

WING COMMANDER ACADEMY

"WALKING WOUNDED"

74711

Story by:
Mark Edens

Teleplay by:
Ralph Sanchez

Edited by:
Michael Edens

FIRST DRAFT
May 22, 1996

U N I V E R S A L C A R T O O N S T U D I O S , I N C .

Copyright © and TM 1996
All Rights Reserved

WING COMMANDER ACADEMY
"Walking Wounded"
Prod. # 74711

CAST LIST

***** THE CADETS *****

ARCHER - flight suit and casual civilian clothes.
MAVERICK
MANIAC
HYENA
GRUNT
PAYBACK
BLIZZARD - flashback from # 74703.
CADETS - in Rec Room. No lines.

***** TIGER'S CLAW PERSONNEL *****

TOLWYN
GUTHRIG
EXECUTIVE OFFICER - used in # 74706 and # 74707.
CREWMAN - on the bridge of the Tiger's Claw. 4 lines.
SIM TECH - operates flight simulator. No lines.
FEMALE JUNIOR OFFICER - beautiful. New to the Tiger's Claw. No lines.

***** HOSPITAL SHIP "PLEIKU" PERSONNEL *****

DR. SAMUEL KYLE - 40-ish, war-weary, seen everything from the inside and out. Has a dry wit. Wears surgical scrubs.
LT. BLU - a nurse on the Pleiku. Wears surgical scrubs. 2 lines.
LT. PETERSON - another nurse in surgical scrubs. No lines.
PATIENT - Unconscious. No lines.
WOUNDED PILOTS AND MARINES - "Moans" and some overlapping calls for help.

***** KILRATHI ABOARD CAPTURED TRANSPORT *****

KILRATHI FORCE COMMANDER - 2 lines.
KILRATHI BRIDGE OFFICER - No lines.
KILRATHI TECHS - No lines.

***** KILRATHI ABOARD CORVETTE "NIR'RUNIHN" *****

KILRATHI CAPTAIN
WEAPONS OFFICER - in Kilrathi uniform and an armored spacesuit.
KILRATHI WARRIORS - in armored spacesuits, armed with laser rifles. No lines.

WING COMMANDER ACADEMY
"Walking Wounded"
Episode 11 (Prod. # 74711)

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

CAMERA POV is zig-zagging and dodging through a field of ASTEROIDS. The chunks of space rocks hurtle PAST CAMERA, barely missing impact. PULL WIDE to REVEAL we are actually in --

INT. ARCHER'S SCIMITAR FIGHTER - COCKPIT

ARCHER handles the controls with deft expertise as she flies the SCIMITAR through the dense obstacle course of asteroids. Her eyes focus on the HEADS-UP-DISPLAY in front of her.

ARCHER
(to herself)
C'mon, I know you're hiding in here.

CLOSE ON HEAD'S-UP DISPLAY

Suddenly, a red TARGET ICON appears just short of dead center.

ARCHER (VO)
There you are!

WIDER ON COCKPIT - ARCHER OTS

Dodging asteroids, Archer steers the Scimitar in order to get the target icon to the HEAD'S-UP DISPLAY's center position.

ARCHER
(efforting)
Okay, lock-up, baby. Come on!

ANGLE ON ARCHER

Her eyes narrow, concentrating.

TIGHT ON HEAD'S-UP DISPLAY

The icon reaches center-position. Instantly, it is bracketed by a TARGET LOCK BOX. Inside the box, we see the image of a DRALTHI INTERCEPTOR. We hear the TONE of missile lock.

ARCHER (VO)
Yes!

ON COCKPIT - FAVORING ARCHER

Archer flips the safety cap off the missile firing button.

ARCHER
I've got missile lock!

Her thumb glides over the firing button. She waits for a BEAT.

ARCHER
Missile lock confirmed!

TIGHT ON ARCHER

We can now see sweat on Archer's brow. She fires.

ARCHER OTS - We can see the WAKE of the missile as it launches toward the Target Lock Square on the HEAD'S-UP DISPLAY. In an instant, the missile reaches its target. The cockpit is suddenly bathed by a white, blinding brilliance... followed a BEAT later by the RUMBLE and CONCUSSION of an EXPLOSION --

ARCHER
(more relief than
exultation)
Bingo!

ANGLE ON ARCHER

as the glare of the explosion dies down --

ARCHER (CONT)
(tries to impersonate MANIAC'S VICTORY
WHOOH!)

PULL WIDE to REVEAL the shot of Archer is actually the POV of a CAMERA MONITOR on a console inside --

INT. FLIGHT SIMULATOR CONTROL ROOM - TIGER'S CLAW

GUTHRIG and a SIM TECH are watching Archer on the monitor. They sit behind a semi-circular console that overlooks a SCIMITAR SIMULATOR. Guthrig turns to the Sim Tech.

GUTHRIG
Give us a minute, ensign.

The Sim Tech nods and exits.

ANGLE - FAVORING SIMULATOR

The CANOPY OPENS. Archer climbs out, removing her helmet in the process. She looks relieved as Guthrig ENTERS SHOT, reading through an unrolled scroll of print-out paper.

ARCHER
(jubilant relief)
I nailed him that time!

GUTHRIG
 According to the simulator print-out,
 you hesitated.
 (finally looks at her)
 Why?

CLOSER ANGLE ON ARCHER AND GUTHRIG

Archer's jubilant expression turns defensive, worried.

ARCHER
 I had to make sure of the missile lock.
 It only took two seconds.

GUTHRIG
 (consults print-out)
 Actually, one-point-nine-three seconds.
 Enough time for the Kilrathi to have
 eliminated you. Or your wing man.

ARCHER
 (sees what's coming)
 You're going to ding me over two lousy
 seconds?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Guthrig turns away and pretends to busy himself looking at the
 print-outs. He hates this part of his job.

GUTHRIG
 We have to run more simulations. I'm
 sorry, but until then, I have to ground
 you.

ARCHER
 (losing something important)
 I can't fly... ?

GUTHRIG
 In my opinion, you're a liability in
 combat.

WIDE ANGLE

Archer's quiet desperation turns to anger.

ARCHER
 (cold)
 What do you know about combat?

She whirls and storms out of the room, the doors HISSING OPEN AND
 CLOSED for her. Guthrig watches her go.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW REC ROOM - WIDE ANGLE

FAVOR a table where MANIAC and HYENA are playing a game of cards. Maniac puts his cards down for Hyena to see, smiling wide. We can see some other CADETS at tables around them, playing chess, talking as they eat and drink, a pool table in the BG.

MANIAC
Beaten by The Maniac again!

CLOSER ANGLE ON HYENA AND MANIAC

Hyena looks up -- sees something behind Maniac. Maniac collects the cards off the table, starting to shuffle the deck.

HYENA
(re: off what he sees)
Aw, man. Incredible.

MANIAC
Hyena, c'mon, you're making me blush.

HYENA OTS - OVERLOOKING REC ROOM

Hyena is looking at a young FEMALE JUNIOR OFFICER who has walked up to the food service bar behind Maniac.

HYENA
Don't flatter yourself, Maniac. Check your six. She must've come in with that last batch of replacements.

Maniac turns around to catch a glimpse of the female officer.

MANIAC
(to himself)
Hello...

CAMERA FOLLOWS MANIAC

as he turns back to Hyena and proceeds to get up.

MANIAC (CONT)
A new world to conquer, ol' buddy.

HYENA
That's what I like about you, Maniac.
You don't waste time.

Maniac saunters off to --

ON THE FOOD SERVICE BAR

As the female officer piles food onto her tray, Maniac ENTERS SHOT in front of her, blocking her way. He leans on the bar.

MANIAC

Hi, there. I'm sure you've heard of
The Maniac?

The female officer plucks an APPLE with her left hand from the fruit tray while motioning to Maniac with her right hand to move closer. Encouraged, Maniac leans over --

MANIAC

Is that a "yes?"

When Maniac's face is but inches from the female officer's, she surprises him by jamming the apple into his mouth!

MANIAC

(stuffed mouth)

Umf -- !

WIDER ON SCENE

She walks around the stunned Maniac as Hyena laughs in the BG.

HYENA

(LAUGHS)

Suddenly, the doors open and the EXECUTIVE OFFICER walks in. Hyena jumps to his feet.

HYENA

Attention on deck!

Everyone in the room stands at attention as the Exec. Officer walks to a monitor on the wall.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As you were!

FAVORING MANIAC - TO INCLUDE EXEC. OFFICER

He relaxes and <SPITS> the apple out into his hand. He shakes his head and looks up at what the Exec. Officer is doing. he notices something that disturbs him.

MANIAC

Sir, is that the complete duty roster?

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

That's right, cadet. Got a problem?

MANIAC

(a lie)

No, sir.

Maniac puts the apple on the food bar and starts toward the door.

MANIAC (CONT)
Excuse me, sir.

As the Exec. Officer watches him go, we...

WIPE TO:

INT. ARCHER'S QUARTERS

VERY TIGHT ON -- a military NAME TAG with the name "BOWMAN" stenciled on it. Archer's fingers MOVE INTO SHOT, running over the name plate. PULL WIDE to REVEAL Archer's uniform hanging on the inside of the closet door. Archer is in casual clothes, running her hand over the uniform, pensive. She stops.

ARCHER
(A WEARY, DEFEATED EXHALATION)

She closes the closet door. There's a <CLINK!> sound. Archer looks down: something has fallen on the floor. She looks down --

CLOSE ON BLIZZARD'S MEDAL

-- it's BLIZZARD'S medal (reference Episode #74703). Archer's hand reaches INTO SHOT and picks it up.

CLOSE ANGLE ON ARCHER

Archer straightens up, looking at the medal, lost in memories...

BLIZZARD (VO)
I want you to have this.

ARCHER (VO)
(not unkindly)
You know I can't accept this, Blizzard.

Archer closes her eyes and clasps the medal tight with her fist.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - LONG ON TIGER'S CLAW (ARCHER'S MEMORIES FROM EPISODE # 74703)

Blizzard's Broadsword, followed by Archer's Epee, dives PAST THE CAMERA INTO SHOT speeding toward the carrier, looming just ahead.

SLIGHT REAR ANGLE ON ARCHER - IN HER EPEE COCKPIT

We can see BLIZZARD'S COMLINK IMAGE in the corner of her instrument display as she radios to him:

ARCHER
Alan, it's Arch -- it's Gwen. You've got to turn back.

On her COMLINK SCREEN, we see Blizzard struggle with himself, reaching out to her it seems, and then--

BLIZZARD (RADIO FILTERED)
Gwen... Kilrathi LIAR!!!

His image goes to STATIC, then in a BEAT is replaced by TOLWYN's stern and concerned face.

TOLWYN (RADIO FILTERED)
Fire, Bowman! Fire!

CLOSE ANGLE ON ARCHER

She closes her eyes and presses the firing button.

EXT. SPACE NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - ANGLE ON ARCHER'S EPEE

As a MISSILE fires and streaks OUT OF SHOT. HOLD on Archer's Epee and PUSH IN on the cockpit. We can see her watching the flight of the missile (reflected on the glass of the canopy).

ARCHER
Eject, Alan! Eject!

The reflection of a huge FIREBALL fills the SCREEN. HOLD on the FIREBALL and then --

FADE TO BLACK.

IN THE DARKNESS - We suddenly hear a <KNOCK!>

FADE IN:

INT. ARCHER'S QUARTERS - FAVORING THE DOOR

Archer ENTERS SHOT, still holding the medal in her clenched fist. She pushes a button, allowing Maniac to storm into the room.

MANIAC
So what's this crud about you being grounded?!

ARCHER
(sarcastic)
Won't you come in...

MANIAC
Don't get cute, Archer. I saw the duty roster. What gives?

CAMERA FOLLOWS ARCHER

Archer shrugs and steps toward the viewing port in her room.

ARCHER
Doctor's orders.

Maniac ENTERS SHOT and stands behind her.

MANIAC
Guthrig? The doctor who needs a doctor?

Archer turns partly toward Maniac and opens her fist, looking down at the medal she carries.

ARCHER
He's not so crazy...

CLOSER ANGLE

Maniac rips the medal from Archer's hand and holds it up to her.

MANIAC
This thing about you blaming yourself
for what happened to Blizzard has gone
too far!

ON MANIAC - OVER ARCHER'S SHOULDER

Maniac puts the medal inside his chest pocket and taps it.

MANIAC
It's time to let it go.

ARCHER
That's mine, Maniac!

MANIAC
You're a good pilot. Not as good as
me, but, hey, who is? You gotta move
on.

WIDER ANGLE ON MANIAC AND ARCHER

Archer walks past Maniac, trying not to let him see her vulnerability.

ARCHER
(feeling lost)
It's not that easy...

MANIAC
Make it easy. That's how I do it.

ON ARCHER - MANIAC BEHIND HER SHOULDER

Archer wipes her eyes and turns to Maniac.

ARCHER

(bitter)

Why do you care all of a sudden?

Maniac stands silent, not sure what to say for a BEAT.
Fortunately for him, they are interrupted by the ALARM CLAXON.

TOLWYN (INTERCOM VO)

All duty pilots report to the briefing
room immediately!

Maniac, relieved to have been spared answering, rushes out.

MANIAC

Later, Archer!

LOW ANGLE - LOOKING PAST ARCHER IN THE FG

The DOOR HISSES CLOSED, leaving Archer alone in her quarters.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW BRIEFING ROOM - WIDE ANGLE - SLIGHT DOWNSHOT

Tolwyn stands next to the HOLO-TABLE as MAVERICK, GRUNT, Hyena and Maniac stand at attention. A HOLO-IMAGE of a HOSPITAL SPACESHIP rotates above them. Tolwyn points to it.

TOLWYN

Gentlemen, we have received a distress
call from the hospital ship, *Pleiku*.

ON TOLWYN AND HOLO-TABLE - OVER THE SHOULDERS OF THE CADETS

The image dissolves to one of several ships in formation.

TOLWYN (CONT)

She was part of a convoy that was
jumped by a Kilrathi advance force at
the edge of this sector.

The HOLO-IMAGE dissipates and Tolwyn walks closer to his troops.

TOLWYN (CONT)

That means the *Pleiku* is within range
of our fighters.

FAVOR TOLWYN AND MAVERICK

as Tolwyn turns to Maverick.

TOLWYN (CONT)

Cadet Blair will lead this sortie. The mission: to lend close support to the hospital ship and escort her to the Tiger's Claw. And be wary of Kilrathi traps.

MAVERICK

Yes, sir!

Tolwyn nods and starts OS.

WIDE ANGLE - FAVORING TOLWYN

AS HE HEADS for the briefing room door. It HISSES OPEN. He stops, framed in the doorway, looking back at the cadets.

TOLWYN

There are casualties of war on that ship, gentlemen. They've earned the right to go home. Bring them back.

WIPE TO:

EXT. SPACE

A formation of SCIMITARS streaks across the stars. Maverick and Maniac fly lead; Hyena and Grunt fly behind them and slightly above.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)

All right, guys, keep your eyes on your sensors. This is the last reported position of the *Pleiku*.

INT. MANIAC'S SCIMITAR - COCKPIT - MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR IN B.G.

Maniac scopes out his instruments.

MANIAC

You thing we'd be seeing signs of a battle by now.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)

(grimly)

Maybe this battle's over.

CLOSE ON MANIAC'S INSTRUMENT PANEL - MANIAC OTS

<BLIP-BLIP!> Suddenly, a TARGET ICON appears on Maniac's long range sensor screen. Maniac reaches INTO SHOT, punching buttons.

MANIAC

Wait! I'm picking up a ship!

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
Me, too. It's not a fighter, either.

The SCHEMATIC of a HOSPITAL SHIP (like the one we saw in the briefing room earlier) now appears on Maniac's screen.

MANIAC
Confirm that! A hospital ship. We got it!

EXT. SPACE - PANNING WITH THE SCIMITARS

The four SCIMITARS light their AFTERBURNERS and fly toward the distant speck of the hospital ship.

EXT. SPACE - NEAR THE HOSPITAL SHIP - WITH SCIMITARS

The *Pleiku* is severely damaged. Large burn marks scar her hull. Engine sections have been blown apart. Some of her decks are exposed to open space. And there is a huge, cavernous maw near the front, as if something has punched a hole into her nose. The SCIMITARS ENTER SHOT PAST THE CAMERA, heading for the *Pleiku*.

GRUNT (VO)
Those gatos don't leave much, do they?!

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
I'm reading a hull breach; radiation leaks; engines destroyed; main power systems off-line.

FAVORING MANIAC'S SCIMITAR - LOOKING INTO COCKPIT

Maniac looks down at the ship, then at his instruments.

MANIAC (RADIO VO)
Mav, I'm picking up life signs. There are people alive in there.

FAVORING MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR - LOOKING INTO COCKPIT

Maverick nods and activates his com-link.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
Okay, let's see if we can talk to them.
(into com-link:)
Hospital Ship *Pleiku*, this is Chris Blair from the *Tiger's Claw*. Do you read?

FAVORING THE PLEIKU - CAMERA PANNING OVER HER HULL

There is nothing but silence answering Maverick. STOP PAN at the gaping maw at the front of the ship. Nothing but torn metal.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO) (CONT)
Come in, Pleiku. Do you read?

MANIAC (RADIO VO)
Man, look at that! There's nothing
left of the bridge!

ON MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR - LOOKING INTO THE COCKPIT

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
Their comm systems are out, too. I get
no answer.

An <ALARM!> interrupts Maverick. He looks at his instruments.

MAVERICK (CONT)
Hang on! I'm picking up another ship!

EXT. SPACE - NEAR THE PLEIKU - WIDE ON SCIMITARS

The SCIMITARS fly in formation over the hospital ship as --

HYENA (RADIO VO)
One of ours?

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
Too far away to get a recognition
signal. We better check it out.

ANGLE ON MANIAC - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT - WITH HOSPITAL
SHIP IN B.G.

Maniac activates his comlink.

MANIAC
Hey, what about the hospital ship? We
can't just leave 'em. The Kilrathi
might come back to finish the job.

FAVORING MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR - MANIAC'S SCIMITAR IN B.G.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
Good point, Maniac. Thanks for
volunteering.

ON MANIAC - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

Maniac doesn't like this at all!

MANIAC
Hey, time-out! I wasn't volunteering.
I go where the action is! I'm your
best pilot!

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
 Yeah -- and I'm lead on this flight.
 You stay put right here.

Maniac makes a fist and shakes at the injustice of it all.

MANIAC
 <GROAN OF ANGRY FRUSTRATION>

WIDE ON SCIMITARS

Three SCIMITARS light AFTERBURNERS and streak OUT OF SHOT, leaving Maniac's SCIMITAR alone with the hospital ship.

WIPE TO:

EXT. SPACE NEAR TRANSPORT SHIP - WIDE ANGLE

The transport ship moves ominously through space. PUSH IN SLOWLY to reveal that it has sustained some minor battle damage.

INT. TRANSPORT SHIP: BRIDGE - TIGHT ON A TACTICAL DISPLAY

showing the advance of three SENSOR CONTACTS moving toward a SCHEMATIC of a TRANSPORT SHIP at the screen's center.

KILRATHI FORCE COMMANDER (OS)
 The Terrans have taken the bait.

PULL WIDE -- TO REVEAL THE BRIDGE OF THE TRANSPORT SHIP

A small bridge with the CONFED INSIGNIA etched over the TACTICAL DISPLAY SCREEN is manned by Kilrathi warriors: a KILRATHI FORCE COMMANDER, a KILRATHI BRIDGE OFFICER and KILRATHI TECHS.

KILRATHI FORCE COMMANDER (CONT)
 As soon as they are in range, launch our little surprise. And inform the Nir'Runihn to destroy the hospital ship. It has served its purpose.

EXT. SPACE - MOVING WITH SCIMITARS

The three SCIMITARS in Maverick's flight streak toward an as-yet-unrecognizable ship in the distance.

ANGLE ON MAVERICK - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

Maverick looks at his instruments.

MAVERICK (CONT)
 I'm getting a recognition signal. It's Confederation! Fighter transport Morgan.

GRUNT (RADIO VO)
Reinforcements! Que suerte!

WIDE ON SCIMITARS -ⁱ AS THE TRANSPORT SHIP NOW LOOMS LARGER

The SCIMITARS rocket toward the transport ship as --

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
Transport ship Morgan, we are here to
assist. Over.

CLOSER ON TRANSPORT SHIP

Huge HANGAR DOORS slowly open, revealing two large launch bays.
SABRE FIGHTERS and BROADSWORD BOMBERS LAUNCH from the transport
ship. They streak into space in flights of two and three abreast.

HYENA (RADIO VO)
(surprised)
Hey, what are they doing?

GRUNT (RADIO VO)
Maybe it's a welcoming committee.

WIDE

The Confederation fighters leaving the transport ship continue
past the three SCIMITARS.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
(growing suspicious)
Some welcoming committee. They're
leaving.

FAVORING THE TRANSPORT SHIP

A second wave of fighters suddenly emerge from the launch bays.
Except, these are... Kilrathi DRALTHI INTERCEPTORS!

PANNING - FAVORING MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR

as Maverick's Scimitar tries to veer away, Grunt's and Hyena's
Scimitars following.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
Kilrathi! It's a trap!

ON DRALTHI INTERCEPTORS

They fly right for THE CAMERA, cannons blasting away until the
SCREEN IS FILLED WITH GLOWING FIRE and we --

FADE OUT

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - NEAR TRANSPORT SHIP - ANGLE - CAMERA FOLLOWS
MAVERICK'S AND HYENA'S SCIMITARS

Maverick's and Hyena's Scimitars ENTER SHOT, streaking through
space. LASER BLASTS rip THROUGH THE SHOT.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
They're on us! Break right, Hyena!

The two SCIMITARS bank sharply in opposite directions (Hyena's
banking to the right), moving OUT OF SHOT away from each other as
two Kilrathi DRALTHI INTERCEPTORS now ENTER SHOT.

GRUNT (RADIO VO)
Two flaming gatos comin' up!

Suddenly from behind, two MISSILES streak INTO SHOT, impacting
the Dralthis, creating TWIN FIREBALLS. A third SCIMITAR (Grunt's)
ENTERS SHOT and flies between the FIREBALLS.

GRUNT (RADIO VO) (CONT)
Aie! Arriba!

WITH MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR - LOOKING INTO COCKPIT - BATTLE IN B.G.

Maverick looks back to see what Grunt has left of the two
Dralthis (the FADING FIREBALLS).

MAVERICK
Good shooting, Grunt!

HYENA (RADIO VO)
Heads up, Mav! Furball -- twelve
o'clock high!

Maverick snaps his head back forward, looking up at --

MAVERICK'S POV - THROUGH COCKPIT CANOPY

A Dralthis is headed right FOR CAMERA. It fires a MISSILE!
Maverick yanks hard right on the control stick --

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
(CRY OF DESPERATE EFFORT)

WITH MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR

It banks TOWARD CAMERA and then OUT OF SHOT. The MISSILE streaks
THROUGH THE SHOT.

WIPE TO:

EXT. SPACE - NEAR THE PLEIKU - FAVORING MANIAC'S SCIMITAR

The SCIMITAR skims over the battered Pleiku as we hear --

GRUNT (RADIO VO)
(STATIC & WEAK)
Hey, I need help here! Two gatos on my
tail!

ANGLE ON MANIAC - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

We can see the battered *Pleiku* in the BG. Maniac shakes his head, tortured as he hears:

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
(STATIC & WEAK)
Hyena, cover Grunt! I'll take this one!

HYENA (RADIO VO)
(STATIC & WEAK)
Sorry, Maverick. Got my own problems -
three of 'em!

MANIAC
Aw, man, they need me. What am I doing
babysitting this floating hulk?

Maniac starts FLIPPING SWITCHES and PUNCHING BUTTONS as he starts bringing all his systems on line.

MANIAC (CONT)
Orders or no orders, I'm going!

LONG SHOT ON PLEIKU AND MANIAC'S SCIMITAR

MOVE THE CAMERA SLIGHTLY to reveal in the FG, the Kilrathi corvette *Nir'Runihn*, floating powered down. Suddenly, its ENGINES IGNITE (NOTE: the engines are pointed TOWARD THE CAMERA) and it starts to move toward the *Pleiku* and Maniac's Scimitar.

ANGLE ON MANIAC - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

ALARMS go off. Startled, Maniac looks at his instruments.

MANIAC
Hey, what --?!
(realization)
I'm targeted! Where is he?!

ON NIR'RUNIHN

streaking TOWARD THE CAMERA. It fires a MISSILE that streaks PAST THE CAMERA OUT OF SHOT.

WITH MANIAC'S SCIMITAR

As Maniac banks hard left and lights his AFTERBURNER.

MANIAC (RADIO VO)
Burning tailpipe!

Manica does a barrel roll and DIVES OUT OF SHOT and behind the Pleiku. The missile ENTERS SHOT and streaks past the point in space occupied by Maniac only a second earlier.

INT. NIR'RUNIHN BRIDGE - CLOSE ANGLE ON ARM OF COMMAND CHAIR

as a Kilarthi FIST <SLAMS> angrily against it. PULL BACK to REVEAL the CAPTAIN of the NIR'RUNIHN in his command chair, furious. A Kilarthi WEAPONS OFFICER sits at a console in front of him, looking up at a HOLO TACTICAL DISPLAY.

KILRATHI CAPTAIN
Incompetent! Surprise should have made him ours!

WEAPONS OFFICER
The Terran pilot is very quick.

CLOSER ON THE KILRATHI CAPTAIN AND THE WEAPONS OFFICER

The captain gets to his feet and looms over the weapons officer.

KILRATHI CAPTAIN
Or you are very slow. Lock onto him and finish him!

WEAPONS OFFICER
But, captain, we have only one missile left after our last attack on the hospital ship. Shouldn't we --

KILRATHI CAPTAIN
Don't question my orders! I want that Terran fighter!

The Weapons Officer nods and quietly hurries to re-aim.

EXT. SPACE - WITH MANIAC'S SCIMITAR

Maniac's SCIMITAR loops down INTO SHOT, trying to get a six o'clock position on the Nir'Runihn. The Nir'Runihn, however, swings about fast and BANKS OUT OF SHOT.

MANIAC (RADIO VO)
Okay, now you've made The Maniac mad!

WITH MANIAC'S SCIMITAR - BEHIND COCKPIT - MANIAC OTS

Maniac is flying for the Nir'Runihn, visible in the BG in front of him. The cockpit moves IN and OUT OF SHOT as Maniac zig-zags wildly. We can hear the intermittent TONES of MISSILE LOCK.

MANIAC (RADIO VO) (CONT)
Trying to get a lock on me? Guess
again, furball!

WIDER ON SCENE -- FOLLOWING MANIAC'S APPROACH

Maniac dives toward the Nir'Runihn. Suddenly, LASER BLASTS fire out from the Nir'Runihn, streaking past Maniac.

MANIAC (RADIO VO) (CONT)
Whoa! Okay, you got guns -- !!

TIGHT ON MANIAC'S COCKPIT - ON MANIAC DRAMATIC UPSHOT

Maniac CLICKS the firing button on his control stick as the HEADS-UP-DISPLAY with the Nir'Runihn in the center is reflected onto his HELMET VISOR.

MANIAC (RADIO VO) (CONT)
(deadly determination)
Well, so do I.

WITH MANIAC'S SCIMITAR

as it fires its LASER CANNONS.

HIGH DOWNSHOT - SCIMITAR AND NIR'RUNIHN

Maniac's SCIMITAR does a 360-roll in front of the CAMERA, firing lasers, and then starts a DIVE toward the Nir'Runihn.

TRACK WITH MANIAC'S SCIMITAR

as it continues its dive and heads nose-first for the Nir'Runihn. There is a massive criss-cross of laser fire between the Nir'Runihn and the SCIMITAR.

ANGLE - FAVORING NIR'RUNIHN'S LASER TURRETS

The turrets pummel away at the SCIMITAR with LASER BLASTS.

TRACKING WITH MANIAC'S SCIMITAR

as it skims over the hull of the Nir'Runihn, zig-zagging to avoid the turrets' LASER BLASTS, firing and... one... by... one... taking out the laser turrets.

MANIAC (RADIO VO) (CONT)
(VICTORY WHOOP)

INT. NIR'RUNIHN BRIDGE - WIDE ANGLE

The deck SHUDDERS and the LIGHTS FLICKER and dim to a DULL RED.

WEAPONS OFFICER
Laser turrets off-line!

KILRATHI CAPTAIN
Get him back in missile sights!!

EXT. SPACE - WITH MANIAC'S SCIMITAR

Maniac pulls the SCIMITAR up from its dive, away from the hull of the NIR'RUNIHN.

ANGLE ON MANIAC - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

He looks back with glee.

MANIAC
Now to finish you off --

The ALARM CLAXON goes off, followed by the TONE of missile lock!

MANIAC (CONT)
(very worried)
Missile lock!

INT. NIR'RUNIHN BRIDGE - FAVORING TACTICAL HOLO DISPLAY

that shows Maniac's SCIMITAR bracketed by a MISSILE LOCK ICON.

KILRATHI CAPTAIN
FIRE!!!

EXT. SPACE - CLOSE ON NIR'RUNIHN

A missile launches from her underside and streaks OUT OF SHOT.

ANGLE ON MANIAC'S SCIMITAR

Maniac is too close to the Nir'Runihn to evade in time. The missile is going to hit in a split second --

CLOSER - FAVORING COCKPIT

Maniac has no choice but to pull the ejection handle.

MANIAC (RADIO VO)
(DESPERATE CRY)

The EJECTION POD launches away from the fighter. The missile hits and the SCIMITAR EXPLODES into a FIREBALL.

INT. NIR'RUNIHN BRIDGE - ON THE WEAPONS OFFICER

The weapons officer raises his fist in the air, jubilant.

WEAPONS OFFICER
(JUBILANT ROAR OF VICTORY)

WIDEN to include the Kilrathi captain as, coldly furious, he steps INTO SHOT behind the weapons officer.

KILRATHI CAPTAIN
Do not be so quick to celebrate. The
Terran is still alive.

ANGLE - FAVORING WEAPONS STATION

The captain watches as the weapons officer pushes a button and the TACTICAL DISPLAY converts into a MOTION TRACKING SENSOR. A moving ICON gets his attention.

WEAPONS OFFICER
(chastened)
I am tracking the Terran ejection pod,
sir. It's headed for the hospital ship.

KILRATHI CAPTAIN
Good. We'll finish him there.

WEAPONS OFFICER
But, captain, we have no weapons left.

The captain leans into the console, watching the icon, practically salivating at the thought:

KILRATHI CAPTAIN
Alert the crew. We will board that
ship!

WIPE TO:

EXT. SPACE - WITH MAVERICK'S FLIGHT

A Dralhti Interceptor ENTERS SHOT and streaks PAST CAMERA. There's a BEAT. Grunt's SCIMITAR then ENTERS SHOT and --

GRUNT (RADIO VO)
Make your peace, gato!

A MISSILE LAUNCHES from Grunt's SCIMITAR.

ANGLE - TRACKING DRALTHI INTERCEPTOR

as it attempts to bank hard left to get out of the way of the missile. But the maneuver is too late -- the missile HITS and the Dralthi EXPLODES in a FIREBALL.

WITH GRUNT'S SCIMITAR - FAVORING COCKPIT

In the BG, we can see the FIREBALL of the exploded Dralthi.

GRUNT (RADIO VO) (CONT)
That's the last one, Maverick.

WITH MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR - TRANSPORT SHIP IN B.G.

Maverick looks back at the transport ship through his canopy.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
No. There's one more to take care of.

He banks his fighter AWAY FROM THE CAMERA toward the transport --

FOLLOWING MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR - MAVERICK OTS

The SCIMITAR flies toward the transport. As it closes in, Maverick launches TWO missiles at the engine bays. The missiles HIT and the engines EXPLODE. The SCIMITAR banks hard left to fly OUT OF SHOT. The large transport remains IN SHOT, disabled.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO) (CONT)
He's not going anywhere.

FAVORING THE THREE SCIMITARS

as Maverick, Grunt and Hyena all ENTER SHOT, and join formation.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO) (CONT)
But we are. Those fighters were headed for the Claw!

HYENA (RADIO VO)
What about Maniac?

WIDER ON SCENE - PANNING WITH THREE SCIMITARS

as they light their AFTERBURNERS and rocket off into space.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
(doesn't believe...
Maniac's in trouble)
He'll just have to fend for himself.

WIPE TO:

EXT. SPACE - ON MANIAC'S EJECTION POD

It moves slowly toward the Pleiku. We can see a CIRCULAR DOCKING PORT on the hull of the hospital ship.

MANIAC (RADIO VO)
Maniac to Hospital Ship Pleiku: I am
docking alongside.

CLOSER - POD AND DOCKING PORT

The pod extends DOCKING GRAPPLERS as it makes CONTACT.

MANIAC (RADIO VO/CONT)
I'm one of the good guys! Don't shoot!

INT. EJECTION POD - ANGLE ON MANIAC

Maniac looks at his instruments as the <THUMP> of contact and a small SHUDDER subside.

MANIAC (CONT)
(to himself)
Hope they heard that...

Maniac ducks down under his seat and OUT OF SHOT --

INT. PLEIKU CORRIDOR - FAVORING DOCKING AIRLOCK

A circular AIRLOCK rotates open with a FAINT HISS. Maniac is on the other side. He's on his hands and knees. He crawls out into the corridor and gets up. He freezes, shocked --

MANIAC
(SHOCKED GASP)

REVERSE ANGLE - PLEIKU CORRIDOR

The corridor is full of WOUNDED PILOTS AND MARINES. They lie on gurneys, on blankets on the deck, or some are propped up against the bulkheads. The human cost of war...

PILOTS/MARINES
(MOANS)

CLOSE ON MANIAC'S FACE

He has never seen this before.

OTS MANIAC - THE CORRIDOR

One of the pilots looks up and spots Maniac. Others do the same. The corridor is suddenly awash with tempered excitement.

PILOTS/MARINES
 (desperately hopeful)
 Look! It's a pilot!/Are you here to
 rescue us?

ANGLE - TRACKING MANIAC

as he starts to walk down the corridor, past the wounded.

PILOTS/MARINES
 Take us home, please!/?/Help us...

Maniac reaches the end of the corridor where there is a large door. A bandaged FEMALE PILOT reaches up from a blanket on the floor and touches Maniac's hand. All Maniac can say is--

MANIAC
 (a whisper)
 I'm sorry ...

The DOOR HISSES OPEN. It reveals DR. SAMUEL KYLE, dressed in surgical scrubs, stepping out to greet Maniac. The 40-ish-year-old doctor has seen way too much of war, and survives it with the compliments of a dry wit.

DR. KYLE
 Hope you're not wounded, 'cause I got
 no more room.

MANIAC
 (still in a daze)
 Huh, wha - ?

Kyle extends a hand to Maniac. In a daze, Maniac shakes it.

DR. KYLE
 I'm Doctor Kyle. Welcome to my home
 away from home. We're a little crowded
 and we could use some more antibiotics,
 but we manage. Are you our rescue?

MANIAC
 Ah... afraid not. I'm stranded here.

ANGLE - FAVORING KYLE

Kyle crosses his arms and shakes his head. More "good" news.

DR. KYLE
 Great. Oh, well. I can always use a
 hand in triage.

Kyle puts an arm around Maniac's shoulders and leads him through the door.

MANIAC

I haven't had any med training, doc.

DR. KYLE

That's okay, neither has half of what's left of my staff ...

INT. THE MED BAY - WIDE ANGLE

Dr. Kyle leads Maniac into a large, oval-shaped room where the lights are out and only PORTABLE LIGHTS illuminate the place. A couple of nurses, LT. BLU and LT. PETERSON, hover over the beds.

DR. KYLE

These are our toughest cases. The ones that need the most attention.

LT. BLU

Doctor, I need you.

Kyle moves over to the bed where Blu is working on a PATIENT. Maniac is slow to follow him.

MANIAC

Want me to wait outside?

FAVORING HOSPITAL BED

as Kyle and Lt. Blu work on a patient, Maniac slowly retreats.

DR. KYLE

Afraid of the sight of blood?

MANIAC

No, just internal organs.

ON KYLE - OVER MANIAC'S SHOULDER

Kyle looks up from what he is doing to flash a smile at Maniac.

DR. KYLE

You'll be fine. What's your name?

MANIAC

Maniac.

DR. KYLE

That's a name?

ON MANIAC

Maniac points to the wings on his uniform.

MANIAC

Call sign. I'm a pilot.

ANGLE TO INCLUDE A RESPIRATOR PUMP

Lt. Blue wheels the RESPIRATOR PUMP over to the bed as Kyke waves Maniac closer to the bed.

DR. KYLE

Well, okay, pilot. Come over here.
I'm going to need your help.

WITH MANIAC

as he moves closer to the bed.

MANIAC

Look, I don't want to risk hurting
anybody, doc.

DR. KYLE

Too late. The war took care of that.
With the main power out, we've had to
learn medicine the old-fashioned way.

Kyle takes Maniac's hands and places them on a PUMP MECHANISM in the respirator.

CLOSER - MANIAC AND PUMP

Kyle leads Maniac's hands in working the manual pump.

DR. KYLE (CONT)

You have to work the lung pump manually
until the patient can breathe on his
own. I have to operate on another kid
and I need my nurses. Right now you're
this boy's lungs.

Kyle lets go of Maniac's hands. Maniac continues to pump.

WIDER ANGLE ON SCENE

as Kyle moves away with Lt. Blu and heads OUT OF SHOT. Maniac pumps away with fear and determination combined.

MANIAC

(to himself)

Please don't let me mess up....

WIPE TO:

EXT. SPACE - THE TIGER'S CLAW (ESTABLISHING)

as the Tiger's Claw moves through space --

EXECUTIVE OFFICER (VO)
Commodore Tolwyn, fighters approaching.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW BRIDGE

Tolwyn and the Executive Officer stand behind the TACTICAL DISPLAY. CONTACTS appears on the big HOLO SCREEN.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CONT)
Recognition signal says they're ours.
Probably part of the task force our
fighters rescued.

CLOSER - FAVORING TOLWYN

as he nods and moves to a console where a CREWMAN sits.

TOLWYN
Contact that flight. Let's bring them
in. They've earned it.

CREWMAN
Yes, sir.

WIPE TO:

EXT. SPACE - WITH MAVERICK'S FLIGHT

The three SCIMITARS streak across space, racing toward the Claw.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
Maverick to Tiger's Claw, do you copy?

ON MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR - FAVORING COCKPIT

Maverick is answered by a BURST OF STATIC.

MAVERICK
(worried)
They're jamming us. The Claw doesn't
know it, but they're about to get
ambushed!

INT. TIGER'S CLAW BRIDGE - ANGLE ON TOLWYN AND CREWMAN

The crewman, puzzled, turns to Tolwyn.

CREWMAN
I can't raise the ships, sir.
There's... interference.

TOLWYN
What's the source?

ANGLE ON TOLWYN AND THE CREWMAN

as the crewman fidgets with his instruments. The Exec. Officer ENTERS SHOT to watch, curious.

CREWMAN
(puzzlement grows)
The ships are the source.

Tolwyn throws the Exec. Officer a glance, then --

TOLWYN
It's a trap!

As if to emphasize his point, suddenly ALARM CLAXONS go off. The crewman leans into his console and gets excited:

CREWMAN
Sir -- long range missile lock!

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: ARCHER'S QUARTERS - ANGLE ON ARCHER

Archer springs up from her desk where she had been sitting when the ALARM CLAXON goes off, followed by --

TOLWYN (SHIP'S ADDRESS VO)
Battle stations! All pilots to the
Flight Deck! This is not a drill!

WIDE ANGLE - SLIGHT DOWNSHOT

Archer leaps to the closet door, opens it, and grabs her flight suit. As she runs for the door --

ARCHER
(convincing herself)
You're doing this, Bowman!

INT. TIGER'S CLAW BRIDGE - ANGLE ON TOLWYN AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER

On the TACTICAL DISPLAY, a spread of MISSILES can be seen heading for the Tiger's Claw. The Exec. Officer turns to Tolwyn.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
They've launched missiles!

TOLWYN
Evasive action! Brace for impact!

as the ALARM CLAXONS cry a deafening scream of anxiety, we --

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - ON THE PLEIKU (ESTABLISHING)

PUSH IN on the hospital ship where the ejection pod has docked.

INT. PLEIKU - MED BAY - FAVORING MANIAC

Maniac is still working the manual pump when he notices something. Alarmed, he looks around.

MANIAC

Doc! Nurse! Something's happening.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE LT. BLU

as she walks over from another bed and looks over the patient.

LT. BLU

Easy, pilot. He's okay.

MANIAC

But he's making this noise --

Dr. Kyle ENTERS SHOT and leans over the bed.

DR. KYLE

That's 'cause he's breathing.

(to Lt. Blu:)

You can take the pump away, nurse.

ANGLE ON LT. BLU AND MANIAC

Lt. Blue smiles at Maniac and takes his hands off the pump. Maniac just stares at it. She pats him on the shoulder and takes the pump OUT OF SHOT.

MANIAC

(truly awed)

Wow ...

CLOSER - ON MANIAC AND DR. KYLE

Kyle gives Maniac a "thumbs up."

DR. KYLE

You saved his life.

Before Maniac can say anything, they are interrupted by a LOUD CLANG that reverberates throughout. Kyle looks up.

DR. KYLE (CONT)
 (worried)
 What was that?

MANIAC
 Sounds like docking grapplers.
 (realization)
 The Kilrathi!

EXT. SPACE - WITH THE PLEIKU

The Nir'Runihn has moved over the Pleiku. A docking tunnel extends from the Nir'Runihn to a docking port near the front of the Pleiku.

DR. KYLE (VO)
 Great. More guests for dinner...

WIPE TO:

EXT. SPACE NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - ANGLE ON TIGER'S CLAW

The Tiger's Claw turns TOWARD CAMERA as a CLUSTER OF MISSILES ENTERS SHOT and impact on her STARBOARD SHIELD. A brilliant FIREBALL dwarfs the Claw for a BEAT, then DISSIPATES.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW BRIDGE - ANGLE ON TOLWYN AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Tolwyn and the Executive Officer watch the busy TACTICAL DISPLAY.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
 Shields down to forty percent, sir.

EXT. SPACE NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - FAVORING LAUNCH BAYS

A flight of SCIMITARS take off from the bay, launching into space and OUT OF SHOT. Two SCIMITARS launching on the second wave, however, are hit by missiles ENTERING SHOT from o.s. and EXPLODE.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW BRIDGE - CLOSE ON TACTICAL DISPLAY

as we see TWO BLIPS "wink out" from the screen. PULL WIDE to REVEAL Tolwyn and the Exec. Officer.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
 We're losing fighters on take-off!

The deck SHUDDERS from another MUFFLED EXPLOSION OS.

ANGLE ON TOLWYN AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER - FAVORING TOLWYN

Tolwyn stands grimly quiet, looking at the tactical display OS.

TOLWYN
 (to himself)
 We're running out of time.

His mind made up, he turns to the Executive Officer.

TOLWYN (CONT)
 Mr. Nelson -- you have the comm.

WIDE ANGLE - FAVORING TOLWYN

as he turns to leave the bridge.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
 But... where are you going, sir?

TOLWYN
 One of Napoleon's generals said it
 best: ride to the sound of the guns.

Tolwyn exits as the Exec. Officer looks after him, puzzled.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW FLIGHT DECK - FAVORING TWO SCIMITARS

The deck SHUDDERS with the concussion of o.s. EXPLOSIONS.
 PAYBACK climbs aboard the SCIMITAR IN THE F.G. As she settles in
 and pulls her helmet on, she sees Archer climbing into the
 SCIMITAR IN THE B.G.

PAYBACK
 (to Archer, yelling
 above the din)
 What do you think you're doing?!

REVERSE ANGLE - WITH ARCHER

as she pulls on her own helmet, she yells back:

ARCHER
 Same thing you are!

ON PAYBACK'S SCIMITAR - VERY CLOSE ON PAYBACK

She scowls and FIRES UP HER ENGINES as her CANOPY CLOSES.

PAYBACK
 Do me a favor and stay off my wing.

WIDE ON FLIGHT DECK

The two SCIMITARS lift off the deck and FIRE MAIN ENGINES,
 launching through the FORCE FIELD shielding the hangar bay doors.

WIPE TO:

EXT. SPACE - WITH MAVERICK'S FLIGHT

The three SCIMITARS streak INTO SHOT.

HYENA (RADIO VO)
Hey, my sensors are picking up one big
battle up ahead.

WITH MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR - FAVORING COCKPIT

Maverick turns to Hyena's SCIMITAR, visible through the canopy as it flies in formation next to his.

MAVERICK (RADIO VO)
They started without us. We'll be
there in 90 seconds.

PAN WITH THE SCIMITARS

The SCIMITARS streak AWAY FROM THE CAMERA toward a distant
FLICKER AND FLASH OF LIGHT -- the site of the battle.

GRUNT (RADIO VO)
Just hope the Claw's in one piece when
we get there.

WIPE TO:

INT. PLEIKU: CORRIDOR - FOLLOWING MANIAC AND KYLE

Maniac and Dr. Kyle come through the Med Bay door and move past the wounded in the corridor, toward the docking port airlock.

MANIAC
The Kilrathi'll most likely board near
the bridge and then move in from there.

ANGLE ON DOCKING PORT AIRLOCK AND T-INTERSECTION

Maniac and Kyle stop next to the airlock. The corridor ends a few feet past it, at a T-intersection.

MANIAC (CONT)
What's the situation with the ship?

DR. KYLE
There's nothing between us and them but
a few air-tight doors.

MANIAC
The furballs'll kick 'em open. If the
decompression doesn't get us, their
lasers will. At least, we'll go fast.

CLOSER ON DR. KYLE

as he turns back to the Med Bay door, thinking...

DR. KYLE

The Med Bay is a stand-alone compartment. We can seal it from the rest of the ship. We can all crowd in there.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE MANIAC

as he nods.

MANIAC

(formulating a plan)

Yeah... yeah, good. Maybe we can give the cats a taste of their own medicine.

(a beat)

I'll need a volunteer.

DR. KYLE

Well, that's how I wound up here in the first place.

INT. KILRATHI DOCKING TUNNEL - CLOSE ON A LASER BEAM

cutting through the Pleiku's bulkhead. PULL BACK to REVEAL a KILRATHI WARRIOR dressed in an ARMORED SPACESUIT, holding a large CUTTING LASER RIFLE. The warrior has cut through a section of the bulkhead which suddenly gives way and falls away.

ANGLE - LOOKING DOWN DOCKING TUNNEL - FAVOR THE WEAPONS OFFICER

The Weapons Officer motions to a group of KILRATHI WARRIORS crammed in a cylindrical docking tunnel. All are in SPACESUITS.

WEAPONS OFFICER (FILTERED)

Find the Terrans! I want them all exterminated!

The Kilrathi warriors start forward toward the Pleiku.

INT. EJECTION POD - ANGLE ON MANIAC

Maniac is cross-circuiting some of the motherboards under his instrument panel.

MANIAC

(to himself)

This better work, Maniac. We only got one shot.

He finishes switching some motherboards and CLOSES THE PANEL. Then he sticks his head out the ejection pod hatch --

INT. DOCKING PORT - WIDE ANGLE

Dr. Kyle is rigging a cable lifeline across the docking port as Maniac sticks his head out the docking port airlock. Kyle tosses the end of the lifeline to Maniac.

MANIAC (CONT)
You ready, Doc?

DR. KYLE
Let's do it!

INT. EJECTION POD - ANGLE ON MANIAC

Maniac ties the end of the cable lifeline around his waist, then pushes a button on the ejection pods controls.

MANIAC
Here goes nothing!

EXT. SPACE - CLOSE ANGLE ON THE HOSPITAL SHIP AND EJECTION POD

as the ejection pod's MANEUVERING THRUSTERS FIRE and it starts to separate from the hospital ship.

INT. DOCKING PORT - ANGLE ON DOCKING PORT HATCH

As the air in the docking port begins to rush out with a LOUD DECOMPRESSION WOOSH, Maniac leaps from the pod's open hatch as the ejection pod moves away from the Pleiku. The RUSHING AIR tries to suck him out into space --

CLOSER ON MANIAC

-- but Maniac is held by the lifeline. He struggles to pull himself back in.

MANIAC
(CHOKED STRUGGLED GRUNTS)

INT. PLEIKU: A BATTLE DAMAGED CORRIDOR - ANGLE ON WEAPONS OFFICER AND SOME KILRATHI WARRIORS

Passing a large VIEWING PORT in the corridor, the Weapons Officer halts his group of warriors with a raised arm. He has caught a glimpse of something outside. He leans to the viewing port --

WEAPONS OFFICER (FILTERED)
(suspicious)
What is this?

ON THE EJECTION POD - WEAPONS OFFICER'S POV THROUGH VIEWING PORT
The ejection pod is flying THROUGH SHOT --

EXT. SPACE - WITH NIR'RUNIHN AND EJECTION POD

As the ejection pod flies up toward the Nir'Runihn, which is connected to the Pleiku by the docking tunnel.

INT. EJECTION POD - ANGLE ON INSTRUMENT PANEL

The instrument panels Maniac had been working on start to ARC with ELECTRICITY as they overload...

EXT. SPACE - WITH NIR'RUNIHN, EJECTION POD AND PLEIKU

A split second before it would crash into the Nir'Runihn, the ejection pod EXPLODES!

CLOSER - FAVORING THE NIR'RUNIHN

SECONADRY EXPLOSIONS rip through the Nir'Runihn. The docking tunnel crumples. The Nir'Runihn disintegrates in a FINAL EXPLOSION!

INT. PLEIKU - BATTLE DAMAGED CORRIDOR

The EXPLOSION SMASHES the viewing port in the corridor. The horrified weapons officer is --

WEAPONS OFFICER (FILTERED)
(PANICKED ROAR)

-- sucked into space by the OUT-RUSHING AIR. The other KILRATHI WARRIORS are also sucked into space as the bulkhead crumples, exposing the corridor to space.

INT. DOCKING PORT - WIDE ANGLE

Maniac is dangling at the end of the lifeline as the GALE-FORCE WIND of the escaping air tries to pull him out the open docking port hatch. Dr. Kyle, anchored to the port by a GRAPPLING HOOK, pulls on the lifeline, trying to reel Maniac in. Both men are holding their breaths.

CLOSER ON OPEN DOCKING PORT HATCH AND MANIAC

The DECOMPRESSION WIND STARTS TO SLOW and Maniac drops face down on the deck. NOTE: BEGIN HEART-BEAT SOUND - all we can hear in the vacuum of space: the sound of our own blood rushing through our bodies.

WIDER ANGLE

HEART-BEAT SOUND CONTINUES as Maniac and Kyle struggle to reach each other. Kyle reaches him now with his arm and pulls him in. Maniac is hurt -- flying debris has torn his clothes. Kyle pulls him OUT OF SHOT--

INT. PLEIKU: CORRIDOR - WITH MED BAY DOOR IN B.G.

HEART-BEAT SOUND CONTINUES as Kyle drags Maniac INTO SHOT toward the Med bay door. They collapse just in front of the door. A TENSE MOMENT then, the airlock door opens. AIR RUSHES OUT as the arms of Lt. Blu and Lt. Peterson reach out and drag Kyle and Maniac in through the door. END HEART-BEAT SOUND.

INT. PLEIKU: MED BAY DOOR AIRLOCK - WIDE ANGLE

The AIRLOCK DOOR CLOSES as Kyle and Maniac gasp for breath. Maniac looks at Kyle, Lt. Blu, and Lt. Peterson.

MANIAC
(gasping for breath)
You guys can fly with me anytime!

WIPE TO:

EXT. SPACE - NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - EXTREME WIDE

on a free-for-all of Confed fighters battling each other in a field of EXPLODING FIREBALLS and LASER BLASTS. Maverick's, Hyena's, and Grunt's Scimitars fly PAST THE CAMERA INTO SHOT, heading into the fight.

TRACKING MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR

He FIRES LASERS.

REVERSE - TRACKING A SABRE (PILOTED BY A KILRATHI)

It's HIT by Maverick's LASER FIRE and EXPLODES.

ON ANOTHER SABRE - OTS GRUNT - FROM INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR

as he flies toward another SABRE that he's locking up in his sights. We hear the TONE of missile lock.

GRUNT
Gotcha, furball!

He LAUNCHES A MISSILE at the Sabre.

ON SABRE

as it flies AWAY FROM CAMERA and is HIT by the missile and EXPLODES. Grunt's SCIMITAR flies THROUGH SHOT.

WITH PAYBACK'S SCIMITAR - FAVORING COCKPIT

A second SCIMITAR ENTERS SHOT and pulls up on Payback's wing.

HYENA (RADIO VO)
Missed me, Payback?

PAYBACK
Nice of you guys to get in the fight.

PAN WITH THEM as they turn and dive toward a couple of Sabre fighters, OPENING FIRE WITH LASERS.

LONG ON TIGER'S CLAW

as the battle rages around it -- LASER FIRE and EXPLOSIONS. Three Broadsword bombers race PAST THE CAMERA INTO SHOT, headed for the Tiger's Claw.

WITH ARCHER'S SCIMITAR - FAVORING COCKPIT

as it STREAKS INTO SHOT. She looks up just as another SCIMITAR ENTERS SHOT and pulls up alongside her.

ARCHER (RADIO VO)
(to other Scimitar:)
Identify -- friend or foe.

TOLWYN (RADIO VO)
That's your call, cadet.

ANGLE ON ARCHER - INSIDE HER SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

as she reacts. She's really under a microscope now...

ARCHER
Ah... Commodore, sir! I'm on your wing!

WITH TOLWYN'S SCIMITAR - CLOSE ON COCKPIT

Tolwyn looks at Archer's fighter in BG, determined:

TOLWYN
No, cadet, I'm on your wing.

CAMERA MOVES - FOLLOWING ARCHER'S AND TOLWYN'S SCIMITARS

The two Scimitars fly toward the three Broadwords in the BG. As we MOVE WITH THE SCIMITARS, the Tiger's Claw looms into view.

ARCHER (RADIO VO)
Target at twelve o'clock, sir. Three
Broadwords.

WITH ARCHER'S SCIMITAR - CLOSE ON COCKPIT

We see the Broadwords on her HEADS-UP DISPLAY as they loom closer.

ARCHER

Commodore, dive through their formation. We'll scatter them and engage.

WITH TOLWYN'S SCIMITAR - CLOSE ON COCKPIT

A trace of a smile on the commodore, perhaps?

TOLWYN

I'm going in, Bowman.

He yanks the control stick hard right and BANKS AWAY FROM CAMERA.

PAN WITH TOLWYN'S SCIMITAR

He dives through the V-Formation of the three broadswords. The broadswords bank in three different directions to avoid Tolwyn.

ANGLE ON ARCHER - INSIDE HER SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

as Archer sees this and cranks her stick hard right --

ARCHER

(convincing herself)

Just a walk in the park, Archer ...

Archer banks AWAY FROM THE CAMERA until we are outside her Scimitar.

WITH ARCHER'S SCIMITAR - ARCHER OTS

Archer is trying to get missile lock on a Broadsword in her sights. We can see it zig-zagging ahead of her.

ANGLE - ARCHER'S COCKPIT POV

Suddenly, Payback's SCIMITAR screams INTO SHOT, taking position between Archer and the Broadsword.

ON ARCHER - INSIDE HER SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

as she yanks back on the stick to pull up --

ARCHER

(STARTLED CRY)

WITH ARCHER'S SCIMITAR AND PAYBACK'S SCIMITAR

Archer pulls up to avoid hitting Payback as Payback launches a missile that streaks OUT OF SHOT.

ON BROADSWORD

The missile HITS the Broadsword, causing it to EXPLODE.

WITH ARCHER'S SCIMITAR - FAVORING COCKPIT

as Archer steadies her ship, Payback pulls up to her wing.

PAYBACK (RADIO VO)
That's how you do it, Archer.

ARCHER (RADIO VO)
I had him in my sights ...

WITH TOLWYN'S SCIMITAR

as it ENTERS SHOT and banks hard left to avoid a Broadsword that pursues it.

TOLWYN (RADIO VO)
This is Tolwyn! I can't shake this
beastly furball off my tail!

WITH ARCHER'S AND PAYBACK'S SCIMITARS

Archer's is first to peel off and dive o.s.

ARCHER (RADIO VO)
I'm on it, Commodore!

PAYBACK (RADIO VO)
So am I!

Payback's fighter dives o.s.

WIDE ON SPACE

As Tolwyn's SCIMITAR streaks through shot, followed a BEAT later by the Broadsword... followed a BEAT later by Archer and Payback's SCIMITARS. CAMERA TRACKS WITH Scimitars.

ARCHER (RADIO VO)
You don't trust me, do you? I'm two
seconds from being in position!

PAYBACK (RADIO VO)
I can take him out!

ANGLE ON ARCHER - INSIDE HER SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

She looks down at her instruments. Her eyes go wide.

ARCHER
(shocked)
No!

WITH ARCHER AND PAYBACK'S SCIMITARS

Archer suddenly peels off.

PAYBACK (RADIO VO)
I knew it! She won't engage!

FOLLOWING TOLWYN'S SCIMITAR AND BROADSWORD - PAYBACK OTS - INSIDE
HER SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

In her HEADS-UP DISPLAY and Payback locks up the Broadsword
that's on Tolwyn (we can see both ships through her canopy).

PAYBACK
Missile lock! On its way!

She FIRES A MISSILE at the Broadsword.

WITH BROADSWORD

as it is HIT by Payback's missile and EXPLODES!

ARCHER OTS - LOOKING OUT THE CANOPY FROM INSIDE HER SCIMITAR

The third Broadsword is headed for the Tiger's Claw in the b.g.
We hear the TONE of missile lock.

WITH ARCHER'S SCIMITAR - CLOSE ON COCKPIT

as Archer concentrates.

ARCHER (RADIO VO)
Not this time. Not the Claw.

VERY CLOSE ON ARCHER - INSIDE HER SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

She does not close her eyes. She does not hesitate. We hear the
CLICK OF THE TRIGGER and the Scimitar is JOLTED by the MISSILE
LAUNCH. WE STAY ON ARCHER. A beat. She is suddenly washed in a
BLINDING GLARE as the Broadsword OS EXPLODES.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TIGER'S CLAW - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE TOLWYN'S QUARTERS

Archer leans against the bulkhead, waiting, when Maniac turns the
corner and walks up to her. Archer stiffens a little.

ARCHER
Look who's back.

MANIAC
I heard you saved the ship.

ARCHER
I did my job.

(softens)
You were right. I had to move on ... I
guess.

CLOSER

Maniac pulls Blizzard's medal from his pocket and holds it out.

MANIAC
Sorry I kept Blizzard's medal. Here.

Archer takes it, looks at it, then pockets it.

ARCHER
I'll send it to his family. I won't be
needing it.

The door to Tolwyn's quarters HISSES OPEN and Tolwyn appears.

TOLWYN
Come in, cadets.

WIPE TO:

INT. TOLWYN'S QUARTERS - WIDE ANGLE

Archer and Maniac stand at attention in front of Tolwyn's desk.
Tolwyn stands as well.

TOLWYN
I'll make it brief: I am recommending
you both for the Flying Cross. Two
ships were saved because of you. It's
an honor well deserved.

ANGLE ON MANIAC

as he takes a step forward.

MANIAC
Ah, sir... I'd like to recommend my
medal be given to someone else.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE TOLWYN AND ARCHER staring at Maniac in shock.

MANIAC (CONT)
The doctor and nurses on that hospital
ship... they were the real heroes.

Tolwyn nods as Archer just keeps staring at Maniac.

TOLWYN
Very well, if that's your wish.
Dismissed.

Archer and Maniac salute and turn to exit --

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: CORRIDOR OUTSIDE TOLWYN'S QUARTERS - ANGLE ON DOOR TO TOLWYN'S QUARTERS

The DOOR HISSES OPEN and Archer and Maniac emerge. Archer is still staring at Maniac as the DOOR HISSES CLOSED.

MANIAC

Don't say it!

ARCHER

I didn't say a thing.

She smiles. A short beat. Then she leans in and gives Maniac a tiny peck on the cheek. She then turns and walks away OUT OF SHOT. Maniac smiles.

WIDE ANGLE

Maniac turns and calls out to Archer --

MANIAC

Hey, how 'bout a game of racquetball?
I've been practicing!

ARCHER

Any time, Maniac. I got your number ...

Smiling, Maniac watches as Archer turns the corner of the corridor, and we --

FADE OUT.

THE END