

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"The River of Stars"

Written By

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Episode 3S10

Story

10/27/95 (White)

11/3/95 (Blue)

11/10/95 (Pink)

Director:
Tucker Gates

10/27/95

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"The River of Stars"

CAST

NATHAN WEST
SHANE VANSSEN
COOPER HAWKES
VANESSA DAMPHOUSSE
PAUL WANG
MCQUEEN
ROSS

KELCHER
STONE
WINSLOW
DEAN
HORN
LEWIS
OFFICER
LIEUTENANT
REYNOLDS
ENSIGN
LARKIN

11/3/95

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"The River of Stars"

SETS

INTERIORS

ISSCV /	SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM	(X)
	BATTLE STATIONS	
	COCKPIT	
	WINDOW	
	AIRLOCK	

SARATOGA /	OBSERVATION WINDOW
	LOADING BAY
	COMMAND CENTER

EXTERIORS

ISSCV WING

TEASER

The haunting strings and sensual woodwinds of "Arabian Dance" from Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" are allowed to establish a tone before a SLOW FADE IN REVEALS...

A star...unlike any seen in Space. This is purely a symbol. Black and white, it appears almost ancient. PULLING BACK REVEALS the star atop a Christmas tree in a photograph from the First World War, a conflict further in time to the 58th squadron than the Civil War is to us.

The tree is contradictorily placed in the surreal debris of a battlefield. Lieutenant Paul Wang's VOICE is HEARD. It is matter of fact in tone, however with an anxious edge, hinting at a personal crisis.

WANG (V.O)

It had been five months of the most horrific warfare in Earth's history...

(X)

DISSOLVE TO:

MULTIPLE PHOTOGRAPHS OF WWI

MOVING, they SUPERIMPOSE over one another. A hellish nightmare that was the Western Front. Gas masked soldiers knee deep in mud flooded trenches. The dead are stacked with less care than ammunition and supplies. Barbed wire. Bare, splintered trees. Sunless gray skies.

WANG (V.O) (CONT'D)

A war, in which, rivers of blood flowed in trenches for a few yards of advancement.

The IMAGES continue to PASS hauntingly over one another reflecting the subjects Wang mentions.

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

A cold modern war born from ancient nationalist hatred. A war which saw the introduction of awesome technological weapons. The machine gun. The armored tank. Nerve gas. And yet...

The hesitation resonates as, once again, the star atop the tree appears.

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

On December 24, 1914...German, British and French soldiers climbed out of their trenches to meet in "No Man's Land" to peacefully celebrate Christmas.

(CONTINUED)

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0 CONTINUED:

0

The PHOTOGRAPHS, and hopefully wonderfully undercranked newsreel footage, convey the bizarre miracle known as "The Christmas Truce."

British and German soldiers pose with one another, singing carols and exchanging gifts. The scorched ground between the trenches provides a soccer field.

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

They sang Christmas carols, exchanged cigarettes and autographs. Posed for pictures. Buried their dead. The silence remained throughout Christmas day.

The IMAGES continue during Wang's pause...

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

In the following three years, nearly eight million would die. And less than two decades later, the same armies would be engaged in the greatest loss of human life in history.

The IMAGES eventually return to the lonely, defiant Christmas tree...and the star. Shining...in the sunless gray sky.

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

The world had never seen anything like it before...and one hundred and forty nine years later, to the day...it's impossible to imagine ever seeing it again.

CUT TO:

1 EXT. SPACE - A STAR - (CGI)

1

Round and bright. The THUNDER of war RIPS over Tchaikovsky. Alien fighter jets streak before the star, air to air missiles ERUPTING as they fly.

The enemy attacks a convoy of five ISSCV transport craft, returning INTENSE and plentiful FIRE.

2 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE

2

CHAOS. FAST. INTENSE. PERIOD. The ship trembles. Damphousse is over the LIDAR screen.

(CONTINUED)

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2	CONTINUED:					2
		DAMPHOUSSE				
		BANDITS!	TWO AND SIX O'CLOCK!			
3	INT. BATTLE STATION - ISSCV - SPACE					3
	Hawkes is at his station. KELCHER and WINSLOW are at the other two posts. Hawkes works his track ball; sweat, not perspiration, covers his face.					(X) (X)
4	EXT. ISSCV - CANNON - SPACE (CGI)					4
	A cannon swivels from eight to two o'clock. FIRES! BAM! BAM! A chig fighter EXPLODES!					
5	INT. SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE					5
		DAMPHOUSSE	SIX O'CLOCK! SIX O'CLOCK!			
6	EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI)					6
	An enemy fighter SWOOPS in from behind.					
7	OMITTED					7
8	OMITTED					8
9	INT. SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV					9
	Wang, manning the side armament, maintains his footing and returns FIRE, SCREAMING a battle CRY with each recoil of the large gun.					(X) (X)
10	EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI)					10
	The side cannon tears into the enemy fighter as it veers right. It EXPLODES!					

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11 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE 11

No time for celebration. Shane makes visual contact.

SHANE
RED DEVILS THIS IS WILD CARDS!
ENEMY'S SUPERIOR! WE'RE TIGHT ON
YOUR FIVE! TIGHT ON YOUR FIVE!

12 EXT. SPACE - (CGI) 12

The 58th's ISSCV pulls to the rear right side of another ISSCV as a squadron of Chig fighters attack from the TOP OF FRAME.

The lead ISSCV takes it square and EXPLODES!

13 INT. COCKPIT - 58TH'S ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI) 13

Orange light FLASHES into the cockpit. Nathan struggles to keep visual contact through the blinding light.

14 INT. SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE 14

The crew is tossed to the floor.

15 INT. BATTLE STATION - ISSCV - SPACE 15

Sparks fly as Cooper struggles to maintain his position.

COOPER
BEND OVER, CHIGGIE MAN!

He squeezes the trigger.

16 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI) 16

Cannon FIRE nails two Chig fighters. KA-BOOM! Another fighter, however, lays into the ISSCV. A direct hit to the right and rear engines. They FLARE and die.

The left engine is knocked into its downward landing position, causing the craft to tumble and spin out of control.

A17 INT. SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE A17

The crew is tossed agaisnt the walls and ceiling.

(X)

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17 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE

17

Nathan and Shane are strapped in as the stars outside
tumble and roll.

(CONTINUED)

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17 CONTINUED:

17

NATHAN
WE'RE HIT! ENGINES ONE, TWO,
FOUR AND FIVE ARE OUT! MAYDAY!
MAYDAY!

18 EXT. SPACE - (CGI)

18

The ISSCV TUMBLES out of control TOWARD CAMERA and OUT OF FRAME, REVEALING in the distant background, the continuing dogfight. The Alien fighters leave the damaged ISSCV and return to the thick of the action.

THE ISSCV

as it continues to spin and tumble helplessly away from the battle and toward the vast abyss of Space.

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

- 19 EXT. SPACE - (CGI) 19
We barely ESTABLISH a star field before the wounded ISSCV hurls INTO FRAME, rolling and bucking wildly. The left main engine, stuck in its landing position, continues to sporadically FIRE while the other engines are dead.
- 20 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE 20
The cockpit appears still, however the ship's intense spinning is reflected by a rolling starfield out the window.
- NATHAN
THE PORT MAIN ENGINE IS GRINDING
US IN AN INTROVERTED SPIN.
- SHANE
IT'S VENTING FUEL. SHUT IT DOWN
AND IT MIGHT NOT FIRE UP AGAIN!
- 21 INT. SUPPLY ROOM/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE 21
The crew struggles to reach the seats and strap themselves in as CAMERA TURNS from the wild pitch and yaw. Wang's legs rise above his head as he grips a bolted storage case.
- 22 INT. BATTLE STATION - ISSCV - SPACE 22
Strapped in, Hawkes holds the console as the CAMERA TURNS.
- COOPER
THAT FREEZE DRIED BURRITO IS
TALKIN' TO ME!
- 23 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE 23
NATHAN
SHUT DOWN MAIN PORT ENGINE!
Shane struggles to reach the switches, but does so.
- 24 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI) 24
The engine shuts down. The craft continues to spin, heading into Space.

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25 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE 25

Quickly, Nathan assesses the situation. He commands...

NATHAN
BURN PRIMARY AND VERNIER Rcs
thrusters to stabilize!

26 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - ISSCV 26 (X)

The sickening rolling continues. Strapped into their seats, the crew practice G-Force breathing, quick and short. Wang yells into his commset.

WANG
NEGATIVE! IT'LL TAKE ALL THE
THRUSTERS FUEL! WE CAN'T LAND!

27 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE 27

NATHAN
WE'LL ROLL FOREVER! LOSE
CONSCIOUSNESS IN A COUPLE
MINUTES!

28 INT. SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE 28

Sitting next to Wang is Pvt. CARL LOCKHART. He brings his hands to his mouth...about to vomit. (X)

WANG
FIRE THOSE THRUSTERS!

29 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE 29

NATHAN
(to Shane)
BURN 'EM 'TIL WE STABILIZE. IN
FOUR...THREE...TWO...ONE...

She engages the switches. The ship kicks back.

30 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI) 30

In the forward belly of the vehicle, smaller engines angrily ignite. The ISSCV begins to slow its roll.

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31 INT. BATTLE STATION - ISSCV 31

Cooper, Kelcher and Stone engage in a symphony of BELCHES battling off motion sickness.

32 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI) 32

It's not immediate, yet the ship begins to stabilize.

33 INT. SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE 33

The CAMERA NO LONGER SPINS as the roll is stabilized. The ISSCV CREAKS and GROANS from the strain. Damphousse eyes Wang, relieved.

34 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE 34

A faint light from the thrusters' burn shimmers on West and Vansen. The stars return to their fixed position.

NATHAN
NOW! SHUT 'EM DOWN!

Shane simply looks at the instrument board.

NATHAN
VANSEN, SHUT 'EM DOWN!

SHANE
Don't have to. They're out of fuel.

Nathan catches his breath. She reaches out and shuts down the useless engines for safety precautions.

35 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI) 35

The lifeless vehicle floats adrift into the black sea.

36 INT. BATTLE STATION - ISSCV - SPACE 36

Cooper removes the Telepresence goggles. He sets them down knowing the real problems are just beginning.

37 INT. SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE 37

The remaining crew wipe the sweat from their faces, catch their breaths, which is the only ominous SOUND.

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38 INT. COCKPIT -ISSCV - SPACE 38

Shane reaches over and takes Nathan's arm.

SHANE
Good flyin'. You did the right
thing.

Nathan knows he did. It's the uncertainty of the
immediate future...and the ear splitting silence. Nathan
speaks into his headset.

NATHAN
Home Base, this is Wild Cards,
come in.
(no reponse)
Repeat. Home Base, this is Wild
Cards...come in.
(beat)
Radio's dead.

As they consider, neither pilot can look at one another.

39 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI) 39

As the ISSCV floats aimlessly in Space...

CUT TO:

40 EXT. SCVN SARATOGA - SPACE (CGI) - ESTABLISHING 40

The carrier awaits the convoy's return.

41 INT. OBSERVATION WINDOW - SARATOGA - SPACE 41

A large round porthole looks out into Space. Stepping
INTO FRAME is Lt. Colonel T.C. McQueen with an intense
concern. His eyes stare into the sea, waiting. Anxious.
He sees something O.S.

MCQUEEN'S POV - OBSERVATION WINDOW - (CGI)

Like a newborn star amongst the ancients, a set of ISSCV
landing lights appear.

MCQUEEN

slightly tenses. CAMERA CRANES down the side of his body
to his fist. An index finger slowly uncurls. "One."

(CONTINUED)

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41 CONTINUED:

41

WIDER - LOWER ANGLE

Before the Colonel in the window, an ISSCV passes. After a moment, another crippled ISSCV thunders behind him.

CLOSE- MCQUEEN'S HAND

A second finger uncurls. "Two."

WIDER - LOWER ANGLE

McQueen grows increasingly concerned. A third craft passes the window.

CLOSE - MCQUEEN'S HAND

A third finger. "Three."

MCQUEEN

waits, searches. He realizes that is all that will return.

CLOSE - MCQUEEN'S HAND

The fingers curl back into an intense fist.

CUT TO:

A42 INT. FLIGHT DECK CORRIDOR - SARATOGA - DAY

A42

The chaos of a post battle debriefing. MEDICS evacuate the wounded. OFFICERS take notes from PILOTS describing the dogfight, gesturing with their hands. CREWMEN inspect the damaged ship.

McQueen walks with two ISSCV crewmen, HORN and LEWIS.

(X)

LEWIS

Yes, sir, I definitely saw it. Ship in front of the 58th took a hit, then they got it. Left engine.

HORN

No, man, right engine.

LEWIS

Right. Left. They're toast.

McQueen doesn't dig the blunt observation.

(CONTINUED)

A42 CONTINUED:

A42

HORN

No, man, we got a "mayday" after they got hit.

MCQUEEN

Where's your communications officer?

They gesture "over there." As McQueen moves off...

(X)

LEWIS

Left.

(X)

(X)

HORN

Right!

(X)

(X)

42 INT. LOADING BAY - DAY

42

(X)

McQueen questions the communications OFFICER.

(X)

MCQUEEN

You got a "mayday" from the 58th?

OFFICER

Yes, sir. I responded and confirmed they got our signal, but they never responded.

MCQUEEN

Their transmitter could have been damaged.

OFFICER

Or there could have not been anyone left to respond.

McQueen flashes him an angry look.

MCQUEEN

I want your radio receiver log. Get me the 58th's last known position. DO IT!

The officer turns and hustles back into the ISSCV. McQueen reaches out and grabs a Lieutenant.

MCQUEEN

Inform Commodore Ross I need ten SAR teams formed immediately to be deployed in thirty mikes.

(X)

(X)

LIEUTENANT

Aye aye, sir.

(CONTINUED)

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42 CONTINUED: 42

As CAMERA PUSHES IN ON McQUEEN, fearing the worst...

CUT TO:

43 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE 43

The dark cargo vehicle floats in the greater darkness.

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44 INT. SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - NIGHT

44

The ship has the atmosphere which we all experience after a big quake. Everyone aboard harbors residue fear. Its scarier knowing how close you came. And the comfort of normalcy is sometime away...or never.

Xenon flashlights criss-cross in the darkness, catching glimpses of debris. Unidentified VOICES call out damage.

WINSLOW

Four of ten Momentum wheels are down.

NATHAN

Main Propulsion Systems are inoperable.

WANG

Partial Pressure O2 Sensor is at 24 kilopascals.

(X)

DAMPHOUSSE

Main on board computer...

A sick pause as everyone awaits...

DAMPHOUSSE (CONT'D)

Is singing' with with Elvis.

COOPER

We're dead.

SHANE

Without a computer we're on our own. Won't be the first time. Damphousse, Radio?

DAMPHOUSSE

Left High Gain Antennae damage is nominal. I think I can...

SHANE

Get on it.

Damphousse nods, moves toward the radio. CAMERA FOLLOWS SHANE as she moves to Wang and Winslow, intense and rapid.

SHANE

Fuel cell damage?

WANG

Extensive. Solar arrays are inoperable. Fuel cells, secondary batteries were low before the dogfight.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

WINSLOW

We have to shut down some electrical systems in order to save power for cabin air, Thermal control, the radio, if it works..

WANG

Without propulsion, we won't need Navigation, Telemetry... looks like the only way we're going to get home is if someone finds us.

Shane' reflex is to take issue with Wang's statement, but she knows he's right. With a strong whisper...

SHANE

Make it happen.

Shane moves off toward a porthole by herself to think. Something seems to occur to her. She checks her watch. Her expression turns sad.

SHANE

It's twelve after midnight.

(X)

She turns to the others, working quickly and quietly. Her whisper can be heard throughout the two rooms.

SHANE

Christmas.

Everyone pauses. No smiles, of course.

WANG

turns to her with a subtle expression of annoyance.

COOPER

appears puzzled. He looks to the others as if for hints as to what this is all about.

WIDER

CRACKING the sad silence, is a BLAST of radio STATIC, from the supply room. Everyone turns, freezes. Damphousse is working on the lower panel.

MCQUEEN (V.O.)

Wild Cards...this is Queen Six.
Respond. Wild Cards this is
Queen Six...

Damphousse hurriedly picks up the radio mic.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

DAMPHOUSSE

Queen Six this is Wild Cards.
Queen Six this is Wild Cards.

The 58th squadron anxiously awaits a response.

CUT TO:

45 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT

45

McQueen stands over a Communications Officer, REYNOLDS.
The radio is static. Reynolds turns to McQueen .

REYNOLDS

No response, sir. And TDRS
System confirms our signal has
been received.

MCQUEEN

Have it pinpoint the location of
the signal reception.

REYNOLDS

(shakes his head)
The linking tracking satellite
was taken out in the firefight.

MCQUEEN

So what you're telling me is they
can hear us but we can't hear
them.

Reynolds is careful with his next point in face.

REYNOLDS

Sir...just because a signal is
being received... doesn't mean
there is anyone... around... to
receive it.

MCQUEEN

They're out there.

Reynolds is about to ask, "how do you know," but the
Colonel's response is out before the question.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

I can feel them.

CUT TO:

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46 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI) 46

Indeed, the ship continues to fall through the Heavens, CLEARING FRAME and leaving nothing but stars.

47 INT. ISSCV - SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM NIGHT - CLOSE - WINDOW 47 (X)

Placed over the stars is a clear sextant. Wang studies the navigational tool and scribbles down some calculations before consulting with a small bound star map book. O.S., RADIO STATIC CRACKLES and POPS. Beneath it, McQueen can barely be HEARD.

WIDER

Everyone remains busy with repairs as Shane, Damphousse and Nathan listen to the radio. The urgency and intensity remains high.

MCQUEEN (V.O)

...believe your...radio...in
receive...only mode...

Presently... conducting... and
Rescue Oper... in the Procyon
system... I know you're out
there... hold on... don't lose
faith...

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

The signal is lost. The squadron, however, look to one another with a degree of optimism. Wang's sigh draws their attention towards him.

WANG

We're not in the Procyon System.
Far from it. We got kicked out
in the firefight.

(X)

Just as quickly, the mood turns downward.

COOPER

We're dumpin' in the river.

(X)

WINSLOW

That must be Hawkes' way of
tryin' to say we're up the creek
without...

(X)
(X)

WANG

He's kind of right. If we were
on Earth, our ship would be
moving in the Eridanus
Constellation. "A river of
stars."

(CONTINUED)

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47 CONTINUED:

47

Pause. Faint, lonely static CRACKLES as Vanessa continues to work on the radio.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

WANG (CONT'D)

When I was a kid, in the Winter, it'd get dark early. On my way home from basketball practice, I'd see Eridanus in the sky. It gave me comfort to see it return every year...to know...somethings never went away.

COOPER

We're gonna go away if we can't do somethin'.

NATHAN

If Wang knows our position, we could send out a bistatic LIDAR flare. If they found it, they'd know our actual position.

Wang reacts to this as if he has more bad news but the quickness of the other responses gives him pause.

DAMPHOUSE

BLF cannisters are fired out of a pulse cannon. We haven't the power.

SHANE

We could just drop it out the airlock. It's better than nothing.

WANG

It isn't better than nothing.

Everyone turns to him.

WANG

Our position is beyond the Von Braun line. We're in "No Man's Land" falling... toward enemy territory. A flare would just announce our presence to the Chigs.

48 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA - NIGHT

48 (X)

McQueen walks among the crew preparing to leave for the rescue mission.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

Commodore Ross appears beside him, sympathetic.

ROSS
Colonel...You've requested ten
SARs to look for the 58th near
Procyon?.

(X)
(X)
(X)

MCQUEEN
Yes, sir.

ROSS
That area was just subject to an
intensive ariel engagement. One
that our heavily armed ships
retreated from. I cannot
dispatch ten S&R, lightly armed,
artillery vehicles into that
area.

MCQUEEN
Then send five, sir.

ROSS
The battleship Charles Veach is
under attack. We have been
ordered to provide...

MCQUEEN
Then send one. I'll fly
it...sir.

ROSS
Colonel, searching for them with
a hundred ships in that vast a
region of Space would be the
equivalent of finding a specific
drop of water in the Mississippi
River.

McQueen knows this is true.

MCQUEEN
As long as I know the drop is in
the river...I'll look for it.

Ross can't deny him, yet can't completely honor the
request. As he marches off...

ROSS
You can have three ships. No
fighter support. And the first
sign of any Chigs, they're to get
the hell out of there.

(CONTINUED)

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48 CONTINUED: 48

MCQUEEN
Aye aye. Thank you, sir.

CUT TO:

49 INT. ISSCV - NIGHT 49

Shane looks at the stars out a porthole. She checks her watch, sad. She looks back to Nathan, Cooper, Wang, Damphousse and Winslow in the supply room. The remaining crew are huddled together in the SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM.

Its dark and seemingly colder. Shane rubs her arm.

SHANE
Cabin temperature is dropping.

WINSLOW
Secondary power is running low,
that's why.

DAMPHOUSSE
If I was home in New York
tonight...we'd be around the
fireplace right now.

Everyone thinks of home. Nathan stands, cold.

NATHAN
At this rate, in a few hours
we'll be well below freezing.

Suddenly a BURST of Radio static...

DAMPHOUSSE
McQueen..!

Then, FAINTLY, through the radio and static...the horns of the "Batman" TV THEME plays. (X)
(X)

Everyone stares blankly at the radio. Within the static...

(CONTINUED)

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49 CONTINUED:

49

As the THEME SONG CONTINUES...Cooper winces.

COOPER

What the..?

Now understanding that BS&P would only ruin a good gag in the 7:00 Sunday time slot, although this is highly suspect and not one single person in the Universe would have been harmed nor written a letter over the use of the word "testicles", Cooper doesn't bother and allows more adult humor to a later time slot. Sure, let those shows become hits!

NATHAN

This is that old TV show. Like, one guy was a bat and the other guy was like a bird or something. I like this show.

(X)
(X)
(X)

WINSLOW

We caught a lucky break. A good TV show before drifting off into eternity.

SHANE

If we ever get back, we should all pitch in and get McQueen a good therapist.

WANG

It's not McQueen. Television signals have been inadvertently beamed out into Space since the 1940's. We're probably intercepting...

Suddenly, from above, the unmistakable SOUND of enemy FIGHTER JETS BUZZING the ISSCV. STATIC on the RADIO BLARES from interference.

DAMPHOUSSE

CHIG FIGHTERS!

Some hit the deck. Nathan moves to the window, purple light from the enemy engines flashing across his face.

NATHAN'S POV - OUT THE PORTHOLE (CGI)

Three chig jets veer off, circling back toward the 58th.

NATHAN

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON HIM as the jets approach...

(CONTINUED)

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(Blue)

19A.

49 CONTINUED:

49

NATHAN
(a whisper)
This is it...

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

WANG

Genuflects and kisses a cross around his neck.

THE OTHERS

tense as the jets approach. Death is at any second.

NATHAN

eyes fiery at the window as he stands alone, defiant.

NATHAN'S POV - PORTHOLE

The fighters SCREAM over the ship but fly past.

WIDER

Everyone is stunned. The JETS ARE HEARD in the distance. Those aboard move, crowding around the porthole on the opposite side of the ship.

CREW'S POV - OUT THE OTHER PORTHOLE (CGI)

The three Chig fighters fly over and veer off making a large circular swing around the ISSCV.

NATHAN

looks out the porthole where he stands.

NATHAN'S POV - PORTHOLE (CGI)

The trio of enemy craft swing around the front of the ISSCV, continuing their encirclement. Then, amazingly, they veer off and fly away into the distance.

SUPPLY ROOM

The stunned squadron and crew are silent with shock.

WINSLOW

What the hell was that?

COOPER

They were fighter jets, not scouts.

SHANE

Maybe they wanted to get home for Christmas.

DAMPHOUSSE

Must have taken us for dead.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

COOPER

No, they're like a cat that's got
a mouse by the tail.

Everyone continues to look out the portholes, more scared
by not being attacked.

WANG

Coop is right. I don't know why
they took off...but they'll be
back...

AS CAMERA CREEPS in on the 58th looking into Space from
the porthole window.

WANG (CONT'D)

Chigs always finish the job.

CAMERA PULLS BACK from the ISSCV porthole...

50 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - CONTINUOUS

50

CAMERA CONTINUES to pulls back REVEALING the ISSCV. A
tiny drop of water in the river of stars.

FADE OUT:

END ACT ONE

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 22.

ACT TWO

51 EXT. ISSCV - PORTHOLE WINDOW - SPACE 51 (X)

Condensation glistens on the window, catching the dim light from distant Rigel. Shane wipes the moisture off the window and looks out. (X)

52 INT. ISSCV - NIGHT 52

Shane stands at the window. Her breath can be seen as she sighs. She's considering something, deciding. She looks back at the others.

SHANE'S POV - THE 58TH

Nathan, Cooper and Winslow watch as Damphousse continues to work on the radio, while Wang monitors reception. The other crewmen are in the bunk room, shivering and quiet.

Shane comes to a decision. She moves across the SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM to the lockers and produces a small Alice Pack. She stands before Cooper, Wang, Damphousse, West and Winslow. Vansen is a little embarrassed, but determined.

SHANE

Look, I know this is going to be weird, but...under these circumstances...I don't want to...not do it...Okay? And...don't you guys feel weird, alright?

The others look at her, blank.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I had been hiding this stuff in here, so I just happen to have it. This is important to me.

She quickly reaches into her pack and produces a small present wrapped in simple brown paper. She hands one to Damphousse, moves along to Winslow, on to Nathan. Cooper looks at his present with no idea what is going on. (X)

She moves to Wang at the radio and sets his present on the console. CAMERA SLIGHTLY PUSHES INTO Wang as he looks down at the gift, troubled.

WIDER

Even Cooper, who doesn't understand, is moved.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 22A.

52 CONTINUED:

52

DAMPHOUSSE
Shane...I don't know what to say.
You shouldn't have...

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

Shane is falsely nonchalant.

SHANE

Look, I just had them...it's no big deal, you know...just...

Her tough front cracks...

SHANE (CONT'D)

Just open them and pretend there's a big tree with a lot of lights and dinner cooking in the kitchen and a trash bag for all the wrapping paper and we're FAR FROM THIS DARK COLD BOX, safe and warm and all the Whos down in Who-Ville are singing "Dah-Who-Dor-Eh. Dah-Who-Dor-Eh." Open 'em!

Being that this was given as an order, Damphousse, Winslow and Nathan quickly unwrap their small gifts. Cooper looks at the others unsure. At the radio, Wang doesn't even touch his present.

Damphousse and Winslow open their gifts. Each receives a new K-Bar knife. The two female Lieutenants look to Shane, who reacts, insecure.

SHANE

Okay, look, I wish it could have been a necklace or something but we are light years from home and that's all I could find in the Saratoga PX...

DAMPHOUSSE

It's beautiful, Shane. Thank you.

SHANE

They're engraved.

DAMPHOUSSE

"To 'Phousse. Hoo-Yah! Christmas. 2063."

WINSLOW

It'll be an honor to stab a Chig with this.

Shane smiles, then looks to Nathan. He holds a pair of thick thermal socks. He looks at Shane, who shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

SHANE

You're hard to buy for. You don't have many interests outside of Kylen.

He looks down, nods. Nathan pulls the socks over his hands and moves off toward the flight deck doors. He disappears into the cockpit area. Shane sighs, guilty.

SHANE

I guess I shouldn't have put it that way.

DAMPHOUSSE

(to Shane)

Look, let's face it...Nathan is different than us. You... Wang, Winslow, we joined the Corp 'cause we wanted to be life takers and heart breakers.

53 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE

53

Nathan sits in the pilot's seat. The stars shine out the window. He reaches for his phototag of Kylen, looking at it as he listens on the intercom.

DAMPHOUSSE (V.O.)

Coop was sentenced to the Corp, but he's got it in him.

COOPER (V.O.)

West doesn't have it in him.

SHANE (V.O.)

Yeah, he does. But he also has more. Nathan's not just some guy pining for his girlfriend...she's become his Faith.

Nathan looks at the stars. She is out there somewhere.

54 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - ISSCV - NIGHT

54

SHANE (CONT'D)

Something he'd give his life for because he believes it's right.

Shane looks at Wang who appears troubled by this discussion. She then turns to Cooper.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

SHANE

You gonna open yours, Coop?

Cooper looks at his present, then looks up, self conscious.

SHANE

It's a Christmas present.

He eyes them, uncomfortable.

COOPER

What's it for?

WINSLOW

Christmas!

COOPER

I never told you guys this...but I took off from the In Vitro Educational Facility before all that. All I know about Christmas is that one day every year none of the stuff in Philadelphia was open. It was a headache. And it was lonelier than usual.

The three Lieutenants look to one another, understanding.

DAMPHOUSSE

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Wang snaps over his shoulder.

WANG

It's actually continuing the Roman festival of Saturnalia. Jesus of Nazareth was born on September 15, 7 b.c.

A beat of "what's with Wang?"

COOPER

Nazareth and Christ, who are those two guys?

WINSLOW

It's just one guy.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

DAMPHOUSSE

He was born in Bethlehem. A star directed three wise men from the East who believed the son of God had been born.

WANG

"The star" was a rare alignment of Saturn and Jupiter or possibly a Supernova or even a comet.

SHANE

He was conceived though the miracle of immaculate conception.

(X)

Cooper's expression indicates he needs this flushed out.

WINSLOW

His Mom and Dad didn't...do it.

WANG

The myth of immaculate conception.

COOPER

You mean like an In Vitro?

Shane, Damphousse and Winslow turn to Wang with a smirk, "so there." Wang sighs. Shane slowly moves over to Wang.

SHANE

Aren't you going to open your present, Paul?

Wang struggles, not wanting to be rude to Vansen, however...

WANG

Shane...it's, uh...real nice of you to do this, but uh...I...can't take your gift.

Vansen is a bit hurt.

WANG

It's just... I don't really believe in it...anymore.

Damphousse and Winslow look to one another, surprised.

WINSLOW

That never stopped my family from opening presents.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

WANG
(snaps)
Well, it stops me.

Wang takes the present and moves it aside, rejecting it.

DAMPHOUSSE
Paul, you cross yourself before
every mission.

WANG
It's superstition. The same as
my Chicago Bears T-Shirt.

SHANE
Something happen to make you feel
this way?

Wang turns, anxious, cold, scared. He barks...

WANG
With all the death we've seen in
the last six months! The
things...I've done! How can you
believe such garbage?

Suddenly, a LOUD burst. Another. Almost like a gunshot.
The crew snaps to attention, scared.

Bolted clamps holding an O2/N2 pipe BURSTS causing a tear.
A stream of gas jets out into the ISSCV. Another BREAKS.

CHAOS erupts as the entire crew rushes to the pipes to
arrest the problem.

COOPER

as he hops to his feet, the gift from Shane falls from his
lap onto the floor.

WIDER

The crew race toward the pipes.

CLOSE - COOPER'S PRESENT

A boot steps on it in the chaos.

WIDER

The crew gathers at the gas spraying pipes. Kelcher
reaches with his bare hands to restrain the leak.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

SHANE
DON'T TOUCH IT!

Too late. Kelcher grabs the pipe. His hand is frozen to the tube. He tries to get it off.

KELCHER
Its frozen!

WANG
The bolts are brittle. They're breaking.

Damphousse races to the flight deck and opens the door, calling to the cockpit.

DAMPHOUSSE
WEST, DECREASE O2/N2 CONTROL
VALVE TO 400 KPS!

55 INT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

55

Nathan immediately pops some switches, lowering the O2 flow.

56 INT. CABIN - NIGHT

56

Damphousse rushes back to help the others. After a beat, the stream eases.

SHANE
Lockhart. Get these leaks
secured, NOW!

(X)

The two hustles off to a supply area. Winslow and Shane move to Kelcher. He suggests a way to release his hand.

KELCHER
Maybe some warm water.

WINSLOW
Oh! Yeah! Then after we can
make cocoa!

COOPER
SHE TOLD YOU NOT TO TOUCH IT!

SHANE
Even if we had hot water it would
cause the pipes to crack even
more. Its comin' off the hard
way, Kelcher.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

Kelcher holds his breath as the other slowly pulls his hand away from the freezing pipe. The flesh TEARS as the crewman winces. Finally, its pulled free. Kelcher couples his hand in pain. Winslow moves in for a close look at the pipe.

WINSLOW

Wow, look at all that hair he left behind.

Nathan moves out from the cockpit area to join the group.

SHANE

I'd say we lost two hours of O2 supply just now.

NATHAN

More.

SHANE

Everyone's to limit their movement. I know it's probably impossible, but some sleep would help.

COOPER

Yeah...that way we don't have to see the Chigs comin'.

WANG

I'll pull watch on the radio.

The group moves out, grabbing blankets and anything to cover themselves with to keep warm. Lockhart and Dean continues to work on the pipe.

Cooper looks down and finds the thin square present. He begins to unwrap it REVEALING a "Never Mind the Bollocks, Its the Sex Pistols." Compact Disc. Its cracked in half and broken.

Shane moves to him and sighs. Cooper looks quickly to her, feeling her sadness.

COOPER

It's okay...just that you got me something...makes me feel...good.

Shane looks to Cooper with a sad smile.

SHANE

Coop, you may have run away from the In Vitro facility, but you do know what it is all about.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 30.

56 CONTINUED: 56

She moves off, leaving him considering what it is that he knows all about.

CUT TO:

57 EXT. SARATOGA - NIGHT - RE-ESTABLISHING 57

The warship floats silently in the Christmas eve.

58 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT 58

McQueen maintains a vigil by the radio. He appears tired but focused and intense. He reads from an electronic notebook. (X)
(X)

MCQUEEN

At home tonight, Pope Pius XII held Mass in Vatican Square. He prayed for the lives and safe return of all Earth armies involved in the war.

Next to him, another radio crackles to life. McQueen momentarily turns the 58th radio to "RECEIVE ONLY" and opens the other radio.

RADIO (v.o.)

Queen Six this is SAR one. We got a negative on any sighting of the 58th, visual or LIDAR. Permission to sweep area 300K MSKs from sight of dogfight. (X)
(X)

McQueen is discouraged, but does not hesitate to...

MCQUEEN

Roger that, SAR one. (X)

As McQueen rubs his tired eyes, an ENSIGN approaches from behind him carrying a small clear disc.

ENSIGN

Colonel, here is the optical disc you requested.

McQueen nods his thanks. The junior officer moves off. McQueen turns the radio back into transmit/receive mode.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 30A.

58 CONTINUED:

58

MCQUEEN
Queen Six to Wild Cards...this is
your interstellar disc jockey,
Colonel McQueen.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

MCQUEEN (Cont'd)
There's something I'd like you to hear. It occurred 95 years ago last evening. It was a message to the Earth from the first men to orbit the Moon.

He places the disc into a machine.

MCQUEEN
It's not my Christmas present.
That'll be to get you home.

McQueen begins the recording. CAMERA PUSHES IN ON HIM as he listens to the heavily radio filtered VOICES of the Apollo Eight astronauts. So distant. So magical.

BILL ANDERS (V.O.)
For all the people back on Earth, the crew of Apollo Eight has a message that we would like to send to you...

59 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - (CGI)

59

As the ship floats in the river of stars...

BILL ANDERS (V.O.)
In the beginning, God created the Heaven and the Earth. And the Earth was without form and void.

60 INT. BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE

60

CAMERA DRIFTS ACROSS the bunks as the 58th squadron listens to the VOICES of ancient explorers.

BILL ANDERS (V.O.)
And God said let there be light. And there was light. And it was good: And God divided the light from the darkness.

CAMERA MOVES ACROSS Nathan, his back to CAMERA, looking out at the stars.

JIM LOVELL (V.O.)
And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

(CONTINUED).

60 CONTINUED:

60

CAMERA FINDS DAMPHOUSSE on her back, eyes watery but no tears drop.

JIM LOVELL (V.O.)
And God said, Let there be a
firmament in the midst of the
waters, and let it divide the
waters from the waters.

COOPER may not follow what is going on, but he feels it emotionally.

JIM LOVELL (V.O.)
And God made the firmament, and
divided the waters under the
firmament from the waters which
were above the firmament: and it
was so.

SHANE lies on her back listening to the early explorers.

JIM LOVELL (V.O.)
And God called the firmament
Heaven. And the evening and the
morning were the second day.

As CAMERA ADJUSTS to SEE the 58th in their bunks,
quiet...listening.

FRANK BORMAN (V.O.)
And God called the dry land
Earth; and the gathering together
of the waters called the seas:
And God saw that it was good.
(beat)
And from the crew of Apollo
Eight, we close with good night.
Good luck. A merry Christmas.
And God bless all of you.

61 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT

61

CAMERA MOVES about the quiet and still Command Center. On this evening, McQueen is alone, listening to the voices and thinking of his people.

FRANK BORMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
All of you on the good Earth.

McQueen turns off the machine. A hand ENTERS FRAME and rests on McQueen's shoulder. The Colonel turns to see Commodore Ross. The two leaders of men need not exchange any words.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 32A.

61 CONTINUED:

61

Both know what is going through one another's hearts.

DISSOLVE TO:

(X)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 33.

62 INT. BUNK ROOM/SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE 62 (X)

CAMERA MOVES THROUGH the freezing sleeping bodies in the bunk room. IT CONTINUES TO the SUPPLY ROOM, MOVING IN ON WANG who sits at the radio, listening to McQueen.

Suddenly, a BLAST of STATIC removes McQueen from the radio. Silence. Wang adjust some controls on the radio.

Then... an odd magnetic pulse can be HEARD over the RADIO, not like anything WE WOULD NORMALLY HEAR on the radio. Wang cocks his head as if "What the hell was that?"

Strange deep TONES, almost like VOICES, but definitely not human. Almost magnetic CLICKS, like a porpoise. Eerie. It freezes Wang in the macabre silence.

Suddenly, a definite series of deliberate tones are blasted out, but not in a manner that SOUNDS like electric Morse Code, but indeed that is what it is.

Wang removes a pen and begins recording the signals, which are hauntingly distant and strange.

CUT TO:

63 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT 63

CAMERA MOVES across the radio control panel of the vacant room. The ODD SIGNALS can be received here, also. AS CAMERA REVEALS McQueen, he is scribbling down the tones.

64 INT. SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - NIGHT - WANG 64

The weird signals end, however he continues to write, trying desperately to recall what was received. He stops and looks at the paper in the unbearable silence.

65 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT - MCQUEEN 65

studies the signals. They don't make sense.

66 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - NIGHT - CLOSE - PAPER

66

Wang's records of the signals sit near the sextant.

WANG

As he struggles to make sense of the numbers, something appears to occur to him. He reaches for the sextant. He looks at it, then quickly picks up the paper and moves to the porthole.

PORTHOLE

Wang places the Sextant to the window and follows the numbers on the paper. He looks up.

WANG'S POV - SPACE

In the distance, a hazy fuzzy star.

WANG

picks up a foot long telescope and looks out the window.

WANG'S POV - PORTHOLE - TELESCOPE MATTE

A comet is moving through Space.

WANG

CAMERA PUSHES in on Wang, as he reacts, scared. Behind him, Cooper appears, sleepy and cold.

COOPER

Chigs?

WANG

A comet...and it's approaching in an angle and direction...that is on a direct path of this ship.

Cooper looks out, barely able to see the tiny body.

COOPER

How did you know it was there?

CAMERA EASES IN on WANG, seemingly more afraid of the answer than the approaching comet.

WANG

I don't know.

Cooper looks at him as if Wang's flipped. Wang continues to look out into Space.

"The River of Stars" 3S10 10/28/95 (White) 35.

67 EXT. - SPACE - (CGI)

67

The emptiness of Space is shattered by a huge comet. It
ROARS away from CAMERA, toward the tiny I.S.S.C.V. in the
distance.

FADE OUT:

ACT THREE

68 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT

68

McQueen's urgency and intensity has picked up a bit. He senses the mysterious signals are pointing him toward the 58th. Before him, on the radio is Reynolds. To the side is a ship's astronomer, Captain LARKIN.

(X)

MCQUEEN

Do these numbers mean anything to the star charts?

LARKIN

Sorry, Colonel...we had a little Off Duty Christmas eve party in the Astronomer's quarters. Some corporal tried to make scotch out of his after shave and these charts are all looking like nothin' but a bunch of white dots...

(X)

MCQUEEN

There are men and women out there who will never have the chance to have a hangover again if you don't get those "white dots" focused.

Larkin collects himself as he looks at the chart. McQueen turns to Reynolds.

MCQUEEN

Have you located the source of the transmissions?

REYNOLDS

They're not from any frequency used by the Armed Forces, even classified frequencies. And the Morse code...it's weird. It's like broken English. Like someone who doesn't quite know it.

MCQUEEN

All our pilots and crew know it inside and out. It could be a distress call. Any reports of civilian activity in the Procyon region?

(X)

(X)

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 37.

68 CONTINUED: 68

LARKIN
You'd be looking in the wrong
area. These coordinates indicate
the position of Comet Yanelli-
Wimberly. That's closer to
Epsilon Eridanus.

(X)
(X)

As McQueen takes in this new information...

CUT TO:

69 EXT. SPACE - NIGHT 69

The comet is larger now, with only a slight tail.

A70 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - NIGHT A70 (X)

Shane and Nathan look out at the comet.

NATHAN
A short burn of the main engine
could take us out of its path.

SHANE
We'd run the risk of tumbling
again, with no thrusters to
stabilize.

70 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - ISSCV - NIGHT 70

Damphousse is looking at Wang's piece of paper which
recorded the signals.

DAMPHOUSSE
This code is weird.

WANG
I tell ya, man. The whole thing
was weird. It's like, I could
feel...even over the radio...that
the sender wasn't human.

The squadron eye one another, a bit worried about Wang.
Nathan and Shane enter from the cockpit.

(X)

DAMPHOUSSE
Are you sure...you recorded it
correctly? We're all exhausted,
freezing...

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars"

3S10

11/03/95

(Blue)

37A.

70 CONTINUED:

70

WANG

What do you mean did I get it
right?

(more)

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

WANG (Cont'd)

There's a comet barreling down on us that we wouldn't know about if I didn't get these RIGHT!

COOPER

Wanger, why don't you let me take a shift on the radio.

WANG

I'm fine.

SHANE

Take a break, Paul.

WANG

I'M FINE!

SHANE

Take a break...Paul.

Wang eases, realizing that he is indeed tired and not clear headed. He moves aside as Cooper takes the radio. The radio CRACKLES. Everyone tenses and turns.

MCQUEEN (V.O.)

Wild Cards this is Queen Six...as your position remains undetermined to us at present time, we're reporting the presence of a comet bearing 89 degrees by 15 degrees zero-niner in the Eridinus region.

WANG

See, they intercepted the same signals.

WINSLOW

Could this be an enemy trap?

SHANE

What trap? They could've blown us out of the sky when they flew by us.

COOPER

Maybe they wanted to save the missiles and just let the comet do the work.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 39.

70 CONTINUED:

70

MCQUEEN (V.O.)
5-8, we're still out there
searching... don't let down.
I've...uh...got a message here
from the Commodore.

Everyone is attentive to the radio.

ROSS (V.O.)
I won't insult you by saying
Merry Christmas, 58th...I'll say
it to your faces when you return.
And... I know this may not be
proper conduct for a commander...
but given the circumstances...
and no... I'm not drunk...

(X)

They look to one another, puzzled...until some very cool
SOUNDS emit from the radio...A Delta Blues version of
"I'll Be Home For Christmas (If Only In My Dreams),"
played on Ross's guitar. (No Vocals.)

(X)

Of course it's corny. But it's sincerely from Ross' heart
and therefore, beautiful.

71 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT

71

McQueen listens. Ross plays his guitar, sweet and sad.

72 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - ISSCV

72

Because of the transmission delay, Ross's song repeats a
bit of what WE just HEARD, however, in the song...the
FAINT SOUNDS of the STRANGE RADIO SIGNALS are heard.

WANG

CAMERA QUICKLY PUSHES IN ON HIM. He hustles to the radio,
moving Copper aside and turning the frequencies. The
group PROTESTS.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 10/28/95 (White) 40.

72 CONTINUED:

72

WINSLOW

You even got a problem with a
Christmas song?

WANG

SHUT UP!! SHUT UP!!

Everyone silences, Wang begins writing furiously with a pencil onto the radio console. It becomes clear to all aboard that indeed, the SOUND and QUALITY of the SIGNALS are eerie. They gather around the radio, where Wang records them.

73 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT

73

McQueen picks up a headset, his expression reflecting shock and excitement. He begins recording the receptions. He gestures to Ross, who stops playing.

74 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE

74

Again, the signals cease and Wang writes furiously to keep up with them. As he drops the pencil, everyone moves closer for a look.

NATHAN

What was it?

Wang shakes his head, amped. He tries to clear his head. Damphousse looks it over.

DAMPHOUSSE

I think it's like a scientific
language...rudimentary. It's as
if Einstein was trying to explain
Relativity to a child.

Wang takes the paper from his hand and moves away from the others, indicating to give him a moment. The others respect the demand.

CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES IN ON WANG as he reads. His expression seems to register something, but the idea cannot be right. He subtly shakes it off and re-reads it. It becomes apparent that indeed the signal is something extraordinary. He turns to the others.

WANG

I know what it is.

They wait. He can't bring himself to even suggest the idea. The others are impatient.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

WINSLOW

Is it a movie or a book?

WANG

Telemetry data...orbital
mass...ISSCV mass...speed
Pitch...Yaw...Azimuth. These are
directions on how to be trapped
into an orbit of the approaching
comet. It's telling us how to
hitch a ride.

Everyone considers the bizarre idea.

COOPER

What good would that do?

WANG

The comet is heading away from
enemy territory. In fact, back
toward the Saratoga.

SHANE

We could drop a BLF cannister
once we got into friendly
territory.

NATHAN

(to Wang)

Can it be done?

Wang shrugs.

WANG

Asteroids and comets have been
known to have orbiting
satellites. But following these
signals would be going on
total...

He catches himself, then must admit to the word.

WANG (CONT'D)

Faith.

The impact of the word rings through the crew.

SHANE

What needs to be done?

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

WANG

It requires an approximately 56 second burn from the left main engine...less than that we'll miss the comet's gravitational range. Fly deeper into Chig territory. More than fifty six seconds will take us right into the comet.

COOPER

We're going to get nailed by it anyway.

WANG

The one thing is...well the primary "one thing" is...the engine cannot be fired in its current position.

NATHAN

So much for that.

WANG

We could try to manually adjust the position of the engine.

SHANE

That would require an EVA.

Wang nods.

NATHAN

We only have one suit with 15 minutes 02 supply.

SHANE

I'll do it.

NATHAN

I've EVA's before.

WANG

It's my idea.

(X)

DAMPHOUSSE

We don't know whose idea it was.

They look to one another. As the CO, Shane points to Wang.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

WANG

It requires an approximately 56 second burn from the left main engine...less than that we'll miss the comet's gravitational range. Fly deeper into Chig territory. More than fifty six seconds will take us right into the comet.

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NATHAN

So much for that.

WANG

We could try to manually adjust the position of the engine.

SHANE

That would require an EVA.

Wang nods.

NATHAN

We only have one suit with 15 minutes O2 supply.

SHANE

I'll do it.

NATHAN

I've EVA'd before.

(X)

WANG

It's my idea.

DAMPHOUSSE

We don't know whose idea it was.

They look to one another. As the CO, Shane points to Wang.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

SHANE

Wang goes.

Each member of the unit non verbally protest not getting the nod.

WINSLOW

Why Wang?

SHANE

I have Faith in him.

As Paul accepts that responsibility...

CUT TO:

75 INT. AIR LOCK - ISSCV - NIGHT - TIME CUT - GLOVES

75

are pulled on.

HOSES

are inserted.

A ZIPPER

is pulled up.

THE GLASS HELMET

is grabbed and brought toward Wang.

WIDER

The ISSCV crew stands before the airlock, suiting up Wang. Nathan holds them up. He pulls Kylan's photo tags off of his neck.

NATHAN

I want you to have this, Paul.

Everyone pauses, knowing this is a large gesture.

WANG

Nathan, I can't...

NATHAN

You all said it yourself. It means more than just photo tags, now. And you could use it.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 10/28/95 (White) 44.

75 CONTINUED: 75

Wang pauses, then nods. Nathan puts the tags around Wang's neck and tucks them into the suit. As he backs away, the helmet is placed on the Lieutenant's head. As it CLICKS into place...

CUT TO:

76 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT - (CGI) - WIDE 76

The rear airlock door opens. It is silent except for Wang's breathing. The tethered astronaut drifts out of the ship.

77 INT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 77

The crew is gathered at the windows, whispering encouragement.

78 EXT. ISSCV - WING - SPACE - NIGHT 78

The Wing appears upside down. The jammed engine is in the b.g.. Beyond it, the abyss.

ENTERING FROM TOP OF FRAME is Wang in the spacesuit. Tools in his hand and clamps upon his feet allow him to crawl along the wing toward the engine.

79 INT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 79

Shane and Nathan are crowded at the window, tense. Nathan checks his watch.

NATHAN
Twelve minutes.

80 EXT. ISSCV - WING - SPACE 80

Wang reaches the main port engine. He opens a panel on its side and engages some buttons. There is no sound. Nothing happens.

81 INT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 81

Damphousse, Cooper and Winslow look out the window, wince at the failed first attempt.

82 EXT. ISSCV - WING - NIGHT - WANG 82

appears concerned. He knows there is only one option. He takes a deep breath and moves toward the engine.

WIDER

Wang extends his arms, wrapping them around the engine the best he can. Like a tackling dummy, he pushes against it, In Space, however, it pushes back and he's thrown a bit.

83 INT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 83

The crew hold their breath.

NATHAN
Eight minutes.

84 EXT. WING - ISSCV - NIGHT 84

Wang recovers and pushes again.

85 INT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 85

Inside the ship, a loud CREAK and a THUD from the outside.

86 EXT. WING - ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 86

Wang's force works, the engine is slowly giving way to its flight position.

87 INT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 87

Everyone inside CHEERS!

88 EXT. ISSCV - WING - SPACE - NIGHT 88

Inside the helmet, Wang is sweating and breathing hard. He pauses for a moment to get his breath back. As he looks up, then stands, everything else in the world is forgotten as...

WIDER

Wang appears to be a man standing amongst the Heavens, behind him, the size of a quarter in the distance, the comet approaches. Soon, it will be upon him.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 10/28/95 (White) 46.

88 CONTINUED:

88

WANG

reacts to the inevitability, with horror, and yet, with
awe. As the comet reflects in his visor...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

89 EXT. SARATOGA - SPACE - RE-ESTABLISHING 89

CAMERA MOVES toward the bridge of the carrier.

90 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT 90

A group of scientists are huddled over the computer screens, studying the puzzling signals. This includes Reynolds and Larkin. McQueen listens, intent.

LARKIN

The Chinese government is not a signatory to the Astronomical Union, could these be their independent transmission?

REYNOLDS

I doubt it, it's on the 21-centimeter frequency. And 30 times stronger than the background noise.

McQueen eyes Commodore Ross, away from the group looking at McQueen's original records of the signals.

REYNOLDS

I can't determine what specifically these signals mean or their point of origin.

McQueen moves over to Ross, lowers his tone.

MCQUEEN

I'd like to dispatch a Navy LC escorted by a squadron of SA-43s to the comet's region.

Ross eyes the others behind McQueen, then looks to the Colonel.

ROSS

You and I know where these signals originated.

MCQUEEN

They're an enemy transmission, sir.

ROSS

Probably misinformation. They're aware we're on a search and rescue.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 48.

90 CONTINUED:

90

MCQUEEN
That's why the attack escort for
the rescue vehicle, sir.

Ross eyes McQueen.

MCQUEEN
Why doesn't one of us come out
and say what we're afraid these
signals could be.

ROSS
Setting up an ambush?

MCQUEEN
Presenting us with a gift.

ROSS
I wouldn't count on it.

MCQUEEN
But I do believe it is
something...to go on toward
finding the 58th.

Ross looks at the signals once again. He nods.

ROSS
Dispatch the LC and the 32nd
Squadron to Comet Yanelli-
Wimberly.

As McQueen is off, right on it...

CUT TO:

91 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT - (CGI)

91

In the distance, Comet Yanelli-Wimberly approaches.

92 INT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT

92

The crew of the 58th squadron prepare for the engine burn.
Kelcher and Lockhart strap themselves into their seats.

(X)
(X)

KELCHER
ET Umbilical hatch and centerline
hatches are secured.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 49.

92 CONTINUED: 92

Damphousse is at the radio.

DAMPHOUSSE
Comet 72 thousand kilometers and
closing. Bearing Seven - five-
niner.

A93 INT. BATTLE STATIONS - ISSCV - NIGHT A93 (X)

Cooper and Winslow are at the lidar screen. As Cooper
places an internal commset on his head... (X)

COOPER
Roger, that. Main port engine
pressure is at eighty percent.
We are "GO" for burn.

93 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - NIGHT 93

Wang enters. Nathan is in the pilot seat. Shane is co-
pilot. They activate switches and prepare for the burn.

WANG
Reset the flight clock. It's
crucial the burn is exactly 56
seconds.

Shane reaches over and resets the clock.

CLOSE - DIGITAL CLOCK

reset at zero.

SHANE (V.O.)
Roger, that.

RETURN

Nathan looks at some gauges, troubled.

WANG
Less than that we miss it. More
than 56...we're all gonna have a
hell of a headache.

SHANE
We're reissuing partial power,
here, telemetry and guidance are
history.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 49A.

93 CONTINUED:

93

NATHAN
This whole thing is off line. We
have to fly manual.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 11/03/95 (Blue) 50.

93 CONTINUED: 93

Wang produces the sextant from his flight suit.

WANG
I'll guide you...or I mean...the
stars will.

Wang exits the room.

94 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 94

For perhaps the first time, WE understand the size and magnitude of the approaching body. It is about three times the mass of the ISSCV, which is looking smaller and smaller in contrast.

95 INT. ISSCV - NIGHT 95

The crew prepares. Last thoughts. Final prayers.

DAMPHOUSSE
Ninety seconds to burn.

96 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - NIGHT - SPACE 96

Nathan grips the stick.

COOPER (V.O.) (X)
Thirty five mikes to depletion of
O2/N2 supply.

NATHAN
Let's worry about that in two
mikes.

Shane reaches out to the switches.

CLOSE - SWITCHES

marked "LP Main EN #3" she lifts the safety cover, her finger ready.

DAMPHOUSSE (V.O.)
Eighty seconds...

97 INT. SUPPLY/BUNK ROOM - NIGHT - LOW ANGLE - WANG 97

Wang stands at the porthole with his sextant to the window, tense. In the f.g., before him on the radio console is Shane's wrapped Christmas gift to him.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

DAMPHOUSSE (V.O.)
Seventy seconds.

It's quiet as they wait. Wang reaches out and takes the gift. He unwraps it to discover a paperback version of "Romeo and Juliet." He holds it like a fragile priceless vase.

DAMPHOUSSE (V.O.)
Sixty seconds.

Wang opens the book to a point he's read a hundred times.

WANG
and, when he shall die, Take him
and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of
heaven so fine...

98 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - NIGHT

98

Shane, her hand poised over the engine, knows Wang has opened the gift. Her eyes would spill with tears...at another time.

WANG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That all the world will be in
love with night...

99 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - ISSCV - NIGHT

99

As he finishes...

WANG (CONT'D)
And pay no worship to the garish
sun.

He holds the book.

WANG
Thank you, Shane.

A long pause...

DAMPHOUSSE
Forty seconds...

100 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV

100

Nathan grips the controls.

(CONTINUED)

"The River of Stars" 3S10 10/28/95 (White) 52.

100 CONTINUED: 100

NATHAN
Alright, let's get lit!

DAMPHOUSSE (V.O.)
Thirty seconds to ignition...

101 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - ISSCV - NIGHT 101

Wang positions the sextant, determined, focused...

WANG
Yaw axis ten degrees...pitch axis
twenty-24...

DAMPHOUSSE
Twenty seconds...

102 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT (CGI) 102

The comet approaches.

DAMPHOUSSE
Ten seconds to burn...

103 INT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 103

The crew hangs on every second.

DAMPHOUSSE
9...8...7...6...5...

CAMERA PUSHES in ON WANG, ready...

104 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - NIGHT 104

West and Vansen count to Damphousse's rhythm.

DAMPHOUSSE (CONT'D)
4...3...2...1...

CLOSE - ENGINE IGNITION SWITCH

DAMPHOUSSE (CONT'D)
IGNITION!

The switch is thrown.

"The River of Stars" 3S10 10/28/95 (White) 53.

105 EXT. ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 105

The left main engine IGNITES, the ship rocks forward in the direction of the comet.

106 INT. SUPPLY ROOM/BUNK ROOM - ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT 106

CAMERA TREMBLES as the rockets RUMBLE.

WANG

battling to keep the sextant in position...

WANG

Steady...sixteen degrees...ten degrees...

107 INT. COCKPIT - SPACE - NIGHT 107

Nathan's arms tremble from the ship's strain. His eyes are ahead toward the comet. Shane looks at the clock.

SHANE

15...16...17...18...19...

CLOSE - CLOCK

counting off the rocket burn. 20...21...22...23...

108 EXT. SPACE - NIGHT 108

The ISSCV tears off toward the comet, growing larger.

109 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - ISSCV - NIGHT 109

As the seconds fly, the tension becomes unbearable. Wang tries to ignore it.

WANG

ADJUST TWO DEGREES BY ONE DEGREE!

110 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE 110

Nathan slightly turns the controls.

SHANE

45...46...47...48...

"The River of Stars" 3S10 10/28/95 (White) 54.

111 EXT. SPACE - NIGHT - (CGI) 111

The ISSCV shrinks in size as it speeds toward the comet.

112 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE - NIGHT - CLOCK 112

51..52...53...54...

WIDER

SHANE
MAIN ENGINE OFF!

She throws a switch, but the engine continues to burn.

SHANE
IT WON'T SHUT DOWN!! WE'RE
OVER!!

She hits it again.

113 EXT. SPACE - NIGHT - (CGI) 113

The engine dies. The ship now floats at great speed toward the top of the comet.

CUT TO:

114 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT 114

Mcqueen sits by the radio. Ross paces behind him. Over the console radio...

THOMAS (V.O.)
Queen Six this is Lightning
Bolts. Approaching Yanelli-
Wimberly. No sign of enemy
activity.

MCQUEEN
Any sign of the 58th?

115 INT. HAMMERHEAD COCKPIT - SPACE 115

Lt. THOMAS pilots a Hammerhead escort. He checks his HUD.

THOMAS
Nothing on the LIDAR...

He looks beyond the HUD display out the canopy. His expression registers shock.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED:

115

THOMAS
Holy...I got a visual...I got an
incredible visual!

116 EXT. SPACE - COMET YANELLI-WIMBERLY - NIGHT - (CGI)

116

The comet races toward the convoy, including a Landing
craft and five Hammerheads.

Then, APPEARING over the top of the comet, the ISSCV
orbits slowly around the planetary body.

THOMAS (V.O.)
FOUND 'EM!!

117 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT

117

McQueen's eyes close with relief. Ross grabs his
shoulder, holding back tears.

118 INT. ISSCV - SUPPLY ROOM - NIGHT

118

CAMERA PUSHES in ON Wang as he looks out the porthole.

WANG
LOOK! OUT THERE!

The crew races to the window, SHOUT with relief.

119 INT. COCKPIT - ISSCV - SPACE

119

Nathan and Shane listen to Wang on the commset.

WANG (V.O.)
An LC convoy. They got us!

The two pilots exchange a fist dap.

NATHAN
I thought we were dead when we
burned too long.

SHANE
Me too, until I saw the actual
elapsed burn time...then I knew
we were gonna be alright.

She points to the clock. Nathan looks.

(CONTINUED)

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119 CONTINUED: 119

CLOSE - CLOCK

"58."

RETURN

As Nathan looks up to her and nods...

120 EXT. SPACE - NIGHT - (CGI) 120

The convoy tears off toward the comet and the rescue.

CUT TO:

121 INT. REC CENTER - SARATOGA - NIGHT 121

A star sits atop a Christmas tree. PULLING BACK REVEALS a Christmas celebration with an even greater heart than most Christmas parties. The 58th is cleaned up and in Marine dress.

Cooper awkwardly approaches Shane.

COOPER

I never done this before, so I hope I got it right...

He hands her a present. She's very touched and excited. As she opens it, she fights an expression of puzzlement in order to appear thrilled.

SHANE

Coop, wow...three free games at the Saratoga bowling alley! Wow.

COOPER

Shoe rental too. Did I do it right?

She reaches out and hugs Cooper. She becomes choked up and moves off. Cooper doesn't understand. He looks at Nathan.

NATHAN

Hawkes...remember last week we all went to the lanes? Except Shane...because she said how she thought bowling was for dweebs?

Now, he does.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

COOPER

Damn. I got to remember this stuff. She ticked at me?

Nathan looks over at Shane across the room, now looking out the rec room observation window. He gets up to move to her.

NATHAN

Nah, man, you did good.

Nathan pats him on the shoulder and moves off. Cooper follows.

OBSERVATION WINDOW

Shane looks out at the stars. Nathan and Cooper join her. After a beat, Wang walks up, buzzed. He holds a glass of blue liquid. Damphousse follows. As does Winslow.

WANG

Hey, you should try this hooch, it's pretty good. But something about it reminds me of shaving.

He looks at the drink then, seems to recall...

WANG

Hey, Nathan...I forgot...here.

Wang pulls off Kylen's photo tag and hands it to Nathan who simply looks at it.

NATHAN

Merry Christmas, Paul.

Wang is drunkenly blown away. He eyes Nathan as if, "are you sure?" Nathan nods.

WANG

I don't deserve it.

NATHAN

Paul, when you talked about bein' a kid and knowin' that the "River of Stars" would always be in the sky...I knew you never lost your Faith. That's what it is...knowing something's always going to be there for you.

Wang looks at the photo tags and shakes his head. He looks around the room and spots McQueen sitting at a table by the other observation window.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

Wang moves over to the table, while everyone watches. He places the tags before McQueen.

WANG
From all of us, sir. Merry
Christmas.

McQueen looks at the tags on the table. Wang moves off.
CAMERA PUSHES IN ON MCQUEEN as he reaches for the tag. He looks at the photo and engages the button.

KYLEN (V.O.)
I believe in you.

THE 58TH

watch him, approving of Wang's move. Nathan is the first to look back out the window.

MCQUEEN

unzips his flight suit pocket. As he places the tags into the pocket, he recalls another present inside. He removes the paper holding his recording of the Alien transmission. McQueen unfolds the paper, looks at it a moment before turning to Ross.

The two warriors exchange a look, before Ross turns his attention out the observation room window, as does McQueen.

REVERSE

In the distant b.g., a fuzzy star, the comet continues its flight through the river of stars.

A GRAPHIC APPEARS..."From the cast and crew of "Space: Above and Beyond"...Peace."

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR