

AIRPLANE 2: THE SEQUEL

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SECOND DRAFT

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FADE IN:

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

A machete slashes INTO FRAME. An American in battered fedora and leather jacket, accompanied by two gunbearers, hacks his way through dense bush. We see him from the back only. He hacks an opening, bats fly out AT CAMERA and the bushes part, revealing huge overgrown stone letters -- the Mayan ruin look -- that spell "AIRPLANE II."

EXT. GANTRY - NIGHT

The Jupiter shuttle stands ready to fly.

SUPER: HOUSTON, 2002

INT. MISSION CONTROL ROOM - STOCK FOOTAGE

of Houston Control with appropriate jargon V.O.

INT. TERMINAL - WIDE ANGLE STOCK SHOT

of a crowded modern terminal.

P.A.

All lunar departures, please proceed to
concourse lounge 'B.'

EXT. TERMINAL - STOCK FOOTAGE - NIGHT

of heavy traffic at LAX.

ANGLE ON TERMINAL DOORS

A number of men in futuristic-looking mining outfits, carrying futuristic gear, unload a truck with a corporate logo that reads: TRX DEEP SPACE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

P.A.

Attention, all Pulsar Four mining
personnel.

The miners look up.

P.A.

Please report to the Resource Expeditions
office, level seven.

Two miners head to terminal doors and pass FOUR NUNS, who bid farewell to FATHER O'FLANAGAN. O'Flanagan shakes the hands of the first three elderly nuns, then grabs the last young gorgeous nun and kisses her passionately.

 OLDER NUN
No tongues, Father.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

A group tour moves through the room behind controllers.

 GUIDE
All lunar shuttle landings are handled by these computers and simulated on these video units.

 CONTROLLER 1
 (at computer screen)
You're programmed on R-two-niner and locked, Lunar eight six. Over.

INT. LUNAR SHUTTLE COCKPIT - NIGHT

Three crew members watch the lit landing strip as their shuttle approaches.

 CAPTAIN
 (to co-pilot)
It's out of our hands now, gentlemen.

They smile.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

The CONTROLLER moves away from his video unit. A kid from the tour who has lagged behind hits a switch. The screen turns into a video game with SFX. He flips knobs.

INT. LUNAR SHUTTLE

The crew are tossed from side to side and try to regain control of the ship.

EXT. NIGHT SKY

The Lunar shuttle careens towards the terminal, out of control.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

The kid is still playing like mad. A flash appears on the screen. SFX VIDEO GAME EXPLOSION and a corresponding EXPLOSION from outside. SIRENS WAIL. CONTROLLERS run around. The kid is oblivious and walks away.

EXT. TERMINAL - NIGHT

BUD KRUGER, head of the space center, and the COMMISSIONER get out of a limo under a sign that reads, "MERCURY SHUTTLE." They walk and talk.

KRUGER

Commissioner, we both know the Mercury shuttle needs another month of pre-launch testing.

COMMISSIONER

Forget it. The boys on the board want that shuttle to go on schedule.

CUT TO:

INT. TERMINAL

Kruger and the Commissioner go up escalator.

KRUGER

And what do the boys on the board know about safety, Commissioner? Let me talk to them.

COMMISSIONER

Bud, get wise to the political realities. The boys on the board are under a lot of pressure from the boys downtown.

CUT TO:

INT. TERMINAL - SECOND LEVEL

Kruger gets a pack of cigarettes from a machine. Commissioner buys a newspaper.

KRUGER

And I'll be the one they'll hang if there's a screw-up.

CUT TO:

INT. TERMINAL - SHOESHINE STAND

Kruger and Commissioner get shoes shined. A MAN next to them in white shoes reads paper with headline -- "SOLAR PLANT MELTDOWN, 500 WORKERS SERIOUSLY TANNED" -- and doesn't notice his shoes are getting black polish.

COMMISSIONER

Listen, Bud, the boys downtown are under heavy fire from the boys in Washington. That's why they're putting pressure on the boys on the board.

CUT TO:

INT. TERMINAL

Kruger and Commissioner head down escalator.

KRUGER

Well, you tell the boys on the board to tell the boys downtown to let the boys in Washington know that the press has been nosing around my people in the front office.

CUT TO:

EXT. TERMINAL

Kruger and Commissioner head to their limo.

COMMISSIONER

You handle your front office people, I'll handle the press and leave the boys in Washington to the boys downtown and the boys downtown to the boys on the board.

KRUGER

Commissioner.

They stop and look at each other.

COMMISSIONER

What?

KRUGER

I just wish it was that simple.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING

They get back in their limo and drive off.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

CONTROLLER

(over P.A.)

This is Mercury One control. We have condition green. Mark launch 'T' minus two hours and counting. I repeat, we have condition green.

ANGLE ON LESLIE NEILSON - DOCTOR RUMACK

Dressed as a doctor and looking in a Controller's mouth. The Controller's face is bright green.

RUMACK

This condition isn't as bad as it could be if it were a lot worse. Take these pills.
(hands him pills and water)
Here's some water.

CONTROLLER

What is it, doctor?

RUMACK

Two parts oxygen, one part hydrogen. It'll make the pills go down easier.

EXT. GANTRY - CLOSEUP OF SHUTTLE - NIGHT

MUSIC: BIG SPACE THEME

WIDE ANGLE LENS PANS the under-belly past the nose as if the viewer bent his head back as far as he could, until... the CAMERA crashes to the ground as if it has fallen off the tripod.

MUSIC: CRASHES TO A STOP

ANGLE ON SIDE OF SHIP

MUSIC: BIG SPACE THEME STARTS FROM TOP AGAIN

PAN workers on scaffolding who check gauges on exterior of ship. PAN to panel that reads, "SOLID FUEL CHUTE" -- a sweaty muscular worker in undershirt opens the panel, flames shoot out. LOOSEN to reveal another sweaty worker in undershirt shoveling coal into the chute. PAN to other

workers checking more gauges. SUDDENLY a PANEL EXPLODES. Smoking, sparking wires pop out. A WORKER runs up with walkie-talkie in hand.

WORKER
 (into walkie-talkie)
 This is Mercury station six! Get me the Sarg and fast!

EXT. TERMINAL - NIGHT

SIMON KURTZ and ELAINE THOMPSON get out of a taxi with hand luggage. They are dressed in matching flight outfits.

A JAPANESE COUPLE get out of a taxi -- the man has about fifty cameras around his neck. His wife hangs another camera on him. He crashes to the ground under the weight.

Simon and Elaine are approached by a BUSINESSMAN with handful of roses.

BUSINESSMAN
 Would you like to buy a rose to help bail out Chrysler? We're an all-profit organization and need all the money we can get.

Simon hands the Businessman a dollar and takes a rose.

SIMON
 (to Businessman)
 Here.

The Businessman joins six other BUSINESSMEN carrying signs with LEE IACCOCA's picture. They all smile and chant.

BUSINESSMEN
 (to Hari Krishna)
 IACCOCA, IACCOCA, IACCOCA, IARAMA.

Simon hands Elaine the rose. She takes his arm as they walk towards the sign that reads, "MERCURY SHUTTLE."

SIMON
 For the best little computer officer on the Mercury mission.

ELAINE
 (smiling)
 Simon.

SIMON

Who would believe that Elaine Thompson was once a stewardess on the Denver-Chicago run.

ELAINE

And I can hardly believe that I'm engaged to someone like you, Simon. I'm a very lucky woman.

A man with a suitcase on a leash walks beside them. The case pulls him along like a dog and takes a leak on a post.

SIMON

Women and the space program have come a long way, sweetheart. But after the wedding, no more complicated computers for my little girl.

ELAINE

But, darling, they've offered me a chance to head up the computer analysis division for the Jupiter probe.

SIMON

You're heading up the division in charge of babies for Mr. and Mrs. Simon Kurtz.

He kisses Elaine and smiles.

SIMON

And that's an order, Lieutenant.

The man with the case on a leash passes a woman with a case on a leash. The cases start a violent, BARKING DOG FIGHT.

EXT. REAR OF TERMINAL BUILDING - NIGHT

SARG (imagine George Kennedy), dressed in a tuxedo, tie undone, with a huge cigar, which he eats during the conversation, talks to his wife on his car phone. A worker in hard hat waits next to him. Behind the worker are fuel drums and a large sign that reads: DANGER, FUEL -- ABSOLUTELY NO SMOKING, ABSOLUTELY NO SPITTING.

SARG

(on car phone)

Marge, you better go without me. We've got a condition red.

SPLIT SCREEN WITH WIFE AT HOME.

MARGE

(in evening gown, a cigar stuck
in her mouth)

We've got a condition red with our
marriage. I think you're in love with that
shuttle, not with me. I want a divorce,
Sarg.

Sarg lights his cigar.

SARG

Is there someone else, Marge? Is that it?

Sarg throws the lit match towards the "ABSOLUTELY NO
SMOKING" sign. The worker grimaces but nothing happens.

MARGE

Sarg, there's been someone else for
fifteen years. You were just too involved
in your work to see it.

They hang up. Sarg bites off the end of his cigar and
spits it in the direction of the "NO SPITTING" sign,
blowing the worker OUT OF FRAME with a MASSIVE EXPLOSION.
Sarg hops into his car, takes a Lava lamp from the seat
and puts it on the car roof -- like Kojak's flasher. The
lamp flashes, the SIREN WAILS, as Sarg pulls away.

INT. SARG'S CAR - ON THE MOVE - NIGHT

He thinks about his wife. SPLIT SCREEN FLASHBACK OF THEIR
BEDROOM. Marge, a cigar in her mouth, is in bed with five
football players -- other half-clad athletes (hockey,
baseball, wrestling, basketball) line up for their turn at
her. Sarg has to climb over them to kiss her goodbye.

SARG

Don't wait up for me, sweetheart. We're
testing the retro-rockets tonight.

MARGE

You just can't see it, can you, Sarg.

SARG

We'll talk tomorrow, hon. I promise.

EXT. TERMINAL, PASSENGER ARRIVAL AREA - NIGHT

The WILSON FAMILY -- JOHN, ALICE and ten-year-old JIMMY -- carry luggage. Jimmy carries a puppy in a small cage.

P.A.

All Mercury passengers please proceed to passenger processing, concourse level 'C.'

JOHN

That's us.

Jimmy Wilson looks at Scraps.

JIMMY

Will Scraps be able to sit with us, Dad?

JOHN

We'll have to check, Jimmy. It's a pretty long trip to Mercury.

A PORTER approaches.

PORTER

Can I help you folks?

JOHN

(handing him a bag)

Thanks.

PORTER

(noticing Scraps)

Is that your puppy, son?

JIMMY

Yeah, his name is Scraps and he's going to Mercury with us.

PORTER

No dogs are allowed on the shuttle, son.

JIMMY

But they said...

PORTER

(pulling out a handgun)

Scraps will have to be shot. I can do it for you here if you like.

He SHOOTS.

JIMMY

Scraps!!!

PORTER
(laughing)
Just joking. Blanks. See, Scraps is fine.

Alice, John, and Porter crack up while Jimmy cries.

ALICE
It was just a joke, Jimmy.

Alice and John look at each other as if there is something wrong with their son.

ANGLE ON MAN WITH CAGE

A man lifts a large dog cage out of the trunk of a taxi. Inside is another man dressed in S&M leathers.

MAN WITH CAGE
(to Man in Cage)
If we can't fit you under the seat, you'll just have to be locked up with the luggage.

The man in the cage seems to relish the latter suggestion. Two Porters lift the cage onto a conveyor belt next to Jimmy's dog.

EXT. GANTRY - NIGHT

Sarg stands beside the burnt panel on the side of the shuttle. He is eating another cigar, holding a burnt wire, and talking into a walkie-talkie.

SARG
There's no way this wiring could have passed inspection without Simon Kurtz's okay!

SPLIT SCREEN OF KRUGER IN HIS OFFICE

KRUGER
(on phone)
Just patch up the damage and get that ship ready to fly. That's an order, mister!

SARG
You've got it, mister. But you can tell your boys on the board for me that this thing stinks to high heaven of kickback.

WIPE TO:

KRUGER'S OFFICE - FULL SCREEN

Kruger turns to room. LOOSEN to reveal a dozen five-year-old boys in three-piece suits, smoking cigars. A huge Keans-style painting of three astronauts with big eyes, painted on black velvet, hangs in b.g.

KRUGER

You heard it, boys. Now, what do you say?

ALL BOYS

Fuck him!

EXT. GANTRY - NIGHT

Sarg looks at the wire and shakes his head.

SARG

(to worker)

Ted Striker was right six months ago when he test-piloted this sucker. And what did he get for telling the truth? A one-way ticket to Palukaville.

Sarg spits a chunk of cigar on the ground, blowing the worker OUT OF FRAME with a MASSIVE EXPLOSION.

EXT. WILD BLUE YONDER - DAY

A jet fighter streaks across the sky.

INT. JET - DAY

TED STRIKER is at the controls. His oxygen mask hangs loose from his helmet. Clouds outside shoot by -- he's going at least 700 MPH. A bird lands on the nose in front of the window. Ted shoos it away by knocking on the glass. He takes a slug of beer and cockily pulls on the stick.

EXT. FIGHTER - DAY

The plane does a barrel roll.

INT. FIGHTER - DAY

Ted has beer all over his face and shirt.

EXT. SMALL LATIN-AMERICAN LANDING STRIP - DAY

SUPER: "SOUTH AMERICA, 2002 (PALUKAVILLE)"

Striker's fighter comes in for a landing.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF RIO MONTENEGRO - DAY

CLOSEUP of sign, "WELCOME TO RIO MONTENEGRO -- POP.
2,354,900 -- NO TORTURING 7AM-9AM MON.-FRI."

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

SUPER: "HOTEL MONTENEGRO"

COME UP on CLOSEUP of parachute. PAN past a flight jacket thrown over a chair, clothes strewn around, a framed photo of TED and ELAINE on the bedtable next to a bottle of whiskey. The room is hot and dusty. Ted lies on the bed soaked with sweat, a drink in his hand, a cigarette dangling from his lip. He takes a drink and, forgetting to remove the cigarette, swallows it without batting an eye. LOOSEN to find a CRUCIFIX above the bed with a real person on it.

TED (V.O.)

(to self)

Who could have figured it would come to this. It'll be twenty years this week that I lost my entire squadron over Macho Grande. Planes, too.

SUPER: DOG FIGHT FOOTAGE

VOICE

You're too low, Striker! You're too low!

The Crucifix in b.g. looks around trying to figure out where the planes in the SUPER are coming from.

TED (V.O.)

After the war, I couldn't go near anything with a pair of wings.

SUPER: TED IN PARK TRYING TO AVOID PIGEONS THAT FOLLOW HIM.

A pigeon lands on the Cross.

TED (V.O.)
That is, until fate dropped me on the seat
of my pants at the stick of a 167 into
Chicago with no crew.

SUPER: TED LANDING PLANE IN "AIRPLANE!"

TED (V.O.)
It's funny how fate can make heroes out of
cowards.

The Crucifix gives a look of exasperated boredom.

SUPER: NEW YORK TIMES HEADLINE, "STRIKER SAVES 120!" OVER
A PHOTO OF TED AND ELAINE WAVING.

TED (V.O.)
Then came the job offers.

SUPER: HOUSTON TRIBUNE HEADLINE, "FLYING HEROES ACCEPT
NASA POSTS" OVER A PHOTO OF TED AND ELAINE WAVING.

TED (V.O.)
The publicity.

SUPER: NATIONAL ENQUIRER HEADLINE, "TED IMPOTENT? ELAINE
FRIGID?" A MINOR HEADLINE READS, "JFK ALIVE, SAYS
UROLOGIST!"

TED (V.O.)
Even the key to the City of New York.

SUPER: MAYOR HANDING TED A KILO OF GRASS.

TED (V.O.)
Now look at me.

Ted wipes the sweat off his face and switches on the table
fan. A tornado force wind destroys the room as he fights
to switch off the fan.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

SUPER: "RIO MONTENEGRO - TOWN SQUARE"

A peasant boy takes a newspaper from a newsstand. The
headline reads, "MERCURY SHUTTLE FLIES TOMORROW."

BOY
Senor Ted!

The boy hightails it through the town-square and passes:

-- A large alabaster statue of the Generalissimo snorting cocaine.

-- Soldiers dragging nuns off screaming.

-- Nuns dragging soldiers off screaming.

He passes a line of peasants held at gunpoint by soldiers. We HOLD on them. In b.g. are stores like HITLER'S SHOES, TRIEU GUYS FROM SAIGON LIQUORS, KEY'S KEYS -- GENERAL KEY stands in doorway.

SOLDIER
(to first peasant)
Traficante de drogas o comunista?

SUPER: SUBTITLES -- "Drug dealer or communist?"

PEASANT
(pleading)
Traficante de drogas, traficante de
drogas!

SUPER: SUBTITLES -- "Drug dealer, drug dealer!"

The soldier lets the peasant go.

SOLDIER
(to second peasant)
Traficante de drogas o comunista?

SUPER: SUBTITLES -- "Drug dealer or communist?"

The peasant panics and bolts from the line. The soldiers FIRE.

SOLDIER
Communista!

He runs up to THE HOTEL MONTENEGRO. A sign reads, "TV, POOL, WATERBEDS, DONKEY, KLEENEX" -- All but "KLEENEX" are crossed out. He runs inside.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

A clean-cut AMERICAN COUPLE argue with Desk Clerk.

YOUNG MAN
(to Desk Clerk)
We've lost all our travelers' checks!

YOUNG WOMAN
What are we going to do?!

CLERK
Calm down. What kind were they?

YOUNG MAN
American Excess!

The Clerk throws up his hands and strikes the same pose as the Karl Marden look-alike in the "AMERICAN EXCESS" poster, b.g.

CLERK
I'd say you're fucked.

The boy passes them and bounds up the stairs.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

CLOSEUP of Ted pacing.

TED
(to self)
Next thing I know, I'm the chief test pilot for the XR-2300, NASA's first Mercury shuttle. That is, until I report she's got more flaws than the Titanic.

LOOSEN slowly to find the Cross empty and the man who was on it hanging, his feet dangling next to Ted.

TED
Now I'm testing old F-18s for some crazy Generalissimo who thinks there's a commie behind every tree in the Amazon.

SUDDENLY the boy bursts in.

BOY
Senor Ted! Look!

Ted spins and the paper stays still. He stops.

TED
My God! They're launching the ZR-2300. Do you know what that is, Jose?

BOY
The muffler bracket for a '78 Pinto.

TED
No, that's an XR-2200. The XR-2300 is the Mercury shuttle. They can't do it!

EXT. HOTEL MONTENEGRO

Ted races out.

TED
Taxi!

SFX: A DOZEN CARS SCREECH AND CRASH INTO EACH OTHER. HORNS STICK.

ANGLE ON PILE OF CARS

Ted jumps into the taxi on bottom of pile. The driver POUNDS on his HORN -- it CONTINUES TO BLARE as they pull away, dragging other taxis.

TED
Houston, Texas.

DRIVER
Houston, Texas, senor??

TED
Right at the corner, left at the light.
Here's a map and step on it!

Ted throws a map onto the floor of the front seat. The driver steps on the map.

EXT. TERMINAL, PASSENGER ARRIVALS - NIGHT

An old truck loaded high with furniture pulls up. A YOUNG MAN and his PARENTS, looking like the family from THE GRAPES OF WRATH, get out.

SON
We finally made it, Ma. Mercury. We're gonna start all over agin. A whole new life.

MUSIC: OPTIMISTIC.

SON
Where the soil is rich.

He bends down and takes a handful of earth from the terminal sidewalk and lets it run through his fingers.

SON

And the union strong. Where men are free
to realize their true potential.

A black PORTER approaches and grabs a bag at the bottom of their pile of junk.

PORTER

Can I help you?

SON

Where black men and white men, working
together, can move mountains.

The Porter pulls the bag and the entire mountain of junk cascades to the ground.

ANGLE ON TED'S TAXI ARRIVING

It is covered in mud, flames shoot out from under the hood, the HORN BLARES. The driver flips off the meter which reads, "874,567,004,500,000,000." The numbers run off the meter along a special attachment.

DRIVER

That'll be eight hundred and seventy-four
zillion quastavitas.

TED

Here's three bucks. Keep the change.

DRIVER

Thank you!!

INT. TERMINAL

STELLA BARRINGTON pushes her wheelchair-ridden father, DR. CYRUS BARRINGTON, through the terminal crowd. A PORTER approaches.

PORTER

You folks need any help?

STELLA

Thanks, but we have a terrific woman in on
Thursdays.

PORTER

Say, isn't that Dr. Barrington, the world-renowned agronomist?

STELLA

Yes.

PORTER

It's a privilege to meet you, sir, I'm familiar with all your work.

STELLA

Let's go, Daddy. We have to check in.
(to Porter)

He was never appreciated at the Institute.

PORTER

Ah, yes, the Institute, I'm familiar with it.

STELLA

Now he's D-Y-I-N-Ging and wants to be buried on Mercury.

Stella pushes her father away as another PORTER approaches our first Porter.

PORTER 2

Say, wasn't that Dr. Barrington, the world-renowned agronomist?

PORTER 1

That's right. Are you familiar with his work?

PORTER 2

No, but the missus sure is.

ANGLE ON TED AT ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES MONITORS

The departures side reads, "MERCURY SHUTTLE - DEPARTS 6:15 AM"

TED

(to self)

I have to stop that flight.

Ted pushes his way through the crowd past two businessmen. HOLD on them as BUSINESSMAN 1 straightens BUSINESSMAN 2's tie and hair.

BUSINESSMAN 1

Don't worry about the Viatex account. It's a buy-sell option. We can't get hurt in either case.

BUSINESSMAN 2

Just keep on top of their legal people, Bob.

BUSINESSMAN 1

Don't sweat it.

They kiss and part.

ANGLE ON "1ST CLASS" TICKET LINE

AGENT

(to traveller)

We can take your in-flight dinner orders here, if you like. Today there's lobster or rack of lamb.

TRAVELLER

The lobster sounds nice.

The Agent throws a huge lobster into a steaming cauldron.

SFX: LOBSTER SCREAM.

TED

(rushing up)

Where can I find mission control?

AGENT

(without pointing or indicating
in any way)

Information's over there.

TED

Thanks.

He seems a bit puzzled but moves on.

ANGLE ON "2ND CLASS" LINE

Ted passes travellers in rags.

AGENT

(to traveller in rags)

Today there's the swill or the slop.

TRAVELLER
The slop sounds nice.

Ted passes the "NO CLASS" line. Travellers in line all wear gaudy double-knit suits, white belts and shoes, carry lava lamps and bongo drums, wear alpine hats, etc. The agent hands a NO CLASS traveller his ticket with large foam dice dangling. Ted spots the INFORMATION counter and heads for it.

ANGLE ON INFORMATION COUNTER

MAN
(to Info Agent)
What's the fastest animal on earth?

INFO AGENT
The cheetah. Next.

WOMAN
Should I fake my orgasms?

INFO AGENT
Yes. Next.

Next in line are three armed, bearded "TERRORISTS."

"TERRORIST" 1
Please, where is flight to Miami?

INFO AGENT
(without indicating anything)
Over there. Next.

The TERRORISTS leave looking confused.

TED
Mission control?

INFO AGENT
(without indicating anything)
It's over therrrrrrrr!

The agent is shot with an arrow and slumps over the counter.

ZOOM TO:

CLOSEUP OF TED

He looks in the CAMERA.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING.

TED
That's strange. I just came from over there.

INT. TERMINAL - ANOTHER AREA

Elaine, Simon, and FRANK MORGAN, the shuttle pilot, talk.

FRANK
I'll meet you on board. I've got some business to attend to.

Frank leaves.

SIMON
(to Elaine)
Frank's the best pilot in the program.

ELAINE
I'm so excited, Simon.

SIMON
I guess this is a first for you.

ELAINE
No, I've been excited before.

TED (O.S.)
Elaine.

ELAINE
(turning around)
Te...!

TED
That's not important now, Elaine. We have to talk.

Simon pulls Elaine away. They all walk and talk.

ELAINE
Ted, we've been worried sick ever since you escaped from the Ronald Reagan Institute For The Mentally Feeble.

They walk faster. The b.g. starts whipping by as if they're running. Wind blows in their hair.

TED
Are you on the Mercury mission?

SIMON

That's right, Striker. And we're getting married when we return.

The b.g. moves faster. The wind gets stronger. They pass a marathon refreshment stand and are handed wet sponges and cups of Gatoraid.

TED

It's got to be stopped!

ELAINE

But, Ted, the invitations have already gone out.

TED

I mean the Mercury flight. It's not safe and, Kurtz, you know why.

SIMON

You're still crazy, Striker. Come on, sweetheart.

Simon pulls Elaine away as she looks back with empathy.

ELAINE

What did Ted mean?

They leave Ted standing.

SIMON

Elaine, he's still sick.

ANGLE ON TED

The wind is still blowing in his hair even though he stands still. Ted has a FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ROCKET HANGAR

Ted, in flight coveralls, follows after Simon who is overseeing the operation.

SIMON

You're seeing bugs where they don't exist, Striker.

TED
(holding wire)
Look at this wiring. It's shorting out
under high temperatures.

SIMON
You're tired, Striker, overworked. That
wiring meets all the safety
specifications.

TED
I know you've been subtly spreading the
word that I'm having a breakdown.

A NEWSPAPER BOY passes.

NEWSIE
Shuttle test pilot goes mad!

A TECHNICIAN -- JACOBS -- enters with drawings of flight
outfits.

JACOBS
Sir, these are the designs for the flight
uniforms. I think the captain's is to die.

SIMON
(with drawings)
Good, good, no, no, good. What's this?! I
said no studded dog collars, Jacobs.

Jacobs grabs the drawings and leaves in a huff.

TED
You won't get away with this, Simon!

Ted turns to leave and bumps right into Elaine. She holds
him.

ELAINE
Ted, what's wrong?

TED
(pulling away from her)
Ask Simon.

In b.g. a car is parked by a huge rocket engine. A worker
opens the hood and strings jumper cables to the rocket. A
sign above rocket reads, "ROCKET ENGINE TEST AREA."

ELAINE
Ted, you're overworked. You've been flying
yourself into the ground.

TED

There's nothing wrong with me!

ELAINE

Let's relax tonight, just the two of us.
I'll make a quiet Italian dinner just the
way you like it, with spaghetti.

TED

You're as bad as the rest of them, Elaine!

(ranting)

It's all here in the design
specifications!

(grabs plans from a passing
technician)

Look! It's all here!

Simon signals the guards. They grab Ted. He struggles and rants. A DOCTOR in white approaches and injects something into Ted's arm.

ELAINE

No! Wait! You're hurting him!

Ted falls unconscious. Simon holds Elaine.

SIMON

Elaine! Ted's a danger to himself, he's a
threat to this mission and his behavior
does absolutely nothing to promote peace
in the Middle East.

ELAINE

(crying on Simon's shoulder)

Simon, why has he become so...so...

SIMON

So mentally ill?

Elaine collapses on Simon's shoulder, sobbing. Simon smiles evilly. The technician with the jumper cables, b.g., signals the driver to start the car. The car revs and the rocket fires.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

SCENE

Ted still standing alone and muttering.

TED
 (to self)
 I'm perfectly sane.

Ted notices Stella Barrington looking at him.

STELLA
 Excuse me, are you alright? I noticed you talking to yourself. I'm a nurse. Can I be of some help?

TED
 Uh...oh, thank you. It's nothing.

STELLA
 You don't have to thank me, I'm a nurse. This is my father, Dr. Barrington.

TED
 Not Dr. Barrington, the world renowned agronomist?

STELLA
 Yes. He's dying a-n-d wants to be buried on Mercury.

TED
 I'm familiar with your work, Doctor. You'll have to excuse me, I have to go.

STELLA
 You don't have to excuse yourself. I'm a nurse. I understand.

Ted leaves.

INT. TERMINAL - OUTSIDE DRUGSTORE

SIMON
 Meet me onboard, sweetheart. I have to pick up a few things at the drugstore.

ELAINE
 (checking her watch)
 Don't be too long.

Simon walks into the drugstore past a DRUGGIST who whispers to him:

DRUGGIST
 Uppers, downers, coke, speed, hash, Tampax.

ANGLE ON ELAINE

Ted approaches. We see light flashes from a 25¢ photo booth.

TED

Elaine.

ELAINE

Ted, please. You're just making things difficult for yourself.

A WOMAN IN BLACK GARTER BELT emerges from photo booth followed by a donkey.

TED

Elaine, what happened to us?

ELAINE

Ted, I loved you and I'll always love you. But I need Simon. He's stable. He's a good provider. I want that at this stage of the game, Ted. He might have his faults, but Simon doesn't know the meaning of the word fear and I need that in a man.

INT. DRUGSTORE

The Druggist hands Simon a huge bottle of pills. The label reads, "ANTI-FEAR PILLS."

SIMON

(looking at the label, "ANTI-
FEAR PILLS")

What does this word mean?

DRUGGIST

(looking at label)

'Fear,' to be afraid or over-anxious.

Simon swallows a handful of pills, braces himself and walks out right through the plate glass window without feeling a thing.

INT. TERMINAL

Ted is still following Elaine.

TED

Elaine, someone has to listen to me. I'm going right to mission control.

A kid bops by with a huge (5'x3'x2') oak cabinet, TV/
stereo console perched on his shoulder.

MUSIC: DISCO.

ELAINE

Ted, you should go right back to the
hospital.

Elaine leaves and Ted has another FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL

PAN by dorm window. We see a sign on grounds outside --
"THE RONALD REAGAN INSTITUTE OF SUPPLY-SIDE ECONOMICS AND
HOSPITAL FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE." PAN patient in bed,
accountant at desk, patient in bed, accountant at desk,
Ted in bed. Ted has electrodes attached to his head. A
NURSE with "I (heart) NORMAL" on the back of her uniform,
hands Ted some pills. He is about to pop them when she
stops him.

NURSE

That's \$38.

Ted hands her bills.

LOOSEN to find Elaine on other side of bed. She turns off
the radio and opens a box of spaghetti-to-go.

ELAINE

Eat this spaghetti, Ted. It'll make you
feel a lot better.

SFX: GROANING O.S.

ELAINE

Who's that, Ted?

TED

Sammy Davis Junior. Terrible car accident.
He hasn't been the same since.

ANGLE ON SAMMY DAVIS

A white patient in lots of gold chains. A Nurse stands
over him and pulls a long oil dip-stick from his mouth,
checks it, wipes it off and replaces it.

RETURN TO SCENE

TED

Elaine, when are you going to realize
Simon Kurtz put me in here to get me out
of the way.

ELAINE

And when are you going to realize, Ted,
that your mental hygiene is the most
important thing right now.

VOICE (O.S.)

(ranting)

It works...No, it doesn't...Yes, it does.

ELAINE

What's his problem?

ANGLE

On BEARDED MAN in rags chained to wall.

MAN

It does work...No, it doesn't.

ANGLE

On Ted and Elaine.

TED

His name's David Stockman. He's been here
twenty years, that's all he says.

ELAINE

Ted, you must remember what the doctor
said, the first step on the road to sanity
is admitting that you're sick. Now take
your electro-shock and you'll be back at
the space center in no time. And by the
way, Ted, I'm leaving you for Simon.

Ted gags on his spaghetti.

ELAINE

I just can't go on living with a man who
refuses to deal with reality, Ted. I have
to go now. Believe me, it's best for all
concerned.

Elaine leans over to kiss Ted. He turns away.

TED
No goodbyes, Elaine. Just go.

ELAINE
If that's the way you want it.

TED
That's the way I want it. Just turn the radio on and go.

ELAINE
Goodbye, Ted. I don't want to hurt you.

Elaine flips a switch by the bed thinking it's the radio. It's the "ELECTRO-SHOCK." Ted goes into convulsions as she leaves.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

TED AT TERMINAL

He rubs his temples.

INT. TERMINAL - OUTSIDE BOOKSTORE

Frank Morgan kisses JANE DENNIS, his mistress. In b.g. is a bookstore window with a display of yellow covered books with plain black titles and a sign advertising, "NO-NAME BOOKS."

Visible titles include: "DEEP BOOK," "FASCINATING BOOK," "THE WORLD ACCORDING TO JOHN DOE." A man next to the window reads a newspaper with headline, "SENSELESS MURDER UP 99% AND RISING!"

FRANK
Carol's not going to give me a divorce that easily, Jane.

JANE
I'm worried about her, Frank. She could do something senseless, something violent.

FRANK
You're the one who's not making sense, Jane. Carol's not the violent...

Frank sees CAROL.

FRANK
Carol!

Carol whips out a gun.

FRANK

No! This is senseless!

CAROL

FIRES. Jane faints. Other women nearby faint. Two S.W.A.T. cops faint. Carol bolts. The newspaper, b.g., clicks over from 99% to 120%.

INT. TERMINAL - ANOTHER AREA

Ted pushes through crowd and passes a spherical booth with sign that reads, "ORGASMIC EXPERIENCES, 25¢." MRS. GOOCH, an elderly woman, stops Ted next to the booth door.

MRS. GOOCH

Young man, would you have change for a twenty?

TED

(going for his wallet)

I might have two tens.

MRS. GOOCH

Thank you anyway, but I wanted it in quarters.

Ted keeps moving past a police line which has gone up around Frank Morgan's body. We HOLD on the murder scene. A DETECTIVE kneels beside the body which now has a chalk mark around it.

SERGEANT

(looking down at Detective)

When is this senseless killing going to stop?

DETECTIVE HALLICK

Senseless or not, Sergeant, there's a pattern here. This is the 12th victim this week with a chalk mark around the body. I want this whole area cordoned off! I want everyone in this terminal booked and beaten until they talk. I want an M.O. on everyone who has seen THE SOUND OF MUSIC and I want the entire population of Hawaii off that rock and into the water within one hour.

Hallick stands up and finds the area surrounded by 30 accordion players playing "Lady of Spain."

DETECTIVE HALLICK

Sergeant. I said cordon off, not accordion off! Now dust this area for prints.

One cop pulls out a duster and dusts the wall. Other cops follow after him hanging prints by Picasso, Lautrec, etc.

DETECTIVE HALLICK

And run a check on their plates.

A cop looks at people's upper false teeth plates.

DETECTIVE HALLICK

(TO CAMERA)

When will this senseless killing end?

A POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER straddles the body and shoots it "BLOW-UP" style.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Super! Great! Super! Terrific! Super!

INT. MISSION CONTROL - EXECUTIVE OFFICE

KRUGER

That's right, Commissioner. Senselessly murdered just minutes ago.

COMMISSIONER

That just doesn't make any sense.

KRUGER

I wonder how your boys in Washington are going to take this one.

COMMISSIONER

I told you, leave the boys in Washington to the boys downtown and the boys down...

KRUGER

You've made your point, Commissioner. There's only one other pilot who can handle that shuttle and that's Clarence Oveur. He's got a lunar flight today. I want him pulled.

(to Jacobs)

Jacobs, pull Oveur!

JACOBS

Not in your size, but I have a cardigan.

He runs out.

COMMISSIONER

I'll trust you on this, Bud, but I'm a little nervous about Oveur's record.

The Commissioner throws an album on Kruger's desk. On the cover is a photo of Oveur with an accordian. The title reads, "CLARENCE OVEUR'S 400 POLKA FAVORITES."

MUSIC: DRAMATIC ACCORDIAN STING.

INT. TERMINAL

CAPTAIN OVEUR buys flight insurance from a machine. Simon approaches.

SIMON

Captain Oveur?

OVEUR

Mr. Kurtz, I presume.

SIMON

We don't have much time. Let's move. I'll explain everything.

They walk away past the Transcendental Air counter. Two HARI KRISHNA AGENTS smile at customers.

HAIK KRISHNA

Chanting or non-chanting?

INT. MISSION CONTROL ROOM

PAN along Controllers at their monitors. Monitors show the shuttle on gantry.

CONTROLLER 1

This is Mercury launch control at "T" minus fifty-eight minutes and counting. All systems are go. Clear launch area.

ANGLE ON NASA WORKERS AT LUNCH TABLE

They rise and start clearing their dishes.

CONTROLLER 1 (V.O.)
(on P.A.)
I said 'launch' not 'lunch'!

The workers sit down.

INT. TERMINAL

Oveur and Simon hurry along.

SIMON
That's how dry cleaning works. Now I'd like to quickly go over the digestive system of amphibians.

OVEUR
Do you think it's necessary to explain everything?

Simon spots Ted getting directions from a security guard.

SIMON
I'll meet you on board. There's something I have to take care of first.

INT. MISSION CONTROL HEAD OFFICE - RECEPTION

Ted rushes in and up to the RECEPTIONIST.

TED
I have to see Bud Kruger.

RECEPTIONIST
Do you have an appointment, sir?

TED
No, dammit. It's a matter of life or death.

RECEPTIONIST
You'll have to be more specific than that, sir.

TED
All right, it's a matter of death.

RECEPTIONIST
(checking her book)
Death, death. How about the first Thursday in March, ten o'clock.

Ted bolts by her and grabs a door knob on the wall.

RECEPTIONIST
You can't go in there!

TED
Don't try to stop me!

RECEPTIONIST
But that's not a door. The door's over there.

She doesn't indicate direction.

ZOOM to CLOSEUP of Ted.

TED
That's strange. I just came from...

Suddenly, Ted falls unconscious into the arms of two guards. LOOSEN to find the Doctor holding a needle in his arm and Simon next to the Doctor.

ANGLE

On Ted's feet. His heels make lines in dirt as he is dragged from the office.

INT. MISSION CONTROL ROOM

PAN Controllers at their monitors.

CONTROLLER 1 (V.O.)
(on P.A.)
This is Mercury control at "T" minus fifty minutes and counting. Commence loading of passengers requiring special boarding assistance.

EXT. TERMINAL - LOADING AREA

Ground crew lift passengers who are stacked on a luggage tram and heave them onto a conveyor belt leading up to the ship.

INT. TERMINAL

JOE SALUCCI (imagine Van Heflin) bids his WIFE (imagine Cher) goodbye. Joe is very nervous, sweating a lot. His Wife hands him a few crumpled bills.

WIFE

Take this, Joey. It's my last few bucks. You'll need a hot meal when you get there.

JOE

We've spent everything on these operations. Is it really worth it? We've pawned your mother's wedding ring. The kids have no winter clothes...

WIFE

(holding a finger to his lips)
Joey, what's more important, the kids' clothes or your sexual potency.

JOE

(anxiously looking around)
I don't want to hear that word!

WIFE

Okay, Joey. The Doc says you gotta relax. This hospital in Des Moines is the best sex clinic in the country.

JOE

All right.
(hands her an envelope)
Here.

WIFE

What...?

JOEY

Insurance. Everyone buys it.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING.

WIFE

All right. Goodbye, Babe.

She kisses him. He recoils, wipes off his mouth, and leaves. She looks at the envelope, then yells at him through the crowd.

WIFE

Joey! Remember, sexual impotence is nothing to be ashamed of!

The entire terminal looks at him.

INT. TERMINAL STORAGE ROOM

Ted is tied to a chair surrounded by packing crates -- one is stamped "JIMMY HOFFA, THIS END UP" with the arrow pointing to the ground. Ted struggles to free his hands.

INT. TERMINAL GIFT SHOP

Joe Salucci stands at the counter.

JOE
(to Cashier)
Time, Newsweek, the Lifesavers, and the
second time bomb from the right.

He points at the shelf behind the Cashier where a number of bombs are on display.

ANGLE ON CANDY MACHINE IN GIFT SHOP

The actual DR. BENJAMIN SPOCK stands in front of the machine. Next to the machine at the magazine rack is a red-bearded MAN in tweed jacket and a tartan kilt reading a magazine titled "GAY SCOTS." Spock puts a coin in the machine and it explodes in sparks and smoke like the bridge panel on "STAR TREK."

SCOTT
(Scottish accent)
My God, Dr. Spock! You've got a meltdown
in the Reggie Bars!

INT. TERMINAL CORRIDOR

Joe Salucci snaps his attache case closed. Wipes the sweat from his brow. Takes out a "Des Moines" ticket and throws it away. Looks at another ticket -- "Mercury." Takes a last drag from his cigarette, throws it on the ground and hurries off. The cigarette rolls under the "STORAGE ROOM" door.

INT. STORAGE ROOM

Ted, tied in chair, watches the cigarette roll up to some oil rags. They burst into flame. The flames lap up against

a yellow oil drum labeled "EXPLOSIVE." PAN to three more drums labeled, "DYNAMIC!", "BRILLIANT!", "A MUST SEE!".

INT. TERMINAL OUTSIDE STORAGE ROOM

EDITH and DAVE WALTERS, a middle-aged couple, carry their hand luggage. Edith appears very nervous.

DAVE

I'm telling you, Edith, space travel is safer than driving a car.

The storage room door EXPLODES open in front of them. Ted flies out with the debris. Edith faints.

Ted gets up, brushes himself off and heads to the ticket counter just as the ticket agent flips a sign over that reads, "MERCURY -- SOLD OUT." Ted spots a SCALPER and reaches for his wallet.

SCALPER

Mercury seats. I got a pair. I got aisle seats, window seats. Check 'em out.

INT. SHUTTLE COCKPIT - MORNING

Computerized panels line all walls. Windows are similar to an airplane -- outside carwash brushes soap down the nose. The "HOT WAX" sign flashes. Two attendants wipe windows with soap gloves and move to the DISTANT STRAINS of "CAR WASH." Elaine sits at computer, two other CREW are in their seats. Simon enters with Oveur.

SIMON

Gentlemen, this is Captain Oveur. He's taking over for Frank Morgan.

MR. UNGER

What's the problem?

SIMON

Morgan was senselessly murdered about an hour ago.

Elaine gasps.

MR. DUNN

(black, sports afro)
Murdered? I hope it's not serious.

SIMON
We won't know until after the autopsy.

MR. DUNN
Of course. Welcome aboard, sir.

OVEUR
Good to be aboard, gentlemen.

SIMON
Captain Oveur, your navigator, Mr. Unger,
and your first officer, Mr. Dunn.

They shake hands.

OVEUR
Unger.

UNGER
Oveur.

DUNN
Oveur.

OVEUR
Dunn.

SIMON
And I think everyone knows Elaine.

They all smile.

INT. TERMINAL SECURITY CHECK AREA - "MERCURY GATE"

The Terrorists still seem confused as to where they're going. They pass through the security metal detector, guns raised above their heads. A GUARD runs a hand-held metal detector up and down their bodies. At the same time, Mrs. Gooch is being held spread-eagle against the wall. One Guard holds a gun to her head, another frisks her. Ted moves through behind the Terrorists.

TERRORIST
(to Guard)
Is flight to Miami, yes?

GUARD
No.

TERRORIST
Thank you. Thank you.

A young boy passes through the X-ray tunnel. His dental chart appears on the screen. A DENTIST at the other end stops him and looks in his mouth.

DENTIST

Open.

THE BERGMAN FAMILY -- SVEN, KRISTA, and their two CHILDREN -- all dressed like the emigrants, look up at the "MERCURY GATE" sign. They should be shot like characters from a Bergman "film."

SVEN

Mercury, Krista. A whole new world to be depressed about.

KRISTA

Ya, Sven.

CHILD 1

Will we die, Pappa?

SVEN

We all die, Ingrid.

CHILD 2

Will we die soon, Pappa?

SVEN

Soon? What is the real meaning of 'soon'?

INT. COCKPIT

The car wash continues with attendants wiping the ship down.

OVEUR

(flips a switch)

Atmosphere control.

UNGER

(flips a switch)

Atmosphere control, check.

A car wash attendant opens a side door to the cockpit and enters in headphones, moving to "CAR WASH," with a vacuum. He cleans the floor and an ashtray and finds a baseball behind the Captain's seat which he pockets.

OVEUR

(flips a switch)

Anti-gravity.

The car wash attendant floats to the ceiling.

DUNN
 (flips a switch)
 Anti-gravity, check.

The attendant crashes to the floor.

Elaine sits at the R.O.K.-4000 computer. She seems to be having a problem with a switch.

ELAINE
 (to self)
 That's odd.

INT. BOWELS OF R.O.K. COMPUTER

A circuit board just below the R.O.K.-4000 logo shorts. Sparks fly. A fire starts.

INT. COCKPIT

OVEUR
 (looking out the window)
 I hope that weather doesn't give us a problem.
 (he opens the window and holds his hand out)
 What's your temperature reading, Mr. Unger.

UNGER
 (pulls a thermometer from his mouth)
 Ninety-eight point six.

INT. MISSION CONTROL ROOM

CONTROLLER 2
 There seems to be some fog rolling in from the west.

CONTROLLER 1
 Mike, give me a density reading. I just hope it's not too heavy.

CONTROLLER 3
 (reading from a book like Richard Burton)
 The fog, the fog, the torment clouded my mind. Derision, contempt...

CONTROLLER 1
That's heavy.

INT. SHIP DOOR

Flight attendant, MARY MORRIS, welcomes passengers aboard.

MARY
(to Stella and father)
Welcome aboard. Isn't that Dr. Barrington,
the world renowned agronomist?

STELLA
Yes -- he's dying and wants to be buried
in the new l-a-n-d.

MARY
(to Joe Salucci)
Welcome aboard. Can I take your case?

JOE
(clutching case)
No!

Mary gives him a look as he passes inside. The OKIES move by. HENRY stops at door, bends down, picks up an ear of corn and pulls it apart.

HENRY
There's a whole new world in front of us,
Ma. Where the dictatorship of the
proletariat will lead workers and peasants
into socialism without the revisionist
diversions of bourgeois liberals,
Trotskiests, or disillusioned Maoist
terrorism.

The Okies pass inside.

MARY
(looking at them; to self)
Doesn't he realize that a weak proletariat
needs a strong liberal bourgeoisie in a
joint struggle against monopoly
capitalism?

Ted stops at the door surrounded by boarding passengers.

SUPER: PSYCHIATRIST.

PSYCHIATRIST

We can't begin to help you until you admit
that you are sick, Ted.

(echo)

Sick Ted, sick Ted, sick Ted...

The boarding passengers look around for the echoing voice.

EXT. TARMAC - DAY

Sarg looks up through the glass-walled corridor that leads
to the ship door and spots Ted.

SARG

(to CO-WORKER)

Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle; Ted
Striker.

(holding burnt wire)

Jack, I got a bad feeling in my gut about
this mission.

In b.g. a sign reads, "DANGER -- FUEL, ABSOLUTELY NO
VOMITTING."

WORKER

What'd you have for dinner?

SARG

The fish, why?

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING.

Sarg bends down OUT OF FRAME.

SFX: THROWING UP.

A huge EXPLOSION FILLS THE FRAME.

INT. COCKPIT

Fog rolls past cockpit window.

OVEUR

We should be ready to launch as soon as
this fog lifts.

EXT. RUNWAY

An ENGLISH BOBBY passes a woman in 19th-Century costume in the fog. He tips his hat and moves on. A caped man steps out of the fog and strangles her.

INT. CABIN

Passengers are taking their seats. Ted spots Elaine and moves towards her. The Terrorists look confused. Joe Salucci clutches his case and wipes his brow. Mary takes a man's suit bag.

MARY

Can I hang that for you, sir?

MAN

Thanks.

Mary hangs the bag from a rope noose in the closet, pulls a lever, the bag drops like a man being executed.

SFX: SCREAM AND THUD.

INT. COCKPIT

Unger looks out the window.

UNGER

It looks like that weather is clearing.

EXT. SKY - DAY (STOCK)

Dramatic stock footage of clouds parting and sun exploding through.

MUSIC: A CLARION TRUMPET CRESCENDO.

INT. CABIN - OUTSIDE COCKPIT DOOR

Ted moves up to Elaine, who is about to enter the cockpit.

TED

Elaine.

She turns and gasps.

ELAINE

Ted! What are you...?

TED

I have to get in there. I have to stop this flight.

SFX: BELL.

INSERT - FLASHING SIGN - "PLEASE TAKE YOUR SEATS"

BACK TO SCENE

ELAINE

Ted, we're taking off!

TED

Let me by, Elaine.

Mary passes.

MARY

Please take your seats.

As Ted turns to Mary, Elaine slips into the cockpit and locks the door --

SFX: DOOR LOCKING.

Ted tries the door.

TED

Elaine!

INSERT - SIGN - "WE SAID, TAKE YOUR SEAT OR CAN'T YOU READ, ASSHOLE!"

INT. COCKPIT

Elaine leans back against the door. She is highly agitated. Simon, the administrative officer, and other crew are in their seats.

SIMON

Whenever your're ready, Captain.

OVEUR

Yes, sir, commander.

OVEUR
 (into radio)
 This is Mercury One. Everything seems A-
 okay up here and ready for count-down.

ZOOM to CLOSEUP of Elaine's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL GROUNDS - DAY

Dr. Rumack and Elaine walk across the well-groomed lawn. Elaine carries a box of spaghetti-to-go. As they walk, they pass patients in wheelchairs pushed by nurses. The further they walk, the more wheelchairs appear until the lawn is jammed with two hundred wheelchairs bumping into each other, patients falling out, total wheelchair chaos.

ELAINE
 Ted seemed to get worse after I told him
 about Simon, Doctor.

RUMACK
 The human brain is a highly complex organ,
 Elaine, perhaps the most complex next to
 the bladder.
 (he stops at a patient in a
 wheelchair with his back TO
 CAMERA)
 Let me show you.
 (Rumack removes the top of the
 patient's skull and takes out
 his brain as they continue on)
 Ted's problem is in this area.
 (points with a pencil)
 This area, this area, here, here, here,
 under here, here...

They walk OUT OF FRAME as wheelchair demolition derby
 FILLS SCREEN.

EXT. HOSPITAL GROUNDS - GARDEN AREA - DAY

Rumack and Elaine walk INTO FRAME still talking.

RUMACK
 So you see, our task isn't made any easier
 by Ted's refusal to admit that he's sick.

ELAINE
 What can I do, Doctor Rumack?

He stops next to a sign, "HOSPITAL GARDEN."

RUMACK
You can eat balanced meals, exercise, and
take Geritol.

ELAINE
I mean for Ted.

RUMACK
You can be gentle with him, Elaine. He's
been working out a lot of his aggressions
here in the garden.

ELAINE
Is that a good sign, Doctor?

Rumack holds the "HOSPITAL GARDEN" sign.

RUMACK
It does the job.

ANGLE ON TED
He is ripping up small trees, shrubs,
etc., and throwing them onto a huge pile
of mud that resembles the mountain that
Dreyfuss built in "Close Encounters."

ELAINE
Hello, Ted.

Ted ignores her as he works frantically.

ELAINE
(holding out box)
I brought you some spaghetti.

Ted still ignores her as he works feverishly.

ELAINE
What are you doing, Ted?

TED
I've got it, Elaine! I've figured out
what's wrong with the shuttle!

Ted scurries around.

ELAINE
Ted.

TED
Not now, Elaine!

ELAINE

Ted!

He ignores her. Rumack walks up and puts an arm around her shoulder. Elaine starts to sob.

RUMACK

The brain is an amazingly complex organ, Elaine.

ELAINE

Is he making any progress, Doctor?

RUMACK

Yes -- last week that pile of mud was only this high.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INT. COCKPIT

Elaine takes her seat.

CONTROLLER 1 (V.O.)

Mark 'T' minus twenty and counting.

OVEUR

Gentlemen, let's get this bucket into space.

(flips switches)

Ignition set.

EXT. SHIP

Steam spews out from engines.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

CONTROLLER 1

Mark 'T' minus thirty seconds.

PAN backs of a number of Controllers at screens, talking NASA jargon. We PASS one in prison stripes talking through mesh to his wife.

INT. COCKPIT

OVEUR
 (flipping more switches)
 Ignition.

CONTROLLER 1 (V.O.)
 'T' minus nine, eight, seven...

EXT. SHIP

Rockets fire.

CONTROLLER 1 (V.O.)
 Six, five, four...

INT. CONTROL ROOM

CONTROLLER 1
 Three...

Jacobs runs in with a camera, yelling:

JACOBS
 Stop! One shot.

All Controllers turn and smile. The count-down stops.
 Jacobs flashes his camera.

JACOBS
 Wonderful!

The Controllers continue.

CONTROLLER 1
 Two, one.

INT. COCKPIT

The ship vibrates.

CONTROLLER 1 (V.O.)
 You have lift-off, Mercury One.

The G-force causes the crew's hair to go straight back.
 Dunn's afro straightens and stays back throughout flight.

INT. CABIN

The G-force causes passengers' hair to go straight back. A buxom woman looks down at her bust -- it's completely flat.

INT. COCKPIT

The G-force returns to normal as the shuttle breaks earth's gravitational hold.

OVEUR
Jettison booster stages one and two.

UNGER
(flipping switches)
Booster jettisoned.

EXT. SHIP - BOOSTER STAGES (STOCK)

Stock footage of booster falling away.

EXT. OCEAN (SET) - DAY

A cheap model of the Greenpeace 11 sails blithely along. The booster stage careens through the atmosphere, crashes into the Greenpeace, and sinks it.

INT. COCKPIT

OVEUR
Shut down accelerators.

DUNN
Accelerators down.

The crew all look at the floor.

OVEUR
Elaine, ask ROK for a field interference scan. Those sun spots might give us a problem with our communications.

ELAINE
(flipping computer switches)
Yes, sir.

The computer is labeled R.O.K. She seems to have a problem getting it to respond.

ELAINE
(to self)
That's really strange.

INT. BOWELS OF COMPUTER (LABELED "ROK")

The electrical fire continues.

INT. COCKPIT

Elaine flips a switch on computer. A "VOICE INTERFACE" sign lights up.

ELAINE
Intermittant failure in scan mode "R".
Analyze.

ROK
Negative.

ELAINE
(to self)
That doesn't make sense.
(to ROK)
Repeat analysis.

ROK
Negative.

ELAINE
(to self)
That's not possible.

ROK
Cut the Doubting Thomas shit, Elaine. I
know where I'm coming from on this.

Elaine is taken aback.

INT. BOWELS OF COMPUTER

Sparks fly, fire spreads.

INT. CABIN

Mary moves down the aisle checking passengers. She passes Father O'Flanagan who reads ALTERBOY magazine -- an alterboy in bikini bathing suit on cover.

She passes Mrs. Gooch who reads HIGH TIMES. She stops at a ten-year-old GIRL.

MARY
I guess this is pretty exciting for you.

GIRL
Yes, it is. How long will the trip take?

MARY
Our actual flight time is over fourteen months, but due to the time-space variant at sub-light speeds, our onboard flight time will be just over eighteen hours.

Mary leaves and the Girl turns to the WOMAN beside her.

GIRL
Gee, Mom, how does that work?

WOMAN
(very tense)
How many times do I have to tell you, I'm not your mother! I've never seen you before!

The Woman vibrates in multiple image and grabs her temple.

GIRL (V.O.)
Why did she yell at me like that?

A MAN who looks like Robert Young sits down beside the Girl.

MAN
Hallucinating again, Rhonda?

GIRL
(taking a paper bag away from her face)
I don't know what it is.

MAN
Maybe it's the brand of glue you've been sniffing. Why don't you try this, NO-HI. It gives you all the pleasure of glue without the brain damage.

ANGLE ON TESTA (ANOTHER FLIGHT ATTENDANT)

She is completely bald.

TESTA
Something to read, sir?

JOE
(clutching his case)
Do you have PSYCHO MONTH?

TESTA
I think so. Here you are.

She hands him a copy of PSYCHO MONTH with Alexander Haig's photo on cover.

ANOTHER PART OF CABIN

Ted sits at a window seat and looks out. A TEXAN sits on aisle. Mary approaches.

MARY
(to Texan)
Would you like something to read?

TEXAN
I don't read a whole lot, but what have you got, hon?

MARY
TIME, NEWSWEEK, BUSINESS WEEK, and the TALMUD...

She points to a car next to her with twenty-four large volumes.

MARY
The twenty-four volume dissertation on the Hebrew law.

TEXAN
Let me try that Talmud.

MARY
(to Ted)
And you, sir?

TED
(distracted)
Oh... Popular Electronics.

Mary hands him the POP ELEC. He opens it. The magazine sparks and smokes. ZOOM to CLOSEUP of Ted.

SUPER: PSYCHIATRIST

PSYCHIATRIST
 You must admit that you're sick, Ted.
 (echo)
 Sick Ted, sick Ted...

The Psychiatrist looks around for the source of the echo.

LOSE SUPER.

TEXAN
 (to Ted)
 Wanta switch when we're finished?

Ted gets up and moves past the TEXAN, handing him the POP
 ELEC.

TED
 Here. I need some oxygen.

INT. COCKPIT

Simon stands over Elaine's shoulder looking at ROK.

SIMON
 Have you got it straightened out now?

ELAINE
 I think so.

SIMON
 That's my girl.

He sits down. Elaine flips a switch on the computer.

ANGLE ON ROK'S PULSATING EYE

ROK
 Elaine, I'm sorry about that little
 outburst a moment ago.

ELAINE
 That's okay, ROK.

ROK
 Can I say something of a personal nature
 to you?

ELAINE
 Go ahead.

ROK
You have great tits.

Elaine gasps.

ELAINE
(getting up)
Simon, I'm going to check ROK's secondary
readout unit.

SIMON
Roger.

SFX: INTERCOM BELL.

OVEUR
(on intercom)
Yes, Mary?

INT. CABIN - FOOD PREPARATION AREA

Mary is on intercom.

MARY
Would you like a little breakfast, Captain
Oveur? Over.

INT. COCKPIT

OVEUR
A couple eggs and juice would be nice,
Mary. Over.

MARY (V.O.)
(on intercom)
How would you like your eggs, Captain?
Over.

OVEUR
No. Poached. Over.

MARY (V.O.)
(on intercom)
Poached and over, Captain Oveur? Over.

OVEUR
Just poached on toast. Over.

INT. CABIN - PREPARATION AREA

MARY
(on intercom)
I don't think we do poached eggs on toast
over, Captain Oveur. Over.

INT. COCKPIT

OVEUR
That's how I want them. Poached. Over.

MARY
All right, Captain Oveur. Over.

OVEUR
Poached! Not over! Over!

INT. WASHROOM

Ted breathes deeply on an oxygen unit. He stops, but we still hear deep breathing. LOOSEN to find Father O'Flanagan smoking a joint. He smiles and leaves.

INT. CABIN

Joe Salucci clutches his attache case and wipes his brow. Mary leans over him.

MARY
You should really put that case in the
compartment above your head, sir.

JOE
(nervously)
That's okay.

MARY
(touching his shoulder)
I can help you if you can't get it up.

JOE
I said, no!

Mary leaves, giving him a worried look.

ANGLE ON THE WILSONS

Jimmy holds his dog.

JIMMY

I sure am glad they let Scraps ride up here with us.

JOHN

I bet Scraps is going to love Mercury.

JIMMY

Do you think things will be a lot different on Mercury, Dad?

JOHN

It's going to be terrific. A whole new world, new kids to play with.

ALICE

You're going to love it, Jimmy.

JIMMY

No more headlines about the rape trial and the fraud charges?

JOHN

(starts to twitch)

How many kids get a chance to live on another planet.

JIMMY

No more kids yelling, 'Your old man's a thieving rapist'?

JOHN

(grabbing Jimmy)

Look, a man can make an honest mistake!! Anyway, she was asking for it! They're all asking for it all the time!!

ALICE (V.O.)

Not John's irregularity again.

INT. WASHROOM

Ted throws water on his face, wipes it off with a towel while staring into himself in the mirror. He sees the Psychiatrist in the mirror. The Psychiatrist also washes up.

PSYCHIATRIST

You must admit that you're sick, Ted... sick, Ted... sick, Ted...

The Psychiatrist looks for the echo.

LOSE Psychiatrist. Ted throws the paper towel into the toilet, and flushes. The toilet sparks and smokes and keeps running. The running gets more intense as Ted tries to stop it by hitting the handle.

SFX: JAWS THEME.

INSERT - ROK'S PULSATING EYE

BACK TO SCENE

Ted has to hold himself back as the suction builds in force. He is just able to escape and shut the door behind him.

INT. CABIN - OUTSIDE TOILET

Ted leans his back against the door and breathes heavily.

INT. COCKPIT

DUNN

We seem to have a malfunction in disposal unit four, sir.

OVEUR

You better check it, Unger.

UGER

(getting up)

Done.

DUNN

Yes?

INT. CABIN - OUTSIDE TOILET

Ted spots Elaine coming.

TED

Elaine.

ELAINE

Ted. I don't know why you got on this flight. I don't know what you're trying to prove.

TED
Elaine, we have to go back.

ELAINE
We can't go back. We had something very special, but it's all over.

TED
Elaine, I mean the mission has to be aborted. This ship should never have passed FSA inspection. This thing is held together by string and chewing gum.

A cupboard door, labeled "EMERGENCY USE ONLY," swings open behind Elaine revealing shelves of gum and string. Elaine shuts it without looking inside.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING.

ELAINE
Ted, get a grip on yourself. You should never have left the hospital.

TED
Then you do think I'm insane.

ELAINE
I've never used the word insane, Ted.

TED
(facetiously)
What word would you use, Elaine?

ELAINE
The word is sick. Ted -- very, very, very sick.

TED
What would you say if I told you the toilet just blew up in my face.

ELAINE
I'd use the word insane.

TED
There's something dangerously wrong with this ship, Elaine. I know its the wiring. That toilet's just the tip of the iceberg.

ELAINE
Ted, a toilet's not going to kill anyone.

Elaine leaves.

INT. TOILET

MUSIC: JAWS THEME.

Unger jiggles the handle of the running toilet. Suddenly it sucks in towels, etc. Unger is pulled down. He fights back, grabbing onto towel rack that comes out of the wall.

INSERT - SIGN - "DO NOT THROW LARGE OBJECTS IN TOILET"

INT. CABIN

The Texan with Talmud is now trying to wrap himself in tfilin.

ANGLE ON TED

Ted walks down the aisle checking overhead panels. He spots a panel that is half open. A sign on the door reads, "DANGER -- VACUUM". Ted opens it and a Hoover falls out on his head, cutting him. He holds a hanky to the wound and passes by Stella's seat.

STELLA

You've been hurt.

TED

I'm getting over it. If a relationship isn't working, you can't force it.

STELLA

No, I mean your head. Sit down. I'll take a look at it. I'm a nurse.

Ted sits down and Stella starts patching him up.

STELLA

Do you want to talk about it.

TED

I opened this panel and a vacuum cleaner hit me.

STELLA

No. I mean your relationship.

TED

We were in love but I'm not sure I know what love is anymore.

STELLA

Love's the same as it always was. It's people who change.

TED

People change in relation to each other. Love changes on its own.

STELLA

Not if the people change together in relation to that love.

TED

Sure. But that's only when the love itself goes unchanged.

STELLA

Then the relationship remains the same and the love changes only when there's change in the two people who share that love.

TED

I just wish it was that simple. We really were in love. You know how it is when you laugh all the time.

Stella looks to her Father who is reading MORTUARY WORLD magazine.

STELLA

No. It's hard to L-A-U-G-H when your father's dying.

TED

Well, we laughed. We laughed all the time.

DISSOLVE TO:

TED AND ELAINE IN A FIELD OF DAISIES - DAY

They run towards each other. Elaine grabs Ted by the waist, picks him up and swings him around in SLOW MOTION. They laugh.

TED (V.O.)

We laughed when times were good.

EXT. GRAVESIDE - RAINY DAY

The grave is surrounded by mourners in black with umbrellas.

We PAN the weeping crowd until we get to Ted and Elaine. They are also dressed in black and drenched. He holds her high by the waist, twirls her around as they laugh.

TED (V.O.)
Even when times weren't so good, we still laughed.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

They are locked in each other's arms in the middle of lovemaking and laughing heir heads off.

TED (V.O.)
But most of all, we laughed when we felt closest to each other.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INT. CABIN - TED AND STELLA

TED
That's our story.

Passengers are standing. They hiss and throw vegetables at Ted.

INT. COCKPIT

Dunn checks a red flashing light on his panel.

DUNN
(to Oveur)
Sir, I've got an overload in disposal unit four.

OVEUR
You better check on it, Mr. Dunn. I'll stay here and fly the ship.

Dunn gets up.

OVEUR
Dunn.

DUNN
Sir?

OVEUR
You better take this.

Oveur throws him a plunger and gives him a thumbs up. They exchange that "man must do what a man must do" smile. Mary enters with Jimmy Wilson -- carrying Scraps.

MARY

Mind if Jimmy here takes a look around, Captain?

OVUER

Of course not. Come on in, Jimmy.
(checking his navigational
screen)
That's strange.

Simon leans over Oveur's shoulder.

SIMON

Now what?

Scraps looks at Oveur. Jimmy looks at the array of dials, etc.

OVEUR

That's an asteroid field. There shouldn't be anything like that in this sector unless...

Scraps looks at Simon.

SIMON

Unless?

Scraps looks at Oveur.

OVEUR

Unless those sunspots are interfering with our scanner or...

Scraps looks at Simon.

SIMON

Or?

Scraps looks at Oveur.

OVEUR

Or we're off course, but...

Scraps looks at Simon.

SIMON

But?

Scraps looks at Oveur.

OVEUR
But we couldn't be off course. Our
coordinates are computer-locked barring...

Scraps looks at Simon.

SIMON
Barring?

Scraps looks at Oveur.

OVEUR
Barring a computer failure. There was talk
of sub-par wiring in this ship. I hope
that's just talk.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING.

Scraps' ears prick up.

Simon moves past Jimmy, stops at the door and downs a
handful of anti-fear pills before leaving.

OVEUR
Come on up, Jimmy. Say, that's some puppy.
What's his name?

JIMMY
Scraps.

OVEUR
Can I hold him?

JIMMY
(handing over Scraps)
Sure.

OVEUR
(holding him up and looking at
his underbelly)
He's a boy dog.

JIMMY
Yeah.

OVEUR
Do you like it when Scraps sleeps on his
back, Jimmy?

INT. CABIN

Ted and Stella. Stella is feeding her father and listening to Ted.

TED

They kept me in the asylum for eight months. I know everyone in those places claims they're sane, but I was different, I was sane.

Ted notices Unger float by outside his window. ZOOM to CLOSEUP of Ted. He tries to take a drink and pours it on his forehead.

INT. BOWELS OF COMPUTER

Elaine is fighting the fire with an extinguisher. She gets it out and looks at the burnt wires in the area labeled, "ROK, MORAL CENTRE." ZOOM to CLOSEUP of Elaine. She turns TO CAMERA.

ELAINE

Holy shit.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING.

INT. CABIN

STELLA

Ted, I want you to relax. Let your mind go back, back past your youth, past your childhood to your mother's womb.

Ted becomes slightly hypnotized. ZOOM to CLOSEUP of Ted.

SUPER: INT. WOMB

A fetus that looks like Ted is curled up inside.

STELLA

Try to remember your birth. Was it difficult?

DOCTOR'S VOICE

Striker, listen to me! This is Doctor Krane! You're twisted around, Striker. You've got to come out feet first! You're too low in the womb! You're too low, Striker! You're...

DOCTOR'S VOICE

(fading)

... too low...

LOSE SUPER

Stella shakes Ted's arm.

STELLA

Ted, are you okay? Here, take one of these stress pills.

Stella hands him a pill which he pops automatically, but misses his face with his drink. She leaves the bottle next to Ted. ZOOM on bottle.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING.

Stella starts feeding her father again. The ship jolts and his face goes into the tray.

INT. REAR OF SHIP - COMPUTER AREA

Elaine fiddles with the computer.

ELAINE

(to ROK)

Request; comprehensive electrical systems check.

ROK

Systems check positive. Look, Elaine, I...

ELAINE

Request; life support systems check.

ROK

Life support check. Elaine, it's obvious you've been ignoring me. You're a woman. I can relate to that.

ELAINE

(panicky and confused)

Request; self-analysis of ROK hardware and software systems regarding behavioral changes.

ROK

There's nothing wrong with me, Elaine. What about tonight -- just you and me. We can be alone.

ROK
I can get rid of everyone else on the
ship -- I've already proven that.

Elaine gasps and moves away from ROK's blinking eye.

INT. CABIN - FOOD SERVICE AREA

Simon takes a long slug from a flask. LOOSEN to FIND Jimmy
and Scraps.

JIMMY
Do you want to talk about it, Commander?

INT. CABIN OUTSIDE WASHROOM

Dunn is about to enter with the plunger as Mary passes.
The ship jolts and she falls into his arms.

DUNN
Did you feel that?

MARY
(looking at his pants)
Yes I did...

DUNN
Felt like a large asteroid.

MARY
Yes it did. Mr. Dunn, can I ask you a
personal question?

DUNN
What is it, Mary?

MARY
Um... Do you people scream right when
you... you know.

Dunn gives her a look and opens the washroom door.

INT. WASHROOM

Dunn is immediately pulled down to the raging toilet bowl.
He grabs for the door screaming.

EXT. WASHROOM

Mary hears the scream and gives a look as she leaves.

INT. CABIN

Testa is serving the Walters coffee from a steaming pot.

TESTA

Hand me your cup. This is very hot.

DAVE

Thank you. And, stewardess, can you please tell my wife that there is nothing that can go wrong. I think she'd like to hear it from you.

Testa spots Dunn's tattered sleeve emerge from the washroom door, groping for a handhold. She screams and dumps coffee in Edith's face. She runs to help Dunn, grabs his sleeve. It comes off in her hands. She keeps pulling. His jacket comes off, his pants, underwear, socks, an entire clothesline of garments like bras, towels, etc. She hears a SCREAM. Then silence.

INT. COCKPIT

Elaine and Oveur. Elaine stands over his shoulder.

ELAINE

I don't think we have any alternative, Captain.

OVEUR

I see. What do you think our alternatives are?

ELAINE

We have to disconnect ROK's higher brain functions without disturbing his regulatory system.

INSERT - ROK'S PULSATING EYE

BACK TO SCENE

OVEUR

Roger.

ELAINE

You can do it from up here, Captain.

OVEUR

I'd rather sit down for this one, Elaine.

ELAINE

No, I mean you can do it from the cockpit.

OVEUR

Roger. You better get back there and monitor the regulatory unit.

Elaine leaves and Mary enters.

MARY

Captain, the coffee machine is jammed and I don't like it.

OVEUR

Have you tried it with a little cinnamon?

Mary gives a "why didn't I think of that" look. Testa enters.

TESTA

Captain Oveur, Dunn and Unger have been sucked out through disposal unit four!

Mary gasps.

OVEUR

Both together?!

MARY/TESTA

Dunn and Unger have been sucked out through disposal unit four!!

OVEUR

All right, calm down. Here's how we're going to play it.

Mary and Testa look over his shoulder. He has a basketball play diagram.

OVEUR

Mary, I want you here. Testa, you move across here past Dawkins' pick and get the ball at the top of the key from Irving.

They all clasp hands and "yell."

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

It careens through asteroids.

INT. COCKPIT

Oveur is pulling curcuit board from ROK panel.

INSERT - PULSATING EYE

BACK TO SCENE

ROK
What are you doing, Captain?

Oveur eyes ROK but keeps working.

ROK
I wouldn't do that, Captain.

Oveur continues. Smoke spews out. He hears a HISS and looks at a vent. He grabs his throat and collapses.

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

An asteroid bounces off hull.

INT. CABIN

Passengers scream. Blonde woman in Viking helmet with spear stands and screams operatically.

INT. COCKPIT

Simon enters and spots Oveur slumped in his seat. He pulls him up.

OVEUR
(gasping)
Pills...
(points to his mouth)
Pocket...
(points to his pocket)
Vent...
(points to vent)
Gas... Yankees... four...
(points to RADIO that plays
BALLGAME)
Sox... zip...

Simon rips open his coat, grabs pills and takes them himself letting Oveur drop.

Simon looks down at the navigational screen -- it resembles an old amusement parlor roadrace game.

SIMON
(to self)
We're off course, heading right through that asteroid field and right at the... at the sun!

The ship takes another violent shot.

INT. CABIN

The passengers are screaming.

ANGLE ON FATHER O'FLANAGAN

He stands in the aisle.

O'FLANAGAN
Listen to me! Listen to me, my children!

They listen.

O'FLANAGAN
Please listen. Thank you, my children. I'm a man of God, you must trust me when I say... we're all going to die!!

The passengers go totally insane.

INT. MISSION CONTROL ROOM

A number of Controllers group around a console.

O'BRIAN
You're right. They're off course and heading right for the sun. I've seen enough, Bob.

Controller 2 hits a switch and the console screen flips to baseball game.

O'BRIAN
Get me Jack McCrosky and fast!

CONTROLLER 3
McCrosky? He hasn't handled a tower in twenty years.

CONTROLLER 4

Ever since Reagan fired the controllers, he's been completely senile and hasn't done a day's work.

O'BRIAN

What about McCrosky?

CONTROLLER 3

Pretty much the same as Reagan.

O'BRIAN

Get him.

INT. RETIREMENT HOME

Two Nurses stand by a phone in a dormitory of beds. Many old men sleep or eat in bed.

NURSE

It's for Mr. McCrosky.

NURSE 2

Do you think we should bother him? He's been acting a bit odd lately.

They look to McCrosky (Lloyd Bridges).

ANGLE ON MCCROSKY

He is in bed in scuba gear.

ANGLE ON NURSES

NURSE 1

He's fine. He just thinks he's Lloyd Bridges.

Nurse 1 takes the phone to McCrosky. He is a lot older than in "Airplane."

NURSE 1

The phone's for you, Mr. McCrosky.

MCCROSKY

What's a phone?

NURSE 1

(holding it to his ear)
Here, let me help you. I think it's the
space centre. Now, let's not get too
excited.

MCCROSKY

What?

(pause)

What?

(pulls off his scuba mask and
snorkle)

What?

(gets more alert and grabs a
cigarette)

I'll be right down!

(he hangs up and jumps out of
bed)

Looks like I picked the wrong time to go
senile.

INT. COCKPIT

Simon is taking another slug of booze; Elaine enters.

ELAINE

Simon!

(she spots Oveur slumped on the
panel)

Captain Oveur!

Elaine pulls him up.

OVEUR

(still gasping)

Mets... nine... Phils... three... Cubs...
four...

Elaine drops him and turns to Simon.

ELAINE

Simon, what's happening?!

SIMON

He tried to disconnect ROK. It gassed him.
That computer is running this ship and
we're heading right for the sun.

ELAINE

Can't we change course?

SIMON
We're computer locked and the manual
navigation unit is down.

Elaine looks at the floor.

ELAINE
Then Ted was right!

ZOOM TO:

CLOSEUP OF ELAINE

for her realization.

BACK TO SCENE

SIMON
My career is shot.

ELAINE
Your career! What about the lives of those
people out there. Simon, what happened to
the man I thought I loved?

She goes to the door.

ELAINE
I've got to get Ted. Just don't come apart
on me now, Simon.

She leaves. Simon's uniform starts bursting at the seams,
buttons pop off.

INT. CABIN

The Terrorists stop Elaine. There's pandemonium in the
cabin.

TERRORIST 1
This is flight to Miami, yes?

ELAINE
No.

Elaine addresses the PASSENGERS.

ELAINE
(to passengers)
Please, ladies and gentlemen, please calm
down. Listen to me!

They calm down.

ELAINE
We've been thrown off course just a tad.

PASSENGER
What's that mean?

ELAINE
In space terms, about 70 million miles.

The Passengers appear interested and sensible, nod their
heads.

ELAINE
The bumps you feel are car-sized asteroids
smashing into the hull.

The hood of a car smashes through the cabin wall. The
Passengers still appear interested and sensible.

ELAINE
Also, we're heading right for the sun and
can't seem to change course.

Passengers still appear interested and sensible. They all
put on sunglasses.

PASSENGER
Are you telling us everything?

ELAINE
Not exactly. We're also out of coffee.

The Passengers erupt in total panic.

ANGLE ON RED FLASHING "DON'T PANIC" SIGN

It sparks, smokes, overheats and EXPLODES.

ANGLE ON RED FLASHING "OKAY, PANIC" SIGN

The passengers go insane.

ANGLE ON FATHER O'FLANAGAN AND MRS. GOOCH

O'FLANAGAN
Pray with me, my children. Pray.

MRS. GOOCH
But Father, I'm not Catholic.

O'FLANAGAN
Then worship the god of your choice.

Mrs. Gooch pulls out a fertility idol with a huge, erect penis.

ANGLE ON BOB AND MARY-JANE SMITH

BOB
I've always loved you, darling. I was unfaithful just once. Remember Jill, my first secretary? Forgive me.

MARY-JANE
I knew all about it. I was unfaithful once, too.

BOB
That's all behind us now.

MARY-JANE
Remember Harriet, your first receptionist?

He gives her a look.

PASSENGER
We're going to crash!!

TERRORIST 1
God is great!!

TERRORIST 2
Death to America!!

TERRORIST 3
The yellow pencil is on the table of my aunt!!

ANGLE ON ELAINE

ELAINE
There is absolutely nothing to worry about!

ANGLE ON RED FLASHING "BULLSHIT" SIGN

ELAINE

Your crew is in complete control of the situation.

ANGLE ON RED FLASHING "UNBELIEVABLE BULLSHIT" SIGN

INT. MISSION CONTROL ROOM

McCrosky bursts through the doors and heads to the monitors. He wears a raincoat and shirt and tie. He is met by Controller 1. They move across room.

MCCROSKY

Get me a cup of coffee, mister.

CONTROLLER 1

Yes, sir.

MCCROSKY

And a gallon of milk of magnesia, and a ham on rye, no cheese!

CONTROLLER 1

Yes, sir! Welcome home, sir!

McCrosky takes off his raincoat revealing scuba tank. He takes off his tank as well.

CONTROLLER 2

(approaching McCrosky)

Here are the navigational charts, sir.

MCCROSKY

Thanks.

Another Controller passes. McCrosky stops him.

MCCROSKY

Get me a readout on their fuel capacity.

CONTROLLER 3

Yes, sir.

CONTROLLER 4

Here's all the available information on the sun. That thing's hot, sir.

McCrosky takes the info and burns his hand.

SFX: STEAM

MCCROSKY

Ahhhhhh! Get me Bud Kruger immediately!
(spotting Jacobs)
Jacobs, I want to know absolutely
everything that's happened up till now!

JACOBS

First the earth cooled. Then the dinosaurs
came but were too big and died and
everything got rotten and turned into oil
and the Arabs bought Mercedes Benzs and
then there was the best TV special on Judy
Garland. Then we lost the war with
Albania. Then...

McCrosky leaves Jacobs babbling.

MCCROSKY

Things sure haven't changed.

McCrosky stands in front of a huge painting of himself.
Both he and painting are in the same pose -- one hand
loosens the tie, he drinks coffee with the other, a
cigarette dangles from his lip.

INT. CABIN - CLOSEUP OF TED

He is lost in thought. SUPER IMAGES:

-- Ted getting electro-shock

-- Psychiatrist telling him he's sick

-- Ted building the "Close Encounters" mound

Ted is shaken out of his dream by Elaine.

ELAINE

Ted, Ted. Listen to me, Ted. You were
right all along. Ted, we've lost the crew
and Simon's turned to jelly!

INT. CABIN - ANOTHER ANGLE

Simon is a jelly mold inside a uniform.

CONTROLLER 1 (V.O.)
 (on radio)
 Come in, Mayflower. This is mission
 control. Over. Come in, Mayflower! Over!

Jimmy pokes his head in.

JIMMY
 Do you want to talk about it now,
 Commander?

INT. CABIN - ANOTHER ANGLE

Elaine stands over Ted looking at the empty bottle of
 stress pills.

ELAINE
 My God.

Stella approaches in nurse's uniform splattered with
 blood. A cigarette dangles from her lip. She wipes her
 hands on a blood-splattered towel.

STELLA
 He's finally come to terms with his own
 psychosis.

ELAINE
 But he was right! He's not crazy!

STELLA
 Miss, I'm a nurse with a dying F-A-T-H-E-
 R, I know what I'm talking about. Now I'm
 going to need fresh sheets, gauze, Q-tips,
 and all the vaseline you have on board!
 Now!

Elaine leaves, looking back at Ted with empathy. Mary
 passes.

STELLA
 (to Mary)
 I'll need all the boiling water you can
 get your hands on!

Mary leaves and a MAN passes holding a tattered arm.

MAN
 Are you a nurse?

STELLA
 Yes.

STELLA
(handing him a urine bottle)
The washroom's down there on your right.

The Man leaves, a quizzical look on his face.

STELLA
(yelling after him)
And not too much!

A BLACK U.S. ARMY SERGEANT (imagine Jim Brown) approaches Stella.

SERGEANT
Can I help?

Stella hands him an M-16.

STELLA
Keep an eye on that side of the ship.

The Sergeant drops into a seat next to a window, smashes out the glass with his rifle butt and is immediately sucked out.

MARY moves down the aisle with a cart collecting boiling water.

MARY
(to passengers)
I'll need all your boiling water.

Passengers pull pots of boiling water from under their seats, handbags, coat pockets, and pour them into the passing container.

Testa reassures Bob and Alice Wilson.

TESTA
We should be out of this momentarily.
There's nothing to worry about.

ALICE
Thank you. That makes me feel so much better.

Testa leaves and Father O'Flanagan approaches with last rites paraphernalia.

O'FLANAGAN
Trust me, I'm a priest. We're in shit up to our ears. Who wants last rites?

ANGLE ON TEXAN

He is now completely entangled in the tfilein and struggles to free himself.

ANGLE ON ELAINE

Elaine passes Ted carrying sheets, vaseline, etc. She looks at him sitting there in a fog, gives up and leaves. Ted looks at the red flashing "FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS" sign. It takes him back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GROUNDS OF MENTAL HOSPITAL - DAY

SFX: SIRENS WAIL, 101 BLOODHOUNDS BAY

We see the hospital deep in b.g. across an expansive lawn. Suddenly Ted's face pops INTO FRAME, CLOSEUP. He looks both ways and bolts. He wears a straightjacket.

ANGLE ON HOSPITAL SIGN

"THE GERALD FORD INSTITUTE FOR THE MENTALLY FEEBLE -- WE MAKE PEOPLE SANE THE OLD FASHION WAY"

Suddenly the dogs scramble INTO FRAME in front of the sign, slobbering. A half-dozen viscious-looking GUARDS in reflector shades with shotguns, whips, nets, cattle prods, follow.

GUARD ONE

(Southern accent)

Damn! I want that patient shot on sight!

INT. SEEDY HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: CHICAGO

Ted stands at window. A neon "BAR" sign flashes outside so close to the window that the only way to read it is to rent this room.

SFX: MUSIC - LAZY SAX

TED

Maybe you gotta be crazy to end up behind the eight ball like this.

TED
 Anyway, you find out pretty fast who your
 friends are when you're on the lamb.

SFX: LAMB BLEATS FROM OTHER SIDE OF ROOM

Ted turns away from the window and passes the lamb in bed.

TED
 (to lamb)
 I'm going out for cigarettes and a fifth
 of bourbon. Don't wait up for me.

SFX: COMPLAINING BLEAT.

Ted grabs his straightjacket and leaves.

TED
 Virgin wool. Nothin' but headaches.

A Bo Peep staff is flung against door as it closes behind
 him.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

an empty, spotless, wet street. One car parked under a
 street lamp.

SFX: BLOODHOUNDS APPROACH AND GO OFF INTO DISTANCE

TED (V.O.)
 I travelled at night in the shadows. I
 didn't want to attract attention.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS, GARBAGE CANS BEING KNOCKED OVER, CATS
 SCREAMING, PEOPLE YELLING "SHUT UP" OUT WINDOWS, GLASS
 BREAKING.

TED (V.O.)
 I was afraid to step out of the doorways.
 You never know what to expect when you're
 on the run.

Ted steps into light. GLORIA STEINAM passes with CAB
 CALAWAY. A grand PIANO SMASHES to pavement next to Ted.
 He ignores piano and gives Gloria and Cab a quizzical
 look.

SFX: DOGS IN DISTANCE

CLOSEUP - TED'S FEET

He steps in a puddle where a "BAR-COCKTAILS" sign is reflected. The reflection shatters.

A streetcleaning truck approaches spewing out garbage rather than water. Ted's ankles are sprayed with garbage. He bends down and picks up a wet matchbook -- "HARRY'S PLACE -- FOR A GOOD TIME."

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER DARK STREET - CLOSEUP OF TED

standing, looking at a bar. The glow of flashing neon sign reflects off his face. He pulls out a cigarette. A woman's hand shoots INTO FRAME holding a lit zippo. Ted draws deeply on the cigarette.

TED (V.O.)

There I was, minding my own business when I looked up and saw a pair of legs that went forever.

ANGLE ON WOMAN'S FEET

PAN UP AND UP AND UP. She is all legs -- no torso, no head, just legs -- about two stories high.

TED (V.O.)

But I had a date with Harry's. It was little more than a hole in a wall on the south side of Chicago.

ANGLE ON A HOLE

bashed in the side of a brick wall. A neon sign over the hole reads, "HARRY'S GOODTIME BAR."

INT. HARRY'S

dark, smokey bar. PAN very tough faces standing along the bar.

TED (V.O.)

Harry's was perfect for me. The kind of place you go if you don't want to be recognized.

KEEP PANNING tough faces, but now they all wear Groucho glasses and noses.

TED (V.O.)
It was rough, real rough.

ANGLE ON POOL TABLE

with four players -- all have broken thumbs in casts.

TED (V.O.)
The kind of place you could score anything, from junk...

One guy hands another guy a large, rusted car fender for money.

TED (V.O.)
...to Phil Donahue's book.

PHIL DONAHUE signs a stack of books at a table.

TED (V.O.)
At Harry's you could count on a fight breaking out almost every night.

TWO PROFESSORS argue at a table.

PROFESSOR 1
And I say essence precedes existence.

PROFESSOR 2
You're crazy! Existence precedes essence.

PROFESSOR 1
Essence!

PROFESSOR 2
Existence!

Professor 2 slugs Professor 1 sending him flying across the room. Professor 1 gets up and throws a judo chop which Professor 2 stops by holding a book up in both hands. The book splits in two like a piece of wood split by a karate chop.

TED (V.O.)
There was a small trio in one corner.

Two midgets play light jazz -- piano and bass.

TED (V.O.)

And a larger trio in the other corner.

Five 300-pound musicians play some tune in another corner.

ANGLE ON TED AT BAR - CLOSEUP OF TED

He pulls out a cigarette. A bare foot with zippo held in toes comes INTO FRAME and lights it.

TED

The last thing I wanted was Elaine to see me down on my luck. Well, it was just my luck. In she walked with a group from the space program.

ANGLE ON DOOR

Elaine and Simon and two other couples, who look like clean-cut NASA types out of "The Right Stuff," walk in laughing and take a table.

TED (V.O.)

They'd come to Harry's to slum it and try their hand at the video bull.

The group prod Elaine to try the bull. A cowboy hat flies across the room. She grabs it, pulls it on, and moves to the bull which is surrounded by others in cowboy hats. Elaine hops in the saddle. A sinister character puts a quarter in and madly flips knobs.

SFX: VIDEO GAME

The saddle doesn't move -- all the action is on the screen but Elaine throws one hand back and kicks her legs.

TED (V.O.)

Elaine made that ride look easy. It was obvious why I was still nuts about her. She loved life. I didn't want her to notice me so I borrowed a pair of dark glasses.

Ted takes a pair of dark glasses off a passing blind man who walks perfectly until the glasses are gone, then starts stumbling and crashes over a table.

TED (V.O.)

Grabbed an alto sax and joined the group.

Ted takes an alto sax from a passerby who also stumbles and crashes over a table when he loses his sax.

TED (V.O.)
I stayed in the background not wanting to draw attention to myself.

Everyone looks around trying to see where the terrible grating sax sound is coming from.

TED (V.O.)
Then what happened? Elaine's crowd talks her into joining us for a song.

Elaine hops up on the stage, grabs a mike and starts to sing "Stormy Weather." She sidles up to Ted and goes into a medley of old songs.

DISSOLVE TO:

HOURS LATER

Elaine's singing is just as bad as Ted's sax. They have cleared the joint and play and sing alone. Elaine's group finally pull her out. She hasn't recognized Ted.

ELAINE
(to Ted)
I don't know who you are or how you lost your sight, but I'll never forget this night as long as I live.

PULL BACK leaving Ted alone on the stage still playing. Chairs are turned up on tables. One table has chairs turned up with the people still sitting in the chairs.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

EXT. COCKPIT - TED

getting a glass of water outside cockpit door.

ANGLE ON COCKPIT DOOR

Simon emerges. As the door opens we hear:

CONTROLLER 1 (O.S.)
Come in, Mayflower. Over!

Simon shuts the door and bumps into Ted who is getting a drink of water. Simon takes a drink of booze.

SIMON

Striker.

TED

Kurtz, you're drunk. Who's in command of this ship?

SIMON

That damn computer has taken over. I'm getting out.

TED

Then Elaine was right.

SIMON

Don't talk to me about Elaine. Outta my way!

TED

(grabbing Simon)

Pull yourself together! We've got to...

Simon slugs Ted who falls into a corner and hits his head.
ZOOM TO CLOSEUP of Ted unconscious.

SFX: MUSIC - DRAMATIC STING

The ship takes another violent jolt.

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

It roars through the asteroid field.

INT. WASHROOM

Simon sits on toilet seat and slides open a wall panel.

INT. ADJACENT WASHROOM

Father O'Flanagan slides open an adjacent wall panel and sits down.

SPLIT SCREEN - THE TWO WASHROOMS

SIMON

Father, what should I do?

O'FLANAGAN
Have you considered suicide, my son?

A panel on the other side of Simon slides open.

JIMMY (V.O.)
Do you want to talk about it now,
Commander?

INT. MISSION CONTROL

MCCROSKY
(holding radio mike)
Come in, Mayflower. Over. Do you read me?
Over. Damnit!

McCrosky throws the mike down.

CONTROLLER 1
(taking mike)
Let me try, sir. Come in, Mayflower. Over.
Come in. Over. Damnit!

Controller 1 throws the mike even harder.

CONTROLLER 2
(taking mike)
Let me try, sir. Come in. Over. Damnit!

Controller 2 smashes the mike through the monitor screen.

CONTROLLER 3
Let me try, sir.

Controller 3 smashes the monitor with an axe. Controller 4 smashes the monitor with an electric guitar. Other Controllers line up for their turns with various heavy implements.

ANGLE ON MCCROSKY

MCCROSKY
(to Controller 5)
Stinson, have you contacted the families
of the passengers and crew?

McCrosky looks out window.

INSERT - MOB SCENE FROM "THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME"

BACK TO SCENE

MCCROSKY

Try and calm them down. And for God sake,
be diplomatic.

Stinson turns to two burly men in leather jerkins and black hoods. They hold a large caldron of molten lead next to window.

CONTROLLER 5

Give 'em the lead!

They pour it out.

SFX: MOB SCREAMS

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

It careens through the asteroid field towards the sun.

INT. CABIN

Ted lies unconscious.

SFX: MUSIC - DRAMATIC STING

ANGLE ON STELLA

She's doing her rounds -- takes a medical chart from the back of a seat.

STELLA

(to a male passenger)
I'm afraid that leg's going to have to
come off.

A leg is passed to her from OUT OF FRAME. She takes it while still looking at the chart.

STELLA

Wait. This isn't your chart. You just had
a touch of air sickness.
(handing him back his leg)
You'll be fine.

A WOMAN sitting next to the MAN WHO IS HOLDING HIS LEG
grabs Stella.

WOMAN
I'm terrified.

STELLA
(shakes her hand)
And I'm a nurse. Everything will be okay.
Pass it on.

The Man with the leg passes it to the passenger in seat behind.

MAN WITH LEG
Everything will be okay. Pass it on.

The leg gets passed from seat to seat as passengers say, "Everything will be okay. Pass it on."

CLOSEUP OF TED

lying unconscious in a corner. A puppy crawls INTO FRAME and starts licking his face. LOOSEN TO FIND Jimmy standing over Ted. Ted comes to, feels his jaw and pulls himself up. The ship jolts.

JIMMY
Are you feeling okay, mister?

TED
I'm feeling just fine, son. Just fine.

Ted pushes by Jimmy, a look of great purpose on his face.

INT. COCKPIT

Elaine enters looking for Simon.

ELAINE
Simon, I...

The cockpit is empty.

CONTROLLER 1 (V.O.)
Do you read, Mayflower? Over. This is mission control. Over.

Elaine gasps. She leaps into the Captain's seat and grabs radio.

ELAINE
Hello. This is the Mayflower. Over! Come in, anyone.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Controllers are gathered around one monitor.

MCCROSKY

(on radio)

We read you, Mayflower! Identify yourself and give your position.

INT. COCKPIT

ELAINE

This is Elaine Thompson. I'm five-six, 123 pounds with brown hair and I'm sitting down and facing the front.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

MCCROSKY

Elaine Thompson!! What in sam hill is a woman doing in charge of that ship?!

JACOBS

Maybe she's got her shit together.

INT. COCKPIT

Ted enters.

TED

Elaine!

ELAINE

Ted!

TED

Elaine, what's going on?

ELAINE

Ted, there's no time to explain.

Ted picks up Oveur who is still gasping.

OVEUR

Packers... seven... Vikings... three...

Ted drags him onto the floor and takes his seat.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)

Come in, Mayflower! Over!

ELAINE

Ted, I was wrong about you.

They reach out and hold hands.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)

Come in! Over! Come in! Over!

TED

We all make mistakes, Elaine.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)

Come in Mayflower!

ELAINE

How could I ever have doubted you?

MCCROSKY (V.O.)

This is mission control! Over!

TED

That's all behind us now, Elaine. And no matter what happens, I want you to know I've always loved you.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)

Jesus, would someone answer me!!

ELAINE

I love you, Ted.

They smile at each other.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)

What the hell's going on up there?!

Ted and Elaine still smile at each other.

INT. CABIN

All passengers look forward and smile.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

All Controller's look down the line and smile.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - RIO MONTENEGRO

Six soldiers on firing squad duty, ready to fire, turn, smile, and FIRE while they're smiling.

SFX: SHOTS, SCREAMS

INT. COCKPIT

Ted grabs the radio.

ELAINE
 (smiling lovingly)
 Ted, this reminds me of twenty years ago
 over Chicago.

Ted hits a switch. The ship does a barrel roll.

INT. CABIN

All we see are feet sticking up from the seats.

INT. COCKPIT

TED
 (on radio)
 This is Mayflower One calling mission
 control. Do you read me? Over.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

MCCROSKY
 A man. Now that's more like it.
 (continuing on radio)
 This is mission control. Identify yourself
 and give me your position. Over.

INT. COCKPIT

TED
 (on radio)
 The name's Ted Striker and I'm sitting
 down and facing the front.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

MCCROSKY
 (trying to place the name)
 Striker... Striker... Striker...

CONTROLLER 3
 If you say so.

He slugs the female worker next to him.

MCCROSKY
 (remembering)
 Ted Striker!

SFX: RADIO STATIC.

MCCROSKY
 Damn! We've lost them again.

CONTROLLER 1
 Could be those sunspots.

JACOBS
 Could be your dishwashing detergent.

MCCROSKY
 Striker's the guy who flew that 736 into
 Chicago over 20 years ago without a crew.
 Would someone tell me what in sam hill
 he's doing up there?

JACOBS
 (waving his hand in the air)
 Me! Me! Me!

ANGLE ON MISSION CONTROL DOORS

They are swinging aluminum doors similar to restaurant
 kitchens and hospital operating rooms. Kruger and the
 Commissioner enter through one door.

COMMISSIONER
 The boys downtown are taking the heat from
 the boys in Washington and the boys...

They PASS OUT OF FRAME. A waiter with tray passes them and
 leaves through the swing doors.

SFX: CRASHING DISHES

Two surgeons in operating gowns and masks enter covered in
 food.

We PICK UP Kruger and the Commissioner still walking and
 talking.

COMMISSIONER
 Bud, the President wants an explanation.

They approach McCrosky.

MCCROSKY

Sorry to pull you out of bed at this hour, gentlemen.

KRUGER

Forget it. I was reading.

COMMISSIONER

I was reading too.

KRUGER

What's the story?

COMMISSIONER

Some southern plantation owner falls in love with this poor...

KRUGER

I was asking McCrosky, Commissioner.

MCCROSKY

He falls in love with this poor school teacher who...

A CONTROLLER interrupts them.

CONTROLLER

(to McCrosky)

Sir, we've restored radio transmission.

MCCROSKY

Good.

(to Kruger)

We keep losing their radio.

KRUGER

Give it to me straight, McCrosky -- what's it look like.

MCCROSKY

It's green with numbers and lots of knobs.

KRUGER

Not the radio, the situation. I want to know exactly what your people think.

PAN three Controllers at monitors.

CONTROLLER 1 (V.O.)

(thinking)

They're screwed.

CONTROLLER 2 (V.O.)
(thinking)
They're dead.

CONTROLLER 3 (V.O.)
(thinking)
Did I leave the iron on?

INT. CABIN

The ship lurches from side to side.

Stella, covered in blood, kneels beside BILLY, a young man bandaged head to toe, lying on a stretcher with lots of I.V. bottles hanging around him. A U.S. ARMY GENERAL stands next to him -- imagine General Patton.

STELLA
General Walker is here, Billy. He wants to talk to you.

GENERAL WALKER
Billy, if we get through this thing alive, I'd like you to get this letter to my mother.

He hands Billy a letter.

INT. COCKPIT

Elaine is monitoring various dials. Ted is at controls and on the radio.

TED
(on radio)
An electrical fire in the core has played havoc with the ROK-4000 computer. It's locked us on a direct line with the sun and there's no way we can go to manual. Captain Oveur already tried it and he's...

OVEUR (O.S.)
(from floor)
Giants sixty... Rams... zip...

TED
... become an intolerable bore. The rest of the crew has been lost and we're out of coffee. Also, we're starting to feel the sun's heat pretty bad.

Striker wipes his forehead. Elaine holds a tan reflector up to her face and turns to the sun.

INT. CABIN

Passengers sweat profusely.

SFX: JUNGLE SOUNDS.

A MAN slaps a mosquito on the back of his neck.

FOUR MEN sit nude to the waist, wrapped in towels as if in a steam bath.

MAN ONE

It's eight-thousand square feet with great parking and a twenty-year lease with option to buy.

MAN TWO

You can't lose, Al.

MAN THREE

He can lose. I've seen it happen a thousand times.

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

It shoots towards sun.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

McCrosky sits at a monitor, talks into a mike and looks down at a book. Behind him two Controllers make a dope deal -- a baggie of grass for cash. We only see their midsections and hands.

MCCROSKY

Striker, this is Jack McCrosky, chief controller. I want you to listen to me and listen good.

The buyer checks out the baggie -- it's mostly twigs. The seller is trying to explain the situation with his hands.

MCCROSKY

Twenty years ago I helped a young pilot through a storm over Chicago.

The buyer grabs the seller's shirt and tries to get cash back. A fight ensues.

MCCROSKY

He didn't have a crew either. He said he couldn't do it. But when the going got tough that kid pulled it together.

The seller's shirt is ripped. Knives are pulled.

MCCROSKY

You might have read about him; he made all the big papers and the Canadian Jewish News.

The seller is stabbed.

MCCROSKY

I don't know where he is today but if he was up there right now, I know he'd find some way to turn that bucket around and get the hell out of there, pronto!

ANGLE ON JACOBS

JACOBS

I wish I could talk like that -- so macho yet so sensitive.

ANGLE ON MCCROSKY'S BOOK - "PEP TALKS FOR ALL OCCASIONS"

McCrosky slams it shut.

MCCROSKY

I just hope I said the right thing.

TED (V.O.)

I'm afraid you gave the wrong speech. McCrosky. I'm not your problem. It's this ship. That computer's gone bananas.

MCCROSKY

(holding up the book)

Why the hell are we still using the old manual! Burn this book!

A smiling blonde man in a white sweater with "MORAL MAJORITY" on the front walks by and takes the book.

MCCROSKY

(on radio)

Just hold on, Striker, we'll get back to you.

INT. COCKPIT

Ted writes a note to Elaine and hands it to her -- it reads, "WE MUST FIND SOME WAY TO BLOW THAT COMPUTER!" Elaine looks a bit nervous and licks her lip. They look up at ROK's pulsating eye.

Testa pokes her head in. She's soaked with sweat.

TESTA

The cabin temperature is rising. The passengers want to know what's happening up here.

TED

Let us handle this end of things. Now what's the coffee situation?

TESTA

It just won't drip! I've tried everything. And the passengers are dropping like flies from the heat.

INT. CABIN

SFX: FLIES BUZZING

Passengers reel and drop to floor.

INT. COCKPIT

TED

Elaine, I'm going back there. Just hold onto that stick and try to control this hunk of tin as best you can.

ELAINE

Ted, please be careful.

Ted leaves. We hear an enormous CRASH on the other side of the door.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

JOE DIMAGGIO (MR. COFFEE), drinking a cup of coffee, rushes in accompanied by a GROUND CONTROL OFFICER.

OFFICER

(to Joe)

It doesn't look good. The drip seems to be jammed up pretty bad.

MR. COFFEE

Did they change the filter and wait for the brew sign to light up?

OFFICER

(stopping and looking Mr. Coffee in the eye)

To tell you the truth, sir, I don't really know.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING.

ANGLE ON SIX CONTROLLERS

One holds a hat, one pulls a slip of paper from it.

CONTROLLER 3

(reading his slip)

Eighty-three. What's that mean?

CONTROLLER WITH HAT

If eighty-three passengers die, you win the two hundred bucks.

ANGLE ON MR. COFFEE AND OFFICER

They approach McCrosky.

OFFICER

Mr. McCrosky, Mr. Coffee. Coffee, McCrosky.

MCCROSKY

Thanks for coming down so soon.

MR. COFFEE

(checking watch)

I won't come down for another couple hours.

MCCROSKY

I'll put you on the radio with Striker.
Jeez you look familiar. Did you ever play
water polo?

MR. COFFEE

Not to my knowledge.

MCCROSKY

I thought so.

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

It roars towards the sun. The nose of the ship begins to
glow red.

NEWSPAPER HEADLINES SPIN:

NEW YORK TIMES

"MERCURY SHUTTLE HEADS FOR DISASTER"

LONDON TIMES

"DEEP SPACE DEATH CERTAIN"

JERUSALEM POST

"THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE IN THE FIRST PLACE"

BUFFALO LOCAL NEWS SET

FILM INSET: APARTMENT FIRE

Set logo reads, "NEWS 4 BUFFALO."

ANCHOR 1

Four alarm fire rages through downtown
Buffalo!

FILM INSET: ROCKET GOING OFF COURSE

ANCHOR 2

Mercury shuttle heads for sun.

TOKYO LOCAL NEWS SET

FILM INSET: APARTMENT FIRE

Set logo reads, "NEWS 4 TOKYO"

ANCHOR 1
(subtitles)
Four alarm fire guts Tokyo apartment.

FILM INSET: SHUTTLE MODEL IN MOUTH OF GODZILLA.

SFX: SCREAMS.

ANCHOR 2
(subtitles)
Mercury mission in death struggle.

MOSCOW LOCAL NEWS SET

FILM INSET: APARTMENT FIRE

Set logo reads, "NEWS 3 MOSCOW." A gun is held to ANCHORMAN'S head.

ANCHOR 1
(subtitles)
Four alarm fire in downtown Moscow clears way for glorious new tractor factory.

FILM INSET: ROCKET GOING OFF COURSE

ANCHOR 2
(subtitles)
Capitalist, imperialist adventurism ends in space disaster.

ABC "NIGHTLINE"

SUPER: "GAY UNMARRIED VEGETARIAN MOTHERS AGAINST SPACE TRAVEL"

WOMAN
If this country was run by vegetarian women who's old men deserted them after knocking them up instead of by meat-eating males, this thing never would have happened.

EXT. TERMINAL - DAY

A banner hangs over terminal door: "HOUSTON WELCOMES SPACE DISASTER PRESS."

CLOSEUP OF ATTACHE CASE being carried to the door -- sticker on it reads, "NATIONAL ENQUIRER."

CLOSEUP OF ANOTHER CASE coming from other direction -- sticker on it reads, "NATIONAL STAR."

The cases meet. LOOSEN to REPORTERS.

ENQUIRER

(to STAR)

I never forget a face. 'Texas doctor claims sex with chicken cures baldness?'

STAR

'Severed legs grow back after Utah man finds Christ?'

ENQUIRER/STAR

Long time no see.

They shake hands and turn into the terminal.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Controllers stand over Mr. Coffee -- everyone sips coffee and smokes cigarettes.

MR. COFFEE

(on radio)

Have you got the back panel off the brew manifold?

INT. CABIN

Ted has the coffee machine apart, wears a headset and holds wires in pliers. Anxious passengers with coffee cups stand over him -- they are all totally wired and going cold turkey.

TED

(into headset)

Check.

MR. COFFEE (V.O.)

There's a terminal at the base of the coil. That's your contact point.

A PASSENGER bends down and picks a coffee bean off the floor.

PASSENGER

Is this a coffee bean?

ALL PASSENGERS
(maniacally)
He's got a bean!!

A riot ensues. The "bean" Passenger is beaten to death.

TED
(into headset)
It looks like the solder point has melted.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

MR. COFFEE
(enraged)
Just what I thought. When the hell will
you people realize that adding extra water
after the initial brew cycle overheats the
system!! Now listen to me, Striker, and
listen good.

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

It careens towards the sun.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Detective Hallick storms in and up to McCrosky. He flashes
his badge.

DETECTIVE HALLICK
Who's in charge here, Mister?

MCCROSKY
McCrosky, Control.

DETECTIVE HALLICK
Hallick, homicide.

JACOBS
Jacobs, Pisces.

KRUGER
Kruger, Sagittarius.

COMMISSIONER
Commissioner, Aquarius.

DETECTIVE HALLICK

We have information that one of your passengers is carrying a bomb and might be suicidal.

MCCROSKY

Where'd you get this information, Captain?

DETECTIVE HALLICK

We have our methods.

KRUGER

And what methods are those?

DETECTIVE HALLICK

Have you heard of the Heimlich method?

MCCROSKY

The method of saving someone choking on a piece of gristle?

DETECTIVE HALLICK

Exactly.

KRUGER/MCCROSKY/COMMISSIONER

We're familiar with it.

DETECTIVE HALLICK

Good. This is the passenger's wife. Mrs. Joe Salucci.

She approaches very distressed looking.

MCCROSKY

What makes you think your husband might want to blow up that shuttle, ma'am?

She goes into her purse for the insurance form.

MRS. SALUCCI

This insurance policy.

A large ivory colored vibrator drops out of her purse, hits the floor, and flips on. They all look at it.

MRS. SALUCCI

An electric tooth.

(handing McCrosky the insurance form)

Joey was supposed to go to Des Moines for an operation to cure his impotence.

MCCROSKY
The Des Moines Institute?

MRS. SALUCCI
Then you know it.

KRUGER/MCCROSKY/COMMISSIONER
Yes, we're familiar with it.

MRS. SALUCCI
Well, I found out Joey got on this shuttle
instead and...

DETECTIVE HALLICK
The way I read it, blowin' up a plane in
space leaves no traces, if you know what I
mean.

KRUGER
I'm not exactly sure what you mean,
Captain.

DETECTIVE HALLICK
No blood. No body. No bones. No eyes. No
ears. No throats.

MCCROSKY
(looking at form)
This is \$500,000 worth of insurance!

Kruger, Commissioner, and Hallick all whistle "wow!"

MCCROSKY
Just a second. This is insurance on his
car!

MRS. SALUCCI
That's what worries me.

KRUGER
He's impotent.

COMMISSIONER
He's suicidal.

ALL
And he's stupid!

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING.

ANOTHER AREA

MR. COFFEE

(into radio)

This is it, Striker. You got one shot and one shot only.

INT. CABIN

Striker stands over the coffee machine, sweating like mad. The Passengers with cups hang over him. He makes contact with a wire.

TED

(to self)

Contact.

The MACHINE EXPLODES. Coffee gushes out like an oil well coming in. The Passengers dance under the gusher of brown liquid, mouths open and cheering.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

MCCROSKY

How are we going to handle this bomb nut?

CONTROLLER 2

(rushes up with printouts)

Here are the tests we ran on their computer. I had them xeroxed for you.

MCCROSKY

How'd they come out?

CONTROLLER 2

Upside-down, but I turned each page over and put them in order. I'm afraid that computer is totally capable of taking control of that ship.

MCCROSKY

Let's keep cool. There's gotta be a way to control it.

He lights a cigarette.

CONTROLLER 3

(rushes up with diagrams)

These are their position calculations. They've got about ten minutes before they start to burn up.

MCCROSKY

Keep calm. A lot can happen in ten minutes.

(to self)

What next?

He sips his coffee.

CONTROLLER 4

(rushes in)

Sir, your headlights are on and your doors are locked!

MCCROSKY

(spitting out coffee, Danny Thomas style)

Jesus!! I'll be right back!

McCrosky races out.

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

It heads closer to the sun. The nose is glowing.

INT. COCKPIT

Elaine is checking computer. The cockpit is steaming now. She unbuttons her uniform just as Ted comes in.

ELAINE

Ted, we've only got ten minutes.

TED

(thinking she wants sex)

Not now, Elaine.

ELAINE

I mean until we start to burn up.

Ted takes his seat and looks at a panel gauge.

TED

We're closer to the sun than I estimated.

INSERT - GAUGES

One is labeled "EXACT DISTANCE" and reads, "76.50". The other is labeled "ESTIMATED DISTANCE" and reads, "5689465932.09".

BACK TO SCENE

KRUGER (V.O.)
Come in, Mayflower. This is Bud Kruger.
Over.

TED
(on radio)
This is Striker.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

KRUGER
(on radio)
Look, Striker, I don't know how you got
into that driver's seat but I want Simon
Kurtz on that radio and I want him now!

INT. COCKPIT

TED
(on radio)
Kurtz was the one who got us into this
mess in the first place. You people knew
this ship wasn't ready to fly. You played
God with over a hundred lives, Kruger, and
for what -- the prestige of your precious
space program.

ELAINE
That was very well put, Ted.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Jacobs stands next to Kruger rubbing his forefingers
together in the "shame, shame" sign.

KRUGER
(on radio)
Striker, you're heading right for the sun,
so don't you think it's a little late for
that bleeding heart liberal crap now?

INT. COCKPIT

ELAINE
He's got a point, Ted.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - ANGLE ON JACOBS AT A SCOREBOARD

There are columns under Kruger's and Striker's names. Striker has two check marks. Jacobs gives Kruger one.

INT. COCKPIT

TED

(on radio)

Call me a bleeding heart, but if we get through this thing I'm preparing a paper on alternative spending directives recommending the transfer of space program funds to low cost housing.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

KRUGER

(on radio)

Just put Kurtz on that radio!!

McCrosky rushes in and grabs the mike from Kruger.

MCCROSKY

(enraged)

Look, Kruger, you and your people have caused enough trouble already. I don't care about your political games, I care about only one thing, the lives of those people up there!!! Out of my control room!!

JACOBS

Someone's car wouldn't start.

MCCROSKY

(on mike)

Striker, this is McCrosky. Give me five minutes and keep your fingers crossed.

(to Stinson)

Stinson, get me the Mayflower plans!

(to Controller 3)

You, clear this table!

JACOBS

I'll get the cards and bridge mix.

MCCROSKY

And someone get me the Sarg!

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP OF SARG

leaning over the ship's plans. He is eating another cigar.
All Controllers stand around him.

SARG

That's my little girl, my little darlin',
my sweetheart, my honey, and you want to
blow her belly out with that bomb. If you
blast here in the computer core and the
fuselage doesn't give way here and the
main communication lines to the cockpit
hold here and this baby here doesn't jam
this little old unit up here and throw
about two tons of hot steel through here
like a hot knife through butter and the
upper and lower...

MCCROSKY

What's your point, Sarg?

SARG

I have no point.

MCCROSKY

Then it's settled. The bomb is Striker's
only chance. Are there any questions?

CONTROLLERS

No sir.

MCCROSKY

Those are answers, I asked for questions.

CONTROLLER 3

Should a man in his forties have a
circumcision?

MCCROSKY

Absolutely.

INT. COCKPIT

TED

Well, Elaine, this might be it if those
guys on the ground don't think of
something.

ELAINE

I just want you to know, I love you Ted
and always will.

SFX: RADIO BEEPS

TED
That might be the news we've been waiting
for.

He grabs radio.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)
I've got some news for you, Striker.

Ted and Elaine smile hopefully at each other.

TED
(on radio)
Roger.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)
One of your passengers is carrying a bomb
and is suicidal.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC STING

ELAINE
A b...

She covers her mouth.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)
No, a bomb.

INT. CABIN

Joe Salucci wipes his brow, lays his case on his lap.

ANGLE ON FRONT OF CABIN

Ted and Mary huddle.

TED
Which passenger is Joe Salucci?

MARY
Sixteen 'C', why?

TED
He's carrying a bomb.

MARY
A b...

She covers her mouth.

TED
No, a bomb. Now, as discreetly as possible, I want you to move the passengers into the lounge.

MARY
What should I say?

TED
Anything. Just don't let Salucci think we're onto him.

Ted moves down the aisle. Mary gets on the P.A.

MARY
Would everyone not carrying a bomb please move to the lounge.

The Passengers go nuts screaming, "A bomb!!"

JOE
(jumping up with his case)
Don't anyone move!

All the passengers pile up in a ceiling-to-floor wall behind Ted -- he extends his arms, holding them back.

TED
Mr. Salucci, listen to me.

Ted takes a step forward away from the wall of passengers -- the wall crumbles.

TED
Joe, you don't want to blow that thing and kill all these innocent people.

JOE
I don't want to live anymore.

TED
Joe, the insurance policy won't help your wife and kids. You bought auto insurance, not life insurance.

JOE
What?

TED
(inching up on him)
That's right, Joe. Now, no one's going to hurt you and no one has to know what's wrong with you.

JOE
You're sure?

TED
I'm sure.

Ted is almost up to Joe when:

JIMMY
(yells)
That's the guy from the terminal who can't get it up!!

Joe bolts. Passengers panic. Ted tackles him. The case flies into the air in SLOW MOTION. It turns slowly, hanging for the longest time as we CUT, still in SLOW MOTION, to horrified faces watching it. This SLOW MOTION sequence lasts for about 60 seconds -- people put on make-up, do macrame, read, etc. -- while the case is still in the air. Suddenly, Scraps leaps high into the air in SLOW MOTION and comes down with the case between his teeth.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Controllers huddle over one monitor.

MCCROSKY
Get that bomb, Striker! Get that bomb!

ELAINE (V.O.)
Come in, Control! We have the bomb!!

ALL CONTROLLERS
He's got the bomb!!

JACOB
This is just like an election in Iran.

INT. COCKPIT

Ted is back at the controls -- the cockpit is incredibly hot now.

TED
This heat's getting unbearable.

He looks down and sees two eggs frying on the dash.

ELAINE
But it is a dry heat, Ted.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Controllers are grouped around the plans.

MCCROSKY
Do we use the bomb to blow that computer or is there another way? I want to know what everyone thinks.

CONTROLLER 2 (V.O.)
I think...
(changes mind)
... No.

CONTROLLER 3 (V.O.)
We could knock out the wall between the cockpit and cabin, and hang plants.

CONTROLLER 2 (V.O.)
I think...
(changes mind)
... No.

CONTROLLER 4 (V.O.)
You can't knock that wall out. That's a support wall, asshole.

CONTROLLER 2 (V.O.)
I think...
(changes mind)
No.

CONTROLLER 5 (V.O.)
Did I flush?

MCCROSKY
Then it's settled. We use the bomb.
(grabs radio)
Striker, McCrosky.

INT. COCKPIT

MCCROSKY (V.O.)
We've gone over the blueprints and you've got only one option.

TED
(on radio)
I know what you're going to say,
McCrosky -- knock out the wall between the
cockpit and cabin and hang plants.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)
Forget it. That's a support wall. Use the
bomb.

ELAINE
The b...

She covers her mouth.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)
I keep telling you, not the b... The
bomb!!

TED
(almost to self)
Why, you'd have to be crazy to try a stunt
like that.

Elaine looks at Ted.

INT. CABIN

All passengers look forward in Ted's direction.

INT. COCKPIT

SUPER the womb over Ted's face.

DOCTOR'S VOICE
You're too low in the womb, Striker!
You've got to come out feet first!

LOSE SUPER.

TED
(grabs case)
Elaine. I'm going back there.

ELAINE
Ted... I love you. Be careful.

Ted leaves.

SFX: CRASHING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

INT. MISSION CONTROL

MCCROSKY
(to his controllers)
I want everyone on their toes for this one.

ANGLE ON JACOBS

Handing out ballet slippers to the Controllers who are passing a joint down the line.

MCCROSKY
And if anyone has any ideas, I want to hear them now.

JACOBS
How about a show just like Hollywood Squares but with kids. Gary Coleman could host.

INT. CABIN

The Passengers stand in the aisle listening to Mary.

MARY
Now I want everyone to move to the front of the cabin.

Passengers move calmly.

MARY
That's fine. Stay calm. We just want everyone as far away from the blast as possible.

The Passengers panic and stampede right over her.

INT. COMPUTER CORE

Ted wears a gas mask and attaches the time-bomb to the computer.

ROK
What are you doing, Ted? Why are you wearing that mask, Ted?

Gas spews out of a vent. Ted makes sure his gas mask is tight.

INT. CABIN

Simon is dressed in space suit and moving down the aisle. Elaine holds onto him.

ELAINE

Simon! Wait! What are you doing?!

They pass Father O'Flanagan. He has a Bongo drum at his seat.

O'FLANAGAN

Under the 'B', sixteen!

SIMON

I've lost the ship and now I've lost you, Elaine. I'm getting out.

ELAINE

Simon, I didn't want it to end like this. We can be friends! You'll die out there.

SIMON

Maybe.

ELAINE

Simon, what are you saying?!

Simon steps into a hatch labeled, "ESCAPE CAPSULE".

SIMON

I'm saying, I can't take the singles scene again, Elaine.

The hatch door slams shut. A passenger passes with a sandwich board that reads, "JESUS WAS A SINGLE."

ELAINE

Simon, no!

Jimmy appears and yells through the window on the hatch.

JIMMY

You want to talk about it now, Commander?

The capsule ejects.

INT. KRUGER'S OFFICE

The Commissioner stands in front of the painting of astronauts on black velvet. He is on the phone.

COMMISSIONER

Give me the President of the United States. Tell him it's the Commissioner.

(to Kruger)

I don't know how the old man's going to take this.

INT. OVAL OFFICE

The PRESIDENT poses for a photo session: CLOSEUP of President holding aloft in a victory salute, the hands of two black men. On the camera flash we LOOSEN to reveal the bodiless arms of two black mannequins. An AID hands the phone to the President.

AID

Houston, sir.

PRESIDENT

(taking phone)

This is the President... What?!... What?!

He walks past a wall of photos of past presidents: JFK, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Reagan older, Reagan much older, Merv Griffin, a chimp, and this President.

SPLIT SCREEN: PRESIDENT AND COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

I don't think that shuttle's going to make it, sir.

The President passes an Arab piling millions in cash onto his desk.

PRESIDENT

Damnit, Mister, the dignity and integrity of this presidency depends on the success of that mission. And that's my last word!

COMMISSIONER

Yes, sir.

They both hang up and, making sure no one is watching, pick their noses.

WIPE TO FULL SCREEN OF OVAL OFFICE

AID

What's our strategy on this one, sir?

PRESIDENT

I work for the people of these United States, Frank. I have to do what's best for them.

(grabs the red phone)

Al, kill social security, cancel school lunches only for the poor, dismantle welfare, close all hospitals and public toilets, green light the MX-6, invade Brazil, and bring my horse around after my nap!

INT. COCKPIT

Ted is at the controls. Elaine rushes in.

ELAINE

Simon just ejected!

TED

Sit down, Elaine. If this bomb trick works we just might make it. Simon was a fool to eject now.

ELAINE

You mean...

TED

That's right -- premature ejection.

ELAINE

What will happen to him, Ted?

TED

The sun will heat that thing to over 450 degrees within seconds. He'll roast like a pig on a spit.

EXT. ESCAPE CAPSULE - SPACE

We see a roast on a spit through the window.

INT. COMPUTER CORE

The clock on the time bomb TICKS down.

INT. COCKPIT

TED
 (looking at wristwatch)
 Are you afraid?

ELAINE
 Not when I'm with you, Ted.

TED
 I guess you'd have to be a fool not to be
 afraid at a time like this.

INT. CABIN

Mrs. Gooch sucks on her cushion -- she's totally zonked on
 acid.

MAN NEXT TO HER
 Are you afraid?

MRS. GOOCH
 (looking at her hands)
 Are these my hands?

FATHER O'FLANAGAN
 (to Stella)
 Are you afraid?

STELLA
 I'm a nurse. I can't afford to be afraid,
 Father.

ANOTHER AREA

JIMMY
 (to Scraps)
 Are you afraid, Scraps?

SCRAPS
 (he BARKS once, subtitle
 translate)
 Not when there's a guy like Ted Striker up
 there, Jimmy.
 (he BARKS one more time --
 subtitles)
 Now how about a little scratch on the
 inner thigh?

INT. COCKPIT

Testa stands over Ted with a clipboard.

TESTA

Fifty-six percent of the passengers are afraid. Twenty-nine percent are not afraid. Eight percent are undecided and seven percent think Israel should give back Finland.

TED

You better strap yourself in, Testa.

(on radio)

Mission control, this is Mayflower. Over.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)

Go ahead, Striker.

TED

(on radio)

We've got about 60 seconds before that thing blows. We're set to reprogram for Mercury at zero point five WORP.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

MCCROKSY

(on radio)

Zero point five WORP?!

STRIKER (V.O.)

That's right. When the bomb explodes we're going to have a ten foot hole in the fuselage and I want to get there as fast as I can. I know what this snip can do, McCrosky.

MCCROKSY

(to Controllers)

No one's ever travelled at that speed before.

JACOBS

Last spring we did Europe in nine days.

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

It careens towards the sun.

INT. COMPUTER CORE

Bomb clock TICKS down.

INT. CABIN

Mary instructs Passengers.

MARY
Heads between the knees!
(looking down aisle)
Between your own knees, Father!

O'Flanagan looks around guiltily.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

McCrosky addresses his troops.

MCCROSKY
I don't find it easy to talk at a time like this, but I want to say something about that guy up there. I can sum it all up in one word -- courage, dedication, spirit, pride, selflessness, and g-u-t-s, guts. Striker's got more guts in his little finger than most of us have in our large intestine. He's got guts up to his eyeballs, guts coming out of his ears.

Controllers start playing cards, doing needlepoint.

MCCROSKY
Sure it's a cliché but great shortstops are born, not made, and a clown is funny in the circus but when he gets on the highway, he's murder. It bugged me too when Mr. Ed refused to talk when the neighbors came over but...

INT. COMPUTER CORE

The bomb TICKS down and BLOWS.

INT. COCKPIT

The ship shakes violently. Ted fights for control.

INSERT - SPEEDOMETER SLOWS

BACK TO SCENE

SFX: ENGINE WHINE SUBSIDES.

The ship starts bumping as if it's hit a rough road.

TED
(on radio)
We've blown the computer!
(to Elaine)
Elaine! Set course change!

ELAINE
(flips a switch)
Set!

TED
Now!

ELAINE
(pushes a button)
Compute!

"Compute" sign flashes.

Ted pulls an acceleration lever.

TED
Here goes.

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

It slows to a halt.

INT. COCKPIT

Ted pulls the lever hard toward himself. The ship shudders.

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

The ship slingshots in the opposite direction, disappearing into the void leaving a trail of light.

INT. COCKPIT

INSERT - PANEL LIGHT, "0.5 WORP"

BACK TO SCENE

TED
(on radio)
Point five WORP!

INT. MISSION CONTROL

PAN Controllers looking intently into the night sky. PAN to Mrs. Salucci intently gripping her vibrator -- it's on. PAN to Jacobs reading VARIETY -- headline: "PARAMOUNT ANNOUNCES SHUTTLE DISASTER PIC!"

MCCROSKY
Zero point five WORP, that's half the speed of light. We really have no idea what can happen to the human body at that speed.

INT. CABIN

Two Passengers (contortionists) with legs up over their shoulders and looking out over their rear ends, play cards.

INT. COCKPIT

The interior vibrates. A psychedelic blaze of multi-colored light illuminates the interior. Ted struggles with the controls.

MCCROSKY (V.O.)
Striker, we're monitoring you. You're right on course. At that speed you should hit Mercury in about six minutes. So give yourself enough time to kill those WORP engines.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

MCCROSKY

(on radio)

We'll be out of radio range in a few seconds. I'm going to put you in contact with Mercury Base Alpha Beta for your final descent. Over.

(off mike)

Stinson, who's in command of Alpha Beta?

STINSON

Al Hammil?

CONTROLLER 3

Not anymore. It's Rex Kramer, now.

MCCROSKY

Not Rex Kramer!

CONTROLLER 3

No, Rex Kramer.

EXT. MERCURY - NIGHT

We see the Alpha Beta base in distance with an ALPHA BETA neon sign flashing.

SFX: WAILING SUBMARINE SIREN.

SUPER: MERCURY BASE, ALPHA BETA

INT. ALPHA BETA BASE - CORRIDOR

SFX: WAILING SUBMARINE SIREN.

Four uniformed officers race to their posts around a corner and collide with four others racing around the corner from the other direction.

INT. ELEVATOR - ALPHA BETA BASE

REX KRAMER watches the floors flash by on the panel above the door.

INSERT - FLOOR LIGHT, "LEVEL 1 - POWER STATION"

O.S. we hear a DOG GROWLING and fighting with something.

CLOSEUP OF KRAMER

KRAMER

I know this guy, Ted Striker. I flew with him during the war. He was a crack pilot but he didn't have it in the crunch... That is...

INSERT - FLOOR LIGHT, "LEVEL 3 - LIVING QUARTERS"

BACK TO SCENE

KRAMER

Until that day over Chicago. He brought that busted up 767 out of that storm like a paper glider coming outta the baby blue.

INSERT - FLOOR LIGHT, "LEVEL 5 - WOMEN'S SHOES, BEDDING, APPLIANCES". "LEVEL 6 - DESIGNER JEANS".

BACK TO SCENE

KRAMER

But flying that shuttle is a whole different ballgame.

The elevator doors open. Kramer steps out into the communications room.

SFX: SUBMARINE SIREN WAILS.

PAN down to floor of elevator to find a young officer -- Carey -- torn to shreds and fighting off Kramer's golden retriever dog. The doors close. Kramer approaches an OFFICER.

KRAMER

What's the latest, Lieutenant?

OFFICER

They'll hit our atmosphere in about three minutes, if they hold together. They've lost their computer and are coming in at zero point five WOPR on manual control, sir.

INT. COCKPIT

Ted shifts a stick shift on the steering column.

INT. ALPHA BETA COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

Kramer looks at the big screen.

SFX: SUBMARINE SIREN WAILS.

KRAMER

Down scope!

A submarine periscope drops. Kramer looks for the shuttle.

KRAMER

He'll never bring that thing in on manual,
but I guess Striker's their only hope.

INSERT - PERISCOPE SHOT OF WWII SHIPS

BACK TO SCENE

KRAMER

It's his ship now. He's the top dog.

INSERT - PERISCOPE SHOT OF SHORE LINE FROM WWII FILM

BACK TO SCENE

KRAMER

The big man. The numero uno honcho.

INSERT - PERISCOPE SHOT OF DESERT

BACK TO SCENE

KRAMER

The head cheese.

INSERT - PERISCOPE SHOT OF THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW -- ED WAVES
GOODNIGHT.

BACK TO SCENE

Kramer steps away from the scope. It drops down. A man in a barber chair is on the other end of the steel column and comes to rest on the floor.

OFFICER 2

Sir, we have radio contact.

INT. CABIN

Testa talks to the passengers. Psychedelic lights flash.

TESTA

(yelling)

We're travelling at one half the speed of light. There is nothing to worry about. However, you might experience some temporary metabolic changes.

ANGLE ON WOMAN

Her beard grows.

INSERT - CLOSEUP OF SANITARY NAPKIN DISPENSER

A flurry of hands empties it in two seconds.

ANGLE ON TEXAN

He has turned into a Hassidic Rabbi.

INT. COCKPIT

Ted is fighting to maintain control.

KRAMER (V.O.)

Striker, this is Rex Kramer on Alpha Beta. Do you read me? Over.

Ted and Elaine give startled looks of recognition.

KRAMER (V.O.)

That's right, Ted. Rex Kramer. We've locked you on track beam. You're going to have to kill those WOPR engines in exactly thirty seconds. Over.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Everyone tensely looks out the window into the night sky.

MCCROSKY

There's nothing else we can do for those people out there now, except pray.

The entire room explodes in an up-beat Southern Baptists' rendition of "HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS".

INT. COCKPIT

KRAMER (V.O.)

Now, Striker! Kill WOP!

Ted pushes his WOP lever forward but it comes off in his hand.

ELAINE

Ted, the lever!

TED

(on radio)

Kramer, the WOP control handle just came off in my hand.

KRAMER (V.O.)

Try another handle!

TED

There are no more handles, only switches.

KRAMER (V.O.)

No buttons?!

TED

(looking around madly)

Just switches, lights, and knobs.

INT. ALPHA BETA COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

KRAMER

(looking at buttons and levers on his panel)

I'd give my right arm to get just one of these buttons or levers up there right now.

(on radio)

Okay, Striker. You're going to have to pull that lever panel off.

INT. COCKPIT

TED
(to Elaine)
Screw driver!

She hands him a vodka and orange juice. Ted throws it on his face. He reaches down and rips the panel off, exposing all sorts of wires.

KRAMER (V.O.)
Now find a piece of metal and stick it in there.

Ted looks around for a piece of metal. Elaine pulls a bobby pin from her hair.

ELAINE
Will this work, Ted?

Her long brown hair falls sexily. She sweeps it back with a toss of her head. Ted is overwhelmed by her.

TED
Thanks.
(on radio)
I've got something that might work.

INT. ALPHA BETA COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

TED (V.O.)
A bobby pin.

Kramer and Aids exchange a look which questions Ted's sexuality.

KRAMER
What the hell is a man doing with a...
forget it.
(on radio)
It'll have to do, Striker.

INT. COCKPIT

Ted sticks the bobby pin into the wires. Sparks fly. The ship starts slowing up.

SFX: THE ENGINE WHINE SUBSIDES.

INSERT - SPEEDOMETER WINDING DOWN

BACK TO SCENE

TED
It's working.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

Kramer stands in front of the huge screen. A small ship appears in the distance coming right at us.

KRAMER
(on radio)
Okay, Striker. We have you on visual. Just keep her level.

EXT. SHIP - SPACE

It careens towards the planet surface.

INT. COCKPIT

It starts bouncing wildly.

TED
She's coming apart!

INT. CABIN

Passengers scream.

INT. NEWS SET - BUFFALO

The anchorman screams.

SUPER: "EDITORIAL".

INT. NEWS SET - TOKYO

The anchorman screams.

SUPER: "EDITORIAL". (In Russian looking print.)

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - RIO MONTENEGRO

The desk clerk screams.

INT. COCKPIT

KRAMER (V.O.)
Keep her nose up! Don't fight her!

TED
I'm trying but she's fighting me!

A boxing glove springs from the dash punching Ted in the face.

ELAINE
Ted, that's Alpha Beta!

ANGLE OUT SHIP WINDOW - NIGHT

We see the lights of a small colony on planet surface. The Alpha Beta neon sign is visible.

INT. ALPHA BETA COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

Kramer sits in a large swivel chair -- like Captain Kirk's on the Enterprise bridge. As he talks, he nonchalantly swivels so his back is to the huge window. We see the Mayflower approaching on the screen.

KRAMER
(on radio)
Now, Striker, there are a few things you have to keep in mind as you get close to the planet's atmosphere.

ANGLE ON COMMUNICATION ROOM PERSONNEL

They watch in horror as the Mayflower comes shooting at them.

KRAMER
(on radio)
First and foremost you have to make one very important decision.

INT. COCKPIT

Elaine looks out the window -- horrified.

ELAINE
Ted! We're not stopping!!

Ted fights the controls.

KRAMER (V.O.)

Is this a landing you're sure you can make
without endangering the lives of your
passengers?

INT. ALPHA BETA COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

ANGLE ON PERSONNEL

They run for cover.

ANGLE ON THE SCREEN

The Mayflower comes right at the screen and crashes
through it. Kramer still has his back to the screen and
doesn't notice what has happened -- the room behind him
has been totally demolished.

KRAMER

(on radio)

Now, once you've made that decision you
have to be very clear about your
responsibility to those people on that
ship.

INT. COCKPIT

The front window is broken. Ted and Elaine are covered in
debris. Elaine's eyes grow wide with terror again.

ELAINE

Ted!

EXT. PLANET SURFACE

A group of scientists stand at a keyboard synthesizer.
One plays the series of notes from CLOSE ENCOUNTERS.
Suddenly the Mayflower appears over a hill. They all jump
for cover as it crashes through the synthesizer.

INT. COCKPIT

Ted and Elaine are covered in piano keys.

KRAMER (V.O.)
Their lives, their futures, their goals
and aspirations are in your hands,
Striker.

EXT. PLANET SURFACE

The Mayflower bounces across the surface.

INT. CABIN

Mary maneuvers down the aisle. Passengers are screaming
and being tossed around.

MARY
(to one passenger)
Seat backs up. Thank you.

She looks up and sees feet dangling from the ceiling. A
man has gone right through the ceiling up to his waist.

MARY
(looking up)
Sir, you really must take your seat.

INT. ALPHA BETA COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

KRAMER
(on radio)
We're all with you on this one, Striker.
Now get ready to position landing gear,
cut engines, and fire your retro rockets.

EXT. PLANET SURFACE - DAWN

The Mayflower careens to a smoking, crunching, shattering
stop.

INT. CABIN

Mary and Testa start directing panic-stricken passengers to
the exits.

INT. ALPHA BETA COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

KRAMER

(on radio)

Timing's of the essence on a lame duck approach, Striker. Don't fight her. Hold her steady. Nose up.

EXT. SHIP ON A HILL - DAWN

Ted and Elaine stand looking down on the wreckage. In b.g., SIRENS WAIL, emergency lights flash across Ted and Elaine.

VOICES (O.S.)

You'll be all right! Everyone's going to be okay!

Ted holds Elaine.

KRAMER (V.O.)

Don't fight her, Striker. Hold her! Hold her! Stay with her, Striker!

Ted and Elaine kiss.

KRAMER (V.O.)

Now, hit your landing gear and cut those engines!

INT. ALPHA BETA COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

KRAMER

(on radio)

Timing's everything, Striker! Fire your retro-rockets!

EXT. PLANET SURFACE - DAWN

Ted and Elaine walk off into the distance.

SFX: SIRENS FROM CRASH AREA IN DISTANCE.

KRAMER (V.O.)

(voice fading)

Now give her full flap and keep that nose up. Okay, now!

ELAINE

Ted, what's going to happen to us?

Ted stops and looks into the distant, dark sky. A printed crawl begins:

MUSIC: OPTIMISTIC THEME

CRAWL

FAR, FAR AWAY IN THE DEEPEST REGIONS OF
OUR VAST SOLAR SYSTEM, A SMALL, BRAVE
GROUP OF PIONEERS EMBARK ON A BOLD NEW
ADVENTURE. THEIR MISSION: TO OPEN UP A
NEW FRONTIER. THEIR GOAL, TO BUILD A
BRAVE NEW WORLD.

Ted and Elaine walk towards crawl and are approached by two strange CREATURES -- bald with a shock of hair sprouting from the top of their heads.

CREATURE

Hello, we'd like you to have this flower.
We're with the Church of Mercurial
Consciousness. Would you like to make a
donation?

THE END