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Yellow Ribbons

D. Scott Drake
Old Dominion University

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YELLOW RIBBONS

by

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B.A., May 1981, Creighton University

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
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Approved by?

William Patrick, Director

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ABSTRACT

YELLOW RIBBONS

D. Scott Drake
Old Dominion University, 1993
Director: William Patrick

Yellow Ribbons is a feature-film screenplay that dramatizes various aspects of the Persian Gulf War. The hero of the story, Lieutenant Jason Hart, a talented but quixotic naval fighter pilot, participates in one of the last allied offensive military actions: the bombing of the retreating Iraqi army. Jake suffers a crisis of conscience in the climactic moment of the bombing and decides that he cannot continue to serve the navy as a fighter pilot. The story then shifts from the Persian Gulf to the United States. There Jake encounters a new set of obstacles as he struggles with his experience in the war. The most important of these obstacles include his crumbling marriage and his quest to tell the truth about the war. Jake is successful in the latter endeavor, but the price he pays is quite high.

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FADE IN:

Green and red lights glow in the Combat Information Center of the U.S.S. John F. Kennedy (CV-67).

RADAR CONTROLMEN monitor the sweep of their radar scopes.

STATUS BOARD KEEPERS write the tail numbers of the Heartbreakers and other Kennedy squadrons onto the status boards.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER STEVE HINSON, middle thirties, harried, takes a message from a VOICE on the radiotelephone.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hometown, Hometown, this is Victory, over.

STEVE

Victory, this is Hometown, go ahead, over.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hometown, delta five seven, alpha six two, x-ray one six, romeo one five. Do you copy, over?

Steve writes the message on a status board.

STEVE

Victory, I copy delta five seven, alpha six two, x-ray one six, romeo one five, over.

VOICE (O.S.)

Roger, out.

Steve looks up the codes in the code book, writing each word next to the alpha-numeric code on the status board.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

An F-14 Tomcat rolls across the flight deck into the catapult.

INT. HART'S JET - NIGHT

LIEUTENANT JAKE "DUSTER" HART, late twenties, a talented but quixotic man, and the radar intercept officer, LIEUTENANT TOM "FOUR EYES" JOHNSON, a geeky-looking man who wears glasses, ready for launch.

JAKE

Got a radio check, Four Eyes?

TOM

Hometown this is Heartbreaker two zero four. Radio check, over.

INT. COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER (CIC) - NIGHT

The Status Board Keeper writes Jake's jet's tail number, 204, onto the board. A Radar Controlman sits in front of the green glow of a radar scope.

CONTROLMAN

Heartbreaker two zero four this is Hometown, I read you loud and clear. How me, over?

INT. HART'S JET - NIGHT

TOM

I read you loud and clear, out.

Jake tests the control stick to the left, right, forward, and backward.

JAKE

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

TOM

Amen.

INT. CIC - NIGHT

CAPTAIN BILL SHELTON, the KENNEDY skipper, and REAR ADMIRAL BLOUIN, whose silver hair and thick eyebrows accent his wizened face, wait as Steve decodes the message.

CAPTAIN SHELTON

Well Steve?

STEVE

The eagle has landed, Sir. The message from central command is that the eagle has landed.

ADMIRAL BLOUIN

The air force is bombing Iraq. Better tell Central Command that our boys aren't far behind.

CAPTAIN SHELTON

Steve.

STEVE

I'm already on it, Captain.

Steve goes to the radiotelephone. Admiral Blouin turns to Captain Shelton.

ADMIRAL BLOUIN

And now we wait.

Captain Shelton takes a quick glance at all of the tail numbers on the status boards.

CAPTAIN SHELTON

God help us all.

EXT. BAGHDAD - NIGHT

Sirens WAIL as search lights and thousands of tracers from anti-aircraft ARTILLERY light the night sky over Baghdad.

Distant EXPLOSIONS can be heard.

A building EXPLODES into dust and rubble.

Fire leaps up into the sky.

SCREAMS pierce the night.

INT. JAKE'S JET - NIGHT

Jake rams the throttles forward. The engines WHINE.

TOM

How's the reflexes, Jake?

JAKE
Quick as lightning. How's the vision,
Four Eyes?

TOM
Sharp as an eagle's on a sunny day.

JAKE
Let's do it.

Jake salutes the CATAPULT OFFICER.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

The catapult shoots Jake's jet off of the flight deck. The FLIGHT DECK CREW stands in a cloud of steam as the glow from the engine exhaust of Jake's F-14 lifts into the sky.

EXT. F-14 FORMATION - NIGHT

Jake and Tom join the other Heartbreakers in formation as the squadron of F-14's flies over the Arabian peninsula.

EXT. IRAQI AIR BASE - NIGHT

The general alarm RINGS out over EXPLOSIONS as the IRAQI PILOTS scramble to their jets.

A MiG BLASTS down the runway and takes off.

EXT. E-2C HAWKEYE - NIGHT

A U.S. Navy E-2C flies alone in the Arabian sky.

INT. E-2C HAWKEYE - NIGHT

A RADAR OFFICER picks up the Iraqi fighter on his radar scope.

RADAR OFFICER
Heartbreaker, this is Tomahawk,
bandit, bandit, 020 degrees, 225
miles, over.

EXT. F-14 FORMATION - DAY

As the Heartbreakers proceed to their target the morning sun breaks over the horizon.

INT. PETE'S JET - DAY

COMMANDER PETE "SKIPPER" FORSTER, a no-nonsense man who commands the Heartbreakers, takes the message.

PETE
Tomahawk, Heartbreaker, roger, out.
Look alive, gents, company's on the way.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Jake alternates his view from his instruments to the sky.

JAKE
Can you see him?

Tom looks at the radar scope and fine tunes its picture.

TOM
I've got him, Jake, 025 degrees, 210 miles.

EXT. IRAQI JET - DAY

The Iraqi jet flies toward the Heartbreakers.

INT. KENNEDY CIC - DAY

A Status Board Keeper adds the Iraqi fighter to the tactical display board. Its flight path visibly intercepts that of the Heartbreakers.

Captain Shelton and Admiral Blouin look over a chart as Steve hangs up the radiotelephone.

STEVE
Captain, Tomahawk reports one bandit.

ADMIRAL BLOUIN
Just one? So much for their air power.

CAPTAIN SHELTON
Our Air Force probably took care of
the rest from that airfield.
(to Steve)
Course?

STEVE
Two zero zero, Sir, toward the
Heartbreakers.

INT. PETE'S JET - DAY

Pete looks in the direction of Jake's jet.

PETE
Two-oh-four break starboard and engage.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Jake looks in the direction of Pete's jet as he takes the
message.

HART
Two-oh-four, roger.

EXT. F-14 FORMATION - DAY

Jake rolls his jet out of the formation to the right and
flies alone toward the Iraqi MiG.

INT. CIC - DAY

The Status Board Keeper writes 204 on the tactical display
board as Jake engages the Iraqi.

Captain Shelton signs a message and Admiral Cave looks on as
Steve monitors the radiotelephone.

STEVE
Captain, two zero four is engaged.
The remainder of the squadron stayed
with the bombers.

CAPTAIN SHELTON
Who's the pilot of two-oh-four?

STEVE
Jake Hart, Sir.

ADMIRAL BLOUIN
Is he a good man, Ron?

CAPTAIN SHELTON
Admiral, he was born to fly.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Tom keeps his eyes focused on the blip on the radar scope.

TOM
Let's not get too close to this
bastard.

INT. IRAQI JET - DAY

The IRAQI PILOT watches a white blip advance on his radar scope. As the blip moves toward the center of the scope the Pilot flips a switch to lock his fire control radar on Jake's jet. A light flashes.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

A red light on Tom's panel flashes and an alarm BEEPS. Tom flips a switch shutting the alarm off.

TOM
Goddammit Jake we're lit up! We came
in too close!

Jake is calm, his eyes focused on a distant point in the sky.

JAKE
I know what I'm doing.

INT. IRAQI JET - DAY

The Pilot presses the fire button, releasing an air-to-air missile.

EXT. IRAQI JET - DAY

The air-to-air missile FIRES off the wing tip of the Iraqi jet.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Another warning light flashes and an alarm BEEPS. Tom turns the alarm off.

TOM
Inbound! Inbound!

Jake remains calm and focused.

JAKE
Range?

TOM
Forty miles. Shoot, man, shoot!

EXT. MISSILE - DAY

The Iraqi air-to-air missile STREAKS toward Hart's jet.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Jake sees the missile threat ahead in the sky.

JAKE
Launch chaff!

Tom pushes a button on his control panel.

TOM
Chaff away. Break right! Break right!

EXT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

A silver plume of chaff BURSTS off the wing of Jake's jet as it breaks sharply to the right. The missile rushes past and EXPLODES harmlessly in the chaff.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Jake and Tom watch the pyrotechnic explosion.

TOM
Goddammit, Jake, that was too close.
I think I shit my flight suit!

JAKE

Have faith, Four Eyes. I won't let you down.

EXT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

The Iraqi fighter BLASTS by Jake and Tom.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Tom snaps his head around as the Iraqi fighter streaks by.

TOM

Jesus! Who is this asshole?

Jake throws the control stick to the right.

JAKE

A damn good pilot, that's who.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Jake's jet breaks to the left and behind the Iraqi fighter.

The Iraqi quickly rolls to the right.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Tom watches the Iraqi jet as Jake maneuvers the stick, matching the Iraqi move for move.

JAKE

Oh, you're good.

Jake throws the control stick to the right.

TOM

Must of been trained by the Russians.

JAKE

No, I bet we trained him.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Jake's jet again moves in behind the Iraqi fighter.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

A blip on Jake's radar scope is nearly in the center of the screen. Jake moves the control stick in concert with the blip.

JAKE
Steady. Steady.

EXT. SKY - DAY

The Iraqi jet climbs straight up, attempting to loop around Jake.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Tom slaps his control panel.

TOM
Shit! We almost had him.

Jake maneuvers the control stick methodically.

JAKE
He's very good . . .

Jake pulls back on his control stick.

JAKE (CONT.)
. . . but so are we.

Tom feels the gravitational force.

TOM
Ohhh shit!

EXT. SKY - DAY

Jake's jet follows the Iraqi jet in a looping arc.

INT. JAKE' S JET - DAY

Jake and Tom are upside down as their jet continues around in the loop. The blip on the radar moves toward the center again.

TOM
Come on, Jake! Are you going to
shoot this fucker or play cat and
mouse all day?

Jake keeps his attention focused on the radar scope.

TOM (CONT.)
Come on, Jake. We need to waste this
camel jockey, now!

EXT. SKY - DAY

Jake's jet moves in behind the Iraqi fighter as they both
come out of their loops.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Jake presses the red firing button for the 20mm cannon.

EXT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Twenty millimeter rounds and tracers FIRE out of Jake's jet.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Tom watches in disbelief as 20mm rounds fire out of the jet.

TOM
Use a missile on this scumbag!

EXT. IRAQI JET - DAY

Tracers and 20mm rounds whiz by the Iraqi jet.

INT. IRAQI JET - DAY

The cockpit flashes white as the Iraqi jet takes rounds into
its fuselage.

EXT. IRAQI JET - DAY

The Iraqi jet EXPLODES in a giant orange and white fireball.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Jake is taken back by the destruction in the sky before him.

JAKE
Holy Mother of Christ!

Tom claps his hands together.

TOM
Yee Haa! Die you Iraqi fuck, you
camel riding son-of-a . . .

JAKE
Knock it off, Four Eyes!

TOM
Well excuse me if I'm glad that we
just fried the mother fucker that
tried to put a missile up our ass?

Jake flips his face shield up and wipes his eyes.

JAKE
Just stick to the radar and
get us home!

TOM
Yes, Sir! Jesus.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK - DAY

An F-14 SLAMS down on deck as Jake's jet approaches the Kennedy.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

From Jake's POV the Kennedy looks small in the rolling Red Sea. Jake maneuvers the control stick, lining his jet up for a landing.

INT. MODEL PLANE - DAY

Jake, age nine, sits in the cockpit of a scale model P-51 Mustang as it dangles precariously on a line that runs from the hayloft in the barn to a fence post across the farmyard.

EXT. FARM - DAY

The Hart farm consists of an old farmhouse, a barn that has been converted into a hangar for a crop duster, a few out buildings, and a dirt landing strip with a red wind sock. Jake's mother, SALLY, an attractive woman in her late twenties, runs out of the house into the yard.

SALLY

Jason!

Jake pulls a safety lever and the plane starts down the rope.

SALLY

Jason! No!

INT. MODEL PLANE - DAY

From Jake's POV, the ground and the post loom larger and larger as the model plane slides down the rope.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Jake's POV as his F-14 slams down on deck.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK - DAY

LIEUTENANT RANDY "BEEF" RHODES, a stocky, ornery-looking F-14 pilot in his early thirties, raises his hand for a high-five as Jake puts his feet on the deck.

RANDY

That's some kind of flying, bro!

Jake slaps Randy's hand.

RANDY (CONT.)

You'll get a Distinguished Flying Cross for that one.

JAKE

Save it for now, Beef, okay?

Randy, his hand still in the air, looks dumbfounded. Tom walks by and slaps Randy's hand.

RANDY

What's eating him?

Tom shrugs his shoulders.

TOM
All of a sudden he's Mother Teresa.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jake's wife, MARGO HART, a woman whose beauty always garners a second look, is getting ready for work. A navy captain's uniform with a slew of ribbons is on her unmade bed.

On her dressing table is a wedding photograph of her and Jake. Although Margo had long, beautiful hair in the photograph, it is now cut in a hard arcing wave. As she slides her wedding ring down her finger the telephone RINGS.

SHOWER WATER runs in the bathroom.

MARGO
Hello.
(beat)
Oh hi, Wendall. No, I was already up.

The shower is turned off. Margo's lover, CAPTAIN MITCH CAVE, a naval aviator who is used to finishing first, walks into the bedroom wrapping a towel around himself.

MITCH
(loudly)
Margo where did you put . . .

Margo raises a finger to her lips, silencing Mitch. She points to the television and turns her wrist.

MARGO
(to Mitch)
CNN.

Mitch turns the TV to CNN.

MARGO
Yes, I have it on now.
(beat)
Oh my God.

CNN is broadcasting a report on the start of the Persian Gulf War. A REPORTER stands in the desert, microphone in hand.

REPORTER

. . . where just a few hours ago
U.S. and allied forces launched a
massive air strike against several
Iraqi targets.

EXT. FARM - DAY

The Hart farm looks peaceful in a troubled world.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jake's father, WENDALL, late forties, rough-looking, is on the phone. Sally, now in her forties, sits at the table crying.

WENDALL

Well his mother is pretty upset. I
mean with Jake being right there
and all . . .

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Mitch dresses as he watches television. The report shows thousands of tracers and anti-aircraft shells brightening the night sky over Baghdad. Margo watches as well as she talks on the phone.

MARGO

Will you be all right?

WENDALL (O.S.)

Oh sure. Jake's a good pilot. It's
you we were worried about.

MARGO

I'll be fine, I think, after it
settles in. Thanks for calling.

Margo hangs up the phone.

MITCH

Well?

MARGO

That was Jake's dad. We're at war,
Mitch, a real war.

Mitch kisses Margo.

MITCH

We didn't send a half million troops over there for nothing. There's too much oil at stake . . .

MARGO

I was thinking more of Jake.

MITCH

. . . not to mention a half a million Kuwaitis.

Margo watches the news report on the war, where we see the video from a smart bomb as it obliterates an Iraqi hanger.

MARGO

You knew this was going to happen?

MITCH

What do you think?

MARGO

You could have told me. How long do you think we'll be over there?

MITCH

Hard to say. Hussein's a wild card, but eight years of fighting the Iranians beat his army to hell.

MARGO

So we will win this then?

Mitch wraps his arms around Margo.

MITCH

We are going to win this war and win it convincingly. America won't accept anything less.

He kisses her tenderly on the lips.

MITCH (CONT.)

Well, I've got to go.

Margo nods.

MITCH (CONT.)

Everything will be fine.
Remember, we're the good guys.

Mitch kisses her on the forehead and leaves.

Margo walks to the dresser, picks up her wedding photograph, and looks forlornly at Jake.

MARGO

Oh, Jake.

INT. STATEROOM - DAY

Jake sits at his desk writing in beautiful, ornate calligraphy on a sheet of parchment with a quill pen. Tom bursts through the door.

TOM

Caught you dicking the dog, did I?

JAKE

Can't you ever knock?

TOM

And lose the element of surprise?

Tom picks up the parchment and reads from it.

TOM (cont.)

You would not tell with such high zest to children ardent for some desperate glory, the old lie: Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.

He hands the parchment back to Jake.

TOM (CONT.)

Dulce et decorum est? What the fuck is that, some kind of devil worship?

JAKE

It's Latin, shit-for-brains. It means it is sweet and becoming to die for one's country.

TOM

You need a vacation, Jake.

JAKE

It's from a poem about combat by Wilfred Owen. You should read it.

TOM

Can't, there's a war on.

(beat)

(MORE)

TOM (CONT.)

Look, Jake, maybe I got a little excited up there. But can you blame me? I mean we did it, man, we won a fucking dogfight!

JAKE

It just wasn't the right time to get so carried away.

TOM

Maybe not. But hell, Jake, we've waited all of our lives for a chance like that.

Jake looks at the poem on the parchment.

JAKE

Dulce et decorum . . . it's a hell of a thing to wait for.

Tom taps the parchment with his finger.

TOM

We're the ones who put it all on the line. Don't forget that.

He slaps Jake on the back.

TOM (CONT.)

We flew like aces, man, like aces.

Tom exits. Jake flops on his rack, takes a photograph of Margo with long hair off the bulkhead, and looks at it dreamily.

JAKE

We flew like aces.

INT. MITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

From the over-large mahogany desk to the American flag to the samurai sword collection on the wall, Captain Cave's office oozes martial power. Mitch is sitting at a conference table with LIEUTENANT COMMANDER CHARLIE GROSEPORT, who is a pretty woman in an earthy sort of way. They watch televised news footage of the first day of the Gulf War.

MITCH

Charlie, this whole damn country was poised for war. We couldn't wait to drop the first bomb.

CHARLIE

It's the end of the American century. It would be nice to go out a winner.

Mitch laughs at this.

MITCH

It's not over for us yet.

Mitch points to a graphic on the television that shows 76% of America supporting the war.

MITCH (CONT.)

Seventy-six percent!

CHARLIE

We're scared, Captain. Our military might is about the only thing that keeps us together as we redefine who we are.

MITCH

Charlie, you're too cynical!

CHARLIE

Maybe so. But it's great to pull together like this.

MITCH

This one is going to be over quick. And when all of the flag waving stops it will fade from the headlines even faster. All too soon the Persian Gulf War will only be so much forgotten history.

CHARLIE

That's the way of the world, Captain. Forgotten history is what some people call progress.

Mitch laughs again.

MITCH

It's no wonder you don't write such good copy.

He turns the television off.

MITCH (CONT.)

Well before everyone forgets, why
don't we squeeze a little goodwill
out of the war.

INT. HANGAR DECK - DAY

Jake in coveralls, has his head buried inside his F-14. The hangar has other jets in various stages of readiness, as well as additional AIR CREW PERSONNEL. Jake makes an adjustment on a hydraulic line.

JAKE

Now hit the switch. And hit the
right switch, or you'll be cleaning
up hydraulic fluid all afternoon!

PETTY OFFICER "MAC" MCCARTHY sits in the cockpit of Jake's jet. We see "Lt. Jake 'Duster' Hart," and "Lt. Tom 'Four Eyes' Johnson" stenciled on the fuselage. Mac flips a switch.

MAC

Switch on!

JAKE

What's she read up there?

MAC

Twenty-seven, right on the money.

Mac flips the switch again and climbs out of the aircraft.

MAC (CONT.)

That's a pretty neat trick.

JAKE

I'm a magic man.

An AIRMAN walks up to Jake.

AIRMAN

Lieutenant Hart, the Skipper wants to
see you in his office.

JAKE

Oh shit. Well Mac, it's been nice
working with you.

INT. PETE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake, wiping his greasy hands on a rag, walks into Pete's office. Pete is working at his desk.

PETE

Have you been out in that hangar again?

JAKE

Of course not, Sir.

PETE

Don't bullshit me! How many times do I have to tell you that you are not back on your daddy's farm? Those are not crop dusters out there.

JAKE

I know, Skipper.

PETE

We pay you to fly, not turn wrenches. You leave that to the enlisted. Got it?

JAKE

Got it, Sir.

PETE

Now, what's this riff between you and Four Eyes that I've been hearing about?

JAKE

It's nothing, Skipper. We got a little heated the other day. We worked it out.

PETE

I need to know that you're focused on our mission here, Jake. I can't afford to have any of my pilots second guessing our job.

JAKE

No, Sir.

PETE

So when you're ordered to engage, you do just that, engage, as soon as you can and with all of the force you can muster.

JAKE

Yes, Sir.

PETE

You're a damn good pilot, Jake, but if you want to make it you have to play by the rules.

INT. HANGAR DECK - DAY

Jake walks back onto the hangar deck, where Mac is at work on a jet that is parked next to Jake's Tomcat.

JAKE

Don't forget to check the oil and fill it with wiper fluid.

MAC

Very funny, Sir.

Jake pulls a wrench out of a toolbox.

JAKE

Okay if I borrow this for a minute?

MAC

It's your funeral, Airman Hart.

Jake laughs, then turns to his Tomcat and removes a panel.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Margo and Mitch are finishing a candlelight dinner at a swanky restaurant. Mitch puts several twenties into the leather check holder. The WAITER comes to the table to pick up the check.

WAITER

Thank you, Sir.

The waiter departs the table. Margo takes a sip of her wine.

MITCH

You don't think Jake will just roll over and play dead when he gets home?

MARGO

There's a chance he may never find out about us.

MITCH

A fat chance. But this isn't just about us, Margo. You need to admit to yourself that you're no longer the country girl Jake married.

MARGO

Maybe that's what I'm scared of.

MITCH

Fact is, you don't need Jake anymore. You're a player now, with your own career, your own agenda. Isn't that why you fell in with me to begin with?

MARGO

Don't be so crude, Mitch. But you're right. As much as I hate to admit it, I was glad to see Jake leave for the Persian Gulf. I needed him to go away for a while.

MITCH

You should keep yourself ahead of the power curve by telling Jake it's over while he's still in the Gulf.

MARGO

That's so cold, Mitch. I hate to think of him having to deal with this over there, odd as that sounds.

(beat)

Where are we in all of this?

MITCH

Same place as always, sweetheart, no promises, no regrets.

INT. READY ROOM - DAY

The air of the Heartbreaker's ready room is charged with electricity. A poster of Saddam Hussein hangs on the wall with an X drawn over his face. Next to the poster hangs a large plaque with a phoenix missile piercing a red heart and a slogan that reads "VF-16 Heartbreakers fly to fight and fight to win."

Several squadron PILOTS and RADAR INTERCEPT OFFICERS are gathered in the room before Tom enters.

TOM

Make a hole, make it wide. Fighter pilot coming through.

RANDY

Pilot my red, white, and blue ass! You know as much about flying as I do about brain surgery.

TOM

Oh, so you went to medical school then? I've got this pimple on my ass that's . . .

RANDY

I'll give you a pimple on your ass, you four-eyed dick-whacking back-seat-riding son-of-a-bitch! You couldn't fly a paper airplane across the john!

Jake enters the ready room and gets a high-five from Randy.

RANDY (CONT.)

My main man, how you doing?

JAKE

I'll feel better when we can shoot at targets again. How goes the war?

RANDY

Fine, if we can keep needle dicks like Four Eyes from fucking it up.

Tom gives Randy the finger. Pete enters the ready room.

PETE

Seats gentlemen.

All of the officers take a seat. Pete walks to the podium at the front of the ready room. A large map of the Persian Gulf region hangs on the bulkhead behind him.

JAKE

Is the war over yet, Skipper?

PETE

Not quite, but I bet Saddam Hussein wished it was.

TOM

And I bet a few Iraqi pilots wished it had never started!

A cheer goes up by everyone except Jake, who looks at Tom and frowns.

PETE

All right, all right, hold it down.

Pete hands out a batch of photographs.

PETE (CONT.)

Take a look at the photos that Beef and Noodles took with TARPS.

Jake looks at a photo that shows a long column of Iraqi troops and another of military and civilian vehicles.

PETE (CONT.)

After only five weeks of bombing and three days of ground assaults the Iraqi army is already retreating.

Another cheer goes up.

JAKE

Good, let's head for home.

Jake's fellow officers boo him. Tom throws a wad of paper at him.

PETE

Central Command wants these retreating columns hit and hit hard. The columns in the photos are forming on the Jahra to Basra and Jahra to Umm Qasr roads.

Pete turns to the map and points the roads out.

JAKE

These are ground forces. This is an army job.

PETE

This time everybody's in on the act. We'll play it straight, five miles ahead of the bombers, spread out. We don't anticipate anti-aircraft fire, but keep your heads up. Questions? That's all.

The officers begin to file out of the room.

RANDY

Looks like the show's about over.

TOM

And I was just starting to have fun.

JAKE

Four Eyes, you're a sick puppy.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The outer offices of International Defense Consultants (IDC) are buzzing with activity. Several SECRETARIES are busy typing and answering phones. A huge wreath of yellow ribbons hangs on the wall.

ERNIE DOBBS, a grizzled journalist and Vietnam War veteran, is being escorted by IDC's receptionist, MARY DUGAN.

MARY

Here we are.

IN MARGO'S OFFICE

Margo's office smells of leather and money. A large window affords a spectacular view of the city. Margo is on the telephone at her desk.

MARGO

Please understand that if the order is not filled by the second I will void the contract.

Margo hangs up the telephone.

MARY

Mr. Dobbs to see you.

MARGO

Hello, Mr. Dobbs, I appreciate
your coming on such short notice.

Margo shakes Ernie's hand rather firmly.

ERNIE

Call me Ernie.

MARGO

Very well, Ernie. Let me come
right to the point. Oh, please
be seated.

Margo and Ernie sit down on the couch.

MARGO

Rumor has it that you're snooping
around IDC.

ERNIE

Is that the rumor?

MARGO

Yes it is, and I'd like to know why.

ERNIE

Mrs. Hart, if I am, why would I tell
you? And if I'm not . . .

MARGO

Oh you are, Mr. Dobbs.

Ernie remains steadfastly tight lipped.

MARGO

Mr. Dobbs, just because the defense
department buys something through
IDC it doesn't mean that we require
them to use it. If you persist in
your meddling IDC will seek a
restraining order.

ERNIE

Well, I'll keep that in mind.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The Iraqi army retreats from Kuwait City in a sixty mile long column of tanks, howitzers, armored cars, ambulances, and civilian vehicles.

IRAQI INFANTRYMEN, looking more like starving, despondent refugees than soldiers, straggle along with the vehicles.

A YOUNG IRAQI SOLDIER looks up at the sky.

An OLD IRAQI SOLDIER also looks up at the sky, as do other soldiers.

EXT. SKY - DAY

From the retreating Iraqi soldier's POV, U.S. warplanes begin to fill the sky from a distance, getting larger and larger as they approach the Iraqi column.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Bombs and missiles EXPLODE at various points along the retreating Iraqi column.

A tank turns to take a defensive position, EXPLODING before it fires a round.

An ambulance carrying wounded soldiers disintegrates in an orange ball of fire.

A carload of civilians is blown off the road by the pressure wave of an exploding bomb.

Jets STREAK overhead, unleashing their firepower into the Iraqi column.

Bombs continue to EXPLODE along the roadside.

Iraqi soldiers run in all directions. Some return fire with their small arms, but to no avail.

Then as quickly as the bombs descended on the column they stop for a moment, and the desert is filled with the screams of wounded men.

INT. CIC - DAY

All of the status boards are filled with tail numbers, ground troop dispositions, and locations of enemy forces. Admiral Blouin and Captain Shelton review a status board as Steve speaks into the growler.

STEVE

Roger that, I'll let him know.
(to Shelton)

The first bomber is on deck, Sir, and the Heartbreakers are on station.

CAPTAIN SHELTON

Okay, Steve. Tell them to clean up what's left of Hussein's famous Red Guard.

Two Radar Controlmen give each other a high-five.

STEVE

Heartbreaker this is Hometown, vector 025. Weapons free! Weapons free!

INT. PETE'S JET - DAY

PETE

Hometown, Heartbreaker, roger your last. Okay, gents, it's our turn to play. Shoot everything you have.

EXT. F-14 FORMATION - DAY

One by one the Heartbreakers roll out of the formation and descend toward the Iraqi column. Hart is the last one to descend.

EXT. RANDY'S JET - DAY

The TARPS (Tactical Area Reconnaissance Photo System) pod CLICKS and WHIRLS as its cameras photograph the battle.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The Iraqi column is in tatters. Hundreds of vehicles are burning. Charred, bloodied BODIES are strewn around the highway like so much debris.

Pete's jet ZOOMS toward the highway, FIRING two missiles. They EXPLODE into the side of a truck. Two more F-14's streak by, their missiles EXPLODING into a tank and civilian vehicle.

Weaponless Iraqi soldiers scurry into the desert, only to be cut down by the 20mm canon of a F-14 as it THUNDERS overhead.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

From Jake's POV, death and destruction stretch for miles across the desert.

JAKE
What the hell?

Tom looks aver the battle scene.

TOM
We're kicking some ass here!

Jake presses the red fire button and watches his missile hit an armored carrier.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Hart's missile EXPLODES into the armored carrier. The hatch comes open and a SOLDIER tries to get out, but burns to death instead. Jake's jet STREAKS by close overhead.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Jake and Tom look down at the havoc wrought on the Iraqi column by the allied air forces.

JAKE
Holy Christ!

TOM
This is a turkey shoot! It's like a fucking video game!

JAKE
This isn't right.

Jake pulls back on the control stick.

TOM
Die, ragheads, die!

JAKE
This just isn't right.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Jake's jet climbs up and away from the highway. Other jets continue to annihilate the Iraqis, vehicle by vehicle, man by man.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Jake continues to fly away from the column. Tom prepares his control panel for another attack run.

JAKE
Do people know what are we doing here?

Tom looks back as the battle scene fades into the distance.

TOM
Jake!

JAKE
No!

TOM
We have to go back and finish it.

JAKE
They were finished long before we got here.

TOM
Goddammit, Jake, don't do this!
We've got orders!

JAKE
I'm not a butcher!

TOM
It's a target!

JAKE
Target hell! It's a slaughter!

TOM
We've got to fire our missiles!

JAKE
Fine!
(beat)
You want to get rid of the damn
things so bad?

Jake rams the control stick ahead.

JAKE (CONT.)
Let's get rid of it all!

EXT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

Jake's jet spirals straight down toward the ground. The Iraqi column burns in the distance.

INT. JAKE'S JET - DAY

From Jake's POV the desert ground zooms in closer and closer. In the back seat Tom grabs the sides of the cockpit as the jet spins around.

TOM
Jake! Come on Jake! Pull it up!
(beat)
Mayday! Mayday! Two-oh-four, mayday!

Seconds before it is too late to pull up, Jake fires the remaining missiles and pulls back on the stick.

The missiles explode harmlessly in the sand. Jake levels the jet out.

JAKE
This is two zero four, disregard my
last. I repeat, disregard my last.

Tom pulls his face mask off and breathes heavily.

TOM
Fuck! You're crazy!

JAKE
You're all right.

TOM
Motherfucker. You just got our asses
court martialed.

JAKE

You didn't do anything. You didn't do anything at all.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Jake's jet SLAMS down on deck.

INT. PETE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake and Tom stand in front of Pete's desk. All of the men are fresh from the battle and in flight gear.

PETE

Now suppose you tell me what the hell happened out there.

Jake and Tom look at each other.

TOM

It was a malfunction, Skipper. The missiles . . .

PETE

Malfunction my Georgia ass! Don't you bullshit me, Four Eyes, or you'll be flying a goddamn desk in the bowels of this ship!

JAKE

It was me, Sir. I didn't make another run at the Iraqi column. I couldn't fire on them again.

PETE

Couldn't fire? What the hell do you mean you couldn't fire?

JAKE

I don't really know what I mean, Sir. The massacre . . . I just couldn't fire.

Pete rises from his desk.

PETE

Well goddammit, son, the U.S. government has invested six million dollars in your hide so that you will fire!

JAKE

I know, Sir, but . . .

PETE

And when you fly in my squadron you will fire! I need you to fire! The whole navy needs you to fire! Hell, 250 million Americans need you to fire!

Pete leans over his desk and yells directly into Jake's face.

PETE (CONT.)

The whole goddamn world wants you to fire!

(beat)

Do I make myself clear?

JAKE

Yes, Sir. You should know that Four Eyes didn't . . .

PETE

Don't piss me off more than I already am! Now get out of here, both of you, and get ready to fly. This war's not over yet!

INT. PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Jake closes Pete's office door softly, then looks Tom in the eyes.

JAKE

I can't do it. I can't go back.

TOM

You chickenshit son-of-a-bitch. You just fucked us both.

EXT. BRIDGE WING - DAY

Jake stands on the bridge wing and looks down at the party atmosphere on the flight deck. Steppenwolf's "MAGIC CARPET RIDE" blares out of speakers. ORDNANCE MEN are busy reloading the F-14's and A-6B's with ordnance, half-dancing to the music. A YELLOW SHIRT dances a jig by the catapult after an A-6B takes off.

Randy exits the hatch onto the bridge wing.

RANDY
Hey, bud, you hiding?

JAKE
Word gets out quick.

RANDY
You know Four Eyes. He couldn't keep his trap shut to save his mother.

Randy looks down at the activity on the flight deck.

RANDY (CONT.)
This war has turned into a real party. Fucking Hussein, man, he can dish it out to the little guy, but he sure can't take it.

JAKE
People need to know what's really going on over here.

RANDY
Don't get crazy, Jake.

Jake shifts his POV to the blue, serene ocean.

JAKE
Good advice, but too late. I blew it up there, Beef. I'm finished.

RANDY
Bullshit! You're the best damn pilot I've ever seen, except for me, of course. You belong in a Tomcat, babe, you know you do.

JAKE
No, I can't get back in the jet. I guess my nerve is shot.

RANDY
I can't believe that!

JAKE
Neither can I.

INT. SICK BAY - DAY

Jake sits on the examining table in his tee-shirt, pants, and barefeet. CAPTAIN POLANSKI, a flight surgeon in his early fifties who looks like he's seen it all, checks Jake's reflexes.

CAPTAIN POLANSKI
You can get dressed now.

Polanski makes a few notes in Jake's medical record as Jake gets dressed.

CAPTAIN POLANSKI (CONT.)
That will be all for now. I'll have the corpsman call you when I need to see you again.

JAKE
So how screwed up am I, Sir?

CAPTAIN POLANSKI
I'll let you know, Lieutenant.

As Jake exits sick bay Pete enters in full flight gear. The two pilots look at each other momentarily.

JAKE
Excuse me, Skipper.

Pete closes the door after Jake exits.

CAPTAIN POLANSKI
Hello, Pete. Don't you have a plane to catch?

PETE
Don't you know it, Ski, but I wanted to check on our boy.

CAPTAIN POLANSKI
Well, physically he's damn near perfect. But psychologically . . . let's just say that he's in no condition to fly. Officially, he's grounded.

PETE
I'll be damned.

CAPTAIN POLANSKI

I'm going to forward a psychological profile to Naval Investigative Service, just to cover all the bases.

PETE

Jake is no security threat! Hell, he's the best pilot I've got. I put him up for a Distinguished Flying Cross.

CAPTAIN POLANSKI

I know, Pete. But he's a liability right now. Luck to you, Pete.

INT. KENNEDY PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Tom walks down the passageway looking at photos of the road battle. When he gets to his stateroom he notices that a yellow chicken with big glasses has been painted on it, along with the words "Balk! Balk!"

TOM

Son-of-a-bitch!

Tom walks down the passageway to Jake's stateroom, the door to which also has a yellow chicken. Tom bursts into the room, but Jake isn't there.

INT. WARDROOM - DAY

Jake is sketching on a pad as he listens to a NAVY REPORTER of "Navy News This Week" on the Kennedy's television system.

NAVY REPORTER

. . . and the first of the victorious Gulf War veterans have been welcomed home as heroes by enthusiastic crowds.

The report shows a group of army soldiers being welcomed home by a large, flag-waving crowd. Tom rushes into the wardroom.

TOM

Did you see your door?

JAKE

I've already asked to have them repainted.

TOM

This is all your fault!

(beat)

I don't get you, anyway. Why did you become a fighter pilot? We kill people! It's our job! What did you think you were getting into, United fucking Airlines?

Jake sets his quill pen down.

JAKE

No I didn't!

He gets up from his seat.

JAKE (CONT.)

But I didn't become a fighter pilot to slaughter people by the thousands either! We crossed a line out there.

TOM

Whose line? Yours? Well who the hell are you to make the rules?

Tom's question knocks Jake back into his seat. He picks up his pen again.

TOM (CONT.)

Why couldn't you have become an artist or something, instead of joining the navy and ruining my life?

JAKE

We crossed a line, Tom.

TOM

You're pathetic!

Tom throws the photos on top of Jake.

TOM (CONT.)

Draw on these!

Tom storms out of the wardroom.

Jake looks at the photos, which depict the road battle from beginning to end. One photo shows what appears to be four burned bodies clutching each other in the back of a truck.

Jake turns the photo over and in a few quick strokes sketches a bird in flight.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

Ernie sits at his desk in the offices of the Norfolk Nonpareil. He lights a cigarette, pours whiskey into a paper cup, then puts the bottle in the bottom drawer. A MESSENGER drops off a stack of wire reports, on his way to the desks of other REPORTERS.

Ernie sifts through the reports.

ERNIE

Interstate accident kills two. Woman
sues man for custody of dog. Good,
good. Scientists debate ozone
depletion. Christ.

HARVEY SINCLAIR, the managing editor, yells from his office door.

HARVEY

Dobbs! Dobbs!

ERNIE

Yeah yeah.

Ernie chugs his whiskey, then smashes the cup into the palm of an OFFICE BOY he passes on the way to Harvey's office.

IN HARVEY'S OFFICE

HARVEY

I need more coverage of the Kennedy
homecoming.

ERNIE

Oh come on, Harvey! That's junior
reporter stuff.

HARVEY

Look, Ernie, I don't have to tell
you that you're not exactly Pulitzer
Prize material anymore.

ERNIE

No, but you did anyway.

HARVEY

If you stopped shooting from the hip and did some real investigative journalism . . .

ERNIE

Are you going to burn my ass over IDC again?

HARVEY

You told me you had your facts together. But you didn't have shit!

ERNIE

I had a hunch, remember those? There's something rotten about this war, and IDC . . .

HARVEY

Stop living in the past, Dobbs. You Vietnam guys always. . . look, I just want you to go down to the piers tomorrow for the homecoming, all right?

ERNIE

Wouldn't miss it for the world.

EXT. HARBOR - DAY

TITLE

Norfolk, Virginia

The harbor is full of pleasure craft. HORNS and SIRENS fill the air. Three fire and rescue boats shoot red, white, and blue water in one hundred foot arcs. The Kennedy makes her final approach to the pier.

EXT. PIER - DAY

Charlie is passing out yellow, helium-filled balloons to CHILDREN.

A navy band strikes up "WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME." Ernie, looking very uninterested, munches on a hot dog.

A HOMECOMING CROWD of some two thousand flag-waving men, women, and children surges onto the pier.

A YOUNG WOMAN carries a sign reading "I love you John B!" A SECOND YOUNG WOMAN carries a sign reading "Gina's Ready!" A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN's sign reads "WELCOME HOME HEROES!"

A TELEVISION CREW films the homecoming.

Jake walks down the brow with Mac and two ENLISTED MEN.

FIRST ENLISTED MAN

Look at the women! I've died and gone to heaven.

JAKE

Any of them belong to you?

FIRST ENLISTED MAN

Sir, they all belong to me.

MAC

In your dreams, pal, in your dreams.

Jake and the men step onto the pier.

JAKE

(sarcastically)

You boys behave yourselves. Make your mothers proud!

MAC

You too, Sir.

The surging crowd absorbs the enlisted men. An OLD MAN with no teeth and wearing a VFW hat and a row of old medals on his "Desert Storm" tee shirt grabs Jake's hand.

OLD MAN

Welcome home, son! Welcome home!

Jake is taken back at first by the old man's enthusiasm.

JAKE

Thank you, sir.

OLD MAN

You done good over there, real good!

Jake fights his way through the crowd.

A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN takes a large yellow ribbon from around her waist, throws it around Jake, pulls him toward her, then kisses him full on the lips.

PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN
Welcome home, handsome!

Jake looks at her bewildered, then moves down the pier. He spots a woman in the crowd. After a moment he realizes it is Margo.

JAKE
Margo? Margo!

Margo waves and moves toward Jake.

JAKE (CONT.)
I almost didn't recognize you. You cut your hair!

MARGO
Oh, yeah. Like it?

JAKE
Of course.

A SAILOR and WOMAN brush by Margo.

MARGO
Isn't this great! It's like we're part of history.

JAKE
You'd think we just won World War II.

Margo raises a yellow ribbon to Jake's shirt.

MARGO
Here, I brought a ribbon to welcome you home.

She pins the ribbon on his uniform and kisses him on the cheek. Jake laughs at the lukewarm reception.

JAKE
After eight months of combat all I get is a kiss on the cheek? Come on! I'm home!

Margo reluctantly kisses him on the lips. As she does, Jake grabs her around the waist and lifts her off her feet.

MARGO
Jake!

JAKE

Now that's a homecoming kiss!
Let's get out of this circus.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Margo is at the wheel of her new convertible Saab. Jake is spread out in the passenger seat, enjoying the sunshine on the trip to their condo.

JAKE

I can't wait any longer!

Jake roots around in his suitcase and pulls out a pair of shorts. Then he stands up in the car and strips off his uniform.

MARGO

Jake!

He pulls his shorts on and leans out over the windshield.

JAKE

Hello America!

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Jake drinks a beer as he and Margo watch the waves roll onto the beach in front of their condo. Jake's golden retriever, DUKE, lies on the sand next to him.

MARGO

This is serious, Jake. You can't just quit.

JAKE

Quit? I'll be lucky if they don't throw my carcass in the brig.

MARGO

Don't be so melodramatic.

JAKE

You weren't there, Margo, you didn't see the devastation.

MARGO

No, and I never thought I'd see the day when you quit flying.

JAKE

I'm quitting the navy, not flying.
I'll go back to flying crop
dusters.

MARGO

Oh come off it, Jake!

Hart grabs Duke's head and brings Duke's muzzle up to his
face.

JAKE

That's what we'll do, boy, we'll go
back to the farm.

MARGO

And what am I supposed to do, go
back and be a country lawyer?

JAKE

You tell me, Margo.

MARGO

What's that supposed to mean?

JAKE

It means that I'm not stupid. When
you're really in love with somebody
and they've been gone for eight
months, and in a war, you don't
give them a kiss on the fucking
cheek when they get home!

MARGO

But, Jake, it was just seeing you
finally . . .

JAKE

Oh thanks a lot! You know I noticed
a change in your letters. Sometimes
I felt more like your client than
your husband.

MARGO

That's not fair!

JAKE

The hell if it isn't! The question
is, why? What happened between us?

MARGO

I don't want to talk about this.

She runs toward the condo. Duke looks sad-eyed at Jake.

JAKE
Know any good jokes? Huh? Well,
me neither. Let's go for a walk.

Jake and Duke head down the beach.

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Jake, in uniform, sits on the hood of his car as F-14's do touch-and-goes on the runway in front of him. He opens a small case and pulls out his Distinguished Flying Cross. He lets it sit in the palm of his hand for a moment.

JAKE
What a joke.

He puts the medal back in the case, gets in the car, puts the case in the glove compartment, then burns rubber as he drives away.

INT. NAVAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE (NIS) - DAY

Jake sits at a desk. AGENT SCOFIELD, a man who has been ugly since birth, leans with his back to the wall, leering at Jake. AGENT DANFORTH, a clean-cut man in his forties, walks into the room carrying two cups of coffee.

AGENT DANFORTH
Here you are, Lieutenant.

Jake takes a cup. Agent Danforth sits down.

JAKE
Thanks.

AGENT DANFORTH
I heard you got the Distinguished
Flying Cross this morning.

JAKE
News travels fast.

AGENT DANFORTH
We like to stay on top of our cases.

JAKE
Is that what I am, a case?

AGENT DANFORTH

Understand that this inquiry is strictly routine. It's a follow up, really.

JAKE

A follow up to what?

AGENT SCOFIELD

Why don't you make this easy for all of us, Lieutenant, and just tell us what the fuck you thought you were doing over in the Gulf!

Agent Scofield's outburst doesn't rattle Jake.

JAKE

What does it matter? The war's over. We still won.

AGENT SCOFIELD

I'll tell you why it matters, smart guy. Because it's people like you who will stop at nothing to undermine the United States government.

Jake looks at Agent Scofield in disbelief.

JAKE

Oh come on! You think I'm a spy? Maybe you haven't heard, but the cold war is over. We won that one too.

AGENT DANFORTH

We don't think you're a spy, Jake. We just wonder why a fighter pilot of your stature would, well, not complete his mission.

JAKE

Because it was wrong! What's it matter anyway? In a couple months I'm out of the navy and it will all be over.

Agent Scofield leans over the table toward Jake.

AGENT SCOFIELD

It matters, Lieutenant, and it may not be over as quick as you think.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Tom, Randy, LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE CRAIG JACKSON, a baby-faced pilot of twenty three, and other Heartbreakers are playing basketball on a naval base court.

Tom dribbles the ball down court, passes it to Randy, who shoots and misses. Tom grabs the rebound and scores.

Jake walks up to the basketball court.

JAKE
Nice shot, Four Eyes!

One of the Heartbreakers inbound the ball.

TOM
Well, if it isn't Mr. DF fucking C!

Tom runs down the court to play defense. The offensive team misses their shot. Randy kicks out the ball to a Heartbreaker, who brings it down court, passes it to Tom, who scores.

JAKE
Tom, can I talk to you for a minute?

Randy grabs the basketball.

RANDY
Let's take five, man.

Tom motions for the ball. Randy passes it to him, and then walks off the court with the other Heartbreakers. As he does he gives Jake a high-five.

JAKE
How you doing, Beef?

RANDY
No complaints, bud.

Tom shoots a basket.

JAKE
Look, Tom, NIS is busting my ass,
and I was wondering if they'd been
doing the same to you.

Tom rebounds his ball and shoots again.

TOM

Yeah, they were here once. I told them the truth, that I didn't do anything.

JAKE

Well, I just wanted to tell you I was sorry. I didn't want you to get in any trouble.

TOM

Yeah, you're sorry, all right! Let me tell you something, I'm glad I'm not your back seat anymore. Everybody thinks you've lost it.

Jake grabs the rebound.

TOM (CONT.)

Give me the ball! Fucking war hero! I can't believe you still got the DFC.

Tom shoots again. Jake grabs the rebound.

JAKE

What we did over there was wrong!

TOM

Oh bullshit! What was wrong was your damn flying us straight into the fucking sand. Give me the ball.

Jake passes Tom the ball. He shoots.

TOM (CONT.)

But never mind that you nearly flew us into to the desert! Never mind that you made it damned near impossible for me to show my face around her for a while. Never mind that you played me for a fool!

JAKE

Look, Tom, I'm sorry, I . . .

TOM

Sorry doesn't cut it! I counted on you! Don't you get it? I put my ass in your hands!

Craig walks up to the court.

CRAIG

Come on, Tom, we've got to get back to the squadron.

TOM

Hey, Craig, you want to meet a war hero? Meet Jason Alexander Hart, fighter pilot extraordinaire.

Jake and Craig nod at each other. Craig walks away.

TOM (CONT.)

He's my new pilot, I'm breaking him in.

Tom looks as if he's going to leave, but then he gets in Jake's face.

TOM (CONT.)

You know, Jake, you might have been the best damn fighter pilot in the world. But you don't know shit about being a friend.

Tom shoves the basketball into Jake's stomach before he walks off.

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Charlie's office at fleet headquarters is all mom and apple pie. Promotional pictures of ships and submarines hang on the walls, as do posters which read "Keepers of the Sea," "Uncle Sam Wants You," "It's Not Just a Job, It's an Adventure."

Charlie is laying out an ad on a drafting table when Jake walks in.

JAKE

Commander Groseport?

CHARLIE

Yes.

JAKE

I'm Jake Hart.

CHARLIE

The fighter pilot! Captain Cave told me you'd be with us for a while.

JAKE
Captain Cave?

CHARLIE
The boss. You'll meet him later.

Jake walks over to the drafting table and looks at the ad, which is a drawing of a large yellow ribbon wrapped around a ship.

JAKE
You do the drawing?

CHARLIE
No, I just write copy. We're working up promotional material to celebrate the Gulf War victory.

Jake looks unsure about this.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
So, Captain Cave tells me you're getting out of the navy.

JAKE
That's right.

Charlie waits for Jake to continue with his story, but he doesn't.

CHARLIE
Well, I'll do what I can to make your time here at fleet headquarters go smoothly. I try to mix in a little fun with all of the public relations work.

JAKE
Commander, you're very kind, but there must be some mistake.

CHARLIE
Mistake?

JAKE
Yes. I'm not here because I want to promote the war.

CHARLIE

Let's get a couple of things straight. First, call me Charlie, everybody does. Second, we are not promoting the war here. I would never do that.

Jake points to the ad and to the navy promotional posters.

JAKE

Then how can you do all of this?

CHARLIE

Oh come now, Jake. The world isn't as black and white as all that.

JAKE

It is when you fly.

CHARLIE

Maybe so, Jake.

(beat)

Look, why don't I buy you lunch. And then this afternoon you can help me present a plaque to a group of very patriotic ladies.

Jake looks very skeptical about this outing. Charlie takes him by the arm and leads him out of the office.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

We'll have fun. I promise.

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

The Norfolk Women's League luncheon is in progress. Fifty WOMEN, mostly middle-aged to elderly, sit at tables sipping coffee. Each table has a yellow-ribboned ornament of some kind. The league president, SYLVIA SIMPSON, sixtyish, stylish, is at the podium. Jake and Charlie sit at the head table.

SYLVIA

And now I have a surprise. It is my great pleasure to introduce a true American hero. He flew over one hundred missions in Operation Desert Storm, and he earned a Distinguished Flying Cross. Please welcome Lieutenant Jason Hart.

Charlie leans over to Jake and whispers in his ear.

CHARLIE

Just read the speech and we're out of here.

Jake assumes the podium to a round of applause. Sylvia sits at the head table. Jake is obviously nervous.

JAKE

Thank you Mrs. Simpson, ladies. Although people like myself were called to serve in the Gulf, we could have never served as successfully as we did without the tremendous support of organizations like yours.

Charlie looks on approvingly.

JAKE (CONT.)

Through your tireless efforts more than one thousand care packages were sent to the Persian Gulf. It is for your inspiring display of patriotism that the men and women of the United States Navy would like to honor you
. . . .

Jake gazes out at a room full of smiles. He looks confused, disoriented. We HEAR the battle sounds of screaming jets, exploding bombs, and wounded men.

JAKE (CONT.)

. . . to honor you with this commemorative plaque.

Jake holds the plaque up. The BATTLE SOUNDS get louder. Jake tries to shake them off. The ladies wait. He lowers the plaque.

JAKE (CONT.)

This isn't right.

(beat)

We killed too many. We all killed too many. I can't do this . . .
I can't . . .

Jake drops the plaque like a hot plate. Its CRASH on the floor startles the women. Jake hurries out of the room.

OUTSIDE THE MEETING ROOM

Jake is at a drinking fountain running water on his face. Charlie rushes up to him.

CHARLIE

You put me in a hell of a spot back there!

JAKE

I told you I didn't want to have anything to do with this.

CHARLIE

Maybe not, but you don't just run out on people.

Jake looks at her, water dripping from his face.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

I think it's time you meet the boss.

INT. MITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake sits in front of Mitch's huge desk. Mitch is wandering about his room, as if to vent his anger.

MITCH

Now goddammit, Lieutenant, when Commander Groseport tells you to give a plaque to the Women's League I expect you to do just that!

JAKE

But, Sir, it's the assignment. I don't want . . .

MITCH

You don't want? Who the hell are you to want anything? Shit, son, you're a goddamned hero. Most pilots would give their left nut to get a DFC.

JAKE

I didn't want it.

MITCH

Don't be so damned humble, it doesn't inspire confidence.

JAKE

No, Sir.

MITCH

What's wrong with being a hero,
anyway? Nothing wrong with a little
recognition. No harm in spreading a
little good will.

JAKE

No, Sir.

MITCH

Now look, Lieutenant, you're on my
staff because somebody out there
thinks your ass needs looked after.
I'm inclined to agree with them.

JAKE

Who, Sir?

MITCH

None of your damned business who!
You need to know only one thing, and
that's that until you get out of the
navy your hide belongs to me. I
expect you to do as you're damn well
told!

IN THE HALLWAY

Jake closes the door to Mitch's office.

JAKE

Jerk!

INT. MARGO'S OFFICE - DAY

Ernie is seated opposite Margo at her desk.

MARGO

Mr. Dobbs, you're grasping for
straws. Our contracts with the navy
are completely above board.

Just then Jake bursts into the office.

MARGO (CONT.)

Jake!

JAKE

Margo we have to talk.

MARGO

Obviously you can see that I'm in a meeting now. Why don't you . . .

JAKE

Now, Margo!

MARGO

Mr. Dobbs I must apologize for my husband.

ERNIE

Not at all. I appreciate a man who has something on his mind.

Ernie offers Jake a handshake, which he accepts.

ERNIE (CONT.)

Ernie Dobbs.

JAKE

I'm out of line here, Mr. Dobbs, I'm sorry. My job has me a little on edge.

ERNIE

Say no more, my friend. I know office hassles only too well.

Ernie studies Jake as he says this, as if gauging the magnitude of Jake's problem.

ERNIE (CONT.)

Well, I'll leave you two to your affairs.

Ernie makes a quick exit out of Margo's office. Margo storms around her desk to face Jake.

MARGO

What the hell is the matter with you?

JAKE

All right, I should have called.

MARGO

That man's a reporter. He'll stop at nothing to ruin this company.

JAKE

He seemed rather nice.

Margo throws her hands up in the air.

MARGO

Oh! Don't be such a hayseed, Jake!
You have no idea what's at stake
here.

JAKE

What, your precious company? I don't
give a damn about this death machine!

MARGO

Death ma . . . do you have any idea
of the number of lives we saved in
the Persian Gulf?

JAKE

I have no idea . . .

MARGO

Saved because we made sure all of
the contracts were filled on time!
Saved because we made sure that
only the best material was shipped!
Saved because we just happened to
give a damn about every soldier and
sailor that was over there!

Margo, breathing heavy, looks Jake squarely in the face,
waiting for him to acquiesce.

JAKE

Then isn't it a kick in the ass
that while we were so busy saving
people we ended up losing our
marriage.

Jake starts for the door, but before he leaves the office he
turns back to Margo.

JAKE (CONT.)

You know, Margo, I may be a hayseed
in a lot of ways, but if it wasn't
for me you'd still be feeding hogs
back on your daddy's farm.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Jake is walking out to his Chevy Blazer. Ernie drives his beaten old Ford next to Jake and TOOTS his horn.

ERNIE

Hey there, Lieutenant, I was just on my way for a drink. How about I buy you one?

JAKE

No, thanks, Mr. Dobbs.

ERNIE

Come on why don't you. We can bitch about our bosses!

Jake weighs Ernie's offer for a moment.

JAKE

What the hell. Where?

ERNIE

You know the Saigon Bar, on Collard?

JAKE

I've been by it.

ERNIE

I'll see you there.

INT. BAR - DAY

Jake walks into the Saigon Bar, which is like stepping back into the 1960's. Jimi Hendrix's "HEY JOE" blasts out of the jukebox. 1960's and Vietnam War memorabilia cover the walls.

Two VIETNAM WAR VETERANS, dressed in army fatigues, shoot pool.

THIRTY NINE, a man with long hair, a headband, and no legs, spots Jake's uniform from behind the bar.

THIRTY NINE

Hey, navy, we've got a dress code here!

Jimmy rolls his wheelchair down a ramp to where Jake looks at a poster of the Kent State shooting.

THIRTY NINE (CONT.)

Do you know where that is, young'n?

JAKE

Kent State.

THIRTY NINE

They were gunned down, brother, by the U.S. government. But excuse me, brother, I guess you are the government.

Jake ignores Thirty Nine's remark.

JAKE

You know a guy named Dobbs?

Ernie walks into the bar from a rest room.

THIRTY NINE

Seek and ye shall find, brother. There's your man now.

Thirty Nine laughs as he wheels himself back up the ramp and behind the bar. Ernie walks by Jake to the bar, where Thirty Nine has already poured him a whiskey. Ernie gulps it down.

ERNIE

Thanks, Thirty Nine. What are you drinking, Lieutenant?

JAKE

Beer.

Ernie grabs his glass and the bottle off the bar.

ERNIE

Step into my office.

Ernie goes to a booth. Jake follows him and sits down. Thirty Nine wheels up with a pitcher of beer and a glass.

ERNIE (CONT.)

Thanks, Thirty Nine.

JAKE

Thirty Nine?

THIRTY NINE

The hill in Nam where I left my legs.

JAKE

Oh, I'm very sorry.

THIRTY NINE

Not as sorry as the gooks that took them!

Thirty Nine laughs and rolls back to the bar.

ERNIE

His squad was pinned down on Hill 39. He directed fire for over three hours, all the while his legs were half blown off. He killed thirty-four VC that night without losing a man.

JAKE

Jesus!

ERNIE

The Marine Corps gave him the Navy Cross, but they took his legs.

Ernie points to Jake's DFC.

ERNIE (CONT.)

You're not the only hero around here.

Jake takes a swig of beer.

JAKE

What about you?

ERNIE

What about me?

JAKE

Were you in Vietnam?

ERNIE

Sure. I was the guy that got Thirty Nine off the hill.

Jake pours Ernie another whiskey, then raises his own glass for a toast.

JAKE

Here's to Thirty Nine's legs, wherever they are. And may there never be another fucking war.

Ernie shoots his whiskey.

ERNIE
Amen to that, my friend.

EXT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Margo stands in a short bathrobe at the balcony rail looking at the ocean. Mitch, also in a robe, walks out of the hotel room and kisses her on the back of the neck.

MITCH
Come inside.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Mitch lies naked on the bed, his hands on Margo's naked hips, pulling her onto him. Margo moves rhythmically to his thrusts. Mitch slides his hands up her sides and cups her breasts.

MARGO
Yes, yes . . .

Margo puts her hands on top of Mitch's as she thrusts her hips back and forth.

MARGO (CONT.)
Oh, oh, . . . mmm.

She flops forward onto Mitch's chest.

Moonlight reflects off the ocean's surface as Margo reclines in Mitch's arms. An ocean breeze blows into the room.

MITCH
I love the smell of the sea. It smells like . . .

MARGO
Salt?

Mitch laughs.

MITCH
Well of course salt! But also . . .
power, pure, natural, power. When I
was on my first ship we were caught in
a storm, a typhoon.
(MORE)

MITCH (CONT.)

A wave, I don't know, maybe fifty-five, sixty feet high, rolled in on top of us, and when it rolled away it took with it our radio antennas, the captain's gig, and a whole lot of my respect.

MARGO

Did you get seasick?

MITCH

Frankly, yes. I was sick as a dog!

Margo gets up from the bed and puts on her robe.

MARGO

It's so late, Mitch. I've got to go.

MITCH

What's your hurry? You're going to leave him anyway.

Margo looks out at the ocean for a moment.

MARGO

Thanks for looking out for him. Sometimes I feel so bad I . . .

MITCH

Guilt is unhealthy, Margaret, and it isn't sexy at all.

INT. CONDO - NIGHT

The condo is lit by only the soundless, flickering images of CNN on the television. As quiet as Margo tries to be as she enters the front door, she rouses Duke to a BARK.

Jake, sprawled out drunk on the couch, shirt hanging open, belt buckle undone, clicks on a lamp. He looks at a clock. It is 3:30 in the morning.

JAKE

Where in the hell have you been?

Margo turns on another light. The condo looks like a page out of a modern decorating magazine.

MARGO

I told you. I had a dinner party.
You look like hell.

JAKE

Good of you to notice. I had a
couple beers with my pal, Ernie.

MARGO

Not Dobbs!

Jake nods.

MARGO (CONT.)

Oh you are an idiot. What'd he do,
get you drunk and pump you for
information on IDC?

Jake laughs.

JAKE

Funny, your name never came up.

MARGO

Ohh!

Jake gets up off the couch a little too fast and has to catch
his balance on a chair back.

MARGO (CONT.)

Look at yourself!

Jake tries to buckle his pants.

MARGO (CONT.)

What's happening to you? Where's the
confident young fighter pilot I
married?

JAKE

I flew crop dusters! We were
farmers.

MARGO

But we had dreams, Jake, remember?
You wanted to be the best pilot in
the navy. There were so many things
we wanted to do.

JAKE

I've done too many things.

He pulls his belt from the pant loops.

JAKE (CONT.)
Where were you tonight, Margo?

MARGO
I told you.

JAKE
The truth!

MARGO
Well I wasn't out playing drunken sailor!

Jake sobers up a bit.

JAKE
I'll ask one more time. Where in the fuck were you?

MARGO
Don't use that tone of voice with me! I'm not one of your gross friends.

JAKE
That's for damned sure!
(beat)
You were with somebody.

MARGO
I was at a party!

JAKE
Until 3:30?
(beat)
You fucking around on me?

MARGO
Don't be so crude, Jake! This isn't a locker room.

JAKE
You're fucking around on me!

MARGO
Stop it!

Jake makes a half-drunk lunge toward Margo, but falls to the floor.

MARGO

Jake!

She starts to help him up. But he pushes her away.

JAKE

Get away from me! Get away!

Margo, shocked, reels back. The pain of Jake's rejection shows on her face. Jake gets up on all fours, then drags himself to his feet. Margo tries to help him again.

MARGO

Jake! Oh no! Jake!

Jake pushes her backwards.

JAKE

I said get out of here!

Margo starts to cry, then rushes out of the condo.

Jake drags himself over to the couch.

JAKE (CONT.)

Fucking around on me. . .

He flops onto the couch.

JAKE (CONT.)

Fucking around . . .

He throws an arm over his eyes. Duke comes over and sits next to the couch.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Bags sag under Jake's eyes as he sits at Charlie's desk sipping coffee. He looks at his watch: 6:14 a.m. Just as he closes his eyes for a moment Charlie walks in.

CHARLIE

Jake!

Startled, Jake spills coffee on his pants.

JAKE

Shit!

CHARLIE

Oh, Jake, I'm sorry. I didn't mean
to . . .

She grabs a piece of paper.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Here, let me soak it up.

She bends over and presses the paper to Jake's leg. Jake
watches her for a moment, then takes her by the arm.

JAKE

It's okay, Charlie, really.

Charlie looks at Jake, there eyes locking on to each other
for just a moment longer than what they each expected.

CHARLIE

I can wash them. What I mean is . . .

JAKE

It's okay.

Charlie notices that Jake is in rough shape.

CHARLIE

I didn't expect you here so early.
What's happened, Jake?

JAKE

I'll tell you all about it sometime.
(beat)
Charlie, about yesterday, I . . .

Charlie puts an index finger to Jake's lips.

CHARLIE

No need to get into that. I should
not have put you in that position.

JAKE

I was about to say the same thing.

Charlie laughs.

CHARLIE

Great minds do think alike.

They look at each other again for just a moment too long.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Well, sailor, the morning staff
meeting is in five minutes.

INT. STAFF ROOM - DAY

Jake and Charlie walk into the staff room. COMMANDER RICK BOYLE and four other OFFICERS are gathered around a table piled high with documents, many of which are stamped "Confidential" and "Secret."

CHARLIE
Gentlemen, Jake Hart. He's on
temporary duty.

FIRST OFFICER
Is he cleared for this?

Jake looks offended, Charlie indignant.

CHARLIE
You're paranoid. Take a vacation.

Another of the officers notices the coffee stain on Jake's pants.

SECOND OFFICER
Smooth move, pal.

Jake finds a seat next to Rick, who looks disapprovingly at Jake. Mitch enters the room in a rush and takes a seat at the head of the table.

MITCH
Let's get to it. Commander Boyle.

RICK
The response to the homecoming
campaign continues to be very
positive.

MITCH
Charlie, you've done a hell of a job
there. Keep it up.

CHARLIE
Thank you, Sir.

MITCH

What about our latest problem?

RICK

The casualty reports?

MITCH

Yes. The last thing the Joint Chiefs want is to get into a pissing contest with the press over the number of Iraqi casualties.

FIRST OFFICER

We sure as hell don't need another Vietnam.

MITCH

No we don't. And if we have to work a little magic with these numbers to keep everybody happy, well, that's just what we'll do.

Rick walks to an easel and flips over a chart that illustrates in a graphic format the number of Gulf War casualties. Upon seeing the chart, Jake looks very upset.

RICK

As you can see here, Captain, we have a couple of challenges here. First, we have to keep a lid on the total number of enemy casualties, as shown by this graph here.

Rick points to a very long graph with the number 80,000 at the end.

MITCH

Well Central Command's really helped us out there, by not counting all of the bodies.

The words "Iraqi Casualties" on the chart dominate Jake's view.

IN JAKE'S JET

Jake is in the cockpit of his F-14. From his POV the decimated Iraqi column is spread out before him. A missile shoots out from his jet. It explodes into the side of the personnel carrier. Pete's words echo in his mind.

PETE (O.S.)

The whole goddamned world wants you
to fire! The whole goddamned world

. . .

IN THE STAFF ROOM

Jake shakes his head, bringing himself back to the present.
Rick flips to another chart.

RICK

Second, we absolutely need to refute
any claims of an excessive number of
civilian casualties.

Jake stares at the sheer magnitude of the numbers on the
chart: 80,000. 50,000, 30,000.

RICK (CONT.)

Finally, we need to downplay the
amount of ordnance we dropped on
Iraq.

FIRST OFFICER

That's going to be a little hard,
considering that we dumped more
damn bombs on Iraq than we did in
all of World War II.

MITCH

Our concern here is not the amount
of ordnance but the casualties that
will occur because of the disruption
to medical and sanitation facilities.

CHARLIE

Well how many more people are we
talking about?

RICK

Maybe forty five, fifty thousand.

This figure knocks Charlie back in her chair. Mitch WHISTLES.

MITCH

We simply must step up the
humanitarian relief effort. Charlie,
I want you on this. Take a look at
Rick's numbers and come up with an
angle of attack. That's all.

The officers get up to leave.

MITCH (CONT.)

And let's keep the press on our side!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Jake carries an armload of documents for Charlie on the way back to the office.

CHARLIE

I could get used to having you around.

JAKE

Yeah, but am I cleared to carry this stuff?

CHARLIE

Oh please!

JAKE

What's the story on Captain Cave, anyway?

CHARLIE

He's a brilliant officer, but he has only two loves, the navy and himself.

JAKE

Well, he should do well.

CHARLIE

Oh he's done well.

IN CHARLIE'S OFFICE

Jake sets the documents down on a table. Charlie flips a sign on a safe from "Locked" to "Open," and then opens the safe.

CHARLIE

Better put those in here.

JAKE

Don't want our secrets falling into the wrong hands.

Jake hands the documents to Charlie, who files them in the safe. She locks the safe again and changes the sign.

JAKE (CONT.)

Tell me something, Charlie, how does all of this sit with you? I mean Cave has all but told you to put out false information.

Charlie closes the door to her office. She crosses her arms around her chest and walks to her desk.

CHARLIE

Sure it bothers me. But what's done is done. I can't bring back the dead, only protect the living. So I do what I can to make sure everybody knows that this is the best damn navy in the world.

JAKE

But we can't just turn our backs to the truth. People have to know about what went on over there.

CHARLIE

Maybe people don't want to know. Maybe they shouldn't know.

Jake shakes his head in disagreement.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Jake, when you've been in public affairs as long enough as I have you realize that truth has many shades.

JAKE

Maybe you've been at this too long.

Charlie weighs Jake's words for a moment.

CHARLIE

Maybe we all have.

INT. CAR - DAY

Jake is on the way home in his Blazer. From his POV we see a sign at a used car lot that reads "Zero Down for Gulf War Veterans." A yellow ribbon dangles from the antenna of each car in the lot.

INT. CONDO - DAY

Jake walks into his condo. Duke runs up to greet him.

JAKE

Hi, Duke. How you been, boy?

Jake notices the message light flashing on his answering machine. He presses the play button.

MARGO (O.S.)

Hi, Jake, it's me. I think we'd better not see each other. I moved some of my things out for now. We'll have to figure out what to do with the condo. I'm really sorry, Jake.

The answering machine BEEPS again. Jake stands and stares at the flashing light for a moment.

IN THE BEDROOM

Jake walks into the bedroom. The doors to Margo's closet are open. Other than a few empty hangers and a rather ugly dress the only other item in the closet is a box marked "Jake's things."

Jake pulls the box off the shelf and sits on the bed. He opens the box and pulls out the picture of Margo that he had on the Kennedy, his Distinguished Flying Cross, several quill pens bound by a rubber band, and some old calligraphy.

Finally, he pulls out the highway battle photos. They are face down at first, with the bird sketch face up.

He looks through them, seeing the photo of the burned and huddled soldiers, another of a desert littered with dead bodies, a third that shows miles of burned-out vehicles.

Duke comes into the bedroom and jumps on the bed.

JAKE

Let's go for a run, boy.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Jake and Duke are running along the surf. As they head back to the condo Jake stops to look at the sun as it makes its slow dip below the horizon.

INT. SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Jake walks through the Heartbreaker's locker room. Randy is taking Four Eyes personal belongings out of his locker.

JAKE

This place feels like a ghost town.

Randy takes a pair of glasses out of the locker and puts them in a box.

JAKE (CONT.)

That's Four Eyes' locker. What's going on?

Randy closes the locker door.

RANDY

I guess you haven't heard. Four Eyes and Jackson bought it. Jackson came in too low on a touch and go, hit the carrier.

Jake is shocked. He half sits, half falls to a bench.

RANDY (CONT.)

I told the skipper I'd send this stuff to Tom's parents. I got to go.

Randy starts out of the locker room.

JAKE

Isn't that a kick in the ass, him making it through the war just to get killed by a rookie.

Randy reaches into the box, pulls out a snapshot, and hands it to Jake. Jake looks at the picture of he and Tom in front of their F-14 Tomcat. Randy walks out of the room.

Jake goes to Four Eyes' locker and looks inside of it.

JAKE (CONT.)

I'm sorry, Four Eyes.

He closes the locker door.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Charlie walks into an upscale pub. An ACOUSTIC BAND plays on a small stage. She spots Jake drinking a beer at the bar. She puts her arm around him.

CHARLIE

Hey there, handsome. Buy a girl a drink?

JAKE

Thanks for coming, Charlie. Let's get a booth.

He and Charlie sit in a booth. Other PATRONS sit in booths and at tables. A WAITRESS brings Jake and Charlie a pitcher of beer. Jake fills their glasses.

CHARLIE

So how long had you known Tom?

JAKE

Since AOCs. Over seven years. We were in the same class, He was so gung-ho about everything.

CHARLIE

But not you?

JAKE

Oh I was, you had to be to make it through. But Tom really believed in what he was doing. He was out to save the world for democracy.

CHARLIE

He sounds like a dedicated officer.

JAKE

Yep. Red, white, and blue to the end.

CHARLIE

I'm very sorry, Jake. But life goes on.

JAKE

But if I hadn't . . .

Charlie lays her hands tenderly on Jake.

CHARLIE
No, don't blame yourself. You
had nothing to do with his death.

Jake looks as if he is about to cry.

JAKE
But I let him down, Charlie.
(beat)
I let the whole squadron down.

Charlie gets up and takes Jake by the hand.

CHARLIE
Come on. Let's go for a walk.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Jake and Charlie stroll arm-in-arm down the moonlit beach.
The waves toss gently across their feet.

CHARLIE
It's really none of my business, but
you're married, right?

JAKE
I am. . . was. It's over.

CHARLIE
Oh. Sorry.

JAKE
Yeah it's a hell of a thing. I got
home from the Gulf and realized that
Margo wasn't the person I had
married.

CHARLIE
Do you still love her?

JAKE
Love? I am concerned for her. But
love?

Jake shrugs his shoulders.

JAKE (CONT.)
What about you? Ever married?

CHARLIE

No. I came close once. But I wanted a career in the navy. He didn't.

The ocean breeze tugs at Charlie's hair. Jake looks at her, seeing for the first time past the officer and the colleague to her beauty and warmth.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Penny for your thoughts.

JAKE

I was just thinking how you and I might have fared if things were different.

CHARLIE

Different how?

JAKE

Well, if I was on my way up instead of on my way out.

Charlie takes Jake's face in her hands.

CHARLIE

Everything will work out fine, Jake, you'll see. Besides, I think you're wonderful just the way you are.

INT. SAIGON BAR - NIGHT

A bottle of whiskey, half full, sits next to an empty glass on the table of Ernie's booth. Ernie looks at the battle photos as Jake drinks his beer.

JAKE

Well?

Ernie sets the photos down, pours himself a whiskey, then chugs it.

ERNIE

They're dynamite, Jake. And you say you were there?

JAKE

I was there all right.

ERNIE

So why give them to me?

JAKE
Because people need to be told.

ERNIE
But what about you?

JAKE
What about me?

ERNIE
What are you after? Penance,
revenge, money? I just want to know
who I'm crawling in bed with here.

JAKE
Look, Ernie, the pictures either
stand on their own or they don't.

Ernie, suspicious, takes another drink of whiskey. Jake starts to pick the photos up.

JAKE (CONT.)
Never mind. I'll go somewhere else.

Ernie puts his hand on top of the photos.

ERNIE
You know that if you go down this
path there's no turning back?

JAKE
Ernie, I'm halfway down that path
already.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

Ernie pours a cup of whiskey. He hands it to Harvey, who is sitting at his desk looking at the gruesome battle photos.

ERNIE
Here, Harv, drink this.

Harvey takes a drink and gags on the alcohol.

HARVEY
Jesus, Dobbs, how do you drink this
stuff?

ERNIE
How do you not drink it?

Harvey puts the last of the pictures on his desk.

HARVEY

I don't know about these, Dobbs.
This is a military town. Hell, we're
a military country. Who would it
serve to print these?

Ernie drinks his whiskey as if it was water.

ERNIE

Come on, Harvey, you can't be
serious. You keep telling me you
want a story with some meat to it.
Well goddammit this has meat!

HARVEY

Maybe, but damn near half our
readers rely on the Defense
Department for income. Half!
We have to be very careful.

Ernie crushes the cup and tosses it into a waste basket.

ERNIE

So what's it going to take to run
this story?

HARVEY

Look, if we're going to open this
can of worms then we have to be
ready to go all the way with it.
I need more than just these photos.
As powerful as they are there is
nothing here that indicates the
allied forces did anything wrong.

ERNIE

You want more evidence, I'll get
it. Just run the story.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

The small airport consists of a corrugated metal hangar, one landing strip, and several single-engine planes parked on the tarmac. Jake, who is carrying a flight bag, and Charlie are looking at a twin-engine plane. An ATTENDANT in greasy coveralls and a not-so-bright look walks out of the hangar.

ATTENDANT

Can I help you?

JAKE

We want to rent this plane.

CHARLIE

No we don't! We just want to look.

The Attendant looks confused.

JAKE

Come on, Charlie! It's not just a job, it's an adventure. Remember?

Charlie rolls her eyes.

ATTENDANT

You know you got to have a license.

Jake laughs at this.

JAKE

What, a driver's license?

ATTENDANT

A pilot's license! And a log book.
And file a flight plan.

JAKE

Anything else?

ATTENDANT

Well there's fuel, and insurance,
and . . .

Jake and Charlie are both laughing now.

JAKE

We get the picture!

INT. PLANE - DAY

Jake is all smiles at the controls of the plane. Charlie is strapped into the seat beside him. Jake pulls back on the wheel.

EXT. PLANE - DAY

The plane arches up into the sky and then levels out. As it flies on the land gives way to the blue ocean.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Jake pushes his seat back, and then reaches over and unbuckles Charlie's seat belt.

CHARLIE

Jake!

He takes her by the hand and pulls her over to his seat.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Jake, no. What are you doing?

Jake pulls her over to him.

JAKE

Come on.

Charlie sits between his legs. Jake has his arms around her, one hand on the wheel, the other on Charlie.

JAKE (CONT.)

Put your hand on the wheel.

CHARLIE

No, Jake, something might happen.

JAKE

I won't let anything go wrong, I promise. Go ahead.

Charlie slowly raises her hand to the wheel. For a few moments they fly the plane together. Charlie starts to smile.

JAKE (CONT.)

Now the other hand.

More confident now, Charlie puts her other hand on the wheel. Jake takes his hand away slowly.

CHARLIE

Oh my God! Jake, I'm flying! I'm flying!

Jake laughs at Charlie's girlish excitement. He kisses her on the back of the neck.

JAKE
Great, isn't it?

EXT. PLANE - DAY

The plane soars through the sky as free as a bird.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake is trotting on the sidewalk with Charlie on his back. His arms are spread out like wings

JAKE
May day! May day!

He begins to stagger. Charlie starts to slip off.

CHARLIE
Ahh!

Charlie grabs Jake around the head, covering his eyes.

JAKE
Pilot to navigator! Pilot to
navigator! I've lost visuals!

CHARLIE
Put me down!

Jake lowers Charlie to the sidewalk. But they are both laughing so hard they that they end up falling in the grass.

JAKE
Oh! Crash landing! Are you okay?

CHARLIE
I'm fine, you maniac!

AT THE APARTMENT DOOR

The door to Charlie's apartment is open. Jake leans over Charlie, his arm resting on the building. Charlie hooks her finger on the waist of Jake's pants, tugging at them a little.

CHARLIE
You could come in, Jake.

Jake kisses her, a long, wet, deep kiss. They part lips. He rests his forehead against hers.

JAKE
Not yet, okay?

This perplexes Charlie.

CHARLIE
What? Tell me.

JAKE
It's better that you don't know.

She wraps her arms around him. He runs his fingers through her hair.

CHARLIE
You know that I'm here for you?

They kiss again, mouths open, tongues exploring.

JAKE
I better go.

They hold hands. Charlie steps into the apartment. Their arms are outstretched, only fingers touching now. Then, slowly, they let go. Charlie smiles, and quietly closes the door.

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Charlie puts a document into the safe, closes the drawer, spins the tumbler, then flips the sign to "Locked." There's a KNOCK on her office door. It's Margo, briefcase in hand.

CHARLIE
May I help you?

MARGO
I'm looking for Lieutenant Hart. I was told he worked in this office.

The stance, the demeanor, the stunning yellow dress, all tell Charlie who this is.

CHARLIE
You must be Margo.

MARGO
Is this the right office?

CHARLIE
Jake works here. But he's on an errand. Is there a message?

MARGO

Yeah. Tell him I want my condo back.

Margo departs abruptly. Dismayed, Charlie walks out into the hallway to watch her walk away.

INT. MITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Margo walks into Mitch's office. Mitch and Admiral Blouin rise from the conference table upon seeing her.

MITCH

Hello, Margo.

MARGO

Captain Cave. Admiral Blouin.

ADMIRAL BLOUIN

Ms. Hart.

MITCH

Has IDC worked out a figure based on the contract specifications?

MARGO

We have. And I think you'll find it very competitive.

INT. SAIGON BAR - DAY

Ernie sits in his booth with his whiskey. Jake gets up from the booth and walks over to the bar. He keeps his back turned to Ernie.

JAKE

All I wanted to do was bide my time until I got my discharge.

ERNIE

This could get ugly for you. I wouldn't blame you if you just went back to your daddy's farm and forgot all about the war.

JAKE

Don't think I haven't thought just that.

(beat)

But I can't run from it.

Jake comes back to the booth.

ERNIE
So you'll try to get the casualty reports?

JAKE
I won't put Charlie in jeopardy.

ERNIE
Nobody needs to know about her. And I'll keep your name out of it as long as I can.

JAKE
Thanks, but it won't take a genius to put two and two together and come up with me.

Ernie takes a drink of whiskey.

JAKE (CONT.)
That lousy fucking war!

ERNIE
Amen to that, my friend.

EXT. NEWSPAPER BOX - DAY

A MAN lifts the lid of a Norfolk Nonpareil newspaper box. He pulls the paper out and grimaces at the headline "Highway of Death" and a photo of a desert littered with dead bodies and burned-out vehicles.

INT. MITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Mitch throws a copy of the Norfolk Nonpareil down on his desk. The headline "Highway of Death" is face up.

MITCH
Goddammit Rick! How in the hell did this Dobbs asshole get his hands on an intelligence photograph?

Rick picks the paper up and looks at the photo.

RICK
He's got to be working with somebody on the inside.

MITCH

Which inside? Navy? Air Force? CIA?
(beat)

All right. Let's start by digging in
our own back yard. I want to know
which squadron took those pictures.

RICK

Find the photos, find the leak.

MITCH

You're damn right! And when we do
I'm going to hang the treasonous
son-of-a-bitch!

Mitch picks up the telephone.

MITCH (CONT.)

(to Rick)

Let's get Charlie on this. I want a
rebuttal article on my desk by 1500.

Rick hustles out of the office.

MITCH (CONT.)

Get me Agent Danforth at
Naval Investigative Service ASAP!

INT. SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Agents Scofield and Danforth are in Pete's office. Pete is
looking at the battle photo in the paper.

PETE

It's ours all right. But I can
assure you that none of my men
would ever . . .

AGENT DANFORTH

What about Hart?

PETE

Hart? He's not even stationed here.

AGENT SCOFIELD

But he could have already had the
photo.

PETE

Yes, I suppose, but he's nearly out of the navy.

AGENT DANFORTH

All the more reason for him to pull a stunt like this. We'll be in touch, Commander.

Agents Danforth and Scofield depart. Pete looks at the photo.

PETE

Jake, Jake, Jake.

EXT. FLEET HEADQUARTERS - DAY

As Jake walks toward the headquarters building he is approached by AGENT HOLCROFT and AGENT BANE.

AGENT HOLCROFT

Lieutenant Jason Hart?

Agent Holcroft flips an identification badge at Jake.

AGENT HOLCROFT (CONT.)

NIS. You'll come with us, please.

Agent Bane grabs Jake by the arm and slaps a pair of handcuffs on him.

JAKE

You don't need those!

INT. NAVAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE - DAY

Jake, still handcuffed, sits on a chair at the end of an interrogation room. A light hangs over his head. Agent Scofield paces the floor in front of a large mirror. Agent Danforth sits at a table looking over Jake's personnel file.

AGENT SCOFIELD

Why don't you make it easy on yourself. Tell us who you're working for and we'll wrap this up.

JAKE

How many times do I have to tell you? I don't know anything about any photos, and I'm sure as hell not working for anyone!

AGENT SCOFIELD

And how many times do I have to
tell you that you're full of shit!

Agent Scofield grabs Jake by the hair and pulls his head
back.

AGENT SCOFIELD (CONT.)

I'm getting tired of fucking with
you! Tell me who you're working for!

Jake, his head pulled back, just stares up at Agent Scofield.
After a moment of this stare down Agent Scofield throws
Jake's head forward.

AGENT SCOFIELD (CONT.)

Ahhh!

Agent Scofield goes to the table, pours himself a glass of
water, and sits down. Agent Danforth gets up and walks calmly
over to Jake.

AGENT DANFORTH

You understand why he's so upset?

Agent Danforth pulls a key from his pocket and unlocks Jake's
handcuffs. Jake rubs his wrists.

JAKE

Because he's so damn ugly?

AGENT SCOFIELD

Fuck you, pretty boy!

Agent Danforth laughs and tosses the handcuffs on the table.

AGENT DANFORTH

No, no. It's because of the risk
that you pose to the United States.
If certain foreign organizations are
paying you to discredit our
government, well, we simply must
know.

JAKE

I'll say it one more time. I'm only
working for Uncle Sam, just like
you.

Jake gets up and goes to the mirror.

JAKE

Look, you guys don't have shit and you know it. So why don't we call it a day.

(beat)

Who's behind the mirror?

IN ANOTHER ROOM

Agents Scofield and Danforth enter a closet-sized room where Mitch is watching Jake through the mirror.

MITCH

He's a cool customer.

AGENT SCOFIELD

Fucking fighter pilot!

Mitch gives Agent Scofield an incredulous look.

AGENT SCOFIELD (CONT.)

No offense, Captain.

MITCH

I think we better let him go for now. We don't want this to turn into some civil rights issue.

AGENT DANFORTH

You may be right.

They watch Jake walk around the room.

MITCH

If we want to build a case against him we need him on the street.

AGENT SCOFIELD

To see what sewer the little rat runs to.

AGENT DANFORTH

There's always the chance that this whole thing will blow over. We just won a good war. A sanctimonious prick like Hart won't get the time of day.

INT. MARGO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Mitch is sprawled out on Margo's couch with a drink in his hand. Margo is at the window, looking at the city lights.

MARGO

I'm sorry I talked you into taking him on your staff. I felt so guilty then, but now . . .

MITCH

He's a tough nut to crack, your Jake.

MARGO

I should have seen this coming. Something happened to him in the Gulf, changed him.

MITCH

War changes all of us, one way or another.

Mitch tosses back the rest of his drink.

INT. CONDO - NIGHT

The front door swings open and Jake enters the condo. Duke comes ambling up to him looking for attention.

JAKE

Hi, Duke. How's my boy?

Margo walks out of the bedroom with her arms across her chest.

JAKE (CONT.)

Margo!

MARGO

Did you know that NIS searched the house today? My House!

JAKE

None of that concerns you. What are you doing here?

MARGO

The hell if it doesn't! I've got a reputation to protect.

JAKE

Please!

MARGO

You never once stopped to think about me! About my career!

JAKE

You're really a piece of work, you know it? You and your precious legal career! There's more to the world than you and IDC.

IN THE BEDROOM

Jake makes his way into the bedroom. The closet is full of Margo's clothes again.

JAKE (CONT.)

What's this?

MARGO

I'm not giving up my house.

JAKE

Your house? What's the matter, lover boy get tired of you already?

MARGO

Just get your things and get out!

Jake pulls a few clothes haphazardly out of his dresser and stuffs them into a bag.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Jake pulls a couple of his calligraphic art works off the wall and stuffs them into his bag. Margo sits on the couch defiantly.

JAKE

You know something, you can have this fucking condo, and the designer couch, and marble sinks, and the fucking matched luggage!

He makes his way to the front door.

JAKE (CONT.)

So who's filing, Margo, you or me?

MARGO

I don't know!

JAKE
Come on, Duke!

Jake and Duke rush out the front door.

EXT. CONDO - NIGHT

Jake and Duke hop into Jake's Chevy Blazer. Jake SQUEALS out of the driveway.

IN THE STREET

Jake continues backing up the street a few feet. He stops next to a four-door sedan with Agents Holcroft and Bane in it. Jake yells out his window.

JAKE
If it isn't Heckle and Jeckle. I'm going to get a hotel room and then go to sleep. Why don't you boys go get yourselves a donut!

Jake tears down the road.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Agents Holcroft and Bane look at each other rather angrily.

AGENT HOLCROFT
Smart ass.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Duke is asleep at the foot of the bed. Jake's hair is wet. He's in gym shorts and has a towel draped around the neck. He picks up the phone, dials, then walks to the window and looks at the surf rolling onto the beach.

JAKE
Hi, it's Jake. Did I wake you?

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

All of the lights are on in Charlie's living room. She is fully dressed and on the telephone. CNN is on the television, but there is no sound.

CHARLIE

Oh, Jake, no. I've been so worried.
Where are you?

IN THE HOTEL ROOM

JAKE

I got a room on the beach, the
Driftide.

IN THE APARTMENT

CHARLIE

I'm coming over.

(beat)

I don't care if you're being
followed! I want to see you.

(beat)

I don't care about them. You need me
now more than you think. What room?

IN THE HOTEL ROOM

Except for the moonlight coming in through the open window
the room is dark. There's a KNOCK on Jake's door. He answers
it. Charlie steps inside, and before Jake even has the door
shut she drops the small bag she is carrying, wraps her arms
around his neck, and kisses him passionately.

CHARLIE

I guess that seemed a little
desperate.

JAKE

No. I'm glad you came.

They kiss again, a shorter one this time.

CHARLIE

I've been so worried, Jake. Rumors
were flying around headquarters
today that you're some kind of spy.

Jake laughs at this.

JAKE

If you believed that you wouldn't
be here.

CHARLIE

I don't know. Maybe I'd have come
anyway.

Duke jumps down from the bed and BARKS at the intrusion.

JAKE

Duke go back to sleep. She's on our side. My dog.

Duke curls up in a corner. Jake and Charlie sit on the bed.

CHARLIE

But you are behind the newspaper story?

JAKE

Yes. That's what I couldn't tell you the other night. I didn't want you to get involved.

CHARLIE

But I am involved! I was involved the day you walked into the office.

JAKE

But, Charlie, I'm not finished. There are more photos.

CHARLIE

I don't care! I can help you. I know things.

JAKE

No! There's no way you're going to . . .

CHARLIE

I want to help you! It's like you said, people have to be told. So many died . . .

JAKE

No, Charlie. I could never forgive myself if anything happened to you.

CHARLIE

But I need to help you. I could give you the combination to the safe.

Jake takes a moment to think about this.

JAKE

No. If I'm caught . . .

CHARLIE

If you're caught you tell them you saw me open it once.

JAKE

You have to promise me that you will never tell anyone that you gave it to me.

CHARLIE

No, wait you'd go to prison . . .

JAKE

Promise!

CHARLIE

Okay. But you promise me something.

JAKE

Anything.

CHARLIE

Don't shut me out, Jake. Promise me you'll never shut me out.

Jake puts the palm of his hand on her cheek. She nuzzles and kisses it.

JAKE

I promise, Charlie.

Jake kisses her suddenly. She responds by putting her arms around him. He pulls her close.

Charlie runs her fingers through Jake's hair. He kisses her, mouths open, tongues moving freely.

They lie back on the bed, kissing. Charlie's hands roam over Jake's chest. He unbuttons her blouse. She wiggles out of it. He unsnaps her bra. Her breasts shake free.

Charlie cradles Jake's head as he kisses her breasts.

CHARLIE

Oh, Jake, Jake . . .

Jake unsnaps her pants. She kicks them off. He slides his hand across her panties.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Mmmm . . .

Charlie gets up on her knees, her breasts swing freely. She pulls Jake's shorts off, then her panties. She kisses his neck, his chest, his stomach. Jake strokes her hair.

She lowers herself onto him. He cups her breasts, kisses them, kisses her neck, her lips. Charlie begins to grind her hips back and forth. Jake guides her with his hands.

CHARLIE

Yes, Jake, yes.

She tosses her head back and arches her back. Jake raises himself up to her. And then they flop down again.

She rolls off of Jake onto the bed. Her head rests on his chest. He strokes her hair.

JAKE

Come home with me tomorrow.

CHARLIE

Home?

JAKE

Illinois, the farm. If I don't go now it may be a while before I get back.

CHARLIE

Don't talk like that!

JAKE

I owe my folks an explanation. I'd like you with me.

CHARLIE

Yes. I'd like that too.

The drift off to sleep to the sounds of the rolling surf.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Mitch, Admiral Blouin, and two CADDIES are on the eighteenth tee. Mitch executes a picture-perfect swing, hitting his ball far down the center of the fairway.

ADMIRAL BLOUIN

Nice shot, Mitch.

Mitch hands his club to his caddie, and the group heads down the fairway.

ADMIRAL BLOUIN (CONT.)

So, Mitch, what are you going to do with this Lieutenant Hart?

MITCH

Watch him for now.

ADMIRAL BLOUIN

There's a danger there, if you give him too much leash.

MITCH

The hell of it is, we need more proof, and we're not going to get it with him in the brig. And the fucking newspaper isn't helping us any.

ADMIRAL BLOUIN

What about the reporter?

MITCH

Dobbs. He's a rabble-rouser and a drunk, nothing we haven't dealt with before.

They come upon Admiral Blouin's golf ball.

MITCH (CONT.)

Looks like about a four iron.

Admiral Blouin nods to his caddie, who hands him a four iron. The Admiral addresses the ball, swings, and puts the ball close to the pin.

ADMIRAL BLOUIN

Four iron it is!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Jake puts on a pair of sunglasses and a ball cap. Charlie hands him a set of keys.

CHARLIE

Here are the keys to my car.

JAKE

It's not too late to change your mind.

Charlie takes his face in her hands.

CHARLIE
Just be careful.

She hands him a newspaper.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
Use this on your way out.

He kisses her, then walks out of the room.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Jake unfolds the newspaper and holds it in front of his face as if he was reading it. He walks past his Blazer to Charlie's not-so-new Toyota Corolla.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Two AGENTS watch Jake go past the Blazer to Charlie's car without realizing it is him.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Charlie's car pulls out of the parking lot and onto the roadway.

INT. MITCH'S CAR - DAY

Mitch is driving toward the naval station. As he approaches the gate we see from his POV a rag-tag bunch of PROTESTORS, all of whom are grimy, unshaven, unkempt men, some of whom are wearing military jackets or pants.

MITCH
What the hell?

As Mitch drives closer we see a sign that reads "Homeless Veterans Paid Their Dues Twice."

INT. MITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Mitch enters his office. As soon as he sets his briefcase on his desk Rick walks in.

MITCH
Did you see the protestors at the main gate?

RICK
Base security is already on the way.

MITCH
But it isn't right, Rick. We can't
have our veterans roaming the
streets like dogs.

Rick holds the morning Norfolk Nonpareil out to Mitch.

RICK
Seen this?

Mitch looks at the paper. A photo of the burned and huddled
bodies is on the front page under the headline "Retreating
Army Massacred."

MITCH
What's with this fucking paper? This
is a navy town. We shouldn't have to
look at this shit every day.

RICK
It's news, Captain.

MITCH
Yeah, well it's classified news! We
still have troops in that Mid-East
powder keg, don't these liberal
bastards know that?

Mitch tosses the paper on his desk.

MITCH (CONT.)
Get Charlie up here.

RICK
It's Saturday, Sir.

MITCH
Just get her here!

Mitch picks up the phone and dials.

MITCH (CONT.)
All right, now the gloves come off.
(beat)
Agent Danforth, Captain Cave. Do
you know why I'm calling?

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake pulls a document from the safe and puts it in a gym bag. He locks the safe and walks out of the office with the gym bag in hand.

INT. COPY ROOM - DAY

Jake enters the copy room and locks the door. He pulls several documents stamped "Secret" and "Confidential" out of the gym bag and begins to copy them.

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Rick walks into Charlie's office, picks up the phone, dials.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Charlie's phone RINGS once, and then her answering machine comes on.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Hi, this is Charlie. I can't come to the phone now, but if you leave your name and number I'll call you back.

RICK (O.S.)

This is Commander Boyle. It's Saturday 11:18. We need you in the office double-quick.

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Rick hangs up the phone and walks out.

INT. COPY ROOM - DAY

Jake puts the last of the copies into the gym bag.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

As Jake heads back to Charlie's office he just misses bumping into Rick.

INT. CHARLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake puts the original documents back into the safe. He goes to the phone and dials.

JAKE
I'm on my way.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

From the agent's POV, we see a woman dressed in a large hat and sunglasses walk out of the hotel lobby with a golden retriever and get into a cab.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

AGENT LETNER and other AGENTS are rifling through Harvey's office and Dobbs' desk. Harvey holds the search warrant in his hand.

HARVEY
What are you looking for?

AGENT LETNER
Classified data. Read the warrant.

HARVEY
This is a newspaper for crying out loud!

The agents who were searching the desk and office walk up to Agent Letner.

AGENT LETNER
Anything?

The agents shake their heads no.

AGENT LETNER
That will be all for now,
Mr. Sinclair. I apologize for any
inconvenience we may have caused
you.

The agents hustle out of the newsroom, leaving Harvey dumbfounded.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - DAY

Jake is driving the car. The gym bag lies on the front seat.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

The two agents from the sedan walk to Jake's room.

INT. THE HOTEL ROOM

A MAID is taking the bedding off the bed. The two agents give each other an "oh no" look as Jake's getaway dawns on them.

FIRST AGENT

The dog!

SECOND AGENT

The woman in the cab!

FIRST AGENT

Shit!

The agents run out of the room.

INT. SAIGON BAR - DAY

Thirty Nine is waiting at the door as Charlie and Duke hustle through.

THIRTY NINE

You must be Charlie. I'm Thirty Nine.

CHARLIE

Hi. Is Jake here?

Thirty Nine rolls himself over to the women's rest room and pushes open the door.

THIRTY NINE

Okay, my man.

Jake walks out of the rest room and kisses Charlie.

CHARLIE

Any problems?

JAKE

No. Your car's out back.

Jake hands the gym bag to Thirty Nine.

JAKE (CONT.)
Are you sure you want to keep
these?

THIRTY NINE
Are you sure you trust me?

Both men laugh.

JAKE
We'll be back tomorrow. Thanks.

Jake and Charlie head out the back.

THIRTY NINE
Keep the faith, brother!

Thirty Nine puts the gym bag behind the bar.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Jake, who is carrying two small bags, Charlie, and Duke get out of the car and walk to the same plane that they rented before. The Attendant walks out of the hangar.

ATTENDANT
Back for another try?

JAKE
We need it for a couple of days
this time, okay?

ATTENDANT
You in some kind of trouble? I don't
rent to smugglers!

JAKE
We're not smugglers.

Jake puts the bags into the plane, then heads toward the hangar with the Attendant. Charlie and Duke get into the plane.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Jake taxis the plane down the runway. Charlie sits in the passenger seat, Duke is in the back.

JAKE

I filed a flight plan to Minnesota,
just in case we were followed.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

The plane lifts off the runway and into the sky.

INT. MITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Mitch is on the phone, pacing back and forth.

MITCH

How did those fucksticks lose him?

(beat)

They didn't see anybody else?

(beat)

Well who is she?

(beat)

Christ. What about Dobbs?

(beat)

Good. Don't fuck it up.

INT. PLANE - DAY

The sun is setting as Jake looks over the terrain. Charlie is asleep on Jake's shoulder. He nudges her gently.

JAKE

Charlie, wake up.

CHARLIE

Hmmm?

JAKE

Wake up. We're here.

She sits up and looks down at the Hart farm. From her POV we see "Hart Crop Dusting" in huge white letters on the barn roof.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Wendall and Sally walk out of the farmhouse into the yard. They look up as Jake's plane passes overhead.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Charlie gives Jake a worried look.

CHARLIE
A dirt runway?

JAKE
Don't worry. I've been landing here
since I was fifteen.

EXT. FARM - DAY

The plane glides down out of the sky and onto the dirt landing strip.

The plane taxis next to the barn. The motor is cut off.

Duke is the first out of the plane. He runs around the side of the barn. Jake steps out to Sally's open arms. As they hug she starts to cry.

JAKE
It's okay, Mom.

Wendall helps Charlie out of the plane.

WENDALL
You must be Charlie. I'm Wendall.

CHARLIE
Hello Mr. Hart.

Jake walks his mother over to Charlie.

JAKE
Mom, this is Charlie Groseport.

Sally readily accepts Charlie's extended hand.

CHARLIE
Hello Mrs. Hart.

SALLY
Just Sally, please. Jake's told me
so many nice things about you.

WENDALL
Your mother has supper ready. Why
don't you go on in. I'll take care
of the plane.

Jake and Wendall look at each other for a moment, which is their way of saying hello.

JAKE

Thanks, Dad.

Jake, Charlie, and Sally head toward the house, along with Duke, who comes running up to them. In the background we HEAR the plane start up.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Sally, Wendall, Jake, and Charlie are gathered around a kitchen table full of corn on the cob, steak, homemade bread, butter, a bowl of green beans, and a pitcher of milk.

WENDALL

Fact is son, the crop dusting business ain't what it used to be. Sally, what was that you read in the paper?

SALLY

Oh the farms. Seven more farms went under last year.

WENDALL

The small farmer can't afford to pay me, and the big corporations don't need me. I think your mother and I will sell out and move to Florida!

JAKE

You'll never sell the Sally Mae.

SALLY

You're right about that!

Sally gets up from the table.

CHARLIE

Well, who wants pie?

WENDALL

I'll take a sliver.

JAKE

I'll wait, Mom.

Charlie begins to clear the dishes from the table.

CHARLIE
I'll get these, Sally.

SALLY
No, now don't be silly. You and Jake
run along. Wendall and I can manage,
can't we dear?

WENDALL
I can manage a piece of that pie!

Hart kisses his mother on the cheek.

JAKE
Thanks for supper. It was as good as
ever.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

The rented plane and the crop duster sit nose to tail in the barn. "Sally Mae" is painted on the fuselage of the bi-winged, open-cockpit crop duster. As Jake and Charlie walk past the crop duster he runs his hand along the fuselage as if caressing a lover.

CHARLIE
So that's the famous Sally Mae.

JAKE
That's her. Beautiful, isn't she?

CHARLIE
Yes.

Jake forgoes the ladder to the hayloft and instead climbs up a beam. Charlie climbs the ladder.

CHARLIE
You know, Jake, you don't take the
ladder to anything.

JAKE
Force of habit, I guess. I've been
climbing that beam for as long as I
can remember.

Jake throws open the hayloft doors to the starry sky. The moonlight and the music of the CICADAS pour in. Jake stands at the edge of the hayloft and takes a deep breath.

JAKE (CONT.)

Smell that sweet country air.

Charlie comes up behind Jake and wraps her arms around him.

CHARLIE

It's beautiful here, Jake.

Charlie sits down on a small pile of hay.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Feel good to be back?

JAKE

Yeah, but it's like the old saying,
you can't go home again.

Jake sits next to Charlie.

CHARLIE

So where do we go, Jake.

JAKE

We? Are you sure?

CHARLIE

I wouldn't be here if I wasn't.

Jake takes her in his arms and kisses her.

JAKE

It's easier having you with me. You
know that?

Charlie senses Jake's need for reassurance.

CHARLIE

I won't leave you, Jake, no matter
what happens.

She leans her head against Jake's shoulder. For a few moments
they are quiet.

JAKE

I flew out of this barn once in a
little wooden plane Dad made me, a
P-51 Mustang. I rigged a rope from
here to that fence post across
the yard. I put the plane on a
pulley and slid down the rope.

CHARLIE

You must have scared your poor mother half to death.

JAKE

I did. I don't think she knew if she wanted to kiss me or shoot me. Anyway, I crashed into the post and trashed the plane.

CHARLIE

You're a crazy man.

Again they are quiet for a few moments

JAKE

You know, Charlie, it's a shame that I had to travel so far to find out that the person I wanted to be was always right here.

CHARLIE

Yes, but then look who you found along the way.

Jake smiles at this, then kisses her.

JAKE

We should go back inside.

They get up and walk toward the ladder.

INT. SAIGON BAR - NIGHT

Thirty Nine is behind the bar washing glasses. Ernie takes a drink of whiskey and then sets the empty glass on the bar with some conviction.

ERNIE

Ahhh! Well, Thirty Nine, I guess I'll call it a night. Look after our package now.

THIRTY NINE

Don't you worry about that. You want a cab?

ERNIE

Me? The day I need a cab is the day I stop drinking!

Ernie heads for the door.

ERNIE (CONT.)
Good night, my friend.

THIRTY NINE
See you, Dobbsie.

EXT. SAIGON BAR - NIGHT

Ernie walks out of the bar. The "Saigon Bar" light goes out above his head. Nobody is in sight, and the night is unnervingly quiet.

Ernie walks toward his car, WHISTLING.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Ernie drops his keys as he tries to put them in the lock.

ERNIE
Whoops.

With some effort he picks them up and unlocks the door.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Ernie cranks the motor over and over.

ERNIE
Come on you piece of . . .

Finally the engine catches. He revs up the engine and pulls into the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Ernie's car drives down the deserted street.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

From Ernie's POV, a shadow moves suddenly in front of the car. There is a loud THUD. A body rolls up over the windshield.

ERNIE
Jesus Christ!

He stops the car.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Before Ernie can even get out of his car a police car arrives on the scene with its lights flashing. Two POLICE OFFICERS get out of the police car.

The first police officer goes toward Ernie, who is walking toward the victim. The second police officer is checking the victim's vital signs.

FIRST POLICE OFFICER
Please place your hands on the car
and spread your feet.

ERNIE
What? I . . .

The police officer throws Ernie against the trunk of the car and searches him. The victim lies on the pavement just behind Ernie's car.

ERNIE (CONT.)
Hey what is this?

FIRST POLICE OFFICER
Have you been drinking, Sir?

ERNIE
Maybe one or two but . . .

The second police officer looks up.

SECOND POLICE OFFICER
He's dead.

ERNIE
Hey no way!

FIRST POLICE OFFICER
Sir, you're under arrest for motor
vehicle homicide.

The police officer slaps a pair of handcuffs on Ernie.

FIRST POLICE OFFICER (CONT.)
You have the right to remain
silent . . .

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Ernie sits in a straight-backed chair, his hands cuffed behind the back of the chair. Agent Danforth sits at a table. Agent Scofield, who is standing behind Ernie, punches him in the back of the head.

ERNIE

Uhh!

Agent Scofield grabs Ernie by the hair and pulls his head back.

AGENT SCOFIELD

I'll ask one more time. Where are the photos, where is Lieutenant Hart?

Ernie has a little spittle coming out of his mouth. His hair is soaked with sweat, and he's breathing heavily.

ERNIE

Go fuck yourself!

Agent Scofield punches Ernie in the back of the head again, snapping it forward. Ernie slowly lifts his head back up.

AGENT SCOFIELD

You know it's a pity that you got so banged up in the accident.

ERNIE

I want a fucking lawyer. I want out of here!

Agent Scofield kicks Ernie and the chair over. Ernie's head bounces off of the floor. Agent Scofield leans over him.

AGENT SCOFIELD

Mr. Dobbs, you're a repeat offender. You're not getting out of here for a long, long time.

The threat of incarceration registers as fear on Ernie's face.

EXT. CROP DUSTER - DAY

The Sally Mae flies through a cloud. It turns over in a barrel roll and then falls through blue sky.

INT. CROP DUSTER - DAY

Jake maneuvers the control stick and pulls back on the throttle. The landing strip comes into view.

EXT. LANDING STRIP - DAY

The Sally Mae touches down on the dirt landing strip. Jake taxis the plane next to the barn and shuts the motor off.

Wendall walks out of the barn, wiping his greasy hands on a rag.

WENDALL

Well?

Jake hops down to the ground.

JAKE

She still handles like a dream, Dad.

WENDALL

She's no F-14, though.

Wendall rubs a cloth across the fuselage, waiting to see if Jake will respond.

JAKE

Look, I know you don't approve of what I'm doing.

WENDALL

Jake I'm not sure what you're doing. I don't know if I should shake your hand or call the damn sheriff.

JAKE

What about Mom?

WENDALL

She's just glad you made it home alive. But she hates to see you throw away your career. You worked so hard to get away from here, to make something of yourself. You were such a good pilot, Jake.

JAKE

It takes more than that to make a career, Dad.

Wendall shakes his head and rubs his hands on the rag.

WENDALL

And we wonder what happened to you
and Margo.

JAKE

Margo changed into somebody else.
I thought I had changed too, but
I really just figured out that I
hadn't changed at all.

Jake puts his arm around his dad's shoulder.

JAKE (CONT.)

I'm still a farmer, just like my old
man.

INT. JAIL - DAY

Ernie's face is swollen and bruised and there is a cut above his right eye. He sits at a table in the visitor's room. LEE WILSON, an attorney whose appearance would put him on Wall Street instead of his office at the A.C.L.U., and Thirty Nine come into the room.

THIRTY NINE

Jesus, Ernie, you must of been in
some accident.

ERNIE

Accident my ass!
(to Lee)
Who are you?

LEE

Lee Wilson. I've been retained by your
newspaper.

ERNIE

Well get me out of this hell hole.

LEE

I'm afraid there's a problem there.
You've been denied bail.

ERNIE

Those motherfuckers!

LEE

You were drunk and driving on a
suspended license, and with your
previous DUI's . . .

ERNIE

I wasn't drunk! I was set up!

THIRTY NINE

Who, Ernie?

ERNIE

Fucking NIS.

LEE

Okay, sit tight. Let me do some
checking and I'll see if I
can get you out of here.

Lee heads for the door.

ERNIE

They'll be after Jake.

Ernie coughs and grimaces from the pain.

ERNIE (CONT.)

They beat the shit out of me, Thirty
Nine. I can't be in here. Not again!

THIRTY NINE

How many times in a lifetime,
brother?

ERNIE

I almost talked, man, I almost gave
them everything.

THIRTY NINE

You hang in there, brother! You be
strong for me! We'll get you out.

ERNIE

I need a fucking drink.

(beat)

Listen, you give Jake my papers, hear?

THIRTY NINE

You can give them to him when . . .

ERNIE

Just give them to him! And tell him I want him to spill it all, Thirty Nine. I want him to tell the whole fucking world.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

A GUARD carries a tray of food down the corridor to Ernie's cell. He looks up and drops the tray to the floor.

GUARD

Holy . . .

Ernie, a bed sheet tied around his neck, hangs from a cross bar in his cell. His face, purple and swollen, tongue extended, is pressed up against the bars.

The guard runs back down the corridor.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Wendall helps Charlie into the airplane. Sally is hugging Jake.

JAKE

I'll be fine, Mom.

Jake bends over and gets a kiss from Duke.

JAKE (CONT.)

You behave yourself here, boy.

Wendall walks over to Jake.

WENDALL

Son, maybe I don't understand all that went on over there. But I know you've always been one to do what's right.

He gives Jake a half-hug.

Jake gets into the plane. The engine FIRES and the propeller spins around. Duke starts to BARK.

The plane speeds down the landing strip and lifts into the sky.

INT. SAIGON BAR - NIGHT

Thirty Nine pushes the back door open. Jake and Charlie walk inside. They go to the bar, where Harvey sits drinking a whiskey. A framed copy of the "Highway of Death" story hangs on the wall.

JAKE
Where's Dobbs?

HARVEY
Jake, I'm Harvey Sinclair, editor
of the Nonpareil.

JAKE
Thirty Nine?

Thirty Nine is too struck with emotion to answer.

JAKE (CONT.)
What? Where's Dobbs?

THIRTY NINE
Dead!
(beat)
Dobbsie's dead.

Jake slumps against the bar.

CHARLIE
Jake!

Charlie rushes to Jake and helps him sit on a barstool.

JAKE
No, not again. Charlie?

CHARLIE
Oh, Jake.

She kisses him tenderly.

HARVEY
He hung himself in his cell.

Harvey swallows the rest of his whiskey.

CHARLIE
Oh my God!

JAKE
In his cell?

THIRTY NINE

They busted him.

HARVEY

Motor vehicle homicide. DUI.

THIRTY NINE

He was set up! There isn't even a body.

HARVEY

Apparently a mix up was made at the coroner's and the body was cremated.

JAKE

But why would he kill himself?

HARVEY

A couple of NIS agents leaned on him pretty hard. I think he killed himself rather than talk.

THIRTY NINE

It was going back to the hole, brother.

JAKE

The hole?

THIRTY NINE

After Ernie pulled me off that hill he went back up it to check for more men. Nothing but VC. Four years in a POW camp. He couldn't do it again.

JAKE

Those motherfuckers! We have to do something!

HARVEY

I have a whole team of lawyers on it, Jake.

Harvey swallows the rest of his whiskey.

THIRTY NINE

There is something he wanted.

JAKE

What?

Thirty Nine puts the gym bag and another stack of papers on the bar.

THIRTY NINE

These are his papers, his notes,
research.

Charlie and Jake look through a couple of Ernie's papers.

JAKE

Navy contracts. IDC!

CHARLIE

Jake, look!

She holds the paper for Jake to read.

JAKE

Captain Cave?

The implications dawn on Jake.

JAKE (CONT.)

Cave!

CHARLIE

That's why Margo was at headquarters.

JAKE

What?

CHARLIE

Oh, a while ago. I'm sorry I didn't
tell you. She was such a bitch.

JAKE

It's okay. It doesn't matter now.

(to Thirty Nine)

So what did Ernie want us to do with
these?

THIRTY NINE

Tell the world.

JAKE

Harvey?

HARVEY

There's a lot in there I simply
can't publish.

JAKE
How then?

HARVEY
Television.

INT - TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

LARRY KING sits on the set of Larry King Live. We see Jake, in uniform, on a television monitor next to Larry.

LARRY
We are taking your phone calls for Lieutenant Jason Hart, a decorated Gulf War veteran who charges, among other things, that the allied forces committed war crimes in the Gulf. Council Bluffs, Iowa, hello.

Larry pushes a button on his console, and the CALLER'S VOICE comes over the speaker.

CALLER (O.S.)
Hi, Larry, great show.

LARRY
Thanks.

CALLER (O.S.)
Yes, Mr. Hart, you said that as many as 8,000 Iraqis were buried alive in their trenches. But as a pilot, how could you know this?

Larry pushes the button on his console again.

JAKE
As a pilot I couldn't. But as a staff member at fleet headquarters I had access to official documents which listed such figures.

LARRY
And some of these documents were classified?

JAKE
Most of them were, yes.

INT. CONDO - NIGHT

Margo sits on the edge of her couch, watching Jake on Larry King Live. Mitch paces the floor as he yells into the phone.

MITCH

I don't give a good goddamned if we
have to use a Russian satellite! I
want that television signal traced!

He slams the receiver down and then looks at the television.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

Larry and Jake continue the show.

LARRY

Beaverdale, Pennsylvania, hello.

Larry pushes a button and the SECOND CALLER'S VOICE comes over the speaker.

SECOND CALLER (O.S.)

Hello, Larry. Lieutenant Hart, why
was it wrong to attack the Iraqis
while they were retreating? Wasn't
the whole idea to put an end to their
power?

Larry pushes the button again.

LARRY

Why shouldn't we have exploited the
opportunity to put a dent in Saddam
Hussein's military machine?

JAKE

Well, at the time of the attack the
war was over. That is why the Iraqis
were retreating.

INT. NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY - NIGHT

The NSA operations room is all high-tech.

TECHNICIANS monitor several television sets with Larry King Live on them.

Other TECHNICIANS adjust computer tracing equipment.

Other TECHNICIANS read satellite tracking reports.

FIRST TECHNICIAN
I've got the broadcast satellite.
It's Telestar AG610.

SECOND TECHNICIAN
Good. Now let's get a fix on the
live feed.

The second technician punches up a graphic display on a computer that reads "Telestar AG610 Uplinks: 6532Y1, 7342U2, 6952U3."

The First Technician looks at a large clock on the wall.
It's 9:25 p.m.

FIRST TECHNICIAN
Thirty five minutes! We'll never
figure this out in time!

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

Larry and Jake continue Larry King Live.

LARRY
So in effect we punched them after
the bell had rung.

JAKE
Yes. We killed 25,000 people as they
fled along the Jahra to Basra and
Jahra to Umm Qasr roads. Many of
those were not Iraqi soldiers at
all, but Palestinian, Egyptian,
and Sudanese workers.

INT. CONDO - NIGHT

Margo shakes her head as she watches Jake on television.

MARGO
I can't believe he's doing this.

Mitch puts his hand on Margo's knee and pushes himself off
the couch.

MITCH
He's doing it. He's doing it to all
of us.

The telephone RINGS. Mitch answers it.

MITCH (CONT.)

Cave.

(beat)

Good work. I'm on my way.

MARGO

What is it?

Mitch is grabbing his car keys.

MITCH

NSA has pinpointed the signal. The yellow son-of-a-bitch is at a hotel on the beach.

Mitch heads for the door.

MARGO

I'm coming with you!

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

A satellite television truck sits in the parking lot with its satellite dish rotating.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Jake sits on a chair in front of a blue screen. A CAMERAMAN operates the television camera. A DIRECTOR has a pair of earphones and microphone on his head. Larry King is on a television monitor next to the crewman. Harvey and Charlie look on.

LARRY (on the monitor)

Some, maybe most, people will see you as a traitor.

JAKE

I know, Larry, and that is very sad.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Mitch and Margo get out of their car in the parking lot.

A NIS car, its blue light flashing on the dashboard, pulls into the lot along with and several police cars.

Agents Scofield and Danforth get out of the NIS car. Agent Scofield opens the back door of the television van.

INT. TELEVISION VAN - NIGHT

Two CREWMEN monitor the high-tech controls. Agent Scofield bursts into the van.

FIRST CREWMAN
Get the hell out of here!

Agent Scofield flashes his badge and draws his service revolver.

AGENT SCOFIELD
What room?

FIRST CREWMAN
I don't know.

Agent Scofield sticks the guns barrel on the First Crewman's nose.

AGENT SCOFIELD
(yelling)
What room?

The First Crewman raises his hands.

FIRST CREWMAN
One seventeen!

Agent Scofield hops out of the van. The First Crewman speaks into his microphone.

FIRST CREWMAN (CONT.)
Heads up, man, the cops are on the way!

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Agents Danforth and Scofield, Mitch, Margo, and POLICEMEN, run down the hallway. They come to room 117. Agent Danforth BANGS on the door with his fist.

AGENT DANFORTH
Naval Investigative Service! Open up!

IN THE HOTEL ROOM

The Cameraman and Director look at each other nervously. Harvey leans against the door. Charlie raises her hand to her mouth. Jake remains calm as he speaks into the camera.

LARRY (on the monitor)
But what of the Pentagon report
claiming most of those people raped
and pillaged Kuwait?

JAKE
I don't condone that, of course. But
what kind of justice is it that
massacres one thousand men to punish
the one who is guilty?

DIRECTOR
Go to break! Go to break!
(beat)
We're off!

CHARLIE
Jake, the window!

JAKE
No. Let them in.

Harvey opens the door. Agents Danforth and Scofield come through so fast it knocks Harvey to the floor.

AGENT DANFORTH
Lieutenant Hart, we have a warrant
for your arrest!

The Cameraman and Director run out of the room. Agent Scofield, Margo, and Mitch rush in.

Agent Danforth begins to cuff Jake, who remains collected until he sees Mitch.

JAKE
Cave! Cave!

Jake breaks loose from Agent Danforth and lunges at Mitch, knocking him up against the wall. Jake grabs Mitch around the throat.

JAKE (CONT.)
Dobbs is dead, you son-of-a-bitch!

Mitch's eyes begin to bulge. Agents Danforth and Scofield draw their service revolvers and point them at Jake.

CHARLIE

No!

Charlie runs over to Jake and tries to pull his arms off of Mitch.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Jake, stop! They'll kill you!

She wrestles Jake's hands down from Mitch's throat. Agent Scofield pushes her out of the way, grabs Jake from behind, and throws him face down on the bed.

AGENT SCOFIELD

Show's over, you yellow-bellied fuck!

Margo helps Mitch recover from Jake's attack. He coughs and rubs his throat.

MITCH

Charlie? What the hell are you doing here?

JAKE

Charlie!

Charlie looks Mitch in the eye.

CHARLIE

I came here to tell that you I quit.

Agent Scofield slaps a pair of cuffs on Jake, and then pulls him to his feet. He starts to push Jake out the door, but Jake stops in front of Margo.

JAKE

So it was Cave, huh? Well, I guess we're both a long way from the farm.

Agent Scofield pushes Jake in the back.

AGENT SCOFIELD

Get going.

Charlie and Harvey, who is rubbing his neck, follow Agent Scofield and Jake out of the room.

INT. PRISON - DAY

An INMATE pushes a mail cart in front of a row of prison cells. He stops at a cell, hands the SECOND INMATE his mail, moves on. He stops again, hands another inmate, Jake, a package.

IN THE PRISON CELL

Jake takes the package to his rack and opens it. It is a book entitled "Sand and Sky: A Fighter Pilot's Journey Through a Desert Storm," by Jason Alexander Hart. The jacket cover depicts the sun setting on a lone Bedouin as he rides his camel across the Arabian desert.

Jake opens the book. We see the dedication. It reads, "To Ernie Dobbs and Tom 'Four Eyes' Johnson, true warriors, two friends."

A PRISON GUARD walks up to Jake's cell.

PRISON GUARD
You got a visitor.

IN THE VISITOR'S ROOM

Jake walks into the plexiglass booth and picks up the phone. Charlie is on the other end of the line, looking longingly through the glass.

JAKE
Hi, sweetheart.

CHARLIE
Hey, handsome.

JAKE
Harvey sent me an advanced copy of the book.

CHARLIE
I saw it too. It's fantastic, Jake. I'm very proud of you.

JAKE
I miss you, Charlie.

CHARLIE
I miss you, darling. I'm always here for you. You know that?

Jake nods. The prison guard walks up behind him.

PRISON GUARD
Okay, Hart.

JAKE
Gotta go, babe.

CHARLIE
Jake.

JAKE
Yes?

CHARLIE
Was it worth it?

Jake looks at Charlie through the plexiglass for a moment.

JAKE
I guess we'll have to wait until
the next war before we can answer
that.

Jake and Charlie hang up their phones. Jake puts his hand up to the plexiglass. Charlie kisses her hand and puts it opposite Jake's. They gaze at each other through the glass.

FADE OUT.