

HOME BY CHRISTMAS

Bob Hope in Korea, 1950

by

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INSERT - FILM CLIP FROM MASH EPISODE *ABYSSINIA, HENRY*:

WE SEE an actual clip from the television show MASH.

We're in the MASH operating room. It's crowded with the cast:
ALAN ALDA (HAWKEYE), WAYNE ROGERS (TRAPPER JOHN), MCCLEAN
STEVENSON (HENRY BLAKE), LARRY LINVILLE (FRANK BURNS),
LORETTA SWIT (MAJ. HOUЛИHAN) plus nurses at each table.

GARY BURGHOFF enters as RADAR, the only actor not in surgical scrubs. He holds a mask to his face and carries a telegram.

RADAR

Colonel?

BLAKE

Yo?

RADAR

Do you know what I found in this morning's mail?

BLAKE

Ah, now that's a tough one. Hum a few bars will you, Radar?

RADAR

You're going home.

BLAKE

I'm going home?

RADAR

You got all your points. They're discharging you.

BLAKE

Discharged?

RADAR

Tokyo, San Francisco, then home.

BLAKE

I'm going home? I'm discharged?
I'm going home!

The cast breaks out into ad-libbed congratulations as Blake is overcome with joy on the news. WE HEAR:

LARRY (O.S.)

And cut! Print it. We're wrapped, everyone. See you tomorrow.

INT. MASH SET (1974)

SUPER: "Los Angeles, 1974." With actors still in surgical masks, WE SEE CAST and CREW wrap for the day. LARRY GELBART, 45, and producer GENE REYNOLDS, 40s, watch video replay of the scene as ALAN ALDA, 30s, comes over and removes his mask. An EXECUTIVE, MIKE, 20s, joins them.

LARRY

Everyone know Mike from CBS?

ALDA

What brings you out?

MIKE

Larry called. About a new scene?

ALDA

There's a new scene?

LARRY

Gene. Mike's here.

ALDA

There's a new scene?

Larry ushers them off to the familiar "swamp" set, where Alda's character lives.

LARRY

A final scene we shoot tomorrow.

Larry hands a YELLOW LEGAL PAD with dialogue on it to Alda.

ALDA

(reading aloud)

Radar enters, telegram in hand, and says, 'I have a message. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Blake's plane was shot down over the Sea of Japan. It spun in. There were no survivors.

(stunned, to Larry)

Jesus, Henry dies? *He dies?*

MIKE

In a comedy? How is that funny?

ALDA

It's not. It's brilliant.

LARRY

We show extras getting killed every week. I want to make a point. War doesn't always happen to some one else. Don't tell the cast. I want it to hit them hard when we shoot.

MIKE

Oh, it will. Let me rephrase. Do we really need to end the season on a downer?

LARRY

Yes.

ALDA

Yes.

REYNOLDS

Yes.

EXT. CBS RADFORD PARKING LOT

Larry and Mike walk to their cars. Larry's is a '74 Cadillac. Mike's is a Mercedes. Larry has the legal pad in hand.

MIKE

Let me rephrase. Last army show on CBS was *Gomer Pyle*. Nobody died on *Gomer Pyle*.

LARRY

And Gomer was the only marine in America who never heard of Vietnam. The war's on Cronkite every night for dinner.

MIKE

Maybe people want to forget it by prime time. Let me rephrase. *MASH* is finally a hit. It's what, four years since CBS canned the Smothers Brothers for this kind of thing.

LARRY

They didn't have our ratings.

MIKE

Lar, it's OK to just be funny.

Mike takes off. In his car, Larry reads his legal pad notes.

EXT. NBC STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD (1950)

INSERT - YELLOW LEGAL PAD

SUPER: "Los Angeles, 1950." WE HEAR a girl LAUGHING. The pad has jokes scribbled on it. It's held in a girl's hands.

EXT. 1950 CADILLAC

Larry, 21, and NAOMI, 19, who reads his jokes on the pad.

NAOMI

Larry, these are hilarious.

At Sunset and Vine, people line up on the sidewalk at a door that says "The Bob Hope Show." At the studio gate, a guard raises the gate. Larry waves to him. Naomi is star struck.

GUARD

Hi Larry.

NAOMI

Oh. My. God. He knows you.

LARRY

He is getting kind of familiar.
He's fired.

NAOMI

No, Larry, please don't --

LARRY

I kid. Writers don't fire anyone.
They get fired.

INT. NBC STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

Larry escorts Naomi thru a stage door. On stage is DORIS DAY, 27, rehearsing. Naomi tightens up, squeezing Larry's arm.

NAOMI

Oh my God. Doris Day!

Doris stops singing to look Larry's way. Larry is mortified. JIMMY SAPHIER, 30s, the show's producer-manager, comes over.

JIMMY

Bob is *muy* unhappy with the mono.
Wants a big kid in the back.

LARRY

(to Naomi)

Bobspeak: meaning, the monologue isn't funny, or so Bob says, and he wants a big closing joke.

JIMMY

And you're still standing here. Let me find this lady a seat. Front row for VIPs. Tonight our guest star is Mr. Burt Lancaster.

(to Larry as she walks on)
Is she legal? You're 21 now.

LARRY

Gimme a break.

Larry heads for the writers room and FREEZES as WE HEAR:

NAOMI (O.S.)

Oh my God - BURT LANCASTER!

Larry sees her gush over BURT LANCASTER, 36, on stage.

LARRY

She's twelve!

ANGLE - BACKSTAGE

Larry hurries past wardrobe, make-up, dressing rooms. He slows at the gold-starred one with "Bob Hope" on it. A loud argument is going on inside, the door half open. CHUCK, 30s, the show's ad agency rep, leans on the desk, smoking. We get GLIMPSES of BOB HOPE, 40s, agitated, pacing.

CHUCK

Joe McCarthy jokes? Nobody cares.

BOB

He's making headlines every day. I went off on HUAC it didn't hurt me.

CHUCK

It's OK to just be funny. Besides, you're both Republicans.

BOB

No, I'm a Republican. He's nuts.

CHUCK

He's also a vindictive asshole.
It's an election year.

(MORE)

CHUCK (cont'd)

In a month the Republicans will
lose the mid-terms, and no one will
ever hear from that shit kicker
junior senator again.

BOB

He can't hurt me.

CHUCK

No. But he can chase sponsor money
away. My agency's seen him do it.
Same money you pay your cast, crew,
and writers with.

Bob sees Larry, waves him off, closes the door.

INT. WRITERS ROOM

Sitting at a big table: MORT, 30s, WW II vet, always in a baseball cap, junior producer; FRED, 40s, dark, the oldest writer, graying hair, BLACK SUIT, sips from a flask, bandage on forehead, imagine Robert Mitchum writing gags; CHET, 35, proto-beatnik, Tiki shirts, green shades, always scruffy. They spot Larry as he enters.

MORT

Where you been?

FRED

Dog bit him on his paper route.
Bob's changing the mono. McCarthy
jokes'll never make it.

CHET

I dunno. Bob hates McCarthy. I like
him. Kicking ass and taking names.

MORT

Kicking ass and making up names.

CHET

Bob should use my baseball stuff.
World Series ends in four yesterday
so Bob says he wants a *today* topic.
Worked all night on'm. No sleep.

FRED

Yeah? They put me to sleep.

CHET

(re Fred's bandage)

That when you fell off the bar
stool?

Fred makes a loud SNORING noise directed at Chet. The PHONE RINGS. Fred answers, listens, hangs up, smiling at Chet.

FRED
New topic. Santa Anita race track.

LARRY
Santa Anita? That's so old.

MORT
Are you gonna tell Bob?

FRED
Noooooo.

LARRY
(thinking)
Fine - my horse is so old, the bet
was win, place, or live.
(the guys groan)
So old, out of the gate he tripped
on his hearing aid.

NAOMI (O.S.)
OH MY GAWD - BOB HOPE!

Indeed, behind Larry, is Bob, amped-up before the show. He's looking back at Naomi. Chuck and Jimmy are there, too.

BOB
Catch her when she faints, Jimmy.
They're never ready for me the
first time.
(to Larry)
I heard the Santa Anitas. Keepers.
Freddy, fall off a bar stool again?

The writers CRACK UP like it's the funniest thing they ever heard, even Fred. Seeing Chuck, Bob closes the door on him.

BOB
Lar, let's hear'm again.

LARRY
C'mon, I was kidding. Use those and
you'll really sound like Bob Hope.

BOB
What's that supposed to mean?

Bob gives Larry a cold look. The room goes quiet.

LARRY

I just meant --

BOB

Think I can't sell those?

FRED

Nobody said that.

MORT

Of course you could.

CHET

World Series. Still front page.

BOB

A hundred says I can sell'm.

Bob throws money on the table. The writers all ad-lib that they're in and shoot looks at Larry that say "thanks, a lot."

INT. NBC STUDIOS CONTROL ROOM

Larry and the writers watch Bob from the control booth. Bob stands before a live radio audience that laughs LOUDLY.

BOB

I won't say my horse was old, but out of the gate he tripped over his hearing aid. In fact, the bet was win, place, or live.

After the laugh, the writers pull out money.

BOB

Thank you! And don't forget, my new movie *Fancy Pants*, with Lucille Ball, opens Friday in your town.

Bob soaks up applause as they go to commercial. Wardrobe runs out, puts him in a 10-gallon cowboy hat and chaps as he holds up his hand to the writers making the universal "money" sign.

INT. NBC STUDIOS BACKSTAGE

Jimmy and the writers wait. WE HEAR Bob sing "Thanks For The Memory" to applause.

JIMMY

Stay! Bob's got a big announcement.

Bob comes back stage in Prince Valiant outfit. To writers:

BOB
Ah, they love that Bob Hope sound!

Bob runs out and the applause level goes WAY UP.

JIMMY
That was not the announcement.

CHET
He wants to go double or nothing.

JIMMY
You want to get off probation you
might just listen for a change.

CHET
It wasn't my fault. I told you.

JIMMY
Do I know? Was I there? You got a
big mouth sometimes, Chet. Some
things about Bob Hope you don't say
in front of Mrs. Bob Hope. To you I
have to explain this.

Bob runs back. Everyone circles around him.

BOB
Ok, big news. Got your passports?

FRED
Shit.

BOB
(pointedly ignoring Fred)
I was on the phone this afternoon
with *President Truman*.

Bob pauses for maximum name-dropping effect.

LARRY
Sorry, I didn't catch the name.

BOB
We're going to Korea. Biggest USO
show ever. The whole band!

The writers wear frozen smiles, except an excited Larry.

LARRY
Wow! Korea?

FRED

Army cruel, night and day. "Wow."

CHET

Army cots with zero women. "Korea."

JIMMY

Ok, everyone, great show!

Everyone goes, except the writers, who fork over their \$100.

BOB

Thank you, thank you. Hey, I need
jokes for a Jerry Lewis dinner.

LARRY

There's a dinner for Jerry?

BOB

No. I'm having dinner with Jerry. I
need some jokes. Chet, Mort?

Chet boldly takes his bills back from Bob.

CHET

Four good ones. Call you tomorrow.

BOB

Five.

CHET

Four.

CHUCK

Bob. The whole band. Twenty guys?

BOB

When I sold it to Truman I got
excited.

JIMMY

You know how the sponsors feel
about expensive location trips.

Bob whistles "Road to Morocco" as he changes into a sport
coat, not wanting to hear it.

CHUCK

They pay the bills around here.

BOB

Who pays them? I'm number one in
radio and movies. I pay the bills.

(MORE)

BOB(cont'd)
(thinks quickly)
The Paleface opened big in Tokyo.
Tell NBC and Paramount to split the
bill and write it off as promotion.

Jimmy thinks, likes it. Chuck gets it, nods.

JIMMY
(to his assistant)
Get me NBC, I've got some very
patriotic news for them.

The curtain lifts as the crew cleans up. Bob, Jimmy, and Larry see Naomi, Lancaster, and his guys on stage as Naomi gives Lancaster her phone number. Bob adds it up.

BOB
Lar, I need a lift. Got plans?

LARRY
Not anymore.

JIMMY
(to his assistant)
A lady needs a cab ride home.

EXT. STUDIO PARKING LOT

There's a beat coupé next to Larry's shiny Cadillac. Bob heads for the coupé. Larry heads for the Cadillac.

BOB
That's yours? What am I paying you?

They hop in as Bob goes over numbers in his head. He finds a bag of 78 records on the seat and looks them over: Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker. Larry puts on a bop station.

BOB
No wife, no kids. Where you live?

LARRY
Beverly Hills. With my folks.

BOB
At home. Bop, burgers, and a Cadillac. Not much overhead. Man, what I wouldn't give to be 21, single, and loaded for a week.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD

Larry and Bob drive up from Sunset to Ciro's (now the Comedy Store). Bob studies the records, listens to the radio.

BOB

Dizzy, Bird ... Who knew you could play jazz backwards? There a sketch in this stuff?

LARRY

Yeah, the names, hipster clothes.

They're high all the time.

(stoned voice)

Jazz. What is jazz? Jazz is a cop in a pink uniform writing speeding tickets to parked cars, you dig?

What is jazz? Jazz is a barking dog singing love songs to Kate Smith.

Bob cracks up.

BOB

Ever been a top 10 bop hit?

LARRY

Nah.

BOB

Write it when they get one, or it's two hours explaining bop to Chuckie the ad man. 21. You're free.

Tomorrow I'm in Palm Springs with the family, but I host a March of Dimes dinner at night, then over 18 holes I argue reshoots with Barney Balaban and his Eskimos.

LARRY

Is that a band?

BOB

Paramount brass. W.C. Fields used to see the suits coming down to the set and say, "Eskimo trouble!"

LARRY

Big Broadcast of 1937.

BOB

How did you know that?

LARRY

I've seen all your movies. Twice.

BOB

So, a fan of that Bob Hope sound
after all. If you live at home,
what do you do when you get a girl?

LARRY

Hope she has an apartment. I hate
motels.

BOB

(re the giant back seat)
Now I know why you got a Cadillac.
When I was 21 I was dancing in
vaudeville and lucky to eat. Always
on trains. Ever been to Altoona?
Louisville?

LARRY

I haven't been anywhere.

BOB

I was gonna be the next Fred
Astaire.

LARRY

A dancer? What happened?

BOB

World already had a Fred Astaire.
It needed a Bob Hope.

EXT. CIRO'S NIGHTCLUB

They pull into Ciro's parking lot as Bob waves to fans and
valets rush over.

VALET

Miss Maxwell's almost done with the
first set, Mr. Hope.

BOB

Thanks, guys. My wallet ...

Bob pats his pockets for tip money. Larry tips them.

INT. CIRO'S NIGHTCLUB

It's the swankiest nightclub in LA, if not the hippest. Bob and Larry enter and the maître d' cozies up, ushering them to the back of the big room.

INT. MAIN SHOWROOM

On-stage is blonde bombshell Marilyn Maxwell, 29, singing "I Didn't Want to Do It." Bob waves at her and she winks to him. Larry soaks up the pure sex appeal and glamour.

MAÎTRE D'
(much too loudly)
Would you like to wait in Miss
Maxwell's dressing room tonight?

BOB
With all the music no one could
hear you out in the parking lot.

EARL WILSON
Yeah, quiet. I want an exclusive.

Unseen by Bob, columnist EARL WILSON, 43, has sidled up -- short, squat, buzz cut, notebook in hand, wearing big thick Mr. Peepers glasses befitting the author of the gossip column *It Happened Last Night*. Bob reacts as if he just noticed a centipede on his shirt.

EARL WILSON
What was that about you in *Miss
Maxwell's dressing room?*

BOB
Hah! Lar, Earl Wilson. Lar's one of
my writers, a pistol if you need
jokes for the column.

EARL WILSON
Why do they call Marilyn "the other
Mrs. Bob Hope?" Is that good for a
guy pushing himself as America's
favorite family comic?

BOB
Me? That's Ozzie Nelson. I never
push my family on the show. The
censors are all over me.

EARL WILSON

True ...

BOB

No. Your friend Sidney Skolsky says
that "other Mrs. Bob Hope" crap.

EARL WILSON

You know I hate Sidney's guts and
he hates mine.

Just then, Marilyn finishes to applause. Bob, Earl, Larry,
and the Maître d' applaud loudly for a polite second then get
back to business.

BOB

Then maybe you'd like a real scoop
instead of his bullshit.

EARL WILSON

A *real* scoop. Not Marilyn starring
in your next movie. Heard it last
night.

(re Larry)

You gonna have your guys sign
loyalty oaths like NBC's other
shows? Most writers are reds.

BOB

Loyalty oaths? First, nobody on my
show works for NBC. They work for
me. And I don't need any loyalty
oaths. You know I've gone on the
air against that HUAC stuff.

EARL WILSON

People want real Americans on their
shows. You're from England, right?

BOB

I was born in England. I'm from
Cleveland. You think Larry here's a
commie? You should see his
Cadillac. I'm no red, but people
gotta calm down.

Marilyn arrives, smiles at Larry, who kind of melts in her
presence. She's appalled to see Wilson eyeing her legs.

MARILYN

Hiya Larry. Looking good.

(appalled)

Earl -- always a surprise.

EARL WILSON

But not surprised to see the same
married movie star here four nights
in a row?

BOB

Hiya kid. Earl's looking for a big
scoop about us.

MARILYN

Earl, Bob and I are --

EARL WILSON

-- just *gooooood* friends. Bob, you
mentioned a scoop?

Everybody eyes Bob, it's on him.

BOB

Get your pencil ready. You're
breaking this story and getting
Marilyn's reaction, too. I just got
official word that I'm going to
Korea for the biggest show in USO
history, and I am herewith asking
Miss Maxwell if she will join me on
that tour.

EARL WILSON

Pretty good -- Maxie?

MARILYN

Sure. I did USO shows in the last
war, I'll go now.

EARL WILSON

Why Korea? MacArthur says the
war'll be over in three months.

BOB

Then I better get there fast. Look,
I go where the guys go.

EARL WILSON

Why no Doris Day? Bad blood? Huh?
She a bitch? She looks like it.

BOB

No! She's shooting a movie. No GI's
gonna turn down Marilyn. Perhaps
you saw her striptease in *Key to
the City* with Clark Gable?

EARL WILSON

Yeah ... and *Lost in a Harem*. Love
a live version.

Wilson turns back to his notes as Marilyn refrains from hitting him. Everyone waits on his reaction.

EARL WILSON

Ok, it beats Skolsky's shit. Love
to keep beating him. Don't lose my
number, Bobby.

BOB

I won't.

EARL WILSON

Good. You two *behave*, or papa'll
hear about it.

Wilson exits. They all exhale.

BOB

I did come to tell you the news.
Sorry it had to be that way.

MARILYN

I record in the morning ...

BOB

I'm headed down to Palm Springs.

Just then, two autograph hounds arrive, blowing the moment.

EXT. CIRO'S PARKING LOT

Larry and Bob comes out and the valets scramble to get Larry's car. They see Wilson driving out, waving to them.

BOB

Twenty-one ... you want to trade
places, lemme know. Let's hit Big
Boy in Burbank. I'm starved.

INT. GELBART HOME - NIGHT

HARRY GELBART, 40s, sits in his living room easy chair in a bathrobe reading a newspaper headlined "Truman and MacArthur to Meet at Wake Island; Reds Flee North." Another reads: "Nixon Edges Douglas in Senate Poll." Larry enters from the front door. Harry speaks in a Yiddish accent.

LARRY
Waiting up for me?

HARRY
It's 10:15, Mr. Excitement. You're twenty-one now. You can stay out if you want.

Larry hands him his pay envelope, flops down on the couch.

LARRY
Pay day.

HARRY
Too much.

Harry hands it back. Larry won't take it. Larry picks up the paper, reading new car ads. Larry's mom, FRIEDA, 40s, enters, and she has the same Old World accent.

HARRY
Look, Sinatra's home.

FRIEDA
The show was funny. The horse tripping over the hearing aid.

HARRY
Funny.

LARRY
That wasn't a real joke.

FRIEDA
It was as funny as a real joke.

HARRY
What do you mean not a real joke?

LARRY
I was making fun of Bob's style.

HARRY
Don't make trouble. Just be funny.

Harry swats Larry with the newspaper. Larry sees the Korea headline.

LARRY
Oh, yeah, I forgot. Can't make Sunday dinner. I'll be in Korea.

FRIEDA

Korea? Of the Korean War, Korea?

LARRY

Yeah. We leave Saturday. Gonna be amazing. Probably meet MacArthur.

HARRY

Certainly sound excited to go to a war. Most people avoid them.

LARRY

It's my job? Besides, I'll be with Bob. Nobody shoots at him except critics.

FRIEDA

Communists would.

LARRY

Not if they want to work in this town.

HARRY

Korea. We'll get Chinese tomorrow night. You'll get over it. Try Tijuana, like your college friends.

FRIEDA

Be nice. Say, 'I appreciate the offer, but I prefer not to go to the Korean War at this time.'

LARRY

Larry Gelbart, courteous objector.

FRIEDA

Tell him wars aren't funny.

LARRY

You tell him. Nobody plays a war like Bob.

HARRY

What are we going to do, write a note that says Larry's excused?

LARRY

Yeah, I'm too well to attend.

FRIEDA

So, it's settled. You're not going.

LARRY

Mom, they stop wars for Bob Hope.
Korea's practically over.

HARRY

And I'm practically a millionaire
barber.

Harry and Frieda share a look. There's nothing they can do.

EXT. HUGHES AIRCRAFT RUNWAY - DAY

Bob, a bleary-eyed Fred, and Jimmy wait on the field near two army C-54 transports. 40 cast and crew board the planes. Bob hangs out with the Hi-Hatters, an African-American dancing team. Bob shows them a move. The dancers act impressed.

DANCER

Nice, nice. Let me show you what
you were trying to do.

The three Hi-Hatters then do the move, all better than Bob.

BOB

I'll keep my day job.

Fred spots Marilyn getting out of cab, crossing the tarmac like a catwalk.

BOB

Boys, Miss Marilyn Maxwell. You may
recall her in *Champion* opposite
Kirk what's-he-got-that-I-haven't
Douglas?

FRED

Missed it.

MARILYN

You were in the theater when you
missed it, Freddie.

A purple Mercury pulls up. Chet, in shades, blue suit, and white patent leather shoes gets hot kisses from two German girls ad-libbing "auf Wiedersehen, schotzy" before leaving.

MORT

Two? Two? Why you? How?

CHET

A man off to war? Baby, I might
never come back ...

BOB
Don't get my hopes up. Where's Lar?

ANGLE - LARRY'S CADILLAC

parking. Harry sits up front, Frieda in back. Larry waves to the guys as Frieda pushes a bag lunch on him, mortifying him.

FRIEDA
Take your lunch.

LARRY
They have food on planes now. In fact, they have planes now.

HARRY
It's roast beef.

LARRY
It's a Bob Hope show. We go first class.

FRIEDA
Take it.

LARRY
Ma. No.

The Gelbarts get out. The guys watch as Frieda and Harry hug and kiss Larry good-bye. She pushes the lunch again.

MORT
Hi Mrs. G!

FRED
Did you sign Larry's report card?

BOB
Can't go on the field trip unless you sign it.

Larry hugs his mom a last time and does not take the lunch.

HARRY
Do me a favor, Mr. Wiseguy. Keep your mouth shut and your eyes open. That you should do everywhere.

INT. USO PLANE

Larry sits next to Chet and looks out the window as his parents wave. Chet takes out a roast beef sandwich.

LARRY

What's with the sandwich?

CHET

No food 'til Hawaii. It's the army.
You wanted stewardesses?

As they taxi, Larry looks out the window to see his mom waving. Larry's dad is eating the sandwich.

INSERT MAP ANIMATION

We see a world map with the USO planes flying around a slowly turning globe, touching at Hawaii and Guam, as the USA disappears from sight. The plane heads to Tokyo.

INT. USO PLANE - NIGHT

Bob and Marilyn sit. Jimmy faces them on a fold-down chair.

JIMMY

NBC has upped their offer for a weekly TV show by 10%.

BOB

No, no, and 10% more no.

JIMMY

Look at Milton Berle. Never been hotter. Lucille Ball?

BOB

TV's the best thing ever happened to them. I'm a movie star. I do TV to promote movies. Specials only.

JIMMY

Berle's numbers speak pretty loud.

BOB

Everything about Milton is loud.
No.

(to Marilyn)

Hey, kid. Wait'll you see Tokyo.

But, Marilyn has drifted off to sleep on him.

ANGLE - THE WRITERS

Chet, Fred, Larry, and Mort all sit in a group. Larry reads *Billboard* and the other three play poker and talk.

CHET

Eisenhower? America will never
elect a bald President.

MORT

Ike. The guy who beat Hitler?

CHET

Douglas MacArthur beat Tojo. And
Big Mac don't need a rug. And that
chin. Puh-res-i-den-tial.

FRED

Had no idea you were so political,
Chester. Oughta run for Congress.

CHET

How'd you hear the word Congress?
There a Congress liquor store?

Fred flips him off. Mort sees what Larry's reading.

MORT

Ditch that. Their critic called our
tv special warmed over vaudeville.

CHET

Seen Sid Caesar? Fun-nee.

FRED

Need a Ph.D. to watch that guy.
Bob's show is good enough for me.
Pays my bar tab, anyway.

LARRY

Your bar tab? I want a raise.

CHET

Hey, I don't blame Bob doing what
he does. He invented it. But times
change.

LARRY

Invented what? Jokes?

MORT
His kind of a show.

Larry is baffled here -- shrugs. What?

FRED
No characters, plots, situation --
just jokes. A lot of vaudeville
guys tried it. Bob figured it out.

LARRY
Figured what out?

CHET
The no-story comedy show. Bob cold
opened the monologue - which they
did not want him to do.

LARRY
Wait. They didn't want the star of
the show to open his own show?

MORT
No. They thought the star should
come on after the band, the
announcer, the commercials. In all
of show business, what star is his
own opening act? Bob figured radio
works best if he goes first. And
all topical jokes. That day's news.

FRED
First to hire a room of writers.
Doubled the jokes in a show. If
Chet'd quit we could triple it.

Now Chet flips Fred off.

CHET
After the mono, Bob kids the band.
Does bits, has a guest star out for
an interview about their new movie
or whatever bullshit.

MORT
Then music to close. It builds from
Bob solo to that big Bob finish.

LARRY
Everybody does that.

OTHER THREE WRITERS
Now.

Fred, drunk, pokes Larry in the chest.

FRED
You were burping up your lunch back
then.

LARRY
You're burping yours up now.

Fred just eyes Larry coolly as Bob sits down with them.

FRED
You know, I'm glad you're Jewish.
That way I always got a reason not
to like you.

BOB
Jesus. Shut up.

CHET
That's our Freddie, giving drunk
Klansmen a bad name.

FRED
Listen, eightball --

Just then, turbulence causes Fred to slosh his paper cup of bourbon and some of it hits Bob's sleeve.

BOB
Goddammit. Go to sleep.

FRED
Don't tell me what to do.

It's uncomfortable, silent, just the sound of the plane. Fred gets up, goes back a few aisles and drops into a seat, pulling his hat over his face. Bob eyes Fred, pissed. Jimmy sits down next to Chet.

ANGLE - CHET AND JIMMY

CHET
Why's Fred get away with that shit
and I'm always on probation?

JIMMY
Pull Bob out of a car wreck the
rules change. Just worry about you.
(MORE)

JIMMY(cont'd)

You guys make sure you don't go
three weeks without jokes on-air
and it's hard to get fired. For
most people.

ANGLE - BOB, WRITERS, JIMMY

Bob returns to optimist mode and signals to Mort.

BOB

Deal. I wanna win Lar's Caddy back.

EXT. HANEDA AIRFIELD, TOKYO - DAY

SUPER: "Tuesday, October 24th, 1950. Tokyo." Bob's planes
land on the airfield runways.

INT. USO PLANE - DAY

Everybody wakes up stiff on seats with rolled up jackets as
pillows. They get up to deplane, Bob first.

FRED

Japs'll be a great audience. Only
five years since the A-Bomb.

LARRY

Yeah, what's funny after that?

JIMMY

Bob is. *The Paleface* opened huge
over here.

EXT. PLANE

Bob stands in the plane's door and a CHEER goes up like it's
a Beatles show. Two Japanese men are dressed up as Bob and
Jane Russell from *The Paleface*. Bob signs autographs and
poses for pictures as crowds of Japanese fans greet him.

CROWD

Boba Hopa! Boba Hopa! Boba Hopa!

CHET

(to Larry)

Probably think he's Red Buttons.

BOB (O.S.)

I heard that!

JIMMY
Bob heard that!

INT. BUS - DAY

Bob's bus rolls through downtown Tokyo as fans chase after. Suddenly, the bus stops, as the street is clogged with fans. WE HEAR the crowd singing "Buttons and Bows," Bob's hit song from *The Paleface*. He leans out the window to cheers and sings along with them.

MORT
We fought a war with them? We
shoulda just sent him.

BOB
Guys, jokes, jokes.

CHET
My World Series stuff!

The writers whip out notebooks and feed Bob pages. WE HEAR HUGE LAUGHS. Chet gives Fred an I Told You So Look.

BUS DRIVER
You know none of these people speak
English, right?

LARRY
Then why are they laughing?

BUS DRIVER
He's Bob Hope. They know when he's
being funny.

Bob peeks back into the bus, loving it.

BOB
Christmas bonus this year. Promise!

CHET
I told you that stuff would kill.
You gotta listen to me.

INT. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Bob and co. enter. LIEUTENANT PRESCOTT, 20s, an army PR handler, greets them.

PRESCOTT

Sir, I'm Lieutenant Prescott, your escort for your visit. General and Mrs. MacArthur have invited you and your cast to lunch.

BOB

All forty of us?

PRESCOTT

The invitation is for twenty only.

BOB

We'll handle it. Thank you.

JIMMY

Cut the band. That leaves twenty-two.

BOB

Cut two of the writers.

CHET

You're not cutting me. I'm going. I gotta meet MacArthur.

MORT

We'll draw lots.

CHET

You draw. I'm going.

LARRY

We're all drawing lots.

CHET

(pleading)

Bob!

BOB

(pleading)

Chet!

Fred takes out four matchsticks and snaps two in half.

FRED

Long pulls go.

The writers grab. Mort and Larry draw the long matches.

BOB

Sorry, Freddie.

FRED

Send me a bottle of gin if you feel
that bad.

CHET

I'm going.

BOB

No, fair's fair.

CHET

Fair? Fair? I can't come to Japan
and not meet Big Mac.

BOB

Maybe you should go and I'll stay?

CHET

Really?

JIMMY

No!

Everybody heads for their rooms except the writers.

CHET

Guys, come on, how much for a
Macarthur ticket? \$50. \$100.

LARRY

No way.

MORT

Uh-uh.

FRED

Forget it.

CHET

(to Fred)

You're not even going.

FRED

I just like turning you down.

EXT. IMPERIAL PALACE - DAY

An army bus pulls up, met by a full dress military guard. Bob and his people and Prescott step out. Larry and Mort stare up at the white, imperial walls in front of them.

MORT
Already lives like he's President.

LARRY
If Presidents had the money.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE

Inside, GENERAL and MRS MACARTHUR, 70ish, welcome Bob's company with a cadre of miliary officials.

MRS. MACARTHUR
Mr. Hope, welcome to our home.

LARRY
Cozy.

MACARTHUR
Bob Hope, what a pleasure.

BOB
Likewise, general.

MacArthur laughs, as if Bob just told a hilarious joke.

LARRY
Guess MacArthur doesn't speak English, either.

MacArthur watches GIs surround Bob. Mort sees MacArthur eyeing Bob coolly, and tries to break the ice with him.

MORT
I used to be one of those guys. In a quonset hut in Alaska. I heard a Christmas show Bob did on radio. Like a lifeline home. A year later I was writing jokes for him.

MacArthur just watches. Mrs. MacArthur and Prescott pass by.

MRS. MACARTHUR
A chair short? We have twenty-one guests and twenty chairs?

PRESCOTT
Yes, ma'am. I counted three times.

WE HEAR a very familiar LAUGH. Larry and Mort turn to see CHET laughing TOO LOUDLY at something MacArthur said. Bob slowly walks over, staring daggers at Chet, who snaps pictures of himself with MacArthur on a Brownie camera.

CHET

Bob, did you hear that? The General's a comedian, too.

BOB

Is he looking for a writer?

MRS. MACARTHUR

Ladies and Gentlemen, lunch.

As everyone moves to the table, MacArthur sits at the head. Bob, Chet, Larry, Mort sit on one side of him. The officers sit on the other. Chet brazenly slides in next to MacArthur, in Bob's seat. As everyone sits on silk covered formal dining chairs, Mrs. MacArthur sits in a metal folding chair.

CUT TO:

Waiters clear plates, serve coffee. Chet sucks up to MacArthur, who loves it.

CHET

Tell us about your invasion at Inchon. In one move you turned the whole war around.

MACARTHUR

Well Chet, it's not really a war by my standards. Not when the enemy is North Korea's President Kim Buck Tooth -- excuse me, Kim Il Jong.

Chet and the officers laugh, with Chet slapping the table.

MORT

Not a real war?

PRESCOTT

It's more of a policing action.

CHET

It's a real war now. Bob's here.

Now Bob and MacArthur both give Chet a dead stare.

MACARTHUR

The Inchon landing means our boys will be home by Christmas.

MORT

What if the Chinese get involved?

BOB

I heard Mao Zedong says if we
invade past the 38th parallels --

MACARTHUR

*The 38th Parallel. The border with
North Korea. We're not invading.
We're liberating. I forgot. You
golf with Ike, my old secretary.*

BOB

No, I mean, it's in the papers.

MACARTHUR

Mao has an army of laundry men. He
fears a confrontation with me --
the United States. After Inchon,
his moment passed. In fact, I
ordered our forces North to his
borders today to finish the North
Korean army. Well, you have a
comedy show to do.

MacArthur gets up, signalling the end of lunch.

CHET

Back to the grind. What a thrill,
Mr. President - general.

MacArthur wags a finger as if to say "naughty, naughty." As
MacArthur shakes hands with everyone, Bob smacks Chet upside
the back of the head like he's a five-year-old.

INSERT MAP ANIMATION

SUPER: "Wednesday, October 25th, 1950." WE SEE a graphic of
Bob's plane leave Tokyo for Seoul, South Korea. WE SEE the
38th Parallel line, the border with the North. Bob's plane
stops at Seoul, BELOW the parallel.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Bob, Jimmy, Fred, Mort, Larry, and Chet play cards. They
look up when they hear the captain's voice.

PILOT (PA)

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are now
approaching Seoul, recently
liberated from communist oppression
and under new management.

The passengers all applaud this.

PILOT (PA)
In Seoul, you will find Coca-Cola,
The New York Times, and Bob Hope.
Just like downtown Omaha.

CHET
See? You guys coulda showed Mac a
little respect. 'Writing parking
tickets.' Guy's our next President.

LARRY
Already thinks he is.

MORT
With that chin, who wouldn't?

CHET
And you and the Chinese invading.

MORT
Mao said don't go into the North.
Truman said don't go North. Mac
went North. Fair question.

CHET
Listen to the armchair generals.
Tell him, Bob. Home by Christmas.

BOB
That's what he said.

CHET
What? You too? He's *MacArthur*.

BOB
Yeah ... sure.

LARRY
But?

BOB
They don't know everything. In
Africa, in '42, Ike told me himself
"Rommel's on the run." Two hours
later, I'm in a shelter with Nazi
bombs falling on me.

CHET
How can you argue with Inchon? That
battle turned the war around.

LARRY

Inchon: Korean for "what a chin."

CHET

MacArthur knows his business.

MORT

And Ike didn't? They all do.
They're only human. Bob, tell'm
about Patton. In Sicily.

LARRY

What happened with Patton?

BOB

Don't remind me.

MORT

Remember when Patton slapped those
two GIs? When the news broke, he
wanted Bob to go on the radio and
defend him. Bob's not a press
secretary for generals.

BOB

Patton was a great general. Look. I
just tell jokes. Mac's right. The
reds are done.

CHET

We're kicking their asses.

PILOT (PA)

Folks, we'll have to put those ice
cold Cokes on hold. Seoul's main
runway was bombed an hour ago.
We'll circle as they clear debris.

Mort shoots Chet an I-Told-You-So look. Bob gets up, and
heads back to Marilyn.

EXT. SEOUL AIRPORT

The two USO planes have landed and Bob's troupe deplane. As
they do, Fred turns to Larry and tosses him a newspaper
reporter's SKINNY, LINED YELLOW NOTE PAD (Mort, Fred, Chet
already have them). Prescott and his DRIVER, 18, wait for Bob
with a staff car.

FRED

Ok, junior. When we get to base,
get the dope: Gossip, slang, what
they love, hate, all of it.

CHET

Especially officers they hate.

MORT

Bob's rule number one: If GIs think
it, Bob says it. He's the only guy
in Korea can say what he wants. And
does. It's why they love him.

PREScott

Sir, we'll start with a tour of
territory returned to indigenous
Koreans from insurgent Koreans.

LARRY

They invaded their own country?
They look more Korean than we do.

PREScott

Excuse me?

FRED

Bob, can we get to work?

BOB

Lieutenant, my guys need to get on
base. Like beavers need to chew
wood, they need to write jokes.
Marilyn and I will go with you.

(to the writers)

Au revoir, peasants.

(to Larry)

Junior, with us.

INT. PREScott'S CAR

Larry sits up front with the Driver. Bob, Marilyn, and
Prescott sit in back, as the car drives toward base. Larry
notices a long line of GIs outside a building, off the
tarmac. The building is a hospital with a RED CROSS on it.

LARRY

What's the line for?

DRIVER

Shots. Flu, malaria, clap.

Larry writes it down.

DRIVER
You met MacArthur? He say when
we're going home?

LARRY
By Christmas.

DRIVER
Right. Then why're we still moving
North?

PRESCOTT
(to the Driver)
You're here to drive. So *drive*.

EXT. ARMY BASE

Mort talks to African-American GIs in a jeep motor pool.

MECHANIC
We get a Christmas show in October?

MORT
It airs in the states by Christmas.

MECHANIC
So it's an army Christmas show.

MORT
So which of the brass is on your
case most?

MECHANIC
You're not going to name me?

MORT
For Bob only.

MECHANIC
General Ned Almond. Put us all back
here. Thinks the Negro is afraid to
fight. Wants the army segregated
again. If he had a shoe shine unit,
that's where he'd put us. Anyway,
we'll be home in a month, right?

MORT
That's what I hear.

ANGLE - FRED

As he smokes, talking to a machine gun crew sitting on a jeep with a 50 MM gun on back, loading up. Their eyes follow Fred's cigarette as he waves it around while he talks.

FRED

Where do you guys get a drink around here?

MACHINE GUNNER

Rosie's.

This gets smirks from the other guys, knowing looks.

FRED

Ok, what else do you get there?

MACHINE GUNNER

Hand out the Camels, I'll talk.

Fred tosses them the pack, notebook ready.

INT. ROSIE'S

Chet sits at the bar with GIs and Korean girls. ROSIE, 40s, the madame, puts a drink down for Chet. One of Rosie's girls kisses a GI good-bye and he hands her cash. Enter Fred.

FRED

Figures you'd get here first.

CHET

Then you know what they sell.
Thanks, Rosie. Almond's a hardass?

ROSIE

He shut me down. He should fight communist, not me. In June, communist say I'm capitalist. This week, capitalist say I'm immoral. Know what, I always make money.

B-GIRL

I can be communist, but it's extra.

This gets a laugh as she hands Rosie money. Chet takes notes.

SOLDIER

Almond says Rosie's a bad influence on American morale.

CHET
Morale or morals?

ROSIE
Morals. I'm great for morale.

EXT. TANK LINE

Mort talks to tank crews, who load up. Mort takes notes.

MORT
Worst thing they make in mess hall?

TANK DRIVER
The food.
(Mort waits, wanting more)
Same as everywhere. Shit on a
shingle. Wednesday beef.

MORT
Guys loading up? Going out?

TANK DRIVER
North along the border, Yalu River.
Then it's back to Tokyo and a full
dress victory parade for MacArthur.

MORT
The fighting bad?

TANK DRIVER
Fighting? We're mopping up, man.

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

WE HEAR JETS overhead. Prescott's car pulls up to an F-80 two-seater fighter jet with a busy flight crew. They get out of the car, impressed by the gleaming jet, a sight new to 1950.

PRESCOTT
An F-80 Shooting Star, Mr. Hope.
First American jet used in combat.
We want you to see how the Pentagon
spends your tax dollars.

BOB
It's why I do army shows. To visit
my money.

PRESCOTT

Very funny, sir. We're hoping you
might work an F-80 into your show.

BOB

Is it a funny jet?

As they exit the car, CAPTAIN JOHN KRUPA, 20s, walks over. He's the opposite of Prescott, a burly, tough fighter jock with five o'clock shadow, all Chuck Yeager cool. Bob reaches over to shake hands with Krupa, who eyes Marilyn.

PRESCOTT

Mr. Hope, meet Captain John Krupa.
He'll be your pilot in Korea.

BOB

Hi, I'm Bob. This is Marilyn.

KRUPA

I recognize you. Miss Maxwell, I
saw you sing once with Jimmy
Dorsey. And of course, *Lost in a
Harem*.

MARILYN

My Abbott and Costello picture.
(eyes Bob)
I played wife number thirty-eight.

KRUPA

I don't remember them in it.

BOB

I know how they feel.

MARILYN

I think I'm gonna like the Air
Force.

PRESCOTT

Mr. Hope, the Shooting Star flies
up to speeds of 600 miles per hour.

BOB

What's faster, Krupa or the jet?

KRUPA

Come on up and find out.

CUT TO:

INT. F-80 - DAY

Bob is laughing like a kid on a roller coaster as Krupa buzzes the field, Larry, Prescott, and Marilyn.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Krupa and Bob climb down from the plane, as Bob walks - with wobbly legs - to Larry, Prescott, and Marilyn.

BOB

You and Krupa here have a lot in common.

LARRY

Yeah?

BOB

Prob'ly? Anyway, put him in the show, will ya? I like him.

LARRY

In the show? How?

BOB

Gee, I dunno, write something? I'm due at a hospital show.

Bob and Marilyn hop in the car, leaving Larry and Krupa.

LARRY

Larry Gelbart.

KRUPA

John Krupa.

LARRY

Krupa. Like the drummer. You funny?

KRUPA

Maybe. No one says it to my face.

LARRY

Funny. You look young to be a fighter pilot.

KRUPA

Out here I'm old. You look young to be a comedy writer.

LARRY

I am. Where you from?

KRUPA

West Virginia. You?

LARRY

Beverly Hills. So, jet pilot.
What's that like?

INT. JET

Larry holds on as best he can as Krupa skims over tree tops.

LARRY'S POV

We see trees, buildings, people as Krupa comes REALLY CLOSE.

INT. JET

Larry white knuckles it, holding tight, shouting through the oxygen mask intercoms.

KRUPA

So you know Doris Day?

LARRY

Doris? Yeah. We gonna hit that
tree?

KRUPA

Nah. Dorothy Lamour?

LARRY

Sure.

KRUPA

All these actresses. You ever ...

LARRY

Doesn't happen to writers. It's why
we make stuff up. When did you join
the Air Force?

KRUPA

Out of high school. It was that or
the coal mine where my dad works.

LARRY

Going to college? GI Bill?

KRUPA

Me? I'm a lifer. You go to college?

LARRY

Been writing jokes since I was 16.

KRUPA

How'd you get that job?

LARRY

My dad's a barber. Cuts Danny Thomas' hair ...

KRUPA

Danny Thomas walks into a barbershop. Sounds like a joke.

EXT. AIRPORT

Larry, on shaky legs, exits the plane with Krupa.

LARRY

Well, you must be happy. This war is practically over.

KRUPA

"Practically." It still gets hairy.

LARRY

Gets what?

KRUPA

Hairy. Ugly. Russian MiG jets are tough. Chinese come across the border for quick hits then go back.

LARRY

Chinese? You saw them?

KRUPA

Just the ones trying to kill me.
Why?

LARRY

Macarthur says China isn't in it.

KRUPA

Ok. Then they're not.

LARRY

You said you saw them.

KRUPA

Not if God says I didn't.

LARRY

Where did you not see them?

KRUPA

North near the Chinese border. We buzzed low. Under a tree was a 50 millimeter gun. Shot up my wings and fuel tank. My wingman got shot down. Mike. From by you. San Diego.

Krupa turns quiet. Larry stops writing, not expecting that.

INT. MESS HALL

Fred, Mort, and Chet go over jokes at a table. Larry rushes in with new pages that he hands out to them.

FRED

Late. You find a comic book stand?

LARRY

I got GREAT stuff from the GIs. I went up in a jet, too.

CHET

The pilot pin some wings on you?

LARRY

(re pages)

And it's flu shot day.

FRED

Flu shots. I'm half asleep already.

CHET

No wonder people take an instant dislike to you, Freddie.

LARRY

It saves time.

Chet, Mort, and Fred read the pages.

CHET

Funny.

MORT

Yup.

FRED

Eh.

(on their looks)

Ok. It's funny. Pilot bit's good.
 I'll punch it up. Ok, they hate
 Almond, get laid at Rosie's, hate
 Wednesday beef. And it's flu shot
 day. It's officially an army show.

ANGLE - BOB AND THE WRITERS

Bob, in leather bomber jacket, smirks as he reads the jokes.
 He eyes Larry:

BOB

The flu shot bit. You play the GI.

LARRY

Me?

BOB

You see Central Casting out here?
 Don't worry, I'll try not to sound
 too much like Bob Hope for you. Ok,
 Le Mono.

(reads jokes)

Yow, I just had lunch with Almond.

CHET

Better cancel dinner.

Bob smiles, laughing, circles his favorites, then pockets it.

LARRY

You're hiding the mono in Korea?

BOB

The mono is sacred. If only I know
 what it is, no one can change it.

EXT. FIELD ARMY BASE

It's all tents, out in the country somewhere. GIs climb into
 trucks to see Bob's show.

INT. BARRACKS

A WISEASS GI in a MacArthur hat, sunglasses, and corn cob
 pipe imitates MacArthur. A Corporal enters to wrangle them.

WISE ASS GI

When Bob Hope tells a joke you will
laugh. Slackers who do not laugh
will see the show again until they
find it funny. Is that understood?

The guys crack up. Wise Ass sits down, with a *New Yorker*.

CORPORAL

Rides for the show are here. You're
gonna stay here and read magazines?

WISE ASS GI

Bob Hope's my old man's idea of
funny.

CORPORAL

He must be *real* old if he don't
like Marilyn Maxwell.

The guys leave. Then, Wise Ass GI eyes a Bettie Page pin-up
on the wall. Beat. He hops up and runs out to the trucks.

INT. BACKSTAGE AMPHITHEATER

As Bob's crew sets up, Larry checks the crowd thru the
curtains. He's in costume, in khakis. Krupa looks NERVOUS.

KRUPA

Full already, huh?

MORT

Not even.

LARRY AND KRUPA'S POV FROM CURTAINS

Troops sit on folding chairs, trying to keep warm in the
autumn chill. The surrounding hills are bare grass. Then,
from the hills, troops file in from the battlefield.
Unshaven, dirty, tired, they plop down, rifles on shoulders.
Thousands, until every visible spot is covered in GI green.

ANGLE - BACKSTAGE

Bob and the other writers walk up to check the crowd. Larry
and Krupa join them. Bob sees Krupa is NERVOUS.

KRUPA

Where can I change into my dress
uniform?

BOB

Dress uniform? This isn't for the brass, it's for the guys. Just be you. It's why I wanted you.

Reassured, Krupa and Larry walk off. WE HEAR "THANKS FOR THE MEMORY cue up. Wardrobe runs up and takes off Bob's jacket.

WARDROBE

It's five o'clock, Bob. Showtime.

BOB

I need that!

MORT

For the sketch, not the monologue.

Mort walks Bob to the wings as he mumbles his first joke again and again, nervous. Wardrobe brings him a golf club:

ANNOUNCER (PA)

Won't you please welcome, man's best friend, Bob Hope!

EXT. AMPHITHEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Bob enters, the total pro, the Bob they want to see. He gets a laugh from the outfit alone.

BOB

Hello, fellow tourists! Isn't it Seoul wonderful this time of year?

(HUGE BOOS)

That's what you think.

(swings golf club)

I'm just playing through.

Bob sees some soldiers, sitting up in trees trying to get a look at him.

BOB

(re soldiers in trees)

Hiya! Who stuck you up there? You must be Republicans.

(to crowd)

You guys know what Korea is, it's Siberia without the scenic route.

Seriously, General Almond, thanks for putting me up.

Bob waves to GENERAL EDWARD "NED" ALMOND, 58, trim, tough, in the front row with his staff. He stands up to mild applause.

BOB

The General really knows how to treat a star. I landed at the airport and told my limo driver -- once he'd put the carrot in front of the mule -- take me to the best place in town. So I'm staying at Rosie's.

(HUGE LAUGH)

Well, I know it's a classy place. As I walked in, I saw General Almond coming out.

ANGLE - BLACK MECHANICS

It's the mechanics Mort interviewed earlier. They can't believe he said it. They stand to see Almond's face.

ANGLE - WRITERS WATCHING BOB FROM BACKSTAGE

the writers count together, timing the joke out with Bob.

WRITERS

Two, three, four ...

ANGLE - BOB AND THE CROWD

As the crowd lets go with a ROAR.

ANGLE - GENERAL ALMOND AND STAFF

The staff cracks up and Almond puts on a tight, fake smile.

ANGLE - BOB

On stage, rolling with the laughs.

BOB

At least I think it was General Almond. It's so hard to tell when a man's crawling on hands and knees.

Bob checks his shoe, like he just stepped in something.

BOB

Wednesday beef again.

As Larry enters from the wings.

LARRY

Oh, Mr. Hope?

BOB

Why it's Private Gelbart. They sent you to Korea? Well, I guess if everyone else does their part, we could still win.

Larry shoots a look backstage at the writers, who all smirk.

ANGLE - WRITERS

Fred, Mort, and Chet trying not to laugh.

MORT

Chet, did you forget to tell Larry we added that line for Bob?

CHET

Whups.

ANGLE - LARRY AND BOB

As Larry jumps back into the sketch.

LARRY

As you know Mr. Hope, it's flu shot day here in Seoul.

HUGE BOOS come up from the crowd. Larry takes out a giant syringe from the kit, to LAUGHS FROM THE CROWD.

LARRY

After he heard the monologue, General Almond sent me over.

BOB

Wait a minute, I got every shot in the book in Tokyo. Flu, malaria, measles, headaches, and a round trip to Rosie's.

Bob gets LAUGH, and is about to segue, when Larry cuts him off.

LARRY

Oh no, Bob. This isn't for flu.

(Bob eyes him, surprised)

It's to protect the Koreans from you.

This gets a HUGE LAUGH. Bob steps away from the microphone, trying not to crack up.

BOB
You ad-libbed on me you son of a bitch?

Larry aims the needle at Bob's ass. Bob grabs the microphone:

BOB (CONT'D)
Fellas, while I get out of this, take a look at what you've been fighting for, and I don't mean democracy - Marilyn Maxwell!

THE APPLAUSE and HOOTING and WHISTLING IS DEAFENING as Marilyn enters in a tight fitting dress.

MARILYN
Bob, look at all these big strong men. Don't you wish you were one?

Mock hurt, he leaves. She opens on "Baby, It's Cold Outside."

INT. BACKSTAGE

Hope corners Larry, cracking up.

LARRY
Bob, Bob, I'll make it up to you.

BOB
Like how?

LARRY
That last joke? No charge.

Bob and the writers laugh.

JIMMY
That's the only way you could.

Larry joins Krupa, who looks nervous.

LARRY
You're on next. You know the lines.
There's cue cards just in case.
(sees Krupa's nerves,
talks quietly, calmly)
You're out there with Bob Hope.
When you're playing ball with Joe Dimaggio it's hard to lose.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER STAGE

Bob walks over to the mic, sounds surprisingly earnest.

BOB

And now fellas, a word from our sponsor, Uncle Sam. Yesterday I took a ride in one of the new fighter jets that's helping win this war. That's how fast General Almond wants me gone. But against orders, the pilot brought me back. So before he gets court marshalled, meet Captain John Krupa. Captain?

Krupa lopes on and gets applause and hoots from his friends.

ANGLE - LARRY

Backstage, script rolled up in his hand, tight. He's more nervous for Krupa than Krupa is. Prescott stands next to him.

ANGLE - KRUPA'S SQUADRON IN CROWD

Krupa's co-pilots and crewmen stand up and cheer.

PILOT #1

There he is!

ANGLE - BOB AND KRUPA

Krupa comes out, stares into the crowd, mesmerized for a moment. Bob grabs his hand to shake hands, otherwise Krupa might not have stopped, and he calms down.

BOB

Well, captain, I'll understand if you're nervous being in my show.

KRUPA

I'm a pilot, Bob. I'm used to bombs.

BOB

I hear flying jets is dangerous work.

KRUPA

Yeah, but since I dropped you off I
don't draw half as much sniper
fire.

ANGLE - KRUPA'S SQUADRON IN CROWD

Krupa's co-pilots and crewmen crack up.

KRUPA (PA)

Up near Pusan my squadron, the
25th, came in low over some trees.

The guys stand up and take a bow, getting pelted with any
handy object by the rest of the crowd.

PILOT #2

Why Chollie, he's relating our
adventures in Pusan.

PILOT #1

A pip, I remember it well.

ANGLE - KRUPA AND BOB

As Krupa picks up the story.

KRUPA

The 25th was looking for a North
Korean supply line, when a 50
millimeter gun opened up on me.

BOB (PA)

Happens to me every year around
Oscar time.

KRUPA

It was a North Korean machine gun
nest.

ANGLE - FRED, LARRY, CHET, MORT

Backstage, the writers follow the show with their scripts.
Larry reacts as Krupa says "North Korean."

LARRY

North Korean? They were Chinese.
And his friend got killed. That's
what you call punching it up?

FRED

MacArthur says no Chinese in Korea.
I'm not putting Bob out there to
fuck with MacArthur. And what's
funny about a guy getting killed?
What? They're soldiers. They know
people die. We're not here to
remind them of that.

ANGLE - KRUPA'S SQUADRON IN THE CROWD

They're no longer smiling as they listen to Krupa on the PA.

PILOT #2
North Korean?

PILOT #1
That's when Mikey got it.

KRUPA (PA)
My fuel tank was shot. I had one
run at them, so I circled back and
took'm out before heading home.

PILOT #1
Didn't even mention Mikey.

PILOT #2
Ah, Krupe's in show biz now.

ANGLE - BOB AND KRUPA

As Krupa wraps it up.

BOB
Well Captain, thanks for being on
my show. A little different from
army life, eh?

KRUPA
Yeah, first time I've ever seen our
own guys point guns at me.

ANGLE - LARRY AND THE WRITERS

Larry says the lines along with Bob and Krupa.

MORT
Funny. And not just pilot funny.

EXT. STAGE

Bob, the full band, all the singers, the cast (including Krupa and Larry) as "White Christmas" starts up.

BOB

Fellas, I don't want to encourage the enemy, but this is a song Bing Crosby made famous. We loved coming to see you. We hear you'll be home by Christmas, where we want you most.

Bob and Marilyn step out front and the cast joins them.

ANGLE - MARINE PLATOON

It's dark and GIs stare at the show, rapt, singing along. A MARINE CAPTAIN quietly gets the attention of his men.

MARINE CAPTAIN

Show's over. Let's go.

MARINE PRIVATE #1

What?

MARINE CAPTAIN

ROKs at Unsan are under heavy fire.

MARINE PRIVATE

Heavy fire?

MARINE CAPTAIN

Yeah. Big.

There's an ominous pause, as his guys look confused.

MARINE CAPTAIN

Let's go.

They get up, singing "White Christmas" with attitude.

EXT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Backstage overflows with GIs. Bob's musicians jam in a corner. Bob, Marilyn, and Prescott enter. Bob and Marilyn drink from their own bottle with paper cups, tipsy. Bob is looking for someone in the crowd.

At the bar, Fred drinks with Larry (still in his Private Gelbart get-up) and Chet, surrounded by Krupa, his squadron, and many GIs. Fred is lost in his own world, bored.

SOLDIER
Lucille Ball?

LARRY
Sure.

SOLDIER #1
Jane Russell.

CHET
Oh yes ...

SOLDIER #1
Did you ever --

LARRY
No! Doesn't happen to writers.

CHET
Speak for yourself.

LARRY
What?

All eyes turn to Chet, especially a surprised Larry.

CHET
Well, I'm not ruling anything out,
is all I'm saying.

SOLDIER #2
What about Bob? He gets around!

Chet spots Bob nearby.

CHET
I'm already on probation.

PILOT
What was that treetop story? You
coulda mentioned Mike.

KRUPA
I did when I told them about it.

PILOT #2
And they were Chinese.

LARRY

For folks back home, it woulda
ruined the bit.

PILOT #2

Sorry our friend getting shot
fucked up your "bit."

Bob and Marilyn walk up, tipsy.

MARILYN

Six trucks of GIs couldn't make it
to the show. Guess who heard about
it?

BOB

Oh, Freddie? Road trip! There's
some boys need some laughs.

Fred turns from the bar and falls flat on his face, stone
drunk. GIs rush to pick him up. Bob looks at Larry.

BOB

Lar, you're up. Tony!

A guitarist, TONY, 20s, playing, gets the nod from Bob.

EXT. KOREAN ROAD - NIGHT

A jeep and a full troop truck full of armed men bookend
Hope's car. The drivers use moonlight - no headlights.

INT. CAR

The car hits giant potholes. Bob and Marilyn sit in back,
sipping from their paper cups, like high school kids on prom
night. They kiss, sloppily. Larry makes the mistake of
looking in the back seat. Bob sees Larry's judgmental look:

BOB

Yes, Lawrence?

Larry turns away. He and Prescott's Driver sit up front,
MINDING THEIR OWN BUSINESS. Then there's giggling again.

BOB

Hey, this is how we did it in Italy
in '43. Me, a honey, a guitar, and
a gag man. Wait'll these GIs see
us. They're sitting in mud
freezing their asses off.

LARRY
Like us?

Larry looks over his shoulder as Bob strokes her hair.

BOB
Try it on thirty a week, smart ass.
They're out here stuck in mud at
three in the morning because they
got drafted. Remember that.

Larry turns, keeps his eyes out the window. WE HEAR Bob and Marilyn giggling to themselves again.

EXT. MUDDY ROAD - NIGHT

A convoy of trucks is trapped in mud. Headlights illuminate the scene as a truck tows a stuck vehicle from mud. It's the trucks from the WISE ASS GI's outfit. The guys pushing are tired, cold, dirty. The truck pulled from the mud is backed up, rear gate down. Bob's cars arrive and Prescott's GIs jump out to help. Bob sees the flatbed truck with the lights shining on it, thinking. A SERGEANT, 20s, steps up.

PREScott
Unpack that coffee. Get these guys
some coffee and food.

SERGEANT
Is that really him?

BOB
It's me, pal. I deliver.
(re the flatbed truck)
Leave that. It's my stage.

SFX: WE HEAR "Thanks for the Memory" on acoustic guitar.

CUT TO:

The GIs sit in a circle around Bob's truck. A curtain has been hung over the back as his impromptu stage. Tony the Guitarist sits on the edge of it, warming them up.

INT. TRUCK

Behind a BLANKET, hung as a curtain, Marilyn awaits her cue. Larry reads off his notes:

LARRY

Know why I'm out here at three AM?

CUT TO:

ANGLE - BOB IN FRONT OF THE BLANKET

finishing Larry's joke on the back of the truck, golf club in hand.

BOB

... after General Almond heard my monologue he gave me a top secret assignment: prisoner exchange.

This gets a LAUGH. Now Marilyn sticks her head out.

MARILYN

Well, hello Bob!

BOB

Marilyn! I haven't seen you in three weeks.

MARILYN

But Bob, you said not to come out until you got your first laugh.

Marilyn steps outside in her dress, getting wolf whistles.

BOB

Well, how about a song? Those always work.

The Guitarist goes into "My Funny Valentine," which Marilyn sings to the GIs, but emphasizes lines for Bob, who mugs along with her.

MARILYN

*Sweet comic Valentine
You make me smile with my heart
Your looks are laughable,
unphotographable
Yet you're my favorite work of art.*

ANGLE - TWO MARINES

It's the MARINE CAPTAIN and MARINE PRIVATE who left Bob's show during "White Christmas." They're more into hot coffee and food than him. They wear wet, torn uniforms, faces scraped raw from brush and gravel.

ANGLE - BOB

As he sees the two marines showing up late.

BOB

What happened to you guys? The local girls must be rough.

MARINE PRIVATE

Ho, ho, ho. They weren't local.

BOB

Hey, the key word is girl, right?

ANGLE - CAPTAIN AND PRIVATE

tell their story to a circle of GIs, Bob, Marilyn, and Larry.

MARINE PRIVATE

We went as back-up at Unsan. By the time we got there, every ROK we saw was dead. Wiped out.

PREScott

North Koreans. Circling back.

MARINE CAPTAIN

No, Chinese. Lots. Screaming, blowing trumpets all night.

LARRY

Did you see any Chinese?

MARINE CAPTAIN

Hard to miss all those red stars flying in your face. I know how they fight. I was in Manchuria five years ago.

PREScott

You saw them? MacArthur plans to piss in the Yalu river next week.

MARINE PRIVATE

Mao's saving Dugout Doug the trip.

PREScott

What did you call him, private?

MARINE CAPTAIN

Dugout Doug, lieutenant. Just like
the Philippines. Never leaves HQ.
Been out here one day to hand out
medals and take pictures.

The Captain unslings a gun from his shoulder. He hands it to Bob. There's a low whistle from Prescott's Driver.

MARINE PRIVATE

Chinese zip gun. Merry Christmas,
Bob Hope.

MARINE CAPTAIN

Sorry there's not a red bow on it.
But it's not Christmas anyway. It's
Halloween.

INT. SEOUL MESS HALL - DAY

Bob's cast and crew sit and finish breakfast and coffee. Their bags are with them. They look exhausted, hung over, and feeling the morning chill.

Then Chet rushes by, in a South Korean local's shirt, Bermuda shorts, sunglasses, and a Kansas City Monarchs baseball cap. He pops breakfast rolls in his pockets and grabs coffee. As the officers eye Chet, Bob just shrugs.

BOB

Best not to ask where Chester's concerned, general. Where are the first marines today? I always do a show for them. I'm not on in Pyonyang til tonight.

PRESCOTT

First Marines? They just took Wonsan. It's the second Inchon.

KRUPA

We can fly up there in an hour and make Pyonyang in good time.

INSERT MAP ANIMATION

SUPER: "October 26th, 1950." Bob's plane is shown flying to the Eastern side of the Korean peninsula, crossing the 38th Parallel into North Korea and the port of Wonsan.

INT. PLANE

Larry and writers doggedly work out jokes, doing weak Bob impressions. Fred and Chet are hung over.

FRED

These fighter jets are wild. I thought one flew by, but it was ... ah forget it, I got nothing.

CHET

Hey, how about these fighter jets? I haven't been on anything that fast since Gloria DeHaven!

Everybody starts to laugh, then stops. Bob sits down with them. He picks up Larry's notebook. Chet's busted.

BOB

Come again, Chester?

CHET

I was just, I mean -- it was --

BOB

Don't bother. How's the mono?

Bob reads over Larry's notebook, starts whistling.

FRED

Robert, you only whistle when you're unhappy.

(Fred reads Larry's jokes)
Chinese army jokes? What gives?

LARRY

We met some marines last night who fought the Chinese.

FRED

They say.

LARRY

They gave Bob a Chinese zip gun.

FRED

China supplies the North. So what?

CHET

MacArthur told us. No Chinese. Big Mac has spoken.

MORT
Bob doesn't take orders.

CHET
From MacArthur?

MORT
From any one.

FRED
A zip gun's not a Chinaman. Same
thing with Krupa. Stick to funny.

BOB
Wait. Krupa? What happened?

Fred realizes he made a mistake. Reluctantly:

FRED
Krupa's story about getting shot
at? He says it was the Chinese.
Also, his wingman was killed. I
changed it to North Koreans and
left the other guy out.

For the first time, Bob truly looks angry.

BOB
Goddammit. Don't ever do that to me
again. They know when it's bullshit
up there. I don't bullshit them.

Bob tosses the notebook to confused Larry.

BOB
And you. Just say communists. Reds.
Got it? Maybe they did fight some
Chinese. There's Russians here,
too. Does it change anything? The
whole world says Korea's done by
Christmas. We're winning. Maybe
MacArthur, the CIA, the United
States military, and the President
of the United States know what
they're talking about. Maybe they
don't. Me? I hope they do. I don't
make the news. I make fun of it.

Marilyn bustles by and Bob, alert to the possibilities, jumps
up to join her.

BOB
Let me know when it's soup.

ANGLE - BOB AND MARILYN

As he follows her up the aisle.

BOB
Honey, what?

MARILYN
I want some time with you.

BOB
This isn't exactly Paris.

MARILYN
I didn't expect it to be. It's nice
not running around and hiding, but
we never have any time.

BOB
These trips --

MARILYN
It's still work for you, and that
always comes first.

BOB
I never led you on.

MARILYN
And I didn't lead you on. You're
kidding yourself if you think I
want to be the woman who broke up
Bob Hope's marriage.

BOB
What?

MARILYN
I don't want you to leave anyone. I
just don't want to be left behind
when you're with me.

Bob pulls her close.

CHET (O.S.)
Hey, look. The 1st Marines!

Everyone looks down at the coastline and the Sea of Japan.

POV - THRU PLANE WINDOWS

At Wonsan Harbor, combat loaded battleships with thousands of sailors and marines wait at sea. Plumes of black smoke rise from a cruiser. Then an EXPLOSION, as it hits more mines.

MORT (O.S.)
That did some damage.

ANGLE - THE WRITERS

trying to get a glimpse of the action below. Bob and Marilyn work their way down the aisle, to the rest of the company.

LARRY
Why are they on the ships?

PRESCOTT
They've got mine sweepers. They haven't landed yet.

As they watch, more explosions go up as mines are detonated.

EXT. WONSAN AIRFIELD - DAY

The C-54s carrying Hope's troupe land at the airport and taxi around toward the airfield's small terminal and hangar. The doors pop open on the planes and the ladders drop as everyone gets out and stands on the tarmac - it's deserted.

At the opposite end of the field is the terminal. A plume of black smoke comes up from behind it. The village as seen in the distance, is on fire.

The late October wind is chilly and sharp as everyone buttons up their jackets and heads for the hangar.

CHET
We beat the marines. Hilarious.
There's a joke in that.

MORT
Yeah, on us. 'Cause if the marines aren't holding Wonsan, who is?

PRESCOTT
I was told they'd taken it. It's a hot zone.

MARILYN

Oh God.

The troupe has made it far enough now where they can see clearly what's on the tarmac near the hangar.

On the side of the landing strip are dead bodies, a shot to death Korean family. They haven't been buried yet: Men, women, children.

Beyond the bodies are all their belongings: dumped out suitcases, broken toys, a bird in a bird cage that's still alive, and a dog leashed to a suitcase, barking at the plane.

A wedding dresses, half stuck out of a suitcase, flaps like a flag in the chilly wind.

There's stunned silence as they get a look at the bodies.

CHET

Jeez.

FRED

How old is that kid? Six?

Fred looks cold-angry. Mort has tears in his eyes. Larry is speechless, struggling to say ANYTHING.

KRUPA

Typical for the North Korean army.
Murderers. Better get in the terminal for cover. There's gonna be snipers and stragglers.

JIMMY

Almond is gonna hear about this.

BOB

Yeah, have NBC file a complaint. If we ever make a phone call again.

Bob was overheard. He sees how worried people are.

BOB

Kidding! Kidding!
(calm, in charge)
Everyone, we've got a show to do.
Let's get to the hangar. Warm up.

Bob starts walking and they follow him. Except Larry, who watches Krupa. Krupa pulls his pistol and takes the safety off. The flight crew pull pistols, head for the terminal.

The terminal has big windows in front so passengers can see planes landing and taking off. WE SEE desks, a waiting area, a luggage pick-up.

KRUPA
Prescott, let's go.

Larry watches as Prescott, who hadn't thought of it, now joins Krupa's flight crew, gun drawn.

EXT. WONSAN AIRFIELD TERMINAL

Krupa takes one side of the front door and his men the other. WE HEAR a DOOR INSIDE the terminal SLAM SHUT. Krupa steps forward, gesturing that he'll go in first.

INT. WONSAN TERMINAL

Prescott kicks in the door. Krupa goes in like a cop, but there's no one inside. WE HEAR A NOISE from the back of the room, like someone making an effort to move something heavy.

ANGLE - LARRY'S POV

Through the big windows, Larry can see what happens next. On Krupa's signal, the men cover Krupa like cops about to enter a house with a gunman inside.

INT. WONSAN TERMINAL

The main luggage area is deserted and has clearly been ransacked. WE HEAR MOVEMENT from the back again. The terminal main waiting room consists of long benches, a chalk board with Korean characters and arrival/departure times on it, and one dead civilian airport worker behind the counter.

Krupa and his men slowly enter. One of Krupa's men, quite nervous, steps too close to the window, and Krupa quickly moves to pull him back.

As Krupa does so, his leg hits a METAL FOLDING CHAIR that bangs on the floor and ECHOES LOUDLY in the big empty space. They freeze. The noise is behind the ticketing desk.

EXT. WONSAN AIRFIELD

Larry looks toward the terminal. WE SEE Krupa and the others spread out around the ticketing counter. Then, past the terminal, Larry SEES DUST coming up on the road.

In the hangar, Chet notices Larry still out there.

CHET
Larry, get over here!

LARRY
There's somebody coming!

ANGLE - MORT, CHET, AND BOB

They see the dust coming up the road now.

MORT
Trucks. From the west. Not the
marines, the harbor's east.

BOB
Who is it?

MORT
I can't see.

ANGLE - LARRY

He looks in the terminal. Krupa's men are all in position.

ANGLE - LARRY'S POV

Krupa leads the men to the back room, first again. Krupa holds up THREE fingers, counting off: 1-2-3.

INT. WONSAN TERMINAL

Krupa throws himself against the wall, ready to shoot anyone or anything behind the counter.

Krupa edges down one wall, gun up. The others walk alongside the counter, guns out.

Krupa sets up to go through the door first. His two guys get ready to kick it open when Krupa notices the cabinets below the counter. There's a shoelace caught in one of the doors.

Krupa signals the men to FREEZE, points to the locker. One more step and his guys would be in front of it. Krupa signals a three count again: 1-2-3.

The men yank open the door. Krupa shouts in Korean:

KRUPA
Don't move! Halt!

Inside, a skinny Korean boy, scared to death, pops up above the counter in a fedora and suit way too big for him. WE HEAR BOOM! A bullet smashes the wall inches over the kid's head.

The pilot holds Prescott's gun arm in the air, by the wrist. The gun smokes. The pilot stopped him just in time.

KID
Don't shoot! No communist! I like Harry Truman! I'm not Chinese!

EXT. WONSAN AIRFIELD

Larry exhales at what he's watching inside the terminal. WE HEAR the RUMBLE of HEAVY ARMORED VEHICLES.

INT. WONSAN TERMINAL

Krupa and the guys relax, when they HEAR the RUMBLE.

KRUPA
Shit.

They look out the window to see the column of trucks.

INT. WONSAN AIRFIELD

Krupa and his men exit the terminal to see the big trucks.

KRUPA
About time. It's the army. X Corps.

ANGLE - AMERICAN CONVOY

X Corps' army trucks roll into the airport. Krupa waves the all clear to the hangar.

EXT. PLANE

Bob's shaky troupe exits the hangar, chattery and nervous. The soldiers are all looking at Bob. General Almond, sharp-jawed, all high energy aggression, gets out, in a clean pressed, decorated uniform.

ALMOND

Bob! Where's the 1st Marines?

PRESCOTT

Over there, sir.

Indeed, rolling in from the East are three jeeps of 1st Marines. The first to get there are the officers, and LT. GENERAL LEWIS PULLER, 50s. He does not look happy. The marine generals dress like soldiers, compared to Almond in his clean pressed uniform.

ALMOND

Ha! Bob Hope beats the marines to the beaches. Great headline!

BOB

The marines are welcome at all my landings.

Everyone finds this funny except the marines. Puller is contained fury.

PULLER

We been on boats three weeks clearing two-thousand mines. Mines Tokyo and X Corps never mentioned.

Almond waves an aide over and a photographer.

MARILYN

Two thousand?

PULLER

Nine men killed clearing them. Mines I seriously doubt the North Koreans laid on their own -- it had to have been Russian or Chinese advisors.

ALMOND

(cuts him off, re Bob)
Let's not go over excuses.

PULLER

Excuses? Yours or mine?

ALMOND

(to Bob and Marilyn)
Wonsan's complicated. It's not as simple as Inchon.

PULLER

While we waited three weeks the
North Koreans escaped above the
border.

ALMOND

Yah, running scared. It's why we're
going so far north. To finish them
off.

PULLER

Or they're baiting us north to thin
out our lines.

ALMOND

They don't think that far ahead.

PULLER

They thought out those mines pretty
well.

Puller stops, speechless, as two GIs in white waiter jackets come up to the general, like they walked out of Sardi's.

WAITER

How many for lunch, general?

ALMOND

Bob, Marilyn, Puller, join me. We
have roast beef today.

BOB

I can't. I'm visiting the Missouri
out there. Wounded men.

PULLER

I'm still seasick.

Puller walks off, cursing under his breath. Krupa steps up to the X Corps command with the kid.

ALMOND

What's this, captain?

KRUPA

Found him inside. There's a family
of non-coms on the tarmac.

(in Korean)

Your family?

KID

My teacher's family.

ALMOND
Get him talking.

X CORPS SERGEANT
(menacing)
Yes, sir. He will.

The Sergeant tosses the kid a Hershey bar, who devours it.

KRUPA
Says the Chinese are coming.

ALMOND
Chinese? You mean North Koreans.
Maybe Russians.

KRUPA
He said Chinese, sir.

ALMOND
For God's sake, I hardly take him
to be a credible source of military
intelligence. You're probably just
impressed by his suit.

Almond's aides and staff crack up at Almond's joke. Krupa
takes it, because he has to take it. The sergeant takes the
kid and the brass walk off with Bob as he signs autographs.

Larry, Fred, Mort, and Chet meet up with Krupa.

LARRY
What happened in there?

KRUPA
Local kid hiding. Figured we were
the Chinese, Russians, who knows.

LARRY
North Koreans, Russian mines,
Chinese, the UN, and us.

KRUPA
Nuts.

Jimmy Saphier arrives with four GIs.

JIMMY
While Bob and Marilyn are on the
Missouri, you each get a guide. Get
to work.

The writers disappear into the mass of arriving X Corps GIs.

ANGLE - LARRY

Larry wanders among GIs with his guide. Larry starts asking the usual questions, which don't make sense now:

LARRY

So, where do you guys go for a drink around here?

X CORPS SERGEANT

You been here longer than me. It's that kind of a war.

WE HEAR a HONKING horn as a jeep pulls up to Larry.

DRIVER

You Bob's writer, Leon Goldman?

LARRY

Sure.

DRIVER

Hop in. Bob Hope wants you now.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

In a jeep, Bob and Marilyn sit in back and Larry up front. They roll past refugees on the side of the road who shout at the jeep, hoping for food, water, any help.

Up ahead, GIs divert refugees off the road onto a large rocky field. The jeep follows goes onto the field. Larry tries to write as the jeep bounces off rocks. They shout to talk.

DRIVER

What are you writing?

LARRY

Jokes.

DRIVER

Is this funny?

LARRY

I don't know. It's all I got. Where are these people going?

DRIVER

(shrugs)

Don't think they care long as they're not getting shot to shit.

LARRY

Why are we driving on rocks? I
can't write.

DRIVER

Russians mined the road. We'd get
our asses blown off. Unless you
think that's funny.

Larry puts the notebook away to watch the countryside and
refugees. They carry everything they own on their backs.

The jeep finally gets back on a real road as they enter
Wonsan harbor, a landing base with thousands of marines from
ships now arriving. The jeep takes them down to the dock.

A helicopter waits for them, the kind seen every week in the
opening credits of MASH. Under the big, spinning propeller,
the pilot indicates there is only room for Bob and Marilyn in
the helicopter. Larry has to wait. They get inside and it
takes off, heading out to sea to the battleship USS Missouri.

ANGLE - LARRY

Larry is waved onto a PT boat and taken out to sea with some
GIs. Theirs is the only boat heading out. All the others head
to shore, full of men younger than Larry.

LARRY

Those guys graduate high school
yet?

PT BOAT CAPTAIN

How old are you?

LARRY

Twenty-one.

PT BOAT CAPTAIN

Out here that's retirement age.

ANGLE - USS MISSOURI

WE SEE Bob's helicopter land on the big ship.

ANGLE - LARRY ON THE PT BOAT

Larry's PT arrives at the Missouri. An ENSIGN, 20s greets
him. Some of the deck is a triage area for wounded GIs.

WE SEE a HUGE explosion far out in the harbor. Smoke billows from a distant mine sweeper.

ENSIGN

Welcome aboard! You are now on the USS Missouri, the very same ship on which General MacArthur personally accepted the complete surrender of the empire of Japan, ending hostilities in the Pacific.

Larry heads for the deck where the wounded arrive. It's a scene familiar to M*A*S*H fans. 1950s medi-copters land, carrying hurt sailors on sideboards from smoldering ships in the distance. Doctors rush in, crouching low, examining them. Larry is transfixed as doctors make life or death calls. Some men are taken downstairs. Others get last rites. A young CORPSMEN runs out to the medical teams.

CORPSMEN

Incoming!

A doctor bumps into Larry as he runs alongside a stretcher carrying a wounded woman. Two doctors run past, shouting:

DOCTOR

What the hell happened?

DOCTOR #2

More mines.

Doctor #2 points to a ship further out. Black smoke billows from it as another medi-copter hovers above.

CORPSMAN

(to Larry)

Who are you?

LARRY

The writer!

CORPSMAN

What?

LARRY

I write jokes!

CORPSMAN

You're in the way!

A SAILOR grabs Larry's sleeve and pulls him toward a doorway.

INT. SICK BAY

The Sailor escorts Larry down the steps to the sick bay. Larry overhears two wounded marines, bandages on their heads.

SAILOR

Wait here, please. I'll see if you can come in yet.

The Sailor ducks into the sick bay, leaving Larry.

MARINE PRIVATE #1

Don't know what happened. I just woke up here. FUBAR.

The marines see Larry's confused look.

MARINE PRIVATE #2

FUBAR. Fucked up beyond all reason.

The Sailor waves Larry inside.

LARRY'S POV

The sick bay is a long rectangular room lined with beds for wounded men, followed by a second ward after that.

Bob and Marilyn stand at the door for the second ward. Larry heads for them as they confer with a Navy doctor, then enter the next ward. Larry hurries to catch up.

INT. SICK BAY

Larry follows Bob and Marilyn into the next sick bay, a room similar to the one they are leaving.

BOB

Ok, you boys know the drill about getting a Bob Hope autograph.

MARILYN

Yeah, sorry fellas, it's orders, you have to take one.

Larry watches from the door, standing back while Bob works. Bob and Marilyn stop at the first bed, a 19-year-old marine whose arms are completely in casts.

BOB

Hey, kid. How you throw dice with
those on?

(gets a smile)

Where you from?

WOUNDED MAN

San Francisco.

BOB

Yeah? I used to play the Golden
Gate Theater on Market Street. They
still have the sandwich shop on
Polk - Zalley's?

WOUNDED MAN

You know Zalley's? Sign my cast?

MARILYN

Sure.

WOUNDED MAN

What are you doing after the war,
Miss Maxwell?

MARILYN

Waiting for the good looking guys
to come home.

(re Bob)

This is all we got.

BOB

I feel a song coming on.

LARRY'S POV

Larry looks down the line of kids. The wounds are horrible: one marine has blackened skin, burns all over his chest. Others are bandaged around their hands, in spots over their chests and torso covering bullet wounds, and some are simply unconscious.

ANGLE - BOB AND MARILYN

They move on to a marine in the next bed, wrapped up to the chest in a blanket, lots of drip and plasma tubes. Bob looks down, and the boy has no legs, which catches Bob by surprise. Bob chokes up a little, as does Marilyn. Larry has come up closest to Bob.

WOUNDED MAN #2
Hey, ski nose. Sign my cast?

BOB
Ski nose? A wise guy. Who came
through here first, Bing Crosby?

WOUNDED MAN #2
If he's selling Chinese mines, he
did.

BOB
Chinese mines ...
(sees Larry)
Hey, where you from?

WOUNDED MAN #2
Kentucky. Going back to racing when
I get back. I'm a jockey.

Bob chokes up, looking where the kid's legs used to be. The soldiers watch as Bob's eyes tear up slightly and Marilyn taps him on the shoulder, a signal that she'll take over.

MARILYN
Want to hear a song?

WOUNDED MAN #2
"We'll Meet Again."

Marilyn sits down and sings "We'll Meet Again" to him at his bedside. It softly fills the ward, as his eyes close and he listens, clearly drifting off, unconscious.

Bob heads quickly down to the end of the hall to hide his tears and disappears into a small room.

Larry follows him, past Marilyn, her song continuing.

Larry finds Bob in what hospitals call a "crying room," where you basically let out all the emotion that builds up in wards like these, but out of sight of the patients.

Larry sees Bob in the room, tears in his eyes, allowing himself to lose it. Bob spots Larry in the doorway.

BOB
What? Can't I get one goddamn
minute to myself?

Larry backs off, giving Bob some privacy, as Bob loses it. The doctor comes up to the door.

DOCTOR
Excuse me, is Mr. Hope in there?

LARRY
Yes, please give him a minute.

DOCTOR
Who are you?

LARRY
One of Bob's writers.

DOCTOR
Excuse me, kid.

The doctor walks past Larry, ignoring him.

DOCTOR
Mr. Hope, that marine back there
missing his -- from Kentucky. He's
awake. I don't know how long I'll
have him ...

BOB
Awake?

DOCTOR
At all.

Bob pulls himself together, wiping tears from his eyes. He
steels himself, and from the time it takes him to get up and
walk from one end of the crying room to the other, he's once
again - Bob Hope, comedian.

INT. SICK BAY

Bob enters, as Marilyn ends the song.

BOB
Ok, fellas, whose got the dice?
You know what the Navy is -- the
original floating craps game.

The guys laugh but no one gets up, not that they can.

BOB
Ok, I'll make house calls.

Bob goes to the kid from Kentucky, and Larry is within ear
shot of their conversation.

BOB (CONT'D)

Hey kid, you fell asleep during my
first set.

WOUNDED MAN #2

Never happened to you before?

BOB

I see the marines are now trained
in sarcasm. Kentucky, huh? Where?

WOUNDED MAN #2

Louisville.

BOB

Ah, the Royale. I played it in
vaudeville. On Benson and ...

WOUNDED MAN #2

Third. It's a movie house now. I
saw *Road to Morocco* there with my
dad.

BOB

Jockey, huh? You know, last week at
Santa Anita, I ran a horse.

WOUNDED MAN #2

Yeah?

BOB

I won't say he was old, but out of
the gate he tripped over his
hearing aid.

The kid cracks up. Larry watches as Bob times it perfectly,
silently saying the follow-up as Bob says it:

BOB

The bet was win, place, or live.

WOUNDED MAN #2

Mr. Hope, would you mind signing my
cast before you go?

Bob looks down: he already did sign it. The kid fades again.

The kid slips away, and the doctor rushes in with a nurse.
The kid isn't just falling asleep. Bob backs up. Marilyn
watches stoically, holding it in -- she's been here before,
too.

There's a silence as the Nurse and the Doctor try to save the boy. They can't. Bob backs away to the crying room, gestures for Larry and Marilyn to follow.

INT. CRYING ROOM

Bob and Marilyn sit down on folding chairs, exhausted. Larry watches them get a second wind.

BOB

Quit staring at me.

LARRY

Bob, if you need a minute ...

BOB

I already had one. Do you?

(to Marilyn)

They told me they took Wonsan. How could they not know that? How? And those bodies on the field ... they weren't dead but a few hours. We walked right into it.

LARRY

(checks his notebook)

GI's call it "FUBAR." It means --

MARILYN

We know what it means.

Just then, WE HEAR a loud voice in the sick ward.

PRESCOTT

Excuse me, Mr. Hope?

Prescott barges into the crying room.

PRESCOTT

General Almond asked that I brief you - and Miss Maxwell, of course.

BOB

Brief us? He sending us on a mission?

PRESCOTT

Ha! Yes, sir. He wants you to have a positive perspective of the Wonsan landing, as confusing as it must have looked to civilians.

BOB

Sure, go ahead, Lieutenant.

PREScott

(like a press conference)

The 1st marines have landed safely
and are now moving on to clean up
North Korean stragglers on the run.
General Almond wants you to know
everything is back to normal and
communist forces are expected to
surrender within days.

MARILYN

That's great.

PREScott

General Almond moved the marines
out in hot pursuit, double-time.

BOB

Wait, the 1st Marines are why I
came out here. Now they're gone?

PREScott

Yes, well, in all the confus -- uh,
the landing, the North Koreans are
farther north than first thought.

(re the wounded)

But of course, there's some of the
mighty 1st here on-board.

BOB

I understand. Glad it's going our
way.

MARILYN

Yes, thank God.

Prescott exits. Larry looks at Bob: Well?

LARRY

(re his notebook)

You don't believe that guy?

Bob eyes Larry, pointedly not answering him. The sick bay
Doctor sticks his head in the door.

DOCTOR

Mr. Hope, the second ward is open.

The Doctor exits. Bob hops up to his feet, so does Marilyn.
Bob tosses Larry back his notebook.

BOB
Doesn't matter what I think. No
marines. No show.

Bob and Marilyn exit. Larry sits, angry.

BOB (O.S.)
Ok, you boys know the drill about
getting a Bob Hope autograph.

MARILYN (O.S.)
Yeah, sorry fellas, it's orders.
You gotta take one.

Larry pockets his notebook and follows Bob and Marilyn.

EXT. PLANE - DAY

Bob's plane is warming up on the runway. Bob stands on the doorway, waving to a crowd of marines.

BOB
Next landing fellas, I'll bring the
beer!

Bob lingers a second, waving to them. He goes inside, but the marines stay out there, waiting for another glimpse of Bob. It starts to rain.

INT. PLANE

Larry, Fred, Chet, and Mort sit together. Bob walks up as the writers look out the window.

MORT
First marines. Headed North.

WRITERS POV

WE SEE the 1st Marine column, rolling away, heading out of the airport area, off into the North.

ANGLE - BOB AND THE WRITERS

As Bob drops down into a seat among them.

BOB
Jokes?

They hand Bob their notebooks.

BOB'S POV

WE SEE the jokes fly by as he flips thru the pages. Names pop out to us: MacArthur; Mao; Truman; Kim Il Jong; China; Red Army; Stalin. WE HEAR Bob whistling "Fancy Pants."

ANGLE - BOB

flipping thru the pages.

BOB

Do these come with a loyalty oath?
(reads from Larry's book)

They only sell plain candy bars at
the PX because GIs think General
Almond is nuts enough.

(reads, eyeing Mort)
If you see a fat guy in a red suit
don't shoot, it ain't Mao, it's
still Santa.

(to Mort)
Et tu, Morton?

Bob crumples the page and tosses it at Mort. Bob turns his attention to Chet, who looks sullen.

CHET

You know me, I love Big Mac, but
... the natives are restless.

BOB

Freddie?

FRED

You don't need to do that shit.
We're here to get laughs. It's a
fucking Christmas show for fuck's
Sake. Fuck this fucking bullshit.

BOB

Nicely put.

MORT

C'mon, the guys know something's
up.

CHET

So Bob should nail MacArthur in
front of his own troops?

(MORE)

CHET (cont'd)

(to Bob)

We don't make the news. We make
fun of it, right?

JIMMY

I dunno. Radioman told me back home
the AP is reporting Bob beat the
marines to Wonsan. We made news.

MORT

So it's no secret. What's the
difference?

CHET

The difference is this is a war and
these guys are in the middle of it.
Whose side are you on?

MORT

Same side I fought for five years
ago. Go to hell.

CHET

So one battle goes screwy. We're
winning. Why bring the guys down?

LARRY

They are down. They --

FRED

(like shushing a kid)

Larry, please?

(to Bob)

Just do the Marilyn in a Christmas
stocking jokes. Just be funny.

LARRY

(re his notebook)

What happened to if the guys think
it Bob says it? If we don't care
what the guys think, Fred's right.

BOB

Who says I don't care what they
think?

Bob leans forward, challenging Larry. Larry doesn't back
down. He shrugs, like, "whatever."

LARRY

Just do the Christmas jokes.

Bob stares coolly back at Larry. Chet, Fred, and Mort all ad-lib arguing their points to Bob, as Jimmy tries to quiet them. Larry says nothing, just waiting for Bob's decision. Bob gives up on all of them. Annoyed, he gathers up the notebook pages, avoiding Larry's look. The guys only get quiet when they see Bob get up and leave.

ANGLE - BOB

Bob heads up to the front of the plane. There's a seat next to Marilyn. Their eyes meet. Then she sees the jokes in his hands and she looks away, chilly.

Bob turns, spots a seat at the back of the plane, passing Prescott. He gives Bob a big smile and a thumbs up.

PREScott

Pyongyang an hour away, Mr. Hope.

BOB

Yep.

Bob finally finds a spot way in the back of the plane. He sits at the window. Then Bob sees something on the tarmac that stops him, makes him smile.

BOB'S POV - THE 1ST MARINES

It's a downpour now as rain drenches the young marines still out on the tarmac, soaked, chilly. They've spotted him in the window. They wave and take pictures.

BOB SEES a jeep pulls up to the marines and a SERGEANT lays into the kids, really chewing them out. They run in the rain for their trucks, to roll out. Their truck joins the convoys, becoming part of the bigger roll out, and disappears North.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Bob watches them as the rain spatters the window. They roll for take-off. Bob rests his head against the window, and falls asleep.

INSERT MAP ANIMATION

SUPER: "Thursday, October 26th, 1950. Pyongyang." Bob's planes fly back West, from Wonsan to Pyongyang, all in the North, above the 38th parallel.

INT. PLANE

Bob has fallen asleep, the jokes still in his hands, pretty much untouched. Jimmy taps Bob, waking him up.

EXT. PLANE - DAY

Bob's planes sit on the runway as his troupe deplanes and gets into two busses.

A jeep waits for Bob and Marilyn with GENERAL JOHNNIE WALKER, 61, greeting them. Walker is a short, bulldog. He wears sunglasses, a silver helmet, a pearl-handled revolver. A flashing red siren with three big stars is affixed to his jeep.

The writers come-up just behind Bob with Prescott who instantly salutes Walker, who barely notices him.

PRESCOTT

Mr. Hope, Miss Maxwell, allow me to introduce General Johnnie Walker, Eighth Army.

BOB

(loud, for the writers)
Marilyn, allow me to introduce you to General Johnnie Walker.

On hearing the name, all four writers jot down this instant keeper.

WALKER

Loved *Lost in a Harem*.

MARILYN

Thank you, general.

Bob jumps in the back seat of the jeep and Walker gallantly helps Marilyn up the step, then hops into his seat.

WALKER

Ok! Roll!

INT. WALKER'S JEEP

Walker's driver shoots thru the city at about sixty miles and hour, showing no fear, while Bob and Marilyn just try not to fall out onto the street.

From time to time, Walker actually gets up to wave to soldiers on the street, as if he were leading a parade. The "streets" are dirt roads and the buildings are charred black rubble.

WALKER

Commies kept it nice, eh? I don't think they're getting their deposit back. This is downtown Pyongyang. Let me know if you want to do some window shopping, Miss Maxwell! Yah, I'm kidding, of course. We're headed out to Pyongyang University where you can set up for your show. Take it easy on me up there, Bob. I don't want to have to shoot you. HAH! I'm kidding, of course.

BOB

Was there much fighting to take the city?

WALKER (CONT'D)

Hah! We hauled butt thinking there'd be a fight but only got into some friendly fire. Nobody got hurt, but by the time we sorted it out, the South Koreans got into the city first. Can you believe that? Hey, but you beat the marines to Wonsan. It's that kind of a war.

BOB

General, what's going on? What happened at Wonsan? Or Unsan? Are the Chinese in it?

WALKER

Yah, yah, you heard about the dust-up at Unsan last night?

(Bob and Marilyn nod)

Ok, unofficially, some Chinese are here. Is it a problem? It's the country next door. Lots of Mexicans in Texas, right? They a problem?

(Bob and Marilyn shrug
like, "guess not")

Right. So if Tokyo says home by Christmas, we're home by Christmas. Yah, well, you got jokes to tell, I got a war to run. Wonderful meeting you both. See you tonight.

Walker's jeep tears off gunning 60 m.p.h., siren blaring as the trucks with Bob's cast and crew arrive. Bob can see across the quad, a growing group of his GI fans. Prescott heads over to Bob and Marilyn. Bob yawns.

MARILYN
You need some rest.

Bob shrugs, re the GI fans: "what can I do?"

PRESCOTT
Mr. Saphier says he'll get your show set up on the football field. We have several hospital visits planned.

BOB
Sure. I'm ready to go. Marilyn?

MARILYN
Fifteen minutes. Gotta girly up.

BOB
(to the writers)
Road trip! Lar --
(icily)
-- no. Mort, lets hit it.

Mort gets into the staff car with Marilyn and Bob. The car leaves a cloud of dust behind them. Chet looks to Larry.

CHET
That's not good. You don't want to be on probation, man. Bob's always looking at you. You never think your job's safe. Fred's always needling you.

LARRY
That's what it's like now.

EXT. PYONGYANG STREETS - DAY

Krupa and Larry walk down the street, taking in the rubble. Larry shivers, only wearing an LA-friendly sport coat.

LARRY
How is it the Chinese attack and the worst thing we can do is tell our guys who's shooting at them.
(MORE)

LARRY (cont'd)

Back home they think there's a
commie under everybody's bed and
out here they can't find one.

They find themselves outside the Russian embassy where three GIs hang out in the courtyard. They have a bonfire going (using busted up furniture) and liberated bottles of vodka. Krupa and Larry come up to the fire to warms their hands. In a bureau the soldiers use for wood are a pile of clothes.

7TH CAVALRY GI

Nice jacket, sport. You a reporter
for the Palm Beach news?

LARRY

For Bob Hope.

7TH CAVALRY GI

Yeah? You need a jacket? Trust me,
it's getting cold. No one's got
winter gear. Who thought we'd be
this far North in October?

One of the GIs points to a looted Russian commissar's long coat and big fur hat.

LARRY

Sure, thanks.

7TH CAVALRY GI

Good. Cause we need some backstage
passes.

The GIs wait on Larry, who nods.

LARRY

Deal --

KRUPA

-- and a bottle. Comrade.

The GIs throw Krupa a bottle and a grateful Larry his Russian long coat and fur hat.

ANGLE - ARMY STAFF CAR

Prescott sits up front with a driver. Bob, Marilyn, and Mort sit in back. Bob waves to GIs who recognize him. Where there isn't rubble, buildings have Communist murals on them. At an intersection, they see one of Joseph Stalin and Kim Il Jong surrounded by angelic children who look up at them as gods. Passing GIs flick cigarette butts and smash bottles on it.

The car passes a girls school. The courtyard houses North Korean POWs. Rows of them sit Indian-style, hands on heads. Republic of Korea soldiers guard them, not American GIs. Three NK officers hang by the neck, swinging in the wind, as examples to the rest.

Bob's car heads through a levelled area completely charred black - fields and hills recently wiped out by fire. Remains of bodies, barely recognizable, litter the hills and fields.

ANGLE - BOB, MARILYN, AND MORT

Bob leans forward to Prescott.

BOB (CONT'D)
What the hell happened?

PRESCOTT
Napalm. A chemical fire we drop
that incinerates enemy territory.

Bob, Marilyn, and Mort take in the black fields, which stretch to the horizon.

ANGLE - PRESCOTT'S CAR

The car drives into downtown Pyonyang near a still standing three story building. Bob sleeps, faced pressed against the car door. When the car jerks to a stop, he wakes up.

PRESCOTT
Mr. Hope, I'll go in and let them
know you're here. Be right back.

Prescott gets out of the car and heads into the building. Bob, Marilyn, and Mort sit back, beat. Nobody talks, they're all exhausted, half asleep.

Mort nudges Bob. Mort nods to a street corner where a group of GIs have spotted Bob and Marilyn. The crowd is gradually growing, as they try to get a glimpse of him. Beat, Bob pulls himself up and leans out the window.

BOB
Hey, I'm playing through to the
18th hole. Pyongyang's the worst
sand trap I ever hit!

ANGLE - BOB, MORT, AND THE CROWD OF GIS

In the chill air, Bob signs autographs, posing for pictures, hanging out. Mort listens, takes notes, takes photos.

GI

Man, we were racing to get here first. Night before we did the 5th and 7th Cavalries were blowing the shit out each other. "Friendly fire." By the time we got here the Russians were long gone.

MORT

Wiped out, huh?

GI #2

Bugged out. North. They'll be back.

GI

Bullshit. They high-tailed it. Took our POWs, too. They know we'll come North for'm.

(to Bob)

The shit they did here. We found a well full of dead bodies. Ditches full of people.

GI #2

Least there's food. We were down to a slice of spam and a can of grapefruit juice per day cause our supply lines are stretched so thin. Gets down to thirty degrees at night. We were three to a blanket.

(re something behind Bob)

I want those in a blanket.

WE HEAR wolf whistles. Marilyn has emerged from the car in a tight sweater.

GI #1

Oh, man.

BOB

I'm glad that was for Marilyn.

The guys are whistling and ogling her.

GI #2

What size cup do you wear?

MARILYN
Bigger than yours, honey.

The GI's friends laugh him down as he has no comeback.
Prescott comes out of the building.

PREScott
They're ready for you inside.

BOB
Fellas, I'm going inside. We'll
come back. Hang out if you can.

Bob heads inside with Prescott, but GI #3 tags along.

GI #1
(ogling Marilyn)
I didn't even get that sweater's
autograph.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Prescott and Marilyn head through a lounge area, empty except for a couch and a desk with no chair. GI #3 walks with Hope, talking his ear off. Mort follows Bob.

GI #3
I'm a cameraman in the Field
Photographic Unit. I want to work
in pictures when I get home.

BOB
Sure. Toluca Lake 3-409. My home
office. You call me when you're
out. Toluca Lake 3-409. What's your
name? I don't forget names.

GI #3
Thanks! Mine's Ralph Kramer.

Mort writes it down as Bob and Marilyn head inside.

MORT
Call after noon. Bob drinks.

BOB (O.S.)
I heard that!

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Bob, Marilyn, Prescott, and a furious Mort climb the stairs.

MORT

Can you believe that? Our own guys
shooting each other for Ping Pong,
Korea.

PRESCOTT

Happens in every war. Generals have
their reasons, sir.

MORT

Yeah. I been in a war. Not a
"police action." First general into
town gets the headlines at home.
That's why guys get ground into
dust.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Bob, Marilyn, and Mort follow Prescott into an office
building converted into a hospital. At the top of the stairs,
doctors and nurses wait for them.

DOCTOR

This ward is all men flown down
from the Chinese invasion at Unsan.

BOB

Invasion?

DOCTOR

Yes. We've got three floors just
like this.

The doctor opens the door. It's an entire floor of severely
wounded American and South Korean soldiers. The lines of beds
stretch across the entire building, with few aisles. They're
all in bad shape. Bob takes a step forward, taking in all
these hurt men.

BOB

(quietly)

Jesus Christ.

One by one, GIs start to notice Bob as the room gets quiet.
Bob bucks up, becomes Bob Hope, Comedian.

BOB

Ten shun! Ok, whose got the dice?

EXT. PYONGYANG FOOTBALL FIELD

The stage is finished and Les Brown's band sets up their music and tuning up. The front rows have folding chairs, but for the most part, the soldiers gathering out front sit on the ground, many trying to keep warm in the increasingly chilly air.

From the stage, Fred spots Larry and Krupa and the three 7th Cav GIs who gave Larry the coat.

FRED

Hey, Bob's back! Get up here!

EXT. BACKSTAGE

The writers gather around a table with Bob, punching up a sketch. Larry enters, looped, in his commissar's outfit.

MORT

You switch sides?

CHET

Larry's so impressionable.

LARRY

How come at home there's supposed to be a commie under every bed and out here we can't find ONE?

Bob and Larry share a look as Larry flops down in a seat. Jimmy comes up to talk to Bob, whispering in his ear.

CHET

Drinking before a show. You after Fred's job?

FRED

Moving on. Page ten. We need a big kid for Bob's entrance as the sheriff.

BOB

You guys can handle it. Marilyn and I have to rehearse some new lyrics.

CHET

The army objected to "How Much Is That Doggy in the Window?"

LARRY

Turned out the dog is a Pekingese
spy. Sshhh, top secret.

BOB

That's a good one for the Larry
Gelbart show. But you write for me.
So work on that Bob Hope sound.

CHET

Like Bob's entrance? I need a
laugh.

LARRY

Bob comes in as the sheriff and
says, "What you call being a coward
I call making a living!"

CHET

Ka-ching. That works.

Bob and Larry lock eyes. Both know Larry meant it. Mort and Fred see it, too. Chet's oblivious to the looks as he jots it down. Bob doesn't give in to Larry.

BOB

Yeah, it does.

Bob nods to Chet, who writes it down. Bob exits with Jimmy, who shoots a look back at Larry like "what's your problem?"

MORT

You trying to get fired?

FRED

If I can help in any way ...

LARRY

There's worse things than being
fired.

MORT

In show business?

EXT. BACKSTAGE

Hope rushes to find Marilyn with Jimmy in tow. They pass the 7th CAV GIs we met at the Russian Embassy, now backstage, eyeing Marilyn and scarfing craft service food with their vodka.

Four soldiers hand out brand new parkas to a shivering cast and crew. Jimmy pulls one on as he talks to Bob, who hasn't changed his icy look.

JIMMY

Larry's a kid, he lost his temper.

BOB

He's a writer. He'll get over it.

Prescott waits for Bob backstage. Bob stays icy.

PRESCOTT

Mr. Hope? Could I take a look at the script before the show.

JIMMY

The script?

PRESCOTT

Yes. I'd like to report back to General Almond the tone of the show.

BOB

Sure. Jimmy, give him the run through, will ya?

JIMMY

Right away.

Jimmy hands the Prescott his own copy. A GI shyly comes up. For the SHY GI, Bob warms up.

SHY GI

Uh Mr. Hope? My brother and me are from Akron, he's a huge fan --

BOB

Ohio boys? I'm from Cleveland.

PRESCOTT

(looks up)

I thought you were born in England.

BOB

(icy)

Yeah. But I'm from Cleveland.

(to the Shy GI)

I came over when I was three. It was that or marry the girl.

(as the Shy GI laughs)

Jimmy, an 8x10 for ...?

Jimmy has one ready and hands it to Bob with a pen.

SHY GI
Willie.

BOB
(as Bob signs)
Willie boy.

PREScott
No, he said "Willie."

Everyone looks at Prescott for a second as if to say "we know." The Shy GI leaves as Prescott scans the script.

BOB
Lemme know if you have any good jokes.

Prescott sits down in the background to read through the scripts. WE HEAR the band warm up with "Buttons and Bows." Bob eyes Prescott, whistling along with the band.

ANGLE - BOB

stepping away from Prescott. Bob peaks thru the curtains.

ANGLE - BOB'S POV

Hospital staff seat wounded men in the front rows, in wheel chairs, on stretchers, and those that are mobile in folding chairs. It obviously pains many to move. As the sun goes down, it's C-O-L-D.

Out back, soldiers pour into the football stadium.

ANGLE - BOB

Bob pauses, moved by the sight of all them. Prescott comes up to him. Bob is oblivious, in his own space for the moment.

BOB
Wow, look at'm come.

PREScott
Mr. Hope, there's no monologue.
This script starts on the second sketch.

Bob pats his pocket, wishing Prescott would go away.

BOB
Mono's here. Fort Knox.

PRESCOTT
May I see it?

BOB
No, you kidding? Milton Berle could
be right around the corner.

PRESCOTT
Sir, I seriously doubt Milton Berle
would come all the way to Korea
steal a joke.

BOB
Oh, you don't know Miltie.

PRESCOTT
Mr. Hope. I'm not kidding.

BOB
Me, neither. No.

PRESCOTT
Sir, we know the questions your
writers are asking. You act like
men gossiping in war is news. We
all know what they're saying. I can
not allow you to undermine the war
effort.

BOB
Me undermine it? Me?
(re the audience)
You think I'd do that to these
guys?

PRESCOTT
Criticizing General MacArthur at a
moment like this is un-American.

BOB
Get outta here. I don't need
patriotism lectures from you.

PRESCOTT
I can call my superior officers.

BOB
And I can call theirs. What time is
it in DC, Jimmy?
(before Jimmy answers)
(MORE)

BOB(cont'd)

Five AM. Harry's always happy to
hear from me, but not that early.

PREScott

Harry ... ?

BOB

Truman.

Prescott backs down, walking off in a huff.

JIMMY

Would you really call Truman?

BOB

(shaking his head)

Not if I want to get back into the
USA I wouldn't.

Bob shakes his head and walks off. He gets to his dressing
room where a Gomer Pile-like GI awaits him, standing guard.

GOMER

Sir, I've been asked to assist you
in anything you might need.

BOB

That gun loaded?

GOMER

Yes, sir.

Bob takes the notebook jokes out of his jacket.

BOB

Anyone tries to get in here,
shoot 'm

GOMER

Yes, sir.

Bob, closes the door, sits down on a metal folding chair. He
lays out the notebook pages, rereading them. Calmly, Bob
takes out a black marker and starts crossing out jokes.

EXT. PYONGYANG UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL FIELD

Larry, Krupa, Mort, and Chet walk out from the stage door.
They see thousands of troops waiting. Larry now wears an army
parka, like the other guys.

The Les Brown orchestra strikes up Bob's jaunty theme music
from "Fancy Pants."

LARRY

Get ready for that big Bob Hope sound.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Bob is freezing while Jimmy tries to get a US parka on him.

JIMMY

You'll get pneumonia.

BOB

Will you quit? I'll go out in my suit even if I freeze my ass off.

(re parka)

That thing's warm but it's not ... funny.

Just then, Bob's eye catches something in the room the writers were using: Larry's discarded Russian fur hat and long coat. WE HEAR:

PA SYSTEM

Ladies and gentlemen, greetings from liberated Pyongyang!

EXT. PYONGYANG UNIVERSITY FIELD

The soldiers give themselves an extended CHEER.

PA SYSTEM

And now, please welcome the mayor of Pyongyang, Party Chairman, Bob Hope!

Bob walks out in the Russian fur hat, long coat, and his nine iron. The soldiers are up on their feet, with something we haven't seen on many faces in Pyongyang - excitement, fun.

BOB'S POV

Of the wounded in the front row, applauding as best they can, actually looking happy.

ANGLE - PRESCOTT

A skeptical look on his face, as he watches the show, arms crossed, with GENERAL WALKER and other officers.

WALKER

Prescott. What's he gonna say?

PRESCOTT

I don't know, sir.

WALKER

Yah. I see General MacArthur's
intel is as good as ever.

ANGLE - LARRY AND KRUPA

Along with Chet, Fred, and Mort. Larry looks just as
skeptical as the Prescott.

LARRY

My horse is so old ...

ANGLE - BOB

who soaks up the applause, alpha-celeb that he is, with a
comical look of "for me?" on his face. And then, at the
perfect moment ...

BOB

You fellas look surprised ...
didn't you hear you're getting a
change of enemy?

There's a pause, a Did He Really Say That Pause, and we hear
a "ooooooohhhhh" rising from the troops, since they knew
exactly what it meant.

ANGLE - WRITERS AND KRUPA

The writers look confused as Krupa laughs. Larry smiles.

FRED

Who wrote that?

LARRY

He did.

ANGLE - PRESCOTT

Not looking happy.

ANGLE - BOB

Shooting a look to his guys before he really gets going.

BOB

(to the marines)

Things really move around here. I took a cab over from the Pyongyang Hotel. I paid the driver in US dollars, he spoke Russian, and I got my change back in Chinese yuan. At the Pyongyang the towels say "His, Hers, and Whose Sorry Now?"

(waits out the laugh)

Seriously, I love it here with General Johnnie Walker in charge. He fits right in. Last week Johnnie Walker Black, this week Johnnie Walker Red. Sorry about that last one. In Pyongyang, the bombs just keep coming. But isn't North Korea lovely this time of year?

The GIs BOO loud and LONG. Bob looks surprised again:

BOB (CONT'D)

No, you know what North Korea is.
It's Siberia with Chinese take-out.

There's a pause as the troops can't believe he said it, then a big laugh.

ANGLE - LARRY

Fred, Chet, Larry, and Mort, all laughing, as a HUGE LAUGH erupts from the troops. Mort marvels at it:

MORT

He's taking MacArthur apart and didn't even say his name.

ANGLE - BOB

Soaking up the greatness.

BOB

You know, we're so close to the front I sent my laundry out and it came back with fortune cookie in it.

Bob looks at Larry, Chet, Fred, and Mort all watching the show. He makes the sign he made to them when he won the \$100 from each of them. He's made his point.

BOB (CONT'D)

I told my driver to take me where the action is around here. He took me to General Walker's tent.

As Bob slips into the jokes we've already heard, WE CUT TO:

EXT. PYONGYANG AIRFIELD

Bob's planes are ready to go on the runway. The musicians and tech crew board the planes behind them.

Bob and Marilyn sign autographs. Troops on the tarmac noticeably shiver, as they're still in their summer uniforms. Bob's cast and crew all wear winter parkas and snow hats - Bob still wears his Russian outfit.

ANGLE - LARRY

With Krupa and his flight crew. Larry is making a list as they shout to him:

CREWMAN #1
Some magazines.

CREWMAN #2
With women in them.

CREWMAN #3
The kind --

LARRY
I know the kind.

KRUPA
Food.

CREWMAN #1
Candy bars.

CREWMAN #2
Pepper salami.

CREWMAN #1
Beer!

LARRY
Got it, got it.

KRUPA
I had a great time flying you guys
around.

LARRY
I'll get this stuff into the mail
for you as soon as I get back.

ANGLE - BOB

The propellers on their C-54s crank up. Bob stays for every last autograph and snapshot. One guy keeps coming back for another and another, just excited to be near Bob Hope.

BOB
(to autograph hound)
Did you forget your Aunt Mary?

Bob signs it as the guy gets out of the way for another soldier. Larry comes up to Bob.

LARRY
You changed your mind.

BOB
No, I just did it my way.
(re the troops)
Anyway, I doubt anyone'll be
thinking about us tomorrow morning.

The autograph hound is back and Bob starts signing.

BOB (CONT'D)
Does Aunt Mary have a sister?

AUTOGRAPH HOUND
A son, Joe.

BOB
Fellas, what else can I do for you?

PRIVATE

Get us some parkas like yours!
It's freezing out here.

SERGEANT

Yeah, we're still in summer
uniforms. Tell Big Mac!

BOB

I'll do better.

Bob takes his parka off and throws it to the soldier.
Following his example, Bob's cast and crew take their parkas
and hats off and toss them to the shivering GIs, filling the
air them.

ANGLE - THE WRITERS

In their parkas as Jimmy nudges them to throw their parkas.
Finally they do, glaring at Bob. Bob and the writers wave
good-bye to the GIs on the tarmac. Bob stops to sign the
autograph hound's parka, before jumping on the stairway to
the plane.

The writers greet Bob, smiling with clenched, chattering
teeth. Bob alone seems unaffected by the cold.

MORT

Very generous, Bob. The guys need
those parkas. They're freezing.

BOB

Ah, it was nothing.

FRED

Now we're freezing.

LARRY

You know where we're going next,
don't you?

Bob looks confused, just now coming off his high.

CHET

Alaska.

BOB

Fellas, fellas, what are you
worried about? You think the army
can't find a another parka for a
big star like me?

With that, Bob skips up the stairs, the writers knowing exactly what he meant and follow him inside, with a little less spring in their step.

INT. PLANE

Marilyn sits at her window seat in the front row, waving to GIs. Larry sits next to her. Larry spots Bob coming down the aisle and starts to get up. Marilyn sees Bob, too. She grabs Larry's hand for him to stay. At the same time, Bob puts a hand on Larry's shoulder for him to sit. Larry gets it, and sits back, as Bob heads to the back of the plane. Bob looks back at Marilyn for a second, then gives up. He turns to face Chet and Fred.

BOB

Ok, who's got the cards?

ANGLE - MORT

the last to enter the plane. He watches the troops in the distance, marching off in columns, headed North. He waves to the last on the tarmac, who definitely want to go home with them. Mort finds it hard to hold back a tear. Finally, he enters the plane, and the door closes behind him, taxiing down the runway, building towards it's take-off. GIs remain on the field, until Bob's planes are completely out of sight.

INT. NBC STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD (1950)

Larry walks down the halls of Bob's NBC offices with a big box full of beer, salami, and '50s mens magazines. Larry walks past Bob's secretaries.

SECRETARY

(eyeing a copy of KNAVE)

Another big Friday night, Larry?

LARRY

Hilarious, ladies. This happens to be going to Captain Krupa. Have you heard where he's stationed yet?

SECRETARY

Not yet. Bob needs you in editing.

Larry takes his box and heads down to editing. As he walks down the hall, WE HEAR Larry's Captain Krupa sketch playing, and the big laughs it got in Seoul.

Larry finds Bob and Jimmy with the tech guys. Standing over them is Chuck, the sponsor censor/rep. They look grim.

CHUCK

Cut it. Just cut it, and pick it up after with the Western sketch.

LARRY

What? You're cutting my stuff?
Play it back, it got laughs.

BOB

We know it did Larry.

LARRY

Why are we cutting funny? We never cut funny.

JIMMY

Larry --

LARRY

What am I supposed to tell Krupa?
His family knows he'll be on the show.

(re care package)

Who do you think this is for?

BOB

Larry. John Krupa's dead.

LARRY

What?

BOB

I know he was a friend. But he's dead. He was shot down over North Korea. The fighting's gotten bad.

LARRY

I know.

Larry sits down, the care package in his lap.

BOB

There's no way we can play the sketch. His family --

LARRY

Yeah. Wouldn't be right.

BOB

It's a war, Lar. It's what happens. People get hurt.

As the news sinks in on the 21-year-old Larry, the room goes SILENT, AS WE

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER: "The day Bob Hope left Korea, 180,000 Chinese troops were already in Korea and attacked United Nations forces. The Korean War did not end by Christmas 1950, but on July 27th, 1953, with the armistice that exists today. American forces suffered 36,516 dead, 92,134 wounded, and 8,176 missing in action."

FADE IN:

INT. CBS RADFORD MASH SET (1974)

The cast and crew are ready in the operating room. Gary Burghoff waits for them, looking impatient again. The 45-year-old Larry stands next to the camera.

From Larry's jacket pocket he takes out the final script page, folded long, in half, and hands it to Burghoff. WE SEE Burghoff's face as he absorbs what he's about to say.

LARRY
Ok everyone, places.
(waits for Burghoff)
And, rolling.

CUT TO:

FOOTAGE FROM MASH EPISODE, *ABYSSINIA, HENRY*:

INT. SURGERY/OR SET

The cast is in surgical garb, masks on, operating on wounded soldiers.

RADAR O'REILLY enters the OR. He does not wear a mask.

TRAPPER JOHN
Radar, put a mask on.

HAWKEYE PIERCE
If that's my discharge, give it to me straight, I can take it.

Radar is devastated, crying, can barely deliver the news.

RADAR

I have a message.

(everyone listens)

Lieutenant Colonel Henry Blake's
plane ... was shot down ... over
the Sea of Japan. It spun in.
There were no survivors.

Radar leaves. The OR is silent, the cast in tears. Then, WE
HEAR a metal forceps hit the floor, bringing everyone back to
their job, saving lives.

FADE TO BLACK.