

## **The Cross-Country**

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FADE IN

The lines from the movie *Unforgiven* are shown on screen.

KID

Is that what is like, in the old days,  
riding out with everybody shooting, smoke  
all over, folks yelling, and bullets  
whizzing by?

MUNNY

I can't remember kid, I was drunk most of  
the time. But I, ahh, I ain't like that no  
more.

INT F-16 COCKPIT - NIGHT

The pilot is wearing his oxygen mask and night vision goggles. He has the appearance of an automaton; an emotionless machine that is coldly going about the business leading a flight of four jets over Iraq. In reality this thing is a man, call sign BULLET and he is flying Viper 1-1. When Bullet looks through his NVGs everything has an eerie green glow, including the lights of a city which can be seen about 15 miles in the distance. A communication from the AWACS aircraft, call sign BIGEYE, is heard.

BIGEYE (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-1, this is Bigeye, Chariot has  
activated you to execute response option  
Bravo, Bigeye authenticates Tango Charlie.

Bullet looks down at his kneeboard card. On the card is a complex matrix of letters and numbers. Bullet's index finger traces down a column then across a row.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Roger Bigeye, Viper 1-1 is activated for  
response option Bravo, Viper 1-1  
authenticates Mike X-Ray.

BIGEYE (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-1, that's a good authentication.  
Confirm your composition and status.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-1 is a flight of two F-16s, Viper 1-1 and 1-2. Two F-18s, Bella 2-1 and 2-2 are in a four-mile trail, all four aircraft green and as fragged.

BIGEYE (OVER THE RADIO)

Copy that Viper 1-1, as fragged. Be advised your package includes HARM shooters who will be in trail as well as SAR support. When able please advise your planned time on target.

Bullet reaches up and pushes a series of buttons on his display and upfront control.



VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Bigeye, Viper estimates time-on-target as 0231. I will update that time IP inbound.

BIGEYE (OVER THE RADIO)  
Roger that Viper 1-1.

There is a momentary pause.

BIGEYE (OVER THE RADIO)  
Viper flight, be advised, you are being activated because of SAM activity in your sector of the AOR.

For the first time the automaton shows evidence that a human is behind the mask as the pilot flinches when he hears this, but then responds in a nonchalant tone of voice.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Thanks for the heads up Bigeye.

Bullet nods slowly in the cockpit. After a momentary pause he takes a deep breath, nods his head in a determined way, and gets busy.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Viper 1-2, you will drop on DMPI 3. I will give you the tactical lead after passing the IP.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Roger, Viper 2 targeting DMPI 3.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
After release you will action right, and after timeout plan an initial egress heading of 120, then when clear of Bella flight, 180 degrees. Viper 1-1 will remain in the target area to collect BDA. After I am clear of the target area I will call your turn for our rejoin and egress south.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Two.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Bella flight, you will target DMPIs 1 and 2 as fragged. I will be collecting BDA for you. Plan to egress heading 180 also; you will be in trail of Viper 1-2, and I will fall in trail of Bella flight as we egress the target area. Acknowledge in order.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Bella 2-1.

BELLA 2-2 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Bella 2-2.

Bullet pulls his mask off to reveal a middle-aged man. As we see



his face for the first time, we hear him say to himself out loud, but quietly.

BULLET (quietly)  
Oh God, please don't let me fuck this up.

After this we hear Bullet thinking to himself about his situation.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)  
How did I end up as lead on my first combat mission over Iraq, hell, my first combat mission ever! I guess it is as they say in baseball, 'the ball has a way of finding you.' Well, I'll be damned if I am going to *fuck this up*.

Bullet pauses for a moment to collect his thoughts.

BULLET (quietly)  
Oh God, **please** don't let me fuck this up.

With that Bullet puts his mask back on, and resumes directing the flight.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Bigeye, Viper 1-1 and flight are IP inbound, updated time-on-target, 0232.

BIGEYE (OVER THE RADIO)  
Copy updated TOT, 0232.

There is then a short pause before Bigeye continues.

BIGEYE (OVER THE RADIO)  
Bigeye sends *good hunting* Viper flight, **good hunting!!**

All that can be seen in the cockpit is the head of the automaton again, but Bigeye's comment result in the machine freezing for just a moment. Then the automaton resumes its duty and responds in a monotone voice.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Thank you, Bigeye, we will update you when off target with BDA. Break, break, Viper 1-2, you have lead on the left.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Viper 1-2, lead on the left. Viper 1-2 has PID on the target, green 'em up.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Viper 1-1, system green.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Bella 2-1 is green.

BELLA 2-2 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Bella 2-2, green.



We see Bullet slewing his targeting pod in the target area. There is a large rectangular building just to the left of a smaller square building. He slews his cursors over the smaller building and commands a self-track.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)  
OK, Viper 1-2, I'll back you up if you don't  
get your bomb off.

Just then we hear an intense voice come over the radio.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
**Viper, LOOK RIGHT, LOOK RIGHT!**

Bullet looks to the right and sees two surface-to-air missiles lighting up his NVGs. One missile has already gained some altitude, and the second missile has just started its climb up and away from its launcher. As he looks at the first two missiles the rocket motor for a third missile suddenly ignites and begins climbing into the sky.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)  
Shit, three missiles, probably a damn SA-6.  
OK, just hold what you got and let's see who  
they are targeting.

As he looks at the three missiles, the first missile reaches the same altitude as Viper 1-1 and levels off. Suddenly its relative motion stops, but the range to his jet is now rapidly decreasing.

BULLET (INNER VOICE, highly stressed)  
Fuck, that's not what i want to see. How the  
hell are they tracking me? Did i miss the  
radar warning receiver warning tones?

Bullet now scans his radar warning receiver display, it is blank.

BULLET (INNER VOICE, highly stressed)  
Ok, they aren't tracking me with their  
radar, but those fucking missiles look like  
they are being guided by somethang, and I'll  
be damned if I'm going to get shot down on  
my first combat mission. And where the hell  
is the damn Safety Officer by the way? For  
the first time I need his sorry ass, and  
he's nowhere to be found.

Bullet broadcasts in his best, most calm and collected voice.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Viper 1-1 is targeted, defending left.

We see an F-16 bank and turn hard to the left. The turn continues until the missile that is closest to him is exactly 90 degrees off the right side of his aircraft, then he rolls out.

Through his NVGs Bullet sees the intense glow of the three



missiles' rocket motors. After what seems an eternity, but which in reality is only a few seconds, the first missile begins to move aft in his canopy. Soon he can observe relative motion for all three missiles, all of them drifting from the three o'clock position to the four o'clock, and then further aft.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)

Well, it looks like they won't get me tonight, or at least not with those missiles anyway.

Bullet is again using his calm and collected voice.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-1 is naked, all three missiles are now tracking aft, resuming the bomb run.

The F-16 now banks 90 degrees to the right and turns to center the steering cues in his HUD. Once he has confirmed his weapon system is still tracking the target, he looks to his left and down to see where Viper 1-2 is. They are now over the city which they are attacking, and, to his surprise, the lights of the city are completely obscuring the view of his wingman in his NVGs.

BULLET (INNER VOICE, highly stressed)

Shit, where's Viper 1-2. Hell, I've never dropped bombs over an actual city, and I can't find him among all those *damn* lights! Well, I'll be damned if I'm going to lose sight of my tactical lead on my first combat sortie, and I'm certainly not going to run into him either. Damn Safety Officer!!

With that Bullet turns slightly to the right, then takes a moment to collect his thoughts.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)

OK, you know where he is, so use the same technique you've always used, just stare at the piece of sky where he should be and wait for your eye to detect some relative motion.

The automaton returns and rotates his head to look outside the cockpit, down and to his left. After what again seems like an eternity, but is in reality just a few seconds, he detects movement of a set of lights relative to the city's lights. It is his lead, almost exactly where he expected him to be.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)

Well son-of-a-bitch, there he is.

He then keys the radio again using his most calm and collected voice.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-1, visual on Viper 1-2, and tally on the target.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)

Roger that, Viper 1-2 pickle in 10 seconds.



Inside the cockpit we see Bullet setting up his weapon system to both backup Viper 1-2's drop and obtain BDA. As he is completing these tasks he observes several flashes of light that light up his cockpit. He is momentarily distracted by these flashes.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)

I don't know what those are, and I probably don't want to know, so let's just focus on getting bombs on target.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-2, bombs away, 23 seconds.

Bullet now pans out his targeting pod to show a larger area around Viper 1-2's target. As he passes abeam the target a small white object floats into the field of view and towards the building at the center of his display. Suddenly a bright flash fills his screen, and for a moment both his targeting pod and his NVGs are saturated by the bright light. When the light disappears, the target area comes back into view and the small building is now gone.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-2, that's a Shack, come right for egress.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-2, roger, egressing heading 120.

We see two F-16s flying in formation. The one on the left starts a right turn to pass behind the F-16 on the right. The F-16 on the right now begins a slow turn to the left.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Bella 2-1, ten seconds.

Inside the cockpit of Viper 1-1 Bullet slews his targeting pod to the left to acquire a large two-story building with many windows, and several vehicles parked nearby.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Bella 2-1, bombs away, 21 seconds.

BELLA 2-2 (OVER THE RADIO)

Bella 2-2, bombs away, 21 seconds.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Bella flight, action right.

BELLA 2-2 (OVER THE RADIO)

Two.

Viper 1-1 is now almost directly in front of Bella flight and on the opposite side of the target. Then, as before, two small white objects float into Viper 1-1's targeting POD, one headed towards the left side of the building and the other headed to the right. They arrive at the building simultaneously and again Viper 1-1's screen is filled with the flash of a bright light. But this time it is much larger and brighter than the flash from



Viper 1-2's bomb. As the screen recovers from the initial explosion it shows what appears to be a small mushroom cloud rising from where the building once was. The building is now gone. Bullet can't help but react to what has just happened.

BULLET

FUUUUCK!...Nobody coulda survived that!

He is momentarily fixed on what he is seeing in his screen but is snapped back into the moment when he hears Bella 2-1.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Bella flight, in-place right, roll out heading 180.

BELLA 2-2 (OVER THE RADIO)

Two.

Simultaneously the two F-18s roll right to almost 90 degrees of bank and turn hard out of view.

From Bullet's cockpit he can see the two F-18s turning to exit the target area.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-1 is visual Bella flight and will be approximately 2 miles in trail on the egress.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Copy visual.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-2, Bella flight is behind and above you. Give me a right 90, and I will call your turn back to the egress heading.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)

Two.

A single F-16 now banks right to nearly 90 degrees and turns hard to the right.

Bullet watches as Viper 1-2 crosses below Bella flight, and then drifts off to his right. Before Viper 1-2 reaches abeam Viper 1-1 he again directs Viper 1-2 to maneuver.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-2, come left now heading 180.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)

Two.

Viper 1-2 rolls left to nearly 90 degrees and turns hard to the left for 90 degrees. As he rolls out Viper 1-1 is abeam him on his left.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-2, out of your turn Viper 1-1 will be your left side high. Call your visual.



VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Viper 1-2, visual.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Roger that, Viper 1-1 has the lead on the left.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Viper 1-1, lead on the left.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Continue the egress, reference south.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Two.

The two F-16s are now abeam each other and flying in formation. They are leaving the city behind with a large fire burning on its north side.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Bigeye, Viper and Bella are clear of the target area. BDA indicates mission success code Alpha.

BIGEYE (OVER THE RADIO)  
Roger that Viper 1-1, we show south green.

There is a short pause on the radio.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Viper 1-1, do you think we should go find that SA-6 that shot at you?

Bullet considers the question for a moment.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Na, we sent the message the commander wanted to send; they no longer have an air defense headquarters in the south. So, unless Chariot re-frags us to go find and kill that thang, I think our mission is to get these jets back to base.

VIPER 1-2 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Two.

BIGEYE (OVER THE RADIO)  
Viper 1-1, Chariot directs continue egress, the entire response package is flowing south now.

Bullet again removes his oxygen mask.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)  
Shit man, *three fucking SAMs*. And they pretty much had me dead to rights if they had used their radar. Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good, I guess. And holy



shit do I feel sorry for anybody who was in that building. But that's what you get when you shoot at us, we play for keeps. But still, **fuuck**.

He shakes his head slowly as the image of the building disappearing under a mushroom cloud replays in his mind.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)

Well, I survived my first combat sortie. I kinda expected I would be more scared than I was.

Suddenly his face winces.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)

Hell, it was all those damn night carrier landings that made it a lot easier. Three SAMs ain't nearly as scary as a *pitching deck night trap*. Yeah, I'm glad I don't have to do one of those tonight...**that would really suck!!**

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Viper 1-1, Bella 2-1.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Go ahead.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Confirm you got good BDA?

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Oh yeah, two simo Shacks for you guys. If I were in the Navy I would say "BRAVO ZULU" Bella flight.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Thanks Viper 1-1.

There is a short pause.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Did you see those SAMS detonate?

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Na, once they started drifting aft and I knew they weren't tracking me, I focused on making sure we got bombs on target. I saw some flashes in my cockpit though.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

Yeah, two of them detonated in front of us, and from where I was sitting it looked maybe less than a mile behind you.

Inside Viper 1-1 Bullet raises his eyebrows but says nothing.

BELLA 2-1 (OVER THE RADIO)

I sure am glad we had an old combat veteran



leading us on that mission.

VIPER 1-1 (OVER THE RADIO)  
Thanks Bella 2-1.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)  
If they only knew!!!

There is a momentary pause.

BULLET (INNER VOICE)  
Yeah, I'm just glad I don't have to land  
aboard a damn boat tonight, **that would**  
**really suck!!** And where the hell was that  
damn Safety Officer anyway?

FADE OUT TO THE MUSIC OF "Bullet the Blue Sky."

BEGIN OPENING CREDITS

Credits roll while scenes of USAF and Navy fighter jets are simultaneously shown taking off and getting shot off aircraft carriers, followed by scenes of precision munitions destroying Global War on Terror targets.

END CREDITS

FADE IN

EXT. USAF F-16 FLIGHT LINE - NIGHT

A young Air Force Major, call sign SLIDER, is in a flight suit and driving a staff car at an overseas location while two F-16s are taxiing in for parking. The staff car parks in front of one F-16. Slider exits the car, standing a safe distance until the F-16's engine winds down. When the canopy opens he approaches the jet as the ground crew places a ladder on the side of the aircraft. The pilot removes his helmet to reveal Bullet, and we now see he has a head of white-gray hair. He notices Slider.

BULLET  
Slider, what are you doing here?

SLIDER  
Welcome back Sir. How was your flight?

BULLET  
Oh, not what you told me to expect for sure.  
We got activated and dropped.

SLIDER  
Yeah, I heard. All those boring missions  
I've been flying, and you show up and drop  
on your first mission in the AOR.

BULLET  
Yeah, that's kinda crazy isn't it. And to  
say hello in style they shot what I think  
were three SA-6s at me in the target area.



SLIDER

Yeah, I heard that too. I guess they wanted to welcome you to the jungle.

BULLET

Yeah, but it kind of backfired on them as we took out their Southern Air Defense Headquarters. Maybe they'll think twice before they shoot at us again.

Bullet has exited the cockpit and is descending the boarding ladder. After reaching the ground he turns to Slider.

BULLET

So, I have to ask, you aren't here because of anything related to this mission are you?

SLIDER

Ah, no sir.

BULLET

Well, that's a relief. I thought for a second we dropped on a baby milk factory, or an orphanage or something. When those bombs detonated it looked like the closing scenes of *Dr. Strangelove*. So, if we didn't hit that Headquarters building, I'm pretty sure our fearless leaders would have me hangin' from a light post before morning.

Bullet and Slider have begun walking towards the staff car as Bullet finishes this statement.

SLIDER

Well sir, from what I heard you don't have to worry about that.

BULLET

Ok, so what's up?

SLIDER

Ahh, you remember that you approved Scat and Gus to rotate back to the Deed for some R&R?

Bullet suddenly stops and looks at Slider.

BULLET

Oh God, what did they do?

SLIDER

Well, sir, while back at the Deed they met up with some female Navy C-9 pilots and...

Slider is interrupted by Bullet.

BULLET

Oh, God, this can't be good.



SLIDER

Well, sir, it's not as bad as it could be.

BULLET

That's not very reassuring Slider. A PC crime is worse than a war crime these days, and this sure sounds like a potential PC crime.

SLIDER

Well sir, surprisingly enough it seems Scat and Gus sort of hit it off, so to speak, with these squid trash haulers...

With this Slider stops, suddenly aware of his words and to whom he is speaking.

SLIDER

Sorry sir, I meant to say NAVY trash haulers!!

BULLET

Yeah, yeah, no offense, but let's get to the point of the story already.

SLIDER

Well, the C-9 pilots were flying to Navy Sigonella for a few days, then they were scheduled to fly back here. So, they offered to take Scat and Gus for a ride, so to speak, to show them Sig and then return them to Jabber.

Bullet smiles and half laughs, then realizes the significance of his words.

BULLET

Wait, did they leave the AOR without orders?

SLIDER

Ahh, yes sir, they did.

Bullet and Slider have reached the staff car and are standing by the driver's side door.

BULLET

So, did they get stuck in Sig after the C-9 girls soured on them?

SLIDER

Well, no sir, as hard as it is to believe with those two, it seems the Navy girls didn't get sick of them.

BULLET

Hell, those must be two tolerant girls. So, what did they do?

SLIDER

Well, they ended up at the Sigonella Bar, I think it's called the Venus Fly Trap or



something...

Bullet interrupts Slider.

BULLET

It's actually called "The Fly Trap," although I'm guessing *Venus Fly Trap* may actually be a better name for it in this case.

SLIDER

Well, not exactly sir. It turns out that some squid fighter guys...

Again, Slider stops himself in mid-sentence as he looks at Bullet.

SLIDER

Sorry sir, I...

Bullet interrupts Slider.

BULLET

Yeah, you can call C-9 pilots squids, but not Navy *fighter* guys!!

SLIDER

Sorry sir. Anyway, these Navy fighter guys had flown into Sig from their carrier and, well, one thing led to another, and Scat and Gus challenged them to a game of CRUD.

Bullet looks surprised to hear this.

BULLET

CRUD, did these navy guys even know what CRUD was?

SLIDER

Well, apparently not, or at least not until Scat and Gus taught it to them.

Bullet is smiling, almost looking proud of what his guys have done.

BULLET

Did they teach them "combat rules" or "gentlemen's rules?"

Slider looks shocked that such a question would be asked, and answers with a tone of indignation.

SLIDER

Sir, *Combat CRUD* of course. Would you expect anything less of them?

Bullet raises his eyebrows and nods his head.

BULLET

Yeah, good point. I wouldn't let them back in the squadron if they had played



"gentlemen's rules" with other fighter pilots, especially Navy fighter guys.

SLIDER

Well, the good news is that Scat and Gus won all the Crud matches.

BULLET

Shit hot.

SLIDER

Yes, well, let's just say that the Navy guys weren't good losers.

BULLET

I wouldn't expect them to be, not if they are worth a shit anyway!!

SLIDER

Yes, well, they lived up to your expectations, I guess, as the ensuing brawl destroyed the pool table, and one of the Navy guys went through a window.

BULLET

Was he hurt?

SLIDER

Some stitches maybe, but no permanent damage.

BULLET

How about Scat and Gus?

SLIDER

They sustained only minor damage. And what's interesting is that they appear to have been more popular with the C-9 girls after their rumble with the squid...er, I mean, Navy guys, as they still offered to "fly them," so to speak, back to the Deed.

Again, Bullet laughs under his breath.

BULLET

So, are they back?

SLIDER

Yes sir, they made it back this morning.

BULLET

Are they fit to fly?

SLIDER

Yes sir.

BULLET

So, *what's the problem?*



SLIDER

Well sir, the Sigonella base commander wasn't happy about the damage done to the Club, and he wanted to blame the Air Force for it. But before he could round Gus and Scat up, they were on the C-9 headed back here.

BULLET

Sounds like an effective bug-out to me?

SLIDER

Well, it was until the Sigonella Base CO tracked the C-9's flight plan back to Jabber. He then called our Wing CO, and they were busted as soon as the C-9 landed. The Security Forces are holding them over at the brig, and the Expeditionary Ops Group Commander has tasked me with collecting you and them and bringing all three of you over to his office as soon as you landed.

BULLET

Gus and Scat, I shoulda known better then to turn those two loose without a chaperone.

Bullet pauses, looking down at the ground as he considers the situation.

BULLET

OK, well first, I have to get over to "interrogation" for this mission before I can go to the EOG's office.

Slider laughs.

SLIDER

Ya know Sir, some of the guys are starting to call the intel debrief the "interrogation," and the intel guys don't really like that name.

BULLET

Well that's too bad, because it is more of an *interrogation then a debrief*, especially if you drop something.

Bullet then thinks for a moment.

BULLET

But back to our two love birds, I'd like you to get over to the brig and get them out of confinement. Then take them over to my office and keep them there until I get done with interrogation. And don't, under any circumstances, let them see the EOG until I get over there. Got it?



SLIDER

Yes sir, but the EOG was expecting you to come to his office immediately after landing.

BULLET

Well, I guess he'll just have to wait a bit longer, won't he?

SLIDER

Yes sir, but he was pissed before, and I think he will be even more pissed if you keep him waiting.

BULLET

Well, that's probably true, but isn't the Air Force motto "Mission First?"

SLIDER

Yes sir, I think that's this month's motto.

BULLET

So, we'll get to see whether the EOG is on board with the Air Force motto or not. And if he's not, well, I guess I'll have to answer for my actions. Fortunately, I have a lot of experience with that, although I thought I had left those days in my past.

Slider laughs at this. Bullet pauses and looks off into the distance, and as he does a smile comes over his face. He seems to have mentally transported himself to a different time and place.

BULLET

Navy female cargo pilots?

SLIDER

Ahh, yes sir, that's who Gus and Scat were chasing around the Med.

Bullet continues to look off into the distance while smiling.

BULLET

Combat CRUD with Navy fighter pilots?

SLIDER

Ah, yes sir.

Bullet raises his eyebrows while nodding his head slightly, then turns and looks at Slider.

BULLET

Ya know Slider, I flew in the Navy before I came over to the Air Force.

Slider responds while giving a slight "eye roll" which he intends to be out of Bullet's view.

SLIDER (sarcastically)

Ahh, yes sir, I think *you may have mentioned*



*that.*

Bullet saw Slider's eye roll but isn't offended.

BULLET

But did I ever tell ya about the cross country I once took with my bud Morty to the West Coast?

SLIDER

Ah, no sir, I don't think I've heard *that* one.

BULLET

It was quite the weekend, some described it as an "epic" journey.

Bullet's look again drifts over Slider's head and is looking off into the distance. After an extended moment, his eyes snap back down to look directly at Slider as the smile fades and a look of seriousness returns.

BULLET

But we haven't got time for me to tell you about all that. So, go get the lads and I'll meet you over in my office soonest.

SLIDER

Yes sir.

With this, Slider gets in the staff car and drives off leaving Bullet standing alone in his flight gear. The camera pulls in on his face, and it transforms into that of a young fighter pilot.

INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

The now young fighter pilot has his helmet on, and his mask is hanging from one side of the helmet. As we watch he fastens the mask up over his face and puts the jet he is flying into a left-hand turn.

EXT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

We are looking from the flight deck towards an F-14 that is abeam the landing area with its flaps, wheels, and hook down. It begins a left turn towards the landing area of the carrier.

INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

In the backseat is Bullet's RIO who has his helmet and mask on, visor down, so that we see nothing of his face. The RIO's call sign is TESTICLES.

TESTICLES

Bullet, you got the ball?

BULLET

Yep.



TESTICLES (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle One-oh-two, Tomcat ball, 4.2.

EXT. CARRIER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

We see and hear the Landing Signal Officer (LSO), acknowledging the ball call.

LSO (OVER THE RADIO)  
Roger ball, Tomcat.

INT. F-14, BULLET'S POV - DAY

We see the F-14 completing its turn to line up with the carrier's landing area. Bullet rolls wings level and is making a series of power corrections. This is one of the hardest things a person can do, except for doing this same thing at night, which is 100 times harder.

The scene alternates between an exterior view of a Tomcat approaching the deck, the LSO who most people would think is standing way too close to where the jet will soon land, the meatball moving slightly above and below the center position, and the tailhook as it grabs a wire on the flight deck.

As the aircraft carrier drags the jet to a stop Bullet is thrown violently against his shoulder straps while his head, unrestrained, is thrown violently forward.

Bullet went to full (Military) power as the hook grabbed the wire, and he now brings the throttles back to idle as the jet comes to a stop. He then begins a series of tasks to configure the aircraft to taxi out of the landing as the yellow shirt, standing forward and to his right, motions him to taxi forward, and then to turn right.

EXT. CARRIER VULTURES ROW - DAY

We are now looking down to see a Tomcat clearing the landing area. Just as Bullet and Testicles clear the landing area we see another Tomcat slam aboard and get dragged to a stop immediately behind their jet.

EXT. CARRIER FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Bullet's F-14 is now parked on the flight deck. The canopy is open, and Testicles has just finished climbing down the boarding ladder. Jets continue to slam onto the flight deck every 20 seconds. Bullet now climbs down the ladder, and as he reaches the flight deck, and we see both Testy and Bullet are wearing VF-41 patches on their flight suits. Bullet is sporting a TOPGUN patch on his right shoulder. Bullet and Testy exchange high fives while yelling to each other to be heard over the sounds of landing and taxing jets.

BULLET (shouting)  
Man, was that fun or what? *We kicked those guys' asses!*



TESTICLES (shouting)  
We sure did. I'm not sure they ever saw  
Stubby.

BULLET (shouting)  
Yeah, they seemed a bit SA challenged didn't  
they.

TESTICLES (shouting)  
Yeah, no shit.

A Sailor in a yellow jersey and float coat with "FLIGHT DECK CPO"  
stenciled on it approaches them and yells into Bullet's face.

FLT DECK CPO (shouting)  
Sirs, would you mind getting the fuck off my  
*fight deck!!!!*

Bullet realizes that they are standing in perhaps the most  
dangerous place on earth, a carrier flight deck during flight  
operations.

BULLET (shouting)  
Oh, yeah, sorry Chief, we were just  
celebrating how we kicked the shit out of  
some brand X Tomcats - the sister squadron  
ya know?

FLT Deck CPO (shouting)  
That's great sir, but how about doing that  
down there before you both get blown  
overboard or sucked down an intake.

As he says this the CPO is pointing to the edge of the flight  
deck where a yellow rectangle is painted to indicate there are  
some unseen steps.

BULLET (shouting)  
You got it Chief.

With this Bullet grabs Testicles.

BULLET (shouting)  
Yeah, Testy, we'd better get off the flight  
deck before the Flight Deck Chief kicks our  
ass.

Bullet and Testy make their way over to and down the steps onto  
a catwalk on the edge of the flight deck. From there Testicles  
opens a hatch that leads to the interior of the ship.

INT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER - DARK (REGARDLESS DAY OR NIGHT)  
Their discussion of the sortie continues as Testicles leads  
Bullet along the narrow passageways.

BULLET  
That was some great radar work up there.

TESTICLES  
Why, thanks Bullet, and that was some



awesome "pilot shit" also.

BULLET

Well, it helps to have a wingman like Stubby, he's damn near the perfect wingman.

Testicles and Bullet have come to an intersection of two passageways. Testicles goes straight through the intersection, but Bullet stops.

BULLET

Ah, Testy, it's a left turn here.

Testicles, obviously frustrated, turns around and makes the turn into the new passageway.

TESTICLES

Shit, I guess I'm still learning my way around down here.

BULLET

Don't worry about it, everybody goes through the same learning process.

Bullet and Testy are continuing to walk along the narrow passageway, pausing occasionally as they meet another member of the ship's crew going in the opposite direction.

TESTICLES

Are there any written instructions on how to find your way around the ship?

BULLET

No, it's like much of what we do, learned by doing. But don't worry, keep working that radar like you did today and I'll make sure you never disappear into the bowels of the ship never to be seen or heard from again.

Testicles now stops in front of a knee-knocker, turns around to face Bullet with his hand on the top of the steel edge that makes up the top of the knee-knocker.

TESTICLES

Watch your head on this knee-knocker *Bullet*.

BULLET

Very funny Testicles, but that was on the Nimitz, not this boat. And ahh, who told you of that little incident?

TESTICLES

Oh, I flew with Kazi the other day and he told me the whole story. Did you really go flying with a gash in your head?

BULLET

Well, ah, I, ahh, don't recall.



TESTICLES

*You don't recall?* And did it really take four stitches to fix the wound in your head.

Bullet pushes Testy through the knee knocker and follows him as they continue walking.

BULLET

Yeah, I, ahh, don't recall that either. And you should know better than to trust anythang Kamikaze tells you, especially anythang he tells you about me.

Bullet and Testy reach a door with a large VF-41 patch on it. Testy stops and again turns to face Bullet.

TESTICLES

So, did you go flying or not?

BULLET

Somethangs I prefer to leave in the past. And besides, as my new RIO shouldn't you be defending me when you hear someone telling you crazy stories like that?

TESTICLES

Hell, Bullet, I didn't need to defend you, that's a great story. And Kazi said something about you never being the guy who would be sitting in the Ready Room talking about fescue grass seed. I'm not sure what that meant, but I think it was a compliment.

BULLET

Kazi said *that*.

With that Bullet smiles broadly as he is obviously very happy to hear what Kazi had said.

TESTICLES

Yeah, what does that mean?

BULLET

I, uh, think I'll let Kazi tell you about fescue and fighter pilots.

TESTICLES

And is that what Kazi stands for, Kamikaze?

BULLET

Yeah. What, you didn't know that?

TESTICLES

No, I've never heard anybody call him anything other than Kazi. Kamikaze, now that's a cool call sign, a lot better than Testicles. And speaking of callsigns, do you really expect me to defend you after giving me the call sign Testicles?



BULLET

I, uh, I thought Morty and Horse gave you that call sign.

TESTICLES

All three of you did at the last squadron party.

BULLET

Oh. Well, I, uh, don't recall that.

TESTICLES

That's not surprising since all three of you were pretty damn drunk.

BULLET

Well, there ya go, you can't hold anythang against me if I was drunk.

TESTICLES (incredulously)

*I can't! Why not?*

BULLET

Fighter pilot rules, you can't hold anythang against a fighter pilot that he does when he's drunk.

As they finish this exchange Bullet opens the door to the squadron's ready room and pushes Testicles through the door.

INT. VF-41 SQUADRON READY ROOM - WELL ILLUMINATED

BULLET

Besides, there are worse call signs out there.

As he says this, Bullet passes another young RIO.

BULLET

Hey Dick Weed, how's it going?

DICK WEED

Fuck you Bullet!!

BULLET

See, Testicles is a lot better than Dick Weed.

TESTICLES

Yes, and you gave *him* that call sign too!!!

BULLET

Really, I thought Morty and Horse gave him that call sign.

TESTICLES

Yes, all three of you did, *at the same damn party.*



BULLET

Oh, well, I, uh, don't recall that.

TESTICLES

I'm starting to learn that you don't remember many "*thangs*," especially "*thangs*" you don't want to remember.

BULLET

Well, I'm not sure I agree with that. But you and Dick Weed should blame Morty and Horse for those call signs if you don't like them, *not that it will do you any good of course.*

Bullet and Testy have walked to the front of the ready room when the Squadron Duty Officer calls out.

SDO

Bullet, Skipper wants to see you in his stateroom.

BULLET

Oh God, did he say what for?

SDO

No, but he didn't seem pissed off or anything, if you're worried about that.

Bullet looks surprised to hear this.

BULLET

*Really?* Well, I wonder what this is about then.

SDO

It might have something to do with your orders. I heard him talking to the XO about that.

BULLET

Oh God, *that* can't be good.

SDO

Yeah, the Skipper didn't seem pissed, but the XO sure did.

BULLET

Well, there's nothing unusual about the XO being pissed off, *that's* for sure.

Bullet stops at the exit to the ready room.

BULLET

Testy, I won't be able to make the debrief, but I will join you in the chow hall after my meeting with the Skipper.

TESTICLES

Wilco, but you are going to miss out on all the fun.



BULLET  
Yeah, I know, but you can tell me all about  
it later.

Bullet and Testy exit the Ready Room.

INT. PASSAGEWAY ON AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER - WELL LIGHTED

Bullet is walking up a passageway on the carrier. He stops at the door which has a large VF-41 patch on it and a brass plate that says, VF-41 Commanding Officer, CDR SCOTT SHUMAN. CDR SHUMAN'S call sign is SHU. Bullet squares himself to the door, then knocks three times.

SHU (heard through the dorr)  
Enter.

Bullet opens the door and enters the room.

INT. SQUADRON COMMANDER STATEROOM - SPARSLY ILLUMINATED

The room doubles as both an office and sleeping quarters. In the office area are two spartan aluminum chairs and a small desk which folds out of the wall when being used. Shu is sitting at the desk on one of the metal chairs.

SHU  
Bullet, come in, take a seat.

Shu motions to the unoccupied aluminum chair as he says this.

BULLET  
Thank you, sir.

SHU  
How'd the flight go?

Bullet's eyes light up as he responds.

BULLET  
Awesome sir, we kicked the shit out of Brand X on both engagements, and I'm pretty sure I got an OK 3 wire on my pass also.

SHU  
Excellent. And how did the new RIO, ahh, Gerry, do? What's his call sign again?

Bullet coughs and deflects his eyes away from Shu and towards the deck.

BULLET  
Ahh, Testicles, I, ahh, think.

SHU  
*Testicles?* What the hell did he do to earn  
*that call sign?*

Bullet again looks away and towards the deck, now squirming



uncomfortably in his chair.

BULLET

I'm, uh, I'm not sure, sir.

SHU

And what about the other new guy, what's his call sign?

Bullet is growing more uncomfortable.

BULLET

Ah, I think he got Dick Weed, sir.

SHU

Dick Weed? Well, that's better than Testicles at least. I just don't get *Testicles* at all.

Bullet begins to stand up from the chair and move towards the exit.

BULLET

Yes sir. Well, ah, is that all you wanted to see me about, sir?

SHU

**NO!**

With that Bullet slowly returns to the chair. Shu looks up from the papers on his desk as he begins to speak.

SHU

How's Cindy doing? Have you gotten any mail from her recently?

BULLET

I got a letter from her a few days ago. I think she'll be upgrading to DC-9 First Officer about the time we leave for the deployment.

SHU

I don't know much about airline stuff, but that sounds good, doesn't it?

BULLET

Yes sir, that's good. It would be like moving from RIO to pilot.

SHU

Yes, well, it's probably a good idea if you do not make that analogy to anybody besides me, especially a RIO. There are those who say you have a problem with RIOs, and a statement like that wouldn't help you with that at all.

Shu returns his attention to the papers on his desk. There is a long pause where nothing is said. Bullet sits there looking at



Shu, and after the pause exceeds his patience, he begins to stand up and move to the door again.

BULLET

Well sir...

Shu interrupts Bullet, and as he does Bullet slowly returns to his seated position again.

SHU

I received a message from BUPERS today about your orders. They have your preference sheet for the aggressor squadron, VX-4, and TOPGUN instructor.

Shu pauses, still looking at the papers in front of him, then looks up and makes eye contact with Bullet.

SHU

As you know, the XO wants you to go to the RAG and teach F-14 replacement pilots. And the RAG CO needs an LSO to get replacement pilots carrier qualified, so you are a perfect fit for the RAG.

Shu pauses, looking at Bullet waiting for him to respond, but Bullet continues to sit, now motionless, staring at the squadron CO. The silence continues for an uncomfortably long time.

SHU

OK, so here's the deal, the XO has worked a deal with the RAG CO where you go to the RAG, and he gets the next couple of top replacements.

Shu again pauses waiting for Bullet to respond. Bullet remains motionless in the chair staring at Shu for another extended period of silence.

SHU

OK, so I get that you don't want to go to the RAG, but your timing isn't right to go to the aggressor squadron, and the XO certainly isn't going to approve an extension for you.

Shu again pauses. Bullet continues to sit motionless in the chair just staring at Shu. Shu again breaks the silence.

SHU

OK, what the XO doesn't know is that BUPERS has indicated that you are in the hunt for orders to either TOPGUN or VX-4.

Bullet finally speaks.

BULLET

*Shit hot Skipper,* I would prefer either of those to RAG instructor.



SHU

Bullet, you have been my number one lieutenant since I took over, and were Lonzo's number one before me, so I want to see you get some orders that are both good for you and what's good for the navy. But the XO is well connected, so pissing him off is probably not in your best interest.

BULLET

Well, sir, I think the XO has been pissed off at me since he first got to the squadron.

SHU

That's true. And while we are on this topic, it probably didn't help that you put him on the hit board for yelling at DJ on the squadron common frequency.

BULLET

Well sir, it seemed the right thang to do at the time.

SHU (incredulously)

*It seemed like the right thing to do?*

There is another lengthy pause as Shu waits for Bullet's response, which again doesn't come.

SHU

And is it true that after the XO erased himself from the hit board that you wrote the whole story up in the hard sayings log?

BULLET

Well sir, I ahh, don't recall doing such a thang.

SHU

*You, don't recall?* Why, were you drunk again?

BULLET

Well sir, I ahh, I can't confirm nor deny whether I was drunk when I documented that tragic event into the hard saying log.

Shu stares at Bullet for a moment, then speaks with a tone of frustration in his voice.

SHU

Yeah, I really can't imagine *WHY* the XO is always pissed off at you, Bullet.

There is another long pause as Shu stares at Bullet who remains motionless in his chair.

SHU

Ya know, there are some people who still remember you going flying after running into that knee knocker. Most notably DJ and the



Wing Safety Officer.

With that Shu stops and again eyeballs Bullet. He is again motionless in the chair. Shu eventually resumes.

SHU

And Pooh Bear is still pissed off about the shoulder block you threw him during the shell-backing ceremony. He swears you bruised his ribs, maybe even worse.

BULLET

Well sir, I admit that I wasn't a very good pollywog, but I'm not sure I want to be a good pollywog.

With that Shu struggles to hold back his laughter.

SHU

Yeah, see, that's not smart Bullet. You can't go around pissing off senior officers and expect to keep advancing ya know. You need to learn that sometimes it's best to keep you damn mouth shut, particularly when it comes to the XO and my department heads. If you truly want to keep advancing you gotta knock that kinda shit off.

Shu looks away from Bullet and resumes looking at the papers on his desk.

SHU

I swear, you and Kazi. I spend about half of my time trying to keep my own O-4s from bringing charges against you two.

There is another pause. Then Shu returns his look to Bullet and resumes his counseling.

SHU

And is it also true that you referred to the D-CAG as "DEPUTY" when you joined on him in the overhead pattern the other day?

BULLET

Well sir, I, ahh, can't...

Shu interrupts Bullet before he can finish his sentence.

SHU (sternly)

*And you better not tell me that you don't recall!!*

Bullet is at first a bit off balance, then regains his equipoise.

BULLET

Yes sir, I believe I did do that.

SHU

You know that he hates being called *Deputy*,



don't you?

BULLET

Ahh, yes sir, I do.

Shu again pauses and eyeballs Bullet who is again sitting motionless in his chair, staring back at Shu.

SHU

Ya know, Lonzo used to say that he loved your spirit, but I'm here to tell you that we are a peacetime navy, and that kinda *spirit* will probably get you shitcanned if you don't learn how to control it.

BULLET

Yes sir, I see your point.

With that Shu resumes looking at the papers on his desk. Bullet sits there for an extended period of time, then again begins to stand up and move towards the door.

BULLET

Is that ahh, all you had for me sir?

SHU

**No!**

Bullet again slowly returns to his chair. After another lengthy pause Shu begins to speak without taking his eyes off the papers in front of him.

SHU

So, which orders would you prefer, VX-4 or TOPGUN instructor?

Bullet looks a bit surprised.

BULLET

Either one works for me, but Size said he would prefer developing tactics over teaching tactics, and VX-4 is where they develop tactics.

Shu nods his head. Without taking his eyes off the papers in his hands he continues.

SHU

To get orders to VX-4 you usually need to visit them and interview. So, I'm going to let you have a jet to go cross country to the west coast for your interview.

BULLET (excitedly)

*Shit hot Skipper!*

Shu momentarily looks up from his papers to glare at Bullet, then resumes looking at his papers.



SHU

We get back off the boat two weeks before Thanksgiving, and we begin the six-month deployment on the 31st of December. So, I will set up an interview on a Friday between when we get back and when we leave on the deployment.

Shu now returns his gaze directly at Bullet and is speaking in a stern tone of voice.

SHU

But you had better deliver the greatest interview of your life, because if you don't, I won't be able to keep you from going to the RAG.

BULLET

No points for second place, right Skipper!

SHU

That's a good way to think about it.

BULLET

Excellent, I like it when the pressure is on, like a pitching deck night trap!!

Shu returns his attention to the papers in his hand. Bullet sits there motionless again for a moment. He again grows impatient and begins to stand.

BULLET

Is that all you wanted to see me about then, sir?

SHU

**Yes!**

Bullet looks surprised that he can finally continue to move towards the door. He makes it to the door and is reaching out to open it when he is stopped.

SHU

Oh, and ahh, Bullet, one last thing.

Bullet freezes like a deer that has suddenly been hit with a bright light, his hand extended towards the doorknob.

SHU

The new jet, 101, is coming up for a phase inspection, and we need to get that completed before we begin the deployment. So, you can plan on taking 101 with you for your trip to California and put as many hours on it as you can so that we can get it into phase as soon as you get back.

BULLET (slightly sarcastically)

*I think I can do that, sir.*



SHU

Also, we are behind on our fuel burn for the quarter, plan to burn as much gas as you can during your trip also.

Bullet now has a broad grin on his face.

BULLET (very sarcastically)

*I think I can do that too, sir.*

There is another pause in the conversation. Bullet again begins to reach to open the door when Shu again freezes Bullet in place.

SHU

And ahh, Bullet, try not to repaint any F-18s on this cross country *please*. The War Party CO is still pretty pissed off from your last cross country.

BULLET

Yes, sir! Sorry about that Skipper.

Shu has no response; he just continues to look at the papers he has in his hand.

BULLET

And ahh, thanks Skipper.

SHU

Just get the hell out of my stateroom, Bullet.

BULLET

Yes, sir.

With that Bullet is finally able to open the door and exit into the passageway. After closing the door behind him he pauses, takes a deep breath, then gives a fist pump and smiles as he turns to return to the VF-41 Ready Room.

INT. VF-41 SQUADRON READY ROOM - WELL ILLUMINATED

Bullet re-enters the squadron Ready Room. He looks both relieved and happy.

SDO

What did the Skipper want to see you about, Bullet?

BULLET

Oh, ahh, he wanted to hear what call signs the new guys ended up with.

SDO

Really? I guess he doesn't like Testicles and Dick Weed?

BULLET

Actually, he does like them, especially,



Testicles. I think he likes the Athenian connection.

SDO  
The Athenian connection, what the hell is the Athenian connection?

BULLET  
Ahh, I'm not sure, we were drunk that night, or so I've been told!

Just then a tall muscular member of the squadron bursts into the back of the ready room. His call sign is MORTY.

MORTY (shouting)  
Bullet, how the hell are you?

Bullet responds in a normal voice.

BULLET  
Good, Morty, what are you up to?

As Morty reaches Bullet he slugs him the arm, knocking him off balance for a moment.

MORTY (shouting)  
I've been looking for ya brother. I hear the Skipper has given you a jet to go out to the West Coast and interview with VX-4.

Bullet looks a bit bewildered, glances back in the direction of Shu's stateroom, then back at Morty.

BULLET  
How did you hear that, I mean, I just left his room, and he, ah, just...

Morty interrupts Bullet.

MORTY  
News travels fast on the boat Bullet.

Bullet looks to be somewhat in disbelief.

BULLET  
Yeah, but I mean, I just left...

Morty again interrupts Bullet.

MORTY  
Do you have a RIO yet?

BULLET  
How would I have a RIO, I mean, I, ahh...

Bullet again glances back towards Shu's stateroom.

BULLET  
...I just left...



Morty again interrupts Bullet.

MORTY

Perfect, then I'm going with you. And I heard that we need to put as many hours on the new jet as we can, and burn as much gas as possible, so I am planning on stopping at as many Air Force bases that we've never been to before as we can.

Then Morty's voice drops as he looks away from Bullet.

MORTY (very quietly)

And, uh, we'll spend Saturday night at Mather Air Force Base.

Bullet is starting to sense that Morty is up to his usual chicanery.

BULLET

Mather Air Force Base? Where the hell is Mather Air Force Base.

Morty (very quietly)

Sacramento.

BULLET

Sacramento, California? Why the hell would we want to spend a night in Sacramento, California?

MORTY (very quietly)

Well, I have a friend who lives out there.

BULLET

A friend?

MORTY (very quietly)

Yeah, a, uh, friend.

MORTY (shouting again)

Oh, Bullet, this is going to be awesome, it might even be an *epic* journey.

BULLET

Wait a minute, this wouldn't be your Air Force *tanker pilot girlfriend* we are visiting at Mather, would it?

MORTY (very quietly)

Well, now that you mention it, I think she might be based near there.

Morty quickly goes on the offensive again.

MORTY

This'll be great. I'll do all the flight planning and get all the PPRs; all you'll have to do is fly and get ready for your interview.



Bullet looks resigned that Morty has taken control of the trip.

BULLET

Oh, OK, that'll be good, *I guess*. And I guess I can find something to do in Mather while you and your Air Force girlfriend do, *whatever it is you do!!*

Bullet finishes the sentence with a note of disgust.

Morty again slugs Bullet in the arm, knocking him a foot or two off balance, then wraps an arm around him.

MORTY (shouting)

Oh, Bullet, this is going to be awesome.

BULLET

I thought you said it was going to be "EPIC?"

MORTY

Yes, yes, I like that, an epic journey. Now, let's go get some chow and figure out what Air Force bases we've never been to.

BULLET

You mean besides Mather?

MORTY

Yes, yes, besides Mather *of course*.

Bullet and Morty exit the back of the Ready Room.

INT. VF-41 SHORE BASED READY ROOM - DAY

The shore based Ready Room is much larger than the ship-based Ready room. There is a horseshoe-shaped Squadron Duty Officer's (SDO) desk along one of the walls with the current SDO, GANDHI, sitting behind it. Leaning against the desk are Morty and two other officers, HORSE, and BUSTER.

HORSE

So, Morty, you really were able to get Bullet to agree to take you out to see *Amy*?

Horse says Amy's name with a note of derision; he obviously is not fond of *Amy*.

MORTY

Yes, well, sort of. I kind of took over the whole process and before he knew it, I had the whole thing planned. And at that point he had to just kind of go with the flow.

HORSE

Bullet isn't very good at "*going with the flow*," but I guess it shows the power of being the first guy with a plan.



MORTY

EXACTLY.

HORSE

And what's he doing while you and AMY are "*catching up*?"

MORTY

Oh, who knows, but knowing him he's probably reading the NATOPS manual, or listening to some vocabulary tapes.

All three laugh at this, then Morty continues.

MORTY

But I suspect he'll find some way to get himself into trouble!

Gandhi who has been on the phone, now hangs it up and turns to Morty.

GANDHI

Morty, Maintenance says your jet is ready when you guys are. Just give me a heads up before you walk and I'll get the crew out there for you.

MORTY

Thanks, Gandhi.

BUSTER

Speaking of Bullet, do you know which Bullet is going with you, Bullet, or his evil twin, Bizzarro Bullet?

MORTY

No, I haven't seen him yet.

BUSTER

I hope you don't get Bizzarro Bullet. He can be a jerk, and he's half-crazy, too.

MORTY

Yeah, we've all seen the Bizzarro side of him, but since he is going out for that interview, I expect he'll be controllable. You know how much he's worked up over these orders.

BUSTER

Yeah, but if he screws up that interview he might be in an especially disagreeable mood.

HORSE

Yeah, the trip back eastbound might be painful.

MORTY

I'm not too worried, I expect I can control him. I've done a good job of it so far.



Horse raises his coffee mug up as if he were making a toast.

HORSE  
Well, *good luck with that!!!*

As this exchange is completed Bullet enters the ready room carrying a small overnight bag.

MORTY (shouting)  
Bullet, how the hell are you this morning?!

Morty slugs Bullet in the arm knocking him off balance momentarily.

BULLET  
Hello Morty, glad to see you are in good spirits. Horse, are you and Buster here to see us off?

HORSE  
Yes, we wanted to give "The Love Chariot" an appropriate farewell.

Bullet looks at Morty with disgust.

BULLET  
*Love Chariot?*

Morty shrugs his shoulders.

MORTY  
Don't look at me.

BULLET  
Oh, no, I'm sure you didn't have anything to do with that name, it doesn't sound like you at all!!

BUSTER  
Well, I see you guys are off to a good start.

HORSE  
Yeah, I wish I could go along just to see where this goes from here.

BULLET  
Speaking of which, do we have a jet, Gandhi?

GANDHI  
Yes, just let me know when you guys are done arguing and I'll let Maintenance know you are walking.

BULLET  
OK Morty, where are we headed today?

MORTY  
First leg we go to Little Rock Air Force



Base, then we'll RON at Buckley Air Force Base.

BULLET  
Buckley, where's Buckley?

MORTY  
Denver.

BULLET  
And are we filed?

MORTY (indignantly)  
*Yes, Bullet.*

BULLET  
And do we have PPRs?

MORTY (indignantly)  
*Yes, Bullet.*

BULLET  
Well, OK then, I guess we are released into our own recognizance!

MORTY  
What does that mean?

BULLET  
*Raising Arizona*, great movie.

MORTY  
Never seen it.

Bullet gives Morty the stink eye.

BULLET (indignantly)  
*You have never seen Raising Arizona?*

MORTY  
No.

BULLET (indignantly)  
Maybe we should go before I find out somethang else and change my mind about this whole thang.

MORTY (shouting)  
Yes, Bullet, let's go. And remember, this is going to be great.

BULLET  
I thought you said this was going to be epic!!

MORTY  
Yes Bullet, you are correct, THIS IS GOING TO BE EPIC!!



As he says this, he again slugs Bullet in the arm knocking him off balance. Bullet winces in pain as he rubs his arm.

HORSE

Well, boys, have fun.

BUSTER

Yes, and try to make it back in one piece.

BULLET

No worries about that, we are on a mission from God.

Bullet and Morty exit together leaving Horse, Buster, and Gandhi in the Ready Room.

BUSTER

I wonder what trouble they are going to get into. I think last time Bullet was on a cross-country he re-painted a VFA-87 jet to read VA-87 didn't he?

HORSE

He did, and he did some flat hatting at a Guard base in his old hometown, too. It seems the further he gets from Oceana the more Bizzarro Bullet takes over.

BUSTER

Yes, I am not sure Morty will be able to keep him in check like he thinks.

HORSE

Well, one thing is for sure, we can expect some good stories when they return.

BUSTER

That's true, assuming they do return.

All three laugh at this comment.

EXT. NAS OCEANA FLIGHT LINE - DAY

Bullet and Morty are in their flight gear and are walking across the busy Oceana ramp. It is 1988 and Oceana is arguably the center of East Coast Naval Aviation. The third character of our story now comes into view, Fast Eagle 101 (FE101). When they see it Bullet and Morty stop.

MORTY

Isn't she a beautiful beast?

BULLET

Yes, Morty, she is beautiful. It's kinda hard to believe we have this jet for the next four days.

After a short pause he continues.



BULLET

Morty, do you know who Gene Valencia is?

Morty gives Bullet a look of disgust.

MORTY

Bullet, of course I do - World War II Navy ace in the Pacific Theater.

BULLET

Excellent Morty. But did ya know that when he was asked to describe the F6F Hellcat he said that if the F6F could cook, he would marry it!! Every time I walk out here and see one of these beauties, I know how he felt.

MORTY

Yeah, our love chariot.

BULLET (disgustedly)

*This ain't no love chariot, Morty!!*

MORTY (disappointedly)

Oh, all right, but I still like that name.

BULLET

We are on a mission from God.

MORTY

OK, I'll go with that, we are on a mission from God...in a love chariot.

BULLET (disgustedly)

I still have time to get Gandhi to go with me ya know.

MORTY

Oh, all right, we are on a mission from God.

INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

Bullet's mask is hanging from his helmet, only latched on one side, exposing his face. The sleeves on his flight suit are rolled up to his elbows, and he is wearing no flight gloves.

Morty's oxygen mask is attached on both sides of his helmet, his visor is down, his sleeves are rolled down, and he has flight gloves on; no skin is exposed anywhere.

BULLET

Morty, takeoff checklist. Brakes are good, fuel is 15.9, feed switch is normal, dump switch is off, canopy closed, locks engaged, light out, seal inflated, handle in close position, seat armed, strapped in, MCO in the window, wings are 20 auto, both lights out, flaps are at maneuver, spoilers are armed. You ready to go?



MORTY

Ready.

There is a pause as nothing happens.

Bullet (imitating Judge Smails)  
Well, we're waiting.

MORTY

Oh, right.

Morty transmits to the OCEANA (NTU) TOWER.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
Oceana tower, Fast Eagle one zero one,  
takeoff.

NTU Tower (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle one zero one, winds are two three  
zero at one zero knots, cleared for takeoff,  
change to departure frequency is approved.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle 101, cleared for takeoff,  
switching to departure.

Bullet taxis FE101 onto the runway and brings it to a stop on the centerline. While holding the brakes he pushes the throttles to full military power. The exhaust nozzles close and as the engines reach full power the airplane rotates forward compressing the nose gear strut. Bullet completes the final checks.

BULLET  
Nozzles are closed, engines look good,  
control checks, forward, aft, left, right,  
left rudder, right rudder.

As Bullet completes the control checks the control surfaces on the aircraft move.

BULLET  
Here comes the burners.

With this Bullet advances the throttles to Zone 2 afterburner. The engine nozzles open as the afterburners ignite and a jet of flame appears exiting the exhaust nozzles of both engines.

BULLET  
Good burners, ready to go, Morty?

MORTY  
Let's go.

Bullet simultaneously releases the brakes and pushes the throttles full forward to Zone 5 afterburner. Both exhaust nozzles fully open and the flame out of both engines grows to its full length and brightness as FE101 lunges forward. Bullet



and Morty are pressed back against their seats as the big fighter accelerates. FE101 lifts off and climbs as the gear retract. FE101 grows small as it continues to accelerate and swiftly climbs into the distance.

INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

FE101 has reached its cruise altitude. Morty has his oxygen mask on as required; Bullet's mask is hanging on his helmet only latched on one side again.

MORTY

So, Bullet, do you ever wear your oxygen mask?

BULLET (sarcastically)

Occasionally, Morty, *why do you ask?*

MORTY

Just wondering, because we are at 36,000 feet, and the cockpit altitude is 14,000 feet.

BULLET

*And your point is?*

MORTY

Just wanted to make sure that you don't check out on me up there.

BULLET

I take a hit of oxygen every once in a while. But I am glad to see that you are worried about me.

MORTY

YOU!! I'm worried about me. I have no controls back here in case you forgot.

BULLET

*As it should be, of course.*

MORTY

And do you ever wear your gloves?

BULLET

Occasionally, Morty, *why do you ask?*

MORTY

Just wondering.

Morty looks around seeming quite pleased with himself that he has given Bullet "shit" over the non-standard wear of his flight gear.

MORTY

So, are you prepared for your big interview tomorrow?



BULLET

I hope so. I guess I had better be.

MORTY

It would be cool to go to VX-4, you get to fly both the Tomcat and Hornet, right?

BULLET

Yeah, and believe it or not, they still have three Phantoms, so I am hoping that I can get qualed in that beast also.

MORTY

That would be very cool. But what's the XO going to say if you go there?

BULLET

To paraphrase Orson Wells, "I worry about no problem, before its time."

MORTY

Bullet, the amateur philosopher.

Bullet like's Morty's characterization of him and nods in approval.

BULLET

So, are you prepared for your big date on Saturday?

MORTY

Oh, yeah.

BULLET

Where did you guys meet again?

MORTY

Bullet, how many times do I have to tell you this. When Horse, Buster, and I got off the boat in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, we headed to Munich for Oktoberfest. However, Horse's inability to speak German was limiting his success with the German ladies, so he wanted to go back to an English-speaking country. So, we headed down to Ramstein AFB where we met this KC-135 crew.

BULLET

And she was part of the 135 crew, ahhh, what's her name again?

MORTY

And again, for the umpteenth time, Amy. Yes, she was the second pilot.

BULLET

Second pilot, what the hell is a second pilot?



MORTY

I'm not really sure, but I think we'd call her the copilot.

BULLET

*Whatever!* Tanker guys, even if they are girls.

MORTY

Horse and Buster weren't too crazy about her as she essentially took over our trip, which basically ruined their plans.

BULLET

*Yeah, I hate it when people do that too!*

As he says this he looks at Morty in his mirrors. Morty is oblivious to Bullet's attack.

BULLET

I thought I detected a bit of disdain in Horse's voice every time her name comes up.

MORTY

Yeah, and Amy wasn't too crazy about him either, but we hit it off. For once I got the girl and Horse didn't, which is probably another reason why he's not too crazy about her.

BULLET

Horse is the king ya know, except when it comes to, ahh, what's her name I guess.

MORTY

Jeez Bullet, it's Amy. How about writing her name down so that you can remember it.

BULLET

I'll think about it Morty, but no promises.

FE101 flies towards the distant horizon.

EXT. BUCKLY AFB TRANSIENT FLIGHT LINE - DAY

An Air Force STAFF SERGEANT (SSgt) is guiding FE101 in for parking. It is parked next to a Canadian trainer jet. After the aircraft shuts down and the canopy raised, Morty is out of his seat and down the boarding ladder that was opened by the USAF SSgt. When he reaches the ground, Morty loosens his flight gear as Bullet descends the boarding ladder.

BULLET

So, this is Buckley AFB?

MORTY

Yep, this is Buckley.

BULLET

So, who was Buckley?



Morty looks slightly annoyed at Bullet.

MORTY (slightly annoyed)  
What?

BULLET  
Ya know, Buckley Air Force Base. The Air Force usually names their bases after famous pilots or heroes, so I was wondering who Buckley was?

MORTY (slightly annoyed)  
How the hell should I know who Buckley was?

BULLET  
Well, you did all the flight planning, so I thought you would have done a little research to learn who the base was named after.

MORTY (moderately annoyed)  
I didn't realize researching the history of the base was a part of my flight planning duties, *Bullet*.

BULLET  
Well, I'm just saying it would have been nice to know who Buckley was. Maybe we could toast him at the bar tonight?

MORTY (moderately annoyed)  
Well, we can toast him if you want, but you'll have to do the research *yourself*.

BULLET  
It just seems to me that we should remember the greats who came before us, but I guess that's not part of your RIO duties.

MORTY (highly annoyed)  
So, you're saying my duties include finding out who Air Force Bases are named after?

BULLET  
Well, not *all* Air Force bases *obviously*, but at least the ones we are going to land at, I think.

Morty looks Bullet dead in the eye with a stern look on his face.

MORTY  
Bullet, has anyone ever pointed out to you that you seem to have a problem with RIOs?

BULLET  
Only if they don't do their job, *Morty*.



MORTY (highly annoyed)  
Yeah, well, you seem to have unique ideas  
about what a RIO's job is *Bullet*.

After saying this Morty turns his back on Bullet. When his back is turned Bullet smiles looking very pleased with himself. The Air Force SSgt reappears.

SSGT 1  
Welcome to Buckley, sirs, will you be a gas  
and go or an RON?

BULLET  
We will be RONing Sergeant.

SSGT 1  
OK, sir, would you like to be fueled tonight  
or in the morning before you leave?

BULLET  
Tonight, if you can, and my RIO friend has  
our gas card, *don't you Morty?*

MORTY (disgustedly)  
Yes, I have the damn gas card, *Bullet!!*

Morty hands the card to the SSgt.

MORTY  
He would be lost without me you know.

SSGT 1  
Oh, well, you must be enlisted then.

MORTY  
No, why would you think that?

SSGT 1  
Because all officers would be lost without  
us enlisted men!

With this the SSgt leaves with the gas card, leaving Morty with a puzzled look on his face.

Bullet looks even more pleased than before.

BULLET  
Yes, are you sure you are not enlisted,  
Morty?

MORTY (angrily)  
Shut up, Bullet.

Bullet shouts a question to the SSgt

BULLET  
Hey Sargeant, do you know who this base is  
named after, I mean, who Buckley was?

The SSgt stops and turns towards Bullet.



SSGT 1

Yes, sir, it is named after a World War I fighter pilot who was killed during the Meuse Offensive. It was called Naval Air Station Denver for a few years after the Second World War before the Air Force took it back.

BULLET

Thanks, Sargeant, you are right, you enlisted guys know everything don't you?

SSGT 1

Well sir, us *Air Force* enlisted do, including how to service Navy *F-14s*.

With this the SSgt walks in the direction of the fuel truck parked on the far side of the ramp.

BULLET

See, Morty, wouldn't it have been nice to know all that, especially the part about this having once been a Navy base?

MORTY (angrily)

Shut up, Bullet.

Bullet and Morty have now started to walk across the flight line toward the base operations building.

BULLET

So, what do you have planned for us tonight?

MORTY

Planned for us tonight? *I don't have anything planned for us tonight.*

BULLET

Wait, wasn't our deal that I would bring you along if you did all the planning?

MORTY

Oh, I didn't know that planning a cross country included planning your entertainment at each stop.

BULLET

Not each stop, just each *overnight* stop!!!

MORTY

OK, well, my plan was to go to the Buckley Club and hang out there for a while.

BULLET

Does Buckley even have an O'Club?

MORTY (frustrated)

I don't know Bullet.



There is a short pause.

BULLET  
Yeah, we are going to have to work on your  
flight planning skills, Morty.

MORTY (angrily)  
Shut up, Bullet.

With that Bullet opens the door for Morty and they enter the  
base ops building.

INT. BUCKLEY OFFICER'S CLUB - NIGHT

Buckley O'Club is a typical bar except that there are stickers  
of dozens, if not hundreds of Navy, Marine, and Air Force  
squadrons "zapped" all over every vertical surface. Bullet and  
Morty enter wearing flight suits, and Bullet is wearing his Navy  
leather jacket. There are the only a few people in the club.

BULLET  
Well, I guess we now know what Thursday  
night at the Buckley Club is like.

MORTY  
Yeah, it's a bit dead, isn't it?

BULLET  
I could make a few comments about...

Morty interrupts him again.

MORTY  
Yeah, well I could say a lot of things right  
now, but how about we both exercise some  
restraint and just order our beers.

BULLET  
I must say, that's an excellent idea  
Ambassador Morty.

Bullet and Morty both look at each other.

BULLET AND MORTY (in unison)  
Dr. Strangelove!!

At the bar they order two beers. When the beers arrive Morty  
makes a toast.

MORTY  
Well, here's to day one of our journey.

BULLET  
I'll drink to that.

They clank glasses and both take a drink.

BULLET  
And here's to the next three days, and to  
Fast Eagle 101. I sure wish she could be  
here drinking with us.



MORTY

Hear! Hear!

As they finish their beer, two other men enter the bar. They also are wearing flight suits, except their flight suits are tan; Bullet and Morty's are olive-green. One of the two new arrivals is wearing a black jacket with a large mutton fur collar. They sit down on the opposite side of the bar.

BULLET

Are they Air Force pilots?

MORTY

No, I think they might be Canadians.

BULLET

Oh yeah, there was a Canadian trainer jet on the transient line next to FE 101 wasn't there?

MORTY

Yeah, that must be those guys.

BULLET

That's a nice jacket that one guy has don't ya think?

MORTY

Yeah, if you like Canuck jackets, I guess.

BULLET

Do ya think they would roll the bones with us?

MORTY

I don't know. Does this bar even have dice?

BULLET

Well, let's find out.

Bullet draws the BARTENDER'S attention and motions him over.

BARTENDER 1

Another round already?

BULLET

Not just yet. We were wondering if you had any dice?

The bartender, without saying a word, goes over to and reaches behind the cash register and produces a leather cup. He places it in front of Bullet and Morty. Bullet then pours out five dice from inside the cup onto the bar.

BULLET

Yep, they got dice! Shall we challenge the Canadians to some Klondike? Only seems appropriate seeings how they are probably from the Klondike.



MORTY

You bet. I am always OK with someone else buying my beer.

BULLET

OK, let's go get us some Canadian money.

With this Bullet and Morty head over to join the two Canadians on the other side of the bar. One is named LIGHTBODY, the other PARSONS.

MORTY

Hey, we were wondering if you guys are Canadians.

LIGHTBODY

Sure are, eh. We were wondering if you guys were Air Force pilots.

BULLET

Na, we are Naval Aviators, we are better than pilots.

PARSONS

Navy, what are you doing at Buckley AFB? I am not an expert on American geography, but I don't think there are any aircraft carriers around Denver are there?

BULLET

No, we are here to celebrate the history of this base, ya know, when it was Naval Air Station Denver.

LIGHTBODY

This used to be a Navy base?

BULLET

Of course, you guys didn't know that. We thought you might be here as part of that celebration also.

PARSONS

No, we are here just for tonight. Are you spending the entire weekend here in Denver, eh?

BULLET

No, we are headed to the West Coast after this. See, we are on a mission from God.

PARSONS

So, are you getting the band back together?

BULLET

Morty, we have a man who know his movies.

PARSONS

Of course, *The Blues Brothers*. Which of you



is Jake, eh?

BULLET

I'm Jake, he's Elwood, but more importantly, we have some dice and I think we should roll some bones for the next round.

LIGHTBODY

Well, we could do that, but we were thinking we could play some CRUD, eh?

MORTY

CRUD, is that a dice game?

Both Canadian pilots laugh momentarily.

LIGHTBODY

No, it's a pool table game.

MORTY

Pool table game?

LIGHTBODY

Yes, it's a Canadian original. We could show you how to play if you are game.

BULLET

Yeah, let's see this Canuck billiards game.

LIGHTBODY

OK, follow us.

All four pilots head over to the pool table.

LIGHTBODY

Parsons, would you go to the restroom and get the rolls for us, eh?

PARSONS

Right, two rolls coming right up.

Bullet looks at Morty with a questioning look, Morty shrugs his shoulders.

Lightbody clears the table of all balls except for the eight ball and the cue ball. He places the eight ball in position at one end of the table, then takes the cue ball to the opposite end of the table. As he does this Parsons returns and places one roll of toilet paper in each of the two side pockets.

LIGHTBODY

OK, the basics of the game are that it is played with two balls, the object ball...

As he says this, he raises up the cue ball.

LIGHTBODY

...and the target ball.

As he says this, he points at the eight ball.



LIGHTBODY

The objective is to throw the object ball and hit the target ball. Once the target ball is in motion the player for the other team grabs the object ball and he throws it towards the target ball attempting to either knock it into a corner pocket or to just make contact and keep it in motion. If he hits the target ball into a pocket the other team loses a life.

MORTY

Loses a life?

PARSONS

Yes, each team member has three lives, and if he loses all his lives then he is out of the game.

BULLET

And what if the guy makes contact with the target ball but it doesn't go it into a pocket?

LIGHTBODY

Then play continues and the next player on the opposite team throws it towards the target ball. This continues until either the target ball is knocked into a pocket or until it comes to a stop.

PARSONS

If it comes to a stop, it's called a "dead ball foul" and the guy whose turn it was to throw the object ball loses a life.

LIGHTBODY

An important point is that the guy throwing the object ball can only shoot it from either of the two ends of the table. In fact, he has to have at least one of his balls beyond the 45-degree angle that defines the end of the table.

MORTY

One of his balls?

LIGHTBODY

Yes, and if he throws the object ball without one or both of his balls beyond that 45-degree angle it's called a "balls foul" and he loses a life.

BULLET

Damn, lots of rules, ya sure you don't want to just roll the dice?

PARSONS

Well, we could, I mean, if CRUD is too



complicated for you *Navy guys*, eh?

Bullet has a bit of a sick look on his face as he realizes that the Canadians have successfully maneuvered them into playing a game with which they are unfamiliar.

MORTY

Bullet, you up for this CRUD business?

BULLET

Yeah, I mean we have no choice now; we wouldn't want to look like simpletons to our new Canuck buds. But it does seem kinda complicated, eh?

LIGHTBODY

Oh, we've only begun to show you the rules.

MORTY

There's more?

PARSONS

Oh, yeah. For instance, if the shooter shoots the object ball off the table, he can retrieve it so long as the target ball doesn't come to a stop. And if he touches the target ball with anything other than the object ball then he loses a life.

MORTY

So, who wins?

PARSONS

The team who runs out of lives first loses.

BULLET

Sort of like war I guess, isn't it?

PARSONS

Well, it's funny how you Yanks always tend to think of it in those terms being the warmongers you are.

BULLET

Warmonger? That's kinda uncalled for don't you think.

PARSONS

Well, no more called for than you calling us Canuks, eh.

BULLET

Hmm, good point, except don't you have a hockey team called the Canuks up there?

PARSONS

Hmm, well that's a good point also.

LIGHTBODY

OK, and back to the CRUD rules if you don't



mind. Each player has to play his shooter turn in order. If a team has a shooter play out of turn, they lose a life.

PARSONS  
And no pointing at any opposing team's players is allowed, or the pointer...

BULLET  
Let me guess, loses a life.

PARSONS  
Exactly.

MORTY  
That's very gentlemanly and polite of you, you can tell it's a Canadian game.

LIGHTBODY  
Of course, eh?

Bullet looks confused.

BULLET  
Gentlemanly?

MORTY  
It's a Canadian thing Bullet.

BULLET  
Whatever, I guess.

LIGHTBODY  
I can see you friend is a bit perplexed about the *gentlemanly* issue.

MORTY  
Yes, Bullet's only loosely considered a human, let alone an officer, and never a gentleman.

BULLET  
And I think that was uncalled for Morty.

Morty looks at Bullet and shrugs his shoulders.

PARSONS  
Well, there are two versions of CRUD, the first is called "Gentleman's CRUD," and the second is called "Combat CRUD."

BULLET  
Combat CRUD. Being the warmonger that I am I like the sound of that. How is *it* played?

PARSONS  
The rules are the same, but under combat rules the shooter can be blocked, or knocked by the opposite team's next shooter in an attempt to disrupt his shot.



BULLET

Blocked, knocked? Sounds like what you are saying is that we can make physical contact with the shooter to make him miss the, ahh, target ball?

LIGHTBODY

That's correct, but only if you are the next shooter. If any other player on the opposing team makes contact with the shooter, it's a life.

PARSONS

So, are you Navy Yanks up to the challenge, eh?

BULLET

I suspect the odds are stacked against us, but that's what Naval Aviation is all about, so yeah, Morty, are we in?

MORTY

How can we not be?

LIGHTBODY

Good show. And would you prefer gentleman's rules or combat rules?

MORTY

I think we have to play combat rules, don't you Bullet?

BULLET

Yeah, I think combat rules would be more appropriate, although I can see that the difficulty factor will be much higher under combat rules.

PARSONS

OK, let's play CRUD. And combat rules it is. Loser buys the winners beer.

BULLET

I think we are getting set up, but it's a bet. And at some point we are going to have to discuss trading jackets also, as I really like that flight jacket.

PARSONS

You like this jacket?

BULLET

Yeah, and I'll trade you my Navy jacket for that Canuck jacket.

PARSONS

First let's play some CRUD, and we can talk about jacket trades later.



BULLET

Deal.

LIGHTBODY

OK, since you guys are CRUD novices, we will let you shoot first, and we will receive.

BULLET

Morty, do you want to shoot first?

MORTY

Yes Bullet, I do, even though I'm not sure what I'm doing.

BULLET

That makes two of us, brother.

LIGHTBODY

OK, Morty, grab the cue ball and go to that end of the table. I will take the target ball to this end. Your goal is to shoot the object ball and make contact with the target ball, putting it into play.

BULLET

And don't forget, Morty, combat rules, so we can disrupt their shooter through physical contact, right?

PARSONS

Right.

The scene pulls back to show 4 men running wildly around the pool table, with physical contact being made as they play CRUD. Bullet shoots from the side of the table and the Canadians both use their elbows to point at Bullet.

LIGHTBODY & PARSONS (simultaneously yelling)

**Balls!**

EXT. BUCKLEY OFFICER'S CLUB LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

The door leading out to the loading dock suddenly bursts open as Bullet and Morty fly through it and down the stairs. They run across the street from the O'Club and take shelter behind a car parked on the street. Sirens are heard in the distance and coming closer. Bullet is wearing a Canadian flight jacket.

BULLET

Damn Morty, you knocked the hell out of Lightbody.

MORTY

Yeah, perhaps I got a little carried away.

BULLET

Ya think? Not only did you knock him into the pool table, you broke one of the table's legs completing off. I'm pretty sure nobody



will ever play pool on that table again. The Club Manager certainly was pissed off. I mean, what got into you?

MORTY

I was getting sick of those guys beating us, I guess I saw white.

BULLET

*You saw white?*

MORTY

Yeah, that happens to me every once in a while. But did the Club Manager really call the Shore Patrol on us?

BULLET

Security Forces.

MORTY

*What?*

BULLET

I think they are called the Security Forces in the Air Force, and yes, the Air Force equivalent of the Shore Patrol are probably after us now. But I'm mostly worried about Lightbody, as he was out cold. Parsons didn't seem to be able to help him much either. It's all that weightlifting you and Horse have been doing.

MORTY

We are huge don't you think?

As Morty says this he can't help but flex up his entire upper body and both arms into an "Arnold" pose.

BULLET

And how about Parsons, he told us to get out of there and that he would cover for us. Can't get much better than that. We nearly kill his friend and he is willing to cover for us.

MORTY

I'm telling ya, Canadians are the best, unless you are playing hockey against them, then watch out.

BULLET

And yeah, you are huge all right, but you are like Bullwinkle with his magic tricks; you don't seem to know your own strength.

MORTY

Bullwinkle? I don't know Bullwinkle. What squadron is he in?

Bullet looks at Morty with a look of shock and disgust.



BULLET  
Not fighter pilot Bullwinkle, cartoon  
character Bullwinkle.

MORTY  
I am not familiar with cartoon character  
Bullwinkle either.

Bullet stops scanning the horizon for the Security Forces and  
turns all his attention to Morty with a look of disappointment.

BULLET  
Wait a minute, you mean to tell me that  
you've never seen *The Adventures of Rocky  
and Bullwinkle*?

MORTY  
No, I don't think so.

BULLET  
*OH MY GOD*, I'm evading Air Force cops with a  
guy who has never seen *The Bullwinkle Show*.

The sounds of sirens continue to grow louder and are nearing the  
O'Club.

MORTY  
Yes, Bullet, I have never seen the  
*Bullwinkle and Rocket Show*, or whatever it's  
called, but perhaps we should focus on  
evading the Air Force security people right  
now and not get distracted by what cartoons  
I may or may not have watched as a kid.

BULLET  
I learned everything I needed to know about  
the Cold War from that cartoon. The good  
guys, Bullwinkle and Rocky, versus the bad  
guys, Boris and Natasha. Ironically, given  
our current situation, one of the good guys  
was a Canadian, go figure.

MORTY  
Really, which one was Canadian?

BULLET  
Bullwinkle was a moose, so I assume he was  
Canadian. Rocky was a flying squirrel,  
classic American character with a distinct  
Midwest accent. It was a great cartoon.

At this moment an Air Force police car passes Bullet and Morty  
but does not see them hiding behind the parked car. Bullet scans  
the horizon again.

BULLET  
Come on, Morty, we have to get off the  
street. I think that hedgerow may offer us  
concealment.



MORTY

OK, let's go.

With that Bullet and Morty cross over a sidewalk and into on-base housing. There is a hedgerow running parallel to and along the full length of the road they are on. Bullet goes through a gap in the hedge, Morty jumps over it.

BULLET

Ok, I don't think we haven't been detected yet, but let's hold our position for a few moments to make sure.

MORTY

I'm with you.

Bullet stops scanning the horizon and looks back at Morty again.

BULLET

I still can't believe you never watched *The Bullwinkle Show*. Did you not have a television in your house as a kid.

MORTY (angrily)

Yes, we had a television *Bullet*, but I guess I didn't watch that many cartoons. I think we only had 4 channels.

BULLET

Boris and Natasha, the Russians obviously, were always scheming to cause trouble, and Moose and Squirrel always disrupted their plans. And, I gotta say, I always thought Natasha was kinda hot. I loved her accent.

MORTY

Bullet, how about we delay the discussion of Russian cartoon hotties until later. If we get busted here at Buckley you will miss your interview tomorrow, and I won't make my date either. So, let's figure out how to get out of this mess.

BULLET

Ok, Tiny, this hedge runs all the way up to that intersection. I think we might be able to make it across that intersection and over to those buildings, which should get us close enough to the Q for us to make a break for it.

Morty looks around as he assesses Bullet's plan.

MORTY

Hmm, I actually like that plan, mostly because I don't see anything better. And, ahh, don't call me Tiny.



BULLET  
OK, but Lightbody might still be alive if  
you weren't HUGE.

Morty can't help but flex his muscles again while Bullet scans  
the horizon.

MORTY  
Yes, I am huge, aren't I?

BULLET  
Hey, let's try to stay focused for once. I  
think the security forces are still at the  
Club, so we may be able get the hell out of  
here now before they get organized and start  
searching for us.

MORTY  
Who would have thought SERE training would  
prove so valuable to us on this cross  
country.

BULLET  
Yeah, and if we can get out of this it will  
confirm that we truly are on a mission from  
God.

MORTY  
OK, well, let's go.

BULLET  
Wait, one last thang, when we are moving  
remember to "serpentine."

MORTY  
Serpentine, what the hell are you talking  
about?

BULLET  
Peter Faulk always reminded Alan Arkin to  
serpentine in the movie *The In-Laws*. Have  
you ever seen that movie?

MORTY (angrily)  
I really don't think this is the time to be  
discussing EITHER CARTOONS OR MOVIES FOR  
GOD'S SAKE.

Bullet looks somewhat hurt by Morty's words.

BULLET  
Jeez Morty, no need to get upset about it, I  
mean, I was just asking whether you had seen  
that movie or not.

Morty, very frustrated, gives a huge sigh.

MORTY (Patronizing voice)  
*OK, no, I don't think I've ever seen that  
movie.*



BULLET

Well, part of your RIO improvement training when we get back to Oceana will be to watch *Raising Arizona* and *The In-Laws* with me.

MORTY

*Alright*, if we make it out of here and back to Oceana, I'll do that, *OK*.

BULLET

And if they start shooting at us, we will definitely need to serpentine, whatever that means.

Morty is looking somewhat frustrated now.

MORTY

*OK*, we will serpentine if they start shooting at us.

BULLET

*OK*, I think we have a good plan now, so let's go.

As they move off up the hedgerow Morty is moving in a straight line towards the intersection; Bullet is serpentinaing.

EXT. BUCKLEY BOQ - DAY

Bullet is standing in front of the Buckley BOQ in a Canadian flight jacket looking at his watch rather impatiently. Morty exits the BOQ. As he joins Bullet, he slugs him in the arm.

MORTY (shouting)

Bullet, how the hell are you brother?!

Bullet is knocked off balance and a few feet to his side by Morty's slug.

BULLET

Hello, Morty, I guess since we both made it through the night it's safe to say Parsons covered for us.

MORTY

Yeah, or else they would have dragged us out of the Q in the middle of the night.

BULLET

I wish we could find him and say thangs for the assist, but I'm afraid it would be too risky. I think it's best to stay on plan.

MORTY

Yeah, I agree. Maybe we can look them up after we get back to Oceana.

BULLET

That's a good idea. Let's just hope we didn't start a war with Canada.



MORTY

Yeah, let's hope not. So, I trust you got some good sleep?

BULLET

You know me, I can sleep through almost anything. Sirens are nothing compared to the sounds of catapults and arresting gear going off right above our heads. How about you?

MORTY

Yeah, once the sirens stopped, I slept great. And, I should have known you slept well, you fell asleep in the middle of the marshal stack one night while waiting to start your approach for a night trap.

Bullet looks at Morty with a puzzled look on his face.

BULLET

You really shouldn't believe any of those stories you hear about me, ya know.

MORTY

Bullet, I was in your back seat.

BULLET

Really, I thought Testicles was in my back seat that night?

MORTY

That was another night, and Testy told me about that one also.

BULLET

Well, I'm not too sure about that, but let's not dwell on the past. I had a dream last night that we flew a low-level on our way to Pt. Mugu today. So, I have decided we are going to fly a low-level, and the low-level we are going to fly is VR-1266.

Morty is looking at Bullet with a skeptical look on his face.

MORTY

Bullet, we can't fly a low-level today.

BULLET

Why not?

MORTY

Well, first off, we didn't include a low-level in the cross-country request, and secondly, we don't have any charts for VR-1266.

BULLET

About the first point, remember our task is to fly as many hours and burn as much gas as



we can, and this will help us achieve both of those objectives. And on the second point, we don't need a low-level chart, I flew 1266 once in advanced training, so I can fly it from memory.

MORTY (beginning to get angry)  
Bullet, there is no way I am flying a low-level without a low-level chart.

BULLET  
Morty, remember, we are on a mission from God, therefore we don't need a stinking low-level chart. Besides, you'll love this low-level.

MORTY  
No matter how good a low-level it is, I'm still not going to fly it without a low-level chart!!

Bullet looks at Morty, somewhat frustrated by his obstinance.

BULLET  
Alright, I'll get you a damn chart, but I want you to know that you are dragging me down with all these negative waves, man.

MORTY  
Well, if making you get me a low-level chart for a low-level is dragging you down, then yes, I'm dragging you down.

BULLET  
Well, I'm at least happy to hear that you have agreed to fly 1266 with me. Trust me, you won't regret it.

MORTY (shouting)  
Not unless we get a chart!!!

BULLET  
You seem to be obsessed with this chart thang, Morty! That's another issue we are going to have to work on.

MORTY  
Yes, I *am* obsessed with charts, and...

Bullet interrupts.

BULLET  
But for now, here's what we'll do. We'll fly down to Marine Corps Air Station Yuma for our first leg this morning. They are the scheduling authority for 1266, so we can gas up there and schedule the route.

MORTY  
Not unless I have a CHART, *Bullet*.



BULLET

Again, with the negative waves! But I'll get you your damn chart, and you will thank me for this later.

MORTY

Not unless you get me a chart I won't.

Bullet gives Morty a look of disappointment.

BULLET (patronizing voice)

I said I would get you a chart Morty, so come on, let's go fly a low-level.

As Bullet says this, he grabs his overnight bag and walks toward Base Operations. Morty is left standing half angry and disgusted.

MORTY

I think Bizzarro Bullet may have escaped his cage!!

Morty picks up his overnight bag and follows Bullet to Base Ops.

EXT. IN FRONT OF MCAS YUMA'S BASE OPERATIONS BUILDING - DAY

Bullet and Morty are exiting Base Ops and walking towards two large buildings which are about a quarter mile up and on opposite sides of the street. Bullet is outlining his plan.

BULLET

Alright, we have 1266 scheduled for a 1300 entry, and we are getting Fast Eagle 101 fueled. Wanna get some chow?

MORTY

No, Bullet, as I said at Buckley, I am not flying any low-level without a chart.

Bullet and Morty continue talking as they walk. Bullet looks at Morty with a sideways look.

BULLET

Morty, I thought we had moved past this chart obsession, but I can see you have regressed back to the negative waves thang again.

MORTY

Yes Bullet, I am insisting we have a chart before we fly a military low-level. I know that may seem strange to you, but no amount of your shit is going to change my mind on this issue!!! And by the way, isn't "regressed back" a double negative?

Bullet and Morty are about halfway to the two large buildings. Bullet looks at Morty somewhat surprised, and somewhat impressed as he considers Morty's words.



BULLET

Hum, I don't think it's a double negative, but it is a tautological error. I see you have had some English training, Mayonnaise!

Morty is quite pleased that he has corrected Bullet's English. There is a short pause in the conversation as they continue walking.

BULLET

Ya know Morty, I have lots of great memories here at Yuma from my time at TOPGUN. Did you know that many of the TOPGUN missions are flown here at Yuma?

MORTY

No, I didn't know that.

BULLET

Yeah, we'd take off from Miramar and fly over here for the morning mission, then land here and debrief. After some quick chow we'd brief the afternoon mission, fly it on the Yuma ranges before bingoing back to Miramar to debrief.

MORTY

Really? That sounds like both a lot of fun and a lot of work.

BULLET

Yeah, it was both. Some of those missions were huge fights with like 14 fighters and 14 or more bandits. It was awesome!!!

MORTY

Sounds like it.

BULLET

One of my favorite memories was when I was fighter lead. We had had a good day on the morning mission, killing a bunch of bandits without losing any fighters. Well, we lost Pouch, but he was our Neidermeyer, so considered him an "acceptable loss!"

MORTY

Pouch from VF-84. Yeah, he was kinda the Neidermeyer type wasn't he. Wasn't he former Marine or something?

BULLET

Yep. But what I remember most is that I ended up initially leading an eight ship of Tomcats as we exited the range. Then, a four ship of bandits joined the formation, and as we circled south of Yuma we picked up a Kfir, so that when we hit the initial, we



were a flight of 13. I remember looking to my right and I couldn't see the last few jets out there the formation was so big.

MORTY

A flight of 13? Damn, and most of them you just picked up without a brief or anything?

BULLET

Nope, other than a quick brief over the admin frequency. I also remember thinking how ironic it was that I was leading a flight of 13 into the break and I wasn't even flight lead qualified.

MORTY

Wait, you went to TOPGUN without a flight lead qual?

BULLET

Yep, Lonzo selected me to go before I was a lieutenant, without a flight lead qual, and with just under 300 hours in the jet. I had completed a deployment, which was the only qualification I actually did have. Lonzo requested waivers for all the other requirements, and they approved them all.

MORTY

Damn, Bullet, that's pretty cool.

BULLET

I often wondered if anybody in that flight of 13 would have bailed on me if they had known the guy leading them wasn't even flight lead qualified.

At this point Bullet and Morty have arrived between the two buildings.

BULLET

And this is the Yuma TACTS facility where we debriefed the morning missions. Lots of good times in there for sure.

MORTY

Bullet, if this trip down memory lane is designed to get me to fly 1266 without a chart, it's not going to work.

Bullet looks at Morty with a cross between a sad look and a look of disappointment.

BULLET

Morty, these negative waves really are unbecoming of you, ya know.

Bullet now looks at the larger of the two buildings opposite the Yuma TACTS building.



BULLET

And of course, directly across the street from the Yuma TACTS building is MAG-5, the Marine Harrier Air Group. And since Marine Harriers frequently fly low-levels, I am certain that somewhere in that building is a 1266 low-level chart. We just need to convince whoever has it to let us use it for our low-level, and you will have your damn chart.

Morty looks at the large building.

MORTY

Oh, I, ahh, forgot that MAG-5 is here. Well, I have to say, this plan of yours just might work. But there is one potential problem.

BULLET

What's that?

MORTY

These guys are all Marines, and Marine pilots don't really like Navy pilots. It's that whole "You left us at Guadalcanal" thing; they still haven't gotten over that unfortunate event.

BULLET

Yeah, I heard about Guadalcanal many times when I was in flight school, so maybe you had better let me do the talking up there.

Morty looks at Bullet skeptically.

MORTY

You think you have a better chance of getting a Marine to trust you with his chart than I do?

BULLET

Yes, I do, Morty. These guys are all single seat aviators, so they will trust a pilot much more than a back seater.

Morty looks at Bullet with a look of disgust.

MORTY

*Do you know you have a problem with RIOs?*

BULLET

Well, no, I don't. But I do know we don't have time to debate that issue because we got us some flying to do. So, let's go get us a chart, and then go fly us a low-level.

With that Bullet turns and heads toward the entrance to the MAG-5 building. Morty lags behind momentarily before following.



MORTY

Yes, I am definitely in Bizarro Bullet' world now.

INT. MAG-5 HARRIER SQUADRON READY ROOM - DAY

A Marine Harrier ready room is similar to a Navy shore-based ready room. Scattered around the room are the occasional Marines talking in small groups.

Bullet and Morty pause at the entrance the way a stranger might pause when attempting to crash a wedding party.

BULLET

So, this is what a Marine Ready Room looks like. Strangely enough, it kinda looks like a Navy ready room doesn't it.

MORTY

Yeah, apart from all the Marines!

BULLET

They kinda have a different look to them don't they. Is it just the haircuts that make them look different?

All the Marines are sporting "high and tight" haircuts as opposed to the short, but far from "high and tight" haircuts Bullet and Morty have.

MORTY

That's certainly one difference for sure.

BULLET

I, ah, don't see anybody I know from flight school. Do you recognize anybody from the Boat School?

MORTY

No, no friendlies that I can see.

BULLET

Over there is a single Second Lieutenant. So, I am thinking we should target him for our chart.

MORTY

Sounds good, I guess!

Bullet takes a deep breath as if he were about to enter hostile territory.

BULLET

OK, we are going in. And, if they start shooting at us, don't forget to serpentine!!

MORTY

Yeah, I don't think they will start shooting at us Bullet. I know it's hard to believe sometimes but they really are on our team.



They just have a hard time tolerating SOME Navy guys, *which I can't imagine why!!!*

As Morty says this he eyeballs Bullet, and Bullet gets the point of his attack.

BULLET  
I think that was uncalled for, particularly as we are about to go into hostile territory. Now, let's stay focused; a chart and a low-level, that's what we need.

With this statement Bullet enters the Ready Room and makes his way towards the 2LT sitting at a table by himself. The 2LT looks like he could be a middleweight boxer. His call sign is GIZMO.

BULLET  
Hey, ah, how's it going?

The Marine looks up at Bullet and Morty with a surprised look.

GIZMO  
Good morning, sir, who the hell are you guys. You are Navy, aren't you?

BULLET  
Yeah, we are with VF-41 passing through Yuma on a cross-country to the West Coast. I'm Bullet, and this is Morty.

GIZMO  
I'm Gizmo. A cross-country to the West Coast and you stopped in Yuma! Why the hell would you do that?

BULLET  
We are scheduled to fly VR-1266 this afternoon to get some low-level training while out west. Have you flown 1266?

GIZMO  
Not yet, but I'm still new to the squadron. I start low altitude nav training in a couple weeks and I'm scheduled to fly it on one of those missions.

BULLET  
Oh, you will love it. I flew it in the Training Command while on a weapons det in El Centro. I loved it. What training squadron were you in?

GIZMO  
VT-21 in Kingsville.

BULLET  
A Red Hawk brother.

GIZMO  
When were you in 21, sir?



BULLET

Oh, I was there from '85-86, and I got my wings in January of '86. Anyway, we have a small problem, and we were wondering if you could help us out?

GIZMO

What's that, sir?

Bullet gives a sideways glance towards Morty.

BULLET

Well, we only made one chart for this low-level as the RIO usually does all the nav work in the F-14. But my, RIO, ah, Morty, well, he, uh, dropped the chart and it fell way under his ejection seat, and we can't get it out without removing the seat.

As Bullet is saying this Morty looks at Bullet with another look of disgust and anger.

BULLET

So, we were wondering if you, or the squadron, had a VR-1266 chart we could use today?

GIZMO

Well, I don't know about the squadron as I am still new here, but I made one for my low altitude training flights.

Bullet sits silently looking at Gizmo. There is an extended moment where no one speaks.

GIZMO

I, uh, guess I could loan you my 1266 chart if you, uh, need one.

BULLET

That would be great. And we will make sure and get it back to you.

There is another long pause as Gizmo eyes Bullet warily. Bullet sits silently staring at Gizmo.

GIZMO

Yeah, OK, I guess I could loan you my chart. Do you want me to go get it?

BULLET

Yeah, that would be great. Thanks.

GIZMO

Yes, sir, well, let me get it. I'll, ahh, be right back.

Before he stands up Gizmo sits for a moment eye-balling Bullet, but eventually gets up and disappears from the Ready Room.



MORTY (angrily)  
 Nothing like throwing me under the bus  
 Bullet! And I will now confirm that this RIO  
*definitely* has a problem with you.

BULLET  
 Well, Morty, we needed some cover story to  
 convince him we didn't schedule a low-level  
 without bringing along a chart to fly it.

MORTY (angrily)  
 But that's exactly what you did, *Bullet*.

BULLET  
 I think you meant to say that that's what we  
 did, *Morty*.

Morty is momentarily speechless.

MORTY  
 It is amazing to me that you haven't had your  
 ass kicked many times by numerous RIOS.

Bullet looks at Morty with a pleased look on his face.

BULLET  
 Ya know, Morty, maybe I only have problems  
 with *some* RIOS.

Just then Gizmo returns carrying his 1266 chart and hands it to  
 Bullet.

GIZMO  
 OK, sir, here's my chart.

Gizmo then looks at Morty.

GIZMO  
 And you aren't going to *drop my chart under*  
*your seat, are you?*

Morty is struggling to hold back his anger.

MORTY  
 NO, I promise I'll take good care of your  
 chart.

Meanwhile Bullet has been looking through Gizmo's chart.

BULLET  
 Damn, Gizmo, this could be the best low-  
 level chart I have ever seen. This thang is  
 a work of art. Look at this thang Morty.

Bullet hands the chart to Morty. Morty quickly scans through a  
 couple of pages.

MORTY  
 Damn, this is a nice chart.



Gizmo is obviously proud of his work.

GIZMO  
Yeah, I spent a lot of time making it. I  
just finished it last weekend.

Morty hands the chart back to Bullet.

BULLET  
So, Morty, is that going to work for you?

MORTY  
Yeah, can't get much better than that.

Bullet takes the chart and is holding it in front of him.

BULLET  
Gizmo, this is great, and thanks for letting  
us use this.

GIZMO  
Oh, that's OK, sir. We pilots have to stick  
together ya know, especially in cases like  
this.

Gizmo is looking at Morty as he makes this statement. Bullet  
laughs, Morty does not.

BULLET  
Well, I can't argue with you in this case  
since...

As he says this, he looks at Morty who is giving him  
the evil eye. Bullet decides not to finish the  
thought.

BULLET  
...ahh, well, whatever. So, do you have an  
address where we can mail this back to you?

Gizmo's look turns cold as he processes what Bullet has just  
said.

GIZMO  
Mail it back to me?

BULLET  
Well, yeah, we are coming off the route at  
the northwest corner to go into NAS Miramar.

As Bullet is speaking Gizmo reaches out and takes hold of the  
low-level chart so that Bullet is holding one end and Gizmo is  
holding the other end.

GIZMO  
So, you are not coming back to Yuma?

BULLET  
No, we are going into Miramar.



Gizmo now begins to pull the chart towards him, but Bullet refuses to let go.

GIZMO  
Well, I can't let you have my chart if you aren't coming back to Yuma.

A minor tug of war is beginning to develop between Bullet and Gizmo over the chart.

BULLET  
Oh, don't worry, I'll make sure you get it back. We will mail it to you first thang Monday.

Gizmo is now tugging the chart towards him more aggressively, but Bullet refuses to let go.

GIZMO  
Yeah, sir, I can't loan you my chart if you are going to mail it back to me.

At this point Gizmo makes a forceful tug on the chart, and Bullet lets go as he realizes Gizmo is not going to let the chart go, and that he is standing in a room full of Marines.

GIZMO  
Sorry, sir, but I can't risk losing my chart before my low-level nav flights.

BULLET  
Yeah, I get it, and no worries.

Bullet pauses, thinking for a moment.

BULLET  
Do you have a copy machine?

GIZMO  
Well, ah, yes sir, there's one in Admin.

BULLET  
Would you mind if we made a copy of your chart?

GIZMO  
No, sir, that's OK, *so long as I get the original back.*

BULLET  
Yeah, that'll work. Can you show me where Admin is?

GIZMO  
Yes, sir, right this way.

BULLET  
Morty, I'll be right back.



Bullet and Gizmo leave the Ready Room.

INT. MAG-5 HARRIER SQUADRON READY ROOM - DAY

Morty is sitting alone at a table in the ready room as Bullet returns carrying several sheets of paper.

BULLET

OK, Morty, here's your low-level chart.

Morty surveys the stack of papers Bullet just handed him.

MORTY

Bullet, these are black & white copies of the chart.

BULLET (sheepishly)

Yeah, ah, they didn't have a color copier, so this is the best I could do.

MORTY

Bullet, I can't use these charts. Hell, I can barely read them sitting here in this Ready Room.

BULLET

Morty, you said that if I got you a low-level chart that you would fly 1266 with me. So, there is your chart, now let's go fly a low-level.

MORTY

Bullet, it doesn't count as a low-level chart *IF I CAN'T READ IT*. The contour lines, the route line, and all the obstacle symbols are the same color, BLACK. This is essentially worthless.

BULLET

Listen, I got you your chart, now let's get this thang on the hump, we gots us some flying to do!!

As he says this Bullet turns and walks away. Morty is left standing alone.

MORTY

Bizzarro Bullet has gone to a whole new level.

We hear Bullet shouting.

BULLET

Come on Morty, let's fly a low-level.

Morty reluctantly walks to join Bullet as the scene fades out.

INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

Bullet and Morty are in FE101 as it is taxing out for takeoff.



Bullet's flight gear is all wrong again, Morty's flight gear is all correct. Morty has the white papers in front of him and is trying to enter position data into the navigation system as they near the takeoff end of the runway.

BULLET

Morty, ready for the takeoff checklist?

MORTY

No, I haven't gotten all the points loaded in the system yet, so give me a second. These so-called charts are hard to read you know.

BULLET

Well, we have a few minutes before our entry time, so we can hold short until you are ready.

Morty continues to key in navigation data as they hold short. Bullet looks towards the departure end of the runway.

BULLET

Ya know Morty, when I was 18 years old, I drove through Yuma on my way to my freshman year at Arizona State. We stopped at a gas station when two F-4s came blasting over in full afterburner. It was the coolest thang this farm boy had ever seen. I still have a hard time believing that I am actually flying fighters these days.

MORTY

Yeah, well, we had better not screw up this low-level or you won't be flying them much longer.

BULLET

Ah, we got this Morty. Remember, we are on a mission from God.

Morty continues to look through the low-level charts and enter data into the nav system.

BULLET

We launched out of here many times when I was in TOPGUN, and I always hoped that on at least one of those takeoffs that I returned the favor to some high school kid as I went blasting over his head in full blower.

After a short pause, he continues.

BULLET

That's about the only way I could ever repay those Phantom drivers for what they did for me that day, motivating me to fly fighters, and also damaging my hearing.

MORTY (very sarcastically)

You know Bullet, I always like hearing



stories of your childhood, especially right before I am about to fly a damn low-level.

BULLET

Jeez, no need to be so harsh about it Morty. I just thought I would fill the time with an interesting story while you are ever so slowly entering those coordinates. Speaking of which, are you done yet, we need to go if we are going to make our entry time.

MORTY

Well, I have as many points entered as I can. I'll have to enter the later points as we fly, that is if I can read *these damn charts* you got me.

BULLET

Alright, check your seat is armed, and let's go, we gots...

As he says this, he is interrupted by Morty who finishes his sentence for him.

MORTY

...us some flying to do.

BULLET

That's the spirit Morty. Total commitment!

MORTY

You can't fight in here; this is the War Room!

Morty calls Yuma tower.

MORTY(OVER THE RADIO)

Yuma Tower, Fast Eagle 101, takeoff, a single, for VR-1266.

YUMA TOWER (OVER THE RADIO)

Fast Eagle 101, Yuma Tower, winds are 360 at 5 knots, Runway 03 right, cleared for takeoff, frequency change approved. After takeoff turn left direct the entry point for 1266.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)

Change to departure is approved, Fast Eagle 101 is cleared for takeoff and direct to the entry point.

Bullet fastens his mask as he taxis onto the runway. When lined up he brings the aircraft to a stop, then advances the throttles to military thrust, then to full afterburner.

BULLET

I'm all set up here, ready to go?



MORTY  
Everything looks good back here, let's go.

BULLET  
Brakes released.

FE101's nozzles again open as it goes to full afterburner, accelerates down the runway, and lifts off. FE101 flies low over the town of Yuma off the north end of the runway.

BULLET  
Hey Morty, there's that gas station I was telling you about.

Morty's shakes his head and rolls his eyes.

INT. F-14 FLYING A LOW LEVEL OVER SOCAL DESERT - DAY

FE101 is flying at low altitude and high speed. Morty is in the backseat attempting to read the black and white "charts" that Bullet provided him.

BULLET  
Morty, didn't I tell you this was a great low-level. We never get to do ridge crossings on any of the East Coast low levels.

As Bullet says this, they stay low as they follow the slope of a mountain up to the peak of the ridge. As they cross the ridge, they roll inverted and aggressively pull the aircraft down so that they remain at about 100 feet above the ground as they descend down the opposite side. While inverted Morty is looking out of the top of the canopy at the ridge line.

MORTY  
Yeah, I gotta say, this is a cool low-level, I just wish I could read *these damn charts* well enough to know that we are on the route.

BULLET  
No worries Morty, we are right on track. That little mountain complex is right on the route. And I can already see our next turn point.

MORTY  
What are you looking at to see all that?

BULLET  
I told you, I flew this low-level once in the training command with my bud Hambone.

MORTY  
And you remember all these details?

BULLET  
Pretty much, it seems like it was just yesterday that we came zorching through



here.

MORTY

You who cant' remember anybody's name, but you can remember a low-level you flew over two years ago.

BULLET

Some thangs I remember better than other thangs I guess.

MORTY

You are a piece of work, Bullet!

BULLET

Why, thank you, Morty.

They are flying at between 100 and 200 feet and at 480 knots. Morty's altimeter is set to alert him when below 100 feet, and it is alerting more frequently as the low-level progresses. Morty continues to look at the black and white low-level charts.

MORTY

OK, I think our next turn point is coming up in less than a mile where we turn to the west.

BULLET

Naw, it's still up ahead of us at the base of those small mountains.

A short time later.

BULLET

Yeah, here's our turn point.

Bullet banks FE101 up to nearly 90 degrees and turns from their northerly heading to an almost due west heading. As they roll out Morty compares what he sees outside the cockpit to his charts.

MORTY

I show we are north of the route.

BULLET

I think we are looking good. We should pick up the Salton Sea soon, then cross it just south of its northern shore and enter some cool mountains on the west side of the lake.

Morty shakes his head while closing his eyes and mumbles obscenities to himself. He then again attempts to match the terrain to the black and white charts.

BULLET

Yeah, there's the Salton Sea. We are right on course, Morty.

Morty throws all the "charts" into the air and they scatter out of sight into the back seat. He then places his arms on the air



conditioning ducting that runs on both sides of the canopy and looks around to enjoy the scenery.

The flight continues across the Salton Sea and then enters the mountains on the west shore. They again stay low following the slope of the mountains up to the peak of the ridge, then roll inverted to perform another ridge crossing, this time maneuvering even more aggressively than before.

The view switches to looking out the front of the aircraft from the pilot's seat as we see the aircraft flying low down the back side of the mountain. It is December, so the sun is low in the southwest. There is a tall mountain off in the distance which is casting a shadow into the valley Bullet and Morty are now entering. Bullet is shielding his eyes from the sun when he suddenly begins to see a smaller mountain appearing out of the shadows as the radar altimeter low-altitude alert is heard. Bullet suddenly realizes he is descending into the rising slope of the shadowed mountain and quickly pulls up. As Morty feels the sudden G forces he looks around Bullet's helmet and sees the small mountain in the shadows as Bullet rolls inverted to perform another ridge crossing.

MORTY

Damn, that smaller mountain was hard to see in the shadows of that larger mountain.

BULLET (sounding a bit rattled)

Yeah, it was.

Morty eyes Bullet via the mirror in the front seat.

MORTY

You kind of jerked the nose up as we approached that shadowed mountain.

There is no response from Bullet in the front seat.

MORTY

You didn't lose sight of that smaller mountain in the shadows, did you?

BULLET

Morty, I'm trying to fly a low-level up here, ya know. We need to be worrying about what's ahead of us not what's behind us.

MORTY (shouting)

*You did, you did lose sight of that shadowed ridge, didn't you?*

BULLET

Not as far as you know, and you can't prove a thang.

MORTY

Well, don't do that again.

BULLET (sarcastically)

*Trust me, Morty, I'll try not to.*



The flight continues through the mountains.

MORTY

The nav system says we are about at the northwest turn point. You want me to start working on our IFR clearance to Miramar?

BULLET

Yeah, I think we've had about as much fun as should be allowed at this point.

With that Bullet pulls the nose of FE101 up and starts climbing and turning towards the southwest.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)

SOCAL approach, Fast Eagle 101 exiting VR-1266 at point FOXTROT, climbing VFR through 5000 feet, would like to pick up our IFR clearance to NAS Miramar.

Scene fades out as SOCAL Approach radar identifies FE101 and reads them their clearance.

EXT. NAS MIRAMAR FLIGHT LINE - DAY

Bullet and Morty are out of the jet and their flight gear and are walking towards the Transient Line building.

MORTY

So, how close did we come to that small mountain near the Salton Sea?

BULLET

Well, a hell of a lot closer than we wanted that's for sure. I've seen those safety videos about shadowing, but I've never seen it in real life, until today. But you gotta admit, apart from almost hitting the ground that was an awesome low-level.

MORTY

Yes, apart from almost hitting the ground, it was awesome. But that's a pretty big qualifier, don't you think?

BULLET

Yeah, I guess so. Damn good thang we are on a mission from God.

MORTY

Yeah, damn good thing.

BULLET

OK, what's next on the plan?

MORTY

Well, so long as it doesn't take too long to get gas and oil we'll have enough time to shoot an approach into Edwards, then get



over to Pt. Mugu for your interview.

BULLET

Perfect. There's no stopping us now. You know, this is turning out to be a truly epic journey don't ya think?

MORTY

Yes, it is. But I still can't believe you gave me those worthless charts.

BULLET

Hey, they worked, didn't they?

MORTY

No, they didn't. And to avoid me kicking your ass over them let's agree not to talk about charts again until we are back at Oceana.

BULLET

That's a deal, because I don't want you dragging me down with your negative waves, Moriarity.

MORTY

Shut up Bullet.

Bullet and Morty enter the Transient Line building.

EXT. VX-4 PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Bullet and Morty enter the parking lot with tires squealing. They drive up to and come to a screeching stop in a blue Navy staff car. The parking lot is empty except for two cars. The sign on the entrance says, "VX-4 Home of the Evaluators." Bullet and Morty get out of the car still arguing about something.

BULLET

See, there are no cars here. I think we are officially late!!

MORTY

What time were you supposed to be here?

BULLET

Shu just said Friday afternoon, but 1800 is probably officially late.

MORTY

Well, don't blame me, you were the one who had to fly a low-level.

Bullet stops at the entrance door and turns to Morty.

BULLET

So, what the hell happened back there? All I knew was that you stopped talking to ATC, then I saw a flashlight in my mirrors.



MORTY  
I'd rather not talk about it.

BULLET  
Well, I'd rather not talk about being late either, but I suspect I'll be doing that shortly.

MORTY  
Don't even try to blame this on me. I tried to stop you from flying that low-level, but you went all BIZZARRO BULLET on me.

BULLET  
So, what happened, we ended up getting vectored all over SOCAL after you stopped talking to approach.

Morty looks down at the ground.

MORTY (quietly)  
I, ah, dropped the approach chart.

Bullet looks at Morty with a look of astonishment.

BULLET  
You got to be *shitting me*, you dropped the approach chart?

MORTY (shouting)  
Yes, Bullet, I dropped the damn approach chart.

Bullet and Morty stand looking at each other silently for several seconds.

BULLET  
Well, I gotta say, the irony of this hasn't escaped me, ya know. Who was it who was so offended when I told Gizmo that you dropped the low-level chart?

MORTY (angrily)  
Shut up, Bullet.

BULLET  
I think you said, "thanks for throwing me under the bus, *Bullet*," when in reality I was just being Nostradamus.

MORTY (angrily)  
Shut the hell up, Bullet.

BULLET  
Good thang I told the controller that we needed vectors for the approach or we'd still be out there wondering around the Edwards range complex.



MORTY (shouting)  
It's your damn fault, you know.

BULLET  
Listen, I can be blamed for a lot of thangs,  
but just how am I to be blamed for you  
*dropping the damn approach chart?*

MORTY  
Because when I pulled the chart out I  
remembered you telling Gizmo that I dropped  
the low-level chart, and as I moved my leg  
up to key the intercom to tell you that I  
was still pissed off about that, the ahh,  
chart, ahh, slipped off my leg and under the  
seat.

Bullet and Morty stand looking at each other silently again for  
several seconds.

BULLET  
Ya gotta admit, the irony of this is thicker  
than the darkness behind the boat on a  
moonless night.

MORTY  
Yes Bullet, the irony is pretty thick for  
sure. Now I would appreciate it if we never  
spoke of this again.

There is another pause as Bullet and Morty stare at each other.

BULLET  
Well, the list of thangs we are not allowed  
to speak of is starting to get kinda long  
don't ya think?

MORTY  
Shut up Bullet.

BULLET  
Alright Morty, if it will make you feel  
better, I will agree to never speak of the  
"approach chart incident" again.

MORTY  
Thanks, Bullet.

With this Bullet and Morty enter the VX-4 hangar and begin  
walking up a flight of stairs.

BULLET  
At least until I see Horse. I may not be  
able to keep this to myself when I see him.

MORTY  
God, you are such an ass!!

INT. VX-4 SQUADRON SPACES - NIGHT



Bullet and Morty have now reached the top of the stairs and exit the stairwell. They have entered a long passageway with glass windows looking out over the hangar on one side and a row of doors on the other.

BULLET  
I wonder where the ready room is.

A voice from a room down the hall is heard. It is the VX-4 SDO, call sign JR. He is another Naval Aviator and in a flight suit.

JR  
Can I help you guys?

Bullet and Morty move towards the voice and enter the room in which the VX-4 SDO is sitting.

BULLET  
Hey, I'm Bullet, this is Morty. I'm here to meet with your XO, CDR Niedlinger.

JR  
Hey, I'm JR. Are you the guy who had an interview with him and the Chief Operational Test Director?

BULLET  
Yeah, that's me. I, ah, hope I'm not too late.

JR  
Well, afraid you are. They hung around for a while waiting for you, but they left a few minutes ago.

BULLET  
Shit.

JR  
Yeah, sorry about that, we were told you guys were on your way, but I guess you got held up?

BULLET  
Yeah, you could say that. Are you guys flying tomorrow by chance?

JR  
No, we are shut down for the weekend. I'm just finishing up the Ops report or I'd be gone, too. You guys need a ride anywhere?

BULLET  
Naw, thanks for asking, but we got a car from Base Ops.

JR  
Sounds good. Nice meeting you, and good luck getting into the squadron, this is an



awesome assignment.

BULLET (sounding dejected)  
Yeah, I've heard nothing but good things about this place, so I hope it works out. By the way, can you give me your XO's phone number. Maybe I can call him tomorrow?

JR  
Well, normally I'm not supposed to give out phone numbers, but this seems like a good time to ignore the rules.

JR writes the number on a piece of paper and hands it to Bullet.

JR  
You might want to call him in the morning as he just left and won't be home for about 45 minutes if traffic is normal. And don't tell him where you got that number.

BULLET  
If asked I'll say I looked it up in the phone book. Thanks for the gouge, and I hope to maybe see ya again in a few months.

JR  
Yeah, good luck.

Bullet and Morty re-enter the passageway and make their way to the stairs without saying a word.

EXT. VX-4 PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Bullet and Morty exit the hangar and quietly move towards their blue staff car. Morty finally breaks the silence.

MORTY  
Shit, Bullet, this isn't good. The only reason Shu gave us the jet was to do this interview.

Bullet is standing beside the driver's side door and Morty the front passenger door. They face each other from opposite sides of the car silently for a few seconds. Bullet appears to be processing what has just happened.

BULLET  
Yeah, this definitely isn't good.

Bullet and Morty resume their silence as Bullet seems to be looking over or through Morty.

MORTY  
Well, what do you wanna do now?

Bullet, who has appeared to be almost in another world since he learned that he missed his interview, suddenly returns to the present and looks directly at Morty.



BULLET

Well, there is only one thing to do, let's go to the Club.

Morty seems surprised by Bullet's statement.

MORTY

Really, you want to go to the Club? Don't ya think we should give Shu a call and let him know what happened?

Bullet looks at his watch.

BULLET

Well, if I have my time zones correct, I think it's about 2125 back in Oceana.

Morty also looks at his watch now.

MORTY

Yeah, that's what I show also. I'm surprised that a Tomcat *pilot* is capable of doing time zone conversions.

Bullet is looking over, or through Morty again. Then again, his eyes snap back to Morty's face.

BULLET

Yeah, let's go to the Club. And, I'll wear Parson's jacket and be a Canadian exchange pilot with the US Navy.

Morty is taken aback by this idea.

MORTY

What?

Bullet is now opening the driver's side door and is eager to get into the car.

BULLET

Yeah, this'll be good. I'll be a Canadian exchange pilot with the Navy. I already have the jacket, so I just gotta do my best Bob & Doug McKenzie accent and I'm there.

MORTY

Yeah, I don't know about this idea Bullet. What do you know about Canada?

Bullet pauses for a moment before he enters the car as he considers Morty's question.

BULLET

Well, they got moose up there, and lots of snow. They, ah, also like beer, and, ahhhh, hockey right? Yeah, of course they like hockey. What else is there to know?



With this, Bullet gets in the car and starts the engine. Morty is standing with a look of disbelief on his face for a moment.

MORTY  
I didn't know there were nine levels of  
Bizarro Bullet world!

BULLET  
Come on Morty, we need to figure out how we  
are going to get out of this mess, and the  
best place to do that is at the Club. So  
come on, let's go to Canada!!!

Morty then opens the door and gets into the car. The car tires squeal as it leaves the VX-4 parking lot.

EXT. OUTSIDE PT. MUGU OFFICER'S CLUB - NIGHT

Bullet is wearing the Canadian flight jacket and is standing outside the entrance to the Mugu O'Club while occasionally looking at his watch. Morty arrives in very good spirits, and as he walks up he slugs Bullet in the arm.

MORTY (shouting)  
Bullet, how the hell are you doing brother?

Bullet is knocked off balance by the slug. As he regains his balance, he looks at his watch.

BULLET  
Good, Morty, now that you are here. What  
took you so long. Weren't we supposed to  
just drop our kit and come straight over  
here?

MORTY  
Well, ahh, I, had to take care of a few  
items, but I got here as fast as I could.

BULLET  
You called, ahh, what's her name again, your  
Air Force *girlfriend*?

MORTY  
For God's sake Bullet, her name is Amy.

BULLET  
Yeah, you called Amy, didn't you?

MORTY  
Well, yes, I had to let her know that  
everything was looking good for tomorrow  
night and to see what time we needed to be  
there. Didn't you call Cindy?

Bullet gives a slight eyeroll on hearing this.

BULLET  
You and your *Air Force girlfriend*. And no,  
Cindy is on a trip this weekend, so no



chance calling her. Besides, probably best that I figure out a solution to the mess you created for us before I give her a call.

MORTY (shouting)  
That *I* created?

BULLET  
Yes, that you created.

Morty is eyeballing Bullet with an angry glare when Bullet continues...

BULLET  
But we agreed never to bring up the approach chart incident again, and I am a man of my word. And besides, with the time I had waiting for you I came up with a plan for tomorrow. I will call XO Neidlinger at 0830, and then use the staff car to drive over to his place. With any luck I can do the interview at his house. What time did, ahhh, your *Air Force pilot girlfriend* want us up there?

MORTY  
She said a 1600 arrival would be perfect.

BULLET  
Yeah, perfect, we'll plan on a 1430 takeoff. This should work.

MORTY  
That's assuming the XO is OK with you coming over to his house.

BULLET  
Oh, I'll make that happen somehow. And if he doesn't, I should at least be able to talk to him over the phone.

MORTY  
Well, Bullet, that just might work.

BULLET  
Of course it will work, we are on a mission from God. But right now we have to introduce Pt. Mugu to the US Navy's first Canadian Tomcat exchange pilot.

MORTY  
Yeah, Bullet, I'm still not too sure about this.

BULLET  
Na, this will be great. I've always wanted to be Canadian, so this is my chance. Everybody likes Canadians!

With this Bullet slaps Morty on the back.



BULLET

So, you ready?

MORTY

Not really, and I just want to say again,  
and for the record, that I still think this  
is a bad idea.

BULLET

Again, with the negative waves Morty. I have  
a lot of work to do if I am going succeed at  
making you a better person, ya know.

Morty stares at Bullet with a deadpan look.

BULLET

And our next step in that process will be  
for you to stop worrying and follow my lead.

With this, Bullet and Morty disappear into the Club.

INT. PT. MUGU OFFICER'S CLUB - NIGHT

The Mugu Club is a typical looking Officer club bar. In the back  
of the room is a DJ area, and a small dance floor. There is  
music playing, but no one is dancing. In short, the bar is dead.  
Bullet and Morty enter and take seats at the bar.

BARTENDER 2

Evening gentlemen, welcome to the Pt. Mugu  
O'Club. What can I get ya?

BULLET (Canadian accent)

How's it going mate, do you have Molson, eh?

BARTENDER 2

No, sorry, no Molson.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Oh, that's OK, how about some Labatts, eh?

BARTENDER 2

Ahh, no Labatts, either.

MORTY

We'll take two of whatever you have on  
draft.

BARTENDER 2

Two Buds coming right up.

The bartender goes to the far end of the bar to pour two beers.

MORTY

Bullet, your Canadian accent sucks in case  
you didn't know that.

BULLET

What do you mean, didn't you hear me say,



"aboot?"

MORTY

Yes, that was good, but the rest sucks. And oh, by the way, I don't think Canadians call each other "mate." I think that's a British and Aussie thing.

BULLET

Wait, I thought the Canadians were British?

MORTY

God Bullet, you don't know anything about Canada do you. They are still part of the Commonwealth, but have been fully independent since the early 30's.

BULLET

The nineteen thirties?

MORTY

Yeah, I'm pretty sure that's right.

Geez, what took them so long. If they had fought with us in '76 they woulda had it a lot sooner, wouldn't they?

MORTY

Well, you're right there. Instead, they burned down the White House in 1812 fighting *with* the British.

BULLET

Well, we'll forgive them for that, at least for tonight, especially since Parsons covered for us last night.

Morty surveils the room as Bullet does the same.

MORTY

Well, Friday night at the Mugu Club is pretty dead, isn't it?

BULLET

Yes, it is. And there are only two dudes in flight suits, and they don't look like they would be up to rolling the dice with us.

MORTY

Yeah, they look to be talking shop. And they both look to be Commanders, so we had best give them some space, what with you being Canadian and all.

BULLET

That's probably a good idea, although...

Bullet re-surveils the room...



BULLET

...well, too bad they don't have a pool table in here or we coulda taught them how to play CRUD.

MORTY

Well, thank God there's no pool table then, CRUD turned out to be a bad experience for us.

BULLET

Yeah, we wouldn't want Tiny to kill a senior officer, would we? Speaking of that, I wonder how Lightbody's doing today.

MORTY

Hey, don't look now but those two aviators are headed our way. I think they are Tomcat guys.

The two Naval Aviators who were sitting in the back of the bar are approaching Bullet and Morty. The younger, call sign TANK, has a more severe military style haircut. The older, call sign NEEDLES, has a mustache.

TANK

Hey guys, where are you all in from?

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Hello, sirs, we are here from Oceana on a cross country, eh.

NEEDLES

Howdy, I'm Needles, and this is Tank.

MORTY

Hello, sirs, nice to meet you, I'm Morty and this is Bullet.

As they all shake hands.

TANK

Nice to meet you guys. We couldn't help but notice you have a Canadian flight jacket on, and we were wondering what that is all about.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Well, that's all about me being Canadian, eh!

NEEDLES

That's what we were wondering, are you training in the US?

BULLET (Canadian accent)

No, I'm the Canadian exchange pilot to the US Navy, eh.



NEEDLES

Really, and you are in a Tomcat squadron?

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Sure am, eh.

NEEDLES

Wow, I didn't know we had a Canadian exchange program for the Tomcat community.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

It's, ahh, still pretty new, eh.

TANK

Well, what squadron you in?

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Morty, make sure I say this correctly, "Fighting Forty-One?"

Morty momentarily shakes his head and gives a quick eyeroll.

MORTY

Bullet, that's how they used to say it back in the Second World War, today we say Fighter Squadron 41.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Oh, yeah, sorry mate.

Bullet then looks at Tank and Needles.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Pardon, Fighting Squadron 41. What unit you blokes in?

NEEDLES

We are in the Operational Test squadron here at Pt. Mugu, VX-4. I'm the Executive Officer, and Tank is the Chief Operational Test Director.

Bullet nods his head and is momentarily unable to speak, as Morty looks down at the ground and slowly shakes his head. Bullet regains his composure after a moment.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Really, I've heard that's a really good squadron.

TANK

You have to be number one in your fleet squadron before we will even consider you for VX-4.

NEEDLES

Hey, you guys mind if we join you, I want to hear what it's like as the Canadian exchange pilot in a Tomcat squadron?



BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Well, it's OK with me if it's OK with Morty,  
eh?

MORTY  
Yes, sirs, come on over.

NEEDLES  
OK, we'll get our drinks and gear and be  
right back.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
OK, eh!!

Needles and Tank walk across the room to collect their kit.

MORTY  
Bullet, do you know *who those guys are?*  
Bullet finishes talking a long drink from his beer and responds  
without taking his eyes off his glass.

BULLET  
Well, there is a distinct possibility that  
they are the guys I was supposed to  
interview with.

MORTY  
*Yeah, no shit!!!* They must have come over  
here for a beer before they went home. Shit  
Bullet, we need to get the hell out of here  
before they figure out who we are.

Bullet is still staring straight ahead at his glass.

BULLET  
For once, Morty I'm not going to argue with  
you. But we have to conduct an orderly  
retreat, or they will suspect something is  
up. So, let's finish our beers and then find  
some reason to bug out.

MORTY  
Well, here they come, so drink fast and let's  
go.

As Morty finishes speaking Needles and Tank return. Tank takes  
the seat beside Bullet and Needles remains standing between  
Bullet and Morty.

TANK  
So, Bullet, how long have you been flying  
the Tomcat?

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Well, I've been out of the "RAG," as you  
Yanks call it, for about six months.

NEEDLES  
So, what do you think of the venerable



Tomcat?

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Well, it is a beast. We got nothing like it  
back in Canada that's for sure.

TANK  
Well, you guys do have the Hornet up there,  
did you fly it?

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Of course, eh. I flew it before this  
exchange tour.

NEEDLES  
So, what did you think of the Tomcat  
compared to the Hornet? Which one do you  
prefer?

Bullet pauses for a moment, obviously thinking of a valid  
response.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Fighter jets are like Canadian women; the  
one you are with at the moment is the one  
you like best.

Needles and Tank both laugh, Morty just stares at his beer while  
shaking his head in disgust.

TANK  
So, how many hours do you have in the  
Hornet?

Bullet pauses briefly then takes a long drink from his beer.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Oh, I'm not sure, I think about 300 hours.

Tank is beginning to eyeball Bullet, and his questions are  
slowly beginning to take on the tone of an interrogation.

TANK  
That doesn't seem like a lot of hours for a  
pilot selected for an exchange tour.

Bullet says nothing, then turns to Needles.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
So, how many hours do you have in the  
Tomcat?

Needles' tone is more friendly, and not accusatory.

NEEDLES  
Oh, just about 2,000 hours.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Wow, that's a lot of hours.



Bullet now turns back to Tank.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
How many do you have?

TANK  
I'm a Hornet driver and hadn't flown the Tomcat until I got here, so only about 200 hours.

Tank now looks increasingly skeptically at Bullet, and his tone is becoming less friendly.

TANK  
So, what part of Canada are you from?

Bullet is starting to sense Tank's skepticism and begins trying to evade any direct questions.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
My dad was in the Canadian military, so we, ahh, moved around a lot, eh.

TANK  
Really, which branch?

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Air Force. He was enlisted.

TANK  
Really, what was his rank?

Bullet pauses for a moment as he realizes he knows nothing of the enlisted rank structure of the Canadian Air Force.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
He doesn't talk too much about it, but I think he retired a Sergeant.

Then, Bullet turns to Needles.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
What part of America are you from?

NEEDLES  
Oh, I grew up in the Southern California area, so this is home for me.

Tank interjects in the conversation with a more accusatory tone.

TANK  
So, what base were you stationed at in Canada before your exchange tour?

Bullet remembers that Parsons said they were out of Moose Jaw.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Moose Jaw.



Tank notices a "Moose Jaw" patch on Bullet's jacket.

TANK

*What province is Moose Jaw in?*

Bullet's first thought is, "Canada has provinces? What's a province?" He is looking at Tank who is waiting for a response.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Quebec?

TANK (shouting)

**Wrong.** Moose Jaw is in Saskatchewan province. You're not Canadian. What the hell are you trying to pull here? You are out of uniform in that Canadian jacket. Maybe I should call the Shore Patrol on you.

Bullet glances over at Morty hoping for some mutual support, but Morty is just staring down at his beer. Bullet decides to go on the offensive.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Hey Morty, your American friends are starting to piss me off, would you mind getting them to leave me alone, eh?

Morty, now drawn into the conversation, looks at Needles.

MORTY

Sir, Bullet's just trying to finish his beer, any chance you could give us a few minutes here?

Needles is not sure what triggered Tank and unsure whether Bullet is Canadian or not.

NEEDLES

Yeah, sure. Tank let's go back to our table.

TANK

XO, I'm telling you, this guy IS *not* Canadian.

Bullet is looking straight down at his beer and says nothing.

NEEDLES

Come on Tank, let's, ahh, just go back to our table.

Tank is eyeballing Bullet as Needles slaps Tank on the shoulder. Tank reluctantly gets out of his chair and joins Needles as they return to their table.

Morty looks incredulously at Bullet as they move away.

MORTY

*Well, nice job Bullet, it only took you a few minutes to get those guys pissed off at you. I thought for sure they were going to*



call the SPs on you, and probably me, too.

BULLET

Yeah, I wasn't sure if Quebec was a province or not, but I couldn't think of any other place in Canada.

MORTY

Oh, Quebec's a province, but Moosejaw isn't in Quebec apparently.

BULLET

Really, so I actually named a province. What's the odds of that? I had no idea what a province is, or that Canada had provinces.

Bullet takes a drink of beer.

BULLET

What the hell is a province anyway?

MORTY

They are like states.

BULLET

You sure do know a lot about Canada don't you.

MORTY

Well, yes, but the real issue is that if they call the Jimmy Legs you will be busted for being out of uniform, so we need to get the hell out of here, **now**!

BULLET

Yeah, you are probably right, but again, we can't just bug out or they'll think I'm not Canadian.

Morty looks at Bullet with a deadpan look.

MORTY

Bullet, you aren't Canadian!!

BULLET

Well, that's what you say. But, if I am not Canadian, *why am I wearing a Canadian flight jacket?*

Morty closes his eyes and shakes his head with a look of frustration.

BULLET

OK, well, let's just say, *for the sake of argument*, that I'm not Canadian. But right now they don't know that, or at least Needles isn't sure. So, let's finish our beers, then conduct an orderly withdrawal rather than a panicked retreat.



MORTY

OK, but don't take too long, because I'm sure that right now Tank is trying to convince Needles that you aren't Canadian.

Morty sits down beside Bullet and they both drink the remainder of their beers in silence.

BULLET

I still can't believe that I actually named a Canadian province. Hell, maybe *I am Canadian?*

MORTY

No Bullet, you are not Canadian. I don't know what you are, but the one thing you aren't is Canadian. No, I take that back, I do know what you are...uh, oh no!!

As he says this, he sees Needles approaching them alone. He stands beside Bullet.

NEEDLES

OK, I have to ask, are you really Canadian?

Bullet turns to look at Needles as Morty looks away.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

I sure am Canadian, eh.

NEEDLES

Well, if you are Canadian then why didn't you know what province Moose Jaw was in?

Bullet slams his glass on the bar, stands up and faces Needles.

BULLET

(Canadian accent, angerly and shouting)  
*I know what the hell province Moose Jaw is in. How you would feel if you came to Canada and I made you prove to me you were an American!!!*

Needles is taken aback by Bullet's response.

NEEDLES

Hey, I'm sorry, I never thought of it like that, I guess it would kinda piss me off too.

Bullet sits back down and stares at his beer again.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Well, no worries mate, we Canadians are a friendly lot, so long as you don't push us too far.

NEEDLES

Yeah, ahh, no hard feelings.



With this, Needles turns and walks back to his table. Morty looks at Bullet incredulously again.

MORTY

I can't believe it; we might just get out of this mess. But now is our chance to get the hell out of here, so finish your beer and, oh shit!!

As Morty looks at Bullet he sees both Needles and Tank approaching again. He looks straight forward and begins staring at his beer glass again.

NEEDLES

Hey Bullet, Tank wanted to say he was sorry for making you prove you were Canadian.

Tank has a less confrontational look and tone than before, but still is not as friendly as Needles.

TANK

Ya, I didn't think what it would be like to have to prove you were Canadian, so I'd like to buy you and Morty a beer to make it up to you, if that's OK.

Bullet looks at Morty who is hoping Bullet will refuse the offer.

BULLET (Canadian accent)

No hard feelings, mate, and yeah, if you would like to buy us a beer to make it all better, then I'm all about that.

Morty closes his eyes and resumes looking down at his now empty beer glass.

TANK

Sounds good. What are you drinking?

BULLET (Canadian accent)

Well, Labatts is my preferred poison, but since they don't have that I'll have whatever you're drinking, eh.

TANK

Sounds good. Morty, what are you drinking?

MORTY

I'll have whatever everybody else is having.

TANK

Bartender, 4 Budweisers please.

The bartender pours out 4 beers from the tap and places them in front of the 4 pilots. When they arrive, Bullet stands up and raises his beer.



BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Thanks, mate, and here's to American beer,  
it's like making love in a canoe.

TANK  
American beer is like making love in a  
canoe? How's that?

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
They're both fucking close to water!!

Needles and Tank burst into laughter; Morty looks down while slowly shaking his head. The scene fades out as they begin talking about flying the Tomcat and landing aboard aircraft carriers.

INT. PT. MUGU OFFICER'S CLUB - NIGHT

Our four fighter pilots are still sitting at the bar. There are several empty glasses in front of them, and their speech is somewhat less precise. Bullet is still using his Canadian accent, but it is worse than it was earlier. The time is about 1AM.

NEEDLES  
Can you guys stick around for another beer?

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Morty, you want another beer, eh?

MORTY  
Sure, why not?

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Ya, we can do one more. But can I buy the  
last round?

TANK  
Hell, no. It's on us.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Many thanks, you guys are all right ya know.

As Needles orders another round, a look of remorse comes across Bullet's face. He looks at Morty who is eyeballing him, seeming to be somewhat afraid of what Bullet is going to say next. Bullet takes a long drink from his beer, and while looking at Morty, begins to speak.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Ah, hey, you guys mind if I make a  
confession about something, eh?

Morty closes his eyes and slowly shakes his head. Tank is eyeballing Bullet again.

NEEDLES  
Sure, so long as it's not too personal, I  
don't want to hear anything that would make  
me regret buying you all those beers.



Bullet is speaking in a sheepish tone of voice.

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Well, ah, sirs, you have been great, ya  
know, buying us these beers because, well,  
ya know, because you didn't believe I was  
Canadian, eh.

Tank's is now looking at Bullet with an evil eye.

TANK  
YYesss!

BULLET (Canadian accent)  
Well, I just want to say that, well, ya  
know, I'm, ahh, like, not really Canadian!!

Tank jumps out of this seat.

TANK (shouting)  
I knew it. I knew it. I knew you weren't  
fucking Canadian. Are you even in the  
military?

Morty is just staring at his beer while again shaking his head  
with a look of dread on his face. Bullet is now speaking without  
his Canadian accent for the first time since meeting Needles and  
Tank.

BULLET  
Well, ya, sir, I'm in the military.

TANK  
What, are you fucking Air Force?

Bullet turns and looks at Tank with a startled look on his face.

BULLET  
Well, sir, I think *that's uncalled for!!* I  
may not be Canadian, but I sure as hell *am*  
*not Air Force.*

TANK  
You fucking asshole, YOU ARE IN THE NAVY,  
AREN'T YOU?

Bullet pauses for a moment while looking off into the distance,  
as he considers how to respond to this question. However, he  
catches sight of Morty who has turned and is looking at him with  
a stern look on his face. The grin which had momentarily flashed  
across Bullet's face now fades as he captures the message which  
Morty is sending.

BULLET  
Yes sir, I'm Navy.

TANK  
Oh, you asshole, I knew it all along.



NEEDLES

Are you serious, you're in the Navy?

Bullet looks at Needles somewhat sheepishly.

BULLET

Yes, sir. Sorry.

NEEDLES

So, the business about having to prove you were Canadian was all bullshit?

BULLET

Ahh, yes, sir. Sorry!!

TANK (shouting)

I told you he wasn't Canadian.

Needles ignores Tank.

NEEDLES

Then you didn't really know what province Moose Jaw was in?

BULLET

Well sir, to be honest, I didn't even know Canada had provinces. In fact, I'm not really sure what a province is!!

NEEDLES

Well, they're essentially like states.

Bullet looks impressed.

BULLET

Hey Morty, you were right, they ARE like states.

Needles now turns his attention to Morty.

NEEDLES

And you, you must have been in on this act all along also?

MORTY

Well, yes, sir.

BULLET

Sir, Morty is a victim here as much as you are. It was my idea to be the Canadian exchange pilot, and I shamed Morty into going along with me.

TANK

God, you are such an ass. I can't believe you would do such a thing.

Needles is again looking at Bullet.



NEEDLES

And the making love in a canoe joke, where did you get that?

BULLET

Well sir, I think I heard it in a Monty Python skit.

NEEDLES

And the joke about Canadian women?

BULLET

Yeah, I came up with that in the moment. It's a Bullet original, did you like it?

Tank's tone is now slightly less angry.

TANK

And I can't believe I actually started believing you were Canadian. It was that damn canoe joke that convinced me you know.

BULLET

Sorry, sir.

Needles now addresses Tank.

NEEDLES

So, Tank, are you admitting that you thought he was a Canadian, at least for a while?

TANK

Hell yes! I hate to admit it, but yeah, after the damn canoe joke he had me going.

NEEDLES

Well, I gotta say, that was some good bullshit. Maybe some of the best I've ever seen.

TANK

Yeah, reluctantly, I have to agree. In fact, it was so good that I'm still going to buy you a beer.

BULLET

You mean you're not going to call the Shore Patrol?

NEEDLES

Hell no. It would be too embarrassing to admit that we actually believed you were Canadian. In fact, I should buy you a beer for fooling me also.

Bullet looks relieved.

BULLET

Thanks, sirs. Ya know, you guys are AOK, for a couple of senior Os, that is!!



NEEDLES  
Don't push your luck Bullet. Remember, you  
are still out of uniform.

A grin again returns to Bullet's face.

BULLET  
Well, sir, technically...

Bullet is interrupted mid-sentence by Morty.

MORTY  
Technically, what Bullet means to say is  
that you are correct, sir, and he is sorry  
for you having to put up with his  
bullshit!!!

Bullet looks at Morty sternly.

BULLET  
Well, Morty, that *wasn't what I was going to*  
*say.* What I was...

Bullet is again interrupted by Morty.

MORTY (sternly)  
Yes, Bullet, *THAT WAS WHAT YOU WERE GOING TO*  
*SAY.*

Bullet, seeing the look on Morty's face, rolls his eyes while  
slowly nodding his head.

BULLET  
Yes sir, technically, you are correct, and  
I'm sorry for any misunderstanding you may  
have had.

NEEDLES & TANK (simultaneously, & shouting)  
Misunderstanding?!!

Just as they shout this, the round of beers that Needles ordered  
arrives.

BULLET  
Yes sir, misunderstanding. But I suggest we  
not dwell on our past errors, let's drink to  
good times in the O'Club.

Needles and Tank look at each other for a moment.

NEEDLES  
No, let's drink to the senior officers who  
aren't going to call the SPs, and maybe  
somebody's CO!!

Bullet looks at Needles and slowly nods in agreement.

BULLET  
Now that's something I can *really* drink to,



how about you, Morty?

MORTY

Yes sir, I'll drink to that.

They all take a drink.

TANK

But I should still kick your ass for fucking with us as you did.

MORTY

Well, get in line sir.

Bullet looks at Morty both shocked and hurt.

NEEDLES

Hell, all three of us should drink to kicking his ass!!

TANK

Yeah, I'll damn straight drink to that!

MORTY

I'll drink to that also.

Morty, Needles, and Tank all raise their beer glasses and look at Bullet to see what he will do or say.

BULLET (reluctantly)

Well, I guess I'll join you in this toast, although I am doing so under protest.

TANK

Canadians don't get to protest in a US Officers' Club.

BULLET

Well, I guess it's good that I'm *NOT* Canadian then, eh!!!

TANK

By the way, did you know that your Canadian accent sucks?

BULLET

Well, I have heard that, but it apparently is good enough to fool *some folks*.

NEEDLES

Yeah, again, don't press your luck Bullet, there is still time for me to call your CO.

Morty interjects to change the subject.

MORTY

Did you know both my parents were born in Canada?



BULLET

Wait, so you are *Canadian*?!?

MORTY

Yeah, that's why I know so much about Canada, and also being from Buffalo.

NEEDLES

So now you are trying to tell me that you're Canadian?

MORTY

Yes sir, like I said, my parents were both born in Canada.

BULLET

Well, I for one am not gullible enough to believe that story, are you guys?

NEEDLES

No, he doesn't even a *half-assed* Canadian accent.

TANK

And he doesn't even have a Canadian flight jacket.

MORTY

No, I'm serious, *my parents were both Canadians*.

BULLET

Yeah, I'm not buying it either Morty.

Scene fades out as Morty explains his Canadian roots. Neither Needles, Tank, nor *Bullet* believe him!!!

EXT. OOUTSIDE PT. MUGU BOQ REGISTRATION - DAY

Bullet is standing and occasionally looking at his watch. Morty exits the office and approaches Bullet.

BULLET

Good morning, Morty, good to see you could join us this morning.

As Bullet says this he looks again at his watch.

MORTY (shouting)

Good morning, Bullet!

Bullet is bracing for Morty to slug him in the arm, but instead Morty shoulder blocks him, nearly knocking him over.

BULLET

I guess you got some good sleep?

MORTY

Yes, I did Bullet. And how about you?



BULLET

You know me, I never have any trouble sleeping.

MORTY

That's true. But it seems like we have had this conversation before, haven't we?

BULLET

Yeah, I think we have. But I think today is *your big day*, isn't it?

MORTY

Yes, it is, and let's try not to mess this up, shall we?

BULLET

Well, I had a dream last night that there are some good low-levels up the West Coast...

Bullet pauses for a moment and looks at Morty who is glaring at him.

BULLET

Well, ah, I reckon that ain't such a swell idea after all.

MORTY

No, that ain't such a swell idea at all. We are going to fly up to Whidbey Island, then back to Mather Air Force Base. No low-levels, no HI TACAN approaches, and no Canadian exchange pilot business, got it?

Bullet pauses, looking at Morty who is glaring at him.

BULLET

OK, I'll follow your lead today, but don't expect this to stand as any sort of precedence for us.

MORTY

I'm not worried about any precedence; I just don't want today screwed up like yesterday.

BULLET

Yes, I won't dwell on your mistakes from yesterday if you don't. Now, do you want to get some breakfast?

MORTY

Agreed. What's to eat on this base?

BULLET

I don't know, but Mickey Ds is right there.

As Bullet says this, he points to the McDonalds which is just across and up the street from where they are standing.



MORTY

I'm good with McDonalds if you are.

BULLET

Works for me.

Bullet and Morty start walking towards the McDonalds.

BULLET

But I'm not sure I agree with your characterization that yesterday was screwed up. We got to fly a low-level, and VR-1266 no less, saw firsthand how dangerous terrain shadowing can be, got a tour of the Edwards range complex while you were looking for your approach chart.

MORTY (angerly)

I thought we agreed never to speak of that incident ever again.

BULLET

As I was saying, we got a tour of the Edwards ranges, and we learned all about the Canadian political system. How could that be a bad day?

MORTY

You sorta left out the fact that we no-showed your interview with VX-4, the only reason we were given the jet in the first place. Then we pissed off the people who you were supposed to interview with at the club with your crazy Canadian exchange pilot idea.

Bullet and Morty have now crossed the street. The McDonalds is about 25 yards away.

BULLET

Again with the negative waves Morty. Look, it's a nice morning here at Pt. Mugu. So, let's enjoy what we have in the now, and we'll deal with the consequences of yesterday when we have to. You know I deal with no problem before its time.

MORTY

So, do ya think Needles or Tank connected you with the guy they were hanging around to interview?

BULLET

Well, if they did, they never let on about it. I was thinking I should call the XO this morning as I was planning, but I reckon he might recognize my voice, so that probably ain't such a swell idea either.



MORTY

Yeah, there's a good chance they will never forget you after last night. I just assumed we were going to be in the clink for the rest of the weekend, but who would have thought that they would be impressed by your whole act. But what are you going to tell Shu?

Bullet and Morty have now entered the McDonalds parking lot. There are no cars in the parking lot.

BULLET

Let me remind you that we are getting ready for a six-month deployment, so I don't think my interview will be anywhere near the top of Shu's priority list. But, worse case, he'll call me in and try to chew me out, and I'll tell him the Canadian exchange pilot story, and if I know Shu, he'll wish he had been with us. And he'll probably have a hard suppressing his laughter too. Then he'll tell me that I'm going the RAG for sure now.

MORTY

Yeah, there's probably no avoiding you going there now is there?

BULLET

Na, probably not. But in reality, the RAG is a great assignment. And I can tell the XO I decided to go there because he wanted me to. With any luck I may score points with him.

MORTY

You, positive points with the XO? I wouldn't count on that. I think he's still steaming over the hit board affair.

BULLET

Yes, well, regardless, my second positive point about going to the RAG is that I'll do nothing but dogfight the Tomcat for the next three years, competing against the best fighter pilots in the Navy. So, it'll be AOK. And Cindy is keen on staying in Virginia Beach, so maybe I can score some good husband points also.

MORTY

I can see you did some serious thinking last night didn't you.

BULLET

Yes, you know me, I do my best thinking on the edge of sleep. And ya know Morty, how many guys have gotten the chance to be a Canadian exchange pilot to a Tomcat squadron?



MORTY

Well, since there aren't any of those, nobody.

BULLET

Exactly. Except for me. So you can see, I had no choice. How could I look myself in the mirror if I had the chance to be a Canadian exchange pilot and didn't do it. It's like when I had the chance to repaint that F-18, how could I pass on that opportunity. Sometimes you have to just "go for it." Or as they said in the movie *Risky Business*, "sometimes you just have to say, 'what the fuck.'"

MORTY

Yes, well, in case you don't remember, the guy telling Joel that pearl of wisdom later told him that that was all bullshit.

BULLET

Hmm, I kinda forgot that part. Well, still, sometimes you do have to say "what the fuck." Like on every pitching deck night trap. How or why would we ever do somethang that crazy if we didn't in the end just say, "what the fuck!"

MORTY

Well, I'm not sure pretending to be a Canadian exchange pilot in the Pt. Mugu O'Club can be equated to a night trap, Bullet, but I do like your bigger point.

BULLET

Gotta train like we fight, Morty.

MORTY

Exactly, although again, you have a strange way of looking at things.

Morty and Bullet have now reached the door for the McDonalds. Bullet reaches to open it but waits momentarily to do so.

BULLET

And while we are eating I'll tell you about the real dream I had last night. It was about a dystopian future caused by some elitist Ivy League idea that was way crazier than a pitching deck night trap. I think they called it "wok" or "awoke" or something like that. They screwed up the whole Country with their crazy shit. Thank God it was just a dream, or more accurately, a nightmare.

With this Bullet attempts to open the door to McDonalds, but it is locked.



BULLET

What the hell, McDonalds is closed? It's 0900 on a Saturday. Why would they be closed?

Morty looks in the window.

MORTY

Yeah, there's nobody in there.

Then Morty looks around the parking lot.

MORTY

There aren't any cars in the parking lot either.

BULLET

Hey, there is one person in there. Maybe he can tell us what time they open.

Bullet knocks on the door and gains the attention of the person inside. A middle-aged man wearing a McDonalds shirt that says "Manager" comes to the door.

MANAGER

Can I help you?

BULLET

Yeah, what time do you open? We are hoping to get some morning chow before we go flying today.

MANAGER

So, I'm not sure. I guess when we get power restored on the base.

MORTY

Power is out on the base.

MANAGER

Yeah, I'm told it's out for entire base.

MORTY

Why's the power out?

MANAGER

The earthquake of course.

BULLET

Earthquake?

MANAGER

Yeah, they are estimating it at about a magnitude 5.0, and it hit around 3AM this morning.

MORTY

So, I guess we probably won't be getting breakfast this morning by the sounds of it?



MANAGER

Well, not here at least. Now, if you don't mind, I'm inspecting the store for damage. Good luck finding food and have a good flight.

With this the manager closes and locks the door.

BULLET

Wow, an earthquake.

MORTY

Yeah, a magnitude 5 earthquake. Enough to knock out the power on the base.

BULLET

Did you feel any earthquake last night?

MORTY

Not me. You?

BULLET

Not a thang.

MORTY

I wonder if Fast Eagle 101 is OK?

BULLET

Morty, it is a carrier plane. Unless it fell into the open fault line or a building tipped over on it, I'm pretty sure it's going to be AOK. But I suppose we should get over to Base Ops and at least put eyes on her.

MORTY

That's a good idea. Hell Bullet, this trip is truly becoming a real-life odyssey.

BULLET

Yes, it is. Maybe those girls Needles and Tank were trying to set us up with last night were actually sirens?

Bullet and Morty continue walking back towards the BOQ registration office.

INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

FE101 is at cruise altitude. Bullet's mask is hanging from his helmet, sleeves rolled up, no gloves. Morty is configured correctly.

BULLET

So, how we looking timewise for our arrival to, uhh, what's the name of the Air Force Base we are flying to again?

MORTY

Mather. Did you even look at the flight



plan?

BULLET

Yeah, I looked at it, but I don't think Mather is up there with Nellis or Edwards as one of the more memorable Air Force Bases. Unless of course you have an Air Force girlfriend who is stationed there, I guess.

MORTY

She's actually stationed at Beale Air Force Base, but lives closer to Mather, so that's why we are flying into Mather.

BULLET

*Whatever.* So, you never answered my question, are we looking good on time?

MORTY

Yes, we are, should be right on time.

BULLET

Excellent, because it's all about you today, Morty.

MORTY

All about me?

BULLET

Absolutely, Morty.

MORTY

Well, thank you Bullet.

BULLET

You're welcome Morty. Tomorrow we will get back to normal, but for today at least, who's your buddy?

MORTY

Buddy is only half a word Bullet.

Bullet smiles while raising his eyebrows and nodding his head.

BULLET

So, this is the California Central Valley Morty. Some of the best farmland in the world is down there. And this is where most of the Oklahoma diaspora settled during their migration westward after the dust storms in the Great Depression.

Morty looks down mostly disinterested, but humors Bullet with his response.

MORTY

Is that right?

BULLET

Yep, they don't grow much grain down there like we did back in Central Illinois, more



fruits and vegetables.

Morty continues to humor Bullet.

MORTY  
Any elevators down there?

BULLET  
No, fruits and vegetables don't like being dropped from high altitude, they tend to bruise. And that's why they call grain elevators "elevators," we elevate grain and then drop it to move it from one place to another.

Air traffic control, OAKLAND CENTER, calls FE101.

OAKLAND CENTER (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle 101, descend and maintain 5000 feet, contact NORCAL Approach on 351.4.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
Roger Oakland, descent and maintain 5, NORCAL APPROACH three fifty-one four, good day.

Morty is setting in the new frequency.

MORTY  
Bullet, Amy is going to be there waiting for us to land. Any chance we could make some noise as we come into the break to let her know we are there?

There is a bit of a pause as Bullet thinks about what Morty has just asked.

BULLET  
I'm sorry Morty, *could you say that again?*

MORTY  
Standby.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
NORCAL approach, Fast Eagle 101 checking in passing one zero thousand descending to five thousand.

NORCAL (OVER THE RADIO)  
Welcome aboard Fast Eagle 101, continue your descent to 3000 feet. What type of approach are you requesting into Mather today?

MORTY  
Bullet, you are good with the overhead right?

Bullet gives a "thumbs up" to Morty.



MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle 101 is requesting vectors to the  
initial for the overhead approach.

NORCAL (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle 101, this will be vectors to the  
initial for Runway 03 at Mather, fly heading  
one niner zero and report the field in  
sight.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
Heading 1-9-0 for the initial and we will  
report the field.

Now Morty gets back to Bullet.

MORTY  
Yeah, I was asking if we could, like, ahh,  
make some noise so that Amy knows we are  
here?

Bullet pauses for a moment as he looks at Morty in his mirror.

BULLET  
Let me see if I got this right, you want me  
to make some noise so that you can show off  
for your tanker pilot girlfriend?

MORTY  
Well, I'm not sure I would put it *quite like*  
*that*.

BULLET  
Oh, well, how would you put it then?

MORTY  
All right, yes, can we show off for my Air  
Force girlfriend?

BULLET  
Well, now that you put it like that, sure,  
we can do that.

NORCAL (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle 101, Mather is 11 o'clock for 10  
miles, report the field.

Bullet gives Morty another thumbs up.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle 101, field in sight.

NORCAL (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle 101, proceed via your own  
navigation to the initial, contact MATHER  
TOWER now, 2-5-4 point 6.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle 101 switching Tower, good day.



As he says this, he hears the engines get louder and feels the jet accelerating. He looks down at his instruments and sees the airspeed rapidly passing 300 knots. He gives a thumbs up while grinning in satisfaction.

BULLET

If you want me to do this right, you'd better ask the tower for the carrier break.

MORTY

Do you think they will give us the carrier break?

BULLET

Probably not, but if Lonzo were here he would tell us to "make 'em say no."

MORTY

OK, let's see what they say.

As he says this Morty sees the wings come back to the 68-degree swept back position, then the glove vanes come out. There is a small amount of "vapes" coming off both glove vanes. Morty smiles and gives another thumbs up from the back seat. Bullet sees his thumbs up in his mirrors and responds with a thumbs up also. They are 5 miles away from the airport now, at 1500 feet altitude, and the speed is passing 400 knots.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)

Mather Tower, Fast Eagle 101 initial...

INT. MATHER CONTROL TOWER - DAY

Inside the Mather Tower there are two young Air Force ATC specialists. One of them has four stripes on his shirt sleeves indicating that he is a STAFF SERGEANT (SSGT), and the other has five stripes indicating that he is a TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TSGT). The TSgt is the local, or tower controller, and the SSgt is the ground controller. They are both listening to the tower frequency over a speaker in the tower cab and hear Fast Eagle 101 checking in.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)

Fast Eagle 101 initial with one, requesting the carrier break.

The two air force NCOs look at each other with quizzical looks.

TSGT

Carrier break? What's a carrier break?

SSGT 2

I never heard that one before. Must be what Navy guys call the overhead.

TSGT

Yeah, I guess.



TSGT (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle 101, you are cleared for the  
carrier break, break at mid-field and report  
downwind with the gear.

INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

Both Bullet and Morty are screaming in the cockpit so loud that they can be heard even without using the cockpit intercom system.

MORTY  
HOLY SHIT, they approved the carrier break!

BULLET  
YEAH BABY!! Your little Air Force girlfriend  
will definitely be impressed, and maybe even  
a burner break, just to make sure.

As Morty looks at his instruments he sees the altimeter passing below 1000 feet before it levels off at 600 feet. The speed is passing 500 knots and still accelerating.

MORTY  
Just don't break the number.

BULLET  
Wilco.

Morty enjoys the feeling of speed from the backseat. The vapors over the glove vanes have grown in size and the faint roar from the engines can be heard over the noise of the environmental control system.

INT. MATHER CONTROL TOWER - DAY

An older ATC specialist reaches the top of the ladder that is the entrance to the tower cab. This ATC specialist has 5 stripes and two chevrons indicating that he is a SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT (SMSGT).

SMSGT  
Hey guys, has that Navy fighter checked in yet?

TSGT  
He just checked in for the overheard Senior.

SMSGT  
Good, he's our last arrival today, so let's get him on the ground so that I can go home.

TSGT  
He's 3 miles out now so he should be down soon. By the way, what's a carrier break?

SMSGT  
That's some crazy shit Navy pilots do when landing on an aircraft carrier. Why, he didn't ask to do the carrier break did he?



TSGT

Ah, yeah Senior.

SMSGT

My God, you didn't clear him for *that did you?*

After he finishes those words, he looks towards the initial for Runway 03.

TSGT

Yes Senior, I thought it was just what Navy guys call the overhead.

All three Air Force NCOs now catch sight of Fast Eagle 101, wings pinned back, vapes pouring off its glove vanes going VERY fast, and what appears to be level with the top of the tower cab.

TSGT

Holy shit, how low is he?

SSGT 2

How fucking fast is he going?

SMSGT

GOD DAMN NAVY!!

As the SMSgt finishes his cursing Fast Eagle 101 crosses just in front of the tower and banks to near 90 degrees. Suddenly the entire top of the aircraft is covered in vapes, only the cockpit and a long trail of flame exiting the afterburners are visible from the tower cab. The sound of the jet can now be heard as an explosion of sound. The SSgt ducks down.

SSGT 2

HOLY SHIT!!

TSGT

FUCKING AWESOME!!

Fast Eagle 101 maneuvers away from the tower and towards the downwind for Runway 03. As the sound of Fast Eagle 101 diminishes the sound of multiple car alarms can be heard in the parking lots around the tower.

SMSGT

AWESOME MY ASS. Don't ever approve any requests from Navy fighter pilots, *especially a carrier break.*

The SMSgt now turns towards and begins staring at the red phone in the tower. Within seconds it rings.

SMSGT

GOD DAMN NAVY FIGHTER PILOTS.

The SMSgt picks up the red phone.



SMSGT

Senior Master Sergeant Thompson. Yes, sir. No, sir, it was just a Navy F-14 in the overhead. Well sir, we didn't have time to get his speed. Or his altitude sir. Ah, yes, sir. No, sir. Well, we mistakenly approved his request for a carrier break, and, ah, I guess *he gave us a carrier break*, sir.

The SMSgt flinches, clinching his eyes, looking as though he were in great pain.

SMSGT

Yes, sir, I'll be right over.

The SMSgt hangs up the phone.

SMSGT

God, I hate fighter pilots, and I especially I HATE NAVY FIGHTER PILOTS.

With this outburst he turns and moves towards the ladder to exit the tower cab. Before he does, he stops and looks at the TSgt.

SMSGT

Just to be sure, don't approve anything those guys ask for, even if it's to go to the damn latrine, do I make myself clear?

TSGT

Yes, Senior.

SMSGT

God damn Navy!

With that the SMSgt descends the ladder leaving the SSgt and TSgt along in the tower.

TSGT

THAT WAS FUCKING AWESOME!!

SSGT 2

HOLY SHIT, I've never seen air airplane come that close to the tower before. And I sure haven't never heard that much noise from an airplane before. HOLY SHIT!!

INT. F-14 COCKPIT - DAY

Morty is looking left and right at the cloud of vapor that has engulfed the entire back of FE101. Finally, Bullet rolls out of the turn, and as the G forces subside the vapes disappear.

MORTY

Bullet, all your past transgressions are now forgiven.

BULLET

Do you think your girlfriend heard us?



MORTY  
Shit man, I think people in *Oakland* heard us.

BULLET  
Now, if we can just get slowed down, we might actually be able to land.

Fast Eagle 101 has now passed abeam the touchdown point for Runway 03.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
Tower, Fast Eagle 101, abeam with, ah, the gear in transit.

TSGT (OVER THE RADIO)  
Welcome to Mather Fast Eagle 101, you are cleared to land. And by the way, every car alarm on the base is going off right now.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
Fast Eagle 101, cleared to land. And that's what we call a *carrier break*!

TSGT (OVER THE RADIO)  
Roger that Fast Eagle 101, that may be the last one of those I ever see, but it was worth it. Oh, and aahh, confirm gear down.

MORTY (OVER THE RADIO)  
Yeah, we are still working on that.

TSGT (OVER THE RADIO)  
Roger that 101, well, cleared to land anyway.

INT. MATHER CONTROL TOWER - DAY

TSGT  
Fuckin Navy!!

SSGT  
Yeah, no shit fucking Navy. HOLY SHIT!!

Scene fades out on USAF NCOs in the tower cab.

EXT. MATHER AFB TRANIENT LINE - DAY

Morty is standing at the base of the aircrew boarding ladder as Bullet reaches the ground. Bullet and Morty exchange a high five.

BULLET  
Well, if that doesn't impress your girlfriend, I don't know what will.

MORTY  
Yeah, we definitely made a grand entrance. The epic journey continues.



BULLET

Let's get undressed and out of here before the Base Ops folks find us. And of course, we don't want to make you late for your big date.

MORTY

No, we don't.

Bullet and Morty peel off their flight gear as they talk.

MORTY

I wasn't sure we'd make it here after our inauspicious start.

BULLET

Inauspicious, that's a good word. I won't ask you for a definition though, just in case.

Bullet and Morty have finished de-gearing.

MORTY

Just stop it Bullet. We are here to have a good time, remember?

BULLET

Yes, you are correct. I'll try to be on my best behavior for the rest of the day, or at least until I meet your tanker pilot girlfriend. What's her name again?

MORTY

My God Bullet, Amy. And try to remember it when you meet her.

BULLET

Well, I'll try, but you know how bad I am with names.

Shortly after Bullet completes that statement a young athletic, energetic woman comes out of Base Ops and is running towards Morty. It's AMY.

AMY

Steve, you made it, and on time too. When did you get here?

MORTY

Almost 15 minutes ago. Did you hear us in the break?

AMY

Well, I was a little late, and I heard something as I was driving towards Base Ops. Was that you?

Morty answers with a sound of disappointment in his voice.

MORTY

Yeah, that was us. We came screaming into



the break so you could see us, but I guess you missed it.

AMY

Yeah, I guess I did. But that's OK, if you've seen one overhead approach you've seen them all. Let's go get checked into the BOQ. We have tickets to the Comedy Club tonight and we need to get going if we are going to make it there on time. I will bring my car around front and meet you there.

And with that Amy hustles off the ramp towards Base Ops leaving Bullet and Morty alone with FE101. Morty sheepishly turns to look at Bullet who is looking at Morty with a stern look on his face.

BULLET

So, we risked getting busted by the Air Force to impress your girlfriend, and she says that if you've seen one overhead you've seen them all.

Morty looks at Bullet and shrugs his shoulders.

BULLET

OK, well I said I would be on my best behavior, and I am a man of my word.

MORTY

Thanks Bullet. Anyway, let's get our flight gear stowed and get out front.

BULLET

While I'm not overly impressed by her sense of what is or isn't cool flying, I must admit that she's a hell of a looker Morty.

MORTY

Yes, she is. And it looks like I'm going to the Comedy Club tonight.

BULLET

Comedy club? That'll be fun, I guess.

Morty has no response. Bullet and Morty momentarily are silent as they collect their flight gear.

BULLET

Not as much fun as 600 knots in the break though!

MORTY

Yeah, it'll be hard to beat 600 knots in the break.

Scene fades out with Bullet and Morty moving their flight gear into the cockpit of FE101.

INT. MATHER BOQ REGISTRATION OFFICE - DAY



Bullet is checking into the Mather BOQ. Morty has already completed his check-in, and he and Amy are talking off in the corner of the office. When Bullet completes checking in, he walks toward them. As he does so he overhears Amy.

AMY

OK, I will bring my car around and park by your rooms while you talk to Bullet. See you shortly.

With that Amy departs.

BULLET

Where's she going?

MORTY

To move her car over by our rooms.

Morty looks down at the ground and begins speaking in a sheepish tone of voice.

MORTY

Hey, ahh, what were you planning on doing tonight?

BULLET

Oh, not much. Get some chow, and take in a movie, I guess. Maybe an old Air Force movie is playing at the base theater. *Strategic Air Command*, or *Aces High*, or if I'm lucky, *The Blue Max*. Why do you ask?

Morty again is looking somewhat sheepishly at Bullet and attempting to avoid eye contact with him.

MORTY

Well, see, Amy has a friend who wanted to go to the Comedy Club tonight, but, well she, ahh, doesn't have a date.

Bullet just stares at Morty without saying anything. After an uncomfortably long pause Morty finally speaks.

MORTY

So, ahh, I was wondering if you wanted to, ahhh, you know, go to the Comedy Club with me?

BULLET

With you?

MORTY

Well, you know, with, ahh, us?

BULLET

So, let me see if I am getting this right, you want me to double date with you and Amy?



MORTY

Well, I wouldn't put it quite like that.

BULLET

Oh, well, how would you put it then?

MORTY

Well, I guess I would say that you would be going to the Comedy Club with Amy and, ahh, Amy's friend.

There is a lengthy pause as Bullet looks at Morty, again saying nothing.

MORTY

*Yeah, OK, it's kind of a double date.* But hell, it's got to be better than watching old Air Force movies at the base theater, or anything on TV.

BULLET

Yeah, except that I'm a married man, and I'm pretty sure Cindy might object to me double dating with you and your Air Force girlfriends.

MORTY

Look, her friend knows you are married, so it won't really be a date, it is just you trying to save me from having her friend there alone with Amy and me. Besides, wingman rules apply you know, so you have to help me out in situations like this.

BULLET

Except Morty, you are my RIO, *not my wingman.*

MORTY

Exactly, which is an even higher burden of duty than wingman rules ya know.

Bullet looks at Morty for a few moments.

BULLET

So, what do we know about the friend?

MORTY

Well, I have never met her, but Amy says she's really cool, funny, and smart.

Bullet just stares at Morty for another moment.

BULLET

Well, if she's really cool, funny, and smart, then why doesn't she have a date tonight?

MORTY

*Yeah, I don't know.* Look, are you going to help a bud or not?



Bullet again stares at Morty for a moment.

BULLET

OK, I'll help you out, but you are going to owe me for this one.

MORTY

Yeah, sure, whatever you say Bullet. But let's go get changed or we will be late, and Amy doesn't like it when I'm late. So, we will meet you in say, 20 minutes?

BULLET

Yeah, sure, 20 minutes.

Scene fades out as Bullet and Morty walk down the passageway towards their BOQ rooms.

EXT. PARKING LOT FOR A COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

A Volkswagon Rabbit pulls into the parking spot. Amy is driving, Morty is riding shotgun, and Bullet is alone in the backseat. Amy is first out of the car and runs towards the Comedy Club. Morty is next out of the car, then holds the seat forward as Bullet crawls out of the backseat. Amy is yelling in the distance.

AMY

COME ON STEVE, LET'S GO, DEBORAH IS WAITING FOR US.

BULLET

Ya know Morty, it's bad enough that I had to ride in the backseat, but the backseat of this foofy car!!

MORTY

Yeah, it is a bit of a foofy car, but it got us here. And besides, you said you would be on your best behavior, so don't screw this up for me.

BULLET

I do have my limits Morty, but for now my word is still good.

In the time it took Bullet and Morty to get out of the car and walk a short distance Amy has made it to the Comedy Club and has returned.

AMY

OK, I found Deborah, and she is waiting for us by the entrance.

Amy grabs Morty by the arm.

AMY

Come on Steve, I will introduce you to Deborah.



With that she begins pulling Morty across the parking lot. Bullet is left walking alone towards the Comedy Club.

BULLET (muttering to himself)  
Oh, this is going to be great.

Bullet has nearly caught up to Morty, Amy, and Deborah who are standing near the entrance to the Comedy Club. DEBORAH is also young, athletic-looking, and quite attractive.

AMY  
Come on Bullet, get over here and I will introduce you to Deborah.

Bullet continues walking at the same pace as before, perhaps even slowing slightly as he gives Morty a dirty look.

AMY  
Deborah, this is Bullet, Bullet, Deborah.

BULLET  
Hello Deborah, you can call me Robert.

Bullet reaches out to shake hands with Deborah. Deborah extends her hand and they shake.

DEBORAH (sarcastically)  
Hello, Robert, you can call me Deborah!!

Bullet's head rocks back and up just a bit as he smirks and half laughs at Deborah's obviously sarcastic response.

MORTY  
Holy shit Bullet, your first name is Robert. I didn't know that. I've only known you as Bullet.

BULLET  
That's OK Morty because I didn't know your first name was Steve either.

AMY  
Really, how is it that you guys are in the same squadron, and you don't even know each other's names?

MORTY  
We don't need to, he's Bullet and I'm Morty, and that's all that's needed in a fighter squadron.

AMY  
Well, whattteverrrr. Come on, Let's go inside.

With that she grabs Morty's arm and pulls him into the Comedy Club, leaving Bullet and Deborah standing outside.

BULLET  
Well, I guess we should go inside. After



you.

With this Bullet grabs the door and opens it for Deborah.

DEBORAH  
Thank you, Robert, or Bullet, or whatever  
you want to be called.

Bullet again nods his head as he grins and half laughs as he enters the club.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

Our foursome is seated around one half of their table so that they are all facing the stage. Amy is seated on the extreme right, with Morty to her left. Bullet is next to Morty, and Deborah is on the extreme left.

AMY  
So, what do you think of this table?

MORTY  
Yes, this is a great table, right up front.  
Don't you agree Bullet?

BULLET  
Yeah, pretty nice. But if we had some beer  
on it, it would be an even better table!

Morty glares at Bullet for a moment.

MORTY  
So, Bullet, are you offering to buy the  
first round?

BULLET  
No Morty, I thought for sure you would want  
to buy *me* a beer.

Morty glares at Bullet momentarily.

MORTY  
You're right Bullet, I should buy the first  
round. After all you came here with me, and  
Amy got us these great seats. So, what does  
everybody want.

DEBORAH  
I will have a red wine please.

AMY  
Yeah, I'll have a red wine also.

MORTY  
Bullet, what are you having?

BULLET  
I'll have the same thang you're having. By  
the way, I've heard that new red wines are  
dry wines Morty. Is that right?



Morty gives Bullet a dirty look.

AMY

The age of a wine has nothing to do with how dry it is. How did you ever come up with that stupid idea?

BULLET

Oh, one of the guys in the squadron thought he was an expert on wines and told us that one night. I, ah, can't remember who that was, do you remember Morty?

Morty continues giving Bullet the stink eye.

MORTY

One thing you will learn about Bullet is that his memory isn't very good. But I will get you something Bullet. Come on Amy, let's get the drinks.

AMY

Yeah, awesome.

Morty and Amy walk towards the bar.

AMY

Does he really think that the age of a wine determines how dry it is?

MORTY

Well, Bullet grew up on the farm, so you frequently have to cut him some slack.

With that Morty and Amy are gone, and Bullet and Deborah are seated alone at the table. There is an extended period where nothing is said.

BULLET

So, you and Amy are in the same squadron?

DEBORAH

Yes.

There is another period where nothing is said.

BULLET

What squadron is that?

DEBORAH

The 350th Air Refueling Squadron.

BULLET

And what aircraft do you fly?

DEBORAH

KC-135s.



BULLET

Ah, the KC-135, the second-best Air Force tanker.

Deborah looks rather insulted by Bullet's response.

DEBORAH

So, the best Air Force tanker is what, then?

BULLET

The KC-10.

DEBORAH

What makes the KC-10 the best tanker?

BULLET

It's big, easy to find, goes relatively fast, for a tanker that is, and it carries a lot of gas. And, it has a big 'ol basket, what else could you ask for in a tanker?

DEBORAH

Don't all Navy tankers have a basket?

BULLET

Yeah, all Navy tankers do, but none as large as the KC-10's. And the KC-135 has a basket stuck on the end of the boom with a short hose and no take-up reel. I call the KC-135 the "Flying Wrecking Ball" as that basket has wrecked many a Navy jet.

Deborah seems slightly offended by Bullet's comments. The tone of sarcasm has returned.

DEBORAH

*Sounds like a problem with Navy pilots to me.*

Bullet again half laughs at the attack on Navy pilots.

BULLET

Well, it's more of a Navy problem. Because we don't have our own tankers, apart from the KA-6 and the KA-7, we have to rely on the Air Force for a lot of our tanker support, including the 135 Wrecking Ball. Yeah, I wish we had a fleet of KC-10s.

There is an extended period where nothing is said, then Deborah breaks the silence.

DEBORAH

So, how did you get the nickname Bullet?

Bullet flinches as she says this and his lips curl inward as he attempts to conceal that he is annoyed by the question.

BULLET

Ahh, it's a "call sign."



Deborah is now looking equally annoyed that Bullet has obviously corrected her.

DEBORAH  
Pardon me - *call sign*?

BULLET  
Yeah, it's a call sign, not a nickname. High school kids, entertainers, and pro athletes have nicknames. Fighter pilots have call signs.

DEBORAH  
Oh, *is that right*?

BULLET  
Yes.

DEBORAH  
Well, I certainly didn't mean to conflate you with an actor, or even a pro athlete.

BULLET  
Oh, that's OK. No offense taken, I guess.

DEBORAH  
But are you sure you aren't a *high school kid*?

Bullet looks at Deborah and suppresses laughter.

BULLET  
Well, Morty might say that I occasionally behave like a high school kid, but no, I graduated from high school a few years ago.

DEBORAH (sarcastically)  
Well, that's certainly good to know, I'd hate to be sitting here with a *high school kid*.

BULLET  
Well, better a high school kid than an actor, or worse, a pro athlete.

This time Deborah smirks as she attempts to hold in her laughter.

DEBORAH  
You didn't answer the question.

BULLET  
Ahh, sorry, what was the question?

Deborah sighs in frustration.

DEBORAH  
How did you get the *call sign* Bullet?



BULLET

Well, I have three versions of that story, which one would you like to hear?

DEBORAH (frustrated)

Yeah, never mind, I didn't realize it was such a hard question.

BULLET

Well, there's lots that goes into the call sign process. It's not like a few guys get drunk at a party and start passing out call signs ya know.

Deborah is now not even attempting to hide her sarcasm.

DEBORAH (very sarcastically)

Oh, I'm sure it's a *very sophisticated process*.

BULLET

Yes, it is.

With that there is an extended silence again. Bullet looks around the room to see where Morty is.

DEBORAH

So, how long have you been a Navy pilot?

Bullet looks at Deborah for a moment and again appears to be slightly annoyed at the question.

BULLET

Ahh, it's Naval "Aviator."

DEBORAH

*Excuse me?*

BULLET

Yeah, we are actually called *Naval Aviators*, not pilots. *We are better than pilots.*

Deborah gives Bullet a long blank stare. A mixture of disbelief and amazement is projected towards Bullet.

DEBORAH (extremely sarcastic)

*Oh, is that right?*

BULLET

Yes.

DEBORAH

Well, excuse me. So how long have you been a *NAVAL AVIATOR*, or do you also have three different answers to that question?

Bullet again smirks and nods his head.

BULLET

Nope, that's an easy one. I got my wings the



day the *Challenger* exploded.

Deborah is taken aback by the matter-of-fact tone Bullet uses as he says this.

DEBORAH

Wow, that had to make what would have been a great day into a lousy day?

BULLET

Yeah, I had just finished my last hop and had gotten word that I got East Coast fighters, and when I came out of the office to tell everyone, there were those rocket contrails making the big pitchfork in the sky on the TV. It was not cool at all.

DEBORAH

Yeah, I was still in college. I was supposed to be presenting an Air Force ROTC safety briefing when that happened. Everyone was stunned. I was really following the space program then, so it really hit me hard.

BULLET

I reckon that's one of those events where we all remember what we were doing when it happened. Like Pearl Harbor, or when Kennedy was shot for earlier generations.

Deborah tries to turn the conversation away from the *Challenger* disaster.

DEBORAH

So, I heard you and Stephen made some noise when you came into Mather today?

BULLET

Yes, we did, but I guess nobody saw it.

DEBORAH

Well, maybe not too many saw it, but I think a lot of people heard it.

BULLET

Really? Well, that's good.

Deborah half laughs.

DEBORAH

*Why is that good?*

BULLET

Well, if you have 'em you might as well smoke 'em.

DEBORAH

What does *that mean?*



BULLET

Well, if you have a fighter jet at your disposal you might as well make some noise. If you don't you run the risk of getting kicked out of the fighter pilot club.

The deadpan look comes over Deborah's face again.

DEBORAH

Fighter pilot club...really?

BULLET

Well, there's no official fighter pilot club per se, but there are things expected of you as a fighter pilot, and failing to live up to those standards can bring some abuse from your buds.

DEBORAH

"REALLY?"

BULLET

Yes. It puts a lot of pressure on us ya know.

DEBORAH

REALLY? So, what are some of these expectations?

BULLET

Well, it's sort of like the British Constitution, there's nothing actually written down, no written set of rules. Over time we come to know what is OK, and what will bring abuse. I guess it's like a Fighter Pilot Common Law.

Deborah is looking at Bullet somewhat in disbelief. She is about to ask a question when Morty returns with drinks.

MORTY

Deborah, here's your red wine, and I got a beer, and Bullet, here's your usual, a strawberry daiquiri.

Bullet looks with disgust at the drink that is in front of him.

BULLET

Gee, thanks Morty!!

MORTY

And here's your straw, because I know you always want a straw too.

As Morty says this he places the straw into Bullet's daiquiri. Bullet looks at the drink for a moment, then takes a sip from the straw as if he were drinking out of a sippy cup. He winces in disgust.



DEBORAH

Well, I don't know anything about the English Common Law, or fighter pilot rules, but if one of the guys in our squadron's favorite drink was a strawberry daiquiri, with a straw nonetheless, he would get kicked out of the tanker pilot club.

Morty bursts out laughing.

MORTY

Yes, Bullet, I've been meaning to talk to you about your drinking habits. It is shameful enough that I always have to buy you one of those, but asking for the straw really is too much. If word of this gets out it could make life in the Fighting Forty-First a veritable hell.

BULLET

Yes, it could, just like the pink bunny suit in *A Christmas Story*. That's a good one Morty, and a great movie.

MORTY

Very good Bullet. What was the name of the school again, ahh,

BULLET

Oh, give me a second.

DEBORAH

Warren G. Harding Elementary School.

Bullet and Morty look at each other, genuinely impressed.

MORTY

Holy shit, you are a fan of *A Christmas Story*?

DEBORAH

Well, not really, but I saw it once I think. It was OK.

MORTY

Wait, you have seen it once and you know the name of his school?

DEBORAH

Yes. Why, is that one of the things you must know to avoid getting kicked out of the fighter pilot club?

Morty looks at Bullet with a puzzled look on his face.

MORTY (quitly to Bullet)

Fighter pilot club?

BULLET (quietly to Morty)

I'll, ahh, tell you about it later.



BULLET

Well, it's not just *A Christmas Story*, but it's any of the great classic movies. Ya know, like *Dr. Strangelove*, *Animal House*, *Caddy Shack*, and some of the more quotable lines from *Top Gun*.

Deborah gives a half eyeroll and sighs.

DEBORAH

Well, I am glad to know that you Naval Aviators have such demanding standards.

BULLET

Well, as far as you know, anyway.

Just then Amy joins the conversation.

AMY

So, what are you guys talking about?

MORTY

Great lines from classic movies.

AMY

Oh, sounds interesting, NOT! But the show's about to start.

With that the conversation stops as the standup comedian is introduced. The scene fades out as the comedian comes on stage.

EXT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

Our foursome is exiting the club. Amy is very excited and is very high-energy.

AMY

That was awesome, don't you think Steve?

MORTY

Yes, he was very funny. What did you think, Bullet?

BULLET

Yeah, he was pretty good.

MORTY

Better than just watching TV at the BOQ wasn't it?

BULLET

Yeah, Morty, I guess it was.

DEBORAH (sarcastically)

Yeah, he was pretty good. Maybe not as funny as the bit about the English Common Law and the difference between nicknames and call signs, but still pretty good!!



Bullet looks at Deborah with the usual grin on his face as he suppresses outright laughter at Deborah's attack.

MORTY  
So, Bullet, I take it you explained to Deborah the difference between nicknames and call signs?

BULLET  
Yes, I did, although I can't imagine what she thought was humorous about what is a very serious topic.

Deborah just looks at Bullet and Morty with a look of amusement.

DEBORAH  
Yeah, what could be funny about that, let alone the analogy with the British Constitution.

Morty looks at Bullet with a quizzical look on his face.

MORTY  
British Constitution?

BULLET  
I'll, ah, explain it to you later Morty.

DEBORAH (very sarcastically)  
*Oh, I wish I could be there for that explanation.*

Bullet half laughs again as Amy grabs Morty's arm.

AMY  
Come on Steve, let's go. The car is over here.

Amy runs off towards her car with Morty in tow leaving Bullet and Deborah standing at the exit.

BULLET  
Well, ahh, ahh...

Bullet appears to be searching for Deborah's name before he just presses on.

BULLET  
...ahh, where's your car?

Deborah gives Bullet a disgusted look.

DEBORAH  
It's Deborah, and my car is just over there.

BULLET  
Yes, Deborah, well, would you let me walk you to your car?

Deborah looks at Bullet now with a look of suspicion and



contempt.

DEBORAH  
Aren't you married, ahh, ahh, Bullet, if that really is your name.

BULLET  
Yes, I am, and I'm not implying anything in that offer other than to not have you walk to your car alone, late at night, and in a dark parking lot.

DEBORAH  
So, you don't think I can walk to my car by myself at this time of night?

BULLET  
I'm pretty sure that you can take care of yourself, and you certainly don't need any help from me, but I'm old school enough that I have to at least offer to escort you to your car whether you want me to or not.

Deborah looks at Bullet with a look of resignation.

DEBORAH  
OK, well, my car is just over there, and if you feel a need to ensure my safety, I guess you can walk me over there.

BULLET  
Excellent, and I appreciate you humoring me.

DEBORAH  
All right, Mr. Old School Bullet, if that really is your name.

They are walking towards Deborah's car.

DEBORAH  
So, you and Stephen seem to have an interesting relationship. Half the time you are being mean to each other, and half the time you seem to be best friends. What's up with that?

BULLET  
Yes?

DEBORAH  
YES!!! *What does that mean?*

BULLET  
It's like the call sign thang, it complicated being in a fighter squadron. You become friends for life while continuously competing with each other, both in the jet and on the ground.



DEBORAH

*Oh, I see.*

There is a short pause.

DEBORAH

So, I guess strawberry daiquiris are not your favorite drink?

BULLET

*Ahhh, NO!!* And yes, you were correct when you said that my club membership would be in danger if I was caught drinking a strawberry daiquiri, and especially through a straw. In fact, any fruity drink could bring my club membership into question. But, I have to admit that Morty's stunt was pretty damn funny, although he's got payback coming for that humiliation.

DEBORAH

*I see.* And I also suspect Stephen was the squadron member who thought that the age of a wine determines how dry it is?

Bullet looks at Deborah directly. He is genuinely impressed and is laughing.

BULLET

Yeah, he did. We've been abusing him for that faux pas ever since, especially our erudite flight doc, who was mortified that someone could make such a mistake.

Bullet pauses as he eyeballs Deborah.

BULLET

That's pretty good that you sorted all that out from our banter.

DEBORAH

Yes, well, I guess I'm good at picking up on fighter pilot bullshit, once you explained the rules to me. You know, the *British Constitution and all*.

BULLET

Yes, the British Constitution.

DEBORAH

Not that I still don't think it is all pretty silly, *maybe even juvenile*.

BULLET

Well, maybe so, but maybe those are some of the techniques we use to deal with what we do for a living. What makes Naval Aviation special, and why most of us signed up for it, is that peacetime carrier aviation is as dangerous at wartime carrier aviation. I



haven't been under fire, but the Vietnam vets I know say that getting shot isn't any worse than a damn night trap. And we do that night trap business every night when we are deployed, peacetime or war. So, we develop a comradery, as well as a competition to see who's the best, and both of those things make all of us better. And yeah, I guess sometimes that comradery and competition spill over into other things, or maybe even all things.

DEBORAH

Well, I guess, but it still seems a bit juvenile.

With that Bullet and Deborah have arrived at her car.

DEBORAH

Well, this is my car *Mr. Bullet*. Thanks for the escort.

BULLET

No worries. By the way, you should give fighter pilots a chance, some of us aren't all bad ya know. Except for those Eagle drivers, stay away from them for sure!!

Deborah reluctantly laughs at Bullet's attack on F-15 guys.

DEBORAH

So, you are saying there are *some fighter* pilots who aren't *all bad*? That's not a very ringing endorsement of those in your profession you know.

BULLET

Well, I'm not trying to make any commentary on my profession, I'm just saying that some of us aren't all bad, present company excluded of course.

We hear Morty yelling in the distance.

MORTY

BULLET, WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?

Bullet turns towards Morty's voice and raises his hand.

BULLET

OVER HERE MORTY.

MORTY

There he is.

Shortly after Morty says this we hear a car door close and the sound of tires squealing under acceleration. Bullet turns back towards Deborah.



BULLET

Like Morty, he's kinda a swell guy. He puts up with all my bullshit, which is no small task.

Deborah laughs.

DEBORAH

Yes, well, I do have to agree with you on that point. By the way, that stuff about the fighter pilot club and the British Constitution, that was all bullshit wasn't it?

BULLET

Well, in a way yes, and in a way no. But if you mean that I made it all up tonight, well, yeah, I guess maybe I did. But it did help explain our antics, didn't it?

DEBORAH

Yes, as hard as it is for me to admit it, *it actually did*.

Bullet has a grin on his face as the sounds of skidding tires draw closer.

BULLET

See, there ya go. And as I said, Morty's not such a bad bloke, although if you tell him I said that I will totally deny it.

DEBORAH

Well, that may be true, but I think he's taken.

BULLET

That's true only if you choose not to compete.

DEBORAH

What does that mean?

BULLET

Nothing, other than I think you could get most any guy you set your sights on.

Deborah looks at Bullet slightly surprised for a moment.

DEBORAH

Why *Mr. Bullet*, is that a *compliment*?

BULLET

Officially, NO. Unofficially, well, maybe!!

DEBORAH

I think you are going to have to work on your compliments *Mr. Bullet*.



BULLET

Yes, well fortunately those skills aren't highly valued in my "*profession*" as you call it.

Deborah chuckles at those words as the car with Amy and Morty turns up the row where Deborah is parked.

BULLET

Well, I think it's time to say goodnight. Chances are I will never see you again but try to remember all that I have taught you tonight.

Deborah smiles as she shakes her head.

DEBORAH (sarcastically)

Yes Mr Bullet, *I will try to remember all that you have taught me.*

Bullet extends his hand for a handshake.

BULLET

Well, good night, ahhh, ahhh...

Deborah initially reaches out to return Bullet's handshake, then puts both hands on her hips as she realizes Bullet is trying to remember her name.

DEBORAH

It's Deborah for God's sake!!

BULLET

Yes, that's correct, Deborah.

Deborah pauses, giving Bullet the evil eye, then reluctantly reaches out to return his shake.

DEBORAH

Goodnight, *Mr. Bullet*, if that really is your name.

BULLET

Yes, and good night *Ms. Deborah*, if that really is *your name*.

Deborah reluctantly chuckles as the car with Morty and Amy screeches to a stop behind Bullet. Morty opens the door and gets out as Bullet and Deborah drop their handshake and Bullet walks towards Morty.

AMY (yelling)

COME ON BULLET, *LET'S GO.*

BULLET

So, should I call you Steve or Morty from now on?

MORTY

Shut up Bullet, just get in the car.



BULLET  
Or perhaps Stephen?

MORTY  
Shut up Bullet!

Bullet looks at the back seat of the foofy car, then at Morty.

BULLET  
Man, do you ever owe me.

AMY (yelling again)  
COME ON, *LET'S GO!*

Morty responds by giving a shrug of his shoulders. With this Bullet begins to crawl into the backseat.

As Bullet does this Morty's eyes are drawn towards Deborah who is still standing near her car. For a moment their eyes are fixed upon each other.

MORTY  
Good night, Deborah, it was nice meeting you.

Deborah smiles.

DEBORAH  
Good night, Stephen, it was nice meeting you also.

There is a pause as both look at each other.

AMY (yelling again)  
COME ON STEVE, *GET IN THE CAR.*

Morty is almost startled by Amy's words. He haltingly looks away, then back at Deborah for just a moment, then gets in the car. As he closes the door, we hear Amy from inside the car.

AMY  
See you later Deborah.

DEBORAH  
See you, Amy.

With that there is the sound of tires skidding under acceleration as the cheesy car accelerates away with Amy yelling out of the open driver side window a sort of "yaa-hoo" yell. Deborah is left alone by her car. The smile she had when she said good night to Morty lingers on her face for a moment as she looks off into the distance, almost appearing to be contemplating something. She then gets in her car and drives out of the parking lot.

INT. F-14 COCKPIT AT CRUISE ALTITUDE - DAY

Morty is configured correctly as always, Bullet is configured incorrectly as usual.



BULLET

I have to say, the strawberry daiquiri thang last night was well played.

Morty, is smiling and very proud of himself.

MORTY

Why thank you Bullet; I was kind of proud of that one. Amy was shocked that your preferred drink was a strawberry daiquiri. We had a good laugh at your expense.

BULLET

Well, I am glad I could provide you and your *girlfriend* with some entertainment. Did you like my wine comment?

MORTY

Yeah, and did you like how I double reversed that back on you? Amy thought that was hilarious that you thought new wine was dry wine.

BULLET

So, did you ever tell her that actually was your bafoonery?

MORTY

Hell no. We had another laugh at your expense.

BULLET

Again, I am glad that I was able to provide you and your *girlfriend* with some entertainment. But you do know payback will be coming, don't you.

MORTY

Yes, I would expect nothing less. Do you want to hear about what happened after we dropped you at the Q?

BULLET

No, I don't, although Horse and Buster will want *details* of course. While chivalry may be out of fashion these days, I think it still is a good thang, especially for we "knights of the sky."

MORTY

Chivalry? Nobody talks about chivalry anymore, except to condemn it as a form of chauvinism. Speaking of old school, what was it that you said about the British Constitution last night?

BULLET

Well, first, where chivalry is a form of chauvinism it's not good, but where it's a



sign of respect, it's a good thang. And I think it can be both. Regarding the British Constitution, I was trying to explain to her the unwritten rules of being a fighter pilot. I think she asked if these rules were written down, and I said no, that they were like the British Constitution, we learn them by seeing them applied, how those we admire behave, and by the stories that are retold about past fighter pilots.

MORTY

So, did she buy it?

BULLET

Well, she kinda mocked me about it initially, but she reluctantly admitted that the analogy helped her to pick up on some of our antics last night.

MORTY

Really? Which ones?

BULLET

Well, for one thang, she picked up right away on your little daiquiri stunt.

MORTY

Really? So, what did she say about that?

BULLET

As I was escorting her to her car, she said that she assumed a strawberry daiquiri wasn't my usual drink.

MORTY

Really. What else did she say?

BULLET

Well, she also picked up that it was you who thought new wine was dry wine.

MORTY

Really.

BULLET

Yeah, she appeared to be wicked smart, apart from thinking our antics were, I think she said "juvenile" of course. I'm not sure how anybody that smart could ever think our behavior is juvenile.

Morty has no response for this comment.

BULLET

I don't know Morty, but if I were in your shoes, I think I'd drop Amy and go for the redhead.



MORTY  
Her name was Deborah, Bullet.

BULLET  
Yes, it was.

Morty again goes silent as he looks in the distance and seems to be engaged in deep thought. After a period of silence, he continues.

MORTY  
I guess all the cyclops and sirens are in the rearview mirror now.

BULLET  
Yeah, and now onto the deployment. Speaking of the deployment, it's going to be a busy few weeks before we leave, then off for six months aboard the boat. The O-4s go crazy when on the boat for that long ya know, especially in the last two months. That's when Pooh Bear went on the tirade which resulted in me running into that knee knocker.

MORTY  
I thought you said that never happened.

BULLET  
No, I said that you shouldn't believe any stories about me running into a knee knocker.

MORTY  
Part of that story is that you got the Skipper in lots of trouble over that incident.

BULLET  
I can neither confirm nor deny that Lonzo got into trouble because of me, but I will say that Lonzo was awesome during that whole controversy. When I apologized to him for what happened he said to me, "Fuck that Bullet, I like your spirit. Now, how about we get some chow." Then he and I then went to the mess hall and had sliders together.

MORTY  
And the story is that you had stitches in your head when you were down there in the chow hall with him?

BULLET  
Well, I can neither confirm nor deny that, but, yes, tragically I did. And there was Lonzo sitting with me. We were kind of the Nimitz's version of *The Breakfast Club*, in detention in the chow hall together, me for



flying after running into that knee knocker, and him for letting me fly. But that was Lonzo, I suspect there was no other place he would rather have been than sitting in detention with me that day.

Bullet reflects for a moment, then continues.

BULLET

Yeah, that was Lonzo, he wanted people in his squadron who could, and would, "*fly & fight*." And, as he told me, he understood that people who are capable and willing "*to fight*" occasionally push the envelope. But so long as I didn't waste a jet or hurt anybody, he would stand between me and any of his superiors who wanted my scalp.

MORTY

That's awesome.

BULLET

Yeah, he was pretty awesome. Like in the aftermath of losing the Whale at the start of the last deployment. Some of the more experienced guys in the squadron were pretty upset at all the mistakes the boat made that night. And just when passion was starting to overtake prudence, he stood up and gave a speech that re-established order. My memory of that speech brings tears, or ahh, I mean, it ahh, almost brings tears to my eyes. It was especially poignant for me because I graduated from flight school with the pilot of that jet, Ranger 12. Despite knowing one of the guys who was lost that night, what Lonzo said made me proud of what it is we do and why we do it.

MORTY

Didn't Lonzo fly in Vietnam?

BULLET

Yes, he did. So, he knew what it was like to get shot at, and to lose your buds. And he also knew what was required of leaders to prepare the next generation of warriors to do the same. I think Lonzo knew that what it took to get shot off the boat night after night has a lot in common with flying combat sorties day after day.

There is another pause.

BULLET

Ya know, back to last night, I guess our behavior probably does seem a bit childish, and maybe the English Common Law analogy seems ludicrous. But it's moments like Lonzo's speech when the old guys pass onto



the next generation of warriors the accumulated knowledge of what it takes to "*fight and win*" when people are shooting at you, and your friends are dying. I suspect that some sort of common law, or a warrior code, exists in all those military branches where the martial arts are truly practiced, like the SEALSS, Rangers, maybe attack sub guys, all the guys who live on the pointy edge of the sword. I'll bet they all have unwritten rules which are designed to make sure they are ready and able to fight and win when the time comes. And I'll also bet those unwritten rules are far more important to keeping us ready to fight and win than any of the written rules we have, and especially all the thangs the politicians want us to spend all of our time learning.

MORTY

Well said Bullet. You know, I kind of like that common law analogy. I may use it if you don't mind. In fact, I may even tell folks I came up with it.

BULLET

Well, if you think it's good, I expect nothang less Morty.

MORTY

And may we always be blessed with leaders like Lonzo.

BULLET

Amen brother.

There is another pause...

BULLET

Yeah, I do miss Lonzo!!

Scene fades out as Bullet and Morty fly into the distance.

EXT. NAS OCEANA FLIGHT LINE - DAY

Bullet and Morty are walking away from FE101 as they talk.

BULLET

Well, Morty, it's been a hell of a trip. Did we successfully fill the EPIC square?

MORTY

Yes, I think we did. And as I said earlier, I'm pretty sure nobody will ever believe half of what happened when we tell them.

Almost in unison Bullet and Morty stop to turn around and look back at FE101.



BULLET

Is that a great machine or what?

MORTY

Yes Bullet, that is one thing we will always agree about, it is a beautiful thing, or as you would say, a beautiful THANG.

BULLET

Gene Valencia may have said he would marry the F6F if it could cook, but I don't care about whether FE101 can cook or not, if I could, I would marry her.

MORTY

Yes, but I think FE101 prefers me over you.

BULLET

In your dreams Morty, in your dreams!

Just then a navy First Class Petty Officer approaches Bullet and Morty. His name is PO1 GRAVES.

PO1 GRAVES

Lieutenant Allen, Commander Shuman wants to see you in his office.

BULLET

Ahh, he didn't by any chance say what he wanted to talk to me about, did he?

PO1 GRAVES

I didn't talk to the Skipper sir, Chief Clark did.

BULLET

Thanks Petty Officer Graves, tell the Chief that I'll be up there as soon as I get out of my flight gear.

PO1 GRAVES

Yes sir.

PO1 Graves leaves.

MORTY

That's probably not good.

BULLET

No, probably not, although it's not unexpected. I wish I knew what it was that I'm in trouble for. I hate confessing to thangs he doesn't know about yet.

MORTY

Yeah, there are so many things that he could be pissed about, too. Do you want me to go up there with you?



BULLET

Na, PO Graves didn't say he wanted to see both of us, so I reckon you should bug-out while you still can. Besides, anythang he's pissed about was probably my idea.

MORTY

But we were a team, we shouldn't lose our mutual support now, should we?

BULLET

Yes, we were, which is part of what made it a truly epic adventure, but there's no reason for you to pay a price for what, ahh, what do you guys call me behind my back?

MORTY

Bizarro Bullet.

BULLET

Yeah, for what Bizarro Bullet did. And for the record, I'm not crazy about this Bizarro thang, although I guess it may be somewhat accurate, perhaps tragically so.

MORTY

Well, that's very un-Bizarro of you, I must say.

BULLET

Ya know Morty, years from now when we look back on our time flying fighters, I reckon we will both remember this cross country as one of our more memorable events.

MORTY

Yes, and I will always remember that it was both Bullet and Bizarro Bullet who were my pilots on this odyssey. And I will probably remember that Bizarro Bullet was the one who made it an epic journey.

BULLET

Yeah, that low-level will probably make us buds for life.

MORTY

Yes Bullet, that and the Canadian exchange pilot business. I suspect those memories will stay with me forever. Well, see ya, wouldn't want to be ya.

As he leaves, he slugs Bullet in the arm, and Bullet is again knocked off balance.

BULLET

Yeah, see ya Morty.

With that Morty disappears. Bullet is left standing on the ramp as he looks up to see 4 Tomcats flying overhead. As the camera



focuses on Bullet's face it transforms back into the older Bullet from the opening scenes.

INT. EXPEDITIONARY OPS GROUP AND SQUADRON HQ - NIGHT

Bullet is walking down a lengthy corridor. Standing ahead of and waiting for him is Slider.

BULLET  
Slider, do you have our two love birds in my office?

SLIDER  
Yes, sir, and just so you know, the EOG is really pissed that you kept him waiting.

BULLET  
Is that right. Well then, he might as well wait a few more minutes while I talk to my boys.

Bullet opens his office door and enters. As he does Scat and Gus rise and come to attention. Bullet passes them to take a seat behind his desk. Without saying a word, he picks up some papers and looks at them silently. Scat and Gus, still standing at attention, look at each other for a moment. Then Bullet speaks without taking his eyes off the papers in front of him.

BULLET  
So, am I to understand that you two left the AOR without orders?

SCAT AND GUS (almost, but not quite in unison)  
Yes, sir.

There is another pause as Bullet continues to look at the papers in front of him.

BULLET  
And am I also to understand that you destroyed the pool table at the Sigonella Fly Trap?

Scat and Gus make a sideways glance at each other.

SCAT  
Well sir, technically, it was...

At this Bullet looks up from his papers and makes eye-to-eye contact with Scat, and he immediately stops talking.

GUS  
Yes sir, that's, ahh, essentially correct.

With this admission Bullet's attention again return to the papers. Gus and Scat exchange another sideways glance.

BULLET  
And am I also correct in believing all this started because you met two Navy C-9 pilots.



Scat and Gus nervously look at each other, unsure of what to say.

GUS  
Yes, sir, that also, is, ahh, essentially correct.

After a short pause, Bullet stands up and glares first at Gus, then at Scat.

BULLET  
OK lads, I have two questions for you, and what happens next depends upon how you answer these questions. Gus, before you destroyed the pool table, did you kick those squid fighter guy's asses at CRUD?

Gus looks somewhat startled by the question, then grins with pride.

GUS  
Yes sir, we kicked those Navy guy's asses both in CRUD, and after CRUD, if you know what I mean.

Bullet looks at Gus while attempting to hold back a smile. He then looks at Scat.

BULLET  
Scat, were those female squid trash haulers worth the ass chewing I'm about to get from the EOG?

Scat initially looks slightly unsure what to say, giving a sideways look at Gus, then back at Bullet.

SCAT  
Ahh, yess sssir, they were.

Bullet no longer even attempts to suppress his grin.

BULLET  
Slider, when are these lads scheduled to fly again?

SLIDER  
Ah, Gus is flying in the morning, and Scat in the afternoon, sir.

BULLET  
So, I think they need to prep for their sorties and get into crew rest, don't they?

SLIDER  
Yes, sir, ahh, I guess they do.

Bullet looks at Gus and Scat for long moment with the grin still on his face.



BULLET  
OK, lads, now get the hell out of my office.

GUS AND SCAT (in unison)  
YES, SIR.

With that they both turn and exit Bullet's office. Bullet nods his head while still grinning a broad grin. He then moves towards the exit. As he does Slider looks nervously at him.

SLIDER  
I think the EOG was expecting you to arrive with Gus and Scat.

Bullet and Slider have now exited his office and are moving down the corridor towards the door with the words "Expeditionary Operations Group Commander" painted on it.

BULLET  
Well, Slider, you know one my rules is that nobody yells at my guys except me. So, if the EOG wants to yell at anybody, he can yell at me.

SLIDER  
Yes, sir, but ahh, you didn't yell at them.

BULLET  
Well, I can't really punish anybody for doing something that I've done myself, or probably would've done if given a chance.

Bullet then pauses for a moment.

BULLET  
Besides, I like their spirit.

They have reached the EOG's door now, and Bullet stops just outside of it.

BULLET  
Ya know, the most important job I have as a commander is to make sure people like those two lads are here and ready to fight when we need them. And if that means I have to get yelled at, then so be it.

SLIDER  
Yes, sir. Let's just hope those two don't find any more trouble, at least until the deployment is over.

BULLET  
Well, those two are good fighter pilots, especially for their experience level, and so long as they are, I'll keep getting yelled at if I have to. Because the qualities that make those two lads warriors are the same qualities that make them the



hardest to control when they aren't flying. Politicians are good at starting wars, and lads like those two are good at fighting wars. It's our job to separate the politicians from the warriors, and then make sure we don't let the politicians ruin the warriors.

SLIDER

*YES, SIR!!*

Bullet reaches up and is about to knock on the EOG's door but pauses momentarily.

BULLET

Besides, Lonzo, Robin Olds, a whole bunch of past fighter pilots would expect nothing less of me. It's all part of the Common Law.

SLIDER

*Common Law, Sir?*

BULLET

Yeah, I'll have to explain that later. Probably best not to keep the EOG waiting any longer.

With that, Bullet knocks on the EOG's door and enters leaving Slider outside. Through the closed-door Slider can hear the EOG yelling at Bullet.

Slider turns and walks the length of corridor as Aerosmith's "Back in the Saddle Again" is played.

FADE OUT

The End.

Epilogue

In late December 1988 Bullet and Morty began a six-month deployment to the Mediterranean Sea.

When they returned Morty attended the Navy's Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN). He subsequently returned to flight school to be trained as a pilot and returned to the Tomcat community. While in flight school he had a chance to meet "The Red Head" (aka, Deborah) when she was driving to a new assignment. He followed Bullet's advice, marrying her in 1992. They have been happily married now for over 31 years. Bullet frequently reminds Morty how much he owes him, not only for taking him on The Cross-Country, but for his excellent relationship advice.

Deborah still gives Bullet a hard time whenever possible, and still thinks he behaves in a mostly juvenile fashion.

Following completion of the deployment, Bullet received orders to VX-4. When checking into the squadron the Executive Officer, Needles, told him that he received the assignment based upon the



strength of his interview!!! Bullet was selected to attend the US Navy's Test Pilot School in January 1991. However, in the aftermath of the 1991 Tailhook scandal, his "documented attendance" at Tailhook 1990 made him unpromotable, and in 1996 he was sent to Izmir, Turkey to serve on an Air Force staff, in Bullet's words "a fate worse than death." This proved not to be the case as following this assignment his Air Force superiors helped transfer his commission to the Air Force where he would fly the F-16 in the wars that followed the September 11th terrorist attacks, eventually becoming Commander of the 170<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron. He now proudly identifies as an Air Force Fighter pilot...so to speak!!

On "The Cross-Country", Bullet and Morty forged a friendship that has endured to this day. Morty calls Bullet his "brother from another mother", despite all his eccentricities. Bullet states that he can neither confirm nor deny his friendship with Morty, but agrees that they are now, and forever shall be, brothers.

The journey Bullet and Morty took in December of 1988 changed their lives. Morty's prediction that it would be "EPIC" came to pass, and Bullet believes it indeed was a "*modern Odyssey*." As they look back, both believe that they lived during the Golden Age of jet fighter aviation, and that this journey was emblematic of that age.

To this day Bullet is extremely proud of his status as the first and only Canadian exchange pilot to fly the Tomcat in the US Navy!!! However, when Morty reminds him of his past antics he states that "I, ahh, don't recollect. But, I ahh, ain't like that no more."

### **Morty doesn't agree!!**

Closing credits roll split screen with actual photos of Bullet, Morty, The Deborah, and other members of VF-41 and the 170<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron.