

A Prize for the Winner:

The Great Pacific Air Race of 1927

By

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A multi-level playing area. One level contains a rattan love seat and easy chair, a vintage radio, a Victrola, a telephone and an early model refrigerator. This is the Jenson bungalow. Another area has a wooden desk and chairs, typewriter, telephone, wastebasket, suggesting a generic office. Off to one side is a riser with a podium. Another level has a speakeasy's bar, rail, and sawdust floor. A long, central playing area serves as both a street and various airport runways. One platform suggests a ship's stern rail. The set is dominated by design elements that provide a cutaway view of two 1920's vintage airplanes, one a monoplane, the other a biplane.

SCENE - SHIP'S RAIL

The Stars and Stripes share the stage with a funeral wreath. SOUND of seabirds and a ship's horn. A seagoing CHAPLAIN steps into the light, his clerical collar looking smart with his dress blues. SOUND of a ship's band playing a mournful tune.

CHAPLAIN

Holy Father, we humbly gather here today to offer our prayers for the souls of those so recently lost over these very same Pacific waters we pass today. That those precious to their families should perish to satisfy the relentless pursuit of profit in this godless age of commercialism is indeed cause for mourning.

Lights up on JAMES DOLE across the stage. He counterpoints the Chaplain, without addressing him directly.

DOLE

Now, hold on just a minute.

CHAPLAIN

Lord, we honor today the memory of those sacrificed to the technology of a society that has lost its moral compass.

DOLE

Say, that's not fair.

CHAPLAIN

How can we explain the loss of so many of our best and brightest in the pursuit of a deadly pot of gold at the end of a dark rainbow?

DOLE

No, no, you've got it all wrong.

CHAPLAIN

A nation mourns its lost heroes, and demands an end to the sad spectacle of sponsored air contests.

DOLE

You people sure change your tune quick enough. What about Lindbergh?

Lights Out

Scene

NELSON, a 12 year-old news vendor, hawks his wares on a downtown Honolulu street corner. His pitch has become a chant, as he concentrates on the real concern, selling product.

NELSON

LINDBERGH LANDS IN PARIS! LINDBERGH LANDS IN PARIS! LUCKY LINDY LANDS. PAYPAH! Paypah. Paypah. LUCKY LINDY WINS AIR RACE! LUCKY LINDY WINS AIR RACE! Lucky Lindy wins 25 grand. 25 GRAND! 25 Grand. 25 GRAND! Paypah.

Shadowy CUSTOMERS start coming past, snapping up his papers, passing over a nickel, scanning the front page as they exit.

NELSON

(sells a paper)

Yes, sir, twenty five years old! He sure showed 'em, didn't he?

(a sale)

Auntie Huanani, how you? Thirty-three hours! Can you imagine? How he went shi-shi, you figure?

(a sale)

Paypah! PAYPAH Mr. Gibson, no forget, you owe 10 cents from last Sunday. How many? 420 gallons. Yeah. 420. One flying gas tank, I hear.

He had plenty left. Not even close. No forget then? 10 cents you owe me.

(beat)

LINBERGH WINS! LINBERGH WINS 25 GRAND!

(a sale)

Thanks, eh? He went did it, Mr. Kamai, what I told you!

NELSON

What I said? PAYPAH! LINDBERGH WINS AIR RACE!

Lights up on office set. Two Reporters, AL and JOE, are at work. Al is sitting in front of the typewriter, staring at his copy. He jumps up to look down at Nelson, across the playing area.

AL

Look at that little crook, setting up outside our lobby, selling the competition. A brass monkey, balls and all. Makes a lot of racket, too, and I'm on deadline.

JOE

You write better when there's a racket, Al. You write some of your best stuff on the back of napkins in certain establishments that require sawdust for their floors, but then you come back here to the office and wait for beads of blood to form on your forehead while you expand it to column inch. Why is that, you figure?

AL

Something tells me you have an opinion on the subject. Should I prompt it with a token question, out do you wish to go directly to the floor?

Al sits again, pecks at the typewriter slowly.

JOE

I never left the floor Al, I just paused for a moment out of courtesy to that Pulitzer Prize contender flying out of your Olympus. Do you know how fast a snail travels, Al?

AL

No.

JOE

Is that the Board of Water Supply feature?

AL

No. The Chamber of Commerce report.

JOE

Chamber of Commerce? Chamber of ...! Al, give me your damn notes. You shouldn't have to humble yourself this way.

He edges Al out of his chair, begins banging away at his typewriter at a furious pace.

AL

I can do without the sarcasm, Joe. I really could.

JOE

You want the piece?

AL

I want the piece.

JOE

A mile a month.

AL

What?

JOE

A mile a month. That's how fast a snail travels, Al. Leaving you in its dust, choking for air, while you try to write a GODAMN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PIECE!
How many inches?

AL

Six.

JOE

(looks at Al's notes)
Superior shorthand.

AL

Thanks.

They hear Nelson hawking papers in the street.

AL (con't)
(smiles)

Little crook. Right on our corner.

JOE

Look, listen and learn, my friend. That young man down there is the future climbing right up our back. That's the new

American

businessman on the make, a real Charlie hustle. There my procrastinating peer, is the new breed, you know the ones, the ones who make hacks like us look like chumps, with our thirty-five hundred a year and holes in our shoes.

AL

Your shoes.

JOE

My shoes. How do you spell antebellum?

AL

Joe, this is the Chamber of Commerce! A stocking stuffer.

JOE

Do you want the piece or not?

Al picks up a dictionary.

AL

Hold on to your shorts, OK. Anti-boredom?

JOE

Antebellum.

AL

A proper name?

JOE

For crissake, Al, you mean is she married to my Uncle Pete? No, no. Think South, think swamp, think plantation house, moss dripping, that kind

of deal.

AL

Spell it for me.

JOE

If I knew... Oh, gimme that.

Joe grabs the dictionary. Spins through the pages.

JOE (con't)

There. See. Antebellum.

ALLEN

(reads)

Oh. Civil War! That antebellum. Not the antebellum of last year, for instance, on south Kauai, with the plantation cottages being infested with slime mold and everything.

JOE

No, not that one.

They hear Nelson again.

ALLEN

Brass monkey, that little crook.

JOE

Biggest news day since the Prohibition. Let the kid make a buck.

AL

Since the Armistice. I thought he's climbing up our back out there?

(beat)

What did he do, lick all our newsies with a stick?

JOE

He gives 'em a cut, and he only works the our corner after sunset. That's his deal.

Our kids

have a life.

AL

And he doesn't?

JOE

He's got a mother to support. You know her, Emma, the waitress at the Liberty Grill.

AL

Hard to miss.

Oh, yeah. Sweet little Emma. She's a heartbreaker.

AL

I didn't know she was married.

JOE

She's not. The father is an Army fly boy out at Wheeler. A real piece of work, this Callahan. Claims he won the war all by himself, with his Jenny and a pop gun. He's got a wife stashed in Officer's Quarters, a society princess who spikes her orange juice for breakfast, before drinking lunch at the Club with her flapper friends.

AL

Charming. She got the money, he got the pop gun. But the sob story gets to me. I'm buying a rag from young Rockefeller here.

(shouts out window)

Hey, brass balls! Up here! Tell the bull in the lobby I sent you up!

JOE

(reading over notes)

James Dole is going to San Francisco to spend fifty G's on advertising his new pineapple brand? You call this news? I covered this in my Ag feature last week. This is dead fish.

AL

I figured to get in a dig on ad agencies.

JOE

That's understandable. Laudable even. But is it news, my cynical friend? News I write fast. Opinion takes longer.

JOE

AL

Talk about a tough sell. Pineapple in a can? What's next, banana in a bottle?

JOE

Crab in a crate?

AL

Tough sell. Establish both a brand and a product? Fifty grand won't get him the kick in the pants he needs.

JOE

Nope.

AL

Nope.

Nelson enters with newspapers. He looks the two men over carefully, focuses on Al.

NELSON

What you went call me? You was making fun of me, or what?

AL

Hold on there, cowboy. Just want to buy a paper, is all. I like to read our lame, brain damaged competition once in a while, just to congratulate myself on my fine writing skills, particularly when its ghosted by Joe here.

JOE

In the style of.

AL

Precisely.

(pause)

Bullet proof. That's what I called you.

NELSON

Oh. OK, then. You guys reporters or what?

AL

I think we started out that way. Didn't we, Joe?

JOE

No, I've pretty much been a hack all along.

AL

Big circulation day, ey? You did all right tonight?

NELSON

Biggest since Prohibition.

The two reporters exchange looks.

AL

(holds out coin)

Give me my 5 cent worth, Mr. Rockefeller.

NELSON

For you guys, I charge cost. Professional courtesy.

He takes nickel, refunds two cents. Al puts the pennies into his vest pocket.

AL

I like the cut of your jib, old friend..

He scans headlines.

AL

Lucky Lindy! The Lone Eagle! Daring Young Knight
of the Sky! Oh, please.

(beat)

Here's a quote from the young hero.

"I had the best plane..."

NELSON

A Ryan.

AL

"the finest engine..."

NELSON

a Whirlwind.

AL

"and excellent weather. And I had a lot of time to
thank the Lord for all three."

NELSON

Thirty three hours. How he went.....?

JOE

Sounds like boiler-plate to me, but it sure sells in the Midwest.

AL

How'd you like to be in New York or Paris covering this monster, Joe?

JOE

Its a runaway train.

AL

Yes, sir. Biggest news day since...

(pause)

in a while.

NELSON

Smart for that newspaper to put up the prize money for sell more papers.

AL

The Orteig? Mr. Rockefeller, I detect a gap in your bulletproof suit. Joe, do newspapers make their own news?

JOE

Nope. Aside from the odd war now and again.

AL

And why is that? Journalistic ethics?

JOE

I think its because its cheaper to report someone else's news than to make your own.

AL

There you have it. Orteig is a real estate man, isn't he, Joe?

JOE

Work in Manhattan, die in the suburbs.

AL

Not his professional slogan, I take it.

(scanning paper)

Talk about timing. Overnight this kid goes from the Missouri mail route to the front page of every rag in the world. Hell, he's bigger than...

JOE

Hoot Gibson?

AL

Bigger.

JOE

Jack Dempsey?

AL

Bigger.

JOE

The League of Nations.

AL

Bigger! He's bigger than... Charlie Chaplain!

JOE

Definetly bigger, and considerably taller as well. Write it down, Al. Write it down. You got half a column there.

Al starts making notes.

AL

He sure got people changing their tunes, I'll say that. Remember his first ink? A single engine! He was treated like a suicide case.

JOE

Yep, a nut job.

NELSON

He sure came out of nowhere, didn't he?

JOE

Not exactly nowhere, but Missouri will do in a pinch.

Al is still reading column inch.

AL

Yeah, some real tune changing, I tell you. Everybody in the flying business from New York to Wahiawa had an opinion of our boy Lindbergh. Remember Jenson?

JOE

Oh, yeah. Hollywood Jenson, our civilian expert.

Lights Out.

SCENE - JENSON BUNGALOW

Lights up on MARTY JENSON and PEG JENSON. Peg reads from the front page of a newspaper.

PEG

Young Lindbergh at last report has studied the weather reports, and is preparing to depart in his Ryan monoplane in the morning, while Admiral Byrd and his crew have declared they won't rush into any situation before their airship is 100 percent.

(beat)

What do you think, Sugar?

MARTY

Aloha oe.

PEG

No chance?

MARTY

Peg. Trust me on this one.

PEG

Marty, he's an experienced pilot, and he's flying a brand new plane.

MARTY

One guy, one motor, one wing, one hell of a hurry? Those French guys, Nangusser and Coli, they had had the best of everything, thirty years of experience between 'em, clear weather, and they disappear. Rene Fonck is probably the best pilot alive, and he barbeques his crew on takeoff. Everybody

goes multi-engine, with a co-pilot and navigator,
pumpkin. This Lindbergh guy, he's gonna step off
the edge of the world, you watch.

PEG

(looking at photo in paper)

His mamma's going to miss him. Sort of reminds me
Huck Finn, freckles and all. Just needs a fishing pole
and a straw hat.

Marty is jealous.

MARTY

Looks dumb as a stick to me.

Peg smiles, hits him with the paper. Marty playfully slaps her back. She swats him again. They
exchange swats, each one a little softer than the next, until Marty taps her with a little finger.
He smiles, knowing where this little ritual is going. She giggles, jumps on him, smothering him with
kisses.

Lights out.

SCENE - DALLAS SPEAKEASY

BILL ERWIN raises a glass of sudsy beer in a fruit jar from a bar rail. We hear the SOUNDS of a raucous
honky-tonk.

ERWIN

A toast. A toast you'all! From a Texas cowboy
to a Missouri mail pilot. Partner, to those of you who
are about to die, we salute you!

He takes a long pull from the fruit jar.

Lights out

SCENE - MICHIGAN STREET

MILLIE DORAN and AUGIE PEDLAR over a local paper.

MILLIE

Augie, look at this picture. He's dreamy!

AUGIE

I guess.

MILLIE

What do you think?

AUGIE

(slowly)

Well, he's got a new ship, that's good.

MILLIE

And?

AUGIE

And he's a mail pilot, so he can probably fly blind.

MILLIE

Blind?

AUGIE

All socked in. Like flying in cotton badding.

MILLIE

That sounds easy enough. Just watch the altimeter, right?

AUGIE

Not exactly, Miss Doran. It's a strange thing. Most pilots when they can't see the horizon, they're likely to find themselves in the death spiral.

MILLIE

Death spiral?

AUGIE

Even a mail pilot won't last long in one. No relief pilot is taking a chance, too. And he's never taken off with a full load. Can one engine, even a Whirlwind, clear four hundred gallons?

MILLIE

Sure it can. Can't it?

AUGIE

Maybe. Wouldn't bet the farm on it. Would you, Miss Doran?

MILLIE

(Laughing)

I don't own a farm, Augie. Do you?

AUGIE

No, ma'am. But if I did, I sure wouldn't bet it on Charlie Lindbergh.

Lights out.

SCENE - NEWSROOM

Al continues to scan the paper.

AL

Yep, some real tune changing. He's meeting the President of France in the morning. Mangie-vous le croissant, Misseur Leendbergh?

NELSON

He's an American hero!

JOE

Hold on, now. Don't jinx the boy. He's only been famous for half a day.

AL

Look, here's another quote. "I owe it all to that delicious lunch of canned pineapple the first day out, and the refreshing banana-in-a-bottle that kept me awake over Iceland."

JOE

The lunch of heros. Dole Pineapple, Lindbergh's favorite.

AL

In his dreams.

NELSON

Get him to fly to Hawaii. Then Hawaii's famous, too. And I sell more papers. Sayonara.

Nelson exits. Al becomes agitated.

AL

That's it, Joe. That's it! From the mouths of babes.

I'm sending a cable to San Francisco. It's a lightning strike, a smoking bolt, and it puts me and you where it might strike twice!

Al grabs a note pad, begins to write.

AL

To James Dole, San Francisco.

(Beat)

"In view of Lindbergh's Atlantic flight, Pacific remains great area for aviation conquest, stop. Situation is ripe if someone offers suitable prize for nonstop Hawaii, stop.

We prepared to cooperate every possible way, from angle advertising islands and yourself, stop. We believe exceptional opportunity you offer \$25,000 prize for the winner, and \$10,000 for the second..."

CROSSFADE lights to JAMES DOLE across stage, at the podium, addressing the audience, press conference style, his words blending into the reporter's, as FLASHBULBS pop.

DOLE

...offer \$25,000 prize for the winner, and \$10,000 for the second flier to cross from the North American continent to Honolulu in a non-stop flight within one year after the beginning of August 16th, 1927.

(beat)

It has taken the Lindbergh conquest of the Atlantic to make me realize that Hawaii needs to have the future of aviation brought nearer to the present. The continued advance in aviation may mean that within a few years mail delivered within twenty hours from the mainland, or in case of emergency the businessman or visitor can make the journey in a day. Naturally we hope that this contest may be doubly successful, first that the continent and Hawaii be linked by airplane and that it may cost no brave man either life nor limb. I should be glad to see Captain Lindbergh the man to make this flight and to greet him in Honolulu.

CROSSFADE lights to Jenson bungalow. Marty works on an airplane compass while Peg reads from a newspaper.

PEG

"...Captain Charles Lindbergh the man to make this flight and to greet him in Honolulu." Thirty-five thousand bones to meet Lindbergh! Marty, this Dole guy is

star struck, I'm tellin' you.

MARTY

Might just coincidentally sell a few pineapples
along the way.

Marty scans the newspaper, awed by headlines.

MARTY

Look at this guy, Peg! A hundred-fifty thousand froggies mobbed
his plane at Le Bourget Field. For chrissake, the ugliest pug pilot
with a wooden leg could get laid in Paris tonight.

PEG

A certain Pug pilot might get lucky in
Honolulu tonight if he takes me out dancing.

MARTY

Man, this guy can write his own ticket now.
(smiles)
See, what did I tell you?

PEG

You said he was a dead duck!

MARTY

Didn't want to jinx the guy.

He continues to read.

PEG

(teasing)

The Blaisedell Ballroom is having a Charleston
competition tonight. Come on, Marty. Lets go out and
celebrate.

MARTY

Celebrate what? The flying mailboy's first million?
Or that we go bankrupt next month if I don't drum up
more business?

PEG

I raised the hem of my party dress above the knee

today. Your a leg man, Marty. Most of the gals
at the dance will be naked to the knees!

This gets Marty's attention.

MARTY

Above the knee? No kiddin.

(Pause)

Man, this is a year to remember, ain't it?

PEG

Is that a yes?

MARTY

Let me count the ways.

PEG

Come on, sugar. Let's practice.

She moves to Victrola, puts on a record the size of a wagon wheel.

MARTY

Aw, Peg, cut it out. I'm about worn out. I flew
to Maui twice today, for crissake.

PEG

You're young, your strong, and we're broke.
There's a fifty dollar prize for first place.

MARTY

Really? Hold me back, I say hold me BACK!

The record kicks in with a hot jazz tune. Peg does an enthusiastic Charleston, while Marty gives it the
college try.

PEG

Come on flyboy. Kick that wooden leg!

Lights out.

SCENE - HONOLULU STREET

Nelson is sorting papers as EMMA enters with a boxed lunch.

EMMA

I brought you a bento.

NELSON

Okay. I going eat, later.

EMMA

Still sorting?

NELSON

Problems with the press. No late edition.
How come you all dressed up?

EMMA

I'm going with Auntie Peg to the Ballroom.

NELSON

Auntie Peg? Who dat?

EMMA

You met her last week.

NELSON

I don't know who dat.

EMMA

Who dat? What did I tell you about pidgin english? You
won't get to be a reporter sounding like a pig farmer.

NELSON

(corrects himself)

I don't know who that is.

EMMA

The Jensions. They moved into the Yoshikawa place
in January.

NELSON

The haole couple? I don't need anymore haole
relatives, OK?

EMMA

Look, Mr. Big Shot, my friends are your Aunties
and Uncles, just like my parents friends were and
still are. And if you don't like it, just resign
from the human race, OK?

(Beat)

He's a pilot, you know.

Nelson's interest picks up.

NELSON

What kind of pilot?

EMMA

Not on a tugboat in Honolulu harbor. He flew to Maui this morning, and again this afternoon. He has his own plane.

NELSON

I like meet him! Please. Mom.

EMMA

(disapprovingly)

You like what?

NELSON

I like... giving you this two dollars I earned this week, and remind you of what a hardworking, proper english speaking son I am, when you give me what I want.

EMMA

Okay. I'm meeting her at their place. You can walk me over.

Lights out

SCENE - MALLOSKA PETROLEUM OFFICE

BILL MALLOSKA sits, his feet up on the desk, is talking on the phone.

MALLOSKA

So when can I expect them? Next month! There must be static on this line, because I swore I heard you say next MONTH! That's just can't happen my friend. Can't HAPPEN! I've got four businesses to run, including an airport and a flying service I just picked up in foreclosure. A perfectly sound business in an expanding industry, and the knot-head who owned it couldn't manage a shoe-shine stand. Your on the ball, I know it Verg, but if my 12 thousand a year in your pocket doesn't mean anything to you, then you go ahead with your other fish to fry, 'cause one of my lodge brothers passed me his card just the other day, and wouldn't you know he's a pipeline contractor, same as you. He was too

much of a gent that he'd suggest I leave a long-standing business relationship, but I did keep old Georgie's card. Let me see...
(makes no attempt to find a card, rubs receiver on his vest)
Here it is. George Gunch, Wolverine State Tool and Die.
Heard of them? They're up and comers.

Mildred Doran enters, dressed in the latest flapper fashions. She smiles at Malloska, takes a seat.

MALLOSKA (con't)

Verg, I just know your going do the stand up thing for me here. I need it in a week, and a week is seven days. Tell you what, call me back when you have your figures straight. Yes. Have to go Verg, I'm stacked up over here. Bye.

(Hangs up)

Lord, the world is full of dreary fools.

He sees Millie, perks up.

MALLOSKA (con't)

A new dress? Millie, let me look at you! Stand up, girl, I want a fashion show.

She shows off her new outfit.

MILLIE

Remember, the one from the Hudson's window, the last time we were in Detroit?

MALLOSKA

Say, that's right. You look swell, Millie, real swell.

MILLIE

I used some of the money from your graduation check to buy it, Mr. Malloska. You really shouldn't, you know. Now that I'm teaching school and making my own money.

MALLOSKA

Nonsense. I know what first year schoolmarm's make. I promised your Dad I'd look out for his little girl,

didn't I? One day I'll wake up and realize your not a kid anymore, but until then, let me spoil you a little, OK?

MILLIE

O.K. How can a girl refuse an offer like that?

MALLOSKA

No sir, no girl should, either. Say, how's the new pilot working out? The fella Wallace hired to fly you to the work out there in... Where?

MILLIE

Pigeon Creek..

MALLOSKA

That's right. Pigeon Creek. I had a flat tire driving through there one night. And that's the best thing I can say about the place.

MILLIE

The roads are terrible.

MALLOSKA

There's an airstrip?

MILLIE

Sort of.

MALLOSKA

Pedlar, right? That's the guy. Wallace swears by him, but Wallace frequently has his head up.

(Catches himself)

er, where it doesn't belong.

MILLIE

But Augie's a wonderful pilot. I always feel safe with him.

MALLOSKA

(alarmed)

Say, you haven't fallen for this guy, have you, Millie?

Millie tries to hide a smile.

MILLIE

Augie? Lord, no.

MALLOSKA

I hope not. I know plenty of Pilots, too many really, and there's not one of 'em I'd trust with my pocket watch for ten minutes at a stretch. Most of 'em use too much aftershave, cheat on their wives and don't pay their Lodge dues.

MILLIE

'Nuff said, Mr. Malloska. Want to see my clippings?

MALLOSKA

Your clippings?

MILLIE

My newspaper clippings. Look, I'm the "Flying Schoolmarm." The Detroit paper sent out a photographer and everything. (takes out clippings from purse) "Miss Mildred Doran, the Flying Schoolmarm, on board her Breese Biplane, supplied by the Malloska Petroleum Company of Flint. Miss Doran is believed to be the first woman in the world to use an airplane as a conveyance to her employment."

MALLOSKA

Say, not bad.

MILLIE

They said the wire services picked up the story, and it went all over the country. And this morning, this Frenchman calls me from Chicago, and says Pathe Newsreels want to do a story on me. Doesn't that take the cake!

MALLOSKA

Millie, it sure does. Might even sell a gallon or two of gas before its all over. You're the Lindbergh of Pigeon River.

MILLIE

Mr. Malloska!

MALLOSKA

I mean it, kid. You got the world at your feet.

MILLIE

I'd settle for Honolulu.

MALLOSKA

You've decided then. See, now was that so hard? I thought you'd go for the Packard. Or Europe. But Honolulu it is, hey? Well, why not. You're only twenty-one once. When I turned twenty-one, my Father shook my hand, and in it was the only thing he could afford to give me, his watch.

(takes a watch from his vest)

Still keeps time, too. Its been my good luck piece.

MILLIE

Let me carry it, then. When Augie flies me to Hawaii.

Molloska gives her a long, silent look. She takes his hand gently, removing the watch.

Lights out

SCENE - DALLAS SPEAKEASY

BILL IRWIN is having a drink with a LAWYER. He calls out for more drink.

IRWIN

Hey, lemonade tender. Two more cool ones for me and my mouthpiece down here. So, give it to me on the chin. They said no, right? Those miserable peckerwoods turned me down?

LAWYER

They are indeed miserable peckerwoods, Bill. Dallas Milk and Cream isn't ready to put any money into an airplane race, not not unless you can take a cow as a passenger.

IRWIN Maybe you could talk 'em down to a bottle of milk and a meat loaf sandwich.

LAWYER

The problem is, they don't know a thing about this new industry your in. Nobody does, really. It's making

itself up as it goes. The only thing that sticks in the layman's eyes are the crashes. Those two Frenchman being toasted in New York. That's what they remember.

IRWIN

Aw, that was before Lindbergh.

LAWYER

As your representatives, I did all I could to sell them on the reliability of your airplane, how it is equipped with the identical Wright J-5 as Lindy flew, and with a cruising speed of a blistering 105 miles-per-hour and four-hundred and eighty gallons of gas, that it had adequate range, with a contingency factor of...

IRWIN

Hold on there, Mr. Albers. Not to tell you your business, or nothin'. But your goin' at it all wrong. Forget about the ship. Nobody's interested in sponsoring a steel cage and a wood wing. They want to invest in a hero. Give 'em a hero, Albers. One from Dallas, who they can take to the club and introduce to their bubbas.

ALBERS

A Lindbergh?

IRWIN

A Dallas Lindbergh!

ALBERS

(laughs)

Bill... your no Lindbergh.

Irwin eyes Albers for a long moment, cocks his arm, and knocks the man to the floor, without even spilling his drink.

IRWIN

Your not much of a lawyer, either, chum.

He finishes his drink.

Lights out

SCENE - JENSON BUNGALOW

The SOUND of an upbeat Jazz tune. Peg is leading as Marty, Emma, and even Nelson, flap and waggle to the Charleston.

PEG

That's it. Kick those legs! Keep the arms loose, head up, knees together, kick to the side, and three and four!

NELSON

Auntie Peg, dis the dying cockroach dance, or what?

PEG

No, this is the dance the cockroach does to celebrate youth, independence, and good times.

MARTY

I'm with the kid, its closer to a heart attack!

PEG

Fifty bucks, Marty. Fifty!

The Victrola record comes to a scratchy stop. Nelson and Marty collapse into chairs. Emma and Peg seem barely winded.

EMMA

What I don't get is the foot part. How can my feet go one way, and the rest of me the other?

PEG

You get your heels off the floor, then swivel on the balls of your feet. Its easy! Look, here's just the foot.

She demonstrates. Emma tries it out. Their lights fade, leaving Marty and Nelson.

NELSON

Mom says you've got your own airplane?

MARTY

Sure, me a bank back in Santa Monica.. I keep up the payments, I might even own it in about three lifetimes.

NELSON

What kind of plane?

NELSON

MARTY

Its a four seat Travel Air Sedan.

Bi-plane? Pretty slow I guess. In-line engine, or Whirlwind?

MARTY

Last time I checked, it was an in-line British Leopard. I didn't catch your first name, son. Was it Orville or Wilber?

NELSON

You fly in the war?

MARTY

Nope. How the hell old I look to you, anyway?

NELSON

Old. You been a mail pilot?

MARTY

Nope. Those guys are on starvation wages, but they don't worry about it, because most of 'em are dead from flying in snowstorms before scurvy sets in.

NELSON

What kind of pilot are you?

MARTY

A damn good one, thats what kind.

NELSON

How many hours?

MARTY

A bean counter. You with the National Aeronautic Association?

NELSON

How many?

MARTY

Ask my accountant. I don't know, kid. Plenty. Enough to fly Hoot Gibson to San Francisco when he's in a hurry. Enough to slip under

the bridge at Mission Viejo, with three feet to spare on either side. Enough to climb out of the cockpit, onto the wing, and make repairs , with my shoe laces holding the stick in place over the Molokai Channel.

NELSON

Naw? You going enter the Dole Derby, then?

Checks to see that Peg is out of earshot.

MARTY

Hell yes. But I'll need a new plane first.

(whispers)

And a little talk with the wife. You know how it is Orville.

NELSON

Auntie Peg wouldn't mind. You'd be famous!

MARTY

Hey, Peg! Nelson thinks I should enter the Dole Race! What do you think?

Peg and Emma step into the light.

PEG

I think that's the worst idea I've ever heard. I've never looked good in black, baby.

MARTY

If I won, we'd be rich.

PEG

I thought you said the prize money would just barely cover the expenses?

MARTY

There's more at stake here, Peg. More important things.

PEG

Yeah. Like dead pilots and young widows.

MARTY

Like a shot at the big time. Like a place in the history books.

PEG

Yeah, a footnote. "M. Jenkins, Honolulu, lost at sea, August, 1927."

MARTY

Aw, cut it out, Peg. I'm the best, you always said, right?

PEG

Yes, the best....

She rushes to him, whispers in his ear. Marty smiles.

MARTY

Well, that too. But I think that if I could just talk to the bank, and explain about the twenty-five grand, maybe...

PEG

Maybe, if we leave right now, we can win fifty bucks. Nelson, you want to stay here until we get back? You can listen to the radio. KGU is broadcasting live from the Ballroom.

NELSON

Swell. Its, OK, Mom?

EMMA

Sure. Stay here until we get back, I don't want you wandering the streets of Palama at all hours.

MARTY

Help yourself to whatever's in the kitchen. But lay off the Victrola. My recordings take a enough of a beating at Auntie Peg's Charleston Emporium and and Widow-in-Waiting Society.

The women grab purses.

PEG

Let's get going..

EMMA

See you about midnight or so.

NELSON

Bye.

As soon as they are gone, he cues up a record on the Victrola, walks to a cupboard, takes out a bottle of beer, is examing its label when...

Lights out.

SCENE - HAWAIIAN PINEAPPLE BOARDROOM

James Dole addresses the press from a podium. FLASH of news cameras.

DOLE

Gentlemen, there are some concerns that have been raised regarding to the safety factors of the contest. Which for the record, is not the Dole Derby, but the Hawaiian Pineapple Company's North America-Honolulu Hawaii Trans Pacific Flight Competition. Now, try saying that ten times fast.

(smiles)

These safety concerns include...

(Checks list)

adequate fuel capacity to make the crossing with a reserve in case of poor weather or delays, the need for all contestants to have along life rafts and flares in case of a force down at sea, radio range finding devices that might home in a radio beacon to be established, the qualifications of the pilots, planes and engines to make a three thousand mile journey unsupported over the open sea, etcetera, etcetera... The number one concern from the men and agencies consulted appears to be the need for a qualified navigator to find the Hawaiian Islands in the vast expanse of the Pacific. A feat considerably harder, I am constantly reminded, than Mr. Lindbergh locating the continent of Europe. It looks a whole lot more complicated than growing a Pineapple, so I am pleased to announce that as of today the competition will be administrated by the Honolulu and San Francisco branches of the National Aeronautic Association, who will set the requirements to be met by each pilot and aircraft. Thank you, gentleman. There are adult refreshments at the back table.

Lights out.

SCENE - MALLOSKA PETROLEUM OFFICE

Bill Malloska and Augie Pedlar face each other across Malloska's desk. Malloska is looking through some papers.

MALLOSKA

Pedlar, what makes you think you can fly the Pacific? You don't have any long distance experience.

AUGIE

No, sir. Lindbergh didn't either, when he announce for the Orteig. I don't expect you ran a gas station before you started Malloska Petroleum.

MALLOSKA

Maybe not, but if I had gone belly up nobody would have died. You fail, and my ward Millie is as good as a goner. She seems to think your the cat's pajama's. Are you the "cat's pajama's", Pedlar?

AUGIE

I'm a pilot, Mr. Malloska.

MALLOSKA

You're still wearing a panama. You sure don't look like a pilot.

AUGIE

Thank you.

MALLOSKA

You were with an air show?

AUGIE

Sure. I started as a mechanic. Advantage number one for you. Nobody knows engines like I do. Saves you a crew position.

MALLOSKA

You went from mechanic to pilot?

AUGIE

No, sir. I was a wing walker first. There was a job opening due to gusty winds and a pint of liquid courage that was circulating at the hanger.

AUGIE

Walking wings qualified you to be a pilot?

AUGIE

No, sir, from there I went to parachute jumps. I'd pretend

to miss a plane-to-plane transfer and fall, opening the chute at the last minute. People used to faint in the stands.

MALLOSKA

(laughs)

That's pretty good. Give 'em their money's worth, that's it!

AUGIE

I became a pilot when we invented a new gag. I'd take the controls of a two-seat open cockpit and do loops for the crowd. Then I'd drop a dummy, like my harness had snapped. I'd duck down in the cockpit and land using a periscope.

MALLOSKA

You pulling my leg, Pedlar?

AUGIE

I can keep a plane on compass for 30 hours, Mr. Malloska. It's not the miracle everybody makes it out to be, long as your engine holds up.

MALLOSKA

Your a navigator, too?

AUGIE

No, sir. And its nothing I'm going to have time to learn. We put an ad in the paper, we'll have any number of navigators to chose from, no salary needed.

MALLOSKA

They'll do it for the glory, ey?

AUGIE

Yes, sir. Same as me. Same as Millie. You're the only one stands to make a profit on this.

MALLOSKA

I better. Say, how much this going to cost me, anyway?

AUGIE

We need to order a suitable plane. That's ten thousand, at least. A Wright J-5, which is the only engine I'd consider, that's another five thousand. With test flights, spare parts, a hanger crew, travel expenses, we're at twenty thousand anyway, just to make the starting line.

MALLOSKA

At least my gas will be at cost. I'll ship a tanker car worth to you at Oakland.

AUGIE

No thank you, sir. Standard Oil has an aviation grade.

MALLOSKA

What the hell do you know about gas, anyway? You got a degree in petroleum engineering? The plane uses Malloska Petroleum fuel, exclusively.

AUGIE

Your's might. Mine sure won't. I take chances, Mr. Malloska. I don't create them. If I don't control this thing, I don't go.

MALLOSKA

Cocky little bastard. Maybe you are a pilot, after all. But leave the logistics to me. That's my specialty, Pedlar.

AUGIE

Your a gasoline distributor, Mr. Malloska. That's your specialty. If you knew your aviation, you'd never have bought the Flint Airport.

MALLOSKA

Come again?

AUGIE

Its too far a drive from town, you have to land in a mean crosswind, and the field slopes down to a gulch. Whatever you paid for it, let me tell you honest, it was too much.

AUGIE

You know Pedlar, you remind me a little of myself when I was your age. A real straight-shooter. 'Course, I was taller, better looking, had an education, and was already a success at business.

AUGIE

I don't doubt that you were the cat's pajamas. Do we have a deal, Mr. Malloska?

MALLSOKA

Millie wants this more than anything in the world. And she means a lot to me. Everything, really. She's a fine young woman, but I'm afraid all this publicity has gone to her head. I'm holding you personally responsible, got it?

AUGIE

I'm no hotdog in a leather jacket, with a flask in my back pocket. I'll get her there safe. You've got my word.

MALLOSKA

Its a deal then. Just ditch the boater, Pedlar. Start dressing like a pilot. You look like a damn farmer on vacation.

Lights out

SCENE - THE JENSON BUNGALOW

Marty and Nelson are putting together a model airplane, made of balsa and fabric.

MARTY

These things don't look like much, but you launch one into a thermal, I've seen 'em soar for hours over the Pali pass.

NELSON

Let try it, tomorrow!

MARTY

Tomorrow I'm flying to Kauai if the weather holds. Tractor parts for a plantation over there. Maybe someone else can take you.

NELSON

My Dad would take me, but he died in the war.

MARTY

Sorry to hear that.

NELSON

He was a pilot. An ace! Ten German kills over France. The French gave him that big medal of theirs, you know, the French one..

MARTY

Yeah. I know the one.

NELSON

Can I go to Kauai with you? I don't weigh much.

MARTY

Sorry.

NELSON

Shoot, Uncle. Why not? I won't get in the way.

MARTY

I'll take you up over Oahu someday, but the Kauai Channel, that's out. Too dangerous. So don't give me the long face, OK?

NELSON

Too dangerous? That's not what you tell Auntie Peg. You tell her about the life raft, and the flares, and how the empty fuel tanks going float the plane.

MARTY

Nelson, one thing your going to learn as you get older, is that sometimes you need to tell people what they want to hear, and maybe leave out the unpleasant stuff.

NELSON

Like what?

MARTY

Your a dead duck if you repeat this.

NELSON

Quack, quack.

MARTY

Like the life raft stuff is a bunch of boloney. Its to make wives easier to live with and lets Mr. John Q Passenger feel like he's covered his odds a little. When an airplane goes down at sea, the first thing happens is the landing gear snags a wave, snaps the nose forward, and suddenly your flying a submarine. If the impact doesn't kill you or knock you cold, the fuselage is gonna split open and you'll drown before you clear the wreckage.

NELSON

A ride over Oahu would be OK, too.

Emma and Peg enter.

EMMA

Son, time to go. We're going to early services tomorrow, and you got Sunday papers to sort.

Marty gives the plane to Nelson.

MARTY

Just let the wing dope dry over night, and it should be ready to go.

NELSON

Thank you.

PEG

Bye, Emma. Don't forget about Tuesday.

EMMA

Tuesday?

PEG

The Leong's are having a seance, remember? Last time, the table started to rattle, and Amy Leong's hat flew across the room!

EMMA

I'll be there. Just don't tell Father Barbosa, or he'll scold me good.

PEG

And its Marty's birthday Saturday. The gang is coming over, and we're gonna break the law a little.

Nelson holds up the model glider, runs out of the room, weaving and gliding.

NELSON

Come on, Mom! I got to dry this wing. Thanks for the glider, Uncle Marty!

EMMA

Bye, Marty.

Emma and Nelson exit.

PEG

He likes you.

MARTY

Aw, he's all right.

PEG

Kids always like you, Sugar. Says a lot about a guy, if kids and puppies think he's swell.

MARTY

The smart guy just packs a lollipop and a dog biscuit in the boot of his Ford.

She kisses him.

PEG

You'll make a good Daddy, you know that?

This gets Marty's attention.

MARTY

What are you saying, Peg? Are you... you, you know?

PEG

(laughs)

No. But its Saturday night. Remember our first Saturday night?

MARTY

Oh, yeah, honey, I sure do. Still got the hotel bill. Gonna scandalize your Mother with it if she ever gets out of line.

PEG

You dirty dog.

She slaps him playfully.

MARTY

I'm a puppy magnet, remember?

PEG

You flying tomorrow?

MARTY

Depends on the weather. Kauai, maybe.

(beat)

The NAA starts accepting entrance fees for the race tomorrow. A hundred skins.

PEG

Marty, don't start.

MARTY

Hawaii should have its own plane, Peg. With a Hawaiian pilot.

PEG

Marty, you're German-Irish, for God's sake. We've been here six months.

MARTY

You know what I mean. Everybody I talk to says they'd be all for it. They keep asking if I'm going to enter.

PEG

Well, if your going to enter, I can't stop you.

Marty perks up.

MARTY

You mean.....?

PEG

I can't stop you, but I *will* divorce you.

MARTY

Aw, Peg. Cut it out.

PEG

You know I will. When you asked me to marry you, what did you tell me?

MARTY

This is different.

PEG

No, its not. What did you tell me.

MARTY

Well, I told you you had the best legs in California.

PEG

What did you promise me. About the flying?

MARTY

I was a little nutty that night. I was in love. It makes a guy say things, you know?

PEG

Yes, things that have to be lived up to. Come on, you remember.

MARTY

I said I'd quit flying if thats what it took for you to be the wife.

PEG

Did I ask you to quit, even though I get scared to death?

MARTY

Nope.

PEG

Thats because I love you, Sugar. And I want you to be happy. And you look damn sexy in that leather helmet. But I know the long odds when

I see 'em. In a few years they'll probably be passenger service between the mainland and here. We can buy a couple of tickets and fly the Pacific together. OK? So let's just forget about it and have a good Saturday night.

They kiss.

MARTY

I'll get my helmet.

Lights out

SCENE - HONOLULU STREET

Nelson, with the glider, leads the way as Emma follows.

EMMA

That thing really fly?

NELSON

Does a pig whistle? He cut a strip from an old inner tube, says if I wind it tight, it'll run the propeller for half a minute. Marty says it'll catch a wind and stay up for an hour maybe.

EMMA

Uncle Marty.

NELSON

I call him that! When I'm with him. But he's not my Uncle, OK! I don't even know if I have any Uncles. So don't make ones up for me.

EMMA

Your one to talk. What about your war hero Daddy? You think I don't hear about these things later. I'm not real proud of your father either, Nelson, but at least he helps support you...

NELSON

Twenty-five dollars a month! Cost more than that to board a horse at Kapiolani Stables. You should throw that bum's money in his face.

EMMA
(a warning)

Nelson.

NELSON

I saw him yesterday. He was going to buy a paper, yeah? Then he spotted me and kept going 'cause he had the missus with him. He's a chump.. I'm glad he never talk to me, 'cause he's a low class chump!

EMMA

You don't know him. He's not a bad person, Nelson.

Despite the bravado, Nelson begins to crumble, his voice breaking.

NELSON

As soon as I'm old enough, I'm going to smack his face for him!

He begins to cry.

NELSON (con't)

He never even look at me. Like he was ashamed.

Emma moves to him, sits him on a bench as tries to control his tears. She hugs him.

EMMA

Your growing up so fast. Slow down, keiki. What have we always said about each other?

NELSON

That we're all the family we need.

EMMA

That's right. So enjoy being a boy. Remember what what fun can be. Then when you grow up, instead of trying to get even with your father, find yourself a nice Hawaiian girl and you two raise up kids who have a father at home. A father that takes them fishing, builds them model airplanes, a father who looks them in the eye every day and says "I love you, you little rascals, you." And you can introduce them to all your friends, you know

like fathers do. "Fred, meet the family. This is my oldest...

NELSON

Nelson, Junior.

EMMA

"Nelson, Junior. And this is my youngest boy..."

NELSON

Nelson the third.

EMMA

"Nelson the third.

(testing him)

And this little cutie here is my daughter..."

NELSON

Nelsonetta.

They laugh.

EMMA

You going to be, OK?

NELSON

(shrugs if off)

I've got papers to sell.

EMMA

What? Its almost nine.

NELSON

Mr. Ching is keeping his magazine stand on Fort Street open until eleven on Saturdays. Here, take the glider. Careful, but. The wing is still drying.

She takes the plane and gives him a quick hug.

EMMA

Thank you for being a boy, at least for one more day.

NELSON

Aw, mom. Cut it out.

EMMA

It makes me feel like a mother, OK? Soon enough, you'll put on your man face for good, and I'll never see tears from you again. I don't know why men get that way, but they do. Now a woman, when she's feeling low, when her world is falling apart, at least she knows she can get in a good cry, and maybe feel a little better.

NELSON

I'm gonna be late. Bye!

He exits.

EMMA
(softly)

Bye.

She begins to cry, hiding her face in her hands.

Lights out

SCENE - JENSON BUNGALOW

Marty enters, wearing his leather helmet, with carrying a small box of odd shaped bottle.

MARTY

Nearly forgot, I had the hootch for the party in the Ford. Wouldn't want to get pulled over with this lot on the back seat.

Peg checks over the bottles.

PEG

Hey, good haul, sugar. You are one connected man.

MARTY

Aw, heck, I had to run all over town for this stuff. It was like pulling teeth to get more than a bottle's worth.

PEG

What have we got here?

MARTY

Two bottles of white lightning, that we better not get too close to with a lit cigarette, a bottle of ha, ha, Canadian whiskey, and a bottle of something called, if I got it right, "Okolehau."

Peg pulls a cork, sniffs at the contents, curls her lip.

PEG

What's that?

MARTY

Beats me. It means "the rear end of a tree."

PEG

Charming.

MARTY

Let's not take it out until everybody's half gassed. You know our crowd, they'll drink radiator fluid by then.

PEG

We might try a little preview of the Canadian, to get the evenings festivities under way.

MARTY

I second that motion.

He gets two glasses.

MARTY (con't)

The booze may be cheap, but the glasses are clean. Here's to us, Peg. Broke but happy, content to scratch out a living here in paradise, hoping the weather stays clear enough for me to make twenty bucks flying tractor wheels to Kauai.

.

PEG

Oh, boo hoo, Marty.

(beat)

We've got a damn good life here, Bub. You jumped at the chance to fly in Hawaii. Who wouldn't? Two hundred a stunt in Hollywood wasn't a future. We were drinking half the profits, celebrating you not breaking your fool neck flying a Jenny into some chicken coop.

MARTY

I know, I know. But, we'll never see another shot like this one, Peg. You know we won't. Sure, its risky. I admit it. Flying is risky. So is marriage. So is drinking bathtub booze. And I won't hold it against you, 'cause I know your right, but I tell you, Peg, everyday for the rest of my life, I'm gonna get up in the morning, I'm gonna look at myself in the mirror, and I'm gonna say to myself, "Jenson, you missed your shot."

PEG

Sugar, we said at the start that we were gonna be different. You didn't want the pipe and the slippers, and I sure as heck didn't want the kitchen and a pack of kids. We were gonna be a team. Like Scott and Zelda. Marty and Peg, a couple of modern swells. Partners. If we could take turns flying the plane, hell I'd go with you.

Marty looks at her intently.

PEG (con't)

That was a joke, Marty. You've told me a thousand times I'm too nervous to be a pilot.

MARTY

Yes, still true. I'd never fly in a plane with you at the controls. Sorry.

(beat)

How were you at math in school?

PEG

I was OK. Why?

MARTY

First, a toast. To us. The Jenson Partnership.

PEG

Marty?

MARTY

To us.

PEG

Well, how much trouble can that get me into?

To us.

They clink glasses and drink. After a moment the homemade booze hits home. They look at each other, their faces contorted.

PEG

(gasping for air)

That's swell!

MARTY

(simultaneous)

That's swell!

They begin to laugh and collapse into each others arms.

Lights out

SCENE - NEWSROOM

Al and Joe are playing cards as Nelson enters, papers under his arm. He drops off a paper at their desk, picks up three pennies waiting for him.

AL

Thank you, old friend. I'd read it, but I can't take time out from shellacking my colleague here at a penny a point.

Joe lays down his cards.

JOE

Gin.

Al is stunned. He throws his cards into a wastebasket.

AL

Alack, alack I say, at my lack of a shellack!

NELSON

You guys want a big story? You could still

make the late edition. Maybe get it on the wire to San Francisco. Hawaii's going to have its own plane in the race. Marty Jenson is joining the race!

AL

Jenson? Well, why not? He now joins a select crowd of forty or so who claim to have a hat in the ring, half of whom can be considered fruitcakes of one kind or another. Like Pola Negri's new husband, what's his name...?

JOE

Prince Serge Mdivani.

AL

That's the one.

JOE

Fruitcake.

AL

And that Frenchman Fonck, if his burns heal quick enough from that unfortunate incident at Roosevelt Field.

JOE

Ouch.

NELSON

If anybody can do it, Marty can. You can interview him tomorrow. I'll bring him here!

AL

Hold on there, old horse. Joe and me, we're taking the Matsonia in the morning, going to cover this story right. From a suite at the St. Regis, overlooking the bay.

JOE

Best expense account lobster on the west coast.

AL

Amen.

Al is thumbing through the paper Nelson has brought.

AL (con't)

Holey moley, Ruth is pounding the ball this year.

(to Nelson)

Say, the NAA rule about a qualified navigator?

Whose Jenson have in mind?

NELSON

Auntie Peg, she got some books from the library and bought a sliderule. They're gonna be famous! You can still make the late edition!

He exits.

AL

Here I thought Jenson was on the ball.

JOE

His wife navigating? He's approaching fruit-cakeville on a stunt like that.

AL

Yeah, but he's *our* fruitcake.

JOE

What if they get themselves bent up, or toasted? Jeeze, hadn't counted on it being maybe somebody we know.

AL

Hell, they hardly got a Indian nickel between 'em.

JOE

Yeah, they'll never get off the ground.

AL

Hope not.

JOE

I'm with you.

(beat)

A toast then.

He takes two flimsy wedge-paper cups from a water cooler, pours two drinks from a hip flask.

AL

Amen.

Al sniffs at his drink.

AL

Vodka?

JOE

Of sorts.

AL

To the complete and utter failure of anyone we know personally to make the starting line. Skol.

JOE

Skol.

They drink.

Lights out

SCENE - The characters appear one by one, in scattered parts of the playing area, talking directly to the audience.

DOLE

Those newspaper gents sure know their stuff. Hawaiian Pineapple Company has made the papers all over the world. Even radio wants in. KGU is going to carry instantaneous reports via telegraph from the mainland. What a marvelous age we live in, isn't it? After ten thousand years, the horse is out, and the automobile takes over. Can hardly even cross Merchant Street without waving a flag. Ford calls it the automobile age, but I think the airplane is going to give him a run for his money, particularly here in the islands, where I in vision people and products moving about with ease via flying boats. Can you imagine? Breakfast in Honolulu,

lunch on Kauai! And for in-flight refreshments, what would be more appropriate than a locally made new product, just chock full of vitamins and minerals? Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the beverage of the future. Pineapple Juice! A toast to our brave boys in their flying machines!

He pours a glassful from a beaker, drinks, looks like he's been slapped in the face.

CROSSFADE lights.

ERWIN

People are askin' me; "Bill, what the hell are you doin'?" You're gonna fly to Hawaii? You've never even laid eyes on the Pacific Ocean before. What makes you want to risk your fool neck?" Well, partners, I can count about twenty-five thousand reasons. I already own my Swallow, and she's first-rate equipment, even with a couple thousand hours on her. All she needs is a J-5, and she's ready. Like everybody else, I'm mortgaging my prize money, but with more of it to go around. I can promise my backers twice their money out of the purse. So, it'll fall together, I'll get it done. Always have. You want something, you kick somebody's butt, including your own until you get it done.

(beat)

You want it enough, it happens. There's always a way. And what is I want? I want everything I can get, partners! Yes' damn right. I want every fast car, every pretty dame, every horse ranch, and every-godamn speed record I can lay my hands on. Here's to the guy whose gonna knock Lindbergh's skinny butt off the front page!

(he drinks from a water glass of cheap booze)

Water boy! Another ladle out of your finest bucket!

CROSSFADE lights

MILLIE

Those press boys have sure have been nice, even if they are a rough bunch. They can't imagine what a shave and a pressed suit means to a girl. Some call me the bravest girl they ever met. Say I remind

them of the movie stars they've covered. Can you imagine? 'Course, those are usually the ones that get fresh, sooner or later. But they showed me how to stop and look for the cameras, keeping my neck tight and my head at an angle. It really works! I used to look like such a pumpkin in all my photos. A couple of the boys have even tried to get me to change my mind, as if I'd ever dare make a fool of Mr. Malloska. I try not to let the naybirds roost in my window, though.

(beat)

I've always had the best luck any girl could have asked for. I could have been raised in an orphanage and married to a farmer by now. Instead, I'm in the news, from coast to coast, almost everyday. Some old harpies are even suggesting that I'm doing all this, betting my life, really, to find myself the right kind of husband. I have learned to just say "no comment" to that kind of talk.

(beat)

But, enough. A toast of adult ginger ale to my darling Augie, the best pilot, and the best mechanic, who I know will get me there safe. He always has.

She drinks from a champagne glass.

CROSSFADE lights.

AUGIE

Its the engine, really. Not that the plane isn't important, sure its crucial. But planes don't fail hardly, except during takeoff and landing, and an experienced hand can keep that risk acceptable. No its the engine. If I get a Whirlwind fresh from the factory, and keep the schedule myself, then that puts us over the top. Molloska's big pockets sure help. Though if it was up to me, I wouldn't take Miss Doran.

(beat)

But if it wasn't for her, Molloska wouldn't take me, either. So be it then. She's always been good luck for me. Not that we need it. It wouldn't be enough, anyway. I've looked at this real close and it comes down to a skilled set of hands and a reliable engine. That's all it

takes for them to stop laughing at Augie Pedlar.
Thanks, Miss Doran.

He raises a shot glass high, barely touches it to his lips, puts it down.

Lights out.

SCENE - JENSON BUNGALOW

PEG

(slurring her words, holding a glass)
Marty? Marty, get back here, sugar. I thought of
another one. To the smartest, best looking, sexiest,
couple that ever became famous together before the
age of thirty. Then one for the best legs of any
navigator in the race. Marty? Marty.

She begins to slump in the sofa. Marty slips in from the shadows, catches her gently, taking the glass
before it spills. He pulls her close and she sleeps on his shoulder. He addresses the audience directly.

MARTY

You'll have to excuse Peg, here. She doesn't get
gassed this way, much. But she earned this celebration.
Got us a bank loan with no collateral, and a thousand
dollar sponsor to boot. That's my gal. She even found
time to study that two dollar slide rule I bought her.

(smiles)

Haven't figured out how, or when, I break it to her that
there's no way I'll let her navigate me 24 hundred miles
over empty water. Oh, she's going to be hoppin' when
she finds out. Sorry, sugar. Pilot's were born to take
the risks. Sorts out the ruffraff on a regular basis. I'll
share everything I've got with you, sugar. But not the risk.

(beat)

My old man always told me life's just like a poker game.
One part experience, one part knowing your opponents,
one part luck. I held a royal flush once. Man did it look
pretty. Think about it every time I sit down to play. Kind
of savor the memory, you know? Keeps me coming back
to the table, even.

(beat)

And that my friends, is what flying is like for me on a good
day. All the planets line up and take a bow in my direction.
Oh, yeah.

(holds up the glass)

So here's to holding all the cards. I'll drink to that, and you can quote me.

He holds the glass to his lips, but becomes distracted by the SOUND of Nelson's voice, heard off stage, just a muffled buzz at first, then growing louder. As Marty's light fades, he tries again to drink, but instead he peers off into the shadows, as if he's not sure what it is he hears.

Lights out.

SCENE - HONOLULU STREET

Nelson enters at a run, carrying papers, shouting.

NELSON
PAYPAH! PAYPAH! TWO DEAD IN AIR RACE!
TWO DEAD IN AIR RACE. PLANE BURNS AT
TAKEOFF! PAYPAH! PAYPAH!

He exit at the run, but his headline mantra can be heard for several beats before fading.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE - HONOLULU HARBOR

Lights up on Al and Joe are at the ship's rail. The SOUND of a ship's horn rumbling. Nelson runs across the stage, newspapers in hand.

NELSON
PAYPAH! PAYPAH! TWO DEAD IN AIR RACE!
PLANE BURNS AT TAKEOFF. PAYPAH! PAYPAH!

He runs to the raised platform where Al and Joe stand at the rail.

AL
Hey, kid! Up here! Give it a toss!

Nelson fold the paper, flings it to Al, who tosses back a quarter.

AL (con't)
Hold down the fort for us, old friend.

The SOUND of a ship's horn. Nelson waves as he runs off.

NELSON

PAYPAH! PAYPAH!

Al unfolds the paper, and Joe crowds in close to read as well.

AL

Lt. Commander George Covell and Lt. Dick Waggener
we killed early today at Point Loma, California
while attempting to takeoff in their heavily loaded
Monoplane *The Spirit of John Rodgers*. Witnesses
say that the..

CROSSFADE lights to other areas of the stage, where the other characters read the same newspaper.
Lights up on Augie, reading to Millie Doran, who now wears a stylish flying uniform.

AUGIE

Witnesses say minutes after clearing the North Island
Naval Station, the plane was still only twenty
feet off the water and flew into the sand dunes at
Point Loma. Their destination was Oakland Airport
where they were scheduled to compete....

CROSSFADE lights. Bill Erwin, a mug of coffee in his hands as he reads.

ERWIN

...scheduled to compete in the Pacific Air Race from
California to Hawaii. The race...

CROSSFADE lights. James Dole in golf attire, holding a club.

DOLE

The race, sponsored by the Hawaiian Pineapple Company,
offers 35 thousand dollars in prize money for the first
airplane to fly non-stop to the Hawaiian Islands.

CROSSFADE lights. The Jensen Bungalow. Peg reads to Marty. They are both in pajamas.

PEG

A Navy rescue crew investigating the smoke, found the

twisted wreckage of the monoplane burned beyond recognition, and no survivors. A small crowd had gathered at the air station to witness the departure, including Covell's wife and Waggener's fiancé.

CROSSFADE lights. Al and Joe at the ship's rail.

AL

Investigators say the design of the monoplane, which allowed no forward view, could have contributed to the crash. Funeral services are pending.

(pause)

Oh, Lord. What hath we wrought?

JOE

Hey, come on now. This is hardly our fault.

CROSSFADE lights back to Dole.

DOLE

I sure feel bad about those two fellas. And their women, too. I'd send them a check to cover the funeral expenses, but I can't give the appearance of being at fault here.

CROSSFADE lights to Augie and Millie.

MILLIE

(upset)

Augie, its not too late for you to change your mind. I don't want you getting into something you'll regret. It was my idea. I can talk to Mr. Malloska if you want out.

AUGIE

Want out? Why, Miss Doran, that's the last thing on my mind. I feel bad for those boys, but I don't see any reflection on our efforts. We're solid. That new Buhl is gonna arrive from Detroit any day now, and as soon as I break in the engine, we're on our way to Oakland. That is, unless you its you that's having the second thoughts.

MILLIE

Don't be silly, Augie. Pull out? After all the publicity? They say there's been more press on our entry than all the others combined. It's silly, really.

Everybody's risk is the same. Why are we different?

AUGIE

Its not us. You know that. Its you. Heck, I'm lucky if they spell my name right, when it appears at all. Those press boys think the world of you, and, well, so do I. You're one of a kind, I mean it, too.

MILLIE

Why thanks, Augie. That's sweet of you. We going to win this thing?

AUGIE

You bet. We're half way there already.

CROSSFADE lights to Bill Erwin

ERWIN

What the hell did they expect? No forward visibility? Hell, even a crate like the Jenny had a forward view. Just because you're flying a gas tank doesn't mean you got to give up on common sense. Everyone figures Lindy did it with a periscope, so that's it. Thanks, Charlie. You're luck's gonna kill off half my competition before I leave Dallas.

CROSSFADE lights to Marty and Peg.

PEG

Those poor gals. Seeing your man burned up like that. It can't get much worse, can it?

MARTY

Well, seeing it happen is sure awful, Peg. No doubt about that. But it beats being the one barbequed on a sand dune.

PEG

You're all heart, Marty.

MARTY

If I got torn up over every pilot who bought the farm, I'd have to give up sleeping nights. People fly, people die. That's the way its always been. I'm the only exception. I'm gonna live forever.

PEG

That's why I'm gonna love flying with you, Sugar.
I know you'll get us there.

MARTY

I'll get us there? It's the navigator that gets us there.
I just point the plane.

PEG

Well, Mr. Plane Pointer, I've been studying up on
celestial navigation. Not all that hard so far. But
pretty soon I'm gonna need a...

(checks text)

sixtent.

MARTY

A sextant?

Peg looks at the text.

PEG

I guess.

MARTY

Peg, I been meaning to talk to you about that.

PEG

About what, Sugar?

MARTY

The navigator's position.

PEG

I'm getting more of it each day.

(picks up text)

This is a great book. Did you know that Captain
Cook is the father of modern navigation?

MARTY

The NAA rules say each plane has to carry a qualified
navigator.

PEG

That's me. In a couple of weeks, anyway.

MARTY

Can dead mean vote twice?

PEG

What?

MARTY

Can ducks make vertical turns?

PEG

Have you gone screwy on me?

MARTY

Compass, Deviation, Magnetic, Variation and True.

PEG

And?

MARTY

Its the ABC of navigation. The basics. Even I know that much, and I need a navigator.

PEG

You said all it took was a little book work and some math skills.

MARTY

Yes and no.

PEG

And no? And no? I don't remember the no part being brought up before.

MARTY

Well, I'm bringing it up now.

PEG

I can see that. Fire away.

MARTY

Peg, the NAA certification test is based on the Merchant Marine navigation ticket. It assumes college level algebra, geometry, and advanced trigonometry. It's a seven hour exam, with one hundred and twenty challenge questions that requires a ninety-seven percent

score to pass.

PEG

Oh, yeah?

MARTY

Yeah.

PEG

So, you were pulling my leg all along?

MARTY

Well, I wouldn't say....

PEG

Figuring once we got rolling, and had a few investors, that you could break the news to me, and it would be too late for us to back out?

MARTY

That's not exactly...

PEG

Sort of playing me for a sucker, buying me books and slide rules when you knew all along that I couldn't pass any test?

MARTY

The thing is, Peg...

PEG

The thing is, you lied to me.

MARTY

Aw, now Peg. It just boiled down to there's no way I'm was gonna risk you neck over this. I'm the pilot, remember?

PEG

I guess that makes me just the dumb wife, who can be lied to and made a fool of because Marty Jenson wants his name in the history books.

MARTY

Hey, listen to me, Peg.

PEG

No, you listen. You hear that?

MARTY

What?

PEG

That ringing sound?

MARTY

What...?

She slaps him on the face, hard.

PEG

Hear it now, Mr. History Books?

She exits in a huff. Marty picks up her slide rule, begins to fiddle with it. Discovering he has it upside down, he throws it to the table in disgust.

Lights out

SCENE - HONOLULU STREET

Nelson sells paper.

NELSON

PAYPAH! PAYPAH! DEMPSEY KO'S SHARKEY
IN THE 15TH! DEMPSEY WINS. PAYPAH, Paypah.

Emma enters.

EMMA

I brought you a bento.

NELSON

Mom, I still got the sandwiches you made. You
shouldn't come all the way down here, just to make
me eat again.

EMMA

Oh, be quiet. I still have to look out for you, even if you
are thirteen going on twenty-four.

(beat)

Peg is going to be staying over tonight, so don't wake her up when you come in, OK?

NELSON

Auntie Peg? At our place?

EMMA

She had a big fight with Marty, and she moved out.

NELSON

Nah! Marty going to pull out of the race then?

EMMA

If he has any sense. Peg wants him to.

NELSON

He can't! He's got everyone in Hawaii counting on him. If he pulls out, he's going to look pretty stupid. We gotta talk her out of it, Mom.

EMMA

They don't need any advice from the likes of us. Neither one of us is exactly qualified to be a marriage counselor.

(beat)

Your father called today.

NELSON

What did that bum want? A receipt for his twenty-five dollars?

EMMA

Nelson, that's enough. He wants to see us. The two of us, together.

NELSON

Why?

EMMA

He wouldn't say. But I've got a pretty good idea.

NELSON

So?

EMMA

I've heard his wife left him.

NELSON

So?

EMMA

So, maybe he's ready to be a father, after all.

NELSON

What?

EMMA

He's always cared about me, and you, too. But he wanted to be fair to his wife, and I can't fault him for that.

NELSON

You mean, he going to live with us? Where's Auntie Peg going to sleep? On the lanai?

EMMA

No, lolo. We'd move up to Wheeler Field.

NELSON

Forget it! I won't go live with that chump. He can't just take over our life. We don't need him. We don't need anybody, remember?

EMMA

No, we don't need him. But he is your father, and I love him. So keep an open mind, alright? You'd like him, Nelson. He's a pilot, he loves kids, and your getting to the age where a father would be a real help.

NELSON

I don't need him. I don't need anybody. I don't need you either!

He gathers up his paper.

NELSON

PAYPAH! DEMPSEY BEATS SHARKY!
DEMPSEY BEATS SHARKEY IN 15! PAYPAH!

He exits. Lights out.

SCENE - FLYNT AIRPORT

Millie, Augie, and Malloska look to the sky. SOUND of an airplane approaching, full throttle.

MILLIE

Here she comes! She's a beaut, isn't she!

MALLOSKA

I'll say. Well, Augie, what do you think?

AUGIE

She's a sturdy little number, but kind of fat in the beam.

MALLOSKA

She can carry more gasoline than any model available.
I don't want you and Millie ending up in a life raft
somewheres.

AUGIE

I can appreciate that. But with a double wing, the
extra drag means more fuel consumption, so your
back to square one. I'd have a preferred a monoplane,
Mr. Malloska.

MALLOSKA

I drop 18 grand on a new ship for you, and the best
you can say is "I'd have preferred a monoplane?"

AUGIE

I had plenty to say earlier, but you weren't listening.
Your business contacts with Buhl Aviation seemed more
important..

MALLOSKA

You got the damn engine you asked for! Don't
I get a thank you for that?

AUGIE

(means it)

Thank you for that.

MALLOSKA

Millie, I finally decided on a name for her. *Spirit of Flynt* just wasn't the kind of moniker that does us justice. The *Malloska Messenger* sounded too much like some two-bit newspaper. I'm gonna call her *The Miss Doran*.

Millie lights up.

MILLIE

No! You can't. Its too much! Isn't it?

MALLOSKA

Heck, no. You're the one everybody's interested in. You've gotten more ink that all the others combined. They're gonna forget all about that Lindbergh character by the time we're through. Miss Doran and Mollaska Petroleum, a couple of real winners.

SOUND of the plane flying past, so low the three of them duck down.

MILLIE

Wow, whee!

MALLOSKA

That's Ferd Smith, Buhl's test pilot. What a showman 'ey, Pedlar?

AUGIE

What an idiot, you mean. He's supposed to be delivering a plane, not showboating for a crowd!.

SOUND of the plane doing aerobatics, the engine screaming.

MALLOSKA

Don't worry, Pedlar.. We don't take delivery until he lands. If he cracks up, that's Buhl's problem, not mine.

MILLIE

Wow, look at that! He's a pilot all right!

AUGIE

(growing agitated)

He's a moron, and he's stressing my engine. That engine doesn't have five hours on it!

SOUND of the engine screaming, at high revs. Augie begins to wave his arms, yelling up at the plane.

AUGIE

Cut it out! Stop it! You going to score the block!

MALLOSKA

Holy cow, look at that loop. I told you Buhl knows how to build them.

AUGIE

(to the heavens)

Idiot! Moron!

MILLIE

Look, what a landing! He can sure handle that stick.

Augie runs off stage, in a fury.

AUGIE

Come here, you! I want to talk to you!

MILLIE

(to Malloska)

He sure is upset.

(looks off)

Augie! Augie!

She runs off in the same direction, alarmed by what she sees offstage, followed by Malloska.

MALLOSKA

Pedlar! Put down that wrench! Put the wrench down, Pedlar!

They exit.

Lights out.

SCENE - THE JENSON BUNGALOW

Marty, in his flying gear, enters as Peg is packing a suitcase. They look at each other, long faced.

PEG

Have you seen my swimsuit? The one with the grey skirt?

MARTY

Haven't seen it.

PEG

Are you sure?

MARTY

Now I remember. I must have left it at the cabana the last last time I wore it surfing.

PEG

Ha, ha. It is to laugh. I bet you'll be just hysterical when you get served the divorce papers.

MARTY

Aw, c'mon, Peg. Don't be talking like that.

PEG

I can't talk about divorce, but its all right for you to lie through your teeth? Where did I put that suit?

MARTY

The one with the grey skirt? That was the one you were wearing, at least for a while, the night we took a swim out to....

PEG

Hold it right there, Buster. This is your future ex-wife you're talking to, not some boozy floozy.

MARTY

Yeah, but you were *my* boozy floozy. And I loved you like crazy that night. Still do.

PEG

Its a little late for that kind of talk. Forward my mail to Emma's place. I left the address in the kitchen.

MARTY

Would it do me any good to apologize?

PEG

No. How do I know it wouldn't be another lie?

MARTY

Cross my heart and hope to....

(pause)

Ah, cross my heart.

PEG

You really think that's all it takes? Say your sorry, and get over it, Peg.

MARTY

I know you better than that.

PEG

I'm not so sure you really know me at all. I was ready to go to hell and back with you.

MARTY

Well, at least to Oakland and back.

PEG

That's it, Mr. Smartmouth. Just remember, when your phone doesn't ring, it's me not calling!

She heads for the door in a huff.

MARTY

I'm quitting the race.

PEG

Say again?

MARTY

I'm not going. Becoming the most famous guy in the world won't mean a thing to me, if I can't have you with me.

PEG

It wouldn't?

MARTY

Nope. Sure, I'd have money, and fancy cars, and all the broads a guy could want....

PEG

Hey, just stick to groveling like a dog, I liked that better.

.

MARTY

I'm pulling out of the race, baby. And I'm asking you to forgive me.

PEG

You mean it?

He takes an envelope from his pocket.

MARTY

My letter of withdrawal. Here, you mail it.

She takes the envelope, looks over the letter.

PEG

No tricks this time?

MARTY

No tricks

PEG

I forgive you.

They kiss.

PEG (con't)

You really hurt me, sugar.

MARTY

I know. And I feel rotten about it.

PEG

OK, you can go.

MARTY

What?

PEG

You can stay in the race.

MARTY

That's swell of you, doll. It really is. But the whole thing was probably just a pipe dream. We can barely make the rent and I'm talking about raising twenty grand?

PEG

Well, before you put your foot in your mouth the other night, I was about to tell you that Mr. Goodman called from the Buick dealership and pledged five

grand.

MARTY
(brightens up)

Really?

PEG

Really. He said he might be able to raise more down
at his country club.

MARTY
Yeeeeoooooh! That's.... That's... I love you pieces,
baby, I really do

PEG

And you'll never lie to me again? Promise?

MARTY
Promise. Not about important things, anyway.

PEG

What's that mean? C'mon, come clean.

MARTY

Well. After you told me you were leaving, I used that
swimsuit to wash the Ford.

Lights out

SCENE - DALLAS AIRPORT

Bill Erwin is speaks to the audience, as flashbulbs pop. SOUND of a crowd.

ERWIN

I just want to thank ya'll for seeing me off to California
today and for the tremendous amount of support that the
city has shown for my entry in the Pacific Air Race.
And as a very small token of thanks, I have named my ship
the *Dallas Spirit*, after being advised by some pointy-headed
newspapermen that my original choice, *Hell Bent for Honolulu*
would make a lousy headline. A lot of people
have been wishing me "good luck" lately, but when it
comes to flying I believe you make your own luck...

CROSSFADE lights to another airport farewell, with Bill Malloska addressing the crowd, with Augie and
Millie by his side, Millie dressed in trendy aviatrix fashions of plus-fours, with Argyll socks. Augie still is

his checkered suit and panama hat.

MALLOSKA

...I believe you make your own luck in this world, and I would never risk the life of a loved one, or even a pilot for that matter, counting on luck alone to see them through. That's why Malloska Petroleum has purchased the very finest airship available today, the Buhl Air Sedan, manufactured right here in the Wolverine State. The *Miss Doran*, I am confident, will soon join the *Spirit of St. Louis* as a sacred icon of the new American age of aviation. I'll be leaving for Honolulu myself today, playing it safe by train and ship, to greet the Miss Doran as she lands in the winners circle. So, as we say our fond farewells to Mildred Doran and Augie Pedlar, we wish them not good luck, but godspeed, and look forward to reading the headlines this August 17th...

CROSSFADE lights to another farewell, this one at the ship's rail platform. Marty, wearing leis, addresses the crowd from hand-held text with Peg, Emma, Nelson, and Dole standing nearby.

MARTY

...reading the headlines this August 17th, and finding that a haole boy from Hawaii has the prize in hand, a prize that will send aloha from our islands to every corner of the globe. I can't even begin to express my thanks to my fine sponsors, to Mr. Dole here for putting up the prize, and to my wonderful wife, Peg, who has been the real sparkplug behind our fundraising effort.

Peg calls out over the SOUND of the crowd.

PEG

We're still two thousand short, kiddo! I'll be passing the hat later!

MARTY

She's not kidding, either. And remember, any pledge over a hundred dollars will be repaid from the purse money.

SOUND of the ship's horn giving a warning blast. SOUND of a brass band playing *Aloha Oe*.

MARTY

Aloha! See you on the 17th! Bye, Peg! You're the best!

PEG

Marty Jenson, you better win, or we'll be in hock up

to our ears!

MARTY

You can bet on it! But I guess we already have! Aloha!

Lights on Marty fade, leaving the others. Dole steps up and addresses the crowd.

DOLE

It sure is gratifying to see all you folks out here, wishing our very own Marty Jenson good luck. Of course, I can't take sides in this race, but just between you and me, I think Marty is a fine guy and one heck of a pilot, and I'm looking forward to greeting him at Wheeler Field with a lei, a bottle of champ.... ah, pineapple juice, and maybe even a big fat check!

Dole gives a final wave. Peg, Emma and Nelson begin to exit. Dole hurries over to them.

DOLE (con't)

Mrs Jenson, could I talk to you for a moment?

Peg looks puzzled.

PEG

Sure. You two go ahead, I'll catch up.

CROSSFADE lights as Emma and Nelson continue to walk.

NELSON

Marty's going to win, I just know it. He's the best.

EMMA

He's still got to find a plane, and a navigator, not to mention a few thousand more dollars. I sure hope it all falls together for them.

(beat)

Your father's supposed to meet us at Peg's place this Sunday. Are you ready to talk with him?

NELSON

I guess. It might be OK living up at Wheeler. I'd get to see the planes everyday. But how am I going to make money? Do people buy papers up in Wahiawa?

EMMA

Last I heard, you have to be able to read to get into the Army.

NELSON

Army guys are lousy tippers.

They exit. CROSSFADE lights to Dole and Peg.

DOLE

I thought I should tell you personally, because its going to be in the afternoon paper. There's been another fatality.

PEG

Oh, Lord. Who was it?

DOLE

Art Rogers, in the *City of Los Angeles*. He was taking off for Oakland when his ship stalled. He was wearing a parachute and jumped, but he was too low and was killed.

PEG

Just tell me his wife wasn't there.

DOLE

I'm afraid she was.

(beat)

Mrs Jenson, I'm having serious second thoughts about this whole enterprise. I've talked to our board about canceling, but they say we'll be sued from here to Sunday.

PEG

Its not your fault Mr. Dole. Flying is risky. Always has been. Marty says thats what makes pilots into heros.

DOLE

Three dead, and the race isn't even under way. I never expected so many entries. Captain Lindbergh himself has said off the record that he won't enter because its too dangerous, and we've got fourteen entries, including that Doran woman who wants to ride over as a passenger. Your husband seems like a fine young man, and I wouldn't want him on my conscience with the rest.

PEG

Don't you worry about Marty. He's a big boy. And no one's going to blame you, Mr. Dole.

DOLE

Too late. They already are. I thought the NAA boys would take care of the safety details. Where's the NAA, that's what I want to know?

Lights out.

SCENE - OAKLAND AIRPORT OFFICE

Marty, Augy and Erwin sit in front of a desk, shifting uncomfortably in their seats. Behind the desk, in full uniform, is Major BILL "SCOTTY" BREINGAN, of the Royal British Flying Corps. He is closely examines paperwork on the desk, and with a thick Scottish burr, grills each pilot in turn.

BREINGAN

Gentleman, the race is down to eight entrance, the others having withdrawn due to accidents, lack of funds, or a sudden case of common sense. Your the final three to be certified. Pedlar. You've got the only biplane left in the race. Doesn't that ring any alarm bells to ya?

AUGIE

The engine is what counts, Major. I've got a J-5, like the rest.

BREINGAN

Didn't stop ya from bein' forced down into a cornfield north a Modesto on yes way hear. What was the problem?

AUGIE

I hit turbulence crossing the Sierras, sir. It knocked a fuel line loose.

BREINGAN

And your expecting nothing but clear skies to Honolulu?

AUGIE

No, sir. I'm not expecting any mountains, either.

BREINGAN

Your navigator, Lt. Vilas Knope. He done any flying before?

AUGIE

Quite a bit, over Southern California mostly.

BREINGAN

He has your complete confidence?

AUGIE

He's an Annapolis man. Been navigating at sea for over ten years.

BREINGAN

Well, that's saying something. There's been talk of some pilots trying to sign on their wives as navigators. Can you credit that, then?

He shoots Marty a look, and Jenson avoids his glare.

BREINGAN

Now to the obvious. Mildred Doran. Have you takin' leave of your senses man? She represents a hundred miles of fuel. Your riskin' her life for no good reason. If she was your kin, would you permit it?

AUGIE

She's in the contract I signed with my employer. Besides, Miss Doran is very ambitious, and won't be denied. If it was up to me, I'd ground her.

BREINGAN

We'd be in agreement then. But there's nothing in the guidelines to prevent it.

(he stamps a form)

You've got clearance. But remain seated, I've got more to say.

(beat)

Erwin. I've got some serious reservations about your equipment. Your Swallow, to start. There's no manifest on her.

ERWIN

It's a copy. Their chief engineer quit last year,

and he built me the exact same plane.

BREINGAN

Oh, that's comforting. He build it in his garage on the weekends, did he?

ERWIN

Its good as an original.

BREINGAN

So good you were only forced down twice on your flight from Dallas. You planning to outfit her with pontoons for the race?

ERWIN

Look, I've read and re-read the rules. I am in full compliance. And I don't need some limey uniform cracking wise with me.

BREINGAN

A limey? I'm a Scotsman, Erwin. If you're going to insult a man, try to get your facts straight. I'm hoping your navigator is better at geography than your miserable self.

(reads from papers)

Lt. Commander Alvin H. Eichwoldt, US Navy Reserve. He's qualified, alright. He's also got a wife and four young ones at home. You want that on your conscience, do yah?

ERWIN

He contacted me. If his old lady's right with it, then who am I to deny him his day in the sun?

Breingan frowns, stamps his papers.

BREINGAN

Your cleared.

(beat)

Now then, Mr. Jenson. No plane, no navigator, and a very interesting fuel arrangement. Talk to me, Jenson. The final deadline is this Sunday, noon.

MARTY

I've completed arrangements to take delivery of a Breese.

She's a solid ship, and its being fitted with a J-5 with a hundred hours on it. I've got a strong lead on a navigator, Paul Schluter, a Merchant Marine man. He Captains the SS Nome, but he's taken a month's leave hoping to get in on the race.

BREINGAN

So far then, you've got a ship and a crew in theory, only. Now, what about your fuel situation? Am I reading this application right?

MARTY

I won't have time to outfit my ship with an adequate cabin tank, so I'll be carrying two hundred gallons in five gallon cans, properly secured. The navigator will fill the fuselage tank every fifteen minutes with the individual cans, and dump them overboard to save weight.

The other men stare at him in disbelief.

BREINGAN

Interesting. Let me ask your fellow pilots of their opinion on this. Pedlar?

AUGIE

It's asking a lot of your navigator. He'll have his hands full without having to manhandle gas cans in a cramped cabin.

BREINGAN

Erwin?

AUGIE

I'm not big on a lot of rules, myself. But your runnin' a pretty good risk of turnin' yourself into a roman candle, partner. Sparking in the fuselage is not unheard of if you run into a storm front. But what the hell, its your funeral.

BREINGAN

And there's the matter of the ejected cans taking out part of your tail section. All in all, its a desperate, nay, even foolish plan, not worthy of an aviation professional.

MARTY

There's nothing in the rules that prohibits it.

BREINGAN

Ah, but that was before the rules committee read your application. We then came up with Article 4A. It requires all fuel to be carried in sealed tanks. We call it the Jenson rule, in yes rather dubious honor.

(stamps paper)

Certification denied. If you can configure yourself properly by day after tomorrow, I'll re-examine your entry.

(beat)

Now then, I'll tell the three of 'yah you what I've told all the others. Vertigo during prolonged blind flying is a reality. The "Death Spiral" is not a myth, not at all. Its not like a tailspin. The more you think your correcting, the tighter you work into the spiral, and once you pass critical, your locked in. I've been in one myself, and I can tell you that if I hadn't chanced into the clear, I wouldn't be talkin' to you today. And I've been aloft since 1915. There *will* be fogs and weather fronts over your route. Stay above or below the soup, keep your horizon reference and you'll have the best of it. Good luck, men. Lord knows, you'll need it. If you've any questions, I'll be on the field the rest of the day.

He exits. Marty is fuming.

MARTY

The Jenson rule! What the hell is all that? They're making this stuff up as they go along.

AUGIE

It's the fatalities. Its got the committee rattled.

ERWIN

Bad luck, partner. I'd cancel that plane order of yours.

MARTY

I'm no quitter, Bill. I'll make that deadline somehow.

(beat)

Say, what do you guys figure on this vertigo? We've all flown blind and one time or another. Its seat of the pants, but I've never had a problem.

AUGIE

Sure, for a few minutes at a time. It depends on how long you're socked in.

ERWIN

Hell, I still say its a matter of experience. I've spent hours in the soup without a problem. I'm not gonna burn fuel duckin' and dodgin' every cloud I see.

AUGIE

I got Millie to worry about, so I'm gonna get above the clouds, and stay there. How about you, Marty?

MARTY

I gotta be first, no matter what. So, I'll stay below the soup until I burn off some fuel, then I can climb to altitude faster and save time.

ERWIN

I'll be waiting at Wheeler to greet both you boys. Experience will out. I'm headin' over to that speakeasy 'cross the tracks. You guys want to join me for some fortified ice tea?

MARTY

Maybe later, Bill.

ERWIN

Pedlar? Its a Pilot's clubhouse, but hell, I'll vouch for ya!

AUGIE

Don't drink.

ERWIN

They got one hell of a nickel lunch.

AUGIE

Now your talking my language.

As Pedlar and Erwin move towards the exit. PAUL SCHLUTER enters, wearing an ill fitting suit. He speaks to the two pilots in a heavy German accent.

SCHLUTER

Martin Yenson?

Erwin shakes a thumb towards Marty as he and Pedlar exit. Schluter approaches Marty, who is making notes in a log.

SCHLUTER (con't)

Mr. Yenson?

MARTY

Close enough.

SCHLUTER

Captain Paul Schluter, at your service.

MARTY

Well, welcome. I figured you'd be wearing your uniform.

SCHLUTER

Mr. Yenson, you are in a rival industry. I go as a civilian, yes?

MARTY

Ever been up in an airplane before?

SCHLUTER

No. But I can navigate upside down, if necessary.

MARTY

Good, it may be necessary.

SCHLUTER

You make joke, yes?

MARTY

Yes. I can't pay you a dime.

SCHLUTER

I have no need of your dime. I go for the glory.

MARTY

We don't go at all if I don't find three four-by-eight sheets of aluminum and a welding rig in the next forty-eight hours.

SCHLUTER

My ship is in dry dock for repairs. I have influence at the shipyard. Perhaps I could be of assistance?

MARTY

Paul, I think this is the beginning of a remarkable friendship.

SCHLUTER

Please, call me Captain Schluter.

MARTY

OK. You can call me General Jenson.

(beat)

I make joke, yes!

SOUND of an airplane on approach. Breingan enters.

BREINGAN

Jenson, your Breese is headin' in for a landin.

Lights out.

SCENE - THE JENSON BUNGALOW

Peg is gathering her purse and rolls of tickets, getting ready to leave. Emma is counting cash from a bank bag, while Nelson watches, sipping a coke. Emma and Nelson are dressed in their Sunday best aloha wear.

EMMA

Its all here. Fifty dollars for making change, and the guest register for everyone to sign. Got enough tickets, Peg?

PEG

Enough for a sellout, but I think a three quarters house will put us over the top. Thanks for all the help.

NELSON

Good luck, Auntie Peg. Make lots of money.

PEG

We were sure lucky to get a Mary Pickford film for the benefit. Wallace Beery just wouldn't have done it for us. Marty wired that he's down to his last twenty bucks.

(beat)

Well, good luck with the... the ah.. Meeting?

EMMA

Close enough.

PEG

Try to keep an open mind, Nelson. Its not gonna be easy for him, either.

NELSON

As long as he doesn't expect me to call him Dad. He'll be lucky I don't call him.....

EMMA

Nelson!

PEG

Gotta run. Love you both for helping me out the last couple of weeks. When Marty wins, we'll all go out together and paint the town.

She exits.

NELSON

Mom, what if Marty dies?

EMMA

Don't talk like that. Its bad luck.

NELSON

But what if he does? What's Auntie Peg going to do if he dies? She going to wait on tables with you down at the grill?

EMMA

Better we talk about us.

(she gives Nelson a once over)

You look very handsome, keiki. A real little man any father would be proud of.

NELSON

You two going to get married then?

EMMA

These things are complicated. A divorce could take quite a while. And the military doesn't approve of divorced officers, or Polynesian wives for that matter.

We'll work it out. But you are going to have to go along with whatever happens, Nelson. Its a family were trying to make here.

NELSON

Why did you pick him, Mom? Did he lie to you?

EMMA

No. I knew he was married. I was young, and a little wild. There was a war on, and there's just something about a uniform.

NELSON

You did it with him because he wore a uniform?

EMMA

Hey! That's enough, OK? One of these days you'll make your own mistakes, and you won't appreciate me making judgements about you!

NELSON

OK, OK. He just better not try to treat me like some kid. I'm a businessman, see. And if he can't take me up in his airplane, then what good is he? Does he like to fish? Maybe we could...

SOUND of the phone ringing.

EMMA

I better answer that. It might be a telegram from Marty.

(picks up phone)

Hello? Oh, Hi! Yes, we're waiting.

(beat)

Yes, I see.

(beat)

Well, I wouldn't want that.

(beat)

Keep it. We're doing just fine.

(beat)

He'll get over it. And so will I.

(beat)

No, I'd rather you didn't. Let's not play any more games, then. Thanks. Goodbye.

She hangs up. Nelson and Emma look at each other with a silent understanding of what's happened.

EMMA

Come on. We can still catch the matinee.

She gathers up her things, trying to contain herself.

NELSON

You OK?

EMMA

(sadly)

No.

NELSON

Does it make you feel better if I say I feel rotten, too?

EMMA

No.

They look at each other.

NELSON

He's a chump!

EMMA

(simultaneous)

He's a chump!

They smile. Emma hugs him tightly.

Lights out.

SCENE - MARTY'S BREESE airplane.

Marty is at the controls of the ship, with Schluter seated behind him in the cabin area. The tube steel outline is mounted on a teeter-totter, and the two actors manipulate its angle by shifting their weight. SOUND of airplane engine, revving, screaming, diving. Marty is smiling, enjoying putting the plane through its paces. Schluter clings to the cabin frame for dear life, white as a sheet.

Lights out

SCENE - OAKLAND SPEAKEASY

Erwin is holding court at the bar rail, while Al takes notes and Joe wields a flash camera. Augie stand nearby, eating a sandwich, going over paper work with Breingan.

ERWIN

So the Kraut sees my markings, and he figures 'cause I'm with a spotter squadron, he's only got to keep half an eye on me while he jumps a Spad. 'Cept I get into the sun, drop in, and get him. He was my eighth and last, making me the 13th ranked American ace of the war.

AL

No kiddin'? Lucky thirteen, ey?

BREINGAN

Erwin, what about the eleven other pilots that tied you for that record?

ERWIN

I'm sure they're braggin' about it, too, partner. And none of them did it in a spotter.

BREINGAN

Which explains maybe why you were shot down five times, I suppose?

ERWIN

Four times! Four. Collisions don't count.

JOE

Does that make you the leading ace from Texas, Bill?

ERWIN

Sure does, partner.

BREINGAN

Cut the bull, Erwin. You we're born in New York, its common knowledge.

ERWIN

Say, Major, how would you like to go around back and continue this discussion, private like?

AL

Now, now, boys. We came here to interview pilots, not stir up a controversy.

JOE

No, sir, not our style, is it, Al? Say, any more pilots in here?

BREINGAN

There's Pedlar, here.

Al

Pedlar? Whose he?

BREINGAN

He'll be flying the *Miss Doran*.

JOE

Well, now, that's more like it.

They move to Augie.

AL

Is it true Millie is worth a million and a half?

JOE

I hear Ramon Navarro flew up from Hollywood just to take her to dinner.

AUGIE

You can ask her yourself.

He nods towards the entrance as Millie enters, in one of her chic flying outfits. The two reporters rush over to her.

AL

Miss Doran! Miss Doran!

JOE

Over here, Miss Doran. Gives us a smile!

Millie poses artfully when she sees the camera.

Lights Out

SCENE - HONOLULU STREET CORNER

Nelson is hawking papers.

NELSON

PAYPAH! PAYPAH! AIR RACE UNDER WAY

AT NOON TOMORROW! LOCAL PILOT LAST
TO QUALIFY! AIR RACE TOMORROW! PAYPAH!
Paypah. Paypah.

Lights out.

SCENE - OAKLAND AIRPORT OFFICE

Breingan is at his desk as Marty rushes in, carrying two carpenter's levels.

MARTY

Major! I've come up with something! A blind flying gauge! Mount these at ninety-degree angles in the cockpit, then if your socked you've got a reference for both tilt and yaw! If I can get a patent application off, I'll be willing to share the idea with the other pilots. Damn clever, don't you think?

BREINGAN

Oh, yah, a stroke of brilliance. Gimme those.

Marty hands over the levels. Breingan crosses one over the other.

BREINGAN

Keep yes eyes on the bubbles.

Marty watches closely as Breingan moves the two levels in a slow, gradual downward spiral. The two bubbles stay centered. Breingan finishes the spiral by dropping the two levels into his wastebasket. Marty looks embarrassed.

BREINGAN

Stay out of the soup, Jenson.

Lights out

SCENE - JENSON BUNGALOW

Peg, Emma and Nelson are gathered around the radio. SOUND of a RADIO ANNOUNCER.

ANNOUNCER

This is KGU Radio, bring you live coverage, via telegraph report, on the Great Pacific Air Race, set to get under way at 10 am local time, just a few moments from now. The entrants have drawn lots for their takeoff positions, and will depart at two minute intervals. A crowd estimated at 75,000 is at Oakland Airport to watch the spectacle, along with

reporters from every corner of the globe. With eight entrants qualified to start, local pilot Martin Jenson, in his Breese monoplane, *The Aloha*, has drawn number six.

Peg and the others cheer.

PEG

Yay, Marty! Go sugar, go!

CROSSFADE to central playing area, representing Oakland Airport. Al and Joe are taking notes. Marty, Erwin and Augie are in their planes, at the controls. We can see Paul Schluter in the cabin of the *Aloha*. SOUND of an engine revving. They look off in the same direction.

AL(con't)

There goes Benny Griffin.

CROSSFADE to Jenson bungalow.

ANNOUNCER

And the first plane, *The Oklahoma*, a Travel Air 5000, Benny Griffin at the controls, is reported to have taken off uneventfully. Next up is the *El Encanto*, a craft designed by its pilot, Lt. Norm Goddard, a Naval Reserve officer.

CROSSFADE to Oakland. SOUND of engine straining.

JOE

He better grab some air soon, or he's out of runway.

AL

Oh, boy. He's starting to weave.

JOE

Look out, he's in trouble!

AL

(alarmed)

Oh!

JOE

Holy cow!

CROSSFADE to bungalow.

ANNOUNCER

The *El Encanto* has crashed on takeoff. Repeat, pilot Norman Goddard ground looped his plane on takeoff, but he and his navigator are reported to be unhurt, and there was no fire, repeat, no fire.

NELSON

Those guys are sure lucky.

PEG

I'll say.

ANNOUNCER

The runway is not blocked, so the *Pabco Pacific Flyer* will depart next, on schedule.

CROSSFADE to airport. SOUND of departing plane.

AL

She's going long, too.

JOE

Yeah, but he's off!

AL

And he's back!

JOE

He sure bounced hard. Busted his tail skid.

AL

He's cutting his engine. Its an abort.

JOE

Smart man. Who's up next?

AL

The Golden Eagle. My money's on these boys.

JOE

Sure. Fastest airspeed of the bunch. Best equipment, too. That Vega of their's sure cuts clean.

CROSSFADE to bungalow.

ANNOUNCER

Jack Frost and Gordon Cooper are off to a fast start in *The Golden Eagle*. They only needed half of the runway to clear, and are reported to be climbing confidently over the skyline of San Francisco.

NELSON

Marty better worry about these fellahs.

EMMA

Have you seen their pictures, Peg? Dreamy. Like a couple of movie stars.

PEG

It takes more than a pretty face to make a good pilot. Marty proves that.

CROSSFADE to airport. Marty, Augie, and Erwin, in their flight gear, have gathered to say their final goodbyes. Schluter waits inside the *Aloha*, checking and rechecking his charts.

MARTY

Bill, Augie. Take care of yourself. I'll show you the islands when we get there.

ERWIN

Sure. Just don't get sore when you see me parked at the hanger when you reach Wheeler.

AUGIE

Thanks, Marty. Luck to you both.

Millie enters, waving to the audience. Al and Joe rush over for a final interview.

AL

Millie, how do you feel? Are you nervous?

MILLIE

I'm fine. I'm looking forward to the flight, and to meeting up with my sponsor, Mr. Malloska, of Malloska Petroleum, when we arrive in Honolulu.

JOE

Millie, any final words to your fans around the world?

MILLIE

Follow your dreams. I was just a small town Michigan girl, and look at me now.

Augie approaches, putting on his helmet.

AUGIE

Leave off, boys. We're up. You OK, Millie?

MILLIE

Sure, Augie. I know you'll get us there.

AUGIE

Is Vilas on board?

MILLIE

Since breakfast. He's raring to go.

AUGIE

Lets get gone.

Millie poses for a last round of photos as FLASHBULBS pop. She waves to the crowd. SOUND of cheers and applause. She and Augie take their places in the plane.

CROSSFADE to bungalow.

ANNOUNCER

Next up is that crowd pleasing favorite, the Buhl biplane *Miss Doran*.

NELSON

No chance. Its way too slow.

ANNOUNCER

Plucky aviatrix Mildred Doran, "The Flying Schoolmarm" has charmed newspaper readers worldwide with her stylish flying outfits and her girlish enthusiasm. Perhaps no one since Captain Lindbergh has contributed more to advancing the cause of civil aviation.

PEG

Oh, gag! She's contributing as much as a hundred and twenty pound suitcase. What about Marty?

CROSSFADE to airport. Marty confers with Schluter at the monoplane.

MARTY

Remember, because of the engine noise, you'll have to communicate by passing notes over the top of the cabin tank. I'll have my hands full, so it'll be pretty much a one way deal. The big tank has no fuel gage, so use the dip stick and keep me posted every two hours on how many gallons we've got left. I'll stay under a hundred feet for the first few hours. You'll have to dead reckon us until I climb to altitude, then you can shoot the stars and sun.

SCHLUTER

I keep us on course, no problem, with the stars. If we do not see the islands in the morning, the noon sighting will be critical.

MARTY

(alarmed)

Noon sighting? We could be ought of gas by noon. Go back to dead reckoning in the morning.

SCHLUTER

There is no way to calculate airspeed over water. What if we have already passed the islands?

MARTY

I'll take that chance. Forget the noon sighting.

SCHLUTER

Please, Mr. Yenson. You fly plane, I navigate.

MARTY

Oh, that's just swell, Paul! Didn't they teach you at the Marine Academy, one ship, one captain?

SOUND of engine revving.

SCHLUTER

There is biplane starting. We must hurry!

CROSSFADE to bungalow.

ANNOUNCER

Our apologies for the delay, folks. Cable traffic from the mainland has been understandably heavy today. But sit back, relax, and enjoy a bottle of Nifty Pop. Nifty Pop

not only refreshes, but is an excellent digestive aid after a hearty meal. Remember, everything just tastes better with Nifty Pop.

PEG

Yeah, if you can still eat after all your teeth fall out. Its made out of battery acid and molasses.

NELSON

Really?

ANNOUNCER

This word just in. The final four planes in the race, *The Miss Doran, The Aloha, The Woolaroc, and The Dallas Spirit*, have all departed without incident and are on their way to the Farallone Islands, the last land they'll see for over 2400 miles.

Peg, Emma and Nelson stand and cheer, hugging each other, jumping up and down.

PEG

Yay! Go Marty!

ANNOUNCER

Wait, there's more coming in over the wire. *The Oklahoma*, the first plane to leave Oakland, is reported to have returned to the airport, it's engine on fire!

CROSSFADE to Oakland. Major Breingan, a megaphone in hand, bellows to the audience.

BREINGAN

Clear the runway! Everyone off the damn runway! She's comin' straight in. Clear the runway, now!

AL

Oh, boy. Get the camera ready, Joe. This one could blow anytime. Don't know how he can see through all that smoke.

JOE

I'm loaded and ready. 400 gallons of gasoline. Holy moley, this could be the snap of the year!

AL

Hold on, he's got it on the grass. What a landing!

JOE
(disappointed)

Darn.

CROSSFADE to bungalow.

NELSON
It gets better and better, Auntie Peg. Marty's already moved up from number six to number three.

PEG
Let's wait for them chickens to hatch before we do any headcounts.

ANNOUNCER
Wait here's more. Bill Erwin's *Dallas Spirit* has also been forced to return, it fuselage damaged and trailing strips of fabric.

PEG
Maybe they're already hatching.

CROSSFADE to Oakland. Al and Joe follow Erwin across the playing area, trying to get information from the Pilot, who is livid.

AL
Bill, they're saying your navigator forgot to secure his hatch. Any comment?

JOE
You got time to do a patch job, Bill, or are you calling it a day?

ERWIN
Look at my godamn ship, you idiot! You think a needle and thread and a couple of drop-stitches is going to get me back up?

JOE
Should you have been trying to shoot the Pacific in a counterfeit Swallow, Bill?

ERWIN
(in a rage)

Come here, you little gutter rat!

He grabs Joe by the lapels of his suit and is about to do some damage. SOUND of an airplane engine, missing and backfiring. All three look off in the same direction.

CROSSFADE to bungalow.

ANNOUNCER

And now even *The Miss Doran* has been forced to return, missing on three cylinders. The word is pilot Augie Pedlar is working with his ground crew, hoping to make repairs in time to stay in the race.

NELSON

He's in second place! Go, Marty!

EMMA

At least no one's been hurt. It could have been a real massacre.

PEG

They can't get that biplane past the Golden Gate, and that fool pilot wants to stay in the race? What is he, some kind of a nutbar? It could take the edge right off a girl's enthusiasm for advancing the cause of civilian aviation.

CROSSFADE to Oakland. Al and Joe try to get a last quote from Millie and Augie, but Breingan pushes them back. Millie is agitated and near tears, with Augie trying to comfort her.

AL

Millie, how do you feel? Are you scared?

JOE

Millie, one last picture! Give us a smile, Millie!

BREINGAN

OK, that's enough, boys. Get back, now. Keep your distance, or I'll have the coppers on yah!

AL

Hey, what about the public's right to know? She's the big story here, Major. Always has been.

BREINGAN

Look, fellahs. Give her some air.

JOE

How's she holding up?

BREINGAN

Off the record? I mean it now. I'll box your ears, yah quote me on this.

JOE

Sure.

AL

Yeah, off the record.

BREINGAN

She's scared. I would be myself. Pedlar swaps out three spark plugs and wants to stay in the race. I'm trying to talk some sense into the both of them. Now off with youse.

Al and Joe take a step back, while Breingan joins Augie and Millie at the biplane. Millie is fighting for control.

MILLIE

Augie, it was making all that noise! Its never made noise like that before. You said the engine was the most important thing. You've always said that.

AUGIE

It was just some carbon build up, probably from a bad batch of gas. She's been drained and re-filled and sounds fine.

BREINGAN

Mildred, if the lads want to risk their necks, let 'em. But stay here, I'm beggin' yah, I truly am. They don't need you to get this plane to Wheeler Field.

MILLIE

I wouldn't want to disappoint Mr. Malloska. He's waiting for me.

BREINGAN

He can greet you at Honolulu Harbor, then. Him and Augie both.

AUGIE

got to be on
board.

(shakes his head)

Its in my contract, Major. If I go, she's

(checks his watch)

Miss Doran, either we go, or we don't. You've got to decide, or the clock decides for us.

MILLIE

You've always gotten me there, haven't you, Augie?

AUGIE

Every time, Millie. Every time.

MILLIE

Let's warm it up.

Breingan looks depressed as Millie boards the biplane. Augie raps sharply on the navigator's compartment.

AUGIE

Vilas! Its a go!

He hurries to take his seat. SOUND of engine being turned over.

CROSSFADE to bungalow.

ANNOUNCER

The Miss Doran once again took to the air at 2:03 pm California time, and was escorted as far as the Farallone Islands by several private planes containing newspaper reporters and photographers. And so, there we have it folks, four planes in the air, Hawaii bound at last, and what a day it has been. And now the long wait begins. It will be at least 24 to 26 hours before any plane can be expected to appear over Wheeler Field, where a large crowd is expected to be on hand to greet the winners and the also-rans. Also waiting will be a Hupmobile Super Six Sedan, to whisk the winners to a Waikiki luau being held in their honor. Yes, here in Honolulu, winners drive the Hupmobile. Go in style, go by Hupmobile.

PEG

I'm not looking forward to tonight. How am I going to sleep?

EMMA

We'll sit up with you.

NELSON

Sure, Auntie Peg. I can beat you at poker again. You and Marty are going to be rich soon, so I'll even take your IOU.

PEG

You're all heart, kid. But I feel a lucky streak coming on.

EMMA

I'm sure don't envy that Millie Doran, cooped up in the back of that plane. Can you just imagine? She'll be as bent as a hairpin after spending a full day in there.

PEG

She'll be fine. She's probably reading her press clippings by flashlight.

CROSSFADE to the biplane in flight. SOUND of the engine running smoothly at first, then beginning to stutter and cough. Millie begins to panic, clawing at the tube frame fuselage like an animal confined in a cage.

MILLIE

Augie? Augie, what's that noise? What's that noise! Augie! AUGIE!

SOUND of the engine sputtering to a stop. Millie's high pitched scream fills the darkened stage.

Lights out.

SCENE- JENSON BUNGALOW

Emma, Nelson and Peg are playing cards.

NELSON

I see your sunflower seed, and I raise you a bean.

EMMA

I'm out.

PEG

Your bean, and I raise you a miso peanut.

NELSON

A miso! What are you holding, a flush?

PEG

Cost you a peanut to find out.

NELSON

Call.

PEG

Straight to the king.

NELSON

Slap my face! Straight to the queen.

PEG

I'm on a roll!

She checks her watch.

PEG (con't)

Almost nine. Marty must be pretty tired by now.

Tough it out, sugar.

CROSSFADE to monoplane. SOUND of steady drone of the engine. Instrument lights illuminate Marty in the cockpit. SOUND of Marty in voice over.

MARTY (VO)

The Whirwind is purring like a kitten. Best aviation engine ever built. Now if only I could see worth a damn.

(sticks his head out of cockpit)

If it wasn't for a whitecap now and again, I might as well be flying in a closet. Sure wish this cloud cover would thin out, so Paul could shoot a star or two. Can't wavehop all night.

(checks watch)

Nine o'clock. OK, genius, time to stick to the game-plan. Up through the soup, and stay on top, or we could find out why dead reckoning starts with the word dead. Let's hope this cover has a low ceiling.

SOUND of the engine changing pitch. The actors shift their weight and the plane's nose tilts upward.

CROSSFADE to bungalow. Emma brings in folded paper boxes of food.

EMMA

Whose hungry? I picked up bentos.

NELSON

Bentos again? If I gotta eat one more bento, I'm gonna...

EMMA

Nelson, enough. You could eat your winnings, if you had any. I got you the teri-pork. Peg?

PEG

Thanks, Emma, but my stomach is just in knots. Maybe later.

CROSSFADE to plane.

MARTY(VO)

This soup is deep. Got no choice. Just gotta climb until we break through. We'll clear it soon. There'll be a half-moon up. Damn, I'll sure be happy to see that old moon. Hell, I'll be happy to see my wingtips again.

During the above, the plane has changed angle on its pivot point, slowly leveling off, then the nose begins to point down.

MARTY(VO)

Hey, I'm picking up speed. What the... It can't be, I'm still climbing. Aren't I?

CROSSFADE to bungalow. Emma and Nelson are asleep on the love seat Nelson's head on Emma's shoulder. Peg puts a record on the Victrola, and it plays a soft tune. She takes a cigarette case from her bag, lights up, begins to pace.

CROSSFADE to plane. The nose angles down more steeply now. SOUND of the engine picking up speed. Marty's VO sounds increasingly urgent.

MARTY(VO)

I'm going even faster. This is nuts. It can't be. Every-time I try to level off, I pick up speed! Its the spiral, that's what it is. Don't panic. Think, Jenson, think!

CROSSFADE to bungalow. Emma begins to stir, sees Peg pacing.

EMMA

You OK?

PEG

I'm sick with worry. I never should have let him do it. If anything happens, how can I help him, sitting here a thousand miles away? I never should have let him go!

CROSSFADE to plane. The angle of the nose is even steeper. Schluter has looked up from his logs, and is wondering what is going on.

MARTY(VO)

The major was right. Its a friggen' nightmare. You try to correct, you make it worse. I'm winding tighter and tighter. When I pass critical, we'll drop like a stone. Christ, Peg. I'm sorry, baby.

(beat)

Stay calm, Jenson. There's always a way. Stay calm and think. Think! What did the Major say? Not like a tailspin? Sure, *that* I could get out of. Done it a hundred times for the movies.

(beat)

Wait a minute! A tailspin. Yeah, a tailspin! Lord help us if I don't have the height for this!

He jams his right foot hard on the rudder pedal, and pulls his stick all the way back to his seat. The two actors fling themselves back in their seats, and the plane stands on its tail. SOUND of the engine oscillating in pitch as the two aviators rock violently back and forth in their seats. Schluter hangs on for dear life.

SCHLUTER

Aaaaaahhhh!

MARTY (VO)

Hold on, Paul. We're gettin out of this right...
Now!

Marty pushes the stick forward, standing on the left rudder pedal. The actors throw themselves forward, and the plane tilts down. Marty becomes alarmed, hauling back on the stick. This time we hear him directly.

MARTY

No, no! No!

His scream mingles with Schluter's.

Lights out.

SCENE - WHEELER FIELD

James Dole addresses the audience as FLASHBULBS pop. SOUND of crowd in BG.

DOLE

Morning, folks. Quite a crowd, I'll sure say.
I am looking forward to greeting all the contestants
here at Wheeler Field, but unfortunately only have
checks prepared for the first and second arrivals.

He holds up oversized checks, made out for 25,000 and 10,000 dollars.

DOLE (con't)

The Hawaiian Pineapple Company wishes there was
enough prize money to go around for all four of the
planes currently on route, but as in all contests, there
will be winners and also-rans. Of course, their order of
arrival does nothing to diminish the courage and
and determination of all the contestants. The Honolulu
Police estimate our crowd today at nearly 30 thousand.
I expect no one has traveled quite as far as my special
guest today, Mr. William Malloska of Flynt, Michigan,
here to greet his entrant, *The Miss Doran*.

Malloska joins Dole, attempts to take the 25,000 check from him.

MALLOSKA

I'll take that, Jim.

They share a laugh.

MALLOSKA (con't)

You can just fill in the name Malloska Petroleum, because
I am confident that Mildred, Augie Pedlar, and their
navigator, Vilas what's his name, will be the first to
touch down here in this island paradise of yours.

Peg, Emma, and Nelson enter, watch Dole.

DOLE

What are your first words going to be to Miss
Millie, Bill?

MALLOSKA

Well, congratulations for being first, of course, and I'll tell her she deserves every success in life, because it was her energy, and spirit that really put this contest on the front pages of newspapers all over the world. That and your 35 thousand bucks of course.

Dole spots Peg.

DOLE

And here we have Marguerite Jenson, wife of our local contestant, Martin Jenson. Peg, come on up here and say a few words.

Peg joins the two men.

PEG

Thanks, Mr. Dole. You'll have to excuse me, folks. I look like something the cat dragged in, but I didn't get much sleep last night.

DOLE

That's certainly understandable. Now Peg, if you could talk to Marty right now, what would you say to him?

PEG

I'd say I don't care how you get here, or when, just get here safe.

DOLE

She's terrific, isn't she folks?

SOUND of an airplane approaching. Everyone looks up. SOUND of crowd cheering.

DOLE

And here comes our first arrival. Say they made swell time didn't they?

He uses binoculars to look off.

Dole (con't)

Well, Bill, your congratulations are going to have to wait, 'cause its a monoplane I see arriving. Sure is. I can see her markings, now. Its Art Goebbles and Bill Davis in *The Woolaroc!*

SOUND of the crowd cheering, applauding. Peg and Malloska are less than thrilled.

Lights out.

SCENE - MONOPLANE

SOUND of engine. Marty is at the controls, trying to stay awake, shaking his head, slapping at his face with a gloved hand.

MARTY (VO)

Come on, Jenson. Stay alert. There's land out there somewhere. We've gotta be close. We better be close, gas is gonna be a problem soon.

(beat)

That was some roller coaster ride last night. What would I charge Hollywood for a tailspin ending with wet wheels? Sam Goldwin's wallet wouldn't be fat enough for that stunt.

(beat)

I am beat. Wave hopping all night long, praying for pink on that horizon. At least the soup is finally burning off. Paul can shoot the sun, and get us a fix.

Schluter leans forward and stretches over the top of the cabin fuel tank, just barely reaching Marty with a note clenched in his hand. He taps Jenson firmly on the shoulder. Marty, without breaking concentration on his flying, reaches up and takes the note. He reads.

MARTY (VO)

"Cannot obtain accurate position until noon sighting. Circle until noon. 40 gallons fuel remaining."

A note of panic creeps back into Marty's voice.

MARTY (VO)

Circle until noon? Is he out of his mind?

(checks watch)

If we're down to forty gallons, we'll be damn near dry by noon. Unless the islands are just over the horizon, we're cooked.

Marty squirms awkwardly in his seat, yelling back to get Schluter's attention.

MARTY

Hey! Heeeeyyyyyy!

Schluter looks forward. Marty points to the horizon, then gives the navigator a palms up "which way" signal. Unperturbed, Schluter rotates his finger, indicating they need to circle.

MARTY

No gas!

Schluter cups a hand to his ear, giving the “can’t hear” sign.

MARTY (con’t)

No gas, you idiot!

Unconcerned, Schluter continues to circle his finger.

Lights out.

SCENE - OAKLAND SPEAKEASY

Erwin and Joe share suspicious beverages at the rail.

ERWIN

Say, I didn’t mean to get all fired up the other day.
You’re an alright guy, for a newspaper man, I guess.

JOE

Apology, of sorts, accepted. The compliment of
dubious sincerity I’ll have to pass on.

ERWIN

Can I buy you another of whatever this stuff is we’re
choking down?

JOE

You, sir, are a gentleman and a... Well, a gentleman
certainly.

ERWIN

Tell you what, you buy this round and I’ll let you in
on an exclusive. You can lie about it first.

JOE

Oh, let’s not ruin this special moment with crass commercial
concerns.

ERWIN

Soon as my ship is patched up, me and Alvin are
gonna fly her over to Honolulu, the money be damned.

Joe raise his eyebrows in disbelief. He raises his glass, calling off.

JOE

Oh, mudtender! Well, Bill, I think your nuts, but then, that's just one sane man's opinion.

ERWIN

We're as good as anybody in this damn race, and we aim to prove it. Some radio station even offered to pick up our expenses if we carry a shortwave transmitter and send back reports while we're in range.

AL enters, waving a telegram.

AL

Hot off the wire.

(reads)

Woolaroc arrived Wheeler, wins 25K, stop. Goebel and Davis on way to Royal Hawaiian Hotel for well needed rest, stop. No sign of other entrants, stop.

Joe checks his watch.

JOE

That means *Golden Eagle* and *Aloha* are both overdue. Oh, boy.

AL

They were sighted during the night by ships. *The Miss Doran* must be flying over the soup, right Bill?

ERWIN

I sure hope so. I most surely do.

Lights out.

SCENE - MONOPLANE

An agitated Marty holds his hands overhead, tapping at his watch in a exaggerated manner. Schlutter is already shooting the sun with a sextant through an overhead hatch. He jots a note hurriedly and passes it forward. Marty reads it.

MARTY (VO)

"Heading is 235 degrees, south by southwest. We are 200 miles north of Oahu"

(beat)

200 miles! 200 miles! Hell, we'll have to swim the last hundred and fifty! Peg would have made a better navigator than this stubborn damn Kraut.

(beat)

Don't panic, Jenson. Think, think!

(beat)

Maybe we can find a ship, ditch alongside it. Otherwise, we're dead men.

Marty frantically waves to Jenson, tries to signal him to look for ships. Schluter just shrugs and leans back in his seat. Marty screams to be heard over the engine.

MARTY

You IDIOT!

Lights out.

SCENE - WHEELER FIELD

Dole, with his field glasses, continues to scan the horizon. SOUND of a restless crowd. Peg, Malloska, Emma and Nelson wait anxiously, looking to the sky. Peg looking pale, sinks slowly to the floor, discouraged.

EMMA

Can I get anybody a soda?

PEG

No, thanks.

(looks around)

People are starting to leave?

(calling out)

Hey! Hey, you, where you going?

Nelson chimes in.

NELSON

Hui, you in the hat! Marty Jenson's gonna collect ten grand in a few minutes! You going miss that?

PEG

(barely in control)

It's nearly two o'clock. Where is he? Mr. Dole, where is he? Where are the others? What's happened to them? Are they lost? Shouldn't

we calling the Navy to start a search? They could be in the ocean already. Do *something* Mr. Dole!

Dole doesn't answer, continues to scan with his binoculars.

MALLOSKA

(impatient)

He's just as concerned as you are, young lady. We all are. But as long as there's any chance of a plane being airborne, we're going to stay right here and wait, and you certainly don't help matters by harping on the man.

Nelson steps towards Malloska.

NELSON

Say, butt out, ya big lug!

DOLE

Keep your shirts on, folks. I think I see another plane.

The others jump forward, straining to see.

PEG

Is it Marty?

DOLE

Can't tell.

MALLOSKA

Biplane, monoplane? Speak up Dole, for God's sake.

DOLE

Can't tell.

Lights out.

SCENE - OAKLAND SPEAKEASY

Breingan has joined Erwin and Al at the rail.

BREINGAN

Legally, there's nothing I can do to stop you.
But if there was, I would.

ERWIN

Always knew you were half cop, Breingan.

BREINGAN

Just answer me this. Why? What possible reason
can yah have man?

ERWIN

Hell, seeing you hot under the collar like this
is good a reason as any.

Joe rushes in, telegraph in hand.

JOE

Dole just got ten grand poorer!

AL

Thank god for that. Who is it?

Joe calls out for a bartender.

JOE

Oh, nurse! Nurse! Another round of cough syrup
down here. A neighbor of mine has just become
semi-famous!

Lights out.

SCENE - WHEELER FIELD

SOUND of the crowd cheering and applauding as Marty and Schluter wave, Marty grinning like a madman, Schluter still very much in control. Peg and the others rush over to greet them as the aviators step stiffly out of the plane.

PEG

Marty Jenson, where the hell have you been!

She rushes into his arms and they hug,. SOUND of crowd cheering. Now Nelson is patting him on the back, jumping up and down, Dole waves the check, Emma puts leis on Marty and Schluter. Malloska hangs back, still scanning the horizon for signs of his biplane.

MARTY

Peg, its one heck of a story, but right now I
need a stiff drink, a swim, and a soft bed.

He turns to Schluter, who is giving Emma the once over.

MARTY

Folks, meet Paul Schluter, the stubbornest cuss of a navigator that ever lived. Paul, if I wasn't so damn happy to be alive, I'd punch you right in the snoot. Its a miracle we got here on forty gallons, a flat out miracle. You must have read the stick wrong.

Schluter looks puzzled.

SCHLUTER

Forty gallons? What forty gallons?

Marty takes the note from his flight jacket, points to it.

MARTY

Your note, right here. Four-oh gallons. We should have been in the drink an hour ago.

Schluter takes the note, looks it over.

SCHLUTER

Mr. Yenson, this is not a four. This is how we Europeans make a *seven*.

Marty looks at note, begins to laugh.

MARTY

Well, last sure beats dead. We saw the *Woolaroc* on our way in. The other planes in the hanger already?

Dole steps forward with the oversize check.

DOLE

Marty, on behalf of The Hawaiian Pineapple Company I'd like you to present you with this check for ten thousand dollars. Congratulations, son.

Marty stares at the check, stunned.

MARTY

What? But... The others. We rode in on fumes. Where are the others?

Malloska pushes his way forward.

MALLOSKA

Did you see *The Miss Doran* on your way over?
The biplane? Any sign of the biplane?

MARTY

Sorry, Mister. All we've seen since the Farallones is
fog and water.

PEG

Come on, Sugar. There's a luau waiting for us at the
Royal Hawaiian.

(calling off)

Hey, Hupmobile! Over here! Hey!

Peg, Marty, Schluter, Dole, Emma and Nelson hurry offstage. Malloska, in a daze, sits, tears welling in his eyes. Dole re-enters, looking uncertain of what to do. He walks slowly over to Malloska, sits next to him, placing a hand on his shoulder.

Lights out.

SCENE - HONOLULU STREET

Nelson is hawking papers.

NELSON

PAYPAH! PAYPAH! MASSIVE SEARCH FOR
MISSING AVIATORS! FIVE MISSING AT
SEA! DALLAS SPIRIT TO ATTEMPT CROSSING!
DALLAS SPIRIT TEMPTS FATE! PAYPAH!
PAYPAH! PAYPAH! FIVE MISSING AT SEA!

Lights out.

SCENE - OAKLAND AIRPORT

Erwin is loading supplies into the monoplane as Breingan approaches.

BREINGAN

The weather looks unchanged, Erwin. You'll have
to go over or under the soup.

ERWIN

I'm gonna stay under as long as I can. Keep an eye peeled for any wreckage, or a raft. Alvin's gonna be on the telegraph key to that radio station, so hell, I could come out of this mess a hero after all.

BREINGAN

Erwin, we've had our disagreements in the past, but you know lad, I never doubted your courage. You proved it ten different ways in the war and since. I'm asking yah once last time. Have the courage to tell the world that you've reconsidered.

ERWIN

Sorry, Major. I've got a hard head and a thick skin. Its sort of my trademark, you know?

BREINGAN

I do indeed.

(offers his hand)

Good luck to yah, Bill.

ERWIN

Thank you, sir.

They shake. Breingan turns and leaves.

Lights out.

SCENE - THE JENSON BUNGALOW

The Jenson's are listening to music on the radio, while Marty, wearing a barber's apron, is giving Marty a shave.

MARTY

You're gonna spoil me rotten.

PEG

That's the idea. Its a cinch with these new safety blades.

MARTY

Sugar, how are we going to divvy up the ten thousand? We owe twice that.

PEG

I been thinking on it. How this for a plan? We float a ten thousand dollar mortgage on *The Aloha*, use that and the purse to pay back the investors. Doesn't leave us rich, but at least we get a better plane out of the deal. You can fly tractor parts twice as fast, and we can go broke half as slow.

Radio music ends, and announcer comes on.

ANNOUNCER

As promised, we are bringing you reports, forwarded to us via cable from KPO Radio, San Francisco, on the progress on the brave crew of *The Dallas Spirit*, as they search for survivors of the ill fated Pacific Air Race including Miss Mildred Doran, "The Flying Schoolmarm."

PEG

Marty, can we turn it off? My nerves are still a wreck.

MARTY

Aw, be a sport. I know the guy.

ANNOUNCER

The last message from the crew, now several hours under way, came in at 6 pm local time. Quote: "The weather is partly cloudy with a smooth sea. Have seen no wreckage. It is now getting dark and we will not be able to see much until morning." End quote.

MARTY

There's the understatement of the year.

PEG

Has he got a chance?

MARTY

Bill's a hell of a pilot. Says he's flown blind many a time, and never had a problem. If that knock-off crate of his holds up, he should be fine.

ANNOUNCER

Hold on, this just in! Just came in over the wire.

Quote; "SOS, we are in a spin." End quote. That was received at 6:10 pm.

MARTY

Oh, jeeze.

ANNOUNCER

That was followed shortly by another message. Quote: "We came out of it OK, but were sure scared. It was a close call but we came out of it. The light on the instrument board went out and Bill couldn't see." End quote.

MARTY

Yeah, that'll do it. That and about a hundred other things.

ANNOUNCER

Immediately following, another short report was picked up.. Quote: "We are in another..." End quote. Now their frequency has reported to have been lost altogether. Can it be that tragedy, even after the fact, continues to plague the race, now being called by some The Death Derby? Stay tuned for ongoing coverage, as it happens, brought to you by the Dixie King Cracker Company, yes Dixie King, its the....

MARTY

Oh, put a sock in it, fellah!

He crosses to the radio turns it off.

MARTY(con't)

Come on, Peg. Let's get out of here. Let's go dancing or something. Let's find us some bathtub hootch, and some loud music. What do ya say? Lets live a little.

PEG

I'll get my purse.

Lights out

SCENE - HAWAIIAN PINEAPPLE BOARDROOM

Dole faces the press from the podium. FLASHBULBS pop as Al and Joe grill him, reading from their notes.

AL

Mr. Dole, what do you have to say about the negative reaction to the ten aviators that died before, during, and after your race? Calls for reform have filled the editorial pages of so many newspapers over the last couple of weeks? For instance "That those so precious to their families should perish to satisfy the relentless pursuit of profit in this godless age of commercialism is indeed cause for mourning." The Detroit Harold.

DOLE

Now, hold on just a minute.

JOE

Or this "We honor today the memory of those sacrificed to the technology of a society that has lost its moral compass." The Dallas Tribune.

DOLE

Say, that's not fair.

AL

"How can we explain the loss of our best and brightest in the pursuit of a deadly pot of gold at the end of a dark rainbow?" San Francisco Chronicle.

DOLE

No, no, you've got it all wrong.

AL

"A nation mourns its lost heros, and demands an end to the sad spectacle of sponsored air races." San Diego Ledger.

DOLE

You people sure change your tune quick enough. What about Lindbergh?

Lights Out.

SCENE - JENSON BUNGALOW

Peg, Emma, and Nelson are done up in vintage beach wear, Peg wearing her suit with the grey skirt. They are packing a wicker hamper, getting ready for the beach.

NELSON

Do we have to go to Waikiki again? A whole island full of beaches, and we got to join the crowd out in front of the Moana?

EMMA

Its the only place that has cabanas.

PEG

Cabanas are a must, kiddo. I'm not about to stay out in the sun all afternoon and look like some sunburned farm girl for the rest of the week.

EMMA

Nice suit, Peg. You bring it from the mainland?

PEG

No, got it here. There was a stain on the back here. Did it come off?

EMMA

You can hardly see it. Is that oil or something?

Marty enters, a big smile on his face.

PEG

Ask Marty. I'd love to hear his version. You're home early, sugar. That charter cancel on you?

MARTY

They'll have to wait. 'Cause I just got a telegram that I thought you might want to hear.

PEG

President Coolidge congratulating you on surviving the ordeal?

MARTY

No, I haven't heard from the ingrate. Can you believe it? No this is from MGM.

NELSON

The film studio?

MARTY

The one and only. Deepest pockets in Hollywood. Remember babe, way back when before I was almost famous, I said if I won, the job offers would come rolling in? Probably end up with some swanky job as private pilot to a movie star? Well, I must have

had one hand on the weegie board that day.

Peg lights up.

PEG

Don't tell, don't tell me! Buster Keaton?

MARTY

Nope.

PEG

Tom Mix?

MARTY Nope.

PEG

Mary Pickford?

MARTY

No. This is literally the biggest star in Hollywood.

Peg, Emma and Nelson all shout together.

PEG

Charlie Chaplain!

EMMA

Charlie Chaplain!

NELSON

Charlie Chaplain!

MARTY

Ah, no. I can see the suspense may cause heart failure soon, so I'll break it to you softly. I have been offered the contract to fly, in *The Aloha*, on a coast to coast publicity tour.... Leo the Lion!

The others give him a look.

NELSON

You're pulling our leg, right?

MARTY

Nope, right here in black and white.

PEG

Oh, sure, we're gonna just pick up and move to California to chauffeur Louis B. Mayer's housecat.

MARTY

Oh, ye of little faith. You might want to check the compensation package before you scoff.

Peg takes the telegram, reads it.

PEG

Fifty grand? FIFTY GRAND! Here, kitty, kitty, kitty.

EMMA

Wow. Congratulations. Isn't that great, Nelson?

NELSON

(crestfallen)

Yeah. Congratulations, Uncle Marty. I guess you'll be leaving pretty soon, ey?

MARTY

Yes, in a couple of weeks.

NELSON

Oh.

MARTY

But, you know, I've been thinking. I'll be away a lot, and Peg here never did mix too well with that Hollywood crowd. Peg, now that we're a couple of swells with a dollar in our pocket, what do you think about asking Emma and Nelson to come with us, you know see the mainland sights, build a snowman, wander in the desert, that sort of thing?

PEG

I think that's a terrific idea. Emma?

EMMA

Oh, that's nice of you folks, but...

Nelson can hardly contain himself.

NELSON

Please, Mom. Please!

EMMA

I don't know.

PEG

Oh, come on, Emma. They've got terrific schools. You could show those movie guys what a real island girl is like. Those South American broads with the fruitstands on their heads always get the hula girl parts.

MARTY

Sure. You could write your own ticket with all those Gatsby wannabees in their raccoon coats.

EMMA

We'll see.

MARTY

I take that as a qualified yes. Well, this is cause for a celebration. C'mon everybody. On your feet.

He puts a record on the Victrola.

MARTY

A dance. A dance to good times, good friends, and to flying the Pacific with four gallons of gas to spare.

He puts on a platter playing a jumped up jazz tune. The four of them break into a Charleston.

Lights out.

THE END