

BEST GUNS

Written by

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Based on 'Top Gun' (1986)

1 EXT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER DECK - AFTERNOON 1

A montage of Navy deck CREW waving AIRCRAFT around against a backdrop of pristine ocean and puffs of steam, atop the USS CRAZYHORSE carrier.

F-14 TOMCATS take off and land on the deck, guided by the crew members.

The montage rolls into...

2 INT. CARRIER COMMAND ROOM - AFTERNOON 2

A team of Navy ANALYSTS sit around the edges of a small command room, looking at sweeping radar screens.

One of the analysts, a guy in his 20s, writes something on a map, rolling it up quickly to cross the room as the CAPTAIN enters.

ANALYST

Sir!

The Captain--completely bald, edgy, angry, and always smoking a cigar--presses two fingers of his cigar-toting hand against the guy's chest.

CAPTAIN

(aggressive)

This better be good. Tell me what we've got, rookie!

The analyst lays out the map on the Captain's work bench, pointing.

ANALYST

Sir we think it's a Mig, behaving in a fairly nebulous manner, on an *irrelevant* heading, in a political region of the (air quotes) "Indian Ocean" I'd rather not refer to.

The Captain grimaces.

CAPTAIN

Dammit! We're sure it's a Mig?

ANALYST

Well we didn't get a good look at the make sir, but our guy in the air says it's definitely a dark colour, with a red star on the tail.

(MORE)

ANALYST (CONT'D)

It doesn't match any known airforce color scheme or markings, but it sounds *fairly* sinister-looking.

The Captain kicks over a small recycling basket.

CAPTAIN

Shitnuts! That *does* sound ominous. Who have we got out there?

ANALYST

Panther and Wizard, with Lone Wolf and Moose.

The Captain smashes his fist down on the map.

CAPTAIN

Fudge *butler*! Lone Wolf? That guy's mouth is always writing cheques his ass can't cash.

ANALYST

I know sir, we can all hear you through the wall when you shout that at him.

The captain prods the rookie's chest again, scuffing it with cigar burns.

CAPTAIN

Let's just hope he doesn't do anything to antagonize that Mig, you rookie son of a bitch.

3 EXT. OPEN SEA - AFTERNOON

3

The roar of wind fills audio. An F-14 TOMCAT flies inverted directly above a "MIG" that looks suspiciously like an F-5 Tiger painted black. There is definitely a red star on the tail though, so we're still not sure how to feel.

4 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - AFTERNOON

4

Both LONE WOLF, and his co-pilot MOOSE (who sits directly behind him in the two-man cockpit) look up through the clear perspex, flipping birds and making other rude wanking type gestures to the enemy PILOT, hidden behind a tinted visor, who watches them with an inquisitive head tilt.

Moose pulls out a Polaroid camera, snapping a picture.

MOOSE

Nice flying, Lone Wolf! I'm going to send a copy of this to Reader's fuckin' Digest. A funny thing happened at work today...

5 EXT. OPEN SEA - AFTERNOON 5

The enemy plane peels off, flying away.

6 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - AFTERNOON 6

Lone Wolf tugs off his oxygen mask, smiling at the departing fighter.

LONE WOLF

We're going to get a medal for this, Moose!

MOOSE

Radical! You really think so?

Moose punches the canopy.

LONE WOLF

Or suspended. I have trouble reading the Captain.

Lone Wolf looks around.

LONE WOLF

Hey Moose, where did Panther and Wizard go?

Moose looks around too, before pointing.

MOOSE

There.

7 EXT. OPEN SEA - AFTERNOON 7

Nearby, another Tomcat flies erratically, veering up and down, doing a barrel roll.

8 INT. PANTHER'S F-14 TOMCAT COCKPIT - AFTERNOON 8

In the other cockpit, PANTHER is freaking the fuck out. His hand is shaky on the stick, he's sweating sheets, and he has to keep blinking the salty deluge out of his eyes.

His copilot, WIZARD, leans over his shoulder.

WIZARD

Hey Panther dude are you okay?  
Should we like, call your mom or  
something?

Wizard watches him for a moment.

WIZARD

Panther? Trev? Are... you thinking  
about something important dude?  
There's some shit going on out  
here. You're kind of fuckin' up the  
plane, broseph.

PANTHER

Migs! Lone Wolf! What? Y-you said  
there are--where's the Mig? Is he  
on me? (thrashes around looking  
outside) He's on me! We're taking  
fire!

Wizard looks around, confused.

WIZARD

Are you guys high? Where are these  
Migs? All I saw was an F-5 Tiger  
painted black.

Close on Panther, blinking away sweat still, wiping  
ineffectively at his helmeted brow. He looks down at his  
hands.

Close on Panther's hands, shaking the stick violently.

Panther looks over at a photo, stuck to the console. It's a  
picture of David Hasselhoff as Knight Rider, leaning on KITT,  
giving a thumbs up. He focuses on the picture, his grip on  
the stick steady.

Panther seems to shake it off, looking at Wizard over his  
shoulder.

PANTHER

It's okay. I'm good. There's no  
Mig.

Lone Wolf's Tomcat drops in behind Panther's, staying right  
on his ass.

10 INT. PANTHER'S F-14 TOMCAT COCKPIT - AFTERNOON 10

Panther and Wizard breathe a sigh of relief. Panther looks around outside, calmer now.

PANTHER

Do you see Lone Wolf and Moose?

A 'MISSILE LOCK' alert begins blinking, and wailing with a loud siren, triggering Panther's previous shakes and sweating, heavy blinking, gasping. He's again on the verge of tears.

The aircraft rocks as Panther jerks the stick, throwing them both around.

11 EXT. OPEN SEA - AFTERNOON 11

Outside, Lone Wolf's Tomcat remains behind Panther's.

12 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - AFTERNOON 12

Back in Lone Wolf's aircraft, Moose looks down at his display.

MOOSE

Oh crap Lone Wolf we're painting Panther with our targeting radar.

Lone Wolf grins, looking back over his shoulder.

LONE WOLF

I know. I call it an *air-to-air flyby*.

MOOSE

What do you mean?

LONE WOLF

You know how we're always buzzing the tower, making commissioned officers spill hot food on themselves?

MOOSE

Sure.

LONE WOLF

Well I'm trying something new. I figure we only take off and land like, what, once per flight right?

MOOSE  
If we're lucky.

LONE WOLF  
This way, we can annoy literally  
ten times the people we bullied  
previously. Not literally. But  
still. *Literally*.

Panther can be heard weeping over the radio.

MOOSE  
But Lone, buddy, didn't Panther  
just have a massive shitfit about  
that Mig?

Lone Wolf pauses, frowning.

LONE WOLF  
I guess?

MOOSE  
And isn't that him I can hear  
screaming and crying on the radio  
now?

Lone Wolf listens a moment.

PANTHER (V.O.)  
(muffled, crazed)  
I just keep pissing my paaaants--

LONE WOLF  
Yeah?

MOOSE  
Maybe this is one of those Captain  
will suspend us things dude. I  
can't help thinking it's the kind  
of situation he gets all asshurt  
about.

Lone Wolf thinks carefully, pressing his helmet closer to his  
ear, listening for a long time to the sound of Panther  
screaming, swearing and crying, the missile lock alarm, and  
Wizard yelling.

WIZARD (V.O.)  
(radio)  
Calm the fuck down, Panther!  
(grunts) Stop rolling the plane!

Lone Wolf slowly nods, sighing, flipping a switch. Almost at  
once, the noise coming from the radio stops.

13 EXT. OPEN SEA - EVENING 13

As the sun sets on the horizon, Lone Wolf's Tomcat pulls up alongside Panther's.

LONE WOLF (V.O.)  
(radio)  
Hey ah, Panther? Sorry about that.

14 INT. PANTHER'S F-14 TOMCAT COCKPIT - EVENING 14

Panther looks across at Lone Wolf's cockpit, blinking hard, hand still shaking on the stick, drenched.

LONE WOLF (V.O.)  
(radio)  
Okay Panther, here's what we're gonna do. I'm going to fly towards the ship, and you're going to follow me in.

15 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - EVENING 15

Lone Wolf looks over at Panther's cockpit, getting no response.

LONE WOLF  
You hear me over there, pal? Side by side, just like this, you and me. We'll land together.

MOOSE  
Together, Lone? Isn't it like a one lane kind of--

LONE WOLF  
Moose do you want to get suspended by the Captain again, or do you want us to be heroes?

MOOSE  
No but I mean--

LONE WOLF  
Suspended or heroes, Moose? Choose one.

MOOSE  
Well obviously heroes but all I'm saying--

Lone wolf throws up a shoosh wave.

LONE WOLF

Ubup!

Moose pauses for a moment, unsure how to broach the topic again.

Lone Wolf looks across at Panther, exuding sweaty charm.

LONE WOLF

You and me, Panther. Side by side.  
Mano a mano. *Quid pro quo*.  
Invictus... uh...

Lone Wolf looks ahead, then down at his radar.

LONE WOLF

Okay we're coming up on the  
carrier, Panther. Just stay on my  
wing.

16 EXT. OPEN SEA - EVENING

16

Looking past both Tomcats from behind, we can see the lights of the carrier on the inky black ocean surface.

Both Tomcats descend toward it side by side, Panther's aircraft still veering left then right, rolling and yawing on approach.

17 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - EVENING

17

Moose looks down at his screen, panicking.

MOOSE

He's coming in too low, Lone! And  
I'm *still* pretty sure there's only  
one lane, one arrester hook system,  
and like a big fuckin' tower in the  
way. You know that tower we always  
buzz?

As Lone Wolf pulls his helmet away from his ear to turn and look at Moose, a tower controller begins screaming through his radio, unheard.

CONTROLLER (V.O.)

(radio, screams)

Holy shit Lone Wolf what are you  
doing?! You're coming in side by  
side??

LONE WOLF

Moose, how many times have you landed on an aircraft carrier?

MOOSE

(confused)

Like a few hundred?

LONE WOLF

Right. And how many times have I done it?

MOOSE

One more than me because of that day I slept in.

Lone Wolf nods, satisfied.

LONE WOLF

Thank you. Now please, let a veteran of the art handle this delicate maneuver.

Lone Wolf returns his attention to the controls, then looks across at Panther.

LONE WOLF

How you doing over there, Panther?

18

INT. PANTHER'S F-14 TOMCAT COCKPIT - EVENING

18

Wizard leans forward looking over Panther's shoulder at the approaching carrier.

WIZARD

He's not good, Lone Wolf! Panther's in and out of consciousness. Maybe we should just eject.

LONE WOLF (V.O.)

(radio)

Negative, Wizard. I'm gonna get you home. Just stay on my wing.

CONTROLLER (V.O.)

(radio)

No! Don't stay on his wing! Repeat, do *not* stay on his wing! One of you needs to drop back. This is a single lane aircraft carrier. Repeat--

WIZARD  
Lone who the fuck is that?

LONE WOLF (V.O.)  
(radio)  
Must be the Mig, Wiz. Just ignore  
him. Stay on my wing okay? *Don't*  
eject.

Wizard leans further forward to look at Panther's face,  
seeing his head leaned back against the glass, eyes closed,  
snoring.

WIZARD  
Uh... okay.

19 EXT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER DECK - EVENING 19

Rock music blares again from a boombox somewhere. The crew  
from our opening scenes all jump up and down waving glowing  
sticks and paddles, crossing their arms, shaking their heads  
and screaming at the approaching Tomcats.

At the last moment they all scatter. Someone kicks over the  
boombox, silencing it.

The two Tomcats land side by side. Lone Wolf's aircraft grabs  
the hook and settles to a halt, while Panther's skips once  
off the deck before lawn darting into the control tower,  
EXPLODING.

20 EXT. OPEN SEA - EVENING 20

Wide on the USS CRAZYHORSE from a circling chopper as the  
resulting fireball mushroom clouds into the sky with a  
FWOOMF.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
(screams, protracted)  
Lone Wolf!

21 INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM - NIGHT 21

Lone Wolf and Moose stand at nervous attention while the  
Captain paces back and forth in front of them, gesticulating  
with his cigar, seeming to write what he's yelling in the air  
with the tip of it. The man is customarily red with rage.

CAPTAIN

Because of you two idiots Panther and Wizard just destroyed a few hundred million dollars worth of control tower.

LONE WOLF

To be fair sir, I did not even *think* about buzzing it this time.

The Captain freezes, turning his full glowering attention to Lone Wolf.

Moose throws Lone Wolf a glance.

MOOSE

(sideways, quiet)

Oh shit he's gonna suspend us, Lone. I can tell he's in one of his moods.

The Captain whirls on Moose, pointing the cigar at his face menacingly.

CAPTAIN

Shut up!

The Captain continues pacing.

CAPTAIN

(exasperated)

I really *want* to suspend you morons again, but you've just given me a bigger problem. Oh man, this really chaps my lips to even say it.

Lone Wolf and Moose share another quick glance.

CAPTAIN

Panther and Wizard were the best I've got. I was about to send them to Best Guns Flight School, now they're out. Panther and Wizard were number one, you two idiots are number two. They're out, so they're no longer number one, but then at the same time, you can't reasonably be considered number two anymore. They *were* number one, you *were* number two. You weren't number one before, but by the transitive property you're *now* number one.

MOOSE  
What's a transit of--

CAPTAIN  
(pointing)  
Shut up, Moose!

The Captain sighs, knocking over his recycling basket half-heartedly with his foot, taking a long time to tip it.

CAPTAIN  
Panther and Wizard are out, you're in. I'd love to send both of you dick ticklers to laundry duty for the next two weeks but instead of that, I'm going to give you shit hurdlers the shot of your dreams. You two butt... um... smellers are going to--Best Guns.

Lone Wolf and Moose can't hide their joy, high-fiving.

CAPTAIN  
(points)  
Hey! Quit thumb wrestling and get the fuck out of my office.

As they leave, the Captain knocks over a pencil holder, spilling three pencils.

CAPTAIN  
Man, this really grinds my beans.

22 EXT. BEST GUNS AIRFIELD - DAY

22

Epic synth music floods audio as we track an F-14 speeding up to take off on the runway at Best guns.

In foreground, Lone Wolf speeds alongside it on his motorcycle, fist-pumping the air.

LONE WOLF  
Yeah!

He rides a while longer as the Tomcat speeds up. Lone Wolf gives it a thumbs up.

LONE WOLF  
Woooooooooooo!

Lone Wolf waves to the pilot enthusiastically, unaware that he's about to run out of road, heading straight for a lake.

23 INT. BEST GUNS PILOT'S COCKPIT - DAY 23

The Tomcat PILOT turns to look at the waving Lone Wolf, offering a slightly hesitant wave back, still bringing his bird up to takeoff speed.

Over his shoulder, we watch Lone Wolf hit the surface of the lake where the runway continues past it, the bike quickly disappearing in a brief white streak of foam.

The pilot returns his attention to the runway.

24 INT. BEST GUNS BRIEFING ROOM - DAY 24

Lone Wolf--soaked head to toe enters a crowded briefing room, his shoes squelching as he ducks the projector beam to sit beside Moose, giving those at the front an awkward "sorry" wave. As he looks around the room, we see it is full with around twenty other PILOTS and INSTRUCTORS.

At the front of the room is STRIKER--an ageing, moustached pilot who seems excessively calm and measured, often inappropriately. He talks in a slow and deliberate manner.

STRIKER

Gentlemen. Welcome... to Best Guns.  
My callsign is Striker. I'm the  
lead flight instructor here.

Lone Wolf continues to peer around the room, making eye contact with a few of the pilots.

MOOSE

(whispers)  
What are you doing?

LONE WOLF

(quiet)  
Trying to figure out who's the  
best.

Striker writes "Mr Striker" on the blackboard at the front.

STRIKER

In case you're trying to figure out  
who the best is, gentlemen, there's  
a plaque at the back of the room  
with every year's best Academy  
pilot. I'm at the top of that  
plaque because I was the best,  
first. First best.

Lone Wolf looks at the back of the room, locking eyes with RICEMAN--an Asian-American tall, muscled bro-type.

Striker's gaze falls on Lone Wolf.

STRIKER

You think it might be you this year?

Lone Wolf looks around, then back at Striker, eyebrows raised.

LONE WOLF

What, me specifically? Sure. I mean... there's a chance.

STRIKER

You're confident. I like that. Gentlemen, you're dismissed for now.

25

INT. BEST GUNS HALLWAY - DAY

25

In the hall, after class, Moose walks with Lone Wolf, nodding toward Riceman, who leans against the far wall talking to a couple of pilots, eating rice from a small bowl with chopsticks.

MOOSE

(quiet)

You wanted to know who the best is? That's him there. Riceman.

LONE WOLF

Very funny, Moose. But that's racist.

MOOSE

No that's really his callsign.

LONE WOLF

Oh. And he just goes around eating rice? What is that, like a bit? Some sort of branding?

Riceman notices them, walking over.

MOOSE

What's up, Riceman? This is Lone Wolf, and I'm Moose.

RICEMAN

I know who you are. Panther was my best friend from college, and Wizard got me a good deal on my mortgage.

LONE WOLF

Oh.

RICEMAN

I know all about you, Lone Wolf. And I think you're dangerous.

LONE WOLF

What?

RICEMAN

You're dangerous, bro. You're like a rice farmer who neglects to shuck the stalks every day during the last third of grow season.

LONE WOLF

I am?

RICEMAN

It's going to be *my* name up on that plaque at the end of two weeks. Not yours.

LONE WOLF

What plaque?

Riceman blinks.

RICEMAN

The--one they just told us about. With all the best pilots on it.

LONE WOLF

Oh. How do I get on there?

RICEMAN

You have to be the *best*.

LONE WOLF

Best what?

RICEMAN

(frustrated)  
Pilot.

LONE WOLF  
 (abruptly intense)  
 Yes! I want that.

Striker joins them in the hall, noticing the tension.

STRIKER  
 Gentlemen. Is everything okay here?

Riceman scowls at Moose, then Lone Wolf, avoiding Striker.

RICEMAN  
 You're--*dangerous*, bro. Watch  
 yourself!

Riceman shoves them both with his shoulders as he walks between them, detouring unnecessarily to do it, needing to walk around in an obvious circle to go the direction he meant to.

Striker watches him leave.

STRIKER  
 He's consistently antagonistic. I  
 like that.

Striker looks at them both, nodding, before leaving.

STRIKER  
 Gentlemen.

26 EXT. MACGYVER BAR - NIGHT

26

Establishing shot of the MacGyver bar--a picture of Richard Dean Anderson as the titular MacGyver, animated in neon lights, is on the front marquis. Thumping bass can be heard coming from inside.

NAVY GUYS in their whites line up outside, while others spill out of the bar with GIRLS. There is a distinct 80s aesthetic to the whole scene.

27 INT. MACGYVER BAR - NIGHT

27

The bass becomes loud, hip 80s music as Lone Wolf and Moose approach the bar, also in navy whites.

Waiting at the bar for service, they see Riceman again nearby, eating rice from a shot glass with toothpicks as chopsticks.

LONE WOLF  
 Motherfucker!

Lone Wolf is almost too annoyed by it, looking around the room for a source of rice.

LONE WOLF  
 (outraged)  
 Where is this guy getting *rice*  
 from?

Moose nods, distracted, watching Riceman also.

MOOSE  
 That's how he flies, Lone. Smooth  
 as rice.

Lone Wolf turns his annoyance on Moose now, beginning to notice a tone of hero worship in his voice.

LONE WOLF  
 What does that even mean? How is  
 rice smooth? The individual grains,  
 I guess? But not a bowl of *sushi*  
 rice. It's chunky.

Riceman looks up, seeing his partner SLICER standing at the bar beside Lone Wolf and Moose, listening to their entire conversation. When Slicer looks over at Riceman, he waves him over.

Slicer smiles at Moose.

MOOSE  
 (awkward)  
 Oh, what's up Slicer, I didn't see  
 you there. Lone, this is Riceman's  
 radio officer.

Riceman joins them.

RICEMAN  
 You figured it out yet, Lone Wolf?

Lone Wolf bristles, puffing out his chest a bit, sipping someone else's half-drunk water awkwardly, coughing, taking another sip, spilling some.

LONE WOLF  
 What's that?

RICEMAN  
 Who the best is?

LONE WOLF

Yeah. It's Striker. He's like the first guy on the plaque. They made him head of the school.

Riceman hesitates, trying to assess if Lone Wolf is messing with him, or legitimately stupid.

RICEMAN

Your rice pudding might just have a little too much milk in it, bro. Come on Slicer.

Riceman leans over to shoulder-bump both Moose and Lone Wolf again as he departs.

Lone Wolf, still confused by the analogy, just stares after him.

MOOSE

What a dick. But man... what a pilot. Calm as fuckin' rice, Lone.

Lone Wolf shakes it off, looking around the bar at some of the LADIES.

LONE WOLF

Alright, let's make a seedy bet tonight, something like, follow a girl into the bathroom and scare her into it, but always be ready to backpedal if she screams or has a weapon.

MOOSE

Yeah, ok, I like that. And you have to seem menacing, but also slightly unraveled, so she doesn't know what kind of psychological gymnastics will get you to stop blocking the door.

LONE WOLF

Mix it up a bit this time, sure.

MOOSE

Hey, check *her* out.

Moose nods in the direction of the other side of the bar, where an attractive blonde WOMAN has appeared, also waiting for service.

The BARMAN finishes with another CUSTOMER, going straight over to her.

LONE WOLF

Yeah you're right--what the fuck?  
(yells to barman) Hey you fucking  
asshole, "women and children first"  
is only a meme! We've been standing  
here ten minutes.

The barman and the woman both scowl at him, the barman  
politely excusing himself to serve Lone Wolf and Moose.

LONE WOLF

Thank you. I'd like a vodka and  
cranberry and my friend will have a  
white wine with two sugars.

The annoyed-looking barman turns, scooping ice into a glass  
against the far wall, his back to Lone Wolf and Moose. He  
very obviously spits into the glass before filling it with  
vodka.

MOOSE

No, I mean the girl. Why don't you  
try that thing where you sing to  
her, to shame her into it?

Lone Wolf takes another look at her, slowly nodding. She  
notices his gaze, frowning.

LONE WOLF

Hmmm. Yeah, you're right. Might be  
more effective than threats with  
this one. Just looking at her, I'd  
say she looks a little... (looks at  
Moose) unsafe?

Moose frowns, unsure for a moment, then suddenly getting it.

MOOSE

Oh no--no! Lone, not unsafe. I hate  
it when she's unsafe.

28

INT. MACGYVER BAR - NIGHT

28

Close on a microphone being picked up, the hip 80s music  
scratching to silence for a few seconds before SAFETY DANCE  
begins.

Thus ensues a brief but poignant MONTAGE of Lone Wolf and  
Moose with the smallest member of the band dressed as a tiny  
JESTER re-enacting the best bits of the Safety Dance video,  
getting right in the woman's face with their stupid dancing  
and singing. The rest of the bar gradually join in, kind of  
half-assed, mostly bemused.

When it's all over, Lone Wolf and Moose grin at her, stopped in the final pose of the act, completely out of breath. Moose turns away to give the band member twenty bucks.

CHARLIE

Which one of you two am I supposed to be inviting for a drink now?

Lone Wolf grins even bigger, patting his chest.

LONE WOLF

Me! I'm the guy!

She stifles a sigh, gesturing obligatorily to the stool beside her.

CHARLIE

(unenthused)

Please have a seat. I'm Charlie Blueballs.

Lone Wolf pauses, considers asking her to repeat it, but sits down. He's just too happy that this has worked to really know what's going on now, compounding his usual personality of "obnoxious stupid grin".

CHARLIE

From a purely anthropological point of view, I'm wondering, does this routine usually work on girls in bars?

LONE WOLF

(coy)

I've only ever done it twice. The first time, I changed some lyrics to subtly threaten her cat, so she felt obliged to come home with me.

CHARLIE

Oh. And the second?

LONE WOLF

(charming smile)

Let me get back to you in the morning on that. Do you have any pets?

Charlie notices an OLDER MAN coming in through the front entry, waving to him.

CHARLIE

Hey I gotta go, I really appreciate your interest and will keep your details on file.

Lone Wolf grins again.

LONE WOLF

Sweet! Do you want to--

She gets up, leaving the bar stool. He watches her hug the older guy and sit down at a table.

Moose joins Lone Wolf with their drinks, handing him the vodka cranberry.

MOOSE

Who's that douchebag?

LONE WOLF

She mustn't have understood that I was offering to have sex with her.

Moose snorts.

MOOSE

Sometimes they're just pretending not to understand, dude. You need to go yell it in her face.

Lone Wolf watches her get up, crossing the crowded room to the ladies' room.

LONE WOLF

Yeah, maybe you're right.

Lone Wolf hands Moose his drink, giving him a thumbs up as he walks toward the bathrooms also.

29

INT. MACGYVER BAR LADIES BATHROOM - NIGHT

29

Charlie washes her hands in the ladies' bathroom, looking up to see Lone Wolf enter in the mirror. He stands blocking the doorway with that same suarvy, misplaced self-assurance.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry--

LONE WOLF

Don't be, baby.

CHARLIE

--do you find this charming somehow? Do you think I'm going to, what, just have sex with you up against the cubicle wall?

Lone Wolf points at the sinks.

LONE WOLF

I was thinking we could lay across these sinks.

Charlie looks down at the disgusting, uncleaned, handpaper-clogged, mold-specked, vomit-pooling, rusted stainless steel bench with two sinks.

CHARLIE

Wow.

LONE WOLF

I know! Look, I just want to stop you making a big mistake with that older guy.

CHARLIE

What, so I can make an even bigger mistake with a young guy like you?

Lone Wolf snaps his fingers.

LONE WOLF

(sudden intensity)  
Yes! I'd like that.

She shakes her head and leaves the bathroom as he looks down to unzip.

Lone Wolf looks around, confused.

LONE WOLF

Oh come on! What do women want?

30

INT. BEST GUNS HANGAR - DAY

30

The pilots from the briefing room now sit in rows inside a hangar, watching Striker speak up front.

STRIKER

Gentlemen. To stay at the absolute top of our game, Navy employs civilian contractors to come in and revolutionize the way we do things from time to time.

(MORE)

STRIKER (CONT'D)

A lot of those times, it turns out that the experts' lack of naval experience and worldly understanding derails billion dollar programs that need to be scrapped, then re-established in the same way that they always have worked. But let me just say we love hearing fresh ideas, regardless of how wasteful of taxpayer money and military resources they may ultimately prove to be. With that in mind, let me introduce you to-- for some reason, an astrophysicist, who works closely with the Pentagon on numerous projects that require a certain amount of women on staff to continue to receiving funding.

Close on a pair of high heels, walking up the aisle between the pilots.

STRIKER

Gentlemen, meet Charlie Blueballs. Callsign Chuck E Blue Cheese. Of course, don't ask me why a part time Pentagon liaison needs a callsign. I suppose everyone gets one.

She gets to the front and turns--revealing that it's the woman Lone Wolf hit on and got inappropriate with the night before.

CHARLIE

Hi everyone. The Pentagon asked if I could come in today and talk to you a bit about the limitations of the Mig, so you know all their weaknesses, and just to give you the opportunity to correct me on anything I may be getting wrong about Migs in general. You know, standard Best Guns curriculum.

Moose leans over to Lone Wolf.

MOOSE

(quiet)

Oh shit Lone that's the girl you *definitely* had sex with in the bathroom last night.

(MORE)

MOOSE (CONT'D)

Remember how you were saying all  
the way home about what you did  
with--and to--her?

Lone Wolf covers his nervousness with an unconvincing half  
grin, fidgeting.

LONE WOLF

Yep.

CHARLIE

So basically, we're one hundred per  
cent sure that Migs can't do more  
than a negative one-G turn.

Moose leans over again.

MOOSE

Hey what about that Mig we saw the  
other day?

LONE WOLF

Yeah that's bullshit man, you  
should say something.

Charlie stops speaking, looking at Lone Wolf and Moose.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry guys, is something wrong?

MOOSE

Oh it's just that your information  
isn't accurate. We were flying  
upside down with a Mig in a  
negative five-G turn quite  
recently. I have a Polaroid of it  
at home.

PILOT

(coughs)  
Bullshit.

Moose turns to the pilot behind him.

MOOSE

No it's true. We were going to show  
him our penises but it seemed a bit  
gay, so we just made wanking  
gestures.

CHARLIE

You're the guys who flipped off a  
Mig over the (air quotes) "Indian  
Ocean" last week?

Lone Wolf gives her his trademark cocky grin.

LONE WOLF

We also scared our wingman so bad  
he shit his pants and blew up a  
control tower.

COMEDIAN, another instructor, enters the hangar.

COMEDIAN

Time for a hop.

STRIKER

Gentlemen, let's fly.

31 INT. BEST GUNS HALLWAY - DAY

31

Charlie catches up with Lone Wolf as he walks quickly through the hall, now wearing his aviator sunglasses and chewing gum.

CHARLIE

Lieutenant!

Lone Wolf turns, stopping briefly.

CHARLIE

Why didn't you tell me you're a  
famous Mig masturbator? I'd love to  
hear about that guy who shit his  
pants sometime.

LONE WOLF

(feigning disinterest)

Well, you have Pentagon  
astrophysicist clearance. You can  
read about it.

Lone Wolf darts into a stairwell, leaving her there to swoon.

32 INT. BEST GUNS STAIRWELL - DAY

32

At the top of the stairs, Riceman is waiting, eating rice from a plastic squeeze pack with a tea spoon.

LONE WOLF

(noticing the rice)

Son of a--

RICEMAN

Lone Wolf. I'm wondering--who was  
covering Panther while you were  
showboating with the Mig?

LONE WOLF  
 (confused)  
 Dude a Mig is a plane. Not a boat.

RICEMAN  
 (pause)  
 What? I'm saying who was being  
 Panther's wingman, bro? You should  
 have been on him like white on  
 rice.

LONE WOLF  
 Panther was just *fine*, Riceman. He  
 only really lost it when we started  
 fucking with him afterwards. Heck,  
 he would have even been alright if  
 I hadn't strongly suggested they  
 don't eject, and not convinced them  
 to land two-wide on a single lane  
 carrier deck. (emphatic) It turns  
 out, *all* carriers are like that. I  
 just *forgot*.

Lone wolf nods, satisfied. Riceman watches him walk away,  
 sort of thrown by the interaction once more.

33 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY 33

Comedian's A-4 SKYHAWK follows closely behind Lone Wolf and  
 Moose's Tomcat, flying low over the desert surrounding Best  
 Guns.

The Tomcat tries to shake the Skyhawk but it's too nimble.

34 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 34

Moose pellet-drums in his seat slapping at the rear of the  
 cockpit, trying to see Comedian.

MOOSE  
 This guy is all over us, Lone!

35 INT. A-4 SKYHAWK COCKPIT - DAY 35

Comedian grins as he deftly works the stick and throttle,  
 weirdly enjoying it.

COMEDIAN  
 (growls)  
 That's it, you shit-fuckers. Come  
 to Comedian.

36 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

36

Lone Wolf is sweating, blinking hard with the G-forces as he fights to control his fighter in a hard turn.

MOOSE

What do we do man?

LONE WOLF

Moose, I have an idea. I'm going to stop the plane, let him fly right by.

Moose frowns, thinks, frowns again, goes to say something, hesitates, then:

MOOSE

Huh?

LONE WOLF

I'm gonna stop the plane. Get ready.

MOOSE

But Lone--

Lone Wolf slams on the air brakes, cutting his throttle.

37 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY

37

The Tomcat drops like a rock, stalling, while the Skyhawk flies past, over the top.

38 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

38

Lone Wolf points at Comedian flying over them as they drop.

LONE WOLF

(intense confidence)

See? There he is! I did it!

Moose looks around as they continue to fall, the roar of the wind increasing.

MOOSE

Cool move, Lone. What happens in part two of the plan?

Lone Wolf throws a quick, still beaming, glance back at him.

LONE WOLF

What? Oh.

Lone Wolf cranks the throttle.

39 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY 39

The Tomcat's engines relight, before it finds lift, following the Skyhawk a few hundred feet beneath.

Looking back at the Skyhawk, the Tomcat pops up from below, in gun range behind it.

40 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 40

Lone Wolf and Moose cheer.

LONE WOLF  
Bang, Comedian. We got you!

41 INT. A-4 SKYHAWK COCKPIT - DAY 41

Comedian seems annoyed, looking at the Tomcat over his shoulder.

COMEDIAN  
Base, this is Comedian. I've lost sight of Lone Wolf and Moose. I'm heading back in. Looks like no one wins this round.

42 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 42

Lone Wolf and Moose pause mid-high five, looking at each other.

MOOSE  
What?

LONE WOLF  
Is he fucking with us?

43 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY 43

The Tomcat pulls alongside the Skyhawk. Lone Wolf and Moose both wave at Comedian.

44 INT. A-4 SKYHAWK COCKPIT - DAY 44

Comedian looks over at the Tomcat while he speaks.

COMEDIAN

Repeat, no sign of Lone Wolf and  
Moose. No joy.

LONE WOLF (V.O.)

(radio)

Bang, Comedian! We got you!

COMEDIAN

Too late, gents. We're under the  
hard deck.

45 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY 45

The A-4 peels off, flying away.

46 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 46

Lone Wolf and Moose watch him fly away in stunned silence.

MOOSE

I can't believe that motherfucker  
just did that.

LONE WOLF

Do you think he really didn't see  
us?

MOOSE

(incredulous)

No!

Lone Wolf is disappointed.

MOOSE

Fuck it dude, we won. We're the  
winners, even if no one else knows  
it.

Lone Wolf perks up a bit.

LONE WOLF

Yeah, I guess you're right. You  
know what? Let's do something fun.

Lone Wolf lifts his oxygen mask to his mouth.

LONE WOLF

Base, this is Lone Wolf and Moose,  
requesting a flyby of the tower.

47 INT. BEST GUNS TOWER - DAY 47

A SERGEANT in the airfield control tower pours hot, steaming coffee for himself, before picking up the radio. Two other CONTROLLERS man stations nearby.

SERGEANT  
(into radio)  
That's a negative, Spookypants.  
Pattern is full.

SERGEANT  
(to controllers)  
It's full right?

One controller shrugs.

SERGEANT  
(to self)  
It's probably full.

48 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 48

Back in the cockpit, Lone Wolf increases the thrust to full.

49 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY 49

Looking at the tower in the distance, over the wings of the F-14 as they sweep back into their "speed" mode. The afterburners flare, bright.

50 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 50

Inside, Moose looks worried, holding onto the sides.

MOOSE  
What are you doing, Lone? He said  
pattern is full. That sounds like a  
hard 'no'.

LONE WOLF  
Don't worry, Moose. If we're going  
faster than the speed of sound,  
they're not going to be able to see  
who it is.

Moose frowns.

MOOSE  
I think you need to do that math  
again!

The roaring of their engines grows louder as their speed increases.

51 INT. BEST GUNS TOWER - DAY 51

The sergeant looks out across the airfield, very carefully blowing and sipping at his still steaming black coffee.

Past him, through the side windows, Lone Wolf's F-14 zips by quickly, silently, incredibly close.

The sergeant looks up, without removing his lips from just above the coffee cup rim.

SERGEANT

Hm?

The windows all shatter with a loud CRACK and BOOM as a sonic boom hits the tower, destroying equipment in a shower of sparks, and shattering the coffee cup all at once.

52 EXT. BEST GUNS AIRFIELD - DAY 52

The Tomcat climbs quickly into the sky.

SERGEANT (V.O.)

YEEEEAAAARGH!

53 INT. INSTRUCTOR OFFICES - DAY 53

Lone Wolf and Moose wait outside Striker's office, hearing the Sergeant yelling inside, a diatribe that his previous voice over rolls right into.

SERGEANT

(screams)

I specifically told that loose cannon *don't* fly past my tower, not *do*, then he did it at Mach one point *five*. That's the *opposite* of what I said, Tom! It's like he went out of his way to defy me! Is that what you're teaching these guys now?

The Sergeant bursts from the office, running into a CADET carrying a tray full of steaming hot coffee.

The Sergeant falls to his knees, wailing at the sky, over-dramatic.

SERGEANT  
Whyyyyyyyyy?!

Moose leans over to Lone Wolf, whispering.

MOOSE  
How come every officer we meet is a  
pussy who can't regulate his  
emotional temperature, dude?

Lone Wolf shrugs.

LONE WOLF  
Striker is pretty cool at least.

They stand at attention as Striker emerges calmly from his office, looking at the Sergeant, who now lays on the floor sobbing into his coffee-stained shirt.

STRIKER  
Gentlemen.

Striker watches the Sergeant for a long time, detached.

STRIKER  
He's easily rattled by minor  
setbacks, and doesn't mind  
communicating it to the world. I  
like that.

Striker looks at Lone Wolf and Moose.

STRIKER  
My office, gentlemen.

They follow Striker inside, where Comedian is waiting also.

54

INT. STRIKER'S OFFICE - DAY

54

Striker looks out the window at the airfield while Comedian sits in a corner, looking stern, arms folded. Lone Wolf and Moose stand at attention facing Striker.

STRIKER  
Gentlemen, I don't think I need to  
tell you that the Sergeant is  
upset.

The Sergeant's sobs grow louder, then quiet, just outside.

MOOSE  
It does seem like he's having a  
hard day, sir.

Striker looks at Moose a moment, nodding.

STRIKER

His girlfriend is cheating on him.

Lone Wolf and Moose share an uncomfortable look.

COMEDIAN

It's okay. Everyone knows about it.

The sobbing grows louder again.

SERGEANT (O.C.)

Charlieeeeeee...

Striker turns to look at them.

STRIKER

Gentlemen, why did you follow  
Comedian below the hard deck after  
he called "no joy"?

LONE WOLF

We got him, sir. He's just being an  
*asshole*.

Moose frowns.

MOOSE

Hey Lone you remember we talked  
about the difference between shit  
we say to each other in private  
versus what you need to say in the  
navy to get by? Remember we said  
about how every time you shoot your  
mouth off, they seem to punish both  
of us as a collective unit for some  
reason?

Comedian stands to his full height, taking a step toward them  
in background.

COMEDIAN

(quiet)

So I'm an *asshole*, Moose?

Moose shoots him a quick bewildered look.

STRIKER

Gentlemen, I don't like your tone.  
I'm going to need to have a serious  
think about your future here.

(MORE)

STRIKER (CONT'D)

We take things very seriously at Best Guns Awesome Flight School Academy.

LONE WOLF

Really, sir? Just because I broke the rules of engagement?

STRIKER

You also blew past the tower at Mach one and a half, destroying a few million dollars worth of equipment.

LONE WOLF

Oh, right. I forgot about that. (realization) Oh, that's probably why...

Lone Wolf trails off as he points to the area where the Sergeant still lays crying almost inaudibly on the floor outside. He looks back at Moose, who just nods.

STRIKER

Gentlemen, you're dismissed. One more day like today, and I won't let you fly here again.

As they pass, Striker puts a hand against Moose's arm. Moose pauses there.

STRIKER

Moose, I'm particularly disappointed in you.

Moose looks sad and ashamed as he leaves.

Striker looks over at Comedian when the door is shut.

STRIKER

What do you think?

COMEDIAN

I wouldn't want to go into battle with him. He's dangerous, and a cowboy. He's a dangerous cowboy.

STRIKER

I flew with his old man.

COMEDIAN

Oh yeah? What was he like?

STRIKER

Great pilot. Well, sometimes. I always suspected he was putting the plane on autopilot, and having a nap when I was in the john. He flew on instinct alone. Not so smart though.

COMEDIAN

What do you mean? Like he wasn't good with investing, or..?

STRIKER

Ejected from an F-4 Phantom on the deck of a carrier, trying to find the controls for an AM radio that we all assured him emphatically did not exist.

COMEDIAN

Sounds like the apple didn't fall far from the tree. That kid doesn't belong here at Best Guns.

Striker nods.

55

INT. LONE WOLF'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

55

Lone wolf sits up in bed reading 'Playing Pool, Pouring Cocktails, and entering the Brothel Business for Young Entrepreneurs - A primer for moving into your career "sequel" -- From the author of *Color of Thunder*'.

A KNOCK at the door. He looks up.

LONE WOLF

Yo!

Moose leans in.

MOOSE

Hey Lone, got a minute?

LONE WOLF

Of course.

Moose enters, sitting on the corner of the bed. Soft music plays.

MOOSE

Lone, I've been thinking a lot about my family.

(MORE)

MOOSE (CONT'D)

It'd really help me support them if you stop being a dick to people all the time.

Lone Wolf thinks.

LONE WOLF

Yeah, okay, I can kind of see that. Because you always get in shit when I do. Right?

Moose smiles, nodding. He taps Lone Wolf on the foot, getting up.

MOOSE

Thanks, man. I knew you'd understand. You're really maturing as a human being.

Moose leaves.

56

INT. BEST GUNS CLASSROOM - DAY

56

Lone Wolf fills circles on a multiple choice personality test, looking up as Charlie leans over his desk in an obviously seductive way, with her cleavage exposed.

LONE WOLF

Oh. Ah... hi.

Slicer, sitting a few seats behind, looks up, observing the interaction out of the corner of his eye.

CHARLIE

You're a real piece of shit, Lone Wolf.

They lock eyes briefly. She looks at Slicer, then back at Lone Wolf. He looks back at Slicer too. Noticing, Slicer pretends to be more deeply engaged in his reading and writing.

Charlie winks at Lone Wolf, handing him a note.

While Lone Wolf reads it, Slicer leans forward.

SLICER

Shit your pants, eh Lone Wolf?

Lone Wolf looks at him.

LONE WOLF

Slicer... (sniffs) you kind of...  
 (sniffs again) whoa. *Did you*  
 actually shit your pants just now,  
 Slicer? And you're... what, trying  
 to get out ahead of it by blaming  
*me?*

Slicer seems nervous, looking around the room before putting his head back in his book, ashamed. He stealthily smells himself as Lone Wolf returns to reading the note.

Looking at the note over his shoulder, it says 'My house. 5:30PM' followed by a crude drawing of a penis and a vagina. The penis is shooting squiggly lines.

57

EXT. BEACH - DAY

57

Upbeat 80s music floods audio again. At a popular beach, full of dayglo bather-clad BEACHGOERS, Lone Wolf and Moose play beach volleyball against Riceman and Slicer. Everyone except Moose is shirtless and glistening in the sun. Moose wears a tank top.

Riceman spikes the ball at Moose, who hits it up for Lone Wolf to knock back for a point. They high five.

During a break in play, Riceman squirts a tube of sunscreen on Slicer's back, before squirting a tube of 'Rice in a Tube!' into his mouth.

Checking his watch, Lone Wolf half notices the tube of rice, beginning to get angry before double taking at the time: 7:00PM.

LONE WOLF

Shit! How have we been playing for  
 six *hours*?!

Lone Wolf runs to his motorbike, still shirtless, jumping on it, peeling out of the carpark.

Moose retrieves the ball from beneath the net, turning to hand it to Lone Wolf, before seeing him riding off.

MOOSE

Okay you're up, bro--

Moose looks at Riceman and Slicer, both standing there looking annoyed and impatient.

MOOSE

Uh...

58 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

58

Charlie sits watching a small, wood-paneled CRT television in her suburban house. Lace curtains flap in an open doorway behind her, while Lone Wolf pulls up outside on his motorbike beyond bay doors.

Lone Wolf jumps off the bike, running to the open bay doors, knocking as he sees her waiting. Romantic 80s music plays.

LONE WOLF

Hey, I'm sorry. I was playing an epic game of volleyball and lost track of time. Fucking Riceman. Do you know this guy? He can't do anything without eating rice. Like we get it, dude, you eat a lot of rice. You know a lot about rice and how they farm it for some reason. What did he do like a school project on rice? How does he--

Charlie stands, walking past him to the back deck, where an outdoor table is set with plates.

CHARLIE

Hey I'm going to eat now but feel free to continue talking.

59 EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

59

Lone Wolf and Charlie finish their meal on the back deck.

LONE WOLF

Alright, so where do you want to do this?

She looks confused.

LONE WOLF

The sex. That's why you invited me over, right?

Now she seems annoyed.

CHARLIE

No, I wanted to hear about the Mig. Why were you flying so close to it, inverted, cockpit to cockpit?

Lone Wolf removes the note she gave him from a pocket.

LONE WOLF  
What about your note?

She takes it from him, looks at it, then shrugs.

CHARLIE  
What about it?

Lone Wolf's intensity grows.

LONE WOLF  
The *drawing*.

She looks again at what is clearly a penis and vagina.

CHARLIE  
A guy playing the cello? I always doodle these.

Lone Wolf sits back, deflated.

LONE WOLF  
I bet Moose a hundred bucks that Mig pilots fly naked. I was trying to show him it's a guy in just a helmet. For the Pentagon's records, it's not true, okay?

Charlie frowns.

CHARLIE  
What? Why would you think that?

LONE WOLF  
My dad used to tell me that's how they fly. Before he disappeared, ejecting over Korea.

CHARLIE  
Oh I'm so sorry, I didn't know he flew in the Korean war.

LONE WOLF  
No not the war, he was a commercial airline pilot.

Charlie pauses, thinks, half opens her mouth, then frowns. Lone wolf stares down at his glass of Sprite.

LONE WOLF  
They tried to tell us that *he* screwed up, that *he* shouldn't have been buzzing apartment towers with three hundred souls aboard...

(MORE)

LONE WOLF (CONT'D)

that there basically *is* no way to eject from a seven-four-seven without killing everyone aboard... but I don't know. To this day they won't release the transcripts of the crew and passengers trying to stop him opening the outer door. It's just government red tape.

Charlie stares at a space on the wall for a long time before swallowing hard, considering her words carefully.

CHARLIE

That must have been very difficult for you.

Lone Wolf looks up, earnest, tearing up a little. He remembers where he is, putting his drink down, offering her a polite smile.

LONE WOLF

Thanks for the nice meal. See you at school.

He trots back to his motorbike, jumping on and starting it quickly before peeling out of her yard, tearing up the lawn.

60 INT. BEST GUNS HALLWAY - DAY 60

The next day, Lone Wolf waits for an elevator at Best Guns. Charlie walks up beside him, waiting also. They share a glance, smiling. The elevator arrives, and they enter.

61 INT. BEST GUNS ELEVATOR - DAY 61

As they stand at opposite corners at the back of the elevator, the tension grows. Charlie turns to Lone Wolf.

CHARLIE

I should be honest... I don't normally invite students to my home. Even to tell me about a cool Mig they saw.

Lone Wolf perks up a bit.

LONE WOLF

(pointing to dick)  
So you *do* want my--

The elevator stops, its doors dinging. They both look awkward as an OFFICER gets on, standing at the front, turning to face away from them.

She shoots him a quick, nervous smile. He grins back at her, doing bigger pointing motions to his dick.

She shakes her head, frowning, making a 'shhh' gesture.

The Officer briefly half turns back over one shoulder, looking at her out of the corner of his eye. She faces the opposite wall, playing it cool

Lone Wolf starts making sex motions with his hips and arms, an inquisitive manic grin on his face as he stares at her while thrusting longer and more obviously, making the lift sway.

The Officer quickly snaps his gaze back at Lone Wolf, who freezes mid-thrust, holding eye contact with Officer a moment before the lift dings again. The Officer exits.

Lone Wolf looks at Charlie.

LONE WOLF  
Phew that was close.

62

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

62

Lone Wolf and Moose stand leaned against a rental car outside the AIRPORT arrivals building.

LONE WOLF  
You know I always forget you have a wife and kids.

Moose nods, gaze fixed on the arrivals doors where CAROL and two KIDS exit in a frenzy of luggage and misplaced energy. She looks up, waving to him.

He waves back.

MOOSE  
I know, it's probably my casual attitude to violent threats against women, and my ambiguous level of participation in your pickup routine.

LONE WOLF  
You didn't mention anything to Carol about Charlie, right?

MOOSE

Of course not. (louder) Here they are!

Carol and the kids arrive, Moose hugging them all before loading their luggage into the boot.

Carol hugs Lone Wolf.

CAROL

Hey Lone Wolf Moose told me you're getting pretty serious with a girl you nearly assaulted in a bar bathroom. You dog!

Lone Wolf grins at her as they all get into the car.

LONE WOLF

I bet he tells you where I get my asshole bleached too!

The car peels out of the lot.

63 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY 63

More A-4 Skyhawks chase F-14 Tomcats around in a brief sequence.

64 INT. BEST GUNS BRIEFING ROOM - DAY 64

The formation of Skyhawks and Tomcats is replicated on a computer screen with low-pixel animated plane icons.

CHARLIE (O.C.)

Well this is just wrong.

Pulling out, we reveal Charlie, Striker and Comedian at the front of the class, looking at a replay of a recent battle on computer screens, while Lone Wolf, Moose, Riceman, Slicer, and a handful of other pilots sit at attention in their seats, taking notes.

CHARLIE

You took your plane into a hard climb then stalled it, nearly took out both yourself and your opponent on the way down, relit one engine before nearly slamming into the ground, barely landed--and you're claiming it a win because...

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
 (looks down at notes) "In a real  
 world scenario I would have steered  
 into the other guy's wing then  
 ejected at the last second".

Charlie looks up at Lone Wolf, waiting for a response. He  
 stammers, put on the spot.

LONE WOLF  
 Um, what? Sorry I wasn't listening.  
 I'm a... good pilot?

Riceman, leaning over a microwave Risotto, eating it with the  
 little plastic spork out of its steaming cardboard packaging,  
 looks up at Charlie also, more interested now.

CHARLIE  
 What you did worked in this one  
 case, but it's a perfect example of  
 what *not* to do.

Lone Wolf frowns, beginning to get up to speed.

LONE WOLF  
 Not... to do?

The pilot who coughed "bullshit" leans forward from the row  
 behind Lone Wolf, patting him on the shoulder while he glares  
 at Charlie.

PILOT  
 Stupidest fucking move I ever saw,  
 man.

65 EXT. BEST GUNS CARPARK - AFTERNOON

65

Lone Wolf storms out of the Best Guns main building toward  
 the carpark, followed by Charlie.

CHARLIE  
 Lone Wolf!

He ignores her, jumping onto his motorbike.

CHARLIE  
 Lone Wolf stop! I'm trying to tell  
 you--

He starts the bike as she reaches his side, revving it.

CHARLIE

(shouts)

Lone Wolf my review of your flying  
was spot on! I can't be biased in  
there, those guys will--

He revs the bike again, looking at her deadpan.

CHARLIE

(shouts)

Lone Wolf you're being childish!

He revs it again, harder, for a longer time, placing the  
other hand up to his ear, miming difficulty hearing.

CHARLIE

(shouts)

Can you just stop for a minute and  
let me explain!

He revs the bike even harder, without pause, taking it to the  
upper redline, making the whole bike shudder between his  
legs, smoke beginning to waft from the vents around the  
engine and exhaust.

CHARLIE

(shouts)

Please, I don't want you to...

She trails off, looking down at the bike as more and more  
smoke begins to envelop it.

CHARLIE

Hey ah, Lone Wolf? I think you need  
to be careful, that bike is--

He puts his hand to his ear again.

LONE WOLF

(shouts)

I'm sorry, what? I'm having trouble  
hearing you.

She points to the engine well, where flames are now licking  
at the vents, billowing smoke from both sides, still  
unnoticed by Lone Wolf as it blows slightly behind him,  
becoming a towering column. The bike still revs at redline.  
Charlie points to it.

CHARLIE

(shouts)

Your motorbike!

He nods, smiling belligerently.

LONE WOLF

(shouts)

I know, it's cool isn't it? My dad  
gave it to me! It's the best thing  
I ever owned!

The smoke wraps around him entirely, before the engine explodes with a single loud BOOM. Charlie takes a step back as the revving stops, and the smoke continues to plume around the still-standing Lone Wolf.

CHARLIE

(hesitant)

Lone Wolf?

66

EXT. BEST GUNS CARPARK - EVENING

66

Close on Lone Wolf, face and hair darkened, clothes charred, wrapped in a blanket, being carried by a beefy FIREMAN.

Pull out to reveal a FIRE CREW hosing down the remnants of Lone Wolf's still smoking motorbike, while Lone Wolf is carried to a set of nearby steps, slapped down seated next to Charlie with the blanket still over his shoulders.

Charlie gives the fireman a folded ten dollar note.

CHARLIE

Thank you.

The fireman leaves, his crew beginning to pack up. She smiles with a slight grimace at Lone Wolf, who sits quietly looking at his feet.

CHARLIE

Are you okay?

LONE WOLF

(bummed)

No one told me I shouldn't do that  
with a motorbike.

She pats him on the shoulder.

CHARLIE

It's okay. I probably wouldn't have  
known either.

He nods.

CHARLIE

Look man, I kind of have to get up your ass about stupid shit that you do, or it will be my responsibility when you accidentally kill yourself or Moose up there.

LONE WOLF

(scoffs)  
Unlikely plot twist.

CHARLIE

I need to keep it together or people are going to be able to tell...

He looks at her.

LONE WOLF

Tell what?

She stares into his eyes for a long moment, almost unsure.

CHARLIE

Despite all my previously reliable instincts, I'm falling for you. Ridiculous as that sounds, coming out of my mouth in this carpark, where you just... (looks at smoldering bike) anyway.

He stares back, slowly nodding, smile creepily spreading across his face.

'Take my breath away' begins playing, rising through audio.

LONE WOLF

This is going to happen, isn't it?

She sighs.

67

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

67

Lone Wolf and Charlie stand facing each other a few steps apart in her dimly blue-lit bedroom. He's shirtless and she wears some kind of lingerie with layers of silky and lacey night gowns. Lacey curtains again flap in the breeze around an open window. The music reaches a massive crescendo as they begin walking slowly toward each other.

Lone Wolf punches her in the nose. She goes down like a sack of potatoes muffled squeal, looking up at him shocked while holding her bloodied face.

CHARLIE  
 (horrified)  
 What are you doing?

Now Lone Wolf is surprised, reaching out to her.

LONE WOLF  
 Oh! Sorry, are you into more  
 vanilla stuff? I can dial it down!

68 EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - MORNING 68

Establishing shot of Charlie's house, the following morning.

69 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING 69

Charlie wakes in bed, looking over at a paper plane, folded  
 shittily on the empty space beside her. She smiles, opening  
 it.

Over her shoulder we see, in what looks like the handwriting  
 of an amateur: 'Sorry about your nasal bridge, thanks for not  
 being a huge cunt about it'.

70 EXT. BEST GUNS TARMAC - MORNING 70

Lone Wolf, Moose, and the pilot who said "stupidest move I  
 ever saw" all walk toward their planes.

PILOT  
 Did you hear Riceman won another  
 hop?

Lone Wolf shrugs.

LONE WOLF  
 Nope. Well done.

MOOSE  
 It doesn't matter how many hops he  
 wins because we're still gonna beat  
 him to the top of the plaque.

PILOT  
 (to Moose)  
 Well no, I don't feel like you've  
 thought this through. If he  
 continues winning hops, he wins the  
 most hops, which means he's the  
 overall winner and goes on to be at  
 the top of the plaque.

(MORE)

PILOT (CONT'D)

One thing facilitates the other.  
It's another gradual step in the  
direction of you definitely *not*  
winning the plaque.

MOOSE

Well it doesn't matter anyway,  
we're still better than that guy,  
right Lone?

Moose holds up his helmet, and Lone Wolf does likewise. They  
clunk them together.

PILOT

No, in that case you objectively  
*wouldn't* be better. And you guys  
shouldn't do that with your  
helmets. They're built to resist  
pretty much one major hit and  
shatter, so small bumps will reduce  
the structural integrity, meaning  
they may not hold up to an *actual*  
impact.

Moose taps his helmet against his head.

MOOSE

Psssh. What do you know, man? We  
don't care about your helmet  
opinions anyway, right Lone? We're  
*dangerous*.

PILOT

They're helmet *facts*.

Lone Wolf nods.

LONE WOLF

That's right. I feel the need...  
the *need*...

LONE WOLF & MOOSE

For *speed*!

They clunk helmets again.

PILOT

What, like the drug? You know you  
can get kicked out of here for  
that.

Moose frowns at him.

MOOSE

No man, like going fast!

As they reach their Tomcat, the other pilot shakes his head a little, walking on.

PILOT

(fading as he departs)

We all do, dumbass. We fly jet fighters. It's not a noteworthy distinction with which to define yourself, in such a speed-oriented profession. It would have singled you out moreso if you said "We're the guys who like to *think* before we do things". Not too many like that around here though.

They watch him walk off.

MOOSE

What's his problem?

LONE WOLF

I literally don't know that guy's name.

They laugh in unison.

71 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY 71

Another hop, another flight exercise--this time two Tomcats chase a lone Skyhawk.

72 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 72

In the rear Tomcat, Lone Wolf and Moose angle for a shot at the A-4.

COMEDIAN (V.O.)

(radio)

Getting to the pointy end of it, boys. Riceman and Slicer are in the lead with Lone Wolf and Moose only two points behind. Good hunting!

Moose leans forward, tapping Lone Wolf on the shoulder, pulling his oxygen mask off.

MOOSE

Hey ah, Lone? Does it seem weird to you that we keep screwing up all the time, then a bunch of stuff happened I guess, and now we're in second place, only two points behind Riceman, the clear consistent winner of every challenge so far?

Lone Wolf removes his mask, looking back at Moose, confused.

LONE WOLF

What are you saying?

MOOSE

Hey don't get me wrong man, we'll take it, but all I remember about the last few days is playing some volleyball and hanging out with my family at an airport, some stuff about your butthole... when did we start kicking ass all of a sudden?

Lone Wolf shrugs.

LONE WOLF

I guess we're a lot better at this than we realized.

Moose sits back, putting his mask back on, unsure.

MOOSE

Yeah I guess.

A second A-4 quickly zips by them, overhead.

LONE WOLF

Whoa! There's the second bogey.

Moose tracks it as the second opponent arcs around behind them, Lone Wolf splitting his attention between the A-4 in front, and the new one.

MOOSE

Wait a second. Whose plane is that?

73

INT. STRIKER'S COCKPIT - DAY

73

Flying calm as rice in his cockpit, Striker peels off his oxygen mask.

STRIKER

Gentlemen.

74 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 74

Lone Wolf and Moose share a surprised glance.

MOOSE

Holy shit bro that's Striker!

Lone Wolf puts his mask back on.

LONE WOLF

I think you've got this, ah,  
Hollywood, I'm going after Striker.

PILOT (V.O.)

(radio)

Are you talking to me? That's not  
my callsign.

Lone Wolf slides his thrusters back and yanks the flight  
stick to the left.

75 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY 75

The rear Tomcat rolls away, out of the chase, after Striker's  
descending A-4, both coiling toward the canyon floor.

76 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 76

Moose looks back up at their wingman and the other A-4,  
disappearing quickly.

MOOSE

I hope you know what you're doing,  
Lone. I'm sure I remember a bunch  
of people saying never leave your  
wingman.

LONE WOLF

That's more of a *recommendation*,  
Moose.

Lone Wolf lines up his gun reticle on the A-4 as it zips  
between canyon walls, eluding him.

77 EXT. CANYON - DAY 77

The F-14 descends into the canyon behind the A-4, following it between tight turns around the rocky walls and columns.

78 INT. STRIKER'S COCKPIT - DAY 78

Striker looks at his radar, and up at the rear view mirror, still calm, but mildly perturbed.

STRIKER

This kid is good at flying aeroplanes dangerously. I like that.

79 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 79

Lone Wolf is beginning to sweat, blinking hard with the G-forces.

LONE WOLF

Damn, Striker is slick. He flies like--first best, twice over.

80 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY 80

The A-4 pulls out of the canyon, heading for open sky, followed by the F-14, still close on its tail, but unable to get a lock.

81 INT. STRIKER'S COCKPIT - DAY 81

Striker looks in his rearview at the Tomcat, closing in. Striker lifts his mask halfway to his face.

STRIKER

You're good, kid, but you broke the single biggest rule of Best Guns.

82 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 82

Lone Wolf leans intensely over his stick, watching his gun camera for the impending lock. It beeps louder and faster. He can barely hold back his glee.

LONE WOLF

Oh yeah, what's that, Striker? Don't beat first best? Not even once?

83 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - DAY 83

Looking back at Striker's A-4, followed by the Tomcat, with another A-4 popping up into frame behind them both.

84 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 84

Back in the cockpit, Lone Wolf's intensity is shattered by the sound of a second alarm, blaring over the targeting sound, with a corresponding 'MISSILE LOCK' alert on the dash.

STRIKER (V.O.)  
(radio)  
You left your wingman.

Lone Wolf and Moose both reel around in their seats, spotting Comedian's A-4.

COMEDIAN (V.O.)  
(radio)  
Welcome to fuck town, gents.  
Population: You and me.

MOOSE  
Oh snap Lone I *knew* that wingman  
shit was a real thing. It's like  
the number one rule he said!

Lone Wolf pulls off his mask, leaning his head back against the seat, taking a long breath.

85 INT. BEST GUNS LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON 85

Lone Wolf sits in just a towel on the locker room bench while Moose dries himself nearby. Other PILOTS dry off in background also.

MOOSE  
Cheer up, Lone. It turns out  
Striker took out Riceman right  
before we ate shit. We're still  
only two points behind.

Moose suddenly stands at attention as Comedian enters. Lone Wolf looks up, standing also. As he does, his towel falls off.

Comedian seems to notice it's happened but doesn't break steely eye contact with Lone Wolf.

## COMEDIAN

That was some of the most shit hot flying I've ever witnessed. Right up until the part where you got your shit pushed in, by me. You never leave your wingman. Never ever.

Comedian glances down as he goes to turn away, making a slight grimace.

Now Riceman approaches from out of frame, spreading cream cheese on a rice cake with a plastic picnic knife. Lone Wolf turns to face him, holding eye contact again, this time more to mentally will Riceman not to look down.

## RICEMAN

It's not your flying, Lone Wolf. It's your attitude. Sure, the enemy is dangerous, but you're worse than dangerous. You're... (looks down, trailing off) dangerouser.

Lone Wolf looks down too.

## LONE WOLF

My towel fell off.

## RICEMAN

Why are you erect?

## LONE WOLF

(confused)

I don't know! It started when Comedian was praising me but it actually got more intense when he told me off.

Riceman scowls at him, shoulder-bumping him at a wide lean when he leaves.

Lone Wolf looks over at Moose.

## LONE WOLF

I'm sorry, Moose. It won't happen again.

Moose nods.

## MOOSE

I know it won't, man.

Lone Wolf takes half a step towards him to hug, arms outstretched, but Moose instinctively throws his palms up, leaning back.

Lone Wolf offers him his hand to shake instead.

Moose makes a fist, giving only a two knuckled fist bump.

86 INT. LONE WOLF'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

86

Lone Wolf sits up alone in bed, looking at a passport-sized photo. He looks a little teary, contemplative.

Going over shoulder we see that the picture is black and white--a KID and his DAD, obviously Lone Wolf's, both standing on the wing of a jet, smiling up at camera, the words 'Do not stand here' at their feet.

Lone Wolf pulls out another photo, slightly bigger. It shows the same man, in full flight outfit and parachute, just about to land on a grass hill, a flaming jet going down in background. He waves at camera, smiling.

Lone Wolf wipes a tear from the corner of his eye with his thumb.

A third image. This one is in faded color, and is actually an airline brochure, letter-sized. Lone Wolf's dad, a little older, in full commercial pilot's uniform, standing in front of a passenger jet, flanked by his CO-PILOT and CREW, with 'Zippy Airlines' branding on the plane, and graphics with lines of copy beneath. While Lone Wolf's dad smiles and waves at camera, the entire crew glare at him.

Lone Wolf blows his nose with the corner of his pillow.

87 EXT. STREET HAWK HOTEL - NIGHT

87

Establishing shot of the Street Hawk Hotel, a bar/restaurant. Loud piano and amateur singing waft from within.

88 INT. STREET HAWK HOTEL - NIGHT

88

Inside, Moose sits playing a piano with his kids sitting on top of it, while Lone Wolf, Charlie and Carol sit at a table nearby, drinking, all laughing at someone's previous comment.

CAROL

If you think that's bad, you should have him tell you what he did to the Admiral's daughter!

Lone Wolf thinks a moment as Charlie grins at him, waiting.

LONE WOLF

(cocky)

Which one was that? The fake broken  
arm, so she'd help me unzip?

Carol chuckles, shaking her head.

CAROL

No...

LONE WOLF

(genuinely curious)

The dognapping?

Carol thinks.

CAROL

No, I don't... *think* so...

Carol takes a shot of tequila.

LONE WOLF

Oh not that girl who was stupid  
enough to buy out my shares in  
Atari.

Charlie's smile falters.

LONE WOLF

Wait, did I accidentally back over  
her dad? No, he was a *Vice-Admiral*.  
Who the fuck are you talking about  
Carol?

Carol takes another tequila shot, fading. Lone Wolf looks at  
Charlie, sensing his moment to end the current thread.

LONE WOLF

I'm gonna go sing with Moose.

He gets up quickly, running to Moose's side, joining in the  
song. He goes to tickle one of the kids, who reels back,  
falling off the piano with a loud thud. Carol laughs.

LONE WOLF

Oh I'm sorry kid!

Carol leans over to Charlie, offering her one of two tequila  
shots. They down them together.

CAROL

(shouts)

Hearts are breaking all over the  
world tonight!

CHARLIE

You think so? Because of me and  
Lone Wolf?

Carol is suddenly serious.

CAROL

What? No. Because of *war*, Charlie.  
We're bombing the shit out of all  
the mud people countries. That  
can't be any fun for them.

Carol gets up, shaking her head, looking a little disgusted,  
before turning her attention to Moose.

CAROL

(shouts, drunk)

Moose you big stud, take me to bed  
or drop me off at a truck stop.

Moose sings 'Great Balls of Fire' while playing the piano  
poorly.

89

EXT. THE DOCKS - NIGHT

89

Lone Wolf rides a small replacement scooter with Charlie on  
back, weaving between fishing crates and other dock-related  
items. The shitty piano music continues through background  
audio, with Moose singing, unable to recall any actual  
lyrics.

MOOSE (V.O.)

(singing)

You shit my pants and you shit on  
my plane, you sometimes cook so I  
can't complain, something something  
eats all the fries, goodness  
greatness *my* balls are tired!

Lone Wolf leans on Charlie at the water's edge, balancing  
together against his parked scooter, nose to nose.

CHARLIE

(laughing)

Lone Wolf you big stud, take me to  
bed or drop me off at a truck stop.

'Danger Zone' slowly begins to rise in audio as they pet heavily. Pulling out wider, a row of early morning fishermen sitting on the dock nearby all watch them, unblinking.

90 EXT. BEST GUNS RUNWAY - MORNING 90

'Danger Zone' continues to rise as we watch a row of F-14 Tomcats taxi and take off from behind, a deep field look right down the runway, heat haze wafting in the distance.

91 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - MORNING 91

Lone Wolf and Moose do a check of their equipment.

STRIKER (V.O.)

(radio)

Gentlemen. It's hop thirty-one, graduation is in two weeks. The Best Guns trophy is still up for grabs. Good hunting, gentlemen.

92 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - MORNING 92

Lone Wolf's Tomcat pulls up alongside Riceman and Slicer's Tomcat.

93 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - MORNING 93

Lone Wolf and Moose look across at the other plane. Lone Wolf removes his face mask, giving Riceman a cocky smile and wave.

94 INT. RICEMAN'S COCKPIT - MORNING 94

Riceman and Slicer look over at Lone Wolf with disdain. Riceman also removes his face mask, peeling the cling wrap on a rice crispy square, chowing down.

He reaches back with it to offer Slicer a bite, but Slicer shakes his head--all business.

Outside, an A-4 Skyhawk zips past the pair of Tomcats.

Riceman carefully rewraps the treat, pocketing it, then puts his mask back on, chewing quickly.

95 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - MORNING 95

The two Tomcats follow the Skyhawk into a tight turn.

96 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - MORNING 96

Lone Wolf lines up his gun camera on the Skyhawk, the targeting beep with reticle flashing red and green indicating a near-lock.

Riceman's Tomcat slides into view, blocking Lone Wolf's shot with its afterburners.

Lone Wolf slaps his console.

LONE WOLF

Come on!

MOOSE

Riceman what are you doing? We called it.

97 INT. RICEMAN'S COCKPIT - MORNING 97

Riceman tries to line up a shot on the Skyhawk, but it evades his guns.

He pursues it into another tight turn.

98 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - MORNING 98

The two Tomcats follow the Skyhawk into the next turn, going the other direction.

The rear Tomcat is close beneath the lead, jerking left and right out of the turn's arc in unsuccessful attempts to get around.

99 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - MORNING 99

Lone Wolf sweats, grunting with the effort of following Riceman into the turns.

His gun camera is still obstructed by Riceman's plane.

LONE WOLF

He's got to pull out. He won't get the shot. What are you doing, Riceman?

MOOSE

Come on Riceman, take the shot or get the fuck out.

100 INT. RICEMAN'S COCKPIT - MORNING 100

Riceman jerks the stick, pulling clear of the turn, across Lone Wolf's nose.

RICEMAN  
Dammit. I'm out.

101 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - MORNING 101

The rear Tomcat hits turbulence as it passes through the jetwash of the first.

Both Tomcats pull out of the turn.

102 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - MORNING 102

The whole cockpit shudders as Lone Wolf wrestles with the stick.

LONE WOLF  
Whoa.

MOOSE  
What was that?

LONE WOLF  
We hit his jet wash, we've got an engine out.

103 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - MORNING 103

Lone Wolf's Tomcat begins to stall to one side, as its second engine also flames out.

104 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - MORNING 104

Lone Wolf pulls back on the stick, struggling to look down at his diagnostics while the aircraft falls into a spin.

LONE WOLF  
We lost both engines Moose, we're gonna have to bail out!

105 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - MORNING 105

The Tomcat falls toward Earth in a quickening flat spin.

106 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - MORNING

106

Lone Wolf and Moose both struggle with the G-forces.

LONE WOLF  
Eject! Eject! Eject!

Lone Wolf flips open a plastic panel on a button marked 'Co-pilot failsafe - SEAT ONLY'.

LONE WOLF  
Hang on buddy, I'm getting you out first...

Lone Wolf pounds the button. Behind him, Moose's entire seat shoots upward, his helmet hitting hard against the inside of the still-closed canopy before the whole seat and Moose bounce back down, clicking back into place, with the sound of a gas lift chair being abused.

MOOSE  
Oof!

Moose is stunned, but otherwise okay.

Lone Wolf turns back to quickly look at Moose, surprised to see that he hasn't ejected. The flat spin is getting faster, and the roar of the wind grows louder outside.

LONE WOLF  
It didn't work! Hang on Moose, I'm trying again!

Lone Wolf hits the button again. Once again, unnoticed by him, Moose is propelled into the closed interior of the cockpit, pounding his helmeted head against it, before rebounding back into place.

Lone Wolf turns around again, struggling still with the G-forces.

LONE WOLF  
Oh for fuck sake!

Lone Wolf smacks the button three times in a row.

At first, there's no result. Then Moose is rapidly thrust into the closed canopy three times in succession, his helmet splitting apart on the third.

Lone Wolf turns back again just in time to see him return to the floor with a jolt, barely conscious, blood coming from his ears.

LONE WOLF

(shouts)

Moose where's your helmet? This isn't the time to worry about your hair. I'm gonna try hitting it harder!

Lone Wolf slaps his hand down on the button again, this time holding it in place.

107 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - MORNING 107

Moose and his seat shoot up through the canopy, shattering it, out into clear sky.

108 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - MORNING 108

Lone Wolf looks back once more, seeing the space empty. He fist-pumps.

LONE WOLF

Yes!

Lone Wolf pulls his own ejection handles.

109 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - MORNING 109

The damaged canopy is ejected a moment before Lone Wolf's seat shoots out, deploying a chute. In background, Moose descends toward the ocean on a parachute also.

110 EXT. OPEN SEA - MORNING 110

Lone Wolf splashes down, unbuckling his harness and struggling free of the chute, looking around for Moose.

He sees red smoke, swimming towards it.

LONE WOLF

Moose!

111 EXT. OPEN SEA - MORNING 111

Moose lays face down in the water as Lone Wolf arrives at his side, rolling him over.

LONE WOLF

Moose! It's okay, buddy. They're coming.

A Coast Guard HELICOPTER arrives on scene, circling overhead.  
Lone Wolf waves to them.

LONE WOLF  
We're only two weeks from trophy  
time, Moose. Or was it something  
about a plaque?

Lone Wolf looks down at Moose--unconscious, at best.

LONE WOLF  
Moose? Are you... upset at me?

The Coast Guard helicopter lowers a harness on a rope.

LONE WOLF  
To be fair, this one was ninety per  
cent Riceman's fault. I know I  
screw up a lot, but I don't think  
we'll lose points for this round.  
They might be upset about the  
plane, but we can cross that bridge  
when we come to it.

112 EXT. OPEN SEA - MORNING 112

Moose is hauled out of the water, still limp.

LONE WOLF  
(shouts)  
Hey be careful with my buddy, guys!

113 INT. BEST GUNS LOCKER ROOM - DAY 113

Lone Wolf stands shaving at a sink in his underwear.

Striker enters in full Navy dress whites, standing nearby.

STRIKER  
Lieutenant Mews. I'm sorry to tell  
you that Moose is dead.

Lone Wolf turns to look at him, doubtful.

LONE WOLF  
What are you talking about? He's  
fine.

Striker is briefly confused.

STRIKER  
Ah... no.

LONE WOLF

I saw him after we ejected. The Coast Guard picked him up.

STRIKER

Lone Wolf... Moose didn't survive.

Lone Wolf smiles, shaking his head.

LONE WOLF

Sir I can see why you'd think that, but Moose is just really upset at me for crashing the plane and getting him in shit again. He gives me the cold shoulder when I've screwed up a few times in a row. Give him a day or two.

Striker tilts his head slightly, his steely calmness routing around something unanticipated.

STRIKER

I don't think you understand...

Lone Wolf flashes him another cocky grin, waving the razor.

LONE WOLF

A lot better than you know, sir.

Striker looks down at his feet.

STRIKER

You're having trouble processing what's happened, and you're in denial. I don't mind that.

Striker leaves.

114 INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - EVENING

114

Charlie drives Lone Wolf in a piece of crap ROADSTER looking car, pulling over to the side of the road.

LONE WOLF

I still can't figure it out, Charlie. Why would Carol want me to go and steal a bunch of Moose's stuff for her? He's going to be *pissed* when he gets out of hospital and doesn't have his dog tags and sunglasses. He uses those every day.

CHARLIE

I'm not sure I can think of any other ways to explain that Moose is dead and not coming back.

LONE WOLF

(blank)

What do you mean?

She looks into his eyes for a long moment, using all of her eye strength to prevent them rolling.

CHARLIE

Good luck in there.

115 INT. MOOSE'S QUARTERS - EVENING 115

Lone Wolf packs up a box of Moose's stuff while sad music plays.

Into the box go sunglasses, dog tags, a picture of Lone Wolf and Moose with Mr. T, and Moose's wallet. Lone Wolf pauses, lifting the wallet out, removing the cash, pocketing it, before returning the wallet to the box.

116 INT. STRIKER'S OFFICE - EVENING 116

Carol and the kids sit waiting on chairs in Striker's office. Carol's eyes are stained by makeup, everyone looks sad.

Lone Wolf kicks open the door with a loud bang and a big grin, holding the box under one arm.

LONE WOLF

What's up, Mooses?

He tosses the box on the floor next to Carol and goes to tickle one of the kids, who reels back, falling off the chair.

Carol gets up, crying as she leans into Lone Wolf's arms.

CAROL

Oh, Lone Wolf! He loved flying with you so much!

LONE WOLF

Of course he does! Who wouldn't?

She looks up at him.

CAROL

But he would have flown without you. You can't stop now. You have to win this thing... for him.

Lone Wolf shrugs, beaming confidence.

LONE WOLF

Hey screw that, let's win it for both of us!

She nods, a little confused.

CAROL

Did you get his house keys?

Lone Wolf nods.

LONE WOLF

Just promise me you're not gonna lock the poor guy out.

She frowns.

CAROL

Like... metaphorically?

Now Lone Wolf is confused.

LONE WOLF

I guess!

117 INT. NAVY COURT - DAY

117

The next day, Lone Wolf stands at attention, in full uniform, in front of a panel of uniformed Navy OFFICERS. Navy PERSONNEL sit in various positions around the small court room, and Riceman sits further back observing with a few other pilots, plus Striker and Comedian in the back row.

OFFICER

It is the finding of this panel that the F-14's airflow was disrupted across the starboard engine, causing it to stall--

LONE WOLF

That's right. That's what I've been *trying* to tell you.

OFFICER

Please be quiet during this part, Lieutenant.

(MORE)

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Subsequently, the second engine flamed out, resulting in an irretrievable flat spin for the--

LONE WOLF

Right, but what caused the whole airflow thing in the first place? Riceman being a dick. We were telling him, step off bro, get out of there. Moose will tell you what happened...

Lone Wolf looks around the room for Moose.

LONE WOLF

(distracted)

Where is he...

OFFICER

We further find that Lieutenant Todd Mews, callsign (reads) "Boner Wolf" was not to blame for the incident, much as we all would prefer to see this man far removed from the cockpit of any vehicle capable of sustained flight.

The other Officers all nod, murmuring. The same murmuring and nodding from the entire room seated behind him. Lone Wolf almost registers it, but as always, isn't quite tuned in to the emotional temperature or specifics of proceedings.

Lone Wolf notices Striker and Comedian in back, giving them a thumbs up as the Officer strikes a gavel twice, and everyone begins packing up their belongings.

LONE WOLF

(to officers)

We're good? You said *not* responsible right? I can fly?

The officer gives Lone Wolf a disappointed old man glare before leaving.

Lone Wolf walks over to Striker, still a bit unsure if he has been cleared. Lone Wolf hands Striker the cash that he took from Moose's wallet earlier.

LONE WOLF

Sir, can you give this to Moose when you see him? I didn't want Carol to get all his drinking money when she took his things.

(MORE)

LONE WOLF (CONT'D)

I guess they're going through some sort of trial separation. She seemed really upset when I brought it up though. Best not poke the bear.

Striker and Comedian share a concerned glance. Lone Wolf leaves with a salute.

STRIKER

Get him up and flying soon. Give him one of the planes that are nearly out of warranty.

118 EXT. BEST GUNS RUNWAY - MORNING 118

Another day, another hop. F-14 Tomcats take off in a long line on the same runway.

119 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - MORNING 119

Lone Wolf is in the chase for an A-4, behind another Tomcat, in a similar configuration to his previous outing.

Lone wolf seems confused as his vision fades. He blinks hard.

LONE WOLF

Moose I don't know why but everything keeps going fuzzy... my mouth tastes like metal. Is this normal after a strong shave with a new razor?

Wizard leans forward from the rear.

WIZARD

Hey, Lone? Again, it's me. Wizard. Moose is gone.

LONE WOLF

Sorry Wizard I keep forgetting Moose is still pissed at me.

WIZARD

He's not pissed, Lone. He ah... how do I put this... he drowned in the ocean, and now he's dust.

LONE WOLF

(confused)  
I don't follow.

Wizard leans back in his seat.

WIZARD

I honestly can't tell if you're in denial, or just a fuckin' idiot.

Lone Wolf shakes his head, blinking again.

LONE WOLF

What's happening, Wizard? I can't feel my face now.

WIZARD

Don't go all Panther on me, Lone Wolf. Take some deep breaths, and let's go score the points. I'm gonna get my name on that plaque next week, and I've barely had to do anything.

Lone Wolf looks up at the Tomcat and Skyhawk they pursue, breaking off with a jerk of the stick.

120 EXT. BEST GUNS SKIES - MORNING 120

The rear Tomcat peels away, slowing.

121 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - MORNING 121

Wizard watches their fading wingman through the side.

WIZARD

(shouts)

What are you doing?

Lone Wolf looks ashamed.

LONE WOLF

No shot... I call, no ball... I do not have the ball.

122 EXT. BEST GUNS TARMAC - DAY 122

Lone Wolf walks quickly away from his parked Tomcat with helmet in hand, closely followed by Wizard.

WIZARD

(shouts)

Hey!

Lone Wolf ignores him, walking faster.

WIZARD

(angry)

Hey! What happened up there? Are you too chickenshit to even shoot a pretend gun now that you graduated from petty vandalism to full-blown manslaughter? I need a win here too, you know! I deserve this--it's *my* time!

Lone Wolf spins on him, grabbing him by the collar, lifting him onto toes.

LONE WOLF

I said *no* shot! I had *no* ball! I will fire when I'm good and ready, *pressured* to, or encouraged by a lady friend with a convincing appeal to my emotion--*or* vanity. Maybe a pep talk from an older, wiser mentor type. For now though... it's *no* ball!

Lone Wolf walks away.

Riceman and Slicer stand beneath their own Tomcat, watching the interaction, both looking concerned.

123

INT. BEST GUNS LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

123

Lone Wolf stands at his locker in the otherwise empty locker room, emptying his things into a duffel bag.

Riceman enters, carrying a 10kg bag of rice on his shoulder.

Lone Wolf looks up, almost getting annoyed, but too depressed to worry about the rice reference now.

RICEMAN

Hey, ah, Lone Wolf?

LONE WOLF

What do you want, Riceman? This isn't a good time.

RICEMAN

I'm really sorry about Moose. He seemed like a good grain.

LONE WOLF

He's still *is* a good... did you say grain? Fucking... look.

(MORE)

LONE WOLF (CONT'D)

I don't give up on friends, even though I called him a bunch of times and his wife said he won't ever talk to me again.

Riceman frowns.

RICEMAN

Bro you know they buried him, right?

LONE WOLF

In the rankings? Sure. He missed a few hops already. He's really committing to this.

Riceman leaves silently, watching Lone Wolf with cautious suspicion.

Lone Wolf finishes packing the duffel bag, then closes the locker, tossing his key on the bench seat before leaving.

We pull back to reveal Slicer is watching Lone Wolf leave.

He stands, walking to a nearby public phone--for some reason located in a men's locker room.

Slicer puts a quarter in and dials, waiting a moment.

SLICER

Hello, weather tips? Lone Wolf just quit! (pause, frowns) Well no, I suppose it's not. Just a *regular* tip. But still. Pretty huge, in the context of his character arc, wouldn't you-- (pause) Okay, I understand. Maybe next time. (pause) You don't? Oh. Okay then, I won't. Do you know if there's a tip line just for normal--h-hello?

124

INT. AIRPORT BAR - EVENING

124

Charlie enters an airport bar room looking around, finding Lone Wolf seated at the bar itself, his face resting on it, in a pool of sticky spilled drinks.

She looks at the BARMAN, polishing a glass, seeming disinterested.

CHARLIE

How long has he been like this?

BARMAN

Since he arrived. He just came in  
and sat down like that.

Charlie sits next to Lone Wolf.

CHARLIE

Lone Wolf? Hi. Are you feeling  
okay? There's a rumor going around  
base that you quit.

Lone Wolf twists his head only slightly in her direction.

LONE WOLF

(muffled, splashes)  
I *did* quit.

CHARLIE

And you weren't going to say  
goodbye to me?

LONE WOLF

(muffled)  
Yeah, well... you did it first. I  
heard you got a job in Washington.

CHARLIE

That's not for another month. You  
would have been back on your  
carrier by then. And I wasn't going  
to *leave* without saying goodbye.

He looks up at her, wiping away the sticky liquids with a  
napkin.

LONE WOLF

You weren't?

CHARLIE

Of course not.

She hugs him, and he softens.

LONE WOLF

Charlie Moose still isn't returning  
my calls.

She seems shocked, like she'd forgotten that this was a  
thing.

CHARLIE

Oh. Still?

LONE WOLF

You know what? That guy is dead to me, starting now.

She makes kind of a "weeeeell" gesture but stifles it.

CHARLIE

Okay sweetie, that's fair I think. You've done everything you can.

He nods, resolved.

CHARLIE

Now why don't you come back to Best Guns with me and tell them you're not quitting?

LONE WOLF

I don't think I can do it, Charlie. When I go up there now, I just keep thinking about all the things I could have done better.

She nods, empathetic.

LONE WOLF

Forfeiting that volleyball match after putting in so much time and effort. Burning my bike down. Upsetting Moose and Carol somehow. Using your garden as a bathroom when I couldn't find the proper one. Sinking that fighter plane I was flying. Maybe everyone is right about me... maybe I really *am* a screw-up.

She nods more deeply, faraway look in her eyes.

CHARLIE

Maybe you should go and talk to Striker. You know he flew with your dad, right?

Lone Wolf looks at her, confused.

LONE WOLF

No?

CHARLIE

He mentioned it in front of you a bunch of times.

He slowly shakes his head.

LONE WOLF  
Doesn't ring a bell.

125 EXT. STRIKER'S HOUSE - EVENING

125

Lone Wolf rings Striker's front door bell, straightening his shirt collar, then cuffs, then realizing he's only wearing boxer shorts.

He looks back at the parked car just as STRIKER'S WIFE opens the front door.

STRIKER'S WIFE  
Hello, can I--(noticing shorts) oh.

LONE WOLF  
Hi. I'm sorry, I remember now, I took my pants off in the car to block the vents because I couldn't find the controls.

STRIKER'S WIFE  
(closing door)  
Well, okay then. It was nice to--

LONE WOLF  
Is Striker here? I really need to talk to him.

Her pleasant facade falls, holding the door only a few inches from closed. After a long pause it slowly opens.

He smiles, going inside.

LONE WOLF  
You have a lovely home here, Mrs. Striker.

STRIKER'S WIFE (O.C.)  
Please don't call me that again.

126 INT. STRIKER'S HOUSE - EVENING

126

Mrs. Striker leads Lone Wolf through to the living room, where Striker sits alone, drinking scotch neat, staring at an oil painting of a lumberjack.

STRIKER'S WIFE  
Dear, one of your students is here to see you. (quiet) He's not wearing any pants.

Striker looks up at his wife, then Lone Wolf, then down at Lone Wolf's boxers. He nods to Lone Wolf.

STRIKER

You lack awareness of how people perceive you, so you feel no shame. I like that.

LONE WOLF

Sir, I know I said I quit and then buzzed the bottom of the tower in my rental car, but my sort-of girlfriend recently said some encouraging words that made me want to come back to Best Guns.

Striker slowly nods, waving his open hand at the chair opposite.

STRIKER

Please, have a seat.

Just before Lone Wolf can sit down, Mrs. Striker quickly puts a newspaper on the chair, then leaves.

Lone Wolf looks around at all of the photos, showing Striker doing distinguished things--mostly standing in front of planes of different eras, wearing multiple pilot uniforms.

STRIKER

You know, Mews, you're a lot like your father.

LONE WOLF

How's that, sir?

STRIKER

Well, for one thing, you both fly planes.

Striker nods. Lone Wolf waits a moment expectantly, before leaning forward.

LONE WOLF

Sir, is it true you flew with him in Korea?

STRIKER

Oh, sure. We flew together a few times. He played a great hand of poker, your old man. (thinks) Well... sometimes.

(MORE)

STRIKER (CONT'D)

I always suspected he was aiming the plane at pockets of turbulence to palm cards, but... well... I guess I could never prove it, so disregard that.

LONE WOLF

Is it true what they said then? In the media, in all of the official reports... his friends and colleagues. Did he really screw up that day?

Striker thinks a moment, slowly nodding.

STRIKER

Oh, yes. He was a hundred per cent at fault.

Lone Wolf hangs his head.

LONE WOLF

Then maybe I really *am* more like him than I ever knew.

Striker nods again, a faraway look in his eyes.

LONE WOLF

Do you know what really happened to him, sir? Why he disappeared?

Striker looks around the room, standing.

STRIKER

Come with me. They might be listening.

Lone Wolf seems confused as he gets up.

127

EXT. STRIKER'S HOUSE - EVENING

127

In the back yard, Lone Wolf follows striker to a mini fridge. Striker hands him a beer, taking one too.

Striker takes a bottle opener from his pocket, popping the cap off his, before repocketing it.

Lone Wolf looks down at his beer, trying to twist the cap. As he goes to ask for the bottle opener, Striker begins speaking.

STRIKER

Your father flew that passenger jet over the border into North Korea, during a very unfortunate decade for relations between them and us.

LONE WOLF

Wow. They told me he went nuts and tried to get the doors open.

STRIKER

Oh, he did that too. Several people were sucked out of the cabin. A tiny dog, and some sports memorabilia. A very rare painting of a vase.

LONE WOLF

So he *had* to make a landing across the border, to save the rest of the passengers...

STRIKER

No, he said he was going to defect, and offer the remaining passengers as hostages to the enemy, for bartering back captured spies.

LONE WOLF

Oh.

They sit there a moment in silence. Striker sips his beer. Lone Wolf puts his to his mouth then remembers the cap, going to ask for the opener again before Striker speaks.

STRIKER

Based on satellite footage, we know that he managed to land that plane. Our intelligence agencies heard he was later seen swimming back across the border when he realized which Korea he had defected from, and to. He didn't speak a word of Korean, so it's possible he was just given wrong directions after that.

LONE WOLF

Why didn't they ever tell us what really happened?

STRIKER

I guess because the defection happened over the wrong line on some map--and of course he was such an asshole about the whole thing.

LONE WOLF

"Some map", sir? Which map?

STRIKER

The atlas. I never trusted it.

LONE WOLF

What are my options now? Can I come back to Best Guns?

STRIKER

You *do* have enough points to graduate with the rest of your class tomorrow. I don't see why not.

LONE WOLF

Tomorrow? That seems fast... how long was I in that airport? And I'm still graduating? Wow. Well, okay. I'm okay with that. Did I win? No. That's probably a bit much to expect, isn't it?

Striker nods.

LONE WOLF

But I'm graduating.

He continues nodding.

LONE WOLF

Can I use your toilet?

Striker shakes his head slowly.

128

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

128

Lone Wolf drives his rental car past Charlie's place, stopping at the curb opposite. All the lights are off, and there's a 'FOR RENT' sign up outside on the lawn.

LONE WOLF

(angry confusion)

What have I been in a coma?

He speeds off.

129 EXT. BEST GUNS TARMAC - EVENING 129

Lone Wolf lays on the windshield of his rental, watching an F-14 land, thinking hard.

130 EXT. HOTEL SWIMMING POOL - DAY 130

The next day, Lone Wolf hesitantly arrives in full dress uniform at the Best Guns graduation ceremony--indicated by handwritten signs stuck up around the pool fence and outdoor bar.

The party is in full swing, with loud music and announcements over a PA system competing for ear share.

Every pilot and instructor is here in their dress uniforms, some of them noticing Lone Wolf walk up to the area beside the hotel swimming pool, where a small podium and table with diplomas have been set up.

People are clapping as names are read out by the ANNOUNCER--an aging instructor in full dress whites with a Hawaiian shirt over the top.

ANNOUNCER

(into mic)

Mike Walters, callsign Hot Shit,  
Craig Pedro, callsign Tomcat--well  
that's confusing--Joel Beckett,  
callsign Daniel Smith--what? Okay.  
Oh and a big thanks to Carl, our  
Best Guns janitor, for cleaning up  
a lot of the condoms we started  
finding in the base elevator and  
women's toilets.

Riceman and Slicer step up to the podium as the announcer hands them a trophy and a plaque.

ANNOUNCER

(into mic)

Up next... our winners, *first best*--  
Riceman and Slicer. I forget their  
real names, but that's not  
important because--

Striker appears, taking the mic from the announcer.

STRIKER

Gentlemen. I'm sorry to interrupt,  
but this is important.

(MORE)

STRIKER (CONT'D)

We have an unspecified "crisis situation" occurring in one of the gulfs you hear about in the news a lot, at this very moment. Rather than let you continue drinking, and despite how hard you may have partied *last* night, we're about to throw you into the cockpit of a potential world war three powderkeg, with live ammunition and very little intel. Good luck, gents.

Striker hands the mic back to the announcer then walks over to Lone Wolf as young navy OFFICERS hand out assignments to some of the Best Guns pilots in background, including Riceman and Slicer.

ANNOUNCER

(into mic)

Hoo, yikes. That kind of puts a downer on the evening. Oh no, you're not giving an assignment to *that* guy sir? I personally saw him snort a line of beach sand. Well, at least it's not--oh boy, him too? Is he even conscious? Just tuck it under his chin there maybe.

Lone Wolf salutes Striker. Striker hands Lone Wolf an envelope.

STRIKER

You've been called back to your ship by your Captain. He seemed extremely agitated about something when we spoke. Wizard is around here somewhere, but if he's too drunk to fly, just give me a call. I would fly with you any day, Lone Wolf.

Lone Wolf nods, almost smiling, then looking confused.

LONE WOLF

So, I would call you, then wait for you to fly out to the ship, and they'd have to brief you separately, then reinstate you to active duty? How would it work sorry?

Striker gives him a calm smile, beginning to turn away.

STRIKER

You're unable to grasp the deeper layers of meaning in a statement. I like that.

Striker leaves.

131 INT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

131

Lone Wolf and Wizard sit beside Riceman and Slicer in the briefing room of the USS Crazyhorse.

The Captain, smoking his cigar, and the rookie analyst from our opening scenes stand up front, conducting the briefing.

ANALYST

(pointing to map)

We've had sightings of the same black fighter jets with a red star on the tail that Lone Wolf and Panther encountered that day our safety record got reset.

Riceman seems concerned.

RICEMAN

Black fighters with a red star? They weren't F-5 Tigers by any chance were they?

ANALYST

We're not sure. Lone Wolf is the only one who got a really good look at--

LONE WOLF

No, they were definitely *Migs*.

RICEMAN

You said they're painted all black with a red star on the tail?

LONE WOLF

Right.

RICEMAN

You know there's a company that does joy flights in modified F-5 Tigers all around this area, right? People pay money to go up and sit in the back seat while an ex-fighter pilot does barrel rolls and loop to loops off the coast.

LONE WOLF  
Never heard of it.

RICEMAN  
They tried to recruit me a couple  
of years ago. They paint their  
aircraft all black, with a red star  
on the tail.

LONE WOLF  
Just like those Migs.

CAPTAIN  
Well okay, Lone Wolf, Riceman, when  
you're up there, make sure you get  
a positive ID. You're weapons hot,  
so no shooting down F-5's. And  
you're only to fire if you witness  
a hostile act!

Riceman raises his hand.

RICEMAN  
Sir, in light of everything that's  
happened this past week, do you  
really think Lone Wolf should be up  
there?

CAPTAIN  
What are you getting at?

RICEMAN  
I have concerns about his  
competence, and his current mental  
disposition. I can't think of an  
analogous rice situation, but to  
touch on an earlier theme, he's  
dangerous *cubed*.

Lone Wolf shoots him a look but says nothing.

CAPTAIN  
(points cigar)  
I don't like him either, Riceman.  
But I need you watching each  
other's backs. Or at least  
pretending to, so I can tell my  
bosses I had it covered. I could  
really give a shit at this point of  
my tenure, as long as certain  
performance indicators are met.  
Riceman and Slicer will go up  
first, Lone Wolf is your backup if  
things get hairy.

The Captain drops his still lit cigar on the floor and leaves the room.

Lone Wolf and Riceman share a begrudging silence.

132 EXT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER DECK - DAWN 132

Lone Wolf pats one of the missiles hanging from the wing of his idle Tomcat, as Riceman's Tomcat waits nearby to take off on the slingshot, the roar of its engines rising.

'Danger Zone' plays again in background.

Riceman launches.

Over Lone Wolf's shoulder, watching him fly into the distance, still absently patting the missile--which SHIFTS its weight slightly with a loud metallic CREAK, surprising him.

LONE WOLF  
(reeling back)  
Fuck!

133 INT. CARRIER COMMAND ROOM - MORNING 133

The analyst sits hunched over his radar scope with the Captain standing behind him, smoking a cigar.

ANALYST  
(into headset)  
Riceman, you've got two Migs in the area. Keep your eyes sharp.

134 INT. RICEMAN'S COCKPIT - MORNING 134

Riceman and Slicer look around outside for the Migs.

RICEMAN  
That's a negative, Command. "Keep your eyes sharp" is not a saying.

135 INT. CARRIER COMMAND ROOM - MORNING 135

The analyst looks up at the Captain, who nods.

136 INT. RICEMAN'S COCKPIT - MORNING 136

Slicer points to a speck on the horizon.

SLICER  
There! I see them.

Riceman steers toward them.

137 EXT. OCEAN SKIES - MORNING 137

Looking right down the nose of an F-5 Tiger, painted black, with a short musical sting.

138 INT. F-5 TIGER COCKPIT #1 - MORNING 138

Sitting in the pilot seat, another tinted-visor helmeted "Mig" pilot. After a moment of sitting there silently, looking ominous, the pilot raises his visor, revealing STEVE-- a friendly retired navy pilot in his 60s.

He turns back over one shoulder, talking to his as-yet unseen passenger.

STEVE  
How you feeling back there *now*,  
Susie?

Reveal his passenger, SUSIE--an eighteen year old girl with braces and a nervous smile. She wears an ordinary bike helmet.

SUSIE  
I think I'm getting the hang of it,  
Steve. I stopped using the barf bag  
at least. Oh... hang on.

She grabs an air sick bag, vomiting into it a bit.

SUSIE  
Okay I'm good. I just hope my  
Grandad's doing okay!

She turns to her left, waving. Through her cockpit window, we see another black F-5 Tiger, a red star on its tail, flying alongside. The helmeted pilot and passenger--an OLD MAN--wave back, accompanied by a mildly alarmed musical sting.

SUSIE  
He always wanted to fly fighters in  
the war, but they wouldn't let him  
because of his weak bowels.

A slightly louder musical sting.

STEVE

Well, I'm sure he's loving it,  
especially after talking your mom  
and grandma into coming along.

Susie waves at the other side of the cockpit.

Three more sharp musical jabs as we reveal, in three quick  
beats:

139 INT. F-5 TIGER COCKPIT #3 - MORNING 139

A middle-aged LADY, in the back of another F-5, looking  
nervously outside the cockpit, fidgeting.

140 INT. F-5 TIGER COCKPIT #4 - MORNING 140

An OLD LADY, in the rear of yet another F-5, holding her  
harness straps and leaning forward with grim determination,  
either barely aware of where she is or completely in the  
zone.

141 INT. F-5 TIGER COCKPIT #2 141

The old man Susie waved to, also helmeted, looks around at  
the skies with unrestrained glee, and mild senility.

OLD MAN

Can *I* fly the plane?

F-5 PILOT

Nope.

142 EXT. OCEAN SKIES - MORNING 142

Reveal four F-5 TIGERS, flying in close formation, with one  
last foreboding blast of trumpet.

143 INT. CARRIER COMMAND ROOM - MORNING 143

The analyst leans forward even harder over his radar scope.

ANALYST

(surprised)

What? Riceman, we're now reading  
*four* Migs!

The Captain leans down also, looking at the scope.

CAPTAIN

Aw, shit on a stick. I've got enough problems today with my performance review. Get Lone Wolf and Wizard up there too. Tell them if it looks like a Mig, shoot it down.

The analyst goes to speak into his headset.

CAPTAIN

Oh! And if it looks like an F-5 Tiger--*don't*.

ANALYST

(into headset)

Lone Wolf, you're go for takeoff. Priority one: Shoot Migs out of the sky at long range by whatever means necessary. Priority two: double check they're not friendlies.

Some inspirational guitar music rises, continuing into...

144 EXT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER DECK - DAY

144

Lone Wolf's Tomcat stands where Riceman's waited before, testing flaps and afterburners while a thrust shield swings up out of the deck slowly on hydraulic arms behind it.

Wide as Lone Wolf takes off, the music hitting a crescendo. He's about to go fuck some shit up, and this music isn't going to let us forget it.

145 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

145

Lone Wolf checks gauges and snaps toggles, his oxygen mask on tight.

LONE WOLF

Hold steady, Riceman. I'm only minutes out.

RICEMAN (V.O.)

(radio)

That's a negative, Lone Wolf. We've made a visual ident of the contact. It's Steve!

LONE WOLF

(confused)

Say again, Riceman. Are you seeing Migs or not?

RICEMAN (V.O.)

(radio)

No Migs, Lone Wolf. I know this guy, it's *Steve*, from the "ride in a jet" company I told you about.

LONE WOLF

Okay, Riceman. Stay alert, we're still seeing Migs over here so I'm heading to the coordinates they gave us.

RICEMAN (V.O.)

(radio)

Ahhh... I'm guessing that's the same contact, Lone Wolf. Four blips, flying side by side?

Lone Wolf looks at his scope, seeing the four blips.

LONE WOLF

Affirmative! I see them, arming long range missiles now!

Silence from Riceman as Lone Wolf prepares his missile computer.

RICEMAN (V.O.)

Sorry I missed that, Lone Wolf. Say again?

Wizard leans forward from the rear.

WIZARD

Hey Lone Wolf, buddy? Do you think the guys we're seeing might be the same ones Riceman is looking at?

Lone Wolf thinks, realization washing over him at once.

LONE WOLF

Holy shit, Moose. You're right!

Wizard considers correcting him for half a beat before sitting back.

LONE WOLF

(into mask)

Hey Riceman, you might want to be extra careful there, those contacts could be Migs after all. The enemy are masters of camouflage.

RICEMAN (V.O.)

(radio)

They're *not* Migs, Lone Wolf.

LONE WOLF

What makes you so sure?

RICEMAN

The aircraft are clearly F-5 Tigers, they have "Jetfighter Joyride" painted right under the red star on their tail, and when I flew up alongside them, Steve *waved* to me.

Lone Wolf thinks hard, eventually looking over his shoulder.

LONE WOLF

What do you think?

WIZARD

Sounds legit.

Lone Wolf slowly nods, suspicious frown beginning to crease his brow.

LONE WOLF

Yeah... a little *too* legit.

Lone Wolf slams the afterburners on, as more kickass 80s action music ramps up.

146 EXT. OCEAN SKIES - DAY

146

The F-14's afterburners light while its wings sweep back, roaring toward the horizon.

147 EXT. OCEAN SKIES - DAY

147

Riceman's F-14 Tomcat flies in formation with the four F-5 Tigers.

148 INT. F-5 TIGER COCKPIT #1 - DAY

148

Steve leans forward for a closer look at the Tomcat.

STEVE

Looks like you're in for a show today, Susie. That's "Rice" "Man" flying an "F-14 Tomcat". He's one of the hottest young navy pilots around. In fact *the* hottest pilot. I heard he just won Best Guns. (trailing off) Still... I wonder what they're doing out here.

149 INT. RICEMAN'S COCKPIT - DAY

149

Riceman takes off his oxygen mask to eat a Tic Tac, holding it halfway to his face again as he splinters and crunches the candy with his teeth.

RICEMAN

We can confirm after a full radar and visual sweep, there are *no* Migs in the area. Let's head home, boys.

150 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

150

Several targeting alerts blink and beep in Lone Wolf's cockpit, the polar opposite of Riceman's calm habitat.

Lone Wolf has his mask on and grips the controls with tense focus, staring down at his scope, then back up at the dots on the horizon.

LONE WOLF

Riceman I'm in visual range now, I see *four* enemy Migs on your tail. Riceman come in, over!

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
(radio)  
No those--

LONE WOLF  
Riceman do you--

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
(radio)  
Lone Wolf I'm--

LONE WOLF  
Say again Rice--

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
(radio)  
They're not Mig--

LONE WOLF  
You're breaking up--

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
 (radio)  
 Don't speak until I--

LONE WOLF  
 You've gotta say "over" when--

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
 (radio)  
 I'm trying to--

LONE WOLF  
 It's like a radio thing they--

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
 (radio)  
 Just shut the f--

LONE WOLF  
 You learn it on the first day  
 of radio school.

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
 (radio)  
 Bro you gotta let the rice sit  
 before you eat it!

LONE WOLF  
 Huh?

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
 (radio)  
 What?

LONE WOLF  
 Are you seriously still making rice  
 references while I'm out here  
 trying to save your life dude?

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
 (radio)  
 You're not saving my life, Lone  
 Wolf, they're *friendlies*!

Lone Wolf pauses, eyes darting from the sky to his scope and  
 instruments in confusion.

LONE WOLF  
 What?

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
 (radio)  
 It's *Steve*.

Lone Wolf frowns, looking back at Wizard.

LONE WOLF  
 Does he sound normal to you?

WIZARD  
 What?

LONE WOLF  
 Riceman, are you being coerced?

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
What?

LONE WOLF  
Are they making you say this?

A long pause as Lone Wolf glares intensely at the horizon.

WIZARD  
(annoyed)  
How *would* they be?

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
(radio)  
Uhhh... I'm not even sure how to respond to that.

Lone Wolf nods sharply.

LONE WOLF  
(quiet)  
I knew it.

RICEMAN (V.O.)  
(radio)  
I think the last few days have you all messed up, Lone Wolf... you're seeing brown rice where there's only white.

LONE WOLF  
(angry)  
Do you have any other gear, dude?

Lone Wolf's targeting computer shows 'LONG RANGE MISSILE LOCK'.

151 INT. F-5 TIGER COCKPIT #1 - DAY

151

As a loud beeping fills the cockpit, Steve frowns, looking slowly over his many instruments, before tapping one.

STEVE  
Huh.

SUSIE  
Is everything okay, Steve?

STEVE  
All good here, Susie. Just a faulty instrument. Nothing that can't be switched off.

He flicks a toggle, silencing the alert.

Two more distinct alerts begin to beep loudly. Steve taps more instruments.

STEVE

Hmmm. Let me just get on the navy channel here and see what's going on with these guys.

Steve flicks another toggle, abruptly filling the cockpit with Riceman and Lone Wolf's screamed conversation.

RICEMAN (V.O.)

(radio)

Lone Wolf break off! Do *not* shoot down Steve and those other F-5 Tigers.

Steve tilts his head slightly, listening.

LONE WOLF (V.O.)

(radio)

I don't know who you think these guys are, Riceman, but they are *not* your friends.

RICEMAN (V.O.)

(radio)

I don't *think* it's Steve, Lone Wolf, I recognize the guy!

LONE WOLF (V.O.)

(radio)

The enemy is a master of disguise!

RICEMAN (V.O.)

(radio)

Break off your attack! These are civilian aircraft. Repeat--

LONE WOLF (V.O.)

(radio)

Riceman, it's time to shit or get off the log. Sidewinders away!

Steve squints at the horizon, seeing the approaching Tomcat, and five missiles streaking from it.

Susie leans over his shoulder again, a little scared.

SUSIE

Hey Steve, is everything alright?

He turns back to look at her, shaking his head, at the same time pulling a lever.

The canopy pops off above them with a roar of wind, then Susie goes shooting out into the sky, a chute deploying from her seat. She screams, loud at first, fading quickly.

Steve pulls another lever and then he ejects also.

152 EXT. OCEAN SKIES - DAY 152

Wide as the three other pilots and passengers eject, a few beats before long range missiles slam into the F-5 Tigers, EXPLODING them all with direct hits.

153 EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY 153

Susie floats toward the choppy surf below, still screaming.

Nearby, Susie's elderly Grandma swings toward the sea on her parachute also, maintaining the same fixed gaze and tight grip on her harness. Cool as rice.

154 INT. RICEMAN'S COCKPIT - DAY 154

Riceman circles the place where flaming debris still falls into the ocean. He and Slicer both look out through the side.

RICEMAN  
(into mask)  
Tower we need rescue for up to  
eight civilians at my location.

Riceman turns back to Slicer.

RICEMAN  
Is this guy a legit fucking idiot  
or what?

SLICER  
Or a prankster genius.

155 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 155

Lone Wolf and Wizard fly by the scene too, looking down at the ejected passengers and pilots, still landing in the sea.

LONE WOLF

What do you think, Wizard? Should we hit them with the guns or let them go home to tell their comrades how hard we fucked them?

WIZARD

(uneasy)

I'm pretty sure even *suggesting* that is a war crime. I feel nauseous, man. Is that an old lady?

Lone Wolf lifts his mask to his face.

LONE WOLF

Tower, splash four Migs.

156 INT. CARRIER COMMAND ROOM - DAY 156

The command room erupts in elated cheering and hugging. Even the Captain gives the rookie a big bear hug, burning the younger man's hat with his cigar.

157 INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY 157

Lone Wolf smiles as he hears the cheering coming through speakers.

LONE WOLF

Tower, this is Lone Wolf and Wizard, requesting a flyby.

WIZARD

Why did you mention me? I don't want a flyby.

158 INT. CARRIER COMMAND TOWER - DAY 158

In the ship's command tower, the same Sergeant who Lone Wolf spilled coffee on at Best Guns sips hot tea.

SERGEANT

(into mic)

Ahhhhh that's a negative, Lone Wolf and Wizard, the pattern is full.

He looks at the other two TOWER CREW GUYS.

SERGEANT

It's full, right? I just transferred here.

They both shrug.

The Sergeant swivels in his window-facing chair to a tray with tea pot, sugar, and a cup placed on it.

SERGEANT  
(to self)  
It's usually full.

SERGEANT  
Anyone want a cup of tea? I had to switch from coffee recently because of the caffeine.

He pours a steaming hot cup then spoons sugar into it, stirring, burning his finger with a splash, pulling it back to put in his mouth.

SERGEANT  
Yow. That's a hot cup of tea.

The Sergeant carefully lifts the nearly-full cup to his lips, blowing slightly before beginning to take a wary, tenuous sip.

159 EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

159

Wide on the USS Crazyhorse as Lone Wolf's F-14 buzzes the recently rebuilt command tower at high speed, a wave of disrupted water and air vapor following close behind it along with the CRACK of a sonic boom.

SERGEANT (V.O.)  
(screams)  
YEEEEAAAAARGH! WIIIIIZAAAAAARD!

160 EXT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER DECK - DAY

160

The deck is covered almost entirely with cheering CREW as Lone Wolf's F-14 taxis to a halt. They all surround it, some rushing to get it parked.

The canopy pops up and there's Lone Wolf, taking off his helmet--smiling, self-assured, and pretty happy with himself.

He looks across the deck to see Riceman getting out of his own Tomcat.

Lone Wolf points to Riceman with a huge grin, before climbing down.

They meet on the carrier deck amongst the mirthful crowd of enlisted men.

RICEMAN  
(pointing)  
You! ...are still dangerous...

Lone Wolf nods, smile widening.

LONE WOLF  
And?

RICEMAN  
And I'm putting in an official  
complaint about your conduct.

Lone Wolf continues to smile and nod, over-enthusiastically.

LONE WOLF  
Aaaaaand?

Riceman frowns.

RICEMAN  
And, I'm going to suggest you be  
made to perform a full IQ test and  
psychology panel before being  
allowed to fly again.

Lone Wolf's demeanor holds.

LONE WOLF  
And?

RICEMAN  
And what?

LONE WOLF  
You know... for saving your life?  
Begins with a (thinks) T.

RICEMAN  
(incredulous)  
*Thank you?*

LONE WOLF  
You're welcome.

Lone Wolf opens his arms for a hug. Riceman walks past him, shoulder-bumping his outstretched arm.

Lone Wolf isn't able to give it much thought as he's hauled high up on the shoulders of some crew members, who begin chanting his name, others still clapping and cheering.

Close on Lone Wolf, silently appreciating their adulation. A thought seems to occur to him there, pausing his big smile briefly as he begins to look around, eyes sweeping over a long line of grateful DECK HANDS, PILOTS, assorted CREW--then MOOSE, in full navy whites, giving a thumbs up and smiling, nodding--before we continue past more crew.

Lone Wolf double takes, looking back to where Moose stood. Reveal his POV of an ACTUAL MOOSE, standing there seemingly unnoticed by the rest of the crew on the deck of the USS Crazyhorse.

Lone Wolf shrugs it off, getting swept up in the moment again as he's hauled across the deck to where the Captain approaches. They all stop cheering a moment, putting Lone Wolf down in front of the Captain.

CAPTAIN

You did alright this time, Lone Wolf. Your ass finally wrote a check that it was able to cash.

Lone Wolf salutes.

Lone Wolf is hauled away by the crew again amidst shouts of "Lone Wolf" and people spraying champagne.

161 EXT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER DECK - EVENING

161

Lone Wolf, now showered and wearing his uniform, standing at railing by the edge of the deck, looks down at the photo of himself with Mr. T and Moose.

A loud AIR HORN goes off above him, startling him, making Lone Wolf drop the photo into the sea.

He turns, looking up at where the horn came from.

Reveal the Sergeant, standing there at a window, pointing to his bandaged hand while slowly nodding.

LONE WOLF

Who's *that* asshole?

162 INT. CARRIER LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

162

Lone Wolf packs his things up in the same duffel bag he used at Best Guns, emptying his locker once more.

The Captain enters, handing him a set of keys on a stupid keyring.

CAPTAIN

Here, you left these in the plane.

Lone Wolf takes them from him, pulling one key off the ring, handing it back to the Captain.

CAPTAIN

They said you can have your pick of assignments. Where will you go?

Lone Wolf thinks.

LONE WOLF

I'm thinking about becoming an instructor.

The Captain audibly scoffs.

CAPTAIN

What, Best Guns? Didn't you pretty much shit the bed there, Mews?

LONE WOLF

Sir, I shit a *lot* of beds. I can't be expected to remember which ones I owned up to.

The Captain shrugs.

CAPTAIN

Well, as long as it's not *my* fuckin' ship.

Lone Wolf begins laughing, but the Captain remains stoney-faced.

Lone Wolf half-salutes before leaving awkwardly. The Captain watches him go with disdain and a slight shake of the head.

163

INT. BEST GUNS BAR - DAY

163

Lone Wolf sits drinking in the Best Guns base bar, denoted by jet fighter memorabilia, and items adorned by embroidered patches.

A BARMAN idly watches baseball on a small TV.

Over Lone Wolf's shoulder a WOMAN enters, silhouetted by the afternoon sun. She pauses a moment, then walks to the jukebox, playing a song.

'Safety Dance' begins playing, loud. Lone Wolf half looks up, but doesn't turn around, merely acknowledging the moment of recognition to himself.

CHARLIE (O.C.)  
Hey, Todd Mews!

Lone Wolf looks up at the barman, concern apparent.

LONE WOLF  
(quiet)  
Who's that? Is she carrying an envelope?

Lone Wolf spins around, already half off his stool, looking at the floor, pointing at her.

LONE WOLF  
Look lady, you can't serve me unless I'm making eye contact. I know my rights--

He sees Charlie.

LONE WOLF  
Oh. Hi.

She smiles, walking over to him.

CHARLIE  
I decided to move back here full time, so we can be together.

Lone Wolf smiles, hugging her, moving in close, face to face.

CHARLIE  
You can teach young pilots how to keep the skies safe and I can... liaise with the Pentagon or something. Basically what I was doing before, but at higher pay, with less hours probably.

Lone Wolf's smile grows as he begins nodding.

LONE WOLF  
Baby... that all sounds great. And we have time for that...

They kiss.

LONE WOLF  
But for right now... I've been thinking it through really hard...  
(MORE)

LONE WOLF (CONT'D)  
there's something important I need  
to do.

She pulls back a bit, confused.

CHARLIE  
What is it?

Lone Wolf's grin reaches a confidence-beaming crescendo.

LONE WOLF  
I'm gonna be a race car driver!

Charlie frowns.

ROLL CREDITS. Fini.

Todd Mews will return in: **Color of Thunder.**