

**PROJECT  
EZEKIEL**

by  
Robert Rosenthal

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE PERSIAN GULF - NIGHT (AERIAL)

TITLE OVER - THE PERSIAN GULF, 1996

Slow ZOOM down from outer space, through patchy cloud cover, onto the U.S. Aircraft Carrier George Washington, an island of light atop a vast liquid blackness. PUSH INTO--

INT. CONTROL TOWER

--where all is quiet at the moment. A RADAR OPERATOR, stares off and sips his coffee. He yawns, checks his radar screen. He bends closer, squints in surprise.

RADAR OPERATOR  
(shouts)  
Bogie! Heading 1-2-7, 2-6-7, 1-4-1!

On the radar screen a blip bounces crazily back and forth. He looks totally baffled.

RADAR OPERATOR  
What the hell ...?

His SUPERVISOR, an older man, hurries over. He peers over the operator's shoulder at the screen. The blip is gone.

RADAR OPERATOR  
Damn thing was jumping five, ten miles a second-- and reversing course!

The supervisor gives him a long, assessing look, then shrugs, slaps him on the shoulder.

SUPERVISOR  
Probably just Air Force. They got more damn stealth technology up there than they know what to do with.

EXT. CARRIER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Two F-14s from the Ghost Riders Squadron sit ready for action. Lieutenant WYATT GORDON, late 20s, and his Radio Information Officer (or R.I.O.), Lt. Commander HAL HAWKINS, early 30s, climb into the cockpit of the nearest plane.

They acknowledge each other with a grin and a 'thumbs up,' then don their helmets which are marked with their call signs: "FLASH" and "HAWK."

The two planes take off, arrowing upward from the carrier into the dusky blue sky.

EXT. ABOVE THE PERSIAN GULF

The two F-14s cut a course inland across the brown desert.

INT. WYATT'S F-14

Wyatt and Hal chat together on the private "admin" frequency and with the George Washington CONTROLLER.

(All dialogue is FILTERED.)

WYATT (O.S.)

Another boring desert run.

HAL (O.S.)

Boring is good, Flash. Remember that.

(to Controller)

Ghost Rider 2-1 here. It's a beautiful day at 20,000 feet along the scenic coastline of Iraq, and not even a fly to disturb the tranquility of the no-fly zone.

CONTROLLER (O.S.)

Roger that, Ghost Rider 2-1. We've got reports of ground traffic in Sector Bravo Tango Victor. You mind taking a look?

HAL (O.S.)

On our way.

The F-14s bank and turn, heading further inland.

INTERCUT-- COCKPIT AND EXTERIOR OF THE OTHER F-14

"ELVIS" pilots, behind him "TOOTHPICK," his R.I.O.-- a broomstick in flight gear. Their plane has begun to shiver, accompanied by an ominous RUMBLE.

ELVIS

Ghost Rider 2-2 here. Uh, sorry to break up the party, but we have a problem. Nasty vibration in the fuselage.

Suddenly, the plane's nose cone breaks loose. It slams into the side of the canopy, shattering it and spraying glass and metal at Elvis and Toothpick in an explosive shower. It then glances off the stabilizer before spinning off into the air.

Wind rips at Elvis and Toothpick. Both are bloodied.

INTERCUT-- WYATT'S F-14/ ELVIS'S F-14

ELVIS  
Christ! My eye!

WYATT  
What in hell's going on?

TOOTHPICK  
God damn nose cone blew off! I'm hit.

ELVIS  
Oh man. We are leaking fuel, hydraulics. Left stabilizer's torn up. Wing panel. Gotta eject.

Wyatt peers down at the endless brown stretch of desert below and shakes his head.

WYATT  
How bad you injured, Tooth? Elvis?

ELVIS  
My eye's on fire, but I'll live.

TOOTHPICK  
Don't know, Flash. A lot of blood.

WYATT  
Elvis, your control stick function with all that stabilizer damage?

Elvis gingerly tests the stick. The plane responds stiffly.

ELVIS  
Yeah, some, but that's not gonna get us home to Mother when the fuel's gone.

WYATT  
I propose we try a little maneuver I heard about once.

The voice of the Squadron Commander comes on the radio.

SQUADRON COMMANDER (O.S.)  
This is Big Bird. We advise you  
eject now, Ghost Rider 2-2. We can  
have rescue there in twenty  
minutes.

HAL  
Tooth may not have twenty minutes.

ELVIS  
It's my call. Take us home, Flash.

TOOTHPICK  
(weak)  
Please, God.

WYATT  
Okay, throttle way back, Elvis.  
Here comes your piggyback ride.

Wyatt's F-14 edges in close behind and beneath Elvis's.

Wyatt handles his control stick with precision as the gap  
between the two planes narrows and closes.

Both F-14s jolt as Wyatt slides one wing under Elvis's  
ventral fin. They fly to a SICKENING, GRINDING PROTEST of  
metal on metal as they CLANG and bump off each other. But  
Elvis's plane stabilizes.

ELVIS  
Son of a bitch!

Wyatt continues to manipulate the control stick with care,  
making constant adjustments.

WYATT  
Elvis, take her left, ten degrees.  
Good. Another ten. You are looking  
good.

The two planes bank together, wing to tail. With the  
coastline below them, a bolt from Elvis's plane flies loose,  
cracks against Wyatt's canopy like a GUNSHOT.

HAL  
What in hell was that?

WYATT  
Just Elvis dishing us some flak.

Another bolt flies off-- SMASH-- leaving a long crack in  
Wyatt's canopy.

ELVIS (O.S.)  
God damn plane's disintegrating.  
I'm gonna bail.

The crack in Wyatt's canopy lengthens. Wyatt leans away from it as much as he can in the tight confines of the cockpit.

WYATT  
Hold on just a little longer.

The F-14s fly above the sparkling Gulf. The carrier can be seen, a tiny dark blot in the far distance.

WYATT  
Gonna ease you down to about 1000 feet, air speed a gentle 200 knots. Ideal for a nice, safe water eject a mere mile from Mother. What more could you ask for?

ELVIS  
Roger that, Flash. Thanks for the piggyback.

Wyatt's F-14 descends to 1000 feet, then banks off sharply. As it disengages, a large chunk of metal breaks loose from Elvis's F-14, tearing into Wyatt's wing. Fuel gushes out.

Elvis's F-14 begins to nose down into a dive.

ELVIS  
Okay, Tooth. Here we go. Eject!

Elvis reaches for the canopy jettison handle. The canopy shoot upward, followed by Elvis and Tooth in their seats.

Hal points to their plane's damaged wing.

HAL  
We're not going to be real popular trying to land with a fuel leak.

WYATT  
Shall I do the honors? Eject, eject, eject!

Wyatt reaches for the handle and yanks.

EXT. EJECTING

Wyatt and Hal soar into the air. Chutes open. Elvis and Tooth's chutes are already drifting toward the water's surface. A helicopter rescue bears down on them.

EXT. CARRIER FLIGHT DECK

The helicopter touches down on the carrier. Tooth and Elvis are rushed away on stretchers. Wyatt and Hal climb out soaking wet. They exchange looks and a thumbs up.

They're greeted by a chorus of hoots and applause from the ground crew and from fellow pilots who have turned out to watch. Four PILOTS run over and slap Wyatt on the back. Hal hangs by his side.

PILOT ONE

Never thought I'd see two F-14s mating.

PILOT TWO

You, son, are plum loco.

WYATT

Not loco. Never that. Totally in command. Born to the control zone.

PILOT THREE

Really? That your idea of control, Flash?

Hal slides away from the group and starts walking away.

WYATT

Hey, when you got the right stuff.

In the b.g. Hal shakes his head, grinning at Wyatt's bluster.

INT. COMMANDER ELLINGSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Wyatt and Hal sit before Commander ELLINGSON, mid-40s, who leans forward from behind a highly polished desk. The mood is serious, but not overly formal.

ELLINGSON

Hey! I don't care if it worked. Don't pull shit like that again.

Hal and Wyatt nod in respectful silence.

WYATT

So what do they think happened?  
I mean, damn nose cone doesn't just blow loose.

Ellingson shakes his head: a you-should-know-better look.

ELLINGSON

What happened is not your problem.

Wyatt and Hal eye each other. Like hell it's not!

ELLINGSON

You're pilots. Your job is to fly,  
not launch inquiries.

HAL

I get the feeling we're encroaching  
on the dark inner workings of the  
military-industrial complex here,  
buddy. Shhh.

Ellingson laughs.

ELLINGSON

Look. If you want to keep flying,  
then don't be asking questions that  
could get you labeled a trouble-  
maker. That's all. Okay?

INT. WYATT AND HAL'S QUARTERS - DAY

Hal lounges on his bunk reading a battered paperback: Wells' The Invisible Man. Wyatt hunches beside a birdcage. His pet cockatiel, JONAS, flutters and flaps inside as Wyatt tries to teach him fighter pilot jargon.

WYATT

C'mon, Jonas. "Get to the control  
zone."

JONAS

Awk. Control. Control.

A KNOCK on the door. Elvis enters. He's the spitting image of ... you guessed it. He wears a patch over his left eye. Wyatt and Hal rise to greet him. Elvis heads for the birdcage. He stoops beside it.

ELVIS

And how is our Jonas Pruitt today?

JONAS

Jonas Pruitt. Awk. Navy ace.

Elvis grins and shakes his head. He loves it.

ELVIS

Amazing what you've done with this  
bird, Flash.

(to Jonas)

Hey, Jonas. "He bought the farm."

JONAS

Bought the farm. Awk. Splashed it.

Hal shoots Jonas a look: don't tempt fate like that.

WYATT

So how you doing, Elvis?

ELVIS

Just wanted to come by and say thanks. They're posting me to a desk job in Newport News. A fighter pilot with one eye's not worth much.

WYATT

Aw, Jeez, Elvis. I'm sorry.

ELVIS

Don't be. If it weren't for you and that crazy stunt, Tooth would be dead. I figure I can learn to fly a desk all right.

Wyatt hesitates, at a loss for words, more upset than he cares to show. He makes a decision, goes to Jonas's cage. He regards Elvis.

WYATT

Listen. I need a favor. It's not natural, me keeping Jonas all cooped up like this. Take him back stateside with you. Please.

ELVIS

No, Flash. He's yours.

WYATT

Come on. Maybe swing by Graceland, teach him a few tunes. All he's doing here is getting seasick.

HAL

And giving me the willies.

A long stare passes between Wyatt and Elvis. Elvis knows Wyatt is trying to make his departure easier. Finally he nods, grateful.

WYATT

Little something to remember us by.

ELVIS

Like I could forget! I'll come by and pick him up before I go.

They shake hands, then embrace roughly. Elvis exits. Hal regards Wyatt proudly, nods and flashes him a thumbs up.

WYATT

He'll never fly again. I'd rather be dead.

INT. READY ROOM, CARRIER GEORGE WASHINGTON - NIGHT

Wyatt and Hal, already in their flight gear, sit at a table opposite each other. They partner at bridge against "SPUR" and "PURDUE," late twenties, also in flight gear.

TITLE OVER-- TEN MONTHS LATER

PURDUE

Hear you're heading on to Pax River, Flash. Gonna desert us Ghost Riders to be a test pilot.

WYATT

Well Purdue, it's like this. I'm just following in the righteous footsteps of Jonas Pruitt.

SPUR

You? Jonas Pruitt? Get real. I open two hearts, suckers.

HAL

Must be some hand there, Spur. Packed with royalty.

WYATT

Or just a bad bid. I pass.

Spur shoots Wyatt an ugly look.

PURDUE

Let's go for it. Six hearts.

HAL

All pass, I presume? Flash, I believe you have the lead.

Wyatt stares at his hand. He slaps down the four of clubs. Purdue lays down his hand as dummy. Spur plays a low club from the dummy, which Hal wins with the ace. Wyatt nods. Spur captures Hal's club return with the king from his hand.

SPUR

All right boys. Showtime.

WYATT

For us, you mean. I'm flying queen  
third in trumps behind you. Bang.  
You're down one.

SPUR

(slow burn)

How'd you find that lead? Hawk pick  
his nose for a club or something?

HAL

I don't recall any nose-picking.  
But I'll let you in on a little  
secret.

(whispers)

Wyatt and me, we've got psychic  
powers. It's a mind meld.

Wyatt suppresses a chuckle and nods, serious.

PURDUE

You boys been flying together too  
long. Brains all gone to mush.

SPUR

No, let's give these Houdinis a  
chance. Tell me what I'm thinking--  
right now. Come on! Mind meld!

Wyatt and Hal close eyes as if in deep meditation.

HAL

I'm picking up ... Oh no. Wyatt,  
you getting what I'm getting?

WYATT

Shit, yeah. He's thinking ... about  
jacking off! My God, Spur! Not  
again!

Wyatt and Hal explode in laughter. Even Purdue can't stop  
from tittering. Spur rises slowly, intent on taking Wyatt  
apart limb from limb.

VOICE ON P.A.

Alert! Alert! Now launch F-14s.  
Bogie in the no-fly zone.

All look surprised. They leap up and rush for the door. As  
they exit, Spur jostles Wyatt.

SPUR

Saved by the bell, Flasher boy.

EXT. CARRIER DECK

Wyatt's and Spur's F-14s roar off into the night sky.

INT. WYATT'S F-14

Wyatt sits helmeted and masked, Hal behind him.

(All dialogue is via radio and FILTERED.)

CONTROLLER (O.S.)  
Approach 24,000 feet, vector 0-2-5.  
Make visual i.d., then get out. Do  
not engage. Repeat, do not engage.

HAL  
Roger that. Listen up, Spur. Better  
keep that trigger finger of yours  
tied down. You don't want to go  
preempting Congress and start a war  
or anything.

SPUR (O.S.)  
Up yours, Hawk. You boys hang back  
and let a real Navy pilot show you  
how it's done.

WYATT  
Fine by me. Ladies first.

Hal checks his radar screen.

HAL  
Bogie, twelve miles. Hey Flash.  
Long as Spur and Purdue have taken  
it upon themselves to fly point for  
us, why don't we grab a new vector.

WYATT  
I like it. Whatcha got?

HAL  
Drop to 10,000. Come in low at ...  
vector 0-1-4.

WYATT  
Spur, we're taking the low road.

EXT. TWO F-14s IN FLIGHT

One F-14 peels away from the other and arrows downward.

INTERCUT-- INT./ EXT. WYATT'S F-14

HAL  
Bogie, four miles.

WYATT  
So where the hell is it?

HAL  
I'm getting a bad feeling here.  
Maybe we should just turn around  
and go home.

Ahead, several miles away, a white FLASH sears the night sky, followed by a brilliant FIREBALL and a percussive BLAST.

WYATT  
Holy shit! Was that lightning?  
Spur, you roger that? Spur?

He hears only STATIC.

HAL  
Radar lock! Get us out of here!

WYATT  
We've got to go after him. Spur!

A second flash blanches their faces electric white. Wisps of smoke curl through the cockpit. The plane shudders.

HAL  
Controls are going crazy. I think  
we're hit. Get us home!

WYATT  
Hit? Lightning?

HAL  
I don't-- Fire! Starboard wing!

Wyatt looks starboard. The underside of the wing crackles with blue-white flame: sparks effervesce as if off a welder's arc. The nose of the plane cants down sharply.

Wyatt's hand works the control-stick furiously-- to no avail. He can't halt his F-14s dive. The altimeter circles madly. His hand inches forward against the mounting g-forces, reaches and grasps the canopy jettison handle.

WYATT  
Eject! Eject! Eject!

EXT. F-14 CRASHING

Wyatt's F-14 plummets in a wild spiral, wing afire. Seconds later it explodes, raining fiery debris into the night sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OFFICER'S ROOM, CARRIER G.W. - DAY

Wyatt sits alone in a folding chair in front of a long conference table. From behind the table four of his superiors, including Commander Ellingson, stare down at him. All wear full dress Navy blues.

A young ENSIGN sits at a small table off to one side. He transcribes the proceedings, as in any courtroom.

ELLINGSON

All right. So you're claiming there was a double lightning strike.

WYATT

That's correct, sir.

ELLINGSON

In your report, Lieutenant, you gave your air speed as 400 knots when you made your decision to eject. Didn't you consider the danger of flail injury from wind?

WYATT

I felt it posed less of a danger than staying with the plane, sir.

ELLINGSON

(reluctant nod)

And how do you explain your survival free of injuries ejecting at 400 knots?

WYATT

Our instruments were going crazy from the lightning. Air speed could've been less.

ELLINGSON

In which case, shouldn't Lieutenant Commander Hawkins have survived?

WYATT

(long silence)

I don't know, sir.

ELLINGSON

We think he might have been caught  
in the frag pattern when your plane  
exploded.

Wyatt shrugs, looks down, looks back up.

WYATT

I can't recall anything after we  
ejected.

ELLINGSON

You can't recall? Still?

WYATT

No, sir. It's a blank. I haven't  
been feeling too well ...

Ellingson gives an exasperated sigh and holds up one hand for  
Wyatt to stop. He peers down at Wyatt, shaking his head.

ELLINGSON

We've got three officers dead, two  
aircraft down, and our only  
eyewitness has amnesia. Damn.

Ellingson turns to the officer on his right. They exchange  
whispered words. Wyatt stares at the row of high-gloss shoes  
under the officers' table.

WYATT

I accept full responsibility, sir.  
I should've gotten us out of there.  
(voice breaking)  
Hawk-- Hal Hawkins was my best  
friend.

ELLINGSON

Lieutenant Gordon, I'm going to ask  
you to proceed directly to Bethesda  
Naval Hospital for a full neuro-  
psychiatric evaluation. This board  
is adjourned pending the results of  
that evaluation.

Wyatt grimaces, nods his acceptance. His hands are balled  
into fists.

EXT. BETHESDA NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Establishing shot. A large SIGN in front of the building.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE, BETHESDA NAVAL HOSPITAL

Wyatt lies on a psychiatrist's couch, his fists balled tight, eyes squeezed shut. In a chair facing him sits Lt. Commander EMILY STEELMAN, M.D., late 20s.

She leans forward, her stockinged legs neatly crossed, note pad on one knee. She is not in uniform, just a plain civilian skirt and blouse. Her hair is cut military short.

EMILY

And what happens next?

WYATT

Looking for the bogie. What the--?

EMILY

What's happening? Wyatt?

WYATT

We're hit. Wing's on fire!

Wyatt's face is tense in fierce concentration. Emily stands, moves close-- a pained, empathic look on her face. She hesitates, places a hand on his shoulder.

EMILY

Let the touch of my hand remind you that you're safe.

Wyatt stiffens. He remains silent, shut down by her touch.

EMILY

What happens next?

Wyatt sits up abruptly, shakes his head. He's uncomfortable, both with the hypnosis and with Emily's closeness. He turns his gaze to the floor, finds her legs instead, looks away.

WYATT

Nothing.

EMILY

Nothing?

Wyatt shrugs, frowns. Emily eyes him, sighs and retreats to her chair.

EMILY

That's three times. We're striking out.

WYATT

I don't get it. One second it's all under control. The next ...

EMILY

We all need to feel in control. But sometimes we can't be. You made the right decision.

Wyatt shrugs. He's not so sure.

EMILY

You miss him, don't you?

Wyatt nods deep and slow.

EMILY

Well, there are better ways to mourn. Do you have a picture? Talk to him. Tell him how you feel.

Wyatt looks at her like she's lost it.

WYATT

You ever catch me talking to a photograph, you'll know I really need your help.

Emily chuckles.

WYATT

Look. All Hawk would want is for me to be an even better pilot.

EMILY

Fine by me. Let's schedule our next session. Say, tomorrow, 10 AM?

WYATT

How many more times do we have to go through this?

EMILY

Don't you want to find out what happened?

WYATT

No. I just want to get back flying.

A long, challenging silence. Emily shakes her head.

EMILY

Okay. I can't force you to do hypnosis. But you'd better be sure.

WYATT

I'm sure.  
(pause)  
Thanks.

She smiles at him, nods.

EXT. BENCH BY A POND IN A PARK, MARYLAND SUBURBS - DAY

Wyatt in summer tans sits and stares into the swaying treetops. In the b.g. a young boy flies a kite. Wyatt follows its dips and turns, calm, enjoying it.

The kite swoops into a sudden dive and he startles. The kite lofts again, climbing higher on the breeze.

Wyatt shakes his head, angry at himself for startling. He eyes his watch and stalks off purposefully.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE

Emily at her desk, Wyatt facing her. He sits stiff and awkward, hoping to get out of there as fast as he can, to avoid her probing and to quell his growing attraction to her.

EMILY

They still don't know what it was that knocked you down. They're calling it a freak double lightning strike, based on your report.

WYATT

Sounds good to me.

EMILY

You have a problem with that?

WYATT

No, I'm fine.

EMILY

Off the record.

WYATT

(pause)  
Two planes down less than a minute apart and there wasn't a thunderhead on radar within two hundred miles.

EMILY

So what do you think happened?

WYATT

I don't know, and I don't ask. But  
it wasn't lightning.

Emily nods, taking this in.

WYATT

I wouldn't mention this to anyone  
else if I were you.

Emily regards him, nods. She closes his file with a sigh.

EMILY

Okay. Officially, your case is  
closed. Your amnesia is  
psychological. An Acute Stress  
Reaction. Unlikely to repeat.  
You're fit for duty.

WYATT

Glad someone thinks so.

He rises.

EMILY

People die, Wyatt. Good people.  
People we care about.

Wyatt gives a perfunctory nod. Emily rises, offers her hand.

EMILY

Good luck at Pax River. I think  
you'll make a fine test pilot.

They shake. Emily's gaze lingers on Wyatt as he exits.

EMILY

(to herself)  
Oh, and Wyatt. Nice butt

TITLE OVER-- SEVEN YEARS LATER

INT. PENTAGON - DAY

Wyatt's footfalls echo as he walks a series of long, well-  
polished corridors.

He enters the office of Rear Admiral WINOKER, salutes and  
stands at attention. The Admiral looks up, smiles at Wyatt.

WYATT

Lt. Commander Wyatt Gordon, sir.

ADMIRAL  
Sit, Lt. Commander.

Wyatt sits. The Admiral flips through his file in a rapid, cursory way. He's obviously reviewed it already.

ADMIRAL  
You have an outstanding record.

WYATT  
Except for one incident, sir.

ADMIRAL  
I'm not sure what incident you're referring to.

WYATT  
On the George Washington?

The Admiral pauses, eyebrows raised.

ADMIRAL  
There's nothing in here about any problem on the George Washington.

An awkward moment.

ADMIRAL  
Well, you've been recommended by N.R.O. for an extremely classified post flight-testing state of the art stealth technology. The project's under U.S. Air Force command, but they need a crack Navy test pilot with extensive carrier experience. I'm afraid I can't give you any more details than that, because frankly, I'm not privy to them myself. You interested?

WYATT  
When do I start, sir?

ADMIRAL  
(smiles)  
You'll catch a transport out of Andrews at 0800 hours. You'll be reassigned to General Ashford's command. Upon your arrival you'll be briefed further. That's all.

Wyatt rises and gives a brisk two-finger salute.

ADMIRAL

Oh, and Wyatt. You've made early  
select for Commander.  
Congratulations, Commander Gordon.

WYATT

Thank you, sir!

Wyatt leaves. In the hall he pumps his fist.

WYATT

All right!

EXT. GROOM LAKE BASE, NEVADA - DAY

A military base sprawls across the Nevada desert: a five mile  
long runway, control tower, radar complex, fire station,  
reservoir, and an assortment of buildings and hangars.

Low mountains heft up from the flats some ten miles to the  
north. This is the Groom Lake Base of the Nellis Air Force  
Test Range: the infamous Area 51.

A military chopper spins down onto a landing pad by one of  
the hangers, kicking dust everywhere. Wyatt in uniform  
springs out, hefting a plain gray valise. He is greeted by an  
ENLISTED MAN who salutes.

INT. BACHELOR'S OFFICER'S QUARTERS

The Enlisted Man opens the door to a small sparse room. Wyatt  
takes in a twin bed with neatly-folded gray blankets at its  
foot, a night stand and desk with a black phone and wooden  
frame chair-- all in basic pine.

ENLISTED MAN

Colonel Wolfe will be by shortly,  
sir. He likes to greet the new  
officers personally. If there's  
anything I can get you ....

Wyatt waves him off. After he leaves, Wyatt hefts his valise  
onto the bed. He opens it, tosses out a few uniforms, and  
comes up with a framed 4x6 photo.

He sets the photo on the night stand. It shows Wyatt and Hal  
Hawkins, grinning arm in arm in front of their F-14 on the  
deck of the George Washington.

WYATT

(to photo)

Well, buddy. Here we are.

(MORE)

WYATT(cont'd)

Above Top Secret Air Force shithole  
in the middle of Nevada nowhere.  
That's real career advancement for  
you, huh.

EXT. OUTSIDE OFFICER'S QUARTERS

Wyatt wanders out of the Officer's building, looks around.  
Striding towards him across the heat-baked ground is Colonel  
GERRY WOLFE, a solidly-built, mustached man in his mid-50s.

Wolfe is tanned and fit. His uniform wilts over his muscles,  
but his cap and visor are impeccable. He is affable, but can  
cloud over with anger unpredictably. No one who knows him is  
ever entirely comfortable in his presence.

WOLFE

Commander Gordon. Colonel Gerry  
Wolfe, your C.O. Welcome to the Air  
Force.

Wolfe extends his hand. Wyatt salutes, then accepts the  
Colonel's brisk handshake.

WOLFE

If you're half the pilot they say  
you are, then this is where you  
belonged in the first place.

Wyatt smiles, a bit awkward.

WOLFE

You're now part of Project Ezekiel.  
Classified 'Above Top Secret.' That  
means officially none of this  
exists.

He waves his arm to take in the entire base.

WYATT

I understand, sir.

WOLFE

Come on. I'll give you the grand  
tour.

INT. LONG FLUORESCENT-LIT CORRIDOR

Wolfe motions up and down the corridor.

WOLFE

Most of the base is underground for  
security reasons. This wing houses  
the labs. The staff rotate over  
from Los Alamos and Palmdale.

(MORE)

WOLFE (cont'd)

Security personnel and civilian  
workers shuttle in daily from  
Vegas.

EXT. HANGARS

They pause by one hangar set apart from the rest.

WOLFE

Now the craft we've got in here is  
way beyond anything you ever  
dreamed of in your Navy days.

Wyatt remains respectfully silent. Wolfe grins at him.

WOLFE

You wait, Commander. This is Area  
51. We're pure science fiction.

INT. MESS HALL

Wolfe and Wyatt walk over to three uniformed officers seated  
together eating a sumptuous meal. They are Lt. Colonel  
DESICCA, Captain PEABODY and Major STAN GREENBERG.

WOLFE

Folks, I want you all to meet  
Commander Wyatt Gordon, a Navy  
reject and our newest test pilot.  
Commander, meet Lt. Colonel  
DeSicca, my second in command, and  
Captain Peabody. They're the  
engineering brains of this outfit.  
And Major Stan Greenberg, our  
flight trainer.

WYATT

Pleased to meet you all. I'm Flash.

DESICCA

When you're flying in the Box, even  
your call sign isn't secure.

GREENBERG

The Box is our airspace.

DESICCA

So lose it, Flash.

PEABODY

(shovelling a mouthful)  
The food here's sensational. Kansas  
City sirloin, Maine lobster,  
Alaskan King Crab.

(MORE)

PEABODY (cont'd)

The all-American diet. You name it,  
they can get it for you.

GREENBERG

It's those black budget tax dollars  
hard at work.

The mess hall door opens and Commander Emily Steelman enters.

WOLFE

Ah, our resident psychiatrist, late  
as usual. I believe you know  
Commander Steelman from her  
Bethesda days. She's in charge of  
your psychometric evaluations.

Wyatt stares at Emily in disbelief. She has hardly aged,  
though she now wears her hair long and up. Their eyes lock  
briefly. She shoots him a smile, warm and professional.

WYATT

A real pleasure, Doctor.  
(to Wolfe)  
When do I get to meet the other  
pilots?

WOLFE

You don't. Pilots don't fraternize  
at Groom.

DESICCA

No one fraternizes at Groom. Your  
clearance is for Project Ezekiel  
only. And that's us. Period.

PEABODY

But Ezekiel's the peach. It's where  
you want to be.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DAY

Emily sits at her desk intent on the file in front of her.  
Her office is as friendly as a room can be at Groom. Monet  
posters on the walls, a hanging spider plant in the cracked  
window frame, a hand-knit Afghan tossed over the couch.

Her desktop is immaculate. No clutter around the computer  
monitor. A neat row of filing cabinets lines one wall. A TV  
monitor and VCR are also visible.

A KNOCK at the door catches Emily's attention. The door opens  
a crack and Wyatt peers through. She seems pleased to see  
him. He breezes in and flops down on her couch, reclining.

WYATT

I've got a problem, Doc. I keep having this flying dream.

Emily chuckles.

EMILY

Yeah, I remember. And look where it's got you. Groom Lake.

He sits up. A broad smile.

WYATT

Yeah, it did. But what I want to know is how in hell did you get here? You order electric shock for the Admiral's wife or something?

EMILY

I requested this post. The desert air. Vegas just down the road. What more could a girl want?

Wyatt takes her in with a long, wondering look.

EMILY

I've reviewed your Fitness Report. Some real wild flying at Pax River that first year. Working the crash out of your system, I suppose?

WYATT

Nah, just a rookie strutting his stuff. Hey, I thought that crash wasn't in my Fitness Report. Admiral Winokur at the Pentagon--

EMILY

Depends which version you read. My clearance is higher than his.

Wyatt nods, impressed, but trying to minimize it.

EMILY

You ever get back any more memories from the crash?

WYATT

Haven't thought about it in ages.

EMILY

So no unusual symptoms? Dreams? Headaches? Nose bleeds?

WYATT

What is this? I drop by for a friendly hello and you start in interrogating me?

EMILY

Sorry. Always on the job. That's me.

WYATT

Well get off the job. I'm okay.

EXT. THE BASE - DAY

Wyatt and Colonel Wolfe walk briskly towards the special hangar housing the experimental craft.

WYATT

Ezekiel's from the Bible, isn't it?

Colonel Wolfe stops and stares off towards the mountains.

WOLFE

"And I looked, and beheld out of the north a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it." Ezekiel I, verse 4.

WYATT

Sorry. I don't get it, sir.

WOLFE

Follow me.

INT. HANGER

Wyatt and Wolfe enter the massive space of the hangar. Directly in front of them sits a vintage FLYING SAUCER with "U.S.A.F." marked in small lettering across the cupola.

WOLFE

Wyatt, meet Zeke. Our whole reason for not-existing here.

Wyatt stands frozen, uncomprehending. Is this a joke? Colonel Wolfe takes him by the arm and ushers him toward the craft. In awe, Wyatt runs a hand over the exterior.

WOLFE

Ceramic-polymer hybrid. Incredibly heat resistant with a minimal coefficient of expansion.

(MORE)

WOLFE (cont 'd)

Old Zeke here revolutionized  
aeronautics when she tumbled our  
way back in '47.

WYATT

Son of a bitch! I test-fly this?

WOLFE

Come on.

Wolfe leads him up the ramp, through the narrow hatch into  
the craft.

INT. THE CRAFT

There are no windows, though it is not dark. The curved walls  
shine coldly translucent. The only sign of instruments is a  
small console on a slim stalk of a stand. Otherwise all we  
see are four seats arranged symmetrically about the craft,  
facing each other.

A finely-etched design appears on the wall behind each seat:  
a series of nested circles and sunbursts. Wyatt regards them  
closely, but says nothing.

WOLFE

A true flying disk, retrofitted for  
human pilots by the U.S. Air Force.  
A work of genius and fifty years'  
intensive research.

WYATT

(looking around)  
Where's the cockpit?

WOLFE

You're standing in it.

Wyatt moves to the console, checks it out with a frown.

WYATT

How am I supposed to fly with this?  
Sir.

WOLFE

That's your weapons console. You  
get to play with it later on, after  
you've mastered the basics.

The Colonel picks up an object of metal and plastic from one  
of the seats. It looks like an ice-hockey helmet sculpted by  
Dali, with help from Bucky Fuller. Very fluid. The  
undersurface is dense with shiny contact electrodes.

WOLFE

Here's your stick and rudder, your instruments-- everything you need.

WYATT

I don't get it. What is it?

WOLFE

A headband. Least it started out looking like one. Alien technology-- adapted to the human brain.

Wyatt just stares, uncomprehending.

WOLFE

It's a telepathic interface. When you wear it, you're not just the pilot. You're the craft.

Wyatt, agog, still doesn't get it.

WOLFE

Commander, have you ever watched a hawk circling in the sky and wondered what it would feel like to be that bird? To feel what it feels as it rides a thermal or knives into a dive?

Wyatt nods vehemently, totally with him. Wolfe calmly nods back and holds up the headband. Wyatt gets it. His eyes go wide in astonishment and he grins like a kid.

INT. HANGER

They exit the craft. Wyatt turns to stare at it. He notices a rack of light-blue flight suits against a wall.

WYATT

What's with the special flight suits?

WOLFE

They protect you from the null-gravity field that powers Zeke.

WYATT

Why? What's the field do?

WOLFE

It causes the magnetic polarity of your cells to flip-flop thousands of times per second.

(MORE)

WOLFE (cont'd)

It's instantly fatal. We found that out the hard way.

An awkward silence.

WOLFE

Embedded in the suit is a meshwork of silicon micro-filaments. They act as a conduit for the field. Kind of a fancy lightning rod.

Wyatt simply nods.

WOLFE

Ferrous metals screw up the interface too. Keys, watches, rings. So there're no pockets in these flight suits.

Wyatt turns, takes in Zeke again. It's a whole new world.

WOLFE

Look her over, Commander. Take your time.

The Colonel leaves. Some moments later Wyatt startles at a CLATTER behind him amplified in the vast space of the hangar.

An old man (COLERIDGE) in a faded Air Force uniform shuffles along with a pronounced limp. He waves at Wyatt. His face is heavily scarred from burns and reconstructive surgery.

COLERIDGE

Sorry. You gotta be the new pilot.

WYATT

Yeah, that's me.

COLERIDGE

She's got a mind of her own, Zeke. Soul of her own too. Best be careful.

WYATT

I will, thanks. You've been around here a while, huh.

COLERIDGE

You take care now.

Coleridge shuffles off, leaving Wyatt wondering.

EXT. OUTSIDE HANGARS

Wyatt walks back to his quarters dazed. Four MPs led by Lt. A.J. MARSINIAC march towards him in formation.

Marsiniac, a clean-shaven, over-muscled, pretty boy, salutes. Wyatt salutes back, friendly. The MPs break ranks and rush him. They grab him. Wyatt fights, but they overpower him, slam him up against the hangar wall and pin him there. As Wyatt struggles, enraged, Marsiniac slowly draws his revolver and puts it to Wyatt's temple. He's smiling the whole time.

MARSINIAC

My orders come direct from General Ashford, sir. What you've just seen does not exist. Got it?

Wyatt strains away from the gun and nods.

MARSINIAC

Got it?

WYATT

Yeah, I got it.

MARSINIAC

Or else, you don't exist.

Marsiniac holsters his gun and turns away. The MPs release Wyatt gingerly and back away, not turning their backs on him until they're a good distance away.

MARSINIAC

Don't bother bringing this up with the Colonel. He'll be real sympathetic and all, then tell you there's nothing he can do. It's just base policy. You have yourself a good day now, sir. Oh, and sorry.

He salutes, then ambles off with the MPs. Wyatt's hands shake as he straightens his uniform. He wipes blood from his lip, spits at the dirt, glares in Marsiniac's direction.

INT. WYATT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Wyatt in his boxer shorts lies on his bed. He rises, stretches and peers out his window.

I./E. WYATT'S WINDOW LOOKING OUT ONTO THE HILLS

An ocean of stars sprawls across the desert night sky. As Wyatt watches, the distant hills take on a strange orange glow. A brilliant golden-orange sphere of light rises slowly above them.

It hovers, swings back and forth across the sky pendulum-like, circles clumsily, then sails off in a straight line.

WOLFE (V.O.)

"... a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it."

Wyatt stands transfixed. His expression shifts from disbelief to amazement at the thought of flying such a thing.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Wyatt, Wolfe, Greenberg, DeSicca, and Peabody are seated in a conference room. It's all straight-lines-- no adornments except for an American flag, a podium that's been dragged off to one side and a flipchart marked with colored vectors.

A large video monitor sits at the front of the room. All eyes are on it. Wyatt looks serious, even studious. He struggles to hide just how blown away he is by all he sees and hears.

VIDEOTAPE:

Night view of the desert sky. Three golden-orange orbs of light appear on the horizon and fly towards the camera. Bursts of speed alternate with jerky pendulum-like swings back and forth.

WYATT (O.S.)

What's the orange light? Exhaust?

PEABODY (O.S.)

Ionization. From the gravity nullification field.

DESICCA (O.S.)

We have developed a cloak for intelligence runs, but it cuts down significantly on performance.

BACK TO SCENE.

GREENBERG

The craft you see here are part of our fleet at Edwards Air Force Base. They're reengineered to fly like conventional aircraft. They do not require the telepathic interface.

WOLFE

The Edwards boys manage to corner most of the funding. But compare these clunkers to what you'll see next.

INTERCUT-- VIDEOTAPE/ BRIEFING ROOM

Another brilliant orange-white sphere hangs in the night sky. It streaks across the sky and disappears, only to reappear in a different quadrant of the sky. The sphere continues to disappear and reappear in a series of disconnected blips that zigzag back and forth at incredible speed.

WOLFE

That's me putting Zeke through her paces.

The others laugh and guffaw.

WOLFE

No, this is the real thing. An alien craft buzzing Archulete Peak, June, '99. They just flaunt their stuff right under our noses, breach security at the highest levels, and not a God damn thing we can do about it. Not yet anyway.

DESICCA

We regard these incursions as hostile.

On the monitor four alien craft perform similar aerial acrobatics, pin-balling crazily across the night sky.

WOLFE

Here's a quartet above Los Alamos.

WYATT

Have we ever engaged them?

WOLFE

We've managed to take down one or two over the years, but they never really let us engage. They run.

DESICCA

But their cattle mutilations and wanton abduction of our civilians continue unchecked.

WYATT

So that shit's all true?

Peabody and Greenberg eye each other. A hint of skepticism.

DESICCA

Make no mistake, Commander. We are at war, with the most cunning, technologically advanced foe that mankind has ever faced.

On the video a glowing orange sphere darts rapidly in all directions, but does not duplicate the stroboscopic pinballing of the aliens.

PEABODY

This is one of our better runs. Another Navy pilot, all the way back in '88.

GREENBERG

Commander Pruitt achieved excellent control. But he was never able to duplicate the instantaneous position shifts of the alien craft.

WYATT

Hold on. You mean Jonas Pruitt?

WOLFE

Ahh, you know of him.

WYATT

Hell. The man's a legend. Greatest pilot ever lived.

WOLFE

Greatest Navy pilot.

Wyatt grins wide, pleased to the point of embarrassment at discovering that Pruitt was part of Project Ezekiel.

WYATT

So what's Pruitt up to these days?

A momentary silence. No one wants to field Wyatt's question.

DESICCA

Commander Pruitt crashed and died not long after making the test flight you see here.

Wyatt is stunned. Speechless.

WOLFE

Okay. Let's break.

INT. FLIGHT SIMULATOR ROOM - DAY

Greenberg escorts Wyatt towards a complicated piece of machinery, rather like a planetarium with a padded chair at its center. Zeke's flight simulator.

Wyatt swings into the chair. He sits very still as Greenberg straps his head in place and adjusts the instruments.

GREENBERG

To manage the interface, you must be totally at ease with hard turns, abrupt accelerations, climbs and dives.

WYATT

Who better than a fighter pilot, huh?

GREENBERG

Especially if he's carrier trained. With Zeke, though, your control is all mental. Picture yourself hitting a dive, breaking right or left. Initiate the action in your mind. Zeke will respond. Once you've managed that, then push it-- way past what you ever thought was possible. Zeke will respond.

Wyatt grins wide. This he likes.

WYATT

Why the simulator? Why not just train pilot to copilot with two headbands.

GREENBERG

Why not two brains in one body?

Wyatt digests this, nods. He fidgets, very uncomfortable as Greenberg positions twin lasers within an inch of each eye.

WYATT

What are those things?

GREENBERG

Lasers. The simulator beams laser images directly onto your retinas.

Greenberg completes the final adjustments around Wyatt's eyes.

GREENBERG

Okay. When the green light flashes,  
you're in control. Picture any  
maneuver you like. Make it real.  
And good luck.

Wyatt's eyes open wide, pupils dilated in concentration,  
reflecting red laser light. On his lips, the ghost of a grin.

EXT. FIRING RANGE - DAY

The deadly, focused squint of Colonel Wolfe's left eye. He  
sights along the barrel of a sleek, black, cylindrical weapon  
shouldered like a rifle. A GUNSHOT sounds. He blinks, but  
otherwise does not flinch.

His weapon is aimed on a distant target: a flying saucer  
bulls-eye shaded gray to black. The target dodges and swerves  
unpredictably.

He squeezes a button on the underside of the black cylinder.  
From its end a pulse of ruby light winks on and off.

Smoke curls from a hole singed neatly into the cupola of the  
target flying saucer. It flops over. Another pops up.

WOLFE

Okay, Wolfman. Warm-up's over.  
Think you can handle three for  
starters?

He taps twice at a button on a remote control and two more  
saucer targets pop up. All three dodge and swerve madly.

WOLFE

Now anticipate. An-ti-ci-pate!

A GUNSHOT sounds. He squeezes off three rapid pulses. One  
target flops over, another is singed at an edge, the third  
continues its unpredictable motion unscathed.

WOLFE

Pathetic son of a bitch.

Emily strides purposeful and angry past the backs of  
uniformed soldiers practicing with revolvers, rifles and  
laser guns. A GUNSHOT provokes a brief startle, leaving her  
determination unruffled.

Emily beelines for the Colonel. He spies her and carefully  
sets his weapon down. He faces her. GUNSHOTS fire  
sporadically throughout the scene.

WOLFE

Commander Steelman. Don't believe I've ever seen you out on the firing range before? Care for a shot?

EMILY

Why wasn't I included in Commander Gordon's briefing?

WOLFE

Because I didn't want you there. No point scaring him half to death before he even gets started.

EMILY

He has a right to know the risks. Standard procedure dictates--

WOLFE

He has no such right. He's a military test pilot under my command.

EMILY

Look, I know this man better than anyone. If he develops symptoms he will not report them, and that comes under my authority.

Wolfe eyes her coldly. She changes her tack.

EMILY

Gerry, can we really afford to risk losing another good pilot?

WOLFE

I'm willing to take that risk.

Emily stares at him, silent, angry.

WOLFE

We both took oaths. The success of this project comes first.

EMILY

Yeah, well, I took another oath too once-- as a physician. "First, do no harm."

Emily looks at him hard, then stalks off. Wolfe follows her with a look of controlled rage. With a scowl he swings his laser rifle to his shoulder and squeezes off a rapid sequence of blasts. All three saucer targets explode into flame.

EXT. THE BASE - DAY

Wyatt jogs in gray sweats trailing dust. Marsiniac and his MPs come thudding toward him double-time. He freezes, looks around for an escape route, takes a stand.

They jog right by him. Marsiniac salutes. Wyatt salutes back, then turns and spits.

INT. FLIGHT SIMULATOR ROOM

Wyatt is seated in the flight simulator as Greenberg straps his head in place and positions the lasers.

GREENBERG

Yesterday was your best yet.

WYATT

Think I'm ready for Zeke?

GREENBERG

Let's try another night flight.

WYATT

The actual interface-- the headband?  
Is it really all that different?

GREENBERG

Well, you've got 360 degrees of visual input. Sounds coming from nowhere-- and everywhere-- and no body awareness to orient by. Yeah, it's different.

WYATT

Jesus!

GREENBERG

Some guys pee themselves. They don't even know it 'til after they've landed.

Wyatt digests this information with a worried expression.

EXT. POOL, OFFICER'S CLUB - DAY

Emily reclines on a lounge by a spacious pool. No one else is there this time of day. She wears a tasteful one-piece suit that shows off her figure. Her hair hangs down wet.

She eyes Wyatt fondly as he trampolines off the high-dive, arcing into a swan dive. He swims over to her, hoists himself out of the pool. He drops onto the lounge chair next to hers, dripping, and stares up at the sky. Neither says anything.

WYATT

I fly Zeke tomorrow.

EMILY

I know.

Emily eyes him. She considers sharing the information Colonel Wolfe wanted withheld, but decides against it.

EMILY

Be careful. You have to stay focused, whatever happens.

WYATT

Any chance you'd care to join me at the Officer's Club afterwards and celebrate? Or is that not ethical?

EMILY

Well, it's not unethical.

Wyatt's face lights up.

EMILY

But I don't think it's a good idea.

Wyatt deflates. He nods.

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Colonel Wolfe and Wyatt stroll toward Zeke, which sits before them on the runway, very matter of fact. Wyatt wears the special flight suit: light metallic blue, one piece, with a hint of vertical striation to its unusual fabric. The suit is dully reflective in the sunlight.

WYATT

I hear Zeke's got a mind of her own.

WOLFE

Who told you that? Doctor Emily?

WYATT

Some old guy floating around Zeke's hangar. Looked like he'd been chewed up pretty bad.

WOLFE

Ohhh, Coleridge. Yeah, he's been 'round the barn a few times.

WYATT

Who is he?

They enter Zeke through the low, narrow hatch.

INT. ZEKE

WOLFE

Was a pilot, once. One of the project's early casualties. We give him odd jobs, feed him, keep him out of trouble. He'd never make it on the outside.

WYATT

He warned me to be careful.

Wyatt sits in one of the seats. Wolfe hovers above him, adjusting the headband and the radio, which consists of a mouthpiece and attached earpiece.

WOLFE

The ghost haunting the machine. You just keep your mind on flying and you'll be fine. Okay. Headband. Radio. Flight suit. All systems go.

WYATT

Uh. Think I have to urinate, sir.

Colonel Wolfe snorts a laugh.

WOLFE

This first hop's a short one. Hold it in.

Wyatt nods, but looks anxious.

WOLFE

Listen. I've been flying Zeke since we first got the bugs out of the headband and it still takes all my concentration. Zeke's a wild stallion and your job is to tame her. Dominate her. So you stay focused. Any ... stray thoughts, you reject them!

Wyatt nods, tense. He swallows. Wolfe slaps his shoulder.

WOLFE

Oh. And Wyatt.

WYATT

Yes sir?

WOLFE

Very important. Have yourself a God  
damn good time.

Wolfe exits. The hatch closes with a HISS. Colored lights flicker and dance in a seemingly random pattern along the headband's inner and outer surfaces. Wyatt looks grim.

GREENBERG (O.S.)

(filtered)

Okay, Commander. Take her up.

Wyatt's face tenses in concentration. His eyes are closed.

EXT. RUNWAY (WYATT'S POV)

The ground recedes below: six feet, then twenty, then it drops away fast.

EXT. DESERT PANORAMA (WYATT'S POV)

The brown desert sprawls below Wyatt in an incredible panorama which somehow remains intricately detailed. Hares dart in and out of the brush. An officer swims laps in the pool. Wasps buzz actively about their nest-- all in exacting detail.

WYATT (O.S.)

Son of a bitch! Sorry.

GREENBERG (O.S.)

(filtered)

Stay focused. How you doing?

WYATT (O.S.)

Fine. Real, real fine.

GREENBERG (O.S.)

(filtered)

Take her in a circle, then set her  
back down.

EXT. ZEKE AIRBORNE

Zeke circles, then settles back onto the runway.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt removes the headband. He just stares, elated. Wolfe enters, stands beside him.

WOLFE

Any problems? Unusual sensations?

Wyatt steals a quick pat at his crotch to feel if he's wet.

WYATT  
(relieved)  
No, sir.

WOLFE  
Good. I want you doing at least one  
hop a day from here on.

MONTAGE:

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt, seated in Zeke, puts on the headband, adjusts it.

EXT. ZEKE IN FLIGHT - NIGHT

Zeke dodges in and out among the peaks of the Groom Range. The night terrain is quite clear to Wyatt's telepathic vision, only shaded differently.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

Zeke in the b.g. Greenberg smiles at Wyatt, gives an A-OK.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Wyatt and Peabody watch a video of one of Wyatt's test flights in Zeke. Peabody points, nods approvingly.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DAY

Wyatt and Emily chat and laugh on the couch in her office.

EXT. ZEKE IN FLIGHT - NIGHT

Zeke shoots upward in a rapid vertical acceleration, a streak of vivid orange, then drops down into the Groom Range. Zeke comes upon a set of train tracks and follows them at high speed, heading fast for a tunnel much too small for it to pass through.

WYATT (O.S.)  
Faster than a speeding bullet ...

Zeke soars upward in an instantaneous vertical lift over the mountaintop, then drops back down to the tracks on the other side.

WYATT (O.S.)  
More vertical lift than a  
locomotive ...

EXT. THE BASE - DAY

Wyatt in flight suit with Wolfe, their backs to us, walking away from Zeke. Wolfe gives Wyatt a paternal pat on the shoulder.

EXT. THE BASE - DAY

Wyatt and Emily stroll side by side chatting and laughing. He places a hand on her arm. She does not pull away.

END MONTAGE.

INTERCUT-- NIGHT SKY/ ZEKE'S INTERIOR/ DESERT FLOOR

Zeke sails low over the desert. Flips over several times.

Inside, Wyatt in the headband. He grins, totally at ease. Suddenly his grin fades to a look of horror and disgust.

Below him, enhanced by his telepathic sight, the ground is littered with the carcasses of hundreds of cattle, their bodies surgically cut open.

WYATT

Aw, Jesus.

DESICCA (OVER RADIO)

What's wrong?

WYATT

I've got a bunch of dead cattle here.

A blur of motion in the clouds catches Wyatt's attention. He spies another saucer darting in and out of the clouds.

WYATT

And some company. Another saucer.

The other saucer shoots off. Zeke streaks after it.

WYATT

I'm going after him.

DESICCA (OVER RADIO)

No! Too risky. Get out of there!

Wyatt continues the chase.

DESICCA (OVER RADIO)

Commander! I want you back on the ground, now! That's an order.

Wyatt reluctantly abandons the chase. The saucer speeds off.

EXT. RUNWAY

Zeke settles onto the tarmac.

INT. CONTROL TOWER

DeSicca peers at a radar screen. Wyatt watches over his shoulder, circumspect.

DESICCA

Nah, there's no sign of him.

WYATT

What the hell was it?

DESICCA

What the hell do you think it was?

(pause)

We need to get you trained as fast as we can. I only hope to hell you turn out to be worth it.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - NIGHT

Emily's face is tight with concern. Colonel Wolfe grips a mike in one hand. Beside him stand Greenberg, DeSicca and Peabody. All stare out at a glowing orange orb that hovers in the night sky. In the b.g., a host of radar operators.

WOLFE

(into mike)

All right, Commander. Final exam time. Show us what you've got. Give those UFO nuts camped out on the other side of the Groom Range something to remember.

The glowing golden craft swings into a wide arc. It crisscrosses the sky, then loops crazily back on itself as if trying to tie itself in a knot. It circles tighter and tighter, climbing higher, inscribing a golden spiral like a unicorn's horn on the midnight slate of the sky.

Greenberg and Peabody stare at Zeke, very impressed.

GREENBERG

That's not bad for only a month on the interface.

Wolfe watches, unimpressed.

WOLFE

Not bad. But no better than I'd  
expect from any Navy ace.

(to Emily)

Your predictions aren't winning you  
any ribbons so far.

Emily says nothing. Wolfe eyes his wristwatch.

WOLFE

(into mike)

If you scan to the south,  
Commander, you'll discover a little  
surprise we've arranged for you.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt sits transfixed.

WYATT

What the-- Bandits? I don't get  
it, sir.

WOLFE (O.S.)

(filtered)

F-16s scrambled from a nearby  
facility. You've been identified as  
alien. They have orders to take you  
down. This is not a drill. You have  
no offensive capability. Evade them--  
if you can.

INTERCUT-- ZEKE/ F-16s/ WYATT INSIDE ZEKE

Two F-16s cut through the night sky. They split apart,  
converging on Zeke from different vectors.

Wyatt's face tenses.

WYATT

I don't fucking believe this.

Zeke wobbles, then stabilizes and darts back and forth.

Wyatt now looks calm, focused, and mighty pissed.

WYATT

Okay, assholes, let's do it.

Zeke knifes down into the Groom Range. The two F-16s pursue.  
One launches a missile, which Wyatt picks up in immense  
detail as it streaks toward him. He throws Zeke into a series  
of rapid cuts and twists, decoying the missile into the hills  
where it EXPLODES harmlessly.

Two more missiles zero in on him from opposite sides. He dodges, they follow. Closer, closer. At the last instant he knifes upward. The two missiles lock onto each other and collide in a spectacular midair EXPLOSION. Zeke sails off.

Another missile locks on. Zeke swoops in low, accelerating straight at the control tower, with the missile close behind.

INT. CONTROL TOWER

Zeke coming straight on, at impossible speed.

PEABODY

(shouts)

Hey!

Everyone ducks and gasps except Wolfe, who stands tall. Zeke and the missile streak past overhead, missing the tower by a mere ten feet. Wolfe throttles the mike as he shouts.

WOLFE

Don't you ever pull a stunt like that on me, you son of a bitch!

EXT. ZEKE IN FLIGHT

Zeke continues on to outlast the missile, which falls to the ground spent, out of fuel, without detonating.

Zeke then doubles back, skimming just above ground level to get directly under the F-16s before ascending sharply. Zeke circles rapidly around the two planes in a band of orange.

INT. CONTROL TOWER

GREENBERG

(chuckling)

He's flying circles around them.

PEABODY

Damn, that's good.

WOLFE

Not good enough.

The F-16s disengage and retreat to the laughter of the control tower personnel.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt is jubilant.

WYATT

Hope you all enjoyed the show.

WOLFE (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Nice flying, Commander. Those pilots  
will need Dr. Emily's help after  
their close encounter with Zeke.

Wyatt grins wide. His grin dissolves with the next line.

HAL (V.O.)  
Yeah, great piece of flying, buddy.  
Just like old times.

WYATT  
You say something, Colonel?

WOLFE (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Negative.

HAL (V.O.)  
No, Flash, it's me. Hawk.

Wyatt's face is screwed up in concentration. He licks his lips, gnaws on his lower lip. His breathing is slow and forced. The colored lights on his headband pulse to a different, more synchronous rhythm.

HAL (V.O.)  
You are now tapped into the most  
advanced piece of technology on the  
planet.

WYATT  
What is this? What's going on?

HAL (V.O.)  
It'll let you utilize your entire  
brain. Unfortunately, that's not  
going to be enough to get Zeke to  
perform the way you want.

WYATT  
Hawk?

HAL (V.O.)  
I prefer Hal now, if you don't mind.

INT. CONTROL TOWER (TIME OVERLAP)

WYATT (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
What is this? What's going on?

Colonel Wolfe shoots a questioning look at Emily. She shrugs, shakes her head, no idea what's up with Wyatt.

WYATT (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Hawk?

WOLFE  
(into mike)  
Commander, report in.

WYATT (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
I'm okay. Yeah, okay.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt's eyes are clamped shut, as if this could shut out the voice of his old friend and R.I.O.

WOLFE (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Bring her down. Now!

WYATT  
What? Hawk?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. F-14 (WYATT'S FLASHBACK)

Wyatt, helmeted, in his old flight suit, pilots his F-14. A rapid, dizzying sequence: lightning, Spur's plane EXPLODES, more lightning, smoke, the wing sputtering white fire.

WYATT  
Eject! Eject! Eject!

BACK TO SCENE.

Wyatt's face-- pure tension as he relives the crash.

HAL (V.O.)  
Easy now, Wyatt. Maintain focus.

WYATT  
Are we hit? Hawk? Let's get the hell back to Mother. Break left!

HAL (V.O.)  
All right, buddy. We'll do this the hard way. Breaking left!

INT. CONTROL TOWER

Everyone looks worried, even Colonel Wolfe.

EMILY

A flashback, damn it. He's reliving his crash from the Gulf. Trying to give it a different ending.

She casts a dark look Wolfe's way.

EMILY

At least I hope that's all it is.

WYATT (O.S.)

(filtered)

Taking evasive action.

Zeke begins to ping-pong rapidly back and forth, cutting golden orange trails across the night sky. It then winks out and strobes from one location to another-- just like the genuine alien saucers on the videotape-- a crazed, fiery pinball shot loose across the sky.

EXT. SOMEWHERE ON THE BASE

Coleridge, wandering the grounds, stares up at Zeke. He shakes his head in dismay, mutters darkly to himself, then glares at the control tower. He trudges onward.

INT. CONTROL TOWER

Colonel Wolfe stares in awe. Totally blown away. The others are jubilant, all except for Emily.

WOLFE

Holy Mother of God.

PEABODY

Champagne tonight! Project Ezekiel has found her savior.

GREENBERG

Beats hell out of your best run, Gerry. With all due respect.

DESICCA

Doctor, I owe you an apology. Your hypothesis appears to have been sounder than I gave it credit for.

Emily seems not to hear him. She snatches the mike from Colonel Wolfe, who continues to stare up at the craft in awe.

EMILY

(into mike)

Wyatt. This is Emily. You're flying Zeke. Not your F-14. Zeke. Reorient and focus. Please, Wyatt. Please.

Colonel Wolfe archly observes Emily's attempt to get through. When she pauses, he gently pries the mike from her hand.

WOLFE

(into mike)

Bring her down, Commander. Find the target. Now! That's an order.

EXT. RUNWAY (WYATT'S POV)

Vibrant day-glow colors in a large, brightly flood-lit bulls-eye design appear on the runway far below. They loom larger and larger as Wyatt brings Zeke down. He sets the craft directly atop the bulls-eye.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt fumbles with the head-band and yanks it off. He sits in silence, relieved and thankful to be back on the ground. Colonel Wolfe opens the hatch. He does not enter, but hangs back, one hand on the pistol holstered at his side.

WOLFE

Commander? Wyatt? You okay, son?

WYATT

Yeah, I think so.

Wolfe enters, relieved. Wyatt stands, wobbly. Wolfe offers him a hand which he's too dazed to notice. They disembark together and walk back towards the base.

WOLFE

So what the hell happened up there?

WYATT

I don't know. I don't know.

WOLFE

Well, you report to Doctor Steelman first thing in the morning. And then you come talk to me about that extraordinary bit of flying you did. God damn nice piece of work.

He slaps Wyatt on the back as Wyatt walks off. Wolfe stares after him, wondering.

INT. WYATT'S QUARTERS

Wyatt enters his quarters. He heads straight for the bathroom. He soaks a hand towel in the sink, buries his face in it. He stares at himself in the mirror. It's okay. He's got things back under control.

Wyatt emerges from the bathroom in his boxer shorts. Tosses himself onto the bed. He spies the photo of himself with Hal, hesitates, then shoves it in the drawer of the night stand. He turns out the light.

EXT. DECK OF CARRIER - DAY (WYATT'S DREAM)

A choppy sea in a bracing wind. The deck heaves on the swells, lending a sense of instability to everything.

Wyatt, hair whipped back, face wet with spray, peers over the side into a blowing fog. Yet the carrier itself remains bathed in sunlight, an island of light and clarity.

Hal strolls up to Wyatt. He wears his flight suit from the crash scene. The sun glints off the suit, strobing up and down in bursts of sunlight very much like the flight patterns of the alien craft. A brief sunburst limns his head in a corona. He regards Wyatt, earnest, somber.

HAL

Hey, Wyatt.

Wyatt stares at him, awe-struck, aghast.

WYATT

(hoarse whisper)

What is this?

HAL

Good question. There's a lot that needs explaining. Especially about what happened to you and me.

WYATT

I'm sorry. I should've listened to you. I should've gotten us the hell out of there.

HAL

You should be listening to me now. You want to fly Zeke? The right way? Then listen!

Wyatt nods. Hal has his attention, for the moment.

HAL

You need to know about the One Mind. See, that's all that really exists in the universe. And each one of us holds a tiny piece of it. We put up walls, Wyatt, walls we call "identity," to try to separate our little piece of the One Mind from all the others. But the walls are bullshit.

WYATT

This has to be a dream.

HAL

It is a dream. A dream of the One Mind, separated and fractured.

Wyatt looks baffled. Hal tries a different tack.

HAL

Imagine the ocean dreaming itself into countless snowflakes-- each one tiny, separate, drifting on its own, lost. Each one forgetting it came from this vast ocean. Well, we're those snowflakes, buddy.

An F-14 takes off soundlessly in the b.g. Sunlight reflects off the metal of its fuselage in a sunburst.

The sunburst fades and-- the plane is gone. In its place a cloud of starlings swerves through the air as a single unit, their sudden cuts and dips reminiscent of Zeke in flight. Their wings catch orange light, as if from a sunset.

HAL

We're fractured. But not Zeke's creators. They remember. They know they're part of that ocean, part of the One Mind. And they know how to put that knowledge to use. With the headband.

WYATT

I'm sorry, man. What in hell are you talking about?

HAL

You need to learn to use the interface like Zeke's creators do. It's important. There are consequences.

WYATT  
(anxious)  
What are you saying?

HAL  
Here. Let me show you. Grab my  
hand.

Hal extends his hand to Wyatt. Wyatt reaches for it, then  
hesitates. He pulls away.

WYATT  
No. You're dead. Dead!

VOICE OVER PA  
(with alarm)  
Alert. Alert. Bogie in the no-fly  
zone. Now launch F-14s.

Crews swarm out all over the flight deck. They rush for the  
planes like insects whose nest has been disturbed.

Wyatt, distraught, near panic, turns back to Hal. He's gone.  
Wyatt turns again and-- the flight crews are gone too. And  
the F-14s. The flight deck stands wide and empty as the fog  
starts to billow across it, wraith-like, enveloping Wyatt in  
blankness.

WYATT  
Hawk? Hal?  
(desperate)  
Hal!

INT. WYATT'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Wyatt sits straight up in bed, hair plastered to his  
forehead. He clicks on the bedside light, shaken.

He gets the photo out of the drawer and stares at it. He  
slowly sets it down, drops back onto the bed and grips his  
head in pain, fighting back tears.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DAY

Wyatt's eyes are shut. He lies on the couch, shoes off. From  
her chair Emily peers intently at him. He appears drained,  
shaken and uncertain of himself. A tape recorder sits on the  
floor between them, running.

EMILY  
And that's it? Nothing else?

WYATT

I was just trying to evade the bogie and make it back to the carrier.

He opens his eyes, sits up. He looks at Emily.

WYATT

A flashback, like you said.

Emily gives him a long, assessing look. She doesn't believe him, but doesn't entirely disbelieve him either. She reaches over to switch off the tape deck, pausing to make sure her next line is recorded.

EMILY

Okay, then. I guess we're done.

She shuts off the tape recorder. Wyatt reaches for his shoes.

EMILY

Hold on. I want to show you something.

Wyatt puts on his shoes as Emily unlocks a filing cabinet, removes a videotape and inserts it into the VCR.

EMILY

Pruitt's Syndrome is named for the pilot you're about to see. He wasn't its first casualty. But he was the first whose symptoms were obvious enough to be identified.

WYATT

Jonas Pruitt?

EMILY

(nodding)

I'm afraid there's more to Commander Pruitt's story than what you may have heard from the Colonel. I'm violating a direct order of his by showing you this.

WYATT

Then why are you doing it?

EMILY

Because you have the right to know.

INT. A PLAIN, BARE ROOM - DAY (ON VIDEO MONITOR)

Commander JONAS PRUITT, a lean, middle-aged man with thinning hair, sits formal and stiff in a rumpled uniform. He seems oddly at ease, content with himself. He is in the middle of an interview with a PSYCHIATRIST.

An unusual tattoo decorates Pruitt's right forearm: a series of nested circles and sunbursts like those found inside Zeke.

PSYCHIATRIST

Okay. That makes sense. But what happens now? When you wear the headband?

PRUITT

Now? I won't. Don't need to. I've achieved perfect mind control. My mind, their control.

Pruitt grins wide. The psychiatrist nods soberly, then darts a look at camera that shouts "beyond help."

PSYCHIATRIST

Their control. Who exactly do you mean? The voices?

PRUITT

(irritated)

I told you. The aliens. The space bandits who buzz our launches. The dark benefactors who dropped their technology into our laps in '47-- call it a "crash" program. Toss the humans a few neat toys. Observe how they play with them.

The psychiatrist says nothing. Pruitt just shakes his head.

PRUITT

You don't get it. Nobody gets it. Zeke and the headband? It's a test. An entrance exam. To see if we're ready.

PSYCHIATRIST

Ready for what?

PRUITT

Ready to link up with the rest of the great big ol' universe.

PSYCHIATRIST

O-kay ...

PRUITT

But we're flunking, doc. Right here at Groom, we're blowing it, big time. And we don't get a second chance.

PSYCHIATRIST

Sorry. I don't follow you.

PRUITT

If I thought you were following me, then I'd be a paranoid, wouldn't I?

Pruitt bursts into a cackle. The psychiatrist eyes him, sober-faced.

PRUITT

There are ... consequences, you know. To flunking. When you defy Universal Law ...

PSYCHIATRIST

What kind of consequences?

Pruitt pauses, as though listening to an internal voice. He grins slyly at the psychiatrist.

PRUITT

Well, doc, what action might you take if the cockroaches decided they were advanced enough to run your house?

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE

Emily hits the mute on the remote. The interview rolls on soundlessly in the b.g. She turns to Wyatt.

EMILY

There you have it. Pruitt's Syndrome. The original Broadway hit.

WYATT

I don't believe it. He went nuts. Jesus! How?

EMILY

Commander Pruitt believed he was in contact with the aliens. He was killed making his next test flight ... in an attempt to steal Zeke and return her to her rightful owners.

WYATT

Aw no!

Wyatt looks away, struggling with this news about Pruitt.

WYATT

This ever happen to any other pilots?

Emily nods.

WYATT

How many?

EMILY

Approximately 80%.

WYATT

Does it ever go away? I mean, does everyone wind up like-- him?

EMILY

The more hours on the headband, the greater the risk.

WYATT

I've logged a month of flights already.

She says nothing. He stares off, still trying to absorb what he's heard.

EMILY

The headband is dangerous. You should have been told. I'm sorry.

WYATT

Jonas Pruitt went crazy and splashed her.

EMILY

Well, he was being chased by half the damn Air Force.

Wyatt takes in this information with a somber look.

WYATT

He was shot down?

EMILY

The official version is he crashed. Set the project back years.

Wyatt stares o.s. He notices the video, which now shows two pilots, both in headbands. One of them is a younger Colonel Wolfe. The other, face heavily scarred, is Coleridge.

WYATT

Wait! That's Wolfe. And the old guy  
from Zeke's hangar.

EMILY

And you don't need to see this.

Emily shuts off the VCR with her remote.

WYATT

Two headbands-- at the same time.

EMILY

The results were not pretty.

WYATT

Why? What happened?

EMILY

It's classified.

WYATT

Jeez. I thought I had a "right to  
know."

She struggles with herself, bounces the remote against her thigh, points it at the VCR. Her arm drops back to her lap.

EMILY

I can't, Wyatt. I'm sorry.

He glares at her, disappointed. She hesitates, sighs, crosses to the couch and sits beside him. She takes both his hands in hers.

EMILY

Okay. If you breathe one word of  
this to anyone, you've destroyed  
me. Do you understand?

(pause)

And yourself too.

He nods. Resigned, she switches the tape back on.

VIDEOTAPE:

Wolfe and Coleridge in older headbands. They grimace in concentration. It's mental arm-wrestling, pitting two strong wills against each other.

A malign smile creeps over Wolfe's lips, like a chess master who's just played a move he knows his opponent cannot recover from.

Coleridge's face screws up in pain. He grinds his teeth, turning red, eyes popping. One of his arms leaps up by itself and smacks him in the face. A look of shocked surprise. His other hand draws back, punches himself in the jaw.

Furious, he struggles to resist as his hand, trembling, strains toward his face, two fingers extended right at his eyes.

COLERIDGE  
Get-out-of-my-brain!

With his free hand he rips the headband off his scalp. He leaps up and charges Wolfe, knocking him over in his chair. He kicks at him.

MPs swarm over Coleridge. They pull him off Wolfe. He's screaming garbled curses as he's dragged out the door.

Wolfe hoists himself from the ground, straightens his uniform, takes off the headband. He shrugs-- all in day's work-- but he can't keep himself from grinning.

BACK TO SCENE.

WYATT  
What happened to the guy?

EMILY  
Burned out his prefrontal cortex.  
He's basically senile now.

WYATT  
Sweet God.

EMILY  
The two headbands set up some kind of interference pattern-- a war between the minds. One of them has to give. It wasn't Wolfe's.

WYATT  
I always wondered why the Colonel kept that guy around. Now I get it. Guilt.

EMILY  
Nah, it's not guilt.

Wyatt looks at her, confused.

EMILY  
More like a trophy.

INT. COLONEL WOLFE'S OFFICE - DAY

Framed photographs of aircraft, including Zeke, adorn the wall behind the desk. Photos of the current President and President Reagan hang on either side of a large American flag. On another wall hangs a print of the Red Baron's triplane and a set of old dueling pistols.

Wyatt enters and salutes. Wolfe looks up from his desk.

WOLFE  
Commander. Good. You ready to take me up in old Zeke and show me a few moves?

Wyatt does not smile. He stands stiffly, awkwardly.

WOLFE  
I read Doctor Steelman's report. Just some flashback, huh.

WYATT  
Yes sir, that's correct.

WOLFE  
Well hell, you can handle that, can't you?  
(pause)  
Why don't you sit down?

Wyatt makes no move to sit.

WYATT  
(rehearsed)  
In the interest of safety and the success of the project, sir, I do not believe I should fly the alien craft again.

WOLFE  
Not an option. Your handling of Zeke is just what we've been gunning for. Hell, you outflew Pruitt!

WYATT  
Yes sir, exactly. Pruitt. I don't want to wind up like Pruitt.

WOLFE

Hey. You're a test pilot, you know the risks.

WYATT

When I joined the Navy, sir, I decided that to die for my country would be an honor. Nobody ever mentioned going insane.

WOLFE

I see. Someone's been telling you things you have no right to know.

WYATT

In the interest of safety and the success of the project, I cannot fly the alien craft again, sir. I respectfully request a transfer.

WOLFE

Denied. We'll talk more later.

WYATT

With all due respect, sir, I am officially requesting a transfer.

WOLFE

Denied. Officially. Dismissed!

Wolfe pauses, waiting for Wyatt to leave. When he doesn't, Wolfe rises from his chair and gets right in Wyatt's face.

WOLFE

I don't believe you understand the nature of this project, Commander. We don't expose you to the most sensitive secret in the history of the United States military, then let you waltz out of here just because you happened to get spooked by some God damn flashback.

WYATT

I understand, sir.

WOLFE

No, I don't believe you do. "Above Top Secret" means you live with us, you work with us, and if need be, you die with us. Lieutenant Marsiniac made that clear to you your first day here, did he not?

WYATT

Second day, sir.

WOLFE

Did he not make that clear?

Wyatt stands stubborn. Finally he nods, eyeing the ground.

WOLFE

Lovely. Now we understand each other. Come see me when you're ready to fly. Otherwise stay the hell out of my sight.

Wyatt stands frozen for half a beat. He glares at Wolfe, who meets his glare without a flinch. He gives Wolfe an overly formal salute, spins and leaves. Wolfe picks up the phone.

WOLFE

Get me General Ashford at the Pentagon.

INT. GENERAL ASHFORD'S OFFICE

General ASHFORD is on the speaker phone at his desk. We see only his craggy cheeks, thin lips, and skeletal hands.

He twines a rubber band around his hand, twisting it, stretching it taut and releasing it hard against his pale, dry skin over and over as he talks.

ASHFORD

So you think the good doctor may have misjudged her man, eh?

(pause)

Well, talk with her. If you decide to ... abort this phase of the project, let me know, I'll make the arrangements. But don't be too hasty. You're ninety million over budget and two years behind. I'm starting to hear some grumbling.

WOLFE

From who?

ASHFORD

Don't piss your pants. As long as those ranchers keep hollering over their cows, nobody's going to dare touch our budget.

INT. TAVERN, RACHEL, NEVADA - NIGHT

Drunken men in cowboy hats and boots whirl equally drunken women across a tight dance floor.

Wyatt slumps at the bar, impervious to the MUSIC, hooting, and dancing. A bartender pours him a double of J&B. Wyatt downs half of it. The wall behind the bartender is plastered with taped-up photos of jets-- and UFOs.

TRUDY, early twenties, uncoils from her stool at the end of the bar and slinks toward Wyatt. She wears a tasseled red leather mini-skirt with matching vest and low-cut blouse, cowboy boots, and a bright red neckerchief. The vest's single button does little to constrain her bust.

TRUDY

Hi there. I'm Trudy. Mind if I sit?

Wyatt shrugs, barely looking her way.

TRUDY

You're new around here. You're Air Force, right? An officer?

WYATT

Navy. And I'm trying to think.

He knocks back the rest of his Scotch.

TRUDY

No, you're trying to drink. So what's a Navy man doing here in Nevada? Not a hell of a lot of water, case you hadn't noticed.

WYATT

Naval aviation.

TRUDY

Oh, a pilot. I've known a few pilots in my time. Bet you're flying those E.T. saucers, right?

WYATT

(sputters)

'xcuse me? We test aircraft, ma'am.

TRUDY

Yeah, I know. It's all top secret. Only there was this big story ran in the Vegas Sun few years back. Some reporter got the goods on you boys.

(MORE)

TRUDY (cont'd)

And now we got all kinds of weirdos hanging around here, trying to catch a peek at a genuine U-F-O. But heck, it's sure been good for business.

WYATT

A newspaper story? What'd it say?

Trudy nods, smiles. She swings into the seat next to his.

TRUDY

Buy me a drink?

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE TAVERN

Trudy and Wyatt stand by the rear of Trudy's red pick-up, which sports a touristy "Area 51 Parking" sticker on the bumper. She pulls him into a hard, wet kiss, grinding her body against his. He gropes her, then pulls away.

WYATT

Sorry. I can't do this.

He walks away, leaving her gaping in anger.

INT. EMILY'S QUARTERS

Emily is asleep in bed. The doorbell RINGS many times before she rouses. She tosses on a robe and opens the door. Wyatt stands there, a bit dishevelled and obviously drunk-- in a cute, lovable way.

WYATT

Sorry to bug you so late, but I just made a major career decision and I wanted to say goodbye.

EMILY

What are you talking about?

WYATT

There's this reporter in Vegas. Gonna give him a story that'll win him a Pulitzer.

EMILY

Wyatt, you're drunk. Come in, before somebody hears you.

WYATT

Do some of my best thinking while in-e-briated.

She grabs him and hauls him inside. She sits him down on her couch. She makes up a pot of drip coffee as they talk.

EMILY

Now tell me, what's going on?

WYATT

Told the Colonel I wouldn't fly Zeke. Requested a transfer. He threatened my life.

EMILY

Oh... That's no bluff. So you're going AWOL? Right this minute? That what you're trying to tell me?

WYATT

Uh-huh.

EMILY

Then you are insane. And you shouldn't need a psychiatrist to tell you that. How far do you think you'd get?

Wyatt shakes his head playfully.

EMILY

They'll hunt you down. They'll find you.

He shrugs, offers a silly grin.

EMILY

They'll kill you, Wyatt.

He says nothing. Emily struggles to come up with some way to get through to him.

EMILY

Okay. Wait... I'm coming with you.

WYATT

What?

EMILY

You'll need corroboration. I've got weekend leave. I even have a high-level contact in D.C.

WYATT

No. Too risky.

EMILY

Look, that flying you did happens to be the best chance this project's ever had and Wolfe knows it. Which gives me a damn lot of leeway. My ass is covered.

Wyatt peers coyly at her ass.

WYATT

Aww, too bad.

Emily shoots him a look while fighting back a grin.

EMILY

Can you be serious?

WYATT

Okay. Let's fly off together.

He gets up and turns toward the door, arms extended like airplane wings. She grabs one arm, swings him around.

EMILY

How 'bout we come up with some kind of plan?

INT. OFFICERS' GYM, GROOM LAKE BASE - DAY

Emily in a white leotard performs a Tai Chi routine that includes a slow sweep with one leg extended high.

Wolfe approaches. He stands beside her, arms folded. She ignores him and continues her routine, speeding up into a rapid flurry of motion that forces him to step back. Abruptly she halts. She regards him and waits for him to speak first.

WOLFE

Commander Gordon's refusing to fly.

She stews, but can come up with nothing to say.

WOLFE

I need him back in the headband. He's your boy. Got any ideas?

EMILY

I think if I can get to the bottom of what happened in the Gulf--

WOLFE

C'mon, doctor. I haven't got time for you to play Sigmund Freud.

Emily's stymied.

WOLFE

Look. Come up with a plan and let me know. I want results.

(beat)

Oh, and doctor. Emily. You know I have the utmost respect for you and your work here. I wouldn't want to jeopardize that in any way. So please, do not attempt to undermine my command again.

EMILY

You're referring to my informing Commander Gordon about Pruitt's Syndrome?

She hopes that's what he means, and not the Coleridge video.

WOLFE

I'll let it slide-- this time. But you go behind my back again ...

Wolfe's look is dark, severe.

WOLFE

Consider yourself warned.

EXT. OFFICERS' QUARTERS - DAY

Wyatt in gray sweats and sneakers jogs out onto the base. He marks time for a beat, eyes his watch. He surveys the base.

WYATT

(low)

So long, assholes.

Wyatt jogs across the base. He checks his watch as though timing his progress.

EXT. EMILY'S PARKING SPOT OUTSIDE HER OFFICE

Emily leaves her office. She wears a stylish civilian skirt and blouse and carries a small floral valise. She eyes her watch, heads for her car. No other cars are parked nearby.

She unlocks the trunk of her blue government-issue Ford, hesitates, then shuts it, but not all the way. She loads the valise into the back seat, gets behind the wheel, waits. She checks her watch again.

INTERCUT -- WYATT JOGGING/ EMILY WAITING IN HER CAR

Marsiniac spies Wyatt jogging, grins and hustles over to him. He matches Wyatt's pace, jogging side by side with him.

MARSINIAC

Colonel wants a word with you. Now!  
You're in deep shit, fella.

WYATT

(huffing, slows)  
What'd'ya mean?

MARSINIAC

You know what I mean.

Emily looks around, anxious that Wyatt hasn't appeared. She checks her watch, clicks on the radio.

Wyatt regards Marsiniac.

WYATT

You tell the Colonel I'm going to  
finish my run. He'll have to wait.

Marsiniac slaps him on the back.

MARSINIAC

Just bullshittin' ya, buddy. Ha!  
And you fell for it big-time. You  
shoulda seen your face. But really,  
Colonel would like to see you  
sometime today.

Marsiniac stops running. He belly-laughs, out of breath, as Wyatt speeds away.

E/I. EMILY'S CAR

Emily's car bounces. She gets out, shakes her head in annoyance as if she'd stupidly forgotten to close the trunk and does so, without looking down.

EMILY

'Bout time.

EXT. GUARD POST

A GUARD stops Emily's car at the gate.

GUARD

Afternoon, doctor. Where you headed?

EMILY

Couple days leave in the Sierras.

GUARD

Sounds good to me.

He waves her through the gate.

INT. TRUNK OF EMILY'S CAR (POV)

A dark, confined space with light edging through the cracks. The ENGINE and ROAD NOISE mask Wyatt's labored BREATHING. Tires CRUNCH as the car comes to a stop on a dirt shoulder. A car DOOR OPENS, followed by FOOTSTEPS.

The trunk POPS and brightness floods in, resolving to reveal Emily standing there, peering down.

EXT. DESERT ROADSIDE

Emily's car sits on the shoulder in the true middle of nowhere. Emily stands by the open trunk as Wyatt unfolds himself and hops out. His sweats are soaked. He wipes his forehead, inhales, stretches out the kinks in his back.

WYATT

Thanks for finally stopping! Jeez.

EMILY

Just playing it safe.

He swings into the passenger seat and turns the vent of the AC full on his face. Emily slides in behind the wheel. He catches a glimpse of her legs. She notices, grins to herself.

A military chopper sputters past overhead. They freeze until the sound fades, then eye each other with apprehension. Emily starts the car up and pulls out fast.

EXT. LAS VEGAS

Emily's Ford enters Las Vegas; drives down the Strip.

I/E. EMILY'S CAR (DRIVING)

Emily and Wyatt gaze out at the Strip

EMILY

Vegas. Most anonymous city in the world.

INT. LARGE PUBLIC PARKING GARAGE

Emily's car is backed into a dark corner tight with other cars. Wyatt crouches by the hood, removing the front government license plate with a screwdriver while Emily stands lookout.

E/I. TAXI, VEGAS

A taxi cruises down the Strip. Wyatt and Emily sit silent in the back seat.

INT. COLONEL WOLFE'S OFFICE

Wolfe agitates behind his desk. He picks up his phone, punches in a number.

WOLFE

Get me Marsiniac.... Lieutenant?  
Find Commander Gordon. Escort him  
here at once.

INT. MOTEL REGISTRATION DESK

A large chain motel located well off the Strip. Inside a DESK CLERK waits on Wyatt and Emily.

DESK CLERK

King-size bed okay?

Wyatt eyes Emily.

WYATT

Uh, two doubles might be better.

DESK CLERK

Take it or leave it. It's all we  
got.

EMILY

We'll take it.

She pulls a crisp hundred dollar bill from her purse and slaps it down before the desk clerk, who takes it and slides over the key.

DESK CLERK

Thank you, Mr. And Mrs. Washington.  
And good luck at the tables.

EMILY

Yeah, luck we could use.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Wyatt flops back on the bed, kicks off his shoes. Emily unpacks her valise, placing clothing in drawers, including a sheer nightgown and lacy underwear which she shields from his view.

Wyatt props himself on one elbow, eyes her. She finishes unpacking, closes the drawer, turns, eyes him. An awkward moment. Sexual tension simmers just below the surface. Wyatt clears his throat.

WYATT

I've been meaning to ask you ...

EMILY

(coy)

Yes?

She holds him in her gaze. He hesitates.

WYATT

Well ... you seem to have access to a lot of classified information. Ever run across anything about Hawk and Spur and that bogie?

She drops into a chair near the bed, angling her legs away from him. She nods several times, considering his query, and shifting gears.

EMILY

Okay. How about this? You were picked up twelve miles from the actual crash site.

WYATT

That's not possible. Two, three miles, okay. Not twelve. Not unless I ejected into a hurricane.

EMILY

Hal Hawkins' seat was found a mile from yours. But not his body.

Wyatt looks puzzled, confused. He waits for her to continue.

EMILY

His body was never found.

WYATT

That's bullshit. He was listed killed in action, not M.I.A.

EMILY  
You asked what I know.

WYATT  
So what are you saying? There was  
some kind of cover-up?

She just looks at him.

WYATT  
But why?

Emily hesitates. She leans forward, earnest.

EMILY  
All the evidence I've seen suggests  
that you and Hawk encountered an  
extraterrestrial craft.

Wyatt's eyes bug open wide.

EMILY  
They shot you down and when you  
ejected, they plucked you right out  
of the air.

Wyatt stares around the room as if checking for anyone else  
who might have overheard such an outrageous comment.

WYATT  
Excuse me. Are you saying we were  
"abducted?"

EMILY  
Think about it. The freak lightning  
strikes? Hal's disappearance? Your  
lack of injuries? And the cover-up.

WYATT  
Oh come on!

EMILY  
No, you come on!

Wyatt spins away from her. Suddenly he freezes. His eyes go  
wide.

EXT. CARRIER DECK (FLASHBACK-- FROM WYATT'S DREAM)

Hal in his flight suit regards Wyatt, earnest, somber.

BACK TO SCENE.

Wyatt turns slowly back to Emily. He drops onto the bed.

WYATT

Jesus. Hal. He could be alive.

Emily goes and sits by him. A soft look.

EMILY

Yeah. And that's all I can tell you. But I think you know more.

Wyatt turns, shoots her a look.

EMILY

In your unconscious mind... We need to try hypnosis again.

WYATT

Forget it.

She rests a hand on his arm. A firm, beseeching look.

WYATT

I said no.

EMILY

Wyatt. You've got to deal with what happened. And when you do, I suspect you'll also remember the secret to how you flew Zeke.

WYATT

I told you. I'm never flying Zeke again.

EMILY

Yes you will. You have to.

Wyatt pulls away from her. He stands and stares at her in disbelief.

WYATT

You gonna threaten my life next?

Emily just shakes her head and continues looking at him.

WYATT

Screw this!

He stalks away from her headed for the door. She follows, grabs him by the arm. He halts.

EMILY

You once told me that all Hawk would want is for you to be a better pilot.

(MORE)

EMILY (cont'd)

And now, you're never gonna fly again. Face it, Wyatt. When you get right up against the truth, you bail. You've gotten so damn good at it your God damn motto could be Eject. "Eject, eject, eject!"

Wyatt spins and grabs her hard by the shoulders. He skewers her with a look. Slowly he releases her. He holds up his palms in a gesture of surrender and back off. His voice is husky and his eyes glisten.

WYATT

Let it go, damn it. It wasn't your best friend who died up there that night, or whatever the hell happened to him.

A long silence.

EMILY

I'm sorry, Wyatt. It's just that-- This is destroying you and I can't let that happen. I care about you too much.

(beat)

More than I should.

Wyatt's anger deflates at her words. He exhales loudly. She reaches out and tentatively touches him on the cheek, gently turning his face toward hers.

Wyatt stares into her eyes, his expression softening, but still uncertain. He reaches for her, holds her. She looks up into his eyes. Their embrace dares a kiss. Another. Before they know what's happened they are kissing hard and hungry.

Emily breaks away from him. She goes to the bed and sits. She regards Wyatt-- an invitation.

He sits beside her. They edge into an embrace, but it's too awkward to hold and they topple over, both giggling.

She scoots up onto the bed, grabs him by the arm and coaxes him down beside her. A look gives way to a long kiss ... and then they're tearing at each others clothes.

INT. WYATT'S QUARTERS AT GROOM LAKE

Lieutenant Marsiniac tears the blankets off Wyatt's bed. He upends the mattress. He bangs the desk drawers open and shut, searching for clues to Wyatt's whereabouts. Nothing. Frustrated, he kicks the desk and whips out his cell phone.

MARSINIAC

Colonel Wolfe, sir? His stuff's all here, but I've hunted the whole damn base and I'd swear he's AWOL.

INT. COLONEL WOLFE'S OFFICE

Wolfe sits at his desk, phone in hand, face taut. He grips the receiver with a hollow look that hardens into determination. He punches in a number.

WOLFE

General Ashford. Private line. Urgent. And locate Dr. Steelman for me. Get her back on base fast.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Emily and Wyatt lie in bed, snuggled in a post-coital glow, clothes heaped on the floor beside the bed.

WYATT

You know, what amazes me most is the two of us winding up at Groom together. I mean, what are the odds against that?

EMILY

It must have been fate.

WYATT

Yeah, that's what I was thinking.

EMILY

Okay. I confess, I pushed for your selection. Because of what happened -- what I think happened-- to you and Hawk in the Gulf.

Wyatt could get angry at this ... but doesn't. Instead he smiles at her.

WYATT

So I have you to thank for this mess I'm in.

Emily caresses his hair.

EMILY

Sorry. I couldn't let a man like you get away now, could I?

Both chuckle.

WYATT

Well, just don't ever try to pull anything like that again. 'Cause I'll figure it out. I've got psychic powers, y'know.

He gives a boyish grin. Emily eyes him, wanting him.

EMILY

Oh, really? Well, how about we run a little test of those psychic powers, right now?

WYATT

She doesn't believe me.

EMILY

Come on. Close your eyes.

WYATT

You gonna do hypnosis?

She snorts derisively. Wyatt checks her out, nods okay, closes his eyes. Emily eases on top of him, straddling him, her breaths coming quicker.

EMILY

Okay. Now-- read my mind.

WYATT

(groans)

He begins caressing her hard and urgent. She kisses him.

EMILY

(between kisses)

Um. Amazing! You are psychic.

They tumble back into lovemaking.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

The table is littered with paper coffee cups, opened cream containers and half-eaten donuts. Emily brushes her teeth in the bathroom o.s. Wyatt lounges on the bed in his boxer shorts reading the Gideon Bible, opened to Ezekiel.

WYATT

(to himself)

"And the living creatures returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."

He reads on, growing more intrigued. The bathroom faucet shuts off. He calls out to Emily.

WYATT

Hey! Listen to this! From Ezekiel.  
"I saw a wheel on the earth beside  
the living creatures, and when the  
creatures were lifted up from the  
earth the wheels were lifted up."  
That's gotta be a flying saucer!  
"For the Spirit of the living  
creature was in the wheels."

He shakes his head, mulling it over.

WYATT

"The Spirit of the living creature  
was in the wheels."

(beat)

Did I ever mention that just before  
my flashback I heard Hawk's voice?

Emily flies out of the bathroom in her nightgown.

EMILY

What did you say?

WYATT

Hawk spoke to me. As clear as you  
standing there. And then I had this  
weird dream about him.

Wyatt rises, goes to caress her shoulder. She remains wooden.

EMILY

Tell me exactly what he said.

WYATT

(offhanded)

That we're all part of this "One  
Mind." The aliens too. And that's  
the secret to how they fly Zeke.  
Pretty bizarre, huh?

She deflates, sits on the edge of the bed, trying to hide  
just how upset she is. He sits beside her, strokes her arm.

EMILY

Why didn't you tell me this before?

WYATT

I don't know. Afraid you'd have me  
grounded.

(MORE)

WYATT (cont'd)

(beat)

It's Pruitt's Syndrome, isn't it?

Emily sighs, then nods. She struggles to keep her feelings in check. A beat-- and she's got herself back under control.

EMILY

We have to check this out under hypnosis. It's absolutely vital.

WYATT

I told you, no hypnosis.

She regards him, incredulous.

EMILY

This is your mind we're talking about.

WYATT

No hypnosis. That's final.

He sinks back down onto the bed. She edges in closer.

EMILY

What are you so afraid of, Wyatt?

WYATT

I've just got to figure it out on my own. That's all.

EMILY

(long beat)

Fine. I'm going to shower.

Emily stalks into the bathroom and shuts the door hard. Wyatt shakes his head. He closes his eyes, exasperated.

He opens his eyes, removes a scrap of paper from his wallet. He waits. The SHOWER come on. He grabs the phone, calls.

FEMALE OPERATOR (ON PHONE)

Las Vegas Sun.

WYATT (TO PHONE)

Tom Goddard, please.

INTERCUT - NEWSROOM, LAS VEGAS SUN/ MOTEL ROOM

Reporter TOM GODDARD sits at his cubicle in the noisy newsroom, banging out a piece on his word processor. Clips of his articles adorn the walls. He picks up the phone.

GODDARD

Goddard here.

WYATT

Got a story for you. About Groom  
Lake and Area 51.

GODDARD

That's ancient history. Thanks  
anyway.

WYATT

I'm a pilot.

GODDARD

A pilot? At Groom?

WYATT

I've flown extraterrestrial  
saucers. My life's been threatened.

GODDARD

Stop. Don't say another word on  
this line. We need to meet in  
person. Are you in Vegas? Can you  
get to me?

WYATT

Shit. Your line's tapped.

GODDARD

Wait--

Wyatt hangs up fast. He turns to find Emily wrapped in a bath  
towel staring at him from the bathroom doorway.

EMILY

(flat)

What's going on?

WYATT

I think I blew it.

EMILY

Let's get the hell out of here,  
now.

WYATT

I really could use a shower.

EMILY

Yeah, you stink. Too bad.

INT. GREYHOUND TERMINAL, LAS VEGAS

Emily stands at a ticket counter opposite a female TICKET AGENT. Emily wears jeans, sneakers, a plain print blouse, and sun-glasses. Her hair is down.

EMILY

One to Phoenix please. Round-trip.

TICKET AGENT

That leaves in fifteen minutes,  
ma'am. Gate two.

Emily exits, passing Wyatt without acknowledgement. He wears new clothes: your basic sport shirt and slacks. He heads for the ticket counter and a different agent.

WYATT

Two fares to L.A. One way.

Emily reenters, hair up, no sunglasses and goes to a yet another agent.

EMILY

(Southern accent)

One way to Phoenix please.

E/I. GREYHOUND BUS IN TERMINAL

The destination sign on the bus reads "PHOENIX." Emily and Wyatt are inside seated apart, faces hidden behind tented newspapers. The bus is barely half full.

A Greyhound functionary enters and performs a rapid head count. When she leaves the bus pulls out. Wyatt gets up and takes the seat next to Emily.

WYATT

I think we've left them a pretty  
tough trail to follow.

INT. WYATT AND EMILY'S FORMER MOTEL ROOM

A male MAID is vacuuming, wearing a Walkman, bopping to the unheard beat. He does not hear the KNOCK before the door bursts open and FOUR G-MEN waving guns rush him. The maid shrieks, passes out. The men begin tearing the room apart.

E/I. BUS (DRIVING)

The bus cruises through the desert down Route 93. Wyatt and Emily chat softly.

WYATT

So tell me, who's this contact of yours in D.C.?

EMILY

He's a man who respects the truth as much as I do.... My dad.

WYATT

Your dad? How the hell's your dad gonna-- wait a minute. Steelman. Not Harold Jacobson Steelman?

EMILY

(mild Southern accent)  
The Hon'orable ten term Congressman from Virginia. Newly retired.

WYATT

He was the only one on that Ethics Committee who cared more about the facts than scoring political points. He does have credibility.

EMILY

Well I'm glad we can finally agree on something.

The bus comes to its first stop at the depot in Henderson, Nevada. Wyatt and Emily slide behind their newspapers again. Several passengers board.

A man wearing only the jacket of a Greyhound official comes on board and performs a rapid head count. He makes certain he gets a good look at Wyatt behind his paper. He leaves.

WYATT

I don't like this.

EMILY

What? What's the matter?

A young MAN and WOMAN, a couple, hurry on. They take seats a few rows behind Wyatt and Emily.

WYATT

Why'd they need another head count? And that couple that just got on in such a big rush.

EMILY

They look harmless enough. I'm more worried about you. Pruitt's Syndrome can generalize into full-blown paranoia.

WYATT

It just doesn't feel right.

The bus pulls out onto the road. Emily turns and quickly checks out the couple, who do not seem to notice her. She shrugs to herself, then eyes Wyatt with concern.

EXT. BUS (DRIVING)

The bus rolls through the desert, chewing up the miles.

EXT. BUS DEPOT, KINGMAN, ARIZONA

The Greyhound pulls into the depot. There are a dozen or more buses parked, most of them chartered tour buses.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS

Wyatt looks agitated. He turns to Emily.

WYATT

(low)

I'm getting off. Meet me in two minutes behind that last tour bus. And leave your bag. If they follow you, run.

EMILY

Wyatt, I think you're overreacting.

He stands, stretches.

EMILY

This is nuts.

WYATT

(loud)

I'm gonna grab a Coke, hon.

Emily watches him through the window until he's inside the depot. She fights an urge to turn and look at the supposedly suspicious couple.

An old man gets up in the seat behind her and shuffles toward the aisle. She sees her chance, grabs her purse and leaps out in front of him. As she hurries down the aisle off the bus she looks back.

The man and woman are frantically trying to push past the old man.

Emily ducks behind the nearest bus. She is shaking, out of breath. She hears a PING as something impacts the chrome of the bus beside her. She looks up, spies the woman with a strange-looking pistol aimed her way.

Emily dashes for the next bus, rolls under it and out the opposite side. She jogs through a maze of buses, hesitating at each vulnerable open point.

As she sprints between two buses she spies the woman hunting for her, looking the other way, gun held close by her side.

A new bus pulls in. Emily jogs along beside it, using it as a screen, making her way toward the rendezvous point.

A number of other men and women have joined the search, all dressed like civilians, all trying to look inconspicuous.

Emily falls back and sinks against the side of another bus. She sighs. A dull TAP causes her to spin in fear.

A CHILD, face pressed to the glass, sticks out his tongue at her. She smiles and sticks out her tongue when-- someone grabs her. She gasps loudly. It's Wyatt.

WYATT

Shh! Come on!

He spins her around and runs holding her hand toward one of several tour buses that's in the process of boarding. They slip into line-- all ELDERLY COUPLES-- and steal on board while the TOUR GUIDE is distracted by a CANTANKEROUS MAN.

CANTANKEROUS MAN

No, you listen to me, dear! I paid good money for this trip ...

INT. TOUR BUS

Wyatt and Emily duck into an empty seat at the very back of the bus away from the seniors. They slouch low as the tour guide boards and the bus rolls out.

One old lady near the back turns and eyes them with a look of mischievous mirth. Wyatt blows her a kiss. She loves it, blows him one back.

TOUR GUIDE

Ladies and gentleman, we'll be proceeding directly to the Grand Canyon. It's a three hour drive so you might as well relax and enjoy the scenery.

EXT. BUS DEPOT, KINGMAN, ARIZONA

A line of tour buses pulls out, one behind the other. A cloud of gray exhaust and brown road dust obscures the buses' markings and license plates. Several cars pull out as well.

The man and woman regroup with the other agents. They all stare in frustration at the line of buses and cars. The man yanks his cell phone from his pocket and makes a call.

INT. TOUR BUS - THREE HOURS LATER

Wyatt and Emily slump in their seats, asleep.

EXT. TOUR BUS APPROACHING ROADBLOCK

A road sign reads "Welcome to Grand Canyon, USA." Ahead, two Arizona state police cars are manning a roadblock, their lights blazing. The bus slows and joins a line of cars.

INT. TOUR BUS

Wyatt and Emily rouse as the bus slows to a stop. The seniors are abuzz with agitated conversation.

TOUR GUIDE

Ladies and gentleman, we are stopping to comply with a State Police road block. Nothing for us to be concerned about.

Wyatt and Emily eye each other, apprehensive.

AN OLD WOMAN turns to her husband, scared.

OLD WOMAN

Aww Sid, now look what you've gone and done. I told you, "Please, don't kick the slot machines."

An Arizona State POLICE OFFICER holding a photo in one hand boards the bus. He glances at the photo as he moves rapidly up the aisle, eyeing the seniors, grinning because they're so unlike the man and woman in the photo (Wyatt and Emily).

He gets to the empty back of the bus and is about to turn when he notices the emergency door hanging open a crack.

EXT. LARGE WAREHOUSE-LIKE BUILDING

Wyatt and Emily sprint away from the bus toward the back of a large building. They turn a corner and spy helicopters out on a small airfield. A glass window reveals a waiting area with a prominent sign: "CANYON AIR TOURS."

WYATT

I'm betting they don't bother to  
lock up their helos until after the  
sunset tour.

He takes off on a dead run for the nearest chopper. Emily hangs back, not convinced that this is such a great idea, but as he gains distance without looking back she starts to run.

EXT. HELICOPTER ON AIRFIELD

Wyatt swings open the door to the glass bubble cockpit of the four-man chopper. He leaps inside and surveys the controls as Emily huffs up alongside. He kicks open the copilot door for her. She climbs in.

A PILOT and a MECHANIC come running out from the office.

MECHANIC

Hey! What the hell are you doing?

Wyatt starts the chopper and lifts off.

EXT. AIRFIELD (AERIAL)

The figures of the pilot and mechanic dwindle, shouting and waving on the ground below. The police at the roadblock stare skyward. One draws his gun and fires a SHOT.

INT. HELICOPTER

Wyatt handles the stick with assurance. He eyes the myriad controls with intensity. Emily is scared.

EMILY

You sure you know how to fly this  
thing?

WYATT

The helo pilots on the George Washington used to take us up and let us fool around.

EMILY

"Fool around." So you've never actually flown a helicopter by yourself?

WYATT

There's a first time for everything, darling. Trust me. Pilot's intuition.

EMILY

Great. Terrific. Hope you're not offended if I close my eyes.

She shuts her eyes tight.

EXT. GRAND CANYON

The helicopter flies into the Grand Canyon.

STOCK FOOTAGE-- THE GRAND CANYON BY HELICOPTER AT SUNSET.

I/E. HELICOPTER

WYATT

You might want to take a peek. It's a damn pretty sight.

Emily squints open her eyes. Wider.

EMILY

God.

LOUDSPEAKER (O.S.)

This is the police. You are under arrest. Bring the chopper down now.

They startle, peer behind them. A police helicopter hovers right on their tail.

EXT. THROUGH THE CANYON

Wyatt dives down into the canyon. The police chopper pursues. They dart in and out of the rock formations, in much the same manner as Wyatt's outmaneuvering the missiles in Zeke.

WYATT

(pushing the stick)

C'mon, move! Damn primitive earth technology.

Wyatt slips through a narrow chimney and comes face to face with-- an identical tourist helicopter, hovering directly in front of them.

He pulls up sharp to avoid a collision-- close enough to see the gasping faces in the other chopper-- then swerves around a sandstone promontory. The police chopper has to drop back to avoid the tourist helicopter.

WYATT

Sorry, boys. You're no match for this U.S. Navy ace.

He swings out into the main part of the canyon-- to confront a curtain of MILITARY HELICOPTERS. They litter the sky like a cloud of overfed locusts. Among them are two heavy-duty army Hueys dangling large electromagnets from thick cables.

WYATT

What in hell are those?

EMILY

They look like electromagnets.  
Guess Wolfe wants to snag us alive.

WYATT

In a helo? And here I thought he was a smart guy.

Wyatt's chopper SPUTTERS. His eyes search the controls.

WYATT

Well, the good news is they're not going to get to try out those magnets. The bad news-- we're out of gas. I'll drop down as low as I can. Grab some life vests.

Wyatt's chopper dives for the Colorado and levels off at about twenty feet. He's gliding for the bank when the chopper's engines SPUTTER OUT. It hangs for a second, then plummets, auto-rotating down into the seething rapids.

EXT. THE RAPIDS OF THE COLORADO RIVER

Wyatt and Emily clamber out of the chopper into the raging whitewater. She wears an orange life vest, he does not.

A large rock tears the open door off the chopper. Wyatt grabs for it, uses it as a float. Holding onto the door the two are swept down river, buffeted and battered. A ten foot cataract looms ahead. Faces frozen in fear, they grip hands ...

... and are swept over the cataract. The door capsizes, hurling them free. They continue to grip hands, heads bobbing up and down beneath the surface.

Wyatt goes under, losing his grip on her. He swipes for her hand, misses, reaches out, misses again-- and they are swept apart.

Wyatt fights for the bank. He makes it and hauls himself exhausted from the river. As he lies there panting a military chopper touches down right next to him.

A horde of black-clad Special Forces MPs rush out and surround him, guns leveled. On his knees, he lofts his arms in surrender, points at the river.

WYATT

Emily! Get Emily!

INT. COLONEL WOLFE'S OFFICE - DAY

Emily sits in fresh clothes, her uncombed hair roughly pinned up. Wolfe frowns at her from behind his desk.

WOLFE

If it were up to me you'd be in the brig. But I'm forced to leave that decision to General Ashford. He's flying in tomorrow.

EMILY

What the hell was I supposed to do, Gerry? Stand by while the best pilot we've ever had goes AWOL?

WOLFE

I told you to inform me of your plans.

EMILY

If I wasn't completely genuine he'd have known. I acted in the best interests of the Project.

Wolfe shakes his head. He's heard one too many excuses.

EMILY  
Listen, I think there's some kind  
of telepathic link involved here.

WOLFE  
Doctor.

EMILY  
Something about a universal mind,  
the One Mind.

WOLFE  
Doctor!

EMILY  
Back in the Gulf he must have--

WOLFE  
Emily!

She stops.

WOLFE  
I don't give a damn what happened  
in the Gulf. I don't care if they  
stuck an implant in his brain or up  
his ass. I don't care if he glows  
in the dark.

Emily is floored. No response.

WOLFE  
All I care about is how he flew  
Zeke. And I'm going to get that out  
of him. My way.

EMILY  
How?

WOLFE  
Sorry. You're off the Project.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE

Emily paces before her desk. She's frightened, uncertain. She  
picks up the phone, punches in a number, hangs up. She picks  
up the phone again, hits the redial, waits.

MALE VOICE (ON PHONE)  
(mild southern accent)  
Hello. Harry Steelman here. Look  
forward to gettin' back to you.  
Have a pleasant day now. (BEEP)

As Emily listens to the message she runs a hand through her hair, struggling with whether to involve her father, and wondering if she'll live to ever see him again.

EMILY  
(fighting to sound normal)  
Hi, Dad. It's Emily.... You there?  
.... Okay, guess not. Well, I  
really love you, Dad. Goodbye.

Emily wipes away a tear as she hangs up. She looks about the room, frantic, trying to decide what to do. Her resolve hardens. From the back of a closet she grabs a battered black medical bag and rushes out the door.

INT. MEDICAL SUPPLY AREA

Emily unlocks a tall storage cabinet and rummages through it. She emerges with a glass vial and a metallic, palm-sized cylindrical device: an air-jet syringe. She fills the air-jet syringe from the vial and shoves it into the black bag.

INT. PASSAGEWAY

Emily hurries down the passageway. She arrives at a door with a guard seated beside it, his feet propped up on a chair, a Superman comic hoisted over his face. He lowers the comic. It's Marsiniac.

Emily nods at him, heads for the door. He leaps up and blocks her way.

MARSINIAC  
Hold there, doctor. You do not have  
authorization to see the prisoner.

EMILY  
Yes, I do.

She opens her bag and rummages inside while Marsiniac waits. In a sudden move she swings her leg around in a fast T'ai Chi kick that catches Marsiniac full in the face.

Marsiniac crumples to the floor. Standing over his body she continues the T'ai Chi routine for a beat, then stoops down to his body gripping the air-jet syringe.

Marsiniac grabs her and pulls her down. They grapple. He goes for his gun. Emily tries to jab him with the air-jet syringe.

He gets on top of her, frees his gun, inches it toward her head, grinning. She knees him in the groin. As he clutches up, she jabs the syringe into his neck. SHARP HISS.

He collapses instantly. She retrieves her black bag and his revolver, takes the keys from his belt, unlocks the door.

INT. WYATT'S CELL

Wyatt is curled up on a cot asleep in gray boxer shorts and a tee-shirt. Emily stoops by his side. She shakes him.

EMILY  
(out of breath)  
Wyatt. Wyatt! It's me.

He opens his eyes-- a foggy grin-- and sweeps her into a hug.

WYATT  
Thank God you're okay!

Emily's way too panicked to enjoy the hug. She pushes him away.

EMILY  
We've got to get out of here.

She surveys Wyatt.

EMILY  
You need some clothes.

WYATT  
Yeah. And a shower. Too bad, huh.

She laughs.

LATER:

They drag Marsiniac into the room. She removes his shoes as Wyatt unbuckles his belt. Together they tug off his pants. Both stare down at him.

WYATT  
Kind of a small man, wouldn't you say?

EMILY  
Well, I know what Freud would say.

WYATT  
Yeah. "Vat an asshole!"

LATER:

Wyatt, dressed in Marsiniac's pants, buttons up his shirt.

EMILY

Now all we have to do is figure a way out of here. After that we can try something easy, like flying to the moon.

WYATT

We have to go for Zeke.

EMILY

Are you sure?

WYATT

I'm sure.

Emily regards him, skeptical.

WYATT

I'm a pilot, remember? Pilots fly.

Emily nods, a hint of pride in him stealing across her face.

WYATT

Besides, if I go totally nuts I know this great shrink. She does this thing with hypnosis ...

She punches him playfully. They embrace, then quickly detach.

EMILY

Come on. Follow me.

INT. BROAD FLUORESCENT-LIT PASSAGEWAY

Wyatt and Emily walk briskly down a long, underground passageway. Wyatt's pants are too tight, pinching him as he walks. A lab tech passes them, oblivious.

DeSicca approaches. Slowing, they pass each other. They nod at him, professional. He gives them a long, puzzled look, then darts into the first room he comes to.

WYATT

Let's move it.

They begin to run. Wyatt struggles in his sausage-tight pants. An ALARM sounds.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
(over alarm)  
Priority One. Code Yellow. Priority  
One. Code Yellow. Secure the base.

They sprint down the corridor, turn into another, then another. Emily pulls Wyatt into a hard left turn. The short corridor ahead dead ends in a metal door.

EMILY  
That's the hangar! Go!

They reach the door, tug. Nothing. It's locked. The ALARM continues to blare.

EMILY  
Shit!

Emily bangs on the door. Wyatt slams his shoulder against it, winces. The alarm stops. They hammer on the door together. A SOFT HISS catches Wyatt's attention.

WYATT  
What's that?

They look around for the source of the sound and spy a nozzle in the ceiling.

EMILY  
Gas! Get down! On the floor!

They drop to the floor. They try to breathe through their sleeves, but the gas is already taking effect.

Heavy footfalls ECHO in the main corridor. Vision CAREENS. The ECHOING FOOTFALLS ring louder, more DISTORTED.

Wyatt and Emily turn to face their captors, backs against the locked door. They grip hands and wait. As consciousness slips away Emily turns to Wyatt.

EMILY  
I love you.

Behind them the door to the hanger swings open. They tumble through. Coleridge, shirt sleeves rolled up workman-like, tugs them over the threshold into a stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL

Coleridge slams the door against the gas and the guards, then bolts it.

Wyatt, coming to, coughing hard, grabs Coleridge's arm. He spies a tattoo on his forearm: a series of nested circles and sun-bursts exactly like those inscribed in Zeke. Wyatt blinks to clear his vision. He scrutinizes the man more closely.

WYATT  
(coughing)  
Commander?

A vague look of recognition flickers across Coleridge's face. A tentative nod. Then nothing. Emily slowly rouses.

COLERIDGE  
Best get to Zeke. C'mon.

A dull POUNDING on the door convinces Wyatt he's right.

INT. ZEKE'S HANGAR

Coleridge limps into the hangar. Emily and Wyatt stumble in behind him, coughing. The hangar is deserted. In the middle sits Zeke, a vision of placidity amidst all the SHOUTING and commotion from outside.

Coleridge hurries to the main hangar door and bolts it manually. Wyatt grabs three light-blue flight suits from the rack. He shoves one at Emily. She takes it.

COLERIDGE  
Get to Zeke! They won't do nothing  
to hurt her. Best change inside.

Wyatt shoves a flight suit at Coleridge.

WYATT  
You're coming with us, Commander  
Pruitt.

Emily looks on, stunned. Coleridge shakes his head.

EMILY  
Pruitt?

WYATT  
C'mon, Commander!

PRUITT  
I can't fly her. Not like you.

He shakes his head and backs away. Wyatt stands firm.

WYATT  
Come on! Please!

A long moment.

EMILY  
It's too late, Wyatt.

PRUITT  
Go on now. You fly her real good.  
Take her on home.

Wyatt regards him warmly. He offers his hand. Pruitt looks down at the hand. Slowly, he clasps it.

WYATT  
Jonas Pruitt, you're still the  
best.

Pruitt shrugs, nods-- a thin smile. Emily tugs at Wyatt. He releases Pruitt's hand. They turn and run up the ramp into Zeke, clutching their flight suits.

INT. ZEKE

Emily and Wyatt enter, close the hatch door. Sighing and grinning triumph at each other they turn to find--

Colonel Wolfe already in a flight suit. He stands off to one side. In his left hand he dangles two headbands while in his right he grips a silvery revolver pointed their way.

WOLFE  
What a coincidence, running into  
the two of you here. You wouldn't  
be trying to steal top secret  
government property, would you?  
That would authorize me to use  
deadly force.

Wyatt and Emily stand frozen.

WOLFE  
Thank you for bringing him to me,  
doctor. Now we do things my way.

Wyatt turns on Emily with a stunned look of betrayal. She shakes her head 'no,' mouthing a choked protest.

WOLFE  
Shall we? Wyatt, suit up. Not you,  
Emily. You were warned.

WYATT  
But the grav-null field.

WOLFE

One less complication for our  
little experiment. Now move it!

Emily stands panicked, clutching the flight suit to her chest. Wyatt grimly strips off the guard's uniform and dons the flight suit.

WOLFE

(as Wyatt changes)

I've been mulling over all that One  
Mind crap and it happens to fit with  
what I've been wanting to do with  
you ever since they hauled your  
sorry Navy ass back here.

Wolfe thrusts a headband at Wyatt.

EMILY

Don't, Wyatt! Don't put it on.

Wolfe doesn't even look at her.

EMILY

Remember Coleridge.

WYATT

(to Wolfe)

She means Pruitt, doesn't she?

WOLFE

Well bravo. So you figured out the  
masquerade. You want a prize?

He levels the gun at Wyatt.

WOLFE

Put on the damn headband and take  
your seat. We've got work to do.

Wyatt moves slowly, contemplating a rush at Wolfe.

WOLFE

These alloy bullets will rip you  
apart without any damage to Zeke.

Wyatt sits slowly, reluctantly. He dons the headband,  
switches it on. Wolfe nods in satisfaction.

WOLFE

Now take her up. When I join you on  
the interface, you follow my lead.

(grins)

'Course you won't have much choice.

Wyatt's face clenches in concentration.

WOLFE

Oh, almost forgot. Goodbye, Emily.

Emily stands terrified, backed against the wall of the craft. She shifts the flight suit back and forth over her body, hoping to somehow shield herself from the deadly effects of the grav-null field, waiting for the moment of death. The seconds tick by.

WOLFE

Don't fuck with me, son.

Wolfe waits another beat, then hurls himself into a seat and yanks on his headband. He concentrates. He grins, savage.

Wyatt's face contorts sharply. His arms flail, muscles twitch, then his face relaxes as if dead, except for the lingering ghost of a smile. PUSH IN on his smile to:

WYATT'S MIND:

Harsh, angry bursts of color; grating, immobilizing NOISE. In their midst, IMAGES OF WOLFE flicker in and out:

Teenage Wolfe poking a young boy repeatedly in the chest.

Wolfe at a chess board, setting his queen down, very pleased with himself, grinning at his unseen opponent. He mouths, "Checkmate."

Wolfe, late 20s, shrugging "it's not my problem" as a sad-eyed young woman drops her head and slinks away, hands cradling her belly.

Wolfe picking himself off the floor with a smirk as Coleridge is dragged off screaming by MPs. The screams ECHO to:

Wolfe's face lit by a strange luminescence, locked in an angry, determined glare. He wears a headband. His flight suit is darker blue and cut differently. He pilots Zeke.

BACK TO SCENE.

WYATT

(weak)

You were there, Colonel. In the Gulf.

Wolfe's expression doesn't flinch.

WYATT

I see you. Flying Zeke.

WOLFE  
(long beat)  
Yeah. I was there.

INT. ZEKE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Wolfe pilots Zeke in the older flight suit and headband. With the enhanced night vision of the headband Wolfe sites two F-14s approaching along different vectors.

WOLFE (V.O.)  
First operational test of Project  
Ezekiel under combat conditions.  
Only turned out we weren't the only  
ones observing.

Something above Wolfe grabs his attention. His eyes go wide in fear and rage at:

A HUGE, SHADOWY DISK, like Zeke, only the size of a football field.

Wolfe's jaw-locked stare is snapped by the explosion of Spur's plane, followed closely by Wyatt's plummeting into a fatal spiral.

WOLFE (V.O.)  
I'd fired before I even knew it, I  
wanted to bring down that alien son  
of a bitch so bad. Forgot I was  
already locked onto your F-14s. So  
you guys burned while that bastard  
sailed off scot-free.

BACK TO SCENE.

WOLFE  
Sorry about your friends. But  
that's war.

Wyatt's face tightens, determined.

WYATT  
And what about the cattle? You've  
butchered thousands. That war too?

WOLFE  
God damned right it is. A few dead  
cows? That's nothing to win a war.  
Now get this bird in the air.

Wyatt's face: no reaction. Wolfe scowls.

WYATT'S MIND:

Wyatt stares into Wolfe's eyes-- cold, penetrating. One eye grows larger, larger, engulfing Wyatt, who tumbles into the black well of the pupil in a hapless SCREAM.

ANGLE ON WOLFE:

His grinning face in the headband. Confident. In control.

WYATT'S MIND:

Wyatt still falling through blackness. The blackness becomes night sky and he's ...

EXT. NIGHT SKY, THE PERSIAN GULF (WYATT'S FLASHBACK)

... plummeting through the air in the seat of his old F-14. The plane explodes beneath him in a shower of fiery debris--

WYATT (V.O.)

Noooooo!

-- and he lands hard, onto the flight deck of a carrier.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK, CARRIER GEORGE WASHINGTON (WYATT'S MIND)

An F-14 touches down, barreling right at him. He rolls out of the way, shielding his face with his arms from the fiery exhaust. His roll brings him right up against--

An officer's dress shoes and pant legs. He looks up. It's Hal. Hal nods, grim-- so it's come to this. He holds out his hand to Wyatt, just as he did in Wyatt's dream.

ANGLE ON WOLFE:

A determined grin gives way to a ripple of discomfort. The discomfort widens to surprise, shock, worry, as ...

WYATT'S MIND:

Wyatt takes Hal's hand-- a firm clasp. They regard each other warmly. Hal hauls Wyatt to his feet.

BACK TO SCENE.

Wolfe writhes, muscles clenched. He chokes out a cry. One arm twitches up. His whole body follows in a violent spasm that leaves him slumped in his chair.

His gun clatters to the floor. Wyatt tears off his headband, leaps to his feet, glares down at Wolfe's unconscious body.

WYATT

That's for Jonas Pruitt.

He remembers Emily. She's still huddled against the wall, petrified. She regards him with awe.

WYATT

You okay?

She slowly comes unstuck, hurls herself into his arms with a sob. The hatch opens. HISS. They freeze. Pruitt stands there.

PRUITT

Best get moving. And lock the hatch. Here.

Pruitt motions to a concealed switch on the wall. Wyatt pokes at Wolfe's body with his foot.

WYATT

Can you help me get this sack of shit out of here?

Wyatt carefully removes Wolfe's headband and sets it on a seat. He and Pruitt drag the body to the hatch and roll it out onto the ramp.

Wyatt picks up Wolfe's gun, hands it to Pruitt. He takes it, stares at it, then shuffles off. A dull METALLIC POUNDING rings out from the main hangar door. Wyatt spins on Emily.

WYATT

Get that flight suit on!

Emily starts to unbutton her blouse. Wyatt stares at her.

EMILY

You just going to stand there and stare?

Wyatt nods, flashes her a boyish grin. Exasperated, Emily strips down to panties and bra. She wriggles her legs into the flight suit.

WYATT

Wait. Any metal in that bra? Is it underwire?

She shoots him a baffled look and shrugs.

WYATT

Get rid of it. The watch too. No metal.

She turns her back and removes the bra, tosses it and her watch onto the pile of clothing. She pulls the suit up over her breasts, arms and shoulders and zips it shut.

She turns. With a challenging look, she removes her earrings. She fumbles with the pin holding back her hair, yanks it out. Her hair cascades down around her shoulders.

WYATT

Takes a woman forever to get ready.

Emily's look darkens. She tosses the hairpin and the earrings onto her piled clothing. One earring rolls away unnoticed. She scoops up the entire pile and heaves it out the hatch.

EMILY

That good enough?

An EXPLOSION is followed by SHOUTS as the guards blast through the hangar door.

Emily spies the stray earring as Wyatt hits the button to close the hatch. She dives for it and underhands it through the narrowing opening an instant before it slides shut.

WYATT

Nice toss!

Wyatt locks the hatch, leaps to his seat, tugs on the headband. It comes alive with colors. He concentrates. Emily takes a seat. She fingers Wolfe's headband, braces herself.

INT. HANGAR

Guards pour into the hangar. Two guards kneel on the ramp by Wolfe's body. One checks for a pulse, the other picks Emily's bra off Wolfe's thigh with a bewildered look. Wolfe rouses.

More guards rush toward Zeke's hatch. They try to open it. GUNSHOTS ring out. Two of them drop. The others fall back and look wildly around for the source of the gunfire.

WOLFE

A laser! A laser!

A guard hands him a laser gun-- the deadly black cylinder from the firing range. Another GUNSHOT. A bullet WHIZZES past Wolfe's head.

Enraged, his eyes search for the sniper. He spies Pruitt up in the catwalks with the silvery revolver sighted on him. He drops to the floor as a GUNSHOT takes out the guard next to him.

In a single fluid movement the Colonel leaps to his feet, shoulders the laser and fires. A BRIGHT RUBY BEAM stabs up into the catwalks.

Tiny flames lick and smoke curls from a neat hole burned into Pruitt's forehead. He tumbles down.

INT. ZEKE (WYATT'S POV IN THE HEADBAND)

Pruitt's body falls, looming large. He crashes onto Zeke. Pruitt's scarred face and the strange tattoo on his arm are plastered for a beat against Wyatt's vision before he slides off.

WYATT

Aghh!

INT. HANGAR

Zeke leaps into the air of the hangar just as Wolfe fires a second brilliant ruby beam across the space where the hatch had been. Zeke accelerates straight up with blinding speed and SMASHES through the roof of the hangar.

The guards stare up at a patch of sky framed within a jagged, gaping hole. Wolfe follows their glances, grim. He yanks a cell phone off the belt of a nearby guard.

WOLFE

Borrow your phone?

EXT. THE DESERT

On a hillside a group of UFO fanatics are gathered in lawn chairs, sun umbrellas, clutching binoculars or sipping drinks. Zeke hovers, then whizzes by. They gape and cheer and spill their drinks all over themselves.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt sits focused, his gaze fixed, unblinking. Emily regards him, tense. Her fingers toy with the headband.

WYATT

What the hell do we do now?

EMILY

You're asking me?

HAL (V.O.)

It's your call, buddy.

Wyatt's face falls. This is precisely what he's been anticipating and dreading. He tenses.

HAL (V.O.)

Yup, me again. I'm looking for a pilot who can work with me and not get all crazy, 'cause here comes the Air Force and they look like they mean business.

Wyatt struggles. Finally he relaxes and accepts the inevitable, even if it means he is crazy.

WYATT

Nice to be flying with you again.

EMILY (O.C.)

(puzzled)

Thanks.

WYATT

Commence evasive action?

EMILY

Sure, why not?

EXT. SKY

Four Air Force F-16s arc up out of the distant blue. Zeke accelerates, pulls away from them. A dozen more appear. They converge on Zeke from all directions.

INT. AIR FORCE F-16

A PILOT and his COPILOT streak in pursuit of Zeke.

PILOT

(filtered)

I get the strangest feeling this is one of ours.

EXT. SKY

A multitude of missiles streak towards Zeke.

HAL (V.O.)

Missile track, five, nine and two o'clock. Also six and ten. Hell, they're everywhere. I suggest you vacate ground zero, partner.

WYATT (O.S.)

Got to make sure they don't lock onto another target.

HAL (V.O.)  
I appreciate the sentiment, but  
let's not ...  
(builds to a shout)  
... take it too far!

Zeke holds position until the last possible second, then accelerates straight up at impossible speed. The missiles detonate where Zeke had been.

A fireball spews upward followed by a deafening EXPLOSION. Zeke rides the blast wave higher.

A late missile streaks through the smoke and locks onto one of the F-16s approaching from the opposite side.

INT. TARGET F-16

The COPILOT spies the missile on radar and shouts out to the PILOT.

COPILOT  
(filtered)  
Radar lock! Missile half-mile!

EXT. F-16

The plane banks into a steep dive, but too late to shake the missile. It tears into the wing, blasts it away. The plane plummets in a spiraling dive, trailing flames and smoke.

INT. ZEKE

On Wyatt-- eyes wide, upset.

WYATT  
He's not going to make it.

Emily eyes Wyatt, concerned. Is this Pruitt's syndrome?

EMILY  
Are you okay?

EXT. ZEKE

Zeke dives after the F-16. Wyatt matches his spin to that of the plane. They revolve rapidly side by side-- dizzying.

He slows the F-16s spin against his-- metal SQUEALING against ceramic polymer-- finally stabilizing it completely until Zeke glides along with the F-16 perched unsteadily atop it.

HAL (V.O.)  
Why it's deja-vu all over again.

I/E. F-16 (ATOP ZEKE)

Pilot and copilot stare out, stunned at the sudden cessation of their spinning dive.

PILOT (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
What the-- What's happening?

COPILOT (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
We're-- Holy shit! We're being  
abducted.

EXT. F-16 ATOP ZEKE

The canopy blows off as they eject.

HAL (V.O.)  
Guess they didn't trust your  
flying, Flash.

The other F-16s converge back onto Zeke. Zeke spins, dumps the F-16 fuselage, then lofts vertically at tremendous speed.

INT. ZEKE

Emily regards Wyatt, really worried now. She fingers the headband. Looks at Wyatt. Back at the headband. She makes her decision, puts it on. It pulses to life.

EXT. BLUE SKY

Zeke soars through a clear sky of high altitude deep blue. Not a plane in sight.

HAL (V.O.)  
We've got company.

WYATT (O.S.)  
Bandits? Where?

HAL (V.O.)  
Not out there. Greetings, Emily.

EMILY (O.S.)  
Oh my God. Hawk?

HAL (V.O.)  
You can call me Hal.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt and Emily, both in headbands, call out at each other. They stare forward, yet make no eye contact. They cannot see each other while wearing the headbands, only the pov of Zeke.

WYATT

Take it off, Emily. Now!

EMILY

You need my help, especially if you're hearing Hawk.

HAL (V.O.)

Focus. Try to think of yourselves as a "we" rather than an "I." See what happens.

Their faces relax and-- Hal materializes. He wears his flight suit from the F-14, but his body shifts and glimmers quasi-transparent. Through it shows, in varying degrees of penetration, not only the interior of the craft, but the sky beyond too, as if Hal embodied the pov of the headband itself: the consciousness of Zeke.

HAL

Much better. Thanks.

Wyatt and Emily stare at Hal, then at each other.

WYATT

I must be going nuts. I can see you. Both of you.

EMILY

(reluctant)

So can I.

HAL

The One Mind sees all.

A quiet moment as they all regard each other.

EXT. SKY

The Air Force F-16s catch up to them. Zeke stobes through a series of incredible aerobatics exactly like the real aliens.

INT. AIR FORCE F-16

The pilot tries to track Zeke's movements for a kill.

PILOT  
(filtered)  
I take it back. This is definitely  
not one of ours.

EXT. SKY

Zeke strobos higher and higher, shrinking to a tiny speck,  
then disappearing altogether.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

The earth stretches below Zeke. Cloud patterns swirl across  
the sere Southwest portion of the North American land mass.  
To the west glistens the Pacific.

Emily stares out, awestruck. A saucer resembling Zeke  
approaches, a tiny dot growing larger against the backdrop of  
the earth. It advances in clumsy fits and starts.

INTERCUT-- ZEKE'S INTERIOR/ OUTER SPACE

WYATT  
That what I think it is?

A lightning-bolt-like particle beam zaps out with a CRACKLE  
of electrostatic discharge. Zeke leaps sideways, evading it.

HAL  
Nope. Just more Air Force.  
Accelerated particle beam. Look  
familiar, Wyatt?

More saucers appear. They maneuver to surround Zeke, but Zeke  
dances across the sky and evades them easily.

The saucers discharge particle beams in rapid succession.  
Zeke dodges the dizzying, sizzling array of crisscrossing  
beams, strobing in and out between them in a blur of speed  
and maneuverability.

WYATT  
Now this is what I call flying!

The saucers cannot touch him. Until-- a ZAP of electrostatic  
discharge lights the sky all around them. It originates from  
a new saucer that has appeared from out of nowhere.

WYATT  
What the--?

INT. NEW SAUCER

Colonel Wolfe in flight suit and headband pilots Zeke's secret back-up. He grimaces in concentration.

WOLFE

If I understand the One fucking  
Mind correctly, you're gonna know  
exactly who's on your ass now, Navy  
punk. Here comes the Wolfman.

Wolfe concentrates hard, broadcasting pure raging hatred.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt, Emily and Hal eye each other, worried.

WYATT

Whoever's flying that thing has to be  
using the interface. I can feel him.

EMILY

It's Wolfe. You should have killed  
him.

HAL

No! Don't start thinking like he  
does. Not out here. Or you'll  
attract the wrong kind of  
attention.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Wyatt dances Zeke everywhere as Wolfe's saucer lashes out with particle beam discharges. Zeke strobes away from Wolfe, but Wolfe pursues. The moon looms larger behind the saucers.

EXT. THE MOON

Zeke dives for the moon's surface with Wolfe in pursuit. They zip in and out between jagged mountains, circling in and around craters. Wolfe cannot catch him, nor can Wyatt break away. Zeke leaps back into space, with Wolfe still following.

INT. WOLFE'S SAUCER

Wolfe-- rapt in the interface, totally focused. His thumb hovers above a button on a joystick on the weapons console.

WOLFE

Come on, punk, come on. You may be  
too slippery for the Wolfman to  
catch, but-- not-- to-- anticipate!

Wolfe stabs at the button.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Wolfe's particle beam fires and sure enough, Zeke strobos almost, but not quite, into it's path. But Wolfe's saucer is too close. The discharge lights up Zeke and simultaneously arcs back to halo his own craft-- all in a fraction of a second.

INT. ZEKE

Lightning forks and sizzles. Everything crackles in a blaze of searing white. Hal breaks up in static, solidifies again.

HAL

We're hit! Particle beam's disrupted the propulsion field.

WYATT

We're hit? Oh God!

Wyatt's face goes numb, teetering on the brink of a flashback. He catches Emily regarding him with concern. He shakes himself out of it, smiles at her, grateful. She smiles back.

INT. WOLFE'S SAUCER

Colonel Wolfe rages, thumbing the button on his weapons console repeatedly.

WOLFE

Edwards, this is Z-two-zero. Bandit disabled, but my beam weapon's shorted out. Get your clowns over here and finish him.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt is back to himself.

WYATT

Hal, what's our status?

HAL

Stranded in moon orbit.

Wyatt nods. He looks at Hal, smiles weakly at Emily.

WYATT

When his weapon's recharged, we're cinder.

EMILY  
(peering o.s.)  
We may not have long to wait.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

The Edwards saucers glide into battle formation around Wolfe's craft, facing off against Zeke.

INT. WOLFE'S SAUCER

Wolfe's face lights in a savage grin.

WOLFE  
Well, well, well. Look who's  
decided to join the party.  
(into radio)  
Coordinate beam weapons, new  
priority target vector 0-3-2, 0-2-9.  
Fire on the count of three. Adios,  
you son of a bitch. One-two-THREE!

INT. ZEKE

HAL  
Oh shit.

WYATT AND EMILY  
Oh shit.

INTERCUT-- OUTER SPACE/ ZEKE'S INTERIOR/ WOLFE'S SAUCER

The particle beams all lash out as one in a devastating, prolonged blast of pure energy. It surges directly at Zeke-- and shoots by overhead, well high of the mark.

WYATT  
What the--

The energy coruscates blue-white along the leading edge of a HUGE, SHADOWY DISK that has appeared in the b.g., setting it aglow before sizzling out. The disk glides majestically on into the frame, unaffected by the blast. It is magnificent.

WOLFE  
Fire again! Now!

Another lightning pulse streams from the six saucers. The new disk absorbs this too without apparent damage.

Wyatt and Emily stare at the new arrival in terror and awe.

HAL

Fear not. Mother has arrived. And  
not a moment too soon.

The Edwards saucers break formation and scatter back towards earth. But not Wolfe.

WOLFE

Alien son of a bitch! We fried your  
ass. You're dead. Dead!

The huge disk, the MOTHERSHIP, begins to pulse with a strange luminosity bright enough to rival the moon in the b.g.

A wide beam of harsh white light stabs out from the mothership's side to envelope Wolfe's saucer. It draws the saucer towards the mothership.

Wolfe in his headband concentrates with vein-popping intensity, trying to counter the pull of the beam.

WOLFE

You-- can-- not.

He hammers the weapons console with his fist.

WOLFE

You have no right! Noooo!

Wolfe tears off his headband, beaded in sweat, scared, defeated. He stares blankly ahead.

HAL

The micro-chip of the One Mind  
known as Gerald Wolfe is due for  
some serious reprogramming.

Wolfe's saucer passes right through the mothership's walls, swallowed within its blinding luminosity.

Wolfe's body blazes as if set afire by the intense beam. His face is locked in a rictus. His body begins to fade, going transparent like Hal's. As it does, his face suddenly relaxes --into wide-eyed, childlike awe. The light cuts off. Wolfe is gone.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt stares riveted at the beam of light as the last of Wolfe's saucer is absorbed into the mothership.

Wyatt's blank stare is mirrored by Emily. Their headbands pulse in exact synchrony: the same colors on the same beats.

EXT. NIGHT SKY, PERSIAN GULF (FLASHBACK)

An identical beam of intense white light bathes Wyatt and Hal, floated upward in the seats of their F-14 away from the fiery debris of the explosion below them. Hal slumps unconscious in his seat.

They approach the mothership. They pass through the luminous walls of the ship.

INT. MOTHERSHIP (FLASHBACK)

A host of typical alien GRAYS-- flat oval faces, slanted black pools for eyes-- grab at Wyatt in a shadowy, crazily angular room that defies accurate perception. They carry him off screaming.

CUT TO:

Wyatt on a metal table straining to escape. One LARGE GRAY approaches, grasping a needle-like probe in its three-fingered hand. It brings the probe right up to Wyatt's eye ... then stabs through the eye (POV) into Wyatt's brain.

WYATT

Nooooo!

EMILY (O.S.)

(shrieks)

BACK TO SCENE.

Emily's face contorts with terror. She flings her hands up to ward off the probe, real for her too in the headband.

Hal stands beside her, one hand hovering at her shoulder, the other waving up and down in front of her eyes, cutting across and through her raised hands. He'd like to grab her and shake her-- if only he had a physical body.

HAL

Emily! Stop! Stop it!

Emily slowly comes to herself, still trembling.

EMILY

An implant. I was right. It's a classic abduction.

HAL

No, it's a rescue, a simple rescue.

Emily looks incredulous. If this is Hal's idea of a rescue, they'd've been better off with Wolfe.

HAL

You created that nightmare, not Wyatt. Those were your thoughts, made real for both of you by the headband.

EMILY

Should I take it off?

Hal shakes his head no.

HAL

Just let him remember on his own.

Emily settles back. Her eyes close.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOTHERSHIP (FLASHBACK)

Wyatt and Hal lie supine, unconscious, levitated in the air in a quiet, luminous golden room. A shimmering curtain of rainbow colors twine and play about their bodies.

Throughout the room vague configurations of color coalesce and disperse, giving the impression of shifting ENERGY BEINGS who minister to the two injured pilots.

BACK TO SCENE.

EMILY

(awed whisper)

My God. Fractures knitting in seconds. Contusions resolving.

HAL

Out among the stars there are good guys and bad guys, just like on earth.

Emily and Hal suddenly find themselves bathed in the same shimmering rainbow colors.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

The mothership floats directly above Zeke, dwarfing the tiny craft. From its underside a cone of rainbow-colored light curtains down over Zeke.

INT. ZEKE

Wyatt rouses with a peaceful smile at Emily. They stare in childlike awe at the rainbow colors that play and shimmer all around them.

Hal drifts over to Wyatt, drops a hand onto his shoulder, which overlaps into his body. The rainbow colors disappear.

HAL  
You're gonna be okay now, buddy.

WYATT  
I remember.

Hal nods knowingly.

HAL  
They sent you back. Me ... let's say they made me an offer I couldn't refuse.

EMILY  
They kept you? Against your will?

Hal smiles, shakes his head.

HAL  
I was dead. They had to keep me. I'm part of them now. Part of the extraterrestrial group mind.

Emily finally puts it all together.

EMILY  
A group mind. Of course! That's why Pruitt and the others went insane.

HAL  
Yup. It's just too damn big-- and a mite on the bizarre side too-- for your average human brain to comprehend.

EMILY  
But Wyatt had a safe link to it. Through you.

Hal takes a slow bow. His body fades out and in, shimmering.

HAL  
I hear Mother calling. Time to go.

WYATT  
But Zeke's damaged.

HAL  
All systems are go.

WYATT

I can't fly this thing without you,  
Hawk. For Christ sakes, I'm no  
astronaut.

HAL

You'll do fine. Just stay connected  
to the One Mind.

WYATT

And how exactly am I supposed to do  
that?

HAL

The same way you reached me, buddy.  
(mysterious smile)  
Emily, it's been a pleasure. Hang  
in there with him. He's a crazy  
man, but a good man.

Emily nods, teary-eyed.

WYATT

Hawk. Please. Don't go.

HAL

Where could I possibly go that you  
can't reach me. I love you, Flash.

Wyatt is moved to tears. Hal's body shimmers and winks out.  
Wyatt and Emily sit in silence. Wyatt flashes a thumbs up in  
Hal's direction.

WYATT

Love you too, man. Adios.

The cabin brightens to daylight intensity as the mothership  
pulses to life overhead, then dims again as it disappears,  
leaving an ethereal golden trail in its wake.

Wyatt and Emily regard each other for a long moment.

WYATT

Guess we'd better get ol' Zeke here  
moving before we become target  
practice for somebody else's top-  
secret weapons project.

EMILY

Wyatt, fly me to the moon. Just  
once. Please.

Wyatt smiles, nods, settles into his seat.

WYATT

Once around the moon if you please,  
Zeke.

He waits. Nothing happens. His headband pulses faint and dull. A look of consternation, then he grins, shrugs and gives it another try, closing his eyes and concentrating hard.

INTERCUT-- OUTER SPACE/ ZEKE'S INTERIOR

Zeke floats, stranded.

WYATT

It's not responding.

EMILY

What do you mean, "not responding?"

WYATT

Nothing's happening. I can't get  
any juice.

EMILY

Come on, let's try it together.

They both concentrate. Harder. Nothing. The light in the craft dims. Emily shivers, hugs herself. Frost begins to form on the sunburst symbols. Real fear grips them both.

EMILY

We've lost power. Could Hal be  
wrong? He said there was no damage.

WYATT

I don't know, I don't know what's  
going on.

He closes his eyes and gives it one more shot. Nada.

WYATT

Hal? HAL!

He leaps up, slams his fist against the chair, steadies himself. He grows somber, regards Emily. A long beat.

WYATT

I don't believe this. I refuse to  
believe this. I will not lose you.  
Not after all we've been through.

EMILY

Yeah, it's been one hell of a day.

WYATT

Emily ... I really love you.

She wipes away a tear, nods, frightened.

EMILY

I know. I love you too.

She looks around, taking in the moon, the bright jewel of the earth. She regards Wyatt -- a soulful look, full of love.

EMILY

If we have to die ... I can't think of a more beautiful place or anyone else I'd rather be with than you.

He goes to her, wraps her in a tight embrace. Both are teary-eyed. As they kiss their headbands pulse to life. The cabin lights brighten. They startle, regard each other.

WYATT

Maybe we should try that again.

They embrace again, kiss, very passionate. Emily loses herself in the kiss. Wyatt has to hold her off as--

The moon looms up fast: huge and magnificent.

Zeke swings into a graceful arc around the moon in a tight surface orbit.

HAL (V.O.)

See. You do know how to connect to the One Mind.

Wyatt and Emily look around for the source of Hal's voice, knowing they won't find him anywhere outside themselves. Wyatt gives a thumbs-up.

Emily's eyes meet Wyatt's. He grips her hand as they take in the beauty of the moment.

WYATT

Well, where to now, my love?

EMILY

Can't we just stay here?

Wyatt smiles. He gives her a moment, then nods outward.

WYATT

We've got the whole world to choose from.

She looks out at the distant blue globe of the earth.

EMILY

And nowhere to hide. No place where  
Ashford won't hunt us down.

Wyatt saddens, knowing she's right. He brightens.

WYATT

Hey! I know! How 'bout Las Vegas?

She shoots him a look.

EMILY

I understand there's a tribe in the  
Indonesian archipelago that believes  
their ancestors came from the stars.  
If we landed there we'd be treated  
like gods.... No electricity, no  
plumbing. But some really fine  
festivals and a lot of roast pig.

WYATT

We can probably get that in Vegas  
too, y'know.

EMILY

Heck, I just want to go home. With you.

Wyatt stares at her with sad, loving eyes, wishing he had a  
solution to their dilemma. He brightens.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Zeke arrows toward the earth, reenters the atmosphere.

EXT. VIRGINIA, OUTSIDE WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY (AERIAL)

Zeke's pitched descent flattens out above the Virginia  
countryside. Checkerboard plots of land, irregular clusters  
of trees and low rolling hills give way to rural  
neighborhoods as the landscape whizzes by below.

In the distant background across the Potomac River a  
diminutive Washington Monument and Capital dome poke skyward.  
Zeke slows, drops lower, comes to a stop. It hovers over a  
good size farm house with some land.

EMILY (O.S.)

There's no place like home, there's  
no place like home.

WYATT (O.S.)  
Care to 'drop in' for a visit?  
Introduce me to the Congressman and  
your mom?

EMILY (O.S.)  
Mmm... maybe another time.

EXT. LAFAYETTE PARK OUTSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE

A small crowd is gathered in a demonstration. Their placards read: "Seal Our Borders," "America for Americans" and "Aliens Go Home." A cluster of reporters and TV cameramen cover the demonstration. A SPEAKER addresses the crowd.

SPEAKER  
We will not stand for these  
trespasses on our native soil.

Zeke whooshes by overhead and comes to a dead stop in midair above a large, clear section of the White House lawn. All heads turn. Screams. Oohs. Aahhs.

People scatter, running pell-mell away from the craft, except for the press who sprint towards it, scrambling over the ironwork fence, cameras and all.

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE

The PRESIDENT meets with top military brass, one of them General Ashford, chest ribbons in full display.

A presidential aide, TOM INMAN, rushes into the room followed by a host of secret service agents. They surround the president.

INMAN  
Mr. President! Urgent. A craft of  
some kind has landed on the White  
House lawn.

PRESIDENT  
What? Some kind of stunt?

INMAN  
No, Mr. President. It appears to be  
a flying saucer.

PRESIDENT  
My God! Call the Air Force!

INMAN  
Sir. It's got Air Force markings.

The President eyes Ashford, whose cell phone BEEPS. He answers, grateful for the distraction.

ASHFORD (TO PHONE)  
Ashford here.

DESICCA'S VOICE (OVER PHONE)  
It's DeSicca, sir. Colonel Wolfe tagged them with a particle beam, but an alien craft showed up and we lost the trail. Seem to have lost the Colonel too. We'll keep searching--

ASHFORD (TO PHONE)  
Idiot. I know exactly where they are.

DESICCA (OVER PHONE)  
Sir?

ASHFORD (TO PHONE)  
Heads are going to roll, I promise you that.

PRESIDENT  
My thoughts exactly, General. Shall we go greet our visitors? I'm most interested to hear their story.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE LAWN

A crowd of reporters mobs Wyatt and Emily as they leap down from Zeke, hand in hand.

On the ground they embrace to the FLASHES of cameras which strobe up and down off their flight suits like an alien flight pattern. A REPORTER stabs a mike in their direction.

REPORTER  
Would you like to make a statement?

WYATT  
Why, I believe we just did.

They embrace again-- FLASH-- more passionate-- FLASH to:

INSERT-- FRONT PAGE OF TABLOID. A PHOTO OF THEIR EMBRACE. The headline blares: "ALIENS MAKE CONTACT."

FADE OUT.

END CREDITS TO THE BEATLES' "ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE."