (cont'd)
(awkward smile)
I'll be the first to admit that program
did have its share of difficulties ...

3 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE. DAY.

3

Open on a shot of a FUSED ANTI-TANK SENSOR WEAPON. An Army
TANK is parked in an open field.

PARTRIDGE (VO)
...and we did experience one or two
glitches with the thing, no doubt about
it...

One of the SOLDIERS fires the Sensor Fused antitank weapon.
It misses.

THE GENERAL

PARTRIDGE
But the fact is, even a heat-seeking
missile can miss a target once in a while
and that's no reason to fault our test
people.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER
General, I see here that your test people
taped electric hot plates all over the
tank to help your heat-seeking missile
find its target...

4 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE. DAY.

4

The same tank is having electrical HOT PLATES taped all over
it. Each one is hooked up to an extension cord.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER (VO)
...and that in the actual test the
temperature of the tank was so high that
it could have fried an egg at twenty
feet...

They fire the heat-seeking missile once again. There is a
huge OFF SCREEN EXPLOSION.

5 THE GENERAL

5

PARTRIDGE
There was a verifiable deviation from the
standard test data accumulation.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER
There were other "deviations" were there
not?

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

One could argue that, yes.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

There was one accuracy test in particular involving a crane ...?

6 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE. DAY.

6

Another ARMORED VEHICLE is being used as a target. TILT UP to REVEAL a missile hanging from a crane directly over the target. The missile is dropped. A rock would be as accurate. Again there is an OFF SCREEN EXPLOSION.

7 THE GENERAL

7

PARTRIDGE

That was only one of many, many tests.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

And it proved -- what? That we've got a winner so long as the enemy will allow us to construct a two-story crane directly over their tanks?

PARTRIDGE

As I noted, there have been refinements to our testing procedures. I can now assure you that the--

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

These refinements to which you're referring: were they instituted before or after the Paveway?

PARTRIDGE

Pardon my language, but the Paveway is one "hell" of a bomb. Laser-guided. State of the art. Deadly.

8 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. DAY.

8

The General and several OFFICERS are standing on the edge of a testing ground STARING THROUGH BINOCULARS into the sky. A tank is the target and is on the testing ground several hundred feet away.

SERGEANT

Ah, sir? I think I see the missile coming down over there.

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

Where?

SERGEANT

In the field... Oh shit.

He points behind them. In unison all the binoculars swing around 180 degrees just as a TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION is heard.

PARTRIDGE

What's that mess over there?

OFFICER

(nervously)

I think it's a--

(beat)

--it used to be a herd of cows, sir.

9 THE GENERAL

9

PARTRIDGE

I'm not going to sit here and tell you the Paveway never missed...

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

It missed by a mean distance of five miles, and it missed nearly 50% of the time. That means the Paveway was about as reliable as a flip of the coin.

PARTRIDGE

All you want to look at are the failures. You know, in baseball, a guy who hits 400 is considered pretty damn great.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

In baseball, the losing team isn't killed by their opponents.

(beat)

Let's move on to the next item on our list, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. What would you say the batting average is for the Bradley?

PARTRIDGE

(bristling)

I'm saying that these are sophisticated weapons. It takes people with sophisticated knowledge to conduct these tests and interpret the results. If the U.S.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE (cont'd)

Army acted on the advice of every Tom, Dick and Harry who has an opinion on these matters, we could wind up with a bunch of B52's powered by outboard motors. "Make it simple," says one guy. "Make it inexpensive," says another guy. Well, steak knives are simple and inexpensive, but they're not going to do us much good in the next great conflict.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

I fail to see your point.

PARTRIDGE

A lot of things have to come together to make this new breed of superior weapons. Teamwork, that's my point. That's the genius of our entire process. Simple, old fashioned, teamwork.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Colonel James Burton,
(beat)
Was he part of your team, General?

PARTRIDGE

(beat)
Yes he was. More or less.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

More or less?

PARTRIDGE

Whatever reservations I have about Colonel Burton are between the Colonel and myself. For me to discuss another man's failings in a forum such as this--

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

We have no interest in discussing Colonel Burton's "failings" General. We are here to discuss his findings.

PARTRIDGE

I find it difficult to discuss one without the other.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Try, General. It's why we're here.

Partridge glares at the unseen questioner, but he continues.

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

When he was assigned to the Joint Testing Program, I welcomed Colonel Burton with open arms. And why not? The man was a credit to his uniform. Headed right for the top. Would have gotten there, too, if it weren't for one simple fact: the man is not a team player ...

10 EXT. AERIAL SHOT. PENTAGON. DAY.

10

* To establish: the enormity of the building dwarfing everything around it.

11 EXT. THE PENTAGON. DAY.

11

COLONEL JAMES BURTON, U.S. Air Force, mid-thirties, handsome, a man of simple plain spoken honesty and old fashioned values, heads up the steps. He consults a piece of paper, then glances at his watch.

12 INT. PENTAGON. A CORRIDOR. DAY.

12

Burton stops a USMC OFFICER.

BURTON

Excuse me. Could you tell me how to get to 4E962?

OFFICER

(a rapid fire Marine)

About and back to the escalator. Your left. Two flights up to four. Your left. E ring, your right. Proceed past corridor nine. Face left.

The officer exits. Burton doesn't have a clue what he said.

13 INT. PENTAGON/CORRIDORS. DAY.

13

Burton is walking through the Pentagon looking at the numbers on the doors. He's late -- and he's lost.

14 INT. PENTAGON/PARTRIDGE'S OFFICE. DAY

14

Slightly winded, Burton regains his composure as he waits. Partridge is on the phone with his back to him.

PARTRIDGE

(into phone)

...so there's Spina from Rhode Island and Mays from Nebraska. Any Democrats?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE (cont'd)

(beat)

Who? Forget it. No, he's giving us the run-around. How 'bout the Senate?

(beat)

Sonofabitch. After we papered his state with contracts--

The General SLOWLY SWIVELS to face Burton. He motions for him to be seated.

PARTRIDGE

Charlie, handle it.

(beat)

Make the transmission in Michigan and the turrets in Mississippi.

(beat)

What? Then you figure it out. Talk to you.

Partridge hangs up.

PARTRIDGE

Welcome Colonel.

BURTON

Thank you, General.

Partridge leans back in his chair.

PARTRIDGE

Thought we should get to know each other.

BURTON

I welcome the opportunity, sir.

PARTRIDGE

Fact is, I want to help you.

BURTON

I'm not sure I understand, sir.

Partridge glances at a paper in front of him.

PARTRIDGE

You've just been thrown to the wolves here. And I want to make sure you're protected.

BURTON

... Thank you, sir.

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

Don't get me wrong, Colonel, but under certain circumstances this new job of yours can turn into a real shit-burning detail. You may need all the friends you can get. Count me as one of them.

BURTON

I appreciate that, sir.

Partridge flips through Burton's file.

BURTON

Air Force academy; Strategic Air Command; M.B.A. at Auburn... You've had a good career, great career. So far. Then you draw the short straw.

BURTON

I was assigned, sir.

PARTRIDGE

It's a bum deal, whoever made it. Every other year somebody decides we're spending too much money on weapons that don't work. So every other year, a bunch of pencil necks put their pointy little heads together to come up with a plan. This year's plan -- The Joint Live-Fire Test Program. Staffed with officers from every branch of the service. So now they've got the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines doing a circle jerk over weapons testing, and you get to be ringleader. I mean who dreams up this nonsense?

BURTON

Congress, sir.

PARTRIDGE

(a hard look at Burton)

And it has every right. You won't hear me criticizing the Hill, but you'd think Congress has enough of their own shit to shovel out the back door without worrying about what goes on over here.

BURTON

I'm not anticipating any problems with the posting, sir.

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

Neither am I, Colonel. A man doesn't get as far in his career as you have without being able to walk a mine field. I know you'll be just as careful here.

BURTON

As I said, sir, I'm not anticipating any problems.

Partridge looks at Burton, taking his measure. Then he turns a photograph of a MAN with an enormous fish towards him.

PARTRIDGE

Frank Matheson. Came through here two rotations ago.

Burton looks at the photograph.

PARTRIDGE

That marlin wasn't the only thing he caught. I got him into Syncomm when he left here. Now he's head of their missile testing. And Blake Gilmore? You must know Blake.

BURTON

No, sir. I don't believe I do.

PARTRIDGE

He wasn't even a full bird colonel when he left here for the private sector. That was four years ago. A few frequency gain modulator contracts later and look at him. The man could buy and sell both of us a thousand times over.

BURTON

Lucky man.

PARTRIDGE

Smart man. First rate soldier. Like you, Colonel, knew how to make the most of a difficult situation.

Partridge fixes Burton in his gaze, then reaches for a stack of files.

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

I don't know how they did it in your last job, but this new job of yours is too big for any one man to go it alone. Gotta be a team effort. So here you go.

Partridge hands the files to Burton.

PARTRIDGE

Here's a few of your projects undergoing testing, the UH-60 helicopter, the AH-64 attack copter, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. All outstanding programs. All organized and ready to go. I did a little homework, to give you a leg up.

BURTON

I appreciate it, General.

PARTRIDGE

You know, you could return the favor by giving the Bradley here a little extra attention.

Partridge taps the Bradley folder with his finger.

BURTON

How do you mean?

PARTRIDGE

Just put it on top of all the stuff in your "in" box, ...

Partridge moves the Bradley file to the top.

PARTRIDGE (cont'd)

So it goes into your "out" box just as soon as possible. As a personal favor to me. Best of luck, Colonel.

BURTON

Thank you, sir.

Burton gets up to leave.

PARTRIDGE

And Colonel.

BURTON

Sir?

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

Next time you are told to report
to this office ...

Suddenly Partridge is not smiling and cold as ice.

PARTRIDGE

Be on time.

15 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

15

The office is a large open plan area with several desks. It has that rarest of things, a window, on the Pentagon's inner court. The people who will work with Burton -- UNIFORMED MEN AND WOMEN as well as CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES -- are conversing loudly with each other. BURTON stands before them. The uniforms of all four services are represented.

BURTON

At ease.

(silence)

You can see by all our different uniforms, that we've got kind of a unique assignment here. This joint testing office has been set up as part of the Office of the Secretary of Defense for one purpose -- to oversee the testing being done on weapons systems for all the armed services. The powers that be must think pretty highly of our duties here, because they even gave us a window.

(applause)

Granted it's not on the outside of the Pentagon ...

(laughter)

But any window, even one on the inner court, is damn rare, and we'll take it.

(beat)

Not that I expect you'll be having much time to look out that window. I have here files on the five weapons projects whose testing demands our immediate attention.

As Burton announces each, he hands out the file to a different officer.

BURTON (cont'd)

The AV-8B jump jet. The AH-64 attack helicopter. The M-1 infantry tank. And the Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

(CONTINUED)

By now, Burton has handed out all the folders except for the Bradley folder.

BURTON (cont'd)

Let's do ourselves proud. That is all.

The group breaks, and resumes talking. SGT. FANNING, Burton's assistant, steps forward. He's a young soldier, but an experienced Pentagon hand.

FANNING

Sir, did you forget something?

BURTON

I don't believe so.

Fanning gestures toward the folder still in Burton's hand.

FANNING

The Bradley, sir? You didn't assign it.

BURTON

I'll look into the Bradley myself.

FANNING

(beat)

Certainly, sir. You're the Director.

16 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/MAIN GATE. DAY.

16

Burton drives up behind the wheel of a standard issue Army jeep. He stops at the security gate, and hands his papers to the GUARD. A SIGN identifies the facility -- "Ballistic Research Lab. U.S. Army. Aberdeen Proving Ground."

BURTON

Colonel James Burton. I'm here to take a look at the BFV tests.

GUARD

Straight ahead, Colonel.

The guard waves Burton through.

17 INT. WEAPON TESTING RANGE/OFFICE. DAY.

17

Watching Burton drive up through a pair of binoculars is the Pentagon officer serving as the Project Manager, COLONEL PETER BOCK, U.S. ARMY. Next to him is MAJOR WILLIAM SAYERS, a canny officer who works for BRL (Ballistic Research Lab), the Army agency that oversees the testing of the Bradley.

(CONTINUED)

BOCK
That's the guy?

SAYERS
That's him.

Bock hands the binoculars to Sayers.

SAYERS (cont'd)
Supposed to be real smart. Squadron
Officers' School; Air Command and Staff
College; Industrial College of the Armed
Forces. Real general officer material.

ON BURTON, as he drives, his uniform as crisp as he is.

BOCK
Looks like a fucking Boy Scout.

18 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/OFFICE. DAY.

18

Burton parks. Bock and Sayers step out to greet him.

BOCK
Colonel Burton. Peter Bock. Welcome to
the team.

BURTON
Colonel Bock.

BOCK
This is Major Sayers, our chief tester
for Ballistic Research Lab.

SAYERS
Colonel Burton.

BURTON
Major.

They shake hands.

SAYERS
(gentle ribbing)
So what's an Air Force guy doing at a
test for an Army vehicle?

BURTON
Could be worse.

BOCK
(cautious)
How's that?

(CONTINUED)

BURTON
Congress could've sent over
somebody from the damn Navy.

All laugh. Bock claps a hand on Burton's shoulder.
Everything's buddy buddy.

19 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY.

19

ON THE BRADLEY FIGHTING VEHICLE: awesome, powerful, a
fearsome piece of machinery.

20 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. DAY.

20

The SOLDIERS and lower level TECHNICIANS who actually conduct
the test FIRE an anti-tank weapon, an RPG-9, at the Bradley.

21 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY.

21

The Bradley is rocked by a direct hit. It takes the hit and
stands ready for more.

22 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. DAY.

22

Everything is grins and handshakes.

BOCK
Helluva machine, huh?

BURTON
Congratulations.

BOCK
Drinks on me, gentlemen.

As they turn to go, Burton is still looking out toward the
Bradley.

SAYERS
Joining us Colonel Burton?

BURTON
Should we go out there and take
a closer look first?

BOCK
No.
(smiles quickly)
Safety regulations, Colonel.
The crew moves in first.
We're not allowed near it for
at least an hour.

(CONTINUED)

Burton takes a pair of binoculars from a CAPTAIN who is standing nearby. Burton looks out towards the Bradley.

SAYERS

With any ballastic, shaped-charged armor test, there's always a freak chance something might blow after the fact.

BOCK

(genial)

Don't want to lose you first day on the job.

SAYERS

You, uh, spot something?

Burton hands the binoculars back to the CAPTAIN who observes silently.

BURTON

The explosion, when it hit, seemed small to me.

BOCK

It seemed small because the Bradley is one big troop carrier.

SAYERS

We're at a distance of seventy yards. That may be more than you're used to.
(Burton nods)
Now, how about that drink?

Burton hesitates, then decides to go along.

BURTON

Sounds good, Major.

The silent CAPTAIN watches them go.

23 INT. PENTAGON/CORRIDOR. LATER THAT SAME DAY.

23

Burton walks quickly along the endless corridors. He turns and steps onto an empty escalator.

24 INT. PENTAGON/ESCALATOR. DAY

24

As the escalator glides silently upward, Burton becomes aware of an OFFICER in Army uniform who has moved up directly behind him. Burton squeezes to one side to let the OFFICER pass, but the stranger doesn't do so. Nearing the top, the OFFICER speaks ...

(CONTINUED)

OFFICER

There will be a phone call for you in your office at exactly 1600 hours. It's important you be there.

AT THE TOP OF THE ESCALATOR,

Burton gets off the escalator and turns to question the officer, but the stranger turns away quickly in the opposite direction, then turns again into a nearby corridor. Perplexed, Burton decides to walk after him ...

He looks down the corridor. No one's there.

25 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

25

It's three minutes to four. SERGEANT FANNING, Burton's assistant, is unpacking Burton's files.

FANNING

I cleared out another cabinet for your files, Colonel.

Burton glances up at the wall clock.

FANNING (cont'd)

And by the time we get all squared away, you'll probably be moving on to your next assignment.

BURTON

Thanks, Sergeant.

Fanning sets down some papers on Burton's desk and picks up a framed photograph.

FANNING

Very nice-looking family, sir.

BURTON

Thank you. That's an old picture.

(glances at the clock)

My girls have grown up fast.

FANNING

I grew up an Army brat. What do they call a kid whose dad is in the Air Force?

BURTON

What do they call a kid whose dad is in the Air Force?

(CONTINUED)

FANNING

It's not a joke. Just wondered. If the Army has brats. The Air Force has ... gremlins?

Burton smiles and looks at the clock again.

FANNING (cont'd)

Not that your daughters were ever like that.

BURTON

Oh, they had their moments.

Burton steals another glance at the clock.

FANNING

You getting paid by the hour, Colonel?

BURTON

What?

FANNING

Nothing.

BURTON

I've got an appointment, okay?

FANNING

I'll guarantee you one thing: the way you're looking at the clock, you're definitely not going to be late for it.

(beat)

Is something wrong, Colonel?

It is exactly four o'clock. The second hand sweeps on past the top of the hour. The phone is silent. Burton exhales.

BURTON

I guess not.

Just as Burton begins to move away, the PHONE rings. Burton grabs it.

BURTON

Hello?

MAN (OC PHONE)

Hold on a second.

There's a SCREAMING ROAR in the other end of the phone.

26 INT/EXT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. SAME TIME.

26

A MAN in silhouette holds the phone as a JET FIGHTER taxis past just outside the hangar. The ROAR subsides as it passes.

BURTON (OC PHONE)

F-16.

MAN

Good guess.

27 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. SAME TIME.

27

BURTON

It wasn't a guess. I've got fifteen hundred hours in "16's".

MAN (OC PHONE)

You're right. You do. You're a warrior, not just a manager. That's good.

(beat)

Let's get down to business, Colonel. That test on the Bradley. I hear you thought the explosion seemed a little small.

BURTON

Who are you?

MAN (OC PHONE)

I don't want to say just yet. I will say this. When it comes to the Bradley, you've got good instincts. Go with them.

28 INT/EXT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. SAME TIME.

28

BURTON (OC PHONE)

Meaning what?

MAN

You take it from there.

BURTON (OC PHONE)

Look. If you have something to say--

MAN

I have a lot to say. But I believe in short and simple. I know everyone around you likes things lengthy and complex. Don't let it throw you.

29 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. SAME TIME

29

FANNING is in the background, pretending to mind his own business.

BURTON

This is an unacceptable method of communication--

MAN (OC PHONE)

Right now it's the only method.

BURTON

Look, I don't play games. And I don't take advice from people I don't know.

30 INT/EXT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. SAME TIME.

30

MAN

Colonel, I don't expect you to trust anything you haven't been able to give a good hard once over. That goes for me, but it also goes for the Bradley.

31 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. SAME TIME

31

MAN (OC PHONE)

Try reading the fine print.

The man hangs up. Burton stares at the phone.

FANNING

Somebody playing games, sir?

BURTON

(nods)

I guess. But I have no idea what he was playing.

FANNING

You probably don't want to know. There's a lot of dirty little games being played around here lately. Pretty high stakes too.

32 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. MORNING.

32

Burton walks toward the Bradley that was used in the test firing. With him is one of the tough, suspicious, soldiers who had actually carried out the test: SGT. DALTON.

(CONTINUED)

DALTON

You're up early, sir.

BURTON

Thought I'd drop by on my way to the office.

DALTON

But we're nowhere near your office.

BURTON

You're right. I had to get up before five.

DALTON

I thought your type always got to sleep in.

BURTON

What exactly is my type, Sergeant?

DALTON

What I meant, sir ... you know, desk people.

Burton lets it pass.

BURTON

Has anything on this vehicle been altered since the test?

DALTON

Nothing.

Burton inspects the Bradley. Everything looks exactly as it should.

DALTON

Looking for something, sir?

BURTON

(thinking out loud)

Just reading the fine print ...

Burton climbs up on the Bradley to examine the smallish hole and minimal damage created the day before.

33 INT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/AMMUNITION SHED. MORNING.

33

Burton scans rows of ammunition boxes.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON
(reading)
25 mm rounds.... 7.62 mm tracers...
(stops)
What's this?

Burton stops on boxes with FOREIGN WRITING. Dalton hesitates.

DALTON
That's what was used on the Bradley....

BURTON
I can't read the writing. What language is that?

DALTON
Romanian.

BURTON
I thought the tests were run with Soviet weapons. What the hell are we doing using Romanian ammunition?

34 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. LATER THAT MORNING. 34

Dalton has assembled the same Army Testing crew that was involved in the previous test -- including SPEC-4 GRANGER, a tough, sullen soldier who actually fires the test weapons.

DALTON
(to Burton)
Sir, Colonel Bock and Major Sayers won't be getting here til noon. That's when our first test of the day is scheduled.

BURTON
This isn't an all out test, Sergeant.
More like a little pop quiz.

GRANGER
(looks irritated)
So what am I supposed to fire at?

Burton looks around, fixing on an ammunition shed on the other side of the field.

BURTON
See that door over there?

35 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. MORNING.

35

Dalton, Granger, and two other soldiers carry the METAL DOOR from the ammo shed across the field.

DALTON

Sir, regulations state that the ammunition shed door should never be left open. I'm sure that includes removing it entirely.

BURTON

Regulations say a lot of things...

36 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. MORNING.

36

The metal door is propped up against sandbags 50 yards away. Granger and Dalton are readying the anti-tank weapon.

BURTON

And it's the same ammunition?

DALTON

Romanian. 73 mm. Right out of the box.

BURTON

Fire when ready.

Granger and Dalton adjust the anti-tank weapon.

GRANGER

(announcing)

On the way.

Granger FIRES. There's a rattling CRASH at the other end of the range.

37 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. LATER. NOON.

37

Bock, Sayers, and Burton are mid-conversation.

BURTON

That shell didn't even go through the door.

BOCK

You wrecked a door?

BURTON

Colonel, the ammunition that was used in the last test on the Bradley was the same as we used on this door: Romanian.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BURTON (cont'd)

Arguably, the most defective ammunition in the world. No wonder the Bradley came through with flying colors: the shell that hit it couldn't dent a soup can.

BOCK

This is very serious.

BURTON

It is.

BOCK

You destroyed a door.

BURTON

Colonel, we're talking about a test on an armored personnel carrier, a vehicle that will carry soldiers into combat ...

BOCK

That door is government property. I assume you knew that.

BURTON

The shell didn't penetrate the door!

BOCK

Now it's all bent out of shape. How will you put it back on its hinges?

BURTON

Right now I'm not really worried about putting it back.

BOCK

That door protects our ammunition.

BURTON

The ammunition doesn't work.

BOCK

We need ammunition for tests.

BURTON

Look, I'll buy you a new door!

BOCK

You can't afford a door like that. Look what it stood up to.

BURTON

Exactly. Some spitball from Romania. I understood that only Soviet arms would be used in these tests.

(CONTINUED)

BOCK

Well, hell, Romania is one of those
Soviet blocks ... well, isn't it?

SAYERS

(the voice of reason)

Colonel Burton, we've been testing the
Bradley for some time now, and you may
not be aware of some of the steps we've
taken. The Romanian rocket is only 73
mm. That's less than the 85 mm Russian
version. That smaller diameter means a
smaller explosion with a smaller hole and
less shrapnel. At one point, we were
interested in conducting ballistic tests
using all sorts of ammunition of varying
diameters -- to determine the Bradley's
exact threshold of tolerance. So far
it's held up against everything we've
thrown at it. Soviet, Romanian and
otherwise.

BURTON

I see.

SAYERS

We had left over ammo in the shed.
Someone grabbed the wrong stuff. It was
an honest mistake.

Burton looks at Sayers, not sure he believes him. But he
decides to give him the benefit of the doubt.

BURTON

Looks like I made one as well.

BOCK

No apology necessary.

BURTON

If I was better acquainted with the
history of these tests, I wouldn't have
made that mistake. Well, I'll fix that.
Let me have all the test reports on the
Bradley. Plans, specs, test results,
test parameters. Whatever there is, I'd
like to see it.

SAYERS

Colonel, you can't possibly want to wade
through all that junk?

(CONTINUED)

BOCK

You know, we've got five years of tests on this model alone.

SAYERS

And we do have a schedule to maintain.

BOCK

We have to get the Bradley into production ASAP.

SAYERS

The Army needs the Bradley. You and he and I need it, Colonel.

BURTON

I won't hold you up. I'm as eager as you are to get this thing through. But a job worth doing is worth doing right. Right?

SAYERS

Right.

BOCK

(after a moment)

Right...

PARTRIDGE (VO)

We are nothing if not a team. Squad, platoon, battalion -- all the way up. It's all one big team.

PARTRIDGE

And do you know what the letters in "team" stand for?

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

General--

PARTRIDGE

T. E. A. M. Together Everybody Achieves More. You know, whenever I think of a team, I think of a pentagon. Did you know that a pentagon, geometrically speaking, is a naturally strong structure. And it's got five sides, doesn't it? The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines. That's four sides. What's the fifth side?

(CONTINUED)

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

General--

PARTRIDGE

Hear me out. What's the fifth side?

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

The Coast Guard?

PARTRIDGE

... it's the people. It's the citizens of these United States and you, their elected officials. It's private enterprise. It's McDonnell Douglas; Northrup; Ford Aerospace; Hughes; Lockheed. Many of their fine people work with us. Many of our best people work with them. People. That's the fifth and final side of your pentagon. And that's the strength of the system. Have I made myself clear?

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

(a beat)

No.

39 INT. PENTAGON/PARTRIDGE'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

39

Bock and Sayers are having a drink with Partridge.

BOCK

I'm tellin' you, you gotta nip this shit in the bud. Like with the last guy.

PARTRIDGE

Don't worry about it.

BOCK

He wants to see the reports.

PARTRIDGE

I told you, don't worry about it.

SAYERS

Don't underestimate this guy, John.

BOCK

I've seen his type before. A Boy Scout, bucking for another merit badge.

PARTRIDGE

Just give him the reports.

(CONTINUED)

BOCK

Are you out of your mind? I'm not going
to turn over one page of that stuff to a--

PARTRIDGE

Listen to me. Listen very carefully.

(beat)

Give him everything he wants.

(beat)

Every single piece of paper.

(beat)

Every thing.

40 INT. PENTAGON/CORRIDOR. DAY.

40

Burton turns a corner to discover ten or so SOLDIERS pushing
dollies -- some empty, some piled high with documents -- in
and out of his office.

41 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

41

Burton enters, pushing his way through the soldiers to
discover an ENORMOUS WALL OF DOCUMENTS piled eight feet high
around his desk.

BURTON

(stunned)

What is this?

FANNING

Well sir, there's one of two
possibilities: we're about to be attacked
and they're building bunkers out of
paper; or you got the documents you
asked for.

BURTON

There's some mistake.

FANNING

Every single memo on every last nut and
bolt. Everything you ever wanted to know
about the Bradley and weren't afraid to
ask.

BURTON

I suppose someone meant well ...

FANNING

Oh, you bet, sir. You're being smothered
with affection.

(CONTINUED)

Burton goes through the small entrance between the paper walls and sits down, staring around at mountains of paper.

FANNING

I wonder which national forest laid down its life for this project?

BURTON

(looks at documents)

You read any of this stuff?

FANNING

Not yet, sir. I was hoping you would show up with the Cliff Notes version.

BURTON

I wouldn't know where to start.

FANNING

Maybe that's the whole idea...

Burton looks to Fanning who is already busying himself elsewhere. Burton runs his thumb against the edge of a preposterously tall stack of documents.

BURTON

(thinking out loud)

Can we get some temps in here?

FANNING

(worried)

Tents, sir?

BURTON

Not tents, Sergeant. Temps. Temporary help. Can we get some?

FANNING

I suppose we could. I mean, yes, sir, we have a personnel office.

BURTON

Would you give them a call? How many do you think we'll need? Six, ten?

Fanning looks at the mountain of paper, incredulous.

FANNING

More along the lines of a battalion, sir.

LATER:

(CONTINUED)

The wall of documents has been arranged into a series of six-foot-tall stacks.

BURTON

Listen up, people: we've got some homework assignments.

Burton picks up a stack of documents and hands them off to a group of CIVILIANS.

BURTON

I want every one of these documents read. Every single one, front and back. No matter how insignificant it may seem...

Later: the civilians are sorting through the documents, page by page.

BURTON

Anything to do with design, over here. Funding, there. Test results, up front. Find a place for procurements, inter-departmental correspondence...

Later: every desk in Burton's office compound is covered with two feet of documents, organized into distinct piles.

BURTON

I want them in chronological order. Year by year, department by department. I need them labeled, and indexed. You have any questions, ask me or ask Sergeant Fanning...

Later: Burton and Fanning are sorting through some papers from a stack marked DESIGN.

BURTON

I don't get it.

FANNING

What?

BURTON

This.

Fanning looks at the drawing in Burton's hand: it's a schematic drawing of the BFV, circa 1984.

FANNING

It's the Bradley.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON
Then what's this?

Fanning looks at a second drawing: it's also a schematic of the BFV, which bears virtually no resemblance to the other drawing.

FANNING
What's the date?

BURTON
1968.

Burton pins the two drawing to the wall, side-by-side.

BURTON
The question is: how did they get from this to this?

ON THE 1968 SCHEMATIC

FLASHBACK

42 INT. PENTAGON/PRESENTATION ROOM -- 1968

42

PULL BACK from the 1968 drawing as it's being handed from LIEUTENANT COLONEL SMITH, the officer in charge of this early version of the Bradley (the M-2 Infantry Fighting Vehicle), to a panel of THREE ONE-STAR GENERALS, each of whom is identified by a Branch plaque on the panel desk (Infantry; Reconnaissance; Armored Corps). Each general is flanked by a handful of OFFICERS, and everyone is seated around a single table.

SMITH
Gentlemen, our orders were to design and implement an Infantry Fighting Vehicle that would be a worthy replacement for the M-113 Armored Personnel Carrier. We have met that objective and then some.

The generals examine the drawing while Smith speaks.

SMITH
What you are looking at is the latest in a long line of solid, dependable Army vehicles that have been the envy of military forces worldwide. This vehicle has been designed to bring troops to a combat zone swiftly, efficiently, and safely.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SMITH (cont'd)

It will hold eleven men plus a driver, and features a twenty millimeter cannon that provides ample firepower and, at the same time, flexibility. Lightly armored, speedy and solidly engineered, our troops will be arriving at the battlefield in the best.

The generals nod, murmur, stroke their chins, think.

GENERAL ONE

Nice work, Colonel.

GENERAL TWO

Very nice work.

GENERAL THREE

Damn impressive.

FANNING (VO)

"...the Infantry Fighting Vehicle will serve as an ideal tactical complement to our MBT-70 tank..."

BACK TO

43 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

43

Fanning is reading from a memo. (NOTE: the scenes between Burton and Fanning in which they review the mountain of documents take course over a couple of days, as should be indicated by the changes in their appearance and office.)

FANNING

"...and having no significant offensive capabilities, the vehicle will be light enough to ensure optimum mobility."

BURTON

This was when?

FANNING

1968.

Burton looks at the drawings pinned to the wall, perplexed.

BURTON

In other words, it was designed to be a big taxi cab. Drive guys to the battlefield, go back home.

(beat)

So how'd it end up with a turret on top?

FLASHBACK

44 INT. PENTAGON/PRESENTATION ROOM -- 1972

44

Smith is showing the generals a van size mock-up of the Bradley. The audience has grown, and it now takes two tables to accommodate the accompanying OFFICERS. As they move around the model, Generals Two and Three look pleased. But General One does not.

GENERAL ONE

Very good, but ...

SMITH

But what, General?

GENERAL ONE

With this gorilla in production, I don't suppose there's gonna be anything left in the budget for my scout?

GENERAL TWO

Doubt it, Bob.

GENERAL THREE

But you won't need scouts. You have radar. Air recon. Satellites.

GENERAL ONE

We're always going to need a scout. And you know what I'm thinking? This is a speedy vehicle, right?

SMITH

Very.

GENERAL ONE

So it could serve as a scout.

GENERAL TWO

Instead of carrying troops?

GENERAL ONE

Why not both?

SMITH

But, General, this is a troop carrier. It's fast, yes, but it's design in no way reflects the needs of a scout. For one thing, it's too big. And you can't see all that much from inside.

(CONTINUED)

GENERAL ONE

Stick a turret on top. With lots of opticals.

SMITH

But then it'll be even bigger, sir. It's hard to go on a sneak-and-peek mission when you're over ten feet tall.

GENERAL TWO

He's got a point, Bob.

GENERAL ONE

Yeah, but think how far a man can see from way up there.

SMITH

There's nothing he's going to be able to see that isn't going to see him first.

GENERAL ONE

All I know is we need a scout, and this is fast enough to do the job. And it's funded.

GENERAL THREE

Bob, you turn the Bradley into a scout, we're going to be selling them off to some Presidente de Chimichanga in no time.

GENERAL TWO

(nods)

Anything for surveillance ends up south of the border before the paint even dries.

GENERAL ONE

Last summer, when you wanted that anti-aircraft gun, who backed you up?

GENERAL THREE

You did, Bob.

GENERAL ONE

And who volunteered to go testify to appropriations on behalf of that gun?

GENERAL THREE

You did, Bob.

(CONTINUED)

GENERAL ONE

I'm scheduled to go see the committee on appropriations in two weeks. Now am I going to sell you on my scout, or not?

GENERAL THREE

You did, Bob.

A friendly poke in the shoulder. This is business between friends.

GENERAL TWO

Good. Now is everybody happy?

GENERAL ONE

Everybody. Including Congressman Groves.

GENERAL THREE

What about him?

GENERAL ONE

It's going to be built in his district.

GENERAL THREE

By all means, let's make Congressman Groves happy.

GENERAL TWO

The fact that he's the chairman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee doesn't hurt either.

GENERAL THREE

Speaking of guns ... Colonel, you got the turret. You might as well get the biggest bang you can up there.

SMITH

Pardon?

GENERAL THREE

Get rid of that pansy gun. Get yourself some real firepower. And how about some portholes along the side for individual firearms? So the fellas can stick out their guns and shoot people.

BACK TO

45 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

45

Fanning hands Burton the memo he's been reading.

(CONTINUED)

FANNING

They screwed on a 25 millimeter cannon.

BURTON

On a troop carrier?

FANNING

Troop carrier, slash, scout vehicle.

BURTON

Troop carrier, slash, scout vehicle,
slash, offensive weapons unit.

FANNING

It's got three different missions.

BURTON

Reminds me of the old saying --
"a camel is a horse designed by a
committee."

FANNING

But where do they store the ammo?

FLASHBACK

46 INT. FMC CORPORATION/DESIGN OFFICE -- 1972

46

Colonel Smith is meeting with JONES, one of the Bradley's
several designers. His desk is a drawing table, one of many
such tables in the room, all of which are devoted to the
design of the Bradley.

JONES

But where do you put the ammo?

SMITH

Same place you put it before.

JONES

It won't fit.

SMITH

Why not?

JONES

It's too much.

SMITH

What do you mean, it's too much?

(CONTINUED)

JONES

Between the 25 mm shells and the 4400 rounds of machine gun ammo, it's too much.

SMITH

You can't squeeze it in?

JONES

No.

SMITH

Come on. Just squeeze it in.

JONES

We're not trying on Levis here, Colonel.

47 INT. PENTAGON/PRESENTATION ROOM -- 1972

47

Smith is meeting with the three generals. All the Officers present now require three tables. Gettin' mighty crowded.

GENERAL THREE

Are you telling me that in a vehicle this size, you can't find room for a few rounds of ammunition?

SMITH

Not in it's current configuration, no.

GENERAL TWO

Must be something you can dump.

SMITH

Dump?

GENERAL TWO

Something you don't need.

SMITH

General, the interior is very spare. Besides the ammunition and the men--

GENERAL THREE

Maybe you can leave one of the fellas behind. Put the ammo where the men go.

SMITH

Sir. It's a troop carrier.

GENERAL TWO

So make a couple extra trips, what's the difference?

48 INT. FMC CORPORATION/DESIGN OFFICE -- 1972

48

Smith is meeting with Jones.

JONES

They want a transport that doesn't carry men, and a scout that's got a cannon as big as a tank's on it?

SMITH

Right. And portholes.

JONES

Great, portholes. So the guys on top can shoot at whatever they can't hit with their cannon.

SMITH

You don't have to buy it, Jones, just draw it.

BACK TO

49 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

49

Burton unrolls another schematic of the BFV, this one dated 1976. It features a turret and the big gun. He pins it to the wall next to the other drawings.

FANNING

That's one hell of a cannon.

Burton looks at the '76 schematic.

BURTON

That's the problem...

FLASHBACK

50 INT. FMC CORPORATION/DESIGN OFFICE -- 1976

50

Jones is showing Smith, now a full-bird Colonel, the same schematic of the BFV.

SMITH

That's one hell of a cannon.

JONES

That's a problem.

SMITH

Why?

(CONTINUED)

JONES

You go out on the battlefield with this 25mm sucker sticking out of your turret, and the enemy's going to assume you're there to inflict damage. They're going to unload on this thing with all they've got.

SMITH

It's a troop carrier, not a tank.

JONES

I know that and you know that, but will the enemy know that?

SMITH

You're an alarmist, Jones.

JONES

With that gun up there, you may as well paint a big red bull's eye on either side and be done with it.

BACK TO

51 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

51

BURTON

You're on the battlefield, you spot this thing coming at you. What do you see?

FANNING

Trouble.

BURTON

Exactly. I mean, if it looks like a tank and it's armed like a tank, it's going to draw enemy fire like a tank.

FLASHBACK

52 INT. PENTAGON/PRESENTATION ROOM -- 1979

52

Colonel Smith is showing the three generals, each of whom now sports two stars, the latest mock-up model of the BFV. The room is now crammed with officers seated around four tables.

(CONTINUED)

SMITH

Gentlemen, I'm pleased to present your new Bradley Fighting Vehicle, which can now function as a troop carrier/scout vehicle, which can carry a crew of three and five men, and which now features a brand new, 25 millimeter cannon.

GENERAL ONE

Good work, Colonel.

GENERAL THREE

Outstanding.

General Two stares at the BFV.

GENERAL TWO

The thing is, with a 25 millimeter cannon, you're probably going to draw more fire from enemy tanks. I mean, we know it's not a tank, but will the other side?

SMITH

That has come to our attention, General.

GENERAL THREE

I guess we could always thicken the armor. Toughen up the hide a little bit.

BACK TO

53 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

53

Burton is sorting through another stack of papers.

BURTON

Someone must have pointed it out.

FANNING

I wouldn't bet on it.

BURTON

This thing's got an aluminum skin. Anything an enemy tank fires will go through it like a hot knife through butter.

FLASHBACK

54 INT. PENTAGON/PRESENTATION ROOM -- 1979

54

As before.

(CONTINUED)

SMITH

We're doing the specs on using steel rather than aluminum. Of course, steel's much heavier, so it won't go as fast, but it's a whole lot tougher.

GENERAL ONE

You thicken the armor, you're going to lose speed. And if it loses speed, it won't work as a scout vehicle.

GENERAL TWO

It won't keep pace with our M-111 tanks, either.

GENERAL THREE

Shame. Protection-wise, it could sure use thicker armor.

GENERAL TWO

Thick armor is a reactive measure. Let's think proactive here. I say equip the thing with anti-tank missiles. Then it can blast those enemy tanks before they get a chance to fire.

55 INT. FMC CORPORATION/DESIGN OFFICE -- 1979

55

Smith is meeting with Jones.

JONES

Anti-tank missiles!

SMITH

So it can blast the enemy before they blast it.

JONES

But where do I put the missiles? The men will be sitting on them. They'll have shells wrapped around their ears!

SMITH

That's why you get the big bucks.

JONES

Colonel. There's no room. We're not talking ...

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

SMITH

...about a pair of Levis, I know. We're talking eleven years and nothing to show for it, except an ulcer the size of the District of Columbia and a career that's on permanent hold! I've been a bird colonel so long, I swear I'm growing feathers!

BACK TO

56 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

56

BURTON

They figured the Bradley could open fire first.

FANNING

But if they were worried that the Bradley was vulnerable to enemy fire--

BURTON

They just gave it something that would only attract more.

FANNING

Making it...

BURTON

...even more vulnerable...

FLASHBACK

57 INT. PENTAGON/PRESENTATION ROOM -- 1982

57

An exhausted Smith is presenting the generals and their staffs with the final mock-up of the Bradley.

SMITH

...the new Bradley Fighting Vehicle, featuring scout, troop transport, and anti-tank capabilities. It carries five men--

BACK TO

58 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

58

FANNING

How many did they start with?

BURTON

Eleven.

(CONTINUED)

FLASHBACK

59 INT. PENTAGON/PRESENTATION ROOM -- 1982

59

SMITH
...is outfitted with the most
sophisticated surveillance equipment ever
developed ...

BACK TO

60 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE -- DAY

60

Fanning is measuring the height of the Bradley in the '82
schematic.

FANNING
What's the scale of this thing?

BURTON
One inch to the foot.

FANNING
You could see all the way to Baltimore
from the top of that thing.

BURTON
So much for surprising the enemy.

FLASHBACK

61 INT. PENTAGON/PRESENTATION ROOM -- 1982

61

SMITH
--and it's equipped with a 25 millimeter
cannon and an antitank rocket launcher.

BACK TO

62 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

62

FANNING
Which means it carries--

BURTON
1,500 shells, and ten TOW anti-tank
missiles...

FANNING
Jesus...

FLASHBACK

63 INT. PENTAGON/PRESENTATION ROOM -- 1982

63

SMITH

So in summation, gentlemen, what you have
before you is--

BACK TO

64 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

64

Burton and Fanning stand by a mountain of paper marked
"Bradley Development 1981-1982".

FANNING

...a troop transport that can't carry
troops, a reconnaissance vehicle that's
too conspicuous to do reconnaissance--

BURTON

And a quasi-tank that's got less armor
than a snow blower but is loaded with
enough ammo to take out half of DC.

FLASHBACK

65 INT. PENTAGON/PRESENTATION ROOM -- 1982

65

GENERAL ONE

Fantastic!

GENERAL TWO

Congratulations, General Smith!

GENERAL THREE

Let's build it!

66 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. LATE NIGHT.

66

Quite a few people are still here working. Burton,
exhausted, finishes reading a document, then tosses it on top
of a pile clearly marked "Bradley Tests."

BURTON

These test reports ... are we sure this
is all they sent us?

Fanning holds up a handful of documents.

(CONTINUED)

FANNING

I pray to God this is all. 200 pages of tests on the longevity of the spark plugs. 250 pages on the paint job. The mind boggles.

BURTON

But we're missing some key information. For one thing, I can't seem to find any random fire tests on the Bradley. I mean there are lots of tightly-controlled tests with predesignated points of impact, hundreds of computer simulations of combat conditions, but I don't see anything that actually indicates what might happen when the ammunition stored inside takes a hit.

Burton picks up a document from a pile of test reports. He flips through it.

BURTON

Of course, I could have missed it. The tests that were done, it's impossible to decipher the results, the way they're written up...

FLASHBACK

67 EXT. WEAPON TESTING RANGE -- 1984

67

Bock and Sayers are standing next to a BFV as a line of SOLDIERS -- including Dalton -- are trying to squeeze into it.

DALTON

Sir? Are we actually calling this a test?

BOCK

That's exactly what we're calling it, Sergeant.

68 INT. THE BRADLEY.

68

The men are jammed in like writhing sardines: arms, legs, heads everywhere.

FIRST SOLDIER

Whose foot is on my neck!?

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

SECOND SOLDIER
I can't breathe.

THIRD SOLDIER
You're stepping on my face!

BACK TO

69 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

69

FANNING
(reading)
"...equally impressive was the ease of
access to munitions afforded by the
skillful arrangement of such munitions
relative to the stations assigned the
operatives within..."

FLASHBACK

70 INT. BRADLEY -- 1984

70

Dalton squeezes into the Bradley. The five men inside are
positioned around the interior, each of whom is literally
surrounded by shells and missiles.

SOLDIER
Talk about tight.

DALTON
Private, what's that wrapped around your
helmet?

SOLDIER
Ammunition, sir.

DALTON
What's it doing wrapped around your
helmet?

SOLDIER
Only place to put it, sir.

Sayers and Bock stick their heads in, facing off with Dalton,
upside down.

BOCK
You have a problem with that, Sergeant?

Dalton does, but knows its pointless to say so.

DALTON
No, Colonel. I don't.

(CONTINUED)

SAYERS
(to Bock)
Should I write it up?

BOCK
Looks shipshape to me.

BACK TO

71 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

71

Fanning checks the signature on the report he's just read.

FANNING
(reading)
"...ultimately effecting a highly
integrated internal compartment as a
result of these volume criteria
enhancements."
(beat)
Signed, William J. Sayers.

BURTON
Man knows how to turn a phrase, I'll give
him that. -- "Volume criteria
enhancements ...?" What does he do,
swallow a Thesaurus and spit it up?

FANNING
Was there anything these guys didn't
explain away?

BURTON
Just one...

FLASHBACK

72 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE -- 1984

72

RIFLES poke out of the portholes cut in the side of the
Bradley. They stick up into the air at a 45 degree angle.

73 INT. BRADLEY

73

The men inside try to aim their rifles, but there isn't
enough room to maneuver. All they can do is point up.

74 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE

74

Bock and Sayers stand by, observing. Bock nods to Dalton.

DALTON
Fire!

(CONTINUED)

The rifles start FIRING. Nearby TREE-TOPS are wiped out. BIRDS explode into the air, while the cardboard MANNEQUINS on the ground go untouched. Bock looks at Sayers. Even they can't fake this one.

BURTON (VO)
"...as the BFV most likely would be
returning fire parallel to the plane of
advance..."

75 INT. DESIGN FACTORY -- 1984

75

A WELDER approaches the Bradley.

BURTON (VO)
...the aerial defense afforded by the
apertures in the body of the vehicle were
deemed unnecessary...

The welder welds the portholes shut.

BACK TO

76 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

76

FANNING
So that's what happened to the portholes.
(tossing down a thick document)
This thing has more plot turns than War
and Peace. More laughs too.

BURTON
It's quite a story all right. But with a
couple chapters missing. Random fire
tests. Realistic spall tests. We've got
to make them aware of these omissions
ASAP.

FANNING
I'm sure they're aware, sir.

BURTON
You think they did the tests and they
were accidentally left out of our report?

FANNING
I think, sir, there are no accidents.
Not in the Pentagon. Oh, once in a while
we shoot down one of our own planes, but
if they're going to spend umpteen billion
dollars over seventeen years, you can be
sure that whatever you've got here,
Colonel, is no accident.

(CONTINUED)

Burton gets up and grabs a video tape. He inserts the tape into a video projection unit. An IMAGE OF THE BRADLEY roaring around the testing range projects on the wall. Burton steps closer to the image, studying the Bradley.

BURTON

If they haven't done these tests, then we'll make sure they do. That's our job, to be that independent observer and point out where they've gone off track. They'll do the tests, once they realize how important they are.

FANNING

And if they don't?

BURTON

Then I'll order the tests.

Fanning looks at him, disbelieving.

BURTON

Sergeant, no one's going to ask our guys to ride into battle in anything with a big question mark hanging over it...

77 BLACKNESS

77

The questioning continues.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Am I to understand, General, that you were not in favor of Colonel Burton doing his tests?

PARTRIDGE

Of course not. But I did have reason to doubt the value of some of those tests.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Why, General?

PARTRIDGE

I realized very early on that Colonel Burton is, after all, Air Force blue. And the Bradley, as you know, is an Army project. It's only natural that his perspective might be, shall we say, prejudiced?

(CONTINUED)

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Why would any Air Force officer deliberately want to shoot down an Army project?

PARTRIDGE

I can't predict why my colleagues in the Air Force make some of the decisions they do. It could have something to do with the altitude.

(smiles)

For the record, that's a joke.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

You're accusing Colonel Burton of having some hidden agenda?

PARTRIDGE

(an edge of anger)

Colonel Burton's problem is that he's incapable of hiding anything.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

And since when are openness and honesty a problem?

78 INT. PENTAGON/CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY

78

The large conference room where the Secretary of Defense, CASPER WEINBERGER, conducts his meetings. Seated at the conference table are several high-ranking CIVILIANS and fourteen-or-so OFFICERS, including General Partridge and Colonel Burton. Nameplates identify those at the table and their titles. Partridge is chatting with his cronies. Burton sits by himself.

PARTRIDGE (VO)

They're not. Unless there are issues of national security.

WEINBERGER enters, and heads for the head of the table. Everyone rises.

WEINBERGER

Please be seated.

They sit.

WEINBERGER

I have little time to spend with you today, I'm needed at the Oval Office. But I want to call your attention to this morning's Washington Post.

(CONTINUED)

He holds up the paper.

WEINBERGER

Here, on the front page, above the fold, is a lengthy story that says -- I'll boil it down for you, but do spend some time on the details -- that nearly every weapon produced by us is an overpriced piece of junk. Now that's not news; critics have said it for years. What was news was the mention of our supposedly spectacular DIVAD anti-aircraft gun. It says that when the DIVAD proved incapable of hitting airplanes, we then test-fired it at hovering helicopters. And when it failed to hit hovering helicopters, we test-fired it at stationary targets. And it missed them. Now I ask you, could this possibly be true? General Keane?

KEANE

There was a problem with proximity fusing.

WEINBERGER

According to this, there were nothing but problems. It says here, one of them locked onto a ventilation fan in a latrine.

KEANE

A grotesque exaggeration, sir. My first sergeant was in that latrine at the time, and he's still around to swear otherwise.

WEINBERGER

My point is this: why do I end up learning about these things in the newspaper? I look foolish, and I'm not a foolish man. General Cushing, are you having any problems with the Maverick missile you're developing?

CUSHING

(obviously lying)

No, sir.

WEINBERGER

Any problems with the A-12, Admiral Morehouse?

(CONTINUED)

MOREHOUSE
(also lying)
None whatsoever, sir.

WEINBERGER
General Partridge?

PARTRIDGE
Sir?

WEINBERGER
Any problems with the Bradley?

PARTRIDGE
No, sir.

Burton starts to say something, but Partridge silences him with a glance. The subtle exchange is observed by a silent NAVY OFFICER.

PARTRIDGE (cont'd)
Production is imminent.

WEINBERGER
Good. Because there are people in this administration who do have problems. There are problems with terrorists in Lebanon, and a problem with Colonel Khadafy in Libya, Sandanistas in Nicaragua, and let's not forget our ongoing problem with the Soviet Union. Frankly, I don't appreciate having to field calls from reporters -- and Congressmen -- wondering why something that costs 20 million dollars doesn't work. And of course, I can't answer them, because the word I get from the men in charge of developing these systems is that everything is just peachy. So hear me clearly: if you don't have problems, good. And if you do, get rid of them. I want these things built. If not by you, then I will find men who can.

Burton, frustrated, says nothing. The silent Navy Officer looks at Burton, registering his frustration.

79 INT. PENTAGON/OFFICER'S MESS. DAY

79

Burton has joined Partridge for lunch. A quiet table in the corner.

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

Now, Colonel. About these tests. I understand your concern, but if you knew the vehicle as I do, if you were an armored warfare expert instead of a flyer, you wouldn't be concerned. You'd understand that the Bradley's a good vehicle. Four thousand Americans have jobs building it. The Army wants it.

BURTON

I understand that, sir. But after having reviewed the material to date--

(beat)

By the way, thanks for sending over the files so promptly. I don't think I've ever had the benefit of a more complete file on a project.

PARTRIDGE

(joking)

By the time you're finished reading it, you'll know more about the Bradley than anyone.

BURTON

I have finished reading it, sir. Which is why I'm recommending a full-up, live-fire test. I want to equip a Bradley with all the ammunition it will take into battle, fill all the gas tanks, and hit it with a Soviet anti-tank weapon to see how it'll hold up.

PARTRIDGE

I know how it'll hold up, Colonel: it'll hold up just fine.

BURTON

I'm glad to hear that, sir, but I'm also concerned about the aluminum armor. A study done by the British shows that aluminum--

PARTRIDGE

The British? We fought the Revolution so we wouldn't have to pay any attention to the goddam British.

BURTON

When hit by a shell, aluminum has a tendency to burn, and when it burns it gives off toxic gas.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BURTON (cont'd)

I also need to know, if it does burn, does the fire pose a threat to the ammo and the fuel and the troops inside.

PARTRIDGE

No one takes your job more seriously than I do, Colonel. But I also have a job. I have to get the Bradley deployed: deployed in West Germany, and Turkey, and Greece. I want that rocket launcher pointed at the Soviets, make Ivan think twice about enlarging his empire.

BURTON

But there could be problems with the vehicle, sir. Serious--

PARTRIDGE

(setting down his napkin)

Whatever problems there are, we'll fix them in the field, after they're deployed.

BURTON

But, sir--

PARTRIDGE

(cutting him off)

That's the way things are done around here, Colonel.

(beat)

And that's the way we're going to do this.

80 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

80

Burton is working late. The phone rings. Wearily, he picks it up.

BURTON

Burton.

MAN (OC PHONE)

I hope I'm not disturbing you, Colonel. I understand you've had a rough day.

BURTON

Yes, I have. And crank calls don't make it any easier.

CAFFREY

... it will supplement a pilot's skill,
but it won't replace it. Once we start
believing that technology ...

90 INT. CONVENTION HALL/EXHIBIT BOOTHS. DAY.

90

Burton is watching Caffrey, who's talking to a group of
OFFICERS and CIVILIANS. He wants to approach him, but isn't
sure how.

91 INT. CONVENTION HALL/ANOTHER BOOTH. DAY.

91

Burton tries to act interested in some merchandise as Caffrey
and several other MEN talk on the other side of the aisle.
Suddenly, Caffrey is standing right beside him, pretending to
be looking at the same merchandise.

CAFFREY

Enjoying the convention Colonel?

BURTON

To tell you the truth, I'm not in the
market for any new defense products.

CAFFREY

How about a new battle strategy?

(looks around)

This isn't the best place to talk.

(beat)

Meet me at the DiaTron hospitality booth.
Ten minutes.

92 INT. CONVENTION HALL/HOSPITALITY BOOTH. DAY.

92

A makeshift bar and buffet in the middle of the convention,
packed with sales displays for CRUISE MISSILES and a jostling
crowd of officers and civilians. Caffrey and Burton are
standing off to the side, acting like they're not paying that
much attention to each other.

BURTON

Why did you phone me?

CAFFREY

I always had a hunch you were someone I
could talk to.

BURTON

What made you think I'd listen?

(CONTINUED)

CAFFREY

They way you've been digging into the Bradley. The way you've gone after what you think is right.

(beat)

Also, you drive an old Jeep. I tend to trust an officer who drives his own Jeep.

BURTON

You know a lot about me.

CAFFREY

We've been waiting to talk with someone in your present job for some time.

BURTON

Who is "we"?

CAFFREY

Guys like me. Guys who try to keep an eye on what's going on with some of the self-promoting petty bureaucrats who pass for military men these days.

BURTON

Why so secret?

CAFFREY

If the Pentagon brass had their choice between nailing us or catching a Soviet spy, they'd choose us any day.

(beat)

Drink, Colonel?

93 INT. CONVENTION HALL/BAR. DAY.

93

Caffrey gets a drink. So does Burton.

CAFFREY

Look over there.

Caffrey gestures to a line of OFFICERS standing at the buffet table.

CAFFREY

You know what that is? That's ambition on the hoof. Majors who want to be colonels, colonels who want to be generals, generals who want that second or third or fourth star. And nobody moves up by not getting things done.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

81 INT/EXT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. NIGHT.

81

The same man in silhouette is on the phone. Outside the hangar, illuminated by landing lights, a JET FIGHTER taxis toward the runway.

MAN

I hear you're interested in running more tests, but you just hit a wall by the name of General John Partridge.

(silence)

You there, Colonel?

BURTON (OC PHONE)

I'm here.

MAN

Maybe I can help.

BURTON (OC PHONE)

What makes you think I need help?

MAN

If you didn't, you'd have hung up by now.

82 INT. BURTON'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

82

BURTON

(interested)

What are you suggesting?

MAN (OC PHONE)

There's a defense industry convention tomorrow. In Crystal City, Virginia. Just down the road from you. You might want to take an extra long lunch and attend.

83 INT/EXT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. NIGHT.

83

MAN

You know, walls can be very high and very thick, but if you dig hard enough, sometimes you can go right underneath 'em.

84 INT. BURTON'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

84

There is a CLICK and Burton's phone goes dead.

85 INT. HOTEL/CONVENTION HALL. DAY. 85

The place is crowded with MILITARY OFFICERS, CIVILIAN CONSULTANTS and DEFENSE CONTRACTORS. Burton is wandering around the EXHIBIT BOOTHS showing various defense products.

86 INT. CONVENTION HALL/SEMINAR ROOM. DAY. 86

Burton looks in at a roomful of people watching a VIDEO about training maneuvers on several monitors. He moves on.

87 INT. CONVENTION HALL/ANOTHER SEMINAR ROOM. DAY. 87

Burton stands in the entrance looking in. The room is filled with officers and civilians. At the podium, a MODERATOR drones on, introducing the next speaker.

MODERATOR

...and while most of you know our next panelist as the man who redesigned the FX jet fighter, a few of you out there will appreciate him even more as the man who devised the aerial combat tactics that probably saved your hide at ten thousand feet.

Ladies and gentlemen, the craziest -- like a fox -- fighter pilot I ever met: Colonel John Caffrey...

There is APPLAUSE. A man in civilian clothes, COLONEL JOHN CAFFREY, acknowledges it. He is mid 50's, handsome and forceful.

88 INT. CONVENTION HALL/SEMINAR ROOM. DAY. 88

Burton drifts back into the hall. He looks at his watch, and decides to take off. But then, he stops. He hears Caffrey, whose voice is drifting out into the hall. It's the voice of the man on the phone.

CAFFREY (OC)

... the next generation of aircraft will, as you've seen today, be a miracle of modern technology ...

Burton heads back into the seminar room.

89 INT. CONVENTION HALL/SEMINAR ROOM. DAY. 89

Caffrey is at the podium.

(CONTINUED)

CAFFREY (cont'd)

Which means that what none of them wants to be, what each and every one of them deeply and devoutly strives not to be, is the One Who Dropped The Ball. Because if you're the one who drops the ball, well...

(beat)

...no promotion, no star, no cushy job with a contractor when you retire.

BURTON

I appreciate your interest, Colonel, but if you've got me figured as some sort of stool pigeon, you figured wrong. The military chain of command is there for a purpose and I don't intend to subvert it.

CAFFREY

That a fact? In case you haven't noticed, I work inside the system too. That's why I'm talking to you and not the Washington Post.

BURTON

I don't know what kind of ax you're grinding, but--

CAFFREY

Let me put your mind to rest, Colonel: I'm a flag-waving, mom-and-apple-pie military lifer who got fed up with watching a few fat-assed, bone-heads piss away billions on defective crap that our guys out in the field are supposed to stake their lives on.

94 INT. CONVENTION HALL. DAY

94

Caffrey moves down an aisle set with displays laid out on tables. Burton follows, on the other side of the tables.

BURTON

You have no evidence that the Bradley is a piece of crap. Neither do I. And I'm not about to write it off. Not until I do some tests.

CAFFREY

You don't have a prayer in hell of running those tests. Not unless you're willing to sacrifice your career. Which I don't think you are.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON

Whatever I decide to do or not to do,
Colonel, you can be sure that you -- and
everybody else -- will know all about it.
I don't need to hide in the shadows.

CAFFREY

If you think you're safe because Congress
gave you your job, think again.

BURTON

I'll keep that in mind.

Burton heads off. Caffrey looks after him, more impressed
than he thought he would be.

95 EXT. FRENCH EMBASSY. NIGHT.

95

The embassy is ablaze with lights as the sounds of a party
drift out into the night air.

96 INT. EMBASSY/GRAND SALON. NIGHT.

96

MEN in tuxedos and WOMEN in gowns move about the candlelit
room, doing what everyone in Washington does best:
socializing. Among the guests we see General Partridge,
wearing the military version of a tuxedo, his chest covered
with medals. A BUTLER comes up and whispers in his ear.
Partridge excuses himself and heads off after the butler.

97 INT. EMBASSY/LIBRARY. NIGHT.

97

The butler admits Partridge, then disappears, leaving him
alone with Bock and Sayers, who have been waiting for him.

PARTRIDGE

This better be good.

BOCK

It's Burton. He's going ahead with his
tests.

SAYERS

I thought you talked to him.

PARTRIDGE

I did.

(beat)

The man's either an idiot or a fool.

BOCK

Can't you stop him?

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

I'm not his commanding officer. Some draft-dodging junior Congressman thought we needed more objectivity in the testing process. Goddam checks and balances.

BOCK

This isn't just a check. It's a full fuckin' body block.

SAYERS

These last tests were supposed to be rubber stamped. What are we supposed to do?

BOCK

We don't get this thing out there now, it'll be stuck in development for another seventeen years.

PARTRIDGE

(after a moment)

Order it. Now.

(pause)

Stick to schedule. We'll throw Burton a bone or two. Let him run a couple tests.

BOCK

He wants to blow the damn thing up!

PARTRIDGE

I don't give a good god damn what Colonel Burton wants! Let him do some piddly-shit stuff. Let him take it for a test drive. See if he can parallel park the fucker. Make him think he's doing his job.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Tell me General, did you have Colonel Burton put under surveillance? Or followed in any way?

PARTRIDGE

You've been watching too many movies, Congressman. We're not the CIA.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Is that a "no," General?

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

The only people the Army spies on is the enemy. No, whatever disagreements my office might have had with Colonel Burton, he was never the enemy. We both wanted the same thing, always: the best Bradley we could give our troops.

99 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/GATE. DAY.

99

Burton drives up. The guard waves him through.

100 INT/EXT. BURTON'S JEEP. DAY.

100

Burton, suspecting he's being watched, adjusts his rear view mirror.

ON THE REAR VIEW MIRROR: the guard reaches for the phone.

PARTRIDGE (VO)

He just had a funny way of going about it.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER (VO)

Funny? In what way?

PARTRIDGE (VO)

I don't mean funny "ha-ha", I mean funny "strange". Colonel Burton began to exhibit behavior that I can only call ... eccentric. Take the mannequin thing ...

UNSEEN QUESTIONER (VO)

The mannequin thing?

101 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/HANGAR. DAY.

101

A GROUP OF MANNEQUINS are being dressed like combat soldiers and are being put into the Bradley test vehicle. Burton is supervising the test. Sayers and Bock are standing by.

PARTRIDGE (VO)

The test that Colonel Burton came up with was --if you don't mind me saying, a little melodramatic.

The Bradley rolls out of the hangar, headed for the test range. Everyone piles into jeeps to follow.

PARTRIDGE (VO)

I mean there were other ways to see if clothing would catch fire inside the Bradley when it took a hit....

102 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY.

102

The Bradley positions itself for the test. A jeep races across the field to Burton.

SOLDIER
Colonel?

BURTON
Yes.

SOLDIER
Phone call for you, sir. It's your office. They said it was important.

Burton climbs in next to the soldier. The jeep takes off.

BOCK
Strip the dummies.

DALTON
(confused)
Sir?

BOCK
Strip the dummies, Sergeant. Now!

103 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. THAT SAME DAY. 103

Bock gives the signal, and a small shell is fired at the Bradley. The Bradley takes it pretty well, although a fire does start. Burton and Sayers watch through binoculars.

104 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY.

104

A SOLDIER, with an armful of uniforms, emerges out of the smoke masking the Bradley.

PARTRIDGE (VO)
Certainly no-one in my command gave the okay to strip those dummies and put their clothes inside a fireproof container in the vehicle when Colonel Burton wasn't around...

Burton, Sayers, and Bock pull up to the Bradley. Burton looks at the uniforms amazed. Bock and Sayers look smug. Just then, a jeep loaded with the mannequins -- all of which are completely charred -- drives past. Burton turns to Sayers and Bock.

105 THE GENERAL

105

PARTRIDGE

The insults that were traded that day definitely had no business showing up in the test reports. They were, of course, deleted from the final report -- all except for Colonel Bock's unfortunate reference to Colonel Burton's mother. Understand, temperatures were running high.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Apparently inside the Bradley as well.

106 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. ANOTHER DAY.

106

The Bradley is sitting in the middle of the field.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER (VO)

There seem to have been other, unexplained, events that cast the test results into doubt.

107 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. DAY.

107

Bock gives a signal and Dalton FIRES.

ON THE BRADLEY. It rocks with the force of the shell, but doesn't explode. Burton looks surprised.

108 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY.

108

PARTRIDGE (VO)

There's a degree of uncertainty involved in every test. That's the point of doing tests in the first place: to see what happens. If we knew what the results would be, we wouldn't do the test. And just because the tests did not always come out the way Colonel Burton was expecting is no reason to assume anything devious was going on ...

Burton walks around the Bradley. He looks at the hole left by the shell in one of the fuel tanks. Then, he looks at the "fuel" dripping from the tank. It doesn't look right. He puts a little on his fingers. Sniffs it.

(CONTINUED)

UNSEEN QUESTIONER (VO)

I ask you, General -- filling the fuel tanks with water, for a test designed to check the combustibility of the tanks -- that wasn't devious?

109 THE GENERAL

109

PARTRIDGE

I don't think the Army is devious. Maybe the Army is just stupid.

Partridge, embarrassed, catches himself.

PARTRIDGE

Sometimes. Now and then. On rare occasion. Besides, if the tanks had been filled with fuel, there's a good chance the vehicle would have exploded.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

(confused)

Isn't that the point?

PARTRIDGE

If the vehicle had exploded, how could we run additional tests on it? I can't order up an unlimited number of Bradleys just to blow them to smithereens. Unless you're telling me to spend more money, which I can't imagine you are?

(beat)

Our position is that it's counterproductive to conduct destructive testing on such a precious asset when more valuable information can be gained.

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Like what, General? Driving it around to get the gas mileage?

110 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY.

110

Burton turns to Dalton.

BURTON

Have the tanks always been filled with water, Sergeant?

DALTON

No, sir. Only when the vehicle's being tested.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON

What else don't I know?

Dalton says nothing.

BURTON

Sergeant, I'm asking you a question!
What else don't I know about these tests?

DALTON

The engine is never running.

BURTON

What?

DALTON

They were afraid it would blow up.

BURTON

The engine has never been running for a
single test?

DALTON

Correct.

BURTON

What else?

DALTON

...The... ammunition...stored on the
Bradley...

BURTON

What about it?

111 INT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/AMMUNITION SHED. FOLLOWING 111

An ammunition casing is pried open as Burton watches. It is
filled with sand.

BURTON

Sand...

Burton turns to Dalton and the other soldiers.

BURTON

Did the term "court-martial" ever enter
anyone's mind here?

DALTON

No sir.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON

Really? That's truly amazing Sergeant! I mean here we are, watching water drip out of gas tanks and sand spill out of ammunition! Right after a test that was done to figure out whether or not this damn thing is safe -- but no-one here even thinks of the term "court-martial!" Why, if you don't mind my asking, is that?

DALTON

We were under orders.

BURTON

Whose orders?

Dalton says nothing.

BURTON (cont'd)

Do you think acting on those orders is conscionable?

DALTON

It doesn't matter what we think. Or do. Because you desk warriors from Washington are going to show up and have a million goddamn ways to make the tests turn out whatever way you want.

BURTON

I am not here to manipulate test results. I am here to learn the truth.

DALTON

You want the truth? We get a new white-knight every other year. Some guy just like you. You all start off the same. Big speeches that turn to shit after six months when the next promotion comes due. Then it's back to business as usual.

BURTON

And where did you pick up this lousy attitude?

DALTON

Right here. Watching guys like you.

BURTON

I'm sorry to hear that. Unlike the rest of you, I take my job seriously.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (2)

111

DALTON

Really? Then maybe you could explain to us, Colonel, why the Bradley's been ordered into production. Before you've done your job?

112 INT. PENTAGON/BOCK'S OFFICE. DAY

112

Burton storms in the door.

BURTON

What the hell's going on?
(tossing a memo at Bock)
A hundred Bradleys have been ordered!

BOCK

Is that a problem?

BURTON

Damn right. Every test we've run has either been a failure or a fraud.

BOCK

We have a schedule, and we're going to stick to it. Don't you get it? They want the Bradley deployed. I'm not going to have it on my record that the Bradley fell behind schedule just because you're fussing around over some goddamn test.

BURTON

Those goddam tests could save lives, Colonel.

BOCK

The Bradley could save lives, by bringing men to combat where needed. We need new troop carriers, Burton. And you're standing in the way of our troops getting them.

BURTON

That thing is a death trap.

BOCK

How do you know? Have you put people in there during a test?

BURTON

Of course not. But that's what you'll be doing if you send it out the way it is now.

113 INT. RESTAURANT. DAY.

113

Bock and Sayers are having lunch with DAVID COLLINS, a civilian who works for the FMC Corporation that manufactures the Bradley. The restaurant is elegant, expensive.

SAYERS

He wants to use what?

BOCK

Sheep. For a Vaporifics test.

COLLINS

Jesus. We've already started work on the chassis assembly.

BOCK

Dave, don't worry about it.

COLLINS

Cause if the sheep come out of this thing tits-up, we'll have to stop production.

SAYERS

There are ways around it. Around anything.

COLLINS

Like what?

No answer. They all think.

BOCK

We could sic the animal rights people on him.

SAYERS

That's a long shot.

COLLINS

It is cruel and unusual treatment of sheep.

The WAITER arrives with an entree for Collins, and sets it before him.

WAITER

Rack of lamb?

114 INT. PENTAGON/ BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

114

Fanning hangs up the phone and turns to Burton.

(CONTINUED)

FANNING
That was Aberdeen, sir.

BURTON
When do they plan to run the test?

FANNING
Immediately. Just as soon as we
send over the sheep.

BURTON
I thought they were in charge of the
sheep?

FANNING
They say it's being handled at our
end. The Surgeon General's office.

BURTON
What? Since when is the Surgeon
General ... a shepherd?

115 INT. PENTAGON/HALLWAY. DAY. 115

Burton is walking along an endless corridor. He comes to the
sign he is looking for: SURGEON GENERAL, U.S. ARMY. He
enters.

116 INT. PENTAGON/SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE/RECEPTION. DAY. 116

A SECRETARY thumbs through a directory.

SECRETARY
Sheep. Is that a code word,
Colonel?

BURTON
Sheep. Those woolly things that
go baa.

SECRETARY
Here it is. 3B225.

117 INT. PENTAGON/HALLWAY. DAY. 117

Burton walks down another endless corridor.

118 INT. PENTAGON/3B225. DAY. 118

Burton enters. The room is empty -- of people, furniture,
everything. A WORKMAN enters and loads the last remaining
file boxes onto a dolly.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON
Is this 3B225?

WORKMAN
This is it? Looking for someone.

BURTON
Yeah, I've lost my sheep
and don't know where to find them.

The WORKMAN rolls his eyes, -- officers.

WORKMAN
The guys who were here just moved.
Bigger office.

119 INT. PENTAGON/HALLWAY. DAY.

119

Burton heads down yet another endless corridor, in the opposite direction.

120 INT. PENTAGON/OFFICE. DAY.

120

Burton enters, stops, backs up and looks at the name on the door: RUMINANT PROCUREMENT. Burton looks around. There are TWENTY PENTAGON JUNIOR OFFICERS in four rows of five desks, busily working at computers. DIAGRAMS OF SHEEP are on the walls. He approaches an officious YOUNG OFFICER who is busy running things.

BURTON
(confused)
I was given this room number
by a maintenance worker.

YOUNG OFFICER
You must be Colonel Burton. We were told
you might show up.

BURTON
Who told you that?

YOUNG OFFICER
Colonel Bock. He established this office
last week. With the Surgeon General.
(beat)
You're the one who's trying to kill the
Bradley.

BURTON
Who told you that?

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG OFFICER
I'm sorry, sir. All information in this office is classified.

The officer moves off. Burton follows.

BURTON
Excuse me, but what is Ruminant Procurement?

YOUNG OFFICER
That's what this office has been created to do.

BURTON
Yeah, but what is it?

The Officer grabs a memo from a desk and reads.

YOUNG OFFICER
"...the analysis and policy determination for the parameters about which will be tendered research data on the optimal test ruminant. Such ruminants are to be..."

BURTON
....sheep? You mean sheep? You're in charge of buying the sheep, correct?

The Officer hands Burton the memo.

YOUNG OFFICER
We can't just go out and buy sheep.

BURTON
Why not?

YOUNG OFFICER
We're doing a Vaporifics Test on sheep. Vaporifics is all about what happens when a warhead penetrates armor -- the metal particles vaporize and form a large fireball that fills the troop compartment and ...

BURTON
Captain, I know what a Vaporifics test is. I'm the one who called for it.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG OFFICER

Then you know we have to have
sheep specs before we can proceed?

BURTON

What are sheep specs?

YOUNG OFFICER

Specifications. Shorn or unshorn? Rams,
ewes or lambs? Merinos or short hair.
Shorn merino ewes? Or unshorn merino
rams? Bighorns or domestic? Domestic
shorn lambs? Or Bighorn unshorn--

BURTON

(cutting him off)

Just how long will it take you to
get your sheep specs?

YOUNG OFFICER

Not long at all. Six, eight months tops
and then we can go to tender on the
research data. But then we will require
another eight months to evaluate the
data....

Burton turns and leaves in disgust. The Young Officer
continues his spiel, undeterred.

YOUNG OFFICER

...after which we can go into the
prototype ruminant evaluation mode...

121 EXT. FARM. DAY.

121

Burton stands in front of a herd of SHEEP. A FARMER is
nearby.

BURTON

How much?

122 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE. DAY.

122

A truck loaded with sheep backs onto the testing range,
directed by Burton. Dalton approaches.

DALTON

Sir? We just heard that Colonel Bock is
on his way over here.

BURTON

I'm sure he is.

(CONTINUED)

DALTON

For your information sir, sounded like a world-class shit fit.

BURTON

I'm sure it is, Sergeant.

123 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE. LATER.

123

Bock and Sayers jump out of a car.

BOCK

What the hell's going on here?

They reach Burton, who is standing knee-deep in sheep. There is so much BAH-ING from the sheep that it is hard to hear.

BURTON

Speak up. I can't hear you.

SAYERS

(shouting)

What are these sheep doing here?

BURTON

I bought them.

SAYERS

You can't do that.

BURTON

Well, I did.

BOCK

There are no sheep specs.

BURTON

I've already devised the sheep specs.

SAYERS

What are they?

BURTON

They're alive and kicking, and if it's a choice between them or soldiers being put into the Bradley, then they're it.

SAYERS

Testing is a science, Colonel Burton. Every test has to be a controlled experiment.

(CONTINUED)

BOCK

And you are out of control.

A sheep nudges Bock. He flinches and grabs his hip.

BOCK (cont'd)

Ouch! He bit me. The fucker bit me.

124 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. LATER.

124

Dalton, Granger, and a few technicians are standing to one side. A rocket is fired at the Bradley. The damage appears to be minimal.

BURTON

Let's open it up.

BOCK

(detains Burton)

Regulations, Colonel. Only qualified personnel are allowed within the critical radius of the test target for a period of ...

GRANGER, though, has already moved in and is opening the hatch on the Bradley. Immediately, he starts RETCHING. He falls off the Bradley, CONVULSING violently.

BURTON

Granger, don't breathe! It's the fumes! Stay back! Everyone stay back!

Burton covers his face with a cloth and races in to get Granger, pulling him to safety.

BOCK

I don't smell anything.

Granger is on the ground gagging violently.

BOCK

(to Sayers)

Do you smell anything?

125 INT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/HANGAR. FOLLOWING.

125

Burton and Dalton help Granger into the hangar. Several other soldiers follow.

DALTON

Get the medic!

(CONTINUED)

125 CONTINUED:

125

GRANGER

(choking)

I'm okay! Just back off and let me
breathe, okay?

126 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. SAME TIME.

126

Sayers is wearing a GAS MASK and is supervising several
soldiers who are similarly equipped. They are hauling DEAD
SHEEP out of the Bradley. FUMES still waft up.

SAYERS

Come on! Let's get 'em out of here!

127 INT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/HANGAR. SAME TIME.

127

Granger is leaning back, eyes closed, and breathing slowly.

GRANGER

I'm okay. Jesus, just one tiny whiff ...

DALTON

Did you get a look inside?

GRANGER

Nothing could survive those fumes.

Burton returns with the MEDIC with an oxygen mask.

BURTON

Back off. Let him through.

128 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING.

128

Burton returns to the Bradley. A few soldiers are clearing
up the mess.

SOLDIER

Sir? What killed those sheep?

BURTON

Toxic fumes. From the aluminum inside
the vehicle. It vaporizes when hit.

Burton looks around.

BURTON

Where are the sheep?

SOLDIER

Major Sayers said they had to go in the
incinerator.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON

What!

SOLDIER

They just carted them away, sir.

(beat)

Right over there.

BURTON

Stop!

SOLDIER

Colonel--

BURTON

I need them! For autopsy. To verify the results.

(yelling)

Stop those sheep!!

129 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/SIDE GATE. SAME TIME. 129

A truck loaded with DEAD SHEEP is pulling out of a side gate.

130 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. SAME TIME. 130

Burton sees a jeep driving up. He races over and commandeers it.

BURTON

Follow those sheep!

SOLDIER

(bewildered)

Excuse me?

131 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/SIDE GATE. DAY. 131

The jeep roars out the gate with Burton standing up in the passenger seat.

BURTON

(yelling)-

Stop that vehicle!

132 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. DAY. 132

The rickety old truck loaded with dead sheep roars along the road.

133 EXT/INT. JEEP. DAY.

133

BURTON

Faster! Faster! Through here, we'll cut them off.

The soldier checks the rear-view mirror, alarmed.

SOLDIER

Sir? We're still on army property, and--

A SIREN sounds behind them. A MILITARY POLICE car is right behind them. The soldier stops the jeep. Burton jumps out as two big Military COPS get out.

BURTON

They're getting away.
(yelling at the M.P.'s)
Dammit, I need those dead sheep! What the hell are you stopping us for. Stop the sheep!

He stares into the sunglasses of the two Military Cops who look at him like he's a lunatic.

PARTRIDGE (VO)

Some people might call Colonel Burton's behavior "colorful." I'm not one of them. My feeling is that an Air Force colonel should exhibit only one color, and that's Air Force blue.

134 EXT. WEAPON TESTING RANGE/OFFICE. FOLLOWING.

134

Burton steps out of the Military Police car. Dalton and the others just watch. Burton is silently furious, and a little embarrassed. He walks over to his jeep and gets in, leaving without a word to anyone. Dalton, Granger, and a couple of other soldiers watch him go, their expression hard to read.

135 INT. PENTAGON/PARTRIDGE'S OFFICE. DAY.

135

Burton stands resolutely before Partridge's desk.

BURTON

Not one of the tests I've ordered has been conducted according to plan and since my job ...

PARTRIDGE

(losing patience)
Your job is to stop whining and serve
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE (cont'd)
the United States as befits an
officer.

BURTON
Sir, I have an obligation to...

PARTRIDGE
You've got seventeen billion in
obligations, Colonel. And the price
keeps going up every minute we waste
arguing. Your job is to get the Bradley
rolling, and pronto.

BURTON
My job, General, is the Joint Live-
Fire Test Program. It means what it
says. Live fire. Sir, I'm going to have
to insist on a live-fire test on the
Bradley. Under combat conditions.
There's no other way--

PARTRIDGE
There have been plenty of tests with live
ammunition that--

BURTON
Sir. That is nonsense.

PARTRIDGE
I'm not sure I heard you right, Colonel.

BURTON
There've been no accurate tests, General.
Every test I know of has been a fraud.

PARTRIDGE
Sit down, Colonel.

Burton sits. Partridge gets up from his desk, and stands
next to Burton, looming large over him.

PARTRIDGE
You're losing sight of what's important
here.

BURTON
No. It's very clear to me...

PARTRIDGE
Now you listen to me, you fucking
fly boy. You don't know jack shit
about combat.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON

I know that there are a lot of ways for a soldier to die in that vehicle.

PARTRIDGE

Don't preach to me.

BURTON

I want a realistic test that...

PARTRIDGE

The number one priority at this point ...

BURTON

People first -- vehicle second -- Those are my priorities. Unfortunately, the Army's priorities seem to be the exact opposite.

PARTRIDGE

You are way out of line here!

BURTON

(beat)

Sir, I will not sign off on the Bradley without a live-fire test.

Burton turns and exits. Partridge, enraged, watches him go. He punches his intercom.

PARTRIDGE

Get me General De Grasso, Air Force Command.

136 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

136

Burton is at his desk. The phone rings. Fanning fields the call.

FANNING

Sir. That was General de Grasso. You're to report on the double.

Burton stands.

137 INT. PENTAGON/GENERAL DE GRASSO'S OFFICE. DAY.

137

Burton stands before his commanding officer, GENERAL DE GRASSO, who communicates without emotion.

(CONTINUED)

DE GRASSO

It's an economy move, Colonel.
Department wide. You're being
reassigned.

BURTON

To where, sir?

DE GRASSO

That has yet to be determined. You'll be
informed shortly.

BURTON

In the meantime, shall I continue in my
present assignment?

DE GRASSO

Your present assignment has been
eliminated.

BURTON

I'm not sure my job can be eliminated,
sir. I was appointed by Congress...

DE GRASSO

But you're paid by the Army, Colonel.
And if they can't afford you...

BURTON

There's an unfilled slot in my
department. They could eliminate that
and get the savings they need.

DE GRASSO

You've been given an order, Colonel.

BURTON

Yes, sir.

Burton salutes, and De Grasso returns it. Burton does an
about face and strides from the office.

138 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. EVENING.

138

All are gone except for Burton and Fanning.

BURTON

That son of a bitch...

Fanning produces a bottle of bourbon and two glasses.

(CONTINUED)

FANNING
One for the road?

BURTON
(notes the bottle)
Better put that away.

FANNING
What can they do? Fire you?

BURTON
All right. Just a finger.

Fanning fills the glass to the rim.

BURTON (cont'd)
Sergeant, a finger is measured
horizontally. Not like a dipstick.

FANNING
You look like you could use it, sir.

BURTON
I'm not really a drinking man.
(beat)
Hey, who am I kidding?
When I took this job, I used to have a
glass of wine before dinner. Pretty soon
it was two glasses. Last night I
polished off the best part of a bottle,
before we even sat down.
(beat, he smiles)
My wife said, "Jim, the wine's supposed
to breath, but it won't get a chance if
you inhale it first."

FANNING
Sounds like a bright lady.

BURTON
(nods)
Thank god, she's got a sense of humor
about all this, 'cause I've lost mine.
(beat)
You know, it sounds crazy, but I always
thought I'd win. Somewhere in my mind I
thought they'd suddenly smack themselves
on the forehead and say, "Burton, you're
right. We are putting self-interest
before the men's safety." What's right
here has always been just that obvious.
And it really bothers me that there are
people who can't see that. Or won't.

(CONTINUED)

Burton rises to go. Fanning reaches for his untouched drink.

FANNING

You don't mind, do you? I don't believe
in government waste.

BURTON

Go right ahead.

FANNING

Billions on a troop vehicle is one thing,
but I can't stand by while you throw away
good bourbon.

And he knocks the drink back. As the phone rings.

BURTON

Burton.

CAFFREY (OC PHONE)

You want your thankless job back?

BURTON

Jesus...

(beat)

Is there anything you don't know?

139 EXT/INT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. DUSK.

139

CAFFREY

Just one: how far are you willing to go
with this thing?

140 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

140

BURTON

You mean, how far is Partridge planning
to send me with this reassignment? My
guess is the dark side of the moon.

141 EXT/INT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. DUSK.

141

CAFFREY

While you're stewing it over, why not
take a trip this weekend?

142 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

142

BURTON

No, thanks. I've already done enough
traveling, back and forth to Aberdeen
testing ground.

143 EXT/INT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. DUSK.

143

CAFFREY
Ever been to California?

BURTON (OC PHONE)
What?

CAFFREY
You should go.

BURTON (OC PHONE)
Thanks. But I'm not really up for a
vacation right now.

CAFFREY
No one goes to San Jose for a vacation...

144 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

144

The line goes dead. Burton hangs up, confused, but
intrigued.

145 EXT. FACTORY/GATE. DAY.

145

ON A SIGN: FMC FACTORY. SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA. Burton shows
his I.D. to a GUARD at the gate. He enters.

146 INT. FACTORY/ENTRANCE. DAY.

146

ON A ROW OF BRADLEYS, fresh off the production line. Burton,
accompanied by a PROJECT MANAGER, stares in amazement.

147 INT. FACTORY/FLOOR. DAY.

147

Burton looks at one of the Bradley's. Unlike the Bradley
that Burton's been testing, this version of the vehicle has
external fuel tanks and several armored plates surrounding
it.

BURTON
Who changed the specs?

MANAGER
The Israelis.

BURTON
What?

MANAGER
When they placed the order.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON
These are for export?

MANAGER
Yeah.

BURTON
All of them?

MANAGER
Every one with these specs: fuel tanks
on the outside, reinforced armor.

BURTON
What about the specs for ours?

MANAGER
Exactly like the ones you're testing,
Colonel. No change.

148 EXT. DESERT AIR BASE. DAY.

148

An F-16 JET FIGHTER slashes through the frame and lands on a
desert runway.

It pulls past another JET. Beneath it, Caffrey is consulting
with TWO FIGHTER PILOTS.

149 EXT. DESERT AIR BASE/F-16. DAY.

149

ON BURTON, as he walks through the shimmering heat. Caffrey
turns and walks over to meet him.

CAFFREY
Hot damn. Colonel, you're either the
dumbest son of a bitch I know. Or the
bravest.

150 INT/EXT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. DAY.

150

JET FIGHTERS taxi past outside. Caffrey and Burton stand in
the shadows, talking.

CAFFREY
The Israelis didn't have to test it.
They knew from looking at it that it was
a death trap. So they put the fuel tanks
on the outside, and reinforced the armor.

BURTON
So while we're sending our guys off to
die, they're redesigning the damn thing.

(CONTINUED)

CAFFREY

They can't sell it like it is.

BURTON

That's what this is all about? The sale?

CAFFREY

Business as usual.

BURTON

I saw it, but I don't believe it.
Unfuckingbelievable.

CAFFREY

The Bradley is one of those fiascoes that's fueled by all the greed and ambition that a few thousand petty bureaucrats can supply. Before you know it, they do have a real weapon on their hands. A kind of black hole that devours billions, and the careers of anyone who stands in its way.

BURTON

(after a moment)

If there was just some way ...

CAFFREY

Remember, you win battles by maneuver.

BURTON

I don't have any room to maneuver.

CAFFREY

You've got room. You've got everything you need. Up here.
(points to his head)

BURTON

You think so, huh? I feel my head's about to blow any second.

CAFFREY

That means they're winning. What you've got to do is get inside their heads.

(points to his head again)

That's how you win.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON

Maybe I should pull back, retrench. When I reach a higher rank, I'll be in a stronger position to ...

CAFFREY

To get there, you're going to have to compromise your principles, then it'll be too late. You'll be programmed to keep operating the same rotten way once you're at the top. You wanna look good, or really do some good?

BURTON

Sounds like you want your job back after all...

151 INT. PENTAGON/WEINBERGER'S OFFICE. DAY

151

Weinberger throws a newspaper on his desk, in front of which sits Partridge.

WEINBERGER

General Partridge, you've read today's Washington Post?

PARTRIDGE

I have, Mr. Secretary.

WEINBERGER

Please explain to me why I have to find out from the press that the man in charge of testing the Bradley Fighting Vehicle has been fired?

PARTRIDGE

He wasn't fired, sir. He was reassigned.

WEINBERGER

By whom?

PARTRIDGE

By General De Grasso, his commanding officer. I'm as shocked as you are, sir. My guess is that there was some sort of confusion between the Army and Air Force commands. That's the kind of trouble you get into with these cross-departmental joint testing programs.

Weinberger's intercom sounds.

(CONTINUED)

WEINBERGER

Yes?

ASSISTANT (OC INTERCOM)

Congressman Stratton is on the phone.

Weinberger picks up.

WEINBERGER

Sam! What can I do for you? What article? Oh, that article. Of course, it's not true. Inter-office snafu.

(they share a laugh)

File the whole thing under creative journalism. His report? It's in the works as we speak. Advance word is that it gives the Bradley an A-1 rating. Well, you can be sure you're going to see it before anyone else -- except me, of course.

(more laughs)

Right. My best to Ellen. Good-bye, Sam.

Weinberger hangs up. He's not laughing now.

WEINBERGER

That is the last call like that I am going to receive on this matter from Congressman Stratton or anyone else on the Hill.

152 INT. PENTAGON/PARTRIDGE'S OFFICE. DAY

152

Partridge is at his desk, pouring over some papers. Burton enters. Partridge barely looks up.

PARTRIDGE

Colonel, I want you to do a report on the tests conducted on the BFV since your watch.

BURTON

Sir? I was under the impression that my job--

PARTRIDGE

Your job has been reinstated.

(beat)

I want your report on my desk by 1800 hours, tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON

Yes, sir.

PARTRIDGE

And Colonel, in case you are unaware, as per the military manual, your report will be delivered to me and to me alone.

Should so much as a single copy of your report be made public, I will bring you up on charges of willful subversion of military procedure and have you court-martialed.

(beat)

Dismissed.

153 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

153

Burton enters. Fanning is packing Burton's files.

BURTON

You can stop packing. We're staying.

FANNING

How did ...?

(beat)

Never mind.

BURTON

Do we have a rule book?

FANNING

A rule book, sir?

BURTON

A book, with rules in it.

FANNING

What do you need a rule book for?

BURTON

For playing by the rules. Because I always play by the rules.

FANNING

How do you know, if you need a rule book to tell what the rules are?

BURTON

I need a rule book to tell me what rules I--

(beat)

Just get me the book.

154 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

154

Burton is at the computer. On the desk next to him is a book of military rules and regulations. Fanning approaches.

FANNING

Night, sir.

BURTON

(as he types)

What sounds better: "The Bradley has so far failed virtually every test," or "the testing program of the Bradley has been without any coherent standards..."

FANNING

They both sound like something the General isn't going to want in his memo.

BURTON

This is not just a memo. This is a deadly weapon.

FANNING

Sir, an M-16 is a deadly weapon.
A memo is a piece of paper. Unless
you plan to inflict a lot of paper cuts
...

BURTON

Do you know what the Pentagon makes more of than anything else? Tanks, planes, bullets? No, memos. Mountains and mountains of memos. That's their game, confuse and delay. Well, I can play their game too.

(typing furiously)

The Joint Live-Fire Test Program lives!

FANNING

You haven't been inhaling any of those "joints", have you?

BURTON smiles and waves him away.

155 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. LATER THAT SAME NIGHT.

155

Burton is pounding away at the computer. As he works, we hear what he's writing.

(CONTINUED)

BURTON (VO)

" the failure of the Bradley to incorporate even the most elementary safeguards to protect the troops inside it raises questions about the integrity"

156 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. LATER STILL.

156

Burton's still at it.

BURTON (VO)

"...and the manner in which the Vaporifics Test was carried out suggests either negligence or a failure in the chain of command..."

157 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. STILL LATER.

157

BURTON (VO)

"...had any troops been inside the vehicle as it is currently configured, they would have been killed either by toxic fumes, flames, or the overpressure created by the powerful expanding gas in the compartment ..."

158 INT. PENTAGON/PARTRIDGE'S OFFICE. THE NEXT DAY.

158

Partridge is reading Burton's report. An AIDE stands by.

PARTRIDGE

"...and as a result of manifest deficiencies in every area, this office is advising the immediate necessity of live-fire testing under combat conditions..."

Partridge hands his aide the report.

PARTRIDGE

Rewrite it.

AIDE

Sir?

PARTRIDGE

Rewrite this fucking piece of garbage so it smells like a rose

159 INT. PENTAGON/AIDE'S OFFICE. DAY

159

The aide is at the computer.

(CONTINUED)

ON THE COMPUTER: "The Bradley test standards have been consistently altered in extreme ways..." which is rewritten to say: "The Bradley tests have been extremely consistent. They have altered the standard for testing..."

Next: "...the manner in which the Vaporifics Test was carried out suggests either negligence or a failure in the chain of command..." becomes: "...the marginalized optimal performance data suggests no vaporifics shift at this time..."

160 INT. PENTAGON/PARTRIDGE'S OFFICE. DAY.

160

Partridge reads the revised memo.

PARTRIDGE

...the marginalized optimal performance data suggests no vaporifics shift at this time..."

(beat)

Brilliant, Corporal. Absofuckinglutely brilliant.

AIDE

Thank you.

(beat)

But, sir?

PARTRIDGE

What?

AIDE

What does it mean?

PARTRIDGE

What do you mean, "what does it mean?"
You wrote it.

161 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY.

161

Fanning reads the revised memo.

FANNING

...the Bradley tests have been extremely consistent. They have altered the standard for testing..."

(beat)

Have you actually read this thing? It's exactly the opposite of what you wrote.

BURTON

I know.

(CONTINUED)

Burton can't help but smile as he picks up the rule book.

BURTON

Military rule number one: I write my report. It's classified. It goes to Partridge. Military rule number two: He can revise it any way he wants. His version is also classified. Rule number three: My reply to what he's written can be sent to anyone remotely involved in the Bradley.

FANNING

(getting it)

That could be, hundreds of people...

BURTON

Rules are rules... Strictly by the book.

162 INT. PENTAGON/PARTRIDGE'S OFFICE. DAY.

162

The General is storming around reading Burton's response. Bock and Sayers stand by.

PARTRIDGE

"....the characterization in your report is at best a serious misunderstanding of the testing procedures on a vehicle as flawed as the Bradley. As noted in my original report--"

(beat)

Jesus Christ. Who did this fucking thing go to?

BOCK

The distribution page listed 198 names.

PARTRIDGE

Court-martial that sonofabitch. Lock him up. Now.

BOCK

We already looked into that. We can't.

PARTRIDGE

We sure as hell can.

BOCK

He's playing by the book. His report is classified. His comment on your report isn't.

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED:

162

The aide sticks his head in the door.

AIDE

Sir, the Washington Post is on the phone.

Bock checks his watch.

BOCK

That was fast. Leaks don't usually get to them till the afternoon.

163 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY

163

Burton is on the phone. Fanning is juggling all the other calls flooding in.

BURTON

I'm sorry, but under military rules I am unable to comment...

(beat)

I can't comment.

(beat)

No. No comment. I'm sorry.

Good bye.

Hangs up and turns to Fanning.

BURTON

I'm getting a sore throat from not saying anything.

The phone rings, and he takes it again.

BURTON (cont'd)

Burton.

(beat)

No, I can't comment.

(beat)

Is there anything I can comment on?

(he grabs a piece of paper)

Well, yes, I just received orders that I am to report for duty in Alaska.

164 PARTRIDGE'S OFFICE. DAY.

164

Partridge's phone is ringing off the hook.

PARTRIDGE

(on the phone)

Alaska is a prestige posting, Senator ...

(beat)

No, sir, that memo of his had nothing to do with his being transferred ...

(CONTINUED)

Partridge's aide rushes in and slips a note in front of him.

PARTRIDGE

(on the phone)

Senator, I'm sorry, but I've just been informed that Secretary Weinberger is on the line. Could I get right back to you? Thank you.

He slams down the phone.

AIDE

Sir! Before you pick up: Weinberger's holding on two; line one is the Times; line three is Wall St. Journal; four is Newsweek; line five is the House Armed Services Committee; line six ...

PARTRIDGE

The House Armed Services Committee? What do they want?

AIDE

Hearings, sir. On the Bradley.

165 EXT. CONGRESS. DAY.

165

A caravan of LIMOS drives up to the capitol. LOBBYISTS and DEFENSE INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES emerge and walk up the steps to the Capitol. Among them we see Sayers.

A second caravan arrives: Pentagon Staff cars driven by military chauffeurs pull up. HIGH RANKING OFFICERS get out, including Partridge and Bock. Their medals flash as they head up the steps.

166 THE GENERAL

166

UNSEEN QUESTIONER

Alaska, General?

PARTRIDGE

We thought that Colonel Burton's skills could best be used in that very strategic theater of operations.

At this point, the camera pulls slowly back from the General and the LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE UP to reveal that we have been in a HOUSE SUB COMMITTEE hearing room. The room is packed: behind the General sits an army: OFFICERS, REPORTERS, SPECTATORS. In front of the room is the HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE -- including the UNSEEN QUESTIONER, who chairs the Committee.

(CONTINUED)

CONGRESSMAN

You felt that testing the tundra was more important than completing tests on the Bradley?

PARTRIDGE

As committed environmentalists, we saw it as our duty to delineate any potential degradation of the environment by assigning Colonel Burton to that test.

CONGRESSMAN

And it has nothing to do with Colonel Burton's criticism of the Bradley testing procedures.

PARTRIDGE

There is no connection whatsoever, Mr. Chairman.

CONGRESSMAN

Did you ever say to Colonel Burton -- "if I get one more call from the Hill about your -- expletive deleted -- report, I'll put your ass in a sling?"

PARTRIDGE

Does that sound like me?

CONGRESSMAN

Answer the question, please.

PARTRIDGE

I don't remember saying it. Not that I wasn't provoked.

CONGRESSMAN

Two witnesses have testified that you said exactly those words to Colonel Burton outside the Pentagon pharmacy.

PARTRIDGE

I have visited the pharmacy. Quite a bit lately. For antacids.

(smiles at his own joke)

But I would never say anything like that to anyone, let alone a fellow officer.

CONGRESSMAN

But you make no secret of your antagonism to Colonel Burton?

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

It's his report that I don't approve of.
Colonel Burton's report is fallacious,
misinformed, and accusatory.
And I have no use for any officer who is
more interested in grabbing headlines
than he is in defending this country.

167 EXT. CAPITOL. DAY.

167

Burton drives up in his jeep, unattended. As he pulls into a
parking spot, an ATTENDANT flags him down.

ATTENDANT

Hey, pal! You can't park there.

Burton backs out and heads for another parking place

ATTENDANT

Don't even think about it!

168 INT. CAPITOL/HEARING ROOM. DAY

168

Flanked by civilian officials, Sayers testifies.

SAYERS

Congressman, in my opinion, Colonel
Burton refused to accept that effective
testing procedures are an evolutionary
process. These testing procedures need
to be refined, and then refined again.
Colonel Burton was only interested in the
quick fix ...

169 INT. CAPITOL/CORRIDOR. DAY

169

Burton heads down the hall, dwarfed by its scale.

170 INT. CAPITOL/HEARING ROOM. DAY

170

Bock, flanked by other officers, is testifying.

BOCK

Colonel Burton insists that we test the
Bradley in combat conditions, but he has
no concept of how the Bradley will be
used in combat.

ON BURTON, as he enters. Partridge's AIDE notes Burton's
arrival and quickly moves up behind General Partridge and
whispers in his ear. Partridge turns to see ... Burton.

(CONTINUED)

CONGRESSMAN

At this time, the committee would like to call as witness, Colonel James G. Burton, United States Air Force.

PARTRIDGE

(quickly)
Mr. Chairman.

CONGRESSMAN

Yes, General.

PARTRIDGE

As you must know, under military rules of conduct, no man may appear at these hearings without the express order of his commanding officer. Unfortunately, General De Grasso is on a fact-finding tour of our bases in Germany. I don't believe General De Grasso has given any order for Colonel Burton to testify.

CONGRESSMAN

You are quite right, General. But as Colonel Burton has been transferred to Alaska, he is no longer under General De Grasso's command. Am I correct?

ON PARTRIDGE. He's been trumped, and he has nothing to say.

171 INT. CAPITOL/HEARING ROOM. DAY

171

Burton is testifying.

CONGRESSMAN

Looks like you stirred up a hornet's nest, Colonel.

BURTON

Sir, that was never my intention.

CONGRESSMAN

What was your intention?

BURTON

Simply to do the job I was assigned...

DISSOLVE

(CONTINUED)

BURTON

...and so by this time, with so many dollars spent, there was still no agreement even on what the vehicle should be. The Bradley is a vehicle that performs a variety of tasks, but doesn't do any of them very well ...

DISSOLVE

BURTON

...when the Israelis bought the Bradley, they made extensive modifications to protect their troops riding inside it, such as storing their fuel outside the crew compartment ...

CONGRESSMAN

And we have not?

BURTON

That is correct.

The Army brass, the defense industry executives, the civilian testers, all watch in stony silence.

DISSOLVE

BURTON

The Army test reports do not make the possibility of casualties a top priority. In fact, General Partridge's report on the Bradley does not even mention the word casualty. Not once....I came to the conclusion that what was required was a live-fire-test. I requested such a test, repeatedly--

CONGRESSMAN

Did you get that test?

BURTON

No, sir. I did not...

CONGRESSMAN

Why not?

BURTON

I wanted more realism than Army testing was accustomed to providing.

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE
(interjecting)
You want realism ...?

CONGRESSMAN
General, you are out of order.

PARTRIDGE
Congressman, in the interest of resolving the issues presented here today, I would like to say something.

CONGRESSMAN
Go ahead, General.

PARTRIDGE
Colonel Burton wants more realism. So let's talk about the real world for a moment.
The real world has enemies in it. There are forces who are at work even now with one objective in mind, the destruction of this country. We must not, we will not allow these forces to prevail. For if they do, you can be sure that you and I and everyone else will never again have the luxury of meeting in this building to debate anything. As I said at the outset, we are in the business of winning. That takes teamwork. And Colonel Burton is not a team player.

CONGRESSMAN
General, the "teamwork" you so prize, I take it it was in full force during the development of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

PARTRIDGE
Text book.

CONGRESSMAN
Perhaps you'd like to tell us how much has been spent so far to develop the Bradley.

PARTRIDGE
How much?

CONGRESSMAN
You have the figures, don't you?

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

Of course.

The General, trapped, puts on his glasses and hastily thumbs through a LOOSE LEAF BINDER in front of him.

PARTRIDGE (cont'd)

(reads)

Ah...Twenty...more or less.

CONGRESSMAN

Twenty?

PARTRIDGE

Twenty.

CONGRESSMAN

Million?

PENTAGON WARS

(clears his throat)

.....Billion.

CONGRESSMAN

Billion? With a "b"?

PARTRIDGE

...with a "b".

CONGRESSMAN

Twenty billion dollars. For designing one armored vehicle?

PARTRIDGE

That's one way of looking at it.

CONGRESSMAN

Of the taxpayers money?

PARTRIDGE

We're all taxpayers, after all. We're in this together.

CONGRESSMAN

General, how many years has this program been running?

PARTRIDGE

The way I make it out here... twelve... fifteen... seventeen... seventeen years...

(quickly)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED: (4)

171

PARTRIDGE (cont'd)

Which is evidence of the enormous care my team takes in the development of each and every weapon system undertaken by the Pentagon.

CONGRESSMAN

Seventeen years. Twenty billion dollars. Of taxpayers' money. General, I think it's time the great American public gets the live-fire test that Colonel Burton wants.

And that is that.

172 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/HANGAR. DAY.

172

Sayers and Colonel Bock enter. Sitting in the middle of the hangar is a Bradley.

CAFFREY (VO)

Calvin Coolidge was right: the problems in life start when you get what you want. They'll be coming up with ways to screw you that you haven't dreamed of yet ...

173 EXT/INT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. DAY.

173

Caffrey is on the phone.

CAFFREY

.... they'll bring in ringers. It's a poker game, Jim, and you're playing against sharks who can deal the cards in any order they want ...

174 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/HANGAR. DAY.

174

Dalton and his men ARE ALTERING the Bradley -- under the orders of Bock and Sayers.

CAFFREY (VO)

...they're gonna do everything they can to make you out to be a fool and a traitor.

175 EXT/INT. DESERT AIR BASE/HANGAR. DAY.

175

CAFFREY

They'll shave that deck any way they have to and hang you out to dry...

176 EXT. WEAPONS TEST RANGE/HANGAR. NIGHT. 176

Sayers checks the illicit changes that are being made to make sure the Bradley passes the live-fire test.

177 INT. PENTAGON/BURTON'S OFFICE. DAY. 177

Burton is packing up his papers and leaving for the big test. Fanning and the others watch.

FANNING

Sir ...

BURTON

Sergeant?

FANNING

I thought about this last night. And I was thinking maybe I should be out there with you. You know, a show of solidarity and all that.

BURTON

(moved)

Thanks, Sergeant.

FANNING

But I decided against it.

BURTON

One career is enough. I understand.

FANNING

I don't think you do, Colonel. You see, I thought I could do more good here at the Pentagon if I kept a low profile, -- if I wasn't seen fraternizing with the enemy, so to speak.

BURTON

(big smile)

Thinking of joining our side?

FANNING

Colonel, I already have.

178 EXT. PENTAGON/PARKING LOT. DAY. 178

Burton exits. As he heads for his jeep, he sees something: Caffrey, crossing the parking lot, heading right for him.

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED:

178

BURTON
You know something? You're either the
dumbest sonofabitch I know, or the--
(beat)
--the dumbest...

Caffrey laughs.

CAFFREY
Time to come in from the cold.

179 EXT. WEAPON TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DUSK.

179

The Bradley is sitting in the middle of the field, ready for the test. Burton and Caffrey take a look at it.

CAFFREY
I'm not an Infantry guy. Hell, I'm not even Army. All I really know is jet fighters.
But I'll tell you one thing: every damn one of these nuts and bolts has been taken off and put back on again.

He rubs his finger along a flange. A WHITE CRUSTY FOAM has formed where it is bolted to the fuel shield.

CAFFREY
This wouldn't be flame retardant, would it?

BURTON
(mock amazement)
Surely not.

CAFFREY
This deck sure as hell has been shaved, and it's the work of a master.

BURTON
Yeah.
(beat)
Time I played the Ace.

180 INT/EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/HANGAR. NIGHT

180

Burton enters Dalton and his exhausted, grimy crew, are lounging around, having a beer. They snap to.

BURTON
At ease, gentlemen. Looks like you've been working.

(CONTINUED)

Sullen nods.

BURTON

Sergeant? You got any M-16's you're testing around here?

DALTON

Got a couple in the lock-up.

BURTON

Bring me one please.

181 INT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/HANGAR. NIGHT

181

Dalton hands Burton an M-16.

BURTON

I want to tell you a story....

Granger rolls his eyes.

BURTON

You have a problem, Mr. Granger?

GRANGER

No, sir.

BURTON

Good. Because it's about guys like you. Guys who were in Vietnam. About a year ago, I went to the Veterans hospital to visit a friend, someone I know from my fighter days, but I took a wrong turn when I got off the elevator. But now, when I look back on it, it was no accident. I was meant to go down that corridor, because that's where I met Phil.

Burton holds up the M-16.

BURTON

Now I don't know alot about rifles. But I'll tell you what Phil taught me about the M-16. You all know the M-16. I'll bet a lot of you used it over in Vietnam. But you were lucky. None of you could have been there in the early days of that war, when they sent guys over to fight with M-16's that jammed in combat. Little bit of dust, little bit of rain, and you were left with a gun that was useless.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BURTON (cont'd)

(beat)

Maybe the early M-16's weren't tested properly. Maybe someone, somewhere, was more worried about a production schedule, or a career, or a promotion than he was about the kids who were sent over to some fucking jungle and ended up holding their stomachs in their hand.

Suddenly he lets the M-16 fall to the concrete floor with an ECHOING CLATTER.

BURTON

But you don't know anyone that happened to, do you? No, I'm sure not. Otherwise, you'd be out there right now making sure that Bradley is exactly -- exactly --the way any normal Bradley will be under normal combat conditions. With guys riding inside, just like the guys you didn't know in Bien Hoa or Nha Trang or whatever piece of hell it was.

He picks up the M-16, aims it in the air and pulls the trigger. There is a loud CLICK. The attention of every man in the place is riveted on him.

BURTON

None of you guys seems to be real worried about this test. Or about the next generation of kids who get to ride into heavy battle -- inside this thing. You might feel different if you knew Phil, the guy in the veteran's hospital. He's about your age, and he's been in a coma for 20 years. There's an old wedding photo of him and his bride. It's got an Army eagle on the frame, and it's sitting up on the shelf next to the catheter.

(beat)

He's been in that coma since the day his M-16 jammed somewhere outside Vung Tau...

He hands the M-16 back to one of the soldiers.

BURTON

But, hell, you don't know the guy. Or anybody like him. Good night gentlemen.

He turns and walks outside. There is a SILENCE among the soldiers.

182 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/GATE. MORNING. 182

A continuous stream of vehicles arrives at the test site military STAFF CARS, a few LIMOS, GOVERNMENT CARS....

183 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. DAY. 183

Partridge gets out of a staff car. Bock is waiting nervously.

PARTRIDGE
Morning Colonel. Everything okay?

BOCK
Fine sir.

184 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. DAY. 184

Dalton and his crew (the same soldiers Burton talked to the night before), are wheeling a flat-bed vehicle into place. Mounted on top of it is an ANTI-TANK WEAPON. The crew is clean-shaven and cleaned-up from the night before.

SAYERS
Everything all right, Sergeant?

SGT. DALTON
Fine sir.

185 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY. 185

A giant mobile BILLBOARD is positioned in the center of the test range. On it is a picture of the Bradley, and the words: THE BRADLEY. CARRYING ON IN THE FINEST TRADITION.

186 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. DAY. 186

Members of the House Armed Services Committee arrive and mingle with the onlookers. Partridge is like the genial host of his own private party. He is shaking hands and mingling. Burton and Caffrey arrive.

CAFFREY
Jesus. Is this a garden party
or a weapons test?

187 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. DAY. 187

Dalton, Spec-4 Granger, and the others are looking around and exchanging glances.

188 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. DAY. 188

Burton is looking at Dalton and company. He looks worried.

BURTON

I don't like what I see.

(beat)

Those guys are clean-shaven and scrubbed
as surgeons.

CAFFREY

Yeah? So?

BURTON

So if the Bradley was rigged when we saw
it last night, and if those guys were
going to put it right, then they should
be looking raggedy-assed and dazed like a
bunch of tomcats at dawn.

ON PARTRIDGE, talking to the group of VIP's around him.

PARTRIDGE

I think it's fair to say that you'll be
seeing enough from this test to give you
the basis, once and for all, to form your
own conclusions about the kind of
systemic excellence....

189 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY. 189

The mobile billboard showing the painting of the Bradley is
moved aside revealing the actual Bradley. It looms,
powerful, seemingly invincible.

190 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. DAY. 190

PARTRIDGE

(the solicitous host)

I'll be giving the signal shortly.
When I do, I'd like you to visualize
combat conditions. Imagine that
the men firing that missile are the
enemy. And the Bradley ... I don't
have to tell you, the Bradley's on
our side ...

191 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. DAY. 191

Dalton and his men are making final preparations, lining up
the Bradley in the sights of the anti-Tank weapon.

(CONTINUED)

SAYERS

Everything's going to go as planned isn't it?

DALTON

It'll go exactly as it should.

Sayers half-smiles. Then he realizes he didn't get the answer he should have.

SAYERS

As planned. Right?

Dalton speaks into a two-way radio.

SGT. DALTON

Move the vehicle about five yards forward and then clear out.

192 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY.

192

The Bradley's engine roars, and it moves a few yards forward. The driver then leaves it IDLING and jumps out.

193 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. DAY.

193

SAYERS

There's fuel in that tank. Sergeant, you put ... what? Just enough to start it up?

(no answer)

How much fuel is in those tanks?

DALTON

No more than it would have if it was in combat.

Sayers suddenly realizes that he's in big trouble. He SIGNALS his panic.

194 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. DAY.

194

Bock sees Sayers's waving.

PARTRIDGE

Ladies and gentlemen, you have been briefed as to the test conditions, and the hour is at hand ...

BOCK

(panicked)

Ah, sir ... sir ...

(CONTINUED)

PARTRIDGE

All eyes front, on the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. The vehicle which will carry our boys to victory for many, many years to come.

The General gives a HAND SIGNAL to proceed.

195 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. DAY. 195

Dalton FIRES.

196 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY. 196

The Bradley is hit by the anti-tank weapon. It immediately BLOWS UP IN A HUGE FIREBALL.

197 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. DAY. 197

Everyone dives for cover.

198 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. DAY. 198

Dalton and his men grin. DEBRIS showers down all over.

199 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. DAY. 199

Burton and Caffrey watch.

200 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY. 200

The Bradley has secondary EXPLOSIONS. It is a mass of flames.

201 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/COMMAND POSITION. DAY. 201

The General dusts himself off. He stares at the molten mass of flames. For a moment he is dumbfounded, but he recovers, turning to the VIPs.

PARTRIDGE

Lunch anyone? -

202 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIRING AREA. DAY. 202

Burton walks over to Granger and Dalton.

GRANGER

Colonel?

BURTON

Yes, Sergeant?

(CONTINUED)

GRANGER

The whole time you were stem-winding that speech of yours to us last night all I could think of was: "Shit this guy has been marooned at sea for so long, he don't recognize dry land when he's standing on it."

BURTON

(grinning)

That a fact?

GRANGER

Sir, we'd already taken all the phony shit out of the vehicle. The stuff those guys made us rig the thing with. Then we had to listen to you on top of it.

BURTON

Next time I'll know better.

GRANGER

Great sermon, though. Anytime you want to show up and make a speech just for the hell of it, let us know.

And for the first time, hard-ass GRANGER salutes. And BURTON, standing tall, returns it.

203 EXT. WEAPONS TESTING RANGE/FIELD. DAY.

203

The Bradley burns....and burns...and burns.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP

Over the burning Bradley, we superimpose a photo of Burton, and the following lines:

Within months of the test of the Bradley, Colonel James Burton had been forced to retire from the military by those he had opposed within the Pentagon.

A photo of the General.

Most of those overseeing the testing of the Bradley were promoted. The General in charge of the program was given a third star.

(CONTINUED)

A photo of Bock.

Colonel Bock was Promoted to General and was put in charge of several multi-billion dollar weapons testing programs before retiring to work as Vice President of a Defense contracting firm.

204 EXT. PERSIAN GULF WAR. DAY.

204

Back to the very first scene of the film--one of the Bradleys TAKES A HIT. In the smoke and dust of combat a YOUNG SOLDIER pokes his head up out of the Bradley's hatch. He is dazed--but thankful to be alive.

FREEZE FRAME

The Bradley was used extensively in combat in the Persian Gulf War. As a result of modifications made after tests ordered by Colonel James Burton, it is estimated that casualties were reduced by over fifty percent.

However many of the crucial recommendations about fire hazards still had not been implemented. Twenty of the Bradleys exploded in flames when hit by enemy fire...

FADE OUT

THE END