

BLACK THUNDER

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

A black STEALTH FIGHTER zooms overhead, banking and turning.
A pair of F-15 STRIKE EAGLE WARPLANES zoom after it.

INT. F-15 STRIKE EAGLE #1 -- DAY

In the cockpit, the PILOT and WINGMAN communicate with the second Strike Eagle.

PILOT #1
He's getting away! He's getting away!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Stealth Fighter makes several evasive maneuvers, losing the two Strike Eagles in the clouds.

INT. F-15 STRIKE EAGLE #1 -- DAY

PILOT #2 (V.O.)
Lost him. He's BVR.

PILOT #1
Watch your six, I'm going tall in the saddle.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

Strike Eagle #1 zooms away from the other plane, ascending.
The Stealth Fighter takes evasive maneuvers...
Strike Eagle #1 zooms down, heading right at the Stealth!

PILOT #1
Tally ho! Bandit at zero six niner,
thirty angels. Wizzo, lock on target!

WINGMAN
Roger. Locked on.

INT. F-15 STRIKE EAGLE #1 -- DAY

The Stealth in the heads up display, targeted... Then the display goes blank. The Stealth has VANISHED into thin air!

WINGMAN

He's gone...

PILOT #1

Check the FLIR...

WINGMAN

No sign of him on the HUD, the FLIR,
or the E/O, sir.

PILOT #1

Strike Eagle 2, have lost contact with
our Bandit. Do you have a posit?

PILOT #2 (V.O.)

He was there a minute ago... now he's
gone.

(beat)

Target locator line is blank. Range
to target: negative. Closure rate:
Zero. Nothing.

PILOT #1

What about visual contact?

PILOT #2 (V.O.)

Now you see him, now you don't. He's
not on any of our displays, and I don't
see him out there...

PILOT #1

A plane can't just disappear.

PILOT #2 (V.O.)

It's gone, Colonel.

Pilot #1 shakes his head. How is this possible?

PILOT #1

Base, this is Strike Eagle one, do you
read? We've lost our target bogey.
He just disappeared...

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Behind the stick of the Stealth Fighter, a PILOT in a black
helmet and G-suit, watches the two F-15 Strike Eagles pass on
his HUD... targeting the first plane.

MOORE

Weapons locked on.

His finger moves to the red launch button.

INT. F-15 STRIKE EAGLE #1 -- DAY

The RWR warning light indicates a targeting radar has locked on to the plane.

WINGMAN

We've been spiked! Break right! Break right!

The Pilot makes a hard right turn...

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

The Pilot In Black gets ready to press the red launch button.

MOORE

Fire missile one...

But he doesn't fire.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The F-15 Strike Eagle zooms away... but Strike Eagle #2 enters the kill zone.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

The second F-15 pops up on his HUD, and he locks onto target.

MOORE

Target acquired. Weapons locked on.
I'm engaged.

Again, he doesn't fire. Sparing the F-15 pilot and wingman.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

PILOT #2 (V.O.)

We're spiked! Slice it! Slice it!

The second F-15 Strike Eagle zooms away (slicing left).

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

The Pilot In Black moves his thumb from the fire button.

MOORE

That's a ninety five percent PK. Splash
two Strike Eagles.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Stealth Fighter pulls out of the cloud cover and heads back to base.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE -- DAY

The Stealth Fighter lands at the base.

EXT. EDWARDS AFB -- DAY

Colonel STEVE MOORE, pilot of the experimental Nova Stealth Fighter, takes off his black helmet as he walks away from the top secret plane.

Moore is a handsome flight jock in his late thirties, who exudes a macho self confidence. He's survived some of the hairiest air battles in modern warfare and walked away without a scratch. He's the best there is.

INT. HALLWAY - EDWARDS AFB -- DAY

Moore salutes General "Whiskey" PETE BARNES, the head of the experimental Nova Stealth Fighter program.

MOORE
General Barnes.

BARNES
Good flying, Steve.

They walk down the hallway.

BARNES
You were there one minute, gone the next. Neither plane could find you.

MOORE
It was a milk run, sir. Just went active-stealth, then used the clouds as camouflage. Played Popeye with them for a couple minutes.
(beat)
Could have blasted those Eagles out of the sky, if I had any ordnance onboard.

Barnes laughs.

BARNES
Ready for a real test?

MOORE

Sending me to Bagdad, sir?

BARNES

Tomorrow I'm putting Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada on full alert. Every plane, every chopper, every radar man in the USAF Fighter Weapons Center will be looking for you.

(beat)

Waiting for you.

(beat)

You're going to use the Nova's active stealth to get past them and drop a paint bomb on the base.

(beat)

If you drop it on General Sorenson's building, I'll buy you dinner.

MOORE

Sir, I can taste that lobster, now.

BARNES

I'll bet you can.

Barnes laughs and claps Moore on the shoulder.

INT. SECURITY CHECKPOINT -- DAY

Moore, now in street clothes, is stopped at a security checkpoint by a pair of blue helmeted Air Force SECURITY POLICE.

They check his ID badge, scan his thumb print, run a metal detector over him, and pat him down.

EXT. EDWARDS AFB -- DAY

When Moore leaves the building, another pair of BLUE HELMETS check his ID badge. Guns ready in the event he's an impostor.

EXT. GUARD KIOSK -- DAY

As Moore drives out of the parking lot, a GUARD in a kiosk checks his ID badge, studying Moore's face carefully before lifting the arm and allowing him to exit.

The Nova project is still black... So top secret that few inside the Air Force even know it exists.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Moore drives his car back to his apartment, parking in the underground garage of the multi level building.

INT. MOORE'S APARTMENT LOBBY -- DAY

Moore unlocks his mailbox and grabs the bills and magazines. Flips through the new Playboy as he crosses to the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR -- DAY

Moore hits his floor button and continues checking out the magazine. As the doors are about to close, a MAN squeezes onto the elevator, back to Moore.

MOORE

What floor?

The doors close, no answer.

MOORE

Where you headed?

DOUBLE

Stop button please.

Moore looks up from his magazine, just as the Man turns around to face him.

Steve Moore is looking at a mirror image of himself. The Man is his EXACT DOUBLE, dressed in an overcoat and hat.

MOORE

What the....?

Thump! Thump! The DOUBLE fires a silenced gun at Moore.

Moore gasps, slumping to the elevator floor.

Dead.

The Double hits the Elevator Stop button.

He searches Moore's pockets, pulling out his keys, his wallet, his ID badge, and any identifying affects.

After a glance at the fallen Playboy, the Double adds the magazine to the contents of his pockets.

Then the Double pulls out a pocket knife and grabs Moore's right hand carefully.

DOUBLE

Sorry, that thumb's gotta come off.

He bends down to cut off Moore's thumb (for print analysis).

EXT. EDWARDS AFB -- DAWN

The sun rises behind the air force base.

EXT. GUARD KIOSK -- DAY

The Double drives up to the kiosk in Moore's car, showing the Guard his ID badge. The Guard lets him in.

INT. HALLWAY - EDWARDS AFB -- DAY

The Double walks down the hall, dressed in his flight suit. He salutes General Barnes.

BARNES

Well, Colonel, you ready for lobster tonight?

DOUBLE

Ready for lobster every night, sir.

Gen. Barnes watches him walk away, confused by the response.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Once he's strapped in, the Double pulls off the latex 'Mission Impossible' mask of Colonel Steve Moore and tosses it outside the plane. The oxygen mask covers his real face, so we can't see who he is. The Double starts the Nova's jets.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE -- DAY

The top secret Nova Stealth Fighter takes off... Stolen!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Stealth Fighter zooms away, disappearing in the clouds.

EXT. NELLIS AFB, NEVADA -- DAY

Quiet. Everyone on full alert. Waiting for the Nova.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

A pair of FIGHTER JETS zoom through the sky.

PILOT #1 (V.O.)
Any sign of our bogey?

PILOT #2 (V.O.)
Nothing.

INT. HALLWAY - EDWARDS AFB -- DAY

General Barnes storms down the hallway, followed by his assistant Captain PHIL DeMUTH.

DEMUTH
Sir, still no contact with the Nova.

BARNES
He might still be circling Nellis,
looking for a way in.

DEMUTH
Sir, something's wrong. He should
have dropped his payload and been back
already.

BARNES
Let's try to get him on the radio.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

Barnes stands behind a radio operator.

RADIO
Nova, this is base, do you copy?

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova Stealth Fighter flies. But doesn't answer the calls from base.

RADIO (V.O.)
Nova, do you copy? Please break radio
silence and answer. Nova?

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

RADIO
Nothing, sir.

DEMUTH

And AWACS has no indication that the Nova entered Nevada airspace. They have a pair of E-3 Sentries up there. Not a blip on the radar or any sign of heat registration.

Barnes turns back to the Radio Operator.

BARNES

Get Nellis on the horn. Have General Sorenson search the area for downed aircraft. We may have lost the Nova.

INT. HALLWAY - EDWARDS AFB -- DAY

DeMuth has trouble keeping up with General Barnes.

DEMUTH

Sir, there's another possibility.

BARNES

Yes?

DEMUTH

That Captain Moore has gone AWOL with the plane.

BARNES

I hand picked Moore for this project. Served in 'Nam with his father. He's like my own kid. I can't imagine him stealing this plane.

INT. SECURITY CHECKPOINT -- DAY

DeMuth talks with the Air Force SECURITY POLICE, nods.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

DeMuth pulls General Barnes away from The Big Board.

DEMUTH

Sir, he went through the security checkpoints this morning. Three sets of blue caps checked his ID card. His thumbprint is on the records.

BARNES

No one else had access to the Nova...

DEMUTH

Nellis has no reports of wreckage in the vicinity.

General Barnes nods, accepting Moore has stolen the plane.

INT. HALLWAY - EDWARDS AFB -- DAY

DeMuth is again playing catchup with General Barnes.

DEMUTH

There's something kind of funny about losing a Stealth plane.

BARNES

I'm not laughing, Captain.

DEMUTH

What I mean, sir, is, we built an invisible war plane, and now...

BARNES

I know what you mean, DeMuth.

DEMUTH

If it's still in the air, sir, how are we going to find it?

BARNES

The SR-71 Blackbird. Best spy plane ever made. It can find anything.

DEMUTH

I'll have one fueled and ready, sir. Who's going to fly it?

BARNES

Get Vince Conners out here.

DeMuth nods and gets to work.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

A PIPER CHEROKEE zooms over the high desert, approaching a canyon cut between the hills.

INT. PIPER CHEROKEE -- DAY

Behind the wheel, VINCE CONNERS guides the light plane towards the canyon. Conners is one of the Air Force's top test pilots. He can fly any plane known to man.

Beside Conners in the plane is WINSTON, an inner city pre-teen who is itching to fly the plane.

Conners is part of the Big Brother Program, and Winston is his charge. He takes the kid flying twice a month.

CONNERS

Okay. What are the four forces of flying?

WINSTON

Thrust, Lift, Drag, Weight.

CONNERS

Very good, Winston. What is Thrust?

WINSTON

It's the force made by the propeller which cause the plane to move forward.

CONNERS

How is it measured?

WINSTON

Pounds... Can I fly the plane, now?

Conners ignores the request, and pulls back on the wheel.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Piper Cherokee zooms up, over the crest of a hill.

INT. PIPER CHEROKEE -- DAY

CONNERS

What's lift?

WINSTON

The force that pushes the plane up.

CONNERS

What causes it?

WINSTON

Couldn't I just fly the plane?

CONNERS

Hey. You've got to learn this stuff if you're going to fly the plane. It's not just turning the wheel like this...

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Cherokee banks gracefully, avoiding a hill.

INT. PIPER CHEROKEE -- DAY

Conners brings the plane level again.

CONNERS

You've got to know math and science, too. That's why you've got to stay in school and keep studying.

WINSTON

Yes Mr. Conners.

CONNERS

Watch that attitude. I can make you get out and walk.

Winston laughs.

CONNERS

Okay. What causes lift?

WINSTON

The shape of the wing. The air travels over the top faster than it travels over the bottom. So the air at the bottom pushes the wing up.

CONNERS

Extra credit: What do you call that?

WINSTON

Bernoulli's Law.

CONNERS

You've been studying.

WINSTON

Yup. I'd sure like to fly the plane.

CONNERS

You will... in another five years if you keep studying. You've got to know the basics before let you have the wheel. I had one of the best teachers in the Air Force.

Taped to the control panel: A photo of Conners in uniform next to COLONEL TOM RATCHER, his mentor. The photo is cropped to exclude whoever was standing to Ratcher's left.

Conners pulls back on the wheel, taking them on a wild loop.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Cherokee does an amazing loop-the-loop near the canyon.

INT. PIPER CHEROKEE -- DAY

Winston was holding on for dear life while the plane was upside down. Now he lets go and tries to act cool.

WINSTON

Can we do that again? That was fun!

CONNERS

How's your mom doing?

WINSTON

Working overtime at one of her jobs.
She doesn't come home 'till I'm asleep.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Cherokee does a couple more amazing maneuvers.

INT. PIPER CHEROKEE -- DAY

Winston is having a great time. This is better than riding a roller coaster.

CONNERS

Getting your homework done?

WINSTON

Usually.

CONNERS

Doing any extra credit work?

WINSTON

Why? Won't get me anything.

CONNERS

It'll make you smarter. You can't
ever be too smart. Dumb guys get jobs
cleaning out the sewers. You want to
do that?

WINSTON

No, sir. I want to fly jet planes.
Get into dog fights with MiG fighters,
and blast 'em with missiles. Like in
the video games.

CONNERS

Do tricky aerial maneuvers? Like this?

Connors gives Winston a thrill ride.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Cherokee does some amazing stunts. Zooming through the
canyon, pulling up into loop-the-loops. Fantastic stuff.

CONNERS

Some kids in Big Brothers get stuck
with the sewer workers. They spend
their Saturday with a shovel cleaning
out smelly stuff.

INT. PIPER CHEROKEE -- DAY

WINSTON

Wow! Wow! Wow!

CONNERS

Do all your homework, especially math
and science, and you'll be able to fly
like that.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Cherokee glides over the top of a hill....

Suddenly, an F-16 ROARS past, banking.

INT. PIPER CHEROKEE -- DAY

Connors holds tight to the wheel. A voice from the plane's
radio.

RADIO (V.O.)

Whisky Tango Delta seventy one, do you
copy?

CONNERS

This is Whisky Tango Delta.

RADIO (V.O.)

Conners, you are to return to the airfield immediately. By order of General Barnes. This is a national emergency.

CONNERS

I copy. Heading back.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The F-16 ZOOMS away at high speed.

INT. PIPER CHEROKEE -- DAY

Conners turns the plane around and looks at Winston.

CONNERS

Sorry, sport. That's it for today.

EXT. AIRFIELD -- DAY

The Piper Cherokee lands and taxis to a hanger.

EXT. HANGER -- DAY

Conners and Winston exit the airplane. An Air Force vehicle is waiting for Conners, along with DeMuth.

DEMUTH

Captain, there's been an emergency. General Barnes needs you on the double.

CONNERS

Someone's got to take this kid back, so he can do his homework.

DEMUTH

We'll take care of it, sir.

WINSTON

I could go along.

CONNERS

Your mom needs you.

Winston nods. Conners gives him a hug, then climbs into the Air Force vehicle with DeMuth and speeds off. An Air Force FLUNKY left to take care of Winston.

EXT. EDWARDS AFB -- EVENING

The Air Force vehicle zooms past the guard kiosk, entering the base. Vince Conners has been called to action.

INT. HALLWAY - EDWARDS AFB -- EVENING

General Barnes briefs Conners on the run.

BARNES

At nineteen hundred hours today, one of our experimental air craft, code named Nova, was stolen from base.

CONNERS

Stolen?

BARNES

The Nova was a "black project". An ultra top secret version of the F-117A Stealth Fighter plane. Code name "Black Thunder".

CONNERS

We've had the F-117A since 1980...

BARNES

What do you know about Stealth?

CONNERS

It's attained by shrinking the geometric cross section of the plane, making it thinner, and using radar absorbing materials to cut down on reflectivity. The plane absorbs radar waves rather than bouncing them back...

BARNES

Right. The Nova uses the standard technology, but adds something new. An "active" stealth system.

CONNERS

Active?

BARNES

You know the "black box" ECM in the Blackbird?

CONNERS

Radar jammer.

BARNES

We've had a team working on improvements for the past thirty five years. What they came up with, is "active stealth".

(beat)

It's a cloaking device.

CONNERS

(incredulous)

Like on Star Trek?

BARNES

Exactly. It bends light using a beam outside the human spectrum to blanket the plane from radar, positioning devices, infra-red trackers, and even video surveillance. It's an invisible airplane. There's a computer controlled....

CONNERS

Someone stole this, sir?

BARNES

Yes. One of our best pilots took off with it just over an hour ago. Routine training mission. He hasn't returned.

They turn the corner and enter the...

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- EVENING

Barnes checks with the Radio Operator, gets a head shake, turns back to Conners.

BARNES

The Nova can fly into an enemy country at supersonic speed, using its cloaking device to evade enemy planes on patrol, deliver missiles and smart bombs with pin point accuracy, and return completely undetected. It's the ultimate weapon. Whoever controls the Nova, can literally rule the world.

(beat)

I need you to get it back.

CONNERS

How do I find it?

BARNES

The "active" stealth is a drain on the Nova's power system. Designed to be used only for strategic and evasive operations.

CONNERS

So he'll be using the passive stealth system... And he's got a head start.

BARNES

You can catch up with him. The SR-71 flies at Mach-3. Think you can find him with the Blackbird?

CONNERS

Sure.

DeMuth enters, holding the latex "mission impossible" mask.

DEMUTH

Sir? A member of the security team found this out by the hanger.

General Barnes examines the mask.

BARNES

So Steve didn't steal the plane.

DEMUTH

Sir... They found Colonel Moore's body in his apartment. Shot twice.

CONNERS

Steven Moore?

DEMUTH

Yes.

CONNERS

We flew together in Desert Storm. He's a good man.

DEMUTH

Was a good man.

(beat)

They cut off his thumb. To get past the print scanner.

CONNERS

General, you're talking about a high tech piece of equipment.

(MORE)

CONNERS (CONT'D)

A guy can't just wander in off the street and fly it. Only a handful of people would know how...

BARNES

Security is working on that. We need you to get that plane back.

CONNERS

Yes, sir.

Through the window, General Barnes sees a MAN in the hallway.

CONNERS

Once I find the Nova, and steal her back, what happens to the SR-71?

BARNES

We've got a Wingman for you who can not only operate the Blackbird's spy camera, he's checked out to fly the plane. He flew combat in Storm.

Barnes gestures for the Man in the hallway to enter.

BARNES

You'll be working with Rick Jannick.

When Conners sees the man is JANNICK, he shakes his head.

CONNERS

No.

When Jannick offers his hand, Conners refuses it and leaves the room. General Barnes gives chase.

INT. HALLWAY - EDWARDS AFB -- EVENING

Conners is halfway down the hall when General Barnes grabs him and spins him around.

BARNES

Where the hell do you think you're going?

CONNERS

I'm not working with Jannick.

BARNES

He's the best man we have for this mission.

CONNERS

He's not a pilot, he's a skydiver. A crashcup. First sign of trouble and he hits the eject button. Do you know how many planes he's lost?

BARNES

I've gone over his file. He was number two in his class, right after you.

(beat)

You two were like brothers.

CONNERS

That was a long time ago.

(beat)

Sir, with all due respect, I'd rather work with Colonel Tom Ratcher. He's the best ACM pilot in the world. He taught me stuff that...

BARNES

Ratcher's retired. Off radar - we won't be able to find him in time.

(beat)

Jannick is on the team. If you don't want to work with him, we can pull Bill Jones out of San Diego. He used to be a test pilot, he can fly anything. And Jones is a team player.

General Barnes gives Conners a look which quiets him.

BARNES

Are you a team player? There's no place up there for cowboys. No place up there for grudges. If you have a problem with Jannick, it stays on the ground. Do you understand that?

CONNERS

Yes, sir.

BARNES

Good.

Barnes gestures through the window to RICK JANNICK. Jannick is too smooth, too cocky, and too slick. He makes his finger into a gun and fires a shot through the glass at Conners before ambling out to meet Conners and Barnes.

JANNICK

Vince-buddy. How they hanging?

Jannick offers his hand, and Conners refuses it.

CONNERS

Rick.

BARNES

Suit up and let's go. They have a seventy three minute head start.

JANNICK

We'll catch 'em.

EXT. AIRFIELD -- NIGHT

General Barnes continues the briefing with Connors and Jannick (in flight suits) following.

BARNES

Remember the Blackbird Interceptor project back in '65?

CONNERS

Before my time, but I know of it.

BARNES

That's what you'll be flying. New plane, but with the same weapons package.

JANNICK

Weapons? Great.

BARNES

Two wing mounted guns, four sidewinder missiles. Not much, but enough to keep you out of trouble.

CONNERS

Hopefully we won't have to use them.

JANNICK

Don't know about you, but I'm ready to rock and roll. These guys snatched our plane, let's waste 'em.

Connors gives him a look that would freeze lava.

CONNERS

We'll get the plane back without causing an international incident, sir.

BARNES

Good. The Blackbird's fueled and waiting on the strip.

Conners and Jannick salute Barnes and go to the plane.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 Blackbird taxis down the runway and takes off.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 Blackbird roars through the sky, blasting a sonic boom which can be heard for miles.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Conners is behind the stick, with Jannick in the wingman position behind him. The photo of he and Ratcher taped to the console: Conners' good luck charm.

The wingman seat not only has weapons controls, but controls for the spy camera and a video screen with the spy camera view. Jannick can examine and assess the photos himself, without radioing them to base.

JANNICK

Let's find this thing and blast it,
I've got plans for the night.

CONNERS

Orders are to get it back in one piece.
(beat)
Jannick, let me be honest with you.
You're the last person I'd pick for
back up. You're a crashcup. A sky
diver. You bail at the first sign of
trouble.

JANNICK

Ancient history, Conners. Storm was
seven years ago. Lotta air under the
wing since then.

CONNERS

You left me hanging then, you're not
going to leave me this time.

JANNICK

Screw you.

CONNERS

Just remember: My life is in your hands.

JANNICK
And mine's in yours.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- NIGHT

General Barnes and DeMuth track the SR-71 on the Big Board, listening to Conners give status reports on the radio.

CONNERS (V.O.)
We're tracking west. Since they didn't go to Vegas, I'm guessing China, an Soviet breakaway, or the Middle East.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 Blackbird soars through the sky, rocket flares blasting, zipping through the clouds.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Jannick watches the video monitor, analyzing images.

THE MONITOR

Shows overhead shots of Russian countryside. Jannick can magnify the images to see details.

JANNICK
Nothing over Russia. Nothing on the ground. Let's move south, check out those clever Chinese.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 Blackbird banks and changes course.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Conners pilots the Blackbird with steady hands. Cornering easily even at supersonic speeds.

Jannick notices something on his monitor.

JANNICK
May have something.

THE MONITOR

Shows a shape flying in the darkness. Jannick magnifies it until he sees a blur in the clouds.

JANNICK
Going infra-red.

The image turns into glowing spots... including one which looks like a plane. Jannick can't seem to get it in focus.

JANNICK
I've got it. Take her down for visual.

CONNERS presses forward on the stick.

CONNERS
Descending to 25,000 feet.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 Blackbird descends, pushing through the clouds.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

Birds. A huge flock of birds, flying in the night.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Connors spots the birds and pulls back on the stick.

CONNERS
Shit! That's a flock of birds, Jannick!
You trying to get us killed? Know
what happens if a bunch of those things
get sucked into the turbines?

JANNICK
We're treated to goose pate on our way
out of the plane.

CONNERS
That was your last mistake.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 Blackbird climbs back into the clouds.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- NIGHT

CONNERS (V.O.)
Nothing over Russia or China, we're
gonna check out the Middle East.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 roars past.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Jannick watches the monitor for signs of the Nova.

JANNICK
I've got something.

CONNERS
More birds?

THE MONITOR

Clearly a plane this timer: The Nova's wedge shape, and glows
from both wind friction and the exhaust from the twin jets.

JANNICK
It's our Nova. Positive IR signature.
Take us down.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- NIGHT

JANNICK (V.O.)
We have a positive IR signature on the
Nova Stealth Fighter. Moving in for
visual contact.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 Blackbird descends through the clouds.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

JANNICK
Lower. Lower. There!

THE MONITOR

Shows the Nova Stealth Fighter. Black on black: difficult to
see, but definitely there.

CONNERS

Damn! He spotted us!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The Nova ZIPS away, using its superior maneuvering to evade the SR-71. The Blackbird is like a bus: it takes a lot of space to corner. The Nova pivots like race car.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Connors chases the Nova through the sky, making the flying bus do tricks no other pilot could.

JANNICK

Going to try to bring it down with the wing guns.

Jannick on the gun controls, using his HUD to lock on.

EXT. SR-71 BLACKBIRD -- NIGHT

The wing guns flare, sending an arc of bullets through the night sky. A few tracer rounds glowing in the dark.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The Nova veers away as tracer fire blasts past it.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

JANNICK

I can't lock on!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The Nova runs some amazing evasive maneuvers.

The SR-71 does its best to follow.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

JANNICK

I want to use the sidewinders.

CONNERS

If you can't lock on with guns, what makes you think you'll do any better with missiles?

JANNICK

Trust me.

CONNERS

No. The sidewinders are last resort.

Jannick's face shows displeasure. Conners doesn't trust him.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The Nova continues to out maneuver the SR-71...

Ending up BEHIND the Blackbird.

The Nova opens fire with its wing guns, sending tracer fire...

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Tracer fire flying past the cockpit windows!

Conners twists the stick, taking the Blackbird on a curve so hard the G forces twist his face around.

Jannick hangs on, like a roller coaster car out of control.

JANNICK

Shit! Who taught you how to drive!

CONNERS

Hold on!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 makes a sudden ascent... turning sideways at Mach 1... then completing it's hairpin (for Mach 1) turn...

Right behind the Nova!

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Jannick swallows his vomit and looks at the HUD.

The Nova is perfectly within the target circle.

Jannick grabs the wing gun controls.

JANNICK

Got a lock!

The Nova in the heads up display, targeted... Then the display goes blank. The Nova has VANISHED into thin air!

JANNICK

He's gone! Do you have visual?

CONNERS

Negative. He's BVR. Hard to maintain visual at Mach 2...

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- NIGHT

CONNERS (V.O.)

Base, Conners. We've lost him. Had him in our gunsights, then he vanished. Must have gone "active" stealth.

(beat)

We'll find him again.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 Blackbird ascends and continues searching.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Jannick studies the Monitor, looking for signs of the Nova.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 flies patterns over the Middle East.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

CONNERS

Anything?

JANNICK

Negative. He's not in the Middle East. Let's give North Africa a try.

Conners nods and guides the Blackbird west.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 Blackbird zooms through the night.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Jannick sees something on the monitor.

JANNICK

Got something. Can you take us two
seventy degrees and drops us to thirty
angels?

CONNERS

Roger.

Connors turns the plane south and drops them to 30,000 feet.

THE MONITOR

Shows the Nova on a landing strip in Libya.

JANNICK

I've got it.

CONNERS

Are you SURE?

JANNICK

This is my JOB, Connors. Just
concentrate on doing yours. Okay?
Confirmed sighting of the Nova.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- NIGHT

CONNERS (V.O.)

Base, Connors. Jannick has the Nova
on a landing strip in Libya.

General Barnes grabs the mike.

BARNES

Connors, General Barnes. I'm giving
you six hours to get that plane back.
Then we're carpet bombing the area.

DEMUTH

Sir, that's going to start a war...

BARNES

At least it'll be one we can win. If
some terrorist faction duplicates the
Nova's technology...

DeMuth nods.

DEMUTH

Yes, sir. I'll get the Pentagon on the phone, and put in a call to the President.

General Barnes speaks back into the mike.

BARNES

You've got six hours. Good luck.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

CONNERS

Right, sir.

Connors sets the countdown feature on his watch for six hours.

JANNICK

Take another pass before we land.
I'll get some terrain photos.

Connors nods and circles the Blackbird.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- NIGHT

The SR-71 banks and makes another pass over the area.

Click.
Click.
Click.
Click.
Click.

Then the Blackbird begins its descent to a hard desert area with rock formations several miles from the air field.

EXT. SR-71 BLACKBIRD -- NIGHT

The landing gear skids along the hard dirt, and the SR-71 comes to a stop in the rock formation/desert area.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- NIGHT

Connors takes off his helmet, starts climbing out.

CONNERS

It's going to be daylight soon. Better get the camouflage over this thing.

EXT. ROCK FORMATIONS -- MORNING

A camouflage tarp covers the SR-71, except for a three foot portion of the wing. Conners adjusts the tarp, covering the wing. Jannick takes off his helmet and scopes the terrain.

Conners checks his watch: Five hours and forty seven minutes before they carpet bomb the area.

Conners begins pulling equipment from a duffle bag: a matching pair of 45s, a jungle knife, a walkie talkie.

Jannick extends three photos to Conners.

JANNICK

Overhead shots. That's the air strip.
Bridge. A small village. We're here.

CONNERS

Look. Troops.

JANNICK

Couple of jeeps, no big deal.

Conners takes the photos.

CONNERS

You stay here with the plane, I'll
signal when I've got the Nova.

JANNICK

Bullshit, Conners, we're partners on
this. I'm coming along.

CONNERS

Wrong. I'm not going to let you
crashcup this mission.

(beat)

Stay with the plane. We may need it
to get out of here.

Conners looks at his watch again.

CONNERS

If you don't hear from me in five and
a half hours, take off without me.

JANNICK

Conners....

But Conners has disappeared into the shadows.

Jannick pulls out a cigarette and lights up, taking a seat on a rock formation.

EXT. ROCK FORMATIONS -- DAY

A quarter mile away, a SEVEN MAN ENEMY PATROL lead by the vicious ELIAS, second in command of the Spider Terrorist Organization. Elias is massive and acne ravaged ugly.

ELIAS

Our radar lost them somewhere around here. You three take the road.

THREE PATROLMEN jog off down the road, rifles ready. Elias and the others spread out and search the area.

ELIAS

Do you see anything?

Each of the four PATROLMEN says no. But as they continue down the dirt road, Elias smells something.

ELIAS

Who is smoking?

None of the four. Elias smiles, and readies his gun.

EXT. ROCK FORMATIONS -- DAY

Jannick hears Elias' voice echoing, puts out his cigarette and grabs a gun from the duffle bag.

He climbs over a rock formation, looking down on the dirt road below... and the five man patrol.

He sees Elias stop, gesturing to his men.

ELIAS

Heiden, those hills. Cirillo, over there. Macope, to the north.

Then Elias points RIGHT AT JANNICK.

ELIAS

Grantt, over there.

Patrolman Grantt starts climbing the rock formation to where Jannick is hiding.

JANNICK

Shit.

Jannick pulls his gun, aiming at the approaching patrolman. Then glances over his shoulder at the Blackbird's exposed tail section. He can't let them find the plane!

Jannick tries to hide behind some rocks. For a moment, it looks like Patrolman Grantt is going to go right past him, and miss the Blackbird, too.

But Grantt changes course, climbing over the rocks that Jannick is hiding behind!

Suspense builds. Grantt is only five feet away from Jannick!

Grantt steps over the rocks, stepping RIGHT ON JANNICK.

Jannick grabs the foot and yanks the Patrolman off balance. Grantt hits his head on a rock, then starts struggling.

Jannick puts his hand in Grantt's mouth to keep him quiet. This will have to be a totally silent fight. Grantt BITES!

Grantt lands a couple of solid punches, and reaches for his gun. Jannick slams the gun hand against a rock until Grantt drops it. Grantt punches Jannick again.

Jannick SLAMS the Patrolman's head against a rock until the man stops moving.... dead.

ELIAS

Grantt? You find anything?

Jannick realizes the dead patrolman isn't going to answer.

ELIAS

Grantt?

ELIAS begins climbing the rock formation. Towards Jannick and the Blackbird!

Jannick grabs the Patrolman's fallen gun and scurries away. Trying to put as much distance between himself and the plane before he's discovered.

ELIAS

Grantt?

Elias climbs closer to Grantt's corpse.

Jannick continues scrambling... slips and almost falls.

Elias turns toward the sound... gun ready.

ELIAS

Who is there?

Jannick turns, fires, keeps moving. Hoping they'll chase.

ELIAS hits the dirt as the bullet ricochets nearby.

ELIAS

Found him!

THE OTHER PATROLMEN scramble to back up Elias.

JANNICK is getting shot at from all sides. Bullets ricocheting off the rock formation behind him. He fires each of his guns in different directions, trying to keep the Patrolmen back.

ELIAS gestures for two of the Patrolmen to advance, then provides them with cover fire.

Bullets spatter around Jannick, kicking dirt into his face.

Jannick continues firing at Elias, until he notices the two Patrolman scrambling up the rocks to his right. He spins and fires both guns at them.

BLAM! One Patrolman gets knocked off his feet by gunfire.

The other keeps coming... but Jannick's guns have run dry!

Jannick ducks behind a rock, reloading quickly as...

The Patrolman scrambles up at him, gun ready!

Jannick drops bullets, has to scoop them up...

The Patrolman only a few feet away, gun leveling at Jannick...

Jannick slams the cylinder closed, quick aims, and BLASTS the Patrolman before he can fire.

THEN THE FOURTH PATROLMAN drops on top of him from the rock formation above. Knocking Jannick to the ground.

Jannick loses his gun in the scuffle. The Patrolman slams Jannick's head back against a rock several times.

Jannick feels around for his gun... finds it.

JANNICK

Son of a bitch...

But before he can fire it at the Patrolman, he's knocked from behind cover.

Into the gunsites of Elias! Elias opens fire.

Jannick rolls across the ground, bullets chasing him, looking for another rock formation to take cover behind.

Just as Elias' bullets almost catch him, he finds cover.

Bullets spark off the rock formation Jannick hides behind. He checks his gun: three rounds. Reaches into his pocket to reload... his pocket is ripped open. Empty.

JANNICK

Shit.

He closes the cylinder gauges the direction of the Patrolman's gunfire, then pops over the formation and opens fire.

WHACK! Elias knocks the gun out of Jannick's hands with his rifle butt. Before Jannick realizes Elias had snuck up in his blind spot.... WHACK! The rifle butt hits him in the head.

EXT. BRIDGE OVER GORGE -- DAY

Conners starts across the bridge, staying low. When he gets halfway across, he hears noises behind him... Three Patrolmen.

No way to make it to the other side of the bridge before they kill him.

PATROLMAN (V.O.)

Somebody's on the bridge!

The Three Patrolmen begin firing at him. Bullets sparking.

He looks over the bridge railing: It's hundreds of feet down. But Conners has a parachute.

Conners steps onto the railing, balances for a moment, then jumps. He free-falls for a few seconds, then pops open his parachute. Floats to the bottom of the gorge.

The Three Patrolmen run to the center of the bridge, looking down as Conners unhooks his chute and runs away.

A couple of shots rain down on Conners, but he makes it to cover... On the run... A fugitive in a foreign land.

One of the Patrolmen lifts his walkie talkie.

PATROLMAN (V.O.)

Mr. Elias... We chased a man across the bridge. Headed to the village.

EXT. ROCK FORMATIONS -- DAY

Elias nods and pockets the walkie talkie.

The Patrolman pockets Jannick's guns and props him up.

ELIAS

What do we have here? It looks like a pilot.

Elias presses his gun into Jannick's left eye.

ELIAS

So, Mr. Pilot, where is your plane?

JANNICK

I parachuted in. I'm a sky diver, that's all. A sky diver.

Elias pulls the gun from Jannick's eye long enough to poke his unopened parachute.

ELIAS

You didn't have to use this, eh?

JANNICK

I always land on my feet.

ELIAS

You are a pilot. Our low level radar picked up your plane. Why don't you tell me where it is?

JANNICK

Why don't you kiss my ass?

Elias presses the gun into his eye socket.

ELIAS

I'll kill you.

JANNICK

What are you waiting for?

Elias studies Jannick for a moment, nods, and pulls the gun away from his face.... then SLAMS it into his head.

Jannick goes down and out.

ELIAS

Search back there.

The Patrolman nods and goes to the formation where Jannick started. He climbs the formation, and spots the Blackbird covered by the camouflage tarp.

PATROLMAN (O.S.)

Sir! The plane.

Elias gives Jannick another SLAM before climbing up to look at the plane. He smiles and clicks on his walkie talkie.

ELIAS
Sir? This is Elias...

INT. HANGER -- DAY

A make shift war room set up in an air strip hanger. Headquarters for the Spider Terrorist Group, leads by...

STONE
Yes, Mr. Elias?

ELIAS (V.O.)
We have found a pilot, and what looks to be an American SR-71 spy plane.

STONE
Interesting.

STONE is the new breed of international terrorist: Suave, handsome, elegant, and deadly. Behind him, his terrorist cell prepares for their penultimate mission.

ELIAS (V.O.)
Another man was seen near the village, I'll have the patrols begin searching.

STONE
Bring me the pilot. We'll see if he knows anything about this plane we've stolen.

ELIAS (V.O.)
What about the SR-71?

There's a man standing next to Stone. We can't see his face, but we recognize his voice as the Double's.

DOUBLE
I'll bring it in.

Stone nods his approval, and the Double exits the hanger. We can see his back, but still not his face.

EXT. LIBYAN TOWN -- DAY

Conners, completely out of place in his pilot suit, sneaks into town. A gun in each hand, ready for anything.

Arches, parapets, Moorish architecture.

Conners sneaks through a covered section into a courtyard, almost bumping into...

A FOUR MAN PATROL sweeps through town, hassling a MAN.

PATROLMAN

Where are you going?

(beat)

Get back in your house!

The Man scurries back to his doorway, and the lead Patrolman laughs. The Man has left behind a bota bag of wine, and the lead Patrolman confiscates it and takes a drink.

One of the Patrolmen looks into the covered section where Conners hides. Conners tries to blend with the wall.

The Patrolman starts to walk away, then stops and comes back. Pulling out his flashlight to search the covered section. His flashlight finds Conner's boot.

Before the Patrolman can alert the others, Conners grabs him and yanks him into the shadows. The Patrolman struggles. Jams an elbow into Conner's chest. Almost gets away.

A few yards away: The rest of the patrol continues walking, sharing the bota of wine.

Conners keeps the Patrolman quiet, fighting him, and finally breaking his neck. He quietly lowers him to the ground.

Conner's flight suit goes in a stolen gunnysack. He puts on some of the Patrolman's clothes... turning into a Peasant.

CONNERS carefully walks out of the covered section, stooped over like a peasant, almost dragging his gunnysack.

PATROLMAN

Where are you going?

Conners doesn't look up. The lead Patrolman starts after him, followed by the others.

PATROLMAN

There's a curfew.

Conners ignores him, walking away. One of the Patrolmen imitates the stooped over walk, and gets a big laugh.

The Patrol lets him go, turning back to the wine.

PATROLMAN

Hey! Jette! Want some of this wine?

No answer from the covered section, so the lead Patrolman goes to investigate.

Conners walks faster, trying to get out of there before...

The Lead Patrolman discovers the dead man in the alcove.

PATROLMAN
That man! Get him!

But Conners has turned a corner. The Patrol gives chase.

The lead Patrolman lifts his walkie talkie.

PATROLMAN
Sir? This is blue patrol.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Stone speaks into the walkie.

STONE
What is it?

PATROLMAN (V.O.)
Someone has killed one of my men. We
need help searching the village...

EXT. ROCK FORMATIONS -- DAY

ELIAS
I'll take care of it.

Elias lowers his walkie and turns to the other Patrolman.

ELIAS
Our pilot may have had a friend.

EXT. LIBYAN TOWN -- DAY

Conners runs around a corner onto a deserted street. The Patrol only a few yards behind him! He squeezes into a dark doorway, blending with the shadows.

The Patrol comes around the corner, guns ready.

They will find him. Conners opens the door and ducks into the house, just as a flashlight sprays the doorway where he was standing.

INT. LIBYAN HOUSE -- DAY

Conners stands quietly in the dark house. He's escaped.

Then a GUN is shoved into his right ear.

Conners can't make out the gunman in the dark house.

CONNERS

Take it easy.

He raises his hands slowly. When his hand is even with the gun, he springs to action.

Whack! He knocks the gun away from his head, spins, and grabs the Assailant's gun wrist.

The gun glitters morning light as they struggle. The Assailant pressing it towards Conners, and Conners doing his damndest to keep it away.

Finally Conners swings out with his feet, knocking the Assailant to the floor. He bats the gun away, lands a couple of good punches, and subdues the Assailant.

CONNERS

Let's see what we've got.

Grabbing the gun and yanking the Assailant up, Conners clicks on the table light. Seeing the Assailant's face...

MELA BELNICK is a beautiful Libyan woman, Conners' age.

MELA

Who are you?

CONNERS

I'm the one with the gun. I'll ask the questions.

Before Mela can speak, there's a knock at the front door.

PATROLMAN (O.S.)

Security Police. Open up!

More insistent knocking. Conners looks around the one room flat. No other exits.

PATROLMAN (O.S.)

Open the door! Now!

CONNERS

(whispers)

Remember. I have the gun. Tell them
I'm here, and I'll kill you.

MELA

A minute. Let me dress.

Mela pushes him into a wardrobe, then unbuttoned her clothes
and tasseled her hair, looking as if she just woke up.

Mela opens the door, and Elias and a Patrolman enter.

MELA

What do you want?

ELIAS

We're looking for a man.

MELA

I'm the only one here.

ELIAS

This man killed a member of my patrol.
We suspect he's an American spy.

MELA

Look if you want. He's not here.

Conners stays very still in the wardrobe, as Elias takes a
few steps towards him as he looks around the room.

When Conners squeezes against the wall, it gives way - a false
wall made of fabric. Conners moves through the fabric into a
secret section of the wardrobe... filled with gun crates.

ELIAS

But you've had men here, before, Mela.
Haven't you?

MELA

That is not your business.

ELIAS

EVERYTHING that happens in this town
is my business. Spider's business.

Elias moves to the wardrobe cabinet and opens it.

Conners stands very still behind the false wall as Elias'
hand searches inside the wardrobe. His hand comes very close
to finding the false wall... and Conners.

Elias touches her clothes, fingering a lacy slip.

ELIAS

You have many nice things. I can take them away. Leave you nothing.

MELA

Except my love for you.

He laughs at her venom.

ELIAS

If you see this man, or any stranger, report him immediately. Understood?

Mela nods slowly. Elias gestures to the Patrolman.

ELIAS

Come.

The Patrolman follows Elias out of the flat. Conners waits until Mela has closed the door before breathing again.

EXT. LIBYAN TOWN -- DAY

Elias moves to the street to check on the other Patrolmen doing house to house searches. Jannick, handcuffed with a black hood over his head, is under guard. As they get ready to move to the next street, Elias turns to the lead Patrolman.

ELIAS

Watch her. She is a dissident and can not be trusted.

The Patrolman nods.

INT. LIBYAN HOUSE -- DAY

Mela tells her story to Conners.

MELA

The government allows these terrorists to train here. They parcel out the towns and villages.

(beat)

This town is owned by the Spider Group.

(beat)

They take what they want from us. We can't stop them.

EXT. LIBYAN TOWN -- DAY

The Patrolman watches the front door.

INT. LIBYAN HOUSE -- DAY

MELA

I can hide you for three days. By then, they will have stopped looking.

CONNERS

I don't have three days.
(looks at watch)
I've only got four hours and fifty two minutes.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

DEMUTH

That's not much time.

BARNES

I know.

DEMUTH

Sir, are we really going to destroy a seventy five million dollar prototype warplane if Conners fails?

BARNES

What choice do we have...

Barnes moves to the operations map, pointing to the section where the Nova was found.

BARNES

That region is run by the Spider Terrorist Organization. They make the Bahder-Minhoff Gang look like a bunch of school yard bullies.

(beat)

A weapon like the Nova will turn them into a world superpower.

DEMUTH

It wouldn't be a cold war, would it?

BARNES

Get the CIA on the phone. I want everything they've got on Spider.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

When the black hood is pulled off Jannick's face, he's sitting in the hanger, tied to a chair.

STONE

Good evening. So glad you could make it. My name is Stone. And you are?

JANNICK

Screw you.

STONE

Your identification tags say you are Richard Jannick, a captain of the United States Air Force.

JANNICK

You've got me name, my rank, my ID number. There's nothing else I can tell you. Conversation's over.

STONE

I'd like to thank you for bringing me the second plane. Will another come to rescue you?

(beat)

Before long, I may end up with my own air force.

JANNICK

You'll get an air force... delivering a half ton of ordnance on this hell hole. Have you seen what the new smart bombs can do?

STONE

Yes I have. Quite impressive.

(beat)

In fact, we'd like to use these planes of yours to help deliver a couple of smart bombs of our own.

Stone goes to a tool cart and rummages around until he finds a pair of needle nose pliers.

STONE

But first, I have some questions to ask you about this Nova Stealth plane.

He grabs one of Jannick's fingers with the pliers.

STONE

Tell me when you're ready to answer.

The pliers squeeze...

EXT. LIBYAN TOWN -- DAY

The Patrolman eyes Mela's flat with suspicion. He hears a muffled conversation. Wasn't she alone?

He moves closer, listening at the door.

INT. LIBYAN HOUSE -- DAY

MELA

I can help you get your...

Conners hears something and puts his finger to his lips to cut her off. A noise at the door.

Conners moves to the door, quickly opening it and grabbing the Patrolman, yanking him inside and slamming the door shut with his back.

PATROLMAN

You are here!

The Patrolman reaches for his gun. Conners bats it out of his hand and slams him against the door again.

CONNERS

Why were you listening?

PATROLMAN

She is a problem... Not co-operative.
We found your secret plane, and the other pilot.

CONNERS

Jannick?

The Patrolman SLAMS Conners back and reaches for his walkie talkie. He clicks the on button, but before he can call for help, Conners bats it across the room.

The walkie talkie lands under the bed. The Patrolman yells.

PATROLMAN

Hel...

Conners grabs him around the neck, cutting him off. As he grapples with the man, Mela looks for the fallen walkie talkie.

THE RED "ON" LIGHT glows under the bed.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Elias' walkie talkie is hissing. He listens closely, can hear movement, but not voices.

ELIAS
Hello? Hello?

INT. LIBYAN HOUSE -- DAY

The Patrolman knocks Conners' hands from his neck, takes in a big, raspy breath, prepares to yell for help.

Mela reaches under the bed for the walkie talkie... it's just out of reach. She tries the other side of the bed.

PATROLMAN
The Amer....

Conners cuts off the yell with a punch to the face.

Conners and the Patrolman slam and grapple with each other. A sloppy fight... street wrestling.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Elias listens to the sounds on his walkie talkie.

INT. LIBYAN HOUSE -- DAY

Mela grabs the walkie talkie and clicks it off. She holds it up for Conners to see... But he's busy fighting.

The Patrolman strangling Conners. Cutting off his air.

Mela scoops up the fallen gun, but sees a PATROL through the torn curtain covering the window. A gunshot would alert them. She sets the gun down and grabs a knife.

Conners is turning blue. He struggles to free himself. Can't.

Mela repositions the knife in her hands for stabbing, and lunges at Conners and the Patrolman...

Almost stabbing Conners, as they two men grapple!

Mela steps back, waiting for an opening. Then STABS. The knife plunges into the Patrolman's chest, then breaks off!

Mela is holding a useless handle. The Patrolman still fights.

Conners presses the broken knife deeper into the Patrolman's chest. The brute lets go of him. Conners gasps.

The Patrolman attacks. This guy just won't quit!

Mela picks up a tea kettle and SLAMS the Patrolman's head.

The Patrolman falls to the floor... Then begins crawling to the door. He gets the door open a crack, ready to yell.

PATROLMAN

H.....

Conners yanks him back, and Mela closes the door.

The Patrolman finds the knife handle, and stabs Conner's leg with the dull end. Several strokes before he draws blood.

Mela searches her flat for a weapon. She sees a pair of spike heels and runs for them. But after hefting one, has a better idea. She grabs a plastic carry bag.

Conners finally goes down, and the Patrolman moves the half-knife up to his neck...

But Mela yanks the plastic bag over the Patrolman's face. When he struggles to get it off, she holds tight to it.

Conners knocks the knife from his hand, but the Patrolman's struggles become feeble. Finally, he suffocates.

Mela lets him fall to the floor.

CONNERS

Thanks.

MELA

Are you alright?

Conners looks at his bleeding leg.

CONNERS

No.

(beat)

They have my partner. And his plane.

(beat)

How the hell did he get captured? And give them the Blackbird. The man's a crashcup...

(beat)

I don't have time for this...

Conners looks at his count down watch.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

BARNES

Only three hours and fifty seven minutes.

DeMuth enters with a stack on manila envelopes.

DEMUTH

Sorry, it took so long, General. The CIA made me jump through hoops to get this stuff.

BARNES

Yes?

DEMUTH

I'm afraid it's worse than we thought, sir. The CIA has been monitoring terrorist weapons buys for the past seven years. Lately, there's been a change in the way that terrorists do business.

BARNES

That is?

DeMuth sorts through files as he talks. Looking for a specific document.

DEMUTH

They're networking. Forming 'buyers clubs' for large scale weaponry.

BARNES

What are you telling me, DeMuth? That terrorists are getting ten percent off on their guns?

DEMUTH

No, sir. They've joined forces to buy weapons of mass destruction.

BARNES

Nerve gas?

DEMUTH

No, sir...

BARNES

Nuclear warheads?

DEMUTH

Worse than that, sir....

INT. HANGER -- DAY

STONE

Biological weapons. Germ warfare.

Stone smiles at Jannick, who is pretty beat up.

A forklift with a pair of big ugly bombs on it moves past, and Stone stops it.

STONE

One of your American allies had to sell their stockpile after signing a treaty. A going out of the germ warfare business sale.

(caresses the bombs)

We were looking to get into that business. Purchased two bombs at a reasonable discount.

JANNICK

You're insane. You can't control a plague. Billions of people will die.

STONE

We're counting on that.

Stone turns to a global map on a rolling stand.

STONE

Our primary target is here. The Paris Peace Talks. Presidents and Premieres from every country will be on hand.

(beat)

At first they'll probably think it's food poisoning. Within twelve hours they'll be dead.

(beat)

With that Stealth plane of yours, they'll never even know what hit them. We'll be free to go on to our secondary target, here.

Stone is pointing to the United States. The midwest.

STONE

What do you call it? The heart land. Always feeling neglected.

(beat)

I hope they appreciate our little heart attack.

Stone crosses out Kansas with a marking pen. Caresses the bombs again, then gestures to the forklift driver.

THE FORKLIFT hauls the bombs away: to the waiting Nova.

STONE

We fly in two days. Pity you'll be
dead by then.

Jannick struggles with his bonds.

JANNICK

You'll never get off the ground. In
less than four hours, the entire United
States Air Force will carpet bomb this
hell hole.

STONE

You're bluffing.

JANNICK

That's our fail safe. If they don't
hear from me within four hours, fire
is going to rain down from the sky.

STONE

Then I guess I push my mission forward.

Stone yells to SOLDIERS in the hanger.

STONE

Fuel the planes! We fly in two hours!

JANNICK

I'm not flying for you.

STONE

I already have an American pilot.

When Jannick sees the Double's face, he is shocked.

JANNICK

Ratcher.

The Double is Colonel Tom Ratcher: Vince Conner's best friend
and mentor. Ratcher smiles at Jannick.

In his hand is Jannick's ID folder, including a photo of
Ratcher and Jannick in uniform standing beside each other.
It's the SAME photo that Conners carries, cropped differently.

RATCHER

So how is my favorite air combat
student?

JANNICK

Ratcher, get me out of here...

RATCHER

I wasn't talking about you, Richard.
How's my old buddy Vince Conners?

INT. LIBYAN HOUSE -- DAY

Mela finishes wrapping Conners wounded leg.

MELA

You'll be okay.

CONNERS

I'm screwed. Less than four hours on
the clock. I'm trapped behind enemy
lines. My CAS pilot and his plane
have been captured. I've got nothing.

MELA

You have me.

CONNERS

This is too dangerous.

MELA

Too dangerous? Those enemy soldiers?

(beat)

I deal with them every day. They are
part of my life.

(beat)

This is my country. The land that I
love. The men in my government have
destroyed it. Allowed these criminals
free reign. Our people have been pushed
to many times. Now it is time to stand
our ground and fight.

Mela grabs the Patrolman's fallen gun.

MELA

Give me a gun, and I will fight.

CONNERS

If you fight, you can die.

MELA

So be it.

(beat)

The Patrols will be looking for you.
I can hide you...

CONNERS

No time for that.

(MORE)

CONNERS (CONT'D)

In three hours and twenty eight minutes this country won't exist. They'll start carpet bombing if I don't get that plane.

MELA

You would destroy my country?

CONNERS

To protect the world. It's a trade off. A decision, thank God, I didn't have to make.

Connors pulls out the overhead photos of the region.

CONNERS

I've got to get to that plane.

MELA

Look how far it is. There will be patrols searching for you. A checkpoint, here.

CONNERS

Look... I'm running out of time...

Connors gathers his gunny sack and prepares to leave. Mela stops him.

MELA

Wait! My cousin Rojar Ebair has a fruit cart!

Conner expression says it all: A fruit cart?

EXT. LIBYAN TOWN -- DAY

The most beat up pick up truck in the world sputters past a Patrolman, on its way to Mela's flat. A tarp covers the fresh fruit and vegetables in the bed.

The truck parks in front of Mela's flat, and ROJAR EB AIR, who resembles John Rhys-Davies from "Raiders", steps out.

INT. LIBYAN HOUSE -- DAY

Knocking at the door. Connors takes cover.

MELA

Who is it?

ROJAR (V.O.)
Your cousin Ebair, with melons.

Mela lets Rojar in, Conners lowers his gun and comes out.

ROJAR
Rojar Ebair.

CONNERS
Vince Conners.

They shake. Rojar looks Conners over like a piece of fruit.

ROJAR
He'll fit.

EXT. LIBYAN TOWN -- DAY

The tarp is pulled back slightly, as Conners tries to squeeze between the crates of fresh fruit in back of the pick up.

Once he's settled inside, Rojar stacks crates over him.

ROJAR
There.

Before Rojar and Mela climb into the cab, a Patrolman yells.

PATROLMAN (V.O.)
Hey! What are you doing there!

Rojar steps around the truck and smiles.

ROJAR
Making a delivery. Fresh produce.
Melons, vegetables, chick-peas. I
must deliver them before noon, or the
heat will spoil them.

The Patrolman buys it, nods, gesturing Rojar away.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Rojar hops into the cab next to Mela, turns the key.

ROJAR
Everyone likes the fresh melons.

EXT. HANGER -- DAY

Two big ugly bombs on the fork lift. Ratcher watches as the biological weapons are loaded onto the Nova. Stone startles him.

STONE
How much longer?

RATCHER
Almost loaded and ready for delivery.
I'll get suited up.

STONE
Be in the air in one hour. Goodbye
Kansas, goodbye yellow brick road.

Ratcher glares at Stone as he walks away.

EXT. LIBYAN TOWN -- DAY

The ancient pick up truck backfires and sputters away. Conners hidden in back amongst the melons and produce.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Rojar drives through the village.

ROJAR
You like the American Cowboy?

MELA
What about the check point?

ROJAR
We drive through.

MELA
They won't want to know where you're
going?

ROJAR
I tell them the air field. Even the
pilots like the fresh melons.

MELA
What if they search the truck?

ROJAR
He's hidden good. Casabas over him.

MELA

If they look under the casabas?

ROJAR

We see if this old fruit cart can out
run a motorcycle.

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN COUNTRY -- DAY

They leave the village, headed to the check point, and the
air field a mile beyond it.

EXT. GUARD KIOSK -- DAY

The truck stops behind a beat up Peugeot waiting to pass
through the check point.

A pair of SOLDIERS search the Peugeot, popping the trunk,
looking behind the seats. Practically stripping it.

A pair of army motorcycles are parked behind the kiosk.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Mela watches the Soldiers search the Peugeot, tearing it apart.
Tension: They will soon do this to the pick up truck.

EXT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Under the casaba melons, Connors stays very still.

EXT. GUARD KIOSK -- DAY

The Soldiers lets the Peugeot pass through, and gesture for
the pick up to move forward.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

ROJAR

Here we go.

Rojar moves the truck up to the gate and puts on a smile.
Mela is tense. Suspense builds as the Soldiers approach.

ROJAR

Hey! I have the melons for the men
down there. Pilots love the melons.

SOLDIER (V.O.)
Out of the truck. Let's see your
papers. Hers, too.

EXT. GUARD KIOSK -- DAY

Rojar steps out of the truck and shows the Soldier his papers.
Mela hands her papers through the open window to Soldier #2.

EXT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Under the casaba melons, Conners stays very still.

EXT. GUARD KIOSK -- DAY

As the Soldier examines his papers, Rojar moves to the back
of the truck and pulls back the tarp a little.

ROJAR
See? Melons. Fresh fruits and
vegetables. Chick-peas. I have to
deliver before the sun comes up, to
keep them from spoiling.

Rojar lowers the tarp back into place. The Soldier hands him
back his papers, then raises the tarp himself.

ROJAR
Hey? You want one? They won't notice
if a couple are missing. Don't touch
them all with those filthy hands!

The Soldier begins digging around in the crates of vegetables.

EXT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Under the casaba melons, Conners stays very still.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Mela takes her papers back from the Soldier, trying NOT to
look at the search of the pick up bed.

The truck keys dangle from the ignition... She may be forced
to scoot to the drivers seat, start the truck, and take off.

EXT. GUARD KIOSK -- DAY

The Soldier reaches a hand between the crates, feeling around.

EXT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Under the casaba melons, Conners stays still as the hand feels RIGHT NEXT TO HIM. Close... VERY close!

EXT. GUARD KIOSK -- DAY

Rojar gets ready to brain the Soldier with a melon if he finds Conners. Tension builds.

Then the Soldier pulls his hand out, lowers the tarp, and takes the melon from Rojar with a smile.

ROJAR
You'll like that one.

Rojar gets back into the truck's cab, gets the ignition on.

Then Soldier #2 notices that Mela looks very much like one of the photos of dissidents on his clipboard. He shows the photo to Soldier #1.

SOLDIER
Halt! Halt!

Rojar slams the truck into gear and roars away, smashing the gate-arm into a dozen pieces.

SOLDIER
Halt! Halt!

Soldier #2 raises his rifle and opens fire. Bullets spark over the back of the truck.

EXT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

A melon explodes, raining juice on Conners.

EXT. GUARD KIOSK -- DAY

Soldier #1 joins in the shooting. Sparks off the pick up.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Mela and Rojar duck as the back window is BLOWN out.

ROJAR
Down! Stay down!

Rojar whips the pick up truck around a corner on the dirt road at high speed, rolling some melons out the back.

EXT. GUARD KIOSK -- DAY

The two Soldiers hop on their motorcycles and give chase.

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN COUNTRY -- DAY

The Pick Up Truck roars down the dirt road.

The Two Motorcycles roar after it.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Mela sees the motorcycles.

MELA
They're right behind us.

ROJAR
I knew I should have put the new spark
plugs in.

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN COUNTRY -- DAY

The Two Motorcycles are getting closer.

Soldier #1 breaks away, zooming up to the driver's side window of the truck.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Mela looks across Rojar at Soldier #1, who is aiming his gun through the window, preparing to fire.

MELA
Down!

Rojar and Mela duck as the bullet whizzes through the cab, in one window and out the other.

Rojar grabs a melon from the seat and throws it out the window at Soldier #1.

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN COUNTRY -- DAY

Soldier #1 has to pull back to avoid being hit by the melon.

Soldier #2 opens fire through the back window, shattering glass and exploding melons.

Suddenly, the tarp flips up and Conners pops to his feet in the pick up bed. He double draws his two 45s in one fluid motion and begins blasting away at Soldier #2.

Soldier #2 stops firing and starts zig-zagging, as bullets blaze all around him. One sparks off his handlebars.

Conners shifts aim, firing at Soldier #1.

Soldier #1 fires at Conners, bullets sparking off the cab.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Rojar tries to outrun the motorcycles, but the pick up truck just doesn't have the guts.

He sees Soldier #1 zooming closer to the truck to shoot at Conners, and jams the wheel to the left.

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN COUNTRY -- DAY

The pick up truck weaves towards the motorcycle, and Soldier #1 has to back off.

Conners fires at him with both guns, bullets sparking off the cycle, but missing Soldier #1. Lucky.

Soldier #2 is roaring up on the right side of the truck.

Conners and Soldier #1 exchange gunfire, bullets sparking.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

ROJAR

Hold on!

Rojar has to turn the wheel quickly, to make a sharp corner.

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN COUNTRY -- DAY

Almost losing Conners from the back of the truck as he fights for balance. As he tries to right himself, Soldier #1 blasts at him, exploding several melons.

CONNERS

Who taught you how to drive?

ROJAR (O.S.)

Sorry!

Conners drops clips, reloads, and blasts at Soldier #1.

That's when Soldier #2 attacks. Riding VERY close to the back of the truck, he opens fire at Conners.

Conners hits the dirt (melons) as bullets fly overhead from both sides. He grabs the tarp, yanks it off its hooks, and tosses it over Soldier #2.

Soldier #2 is driving his motorcycle blind: The tarp completely covering him like a poncho. He drops his gun and grabs at the tarp, trying to tear it off. Steering the cycle with the other hand.

Soldier #1 opens fire, Conners blasts back with both guns.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

The road curves, and Rojar begins his turn.

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN COUNTRY -- DAY

Soldier #2 can't see that the road curves, and bumps up onto the shoulder, zooming over the dirt towards a tree.

Conners and Soldier #1 continue blasting at each other. With the pick up truck shaking, and Soldier #1 zig-zagging, Conners can't get a good shot.

CONNERS

Bullets are too small.

Then he notices the melons.

Soldier #2 is getting CLOSER to the tree. He finally yanks the tarp off, sees the tree, corrects his steering, and zooms back after the pick up truck.

Conners kicks melons at Soldier #1. The third melon hits the front wheel, sending the cycle flipping into a ditch.

Soldier #2 zooms up to the passenger side, and jumps onto the truck. His cycle zooms away.

Standing on the running board, he reaches inside the truck, grabbing Mela and punching her in the face.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Mela fights with Soldier #2, as Rojar drives. She knocks him away... but swings into the truck bed, fighting Conners.

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN COUNTRY -- DAY

Conners fights Soldier #2 in the bed of the speeding truck.

ROJAR (O.S.)

Hit him! Use the strangle hold!

Soldier #2 socks Conners in the face, almost knocking him off the truck. Conners barely hangs on, kicks the soldier away. They trade punches until Conners knocks him off the truck.

CONNERS

Splash two soldiers.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK -- DAY

Conners yells at Rojar.

CONNERS

Go back! We have to make sure they don't radio the hanger!

ROJAR

Go back? You're crazy!

Rojar yanks the truck into a 180 slide, almost losing Conners. The truck zooms back to the fallen soldiers.

EXT. EDWARDS AFB -- DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

DeMuth looks up as General Barnes enters.

DEMUTH

No word, sir. A little over two hours left on the clock.

BARNES

Is the strike team ready?

DEMUTH

Yes, sir.

DeMuth gestures through the window to Commander "Fox" HINKLE, a tough looking ACM pilot in his late forties. A cold stare and grey hair have earned him his nickname. Hinkle enters.

DEMUTH
Wing Commander Hinkle.

Hinkle salutes Barnes.

BARNES
The President has approved a limited strike mission.
(moves to map)
Our target is here. We have approximate co-ordinates of an airfield, where our stolen Black Project plane is being held. Take out the airfield, the hanger, and any outbuildings in the vicinity.

Barnes looks into Hinkle's eyes. Dead serious.

BARNES
Burn it all. Nothing left standing, no one who saw the plane survives. Understand?

Hinkle nods, salutes, leaves.

DEMUTH
Sir, if Connors and Jannick are in the area...

BARNES
If they can get the Nova back within two hours, I'll call off the strike. If not...

Silence. DeMuth finally nods.

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN COUNTRY -- DAY

The ancient pick up truck is parked on a curve overlooking the airfield. A motorcycle is parked next to it. Rojar leans against the truck, eating melons.

Connors and Mela share a pair of binoculars, looking down at the airfield. Connors in soldier uniform.

MELA
The planes are out in the open.

CONNERS

They've probably got Jannick in that hanger.

MELA

Do you need him to fly the other plane?

CONNERS

No. The SR-71 is declassified. I can leave in behind. Let a surgical strike remove it before they find a way to use it. But the Nova...

MELA

So why rescue this man? What is he to you? A friend?

CONNERS

Definitely not a friend.

Mela studies him.

MELA

You don't like him, but you will risk yourself to rescue him?

CONNERS

I may not like that man. I may even hate him. But he's my partner. I came here with him, and I'm going to leave here with him.

MELA

Even if it kills you?

CONNERS

I have to do what's right, not what's best for me. If I spend too much time thinking of what's best for me, the world crumbles around me. I don't want to live in that world.

(beat)

I'd rather die doing what's right, than live doing what's wrong.

MELA

You are a good man. I wish there were more men like you in my country.

Connors moves to his feet, checks his guns, and gets ready for action. Mela follows him.

MELA

I want to help.

CONNERS

No. Your fight is here. Down there,
that's my fight.

Mela gives him a brief kiss, then Connors hops on the stolen motorcycle and gets ready to rumble. He gives Rojar a wave, then zooms down the dirt road to the hanger and air field.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The squadron of fighters and bombers roar through the sky towards Northern Africa.

PILOT #1 (V.O.)

This is squadron leader. Our ETA to
target is two hours and forty seven
minutes. Orders are to toast the place.
No survivors.

The squadron roars towards Libya, the hanger, and Connors.

EXT. AIRFIELD -- DAY

A SOLDIER on patrol hears a motorcycle and looks up. He readies his machinegun.

Relaxes when he sees the Soldier on the motorcycle zooming towards him, a hand raised in greeting.

The Soldier smiles, takes his hand off his gun and raises it in greeting to the cycle-soldier.

BANG! Connors shoots him as he zooms past on his way to the hanger.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Connors zooms into the hanger on the cycle.

Over a dozen heavily armed SOLDIERS are caught off guard. By the time they notice Connors and raise their weapons, he's deep inside the hanger.

SOLDIER #1 raises his gun, firing a blast.

Connors picks him off with his machinegun as he zooms past, sees another Soldier raise his gun, and blasts him, too.

Connors roars through the warehouse on the motorcycle, exchanging gunfire with the SOLDIERS.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Stone hears the shooting and turns to Elias.

STONE

Get him!

Elias grabs a machinegun, tosses another to a Soldier, and races to the other side of the hanger.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Conners is being chased by gunfire. He turns and heads right at the shooting Soldier #11.

Soldier #11 stops shooting, turns and runs. He can't outrun the motorcycle. Conners hits him with his gun butt.

ELIAS

Kill that man!

The Soldiers begin firing in unison at Conners.

Bullets spark around him. Conners skids into a 180 and blasts his machinegun at a pair of Soldiers. Taking them out.

Conners speeds at Soldier #12, but this guy doesn't run. He grabs a short piece of pipe and tries to knock Conners off the cycle as he passes. Conners ducks, skids around, and heads at him again. It's bull fighting.

After a few passes, Conners GRABS the pipe as he roars past, dragging Soldier #12 off his feet.

Now Conners uses the pipe to joust at other soldiers from the speeding motorcycle.

SOLDIER #13 raises his machinegun to blast Conners off his speeding cycle.

Conners uses the pipe as a clothesline and knocks the Soldier #13 to the floor. When Soldier #13 rolls and pops up with his gun... Conners blasts him with his machinegun.

Conners jousts and clotheslines several more Soldiers, before tossing the pipe aside. He has spotted Jannick in the corner of the Hanger, tied to a chair.

Now all he has to do is get past Elias and his army...

ELIAS and the SOLDIERS raise machine guns, ready to fire.

Conners aims his machinegun and squeezes the trigger. Click. Out of shells!

Elias and the Soldiers open fire, splattering bullets all around Conners. There are too many of them for Conners to fight with his handguns.

Conners revvs the cycle and SPEEDS towards the Soldiers, leaning into a side-skid which bowls over a half dozen men like ten pins. The other Soldiers dive out of the way.

Conners draws both of his 45s and blasts away at Soldiers, while his cycle skids on its side, killing two of them.

When the cycle stops moving, Conners pops to his feet, spins and fires with the grace of a jungle cat, killing a pair of Soldiers behind him who were about to fire.

Elias takes cover behind some fuel drums, as Conners fires both guns, spinning right and left, climbing over a stack of crates in ballet-like moves.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Jannick hears a noise from behind him. He tries to turn his head, but he's tied to the chair.

The figure creeping up behind him has a knife in his hand. The knife moves around Jannick, heading towards his chest.

Jannick settles his feet on the concrete, then spins himself around to face his assailant.

CONNERS

Watch it. I could of cut you.

JANNICK

Conners.

Conners cuts the ropes binding Jannick to the chair. Jannick rubs his wrists and ankles to get the circulation back.

JANNICK

You didn't have to come back.

CONNERS

Yes I did.

JANNICK

You should have just taken the plane and jammed.

CONNERS

I couldn't leave you hanging. Your life is in my hands.

JANNICK

I didn't tell them anything...

CONNERS

I know. Here.

Connors hands him a soldier's machinegun.

CONNERS

We're getting out of here... Can you fly?

JANNICK

Shit yes.

CONNERS

Good. Because I need you. Getting out of here has a pucker factor of ten. I'm going to need coverfire, and that Blackbird's no UAV.

JANNICK

I'm your man.

Connors and Jannick shake hands... then all hell breaks loose!

Bullets begin tearing apart the corner of the hanger where Connors and Jannick hide.

JANNICK

Here we go.

Jannick checks the action on his machinegun, and rolls out.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Jannick fires his machinegun, aiming across the hanger at Soldier #1. Squeezing the trigger, he fires off a round.

Connors is right behind him, both 45s blazing. Spinning and firing gracefully.

The bullet slams into the crate to Soldier #1's right, sending sawdust into the air.

SOLDIER #1 counters by sending a stream of machine gun fire into the corner at Jannick and Connors.

STONE

Ratcher! The plane! Go! Go now!

STONE provides coverfire as Colonel Tom Ratcher runs behind a stack of crates... Heading towards the hanger doors.

Jannick aims directly at the crates and squeezes off a shot. The bullet blows a huge hole into the crate... But misses Ratcher.

Ratcher scrambles to the next stack of crates. Closer to the hanger doors, and the Nova with its biological payload.

Jet fuel + Ricochets = Pockets of fire erupting in the hanger, giving a weird smoky glow to the shoot out.

Soldier #1 begins scaling a stack of crates, Uzi slung over his shoulder. He stairsteps up the crates, climbing from one to another, until he is ten feet off the ground.

Conners hears a noise behind him, spins, and blasts a soldier off his feet into a stack of fuel cans, knocking them over.

SOLDIER #2 and Soldier #3 run at Jannick and Conners, firing off short bursts of machinegun fire.

Stone retains his position behind a stack of fuel barrels, next to Soldier #5 and #6.

STONE

Elias! Take them from behind!

Jannick aims his machinegun and squeezes off a burst.

Soldier #4 is hit in the neck, he screams, doesn't die.

Soldier #1 aims down at Conners and Jannick and squeezes the trigger of his machine gun.

Bullets spray the floor directly in front of Conners and Jannick, forcing them back towards the corner.

STONE, Soldier #5 and Soldier #6 provide cover fire as Ratcher runs towards the door.

Soldier #1 sprays a burst of fire, covering Soldier #2 and #3 who are only 40 feet from where Jannick has taken cover.

Conners sees two men running towards them and dives onto a rolling cart, firing both 45s as he glides across the floor.

Hitting both Soldiers. Rolling off the cart. Joining Jannick.

SOLDIER #4 yelps and runs around like a spastic in the center of the Hanger, bullets flying right and left past his head.

CONNERS

Ratcher. Got him?

Conners nods to his left. Jannick returns the nod. They move into action, firing to keep Soldier #3 and Soldier #2 in place as they run around the perimeter of the Hanger.

RATCHER sees them running towards him and runs faster.

Soldier #1 aims down from his vantage point atop the stack of crates and shoots a stream of bullets.

SOLDIER #5, #6, and Elias chime in.

ELIAS

Keep them from escaping! Don't let them out the doors!

Elias BLASTS his machinegun at them, sending a spray of hot lead spattering at...

Jannick and Conners run as fast as they can. Bullets kick up dust only inches behind them.

SOLDIER #3 and #2 get to the entrance of the Hanger and stop, raising their weapons at the running pair.

SOLDIER #1 increases the speed of his arc slightly, twisting the Uzi to the right.

One of the bullets from Elias's Uzi tags Jannick in the leg. His thigh is yanked out from under him and he crumbles in a heap on the ground.

JANNICK

I'm hit! I'm hit!

Conners goes back for him.

Soldier #1 takes careful aim at Jannick, pulls the trigger. Nothing happens. His clip is empty. He pulls another clip out of his pocket and reloads.

Conners grabs Jannick under the arms and hoists him to his feet, dragging him towards a stack of fuel cans.

Elias jumps out from behind his cover and sends a spray of machine gun fire in their direction.

Conners drags Jannick to a safe corner where they crouch down out of the line of fire.

Bullets whiz all around them, ricocheting off the walls, spaying them with dust.

JANNICK

Get out of here. I'll cover you.

CONNERS

Bullshit. We got this far, Jannick.
We're going all the way.

Jannick and Conners examine his wounded thigh.

A stream of bullets rip into the surrounding crates as Jannick looks at the torn flesh.

CONNERS

Missed the bone. You can walk.

Jannick uses part of his pant leg to bandage it.

For a moment, there is silence. No one is firing. The silence is deafening.

Conners takes a gizmo from his pocket and sticks it onto a console behind the chair.

JANNICK

What's that?

CONNERS

Slaver.

(beat)

So we can find this place with a
sidewinder when we're out of here.

Soldier #1 drops to the ground and runs from fuel can stack to stack, around the Hanger towards Jannick and Conners. Soldier #1 silently moves behind them, gun ready.

Ratcher gets to the doors where Soldier #3 and #2 stand.

RATCHER

Kill them! No one comes through this
door alive. Understand?

Soldier #3 and #2 nod.

Jannick and Conners reload and blast away at Elias and the other Soldiers... unaware the Soldier #1 is behind them.

Stone looks from Soldier #8 to #9 and nods.

STONE

Finish them.

The two soldiers raise, spraying fire at Jannick and Conners.

Bullets spatter and spark off the floor in front of them.

Conners hears a click and spins, firing at Soldier #1.

SOLDIER #1 goes down, dead.

SOLDIER #2 and #3 open fire, sending rounds whizzing. Bullets ricochet. Hitting a fuel can, sending an EXPLOSION OF FLAMES roaring into the air.

Conners sees Ratcher at the doors and fires off a shot.

CONNERS

Ratcher is getting away.

Ratcher and Conners exchange shots, both missing each other.

Jannick fires off a round at Soldier #5, hitting him in the chest and spinning him around.

Conners turns back to the fuel cans, spotting a head and machine gun raising up. He fires, the head ducks back down.

Twisting quickly around the edge of the crate, Jannick aims his machinegun at Soldier #3 and pulls the trigger. Click. Click. Click.

Pulling behind a crate quickly, Jannick begins searching the soldier's fallen guns for a compatible clip.

JANNICK

Shit! One of these things has to match!

Then he spots a machinegun like his... Out in the open.

SOLDIER #6 charges through the Hanger, blasting away.

Conners raises his gun and fires each one, hitting Soldier #6 with both shots.

Jannick counts to ten, then rolls across the floor to the machinegun. Bullets follow him every inch of the way. When he gets to the machinegun, he scoops it up and fires at Soldier #7. Blasting him right off his feet.

Soldier #7 SLAMS into fuel cans, bowling them over.

Armed again, Jannick looks across at Conners and nods.

CONNERS

Let's do it.

Conners rolls out from behind his cover, pops to his feet, takes aim at Soldier #3 and squeezes off a shot which shatters the crate into fragments, but misses the gunman.

Soldier #3 sends a burst of machine gun fire down at Conners, pitting the ground only an inch away from him.

Jannick pops to his feet from behind the forklift, takes aim, and fires at Soldier #3 three times.

All three bullets hit him, and he spins around on the crates before falling to the ground below. He lands with a wicked sounding splat.

CONNERS

Thanks.

JANNICK

De nada.

Soldier #2 sees Jannick only a few feet away, and sights in on his head. Finger squeezing the trigger.

Conners twists quickly, aiming at Soldier #2 with both guns and firing as he dives to the floor.

Soldier #2 flies backwards with the force of the shots, landing on his butt before he can even squeeze the trigger.

Jannick smiles at Conners.

JANNICK

Thanks.

CONNERS

Owed you one.

Then Elias opens fire. The two duck down behind the forklift. Conners takes the last two clips from his pockets and reloads.

Conners looks from Elias and Soldier #8 to Stone and #9.

CONNERS

Only four left.

JANNICK

Plus Ratcher.

Ratcher runs out the hanger doors. Heading to the Nova!

CONNERS

Can you handle those two?
(nods to Stone & #9)

JANNICK

No problem.

CONNERS

Good. I'm going after Ratcher.

Jannick breaks away, going after Stone and Soldier #9.

Bullets chase him, kicking up dirt behind his feet and ricocheting off crates.

Halfway across the hanger, Soldier #9 swings out from behind a fuel can, aiming his machine gun at Jannick's head.

STONE

Are you ready to die?

EXT. AIRFIELD -- DAY

Ratcher grabs a flight suit and struggles into it.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Connors makes a break for it, running behind a stack of cans. He blasts Soldier #8 along the way.

Elias jumps on the forklift and starts it up. He puts it into gear and aims it at the stack of fuel barrels Connors hides behind.

Connors looks over the crates and sees the forklift SPEEDING at him. He fires both guns, bullets spark off the forklift.. But it keeps on coming!

Jannick looks at Soldier #9. He's as big as a house.

STONE

Drop your gun, and maybe he'll let you live.

Jannick drops the gun, and holds up his hands.

Stone taps Jannick on the face before turning to Soldier #9.

STONE

Kill him.

Stone walks away.

Jannick looks down the gun barrel. He has passed through his fear, and seems confident.

JANNICK

Stone.

Stone turns for a moment.

JANNICK

After I kill him, you're next.

Stone laughs and continues away.

Jannick spins around, knocking the gun up and grabbing Soldier #9's wrists. They struggle, the gun right between them.

BLAM! A bullet flies past Jannick's face, powder singing his hair.

Soldier #9 twists the gun around, muscling it so that it's aiming at Jannick's left eye. His trigger finger tightens.

Jannick pushes the gun barrel away from his face. The Soldier pushes it back, gets ready to fire at his eye.

THEY STRUGGLE the Uzi between them. Aiming from Jannick's face to Soldier #9's and back.

BLAM! Jannick drops to the floor, the bullet skims over his head. Twisting, he pulls the Soldier down and wrestles the gun from his hands.

BLAM! Jannick spins the gun into his palm and BLASTS Soldier #9 right off his feet, all in one clean move.

SOLDIER #9 SLAMS against the wall, and slides down it.

Jannick turns to see how Connors is doing with ELIAS. Behind him, Soldier #9 moves to his feet, dazed and angry.

CONNERS fires again at the speeding forklift. The bullet sparks, but doesn't slow it down.

CONNERS

Yikes.

He dives out from behind the crates, just as the forklift hits them. Smashing them to saw dust.

Connors moves to his feet in time to see Elias make a U turn.

JANNICK hears a noise and turns to see Soldier #9 charging.

He steps away, like a matador, then jumps on the Soldier's back; one arm around his throat, the other gouging his eyes.

Soldier #9 shakes his head so Jannick's fingers can't find purchase. One of his meaty hands reaches back, trying to pull him off, but Jannick is just outside of his reach.

Roaring, Soldier #9 slams his body backwards against the wall, smashing Jannick.

Jannick lets go and slides down the wall. Dazed. Soldier #9 laughs, and attacks.

CONNERS sees the forklift coming at him again. He runs behind a stack of 50 gallon fuel drums.

Elias corrects his aim, turning the forklift back at Connors.

Connors sees the forklift coming at him, and realizes there is no escape.

STONE jogs across the hanger to the communications panel, to call for reinforcements. Lifting the radio.

JANNICK looks up at Soldier #9 in time to see a fist flying through the air towards his face. Jannick moves his head and the fist slams into the wall only inches from his ear.

JANNICK

You're gonna make me mad.

Jannick kicks up with both feet, slamming them into the giant's groin.

Soldier #9's face turns white, he pulls his fist away from the wall and takes a step backwards.

Jannick butts his head into Soldier #9's bloody chest.

Jannick bounces off. Soldier #9 reaches down for his neck, ready to strangle him.

Jannick gives him a right/left combination punch to the face, but he doesn't flinch. The hands grab his neck, fingers tightening on his throat.

THE FORKLIFT hits the stack of crates. Connors rolls out of the way at the last moment, the forklift WHIZZING past him.

Connors spins, aiming at Elias's unprotected back and fires four shots. Emptying his guns into him.

Elias falls off the forklift, dead.

JANNICK's face is turning blue. Soldier #9 tightens his hand on the pilot's neck, smiling the entire time.

Jannick sees the holstered pistol clipped to Soldier #9's belt. His blue face smiles.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Soldier #9 FLIES off of Jannick, skidding to the ground, dead. Jannick blows smoke off his gun and smiles at Conners.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Jannick is YANKED off his feet by the gunshots.

CONNERS

No! No!

STONE laughs from the far corner of the hanger.

Conners fires a barrage at Stone, rolls across the hanger to where Jannick lays in a pool of blood.

Jannick is dying. Conners grabs his hand.

JANNICK

Jesus. Hurts.

CONNERS

Jannick. You're not a crashcup. Never were. I'm sorry.

Jannick smiles at Conners... then dies.

Conners moves to his feet, fires at Stone until his guns are empty. Stone goes down.

Then Conners goes out to get Ratcher.

EXT. AIRFIELD -- DAY

Ratcher is suited up, about the climb into the Nova, when Conners comes out of the Hanger holding a machinegun.

CONNERS

Ratcher!

Ratcher turns, sees Conners, and smiles.

RATCHER

Vincent. So good to see you.

Conners doesn't want to shoot him. This man was like a father to him. He tries talking him into giving up.

CONNERS

Tom.... What are you doing?

RATCHER

Getting rich. Do you know how much I'm being paid for this?

CONNERS

This is treason. Terrorism.

RATCHER

Treason? Grow up, Vince. Open your eyes. You've been brain washed by those flag wavers at the Air Force.

Ratcher looks at him like a disappointed father.

RATCHER

What is patriotism? Freedom? Free trade? Those are tools we use to colonize other countries. We move in our fast food, and strip them of their culture. Then threaten them with trade sanctions if they don't do our bidding at the UN.

CONNERS

Tom....

RATCHER

Vincent, making money is the American way. I'm being patriotic. Stone outbid Uncle Sam. He wins.

Ratcher sees a machinegun sitting a few feet away, and tries to inch towards it as they talk.

CONNERS

That's not what America is.

(beat)

Defending the little guy. Doing what's right. Self sacrifice. Helping other people when they're in trouble.

RATCHER

That's good. If you ever win the Miss America Pageant, that's the speech to give. But this isn't a beauty contest. This is the real world.

CONNERS

If money is all America stands for now, then we've taken a wrong turn. It's time to change directions.

RATCHER

Isn't it time you grew up? Stop
dreaming and open your eyes?

Ratcher puts his hand on top of the machinegun casually.

Conners is in emotional distress: His mentor is scum.

Conners is confused: Is everything he believes in wrong?

CONNERS

Tom.... I looked up to you.

RATCHER

You and Jannick were like sons to me.
Of course, you were always my favorite.
Which is why your sacrifice will be
particularly painful to me.

Ratcher flips the machinegun into his hands and opens fire.

Conners sees the move coming, and squeezes his trigger, sending
a spray of gunfire at Ratcher.

Ratcher has to hit the dirt, rolling to take cover behind a
stack of oil drums, as bullets chase him.

Conners keep firing as he runs to the Nova: fueled and ready.
He tosses down his machinegun, and climbs to the cockpit.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners puts on a helmet, hits the ignition, and preps for
take off. We hear the Nova's jets ROAR to life.

EXT. AIRFIELD -- DAY

Ratcher comes out from the oil drums.

RATCHER

Shit.

He grabs his helmet and runs for the SR-71.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE -- DAY

The Nova takes off, screaming into the sky.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

Ratcher climbs into the cockpit. Noticing the photo of himself and Conners taped to the instrument panel, he tears it off, crumples it up, and tosses it out.

EXT. AIRFIELD -- DAY

The crumpled photo lands near the SR-71's landing gear.

We hear the big jets roar to life, and the wheels run over the photo, smashing it even more.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE -- DAY

The SR-71 Blackbird rockets down the runway and takes off, in hot pursuit of the Nova.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Stone lays on the floor. His jacket punctured by bullets.

Suddenly, his eyes open. He sits up. He's ALIVE!

Stone moves to his feet, rips off the jacket exposing a bullet proof vest riddled with flattened lead.

STONE

Thank God for Kevlar.

He brushes flattened bullets off the vest, then grabs a gun and jogs to the hanger doors.

EXT. AIRFIELD -- DAY

The planes are gone.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Stone jogs back to the communications console, picks up the microphone, and signals the Libyan Air Force.

STONE

Attention Squadron Red. They've stolen the Nova fighter plane. Probably coming your way.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

A flock of Libyan MiG 27 Fighter Planes fly in formation.

PILOT #1 (V.O.)
Red Squadron, copy.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners hears Stone's voice on the headset.

STONE (V.O.)
Shoot him down! Don't let him leave
our air space!

Conners brings up a weapons menu, selects an AIM-9x sidewinder missile, places it on Slave Mode, and launches it.

CONNERS
Enjoy this lovely parting gift.
Courtesy the United States Air Force.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Sidewinder missile launches from the Nova, turning in the sky to seek the slaver gizmo in the Hanger.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

Stone smiles and hangs up the microphone... next to the slaver gizmo, which is now blinking with a small red LED.

Stone is too busy feeling good about himself to see it.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Sidewinder missile zooms out of the sky towards the hanger. Homing in on the slaver gizmo.

EXT. HANGER -- DAY

The Sidewinder missile finds the hanger. Zooms inside.

INT. HANGER -- DAY

We zoom with the missile as it finds the slaver gizmo. Stone's mouth opens in a scream. The missile is coming RIGHT AT HIM!

BLAAAAAAAAAAAAAM!

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN COUNTRY -- DAY

Mela turns her eyes away from the binoculars, blinking away the flash: A bright fire ball with flying burning fuel cans.

She moves to her feet and tosses the binoculars aside.

MELA

Let's go.

Rojar looks up from his melon.

ROJAR

Where?

MELA

To take back our village.

She grabs a machinegun from the pick up bed. Rojar tosses aside the remainder of his melon, and grabs a gun.

They climb into the truck, and it takes off down the road.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova zooms past.

The SR-71 Blackbird zooms after it.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Connors radios Edwards Air Force Base.

CONNERS

Edwards, this is Black Thunder, Connors.
Do you read?

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

Barnes picks up the microphone.

BARNES

Barnes here.

CONNERS (V.O.)

General. The good news is: I have to
Nova.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS

I am at seventeen point oh four three degrees East, and the Tropic Of Cancer, headed north.

BARNES (V.O.)

Copy that. The bad news?

CONNERS

I'm carrying two big NBC bombs, and I'm not talking "Suddenly Susan" and "The Single Guy". Germ warfare.

(beat)

If I take a hit and go down, I may take an entire continent with me.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

Barnes turns to DeMuth.

BARNES

How soon 'till our planes get there?

DEMUTH

Thirty minutes. But the Nova's faster. They may never catch up.

Barnes grabs the microphone.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

BARNES (V.O.)

We have a squadron thirty minutes South of you...

CONNERS

Can't go South. I've got Ratcher in the SR-71 chasing me. Their entire Air Force to my North. I'm stuck in the middle.

(beat)

Get me a landing strip in Europe. I'll try to make it...

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

Zoom! The flock of MiGs roars at the Nova.

CONNERS (V.O.)
Gotta go. I'm flying right into a
furball.

The Nova banks, and moves in to fight.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Connors twist the wheel, banking to a more favorable aspect.
He selects missiles and gets ready for battle.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

Banking and faking, the Nova zooms straight up at one of the
MiG 27 Fighter planes.

PILOT (V.O.)
Commander! He has a lock on me!

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Connors targets the MiG 27 on his HUD, locks on, and presses
the red launch button.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Sidewinder missile zooms across the sky, BLASTING the MiG
27 Fighter plane into a million pieces.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS
Splash one MiG 27.

Then his RWR indicates he's in a MiG's gunsites.

CONNERS
Shit. They've spiked me.

INT. MIG 27 STRIKE PLANE -- DAY

The PILOT locks on target and presses the fire button.

PILOT (V.O.)
Go to hell, American.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The missile blasts through the sky at the Nova.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners punches the chaff button.

CONNERS
Popping chaff.

EXT. NOVA -- DAY

The "Chaff" fires away from the plane. A bundle of aluminum strips looking somewhat like a metal pom-pom, chaff is like countermeasures on a submarine.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova makes a tight port roll zooms away.

The missile hits the chaff and EXPLODES in the sky a hundred feet from the Nova.

The Nova slices right, coming after the MiG 27.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners gets the MiG centered on his HUD, and pets the pedal to the metal. Roaring straight at the plane.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova ROARS right to left.

The MiG 27 flies left to right.

INT. MIG 27 STRIKE PLANE -- DAY

PILOT (V.O.)
He's coming right at me!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova roars right to left.... closer!

The MiG 27 roars left to right... closer!

It's an airborne game of "chicken".

INT. MIG 27 STRIKE PLANE -- DAY

The Pilot panics, pulls back on his stick, zooming up...

Seeing the plane above him too late.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The two MiG 27s slam into each other and explode.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS

Three down, two to go.

INT. MIG 27 STRIKE PLANE -- DAY

The MiG pilot swoops out of the sky, sighting in on the Nova.

PILOT #2 (V.O.)

Target acquired. Firing missiles.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

A pair of missile fire from the MiG, twisting after the Nova.

The Nova banks left.

The missiles follow.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Connors works the stick, trying to evade the missiles which have locked on.

CONNERS

They're on me. They're on me.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova takes a hard right.

The missiles follow.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners pops chaff and throws the Nova into a spin.

EXT. NOVA -- DAY

Chaff pops.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova "post holes": goes into a rapid spiraling descent. Zooming at high speed directly towards the ground.

The missile hits the chaff and explodes.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners pulls out of the spin, heads straight up....

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova heads straight up: Right at the MiG soft white belly. Firing a pair of sidewinders at the MiG. Blasting it.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS
One left. Come on down.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The last MiG 27 Strike plane slices out of the sky.

The Nova evades, banking hard left.

THE TWO PLANES engage in complicated air combat maneuvers, each trying for the advantage over the other.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS
This guy's good.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The MiG banks left, fakes, then slices towards the Nova.

The Nova fakes, slices, evades.

The MiG spins, comes up right behind the Nova.

INT. MIG 27 STRIKE PLANE -- DAY

The Nova pops into the MiG's target line.

PILOT #1 (V.O.)
I have you now.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Warning from Conner's RWR of a target lock.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The MiG flies behind the Nova.

INT. MIG 27 STRIKE PLANE -- DAY

PILOT #1 (V.O.)
Chaff won't work with a heat seeker.
Take two, call me in hell.

The MiG pilot fires a pair of heat seeking missiles.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

A pair of heat seeking missiles zooms towards the Nova.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Connors pops chaff, pulls back on the stick.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova ascends rapidly.

The two heat seeker missiles ignore the chaff and continue after the Nova.

INT. MIG 27 STRIKE PLANE -- DAY

The MiG pilot laughs.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova does a high speed loop-the-loop.

The heat seeker missiles right on the Nova's tail!

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS

When you're hot, you're hot.

He zooms right up to the MiG's tail, then veers away.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova veers away from the MiG, slicing hard left.

The two heat seeker missiles have found a new heat source:
The MiG's jet engines. They close in on the MiG.

INT. MIG 27 STRIKE PLANE -- DAY

PILOT #1 (V.O.)

No! No!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The two heat seeking missiles find the two jet afterburners
on the MiG 27 Strike plane.

BLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAM!

The MiG 27 explodes in a giant fireball.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS

Splash one air force.

Connors radios Edwards AFB.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

CONNERS (V.O.)
Edwards, Conners. Do you read?

BARNES
Barnes, here. We're still working on that air field.

CONNERS (V.O.)
I'll be over Europe in three minutes.
(beat)
No sign of Ratcher in the Blackbird.
(beat)
Sir, I'm afraid he may be hanging back until I hit French air space.

BARNES
Why would he do that?

CONNERS (V.O.)
If he shoots me down over Europe, it's the same as dropping the bombs.
(beat)
What I'm saying, sir, is that we have a potential germ warfare disaster.

BARNES
Copy that. I'll get back to you.

General Barnes hangs up the mike and turns to DeMuth.

BARNES
Get the President on the phone.

DeMuth nods.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE -- DAY

Conversation over a stock shot of the White House.

BARNES (V.O.)
Mr. President, this is potential international disaster. If those bombs drop on France, millions will die. And the disease will spread like wildfire.

PRESIDENT (V.O.)
What do you suggest we do, General?

BARNES (V.O.)
Alert the heads of European government,
and cancel all air flights into the
United States until this is resolved.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova zooms over the Mediterranean Sea.

A few seconds later, the SR-71 Blackbird zooms past.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

DeMuth shows General Barnes a visual display: A world map.

DEMUTH
If the Nova is shot down over Europe,
the disease will spread like this...
(beat)
Twelve hours.

France is red with disease.

DEMUTH
Twenty four hours.

Europe and parts of Asia are red with disease.

DEMUTH
Thirty six hours.

Parts of the USA are covered by red spots.

DEMUTH
Forty eight hours.

The entire world map is bright red. Everyone on earth will
be dead in 48 hours if the Nova is shot down.

BARNES
Why did we create this thing, if we
can't control it or stop it?

DEMUTH
I don't know, sir.

Barnes grabs the microphone.

BARNES
Connors, this is Edwards AFB.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova zooms past.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS

Connors, I copy.

BARNES (V.O.)

Vince, we have a....

The RWR begins blinking on the HUD.

CONNERS

Sorry, sir. I have to cut you off.
Ratcher's right on my tail.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova zooms past, entering French Air Space.

Followed a second later by the SR-71 Blackbird.

EXT. FRENCH MILITARY BASE -- DAY

A French Military Base with radar tracking cones rotating.

INT. FRENCH MILITARY BASE -- DAY

A mustached French RADIO man speaks into a mike.

RADIO (V.O.)

You are entering French air space.
Please identify yourself. If you do
not identify yourself, you will be
shot down. Do you understand?

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Connors answers.

CONNERS

I am an American Air Force pilot.
Being chased by an unfriendly aircraft.
Request...

ROOOOOOAR!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The SR-71 Blackbird zooms past the Nova Stealth Fighter, almost knocking it out of the sky.

INT. FRENCH MILITARY BASE -- DAY

RADIO (V.O.)
Hello? Hello? We have lost contact.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

In the skies over Europe, the final battle is about to begin. The Blackbird banks left, coming around behind the Nova.

EXT. SR-71 BLACKBIRD -- DAY

The wing guns begin firing.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova zips away, tracer bullets arcing past.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

Ratcher mans the wing guns AND flies the plane.

RATCHER
Might as well give up, Vincent. You know I'm the better pilot.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Blackbird banks, zipping right behind the Nova again. There's no escaping this guy!

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

RATCHER
I was the one who taught you air combat maneuvering, remember?

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova fakes left, banks right, evading machine gun fire.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners works the stick, rocking the plane out of the machinegun's path.

CONNERS

I've picked up a few tricks since then.
I think you'll like them.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova hard lefts into a 180, spinning around to the Blackbird's flanks.

The Blackbird makes the EXACT SAME MOVE, coming up behind the Nova Stealth Fighter.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

RATCHER

Tricks, Vincent. That's all they are.
I can even out fly you in this school
bus.

Ratcher fires the wing guns.

EXT. SR-71 BLACKBIRD -- DAY

The wing guns fire.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova makes a crazy, panic move, to evade the machinegun fire. Tracers blaze where the Nova once was.

RATCHER (V.O.)

That RAM skin on your wings is fragile
stuff.

INT. SR-71 BLACKBIRD -- DAY

RATCHER

One well placed hit might take the
whole plane down...
(beat)
Take Europe down.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS

Stone's dead, Tom. There's no one to pay you for this.

RATCHER (V.O.)

I've already been paid.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova makes an evasive move, spectacular areal acrobatics, losing the Blackbird.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

RATCHER

Drop the load, Vincent, and I'll let you live. We can be partners. Why fly against each other, when we can fly together?

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Blackbird finds the Nova in the clouds, riding his tail.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS

Kill millions of people? For what?

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova slices right, spins, fakes, and pops up next to the Blackbird: flying parallel.

The Blackbird pulls the same maneuver, popping up on the opposite side of the Nova.

It's an amazing display of areal combat maneuvers.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

RATCHER

Millions of dollars.

(beat)

What do you care about those people.

(MORE)

RATCHER (CONT'D)

From up here, they're nothing. So small, we can't even see them. If you could make a hundred dollars for every one who died...

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS

Innocent people, Tom.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

RATCHER

It's France, Vincent. Fuck them.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS

Sorry, Tom. No deal.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

RATCHER

I'm the one who's sorry.

Ratcher works the joystick.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Blackbird zooms around, rolling across the clouds, coming up directly behind the Nova.

It fires a Sidewinder missile at the Stealth fighter.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

The HUD blinks a warning that he's been targeted, and a missile is approaching.

Connors hits the chaff button, then loops the Nova into a posthole free-fall.

EXT. NOVA -- DAY

Chaff pops out, glittering.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova spirals into a posthole fall, zooming towards the streets of Paris at high speed.

The Sidewinder hits the chaff and EXPLODES!

EXT. MONEY SHOT -- DAY

The Nova pulls out at the last minute, buzzing the Eiffel Tower so close that people on the street scream.

As the Nova begins climbing, the SR-71 RIPS through the sky next to the Eiffel Tower, chasing the Nova.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova zips through the sky.

The Blackbird roars after it in hot pursuit.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS

You have to see me to hit me.

Connors waits until his HUD shows no sign of the Blackbird before hitting the "active stealth" button.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

The Nova is a radar blip one moment, gone the next.

Ratcher checks his FLIR screen: Nothing. The plane has disappeared into thin air.

Ratcher laughs.

RATCHER

I don't HAVE to see you, Vincent. I
just have to predict where you'll go.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Blackbird roars through the clouds: finding the Nova!

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners breaks a sweat. His RWR indicator shows that Ratcher has a lock on him... even though he's "invisible".

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

Ratcher laughs, and launches two sidewinder missiles!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The two sidewinders zoom after the Nova.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners twists the stick right, left....

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The two sidewinders follow the Nova through the maneuvers.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

CONNERS
Heat seekers.

Conners pulls back on the stick.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova does an elegant loop-the-loop... the two sidewinders mimicking the acrobatics.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners upside down.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova pulls out of the loop-the-loop directly behind the Blackbird. The Nova zooms away, and the sidewinders lock on to the SR-71's after burners.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

Ratcher laughs as the missile lock onto him.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The SR-71 roars out of there, speeding away from the sidewinders! Outrunning the missiles at Mach 3!

The two missiles run out of fuel, and falls to earth.

EXT. PARIS -- DAY

The missiles hit a stock footage building in Paris and blow it to pieces. BLAAAAAAAAAAM!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The SR-71 banks, and comes back for Connors.

The Nova flies right to left.

The SR-71 flies left to right.

We're playing high speed "chicken" again.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Connors HUD shows the SR-71 heading right for him.

Then his RWR shows a target lock.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

Ratcher has the Nova targeted. His finger on the missile launch button.

RATCHER

My last missile, Vincent. But I'll share it with you.

He fires.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The sidewinder flies at the Nova.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Connors locks on the incoming missile, fires one of his own.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova's missile fires.

Both missiles meet in the middle and explode!

The Nova slices right, avoiding the explosion.

The SR-71 isn't so lucky: It hits the debris head on.

EXT. SR-71 BLACKBIRD -- DAY

A big chunk of debris gets sucked into the jet intake.

INT. SR-71 COCKPIT -- DAY

RATCHER

No! No!

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The SR-71 Blackbird EXPLODES into a million pieces, raining fiery debris over Paris.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Connors lets out his breath, relaxing.

CONNERS

Sorry, Tom.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM -- DAY

CONNERS (V.O.)

This is Vince Connors in the Black
Thunder.... Coming in.

General Barnes and everyone else in the operations room cheer.

EXT. AERIAL FOOTAGE -- DAY

The Nova banks gracefully, and heads back to Edwards.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE -- DAY

The Nova Stealth Fighter lands at Edwards AFB.

INT. NOVA COCKPIT -- DAY

Conners takes off his helmet and climbs out.

INT. HALLWAY - EDWARDS AFB -- DAY

Conners meets General Barnes and DeMuth in the hallway.

CONNERS

The Nova's had her test flight. I'd
say she did okay.

General Barnes shakes Conners hand.

BARNES

Good to have you back, Vince.

CONNERS

I just wish Jannick would've made it.

Barnes nods slowly.

CLOSING TITLES OVER:

The full photograph. Conners, Ratcher, and Jannick.