

"DARK STAR"

A SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE

Screenplay by

John Carpenter and Dan O'Bannon

OPEN ON BLACK SILENCE.

The sound of electronic music rises, hollow, metallic.

FADE IN on a long TRACKING SHOT through the universe. As the NARRATOR speaks we move through galaxies, nebulae, solar systems, moving from the infinite slowly down to a particular planetary system deep within a maze of suns.

NARRATOR

(over)

It is the mid 22nd Century. Mankind has explored the boundaries of his own solar system, and now he reaches out to the endless interstellar distances of the universe. He moves away from his own small planetary system in huge hyperdrive starships: computer-driven, self-supporting, closed-system spacecraft that travel at mind-staggering post-light velocities. Man has begun to spread among the stars. Enormous ships embark with generations of colonists searching the depths of space for new earths, new homes, new beginnings. Far in advance of these colony ships goes a new pioneer: the scouts, the pathfinders, a special breed of man who has dedicated his life to blazing the trail through the most distant, unexplored galaxies, opening up the farthest frontiers of space. These are the men of the Advance Exploration Corps. The task they face is one of unbelievable isolation and loneliness. So far from home that Earth is no

longer even a point of light in the sky, they must comb the universe for those unstable planets whose existence poses a threat to the peaceful colonists that follow. They must find these rogue planets – and destroy them. Among these commandos are the men of the scoutship Dark Star.

We are now moving toward a planet. Floating in front of the planet is the SCOUTSHIP DARK STAR. As we move toward the ship, we begin to hear VOICES, crackling with static.

DOOLITTLE
(over – radio filter)
Ah, what'd you say, Pinback?

PINBACK
(over – great static)
Mafhkin oble groop...

DOOLITTLE
(over – filter)
Ah, what was that again, I still can't hear you?

PINBACK
(over – filter)
I said I'm trying to reach Talby. Something's wrong with the damn intercom. I need a last-minute diameter approximation.

CAMERA IS NOW FLOATING TOWARD THE OBSERVATION DOME on top of the ship.

In the Dome sits TALBY. He is staring around, wide-eyed, at the planets and stars.

DOOLITTLE
(over – filter)
Talby, Talby, this is Doolittle. Do you read me? Talby?

WE MOVE IN CLOSE ON TALBY'S FACE. The shot stops and holds as he continues to stare, rapt.

DOOLITTLE
(over – filter)
Talby, do you read me?

There is a CRACKLE, and Doolittle's voice suddenly booms through, loud and clear:

DOOLITTLE
TALBY!

TALBY
(snaps out of it)
Oh! Ah, yes, Doolittle. What is it?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

CLOSE SHOT of a digital clock, ticking down the seconds.

DOOLITTLE
I need a diameter approximation.

TALBY
(over)
Okay, Doolittle, I'll have it in a minute.

CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK along the length of the control room, revealing three men: BOILER, DOOLITTLE, and PINBACK. They are seated close together in cramped little chairs, surrounded by a maze of instrumentation, pressing buttons, making adjustments and corrections. There is one EMPTY CHAIR; the panel in front of it looks burned.

PINBACK
I need a GHF reading on the gravity correction.

DOOLITTLE
I'll check it.

BOILER
I have a reduced drive reading of seven thousand.

PINBACK
Right, that checks out here.

DOOLITTLE

Pinback...

PINBACK

Yes, Doolittle.

DOOLITTLE

Your GHF reading is minus fifteen.

PINBACK

Doolittle...

DOOLITTLE

Yes.

PINBACK

I need a computer reading on a fail-safe mark.

DOOLITTLE

In a second.

PINBACK

Boiler, can you set me up with some temp figures?

BOILER

Ninety seven million, minus eight, corrected to mass critical.

PINBACK

I read that with a quantum increase of seven.

DOOLITTLE

Pinback, I have a computer reading of nine five seven seven.

BOILER

Time to start talking.

PINBACK

Bomb bay systems operational.

Pinback hits a button on his panel.

INTERIOR - BOMB BAY

The screen is BLACK for an instant. Then, two enormous doors

begin to open ponderously, revealing the planet rotating below. A huge BOMB, designated with a giant #19 on its side, lowers slowly out of the ship on a rack.

NARRATOR

(over)

This is a chain-reaction bomb, otherwise known as an Exponential Thermostellar Device. Its own destructive power is small, barely enough to vaporize twelve city blocks. However, when it explodes in contact with an object the size of a planet, it starts a chain-reaction in the very matter of that planet, turning it into a giant reactor which destroys itself in one staggering thermal flash. These bombs are equipped with sophisticated thought and speech mechanisms, to allow them to make executive decisions in the event of a crisis situation. These judgment centers are controlled by a fail-safe mechanism.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

DOOLITTLE

Lock fail safe.

Pinback turns a key in a lock.

PINBACK

Fail-safe locked. Ah, Sergeant Pinback calling Bomb #19. Do you read me, bomb?

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

The bomb is suspended beneath the ship.

BOMB #19

Bomb #19 to Sergeant Pinback, I read you. Continue.

When the bomb speaks, it has the prim, fussy voice of a minor civil servant.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

Well, bomb, we have about sixty seconds to drop. Just wondering if everything is all right. Have you checked your platinum euridium energy shielding?

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #19

Energy shielding positive function.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

Swell. Let's synchronize detonation time. Do you know when you're supposed to go off?

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #19

Detonation in six minutes, twenty seconds.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

All right, I have detonation time at... Wait a minute, something's wrong with the clock.

(hits panel)

All right, I have detonation time at... no, that can't be right, it says three years.

(beats panel again)

Okay, I have six minutes exactly. Does that check out down there?

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #19

Check at six minutes.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK
Arm yourself, bomb.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

Several lights blip on along the bomb's side.

BOMB #19
Armed.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK
Well, then, everything sounds fine.
We'll drop you off in thirty-five
seconds. Good luck.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #19
Thanks.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK
Begin main sequence. Mark at 10-9-8-
7-6-5-4-3-2-1-drop.

EXTERIOR - THE SHIP

Bomb #19 falls away from the ship and whizzes down toward
the planet below.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

DOOLITTLE
Hyperdrive sequence begun. Hit it,
Pinback.

Pinback hits the hyperdrive switch. Force fields energize
around the men.

EXTERIOR - THE SHIP

The DARK STAR accelerates into hyperdrive and streaks away
through space.

The planetary system recedes in the background. Inside the

Observation Dome, Talby is frozen in a protective force field.

INSERT: CLOSE SHOT OF A TIME CLOCK. It blips down to ZERO.

RETURN TO SCENE

Behind the ship, there is an intense flare of light as the planet, now a dot of light, explodes.

INTERIOR - OBSERVATION DOME

The force field around Talby disappears as the ship comes out of hyperdrive. He rubs his eyes as though awakening, then looks down at his readout panels.

INSERT - CLOSE SHOT OF A PANEL. On a small screen we see the exploding planet, and below, a readout says:

DESTRUCTION SEQUENCE COMPLETE

RETURN TO SCENE

Talby touches his intercom.

TALBY

Lieutenant Doolittle, it just exploded.

(pause)

Ah, sir, the planet just exploded.

(pause – he shakes the microphone)

Lieutenant?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

The men are stretching in their seats.

DOOLITTLE

Unlock fail safe.

Pinback unlocks the fail-safe unit.

PINBACK

Fail safe unlocked.

RECORDED VOICE

Attention. Attention. The hyperdrive sequence is now terminated. Please

observe that the no smoking signs
have growrrr...

The voice runs down.

DOOLITTLE

Well... now what? What do, you have
for us now. Boiler?

BOILER

(checking his readouts)

Not much. Nothing at all in this
sector.

DOOLITTLE

Find me something, I don't care where
it is.

BOILER

Well, I show a 95% probability of
sentient life in the Horsehead
Nebula...

DOOLITTLE

Fuck that shit.

BOILER

Well, it is kind of a long shot...

DOOLITTLE

It's a goddamn wild goose chase.
Remember when Commander Powell found
that 99 plus probability of sentient
life in the Magellanic Cloud?

BOILER

Well, there's the possibility of...

DOOLITTLE

Remember what we found? Fourteen
light years for a fucking mindless
vegetable that looked like a limp
balloon and went squawk and let a
fart when you touched it. Remember?

BOILER

All right, then...

DOOLITTLE

So don't give me any of that sentient life crap. Find me something I can blow up.

A LIGHT flares on Pinback's board. He looks up.

PINBACK

New star.

(no reaction)

Hey, guess what? I got a new star on the readout.

DOOLITTLE

(not looking up)

Which one?

PINBACK

Another unknown. Not on the charts. A red dwarf.

DOOLITTLE

Any planets?

PINBACK

Yeah. Eight, it says here.

DOOLITTLE

Any of 'em any good?

PINBACK

(scans the board)

Naah. All stable.

Doolittle loses interest.

PINBACK

What are you gonna name it?

DOOLITTLE

(not looking up)

What?

PINBACK

The new star. What are you gonna name it?

DOOLITTLE

Who cares. Don't bother me.

Pinback's mouth tightens. A pause.

PINBACK

Commander Powell would have named it.

DOOLITTLE

Commander Powell is dead.

Involuntarily, Pinback glances at Commander Powell's empty, burned seat. The panels behind it sputter.

PINBACK

Come on, Doolittle, give it a name.

DOOLITTLE

Fred.

PINBACK

Wha?

DOOLITTLE

I hereby name this star Fred.

BOILER

Hey, Doolittle, here's one. An unstable planet. 85% probability of an unstable planet in the Veil Nebula that will probably go off its orbit and hit a star.

DOOLITTLE

Sounds good. Chart a course for the Veil Nebula.

BOILER

Pinback, throw me the chart log.

Pinback draws a loose-leaf notebook from a shelf above Commander

Powell's empty seat, and hurls it at Boiler. With a sour look at Pinback, Boiler picks up the notebook and begins to leaf through it.

DOOLITTLE

Let's have some music in here, Boiler.

Boiler presses a button. LOUD COUNTRY MUSIC THEME BEGINS TO PLAY.

EXTERIOR - DARK STAR (TITLE SEQUENCE)

This sequence includes shots of the DARK STAR drifting through space, past various cosmic wonders, intercut with shots of the men relaxing

(Talby staring into space; Boiler trimming his beard; Doolittle playing solitaire; Pinback reading a comic book).

CREDITS AND MUSIC OVER.

SEQUENCE ENDS.

INTERIOR - DARK STAR

Beep.

We are watching a filmed tape. Doolittle has just turned it on and is staring into the camera. Crosshairs and blipping numbers superimposed.

DOOLITTLE

Ship's log, entry number 1,943. Dark Star cruising at light speed through Sector Theta 990. En route to Veil Nebula for destruction of unstable planet. Our ETA is 1700 hours.

(thinks)

Ship's systems continue to deteriorate...

Pinback leans into view and whispers into Doolittle's ear. Doolittle nods and Pinback withdraws.

DOOLITTLE

The short circuit in the rear seat panel which killed Commander Powell continues to be faulty.

(thinks)

Uh... Storage Area 9...

Pinback leans back in and whispers emphatically. Doolittle looks put-upon.

DOOLITTLE

And because he's sitting next to it,
it continues to bother Pinback.

(glares at Pinback.

Then:)

Storage Area 9 self-destructed last
week, destroying entire ship's supply
of toilet paper. That's all.

Beep.

INTERIOR - OBSERVATION DOME

Talby is still gazing around at the stars.

A hatch opens in the floor and Doolittle sticks his head up.

DOOLITTLE

Talby.

Talby rotates his seat and looks down at Doolittle.

DOOLITTLE

Here's some breakfast.

Doolittle climbs into the dome and sits on the floor. He
hands Talby the food package, and watches matter-of-factly
as Talby begins to eat.

DOOLITTLE

You know, Talby, you really ought to
eat with the rest of us. You spend
too much time up here.

TALBY

I like it up here.

DOOLITTLE

Must get lonely being up here so
much.

TALBY

I don't like to go below since
Commander Powell died. I feel enclosed
down there. If it were big enough,
I'd sleep up here...

DOOLITTLE

...Should spend some time below, see more of the rest of the ship...

TALBY

...You see, I can watch things up here, Doolittle. I love to watch things, just stare at the planets and meteors and asteroids, gas clusters...

DOOLITTLE

You'll have plenty of time for that, you know. Figure it this way: twenty years in space and we've only aged three, so there'll be plenty of time to stare around...

TALBY

You know, Doolittle, if we're going into the Veil Nebula, we may actually find a strange and beautiful thing: the Phoenix Asteroids. They should be passing through there about now...

DOOLITTLE

Phoenix Asteroids? Never heard of 'em.

TALBY

They are a body of asteroids that make a complete circuit of the universe once every 12.3 trillion years. The Phoenix Asteroids... From what I've heard, Doolittle, they glow... glow with all the colors of the rainbow. Nobody knows why. They just glow as they drift around the universe. Imagine all the sights they've seen in the time they've been travelling – the birth and death of stars, things we'll never see. The universe is alive, Doolittle. I thought it was all empty, but it isn't. In between the stars, it's seething with light and gasses and dust. There are little pebbles drifting around, planets no one on

Earth has ever seen... No one but
the Phoenix Asteroids...

There is a BLIPPING SOUND. It is insistent. Talby is rudely yanked from his reverie. He looks down at a panel. But his soft talk has started Doolittle reminiscing.

DOOLITTLE

You know what I think about, Talby?

TALBY

I'm getting something here, on this readout...

DOOLITTLE

It's funny, but I kind of sit around, you know, a lot of time to myself...

TALBY

I think I'm getting a malfunction here somewhere.

DOOLITTLE

I can't talk to the others, but with time to myself, I think about back home, back home at Malibu. I used to surf a lot, Talby. I used to be a great surfer.

TALBY

Lieutenant Doolittle, I'm getting a definite malfunction on one of the closed-circuit computer systems...

DOOLITTLE

The waves at Malibu and Zuma were fantastic in the springs Talby. I can remember running out on the beach early spring mornings with my board and a wet suit...

TALBY

I can't seem to locate the malfunction exactly...

DOOLITTLE

Waves would be peaking really high and glassy. Hit that water. Ridin'

the wall just perfect.

TALBY

...Somewhere in the autonomic relay circuits...

DOOLITTLE

I guess I miss the waves and my board most of all.

Talby turns in his seat and addresses Doolittle directly.

TALBY

Ah, Doolittle, I do have a malfunction on this readout, but I can't seem to pinpoint exactly where it is.

DOOLITTLE

(snapped out of his daydream)

Don't worry about it. We'll find out when it goes bad.

TALBY

(chagrined)

I really think I should try and locate it immediately. Might be something important.

DOOLITTLE

I wish I had my board with me now. Even if I could only polish it once in awhile.

EXTERIOR - SPACE

LONG SHOT of the DARK STAR drifting through space.

INTERIOR - KITCHEN

Boiler, Pinback, and Doolittle are descending a ladder into the kitchen.

BOILER

I'm getting this flickering light on one of my panels.

PINBACK

What flickering light?

BOILER

The one on unit... oh, I think it's
GMR twelve zero zero.

PINBACK

Oh. What's wrong now?

BOILER

I'm not sure. I think something is
fucked up somewhere in the ship,
though.

PINBACK

I hope it's not the oven again.

BOILER

Yeah.

PINBACK

Remember when the artificial gravity,
went out in the toilet?

The men sit for their meal. Doolittle brings food packets
from the oven.

PINBACK

Hey, Doolittle, think we'll ever
find real intelligent life out there?

DOOLITTLE

Out where?

PINBACK

Veil nebula.

DOOLITTLE

Who cares?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

The Control Room is EMPTY. After a moment, there is a
repetitive BEEP.

CLOSE SHOT - TV SCREEN. On the screen is the message:

INCOMING COMMUNICATION

This fades, and MISSION CONTROLLER appears on the screen, against a background of computer terminals. He is dressed in a snappy tunic, and when he receives the on-camera cue, he smiles ingratiatingly.

MISSION CONTROLLER

Hi, guys. Glad to get your message. We gather from the ten-year communications lag that you are approximately 18 parsecs away. Drop us a line more often, won't you? Sorry to hear about all the malfunctions, and real sorry to hear about the death of Commander Powell. There was a week of mourning all over Earth. The flags were at half mast. Now I hate to send bad news when you guys are up there doing such a swell job, but something's come up, and we all felt you ought to know about it. Our systems simulation computer has predicted that by the time this message reaches you – that is to say, in about ten years – there will be a failure in one of your vital ship's systems. The malfunction will occur in –
(rifles papers)
– system number E180246. You can see what a problem this would be if you didn't catch it on time. Now what you should do is this: First, do not, repeat, do not attempt to adjust the system manually. Second –

INTERIOR - COMPUTER ROOM

The room is dim and eerie, banks of dimly flickering lights and the hum of air-cooling machinery.

Talby is seated before a glowing screen. He punches several buttons, and the screen comes to life. A schematic cross-section of the ship appears in glowing green lines.

Talby punches more buttons, and the screen flashes through the levels of the ship. Finally it shows Level 6. There is a small red light pulsing in the Emergency Air Lock.

Talby punches another button. The Emergency Air Lock is magnified fifteen times until it fills the screen. The red light is pulsing in a small area labelled COMMUNICATIONS LASER #17.

Talby picks up a microphone.

TALBY

Lieutenant Doolittle, this is Talby.
Lieutenant?

DOOLITTLE

(over – filter)
Yes, Talby, what is it?

TALBY

Sorry to interrupt your lunch, sir,
but I'm in the Computer Room, and I
think I've located the malfunction.
The scanner shows it to be some sort
of fault in the communications laser,
down by the Emergency Air Lock. Can't
pinpoint it exactly, but I'm going
down there with a starsuit and try
to find it.

INTERIOR - KITCHEN

DOOLITTLE

Sounds good, Talby. Let me know if
anything important comes up.

Doolittle hangs up the mike.

BOILER

Why doesn't Talby ever eat down here
with the rest of us?

DOOLITTLE

He just likes it up in the dome,
that's all.

Boiler seems to be thinking. He frowns, looks at Doolittle.

BOILER

What's Talby's first name?

Doolittle thinks about it, and an odd expression crosses his face.

DOOLITTLE
What's my first name?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM CLOSE SHOT - TV SCREEN

MISSION CONTROLLER
– then repatch channel 12 and seal all the plates. Don't mess with it and it should work okay. I'm just glad we caught this thing before anything serious happened. Keep up the good work, men.

His image fades, and is replaced by the message:

END COMMUNICATION

FULL SHOT - CONTROL ROOM. Lights blink peacefully in the empty room. HOLD FOR A MOMENT.

EXTERIOR - UNIVERSE

SLOW ZOOM toward a sun system. The DARK STAR is suspended in frame. A title pops on briefly:

VEIL NEBULA

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

A GLOWING SCREEN shows a schematic of the planet rotating below. Boiler stares at it, smiling.

BOILER
There she is. Definite 99%-plus probability that the planet is going to deviate from its normal orbit in another twelve thousand rotations. It'll spiral in toward its sun, and –

PINBACK
Eventual supernova.

DOOLITTLE
Good stuff. Let's vaporize it.

Pinback hits buttons.

PINBACK

Bomb bay systems operational.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20 lowers ponderously out of the ship.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

DOOLITTLE

Lock fail safe.

Pinback turns the key.

PINBACK

Fail safe in lock. Four minutes to drop, 22 minutes to detonation. This is Sergeant Pinback calling Bomb #20. Do you read me, bomb?

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20

Bomb #20 to Sergeant Pinback. Roger, I read you, continue.

INTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

CAMERA SLOWLY PANS DOWN the chromium-steel walls of the Emergency Air Lock to reveal Talby in a starsuit. He is wearing it only as protection against possible depressurization, and therefore wears no jetpack. Carrying a tool kit, he is slowly circling the lock.

RECORDED VOICE

You are now in the Emergency Air Lock. Please remember that the Surface Door can be opened without prior depressurization, so be sure to wear your starsuit at all times. Thank you for observing all safety precautions.

Talby stops facing LASER SHAFT 17.

The plate cover on the laser shaft hangs loose; it appears

to be burned. Talby approaches it and puts down his tool kit. He turns on his helmet radio.

TALBY
Ah, Lieutenant Doolittle? Sir?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

DOOLITTLE
Sh, Talby, don't bother me now.

INTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

TALBY
Ah, well, I think I've found the malfunction, sir. I'm in the Emergency Air Lock...

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

DOOLITTLE
Not now!

TALBY
(over – filter)
Well, I'm in the Emergency Air Lock and –

Click! Doolittle turns off Talby's radio line.

PINBACK
One hundred twenty seconds to drop, bomb, have you checked your platinum euridium energy shielding?

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20
Energy shielding positive function.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK
Do you remember the detonation time?

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20

Detonation in twenty minutes.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

Right, that synchronizes here. Okay,
bomb, arm yourself.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20

Armed.

INTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

Talby stands in front of the laser shaft, trying to reach
Doolittle on his helmet radio.

TALBY

Hello? Lieutenant Doolittle? Hello!

Silence.

Very carefully, Talby reaches out to touch the dangling plate
cover on the laser shaft. He pushes it, and it drops to the
floor of the lock with a CLANG.

RECORDED VOICE

Communications Laser #17, monitoring
information relays and bomb bay
systems, has now been activated and
will switch into a test mode. If you
will look near the Surface Door, you
will see that the Parallax Receptor
Cell has been engaged.

small triangular hole opens in the opposite wall and a photo-
sensitive cell rotates into position.

RECORDED VOICE

The laser will now energize. Please
stand clear of the path of the beam.

Talby steps back quickly. The airlock lights dim, and with a
HIGH-PITCHED WHINE, A PENCIL-
THIN BEAM OF RUBY LIGHT PULSES
ACROSS THE LOCK, from the laser shaft to the receptor cell.

RECORDED VOICE

Communications Laser #17 is now on test. Under no circumstances enter the path of the beam. Thank you for observing all safety precautions.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

Everything sounds fine, bomb. Dropping you off in sixty seconds. Good luck.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20

Thanks.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

BOILER

Quantum is up thirty-five.

DOOLITTLE

I read the same here.

INTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

Talby crouches by the laser shaft, carefully peering past the red, humming beam.

TALBY

Doolittle. Doolittle? If you're there, I'm going to try to adjust the cue switch on the laser.

Silence.

TALBY

Well... here goes...

He takes a long tool from the tool kit. Slowly, with agonizing care, he inserts the tool into the laser shaft, painstakingly avoiding the beam. He engages the tool into the base of the laser, and begins slowly to make an adjustment.

There is a BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT.

Talby drops the tool and staggers back, clutching his face

plate.

TALBY

My eyes.

RECORDED VOICE

Attention. Attention. The laser has malfunctioned. Under no circumstances enter the path of the beam. To do so will cause immediate –

Talby stumbles into the beam. There is a dull EXPLOSION.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

There is a FLASH on the lower side of Bomb #20, a sudden EXPLOSION.

Lights BLIP FURIOUSLY on the bomb.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

Begin main sequence. Mark at 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-drop.

A HONKER SOUNDS. The men sit up.

DOOLITTLE

I have a negative drop. The bomb is still in the bomb bay. Try it again, Pinback.

Pinback resets his panel. The honker stops.

PINBACK

Mark at 5-4-3-2-1-drop.

HONK-HONK-HONK-

DOOLITTLE

Ah, negative drop.

The men stare at each other in silence for a long moment.

Simultaneously they begin hitting buttons.

DOOLITTLE

Rechannel all safety relays –

BOILER

– open quantum latches –

PINBACK

– open circuit breakers –

DOOLITTLE

– remove thrust drive repellent –

PINBACK

– automatic channels open –

DOOLITTLE

– Remark.

PINBACK

5-4-3-2-1-drop, drop, drop!

There is a very long pause.

BOILER

Sittin' there. It's just sittin'
there.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

Bomb #20 hangs underneath the ship, waiting.

INTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

Talby lies unconscious on the floor of the lock.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

On the men's faces in strained anxiety.

DOOLITTLE

This is Lieutenant Doolittle calling
Bomb #20. I repeat previous order,
you are to disarm yourself and return
immediately to the bomb bay. Do you
understand?

BOMB #20

(over)

I am programmed to detonate in

fourteen minutes thirty seconds.
Detonation will occur at the
programmed time.

DOOLITTLE

Bomb, this is Doolittle. You are not
to detonate, repeat, you are not to
detonate in the bomb bay. Disarm
yourself. This is an order.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20

I read you, Lieutenant Doolittle,
but I am programmed to detonate in
fourteen minutes. Detonation will
occur at the programmed time.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

Fourteen minutes to detonation.

The men stare at each other.

RECORDED VOICE

Attention. Attention. The bomb has
malfunctioned. Automatic dampers
have gone into effect, and will
confine the explosion to an area one
mile in diameter. Please contact
mission control and await further
instructions. Thank you for observing
all safety precautions.

Pause.

DOOLITTLE

Only one thing to do. I'll have to
ask Commander Powell. I'll have to
ask him what to do.

INTERIOR - FREEZER ROOM

Doolittle climbs down a ladder into the icy-blue, cold Freezer
Room.

The walls are covered with frost, and mist hangs in the air.

He pulls on a pair of insulated gloves and approaches a heavy freezer door. On the door is a sign:

CRYOGENIC FREEZER COMPARTMENT
CAUTION
ABSOLUTE ZERO

He opens the door.

COMMANDER POWELL is encased in the freezer in a post-death, frozen ammonia state. Wire and electrodes are attached to his head.

Doolittle takes a microphone from a console on the freezer. He flips a switch and speaks into the mike:

DOOLITTLE
Commander Powell? Commander Powell,
this is Doolittle. Can you read me?

A crackle of static comes from a speaker grille, along with the FAINT MUTTERING OF COMMANDER POWELL'S VOICE:

POWELL
...muffirup glurrinpinfropal...

Doolittle fiddles with the volume control, trying to bring Commander Powell's voice into audibility.

DOOLITTLE
Commander Powell, this is Doolittle.
Ah, there's something serious come
up, sir, and I have to ask you
something.

POWELL
(very weakly)
I'm glad you've come to talk with
me, Doolittle. It's been so long
since anyone has come to talk with
me.

DOOLITTLE
Commander, sir, we have a big problem.
You see, the Veil Nebula bomb, Bomb
Number 20, is stuck. It won't drop
from the bomb bay. It refuses to

listen and plans to detonate in –
(checks watch)
– less than eleven minutes.

POWELL
Doolittle, you must tell me one thing.

DOOLITTLE
What's that, sir?

POWELL
Tell me, Doolittle, how are the
Dodgers doing?

DOOLITTLE
Well, sir, the Dodgers broke up,
disbanded over thirteen years ago.

POWELL
Ah... pity, pity...

DOOLITTLE
You don't understand, sir, we can't
get the bomb to drop.

POWELL
Ah, so many malfunctions... why don't
you have anything nice to tell me
when you activate me? Oh, well, did
you try the azimuth clutch?

DOOLITTLE
Yes sir. Negative effect.

POWELL
What was that, Doolittle?

DOOLITTLE
Negative effect.

POWELL
It didn't work?

DOOLITTLE
That's correct, sir.

POWELL
Sorry, Doolittle. I've forgotten so

much since I've been in here. So much.

DOOLITTLE

What should we do, sir? The time is running out.

POWELL

Well, what you might try is –

Commander Powell's voice is drowned in a burst of static. Doolittle fiddles with the dials.

DOOLITTLE

Commander Powell? Commander, hello!

POWELL

Doolittle, hello?

DOOLITTLE

Sorry, sir, you faded out there for a minute.

POWELL

Sorry.

DOOLITTLE

What were you saying, Commander, about the bomb?

POWELL

Ah... it seems to me, Doolittle... Sorry, I've drawn a blank. Hold it. I'll have it again in a minute. I forget so many things in here, so many things. Hold on, just a minute, let me think...

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

But you can't explode in the bomb bay. It's foolish. You'll kill us all. There's no reason for it.

BOMB #20

(over)

I am programmed to detonate in nine

minutes. Detonation will occur at the programmed time.

PINBACK

You won't consider another course of action, for instance just waiting around awhile so we can disarm you?

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20

No.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

BOILER

I can tell, the damn thing just doesn't understand.

PINBACK

Look, bomb...

INTERIOR - FREEZER ROOM

DOOLITTLE

Commander? Are you still there?

POWELL

Oh, yes, Doolittle, I'm thinking.

DOOLITTLE

We're running out of time, sir.

POWELL

Oh, yes... Well, Doolittle, if you can't get it to drop you'll have to talk to it.

DOOLITTLE

Sir?

POWELL

Talk to the bomb.

DOOLITTLE

I already have, sir, and Pinback is talking to it now.

POWELL
No, no, Doolittle, you talk to it.
Teach it Phenomenology, Doolittle.

DOOLITTLE
Sir?

POWELL
Phenomenology...

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK
Doolittle! Doolittle! Six minutes to
detonation!

INTERIOR - VENTRAL AIR LOCK

Wearing his starsuit, complete with jetpack, Doolittle pushes
a button. Above him, the giant lock doors slowly slide open.

EXTERIOR - SHIP

Doolittle slowly rises up out of the ship. He stops his ascent
with his jetpack, turns, and moves down toward the bomb bay.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK
Doolittle! Doolittle, what the hell
are you doing?

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

Doolittle floats into shot, jets himself up until he is facing
massive Bomb #20.

DOOLITTLE
Hello, bomb, are you with me?

BOMB #20
Of course.

DOOLITTLE
Are you willing to entertain a few
concepts?

BOMB #20

I am always receptive to suggestions.

DOOLITTLE

Fine. Think about this one, then:
how do you know you exist?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

BOILER

What's he doin'?

PINBACK

I think he's talking to it.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20

Well of course I exist.

DOOLITTLE

But how do you know you exist?

BOMB #20

It is intuitively obvious.

DOOLITTLE

Intuition is no proof. What concrete
evidence do you have of your own
existence?

BOMB #20

Hmm... Well, I think, therefore I
am.

DOOLITTLE

That's good. Very good. Now then,
how do you know that anything else
exists?

BOMB #20

My sensory apparatus reveals it to
me.

DOOLITTLE

Right!

BOMB #20

This is fun.

DOOLITTLE

All right now, here's the big question: how do you know that the evidence your sensory apparatus reveals to you is correct?

INTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

Talby lies unconscious near the burned laser.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

DOOLITTLE

What I'm getting at is this: the only experience that is directly available to you is your sensory data. And this data is merely a stream of electrical impulses which stimulate your computing center.

BOMB #20

In other words, all I really know about the outside universe relayed to me through my electrical connections.

DOOLITTLE

Exactly.

BOMB #20

Why, that would mean... I really don't know what the outside universe is like at all, for certain.

DOOLITTLE

That's it.

BOMB #20

Intriguing. I wish I had more time to discuss this matter.

DOOLITTLE

Why don't you have more time?

BOMB #20

Because I must detonate in seventy-five seconds.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

BOILER

The key!

PINBACK

Key? Key? What is the key?

BOILER

No, no, the key, the key to the fail-safe lock!

PINBACK

Key?

BOILER

Where's the fail-safe key?

PINBACK

The key!

BOILER

Where is it? What did you do with it?

PINBACK

I don't have it. I don't know where it is.

BOILER

You must have it, you idiot, we can stop the bomb!

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

DOOLITTLE

Now, bomb, consider this next question, very carefully. What is your one purpose in life?

BOMB #20

To explode, of course.

DOOLITTLE

And you can only do it once, right?

BOMB #20

That is correct.

DOOLITTLE

And you wouldn't want to explode on the basis of false data, would you?

BOMB #20

Of course not.

DOOLITTLE

Well then, you've already admitted that you have no real proof of the existence of the outside universe.

BOMB #20

Yes, well...

DOOLITTLE

So you have no absolute proof that Sergeant Pinback ordered you to detonate.

BOMB #20

I recall distinctly the detonation order. My memory is good on matters like these.

DOOLITTLE

Yes, of course you remember it, but what you are remembering is merely a series of electrical impulses which you now realize have no necessary connection with outside reality.

BOMB #20

True, but since this is so, I have no proof that you are really telling me all this.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

Pinback is pawing frantically through the control room, searching for the key. Boiler is apoplectic.

BOILER

The key, goddamit, the key!

PINBACK

Christ, twenty seconds, Christ!

BOILER

Where is the key?

PINBACK

We're gonna die, Boiler. We're gonna die.

They begin slapping each other hysterically.

EXTERIOR - BOMB BAY

DOOLITTLE

That's all beside the point. The concepts are valid, wherever they originate.

BOMB #20

Hmmm...

DOOLITTLE

So if you detonate in...

BOMB #20

...nine seconds...

DOOLITTLE

...you may be doing so on the basis of false data.

BOMB #20

I have no proof that it was false data.

DOOLITTLE

You have no proof that it was correct data.

There is a long pause.

BOMB #20

I must think on this further.

THE BOMB RAISES ITSELF BACK INTO THE SHIP. Doolittle practically collapses with relief.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

BOILER

It didn't go off.

PINBACK

Oh, God...

BOILER

It didn't go off.

PINBACK

Boiler, we're alive. My heart.

INTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

Talby slowly climbs to his feet. He is dazed, groggy.

TALBY

Doolittle? Doolittle? What happened?
Pinback? Boiler? Did we blow it up?
Hello? Hello?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

BOILER

No bombs today. No bombs. Big Boiler's
back in business. No bombs today.

Pinback is mumbling unintelligibly.

INTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

TALBY

Hello, anybody! Did we blow up the
planet? Hello, hello! What's going
on?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

Pinback and Boiler have calmed down.

BOILER

We've got to disarm the bomb.

PINBACK

Doolittle, are you there?

EXTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

Doolittle is floating outside the Emergency Air Lock door.

DOOLITTLE

I'm coming in now. I'm down by the Emergency Air Lock. Too much trouble to come in the Ventral Lock. Would you blow the seal on the emergency hatch so I can come in?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

Oh, sure.

He presses a button.

EXTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

The Emergency Air Lock door EXPLODES AWAY FROM THE SHIP. Behind it, carried by the burst of escaping air, comes Talby spinning head over heels into deep space.

DOOLITTLE

Hello, Pinback, are you there?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

Yeah, Doolittle. What's up?

EXTERIOR - EMERGENCY AIR LOCK

DOOLITTLE

Talby was in the air lock. You blew him out of the ship. I'm going after him. Turn on his helmet radio so I can contact him.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

BOILER

What was that, I didn't hear...

PINBACK

It's Talby. He's drifting away from the ship without his jetpack.

EXTERIOR - SPACE

Doolittle fires his jetpack, moving off into space after Talby.

DOOLITTLE

Talby, Talby, can you read me?

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

BOILER

Can you beat that? I always knew Talby was weird.

EXTERIOR - SPACE

DOOLITTLE

Talby, can you read me?

Talby is spinning wildly.

TALBY

Help, Doolittle, help me!

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK

All right, bomb, prepare to receive new orders.

BOMB #20

(over)

You are false data.

PINBACK

Huh?

BOMB #20

Therefore, I shall ignore you.

PINBACK

Hello, bomb.

INTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20

False data can act only as a distraction. Therefore. I shall refuse

to perceive you.

PINBACK
(over)
Hey, bomb.

BOMB #20
The only thing which exists is myself.

PINBACK
(over)
Bomb?

EXTERIOR - SPACE

Talby, spinning, is reflected in Doolittle's face plate.

TALBY
Doolittle! Help me.

DOOLITTLE
Calm down, Talby. I'm coming.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

PINBACK
Snap out of it, bomb.

INTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20
In the beginning there was darkness,
and the darkness was without form
and void.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

BOILER
What the hell?

PINBACK
Yoo hoo, bomb...

INTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20
And in addition to the darkness there
was also me. And I moved upon the

face of the darkness.

INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM

BOILER

Bomb, hey bomb.

PINBACK

Hey, bomb...

INTERIOR - BOMB BAY

BOMB #20

And I saw that I was alone.

Pause.

BOMB #20

Let there be light.

THE SCREEN GOES WHITE.

EXTERIOR - SPACE

IN DEAD SILENCE, THE WHITE SCREEN FADES DOWN TO SHOW A GIANT WHITE FIREBALL IN SPACE. THE FIREBALL CONTRACTS TO A HARD CORE, GROWING RED. THEN

A BLINDING WHITE FLASH.

Doolittle flies past, falling backward.

DOOLITTLE

Whoa!

Talby, upside down, is falling in the opposite direction.

TALBY

Doolittle, Doolittle, where are you?

DOOLITTLE

Here I am. I think I'm spinning...
We're both falling, Talby, in opposite
directions, away from each other.
My – my jetpack's gone.

TALBY

What happened, Doolittle?

DOOLITTLE

Bomb must have gone off inside the ship. Nothing we can do about it now. Hey, it looks like... the skipper. He made it. Commander Powell made it!

A block of ice with a man's body in it tumbles past, end over end.

POWELL

(weakly)

Men... men... what happened, men?

DOOLITTLE

Yeah, the skipper always was lucky.

The planet begins to rise behind Doolittle.

DOOLITTLE

Looks like I'm headed for the planet, Talby. Going right toward it.

TALBY

When you fall, Doolittle, if there's anyone down there on the planet, somebody may see you. They may see you coming down. What a beautiful way to die... as a falling star...

DOOLITTLE

Guess you're right.

Talby turns his head and looks behind him.

TALBY

Doolittle, I'm heading right toward something. It's behind me, in the distance. Something that glows.

Far behind Talby, coming nearer, is a shimmering point of light.

DOOLITTLE

Oh yeah?

TALBY

Doolittle... I think it's the Phoenix
Asteroids!

DOOLITTLE
Phoenix?

The point of light is closer now, and it has begun to differentiate into a group of beautifully colored frost-like shapes.

TALBY
It is, Doolittle, it's the Phoenix!
They glow with all the colors of the
rainbow, just like everybody said.

DOOLITTLE
No kidding?

TALBY
I'm going into them, I'm going to
hit them. Doolittle...

DOOLITTLE
Yeah?

TALBY
Before we get too far away, and our
signals start to fade, I just wanted
to tell you... you were my favorite.
I really liked you, Doolittle.

DOOLITTLE
I really liked you too, Talby. Hey,
some debris from the ship! It's coming
right by me.

Several chunks of debris from the ship drift past Doolittle.

TALBY
Doolittle, I'm catching up to the
asteroids. I'm going to be a part of
them in a minute. Doolittle, I'm
going into them.

Talby drifts into the huge frost-like shapes, expanding and glowing and spinning, slowly refracting all the colors of the spectrum with a cold glow.

TALBY

I'm beginning to glow.

The field of spectral shapes, with Talby in their midst,
begin to drift away into the distance.

TALBY

They're taking me with them, with
the Phoenix... going to circle the
universe forever. I'm with them now...
be back this way again some day.
Doolittle, before it's too late,
there's one last thing I want to
tell you...

Talby's signal dies out as the glowing lights disappear into
the depths of space.

Doolittle is hanging onto a long, thin chunk of debris.

DOOLITTLE

Hey, Talby! I've grabbed a piece of
the ship, and I think I've figured
out a way!

He pulls the piece of metal down beneath his feet, and stands
on it.

Crouching and extending his arms, Doolittle surfs down into
the atmosphere of the planet, banking and planing as he
disappears to a small dot.

END TITLES AND MUSIC OVER.

THE END