

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Butts"

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Director:
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Episode 3S04
Story 4427
8/14/95 (White)

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SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Butts"

CAST

NATHAN WEST
SHANE VANSEN
COOPER HAWKES
VANESSA DAMPHOUSSE
PAUL WANG
MCQUEEN

COCHRAN
ROSS
BOWMAN
CL. RAYMOND T. BUTTS
SAILOR
MARINE

8/14/95

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Butts"

SETS

EXTERIORS

PLANET 2063F
WOODS/WOODS

INTERIORS

SARATOGA/

COMMAND CENTER
FLIGHT DECK
CORRIDOR
COCKPIT BAY
INTERROGATION ROOM
SLEEPING QUARTERS
REC ROOM

HALLWAY
HALLWAY #1
HALLWAY # 2
CLEAN ROOM HALLWAY
CLEAN ROOM
HALLWAY #3
CORRIDOR

LOADING BAY

ISSCV

TEASER

1 EXT. SPACE

1

A sulfuric yellow moon, full and cratered, rolls like a lazy tumbleweed on a black frontier. If it were to rise above the mountains into the Arizona sky, coyotes would howl. And cowboys would dream. (SFX)

Suddenly... the serenity is shattered as a Hammerhead BURSTS INTO FRAME... then stalls. The ENGINES sputter, then IGNITE. Beaten and disabled, the craft flutters and wobbles. (SFX)

Like a drunken bee, it flies before the moon, becoming a black silhouette. CAMERA PANS with the debilitated vehicle, REVEALING the SCVN SARATOGA in the distance.

2 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA

2

The controlled efficient chaos of a battleship at war runs amok in the Saratoga Command center. An ENSIGN delivers a report to Commodore ROSS while MCQUEEN studies current troop positions.

CAMERA URGENTLY MOVES through the personnel to COCHRAN, monitoring a LIDAR screen. He tenses.

COCHRAN
Commodore, bogey bearing one-
niner-zero. 20,000 miles.
Closing.

Ross turns. McQueen moves to Cochran.

ROSS
IFF?

COCHRAN
Negative?

MCQUEEN
'Scope me.

A high tech periscope tube lowers INTO FRAME, connected to the LONG RANGE KECK TELESCOPE (LRKT). McQueen buries his eyes into the view finder.

MCQUEEN'S POV - SPACE - LRKT MATTE

Grainy and distant, adding to the mystery, the disabled Hammerhead hobbles toward the Saratoga, drifting IN and OUT OF FRAME. (SFX)

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

RETURN

McQueen pulls away. He looks to Ross, intense and puzzled.

MCQUEEN
It's a Hammerhead.

3 EXT. SPACE

3

The unidentified jet struggles to reach the ship. (SFX)

4 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA

4

Ross and McQueen huddle, their tone urgent and unsure.

ROSS
All our birds are accounted for
and there's no other Carriers in
this region.

MCQUEEN
Any intelligence reports of Chigs
flying captured SA-43's?

Ross shakes his head, not that he knows of.

COCHRAN
10,000 miles. Still closing.

MCQUEEN
Could be a Silicate suicide
bomber.

Ross barks to Cochran.

ROSS
Deny it. Warn 'em.

Cochran speaks into his radio headset.

COCHRAN
Unidentified spacecraft off my
port bow, you are approaching the
USS Naval Carrier Saratoga.
Request you alter course and
identify yourself immediately.

5 EXT. SARATOGA - SPACE

5

The jet nears its approach to the Saratoga. Still on course.
(SFX)

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

COCHRAN (CONT'D) (V.O.)
You are denied permission to
land...

6 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA

6

Cochran calls out to the officers on deck.

COCHRAN
Still coming.

Ross calls out to BOWMAN at the weapons control.

ROSS
Fire a warning shot.

MCQUEEN
One-six-niner off the port bow.

BOWMAN
One-six-niner off the port bow.
Aye. Aye.

7 EXT. SARATOGA - SPACE

7

An exterior cannon on the port bow FIRES a blast in the jet's direction. The Hammerhead ignores it. In fact, with a dying BURST OF ENGINE, the invading jet nears the spacecraft carrier. A large hangar door begins to open. (SFX)

8 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA

8

Shocked, Cochran turns to McQueen and Ross.

COCHRAN
Commodore, it overrode the
HBDL...

ROSS
Impossible...

COCHRAN
It's docking.

Intense, McQueen immediately moves off. Ross turns, barking commands.

ROSS
Security alert! Master of Arms
lay to the third deck!

- 9 INT. HANGAR BAY - SARATOGA 9
- The charred and damaged plane locks into the hangar bay. The cockpit is disengaged from the plane and begins rising to another level. (SFX)
- 10 INT. FLIGHT DECK CORRIDOR - SARATOGA 10
- Marine Security Forces, heavily armed and armored, run down the corridor to the flight deck doors and take position. McQueen is with them, wielding his sidearm.
- 11 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA 11
- The flight deck is vacant of any cockpits. CAMERA IS MOVING as a cockpit holding bay panel slides open. A cockpit begins to rise. Before it settles...
- CLOSE - CANOPY
- ENTERS FRAME REVEALING the pilot's stenciled I.D.; COL. RAYMOND T. BUTTS. There is no movement in the cockpit.
- 12 INT. FLIGHT DECK CORRIDOR - SARATOGA 12
- The flight deck doors begin to rise. The Marine Security Force races onto the deck.
- 13 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA 13
- As the Marines encircle the cockpit, weapons aimed at point blank range, McQueen commands...
- MCQUEEN
Pop the canopy.
- A MARINE does so. The others tense. As the canopy RISES, the SOUND of JOHNNY CASH'S "A Boy Named Sue" escapes from the cockpit. CAMERA PUSHES INTO the pilot.
- COLONEL RAY BUTTS is motionless, his face blackened with camouflage. Dried blood cakes his nostrils down to his chin. His eyes are closed with his head back. On his helmet, a punk like Marine is kicking an Alien square in the ass. A nickname above the artwork reads "KICKS" Butt. Silence. Tension.
- McQueen moves forward, cautious but concerned, studying the pilot.
- A MARINE
He's dead.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

McQueen holsters his sidearm. The others lower their weapons. McQueen reaches into the cockpit to release the restraints. As they CLICK, Butts' eyes flash open. On pure reflex, he grabs McQueen by the collar and PUNCHES him. Again! Then throws him back. The other Marines immediately pile onto Butts.

MCQUEEN

falls to the deck, dazed.

WIDER

Marines are tossed back as Butts hops to his feet, repelling the Security officers with precision martial arts maneuvers.

WHAM! Butts drives an elbow into a face. BOOM! He kicks a Marine in the chest. Butts moves away from the cockpit, swarmed by men trying to restrain him. Impossible. He's wired on instinct and adrenalin.

As the last are tossed off of him, two Marines tackle Butts. One high, one low. The three men stumble backwards and disappear down an empty cockpit bay. O.S., below, the fight CONTINUES...

MCQUEEN

is helped to his feet by Commodore Ross, who ENTERS. Both are shocked at what they've just witnessed and hustle over to the cockpit bay.

14 INT. COCKPIT BAY - SARATOGA - LOOKING UP

14

Framed by surrounding darkness, McQueen and Ross peer over the side looking down into the cockpit bay. O.S., the three Marines still fight.

MCQUEEN

Kind of a bummer getting your ass
kicked by a dead guy.

With a Marine Corp battle cry, the other Marines pour into the cockpit bay to help out the two Security officers in the hole, blackening FRAME. On an especially heavy O.S., body BLOW...

CUT TO BLACK:

END TEASER

ACT ONE

15 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - SARATOGA - CLOSE - A TATTOO

15

An anchor, globe and eagle lies beneath the flesh of a muscular forearm. CAMERA BEGINS to MOVE up the arm...

BUTTS (V.O.)

My name is Butts, Raymond Thomas.

CAMERA RISES, REVEALING the name badge over the chest: "BUTTS."

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

My rank is Lt. Colonel.

CAMERA finally SETTLES on Ray Butts' face. With one look it is apparent he is one gung ho Devil Dog. His hair is high and tight. His eyes are crystal clear with the ability to look right through another person. Lines and scars tell a tale of many war stories, however, what lies beneath the skin, into the soul, he is trained to keep hidden.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

924-71-5843.

Sitting across the table is McQueen, studying Butts and his polite but resistant posture. Both veterans are aware that Butts' cooperative tone is an attempt at hiding something.

MCQUEEN

You're not a prisoner of war,
Colonel.

BUTTS

(evading)

No, Colonel. I've been a P.O.W.
Back in '52. Karakoram. CC's
stuck a hot coat hanger wire
right up my...

Butts reaches for a cigarette and a lighter, as if two old vets are exchanging war stories. It's a conscious attempt to stray. McQueen knows it. He cuts him off.

MCQUEEN

How did you override the Hangar
Bay Door Lock?

BUTTS (CONT'D)

(beat)

And I never talked.

He eyes McQueen, tries to light the smoke but the lighter doesn't work.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

BUTTS (CONT'D)
Piece of crap.

MCQUEEN
I was on the bridge. It wasn't
activated on our end.

BUTTS
I would advise an immediate
investigation of the HBDL...

MCQUEEN
(cuts him off)
Where's your men?

Only a seasoned veteran, like McQueen, could detect the glitch
in Butts' emotional exterior.

BUTTS
I am... not at liberty to address
that question.

MCQUEEN
You recon?

BUTTS
If I were, I would not be at
liberty to address that question.

MCQUEEN
Butts... I've been where you're
at. I know how to evade
interrogation. Let's cut through
it. I'm not out to bust you. We
have a lot in common...

McQueen opens a folder. :

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)
Joined the Corp at twenty. Never
- married. A week out of Parris
Island you were at the Space
Aviator's Academy in Luxley. Top
of the class. Two tours with the
5th in Karakoram, '52 to '55.
Two Silver Stars in Guatemala.
Special Forces in the A.I.
rebellion. We're two lifers.
You've got nothin' to hide.

BUTTS
Don't tongue me, McQueen.

McQueen bristles.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

BUTTS (CONT'D)

Maybe we got the same amount of time in and the same ribbons hangin' from our nipples when we put on the dress blues... but don't ever think for a second that we're equal... Tank.

McQueen is ready to kill him, then realizes Butts is trying to throw him off by getting him angry. McQueen fights fire with fire.

MCQUEEN

You screwed up, didn't you?
You're CYA right now.

BUTTS

Ray Butts never screws up.

MCQUEEN

I bet Ray Butts did. Men got hurt under your command and you won't come clean.

Butts shoots him an "if looks could kill" glance. And Butts glance seems most capable of accomplishing the task. He's too good, however, to allow McQueen's emotional stab to give him away. The next move in the chess match is his. Pausing, Butts lowers his tone...

BUTTS

Off the record?

McQueen nods.

BUTTS

The Chigs... I seen 'em... skip across a black hole wash.

Butts illustrates with his finger "drawing" on the table to clarify the following.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

You got your black hole... the event horizon. And out here... half a million miles from it is matter 'n gas bein' sucked in. The "wash"... as it were. Now, we go inside that wash and we're gone. No way to escape that gravity. But the Chigs...

He leans forward as if revealing a major secret.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

BUTTS (CONT'D)

The chigs... I seen 'em go a quarter million miles into that wash and skip 'cross it. Like a flat rock on a pond. Gives 'em an ability to jump you.

MCQUEEN

You tellin' me that's what happened to you?

BUTTS

Didn't say that. You need somethin' to know, so I'm tellin' ya...

McQueen moves forward, pissed.

MCQUEEN

All that tells me is you've read Naval Intelligence report four, baker, stroke, seven, niner. Received four days ago.

Butts holds his stoic glare.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

Don't jerk me, Butts. And don't try to evade the question by tossin' me bones about the enemy. Tell me something I don't know.

Butts sits back, eyeing McQueen.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

Like how you got here. And why?

Stalemate.

16 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA - BUTTS' COCKPIT

16

Three pairs of boots stand by the cockpit. Nathan leans INTO FRAME studying some burn impacts on the craft.

NATHAN

Check out how close this chig missile burn is. This Zoomey was in a serious hand to hand furball.

Cooper leans over and pops the canopy. Shane squats down, looking at the instrument panel as Cooper ejects an Optical disc and studies it.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

COOPER
Who's... "The Man in Black?"

SHANE
These readouts indicate the plane
was on the border of the Cerberus
black hole.

This impresses both Cooper and Nathan who move in closer.

COOPER
That's Never-Never country.

NATHAN
The Optical Disc playback should
show the flight...

As Shane reaches inside the cockpit, from nowhere, a hand quickly reaches INTO FRAME and grabs her. It pulls her up and spins her roughly around.

LOW ANGLE - RAY BUTTS

Fire in his eyes as he looks at Shane.

BUTTS
Touch that ODP and you'll be
wearin' your bra backwards after
I twist you in half.

Shane knocks his hand away, defensive, yet respectful. He is an officer.

WIDER

Nathan and Cooper step aggressively toward Butts, but before they can utter a word, Butts grabs Nathan's shirt.

BUTTS
My, my, look at loverboy here...

Shane picks up on the put down, curious. It's as if Butts knows things about them.

BUTTS (CONT'D)
He's got officer ass kickin' on
his mind. Let's go, Romeo, don't
let your better sense hold you
back.

Cooper moves forward, firm, yet respectful of the officer.

COOPER
Sir, we were just interested...

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

Cooper tries to ease Butts' hand from Nathan. Butts defensively grabs Cooper by the back of the neck, cocking his other hand. Ready to strike. Cooper's expression turns hard and mean. Butts' eyes are intense.

BUTTS

Hey man, you're touching me like you love me. Do you love me?

Cooper wants to kill.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

Hey, I love you. Maybe we can get married. Maybe you'd like to propose to me. Why don't you drop down on one knee and ask for my hand?

Cooper squirms to get away, cool. Butts maintain his hold. His expression changes as he feels the navel on the back of Coop's neck.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

Oh my God... another nipple neck.

He lets Cooper go and wipes his hand on Shane's flight suit.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

This bucket's crawlin' with 'em.

Butts notices the 58th squadron insignia on Shane's suit.

BUTTS

The 58th? Wait a mike. You pudknockers are the 58th?

They eye him, not committing to anything that provides more ammo.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

- The "Wild Cards?" No lie? You held off the Chigs at the Battle of the Belt? That was you? I heard a you.

He acts impressed. Still cautious, they nod. Butts scoffs.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

Hell, I don't know what I was expecting... but it ain't you. Chigs must not of wanted it that day.

The three lieutenants steam before the antagonizing Colonel.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

BUTTS

Well, you can take on the entire
Chig army... but I advise you to
stay clear of me. Now, move!

Nathan, Shane and Cooper walk off. Cooper flips Butts the
Johnny Cash Optical disc as the three young officers exit the
deck. CAMERA PUSHES IN on Butts as he looks at the disc,
clearly swirling up a sad and painful memory. As he wraps his
fingers gently around the plastic...

17 INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - SARATOGA - NIGHT

17

The room is dark. The 58th are in their beds.

WANG

No one has an ass that hard.

NATHAN

No, man. That guy is one Colonel
Semper Psycho. He'd eat his own
guts and ask for seconds.

COOPER

How come you can't just punch an
officer?

An collective incredulous look to Cooper, who turns defensive.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Like, if he's got it comin'?

DAMPHOUSSE

Butts couldn't of made Colonel if
he's a long gone hardcharger.
The Corp don't want men like
that.

WANG

'Phousse is right, you guys are
overdoin' it just 'cause he gave
you a jalapeno enema.

SHANE

He knew about us.

Everyone looks to her, curious. She tries to explain.

SHANE (CONT'D)

He called Nathan "loverboy." And
it wasn't by accident.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

NATHAN

What the hell's that mean?

SHANE

We know why you joined the Corp.
How you feel about Kylan... but
anyone outside the Wild Cards
wouldn't know.

NATHAN

You're reachin'. He was just
trying to cut me.

COOPER

He didn't know I was an In Vitro
until he grabbed my neck.

SHANE

Even that. I got a gut feelin'
it was all a put on.

COOPER

He is a sneaky mother. Came out
of nowhere.

Nathan turns on his back, tired of talking about Butts.

NATHAN

You're givin' him too much
credit. The guy's just mean.

CAMERA BEGINS TO CREEP AWAY from the five bunks, ACROSS THE
ROOM into the darkness...

SHANE

I don't know. Maybe... it's
just, no one's born that mean.

CAMERA BOOMS DOWN to a lower bunk. In the berth, covered in
blankets, unbeknownst to the others, is Ray Butts. Faint spill
light falls on his face. He lies toward CAMERA, listening.
Blank and somewhat sad. The others can be seen OUT OF FOCUS in
the b.g. as they talk about him.

SHANE (CONT'D)

They either put it on for effect
or... somethin' happened.
Something turned them mean. And
maybe they can't ever go back.

Butts stares into the darkness, listening to her voice.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

SHANE (CONT'D)
And the worse part is... they
know it.

Butts shuts his eyes. She is right. And he knows it.

18 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA - CLOSE - VIDEO SCREEN

18

"Macbeth", appearing crazed and mean FILLS FRAME.

MACBETH
My name's Macbeth.

YOUNG SIWARD
The devil himself could not
pronounce a title more hateful to
mine ear.

WIDER

Wang and Cooper sit before the screen, both are caught up in
the emotion, but Cooper is lost.

In the b.g., Shane and Damphousse are at a table repainting
their "Wild Card" nicknames on their flight helmets. Nathan is
across the room sitting at an electronic newspaper monitor, but
watching the movie on the screen across the room.

WANG
Isn't this great? I requested it
at the beginning of our tour.
Took three months to get it.

COOPER
I don't know what this guy's
sayin', but he means it.

MACBETH (V.O.)
No, nor more fearful.

BACK DOORWAY/CORRIDOR

Butts appears outside the rec room, holding in the corridor
darkness. He studies the group, listening to the words on
screen.

YOUNG SIWARD (V.O.)
Thou liest, abhorred tyrant;

TV MONITOR

Young Siward draws his sword.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

YOUNG SIWARD (CONT'D)
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

Macbeth and Siward charge one another and begin to fight. Suddenly, the screen turns black with the graphic "MONITORED" across FRAME.

WIDER

Wang and Cooper throw up their hands in protest.

WANG
Damned Armed Forces TV.

Cooper draws his butterfly knife and hustles to the controls, furiously digging at the panel.

WANG (CONT'D)
We can kill Chigs and earn medals, but they won't let us see a fight on TV.

Cooper yanks a computer chip out of the control panel.

COOPER
Popped the V-Chip!

Suddenly, the "MONITORED" graphic disappears and the fight resumes. Macbeth plunges his sword into Young Siward!

WANG
Just in time!

BUTTS

quietly enters the room. He's up to something.

SHANE & DAMPHOUSSE

eye the Colonel as he moves across the room. His presence creates tension. As he CLEARS FRAME...

WIDER

Wang and Cooper settle back into the movie as Butts approaches in the b.g., moving toward the control panel.

MACBETH
Thou wast born of woman. But
swords I smile at...

Butts turns off the monitor. Wang and Cooper whirl to Butts, pissed, before realizing who it is...

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

WANG

Hey, fool, what the hell ..?

BUTTS

I saw what you maggots did.
Brass says you're not suppose to
see this crap.

WANG

Shakespeare is not crap.

BUTTS

(testing him)

It is if it's on orders from the
brass. Now, move out.

Wang and Cooper eye each other. Neither moves. Wang is quite angry, but reluctant to express it. He eyes the room...

SHANE, DAMPHOUSSE & NATHAN

are tense as they watch the confrontation. Damphousse subtly shakes her head to Wang as if "don't do anything."

RETURN

Wang looks back, adrenalin pumping.

WANG

May speak freely... Colonel?

Butts turns to Wang. The Colonel's eyes are fiery.

BUTTS

Speak.

WANG

You don't care if we see this.
You're just messin' with our
heads. Bein' at war, this could
be the last time I hear
Shakespeare and you took that
from me. And if you weren't
wearing those Oak Leaves, sir,
I'd be kickin' your ass up
between your shoulder blades.

Wang holds firm, but scared of retaliation. Butts remain stoic as Cooper cocks a proud half grin. Shane, Damphousse and Nathan are stunned, yet impressed.

Butts reaches for his Colonel pins.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

BUTTS

Tell ya what. I'll drop my Oak
Leaves for ten seconds, 'cause
that's all the time I'll need to
pound some respect into you.

Butts drops his officer insignia to the ground. He moves
toward Wang. Suddenly, O.S., a dull THUMP. Butts turns.

Cooper has jabbed his butterfly knife into the table,
indicating he is ready to take on Butts mano y mano. Butts
eyes the gesture, bemused.

BUTTS

Keep the knife. It'll make
things even.

WANG

(getting his senses)
Okay. Alright...

Butts steps toward Cooper who moves toward Butts. Wang reaches
up to restrain the Colonel.

WANG (CONT'D)

Coop, let's all cool off...

Butts grabs Wang and flips him over his back. Wang crashes
hard to the ground.

WIDER

Cooper makes a move, but like lightning, Butts spins back and
drives his palm into Cooper's chin. Cooper's head rocks back,
dazed. Shane, Damphousse, and Nathan race from their position
toward the fight.

Cooper charges Butts, just as the other three RUN INTO FRAME
and leap on the Colonel, who holds his ground.

WANG

dazed, shakes it off as the FIGHT is HEARD, O.S. After an
especially HEAVY O.S. PUNCH, Nathan falls INTO FRAME beside
Wang. Both their bells are rung as they look to one another.

WANG

He's worse than you said.

As they both return to the fight...

CUT TO:

19 INT. FLIGHT DECK CORRIDOR - SARATOGA

19

McQueen is walking down the dark flight deck corridor, angry and full of purpose. CAMERA IS MOVING, leading him through the vacant passage way. McQueen sees something on the flight deck and marches toward it.

20 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA

20

Ray Butts sits in the f.g. on a toolbox beside his cockpit. Johnny Cash's "I Walk the Line" plays on a portable optical disc machine. A bottle of bourbon and several cigarette butts lie at his feet.

Butt's expression is distant and sad. He appears heartbroken and doesn't alter his air an iota as McQueen storms up to him.

MCQUEEN

I want you gone. I don't know how or why you're here or what you think you're doing with my people. Abusing subordinates, disrupting unity and morale. Whatever you're doing, I take one look at you and know it's only about you... and anyone pulled in is going to die while you just drive on.

Butts takes a drink from his glass of bourbon, buzzed.

BUTTS

They passed my test. They all came runnin' to help their buddies. You taught 'em good.

MCQUEEN

Don't tongue me. You're gone. I wouldn't care if you turned out to be the Commodore's bestest golf buddy or you bleed Scarlet and Gold or even if the flag at Iwo Jima was raised on your ass. I will pull every string to get you away from my people, off this bucket and back to the slime pit you climbed out of.

Butts takes another drink.

BUTTS

Well... you can pull strings, but I pull ropes.

McQueen listens.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

BUTTS (CONT'D)
I got a mission, classified
"compartmentalized"... and I'm
takin' them with me.

Butts pulls some paperwork out of his pocket and flips it to
McQueen who quickly opens them and reads...

BUTTS
Your squad's not the calibre I'm
used to operating with, but
they'll do in a pinch. I've got
to go as soon as the tide wanes
on the Cerberus black hole.

McQueen is shocked, furious. With determination...

MCQUEEN
This ain't gonna happen.

BUTTS
Don't bother fighting it,
McQueen. I'm in so deep... so
dark... the Old Man approves
everything I request, including
this.

McQueen looks at the papers once again. CAMERA PUSHES IN.

BUTTS
Deal with it. You're no longer
in command of the 58th. They're
mine now.

Butts downs his drink as Johnny Cash plays. McQueen looks to
the paperwork which has ripped away his command.

FADE OUT:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

21 EXT. SARATOGA - SPACE 21

The large craft is dark against the black sea of stars.

22 INT. HALLWAY - SARATOGA - CLOSE - A HANDGUN 22

moves through the dim hallway. Quiet. Covert. Held by Cooper. The gun continues until meeting another hand weapon, held by Damphousse. CAMERA REVEALS the two lieutenants. They are intense. Battle faces.

COOPER

(whispers)

I want to get that guy so bad.

Damphousse nods, gestures for silence. Using hand signals, she indicates "I'll go this direction. You go that direction." Cooper nods, confirming. They move off in opposite directions.

23 INT. FLIGHT DECK CORRIDOR - SARATOGA 23

Vacant. Dark. CAMERA CREEPS along the hallway until REVEALING Nathan, covering in shadows. He rocks the slide back on his handgun, a quiet SNAP.

24 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA 24

The stars don't twinkle out the windows, but they shine brightly. Two silhouettes appear, Wang and Vansen, covering each others' backs. They proceed into the room, Wang against the right wall, Vansen against the left.

25 INT. HALLWAY #1 - SARATOGA 25

Damphousse creeps down a hallway, weapon ready. She reaches a T-intersection of hallway. Vanessa puts her back to the wall and inches toward the hallway opening. She raises her weapon and peeks out down the adjoining hallway to the left.

DAMPHOUSSE'S POV - HALLWAY #2

To the left, it's empty.

RETURN

Damphousse quickly turns her back to the opposite wall and looks down hallway #2 to the right.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

DAMPHOUSSE'S POV - HALLWAY #2

Empty, however, a green light blinks out above a door that indicates clear passage.

RETURN

Damphousse reads this and hustles along the hallway, gun readied.

26 INT. CLEAN ROOM HALLWAY - SARATOGA

26

The hallway is empty. Damphousse appears at the end of the passageway. Then, she sees...

DAMPHOUSSE'S POV - CLEAN ROOM DOOR

gently closes.

DAMPHOUSSE

in hot pursuit, hustles to the door and peeks carefully into the porthole.

DAMPHOUSSE'S POV - THROUGH THE TRIANGULAR WINDOW

A hanging space suit moves slightly.

DAMPHOUSSE

opens the door and charges inside.

27 INT. CLEAN ROOM - SARATOGA

27

Damphousse moves to the space suit, weapon raised. CAMERA MOVES, leading her to the door and REVEALING Butts, black flight suit and camouflaged, squatting behind the door behind her. He shoots his weapon. Damphousse never saw it coming.

REVERSE

Vanessa is hit with a red paintball which splatters across her back. She turns, startled, then angry when she realizes he's behind her.

BUTTS

shows her a fine line of wire held between his finger leading to the space suit. He stands and hustles off toward the loading bay. As he passes Damphousse...

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

DAMPHOUSSE
You shot me in the back!

BUTTS
'Cause you didn't cover it!

He disappears. After a beat, Cooper appears in the doorway and checks out the red splotch across her back.

COOPER
Where'd he go?

DAMPHOUSSE
Sorry, Coop. I'm dead.

COOPER
I think you're on your last
breath.

Damphousse sighs and subtly gestures toward the loading bay. Cooper takes off in that direction.

28 INT. HALLWAY #3 - SARATOGA

28

CAMERA IS LOW and MOVING as Cooper hustles down a hallway. Suddenly, a door marked "GALLEY" begins to open. Cooper turns and shoots!

DOORWAY

A SAILOR, in a white apron, holding two large cans of tomatoes is plastered with red paint. He looks at Cooper, annoyed.

COOPER

is surprised it's not Butts. Frustrated, he lowers his weapon, dropping his guard...

DOORWAY

Butts, hidden behind the sailor, moves his "cover" aside and BLASTS away.

COOPER

is nailed with red paint. He's mad.

COOPER
Oh, man, that's cheap. I ain't
goin' down like this.

As Butts disappears into the hallway of darkness...

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

BUTTS

If it were real, you wouldn't be
able to bitch, so shut up.

And he's gone. The Sailor looks to Cooper.

SAILOR

Isn't bad enough I'm on KP
without you guys using me as a
human shield?

As Cooper scowls at the cook...

29 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA

29

Wang and Shane have made their way across the dark room.

SHANE

weapon ready, spins into an area that could provide cover for
an "enemy." Nothing. She looks to Wang.

WANG

checks behind a similar area on his side of the room. He turns
to Shane, shakes his head "no."

WIDER

Both are frustrated. They slowly ease toward one another while
continuing to be on their guard.

Suddenly, above the ceiling pipes, a SOUND, like FOOTSTEPS.
Wang and Shane raise their weapons, moving into the room. As
they try to locate the source of the SOUNDS...

Ray Butts drops out of the ceiling from a Virtual Reality
Circle. In one fluid move, he lands on the floor and FIRES two
quick BLASTS.

WANG & SHANE

turn on the SOUND of the SHOTS, only to be met with paint balls
splattering on their clothes. As they look to each other,
pissed off...

30 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA

30

The instrument panel lights in the cockpits cast eerie and
colorful shadows across the cavernous room. Nathan appears
behind a cockpit and crouch/runs ahead to the next, taking
cover. He pauses, looks about.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

Once clear, he proceeds to the next cockpit, making a clean sweep of the flight deck. Nathan pauses again, checks the area.

As he moves toward the next cockpit for cover, however, the cockpit suddenly drops into the holding bay. Nathan's cover disappears and he is left exposed. He turns to head back to the other cockpits.

That cockpit also drops. He has nowhere to hide. As he turns and searches for cover...

AN EMPTY COCKPIT BAY

begins to rise. Butts stand on top of the cockpit, quickly appearing out of nowhere. He FIRES.

NATHAN

is tagged right between the eyes.

BUTTS

His job is done. The squadron has been wiped out. As he stands in the cockpit bay.

BUTTS
Easy as eatin' blueberry
pancakes.

CUT TO:

31 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA

31

Wang is standing in the Virtual Realty bay looking up into the circles in the ceiling. He wonders how Butts could have gotten up there.

WANG
Cheap. They were all cheap
kills.

He moves to the others gathered around the table. McQueen sits at a monitor across the room.

COOPER
He won't have any dish washers to
hide behind in the thick.

NATHAN
I don't get the point of the
whole thing.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

NATHAN (Cont'd)

He should be trainin' us to use
the skills he knows, not showin'
'em off.

DAMPHOUSSE

Right. Felt like he was usin' us
to sharpen his skills. We were
just clay pigeons.

SHANE

Maybe he's trying to lead by
example.

MCQUEEN

subtly cocks an ear to the conversation. It tears him up, but
he cannot show it.

WANG (O.S.)

Not much of a leader.

RETURN

Cooper is so mad he can't sit still.

COOPER

I'm in a squad where I'd rather
shoot the commander than the
enemy.

McQueen stands and moves to them.

MCQUEEN

Knock it off.

COOPER

You know what I'm sayin', sir.
I mean... I never felt like
shootin' you.

MCQUEEN

Hawkes, you're makin' me all
misty.

WANG

Sir... we'd lay down our lives
for you, 'cause we know you'd put
down for us. But... Butts...

NATHAN

He wouldn't be there.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

DAMPHOUSSE

Sir... isn't there anything you
can do?

COOPER

We don't want him. We want you.

MCQUEEN

This isn't a dating service.
We're at war. If we question
orders... there will be no
order. It would all fall
apart...

They all look away as if rejected by McQueen. He reads this
and it eats at him... but there's nothing much he can say.

NATHAN

Would you follow him into a
firefight?

MCQUEEN

He's an officer in the Corp.
He's trained to care about his
Marines. And if I was so
ordered, yes, I would follow
him...

McQueen starts out, then pauses...

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

But I'd watch my back. And I'd
watch each other's back... real
close.

He turns and exits. The squadron is silent. Shane stands.

SHANE

Maybe we won't have to worry
about it. After the way we
performed today... Butts won't
want us to follow him.

She moves out of the room. The remaining 58th eye each other,
ashamed and still angry.

32 INT. CORRIDOR - SARATOGA

32

Shane walks down the corridor toward the 58th squadron's
sleeping quarters. From inside the room, Johnny Cash's "I
Still Miss Someone" twangs softly, painfully.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

Shane opens the door, but no light spills from the room. Only music. She slowly, curiously peeks inside.

33 INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - SARATOGA

33

Raymond Butts sits at the table in the dark, his back to Shane and CAMERA. Smoke smoulders in an ashtray. A bottle of bourbon and a glass are in arm's reach.

Shane watches, listens, for a moment, then moves slowly toward him, around the table.

OVER SHANE'S SHOULDER

MOVING... Butts slowly raises his head to look at Shane, REVEALING blood shot eyes and stubble. He looks at her but remains silent.

SHANE

I was wondering if you still want us for the mission... after today?

Butts pauses for a long moment.

BUTTS

Most units I've trained... eat it in five minutes. You all lasted ten.

Shane nods, pauses, until he returns to his drink, a signal for her to leave. She begins to move out, then pauses. With her back to him and his to hers...

SHANE

What do you think about in the dark?

Pause. Butts picks up a cigarette and a lighter. With his back to CAMERA, we can't see him try to light it. Just the CLICK, CLICK, of the faulty lighter. He tosses the cigarette and lighter on the table.

BUTTS

I think about the first man I ever killed.

Shane is shaken by the answer's honesty.

SHANE

What about him?

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

BUTTS
(more light than dark)
I wonder what he's doin' now.

Pause.

BUTTS (CONT'D)
(likewise)
And if he got the better end of
the deal.

He peers over his shoulder at her.

SHANE
How many...have you killed?

Butts' entire being turns dark, dreadful and sad. He turns
away from her.

BUTTS
One too many.
(pause)
Tell 'em to hit the sack. We
ship out tomorrow.

Shane watches him for a moment, then exits. As Butts takes one
more drink, and the MUSIC plays...

CUT TO:

34 INT. LOADING BAY - SARATOGA - CLOSE - WEAPONS

34

Stacked. One by one, they are picked up by the 58th.

WIDER

urgency and movement sweep the area as the I.S.S.C.V. is
loaded for the mission. Boxes of ammunition and supplies are
carried aboard only by the 58th, since this is a secret
assignment. Colonel Butts supervises.

SHANE & NATHAN

pick up their flight helmets, whispering to each other.

NATHAN
Think he'll ever tell us exactly
what the mission is?

SHANE
If we're takin' our helmets, we
must be gettin' airborne.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

SOME PACKS

are piled on the loading dock, a level below. Wang moves to them and double checks what he sees.

WANG
Parachutes?! We're makin' a
drop?!

Butts moves into a tyrannical position over Wang, indicating to shut up. Wang complies and loads a pack into the I.S.S.C.V. Butts checks his watch.

CLEAN ROOM DOOR

McQueen appears... watching... concerned.

RETURN

Butts calls out from the upper level.

BUTTS
Supplies secured? Load up.

The 58th move to board the I.S.S.C.V. Shane is first in line. She eyes McQueen as she enters, nonverbally expressing doubt about Butts.

MCQUEEN

has to avert his eyes.

I.S.S.C.V. ENTRANCE

The remainder of the squadron file into the vehicle, each repeating Shane's expression.

MCQUEEN

each look hurts as deeply as the first.

I.S.S.C.V. ENTRANCE

The squadron disappear into the vehicle. Butts begins to move to the door.

LOADING BAY

McQueen steps down into the loading bay.

MCQUEEN
Butts.

Butts stops, eyes front.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

MCQUEEN

I know they're not my children.
They're Marines. Life takers and
heart breakers.

McQueen steps closer, growing with intensity.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

And I know we're at war. And
people die. But if I learn that
any of my people died... because
of you.

McQueen pauses. Butts keeps his eyes forward.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

All your recon skills and black
ops training won't be worth a
damn. I'll find you.

After a pause, Butts decides McQueen is finished and heads into
the I.S.S.C.V.

I.S.S.C.V. DOOR

The 58th stand behind Butts who turns and looks hard to
McQueen. The door begins to close.

MCQUEEN

The door moves, covering his image...

I.S.S.C.V. DOOR

Butts and the 58th disappear as the I.S.S.C.V. door SLAMS
SHUT.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. SARATOGA - SPACE - CLOSE - I.S.S.C.V. ENGINES (SFX)

35

Ignite, strong and powerful. The ship lifts off the deck and
ROARS into space.

36 INT. REC ROOM - NIGHT - CLOSE - OBSERVATION WINDOW

36

McQueen moves INTO FRAME, looking out as the I.S.S.C.V. passes
through and pulls away from the Saratoga. McQueen can only
watch them go.

CUT TO:

37 INT. I.S.S.C.V. - SPACE

37

The squadron is now in full gear. Guns, parachutes, packs. They are camouflaged and wearing night vision goggles. They sit, side by side like troops ready to parachute.

Butts remains silent. He checks his watch.

38 EXT. PLANET 2063F - NIGHT

38

An Earth size planet, ominous on the dark side, away from its Sun. The I.S.S.C.V. ROARS into FRAME and begins ENTRY. Atmospheric burn trails stream from the ship as the bottom glows a fiery red.

39 INT. I.S.S.C.V. - ATMOSPHERE

39

With no fanfare, Butts stands before the group.

BUTTS

You are participating in "Operation - Get Rhythm." The objective is to retrieve six SA-43 attack jets currently camo'd deep in enemy territory...

DAMPHOUSSE

How did they get there?

He shoots her a dirty look and continues, not answering the question.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

... and return them safely to the Saratoga.

Wang looks to Cooper and nods with confidence as if "no problem."

BUTTS (CONT'D)

- To achieve optimum stealth, deployment will be achieved via High-Altitude-Low-Opening parachute drop. I.S.S.C.V. exit will be at 30,000 feet, chute deployment will commence at 2,000 feet.

Wang looks to Cooper and shakes his head with no confidence, as if "problem."

SHANE

We haven't been trained for a HALO jump.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

BUTTS
Same as a regular jump... you
just wait longer.

WANG
A hell of a lot longer!

BUTTS
It's as easy as eatin' a
blueberry pancake.

He turns and opens the I.S.S.C.V. door, a fierce wind whips
inside the vehicle.

BUTTS
On your feet. Step up to the
hatch.

Butts looks to his watch.

BUTTS
We will meet at 30 degrees 5
minutes by 75 degrees 2 minutes
at 02:34. Ready... ready...

They look to their watches, battling the wind.

BUTTS (CONT'D)
Hack.

They set their watches, then place small oxygen masks over
their nose and mouth. They move into position single file
along the wall. The Marines, in unison, look to their leader
for inspiration, but only get...

BUTTS
It's dark. You won't even know
you're falling 27,000 feet.

No one has altered their stoic, anxious expression. Butts
steams.

BUTTS
Come on you sons of bitches, what
do you think you're gonna live
forever?! Go! Go! Semper Fi!

Shane jumps out of the vehicle. Cooper steps up.

BUTTS (CONT'D)
DO OR DIE!!

Cooper jumps. Nathan steps up.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

BUTTS (CONT'D)
GUNG HO! GUNG HO!!

Nathan leaps, Damphousse jumps out right after him. Wang steps up, pauses. He looks at Butts, who seems surprisingly sympathetic.

BUTTS
Want me to hold your hand on the way down?

Wang nods, holds out his hand. Butts grabs it and yanks Wang out the door. Wang's SCREAM FADES O.S. as he drops. Butts turns and leaps out the door.

BUTTS
HOO-YAH!!!

40 EXT. PLANET 2063F - SKY - NIGHT (SFX)

40

It's dark, the I.S.S.C.V. is barely discernible as it pulls away into the sky. Several small black dots tumble into the night.

Suddenly, Nathan, eyes wide, ENTERS FRAME and STREAKS PAST CAMERA like a human rocket.

41 EXT. PLANET 2063F - NIGHT

41

Cooper is on the ground, quickly gathering his chute. Shane is in the b.g., gathering hers. It is dark, a figure parachutes INTO FRAME. As it hits the ground and rolls...

WANG

stands to his feet, stunned. He looks to the sky. Nathan, chute bunched up under his arm, runs up to Wang, whispers.

NATHAN
Wang, c'mon, what are you doin'?

WANG
I'm waiting for my testicles.
They should be dropping in any second.

Nathan grabs Wang, pulling him toward nearby cover. Wang gathers his chute as they go.

42 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

42

The 58th gather up in the nearby cover of some extraterrestrial trees with a striking resemblance to Earth's. The Marines speak in whispers.

NATHAN
Where's Semper Psycho?

Butts steps out of the bush.

BUTTS
If I was Chig, I'd be burying you right now.

SHANE
Sir, what are the co-ordinates of the Hammerheads?

The squad looks to him. Butts pauses... his tone is dark and covert.

BUTTS
I've changed the initial objective.

The Marines look to one another, pissed off.

NATHAN
You've changed it?

COOPER
What's the mission?

BUTTS
Classified.

SHANE
Classified? There's six of us in Chig territory. You think there's gonna be a breach of security?

DAMPHOUSSE
Tell us now.

BUTTS
Is that an order, Lieutenant Damp House?

DAMPHOUSSE
'Phousse. 'Phousse.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

NATHAN

I don't believe this new objective is an authorized mission. You're using us and we want to know what the assignment is.

COOPER

Or we don't go.

Butts eyes them hatefully and yet doesn't blame them.

BUTTS

Alright, secure your chutes over there. Then come back and I'll orientate you.

The 58th hustle away with their chutes.

ANOTHER AREA

The group bury their parachutes and hide them beneath a collection of rocks and extraterrestrial vegetation. Once secured, they head back to the initial gathering point.

GATHERING POINT

CAMERA IS MOVING, leading the commandoes back to the original meeting spot. As they approach, Shane begins to look about, anxious, intense.

SHANE

Where is he?

The others fan out, looking for Colonel Butts, growing increasingly angry and nervous.

DAMPHOUSSE

He's gone. He left us.

WANG

What do we now? If we go lookin' for him, all we could find is the Chigs.

Nathan looks to Shane, angry and afraid.

As they 58th gather together in the forest... wondering what lies beyond in the darkness.

FADE OUT:

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

43 EXT. PLANET 2063F - WOODS - NIGHT

43

Two moons and a distant ring hang in the evening sky. In the f.g., cutting two thirds of the FRAME is some vegetation. Quietly, Nathan and Damphousse appear through the foliage, wearing their night vision goggles.

Nathan checks his Infra Red Detection Monitor on his M-590. He looks to Damphousse and shakes his head "nothing."

44 EXT. TRACKING AREA #2 - WOODS - NIGHT

44

Shane, Cooper and Wang proceed into the woods, searching. They move through an area of high bushes. Wang pauses. He brings the microphone on his headset close to his lips, then "blows" softly into it twice. A signal.

Cooper and Shane turn, move toward Wang. Once there, he shines his blue filtered flashlight on the tall grass. Two bushes growing close together have interlaced branches.

Shane shrugs at Wang, who holds up a hand and points to two other similar bushes. As a demonstration, he passes through the two bushes. As the branches brush against Wang, then return to position, the branches interlace like the first pair of bushes Wang indicated.

Cooper nods, understands. He whispers into his headset.

COOPER

West... we found some bushes he passed through. Alter your position 25 meters East.

45 EXT. TRACKING AREA #1 - NIGHT

45

Nathan listens in his headset.

NATHAN

Roger that.

He looks to Damphousse who is kneeling in the b.g., looking at something on the ground. She waves over Nathan. He moves to her and squats for a closer look.

INSERT - GROUND

A subtle indentation from a footstep.

NATHAN & DAMPHOUSSE

He tenses, looks to her and shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

NATHAN
That's a Chig footprint.

As she looks to him, concerned...

CUT TO:

46 EXT. TRACKING AREA #3 - NIGHT

46

Shane, Cooper and Wang moves through the brush. It's painfully silent, eerie. No night sounds of Earth. They approach the base of a hill.

Suddenly, O.S., a FAINT RUSTLE of grass. The three Marines raise their rifles. The SOUND grows CLOSER.

A dark figure appears. It pauses. Over their headsets...

NATHAN (V.O.)
Denver.

SHANE
(responding)
Omelette.

Everyone eases as Nathan and Damphousse exit the woods.

Wang signals everyone to the base of the hill. He kneels, pointing to some smaller plants, pressed against the ground going uphill.

WANG
He went up this hill.

NATHAN
We saw some Chig tracks. It
could be...

In the distance, a NOISE... RHYTHMIC... DELIBERATE... but very FAINT. They freeze, listen. Damphousse quickly removes an audio amplifier and places it to her ear, while searching the area with a small directional Mic.

Damphousse pauses, HEARS something, then quickly gestures up the hill. The 58th take off in that direction.

47 EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

47

The 58th move up the hill in a single file line. O.S., the RHYTHMIC SOUND continues...

48 EXT. FURTHER UP THE HILL - NIGHT

48

The squaward the plateau with Damphousse covering. Clearly, the RHYTHMIC SOUND is just over the ridge. She crawls on the ground and as she looks over the crest, the darken image of Ray Butts can be seen, digging.

DAMPHOUSSE (V.O.)
What the hell is he doing?

NATHAN & WANG

creep on the ground, covert. Beyond them, Butts digs.

WANG
Looks like he's planting
explosive charges.

COOPER

is proceeding, crouched over. He takes a step. Another...

DAMPHOUSSE (V.O.)
Maybe he's caching equipment.

Suddenly, as Cooper nears Butts' work area, Cooper stumbles over something beneath his feet. He quietly GRUNTS as he keeps from falling.

BUTTS

His silhouette cocks its head. Freezes.

COOPER

looks down.

COOPER'S POV - DEAD BODY

in a Marine Corp uniform.

COOPER

tries not to freak.

COOPER
Over here! There's a body.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

NATHAN & WANG

hustle off.

SHANE & DAMPHOUSSE

move toward Cooper.

WIDER

Cooper stands over the dead body. In a beat, the others quietly move to him, shocked and puzzled by the body. Cooper leans down to turn over the corpse.

Suddenly, from out of nowhere, Butts charges Cooper and places a gun toward his head. The 58th raise their rifles. Everyone is intense, charged. Butts appears crazed. The following is all OVERLAPPED and CHAOTIC.

BUTTS
GET AWAY! GET AWAY FROM THERE!

NATHAN
GET THAT WEAPON OFF HIM!

BUTTS
MOVE OUT!

WANG
COLONEL, LET HAWKES GO!!

BUTTS
YOU DIDN'T WANT TO COME WITH ME,
SO GET THE HELL AWAY!

SHANE
IDENTIFY THIS BODY, SIR.

Butts freezes up, pained. The gun is still aimed at Cooper.

NATHAN
Explain this, Colonel. Was the
mission a friendly assassination?

Butts looks to him, horrified, "is that what you think?"

DAMPHOUSSE
DID YOU KILL THIS MAN?

Butts freezes. He stares beyond them, breaking from his heart. The violent intensity succumbs to horrified dread. He shuts his eyes as if that could erase a terrible memory.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

BUTTS

He's dead... because of me.

He lowers his weapon. Cooper takes it from him. Still cautious... the 58th is shaken by Butts' admission.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

In my life... I've killed hundreds. People. Aliens. A.I.'s. Some close enough to see... that... look. That moment as they realize... they have one terrified heartbeat to live.

(pause)

And I never knew... how sacred that moment was... until I saw it in my only friend's eyes.

He moves to the body, looking upon it with pained longing. The young men and women are motionless.

BUTTS

Our unit was sent to bomb a Chig C-3 Tower. That area was hot with AAG so I ordered we set 'em down and do it... like old time soldiers.

(a deep breath)

We crept in at night and demolished the Communication Tower like we was eatin' blueberry pancakes.

(pause)

Then... on the return... here... only half a klick from the planes... we got ambushed.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. HILLTOP - NIGHT - CLOSE BUTTS (FLASHBACK)

50

Chaos. EXPLOSIONS FLASHES of light. Tracer FIRE! Yet there is NO SOUND. Only Raymond Butts' VOICE, recalling, drained of emotion. As he tries to return fire...

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

If I live a million years, I'll never know why it happened this one time... after all I've seen and done... I think because I had made this friend...

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

ROBERT OWENS (FLASHBACK)

another Marine, equally frightened, returns FIRE.

BUTTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Someone I actually gave a damn
about and, I knew, did for me...

BUTTS (FLASHBACK)

CAMERA MOVES IN on him, breaths deep and fast.

BUTTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And for once I felt the fear of
never seeing someone again... I
gave into an instinct I was
unfamiliar with... and I ran.

JUMP CUT TO:

51 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - CLOSE - BUTTS

51

CAMERA IS HAND HELD and TIGHT on Butts' horror.

BUTTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I saw an out. I went for it.
And... I was so close to this
person, we two worked like one
man... I assumed he was with me.

Butts pulls up, CAMERA SWIRLS DIZZILY about him, as he looks back.

BUTTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Next thing... I knew... I was out
of the thick. Alone. I turned
just in time to see him... the
last man... go down.

OWENS - EXTREMELY CLOSE ON HIS EYES

Wide, dreadful and scared. SLOW MOTION as a FLASH FILL THE FRAME.

BUTTS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... with that horror in his eyes
that I was so familiar with.

The FLASH RECEDES TO BLACK...

52 EXT. HILLTOP - NIGHT (PRESENT)

52

Butts ENTERS A BLACK FRAME. His eyes are red, but no tears.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

With the Chigs distracted... I made it to my Hammerhead and got out. They jumped me outside Cerberus. They shot up my communications. I knew the Saratoga was in reach. And I knew of the 58th... and with you... I could return.

The young Marines are shaken and silent. No one can look to one another. Butts stands over his friend.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

Look what they did. The Chigs are afraid of their dead. They're horrified of ours. Severed the head... removed the eyes... the heart.

If he was ever going to cry, it would be now. He doesn't.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

But that crap means nothing. The finest spirit... an unequaled soul... is gone.

(pause)

And that's because of me.

Butts finally looks to the Lieutenants.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

So I came back to lay him to rest. That's the least I can do for him... for his family... and unfortunately... it seems like all I can do for me.

He picks up a shovel and starts digging. Nathan looks to his friends and fellow soldiers.

NATHAN

Let's find the others... and do the same.

As the 58th spread out, removing small shovels from their packs, Butts continues the RHYTHMIC DIGGING.

DISSOLVE TO:

53 EXT. HILLTOP - MORNING - EXTREMELY WIDE

53

Six silhouetted figures stand atop the hill against an amber sky.

BUTTS (V.O.)
His name is Robert Joseph Grant
and he grew up in Syracuse, New
York.

A MOUND OF DIRT

with a small flag atop the soil.

BUTTS (V.O.)
He has a wife, Karen, and three
kids, Alex, Elizabeth and Bill.

WIDER

Butts stands before the grave. The 58th are gathered.

BUTTS (CONT'D)
Even though he could have
remained with them, he went to
war. He wanted to protect their
future, their freedom. Some
people laugh at that idea... but
we're here to honor it.

A cold wind blows.

BUTTS (CONT'D)
Throughout the stained history of
war... from "The Iliad" to...
this moment... Soldiers have made
promises to their colleagues that
if they fall... in battle... they
will not allow the enemy to
disgrace their dead bodies.
(pause)
I'm sorry I didn't keep that
promise.

Cooper looks up to the others, who keep their eyes downward.

BUTTS (CONT'D)
We would talk about it, now 'n
again. Bob... he said if he
could choose how to die... he
would go down a black hole while
listening to Johnny Cash. Now,
I'm not much for Johnny Cash...
but that's how Bob wanted to go.

Nathan looks up to Butts, listening.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

BUTTS (CONT'D)

Science types say anyone entering a black hole would be pulled in every direction. That light would be bent so intensely the future would race before your eyes so fast, it would be impossible to perceive. That time would be so... distorted... that the person's last second of life would never come... even though that person would be dead.

Butts considers and smiles.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

But no one really knows. Bob wanted to believe the other theories that you could survive it, even go back in time... or forward... or come out in a different universe. A place where you could look in on this one from time to time.

Butts pauses. The wind blows.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

He may have died in a much less glorious fashion... but I believe... I have to believe... right now... he lives on in each of these possibilities.

Butts stops, moves to attention and salutes. The others do also. Butts lowers his salute to his friend for the final time. He looks at Shane.

BUTTS

You were wrong that night in the bunks, Vansen. Some people, like me, are born mean. But you were also right... some things happen that can make you meaner.

Shane looks back at the Colonel and subtly nods, understanding.

BUTTS

Now lets get those planes.

CUT TO:

54 EXT. CLEARING - DAY - CLOSE - A HAMMERHEAD

54

The front end of an SA-43 attack plane, hidden in trees, under camouflage net, waits for a pilot.

BEYOND THE CLEARING

Under cover, Damphousse holds an electronic instrument.

DAMPHOUSSE

Sensors say they're operational.

BUTTS

Change into your flight suits.
Let's go. If the Chigs knew they
were here, they'd have destroyed
them. It should be pancake time.

The unit begins to change.

55 EXT. HILLTOP - DAY - LOOKING DOWN

55

The area can be seen from this vantage point. The planes are well hidden. CAMERA PULLS BACK on the serene other worldly planet...

Then... ENTERING FRAME... a camouflaged cannon barrel... Alien in make and texture.

CONTINUING up the weapon REVEALS three Alien soldiers, at the ready. As they wait for the enemy to make a move...

FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

56 EXT. WOODS - PLANET 2063F - DAY - A HOLE

56

Supplies, some equipment and unnecessary gear is cached in a hole. Dirt is tossed over it, hiding it from view.

Nathan secures the area and hustles to the others, now wearing their flight suits and helmets. They are gathered around Colonel Butts.

BUTTS

Alright... everybody knows their assignments. Nothin' fancy, just get to the Hammerheads and take off.

(pause)

Now... when we get off this stinkin' cesspool, the course back to the Saratoga requires passage near the Cerberus black hole. You have to look alive for two reasons.

Everyone listens closely.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

First, that sucker has a mass twenty times larger than our Sun. These Hammerheads do not have the thrust to escape the gravitational pull up to half a million miles. Stay clear.

The squadron understands.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

Second... the Chigs have fighters that are capable of cutting across Cerberus' wash.

Butts finds a stone and plops it down.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

If this is the hole, the event horizon, this is no man's land.

He draws a circle around it and spirals his finger toward the stone/hole.

BUTTS (CONT'D)

This is how I got jumped. They have these... red fighters...

(more)

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

BUTTS (Cont'd)
bastards can skip across here,
cutting off a quarter million
miles of our flight path. They
come out ahead of you... and
it's a brick passer. Unless
you're ready. You ready?

58TH
Yes, sir. Affirmative, etc.

They each give a quick check of their equipment.

BUTTS
One more thing.
(pause)
I never got the chance to tell my
friends "goodbye."

This hits the pilots, they eye each other.

BUTTS (CONT'D)
Odds are some of you aren't gonna
make it back. Don't spend a
whole life regretting...

A very macabre breeze blows across the Marines. They look to
one another as if for the last time.

WANG
Goodbye... if there is a Heaven,
I hope the Niners aren't in its
Super Bowl.

COOPER
Six years ain't a long time to
live... but 'least some of it was
with you guys.

DAMPHOUSSE
(in French)
Au revoir, we'll meet again.

SHANE
Goodbye.

She turns to Nathan, a moment between the two of them.

SHANE
Hope you find her there.

NATHAN
Bye.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

He turns to Butts.

NATHAN

I know I'm speakin' for all of us, Colonel. Can't say it's been great serving under you... but... we hope to see you on the other side.

BUTTS

Whatta you talkin' to me for? I ain't gonna die.

The 58th are taken aback, annoyed. Butts readies.

BUTTS

I'll be point. I take Bob's plane. Ready... ready... hack!

57 EXT. CLEARING - DAY

57

Butts races out from cover into the clearing, sprinting toward a Hammerhead in the f.g.

58 EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

58

The Alien battery opens FIRE. CANNON and RIFLES.

59 EXT. CLEARING - DAY

59

Butts comes under attack. An EXPLOSION sends him hustling for cover behind a rock. O.S. WEAPONS FIRE.

60 EXT. WOODED COVER - DAY

60

The 58th are shocked, on alert.

NATHAN

He's pinned down.

They search for the Alien artillery placement.

SHANE

There. Two thirds up the hill.

COOPER

They're dug in. We can't get 'em from this position.

CAMERA PUSHES IN on Nathan.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

NATHAN
Then we'll get them from their
position. Move out.

He takes off, running behind cover. The other members of the
squad follow.

61 EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

61

The Aliens continue to FIRE.

62 EXT. CLEARING - DAY

62

The artillery FIRE grows closer. Butts makes a break for a
tree just as the rock he covered behind EXPLODES!

63 EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY - CLOSE - CANNON

63

FIRES. AGAIN!

WIDER

The Alien battery work together to operate the howitzer-like
cannon. Behind them, in the b.g., some bushes move.

An Alien SOLDIER turns its rifle toward the bush, FIRES!

BEHIND THE BATTERY - LOW ANGLE

Wang and Cooper stand up behind some rocks, FIRING.

THE ALIEN SOLDIER

is BLASTED BACKWARD and tumbles down the hillside.

WANG & COOPER

look off to the side and give an intense "thumbs up" to...

DAMPHOUSSE

some distance away, releases the string that was shaking the
bush causing the distraction. She moves off.

64 EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

64

The two remaining Aliens swivel the heavy weapon, their cannon
targeted at Wang and Cooper. The two Marines are dead in their
sights. Before the Aliens can fire, behind them, M-590 FIRE
bursts from the trees.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

64

The Alien soldiers are ripped to the ground. Dead.

NATHAN & SHANE

drop from their hiding place in the tree, reminiscent of Colonel Butts. Nathan speaks INTO his headset...

NATHAN

Colonel, this is Lieutenant West... area is secured.

BUTTS (V.O.)

Pass the syrup.

As the 58th eye one another. The Colonel's charm is taking hold. They move out.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. CLEARING - DAY - HAMMERHEAD

65

CLOSE on the cockpit frame "Capt. Robert Grant." CAMERA CRANES UP to REVEAL Ray Butts inside the cockpit.

BUTTS

Mission computer... check.

66 EXT. HAMMERHEAD #2 - DAY

66

Nathan is in the cockpit. ENGINES WHIRRING.

NATHAN

Master Arm switch, safe.

67 EXT. HAMMERHEAD #3 - DAY

67

Shane readies her jet for take off.

SHANE

I.R. coolant switch, off.

68 EXT. HAMMERHEAD #4 - DAY

68

Cooper adjusts his controls in the full sized jet.

COOPER

Attitude reference indicator uncaged... check.

69 EXT. HAMMERHEAD #1 - DAY

69

Butts looks about the planes.

BUTTS
Clearance Five-Eight, clearance
on request. Let's blow this
joint.

As the ENGINES begin to SCREAM.,.

CUT TO:

70 EXT. PLANET 2063F - DAY - SPACE

70

The large planet floats amongst the stars. In the atmosphere,
small fires burst. Tiny dots grow larger, faster... until,
with blinding speed, the squadron of retrieved Hammerheads ROAR
PAST FRAME.

71 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE

71

Butts flies his friend's Hammerhead.

BUTTS
Wild Cards, this is Deuces Wild.
Cerberus 100 KSM's three o'clock.
Maintain position. Home base is
500 KSM's.

72 EXT. SPACE

72

In the near distance, a swirling half million miles of atoms
and gas radiate from an domed circle devoid of light. It is
quite magnificent.

The 58th squadron fly past in tight formation. After they've
become dots amongst the stars... two Alien attack jets, red in
color, head toward the black hole wash.

73 INT. DAMPHOUSSE'S COCKPIT - SPACE

73

Vanessa reads something on her LIDAR.

DAMPHOUSSE
This is Queen of Hearts... got
two bogeys five O'clock. But
they're not closing.

74 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE

74

He checks his screen.

BUTTS

That's them. At this intercept angle, we won't have enough fuel to maneuver when they hit.

75 INT. NATHAN'S COCKPIT - SPACE

75

He engages some switches, getting ready for a fight.

NATHAN

Then let's take 'em on.

76 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - DAY

76

BUTTS

Negative. They're in the wash. We can't engage.

77 INT. COOPER'S COCKPIT - SPACE

77

COOPER

If we can't EA, we're just target practice for the Chigs.

78 INT. WANG'S COCKPIT - SPACE

78

As he flies, tensing.

WANG

Whatta you advise, Deuces Wild?

79 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE

79

CAMERA PUSHES IN as he removes a photograph lodged in the controls of the cockpit. He looks at it with sadness.

INSERT - PHOTO

Captain Grant is posed with his wife and three children.

BUTTS

considers... then begins furiously hitting gauges.

WANG (V.O.)

Repeat. What do you advise?

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

79

BUTTS
Just fly tight. You won't have
to worry about these mother
jumpers...

He cuts his controls hard to the right.

80 EXT. SPACE

80

Butts' plane falls out of formation and cuts back toward the
black hole's wash.

81 INT. NATHAN'S COCKPIT - SPACE

81

Nathan's sees the Colonel's actions on the HUD.

NATHAN
Colonel... NO! If you go in, you
can't get out. We'll all go.

82 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE

82

Butts grips the controls, intense... determined.

BUTTS
Negative! That's an order. If
anyone can kick their ass and get
out of the wash, it's Colonel
Raymond T. Butts.

83 EXT. BLACK HOLE WASH - SPACE

83

Butts Hammerhead TEARS INTO FRAME, trailing the red attack jets
as they STREAK toward the whirlpool of matter. Suddenly, the
two fighters break in separate directions.

84 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE

84

Butts' eyes flash back and forth. He cranks it left. The
cockpit angles.

85 EXT. BLACK HOLE WASH - SPACE

85

The first Alien craft jinks. Butts follows. The two vehicles
SCREAM TOWARD FRAME.

- 86 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE 86
The G-forces are severe. Intense. He FIRES!
- 87 EXT. BLACK HOLE WASH - SPACE 87
The front cannons on the Hammerhead FIRES and recoils angrily, TEARING INTO the Red Fighter. It ERUPTS furiously. Butts' plane is rocked in the explosion.
- 88 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE 88
Butts battles to veer away.
- 89 EXT. BLACK HOLE WASH - SPACE 89
The Hammerhead veers right, then pulls up. Through a cloud of matter and gas appears the second Alien fighter.
- 90 INT. NATHAN'S COCKPIT - SPACE 90
As he watches on his LIDAR...

NATHAN
Colonel... CHECK SIX! CHECK SIX!
- 91 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE 91
Butts looks about furiously. He pulls back on the stick.
- 92 EXT. BLACK HOLE WASH - SPACE 92
Butts' Hammerhead suddenly pulls upward. Alien missiles blow through the space just occupied by Butts. The Red Fighter STREAKS through FRAME.
- 93 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE 93
Butts slams the controls forward, FIRING.
- 94 EXT. BLACK HOLE WASH - SPACE 94
The Hammerhead tails downward, its weapons cutting the enemy ship in half. Butts veer off, further toward the event horizon. The Alien fighter EXPLODES, the matter grabbed immediately in the gravity whirlpool.

- 95 INT. COOPER'S COCKPIT - SPACE 95
As Cooper watches his screen.
COOPER
HOO-YAH!
- 96 INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - SPACE 96
She YELLS victoriously.
- 97 INT. NATHAN'S COCKPIT - SPACE 97
Nathan remains concerned.
NATHAN
Now get out of there!
- 98 EXT. BLACK HOLE - SPACE 98
Butts' Hammerhead fishtails into the black hole wash. It pauses. The engines FIRE, but the plane doesn't move forward, only around the other matter.
- 99 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE 99
Butts is concerned. He FIRES the engines once again. The plane trembles and GROANS. Nothing. Outside the window, the swirling matter spins faster. Butts FIRES the ENGINES!
- 100 EXT. BLACK HOLE - SPACE 100
The ENGINES IGNITE, a long blue cone of flame tails out... but the Hammerhead doesn't budge.
- 101 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE 101
His face grimaces, determined. He hits the ENGINES again.
BUTTS
C'mon, you son of a...
The ROCKETS FIRE. The jet trembles.
- 102 INT. COOPER'S COCKPIT - SPACE. 102
Cooper reacts as if he was in the cockpit with Butts.

(CONTINUED)

- 102 CONTINUED: 102
- COOPER
C'MON! BURN 'EM! BURN 'EM!
- 103 INT. WANG'S COCKPIT - SPACE 103
- Watching on his LIDAR, intense.
- WANG
GO! GO! GIVE IT ALL!
- 104 EXT. BLACK HOLE - SPACE 104
- Suddenly, the engines stop. Silence. The plane floats in the sea of doomed matter.
- 105 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE 105
- A scared expression of resolve sweeps over Raymond Butts.
- BUTTS
I'm outta fuel.
- As he closes his eyes, knowing he is soon to be dead.
- 106 INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - SPACE 106
- Shane reacts, sadly. She knows it also.
- 107 INT. NATHAN'S COCKPIT - SPACE 107
- He knows it as well.
- 108 EXT. BLACK HOLE - SPACE 108
- Butts' Hammerhead picks up speed as gravity's pull increases closer to the event horizon.
- 109 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE 109
- He sighs, closes his eyes... opens them. Ready for the ride of his life.
- BUTTS
Well... I guess Ray Butts has ate his last pancake. It's been an honor 5-8.

- 110 INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - SPACE 110
She closes her eyes.
SHANE
Goodbye, sir.
- 111 INT. NATHAN'S COCKPIT - SPACE 111
Nathan looks out his window.
NATHAN
See ya on the other side, Colonel
- 112 INT. COOPER'S COCKPIT - SPACE 112
Once again, Cooper feels the unfamiliar feeling of sadness.
COOPER
Ride it for Bob.
- 113 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE 113
Butts reaches out and engages some switches... the twangy guitar of Johnny Cash's "I Walk the Line" THUMPS into space.
- 114 INT. WANG'S COCKPIT - SPACE 114
He can't smile as he hears the MUSIC over the radio.
- 115 INT. DAMPHOUSSE'S COCKPIT - SPACE 115
Her eyes well with tears, but being a Marine, she won't let them fall.
- 116 EXT. BLACK HOLE - SPACE 116
Butts' Hammerhead spins PAST FRAME as it swirls with increasing speed. CAMERA RISES to REVEAL the plane's proximity to the black hole.
- 117 INT. BUTTS' COCKPIT - SPACE 117
Johnny Cash continues as the G-forces intensify. Butts fights them, putting his head back, breathing quick and deep. His expression registers that he sees something odd.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

117

BUTTS' POV - SPACE

Intense gravity pulls the stars into a FISHEYE IMAGE.

RETURN

Butts' expression turns to wonder. He notes an additional phenomenon as he looks curiously to his feet.

BUTTS' FEET

are pulled into the cockpit from the increasing gravity.

BUTTS

continues to struggle, however, he is not in pain. Light flashes outside the cockpit. He looks out with wonder.

BUTTS' POV - SPACE

Through the cockpit window, images FLASH as light and time are bent so severely the past and future race by. Amongst the images is Butts falling into the Black Hole.

BUTTS

turns and looks out the side window.

BUTTS' POV - THE BLACK HOLE

If you've ever stood at the lip of Horseshoe Falls and felt its power... its nothing compared to this ultimate of nature's phenomenon. Matter seems to vanish as it falls across the event horizon.

BUTTS

looks to his watch.

BUTTS' POV - WATCH - EXTREMELY CLOSE

The second hand noticeably slows. The final second will never come.

BUTTS

As he's about to go down.

BUTTS
See you soon, Bob.

118 EXT. THE BLACK HOLE - SPACE

118

The Hammerhead is stretched and pulled in every direction until it finally is torn to shreds and EXPLODES. The debris and flame vanish into the region of nothingness. Beautiful.

In a moment... it is as if nothing happened. All evidence of Colonel Raymond Butts is forever... gone. As matter continues to disappear, as it has for a billion years. And shall for a billion more.

DISSOLVE TO:

119 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA

119

The Hammerheads rise into the flight deck one by one. The flight deck doors open and the crew rush in to assist.

MCQUEEN

moves onto the flight deck, relieved to see them back and yet... he notes their sad tone...

FLIGHT DECK

The 58th climb out of their pits.

MCQUEEN

Welcome home.

The nod and recognize his greeting. The squadron is happy to be back and pleased to see McQueen... but they remain quiet and withdrawn.

MCQUEEN

I had the galley make up something special... it'll be in the mess when you get cleaned up.

CUT TO:

120 INT. REC ROOM - SARATOGA

120

The tables are set with clean white linen. Silverware and plates dress the table. The 58th wait quietly for chow.

A SAILOR wheels in a cart with breakfast for each. He places the food on the plates. Nathan lifts the plastic lid to find eggs, bacon and a stack of pancakes.

He looks to the others who stare into the flapjacks.

NATHAN

Blueberry pancakes.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

120

No one knows quite what to do. They are certain, however, they can't eat them.

After a beat, Nathan stands, grabs his plate and moves toward a door in the wall marked "REFUSE." He opens it and respectfully scoops the pancakes into the disposal.

DISPOSAL POV

Nathan moves off. Then, like a bizarre funeral procession, Shane, Cooper, and Wang pay their respect by scooping their pancakes into the disposal. Damphousse, being last, closes the door causing the FRAME TO GO BLACK.

121 EXT. SARATOGA - SPACE - CLOSE - REFUSE PORTHOLE

121

From a panel marked "REFUSE DISPOSAL," two dozen pancakes tumble out from the giant ship.

122 EXT. SPACE

122

A field of stars, heavenly and serene. Then, FALLING INTO FRAME, like a bizarre asteroid field, is the final tribute to Ray Butts. Twenty-four pancakes, spinning and tumbling... forever... into Space.

THE END