

INDIANS VS. ALIENS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. - A SWIRLING, BLINDING SNOWSTORM - ANTARCTIC DAYLIGHT

A polar blizzard HOWLS around a drab complex of connected two-story buildings set high on pylons in the snow. A TITLE:
Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station
November 19, 2020 - 8:03 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

INT. AMUNDSEN STATION - TELESCOPE CONTROL LAB - MORNING

The work day's just starting, and the lab is still nearly deserted. In a far corner a lone SCIENTIST, male, 59, is studying three monitors intently and typing on a keyboard. An INTERN, male, 22, enters the lab and greets him.

INTERN

Morning Doc! Didn't think I'd see
you before ten.

The Scientist doesn't respond. He's shaking his head in disbelief and muttering at the screens on his desk. The Intern sits at his own desk and starts organizing for work.

INTERN

I don't know how you do it. I
split early and I'm still half
hung-over. You guys with those
shots, man...

The Scientist finally looks up and speaks to the Intern.

SCIENTIST

Get over here and look at this.
See if I'm crazy.

The Intern gets up and starts toward the Scientist's desk.

INTERN

Shit, I can't believe Celia didn't
pass out. I mean, that's a lot of
hooch for a girl. When I
left she was still playing
quarters...

The Scientist stands up and interrupts urgently.

SCIENTIST
Just sit down here and look!

He points at the screens as the Intern arrives and sits in his chair. The Intern orients himself quickly.

INTERN
Hoh-kayyy, let's see what we g --

The Intern's mouth drops open in disbelief.

INTERN (CONT'D)
No... No fucking way! We got video?

The scientist reaches for the keyboard and taps two keys. He points to the screen on the left.

SCIENTIST
Should be able to see it now.

The Scientist pulls a new bottle of Southern Comfort from his bottom desk drawer and opens it.

EXT. - TELESCOPE IMAGE - THE STORMY SKY ABOVE THE STATION

A GIGANTIC FIREBALL drops straight through the clouds, followed by two more off in the distance. Above the flames at its base, we see a massive black OBELISK, the size of a very large skyscraper, hurtling down through the atmosphere.

INT. - TELESCOPE CONTROL LAB

The station begins to RUMBLE as the first shock waves arrive. The Intern panics; the Scientist takes a big swig.

INTERN
Shit! Doc! We gotta -

The Scientist COUGHS from the liquor, shakes his head and hands the bottle to the Intern.

SCIENTIST
Been good knowing you, kid.

The Intern pauses, then closes his eyes and drinks.

EXT - AMUNDSEN-SCOTT STATION - ANTARCTIC DAYLIGHT

The first obelisk SLAMS down exactly on top of the station complex, obliterating it instantly.

In the distance, the other two obelisks SMASH down into the snow and ice, completing a triangular formation six miles on a side. The force of their landings burrows each of the obelisks about two stories deep into the ice.

The continent JOLTS and SHUDDERS with the incredible impacts. Tremendous fiery shock waves carrying ice blocks the size of boulders, oceans of snow and pieces of the destroyed station ROAR and BILLOW out from the sites.

Pink energy beams BOLT from the tops of the three obelisks and SLICE through the blizzard to interconnect them at their peaks. The tumult within the triangle is instantly calmed.

Then, nothing, except for the howling snowstorm and the evil CRACKLING of the energy beams. The beams shift color to blood-red. They thicken and intensify. Their crackling steadies and modulates to a low, powerful, ominous HUM.

The pitch-black obelisks begin to heat up and glow red deep within their centers. The glow intensifies and spreads throughout the structures. Steam rises in thick clouds from their bases. The snowscape RUMBLES as the enormous reddening obelisks slowly sink farther down into the ice.

From the steamy edge of one of the impact craters, a lone trickle of liquid water POURS over the snowbank.

EXT. - WASHINGTON D.C. - THE WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Marine One, the presidential helicopter, lands on the South Lawn. A TITLE:

Washington, D.C.

3:31 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

9:31 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

PRESIDENT ANDREW McCULLEN, 66, Caucasian, in a golf outfit and a ten-gallon cowboy hat, alights from the chopper. His game was interrupted; the Alabama native still has a putter in his hand and golf shoes on. An AIDE greets the President outside the helicopter under the rotors, and follows as he stalks to the Oval Office.

AIDE #1
 (yelling)
 Mr. President! You're needed in
 the Situation Room sir!

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 (yelling, a thick drawl)
 Well no shit, Sherlock!

The aide follows the President into the Oval Office. The President discards his Stetson and sits behind his desk, examining his putter. The aide doesn't let him settle in.

AIDE #1
 Mr. President? Sir? There's no
 time! We're under attack!

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (O.S.)
 Awww, I got a minute. Who's
 attacking? China? North Korea?
 Can't be the Russkies - hell, they
 ain't even got gas money no more...

AIDE #1
 Sir the NSA thinks it's aliens.
 Extra-terrestrials!

The President jumps up and runs for the Situation Room.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Aliens! I knew it! I god-damned
 always knew it! Eight god-damned
 years them bureaucrat fuckers been
 telling me there ain't no UFO files
 nor nothing! Hah! HAH!

INT. - WHITE HOUSE, WEST WING AND CORRIDORS/STAIRWAYS

The President rants about alien abductions and cattle mutilations and other conspiracy theories all the way through the West Wing on his way to the Situation Room.

INT. - WHITE HOUSE BASEMENT, SITUATION ROOM

16 high-level government officials stand at attention when the President enters. He heads straight for his seat at the head of the conference table and SLAMS the putter down. He casts a no-bullshit gaze at each of them as he speaks.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

When we're done with these E.T.s?
I'm-a find out whichever one of
you's been in charge of lying to me
about all this. And that there
putter's going straight up his
bureaucrat ass! Now sit down, and
somebody tell me where the fire is.

Everyone sits except NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER JAMES FISHER,
53, a career bureaucrat and an oily-smooth operator.

Fisher hurries to a video screen at the far end of the room.
He nods to an aide, and a map of Antarctica fills the
screen. A dot at the geographic South Pole blinks red.

JAMES FISHER

Mr. President about 90 minutes ago,
our Amundsen-Scott research station
at the South Pole was destroyed.
Wiped out. We can't say yet who
did it. All we have is this last
video file from a telescope there.

Fisher nods to his aide again. The final images from the
telescope replace the map on the screen and play through to
abrupt static at the end. The video rewinds to the clearest
picture of the first falling obelisk.

JAMES FISHER

Sir there are now three of these
objects, or structures, embedded in
the Antarctic ice. Our analysts
estimate they're each about 1800
feet tall and over a square-acre
thick. Imagine the size of One
World Trade Center and you'll have
a sense of them.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

We got satellite pictures yet?

Fisher glances at his aide, and several satellite photos
begin to click across the screen.

JAMES FISHER

The weather's pretty bad on-site now, sir. We can't see much through the clouds and the snow. Using infrared and X-ray imaging, all we can tell is that there's a triangular force field of some kind, probably with the objects at the corners. It's blocking our efforts to see underneath. We can say that the triangle's six miles to a side. And we do know this -- the objects are hot.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Hot?

Fisher nods. The screen displays an infrared satellite image of the site. The three corners of the triangle are glowing orange compared to the rest of the photo.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Well, what the fuck? And... these things ain't from Earth?

JAMES FISHER

No sir. We checked satellites, the International Space Station, Earth-bound radar, everything. We queried every country with so much as a Polaroid pointed skyward. These things did not leave Earth before they fell from space and crashed down on the South Pole.

The President looks at GENERAL ALOUICIOUS "AL" BARNES, 61, African American, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, seated immediately to his right. Barnes is the only one in the room the President trusts.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Say, Al? What do we really care about the South Pole? It ain't our territory. Can't we just let the U.N. or somebody handle this? Or do we gotta keep it all hushy-hushy? To keep the big lies going and all?

GENERAL BARNES

Mr. President we're looking at this as an attack. A military attack.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Well are they shooting at anything out there in the snow? Can they hit us from there?

GENERAL BARNES

No, sir, not that we've been able to detect. But...

At the far end of the table NATIONAL SCIENCE ADVISOR MARY SLANSKY speaks up. 47, brilliant, a career academic and a full-time feminist. The President can't stand her.

MARY SLANSKY

I'm sorry to interrupt, Mr. President. But the reason we see - well, I mean, we're saying it's an attack because of what else we're finding on the satellite images.

Slansky nods to Fisher's Aide. An image of barren, snow-swept Antarctica appears on the screen. In the foreground, a waterfall cascades down into a crevasse in the ice.

MARY SLANSKY

Sir, this is about six miles from the triangle area. An hour ago? This waterfall didn't exist. The river feeding it didn't exist. It couldn't. I mean -- liquid water? In Antarctica?

The President picks up the putter and points it at Slansky. No man could be more condescending.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Mary, now, listen here. I've said it ump-teen times. And this'll be the last time I tell you before you're on the unemployment line, girly. Now, there ain't many days

(MORE)

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
 left in it. But my administration
 ain't supporting, no way, no how,
 none of that bullshit about global
 warming. You hear?

The President BANGS the putter down again for emphasis. 16
 top-level officials do their best to keep from grimacing in
 embarrassment. Fisher smoothly breaks the silence.

JAMES FISHER
 "Mr. President, if these aliens
 succeed in melting the ice sheet at
 the South Pole? Well, sir, climate
 change won't be the problem.
 There'll be coastal flooding,
 world-wide. Massive economic
 disruption. Nations will fail.
 Wars will start -- over territory,
 resources, you name it. For my
 money, the E.T. bastards' plan is
 to soften us up. Let us fight
 among ourselves. Expend our
 weapons, damage our alliances,
 wreck our economies -- and then
 they can come and mop us up later.

General Barnes nods somberly in agreement. The President
 shakes his head and makes a face.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Hog wash! You trying to tell me
 that if a few Wall Street bankers
 get their wing tips wet on-a way to
 work, then we're gonna have World
 War III? No, sir. I do not
 believe that.

Slansky sees Armageddon coming, and she's had enough of
 McCullen. She SLAPS the table with a palm and stands up.

MARY SLANSKY
 Mr. President, you can fire me if
 you want. Hell, I'd rather quit
 right now and start driving for
 Colorado. But somebody has to lay
 (MORE)

MARY SLANSKY (CONT'D)

this out for you -- so you get it.
If this melting keeps up? We're
not talking about a couple feet of
flood water in lower Manhattan! It
won't be just a few yards of sand
lost on Miami Beach!

The President sneers and rocks back in his chair. He regards Slansky with disbelief and contempt.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Well do tell, then, girly. Just
how much flooding we talking about?
I'm-a quote Johnny Cash: 'How
high's the water, mama?'

Slansky twirls a finger at Fisher's Aide. A map of the United States appears on the screen. The map goes into motion, and the coastlines shrink dramatically.

MARY SLANSKY

Antarctica's about the size of the
United States plus Mexico. The ice
averages 7000 feet thick - it's 90
percent of all the ice in the
world. If it melts? We're talking
about a 200-foot rise in sea level,
world-wide. That's twelve stories
of water in lower Manhattan.
Quoting Billy Joel? 'Say goodbye
to Hollywood.' And 90% of Florida.
Oh, and, plus, Shanghai and Buenos
Aires and Calcutta, and, and, and.

The President, sobered, looks to General Barnes. Barnes inquires of Slansky.

GENERAL BARNES

Mary? How much time do we have?

Slansky shrugs and shakes her head, meaning "none." All the others at the table shake their heads, agreeing with her.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

All right, then. Al, let's see if

(MORE)

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
 we can put some eyes on this thing
 pronto. Who we got at McMurdo, can
 get on a snowmobile or something
 and go take a look-see?

General Barnes shakes his head.

GENERAL BARNES
 Mr. President, McMurdo Station is
 on the Antarctic coast. 850 miles
 from the Pole. Flying's the only
 fast option. But McMurdo's socked-
 in by weather now, and they've only
 got cargo planes on hand.

The President stands up and paces, swinging the putter to
 and fro as he thinks.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Well, horse, shit! Hm... -- Al, when
 it comes to this alien stuff
 there's only one man to trust.
 JIMMY PAYTON. Is he still where I
 put him?

GENERAL BARNES
 COLONEL PAYTON's still in command
 at Area 51 in Nevada, sir.

The President stops and points the putter at the General.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Get him on the horn. Right now.

EXT. - HOT, WINDSWEPT MILITARY AIRFIELD IN NEVADA - DAY

A brand-new F-35 fighter jet banks hard, dives low and
 SCREAMS full-throttle across the tarmac at an altitude of
 maybe 80 feet. A TITLE:

Area 51 - Groom Lake, Nevada

12:50 p.m. Pacific Standard Time

9:50 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

The jet's sonic BOOM rattles windows in the CONTROL TOWER
 and shakes all the buildings nearby. The F-35 ROCKETS into
 a climb and cracks off a barrel roll.

INT. - THE F-35'S COCKPIT

A combat helmet labelled COL. JAMES PAYTON scans the skies through the canopy as the jet continues its roll.

COLONEL PAYTON
 (into radio, with an
 Alabama drawl)
 Whoooooooo! Red Dog Two, this is
 Red Dog One. Prepare your tail for
 a thorough waxing Cap'n Davis! Arm
 combat simulator system and begin
 formulating your excuses. We are
 GO for a dogfight!

EXT. - THE CLOUDLESS SKIES OVER AREA 51

The F-35 levels off and banks hard about.

INT. - THE F-35'S COCKPIT

Colonel Payton keeps searching for the second jet fighter.

CAPTAIN DAVIS (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Red Dog One, Red Dog Two.
 Confirmed, simulator system is
 armed. Begging the Colonel's
 pardon but I was hoping to use that
 particular bit of airspace.

EXT. - SKIES OVER AREA 51

A second F-35 with afterburners blazing ZOOMS across the top of Col. Payton's jet, mere feet over his head. The Colonel's jet is buffeted badly in the turbulent jetwash.

COLONEL PAYTON (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Ohhhh, you sum bitch! It's gonna
 be no mercy now Captain! You best
 tighten that diaper, kid!

The CONTROL TOWER interrupts the pilots' chatter.

CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Red Dog One, Groom Lake tower.
 Colonel you're cleared for an
 immediate landing on runway 2-7.
 Perhaps a bit slower on approach
 this time, if the Colonel's so
 inclined.

COLONEL PAYTON
 Tower, Red Dog One. Indeed I would
 like to know exactly who's got the
 brass to try and interrupt my very
 important military training
 exercises?

Silence, for a beat.

CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Red Dog One, tower. Sir, that
 would be the President of the
 United States. You're needed on a
 scramble phone immediately. We'll
 have one for you on the flight
 line. Tower out.

EXT. - SKIES OVER AREA 51

The Colonel's F-35 breaks off and banks for the airfield.

INT. - WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM - DAY

The President, impatient, is seated at the table again. An
 aide enters and hands a note to General Barnes.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Al? Haven't we got Jimmy yet?

GENERAL BARNES
 Not quite Mr. President. I gather
 he was out flying. He'll be
 landing soon. Meanwhile -- we may
 have an option for getting a faster
 look at the situation.

James Fisher re-enters the room and nods at his aide. A map of the South Pacific comes up on the screen. A dot blinks red in the ocean southeast of New Zealand.

JAMES FISHER

Sir, we've got a carrier battle group heading home to San Diego. Right now the Theodore Roosevelt is less than 2200 miles from McMurdo and she's got three F/A-18 E Super Hornets on board. Those jets could land at McMurdo in about 100 minutes, refuel, and reach the Pole 50 minutes later.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

F/A-18s? Well what the hell's wrong with the F-35? Damn, we just plunked down all 'at money for...

GENERAL BARNES

(interrupting politely)

It's a matter of range, Mr. President. The F-35 maxes out under 1400 miles. A single-seat F/A-18, the E model, can travel almost 2100 miles on one fill-up.

The President raises his palms and shrugs in exasperation.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Then just re-fuel the sonsabitches in flight! Hell, we got tanker planes based all over the globe...

GENERAL BARNES

We could do it with the assets we have, sir. But if your plan for Colonel Payton's what I think it is, he'll need those same tankers - and loaded with different fuel to boot. It'd be the F/A-18s with Colonel Payton, or F-35s without.

The President SMACKS his palms together in frustration.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Shit... the... bed! Eight years I been hearing 'em fuss. "Cut defense! Cut defense! Blahh-bitty-blah!" Now them E.T.s got us by the jewels and I can't gas up two jets at once? God, dammit, Al, I have had my fill of this job! January can't get here quick enough!

The President stands, paces, and turns to General Barnes.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

What about the weather? If it's too shitty for our guys in the Hornets to land down there, why, they'll be plumb out of gas won't they? What're they supposed to do? Piss in their tanks?

Mary Slansky clears her throat. Everyone turns to her.

MARY SLANSKY

We're monitoring the local weather constantly, Mr. President. We're hoping it'll be clear enough over McMurdo in two hours.

An aide from the far end of the table brings a note to General Barnes. Barnes reads it and nods.

GENERAL BARNES

Mr. President we've got Colonel Payton on a secure line in Nevada.

The President nods to Barnes and addresses everyone else.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Let us have the room everybody, will you? We won't be long.

Everyone leaves but General Barnes and President McCullen. The door closes; General Barnes activates a speakerphone.

GENERAL BARNES

Colonel? The President and I have the Situation Room to ourselves.

EXT. - AREA 51 FLIGHT LINE - DAY

A CORPORAL stands watch outside a Jeep parked next to Colonel Payton's F-35 fighter on the tarmac. The Colonel sits alone in the Jeep. A secure telephone case occupies the driver's seat to the Colonel's left.

INT. - JEEP

COLONEL PAYTON

Been too long, Mr. President! How are you?

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (O.S.)

(through phone)

Jimmy I've done told you - it was 'Andy' back home, it's 'Andy' now.

COLONEL PAYTON

(smiling)

I heard you, Mr. President. And once you're back home in Alabama come January I'll call you everything but late for dinner. And you know I will.

INT. - WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Jimmy I'd like to catch up with you but we're in a rush. Long and short is, them E.T.s I was hoping you'd find out something about? Well, they're trying to melt the entire South Pole. Right now.

COLONEL PAYTON (O.S.)

(through phone)

What? No shit? Well how're they..

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

(interrupting)

No time, Jimmy, no time. Listen. We have got to have somebody go and get some eyeballs on the big damned

(MORE)

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
things they're using to do it. Now
- have you still got one-a them
Blackbirds ready to go out there?

The Colonel weighs his answer for a moment; it's a secret.

COLONEL PAYTON (O.S.)
(through phone)
Mr. President as you know, the
Congress discontinued the SR-71
program in 1998...

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
(interrupting)
I've read General Barnes into this
Jimmy. It's okay. You can say.
Everybody's gonna know anyhow.

COLONEL PAYTON (O.S.)
(through phone)
Well in that case, yessir. We fly
her two nights a week as you've
ordered. Please don't ask a fella
how we pay for it though, will you?

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
Good man, then, Jimmy. That's
fine. How long you figure it'll
take you to reach the Pole?

COLONEL PAYTON (O.S.)
(through phone)
Wellsir... about an hour to get the
Blackbird airborne... refueling by
tanker if there's enough JP-7 fuel
out there someplace... say less than
9000 miles to the South Pole... oh,
I'd guess five-n a half, more like
six hours? Long as I don't stop
and talk it over with my wife.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
(laughs)
Lean 'er towards five Jimmy.
General Barnes here'll make sure
you've got gas on the way wherever
you need it. Ain't that right, Al?

GENERAL BARNES
 I'll get into it personally Mr.
 President. Per your orders we've
 got JP-7 stocked here and there.

INT. - MILITARY JEEP - AREA 51 FLIGHT LINE

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (O.S.)
 (through phone)
 Get a move on then, Jimmy. Good
 luck.

The President rings off.

EXT. - AREA 51 FLIGHT LINE

Colonel Payton exits the Jeep and addresses the Corporal.

COLONEL PAYTON
 Mister? Go wake everybody up. On
 the double! General base alert.
 That Blackbird we don't officially
 have -- I want it all spun-up and
 ready to taxi in 40 minutes, and
 for every minute it's late
 somebody's gonna lose a stripe!

CORPORAL
 Yes, sir!

The Corporal salutes smartly, scrambles into the Jeep and
 tears off. Colonel Payton jogs toward the nearest hangar to
 get ready for his flight.

INT. - WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

The President reclines in his seat and studies the ceiling.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Six hours, Al. Three hours for
 them Hornets launching from the
 Roosevelt. But we sure's shit
 could wind up killing the pilots.
 No bullshit now, what do you think?

General Barnes drums his fingers on the conference table.

GENERAL BARNES

Mr. President, I think I'm glad I'm not in your shoes. But I also think those three hours might save a lot of lives later. We're lucky every minute nobody breaks this story. Shoot... evacuations? Panic in the coastal cities alone could..

The President cuts him off with a waive and stands up. He speaks over his shoulder as he leaves the Situation Room.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

I know, Al. I do. Dispatch them Hornets, General. Then get the team back in this room. In two hours I want military options for if we can blast these things, and emergency plans for if we can't.

EXT. - PACIFIC OCEAN - SOUTHEAST OF NEW ZEALAND - MORNING

Five smaller warships and the nuclear aircraft carrier U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt, the "Big Stick," execute a sweeping, coordinated turn to starboard in the vast, choppy Pacific Ocean. A TITLE:
Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group
10:13 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

INT. - U.S.S. THEODORE ROOSEVENT - BRIDGE

New orders have arrived. The bridge bustles with activity. The carrier's EXECUTIVE OFFICER updates ADMIRAL RATIGAN.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Strike group settled on new heading
1-7-9 Admiral. We're aimed right
at the penguins.

Admiral Ratigan accepts a sealed envelope marked TOP SECRET from a crewman, then replies to the X.O.

ADMIRAL RATIGAN

Very well. Have all ships increase
to flank speed and maintain
heading. Also -- tell our tender
(MORE)

ADMIRAL RATIGAN (CONT'D)
 to stay close and make ready to
 transfer every available gallon of
 JP-7 to the Big Stick.

The X.O. begins relaying the orders to the strike group.

INT. - HANGAR DECK, U.S.S. THEODORE ROOSEVELT

A team of crewmen hurriedly retrieves one F/A-18 Super
 Hornet from storage and begins preparing it for takeoff.

INT./EXT. - FANTAIL, U.S.S. THEODORE ROOSEVELT

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DANNY KEEPSEAGLE, 28, Native American,
 quiet, usually more comfortable alone, sits by himself in
 the gusty winds near the stern gunwale, watching miles of
 ocean retreating in the Nimitz-class supercarrier's wake.

A brief ALARM sounds all over the ship on the 1 MC system,
 followed by an ANNOUNCEMENT.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Attention all hands, attention all
 hands. Lieutenant Commander
 Keepseagle, report to the bridge.
 Lieutenant Commander Keepseagle to
 the bridge. On the double.

Danny scrambles to his feet and runs inside.

EXT. - VERDE CANYON INDIAN RESERVATION - ARIZONA - DAY

19 Native American second-graders are seated outdoors in a
 semi-circle around tribal elder JOE YAZZIE, late-60s, with a
 kindly way not-quite-hiding a mischievous streak. A TITLE:
 Lomayestewa School, Verde Canyon Indian Reservation
 1:15 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
 10:15 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

Joe's teaching the kids about tribal legends, traditions,
 and bits of language. Their teacher, WILMA KEEPSEAGLE, 27,
 Native American, far too lonely for an attractive woman her
 age, stands and watches nearby.

JOE YAZZIE

(to all the children)

And so after three days in the desert following Tortoise, with no food or water, Coyote could take no more. As he lay down to die, with his very last breath he called out to Tortoise. 'You tricked me! How could you?' And Tortoise replied, 'yes, I did, but you wanted to eat me - so it was only fair.'

Several kids raise their hands. Joe calls on SCHOOLKID #1.

SCHOOLKID #1

How - how, uh, did Tortoise, uh... why did Coyote follow Tortoise so far out in the desert?

JOE YAZZIE

Well, Coyote wanted an easy meal. Tortoise wasn't fast, or strong. He had no teeth, the 'mikkta...'

Joe looks at all the kids expectantly. They know to repeat a new native word when Joe pauses.

SCHOOLCHILDREN

(in near-unison)

Mikkta!

Joe nods, smiles, and continues.

JOE YAZZIE

... or claws. But he used what the Creator gave him - his smarts, or his 'shata dii...'

Joe pauses again.

SCHOOLCHILDREN

(in near-unison)

Shata dii!

JOE YAZZIE

... to trick Coyote into going far into the desert, where only Tortoise could survive.

Off in the distance a small yellow biplane approaches. The kids stand to watch the crop-duster dive and bank toward the school. One of the kids points skyward and yells.

SCHOOLKID #2

That's my uncle Rodney!

The kids all waive furiously as the biplane ROARS down, so close they can see the lone pilot RODNEY YAZZIE, Native American, 29, adventurous, too single, and in love with Wilma. He smiles and waves back at them.

SCHOOLCHILDREN

(yelling all at once)

Hi Rodney! Rodney, take us for a ride! Rodney, land right here!

A bouquet of sage flowers falls from the plane and lands nearby, closer to Wilma than to the kids. The biplane skims the treetops near the school. Then it climbs rapidly, performs a barrel roll and flies off.

The kids run past Wilma to retrieve the flowers while she casts a disapproving glance at Joe. Joe smiles wanly and shrugs, knowing all about the crush his son Rodney's always had on Wilma. She knows better, but Wilma can't help sneaking a wistful glance after the biplane as it departs.

INT. - BRIDGE, U.S.S. THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Danny arrives and salutes Admiral Ratigan. The Admiral returns the salute and gets straight to business.

ADMIRAL RATIGAN

At ease, Danny. Listen. I know you're short-time. And I'm sorry to drop this in your lap. But you've got more hours in a Super Hornet than anybody on board. And you're the only pilot handy who's landed anything on snow. Alaska for your joint tour, wasn't it?

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Four years ago, sir. Eielson, southeast of Fairbanks.

Admiral Ratigan hands Danny a TOP SECRET envelope.

ADMIRAL RATIGAN

This is straight from the White House. Your eyes only. Open it once you're airborne. All I know is, I have to put you in an F/A-18 as fast as it gets off the elevator and tell you to burn for McMurdo Station on the Antarctic coast. Top speed. As in, redline it. All the way. And it'll just be you. No wingman.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

I'm just fine alone sir. But isn't that against procedure?

ADMIRAL RATIGAN

Mmm-hm. And it'll be dangerous. McMurdo's at the ragged edge of your operating range. But we can't even top you up with fuel after takeoff. My orders say to take our other two Super Hornets and our tanker, and send them all south after you stocked with JP-7.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

(confused)

Blackbird fuel? Those spy planes are all in museums aren't they?

ADMIRAL RATIGAN

Orders they give me. Explanations, they don't. Hell, I can't even carry you on the deck for 100 miles. Best I can do is flank speed south until you launch.

The Admiral pauses, waiting for questions. Danny has none.

ADMIRAL RATIGAN (CONT'D)

The weather there's dogshit now. They say it'll clear. But you might find yourself on bingo fuel looking for an airstrip in a blizzard.

The Executive Officer approaches the two men.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(to the Admiral)

Excuse me, Admiral. The Super Hornet's spun-up and hooked to the catapult now. We'll keep pumping in fuel until the shot.

(to Danny)

Lieutenant Commander we've brought your flight gear to the head. Right down the passageway here. You can duck in there to suit up.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

(to the Admiral)

Sir do I have time to call my wife?

The Admiral pauses and rubs his chin. He reaches past the X.O. to a desk and picks up a bulky hand-held satellite phone, then hands it to Danny.

ADMIRAL RATIGAN

(to the X.O. so Danny can hear the ruse)

X.O., call down to the flight deck and have those guys double-check the tire pressure on that Hornet. And the lug nuts. Carefully. Pegasus Field's nothing but ten thousand feet of ice. Danny's gonna need solid gear on that shit.

Danny smiles and dashes for the lavatory. The X.O. nods and turns to carry out the order.

EXT. - LOMAYESTEWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Wilma is gathering the children to take them back indoors.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

O.k., everyone, time to go back inside. Let's say 'thank you' to Elder Yazzie and get lined up.

The kids offer Joe a smattering of thank-yous and hugs.

Wilma's cell phone RINGS. She answers while she lines the kids up and takes a quick head-count.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Hello?

INT. - BRIDGE-DECK HEAD, U.S.S. THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Danny struggles as he tries to talk on the bulky satellite phone while donning his flight gear in the cramped lavatory.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Wilma -- I just have a minute!

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)

(through phone)

Danny? Danny, where are you? Are you back in San Diego already? When did you make port? Did they sign your discharge papers?

Danny fumbles the phone as he puts an arm into his suit.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Whoops... Sorry... You still there?

EXT. - LOMAYESTEWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Wilma finishes lining the kids up and holds up her phone.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

(to the children)

Kids? It's my husband Danny! Remember his visit and the awesome pictures of his jet plane? And that big, giant Navy ship where he works? Can we all say hi to Danny?

SCHOOLKIDS

(unison)

Hiiiiiiiiiiiiii Dannn-nnyy!

Wilma pulls the phone back down and turns from the kids.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Baby, I think I can take personal days the rest of this week and get

(MORE)

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE (CONT'D)
 an early start for San Diego
 tonight. Oh, this is so exciting!
 You'll be home for Thanksgiving!
 And we'll finally be together all
 the time! Where am I picking you
 up? At the ship? In town?

INT. - BRIDGE-DECK HEAD, U.S.S. THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Danny balances the sat phone on the small sink and steadies
 a foot on the commode seat to tie his boot.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 (loudly, at the phone)
 Wilma listen! I don't have any
 time. I have a flight! Don't
 drive to San Diego! I'm not sure
 when I'll be back. I'll call...

The Executive Officer KNOCKS on the head door.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER (O.S.)
 (through the door)
 Wheels-up Commander! Rock n' roll!

Danny stuffs the TOP SECRET envelope into his flight suit.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)
 (from the phone)
 What? Don't come? Why not?
 Danny! We have to talk! We need
 to work things out. You promised!
 You said you'd retire and we could...

Danny grabs his helmet out of his flight bag. It catches,
 and the upset bag KNOCKS the sat phone into the commode.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 Dammit!

Danny looks at the phone, then puts his helmet on and opens
 the door. He sheepishly points the X.O. toward the commode
 as he hurries past him into the passageway.

EXT. - LOMAYESTEWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Wilma hears the connection drop and glares at the phone, upset. She looks off into the sky after Rodney's distant crop-duster. She reflects, and tears up briefly.

Then she gathers her composure, turns back to the children and holds her phone up toward them again.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
(to the kids, wistfully)
Say goodbye to Danny everyone!

SCHOOLKIDS
(unison)
Byyyyyyeee, Dannn-nnyy!

Wilma leads the kids back inside the school.

EXT. - FLIGHT DECK, U.S.S. THEODORE ROOSEVELT - DAY

Danny emerges from the superstructure on the run, buckling his helmet as he goes. A TITLE:
Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group
10:25 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

A yellow-jerseyed PLANE DIRECTOR catches up with him and leans in close with instructions. We see the two carefully avoid the catapult connection hooked to the nose gear.

PLANE DIRECTOR
(yelling)
Commander! We're gonna crank the steam up full on the cat so you won't need the afterburner! Should be a hell of a shot! Squinch your ass up tight! Good luck!

The Plane Director pats Danny on the back as he climbs for the cockpit. Purple-jerseyed fuel handlers disconnect a hose from the Super Hornet. Deck-crew members wearing varied colors hurry through their preparations for an emergency launch.

INT. - CATAPULT CONTROL ROOM - BELOWDECKS

A technician turns a steam valve, bringing the launch catapult system up to FULL POWER.

INT. - BRIDGE

The X.O., trying to dry out the sat phone with a handful of paper towels, walks to the windows to watch the launch.

INT. - COCKPIT - F/A-18 SUPER HORNET

Danny straps in, closes the canopy, waggles the jet's wing and tail flaps, and pushes the throttles up to 'full.' He looks out to the Plane Director and flashes a thumbs-up.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 (into his radio)
 Big Stick, Big Stick, this is
 Snowman One. Ready for launch.

PLANE DIRECTOR (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Roger that, Snowman. Pucker up!

EXT. - FLIGHT DECK

The Plane Director crouches low and CHOPS his arm down in a 'GO' motion. The catapult hook BLASTS down the flight deck in a cloud of steam, towing Danny's fighter jet toward the end of the short runway.

INT. - BELOW THE FLIGHT DECK - CATAPULT MECHANISM

A steam line EXPLODES at a junction with a BANG, sending metal fragments and clouds of deadly-hot steam everywhere.

EXT. - FLIGHT DECK

Halfway to the end of the deck, the catapult loses power.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny feels the acceleration drop off suddenly.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 Oh, shit!

INT. - BRIDGE

The X.O. sees that there's trouble with the catapult.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Oh, shit!

EXT. - FLIGHT DECK

The Plane Director hears the explosion and watches the jet's acceleration tail off. He knows the catapult's broken.

PLANE DIRECTOR

Oh, shit!

(into his radio)

Light the cans Danny!

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny knows he's too far along in the launch for the brakes to help. He's already reaching for the afterburner switch.

EXT. - FLIGHT DECK

The Super Hornet's afterburner BOOMS to life and powers the jet forward. The struggling plane leaves the end of the flight deck and DROPS precipitously toward the rough ocean.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny works the stick and reaches for the gear switch.

EXT. - PACIFIC OCEAN - OFF THE END OF THE FLIGHT DECK

The jet's still dropping. The engines strain at full-blast trying to lift it. The landing gear begins to retract, clearing the tops of some treacherous waves by mere inches. 50 feet, 70 feet, 100 feet out - the jet stops falling. It flies perilously close to the water, but it's airborne.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny hauls back on the control stick.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Whooooo! Indian styyyllee!

EXT. - FLIGHT DECK

The deck crew watches the Super Hornet rocketing skyward, its afterburners ablaze. The crew CHEERS, amazed that Danny kept the jet flying.

PLANE DIRECTOR (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Hell of a save, Snowman!

INT. - BRIDGE

The Executive Officer clenches the wet paper towels and pumps his fist in the air.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
 Yes! Fuckin' A, Danny K!

EXT. - SKY OVER THE U.S.S. THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Danny buzzes the flight deck and executes a barrel roll, then turns off the afterburners and starts on his lonely, dangerous flight south to McMurdo Station.

EXT. - FLIGHT LINE - AREA 51, GROOM LAKE NEVADA - DAY

An extensive, busy ground crew checks over a SR-71 Blackbird spy plane and starts its massive engines. A TITLE:
 Area 51, Groom Lake, Nevada
 1:58 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
 10:58 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

EXT. - RUNWAY

A Jeep SPEEDS full-tilt across the tarmac toward the waiting Blackbird.

INT. - JEEP

Colonel Payton rides shotgun. A Corporal is driving.

THE CORPORAL
 The Blackbird's all set, Colonel.
 General Barnes called while you
 were suiting up.

The Corporal pauses. He hates giving the Colonel bad news.

COLONEL PAYTON
 And? Spit it out, mister.

THE CORPORAL
 (nervously)

Well, sir... it's... it's refueling. General Barnes says they can ferry some JP-7 to McMurdo in time. But there's no way to do an airborne delivery. You'll have to divert off-course and land at the station. And when you do? You can't turn off the engines. McMurdo doesn't have a start-cart big enough to crank the Blackbird over... uh... sir.

Colonel Payton reflects for a moment, growls, and delivers a vicious PUNCH to the dashboard, cracking it.

COLONEL PAYTON

Lumpy, runny, horse shit! That old spy-bird ain't even supposed to be flying! And I gotta land her in the snow? And then take off again?

The Corporal's scared mute. The Colonel fumes silently. The Jeep barrels up to the nose of the Blackbird and SCREECHES to a halt.

COLONEL PAYTON

(to himself, angrily)

Andy McCullen you always were a cocksucker's cocksucker! Damn you...

The Colonel pauses, collects himself, and shakes his head.

COLONEL PAYTON (CONT'D)

(to the Corporal)

Corporal? You did not hear me talk about our esteemed Commander in Chief that way. And who cracked that-there dashboard, son?

THE CORPORAL

Uh... I did, sir!

Colonel Payton nods, pats the Corporal on the shoulder, grabs his helmet from the back and gets out of the Jeep. Then he leans back in and addresses the Corporal.

COLONEL PAYTON

One more thing. I don't make it

(CONT'D)

COLONEL PAYTON (CONT'D)
 back? You go see my wife. In
 person. An' you tell her I left
 this Jeep thinking about her. You
 gonna do that for me... Sergeant?

The Corporal-now-Sergeant nods quickly. Colonel Payton
 SLAMS the Jeep's door and dashes for the Blackbird.

EXT. - ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - RESERVATION - AFTERNOON

Wilma goes out to her big, crappy '78 Lincoln after school
 and tries to start it. It won't turn over. A TITLE:
 Verde Canyon Indian Reservation
 3:20 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
 12:20 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

After a long day teaching, distraught over her relationship
 with Danny, and confused about Rodney, she POUNDS the
 steering wheel in frustration and HONKS the horn.

Tribal police officer VALENTINO "TINO" YAZZIE, 24, Native
 American, always smiling, an incongruous cop, happens by in
 his police-configured 4x4 SUV and sees what's going on. He
 rolls up and stops to talk to Wilma.

TINO YAZZIE
 Hey there, Wilma! Trouble with
 your 'res cruiser' again, hey?

Wilma gets out of her car and gives the fender a KICK. Tino
 gets out of his 4x4 and walks over to her.

TINO YAZZIE (CONT'D)
 (smiling)
 Nahhh, nah. Old beater like this?
 You kick it when the fender rubs
 the tires. Something falls off?
 Duct tape. And when it don't turn
 over? You jump it. Hang on, hey?
 I got some cables in the squad.

Wilma looks at her battered old car and shakes her head.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
 Thanks, Tino, but I don't even feel
 like dealing with it. I just want
 to go home. Spot me a ride?

Tino nods and smiles and waives her to his 4x4.

TINO YAZZIE
 Indian style, hey? Somebody gots a
 car? Everybody gots a ride.

The two get in the SUV and leave, heading for town.

INT. - TRIBAL POLICE 4x4 - FRONT SEAT

They drive for a moment before Tino speaks.

TINO YAZZIE
 Tough day teaching today, hey?

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
 No, not really. It's just... I mean...
 Tino, could you have a talk with
 your cousin for me?

Tino smiles, knowing what she means.

TINO YAZZIE
 Oh... I don't know, Wilma. Rodney's
 not much of a listener, hey?

Tino sees a junky old pickup on the side of the road ahead.
 The hood's up, and the radiator's spewing steam.

TINO YAZZIE
 Uh, oh. There's Uncle Joe. Guess
 his truck's fucked-up too, hey?

EXT. - VERDE CANYON INDIAN RESERVATION - SIDE OF THE ROAD

Tino pulls the 4x4 up behind Joe Yazzie's pickup. Joe
 leaves the front of his truck and walks back to Tino.

TINO YAZZIE
 (out the window to Joe)
 Got my tribal Uber goin' on today
 Uncle! No cents a mile, hey? You
 need a lift too?

Joe shrugs, then starts for the back door of the 4x4.

JOE YAZZIE

I don't know, Tino. Gonna look like a crook or something, riding in back...

INT. - TRIBAL POLICE 4X4

Tino laughs, waits until Joe closes the door and starts the police SUV off toward town again.

TINO YAZZIE

(behind him, to Joe)

Nah, hey, don't worry Uncle. Wilma here'll vouch for you if the old ladies start to gossip. Sounds like she needs a favor with your boy Rodney, though, hey?

Wilma shoots Tino a disappointed look, but then resigns herself once again to everyone knowing everyone's business on the reservation.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

No, no, I was... Well... I was just asking Tino. Could... could one of you have a talk with Rodney for me? I mean, I'm married. I can't have him going around, doing... like, doing stuff, like he did today. Everyone's going to get the wrong idea. You know what I mean?

Joe nods and smiles wisely in the back seat.

JOE YAZZIE

(to Wilma)

I'll make you a deal, little Sage Flower. You figure out what the right idea is, and I'll make sure Rodney gets it.

TINO YAZZIE

(to the windshield, for Joe)

Hey, now, Uncle! That's not...

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
 (to Tino, over Tino)
 Oh, for... You see? You see where
 Rodney gets this?

JOE YAZZIE
 (to both of them)
 Whaaaaat? I'm old. I get to speak
 'Grandpa truth,' don't I? That's
 what the old stories say, hey?

A RADIO CALL from the dispatcher interrupts them.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Verde Canyon One, pick up, Tino.

Tino picks up the radio mic and responds.

TINO YAZZIE
 (into the mic)
 Verde Canyon One. Go.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Tino we've got an alert from the
 motion detectors out at the Penta
 Din site. Tribal Council says
 these're all code-three calls now.

TINO YAZZIE
 (into the mic)
 Verde Canyon One. Responding code
 three. E.T.A. 55 minutes.

Tino stops the 4x4 on the side of the road.

TINO YAZZIE
 Probably pothunters again.
 (beat)
 It's kind of a long ride out there,
 hey? You two want to go with?

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
 (indifferent)
 Why not?

Joe reaches behind his back and pulls a massive Smith & Wesson Model 29 revolver from his belt.

JOE YAZZIE
 Goddamned pothunters! Let's go
 make those punks' day!

Joe holds up the Dirty Harry hand-cannon and spins the chamber with relish. Wilma hears, and looks back at Joe.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
 (incredulously)
 Joe! Holy -- What're you...

Tino clicks on the 4x4's SIREN, drowning out Wilma's words.

EXT. - VERDE CANYON INDIAN RESERVATION - ROADSIDE

Tino cracks off a tire-smoking U-turn and the cop car SPEEDS away, siren BLARING, for the far end of the reservation.

EXT. OPEN SKY - 40,000 FEET ABOVE THE SOUTH PACIFIC - DAY

Danny's F/A-18 is approaching the Antarctic coast. A TITLE:
 McMurdo Station, Antarctica
 12:26 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

INT. - F/A-18, COCKPIT

Danny checks his position, looks down at a solid layer of ominous-looking clouds and radios McMurdo Tower.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 McMurdo flight control, this is
 U.S. flight Snowman One. Request
 weather update and clearance to
 land. Over.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Snowman One, McMurdo Tower. We
 heard you were coming. Suggest you
 hold 40,000 and circle. Current
 wind speed 20 to 25 knots and
 gusting, visibility under one-half
 mile, ceiling 5,000. Doppler
 indicates wind shear. Projected
 time to clear is 90 minutes.

An ALARM sounds in the cockpit. The jet's low on fuel.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 (to the tower over the
 radio)
 Ah, negative, McMurdo. I am bingo
 fuel. Repeat. Bingo fuel. I do
 need a runway. Over.

McMurdo Tower doesn't respond immediately. There's a note of worry in the controller's voice when he does.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Copy that, Snowman. Pegasus Field
 has 10,000 feet, suggest runway
 heading 3-3 and stall it in. It's
 just an ice sheet Snowman. Without
 reverse thrust you'll need lots of
 runout.

EXT. OPEN SKY

Danny's jet banks left and dives down into a thick layer of ominous-looking clouds. Swirling high winds and driven ice pellets rock the Super Hornet as it descends through the storm. Danny struggles to maintain control of the plane.

At 5,000 feet the jet emerges from the cloud layer into a snowstorm. Danny's already above the runway by the time he can see anything.

INT. - McMURDO STATION, ANTARCTICA - CONTROL TOWER

A crowd of AIR-TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS and STAFFERS has gathered at the windows. Everybody wants to watch the risky landing.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Snowman One, McMurdo Tower. We see
 you now. Suggest a go-round,
 Snowman. Stopping's tricky here.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Ah, negative, McMurdo. Very low
 fuel. I think I can drop it and
 get stopped.

EXT. - THE SKY OVER PEGASUS FIELD - BLIZZARD

The Super Hornet descends very rapidly toward the sheer-ice runway, but still flies high over the first third of it. Crosswinds RIP at the twin tailfins and slew the plane nearly sideways.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny grips the control stick with both hands to compensate for the crosswinds.

EXT. - THE SKY OVER PEGASUS FIELD

At 200 feet wind shear suddenly STRIKES. The jet's wings begin yawing back and forth violently. Its nose drops as though it's been hammered from above.

INT. - COCKPIT

A different COCKPIT ALARM BLARES.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
Whoa! Shit!

Danny risks taking one hand from the shuddering, unruly control stick. He SLAMS the throttle forward and flips the switch for the afterburners.

EXT. - THE SKY OVER PEGASUS FIELD

The Super Hornet's afterburners BOOM to life. The jet accelerates rapidly over the runway. Its nose inches up, and the plane fights its way through the wind shear cell.

Danny corrects the fighter in time to SCREAM past the tower.

INT. - McMURDO TOWER

The crowd at the windows hits the deck for cover as the jet RIPS past just feet away from them.

TOWER STAFFER
(to the guy next to him
on the floor)
This guy's fuckin' crazy!

The air-traffic controller covers his mic and yells out.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1
Roll fire & rescue! Now!

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD/INT. HANGARS AND GARAGES

Alarms BLARE and emergency crews race to take their vehicles and equipment out into the freezing gale.

EXT. - THE SKY OVER PEGASUS FIELD

Danny's nearly completed a wide arc back to the end of the runway when the Super Hornet's engines flame-out and stop.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)
(through radio)
McMurdo Tower, Snowman One. Zero
fuel. Coming in deadstick.

EXT. - THE SKY OVER PEGASUS FIELD

The fighter yaws badly as Danny lines it up without power.

INT. - McMURDO TOWER

The crowd at the windows is watching with rapt attention.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)
(heard through the radio)
Copy that, Snowman. Good luck.

EXT. - THE SKY OVER PEGASUS FIELD

The wind nearly wrecks the descending F/A-18, but Danny finally DROPS it down heavily on the ice.

INT. - McMURDO TOWER

The watching crowd CHEERS, amazed at the landing.

EXT. - RUNWAY, PEGASUS FIELD

The speeding Super Hornet slips and skids across the runway. Danny brakes and steers rapidly, and finally brings the plane's rollout under control.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)
 (through the radio, with
 background applause)
 Nice work, Snowman. Welcome to
 Antarctica.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 Copy that, McMurdo. Much obliged.
 Sorry about that close one.
 Request immediate re-fuel and
 priority clearance for takeoff.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)
 (through the radio)
 Roger, Snowman. Soon as we get
 some trousers changed around here
 we'll come get you gassed-up.

EXT. - BLACKTOP DESERT ROAD - VERDE CANYON RESERVATION - DAY

Tino's police 4x4 ZOOMS down the empty two-lane blacktop,
 its emergency lights FLASHING and siren WAILING. A TITLE:
 Verde Canyon Indian Reservation
 3:38 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
 12:38 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

INT. - POLICE 4X4

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
 (loudly past the siren,
 to Tino)
 There's nobody out here! Can't you
 turn that thing off?

TINO YAZZIE
 (loudly)
 One sec, hey? Lemme get past the
 Chairman's house.

EXT. - BLACKTOP DESERT ROAD - VERDE CANYON RESERVATION - DAY

The police 4x4 TEARS past a lone house situated far back
 from the main road.

INT. - POLICE 4X4

At a safe distance, Tino clicks off the siren.

TINO YAZZIE

Yah, I gotta make it look good, hey? If the Council thinks I'm dogging it out to Penta Din I'll get fired. They really want to protect those old petroglyphs.

Joe's asleep and snoring in the back seat. The 4x4 barrels along relatively quietly for a moment.

EXT. - BLACKTOP DESERT ROAD

Suddenly a yellow biplane ZOOMS directly over the 4x4 from behind, narrowly clearing the roof as it passes.

INT. - POLICE 4X4

Tino and Wilma reflexively duck as the plane buzzes over. Joe wakes up and fumbles for his gun.

JOE YAZZIE

(startled awake)

What the hell was that?

EXT. - BLACKTOP DESERT ROAD

A familiar crop-duster climbs ahead of the 4x4 and performs a barrel roll over the road.

INT. - POLICE 4X4

Rodney Yazzie's voice comes over the police radio.

RODNEY YAZZIE (O.S.)

(through radio)

Verde Canyon One! Tino! This is your braver and more-talented cousin. What 'chu doin', hey? Where's the fire?

TINO YAZZIE

(to Joe)

Say, Uncle -- I bet he could get out to Penta Din faster, hey?

Tino picks up the radio mic.

TINO YAZZIE

(into radio)

Yah, ah, piss-plane, piss-plane,
this is Verde Canyon One. You are
now under arrest for, ah, fucking
around too much in the sky, hey?
Please pull over, or, land, or
whatever, and wait for me to figure
out what kind of ticket that is.

EXT. - SKY OVER BLACKTOP DESERT ROAD

Rodney turns the yellow crop-duster around and DIVES down at the road, heading for the 4x4 at a height of about six feet.

INT. - POLICE 4X4

Wilma and Joe get nervous as the biplane flies straight at them. Tino MATS the gas. The 4x4 kicks into passing gear.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Valentino! This isn't funny!

TINO YAZZIE

(into mic)

Yah, piss-plane, you better pull
up. I got a sage-bombing victim in
the truck here -- says she can
identify you for sky-littering,
plus cheaping-out on flowers.

Wilma and Joe duck down in their seats.

EXT. - SKY OVER BLACKTOP DESERT ROAD

At the last possible instant the biplane pulls up slightly and ZOOMS too close for comfort over the 4x4 again.

INT. - POLICE 4X4

RODNEY YAZZIE (O.S.)

(through the radio)

Aww, hey, sorry Wilma! I never
thought you'd be riding with a
clown like Tino, hey?

TINO YAZZIE

(into mic)

Hey! Rodney! Seriously, turn around and head out to Penta Din. Motion detectors went off. I think we got some pothunters!

RODNEY YAZZIE (O.S.)

(over the radio)

Oooohh, pothunters! Copy that! I'll go! I gotta dust this last alfalfa n' then I'll fly out there.

Wilma shoots an icy glare at Tino. Tino shrugs.

TINO YAZZIE

What? He can get there faster. Might need the help, hey? You don't even have to talk to him.

Wilma shakes her head and turns toward her window, thinking about what she's going to do about Rodney, and Danny.

INT./EXT. - HANGAR - PEGASUS FIELD - McMURDO - DAY BLIZZARD

McMurdo workers finish re-fueling Danny's jet and roll open the hangar's large doors to reveal the still-swirling snowstorm outside. A TITLE:

McMurdo Station, Antarctica

12:41 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

A tow-tractor begins pulling the jet through the doorway to the runway. Danny shuts the canopy as the jet rolls. The big doors close behind him, and he starts the engines.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny shivers from the cold and snaps up his oxygen mask.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

(into radio)

McMurdo Tower, Snowman One. Request clearance for immediate takeoff runway 1-5.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Snowman One -- you've seen the wind
 out there Commander. Downwind
 takeoff not advised. Suggest you
 taxi out, depart runway 3-3.

Danny looks at 10,000 feet of ice and decides he doesn't want to waste time taxiing to the other end of the runway.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 (into radio)
 Negative, tower. No time.
 Besides, this place can't touch my
 old base in Alaska. I can get up.

The controller pauses, considering a downwind takeoff with 25-knot tailwinds.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)
 (skeptically)
 Copy that, Snowman. You have the
 field. Current winds 20 to 25
 knots and gusting. Good luck.

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD - RUNWAY

The tractor unhooks and drives off. The Super Hornet taxis and steers to straighten itself on the runway.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny eases the throttle forward. The jet begins to roll.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 (to himself)
 Let's go, baby. One time, Indian
 style!

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD - RUNWAY

The jet skids and slides left and right on the ice as it picks up speed. At a relatively-stable moment the afterburners BOOM to life and the jet precariously LIFTS off the runway, buffeted by the swirling wind and snow.

INT. - McMURDO TOWER

The crowd at the windows claps cheers again as Danny takes off, gains altitude and disappears into the driven snow.

EXT. DESERT TWO-TRACK - VERDE CANYON RESERVATION - DAY

Tino's 4x4 JOUNCES through the desert on a bumpy two-track, heading for a large, distinctive rock formation at the foot of several larger mountains. A TITLE:
Penta Din, Verde Canyon Indian Reservation
4:18 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
1:18 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

INT. - POLICE 4X4

The 4x4 tops a small hill and arrives at the Penta Din edifice. It's a vertical rectangular rock face, easily 100' tall and over 200' wide. Petroglyphs and ceremonial stone carvings cover the face. Small solar collectors and post-mounted metal boxes, the motion detectors, dot the vicinity.

Depressions in the desert and remnants of crumbled adobe walls cover the area in front of the rock face. This is a site of much ancestral significance to the Omakri tribe.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Wow... I haven't been out here since
I was a little girl. I'd forgotten
how big it is.

EXT. - PENTA DIN SITE

Tino wheels the 4x4 off the two-track, careful to avoid the ancient ruins. The truck SCRATCHES through the dust and sagebrush, heading for the far end of the face.

INT. - POLICE 4X4

JOE YAZZIE

(to Wilma)

Yah, Wilma, we gotta start bringing
the kids out here again. All they
know now is how to work those
damned cell phones of theirs.

(beat)

Say... you two remember the Elders'
Prayer?

TINO YAZZIE
 (uncertain)
 Uh... Part of it.
 "Some of your salvation lies
 within. More... uh..."

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
 (picking up where Tino
 falters)
 "... Abides. More abides with
 others..."

TINO YAZZIE AND WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
 (unison)
 "... Seek, connect, and live in
 peace."

Joe nods, proud that they've remembered the lesson.

JOE YAZZIE
 Not too shabby. Maybe while we're
 here I'll teach you a few-a those
 symbols up on the rocks th - HEY!

Joe leans forward and points his pistol at the windshield.

JOE YAZZIE (CONT'D)
 There's those fuckin' pothunters!
 Far corner! I just seen a tire!
 Go Tino! Go!

Tino hits the gas and turns on the SIREN. The 4x4 TEARS
 through the desert. Two parked motorcycles come into full
 view near the far corner of the rock formation.

EXT. - PENTA DIN

Two young white men, archaeological thieves or POTHUNTERS,
 stand beyond their dirt bikes next to the face. They're
 trying to chisel one of the pictographs out of the rock.

They drop their tools and dash for the dirt bikes when they
 hear the siren and the fast-approaching 4x4. The pothunters
 crouch behind the dirt bikes and draw pistols. They SHOOT
 at the 4x4. Its windshield SHATTERS. Tino locks up the
 brakes and SLIDES the 4x4 sideways. The pothunters shoot
 out both passenger-side tires.

INT./EXT. - POLICE 4X4

Tino and Joe scramble out the driver's side doors. Wilma dives for the floor. Bullets SHATTER the passenger windows.

EXT. - PENTA DIN

Tino and Joe take cover behind the 4x4's fender and then pop up to return fire.

JOE YAZZIE
 (punctuating his words
 with hand-cannon shots)
 Mother... fuckin'... sons... a... bitches!

Tino and Joe don't hit anything. They duck down to reload. The pothunters take advantage of the lull. They mount their bikes and TEAR off side-by-side through the desert. Tino looks after Wilma, and helps her out of the 4x4.

TINO YAZZIE
 You o.k. Wilma?

Wilma nods. Joe fires one last SHOT at the dirt bikes.

JOE YAZZIE
 Come back 'n fight, thieving sonsa...

Joe's last word is drowned-out by the ROAR of a low-flying biplane at full throttle passing just feet overhead. The biplane dives even lower in hot pursuit of the dirt bikes.

INT. BIPLANE COCKPIT

RODNEY YAZZIE
 (yelling gleefully into
 his prop wash)
 I gotcha now you bastards!

EXT. - OPEN DESERT NEAR PENTA DIN

Rodney's flying impossibly low to the ground. Sagebrush and scrub cedars THRASH the biplane's fixed landing gear. The biplane closes quickly on the dirt bikes.

One pothunter finally hears the plane coming and looks back.

It's too late. Each of the biplane's bottom wings RAMS into a pothunter. The men are both knocked sailing off their bikes, and they TUMBLE through the dust and brush.

The biplane's wheels BOUNCE off the ground after the impact. Then the plane climbs quickly and performs a barrel roll.

INT. - BIPLANE COCKPIT

RODNEY YAZZIE
(laughing triumphantly)
Whoooooo! Indian-styylle!

INT. - OVAL OFFICE - THE WHITE HOUSE - EVENING

President McCullen is putting golf balls across the Great Seal. Four missed attempts surround a glass. A TITLE:
Washington D.C.

7:29 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

1:29 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

An aide enters the Oval Office.

AIDE #1
Mr. President? You're needed in
the Situation Room. We should have
video from the F/A-18 soon.

The President knocks one last putt at the glass and misses.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
(toward the errant ball)
Damn-nation!
(to the aide)
"The?" One? What happened to the
other two Hornets?

The two leave the office. The President brings his putter.

INT. - WHITE HOUSE - FROM OVAL OFFICE TO SITUATION ROOM

AIDE #1
Sir the other two jets were needed
to ferry JP-7 fuel to McMurdo
Station for Colonel Payton.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
Damn, damn. Where's Jimmy now?

AIDE #1

The SR-71 lands in two hours, sir.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

"Lands?" Come again? What's Jimmy landing for?

AIDE #1

Assets for refueling the SR-71 airborne couldn't get there timely. It has to happen on the ground at McMurdo. On the ice, actually.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Damn 'er all to hell. So we got just the one bird now, right?

AIDE #1

Yes sir. Lieutenant Commander Danny Keepseagle did re-fuel at McMurdo despite inclement weather. He's approaching the Pole now.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM

The two arrive at the Situation Room. They keep talking as they enter. Everyone stands, and sits after the President does. He points his putter at the aide.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Hold on. "Keepseagle?" An Injun?

The others try to ignore the President's impolitic remark.

AIDE #1

He's Native American Mr. President. Originally from a reservation in Arizona.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

(to the room)

Well, hell's bells. If we only got one scout, I guess it's prob'ly best we got us a Injun.

(beat)

(to General Barnes,
seated to his right)

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
Alrighty then, Al. Let's see what
the boy's got for us.

General Barnes nods to an aide at the far end of the table. The aide activates a video screen. A satellite feed from a camera mounted on Danny's jet comes into panoramic view.

GENERAL BARNES
(loudly to the comm link)
Commander? This is General Barnes.
Video's good. What's your sit rep?

On the screen, brilliant polar sunlight reflects from parts of a distant but obviously massive new inland lake set in the snow far below Danny's Super Hornet.

Much of the lake is shrouded in thick fog, which rolls up off the liquid surface and is pushed away or frozen again by the bitter Antarctic wind. Roughly in the lake's center a large triangular shape, six miles on a side, shimmers above the surface with a menacing blood-red glow.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)
(through the comm link)
20,000 feet and 50 miles out from
the geographic South Pole sir.
Nothing on local radar. Weapons
going hot now, cutting back to
subsonic flight.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny pulls the throttles back to half and clicks switches to arm the Super Hornet's missiles. He scans the sky around the canopy, seeing nothing.

GENERAL BARNES (O.S.)
(through the radio)
Take us in as close to that
triangle as you can Commander.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
Copy that.

Danny pushes forward on the control stick, and the F/A-18 descends toward the ever-growing lake.

EXT. - PENTA DIN SITE - VERDE CANYON RESERVATION - DAY

Rodney's biplane is parked in the desert about 100 yards from Tino's shot-up 4x4. Wilma's standing near the rock face, studying the petroglyphs and carvings. A TITLE:
Verde Canyon Indian Reservation
4:31 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
1:31 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

The two pothunters sit in the dirt, handcuffed, near the front of the 4x4. Joe's pointing his big Smith & Wesson at their faces and giving them a stern lecture.

JOE YAZZIE

Three counts of 'tempted murder on an Indian reservation, hey? Shooting up 'n official tribal vehicle? Oh, yah, you two shitheads gonna do Federal time. Decades! An' if you ever get out? Arizona's gonna want a piece-a your asses too! It's a two-for-one deal when you crackers dick around out here on the res!

Joe gestures over his shoulder toward the petroglyphs.

JOE YAZZIE (CONT'D)

But you see that rock face you were trying to carve up? That's our church, the Omakri people, right there. These ruins here? This is our ancestors' Garden of Eden. An' those pictures you were stealing? That's our Bible! I tell you what, Einsteins. I got this gun here..

Joe sticks the barrel of the huge pistol up under a pothunter's nose.

JOE YAZZIE (CONT'D)

... My nephew Tino's got a shovel in the truck. And my son Rodney? Well, he's got bad vision and memory trouble. So you two just behave yourselves sitting there, or else the only place you're going's three feet straight down!

Tino and Rodney arrive at the 4x4, sweating, pushing the pothunters' dirt bikes. They kick-stand the bikes behind the 4x4 and stop to catch their breath.

RODNEY YAZZIE

Yah, Tino, hey? What're we gonna do with these Indiana Jones fuckers? Piss plane's only got one seat.

Tino walks over to Joe, takes the pistol away and stows it under his belt.

TINO YAZZIE

(to Joe)

Better let me hang on to that, Uncle, hey?

(to Rodney)

I'm not too sure. Yah, I'll call the feds, but it'll take them four hours to get out here. I gotta wait for some tires anyway, so...

JOE YAZZIE

How 'bout we cuff them to the bumper n' have Rodney fly us back to town one-by-one? Maybe the rattlesnakes will get them before the feds do?

Rodney and Tino shrug. The three men ponder what to do.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE - ANTARCTIC DAY

Danny's F/A-18 circles the widening edge of the new lake, collecting lots of video footage. The plane banks, dives low over the water and heads for the shimmering, blood-red triangular formation at the center of the lake. A TITLE:
South Pole

1:32 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

INT. - SITUATION ROOM - THE WHITE HOUSE

Everyone silently watches the video feed, fascinated.

As the jet slices through the thick but wind-riven fog and approaches one side of the formation, the President's

advisers begin to make out two of the massive obelisks on the ends. They're generating, and surrounded by, a somewhat-translucent blood-red energy field.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)
 (through the radio link)
 Current altitude 100 feet.
 Airspeed 400. Radar contacts
 negative. This thing doesn't
 register on instruments.

Various aides and officials in the Situation Room scribble notes and make hushed phone calls furiously. Everyone's scrambling to process the new information.

The jet gets closer, and the formation looms larger and larger ahead. It rises at least 120 stories above the lake. But it's sinking slowly into the water and the ice below.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 (aloud, for the link)
 This's the President, Commander.
 What're you armed with son?

EXT. - SOUTH POLE, ALIEN FORMATION SITE

The jet's approached as close as possible. It banks to the right and climbs, soon paralleling the triangle's top edge.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)
 (through the radio link)
 Sir I've got my nose cannon, two
 Sidewinders and two Harpoons.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM

General Barnes leans in to advise the President quietly.

GENERAL BARNES
 The Sidewinders are just air-to-air, sir. The Harpoons are anti-ship missiles. They might be effective.

The President thinks for a moment.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 (aloud, for the link)
 Take a few shots at 'er Danny and
 see what happens. Target one-a
 them triangle points.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny pulls the jet into a climb and a sharp turn away.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 Roger that.

EXT. - THE SKY OVER THE ALIEN FORMATION

The Super Hornet banks around in a wide arc and comes in low and fast at a triangle point. Danny squeezes the machine-gun trigger. A six-barreled 20-mm rotary cannon in the jet's nose FIRES an angry hail of tracer bullets at the obelisk. The bullets find their mark, but bounce off harmlessly in all directions. Danny quits shooting and climbs to fly across the top of the triangle.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)
 (into radio)
 Bullets bounce right off. Looks
 like the red stuff's shielding or
 something. Shield's not metal
 though. More like... energy.

The jet's one-third of the way across the triangle when a piece of the blood-red shielding disappears in the center.

Three alien COMBAT DRONES, each about the size of the F/A-18, HOWL up out of the formation and fly straight at Danny with blood-red laser bolts SPEWING from their guns. The shield closes up again behind them.

INT. - COCKPIT

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 (into radio)
 Whoa! Shit! Fighters! Wait -
 they look unmanned. Drones!

With no time to think Danny pegs the throttles, squeezes the machine-gun trigger again and whips the Super Hornet into a tight barrel roll. It's a deadly game of chicken. The

tracer bullets spiral right at the center combat drone and it EXPLODES in a fireball of sparks and debris.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM

Everybody CHEERS when the combat drone explodes.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE TRIANGULAR FORMATION

The jet rolls directly between the two remaining drones, bracketed by their feverish laser fire. It SPINS through the fireball left by the destroyed drone. The combat drones fly past the F/A-18, but quickly PIVOT around to give chase.

Danny levels out the roll. The jet's afterburners BOOM to life, and it climbs vertically toward the midday sun.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM

The video screen shows nothing but brilliant sunlight. Everyone averts their eyes.

INT. - COCKPIT

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

(into radio)

White House, the drones aren't shielded. Gonna see if they have a ceiling. 20 grand and climbing!

EXT. - SKY OVER THE TRIANGULAR FORMATION

The Super Hornet rides its blazing afterburners straight up. The drones pursue, firing all the way. Laser bolts SPARK off the jet's wings and fuselage, leaving dark burn marks.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)

(into radio, straining from the G-forces)

30... thousand... 40 thousand... 45...

After 50,000 feet the drones stop climbing and quit firing. They turn back for the surface. Danny levels-off the jet and then points the nose straight back down after them.

INT. - COCKPIT

An ALERT sounds from the control panel; the missile targeting system has acquired the drones.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 (into radio)
 Drone ceiling is 50,000. Targeting works on them. I've got tone lock.

Danny launches his two air-to-air missiles at the drones.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (CONT'D)
 (into radio)
 Fox one! Fox two!

EXT. - SKY OVER THE TRIANGULAR FORMATION

Sidewinder missiles STREAK from their brackets on the Super Hornet's wings and track straight down at the drones. Two direct hits. Both drones EXPLODE in fireballs on impact.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM

Everybody CHEERS again when the drones blow up.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Nice shooting Danny boy! Light off them Harpoons and blast that bitch!

EXT. - SKY OVER THE TRIANGULAR FORMATION

The F/A-18 pulls up and banks away from the triangle.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny clicks off the afterburners and brings the throttles back to half. He takes a moment to collect himself, then turns the jet around to face the triangle again.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM, THE WHITE HOUSE

The video screen shows the triangle coming back into view.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)
 (through comm link)
 25,000, range five miles. Can't get tone lock on the triangle. Gotta eyeball it.

(beat)

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (CONT'D)
Harpoons hot - missiles away!

On the screen, two contrails STREAK away from the jet and angle down toward the triangle. The Harpoons are halfway home when the screen suddenly GLOWS red and goes black.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)
(through comm link)
Oh shit there's a -

The comm link goes dead. The Situation Room hears static.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE TRIANGULAR FORMATION

The triangle's force field LEAPS out in a huge PULSE. The Antarctic sky changes to an evil blood-red for an instant. The pulse disables the missiles and BATS them miles away.

The pulse POUNDS into the Super Hornet like a tidal wave, knocking the jet instantly skyward and spinning it like a toy. The Super Hornet tumbles upward out of control, passing 80,000 feet with no apparent slowing.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny's helmet SNAPS to one side from the force of the pulse and SLAMS into the canopy. He's knocked out cold.

EXT. - SKY OVER McMURDO STATION - DAY

A TITLE:

McMurdo Station, Antarctica
1:36 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

The stormy sky goes blood-red for an instant. The station's lights dim briefly, and some electronic gear malfunctions.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

A TITLE:

Pacific Ocean, 85,000 feet
1:36 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

The sky all around Colonel Payton's SR-71 glows blood-red for an instant, then changes back to normal.

INT. - SR-71 BLACKBIRD - COCKPIT

COLONEL PAYTON
What the hell...?

The spy plane's instrument go haywire for a moment, then return to their normal functions.

EXT. - SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA - DAY

A TITLE:

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
11:36 a.m. Australian Eastern Daylight Time
1:36 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

The sky over the iconic Sydney Opera House shifts to blood-red and then back to normal again.

EXT. - EARTH - SEEN FROM SPACE

A TITLE:

Earth
12:36 a.m. Coordinated Universal Time

The Earth's atmosphere changes briefly from inviting blue-and-white to evil blood-red, then quickly shifts back again.

INT. - A SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER

In pitch-black underground darkness, the walls of an ancient chamber resonate briefly with a distinctive HUM. A single, tiny artificial light illuminates and glows green. Somewhere in the dark, we hear powerful devices activating, and massive stones beginning to GRIND and CRUMBLE.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM - THE WHITE HOUSE

Aides try to re-establish the comm link to the Super Hornet.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
What the blazin' hell was that?

Nobody answers. They don't know, and they're busy working.

EXT. - PENTA DIN SITE - VERDE CANYON RESERVATION - DAY

Tino, Rodney and Joe have the pothunters up on their feet near Tino's police 4x4. A TITLE:
Penta Din, Verde Canyon Indian Reservation
4:36 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
1:36 New Zealand Daylight Time

The entire sky PULSES and changes from blue to blood-red, and then quickly changes back. All five men look around.

TINO YAZZIE

Whoa... what was that, hey?

JOE YAZZIE

(incredulously)

Could... could it...?

(beat)

(yelling to Wilma near
the rock face)

Wilma! Run! The rocks! An-ja!

One of the pothunters, still handcuffed, takes advantage of the distraction and runs away. Rodney chases after him.

Joe sees this and snatches his Dirty Harry pistol out of Tino's belt. He draws a bead on the escaping pothunter. Tino feels the gun being taken away. He turns, sees what Joe's doing, and LUNGES for the gun.

TINO YAZZIE

No! Uncle Joe! You can't -

Tino hits Joe's gun just as it FIRES. The bullet ZINGS off the rock face 10 yards from where Wilma's running away.

At that instant the Earth QUAKES. The 20,000-square-foot rock face SHUDDERS and CRACKS OPEN. Large petroglyph-inscribed chunks of stone start breaking off and falling and tumbling away from the widening halves of the splitting, crumbling rock face. Joe looks at his pistol in amazement.

JOE YAZZIE

Hohhh-leeeee shit!

Rocks and dirt EXPLODE and fly and billow outward from what was the Penta Din formation. The Earth rolls and heaves intensely enough to knock everyone off their feet. The rising, rushing dust obscures everything in the area.

EXT. - 40,000 FEET OVER ANTARCTICA - DAY

Danny's Super Hornet flat-spins down through the sky, out of control with dead engines. A TITLE:
Central Antarctica

1:37 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

INT. - COCKPIT

A COCKPIT ALARM continues to sound. Danny regains consciousness and assesses the situation. Half his instruments don't work. The altimeter does; he's falling fast. Danny SHOVES the stick forward and throws switches.

EXT. - 20,000 FEET OVER ANTARCTICA

The Super Hornet noses into a dive and stops spinning.

INT. - COCKPIT

Danny tries to start the engines.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
Come on! Light up!

EXT. - 5,000 FEET OVER ANTARCTICA

One engine splutters, coughs, and dies again with a loud BANG. The other engine splutters and ROARS to life.

INT. - COCKPIT

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
Yes!

EXT. - 500 FEET OVER ANTARCTICA

The battered, burn-scored jet pulls out of its dive at the last second and levels off near the frozen landscape. It makes a slow, halting turn, climbs as best it can, and sputters off toward McMurdo on one damaged, smoking engine.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM, THE WHITE HOUSE

AIDE #2
Mr. President? We can't establish a direct link with Commander Keepseagle. But our satellites tell us he's still flying. We suspect his radio was knocked out.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Well you keep on her, boy. For all we know his compass' tits-up too. You get him back home safe, else you'll be stationed down there someplace fixing snowplow radios.

The President regards the flurry of activity in the room with impatience. He stands up and BANGS the putter down on the conference table again. Everybody stops and listens.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)

Let's cut the shit, everybody. We all seen that. Regular weapons ain't no good. And if this E.T. thing ain't stopped? Humanity's gang-fucked like it's our turn in the barrel.

He stares down everybody in the room. His mind's made up.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)

(looking at everyone but addressing Barnes)

General? We got a boomer close by down there, ain't we?

General Barnes nods slowly.

GENERAL BARNES

Mr. President the U.S.S. Kentucky is with the Theodore Roosevelt Strike Group. Beneath the group, technically - she's an Ohio-class sub with a complement of Trident ICBMs. Each missile's equipped with eight nuclear warheads; she can deliver those anyplace in her quarter of the world less than 45 minutes after you give an order.

The President pauses. He looks around the room again.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Anybody got an idea beats nukin' the South Pole and doing half-a them E.T. bastards' work for 'em?

The room is silent. The President turns to General Barnes.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
 (solemnly, to Barnes)
 Best fetch me the football.

(beat)

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
 (to SECRETARY OF STATE
 JENNIFER KISSLING)
 Jenny? I'll call the Ruskies and
 China. You get everybody at State
 picking up phones. Toot sweet.
 Make sure the other world leaders
 know our Trident's not heading
 their way. Tell them why we're
 launching. An' tell 'em this, too,
 and you tell 'em good - the missile
 don't work? We're gonna need
 troops and what-not from every one
 of 'em, starting yesterday.

Secretary Kissling nods.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
 (to Secretary Kissling)
 And you let me know the damned
 second y'all are done. Hear?

Secretary Kissling nods again.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
 (to the room, loudly)
 Alright, then. Here it is. Fuck
 them E.T. sum-bitches! Win or
 lose? We ain't sitting quiet in
 the barrel all greased-up and ready
 for them. Nosir! So let's get on
 it now y'all. Move!

President McCullen picks up his putter and leaves the room.
 Everybody bolts from the table to get to work.

EXT. - PENTA DIN SITE - VERDE CANYON RESERVATION - DAY

The Earth stops quaking. The dust settles. A TITLE:
 Penta Din, Verde Canyon Indian Reservation
 4:37 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
 1:37 New Zealand Daylight Time

Tino and Joe stand up to see a shimmering, translucent-green dome where most of the Penta Din rock formation used to be.

The hundred-foot-tall half-bubble extends into the desert toward them for 50 yards, terminating on the ground about two-thirds of the way to Tino's 4x4 and Rodney's biplane.

A series of pictographs flashes across the surface of the dome. The symbols keep repeating in order.

An ALIEN FIGHTER CRAFT is in the center of the dome, hovering silently just inches above the remains of Penta Din. It's between triangular and saucer-shaped, equipped with what must be two guns on the outer edges, and a bit smaller than a Stealth bomber.

The escaping pothunter gets up and starts running again. Rodney picks himself up and gives chase.

RODNEY YAZZIE

Oh no you don't white boy!

Rodney LEAPS and TACKLES the pothunter from behind, near the edge of the shimmering dome. The flying tackle carries the pothunter toward the dome. He hits his head on it and bounces off, unconscious.

Rodney's momentum carries him through the dome to the ground; for him, it was like the bubble didn't exist.

Wilma, dusty but unscathed by Penta Din's destruction, walks toward Tino and Joe and exits through the dome from inside.

Tino and Joe stare at the dome and the fighter in amazement. Joe raises his pistol and SHOOTS at the bubble.

The bullet caroms off the dome and ZINGS away harmlessly. Joe drops his pistol in the dirt.

JOE YAZZIE

Screw the feds. We gotta call the Tribal Council.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM - THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The executives are gathered again. President McCullen enters on a fast walk, with a half-eaten fried chicken leg in one hand and a napkin tucked in his collar. A TITLE:

White House, Washington D.C.
8:50 p.m. Eastern Standard Time
2:50 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

An aide follows with the rest of the President's dinner on a plate. Everybody stands, and sits again as the President settles in behind his food at the head of the table.

General Barnes enters and sits to the President's right.

GENERAL BARNES

Mr. President we should be able to watch the strike on the satellite link. The warheads are in their re-entry phase now.

An aide puts the satellite feed up on the video screen. Eight specks of reflected light fall toward Antarctica. The satellite camera struggles to follow the specks and remain focused. As the warheads heat up with re-entry, growing trails of fire make them easier to follow.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

(to General Barnes)

How long?

GENERAL BARNES

Less than a minute now, sir.

The President watches the warheads speed toward Earth, then points at Mary Slansky.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Mary? How long we got 'til it's all pointless?

Slansky clears her throat and flips through a pile of notes on the table in front of her.

MARY SLANSKY

Mr. President we've been analyzing the available satellite data, plus what we collected from Lieutenant Commander Keepseagle's flight. We've caught two breaks.

Mary nods at an aide, and the screen divides between the falling warheads and a new graphic map of Antarctica. The map flashes red to show where the ice has already melted.

MARY SLANSKY (CONT'D)

First -- the devices landed at the geographic South Pole. Topographically, beneath the ice, that's a lower area. And more of the melting is happening downward in a 'bowl' shape. So it's like the gravy on your mashed potatoes there - most of the water's still penned-in. It's not reaching the ocean as quickly as we'd feared.

The President looks down at his potatoes and raises an eyebrow. He likes her explanation.

MARY SLANSKY (CONT'D)

And second? After that red pulse the structures cooled down some -- must've used a lot of energy. They're still melting the ice. And they are heating up again. But they're not back to...

GENERAL BARNES

(interrupting)

Warhead impact in ten... nine...

Everybody stops what they're doing to focus on the screen.

GENERAL BARNES (CONT'D)

Eight... seven...

The left side of the video screen suddenly GLOWS blood-red. Static interrupts the picture for an instant.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE TRIANGULAR FORMATION

The triangle's force field LEAPS outward in another mammoth PULSE. The Antarctic sky changes to blood-red briefly. But this time it's darker, more intense, and it lasts longer.

The warheads are disabled and deflected miles away.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM, WHITE HOUSE

The picture overcomes the static on the screen. When it returns, the warheads are scattering through the sky.

EXT. - SKY OVER McMURDO STATION

The whole sky shifts to a darker blood-red, for a longer moment this time, then changes back to normal. Some lights go out, and more electronic equipment malfunctions.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH PACIFIC

The sky around Colonel Payton's SR-71 glows a darker blood-red for a longer instant, then changes back to normal.

INT. - SR-71 BLACKBIRD - COCKPIT

All the Blackbird's instruments go dark. Some stay dark.

COLONEL PAYTON
God dammit!

EXT. - SKY OVER ANTARCTICA

Smoke trails from Danny's unsteady Super Hornet. The sky around the jet glows a dark blood-red, then normalizes.

INT. - F/A 18 - COCKPIT

The instrument panel goes dark.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
Uh, oh!

Danny reaches forward and WHACKS the instrument panel. A few of the instruments light up and start to function.

EXT. - EARTH, AS SEEN FROM SPACE

The Earth's atmosphere transforms from inviting blue-and-white to a darker, more foreboding blood red, and then shifts back a bit slower than it did after the first pulse.

EXT. - GIZA PLATEAU - EGYPT - NIGHT

The full moon over the Sphinx shifts to a dark blood-red and then back to normal again. A TITLE:
Giza, Egypt

3:51 a.m. Eastern European Time
 2:51 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

The Earth RUMBLES and QUAKES. The head of the Sphinx vibrates, wobbles, and then EXPLODES off the body. The Sphinx quickly crumbles like Penta Din did, revealing a huge green bubble with an alien fighter craft inside.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM - THE WHITE HOUSE

A fearful, weighty silence takes over as everyone realizes the warheads didn't work. President McCullen tears the napkin from his collar, SLAPS it on his plate, and speaks.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Mary? I ask again. How long we got 'til it's all pointless?

MARY SLANSKY

Mr. President, we... I... -- Well, assuming that pulse drew the same energy as the first one... I'd guess ten, twelve hours before the water really starts entering the ocean.

The President reflects, and turns to General Barnes.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Al? Start shooting every conventional warhead we can deliver on top-a that thing. Make it keep pulsing. Buy us all the time you can. No more nukes though. Good lord willing, we're gonna have to clean all that up one day.

General Barnes nods and motions for an aide.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CON'D)

(to the room)

The rest of y'all -- let's get the other countries involved. Get 'em lobbing missiles too. Let's assemble a strike force and some attack options. We'll meet back here in four hours to plan.

The President stands and leaves the room. Everybody goes off to work on the problem.

EXT. - PENTA DIN SITE - EARLY EVENING

An emergency Tribal Council meeting has been convened. The five TRIBAL COUNCILORS' cars are parked in a rough semicircle near Tino's shot-up 4x4. A TITLE:
Penta Din Site, Verde Canyon Indian Reservation
6:16 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
3:16 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

The Councilors plus Wilma, Tino, Joe, and one handcuffed pothunter stand near the front of the 4x4. Rodney walks the other pothunter over toward the dome.

The bubble continues to flash the series of pictographs in the same order.

The Councilors watch as Joe walks over to the bubble, steps through it, and walks back outside again.

Joe rejoins the group of councilors, draws his pistol and points it at the dome.

JOE YAZZIE

Mind your ears everybody.

Joe fires a SHOT at the shimmering green surface. The bullet ZINGS off it and flies away.

JOE YAZZIE (CONT'D)

Now watch this.

Joe nods to Rodney. Rodney grabs the pothunter by the collar and shoves him at the bubble. The pothunter THUMPS off the dome and lands in a heap.

JOE YAZZIE

(addressing the Council)

Many of you saw the sky turn red.
Maybe you can read the flashing
Omakri symbols like I can. It's
one of the ancient prayers: 'Some
of your salvation lies within.
More abides with others. Seek,
connect, and live in peace.'

The Councilors are silent for a moment. TRIBAL CHAIRMAN RUSSELL KEEPSEAGLE, Native American, late 40s, quiet and thoughtful like his nephew Danny, speaks.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE
 (addressing Joe)
 Elder Yazzie. How's this fit with
 the old legends? What's it mean?

Joe shrugs.

JOE YAZZIE
 Damned if I know. One of the old
 stories says when the winds blow
 dark, the Omakri are to go and
 fight. Seems like a lot for white
 boys with chisels, though, hey?

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
 What about the prayer Joe? Could..

Wilma turns to look at the alien spacecraft and the symbols flashing on the surface of the dome around it.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE (CONT'D)
 Could that be our salvation? In
 there?

Joe shrugs again.

JOE YAZZIE
 From what? We ain't at war.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE
 Not that we know of. Maybe there's
 an attack coming? I'm starting to
 think we should call the feds.

TRIBAL TREASURER ESTHER HUMEUMPTewa, Native American, 50s,
 is nervous and somewhat fearful. She speaks up.

TREASURER HUMEUMPTewa
 Maybe the federal government's
 coming to take more of our land?
 Or dig another uranium mine out
 here or something? This could be
 what we need to stop them. Let's
 keep it to ourselves.

Three Councilors nod in agreement. Everyone thinks, and waits for someone else to speak. The Chairman soon does.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

Wilma? Where's my nephew these days? Someplace we can reach him?

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

I... I don't exactly know. His ship was supposed to be coming home. He said he'd filed his retirement papers. But then on the phone today he said he wasn't coming. He had a flight. That's all I know.

The Chairman looks around the group for a better idea.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

If the Council agrees, I think we should try and call Danny to get his opinion. All in favor?

The group just nods and looks at the alien spacecraft. Rodney brings the handcuffed pothunter back to the group by his collar. Tino clears his throat.

TINO YAZZIE

Ah, say, uh, Mr. Chairman? What about these white boys, hey?

The Chairman shrugs. Nobody else cares what happens to the pothunters. Tino shrugs and unlocks their handcuffs.

TINO YAZZIE

(to the pothunters)

Unless you want to wait for the feds? You didn't see nothing out here. Got me? Now get going, hey?

One pothunter gratefully starts running down the two-track toward the blacktop road. The other one hesitates and looks at their dirt bikes. Tino stares at him in disbelief and shakes his head.

TINO YAZZIE

You gotta be shitting me! Go!

The second pothunter runs off after the first one. Wilma brings the Chairman her cell phone. He dials.

INT. - OVAL OFFICE - THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

President McCullen, behind the Resolute desk, hangs up the phone. A CHINESE INTERPRETER leaves the room. A TITLE:

White House, Washington D.C.

9:18 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

3:18 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

An aide enters. The President gives him a hard look.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Damn Chi-neeese! Shit. -- Tell me you got something good from Jenny.

AIDE #1

I'm - I'm sorry, Mr. President.
State's still making calls, but...

The President cuts him off with a dismissive wave.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

I know. I alllll-ready know. The Ruskies and the damned Chi-neeese told me. They ain't doin' jack. None of them will. They're all gonna be thinking the same way, and keeping their troops home for evacuations and their powder dry for fights against one another later. Can't say I blame 'em. But they are chicken-shit cowards.

Neither man can find anything else to say.

AIDE #1

Thank you, Mr. President.

The aide leaves.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH PACIFIC - ANTARCTIC DAY

Colonel Payton's SR-71 turns and descends. A TITLE:

McMurdo Station, Antarctica

3:22 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

INT. - COCKPIT

COLONEL PAYTON

(into radio)

McMurdo Tower this is U.S.
Blackbird. Requesting priority
clearance and runway, over.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)

(through radio)

U.S. Blackbird approach Pegasus
Field runway 1-5. Please say
coordinates and heading, over.

COLONEL PAYTON

(into radio)

McMurdo this is Colonel Payton. 22
miles north-northeast, 35,000
descending heading 1-0-5, turning
to 1-5-0.

(beat)

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)

(through radio)

U.S. Blackbird we don't have a
radar fix at that location. Please
confirm coordinates and heading.

COLONEL PAYTON

(into radio)

McMurdo that ain't no surprise.
The SR-71 won't report much of a
radar signature.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)

(through radio)

U.S. Blackbird, confirm. Did you
say SR-71? An actual Blackbird?

COLONEL PAYTON

(into radio)

Affirmative, McMurdo. It's an ac-
tu-al Blackbird. I'll need your
longest runway and prayers, over.

INT. - McMURDO TOWER

The tower staff hears that somebody's going to try and land an SR-71 Blackbird in rough weather on ice. They all scramble for spots at the windows again.

The air-traffic controller yells past his mic to the staff.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1
 Roll fire & rescue! On the double!
 (calmly, into radio)
 Ahhh, roger that, Colonel. You've
 got a clear pattern, runway 1-5.
 Current winds 18 knots north-
 northeast and gusting. Good luck.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #2
 (to Controller #1)
 Say, uh... I've got a radar signature
 now. He's not where he says he is.
 I've got him coming in south-
 southeast at 38,000.

Controller #1 considers that for a moment.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1
 (to Controller #2)
 Ehhh, he's probably tired. Those
 spy planes take real long flights.

A tower staffer at the window is looking through binoculars.

TOWER STAFFER
 Hey! I see him. Looks like he's
 got trouble -- trailing a lot of
 smoke. He's real slow, too.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1
 (via radio to Payton)
 U.S. Blackbird, we see your smoke
 Colonel. Be advised fire and
 rescue are en route.

EXT. - SKY OVER PEGASUS FIELD

The Blackbird isn't smoking. It turns, descends, and commits to its final approach to the ice runway.

INT. - BLACKBIRD COCKPIT

Colonel Payton checks his instruments quickly.

COLONEL PAYTON
 (into radio)
 Confirm, McMurdo -- did you say
 smoke?

At that second Danny's battle-damaged F/A-18 WHOOSHES across the Blackbird's flight path, just feet over the SR-71's canopy. A COCKPIT ALARM SOUNDS. Thick smoke from the Super Hornet's damaged engines obscures Colonel Payton's windshield, and Danny's jetwash ROCKS the big spy plane.

Colonel Payton wrestles the stick and throttle, trying to avoid Danny's slower plane ahead and deal with the jetwash.

COLONEL PAYTON
 (into radio)
 Whoa! Sonofa-bitch!

INT. - F/A-18 COCKPIT

Danny, with no radio, realizes he's just barely missed ramming a plane he hadn't noticed in the landing pattern.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 Whoa! Sonofa-bitch!

INT. - McMURDO TOWER

TOWER STAFFER
 (watching through
 binoculars)
 Jesus!
 (to the tower staff)
 We got two jets out there!

EXT. - SKY OVER PEGASUS FIELD

Both jets are heading for runway 1-5. The Super Hornet's approach angle put it ahead after the near-collision. But it's slower, and Danny can barely steer. The Blackbird's coming in faster, and the Colonel can't see for the smoke.

INT. - McMURDO TOWER

Everybody jockeys for better window positions, straining to see what's happening over the runway.

EXT. - SKY OVER PEGASUS FIELD

Strong, snowy winds buffet both planes. They're only yards apart and weaving badly as they descend toward the runway.

Danny's jet quits smoking - its last engine is dead.

INT. - BLACKBIRD COCKPIT

The smoke dissipates, and Colonel Payton's able to see well enough to steer clear of the Super Hornet.

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD

With just feet separating them, the Super Hornet and the Blackbird land at the same time.

INT. - BLACKBIRD COCKPIT

Colonel Payton struggles intently to stop the big, fast Blackbird on the ice.

INT. - SUPER HORNET COCKPIT

Danny steers for the far side of the runway and doesn't hit the brakes, letting the F/A-18 roll free in hopes of staying ahead of the Blackbird.

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD

The Super Hornet uses all 10,000 feet of runway, skids, and SLAMS to a stop in a snowbank off the end of the ice. The Blackbird slides to a precarious stop at the end of the runway, a few yards behind the mostly-buried Super Hornet.

INT. - McMURDO TOWER

Everybody CHEERS the pilots' narrow escapes.

TOWER STAFFER
(to Controller #1)
What a day today!

The controller nods and smiles, then gives the staffer a troubled look. He turns to his screen and his headset.

SNOWMAN TWO (O.S.)
 (over the radio)
 McMurdo tower, Snowman Two.
 Inbound heading 1-7-9, U.S.S.
 Theodore Roosevelt flight ferrying
 JP-7. Request runway and priority
 clearance for three jets, over.

The air-traffic controller shakes his head and rubs his forehead in disbelief.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1
 (to himself)
 God, damn, not again...

INT. - WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

General Barnes is alone in the room. He's eating dinner and talking on the telephone. A TITLE:
 Washington, D.C.
 9:28 p.m. Eastern Standard Time
 3:28 p.m New Zealand Daylight Time

A MILITARY AIDE enters and waits for the General to finish his conversation. The General rings off.

MILITARY AIDE
 Two items regarding Antarctica
 General. Conventional ballistic-
 missile launches are underway. We
 estimate first impacts in 20
 minutes. And we've just received
 word from McMurdo Station. Colonel
 Payton's landed. He's awaiting
 orders, sir.

The General thinks for a moment and shrugs.

GENERAL BARNES
 Well, hell. There isn't anything
 for him to do down there. Make
 sure we've got another set of
 tankers flying for him and tell him
 to head on back to Nevada.

MILITARY AIDE
 Yes sir. Also -- Langley's passing
 (MORE)

MILITARY AIDE (CONT'D)

along reports about a disturbance in Egypt. Apparently somebody blew up the Sphinx? Israel's already issued a blanket denial. But we're seeing early signs of Egyptian troop mobilization.

The General shakes his head and SLAPS a palm on the conference table.

GENERAL BARNES

Damn, damn! Here it comes. Everybody with an old grudge's gonna take advantage of this E.T. thing.

(beat)

First thing, Major. Get those reports to Secretary Kissling A-S-A-P. Maybe she can slow both sides down. Then go ahead and re-task a satellite for Egypt. I want to get a look at this Sphinx deal.

MILITARY AIDE

Yes sir.

INT. - HANGAR OFFICE - PEGASUS FIELD - McMURDO STATION

Colonel Payton and Danny are seated at a table, having coffee and talking in a small conference room. A TITLE: McMURDO Station, Antarctica
3:50 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

A McMURDO STAFFER knocks on the door and peeks inside.

McMURDO STAFFER

Colonel? You've got a message from the Pentagon. You're returning to Nevada. We'll be finished transferring your JP-7 right quick. The Blackbird's still spun-up like you wanted, so you're good to go.

Colonel Payton, perturbed, finishes his coffee and stands.

COLONEL PAYTON

(to the staffer)

Thank you kindly, son.

(to Danny)

Commander if you want to, you can hitch a ride in the Blackbird. I'm wore-out but good. And I wouldn't mind the company. And I know the President'll want to hear more about what you saw out there.

The two leave the conference room and begin walking across the empty hangar to the big rolling doors.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Much as I'd love to fly in a nonexistent spy plane Colonel, I'd better get back to the Big Stick. One of our planes'll have a seat.

The two reach the doorway. A staffer rolls back a big door far enough for the Colonel to exit.

Through the blowing snow outside we see a tow tractor connected to the Blackbird's nose-gear. The plane's engines are still running. A crew disconnects a hose and leaves.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Good luck, Colonel.

The men shake hands. The Colonel jogs out into the freezing cold. Danny remains in the hangar. As the door rolls closed again the staffer brings Danny a satellite phone.

McMURDO STAFFER

Call for you Commander.
Transferred from the Theodore
Roosevelt. They say it's urgent.

Danny takes the phone and nods a 'thanks' to the staffer.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Keepseagle.

EXT. - PENTA DIN SITE - WITHIN THE ALIEN BUBBLE - EVENING

Wilma, Joe, Tino, Rodney, and the five Tribal Councilors have approached the hovering alien spacecraft. Joe reads symbols on the side of the craft near the bottom.

JOE YAZZIE

Tatawa!

A ramp in the underbelly of the craft drops open with a pneumatic HISS. Everyone looks inside. Chairman Keepseagle stands a few feet away and talks on Wilma's cell phone.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

Danny? You there?

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE (O.S.)

(through the phone)

Uncle Russell? Yah, I'm here.
What is it?

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

Danny. Listen. We need advice.

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD - McMURDO STATION - DAY BLIZZARD

A tractor tows the Blackbird toward the runway. A TITLE:
McMurdo Station, Antarctica
4:01 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

INT. - BLACKBIRD COCKPIT

Colonel Payton completes his pre-flight checklist.

COLONEL PAYTON

McMurdo, U.S. Blackbird. Request
immediate clearance, runway 1-5.

The tow-tractor stops pulling the plane.

McMURDO CONTROLLER #1 (O.S.)

(through radio)

U.S. Blackbird, be advised. Your
co-pilot is on his way.

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD - RUNWAY

A service tractor carrying Danny and a ladder SPEEDS across the ice. The Blackbird's rear canopy opens as the tractor arrives. Danny mounts the ladder and gets in the back seat.

INT. - BLACKBIRD COCKPIT

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

We have to go to Yuma, Colonel.
I'll explain on the way.

COLONEL PAYTON

Nothing'd surprise me today, Danny,
but you got four hours to give 'er
a try. Get your pressure-suit and
that other helmet on back there,
y'hear? I don't want you bursting
all over the inside of my top-
secret jet like a stomped frog.

Danny struggles to get dressed in his second cramped space
of the day as the tractor resumes towing the SR-71.

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD - McMURDO STATION

The Blackbird struggles to take off through the gusting
winds and snow. The sky over Antarctica flashes to blood-
red, then returns to normal.

EXT. - PENTA DIN - VERDE CANYON RESERVATION - IN THE DOME

Chairman Keepseagle rejoins the others at the foot of the
alien spacecraft's open ramp. A TITLE:
Verde Canyon Indian Reservation
7:05 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
4:05 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

TREASURER HUMEUMPTWEA

What's Danny think Russell?

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

Well... ah, everybody... It's... Well...
Danny, see, he's - he's in
Antarctica. The South Pole.

Everyone stops examining the alien craft to listen.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Is he o.k.?

The Chairman nods.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Did he ask about me?

The Chairman shakes his head. Wilma's disappointed.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

We, ah, we kept it short. Just business. He's down there, see, because someone... aliens, he says - well, they're attacking the Earth. They're trying to melt all the ice. Right now. He flew down to see what's going on. It's why the sky flashed red like that. That's when Danny was fighting 'em.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

By himself?

The Chairman shrugs and nods. Wilma makes a face.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

How did I know that? How? Pffft... Danny... Always alone. Everything he does he's gotta do it himself...

She walks down the ramp and a few paces away, frustrated.

JOE YAZZIE

The legends, then -- this thing must be for us, hey? We're supposed to go fight these aliens?

RODNEY YAZZIE

I can fly her! I'll go!

Tino shakes his head.

TINO YAZZIE

This ain't no piss plane. Controls are all labelled in Omakri.

Everyone begins talking at once. The Chairman raises a hand for quiet. He gets it.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

Listen. Danny said he's got a ride

(MORE)

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE (CONT'D)

in a spy plane. He can be here around midnight. Let's wait 'til he gets here and then decide what to do.

RODNEY YAZZIE

Let me take Her up, Mr. Chairman. I can have it all figured out by the time Danny gets here.

More excited talking. Everyone has two cents to chip in. The Chairman motions for quiet again.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

I imagine you could fly it Rodney. But we're gonna wait. And we're all hungry. How about you fly to town and get us something to eat before it's too dark to land?

Rodney doesn't want to, but he has enough respect for his elders to do what he's told. He turns reluctantly and walks off for the edge of the bubble and his plane beyond. Tino grabs a chance to tease his cousin when he's down.

TINO YAZZIE

Yah, go git me some tamales, delivery boy, hey? An' be quick! Or no tip for you!

Joe steps up behind his nephew Tino and SWATS him on the back of the head. Wilma hesitates for a moment. Then she calls to Rodney and follows him.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Wait up, Rodney. I'll go with you.

The two leave the dome arm-in-arm. A few of the elders raise their eyebrows at Wilma's decision.

The evening sky overhead FLASHES blood-red, and then returns to normal.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM - THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The executive staff has gathered. Everyone's waiting on President McCullen. A TITLE:

Washington D.C.
11:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time
5:30 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

The President enters at a fast walk. Everyone stands, and sits when the President sits.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
Now then. Where're we at?

GENERAL BARNES
Mr. President we've launched several dozen ballistic missiles with conventional payloads at the triangle. The pulses have disabled and deflected every one.

MARY SLANSKY
Sir we estimate that the melting has been slowed by about 30% -- all from the missiles.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
And that means?

MARY SLANSKY
Maybe 13 hours now before the ice-melt starts reaching the ocean. Less, probably.

The President nods quickly and looks to Secretary Kissling.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
How 'bout everybody else, Jenny?
Any luck getting us some help?

Secretary Kissling wrinkles her nose and shakes her head.

SECRETARY KISSLING
Worse than none, Mr. President. Soon's we notified the other nations about the source of the pulses and asked for assistance they all went 'tortoise.' Whatever troops and other assets they may have had abroad? Everything's being directed back to their home

(MORE)

SECRETARY KISSLING (CONT'D)

countries. Peacekeeping forces,
diplomatic missions, all of it.

The Secretary nods to an aide, and a map of the world comes up on the video screen. Various places are highlighted on the map in yellow and red dots.

SECRETARY KISSLING (CONT'D)

We already see what they're thinking - there's trouble brewing. Pakistan and India are mobilizing forces along their border. There's a big Russian armored column on the road toward Ukraine as of an hour ago. We can't keep track of who's getting ready to shoot at whom in sub-Saharan Africa. And in the Middle East...

General Barnes stands up and interrupts Secretary Kissling.

GENERAL BARNES

I'll pick it up there Madame Secretary.

General Barnes nods at the aide and walks the length of the room to stand near the video screen. The map is replaced with a dark satellite photo of the Middle East.

GENERAL BARNES (CONT'D)

Sir we've confirmed a report out of Egypt. Someone or something has destroyed the Sphinx. Egypt blames Israel. Israel says the Egyptians did it themselves as a pretext. Both countries are moving troops now. However -

General Barnes nods at the aide again. The satellite image on the screen zooms down; there's a crater and heaps of rubble where the Sphinx used to be. In the center of the rubble is a large iridescent green dome. The General highlights it with a laser pointer.

GENERAL BARNES (CONT'D)

We don't know for sure what this thing is. Best intelligence is, the Egyptians don't know either. But it looks a lot like something else Colonel Payton's reported.

General Barnes nods at the aide again. A satellite image of rural western Arizona appears. The view zooms down, and everyone sees the green dome and the craft hovering above the rubble at Penta Din.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Well, summm-bitch. How'd Jimmy find that?

GENERAL BARNES

He didn't, Mr. President. A call from the Verde Canyon Indian Reservation came in to Lieutenant Commander Keepseagle. His tribe found it. Colonel Payton and the Commander are en route now to investigate. Should be on-site in less than four hours.

The President drums his fingers on the conference table.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Verde Canyon? Why's that familiar?

ATTORNEY GENERAL CLAUDE SIMMONS clears his throat.

CLAUDE SIMMONS

Ah, Mr. President, that tribe just won its case in the Supreme Court last June. The United States was found liable for an old uranium-mining operation on their Reservation. Turns out we damaged that area pretty badly.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

I take it we owe them money?

The Attorney General raises his eyebrows and nods.

CLAUDE SIMMONS

A lot. Nine figures' worth, plus interest.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Well, this just keeps getting better and better...

(beat)

(to General Barnes)

Al? What've we got for ground forces down near Yuma Arizona?

The General pauses to think for a moment.

GENERAL BARNES

I'd have to check, sir.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

Well, whatever we got, get 'em there quick -- I want a platoon or better to go get hold of that green sum-bitch and see if we can use it. Or whether we have to bomb it, or what. Pronto, Al. Pron-to.

EXT. - MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA - AIRFIELD - NIGHT

The Blackbird taxis to a stop at the end of a runway. A Jeep ZOOMS flat-out across the tarmac to meet it. A TITLE:
Marine Corps Air Station Yuma
11:21 p.m. Pacific Standard Time
8:21 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

Danny and Colonel Payton climb out of the Blackbird and get in the Jeep. The Jeep TEARS off again across the tarmac.

INT. - JEEP

PRIVATE

Colonel - chopper's ready for you.

The Jeep slows as it nears a huge Boeing CH-47 Chinook cargo helicopter. Its twin rotors are turning, and a platoon of soldiers is hurrying to load it up with equipment and gear.

COLONEL PAYTON

Private I don't need one that big!

The PRIVATE shakes his head as he weaves the Jeep through a flurry of moving vehicles and soldiers, narrowly missing various men and machines.

PRIVATE

That's not yours, sir. Next one.

The Private points out a standard UH-60 Black Hawk an eighth of a mile past the Chinook. It's running and ready to go.

EXT. - TARMAC

Beyond the crowd near the big Chinook, the Corporal mashes the gas again and heads for the Black Hawk as fast as he can go. At the Black Hawk, the Jeep SCREECHES to a stop. Danny and the Colonel jump out of the Jeep and climb into the chopper.

INT. - CABIN, BLACK HAWK HELICOPTER

Danny and the Colonel strap themselves into seats.

COLONEL PAYTON

(to the pilot, yelling
over the engines)

Get 'er up, son! Danny here'll
tell you where to go.

The chopper REVS UP and climbs full-throttle into the night.

EXT. - PENTA DIN SITE - VERDE CANYON RESERVATION - NIGHT

A small camp fire burns halfway between the Councilors' cars and the edge of the dome. The dome's iridescence lights the whole area with an eerie green glow. A TITLE:

Penta Din, Verde Canyon Indian Reservation

12:06 a.m. Pacific Standard Time

9:06 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

Wilma, Rodney, Tino, Joe and the Councilors are sitting around the fire, waiting for Danny and talking. Wilma sits close to Rodney and wears his jacket against the chill of the desert night.

Tino hears the approaching Black Hawk first. He scans the sky, sees its lights and points it out for the others.

TINO YAZZIE

Yah that's gotta be Danny, hey?

Everyone stands up. They watch the chopper circle the dome and land near Rodney's parked biplane in the desert.

Danny and the Colonel get out of the chopper and hurry to greet the group near the fire. Danny sees Wilma and heads for her, expecting a hug and a kiss. She doesn't leave Rodney's side.

Danny stops short. He stares a hole through Rodney but says nothing. Rodney shrugs and puts his arm around Wilma.

RODNEY YAZZIE

Maybe you should've come home once
in a while, hey?

Danny takes two steps and SLUGS Rodney in the jaw. The two wrestle and swing at each other, passing through the dome and back again, until the Chairman and the Colonel catch up to them between the fire and the dome and separate them.

COLONEL PAYTON

(to Danny, as he holds
Danny back)

We don't have time for that
Commander!

Danny doesn't calm down much. He and the Colonel look through the shimmering dome at the hovering alien craft.

COLONEL PAYTON

(to the group)

Colonel James Payton, U.S. Air
Force. Can one of y'all tell me
what that thing is?

Joe steps forward, shaking his head at Danny and Rodney.

JOE YAZZIE

If you believe old Indian stories
Colonel, it's our salvation. Looks
like it flies. Looks like it's got
guns. Otherwise we don't really
know yet, hey?

The Colonel takes Danny by the shoulder, pushes him ahead and starts for the dome.

COLONEL PAYTON

Let's go check it out Commander.

Joe half-heartedly tries to warn the Colonel.

JOE YAZZIE

Colonel? Ah, hey, ah... I don't think it'll...

Danny walks through the bubble. The Colonel THUMPS face-on into it and stumbles backward.

JOE YAZZIE (CONT'D)

... let you in, there, sir.

Danny walks back outside the dome like it's not there. The Colonel gathers himself and looks around for an explanation. The Chairman obliges.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

Colonel I'm Russell Keepseagle. Danny's uncle. We've taken a look inside. It's a ship. A fighter. But everything's written in Omakri. All we've seen pass through that shield are Omakri people and what they carry. This was a sacred place to our ancestors for generations. Millennia. Then the sky turned red today, and the rocks all exploded, and here's this. We think it's for us -- to fight with.

The Colonel thinks for a moment. Off in the distance everyone hears the sound of a large helicopter approaching.

COLONEL PAYTON

Well Mr. Keepseagle, today that thing's for the United States government to fight with. I've got orders from the President to figure out what that sumbitch is, and if possible to take it and go stop some very bad actors from wrecking our planet.

The Colonel points skyward at the approaching Chinook. It circles the dome and prepares to land near the Black Hawk.

COLONEL PAYTON (CONT'D)

(to the group)

Ladies and gents? That there's a fully-armed platoon of U.S. Marines. Now just step on back now, and stay good 'n clear. Let us do what we gotta do, and no harm will come to y'all.

The Colonel goes to meet the Chinook. The Chairman takes Rodney by the shirt over to where Danny's standing. He addresses both of them.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

Listen you two. From what Danny's told me? We don't have time to fuck around waiting for these dumb white boys to figure out how only we can use that ship. And you can settle your personal hash later.

Neither younger man says a word.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE (CONT'D)

Rodney? I know you want to fly it. But Danny's been down there already and he's got combat experience. It's gotta be him. But - he's going to need help. Your Omakri any good, hey?

Rodney, somewhat abashed, takes a moment to answer.

RODNEY YAZZIE

Nah... it's not. I've been studying lately. But I couldn't read much of it inside there. My dad sure can, though. What about him?

The first Marines from the Chinook are reaching the campfire area. Two begin setting up a field table and unpacking communications gear. Another MARINE unslings his rifle and approaches the Indians.

MARINE #1
 Folks? Need you to step back now,
 please! Right now. Behind the
 cars. Move!

The Chairman thinks. They're out of time. He looks at
 Danny. Danny nods and starts toward the dome.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE
 (loudly, over his
 shoulder to Wilma)
 Wilma? How about you and your
 husband take a ride, hey?

Joe gets the Chairman's meaning. He sidles up to the table,
 sneaks a satellite phone and tosses it to Wilma.

Wilma catches the sat phone and runs for the bubble. She
 and Danny pass through and go straight to the alien ship.

Joe sneaks a second satellite phone and hides it behind his
 back. The Marine levels his rifle at all the Indians.

MARINE #1
 Last time I'll say it nice! Back
 behind the cars!

The other Marines continue setting up a command post near
 the front of the cars for Colonel Payton.

The Indians raise their hands, back away, and gather behind
 Tino's shot-up 4x4. Rodney's frustrated; he wants to do
 something. The Chairman goes to talk to Rodney.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE
 Rodney? Didn't I tell you Danny's
 going to need some help?

Rodney, puzzled, thinks for a moment. Then he gets the
 Chairman's meaning. He points at Tino.

RODNEY YAZZIE
 You remember that old trail out to
 Penta Se, Cousin?

Tino nods quickly, climbs on to one of the pothunters' dirt
 bikes and starts it up. Rodney gets on the other bike and
 starts it, then looks back at Joe.

RODNEY YAZZIE
Let's go, Dad! Indian style!

Joe gets on the closer dirt bike behind Tino. The men ROAR off for the desert, with Marines dodging out of their way.

INT. - PENTA DIN - ALIEN SHIP

Danny and Wilma dash up the entry ramp and find themselves in a spacious three-seat cockpit. Control panels and display screens face the seats. More displays surround the cockpit, simulating windows for 360 degrees.

Danny takes the left seat in front of the lone control stick. Wilma takes the seat farthest right, pointedly avoiding the center seat. She finds a button and the displays and panels all light up.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
You won't even sit next to me? I
come home and you're all over
Rodney all of a sudden? What?
What'd I even do, hey?

Wilma's reading Omakri-labeled buttons on a control panel. She pushes one, and the entry ramp closes behind them.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
How about you just fly the
spaceship Danny?

Danny's confused, and mad. He stands up from his seat.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
No! How about you go back out
there and get your boyfriend the
piss-plane guy to fly it?

Wilma reaches to a panel and touches a button. The spaceship LAUNCHES straight up into the air. The sudden acceleration PLANTS Danny back down hard in his seat.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
Whoa!

EXT. - PENTA DIN

The spaceship suddenly ZOOMS straight up to 50,000 feet, silently and with amazing speed. The green dome becomes a full bubble as the ship leaves the ground. Everybody turns to watch it go.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

Whoa!

COLONEL PAYTON

Whoa!

INT. - ALIEN SHIP

Wilma touches another button, and automatic seat belts strap the two in. Danny experiments with the control stick and acquaints himself with the ship's awesome capabilities.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

God, damn, this thing's fast!
Let's try the weapons.

Danny looks at the displays, picks out an empty spot in the desert and puts the ship into a dive.

EXT. - PENTA DIN SITE

Everyone watches as the spaceship DIVES straight back down at the rubble. At the last instant it levels off, ZIPS far out past the Chinook and stops. Two thick bolts of green laser fire BLAST from the guns. Rocks and dirt EXPLODE, leaving a hundred-foot crater where the bolts struck.

CHAIRMAN KEEPSEAGLE

Holy shit!

COLONEL PAYTON

Holy shit!

INT. - ALIEN SHIP

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Holy shit!

EXT. - OPEN DESERT

The Yazzies' motorcycles are speeding through the desert when the laser fire BLASTS a huge crater in the ground just behind them, peppering them with stones and dirt.

JOE YAZZIE

Holy shit!

EXT. - PENTA DIN

The spaceship spins away from the blast crater and ZIPS off at blinding speed. It's gone from sight in a blink.

EXT. - OPEN DESERT - MOONLIT NIGHT

The dirt bikes reach a trail leading to a box canyon.

The lead bike, Rodney's, tops a small hill and SMASHES into a boulder blocking the trail on the far side. The impact LAUNCHES him over the handlebars and breaks the headlight.

Tino's bike tops the hill and SKIDS to a stop just short of the boulder and the wrecked bike. Tino and Joe go find Rodney in the dirt, dust him off and help him up.

TINO YAZZIE

(laughing)

Yah, hey, Rodney? Watch out for that boulder there, hey?

RODNEY YAZZIE

It's not funny! I don't 'member that rock.

JOE YAZZIE

That's because it wasn't there before. Look.

Joe points to the end of the box canyon, where another spaceship hovers inside a green energy shield atop a heap of smashed, exploded rocks.

EXT. - EDGE OF THE MESOSPHERE - 500 MILES ABOVE ANTARCTICA

The streaking space fighter comes to an abrupt stop and hovers 500 miles above the South Pole. A TITLE:
South Pole, Antarctica
9:36 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

INT. - ALIEN SHIP

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Why are we stopping?

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

We're safe up here. The fighter
drones have a 50,000-foot ceiling.
An' I want to see where McMurdo
Station is.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

McMurdo Station? I thought this
triangle thing was at the Pole?

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

It is. I'm dropping you off at
McMurdo first.

Wilma pushes a button and fumes for a bit. Danny moves the
control stick to fly to McMurdo. The ship doesn't move.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Hey! There's no time...

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

(interrupting)

No, you 'hey.' This! This is your
whole problem, Danny! It's our
whole problem! Texas? Alaska?
Some aircraft carrier someplace?
You go, you leave me home, you run
off by yourself to slay dragons or
whatever, and you never let anybody
help you...

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

(interrupting)

Wilma, this thing's already just
about killed me once today. It's
dangerous!

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

So what if it's dangerous? If
we're going to stay married? We're
going to have to face the scary
stuff together. Not just you by
yourself, with me far away worried
sick about you all the time...

Danny reflects. He nods.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

O.k. I get it. Now let's go save
the planet, hey?

Wilma smiles and pushes the button again. Danny noses the ship into a spiraling attack-dive straight at the triangle.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

But I'm not saying I'm ready to
have kids yet!

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE - ANTARCTIC DAY

The alien fighter ROCKETS straight down through the atmosphere in a tight barrel roll. Green laser fire BLASTS from its guns, cutting through the snowy wind and patchy fog and SLAMMING into one point of the blood-red triangle.

The triangular shield fades a bit with every powerful shot. The triangle PULSES to protect itself, and the atmosphere turns blood-red for an instant. The fighter's bubble WEAKENS when the pulse strikes. But the fighter maintains speed and its guns keep firing.

INT. - ALIEN FIGHTER

The triangle and the vast, boiling, steaming lake around it are rushing up at the craft.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Hang on and grit your teeth! Gonna
pull some Gs!

At the last instant Danny pulls out of the crash-dive and skims low across the top of the triangle, cannons blazing.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE

The triangle is visibly affected, but the blood-red energy shield is still absorbing all the fire Danny drills into it.

A piece of the center of the triangle opens as the fighter blazes past. Dozens of flying combat drones HOWL out and pursue the fighter. The opening shuts behind them.

The fighter streaks past the northern tip of the triangle and ZOOMS off over the bubbling, steaming lake. The

triangle's shield mostly disappears, as the energy shifts north and concentrates itself around the northern obelisk.

The focused energy BLASTS OUT from the tip of the north obelisk in a single, thick, blood-red kill shot aimed at the retreating fighter. It scores a glancing hit.

The green bubble around the fighter absorbs much of the blast, but it SPARKS, sputters and disappears. The pursuing combat drones begin to close the gap.

INT. - ALIEN FIGHTER

Cockpit ALARMS go off. A screen filled with flashing red Omakri words appears in front of Danny.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
What's it say?

Wilma sits next to Danny and reads the screen.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
It says... bad fence?

EXT. - SKY WEST OF THE SOUTH POLE

The combat drones open fire, lighting up the sky around the fighter and striking a few glancing blows on its hull.

INT. - ALIEN FIGHTER

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
Means the shield's gone! Hang on!

EXT. - SKY WEST OF THE SOUTH POLE

The fighter pulls into a steep climb. The drones follow, blasting away and scoring solid hits until they turn back at 50,000 feet.

INT. - ALIEN FIGHTER

Danny pushes forward on the control stick. The fighter noses over and dives at the drones.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
Let's see if this works again!

EXT. - SKY WEST OF THE SOUTH POLE

The fighter SPIRALS down at the cluster of drones, spitting laser fire in a helix pattern and hitting a dozen drones in the center of the cluster.

Before the drones can return fire the fighter SPINS through the explosions. A big chunk of debris SLAMS into the fighter's port-side cannon, knocking it out of commission.

The remaining drones FIRE on the retreating fighter. One square HIT to the fighter's tail causes a shower of flame and sparks. The fighter slows and lists to one side.

INT. - ALIEN FIGHTER

Cockpit ALARMS sound again. The screen reappears in front of Danny, flashing new Omakri words in bright red. Wilma leans over and reads.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

'Bad fire bow?' 'Bad strong arms?'

Danny nods quickly and muscles the control stick, trying to outmaneuver the combat drones closing behind them. He pulls back on the stick to climb, but that doesn't work.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Lost a gun. And no more lift!

EXT. - SKY WEST OF THE SOUTH POLE

Two close SHOTS rock the fighter. Danny banks left and heads toward a mountain range. Water in the expanding lake below reaches all the way to the foothills.

INT. - ALIEN FIGHTER

A new Omakri warning appears on the screen. Wilma reads it.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Bad... uh, -- bad ass?

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Yah, not very bad ass, hey? My Hornet's tougher than this crate. Means the engine's damaged. We can't outrun them.

EXT. - MOUNTAIN RANGE WEST OF THE POLE - ANTARCTIC DAY

The fighter flies straight at the mountains. It looks like Danny's opting for suicide.

INT. - ALIEN FIGHTER

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
Dan-nnnnyyy!?

EXT. - MOUNTAIN RANGE - DRAW

At the last second the fighter STOPS short in a narrow draw amid three tall peaks. It hovers in place, then SPINS around to FIRE at the oncoming drones.

INT. - ALIEN FIGHTER

Danny's dodging shots and shooting back as fast as he can. But the ship's maneuvering is slowed; one gun isn't enough.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
There's too many!

EXT. - MOUNTAIN DRAW

The combat drones are closing in fast ahead. Their laser fire ROCKS the bobbing, jinking fighter and BLASTS into the surrounding mountains. It looks like the end of the fight.

INT. - ALIEN FIGHTER

Wilma reaches out to touch Danny's thigh. She prays.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
Some of your salvation lies within.
More abides with others. Seek,
connect, and live in peace.

EXT. - MOUNTAIN DRAW

An iridescent green bubble with another alien fighter inside WHOOSHES over the mountain behind Danny and Wilma, and DIVES in front of the onrushing combat drones. Its shield absorbs the blasts, and its laser cannons CHOP through the drones.

The two fighters' lasers destroy all but two drones. The second fighter chases down the last retreating pair and RAMS its green shield into them, driving them spinning and smoking into the lake below.

INT. - DANNY'S ALIEN FIGHTER

The second alien fighter swings around to face Danny and Wilma, who look at each other in relief and amazement.

TINO YAZZIE (O.S.)
 (through the fighters'
 comm link)
 Yah, Danny, hey? What'chu doing,
 hiding in the rocks there, hey?
 You some kind of pussy?

JOE YAZZIE (O.S.)
 (through the fighters'
 comm link)
 Come on Danny! Pull your panties
 up and let's go fight some more!

Wilma scans the control panel and finds a button for the comm link. She nods to Danny when it's activated.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 Yah, what took you guys so long,
 hey? But seriously - this thing's
 all shot-up. We don't have enough
 firepower between us to beat what's
 out there.

TINO YAZZIE (O.S.)
 Ahhh, fuck that! Ours is still
 good! Not a scratch on her. Ain't
 no Martian Mr. Goodwrench out here
 anyway, hey?

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
 No, Tino, really. We need some
 help. Akame tin de!

When Wilma speaks Omakri, another screen appears in front of the third seat, now to her right. It displays a map of the Earth, with a dozen green dots at locations world-wide.

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE

Danny! Look!

Danny studies the map briefly. He sees what the dots are.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

(quietly, to Wilma)

'... More abides with others. Seek,
connect, and live in peace...'

(beat)

(to the Yazzies)

Yah, hey, you guys? I got an idea.
We're going to McMurdo Station for
a minute. It's on the coast. See
if your ship can work like a tow
truck, hey?

INT. - THE YAZZIES' ALIEN FIGHTER

Joe scans over the symbols on the buttons.

JOE YAZZIE

Let's see... How 'bout 'pull friend?'

Joe hits the button.

EXT. - MOUNTAIN RANGE WEST OF THE SOUTH POLE

The Yazzies' fighter extends a tractor beam and starts off
over the mountains with the Keepseagles' damaged fighter in
tow. The two ships are gone in a blink.

TINO YAZZIE (V.O.)

Say, ah, Wilma? Just how many free
rides I gotta give you in one day
anyway, hey?

INT. - SITUATION ROOM, WHITE HOUSE

The staff is all seated. They've been watching the battle
over the Pole on a satellite feed. A TITLE:
Washington D.C.

3:46 a.m. Eastern Standard Time

12:46 a.m. Pacific Standard Time

9:46 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 (into speakerphone)
 Jimmy? Now one of them's towed the
 other off someplace. Quicker'n
 shit. Where you suppose they're
 going? Back where you are?

COLONEL PAYTON (O.S.)
 (from speakerphone)
 Sir if the one's damaged I'd guess
 Danny'd take her back to McMurdo
 and see about repairs.

The President nods and looks around the table for a better
 guess. Then he points to an aide at the end of the table.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Get me the top dog at McMurdo
 Station on the horn, boy.

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD - ANTARCTIC DAY

Two alien spacecraft, one towing the other, ZIP in low over
 the runway and settle down near the hangar doors. A TITLE:
 McMurdo Station, Antarctica
 9:48 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

EXT./INT. - RUNWAY, HANGAR

The Indians disembark from the fighters. They all run
 inside, shivering. Danny works it out with the ground crew
 to let him bring his damaged spacecraft indoors for repairs.
 It barely fits. With the fighter inside and the big hangar
 doors closed, everyone gathers to decide what to do.

A McMURDO STAFFER offers a satellite phone to the group.

McMURDO STAFFER #2
 Is there a Lieutenant Commander
 Keepseagle here?

Danny takes the phone, goes to the front of the fighter and
 enters. All the in-flight screens are still lit up.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 Keepseagle.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (O.S.)
 (through the phone)
 Danny? I hear-tell you stole a
 space ship from Jimmy Payton. Hell
 you think you're doing, boy?

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 I can explain Mr. President.
 Nobody else was going to be able to
 fly it anyway sir. If you're not
 Omakri? The ship won't even let
 you inside.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (O.S.)
 (through the phone)
 Bullllll-shit! We got the best
 scientists on the planet! We can
 figure it out! You bring that sum-
 bitch back to the Colonel, y'hear?

Danny looks at the screen with the map and its green dots.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 Mr. President? Even better -- how
 about I keep this one and bring in
 twelve more like it?

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD - HANGAR - ANTARCTIC DAY

The big doors roll apart a bit. Rodney and Joe dash out
 into the cold and board the second fighter craft. A TITLE:
 McMurdo Station, Antarctica
 9:55 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

They take off immediately and are out of sight in a blink.

INT. - HANGAR

Danny and Tino round up some ground-crew workers and tools.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 All right. Let's get to work.

The crew starts trying to fix the fighter.

INT. - SITUATION ROOM, WHITE HOUSE

The President, Secretary of State Jennifer Kissling and National Science Adviser Mary Slansky are gathered around the speakerphone. A TITLE:

Washington D.C.

3:55 a.m. Eastern Standard Time

7:55 p.m. Australian Eastern Daylight Time

9:55 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

SECRETARY KISSLING

N -- no, Mr. Prime Minister. Not just Australian citizens. They have to be indigenous. The very first people there. Aboriginals.

MARY SLANSKY

As closely-descended as possible. And there has to be someone who reads that language.

AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER (O.S.)

(through the phone)

Well, which one? There are 27.

The President rolls his eyes and rubs his forehead. Mary Slansky Googles on her iPhone furiously.

MARY SLANSKY

Ah... It's ah... the Pitjantjatjara Anangu.

(beat)

AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER (O.S.)

(through the phone)

Wha -- are you lot having a go at me? Is this a joke?

INT. - HANGAR

The crew is hard at work under the fighter. A TITLE:

McMurdo Station, Antarctica

10:37 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

Tino walks to the front by himself and examines the port laser gun hanging away from a bent bracket. He straightens the bracket, hefts the gun and SMACKS it back into place. It glows like the other cannon again. Just to be sure, he

picks up a roll of duct tape and wraps it around the gun and the bracket a few times, then admires his handiwork.

TINO YAZZIE
Indian style!

EXT. - ULURU/AYERS ROCK - AUSTRALIA - LATE EVENING

The Yazzies' alien fighter descends and circles low over Ayers Rock. The rock is two-thirds destroyed; boulders and rubble are scattered for miles across the Outback. A TITLE:
Uluru/Ayers Rock, Australia

8:07 p.m. Australian Central Daylight Time

11:07 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

Three alien fighter craft in translucent green domes hover over the remnants of the iconic rock. The Yazzies' fighter lands near the domes and drops its ramp.

Three pairs of ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN PILOTS in flight suits disembark and run for the ships. When they all enter the domes, the Yazzies' fighter flies off; it's gone in a blink.

INT. - THE YAZZIES' FIGHTER

Joe is on the satellite phone he swiped at Penta Din.

JOE YAZZIE
All set, Colonel! What's our next
stop, hey?

INT. - PEGASUS FIELD - HANGAR

Danny's on his back under the fighter with the repair crew. A flung wrench JANGLES across the concrete floor from between his feet. A TITLE:

McMurdo Station, Antarctica

11:27 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

Wilma, left out and bored, has been watching the crew struggle to fix the fighter. Danny scoots out from underneath and looks up at her, defeated.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
We can't do it. There's no way!

WILMA KEEPSEAGLE
Well... have you asked it for help?

Danny gives her a confused look and shakes his head. Wilma goes to the ramp and speaks into the spaceship in Omakri. The ship projects annotated schematic diagrams on its hull, with red flashes indicating where the problem areas are.

Danny sees this, dashes to give Wilma an elated kiss, and gets back to work.

EXT. - GIZA, EGYPT - GIZA PLATEAU - AFTERNOON

The Yazzies' fighter descends toward the Sphinx. Its head, chest and paws are missing. An alien fighter craft under a green dome hovers low over the rubble. A TITLE:

Giza Necroplex, Egypt

12:42 p.m. Eastern European Time

11:42 p.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

The local population is FIRING at the dome with various kinds of guns. Shells ZING off in all directions. The Yazzies' fighter lands between the shooters and the dome. Two EGYPTIAN PILOTS in flight suits disembark and run for the dome. Once they pass inside, the Yazzies' fighter flies off and disappears in a blink.

EXT. - NAZCA, PERU - DAWN

An alien fighter swoops in low over the Nazca Lines and lands at the base of the 100-foot hillside containing the iconic Owlman glyph. A TITLE:

Nazca, Peru

6:01 a.m. Eastern Standard Time

12:01 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

The Owlman's head and chest have exploded. An alien fighter hovers over a new rubble-strewn plateau 60 feet up the hill.

EXT. - CHICHEN ITZA, YUCATAN - MEXICO - DAWN

A TITLE:

Chichen Itza, Mexico

5:55 a.m. Central Standard Time

12:55 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

An alien fighter arrives to find the top two-thirds of the El Castillo Temple blown away, and another alien fighter hovering in a dome above the rubble.

EXT. - PEGASUS FIELD - McMURDO STATION - ANTARCTIC DAY

Eleven alien ships are gathered on the runway near the hangar at Pegasus Field. A twelfth approaches and makes an unsteady landing in the swirling, snowy wind. A TITLE: McMurdo Station, Antarctica
2:51 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time

Joe and Rodney exit the last-arriving fighter and run for the hanger through the bitter cold.

INT. - HANGAR, PEGASUS FIELD

The hangar doors roll open a bit to admit Joe and Rodney. The men find a crowd of 30 pilots and interpreters from all over the world, milling about and chatting and examining Danny's duct-tape repaired ship.

Almost everyone's wearing red McMurdo-issued parkas and warm hats. Danny isn't, so Joe and Rodney have no trouble locating him.

JOE YAZZIE

Say, Danny? Where we get some of those coats, hey?

As if on cue, Wilma arrives with weather gear for the men. She returns Rodney's own jacket, then gives him a parka. Rodney pretends not to pay any attention when Wilma returns his jacket. He takes it without a word or a glance, but that clearly requires some effort.

RODNEY YAZZIE

(to Danny)

We got eleven plus our two. When we left Stonehenge there was a big argument going on. I don't think that one's coming.

JOE YAZZIE

Oh, were those English people pissed about their rocks gettin' knocked over, hey? Whoo! So anyway. You gonna give, like, a pep talk or something hey?

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

I hadn't planned on it. Everybody speaks whatever language anyway.

Joe and Rodney nod. It makes sense to them. Tino comes up to the group, happy to have been chatting with so many people from the far corners of the globe.

TINO YAZZIE

This is far out, hey? You meet those Australian dudes? Very cool. They told me I should come visit. Get me some Barbie-doll shrimp!

(beat)

(to Danny)

Say - I hope we get to keep these ships, hey? Because I can get to Australia in, like, five minutes!

Danny shrugs.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

I hadn't really thought about it. Anyways, Tino? You're with me this trip. Joe? Rodney? You ready?

JOE YAZZIE

Oh, yah, hey? We can make ours do all sorts of tricks now. But, uh... we got, you know, some kind of plan or something?

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Not really. We just all sort of thought we'd divide up, like, half and half, pick a corner and start shooting everything out there.

Tino nods and smiles broadly.

TINO YAZZIE

I like it. Indian style!

The men trade high-fives and start for their fighters. Wilma stops Danny by one arm.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Ohhhh, no. Not this time. I got Tino. He can read the Omakri buttons, so -

Wilma shuts Danny up with a passionate kiss and heads off for the hangar's conference room. Danny smiles after her, then starts quietly telling the other crews it's time to go.

EXT. - RUNWAY, PEGASUS FIELD

The big hangar doors open, and the flight crews hustle out into the bitterly-cold wind to get in their alien fighters.

INT. - DANNY'S ALIEN FIGHTER

Danny takes the pilot's seat. Tino sits in the middle seat. They watch through the displays until all the crews have left the hangar.

The McMurdo ground crew rolls the hangar doors fully open.

EXT./INT. - RUNWAY/HANGAR

Danny's fighter eases off the concrete and hovers slowly past the doors. When it's halfway through, Tino reaches for the control panel.

INT. - DANNY'S ALIEN FIGHTER

TINO YAZZIE
Let's see if we got that bubble
working, hey?

Tino quickly pushes a button.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
No!

INT./EXT. - HANGAR, PEGASUS FIELD

The ship's green shield-bubble SNAPS on and MASHES the hangar's doorframe all the way to the roof and beyond. The building's heavily damaged. Danny stops the ship mid-way out and shoots Tino a perturbed look.

INT. - DANNY'S ALIEN FIGHTER

Tino winces at his mistake.

TINO YAZZIE
Oh, crap! Bubble going off!

Tino reaches for the console again before Danny can stop him. He mistakenly hits the button Wilma used at Penta Din, and the ship ROCKETS straight up to 50,000 feet.

EXT. - HANGAR

The front three-fourths of the hangar is destroyed.

INT. - DANNY'S ALIEN FIGHTER

Danny and Tino look at each other and shrug. There's nothing to be done about the hangar now. They wait for the other fighters to join. A few use the quick-ascent button, but most take off more traditionally.

INT. - WHITE HOUSE - SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

The President and the staff watch the fighters' departure from Pegasus Field on the video screen via satellite feed. Colonel Payton's on the speakerphone from Penta Din.

COLONEL PAYTON (O.S.)

(through speakerphone)

Mr. President? Have y'all decided on a 'zero' hour for your attack order, sir? They all oughtta be ready soon.

The President looks around the room and shrugs.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN

I'm not exactly sure that order'd be mine to give, old buddy.

EXT. - THE SKY OVER PEGASUS FIELD - ANTARCTIC DAY

Danny's fighter circles the waiting group, and then ZIPS off for the South Pole. He's gone in a blink. The others follow immediately.

INT. - DANNY'S ALIEN FIGHTER

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

You think you can work the radio, there, Tino?

TINO YAZZIE

Yah I know where that is, hey?

Tino activates the radio.

TINO YAZZIE (CONT'D)
 Testing. Testing. Hey Rodney?
 Don't stop n' try dusting no crops
 along the way, hey? Not much work
 for you down south here.

RODNEY YAZZIE (O.S.)
 (through the comm link)
 Yah, well, there ain't too much
 work for you here neither Barney
 Fife. Don't give out no tickets
 down in the snow there.

(beat)

Hey, Danny? I'm going with some
 guys for the right half. You want
 to take some to the left?

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 That's fine Rodney. Here we go.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE

The fighters dive low across the boiling, steaming lake and separate into two groups. The groups bear down on the north and south points of the triangle.

Danny's fighter SNAPS into a barrel roll. Its laser cannons BLAST away at the north point. The other ships start shooting, and a massive BARRAGE of green energy bursts BATTER the blood-red energy shield and the obelisks beneath.

The triangle PULSES, and the sky turns blood-red. The fighters aren't affected. They keep firing.

The fighters pull up and fly over the triangle's top, to circle around for another pass. The center of the triangle's shield dissolves briefly, and 70 or more combat drones HOWL out from the opening.

The fighters' loosely-coordinated attack deteriorates into a dozen separate dogfights with the drones. Only a few green laser bolts reach the triangle after that. Three drones fall in behind Danny's fighter and BLAST away at its shield.

INT. - DANNY'S FIGHTER

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

(to the radio)

Hey, whoever speaks English?
They're fast but they're dumb.
They can't go over 50,000 feet.
Watch what I do!

(beat)

(to Tino)

Tino! Hit that button again!

Tino hesitates.

TINO YAZZIE

You sure about that?

Danny fires him a "just do it" look. Tino hits the button.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE

Danny's fighter ZIPS straight up 50,000 feet plus. When the three drones follow and stop short, Danny BLASTS them.

INT. - DANNY'S FIGHTER

Danny and Tino watch only three other fighters pull the maneuver. The rest remain locked in tough dogfights below.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

We gotta tell those guys. You
speak anything foreign, Tino?

Tino thinks. He looks around on the floor of the fighter until he finds one of the satellite phones Joe swiped back at Penta Din, and he holds it up to show Danny.

TINO YAZZIE

Yah - maybe, hey? I speak Wilma!

Danny shakes his head and DIVES the fighter back down into the fray. Tino struggles to make a call while the fighter spins, weaves, and rocks from incoming laser fire.

TINO YAZZIE

(into phone)

Yah -hey, uh, I need Wilma

(MORE)

TINO YAZZIE (CONT'D)

Keepseagle please. Long hair, uh,
Indian -- she, uh - she was in that
hangar that just got wrecked? ...
Yah. Sure. I'll hold.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE

Danny's fighter draws four new fierce drone opponents. He quickly POPS UP and dispatches them the same way. But from 50,000 feet it's clear that the battle isn't going well for the humans. There are too many drones against too few experienced fighter pilots. Nobody's hitting the triangle, and several green shields are already fading badly.

Danny's fighter gamely dives down low again, guns blazing.

INT. - DANNY'S FIGHTER

Tino finally gets Wilma on the satellite phone.

TINO YAZZIE

Wilma! You gotta tell our ship to
translate through the other ships!
When I say 'go,' yell loud in
Omakri and make it transmit this...

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE

Danny's fighter tries to make an attack run at the triangle, but a swarm of drones intervenes and denies him. Then across the battlespace, green bubbles start to POP straight up over 50,000 feet and shoot downward. The momentum of the battle begins to turn against the drones.

INT. - DANNY'S FIGHTER

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Good call Tino! They got it!

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE

With the fighters busy popping up to pick off the combat drones, the triangle's taking no fire at all. The blood-red shield energy concentrates at the north corner, and it BLASTS from the tip of the obelisk at an ascending fighter.

With its weakened shield the fighter's no match for the concentrated kill-shot. It EXPLODES instantly.

INT. - DANNY'S FIGHTER

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 (into radio)
 Rodney! Rodney! You see that?

RODNEY YAZZIE (O.S.)
 (through radio)
 Wasn't me Danny! I'm good!

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 (into radio)
 No, no! I mean right before the big blast! The kimono opens! This thing can't walk and chew gum! Listen. You get a buddy and pop up over the south corner - then watch my run! When I draw that heavy shot? You guys dive on a tower!

INT. - RODNEY'S FIGHTER

Rodney pauses, with many mixed feelings about what might be a suicide plan for Danny - and Tino.

RODNEY YAZZIE
 (into radio)
 K. But you better haul ass!

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE

Two fighters POP UP over the triangle's south corner and turn at 50,000 to SMOKE the drones chasing them.

Danny's fighter banks hard, flips into his trademark barrel roll and SCREAMS in low across the top of the triangle, its guns blazing a trail from south to north. It's the only fighter attacking the triangle, and the red shield energy gathers up behind it in a deadly race to the north corner.

INT. - RODNEY'S FIGHTER

Rodney sees Danny start the run, and he SHOVES his fighter into a crash-dive.

RODNEY YAZZIE
 (into radio)
 Fly it like you stole it Danny!
 Inn-dian styyyylle!

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE

Rodney's fighter and its partner seize their chance as the shield energy pursues Danny. They DIVE straight down through a cloud of drones, firing only at the south obelisk.

Danny's fighter STREAKS past the north edge of the triangle and banks away hard. The blood-red energy concentrates around the north point and gathers for a fearsome kill-shot.

But then the south tower, under withering fire from Rodney's team, EXPLODES into a billion red-hot fragments.

The kill-shot BLASTS out at Danny's fleeing fighter. But it's weakened, and it only manages a glancing, ineffective blow. The shield on Danny's fighter disappears with a shower of sparks. The ship flies on.

TINO YAZZIE (O.S.)
 (through the radio)
 Damn, Rodney! What-chu doing,
 having coffee back there? You were
 pretty close to too late, hey?

INT. - RODNEY'S FIGHTER

Rodney watches Danny's fighter, lacking its shield, fly clear of the battle and climb out of the drones' reach.

RODNEY YAZZIE
 (to himself, quietly)
 You were just about too late too,
 there, Danny.

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE

With the south obelisk destroyed, the fighters make short work of the other two. Their huge EXPLOSIONS rock Antarctica for dozens of miles and send tidal waves of water in all directions. The few remaining drones instantly go dark and drop like rocks into the lake below. With nothing left to shoot at, the fighters converge over the lake.

INT. - DANNY'S FIGHTER

JOE YAZZIE (O.S.)
 (through the radio)
 Say, ah, Danny? What now, hey? We
 all gonna get, like, some kind of
 free dinner or something?

Danny and Tino look at each other and shrug.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE
 (into the radio)
 I don't know. Hadn't really
 thought about it. How about we
 just all go home, hey?

EXT. - SKY OVER THE SOUTH POLE

Nobody has a better idea. The fighters all simply fly off
 in different directions, and they're gone in a blink.

INT. - OVAL OFFICE - THE WHITE HOUSE - LATE MORNING

REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS have gathered for a medal-
 presentation ceremony. A TITLE:
 Washington D.C.
 Tuesday November 24, 2020
 11:51 a.m. Eastern Standard Time

President McCullen stands next to Colonel Payton, who's in
 his best dress uniform. They're front-and-center before the
 Resolute desk. Danny, Wilma, Tino, Rodney and Joe are
 gathered to one side behind the men, decidedly out-of-frame.

President McCullen talks about how the nation ought to be
 especially grateful to its military on the upcoming
 Thanksgiving holiday, and recounts some distorted events of
 the Antarctica battle. Then he turns to Colonel Payton.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 And, so therefore, Colonel James
 "Jimmy" Payton, my old personal
 friend, in recognition of your many
 acts of stoic bravery, ingenious
 diplomacy and, yes indeed, true,
 true heroism, which enabled
 countries from around the world to
 (MORE)

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
 come together and assist you in
 defeating humanity's deadliest
 enemies, I hereby convey to you our
 nation's highest expression of
 gratitude - the Congressional Medal
 of Honor.

The President drapes the Medal of Honor on the Colonel. Reporters applaud, cameras flash, and Colonel Payton smiles like he's just won the lottery. Tino leans in close behind Danny and stage-whispers to him, perhaps trying not to be heard, perhaps not so much.

TINO YAZZIE
 What a bunch of bullshit, hey?

The President and the Colonel must've heard Tino. Unfazed, the President shakes the Colonel's hand for the cameras and then raises a finger for more attention.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Now I would be remiss, y'all, if I
 didn't take a moment and recognize
 some of the many other people who
 also helped deliver us from the
 alien peril. They're right over my
 shoulder here, and y'all can chat
 with them here in the Oval as long
 as y'all like. Right now, though,
 we've gotta step on out to the Rose
 Garden, where I'll decide if I'm a-
 gonna pardon that big tasty-looking
 tom turkey out there!

The reporters laugh politely, and they head outside to set up to cover the turkey-pardoning event. Once the crowd's outdoors the President sits behind the Resolute desk.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Seven weeks and I'm done with this
 damn job forever. I. Can't. Wait!

Colonel Payton leaves. Danny and the others smile politely and turn to go. But the President isn't finished.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Folks? Hold up a second.

They turn back to see the President pull five velvet boxes out of a drawer and stack them on the desk.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN
 Four Presidential Medals of
 Freedom. Plus a Congressional
 Medal of Honor for you Danny; you
 weren't discharged yet. All duly
 awarded. But y'all don't get them.

The President pauses, expecting some kind of reaction from the Indians. He doesn't get one.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
 Same deal with that shaft-job I
 just gave y'all with the press.
 History's being written today by
 those reporters outside, there.
 Y'all ain't in it.

The President gets up and goes to stand in front of Danny.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
 You. Mr. Hot-shot Pilot. Your
 pension? It's gonna be - what's
 the military term? FUBAR? Yessir.
 FUBAR. And that zillion-buck
 judgment your tribe won? Guess
 what? The money won't be approved.
 As for that old uranium mine you
 people sued us about, the clean-up
 stops now. Oh. And. Your Federal
 funding for that little school you
 got on the res? Kiss it goodbye.

McCullen pauses again, waiting for some reaction. Nothing. He turns from Danny and regards the group arrogantly, then looks in Tino's direction and points an accusing finger.

PRESIDENT McCULLEN (CONT'D)
 So. You. The 'bullshit'
 whisperer. The wise-ass. In-jun
 Don Rickles. Aparently the
 spokesman. Tell us. Why am I not
 gonna let the federal government do
 right by you people? Hah?

Tino bristles, but he doesn't say a word. Everyone knows what McCullen wants. Danny speaks for the group.

DANNY KEEPSEAGLE

Do what you will. We're not giving you the ships. They were entrusted to the Omakri and the other ancient people, and they'll be there when they're needed. Or... not?

Danny leaves the Oval Office. The group follows. Tino's the last in line. At the door, he turns back to McCullen and stage-whispers again:

TINO YAZZIE

Yah... now that's Innnn-dian styyyle, hey?

EXT. - CENTRAL ANTARCTICA - CLEAR, BITTER-COLD WINDY DAY

A dozen workers on snowmobiles drive slowly across the wind-swept ice and snow, fanned-out in a search formation. One DRIVER stands up and waves to signal the others, then doubles back a few yards. The others converge on his sled.

The driver gets off and walks, studying a hand-held Geiger counter. He stops and yells through the wind to the others.

DRIVER #1

Pretty sure I got one here!

A second DRIVER brings over a metal detector and waives it over the snowy ice where the first driver's standing. The detector WHISTLES to report a large reading.

DRIVER #2

Youbetcha! Nice work boys, that's two for the day! Let's dig her up!

The driver produces a walkie-talkie and radios back to camp.

DRIVER #2

Base camp, base camp, we have a second confirmed warhead location. We need the drill, over.

The drivers look out over the barren snowscape. Just above the horizon, they see a FIREBALL dropping through the sky.

It disappears far beyond the mountains. Seconds later the work crew feels TREMORS through their boots.

DRIVER #2

Whoa! You guys feel that?

Another fireball falls to earth a few miles off. We see a gigantic black OBELISK through the flames before it SMASHES down. A shock wave soon SPLINTERS the ice under the crew.

More fireballs burn through the sky. Seven, eight, ten obelisks CRASH down. A SHADOW falls over the snowmobiles and crew. They hear a RUMBLE and look up. It's

THE END