

The Cage
by
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EXT. MARCH AIR RESERVE BASE - MORNING

Music, credits, American Flag raised to taps.

SHAWN PRICE, 17, a tom boy, jogs with her dog, STRETCH, a rescued Greyhound sporting a miniature, retro, leather flying cap. Her uniform reveals rank of Staff Sergeant.

Saluting confused officers, she arrives at the airfield.

She kneels down, pets Stretch, opens her backpack and pulls out a handheld transceiver. She cautiously inputs a frequency and hears March Tower.

INT. MARCH CONTROL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

CONTROLLER # 1
Yes tango Leader. Welcome..

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

Shawn, listening.

CONTROLLER # 1(O.S.)
..to March! Airspace clear. Fly-
over approved, your discretion.

CUT TO:

INT. JET COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

LEAD PILOT
(Texas accent)
Roger that March Tower. Looking
forward to....

CUT TO:

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

Shawn, listening.

LEAD PILOT (O.S.)
...a great show and Air Force
hospitality. We got a taste for
fine California beach bunnies!

INT. MARCH CONTROL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

CONTROLLER # 1
That's affirmative. GENERAL RUBEOR
has planned a big shindig tonight.
Should heat your turbines!

CUT TO:

INT. JET COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

LEAD PILOT
Thanks chief. Ready guys? ...

CUT TO:

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

Shawn, listening, looking southeast.

LEAD PILOT (O.S.)
...It's show time!

The roaring sound of jet engines becomes louder.

Shawn points Stretch towards the deafening noise.

Six jets approach, Delta formation, low level.

The sound becomes deafening. The AIR FORCE THUNDERBIRDS roar
over the airfield, turning a long, right crosswind.

Stretch can't look up, cowering from the deafening noise.

SHAWN (CONT'D)
Rad birds! I love the Air Force!
We gotta go.

She leaves quickly with Stretch.

INT. MARCH CONTROL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

CONTROLLER # 2
(noticing Shawn)
Hey! Check out that Yo Yo!

CONTROLLER # 1
(looking through his
binoculars)
A Yo Yo with a dog! Call the MP's.

EXT. PILOT'S READY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shawn walks toward the entrance.

Arriving, she pulls out a Thunderbird's poster from her pack.

Other PILOTS and AIRMAN watch the Thunderbird F16 C's taxi and stop in succession.

The THUNDERBIRD PILOTS disembark, assisted by their TEAMS.

Two Base PILOTS approach Shawn. She salutes, nervously.

PILOT # 1
Hey Sarg!... Who's your CO?

Interrupting, pilot #2 bends down, pets Stretch.

PILOT # 2
What's with the dog? (Standing)
High rank for a little girl!

SHAWN
(very nervous)
Just transferred from Nellis.
Waiting for my orders. Do I
already have officers on my butt?

PILOT # 1
(reaching for Shawn)
Hey! Watch your mouth you...

Just then, the lead Thunderbird pilot grabs his arm.

LEAD PILOT
Now, now. Is this my greeting?
Harassing the enlisted? And a
pretty one at that.

He crouches down and pets Stretch.

LEAD PILOT (CONT'D)
Nice dog. A pilot!

He Looks at Shawn.

LEAD PILOT (CONT'D)
Can a Greyhound can beat an F-16?

SHAWN
(at attention)
Sir. She prefers B-58's.

LEAD PILOT
 (standing up)
 B-58's? (Laughs) This girl knows
 her birds. Some days I'm a B-
 58,...Hustler!

Other Pilots and Airman laugh.

SHAWN
 Meet Stretch the racing champion.
 I rescued her. Girl, Salute!

Stretch places her right paw over her brow. The Lead Pilot salutes back and places his hand on Shawn's shoulder.

LEAD PILOT
 What can I do for her?

SHAWN
 (hands him picture)
 She's a big fan. Your autograph?

LEAD PILOT
 My Pleasure.

Suddenly, a MILITARY POLICE VEHICLE approaches with lights flashing.

SHAWN
 (grabs picture)
 Thanks. Let's go girl!

They retreat as the surprised crowd observes.

CUT TO:

I/E. MILITARY POLICE VEHICLE / OPEN FIELD - CONTINUOUS

POLICE OFFICER # 1
 (driving)
 She's Messin' with the wrong cop!

POLICE OFFICER # 2
 Hurry! They're headin' for the
 fence.

The MP'S gain ground.

SHAWN
 (pointing at MP's)
 Stretch! Stop the police car!

Stretch perks up and runs toward it, barking with conviction.

Shawn turns and runs toward the fence, double time.

Stretch stops in front of the MP car and it stops.

POLICE OFFICER # 1
Damn! What kind of dog is that!

POLICE OFFICER # 2
That skinny little ass runs like a
jet!

Shawn reaches the fence and begins to climb.

SHAWN
Come on girl!

Stretch obeys and reaches the fence. Shawn attempts to pull her over. Stretch slips, falls down and becomes stranded. She cries, continuing to jump up on the fence.

SHAWN
(sighs)
It's okay girl. I'm not leavin'
without you.

The MP'S arrive and exit the car while Shawn climbs back over the fence.

POLICE OFFICER # 1
Okay you! Let's see some ID!

Shawn hands him her wallet.

POLICE OFFICER # 2
She's some punk school kid. What
you doin' wearing that uniform?

SHAWN
My Dad's a Birds fan.

POLICE OFFICER # 1
Your Mama not teach you nothin'?
Breaking onto base, impersonating
Air Force personnel..

POLICE OFFICER # 2
Runnin' from our ass... Jailbait!

POLICE OFFICER # 1
Tell your story to the General!

CUT TO:

SEQUENCE:

Officer # 1 cuffs Shawn and loads her in the back seat.

Stretch sits between the MP'S. They look at her and laugh.

Shawn meets the GENERAL whose very unhappy. Stretch salutes him. He returns a half hearted smile and returns the salute.

An OFFICER discovers Shawn is on probation in Orange County.

Shawn's PROBATION OFFICER picks her up, very unhappy.

END SEQUENCE

FADE TO:

INT. SHERIFF STATION - CONTINUOUS

An OFFICER leads Shawn and Stretch through a myriad of desks and criminals to an empty office, seats them and leaves. Soon, with donut and a cup of coffee, DETECTIVE FRANK SIMMONS, 48, balding, a bit overweight, Orange County Sheriff Detective, enters. Stretch keenly observes his donut.

FRANK

(munching donut)

Gee Shawn, probation violation number 524! This ones the kicker. Breaking into a Federal Base, impersonating a Staff Sergeant? You really got a screw loose!

SHAWN

Nobody got hurt. Check this out!

Shawn pulls out the signed poster and hands it to him.

FRANK

(he looks, throws it back)

Hey girl! This is serious shit. It's jail this time. Your mother's gonna' lose it! Right?

Shawn nods and pets Stretch. Frank dials his phone.

CUT TO:

INT. DEADBEATS BAR / JACK'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(CROSSCUT AS NEEDED)

LINDA PRICE, 45, Shawn's mother is a burnt out bartender who needs a makeover and an attitude change. She's on the phone with her demanding son JACK, 15.

LINDA

Yes honey, I know you need the money for your tuxedo. But..

JACK (O.S.)

Another excuse? You promised a check last month. It's a week late!

CUSTOMER

(tanked)

Miss Linda? Where's m....y drink?

LINDA

Can't you see I'm busy!

JACK (O.S.)

Mom! I need an answer!

CUSTOMER

Now you po...ur my God damn drink or I...'ll get it my...self!

JACK (O.S.)

Mom!

Ignored, the customer reaches and grabs the bottle.

LINDA

Oh no you don't!

She pushes him off bar, onto the floor.

JACK (O.S.)

MOM!

The customer stumbles out cursing Linda, life, etc.

LINDA

I'm doing my best. If your lousy father would send more money! You'll have to use your savings.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM

JACK

This crap is your responsibility. I'm not touchin' my money.

LINDA (O.S.)
Then you're not going to a stupid
prom with your airhead girlfriend!

She slams down the phone.

JACK
(throwing the phone)
Bitch!

INT. DEADBEATS BAR

Linda's boss, JOE, 65 and weathered, enters.

JOE
That kid out of line again?

LINDA
Nothin' I can't handle.

The phone rings and Joe answers.

JOE
(cigarette hanging)
Deadbeats!

Joe listens deadpan and hands phone to Linda.

JOE
My customer, your boyfriend.

Linda, embarrassed, grabs the phone and pushes him away.

LINDA
(composed)
Hi Frank. What shakes?

Linda listens intently. Her countenance saddens and she buries her head in her hands.

LINDA
Ok Frank... Thanks...Be right down.

Linda hangs up the phone, composes herself and walks to Joe's office. He's seated at his desk, crunching numbers.

LINDA
Need cover. Shawn's in deep shit.

JOE
Again? Darlin', hate to break it
to you. I got a business to run.

He stands up and grabs her shoulders.

JOE (CONT'D)
Get your life straightened out or
I'll run it without you. You
follow? ... Back for Happy Hour or
your fired!

She kisses him on the cheek.

LINDA
Thanks Joe. You're the best.

Linda grabs her coat, purse and hurries out.

EXT. DEADBEATS BAR - CONTINUOUS

Linda enters her red, dated Z-28 Camaro and speeds off.

CUT TO:

I/E. FRANK'S OFFICE - LATER

Linda enters Frank's office, glares at Shawn and sits.

LINDA
(composed)
Shawn, I.... (pissed) What were
you thinking? Breaking on Base? A
Sergeant in the Air Force? Just
like your father!

SHAWN
Leave Dad out. This was my idea.

Stretch and Frank observe, heads back and forth to dialogue.

LINDA
Just one week to graduation!

SHAWN
Graduate? Who cares! I thought
you liked seeing your boyfriend.

LINDA
(raising her hand)
That's it!

Frank grabs her arm, gets up and sits on front of his desk.

FRANK

(index finger extended)
Listen you little prima donna. If
I didn't like your mother, you'd
been locked up a long time ago.
I've used up all my favors. You're
goin' down this time.

To Linda.

FRANK (CONT'D)

If she was my kid, she wouldn't
have a dog. (petting stretch)
Boundaries! Might be lookin' at
hard time with the Feds.

To Shawn.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Stretch will need a new home. We
don't allow real dogs in jail!

SHAWN

I'll never leave Stretch! Never!

The phone rings and Frank composes and answers it.

FRANK

Simmons.

Frank listens intently to an inaudible voice.

FRANK

What?.... BILL, you told me the
investigation was a wrap!

He hangs up phone.

FRANK

Gotta' go. (Sarcastic) Official
police business!

He points at Shawn.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Your hearing is Friday, 8:00 am
sharp! Be there!

SHAWN

(sly smile)
No problemo!

FRANK

You better pray the judge slept!

As Frank opens the door, Stretch gives him a face lick. They all smile and leave the office.

SHAWN
(opening poster)
Hey Mom. Check out my autograph!

Linda shakes her head and pushes Shawn forward.

**To Read the Full Script, Contact Jonathan Morgan Jenkins @
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