

Dead Man Walks

"DEAD MAN WALKS"

Written by

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FADE IN:

MONTAGE - OLD BLACK AND WHITE FILM CLIPS

SUPER: "LONDON, ENGLAND: DECEMBER 1944"

- A) Dozens of flashes as Nazi V-2 buzz bombs leave rocket launchers at Pennemunde. Sleek aircraft on a runway.
- B) Air raid sirens in London. Explosions. Terror.
- C) Detailed footage of the Nazi's jet propelled air craft at Pennemunde, prominent Swastika. Taking off the runway.
- D) Giant "Top Secret" is rubber stamps across aircraft.

SUPER: "WHITE SANDS, NEW MEXICO: JULY 2 1947"

- E) Vaguely familiar aircraft (same as the Nazi jet, but with U.S. insignia) crashes on a remote farm.
- F) Metal debris scattered in an area the size of two football fields.
- G) Newspaper headline "Unidentified Aircraft Crashes in Desert."
- H) Text in article bolded and enlarged "...Soviets say it was an experimental jet engine propelled airplane ...U.S. authorities say it was a weather balloon ...Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico."
- I) Giant "Top Secret" slams across the newspaper article.

SUPER: "WASHINGTON DC: MAY 22 1949"

- J) Newspaper clippings of Forrestal and Nimitz on carrier deck in Pacific theater. Burial precession at the Arlington National cemetery.
- K) Newspaper headline "Admiral Forrestal Jumps from Hospital Room. Dies."
- L) Text in article bolded and enlarged "...crazy paranoid about Zionists ...family cries murder ...Secretary of Defense during World War II ...visited Roswell Army Air Base only weeks before he died."
- M) Giant "Eyes Only" slams across the newspaper article.

SUPER: "MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE: OCTOBER 1963"

- N) Panoramic view of old Memphis, Victorian era homes, Mississippi River bridge.
- O) Newspaper headline "JFK Appoints Special Investigator to Quell UFO Craziness."
- P) Text in article bolded and enlarged "...Irish Catholic ...former railroad refrigeration car engineer ...G. Howard Clark ...major patents on the refrigerant Freon."
- Q) Zoom on photograph accompanying article, of older, fatter version of the hero chewing a giant Cuban cigar.
- R) Small filing cabinet bulging with documents labeled in bold red letters (the only color in the whole montage) "The Clark Files."
- S) Typewritten letter falls off the filing cabinet, with "The White House" letterhead.
- T) Letter swirls into view to see JFK's handwritten signature.

END MONTAGE

SUPER: VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI: MARCH 2002

EXT. VICTORIAN CIVIL WAR ERA HOME - OVERCAST DAY

NIKKI, mid 30's, indeterminate foreign accent, attractive. Knocks hard at the front door. Opened by KASE a tough military man, mid 20's, filling out a ragged New Orleans Saints jersey, leaning heavily on a walking cane. Fuzzy blue-eyed gray and white long haired cat peers briefly out the opening door, then scurries back into the house.

INT. VICTORIAN CIVIL WAR ERA HOME/LIVING ROOM - OVERCAST DAY

NIKKI

This better be a damn good story,
Mister Clark. That drive up from
New Orleans is an absolute nightmare.

Nikki slips past Kase at the door way. Clears a spot on the cluttered sofa. Sits down. Ceiling fan wobbling overhead flutters Nikki's papers briefly. Kase speaks with a light southern accent, has the demeanor of a Southern Gentleman.

KASE

Why yes, it is nice to see you again,
Miss Nikki Gateaux.
(rhymes with chateau)
You're looking fit and svelte as
ever.

NIKKI

My, but you do try hard to tidy up
for your house guests.

Nikki crosses her legs. Mutters you make it impossible for
a lady to be ladylike here. Kase admires her long legs
openly. Mutters to himself, rolls eyes in dismay, a twelve
on a scale of ten.

NIKKI

Kase, this is supposed to be your
living room, not a health club.
Just look at all these weights and
machines.

KASE

How many times...

NIKKI

Yes, you're in training. You missed
the Olympics though, or hadn't you
heard?

She notices a television set covered with moon dust and an
stereo with so many wires dangling from the back it had
clearly not been used in years.

KASE

Amateurs. Wimps. Besides, the
government jocks wouldn't let me
into the Olympics; Nikki, you know
that. They think I'm dead. They'll
stop at nothing to keep me there.

He glares at her. Nikki shrugs, and is all business now.

NIKKI

You said something about a trillion
dollar story on the phone?

Dixie the cat is on the near end of the sofa, eyes big;
watching and sniffing toward this strange, perfumed intruder.

KASE

(looking toward Dixie)
Cold soda in the ice box. Help
yourself.

Kase steps awkwardly from the front door and eases painfully
into a chair opposite Nikki.

KASE

Sorry about the mess, Nikki. I didn't
mean to offend.

NIKKI

I know, Kase... You know I love you. Too bad life had to get in our way, no?

KASE

Yes, life.

(hoisting the cane)

What would we do without it? ...You been on the science beat at the Times Picayune long enough to know much about the Freon Ban?

NIKKI

Sure, Kase. Freon twelve damages the ozone layer, so we had to ban it and use safer chemicals. Right?

KASE

Sure, Nikki.

Kase repeats like a bubble head with air for brains.

KASE

That's the politically correct explanation. Very good, Nikki.

Kase adjusts himself in the chair to balance the placement of two very painful knees, then slowly leans forward. He speaks with conviction.

KASE

The truth is the Ozone Hole over the South Pole is five times bigger now than it was ten years ago, when the Ban was passed. We've spent a trillion dollars - for nothing.

NIKKI

(writing steadily)

You mean billion dollars, Kase.

Kase waits until she has erased trillion from her notes and written in billion.

KASE

No, it's trillion, with a T. And not just one trillion. The chillers - machines that use the new refrigerants - everything is thirty percent less efficient now. That means everybody is paying at least thirty percent more on their utility bills.

NIKKI

You're serious about this... You think this could have caused the California energy crisis - even the collapse at Enron? The run up in crude oil prices this last year?

(looking up at him)

What hard proof do you have?

Kase says nothing for a short while. Nikki relaxes noticeably. Maybe it's just an elaborate hoax to get her out to the country. She eases the rigid crossed legs and gives him a coquettish look. Kase enjoys the moment as much as she.

KASE

I'm the expert, remember? The highly placed source? The author of two textbooks on energy conservation?

Kase stands up and hobbles out of the living room, through a small dining room, into the kitchen. Dixie follows, double times it past him, slides on the wood floor. The place is cram packed with furniture, close enough together so that Kase can get around without his cane.

KITCHEN

Dixie the cat is sitting by her bowl for food. LOUD MEEOW. Kase hurries to feeds her, with a rough tousle and good scratch under the belly. He leans against the kitchen counter, trying to seem a normal man despite the handicap. Nikki enters, sits at a small dining table piled high with just stuff - ancient New Orleans Saints lunch box, little wood goblins, voo doo figurines.

KASE

Nikki, the trillion dollar price tag is common knowledge in the construction industry. NASA issues regular reports showing satellite photos. The Ozone Hole just gets bigger and bigger. It now covers the tip of South America six months of the year. Penguins regularly wash ashore as far away from Antarctica - as in Rio de Janiero. Brazil, for Christ's sake.

Nikki sits bolt upright at the breakfast table, pursing lips in concentration as she takes more notes.

KASE

NASA was worried enough to send a satellite up specifically to study the ozone layer.

NIKKI

Shouldn't I wait on the story then,
until they publish their results?

Nikki looks up tentatively from her writing, to see Kase
shake his head no, sadly.

KASE

The satellite was launched in
September 2001. It exploded before
reaching orbit. NASA has no plans
for a replacement. The Administration
is worried about other things.

Nikki finishes her notes. Struggles to find an angle.

NIKKI

You mean the NASA rocket exploded in
the same September... as in nine
eleven Twin Towers September?

Kase nods. Watches the wheels turn in Nikki's face.

NIKKI

You don't think they could possibly
be related?

Kase shrugs. Nikki's hands tidy up the table mess as she
talks abstractly.

NIKKI

The same NASA that's cleared the
slate? Focusing all their energy on
a manned expedition to Mars? While
nobody knows what's causing the Ozone
Hole to get bigger? The same
Administration that walked out on
the Global Warming Treaty talks a
few months ago?

Kase is staring unfocused at a map on the dining room wall
opposite. It's an 1800's nautical overlay of the world, a
matching globe on a small table beside it. He maneuvers
over (still in clear sight of Nikki in the kitchen) and behind
him vaguely is a framed letter with NASA bold in the right
half of the letterhead.

KASE

(illustrating with
the globe and map)

The ozone layer blocks ultra high
energy ultra violet rays from reaching
the Earth. Last winter these UV
rays made a microwave out of the
polar ice cap.

(MORE)

KASE (CONT'D)

A block of ice a mile thick,
the size of Rhode Island
sloughed off Antarctica. Imagine
the immense power of a relentless
barrage of U.V. energy without the
ozone to stop it... But... That's
not your story, Nikki.

Nikki stops writing, looks up at Kase. He talks while
maneuvering over to end up standing opposite Nikki's chair
at the table.

KASE

That's only background information.
These people covering up the Freon
Ban conspiracy. They're powerful.
They're rich. They're connected.
They're dangerous. They've made an
easy trillion dollars on this scam.
They destroyed a NASA satellite to
keep their ugly secret.

NIKKI

God dammit, Kase. Why did you tell
me? You don't need a reporter, you
need James Bond.

(stands up)

Why me? You're a damned dissident;
a dead one at that. But me? I've
got a life!

KASE

Knowing you know their secret will
shake them up, rattle their scruples.
They'll shadow you. They'll make
mistakes. I'll find them when they
do.

Nikki's lips tremble slightly, she fidgets with her hands
nervously. Kase inches around the kitchen table, grasps
Nikki's wrist.

KASE

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have imposed
on you. If you can't handle the
heat, I can get you out of here safe.

(grasping her shoulder)

No one will ever know.

An uneasy silence trespasses upon their friendship. Kase
picks up a spring hand exerciser (big chrome spring with two
handles) and squeezes it repeatedly, SPRING SOUNDS. They
both watch the gizmo, glisten with each rep with reflected
light from a table lamp.

NIKKI

No, Kase. I'll know. I'll do it.
I shouldn't. But I will. I'll do
it. This thing will take years to
expose? Damn, what a fool. But
I'll do it.

Nikki is talking to herself by the time she gets her notes together and grabs her things (purse, camera, notebook) in a sudden, stumbling dash through the living room back to the front door.

FOYER

Twisting the knob and opening the door violently, she suddenly turns around to Kase, who has followed her awkwardly, now leaning on his cane looking impossibly calm - and vulnerable.

NIKKI

You sure know how to show a lady a
good time, Kase.

KASE

You're a Goddess, Nikki.

NIKKI

I'll be in touch.

KASE

I know.

EXT. CIVIL WAR ERA VICTORIAN HOME - OVERCAST DAY

Nikki scatters a flock of birds at the feeder in the front yard as she scurries past. Kase watches briefly, then gently closes the door. Lights from Nikki's truck arc across the exterior of the house. She backs out of the drive way, lights shine into the carport. Two beady eyes stare out of a rubble of junk, ears perked up, hackles raised. Scooter the possum. Nikki BURNS RUBBER and speeds away. Kase watches through cracked Venetian blinds, sighs as the car leave. He closes the blinds as red tail lights fade in the distance.

INT. CIVIL WAR ERA VICTORIAN HOME - OVERCAST DAY

Kase sits down on the sofa, and picks up a cell phone from the end table, checking a leather wrist brace briefly, as though he were measuring time by checking his pulse. Then he punches the phone, NUMBER TONES SOUND. Looking out the window, a half dozen deer are lying down in a grove of oak trees by a water bucket and feed trough. Kase opens a window and tosses a couple bowls of apple scented deer corn out to them. They don't budge. Kase smiles, and gets a loaf of whole wheat bread, tosses a half dozen pieces out the window. They go for that, big black eyes, fuzzy ears focused on Kase as they munch it down.

INT. BEAT UP OLD '79 GMC HALF TON PICKUP - OVERCAST DAY

The interior is trashed out badly, speedometer broken, dash faded white, warped from the sun; but the 400 cu.in. engine PURRS better than a Harley Davidson on steroids, especially in idle. Windshshield wipers SQUEAK intermittently. Nikki digs into her purse to get a RINGING cell phone, slowing down at a red light. Just ahead is the Mississippi River bridge, just behind her a brightly lit casino. A few cars in sight. Keeping one eye on the stop light, she picks up the phone and wedges it open.

KASE (V.O.)

Don't worry about the red light,
Nikki. It won't change until I let
it.

Nikki pounds her hands on the steering wheel in fury;
revealing a petite version of Kase's leather band on her own
wrist.

NIKKI

Damn you Kase. Damn your stupid
mentat brain control psycho tricks
anyway. What the hell are you trying
to do here?!

KASE (V.O.)

You're driving too fast, love. You're
upset. You were above the speed
limit before you even left the drive
way here. Calm down.

NIKKI

Kase. There's a cop car!

Nikki blinks in surprise; not quite believing her own two
eyes. Then she gives a mischievous giggle as the police
vehicle eases up to the light in the lane opposite.

NIKKI

He's looking at me. At the light.
Do something!

The cool, collected reporter facade has evaporated in a blaze
of teenage indecision.

KASE (V.O.)

Drive carefully, will you?

NIKKI

Okay. Okay already. Get me away
from this googgle eyed cop will ya?

Nikki twists to the side, avoiding the law officer's
increasingly inquisitive stare.

NIKKI
Dammit Kase. Please.

KASE (V.O.)
Behold. The power of the mind.

The cop car inches closer, obeying an apparently long since green light from his direction. The police officer - is turning around to look at the light from Nikki's direction. Just as he reaches her, the light focuses into green going Nikki's direction. She throws the phone on the floor, slams down hard on the accelerator. With a SQUEEL OF TIRE RUBBER from the big mag chrome rim Michelins, she's gone.

NIKKI
I'll get you for that one, you psychic
freak out!

Yells at the top of her voice toward the cell phone, her leather bound wrist, fist clenched white knuckled on the wheel. A wild grin puts tracks into the careful makeup at the corners of her eyes. Just as she does so the red active light on the phone blinks, then goes off.

NIKKI
The hook's set. Just ya'll come and
get us. Jerks.

MONTAGE - VICKSBURG, NEW ORLEANS - AFTERNOON

- A) Bonnie Blue (Nikki's pickup) crosses the Mississippi River bridge, through the Vicksburg Garden District. Quick view of the Vicksburg National Battlefield.
- B) Pontoon bridge across Lake Ponchartrain, panoramic view of downtown New Orleans in the distance.
- C) Getting out of the jalopy, Nikki pauses to look at the carefree tourists dismounting a trolley in the middle of historic Poydras Street.
- D) Nikki clutches her purse and note pad, hustles into the Times Picayune building, lights blazing in every window.
- E) An police cruiser rolls ominously into the space next to hers. A light rain begins to fall. A heavy fog moves in.
- F) Nikki, spying the police surveillance from the entranceway, turns on heel and stalks into the building.
- G) Head bowed, shaking in consternation while a crooked smile wavers unsteadily upon her lips.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. CIVIL WAR ERA VICTORIAN HOME - DUSK

Kase is working out his lame legs with furious intensity, excruciating pain etching deep lines at the corners of his eyes. The windows are open, and the light of a bright orange sunset reflects into the unlit space through shiny metal blinds. The chromium weights glisten in the dim illumination, and the rhythmic sounds of iron WEIGHTS RATTLING punctuates the still air.

The little red light on the phone blinks. It's Nikki, (Cut to see her looking out her window at the Statesman into the parking lot below) telling him of the surveillance. He reassures, his hands telling the story; then clutches a worn gold frame photo of Nikki in a white knuckled fist as he tries to stay calm. She relaxes with a sigh and smile. She hangs up with pucker and kiss.

Kase collapses the cell phone halves with a CRACK, tears glistening his cheeks; teeth gritting in a grim visage. Slowly, he CRUNCHES the phone with his bare hand. Wires splay out of the little plastic box. He tosses it atop the same pile, along with a half dozen other dead cell phones. Dixie the cat ambles over to investigate, stalking the tangle of wires like it was a live critter. Cat jumps when a wire springs loose with a twang.

Kase begins to exercise again, with doubled speed. IRON WEIGHT SOUNDS. After a few series of knee exercises, he gets up and tries to walk without depending on the cane so much; collapses on the floor with a shout of frustration; POUNDING CLENCHED FISTS on the furniture. Gets up and tries to walk again; falls on his knees; tries again.

SERIES OF SHOTS - FORT POLK, LOUISIANA - DAWN

SUPER: THREE YEARS LATER

- A) WHIPPING BEAT of a military transport helicopter.
- B) Flying over the U.S. Army Fort Polk military reservation, an oasis of asphalt in the middle of knobby Cyprus swamps.
- C) Heading toward the central parade grounds, surrounded by World War II era wood office buildings, paint peeling.
- D) Small groups of soldiers are exercising, jogging around the perimeter.
- E) The helicopter banks toward a landing pad at one end of the parade ground.
- F) At the edge of the X marking the landing zone are universal gyms, soldiers pumping iron.

- G) Downdraft blade wash scatters all the troops as the chopper hovers lower.
- H) One figure keeps working out until the aircraft lands.
- I) Out walks a nefarious figure in a black suit with a shiny metal briefcase chained to one wrist.
- J) Chopper ENGINE REVS UP, the helicopter lifts off, quickly fades away.
- K) The nefarious figure paces past the lone soldier who is wearing camouflage pants and green t-shirt, sweat soaked.
- L) The soldier is Kase, now in a bull dog Marine hair cut.
- M) The exercising soldiers straggle quickly back to the universal gym.
- N) Two of the soldiers, in white medical orderly outfits, flank Kase, who is now seen to be shackled to the equipment.
- O) The orderlies unlock the ankle manacles, muscle Kase off the universal gym, and escort him away in a straight jacket.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. JAG LAWYER'S OFFICES - DAY

STAFF SERGEANT, burly, 20's sits at old wood desk. He's much too big for the desk. Airborne insignia. Combat photos, patches, and memorabilia on the walls. Through a window opposite is the Fort Polk parade grounds. He watches with longing, the helicopter flying away into action. A telephone on the desk rings just as the CHOPPER NOISE recedes. Meaty hand grabs it like it was a live hand grenade.

STAFF SERGEANT
JAG Fort Polk. Good day.

BELKIND (V.O.)
Is this the U.S. Army Judge Advocate
General's offices?

STAFF SERGEANT
Yes, Sir. How may I help you?

BELKIND (V.O.)
Captain Paul Franco, please.

STAFF SERGEANT
I'll forward your call. Sir.

FRANCO (V.O.)
This is Paul Franco.

FRANCO, 30's, intense, speaks at a fast pace like the New York Italian that he is.

CUT TO UNITED NATIONS BUILDING - NEW YORK CITY

BELKIND, foreigner, 50's, fat, permanent grimace, one lazy eye (i.e. one focuses wide) makes him look evil. He's sitting at a large desk, blue Star of David flag on a stand nearby. On top of the desk is an open file folder.

INSERT - CLOSE ON DESK

Open folder shows Kase's passport photo and a short bio on one side, letter with a NASA letterhead (same as the one framed in his home) on top of a small sheath of documents on the other side. Belkind SLAPS the folder closed. Notice an over sized death's head ring reminiscent of Nazis SS on the hand as it pauses on the closed folder.

BACK TO SCENE

Belkind swivels a posh leather chair as a phone connection is made on the other end, turns to look out at ground level upon a cascade of colorful world flags arrayed in front of the U.N. building. Steady vehicle traffic moves behind in a blur. Notice the obnoxious ring again as he puts the receiver to his ear, something vaguely like a Swastika carved bold in the side of the ring. He speaks slowly, enunciating each word, ends long sentences with a swallow, Adams Apple moving.

BELKIND

Hello, Captain Franco. My name is Nathan Belkind. I am attached to the Science Office of the Israeli Embassy, in New York City. At the United Nations... Captain, are you still there?

INT. LAWYER'S PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

Captain Franco stumbles out of his chair, covers the receiver; then stretches the phone chord across the small office to holler down the hall to the Staff Sergeant. He pantomimes, two fingers to the lapel, pointing - get the General in here, A.S.A.P. The NCO runs to comply. Settling back into his chair, Franco takes a deep breath - talks. Franco talks with a chip on his shoulder, resentful at this intrusion - by a foreign power.

FRANCO

I'm sorry, but I'm flustered by this call... and, frankly, confused. Why are you calling me?

BELKIND (V.O.)

Sorry to have caught you at a loss, Captain. I've received a most disturbing communication from a client of yours.

FRANCO

Whom might that be, Mr. Attaché?

BELKIND (V.O.)

Please, understand. I'm not trying to exert influence here. My purpose in calling is only to...

FRANCO

Who is he, may I ask?

BELKIND (V.O.)

A Specialist Fourth Class Clark, formerly assigned to the Headquarters Company at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

(swallow)

This is your legal case right now. No?

FRANCO

Yes. Except little information is available to me. Just the Inspector General's records. Everything else is classified.

BELKIND (V.O.)

Are you saying, Captain, that you can't discuss the details of this case?

FRANCO

No! The documents are classified, and they're out of my reach. Even as his Defense Counsel... They're just not available.

BELKIND (V.O.)

How can you possibly represent this soldier properly?

FRANCO

I do the best I can. Sir.

BELKIND (V.O.)

Perhaps Clark could get help from his U.S. Congressman here in Washington, to obtain the records you need?

FRANCO

No. Sir. Beavus and Butthead are sleeping in the same bed on this one.

BELKIND (V.O.)

I think I understand, Captain. The civilian and political authorities are aligned against this young man?

FRANCO

Yes, and no one cares to bother with due process. Not, for a lowly enlisted man.

BELKIND (V.O.)

Let me caution you, mister American J.A.G. lawyer. Your client is no mere enlisted man.

FRANCO

I don't understand.

The Staff Sergeant pokes his head in the door, motions with two fingers to his lapel, sick figure walks. Two star general is en route. That's combat jungle sign language.

BELKIND (V.O.)

Your client, I regretfully tell you, is a talented engineer and scientist with a strong following. At least in my country.

FRANCO

Yea, Right. And my Mom's the Virgin Mary.

BELKIND (V.O.)

I am unfamiliar with that anachronism. I think you should know that Clark is a scientist of quite respected acumen.

FRANCO

Let me tell you, Mr. Ambassador. Or whatever you are.

The GENERAL enters, burly, silver haired bull of a man with a chest full of ribbons. He curtly motions Franco to put them on speaker phone.

BELKIND'S OFFICE

Two well dressed staff, trim and fit like secret agents - one male, one female - are standing around Belkind's desk.

Listening intensely on parallel phone lines.
One of the Israeli's looks suspiciously like Nikki, but you
don't get a full view of her features for confirmation.

BACK TO SCENE

GENERAL (V.O.)

This is General Fulwyler. On the
speaker phone. I assure you, Sir.
Specialist Clark is receiving the
best legal advice the United States
Army has to offer.

BELKIND

Let's understand each other, General.
We have a problem here. You and I.

FRANCO (V.O.)

Excuse me, Sir. Assuming what you
say is true. What the Hell is this
guy doing in the Army, of all places?
...and enlisted?

The General silences Franco with a chopping hand signal.

BELKIND

He was at White Sands, the main
research laboratory in the whole
U.S. military. Also - and I apologize
if I know something I should not -
HELSTAF is there. That's the anti-
ballistic missile defense system.
The High Energy Laser Facility.

The General is Old School, acts uncomfortable with conference
telephones, talks overly loud and leans over the phone cradle.

GENERAL (V.O.)

HELSTAF, Star Wars, lasers. You're
sure about that?

BELKIND

We have our sources. What about
your own?

FRANCO'S OFFICE

Franco picks the phone off the cradle, and hands it to the
General, then noisily YANKS OPEN DRAWERS and rifles through
a mass of untidy documents on the case. The General AD LIB's
with Belkind as Franco scans a thin file of medical and
military records on the Clark case. The General gingerly
places the phone back on the cradle when Franco indicates
he's ready. There's a CLICK on the line.

FRANCO

I have a confidential report here
written by the Inspector General.
It's not a pretty picture.

BELKIND (V.O.)

I don't understand, Captain. What's
been going on?

FRANCO

You didn't know? I thought he had
contacted you.

BELKIND (V.O.)

All we got was an old letter from
NASA with a message scrawled on top
to contact you.

FRANCO

Clark got into some trouble at White
Sands. Got an Army Commendation
Medal.

BELKIND'S OFFICE

BELKIND

I know that one. It's one of the
highest peacetime awards given by
the Army. Quite an accomplishment
for an enlisted man, yes?

FRANCO (V.O.)

I'd say it's practically in the
miracle category. Begging your
pardon.

BELKIND

Yes, Sir. S. P. Four Clark must
have done something quite
extraordinary, no? What is it that
he did out there?

INSERT - CLOSE ON DESK TOP

A woman's hand with manicured fingers and bright red nail
polish pushes a document across the desk into Belkind's range
of vision. It has White Sands Missile letter head, is signed
by the Post Commander, a two star general. Across the body
of the letter is a red stamp bold in Hebrew, smaller font in
English "SECRET" translated.

BACK TO SCENE

BELKIND

Captain. General. Are there any documents you have about what actually happened out there in your Wild West?

FRANCO (V.O.)

I'm looking, Sir. Damn, nothing. Absolutely nothing. Most of the words are marked out with a black marker. All I can find is an obscure reference to the medal he was awarded.

INSERT - CLOSE ON DESK TOP

Another official looking xerox stamped "SECRET" comes across Belkind's desk into his line of vision, pushed by the same red fingernails. This one has Fort Sam Houston letterhead, Office of the Inspector General. Most of the text has been marked out crudely with a thick black magic marker.

BACK TO SCENE

Tips of Belkind's mouth curl up infinitesimally in the biggest rise you'll see out of him.

BELKIND

I do not get it. First he gets some big time prestigious award. Then they order him out of there. Pronto. I think you better have a talk with your client about all of this. Counselor.

FRANCO (V.O.)

Easier said than done, Belkind.

BELKIND

What are you saying, Captain?

FRANCO (V.O.)

Clark's on a psych ward. There by direct order of the Inspector General.

BELKIND

What's the diagnosis?

Franco answers carefully, unsure if the Israeli will understand the technical words.

FRANCO (V.O.)

Psychosis. P.T.S.D. Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. He has flashbacks all the time. Can't distinguish the present from the past.

BELKIND

I, see. ...What happens now?

LAWYER'S OFFICE

GENERAL

His final Medical Board Hearing is tomorrow. He'll be discharged of the Army by the end of the day. Close your file on this, Belkind. It's over.

The General puts his finger on the phone toggle, terminating the conversation, mutters. God damn diplomats. Slimy bastards. Franco raises his eyebrows, unaccustomed to such crude behavior. Chest full of combat ribbons, Airborne insignia, First Cavalry horse on the shoulder patch reveals the General to be a line officer, not a lawyer. Franco has only one row of dull colored ribbons.

FRANCO

General. ...You still want me to try and prove service connection to the medical disability?

GENERAL

Whatever it takes to get that soldier out of the military. Wreck his life. Gut his career. Make sure nobody ever believes anything he says. Ever again.

The General stalks out. Franco salutes to the empty room.

FRANCO

Yes. Sir. General. Sir.

INT. BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER/PSYCH WARD - DAY

Kase, wearing baby blue hospital pajamas, is seated in a day room with several other patients dressed the same way. Male and female staff in stern white doctors garb phase in and out of view at random. The patients are playing a labored game of Risk, in slow motion. They're all chemically narcotized, and Kase is a mere shell of his former self - eyes glazed, movements slow, slurred speech, drooling. The Risk game ends as one patient resorts to violence, and is quickly escorted away by staff. The remaining patients sit there, nothing to do. They don't seem to mind.

Nikki shows up, hugs an unresponding Kase. She has a large three ring binder, sits down with Kase. Mentions, your trial is tomorrow, we have to get you ready. No response from Kase, but when prompted he sits beside her. More patients gather around as the show and tell goes on; staff hover around jealous of how the patients take to Nikki's manner.

SERIES OF SHOTS - KASE'S LIFE

Nikki keeps a slow monologue going all the time, reading off stenciled labels. Dysfunctional responses from Kase and the other patients accompany her, at awkward intervals. Each short scene ends with a freeze frame, and the album page snapshot photo. Nikki starts slowly, with animal pictures that strike a sympathetic chord with the mentally ill. More patients gather around them after seeing these images and hearing Nikki's descriptions, and Kase visibly relaxes among his friends.

- A) Baby Kase and stuffed penguin "teddy bear" with button eyes
- B) Little Kase catching turtles in bayou
- C) Little Kase holding Robert the duck (extracted from same Louisiana bayou).
- D) Private Clark happy in Basic Training.
- E) Kase taking a fist full of aspirins, then...
- F) Running past the Drill Sergeant with a stop watch, passing the fitness exam to graduate Basic.
- G) Kase, happy in tech school posing before Enola Gay. That's the bomber that dropped the A-bombs on Japan.
- H) P.F.C. Clark marching troops around
- I) Kase in camouflage fatigues leading physical training
- J) Wearing a red shoulder ribbon as a Senior Student Leader
- K) At a gala military affair with Nikki in awesome gown
- L) In a Physical Therapy clinic for his knees, wearing new Specialist Fourth Class insignia
- M) Back home in Texas with Nikki, giving her his best salute.
- N) Dixie the kitten
- O) Posse of adorable baby possumetts crawling all over Nikki, Scotter the possum nearby. Their mom.
- P) Baby possum using cat's own litter box. Then...
- Q) Adolescent Dixie, in hot pursuit

INSERT - WIDE SHOT OF PSYCH WARD

Nikki pauses while raucous laughing dies down. Psychos are fun to entertain.

BACK TO SERIES OF SHOTS

- R) Atlas type map of New Mexico, big blue dot at White Sands Missile Range
- S) Specialist Clark at the Weather Station
- T) Kase with the Atmospheric Sciences Laboratory staff, NASA shuttle in the background (having landed there). You're pulling out leg says one patient (V.0.) Am not. Hands rifle through a few pages until the clamoring stops.
- U) Shuttle Columbia exploded (news photo thereof) because of bad weather forecast, you know. Is important, Kase's job. Very important.
- V) Spec Four Clark in front of weather tracking World War two era radar
- W) Kase letting go weather balloon, aluminum foil trailing (panoramic view of the White Sands mountain pass behind)
- X) Dixie the cat sleeping on the barracks window sill while many soldiers are exercising in the parade ground behind
- Y) Dixie sleeping on desk at weather station, weather maps all around
- Z) Dixie has moved, sleeping in crook of Kase's arms (he's still asleep at the desk)

INSERT - CLOSE IN PSYCH WARD TABLE

Several hands reach in to stop Kase at the Dixie photo for a few seconds while everybody oogles cat.

BACK TO SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Kase touring the High Energy Laser Facility
- B) Room sized computers
- C) Giant chemical tanks outside
- D) Giant mirrors to focus laser beam
- E) Cow named Uther roasted by a laser test trial (only kidding)
- F) Detail of World War two era rocket test stands used to Study Nazi V-two rockets
- G) Kase posing with the Post Commander and Chief Scientist after a technical presentation, his posters on a podium behind them
- H) Shaking the Post Commander's hand, proud as a paratrooper

- I) Close up of Kase beside the tech presentation posters
- J) Computer printouts and graphs
- K) Colorful cross section of a Star Wars X fighter, showing all the engineered systems.

INSERT - CLOSE IN ON PSYCH WARD TABLE

White shirt-sleeve of psych ward staff reaches in, SLAMS SHUT the photo album. Confiscates volume. Sends Kase to his room. Patients are sad. Kase will be gone tomorrow, one way or the other. Nikki is escorted out the locked ward.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. TRIBUNAL ROOM - DAY

The Medical Review Board takes place in a small conference room dominated by a single large oak table. Three Army officers: two medical officers and a line officer (the nefarious man from the helo pad the day before) - and a Court Reporter will be seated at one end, later. Captain Franco and Kase are alone at this point, on one long side of the table; witnesses will sit on the other side. As they wait for the meeting to begin, Franco is reviewing notes scrawled on a yellow legal pad. Nikki arrives a few minutes later - Kase shows no sign of recognizing her, and she stoically sits beside him, aloof. Kase is between Nikki and Franco.

INSERT - CLOSE ON TABLE

Kase is absent mindedly sketching out a map of New Mexico, outlining the large White Sands military reservation on the south of the state; stretching from El Paso to Las Cruces. Kase is a stick figure in the middle. To the east is Holloman Air Force Base - sketches a mushroom cloud; it's where the A-bombs were tested. A few miles to the north is Roswell Army Air Base. Kase draws a little alien E.T. looking stick figure beside a crude flying saucer. Draws a short arrow from Roswell to a drum shaped building he's labeled High Energy Laser Facility, HELSTAF - scratched out, labeled Hell Staff. Image freezes.

BACK TO SCENE

JUDGE 60's, gray hair and three Tribunal members enter the conference room, are seated. Everybody is in full dress uniform, shiny medals and insignia everywhere; colorful ribbons - serious faces.

JUDGE

Has the Service Member had sufficient time in which to prepare his case?

FRANCO

Yes, sir.

JUDGE

Specialist Clark, has your counsel informed you of your rights to testify?

KASE

Yes. Sir.

JUDGE

Counsel, you may proceed.

FRANCO

Members of the Board, my client will prove that: The illness did not exist prior to service; his hospitalization was a result of Command Influence; he did experience trauma in the service but his previous military training at the U.S. Naval Academy was sufficient to prepare him for these extraordinary circumstances; and the Medical Board's diagnosis is without any substantial proof or firm documentation.

JUDGE

Duly recognized.

FRANCO

I would like to question Colonel Saunders

JUDGE

Very well, proceed.

SAUNDERS 50's, completely bald, tall, gaunt - had moments earlier slipped into the room. Speaks with a strong southern brawl, overly loud for the small room like the Baptist minister he is.

INSERT - CLOSE ON KASE

Saunders grasps Kase's shoulder as he passes behind; Kase looks up at him, gives a floppy Charlie Brown smile, but no recognition. Saunders then sits at the table opposite Nikki, Kase, and Franco.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANCO

Please state your name and rank.

SAUNDERS

Robert E. Saunders, Chaplain.
Colonel, U.S. Army.

FRANCO

Thank you. Colonel Saunders, when
did Spec Four Clark start working
for you?

SAUNDERS

The summer of last year around June.

FRANCO

Did you know at that time the
circumstances that led him to Fort
Polk?

SAUNDERS

Yes.

FRANCO

Did you observe him in his work
environment?

SAUNDERS

Yes.

FRANCO

How well did he perform?

SAUNDERS

Exceptionally well. In fact, I had
put him in for a second ARCOM, the
Army Commendation Medal.

FRANCO

Were you surprised when they admitted
him to a psych ward?

SAUNDERS

Yes, I was. I had seen no erratic
or peculiar behavior. Even with the
fact that he had come from a very
stressful situation. He was unusually
able to blend in with the staff.

FRANCO

I have entered into evidence a letter
from the Chief of Psychiatry, Doctor
Gillooly. This document is the
evaluation of Specialist Clark's
state of mind at this same point in
time.

INSERT - CLOSE ON TABLE

Franco enters into evidence a document that had been butchered by a black marker, deleting all names, places, and dates.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANCO

...A ten page single spaced statement with all the names, places, and dates obliterated for anonymity was given to me for evaluation. This statement, which had been submitted to the Inspector General by Spec Four Clark indicates considerable inner turmoil, distress, and desperation. I believe the threat to the patient and those around him is sufficiently important to justify an exception to the provisions of I.G. confidentiality.

Kase had perked up at the mention of Annapolis. Nikki notices, and grasps his hand in hers under the table. Memories start to give Kase's eyes tunnel vision. A flashback seems to happen as pieces of testimony continue in the background.

FLASHBACK - U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY YARD

Staring at the New Mexico drawing in front of him, it's replaced by visions of the past, from Nikki's perspective; the ace photographer taking pix of her most favorite subject.

- A) Kase in a Plebe's blue rim sailor's hat, hand in hand with Nikki
- B) Same place, second frame; they're embraced; then kissing
- C) Midshipman Kase in the bow of a small sail boat out in the Chesapeake Bay (the Academy sea wall in the background) falling over.
- D) Nikki dives in to "rescue" him
- E) They're swimming after the boat as it sails away, halyards flopping in a brisk wind. Kase is a very stronger swimmer.
- F) Kase catches the boat, drops the sail, then hauls Nikki aboard with a hand over the side.

At the end, you realize it was all from Nikki's perspective and that she is the one who is flashing back not Kase.

END FLASHBACK

FRANCO (V.O.)

Defense counsel contends that neither the I.G. nor Doctor Gillooly had the authority to divulge any matters concerning Specialist Clark, to anyone. The Department of the Army transferred Clark to Fort Polk. It was a confidential transfer, and all service personnel are obliged to follow the very specific requirements in such circumstances. The Chief of Psychiatry circumvented this aspect of the military Coda in collusion with the Inspector General. In so doing, they have breached the most intimate of confidences in the military - the sanctity of the Chain of Command. They have also abrogated the oversight by the United States Congress, who directly ordered this transfer.

INSERT - CLOSE ON NIKKI'S HAND AT HER SIDE

Nikki grips his hand hard. Kase jolts in reflex.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANCO

Colonel Saunders, when did you hear of Spec Four Clark's admittance to Chambers?

SAUNDERS

It was the weekend. I visited Kase Monday morning and talked to the nurse that was in charge. It was a male Captain and we spoke privately. He and his junior staff on the ward had seen no evidence of mental problems.

He looks toward Kase, expectantly. No response from Kase.

SAUNDERS

I read the full statement Specialist Clark submitted to the I.G., before it was butchered. It was as lucid and concise an account as I have ever read. The statement was given for review to my Staff Sergeant, who shared it with me. Neither of us thought anything like the opinion stated earlier in the I.G. doctor's letter.

FRANCO

Did you eventually speak with Doctor Durand-Hollis?

SAUNDERS

Yes.

FRANCO

What did Doctor Durand-Hollis say to you about Clark?

SAUNDERS

I visited the Psych Ward with my N.C.O.I.C.

(for Nikki's benefit)

- that's Non-Commissioned Office in Charge - the first of the week. Doctor Durand-Hollis told me he had read only a few pages of Kase's statement and that he was the 'sickest of the sick.'

(indicating quotes

with his fingers)

I told him I have had some dealings with psychiatric patients. That this certainly had not been at all obvious to me, and appreciated his patience. Could we talk about it.

Kase is surprised. He starts to say something, but Franco stops him. Saunders puts on bifocals to read his notes.

SAUNDERS

Durand-Hollis said, 'I've read it. I've read these few pages. I've determined that what's wrong with Clark. Now I'm going to prove it.'

FRANCO

So before Doctor Durand-Hollis even examined him, he believed Clark was severely mentally ill and set out to prove it?

SAUNDERS

To the best of my knowledge, he had not even spoken to Specialist Clark. So, yes Sir. You are correct.

FRANCO

Thank you, Colonel Saunders. You may step down now.

Dr. DH, late 40's, Hispanic features, chubby face, moustache, speaks with a thick Spanish accent. He enters as Saunders leaves. The doctor is nervous.

Reads extemporaneously everything off his notes and typed up official medical records spread out on the table before him, haphazardly.

FRANCO

The defense would like to call Doctor Durand-Hollis.

The doctor is sworn in and seated.

FRANCO

Please, why did you diagnose Spec Four Clark as you did?

DR. DH

He believes that he has developed a special formula of a scientific nature.

FRANCO

I would like to enter into evidence the following document, Exhibit B, from the Johnson Space Center, NASA. It reads, in part. Your concepts about the Unified Field Theory appear to be so profound that you are years ahead of the current scientific thinking in the areas in which you delved.

FLASHBACK - VICKSBURG, DOWNTOWN NEW ORLEANS, TEXAS

Nikki flashes back, to the Vicksburg Civil War Era Home.

- A) Kase opening a thick package from NASA
- B) Reads cover letter with NASA letterhead. Elation
- C) Hands bundle of pages to Nikki. The cover page which reads, "The Conceptual Design of a Constellation Class Starship"
- D) Nikki jumps for joy, hugs him.
- E) Kase drops the loosely bound papers; they spread all over the floor
- F) Detailed drawings, computer code, precise hand sketches of advanced technologies and aircraft. Both kneel to gather up the pages, laughing all the while.
- G) Kase dancing with Nikki at a night club... a drunken soiree in the French Quarter, celebrating.

END FLASHBACK

Both Kase and Nikki are smiling now, as the testimony goes on for a bit at the end of the flashback.

FRANCO (V.O.)
Doctor, have you read this letter?

DR. DH (V.O.)
Yes, I have.

FRANCO (V.O.)
Very well. Please continue with your diagnosis.

DR. DH (V.O.)
His thinking is manifested by persecutory thinking, with concerns about his safety after having made revelations about his peers.

FRANCO
You were you aware of the problems he had at White Sands? Having turned in drug users? Then had his life threatened? How would you categorize the stress he encountered at this time?

DR. DH
Moderate, routine duties.

FRANCO
If so; then, Doctor, how would you categorize Spec Four Clark's predisposition for this condition?

Nikki goes rigid in her chair.

FLASHBACK - WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE

Testimony continues in the background, as Nikki flashes back...

- A) Kase's car is on fire, Kase struggling desperately to extinguish the flames
- B) Kase is a grease monkey in the Auto Craft Shop repairing it, MECHANICAL SOUNDS, regularly accosted by the accused, LOUD INDISTINCT VOICES
- C) Then a motorcycle totaled, wires hanging everywhere.
- D) Kase puts motorcycle up on its stand, straggles toward the barracks in full view of the whole Company, which is at their morning formation in front of the barracks.

E) Nikki in tears on the other end of the phone, as he tells her all these things.

END FLASHBACK

DR. DH (V.O.)

Severe. He had a history of marginal adjustment to personal, family, social, academic, and occupational demands.

Cut from flashback to see the doctor hesitate, as he is reading from his notes. Franco motions, prodding him on through. Dr. DH reads with a thick accent, and the flashback continues.

DR. DH (V.O.)

Specialist Clark graduated from high school at sixteen... attended the U.S. Naval Academy for two years... completed college with a Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Texas, with honors.

FRANCO (V.O.)

Witness, what about Spec Four Clark's social, family, and personal life as exemplified by his military record?

DR. DH

At the Naval Academy he was twenty first in his class, on the Superintendent's List, a Company Commander, Platoon Leader, and on the Deans List. ... a three point five grade point average.

FRANCO

Doctor, please give some details of Clark's professional life.

DR. DH

After college, he worked for Exxon in exploration drilling for two years and then did research.

FRANCO

During which time he completed the technical document reviewed by NASA?

DR. DH

That's correct. He continued research after enlisting, and presented a formal paper of the results to the Post Commander, Major General Fulwyler and the Chief Scientist at White Sands Missile Range.

FRANCO

How old are you Spec Four Clark?

(after no answer)

Twenty seven years old... By any other measure other than that of Doctor Durand-Hollis, I would call Clark an over-achiever. How did the patient do in the hospital?

DR. DH

I personally presented his case history to the staff of the Army Medical Center, as a case study. Of course, his name and identity was confidential.

FRANCO

I see. Were either of the Medical Officers empaneled for this hearing present at that case study presentation?

DR. DH

Yes. They both were.

FRANCO

The physicians on this very Review Board attended this presentation?

DR. DH

Yes sir, they did. But. The identity of the patient was kept confidential.

FRANCO

This is a very unusual case... Isn't it an exercise in futility to disguise the individual's identity? ...Three weeks ago when these physicians reviewed your medical documents, what was their evaluation?

DR. DH

They were unanimously in agreement with my diagnosis.

FRANCO

Yet. Clark's two written appeals issued in the previous months were deemed cause to warrant this formal hearing in Judge's chambers.

INSERT - CLOSE UP

Franco shows two neatly typed statements to the Tribunal members. They're in stark contrast to the hodge podge of scrawled notes the doctor has splayed out before him.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANCO

The defense recommends striking from the record the medical review process preceding this formal hearing. It is prejudged and judgmental due to the legally circumspect way Spec Four Clark's case was presented by Doctor Durand-Hollis before his peers at Brooke Army Medical Center.

The nefarious man, head of the Tribunal, starts to say something, but Franco cuts him short.

FRANCO

I have no further questions for the witness.

Suddenly Kase flinches badly, reaches down and indicates his knees are hurting, real bad. The proceedings are halted momentarily to give him a chance to stand up and hobble around briefly, to work the stiffness out. Nikki supports him as he walks. She almost buckles as most of his weight shifts on her.

FLASHBACK - ANNAPOLIS, OCEAN CITY

Nikki's flashback continues as testimony is heard voiced over.

- A) Midshipman Kase in dress blues with Nikki at the Ring Dance
- B) Nikki and Kase at the Army-Navy football game in JFK Stadium in Philadelphia
- C) Kase sneaking Over the Wall, and out the Yard for a secret rendezvous in town
- D) Spring Break on the beach in Ocean City, Delaware camping
- E) Boozing at the camp site, late one night, Nikki driving the two of them in his dark green Audi Fox through a guard rail, right into the Atlantic Ocean

- F) His legs are trapped by the undercarriage, head barely above water
- G) Nikki can't pull him loose, he slaps her to her senses to go get help
- H) Farmer on giant tractor a few minutes later, Nikki perched beside him
- I) Flashing lights of ambulance. Kase watching from the sidelines (metal crutches and braces on his legs) as the Middie hats fly at graduation two years later in the Academy stadium. Hooray.

END FLASHBACK

Kase is finished walking. Nikki settles him in his chair, then sits down herself exhausted.

JUDGE (V.O.)

Counsel is to sum up the balance of the evidence.

FRANCO (V.O.)

Members of the Board, if the Disability Review Council is to adhere to its original decision that Spec Four Clark's condition is not service aggravated, it must rely on the medical board's analysis on this case. However, after careful analysis of the facts, the foundation of the medical board collapses.

Nikki flinches in her flashback, and everybody notices.

FRANCO (V.O.)

Spec Four Clark came to Fort Sam on an "Eyes Only" transfer arranged by his U.S. Congressman. When he was admitted his medical and service records were still at White Sands. When the staff on the psych ward asked him for personal history; he said he'd gone to Annapolis; he'd turned in drug users at White Sands; he'd presented a technical paper to a two star general there. This is an unusual history for an E Four. The staff didn't even ask for documents, they just assumed he had delusions of grandeur, and was mentally ill.

(MORE)

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

It wasn't until the medical and service records arrived at my own office a few days ago that I was convinced otherwise.

JUDGE

That's conjecture, counselor. It's not admissible.

FRANCO

The sole basis of the diagnosis rests on the psychiatrist having a technical competence in physics and laser technology. Doctor Durand-Hollis did not consult any experts, so the Board must rely on the NASA evaluation.

Franco glares disapproving at the doctor's pile of documents, and makes sure the Tribunal members do too.

FRANCO

Do we want to let a psychiatrist's own views on physics govern the case?

Kase struggles to focus. Then Franco begins his formal closing arguments, reading from a prepared statement. He reads slowly, as though it were new material for him and he had not written it himself.

FLASHBACK - ANNAPOLIS/MAIN POST CHAPEL

Nikki flashes back.

- A) Nikki in the Chapel basement, John Paul Jones' Tomb
- B) Kase by her side, admiring striking green marble dolphins
- C) Pan the stained glass windows, in the Chapel itself, a memorial service in progress
- D) Photo of Kase beside that of others fallen in combat. Wild Bill and the Swamp Fox, another urban legend.

END FLASHBACK

FRANCO (V.O.)

... In retrospect, Spec Four Clark should never have pushed his ideas in the Army. His work performance and record were spotless. His peers and superiors liked him well enough, but he pushed the Army, he voiced his views.

(MORE)

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

He jeopardized himself by turning in his room mates for drug use. When threatened by them he had to seek help from his Congressman. He wrote a formal statement asking for an investigation, and the Inspector General locked him up on a psych ward instead.

Franco presents a signed letter from Colonel Saunders.

FRANCO

The Chief of Chaplains has testified that Doctor Durand-Hollis told him before Clark was even examined that he was

(pantomimed quotes)
"the sickest of the sick" and how he felt the doctor was going to prove it was so. Is that how the Army wants its psychiatric evaluations done?

Franco literally has to read the last few sentences, pausing several times to read an unfamiliar script.

FRANCO

For the Army, Specialist Clark was a nuisance. He perused his technical manuals ...voiced his personal views freely. He stepped on too many toes. It would be better for the Army to be through with Specialist Clark because he caused too many problems.

The Tribunal files out of the room. Returns quickly. They issue a statement, read woodenly by nefarious man like Franco's closing arguments. Kase is standing and facing the Board, eyes downcast and unfocused.

JUDGE

Specialist Fourth Class Clark, the Board finds you unfit to perform the duties of your rank as a result of physical disability incurred in the line of duty. The percentage of disability is zero percent. The Board recommends you be separated from the Service, with severance pay.

Nikki swipes tears from her eyes. Franco is humbly silent. Kase in drug induced haze manages a manic Mona Lisa smile. Tribunal members take one last look before exiting, confident they made the right decision. Kase is escorted out.

Into a brightly lit hallway, medical orderlies in white. All circuits are dead. Nikki stays, to talk angrily with the Doctor, Chaplain, and Attorney. Chaplain calms everybody. They shake hands, exchange business cards, then the Army officers depart. Nikki gently kisses Kase on the cheek. He is unresponsive.

INT. SENATE HEARING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: TWO YEARS LATER

Nikki, a little older, defiant gray streaks in long dark hair, steps out of a city cab at the foot of the U.S. Congress building in Washington DC. Still obviously a reporter, camera and bulky purse slung over one shoulder and notebook PC in the opposite arm; she hurries up the long flight of marble stairs two at a time, having to hike up her long skirt a bit with one hand as she does so.

Nikki hurries down the long and crowded halls, to the largest hearing room. It's already packed. Nikki hustles down the aisle darting her head from side to side looking for an empty seat. A man in a dark suit about half way down the main aisle nonchalantly takes something off the seat beside him, and Nikki immediately hurries to the empty seat, squeezing past the man.

The Senators are beginning to assemble at the dais, each with their large staffs of secretaries and advisors. Nikki notices out of the corner of her eye a battered cane stuffed between her chair and that of the gentleman on the aisle. Several long seconds later something occurs to her, and she turns aside to look at the man's face. He smiles, but without meeting her eyes.

NIKKI

Kase!

Nikki screams so loud that a couple of the staff members all the way up at the dais look up from their paperwork.

NIKKI

...but I thought... you were still in the, uh sanitarium.

KASE

(tears glistening)
Miss Gateaux. How are you? What brings you here?

NIKKI

I'm with the Washington Bureau...
Of... The Times Picayune, Kase.
And you?

KASE

Oh, I was in the area. Came by for the show.

NIKKI

Yea. That'll be the day. Kase doing something without a purpose? No, that just don't happen.

Then it occurs to her that this is a hearing on the government's energy policy, and she starts to ask Kase about their long ago nemesis, the Freon fiasco. Her pulse quickens.

KASE

Thirty six hours, Nikki. Give me thirty six hours...

INSERT - CLOSE TO NIKKI'S WRIST

Grabbing her wrist with a fierce grip, she looks down to see his faded leather wrist band under a too short shirt sleeve. Brief flashback to their long ago exchanging the wrist bands as the promising to each other their hearts.

BACK TO SCENE

Sitting bolt upright in her chair, she nods solemnly and puts her hand over his, revealing her own worn leather wrist band.

NIKKI

I'm with you, Kase. All the way.

Just as she turns to look at Kase, his seat is empty and a Uniform sits down beside her. Kase is absentmindedly ambling toward the front of the room with his cane aided gait. The meeting is called to order with a CRACK of the gavel. Suddenly, the isle is empty except for Kase, looking lost trying feebly to find a seat. Two United States Marine ushers hurry up and politely grab him by his arms, turning him to try to guide him to the back of the room. Kase doesn't budge, and there's a scene.

The Chairman calls the first witness, but everybody else is watching Kase. The Chairman notices then, and Nikki cringes. The Chairman motions another armed Marine at the hearing table to help get Kase out of there. The Marine approaches, but Kase deftly maneuvers around him and manages to trip him with his cane. The Marine falls flat on his face. Kase maneuvers calmly up to the witness table, pulls out a chair and lays his cane on the table and without any ado speaks into the microphone before him.

KASE

My name, is William Howard Clark the second.

Spoken loudly, as if by a man proud of his given name, but a little bit shy to hear it loudly over the P.A. system. Nikki's jaw drops, and she's crawling over the man in the isle seat to get a better view. He gives a disgusted look at her; and they exchange seats.

KASE

I'm here at the request of the Senate Energy Policy Committee to testify concerning my professional opinion of the government's environmental.

CHAIRMAN

We are aware of that Mr. Clark.

KASE

I am an expert in energy conservation, And author of several books, and many technical papers.

Kase is attuning his voice to the P.A. system listening intently to what he sounds like from the speakers. The CHAIRMAN, late 60's distinguished cookie cutter Senator, full head of white hair coiffured.

CHAIRMAN

Yes, and I am Chairman of this Committee. And you will speak only when spoken to, Sir.

With a quick little chuckle, Clark makes the Senator seem like an impatient parent chastening a child on an obvious lesson of etiquette.

KASE

Well, yes, Senator. Thank you very much for inviting me here today. I do appreciate the hospitality.

The LADY SENATOR from Texas, takes the incentive. She's got butch short hair, granny glasses, deep slow southern brawl.

LADY SENATOR

Mr. Clark. We want to hear first hand why you're so opposed to the policies of this here Committee.

KASE

Why, Senata. I am most pleased to be hear with ya'll; thank ye.

A flurry of consternation in the Committee room escalates into a LOW RUMBLE. Nikki ducks behind some papers out of embarrassment for Kase, speaking in a pretend southern accent.

CHAIRMAN

What, pray tell is the matter, Mr. Clark?

KASE

Why, Mister Chairman, Your Honor. Sir. I haven't been asked a question.

LADY SENATOR

Oh, for crying out loud, Clark. We're not your enemy! Would your enemy ask you to testify?

KASE

I may not be your enemy, ma'am. But you most certainly are mine. Please. Ask your questions and let me go home.

The Senators suddenly get down to business, studying their notes and trying to choose one of their number to ask the first question. Kase speaks first.

KASE

Fine. But first I would like to ask the Committee a question.

CHAIRMAN

Go ahead.

KASE

One reason, why you support the Freon Ban?

(holding a finger up)
Just one please.

CHAIRMAN

Why, principally, we believe it will help the ozone layer. Help the environment.

KASE

Are you familiar with the book by Dixie Lee Ray, exposing the Freon Ban as a farce?

The Chairman gestures that he should speak freely.

KASE

Ya'll have been spoon fed the official policy about reversing this Freon Ban business. Jobs lost. School taxes going. Corporate profits declining. Government income plummeting... It just isn't true!

Kase says beneath his breath; but slightly audible over the sensitive P.A. system.

KASE

They look like wild animals caught in the headlights of civilization.

LADY SENATOR

Exactly where are you going with this?

KASE

It's not the first technological boondoggle. You know, the Freon Ban. The super collider was defunded. The strategic defense initiative laser project was defunded... Nor is it the first rip-off of the American people promulgated by the government. What about the oil overcharge monies from the early seventy's? Many billions of dollars from windfall profits? Why can't ya'll just admit a wrong like real people, and go from there?

Nikki is typing furiously on her laptop PC with a Machiavellian look of mischief on her face. Her press release is broadcast to a dozen local environmental groups.

INT. GREENPEACE OFFICES - DAY

Executive staff are hurrying to a meeting in a posh glass enclosed conference room with a panoramic view of the Washington monument beyond. Copies of Nikki's anonymous email are passed around. A big screen TV is activated, and Kase appears on C-Span looking small but speaking large. The environmental activists listen briefly, then as one run out of the room, disrobing as they do. Soon business executive attire is replaced by hippie sweaters, dirty faces, and Keds high top sneakers. Into the elevator, out the lobby, piling into a 60's flower power VW van, they make way toward the Congressional dome where a crowd is already gathering.

SENATE HEARING ROOM

The Chairman interrupts the witness then with a loud RAP of the gavel and asks with a voice dripping in sarcasm. The next Voice Overs take place during the above Series of Shots in the Greenpeace Offices.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

We appreciate your enthusiasm. We think your case is far over stated.

KASE (V.O.)

I hate to be the emperor's clothier.
But in this case your clothes really
are invisible. You really are naked.
You may not see it, Sir. But you
don't really have any power at all.

KASE (V.O.)

(under his breath)

...bloody pawns of special interest
groups, lobbyists, and media monsters.
You're brain dead, oxymorons. Little
cogs in a great big machine gone
amuck.

The crowded Senate conference room has gone stone quiet, so
everybody can hear Kase's musings.

KASE

I oppose the Freon Ban because it
was foisted by industry on Congress.
I oppose the Freon Ban because it
has cost one trillion dollars, and
it's not even helping the ozone layer.

CHAIRMAN

I'm sorry, Mr. Clark. This panel
thinks differently. The Ban is
already very good for the American
economy. If something isn't broke
then we shouldn't try to fix it.

It was Kase's turn to interrupt rudely.

KASE

I appreciate the Chairman's
understanding. But your views are
based on pure ignorance of the
engineering facts. And that goes
for the other members of the
Committee, too.

He mutters under his breath, just loud enough to barely be
heard over the microphone; not realizing others can hear.

KASE

Obviously these fat heads don't really
want to learn anything at all about
my business, or any other business
important to running America

Then, quite loudly into the microphone, with a sarcastic
jeer.

KASE

I won't waste your time any more
with these bizarre ideas of Freedom
and Justice or the American way,
your Honors. It's obvious ya'll
haven't the slightest idea of what
I'm taking about.

(getting up to leave)
I'm going home.

CHAIRMAN

Just one moment, young man.
(motioning to the
Marine guards)
This Court finds you in contempt.
(to the Marines)
Place this man under House arrest.

KASE

As you were, Soldier.

The U.S. Marines freeze.

KASE

Mr. Chairman. It is you who are in
contempt. You and your colleagues
and your...

The Marines unfreeze, are coming toward Kase, and finally reach him from either end of the long witness table. Kase turns, and is trapped by the gallery from behind. Rearing his head back, he shouts a barbaric no, hoists his cane and with a huge CRACK, splits the massive oak hearing table right in half; splinters flying everywhere. He maneuvers away from the crumbled table and away from the Marines.

The Senate panel reels backward at this sudden show of extreme violence. The Marines dash forward to arrest the witness in front of the Senator's long table, but he decks them with deft maneuvers of the cane. He makes it part way down the main hallway, but several more uniforms surround him and begin jousting him with their M-16's. Kase stands his own for a while, then loses his cane and falls to the floor.

They're beating up on Kase with the butts of their rifles. He reaches out to get the cane but it's just beyond his grasp. Suddenly Nikki dashes to the spot from her isle seat, and bends down to pick up the cane. She can't. It's too heavy! She can't even budge it. Looking over at Kase, he gives a little smile between the blows, and motions her with his hands to get the God damn cane to me.

Nikki plants her rear end on the carpeted floor, and pushes the cane to him with her feet. Kase grabs it and hoists it like it was a toothpick and beats the Marines back, skillfully. Stalemate.

The room becomes quite silent, and one of the Marines COCKS HIS WEAPON to fire. He DISCHARGES A FULL CLIP at the witness, but Kase manages to DEFLECT the rounds with the heavy composite metal cane. The audience ducks to the floor, under the ricocheting rounds. A melee breaks out in the hearing room. The Marines tend to crowd control, ignoring Kase.

Carefully smoothing his tie, Kase deliberately buttons his suit coat all the way down. With a spat of spit parlayed to the hand, he stays disheveled hair, and maneuvers swiftly from the room, without so much as a look back.

Managing to make his way freely down the steps of the House of Congress building, Kase hails a cab with a hand wave. The Green Peacers all around him are hovering around portable TV's watching the whole fiasco on CNN's live video feed. No sooner than Kase's cab pulls from the curb but Nikki, seconds behind him, HAILS another taxi and tells the driver to follow Kase. They hadn't far to go.

EXT. VIET NAM VETERANS MEMORIAL - DAY

Kase is maneuvering down the walkway when Nikki's cab pulls up. She gets out and scurries to catch up with him; puts on her adorable child selling Girl Scout cookies act.

NIKKI

Excuse me, Sir. Aren't you William Howard Clark? Don't I know you by another name? Perhaps?

KASE

Why, yes. Miss Gateaux, is it? I mean no. My name is Clark. That's all.

It's a cold winter day. There's ice on the sidewalk. Kase glances sideways with a courteous nod to her, then quickly eyes the sidewalk and its patches of ice, maneuvering around them with his cane. A few steps later, he pauses and looks at her squarely. She's beside him, having metered her gait to match his.

KASE

Oh, you're the nice lady from the Senate Chambers!

A warm smile brightens his face.

KASE

Though I walk through the Valley of
Death... I guess I'm the coward
now, running away from the Lion's
Den.

NIKKI

No, not at all.

Looking around for a place to sit, she motions toward a nearby
park bench and he nods, heading that way.

NIKKI

I agree with you, that they're more
like a bunch of sheep needing a
shepherd than a fierce pack of lions.

KASE

Hah! So, now I'm the wolf - am I?

Kase maneuvers onto the bench next to her. Then he leans a
little forward, both hands clasped on the cane before him.

KASE

I'd much rather be out here anyway.
Course,
(disarming Irish accent)
had I known you would be here, I
would 'a left the farm a whole lot
sooner.

NIKKI

Who are you, Kase Clark?

KASE

Oh, my. A bold lass at that.
Straight to the crux of the matter,
you go too.

NIKKI

I think you're like a modern day
Job. A just, honorable man who's
lost everything for no reason. Did
you know Job was a pagan? I suppose
that's why even God abandoned him in
his moment of greatest need.

KASE

Don't forget his wife, Nikki. Curse
God and die!

NIKKI

Did you know Job was one of only
three people in the Bible who actually
spoke to God? He got everything
back, too: his wife, children, farm.

KASE

What about his self respect or his faith?

NIKKI

Kase? You realize, don't you - you must return.

KASE

I cannot. I will not. What do I owe them?

NIKKI

Spoken like Job himself.

KASE

Hell, I'm barely a man. Why, Nikki. Why must I return?

NIKKI

Because you can make a difference.

He twirls one finger in the air, indicating wow. Big deal.

NIKKI

Then because you owe it to yourself; to the kids, to their families.

NIKKI

Kase?

Nikki carefully seeks his hand and clasps it. Waiting until he turns to look at her, she speaks.

NIKKI

You owe it to the Land, Kase. My love; you owe it to the Sea.

The last brings a lump to his throat, and tears well swiftly into his eyes. They roll silently down his wind reddened cheeks. He lets them be, and they freeze small treks in the lines of his face. Nikki reaches up and brushes them away.

KASE

It's only the wind.

Kase has a weak smile. Then she looks around, and holds up the tear-moistened finger. Yea, right; the wind; indicating that there was no coolness on her moist finger. No wind. Then Nikki rests her head on his shoulder and asks as they both watch the snow as it begins to fall heavily.

NIKKI

You don't really expect to win this thing do you; seriously, Kase?

Kase waits for a moment, then his face brightens. He smiles, slapping the ground hard with the cane, chipping the pavement deeply. Then he gets up and starts back toward the thoroughfare; hits a patch of ice and loses his footing. Nikki, showing unexpected speed and great strength, deftly rights him and leads him away grasping his free arm in hers. Kase fights it for a while, then visibly relaxes into her arm.

They amble back to the main drag, hail a cab. End up in a book store. A giant storm is gathering as they head back to the hotel. Snow and sleet are mixed, traffic is a mess.

INT. LUXURY HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kase and Nikki are in a small, but warmly furnished hotel room. They sit side by side on a sofa, soft incandescent lighting. Kase moves through an elaborately illustrated book on the Celts on the coffee table before them, carrying on a monologue. They warm their hands around steaming cups of hot coffee. Dixie the cat is camped under a table lamp in a nice warm safe spot.

KASE (V.O.)
The original Druids built Stonehenge,
three thousand B.C.

Nikki shows only mild interest.

KASE (V.O.)
The Celts weren't like you think -
heathens, uncultured, savages. They
had schools of law and medicine and
philosophy... libraries, and a very
fair system of justice. There were
three main divisions of Druids: the
Priests, the Judges, and the
Antiquarians. The Clan O'Cleary
were the ancestral antiquarians, the
Keepers of History.

Kase smiles proudly, chin jutting out, shoulders back.

KASE
My Grampa Howard Cleary came straight
from Cork County, Ireland. Druid is
in my blood. I feel it. You can
change names... but not the blood in
your veins.

KASE (V.O.)
The Celts were monotheistic. They
had customs similar to the Hebrews.
Similar words, too. The Druid culture
predated the Hebrews... I believe
the Old Testament was originally Druid.

NIKKI (V.O.)

So instead of Moses receiving the books of the Old Testament... in a mental transmission from the Almighty, he did the much more human thing and just memorized the Druid texts?

Nikki shakes her head in dismay. Kase smiles, shrugs his shoulders - obstinance gone.

KASE

The Druids were a very advanced people - long, long ago. It's not right for modern history to teach they were a bunch of primitive country pumpkins. Hey! There really was an Atlantis. A land of justice and chivalry and good deeds. It wasn't a Camelot fable at all.

Kase is up on his feet now, giving a little private performance. Nikki sinks into the sofa and watches, eyes twinkling.

KASE

What if the Celts stole the Ark from Jerusalem, all those years ago? Then there's this big Hatfields and McCoys feud. You take our Laws, we take your Ark. They bring the Ark back home to Ireland. They hide it, up a ragged loch... in a cave known only to the Druids - now forgotten.

Kase winds up for the punch line, but first checks to be sure Nikki is paying attention.

KASE

They called it the loch'd Ark of the Covenant.

Nikki grimaces, and Kase is embarrassed - but still proud of his play on words.

KASE

...Please don't tell anyone I made such a bad pun; back home they'd start calling me after O. Henry the famous punster. Kase O. Cleary.

Nikki stands up, confronts him boldly, hands on hips, face to face.

NIKKI

So, you don't like modern religion?

KASE

I only object. To their objection,
to meditation in the way of the
mystics. If this were the Middle
Ages right now, I'd be crucified.

Nikki is still livid.

KASE

How about an experiment? I return
to the Abyss? Right now. I'll prove
I'm right.

NIKKI

Why?

KASE

The Jewish mystics said you could
experience the presence of God. In
the throes of deepest meditation,
they say He is there!

NIKKI

But you've been there, Kase. And
you were alone. God wasn't there.

Kase is silent, eyes downcast. They both jump when a giant
bolt of lightning STRIKES right outside their window,
rattling the glass as the THUNDER REVERBERATES. The
lightening freeze frames them for a surreal moment.

NIKKI

What makes you think you'll find God
this time?

Kase shakes his head slowly. Bites his lower lip. Sits
back down on the sofa. Nikki sits down beside him, snuggling
into his body. He starts to say something, then just heaves
a sign and looks away.

NIKKI

What?

Kase looks steadily into Nikki's eyes for reassurance. Her
eyes leave his swiftly. She cannot bear to see him do this.

NIKKI

I don't want you to go. It's too
dangerous. Why would you do any
better than the last time you did
it?

A smile of bliss and sadness. She watches helplessly. He's
already started the process...

NIKKI

You must open the Ark this time!

Nikki shakes his shoulders. His eyes open, oddly disconnected.

NIKKI

If your God is in the Ark, as the Bible says, just open it when you are in the Tabernacle. Instead of kneeling at it and praying there?

She's kneeling on the carpet before the sofa, where Kase sits.

NIKKI

God helped you before. Of that you are convinced, right?

KASE

True.

Kase responds impetuously, eyes closed; a sly smile on his lips. Then, more soberly.

KASE

You really think He could help me from within?

VOICE OVER

Reach out and touch the Faith.

Both hear it. They look at each other. Kase opens his eyes and looks at his coffee cup.

KASE

What'd you put in this stuff anyway? Chicory?

... Kase slips into deep trance. Nikki has dozed off. Jolts awake. Reaches impulsively to grasp his hand.

NIKKI

My God. He's burning hot!

SCREAMING, Nikki pulls her hand quickly away. SLAPS him.

NIKKI

Oh, no. No!

Shakes him. Punches him. Grasps him and drags him toward the bathroom, end tables and lamps CRASH to the floor. Dixie the cat scurries out of Nikki's way with a HOWL and raised hackles.

Into the bath goes Kase. Head BANGS against the tile wall.

She POUNDS his chest with clenched fists, begging the slackened form to respond.

Turns the cold water shower on full. It SPLATTERS all over, soaking her. T-shirt clings tightly to her torso and outlines firm breasts heaving. Pulls wisps of thick black hair from her eyes. Sees her own hands are shaking.

Leans heavily on the side of the tub. Hauls herself up. Rushes into the hallway. To the elevator lobby and the ice machine.

Tears the freezer door open. SLAMMING it on its hinges. Gets a bucket of ice cubes. Hustles past startled hotel patrons. CASCADING SOUND of the shower on full force.

THROWS the ice cubes into tub. RIPS his clothes off. Presses the ice, even to the most sensitive spots. Nothing.

Rips off her wrist band. Rips his off. Presses wrists together. Wraps a towel around their two wrists. Waits.

Nikki starts to nod, losing consciousness. Kase stirs. Smiles. Tattoo materializes on his chest, killer whale; oozes bright red blood from a myriad of tiny tattooed dots; darker blue in others. HEAVES a giant breath.

Nikki rubs her eyes. Scrubs his chest; the tattoo remains. It's real. Nikki sits back on her haunches, aghast.

NIKKI

(under her breath)

You're a Goddess. He told me that.
The Sea. Kase. It's your weakness.
And your power. Oh. My. God.
Neptune... Can't walk. No balance.
Not a creature of the Land. Affinity
for all things fluid. Can it be?

A trickle of blood on his cheek from deep gouge made by her diamond weddingring earlier.

Subtle movement out of the corner of her eye. One hand reaches out into the space before him.

An image flashes into her mind. The hand of Adam reaching across the Sistine Chapel roof; across, over to grasp the outstretched hand of another, God himself?

Nikki reacts to the presence in her mind. Terrified. Certainty is stifling.

NIKKI

He's found the Ark! He found it,
and opened it. The Lord is within.

(MORE)

NIKKI (CONT'D)

He's reaching out, across the mystery
of the epochs.

The Hand shakes, slowly then faster. Extreme pain in his face. Nikki grabs the shaking hand, steadying it with all her might.

The arm, enormously powerful, jostling her whole body with superhuman strength. Flash a medieval battle of primitive man against evil demon on a wide fog shrouded high plain.

Kase is back. Arm relaxes. Presses her hands with his, with a gentleness belying the horror in his features.

NIKKI

He's with me. He's back. Hallelujah!

They embrace. He goes limp in her arms. She drags him out into the room. Gets him onto the couch. Covers him with a blanket.

Runs back to the lavatory, and wrenches, uncontrollably. With great HEAVING SPASMS, her body wrecked. Collapses, onto the bathroom floor. Tears, then a mournful WAIL.

Meanwhile, Kase gets up with an effort, gets a heating pad from his bag, wraps it around his arm. Wonders aloud how long it would be this time before his body recovers. Flash an image, hear a name spoken: I am Metatron, Archangel of the Abyss. Fear me.

KASE

Behold, Leviathan.
(fist in the air)
There will come another day, and
with it another battle.

Bathrobe opens up to show his chest as he speaks. The orca glistens red and green and blue, as though the paint had just dried.

Dixie the cat watches through a closet door slightly ajar.

INT. HOTEL/GUEST ROOM - DAY

Kase, curled up on the couch, pretends to keep his eyes closed while Nikki sweeps into the bathroom, trailing the white bed sheet behind. Actually, he really does keep his eyes closed, because she checks.

Then, while she's cleaning up behind a locked door (he checks that too) Kase wraps a towel around his waist and has the room all tidied up by the time she's finished. No sooner that she exits the bathroom in a billow of steam, than Kase is in there, not quite closing the door - carefully.

Nikki, in lingerie, getting dressed. Stockings. Mini skirt. Billowing pirate blouse. Sitting on the bed, waiting for what looks obliquely like bright red nail polish to dry.

NIKKI

Tell me Kase. Do you always get so efficient first thing in the morning? You didn't have to make the bed you know. We ARE in a hotel... I can handle it, though.

KASE (V.O.)

Thank the U.S. Navy for that little quirk. Hospital corners and all!

NIKKI

You got that right honey.

A few minutes later the shower turns off and Kase yells out at her.

KASE (V.O.)

Old sailor's trick after a night on the high seas, Lassie. You make the bed up good, like tidy and new. Little lady can't resist the temptation to muss it all up again.

NIKKI

You're hardly out of bed and your mind is already back there.

Kase enters the room.

KASE

Bed, hell. I was on the God damn sofa all night. Warm bed right there too all full of pretty lady. Shoot, coolie's mind never got off bed.

NIKKI

(blushes)

KASE

Navy men. They got to be prepared to shove off at any time, you see. Must make the most out of infrequent port calls, you know.

NIKKI

A lady in every port, Admiral?

KASE

Oh-oh. No, ma'am, No way. Too many distractions will get you shot in a moment. Then never make it home to sweet honey.

NIKKI

Good grief, our big Navy man has an answer for everything. We'll see just how sweet this here honey is.

KASE

Begging' your pardon, ma'am. But that one's from the United States Marines.

The room is ominously silent.

KASE

You know, the rough guys that always get us flamboyant sailors out of harms way?

Kase makes CHOKING NOISES, and strangles his neck so as she could barely see in the mirror.

NIKKI

Admiral Jean luc Piccard, you best check your notes. It's the other way around: Navy pulling Marines off bad beach.

KASE

...We going to need a full amphibious landing to rescue this here dumb sailor.

KASE

Okay, so you beached my whale on that one. Had a rough night, didn't I?

NIKKI

You had a rough night! I invite an old friend to my hotel room to nurse his poor frazzled nerves, and what do I get? Some raging, high minded, mental crusader hell bent on returning to Eden.

KASE

Well, I got you there didn't I?

Kase peers around the bathroom door with a sweet little cub scout expression.

NIKKI

Brother, to quote one of your heroes,
We have met the enemy and he is ours.

Kase retreats swiftly back into the bathroom.

KASE

Oh, Oh; oh. Best ring up the Army.
We in heap of deep do do now.

Steps RUNNING IN PLACE rattle the whole room. Then a white towel draped around a cane inches out of the bathroom door.

KASE

Truce!

Nikki looks aside, then Kase dashes to the telephone. And yells into it like he was calling for a strike in a war zone.

KASE

Room service! Get us two big coffees!
Make that A.S.A.P, soldier!

Kase hangs up with a BANG. Looking around from the small telephone table, expecting an urgent request for an encore, he's crestfallen. Nikki's busy TAPPING on her laptop computer, working on the day's agenda.

NIKKI

Doesn't look like I can make it to
the hearing today, dear.

It was quite silent for a while, too long. Nikki looks up. Kase is still right close to the telephone, inches from where he was minutes ago. The sunshine mood has evaporated, and a heavy overcast has taken its place. He's deep in thought, all the gaiety gone like a will of wisp in a thunderstorm.

NIKKI

Don't worry, I've got you penciled
in for dinner. If they don't kick
your insolent ass out before then.
Evening meal too.

Nikki goes back to her work, noticing out of the corner of her eye that Kase has started to tuck his shirt in tight. Tucked, as the military types do, to show a strong, small waist. Tailored pants show strong lines. Then he turns around to fasten his tie in the mirror, very attentive to his appearance all of a sudden.

Nikki can't help herself, but to admire his trim posterior; pencil to her lips and tilting her glasses down a bit as she does so.

KASE

See there, bad girl. See what you missed last night?

NIKKI

Well, excuse me, Admiral Piccard. But does a poor sailor's girl ever get a second chance?

KASE

Yes.

Kase stands tiptoe to look back through the mirror at her generous décolletage. Then, standing back firm, he makes a big deal out of adjusting his pants, especially in the waist.

KASE

Yea, we'll just call it an extended port of call, shall we?

NIKKI

You're absolutely incorrigible. I should pity the poor Committee this morning, how you're going abuse them with your attitude.

By now, she's turned full around to watch him, admiring him openly from head to toe. Kase, absorbed in his preparations for the meeting, pretends not to notice.

NIKKI

Christ, you're in top shape aren't you?!

INSERT - CLOSE TO BATHROOM

Kase stumbles past Nikki, sits at a small bench in the bathroom alcove. Then he unbuckles his trousers and pushes them to the floor. Reaching over, he pulls a couple of bundles out of his medicine kit. Soon he has both knees wrapped carefully with an ace bandage, making a neat tight brace a couple of inches on either side of the joint. Then, with a SCREECH he yanks off a ten inch swath of duct tape and wraps either end tight so they cannot come loose.

Then he stands, pants still at his ankles, and tests his full weight on each leg. Satisfied, he hoists the trousers and yanks the suspenders over his shoulders. A small circle around the bathroom, and there's no evidence of any disabling limp at all.

BACK TO SCENE

Kase enters the bedroom, testing his field dressings. Nikki notices the plain bright brass military style belt buckle and murmurs. Now, that doesn't look very business like.

She was just about to say something aloud when he pulls a freshly pressed jacket from a dry cleaner's plastic bag.

NIKKI

Oh, my.

Nikki's hand goes reflexively to cover her face in dismay. Kase turns, and it dawns on him that she's been watching all the while.

KASE

Kase is going to be a United States
Army soldier boy again today!

It's the dark dress green uniform, with a red, white and blue White Sands Missile Range patch, with official Specialist Fourth Class insignia: a golden eagle and a single chevron. There are several small hatch marks at the bottom of one sleeve, for time in service. Colorful rows of ribbons.

Kase slips the coat on, then he puts on a dark maroon beret with a little gold crossbones insignia.

NIKKI

Jesus. What were you? Green Beret
or something... Navy SEAL's?

KASE

Wouldn't be caught dead with that
bunch of wieners. Excuse me, Ma'am.
Make that hot dogs. No mustard.

With no further elaboration, Kase buttons up the shirt and turns for her to admire. He's oddly distant, flashing back.

FLASHBACK TO THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

- A) A clandestine meeting on a U.S. Navy amphibious landing ship, anchored off the Naval Academy sea wall.
- B) The U.S.S. Spartanburg County.
- C) A small captain's boat coasts up to the side, Kase in work khaki uniform dashes up the ladder, is greeted by a fleet admiral with gold braid up to his elbows.
- D) They pace around the empty tank deck, moonlight glistening off the calm bay surface, deep in conversation.
- E) Then they shake hands and Kase turns to leave. The Admiral calls after him as Kase reaches the gangplank, and gives him a rigid salute.
- F) Kase gives him nonchalant wave; smiles, ducks back onto the motor boat, and speeds back to the Academy.

END FLASHBACK

Nikki goes up to Kase, to help him tidy up some. Then she notices the brass Specialist insignia on his lapels. The brass is clean, but the metal is burnished black around the embossed eagles. She reaches out a hand to clean off the black, but he grabs her wrist.

KASE

Don't touch. They're supposed to be like that.

NIKKI

(blurting out)

But... They make you look like a renegade.

KASE

Yes. Yes, they do, don't they?

Her own knees start to feel a little wobbly, and Nikki sits down on the bed. He had trimmed the wild, disheveled mustache of the day before to be neat and trim, elegant and military. The hair is lightly oiled, not a strand out of place. The uniform is heavily starched, crisp and spotless.

Nikki is looking down, making a business of fumbling with the tallies on her shirt. Close on yes, those are bright red fingernails. Nikki is muttering to herself.

NIKKI

I think I'm glad I'm not going to be there.

KASE

Me, too.

Kase gently kisses her on top of the head. Then, reaching down to tilt her head up he kisses her again, gently on the lips.

KASE

Don't worry, love. Everything is as it should be.

There is a sudden conviction in his voice.

NIKKI

He's either nuts, or a genius.

Said quietly to herself in soliloquy. Then her neck snaps up.

NIKKI

Damn it, William Howard. You've got me talking to myself just like you. Stop it.

Fancying the captive, and captivated, audience; Kase takes a few paces around the room.

KASE

Look, princess. No sugar cane. The miracle of modern medicine. A fist full of aspirins will cure anything.

Said with a greatly exaggerated swagger like a drunken sailor in Bangkok. Then he starts to drag his legs, knees stiff, like a penny actor in a Frankenstein movie.

NIKKI

I'll make a deal with you Kase.

Nikki says as she gets up and starts to get her things together.

NIKKI

I won't ask what you're up to, if you have breakfast with me. But you must promise. You won't tell me anything. Deal?

They shake on it, solemnly. Nikki is out of the room, the door swinging closed, before Kase scurries after her like a country kid going to Sunday church. Dixie the cat comes out from hiding, jumps on top of the unkempt bed square in the middle of a sunny spot, and curls up for a nap. Watching Dixie, the following Nikki and Kase Voice Overs can be heard just outside in the hallway.

HALLWAY

NIKKI (V.O.)

God damn it, William Howard, act your age will you?

KASE (V.O.)

Aye, Aye.

They long walk down the heavily carpeted hotel hallway, and not a word passes between them. Nikki turns to look at him, a little off-balance from the deep carpet quiet. Kase is working at getting the military walk and attitude down right. The hardest part, she smiles heartily, is the facial expression. It looks as though he had brushed his teeth with super glue, and was trying to adjust the set of his jaw permanently, with just the right lines.

The eyes are harder to calm, she observes. Concentrating mightily, Kase slows and Nikki is walking even with him. Hunching shoulders, rubbing his eyes and craning his neck from side to side did not seem to result in the right feel. The eyes are indomitable. Then, just as they reach the elevator lobby on their floor, he HUFFS and pulls a pair of Pilot issue sunglasses from his inside breast pocket. That'll take care of the Baby Blues, he murmurs. Then he dons the dark maroon beret at a rakish angle, and looks himself up and down in the mirror on the burnished metal elevator door. The elevator BELL RINGS, and he hustles to take the cap off, still fumbling with it as he walked through the CLOSING DOORS of the elevator.

ELEVATOR

A couple of floors down, after a few well-dressed businessmen had entered, Nikki says to no one in particular.

NIKKI

On second thought, I think I like
you in uniform Spec Four Clark.
You're much better behaved.

Noticing a few discrete smiles cracked on the other people in the elevator Kase SHUFFLES his feet a little. Looking up to the elevator display he says demurely.

KASE

Why, Miss Gateaux. That's exactly
what the Army thought. See where it
got them? And the Navy, too.

PASSENGER

Maybe you should call in the Marines.

KASE

Bunch of wiernerschnitzels. They
ain't got no mustard, either.

Kase turns and tilts his head down to peer over the shades; and graces the passenger with the look of a remorseless killer. The businessman shrinks back. Kase levels his head carefully, then turns mechanically and stares steady at the little peep hole in the middle of the elevator door for the remainder of the ride down.

The people in the elevator practically run out as soon as it reaches the lobby floor and the DOORS OPEN. Nikki and Kase are the last to leave. They're both smiling as their fellow travelers scurry away. Nikki is waiting for him to take her arm and lead her off. The elevator starts to close; he reaches out and the electric eye BUMPS it open again. Glaring at one another then, each tries to kowtow to the other. Then, just as the doors are closing again they scurry through awkwardly.

Kase pulls up short outside the electromechanical behemoth, to get his new act together, while Nikki looks around to see where the dining room is located. She sets off shortly, Kase in undignified pursuit. They settle at a brightly lit table, remote from any other. No sooner than Kase had helped her into her seat, than he was seated across from her, the Washington Post splayed out all over in front of him.

NIKKI

Damn, how did he do that?

Then she holds up her hands.

NIKKI

No, please - No more Navy tricks, okay?

KASE

Mater D. slid it under my arm as I walked past. How's that for service, eh?

NIKKI

Yea. How's that for a spiffy disguise, Mister Matrix.

KASE

Oh, nuts. Damn cartoonists.
(ruffles the newspaper)
Crummy political satire in the paper.
Got me dressed like a Neanderthal in a groin cloth, limping toward a coliseum full of Senators and lions all about.

NIKKI

(snickering)
That's loin cloth.

KASE

(Cajun accent)
They gonna get some kinda primitive homeboy this bright day, I guaroontee. But not the show they expect. This is my sea today and even the SEALs will do my bidding!

They eat their breakfast swiftly and in contented silence. As they get up to leave, there's a hundred question in Nikki's expression. Kase just dons his beret and sunglasses, gives her a formal salute, and says in his best Terminator.

KASE

Hasta la vista, baby.

As Kase leaves holding up a big fist as he goes.

Nikki, suddenly wary, eyes darting around the room, takes it all in. She SNAPS opens her purse, pulls a very small, but powerful, cell phone out and PUNCHES in a phone number. A foreign sounding voice responds immediately, and they have a brief conversation. All the softness is gone from her grim attitude.

INT. SENATE HEARING ROOM - DAY

The Committee comes to order at a loud BANG of the Chairman's gavel.

CHAIRMAN

This Committee is hereby in session.
The hearing on the Freon Ban is the
current topic. Any more witnesses?

COMMITTEE SECRETARY

No, Sir. Mr. Clark was the final
witness scheduled.

CHAIRMAN

Obviously he won't be coming back.
I hear by determine this hearing is
closed.

The Chairman hoists the gavel. Suddenly a man in military garb gets up from a seat on the far side of the front row, making quite the scene. Everybody looks that way.

KASE

Not so fast, your honor. Actually.
I'm not finished.

Kase walks toward the hearing table, in Army dress greens. He had looked just like another guard, sitting by the doorway. To a person, the committee's jaws drop in surprise. Before they know what was happening, Kase has introduced himself to the Court Reporter, and charmingly coaches her in swearing him in as a witness to the hearing. Then he sits right down in the witness chair, all bright eyed, waiting respectfully for the questioning to begin, as though nothing at all had happened the day before. The Chairman is looking around for the Marine contingent, to have the Warrant for this man's arrest executed. Before he can summon them, the Lady Senator from Texas speaks.

LADY SENATOR

Mr. Clark, what more have you to
say?

KASE

I'm sorry to have been so petulant
yesterday, Ma'am. I'll try to be
more calm and respectable. I promise.

(MORE)

KASE (CONT'D)
 Scouts honor?
 (three fingers, the
 French tripartite)

LADY SENATOR
 (shaking a finger at
 him like grade school)
 You have one more chance.

Swiftly, Kase pulls a yellow legal pad out of a small leather briefcase, and quickly reviews a few notes.

KASE
 Begging your pardon. I would like
 to start from the very beginning.

The Lady Senator nods approval.

KASE
 The Committee will recollect a
 decision made about ten years ago:
 the Freon Ban.

INT. GREENPEACE OFFICES - DAY

Loose pages of papers are just falling to the floor indicating a hasty exit, as elevator doors close in the hallway on a bunch of badly dressed hoodlums off into harm's way. Briefly Kase is heard on a TV there. They're running out of the parking lot toward the flower power VW; it's a bright clear day, patches of snow on the ground in shaded spots, from the storm last night.

KASE (V.O.)
 There was a worldwide environmental
 meeting in Rio de Janeiro centered
 on the alleged harmful effects of
 Freon on the ozone layer. Freon,
 ladies and gentlemen...

SENATE HEARING

KASE
 being what we once used in
 refrigerators and air conditioners
 and hair spray cans and all sorts of
 other innocuous things. The meeting
 produced a treaty to ban all
 production of Freon twelve.
 (at the Committee)
 This has been a hotly contested issue
 for years. A hundred Nobel Laureates
 signed a petition that the Freon Ban
 had inconclusive, incorrect scientific
 supporting evidence.

GREEN PEACE OFFICES

After a minute live in the Conference room, the screen is given over to the full CNN coverage. CNN has done their homework, and are able as the dialog continues, to flash global maps showing the growing Ozone Hole over the years, satellite photos, old newspaper articles, the Dixie Lee Ray book cover, and - increasingly - a growing crowd of people outside at the steps leading up to the Congress building.

SENATE HEARING

KASE

Right about that time, NASA presented to this Committee a report from a recent fly-by over the South Pole. The Ozone Hole in the upper atmosphere was extremely large. This committee quickly recommended ratification of the Freon Ban. Soon thereafter, the Senate ratified the Ban by an overwhelming margin.

By now Kase is practically addressing the audience alone, back to the Committee. Kase acts as if the TV cameras are feeding CNN and not just C-Span; the Senate members aren't even giving their usual rough deference to the TV coverage.

KASE

A very different story was made public by Dixie Lee Ray, a former Cabinet level official here in Washington D.C. She showed the whole treaty to be a total fiasco.

CHAIRMAN

Mr. Clark. If you're leading somewhere, get there quickly.

KASE

This treaty would really be no big deal except ... One, you need other chemicals to do the same job as Freon, but not deplete the ozone layer. Two, existing refrigeration has to be replaced with new equipment designed specifically for the new refrigerant.

EXT. GREENPEACE DEMONSTRATION - DAY

Things are quickly getting organized. A small crowd of tourists gather to watch the demonstration. Wary police officers watch them all, worried.

KASE (V.O.)

The total cost for all this new equipment, worldwide, has been estimated to be a trillion dollars... The equivalent of the entire annual budget of the U.S.

SENATE HEARING

KASE

This is an expense mostly for people in the northern hemisphere, which is where most air conditioning is in use, mostly in the United States. The treaty was passed by the global community, but eighty percent of its cost and its impact is right here on you and I.

SERIES OF SHOTS - GREENPEACE DEMONSTRATION

They are now foisting professionally made signs reading

- A) William Tells
- B) Hell Raiser
- C) Kill Bill
- D) Resident Evil

One Viet Nam vet in jungle fatigues breaks into their midst, toting a makeshift sign that reads

- E) Go Navy - Go Army

on two sides. He rotates it slowly, at the perimeter of the ecoterrorists. They converge on him, and wrestle the sign away.

BACK TO SCENE

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

Mister Clark.

KASE (V.O.)

The pertinence is very clear, Mr. Chairman. I'm describing how special interests influence the Senate, which consequently doesn't make the best decisions for the people of the United States of America.

LADY SENATOR (V.O.)

Clark, please get to your point.

SENATE HEARING

Kase nods. Desperation begins to shadow his attitude. Quickly, he turns back to speak to the room. We see Kase in person, then as the monologue continues, back on to CNN with a ticker tape at the bottom; and the speech continues uninterrupted with images of Antarctica, the huge volcanoes, ice cap, overlay of the Ozone Hole. Then stock footage of a chiller in the basement of a large office building, the Freon sensor in the floor; measurements made in the area after a catastrophic rupture of a chiller - they go to zero after a day, and stay at zero even a few thousand feet into the atmosphere.

KASE

Okay. I believe the evidence is quite clear that Freon does not damage the ozone layer at all. Allow me to paraphrase Ms. Dixie Lee.

Kase pauses to wipe his brow.

KASE

...The Ozone Hole naturally gets bigger, then smaller, every year. The NASA flight happened to be at a time when the Ozone Hole was at its maximum. Why panic and pass the bill then? Why not get a good annual average and make the right decision?

KASE (V.O.)

Second, volcanoes emit chemicals that have the same affect on the ozone as Freon does. One of the largest volcanoes in the world is centered in the big Antarctic Ozone Hole. It spews out more chlorides in a year than all the Freon ever used in the history of civilization... You don't suppose that might have a little, tiny affect, making the Ozone Hole larger?

Kase is talking with a manic intensity now.

KASE (V.O.)

Third, ozone is ten times heavier than air. How can such a heavy fluid make it several miles into the upper atmosphere? ...How can winds bring many thousands of tons of Freon all the way from the Northern Hemisphere to make the 10,000 mile trek to Antarctica?

(MORE)

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

...Not unless the little Freon twelves are self propelled bio nanites with an affinity for Freon and zip zoom right up there all on their own.

GREENPEACE DEMONSTRATION

A phalanx of swarthy Semite looking people approaches the green peacers. They are equal in number, and better organized. Police jockey for position viz a nasty confrontation.

KASE (V.O.)

The Freon ban is a total farce. It's an indirect tax upon the people of the United States, made without our consent or approval, and covered up in order to profit a few select industries.

SENATE HEARING

There is a small commotion on the dais as the Senator from Texas gets off the telephone, stands up, and walks over to stand behind the Chairman, whispering something to him. Kase accelerates the presentation.

KASE (V.O.)

What kind of influence will make the Senate pass overwhelmingly a trillion tax upon the good trusting people of this country? Why did ya'll do it? Why?

The Chairman quickly leans forward and grabs the microphone, almost slobbering into it he's in such haste to speak.

CHAIRMAN

It has come to our attention that you are not an active member of the Armed Forces, Mister Clark.

KASE

And this committee is the very group that sanctioned the treaty, recommending it to the entire Senate for passage.

Close up of Kase, now in a cold sweat.

SERIES OF SHOTS - GREENPEACE DEMONSTRATION

A) The phalanx comes into focus.

- B) Mr. Nathan Belkind is in the lead (black eye patch over that lazy eye of his), surrounded by Mossad and security agents wearing little ear pieces.
- C) Belkind is carrying an elaborate sign
- D) Free Willy
- E) Several Israeli's around him carry signs too
- F) Saint John Paul
- G) Vote 4 Saddam
- H) Go Nuke Power
- I) Elvis Lives
- J) When this new group reaches the homeless Viet Nam vet, they hoist him on his feet and plant his Army - Navy sign firmly in his hands.
- K) The media push the police aside.

BACK TO SCENE

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

Just what in the world do you think you're doing here, dressed like that? It's a felony to impersonate a member of the military, were you aware of that?

KASE (V.O.)

Why, then has the Committee been so circumspect in its investigation of this Freon ban treaty because it's just the same.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

Clark, you are no longer recognized by this committee.

SENATE HEARING

KASE

Who paid you people off, Senator?

CHAIRMAN

Mister Clark, you are to vacate the witness table and report to the bench, right this moment!

KASE

Who was it, Senator?

Kase says this, then looks pleadingly to his onetime ally from Texas. She avoids his look, lips pursed tight, a scandalized expression on her face. The Senators are ready to throw a rope around the nearest tree limb and hang Kase on the spot, emboldened by the growing lynch mob outside.

Suddenly bright flashes from a camera startle the Senators on the panel. Nikki is walking down the middle hallway, flashing pics so rapidly you can't even tell it's she. Nikki's quickly arrested and hauled away, but not before she makes the Senators realize that all this is on live national TV, to thus reign in their act.

KASE

Who was it? Dupont? Or was it a collection of all the manufacturers and suppliers who stand to pocket this trillion dollar fiasco?

LADY SENATOR

You're out of order, Mister.

KASE

So it really was a conspiracy. Your expressions say it all, Senators.

LADY SENATOR

Bailiff!

A burly looking fellow materializes in Kase's vision, a police man. He clears the Committee table in a fast trot, heading straight for Kase, one hand unbuckling the pistol restraint of a menacing firearm bouncing on his hip as he runs. A small catch of Marines follows closely behind with M-16's at port arms. This time the rifles have shiny bayonets attached. Kase just sits there, real quiet. His act is over, and he looks totally dumfounded. The police man is pulling metal hand cuffs from the back of his utility belt, and Kase finds himself starting to hold his hands out for them.

FRANCO

That will not be necessary, your Honors.

The Bailiff looks up at the interruption, and Kase swiftly yanks his hands out of the cuffs. The Army officer paces swiftly up to the hearing table. The Chairman reaches forward to cover his microphone, and the audience hears a muffled, but obviously heated conversation, for a few tense moments. The officer has a sidearm, in a gleaming well worn leather holster: U.S. Army issue Colt 45. The restraining strap flaps loose, with brash bravado. There was an "MP" Military Police band around his arm.

After consulting with the Committee Chair, the Army officer approaches Kase at the witness table, SHOOING the policeman away. The Army MP officer eases into the chair beside him. Then Kase sees him clearly for the first time. Kase is so surprised he stands right up.

KASE

Captain, I mean C ...Colonel; good grief. Franco?

FRANCO

Sit down you idiot, and for God's sake take that obscene Post Office jacket off.

KASE

Yes, Sir.

In pure reflex to the officer's order, the jacket is off in an instant.

FRANCO

Mr. Chairman, will you please allow me a few moments with my client?

Franco has quite an impressive rack of medals now, and is wearing dress blues instead of the less formal greens he wore at the medical board hearing. There is a little gray at his temples, and Colonel's eagles on his shoulders, instead of twin Captain's bars. Kase gives a sudden jolt, as if he realizes now who Franco is.

KASE

Your client? What?

Kase jumps up in his chair again and makes as if to object, but Franco grasps his hand over the witness's mouth. He grabs a shoulder with the other hand, and through shear, brute force pushes Kase back into the seating position.

FRANCO

You better clam up, Spec. Four Clark. Or your ass is going to jail right now, for Contempt of Congress.

Franco cranes his neck toward the Chairman to indicate the still livid Senators. That calms Kase quickly, and convulsively a cold shiver runs down his spine.

FRANCO

Let's just say. I was in the neighborhood.

Franco draws a Pentagon with his finger on the oak table.

FRANCO

Fulwyler. Remember your Post
Commander at White Sands? He has
four stars now. He found me at JAG.
Sent me over.

Then, like a seasoned Staff Sergeant pinned under enemy fire
in hostile territory, Franco looks around at the audience.
He doesn't let Kase see him grimace, to avoid startling his
wet behind the ears apprentice. Franco tries, not very
successfully, to hide grave concern.

FRANCO

Boy, you got friends after all, see?
...What, aren't we having fun yet?

Kase slowly nods affirmative, looking absolutely miserable.

FRANCO

Well, then. Get on with it will
you?

Franco says loudly now; loud enough to be heard over the
room P.A. system. Followed by a just as loud, Al Pacino
"OoHh ah," scent of a woman hoot.

FRANCO

I've been waiting years for this
day!

Franco sits down in a chair and pulls himself up the table
like a little kid edging up to a Thanksgiving turkey dinner.
Then, turning, he urges Kase on.

FRANCO

Come on, boy. Get on with it. That's
an order!

His elbows are on the table, now; quite uncouthly. A rude
soldier bereft of all civilized veneer. Kase is starting to
come to his senses.

KASE

What's with the M.P. armband, Sir?

FRANCO

Borrowed it from some G.I. Joe
security guard at the Pentagon.
Looks good doesn't it?

FRANCO

Specialist Clark, you're the expert
witness, man. Do your job!

A dramatic interchange occurs among the Committee members then. Finally the Chairman holds up his arms in consternation, and points to the Senator from Texas, pantomiming - I disown this man and his situation; he's your prodigal child, deal with him.

LADY SENATOR

Mr. Clark. Has it occurred to you that we might be as surprised in this as you are?

KASE

No.

LADY SENATOR

Or that we might even possibly change our minds?

KASE

No.

CHAIRMAN

Do you realize what a charade you have made of these hearings?

LADY SENATOR

Oh, shut up, Mr. Chairman. Let me handle this... Okay, Clark. Let me say that I am so surprised at these accusations. Speaking, now, for myself alone; and that I am contemplating a change of position. ...Can you at least accept that?

KASE

No.

CHAIRMAN

This conversation has gone on long enough. Arrest that man, Bailiff.

LADY SENATOR

That dog don't hunt. Committee members have rights too, and I insist you recognize my right to question a witness!

KASE

Why would you be interested in what I have to say? Give me one good reason why I should believe you.

LADY SENATOR

Texas has the highest per capita energy use of any nation or state in the world. You know, biggest cars, longest distances? Texas shoulders a very disproportionate percentage of the Freon replacement costs, am I correct?

KASE

Especially along the Gulf Coast, where it's real hot and real humid.

The Chairman, himself obviously a southerner, shows a renewed interest.

GREENPEACE DEMONSTRATION

A shiver of indecision starts to divide the ranks, as southerners on both sides take affront. Somebody has scrawled - Taxation Without Representation - on a poster board. This is a logo on some DC license plates. People start ripping them off nearby cars, and build a small mountain of them.

CHARIMAN (V.O.)

What do you mean? Are you saying that the southern states have been slapped with a trillion dollar tax, all by our selves?

KASE (V.O.)

Think for a moment who uses air conditioning the most? Where are the hottest, most humid places? The Old South, ma'am. Plus southern California. We're the ones who pay most of the trillion dollar cost of the Freon phase out.

SENATE HEARING

Kase looks aside to Colonel Franco, who is now bolt upright in his chair.

KASE

The U.S. military is the single biggest consumer of fuel in the whole world.

SERIES OF SHOTS - GREENPEACE DEMONSTRATION

- A) The bona fide, professional activists have arrived now, brandishing elaborate posters that shout
- B) Impeach Bush, with a Swastika replacing the letter "s"

- C) Ban Lobbyists
- D) Iraq no Phobia
- E) Mars or Die
- F) Quick flash of a dame who looks like Nikki, carrying a poster - Vini, Vidi, Vici - hand grasped around the poster, bright red finger nails in evidence; then tourists block the camera.

BACK TO SCENE

KASE (V.O.)

...We have this here treaty, foisted
on Congress by industry using
prejudicial and unscientific evidence.
...We have a treaty that has stifled
economic growth - escalated oil prices -
wrecked the economy.

SENATE HEARING

The Chairman starts to speak, but Kase holds up a hand and continues. The Chairman is riled, but quickly silenced into deep thought.

KASE

It gets worse! The phasing out of
Freon twelve is only one part of the
plan. The new Freons will be phased
out within seven or eight years;
then again after that; ad infinitum.

Kase stands.

KASE

With each phase; new equipment costs
a trillion dollars; efficiency drops;
utility bills increase.

Kase now gets up, boogies over to the TV camera - the one with the red light meaning live - and says directly to the viewers, nose practically touching the lens.

KASE

There's credible evidence that the
Freon is not a danger to the ozone
layer. The whole world is laughing
at us; competing us into extinction.

The gavel RINGS OUT loudly and the Chairman calls for a recess. Marines pull Kase away from the camera, haul him back, sit him down.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

Mr. Clark, you aren't going to run out again on us are you? Your testimony is of utmost importance. Do you understand?

Kase has that wild look in his eye, feet TAPPING the floor impatiently. Noticing this, the Chairman says to Colonel Franco.

CHAIRMAN

See that your client is here after the recess, will you Colonel?

FRANCO

Yes, Sir.

CHAIRMAN

In fact. Baliff, see that the Witness doesn't leave this room. Or Colonel Paul Franco, United States Army; for that matter.

The Committee members leave to Chambers. Just as they are exiting, a Bailiff comes over to Colonel Franco, still in stunned silence, and asks politely for his side arm, and cell phone.

KASE

Welcome to the Mickey Mouse club, Colonel. Comfy, padded room and all. ...Colonel. Why are you here?

FRANCO

You're good people. We couldn't but help.

Then Kase makes a few crashing kind of sounds, 'O no, its mister steamroller, rolling right over poor play-dough Mr. Bill . . . spat.' Like the original Saturday Night Live skits.

FRANCO

Yea, something like that.

GREENPEACE DEMONSTRATIONS - SUNSET

Street lights are winking on, showing a milling crowd of demonstrators, rubber neckers, and police in roughly equal proportions. Homeland Security vans have ringed in the perimeter, barring anybody else from entering. In the shadows are groups of riot police with helmet shields, tear gas guns, and rubber bullets.

SENATE HEARING - NIGHT

The Committee is back in session. Outside in the middle of the demonstrations small groups of people cluster around video monitors, anxious faces glowing in the quickening dusk. The Chairman denies a request by a Northern Senator to adjourn for the day. Kase and Franco are again seated at the witness table in the glare of spot lights.

KASE

Mr. Chairman. Need I remind you
that I took the oath of an Officer
in the United States Navy.

KASE

(waxing eloquent)

We used to be a nation among nations.
We had destiny. We were admired.
Can we be great ever again? Members
of the Committee...

(closing his eyes and
in one breath)

It's my sincere contention that this
Committee's position on the Freon
Ban Treaty is a blatant, subversive,
but very real and totally sanguine
attempt to destroy the United States
of America completely, utterly, and
for all time.

Then he sits right down in his chair. The entire room bursts
into an loud UPROAR. Outside it's even worse.

FRANCO

(John Wayne voice)

Well done, Pilgrim.

With a look of wild abandon, they get ready for the main
assault. When the ruckus subsides, Franco taps Kase on the
shoulder and asks.

FRANCO

Hey, trooper, why don't you let me
take it for a while? You look Bush'd.

Kase nods yes.

FRANCO

Members of the Committee, I would
like to offer some comments of my
own on these issues.

LADY SENATOR

By all means, Colonel

Franco walks around the witness stand, and goes right up the Committee table and paces as he elaborates his points. He has a voice that carries well in the room, and a manner that calms nerves and brings a modicum of order to the place. It's in stark contrast to Kase's combative, intense style and the whole room breathes a sigh of relief.

FRANCO

It's no crime, to ask for a second diagnosis... to use modern technology to reconsider old issues...?

Franco turns awkwardly to ask Kase a question. By the time he's finished, he's standing up and wandering.

FRANCO

Can you identify who is actually responsible for this whole Freon fiasco? Who would profit most?

Kase starts to speak. Then a wave of indecision stops him. He fumbles some with his fingers, and looks uncomfortably from side to side.

CHAIRMAN

Mr. Clark. Please answer the question.

Kase balks - looks straight down at the table, stays that way.

CHAIRMAN

That's a direct order, son.

KASE

Consulting engineers.

FRANCO

What?

Again, Kase looks extremely indecisive and - for the very first time - a little bit scared. Biting his lower lip and taking a good hard swallow, he continues.

KASE

Chiller jobs are the most profitable work in the construction business... A good engineering firm can make two hundred grand for two days work.

CHAIRMAN

(trying to be chummy)
...I suppose you're known in your hometown as an outspoken and honest individual?

Kase smiles an affirmative.

FRANCO

These people figured you would blow the whistle on the whole deal?

KASE

I DID blow the whistle on them. I wrote it all up in my energy conservation textbook.

FRANCO

How so? ...Why?

KASE

The new Freon is much less efficient - it's the complete opposite of energy conservation. Of course I had to comment on that... Only an idiot like me would be so foolish.

FRANCO

Have you had an attorney's counsel?

KASE

My attorney was friends with my boss. When I needed advice the most, he quit; then I got fired.

Franco looks at him unbelieving.

KASE

I turned in three lawyers for violating a confidence; they tattled to my employers. The Texas Bar twice asked for me to testify against them in their investigations.

FRANCO

You didn't?

KASE

I may be brave, Colonel. I'm not suicidal ...Yet.

Kase starts to say something then senses the walls closing in again. They had painted him into a corner. What credence he may have had earlier was gone now, vaporized in this brief dialogue so carefully marshaled by the Committee. The trap closes swiftly, with the whole world watching.

CHAIRMAN

Bailiff. Will you remove Mr. Clark from this room.

The same burley Bailiff approaches again, and Kase is sick with anticipation. His stomach churns, and his head gets light and he feels very bad indeed.

DR. DH

Dios Mio. Please, Mister Baliff man. You can very well stay where you are, for a few more moments.

They were very soft words, with a foreign accent to them. A trace of fire was there, though; this man was used to getting his way.

DR. DH

Jesus Christo, but these idiotas are gone too darned far this time.

The man says as he walks behind Clark, patting him lightly on the head as he passes. The Bailiff is still approaching the witness, but the man cuts him off with an extended arm.

DR. DH

You just go back to your corner Mister Guardia Civil. Sit yourself down and wait and watch for un poco while longer.

LADY SENATOR

What is this outrage!

The man is still walking slowly toward the bench purposefully. He stops in front of the lady Senator and gives a little curt bow, uttering his greetings.

DR. DH

Begging your pardon. I will be myself clear shortly.

The doctor walks up to the Chairman then, and makes his introductions and demurely asks for a few moment of the Committee's time. The Chairman, regretfully, grants him permission to speak.

Kase is shocked when the man turns around to face the meeting room, hat in hand and a weak smile on his Hispanic features face. It was Doctor Durand-Hollis! The doctor gives Kase a short little smile, motioning with his head a pleasant greeting and with a little dance of the head and shoulders says, you sit tight; is okay.

DR. DH

I am Gabriel Durand-Hollis.

He bows his greetings to either side.

DR. DH

I am now Chief of Psychiatry at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio Tejas at Fort Sam Houston.

DR. DH

Especialist Clark was a patient of mine a few years ago. And a very good one too.

DR. DH

I am meaning to say that I am have observed him all this day. I testify that he is as sane and lucid and logical as anyone in this whole room.

(glaring at the
Senators)

With especial people in mind too.

He turns and glares fiercely at the Committee.

DR. DH

I am tired of letting the political authorities used my profession to harm such good people as this man here. And I will not stand at all mute to see it done here in this most honorable place of Congress in the United States of America.

Then he walks around the witness table, reaches out and shakes Kase's hand.

DR. DH

I am very, very proud of you. I have always been proud of you, even if you did not really know it.

Tears well up in Kase's eyes.

DR. DH

Now, now. Is okay to cry! Is good therapy, see?

Kase lays his head on the table, gently helped there by the Doctor's beckoning hand. He heaves a few times, but a few moments later sits back up, wipes his face, sniffles and sits ever so still. Afraid, utterly; to say a single, solitary, additional word.

The Chairman calls a recess, overcoming protests from the still livid lady Senator from Texas.

The Doctor reaches over to touch Colonel Franco on the arm. When Franco reflexively reaches out to shake his hand, the Doctor swiftly places a small cell phone in his palm.

Covering up quickly, he grasps Franco's hand in both of his own.

Franco plays out his respectful part in the introductions; then meanders off to the side of the room. The Doctor continues to be incredibly irritating to the Committee members, going up to beg the pardon of each and every one of them as they leave to Chambers. Every minute or so, he glances Franco's way; then move to block the Committee's view of him, as he makes an assault on the next Senator leaving.

The Committee is soon back in session.

CHAIRMAN

You actually believe consulting
engineers orchestrated the Freon
Ban?

Kase is deaf, dumb, and mute. Brief view of the demonstrations; it's early in the AM, only a few people remain. The city is asleep.

CHAIRMAN

I find that really hard to believe.

KASE

How so? It's in the Charter of every
professional society in America.

CHAIRMAN

What is?

KASE

To promote the profession, in this
case engineering. Every state
licensing Board follows the same
premise.

LADY SENATOR

I don't follow you.

KASE

I'll use a Board you may relate a
little better to... the Psychological
Associates Advisory Committee in my
state, a subordinate board to the
Psychologists Licensing Board.

Doctor DH perks up at this, and becomes suddenly attentive.

KASE

We often discussed in meetings how
the Board exists only to promote the
profession... to ensure full
employment of all its members.

CHAIRMAN

You're going in circles again, Mr. Clark...

KASE

I published a feature article in a national industry magazine, posing the existence of a possible connection between indoor air quality and psychological illness...

DR. DH

(shocked)

Begging your pardon Mr. Chairman. May I question the witness in this matter? Please?

(he does so anyway)

DR. DH

You are saying that bad air quality can contribute to mental illness?

KASE

Sure, why not? People spend over eighty percent of their time in air conditioned places.

GREENPEACE OFFICES - NIGHT

The demonstrators straggle in. A large screen TV has been running in the conference room. The live C-Span coverage is still going on. The new tact of the testimony startles them. Soon the conference room is full of hippie executives, uttering random grudging accolades. Somebody passes around a big bowl of buttered popcorn. External office lights dim, and everybody squeezes in to watch the show.

KASE (V.O.)

The air we breathe is no less important than the food we eat, is it not? Dietary deficiency contributes to mental instability.

DR. DH (V.O.)

It is a very basic consideration. Yes, it is.

SENATE HEARING

KASE

(sarcastic)

My, but we are being so cooperative today, Doctor Durand-Hollis...

(angry)

What are some of the symptoms of oxygen deprivation?

DR. DH

Dizziness, nausea, headache, mental confusion, diminishing of short term memory; psychosis and death. In that order.

KASE

Would this happen sooner at a high altitude? Such as White Sands Missile Range, which is over a mile high?

DR. DH

Yes. The official name for the condition is Mountain Sickness.

GREENPEACE DEMONSTRATION

Briefly back to what's left of the demonstration. All sides are now watching TV screens, riot police too. Apparently Kase's fate is at least improved to undecided, as they start to take odds among them.

KASE (V.O.)

The symptoms would be worse, if you have a lower than normal red blood count? ...Which is what collects and distributes oxygen within the body?

DR. DH (V.O.)

You are corrected.

SENATE HEARING

KASE

All this happens if a person doesn't have enough oxygen to breathe?

(DH nods)

Because they get too much carbon dioxide?

DR. DH

Already. Yes.

KASE

Imagine a room with many people.

(waving his arms,
like this room)

The more people, the worse the breathing air is, no?

Dr. DH nods his agreement. Back in the green peace conference room. Some of them start to get uncomfortable, and a clerk nonchalantly sneaks over to open a window.

KASE (V.O.)

...No fresh air is provided to a space, you get signs of mental illness. The more people, the smaller the space, the sooner the symptoms?

Again, the doctor nods, not quite able to speak.

Kase takes a break, looking from each Committee member to the next, being sure they are all following his reasoning. They are, maybe too well. The Chairman's hands grip the edge of the table in front of him; white from the exertion.

KASE

One association is responsible for air quality in every building... Yet, nobody has ever sponsored any research into even the possibility that air quality might affect mental health.

Kase makes much ado about loosening his tie and unbuttoning the top button.

KASE

Colonel Franco, why do you suppose that is?

FRANCO

(weakly)
Liability.

KASE

Louder.

FRANCO

Liability. I said damn it.

Kase dramatically waves his arms to each side, quite sure they all realized this very hearing was happening in a crowded room, in a conditioned space.

KASE

Is there no insurance to cover this sort of thing?

FRANCO

No. Too expensive

KASE

...Engineer gets bright idea that indoor air might effect mental illness... publishes story about this in international magazine... A few weeks later he's out of a job, references, career.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

CNN coverage in the Oval Office, from the East Coast morning shows. The President is watching. Senior counselors pace the halls and junior staff are called in, despite the very early hour. Pause on one of the staff standing by the President, in muted conversation with him; the staff member is the nefarious man from the Tribunal.

SENATE HEARING

KASE

Naive engineer lobbies the Psychology Board. Puts it on the Board agenda, submits interesting facts... What do you suppose happened, Colonel Franco?

FRANCO

How should I know?

KASE

You shouldn't. Just checking. To see who's side you're on.

KASE

The whole idea was soundly rejected by the Psych Board's legal counsel... why?

FRANCO

(too quickly)
Mental illness keeps the shrink's couches full and bank accounts fat.

KASE

Doctor. What are generally the most densely occupied buildings in terms of people per square foot of floor space?

Kase motions the Bailiff to turn down the room thermostat, indicating he was getting a little hot under the collar. Nobody misses the significance of his gesture.

DR. DH

It would have to be classrooms in schools.

KASE

Very good.
(clapping lightly)
Is this something a competent engineer, being charged with maintaining the public's health, should be concerned about?

DR. DH

Mr. Clark, I think it is a problem we should all be very concerned about. Especially those of us with childrens in school.

A little murmur starts in the audience behind him, and Kase swiftly asks his next question. Desperation is creeping into his voice, again.

KASE

Why would engineers not police air quality; In fact, they lowered fresh air standards...

FRANCO

It saves energy.
(much too quickly)
Less efficient Freon equipment needs more energy. Reduce outside air standards and no one is any the wiser

KASE

No pun intended... Franco? What single industry is a trillion dollars behind in their facility maintenance?

Franco motions that he needs another hint.

KASE

... high-occupancy, public, always strapped for funds... buildings are falling apart at the seams in every, single community in this nation?

FRANCO

Public schools?

KASE

Need I say more? Reducing outside air intake is the single, easiest way to reduce the operating budget... And, god damn. Wouldn't you know it. The incidence of mental illness in school age children has gone up exponentially... Our kids don't need Ritalin, they need fresh air.

With that, Kase turns to face the audience, and violently SLAMS both fists down hard on the table top, making a tremendous sound. It's just the shock needed to loosen all the tongues in the room, and suddenly everyone is TALKING LOUD AT ONCE. As the crescendo of the uproar peaks, the Senator from Texas catches Kase's eye.

LADY SENATOR

Shoo, ya'll. Get the hell out of
here you idiots!

Kase and his two fellow conspirators hasten from the witness stand, swiftly making their way toward the exit. The lady Senator from Texas keeps the Committee; for that matter, the entire room distracted with a TIRADE, lambasting the crazy witness and his flimsy testimony. Kase is so impressed that he turns at one point, wanting to see her sterling performance; the Doctor grabs him by the collar and yanks him forcefully back to the group, now nearing the door.

Franco's associates from JAG are waiting impatiently at the door. Evidently, Franco had gotten through to them on the doctor's cell telephone. The Army officers in working uniforms were engaged in conversation with the bailiffs. As they approach, Franco paces out ahead.

FRANCO

Boy am I glad to see you guys. Well,
come on - let's get out of here!

The JAG staff is ashen-faced. Bailiffs move to block their exit from the doors.

JAG LAWYER

I'm sorry, Franco. We have orders.
High up. Real high. To take you
people into custody

Franco starts to slug the guy, but the Doctor catches his cocked arm. The three fugitives are out of aces. The door is too far away to make a dash for it, and the bailiffs are armed, and look quite willing to avail themselves of a few slugs.

Suddenly, the main doors to the courtroom open and a big group of people comes hustling in. Kase turns, hoping for a seam in the security, for a chance to escape.

All he sees are Marines. Armed fucking Marines, doubling up on the exit doors and fanning out around the perimeters of the room. The COMMOTION subsides, and the Chairman calls the Court to order. The witnesses settle down for another round. The Hearing reconvenes formally. It's starting to get light outside. Kase sums up the situation, winds up, and gives it his best shot.

KASE

Good Morning America!

He says it into the microphone just like the wild and crazy DJ Robin Williams in the movie. Then, after the clamor dies down in the room.

KASE

Why did Congress act with such haste on the Freon Ban? You voted for a faster phase out schedule than the original treaty ... Then, a year later, you accelerated it again.

The Senators cannot answer.

KASE

What, the noose wasn't tight enough?

The Committee has a smug let the fellow dig his own grave expression on their faces.

LADY SENATOR

Why is oxygen such an issue?

Kase ignores her question completely.

KASE

Two million kids get Attention Deficit Disorder every year. No one knows why. No one is willing to even accept the remote possibility that air quality might be the culprit?

LADY SENATOR

That's bull. It's just some pie in the sky theory.

KASE

What about the universal opposition to my efforts just to get this one little itty bitty question answered? Yes, it says. Yes!! Yes! There is a connection. A conspiracy.

Pausing to take a sip of water from a mug on the Conference table, Kase waits a few breaths to calm down a little bit. Then he hoists himself up to sit on the witness table, legs swinging, and puts on a little show for the cameras...

KASE

(parodying Nixon)

Bringing democracy to Iraq? For what? So they can elect terrorists like they have in Iran, and now in the Palestinian Territories?

(giggling)

Ohhhh Misstterr President.

Kase is all hunched up around the microphone, saying in a President Bill Clinton voice.

KASE

Ohhh, and I owe you one. Just think,
honeybuns - every school boy and
school girl in America will learn
about us in Civics class.

Kase is now a thin John Belushi. He bundles up some papers
and throws them at the Senators.

KASE

Food fight!

(shrill H. Ross Perot
voice)

Why, blow me away. Nazis figured it
all out, decades ago. Ten times
heavier than air nano tech Freon-
twelve molecules make it into the
upper atmosphere because they're
self propelled. Load a jet with
that stuff, it's lighter than air,
and all those fancy maneuvers that
UFO's do are suddenly possible.

(Arnold Schwarzeneger
impersonation)

UFO's aren't high tech at all.
They're actually quite low tech, and
that's why they need this vast Right
Wing Conspiracy to sweep it all under
the rug.

(Gomer Pyle voice)

Well, GoOoLeeEe Sergeant Carter. It
was a jet that crash landed at Roswell -
a Nazi prototype that they had at
the end of the World War Two.

(serious)

The Nazis had precious little oil,
and no jet fuel at all - so they
found a new energy source. The bad
guys got ahold of one of their jet
prototypes; tested this new fangled
Freon lighter than air like helium
trick; but crash... Roswell. Cover
Up. They've been developing the
technology ever since at White Sands.
Unbeknownst to the military that's
funding them and guarding their
secrets. It's all funded by a long
string of trillion dollar boondoggles.
Unidentified Federal Outlays...
U.F.O.'s

By this time, JAG men had surrounded Kase and his friends.
Angry and armed Marines back them up. Their leader grabs
the microphone violently, ripping the cords out; then like
Bill Murray stalking the golfing gophers, he yanks the entire
base stand from its pinning, right off the table.

FRANCO

(John Wayne accent)

Well, Pilgrim, so much for Freedom
of Speech.

But Kase keeps talking, his voice growing hoarse. It doesn't really matter what he says any more. The crowd parts before him in ill concealed terror, like the Red Sea before Moses. The three fugitives make a little progress toward the door, their only viable means of escape. The Marines see this. They're maneuvering through the crowd, to cut them off at the pass.

Just then, the heavy wooden doors to the meeting room burst open (again) and a dozen people crowd into the already full room. Kase sees them from out of the corner of his eye, but the JAG men and their thugs had surrounded he, the doctor and Franco by this time.

Suddenly a big, bald elderly fellow in a totally obnoxious combination of suit jacket and pants bursts into the group like a tourist hell bent on seeing his Congressman. The JAG men quickly hide their drawn weapons, for fear of offending the sensibility of this dude and his crew of unusually rambunctious tourists. The big guy says over and over and over again, in a wonderfully southern voice, to no one in particular but to everyone at the same time too, "Why Excuse Me, Sir" in a voice that was embarrassingly loud, as tourists are wont to do.

SAUNDERS

Why, Glory Be! Hallelujah!

The big voice says, as a couple of bear arms reach out to grasp Kase by the shoulders, shaking him like a rag doll.

SAUNDERS

Lordy, if it ain't my Specialist
Clark!

Slowly getting focus, as he is being shook, Clark catches this obnoxious fellow-with-the-pepperoni-pizza-breath's eye, and starts.

KASE

Ceasar I, mean Col - Colonel Saunders?

He was a little older, but no gray hair (actually, no hair at all) but the same spiritual cheer and gregarious aggressiveness. Evidently the doctor and Franco had recognized the Colonel already, because Kase sees in his peripheral vision that they were exchanging some kind of looks.

Finally set steady on his feet, Kase sees that all of the JAG men and the bailiffs were being engaged in extreme questioning from a bunch of persistent, horribly dressed retired tourists with disgustingly courteous southern accents.

The Pentagon JAG men are reeling back from all this unsolicited good will. The poor double breasted Wall Street Yankee lawyers are totally outclassed; hopeless victims to these proselytizing southern Baptists, hell bent on something; lead by the fearless full bird Colonel (retired) himself.

Kase and the doctor and Franco are suddenly outside in the hallway, ushered there by this perverse influx of humanity. Then, they're right in the middle of a small group of oldsters who are moving with remarkable speed and dexterity.

Half way to the big outside doors, the Colonel catches up to Kase. Grabbing his elbow as they both hustle toward the doors and freedom, Saunders talks in his ear.

SAUNDERS

A little late with the Calvary.

Kase looks at him skeptical, backs away a few baby steps.

SAUNDERS

(arms wide)

After all, boy, we are Southern
Baptists, and we love a Rebel Hero!!

Everyone jostles out the building and into an ugly yellow school bus. The bus JOLTS to a start. No sooner are they underway than cell telephones materialize, in every single palm of the passengers. Several have laptop computers, and one enterprising old buzzard even has a fax machine. The language spoken among them would have put Microsoft corporate offices to great shame; modems, Internet link ups, downloading files, intersecting chat rooms, GPS, flash ram, satellite links, file transfer protocol, and on and on.

The President's Big Bird itself would have been outclassed by the communications that transpired from that yellow church bus. It TRUNDLES down the crowded Washington streets, making its escape complete, into the obscenity of the morning rush hour in the nation's capitol. It's a good story, they're angry, and they call every public official, every news agency, and quite a few wrong numbers of people who had to hear the whole complete story anyway.

DR DH

Book 'em, Danto.

Kase jumps a foot; with a punch to the arm from the doctor.

KASE

Hey, Bones. How do you like the show so far?

DR. DH

Rock and Roll, hombre.

SAUNDERS

We in the Bad Lands now.

KASE

Oh my God. I have a dinner date tonight.

FRANCO

To hell with it. You're gonna have to call and cancel it.

Franco hands him a cell phone.

KASE

What? Are you kidding?

Franco pushes the phone into his face.

KASE

No, I guess you're not.

Dialing Nikki's hotel, the worse look of grief on his face of all that day, Kase solemnly asks for Nikki's room. The telephone RINGS a few times, then the operator asks if he wants to leave a message. "Okay," as he thought of a nice way to say it. The operator asks if he was still there, please?

KASE

Just tell Miss Gateaux... I'm on my way and will be there as fast as the traffic allows.

Kase SNAPS the cell phone shut, and shoves it right back into Franco's face. Then he gets out of his seat and hurries up to the front of the bus, YELLING to the driver as he goes forward to let him off at the next light.

KASE

Do me a favor, Franco. Call your taxi service and have 'em pick me up.

The bus SCREECHES to a halt.

KASE

See ya'll in hell.

Kase hollars to everyone else in the bus, and he's off and running. Looking out of the window as the bus waits at the light, Franco cranes his neck out the window to see Kase haggling with a street vendor for some flowers.

FRANCO

Oh, what the hell.

Franco says to the empty seat beside him. SLAMMING up the school bus window, he tosses a fist full of wadded up dollars in Kase's direction, yelling out the window,

FRANCO

Have a good time, soldier.

DR. DH

And that is now doctor's order.

The doctor adds from the seat in front of Franco, just as the bus starts to pull away. Fumbling with his own wallet and then trying to get some bills loose, the doctor mutters something that sounds like, 'Caramba, if Christ ain't on a crutch,' and tosses the whole damn wallet out the window.

DR. DH

Save sex tonight.

He yells out the window, then he settles into a seat. Across the isle, Captain Franco pulls a cell phone out of his breast pocket, dials a number; and hunches over to speak into it so nobody can over hear. The doctor evidently hears him, however, because a few seconds later a smile comes on his face. Franco hangs up. Their eyes meet.

EXT. - WASHINGTON DC - EVENING

Nikki and Kase are seated at nice dining table, both in evening dress. Nikki is flushed. Kase is; well, there.

NIKKI

Well, how was it?

KASE

Oh, just another day at the office.

NIKKI

Oh Good. ...No more fire works then?
Oh, I'm so happy for you. Did you
get your way?

KASE

Oh. You know how it is. Getting
there is half the fun.. Hey look
there's one of those Japanese Belushi
trees.

Then Kase notices, from the corner of his eye, three uniformed men approaching. Like a tsunami out of season, they look very awkward in the ritzy joint. Then he starts, as they come into focus. Damn, Uniforms. They come up quickly. Noticing the abrupt change in Kase's expression, Nikki turns to look too.

MARSHAL ONE

Federal Marshals. We have orders to take Mr. Clark into custody.

KASE

Sorry, mate.

(swank Australian)

Nope. Been there, Done that. OoRooo, mate.

The officers don't move. They're trying not to make a scene. Kase acts more put out than ever.

KASE

Sorry, I'm not interested! Can't you take a hint?

MARSHAL ONE

Come with us please, Sir.

Two of the marshals try to hoist Kase out of his chair.

NIKKI

You heard the gentleman. We're not interested. Bug off!

KASE

I beg your pardon,
(the perfect English gentlemen)
have you no manners?

KASE

You could please apologize to the lady!

Kase is wringing his arms from out of the grips of the muscle men. Nikki is giggling, at the insane brashness of her dinner companion. Kase picks up a bread stick in his free hand and gives her his best Groucho Marx.

KASE

If this is it, then prison'll be worth every second of it.

Then the thugs tightened their grip, and he stops struggling. Nikki puts her wineglass down then, deliberately; sobering up a little after their laugh.

Very carefully she takes a napkin and dabs a speck of food - bright red finger nails - then she reaches down at her side to grab her purse, the model of domestic acquiescence. Standing, she pushes the chair aside and leaves.

Nikki's walking past the U.S. Marshals; Kase, now extracted from the chair by the Marshals, sees Nikki in a tunnel vision - she's far, far away. Leaving him alone at the mercy of the authorities. Then one of the Marshals says to her loudly, crudely as she walks through the distant door of the dining room.

MARSHAL ONE

Screw you.
(hissing)
And you're whole kind!

Nikki stops dead in her tracks... Reaches into her purse. Then she brandishes a badge, almost slow motion. Speaks with a bitterness worthy of Mrs. Job herself, with a very heavy French accent now.

NIKKI

Mea Culpa. Butt out, little boys.
French Foreign Legion.
(showing her badge)
I have full diplomatic immunity, and
so too does my husband W. H. Clark
Two.

She's so furious a hint of her roots creeps into her voice. They ignore her and continue to pry Kase out of his chair. Kase can be heard murmuring to himself, 'well, shish boom bah if this don't beat all.'

MARSHAL ONE

This man is under house arrest on
the authority of the Patriot Act.
...Lady, you got no jurisdiction
here. This is Washington D. C.

Meanwhile two of the Marshals are holding Kase; a third gets a good wind up and punches him square in the stomach. Kase recovers then gives him a good spat in the face. The Marshal reels back, and motions another thug to take his turn while he cleans the muck from his face. They still ignore Nikki. One of them turns and says to her.

MARSHAL TWO

Yea, bitch; just you try and stop
us.

Nikki rolls her head and says to Kase, now prone on the carpeted floor.

NIKKI

Bitch you want? Bitch you get.

Dropping her badge as if to say, so much for this piece of plastic, she says to Kase.

NIKKI

When are these macho Yankees going
to learn, anything?

Then one of the Marshals grabs her purse away. She's getting angry now. They go as if to grab her wrists and she gives the fellow a move that would have flattened Godzilla. The second one tries to follow suit, and he's down on the floor, even faster. Neither one moves a joint after that. The third Marshall has pulled his weapon by this time and looks very anxious to fire. He's backing warily away from the long reach of her dangerous limbs.

NIKKI

Can't you see you're out manned,
little big man?

Nikki taunts him as she follows his retreat, with not a thing in her hands, or a weapon in sight.

Kase is getting up off the floor and trying to catch his breath. Looking to the side he notices a couple of bad guys in the background wearing dark blue blazers with FBI on the back. He starts feeling extremely desperate then, and hoists some more, trying his level best to come to Nikki's aid. Unfortunately, the knees just won't cooperate; they buckle. He can only watch helplessly, all crumpled up on the floor.

Nikki swiftly grabs a wineglass. She dashes the wine in the Marshall's face in a blur of impossible swiftness. A few painful crunches and a little shrill sound from Nikki, and now the number one Marshal is down too. Kase, hunched as he was regaining his footing and equilibrium, blinks dramatically a few times.

They spend a couple of minutes then, standing, each tidying up their clothes. Kase tucks in his shirt and straightens his tie. She snaps open a cosmetics thing O, and deftly applies a little dab of powder to obscure a speckle of sweat on her upper lip.

Kase goes up to her to ask if his tie is straight; she yanks it a little, then he grabs the excuse to kiss her square on the lips. She acts outraged and slaps him lightly with a white glove. He smiles, wiping the lipstick off his mouth with the back of his white shirt-sleeve.

The FBI blazers drag the U.S. Marshals out of the vicinity, then themselves fade into the surroundings like chameleons.

KASE

Bloody cowards.

Kase calls after them, brandishing a fork high in the air. Nikki giggles at the ridiculous sight. Kase gently grasps her elbow, then; and leads her to her chair. Pulling it out for her, he settles her in. Grasping her gloved hand gently, he gives her wrist a gallant kiss just above her leather wrist band, then goes back to his own seat.

KASE

Waiter! Another bottle of wine!
Pronto, I say!

Kase speaks gruffly like Hagar in a foreign land. An FBI agent (earmark plug still in place) in waiter's white coat tails arrives with the chilled wine before Kase had even sat down.

KASE

Damn spankey service, these FBI types.
Well, where were we, beautiful lady?

NIKKI

Oh, just another day at the office,
I suppose.

Grasping a book of matches she strikes it and lights the candles on the table. The room lights fade dramatically and the candles become prominent. Nikki picks up a wine glass, to toast Kase.

NIKKI

That's a darn good trick, love.

Kase is still a little rattled. The lights flicker. Nikki motions with her eyes and eyebrows the special effects. Kase hunches his shoulders.

KASE

No problemo. You have cute ears.

NIKKI

Oh, my. You give my ears a little
T.L.C. and I'm putty in your arms.

KASE

Ha, mystery solved at long last! I
can see it now. Super agent Nikki,
in the throes of ecstasy succumbing
to dissident Kase in big bouncy bed.

NIKKI

No way, mister freaky spooko. You
think I move fast in this skirt and
high heels? Sans clothes you be dead.

KASE

Oh, but what a way to go.

Kase leans back in his chair, elbows outstretched and hands clasped on his neck, to unself-consciously savor the thought. Nikki bundles up her napkin and throws it in his face. He almost tumbles over backward in the fragile chair. Arms flailing and legs splayed, he most ungracefully catches himself and bounces back forward.

Then he pushes off from the table, slaps his hands on his legs and just plain laughs, deep and long, tears streaming down his cheeks. Nikki watches a little amazed at first, grabs another napkin and tossed it his way, then joins in too with a hearty cheer of her own.

KASE

You know what, Nikki?
(gasping for air)
My ears are the same way.

They both lean forward, holding their chests to contain the most uncouth uproarious laughter.

NIKKI

Yea, like that little big eared fellow
on Deep Space Nine
(between heaves)
Quark, quark. What's a duck yell
when its having an orgasm?

Nikki loses it completely. Kase is the first to recover. He sucks in a deep breath, leans forward and says very seriously.

KASE

You aren't a Vulcan are you? With
those super sensitive ears?

NIKKI

Why?
(tears rolling down
her cheeks)
You met too many women who need sex
only every seven years, have you?

KASE

Yea.

Nikki looks hurt. Kase slows down; thinks about it, then corrects himself.

KASE

I mean no!

Nikki looks even more hurt. Kase slows again, thinking.

Then Nikki burst into a laugh; she'd been pretending.

KASE

Wait, I mean. Yea.

And they both lose it totally. The lights dim, then darken as their laughter fades away.

MONTAGE - NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT

- A) Lightning cascades in the distance as a massive storm approaches across the delta.
- B) A panoply of sparkling white lights comes into focus
- C) The port of New Orleans, U.S. air craft carrier anchored mid river, looking huge. Virga on the horizon, heavy rains are en route.
- D) French mirage fighter jet lands on the carrier deck, French insignia prominent
- E) Captain's yacht departs the carrier, toward Farmer's Market docks, bubbling surf in wake
- F) A passenger in all black jumps off, runs at breakneck speed through the Cafe du Monde, splashes through big puddles in Jackson Square, still running, deep into the French Quarter.
- G) A cafe door opens, a wedge of light escapes, then is gone.
- H) Not too far away in the Garden District it's lightening and thunder. A major storm approaches rapidly.

INT. FRENCH QUARTER/RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A full house, watching Master Sergeant Kase wobbling on his cane up onto the stage. He's resplendent in a Foreign Legion dress uniform that is similar to U.S. Marine Corps dress blues (but different colors), thick gold service stripes half way up his left forearm, glittering sword at his side. The small auditorium is packed with military officers of many nationalities, a panoply of ribbons and polished leather.

KASE

Terrorists. Drug lords. Oil barons.
 Alas, even industrialists. Multi-national corporate entities. These enemies of Freedom have billion dollar budgets. They all want to distort Freedom; twist and contort it so they get what they want.

Now pacing back and forth (kind of), swaggering like a young Patton.

KASE

We do not stand, passive. We of the French Foreign Legion. We seek out these subversive organizations - to infiltrate them... then with the full might of Freedom - we destroy them. Utterly.

The mystery visitor is striding out of a pitch black darkness at the back of the room. Kase sees her and calls.

KASE

Attention on Deck!

The whole restaurant rises and stands at attention, while Kase snaps to attention himself and does his best salute.

NIKKI

As you were, Master Sergeant.

Kase relaxes into parade rest. Everybody else has to remain at attention. Enter Nikki - face flushed from exertion: Dressed in a black/gray pattern jumpsuit, glistening with sweat, clinging tightly to her figure; worn leather cowboy hat with Colonel's silver eagle, hanging at her back on a buckskin cord. She talks while making slow progress toward the podium.

NIKKI

One in five thousand applicants is accepted to the Foreign Legion... The weak bug out, and go Navy SEALs... They come to their senses, eventually.... Nevertheless, just one of fifty SEALs who comes here as a trainee earns our
(motioning toward
Kase, open arms)
pedigree. ORCA. Other Special Forces types do no better...

Nikki is now half way up the center isle. Notice Nikki's shoulder patch of a killer whale likeness, emblazoned with the letters O.R.C.A. beneath. A similar designation was on Kase's uniform, a silver service medal insignia like they do for airborne.

NIKKI

Do you have what it takes? How long can you withstand torture - physical agony; mental horror; total isolation; spiritual vacuum; infinite chaos, in every aspect of your life?

(MORE)

NIKKI (CONT'D)

How long could you survive?
Hours? Days? Survive for
months. You just might,
make the cut.

Nikki does a little cartwheel, jumps up onto the podium to Kase's side. He salutes her again. She returns the salute, steps aside while he holds his salute in honor of the audience. Snapping from Attention, Kase turns and - arm in arm, they walk off the stage. They go through double doors, outside, into a pouring down rain. They pace undaunted, in step, right straight into the downpour, and disappear. Text begins to scroll across the screen a-la Star Wars intro.

SUPER: THIS HAS BEEN INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY. A MILITARY TRIBUNAL WAS CONVENED AS STATED IN THE SPRING OF 1985. THE TESTIMONY DRAMATIZED HERE IS ALL OFF THE OFFICIAL COURT RECORD. THE MAJOR PARTICIPANTS - THE ISRAELI BELKIND, CAPT. FRANCO, COL. SANDERS, DR. DURAND-HOLLIS, AND GEN. FULWYLER ARE REAL. NIKKI IS A COLLECTION OF FEMALE ARCHETYPES FROM MY LIFE. MOST OF THE DETAILS CONCERNING THE ARMY, ANNAPOLIS, THE NASA LETTER, JFK'S LETTER TO GRAMPA HOWARD WERE, AS STATED. WHCII

FADE OUT.

THE END