SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Never No More"

Written By
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Episode 3S13 Story 4521 12/12/95 (Blue)

Director:
James Charleston

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Never No More"

CAST

VANESSA DAMPHOUSSE COOPER HAWKES MCQUEEN SHANE VANSEN PAUL WANG NATHAN WEST COMMODORE ROSS WINSLOW

LT. JENNIFER BRANDT
LT. BILL CURRAN
LT. ECTARD HALL
STONE
CAPTAIN JOHN OAKES
SULLIVAN
SPUD
BURNETT
PATERNO
REAR ADMIRAL BRODEN
LT.GENERAL ALCOTT
SABER
CAPTAIN HADDEN
FENRIS

(X)

(X)

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Never No More"

SETS

INTERIORS

COCKPITS /

BRANDT
HALL
CURRAN
BURNETT
PATERNO
OAKES
VANSEN

SARATOGA /

CHESTY'S BAR FLIGHT DECK

FLIGHT DECK CORRIDOR ORIENTATION ROOM COMMAND CENTER INTERROGATION ROOM SLEEPING QUARTERS

EXTERIORS

HOTEL DEL CORONADO

TEASER

A SLOW FADE IN:

1 EXT. A STAR FIELD - INCLUDING A MOON - NIGHT

1

The man in this moon has tears in his eyes.

As if by his request, the sad and lonely groove of Patsy Cline's "Never No More" begins. After the intro, she begins to sing with a heartache the stars seem to understand.

A female silhouette ENTERS FRAME. Alone, the music, the feel, moves the figure. The moon's back light softly embraces her body. We KNOW it is Shane; hair down, head slumped.

It is as if she is dancing alone within the stars. As her head tilts back, she looks toward the moon. Her eyes are longing and wanting to cry.

Once we FEEL this... the MUSIC... the IMAGE...

SLOWLY FADE TO BLACK:

A2 OVER BLACK:

A2 (X)

The hollow, FILTERED SOUND of a pilot over a RADIO...

BRANDT (V.O.)
Home base this is Soarin'
Hornets. No enemy activity to
report. Currently 7.5 MSKs out.
Request permission to land.

SARATOGA (V.O.)
Roger that, 42nd Squadron. You are clear on Saratoga flight deck four.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. SPACE - DAY

2

A squadron of SA-43s cruises INTO FRAME AWAY FROM CAMERA. The Saratoga is far too distant to be seen.

3 INT. BRANDT'S COCKPIT - DAY

3

LT. JENNIFER BRANDT flies leader of the formation. On her helmet reads "BRANDT" with an angry wasp painted above the name.

5

6

7

3 CONTINUED:

CURRAN (V.O.)

(over radio)

BRANDT, count you in for poker later?

BRANDT

Boys, some things in life are inevitable. The Sun'll rise, the Niners won't make the playoffs and I'll lose my shirt at poker. That's a negative.

4 INT. HALL'S COCKPIT - DAY

Lt. EDWARD HALL laughs, reacting to BRANDT. He's relaxed, the end of a patrol.

HALL

C'mon, BRANDT, come clean. The 35th is flyin' in tonight. You want some time with... "the Captain."

5 INT. BRANDT'S COCKPIT - DAY

BRANDT smiles.

BRANDT

I'll neither confirm, nor deny.

CURRAN (V.O.)

The "Faithful'" comin' in too?

6 INT. CURRAN'S COCKPIT - DAY

Lt. BILL CURRAN checks gauges as he flies.

CURRAN (CONT'D)

Seems like every squadron in the Fifth Wing is bein' called to the Saratoga.

7 INT. HALL'S COCKPIT - DAY

Lt. Hall prepares for arrival, engaging switches.

HALL

Rumor is the Brass is plannin' somethin' major.

7 CONTINUED: 7 Hall pauses, locked on his LIDAR. He double checks. INSERT - LIDAR MONITOR An eerie ghostly image streaks past, distorting the screen. Something is there... and yet... it is not. BRANDT (V.O.) Okay, lose the scuttlebutt over the radio. You know better. HALL His puzzled expression remains focused on the LIDAR. HALL This is Yellow Jacket, I got an angel on the LIDAR. Confirm? INT. BRANDT'S COCKPIT - DAY BRANDT checks her LIDAR monitor. BRANDT Negative. A9 (X A9 INT. CURRAN'S COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY CURRAN (X) Roger that. Negative. Just the 'Toga at 5.8 MSKs. Suddenly, Curran's cockpit EXPLODES in an angry FIREBALL! (X) EXT. SPACE - DAY 9 Curran's jet, trailing wingman of the formation, is (X) obliterated. (X) 10 INT. BRANDT'S COCKPIT - DAY 10 (X Brandt is shocked as orange FLASH blinds her cockpit. (X)

HALL
JUKE RIGHT! JUKE RIGHT!

INT. HALL'S COCKPIT - DAY

11

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3A.

12 EXT. SPACE - DAY

The wingman cuts sharply away from the explosion. The others trail.

12

•

13 INT. BRANDT'S COCKPIT - DAY

13 (X

CHAOS and PANIC fill the RADIO, OVERLAPPING...

HALL (V.O.)

WHAT HAPPENED?!

BRANDT

I DIDN'T SEE ANY...

(X)

Violently, Hall vanishes behind a FLASH of MISSILE IMPACT!

Brandt, despite all of her training, loses her cool, furiously (X) checking gauges and visuals.

BRANDT (X)

I GOT NO BANDITS, VISUAL OR HUD. WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?!!

As she looks up, CAMERA PUSHES IN as his expression turns to pure, total terror. (X)

14
thru OMITTED thru
15

16 EXT. SPACE - DAY - BRANDT'S POV

16 (X

The wall of fire churns. From its center, like a demon ascending from Hell, appears an alien warplane no one has ever seen before. Sharp vertical stabilizers present a scowling angry appearance. It clearly has more power and strength than ordinary Chig fighters.

Most unsettling, however, is the crude markings on the nose of the fuselage. It appears "copied" as if an American were to copy Chinese lettering.

A human skull sits below "ABANDON ALL HOPE."

Flames swirl as the nightmarish jet flies through the fire TOWARD CAMERA.

17 INT. BRANDT'S COCKPIT - DAY

17 (X

(X)

Brandt, frozen with horror, understanding the inevitable, whispers...

17 CONTINUED:

17

BRANDT

Goodbye, John.

(X) (X)

The cockpit ERUPTS!

18 EXT. SPACE - DAY

18

A second EXPLOSION angrily removes Brandt from the Heavens. A (X) lone Hammerhead remains. It futilely FIRES, but POWERFUL enemy LASER CANNON FIRE tears across the jet.

Gone.

Another enormous ball of FIRE swirls. ENTERING FRAME is the hellish enemy fighter. It streaks toward the impact disappearing behind the fiery curtain.

The explosions dissipate leaving no evidence of the battle or the lives that were taken with such speed and power.

Just the stars. And a chilling SILENCE.

FADE OUT:

END TEASER

ACT ONE

19 INT. CHESTY'S - SARATOGA - NIGHT

The FADE IN is SLOW, in time to "Never No More." A little buzzed, SHANE VANSEN stares into her cocktail glass. Blue barroom neon caresses her shoulders. After FEELING her loneliness... CAMERA PULLS BACK to REVEAL she is sitting at a table with DAMPHOUSSE and WINSLOW.

Granted, an officer's club would be more upscale, but this bar plays like a saloon. Blue and Red neon. Smoke. Low light. The music is a bit tinny and hollow. Lonely. Sadly romantic.

Damphousse is savoring an olive, milking every last drop of vodka. Winslow stares at her.

WINSLOW

You're working that olive like it had bought you jewelry.

Damphousse holds up a plastic card.

DAMPHOUSSE

I'm over this month's limit, but I know there's another drink's worth in this pimento.

Vanessa continues on the olive. Winslow eyes Vansen, who hasn't been listening.

WINSLOW

Vansen The Nun, there, still has this and last month's limit.

Damphousse checks Shane's drink limit card.

DAMPHOUSSE

But it's goin' fast.

Vansen doesn't respond. Winslow and Damphousse eye one another, concerned about their friend.

DAMPHOUSSE

Shane, what's with you?

Shane tries to pass it off, "nothin'," but doesn't sell it very well.

DAMPHOUSSE

You've been kinda weird since they said the 35th was flyin' in.

Shane is surprised her air has been so noticeable. She obliquely offers her feelings.

19 CONTINUED:

SHANE

I... I don't know... I can't help this feelin'... something... something's gonna happen. You know? Something's comin'.

Damphousse doesn't quite follow.

DAMPHOUSSE

This 'cause of all the talk about the Old Man planning a big offensive?

Frustrated with an inability to articulate, or come clean, Shane shakes it off. Damphousse and Winslow eye one another again, concerned.

WINSLOW

(lowers voice)

I think I know her problem. (beat)

Seven months stuck in Space can make a girl... fidgety. Know what I'm sayin'? This ship is lookin' awfully gray and cold. I'm gettin' tired of lookin' at nothin' but rivets.

CAMERA PUSHES IN on Shane. Sensing... she looks up toward the entrance with the focus of her entire soul.

SHANE'S POV - FRONT ENTRANCE

Through a pair of swinging doors, enters a group of seven pilots, men and women, backlit by red neon. A touch of SLOW MOTION as CAMERA PUSHES IN ON THEM.

SHANE

looking through a side of fallen hair, is motionless. CAMERA EASES in on HER.

SHANE'S POV - EXTREMELY CLOSE - A SQUADRON PATCH

The 35th squadron. Air Force. "The Flyin' Faithful." As it (X) CROSSES FRAME...

SHANE

her breaths are a bit deeper. CAMERA CONTINUES TO CREEP...

SHANE'S POV - A MAN'S FIGURE

a silhouette of a Marine Captain pauses at the door.

8.

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

SHANE

her only reaction is no reaction...

SHANE'S POV - THE CAPTAIN

enters the bar. On his move...

SHANE'S POV - NAME PATCH

"OAKES." As the name patch CLEARS FRAME...

WIDER

CAPTAIN JOHN OAKES, 26, still dark, passes Vansen in the f.g. Shane's eyes return to her drink as she holds it. Shane looks up again... toward the bar.

SHANE'S POV - THE BAR

Captain Oakes stands at the bar, alone, three quarters back to Vansen. He sadly looks at a telegram size yellow envelope.

SHANE .

looks away from the man, anxious.

THE POKER TABLE - CLOSE - THE ACE OF HEARTS

is dealt onto the table.

MCQUEEN (O.S.)

An Ace to the King.

WIDER

West checks the card he's been dealt. McQueen is dealing. Cooper does not have a good poker face. McQueen deals to FENRIS, a three.

MCQUEEN

A trey to the Fin.
(to Wang)
Queen to the Joker.
(to Hawkes)
And a bullet to G.I. Geequed.

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

Cooper thinks he's keeping cool, but his smile and lit eyes convey his hand. He can't contain an excited BLURT.

The others look at him with stoic incredulousness. McQueen throws in his hand.

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= 19	CONTINUED	: (3)			•		19	
		I don't.			another			
	Nathan, F			ll fold in	n unison.	Cooper scowls.	He (X)	
		You guys		my cards	in a			
	He shrugs gets up to		nd laug	hs as he 1	cakes in th	e pot. Fenris	(X)	
		I though to be ba		troes were	suppose		(X)	
	Cooper chuckles as he obnoxiously piles his chips.							
		Don't lo McQueen.		R e! Talk t	:0		•	
	McQueen eyes Hawkes, irritated. Cooper catches himself							
		Uh ta McQueen.	COOPE lk to	R . Colonel.	· • •			
		I'm gone	FENRI	S			(X)	
	He moves	off. A p	ilot fr	om the 35t	h, SULLIVA	N, approaches.	. (X	
		Can I bu	SULLI y in?	VAN			(X	
		Pull up	NATHA a chair	N , Air Ford	ce.		(X	
	Sullivan the cards	. Sulliv	an eyes	them, siz	ns the game zing up the	. West shuffle pilots. The W	es (X Vild (X (X	
		You guys	SULLI seen a	VAN ny action?	?		(X	
		(co We're th	WANG cky) e 58th.			•		
	Sullivan :	restrains	his re	spect, cod	cky about h	is own unit.	(X	

10.

19 CONTINUED: (4)

19

SULLIVAN

(X)

Not bad.

The 58th eye one another, scoffing at Sullivan's restraint. (X) Sullivan leans in. (X)

(X)

SULLIVAN

(X)

I'm with the Three-Five. Whatta you hear about why all these squadrons are bein' called in?

Everyone eyes everyone, tense. McQueen isn't big on scuttlebutt.

MCQUEEN

Ante up.

As Sullivan tosses in his money and West RIFLES the cards...

THE BAR

In the f.g., Captain Oakes stands, a silhouetted profile. On the bar in front of him is the yellow piece of paper. The bartender, SPUD, stands down the bar.

SPUD

Sorry, zoomie, no billet - no fill it.

OAKES

I'm here to drink to the memory of a pilot who, this very day, was killed in action. You think you're gonna stop me because I don't have a drink ticket?

The barkeep holds his ground.

OAKES (CONT'D)

Listen up, you little poque, if you don't serve me a double shot of J.D. in half a mike, so that I may honor that memory... you're gonna be pouring drinks from a bottle by bendin' backwards over the bar.

SHANE (O.S.)

Set us up.

A plastic drink ticket is dealt onto the bar. Shane appears in the b.g., her eyes on the bartender. Spud takes the ticket, eyes the Captain and begins to move off.

19 CONTINUED: (5)

Oakes also keeps his profile front, not looking at Shane. A moment of anxious tension. Silence, even though BAR MUSIC plays, O.S.

Shane reaches out and holds the yellow piece of paper.

INSERT - YELLOW PAPER

in cold official font: "Captain Oakes, it is our regretful duty to inform you Lieutenant BRANDT, 42nd Squadron, has been killed in action, February 14, 2064."

SHANE

sadly looks at the paper. She turns to the Captain.

SHANE Friend of yours?

OAKES

turns his head toward her, exposing half of his face into the spill light of the bar. He still doesn't look directly at Shane.

OAKES .

More than a friend.

WIDER

As Shane eyes the notification, Spud drops two double shot glasses before them and moves off. Shane picks up her glass.

SHANE

Then... here's to Lieutenant Brandt.

She downs the double shot. He pauses a moment before doing the same. Shane eyes the empty glass, runs a finger along the bottom of her lower lip, wiping away the liquor.

SHANE

You look older.

He doesn't respond. She looks to him.

SHANE

You don't look like a boy anymore.

Sadly... into the darkness.

OAKES

I'm not.

12.

19 CONTINUED: (6)

19

(X)

He picks up the paper.

OAKES (CONT'D)

He disappeared a hundred of these ago.

He flips it on the bar. She looks at the paper.

SHANE

A hundred "more than just a friend?"

Oakes laughs, softly. Still without looking at her and very matter of fact, emotionless...

OAKES

No. She's the only one I've ever felt this way about.

After a long beat...

OAKES (CONT'D)

Since you.

Shane is moved by the words, but tries hard not to show it. She picks up the drink ticket and flashes it to the bartender. As he nods...

THE POKER TABLE

Sullivan checks his cards and makes a bet. The others call.

SULLIVAN (X)

Some soldiers we talked to at Fort Bradley said they heard we're going to land an invasion force at Hermes, then planet hop to a full scale invasion of the Chig's home planet.

More cards. More bets. Exchanged looks.

WANC

They don't know the Chig's home planet.

COOPER

Not what I heard.

NATHAN

I think we'd go in around Cerces. All the squadrons are bein' called in to air strike at Cora.

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⁼ 19	CONTINUED: (7)	19				
	McQueen eyes Nathan. The Colonel grows impatient with the rumors.					
	SULLIVAN There's not going to be any air strikes if they don't figure out what's going on out there.	(X)				
	This is big. Everyone pauses. Wang lowers his voice.					
	SULLIVAN The entire Air Force 42nd	(X)				
	squadron got it today. Killed my Captain's girlfriend. No one knows what hit 'em.	(X)				
	NATHAN No squadron of Chigs on the LIDAR, nothin'?	(X)				
	SULLIVAN It's no squadron.	. (X)				
	Sulli an looks around. Then, pointedly	(X)				
	SULLIVAN (CONT'D) One plane.	(X)				
	The 58th react, shocked. Cooper is doubtful.					
	COOPER Chigs always fly in groups.					
	SULLIVAN Not this one. Air Force guys in the Feynman region are callin' it "Chiggie Von Richtofen."	(X)				
	NATHAN They seen it?					
	Sullivan scoffs at the idea.	(X)				
	SULLIVAN They say "don't even look, 'cause if you see it you're dead."	(X)				
	McQueen puts his cards down hard on the table. Everyone's attention turns toward him.					

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19 CONTINUED: (8)

MCQUEEN
You might as well be talkin'
about ghosts or werewolves,
because there's no such thing.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

19

19 CONTINUED: (9)

MCQUEEN (CONT'D) There is no Chiggie Von Richtofen.

A pause as he looks at everyone, unconvinced.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)
You sound like a bunch of old
ladies at a quilting circle. If
the Old Man is making plans,
we'll know soon enough. 'Til
then... I raise two.

McQueen throws in some money. The junior officers eye one another. The Colonel has done little to sway their thoughts.

McQueen realized this. Unsure himself, he leans back and looks around.

MCQUEEN'S POV - THE BAR

Shane talks to Oakes. They are closer... in the dark.

MCQUEEN

looks back, registering what he has seen. As the others toss in their bets...

THE BAR

heartbroken, but strong, Oakes tightly holds his empty glass. Shane looks at him, feeling his agony.

OAKES

The worst thing is...why isn't she here tonight? No one will tell me. It wasn't a classified mission. There were no reports of Alien activity. No asteroids in the area. No one will say why.

SHANE

Even if you had a detailed report of what happened. You'd still be wonderin' "why?"

He looks away.

SHANE

It's the most asked question.

As she turns away, softly...

, 19

19 CONTINUED: (10)

SHANE (CONT'D)

Why did things turn out this way?

Oakes knows this is more than a comment, but, indeed, a question posed to him. After a beat...

OAKES

Thanks for the drinks.

He cooly moves off. She's hurt, but won't let anyone see it.

MCQUEEN

checks his hand at the table. He looks back on Vansen. McQueen can see it. The Colonel looks back to his cards, but his mind is on his lieutenant at the bar.

SHANE

her eyes travel back to the haunting official notification. She holds it in her hand... portentous.

INSERT - YELLOW PAPER - EXTREMELY CLOSE

"... has been killed in action..."

CUT TO:

20 INT. FLIGHT DECK CORRIDOR - SARATOGA

Two pairs of flight boots march with purpose down the vacant and dark corridor.

CAMERA RISES to REVEAL two pilots, BURNETT and PATERNO, in full flight gear. They wear determined game faces, although their overall air is covert. The pilots continue until meeting Commodore Ross, who is waiting for them in the shadows of the flight deck.

ROSS

Gentlemen, the mission you are about to undergo is classified "compartmentalized." The objective is to deploy a Miniature Intelligence and Reconnaissance Gathering satellite into a polar orbit over the planet Helios in the Ceres region. As you know, this is deep in enemy occupied territory.

(X)

20

20 CONTINUED:

Burnett and Paterno eye one another, anxious and hesitant.

PATERNO
Sir... we've heard... talk...
about an alien craft. Is there
anything...?

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20 CONTINUED: (2)

20

(X)

ROSS

There is no such craft.

Burnett and Paterno know this is all they will receive.

BURNETT & PATERNO

Aye Aye, sir.

They salute the Commodore who returns the salute. The two pilots proceed to the flight deck. CAMERA PUSHES IN on Ross who seems troubled, unsure if he's told a lie.

21 thru OMITTED 26 21 thru 26

27 EXT. PLANET HELIOS - SPACE

27

The mission destination is the size of a dime in the distance. The two SA-43 jets speed toward it.

28 INT. BURNETT'S COCKPIT - SPACE

28

Burnett gives a visual scan of the area before checking his LIDAR.

INSERT - LIDAR SCREEN

The distant planet is indicated "Helios," Distance - 35,000 MSKs. Then... eerily... the screen appears to distort and waver, exactly as we've seen in the Teaser.

BURNETT

furrows his brow, reacting to the screen.

BURNETT What the hell was that?

CUT TO:

29 EXT. SPACE - OVERHEAD ANGLE

29

CAMERA LOOKS DOWN upon the two Hammerheads. Suddenly, between them, tearing upward like an attacking shark... "ABANDON ALL HOPE."

The Alien ace FIRES.

Burnett's plane EXPLODES! The Alien jet continues through the FIRE INTO CAMERA.

30 INT. PATERNO'S COCKPIT - SPACE

30

Shocked, Paterno chaotically checks his gauges. He furiously searches visually for the enemy ship, whipping his head left, right. As he checks above...

(X) (X)

31 EXT. SPACE - PATERNO'S POV

31

"ABANDON ALL HOPE" barrels toward him, its missiles are already en route. The FRAME FLASHES as they IMPACT.

CUT TO:

32 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SARATOGA - CLOSE - MONITOR

32 (X

The previous scene has turned into a digitally recorded image. It is ghostly and full of static. The flames are all the more eerie on the black and white monitor.

The image is terminated quickly to black. White graphic appear: "Transmission received 14-2-2064. 14:06:21."

WIDER

High ranking officials gather around the monitor, highly concerned. ADMIRAL BRODEN, LT. GENERAL ALCOTT, and a Civilian (X) Intelligence officer in a suit and tie, MR. SABER, are silent.

Commodore Ross steps INTO FRAME.

ROSS

Rumors of its existence are rampant. At what point do we inform our people?

BRODEN

Inform them of what? Our pilots' never had time to describe it. It's cloaked or scrambled the DMS, so no one can see it on playback.

ALCOTT

We don't know what it is... all we know is what it can do. (beat)
And that we appear helpless to stop it.

The four men stand alone in the room, silent.

32 CONTINUED:

Ross quietly moves to the battle map and reaches for two jets aimed at Helios in the Ceres region. He removes them from the board.

As Ross holds the symbols of the two lost pilots, his hand becomes an angry and frustrated fist. As he looks back to the map, as if it could somehow provide an answer...

FADE OUT:

END ACT ONE

32

ACT TWO

33 INT. ORIENTATION ROOM - SARATOGA

33

The room is overflowing with several different squadrons. On many of their sleeves are flags from countries other than the United States.

The 58th squadron is amongst the many pilots assembled. Shane sits in the middle of her fellow Marines, however, her attention drifts subtly across the room.

SHANE'S POV - OAKES

sits amongst the 35th. He doesn't look to her.

SHANE

Before she can register disappointment...

MCQUEEN (O.S.) Attention on deck!

(Y)

WIDER

The entire occupancy stand to attention as Commodore Ross enters the room. McQueen stands in front of the pilots.

ROSS

Be seated.

The room follows orders and quickly settles.

ROSS

I'm here to ask an entire squadron to volunteer for a classified sortie in the Ceres region.

Vansen and Oakes rise to attention at the same moment.

SHANE

OAKES

Sir, I volunteer the Sir, I volunteer the 35th squadron. squadron.

Ross eyes the two, deciding.

SHANE

reads this and jumps in on the pause.

33 CONTINUED:

SHANE

Sir, you specified an "entire squadron." Regretfully, the 35th is down a man due to recent casualty.

ROSS

cocks his head, "this is true."

THE 58TH

subtly react, assured. "This one is ours." Cooper taps Shane's leg to indicate "nice going."

THE 35TH AND OAKES

Oakes reads Ross, sensing the assignment slipping away. The Captain jumps in on the pause.

OAKES

Sir, the 35th has flown extensive missions within the Ceres region. Respectfully, we have more experience, sir.

The 35th react the way the 58th reacted to Shane.

ROSS

considers.

ROSS

Experience is what we need. You get the call, 3-5.

THE 35TH

subtly acknowledge the victory. Oakes is proud.

OAKES

Thank you, sir.

THE 58TH AND SHANE

The Wild Cards slump, pissed off by the defeat. Shane straightens.

SHANE

Sir... in that case... I volunteer to fill in the 35th's vacant slot.

The 58th squadron look to her, shocked. Confused.

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23.

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

34

(X)

(X)

(X)

MCQUEEN

is puzzled also. His eyes move from Vansen to Oakes, however, the Colonel remains silent.

WIDER

Ross considers. He looks to McQueen.

ROSS

Colonel?

MCQUEEN

It's an important mission, sir. Vansen is an excellent pilot.

Ross nods.

ROSS

Very well. 35th, Colonel McQueen... and Lt Vansen, remain in the "O room" for briefing. All others, dismissed.

The other pilots begin to move out. The 58th look to Shane, expecting an explanation. She cannot look to them.

CAMERA PUSHES IN on her as pilots PASS FRAME.

She appears to become deep in thought, perhaps as a tool to deflect the disapproval of her exiting peers. Perhaps challenging herself, assuring this is an act she wants to take.

DISSOLVE TO:

34 EXT. HOTEL DEL CORONADO - SAN DIEGO - NIGHT (PAST) - THE MOON

A silver beam ripples in the dark Pacific Ocean from the full moon, large on the horizon. O.S., waves CRASH, as they have for a billion years and will continue for a billion more.

A girl, 18, steps INTO FRAME, back to CAMERA, wearing a simple, classic, formal dress. The young woman stares longingly at the water, the sky. CAMERA MOVES AROUND to REVEAL it is Shane Vansen. O.S., the SOUNDS of a party - on its last breathe.

In the b.g. is a sign which reads "EL CAJON VALLEY HIGH - GRADUATION PARTY. Go Braves!" An arrow points the way.

A boy appears. Three years older than Shane, in a tuxedo. He appears to be searching. After a beat, John Oakes finds Shane and heads toward her.

(X)

34 CONTINUED:

Shane slightly turns her head toward John and smiles. He approaches, closer. At this proximity, John, indeed, appears much younger than the man we've met. His eyes sparkle. There is more bounce. More hope. He seems nervous.

OAKES

I've been lookin' everywhere.

SHANE

Time to leave?

He subtly panics, as if this is the last thing he wants.

OAKES

In a few minutes. Let's go back inside.

SHANE

When this is out here?

She directs his attention to the moon setting behind the Pacific. He looks, smiles, but remains nervous.

John gestures toward the moon.

OAKES

Right there, that, right of top center area. The Sea of Serenity. That's where I did my Air Force High Intensity Survival Training.

Shane looks to the sky. He checks his watch, then back inside.

SHANE

Must have been even more beautiful to stand up there and look back.

OAKES

Only 'cause I knew you were down here.

Shane's reaction is odd. Partially touched and yet with sadness all intertwined. He looks to her, concerned.

Suddenly, O.S., the M.C. speaks over the P.A. John freezes.

P.A. (0.S.)

This song was brought here on an optical disk... so I could play it tonight. This is for Air Force Lieutenant Oakes and Shane Vansen.

34 CONTINUED: (2)

She looks to him, puzzled. He pales with nerves as Patsy Cline's "You Belong to Me" PURRS in the other room.

SHANE

What's this?

OAKES

It's ninety-five years old. It's sung by a woman named Patsy Cline.

Shane looks at the water... the moon... listening... feeling.

OAKES

I forget the gory details... but it was playing when my Dad proposed to my Mom.

She tenses, before slowly looking at him.

OAKES (CONT'D)

And... now... it's playing when I propose to you. Shane, would you marry me?

Shane is sincerely shocked, moved... confused. .

OAKES

I mean... maybe not now... if you don't want... It looks like I'll be stationed out on the USS Lincoln... for a while... and I know you've got a couple years of college and then you plan on the Marine Academy and...

He sighs. She doesn't look to him.

OAKES (CONT'D)

... I know that has been your plan since you were eight... and your dreams are tied to your parents' memory... and I don't want to ask you to change your dreams... but for you, I'll change mine. I'll get out of the service earlier than I'd planned...

SHANE

Baby...

OAKES (CONT'D)

We can make new dreams together.

34 CONTINUED: (3)

SHANE

Baby...

OAKES

Shane... I know how it feels to be away from you... for months, let alone... And I can't take it. I can't envision life without your eyes looking in mine.

She turns to him with those eyes. He grows confident, emotional.

OAKES

I have no doubts... no fear... that I could, happily, belong to you... forever.

She holds back confused tears, then whispers.

SHANE

"Forever."

(Pause)

Baby... yeah... I have no doubts, either. You were made for me. I love you so much...

OAKES

But...

SHANE

But...

(she considers)
Look at the moon. Tomorrow night
it'll set in a different spot.
In a week, only half of it will
shine. In two weeks, you won't
even know its there.

John looks to the moon, sensing her point.

SHANE (CONT'D)

The way my life has gone...All I believe in is that no one can know how things will be different. How they'll change. The only certainty is now.

(pause)

And I sure don't believe in forever.

Pause, the waves CRASH. The song continues. Sadly...

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34 CONTINUED: (4)

34

27.

OAKES So... that a "no?"

After a long pause, she moves to him, slipping her arms around his back and gently placing a head on his shoulder.

SHANE

That's a "let's see where the moon is in five years."

He is clearly disappointed, but seems to understand. John wraps his arms around her and, slowly, they move to the song.

ON THE HORIZON - THE TIP OF THE MOON

disappears behind the ocean, which turns dark.

CUT TO:

35 INT. ORIENTATION ROOM - SARATOGA - CLOSE - SHANE

35

Shane slips out of the memory. She looks around the room, emotional, but in control. The others are prepping for the briefing as CAPTAIN HADDEN, the mission advisor, moves to the front of the room.

MCQUEEN

studies Shane... sensing...

CAPTAIN HADDEN (O.S.)

35th, you are about to participate in operation "Shadow Watch"...

CUT TO:

36 OMITTED

36 (X)

A37 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SARATOGA -

A37 (X)

Lt. General Alcott is pacing in the room.

ALCOTT

Colonel, I'm sure you are aware of the most recent tragic "incident" involving the Air Force 42nd squadron. And the rumors circulating amongst our pilots regarding the cause.

(X) (X)

A37 CONTINUED:

A37 (X)

McQueen sits in the chair across from the Lt. General. Admiral Broden, Commodore Ross and Mr. Saber are seated, in the shadows, on the other side of the room.

ALCOTT (CONT'D)
Your reputation is held in the
highest regard by pilots in every
branch of the service. That's
why we are requesting your
assistance.

McQueen straightens, tense.

(X)

(X).

ALCOTT
It is in the interest of safeguarding security and not jeopardizing future operations, that the troops do not yet have the "need to know." We'd like your assistance in helping facilitate that need.

McQueen eyes the officers. He glances at Mr. Saber. The others in the room remain silent.

(X)

(X)

MCQUEEN
"Facilitate...the need to know."
(beat)

SABER

Then it does exist.

(X)

No one ever said that.

MCQUEEN (X)

Gentlemen, most respectfully, I was briefed on operation "Shadow Watch." I am not questioning the validity of the mission nor its objectives, however the utilization of an entire squadron to deploy one MIRG(merg) and the nature of the directives indicates to a veteran pilot that the rumors of an alien "ace"... out there... are true. It does exist.

The room remains silent.

(X)

MCQUEEN

(X)

And, gentlemen, most respectfully, my senior officers... appear scared.

A37 CONTINUED: (2)

A37 (X)

(X)

(X)

McQueen sits back, with a nervous sigh. Ross eyes his superiors for their reactions. Mr. Saber leans out of the shadows.

SABER

We believe it is a new form of fighter... and there is, most likely, just one... being tested.

MCQUEEN

Then that's what our pilots need to be told.

SABER (X)
Negative. It's imperative to
keep this under wraps.

ALCOTT (X)

(snaps at Saber)
We're not keeping anything "under wraps!"

(composed to McQueen)
We simply cannot have any cause
for "hesitation" during

engagement.

MCQUEEN

"Hesitation?!" These are our people! You give us everything you know and we'll go out and hunt it down!

ALCOTT

And what would you look for? No one has lived to see it.

MCQUEEN

Our pilots will never know, unless they are told of this situation.

McQueen turns to Admiral Broden, appealing to the one with the (X) real power in the room.

MCQUEEN

Sir, respectfully... you're sending them into the dark without a light.

The others turn to Broden as he considers. The Admiral studies (X) McQueen. Finally...

A37 CONTINUED: (3)

A37 (X)

BRODEN

Colonel, what I am about to divulge is our greatest military secret. I expect you to act responsibly with the information...

(Pause)

Deployment of the MIRG satellite is the first small step toward ending this war.

McQueen is caught off guard. He listens intently.

BRODEN (CONT'D)

Sometime in the coming weeks, the Forces of Earth will engage in a major offensive, landing a massive expeditionary force in the Ceres Star System.

McQueen remains in respectful silence.

BRODEN (CONT'D)
The fifth planet from Helios, we have learned, is the enemy's home. We will attack aggressively and drive the Chigs to defeat and surrender.

MCOUEEN

Yes, sir. Aggressively, sir.

BRODEN

This plan cannot be diverted by an obstacle that no one can substantiate. No... gentlemen, until we have a clear idea what we're up against... we are to not reveal the existence of this Alien craft.

(X) (X)

(X)

McQueen's posture reflects his disagreement but acceptance.

37 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA

Shane and John Oakes are the last two remaining in the cavernous flight deck as they finish checking their cockpits. It is quiet and dark as John approaches Shane.

OAKES

In the 35th, we prefer to patrol in a defensive combat spread. Since the Chigs fly in swarms, we attack in a strike-rejoin-strike Loose Duece engagement.

SHANE

Why not a Bracket Attack? It keeps the squadron fighting as a team.

OAKES

In all honesty, Sullivan is a great wingman. Chambers is okay. A couple of the others are weak. Sullivan and me can do more damage with the others as support.

SHANE

Don't have that with the 58th. I'd fight with any of them.

Oakes tenses, defensive.

OAKES

We've been in hotter zones. The competition is tougher. That's why I want you to hang back on our six. I'm told you fly a tight tac turn. If me and Sullivan get in a furball... you'll be there for me.

He looks at the cockpit instruments, but the bite is clearly aimed at her.

OAKES (CONT'D)

Won't you?

She eyes him, angered.

SHANE

You know I will.

He looks at her, "do I?" She reacts, defensive. He eases, (X) reaching into his pocket

(CONTINUED)

37

(X)

(X)

37

(X)

OAKES

I thought you'd like to have this.

He produces a "Flying Faithful" flight patch from his pocket. She takes the patch, eases. She looks to him.

OAKES

Why'd you volunteer?

SHANE

It's my duty to volunteer for any assignment.

OAKES

One minute you were competing with me by using the 58th, next second you're turning your back on them.

SHANE

I would never turn my back on them.

OAKES

I just hope you're not risking your life... in order to make it up to me.

She looks to him, defensive.

OAKES (CONT'D)

'Cause if you are... don't go.

She eases, honestly knowing it may be an element to her

motives. She looks to the patch in her hand.

As Oakes looks at her, still in love, but it's easier to hide in a man's eyes than a boy's.

CUT TO:

38 OMITTED

38

(X)

39

39 INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - SARATOGA

The emblem in the f.g. on the bunk reads "Wild Cards." In the b.g., OUT OF FOCUS, Shane Vansen gears up... alone.

WANG & WEST

lie in their bunks, watching her... silent. Disapproving.

VANSEN

feels their looks, but continues. She ZIPS up her suit.

DAMPHOUSSE & WINSLOW

look off, reacting to the SOUND. They eye Wang and West.

VANSEN

finishes putting on her gear. She SHUTS her locker and moves toward the exit.

= 39 CONTINUED:

39

En route, Hawkes climbs out of his bunk and stops her, grabbing her by the bicep. They lock eyes, somewhat angry.

Hawkes' eyes turn toward her flight suit, accusatory.

HAWKES POV - FLIGHT SUIT

Above the "Wild Cards" patch... the emblem of another squadron, "The Flyin' Faithful."

RETURN

Hawkes' eyes return to hers as if "explain yourself." Vansen, however, pulls her arm from his, glaring defiantly at him before walking out of the room.

As the others remain... in silence. Hurt.

CUT TO:

40 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA - DAY - CLOSE - DECAL

40

The emblem of the 35th squadron, "The Flyin' Faithful" is painted on the side of a cockpit. CAMERA ADJUSTS to REVEAL the urgency of the flight deck crew and pilots preparing the 35th for their mission.

Oakes, like a good officer, moves along the cockpits giving an assuring handshake to each of his pilots.

A WILD CARD DECAL

is painted on one of the cockpits. PULLING BACK REVEALS Lt. Shane Vansen putting on her flight gloves. Her expression is intense and focused. Oakes approaches and extends a hand.

OAKES

Lieutenant.

SHANE

Captain.

OAKES

Remember, I want you to remain on my maximum Six in formation.

SHANE

Yes, sir.

He pauses. Then, opening, but remaining strong...

40

40 CONTINUED:

OAKES

I know pilots never want to talk about this, but for me, prior to a mission. I shake everyone's hand...in case its for the last time. I've never told any of the others that.

SHANE

Then why you tellin' me...sir?

He eyes her. She looks right back. The tension is heated. He extends his hand and she takes it.

CLOSE - THEIR HANDS

hold each other, a lingering squeeze. They release.

And he walks off. She's rattled, but maintains her composure. As she picks up her helmet and prepares to enter the cockpit, she pauses...

ORIENTATION ROOM WINDOW

West and Hawkes watch her prepare for departure. Their posture is distant, reflecting a sense of disloyalty.

SHANE

As they do not acknowledge her, she does not acknowledge them. She gets into her cockpit. McQueen approaches and kneels before her. He looks around, waiting for crewmen to get out of earshot as they clear the flight deck. Siren lights FLASH.

MCQUEEN

Is that mic hot?

She checks the com switch, shakes her head "no."

MCQUEEN

By telling you this, I could be court martialed.

She reacts, puzzled, anxious.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)
There is something out there. An alien ace or a new weapon.
Suspect everything. Assume nothing. If engaged...get the hell out. Consider anything you see "compartmentalized" and then report back only to me.

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

She eyes him, nods. Shane looks to the instrument panel as he begins to walk off.

SHANE

Colonel.

McQueen pauses, turns. The flight deck doors begin to close.

SHANE

Am I doing the right thing?

MCQUEEN

This is an important mission. You're an outstanding pilot...

She turns, eyes him as if "you know what I am really asking."

SHANE

Am I doing the right thing?

McQueen has to rush due to the closure of the flight deck.

MCQUEEN

You mean if you're just doing it for him?

(Beat)

There has to be some thing beyond this war.

Vansen engages her canopy, literally shutting him out. McQueen eyes her, but she can't look back. He hustles off.

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON VANSEN as she looks to her left.

SHANE'S POV - OAKES

in his cockpit, ready. He flashes her a "thumbs up." His cockpit disappears into the lower hangar bay.

WIDER

The other cockpits of the 35th squadron follow into the lower level.

SHANE

As she awaits...she can't help turn to the right.

SHANE'S POV - WEST & HAWKES

watching her go.

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40 CONTINUED: (3)

40

37.

SHANE

She turns back, eyes front...and disappears into the bowels of the Carrier.

WEST AND HAWKES

seem to immediately regret their icy posture. They eye one another, sensing that may have been the last time they'll ever see her.

And now...they can only wait...and hope...for her return.

FADE OUT:

ACT THREE

EXT. SPACE - DAY

=

41

The planet Helios awaits two hundred thousand miles into Space. The stars here are ominous.

A squadron of 6 Hammerheads, in a diamond formation, ROAR INTO FRAME, heading toward the distant planet.

42 INT. OAKES' COCKPIT - DAY 42

Oakes leads the team deep into enemy territory. The Captain checks his HUD, then visually checks to his side.

His wingman, SULLIVAN, pulls up tight on his four and gives a thumbs up, the squadron maintaining radio silence.

(X)

EXT. SPACE - DAY

43

The diamond formation streaks BENEATH CAMERA, WHICH HOLDS ON the rear SA-43.

INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - DAY.

44

Flying in the rear of the formation, Vansen is more alert than she's ever been. Confident, but cautious. She looks to her LIDAR.

INSERT - LIDAR SCREEN

All is quiet.

VANSEN

does not ease, remaining focused. As she continues to fly...

EXT. PLANET HELIOS - SPACE

45

The large gas giant arcs its blue atmosphere ACROSS THE FRAME. CAMERA CREEPS tensely along the vertical horizon. Suddenly, the 35th squadron appears from behind the planet, racing TOWARD CAMERA.

INT. OAKES' COCKPIT - DAY

46

Oakes checks his instrument panel.

'Never	No	More"	3 S 13	12/12,	/95	(Blue)
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39.

46 CONTINUED:

46

INSTRUMENT PANEL - SAFETY COVER

is lifted off a switch designated "Sat. Deployment Launch."

OAKES

checks his LIDAR.

INSERT - LIDAR

the screen wavers. This is somewhat different from the ghostly effect which unknowingly detected The Alien fighter's presence earlier. It should play as a false scare.

OAKES

appears puzzled. He adjusts a knob on the control panel.

INSERT - LIDAR

the wavering ceases. A grid appears indicating satellite deployment coordinates. A countdown clock ticks. 00:00:10... 00:00:09... 00:00:008...

OAKES

readies his finger on the launch button.

47 INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - DAY

47

Shane continues to be on alert. As she looks out on her nine o'clock low...

48 EXT. HELIOS - DAY - SHANE'S POV - ATMOSPHERE

48

An eerie current flow is occurring in the clouds. Rising.

49 INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - DAY

49

Shane reacts, trying to focus on a better look.

50 INT. OAKES' COCKPIT - DAY

50

Oakes readies for launch.

INSERT - LIDAR

00:00:03... 00:00:02... 00:00:01...

	"Never No More 3313 12/12/95 (Bide) 40.	
50	CONTINUED:	50
	INSERT - LAUNCH BUTTON	
	is engaged.	
51	EXT. HAMMERHEAD - SPACE - DAY - OVERHEAD	51
	A milk crate sized Miniature Intelligence and Reconnaissance Gathering Satellite is deployed, shot out and away from the plane, no engines yet.	(X)
52	EXT. HELIOS - SPACE - DAY	52
	As the six Hammerheads tear off, the tiny satellite's engines IGNITE, launching into the desired orbit above.	
	Suddenly, faint bolts of purple light streak toward the satellite. The MIRG EXPLODES, destroyed.	•
53	INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY	53
	SHANE I saw weapons fire!	
54	INT. OAKES' COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY	54
	OAKES (angry) VANSEN! Maintain radio silence!	
55	INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY	55
	Shane checks her lidar, checks visually, adrenalin racing.	
	VANSEN The MIRG got waxed, I'm goin' hot!	
56	INT. OAKES COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY	56
	Intense, pulse racing, Oakes checks his LIDAR screen as the MIRG was well behind and above them.	
	INSERT - LIDAR	
	information races past on the screen which wavers ghostly.	
	(CONTINUED)	

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56	CONTINUED:	56
	OAKES	
	doesn't read the presence of the Alien Ace.	
	OAKES Negative! LIDAR's reading a malfunction in the Payload Assist Module.	
57	INT. VANSEN'S COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY	57
	Vansen is angry with Oakes, the emotion is suspended as she checks her nine o'clock low. Her expression freezes	
58	EXT. PLANET HELIOS - ATMOSPHERE - SPACE - VANSEN'S POV	58
	Rising, beneath the clouds; fast; like a porpoise beneath the water; the hazy form of the Alien fighter is barely discernible. As its form appears beneath the clouds "Abandon All Hope"	
59	INT. VANSEN'S COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY	· 59
	SHANE BOGEY! NINE O'CLOCK LOW!! MOVIN' BACK ON OUR SIX!!	
60	INT. OAKES COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY	60
	The Captain quickly checks his HUD.	
	OAKES I got nothin' on the HUD. Confirm. Confirm.	
61	INT. VANSEN'S COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY	61
	SHANE CONFIRM! CONFIRM! ITS LOCKED ON!! CHAFF AND JINK!	
	She cranks hard on the controls, the cockpit dives	
62	EXT. SPACE - DAY - FROM THE SQUADRON'S SIX	62
	Vansen's jet releases a cloud of metallic strips before she alone violently veers away. FROM THE TOP OF FRAME appears an alien missile.	

	-	
= 62	CONTINUED:	62
	It locks on to the diversionary chaff and trails off into the planet.	
63	INT. OAKES COCKPIT SPACE - DAY	63
	Oakes checks visually out the cockpit.	
	OAKES VANSEN, GET BACK IN FORMATION!!	
64	EXT. SPACE - DAY	64
	From the rear, the Alien ace appears, FIRING INTENSELY, with the speed and power of no craft we've seen in this war. Three wingmen are DESTROYED.	(X)
65	INT. OAKES' COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY	65
	The orange FLASH blinds Oakes from behind and above.	
66	OMITTED	66 (X)
67	INT. VANSEN'S COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY	67
	As her plane cuts back, she angages a switch on her HOTAS.	
	SHANE FOX ONE!	
68	OMITTED	68 (Z
69	EXT. SPACE - DAY	69
	As the alien ace begins a lag pursuit roll after Oakes' and Sullivan's SA-43s, Vansen's missile tags the Chig's back end. It spins out of formation but the weapon does nothing more than delay the inevitable. Oakes and SULLIVAN are momentarily out of danger.	(X) (X) (X) (X)

42.

"Never No More" 3S13 12/12/95 (Blue)

"Never No More" 3S13 12/12/95 (Blue) 43. INT. VANSEN'S COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY 70 70 SHANE SKY OUT! SKY OUT! INT. OAKES' PLANE - SPACE - DAY 71 71 OAKES BOGEYDOPE! ENGAGE ACM!! 72 INT. VANSEN'S COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY 72 SHANE NEGATIVE! NEGATIVE! ENEMY'S GET THE HELL OUTTA SUPERIOR! DODGE!! INT. OAKES COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY 73 Oakes is angry by the command from a Lieutenant, frustrated by the situation... however... OAKES Roger that. Sky out. Return to Home Plate. 74 INT. VANSEN'S COCKPIT - SPACE - DAY 74 She sighs with relief and cuts OUT OF FRAME. 75 EXT. HELIOS - SPACE - DAY 75 The three surviving Hammerheads retreat toward the distant stars, away from the planet. As the Alien Ace CRUISES INTO FRAME, descending, returning beneath the cloaking atmosphere like a great sea monster. As the battlefield returns to silence... CUT TO: INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA - DAY - COCKPIT BAY 76 Shane's cockpit rises into the flight deck. Beside her, Captain Oakes' cockpit and Lieutenant Sullivan's cockpit rises (X) INTO FRAME. Both Vansen and Oakes hurriedly remove their flight gear, angry and impatient to get out. Siren lights flash as the flight deck doors open and crews

(CONTINUED)

attend to the returning craft.

76

Oakes is out of his cockpit and proceeds furiously toward Vansen who assumes a strong stance.

OAKES
YOU BROKE RADIO SILENCE!
YOU REVEALED OUR POSITION!

SHANE
I HAD VISUAL CONTACT
OF AN ENEMY CRAFT!

OAKES

OUR ORDERS WERE NOT TO DIVULGE OUR PRESENCE! I SAW NO SUCH CRAFT!

SHANE

WHAT THE HELL ELSE KILLED THOSE MEN?! IF YOU HAD LISTENED TO ME...

OAKES (CONT'D)
SULLIVAN SAW NO SUCH CRAFT! ON
HUD OR VISUAL!

(X)

SHANE (CONT'D)
(overlapping him)
IF YOU HAD LISTENED TO ME,
INSTEAD OF THE DAMNED HUD, FOUR
MEN WOULD BE STANDING HERE WITH
US.

McQueen, West and Hawkes hustle into the flight deck. McQueen stands between them. Nathan and Cooper move to her like protective brothers.

OAKES

WE'LL NEVER KNOW! I WAS THE COMMANDING OFFICER, VANSEN! FOR ONCE I WAS SUPPOSE TO CALL THE SHOTS BETWEEN US!

Shane takes a furious aggressive step toward Oakes, realizing he is transferring their personal lives into their professional lives.

MCQUEEN

STAND DOWN! BOTH OF YOU!

Both continue to fume, however they back off. McQueen looks to Oakes.

MCQUEEN

Speak, Captain.

76 CONTINUED: (2)

76

(X) (X)

(X) `

OAKES

Lieutenant Vansen claims to have visually contacted an enemy aircraft. Neither myself, Lieutenant Sullivan nor the LIDAR saw any such craft. Lieutenant Vansen broke radio silence, abandoned formation, and then the "Lieutenant" ordered us out of Dodge. I don't know if that's how the 58th flies...

Cooper and Nathan take a step toward Oakes, while...

SHANE

(burning intensely)
I was there for you... as ordered.

McQueen pushes West and Hawkes back, turns hotly toward Vansen.

MCQUEEN

(to West & Hawkes)

Get back!

(to Vansen)

Lieutenant... your orders were to not reveal your position. What evidence did you have of an enemy presence?

Shane is about to spill, wants desperately to, then collects herself. She looks pointedly at McQueen.

SHANE

I'm not at liberty to discuss such evidence at the present time.

McQueen is initially angry, however, her strong glare signal to him that she is under the orders he presented to her.

OAKES

What the hell is that suppose to mean...

In the midst of Oakes' outburst, she whispers to McQueen.

SHANE

I saw it.

McQueen reacts, understanding the grave importance...

46.

76 CONTINUED: (3)

76

77

OAKES (CONT'D) Now you're just trying to cover your ass...

McQueen cuts him off.

MCQUEEN

Make out a report, Captain.

McQueen takes Vansen by the back of the upper arm and moves her off to everyone's confusion and Oakes' anger.

As he turns and throws his flight helmet hard against the flight deck wall.

CUT TO:

77 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SARATOGA - DAY

Shane sits in a chair before McQueen, Ross, Rear Admiral Broden, General Alcott and Mr. Saber all of which listen intently to her debriefing,

SHANE

It was approximately 17 meters. Equal distance Tri-wing. Span approximately 15 to 10 meters. Angle of attack much more pronounced than standard enemy attack spacecraft.

CAMERA MOVES, reflecting the tension in the room.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I did not detect any indication of the craft's position on the SA-43 LIDAR. I also believe it's capable of broadcasting false information.

General Alcott flashes a concerned look to the Admiral Broden.

SHANE (CONT'D)

The craft had a... fuselage. Bullet shaped. And... I didn't get a very good look, however, the nose had been marked. Writing. English. And a crude human skull.

This presents mixed feelings of amazement, anger and concern.

BRODEN

Could you discern its message?

SHANE

(hesitant)

Yes, sir...

MCQUEEN

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON Colonel McQueen as Vansen reports because, as we shall know in the future... it is his destiny.

SHANE (CONT'D)

It read, "Abandon All Hope."

CAMERA HOLDS on Mcqueen as he senses this.

CUT TO:

78 INT. CHESTY'S - SARATOGA - NIGHT

Shane Vansen once again is with the Wild Cards. They sit at a table playing poker. She's putting on an air as if nothing ever happened, however, Vansen is still troubled. The others are happy to have her back. West shuffles the cards. Everyone antes.

Cooper's expression is pouting.

COOPER

I ain't doin' as good as I was the other night.

WANG

'Cause Vansen's back.

DAMPHOUSSE

For as much as she hates A.I.s, she gambles like one.

Shane laughs, shrugs with false modesty. As Nathan deals the cards, Vansen is forced to look in the direction of the entrance. Her expression melts.

VANSEN'S POV - ENTRANCE

Captain Oakes enters Chesty's and pulls up to his spot at the bar.

(CONTINUED)

77

78

78

78 CONTINUED:

RETURN

Shane turns her eyes toward the table. The others pick up on her mood swing and eye each other, "what's going on?" Nathan gestures with a subtle nod of his head toward the bar. The 58th look and realize Oakes is present. They tense, disapproving as they check their cards.

COOPER

One.

He tosses in a chip. Damphousse and Wang follow. Shane remains focused on the table.

WANG Shane... you in?

Her eyes turn upward as if to rejoin the game. She checks her cards, but her mind... her heart... are elsewhere. Vansen eyes the others. No one can look to her, not wanting to interfere.

She looks once again to her cards, before tossing them on the table and slowly rising. Without a word she moves off across the room. The Wild Cards look to each other. Wang calls out to stop her.

WANG

Shane...

The protest is strongly silenced by the only one who would understand.

NATHAN

Let her go.

After a tense sigh, the game begrudgingly continues...

DIGITAL JUKE BOX

Shane glides to the monitor, hair down on her shoulders. In the b.g., Oakes keeps his slumped posture focused in his drink.

Shane makes a selection and waits. After a moment, Patsy Cline's "Never No More" hums through the saloon. Shane feels the music for a moment.

Behind her, John's head turns slowly towards the lieutenant. Without returning the look, Shane eases away. CAMERA PUSHES IN on OAKES at the bar, watching her move with an eye over his shoulder. His heart beats faster.

78 CONTINUED: (2)

78

WIDER

oblivious to everyone, everything but the music, Shane floats across the room toward a small dance area with large observation windows.

The 58th watch her as she moves away from them. John remains at the bar in the b.g.

DANCE AREA - OBSERVATION WINDOW

A moon, similar to ours, glows full amongst the stars in the observation windows. Shane's silhouette appears before the window. She stands before the stars, moving slightly to the music.

AT THE BAR

John turns away, looks to his drink, downs it... and irresistibly, slowly, steps away from the bar. He proceeds toward her.

DANCE AREA

Shane's eyes remain toward the stars as John moves next to her. After a tense, yet alive, moment...

SHANE

That juke box has every Patsy Cline song except "You Belong to Me."

He nods, uncomfortable, yet maintaining strength.

OAKES

Just as well.

(a beat)

Look, I checked over the cockpit's DCL replays and read Sullivan's report and... just cleared my head. And... I know... you were there for me.

(beat) This time.

SHANE

I've always been there.

She turns three quarters and looks at him. The Captain finally returns the look. They surrender to the inevitable. She moves slowly into his arms. He's reluctant to respond, but is more intense than she as he finally holds her.

78

78 CONTINUED: (3)

Together, with relief and yet, sadness; Shane and John slightly sway to "Never No More."

THE 58TH

watch protectively as they continue to play poker.

DANCE AREA

Oakes closes his eyes, whispers in her ear.

OAKES

I hate those words you said to me that night.

Shane doesn't react. Her eyes are filmed with tears, but not spilling.

OAKES (CONT'D)
Because... I've come to believe
them. It started that night. We
drifted away, after I couldn't
ever imagine you being out of my
life. The war began... after
everyone thought there'd never be
another. Promotions.

Reassignments. I've seen so many... people... die.

He's overwhelmed with emotions, fighting to hold back tears. He buries his head in her neck. She hold him tighter.

SHANE

(softly)

John, I'm so sorry she's not here.

(after a moment)
But I'm not sorry that I am.

OAKES

Do you still not believe in "forever?"

SHANE

Yes. Only, unlike that night, I'll no longer surrender to it.

She pulls away and looks into his eyes.

SHANE (CONT'D)

The more something in life seems inevitable... the harder I fight it.

78 CONTINUED: (4)

78

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X).

They look far into one another.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I know now that giving your life to someone... doesn't have to mean dying. And I've always wished that night I had given you mine.

She returns her head to his shoulder and closes her eyes. He allows the emotions to reverberate within him before returning his head to her shoulder and closing his eyes.

ENTRANCE

the swinging doors BANG open. Lieutenant Sullivan hustles in, (X) intense. He moves toward the 58th's poker table.

SULLIVAN (X)
It's true. There is a Chiggie
Von Richtofen.

All heads snap toward Sullivan.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D) (X)
Ross announced we're all to
report to a briefing at Oh-seven
hundred. They believe one alien
fighter is responsible for wiping
out the 19th, the 31st, the 35th
and the 42nd squadron.

CLOSE - CAPTAIN OAKES

with his head still on her shoulder, his eyes snap open; shining with hatred and revenge.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D) (O.S.)
They confirmed it's what killed
Lieutenant Brant.

CLOSE- SHANE'S EYES

with her head still on Oakes' shoulder, her eyes slowly open. Knowing... without being able to see the Captain's eyes... how they appear. As she holds him, her eyes reflecting a fear... of the inevitable.

SLOW FADE OUT:

ACT FOUR

79 EXT. SARATOGA - SPACE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The warship prepares for action this day.

79

80 INT. ORIENTATION ROOM - SARATOGA - DAY

80

Once again it is brimming with pilots from the assembled squadrons of many different countries. Ross addresses the room, at attention.

(X) (X)

ROSS

Out there... in the darkness... hiding... is an enemy craft which has killed your comrades. If not destroyed, it will kill you.

(X)

He eyes the room, eyes on fire. Defiantly..

ROSS (CONT'D)
NOT THIS DAY! This morning you are to participate in "Operation Red Baron." Now hear this C.F.B., your objective is to search for and remove this enemy spacecraft from my sky! Colonel.

McQueen steps forward.

80

MCQUEEN

Air Force Engineers have theorized the Chigs are experimenting with an advanced LIDAR signaling processing technology allowing this fighter to cloak itself to our electronics.

Sullivan stands.

(X)

(X)

SULLIVAN

Sir, how do we detect it?

McQueen pauses, with an intense game face...

MCQUEEN

When a plane in your formation goes down... you'll know your're in the schoolyard.

The pilots release a concerned protest. Ross steps up, voice raised.

ROSS

All our plans are on hold until this Chig is destroyed. We do not intend to wait around watching people die and the enemy advance while a group of pencil pushing engineers develop a new "technology" to combat the enemy. (louder)

Today... you will go out there, find the bastard and PILE ON!!

CUT TO:

81 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA - DAY

81

The flight deck is frenetic. An electric cart, loaded with missiles pulls up to a cockpit. Today, no flight crew member walks on the deck. Everyone moves in double time.

A squadron of Pilots with the flag of Finland on their arms, (X) march with purpose toward the corridor. PA ANNOUNCEMENTS BLARE (X) orders and instructions. (X)

81	CONTINUED:	81
	No one speaks as the 58th squadron gears up for the mission. All pilots are one. Lifetakers and Heartbreakers. Their movements are strong, quick.	
	Away from the squadron, Oakes gears up also. Although his intensity equals the Wild Cards', he does not feel a part of them. Shane knows this. At her cockpit, she finishes suiting up and looks to the Captain.	(X)
	SHANE'S POV - OAKES	(X)
	from across the deck, looks to her. As he starts to move toward her, the other members of the 58th approach.	
	SHANE	(X)
	appears disappointed.	(X)
	THE 58TH AND OAKES	(X)
	West moves to Captain Oakes, with complete sincerity.	(X)
	NATHAN Captain, for this mission we thought you would like to have this.	
	Nathan hands Oakes a "Wild Cards" flight patch. Oakes is moved.	
	SHANE	(X)
	It is not a time for smiles, however Shane's expression reflects her appreciation to West.	
	RETURN	(X)
	West extends a hand.	
	NATHAN Welcome aboard.	
	Hawkes, Damphousse, Winslow and Wang move to the Captain and extend their hands. O.S., the warning SIRENS FLASH. Crew men hustle out of the flight deck toward the corridor.	(X) (X)
	(CONTINUED)	

'Never No	More"	3S13	12/12	/95	(Blue)	55

81 CONTINUED: (2)

81

Shane climbs into her cockpit but remains standing, looking to (X) Oakes.

SHANE'S POV - OAKES

across the flight deck, he shakes Cooper's hand, then turns, looking for Shane. He sees her. As he starts to move...

FLIGHT CONTROL (O.S.)
Pilots to cockpit. Deployment in twenty seconds.

John stops, realizing he is unable to reach her in time.

SHANE

gestures, "It's okay." She flashes a quick pilot's thumbs up.

OAKES

returns the gesture and climbs into his cockpit.

SHANE

hesitates... then shakes off a bad gut feeling. She sits in her cockpit. The canopy closes.

WIDER

The 58th squadron cockpits drop into the hangar bays enroute to "Operation Red Baron."

82 thru OMITTED 83 82 (X thru 83

84 INT. HANGAR BAY - DAY

84

A cockpit is placed into an SA-43 fuselage.

85 EXT. SARATOGA - HANGAR BAYS - DAY

85

Hammerheads begin to pour out of the aircraft carrier. One after another. A feeling that hundreds of Hammerheads are taking off.

86 OMITTED

86 (:

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - DAY 87

87

A BLAST of energy erupts from the personnel in the command center. Ross and McQueen orchestrate the massive force. Ensigns deliver reports. Communications officers instruct pilots over the RADIO.

88 EXT. SPACE - DAY

88

A squadron of SA-43s barrel into Space. Helios waits in the distance.

INT. COCKPIT - DAY 89

89

FENRIS, a Captain in the Finnish Air Force, the flag and logo of the "Fighting Finns" on the helmet, leads his squadron after the enemy. His wingman can be seen tight on his three out the side canopy. The RADIO is BUSY with reports from squadrons all over the Universe.

> SARATOGA (V.O.) Fighting Finns this is Saratoga what's your position?

> > **FENRIS**

(with an accent)

Saratoga this is Finns. We are 15 MSKs from Helios heading zeroniner...

Suddenly, a blinding explosion lights up his cockpit.

(X)

90 EXT. SPACE - DAY

90

Chiggie Von Richtofen rains FIRE upon the helpless squadron. As another wingman EXPLODES...

91 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - DAY 91

The room pauses to give horrified attention to the PANIC and SCREAMS of the besieged squadron.

FENRIS (v.o.)

I'M TAKING FIRE! TWO PLANES ARE DOWN! I CAN'T SEE ANY...

A CRACKLE of angry static indicates the death of the pilot and the others. A sick silence falls upon the command center.

MCOUEEN

Well... we found him.

91

ROSS

What's the nearest squadron in that region?

An ENSIGN at the Flight control panel quickly checks.

ENSIGN

The Wild Cards, sir. The 58th squadron.

CAMERA PUSHES INTO ROSS and McQUEEN as the Commodore releases a confident expression.

ROSS

"Abandon All Hope", my ass.

CUT TO:

92 EXT. HELIOS - DAY

The 58th squadron THUNDERS INTO FRAME.

93 INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - DAY

93

92

Vansen is alert as they near the planet.

SHANE

Saratoga this is Wild Cards, current position is...

She checks her LIDAR...

INSERT - LIDAR .

data flashes on the screen.

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

...five MSKs above Helios, currently...

The ghostly image drifts through the LIDAR SCREEN

SHANE

a momentary expression of puzzlement. Then, quickly, she assumes, realizes...

SHANE

(a whisper)

It's him.

(into radio)

BANDIT FIVE O'CLOCK LOW!

"Never No More" 3S13 12/12/95 (Blue) 57A.

93 CONTINUED:

Shane FIRES a missile. (X)

93

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7

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94	EXT. SPACE - DAY	94
	CAMERA ASCENDS TOWARD the Hammerhead formation. Chiggie Von Richtofen OVERTAKES CAMERA'S SPEED and appears IN FRAME, FIRING at the Wild Cards. Shane's missile nicks the alien jet.	()
95	INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - DAY	95
	SHANE JINK LEFT!!	
96	INT. OAKES' COCKPIT - DAY	96
	He cuts left.	
97	EXT. SPACE - DAY	97
	The squadron takes evasive action. Enemy fire tags one of the jets.	
98	INT. OAKES' COCKPIT - DAY	98
	Sparks and Flame fly outside the cockpit. The engines SCREAM. Oakes battles to maintain control.	
	OAKES This is Oakes, I'm hit.	
99	INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - DAY	99
	CAMERA PUSHES IN ON SHANE'S horror.	
	SHANE Hold on, I'm comin' for ya.	
100	INT. OAKES' COCKPIT - DAY	100
	OAKES NEGATIVE! MY WEAPONS ARE DISABLED! I'M LOSIN' POWER!	
101	INT. WANG'S COCKPIT - DAY	101
	Wang checks out the canopy.	
	WANG HE'S ON OUR SIX!	

"Never No More" 3S13 12/12/95 (Blue)

58.

"Never	No	More"	3513	12/12/95	(Blue)

102 EXT. SPACE - DAY

102

59.

The Alien ace comes in from behind, FIRING. The Squadron takes evasive action. The enemy fighter continues past.

103 INT. NATHAN'S COCKPIT - DAY

103

NATHAN REGROUP!

104 EXT. SPACE - DAY

104

The 58th regroup in formation, ending up behind Chiggie Von Richtofen. They swoop down.

105 INT. COOPER'S COCKPIT - DAY

105

COOPER
WE'RE ON HIS SIX!! BRING SMOKE!!

106 EXT. SPACE - DAY

106

(X)

The 58th squadron, as a team, rain FIRE, including missiles, upon the retreating Alien Ace. The enemy takes numerous hits, causing it to "swerve" out of control, however even direct hits do not cause the craft to explode. The Ace suddenly pulls UP OUT OF FRAME.

107 IN

INT. DAMPHOUSSE'S COCKPIT - DAY

107

Damphousse searches out the canopy.

DAMPHOUSSE

I'VE LOST CONTACT!

108 EXT. SPACE - DAY

108

The ace zeroes in on one of the Hammerheads.

109 INT. NATHAN'S COCKPIT - DAY

109

Nathan searches. His expression freezes.

NATHAN

HE'S LOCKED ON VANSEN!

Nathan FIRES from his HOTAS.

	"Never No More" 3513 12/12/95 (Blue) 60.	
11	0 EXT. HAMMERHEAD - SPACE - LOW ANGLE	110
	The cannons beneath West's Hammerhead FIRES, pivoting.	
11	1 EXT. SPACE - DAY	111
	Taking hits from the Hammerhead, the enemy bares down on Vansen's SA-43. The cannons seem to have little to no effect.	
11	2 INT. COOPER'S COCKPIT - DAY	112
	Cooper is FIRING his pulse cannon.	
	COOPER CANNONS AIN'T DOIN' JACK.	
11	3 INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - DAY	113
	Moving wildly as she weaves evasively.	
	SHANE CAN'T LOSE 'IM!	
11	4 EXT. SPACE - DAY	114
	As her plane weaves and jinks, the Alien ship moves in on her FIRING!	
11	5 EXT. A HAMMERHEAD - DAY	115
	An SA-43 barrels toward CAMERA.	
11	6 INT. OAKES' COCKPIT - DAY	116
	CAMERA PUSHES IN ON Oakes' wild eyes, sweat beading on his forehead.	
11	7 EXT. SPACE - DAY	117
	As Chiggie Von Richtofen is about to move in for the kill on Shane's jet, Oakes' Hammerhead RAMS into the alien craft, driving it out of position.	
118	B INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - DAY	118
	OVER THE RADIO is a tremendous CRASH and ERUPTION OF STATIC. Shane is stunned. She looks out of her canopy toward the	

119 EXT. HELIOS - DAY

119

The two aircraft spin and tumble together toward the planet's clouds, disappearing beneath the atmosphere. Once in the haze, a FLASH of light ERUPTS, but it should remain unclear as to the definite outcome.

120 INT. SHANE'S COCKPIT - DAY

120

Silence, as CAMERA QUICKLY PUSHES IN ON HER, shaken and horrified. Suddenly the canopy is popped. It is only then WE REALIZE WE'RE in the Saratoga flight deck after the mission.

121 INT. FLIGHT DECK - SARATOGA - DAY

121

Shane appears oblivious to the chaos around her. The Wild Cards assist her from the cockpit. Each is unable to celebrate the victory as they are concerned for Vansen, as well as Oakes' fate. McQueen moves in, checking her emotional status.

COOPER

I saw a flash beneath the clouds. I bet he ejected the cockpit.

MCQUEEN

We've got twenty SAR teams already on Planet.

The group begins leading her off the flight deck.

DAMPHOUSSE

They'll find him.

NATHAN

His Hammer didn't explode on impact with the Chig. I'm sure he survived it.

As Shane's eyes close tightly and her knees slightly buckle...

CUT TO:

122 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SARATOGA - DAY

122

McQueen paces the active command center, impatient. A Communications officer calls him over.

LIEUTENANT

Colonel McQueen... SAR ten reporting in.

McQueen hustles over to the radio console.

122

MCQUEEN

Queen Six to SAR ten. Whatta ya got?

SAR TEN (V.O.)

(over the radio)

Found him!

CUT TO:

123 INT. CHESTY'S - NIGHT

123

The 58th are anxiously sitting around a table. No cards tonight. Everyone is clearly there to support Shane, who has an odd calm. A strange resolve.

As she looks to the entrance, she freezes...

SHANE'S POV - ENTRANCE

A male figure appears silhouetted in the door.

SHAN 1

straightens, stunned...

SHANE'S POV - ENTRANCE

The figure moves into the light, REVEALING a stoic McQueen. he heads into the bar.

SHANE

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON HER, as if McQueen's POV. He reaches the table.

WIDER

McQueen stands over the 58th at the table.

MCQUEEN

SAR teams have found no remains of... Chiggie Von Richtofen. It eluded the kill. He's still out there.

A tense silence. No one has the courage to ask, until...

SHANE

John?

123

With great pain and heartbreak, McQueen pulls a yellow envelope INTO FRAME and sets it on the table. Shane looks at the paper. There is no need to open it.

McQueen turns and heads out of the bar, leaving his squadron in sad silence.

124 INT. FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

124

It is silent now. Dark, except for pools of light on the cockpits. A lone figure ENTERS the cavernous room and stands over one of the cockpits.

CLOSE - MCQUEEN

CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES INTO HIM as he stares at the cockpit. He has a sense that destiny awaits him... growing closer.

125 INT. CHESTY'S - NIGHT - CLOSE - YELLOW ENVELOPE

125

sits on the table. CAMERA ADJUSTS to Shane, staring at the death notification.

She slowly stands. The others are concerned for her.

WANG

Where are you goin'?

SHANE

(pause)

To fight the inevitable.

She moves toward the bar, pausing at the digital juke box.

DANCE AREA - OBSERVATION WINDOW

"Never No More" begins O.S. Outside glow the stars and a moon, shaded differently from the evening before.

In silhouette, Shane ENTERS FRAME. The moon's back light softly embraces her body. Her hair is down, head slumped. This is exactly the image and action in the opening of the teaser.

It is as if she is dancing alone within the stars. Her head tilts back as she looks to the man in this moon with tears in his eyes.

A SLOW FADE OUT: