

G. I. JANE

by

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FADE IN:

INT. SENATE HEARING ROOM - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

Blinding in their white uniforms, naval flag officers sit in the audience, showing their support for THEODORE HAYES, a 50-year-old civilian. This is his confirmation hearing. Reading from prepared material:

HAYES

... last few years have brought many advances in the interests of women in naval service, particularly in the land-based maritime specialties. What's more, the Navy has instituted special sensitivity courses with an eye on --

DEHAVEN

Whoa, whoa, whoa. "Land-based maritime specialties." Gimme a second here to de-euphemize that...

At the center of a dais, LILLIAN DEHAVEN leans back to ponder the ceiling of the hearing room. Her plaque card reads "CHAIRPERSON -- SENATE ARMS COMMITTEE." DeHaven is a tough-hided old Southern belle, Scarlett O'Hara at 60.

In her arsenal she carries conversational hand-grenades -- and she's apt to pull a pin at the slightest whim.

DEHAVEN

Would that be anything like "typing"? "Restocking the cupboards"? That sort of thing, Mr. Hayes?

CHUCKLES from the packed gallery. The flag officers go stone-faced. Hayes forces a smile.

HAYES

Hardly the case, Senator.

DEHAVEN

Well, I'm just an old dame without much time left, so you'll pardon me if I jump right in here before they discontinue my blood-type. I am deeply concerned over the Navy's seemingly incontrovertible attitude toward women in the military. Case in point...

On cue, aides begin distributing reports to other members of the dais. Hayes gets a copy, too. And it jars him.

DEHAVEN

"The Lark Report."

HAYES

Madam Senator... this is an internal document of the U.S. Navy. I must seriously question whether --

DEHAVEN

(to others on panel)

The Navy's conclusion regarding the crash of an F-14 aboard an aircraft carrier. Female aviator, it just so happens.

(to Hayes)

You're familiar with this report and its conclusion, am I right?

HAYES

I was one member of the investigating commission.

DEHAVEN

Yes, I see your signature right here -- twice the size of everyone else's. And your conclusion was "pilot error," hmm?

HAYES

I'm really not prepared for any kind of in-depth review of --

DEHAVEN

I'd like to think our next Secretary of the Navy would be prepared for anything, Mr. Hayes.

A humorless smile. She's roasting his nuts over an open fire, and everyone knows it.

HAYES

The commission concluded that the aviator in question failed to execute a proper approach to the carrier.

DEHAVEN

That aside for the moment, I'm struck by the tenor, the ill-spirit
(MORE)

DEHAVEN (CONT'D)
of your report... the degrading
remarks by other aviators...
innuendo about her performance in
unrelated situations... even a
reference to her sexual activity
the weekend prior.

(closing report)

In my seven years on this committee,
I've never seen a downed aviator
treated like this. Never. I'm
deeply disturbed by this report,
Mr. Hayes. Not just what it bodes
for women in the military -- but
for your own confirmation as well.

INT. CORRIDOR - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

Heading for her office, DeHaven is escorted by a small
PRESS RETINUE.

DEHAVEN
... a full 35 percent of all jobs
in the U.S. military are still, to
this day, off-limits to women.
And that's simply gotta change.

PRESS #1
What about those who say women
aren't suited for all jobs? That
they're physically weaker... they
have less stamina...

DEHAVEN
Sure. And we're gonna hog the
bathroom, too.

DEHAVEN'S AIDE catches up, pulls her aside.

DEHAVEN'S AIDE
White House boys want a private
meeting.

DEHAVEN
I'll act surprised.

INT. DEHAVEN'S OFFICE - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

Shoes dumped on her desk, DeHaven changes out knee-high
stockings while devoting one ear to...

WHITE HOUSE #1

... to reassure you that he has every faith in the ability of Mr. Hayes to guide the Navy into the next century. The task, as the Administration sees it, is to acknowledge changing realities without losing traditional values.

A beat. DeHaven looks between the two WHITE HOUSE boys -- #1 young and eager, #2 older and cagier.

DEHAVEN

'Zat it? Ten minutes, nothin' on the table? Sweetcakes, you best go back to the President and tell him to open up the phone book and start lookin' for his next nominee.

White House #1 looks spanked. Taking over, #2 pops a briefcase. An inch-thick report appears before DeHaven.

WHITE HOUSE #2

Administration's plan for 100 percent integration. If female candidates measure up in a series of test cases, the President will support full integration within three years' time.

Surprised -- maybe even startled -- DeHaven flips through the report, absorbing by osmosis.

WHITE HOUSE #2

It's your gender-blind Navy, Senator. Surely you're not going to balk now.

DEHAVEN

Well, it's just that askin' you all to integrate the Navy is like sending a man to do a woman's job.

(a beat)

How do you propose to handle the Combat Exclusion Laws?

WHITE HOUSE #2

Keep narrowing the definitions. Keep redefining.

WHITE HOUSE #1

We got around it in Saudi Arabia.

DEHAVEN
By calling women "Honorary Men."
Ingenious.

WHITE HOUSE #2
C'mon, Senator, President's pitchin'
right down the center of your plate.
If women measure up to men, they've
got the job. You going to take a
swing? Or step out of the box?

DeHaven ruffles the edges of the report, thinking it over.

Thinking light years ahead.

EXT. CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

Buttoning up topcoats, the White House boys move down
marble steps to reach a pair of limousines. Hayes and
two FLAG OFFICERS wait.

HAYES
Well?

WHITE HOUSE #2
(shaking hand)
Congratulations, Mr. Secretary.

INT. HAYES' LIMOUSINE - DAY

INSIDE THE MOVING CAR:

HAYES
So she picks the women, we pick
the programs. Seals?

FLAG OFFICER #1
I'd go Special Reconnaissance.
Every bit as tough -- and we have
a 60 percent drop-out rate among
the men.

HAYES
Then I suggest we start there.

FLAG OFFICER #1
Doesn't matter who she picks. No
woman is going to last one week in
a commando training course. And I
don't care who it is.

EXT. POTOMAC RIVER - WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Winterscape: Dotted with ice floes, the Potomac wends through the capitol city, banks iridescent with snow, morning water calm. There's an almost hallowed beauty to it all. Soon we pick out...

A spot of day-glo. Coming out of the mouth of morning.

Overtaking the floes.

CLOSER on JORDAN O'NEIL. She pushes her flat-water kayak downriver, paddling hard and clean, making good time. Gliding through the graceful arches of the Arlington bridge, she passes...

Cars overhead. Grid-locked by snow conditions.

In seconds Jordan paddles clear, leaving the traffic behind as she heads toward the Washington Monument.

Something BURRS from a life-vest pocket. She rips through velcro to free a cell phone.

JORDAN
Lieutenant O'Neil.

ROYCE (V.O.)
Gotta situation here. Where are you? Stuck in traffic?

JORDAN
(checking dive
watch)
Not due in for 22 minutes, sir.
Watcha got?

INT. SITUATION ROOM - N.I.C. - DAY

ROYCE
All right, stand by, we're going to switch over to COMSAT...

A TACTICAL OFFICER reroutes the call via defense satellite, cryptography flashing on terminals. Lieutenant Commander ROBERT ROYCE joins other Intel officers at a conference table. They're pouring over weather charts, navigation logs, high-altitude NRO video.

TACTICAL OFFICER
Voice-system now secure...

ROYCE

(into speaker)

Okay, fresh stuff: Lost a NATO plane over the Sea of Japan. ELB signals leads us to believe the pilot is alive and has made his way to the North Korean shore, near a fishing village, "Tamyung."

JORDAN (V.O.)

Do we know it's him using the beacon? Not a decoy?

ROYCE

Signals received only sparingly, in such a pattern that leads us to conclude it is a downed aviator trying to conserve his batteries.

JORDAN (V.O.)

Chances of recovery?

ROYCE

You're the analyst for East China, O'Neil. Analyze.

EXT. POTOMAC RIVER - WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Riding the current, Jordan blows a troubled sigh as she accesses the file of her brain. Drifting past the Jefferson Memorial:

JORDAN

North Korean beaches are the best protected, most heavily monitored in the world. The civilian population is so propagandized that it acts as an Early Warning system. Extraction team has to be small and silent -- I'd go with Seals over Delta Force. Problem is, don't want to hold a conventional sub off-shore for target practice. Where's The Polk?

INTERCUTTING:

ROYCE

Halfway 'round the world. So that's the problem -- we can get the team in, just not out.

JORDAN
(an inspired beat)
Unless you Whiskey Run.

ROYCE
Blank faces here, O'Neil.

JORDAN
Quick-hit technique used by Capone.
Rigged a getaway car with running
boards and handles. All his guys
had to do was jump on and take a
ride. Check the files -- DPRK-57 --
I doped it out as a contingency
plan: Seal Team infiltrates, picks
up the package, links up with
recovery sub. But don't waste
time opening and closing hatches.
They just grab the periscope and
hang on for neutral waters.

A dubious beat.

ROYCE
You expect the extraction team to
ride the sub bare-back? Is that
correct, O'Neil?

JORDAN
Only four minutes to neutral waters,
sir. Why not?

Silence on the radio: They're discussing her scenario
privately. During, Jordan's kayak reaches the junction
of the Potomac and the Anacostia rivers. On the far bank
lies...

Naval Intel Center (N.I.C.), bristling with communication
antennae.

Jordan stares at the complex, waiting for a response.

ROYCE
All right, sending the
recommendation across the river.
Royce out.

The phone goes dead.

JORDAN
No, thank you, sir.

EXT. SECURITY STATION - N.I.C. - DAY

Bundled in topcoat and scarves, military and civilian employees transit a security station on their way inside. Presently Jordan appears -- wearing a wetsuit and balancing a collapsed kayak on her head. She flashes a photo-badge and double-times inside.

INT. CORRIDOR - N.I.C. - DAY

Jordan exits a locker room. Smoothing out her Khaki uniform, she heads down a broad corridor with cipher-lock doors. Falling in step:

ROYCE

That was good headwork, lieutenant.

JORDAN

Thank you, sir. We hear back from the Pentagon?

ROYCE

(scoffing)

Probably hear back from CNN first.

JORDAN

Hate this part. Just sweating it out on the sidelines.

ROYCE

Intel has its own glory, lieutenant -- no matter how subtle.

Now they reach...

INT. BULLPEN - N.I.C. - DAY

A circular chamber. Dominating the ground floor is the bullpen, a hive of cubicles and computer stations. On the second floor are executive offices, ringing the bullpen.

ROYCE

By the way, I'll need that option paper by 11-hundred today so I can review it with Admiral Hanover. And do we have any of that breakfast tea around here?

JORDAN

(with a look)

Is this my glory, sir?

On the upper walkway, a frazzled N.I.C. SECRETARY appears. She spots Royce and Jordan below.

N.I.C. SECRETARY
Excuse me, but I have Senator
DeHaven on the line for you.

ROYCE
Jesus God, what now?

He bounds up the stairs toward his office.

N.I.C. SECRETARY
I'm sorry, sir no -- she asked to
speak with Lieutenant O'Neil.

Royce turns back and gives Jordan a hall-of-fame look.
"Oh, really?"

INT. DEHAVEN'S OFFICE - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

DEHAVEN
(into phone)
So everyone I talk to says you're
top drawer with silk stockings
inside.

JORDAN (V.O.)
Thank you, ma'am. Um, may I ask
what this is regarding?

DEHAVEN
(reading file)
High-school pentathlete... ROTC
scholarship, graduated with
honors... top marks in Basic
Training... and, as it just so
happens, a constituent of my home
state of Virginia. Oh, the things
I'll do for one extra vote.

INT. BULLPEN - N.I.C. - DAY

On the phone, Jordan glances around. Co-workers mull
within earshot. Those out of earshot post E-mail memos
on Jordan's computer: "Moving up in life." "I want a
full report." "Don't tell her who you really voted for."

DEHAVEN
Lieutenant O'Neil, I am prepared
to nominate you for the Navy's
Special Reconnaissance program.
Should you accept, you'll ship out
to Coronado next week and join in
the big testosterone festival.

(MORE)

DEHAVEN (CONT'D)
Complete the course, and you'll have a fast ticket to any assignment you want. That's my personal promise to you.

A beat as Jordan's mind catches up to her ears. Now INTERRCUTTING the two:

JORDAN
"Coronado."

DEHAVEN
California.

JORDAN
I know that, sir. Ma'am. It's just that... Beggin' your pardon, Senator, but... do you understand that this involves combat training?

DEHAVEN
This is just a test case, O'Neil. But if it works out -- if you work out -- it could well change the Navy's official policy on women in combat. Or, actually, its official non-policy. Now who's your immediate superior there?

JORDAN
Captain Dwyer. Technically.

DEHAVEN
My office will fill him in and help expedite. Look forward to meeting you at the proper time. Jumping off now...

JORDAN
Uh, question, ma'am.

DEHAVEN
Yes, dear.

JORDAN
Would I be the only one? The only woman?

DEHAVEN
There'll be more to follow -- but yes, dear, right now you're the pick of a very large litter.
(MORE)

DEHAVEN (CONT'D)
And your success would mean a lot.
Jumping, now...

The line goes dead. Jordan hangs up catatonically.

JORDAN
Well, shit-a-doodle-do...

EXT. GUNKHOLE HARBOR - POTOMAC - NIGHT

A small gunkhole harbor up the Potomac. Snow falls thick and silent on overturned canoes, stored for the winter. Beyond stands a clapboard rental house.

INT. JORDAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's not so much furnished as equipped -- scuba gear and wetsuits in the mud room, life vests on coat racks, a training bag and boxing gloves hanging in the living room.

In the kitchen we find...

A naked man. He's steeping tea.

JORDAN (O.S.)
... well, I survived Basic Training and three brothers -- so I know how to fight. What scares me are the sexual politics. I don't want to be turned into some poster girl for women's rights.

CAMERA FOLLOWS as the naked man carries a steaming mug through the house...

INT. BATHROOM - JORDAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

... and sets it down beside Jordan, languishing in a tub.

Snow builds on a window sill. Facing Jordan, the man slides into the tub.

ROYCE
So why're you even considering it?
Are you?

JORDAN
Just like you would be.

ROYCE
Spec-Recon. Those guys are world-class warriors. And they will not want you there, Jordan.

JORDAN
I take it you don't either. Feet.

Dutifully, Royce massages her feet.

ROYCE
Well, you're doin' shit-hot at
Intel.

JORDAN
Royce. We're the same age, we
started the same time -- and now
you're sitting in the upperdecks
while I'm still down in the bullpen.
What does that tell you about the
Navy?

ROYCE
(shaking head)
She's haze grey and underway...

JORDAN
You need operational duty to really
advance... you need combat training
to go operational... yet combat
training is off-limits to people
with tits. I'm topped out at Intel.
Forget the glass ceiling -- I'm
beating my head on a big brass
ceiling.

ROYCE
So dump on me.

JORDAN
This has nothing to do with you.

ROYCE
(getting out)
Well, guess I don't even need to
be here...

JORDAN
Get your dick back here. It has
everything to do with you.

ROYCE
You're such a ball-breaker
sometimes. Especially at night.

JORDAN
Sorry. But after our days...
(MORE)

JORDAN (CONT'D)
(a thoughtful sip)
So if I try this thing... if I
ship out to Coronado... what happens
here?

ROYCE
I'll try to keep the door open.
If you wash out, I make it so that --

JORDAN
Wai', wait. What happens if it
works? Four months of training,
three years of operational duty.
What then?

ROYCE
(blowing a sigh)
I don't feel like doing an option
paper on the rest of my life,
Jordan. Maybe we should just let
it happen.

JORDAN
Which is guy-speak for...

ROYCE
(conceding)
Sounded lame as soon as it came
out of my mouth. But I'm trying
to be honest, okay? Three years
is a long time. Don't ask me to
predict how I'll feel then, Jordan,
because I don't know. And either
do you.

JORDAN
You know, right up until you said
that -- I thought I did know.

Wounded, she gets out.

ROYCE
Jordan...

JORDAN
Thank you, Royce. It was shaping
up like such a tough call -- and
then you go and make it so goddamn
easy. Really, thank you so much.

She punches into a robe and leaves. Royce considers
drowning himself in the tub.

EXT. CORONADO BRIDGE - SAN DIEGO - DAY

Jordan drives a top-down Mustang across the sweeping Coronado Bridge, cityscape behind her, naval base ahead.

A flock of pelicans pace Jordan alongside the bridge. Suddenly two NAVY HELOS BLAST overhead, scattering the pelicans.

EXT. THE GRINDER - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

On base, Jordan carries a gunnysack across an asphalt courtyard. The is "the grinder," reminiscent of a gladiator's arena. She notices at one end...

A silver ship's bell. Hung prominently.

INT. ADMINISTRATION - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

JORDAN

Excuse me, lieutenant. I was told
this is where I check in.

A DUTY OFFICER looks up to find Jordan across a counter.

In no particular hurry, the duty officer makes his way over to check Jordan's orders.

DUTY OFFICER

(looking up)

So you're the one.

Hearing, other workers look up. Among them is a female ensign, KATHY BLONDELL -- no makeup, no nail polish, no concession to her sex. Throughout, she'll watch Jordan with more than passing interest.

JORDAN

Still don't have my bearings yet.
Direct me to the officer's quarters?

The duty officer stamps her paperwork, returns it with room assignment and keys.

DUTY OFFICER

You'll proceed directly to the infirmary for eye tests, blood tests, urinalysis, pregnancy test. Uniform issue adjacent. Then you're to report to the Base Commander. He'd like a word with you.

JORDAN

Fine. And the officer's quarters?

DUTY OFFICER

C.O.'s office can supply you with directions. Enjoy your visit, lieutenant.

It's a nasty little barb -- one that Jordan decides to let slide. Jordan turns for the door. Blondell catches up with a base map.

BLONDELL

B.O.Q., south side. Take a starboard tack out the door.

JORDAN

Thank you, ensign.

BLONDELL

No problem, lieutenant.

INT. C.O.'S OFFICE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

A soft KNOCKING.

C.O.

Come.

A YEOMAN opens the door. Behind him is Jordan.

YEOMAN

Lieutenant j.g. O'Neil reporting, sir.

For a beat, COMMANDING OFFICER (C.O.) TURRENTINE takes stock of the female in his doorway, sizing her up like a fighter across the ring. Then he stubs out a perfectly good cigar, rises with an amiable face, and touches the back of a chair -- stopping just short of pulling it out for her.

C.O.

Yes, of course. Please, have a seat, lieutenant...

JORDAN

Thank you, sir.

C.O.

Would you care for a beverage?
Tea?

JORDAN

I'm fine, sir.

C.O.

So. We're still coming to terms with the exact protocol for this -- for integrating the Spec-Recon training. It may not always be smooth, but we're trying to make it as painless as possible for you.

JORDAN

Thank you, sir. But I expect a certain amount of pain.

More stock-taking. Is he looking at her hair?

JORDAN

Barber was my next stop, sir. Would've had it regulation sooner, only --

C.O.

Don't worry about it. If it's off your collar and out of your eyes, that's all I'm going to ask.

JORDAN

Really, I have no problem with --

C.O.

I'M NOT OUT TO CHANGE YOUR SEX, LIEUTENANT. YOU'LL HAVE SEPARATE BEDS, SEPARATE HEADS. IF YOU HAVE SPECIFIC MEDICAL NEEDS, INFORM THE INFIRMARY. IF A CLASSMATE OR SUPERIOR ACTS IN AN HARASSING OR OTHERWISE UNBECOMING MANNER, PLEASE INFORM ME IMMEDIATELY SO I CAN DEAL WITH IT IMMEDIATELY.
QUESTIONS?

JORDAN

None at this time, sir.

C.O.

Then that's all I have to say.
Dismissed.

Another smile, another phantom gesture on the back of her chair. If Jordan was expecting a fight, the bell never sounded. She rises, salutes -- then turns back at the door.

JORDAN

Sir, I just want you to know...
I'm not here to make a statement.
I don't want to make men look
foolish. All I care about is
completing the training and getting
operational experience -- just
like everyone else, I suspect.

C.O.

If you were like everyone else,
lieutenant, I suspect we wouldn't
be making statements about not
making statements, would we?

(a beat)

Take your leave.

EXT. B.O.Q. - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

The Spec-Recon TRAINEES loiter outside their open rooms,
pumping weights, hosing down dive gear, trading Walkman
tapes. This is the last day of liberty they'll have for
a long time.

MILLER

What am I scannin' here?

Other eyes quickly lock in on...

Jordan. Across a grass courtyard, she walks the ground
floor of an identical building, trying to match key number
to room number. Every door is open, every room empty.

Soon she feels the presence of...

The men. They're disgorging from their rooms -- ten,
twenty, thirty of them -- all buffed and cut. These guys
are what Hitler saw in his dreams.

Jordan picks up her pace. Where the hell is her room?

On all three levels of their building, the men shadow
Jordan en masse. Not hooting. Not leering. Just
assessing.

Jordan finds her room at the far corner of the building:

She's got the entire floor to herself. With a last look
over her shoulder, Jordan vanishes inside.

EXT. THE GRINDER - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

C.O.

Special Reconnaissance. Here you will be trained to infiltrate hostile territory... to be the real-time eyes on the ground... to recover assigned targets and, if need be, to fight your way out under adverse conditions.

CAMERA SURVEYS faces of the trainees: MILLER, MCCOOL, SLUTNIK, CORTEZ, FLEA, STAMM, ENGLAND, NEWBERRY, WICKWIRE.

We'll get to know them later. Dressed in Navy greens, they stand in formation -- ten rows, ten deep, helmets in hand. Pacing before them:

C.O.

That is all that will be said about the special nature of this class -- by us or by you. Many of you have waited years for admission to this program. Opportunities like this are rare -- and those who seize upon them are rarer still.

He approaches Jordan. We can tell what she's thinking. "Just keep moving. Don't single me out."

C.O.

Other than that, there is little to be said but "Good luck, gentleman."

(correcting)
"Gentlepersons."

Jordan flinches.

C.O.

Now I turn you over to the chief training officer. He has earned six naval commendations, the purple heart, and the Navy Cross for heroism and valor. I give you Master Chief John James Urgayle.

Taking over, THE CHIEF stands before the class a moment, sizing them up while giving them -- get an eyeload of him, too: His body is 30 years old, his face 40, his eyes 50.

An ageless warrior. Somewhere, the blood of Ulysses runs in this guy's veins.

The Chief lifts a bullhorn to deliver his opening salvo -- and it's anything but the kick-ass rant the class is expecting:

THE CHIEF

The sun and moon... the ebb and flow of the Pacific tides... global warming... the very angle of the Earth upon its axis... these are just some of the things I control in my world.

Trainees swap private looks.

MCCOOL

We're fucked.

SLUTNIK

Darth Vader reads poetry...

MCCOOL

We are so fucked.

EXT. BEACH - CORONADO NAVAL STATION - DAY

START on boots, crashing through shallow surf, spraying water. We assume this is a routine beach run -- until VIEW RISES to reveal...

Telephone poles on their shoulder. Working in groups of 10, trainees labor under 300-pound poles. Jordan, six inches shorter than most, looks like Atlas carrying the weight of the world. But she's doing it.

INSTRUCTOR

Count down... one, two... count down... three, four...

CLASS CADENCE

One, two, three, four... One, two, three, four...

An ambulance shadows the class. Perched on the front bumper like an hood-ornament, the Chief keeps working his bullhorn:

THE CHIEF

You may think that you are the brightest, the best, the strongest. I assure you, that is a total delusion on your part. It is my job to show you just how weak human beings can truly be.

(MORE)

THE CHIEF (CONT'D)
60 percent of you will not finish
this course. How do I know?
Because that is an historical fact.

It's also intimidating shit.

THE CHIEF
Poles down.

The earth literally shakes as the phone poles hit the damp sand. Approaching on foot, the Chief loads fresh batteries into his bullhorn. He does it like a man thumbing rounds into a shotgun.

THE CHIEF
Now for the bad new: I always like to get one quitter on the first day. And until I do, the first day does not end. So look around right now -- go on, do it. I wonder who it's gonna be...

He passes right by Jordan, never meeting her eyes. INSTRUCTOR PYRO steps up. He's the Chief's bulldog.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
Down to BVDs!

The guys strip down to boxers. Jordan settles for boxers and jog bra.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
Now face the Pacific... link arms... and take a stroll!

The class wades in. The first wave takes Jordan's breath away: It's February, and the water is cold. When they move out of instructors' earshot:

STAMM
What is it with the damn phone poles? We sign up for Spec-Recon or GTE?

WICKWIRE
Just trying to thin the herd.
That's all they want to do right now.

Some of the guys are glancing Jordan's way, cashing in on a cheap wet T-shirt contest. Jordan covers herself instinctively -- and hates the instinct. Modesty isn't going to get her through this.

SLUTNIK

Man. Doesn't she know it's rude
to point?

NEWBERRY

Wow. You see that girl?

WICKWIRE

I got eyes, Newberry.

SLUTNIK

One night. Just one night in my
room, she'd forget all about playin'
commando.

ENGLAND

Tone that shit down, Slutnik. You
heard with they said.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

Out of the water!

The class breaks for the beach.

THE CHIEF

Now make like sugar cookies and
roll in the sand for me.

The trainees hit their bellies and roll. Indeed, they
look like sugar cookies.

THE CHIEF

Collect those poles, gentlemen.
Still a lotta beachfront you haven't
seen...

Groaning, the trainees grab poles. Jordan's pole, wet
slips from their collective grasp...

And bangs Stamm's ankle. He HOWLS through his teeth.

ENGLAND

How bad? Stamm?

JORDAN

We better get a medic over --

STAMM

No, goddamnit. No.

INSTRUCTOR

Up! Up! Up! Up!

Stamm swallows the pain. Poles go back on shoulders. Looking like drunk centipedes, the class staggers off down the beach.

EXT. MUD PIT - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

Wallowing in mud, the class does belly-busters, atomic sit-ups -- and the sadistic reverse push-up, where trainees lie on their backs, place hands under shoulder blades and push their crotches skyward.

THE CHIEF

Pain is your friend. You ally.
It will keep you awake in times of emergency... it will tell you when you are seriously injured... it will keep you angry and remind you to finish the job and get the hell home. But you know the best thing about pain?

CLASS

No, sir!

THE CHIEF

It lets you know that you aren't dead yet.

Instructors roam, RASPING ORDERS, kicking students into proper position. Jordan struggles with the reverses.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

Go regulation if you can't do the reverses, O'Neil.

She looks around. A lot of the guys are having trouble with the reverses, not just her.

JORDAN

Thank you, sir. But I like these just fine.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

Not doin' them very fine, O'Neil.

JORDAN

I'll try anyway, sir.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

You'll try what we tell you to try, O'Neil. Go regulation.

She switches to standard push-ups, her face disappearing into the ooze with every downstroke.

Soon the Chief's boots slosh into FRAME. He's still looking for his human sacrifice.

THE CHIEF

Who's it gonna be. I just wonder,
who is it gonna be...

EXT. BEACH - CORONADO NAVAL STATION - SUNSET

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS

On your belly... on your back...
on your feet... on your belly...
on your back... on your feet...

Whistle-drills. Silhouetted against a lowering sun, the students flop around like docked fish.

INT. ADMINISTRATION - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Blondell is ending her shift. She shoulders a purse and pauses at a window, seeing...

The trainees shuffling into formation like the living dead. Jordan is still among them.

EXT. THE GRINDER - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

THE CHIEF

You have noticed a ship's bell
hanging at the west side of this
courtyard. If, at any time, you
feel you cannot continue with your
training -- that bell is your
salvation. Strike it three times,
and the ordeal is over.

Nervous eyes flick to the bell.

THE CHIEF

Yes, it is a long walk. So I'll
make it as easy as I can.

He turns his back to the class.

THE CHIEF

Now you don't have to watch me
watching you break rank. Because
I know someone here wants to do
it.

CAMERA SEARCHES their faces. There isn't one trainee here who hasn't thought about it. Including Jordan.

THE CHIEF
Now I know what you're thinking...

SLUTNIK
(low)
I'm thinkin' we could jump him
right now...

THE CHIEF
"Can I really take 15 weeks of
this bubonic asshole?" If you
don't know the answer to that
question, the answer is "No, you
cannot." And that is another
historical fact. So do it. Admit
you don't have what it takes...
admit you are out of your depth --
or we're all heading back to the
beach right now.

(waiting a beat)
Instructors! Time hack!

Following the Chief's lead, Instructors lift their dive
watches.

THE CHIEF
Six... five... four... three...
two... one... HACK!
(to class)
The time is now 12-hundred. The
sun is shining brightly. Plenty
of daylight left for another phone-
pole run...

GROANS behind him. The groans give way to the SOUND OF
BOOTS breaking rank.

INT. ADMINISTRATION - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

BLONDELL'S POV: Of a lone figure crossing to the bell.

EXT. GRINDER - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

QUICK CLOSEUPS of Miller, Slutnik, Wickwire, turning to
watch someone cross the grinder. At least we know who it
isn't.

CLOSE on the Chief as the BELL RINGS THREE TIMES. He
turns around to find...

Stamm at the bell.

For the first time, the Chief looks dead-bang at Jordan.

Was he expecting her?

THE CHIEF

Leave your helmet there, Stamm.
Back to the barracks.

Stamm drops his helmet and limps away.

THE CHIEF

The rest of you should remember
one thing. The only easy day was
today. Lieutenant Wickwire?
Turning it over to you.

WICKWIRE

Cuh-lass, face right!

They march off.

INT. MESS HALL - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Dead-ass tired, Jordan slides her tray down the line,
piling on food that means nothing more than raw calories.

She heads for...

A table of trainees, one spot open. Seeing her coming,
the guys shift position. Suddenly the table is full.

ENGLAND

Better look elsewhere, O'Neil.

Jordan glares. None of them meet her eyes. She wheels
around -- and now all eyes are on her, watching her ass
walk away. FEATURE Slutnik, the walking sperm bank.

SLUTNIK

Half a night, Lord, just gimme
half a night to set her straight...

Jordan tries another table. This one, too, becomes
abruptly full. As Jordan leaves, HOLD on Miller. He's a
human eclipse -- six-three, 220, the perfect commando
physique. Instructors wish they could clone him.

MILLER

Average woman is 25 percent body
fat. That's one-quarter fat, man.
Think about that.

MCCOOL

Nice distribution, though.

MILLER

No way does she makes this program.
No way.

After wandering the mess hall like a homeless person, Jordan finds refuge at a table with female mess stewards.

They look at her with blank faces. No understanding. No compassion.

EXT. B.O.Q. - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Jordan walks in a bathrobe, toweling her hair dry. She fishes for keys at her door.

VOICE

It's not so much that they hate you...

Jordan looks. Someone is sitting on an outdoor table, smoking. He leans into the light so she can see his face.

It's Wickwire, the mid-30s lieutenant who doubles as class officer. He's dangerously handsome.

WICKWIRE

They're more afraid of you.

JORDAN

Well, now I feel so much better.

WICKWIRE

It was made clear before you came -- harassment equals career suicide. Can't say anything good, so they don't say much at all. To your face, anyway.

JORDAN

Whose orders were those?

WICKWIRE

It was made clear.
(getting up)
Anyway, stay ballsy. First week's hell, then it levels out. Until S.E.R.E. training, anyway. That's hell-and-a-half.

JORDAN

And how do you know that?

WICKWIRE

Made it to Week 10 last time.

JORDAN

I didn't know they let you try
again. Especially at your age.

WICKWIRE

You're kind of a surprise yourself.

A faint grin from Wickwire before he shadows back across the courtyard that separates the two B.O.Q. buildings.

Back across no-man's land.

INT. JORDAN'S B.O.Q. - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Two beds. Matching lockers. A desk, a chair, a mirror.

All overwhelmingly dull.

Jordan drops the robe off her shoulders to take inventory of her body. Both sides of her neck are bruised from the phone-pole run. Her back and thighs are sand-burned.

Mirror cuts abound. She's already a mess.

Jordan uncaps some cologne. It's a vestige of her old life she's not going to surrender. She sniffs. Savors.

Dabs. Looks back in the mirror...

And breaks out laughing. It's like dropping a rose in a cesspool.

EXT. SILVER STRAND HIGHWAY - CORONADO - DAY

A PHOTOGRAPHER stands near a car parked just outside the base. He's peering through a 600mm lens.

PHOTOGRAPHER'S POV: FOCUSING through cyclone fencing... PANNING past the sand dunes... and finding green-clad trainees gathered at an obstacle course.

EXT. OBSTACLE COURSE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

An explosion of sand: England and Wickwire belly-flop into a sand pit and speed-crawl under barbed wire. Clear, they gain their feet and blitz toward...

The rolling logs. They balance-beam their way to...

The rope climb. Racing to the top, they reach a platform and fling themselves down onto...

The high poles. They land awkwardly, losing their wind and their grip, tumbling into the sand pit below before...

Racing for the finish. The Chief thumbs a stopwatch.

THE CHIEF

England, 88 seconds. You're good
to go for the slide-for-life.
Wickwire, roll back till you get
south of 90.

WICKWIRE

Fuck. Yes sir.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

Who'd you kiss to get back in here,
anyway?

Wickwire dusts off and starts back for...

The starting line. Stepping up next is Cortez, the human fighting cock. Jordan lines up beside him and psyches up for the first obstacle -- and eight-foot sheer wall.

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS

Hang on, here...

He grabs something off a truck and positions it at the base of the wall. It's a little two-step platform.

SNICKERS, MOANS from the guys. Cortez can barely contain his disgust.

CORTEZ

Aw, what is this...

JORDAN

(mortified)

Sir...

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS

Don't have to use it, O'Neil, but
it's gotta go out.

(calling out)

Five... four... three...

JORDAN

I can make this wall without --

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS

... two... one... MARK!

Cortez blurs away. Jordan starts a step late.

Cortez takes the wall clean. Eschewing the two-step, Jordan jumps right over it -- but jumps too far out because of it. She takes the wall awkwardly.

INTERCUT the others as they break rank to follow, eager to see Cortez blow her off the course.

CLASS
Lesgo, Cortez, LESGO, GO, GO!

Cortez belly-flops into the sand pit -- and snags going under the barbed wire.

CORTEZ
Shit of a saint...

Catching up, Jordan clears the wire without a hitch and leads going into...

The rolling logs. They both tight-rope across nimbly and bound on toward...

Rope climb. Jordan starts up at a decent clip -- but Cortez comes from behind like a chimp on white sugar, doubling her speed.

CLASS
Take her, take her here, Cortez...
lookit that monkey-man go... hoo-
yah, hoo-yah...

Cortez reaches the top platform. Now he's faced with...

The high poles. He's seen others land sideways and pay the price. Trying another way, Cortez takes a flying leap...

And WHUMPS down with legs astraddle. He tried to cushion the landing with his hands -- and failed magnificently.

His balls took the brunt.

Jordan WHUMPS down beside him with legs astraddle -- and shoots Cortez a "Hey, no problem" look. She rolls off the poles...

And drops to the pit below. Cortez lands right behind.

Now it's a flat-out sprint for...

The finish line. He takes her at the tape.

THE CHIEF
Cortez, 93 seconds. O'Neil, 94.
Cortez, do a little rescue-recovery
on your gonads and line up again.
O'Neil... move ahead.

Heading back to the starting line, Jordan wheels around.

JORDAN
Say again, sir?

THE CHIEF
You heard me. Move on.

CORTEZ
Aw, this is such bullshit...

Others GRUMBLE in commiseration. Jordan flushes with anger.

JORDAN
Chief, sir, I don't understand why --

THE CHIEF
Educate her, Pyro.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
Automatic five-second deduction,
which slips you under the wire.
It's called "gender-norming," O'Neil --
standard procedure for all females
in physical training courses.
Where you been the last few years?

JORDAN
What "all females"? If I'm the
only --

THE CHIEF
Twice now, I have said the words
"move on."

He turns his back, leaving no possibility of discussion.
Jordan stares after.

SLUTNIK
Can't live with them, can't kill
them. What's the point?

MCCOOL
Somebody throw a tent over this
circus.

WICKWIRE
(low to Jordan)
Just let it go. If it's in your
favor, just shut the hell up and
take it.

EXT. B.O.Q. - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Dressed in bathrobe, Jordan reaches her door. She pauses to check...

The outdoor table. No visitors tonight.

INT. JORDAN'S B.O.Q. - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Jordan pushes inside -- and stops when she sees the little two-step platform. That awful crutch. Someone has put it beside her bed.

Jordan wheels around to check...

EXT. B.O.Q. - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

The men's building. Slutnik and a few others loiter on a balcony, mirroring her stare.

EXT. CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Hastily dressed, Jordan marches across the base. Her march turns into an angry run as she cuts through parking lots... jumps hedges... and finally reaches...

EXT. C.O.'S HOUSE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

An on-base bungalow. Jordan bangs on the front door until the C.O.'s scowling face appears.

JORDAN

Pardon the hour, sir. But you told me to come to you immediately if I felt I was being mistreated in any way.

C.O.

Didn't take long.

He waves her inside.

INT. C.O.'S HOUSE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

C.O.

All right, lieutenant, give me a name and specifics, I'll have the X.O. file an action first thing in the morning.

(waits)

A name?

JORDAN

It's you, sir. And it started the day I came here.

C.O.

(jolted)

Oh, really.

JORDAN

It's this double-standard, the separate quarters, the deferential treatment. It's how you pulled out my chair and nearly served high tea the first time we met.

C.O.

Because I was civil, now you're complaining.

JORDAN

I can't afford civility, sir. How am I supposed to fit in with these guys when you've got me set up as an outsider? Even if I make it under these rules, I still lose, because there'll always be a flag in my file -- "Yeah, she made it, but..." I mean, really -- why didn't you just issue me a goddamn petticoat to wear around the base?

C.O.

Did you just have a brain-fart?

JORDAN

Pardon?

C.O.

Did you just barge in here and curse at your base commander? If so, I regard that as a bonafide brain-fart, and I resent it when people fart inside my home.

JORDAN

I think you've resented me from the start, sir.

Now, finally, her opponent steps into the ring. And he's a bare-knuckle brawler.

C.O.

(building)

What I resent, lieutenant, is some politician using my base as a test tube for her grand social experiment. What I resent is the sensitivity training that is now mandatory for my men... the day-care center I have to build where an officer's lounge used to be... and the OB/GYN I have to keep on staff just so someone can keep track of your personal pap smears.

(drawing close)

But most of all, lieutenant, I resent your perfume, however subtle it may be, competing with the aroma of my fine three-dollar-and-fifty-nine cent cigar, which I will happily put out this very instant if the phallic nature of it happens to offend your goddamn fragile sensibilities. DOES IT?

JORDAN

No, sir.

C.O.

No, sir, WHAT?

JORDAN

The shape doesn't bother me. It's just that goddamn rotten stench.

A dangerous beat -- before the C.O. disengages.

C.O.

Well. 'Least now we're talking the same language.

(a beat)

So one standard. Is that what you're after?

JORDAN

Same rules for everyone, sir.

C.O.

Straight up?

JORDAN

Across the board, sir.

C.O.
And if you just happen to wash out, I won't have to contend with you bitchin' to some hairy-chested female Senator? And please note I did not identify any one in particular.

JORDAN
Wouldn't dream of it, sir.

A deciding beat.

C.O.
Then good night.

JORDAN
So I'll get a fair shot?

C.O.
You'll get everything you want, O'Neil. Let's see if you want what you're gonna get.

INT. BARBER SHOP - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

Jordan gets her hair cut to regulation length. It's over in seconds.

INT. ADMINISTRATION - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

Jordan slaps down old room keys and new orders. Blondell scans the paperwork with deepening concern.

BLONDELL
This some kind of joke?

INT. JORDAN'S B.O.Q. - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

Jordan tosses her belongings into a laundry bag. She slings the bag over her shoulder, boots aside the hated two-step on her way out...

EXT. B.O.Q. BUILDING - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

... marches across the no-man's land...

INT. B.O.Q. ROOM - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

... and bangs open a door. Slutnik sits up on his bed.

SLUTNIK
Well, who the shit you think you are? Comin' in here like that?

JORDAN
Your new roommate.

Slutnik's face curdles. Jordan dumps her bag on an open bunk and starts unpacking.

JORDAN
Anybody usin' these drawers here?

SLUTNIK
Hey, hey, HEY. No possibility.
You can't stay in here. You can't
sleep right next to me.

JORDAN
Funny, the C.O. says I can.

She slaps orders on his chest, continues to unpack.

SLUTNIK
Aw, lookit this, lookit this --
she's bringin' Tampax in here.
C'mon, you got nothin' but rooms
over there.

JORDAN
That your desk? I'll take this
one.

SLUTNIK
WOULD YOU JUST GET OUTTA HERE?

JORDAN
(whirling on him)
Listen, Sex Ape. I'm here to stay.
And if you don't want me for a
roommate or classmate, you got two
options -- move out or ring out.
End of file.

Slutnik stalks out. Jordan fires a look at the innocent bystander here, McCool. He was studying at his desk when the fireworks began.

JORDAN
What about you, McCool? Any problem
with the room assignment?

McCool -- an imperturbable black lieutenant -- just goes back to his manuals.

MCCOOL
"It's not a job -- it's an
adventure."

EXT. OCEAN - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

START on flares igniting overhead. FOLLOW the flares as they parachute down into the surf to illuminate...

The class, standing in one long line, arms linked. As black waves knock out their legs, we're reminded of show girls kicking their way through some macabre review.

EXT. BEACH - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Firing flare guns and working their bullhorns:

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
58 degrees this morning! That's not a bad water temp, really -- if you're standing where we are!

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS
Slurred speech, lack of proper motor control, short-term amnesia -- all early signs of hypothermia! Advanced hypothermia is easy to detect in a classmate! He'll look like he's dead!

THE CHIEF
Body heat. In situations of extreme cold, you can always count on body heat to keep you alive -- and I do not mean your own. We will break you of the cultural barriers that dictate you should not invade another man's space. Are any of you in a situation of extreme cold right now?

INTERCUTTING trainees and instructors:

CLASS
Yes, sir!

THE CHIEF
Then why aren't you all over the man next to you?

The class pivots 90 degrees and starts to close rank.

Behind Jordan, Montgomery (a.k.a. "Flea") hesitates: He's a bantam-weight from Georgia, his manners bred into the bone. He just can't find a delicate way to grab Jordan without mounting her.

JORDAN
Just do it, okay?

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS
If you can't feel the other guy's
pecker, you ain't in tight enough!
I want nuts to butts!

JORDAN
Come on, Montgomery...

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS
Flea! O'Neil! Why is there a
break in that line?

Finally Jordan grabs Flea by the neck, pushes him ahead and mounts him. The class closes down into a long human snake.

JORDAN
(in his ear)
Montgomery, why do they call you
"Flea"?

FLEA
It's really "F. Lee Montgomery" --
but that gets whittled down to
just "Flea." For short, ma'am.

JORDAN
So it really has nothing to do
with actual brain size?

FLEA
No, ma'am.

JORDAN
Well, Flea, I appreciate the respect
you just showed me. But I don't
need it and don't want it -- not
that kind of respect, anyway.
It's just gonna hurt us both, okay?

FLEA
I'll work on it, ma'am.

JORDAN
Do that.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
(to the Chief)
Time.

THE CHIEF
Check your watch, Pyro. Seems
fast.

CAMERA POLLS the grim, blue-lipped faces in the water.

Jordan feels Flea starting to shake. Badly.

JORDAN
Hey. You okay, Flea?

FLEA
'Snot me. It's him.

Two bodies ahead, it's the big bruiser, Miller, who's shuddering. Jordan feels him shaking through Flea.

MILLER
Jesus, my hands... they aren't workin' right...

NEWBERRY
How long i'zis for?

WICKWIRE
'Spoded to be 20-minute intervals,
no more.

NEWBERRY
Swear each time's gettin' longer.

MCCOOL
This where you bailed last time,
Wick?

WICKWIRE
Huh-uh -- but wasn't middla February
last time, either.

FLEA
How you doin', Miller? Miller?

No answer. Bad sign. On shore:

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
22 minutes...

Ignoring, the Chief lifts his bullhorn:

THE CHIEF
Remember, all this is completely
voluntary.
(MORE)

THE CHIEF (CONT'D)
For any of you who don't want to
continue, Instructor Johns is now
serving coffee and danish at the
ambulance.

A portable light comes on. Indeed, an instructor is
setting up coffee service.

THE CHIEF
Any takers?

SLUTNIK
He's the fuckin' Antichrist.

MCCOOL
Wick! They really got donuts over
there? Or just some'a last night's
dinner rolls?

FLEA
Look like donuts to me...

JORDAN
(in disbelief)
What're you guys doing? Huh?

MCCOOL
Just askin'

JORDAN
What, you gonna give it all up for
a maple twist? How dumb you gotta
be? That's exactly what they --

Suddenly the line rips apart. It's Miller, breaking for
shore.

CLASS
NO!

Soon the dyke is bursting everywhere: Four others break
rank, following Miller's lead.

The deserters stagger onto the beach. MEDICS close in
quick, draping them with blankets, shining flashlights in
their faces, asking brain-check question.

MEDICS
Tell me what day this is... look
at me now... what city are you
from, sailor... here, look right
here...

A medic nods to the Chief. No hypothermia. Not yet.

THE CHIEF

You want another minute to think
about this? Huh?

(no response; to
Miller directly)

Do any of you want to reconsider?

Avoiding his eyes, Miller wags his head.

THE CHIEF

Johnson. Get 'em out of my scan.

It's a death sentence. As the quitters slouch for the coffee truck...

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

By my watch... which, of course
appears to be broken... they've
been in 27 minutes without the
benefit of protective gear.

TIGHT on the Chief. Scanning the remaining trainees.

Thinking about holding out for one more.

TIGHT on Jordan. Knowing who he's waiting for. Wondering if she can outlast him.

THE CHIEF

(into bullhorn)

Everybody out.

With a SHIVERING CHEER, the trainees stampede ashore, grabbing blankets, trading body-bumps and high-fives.

Jordan gets swept up in the esprit: They've conquered a common enemy. But when she tries to get high-fived...

The guys turn their backs. It's a cold rebuff, worse than any water.

HOLD TIGHT on Jordan. Shivering. Watching the guys drift away. Hating them.

WICKWIRE

Hey. Way to gut it out.

JORDAN

Thanks, Wick.

INT. INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

The instructors are shuffling muster lists, reorganizing the class. B.G., the BELL TOLLS again and again.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

(shaking head)

Miller. Thought the guy was made of depleted uranium. Really didn't expect to lose him.

THE CHIEF

Every class has its surprises, Pyro. This one'll be no different.

EXT. GRINDER - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

Blondell crosses the grinder with another female ensign, tall and striking. Passing the bell, Blondell checks on...

The helmets lined up beneath. A dozen already.

An O.S. CADENCE CALL -- then, led by Wickwire, trainees double-time into the grinder, uniforms drenched from a beach run. Among them, still, is Jordan. It brings a Mona Lisa smile to Blondell's face.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

Change those clothes, be back here in six minutes! And I am timing you!

The class scatters. Slutnik hits the brakes when he sees Blondell and her friend.

SLUTNIK

Jesus Christ. And I only got three minutes apiece...

ENGLAND

(jerking him away)
Barkin' up the wrong dress, Slutnik.
You ain't their type.

Overhearing, Jordan snaps a look at Blondell, only now realizing. Their eyes meet.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

O'Neil! What're you gawking at?

INT. C.O.'S OFFICE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

P.R. FLAK

(reading newspaper)

"... last week at Coronado. The woman, identity unknown, is believed to be the first female candidate for the elite Special Reconnaissance program. Her presence could signal a shift in the Navy's long-standing policy that excludes women from combat positions."

The P.R. FLAK drops the newspaper on the C.O.'s desk.

It's the San Diego Tribune. Under the headline "G.I. JANE," a photo shows a chesty sailor running the obstacle course.

C.O.

(calling O.S.)

I'm asking again. Where is she?

YEOMAN

Inbound now, sir. Had to pull her out of the dive bell.

P.R. FLAK

I have interview requests from two local TV stations. And a sociologist from U.C. San Diego called, wanted to know if she could examine the interaction between "G.I. Jane" and the men.

C.O.

"A sociol..." Kill the interviews. I don't need civilians nosin' around in matters that are supposed to be covert in nature. Just kill 'em before this whole thing gets outta con --

YEOMAN

Senator DeHaven calling, sir.

The C.O. gets an instant headache.

INT. SENATE BARBER SHOP - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

C.O. (V.O.)

Base Commander Turrentine speaking.

In the Senate barber shop, DeHaven is having her hair colored. She holds a fax of the Tribune article in one hand, a cell phone in the other.

DEHAVEN
(hitting like a
Scud)

Commander, are you of the habit of letting photographers traipse around your base snappin' their fill? These were supposed to have been discreet test cases --

INTERRCUTTING:
C.O.

Senator, they stand out on the public highway with telephoto lenses --

DEHAVEN
-- and now I got reporters from Toadsquat, Iowa, calling my office and askin' what I know about this "G.I. Jane" thing.

C.O.
-- nothing I can do about it unless you're suggesting I infringe on their civil liberties -- which I'd happily do if you'll just trim a little fat off the Constitution.

DEHAVEN
Are you truly mouthin' off to a senior member of the Senate Arms Committee? I mean, I'll give you points for style -- just nothin' for smarts.

INT. C.O.'S OFFICE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

The C.O. double-takes as Jordan enters: She's sun-burned, wind-burned, sand-burned, chapped and chaffed, bloody and soggy. Her dive suit leaks onto the floor.

JORDAN
See me, sir?

C.O.
You makin' friends with the press, lieutenant?

He tosses her the paper. Jordan scans the article as DeHaven continues over speakerphone:

DEHAVEN

Well, seein's how this thing is out, you let me handle the r.p.m. From this point forward, I want all press matters coordinated via my office. I'll be god-damned if I'm gonna watch Hayes pull flowers out of his ass and take credit for this one. Him or the President.

(aside to
beautician)

This my shade? "Midnight Mahogany"? 'Cuz I'm comin' dangerously close to lookin' like Ronald Reagan here.

C.O.

Your prerogative, Senator.

DEHAVEN

Awright. How's our girl doin', anyway?

C.O.

Standing right here in my office.

DEHAVEN

Jordan, dear. How are they treating you?

JORDAN

(catching C.O.'s
eyes)

Can't complain, ma'am.

DEHAVEN

Hmmm. Maybe I'll ask when I see you in person.

JORDAN

Uh, ma'am.

DEHAVEN

Gonna be visiting that all-woman's America's cup team in a few weeks -- If I were a gambler, I'd say Dennis O'Conner's days are numbered. But they're in San Diego, so I thought I'd take a quick promenade of the base.

Deafening silence. We aren't sure who dreads the idea more -- the C.O. or Jordan.

C.O.
Uh, V.I.P. security arrangements
generally take some time, Senator.

DEHAVEN
"Security"? What the hell you
talkin' about? Your base isn't
secure?

C.O.
Of course, but there's more --

DEHAVEN
Then set out the good plates, we'll
all have lunch. My office will
follow up with details. Jumping
off, now...

Phone goes dead. The C.O. gives Jordan a look one might
reserve for a lab technician who inadvertently unleashed
Ebola upon the world.

JORDAN
Sir, I want you to know that I had
nothing to do with any of this.
Not this article, not --

C.O.
"We'll all have lunch." Good idea.
Oh, and let's be sure to invite
this sociologist, too -- just in
case we want to have a FUCKING
BRIDGE GAME AFTERWARDS!

YEOMAN
Sir? Secretary Hayes calling.

The C.O.'s headache becomes a migraine.

JORDAN
(backing out)
Permission to leave, sir?

C.O.
Permission to evaporate, O'Neil.

INT. SENATE BARBER SHOP - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

DeHaven hands the phone to her aide. He's set up a
portable office in the next barber chair.

DEHAVEN
Think I overplayed it?

DEHAVEN'S AIDE

Congress and the Pentagon share a lot of plumbing. They'll never know whose leak it is.

EXT. BEACH - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

150-pound rubber boats ("Zodiacs") litter the beach. The class is breaking down into six-man crews.

THE CHIEF

Boat Five -- Wickwire, Cozad, Vinyl, Intagliata, Ayers, and Wise. Lieutenant Wickwire is your senior officer. Follow his orders to your death.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

Get it up!

Crew Five finds their Zodiac, hoists it onto their heads.

THE CHIEF

Boat Six -- England, O'Neil, McCool, Montgomery, Cortez, and Slutnik. Lieutenant England is your senior officer.

Jordan rolls her eyes: At least two of the guys in her crew are blue-ribbon misogynists. Cortez and Slutnik don't like it any better.

JORDAN

Ah, c'mon...

CORTEZ

Motherachrist...

SLUTNIK

Me? Again?

THE CHIEF

(looking up)

Somebody got a problem with the muster?

JORDAN

Fine by me, sir!

CORTEZ

No problem, sir!

SLUTNIK

Full of joy here, sir!

Exchanging looks across their Zodiac, Jordan and her new crewmates lift the boat overhead.

THE CHIEF
Boat Seven...

EXT. BEACH - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

With BATTLE CRIES, 12 boat crews charge into the teeth of the POUNDING SURF. Some lose their boat to the first wave; others clear the surf and scramble aboard.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
(into bullhorn)
First crew to finish gets hot food
and warm racks for the night!
Rest of you are digging hide-sites
and eating earthworms tonight!

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Beyond the breakers, the Zodiacs run parallel to shore, crews paddling furiously, racing the wind, the sun, the other crews. Instructors shadow in power boats, stopwatches running.

EXT. BOAT SIX - OCEAN - DAY

MCCOOL
Don't wanna be pickin' no sandcrabs
outta my ass tonight!

ENGLAND
So shutup and stroke, McCool!

SLUTNIK
Hoo-yah! Hoo-yah!

Flea checks on Jordan. She paddles hard, really digging in. Flea grins: On some level, he has to admire this women.

Jordan catches the grin, gives one back.

Ahead, buoys mark the finish line. And just when it seems victory is at hand...

THWUNK. Something hits Boat Six. Suddenly it's losing air. Jordan torques around to see...

The Chief on a nearby boat, speargun in hand.

THE CHIEF
Your boat just hit razor coral.
What do you do now?

ENGLAND
Patch and pump! C'mon! Whose ass
is on the kit?

MCCOOL
I say keep paddlin'! We're almost --

ENGLAND
Forget it, McCool! Pri One is to
save the boat, not win a race! So
let's get on it!

They flail to save their sinking boat. Boat Five noses
past, stealing the lead. Wickwire tosses Jordan a passing
look. "Sorry, but..."

EXT. UPPER DUNES - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Up and down the dunes, crews are digging "hide-sites" --
six-man holes that will be their homes tonight. Cortez
and Slutnik are uprooting shrubs, collecting camouflage
material.

CORTEZ
Four years I petition to get into
this program. Four years. Finally
get here, and now it's co-ed?
Such bullshit. Now I'm gettin'
hammered just 'cuz she's on our
crew.

SLUTNIK
Least you don't have to sleep with
her every goddamn night.

CORTEZ
Tellin' you, I'd rather be the
last class with balls than the
first one with chicks.

CUT TO:

EXT. UPPER DUNES - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Jordan and Flea fill sand bags to shore up the walls of
their hide-site. England and McCool shovel back to back.

MCCOOL

Had a grandaddy who wanted to be a Navy man. Wanted to fire them big guns on a big-ass battleship. But Navy said to him, "Oh, no. You can only do one thing on a battleship." "Well what's that?" grandaddy said. "Cook," they said. Now this ain't 100 years ago -- I'm talkin' United States Navy, middla World War II. And you know the reason they gave him? You know why they tol' my grandaddy he couldn't fight for his country?

ENGLAND

He talked too much?

MCCOOL

"Negroes can't see at night. Bad night vision."

JORDAN

You're kiddin' me.

Jordan jumps in the hole, ready to take over shoveling.

MCCOOL

See, you just the new nigger on the block, O'Neil. That's all. And maybe you moved in too early.

He climbs out. HOLD on Jordan, looking off down the dunes, seeing the other crews covering up and going underground for the night. How the hell did she wind up here? So far from home?

EXT. SILVER STRAND HIGHWAY - DAY

A Jeep speeds along the public highway, carrying the C.O. back to base. When the Jeep tops a rise:

C.O.

What in God's name...

Ahead, a half-dozen news crews are camped on the shoulder.

All cameras are trained on the base.

INT. BEDROOM - GEORGETOWN APARTMENT - NIGHT

CAMERA FINDS Navy dress blues laid out on a bed... topcoat draped on a chair-back... CNN on a television.

CNN COMMENTATOR (TV)

... is denying that it is considering changing its long-held policy of exclusion -- but it isn't denying the presence of at least one female in a heretofore all-male program. Dubbed "G.I. Jane" by the media, this woman is now undergoing commando training at the Special Warfare Command Center in San Diego...

Half-shaven, Royce leans out of the bathroom in time to catch...

Footage from Coronado: A woman in Navy greens is on a beach run, loaded down with backpack and M-16. The NEWS FOOTAGE ZOOMS IN, FREEZE FRAMES with the indelible image that will be used over and over in coming weeks: Woman cradling rifle. Madonna for the 21st century.

ROYCE

Goddamn. My poster girl.

CNN COMMENTATOR

Senator DeHaven's office still has not released the identity of the woman, but DeHaven is confirming that "G.I. Jane" has outlasted many of her male counter-parts in the program, said to be one of the most grueling anywhere. Joining us now on "Washington Tonight" for the feminist perspective is Gloria Allred, live from --Royce snaps it off. He can't take anymore.

INT. BEAU-ART HALL - WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

Beneath the coffered ceiling of a great Beau-Art hall, one of Washington's power-tribes is celebrating. We find gowned women, tuxedoed men, gold-braided naval officers, a SWING BAND, and...

Secretary Hayes, newly confirmed. He beams as he dances with his wife. Compliments and friendly barbs come from all directions:

COMPLIMENTS (O.S.)

Congratulations, Mr. Secretary.
Say hello to the President for
me... Maybe now you can change
that carpet in your office, Teddy...
(MORE)

COMPLIMENTS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So what was the deal you made with
DeHaven? Or was it the Devil?
Always get them confused...

HAYES
Didn't you hear? Effective
immediately, all navy vessels can
no longer be referred to as "she."

BRAYS of laughter.

CUT TO:

INT. BEAU-ART HALL - WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

Royce, EXCUSING his way through the crowd, fixating on
the bar, leading his DIAL-A-DATE winner by the hand.

Conversations drift into earshot:

VOICE #1
... women are child-bearers. Life-
givers. Now we're going to make
them killers?

VOICE #2
... just don't have the upper-body
strength...

VOICE #3
How strong do you need to be to
launch a rocket? To push a button
or pull a trigger?

Royce can't get away from it.

DIAL-A-DATE
Are we going to dance?

ROYCE
Not right now.

Just yards from the bar, a Pentagon E-RINGER snags Royce's
elbow.

E-RINGER
Commander Royce. How's life across
the river?

ROYCE
Little slow, sir. When's the
Pentagon going to send me a good
crisis?

E-RINGER
I'll check my out-basket in the morning. Say, do you know...

The E-Ringer turns to make introductions -- but finds his CIRCLE OF FRIENDS embroiled in the topic du jour:

CIRCLE #1
... but men have trained as athletes for 5,000 years. Women have been at it for, what, couple of decades? Do we really know the limits of their strength?

CIRCLE #2
Or their endurance? You know, 30 years ago, women marathoners were 90 minutes off the pace of the men. Now, the women's time is probably only 20 minutes off.

CIRCLE #1
Try 15.

CIRCLE #3
But what do female soldiers really contribute? I mean, why is this "G.I. Jane" there instead of a man?

Eyes drift to Royce, inviting him into the fray.

ROYCE
(to dial-a-date)
You wait right here. I'll get the drinks.

INT. MEZZANINE - BEAU-ART HALL - NIGHT

Heading upstairs with an iceless rum. Royce finds a calm and secluded place to get drunk in peace and quiet.

VOICE #1
Take my word for it. It's just not going to happen. Not now, not anytime soon.

VOICE #2
You're guaranteeing that?

Royce frowns: He thought he was alone. He tracks the voices to a forced-air vent beside the chaise.

VOICE #1

I have it on unorthodox but reliable authority that combat positions will remain off-limits. Despite what's happening with our Babe in Boyland.

Alarms go off in Royce's head. He moves quickly to a railing, looks down.

ROYCE'S POV: Of two naval officers on the floor below.

They stand beside a matching vent. It's impossible to see faces from this angle -- but one man has a distinct bald spot.

NAVAL OFFICER (VOICE #1)

Well, isn't that what these test cases are supposed to decide?

(thinking)

Unless, of course, you're suggesting that "G.I. Jane" is on her way to becoming "Jane Doe"...

BALD SPOT (VOICE #2)

All I'm saying is that we won't be integrating -- despite the rhetoric coming off Capitol Hill, despite what's happening in Coronado. And you did not hear it from me.

NAVAL OFFICER (VOICE #1)

Hear what?

A conspiratorial handshake. The men split up.

INT. BEAU-ART HALL - WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

Royce flashes down the stairs. Hitting main floor, he looks around and then bumps into...

DIAL-A-DATE

There you are. Can we please dance now?

Over her shoulder, Royce spies Bald Spot heading for the cloak room. Royce commandeers the nearest J.O.

ROYCE

Lieutenant!

J.O.

Yes sir?

ROYCE
Take a dance!

INT. BEAU-ART HALL - WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

Royce bobs and weaves through the crowd, trying to keep sight of...

Bald Spot. Pushing through the exit doors.

Only steps behind, Royce shoulders through the doors...

EXT. BEAU-ART HALL - WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

And blasts outside, intending to shake some answers out of Bald Spot. But here Royce finds...

A dozen naval officers waiting for their cars. All of them now wear caps.

Royce tries to check faces of the quickly departing men. but it could have been anyone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

A high-speed transport ("Seafox") is SLAMMING OVER SWELLS.

Lashed to one side is a rubber life boat.

EXT. SEAFOX - OCEAN - DAY

THE CHIEF
Crew Six! Stand by!

ENGLAND

Flea! 'Cool! O'Neil! Cortez!
Slutnik! In that order! Five-
second intervals! Let's go!

England's crew lines up for cast-and-recover drills: One by one, they speed-roll off the transport...

... and drop into the life boat. After quickly stabilizing, they roll off the life boat...

... and disappear underwater like human bullets. England is last to cast off.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Jordan resurfaces. Treading water, she scans for...

Seafox. It makes a hard turn in the water and starts back. The recovery rig -- a big flexible loop -- is lowered into position.

Still hauling ass, Seafox picks up the trainees in reverse order -- England, Slutnik, Cortez. They each stab an arm through the passing loop...

EXT. SEAFOX - OCEAN - DAY

... and vault back aboard, slick as hell.

CORTEZ

Hoo-yah! Better'n sex in a car crash!

But now they're bearing down fast on...

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Jordan. She braces as best she can. As SEAFOX THUNDERS past, she stabs for the loop...

And snags it with her hand. But only her hand.

Hanging on grimly, Jordan drags face down in torrential water. Her mouth gropes for clean air but can't find it.

If she doesn't let go soon, she'll drown.

EXT. SEAFOX - OCEAN - DAY

At the stern, the Chief spots Jordan bobbing up in the boat's wake.

THE CHIEF

(to pilot)

Next recovery! Keep goin', keep goin'!

EXT. OCEAN - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

COUGHING up water, Jordan watches Seafox speed on toward McCool and Flea. They make textbook recoveries. She's the only one who couldn't cut it.

INT. WOMEN'S SHOWERS - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Head hung, Jordan showers alone.

THE CHIEF (O.S.)

You know, the Israelis...

Jordan recoils. Christ, how long has he been there?
Just standing in the doorway?

THE CHIEF
... they tried women in the 1967
War. Female soldiers.

With forced calm, Jordan squeaks off the water and finds a towel.

JORDAN
Permission to get dressed, sir?

THE CHIEF
It seems the men couldn't get used to the sight of women blown open and their viscera hanging from tree limbs. Israeli men would linger over wounded females -- often to the detriment of the mission, often endangering their own lives. They don't use women anymore.

JORDAN
(moving closer)
Sir, someone mentioned you received the Navy Cross. May I ask what you got it for?

THE CHIEF
For pulling a 210-pound man out of a burning barrack in Saudi Arabia.

JORDAN
I see. So when a man tries to rescue another man, he's a hero. But when he tries to rescue a woman, he's gone soft.

THE CHIEF
Could you have pulled that 210-pound man clear, lieutenant?

She can't say yes. She wants to but can't.

THE CHIEF
Females in combat situations impact unit cohesion. Men fight better without women around. And that is an historical fact.

JORDAN

It also seems like a problem with the men's attitude, sir. So maybe you should be sniffing around their shower room instead.

She shoulders past. The Chief gives her a few steps before dropping his bomb:

THE CHIEF

England went out with a stress fracture. That puts you in charge, lieutenant.

JORDAN

(off-balance)

McCool's that same rank. We're both j.g.'s.

THE CHIEF

You were commissioned one month earlier, which makes you the senior officer.

(passing her on his way out)

Remember. There are no bad crews -- only bad leaders.

INT. ARTILLERY RANGE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

Trainees are getting familiar with M-60 machine guns, firing SHORT BURST at downfield targets.

CORTEZ

(pissed)

No operational experience, and now she's callin' the shots?
Unbelievable.

SLUTNIK

Suppose she'll wanna eat with us now...

Jordan overhears them BITCHING. She steps up to an open slot -- and proceeds to WAIL AWAY with her M-60, tracer rounds blazing. Her target vaporized, she keeps WAILING madly, taking out Slutnik's target... then Cortez's... then...

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS

O'Neil... O'Neil... O'NEIL!

Finally she stops.

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS

One burst, one body, O'Neil! What the fuck you trying to do? Spell your name?

(to class)

You are not infantry! Your firepower is limited! Excessive killing only risks compromise...

Reloading, Jordan tosses a look at Slutnik and Cortez.

Ain't nobody bitchin' now.

EXT. MESS HALL - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

BLONDELL (O.S.)

S.E.R.E. training coming up.

Eating at a table with other women, Jordan turns to see Blondell setting down her tray.

BLONDELL

They take you away to San Clemente Island. Half the guys quit when they come back. Supposed to be just hell-and-a-half.

JORDAN

That's what I hear.

BLONDELL

Can I ask you somethin', lieutenant? How come you're doing this? I mean, we're kinda curious.

JORDAN

Who's "we"?

BLONDELL

Just some of the women.

EXT. QUARTERDECK - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

WALKING ACROSS THE BASE:

JORDAN

I don't know if there's any single reason. But my father was Navy. And he had this old-time recruiting poster in his den. It showed a girl trying on a sailor's uniform while saying, "Gee, I wish I were a man! I'd join the Navy!"

(MORE)

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Was maybe 10 years old when I first saw it, and even then it felt wrong. Made me mad. And I don't think a month has gone by that I haven't thought about that poster. "Gee, I wish I were a man."

BLONDELL

I've been accused of that wish.

JORDAN

The woman I saw you with...

BLONDELL

Just a friend. We have friends, too, you know.

JORDAN

But are there... I mean, how many...

BLONDELL

More than you'd guess. It's just that we don't hold coffee klatches. If more than three of us get together at any one time, the guys think it's some kind of uprising.

They laugh.

BLONDELL

Sounds funny now, but it's really not. We have to be careful. The Navy still knows how to put on a witch-hunt.

Reaching the quarterdeck, they scan a message board. Jordan finds a half-dozen phone slips for her.

JORDAN

Royce...

INT. GEORGETOWN APARTMENT - NIGHT

ROYCE

(into phone)

I've been trying you for five days. Don't they give you messages?

JORDAN (V.O.)

It's hard to find time to sleep, Royce. Much less keep up with my phone life.

ROYCE
How hard they making it on you?

EXT. PHONE KIOSK - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Jordan sighs and slumps against the phone kiosk. Where to start?

ROYCE (V.O.)
That bad?

JORDAN
I feel like there's men here,
there's women here -- then there's
men. But hey, what'd I expect?

INTERCUTTING JORDAN AND ROYCE:

ROYCE
Well, not this. I was doing the
Pentagon scene few nights ago.
Got some fresh stuff -- about you.
You may be in a hostile camp. I
think someone may be taking steps
to ensure that you crash and burn.

JORDAN
Me? Why me?

ROYCE
Don't you know? How they're talking
about you?

JORDAN
I saw an article...

ROYCE
I can't walk two blocks in
Washington without hearing about
"G.I. Jane." You're all over the
place, and whether you wanted it
or not, the feminists are sizing
you up for that poster.

Jordan's face sours with an errant thought.

JORDAN
So why are you telling me this?

ROYCE
Big symbols make big targets,
Jordan. I think someone's gunning
for you.

JORDAN

You know, Royce, I got enough heat on me without you turning up the jets, too.

ROYCE

I'm only trying to warn you in case --

JORDAN

Well, let me warn you: I'm going though with this. The more everybody fucks with me, fucks with my head, the more it just makes me want to finish. So don't expect me back crying in your arms any time soon, okay?

ROYCE

That's not what I want, Jordan. I mean... it is and it isn't...

JORDAN

Still can't make up your mind, huh? Gotta go, Royce.

ROYCE

Jordan. You watch your ass.

JORDAN

Sure. I'll join the crowd.

EXT. AIR STATION - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

A HELO WARMS UP on its pad.

Crew Six approaches, garbed in black wetsuits, loaded down with weapons and rucksacks. Jordan is at the lead.

INT. HELO - NIGHT

The helo is airborne. Sitting on rucksacks, trainees slather their faces with green camouflage paint. Over the HOWLING ROTORS:

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

Infiltrate... establish your hide-site... record any movement of troops, vehicles, patrols -- any activity inside your scan. If you are compromised, you have two options! Newberry!

Newberry is the new sixth man. He's young enough to still have a hyperactive Adam's apple.

NEWBERRY
Evasive maneuvers or radio for emergency extraction, sir!

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
If you are extracting, be damn sure to follow procedures you have learned in your classroom training! A helo cannot extract you from a wooded area! You must bring it down in a clearing! What's the minimum clearance for an MH-60 Black Hawk, McCool?

MCCOOL
32 feet, six inches, sir!

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
You will be penalized for early extraction, but you will be penalized more for capture -- trust me, far more! Survival! Evasion! Rescue! Evacuation! Welcome to S.E.R.E.!

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

The helo swoops low over the water, moon silhouetting. Black figures helo-cast into the ocean.

INT. HELO - NIGHT

Last out, Jordan is poised to follow when...

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
Lieutenant! Don't back down!

Jordan looks back. "What the hell does that mean?"

Offering no elaboration, Pyro signals "GO!" Jordan springs clear...

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

... and knifes into black water.

The HELO PATTERS away.

An inky stillness overtakes the world.

Jordan activates a red-light beacon, sweeps it around, revealing her position to...

Her crew. Five black faces regroup around her.

SLUTNIK
Feel right at home, McCool?

They secure weapons atop their waterproof rucksacks.

Jordan checks a heat-bearing compass.

JORDAN
(nodding direction)
South-southeast. And I don't want
to hear another word till we're
underground.

Pushing rucksacks ahead of them, they start swimming towards...

A moonlit shoreline. Half-mile ahead.

EXT. ROCKY SHORELINE - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - NIGHT

Jordan's crew reaches shallow water. They deflate their vests and rucksacks. Jordan trades her face mask for night-vision goggles.

NIGHT-VISION POV: Sweeping the rocks. Nothing at first.

Then two "hostiles" appear, patrolling the rocks.

Jordan motions "down." Six faces sink from sight.

NIGHT-VISION/UNDERWATER POV: Of the "hostile" patrol moving on.

They resurface. On Jordan's cue, the crew sheds flippers and begins scaling rocks. They've made landfall.

EXT. HIDE-SITE MONTAGE - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - NIGHT

MONTAGE: Racing the coming sun, Jordan's crew builds their hide-site... digging feverishly... filling sand bags... telescoping open a roof pole, fanning out spars... laying canvas roof panels into place... camouflaging the panels... sprinkling sanitizing powder around the perimeter to ward off animals. INTERCUT WITH...

A snake slithering across the ground. As it nears the hide-site...

A knife whacks its head off.

Slutnik picks up the carcass, kicks dirt over the severed head. No trace.

EXT. SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

CAMERA PANS the island, awash in morning light. Woodlands lie distant. A road is the only man-made feature -- until in FOREGROUND, we find a spotting scope poking from the ground.

INT. HIDE-SITE - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

SCOPE POV: Of the road. Fast-attack vehicles approach.

MCCOOL
(peering into
scope)

Got two FAVs moving south. I
make... four banditos aboard,
carrying... H-60 machine guns...

Jordan REPEATS THE INFO into a digital tape-recorder,
adds the time.

JORDAN
Newberry, get a photo. South?

CORTEZ
Entering my scan now...

JORDAN
West?

SLUTNIK
Clear.

JORDAN
North?

FLEA
Clear.

SCOPE POV: Of the FAVs disappearing down the road.

CORTEZ
FAVs clear.

Everyone relaxes -- as much as six people can in a hole five feet-wide. McCool opens up MREs (Meals Ready to Eat).

Slutnik guts his snake.

MCCOOL

You mind? I'm trying to eat here.

SLUTNIK

So am I.

Cortez finishes pissing into a tin pot. He transfers the waste to a zip-lock baggy, offers the pot.

CORTEZ

Anyone?

He looks at Jordan. She eyes the pot, tempted and nettled at the same time.

FLEA

Don't wanna evacuate 'cuz someone came down with uric poisoning, el-tee.

Abruptly Jordan unzips, drops her pants, sticks the pot under her. It raises eyebrows: It's a far cry from when she was covering up in cold water.

JORDAN

Didn't even bitch about the seat, did I?

EXT. SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

WIDE VIEW: As a lone figure appears on foot.

INT. HIDE-SITE - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

MCCOOL

What the... Got an unknown here.
100 yards north-northeast.

They pile up at McCool's scope. Jordan bulls her way through.

SCOPE POV: It's a women. Dressed in civilian clothes, she collects firewood. And she's coming this way.

MCCOOL

She part of the training?

JORDAN

I don't know...

SLUTNIK

"She?" There's another one?

McCool takes a second look.

SCOPE POV: OF THE WOMEN DRAWING CLOSER... CLOSER... AND finally looking dead-bang at us. She does an about-face and walks away. Quickly.

MCCOOL

Shit. Think we're had.

CORTEZ

Smoke her.

MCCOOL

I ain't gonna shoot her.

CORTEZ

Only blanks. Lemme do it.

MCCOOL

(pushing him away)

Hey. Ain't your call, man.

He looks to Jordan.

JORDAN

Pri One is to protect the mission.
If she represents a real threat,
we have to do it.

Pleased, Cortez slips his rifle under a roof panel.

JORDAN

(to McCool)

But did she see us? Do you know
for a fact that we are compromised?

McCool doesn't. Not for sure.

JORDAN

If not, firing will only give away
our position to hostiles in the
area. Now how smart is that?

MCCOOL

(a beat)

Mighta been civilian.

NEWBERRY

They got regular peeps on this
island, don't they?

EXT. ROAD - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

The asphalt road shimmers with midday heat. Suddenly a TROOP CARRIER ROARS over a rise.

INT. HIDE-SITE - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

SCOPE POV: Of the troop carrier braking hard. "Hostiles" spill out the rear -- and fan out all around us.

CORTEZ

(at scope)

Banditos on the east perimeter!
150 yards! Shit, she was part of
it!

MCCOOL

Fuck me.

FLEA

What's the word, el-tee? We're
about one minute from a major take-
down here.

HOLD on Jordan, heart skipping. Did she really make the
wrong call?

JORDAN

All right, fire-and-evade maneuvers.
Drop everything but weapons and
the PRC radio -- we're gonna be
high speed, low drag all the way
to the link-up site. Ready?

SLUTNIK

Sure. Now she wants to shoot.

JORDAN

MOVE!

EXT. SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

They come out of the hide-site like atomic locusts,
splintering into three groups and laying down SUPPRESSIVE
FIRE as they blitz for...

The woodlands.

"Hostiles" FIRE and pursue.

Flea is running flat out when the ground vanishes beneath
him. He goes down like a doped race horse. Suddenly
exposed, another crew scrambles into daylight: Flea ran
right over their hide-site.

Slutnik yanks Flea out, gets him back on his feet.

EXT. WOODS - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

Breathing like asthmatics, Jordan's crew regroups at the link-up site just inside the woods. Flea comes in hobbling. Badly.

SLUTNIK

This ain't workin' right!

MCCOOL

What's our go-to-shit plan, O'Neil?

SLUTNIK

This ain't even workin' wrong!

A beat as Jordan deliberates. She doesn't want to go out like this.

FLEA

Really don't wanna be captured, el-
tee. Heard some bad things.

JORDAN

Fuck.

(snatching the
radio)

Basher-Basher, this is Ground Crew
Six requesting emergency extraction.
Stand by for a PRC fix...

EXT. SKY - DAY

As a helo pirouettes in midair.

EXT. WOODS - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

Jordan's crew lopes through the woods, searching for a place to bring the helo down. Right on their heels...

ARTILLERY SIMULATORS THUMP-THUMP-THUMP, illumination GRENADES POP and flare. This may not be war, but it'll do until the real thing comes along.

INT. HELO - DAY

PILOT'S POV: Buzzing treetops, searching.

EXT. WOODS - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

ON THE RUN:

MCCOOL

32 feet, six inches!

JORDAN
I'm lookin', I'm lookin'!

Finally they break into a clearing. Is it big enough?

JORDAN
'Cool?

MCCOOL
(doesn't care)
Smoke it!

Jordan chucka smoke grenade.

INT. HELO - DAY

PILOT'S POV: Yellow smoke rises from the woods. We swoop toward it.

EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

Whirling smoke, the helo descends. Jordan's crew breaks early, trying to get there the instant it touches down.

But before they can...

An FAV crashes through the underbrush, M-60s BARKING in the helo's direction. The helo bounds away.

Jordan's crew tries to retreat -- but a second FAV cuts them off.

INT. HELO - DAY

PILOT'S POV: Of the action below, growing smaller and smaller: Jordan's crew. Surrounded. Laying down weapons. Captured.

EXT. WOODS - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

JORDAN'S POV: Brush slapping her face.

Crew Six is being hauled through the woods, hands tied back, boots around their necks, pulled along by...

The captors. We assume they're instructors in camouflage paint -- but we're moving so fast it's impossible to be sure.

EXT. P.O.W. CAMP - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

A P.O.W. camp, disturbingly authentic. A dozen trainees are already here, held in pens of bamboo and barbed-wire.

Flea, McCool, Slutnik, Cortez, Newberry -- all five get tossed into a pen. Jordan is pulled away.

FLEA

Where are you... HEY! Where are you taking her?

EXT. BOXES - P.O.W. CAMP - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

Jordan is thrown to the ground. Her eyes go wide when she sees a row of steel boxes nearby. They're scarcely larger than coffins.

INT. BOX - P.O.W. CAMP - DAY

Hands push Jordan inside the box. She has to curl up fatally just to fit.

JORDAN

How long?
(no answer)
Please, HOW LONG?

The LID BANGS closed. A LOCK RATCHETS, FOOTSTEPS RETREAT.

Daylight sheets in through ventilation slats.

When her eyes adjust, Jordan finds markings on the lid and walls. Scratchings made with a nail. The memoirs of previous tenants.

JORDAN

"Don't know how much I can take"..."A little taste of death"..."Save the nail"..."(then the real kick- in-the-teeth)"It's been three days now"...

EXT. P.O.W. CAMP - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - NIGHT

As "hostiles" pull Flea out of the pen.

INT. BOX - P.O.W. CAMP - NIGHT

A BANGING wakes Jordan. Are they coming for her? But FOOTSTEPS LEAVE. A GROAN from the adjacent box.

JORDAN

Who is it?

WICKWIRE (O.S.)

(a beat)

You know, I had an apartment about
this size once.

JORDAN

Wick. They got your crew, too?

WICKWIRE (O.S.)

Intagliata was out chasing
breakfast. They found his tracks.
Well, shit.

A beat.

JORDAN

You really came back for more? Of
this?

WICKWIRE (O.S.)

When I was sittin' behind a desk
in Washington, it made sense,
somehow. Blame it on my big
brother. He was Spec-Recon. And
the stories he used to tell...

JORDAN

If you got a good one, Wick...

Anything to get her mind off this box. Out of this box.

Now INTERCUT Jordan and Wickwire, lying like fraternal
twins in their wombs of steel:

WICKWIRE

One time he was doing a rekkie of
the Libyan coastline. This is,
like, right before we bombed
Khadaffi into the past tense. So
his crew does a nighttime infil,
maps all the big artillery
placements and stuff, then turns
around to get the hell gone. But
between them and the water are
five Libyan guards, all armed to
the nuts.

JORDAN

They had to kill 'em?

WICKWIRE

Nah, they were dead-ass asleep.

(MORE)

WICKWIRE (CONT'D)

But on every guard's chest, they
left one Marlboro cigarette. Just
a little calling card to say they'd
been there -- and could come back
any time they wanted.

JORDAN

That's a good story.

WICKWIRE

So the shit you gotta go through?
To get from here to there? Brother
said it was worth it. Worth the
training... worth the divorce...
worth anything.

JORDAN

He was married?

WICKWIRE

At first.

JORDAN

You got anybody, Wick?

WICKWIRE

Not me. You?

It hurts to think about it. The Potomac. The gunkhole
harbor. Royce.

WICKWIRE

O'Neil?

JORDAN

How'd you make it last time, Wick?
How'd you get through this part?

WICKWIRE

(a beat)

Last time I didn't.

JORDAN

(jarred)

Let's keep talkin', Wick. Just
keep talkin' to me...

EXT. NEWSSTAND - WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Royce stops for a newspaper. As he pays, something else
catches his eye. He picks up...

A "People" magazine. The grainy image of "G.I. Jane" fills the cover. A photo inset, much clearer, shows a beaming DeHaven. "BEHIND EVERY GREAT WOMAN..."

ROYCE
(shaking head)
Suitable for framing...

INT. CORRIDOR - N.I.C. - DAY

ROYCE
Got time for a brain-pick?

Reading as he walks, a former CIA spook looks up to find Royce in lockstep. It surprises him: Not many people here talk to him -- unless they're in trouble. THE SPOOK is physically unremarkable except for a face that would be right at home on Easter Island: This is a man who's seen most of the world's ills -- and forgotten none.

THE SPOOK
Subject?

ROYCE
O'Neil, Jordan.

THE SPOOK
Thought you two were file-closed.

ROYCE
You knew about us?

THE SPOOK
Sorry. Thought you knew I knew.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - N.I.C. - DAY

Royce and the Spook enter. The vault-like door closes emphatically. Ensuring their privacy:

ROYCE
Computer -- no transcription, no com-link, no data-link. In fact... shut-down sequence 0-Niner-0-8, mark.

All around, screens go blank, phone lights extinguish. They sit at the conference table. No Computer. No files.

Just two guys doing headwork.

THE SPOOK
All right. So who stands to gain if Jordan flames out in a big way?

ROYCE

The E-Ringers? Full integration
is gonna cost the services billions
at the worst possible time -- when
Congress is already swinging the
axe.

THE SPOOK

(agreeing)

Congress cuts, military bleeds.
But Pentagon's a big place. Let's
narrow the sights.

ROYCE

The Navy? They've made it clear
they don't want to pull missiles
out of subs to make room for women's
heads. What's it gonna cost to
make a fleet of Trident's co-ed?

THE SPOOK

Sabotage born of economics?
Wouldn't be a first. But is Hayes
really going to start his watch
with such a public failure?

ROYCE

Possibly. Just to spite DeHaven.

THE SPOOK

Hmm. Let's aim higher.

Royce blinks. "What's higher?"

THE SPOOK

The White House. If Jordan wins,
DeHaven wins in spades. Why?
Well, it's been said that the only
man the President fears -- ain't
no man.

ROYCE

The first female President?

THE SPOOK

Don't for a second think she didn't
leak this story. "G.I. Jane" gives
DeHaven a symbol that taps into
the biggest constituency of them
all.

ROYCE

Women.

THE SPOOK

If you were the President, wouldn't that put a little piss in your shoes?

ROYCE

I don't know. Seems...

THE SPOOK

This ain't about some little soldier girl sloggin' her way through commando school. The implications go way beyond.

ROYCE

Christ, I don't want to see her take a fall. She thinks I do, but...

THE SPOOK

I take it this file is still open.

ROYCE

(shaping his words)

Even tough I don't talk to her every day -- I still talk to her every day. Know what I mean?

THE SPOOK

(nodding)

Okay, so now work it from the other end. Think about California -- and how things might be handled there.

ROYCE

I don't...

(scoffing)

What, someone on base? A "mole"?

THE SPOOK

This is what you get for brain-picking an old CIA spook. but if I needed to control the outcome of this test case, that's how I'd do it. A man-in-place. Makes everything very controllable.

INT. BOX - P.O.W. CAMP - DAY

JORDAN'S POV: The box opening. Daylight assaulting us, blowing out our eyes. Disembodied hands pulling us out.

EXT. P.O.W. CAMP - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

Legs hobbled, uniform soiled, Jordan is led past a row of huts. She looks like she got hit by a train -- and got back up.

JORDAN'S POV: VISION STILL BLOWN OUT. BUT INSIDE THE pen, we make out 40 trainees now. One guy wrings out a sock and drinks from it.

Jordan moves past huts. VOLATILE VOICES spill out as trainees get interrogated.

JORDAN'S POV: Outside one hut, we see Flea. At least we think it's him: Strapped face-down to a table, sobbing quietly, he wears a slinky dress and whore's makeup. They broke him -- and it's an ugly, ugly sight.

INT. INTERROGATION HUT - P.O.W. CAMP - DAY

THE CHIEF

What is your father's name?

Jordan seated. Prowling the hut is her interrogator. Her tormentor. Her chaperon through Hell.

THE CHIEF

Simple question, lieutenant. No reason not to answer. What is your father's name?

JORDAN

"Dad."

THE CHIEF

Any brothers? Sisters?

JORDAN

Dick, Jane, and Spot.

THE CHIEF

Are you hungry? What's your favorite food? We'll try to get it for you.

JORDAN

Green Eggs and Ham. You're not going to get anywhere. You might as well put me in the cage.

THE CHIEF

You are in the cage, O'Neil. Right here, right now.

JORDAN
Should I be afraid?

THE CHIEF
Right down to your worthless womb, and I'll tell you why. This is my island. My world. And here I can get away with shit that would get me arrested anywhere else in the world. Take another scan of my little joy-boy outside. If I can do that to a Navy Seal, what's gonna happen to you? Huh?

It makes Jordan think -- and yes, it makes her afraid.

Continuing the psychological strip-search:

THE CHIEF
Why didn't you shoot the woman, O'Neil?

JORDAN
Wasn't deemed a threat.

THE CHIEF
She led us right to you. That's no threat?

Jordan rubs her head. So long ago. How did the call come down?

THE CHIEF
Would you have shot if it was a man?

JORDAN
No. Yes. I mean, depends on --

THE CHIEF
The others already told me, O'Neil. They wanted to shoot, but you wouldn't let them. Because you went soft on another women --

JORDAN
That's not right.

THE CHIEF
That's what your crew said. Are they lying? Or are you?

JORDAN
I think you're the liar.

THE CHIEF

I'm not the one who got five good men thrown in a bamboo cage. You wear the bars, you made the call, and you got your whole crew --

JORDAN

We didn't know we were compromised. Firing would only've given away our position.

THE CHIEF

You think we should go easy on women, O'Neil?

She stares a beat, knowing it's a loaded question.

THE CHIEF

Do you?

JORDAN

No.

THE CHIEF

I'm so glad we agree.

With stunning ferocity, he grabs her by the neck, pushes her out the door...

EXT. P.O.W. CAMP - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - DAY

... and throws her onto a table.

In the pens, all faces turn to watch. Even instructors stop what they're doing as...

The Chief pushes Jordan's head down and jams up behind her.

THE CHIEF

Didn't you know you'd be raped if you were captured? Didn't you even think about that?

JORDAN

Sure. Just like your men do.

THE CHIEF

I think we oughtta practice it, just so you know what to expect.

He flips her over, rips off her belt, starts tearing open her pants.

JORDAN

Should I practice bleeding, too,
sir? Would that make me a better
soldier?

He covers her mouth -- her whole face -- with one hand.

THE CHIEF

(to the men)

Any of you can stop this! Just
give me the location of one more
hide-site, and it ends right here!

IN THE PEN:

SLUTNIK

(wide-eyed)

Someone's trippin' out here...

The Chief jerks Jordan up, whirls her around like a dead dance partner, slams her face-first into the pen to give the guys a good look at what's happening to that pretty face.

THE CHIEF

Three crews are still on this island
somewhere. Who knows where?

The men trade itchy looks. Some do know.

JORDAN

Don't do it, don't do it...

The Chief throws her down like garbage.

THE CHIEF

Who's gonna tell me? Who's gonna
be chivalrous and stop this abuse?
What, you want to see her get
mauled? Is that it?

The men shift anxiously. Should they talk? Behind the Chief, Jordan staggers to her feet.

JORDAN

Don't tell him shi --

The Chief whirls, decks her a crescent-kick. Instructors lurch forward instinctively.

THE CHIEF

(waving them back)

She's fine!

(MORE)

THE CHIEF (CONT'D)
(squatting beside)
When I put you down, O'Neil, take
the hint and stay down.

She licks her bloody teeth -- and considers kicking his balls into his brainpan. Instead she makes a move to get up. He grinds her back down with a crowbar forearm.

THE CHIEF
(for her ears
only)
I am saving your life, O'Neil.
You may not know it, but I do.
You're an inferior soldier, a bad
officer, and I don't want you
learning that inconvenient truth
when you're stuck in a muddy bomb
crater behind enemy lines and don't
know how the fuck to get out. You
get out now, O'Neil. Seek life
elsewhere. And if you can't do it
in front of me, do it behind my
back.

Pinning her down with just his eyes, he rises -- and starts away.

Behind him, Jordan struggles to rise.

An ANXIOUS MURMUR races through the men: They don't want to see this. They don't want to see her crucified.

MCCOOL
Down... stay down...

Hearing, the Chief turns back to see...

Jordan wobbling to her feet.

Eye-lock.

JORDAN
Fuck you and the boat you rode in
on. Sir.

TIGHT on the faces of her crewmates -- Slutnik, Cortez, McCool. In their eyes, a new respect. The Chief see it.

Instructors see it. Everyone does.

THE CHIEF
(to instructors)
We're done here.

Beaten, he walks right out of camp.

Wordless, instructors open the pens, unlock the boxes.

Wickwire rises like a vampire in daylight. But this time he made it.

A medic tries to help Jordan, but she pushes him away, walking drunkenly for...

Flea. She begins wiping the makeup from his face.

JORDAN

Make you a deal, Flea. Never tell me how I look -- and I'll never tell you.

EXT. PIERS - SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND - SUNSET

The Chief chuck's gear onto a transport boat. FOOTSTEPS approach. He knows it's Pyro.

THE CHIEF

You don't think she'd be raped if she were captured? You don't think the threat of rape would be used to leverage the men?

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

You broke a dozen training rules back there -- before I lost count.

THE CHIEF

I've had it. Just because they pay me like a baby-sitter doesn't mean I'm gonna be one.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

She's a trainee, just like the others. Why are you coming down so hard?

THE CHIEF

She's an officer. There's a higher standard.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO

She's a women, and that's why you're ridin' her bareback.

THE CHIEF

Of course it is.

(MORE)

THE CHIEF (CONT'D)
And I'm gonna stay on her until
everyone realizes this is not some
bullshit equal-rights thing, that
real lives are gonna be lost.
Maybe mine, maybe yours.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
I oughtta report you.

THE CHIEF
I think you probably would -- if
you didn't know I was right.

EXT. STREET - WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

As a limo moves -- heads for the Capitol building.

INT. DEHAVEN'S LIMO - DAY

DeHaven snags a BUZZING PHONE.

DEHAVEN
Yes?

DEHAVEN'S AIDE (V.O.)
(anxious)
Did you hear?

DEHAVEN
She made it through S.E.R.E.
training. Got a call this morning
from --

DEHAVEN'S AIDE (V.O.)
Not that. The White House just
announced that it was sponsoring
legislation that would, in one
stroke, void all remaining elements
of the 1948 Combat Exclusion Laws.

The phone suddenly weights a ton, DeHaven dumps it on the
seat beside her. HOLD on her disbelieving face.

DEHAVEN'S AIDE (V.O.)
You there? Senator?

INT. CORRIDOR - PENTAGON - DAY

Hand-carrying a report, Flag Officer #1 hurries down a
corridor, pushes through a door. HOLD on the door marker:
"Secretary of the Navy."

INT. SECNAV OFFICE - PENTAGON - DAY

HAYES

Without telling us they do this?
With absolutely no lead time?

At his desk, Hayes scans the report with a deepening frown.

FLAG OFFICER #1

(to Hayes)

Mr. Secretary, if this bill
passes...

FLAG OFFICER #2

Forget our three-year plan. They're
rushing the cadence. We'll be
forced to reorganize the Navy from
top to bottom -- overnight.

HAYES

What the hell is the President
trying to do? Steal DeHaven's
thunder?

FLAG OFFICER #1

I think it's more important, sir,
to decide what we're going to do --
since it's apparent this issue is
not going away quietly.

HAYES

"G.I. Jane." And which one of you
told me she wouldn't last a week?
Huh?

The flags squirm. Shaking his head, Hayes moves to a window that offers a stunning view of Arlington National Cemetery.

HAYES

20 years in the Pentagon, I finally
rate an office with a window --
and it looks out over the world's
largest graveyard. Think it's a
sign?

EXT. GRINDER - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

The bell. It reflects the moon. TILT DOWN to reveal a new batch of helmets -- the casualties of S.E.R.E. A graveyard of its own.

EXT. THE EXCHANGE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Jordan exits with purchases. Her face is still bruised from S.E.R.E. With a minute to kill, she peruses a bulletin board casually. But a RAISED VOICE leads her eyes to...

Wickwire. At a phone kiosk, he hangs up emphatically. He looks flustered when he spots Jordan.

JORDAN

Sorry, didn't mean to --

WICKWIRE

That's okay. Just an ex-girlfriend.
And know I remember why.

JORDAN

First big night of liberty and no date? You're pathetic, Wickwire.

WICKWIRE

Maybe I'll just head over to MCP's with the others, have a drink or four. Don't wanna come, do you?

JORDAN

(touching bruises)

I can't go out. Not like this.

WICKWIRE

I think you look beautiful.

JORDAN

Thanks for lying. But you're the class officer, Wick, and it'd just be weird if we hook up. Besides...

Catching up, Blondell exits the exchange.

BLONDELL

Sorry. Forgot I needed oregano and...

She sees Wickwire. An awkward beat for them all.

JORDAN

Do you, uh, know...

WICKWIRE

Sure, sure.

JORDAN

We're going over to her place to make salad and pasta. Just, you know, nothing special.

WICKWIRE

Okay. Well... thought I'd ask.

Jordan and Blondell head for the parking lot. HOLD on Wickwire, looking after them. Thinking it through.

INT. CLASSROOM - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

Charts are being passed around the room. Every trainee takes one, including Jordan.

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS

... underwater detonation devices employ mechanical timers, and as such, they are subject to variances due to water temperature. That's why when clearing mines, we always use two timers. The charts now being passed out contain calculations you must memorize before...

A MILITARY COP fills the classroom doorway. Frowning, Johns joins the cop for a private discussion.

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS

O'Neil?

JORDAN

Sir?

INSTRUCTOR JOHNS

You're wanted at the C.O.'s.

INT. C.O.'S OUTER OFFICE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

Jordan enters. The yeoman's desk is unattended. Noticing the X.O.'s door open, Jordan peers inside to find...

Blondell. She looks scared out of her mind. Before she and Jordan can speak, the yeoman materializes.

YEOMAN

This way, lieutenant. They're expecting you.

INT. C.O.'S OFFICE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

JORDAN

See me, sir?

The C.O. and X.O. are both here.

C.O.

(uncomfortable)

I don't know of any delicate way to say this, lieutenant, so I won't try. Claims have been made that you have engaged in fraternization -- of the same-sex variety.

Specifically, that you were...

(reading)

"... seen leaving the apartment of another female officer at such a time and in such a manner as to suggest conduct unbecoming."

JORDAN

(a beat, laughing
in relief)

Sir, if someone is suggesting that I'm a lesbian, they're wrong.

The C.O.'s face remains grim. He isn't relieved.

JORDAN

They're very wrong. And I'd like to know where you got this information.

On the C.O.'s nod, the X.O. opens an adjoining office.

Wickwire enters. He's stiff as a groom on a wedding cake.

WICKWIRE

I'm sorry, O'Neil. But as class officer, it's my obligation to report all violations.

JORDAN

This is insane. You've got no proof.

C.O.

(from report)

You were seen leaving Ensign Blondell's apartment at approximately 0-200, whereupon physical affections were exchanged in public.

JORDAN

We hugged.

C.O.

In addition, you have been seen frequenting the base exchange, the mess hall, the --

JORDAN

Because the men didn't want me eating with them. Jesus Christ, let's get this right.

C.O.

That's enough. Everybody.

(to Wickwire)

Rejoin your class, lieutenant.

WICKWIRE

(only to Jordan)

I wish I didn't have to do this, Jordan.

C.O.

Dismissed, lieutenant.

Wickwire exits.

JORDAN

Sir, I just want you to know that this is either a gross mistake -- or someone's vindictive bullshit. In no way did anything happen between Ensign Blondell and myself. We're just friends.

C.O.

So you're saying the charges have no validity whatsoever?

Jordan opens her mouth to confirm -- and hesitates, realizing where this might be headed. What the collateral damage might be.

JORDAN

I'm saying, we're just friends.

C.O.

I find this as distasteful as you, lieutenant. But if it's on my desk, it's on my shoulders.

(MORE)

C.O. (CONT'D)

There's going to be an inquiry --
it will not be quick and it will
definitely not be pretty. You
should prepare yourself.

JORDAN

Sir, please... if there's any way
to do this without dragging everyone
through the mud...

C.O.

I don't see how, O'Neil. Dismissed.

Jordan moves to the door. Again she makes eye-contact
with Blondell. Now we understand why she's so scared:
There's a witch-hunt brewing.

JORDAN

(turning back)

Sir. If tomorrow... I was not
under your command... would the
inquiry still go forward?

C.O.

I'm not sure what --

JORDAN

Would you have the discretion to
end it right then and there?

She's offering her own head on a silver platter -- and
the C.O. actually hesitates before answering.

C.O.

I believe so.

EXT. GRINDER - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

McCool and Flea exit a classroom with other trainees.

They spot Jordan approaching.

MCCOOL

So what'd he want? O'Neil?

She passes them robotically. Flea realizes where she's
going.

FLEA

Oh, no... no, no, no, no...

They lurch after her, grabbing her, stepping in her way.

THE CHIEF
Stand fast!

McCool and Flea jerk to a stop: The Chief has emerged from the instructor's office. Helpless, they watch as...

Jordan mounts the stairs to the bell... takes up the baton... and HITS THE BELL like a tyko drummer.

RING ONE: On the pained faces of her crewmates.

RING TWO: On the Chief. Taking no joy in it. Just accepting it as inevitable.

EXT. THE QUARTERDECK - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

RING THREE: On Wickwire as he walks across the base. His regrets are obvious.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. UPRIVER - THE POTOMAC - DAY

The ice floes are gone. The river banks are budding green. Soon CAMERA FINDS a power boat making its way upriver. A lone figure sits on the prow.

EXT. POWER BOAT - DAY

It's Jordan. Dressed in civvies, gunnysack between her legs, she's back in Virginia with nothing more than what she left with. Around a river bend appears...

The gunkhole harbor. Home.

EXT. GUNKHOLE HARBOR - POTOMAC - DAY

The boat docks. Jordan springs clear, waves a worn-out thanks, starts up the dock. But now she comes to a stop, seeing...

Royce. Stepping out of the house.

EXTREMELY WIDE: River shimmering behind them, they meet on the dock. A charged stand-off: Where do they pick up?

Can they pick up? Then Jordan drops her gunnysack and steps into his wide-spread arms. Royce wraps her up as if to never let go.

For the first time in this whole ordeal, Jordan begins crying, sobbing uncontrollably.

ROYCE
(in her ear)
I want to kill them... I want to
kill the guys who made you cry
like this...

INT. COVERED PORCH - JORDAN'S HOUSE - SUNSET

An hour later. Sharing a quiet moment, Jordan and Royce cradle tea mugs while sitting on the rear porch that overlooks the Potomac and a fiery sunset.

JORDAN
All I wanted was an honest chance.
And If I couldn't get it, I couldn't
stay.

ROYCE
And this class officer...
"Wickwire." You think he was just
trying to get even? Striking back
for...

JORDAN
Maybe. Though it didn't seem like
he was getting any satisfaction
out of it. Almost like...
(a beat)
Did I say he was class officer?

ROYCE
Almost like someone put him up to
it. Okay, who?

JORDAN
No shortage of suspects.

ROYCE
The Chief? Or maybe even
Turrentine? Your C.O.?

She looks at him sidelong.

JORDAN
Royce. Tell me you didn't keep a
file on me.

INT. LIVING ROOM - JORDAN'S HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE on multiple files being pulled out of a briefcase.
One contains clippings -- "G.I. Jane" photos, editorials,

political cartoons. Another holds records of Coronado personnel -- Jordan's crewmates, instructors, the base brass.

ROYCE

Somebody was yankin' your stings,
Jordan -- maybe from 3,000 miles
away. I wanted to know who. I
still do.

She shakes her head, resisting.

ROYCE

C'mon, Jordan. Do the headwork
with me.

JORDAN

It's done with, Royce. Let it go.

ROYCE

Someone screwed you over like this,
left unanswered charges hanging
over your head, and you're not
gonna fight back?

JORDAN

I'm tired of fighting back. I
just wanted to come home and be
safe and have you here and the
river there and just forget the
rest of the world, okay?

ROYCE

Well, before you crawl off to die,
Jordan, give me five minutes of
good headwork.

Agitated, she walks away. B.G., a PHONE RINGS until the machine picks up.

ROYCE

(pulling a file)

"John James Urgayle." The Chief.

JORDAN

What about him.

JORDAN

Instructors typically pull three
year assignments. This guy's in
and out in one year -- your year.
That sound right?

JORDAN
Sounds like an amazing coincidence.

ROYCE
Or like maybe he was baby sitting
a problem child for the Navy.

JORDAN
I don't know, I don't care.

ROYCE
Well, pardon me if I do. Now who
else? Who could've leveraged a
class officer like that? C'mon,
Jordan, keep your head in the game.

UNDER DIALOG, we hear some of the INCOMING CALL:

DEHAVEN'S AIDE (V.O.)
... just got word today. The
Senator wants you to know that
she's disturbed by the matter, and
she'll be looking into it carefully
to make sure you were treated
fairly. If you need to reach us,
we're here in Washington, 202-224-
3121.

A HANG-UP. Something stirs in Jordan's memory.

JORDAN
"In Washington..."

ROYCE
What?

JORDAN
Wickwire said he was dry-docked in
Washington between stints at
Coronado...

We can see her mind gathering speed. Royce switches files quickly.

ROYCE
"Wickwire, Thomas Dane" ... Second
run at Coronado... and correct,
they had him stashed in the
"Appropriation Liaison Office,"
whatever that is.

JORDAN

You don't crap out of Spec-Recon
and get another shot without
dispensation from someone up in
flag country.

(a revelation)

He's got a Sea Daddy somewhere.

ROYCE

I'd sure like to know who.

JORDAN

Yeah. Me too.

INT. ADMINISTRATION - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

ANSWERING A PHONE:

BLONDELL

Administration, Ensign Blondell.

JORDAN (V.O.)

Don't say my name.

BLONDELL

Who's...

(brightening)

Lieuten --

JORDAN (V.O.)

Or rank. But can you do me a favor
and pull a transfer order?

BLONDELL

Okay, but... You didn't have to do
what you did. Not for me.

JORDAN (V.O.)

(appreciative)

"Wickwire, Thomas Dane." See what
you can find.

CUT TO:

INT. ADMINISTRATION - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

File in hand, Blondell returns to the phone.

BLONDELL

Got it.

JORDAN (V.O.)

Who signed as his "sponsoring
officer"?

BLONDELL

Uh... don't see it. There's no signature. But hang on -- there's a note to "See Addendum." Checking...

She finds a crisp sheet of stationary, out of place among the smeared government forms.

BLONDELL

Wow...

JORDAN (V.O.)

What'd you find, Kathy?

CLOSE on the stationary. It bears an image of the Capitol dome.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CAPITOL BLDG. - WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

The real Capitol dome. A flag is being raised over the Senate Wing.

EXT. CAPITOL BLDG. - WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

A car parks at barricades. Jordan and Royce emerge, both in uniforms.

D.C. COP

Don't even dream about leaving that vehicle there.

ROYCE

Government car -- tow it if you want. Just point us to DeHaven's office first.

Not waiting for directions, Jordan takes the Capitol steps two at a time. We've seen this look on her face before -- and last time, she nearly knocked the grinder bell into orbit.

INT. CORRIDOR - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

Jordan and Royce move quickly down a corridor, eyes hunting, passing CAPITOL GUIDES and their tourists. Soon they find...

DeHaven's office. A Navy captain exits with paperwork.

Hasty salutes.

ROYCE
Capt'n.

NAVY CAPTAIN
Commander.

The captain moves on. Royce holds in the doorway a beat, memory nagging him. Again he looks at...

The captain. He has a distinct bald spot.

ROYCE
(to Jordan)
Get started here. I'll catch up.

Picking up where he left off a few weeks ago, Royce follows Bald Spot around a corner...

INT. PRIVATE STAIRCASE - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

... down a private staircase...

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

... and through a door marked "Naval Appropriation Liaison Office." It's not 30 seconds from DeHaven's door.

INT. FOYER - DEHAVEN'S OFFICE - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

SECRETARY
Your name again?

JORDAN
Lieutenant j.g. O'Neil.

In a side office, DeHaven's aide overhears. He rises quickly and enters the foyer.

DEHAVEN'S AIDE
Ms. O'Neil. Yes, of course. I'm Douglas Champeau. Unfortunately, the Senator is in chamber right now. How can I help you?

JORDAN
What chamber? Which way is that?

DEHAVEN'S AIDE
I mean, she's on the floor of the Senate.

JORDAN
Okay, which way?

DEHAVEN'S AIDE
She really can't be disturbed.
But if you care to wait, I'll find
you an office with a phone. It
might be several hours, but --

A TOURIST pokes in.

TOURIST
'Scuse me, but I'm here to pick up
gallery tickets? Are you...

DEHAVEN'S AIDE
See the secretary, please.

Over the aide's shoulder, Jordan watches as...

The tourist claims tickets. HOLD on the bureau near the
secretary's desk where the tickets are stored.

INT. SENATE CHAMBER - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

On the chamber floor, SENATORS mull about, consulting
aides, polling party mates. PAGES place microphones and
fill the ceremonial snuff boxes, readying the room for
session. Among the activity, we find...

DeHaven. Caucusing with another Democrat.

JORDAN (O.S.)
Senator DeHaven...

DeHaven looks behind her. Nobody.

JORDAN
DeHaven...

Now she looks up to behold...

Jordan standing in the gallery. Staring down on DeHaven
as she is, it's hard to read anything into her expression
but open disdain.

Drawn by Jordan's voice, a CAPITOL GUARD hurries down the
gallery steps. Royce runs interference.

JORDAN
We can talk here or we can talk
outside, Senator. You tell me.

On the floor, half the U.S. Senate stops what it's doing
and looks up.

In the gallery, the guard is thrown off-balance by the naval uniforms: Do Royce and Jordan belong here or not? Confused, he looks for guidance from...

DeHaven. She notes C-SPAN cameras swinging Jordan's way.

SUMMONING A PAGE:

DEHAVEN
Cloak room. I'll meet her there.
Just her.

INT. CLOAK ROOM - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

Towering doors swing open. DeHaven appears, face pleasant but harried.

DEHAVEN
Jordan. I always hoped we'd get together -- though just now I'm gearing up for a child-care vote that --

JORDAN
Lieutenant Thomas Wickwire.

About to hug Jordan, DeHaven stops awkwardly.

JORDAN
You know him.

DEHAVEN
Sounds familiar.

JORDAN
It should. You nominated him for Spec-Recon just three days after you nominated me.

DEHAVEN
Jordan. Might we do this over lunch tomorrow? I do very much want to talk, but now is scarcely --

JORDAN
Did you set me up? Did you set me up just to see me fail?

DEHAVEN
Absolutely not.

DeHaven glances back at the doors to the Senate chamber -- the open doors. Walking Jordan a few steps away:

DEHAVEN

Wickwire was there to help. To be my eyes on the inside, to make sure you were getting a fair shot. At least that was the intent.

JORDAN

What changed?

DEHAVEN

Should probably ask him that.

JORDAN

If I have to ask again, Senator, I'll be asking in front of cameras.

It's a threat DeHaven doesn't appreciate. The Senate DOORKEEPER appears.

DOORKEEPER

Madam Senator? Your esteemed colleagues are requesting --

DEHAVEN

Two seconds, Walter.

(answering Jordan)

In 1981, the Supreme Court was asked to rule on the issue of women in combat positions. The Court cited the 1948 Combat Exclusion Laws as a legal foundation for keeping women ineligible. That decision held for all these years -- until the White House, 10 days ago, moved to have the Exclusion Laws voided. To demolish that legal foundation.

JORDAN

So? Isn't the President jumping on your bandwagon?

DEHAVEN

What he did was light the bandwagon on fire. Because he knows what I know -- that American families are not prepared to put their daughters in harm's way.

JORDAN

You don't know that.

DEHAVEN

In face, I do: Roper, Harris,
Gallop -- they all come back the
same.

JORDAN

What are you saying? That a women's
life is more valuable than a man's?
That a women's death hurts a family
more?

DEHAVEN

I'm saying it's not going to happen.
Not when the President is set to
turn this into a third-rail issue
should I choose to ever campaign
against him. He will fry me six
ways to Sunday for sending daughters
and young mothers off to war --
and, quite possibly, for bringing
them back in body bags.

Jordan shakes her head in disbelief. She has met the
enemy -- and she is us.

JORDAN

You were never going to let women
serve in combat. You always had a
safety net. Or thought you did.

DEHAVEN

Jordan. I don't expect you to
fully understand this -- but
sometimes there's more to be gained
from the fight than the victory.

JORDAN

So the rhetoric gets you headlines.
But the reality gets you in trouble.

DEHAVEN

The reality is this: We send far
too many men off to war. I don't
need to compound the problem with
women.

(off Jordan's
look)

Can you honestly tell me you wanted
that life? Squat-pissing in some
third-world jungle with --

JORDAN

I wanted the choice.
(MORE)

JORDAN (CONT'D)

The chance to prove myself, my skills, my work, me. That's how it should've been.

DOORKEEPER

Madam Senator, once again I must --

DEHAVEN

Just hold the goddamn clock, Walter.

Not happy about it, the doorkeeper reaches into an alcove, grabs a broom he keeps around for just these occasions.

He enters the chamber...

INT. SENATE CHAMBER - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

... and moves behind the rostrum. Holding the broom by the bristles, the doorkeeper stands on tip-toes...

And uses the broom handle to turn back the Senate clock by three minutes.

Senators GROAN. It's an old trick played by senior members -- and they all hate it when it happens to them.

INT. CLOAK ROOM - CAPITOL BLDG. - DAY

DEHAVEN

I once promised you a fast ticket, Jordan, and I always meant to make good on that. Come work for me. I can always use a hard-charger on my team.

JORDAN

You promise Wickwire a fast ticket, too?

DEHAVEN

I've had no direct communication with him since this whole thing began. And that's quite verifiable.

JORDAN

I'm sure it is.

DEHAVEN

You'll think about my offer?

JORDAN

You know, I wonder what the SecNav would think about it. If I spoke with him.

DEHAVEN

Well, I spoke with Mr. Hayes this morning myself -- and told him the deal was off. No more test cases. He was only too happy to oblige.

(dangerously low)

Don't play politics with me, little darlin'. You'd be up way past your bedtime.

DOORKEEPER

(distraught)

Madam Senator, please...

DEHAVEN

I'll call you in a few days.

She flashes a winning smile and turns away. As the chamber doors start to close behind her:

JORDAN

So I wonder what the President would think.

The last image we have of DeHaven is her whirling back, startled. The DOORS BOOM CLOSED in her face.

EXT. C.O.'S HOUSE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

Through a window, we see the C.O. with a phone pressed to his ear. He stands at attention even though wearing a bathrobe. Half-audible through the glass:

C.O.

Yes sir. No, I'm not saying it

would be impossible, sir, just...

Yes sir. No sir. Yes sir. I can appreciate that, sir. Good night, sir.

INT. C.O.'S HOUSE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - NIGHT

The C.O. hangs up and looks to Jordan, heretofore unseen.

She waits anxiously.

C.O.

Well, if you had to go over my head, lieutenant, that's the way to do it. Christ, nothin' like a 0-200 call from the Commander and Chief to get the bowels movin'.

JORDAN

Sir? What did he say?

C.O.

Basically -- he asked me if I could unring a bell.

EXT. GRINDER - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

START on the helmet graveyard. Hands enter FRAME to reclaim one helmet in particular. TILT UP on Jordan, back in the grinder, back in Navy greens.

The Spec-Recon class is here. Crewmates gawk like stone idiots as Jordan takes her old place in the line-up.

C.O.

(to class)

One of you here understands better than anyone what this is all about. Someone who has engaged in conduct unbecoming. Someone who knows, I would hope, what he must now do.

CLOSE on Wickwire. Feeling the heat. Wondering if they really know who it is. Now the C.O. parks himself right in Wickwire's face.

C.O.

And unless that someone takes the honorable way out in the next 10 seconds -- I will make certain he faces action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Wickwire breaks rank and heads for the bell. He slows when reaching Jordan, considering an apology he knows would be inadequate.

JORDAN

Just walk away and never stop.

He does. As Wickwire RINGS OUT:

C.O.

It seems we have an opening for class officer. Any nominations?

Eyes swing to Jordan. Way ahead of them:

C.O.
All those in favor?

A CHORUS OF AYES. Jordan puddles up.

C.O.
Chief Urgayle, turning it back
over to you.

On his way to the front, the Chief stops to check in with Jordan.

THE CHIEF
Well, I'm trying to figure out if
you're stupid, unlucky, gluttonous --
or some new alloy of all three.

JORDAN
Good to see you again, too, sir.

THE CHIEF
Okay, O'Neil. So you've impressed
all the others. Now try me.

EXT. CORONADO BRIDGE - DAY

The morning sun is an orange ball balanced on the Coronado Bridge. In silhouette, pelicans circle, some dive-bombing into the bay below. Suddenly a HELO HOWLS across the sun, scattering the birds as it heads off-shore.

INT. HELO - DAY

THE CHIEF
(setting watch)
Four... three... two... one...
hack!

Flea, McCool, Slutnik, Cortez, Newberry, Jordan. Inside the airborne helo, they synchronize their dive watches.

THE CHIEF
Final assignment! Each crew will be dropped 12 miles out! Between you and the shore is a network of mines and underwater obstacles! You will clear the obstacles, you will tag the mines with your crew number! You have until 18-hundred to make landfall!

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

As the helo swoops down onto the ocean deck.

INT. HELO - DAY

The trainees double-check wet gear and survival vests. On Jordan's nod, they push an inflatable life boat ("ILB") to the helo door. It's rolled up into a rubber log.

THE CHIEF

Remember! The one thing you can count on in any mission is that anything mechanical will fail! If you get stuck out here, do not call me, for you will no longer be in my class! Try the Coast Guard!

The HELO PILOT slows to five knots. The Chief gives Jordan the go-ahead nod.

JORDAN

(to her crew)

One-second intervals! Go!

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The ILB splashes down into the ocean. Jordan's crew helo-casts in after it.

From the door of the circling helo, the Chief watches as...

Jordan's crew swims to the ILB, bobbing in the swells.

Flea turns a handle on the CO2 tank meant to inflate the boat. Nothing happens.

FLEA

C'mon, c'mon...

Cortez tries to help. The handle spins in his grip.

CORTEZ

This tank's not gonna cut it, el-tee. Handle's stripped.

Jordan looks skyward. 100 feet overhead, the Chief gives her a parting salute as the helo lifts away.

SLUTNIK

I just wonder how that happened.

JORDAN

Cortez, see if you can dig out the tools without losing the rest of out gear. Try a wrench on that thing.

INT. HELO - DAY

The helo turns into the morning sun. PILOT and CO-PILOT drop visors.

PILOT'S POV: Of dots in the sun. What the hell are try?

SMACK! Something hits the windscreen, splattering red and brown.

THE CHIEF

What happening?!

PILOT

Fucking pelicans! Hang on!

He starts to bank clear -- but not fast enough.

EXT. HELO - DAY

More birds pepper-shot the helo: One SHREDS through the main rotor, another through the tail rotor. Another bird gets sucked right into...

The main turbine.

INT. HELO - DAY

A SHARP BANG... a WICKED SHIMMY... and now the whole helo loses power.

PILOT

Holy... LET'S GYRATE!

As the pilot wrestles controls, the co-pilot rigs for auto-gyration. But the bank they started is working against them: The helo is coming down badly, circling like a huge steel feather.

Braced, the Chief looks out the side door -- and sees ocean rushing up at him. Fast.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

MCCOOL

What the shit is...

Jordan whirls. She's just in time to witness...

The helo hitting the water. In seconds it's gone.

A stunned beat. We never knew the ocean could be this quiet. When the anesthetic of shock wears off:

SLUTNIK

You don't suppose this is just part of...

JORDAN

FLEA! KEEP YOUR EYES ON THAT SPOT!
Mark it, mark it! Cortez? What the hell you waiting for?

Cortez torques his wrench hard: CO2 flows into the ILB, inflating it. The crew scrambles aboard. Jordan digs like a dog to find a radio.

JORDAN

Base, this is Crew Leader Six. We have a downed helo 12 miles west-south west of base with three aboard. Repeat, we have a downed helo with three aboard...

Slutnik yanks a starter cord: Their outboard MOTOR ROARS to life. The boat does a donut in the water and blasts away.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The ILB powers over swells. Flea is perched on the bow, nose to the wind like a hunting dog.

FLEA

CUT IT! CUT IT HERE!

Slutnik motors down.

FLEA

Close as I can get, el-tee!

JORDAN

Flea, 'Cool, Cortez, Newman -- take your minis, hit the water. Go, GO!

They grab masks and mini-tanks and dive in like dolphins. Jordan snaps up the radio.

JORDAN

Base, this is Crew Leader Six.
What is your E.T.A. on that rescue
helos? Over.

BASE (V.O.)

Crew Leader, we have a Medevac
rerouting from Long Beach, but no
other helos prepped at this time.
Seafox One and Two are launching
now. Over.

A beat.

JORDAN

Base, don't think you copied me.
We are 12 miles out. Seafox tops
out at 30 knots, which makes it a
no-show for 18 minutes. Over.

BASE (V.O.)

You copied right, Crew Leader.
We're looking for options ourselves.

SLUTNIK

Maybe we should call the Coast
Guard.

JORDAN

Shut your hole, Slutnik.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

McCool surfaces.

MCCOOL

Visibility drops dead at 40 feet.
If they're deeper than that...

The others surface and swim in.

CORTEZ

Nobody's comin' outta that crash,
el-tee. Nobody.

A grim beat -- and then A CRACKLE on the radio. With a
voice seemingly from the far side of the moon:

THE CHIEF (V.O.)

Base, this is Basher One. I've
got a small problem here. Do you
copy?

Jaws drop.

JORDAN

(into radio)

Basher One, this is O'Neil. We are barely reading you. What is your situation?

EXT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

50 feet down, the helo lies canted on a reef shelf.

INT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

Wedged into a tortured maze of hydraulics and equipment, we find the Chief, operating out of an air-pocket near the windscreen. The pilot is dead, impaled on his cyclic stick, head submerged. The co-pilot is still alive, barely. The Chief struggles to keep the man's head up as he keys a survival radio.

THE CHIEF

Got one other heartbeat here, looks touch and go. I've got a questionable leg.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

THE CHIEF (V.O.)

Managed to activate the ELB. If you just radio base and let them know, they'll fix on that. Oh, and make sure they send a helo with a winch -- door's blocked by a reef. Over.

JORDAN

Chief, sir -- rescue team won't be here for 15 minutes. What's your air situation? Over.

THE CHIEF (V.O.)

Say again? How many micks?

JORDAN

15, sir.

INT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

The Chief sizes up his air pocket.

THE CHIEF

(into radio)

That... may not be adequate.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

FLEA
If we could just fix on him...

MCCOOL
Beacon's a no-go for us.

JORDAN
(into radio)
Chief -- did I see a flare box
aboard? And can you get at it?
Over.

EXT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

The Chief props up the co-pilot's head. Gulps air. Ducks underwater to grope through wreckage. Only now do we see that "questionable leg" he was talking about: It's snapped at mid-calf, blood rivering out.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

THE CHIEF (V.O.)
Got it.

JORDAN
(into radio)
Show us where you are, Chief.

EXT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

Again the Chief goes below water. He finds a small breach in the fuselage... sticks the flare launcher through... and pulls the trigger.

With a MAGNESIUM FLASH, the flare launches...

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

... streaks toward the surface...

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

... and arcs into daylight 50 yards behind the ILB.

FLEA
Six o'clock! Marking, marking!

JORDAN
Spotted you, Chief. Pri One is to
slip you some air, so we're coming
down with a tank -- just something
until the A-team shows. Over.

An ominous beat.

JORDAN

Chief?

CHIEF (V.O.)

O'Neil... there's no air in your
main tanks.

MCCOOL

What?

They scramble to check their main dive tanks. Even through the gauges show full, they're dead empty. All of them.

INT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

THE CHIEF

(into radio)

This mission wasn't about tagging
mines. It was to see how you coped
with mechanical failures. Pretty
fuckin' ironic, huh?

He laughs. It's the bleakest laugh imaginable.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

SLUTNIK

He's circlin' the drain, el-tee.

Jordan surveys the equipment they do have aboard -- the stuff she can count on. Mental turbos kicking in:

JORDAN

So we got two full mini-tanks,
three minutes each. 'Cool? How
much air in yours?

MCCOOL

Maybe half. Not even.

JORDAN

Grab an oar, find a way to weight
it down, we're gonna need it.
Cortez, help him. Flea? You take
one of the two full minis -- and
just follow my lead.

CORTEZ

What, we're gonna pry 'em out with
paddles?

MCCOOL

(grabbing her)

O'Neil. Our air's gonna crap out as soon as we get down there. You know that, don't you?

JORDAN

So I guess we get one shot at it.

INT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

Swimming in his own blood, the Chief starts to fade away, losing consciousness. But then, through the cockpit windscreens...

A hazy orb of light above him. The orb grows and grows until it resolves into a flare carried by his would-be savior. Jordan.

THE CHIEF

Why'd it have to be her...

EXT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

Reaching the downed Helo, McCool and Cortez wedge their oars under the fuselage and leverage hard until...

An opening appears.

Jordan and Flea swim into the breach...

INT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

... and surface inside the wreckage.

JORDAN

Chief, sir... still with me?

CHIEF

(unbuckling co-pilot)

Take him first. Once he's clear, come back with --

JORDAN

Sir, let me suggest you stop giving orders and start doing exactly what I say, because that's the only way we're all getting out of here. Now how's your vest check out? Still good?

EXT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

McCool's air craps out. He abandons his oar and swims for the surface. That leaves only...

Cortez, struggling mightily to keep the escape route open.

He knows his mini-tank is running on empty -- and it scares the bejeezus out of him.

INT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

JORDAN

Flea, take the pilot up slow, feed him air. Chief, sir, you and I are gonna take the express elevator outta here. Remember to let your air out. Ready?

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Twin transports -- Seafox One and Two -- pound across the water. Instructors sweep binoculars, trying to spot...

The ILB. Newberry POPS A FLARE skyward as Slutnik DOWNLOADS INFO over the radio.

EXT. CRASHED HELO - UNDERWATER - DAY

Cortez's air goes dead. He gives it three more seconds, eyes riveted on the underside of the helo, knowing they have to come out... right... fucking... absolutely...

NOW: Jordan appears with the Chief. Flea is at their heels with the co-pilot.

Cortez drops his oar as if it were radioactive and swims for the sky.

The HELO BOOMS back down onto the reef.

Jordan yanks the cord on the Chief's vest. It inflates instantly. One arm raised, Jordan streaks for the surface...

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

... and "Supermans" into daylight with the Chief. They covered 50 feet in four seconds.

Doing a 360, Jordan spots...

Seafox One coming their way.

Jordan waves like a shipwreck victim.

Not slowing, Seafox lowers a recovery rig into place:

They're wasting no time on the pick-up.

Remembering the last time she tried this, Jordan gets a death-grip on the Chief's vest.

THE CHIEF
(growling)
O'Neil...

JORDAN
Shut up, sir. I'm concentrating.

The recovery loop comes at her like a big brass ring.

SEAFOX THUNDERS past. Jordan plunges her free arm through the loop...

And suddenly they're gone, whisked away by the boat.

Throwing a rooster tail a mile long, Seafox pivots on the water and heads back to base.

MCCOOL
Hooooooo-yah!

NEWBERRY
Go, go, go, go!

SLUTNIK
Uh-huh! That's right! Just like we always practice it!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GUARD HOUSE - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

Limousine leading, a parade of vehicles reaches the base entrance. A man exits the limo to expedite matters with the BASE GUARD.

DEHAVEN'S AIDE
Senator DeHaven is here for the graduation ceremonies.

BASE GUARD
What are all these other vehicles?

DEHAVEN'S AIDE
Just a small press corps. Routine.

BASE GUARD
And that pickup truck at the end?

DEHAVEN'S AIDE
That? That would be the all-woman
America's Cup team.

EXT. GRINDER - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

C.O.
(into microphone)
Special Reconnaissance Class 118,
you may now stand down.

All buffed and polished and wearing their dress whites,
the former trainees erupt with ONE GREAT HOO-YAH. What
began as a class of 100 now ends with just 40.

Sitting among the families and friends we find Royce,
smiling through his fears. Not far away sits Blondell.
No one claps louder.

Jordan trades high-fives and fierce hugs with crewmates.

Pyro finally manages to take her aside.

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
Lieutenant? I was asked to give
you this.

It's a small case. Jordan opens it to find a medal of
bronze and blue enamel.

JORDAN
The Navy Cross...

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
I believe he earned it for saving
a man's life in Saudi Arabia. He
wanted you to have it. He was
very clear on that point.

JORDAN
I was looking for him earlier,
but...

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
The Chief was granted early
retirement as of 17-hundred
yesterday. By 18-hundred he was
gone. Out of the Navy.

JORDAN
(knowing better)
Just a coincidence?

INSTRUCTOR PYRO
Maybe it's not my place to speculate
on his private thoughts. But I
think the Chief knew that his way --
his world -- had come and gone.

Jordan nods, understanding.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRINDER - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

DeHaven. She's holding a press conference, trying to
turn piss into wine -- and doing a pretty good job:

DEHAVEN
... of course, we always prefer
peace to war. But if we're going
to war, give women a piece. Give
them the choice to defend their
country. And if the President
doesn't like that idea -- if he
wants to continue to deny women
their equal rights -- then I'll be
happy to step out back with him
any time, anywhere...

Jordan approaches. Spotting her, the PRESS PLEADS for a
photo-op with both women.

DEHAVEN
Jordan? Jordan, dear...

Letting silence be the ultimate expression of scorn, Jordan
walks right past DeHaven...

And joins Royce. Together they turn and leave.

C.O.
Senator, perhaps this would be a
good time for that lunch. Will
the America's Cup team be joining
us?

EXT. BEACH - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

Jordan and Royce walk hand in hand, strolling the same
beach she trained on.

JORDAN

So here we are again. Staring
three years of operational duty in
the face.

ROYCE

Look. It's not like you'd be
completely out of reach. And maybe
we could call in a few favors, get
you stationed at Norfolk instead
of Coronado. There are ways of
dealing with these things -- I
mean, if people are so inclined.

JORDAN

(warily)

Which is guy-speak for...

ROYCE

"Yes, Jordan -- I'll wait for you
no matter how long."

Finally, the right answer.

EXT. AIR STATION - CORONADO NAVAL BASE - DAY

START TIGHT on Jordan's face. Even beneath the camouflage
paint, we can see her exhilaration. PULL BACK to find
her in a line of commandos boarding an IDLING C-130:
She's embarking on her first mission. KEEP PULLING BACK
until we've lost her completely -- until she's just one
soldier among many, indistinguishable from the rest.

FADE OUT.

THE END