

MY SCRIPT

an original screenplay by

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TOP GUN

BY
Chip Proser

NOTE: Aerial dialogue in CAPS is UHF radio; plane to plane,
plane to carrier.

Aerial dialogue in small case is ICS; an inter-cockpit system;
a live mike, heard by pilot and RIO only.

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EXT. NIGHT. - THE PACIFIC IS ANYTHING BUT

WINDS HOWL. Rain drives horizontal. The sea surges up, nearly
to the flight deck of the Aircraft Carrier USS Kitty Hawk.
The carrier plunges, driving its bow into a wall of grey
water. The deck pitches forward and back, rolls left to right,
and yaws in a corkscrew motion. The entire 93,000 ton behemoth
rises and falls in the TYPHOON-DRIVEN SWELL.

2. SOMETHING DROPS DOWN OUT OF THE NIGHT

A ROAR. Silver wings flash by, a cockpit, fiery jet exhausts.
A forty ton monster drops at 120 knots into an area the size
of a tennis court in a CONTROLLED CRASH.

2A. A SHOWER OF SPARKS, A SCREECH OF RUBBER AND METAL as
the gear hits the deck. The hook catches the 3 wire and the
F-14 TOMCAT is slammed to a halt. It's the scariest thing
you've ever seen, the most dangerous maneuver in aviation
and just another day at the office for a Naval Aviator.

TITLES OVER

HARD DRIVING ROCK AND ROLL - THE CARS - RIDE ME HIGH 3.
FLIGHT DECK - THE LANDING SIGNAL OFFICER - (LSO)

Leans almost horizontal into the winds. He holds the pickle,
controlling the landing lights and speaks into a mike. His
calm, professional commands belie the extreme conditions.

LSO
POWER, POWER...DON'T CLIMB...
OKAY, HOLD WHAT YOU GOT.

4. ANOTHER TOMCAT FLIES OVER THE RAMP

It slams in. The pilot hits full power, catches the wire, slams to a stop, cuts his engines.

OMITTED

AIR OPS - BELOW DECK

Lots of scopes and electronic gear. The CARRIER CONTROL APPROACH OFFICER (CCA) watches a blip on radar, reaches for his mike key.

EXT. THE TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING - (AERIAL)

We float like gods, above the storm, above the cloud cover, looking down. From overhead, a probe slides into frame, then a graceful nose. The cockpit sides by, Pilot, then Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) barely illuminated by the orange glow of their instruments. The fuselage gracefully swells to two enormous air intakes, then variable angle wings, swept back for high speed flight. Twin tailbooms cant outward, horizontal stabilizers make constant adjustments. Enormous twin jet exhaust ports glow red in the moonlight.

INT. COCKPIT - (AERIAL)

We become aware of WIND WHISTLE, JET ENGINE SOUNDS, RADIO STATIC. The pilot, COUGAR, is calm, steady. The Radar Intercept Officer in the backseat, GOOSE, is a wildman, always an edge of humor in his voice. A UHF transmission breaks in..

STRIKE (V.O. filtered)
GHOST RIDER, THIS IS STRIKE... WE
HAVE UNKNOWN CONTACT INBOUND, MUSTANG.
YOUR VECTOR ZERO NINE ZERO FOR BOGEY.

Almost immediately the RIO picks up a target and responds.

GOOSE
CONTACT 20 LEFT AT 25, 900 KNOTS
CLOSURE.

8A. ANGLE - SECOND F-14 - 115 - COUGAR'S WINGMAN

Come in on the cockpit with stenciled name and call signs:
LT.

EVAN MITCHELL is the pilot, MAVERICK. In flight suit and oxygen mask, we can only see his eyes. they are confident. In his mid-twenties, he is lean, hard, athletic...the archetype fighter pilot. His rear-seater is LTJG. WALTER MERLIN; WIZARD.

MAVERICK
I'LL I.D. HIM, YOU HOOK 'EM.

Maverick peels off to right, to high cover position; 5 o'clock.

INT. GHOST RIDER 117 - COUGAR'S POV

HEADS UP DISPLAY (HUD) glows dimly on the windscreen. Directly in front of the stick, two CRT screens display data. The bottom screen shows a radar sweep. Wedged between the instruments is a snapshot of a pretty young woman with a 2 month-old baby.

GOOSE

Closing fast. MUSTANG, THIS IS GHOST RIDER ONE ONE SEVEN. CONTACT ONE BOGEY, 090 AT 15 MILES, 900 KNOTS OF CLOSURE.

COUGAR

Look for the trailer.

GOOSE

I don't see anything. MAVERICK,

YOU HAVE A TRAILER?

MAVERICK'S F-1

Flying in combat spread, 1 mile abeam, higher.

GOOSE (CONT'D)

NEGATIVE, COUGAR. LOOKS LIKE HE'S SINGLE.

INT. 117 - COUGAR'S COCKPIT

COUGAR

HANG BACK AND WATCH FOR HIM. HERE COMES...MIG ONE.

EXT. SKY

Closing at 900 knots, The MiG is a speck, then a flash and a ROAR, a knife-edge pass at 300 feet. It rockets past his left wing tip and disappears. Cougar kicks rudder, whips the stick, screams into a tight turning roll and dives after him. He slams the throttle forward to ZONE 5 AFTERBURNER.

EXT. - MAVERICK'S F-1

Maverick sees a SECOND MiG drop from above onto Cougar's tail.

MAVERICK

BOGEY ON YOUR SIX. I'M ON HIS.

Maverick swings after him, lights it.

13A. ALL FOUR JETS SCREAM DOWN IN A POWER DIVE.

They punch through cloud cover into the soup.

EXT. COUGAR'S F-1

He is closing on the first MiG when a shocking BLIPBLIPBLIPBLIP tone breaks into their headsets.

GOOSE

I've got a six strobe. I think he's locked on us.

COUGAR

It's a MiG 21. They don't have radar missiles!

GOOSE

Let's hope you're right!

COUGAR

What is he doing?

GOOSE

He's pissing me off!

Cougar swings mad gyrations, cutting back and forth across the front MiG's tailpipe, trying to break the lock-on. The TONE grows more insistent.

COUGAR

Can't shake him.

MAVERICK (V.O.)

WHAT'S MIG ONE DOING?

COUGAR

Maintaining course. Straight for Mustang.

GOOSE

Stay with him.

The tone grows steady, BLIPBLIPBLIPBLIP.

GOOSE (CONT'D)

(alarmed)

That's missile lock!

COUGAR

He better be kidding!

GOOSE
 Lordy! Eyeball to Asshole.
 Hope nobody burps!

A. INT. MAVERICK'S F-1

MAVERICK
 I'LL LOCK ON THEM, COUGAR. (to
 himself)

Gotcha covered, don't nobody move.

COUGAR
 I'M UP HERE TOO, MAVERICK.

MAVERICK
 ROGER, COUGAR. (to himself and his
 RIO)
 Okay boys, pull out with your hands
 up and nobody'll get hurt.

B. INT. COUGAR'S F-1

Up front, Cougar checks his gunsight...He gets I.R. lock...

COUGAR
 We're locked on MiG ONE. Why doesn't
 he disengage?

GOOSE
 These guys are getting on my nerves.

14C. FINALLY, MIG ONE TURNS AWAY.

GOOSE (CONT'D)
 GHOST RIDER TO MUSTANG. BANDITS
 TURNING AWAY.

But Cougar presses forward, and MiG TWO stays on his tail.

MAVERICK
 COUGAR, BREAK LEFT. TRY A HIGH G
 ROLL UNDERNEATH. BREAK OUT THE BOTTOM.

Anger gives way to discipline. Cougar's Tomcat breaks left,
 dives into dense cloud. MiG TWO still follows.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)
 HE'S STILL ON YOU, COUGAR.

EXT. COUGAR - IN THE CLOUDS

Still hears the tone, BLIPBLIPBLIP...

COUGAR
I KNOW. I KNOW.

He rolls over into wild evasive maneuvers, finally breaks lock.

INT. MIG

Breaks out of cloud, looks around, startled. There is nothing, no F-14. He scans the sky frantically, while rolling the aircraft. ...Suddenly, he feels a presence. He looks straight up and behind him. A few feet away, a TOMCAT slides into position canopy to canopy, an incredible feat of flying. Maverick and Wizard stare at him. Maverick slides even closer, canopies nearly touching. The MiG pilot acknowledges them with a weak wave.

Maverick stares for a moment, then flips him the bird.

The MiG pushes negative G, hard down and away. He heads for the deck.

WIZARD
He's running for it.

MAVERICK
Ah, the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.

WIZARD
Speaking of feet, fuel's down to 4.0. We're gonna get them wet unless we find a Sonoco station.

MAVERICK
COUGAR, THIS IS MAVERICK. I'M GETTING HUNGRY, LET'S HEAD FOR THE BARN. ...COUGAR, WHERE ARE YOU?

EXT. KITTY HAWK FLIGHT DECK - THE LSO

Stands the on plunging deck, peering into the roaring night.

CCA (Filtered)
GHOST RIDER ONE-ONE-FIVE, THIS IS MUSTANG. WX THREE HUNDRED. ONE MILE VISIBILITY WITH HEAVY RAIN.

FINAL INBOUND BEARING THREE-FOUR-ZERO. DECK IS MOVING.

INT. COCKPIT 117 - COUGAR

COUGAR
This is crazy.
(MORE)

COUGAR (CONT'D)
How the hell we supposed to land on
something we can't even see!

GOOSE
Hey, if it was easy, everybody would
want to come up here and do it.....
Instead of just us.

COUGAR
(corrects him)
You.

MUSTANG (V.O. filtered)
MUSTANG TO GHOST RIDER 115...110
SPIN, 42 LOCK. AT 5 MILES READ YOUR
NEEDLES.

INT. COCKPIT 115 - MAVERICK

MAVERICK
NEEDLES READ DOWN AND LEFT.

CCA (V.O. filtered)
CONCUR, FLY YOUR NEEDLES.

MAVERICK
NEEDLES CENTER.

CCA (V.O. filtered)
ROGER. CALL THE BALL.

MAVERICK
Call the ball? I don't see the ship!

INT. COCKPIT 117 - COUGAR'S POV

BLASTS slam the airframe. Rain tattoos the canopy. A gust
rolls the Tomcat, he straightens it, A gust flips it again.

A. MAVERICK'S POV

The Carrier lights appear and disappear through the storm.

INT. COCKPIT 117 - COUGAR

GOOSE
(To Himself)
A walk in the park, Mustang. You
with me, cat man?...Cougar...you
with me?

Goose is thrown about as the wing dips, straightens, dips.

COUGAR

Help me with this one, I'm really screwed up.

GOOSE

Bring it left. Bring it left, You're high.

COUGAR

This is crazy!

GOOSE

What is?

COUGAR

Wait! Hell!..Something's wrong!

GOOSE

What? What is it?

COUGAR

Were upside down!

GOOSE

You're crazy. We're level.

COUGAR

Can't you feel it? I'm hanging in my straps!

GOOSE

You're not. We're level. Look at the instruments, we're okay!

COUGAR

They must be broken. I'm hanging in my straps! We're inverted!

GOOSE

We're not! Trust me! We're okay.

22. FLIGHT DECK - LSO CONTROLLING 115 - MAVERICK

LSO

A LITTLE POWER...FLY THE BALL.

LOOKING GOOD...HOLD WHAT YOU GOT.

23. MAVERICK'S F-14 - ON FINAL APPROACH.

INT. COCKPIT - MAVERICK

He hears Cougar's chatter over the air.

COUGAR (V.O. filtered)
WE'RE UPSIDE DOWN! WE CAN'T LAND!

GOOSE (V.O. filtered)
WELL, WE CAN'T STAY UP HERE EITHER.

FLIGHT DECK

Maverick's plane settles in over the ramp, suddenly, BLASTS FROM IT'S AFTERBURNERS...it ROARS over the deck without touching and off into the night. The LSO is shocked into comment.

LSO
WHERE THE HELL YOU GOING?

26. MAVERICK'S COCKPIT - (AERIAL)

MAVERICK
I...FORGOT SOMETHING.

WIZARD
What the hell you doing?

MAVERICK
Helping him in.

WIZARD
What makes you think we can get back in? We don't have the fuel for this.

MAVERICK
Just get me to him.

WIZARD
He's nine o'clock high. We're two thousand pounds low!

DARK TURBULENT CLOUDS

Maverick's plane pulls up behind Cougar's. Cougar's plane suddenly flips over, flying inverted.

COUGAR
I'm pulling up.

GOOSE
No! Now we're inverted!

Maverick pulls up off the wing of the inverted aircraft. His voice is calmness itself.

MAVERICK
HEY, ANY OF YOU GUYS SEEN AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER AROUND HERE?

Cougar looks over, surprised.

COUGAR
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

MAVERICK
EVERYBODY'S GOT TO BE SOMEWHERE.
..NOW WE'RE RIGHT WITH YOU.
YOU ARE INVERTED. ROLL IT, COUGAR.

Nothing happens.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)
COUGAR, THIS IS MAVERICK. HALF ROLL
IT. NOW!

Cougar's plane completes the roll, is now upright.

GOOSE
We're on vapor, Cougar, you got to
put it down.

COUGAR
It's crazy, man. Instruments are
crazy. We're gonna have to eject.

GOOSE
TELL HIM, WILL YOU TELL HIM? OUR
INSTRUMENTS ARE OKAY.

MAVERICK
YOU'RE STRAIGHT AND LEVEL, COUGAR.

COUGAR
I'M HANGING IN MY STRAPS. I TURN IT
OVER AND I'M STILL HANGING IN MY
STRAPS. WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON UP
HERE?

MAVERICK
YOU'RE NOT IN THE STRAPS. IT'S
VERTIGO, THAT'S ALL IT IS. STAY ON
MY WING. I'LL DROP YOU OFF.

Maverick pulls up wing tip to wing tip, inches apart.

COUGAR
MAVERICK.

MAVERICK
YEAH, COUGAR?

COUGAR
YOU BETTER NOT BE RAGGING ME... IF
YOU'RE FLYING UPSIDE DOWN...

MAVERICK
NO JOKE, COUGAR. ON THE LEVEL.
EVEN I WOULDN'T DO THAT TO YOU.

COUGAR
I'M UPSIDE DOWN. I KNOW IT. I'M GONNA
EJECT.

GOOSE
Look at the weather! They'll never
find us! We're near out of fuel.
Put it down.

MAVERICK
COUGAR, YOU'RE ON THE BALL.

COUGAR
OKAY... OKAY. BUT IF I LAND THIS
THING UPSIDE DOWN. AND I LIVE. I'LL
HAVE YOUR BUTT!

GOOSE
You'll have mine, Cougar. It'll be
where your head used to be.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK

All eyes are on what they can see of the approach of the two planes. Maverick drops him off at the pattern and circles. The LSO watches the approach. The Tomcat drops a wing, straightens, drops the wing, straightens ... the approach of a pilot experiencing vertigo as Cougar tries to satisfy his inner ear.

LSO
LEVEL...YOUR WINGS... EASY...
YOU'RE SETTling...FLY THE BALL.

A wind shear just off the ramp drives the plane suddenly down.

LSO (CONT'D)
POWER...POWER!..POWER!...WAVE OFF!

WAVE OFF WAVE OFF!

AFTERBURNERS BLAST, but the Tomcat horrifyingly settles tail-low toward the deck. The deck crew watches in terror as the plane wallows in toward them. The LSO'S turn, take a few steps and throw themselves off the flight deck.

They sail into the night toward the surging seas a hundred feet below, then are caught in safety nets hung off the side.

A. THE PLANE

Settles, settles, standing on it's engines, trying to arrest it's downward momentum. The hook raises sparks as it skids across the deck... The plane stops falling and hangs for a moment, about to blast back up, when the hook catches the last wire.. The wire snags it, plucking 45,000 pounds of fuel, metal and men out of the air and slamming it all to the deck. WHAMMM! Right wheel flies up the deck and over the side...the gear collapses. The plane SCREECHES sideways. The crew watches helplessly as it skids slams into it and comes to rest in cloud of fuel vapor and steam.

The LSO runs up, shouting into the mike.

LSO (CONT'D)
COUGAR, GOOSE...COME IN COUGAR!
SHUT YOUR ENGINES DOWN, YOU'VE
ARRIVED.

AIR BOSS
GHOST RIDER! ACKNOWLEDGE!
GHOST RIDER! ACKNOWLEDGE!

Crash crew leaps into action. The fire crew is there. The man in the Silver Suit jumps up on the wing and crawls to the cockpit.

The figures inside are not moving. He hits the canopy release.

The canopy pops open. Silver suit grabs at the rear seat harness release. He screams through his suit's aluminized cloth...

SILVER SUIT
Goose, can you hear me? Goose!

Nothing for a moment. He's dead! Then the RIO'S helmet moves...His head turns. He tears the mask away from his face, looks up at Silver Suit. His head clears.

GOOSE
Oh, Hello... Valet parking?

Silver suit is stunned for a moment. He straightens up, his head inclines quizzically. Then it hits him.

SILVER SUIT
Son of a bitch!

GOOSE
You will put it up front, with the
Porsches?

He grabs him under the armpits, drags him out of the plane.

GOOSE (CONT'D)
 Hey...easy...Take it easy...
 I'm a veteran!

Goose grabs a passing crewman by the arm.

GOOSE (CONT'D)
 Can you check under the hood. I
 thought I heard a funny noise.

Other crew members help Cougar out. He seems stunned, but Goose reacts to his fear with frantic one-liners. He grabs a crew member's radio, as Silver Suit helps him away and looks to the figures of the Admiral and the Air Boss far up on the bridge...

He waves to them, does his best impression...Desi Arnaz.

GOOSE (CONT'D)
 Lucy...Ricky...I'n Home!

B. BRIDGE FLIGHT DECK

A moment of disbelief... Then hysterical, tension relieving laughter.

C. FLIGHT DECK

Goose spots Cougar being helped out. He pulls away, reaches back into the cockpit and grabs Cougar's snapshot of wife and kid.

They lead Goose away as firemen blast the aircraft with foam.

GOOSE (CONT'D)
 Is it extra for the hot wax?

28D. BRIDGE - FLIGHT DECK - AIR BOSS

AIR BOSS
 Clear the flight deck.

FLIGHT DECK

A TILLIE, a four wheel mobile crane, slams up to the plane and slings its lifting harness. Goose turns to Silver Suit.

GOOSE
 Well...there goes your tip.

INT. MAVERICK'S PLANE

They have monitored the chatter.

WIZARD

It's Goose. He's alright. Bring it left...You're settling. IS THE DECK CLEAR?

LSO (V.O. filtered)

(softly)

ROGER, BALL, LITTLE POWER...DON'T CLIMB...OKAY, HOLD WHAT YOU GOT!

Wizard does a quick sign of the cross, reaches down, grabs his balls...as...

A. FLIGHT DECK

The TOMCAT slams onto the deck, clearing the wreckage by inches.

INT. CARRIER HATCHWAY - FLIGHT SURGEON, OTHERS

Watch as they bring a shaken Cougar past. Goose, eyes wild, waves at Maverick and Wizard, rolling up. They flame out - VVOOOMMMMM! They sit there, immobile, waiting for a tow, looking numb. Goose does his "stewardess".

GOOSE

On behalf of your Captain and your crew, I want to thank you for flying VF101. And next time your plans include the middle of the goddamn ocean in the dead of frigging night, I hope you'll think of Naval Aviation.

The surgeon looks into Goose's eyes.

SURGEON

Stress reaction...

XO

Check his head.

GOOSE

(wobbling off)

Never mind my head, check my shorts!

SICK BAY - LATER

Cougar lies alone in the dimness, staring at the overhead.

33. 03 LEVEL - BELOW DECKS - OFFICER'S COUNTRY

The usual CLANGS, WHISTLES, ENGINES of Navy life sound FORLORN ECHOING through the dim, deserted passage. From the distance, a single figure passes in and out of the glow of the overhead lights. Cougar comes closer, hobbling unsteadily.

He reaches a door, pulls himself erect and knocks on the sign:

COMMANDER TOM OTAWOCZEK

CO VF 101

STINGER

34. STINGER'S CABIN The skipper works at his desk, responds without looking up.

STINGER (CONT'D)

Come in.

He looks up. Cougar stands in the doorway, a strange, dazed look on his face.

STINGER (CONT'D)

Cougar, what is it? You should be in sick bay. What are you doing?

He walks over to the skipper's desk. His eyes are glazed, but his jaw is firm.

COUGAR

Thinking of my wife and kid.

A determined movement. Hand to chest.

34A. OMITTED

Something metal hits it, skids across the polished surface and clangs up against the coffee mug: gold wings.

35. PASSAGEWAY

Cougar comes out of Stinger's room, bumps into Goose, and Maverick. He turns the other way.

GOOSE

Cougar!

He stops, turns to them. There is nothing to say. Goose hands him his snapshot. Cougar looks at his wife and kid for a moment, then looks up at them. He turns away.

MAVERICK

STINGER (O.S.)

Maverick, Goose...Come in here.

36. STINGER'S OFFICE - DOORWAY

Maverick appears, followed by Goose. They stand at attention.

MAVERICK

Sir?

The Skipper says nothing. Maverick sees the wings on the desk. He enters, walks over, stares down at them. He picks them up.

GOOSE

Don't worry. I'll talk to him.

STINGER

Don't.

MAVERICK

He's a good pilot.

STINGER

I talked a man back once. Three months later, we lost him. It's his decision. Only he knows.

GOOSE

He's the best you have. He's going Top Gun!

STINGER

Was.

MAVERICK

What?

STINGER

Was going. (Turns to Maverick.) Now you are.

MAVERICK

Me?

Maverick stares at the wings, lost in conflicting emotions.

STINGER

Well, he's going (indicating Goose) and he needs someone to fly the plane.

GOOSE

Skipper, you can't do this!

STINGER

I didn't do it, he did it himself. Something about a wife and kid. The fact is, he's lost it. He knows it. I know it. You were up there, you know it, too.

GOOSE

Give him a break, Skipper. It was raining snakes up there. He'll be alright, soon as all the gorillas go home...

The Skipper stares at Goose, non-plussed for a moment.

STINGER

I know some RIOS are a little wiggy...but you abuse the priviledge! I don't believe I'm going to have to put the two of you in the same cockpit...but there it is! It may be good for the Navy. It might be good for you, but most of all, it's good for me. It'll get you out of my sight.

GOOSE

But, Skipper, Cougar's been picked for Top Gun...He's the best of the best!

STINGER

Well, you'll just have to make do with him (indicates Maverick).

Goose and Maverick exchange looks.

GOOSE

Mav's a great flyer but....

STINGER

He's a hell of a flyer. In fact, he's so damn good he might have been picked for Top Gun himself. Except for one thing. (SCREAMS) He just can't seem to follow orders!

Stinger moves slightly, to stand now, directly in front of Maverick and speak eye to eye at four inches.

STINGER (CONT'D)

You just did an incredibly brave thing! What you should have done was land your plane. You don't own that plane, the taxpayers do. I should ream you out for it. But it just doesn't work with you. You're a hell of a flyer. You are maybe ...too good. You never really stepped in it yet. So this is your chance. I'm gonna send you up against the best. They are better than you.

(MORE)

STINGER (CONT'D)

Maybe they'll knock that shine off
your eagle and you'll see, finally,
where discipline and teamwork fit
it.

Maverick hasn't really heard anything but TOPGUN. He snaps
out of it.

MAVERICK

Sir?

STINGER

That is all. Tell me about the MiG
some other time...

MAVERICK

Yes sir!

He snaps off a salute and does an about face.

STINGER

Maverick..

He turns back.

MAVERICK

Yes sir..

STINGER

The wings..

He looks down at the wings in his hands, slowing walks over
places them gently on the Skipper's desk.

STINGER (CONT'D)

Gentlemen!

MAVERICK/GOOSE

Sir?

His facade cracks just slightly.

STINGER

Good luck.

INT. PASSAGEWAY

Maverick and Goose push through a gauntlet of aircrews. They
have become notorious. Guys grab at them...questions...the
MiGs?..What happened up there? How close did they get? What
did the MiGs do? One word is heard over and over..."TopGun".
Goose is left behind in the crowd. Maverick pushes through.
He walks fast...faster. Up ladders, around turns, down
ladders, through passageways. Faster.

He breaks into a trot, then a canter, squeezing past enlisted men, parts lockers, then he breaks into a run...

EXT - CARRIER - NIGHT AND STORM

A hatch slams open on the side of the Carrier. He's out on a catwalk, instantly soaked, running on rain slicked stairs cantilevered high over the breaking seas. He plunges forward to the bow of the ship, stands on the very peak. He is yelling something. He stands there as the bow plunges terrifyingly into the trough. The water rises like a green mountain, up, up to break just a few feet below him, showering him with spray. The noise is incredible.

Come around on his face. It is maddened. He raises his fist and punches the night.

The foaming slope of the wave rushes up, changing color as it

DISSOLVES TO:

Desert Sand whipping by...

39. MOJAVE DESERT - 1 WEEK LATER

A big bike, a real big bike, a turbo...rockets across the desert. Fast. Real fast. Aviator shades low above the handlebars

MAVERICK. GOOSE HANGS ON IN BACK. IT CRANKS FASTER, PULLS

closer...ENGINE SCREAMING. It cranks up a notch, it's going to explode. It can't go faster, but it does. It SCREAMS HIGHER. It ROARS under, by and away, leaving dust...

A. THE BIKE - STILL

Silence. Just the HISS AND POP OF METAL COOLING. Maverick sits on it, staring out past us. Goose looks over Maverick's shoulder.

We see why. Feet come into the frame. Then the uniform:

California Highway Patrol.

40. COUNTRY ROAD - NEAR SAN DIEGO

40A. ANGLE ON MAVERICK. CHP enters the frame, the usual hyper-civil arrogance tinged with awed disbelief. The usual questions are spaced for effect as if he might be talking to some other form of life. Maverick is off the bike, standing at attention. Goose follows more slowly.

CHP

Son. Do you know why I stopped you?

Maverick has some good idea how to deal with authority.

MAVERICK

Yes sir. I do sir

The CHP adjusts his own aviator shades.

CHP

Well... What is it?

MAVERICK

(more than sincere)

Sir. You are going to give me a warning, Sir!

CHP - A touch of a smile, quickly suppressed.

CHP

License and registration.

Maverick hands them over with his Navy ID. CHP scans them, hesitates a moment over the last, looks up with a touch more respect.

CHP (CONT'D)

Lieutenant, do you know how fast you were going?

MAVERICK

Yes sir. I do, Sir.

CHP

Well?

MAVERICK

Sir. I was going Mach point one five.

CHP nods sagely.

CHP

One SIXTH the speed of sound!

MAVERICK

Yes sir.

CHP (a guess)

Lieutenant... What do you... usually fly?

MAVERICK

F-14's sir.

CHP
 (new respect)
 Tomcats?

MAVERICK
 Yes sir!

=

A long pause. Respect in the cop's eyes. He taps the Navy ID on the handlebars...staring at this sincere young man.

CHP
 Lieutenant... Is there... a Russian
 attack?

MAVERICK
 No sir! But you have to be ready.

The cop nods and stares at him.

EXT. MIRAMAR NAVAL AIR STATION - LATER

41A. OMIT

The bike is BLURPING... barely going fast enough to stay upright. Maverick cool in shades and campaign cap dorks past the hanger with the sign: FIGHTERTOWN, USA. He pulls ahead. In back of him, escorting with flashers...the CHP. They pull up at the gate. Maverick and Goose salute the guard, hands over their ID.

The CHP gets out of his car, leans against the door.

CHP
 Lieutenant.

Maverick turns to him.

MAVERICK
 Yes, Sergeant?

CHP
 Remember one thing.

MAVERICK
 Sir?

CHP
 Outside of this gate...
 I...am Top Gun.

MAVERICK
 Yes sir!

He salutes. The CHP returns a snappy one. He gets back in his car and turns away. Maverick receives his ID and clearance. As he passes through, a couple of pilots in flight suits (ICE AND HOLLYWOOD) stare at him. The taller, dark, cool one speaks in a dry voice, meant to be overheard.

ICE

Uh oh, police escort. This one must be a real killer.

The second pilot grins big at them. Maverick turns slightly stares over his shades at them as he passes. Goose grins back the challenge.

42. AERIAL COMBAT - VIETNAM ERA - F4'S, MIG 17'S - STOCK

The Doors on the soundtrack. Jets swoop, missiles fire, a plane explodes. Gun camera views of MiGs, SAMS, flak, bombing runs...

VIPER (V.O.)

During the Korean War, the Navy kill ratio was twelve-to-one. We shot down twelve of their jets for every one of ours. In Vietnam, this ratio fell to three-to-one. Our pilots depended on missiles. They lost their dogfighting skills.

F-14's fighting with F-5's. Music becomes current.

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

Top Gun was created to teach ACM. Air Combat Maneuvering...Dogfighting. Richthofen, Guynemer, Rickenbacker, Galland, Rudel, Bong would envy us. We do just what they did, but we do it beyond the speed of sound.

43. INT. DAY - TOP GUN ORIENTATION ROOM.

VIPER - A tough-looking, confident leader in a blue flight suit, stands before a video-tape monitor. Behind him, on the monitor, the dogfighting continues.

VIPER (CONT'D)

By the end of Vietnam we upped our kill ratio to thirteen to one.

He turns on the lights. We see his audience in F.G.

VIPER (CONT'D)

You're here 'cause you're the top one per cent of all naval aviators.

THE CLASS

Sixteen young men - eight flight crews - sit at attention. They are trim, fit and confident - high school heroes, college jocks.

VIPER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 You're the elite, the best of the best. We're gonna make you better, because you're job is damned important.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE MEN

The camera moves among them. Hold on one of the men; the one who greeted Maverick at the gate, Ice.

VIPER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 With the tensions in the world today, the potential for confrontation is greater than ever, and carrier pilots will be the first ones there. Air combat excellence is vital.

Ice is not looking at the speaker, but, rather, in our direction. HOLLYWOOD, a blond, good-looking pilot, whispers something to him, and gestures. Ice is getting the lowdown on someone. The camera moves and we see who that someone is, as Maverick enters the frame.

VIPER (CONT'D)
 ...Someone once asked me if training men for air combat made the world less safe--flying loaded guns... an accidental confrontation and so forth...

Maverick feels the stare of the other man and glances in his direction. Their eyes meet. Ice smiles coldly.

ANGLE - VIPER

VIPER (CONT'D)
 My answer is: the dangerous thing is being unprepared. You want trouble, that's what you get when things don't work out, when you can't do what you say you can. When you don't know what you can do. And when your opponents aren't sure either. We are not policy. We don't make policy. Elected officials ...civilians, do that. We are the instrument of policy. The tip of the spear. So we had best be sharp.

Maverick has turned to look at Ice. Ice glances back in his direction. Maverick looks at the back of the room where guys in blue flight suits stand. They are the instructors. They look relaxed, poised, mean. Goose is looking up front...Where Viper has stopped. Goose nudges Maverick.

GOOSE

(whispers)

What are you doing?

MAVERICK

Nothing...That's McGown...that's Singer, isn't it?

GOOSE

Turn around, pay attention. What are you doing?

MAVERICK

(musing to himself)

...Just wondering...(turns back)
...who is the best.

He's shocked to find Viper staring right at him, with a killer grin on his face. He's feels caught like a naughty schoolboy.

VIPER

Really... (smiles)

Ya know. We'd like to know who's best too. That's why we've got that plaque on the wall... with the Top Top Gun crew from each class. You think maybe your name's gonna be on it?

Maverick knows he's in trouble, considers the social alternatives, then tells him the truth.

MAVERICK

Yes sir.

A couple of ooo's and aahh's from the guys. The instructors stare the challenge at him. He slides lower in his seat.

VIPER

Considering the company you're in, that's a pretty arrogant attitude.

MAVERICK

(somewhat chastised)

Yes sir.

VIPER

I like that in a fighter pilot.

(MORE)

VIPER (CONT'D)

(couple of laughs
from the guys)

It's okay to be confident. You have to think you're King Kong to want to try to land on carriers. Just keep in mind the other component of success...teamwork.

Viper gathers his notes, the lecture is over.

MAVERICK

Yes sir.

Viper turns back for one more thought.

VIPER

Gentlemen, this is about combat. Remember, there are no points for second place. Dismissed.

Viper walks out. Maverick finds Goose looking at him, quizzically. Others mill around the plaque. A big, friendly bear of a RIO speaks.

WOLFMAN

A plaque?

HOLLYWOOD

It's not the plaque. The winner can get assigned here as instructor. He gets to fight every day.

They move closer to examine the names on the plaque.

44. EXT. "O" CLUB - NIGHT.

Fast cars in the driveway, fast music blares into the night. It's Wednesday; Animal Night. Maverick, Goose Hollywood and Wolfman walk to the entrance.

INT. WOXOF BAR

Loud music, low ceiling, plaques of the squadrons line the walls. A dancer gyrates on stage, largely ignored by pilots talking with their hands. Every pretty girl in San Diego seems to be here. It's a noisy, rowdy place--a "steam releaser" for people under pressure. Nevertheless, there is a control to it all, there are none of the usual bar types, just pilots and Naval Officers.

The Ghost Riders enter. The place is on fire: a mob of dancers, flashing lights, blaring HARD ROCK MUSIC. Beer flows. Pilots talk flying and hustle girls.

NEARBY - AN A7 pilot stands by the bar. He knows Goose and speaks loudly for his benefit..

A7 PILOT

You know the Fighter Pilots motto?
It's better to be dead than to look
bad.

They grin broadly. Goose replies as they brush past.

GOOSE

I don't know, Frank, anybody gets
off on bombing the shit out of dirt
has got to be queer.

Goose exchanges friendly punches with the attack pilots.

Maverick's introductions and friendly barbs are drowned by the music. Maverick is a bit reserved. He doesn't move among the crowd as naturally as Goose does. Hollywood and Wolfman drift away, searching for quarry. Goose orders beer. He nods toward a TALL YOUNG MAN across the room.

GOOSE (CONT'D)

Keller, Black Lion Squadron. I knew
him at Pensacola. He's damn good.

MAVERICK

Is there anybody in the Navy you
don't know?

GOOSE

Gotta keep track of the competition.

Goose suddenly reaches out and grabs a guy moving past.

GOOSE (CONT'D)

Slider -- they let you into Top Gun?
If you're among the best in the Navy,
I tremble for the security of this
country.

SLIDER

Why Goose, whose butt did you kiss
to get here?

GOOSE

The list is long, but distinguished.

SLIDER

So's my Johnson.

GOOSE

This is Maverick.

Smiles good-naturedly, shakes hands with Mav.

SLIDER

So I've heard.

GOOSE

Who's your pilot?

SLIDER

Tom Kazansky.

GOOSE

(very impressed)

No shit. The Iceman....

SLIDER

Mister to you.

GOOSE

You think you can stay up with us.

SLIDER

I think, yeah, we'll show you a thing or two.

GOOSE

This is Evan Mitchell, he steers the thing.

SLIDER

So I heard. Steers it pretty close. Sorry to hear about Cougar. He was a good man.

MAVERICK

Still is..

SLIDER

Yeah. That's what I meant.

Suddenly, behind them, a flame shoots up. Someone ducks his head and swallows it. The pilot sets an empty glass on the bar.

SLIDER (CONT'D)

What was that?

GOOSE

Flaming Hooker. Sort of an institution around here. Or maybe this is the institution, I forget which. It's the house drink. It'll warm the cockles of your heart ... and other things depending on where you spill it.

He motions to the barmaid and she moves over, sets them up.

GOOSE holds a demitasse glass. The barmaid pours Drambuie. They look at Goose apprehensively. Goose looks at nearby flyers in Camo fatigues.

GOOSE (CONT'D)

You can't show fear in front of Marines...They're like Doberman's They'll go for your throat, it's instinctive.

He takes out match and lights it. Maverick holds his arm.

MAVERICK

You ever done this before?

GOOSE

What, been drunk? Sure! Plenty!

He downs it all in one gulp, slaps the glass on the bar, still aflame. He stands there, blinking.

SLIDER

How was it?

GOOSE

Could use a dash more jet fuel.

The others are duly impressed. Maverick's gaze falls on Ice watching from the end of the bar - Slider takes one, Maverick takes one too, downs it in a gulp. Sundown, taking up the challenge, motions for one. The barmaid pours it.

GOOSE (CONT'D)

Careful, don't make an ash of yourself...

He tries to drink the flaming concoction. He tries to go for a sip, but it's too close to his face, he tries to tilt the flame away, but that doesn't work. Finally he goes for the gulp. He burns his lip and misses. He sets his hair on fire. It goes up in a WHOOSH!!

SUNDOWN

Yeow!

GOOSE

Mayday! Down in flames!

He throws a beer in Sundown's face, quenching the fire. Sundown blinks through the beer.

SUNDOWN

Thanks, I needed that.

HOLLYWOOD

You guys are not only crazy, you're dangerous!

Ice comes up from the end of the bar. He motions the Barmaid for another; it comes. Goose lights it. He gulps it down, cool as hell.

ICE

(Disdainfully)

Frat boys.

He walks away. Slider goes after him.

MAVERICK

Who is that guy?

HOLLYWOOD

That's Kazanski.

GOOSE

No shit! That why they call him Ice?

HOLLYWOOD

Nope. It's the way he flies - Ice cold.

No mistakes. Wears you down. After enough time, you just get bored and frustrated, you do something stupid, and he's got you.

Maverick moves in Ice's direction. He passes Wolfman dancing with a girl with bright purple fingernails.

ANGLE - DANCEFLOOR.

GIRL

Why do you all have such funny names?

WOLFMAN

You gotta have a call sign that's just your own...never changes...you have to recognize it immediately. Then, if someone shouts "Wolf, break left!"..you react right away.

GIRL

Why do they call you Wolf?

WOLFMAN

(smiles)

Oh, I don't know.

Goose comes up with his arm around a girl.

GOOSE

Hey Mav, this is Sally. She doesn't believe a word I say. Tell her I'm married, will you?

MAVERICK

Yeah, he's married--but then again, he,s not dead.

Sally laughs and tries to pull Goose back toward the dance floor. Something in Maverick's eyes makes him hang back with his partner.

ANGLE - THE DANCE FLOOR - DANCERS

GIRL

Could I get a call sign?

WOLFMAN

Well, I don't know. That depends.

GIRL

On what?

WOLFMAN

Well, it doesn't just happen, you gotta do something famous.

GIRL

Like what?

WOLFMAN

Oh...I'll think of something.

Maverick smiles at this, but seems on edge... He watches a few pretty girls enter and eye the pilots in their flight suits, then turns and walks up to Ice, who sits, drinking with Slider.

Maverick walks over to him. Ice notices Slider's attention going to Maverick. He turns and grins at him.

ICEMAN

Figured it out yet?

MAVERICK

Figured out what?

ICEMAN

Who is the best.

MAVERICK

Nope.

ICEMAN

Need a hint?

MAVERICK

I think I can work it out on my own.

ICEMAN

You like to work alone. I've heard that about you.

MAVERICK

I've heard of you, too. You were in 124 with Bargamian.

ICEMAN

And you were with Cougar. He was my roommate in flight school.

MAVERICK

He's a good man.

ICEMAN

The best.

SLIDER

You must have soloed under a lucky star. First the MiG, then you slide into Cougar's place.

GOOSE

It's not Cougar's place. It's ours.

ICE

What do you think it was? Was it that MiG contact that did it?

GOOSE

Did what?

ICE

Got you here.

GOOSE

We're here because we're the best flyers in the wing. Not because of some MiG encounter.

SLIDER

What luck! Guys fly their whole career without seeing a MiG up close...You're famous.

ICE

You mean notorious.

Something in the way he says it. It's not quite a joke, more an insult. Maverick's about to take the whole conversation too far when something...someone catches his eye. She catches quite a few eyes in this room. She is very pretty and she's walking in on the arm of a Commander. Maverick turns back, but the moment has passed. Ice dismisses him with a nod and weak smile. Goose pulls him away.

MAVERICK

What do these guys think, I made
Cougar quit?

GOOSE

Pay no attention to it. They're just
trying to rattle you. It's all
psychological. Sit down..and drink.

He deposits Maverick at a chair by a table where other pilots cluster watching and listening to Bugs shoot down his wristwatch.

Maverick broods...

BUGS

We were just really diving down and
by then we were right over downtown
Haiphong. It was some great shit.
Jack says, "What are you doing?"
"What, what am I doing, Jack?" He
says, "What are you doing?" I said,
"I'm rolling in, Jack." "Bugs, we're
at thirty-two hundred feet. Oh shit,
we were like zoom... So we scraped
down at hundred feet right over--
downtown Hanoi! Oh shit, goddamn
it! And blowing down the river. And
so once we were there we let down to
about fifty feet just going down the
river and Jack says... "Bugs...
don't ever do that again!" "Okay,
right, Jack, I'll never do that
again!"

Maverick pays little or no attention. He broods and drinks.

Suddenly, Hollywood nudges him, he turns.

MAVERICK

What, what is it?

HOLLYWOOD

Target passing. Check your six.

MAVERICK

Never mind mine. Check hers.

They turn. Long legs, great ass, beautiful.

HOLLYWOOD

Her six is a ten! Uh oh, a turn to engage.

HIS POV - ACROSS A CROWDED ROOM

Maverick sees a stranger, and somehow he knows, he knows even then. Wolfman turns, sees her walking too.

WOLFMAN

Bogey...9 o'clock level.

SUNDOWN

Nine thirty. Bogey? You presume that hostile?

HOLLYWOOD

Well, we should contact and check it out.

She has turned toward them. She passes by. They start to make a move for her. But just then she finds her date at the bar; a distinguished man with Captain's stripes. Their smiles freeze and they slide back in their chairs. Maverick can't stop looking at her...After a while, the intensity of his gaze draws her attention. She feels him. She is nodding and smiling to her date, but her eyes scan the room like radar. A warning tone goes off in his brain dolu dolu dolu as they lock on him. He feels that thrill of excitement and fear you get when you know you're targeted in someone's scope. Her eyes hold on him for a long moment...long enough, and then sweep by the rest of the room. She turns her attention back to the Captain and laughs at something he says.

Over in a corner, Goose chats up a couple of San Diego girls.

GOOSE

The family unit -- that's the most important thing. It's the only thing you can count on. I'm married --did I tell you that?

FIRST GIRL

Four times. We don't believe you.

GOOSE

I've been married since I was eighteen. Why don't you believe me?

SECOND GIRL

Because you don't look married.

FIRST GIRL

You're not even wearing a ring.

GOOSE

(big smile)

I take it off when I'm chasing women.

It's the only honorable thing to do.

ANGLE - MAVERICK

He's half listening to Bugs rattle on. His eyes are drawn back to the woman. He tries not to stare. She seems to know a lot of people in the club. He looks away. Hollywood is chatting up a girl with a sincerity that cannot be taught. His line is just as polished as his appearance.

HOLLYWOOD

You don't think about death up there,
but you think a lot about the danger.
One mistake and you're a smoking
hole in the ground.

GIRL

I never knew it was so dangerous.

HOLLYWOOD

Oh yeah, it makes everything down
here more meaningful. You feel a
certain intensity of life, and you
want to grab onto every moment.

Maverick looks up at the bar again. A shock. She (Charlie) is staring right at him, intensely, as her date whispers something in her ear. She notices him, staring back, quickly looks away, embarrassed. She says something to the man. He nods and turns away as someone else grabs his attention. The woman, now wouldn't look this way for anything. She picks up her purse from the bar and walks through the crowd and out of the room. Impulsively, Maverick's up, he follows.

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE THE BAR

He breaks out, looks around, doesn't see her. Someone disappears around a corner. He moves after.

CORNER - A door slams shut. Impulsively, before he realizes what he is doing, he's through it.

47. WOMEN'S ROOM.

A feminine GASP! He should have looked at the sign on the door.

The realization of where he is hits him too late. She is standing by the mirror, with her make-up out, looking back

at him. He's not quite sure what to do. A hasty retreat would be appropriate, if embarrassing. Ah, what the hell, he is a fighter pilot! He just walks right over to her...no idea what he will say. She's got her lipstick out, twisting it. She looks over at him with an amused smile.

CHARLIE

Long cruise, was it?

She leans over the sink, puts on lipstick, sees his eyes cover her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Anything I can do to help, Lieutenant?

MAVERICK

Lots of things.

She laughs. He is sort of attractive, but there are other girls in the room, she doesn't want to be too encouraging...She tries not to grin at his embarrassment.

CHARLIE

I'll bet!

MAVERICK

Uhhh...Anything I can do for you?

She laughs again, doesn't know what it is...could be chemical, but she's instinctively attracted.

CHARLIE

Yeah. Hold this. It might be safer.

She hands him a makeup mirror. Starts redoing her lipstick. He just stares at her...She looks up at him, than back to her warpaint. Finally, when it comes, it is cool and amused.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Now I know why all the girls come here. They know how horny you guys get. But this...is ridiculous.

MAVERICK

It's not that.

Mock anger. She's toying with him.

CHARLIE

It isn't?

MAVERICK

Well, it is. It is that, too.

CHARLIE
That's a big comfort to me.

MAVERICK
I could be, too.

CHARLIE
How so?

MAVERICK
Save you from a big mistake with
that other guy.

CHARLIE
And on to a bigger one with you?

MAVERICK
Yeah, most likely.

CHARLIE
Was there ever a girl who didn't
like fighter pilots?

MAVERICK
I heard of one once.

She laughs again, shakes her head...another cowboy! She gently
takes the compact out of his hands, snaps it closed.

CHARLIE
I'm really flattered, Lieutenant,
but I don't go out with pilots.

MAVERICK
Then what are you doing here?

Three pretty blondes enter and look at Maverick quizzically
but not without interest.

CHARLIE
I think the question is...what are
you?

She tries to keep a straight face as she walks out of the
room.

The other girls look at him expectantly. A beat. He just
stands there, then realizes he's holding her lipstick.

MAVERICK
Hi. I'm here to talk about a new
concept in cosmetics...

47A. WOXOF BAR. She returns, spots the Captain, motioning
to her. Maverick enters, goes to the other end of the bar.

He orders a drink. It comes. He drinks it, pays for it, moves off toward the door. Someone backs into his path, he moves quickly and bumps into someone else; her.

CHARLIE

Sorry.

She sees it's him.

MAVERICK

My fault. Should have watched where
I was going.

Her hand goes to his collar. She adjusts his insignia. She smiles.

CHARLIE

Where's your wing man? Who's watching
your six?

MAVERICK

Uh, nobody, I guess.

One final adjustment.

CHARLIE

Too bad.

She breaks the spell abruptly, turns away.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

See you around.

Maverick finds his voice.

MAVERICK

Can I walk you out? She turns back to
him, a smile.

CHARLIE

I'm with someone.

EXT. "O" CLUB - LATER THAT NIGHT

P.O.V. -

From a car in the parking lot, we see Charlie and the Captain leave the club. They walk directly toward us and stop. She turns, says something polite...a peck on the cheek. He turns away. A dome light briefly illuminates the interior of the car as a door opens. It rocks slightly as someone gets in. Charlie turns back and walks over, taking her keys out. She opens the door to the car and gets in.

A. EXT. CAR - NIGHT

She starts the car and pulls away. Suddenly, a figure sits up in the back.

MAVERICK
I thought he'd never leave.

CHARLIE
Yeow!

Startled, she nearly drives off the road. She turns to him, startled.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You! What are you doing here?

MAVERICK
Everybody's got to be somewhere.

CHARLIE
What if Captain Dawson had come with me?

MAVERICK
It would have been really embarrassing!

CHARLIE
How did you know this was my car?

MAVERICK
Simple deduction. It's fast. It's pretty. Sleek and stylish...It's your color...matches your lipstick.

CHARLIE
That's all!

MAVERICK
And I asked someone.

CHARLIE
You think you're pretty smart.

MAVERICK
I think I'm in love.

EXT. GUARD GATE

She pulls up at the guard gate, a MARINE CORPORAL is on duty. He sees the pretty girl pull up and stop, leans over helpfully.

MARINE

Can I help you, Ma'am?

She smiles even more sweetly.

CHARLIE

I don't know, Corporal. Can you do anything about this lunatic?

The car door swings open. Maverick gets out. The car roars away.

He stands in the glare of the spotlight...rocking on his heels, looking across at the guard, who snaps to attention and stares holes in his chest.

50. INT. TOP GUN - NEXT MORNING.

Two guys in flight suits run down stairs past stencils of MiG kills on walls, then down corridor.

FLEX

Not so fast...my head.

They skid to stop outside a door.

INT. HANGAR

Ground crews work on planes in B.G. Jester in middle of lecture.

Door bursts open. Sundown and Flex skid to a halt when they see whole class looking at them.

JESTER

Who are you?

SUNDOWN

I'm Sundown.

JESTER

Yeah, right. You're late.

Viper breaks in, indicating Flex.

VIPER

And who are you?

FLEX

Flex

VIPER

Flex...? You don't look like Flex to me. You call that muscle?

(MORE)

VIPER (CONT'D)
Doesn't look like muscle. Looks
like...Pork.

They laugh. Even Sundown has to laugh, scratching his chest.

VIPER (CONT'D)
What're you laughing at? You're
Fungus.

Stops scratching.

SUNDOWN/FUNGUS
Fungus!

PORK
Don't make an issue of it, it'll
stick.

FUNGUS (Unhappily)
It'll stick anyway.

Viper turns away...

VIPER
Now to continue. In this class we
will be dealing with F-5's and A4's,
as our MiG simulators.

Technically the F-5 does not have the thrust to weight ratio
of the MiG-21--it also does not bleed energy below 300 knots
like the MiG-21 does. The A4 does not turn as well as the
MiG-17 but has significantly better visibility.

Maverick looks back to his notes. SFX footsteps...door
opening. Viper looks up to back of room door.

VIPER (CONT'D)
Hi, Charlie. Good, our TAGREF's here.
Charlie's the most qualified to get
into P subs and curves, and VN
diagrams.

Maverick turns to see the TAGREF walk forward. Maverick
stares at her as she passes without acknowledging him. He is
surprised, embarrassed.

VIPER (CONT'D)
Charlotte Blackwood--code name Charlie--
not your ordinary TAGREF. Charlie
has her Ph.D. in astrophysics--she's
a civilian contractor so you don't
salute her...or anything else. Is
that clear?

She walks to the front and starts her presentation. She talks about something very technical, arcane. MiG tactics, technology. As the briefing rattles on, Maverick reacts to her. Goose glances over at him. He, too, recognizes the girl.

He looks at his partner. Maverick feels his stare.

CHARLIE

Hello, I think I have some new data for you...Now a MiG 21 has a problem with the inverted flight tanks. It won't do a Negative G push over. Even below one G, they risk a flame out. Operationally, they will do a zero to one G only.

A snicker from the audience. She hesitates momentarily, goes on.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

The latest intelligence shows that the most they will do in operation is one...is there something wrong, Lieutenant.

MAVERICK

I don't think you're altogether right...about the MiG, that is.

She stops--some of the pilots look at him. Viper glares.

CHARLIE

I beg your pardon.

MAVERICK

No, I beg yours. But I don't think you're right on that.

CHARLIE

Why not?

MAVERICK

I saw one.

CHARLIE

You saw a MiG 21?

MAVERICK

I saw a MiG do a 4 G negative dive.

CHARLIE

(She doesn't believe him)

Where did you see that?

MAVERICK
It's classified.

Nervous buzz in the room. Viper goes rigid. Charlie can't believe it.

CHARLIE
It's what?

MAVERICK
It's classified. Like Hollywood says,
I could tell you, but then I'd have
to kill you.

Pork stifles a laugh, the others chuckle. Viper is embarrassed.

VIPER
Maverick!!!

She stops Viper with a glance.

CHARLIE
It's all right.

She can handle it. She is very cool, not overbearing. She says it calmly. She doesn't want to embarrass him any more than he is, but she has to get the facts straight.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Lieutenant, I have a top secret
clearance. The Pentagon sees to it
that I know more than you.

MAVERICK
Not in this case.

CHARLIE
(Flatly.)
You saw a MiG push negative 4G?

MAVERICK
Yes, ma'am.

CHARLIE
Where were you?

MAVERICK
On his six.

Little stifled laughs.

CHARLIE
He was in a 4G Negative dive and you
were on his six?

MAVERICK
Yes, ma'am, At first. Then I was
directly above him.

She stares at him for a moment, then she has him. She goes
for the kill.

CHARLIE
If you were directly above him, how
did you see him?

MAVERICK
I was inverted.

A real buzz in the room. Ice laughs audibly.

CHARLIE
You were in a 4G inverted dive with
a MiG 21? (She can't believe it.)
At what range ?

MAVERICK
Two.

CHARLIE
Two miles.

MAVERICK
Two meters.

Chuckles, barely suppressed. Goose pipes up to deflect
attention.

GOOSE
One and a half, actually. I got a
polaroid.

CHARLIE
(Flatly.)
Lieutenant...

MAVERICK
Ma'am?

CHARLIE
What were you doing there?

MAVERICK
Giving him the bird.

Open laughter. She thinks it's at her. She grows red.

CHARLIE
The what?

MAVERICK
You know. The finger.

He shows her, but she can handle this.

CHARLIE
So you're the reason those SALT talks
failed.

The room breaks into laughter. At him. Now he grows red.

Goose puts his hand on Maverick's arm, shakes his head as if
to say: "Let it go, pal, she got you".

She looks at Viper. He doesn't know whether to laugh or cry.

He knows there's something here he doesn't control.

VIPER
Lieutenant!

GOOSE
It's just like he says, sir.

VIPER
(He snaps)
I don't care!

51A. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE LECTURE HALL

She walks away. He runs up and stops her.

MAVERICK
Why didn't you tell me you were a
TAGREF?

She studies him coolly for a moment, like a specimen.

CHARLIE
It never came up.

MAVERICK
You let me make a fool of myself.

CHARLIE
You seemed determined to do that
anyway.. Why didn't you tell me you
were a famous MiG insulter?

MAVERICK
Would it have made a difference?

CHARLIE
No.

MAVERICK

What would?

CHARLIE

You know, I'm assigned to this school. I see sixteen new hotshots every eight weeks. Your attention is flattering, but not really productive. Why don't you keep your mind on flying.

She reaches over and aligns his collar insignia.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Why can't you keep this straight?

She smiles at him and walks away. Maverick turns, sees the others sizing him up. Most of them grin. Maverick moves down the corridor past the CO's Office. Viper leans against the doorsill. He lights a pipe, laconically eyes Maverick. His tone gives away nothing, like an ELINT probe eliciting a response.

VIPER

Maverick... Where'd you get that call sign?

MAVERICK

Ahhh... Runs in the family, sir.

VIPER

You're father was Marvin Mitchell..

MAVERICK

Yes sir.

VIPER

A good man. Good flyer.

Viper turns away.

MAVERICK

Yes sir. Thank you sir.

Maverick watches him for a beat, he's been tested, but he's not sure how or why. He turns to catch up with Goose and the others.

EXT. SKY - LATER

At twenty-eight thousand feet, the two planes circle each other, going in opposite directions. As they jockey for position, they snap past each other like ends of bullwhips.

The earth spins, the horizon appears and disappears. With each hard turn, Maverick and Goose can be heard "grunting" to keep blood in their brains, to keep from passing out.

The fight is hard, physical, and exhausting. The extreme G forces--6.5--flatten them against their seats, causing their heads to weigh over one hundred pounds. Maverick strains to turn his head and track the other jet as it streaks past at Mach One.

MAVERICK

I've lost him -- where is he?

GOOSE

On your six -- coming hard. Four hundred. Losing airspeed! He's on your six and closing fast! Hard left! HARD LEFT!

Maverick jerks the stick left, and the F-14 takes an astonishing turn. Jester ROARS past into a wide arc.

GOOSE (CONT'D)

Great move. Great

MAVERICK

He should've had me.

GOOSE

Take it down. Let's bug out of here. Call for a draw.

MAVERICK

No way. I'll nail him this time. Going vertical.

THE PLANE EXPLODES INTO AFTERBURNER - rocketing toward space. Jester is left in direct line with the sun, and his canopy is sprayed with a blinding glare. Going ballistic is dangerous. The plane flies like a bullet, obeying the laws of physics, not the pilot's touch on control surfaces. The ballistic call warns other aircraft that he is, for the moment, out of control.

GOOSE

He's blind -- you got him!

JESTER

NO JOY! NO JOY! WHERE ARE YOU?
I'VE LOST SIGHT.

GOOSE

He's out of energy! You got control?
Unload!

The F-14 peels over the egg, in a backward dive. It rockets down the outside, gaining energy. Over the ROAR of jets, the SCREAM of the wind, Goose shouts data, but it is muffled, a distant voice in a typhoon. Through the canopy, we see Jester, and he hangs in the air like a sparrow in the path of a falcon.

PILOT'S POV - HUD in windscreen - a diamond in a box.

Maverick lines up the diamond with Jester, and we hear the high pitched tone BEEPING.

JESTER
WE'RE BELOW THE HARD DECK. FIGHT'S
OFF.

GOOSE
He's right. We're at ten thousand.

MAVERICK
No way. I got you, sucker. You're
going down.

Jester maneuvers, but Maverick keeps him in the gunsight.

The BEEPING is louder, faster.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)
In the envelope. FOX TWO MISSILE
SHOT. YOU'RE GONE, JESTER, DEAD!

GOOSE
(stunned)
Goddamn! We beat him!

There is an edge of anger in Jester's voice.

JESTER
ROGER FOX TWO. GET YOUR BUTTS ABOVE
THE HARD DECK. RETURN TO BASE
IMMEDIATELY.

They are brought up short for a moment, then the thrill of victory gets the best of them. Goose lets out a war whoop.

The F-14 sweeps up, rolls into an Immelman..

MAVERICK
We did it!

GOOSE
Look, Ma, top of the world!

52A. EXT. MIRAMAR - LANDING PATTERN.

Maverick's Tomcat breaks hard and high, rolls over on its side, wings perpendicular to the ground. Goose sees the world go sideways.

GOOSE (CONT'D)

Ahhh...A little high on the left,
don't you think?

MAVERICK

Right.

He aileron rolls another quarter turn. Inverted, they pass right down the runway. Goose looks out and insouciantly watches the world go by at 300 knots, upside down.

GOOSE

Right. Much better. ...Ahhh...what
do you call this?

MAVERICK

It's a victory roll.

GOOSE

I wouldn't call it victory. It's
more like...self immolation.

B. INT. CONTROL TOWER

Controllers work. Officers watch the landing activity. One old salt, turns from the coffee machine, a cup of steaming Java microns from his lips. A ROAR. VABOOM! The Tomcat roars over. He yelps as hot coffee flies all over his shirt.

52C.

EXT. MAVERICK'S F-14

They complete the roll, bank left, zoom right by the tower, level with the observation window.

D. F-14'S POV. CONTROLLERS LOOK OUT AT THE F-14, MOUTHS

drop open.

E. ANGLE GOOSE

He waves jauntily.

GOOSE

Hi...Hi there. How ya doing in there?
Mav... Ahhh...you know, at one point
I did want a Navy career.

MAVERICK

Come on, relax...

GOOSE

You see all those guys with gold on their shoulders!!?... Oh, no, I think that was Johnson, Air Boss of the Kitty Hawk!

MAVERICK

Come on, we beat an instructor. How many times in your life do you get to do a victory roll?

GOOSE

Just once, if they take your plane away.

They roll out, break over the runway.

52F. EXT. FLIGHTLINE.

Maverick and Goose walk by parking Tomcats...Ice is unstrapping, Slider is climbing down. Ice looks at Maverick, says one word.

ICEMAN

Cowboys!

Maverick keeps walking...Goose hangs back.

SLIDER

Nice. Always a good idea to show up your instructors.

He nods toward Jester, glaring at them from his A4. Goose indicates the backseat of the Tomcat.

GOOSE

Hey, see any controls back there?
 (thinks about team
 loyalty, reacts to
 Jester's glare...)
 And anyway...we beat the Son of a Bitch!

He turns and runs to catch up with Maverick.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Pilots half undressed. Maverick and Goose enter the room, carrying their helmets. The students look up at them, and Goose suddenly flashes a thumb's up sign with a grin. The students react with clenched fists, ad libs, high fives, victory punches.

WOLFMAN

You won?!!!

MAVERICK

Didn't everybody?

"Oooo" -- they all go "ooo" and laugh.

WOLFMAN

No, we...got our butts kicked.

HOLLYWOOD

Thirty seconds. That's all it took
to blow us out of the sky.

WOLFMAN

We went like this, he went like that.
I say to Hollywood: Where'd he go?
Hollywood says: where'd who go?

HOLLYWOOD

And he's laughing. Right over the
radio, He's laughing at us.

Attention turns to the doorway as Ice and Slider enter. Ice gives a brief dramatic pause, then flashes thumbs up and smiles. The students celebrate Ice's win. Ice handles the attention with the easy composure of one who is used to it.

Maverick ignores him and begins to peel out of his G-suit.

Ice moves toward his locker.

GOOSE

You won.

Congratulations.

HOLLYWOOD

Maverick and Goose won too.

Ice talks into his locker.

ICE

That's not what I heard.

GOOSE

We won!

Ice turns back, stares them down, then turns back into his locker, dismissing them.

ICE

Below the hard deck doesn't count.
You guys are the second team, aren't
you?

Maverick gets up, moves to him, starts to say something, when Jester, breaks into the room.

JESTER

Maverick, Goose. Viper's office.
Now!

53A. INT. TOPGUN CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CO'S OFFICE.

SCREAMING AND YELLING. A lot of screaming and yelling, muffled by the door.

53B. INT. ANTEROOM.

Enlisted Yeomen and Chiefs go about their clerical duties in acute embarrassment mixed with curiosity. Behind the CO'S door, someone is screaming his head off.

BOOM! The door bursts open. A big, brawling Officer - Johnson, the Air Boss - blasts out, nearly smashing into a female petty officer. She almost spills her coffee. Johnson looks right and left in fury too strong for words. He looks like he wants to smash something. They move out of his way, but he just blasts through the door and disappears down the hall.

The enlisted men turn to Viper's office.

THEIR POV

Jester stands inside stonefaced. Maverick and Goose are rigid. Viper...with excess calm deliberation, softly walks over, grasps the doornob. He glances in this direction. The glance is totally without expression, and even scarier for that.

53D. ANGLE ENLISTED (MEN)

In a flash, each man finds something totally engrossing in his work, or something terribly important to do elsewhere.

Slowly, steadily, Viper swings his door closed.54. INT.

VIPER'S OFFICE

He moves over to face Maverick. There is a SILENCE like after a train wreck; nothing but the POPPING of sprung metal and the low GASP of escaping steam. Viper speaks quietly, like a funeral director consoling the living. Makes you want to scream.

VIPER

Well....That about covers the flyby.

Jester almost breaks into a grin.

VIPER (CONT'D)

Now...in addition...you broke two major rules of engagement. And... That's ...not good.

Maverick gives no response. Viper continues.

VIPER (CONT'D)

Lieutenant Candela lost sight of you, and called "no joy". You failed to respond.

He stops and looks at Maverick... A beat. Maverick finally

NODS

VIPER Why?

Maverick is exhausted. It's been a long, rough day. His voice is a horse whisper.

MAVERICK

I had him in view. I was peeling over the egg, into a dive. He saw me when I moved in for the kill. There wasn't any danger...

VIPER

(to Goose)

Is that how you remember it?

GOOSE

Yes, sir. By the time we could respond, we were diving right into his view.

Viper is not satisfied with the answer, but he moves on.

VIPER

The hard deck for this hop was ten thousand feet. Jester, at what point did you call off the fight?

JESTER

Just below ten thousand.

VIPER

But you continued to fight.

Another pause, another grudging nod.

VIPER (CONT'D)

Why?

MAVERICK

We weren't below for more than ten seconds. There was no danger. I had the shot. I took it.

VIPER

The rules of engagement are not flexible. They exist for your safety. You will obey them. Is that clear?

Maverick thinks about continuing the discussion, but the thought is momentary. He quickly cuts his losses, gives Viper what he thinks he wants...He is just on the cusp of too sincere.

MAVERICK

Yes sir, perfectly clear. I guess we were ...I was... just a little over enthusiastic.

Viper measures him for a moment, then lets it go.

VIPER

I guess you were. Dismissed.

Maverick and Goose leave the room. Viper looks at Jester, picks up Maverick's fitness report. Doesn't read it, looks back at Jester.

JESTER

I don't know what to tell you, Skip.

VIPER

Tell me one thing.

Jester waits.

VIPER (CONT'D)

...If you had to go into combat, would you want him with you?

Jester turns, walks slowly around the room. The walls are lined with pictures; planes and pilots...history. There are MiG killers, attack squadrons, ground personnel...There's one picture of a Phantom in flight with the backseater mooning the camera. Other pictures show carriers, famous flyers, previous CO's. Finally Jester replys.

JESTER

Yep.

Viper slaps shut the fitness report.

JESTER (CONT'D)

He's seat of the pants...

Completely unpredictable -- nothing by the book. All over the sky. But I don't know, Skip, he's really got something.

VIPER

Yeah, we get one of these guys every damn class. (laughs)
"Maverick!"

He throws the report on the desk.

JESTER

Yup, a wild pony.

OMITTED

INT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

Wind ROAR, jet WHINE. Hollywood and Wolfman are being thrown about as Hollywood fights the stick.

WOLFMAN

No. No. Look out, you lost it.

They depart flight. Tumble. The horizon swings wildly as they go into flat spin.

WOLFMAN (CONT'D)

We're dead!

A face appears at 12,000 feet, right in front of their canopy. Goose's eyes bug at them.

GOOSE

Man, you guys gooned it. Your laser butts are scattered across KANSAS.

HOLLYWOOD

(disgusted with himself)
Come on. I died enough for one night.

A. EXT. COCKPIT

They climb out of the simulator - A cockpit sprung on moveable rams, surrounded by a dome on which video images are projected.

As they climb down, Maverick and Goose climb up into the cockpit to take their place.

GOOSE

Have you guys ever considered career counseling?

OMITTED

56B. SIMULATOR CONTROL ROOM - Filled with computers, tape transports and video screen representations of computer generated combat. Now Maverick flies it as Charlie and other techs watch.

56C. COCKPIT

Maverick flies the heck out of it. It's real. It lurches and bumps, the NOISES and sights look real. He gets on the tail of a MiG. It breaks, he breaks, then what he does is just too fast to follow. It screams around in a turn. Suddenly, there is a WHUMMP...ALARMS...the lights come on.

GOOSE

What happened?

TECH (V.O. FILTERED)

What did you do in there?

GOOSE

What did you do? You broke it!

COMPUTER ANALYSIS ROOM

Maverick and Goose enter. The techs cluster around the keyboards trying to reprogram, to figure out what went wrong.

CHARLIE

You flew it off the template.
Nobody ever did that before.

GOOSE

That's what she said last night.

She stares at Goose until he grins and moves off to give the others his valuable opinions on how to reprogram the computers.

CHARLIE

What is it about you?

He just shrugs at her and smiles.

MAVERICK

What would you say, too fast...too quick...

CHARLIE

And far too aggressive.

MAVERICK

It is combat. Every second counts.

CHARLIE

The hottest moves in the world aren't gonna help you if you wind up alone. Your wingman's got to be able to follow you. Trust you. Know that he can depend on you. It's more than just fancy flying.

MAVERICK

Well, what you need...what you have to keep looking for...what you want to get is a wingman who can stay up with you. Who can match you move for move. Then you've got something. I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

For what?

MAVERICK

That stuff about the MiG. I was out of line.

CHARLIE

Apology acknowledged.

MAVERICK

Is that all?

CHARLIE

What else do you want?

MAVERICK

Um. You.

CHARLIE

There you go with those moves again.

MAVERICK

Too aggressive?

CHARLIE

I don't mix with the boys. I work here. Let's keep it professional.

MAVERICK

I'm special.

CHARLIE

(laughs)
Yes. I'll give you that!

MAVERICK

Give me a break, I'm asking you out.

CHARLIE

I can't.

MAVERICK

I thought there was something...
That night in the club...

CHARLIE

Lieutenant...

MAVERICK

Evan... or Maverick.

CHARLIE

Maverick...you know the rules of
engagement.

MAVERICK

(can't believe it.)
The what?

CHARLIE

Some one comes up hot on your six,
what do you do?

MAVERICK

What are you talking about?

CHARLIE

You turn into him, check him out,
identify friend or foe.

MAVERICK

I'm not your foe.

CHARLIE

And if he's harmless, you disengage.

MAVERICK

Harmless!

CHARLIE

Uh hum.

MAVERICK

What if he's not?

CHARLIE

You have to shoot him down....If
he's smart, he'll turn away before
that happens.

MAVERICK

Harmless. Nobody ever called me harmless before...

CHARLIE

And probably never again. It's nothing personal. It's just...I know a lot of pilots. Maybe I'm immune...

MAVERICK

Don't worry, I'm a new strain. And I don't give up. Everything I've ever wanted I've had to work like hell for. Well, how about it?

CHARLIE

How about what?

MAVERICK

How about anything, anything you want to do.

CHARLIE

Hard to argue with that, isn't it...

MAVERICK

A date... Coffee... A drink...A walk in the park.

CHARLIE

What about the plane?

MAVERICK

What plane.

CHARLIE

Most of them invite me to sit in the cockpit...play with the levers and things.

MAVERICK

Well, get used to it.

CHARLIE

Used to what?

MAVERICK

I'm different.

CHARLIE

I'm starting to sense that now.

MAVERICK

You're slow to engage. But you'll come around.

SHE PUSHES HIM OUT THE DOOR

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

Let's make it at eight.

CHARLIE

Make what?

MAVERICK

Anything.

CHARLIE

Okay, anything. Just...go. I've gotta work.

She closes the door, turns back to her screen.

THRU 61 OMITTED

*** 59A. BEACH LA JOLLA - DAY

A day off. Pilots, other personnel are enjoying a day at the beach. There are bikinis, and beer, sunfishes and water skiing. The annual Over-the-Line (a variation of softball) tournament is in progress. The team from the Teddy Kennedy Driving School is whipping another known as Scum de Terre.

The pilots are doing pretty well at blowing off steam.

59B. UNDERSEA

Undulating sea grass. Muffled HISS of the surf. A pretty fish comes into view. A spear shoots through it, and nails it to the ocean floor.

59C. SHORELINE

Two figures pop to the surface and wade in to the beach.

Maverick holds the wriggling fish. Charlie is repulsed. She pulls off her mask and snorkle, follows him in to shore..

59D. THE BEACH

They flop down. He drops the fish in front of her, sees her reaction at watching its death throes.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Why'd you do that?

MAVERICK

(surprised)

I had the shot.

She looks at him for a moment, then turns away, fiddles with her mask.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

It dies. We live.

CHARLIE

You're an animal.

MAVERICK

That's true. What are you?

CHARLIE

I don't enjoy watching things suffer.

He smashes the fish on a rock. It is still.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

No!

MAVERICK

It's not suffering anymore.

She looks at him strangely.

CHARLIE

You're horrible

MAVERICK

You're not, cause you eat frozen meatballs? (he puts it down)
Things die. Every time you breathe, you kill millions of tiny organisms. Every time you eat, something had to die.

CHARLIE

You don't have to kill it.

MAVERICK

Somebody does. It's more honest this way. You do your own dirty work.

CHARLIE

You ever think about killing another human being?

MAVERICK

About as much as they think about killing me.

CHARLIE

Does it bother you?

MAVERICK

They know the rules...(this is too strong for her, she turns away, he comes around to her.) That's the deal. That's why you're up there. It's him or me. That's the price of admission. (she draws away) It bothers you, why? You're part of it.

She stiffens, he's losing her. He softens

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

Everybody dies. Most people don't get to die for something. You don't want to confront it, do you. You want to keep it all clean, cerebral... velocity vectors, wing-load diagrams...You ever been up?

CHARLIE

Flying?

MAVERICK

You use your mind to keep things at a distance. You ever just let go?

She doesn't answer.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

You know what really scares me? Living too long. Losing my hair and my teeth...and my guts and my wind. And my brains...Sitting in a room with my hands in my lap, watching daytime TV.

CHARLIE

You don't believe any of this. You don't think you'll ever die.

MAVERICK

That's it, of course. When I'm up there and doing it, I'm cheating it every second. I'm subverting all laws...gravity...whatever. I'm skating the edge of it.

CHARLIE

Winston Churchill.

MAVERICK

What?

CHARLIE

What he said..."There's nothing so exhilarating as being shot at without result."

MAVERICK

All you've got is one life. I guess it's worth about the same to every body. You ever see an old woman after her husband has died? And the meaningless years of decline stretch ahead... When you're in the air and doing something really dangerous, you can look ahead... maybe ten seconds. That's your whole future. That's as far as it goes. But imagine what those seconds are worth.

CHARLIE

What if you kill yourself? Think of everything you'll miss.

MAVERICK

There is lots of stuff I don't know about... Fine wine... great art... the opera. I guess if I live long enough, I'll get to it. If I don't, I'll never miss it.

CHARLIE

Are you really that brave?

MAVERICK

(shakes his head no.)

I watched my mother die. Cancer. She had a long time to think about it. They say you reach an agreement with death. Come to accept the fact that pretty soon you won't be here. I didn't see that. She... was very brave...braver than I am. You go up there, there isn't time to think. If you make a mistake, you're just a smudge on the ground. Simplifies funeral arrangements.

CHARLIE

It's just as I thought.

MAVERICK

What?

CHARLIE

You're totally insane.

MAVERICK

(he smiles)

Thanks very much.

(he lifts the fish)

Care for some suchi?

59E. THE OTHER END OF THE BEACH - LATER

A killer volleyball game in progress. Maverick and Charlie wander toward it, talking softly to themselves. Goose runs up and grabs him away.

GOOSE

Come on, we're next.

MAVERICK

What?

GOOSE

Come on, I got over six bucks on the line.

Maverick looks up and sees the other two-man team, the victors, waiting on the other side of the net for them. Of course it had to be Ice and Slider. Charlie sits and watches as the game gets immediately out of hand. In moments, Maverick and Ice rotate to forward positions directly opposite each other across the net. Other revelers turn to watch as it degenerates (?) to more than a game. Maverick glances at Charlie. He seems uncomfortable, but irrevocably drawn into the confrontation. She says nothing, but her attitude is apparent. Back to the game: Slider and Goose set them up, as they try to spike the ball in each other's face.

The final point...up over the middle. They both go up, Maverick smashes, Ice blocks, but the ball sails away, off his forearm. For the first time ever, Maverick beats him. He looks over at Charlie, she is staring out to sea. She looks back at him and he's suddenly had enough competition. They call for another game, but Maverick turns away...

GOOSE (CONT'D)

Come on, come on! It's double or nothing.. We're talking twelve bucks American, here.

MAVERICK

I've had enough...for now.

He grabs Charlie and his gear..

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

Come on.

CHARLIE

Where?

MAVERICK

You want to go ballistic?

CHARLIE

I don't know. I don't like being out of control.

He looks back at Ice, bouncing the ball and staring at him.

MAVERICK

Stick with me, you'll get used to it.

F. EXT. DESERT

The Bike doing 130, 140, 150 mph. Charlie is unfazed. He turns to check her out, she smiles back at him.

CUT TO

59G. EXT. RUSTIC ADOBE CANTINA -
SUNSET The bike is parked in front.

MONTAGE ON LOCKED OFF CAMERA - to show the passage of time...the latticed terrace, streaks of light. Maverick is feeding a dog. Charlie sits on a rail watching him.

MAVERICK

I always wanted to fly... ever since I first saw a jet. I wanted to fly jets, then I wanted F-14's, then I wanted to fly off carriers, then I wanted Top Gun.

CHARLIE

And now?

MAVERICK

And now I want you.

CHARLIE

You always get what you want?

MAVERICK

I don't know yet.

DISSOLVE

He puts money in jukebox. She watches him...eye to eye contact. The music comes on.

CHARLIE

I want it understood.

MAVERICK

Anything.

CHARLIE

No fooling on base, no signs, no comments, no talk. By anyone.

MAVERICK

Why?

CHARLIE

I'm a professional. You guys are in my line of work.

A long beat. He looks at her -- makes the pact: like a sailor.

MAVERICK

Acknowledged.

She looks at his eyes for any sign of a put-on, insincerity.

Finally he smiles at her but she can read it. It's time. She moves in and covers his grin with a gentle kiss.

DISSOLVE

To them sitting within striking distance at a table. The dog sleeps beneath. Their eyes are now locked. The electricity almost arcs between them.

TCU Scrub pine table. Their fingertips touch.

TIGHT SHOT. Waist to head. Holding, close together, swaying in time with the music. Their lips gently brush.

OMITTED

EXT. DAY - DESERT - TACTS RANGE

An F-14 swoops over the desert, ROARS over an antenna complex.

The JET.- In it's missile rack, it carries a TACTS transponder. The TACTS Range is an area of the desert completely enveloped by computerized radar. The computers calculate a number of aircraft's positions and velocities by means of transponders in the ships and ground stations that talk to each other thousands of times a second. Using this system, it is possible to track aerial combat instantaneously and give pilots directions and also to play back the combats for analysis.

INT. TACTS RANGE TRAILER - DAY

The double viewing screens are five feet high; high technology, state of the art.

On the screens are computer animated figures showing jets from various angles. Flight data is displayed. The operators punch buttons to show

VARIOUS POINTS-OF-VIEW OF THE BATTLE: A PILOT'S P.O.V.; GOD'S P.O.V. FROM OVERHEAD, A LONG RANGE P.O.V., SHOWING TOPOGRAPHY of the landscape and height of mountains.

Students and instructors sit on chairs in the peanut gallery, facing Viper at the front of the room. Charlie is in the back.

VIPER

The bandit has good position right here. All right, freeze here. The moment of choice -- Maverick is defensive. He has a chance to bug out right here....Better to retire and save your plane than force a bad position. Stay in the diamond another three seconds, the bandit will blow you out of the sky...make a hard right, select zone 5...(turns to Maverick to drive point home) you can extend and escape. You make a bad choice. Roll forward.

The computerized rendering resumes on the screen.

VIPER (Con't) (CONT'D)

You perform a split S. That's the last thing you should do. The bandit is right on your tail --Freeze there...the bandit has you in his gunsight. What were you thinking here, Maverick?

MAVERICK

I wasn't thinking. I just did it.

VIPER

Big gamble with a thirty million dollar plane!

MAVERICK

(smiling)

No guts, no glory.

It's a joke. Viper doesn't like that answer at all, but some of the students laugh and mockingly whistle at the cockiness of it. They give Maverick the high sign. Slider leans forward to him.

SLIDER

Your guts. His glory.

Maverick slumps down in his chair under Viper's glare. The computer rendering rolls forward again. He glances back at Charlie. She smiles sympathetically at him.

VIPER

Unfortunately, the gamble worked, or you might have learned something. The bandit never gets a clean shot...Maverick makes an aggressive vertical move here, comes over the top and defeats the bandit with a missile shot. The encounter was a victory, but we've shown it as an example of what not to do. Ice is next.

Another computerized rendering comes up on the screen.

Hollywood leans close to Maverick and speaks quietly.

HOLLYWOOD

Gutsiest move I ever saw.

Maverick gives him a small nod of appreciation.

VIPER

And the dumbest...Okay, look at this. It's textbook. Ice takes control of the battle immediately. He never gives the bandit a chance to take the offensive. An early turn here -- excellent. He goes for the jugular, and it's over just that quick. Let's run that again, it's exactly how it should be done.

THROUGH 75B. OMITTED

EXT. MIRAMAR RUNWAY - DAY

In full flight gear, carrying their helmets and trying to stuff food down their gullets, the students rush/stumble toward the flight line. Hollywood takes a bit of a sandwich and makes a face.

GOOSE

What the hell is this?

MAVERICK

Don't chew it, you won't have it that long. Easier to clean the cockpit if it comes up in big chunks.

Jester yells from the distance.

JESTER

On the run. Let's go. Move it!

GOOSE

A fighter pilot's lunch... a hot dog
and a puke.

They scurry ahead, overtaking the others.

HOLLYWOOD

I was a victim of circumstance.

GOOSE

They should have warned you about
that one.

HOLLYWOOD

She's kinky for flight suits--said
that she'd never seen so many zippers--
played with them all night. The noise
alone kept me up.

GOOSE

What'd you do?

HOLLYWOOD

Pulled left, rolled out, underneath.

WOLFMAN

It's kind of ironic. All you guys
have women troubles and I don't.

HOLLYWOOD

That's because you don't have any
women.

WOLFMAN

Until last night. Did you see the
moves I was making on that girl at
the party?

HOLLYWOOD

The girl with the purple fingernails?

WOLFMAN

That's her--tall hungry woman with
fire in her eyes. It was great.

MAVERICK

It was bad.

WOLFMAN

Bad?

MAVERICK

The girl with the purple fingernails
was Coogan's sister.

They all laugh. Wolfman looks stunned.

HOLLYWOOD

Coogan spent half the night looking
for her. He said he was gonna kill
the son-of-a-bitch who ruined his
sister.

WOLFMAN

I didn't ruin her.

MAVERICK

You didn't help.

WOLFMAN

No, really. She came ruined!...

Ya think he knows it was me?

GOOSE

Seemed not to. But it's hard to know.
You never can tell what's in the
mind of a psychopath.

Wolfman looks very unsettled.

HOLLYWOOD

Hear about Ice?

WOLFMAN

What now?

HOLLYWOOD

He won again.

Goose walks beside Maverick now.

GOOSE

Something bothering you?

MAVERICK

Nothing. Let's just go fight.

Wolfman looks very apprehensive as they approach the F-14's.

MECHANICS surround both planes, making last minute checks of
all systems. Among them is COOGAN, six and a half feet tall,
looking mean. Maverick tosses him a wave.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

Morning, Coogan.

WOLFMAN
How's it goin', Coog?

HOLLYWOOD
Ever find your sister, Coogan?

COOGAN
You guys know somethin' about that?

Wolfman swallows hard and hurries quickly into the plane.

Coogan glares at them all with a look that could kill.

OMITTED

EXT. F-14'S - DAY

Hollywood leads, Maverick follows. They point their noses down and dive. Two bogies fly side by side at five thousand, outlined against the blue Pacific. Smaller, slower, they seem helpless for a moment. We hear the instructors in the F-5's.

VIPER (V.O. filtered)
TWO AT SEVEN O'CLOCK, JESTER.

SCRAMBLE.

JESTER
ROGER. COMING LEFT.

HOLLYWOOD
Holy shit, it's Viper.

MAVERICK
Keep your shirt on, he's saying holy
shit it's us.

The bogies split. Bogey One hard left. Bogey Two hard right.

Hollywood sweeps left, pursuing Bogey One. Maverick hangs back to cover him.

Bogey One makes a strong vertical move. Hollywood stays on him.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)
STAY WITH HIM, WOOD... YOUR SIX CLEAR!

Bogey One loops and comes down, and Hollywood almost loses him for a moment before regaining the angle.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)
STAY WITH HIM! TIGHTEN YOUR TURN!

GOOSE
Bogey at three o'clock high! Nose
on!

Maverick looks quickly at three o'clock high, sees Bogey Two returning to the fight. He jerks the stick right, and the two planes make a quick pass.

VIPER
SNAPSHOT..MISSED HIM..

MAVERICK
ENGAGING THE OTHER GUY.
WOOD, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.

GOOSE
Just cover Wood, Maverick.
Mutual support, man!

MAVERICK
I'm gonna take him, Goose.

GOOSE
Don't be greedy. Stay with Wood.

MAVERICK
I want him!

Maverick goes suddenly vertical, zooms straight up.

GOOSE
Hey, come on--hey!

Maverick loops the F-14 down to get the quick angle on Viper in Bogey Two. Viper takes off, running from the fight again.

Maverick looks over his shoulder and sees that Hollywood still has a good position on Bogey One. He takes a hard right and streaks off after Viper.

GOOSE (CONT'D)
What what are you doing?
We're cover!

MAVERICK
Wood's okay. I want Viper.

Goose looks back at Hollywood and Bogey One.

GOOSE
But we're cover!

Viper streaks across the sky with Maverick close behind. He pushes the throttle forward to ZONE 5 - full afterburner.

Viper shows all his tricks...hard left, hard right, rolling into vertical, flipping into a dive. Maverick stays with him.

VIPER (To himself)
Goddamn, rookie, you're all right!

INT. F-1

Maverick turns to get Viper in the diamond. He hears a SIDEWINDER GROWL in his headset.

MAVERICK
What's the range, Goose. I've got a good tone.

Viper jinks but Maverick stays with him. Viper is in the diamond, and the TONE GOES CRAZY. But suddenly....

GOOSE
Two bogies ! Three o'clock high,
nine o'clock high! Break!

They come out of nowhere, flashing down toward Maverick--a cross fire ambush. Maverick's eyes are startled.

JESTER
ATOLL ON THE NORTHERN F-14. HE'S OUT
OF THE FIGHT..

Maverick is stunned. He has been tricked, humiliated.

There's a little salt for the wound as Viper and Jester celebrate.

VIPER
WALKED RIGHT INTO IT.

JESTER
NOT ONLY THAT, BUT ZORRO GOT YOUR
WINGMAN. NICE GOING.

GOOSE
THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT REGRETS TO
INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SONS ARE DEAD
BECAUSE THEY WERE STUPID!

Slaps his helmet like a dolt...

VIPER
KNOCK OFF THE CHATTER, TOP GUNS.

LET'S RTB. VIPER HAS THE LEAD.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Silence. Several pilots in various forms of undress.

Maverick and Goose sit with their heads down, a hangdog expression on their faces.

INT. DIRTY DAN'S - A BAR -

LATER

Maverick mopes at the bar, a figure comes up behind him.

VIPER

Ya know, that was the best flying I've seen since Nam...(He grins) ...Right up to that part where you got killed.

Viper sits down. He's in a jovial, taunting mood. Maverick watches him guardedly.

VIPER (CONT'D)

Twenty years' experience, I couldn't shake you. You may be a great flyer. I mean that.

MAVERICK

I lost.

VIPER

Of course you did. I said a great flyer, not a smart one. You fly reckless. Great instincts. No discipline. That ambush today, you followed your emotions instead of your wingman. Of course you got killed...and well deserved to. It was a really stupid mistake. In battle, it gets people killed.

Maverick nods and stares at his beer.

MAVERICK

I can take care of myself.

VIPER

Talent is no holy shield. Von Richtofen was killed by a farm boy. Instincts are not enough. Do it our way. We've worked these things out. The good pilots can become better and the great ones can learn how to stay alive.

(MORE)

VIPER (CONT'D)
(he studies him for a moment) Why
do you have to do everything the
hard way?

MAVERICK
It's my own way. It works for me.

I don't care about the rest of that stuff.

VIPER
Then why are you here?

MAVERICK
For the same reason you are.

VIPER
Oh, you mean the thrill!

MAVERICK
The flying. The fighting. I'd go up
there ten times a day to fight.
I'd win at least nine of them.

That's all I want to do. It's what I do best. I am real good.
Just give me the jet.

Viper studies him,

VIPER
It's not a gift, just a loan...

He finishes his beer, then rises.

VIPER (CONT'D)
Nine out of ten is okay, as long as
it's only fun and games. But this
isn't about that. This is serious
business. It is dangerous up there!
At 500 knots, things can change a
lot in a second. Discipline is what
protects us.

He signals the bartender and drops some money on the bar. He
stretches, looks around.

VIPER (CONT'D)
It was a good day. You learned
something. You lost and you're still
alive to think about it. And, you
lost your wingman. That's a cardinal
sin...don't ever do it again. You
owe Hollywood an apology and you owe
me a beer.

Viper touches Maverick's shoulder as he moves away. It was just the gesture Maverick needed, for he seems to relax from his tension. He sips his beer alone.

INT. SAN DIEGO AIRPORT - NIGHT

Maverick and Goose move through the terminal, anxious/expectant looks on their faces.

GOOSE

Relationships are a bitch, here.
It's hard enough to concentrate
...under the pressure. Having a woman
here is asking for it.

MAVERICK

I guess that's what I'm doing, then.

GOOSE

Where do you find the time? Where do
you find the energy. It's tough enough
to keep your mind on school.
A woman here is a real pain in the...

A pretty woman emerges from the crowd and spots them first.

She rushes them, happily, carrying her sleepy four-year-old, RICKY. Goose undergoes an immediate change, beaming a big smile that he has practiced on her for years. She sets down the kid.

GOOSE (CONT'D)

...butt...Hi, honey, God, am I glad
to see you! I missed you.

Goose wraps his arms around Carol, smack, a kiss. She smiles at Maverick, turns back to Goose.

CAROL

I had to come, Willard, I got so
lonesome I just couldn't stand it.

GOOSE

Sure, honey, I understand. It's great
to see you. Hey where's your
backseater, where's the world's
smallest RIO..

He looks all around and then down at the kid, hiding shyly behind his mother's skirts. Goose grabs up the kid and zooms him around, a game they've played before, every six months or so. The kid laughs happily. Maverick just sort of smiles to himself and shakes his head.

OMITTED

POOL (OR BEACH)

Maverick comes to the surface. She enters frame by the side of the pool. She hands him a split fresh pineapple. He eats it in the most salacious manner possible. He's so contented, he's babbling.

MAVERICK

Food...and you...my F-14!

CHARLIE

In that order?

MAVERICK

Well no...inverse order.

CHARLIE

I'm still second best.

MAVERICK

You ever fly an F-14?
(She laughs.)

CHARLIE

I don't fly in anything that doesn't
show movies.

He gets out, grabs a towel, moves over to some chairs. His flight suit is draped over one. He moves it to sit down.

MAVERICK

Ahhh, you'd love it. Night carrier landings! The most dangerous thing you can think of! ...next to you...And the most exciting. You're living at one hundred and ten per cent. Greatest high in the world...

CHARLIE

Danger?

MAVERICK

Yeah!

CHARLIE

Doesn't it ever bother you?

MAVERICK

Why, what's gonna happen?

His flight suit slips onto the ground. Charlie retrieves it.

As she lifts the suit, something falls out of the pocket.

Looks like a gold coin. She picks it up. Maverick is drying his hair. She holds the object out to him, questioning. He sees it, quickly takes it, stuffs it back into his pocket.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

Lucky charm.

CHARLIE

What do you take me for? It's a Navy Cross.

MAVERICK

Just good luck.

CHARLIE

Where'd you get it.

MAVERICK

Pawn shop. What's to eat?

He roots through a picnic basket.

84A. MONTAGE - PREFLIGHT ACTIVITY

VIPER (V.O.)

...MiG sweep over the water. You will proceed down the one-seven zero degree radial looking for MiGs. You will engage all that you find, destroy them, and return to base. Maverick, has the lead. Any questions? All right, let's go. Move like you've got a purpose....

EXT. CLOUD COVER -

,000 FT. - DAY

Four F-14's fly in formation over the Pacific, searching for (MiGs). They spot them, engage. The combatants fly scissor patterns, slashing past each other, angling for position.

We hear the VOICES OF COMBAT from the planes, a barrage of information exchanges between pilots and RIO's. Maverick and Ice swoop close together on each other's wing--moving on each other, testing, they glance at each other and nod. The Challenge...the fight is on. Suddenly an F-5 rises up out of the clouds in front of them--Ice has the advantage and rolls in on him.

ICE

ENGAGING BANDIT 12 O'CLOCK.

MAVERICK

SHIT!!

The F-5 sees his pursuers. Goes into a hard left.

ICE

MIG'S IN A LEFT. MIG'S IN A LEFTHAND.
I'M ENGAGING.

Ice struggles against the G's to bring his nose to bear.

They go around into a Lufbery--a tight circle, Ice has the advantage. He is closer to the F-5's tail than the F-5 is to his. But he can't close, can't line up the shot. He grunts and strains as the G force pushes him down.

MAVERICK

COME OFF RIGHT--COME OFF HIGH--I'M
IN--I'LL ENGAGE.

ICE

STAY WHERE YOU ARE. HE'S MINE. I'M
ENGAGED. I'M IN.

Maverick maneuvers close to their left circle.

ICE (CONT'D)

GET OUT OF THERE, YOU'RE UNSAFE.
GET OUT OF THERE.

MAVERICK

FIRE, OR CLEAR OUT, ICE.
ICE GET LOST!

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

YOU GOT TOO MUCH NOSE TO TAIL --I'M
COMING IN.

ICE

IT'S MY SHOT.

MAVERICK

COME OFF--COME OFF RIGHT. I'M ON MY
WAY IN. YOU GO FREE, I'M ENGAGING.

ICE

STAY OUT OF IT. STAY OUT OF IT,
MAVERICK.

MAVERICK

YOU CAN'T SHOOT HIM, I CAN. I'M IN.

MAVERICK - ABOVE.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)
ICE, ROLL OFF, I CAN SHOOT HIM.

ICE
NO, NO, NO, HE'S MINE.

Maverick is pulling a log of G's, but can't target his weapons, he continues to turn in a hard circle, going round and round without gaining. He can't bring his nose to bear.

MAVERICK
IF YOU CAN'T SHOOT HIM, I CAN.

ICE
NO, I GOT HIM. I CAN TAKE HIM.

Ice stays.

MAVERICK
COMING IN.

Maverick dives down between the two planes pulling 6.5 G's, exposing his underside to Ice. All Ice sees is belly.

Obviously, in this attitude Maverick can't see him.

ICE
(under breath.)
Sonofabitch.

He slams the stick hard right in toward Maverick.

Ice quickly rolls up right, in front of him.

ICE LOOK OUT!

Maverick sees him flash into his view. He has to slam the stick forward to avoid collision. He swings by real close.

Too close.

GOOSE
Oh, no!

They pass through Ice's turbulence. The blast distorts the airflow to Maverick's left engine. BOOMBOOMBOOM. The engine flames out. Full thrust on the right, engine swings the tail around in a yaw. Maverick slams the stick right to correct but too late.

GOOSE (CONT'D)
Plane's coupling up! Plane's coupling up!

The plane couples one yaw to the next--the tail swings around--which becomes an ever increasing flat spin, like an out-of-control frisbee.

GOOSE (CONT'D)

This is not good!...(Rising panic)
We're low!

Maverick is pinned to the instrument panel by centrifugal force, desperately tries to reach back for the ejection lever--but is falling short by about a foot.

MAVERICK

I'm pinned to the panel.

GOOSE

Time to go.

MAVERICK

I can't eject.

The plane is spinning ever faster, out of control. He drops the gear. Still spins. Goose is closer to center of spin--G forces are less. He reaches behind him for the eject handle, starts the eject sequence.

GOOSE

3000 feet. I'll do it.

MAVERICK

Go ahead. I can't reach. 2000 feet!

85A. BOOM - A HURRICANE OF WIND AND NOISE

The canopy BLASTS away--but is held spinning above the cockpit by the vortex of the sinking jet. Goose glances up at it.

GOOSE

MAVERICK Let's go. Eject.

Goose yanks the ejection handle. Things happen in a split second. Goose is fired up and out by the rocket under his seat. Almost instantly he impacts the spinning canopy. A sickening CRUNCH. The canopy is knocked away. Maverick is slammed back in his seat as the ejection seat straps wind up.

He is BLASTED out of the plane just before it spins in.

85B. TIGHT ON MAVERICK AS HE TUMBLES IN SLOW MOTION

He's in shock..the loud THUMPING of his heart, labored breathing, a scream that stays in his mind.

Instinctively, he gropes for straps. He releases the pilot seat, it tumbles away. His chute streams, balloons open, snapping his body like a bullwhip. He drifts momentarily, then plunges into the sea.

85C. UNDERWATER

His face, distorted in the water; wild eyes, disoriented, choking for air. He reaches out, finds nothing to grab.

Suddenly, he is yanked hard to the side.

85D. SURFACE

The parachute is caught by the wind, and dragged, pulling Maverick along beneath the surface. He is twisting in the water, turning over and over, trying desperately to slip out of the tangled straps. He finally hits the surface of the water and sucks air into his lungs. With the end of his strength, he hits the release snaps and breaks free from the parachute. It whips away like a kite in a typhoon.

The sea is choppy and rough. He struggles as his equipment drags him under. He twists, finds the inflatable raft attached to his harness. Maverick pulls the cord, and the raft hisses open. He pulls his body into the six-by-two foot raft and collapses, completely exhausted. The survival has been almost without thinking: an instinctual physical struggle.

85E. TWILIGHT

Maverick begins to focus on the situation. He stains the water with dye, then sees another parachute floating nearby.

Paddling to the parachute, he reaches over the side and begins to pull on the heavy cords that are submerged in the water.

A great struggle. The weight is extremely heavy. Finally, he pulls a body to the surface. Goose. Goose is dead. Maverick releases the parachute and pulls Goose into the raft on top of him. He holds Goose in his arms. His mind shuts down again.

From high above the ocean, we see the debris on the water.

An oil slick, pieces of honeycomb titanium, and the small, helpless figure in the raft.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Searchlights skim over the black ocean. A brilliant light flashes as Maverick pops a pencil flare. Helicopter blades flick powerfully. The lights of the choppers descend toward the wreckage area, scanning the debris, searching for life.

The spotlights find Maverick and Goose in the raft.

The draft from the chopper churns the water. A FROGMAN drops from the chopper and hits with a heavy splash. He surfaces and swims to the raft as a rescue harness is lowered.

Maverick watches curiously as he starts to examine Goose. He hugs Goose closer and looks threatened.

FROGMAN

Let him go, sir. Take it easy.

He tries to pry Goose free, but Maverick has a death grip on the body.

FROGMAN (CONT'D)

Sir! Let him go. It's all right.
Let him go.

Maverick glares at the man as he bobs in the water.

Another long moment, then Maverick releases Goose. The frogman quickly straps Maverick into the harness.

HIS POV. - HE WATCHES THE LIFELESS BODY IN THE WATER AS HE
is pulled up and away. He shivers from the cold.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Extreme CLOSE ON Maverick's face. He is emotionless. His eyes are flat and absolutely without expression. There is complete silence in the room. Then we hear the quiet, calm, probing voice of Viper.

VIPER

How do you feel?

MAVERICK

All right.

VIPER

Goose is dead.

MAVERICK

I know. I was there.

Not one sign of emotion from Maverick. Not one tone of expression. We see Viper now, and his face is strained from a very long day.

VIPER

If you fly jets long enough, something
like this happens to you.

(MORE)

VIPER (CONT'D)

No one escapes it. It touches us
all.

Maverick looks at Viper, and his eyes are very disturbed.

MAVERICK

He was...my responsibility--my RIO.

VIPER

My first squadron in Vietnam, we
lost eight out of eighteen planes.
Ten guys. The first one kills you,
but there'll be others--you can count
on it.

No reaction from Maverick. He can't quite face up to that
reality right now.

VIPER (CONT'D)

You've got to put him in the box.

Maverick is watching Viper, but he doesn't have anything to
say.

EXT. CHARLIE'S SPORTSCAR - NIGHT

The RADIO plays John Lennon; "Stand by Me". Maverick opens
his eyes, doesn't know where he is for a moment.

CHARLIE

...they say you're alright.

MAVERICK

I'm fine.

CHARLIE

This is it, then.

MAVERICK

What?

CHARLIE

The dark side. The price you pay for
all the fun you're having. You knew
about it, of course. Didn't you?

MAVERICK

He was a friend of mine. A good
guy...great guy. It was my fault.

CHARLIE

That's not what I hear.

MAVERICK

I was flying...my responsibility.

CHARLIE

That's what you get flight pay for.

MAVERICK

Maybe I shouldn't take it.

CHARLIE

(In surprise)

Why? You act like you didn't know one day this would happen.

MAVERICK

Not to me.

CHARLIE

You knew it. You all do. It's part of it. Maybe the most important part.

88A. ON THE BEACH - NIGHT AND FOG

Charlie's car pulls up. They get out and walk down toward the water. Maverick seems dazed. She is softly taunting.

MAVERICK

Where are we?

CHARLIE

Where are we? You know where we are. It's called the beach. It's where life first crawled up out of the sea. I come here sometimes... when I feel like crawling back in.

MAVERICK

You don't have to do this.

CHARLIE

Do what, show you a good time?

MAVERICK

I'm not good company. I should be alone.

CHARLIE

I don't think so, but if that's what you want...

They stand there, not making a move.

MAVERICK

No.

CHARLIE

What do you want?

MAVERICK

I want it back.

CHARLIE

What?

MAVERICK

Yesterday.

She turns, nods out, past the moon.

CHARLIE

You look way out there. Out past the date line. West becomes East, all things change. You cross the line...today becomes yesterday...or tomorrow, I forget which.

MAVERICK

That's what I want.

CHARLIE

Of course the line's just imaginary. You can cross it twenty times...nothing really changes.

She turns and walks along the surfline.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

On the beach... It's what they say when Navy men retire...He's "On The Beach". I always liked that. I had a picture...in my head... all these old guys wandering around here, looking out into the past.

He walks to the surf, kicks the sand with his bare feet.

MAVERICK

If we knew then, what we know now, we might never have come up out of there.

He turns to her. She just looks at him.

CHARLIE

You don't believe that.

MAVERICK

Hardly ever.

CHARLIE

Only when you're depressed. Then it passes.

MAVERICK

It does?

CHARLIE

Everything passes. Immutable law of the Universe.

He picks up a piece of flotsam, a twig, worn smooth.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

This too...shall pass. You put as much life as you can between it and you. You start piling up experience between then and now.

He turns and walks.

MAVERICK

What do you do when you come here?

CHARLIE

I sit. I think. I play games.

MAVERICK

What kind of games?

CHARLIE

I like to play "reality".

She stops and turns.

MAVERICK

How do you play reality.

CHARLIE

It's strip reality, actually, like what the pilots always want to play.

MAVERICK

(this gets a small
laugh)

Strip reality! How do you play that?

CHARLIE

It's like strip poker, only, without the bluffing. (he laughs again) One person says something and if the other one accepts that it's true, the one who says it, gets to take one item of clothing off.

MAVERICK

You're crazy. (She stops, he goes on, softer) That's a pretty silly game.

CHARLIE

Not as silly as some. You know the silliest one? ...that we are gods. That we control events on the beach... that we can turn back time...

She moves in close.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Want to play the game?

MAVERICK

How does it go?

CHARLIE

You say the truth. (a beat...) Go ahead. Don't be afraid. You want to win the game, don'tcha?

MAVERICK

What truth?

CHARLIE

The big one. The one that's most on your mind.

A long pause...it comes hard.

MAVERICK

Goose is dead.

CHARLIE

True.

MAVERICK

Now?

CHARLIE

(she nods)
Take something off.

MAVERICK

Off me or off you?

CHARLIE

That's up to you.

He takes the ribbon from her hair. It falls down over her face and shoulders. Now it's her turn.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

It's dangerous...what you do.

He nods. She slowly loosens his tie and pulls it from around his neck.

MAVERICK

It was my fault.

She says nothing, stands looking into his eyes. He slowly, as if in a trance, takes her blouse off.

CHARLIE

You can't bring him back.

She takes off his shirt.

MAVERICK

It was my fault.

He starts to reach for her. She pulls back.

CHARLIE

Nope. Already used that.

She turns and thinks for a moment, looking at the moon.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Your life goes on.

Rather than struggle his T shirt over his head, she grabs it with both hands. She leans in close and bites it. She grabs both sides of the tear and slowly rips it off his body.

MAVERICK

What does it mean?

CHARLIE

(shakes her head no)

That wasn't fair. It was a question.
Penalty round!

She drops her skirt.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You didn't mean it. You didn't think.
You'd do anything to take it back.

MAVERICK

That's three.

CHARLIE

And that's one!

She unbuckles his belt, slowly slides it off. She unzips his pants, they fall.

MAVERICK

One more.

CHARLIE

Your watch.

She unbuckles it.

MAVERICK

You owe me one.

He rests his head on her shoulder, unhooks her bra. She shrugs it off.

They stand on the beach in shorts and bikini bottom, looking into each other's eyes.

CHARLIE

Looks like a tie.

MAVERICK

Who's gonna win?

CHARLIE

We'll say it together. On the count of three...One...two...

Leaning in, softer and harder...they both jump the gun.

BOTHTOGETHER

I love.ove y.you.

They embrace madly and sink to the sand. From the distance it looks like a strange slithering creature crawling back to the sea.

INT. GOOSE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The lights are out in Goose's room at the Bachelor Officers'

Quarters. The door opens, and Maverick enters. He sets a cardboard box on the bed.

Silently, Maverick gathers together Goose's few personal possessions. He fills the box with clothes, books, a clock, a radio, a walkman, and articles from the bathroom. He examines each closely, like an artifact...as if he might find some message or meaning in them. He fumbles them into the box. He can't see too well, his eyes are full of tears.

Maverick closes the box and carries it to the door. He takes one last glance around, then leaves and closes the door behind him.

89A. INT. BOQ RECEPTION AREA

*

Carol and the kid, stand, staring at a silent TV. Carol looks dazed, lost. Maverick walks in, finds her. An awkward silence while they both try to think of something to say.

Maverick hands the box to Carol.

OMITTED

89B. CLOSE UP - MAVERICK.

He sits staring right through us...the thousand-yard stare.

A strange white unreal light washes over him. The only color, the Navy and gold of the stripes on his shoulder boards. A low rumbling mumbling filters through the HISS of surf or fans or something...Snatches of low whispered conversations...

...DISREGARD OF...BASIC AIR-SAFETY
principles...too aggressive
...incident.... 29 July...within
performance parameters... disciplinary
action...tactical doctrine.... even
reckless at times... conjecture...
unsupported ...benefit of the doubt...

Maverick's eyes slowly focus. The light attenuates. The surrounding image becomes denser. Things become real.

C. INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - MAVERICK'S POV

A BOARD OF INQUIRY, a COMMANDER and other NAVY OFFICERS seated behind tables at the front of the room. Maverick faces them, wearing dress whites. Viper is also present. The Commander looks at each of the Officers. They each nod, in turn, indicating readiness. The Commander turns to Maverick, and states for the record:

CDR.

The Board of Inquiry finds that Lt.
Evan Mitchell was not at fault in
the accident of twenty-nine July.

No response from Maverick, one way or the other. Viper studies his face with concern.

CDR. (CONT'D)

Lt. Mitchell's record will be cleared
of this incident.

Still no response from Maverick.

CDR. (CONT'D)

Lt. Mitchell is restored to flight status without further delay. These proceedings are closed.

Maverick doesn't respond.

INT. MAVERICK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maverick lies on his bunk and stares at the ceiling. The phone next to his bed is RINGING. It RINGS EIGHT OR NINE TIMES, then stops. He makes no move to reach for it.

THROUGH 95. OMITTED

94A. INT. COCKPIT - F-14 ON FLIGHT LINE

Maverick sits in the cockpit staring at the controls while the ground crew preps the aircraft for flight. Coogan helps him strap in. He speaks solicitously to Maverick. It is unheard over the JET NOISE and RADIO BABBLE. Maverick looks at the cockpit as if it's a strange territory, suddenly foreign to him. He grabs the stick like it's some peculiar talisman. He turns and looks aft. He seems surprised that it moves the control surfaces in the tails.

INT. F-14 - DAY

FUNGUS

BOGEY AT TEN O'CLOCK LOW. YOU'VE GOT THE ANGLE -- PIECE OF CAKE.

Maverick checks ten o'clock low. He is disturbed. He tries to make the move, but he is a man with no secret: he is afraid.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

ENGAGE, MAVERICK - ANYTIME.

The bogey abruptly turns into him. Maverick hesitates. Then suddenly, he jerks the stick hard right and takes the F-14 away from the bogey at great speed. Fungus is startled.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

WHAT? WHERE'RE YOU--HEY, WHERE IN THE HELL ARE YOU GOING?

MAVERICK

DIDN'T ... AH...LOOK GOOD.

FUNGUS

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? IT DOESN'T GET TO LOOK MUCH BETTER THAN THAT?

MAVERICK

NO. NO GOOD.

A. INT. FLIGHT LINE - DAY

Jester walks up to Viper who waits near an F-5.

JESTER

He just won't engage. He can't do it, Skipper. He can't get back on the horse.

VIPER

It's only been a week. Keep sending him up.

JESTER

I've seen this before.

VIPER

So have I.

JESTER

Some guys never get it back.

He walks off.

THROUGH 102. OMITTED

INT. LOCKER ROOM - IMMEDIATELY AFTER

Maverick grabs his stuff out of the locker, throws them in a bag. He glances up as Fungus enters, continues to pack.

FUNGUS

What are you doing?

MAVERICK

Saving them some paperwork.

FUNGUS

Since when did you care about paperwork?

Maverick walks away. Fungus hesitates, then follows him.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

If I could fly like you I'd have everything I want. If I could fly at all. I can't fly. I can't fly like that. Nobody can. Whatever it is, you've got it!

MAVERICK

Not anymore.

FUNGUS

So, you're scared--so what? You ever
get a good look at me in the back
seat, I'm goddamn terrified.

Grabbing the suitcase, Maverick brushes past Jester and walks up the corridor. Jester and Fungus watch him go. Fungus goes to the phone.

EXT. SAN DIEGO AIRPORT - NIGHT

Charlie parks her car, jumps out, and runs toward the main entrance to the terminal.

INT. TERMINAL

Charlie hurries through the crowd, bumping past people, searching frantically for Maverick in the huge terminal. She moves past bench after bench, and her eyes flick in all directions. A quick glance at the souvenir shop, the coffee shop, and then she heads for the bar.

Maverick is there, sitting alone in a booth with his suitcase beside him, staring into a drink. Charlie composes herself, then walks to the booth and sits down across the table from him. Maverick does not look pleased.

CHARLIE

Never liked fighter pilots anyway.

He looks up trying to be angry, but he can't help it, she makes him laugh.

MAVERICK

You came to the right place.

The waitress comes up.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

What are you having?

Turns to the waitress.

CHARLIE

I'll have what he's having...
Hemlock, is it?

The waitress departs. He tries not to smile, but can't help it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You weren't gonna say goodbye?

MAVERICK

I was, later.

CHARLIE

Long distance? I wouldn't do that to you. I'd at least talk to you.

MAVERICK

I didn't want to see you. I mean, I did...but I didn't..

CHARLIE

I know exactly what you mean.

MAVERICK

How could you?

CHARLIE

I've got a gift just like you do. My gift is I just know what people mean, even if they can't say it. It helps when you're trying to communicate with fighter pilots. Like what you just said was "I'm embarrassed, I feel I've done something wrong, that I've failed, and I don't think I can live up to the expectations of a wonderful interesting, intelligent woman like yourself." That about it?

MAVERICK

(laughs)
...Something like that.

CHARLIE

And I'm gonna sneak off, and be by myself for awhile, like until I can think of a new career...hotel management or something...

MAVERICK

Big talk for someone who's never been shot off her computer.

CHARLIE

Hey, I never said I was a fighter pilot...I never claimed to think it was fun to be shot off the end of a ship in a storm. I can find contentment in a good book. I don't have to roar by someone at Mach two with my hair on fire. Sometimes...I just get happy being with the right man.

MAVERICK

I hope you find him.

CHARLIE

I think I have... I could be wrong.
I have been before. Just remember
one thing. If you're not Top Gun, if
you're not fighting jets, you're not
gonna be able to act like a fighter
pilot... You're gonna have to act
like the rest of us. You're gonna
have to master humility. For you
guys, that's the toughest maneuver
of all.

She gets up...lays a bill out for the drinks...

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

So long, Sailor. See you on the beach
sometime.

She swings away. Her wake sucks in the stares of every man
in the place. Then they look over to Maverick, quick flicks
of envy in their eyes. He stares them back and can't quite
meet their eyes.

EXT. BEACH AT VIPER'S HOUSE - LATER

Viper is tugged down the beach by a three year old kid. They
come across one creature who's had a bad night...Viper spots
him, he spots Viper, and Viper moves toward him. Tim, Viper's
kid, wants to head for the sea and pulls his father in that
direction. He stops, puts his hand on his hips like he's
seen the pilots do.

TIM

Dad...Of all the animals in the ocean,
which one's the baddest?

VIPER

I don't know, Tim. You'll have to
ask them.

Viper turns to the creature, Maverick, and shrugs.

VIPER (CONT'D)

Runs in the family...

Maverick stands up.

MAVERICK

Skipper, sorry to bother you.

VIPER

No bother.

MAVERICK

I called your house.

VIPER

My wife's house.

MAVERICK

She said you took your kid to the
each. Every second Sunday. Zoo or
beach or the ballgame. Y'have the
option...(Maverick thinks for a beat.
Segues to the question...)
What about me?

Viper turns, they stroll together.

VIPER

We can send you back to your squadron
with nothing noted on your record
except "CNC" --course not completed,
no explanation required.

Theoretically, it doesn't hurt your career, but people always
wonder about things like that.

MAVERICK

Or....

VIPER

Or you can quit.

MAVERICK

I don't know...

VIPER

I didn't know either. That's why I
told Jester to prepare your papers.

Maverick looks irritated. Viper stops at an ice cream vendor
and orders three with a gesture.

MAVERICK

You've already made up your mind.

VIPER

It's no disgrace, kid. That spin was
hell. It would wreck anyone's
confidence. You could be a good pilot
again someday...

MAVERICK

(starts to get his
back up)

You think I should quit?!

VIPER

I didn't say that. That's up to you.
(MORE)

VIPER (CONT'D)

But I have responsibility for the other guys up there, not just you. They need to know you're all right...that they can depend on you.

The vendor hands them ice cream, they take it.

MAVERICK

Here, let me get this. We'll be even.

He reaches into his pocket for change, comes out with a handful. Slams it on the counter, starts picking the proper change out. Viper spots something and reaches for it...Maverick sees and tries to block it, but Viper comes up with the Navy Cross.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

Lucky charm.

But Viper recognizes it for what it is.

VIPER

Sometimes it's luck, but in this case, he earned it... I served with your old man.

MAVERICK

I know.

VIPER

VF 51, the Oriskany. You remind me of him. You're just like he was, only better...and worse.

MAVERICK

I'm nothing like him.

VIPER

You may not think so, but you are.

MAVERICK

He was by the book, all the way.

VIPER

They waved him off. He thought he knew better. He hit the ramp.

MAVERICK

I never heard that.

VIPER

Not something they tell dependents.

MAVERICK

It's not true.

Viper looks at him, for a long beat, throws his icecream away.

VIPER

Why would I lie?

He turns, walks away. Maverick stands there for a moment, thinking, then catches up to him, stops him...struggles with the thought...as Viper breaks in...

VIPER (CONT'D)

You start on a wrong heading... the more you stick to it, the further you get from your target. A good pilot always questions himself, always questions his judgments, stays alert for drift and makes the corrections...You may find a little discipline helps with the fear. You don't have to be alone up there.

A pause...quiet intensity.

MAVERICK

How can I go on? I feel so... responsible.

VIPER

Kid, the plain fact is...you are. I'm not gonna stand here and blow sunshine up your ass. Technically, they absolved you. You and I know what really happened. You pushed it. You are responsible and you'll always carry that. You know what, I'll carry it too. I should have taken you out of that cockpit. I guess I'm a hopeless romantic... I always try to find something worthwhile in someone's death. It's no trade-off. It's not one for one. What you learned isn't worth his death. It couldn't be. But maybe there is some value in it. I know it's the first thing I've ever seen that's really gotten to you. Now the question is, what will you do with it. If it gets you out of flight status...so you don't kill yourself or anybody else...that's good. That's one good thing. You were an accident waiting to happen.

MAVERICK

You think I shouldn't fly.

VIPER

I didn't say that. That's up to you.
I think that if you do, if you choose
to come back, you'll be a better
pilot... a better man.

MAVERICK

Would you take me back? Would they?

VIPER

I'll have to think about it. I don't
know about them. I do know one thing,
We've got a lot invested in you.
We'd hate to lose it. Even more than
those other guys, Naval Aviation
needs a very few, very good men.

THROUGH 114. OMITTED

INT. TOP GUN OFFICE

LOUD ROCK AND ROLL. The graduation ceremonies are in full swing...They consist of informal ribbing, laughing, and a lot of talking with the hands. every now and then, the name Goose comes up and a shadow passes across a face. For the most part, they press on, having a good time. Fungus shrugs at someone's question and looks around.

FUNGUS

I don't know where he is...

PORK

What are his plans?

FUNGUS

I don't know.

Ice stands proudly holding the Top Gun plaque as others congratulate him...Hollywood looks up as the door opens, Maverick is there. He looks uncomfortable, unsure. He sees Ice with the plaque. Fungus moves over to him, brings him in.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

I'm glad.

WOLFMAN

Good to see you, man.

One by one, they come over, shake his hand. Viper stands there, looking pleased but gruff. Maverick walks over, shakes his hand. The party starts to pick up.

A real celebration, now.

Jester enters, a sheaf of messages in his hand. He takes Viper aside for a word. Viper nods at him. The group's attention gradually swings onto them. They quiet down instinctively. Viper finally turns to them.

VIPER

Gentlemen, you know how I hate to break up this party before it has a chance to get really out of hand...
(more serious)
...but there's a major flap on.

HOLLYWOOD

We're being called back?

VIPER

You're on your way. Don't bother going to BOQ. Your bags are packed.

He hands them orders. Someone turns the music back up... as they shake hands all around, the music grows, becomes purer as the background voices drop out.

A. TIGHT ON MAVERICK'S

EYES

WIDEN OUT -

To include his helmet. Stereo headphones from his walkman carry the same music from the party as he sits in the cockpit and stares at the grey water rushing under. He sits in his Tomcat on Ready 5 Alert. In the back, Fungus plays a hand computer game - Jet Attack.

EXT. USS KITTY HAWK - SOMEWHERE AT SEA

Maverick's Tomcat sits waiting for a launch order on the forward catapult.

A. ANGLE - MAVERICK

He goes over the briefing in his mind...Stinger's voice breaks through the music.:

STINGER (V.O.)

...Navy oceanographic ship...

INTERNATIONAL WATERS... FIRED
upon... unknown forces...

INT. READY ROOM - USS KITTYHAWK - MOMENTS BEFORE

In full flight gear, sixteen teams of fighter pilots and RIO's pay close attention to the Squadron CO, Stinger.

STINGER

...by unknown forces...by Migs. We don't know who they are. All I know is that it's our ship, and our orders are to escort it out of the area.

Stinger circles an area on the map.

117A. TOMCAT ON THE DECK - MAVERICK

He studies his copy of the same map, headings and vectors pencilled in.

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

This is "Bullseye". A rescue operation is to begin within the hour. Your mission is to give air support to that rescue. There are MiGs in the area, and tensions are high. If you witness a hostile act you will return fire. We will be covering 360 degrees of the compass by section. Be prepared for anything.

B. INT. READY ROOM

Stinger is speaking to individual pilots.

SLIDER

Ice and Hollywood, sector two.

He turns to Maverick who stands nearby.

SLIDER (CONT'D)

And Maverick. You'll back them up, on Ready Five.

C. CLOSE ON HIS FACE

A moment's disappointment passes so fleetingly, you hardly see it.

MAVERICK

Yessir.

As the air crews file out, tense but excited.

118. ICE AND HOLLYWOOD FLY TOGETHER AT TEN THOUSAND FEET

Their eyes search the horizon, while Slider and Wolfman watch their instruments.

ICE
MUSTANG, THIS IS VOODOO ONE, WE ARE
ON STATION.

The two jets streak across the sky.

A. INT. COCKPIT

Suddenly, there are BLIPS on the radar scope.

HOLLYWOOD
CONTACT. TWO BOGEYS 20 RIGHT. AT 12
MILES, CLOSING.

B. INT. COCKPIT - THEIR POV

Two MiGs flying low to the deck.

HOLLYWOOD (CONT'D)
TALLY HO. TWO MIGS AT TWO O'CLOCK
LOW.

118C. THE MIGS SUDDENLY PULL VERTICAL, STREAK STRAIGHT UP.

118D. ICE AND HOLLYWOOD WATCH CAREFULLY.

HOLLYWOOD (CONT'D)
WHAT ARE YOUR INTENTIONS, BOYS?

ICE
THEY'RE JUST HASSELING. LET'S WORK
THEM OUT OF THE AREA.

WOLFMAN
I'VE GOT TWO MORE BOGEYS COMING IN
AT FOUR O'CLOCK HIGH.
GOT 'EM.

HOLLYWOOD
118E. THE FOUR MIGS Join together
in a box formation, begin to circle
the area.

HOLLYWOOD (CONT'D)
TWO MORE -- TWO MORE CONTACTS.

2-7-0 at 10 MILES. WE NEED SOME

HELP HERE, MUSTANG.

ICE
 MUSTANG, WE HAVE FOUR MIGS IN THE
 AREA OF BULLSEYE. REQUEST YOU LAUNCH
 THE ALERT 5 FOR SUPPORT.

DECK - KITTY HAWK

Maverick sits in his Tomcat on the Catapult on ready alert, listening to the message traffic. He gets a launch order, turns to the LSO. The LSO salutes, Maverick salutes and flips him the bird. The LSO drops to the deck. Maverick is slammed back as the F-14 is fired off the deck and rockets into the sky.

CCA (V.O. filtered)
 ROGER, VODOO.

EXT. SKY - HOLLYWOOD AND ICE

The two MiGs cross in a scissor pattern in their path... a provocation...they join together again and fly level at ten thousand feet. One of the MiGs does a sudden canopy roll.

HOLLYWOOD
 VERY FANCY!

BOOM! A FLASH! Suddenly, Out of nowhere, Hollywood's hit.

WHAM! Just that fast, he's hit and goes down. His f-14 disappears into the clouds.

ICE
 WOOD! WOOD, ACKNOWLEDGE!

Ice puts his nose down and follows him.

ICE (CONT'D)
 VODOO ONE, MUSTANG. VODOO THREE IS
 HIT. GOING DOWN. WILL ATTEMPT SAR.

He comes out of clouds at 1500, nothing but empty water below.

ICE (CONT'D)
 Do you have them? Did they get out
 or not?

SLIDER
 (confusion)
 No contact. I don't know.

EXT. MAVERICK'S F-1

MAVERICK
 VODOO, GHOST RIDER ONE. I'M ON THE
 WAY. WAIT FOR ME.

122. THE SKY - MIGS AND TOMCATS CIRCLE

SLIDER
THEY GOT WOLF, THEY GOT WOOD. THEY
GOT THEM..

ICE
MUSTANG, GHOST RIDER. PERMISSION TO
FIRE.

STRIKE (V.O.)
GHOST RIDER, THIS IS MUSTANG.
PERMISSION TO FIRE. PERMISSION TO
FIRE.

ICE
ROGER. ENGAGING. I HAVE THE LEAD.

A. INT. MAVERICK'S F-1

FUNGUS
Let's go! Dive on those bastards!

Maverick hesitates.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)
Come on, man, engage. This is it.
Get your nose in there.

Maverick hesitates again. He sees the hornet's nest below;
planes all over the sky.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)
Bandit at seven o'clock low--solo.
Take him. Pull on the goddamn stick,
man!

MAVERICK
Okay, okay.

FUNGUS
Don't tell me okay. Do it!

Maverick draws a breath, then forces himself to pull the
stick over. The F-14 rolls in hard toward the battle.

Suddenly, the cluster breaks apart. The MiGs break in every
direction as Maverick BLASTS through their formation.

Something comes up through the clouds. A MiG BLASTS by.

Another rolls in and locks onto them.

The MiGs swarm toward the TOMCATS, coming from every
direction. CANNON FIRE erupts from one of the MiGs.

MAVERICK
 MAVERICK'S ENGAGED. HARD LEFT, ICE,
 PADLOCK THE EASTERN SECTION.

The F-14's execute a left oblique turn in unison. They come down in a section attack with their cannons blazing. From Maverick's cockpit, everything looks choppy: MiGs slide past at incredible speed. Cannons BLAST, as the planes scramble for position.

Out-numbered four to two, Maverick and Ice fight defensively. Maverick has the angle on a MiG, when Fungus spots a missile launch.

FUNGUS
 BREAK LEFT! BREAK LEFT! CHAFF!
 FLARES!

MAVERICK
 BREAKING LEFT!

Maverick releases a flare as he takes the F-14 into a hard left. The missile tracks the heat of the flare and sails out of the area, missing the Tomcat and falling toward the sea.

ICE
 TWO MIGS ON MY TAIL, MAVERICK. I'M
 DEFENSIVE.

Maverick jerks his stick right and streaks toward Ice. He cuts off one of the MiGs with CANNON FIRE, driving it down toward the deck. Ice goes into vertical and comes around to gain an angle on the other MiG. His RIO is in position to check Mav's rear.

SLIDER
 MAVERICK! SIX O'CLOCK!

Maverick turns to look and jerks a hard left. The MiG is on him, CANNON BLAZING. Ice Yo Yos inside and cuts the MiG off.

ICE
 FOX ONE.

He fires a sidewinder. The MiG turns hard, the missile sails away.

SLIDER
 BANDIT, THREE O'CLOCK HIGH!

Ice's F-14 is suddenly caught in a HAIL OF CANNON FIRE as a MiG sweeps down from three o'clock. He breaks, dives. The jets streak across the sky, low to the deck, skimming the surface.

FUNGUS
ICE'S DEFENSIVE, HELP HIM OUT.

Maverick's F-14 rolls in and intercepts the bogey on Ice's tail.

MAVERICK
REVERSE RIGHT.

Ice turns right, the MiG bugs and jerks into vertical.

Maverick swoops after him.

FUNGUS
STAY WITH HIM. YOUR SIX IS CLEAR.

Maverick closes, jerking left, right, twisting and turning, staying on his tail.

B. MAVERICK'S COCKPIT

FUNGUS (CONT'D)
ONE ON OUR SIX! BUG OUT! BUG OUT!

BULLETS fly by Maverick's F-14 from the MiG on his six. He pulls a hard left, then takes the plane straight up. We hear instructions shouted by Fungus, but it is all obscured in the SOUNDS AND FURY OF THE BATTLE. Maverick peels over the top and comes down like a comet. A series of passes at the MiGs.

As they come by, one of the MiGs pulls up,

MAVERICK
OKAY, GOING UP. ICE, GO HIGH.
ICE LOOK OUT!

They look up. An MiG 21 is coming down, belly to them, close to a mid-air collision.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)
JESUS!

He pushes down. The MiG ROARS BY. The whole airplane goes "BOOOOMMM" it's that close.

FUNGUS
OHHHHH SHIT!

The shock, the air pressure SLAMS them as it goes by, missing by 4-5 feet. Maverick pulls back in, sees a MiG 21 below. It takes off, bugging out. Ice goes after him. The MiG maneuvers, jerking hard left, hard right, twisting up, down.

Ice is right in his shadow. They come in hard and low over the sea. He has the MiG in the diamond.

ICE
GOOD TONE, FOX ONE

The MiG starts turning.

ICE (CONT'D)
Ah Nuts!

The missile goes by the tail.

ICE (CONT'D)
Son of a bitch!

Then his tail comes off, the airplane goes over, a chute comes out. The MiG EXPLODES into a thousand small pieces.

They roar by the MiG pilot hanging in his straps.

SLIDER
JESUS! HEY SPLASH ONE, SPLASH ONE
BANDIT! SPLASH THAT SUCKER!

MAVERICK
I GOT ONE HERE. ON THE NOSE.
COMING DOWN.

Rolling down on him, good SIDEWINDER TONE. The MiG'S sense him, they break, one guy down low.

ICE
ON THE NOSE?

MAVERICK
GOT 'EM. GOT GOOD TONE.

He squeezes the trigger.

EXT. THE MISSILE STARTS TO GO

The vapor trail comes off, the MiG 21 turns like he's been bounced off a rubber wall, comes around on the missile, beats it. The missile flies by him.

MAVERICK
AH, SHIT! GODDAMN IT!

MiG comes back turning into him.

FUNGUS
THERE'S ANOTHER ONE UP THERE!

MAVERICK
I GOT ONE COMING UP.

FUNGUS
AND HE'S GUNNING.

He looks back. 30 millimeter tracers go by; they just kind of float. He breaks, hits airbrakes, the trailing MiG dives through.

Suddenly another MiG appears, rocketing straight for him.

They close at 900 knots--VABOOOM!--They pass nose to nose, canopy to canopy. Both planes pitch straight up, trying for the altitude advantage.

MAVERICK
Zone 5 burners.

The F-14 outclimbs the MiG sitting on its tail, full thruster, it rockets straight up, away from the planet.

Maverick has the advantage. Suddenly, his F-14 runs out of energy. FUNGUS is the first to call it.

FUNGUS
We're ballistic! Ohhhhhh Shit!

The plane backs down on itself, backs into its own smoke as it flips over, falls away...He catches it, just regains control, when...A ROAR. He looks up.

SECOND MIG coming down. Right on him. It fills the Canopy!

Instinctive - A Push to miss him, Maverick breaks fast down into him, a last ditch maneuver, and the airplane DEPARTS...the roll rates and the pitch rates combine and it tumbles over the top; the airplane just goes end-over-end.

They are being slammed and rattled all over the cockpits...bone-jarring, neck-snapping whips. SHRIEKS and SCREAMS from the airframe. Terrifying?

FUNGUS (CONT'D)
Ohhh Mother!

MAVERICK
(strangely calm)
Goddamnit, Mav, you really are a slow learner. Don't worry, Fung, I've got it.

Fungus is getting his teeth rattled. He's helpless, he has no controls, there's nothing he can do but hold on.

FUNGUS

Don't WORRY!!!? You've GOT it!!!?

Are you CRAZY?

MAVERICK

Roger, I've got it.

The plane's gyrations are rattling Fungus's helmet off the canopy.

FUNGUS

You've got it? Good! Cause for a minute there, you had me worried.

It yaws and rolls, starts into a spin.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

Now have you got it? Have you still got it?

MAVERICK

Yawing right.

FUNGUS

I know!

MAVERICK

Rudder's left, stick's forward.

FUNGUS

Swell! Passing ten thousand!

MAVERICK

I've got it -- hold on!

FUNGUS

Passing 8. Passing 6. Lock your harness!

MAVERICK

I can recover. Hold on!

They're in a progressive spiral, nose low. The altimeter unwinds, speed picks up. The G forces are forcing them away from the axis of spin, jamming Maverick against the instrument panel at the front of the cockpit.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

You with me?

Fungus, also, is jammed to his panel.

FUNGUS

Right behind you.

He is closer to the center of spin and less strongly held.

It doesn't do much good, however, he can't control the plane.

The only thing he can reach is the yellow and black loop; the ejection handle. He reaches for it.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

Speed's up to 150.

Fungus's eyes are wide. The earth grows larger as it rises towards them. G forces flatten them. They've long since lost the MiG. Nobody but an idiot would try to follow them in this maneuver.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

5000 feet. Speed two hundred.

MAVERICK

Okay.

The earth grows larger.

FUNGUS

4500. Critical point.

FUNGUS grabs the ejection handle with both hands.

MAVERICK

No! Not again!

FUNGUS

What are you talking about, we gotta go!

MAVERICK

I'm not losing it again!

The jet is standing on its nose, gaining speed, plunging towards the ocean.

FUNGUS

Gotta go, man.

MAVERICK

280, 290, 300 knots.

FUNGUS

3,000 feet. We gotta go, man.

3,000 feet, we gotta go!

MAVERICK

You go. I'm staying with it.

FUNGUS

I'm gonna go! THREE...TWO...ONE...

Then, just as suddenly, as he's about to pull...Maverick catches it. The plane responds. They're out of the spin. He gets control. Fungus sits there dumbly, hands on handle.

Still not believing...

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

ONE....ONE....ONE...

SEA LEVEL

Maverick stops the tumble, pulls the nose up quickly and the F-14 sweeps into level flight no more than a hundred feet above the deck. He comes up and looks right at Ice. Ice is down low. He comes around, a MiG-21 all over him like a cheap suit. A flick, a whip, and Maverick in perfect position, rolls right in on the MiG. Fungus looks like he just saw Jesus.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

What in the Christ...was that?

He looks at the Mig target set-up in front of him in awe.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

Did you plan that? Was all that something you planned?

Maverick's acquired the target and is all business.

MAVERICK

ALL RIGHT, ICE. COME HARD STARBOARD,
THEN EXTEND TO THE EAST.

Fungus is still lividly frazzled.

FUNGUS

Because...if that was... Next time
you tell me first.

ICE

ROG.

Maverick breaks down, Ice zooms up, breaks in and takes the MiG the other way. Maverick Yo Yo's in, comes right up behind the MiG, as the MiG starts acceleration.

Maverick rolls in on Ice and the MiG.

MAVERICK

I GOT A WINDER LEFT, BUT NO GOOD
TONE ON IT.

ICE
I CAN'T LOSE HIM, CAN YOU GET OFF A
SHOT?

MAVERICK
I GOT NO TONE. IT MIGHT GET YOU.

ICE
WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE? SHOOT IT.

MAVERICK
WHEN I SHOOT, YOU BREAK LEFT..3..2

The MiG fires.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)
HE FIRED, BREAK NOW!

Ice breaks left, drops flares. The MiG's missile follows the flares. Maverick FIRES. The missile doesn't twitch. It flies right up the tail pipe of the MiG, the canopy flies off, the pilot comes out of it, and then the MiG blows up, We go right through the fire ball. VVVARRRUOOMMM!

MAVERICK (CONT'D)
He's out! We got him!

The MiG rolls into the ground...KABOOM! They swoop by the pilot, hanging in his straps...He watches them, dumbly.

Fungus waves.

FUNGUS
What a dope! Maybe they'll give him
another plane...and we can shoot him
down again.

Maverick and Ice join up, light it, stand on their burners and blast straight for the sun.

MAVERICK'S F-14
Without warning, a triple roll, as
the elation hits him.

INT. MAVERICK'S COCKPIT

FUNGUS
What is it? What's wrong?

Fungus nervously looks around at his circuit breakers.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)
Is there something I should know?

MAVERICK

Just relax.

FUNGUS

Is it the plane?

MAVERICK

The plane is fine.

FUNGUS

Is it you?

MAVERICK

Yeah, I guess it is. We did it! We did it...Damn! We sure did it!

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

HELLO MUSTANG, THIS IS MAVERICK.

I'VE GOT A MESSAGE FOR STINGER.

STRIKE

(V.O.)

ROGER, MAVERICK. GO AHEAD.

MAVERICK

TELL STINGER MAVERICK HAS GOOD NEWS AND SOME BAD NEWS. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT ICE GOT A MIG. THE BAD NEWS IS THAT MAVERICK GOT TWO!

He looks over at Ice.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

I GOTTA HAVE ONE.

INT. ICE'S COCKPIT

SLIDER

We're low on fuel, Ice.

Ice considers for a moment, then responds.

ICE

I know. I know....Aw hell, let's do it!

INT. MAVERICK'S COCKPIT

FUNGUS

You're not supposed to...

MAVERICK

But I have to!

FUNGUS

Then...shit! Go ahead. I'm right behind you.

MAVERICK

MUSTANG, THIS IS MAVERICK, REQUEST A FLYBY.

128. PRI-FLY BRIDGE - (Primary Flight Control) USS KITTY HAWK

The Air Boss speaks to Maverick over the UHF. The Admiral, the XO and other officers watch and listen.

AIR BOSS

NEGATIVE, GHOST RIDER, THE PATTERN'S FULL.

MAVERICK (V.O. filtered)

MUSTANG, THIS IS GHOST RIDER.

REQUEST A FLYBY FOR TWO.

OFFICER

Who is that guy?

ADMIRAL

Mitchell...

XO

(surpressing a grin)

...Likes to break at 600, 'stead of 300 knots. The Air Boss hates him. One time, he came over the deck at two hundred, shakes the shit out of the bridge. Lifted Johnson right off his feet.

INT. MAVERICK'S F-1

He glances over at Ice, who gives him thumbs up.

MAVERICK

BOSS, YOU BETTER CLEAR IT OUT, WE'RE FIVE MINUTES OUT AND WE'RE DOING IT!

INT. PRI-FLY BRIDGE

The Admiral looks out over the water and smiles.

MAVERICK (V.O. filtered)

TEN MILES ASTERN, BOSS. HOW ABOUT IT?

The Air Boss is livid. He clenches the mike.

AIR BOSS
MUSTANG TO GHOST RIDER!...

Just then the Admiral pipes up.

ADMIRAL
Johnson!

AIR BOSS
Yes, Sir, Admiral?

ADMIRAL
Give him his flyby.

The Admiral looks at the others, tries to suppress his own grin. He slides into his (borrowed) command chair, looks into the wind. On the back of the chair, a clue; his name and rank: RADM. Buford Clancy, "BOOMER"

The AIR BOSS burns, but has no choice.

AIR BOSS
(really pissed off)
ROGER, GHOST RIDER, YOU'RE CLEAR.

131. EXT.

KITTY HAWK DAY

Sailors line the deck and search the sky. They crane their necks from their battle stations, sweating into the sun, watching for the approach of F-14's. Someone sees it--he points and SHOUTS. The F-14 appears, and every man stands and

CHEERS.

POV -

WE COME SCREAMING IN, 5 FEET OVER THE WATER, throwing up rooster tails behind. WE SPLIT OFF and ZOOM along each side of the carrier, at 100 feet and ROLL IT.

133. INT. PRI-FLY BRIDGE--VVAAAAABBOOOOM!

It lifts the Air Boss right off his feet. The walls warp, dust sifts from the overhead. The whole tower just goes BOOM!

AIR BOSS (CONT'D)
Goddamn that guy!"

EXT. FLIGHT DECK

They break at 500 knots. Ice is first down over the ramp, waved in. The F-14 comes in a little rocky. It bounces hard but grabs the wire, then jerks to a sudden halt. The sailors CHEER AND APPLAUD, throwing fists of victory into the air, straining to get a look at Ice as the crew directs his plane off to the side. Opening the canopy, Ice and Slider unstrap.

Stinger and the others are there. Guys are climbing up, climbing all over the airplane. They're already painting a MiG on the side, and they're looking at Ice in awe.

POV - MAVERICK - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD - AS HE LANDS

He catches the wire, the view slams down toward the deck as the plane arrests, then comes up...He releases the cockpit and can hear the ROAR OF THE CROWD...

EXT. FLIGHT DECK

He swings the nose around past Ice's. Ice's plane is covered in colored jerseys as the ground crew pulls him out.

Maverick's plane swings towards the PRI-FLY BRIDGE. Pilots in flight suits pour from the deck hatch APPLAUDING...

137. HE CUTS HIS ENGINES AS THE GROUND CREW SWARMS

As Maverick and Fungus climb down, they see their wingmen on the deck. Ice is looking in Maverick's direction. His face is inscrutable. Maverick gets mobbed, but pushes over to Ice.

They stare at each other for a moment, eye to eye even as they are buffeted by the crowd. Finally, Ice breaks...a grin.

ICE

I guess I owe you one.

MAVERICK

You don't owe me anything.
We're on the same team.

ICE

You saved our lives. You did it!

MAVERICK

We did it.

ICE

You're a hell of a flyer.
(he can't resist)
You can be my wingman any time.

MAVERICK

(laughs)

No. You can be mine!

Now Ice laughs. Nobody's ever gonna win on this one. But Ice smiles at him...It's now a running joke between them.

ICE

Whatever you say, Commander.

He and Slider snap to and proudly salute. Maverick hesitates, then returns it. As Ice and Slider snap it off, it turns into the pilot's salute, they give them the bird.

Maverick and Fungus laugh and return the compliment.

As they are mobbed by sailors, Maverick is elated to see two familiar figures: Hollywood and Wolfman turn from their battle damaged TOMCAT on the forward elevator as it sinks out of sight below decks.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK

FUNGUS

What happened to you?

WOLFMAN

He got our radio, and an engine. We were lucky to make it back.

HOLLYWOOD

Not luck. Skill.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Stinger rushes up, grabs Ice and Maverick in a bear hug.

STINGER

MiG killers! You name it, boy.
Sky's the limit. You name it. A medal.
Anything you want. Anything.

ICE

MiG killers! What else is there?

Maverick grins, turns away from them. He he looks out, at the dying sun glinting over the sea. He thinks how beautiful it is out here! Fungus grabs him from behind.

FUNGUS

You hear that? Anything we want.

Anything...Well???

MAVERICK

Well what?

FUNGUS

What do you want?

MAVERICK

What do I want?

FUNGUS

What do you want?

MAVERICK

(he thinks.)

Any more MiGs?

Stinger shakes his head no.

STINGER

They don't seem to want to come up anymore. There's nothing on the scopes. In fact, everybody's denying the incident ever happened. So...what is it? What do you want?

Maverick turns away, considering the options.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK - ANOTHER ANGLE

Another Tomcat rolls up to park nearby. He looks at the plane. Over the deck LOUDSPEAKER, comes the final call to the F-14:

LSO (V.O. filtered)

(a touch of sarcasm)

OKAY, GENTLEMEN. YOU CAN CUT YOUR ENGINES...YOU HAVE ARRIVED....

WWHHHEEEEEZZZZEEERRRRRUUUUMMMMMMMM...

AS THE ENGINES FADE, SO DOES THE PICTURE.

FADE IN - WEEKS LATER

EXT. DAY - FLIGHT LINE MIRAMAR - TOPGUN

Viper, Jester and others walk out of hangar to watch a wing return.

141A. EXT. MIRAMAR RUNWAY - DAY

THEIR POV. SUDDENLY AN F-14 BREAKS, ROARS IN OVER THE FIELD inverted, a hundred feet off the ground.

142. FLIGHT LINE MIRAMAR - DAY

JESTER

Who's the hell is that?

VIPER

Three guesses.

JESTER

Well, he's in trouble and he didn't even get here yet.

Jester looks over at an admiral, who steps out of a staff car, squints up at the swooping plane, turns, barks an order to his driver, jumps in the car and SLAMS the door, the car takes off.

EXT. MIRAMAR RUNWAY - DAY - FURTHER DOWN THE RUNWAY

MP jeeps - lights flashing, pull out and head for the flight line.

VIPER

Come on.

THEY HEAD FOR THE HANGAR

144. OVER THE END OF THE RUNWAY

The jet breaks at 500 knots and sets down neatly on the tarmac. The rest of his flight follows in perfect formation.

EXT. MIRAMAR RUNWAY - DAY - MAVERICK'S JET -PULLING UP

He unbuckles his straps, takes his helmet off. He looks over at the approaching caravan.

FUNGUS

I think they know we're here.

MAVERICK

Let me do the talking.

FUNGUS

Oh, no. You did the flying, I'll do the talking!

He stands up in the cockpit, gives a snappy salute.

FUNGUS (CONT'D)

Why Admiral....How really good it is to see you!

Maverick turns away. As he backs down the steps, a jeep screeches up, doors slam open, footsteps.

A VOICE
Who's in charge here?

MAVERICK
I am.

He's answered automatically, but now it hits him. He knows the voice. He turns.

HIS POV - CHARLIE, HANDS ON HIPS

CHARLIE
Not for long, you keep that up.

He hops down, stands there speechless, grinning happily at her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Well?

MAVERICK
Well what?

CHARLIE
You got your F-14, you got Top Gun,
you got your MiGs....You're our new
Top Gun instructor...Now what?

MAVERICK
Oh...I'll think of something...

What are you doing here?

CHARLIE
I live here, remember?

MAVERICK
Right on the flight line?

He's got her on that one. She laughs.

CHARLIE
Everybody's got to be somewhere.

MAVERICK
Maybe your somewhere's with me...

He puts his arms around her. Self-conscious, she pulls away, a little embarrassed to show this on the flight line. He laughs.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)
That's okay. I always look forward
to a challenge.

Now she laughs back and puts her arms around him. She kisses him and now she doesn't give a damn who sees it.

TOP GUN

Chip Proser

HOLLYWOOD

April 19, 1985