

BLACKBIRD

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BLACKNESS

Scroll: Based on a true story. Certain events, names and locations have been changed for dramatic purposes only.

FADE IN:

**EXT. OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN - WEST COAST - CALIFORNIA - 1962
- DAY**

Flight over the pacific. Peaceful, serene, breathtaking scope of the ever expanding waters that lead towards the coast of california.

As flight continues over the ocean, beach fronts start to appear.

EXT. BEACH FRONT - MONTAGE OF PAST EVENTS

Clips of news reels. WWI, WWII, 1947 Cold war begins, Korean war, JFK'S inauguration, Cuban Missile Crisis.

U2 spy plane shot down.

During clips, SCROLL: - During the cold war - In 1960 the United states defense ministry assigned new spy planes to breach Russian airspace in order to gather intelligence. One of such planes, the U2 Spy plane did just that but was shot down creating an unstable incident between both Washington and the Kremlin.

Once the heat between both nations had cooled to a tolerable level, a new spy plane was in the works. One that could not easily be seen or detected by their russian counterparts.

It would prove to be the finest example of engineering on the planet making it the fastest, maneuverable, and hard to spot stealth plane ever built.

It was the SR-71 Spy Plane. Also known as - The Blackbird.

Flight continues over beach front properties and onward over cities towards a distant factory nestled close to a mountain.

EXT. OVER HIGHWAY - BURBANK - CONTINUOUS

Traffic flow, mountain park reserves, a clear hot day.

Flight moves on over a highway as commuters continue on in their daily lives.

Unbeknownst to them, is a single road that forks off of the highway and leads to a highly restricted area.

The only way in is by official entry.

From the highway, a few military vehicles stop at a gatehouse.

EXT. GATEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A guard walks out of the post house and approaches the lead vehicle. The driver's side window rolls down.

GUARD
Identification papers.

Driver holds up official papers along with his ID tag photo card.

Guard examines them.

Satisfied...

GUARD (CONT.)
You may proceed.

Guard hands him his papers and Id then goes back into the post house and opens the gate by pressing a button on his desk.

Gate opens, the driver moves on along with his entourage.

EXT. OVER DIRT ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Row of vehicles follows the road. Winds and bends help to camouflage the way in.

INT. OFFICE - AN ARCHITECTS DREAM WORLD - DAY

On the walls of the office are numerous photos of elaborately designed planes or jets. Early stage to completed designs and also photographed finished products.

But, each photo has been stamped rejected.

Also on the wall is a photo of Eisenhower.

A man sits at his desk and draws out plans for a new concept of spy plane.

He wears a white short sleeved shirt. Neat in appearance, groomed, a well to do architect who takes pride in his work.

DROP IN: SKUNK WORKS division, 1962. Kelly Johnson. (56)
Architect designer. Lockheed's development group.

As Kelly works on his plans, his eyes catch a glimpse of vehicles from the window in front of him through some blinds.

His mood changes.

KELLY
Ah shit.

EXT. MILITARY VEHICLES - CONTINUOUS

The line up of cars slow and stop in front of the factory. A few on-site foremen come out to greet the guests.

One of the drivers hops out and opens the back door.

A general exits the car.

Four star general Jerry Bryce. (50'S) A hard nosed leader who relishes his position as one of the most powerful and influential warlords of the twentieth century.

FOREMAN

General Bryce. Good of you to come.
I didn't get the memo.

BRYCE

Stow it. I'm here to see it.

Foreman Mark Hemple. (30'S) Not the typical floor manager at Lockheed but, a hard worker who has a bad disposition of getting things done too quickly to meet deadlines. A cutting corners kind of man.

MARK

It's not ready yet general. We've still got problems with the fuselage.

BRYCE

What kind of problems?

MARK

Things like - seals breaking too quickly during assembly. Or how some of the rivets manage to pop out. Small unnecessary...

BRYCE

Look, I just want to see it. I don't care about how it goes together. I want to see what it will look like once it's in the air.

Mark has the expression of someone who doesn't want his high school grades looked at. His cohorts also show the same expression.

MARK

Yeah. Well it's only half built so if you'll come this way.

Mark leads the general and his aids inside of the factory.

INT. LOCKHEED MARTIN - ASSEMBLY FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Mark walks in and the general gazes from one station to another as teams work together on various parts.

Follow behind group as Mark explains...

MARK (O.C.)

As you can see general, most of the work is done in stages. Each person is assigned a task on building every part that fits into the plane perfectly. Then every part is inspected over three times before it moves on to the assembly area.

BRYCE

How long has this project been going on?

MARK

Close to a year and a half now. We already had one built and did a flight test, but it failed.

BRYCE

Why?

MARK

The issue is the materials.

BRYCE

Materials?

MARK

Yes. Most if not all commercial or military airplanes are built out of high grade aluminum and steel. The body has to be light and flexible when in flight. But, with the SR-71's body it's the speed which is the issue.

The group approaches a staging area where Mark's workers walk along the shell of a plane and do checks.

Its body is partially torn apart. Arced beams look like a rib cage.

The black skin have ripped sections and expose wires or cables resembling internal organs.

General Bryce looks at it stoically.

BRYCE

So it failed a flight test?

MARK

Sadly yes. When we did a preliminary run the SR-71 attained an altitude of 45000 feet at Mach one point eight. That's when the problems started. Our pilot reported a series of bad vibrations, which lead to power failure. But, as soon as they descended to fifteen thousand feet, they got back power but lost a section of the hull during their descent.

BRYCE

Who's the pilot?

MARK

Captain Barry Desalle.

INT. PUB - BARRY - FIGHT - POLICE - DAY

Barry Desalle. (29) A pilot, well dressed, groomed nicely for the ladies, is in a fist fight with a local pubber.

Their argument, something about how the evolution of the plane used in wars that were won from the air rather than on the ground.

A lively song plays on the jukebox that helps the ambient nature of their fight.

While his opponent, is another young (20's) brash soldier. A marine. Lance Corporal Timothy rand argues on how hard it is to fight head on with dirt on your face and knee dip in shit.

BARRY

(Punches Tim in the face)

Without our air supports none of you grunts would last ten minutes.

Timothy has a few scars on his face. It makes his appearance more - intimidating and - unstable.

TIMOTHY

(Angry)

Fucking seagulls are all the same. You filthy squabs think nothing but saving your own asses.

They exchange blows like it was candy.

Somehow, the bouncer doesn't move a muscle as he gazes at the two idiots wrecking the place.

Barry throws another punch and lands on Timothy's jawline.

It sends him back a few feet and into a table.

Drinks fly, nearby customers quickly move out of the way.

Some of the customers cheer them on and take bets.

Barry is in his groove. But, Timothy recovers and uses his trump card.

He rushes Barry with all of his might and body tackles Barry to the floor.

Both scuffle on the heel ridden, dirty floor when the police burst in the pub guns drawn.

The bouncer simply arcs his finger down to point to the two juveniles duking it out on the floor.

The police break it up and arrest them both.

TIMOTHY

Piece of shit!

BARRY

Kiss my ass!

TIMOTHY

Up yours moron.

BARRY

Eat shit!

POLICEMAN

Alright both of you shut your cakeholes and let's go sleep it off.

BARRY

It's his fault. He started this whole fucking mess. I was just having a quiet drink when this - - mindless zombie decided to explain on how real soldiers fought in the field. And that we didn't need fighter pilots that --

POLICEMAN

Yeah yeah. You're breaking my heart. Let's go.

The policemen escort them from the building.

Both of them bloody, scraped up.

EXT. POLICE CARS - CONTINUOUS

Once they exit the pub, pedestrians gaze at them in silence. Each get in a cruiser. Such luck to have a personal car on their way to the drunk tank.

INT. DRUNK TANK - LATER ON - NIGHT

Barry is sleeping on his side on a cot while Timothy sleeps on the cold concrete floor.

A few more bums and vagrants also sleep but against a wall's base.

Clang! Of a hallway door.

Barry wakes up to hear footfalls coming down the hall. Official sounding steps.

He sits up and rubs his eyes.

After a few more rubs he looks up to see...

BRYCE

(Disappointed)

Jesus, H. Christ. And to think I assigned you to the best kept secret. On your feet.

Barry stands up as the precinct sergeant opens the door.

BARRY

General?

BRYCE

(Yelps)

Lance Corporal Rand! On your feet!

Timothy in his sleepy daze scrambles to his feet and almost topples over because of his extreme hangover.

TIMOTHY

(Looks confused, ready to vomit)

Holy shit. (bends over)

Hurls loudly, vomit hits the floor with a gross sounding splash.

General Bryce nods his head side to side.

BRYCE

If your father could see you now Tim. How disappointed he would be. And you - Captain. What the hell were you thinking? Inciting a fight just to appease your sense of justice? Where was your head?

Once timothy finished his puking, he stands up and faces the General. Blood stains on his face, chunks of puke on his chin. A torn shirt.

TIMOTHY

I'm at fault too sir.

BRYCE

You god damn right you are. You're supposed to represent at how our forces bend to the will of the public's best interests. Not sit there and rumble with one of the top test pilots of our time.

Barry reciprocates the compliment.

BARRY

Thank you sir.

BRYCE

You shut it.

From a bum...

BUM (O.C.)

You shut it. And let me get some sleep.

BRYCE

Move. Both of you.

Barry and Timothy walk out of the cell like two kids who were caught with their hands in the cookie jar.

INT. PRECINCT HALLWAY

Barry and Timothy look pathetic with bloodied shirts, bloodied faces and cuts.

The general faces them as the precinct sergeant goes back to his desk.

BRYCE

I've let your CO know of the situation Corporal. He's advised me to take you under my wing until you get a better perspective of your -
- shortcomings.

BARRY

Am I grounded?

BRYCE

As of today yes. This - display was beyond reproach Captain. Pilots are supposed to be level headed, critical thinkers, and able to carry out orders without question. Now although you were off the base for some R+R it still didn't give you the right to engage in a - juvenile display of who has the bigger prick! We all work together for the same reasons gentlemen. The same goal.

Both look down to the floor with guilty expressions.

The general's face softens.

BRYCE (CONT.)

(Exhales a breath)

I know I'm going to regret this. As of right now, both of you are going to work together.

TIMOTHY

What?

BRYCE

Did I suddenly become a parrot? Or did you lose your hearing suddenly? I said, both of you are going to work together.

BARRY

But - he's a - marine.

BRYCE

So?

Timothy shoots a glance at Barry for his comment.

BRYCE (CONT.)

You've already racked up negative points on your record Captain. Adding Lance Corporal Rand to the project won't make a difference now. Besides, I think that you two should work out both of your issues together rather than on some seedy pub floor acting like school brats. I already spoke with the joint chiefs on it and they've agreed to let this incident slide. But, only this one time. Do I make myself perfectly clear?

BOTH

Yes sir.

BRYCE

Good. Now I suggest you both go home, clean up and report in at O'six am tomorrow. Corporal.

TIMOTHY

Sir.

BRYCE

I've transferred your papers over to the base. Here.

General hands Timothy a card.

BRYCE (CONT.)

This is your pass. Do not lose it under any circumstances. If you do, I'll execute you.

TIMOTHY

Understood.

BRYCE

Good. Now, get out of my sight.

Both men turn and walk away from the general with haste.

EXT. POLICE DETATCHMENT - NIGHT

Barry and Timothy exit the precinct. Both try to keep their shirts closed but find it difficult since their barfight.

Barry flags down a cab.

The cab just drives on because of their apperance.

TIMOTHY

Well, I go this way.

Barry wraps his arms around himself. The chilly night air doesn't help him.

BARRY

I'm this way.

TIMOTHY

So - what is this project?

BARRY

You'll see when you get there. We can't talk about it out in the open.

TIMOTHY

Right. Sorry.

BARRY

Don't worry about it.

TIMOTHY

See ya.

BARRY

See ya.

Timothy turns to walk in the other direction.

Barry watches Tim huddle his arms close to his body. He feels bad that he has to walk a long way to his house.

Instead...

BARRY (CONT.)
 Feel like a coffee?

Timothy turns around.

TIMOTHY
 Yeah, I do actually.

BARRY
 Come on. My house isn't far away. I
 got some clothes too you can use.

Timothy trots back to Barry and both walk side by side down
 an empty sidewalk.

EXT. TWO STORY TOWNHOUSE - LATER

Nestled close to other townhouses is Barry's home. Trees
 line the grove walkway. Bikes chained up at fences. Cars
 parked in stalls.

Ground lights are on.

It's a quaint neighbourhood for families.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BARRY - TELEVISION - CONTINUOUS

Timothy walks out towel drying his hair and is shirtless.
 Barry pours a coffee for both of them and puts the pot onto
 a hotplate that sits on the coffee table.

Timothy sits across from him.

BARRY
 Cream and sugar are there.

TIMOTHY
 Thanks. Black is fine for me.

BARRY
 Okay.

Timothy grabs his cup and takes a healthy sip. The freshness
 of the coffee washes over his senses.

TIMOTHY
 Ah. That hit it.

BARRY
 Look - I uh, I'm sorry for
 yesterday. I just - I just...

TIMOTHY
 Yeah me too. Man, are we ever
 stupid.

BARRY
 (Chuckles)
 Yeah.

TIMOTHY
What's so funny?

BARRY
It's just the way we insulted each other. Just like school kids.

TIMOTHY
Yup.

BARRY
What do you think about Vietnam?

TIMOTHY
I try not to.

BARRY
Think you'll be called into service?

TIMOTHY
Maybe. I don't know. I hope not.

BARRY
Why not?

Timothy thinks for a couple of seconds.

TIMOTHY
Because I think it's a mistake to be there. And I'm pretty sure a lot of the other recruits think the same thing.

BARRY
It's all bullshit.

TIMOTHY
Yeah.

BARRY
Well - you can have the couch.

TIMOTHY
No. I should get home. Thanks for the clothes, but I prefer mine.

BARRY
Alright.

Timothy gets up and slides on a shirt provided by Barry.
Then his coat.
Timothy walks to the front door. Barry follows him.
At the door...

INT. FOYER

Timothy sticks out his hand. Barry grabs it and both shake briefly out of respect for one another. Bruised faces, wounded prides.

TIMOTHY
I'll wash the clothes.

BARRY
Keep them. Just in case you decide to uh - you know.

TIMOTHY
(Cracks a grin)
Yeah. See ya at the base.

BARRY
See you then.

Barry opens the door and Timothy exits the townhouse.

Barry shuts the door.

INT. LOCKHEED MARTIN - ASSEMBLY FLOOR - NEXT MORNING

Barry is working with a few engineers under the belly of the SR-71. A lot of teamsters make noise as they work, but that's how it is in a busy environment.

Behind Barry at a far wall, a door opens. A red light flashes and a warning buzzer sounds.

In walks Timothy dressed in work coveralls and a hard hat.

Barry doesn't see him at the moment.

He is too involved in his tasks.

Timothy approaches.

When he is close enough...

TIMOTHY
Hey.

Barry turns around and smiles.

BARRY
Hey. Come on over.

TIMOTHY
So this is it? The big secret?
Looks like - someone took a walnut cracker to it.

BARRY

Yeah. During its first test run the bird reached mach one point eight. But, it caused severe feedback that cut off the main power. During the descent to a more managable altitude, I managed to get power back but - lost a part of the fuselage as you can see.

Timothy glances up to see the damage done to the hull of the blackbird and shakes his head side to side.

TIMOTHY

I'm amazed it didn't fall apart completely.

BARRY

I thought it would. I almost ejected.

TIMOTHY

So what do you think it is? Speed is part of the problem by the looks of it.

BARRY

It's not strong enough. At least in part of the skin.

TIMOTHY

Steel?

BARRY

And aluminum. The rivets are made of tensil steel. But that's what could be causing the feedback. We still have a lot of work to do.

TIMOTHY

So what do I do?

BARRY

(Smiles)

You my friend, get to take readings.

TIMOTHY

Shit. On what?

BARRY

On all the rivets.

From Tim's perspective he sees thousands of rivets just waiting to be scanned and measured.

Each - and - every one of them.

Oh happy day.

TIMOTHY
 (Deflated, disgusted)
 I need a coffee.

Timothy walks towards a coffee station.

BARRY
 I take two sugars.

Tim waves his hand lazily.

INT. OFFICE - KELLY - MOMENTS LATER

Kelly works on altering parts of the blue print designs of the blackbird's body and shape.

From a simple delta wing configuration, to a more sleek aerodynamic shape with a large wing engine mounted on each side.

Its needle columned mid-section over powers the rest its hull.

A knock on his door.

KELLY
 Come in.

BARRY
 Hey kel...

KELLY
 Barry. What is it?

BARRY
 Just thought I'd introduce a new addition to the floor.

KELLY
 Okay.

BARRY
 Come in.

Timothy walks into Kelly's office.

TIMOTHY
 Sir.

KELLY
 Right. Lance Corporal Tim Rand. I heard that your knowledge in metalurgy is quite advanced. I'd like to hear more of it.

TIMOTHY
 Nothing much to tell. I - built a proto-type boat using a basic
 (MORE)

TIMOTHY (cont'd)
design that's used in most sea
bearing vessels. But never a plane.

KELLY
Is there a difference?

TIMOTHY
Well -- yeah. You're talking about
yaw and pitch on a bouyant surface.
In the air there's no resistance.
Just friction.

KELLY
Yes. And there lies our problem.

BARRY
It's the heat problem. Steel often
rises in heat when a speed above
mach one is reached. But, if we
keep it at just below mach one, the
blackbird is more managable during
flight.

Timothy walks to a wall full of photos.

He gazes at each face and experiment success.

In one photo he sees a familiar face. Von Braun.

Beside Von Braun, is a hand drawn image of a missile.

TIMOTHY
What about - titanium?

KELLY
Huh? That kind of metal in only
used in precision engineering.
We're only building a jet that can
withstand intense speeds of mach
one or mach two.

TIMOTHY
True. But to elimiate resonant
vibrations that accompanies high
speed, you'll have to rebuild the
entire plane from the ground up.
And it has to be built out of
titanium.

Kelly gets up from his desk and paces around his office as
Barry has a disconcerted look on his face because of
Timothy's ludicrous idea.

KELLY
What makes you so sure?

TIMOTHY

Steel can bend, or flex on demand when it's incorporated into a tanker or airliner. Titanium doesn't do that on demand. It's denser, but highly brittle if it's cut improperly. That means...

BARRY

We'll have to redesign the entire assembly plant. Starting from the cutters to the shapers.

TIMOTHY

Exactly.

KELLY

Do you realize how much that is going to cost? We've already invested millions into this project. We're almost there. We just need to realign the hull seals better and to...

TIMOTHY

It won't work. Trust me on that.

KELLY

What proof do you have to come to a conclusion that it won't work?

Timothy leans against a bookshelf.

TIMOTHY

What was the heat readings in the wind tunnel?

KELLY

Just under a thousand degrees. Why?

TIMOTHY

Well, that was a controlled test. But when Captain Desalle took it up for its first test flight, the heat build up reached what temperature?

BARRY

Nearly fifteen hundred degrees.

TIMOTHY

And in turn started to cause the jet to cavitate. Titanium's elements prevent any heat build up no matter if its on land or in the air. Yet the problem is the hull.

KELLY

Why?

TIMOTHY

I noticed how each section has been riveted.

KELLY

Yeah so?

TIMOTHY

Since titanium doesn't flex or bend, you would need to readjust every rivet so that instead of tightening the hull to seal it up, let the air drag during flight do the work instead.

BARRY

I see where you're going with this.

KELLY

Me too. And it makes sense. Once enough speed has been achieved the skin tightens on its own. But, then again --

BARRY

It would leak like a sieve on the ground.

TIMOTHY

Not pretty, but it does the job.

KELLY

Okay. Okay - you might have something there. But it's going to take me at least four weeks to convince Washington.

TIMOTHY

No better time than the present. But, knowing Adams - it won't take four weeks.

KELLY

(To Barry)

Your friend seems awfully sure of himself.

BARRY

One of his - most redeeming qualities.

KELLY

What happened to your face?

Barry quips a smile.

So does Timothy.

Kelly sits back down at his desk and looks up at both of them.

KELLY (CONT.)

What are you guys still doing here?
Get to work.

BARRY

Yes sir.

TIMOTHY

Sir.

Both leave the office.

Kelly picks up the phone and dials a number... Rings twice.
Click!

KELLY

Get me congressman O'neil.

EXT. CAPITOL HILL - WASHINGTON - EARLY DUSK

Cars, traffic, pedestrians. The majestic white building of congress sits on a knoll overlooking the city of D.C.

It's a clear sky.

Sunlight casts a sliver of light rays across the building's east wing.

A conversation between Kelly and O'Neil...

KELLY (V.O.)

That's about it.

O'NEIL (V.O.)

That would just about double the present expenditure.

INT. CAPITOL HILL - O'NEILS OFFICE

A clean office. Old oak panel walls. Hand carved desk, chairs, and grandfather clock.

A few plants add to the ambience.

Congressman Sam O'Neil (60'S) sits alone with a snifter of scotch in front of him as he speaks with Kelly over the phone.

KELLY (V.O.)

Try triple the cost.

O'NEIL

Right. Jesus. How long?

KELLY (V.O.)

At least another year.

O'NEIL

It won't be easy to convince the others.

KELLY (V.O.)

I know. But after going over the specs and materials needed to build it properly, I think it's the only way to get the SR-71 off the ground and over russian airspace.

O'NEIL

I agree. Okay. You have the year. And any other materials you all need.

KELLY (V.O.)

Thanks sam.

O'NEIL

Don't thank me yet. If this doesn't work - I'm afraid that your next assignment will be somewhere off the coast of antarctica.

A moment of silence.

KELLY (V.O.)

Understood. Goodbye Sam.

O'NEIL

Take care.

He hangs up and looks at the phone receiver.

Then he buzzes his secretary.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Yes sir?

O'NEIL

Get me joint chief Adams.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Yes sir.

O'neil gets up from his seat and walks over to a window and peers out to watch the traffic outside.

His phone rings.

O'neil walks back to his desk and answers the phone...

O'NEIL

Dick. Got some good news and some bad news.

INT. ASSEMBLY FLOOR - SIX MONTHS LATER - DAY

The entire plant looks different than before. New stations, cutters, shapers, molders and even a blocked off laser station.

Each station has technicians who work with precision tools.

In the middle of the assembly floor, sits a black plane. It's body is almost completed as workers fit in various sized rivets to the hull.

Barry watches from the floor as Timothy helps a group of men roll in the planes tires using fork lifts.

Barry then helps them unload the forklifts.

Kelly walks in.

KELLY

Barry.

BARRY

Yeah.

KELLY

We just got word on the new engines.

BARRY

And?

KELLY

They're the new Pratt and whitney models.

BARRY

The J-58's?

KELLY

Yeah.

TIMOTHY

What's that in horse power?

KELLY

One hundred and sixty thousand per engine.

BARRY

Holy shit.

KELLY

They'll be here tomorrow.

BARRY

Well, guess it's time to unload these babies and put them on ice.

KELLY

Or we could improve their performance and design around them. Something to think about.

BARRY

Maybe. Okay, let's rip em out guys.

INT. ASSEMBLY FLOOR - SIXTEEN HOURS LATER - DUSK

The crews remove the last engine from the blackbird using a ceiling crane, at the same time, a large flatbed rig pulls in reverse into the assembly plant.

The flatbed contains two tightly wrapped engines in single file.

Once the rig stops, workers then begin to unwrap them carefully.

Driver hops down from the cab and hands Kelly some official documents.

Kelly signs them.

INT. ASSEMBLY FLOOR - FLATBED

Barry watches as the men remove sections of wrapping and expose the engine's intricate shape and design. Tubes, turbo blades, highly polished parts. Right down to the torqued screws, nuts and bolts.

Each engine has a price tag that rivals wall street.

Above Barry, another ceiling crane makes it way over to the flatbed.

From the crane a cable is lowered that has a locking hook.

Timothy moves to the first engine closest to the cab and starts to attach the cable to key points on the engine chassis.

Workers place the cable in molded hooks and then wrap around the engine until it's fully secure.

TIMOTHY

Okay. Let's go!

The crane then lifts the engine slowly. One inch at a time.

For such sensitive equipment moving too fast would cause damage.

Barry keeps a diligent eye on the engine as it leaves the flatbed and descends to the floor low enough so if the cable broke, the engine would at least survive the impact.

Barry and all of the workers walk alongside it to the blackbird.

Barry's gaze veers to the sleek jet.

Its shape and design looks like something described out of science fiction novel.

The overhead lights gleam across the hull.

FADE TO:

EXT. SEEDY HOTEL - BURBANK - DUSK

Pimps, whores, and junkies hang around a three story hotel's parking lot. A few fights break out between rival gangs, which cause dismay to the tourists.

A police car pulls in and starts to break up the scuffle as the pimps and whores scatter.

The junkies just sit close by watching the action.

During the commotion...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - UNKNOWN OCCUPANT

A man sits on a bed. His face is not seen entirely, except he wears glasses and smokes a cigarette.

He is also looking at photographs of the SR-71 inside the lockheed plant being built.

The man flips each photo over to get a glimpse of the design, which include flaws, or retrofitted parts such as the engines.

Beside him on the bed, sits a gun.

As he flips another photo, his left wrist is seen wearing a russian watch.

The man then hears loud screaming outside of his room.

He walks to the window and slowly cracks the drapes open to have a peek.

At ground level, he can see a police officer beating a man with a baton ruthlessly.

Not bothered by such trivial matters, he walks back to the bed and resumes his work.

INT. LOCKHEED MARTIN - BOARD ROOM - NEXT DAY

Barry, Timothy and Kelly sit with a group of scientists as they go over the final specs of the engines.

A secretary walks in with coffees and donuts and places them in front of each person.

Kelly stands in front of a large drawing of their engine and points out each section of the engine as he explains in detail...

KELLY

Okay. Unlike the last set the J-58s have a unique feature which helps give the afterburners more thrust. At mach 1.5, forward bypass doors open to help modulate flow and position the inlet shock. A set of tertiary doors are closed and the ejector doors open. Once mach 1.7 is reached, the aft bypass doors open slightly and spike begins to retract to control the inlet shock.

BARRY

What about at Mach 2?

KELLY

At mach 2, variable-position inlet guide vanes translate from axial to cambered for correct compression conditions. By mach 2.7, the aft bypass doors are almost totally closed again for ram air requirements.

Kelly sits down at the table.

TIMOTHY

Jesus. With that kind of air flow mach three could be achieved.

KELLY

Possibly, but we don't want to take chances on having the engines powering down again.

BARRY

When we inspected the braces, I saw that more bolts were added.

KELLY

It was needed to keep the engine bay fully tightened to achieve a better balance. Since the blackbird is going to reach a speed of mach 2.7, it was necessary to reinforce the chassis bay.

BARRY

Who's going to be my co-pilot?

KELLY

You're sitting next to him.

Barry glances to Timothy.

BARRY

You're kidding.

KELLY

Do I look like I'm kidding? You two have been working on this project for almost a full year together. Why stop now?

TIMOTHY

Yeah why stop now?

Barry shoots timothy a mocking glance.

BARRY

He's not a pilot.

KELLY

And yet he went through the same training as you did. Look, it's just a test flight. I would rather have him there keeping an eye on the residuals while you concentrate on your flight vector during the afterburner tests. Agreed?

Barry has an impatient look, but relents in favor for Timothy.

BARRY

Alright. So, what is the projected altitude we're supposed to achieve?

KELLY

(Grins)

The big eighty.

BARRY

Shit. I knew you were going to say that.

TIMOTHY

Sounds like fun.

The board looks at Timothy.

TIMOTHY (CONT.)

What?

INT. SUIT ROOMS - FIVE DAYS LATER - DAY

Barry and Timothy are being helped by technicians dress in their uniforms. Their suits resemble space flight apparel including air helmets that fit onto metal rings.

Timothy looks real nervous.

TIMOTHY
Hey Barry.

BARRY
Yeah?

TIMOTHY
Uh, what if I - puke in my helmet?

BARRY
Then don't. Try to think about
someplace level. Flat, and quiet.
With the speed we're going to be
moving at, you'll feel your heart
starting to press inward. Just take
short even breaths and squeeze down
on your diaphragm. But, why am I
telling you this anyway? You
already know.

TIMOTHY
I know - I - just get really
nervous around new technology. I
like having my feet on the ground
is all.

Barry turns to face Timothy as workers continue to fit on their gloves, zipping pockets, and lastly places their helmets on.

With a click! Their helmets are locked into place.

Barry loudly says to Timothy...

BARRY
Don't worry so much. Just watch the
panels.

TIMOTHY
Yeah. Okay.

Timothy's eyes are wide like saucers but he starts to control his breathing when one of the technicians pats Barry on the shoulder.

TECH
Good to go.

BARRY
Thanks.

Barry and Timothy leave the suit room.

EXT. HALLWAY

A group of techs walk in front of both Barry and Timothy towards the assembly plant floor.

One opens the door and enters.

INT. ASSEMBLY FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Workers line up and start to clap and cheer. Barry acknowledges the team with a wave and a healthy grin while Timothy looks as if death just walked over his grave.

Kelly waits at the bay door entrance.

The blackbird is nowhere to be seen -- yet.

Barry and Timothy meet with Kelly who then turns to nod at two guards.

They open the doors to reveal outside...

EXT. BLACKBIRD

The newly designed, and completed jet sits patiently overlooking the base with its sleek body and sharp features.

It has a long neck which points at the nose.

Both engines are fully enclosed within the hull and its ports are capped closed.

Two techs rushes up a ladder and removes them.

Barry walks out first, then Timothy. Both side by side like ground based astronauts.

They approach the SR-71's underbelly where a ladder has been extended from inside the jet.

They climb up the ladder. Barry goes first.

Timothy brings up the rear.

INT. BLACKBIRD

Barry moves to the forward section, and sits down in the left hand seat since he is the pilot. Timothy sits in the co-pilot seat and both jack in their helmets to the control panel in front of them.

BARRY

Check, check.

TIMOTHY

I hear ya.

BARRY

Good. Let's go over the flight list.

TIMOTHY

Right.

Timothy unlocks a clip board from the panel and opens the first page as Barry speaks out loud...

BARRY
Cockpit pressure dump switch.

TIMOTHY
Off.

BARRY
Bay air switch.

TIMOTHY
On.

BARRY
Manifold temperature switch.

TIMOTHY
Set to auto.

BARRY
Land/taxi light switch.

TIMOTHY
Off.

They continue on their flight list.

Meanwhile...

INT. OFFICE - KELLY - MOMENTS LATER

Kelly is on the phone with Congressman O'neil.

KELLY
Well what do you mean grounded?

O'NEIL (V.O.)
Just what I said. The test is being postponed until further notice.

KELLY
For christ sake we just got everything ready to go. The boys are doing their flight list now.

O'NEIL (V.O.)
Well, tell them to hold off.

KELLY
(Dismayed)
Well mind telling me what the god damn reason is?

O'NEIL (V.O.)
I wish I could. Let's just say - that there's an unknown variable in the mix.

Kelly scrunches his eyes and suspects.

KELLY

And does this variable know where we are?

O'NEIL (V.O.)

No. But most likely they will soon.

KELLY

Shit.

O'NEIL (V.O.)

Look just tell them anything. We've invested enough into this project and I don't want to see it all go up in flames. You get me?

KELLY

Yeah. Alright. I'll let them know.

O'NEIL (V.O.)

Good. Keep me posted.

KELLY

I will.

Click!

Kelly hangs up.

Exhales a deep breath.

Then leaves his office.

INT. BLACKBIRD

Barry and Timothy are in the groove as they keep checking items off the list until over Barry's helmet speakers...

KELLY (V.O.)

Flight cancelled. Come on in.

BARRY

Wh - mind telling us why?

KELLY (V.O.)

Not here. Come on in. Both of you.

BARRY

Well for fu...

Timothy unplugs his helmet and exits the plane.

Barry remains behind for a moment, then he too unplugs and exits.

EXT. BLACKBIRD

Both climb down the ladder and walk over to Kelly who stands at the bay door entrance.

Techs remove their helmets.

BARRY

What the fuck is going on?

KELLY

I'll see you in my office.

Kelly walks in first.

Barry and timothy glance at each other.

Then they follow Kelly inside.

INT. OFFICE - KELLY - MOMENTS LATER

Kelly walks in first, then Barry and Timothy.

KELLY

Close the door.

Tim closes the door.

BARRY

Okay. So?

KELLY

O'neil postponed the test. He fears there's an unknown trying to gather information about our project.

BARRY

A spy? In America?

TIMOTHY

Why not? We do it all the time in other people's country's.

BARRY

That's not the point. Spies don't stop high clearance tests. Not like this one.

KELLY

Yeah well, O'neil seems to think otherwise. Look, this new era we're all in right now - it's not like the past with dark shadows or cloak and dagger tales where the objective was to get info on another spy. This is about our country's advancement using high tech wizardry and faster than

(MORE)

KELLY (cont'd)
bullet engines. The blackbird is the only jet on the planet so far that can reach mach three - we hope. The closest example was the Avro Arrow. And that was built in Canada in 1952. But lost its funding because of projected costs of refits. It was later scrapped.

TIMOTHY
So how long do we have to wait until the smoke clears in Washington?

KELLY
At least - two months. At best.

BARRY
God damn it.

Barry unzips his suit and sits down.

BARRY (CONT.)
We were so close.

KELLY
Hey, I'm just the messenger. I'm as pissed as you are. But O'neil's right.

BARRY
So what do we do in the meantime?

KELLY
O'neil's got Adams in an uproar about it. Eisenhower is assigning suits to look for this - unknown as quickly as possible.

TIMOTHY
He's in the city?

KELLY
Yeah. We think. We don't know for sure yet.

BARRY
Great. And here I was thinking about my retirement package in fiji.

KELLY
Just - watch your asses. That's all I have.

Barry gets up quickly and exits Kelly's office. Timothy says nothing more and also exits and closes the door.

EXT. HIGHWAY - BARRY'S CAR - DAY

Barry is driving his car at cruising speed along the highway. A 62 Corvette convertible.

Timothy is riding shotgun.

From the front of their car they converse...

TIMOTHY

Come on man, it's not like the project is on hold forever.

BARRY

I don't give a shit. This whole plan was to get me over russian airspace so we can get a glimpse of what's happening deep inside siberian territory.

TIMOTHY

What do think is going on?

BARRY

I just heard rumors.

TIMOTHY

Rumors?

BARRY

Yeah. Something about - a possible doomsday weapon in the works. The boys at langley seem to think it's all real but they don't have enough proof yet. Hence the U2 that got its ass shot down.

TIMOTHY

How is Gary by the way?

BARRY

(Annoyed)

Not bad considering his reputation being tarnished. The god damn media really made him look like some - criminal. He only revealed his altitude and other useless info, but the american public seem to think that he's a coward. Or worse yet, a traitor.

TIMOTHY

I know. I heard the stories.

BARRY

He just did his job for Christ sake. And this is the fucking thanks he gets? Nobody would

(MORE)

BARRY (cont'd)
 complain if they found what the
 boys at the CIA were looking for
 because then they would think, it's
 in the best interest for the public
 good. Which pisses me off the most.

TIMOTHY
 Easy Barry.

BARRY
 (gets angry)
 I'm not going to take it easy god
 damn it. I've had it with the
 walking on egg shells bull shit.
 (Hits the steering wheel)

Barry makes a hard right turn and pulls off the highway and
 disturbs other drivers.

EXT. HIGHWAY SHOULDER

He brakes hard causing some dust to fly up. He then shuts
 off the engine.

Commuters who see it drive by honking their horns and shout
 profanities.

COMMUTER (O.C.)
 Hey! Learn how to drive you prick!

COMMUTER #2 (O.C.)
 Get a life moron!

Barry listens to the random jibes as Timothy tries to hide
 his face.

TIMOTHY
 Christ man, you really love to --

BARRY
 Love to what? Love - to what?

TIMOTHY
 (Deflates)
 Nothing. Forget I said anything.

EXT. BARRY'S CAR - DRIVER SIDE

Barry gazes ahead and stares at nothing. He tries to calm
 his nerves because of the delay of the project.

Timothy sits up.

BARRY
 After the exchange, Gary's wife was
 - thrown into an insane asylum.
 Just to avoid bad publicity.
 (MORE)

BARRY (cont'd)
 Through some - political pressure,
 both sides decided to do an
 exchange of prisoners.

TIMOTHY
 Yeah. Some colonel I think it was.

BARRY
 William Fisher. AKA, Rudolf Abel.
 But guess who came up with the idea
 of the exchange?

TIMOTHY
 Who?

BARRY
 Gary's old man.

TIMOTHY
 No shit. His dad?

BARRY
 Yup. And when Gary finally got
 home, he didn't get the welcoming
 matt tossed in front of him. No,
 no. It was a cold reception. No
 flags, no honorable band, no -
 hero's welcome home. Nothing. Just
 a howdy doo, and why didn't you
 take the poison pill like you were
 supposed to?

Traffic flows by. A light breeze helps to calm Barry's
 nerves.

EXT. BARRY'S CAR - TRUNK

They sit idly on the shoulder of the road to watch the cars
 and trucks.

Timothy feels for Barry's situation and rather than trying
 to argue more about it, sits quietly in the passenger side
 and watches the road as highway traffic continues.

Only the back of their heads are seen.

TIMOTHY
 Feel for some pizza?

BARRY
 I guess. Why? Are you buying?

TIMOTHY
 Why not?

Barry starts the car and jabs the pedal once.

A beefy roar from the Corvette causes Barry to smirk and places it into gear.

He then pulls away and merges with the traffic flow.

EXT. PIZZA JOINT - DAY

Barry's car is parked in the front of the building as pedestrians walk along the sidewalk. A few people stop to ogle at the car's majestic shape and design.

INT. PIZZA JOINT

A small place. Ten tables, four chairs to a table. Checkered table cloths. Old country photos of both Rome and Sicily.

Candle light jars on each table.

Two pretty italian waitresses who wipe and clean tables.

Both shaped like aphrodite and then some.

By the front window, Barry and Tim eat their pizza. One with the works.

BARRY

(Full mouth)

This is really good. I've never even heard of this place before.

TIMOTHY

Found it by accident. Was out on a date after my successful win at a pool tournament. Yet, somehow - lost my date that very night.

BARRY

How?

TIMOTHY

Beats me. One moment I was enjoying my win with a trophy and plaque, with my girl on my arm, and the next moment found myself in here eating pizza.

BARRY

Were you drunk?

TIMOTHY

Uh yeah.

BARRY

Well she probably thought you were too drunk and wanted to go home.

TIMOTHY

I've been drunk with her before.

BARRY

True. But she probably thought at one point - is this all he does on the weekend?

Timothy stops eating and looks at Barry for a moment.

BARRY (CONT.)

Did I hit a nerve?

TIMOTHY

Yeah. Actually you did. You don't know me that well yet to make that kind of assumption.

BARRY

It's not an assumption. It's an observation.

TIMOTHY

And what do you see?

BARRY

I see - a young guy who likes to do things his way no matter what anyone else says. Admirable, but highly toxic in a relationship. I made that same mistake myself.

TIMOTHY

Well I work hard and like to play.

BARRY

Yeah but, did you ever ask on what she likes to do on her days off?

The question causes Timothy to sit back in his chair and wonder.

TIMOTHY

She - enjoyed going out with me. Even on my tournament nights.

BARRY

True. But it only lasts so long until she gets bored. Myself - I - screwed up my relationships because of my work alone. Constant nights going over plans, blueprints, endless voice recordings on what needs to be changed. It took a lot of my time away from the most important person in my life.

TIMOTHY

So you don't date anymore?

BARRY

Oh I date, but I keep the relationship on a long leash.

Timothy spots one of the waitresses gazing their way as she wipes down a table.

Her co-worker shines glasses.

TIMOTHY

See that waitress over there?

Barry in a nonchalant way averts his eyes to the pretty server.

BARRY

Yeah.

TIMOTHY

She's been eyeing you the whole time. And you didn't even see it.

BARRY

Yes I did.

TIMOTHY

No you didn't. I mean, look at that rack of hers.

BARRY

Okay - so, she's pretty. Does she have brains?

TIMOTHY

What does that matter? You can see how she wants to meet you. And I heard that the italian woman can suck the chrome off of a trailer hitch.

BARRY

(Chuckles)

Ah jesus. You really have a one track mind.

Just then, the waitress walks over to their table.

WAITRESS

So how's the food?

BARRY

Really good. Best pizza I had in a long time.

WAITRESS

(Beams a smile)

Thank you. I made it.

BARRY

You did? You serve and bake?

WAITRESS

Why not? I have to keep my talents
up to some degree.

She sits down beside Barry.

Timothy just stares at them with a surprised expression.

The other waitress walks over to the table.

She too sits down next to Timothy.

All start to talk and enjoy a quiet moment.

LATER...

INT. BARRY'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Barry wakes up and finds a body lying next to him half covered face up.

It's his waitress. A beautiful woman with long black hair, breasts the size of cantelopes that hold their shape despite on how she sleeps on her back.

As she breathes her breasts rises and falls gently.

An opportune moment for Barry as he leans over and kisses her lips softly.

She stirs in her sleep and reacts without warning as her arms wraps around his neck.

He covers them both with the blanket.

INT. TIMOTHY'S BEDROOM

Timothy wakes, and rolls over to see his waitress lying next to him. She's more petite, and offers his droopy eyes a wonderful display of her nakedness lying on her right side as she sleeps soundly.

TIMOTHY

(Utters)

I guess it's true what they say
about italian women.

WAITRESS

Oh? And what do they say?

She moves closer to Timothy as she grins wide.

TIMOTHY

I thought you were sleeping.

WAITRESS

Oh I was. But then I felt your eyes
burning into my skin.

TIMOTHY

Hm. A cook and a psychic. Nice
combination.

WAITRESS

Now then. Let's get more acquainted
shall we?

TIMOTHY

(Dumbfounded look)

Yes, let's.

She then eases herself on top of Timothy. Her shape and
muscles flex once she feels that her sex has made contact
with his.

Both begin to become fruitful with each other.

MUCH LATER...

EXT. PIZZA JOINT - DAY

Barry drives up to the front of the pizza joint and drops
both girls off. Timothy gets out to fold his seat up so they
can exit the back seat.

Barry's girl walks over to the driver side and hands him a
note.

She kisses his cheek.

WAITRESS

Call me.

He looks at the note to see her name... Cassie. Short for
Cassandra along with her phone number.

Barry smirks.

BARRY

I will - Cassie.

They both kiss again, but with more passion.

Timothy and his girl exchange numbers too.

TIMOTHY

Thanks - Dina.

DINA

My work days are --

TIMOTHY

Don't tell me. Let me check in now and again. Otherwise your boss would get mad.

DINA

Boss? We don't have one.

TIMOTHY

What? What do you mean?

DINA

Me and Cassie own the place. We are the bosses.

TIMOTHY

Is that so? Oh wow. Okay. Next time -- you, pick a place.

DINA

(Smiles)

Deal.

They kiss hard and passionately.

Barry honks his horn!

BARRY

Hey, come on! Girls got to make a living too.

Both part for air.

Timothy turns and walks to the car.

Cassie joins Dina's side as Timothy hops in the car.

Both women wave to the boys as Barry drives away.

EXT. BARRY'S CAR - PASSENGER SIDE WINDOW - DAY

TIMOTHY

Whew.

BARRY

What?

TIMOTHY

That's too much woman. Holy shit.

BARRY

Good night?

TIMOTHY

Good? It was - it was beyond imagination. How was your night?

BARRY

Well you were right. They can suck the chrome off a hitch.

TIMOTHY

See? I told you. God! I can't wait for our next date.

BARRY

Yeah but first we're going to see O'neil.

TIMOTHY

Uh, how? He's in DC.

BARRY

I brought two tickets once I got home. Our flight leaves in two hours.

TIMOTHY

Ho man. And uh, how are we going to get in? It's only done by invite. And you my friend, are not that important. Neither am I.

BARRY

Leave that to me.

TIMOTHY

I knew you were gonna say that.

EXT. BARRY'S CAR - TRUNK

Barry merges with the traffic. Cars, trucks, honking commuters. Barry changes lanes.

INT. LAX AIRPORT

Hundreds of people walk in and out of the airport. Barry and Timothy approach a more secured area of the terminal and walk past some guards.

INT. PRIVATE AREA - CONTINUOUS

Barry and Timothy arrive and stand in front of a single desk meant for one purpose only. Two guards stand at attention on either side of the desk.

The clerk is a pretty woman. (30'S) She's dressed in airport attire. But, fashionable.

CLERK

Can I help you gentlemen?

BARRY

Yes. I booked two seats on the next flight to washington. Barry Desalle.

CLERK

I see. I'll need to see your identification along with your assigned papers.

Barry pulls out his ID card and Papers as Timothy glances at him quizzically.

Mostly because he didn't hear about any papers.

Barry hands them over to the clerk.

CLERK (CONT.)

Thank you. It will be just a moment. I'll need you ID too please.

TIMOTHY

Huh? Oh.

Timothy pulls out his ID card and hands it to her.

She examines the papers and all signatures.

Timothy gazes at the two behemoth guards that remain motionless.

With the clerk satisfied...

CLERK (CONT.)

(Hands everything back)

Thank you. Everything is in order. You can go to terminal gate two.

BARRY

Thank you.

CLERK

You're welcome.

Barry leads Timothy down a new hallway and hands him his ID card.

A hallway not for public use.

Empty.

INT. TERMINAL GATE 2 - A MOMENT LATER

They both arrive to see a Boeing 707 sitting idle. Two guards approach them.

AIRPORT GUARD

Sir.

BARRY

Sergeant. Are we ready to go?

AIRPORT GUARD

Yes sir. Captain Schneider is onboard and finishing up the flight checks.

BARRY

Good. Let's go.

TIMOTHY

What's with all this? How did you manage to get your hands on that?

BARRY

Schneider owed me a favor. It was also a good excuse for him to get away from the ball and chain.

TIMOTHY

Shit. Are we the only one's going?

BARRY

No. There's a few more people like myself hitching a ride.

EXT. LAX - FUEL DEPOT - THE UNKNOWN VARIABLE - CONTINUOUS

A man sits in a car and uses a pair of binoculars at his driver's side window.

Through the binoculars: He can see both Barry and Timothy entering the 707 at the gate.

Binoculars drop. Only his eyes are seen. Green menacing eyes.

INT. 707 - PASSENGER SEATS

Barry and Timothy walk in to see just a few dozen other people sparsley separated from one another.

A stewardess approaches them.

STEWARDESS

Good morning. You can take any seat you wish.

BARRY

Thank you. Some coffee would be nice once we're underway.

STEWARDESS

Say no more. Enjoy your flight.

BARRY

Thanks.

Barry and Tim walk down an aisle towards the mid-section.

Timothy spots a nice seat. At least he thinks so.

TIMOTHY
This one looks good.

BARRY
Yeah sure.

Timothy gets in first and sits next to the window.

Barry sits beside him.

They both buckle up.

TIMOTHY
Haven't been on a commercial flight
for a long time.

BARRY
Neither have I.

TIMOTHY
Do you really think that you can
convince O'neil to go ahead with
the project? He was adamant about
suspending the program for two
months. Kelly is going to have shit
fit about it because we went behind
his back.

As they talk...

EXT. LAX - FUEL DEPOT - THE UNKNOWN VARIABLE - CONTINUOUS

The unknown variable continues to observe the 707 with his binoculars.

Through Binoculars: He sees both men at the mid-section. But can only make out Timothy.

He sees the shadow of Barry next to him.

EXT. 707 - WINDOW - BARRY - TIM - CONTINUOUS

BARRY
Leave Kelly to me.

TIMOTHY
Well what about this = unknown
variable? The spy?

BARRY
I have a plan for that.

TIMOTHY
(Sighs)
Jesus. I just hope this doesn't
fuck everything up.

BARRY
Will you relax? I got it covered.

Timothy just stares at Barry for a moment.

TIMOTHY

Okay. We'll do it your way.

EXT. LAX - FUEL DEPOT - THE UNKNOWN VARIABLE - CONTINUOUS

The spy starts the car and drives away towards the main terminal.

EXT. 707 - TAXI'S ON TARMAC

Airliner slowly makes its way to the front of the runway. A few other passenger jets bring up the rear and stop to allow the 707 to take off first.

MEANWHILE...

On another jet...

INT. PASSENGER AIRLINER - SPY

The spy sits near the back of the plane. He watches the 707 taking off.

Then, his jet is next.

EXT. AIRLINER

The jet begins its take off run and reaches a cool speed of 150 miles an hour.

Its nose dips up and the jet leaves the tarmac.

Blue smoke plumes from the engine exhaust as it coasts into the air.

EXT. 707 - IN FLIGHT

The jet cruises at an altitude of twenty five thousand feet.

Scattered clouds, and a beautiful view of the land below.

INT. 707 - STEWARDESS

Stewardess pushes a rolling cart full of goodies and fresh brewed coffee.

She stops at Barry's seat.

STEWARDESS

Here we are. Any sugar or cream?

BARRY

Two sugars please.

TIMOTHY

Just black for me.

STEWARDESS

Alright. Anything to eat? We have muffins, cakes, sandwiches, jellies...

TIMOTHY

I'll take a muffin.

BARRY

Coffee is fine.

STEWARDESS

Okay.

As she prepares their order...

BARRY

I spoke with the director of the CIA before we left.

TIMOTHY

Wow. You have a lot of friends.

BARRY

Not really. We don't see eye to eye on most occasions. But with this - unknown lurking he did manage to get his hands some juicy information for me.

TIMOTHY

And?

BARRY

Nibetz.

TIMOTHY

Nibetz?

BARRY

That's the name they got of this so called variable. He entered the country using false ID and rented a car at the airport. The name was entered into the data base and a few days later flagged it red.

STEWARDESS

Here you go gentlemen.

Barry and timothy take their orders and the stewardess moves on.

TIMOTHY

So this Nibetz guy - do the boys in langley think he's just surveillance?

BARRY

They don't know. He hasn't done anything - yet.

TIMOTHY

Then why is he here other than just to --

Timothy realizes...

BARRY

To what?

TIMOTHY

He's following us isn't he?

BARRY

Yup. He's probably on the flight right behind us.

TIMOTHY

(Whispers, urgent)

Shit. What do we do once we land?

BARRY

Well, he wants to gather enough intelligence to report back with. Let's give him that chance.

TIMOTHY

Just like that? In capitol hill? You do realize that place is crawling with security guards. Not to mention under cover hit squads. He knows this.

BARRY

Maybe. But, if he's gonna risk his cover just to get close to us, we might as well make him think that we don't know that he's following us.

Timothy's eyes dart side to side. His anxiousness shows.

TIMOTHY

A wolf hunt.

BARRY

Now you're getting it. Yes. We'll let him inside the hill. And once we get him in a place with no exit or back door, that's when O'neils forces step in. But we have to make it look like that we're on official business.

TIMOTHY

Aren't we?

BARRY

No. This whole thing is going to be on my shoulders. You're just along for the ride.

TIMOTHY

Gee, thanks buddy.

BARRY

I'm going to retire soon. I want this last flight to be my finest run. And no spy is going to stop me.

Timothy has nothing else to say. He sips his delicious coffee.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - FIVE HOURS LATER

Barry and Timothy exit the terminal. Barry flags a cab.

TIMOTHY

That was a good burger.

BARRY

Yeah. But I wanted us to eat first and let our spy catch up.

TIMOTHY

But we don't know what he looks like.

BARRY

Don't need to.

A cab pulls up to the curb.

They climb in.

INT. CAB

The driver is neat in appearance. Clean cab, clean seats, no gum on the floor.

The radio plays soft tunes to help set the mood of a friendly driver.

CAB DRIVER

Where to?

BARRY

Capitol hill.

CAB DRIVER

Off to an early day.

EXT. CAB

Cab pulls away.

Yet at the doors of the terminal...

EXT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - FRONT DOORS

The spy watches the cab pulling away, and then walks out to hail his own cab.

INT. CAB

Timothy looks out his window to see the many white buildings of DC. A reflection of the past colonies when slaves were the trend and fad for settlers.

CAB DRIVER

So what do you think of our great city?

BARRY

Could use some nicer colors.

CAB DRIVER

Yeah. I agree. White is too - bland for my taste. No imagination when it comes to the big wigs.

TIMOTHY

What color do you think they should be?

CAB DRIVER

I don't know. Red, blue, hell a nice picture of a girl in a bikini standing next to the president might be good too. Tells the people that he's not all bullshit.

BARRY

(Chuckles)

I don't think his wife would like that.

CAB DRIVER

Ah what does she care? She's too busy with the summer lineup of clothing styles.

INT. SPY'S CAB

Spy sits in the back seat. His face is not seen fully in the rearview mirror.

He keeps a watchful eye on his targets five car lengths ahead of him.

EXT. FREEWAY INLET - CONTINUOUS

Both taxis merge with the heavy traffic as they continue on to downtown DC.

Spy remains far enough back as to not raise suspicions.

EXT. CHOPPER IN FLIGHT OVER CITY

The daily news chopper flies over the freeway. Both taxis can be seen from its perspective.

EXT. FREEWAY EXIT

Barry's cab takes the exit.

Ten seconds later, the spy follows.

Roadside sign - CAPITOL HILL - 5 miles.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - METRO AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Barry's taxi turns left at an intersection. Another sign reads - Capitol Hill 500 feet.

Behind cab: As they drive on, road lowers out of sight to show Capitol Hill on its own.

Majestic, old, white building that houses powerful people.

EXT. CAPITOL HILL - MOMENTS LATER - EARLY DUSK

Cab pulls up to the curb.

INT. CAB

Barry pays the driver.

CAB DRIVER

Thanks pal.

BARRY

Think you can stick around for awhile?

CAB DRIVER

Why? You going back to the airport?

BARRY

Possibly.

CAB DRIVER

That's an extra hun.

Barry hands him a one hundred dollar bill.

CAB DRIVER (CONT.)

Be right here.

BARRY

Thanks.

Both get out of the cab.

Barry turns to face the road they drove down on. He sees the traffic. And many other cabs.

Until he spots one pulling to the side of the road behind a car.

He waits.

EXT. SPY'S CAB

Cab sits behind a truck. The spy doesn't move or get out yet.

EXT. CAPITOL HILL - CONTINUOUS

Timothy approaches Barry.

TIMOTHY

What is it?

BARRY

I don't know. Maybe nothing.

TIMOTHY

look, if he is going to follow us I don't think he's going to show himself right away.

BARRY

Yeah. Yeah, you may be right.

TIMOTHY

Let's go.

Both turn and walk up the flight of stone steps of Capitol Hill.

EXT. SPY'S CAB

Spy gets out of the cab. His back is shown while he observes both Barry and Timothy walk up the steps of Capitol hill.

Cautiously he pursues using pedestrians as cover.

INT. CAPITOL HILL - FRONT ENTRANCE

Both walk in. Barry turns to look down the steps to see dozens of people at an intersection waiting for the crosswalk sign to turn.

Timothy joins him to watch.

From their perspectives, they see the citizens start to cross.

Except for one person who remains behind.

Barry's eyes spots him.

TIMOTHY

You think?

BARRY

Maybe.

EXT. INTERSECTION

Spy watches the building from the street corner.

He senses something might be wrong in his pursuit and decides to turn right and walk down the sidewalk.

INT. CAPITOL HILL - FRONT ENTRANCE

Barry and Tim watch him walking away. Both can see by the spy's body mannerisms and cautious display that being caught early in the game is not an option.

Once the spy is no longer seen, they turn to face one another.

BARRY

He won't risk coming in here. Not with this much security and the insurmountable amount of cameras.

TIMOTHY

If he knows about the project then he might know of its delay because we know about him.

BARRY

Yeah. That would give him more time to follow us straight to the source.

Timothy glances to the outside in reference to the spy, then back at Barry.

TIMOTHY

You're not thinking of actually...

BARRY

You catch on quick don't you?

TIMOTHY

That's insane. And dangerous.

BARRY

We need to defuse him as soon as possible. Delaying this project is costing us time and money.

TIMOTHY

Yeah - but, letting him just walk right in...

BARRY

Well, not right into the base, but close enough to get himself caught by the troops is a far better option than having a shoot out.

TIMOTHY

Think O'neil will go for it?

BARRY

He'd better. This whole project was his idea in the first place.

Their backs are shown as they walk to O'neil's office.

INT. CAPITOL HILL - O'NEILS OFFICE

O'neil rubs his chin as he eyes both men in front of him.

O'NEIL

That's not a bad idea.

BARRY

Think of it as just - window shopping for him. I'm pretty sure whatever information he's got already was attained through some -- dark corners if you take my meaning.

O'NEIL

Meaning we have a traitor at the base.

TIMOTHY

Possibly. Let's hook them up and find out who it is.

BARRY

That way we can keep it quiet.

O'neil wrings his fingers a few seconds, then picks up his snifter of scotch and downs the remaining contents.

He gets up for a refill.

O'NEIL

You boys want one?

BARRY

I'm fine.

TIMOTHY

I'm fine too.

O'NEIL

Okay. We'll open up an area the least protected. We'll say the grounds need alterations for more - added security but was delayed because of this situation. I'll send word in using our usual method so they pick it up as nothing more than - - daily routine. I'll authorize some phone taps too, but that won't be as reliable. If there is a traitor, they'll just use an outside line.

BARRY

Then we'll just tap the closest place nearest to the base.

O'NEIL

Good. Yes, that works too. Some of the workers like to go off-base for lunch.

TIMOTHY

I can be the look out.

O'NEIL

Right. Well - - seems we have our interests in line.

O'neil sits back down.

BARRY

Sir...

O'NEIL

I know what you're going to say. Since the U2 incident the president has been a little paranoid. If that's what you can call it.

BARRY

Is this really the best answer we have?

O'NEIL

If it's not us, then it's someone else who would come up with another spy plane. This cold war has done nothing but amplify everyone's suspicions about each other. I for one think that the blackbird could be used for more practical issues than flying over russia just to take photographs. But, I don't get to make that decision.

A moment of silence between them.

Then...

TIMOTHY
I think a nice steak is in order.

O'NEIL
(Puzzled, chuckles)
Put some shrimp or lobster with
that order. Lord knows I could go
for that right now.

BARRY
We'll make this work.

O'NEIL
You'd better. Because I promised
Kelly that if he didn't deliver our
product, that his next appointment
would be in Antarctica.

TIMOTHY
Whoa.

O'NEIL
So, you know what's at stake -
right?

BARRY
Yes sir.

O'NEIL
Good. Now, I've got more papers and
documents to authorize, so if you
boys will excuse me.

Both men get up and exit O'neils office.

EXT. O'NEILS OFFICE

After they exit...

TIMOTHY
I don't like the cold.

BARRY
Word from the wise - - If you're
standing in the harshest weather
provided by our world, don't take a
piss outside if you feel the need.

TIMOTHY
Eeesh.

They both walk along the hallway as office workers move
about. A few uniformed guards patrol the halls.

LATER...

EXT. RESTAURANT

Barry and Tomthy walk out of the restaurant. Timothy expresses his satisfaction of eating such a delicious lunch.

TIMOTHY

Ah! That hit the spot. (Pats stomach)

BARRY

Not a bad place. Come on, we have to get back.

They choose to walk down the sidewalk among other shoppers and looky-loos.

EXT. TV SHOP

As they pass by the window of a television shop. A news report shows Kennedy talking about Vietnam.

KENNEDY (O.S.)

"I don't think that unless a greater effort is made by the government to win popular support that the war can be won out there. In the final analysis, it is their war. They are the ones who have to win it or lose it. We can help them, we can give them equipment, we can send out men out there as advisors, but they have to win it, the people of Vietnam, against the communists."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAX - FRONT ENTRANCE

Barry and Timothy exit the terminal.

TIMOTHY

Where's your car again?

BARRY

That way.

Both walk to Barry's car that sits idle in the parking stall.

EXT. BARRY'S CAR

They get in the car, and Barry starts it with a jab of his foot on the gas pedal.

He reverses out and shifts it into foward and heads back to the base.

EXT. BARRY'S CAR - PASSENGER SIDE WINDOW - DAY

Both remain quiet on the drive back.

EXT. GATEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Barry pulls up but stops shy of the gate.

Timothy explains...

TIMOTHY

There's a diner down the highway
about a mile from here where the
workers like to eat off-base.

BARRY

Good, we can use that then.

Barry moves over and parks in front of the gate.

A guard walks out.

GATE GUARD

ID please and papers.

Barry hands them over. Timothy hands his ID card over.

When the guard is satisfied...

GATE GUARD

Thank you. You can proceed.

Guard hands over their ID and papers.

He walks over to the gate house and presses the gate button.

Gate slides open, Barry drives through.

Gate closes.

MUCH LATER...

INT. SEEDY MOTEL ROOM - NEXT DAY

The spy is on the phone with his contact. Only the back of his head is seen.

PHONE (V.O.)

Word of construction is delayed.
North side - no guards or security
patrols are gonna be there. That's
your only way in. You'll have about
ten minutes to get what you need
and get the hell out of there.

Click!

Spy hangs up the phone and gazes at the far wall.

At the same time...

EXT. TIMOTHY'S CAR - ACROSS DINER

Timothy sits in the driver's seat of a car across the road from the diner with a single headphone speaker to his ear.

He can see who the caller is who uses a payphone.

Man hangs up. A click! sound over the headphone.

By Timothy's perspective, the traitor is a young man (20'S) wearing a white sleeved shirt and black pants. A well groomed man who glances around in a timid way making sure he is not seen making the call.

He goes back into the diner.

From the driver's window: Timothy watches him with a stoic gaze.

TIMOTHY

Gotcha.

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

The spy moves through the tree groves wearing all black clothing and a hood.

From his point of view he can see the glow of lights over the tree tops which tells him he is getting much closer to his objective.

After a couple of quick glances to his surroundings, he moves on.

EXT. NORTH SIDE FENCE

The spy approaches and hunches down in front of a wire fence.

Assembly plant stands tall.

His ultimate goal.

He glances side to side, then pulls out wire cutters and begins to cut the fence quickly.

Once he's done, he enters the cut open entrance.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF FENCE

He waits a couple of seconds.

Looks right to left.

What he is not aware of, is that dozens of armed guards wait behind steel containers that are lined up in front of the assembly plant's walls.

He chooses to go left.

From his left side: As he makes his way towards a back door to the assembly plant he suddenly stops to realize that his moment of success seems to easy.

Why are there no guards walking about?

He exhales a couple of breaths. His anxiousness starts to build and suddenly backs up a couple of steps.

In his fear of being caught he turns to run back to the cut entrance.

When suddenly...

Dozens of soldiers jump out from behind the containers.

SOLDIER

Freeze!! Put your hands up! Put your hands up!

From above their location, more soldiers on the rooftop shine down flashlights upon the spy.

SOLDIER #2

Lay on the ground! Lay on the ground now!!

EXT. ASSEMBLY PLANT BACK DOOR

Both Barry and Timothy walk out of the plant with the traitor in handcuffs and joins the men.

One of the soliders cuffs the spy and removes his hood.

The spy is young (30'S). Chiseled good looks, with a mustache. Blue eyes, brown hair.

BARRY

Who are you? Who sent you?

Timothy speaks to the spy in russian.

TIMOTHY

(Subtitled)

He asked who you are. I suggest you tell him if you don't want your face all over the news.

Barry shoots Timothy a puzzled look.

BARRY

Where the hell did you learn Russian?

TIMOTHY

In my third year in.

SPY

(Subtitled)

You won't get anything from me. I only know what I gather for intelligence. Your - plane will never breach russian airspace.

TIMOTHY

He says our plane won't breach russian airspace.

BARRY

Our U2 did.

TIMOTHY

(Subtitled)

Our U2 did.

SPY

(Subtitled)

Yeah, by luck.

Timothy smirks.

BARRY

What he say?

TIMOTHY

He said yeah, but only by luck.

SOLDIER #2

Come on.

Soldier pulls the spy to an awaiting MP jeep.

Barry turns to the traitor.

BARRY

So who the hell are you working for? After all this time on modifying the lifters with your brilliant ideas you go ahead and turn spy? For what purpose?

TRAITOR

I got my reasons.

TIMOTHY

Reasons? You're a god damn american who's going to go to prison for the rest of your life. Or worse. Possibly executed.

TRAITOR

Ask yourself this. Why go through the trouble of building this plane in the first place? Our countries spy on each other all of the time

(MORE)

TRAITOR (cont'd)

using the next best idea. Like mine, and use it to - - peep in other people's business. Our world is moving too fast as it is. Next thing you know it's a new tank. A new carrier with pilotless fighter jets. Or, a new chemical weapon that melts your skin off. Things of that nature which helps our claim as the most powerful nation on earth. Where in the end - it would only make us look like nothing more than just thugs. So, go ahead. Fly your magnificent blackbird for all I care.

BARRY

Get him out of here.

Soldiers take away the traitor.

Barry walks over the fence and grabs it.

Timothy joins him.

TIMOTHY

You don't believe that shit he just said?

BARRY

He has a point. Although a weak one.

TIMOTHY

Come on. That's just - marxist bullshit.

BARRY

Maybe. But ask yourself this, why do we continue to design and create weapons that are more powerful than the next one? Have you seen the pattern lately to our history?

TIMOTHY

What do you mean?

BARRY

We war every twenty or so years. And every single time, the weapons get better and better. Technology has become the weapon.

TIMOTHY

Yeah. Yeah, that's true. But the blackbird. Isn't it the hope of stopping it?

Barry shoots him a concerned glance.

BARRY

Is it?

Barry walks to the back door of the assembly plant.

Timothy watches his back while the soldiers patrol the area.

Feeling defeated, Timothy follows him.

BLEND TO:

EXT. BLACKBIRD - FLIGHT TEST - JULY 20TH 1963 - DAY

A tow vehicle stops outside of the assembly plant as soon as the blackbird clears the bay.

The sunlight gleams across its surface.

Sharp lines, smooth fuselage which leads to the point at the nose where the antenna sticks out.

By anyone's perspective its design marks the jet as the most impressive ever created.

A jet on steroids.

From behind the engine ports, both Barry and Timothy walk out in their suits and helmets.

Would be astronauts on their first voyage.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - LADDER

They climb up the ladder and enter the jet's inner sanctum.

INT. BLACKBIRD

Barry takes the pilot seat, while Timothy sits down in the co-pilot seat.

Both plug their air intake valves to the jet's onboard oxygen valves and lock them in.

Barry speaks to Timothy using his helmet mic...

BARRY

Right. Let's go over the flight list.

TIMOTHY

Ready.

INT. TOWER

Kelly watches with a group of officials and generals.

Radar stations, communications, air flow radar and other personnel watch their monitors with diligence.

Kelly addresses a general.

KELLY

We've set up a preliminary test route to see how fast and how high the blackbird can reach.

GENERAL

Where exactly?

Kelly walks over to a table map to show the general.

KELLY

We start from the east and move on over the pacific where Desalle will begin his run to the upper atmosphere. What were hoping for is to reach an altitude of eighty thousand feet.

GENERAL

The U2 couldn't do that.

KELLY

No. Powers only made it to seventy thousand before a few problems occurred. We've eliminated those problems once and for all.

An air controller warns Kelly.

CONTROLLER

All systems are go.

KELLY

Fine. Begin power up.

CONTROLLER

You may now execute power up.

BARRY (V.O.)

Roger. Beginning cycle now.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - ENGINE PORTS

A low whine of the engine begins. A burst of flame causes the engines to blast a surge of power.

Low whine turns to high pitch shrills as the power increases.

It then levels out.

Engine flames turns a light blue with a hint of orange color.

INT. TOWER

BARRY (V.O.)
Engine at one quarter thrust.
Stationary keeping.

CONTROLLER
Roger. Begin taxi maneuver at 0
five miles per hour.

INT. BLACKBIRD

Barry has his hands on the flight wheel.

BARRY
Roger. Starting our taxi run.

His hand reaches down to his left side and pushes an
acceleration lever slowly.

The power whines higher, and the blackbird moves forward.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - ENGINE PORTS

As the jet taxis, its ports glow brighter. Two sleek
horizontal openings that billow nothing but sheer energy
pushing the blackbird to its destiny.

INT. TOWER

All watch silently.

Until...

GENERAL
Magnificent.

KELLY
It's - our new future of jet.

GENERAL
This is going to change everything.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - FRONT OF RUNWAY

The blackbird stops once its nose aligns with the runway.

Engines slightly power down to idle.

BARRY (V.O.)
Ready to roll.

CONTROLLER (V.O.)
You have clearance. Take off at
your discretion.

BARRY (V.O.)
Roger. Starting run now.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - ENGINE PORTS

As the acceleration climbs, the blackbird rolls down the runway from zero to sixty in three seconds.

Both ports glow brightly and expel a ribbed thrust of exhaust which glows a bright blue orange flame.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - LEFT SIDE

Barry is seen in the cockpit with his helmet on as the blackbird picks up speed.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - FRONT NOSE

As it hurls to the last mile of the runway, its nose dips up and zips past with a loud blast of its engines.

INT. TOWER

Kelly watches a nearby radar scope monitor to see it as a blip.

He puts on a pair of headphones.

KELLY

Desalle.

BARRY (V.O.)

Go ahead.

KELLY

We'll begin with the afterburner test once you reach fifteen thousand feet.

BARRY (V.O.)

Roger.

KELLY

How's Rand?

INT. BLACKBIRD

Barry glances over to Timothy who grips his seat arm rests with an extra tight hold.

BARRY

He's - - getting there.

KELLY

Understood.

BARRY

We're at ten thousand now. Climbing on to fifteen.

KELLY

Roger.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - RIGHT SIDE

The jet veers up and climbs higher. Clouds surround them like cotton balls but are whisked away from their ascent.

The black dagger cuts through the air with relative ease as it passes by.

Soon, at fifteen thousand feet.

INT. BLACKBIRD

Barry watches his altitude dial to see the needle reach the designated objective.

BARRY
Fifteen thousand feet.

KELLY (V.O.)
Activate afterburners.

BARRY
Activating now.

By his left side, he pushes the acceleration lever forward even more.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - RIGHT SIDE

The jet thrusts ahead.

INT. BLACKBIRD

By both of their perspectives, they watch as the clouds start to whisk by at even greater velocity.

TIMOTHY
Holy shit.

BARRY
Reaching mach 0.9 - 0.98 - mach one.

A sonic boom occurs.

KELLY (V.O.)
Continue to mach two and start ascention climb.

BARRY
Roger.

His hand pushes the afterburner even more.

BARRY
Mach one point two. Point four.
Point five.

The windshield shows the clouds whisking past at even greater speed.

BARRY (CONT.)

Point seven, point eight, point nine - mach two.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - RIGHT SIDE

As the second sonic boom occurs, a white disc like shape pushes away from the back end of the jet pushing the blackbird even faster.

INT. TOWER

Kelly watches the monitor to see the blip moving on inch at a time across the pacific ocean's expanse.

KELLY

Now, the real test.

BARRY (V.O.)

Speed - one thousand five hundred and twenty three miles per hour. Moving at two thousand feet per second.

KELLY

Good job. Let's reach it.

BARRY (V.O.)

Going for mach three - now.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - TOP SIDE

Clouds move by at dizzying speed as the blackbird punches for its goal.

It's now or never.

INT. BLACKBIRD

The final test of speed begins as Barry pushes the afterburner lever as far as it can go.

By Timothy's perspective, all he can see is puzzle pieces flying by at break neck speeds.

His eyes almost cross at one point.

TIMOTHY

Oh my god.

BARRY

God doesn't fly like this. Mach two point eight, point nine - nine point six, nine point eight - mach three has been achieved. Speed -

(MORE)

BARRY (cont'd)
two thousand two hundred and eighty
four miles an hour.

A final sonic boom.

EXT. CLOUDS

It is quiet, serene, peaceful. Even for god - until...

A powerful boom sounds and suddenly the blackbird zooms past in one second.

But during that second fly beside the jet as it enjoys mach three without constraint.

Its roaring engines sound clean, smooth and powerful with a deep throb.

INT. BLACKBIRD

Barry is in his element when he hears...

KELLY (V.O.)
Okay, fun time is over.

INT. TOWER

KELLY
Time for the ceiling.

BARRY (V.O.)
Roger. Adjusting flight path to
vector eight - now.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - TOP SIDE

The nose of the blackbird veers upward and climbs higher while it keeps its speed constant.

INT. BLACKBIRD

Timothy watches all of the gauges as best as he can while keeping both hands clasped tightly on the arm rests.

TIMOTHY
Twenty five thousand feet.

Three thousand feet per second flight.

TIMOTHY (CONT.)
Thirty thousand feet.

Higher.

TIMOTHY (CONT.)
Forty thousand feet.

INT. TOWER

The general smiles as he watches the blip on the radar monitor when he hears...

TIMOTHY (CONT.) (V.O.)
(With urgency)
Seventy thousand feet.

KELLY
Come on. Come on.

TIMOTHY (CONT.) (V.O.)
Eighty thousand feet!

Room bursts into cheers and claps.

BARRY (V.O.)
Bullseye.

KELLY
Congratulations guys. You just made history.

INT. BLACKBIRD

The blackbird runs smoothly as it coasts across the surface of the atmosphere, but they still have gravity.

Timothy releases his grip slightly to get a better look of the earth.

TIMOTHY
Oh my god. So this is how you guys see it?

BARRY
Close. We don't reach altitudes this high, but - it feels like we do every time we get into the cockpit.

TIMOTHY
I never really appreciated or even understood it until now. Shit, this is incredible.

BARRY
Not so seagull like now hm?

TIMOTHY
(Crooks a wry smile)
You're still a seagull. But - a talented one.

BARRY
Thanks.

KELLY (V.O.)
Bring it home boys.

BARRY
Understood. Coming home.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - TOP SIDE

Jet dips the nose down back to earth with another sonic boom!

As it vanishes in the clouds...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BLACKBIRD - NOSE - TAXI'S

The blackbird slowly makes its way to the assembly plants front bay doors as crews and officials exit the building with cheers and bottles of champagne.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - LADDER

The ladder drops and both men climb down to meet their team.

Barry helps Timothy out of his helmet.

Then Timothy reciprocates.

The workers surround them and start to spray them both with bubbly wine and thrust cigars their way.

Kelly walks over with the general and his aids.

It is a happy moment for all as the celebration begins.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Barry lazily sits in his booth seat as he enjoys both his drink and his date Cassandra who is dressed to the nines.

A lovely slow song begins.

CASSANDRA
Come on. Dance with me.

BARRY
Hmmm. Sounds nice, lead the way.

Timothy is with his date Dina who kisses his right cheek and snuggles closer to him.

Barry and Cassandra head to the dancefloor.

TIMOTHY
Man, what a week.

DINA
Me too. Had a lot of customers.

TIMOTHY

Mm. Pizza. Sounds delicious right about now.

DINA

What did you do?

TIMOTHY

Flew in one of the most - well, misunderstood jets of all time.

DINA

You're a pilot?

TIMOTHY

Not me. That's all him. I'm his co-pilot.

DINA

Wow. How fast did you go?

TIMOTHY

Ooo, fast enough to rip off roof tiles. Hell we'd probably take the whole roof with us.

Dina chuckles as she nuzzles his neck with her button nose.

DINA

(Seductive)

Wanna take me for a ride?

TIMOTHY

(Cracks a juvenile grin)

Do I ever.

They both get up from the booth and Timothy shouts to Barry...

TIMOTHY (CONT.)

We're heading out.

BARRY

Well, let me drive you guys home.

Timothy walks to the dancing duo.

TIMOTHY

Nah. We'll catch a cab.

BARRY

You sure?

TIMOTHY

Yeah. Besides, we got what a month off? I'm going to take my time to enjoy it.

BARRY
 Okay man. You two have a good night
 then.

CASSANDRA
 I'll call tomorrow.

DINA
 Okay.

Both Dina, and Timothy leave.

Cassandra wraps her arms around Barry's neck.

CASSANDRA
 Now where were we? Oh yeah.

She leans up and kisses his lips.

Both move to the music. Other dancers have their own way,
 but Barry and Cassandra stand out more.

EXT. PUB - NIGHT

Timothy and Dina exit. Rain falls as he hails a cab.

One pulls up to the curb.

Timothy opens the door for Dina and she climbs in, then
 Timothy.

INT. CAB

TIMOTHY
 Home please.

CAB DRIVER
 Where's that pal?

Cab driver turns around.

TIMOTHY
 Oh uh...

DINA
 Marsbury drive.

CAB DRIVER
 That's a long haul.

DINA
 So?

CAB DRIVER
 Okay. It's your dime.

EXT. CAB

Cab pulls away from the curb as other customers exit and hail cabs or smokes cigarettes.

INT. PUB - CONTINUOUS

Barry and Cassandra dance together amidst other dancers. The music is gentle, soothing, and romantic.

Cassandra leans up to kiss Barry on the lips.

Both embrace tighter under a glitter globe as the music comes to its crescendo.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CLOUDS - A MISSION OVER SIBERIA - DAY

A quiet moment in the clouds.

There is a breezy sound of wind.

When out of the blue...

The Blackbird screams by at mach 2.

INT. BLACKBIRD

Both Barry and Timothy work together as they reach their target area.

Over his helmet mic...

BARRY

Start the run.

TIMOTHY

Roger. Camera one enabled. One frame per second.

BARRY

Now we see what the fuss is all about.

TIMOTHY

Nothing but endless forest down there.

Timothy uses an eyescop mounted on his right.

Through the scope: He can see trees, rocky areas, also a single road that seems to lead nowhere.

BARRY (O.C.)

Yeah but that's what the boys in the kremlin are known for. Using thick foliage as their cover.

TIMOTHY

I can't see a thing. No buildings,
no outposts, no... Wait.

BARRY (O.C.)

What?

Timothy peers a little closer in his scope and adjusts the focus.

Through his eye scope: Timothy spots a small vehicle nestled in near the edge of a gully.

TIMOTHY

Ah shit. We got a Zil with a
mounted M51.

BARRY (O.C.)

Oh that's just great. That's all we
fucking need.

TIMOTHY

Doesn't look like they spotted us
yet.

INT. RUSSIAN BUNKER - ALERT - DAY

A row of monitors flash as a general walks into the room and shouts to the men who sit in front of screens.

RUSSIAN GENERAL

(Subtitled)

Report!

RADAR OFFICER

(Subtitled)

Bogey spotted at a cruising
altitude of forty thousand feet.
Bearing east eighteen degrees.

RADAR OFFICER

(subtitled)

Speed?

RADAR OFFICER

(Subtitled)

Just under mach 2.

GENERAL

(Subtitled)

That's more than enough to take it
out. Who is in that vicinity?

RADAR OFFICER

(Subtitled)

Lookout post four - Captain stepan
Ivanov.

GENERAL

Send word and coordinates to his location. Priority one.

RADAR OFFICER

(Subtitled)

Yes General.

EXT. MISSILE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

At a lonely looking truck, four men enjoy a moment of peace and quiet in front of a fire. Rifles stacked like a teepee sits close by.

In front of the truck stands just one man.

Dressed in official uniform is Captain Stepan Ivanov. (30'S)

A man of simple means as he sips a coffee laced with vodka.

He has a mustache but keeps it trimmed neatly.

On the truck's passenger side, a black box near the door rings a bell.

The men stop laughing and glance to the captain who walks over with his coffee.

By the fire, one of the men stands up.

CAPTAIN IVANOV

(Subtitled)

You're up corporal Sidorov.

SIDOROV

(Subtitled)

Yes captain Ivanov.

The corporal then rushes to the black box and opens it to reveal just a phone receiver. He answers the call...

SIDOROV

(Subtitled)

Outpost four. Corporal Sidorov.

Over the receiver...

RECEIVER (V.O.)

(Subtitled)

Unidentified bogey. Coordinates - two two, five mark six eight. Heading east, deploy all missiles, I repeat deploy all missiles.

The corporal looks as if he is about to shit himself when his captain remains calm, stoic, seasoned.

SIDOROV
 (Subtitled)
 Understood.

The corporal gestures an urgent body movement to his fellow comrades to get their asses moving.

The other three get up and mount the truck to activate the mounted missile launcher.

Corporal hangs up.

CAPTAIN IVANOV
 (Subtitled)
 Well?

SIDOROV
 (Subtitled)
 Coordinates coming in now.

INT. MISSILE TRUCK CAB - UNDER GLOVE BOX - CONTINUOUS

The captain opens the passenger side door of the truck and watches a paper being printed out.

The clikety clack of typing of an old device.

Once done, the captain rips the paper off and reads it a loud...

CAPTAIN IVANOV
 (Subtitled)
 Change of bearing now two, two,
 eight mark nine. Adjust for speed
 and set the timing detonator to
 zero.

SIDOROV
 (Subtitled)
 Yes captain.

One of the men flips a switch and the missile launcher quickly spins around and points in the direction of their target.

Meanwhile...

INT. BLACKBIRD

The cockpit's front panel starts to buzz loudly.

TIMOTHY
 What the hell is that?

BARRY
 Did you suddenly develop senility
 in the past minute? We're being
 targeted.

TIMOTHY

Already?

BARRY

Just - relax.

Timothy looks back into the scope to see...

Through his eyescope: He sees a half dozen flashes glowing on the ground. Missiles are coming.

The cockpit glows red as emergency lights activate.

Over his helmet mic he can hear home base...

HELMET (V.O.)

Adjust flight path to six, four,
six mark two. Begin ascent.

BARRY

Roger.

On his left side, Barry pushes the afterburner lever.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - CONTINUOUS

The blackbird is thrust into a speed run while six shiny new russian missiles start their pursuit behind them.

INT. BLACKBIRD

By Barry's perspective he watches as the clouds whisk by as heads in the marked course direction set by his home base.

Timothy just hangs on but, keeps an eye on the radar scope in front of him to see six blips giving chase.

TIMOTHY

How fast are we going?

BARRY

Mach one point nine.

TIMOTHY

(Urgent)

That's too slow. Come on, we can go
a little faster can't we?

BARRY

Aww where's the fun in that?

EXT. BLACKBIRD - CONTINUOUS

The beautiful black beauty spears through the clouds like a hot knife through butter. Its wing tips glow because of Barry's course correction.

As the missile slowly inch closer - the blackbird's engine ports glow brighter.

Then a sonic boom.

INT. BLACKBIRD

Barry is right into the moment as he steers the jet left to right with ease and precise dexterity.

Timothy - well, he just hangs on with his eyes on the radar screen.

What they both don't know is that when Barry kicked in the afterburners, he forgot to check what the speed is.

But, as he looks down to the speed indicator...

BARRY

Holy shit.

TIMOTHY

(Annoyed)

What?

BARRY

We just hit - mach three point two.

Timothy glances down to the radar screen to see that their jet is outrunning the missile attack.

TIMOTHY

Yes! Yes!! Woohoo!!

EXT. BLACKBIRD - CONTINUOUS

The blackbird zooms by over the coast and finally over the north pole to meet up with an airborne refueling plane.

At the same time, behind the bird, all six missiles drop from the sky because of expended fuel.

INT. RUSSIAN BUNKER - ALERT - DAY

The general is not pleased as he watches on a screen to see a warning message wipe across...

SCREEN

(subtitled)

Missiles no longer in pursuit - all
fuel cells expended. BM-24
compliment no longer a viable use.
End...

All the general can do is stare at the blinking cursor.

INT. BLACKBIRD

Both men continue to laugh and have a bit of fun to celebrate their first successful mission aside from being attacked.

Barry eases off on the throttle to cruising speed.

TIMOTHY

Holy shit that was incredible!

BARRY

God this baby just keeps getting better and better.

TIMOTHY

I thought for sure they had an ace up their sleeve.

BARRY

Me too. We were too low to begin with. We should have stayed above fifty thousand.

TIMOTHY

Maybe. But, I'm guessing that's not what - you - wanted. Right?

BARRY

(Smirks)

I just wanted to see how good these guys really were. Seems that, their protocols haven't been changed.

A warning alarm goes off.

BARRY (CONT.)

Oh, there they are.

TIMOTHY

Nice to see a friendly face.

Over their helmet mics...

FUELING PILOT (V.O)

KC-135 on your twelve O'clock.

BARRY

Roger. Good to see you guys.

FUELING PILOT (V.O)

That was some ingenious flying back there. Some of us took bets to see which one would drop first. I lost.

BARRY

Sorry for your loss.

In front of them a nozzle ejects from the fuel tankers rear end.

FUELING PILOT (V.O)

Heading two eight, just ease up to the port. We'll guide you in.

BARRY

Roger.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - REFUELING - CONTINUOUS

The blackbird's top section slowly eases upward to meet with the nozzle's fueling port. A door slides open to reveal the blackbird's fuel orifice.

INT. BLACKBIRD

FUELING PILOT (V.O)

Two feet, one foot. Eight inches.
Four, two, zero.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - REFUELING - CONTINUOUS

The nozzle locks into place.

INT. BLACKBIRD

FUELING PILOT (V.O)

That got it. Just sit back and relax. We'll do the rest.

BARRY

Roger.

TIMOTHY

You won't believe this.

BARRY

What?

TIMOTHY

We got it.

BARRY

Got what?

TIMOTHY

Our target area was photographed. Somehow, through the mess we managed to capture enough evidence for some coordinates.

BARRY

(Stunned)

Are you kidding?

TIMOTHY

No.

Timothy pulls out a map and unfurls it.

TIMOTHY

After the calculations were done, the target is right here. (Points
(MORE)

TIMOTHY (cont'd)
to map) Right smack dab in the
middle regions. Coordinates are
just south of Olenek.

BARRY
Central region. Lower Tunguska.

TIMOTHY
We did it.

BARRY
Boys at the lab are going to love
this.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - REFUELING - CONTINUOUS

Both jets fly across the north pole joined together by a
fueling pipe.

A mating ritual between pilots.

BLEND TO:

EXT. HANGAR - BEALE AIR FORCE BASE - CALIFORNIA - 1985 - DAY

The blackbird taxis up to the hangar and comes to a stop. It
powers down.

Under its belly, the ladder drops.

Both Barry and Timothy climb down the ladder. Two very
seasoned pilots.

Crews scramble out from the hangar and do their daily
routine of cleaning and checking the blackbird's operations.

They remove their helmets.

Both men now much older.

BARRY
Jesus. There must be some glitch in
the air intake valves. It was
getting hotter inside my helmet.

TIMOTHY
I thought mine was fine.

BARRY
Yeah well, you're still young.

EXT. BLACKBIRD - UNDER THE HULL

As they walk away from their beloved blackbird, the seams
start to loosen and leak condensed water to the tarmac.

A very normal response after high speed flight time.

INT. LOCKERROOM

Barry walks out the shower with a towel wrapped around his waist and walks over to a sink with his comb.

Timothy is already dressed and ready to leave the base.

TIMOTHY
Feel like a brewsky later?

BARRY
Nah. I got some downtime with the wife and my holy terrors.

TIMOTHY
Any place special you have in mind?

BARRY
I was thinking - disney.

TIMOTHY
You did that last week.

BARRY
I know. But the kids love goofy.

TIMOTHY
Reminds me of when you and I met.

BARRY
(smirks, combs hair)
That was a good moment. Both of us kicking each other's asses to high hell.

TIMOTHY
Yeah. God did I hurt the next morning.

BARRY
But if we didn't fight, we wouldn't have been able to fly like this.

Timothy's expression changes suddenly from happy to foreboding.

TIMOTHY
Did you hear?

Barry finishes combing his hair and turns to face Timothy.

BARRY
What?

TIMOTHY
I heard through the grapevine that they might consider pulling the blackbird out of service.

A moment of silence.

BARRY

Yeah. I got slight wind of it from one of my more hidden sources. It's not surprising. I mean look at how much it costs just to keep it airborne.

TIMOTHY

JP-7 is on its way out. Works well for supersonic jets but not the low fliers. Eighteen hundred dollars a pint now.

BARRY

And with the continuous maintenance it pushes up the price tag even further.

Barry walks to his locker and removes the towel and dresses.

TIMOTHY

So if they do pull the program, what then? I can't start again in bootcamp.

BARRY

They'll probably sort it out by sectioning us off to other posts. I can stay on as a test pilot or, teach classes to the next generation. You?

TIMOTHY

I was thinking of going south and raise an orchard.

Barry turns as he buckles his pants up.

BARRY

You? An orchard farmer?

TIMOTHY

Why not? I can raise oranges, grapes, strawberries, you name it.

BARRY

What would Dina think about that?

TIMOTHY

She'll probably incorporate my hard work into her restaurants. Which is a good thing.

BARRY

Yeah I suppose. So how many does our family own now?

TIMOTHY

You really have to get an education
in economics.

BARRY

How many?

TIMOTHY

Last count was twenty four outlets.
We're working on a new location in
New York now.

BARRY

Wouldn't mind going there to try it
out.

Timothy can see that Barry looks worn out. His body
movements have become slower.

Being 52 years old means early retirement for some.

TIMOTHY

Why don't we make it a family trip
then?

BARRY

Yeah. Yeah, that sounds like a good
idea.

Barry suddenly coughs and leans over.

Timothy rushes over to help him.

TIMOTHY

Hey, hey are you okay? (Pats back)

BARRY

Yeah. I just - felt a frog in my
throat. (Coughs)

Timothy continues to pat his back. Barry gets his coughing
under control.

TIMOTHY

Shit. You better get yourself
checked out.

BARRY

What for? Doctors only know one
thing that seems to get them in the
mood.

TIMOTHY

Oh? And what's that?

Barry holds up his middle finger not as a curse but to
explain...

BARRY

On how to probe with this listening
to liberace records.

TIMOTHY

(Chuckles)

You're a sick bastard.

BARRY

Aren't I?

Barry finishes dressing and they walk out of the locker
room.

Their backs are seen as they exit.

TIMOTHY

I can't believe that Regan got a
second term.

BARRY

That's what you get when have
actors running the country. Next
thing you know it's -- doctors, or
hotel managers like that prick in
upstate New York.

TIMOTHY

What was his name again?

BARRY

Who gives a shit.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - A WEEK LATER - DAY

Barry sits on a table and buttons his shirt up as his doctor
looks at an X-ray of his lungs.

BARRY

Come on Percy. Don't keep me in the
dark all day here.

Doctor Percy Flannigan. (40'S). A finely tuned physician in
the field of Respiratory and Pulmonology has a grim
expression when he turns around to gaze into the eyes of his
patient.

PERCY

I thought it might be tumerous. But
it's more than that.

BARRY

What do you mean?

PERCY

I mean there's a chemical lodged in the capillaries and are preventing them from expanding as you breathe.

BARRY

In english?

PERCY

Your lungs are showing signs of suffocation. There's far too much scarring which makes it difficult to operate on.

A worried look washes over Barry's face.

BARRY

So is there a treatment? Some counteractive drug?

PERCY

No. We've seen pilots come in before with signs like these but in your case the damage is far too acute.

The doctor walks over to his desk and opens a folder that shows his blood tests.

PERCY (CONT.)

Along with the scarring, we've discovered a dangerous compound in your blood. What ever fuel your base uses, it contains traces of Caesium.

Barry sits with his hands on his lap and stares at the floor for a moment.

BARRY

Are the uh - effects long lasting?

PERCY

In cases of chemotherapy Caesium can be used without the radioactive properties. But, with your exposure to it over the course of years - there is no treatment. At least none that I've ever heard of.

Barry crosses his arms across his chest.

BARRY

Then Timothy might have been exposed to it too. We've flown together since the beginning.

PERCY

You might want to tell him when the time is right for both of you.

BARRY

His wife's not gonna like this.

PERCY

I'm sorry.

Barry hops down off the table and holds out his hand.

BARRY

Thanks doc.

Percy grabs his hand and both shake.

PERCY

I can prescribe some...

BARRY

No. No, no drugs or any kind of hallucinogen. If I'm going then I want to go with my mind still intact.

PERCY

It's going to be painful.

BARRY

What's a little radiation between friends?

Percy offers a whimsical smile.

Barry exits the doctor's office and closes the door behind him.

BLEND TO:

EXT. BEACH FRONT - DAY

Barry leans on a railing and gazes at the ocean water where people play and have fun.

Picnic baskets, beachballs, women in dental floss bikinis.

A paradise.

Timothy arrives and joins him.

TIMOTHY

Nice day today.

BARRY

Yeah. I just heard that I'm a walking isotope.

TIMOTHY

Yeah me too.

Barry looks at Timothy.

BARRY

You got yourself checked out too?

TIMOTHY

Mm-hm. Seems my blood is teeming with Caesium. Who would have thought?

BARRY

Shit. God damn it.

TIMOTHY

Not their fault really. We knew the risks. Can't hold them accountable for something we knew about.

BARRY

Yeah but, our children. Our wives. What if they're sick too?

TIMOTHY

They're not. My doctor explained that even though we have high concentration of Caesium in our blood, it won't transfer over to another. Even in sexual intercourse.

BARRY

That doesn't make sense. Radiation is absolute.

TIMOTHY

That's what I thought. Somehow our bodies managed to contain it. How - I don't know. But I don't care. As long as Dina and my kids are okay.

Barry loosens up when he hears that comment.

A reminder of the more important things in life.

BARRY

Yeah. You're right. Sorry.

TIMOTHY

No need to be sorry man. We had our fun. And shit, did I love it.

Barry and Timothy turn to walk down a pathway towards a group of people sitting together at a picnic table.

Kids, mothers, wives and family members.

Rise above the walkway. A few balloons from the picnic escape and float in the air.

SCROLL: The SR-71 (Blackbird) was retired from service January 26th, 1990 because of a decreasing defense budget and high costs of operation and availability of sophisticated spy satellites. On its retirement the blackbird set a number of world speed records during its retirement flighttime. One such record, it made a 311-mile stretch from St. Louis-to-Cincinnati in less than nine minutes, averaging a speed of 2,176.08 Miles per hour.

The blackbird was then reactivated into service during the serb war as a reconnaissance jet. Yet, it was then permanantly grounded by the US Air Force in 1998 during the Clinton Administration leaving just two at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base.

Kelly Johnson, head of Skunk Works died on December 21, 1990 in Los Angeles, California.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END