"Attack of the Killer Tomatoes"

Screenplay

Four Square Productions, copyright 1976

In 1963, Alfred Hitchcock, made a motion picture entitled "The Birds", a film which depicted a savage attack upon human beings by flocks of the winged creatures.

People laughed.

In the fall of 1975, 7.million black birds invaded the town of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, resisting the best efforts of mankind to dislodge them.

No one is laughing now.

FADE IN

SETTING: A LONG SHOT OF A HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY EVENING HOURS. THE CAMERA ZOOMS VERY SLOWLY TOWARDS A PARTICULAR HOUSE, A DWELLING INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM ITS NEIGHBORS. THE PICTURE DISSOLVES INTO A CLOSE-UP OF A HOUSEWIFE, CLEANING DISHES OVER THE KITCHEN SINK. A RADIO BLARES IN THE BACKGROUND. SUDDENLY, A LARGE TOMATO RISES FROM THE DRAIN AND BEGINS TO SCALE THE WALL OF THE SINK. THE HOUSEWIFE STARES, MOMENTARILY TRANS-FIXED; THEN, EYES WIDE WITH FRIGHT, SHE SLOWLY RETREATS. MAKING A STRANGE GURGLING NOISE, THE TOMATO FOLLOWS HER ACROSS THE ROOM. THE HOUSEWIFE BACKS INTO A WALL, PARALLYZED WITH FEAR. SHE SCREAMS.

BLUR OUT.

CREDITS

BURN IN GOLD TITLE CARDS OVER A BACKGROUND OF TOMATOES EXPLODING AGAINST THE SCREEN.

II.

BLUR IN.

SETTING: THE SAME KITCHEN. TWO POLICE PHOTOGRAPHERS HUDDLE OVER THE HOUSEWIFE'S MANGLED BODY, PROFESSIONALLY SNAPPING PICTURES. THE CAMERA PANS PAST OTHER POLICE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL TO A PAIR OF DETECTIVES, WHO SPEAK QUIETLY IN THE CENTER OF THE KITCHEN. THE RADIO IS STILL ON.

DETECTIVE #1: What do you make of it?

DETECTIVE #2: Don't know, Joe. No weapon, no motive, no clues....All we've got to go on is this bloody corpse.

DETECTIVE #1 NODS HIS HEAD SLOWLY, THOUGHTFULLY. AS THE PHOTOGRAPHERS TAKE THEIR LEAVE, HE LOWERS HIMSELF TO ONE KNEE WITH A PUZZLED EXPRESSION. HE DIPS HIS INDEX FINGER INTO A POOL OF BLOOD, AND EXAMINES IT CAREFULLY. FROWNING, HE TASTES IT. GRAVELY. HE SPEAKS.

DETECTIVE #1: Then look again, Harry.

DETECTIVE #2: Huh?

DETECTIVE #1: Not blood...tomato juice.

THE CAMERA PANS PAST THE DETECTIVES TO A PORTABLE RADIO BY THE SINK.

RADIO VOICEOVER: ...and in spite of concerted efforts to stabilize the situation, the tomato crop continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. Within the last 12 hours, we have received a number of unconfirmed reports from throughout the nation that may or may not be connected with this strange phenomena....

III.

SETTING: A BREAKFAST TABLE. THE HUSBAND SITS ACROSS THE TABLE, OBSCURED BY THE NEWSPAPER HE IS READING. HIS WIFE SITS OPPOSITE HIM, WEARING CURLERS, A BATHROBE, AND A BLEARY-EYED EXPRESSION. THE HUSBAND PICKS UP A GLASS OF TOMATO JUICE, AND DRINKS.

HUSBAND: Hmmmm. Sure doesn't taste like tomato juice....

Aggh-HE COUGHS VIOLENTLY, GAGS, AND SLUMPS OUT OF SIGHT UNDER
THE TABLE. HIS WIFE DOES NOT REACT.

SETTING: A MODEST LIVING ROOM. AN OLD MAN AND HIS WIFE ARE SITTING ON A COUCH FACING THE CAMERA. HE IS READING A NEWSPAPER; SHE IS KNITTING. SUDDENLY, THE SOUND OF BREAKING GLASS ACCOMPANIED BY A GNAWING, CRUNCHING NOISE IS HEARD. WITH CLINICAL INTEREST, THE OLD MAN GLANCES IN THE DIRECTION OF THE NOISE.

OLD MAN: Look at the giant tomato, Martha.

THE OLD WOMAN LOOKS UP FROM HER KNITTING.

OLD WOMAN: I didn't know they growed 'em so big, Jess.

THEY FOLLOW ITS PROGRESS ACROSS THE ROOM WITH THEIR EYES.

OLD MAN: (with passing interest) I wonder where he's goin?

THE GNAWING SOUND GROWS LOUDER

OLD MAN: He got little Timmy.

OLD WOMAN: Poor Timmy....

OLD MAN: It ate him all up.

LOUD BURP.

٧.

A. SETTING: THE MAIN GATE OF A SPRAWLING MILITARY BASE.
THE SIGN POSTED ON THE GUARDHOUSE READS "HEADQUARTERS,
COMBINED MILITARY OPERATIONS, WESTERN UNITED STATES."
A CIVILIAN AUTOMOBILE PULLS UP AND STOPS INFFRONT OF
THE GATE. THE ANGLE CHANGES TO A SUBJECTIVE SHOT FROM
INSIDE THE CAR. THE GUARD APPROACHES THE DRIVER'S SIDE,
SCOWLING.

GUARD: I'm sorry, mister, you can't--

THE GUARD STOPS IN MID-SENTENCE, EYES WIDE WITH RECOG-NITION.

GUARD: Oh, sorry, sir. Pass!

HE SALUTES HASTILY. THE CAR GLIDES THROUGH THE GATE.

B. SETTING: A LONG CORRIDOR IN THE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING.
THE CAMERA MOVES DOWN THE HALL, SUBJECTIVELY SIMULATING
THE PROGRESS OF AN INDIVIDUAL. A NUMBER OF OFFICERS
EITHER SCOWE OR LAUGH AT THE INDIVIDUAL, AND THEN THE STAMMER APOLOGIES OR RESPECTFUL SALUTATIONS AS THEY
RECOGNIZE THE PERSONAGE. AT THE END OF THE HALL, THE
ELEVATOR OPENS. THE ANGLE CUTS TO A CLOSE-UP OF THE
INDIVIDUAL'S HANDS. IN THE LEFT HAND IS A SMALL CARD.
THE RIGHT HAND SCANS ACROSS IT, AS IT IS BEING READ. THE
RIGHT HAND THEN REACHES FOR THE PANEL OF FLOOR BUTTONS.
THE LEGEND READS: 8-

5- CENTRAL HIGH COMMAND
4- TACTICAL TRAINING COMMAND
3- NAVAL AND AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS
2- LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY
1- CAFETERIA
B- RESTROOMS AND ENLISTED PERSONNEL
SUB B 1- WAREHOUSING

SUB B 2- JANITORIAL SERVICES

THE RIGHT HAND DESCENDS, COMING TO REST ON THE LOWEST BUTTON. HESITATING, THE HAND FLICKERS OVER THE CARD ONCE MORE. THE HAND TAPS THE CARD INDECISIVELY, AND EVENTUALLY DECIDES TO PUSH THE BUTTON LABELED "SUB B 2." AFTER A MOMENT, THE ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN, AND THE CAMERA ONCE AGAIN BECOMES SUBJECTIVE. A JANITOR AT WORK IN THE CLUTTERED, DINGY CORRIDOR GREETS THE INDIVIDUAL.

JANITOR: What you lookin' for, mister?

HE REACHES OUT AND ACCEPTS THE CARD, SCRUTINIZING IT. AS HE HANDS IT BACK, HE SPEAKS.

JANITOR: Major Mills, eh? He'll be the third door on your left.

THE JANITOR GESTURES IN THE PROPER DIRECTION.

JANITOR: Never mind them buckets. Just step over 'em.

THE CAMERA MOVES DOWN THE CORRIDOR.

ETTING: A SMALL, CLUTTERED OFFICE. A SERGEANT SITS BEHIND A DESK OVERGROWN WITH DOCUMENTS, AS WELL AS MILITARY AND JANITORIAL PARAPHENALIA. HEARING THE DOOR OPEN, THE SERGEANT LOOKS UP FROM HIS WORK. HE ASSUMES A TOTALLY INCONGRUOUS MILITARY BEARING.

SERGEANT: Good morning, sir! The major's expecting you. Would you follow me, please?

HE RISES.

D. <u>SETTING</u>: AN OFFICE ONLY SLIGHTLY LARGER, AND EVERY BIT AS CLUTTERED. THE ABUNDANCE OF MOPS AND BUCKETS MAKE IT LOOK MORE LIKE A LARGE BROOM CLOSET THAN A SMALL OFFICE. BEHIND A WELL WORN DESK SITS MAJOR MILLS, A MAN WHO APPEARS TO BE THE CLASSIC PROTOTYPE OF A YOUNG OFFICER. AS A RESULT, HE LOOKS COMPLETELY OUT OF PLACE IN HIS SURROUNDINGS. A KNOCK AT THE DOOR CATCHES HIS ATTENTION.

MILLS: Come in.

THE SERGEANT ENTERS, FOLLOWED BY THE INDIVIDUAL, SEEN FOR THE FIRST TIME. HE IS SHORT AND RATHER PUDGY, YET CARRIES HIMSELF WITH A COOL BEARING. HOWEVER, ANY AFFECTATION OF SOPHISTICATION IS UTTERLY DESTROYED BY HIS CLOTHING. HE WEARS A LARGE BEACH HAT, LOUD HAWAIIAN SHIRT, CHECKERED SHORTS, AND SANDALS. THREE CAMERAS ARE SLUNG AROUND HIS NECK. NEVERTHELESS, HE ATTEMPTS TO MAINTAIN AN ATTITUDE OF COMPETENCE.

SERGEANT: Sir, Mr. Dixon is here to see you.

THE MAJOR RISES, STUMBLES AROUND HIS DESK, AND SHAKES MR. DIXON'S HAND.

MILLS: Mr. Dixon! Its a pleasure.

DIXON: (reserved) Thank you, sir.

MILLS: Awfully sorry to pull you away from your vacation, but something rather important seems to be up. Has the White House filled you in?

DIXON: Yes sir.

MILLS: Good.

MAJOR MILLS REACHES ACROSS HIS DESK AND PICKS UP A FOLDER. AS HE DOES THIS, DIXON SNEAKS A QUICK LOOK AROUND THE ROOM, STILL NOT QUITE BELIEVING WHAT HE'S SEEING. HE TRIES TO REMAIN EXPRESSIONLESS, BUT HIS PUZZLED DISTASTE IS OBVIOUS.

MILLS: I've been reading your file, Dixon...interesting.

HE READS FROM THE FILE.

MILLS: "Mason Dixon, government agent. Age 34. Height, six feet, four--

MILLS INVOLUNTARILY SNEAKS A QUICK GLANCE AT DIXON, WHO CANT BE TALLER THAN 5' 6". DIXON, MOMENTARILY EMBARRASSED, AVERTS HIS EYES.

MILLS: Uh, have a seat, Mr. Dixon.

MILLS MOTIONS TO A CHAIR FACING THE DESK. DIXON DUTIFULLY BRUSHES SOME DEBRIS OFF THE SEAT AND SITS DOWN WARILY. MILLS, MEANWHILE, HAS RESEATED HIMSELF BEHIND HIS DESK. HE CONTINUES READING.

MILLS: "Background: Special investigator, Amelia Earhart disappearance...air strike co-ordinator, Bay of Pigs... publicity director, Manhattan project...

DIXON, DESPITE EFFORTS TO THE CONTRARY, BEAMS MODESTLY.

MILLS: "Director, Nixon Massachusetts re-election campaign."

MILLS, IMPRESSED, LOOKS UP AT DIXON.

MILLS: And now, special White House investigator into the tomato crisis....Very impressive. Dixon.

THE DOOR OPENS. THE JANITOR ENTERS, COMPLETELY AT EASE IN FRONT OF THE TWO MEN. HE LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM AS IF SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING, AND THEN REACHES ACROSS DIXON AND GRABS A MOP.

JANITOR: 'Scuse me.

HE LEAVES AS QUICKLY AS HE HAD ENTERED. THERE IS A HEAVY SILENCE.

MILLS: (embarrassed) You know, Dixon, I'm moving upstairs next week.

DIXON REGARDS HIM IMPASSIVELY.

MILLS: They're building me a new office.

DIXON REMAINS EXPRESSIONLESS. MILLS HURRIES ON.

MILLS: Not that I mind the cramped quarters, you know. Hell, I worked out of a tent half this size back in Ethiopia when we were fighting the Boers.

DIXON, RECOGNIZING MILLS' DISCOMFORT, TRIES TO EASE HIS EMBARRASSMENT.

DIXON: That must have been a very dull experience, sir.

MILLS: (blankly) What?

DIXON: A dull experience. Fighting the Boers.

MILLS: What?

DIXON: Dull, sir. Boers? A dull war?

MILLS REGARDS HIM BLANKLY. DIXON PRESSES ON.

DIXON: Boring? Boers?

MILLS: (patiently) No war is fun, Dixon.

DIXON: (exasperated) Yes sir.

THE SERGEANT RE-ENTERS, AND HANDS MILLS A MESSY, CRUMPLED ENVELOPE. MILLS ACCEPTS IT GINGERLY, GRIMACING.

MILLS: (angrily) Sergeant, this is the last straw! I don't care if the mail chute <u>does</u> end at sub basement 1, you tell them to <u>carry</u> my mail down here! I will <u>not</u> have them use that garbage chute as a mail slot!!

SERGEANT: Yes sir.

THE SERGEANT REMAINS IMMOBILE AS MILLS DISGUSTEDLY RIPS OPEN THE LETTER. HE GLANCES UP, AND IS SURPRISED TO SEE THE SERGEANT STILL STANDING THERE. MILLS SUDDENLY SCOWLS.

MILLS: Aw. fer chrissakes!

MILLS REACHES INTO HIS POCKET AND FLIPS THE SERGEANT A QUARTER.

SERGEANT: Gee, thanks Uncle Bill!

THE SERGEANT LEAVES HAPPILY. MILLS, AS HE READS THE LETTER, BRIGHTENS.

MILLS: Good news, Dixon! The presidential press secretary is holding a news conference this very moment. We're finally getting some action!

VI.

SETTING: A SPACIOUS AUDITORIUM, FILLED WITH NEWSMEN, CAMERA CREWS, AND TELEVISION TECHNICIANS. ALL ATTENTION IS FOCUSED ON THE STAGE, WHERE JIM RICHARDSON, THE PRESS SECRETARY, IS ANSWERING A QUESTION. A MAN OF MEDIUM BUILD, HE SHOWS NO DISTINGUISHING PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS, YET EXUDES AN AIR OF QUIET COMPETENCE.

RICHARDSON: Mr. Daniels, I realize that in the past there have been some questions regarding the president's use of public funds for, what some may consider, personal items. However, I can say without fear of contradiction that under no circumstances and at no time has the current administration expended any public monies whatsoever for the purchase of the fluffy, flower print toilet paper. Mr. Mikkelson?

AS THE SECRETARY FIELDS THE NEXT QUESTION, THERE IS A BUZZ OF CONVERSATION THAT DIMINISHES AS THE REPORTER RISES.

MIKKELSON: Mr. Secretary, I'm sure that you're aware that there have been instances in the past where White House representatives have been—shall we say—ill informed. Can we assume from your comments that you have first hand knowledge that the first family has not and does not use the fluffy, flower print toilet paper?

RICHARDSON: (firmly) What you may conclude from my remarks is that neither the president or his family has expended public funds for the purchase of the fluffy, flower print toilet paper. Now, if there are no further questions....

THE REPORTERS RISE EN MASSE, AND PREPARE TO EXIT. A SMALL VOICE SOUNDS FROM THE REAR. IT IS A TEN YEAR OLD BOY.

BOY: Mr. Secretary? Mr. Secretary?

THE PRESS SCRETARY PAUSES, LOOKS TOWARD THE REAR OF THE BUILDING, AND SMILES.

RICHARDSON: Just a moment, gentlemen. One final question. The little fellow in the rear.

THE REPORTERS STOP, AND GLANCE TOWARDS THE REAR.

BOY: Bobby Drake, sir, P.S. 149.

THERE IS SCATTERED, GENTLE LAUGHTER.

BOY: I have a question, sir.

RICHARDSON: (smiling) Certainly, young man. What would you

like to know?

BOY: We've heard nothing at all about the growing tomato menace.

THE SMILE FREEZES ON RICHARDSON'S FACE. AMID A GROWING BUZZ OF CONVERSATION, THE REPORTERS RETURN TO THEIR SEATS.

RICHARDSON: (flustered) I. ah. wouldn't call it a "menace." young man. There have been some isolated reports of alleged instances involving, ah, unusual activity associated with this particular. ah. vegetable....

HE MAKES A VISIBLE EFFORT TO RECOVER.

RICHARDSON: But I assure you, young man, that this is not, and never will become, a "menace." However, the president, leaving no stone unturned, has called upon our most noted Congressional leaders in this field to begin a thorough, intensive, painstaking, and exhaustive investigation into the backgrounds and origins of this, ah, interesting quirk of nature.

HE POINTEDLY IGNORES THE SCATTERED SHOUTS OF "MR. SEC-RETARY!" AND FIRMLY PLOWS ON.

RICHARDSON: Furthermore, you may assure all your young readers that this will never become a problem that Americans need fear, and, I daresay....

VII. SETTING: A SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM. A DODDERING OLD SENATOR SITS AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE, POUNDING HIS GAVEL TO END THE MUTTERED CONVERSATIONS OF HIS FELLOW SENATORS SEATED AROUND HIM.

OLD SENATOR: This meeting of the senate investigating committee is hereby called to order.

THE CONVERSATIONS CEASE. HE SITS LOST IN THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT, PERPLEXED. AT LAST, HE SPEAKS.

OLD SENATOR: Does anybody remember what we're supposed to be investigating?

THE CHATTERING STARTS ANEW. SOMEONE SAYS "TOMATOES."

OLD SENATOR: What was that?

SENATOR #2: Tomatoes, Wayne.

OLD SENATOR: Tomatoes?

SENATOR #2: We're investigating those tomatoes.

THE OLD SENATOR LOOKS AT A SMALL PILE OF PAMPHLETS STACKED BEFORE HIM. HE BRIGHTENS.

OLD SENATOR: Oh, that's right, yes, of course.

HE BEGINS TO PASS OUT THE PAMPHLETS.

OLD SENATOR: Here we are. One for you, one for you...

HE PASSES THEM ALL OUT, AND COMES UP ONE SHORT.

OLD SENATOR: (puzzled) That's odd. There's supposed to be one for everybody. I wonder where it could be?

THE SENATORS BEGIN AN INTENSIVE SEARCH AROUND THE TABLE AS THE SCENE FADES OUT.

VIII.

SETTING: THE SCENE OPENS ON A TIGHT SHOT OF A PAMPHLET ON A DESK, ENTITLED "PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC TOMATO GROWTH AND EXPANSION." THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL A LARGE NEWSPAPER OFFICE. THE EDITOR SITS BEHIND THE DESK, EYES RIVETED TO THE PAMPHLET. HE IS A LARGE MAN, AND HAS A "NO NONSENSE" LOOK ABOUT HIM.

EDITOR: Roberts!

A NERVOUS YOUNG MAN APPEARS AT HIS SIDE.

ROBERTS: Sir?

EDITOR: (Still looking at the pamphlet) Get me Goldstein,

ROBERTS: He's still in Beirut, sir.

EDITOR: (Looks up sharply) Beirut?

ROBERTS: The cease-fire, sir?

EDITOR: Oh. .. yeah. Get me Johnson.

ROBERTS: Sorry, sir. He's covering that trial in Texas.

EDITOR: Aw, cripes. Okay, just get me anybody on the special assignment desk.

ROBERTS: (slightly nervious) They're, ah, all on special assignments. sir.

EDITOR: (exploding) Goddammit! Who the hell is here?!

ROBERTS: Well...there's you...

EDITOR: (icily) Thank you, Roberts.

ROBERTS: (helpfully) But you're busy. Let's see...I guess that leaves me...and the switchboard operator--

EDITOR: That's it?

ROBERTS: Well, yeah, I'm afraid--No! Wait a minute! (triumphantly) There's Fairchild.

EDITOR: Who in hell is he?

ROBERTS: She, sir. Lois Fairchild, society section. The new kid.

THE EDITOR THINKS FOR A MONENT.

EDITOR: Society, huh? Aw, what the hell, send her in.
ROBERTS DECIDES HE IS JOKING, AND CHUCKLES OBLIGINGLY.

EDITOR: Now, dammitt!!

ROBERTS PALES AND RUNS OUT OF THE ROOM.

IX.

SETTING: THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. THE PRESS SECRETARY ENTERS, ACKNOWLEDGES THE PRESIDENT.

RICHARDSON: Good morning, sir.

THE PRESIDENT IS SITTING BEHIND HIS DESK. A SECRETARY STANDS BESIDE HIM. ON THE DESK IS A STACK OF PAPERS AND A LARGE BOX CONTAINING LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF PENS. HE IS FURIOUSLY AND METHODICALLY SIGNING PAPERS, EACH PAPER WITH A NEW PEN. AFTER EACH PAPER IS SIGNED, HE HANDS THE PEN TO THE SECRETARY, THEN CRUMPLES THE PAPER AND TOSSES IT INTO AN ALREADY OVERFLOWING WASTEPAPER BASKET. THROUGHOUT THE FILM, HIS FACE IS NEVER SEEN.

PRESIDENT: How did the conference go?

RICHARDSON: Very well, sir. I don't think we lost any points to the loyal opposition.

PRESIDENT: Excellent! (soberly) Tell me, did the tomato question come up?

RICHARDSON: Just briefly, sir. I think I sidestepped it rather well.

PRESIDENT: You know, Jim, this tomato thing may be more serious than we had originally anticipated.

I've requested a high level meeting out on the West Coast this afternoon—that's where the whole thing started, I'd like to keep it a local affair. I had originally hoped that the Secretary of Agriculture would represent me—however, he's been held over in Moscow.

RICHARDSON: (frowning) Sir, I hope he's not having trouble buying back that wheat we gave them last quarter--

PRESIDENT: (brightly) Far from it! In fact, the Kremlin has generously offered to sell us vintage wheat!

RICHARDSON: What wheat?

PRESIDENT: Vintage wheat! You know, the real high quality stuff, from their emergency silos. (pause) 1958 was a good year for wheat, wasn't it?

RICHARDSON: (diplomatically) I'm sure it was, sir.

PRESIDENT: Good. Jim, you're somewhat of a horticulturist yourself, aren't you?

RICHARDSON: Yes sir... I maintain a modest botanical collection.

PRESIDENT: You grow any tomatoes?

RICHARDSON: Among other things, sir.

PRESIDENT: Fine. Well, since almost the entire Department of Agriculture is overseas on this deal, I was hoping you'd fill in at the meeting for me.

RICHARDSON: I'd be happy to, sir.

PRESIDENT: Excellent. Shirley has the details. I'll see you this evening.

RICHARDSON: Yes sir.

HE TURNS AND WALKS TOWARDS THE DOOR. AS HE PUTS HIS HAND ON THE KNOB, HE STOPS AND TURNS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHARDSON: (frowning) Incidentally, sir, I was wondering...
Do you by any chance use the fluffy--

HE STOPS SUDDENLY.

PRESIDENT: Hmmm?

RICHARDSON: (grimacing) Nevermind.

SETTING: A BUSY CORRIDOR AT THE WESTERN HEADQUARTERS
BUILDING. THE CAMERA IS CLOSE-UP ON A DIRECTORY PLACED
NEXT TO AN ELEVATOR AT ONE END OF THE HALL. IT READS:

WAR ROOM A-- Nuclear Strike Force Tactical Training Command OPERATION NSFTTC

WAR ROOM B-- Personnel Proficiency Planning for Pago Pago Paratroop Platoon Patrols OPERATION PPPPPPPP

WAR ROOM C-- Simulated Ladies Undercover Training Session

WAR ROOM D-- Officer's Wives Bridge Club Meeting

A SIGN HASTILY THUMBTACKED TO THE BOTTOM OF THE DIRECTORY READS:

Sub basement 2-- Tomato Meeting

THE CAMERA ZOOMS BACK TO REVEAL THE ELEVATOR. IT OPENS AND MAJOR MILLS EXITS, QUICKLY GLANCING AT HIS WATCH. DOWN THE HALL, A GROUP OF MEN ARE WAITING OUTSIDE HIS OFFICE. DIXON IS AMONG THEM, AS WELL AS TWO MEN IN LAB COATS AND ONE IN A BUSINESS SUIT. TWO GENERALS AND AN ADMIRAL COMPLETE THE GROUP. THE TWO GENERALS ARE CONVERSING.

GENERAL #1: (pointing to a medal on the other's chest)
Where did you get that one, general?

GENERAL #2: (proudly) Oh, I won that in the three-legged sack race last Armed Forces Day picnic.

MILLS JOINS THE GROUP.

MILLS: Sorry I'm late, gentlemen. After you.

HE HOLDS OPEN THE DOOR. THE DIGHT MEN ATTEMPT TO SQUEEZE IN AROUND A LARGE CONFERENCE TABLE THAT IS ONLY SLIGHTLY SMALLER THAN THE ROOM ITSELF.

MILLS: (lamely) I'd like to apologize for this room--its the best I could do on short notice...

THEY ALL MANAGE TO FIND A SEAT, SOME HAVING TO CRAWL ACROSS THE TABLE TO DO IT.

MILLS: Now. Is everyone here?

DIXON: Where's Jim Richardson?

GENERAL #1: The press secretary?

MILLS: Yes. I suppose we can wait a few minutes.

THERE IS A MOMENTARY SILENCE, BROKEN BY THE ADMIRAL.

ADMIRAL: General, I've been meaning to ask you--have you heard anything about the Nuclear Strike Force Tactical Training Command meeting?

GENERAL #2: Oh, you mean operation Nsfttc? (pronounced Nish-ficht)

ADMIRAL: That's right.

GENERAL #2: Not really. I've been following the Personnel Proficiency Planning for Pago Pago Paratroop Platoon Patrols.

ADMIRAL: Oh, Operation PPPPPPPPP. (Makes a raspberry sound.)

A DISTINGUISHED LOOKING SCIENTIST, DR. MORRISON, JOINS THE CONVERSATION.

DR. MORRISON: What's the poop on PPPPPPPP?

GENERAL #2: Moving well.

THE MAN IN THE BUSINESS SUIT SPEAKS FOR THE FIRST TIME. HE IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

DIRECTOR: Did somebody mention Nish-ficht?

ADMIRAL: No, PPPPPPPP.

MORRISON: Then Mish-glunk must be pretty well wrapped up.

THE CONVERSATION DEGENERATES INTO A MASS OF ANIMATED CONFUSION, WITH REFERENCES TO MISH-GLUNK, NISH-FICHT, AND PPPPPPPP. THE PRESS SECRETARY ENTERS AMID THE CHAOS, IMMEDIATELY TAKEN ABACK BY THE CRAMPED CONDITIONS AND STRANGE SOUNDS. HE DUTIFULLY MANAGES TO FIND A SEAT. MILLS HOLDS UP HIS HAND.

MILLS: Gentlemen, may I have your attention, please?

THE ROOM QUIETS.

MILLS: Now that we're all here, I'd like to turn the meeting over to Dr. Morrison. Doctor?

MORRISON: Thank you, captain.

MILLS: Major.

MORRISON: Pardon me?

MILLS: Never mind.

DR. MORRISON RISES, AND ADDRESSES THE CONFERENCE.

DR. MORRISON: As I'm sure you're well aware, this tomato problem has caused considerable concern within the scientific community. Scientists from throughout the nation have directed their attention to this very vexing problem with only limited success. However, with the help of Dr. Fuji Nokitofa, we believe we have made a breakthrough. Gentlemen, may I introduce Dr. Nokitofa.

ALL EYES TURN TO DR. NOKITOFA, A JAPANESE SCIENTIST.

ADMIRAL: How do you do, Doctor?

NOKITOFA SMILES POLITELY. HIS VOICE IS OBVIOUSLY DUBBED, THE SOUND ENDING TWO SECONDS BEFORE HIS LIPS STOP MOVING.

NOKITOFA: Very well, thank you.

MORRISON: Dr. Nokitofa, would you explain the project to the gentlemen?

DR. MORRISON SITS DOWN AS DR. NOKITOFA RISES. HE CONTINUES TO SPEAK IN AN ATROCIOUSLY DUBBED VOICE.

NOKITOFA: Gentlemen, what we have developed is, in essence, a half-man, half robot--a very sophisticated combination of human intelligence and super-human powers which we are confident will result in the ultimate destruction of the enemy!

AS HE CONCLUDES HIS SPEECH, HE POUNDS THE WALL ONCE FOR EFFECT, ACCIDENTALLY PUTTING HIS FIST THROUGH A PICTURE LABELED "USS ARIZONA."

MILLS: Thank you, Dr. Nokitofa. Any comments, gentlemen?

THE FIA DIRECTOR COUGHS DISCREETLY.

MILLS: Mr. Platt?

DIRECTOR: As head of the Federal Intelligence Agency, I certainly don't mean to question the background of these fine gentlemen. I'm sure that—in their place—they serve their country well. But frankly, I don't think the answer to this problem lies in trinkets and gadgets. This is man versus vegetable—

NOKITOFA: (helpfully) Technically, sir, tomatoes are fags.

MORRISON: He means fruits.

NOKITOFA: (nods) Fruits.

DIRECTOR: (grimacing) You see what I mean? Mr. Dixon,
I've been authorized to assign you four of my
best agents. Gentlemen, with your permission,
I'd like to introduce Mr. Dixon to his operatives.

MILLS: That's fine, Mr. Platt. In the meantime, the rest of us will accompany the doctors to view a demonstration of their latest anti-tomato project.

ALL RISE TO LEAVE.

- XI.

 A. SETTING: A LONG CORRIDOR IN A MEDICAL LABORATORY.

 THE GROUP FROM SCENE 10, MINUS DIXON AND THE DIRECTOR,
 PURPOSEFULLY WALK TOWARD NOKITOFA'S LABORATORY. THEY
 ARE OBLIVIOUS TO ALL DISTRACTIONS, INCLUDING A MAN
 TAKING A LEISURELY SHOWER IN AN EMERGENCY SHOWER. IN
 THE FOREGROUND, A SCIENTIST BENDS OVER A WATER FOUNTAIN.
 AT THAT MOMENT, A DOOR OPENS BEHIND HIM AND SMOKE
 BILLOWS FROM THE ROOM. A SCIENTIST STAGGERS OUT, CLAWING
 AT HIS EYES. SCIENTIST #1 CONTINUES TO DRINK, UNAWARE
 OF SCIENTIST #2, WHO HAS GOTTEN IN LINE, STILL CLAWING
 HIS EYES IN AGONY. THE GROUP WALKS PAST THE TWO
 SCIENTISTS, IGNORING THEM.
 - B. <u>SETTING</u>: DR. NOKITOFA'S LABORATORY. IT APPEARS TO BE A STANDARD CHEMISTRY LAB, WITH ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION.

WHAT APPEARS TO BE A MANNEQUIN IN AN ORANGE FLIGHT SUIT STANDS IMMOBILE IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM. UPON CLOSER INSPECTION, IT APPEARS HUMAN. THE ENTOURAGE ENTERS, LED BY DR. MORRISON. THE MAN IN THE FLIGHT SUIT MAINTAINS A FIXED SMILE.

DR. MORRISON: Essentially, gentlemen, the project entails the development of limbs with superhuman powers. Unfortunately, budget limitations have restricted our development to only one of these technologically advanced legs. This is the first test of that leg....

HE TURNS TO THE MAN IN THE FLIGHT SUIT.

DR. MORRISON: Okay, Bruce, let's try running first.

BRUCE BEGINS RUNNING FURIOUSLY IN A CIRCLE, PIVOTING ON HIS LEFT LEG.

DR. MORRISON: Uhhh...that'll be fine, Bruce.

BRUCE STOPS RUNNING. STILL SMILING.

DR. MORRISON: (a little less confidently) Bruce, please jump for us.

BRUCE, WITH A GREAT EFFORT, JUMPS WITH HIS RIGHT LEG, HIS LEFT LEG REMAINING STATIONARY. HE THEREFORE DIVES SIDEWAYS, OUT OF CAMERA RANGE. THE SOUND OF CLANGING METALWARE ACCOMPANIES HIS IMPACT. WISPS OF SMOKE RISE. NOKITOFA AND MORRISON ARE GREATLY EMBARRASSED; NO ONE ELSE BETRAYS ANY EXPRESSION.

XII.

<u>SETTING:</u> A CORRIDOR AT THE WESTERN HEADQUARTERS BUILDING.
THE FIA DIRECTOR AND DIXON ARE ABOUT TO ENTER A ROOM.

DIRECTOR: Despite some minor recruitment difficulties caused by our recent p.r. problems, I believe that you'll find that your unit meets the highest of standards.

THE DIRECTOR ENTERS A ROOM, FOLLOWED BY DIXON. AS DIXON CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. THE DIRECTOR STOPS.

DIRECTOR: Atten-hut!

A MYRIAD OF STRANGE SOUNDS IS HEARD OFF CAMERA. THE DIRECTOR, WITH OBVIOUS PRIDE, TURNS TO DIXON.

DIRECTOR: Your men, Dixon.

DIXON'S JAW DROPS. HE STARES AT THE SOURCE OF THE DIRECTOR'S PRIDE. BOTH PROFESSIONALLY AND PROUDLY, THE DIRECTOR REVIEWS HIS OPERATIVES. A DRUM ROLL FOLLOWS EACH INTRODUCTION.

DIRECTOR: Sam Smith, disquise expert!

SAM SMITH IS A MASSIVE YOUNG MAN, DRESSED IN ARMY FATIGUES, WEARING A DIME-STOKE FAKE NOSE.

HE SALUTES CRISPLY.

DIRECTOR: Gretta Attenbaum, swimming expert!

GRETTA ATTENBAUM IS A LARGE, MUSCULAR YOUNG LADY, DRESSED IN A ONE PIECE BATHING SUIT AND WEARING A DOZEN GOLD MEDALS AROUND HER NECK. ON HER SUIT IS STENCILED "GDR." SHE CURTSIES CLUMSILY, ACCOMPANIED BY THE CHIMING OF HER MEDALS.

DIRECTOR: Gretta joined us after the last Olympics. We feel she's quite an addition to the department.

DIXON: (making an effort to be polite) Uh, hello.

GRETTA: (smiling brightly, speaking in a heavy German accent)
Hello capitalist pig!

SHE CURTSIES AGAIN, THIS TIME FALLING FLAT ON HER FACE.

DIRECTOR: Greg Colburn, underwater@expert!

GREG COLBURN IS DRESSED ENTIRELY IN A SCUBA DIVING OUTFIT. HIS MASK IS HALF FULL WITH WATER; A GOLDFISH SWIMS IN IT AND A MINIATURE BEER CAN FLOATS ON TOP. AS HIS NAME IS CALLED, HE STANDS STIFFLY AT ATTENTION AND RELEASES A CO 2 CARTRIDGE AS A SORT OF SALUTE. HIS LIFE PRESERVER INFLATES LOUDLY. THE DIRECTOR TURNS TO DIXON.

DIRECTOR: The fourth member of your unit, Lt. Finletter, is winding up his current mission.

HE HANDS DIXON AN ENVELOPE.

DIRECTOR: He will contact you tomorrow at these co-ordinates. Expect him at 10 hundred hours. Good luck, Dixon.

TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF A MILITARY DRUM CADENCE, THE DIRECTOR DRAMATICALLY STRIDES FROM THE ROOM, FOLLOWED BY HIS TROOPS. DIXON, STILL NOT QUITE BELIEVING WHAT HE HAS SEEN, BRINGS UP THE REAR. AS THEY LEAVE, A SMALL DRUMMER-BOY IN REVOLUTIONARY WAR GARB IS STANDING BY THE DOOR. WITH A FLOURISH, HE COMPLETES THE CADENCE.

XIII.

SETTING: THE NEWSPAPER EDITOR'S OFFICE. HE IS SPEAKING HEATEDLY ON THE PHONE.

EDITOR: ...and while we're on the subject of expenses,
Goldstein, you're being paid damn good money to get
the exclusive story out of Beirut! That information
you sent me in your last dispatch appeared in Time
magazine 3 months ago!....I don't care if your Time
subscription does run six month late, you-- (pause)
...So what if you're Jewish! Christ almighty,
Smidley covers the NBA! What do you mean its not
the same? Smidley's white!! Goddamit, if a white
man can cover the NBA, then a Jew can sure as hell
cover an Arab war!

LOIS FAIRCHILD APPEARS AT THE DOOR, AND HESITATES. SHE IS A STYLISHLY DRESSED, ATTRACTIVE YOUNG WOMAN, FIGHTING AN INTERNAL BATTLE BETWEEN BRASH CONFIDENCE AND OUTRIGHT FEAR. THE EDITOR MOTIONS HER IN, AND SHE TAKES A SEAT FACING HIS DESK. HE CONTINUES HIS PHONE CONVERSATION, OBLIVIOUS TO HER PRESENCE.

EDITOR: Now listen, Irving--...Mohammed? Ahh, forget the sports. You--...uh huh...uh huh...all right, Goldstein. All I want is results. Now!!

HE SLAMS THE PHONE ON THE RECEIVER.

EDITOR: Roberts!

ROBERTS MATERIALIZES AT HIS SIDE.

ROBERTS: Sir?

EDITOR: Make a note; from now on, all communications to Beirut are to be sent to Mohammed Abdul Goldstein.

ROBERTS NODS, AND LEAVES. THE EDITOR TURNS TO THE YOUNG LADY SITTING OPPOSITE HIM AND STARES BLANKLY.

FAIRCHILD: (tentatively) Fairchild. sir?

EDITOR: Hmmm?

FAIRCHILD: Fairchild. You sent for me?

EDITOR: Oh. Yeah. Have a seat.

HE LEANS BACK AND OBSERVES HER CAREFULLY.

EDITOR: I've been keeping an eye on you, Fairchild...you've got a good sense of organization.

FAIRCHILD: (brightening) Thank you, sir.

EDITOR: Fluid style.

FAIRCHILD: Thank you, sir.

EDITOR: A sharp mind.

FAIRCHILD: Thank you. sir!

EDITOR: And a nice ass.

FAIRCHILD: Thank-- (aghast)

BEFORE SHE CAN RECOVER, THE EDITOR LEANS FORWARD, AND, STEELY-EYED, SPEAKS DELIBERATELY.

EDITOR: Miss Fairchild, I'm about to give you a challenge.
Your first big assignment. And I expect you to
use every attribute at your disposal. I am sure
that what you lack in experience, you will more than
make up for in determination.

HE PASSES HER THE COPY OF THE SENATE TOMATO REPORT, AND A THICK FILE.

EDITOR: This'll give you the necessary background to handle the story. Go to it.

FAIRCHILD: (with thinly disguised excitement) Right away, sir.

SHE TURNS TO EXIT. HE CALLS OUT AFTER HER.

EDITOR: One more thing, Miss Fairchild. I'm certain that the government will go to unbelievable lengths to insure the secrecy of this thing. Good luck.

XIV.

SETTING: A CONFERENCE ROOM AT WESTERN HEADQUARTERS. MASON DIXON STANDS AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE. GREG COLBURN AND SAM SMITH ARE SEATED. GRETTA ATTENBAUM STANDS NEXT TO COLBURN, WHO IS WEARING HIS SCUBA OUTFIT AND BREATHING THROUGH HIS REGULATOR. HIS BREATH IS LOUDLY AUDIBLE. DIXON SPEAKS TO SMITH, WHO IS STILL DISGUISED BY HIS FAKE NOSE.

DIXON: Will you take that stupid thing off? (glares at Smith)

SMITH REMOVES THE NOSE. DIXON ADDRESSES THE GROUP.

DIXON: Gentlemen, we've--

COLBURN: Sir?

DIXON: (crossly) What?

COLBURN: There's a lady present.

DIXON LOOKS AT GRETTA, WHO SMILES DEMURELY.

DIXON: (softening) Oh, sorry. Won't you have a seat, Miss Attenbaum?

DIXON LABORIOUSLY PICKS UP AN EMPTY CHAIR, AND HANDS IT ACROSS THE TABLE TO GRETTA. SHE EFFORTLESSLY TAKES IT FROM HIM WITH ONE HAND.

GRETTA: Danke.

GRETTA SITS DOWN, AND THE CHAIR COLLAPSES UNDER HER WEIGHT WITH A RESOUNDING CRASH. DAZED, SHE STRUGGLES TO HER FEET AND LEANS AGAINST A TABLE IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM.

DIXON: Now, as I was saying...our mission is to identify tomato strongholds and destroy them as quickly and as quietly as possible.

A THUNDERING CRASH SPLITS THE SILENCE. ALL EYES TURN TO THE BACK OF THE ROOM, WHERE GRETTA LIES STUNNED AMIDST THE DEBRIS OF THE TABLE. TAKING A DEEP BREATH, DIXON CONTINUES.

DIXON: Colburn, you take Sector One. Attenbaum...Sector Two. Smith--

DIXON STARES INCREDUOUSLY AT SMITH, WHO HAS DONNED A BLOND WIG.

SMITH: (importantly) Sir, I think it might be best if no one were to know what I actually look like.

DIXON: I won't argue with that. (To the group) Any questions?

COLBURN: Sir, I think I'm running out of air.

DIXON: Good!

X۷.

SETTING: THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. THE PRESS SECRETARY SITS OPPOSITE THE PRESIDENT, WHO IS STILL SIGNING PAPERS. THERE IS A HALF BOX OF PENS LEFT, AND WASTEPAPER IS SCATTERED OVER THE FLOOR. THE PRESS SECRETARY IS SPEAKING URGENTLY.

RICHARDSON: Not good, Mr. President, not good at all.
Frankly, I was not overly impressed with the level of competency displayed by the scientific team...I haven't seen Dixon's special forces unit yet, but if its anything like I've seen so far, I'd say we were in a bit of trouble.

PRESIDENT: I know what you mean, Jim, I know what you mean. Its like trying to stack Bibles on whipped cream.

RICHARDSON: Yes sir.

PRESIDENT: Jim, an unusual problem calls for an ingenious solution, and I think I've got one. Jim, have you ever heard of Mindmaker?

RICHARDSON: Why certainly, sir. The advertising agency you used during the campaign.

PRESIDENT: That's right. You know, they said I'd never get re-elected. Especially after it go out that I used the Statue of Liberty as collateral on that Arab loan. But I'm sitting here now, and I owe it all to Mindmaker....Incidentally, Jim, you were in the Mideast last summer. Tell me, how does the Old Girl look in the Dead Sea?

RICHARDSON: Just grand, sir.

PRESIDENT: Good....well, I tell you Jim, if those fellows could elect me, they can do anything.

RICHARDSON: Yes sir.

PRESIDENT: Jim, I want you to fly to New York immediately.
Take Air Force One.

RICHARDSON: Sir. Air Force One is...broken.

PRESIDENT: Broken!?

RICHARDSON: Ah, yes sir.

PRESIDENT: (incredulous) The whole plane is broken?

RICHARDSON: In a sense, sir. You remember where the Washington Monument used to he--

PRESIDENT: Spare me! Take Air Force Two.

RICHARDSON: I can't sir, its still in San Clemente.

PRESIDENT: Hasn't he returned that <u>yet</u>?! Well, take a commercial flight.



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PRESIDENT:

That's right. You know, they said I'd never get

re-elected.

RICHARDSON: Especially after it got out that you had used

the Statue of Liberty as colatteral on that

Arab loan.

PRESIDENT:

But, I'm sitting here now, and I owe it all to Mindmaker ... Incidentally, Jim, you were in the Mideast last summer. Tell me, how does

the Old Girl look in the Dead Sea?

RICHARDSON: Yes sir.

PRESIDENT: I want you to see Ted Swann. Believe me, the

man's a genius!

RICHARDSON: I'm on my way, sir.

XVI.

SETTING: THE PRODUCE SECTION OF A LARGE SUPERMARKET. A BOX BOY LAYS DEAD, DOZENS OF TOMATOES SCURRYING OVER HIS BODY.

XVII.

SETTING: THE SIDEWALK IN FROMT OF A SUBURBAN HOME. THE OLD MAN FROM SCENE 4 IS SPEAKING TO DIXON.

OLD MAN:...and that's the whole story. Say, you wanna buy a used crib?

DIXON: (tactfully) I don't think so...but I appreciate the information. This could be especially—

FAIRCHILD: Hey!

BOTH DIXON AND THE OLD MAN LOOK ACROSS THE STREET.
LOIS FAIRCHILD EMERGES FROM A SMALL SPORTS CAR. DIXON,
HAVING NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE, HAS NO IDEA WHAT TO
EXPECT. HE WAITS, CURIOUSLY. SHE PURPOSEFULLY STRIDES
TOWARDS HIM, AND SHOVES A PRESS CARD INTO HIS FACE.

FAIRCHILD: Fairchild, from the Times! What's this deal about tomatoes?

DIXON: (momentarily stunned) Huh?

FAIRCHILD: Look, buddy, don't try to stonewall me! You--

AT THAT MOMENT, A HANDSOME, MUSCULAR MAN WEARING A GRAY SUIT AND GLASSES WALKS PAST THE GROUP. AS HE PASSES, HE CALLS PLEASANTLY TO LOIS.

MAN: Hi, Lois!

STARTLED, SHE RECOGNIZES HIM AND SMILES.

FAIRCHILD: Oh, hi Clark!

AFTER A MOMENTARY PAUSE, SHE WHIRLS BACK TO DIXON, WHO BY NOW REGARDS HER WITH EXTREME DISTASTE.

FAIRCHILD: What're doing here? (motions to the old man) Who is he?

DIXON: (sourly) No comment.

AS THE EXCHANGE CONTINUES, THE SOUND OF RUSHING WIND ACCOMPANIED BY THE SUPERMAN THEMESONG IS HEARD IN THE BACKGROUND. THE OLD MAN IS DISTRACTED BY THE SOUND AND LOOKS SKYWARD, SHIELDING HIS EYES TO FOLLOW SOMETHING ACROSS THE SKY. DIXON AND FAIRCHILD ARE UNAWARE OF THE DISTRACTION.

FAIRCHILD: How serious is the situation?

DIXON IGNORES HER, AND WALKS ACROSS THE STREET TO WHERE HIS CAR IS PARKED. COLBURN, SMITH, AND GRETTA WAIT WITHIN.

DIXON: (firmly) No comment.

FAIRCHILD: The American public has a right to know! You can't ignore the press!

DIXON ENTERS THE CAR, GUNS THE ENGINE, AND RACES PAST HER.

FAIRCHILD: Dixon! Dixon!

XVIII.

SETTING: ROLLING FARMLAND. DIXON'S CAR MOVES SWIFTLY DOWN THE ROAD. ON THE DRIVER'S DOOR IS PAINTED:

Federal Intelligence Agency. Unmarked Car Pool.

DIXON IS DRIVING. COLBURN IS WEARING HIS SCUBA GEAR, GRETTA WEARS HER SWIMMING SUIT, AND SMITH IS DISGUISED AS GEORGE WASHINGTON.

SMITH: Can I turn on the radio, Mr. Dixon?

DIXON: Yeah.

GRETTA: Oh boy! Let's watch "Gunsmoke!"

SMITH TURNS ON THE RADIO. A DISC JOCKEY INTONES
"The song that's everybody's asking for! Ronny Desmond's
Puberty Love! A SHRILL, PUBESCENT VOICE BLARES FORTH.
RESPONDING TO CRIES OF PROTEST, SMITH CHANGES THE STATION.

DIXON: Quiet! I want to hear the news.

NEWSCASTER:

...and today, the President closed the nation's last remaining submarine base at Grotten, Connecticut. When asked why he had made this startling decision, the President responded: 'Those funny little black ships just keep sinking, anyway. And, in other news, today in Newark, New Jersey, a man was eaten by a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich.

FROWNING, DIXON TURNS OFF THE RADIO.

- B. <u>SETTING</u>: HEAVILY WOODED, MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN. DIXON'S AUTOMOBILE GRINDS TO A HALT. GRETTA GETS OUT, AND, CARRYING A KNAPSACK, BEGINS HIKING AS THE CAR PULLS AWAY.
- C. <u>SETTING</u>: CROWDED CITY STREET. DIXON'S AUTOMOBILE PULLS TO A STOP AT THE CURB. SMITH IS NOW DISGUISED AS ABRAHAM LINCOLN, WEARING A BEARD AND TOP HAT. COLBURN, CLAD IN HIS SCUBA GEAR, GETS OUT. THE CAR PULLS AWAY.

XIX.

SETTING: OPEN COUNTRYSIDE. DIXON'S CAR, NOW OCCUPIED BY ONLY DIXON AND SMITH, CRUISES TO A STOP. SMITH IS DISGUISED AS ADOLPH HITLER. DIXON LOOKS AT HIS WATCH, THEN IMPATIENTLY SCANS THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE. THE ROAR OF AN AIRPLANE GROWS LOUDER, THEN RECEDES IN THE DISTANCE. A LOUD, JARRING THUD ROCKS THE ROOF OF THE CAR, AND THE AUTOMOBILE IS ENGULFED BY A BILLOW OF WHITE SILK. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL THAT THE SILK IS ATPARACHUTE, ATTACHED TO A MAN WEARING GOGGLES, A BANDOLIER, FATIGUES, MISCELLANEOUS MILITARY EQUIPMENT, AND A DRESS SWORD. DIXON MANAGES TO EXTRICATE HIMSELF FROM THE CAR, WHEREUPON THE STRANGER HANDS HIM A BUSINESS CARD AND SALUTES. DIXON REGARDS THE STRANGER WITH AMAZEMENT.

DIXON: So you're Finletter, huh? I'm Mason Dixon.

HE GESTURES IN THE DIRECTION OF SMITH.

DIXON: This is--

FINLETTER: (aghast) My God! It's Adolph Hitler!

FINLETTER DRAWS HIS SWORD. DIXON, AFTER A BRIEF BUT FURIOUS STRUGGLE, WRESTLES IT AWAY.

DIXON: (angrily) This is Sam Smith! (sarcastically) He's an undercover expert.

DIXON REGARDS FINLETTER WARTLY.

DIXON: He's only disquised as Adolph Hitler.

FINLETTER STUDIES SMITH, AND IS VERY MUCH IMPRESSED.

FINLETTER: Guten morgen, Herr Hitler.

SMITH: Autobahn!

FINLETTER: (slyly) Ah. sprechen ze deutsch?

SMITH: (happily) Wienerschnitzel!

DIXON: (disgusted, to Finletter) Get in the back seat!

FINLETTER, DRAGGING HIS PARACHUTE BEHIND HIM, COMPLIES. SMITH TURNS TO DIXON.

SMITH: (eagerly) What about me, Mr. Dixon, what about me?

DIXON REGARDS HIM WITH A MIXTURE OF PITY AND CONTEMPT.

Dixon: (sarcastically) You? You go disguise yourself as a tomato and infiltrate their camp.

SMITH NODS HAPPILY. DIXON SADLY SHAKES HIS HEAD.

SETTING: DENSE FOREST. SAM SMITH, ARMS AND LEGS PROTRUDING FROM THE LARGE, ROUND TOMATO COSTUME HE IS WEARING, TIPTOES THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH.

XXI.

<u>SETTING</u>: A CROWDED CITY SQUARE. GREG COLBURN WALKS
THROUGH THE CROWD, STOPPING AT AN ORNATE FOUNTAIN IN
THE CENTER OF THE SQUARE. HE CLIMBS IN, AND BEGINS
SWIMMING.

XXII.

SETTING: AN OFFICE HALLWAY IN THE MIDST OF THE NEW YORK CITY BUSINESS DISTRICT. THE PRESS SECRETARY WALKS DOWN THE HALL, STOPPING AT A DOOR LABELED "MINDMAKER, INC." BELOW THE TITLE IS THE COMPANY LOGO, A GIANT EYEBALL. A PICTURE OF A HAPPY ESKIMO AND HIS NEW REFRIGERATOR IS PAINTED IN THE IRIS. THE PRESS SECRETARY ENTERS THE OFFICE. IT IS SPACIOUS AND TASTEFULLY DECORATED, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF NUMEROUS EYEBALLS ADORNING THE WALLS AND FURNITURE. THE PRESS SECRETARY APPROACHES THE RECEPTIONIST.

RICHARDSON: Mr. Richardson to see Mr. Swann.

RECEPTIONIST: Yes sir. He's expecting you. I'll let him know you're here. Please have a seat.

SHE BUZZES THE INTERCOM.

RECEPTIONIST: Mr. Swann, Mr. Richardson is here to see you...

TO RICHARDSON

RECEPTIONIST: He'll be right with you.

A SMILING, STYLISHLY DRESSED MAN BURSTS THROUGH THE DOORS AT THE END OF THE HALL, RUSHES OVER TO THE PRESS

SECRETARY AND PUMPS HIS HAND FURIOUSLY.

SWANN: Jimbo, buddy, how are ya, how ya doin'?

RICHARDSON: Fine, I--

SWANN: Super! Super! The Prez says you have a situation, Jimbo. Well, let me clue you, old friend, you boys have come to the right place. Lemme give you a peek at Mindmaker in action!

HE ABRUPTLY WHEELS, AND RETURNS IN THE DIRECTION HE ENTERED. AFTER A SPLIT SECOND OF INDECISION, THE PRESS SECRETARY FOLLOWS. THE SCENE MOVES TO A SCREENING ROOM AS THEY ENTER.

SWANN: Jim, we're about to screen the public service spots we just completed for the National Health Foundation.

SWANN CALLS OUT TO THE PROJECTION BOOTH.

SWANN: Let 'er rip!

AS THE TWO GENTLEMEN SIT DOWN, THE LIGHTS DIM AND THE PROJECTOR IS TURNED ON. A SCHOOL ROOM APPEARS ON THE SCREEN, FILLED WITH SECOND-GRADERS: THE CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE ROOM TO THE TEACHER, WHO IS WRITING ON THE BLACK-BOARD. THE NARRATOR INTONES "These children are just like any other children. They go to school. They work. They learn. They play. Yes, these children are just like any others...with one exception." THE SCHOOL BELL RINGS. THE TEACHER MOTIONS THAT THE CLASS IS DISMISSED. THE CLASS HAPPILY RUNS OUTSIDE. "These children...are deaf." FILM RUNS OUT.

SWANN: What do you think?

RICHARDSON: (very impressed) Very good, quite impressive.

SWANN: Yes it is, isn't it?

SWANN VAULTS OUT OF HIS SEAT.

SWANN: Follow me!

SCENE CUTS TO SWANN'S PLUSH OFFICE. HE IS RECLINING IN AN OVERSIZED CHAIR BEHIND HIS DESK. RICHARDSON SITS OPPOSITE HIM.

SWANN: (musing) First, we have to convince the little house-wife out there that the tomato which ate the family pet isn't dangerous...

HE SHRUGS NONCHALANTLY.

SWANN: No problem...Then we have to convince local authorities that the thousands missing from rural communities were merely stranded during their Bicentennial pilgrimage to Philadelphia. No problem. Third, the president wants to do this in a such a way that it can be covered up so no one will know it ever happened...That's no problem. But then he wants to do all this and convince 200 million Americans that this disaster is actually a blessing. Now that's a challenge.

RICHARDSON: I understand what you're saying, Mr. Swann.
The president is a very demanding person. He sometimes expects more than is possible. I--

SWANN: (fiercely) I never said impossible, Richardson! What I said was that it was a challenge. Man was put on this earth to meet challenges, my boy!

RICHARDSON: (slightly confused) Then you really think you can do it?

SWANN: Can I do it?! Can I do it?!!

SWANN BURSTS INTO A SONG DETAILING BOTH HIS PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND HIS SUCCESSES. RICHARDSON IS TAKEN ABACK BY HIS INTENSITY. AS THE SONG CONTINUES, SWANN BECOMES CARRIED AWAY, ULTIMATELY LEAPING ON HIS DESK AS THE SONG CONCLUDES. RICHARDSON STARES, OPEN-MOUTHED.

SWANN: Well, let's go meet that challenge, young man.

HE JUMPS OFF HIS DESK, AND RETURNS TO HIS NORMAL BUSINESSLIKE MANNER. LOOKING AT HIS WATCH, HE SPEAKS RAPIDLY AS HE LEAVES THE ROOM FOLLOWED BY RICHARDSON.

SWANN: I've already put my staff to work. If you'd be good enough to stop by tomorrow morning, we can take a look-see at the preliminary sketches.

THEY ENTER THE SCREENING ROOM.

SWANN: (To projectionist) Roll it!

RICHARDSON: Then I can tell the president that you'll accept the assignment?

SWANN: You bet your booties!

THE LIGHTS DIM AND THE PROJECTOR IS TURNED ON. A SCHOOL ROOM APPEARS ON THE SCREEN, FILLED WITH SECOND GRADERS. THE CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE ROOM TO THE TEACHER, WHO IS READING TO THEM. THE NARRATOR INTONES "These children are just like any other children. They go to school. They work. They learn. They play. Yes, these children are just like any others. With one exception." THE SCHOOL BELL RINGS. THE CLASS HAPPILY RUNS OUTSIDE. "These children...are blind." IMMEDIATELY, CHILDREN BEGIN TRIPPING DOWN THE STEPS, STUMBLING, RUNNING INTO WALLS AND INTO EACH OTHER.

HORRORSTRICKEN, RICHARDSON TURNS TO TED SWANN, WHOSE FACE IS TRANSFIXED BY A STRANGE SMILE.

XXIII.

SETTING: A CITY SIDEWALK. MASON DIXON, HAVING COMPLETED A PHONE CALL, LEAVES A PHONE BOOTH. A STRANGE HAMMERING IS HEARD OVER THE CLAMOR OF NORMAL CITY TRAFFIC. DIXON LOOKS AT FINLETTER, WHO IS CROUCHED ON THE SIDE-WALK UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTING TO HAMMER TENT STAKES INTO THE CEMENT.

FINLETTER: Sir, I'm not sure this is the best spot to camp.

DIXON: (incredulous) We're not sleeping on the sidewalk.

HE POINTS ACROSS THE STREET.

DIXON: You see that big building? Its called a hotel. You and I are going to sleep in the hotel.

FINLETTER: No campfire, sir?

DIXON: No campfire.

FINLETTER PULLS A PACKAGE OUT OF HIS PACK.

FINLETTER: Then what am I going to do with these marsh-mallows?

GRIMACING, DIXON LEADS FINLETTER ACROSS THE STREET. THEY ENTER THE LOBBY OF A LARGE, WELL FURNISHED HOTEL. DIXON SPEAKS TO FINLETTER.

DIXON: Here's the key to my room. I'm going to check for messages. See you in a minute.

FINLETTER NODS. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM ACROSS THE LOBBY TO THE ELEVATOR. IN THE FOREGROUND, LOIS FAIRCHILD IS DOZING ON A COUCH.

SHE DOE'S NOT SEE FINLETTER, WHO IS DIRECTLY BEHIND HER. SHE SITS UP WITH A START; ACROSS THE ROOM, SHE SEES MASON DIXON AT THE DESK. DIXON SAYS SOMETHING TO THE ATTENDANT, WHO TURNS AND REACHES INTO A MAIL SLOT, FINDS NOTHING, AND SHAKES HIS HEAD. FAIRCHILD WATCHES INTENTLY, WHILE IN THE BACKGROUND FINLETTER HAS GOTTEN HIS PARACHUTE STUCK INSIDE THE ELEVATOR. FINALLY, HE MANAGES TO PRY OPEN THE DOORS AND JOIN IT INSIDE. MEANWHILE, DIXON NODS TO THE ATTENDANT, AND WALKS BRISKLY TO THE ELEVATOR. FAIRCHILD SLUMPS DOWN UNTIL DIXON IS INSIDE. THEN SHE WALKS OVER TO THE DESK AND READS THE NUMBER OFF DIXON'S MAIL SLOT. SHE SPEAKS TO THE ATTENDANT.

FATRCHILD: Room 327, please. I seem to have misplaced my key.

THE ATTENDANT HANDS HER THE KEY. SHE SMILES GRATEFULLY.

FAIRCHILD: Thank you.

B. <u>SETTING</u>: A WELL FURNISHED HOTEL ROOM. FINLETTER IS WATCHING TELEVISION, EATING MARSHMALLOWS. THE TELE-VISION BLARES:

"Praytell Records presents--21 great Deadbeats!! You get the best of Jimmy Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Otis Redding, Buddy Holly--

FINLETTER CHANGES THE CHANNEL.

"Its the CBS Evening News, with Charles Collingwood substituting for Charles Osgood substituting for Dan Rather substituting for Mike Wallace substituting for Fred Graham substituting for Roger Mudd substituting for Walter Cronkite...

DIXON: Turn that thing off, will you? Let's get some sleep. We've got a long day ahead of us.

FINLETTER OFFERS HIS PACKAGE TO DIXON.

FINLETTER: Marshmallow?

THE SCENE CUTS TO LOIS FAIRCHILD IN THE LOBBY. SHE NERVOUSLY GLANCES AT THE CLOCK ON THE WALL. IT READS 14:35. FINGERING HER KEY, SHE WALKS TO THE ELEVATOR. THE SCENE CUTS TO THE HOTEL ROOM. FINLETTER IS SLEEPING ON THE COUCH. LOIS FAIRCHILD, OBLIVIOUS TO HIS PRESENCE, STEALTHILY ENTERS THE ROOM. SUDDENLY, FINLETTER STIRS AND TURNS ON THE LIGHT. FAIRCHILD FREEZES. FINLETTER REGARDS HER SLEEPILY.

FAIRCHILD: (petrified) Oh, I'm terribly sorry... I mean...

SHE RETREATS TO THE DOOR.

FAIRCHILD: I thought this was my--really, I mean, you know--

SHE EXITS, SLAMMING THE DOOR BEHIND HER. DIXON, HEARING THE NOISE, CALLS OUT FROM THE BED ROOM.

DIXON: What was that?

FINLETTER: A strumpet, sir.

DIXON: Acwhat?

FINLETTER: A trollup, sir. A harlot, a lady of the evening.

DIXON: (exasperated) Go to sleep, Finletter.

XXIV.

SETTING: DIXON'S HOTEL BEDROOM AT 6 D'CLOCK IN THE MORNING. DIXON STIRS AS THE PHONE RINGS. HE SLEEPILY ANSWERS IT.

DIXON: Hmmm? (suddenly awake) I'll be right down!

DIXON HURRIEDLY BEGINS DRESSING. THE SCENE SHIFTS TO THE LIVING & AS DIXON BURSTS IN. FINLETTER, WEARING HIS UNIFORM, PARACHUTE, AND AN APRON, HAS PREPARED A SUMPTUOUS BREAKFAST. DIXON MOMENTARILY FORGETS HIMSELF AND STARES IN AMAZEMENT.

FINLETTER: Breakfast, sir?

DIXON SNAPS OUT OF IT.

DIXON: No time! I've gotta get downstairs!

FINLETTER: But sir, you need your vitamins--

DIXON: No time!

DIXON GRABS FINLETTER'S ARM.

DIXON: Listen, this is important. You've got to warn Gretta that there's tomato activity in sector 2. You got that? No matter what happens, you tell her!

FINLETTER: Yes sir!

DIXON TURNS TO RUN OUT AS FINLETTER BEGINS TO TAKE OFF HIS APRON. BOTH MEN FREEZE AS A RADIO BULLETIN BREAKS OVER THE AIR.

"We interrupt this program to bring you a special bulletin."

BOTH MEN CROUCH WITH RAPT ATTENTION OVER THE RADIO.

"The following is an NBC Hotline Bulletin, with Douglas Kiker in New York. NBC, the network that brings you the news as it happens, brings you these bulletins in times of emergency. The news you need to know, when you need to know it. On NBC, the network of the news.

DIXON IS RAPIDLY GROWING IMPATIENT.

"This NBC News Hotline Bulletin is brought to you by Schritz Beer--'You're never too drunk to ask for Schritz.' And, by Bright Gums, the toothpaste for people without teeth or dentures. And, by--

DIXON RUSHES OUT IN DISGUST.

B. <u>SETTING</u>: THE HOTEL LOBBY. EXCITED PEOPLE ARE MILLING ABOUT, CHATTERING IN THEIR ANXIETY. MAJOR MILLS IS ON THE TELEPHONE, TRYING TO MAKE HIMSELF HEARD ABOVE THE NOISE.

MILLS: Yes sir, that' right...about five miles outside the city...Dixon and I are heading out there right now to check it out...Yes sir.

HE HANGS UP THE PHONE, NOTICING DIXON WHO HAS JUST ARRIVED.

MILLS: Follow me!

THE TWO MEN LEAVE QUICKLY.

XXV.

SETTING: A TRANQUIL VALLEY STREAM. A NINE YEAR OLD BOY IS FISHING, HIS DOG SITTING CONTENTEDLY BY HIS SIDE. A STRANGE MUNCHING SOUND IS HEARD OFF CAMERA. THE BOY LOOKS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SOUND, BUT HEARS NOTHING MORE. HE RESUMES FISHING. ONCE AGAIN THE SOUND IS HEARD, LOUDER THAN BEFORE. THE DOG GROWLS, AND BOUNDS OFF CAMERA TOWARDS THE SOUND. THE BOY SPEAKS ANXIOUSLY.

BOY: What is it, Spot? What's in there?

A CARTOON VOICES ANSWERS FROM OFF CAMERA.

SPOT: Gosh, Billy, I don't know. You stay there. I'll go look.

THE STRANGE MUNCHING SOUND IS HEARD AGAIN, ACCOMPANIED BY FURIOUS BARKING AND THE RUSTLING OF BUSHES. THEN SILENCE.

BOY: Spot? Spot?!

HE RUNS AFTER THE DOG. THE MUNCHING SOUND RESUMES, EVER LOUDER. AGAIN SILENCE. THE CAMERA ZOOMS TOWARD THE FISHING POLE, WHICH DRIFTS DOWN THE STREAM.

XXVI.

SETTING: THE YARD OF A LARGE FARM HOUSE. THE HOUSE APPEARS TO HAVE TAKEN THE FULL BRUNT OF A HURRICANE: WINDOWS ARE BROKEN, WALLS ARE SMASHED, AND THE YARD IS A MESS. A PLATOON OF SOLDIERS SURROUND THE AREA. THE CAPTAIN AND THE LIEUTENANT ARE ENGAGED IN EARNEST CONVERSATION. THE CAPTAIN IS HOLDING A SHELL ROAD MAP.

LIEUTENANT: What are those red circles, sir?

CAPTAIN: Those are machine gun emplacements. We've got the whole valley surrounded with 'em. Don't think we can hold 'em very long, though.

LIEUTENANT: Then the green line must be their furthest point of advance.

CAPTAIN: That's right.

LIEUTENANT: What are the blue dots?

CAPTAIN: Those are Shell stations.

LIEUTENANT: Oh.

TWO CARS SPEED UP THE DRIVEWAY. THE SECOND IS RECOGNI-ZABLE AS DIXON'S.

CAPTAIN: That must be Major Mills. Take over.

LIEUTENANT: Yes sir.

THE CAPTAIN STRIDES OVER TO MILLS AND DIXON, WHO HAVE LEFT THEIR CARS.

CAPTAIN: (saluting) I'm glad you could make it, sir. I think we've got something that will interest you.

MILLS: So I've been told. (To Dixon) Dixon, I wanted you to see this. Captain?

THE CAPTAIN TAKES THEM AROUND A CORNER. A SCIENTIST IS CROUCHING OVER A ROUND OBJECT, EXAMINING IT WITH A STETHOSCOPE. A SOLDIER STANDS GUARD.

CAPTAIN: Sir, we've captured a giant tomato!

ON CLOSER INSPECTION, THE ROUND OBJECT BECOMES A TOMATO, APPROXIMATELY TWELVE INCHES IN DIAMETER. THE SCIENTIST, CONCLUDING HIS EXAMINATION, FROWNS. GRIMLY, HE STANDS UP.

SCIENTIST: I'm afraid, gentlemen, that what we have here before us is not what we had thought.

CAPTAIN: You don't mean...

THE SCIENTIST NODS SLOWLY, GRIMLY.

SCIENTIST: This, may God help us....is a cherry tomato!

XXVII.

SETTING: A SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT. A WOMAN PROPELS HER SHOPPING CART MADLY, SCREAMING AT THE TOP OF HER LUNGS. A GIANT TOMATO, SIX FEET IN DIAMETER, IS CHASING HER.

XXVIII.

SETTING: EARLY MORNING IN THE WOODS. GRETTA ATTENBAUM SITS IN A CLEARING, CONTENTEDLY EATING A BOWL OF CEREAL FROM A BOX LABELED "STEROIDS: BREAKFAST OF OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS." SUDDENLY, SHE HEARS A NOISE IN THE UNDER-BRUSH. SHE GETS UP TO INVESTIGATE. IMMEDIATELY, A DOZEN OR SO TOMATOES, RANGING IN SIZE FROM 3 TO 12 INCHES , SURROUND HER. SHE WHIRLS AROUND, AND PREPARES TO DO BATTLE. A TOMATO LEAPS AT HER, AND SHE FENDS IT OFF WITH A CRASHING BLOW. THE OTHER TOMATOES JOIN THE FRAY, AND, IN A FURIOUS STRUGGLE, GRETTA GAINS THE UPPER HAND. AS SHE IS ABOUT TO FINISH OFF THE LAST ATTACKER, THERE IS A TREMENDOUS NOISE IN THE WOODS. TURNS. JUST IN TIME TO SEE A SIX FOOT TOMATO BEARING DOWN UPON HER. SHE SCREAMS. THE SCENE CUTS TO ANOTHER PART OF THE WOODS, WHERE FINLETTER IS SEARCHING FOR GRETTA. HEARING THE SCREAM, HE DRAWS HIS SWORD AND PISTOL. AND CHARGES TOWARD THE SOUND. HIS PROGRESS IS EXTREMELY SLOW, DUE TO THE FACT THAT HIS PARACHUTE IS CONTINUALLY SNAGGED IN THE UNDERGROWTH.

FINLETTER FINALLY REACHES THE CLEARING, WHERE THE MANGLED BODY OF GRETTA LIES BROKEN ON THE GROUND. FROWNING, FINLETTER KNEELS BESIDES THE BODY. CONVINCED, THERE IS NOTHING HE CAN DO, HE RISES. STANDING AT ATTENTION, HE SALUTES THE BODY. AND SAYS:

FINLETTER: Mr. Dixon has ordered me to inform you that there is tomato activity in this sector.

HE RETURNS IN THE DIRECTION HE CAME.

XXIX.

<u>SETTING</u>: THE SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM. THE SENATE COMMITTEE, CHAIRED BY THE OLD SENATOR. IS MEETING.

OLD SENATOR: All right, who wants to be paper monitor?

XXX.

SETTING: THE DUTER OFFICE OF MINDMAKER, INC. THE PRESS SECRETARY ENTERS, AND APPROACHES THE RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST: Good afternoon, sir.

SHE BUZZES THE INTERCOM. THE PRESS SECRETARY ABSENT-MINDEDLY FINGERS THE LEAVES OF A PLANT ON HER DESK.

RECEPTIONIST: Mr. Swann? Mr. Richardson is here. Very good, sir.

RICHARDSON: (musing, as he listens to the piped in music)
Its amazing how a plant will respond to music,
isn't it?

RECEPTIONIST: (politely) Yes, isn't it? Mr. Swann will see you in just a few minutes.

RICHARDSON: (politely, but firmly) Please tell Mr. Swann I'll see him now.

SCENE SHIFTS TO SWANN'S OFFICE. HE IS SPEAKING EXCITEDLY ON THE TELEPHONE.

SWANN: I tell you its a great idea, J.B.! The first <u>adult</u> cereal. Kinky Krispies! It comes in three flavors. Cherry--

SWANN TURNS IN HIS CHAIR AS THE DOOR OPENS.

RICHARDSON: Good afternoon, Mr. Swann.

SWANN SMILES HALF HEARTEDLY, THEN CATCHES HIMSELF.

SWANN: J.B., I'll have to call you back. Bye.

SWANN GREETS RICHARDSON ENTHUSIASTICALLY.

SWANN: Jimbo! How's it going?

RICHARDSON: I believe that's my question.

SWANN: Huh? Oh, yeah, right, funny. Well, let me tell you, things are going great banannas! Step over here.

RICHARDSON FOLLOWS SWANN TO A CLOTH-DRAPED EASEL.

SWANN: What do we need? I asked myself. Something original, something dynamic, something that strikes at the very heart of the problem! Well...here it is!

HE UNVEILS THE EASEL. IT REVEALS A POSTER WITH ADJACENT PICTURES OF A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT AND A MUCH, MUCH SMALLER PICTURE OF A TOMATO. ACROSS THE TOP IT READS "TOMATO PLANTS VS. NUCLEAR PLANTS." BELOW THE PICTURES, IT LISTS A NUMBER OF POINTS.

"TOMATO PLANTS EMIT NO RADIOACTIVE WASTES."
"TOMATO PLANTS COST LESS TO BUILD."
"TOMATO PLANTS TASTE BETTER."
"TOMATO PLANTS CANNOT EXPLODE."

SWANN SPEAKS WITH PRIDE AS RICHARDSON WATCHES, EXPRESSION-LESS.

SWANN: This is Mindmaker at its best! (points to the poster)
How can anyone argue with that? And...there's more.
Listen to this.

SWANN TURNS ON A PORTABLE TAPE RECORDER. AFTER A MOMENT OF SILENCE, AN ENTHUSIASTIC VOICE BLARES FORTH.

"Giant tomatoes mean bigger pizzas!"

A DEEP, SERIOUS VOICE FOLLWS.

"Last year, more people were killed by automobile accidents, hert attacks, lung cancer, and natural causes <u>combined</u> than by <u>any</u> one tomato.

A LIGHT HEARTED JINGLE FOLLOWS.

"If you're feeling sad and blue, tomatoes will end it all for you."

SWANN FLIPS OFF THE RECORDER. HE CONTINUES ENTHUSIAS-TICALLY.

SWANN: Pretty classy, huh?

RICHARDSON: (smiling thinly) With a capital "K."

SWANN: Right! And, Mr. Secretary, as a public relations man yourself, you' understand the value of symbols. And we have spent a great deal of time, effort, and over a million dollars to create a symbol which will wage this battle. An effort which will become known as...

HE PAUSES DRAMATICALLY, THEN PULLS A LARGE STP STICKER FROM HIS DESK.

SWANN: The Stop Tomato Program!

RICHARDSON REMAINS EXPRESSIONLESS, THEN FORCES A SLIGHT SMILE.

RICHARDSON: I see. That all looks quite...extraordinary.

SWANN: Thank you.

RICHARDSON: (rising) Now if you'll excuse me, I think I should be on my way--

SWANN: Just a moment! One more thing before you leave,
Mr. Secretary——I'd really like you to see this.
Its something I've been working on for a long time,
the culmination of years of effort!

THE SCENE SHIFTS TO THE SCREENING ROOM. THE TWO MEN ARE SITTING IN THE CENTER.

SWANN: The world's ultimate commercial! Roll it!

THE CAMERA STAYS FIXED ON THE TWO MEN. SWANN IS SMILING IN ANTICIPATION. RICHARDSON SEEMS ONLY SLIGHTLY INTERESTED. AN ANGELIC CHORUS CRESCENDOS, THEN FADES. A GENTLE VOICE SAYS:

"Hi. Jesus Christ, for Magnavox."

SWANN BEAMS WITH DELIGHT. RICHARDSON'S MOUTH DROPS.

XXXI.

SETTING: DIXON IS DRIVING HIS CAR THROUGH SPARSELY POPULATED COUNTRYSIDE ON HIS WAY BACK TO THE CITY. HE TURNS ON HIS CAR RADIO.

"....The nation is in chaos! Can nothing stop this tomato onslaught? Last night tomatoes attacked Los Angeles!

B. <u>SETTING: A BLANK WALL</u>. A MASS OF REFUGEES, SUITCASES IN HAND, RUN ACROSS THE PICTURE, LEFT TO RIGHT.

REFUGEES: Aaaaagghh!

RADIO VOICEOVER: Boston!

REFUGEES RUN ACROSS PICTURE RIGHT TO LEFT.

REFUGEES: Aaaagghh!

RADIO VOICEOVER: Seattle!

REFUGEES RUN LEFT TO RIGHT.

RADIO VOICEOVER: Chicago!

REFUGEES: Aaagghh!

C. <u>SETTING</u>: QUIET PUBLIC LIBRARY. A MEEK GENTLEMAN IN THE CENTER OF THE PICTURE TURNS TO THE PERSON SITTING NEXT TO HIM AND WHISPERS.

RADIO VOICEOVER: Even the mere mention of the word is sufficient to induce panic.

GENTLEMAN: Tomato.

EVERYONE IN THE BUILDING LEAPS FROM THEIR CHAIRS AND ** RUN SCREAMING.

D. <u>SETTING</u>: INTERIOR OF MASON DIXON'S AUTOMOBILE. HE SHAKES HIS HEAD GRIMLY AND CHANGES THE STATION. A ROCK AND ROLL NUMBER BLARES. DIXON TURNS INTO AN ALLEY WAY, AND FINDS THE ROAD BLOCKED BY A GIANT TOMATO. HE SLAMS ON THE BREAKS.

RADIO VOICEOVER: ...and now here's the hottest thing on the charts, Ronny Desmond's <u>Puberty Love!</u>

THE SONG BEGINS TO PLAY. DIXON LOOKS INTO HIS REAR VIEW MIRROR, AND SEES ANOTHER GIANT TOMATO BLOCKING HIS ESCAPE. MYSTERIOUSLY, THE TOMATOES IN FRONT OF HIM TO DRIVE THROUGH. WITH A PUZZLED, MISTRUSTING EXPRESSION, HE DOES SO--SLOWLY. ONCE THROUGH, HE GUNS THE ENGINE AND HURRIES DOWN THE ROAD, STILL PUZZLED.

XXXII.

SETTING: THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. A SECRETARY IS HEARD OVER THE INTERCOM. THE OFFICE IS LITTERED WITH CRUMPLED PAPERS AND THE SUPPLY OF PENS IS DWINDLING.

SECRETARY: Mr. President, Mr. Richardson is on the line from New York.

THE PRESIDENT PICKS UP THE PHONE.

PRESIDENT: Hello, Jim. How was the session?....Good?

To be honest, I had some reservations about this.

THE SCENE CUTS TO RICHARDSON IN THE NEW YORK AIRPORT PHONE BOOTH.

RICHARDSON: Believe me, sir, it was a great idea. I was very impressed. I have complete confidence in Mr. Swann.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT IS HEARD IN THE BACKGROUND OVER AIRPORT LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM.

"Flight number 785 is now boarding at gate 8. Flight #785 to Pheonix, Los Angeles, and San Diego, now boarding at gate 8."

RICHARDSON: I've got to go now, sir, my plane is about to leave. ..Thank you. sir.

RICHARDSON HANGS UP THE PHONE, EXPRESSIONLESS.

XXXIII.

SETTING: WESTERN HEADQUARTERS CONFERENCE ROOM. DIXON IS IN THE MIDDLE OF DESCRIBING HIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE GIANT TOMATOES. HIS AUDIENCE INCLUDES MAJOR MILLS, THE TWO SCIENTISTS, THE PRESS SECRETARY, THE ADMIRAL, AND THE TWO GENERALS.

DIXON: ...and then I put my foot to the floor and got out of there as fast as I could...the whole thing was so strange. I don't know what to think.

NOKITOFA: You made no unusual motions of any kind?

DIXON: Not to my knowledge.

NOKITOFA: Odd.

MORRISON: Were there any loud noises or other extraneous activity which might have affected the tomatoes behavior? Such as an airplane, or another car in the vicinity...

DIXON: I'm almost sure there wasn't.

RICHARDSON: Gentlemen, I'm awfully sorry to interrupt, but I really must get back to Washington.

MILLS: Certainly. Give the president my regards.

RICHARDSON: I'll do that, Captain.

MILLS: Its major.

RICHARDSON: Of course.

AS RICHARDSON RISES, THE DOOR OPENS AND AN AIDE ENTERS.

AIDE: Sir, phone call for Mr. Dixon.

DIXON: Thank you.

DIXON LEAVES ON THE HEELS OF THE PRESS SECRETARY.

XXXIV.

SETTING: HOTEL LOBBY. FINLETTER IS SITTING IN A PHONE BOOTH. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL FAIRCHILD IN A PHONE BOOTH BEHIND HIM. DIXON IS HEARD AS THE CAMERA PULLS BACK.

DIXON: Hello?

CLOSE UP ON FINLETTER.

FINLETTER: Trouble, sir.

CLOSE UP ON FAIRCHILD. THE EDITOR'S VOICE IS HEARD OVER THE PHONE.

EDITOR: Yeah?

FAIRCHILD: Trouble, sir.

BOTH THE EDITOR AND DIXON REACT SIMULTANEOUSLY ON A SPLIT SCREEN.

DIXON & EDITOR: What?

FROM THIS POINT, THE CAMERA IS CLOSE UP ON EACH INDIVI-DUAL AS THEY SPEAK.

FAIRCHILD: I haven't sein Dixon all day. I've been following his assistant, but that's getting me nowhere.

DIXON: Followed, by who?

EDITOR: Following who?

FAIRCHILD: His assistant.

FINLETTER: A spy!

DIXON: A spy?

FAIRCHILD: That's right.

DIXON & THE EDITOR: Well, what's he look like?

FAIRCHILD: Medium height, medium build...

FINLETTER: Its a she, sir. You know, the strumpet last

night. The one with the big

FAIRCHILD: guns and a sword

FINLETTER: with long blond

FAIRCHILD: parachute

FINLETTER: sunglásses

FAIRCHILD: combat boots

FINLETTER: and a dress.

DIXON: Nothing suspicious about that.

EDITOR: You can't be serious!

FAIRCHILD: What shall I do?

EDITOR: (sighing) Look, I thought I made it perfectly clear.

I don't think you've made use of all your potential,

if you know what I mean.

DIXON: (sighning) Look, you're obviously tired. Why don't

you take a nap.

FINLETTER: You mean go to bed?

FAIRCHILD: I couldn't do that!

EDITOR: Why not? You're a woman.

FINLETTER: I resent that!

DIXON: I didn't say you were incompetent, I just think you

could use a rest.

FAIRCHILD: Yes sir. But, I...well, I'll do my best, sir.

DIXON: Good bye.

EDITOR: Good bye.

FAIRCHILD: Good bye.

FINLETTER: Operator, (he bangs on the receiver hook) operator, I got a wrong number. I'd like my dime back.

FAIRCHILD IS WAITING FOR FINLETTER AS HE LEAVES THE BOOTH. SHE LEANS AWKWARDLY AGAINST A WALL, ATTEMPTING TO LOOK ALLURING.

FAIRCHILD: (nervously) Hi there.

FINLETTER IS DOWNCAST, STUNG BY DIXON'S REFUSAL TO BELIEVE HIM.

FINLETTER: Hello.

FAIRCHILD: Listen, I'm...I'm sorry about last night. It was an accident. I didn't mean...

FINLETTER: (mumbling) It was a dark night...I mean the lights were off...and...it got dark...it was dark.

It was lighter earlier.

FAIRCHILD: You want to go to bed?

SHE IS VISIBLY TAKEN ABACK BY HER OWN BOLDNESS. FINLETTER, DEJECTED OVER DIXON'S ORDER TO TAKE A NAP, IS NOT REALLY LISTENING.

FINLETTER: Excuse me, mam?

FAIRCHILD: (frozen) Uhh...uhh...

FINLETTER: Well, I gotta go to bed.

HE SHUFFLES OFF IN THE DIRECTION OF THE ELEVATOR. UNSURE WHETHER HIS REMARK INDICATED AN ACCEPTANCE OF HER PROPOSITION, FAIRCHILD FOLLOWS HESITANTLY.

XXXV.

SETTING: A BUILDING OVERLOOKING A CITY STREET. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS MASON DIXON AS HE WALKS DOWN THE STREET, FROM A SECOND STORY TERRACE. SUDDENLY, A GLOVED HAND HOLDING A PISTOL APPEARS IN THE PICTURE. TAKING CAREFUL AIM, THE HAND DRAWS A BEADING ON DIXON. JUST AS THE SHOT IS FORED, DIXON BENDS DOWN TO TIE HIS SHOE. THE BULLET MISSES DIXON, KILLING AN UNFORTUNATE PEDESTRIAN BEHIND HIM. DIXON CONTINUES WALKING, UNAWARE OF THE INCIDENT.

XXXVI.

SETTING: FINLETTER'S HOTEL ROOM. FINLETTER ENTERS, UNAWARE THAT FAIRCHILD IS FOLLOWING HIM. HE WALKS ACROSS THE ROOM, AND DROPS A NEWSPAPER HE HAS PURCHASED ON THE COFFEE TABLE. FAIRCHILD, TOO NERVOUS TO SPEAK, ENTERS THE BEDROOM, STILL UNDISCOVERED. FINLETTER WALKS OVER TO THE COUCH AND STRIPS OFF HIS FATIGUES, REVEALING STAR SPANGLED, RED, WHITE, AND BLUE UNDERWEAR. AT THAT MOMENT, FAIRCHILD, CONFUSED BY FINLETTER'S ABSENCE, EMERGES FROM THE BEDROOM.

FAIRCHILD: I, uh...

FINLETTER WHIRLS IN SURPRISE. REALIZING HE IS IN HIS UNDERWEAR, HE CROUCHES MODESTLY. THE HEADLINE ON THE NEWSPAPER CATCHES HIS EYE. "RUSSIAN SPY CAPTURED." THE WORD "SPY" CATCHES HIS ATTENTION.

FINLETTER: I was right!!

FAIRCHILD IS TOTALLY CONFUSED. FINLETTER GRABS HIS SWORD OFF THE TABLE AND CHARGES MADLY. FAIRCHILD SCREAMS. FINLETTER FLAILS AWAY, NARROWLY MISSING HER. KNOCKING THE LAMP OFF THE TABLE AND PLUNGING THE ROOM INTO DARKNESS. SCREAMS, CRASHES, AND CURSES REND THE AIR. THE SCENE CUTS TO THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE ROOM MASON DIXON LEAVES THE ELEVATOR AT THE END OF THE HALL. AT THAT MOMENT, A DOOR BURSTS OPEN AND FAIRCHILD, RUNS OUT OF THE ROOM, SCREAMING INCOHERENTLY, EYES WIDE WITH FRIGHT. SHE RACES PAST DIXON, CLUTCHING AT HER TATTERED CLOTHING. DIXON WATCHES ALL OF THIS WITHOUT EXPRESSION, SEEMINGLY UNCONCERNED. HE WALKS INTO HIS ROOM, AND FLIPS ON THE LIGHT. THE ROOM IS A SHAMBLES. HE LOOKS DOWN AT HIS FEET. THERE IS FINLETTER. HIS PARACHUTE HOPELESSLY ENTWINED AMONG A PILE OF FURNISHING. FINLETTER IS HARDLY ABLE TO MOVE, MUCH LESS FREE HIMSELF. DIXON MAINTAINS A CURIOUS CALM. HE WALKS OVER TO THE TELEVISION AND TURNS IT ON. HE PULLS A CHAIR OVER, AND SITS DOWN COMFORTABLY.

DIXON: (calmly) Did you warn Gretta?

A MUFFLED VOICE ANSWERS.

FINLETTER: Yes sir, but she was already dead.

DIXON: It figures.

XXXVII.

SETTING: A CAMPFIRE, AT NIGHT IN THE WOODS. SAM SMITH, DISGUISED AS A TOMATO, SITS NERVOUSLY BETWEEN TWO GIANT TOMATOES. ALL DIALOGUE IS DONE WITH SUBTITLES; THE TOMATOES COMMUNICATE IN MUNCHING SOUNDS. THE CAMERA ZOOMS IN SO THAT ONLY SAM SMITH IS IN THE PICTURE. CHEST UP.

TOMATO VOICE #1: You wanted dark meat?

TOMATO VOICE #2: Yes.

TOMATO VOICE #1: And you wanted a breast?

SAM SMITH LOOKS UP, STARTLED. HE REALIZES THAT THE TOMATO IS SPEAKING TO HIM. HE REACHES OUT AND TAKES A PLATE (OUT OF CAMERA RANGE.)

TOMATO VOICE #1: And you wanted an arm.

HEARING THIS, SMITH'S EYES WIDEN. HE SLOWLY LOOKS DOWN AT HIS PLATE. HE ASSUMES A SLIGHTLY SICK EXPRESSION, AND, VERY CAREFULLY, PUSHES HIS PLATE AWAY.

XXXVIII.

SETTING: A MILITARY BASE. VEHICLES OF ALL SIZES AND DESCRIPTIONS ABOUT THE YARD IN THE EARLY MORNING SUNLIGHT. DIXON, FINLETTER, AND MILLS WALK BRISKLY ACROSS THE OPEN AREA TOWARD THE CAMERA. A LOUDSPEAKER BOOMS ABOVE THE CHAOS.

"Attention. Attention. The 56th Combat Support Group will depart at 0900 hours. All Third Division Personnel report to the Fifth Division Staging Area. All Fifth Division Personnel report to the Third Division Staging Area.... Will the driver of tank 38421 please go to the parking lot. Your lights are on....

MILLS: We've had a few setbacks during the night...

DIXON: Serious?

MILLS: It depends on your point of view. Did you have any relatives in Wyoming?

THEY STEP INSIDE A BUILDING. THERE IS FRENZIED ACTIVITY ALL ABOUT THEM. AT A TABLE, A SOLDIER IS SPEAKING ON THE PHONE. BEHIND HIM STANDS ANOTHER SOLDIER, NEXT TO AN AMERICAN FLAG POSTED ON THE WALL. MOST OF ITS STARS HAVE BEEN X'ED OUT. SOLDIER #1 LISTENS INTENTLY ON THE PHONE, THEN SPEAKS.

SOLDIER #1: Iowa? Are you sure?!

HE HANGS UP GRIMLY AND TURNS TO THE SOLDIER BEHIND HIM.

SOLDIER #1: Iowa.

THE SECOND SOLDIER NODS GLUMLY AND CROSSES OUT ANOTHER STAR.

MILLS: How many does that leave?

SOLDIER #2: Thirteen, sir.

MILLS: (shrugs) Well, back to where we started from.

DIXON: What's the situation?

MILLS WALKS OVER TO A LARGE WALL MAP.

MILLS: Intelligence tells us that the tomatoes are massing for a final, all-out attack on the nation. The top brass has determined to concentrate all of our main forces here on the coast. If we can stop them here, we'll win. If not...

FINLETTER: We'll lose?

DIXON: Is there anything we can do, major?

MILLS: The president has asked for a first hand report.
You're to fly to the capital immediately. Be back
here tonight. We'll need every man we can get.
There's a jet waiting at the airport.

DIXON: Very good.

DIXON AND FINLETTER LEAVE THE BUILDING, AND WALK OUT ON TO THE SIDEWALK. A RIFLE SHOT WHISTLES BY DIXON'S EAR. BOTH MEN DIVE TO THE GROUND.

FINLETTER: Sir, I think somebody's shooting at you!

DIXON RAISES HIS HEAD.

DIXON: Who --

FINLETTER JAMS DIXON'S HEAD TO THE SIDEWALK. DIXON SCREAMS IN PAIN. FINLETTER CHARGES ACROSS THE STREET IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SHOT. A SHADOWY FIGURE IN A SKI MASK RUNS INTO AN ALLEY. FINLETTER GIVES CHASE THROUGHOUT THE CITY. THE ASSASSIN RUNS ACROSS A SET OF RAILROAD TRACKS, THEN SUDDENLY WHEELS AND DRAWS ON FINLETTER, FINLETTER, CAUGHT OFF GUARD, FREEZES. THE ASSASSIN SMILES, AND TAKES AIM. SUDDENLY, A RUMBLING SOUND FILLS THE AIR. A TRAIN RACES DOWN THE TRACKS BETWEEN THE TWO MEN. THE ASSASSIN SNARLS, AND VAINLY ATTEMPTS TO LOCATE FINLETTER BY PEERING BENEATH THE WHEELS. WITH SUDDEN DECISION, HE BEGINS TO RUN DOWN THE TRACK PARALLELING THE TRAIN, FIGURING FINLETTER MAY HAVE RUN IN THAT DIRECTION. AS THE ASSASSIN AND THE TRAIN DISAPPEAR IN THE DISTANCE, THE CAMERA PANS TO FINLETTER, WHO STILL STANDS IMMOBILE WITH HIS ARMS IN THE AIR.

XXXIX.

SETTING: THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. THE PRESIDENT, AWASH IN CRUMPLED PAPERS, CONTINUES TO DEPLETE HIS SUPPLY OF PENS. HE HAS ONLY A DOZEN OR SO LEFT. HE IS SPEAKING TO DIXON.

PRESIDENT: ...and so you can see Mr. Dixon, we have no choice but to make our stand out West. I want you to make sure that our military people in that region are aware of their enormous responsibility.

DIXON: I'm sure they are, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: By the way, have you seen Jim Richardson out there?

DIXON: Just briefly, sir. How is the ad campaign going?

PRESIDENT: Excellent! My mail's running 30-1 in favor of the tomatoes!

DIXON: Terrific:

PRESIDENT: God, I almost forgot.

THE PRESIDENT LEANS OVER HIS INTERCOM.

PRESIDENT: Shirley, I want you to get General Mitchell on the line. Tell him to bomb New York City.

DIXON: (perplexed) But sir--the tomatoes are nowhere near New York City!

PRESIDENT: Listen, you worry about your problems and I'll worry about mine.

DIXON: Yes sir.

DIXON EXITS, JUST AS THE PRESIDENT IS USING HIS LAST PEN. AT THAT MOMENT A WORKMAN, STRAINING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THREE LARGE BOXES, STAGGERS IN. THE BOXES ARE MARKED 'PENS.' THE LAST PEN FALLS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S HAND.

MILLS: You know, Dixon, a man stops to think at a time like this....

DIXON AND FINLETTER JOIN HIM.

MILLS: about his home...his wife...his kids...

ALL THREE ARE STARING PAST THE CAMERA, DEEP IN THOUGHT.

DIXON: You married, major?

MILLS: No.

FINLETTER: Me neither...

MILLS: I wonder what the tomatoes are thinking about right now...

XXXLII.

SETTING: A CLEARING IN THE FOREST. TOMATOES OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES EMBARK UPON A SURREALISTIC SONG AND DANCE ROUTINE THAT LISTS THEIR GRIEVANCES AGAINST MANKIND.

XXXLIII.

SETTING: DESERTED CITY STREET, A CHORUS LINE OF SOLDIERS SING A SLOW PATRIOTIC SONG THAT DEVELOPS INTO A ROCK NUMBER. THE SONG DESCRIBES WHAT THEY WILL DO TO THE TOMATOES.

XXXLIV.

SETTING: A CAMPFIRE IN THE WOODS. SAM SMITH SITS BETWEEN TWO GIANT TOMATOES, EATING A HAMBURGER. HE IS COMPLETELY AT EASE, CONFIDENT THAT HIS DISGUISE HAS WORKED.

SMITH: Say, would somebody pass the ketchup--

HE FREEZES IN MID-SENTENCE, EYES WIDE, REALIZING HE HAS MADE A FATAL MISTAKE. THERE IS A FRENZY OF MUNCHING SOUNDS.

XXXLV.

SETTING: CITY STREETS. IN A COMBINATION OF LIVE ACTION AND MINIATURIZATION, THE ARMY WAGES WAR AGAINST THE TOMATOES. SLOWLY BUT SURELY, THE TOMATOES GAIN THE UPPER HAND.

XXXLVI.

SETTING: A DEBRIS STREWN CITY STREET, EARLY THE NEXT MORNING. MASON DIXON, TIRED AND DIRTY FROM HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE PREVIOUS EVENING'S BATTLE, IS EXAMINING SOME WRECKAGE. IN THE FOREGROUND, A

XXXL.

SETTING: THE NEWSPAPER EDITOR'S OFFICE. LOIS FAIRCHILD, WRAPPED IN A BLANKET AND LOOKING COMPLETELY BEDRAGGLED, STANDS BEFORE THE EDITOR.

EDITOR: (amazed and angry) I don't know what to say, Fairchild.
I do not know what to say. I have never in thirty
years had a reporter arrested for indecent exposure.

FAIRCHILD: (near tears) But you told me--

EDITOR: I told you to use every means at your disposal to get the story! You didn't get the story--you are the story!

HE READS A STACK OF NEWSPAPER HEADLINES ON HIS DESK.

EDITOR: "Undercover Reporter Uncovered." "Stringer Streaker Jailed." "Tomato Chases Tomato, Gets Canned."

FAIRCHILD: I--I'm sorry, sir. Please, if you'd give me one more chance--

EDITOR: What choice have I got? There's no one else here!

HE WAVES HER AWAY. HE SPEAKS WITH RESIGNATION.

EDITOR: Go on, get out of here.

FAIRCHILD: (brightening) Oh, thank you, sir! You won't regret this!

SHE RUSHES DUT.

EDITOR: Fairchild!

SHE STOPS ABRUPTLY AND TURNS.

EDITOR: (dryly) You're not going out in that blanket, are you?

FAIRCHILD: Oh--right.

SHE HANDS HIM THE BLANKET. HE MECHANICALLY TAKES IT, AVERTING HIS EYES.

EDITOR: Fairchild...

XXXLI.

SETTING: A CITY STREET AT NIGHT. DIXON, FINLETTER, AND MILLS WALK PAST TROOPS AND VEHICLES.

DIXON: The men look ready, major.

MILLS: As ready as they'll ever be, Dixon.

MILLS STOPS AND LEANS OVER THE HOOD OF A JEEP.

TELEVISION REPORTER IS INTERVIEWING A DISTRAUGHT WOMAN.

REPORTER: Across this great nation, almost everyone has been affected in one way or another by this terrible onslaught.

HE TURNS TO THE WOMAN.

REPORTER: Mrs. Williams, I understand your husband is missing.

MRS. WILLIAMS: Yes, he is--

REPORTER: Do you think he's dead?

MRS. WILLIAMS: I--

REPORTER: Will you miss him?

SHE IS ON THE VERGE OF TEARS.

WOMAN: I--

REPORTER: Will you marry again?

WOMAN: Waaaahhh!

THE REPORTER PRESSES THE MICROPHONE CLOSER.

REPORTER: Maybe he's laying in a ditch somewhere, both his legs broken, calling your name! Maybe he's--

MEANWHILE, DIXON HAS FINISHED EXAMINING THIS AREA AND В. BEGINS WALKING DOWN THE STREET. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HIS PROGRESS. SUDDENLY, HE STOPS AND BENDS DOWN TO ONE KNEE. ON THE SIDEWALK, HE SEES A TRAIL OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE BLOOD. HE FOLLOWS IT. TURNING A CORNER, HE COMES FACE TO FACE WITH A WOUNDED TOMATO, THE SOURCE OF THE TRAIL OF TOMATO JUICE DIXON HAS BEEN FOLLOWING. THE TOMATO, 2 FEET IN DIAMETER, CHARGES. DIXON TURNS, AND SPRINTS INTO AN APARTMENT BUILDING, HOTLY PURSUED BY THE TOMATO. HE RUNS UP TWO FLIGHTS OF STAIRS AND TURNS INTO A HALLWAY ON THE THIRD FLOOR. HE RUNS DOWN THE LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR, STILL PURSUED BY THE TOMATO. DIXON DUCKS INTO A ROOM, THE TOMATO HOT ON HIS HEELS. A SCHOOL BOY SITS AT A DESK IN THE CORNER, DOING HOME-WORK. DIXON BACKS INTO A CORNER, THE TOMÁTO ADVANCING CAREFULLY. THE RADIO IS ON, PLAYING PUBERTY LOVE. DIXON DUCKS AS THE TOMATO LEAPS AT HIM. THE TOMATO GOES SAILING PAST, OUT THE WINDOW. DIXON, SHAKEN AT HIS CLOSE CALL, LOOKS DOWN AT THE REMAINS OF THE TOMATO.

LOOKING UP, HE JUST HAPPENS TO NOTICE THAT HIS CAR. PARKED DOWN THE STREET, IS BEING TAMPERED WITH BY A MAN WEARING A SKI MASK. FINLETTER, IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT, IS OBLIVIOUS -- HE IS ASLEEP. DIXON, HOPING TO CAPTURE THE ASSASSIN, RUSHES DOWN THE STAIRS AND ACROSS THE STREET. ALERTED BY THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS. THE ASSASSIN SPOTS DIXON AND BEGINS TO RUN, JUMPING INTO HIS CAR PARKED FURTHER DOWN THE STREET. DIXON, DETERMINED TO GIVE CHASE, QUICKLY INSPECTS HIS ENGINE AND, SEEING THAT NOTHING IS WRONG, SLAMS DOWN THE HOOD. THE NOISE ROUSES FINLETTER, WHO SLEEPILY BEGINS TO GET OUT OF THE CAR. DIXON JUMPS INTO THE DRIVER'S SEAT AND SLAMS THE DOOR, UNAWARE THAT FINLETTER'S PARACHUTE IS CAUGHT IN IT. DIXON ACCELERATES WILDLY AND FINLETTER, NOW WIDE AWAKE, RUNS ALONGSIDE BANGING ON THE TRUNK, TRYING TO GET DIXON'S ATTENTION. DIXON DOESN'T HEAR HIM, CON-CENTRATING COMPLETELY ON THE CAR AHEAD OF HIM. FINLETTER IS UNABLE TO KEEP PACE WITH THE CAR, AND IS DRAGGED BEHIND IT, EYES WIDE WITH FRIGHT. AFTER A MINUTE OR SO, DIXON TAKES OUT HIS PISTOL AND AIMS AT THE ASSASSIN. THE FIRST FEW SHOTS HAVE NO EFFECT, BUT THEN A BULLET STRIKES THE ENGINE, AND THE ASSASSIN'S CAR GRINDS NEARLY TO A HALT. DIXON GRINS FIERCELY WITH EXULTATION. SUDDENLY, DIXON'S CAR BEGINS TO MAKE STRANGE NOISES AND ALMOST STOPS. HE TRIES TO SHIFT, BUT THE GEAR IS JAMMED. NOW BOTH CARS SPUTTER ALONG AT 5 MPH. FINLETTER MANAGES TO GET UP, AND BEGINS TO RUN. SOON, HE OVERTAKES DIXON, BUT IS HELD BACK BY HIS PARACHUTE STILL STUCK IN THE DOOR. HE VAINLY ATTEMPTS TO PULL THE CAR ALONG. AWARE THAT HE ISN'T GETTING ANYWHERE, DIXON OPENS THE DOOR. BY DOING SO HE RELEASES FINLETTER, WHO FALLS FORWARD AND BANGS HIS HEAD AGAINST A LAMP POST, COLLAPSING SENSELESS INTO A PILE OF DEBRIS. DIXON JUMPS OUT, AND BEGINS TO RUN. SEEING THAT DIXON IS GAINING, THE ASSASSIN ALSO JUMPS OUT, BUT IS TOO LATE. DIXON YELLS AT HIM.

DIXON: Hold it!

DIXON RAISES HIS GUN, AND THE ASSASSIN RAISES HIS ARMS. AT THAT MOMENT DIXON'S CAR, WHICH HE OUTRAN, ROLLS UP BEHIND HIM, KNOCKING HIM SENSELESS.

XXXLVII.

SETTING: A LARGE, WELL FURNISHED LIVING ROOM. DIXON IS SLUMPED IN AN OVERSIZED CHAIR. HE SITS UP GROGGILY AND GROANS. THE PRESS SECRETARY STANDS ACROSS FROM HIM, HOLDING A PISTOL.

RICHARDSON: Good afternoon, Mr. Dixon. Had a pleasant nap?

DIXON LOOKS UP, NOW AWAKE. HE STARES LEVELLY AT HIS ADVERSARY.

DIXON: Richardson...I'm not surprised.

RICHARDSON: Mr. Dixon, I really didn't think you would be.
That's why you're here.

DIXON: What do you intend to do with me?

RICHARDSON: Mr. Dixon, don't me so naive. You're the only with the knowledge that can stop me.

DIXON: Don't be a fool, Richardson. You don't have a chance.

RICHARDSON: (smiling) You know very well I do. You know, Dixon, its funny....

RICHARDSON, COMPLETELY CONFIDENT, TURNS HIS BACK TO DIXON AND BEGINS TO WALK ABOUT THE ROOM AS HE MUSES. MEANWHILE, DIXON CAREFULLY BEGINS TO DRAW A SMALL DERRINGER OUT OF HIS BACK POCKET.

RICHARDSON: No man sits closer to power than the press secretary to the president of the United States. Yet as close as it is, that power is never within your grasp. It dangles before you... taunting, daring--mocking your very impotence!

HE WHEELS AND GLARES AT DIXON. DIXON FREEZES, HIS HAND STILL IN HIS POCKET.

RICHARDSON: I will not be mocked any more!

DIXON RELAXES, REALIZING THAT RICHARDSON HAS NOT NOTICED ANYTHING AMISS. HE HOLDS THE DERRINGER IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND, WHERE IT CANNOT BE SEEN BY RICHARDSON.

RICHARDSON: I will no longer give other people's answers to other people's questions! The answers will be mine, the questions will be mine, everything will be mine!

RICHARDSON RELAXES. AND SMILES.

RICHARDSON: It'll be glorious, Dixon, its too bad you won't be around to see it.

DIXON: What makes you think you can control these tomatoes better than anyone else?

RICHARDSON: (mildly taunting) Questions, questions. You've missed your calling.

RICHARDSON WALKS OVER TO A TABLE AND PICKS SOMETHING UP.

RICHARDSON: Have you had lunch, Mr. Dixon? Here. Have a tomato.

DIXON RECOILS IN HORROR AS RICHARDSON TOSSES A TOMATO IN HIS DIRECTION. IT FALLS IN HIS LAP AND RESTS MOTIONLESS. DIXON RELAXES, FROWNS. RICHARDSON CHUCKLES.

RICHARDSON: Don't be afraid, its quite small and quite harmless. Its from my garden. Let's just say I'm "in tune" with my tomatoes...At the proper time--when the last vestiges of authority have disappeared--I shall charge in on my white stallion and save the nation. Or what's left of it. My fellow citizens will be eternally grateful--at the very least, they will surely choose my benevolent leadership over the obvious alternative...It shall be my golden moment.

HE ABRUPTLY FACES DIXON.

RICHARDSON: But Mr. Dixon, I fear these are your final moments.

DIXON: You're awfully confident for a man who has failed twice.

RICHARDSON: (shrugs) Three times--but who's counting?

DIXON: I don't think you can do it.

RICHARDSON: (lightly) You know, Dixon, you may be right. I've never killed a man before...

HIS SMILE BECOMES TIGHTER. FOR THE FIRST TIME, A NOTE OF FEAR AND NERVOUSNESS ENTERS HIS VOICE.

RICHARDSON: You may be right...

THE DOORBELL RINGS. RICHARDSON WHEELS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE DOOR.

RICHARDSON: (frightened) Who's there?

VOICE AT THE DOOR: UPS!

THERE IS A MOMENTARY PAUSE. STILL HOLDING THE GUN ON DIXON, RICHARDSON LOOKS AT THE DOOR, THEN BACK TO DIXON. MAKING A DECISION, RICHARDSON, EYES STILL RIVETED ON DIXON. SAYS

RICHARDSON: Come in!

THE DOOR OPENS. RICHARDSON SUDDENLY TURNS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE DOOR AND FIRES TWO QUICK SHOTS. THE UPS MAN, WITH A STUNNED LOOK ON HIS FACE, DROPS HIS PARCEL AND SLOWLY SLUMPS TO THE FLOOR. RICHARDSON LOOKS AT DIXON, AND SMILES TIGHTLY.

RICHARDSON: There again, perhaps you're wrong.

RICHARDSON RAISES HIS GUN. DIXON TIGHTENS HIS GRIP ON HIS DERRINGER.

DIXON: Wait! Before you pull the trigger--tell me how you do it.

RICHARDSON LOWERS HIS GUN, SMILES, AND SHAKES HIS HEAD.

RICHARDSON: Really...how melodramatic. Very well, its really quite simple. You see, all I do--

THE SOUND OF BREAKING GLASS SHATTERS THE QUIET. FINLETTER, YELLING AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS, JUMPS THROUGH THE WINDOW, CHARGES ACROSS TO THE ASTONISHED RICHARDSON, AND RUNS HIM THROUGH WITH HIS SWORD. DIXON SITS IN STUNNED SILENCE, ALMOST BEYOND ANGER, HIS DERRINGER IN HIS HAND, POINTED STRAIGHT AHEAD AT THE SPOT WHERE FINLETTER STANDS. DIXON APPEARS TO BE IN SHOCK. FINLETTER, OBLIVIOUS TO THE GUN POINTED DIRECTLY AT HIM, SPEAKS.

FINLETTER: A real bad apple, sir. Its a good thing we got him.

DIXON BEGINS TO PRESS THE TRIGGER, FINLETTER WALKS PAST DIXON TO THE DOOR, AND PATS HIM ON THE SHOULDER. DIXON, REGAINING HIS TEMPER, SLOWLY RELEASES PRESSURE ON THE TRIGGER AND RESIGNEDLY GETS UP. AS HE FOLLOWS FINLETTER TOWARD THE DOOR, HE STUMBLES OVER THE PARACHUTE, KNOCKING OVER A STACK OF PHONOGRAPH RECORDS. AS HE BENDS DOWN TO PICK THEM UP, HE NOTICES THE ARTISTS: BRAHMS, BEETHOVEN, RONNY DESMOND, CHOPIN, BACH...SUDDENLY, DIXON STRAIGHTENS, HE SCREAMS.

DIXON: Finletter!

FINLETTER, STARTLED, TURNS.

DIXON: Round up everybody in the city! Now! Meet me at the stadium! Hurry! There's no time to lose!

FINLETTER: But sir--everybody's left. Only crazy people would still be here. now--

DIXON: (frantically) I don't care! Just do it! Move!

FINLETTER: (impressed by Dixon's sense of urgency) Yes sir!

THEY RACE OUT OF THE BUILDING.

XXXLVIII.

SETTING: CITY STREETS. DIXON RUNS AS FAST AS HE CAN. HIS PROGRESS IS INTERSPERSED WITH SHOTS OF FINLETTER ROUNDING UP A MOTLEY CROWD OF CITIZENS. EACH SUCCESSIVE SHOT OF FINLETTER SHOWS HIM AND HIS EVER-INCREASING ENTOURAGE STRIDING PURPOSEFULLY TOWARD THE CAMERA, PREPARED TO MEET THE CHALLENGE THAT AWAITS THEM.

XXXLIX.

<u>SETTING</u>: THE SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM. THE OLD SENATOR SPEAKS IN A BORED, PRACTISED TONE.

OLD SENATOR: ...then its unanimously agreed that the committee recommend that no further action be taken at this time.

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SETTING: A CORRIDOR IN THE WESTERN HEADQUARTERS
_BUILDING. MASON DIXON THROWS OPEN A DOOR.

DIXON: I've got it!

THE CAMERA CUTS TO A WOMAN TAKING A BATH, FULLY CLOTHED. SHE REGARDS DIXON INDIGNANTLY. HE IS EXTREMELY EMBARRASSED.

DIXON: Oh, I'm terribly sorry, pardon me!

HE BEGINS TO CLOSE THE DOOR, AND THEN, REALIZING FOR THE FIRST TIME WHAT HE HAS SEEN, TURNS BACK TO THE WOMAN.

DIXON: Pardon me, but why are you taking a bath with your clothes on?

WOMAN: This is a 'G' movie, buster!

DIXON: What about the scene with the--

HE SUDDENLY REALIZES HE IS WASTING VALUABLE TIME.

DIXON: Never mind!

HE EXITS, AND RUNS DOWN TO THE NEXT DOOR. THROWING IT OPEN, HE BURSTS INTO THE WAR ROOM. THERE IS FRENZIED ACTIVITY; FILES BEING BURNED, INSTRUCTIONS BEING RELAYED, ORDERS BEING SHOUTED.

DIXON: I've got it!

EVERYONE TURNS TO HIM.

SETTING: A COLLEGE STADIUM. A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE ARE MASSED BEHIND A MAKESHIFT BARRICADE. IN THE FOREGROUND, DIXON, FINLETTER, AND MILLS STAND BESIDE A RECORD PLAYER AND A LOUDSPEAKER. SUDDENLY, A MUNCHING SOUND IS HEARD, FOLLOWED BY A FRIGHTENED CHORUS OF VOICES. "Here they come!" SOMEONE YELLS. AT THE OPEN END OF THE STADIUM, A LINE OF GIANT TOMATOES IS FORMING. DIXON TURNS TO THE CROWD, WHICH INCLUDES A COWBOY, TARZAN, SHRINERS, A TROOP OF GIRL SCOUTS, A GOAT, A SKINNY BEAUTY QUEEN (MISS POTATO FAMINE OF 1922), TWO CHEERLEADERS, A BASEBALL TEAM, A HORSE, A COW, AND A HIGH SCHOOL BAND.

DIXON: All right, everyone! Cover your ears!

EVERYONE COVERS THEIR EARS AS DIXON PLACES A RECORD ON THE TURNTABLE. PUBERTY LOVE BLARES OUT OVER THE LOUD-SPEAKER. THE GIANT TOMATOES ABRUPTLY STOP THEIR CHARGE. HIGH PITCHED WHINES ISSUE FROM THEM. "THEIR SHRINKING!" SOMEONE SHOUTS. THE TOMATOES ARE NOW ONLY A FOOT OR SO IN DIAMETER. A LOUD CHEER ISSUES FORTH OVER THE MUSIC. THE TOMATOES HAVE RETURNED TO NORMAL SIZE. THE CROWD SURGES FORWARD, AND BEGINS STOMPING THEM. A SCREAM RISES ABOVE THE CHEERING; DIXON, UPON HEARING IT, RUNS OVER TO INVESTIGATE. THE SCREAM SOUNDS AGAIN, AND DIXON RUSHES INTO AN ALLEY WAY BEHIND THE STADIUM.

SETTING: THE ALLEYWAY. LOIS FAIRCHILD IS BACKED AGAINST A WALL, TERRIFIED. DIXON RUSHES TO HER, WHEELS, AND SEES THE SOURCE OF HER FRIGHT. A GIANT TOMATO, WEARING EARMUFFS, LOOMS MENACINGLY. DIXON, THINKING QUICKLY, PULLS A PAPER FROM HIS COAT POCKET. HE SLOWLY ADVANCES TOWARD THE TOMATO, HOLDING THE PAPER IN FRONT OF HIM, AS ONE WOULD SHOW A CROSS TO A VAMPIRE.

THE PAPER BECOMES RECOGNIZABLE AS THE SHEET MUSIC TO PUBERTY LOVE. THE TOMATO SHRINKS; DIXON EXHALES WITH RELIEF.

LIII.

SETTING: THE STADIUM, LITTERED WITH SQUASHED TOMATOES.
ITIS EMPTY, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF DIXON AND FAIRCHILD.

FAIRCHILD: I...I want to thank you for saving my life.

DIXON: Just doing my job, lady.

THERE IS AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE.

FAIRCHILD: Well...I guess there's no more to say...

SHE SMILES BRAVELY.

FAIRCHILD: Goodbye, Mr. Dixon.

DIXON: Goodbye, Miss Fairchild.

FAIRCHILD: Lois.

DIXON: (smiling) Lois.

HE RELUCTANTLY TURNS AND BEGINS TO WALK AWAY.

FAIRCHILD: Goodbye, Mr. Dixon.

HE TURNS AROUND.

DIXON: Mason.

FAIRCHILD: Mason?

DIXON: Lois?

FAIRCHILD: (breathlessly) Oh Mason!

THEY RUN AT EACH OTHER, LOCKING IN A PASSIONED EMBRACE.

DIXON: Lois!

FAIRCHILD: Mason!

DIXON: Lois!

FAIRCHILD: Mason!

DIXON: Lois!

FAIRCHILD: Lois!

DIXON: Mason!