

WING COMMANDER ACADEMY

"THE MOST DELICATE INSTRUMENT"

74703

Story by:
Mark Edens

Teleplay by:
Shari Goodhartz

Edited by:
Michael Edens

FIRST DRAFT
March 25, 1996

UNIVERSAL CARTOON STUDIOS, INC.

Copyright © and TM 1996
All Rights Reserved

WING COMMANDER ACADEMY
"The Most Delicate Instrument"
Prod. #74703

CAST LIST

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

MAVERICK
MANIAC
ARCHER
PAYBACK
HYENA

BLIZZARD - real name Alan Getz. A handsome, dark-haired cadet with an icy demeanor, who's about to lose his cool forever.

***** CONFEDERATION FLEET PERSONNEL *****

TOLWYN
GUTHRIG
MAYA SHULGIN
SENSOR TECH (female)
COMMUNICATIONS TECH (male)
FLIGHT CONTROL - VO only.
HANGAR DECK TECH CREWS - various and sundry, prepping flights, putting out fires and repairing damage. No lines.
N.D. BRIDGE CREW - No lines.
SECURITY GUARDS - with blasters. No lines.
HEAD SECURITY GUARD - 2 lines.

***** THE KILRATHI *****

KILRATHI WARRIOR - actually a fear-inspired delusion. 3 lines (to be played by same actor who voices Hyena).
3 KILRATHI WARRIORS - No lines. They're a paranoid delusion.

***** SHIPS USED *****

TERRAN CONFEDERATION
 TIGER'S CLAW
 SCIMITAR fighters
 EPEE fighters
 BROADSWORD bombers

KILRATHI EMPIRE
 GRATHA fighters

WING COMMANDER ACADEMY
"The Most Delicate Instrument"
Prod. #74703

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE: A BINARY STAR SYSTEM - EXTREME WIDE

looking past a field of ASTEROIDS in the FG. The TWO STARS of the binary system float in space (one star is larger than the other). Suddenly there's a FLASH OF LIGHT and a BLUR OF COLOR appears between the stars, heading TOWARD THE CAMERA (a ship emerging from a jump node). As the ship decelerates, the BLUR BECOMES THE TIGER'S CLAW and stops near the asteroid field.
Then:

TOLWYN (VO)
Pay special attention to your drift
indicators. These binary stars
generate a complex gravitational field.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: BRIEFING ROOM - ON HOLOGRAM OF BINARY STARS

A HOLOGRAPHIC SCHEMATIC of the binary stars on the projection "table" (used in Episode 2) of the briefing room. We can see REPRESENTATIONAL LINES OF GRAVITATIONAL FORCE running between the stars and forming a gravitational field around them.

TOLWYN (VO CONT)
There are no planets. The gravity's
pulled them apart before they could
form.

DOWNGANGLE ON THE ROOM

MAVERICK, ARCHER, PAYBACK, and BLIZZARD (real name Alan Getz; he's handsome in a cool, self-possessed way -- think Val Kilmer in *Top Gun*) are gathered around the holographic projection "table" as TOLWYN briefs them on their up-coming training flight, using the HOLOGRAM SCHEMATIC of the binary stars.

TOLWYN (CONT)
Your mission is to scout the asteroid
belt. You'll divide into two patrols,
led by cadets Blair and Getz.

ANGLE ON MAVERICK AND BLIZZARD - WITH TOLWYN IN EXTREME FG

Pleased, Maverick throws his shoulders back, standing straighter.

MAVERICK
Thank you, sir.

Blizzard's steely eyes move to meet Tolwyn's. One crisp nod.

BLIZZARD
(curtly)
Sir.

ANGLE ON TOLWYN, MAVERICK, BLIZZARD, ARCHER, AND PAYBACK

Tolwyn presses a button the hologram projection "table" and the
HOLOGRAM OF THE BINARY STARS DISSIPATES --

TOLWYN
You launch in one hour.

Tolwyn turns to Maverick and the hours.

TOLWYN (CONT)
Watch out for flying rocks. Dismissed.

Maverick, Archer, and Payback salute, turn, and head for the door. Blizzard lingers for a beat, then salutes and strides confidently for the door as we...

WIPE TO:

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: PILOTS' READY ROOM - LATER - CLOSE ANGLE ON BLIZZARD

standing at his open locker in the ready room. He reaches into his locker and pulls out a medal, which he gazes at thoughtfully for a moment -- it's a PRECISION FLYING MEDAL: a small round disk with three Scimitar fighters in an inverted "V" formation engraved on it. This is obviously some kind of preflight ritual for him. In the BG, we hear:

PAYBACK (OS)
(gripping)
With all of space to choose from,
Tolwyn can really pick some nasty
astralain for these training exercises!

Blizzard pins the medal to his flightsuit.

PAYBACK (OS CONT)
(mimics Tolwyn)
"Watch out for flying rocks."
(vehemently)
Man, I hate asteroids!

Blizzard picks up his helmet and CLOSES HIS LOCKER DOOR, revealing Archer and Payback in front of their lockers a few feet away. Farther in the BG, we can see Maverick at his locker.

Blizzard TURNS AWAY FROM THE CAMERA toward Archer and Payback, whom we can see OVER BLIZZARD'S SHOULDER.

ARCHER
(to Payback)
The Old Man's got his reasons. The
Kilrathi won't always let you pick
where you want to fight. We need the
practice.

ANGLE ON ARCHER AND PAYBACK - FAVORING ARCHER
as they take their helmets from their lockers.

PAYBACK
So we play hide and seek in the
asteroids.
(a grim desire)
I just want one clear shot at a furball
cap ship -- maybe a carrier.

Before Archer can reply, Blizzard steps INTO SHOT behind her.

BLIZZARD
Archer.

ANGLE ON ARCHER AND BLIZZARD
as Archer turns toward Blizzard.

BLIZZARD (CONT)
I want you to fly wing with me.

ARCHER
(slightly surprised
that he would ask)
Uh, sure, Blizzard.

BLIZZARD
Good.

Blizzard abruptly turns and walks OUT OF SHOT.

ON BLIZZARD - OVER THE SHOULDERS OF ARCHER AND PAYBACK

as they watch Blizzard walk AWAY FROM THE CAMERA out of the ready
room door, which SLIDES OPEN for him. Payback looks teasingly
over at Archer.

PAYBACK
(teasing)
That's the most I've heard Blizzard say
since he joined the Academy. I think
he likes you.

Carrying his helmet, Maverick ENTERS SHOT in the BG, heading out the door as Archer and Payback (carrying their helmets) start AWAY FROM THE CAMERA toward the door.

ARCHER

No way. He'd have to have emotions for that -- and they'd get in the way of his flying.

PAYBACK

(LAUGHS)

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: CORRIDOR OUTSIDE READY ROOM - WIDE ANGLE

Payback and Archer come out of the ready room door and join Maverick and Blizzard by the door to the grav-lift (elevator).

PAYBACK (CONT)

(STILL LAUGHING)

MAVERICK

What's the joke?

CLOSER ANGLE ON MAVERICK, BLIZZARD, ARCHER, AND PAYBACK

Payback cuts her eyes at Blizzard, who's seemingly ignoring them.

PAYBACK

Trust me. You don't want to know.
(LAUGHS)

ARCHER

(JOINS IN THE LAUGHTER)

Maverick opens his mouth to protest, but suddenly the elevator doors SLIDE OPEN in the BG, revealing GUTHRIG ANDROPOULOS, the ship's psychiatrist, wearing athletic clothes.

PAYBACK/ARCHER

(SUPPRESS THEIR LAUGHTER)

The cadets get on the elevator with Guthrig.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: SHIP'S ELEVATOR - WIDE

Maverick, Payback, Archer, and Blizzard crowd around Guthrig in the elevator. There's an awkward silence as the elevator descends. Then:

GUTHRIG

(CLEARS THROAT) I'm on my way to the hangar deck to jog. Even a psychiatrist can appreciate the value of exercise.

MAVERICK

I thought it might be something like that. We've got a training mission.

GUTHRIG

I see.

ANGLE ON GUTHRIG, ARCHER, AND BLIZZARD

Like all people everywhere, they don't look at each other as the elevator descends. Finally:

GUTHRIG

I believe humorous banter is useful in relieving pre-flight tension.

BLIZZARD

I'm never tense.

ARCHER

That's why we call him Blizzard. He's always frosty.

An awkward pause, then:

GUTHRIG

I see.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: HANGAR DECK - SLIGHT DOWNSHOT WIDE

Four Scimitar fighters are positioned in the center of the hangar's flight deck as TECH CREWS give them a final check before launch. MAYA SHULGIN works on one fighter while MANIAC looks on. In the BG, the grav-lift (elevator) DOORS OPEN and Maverick, Blizzard, Archer, and Payback emerge, followed by Guthrig.

ON GUTHRIG

He does a few runners stretching exercises.

SLIGHT UPSHOT ON MAYA SHULGIN - OVER MANIAC'S SHOULDER

Maya stands on the Scimitar's wing, adjusting something inside the open cockpit as Maniac looks on. Suddenly we hear:

MAVERICK (OS)

That's my ride, Maniac.

-- and Maniac turns TOWARD THE CAMERA.

SLIGHT DOWNSHOT ON MANIAC AND MAVERICK - OVER MAYA'S SHOULDER

Maya continues to work on the Scimitar's cockpit as Maverick walks up to Maniac.

MANIAC

I was just looking out for you,
hotshot. Asking Shulgin here if there
was a way to boost your shields.

EXT. SPACE NEAR THE TIGER'S CLAW - WIDE ANGLE ON ASTEROID

A large asteroid among the swarm of smaller asteroids. The
CAMERA TRUCKS to reveal TWO KILRATHI GRATHA FIGHTERS hiding
behind the asteroid.

MANIAC (VO CONT)

There's an awful lot of rocks out
there.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: HANGAR DECK - ANGLE ON MAVERICK AND MANIAC -
WITH MAYA IN THE BG

Maya looks over from her work on the Scimitar's cockpit as
Maverick and Maniac bicker. She's unimpressed with their
quarrelling.

MAVERICK

I'll prep my own fighter.

MAYA

No, you'll watch me do it.

ON MAVERICK AND MANIAC

Maniac grins as Maverick looks up. AT THE CAMERA sheepishly.

MAVERICK

(sheepishly)

Sure, Maya. That's what I meant.

EXT. SPACE NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - WIDE ON ASTEROID

The two Gratha fighters roar out from behind the asteroid and
race TOWARD THE CAMERA, ENGINES ROARING.

CLOSE ANGLE - TRACKING THE LEAD GRATHA FIGHTER

It FIRES ONE MISSILE and then ITS REMAINING SEVEN MISSILES in
rapid succession.

LONG SHOT ON TIGER'S CLAW

floating in space, with the two binary stars in the BG. The
Kilrathi missiles streak PAST THE CAMERA INTO SHOT, heading
straight for the Tiger's Claw.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: HANGAR DECK - ANGLE ON GUTHRIG

rocked by an EXPLOSION OS, he's thrown to the deck as he jogs.

GUTHRIG
(IMPACT GRUNT)

ANGLE ON MANIAC, MAVERICK, AND MAYA

as they are rocked by the EXPLOSION OS. Maniac and Maverick are barely able to keep their footing, Maya has to hang on to the edge of the cockpit to keep from being thrown off the Scimitar.

MAVERICK (CONT)
What was that?!

MANIAC
We were hit by something, genius.
Probably an asteroid.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Maya jumps down to the hangar deck beside Maverick and Maniac.

MAYA
That was a missile impact. Felt like
the number six shield to me.

They react with alarm as we hear:

TOLWYN (VO)
(loudspeaker reverb)
Condition Red. We are under attack!
All pilots to their fighters! This is
not a drill!

ANGLE ON MAVERICK - PANNING AND TILTING UP WITH HIM

as he pulls on his helmet and scrambles up to his fighter's cockpit.

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

The Tiger's Claw's laser turrets swivel to bear on the incoming missiles OS and FIRE RAPIDLY.

ANGLE - TRACKING SEVEN KILRATHI MISSILES

The Tiger's Claw's laser defenses score SIX HITS, EXPLODING THE MISSILES, but the last remaining missile GAINS ON TRACK GOING OUT OF SHOT, still heading toward the Tiger's Claw OS.

ANGLE ON THE TIGER'S CLAW

The remaining Kilrathi missile streaks INTO SHOT and EXPLODES AGAINST THE TIGER'S CLAW'S SHIELDS.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: HANGAR DECK - LONG ON ARCHER - OVER MANIAC'S SHOULDER

The EXPLOSION OS rocks the scene as Maniac looks around and spots Archer, who had been putting on her helmet as she scrambled toward her Scimitar's cockpit, but the impact of the explosion tumbles her back down to the hangar deck.

LOW ANGLE ON ARCHER

dazed where she's fallen on the hangar deck. Her helmet lies on the deck beside her.

ARCHER

(GROANS)

Suddenly Maniac races THROUGH THE SHOT, scooping up Archer's helmet. Archer sits up, reacting with outrage.

ARCHER (CONT)

(outraged)

Hold it, Maniac! What the -- !

UPSHOT ON MANIAC - ARCHER'S POV

He finishes climbing into the open cockpit and looks down at Archer OS as he squeezes his head into her helmet.

MANIAC

(straining as he pulls
on Archer's helmet)

Sorry, Archer. No time to talk!

He CLOSES HIS COCKPIT CANOPY.

REAR ANGLE - CLOSE - ON ARCHER'S SCIMITAR (PILOTED BY MANIAC)

as the ENGINES IGNITE, powering up.

ANGLE ON MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR

Maverick CLOSES HIS COCKPIT CANOPY.

REAR ANGLE ON MAVERICK'S SCIMITAR

as his ENGINES IGNITE, powering up.

ANGLE ON BLIZZARD'S SCIMITAR AND PAYBACK'S SCIMITAR - FAVORING BLIZZARD'S SCIMITAR

Blizzard and Payback CLOSE THEIR COCKPIT CANOPIES. We hear their ENGINES IGNITE OS, powering up.

WIDE ON THE FOUR SCIMITARS (MAVERICK'S, ARCHER'S [PILOTED BY MANIAC], BLIZZARD'S, AND PAYBACK'S)

They give their ENGINES FULL THROTTLE and take off down the hangar deck TOWARD THE CAMERA.

REVERSE - ON HANGAR DOOR OPENING

as the four Scimitars ROCKET PAST THE CAMERA INTO SHOT and fly out the open hangar door, passing through the FORCE FIELD that maintains atmospheric pressure inside the hangar.

EXT. SPACE NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - SLIGHT DOWNSHOT WIDE ON TIGER'S CLAW

As the four Scimitar's rocket up TOWARD THE CAMERA, the lead Kilrathi Gratha fighter rockets PAST THE CAMERA INTO SHOT, heading straight for the Scimitars and the Tiger's Claw beyond.

ANGLE - TRACKING BLIZZARD'S SCIMITAR

as he FIRES HIS LASERS.

WIDER ANGLE - TRACKING THE KILRATHI GRATHA FIGHTER

The Gratha is hit by Blizzard's LASER FIRE and the EXPLOSION blows off a STABILIZER. Spinning out of control, the damaged Gratha keeps going.

TRACKING THE FOUR SCIMITARS

as they break formation and scatter OUT OF SHOT --

MAVERICK (VO)
Break! Break!

-- a split second before the damaged Kilrathi Gratha tumbles THROUGH THE SHOT in the other direction.

LONG SHOT ON KILRATHI GRATHA FIGHTER - OVER MAVERICK'S SHOULDER

as he looks back through the canopy of his Scimitar fighter at the damaged Kilrathi Gratha fighter tumbling toward the Tiger's Claw.

MAVERICK (CONT)
He's not even trying to pull out!

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: HANGAR DECK - WIDE ON HANGAR DOOR - OVER MAYA'S SHOULDER

We can see out through the invisible force field at the open hangar door as the tumbling damaged Gratha speeds TOWARD THE CAMERA and the hangar door. Archer stands between Maya and the hangar door. NOTE: The Gratha never enters the hangar.

EXT. SPACE NEAR THE TIGER'S CLAW - EXTREME ANGLE ON TIGER'S CLAW LASER TURRET

as the laser turret depresses its guns to fire down at close range and FIRES.

TRACKING THE KILRATHI GRATHA FIGHTER

as a final LASER HIT at close range causes the Kilrathi Gratha to EXPLODE just before it would have crashed into the hangar deck.

LONG SHOT ON THE SECOND KILRATHI GRATHA FIGHTER

diving TOWARD THE CAMERA. Blizzard's Scimitar and Payback's Scimitar race PAST THE CAMERA INTO SHOT, flying toward the Gratha head-on. A beat later, Archer's Scimitar (piloted by Maniac) roars PAST THE CAMERA INTO SHOT, trying to catch up with Blizzard and Payback.

ON THE SECOND KILRATHI GRATHA FIGHTER - OVER BLIZZARD'S SHOULDER - THROUGH HIS COCKPIT CANOPY

The GRATHA is racing TOWARD THE CAMERA at Blizzard. Blizzard remains calm.

BLIZZARD
Stay with me, Payback.

PAYBACK
I'm on your wing, Blizzard!

CLOSE ANGLE - TRACKING ON BLIZZARD'S COCKPIT

REFLECTED IN THE COCKPIT CANOPY is the growing image of the approaching Gratha. Blizzard sets his mouth grimly.

BLIZZARD
Arming energy guns.

CLOSE ANGLE - TRACKING ON PAYBACK'S COCKPIT

By the size of the REFLECTED GRATHA ON THE COCKPIT CANOPY, we know that the Kilrathi is almost upon her.

PAYBACK
This furball's not stopping!

DOWNSHOT WIDE - LOOKING DOWN ON THE SCENE

The Gratha speeds INTO SHOT from the top right corner, Blizzard (with Payback below and behind him) race INTO SHOT from the bottom left.

CLOSE ANGLE ON BLIZZARD - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

Coldly not betraying a hint of fear.

BLIZZARD
Open fire!

ANGLE - TRACKING BLIZZARD'S SCIMITAR AND PAYBACK'S SCIMITAR
as they FIRE their lasers furiously.

ON THE KILRATHI GRATHA FIGHTER

racing TOWARD THE CAMERA. LASER FIRE EXPLODES in front of it, the fireballs hiding it from view, but then the Gratha flies through the fireballs and keeps coming AT THE CAMERA.

PAYBACK (VO)
His shields held!

ANGLE - TRACKING BLIZZARD'S SCIMITAR AND PAYBACK'S SCIMITAR
Payback's Scimitar breaks left and veers off OUT OF SHOT.

PAYBACK (VO CONT)
(yelling)
Break right, Blizzard! Now!

A moment later, Blizzard's Scimitar breaks right OUT OF SHOT -- and the Kilrathi Gratha fighter screams INTO SHOT. WHIP PAN WITH THE GRATHA as it traces a straight line toward Archer's Scimitar (piloted by Maniac) and the Tiger's Claw beyond it.

CLOSE ANGLE ON MANIAC - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

The REFLECTION OF THE GRATHA GROWS on his helmet visor.

MANIAC
You've faced the rest now face the
best.

CLOSE ANGLE ON MANIAC'S JOYSTICK

He toggles the MISSILE TRIGGER, which responds with a useless CLICK.

MANIAC (CONT)
What the...?

He presses the button again and again, with increasing speed --
CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

MANIAC (CONT)
My missiles weren't prepped!

REAR ANGLE ON ARCHER'S SCIMITAR - PILOTED BY MANIAC

Archer's Scimitar (piloted by Maniac) veers off OUT OF SHOT, his AFTERBURNERS BLAZING.

MANIAC (CONT)
(HOWL OF FRUSTRATION)

A split second later the Kilrathi Gratha flies THROUGH THE SHOT AND OVER THE CAMERA. WHIP PAN FOLLOWING THE GRATHA as Maverick's Scimitar drops INTO SHOT behind it and opens FIRE with his LASERS.

MAVERICK (VO)
I'm on his six!

MOVING WITH THE GRATHA FIGHTER - MAVERICK'S POV

As he follows the Kilrathi in towards the Tiger's Claw, FIRING. The Tiger's Claw laser turrets are FIRING at the Gratha, with the shots also streaking past Maverick.

MANIAC (VO)
Get outta there, Maverick!

ANGLE ON MAVERICK - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

Incoming LASER FIRE from the Tiger's Claw flashes past barely missing his Scimitar.

MAVERICK
You had your chance, Maniac! This one's mine!

Maverick presses his firing button. LASER FIRE OS.

WIDE UPSHOT ANGLE ON THE SCENE

LASERS from Maverick's Scimitar and the Tiger's Claw converge on the Gratha.

ANGLE ON THE KILRATHI GRATHA FIGHTER

The Kilrathi's shield's BUCKLE, and the ship EXPLODES in a huge FIREBALL.

ON THE FIREBALL - OVER MAVERICK'S SHOULDER

He flies through the SMOKE AND DEBRIS. As he clears the other side, we see he's about to collide with the Tiger's Claw!

MAVERICK (CONT)
(STARTLED CRY)

At the last second, he pulls up, ROARING over the Tiger's Claw.

REVERSE ANGLE ON THE TIGER'S CLAW

as Maverick's Scimitar clears the other side of the Tiger's Claw.

MAVERICK (CONT)
(RELIEVED SIGH, A LAUGH) That was
close!

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: BRIDGE - ANGLE ON TOLWYN AND SENSOR TECH

Tolwyn looks over the Sensor Tech's shoulder at his sensor console.

TOLWYN
Any more contacts?

SENSOR TECH
No, sir.

Suddenly an ALARM BEEPS AND FLASHES on the sensor console.
Tolwyn looks on, concerned, as the sensor tech reacts with alarm.

SENSOR TECH (CONT)
Astral flare! It's off the scale!

EXT. SPACE - WIDE

An ENERGY FLARE SHOOTS FROM THE SMALLER STAR TO THE LARGER as A WAVE FRONT forms and sweeps toward the Tiger's Claw and the four fighters in the FG.

ANGLE ON THE TIGER'S CLAW

The Tiger's Claw is jolted as the ENERGY SURGE'S WAVE FRONT passes by. The ship's shields GLOW UNNATURALLY, absorbing the impact of the surge. The ship maintains its position in space.

SENSOR TECH (VO CONT)
Our shields are holding!

TOLWYN (VO)
What about the fighters?!

PAN OVER AND PUSH IN as the WAVE FRONT tosses the much smaller Scimitar fighters around like corks in a tsunami.

TOLWYN (VO CONT)
Their shields are a lot weaker than
ours!

ON MAVERICK - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

His ship BUCKS WILDLY in the strange rays of the ENERGY SURGE. He pulls down his helmet's SUN VISOR, but it's useless. Maverick shields his eyes with one hand.

MAVERICK
(CRY OF PAIN)

ANGLE ON MANIAC - THROUGH THE CANOPY OF ARCHER'S SCIMITAR (WHICH HE PILOTS)

His ship is also shaking, but he's UPSIDE DOWN. The ENERGY GLOW increases. ELECTRICITY SPARKS up from his control console.

MANIAC
(CRY OF PAIN)

ON PAYBACK - INSIDE HER SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

Her cockpit ROLLS from side to side like a pendulum in the ENERGY FLARE. In her helmet's visor, we see the REFLECTION of Payback's controls' FLASHING "OVERLOAD" LIGHTS.

PAYBACK
(CRY OF PAIN)

ANGLE ON BLIZZARD - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

Cockpit SPINNING, he struggles against the ENERGY FLARE.

BLIZZARD
(straining)
Must... regain... control...!

-- but then he collapses back into his seat, writhing in pain.

BLIZZARD (CONT)
(CRY OF PAIN)

WIDE ANGLE

As the four Scimitar fighters tumble with the flow of the ENERGY SURGE, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - FOUR-WAY SPLIT SCREEN

Matching the cockpit motions established at the end of Act One. FOUR-WAY TERROR. At the moment the MULTI-COLORED RAYS become their brightest, SPARKS JUMP from the controls to cadets and play across the surface of their helmets.

MAVERICK/MANIAC/
PAYBACK/BLIZZARD
(CRIES OF PAIN)

As the energy rays FADE, the SPARKS DISAPPEAR INSIDE each of the pilot's helmets, as if being absorbed.

ON MAVERICK - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT - MATCH EARLIER MOTION

The ENERGY GLOW FADES COMPLETELY. He lifts his SUN VISOR on his helmet, shaking his head, struggling to clear it.

MAVERICK
(GROANS)

ON MANIAC - INSIDE ARCHER'S SCIMITAR (WHICH HE PILOTS) - MATCH EARLIER MOTION

Dazed, Maniac also struggles to regain some control. He puts both hands on his joystick, trying to force it, to obey.

MANIAC
(a groan)
Aw... man!

Though still shaking, the cockpit SNAPS TO AN UPRIGHT POSITION.

ANGLE ON PAYBACK - INSIDE HER SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT - MATCH EARLIER MOTION

Her console still SPARKS as her head lolls groggily.

PAYBACK
(GROANS)

LOW ANGLE ON BLIZZARD - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

Eyes half-closed, he's barely conscious.

BLIZZARD
(GROANS) Control...

He reaches feebly for his controls.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: BRIDGE - ANGLE ON TOLWYN AND SENSOR TECH

Tolwyn turns away from the sensor tech's console and barks an order to the COMMUNICATIONS TECH in the BG.

TOLWYN
(to Communications
Tech)

Get those ships aboard -- now!

The Communications Tech activates the ship's address system on his console.

COMMUNICATIONS TECH
Hangar deck! Landing status Code One!

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: HANGAR DECK - LOW ANGLE - WIDE

Special CRASH TRUCKS roll in the huge hangar deck...

COMMUNICATIONS TECH (VO CONT)
(loudspeaker reverb)
Stand by for emergency landings!

Maya Shulgin LEAPS aboard one of the crash trucks as it goes by.

ON THE OPEN HANGAR DOOR - OVER ARCHER'S SHOULDER

Archer looks anxiously through the invisible force field as Maverick's Scimitar erratically approaches the hangar door. We can see Payback's Scimitar and Archer's Scimitar (piloted by Maniac) following behind him.

ARCHER
(almost a prayer)
C'mon, guys. Make it back. Make it
back.

WIDE ANGLE ON HANGAR DOOR - PANNING

with Maverick's Scimitar, followed by Payback's Scimitar and Archer's Scimitar (piloted by Maniac), flies in through the hangar door FORCE FIELD. They SKID to rough landings on the hangar deck.

EXT. SPACE NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - ANGLE ON BLIZZARD - INSIDE HIS SCIMITAR'S COCKPIT

Fighting to remain conscious, Blizzard manages to get his ship to stop SPINNING.

FLIGHT CONTROL (VO)
That's it, Blizzard. Pitch down a
couple of degrees so you can see the
hangar.

TRACKING BLIZZARD'S SCIMITAR

The nose of the ship tilts downwards a few degrees.

OVER BLIZZARD'S SHOULDER

As the nose of his ship lowers, the hangar door of the Tiger's
Claw appears in view.

BLIZZARD
(dazed)
I... I can see it.

FLIGHT CONTROL (VO)
Good job. Line up on the markers.

CLOSE ANGLE ON CONTROLS - INSIDE BLIZZARD'S COCKPIT

Shakily, Blizzard's hand reaches for the controls --

BLIZZARD
Got to... take it... in...

-- but then he lapses into unconsciousness again and his hands
drop against the controls. We hear his ENGINES FIRE OS.

BLIZZARD (CONT)
(GROANS)

FLIGHT CONTROL (VO)
No! You're coming in too fast!

ON HANGAR DOOR - OVER BLIZZARD'S SHOULDER

Approaching the hangar doors. The ship YAWS to the left.

FLIGHT CONTROL (VO CONT)
Too wide! Too wide! Abort! Abort!

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: HANGAR DECK - LOW ANGLE ON HANGAR DOOR

The left wing of Blizzard's Scimitar CRASHES into the edge of the
hangar door as he goes through the FORCE FIELD and is sheered
off.

ANOTHER ANGLE - PANNING WITH BLIZZARD'S SCIMITAR

as it SKIDS TO A CRASH LANDING, breaking up, and BURSTS INTO
FLAME with an EXPLOSION.

ANGLE ON ARCHER

cringing as DEBRIS AND GOUTS OF FLAME flash past her from the EXPLOSION of Blizzard's Scimitar. Then she looks up in alarm.

ARCHER
Blizzard!

ANGLE ON BLIZZARD'S CRASHED SCIMITAR

BURNING. Archer rushes INTO SHOT, heading for the CRACKED OPEN COCKPIT of the now BURNING Scimitar.

ANGLE ON BLIZZARD'S COCKPIT

Amid the FIRE AND SMOKE, Archer reaches INTO SHOT into the cockpit and frees the semi-conscious Blizzard from his shoulder restraints.

ARCHER (CONT)
I got you, Blizzard!

REVERSE ANGLE

Archer drags Blizzard away from the wreck. FLAMES FILL THE FG.

LOW ANGLE - WIDE

with Archer dragging Blizzard in the FG. In the BG, a final EXPLOSION rips apart what's left of the Scimitar. CRASH CREWS rush INTO SHOT to extinguish the unrecognizable FLAMING wreckage.

CLOSE ANGLE ON ARCHER AND BLIZZARD

Archer kneels, cradling Blizzard in her arms. Blizzard struggles feebly.

BLIZZARD
(GROANS)

ARCHER
You're safe now. You're okay.

Blizzard's eyes flutter open. He takes her sooty hand in his.

BLIZZARD
I... knew it would be you... Gwen.

Blizzard passes out. Archer wonders what he meant, then looks around desperately. Guthrig ENTERS SHOT in the BG, looking on with concern.

ARCHER
Medic! I need a medic here!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - WIDE

The Tiger's Claw cruises away from the now quiescent twin stars.

TOLWYN (VO)

It seems the larger star intermittently
draws energy from the smaller one,
creating an energy surge between them.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: SICK BAY - WIDE ANGLE

Maverick, Maniac, Payback and Blizzard are sitting on the edges
of four hi-tech MED-BEDS. Tolwyn walks between the beds,
addressing the cadets.

TOLWYN (CONT)

You four were just unlucky -- the wrong
place at the wrong time. However,
you've all been medically cleared for
duty. So... on your feet!

The cadets jump out of bed and form a line in front of Tolwyn.
Tolwyn points a finger at Maniac.

TOLWYN (CONT)

Everyone but Marshall... Dis-missed!

Maverick, Payback and Blizzard exit, the door sliding OPEN AND
CLOSED for their passage.

ANGLE ON TOLWYN AND MANIAC

Tolwyn turns to Maniac, pretending to be angry.

TOLWYN (CONT)

(feigned anger)

I understand you were flying Archer's
fighter --

MANIAC

(reacts vehemently)

Whatever she said, it's a lie!

WIDER ANGLE

Not expecting this, Tolwyn takes a step back.

MANIAC (CONT)

She's been jealous of me from the
minute we joined the Academy!

CLOSER ANGLE ON MANIAC

His eyes narrow darkly, though he stays at attention.

MANIAC (CONT)
(quieter, more
intense)
They all are.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE TOLWYN as, brow furrowed, Tolwyn looks at Maniac searchingly.

TOLWYN
I was going to commend your initiative,
cadet.

Maniac cuts his eyes suspiciously at Tolwyn.

MANIAC
(suspicious)
Sure. Thank you... sir.

Tolwyn frowns, speaks softly.

TOLWYN
You're dismissed.

WIDE ANGLE

Tolwyn watches Maniac thoughtfully as Maniac turns on his heel and marches out of the sick bay, the DOOR SLIDING OPEN for him.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: CORRIDOR OUTSIDE SICK BAY - SKEWED ANGLE ON MANIAC

Maniac steps outside and the sick bay DOOR SLIDES CLOSED. Immediately Maniac moves to put his back to the wall. He looks from side to side, furtively.

MANIAC
(paranoid)
Archer's turned Tolwyn against me.

WIPE TO:

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: RECORDS ROOM - WIDE ANGLE

A small, dim compartment. Blizzard sits at a console near the door, alone, reviewing recordings from the sortie.

RECORDING OF BLIZZARD'S VOICE (VO)
"Must... maintain... control..."

CLOSE ANGLE ON BLIZZARD

Blizzard punches a command into the console. We hear a "REWIND BLUR." Then:

RECORDING OF BLIZZARD'S VOICE (VO
CONT)

"Must... maintain... control..."

Again the REWIND BLUR. Blizzard doesn't realize when the DOOR SLIDES OPEN OS, letting in a FLOOD OF LIGHT. ARCHER'S SHADOW falls THROUGH SHOT.

RECORDING OF BLIZZARD'S VOICE (VO
CONT)

"Must... maintain... control...."

ON ARCHER - SILHOUETTED IN THE DOORWAY

RECORDING OF BLIZZARD'S VOICE (VO
CONT)

(REWIND BLUR)

"... maintain... control..."

(SHORT REWIND BLUR)

"... control..."

ARCHER

Blizzard?

ANGLE ON ARCHER AND BLIZZARD

She steps into the room and turns on the LIGHTS as Blizzard turns toward her.

ARCHER

What are you doing in the dark?

BLIZZARD

Uh, nothing. I... I'm glad you came.

CAMERA FOLLOWS BLIZZARD

Blizzard rises and moves towards Archer. He removes his PRECISION FLYING RIBBON as he speaks, his words reluctant and forced.

BLIZZARD (CONT)

I... want to... thank you for pulling me out of that...

ARCHER

(trying to make it
easier for him)

Forget it. I'd've done the same for any pilot in trouble.

ON BLIZZARD - OVER ARCHER'S SHOULDER

Blizzard stops abruptly, hurt. He turns away.

BLIZZARD
I... I thought it was because you knew.

ARCHER
Knew what?

BLIZZARD
(a whisper, his back
to her)
That I love you.

ON ARCHER

reacting with shock and surprise.

ARCHER
(completely shocked)
You what?!

ANGLE ON ARCHER AND BLIZZARD

as Blizzard turns desperately toward her.

BLIZZARD
(in a rush)
I've loved you since the first minute I
saw you, Gwen.

He reaches out his hand, offering her his PRECISION FLYING MEDAL.

BLIZZARD (CONT)
I want you to have this.

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

WIDER

Blizzard drops the ribbon and runs out. Archer picks up the ribbon; hesitates a moment, bewildered. Then follows him out.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE RECORD ROOM - WIDE ANGLE

Blizzard has disappeared, but as Archer comes out, she finds Maniac in the corridor, watching her suspiciously.

ARCHER
Did you see which way Blizzard went?

MANIAC
Why? You wanna rat him out, too?

Maniac stalks away, leaving Archer more puzzled than before.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: GUTHRIG'S OFFICE - ANGLE ON ARCHER AND GUTHRIG

Guthrig sits at his desk, looking up at Archer over steepled fingers.

ARCHER
I'm kinda worried -- something strange
is going on with Blizzard.

He gestures for her to sit. She does so, uncomfortably.

ARCHER (CONT)
He said he... well, he said he was in
love with me.

GUTHRIG
I see. How did you feel when he said
that?

CLOSE ON ARCHER

Archer ponders this for a beat, then:

ARCHER
It was... scary. I mean, this is a guy
who's always in control, like nothing
could ever touch him. And suddenly,
he's all... emotional.

GUTHRIG'S POV - OVER THE STEEPLE OF HIS FINGERS

looking at Archer's worried expression.

GUTHRIG
Does it frighten you to think that
someone might be in love with you?

Archer reacts with annoyance.

ARCHER
This isn't about me! It's Blizzard!
Well, there's something weird about
Maniac, too. The way he's been
watching me and...

ANGLE ON GUTHRIG

looking over his steepled fingers.

GUTHRIG
 (detached)
 Do you think Maniac's in love with you,
 too?

WIDEN QUICKLY TO INCLUDE ARCHER as she stands and SLAMS HER HANDS
 on the desk.

ARCHER
 Will you just listen to me!

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: PILOTS' READY ROOM - ANGLE ON PAYBACK

Payback is checking some equipment in her locker when she hears a
 KILRATHI VOICE (actor who plays Hyena) behind her:

KILRATHI WARRIOR (VO)
 (whispers)
 We got your family.

She turns, startled, but sees no one. Her eyes widen in fear as
 the voice continues. She wraps her arms around herself and backs
 into the lockers, her terrified eyes darting from right to left.

KILRATHI WARRIOR (VO CONT)
 We'll get you, too.

ANGLE - TRACKING WITH PAYBACK

Payback grabs a PNEUMO-WRENCH from her locker and moves
 stealthily along the lockers. At the end of the row she JUMPS
 around the corner -- finding herself face-to-face with a KILRATHI
 WARRIOR!

KILRATHI VOICE (CONT)
 (ROAR OF ALARM)

Payback SWINGS her wrench at the Kilrathi, but he catches her arm
 and SLAMS HER up against the bank of lockers.

PAYBACK
 (IMPACT GRUNT)

HIGH ANGLE ON THE SCENE - CRANING DOWN

They struggle, and both fall to the floor. Payback raises the
 wrench, ready to smash the Kilrathi --

HYENA (VO)
 (voice comes out of
 the Kilrathi warrior)
 Payback! Stop!

The CAMERA STOPS MOVING as Payback hesitates for a moment, and the Kilrathi flips her off of him. FOLLOW as she hits the floor, hard.

PAYBACK
(IMPACT GRUNT)

Payback rises to her feet, holding her lowered head in both hands.

CLOSE ON PAYBACK

Just her wide eyes move upwards to see...

ON HYENA - OVER PAYBACK'S SHOULDER

... Hyena getting up off the floor, out of breath (he was actually the person she attacked).

HYENA
(panting, yelling)
What are you -- nuts or something?!

ANGLE ON PAYBACK AND HYENA

Payback ignores him, looking around warily for her enemy.

PAYBACK
Where's the cat?!

Hyena just stares at her, dumbfounded.

PAYBACK (CONT)
You know, the Kilrathi! Where is he?!

HYENA
You are nuts. Look, if this is your idea of a joke, get a sense of humor before you try another one. Okay?

ON HYENA - OVER PAYBACK'S SHOULDER

Hyena turns and stalks off MUTTERING TO HIMSELF:

HYENA (CONT)
Amateur comedians. The worst!

REVOLVE THE CAMERA around Payback to CLOSE ON HER FACE as her nervous, frightened eyes continue to search the room for the "Kilrathi."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: MAVERICK'S QUARTERS - WIDE ANGLE

In the middle of a letter home, Maverick is scanned by the HOLOGRAPHIC RECORDING BEAM. He looks upset, strangely emotional.

MAVERICK
... and the Kilrathi attacked without
any thought of their own survival.

CLOSE ANGLE ON MAVERICK

scanned by the HOLOGRAPHIC BEAM. His worry and anguish is clearly evident on his face.

MAVERICK (CONT)
How can we hope to beat them? They're
so willing to sacrifice themselves!
What if we're not good enough? What if
I'm not brave enough...

A TONE SOUNDS from the door. He looks up, DEACTIVATES THE HOLOGRAPHIC BEAM.

MAVERICK (CONT)
(trying to control
anxiety)
Come in.

WIDE ANGLE

The DOOR SLIDES OPEN and Payback enters, looking extremely nervous. The DOOR SLIDES CLOSED behind her.

MAVERICK (CONT)
What is it, Payback? What's wrong?

She puts a finger to her lips, signaling for silence. She moves quickly to his console, punches up MUSIC through his computer to mask their conversation and leans in towards Maverick's ear.

CLOSE ON PAYBACK AND MAVERICK

as she whispers in his ear and his eyes grow wide with alarm.

PAYBACK
(nervous whisper)
The Kilrathi. They're aboard the ship.

MAVERICK
(shocked whisper)
Kilrathi! Have you told Commodore
Tolwyn?

ON PAYBACK AND MAVERICK

A frightened Payback turns TOWARD THE CAMERA, her back to Maverick.

PAYBACK

(whispered terror)

I can't. If the Kilrathi found out,
they'd get me. Just like they got my
family.

WIPE TO:

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: BRIDGE - ON BRIDGE ELEVATOR DOORS

The ELEVATORS OPEN and an anxious Maverick starts to step out,
but then stops, shocked.

MAVERICK

(quiet shock)

No.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: BRIDGE ELEVATOR - ON THREE "KILRATHI
WARRIORS" - LOOKING PAST MAVERICK FROM INSIDE THE ELEVATOR

The three "KILRATHI WARRIORS" are on the bridge, saluting Tolwyn.
Stunned, Maverick presses himself back against the side wall of
the elevator.

MAVERICK (CONT)

Payback was right! And now Tolwyn's
gone over to them!

Desperately he PUNCHES A BUTTON and the ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: BRIDGE - ANGLE ON TOLWYN, GUTHRIG, HYENA, AND
ARCHER

It's Guthrig, Archer, and Hyena who salute Tolwyn. Then:

ARCHER

Sir, this may sound weird, but I think
that astral flare did something to the
four pilots who were outside when it
hit. Affected their minds somehow.

Tolwyn gives a dubious frown.

TOLWYN

Really, Cadet Bowman. Maybe this has
something to do with Cadet Marshall
taking your ship?

ANGLE - FAVORING ARCHER AND GUTHRIG

She's about to say something insubordinate; Guthrig cuts her off.

GUTHRIG

Cadet Bowman told me the electrical systems inside those fighters were completely scrambled.

ANGLE ON GUTHRIG AND TOLWYN

Tolwyn frowns as he listens to Guthrig.

GUTHRIG (CONT)

Technical section should have told me. The human mind is the most delicate electrical instrument there is.

TOLWYN

(disbelieving)

Are you saying their brains have been scrambled?

WIDEN TO INCLUDE HYENA as he steps forward INTO SHOT urgently.

HYENA

Payback, uh, Cadet Price, attacked me, sir! Like she thought I was a furball.

GUTHRIG

Psycho-electrical derangement could cause hallucinations. It would explain the Kilrathi's suicidal attack.

TOLWYN

The Kilrathi don't need explanations.

GUTHRIG

Even the Kilrathi don't just throw their lives away. They should have known their attack was futile --

CLOSE ON GUTHRIG

his brow furrowed with concern.

GUTHRIG (CONT)

-- if they were in their right minds. But their judgement may have been impaired by exposure to a previous energy flare.

ON TOLWYN - OVER THE SHOULDERS OF GUTHRIG, HYENA, AND ARCHER

Tolwyn thinks for a moment, then turns to the Communications Tech in the BG.

TOLWYN
Order Cadets Blair, Marshall, Price and
Getz to the bridge immediately.

COMMUNICATIONS TECH
Yes, sir.

He punches a button on his console.

COMMUNICATIONS TECH (CONT)
Cadets Blair, Marshall, Price, and Getz
-- report to the bridge immediately.

TIME CUT RIPPLE
DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: CARGO BAY - WIDE SKEWED ANGLE

Maverick, Maniac, Payback, and Blizzard look upwards at a speaker
grill in the wall of the cargo bay:

TOLWYN (VO)
(echoing reverb)
This is a direct order! Cadets Blair,
Marshall, Price and Getz! Contact the
bridge immediately!

CLOSE SKEWED ANGLES - QUICK CUTS ON EACH SPEAKER

These cuts are stylized, highlighting their madness and paranoia.

PAYBACK
The Kilrathi have got the whole ship!

MAVERICK
Even Tolwyn's gone over to them. I saw
three Kilrathi on the bridge!

MANIAC
Archer's in on it, too. I've been
watching her. She sabotaged my weapons
systems so they wouldn't fire.

EXTREME CLOSE SKEWED ANGLES - QUICK CUTS ON EACH SPEAKER

BLIZZARD
No, not Archer.

MAVERICK
We're the only ones left.

BLIZZARD
(about to collapse
under the strain)
What are we going to do?!

MAVERICK
We take the Broadsword bombers --
they're jump capable. We can escape to
another system.

SKEWED ANGLE - FAVORING PAYBACK AND MANIAC - OVER MAVERICK'S AND
BLIZZARD'S SHOULDERS

Payback and Maniac argue with desperate force.

PAYBACK
Broadwords are too slow. Tolwyn'll
scramble fighters. They'll get us
before we can even reach the jump node.

MANIAC
Not if we destroy the Tiger's Claw!
The Broadwords have enough firepower.

BLIZZARD
It's our only chance.

They all look to Maverick. REVOLVE CAMERA around Maverick until
we are CLOSE ON HIS FACE.

MAVERICK
Let's do it.

END OF ACT TWO

FADE OUT.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: BRIDGE - WIDE ANGLE

Tolwyn walks between two rows of people: a team of SECURITY GUARDS on one side, and Archer, Hyena and Guthrig on the other. He now faces the Guards.

TOLWYN

Arrest Blair, Marshall, Price and Getz.
They may be dangerous. Use any force
that's necessary.

Tolwyn turns around to face Archer and Hyena.

TOLWYN (CONT)

You know these people. Where would
they go? What would they do?

CLOSER ANGLE - FAVORING ARCHER

She meets Tolwyn's gaze steadily.

ARCHER

They're pilots, sir. They'd want to be
in a ship.

Tolwyn turns to the Security Guards --

TOLWYN

The hangar deck -- now!

-- and the Security Guards hurry OUT OF SHOT.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: HANGAR DECK - WIDE

A disaster site under repair -- TECH SPECS are everywhere, busy clearing away debris, fixing equipment and ships. PUSH IN on a shadowed doorway, where Maverick, Maniac, Payback and Blizzard skulk into view.

ON SHADOWY DOORWAY

Maverick gestures for the others to stay there. They grimly nod their assent. FOLLOW Maverick as he dashes past TWO BROADSWORD BOMBERS to the flight prep computer station attached to the Broadwords by an umbilical. He punches in commands.

LONG SHOT ON MAVERICK

at the flight prep computer station. Maya Shulgin steps PAST THE CAMERA INTO SHOT, irate.

MAYA

Hey! If you want to know something
about my birds, you ask me!

ANGLE ON MAVERICK

He turns toward Maya as she ENTERS SHOT.

MAVERICK

Are these two weapons' prepped?

MAYA

Yeah, they're ready to go. We've been
on stand-by alert since we tangled with
those Kilrathi.

Maverick smiles sarcastically.

MAVERICK

(sarcastic)

Sure. I bet you have.

Before a puzzled Maya can speak, we hear:

HEAD SECURITY GUARD (OS)

Stand where you are, Blair!

-- and Maverick and Maya look OS, Maverick primed to fight, Maya
more puzzled than ever.

ON THE SECURITY GUARDS - OVER MAVERICK'S AND MAYA'S SHOULDERS

Weapons levelled, they advance past the shadowy door toward
Maverick.

ON MANIAC

who DIVES into the security guards as they pass the shadowy
doorway, swinging recklessly. He knocks several of them down.

MANIAC

(SCREAM OF RAGE)

ANGLE ON PAYBACK

She turns to run, but a security guard lunges INTO SHOT and grabs
her.

PAYBACK

(FRIGHTENED CRY)

-- but she fights back desperately, whirling on him with a
martial arts move that flips him OUT OF SHOT, causing him to lose
his blaster.

ON BLASTER

The blaster CLATTERS to the deck. WIDEN as Payback dives INTO SHOT to the deck and grabs it. She FIRES ONCE as another security guard's boot KICKS the blaster, knocking it off target and out of her hands.

ON TWO SECURITY GUARDS AND PAYBACK

The two security guards haul her to her feet as she struggles desperately in their grasp.

PAYBACK (CONT)

Let go of me, you stinking furballs!

ANGLE ON MAVERICK AND MAYA

Maverick pushes past a disbelieving Maya and climbs into a BROADSWORD BOMBER cockpit.

MAYA

Hey! Wait a minute!

Maverick CLOSES THE CANOPY.

ANGLE ON MANIAC AND BLIZZARD

Blizzard stands uncertainly in the shadowy doorway as Maniac flips a security guard OUT OF SHOT.

MANIAC

(FIERCE CRY OF EXERTION)

ANOTHER ANGLE ON MANIAC AND BLIZZARD

Maniac calls to Blizzard.

MANIAC (CONT)

The Broadsword! Come on!

PAN WITH THEM as they race toward the remaining Broadsword.

ANGLE ON HEAD SECURITY GUARD AND TWO SECURITY GUARDS

As the two security guards aim their blasters, the head security guard calls to them.

HEAD SECURITY GUARD

Stun force only!

The two security guards FIRE.

ANGLE ON MANIAC AND BLIZZARD

Maniac is HIT BY A STUN BLAST and sinks to his knees --

MANIAC

(GROANS)

-- but the other stun blast misses Blizzard who runs OUT OF SHOT.

PANNING WITH BLIZZARD

As he vaults into the open cockpit of the second Broadsword bomber, another stun blast streaks THROUGH THE SHOT, barely missing him. He CLOSES THE CANOPY.

REAR ANGLE ON THE TWO BROADSWORD BOMBERS

as they IGNITE THEIR ENGINES and Maya and the security guards scramble out of the way.

LOW ANGLE WIDE

Archer and Hyena arrive at the hangar deck in the FG as the two Broadwords BLAST OFF and zoom out through the force field shielding the hangar door.

ARCHER

We gotta go after them!

ANGLE - PANNING WITH ARCHER AND HYENA

sprinting for two EPEE FIGHTERS and climbing in...

EXT. SPACE NEAR THE TIGER'S CLAW - PANNING WITH THE TWO BROADSWORD BOMBERS

as they ROAR AWAY from the Tiger's Claw, then loop back.

MAVERICK (VO)

Arming torpedoes!

ON THE HANGAR DOOR

Archer's Epee and Hyena's Epee ROAR OUT from the Tiger's Claw, through the FORCE FIELD shielding the hangar door.

TRACKING ARCHER'S EPEE AND HYENA'S EPEE

Archer and Hyena rocket toward the two Broadwords.

ARCHER (VO)

Maverick, Blizzard, you got to listen to me! That astral flare did something to your brains!

ON ARCHER - INSIDE HER EPEE'S COCKPIT

speaking into her comlink.

ARCHER (CONT)

I'm not a Kilrathi. You're
hallucinating! It's all in your heads!

TRACKING MAVERICK'S BROADSWORD AND BLIZZARD'S BROADSWORD

Maverick and Blizzard open fire with their PLASMA GUNS.

REVERSE TRACKING - ARCHER'S EPEE AND HYENA'S EPEE

Archer and Hyena break off in opposite directions OUT OF SHOT as the PLASMA SHELLS streak THROUGH THE SHOT.

PANNING WITH HYENA'S EPEE

as he FIRES AFTERBURNERS and loops around to get behind
Maverick's Broadsword. Hyena FIRES LASERS at the Broadsword.

REAR ANGLE ON MAVERICK'S BROADSWORD

The Broadsword's REAR-FIRING NEUTRON GUN FIRES.

ON HYENA - IN THE COCKPIT OF HIS EPEE

The PICTURE TILTS CRAZILY as Hyena zig-zags his Epee to dodge the
NEUTRON BLAST.

HYENA

(wryly)

Like that brain scrambling couldn't
have affected his aim, too.

WIDE ANGLE TRACKING BLIZZARD'S BROADSWORD

Archer's Epee descends INTO SHOT behind Blizzard's Broadsword.

ARCHER (VO)

Blizzard, this isn't you! You can
fight it! I know you can!

The Epee's shields are hit by a NEUTRON GUN SHOT from Blizzard,
but Archer stays on his tail.

SLIGHT UPSHOT ON MAVERICK - INSIDE HIS BROADSWORD'S COCKPIT

Behind him, we can see Hyena's Epee maneuver slightly higher.
Hyena FIRES HIS LASERS down at the Broadsword, hitting it,
jolting it with EXPLOSIONS.

CLOSE ANGLE ON MAVERICK - INSIDE HIS BROADSWORD'S COCKPIT

as his controls SHORT OUT. The surge passes through Maverick...

MAVERICK
(CRY OF PAIN)

... then fades away (the effects of the brain scrambling have now been neutralized). Maverick shakes his head to clear it.

MAVERICK (CONT)
(realization)
What...? What am I doing?!

LONG ON TIGER'S CLAW - OVER MAVERICK'S SHOULDER

The Tiger's Claw is looming ever closer. His torpedo arming light FLASHES GREEN on the panel.

BLIZZARD (VO)
You're in range, Maverick! Fire!

MAVERICK
That's the Tiger's Claw!

PANNING WITH MAVERICK'S BROADSWORD

Maverick's Broadsword veers away, followed by Hyena's Epee.

PANNING WITH BLIZZARD'S BROADSWORD AND ARCHER'S EPEE

Blizzard flies toward the Tiger's Claw, followed by Archer's Epee.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: BRIDGE - ANGLE ON SENSOR TECH AND TOLWYN

The Sensor Tech's eyes are glued to his console readouts as Tolwyn looks anxiously over his shoulder.

SENSOR TECH
(relieved)
One Broadsword's turned away.

But then a WARNING ALARM BEEPS AND FLASHES on the console.

SENSOR TECH (CONT)
(worried again)
But the other's got a torpedo lock.

The sensor tech looks up at Tolwyn.

SENSOR TECH (CONT)
His target's the bridge, sir.

TOLWYN
Divert all power to the shields. If
just one torpedo gets through...

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

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 BLIZZARD - IN HIS BROADSWORD'S COCKPIT

We can see ARCHER'S COMLINK IMAGE in the corner of his instrument display...

ARCHER

Alan, you said you loved me. If that's just a little bit true, you've got to believe me.

Struggling with himself, Blizzard reaches out as if to touch her comlink image, but suddenly her image MORPHS into a Kilrathi. He pulls his hand back as if stung. Screaming out:

BLIZZARD

Kilrathi liar!

He reaches for his fire control buttons.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: BRIDGE - ANGLE ON TOLWYN

Decisively, he activates a comlink.

TOLWYN

Fire, Bowman! Fire!

EXT. SPACE NEAR TIGER'S CLAW - ON ARCHER - IN HER EPEE'S COCKPIT

She closes her eyes and presses the firing button on her controls.

ANGLE ON ARCHER'S EPEE

As a MISSILE FIRES and streaks OUT OF SHOT.

ANGLE - TRACKING BLIZZARD'S BROADSWORD

The torpedo pod doors open --

ARCHER (VO)

Eject, Alan! Eject!

-- and, as the TORPEDO FIRES, Archer's missile streaks INTO SHOT and EXPLODES in a HUGE FIREBALL FILLING THE SCREEN, destroying the Broadsword and the just fired torpedo.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: SICK BAY - WIDE ANGLE

Guthrig removes BIO-ELECTRICAL STIMULATORS from Maniac and Payback's heads, while Maverick looks on. He checks a monitor, across which plays TWO STEADY ALPHA WAVES.

GUTHRIG

I need to run some psychological tests before I can let you return to duty, but this bio-electric stimulation seems to have returned your brain functions to normal.

MANIAC

(massaging a headache)

How come you didn't zap Maverick, too?

MAVERICK

Don't worry -- I got mine when Hyena's laser shorted out my cockpit circuits.

CLOSER ANGLE - FAVORING PAYBACK

Her quiet intensity causes Maverick and Maniac turn towards her.

PAYBACK

Too bad the treatment came too late for Blizzard.

Maniac and Maverick bow their heads sadly.

INT. TIGER'S CLAW: CORRIDOR OUTSIDE SICK BAY - WIDE ANGLE

Guthrig exits the sick bay, the DOOR SLIDING OPEN AND CLOSED for him, and finds Archer leaning against the bulkhead waiting for him.

ARCHER

There's something I've got to ask you.
About Blizzard.

ANGLE ON GUTHRIG - CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM

as he steps up to Archer.

GUTHRIG

Depression and self-doubt are normal reactions to losing a comrade...

Archer frowns, answers perhaps a bit too bluntly.

ARCHER

It's not about that. I did what I had to do to save the ship.

ANGLE ON ARCHER

This is hard for her to ask.

ARCHER

It's about the hallucinations. Did they come out of nowhere -- or did they... really mean something?

ON GUTHRIG - OVER ARCHER'S SHOULDER

Not realizing what she's driving at, he clinically detached.

GUTHRIG

The delusions seem to have been exaggerations of suppressed emotions. Self-doubt, jealous rivalry, fear of the Kilrathi...

Archer turns away from him TOWARD THE CAMERA.

ARCHER

Then Blizzard really did...

FOLLOWING ARCHER'S HAND

as it pulls something from a pocket of her uniform.

GUTHRIG (OS)

Blizzard really did what?

Archer's hand opens, revealing Blizzard's PRECISION FLYING MEDAL. HOLD A BEAT, and then Archer's hand closes on it.

ARCHER

Nothing, doctor.

DOWN ANGLE - WIDE

as Archer walks away from Guthrig down the long empty corridor.

ARCHER (CONT)

It doesn't matter now.

FADE OUT.

THE END