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Screenplay #5  
(Treatment)

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"Plane Spotters"

(a treatment)

We open in the Southwestern desert outside a military base. Three male geeks are sitting in lawn chairs at the end of the runway, just outside the military boundary. The geeks are:

BINOCULAR GEEK who watches the planes through heavy-duty binoculars. He is laden with optics of all kinds, including binoculars and a camera around his neck, a camera with a huge lens mounted on a tripod, and mammoth binoculars mounted on a second tripod.

RADIO GEEK who has several scanner radios and other electronic devices attached to his person. He listens to call signs and other radio traffic.

CLIPBOARD GEEK who writes down all the data that the other two geeks give him on a clipboard.

Military aircraft pass directly overhead, just a few feet away. As the aircraft pass, the geeks start furiously collecting data. BINOCULAR GEEK reads the plane's tail number and calls it out. RADIO GEEK listens for the plane's call sign and calls it out. He also reads the plane's "frequency" from a device he is holding in his hands. CLIPBOARD GEEK writes all this information down. As the planes pass, the geeks also remark on the particular features of the aircraft, like its technical modifications and their

previous experience with the same aircraft. ("We saw that one at Holloman.") After a few planes pass, we see that they are working well as a team and seem to be happy in their meaningless pursuit.

Security personnel in camouflage fatigues can be seen in the distance inside the base perimeter. They are watching the watchers. The watchers, in turn, know they are being watched and revel in it.

Things are stable and everyone is happy, but then a disruption occurs. A vehicle is seen approaching in the distance, on the public side of the border. We know it is coming by the big cloud of dust it kicks up on the long dirt road from the highway. The geeks wonder who it is at first, but after some analysis, they identify the intruder. It's LARRY, a fellow plane spotter.

LARRY brings his SUV to a stop near the group and he steps out of the driver's side door. There are greetings among the geeks, as those already present start telling LARRY about the aircraft they have seen.

Then LARRY's passenger steps out of the vehicle. This is someone totally unexpected, like an alien from space.

It's a YOUNG WOMAN! She is stunningly beautiful in a very natural and relaxed way. She is wearing a casual cowgirl outfit that shows off her appealing figure. Clearly, she isn't trying to be beautiful; she just is.

The banter of the geeks comes to a crashing halt. No one knows how to deal with this turn of events. Apart from LARRY, the geeks have no idea what to say.

LARRY introduces the woman as his sister. He says he is taking her to the airport but wanted to show her his plane spotting site. The other geeks grunt some "hellos."

The other three geeks are at a loss for words and don't know what to do. They start by pretending to ignore the intruder, awkwardly resuming their aircraft reports for LARRY. Fortunately, a plane passes overhead, and the geeks snap into data collection

mode. When they call off the numbers, however, they are much more theatrical and self-conscious, like they know the world is watching them. Each of the geeks, when he thinks no one is looking, steals a glimpse of the pretty girl, but no one has any idea how to strike up a conversation.

LARRY is standing beside his sister, explaining what is happening with the aircraft. Of course, to him the YOUNG WOMAN is no one special, and he is completely relaxed with her. He rattles off aircraft statistics just like he would to his geek friends. His sister is very tolerant. Although she has no particular interest in aircraft, she knows this is important to LARRY. She accepts his personality and knows how to humor him.

The other geeks pretend to be involved in their data collection pursuits, but they are really concentrated on the conversation between LARRY and the YOUNG WOMAN. LARRY reels off some arcane fact about the aircraft that just passed overhead, and all three of the other geeks jump into the conversation to correct LARRY. "That's not it at all." A spirited debate then ensues between LARRY and the other geeks about some minor point of aircraft watching.

Clearly, talking to LARRY is a substitute for interacting with the YOUNG WOMAN, who the geeks have no idea how to relate to. She is their real audience. Soon, all four geeks are clustered around the young woman, continuing their aircraft debate.

Then the woman herself has something to say. She points to the t-shirt that CLIPBOARD GEEK is wearing. "Nice t-shirt," she says.

The t-shirt is from White Sands National Monument, New Mexico. The YOUNG WOMAN says she has been there with LARRY. "I really like the desert out there," she says.

CLIPBOARD GEEK responds in the only way he knows how: by recounting his plane spotting achievements at Holloman Air Force Base near White Sands. He makes no real connection with the young woman.

LARRY says it's time to go, since his sister has to catch her flight. Both he and the YOUNG WOMAN move toward the SUV. There is some closing banter between

the geeks, then the visitors drive off down the long dirt road.

A plane passes overhead, and both BINOCULAR GEEK and RADIO GEEK quickly resume their duties. They call out numbers, expecting CLIPBOARD GEEK to write them down.

However, CLIPBOARD GEEK is still looking in the other direction, at the receding car and the cloud of dust it is kicking up.

Then he looks down at his own t-shirt, thinking.

He looks back at the receding car, which is almost to the highway now. Then he looks over at his own vehicle, parked nearby. It is a Jeep with an open top.

Then CLIPBOARD GEEK has a vision...

In a fantasy sequence, he is driving his Jeep in the dunes of White Sands. In the passenger seat beside him is the YOUNG WOMAN. They are both laughing and having fun.

A plane passes loudly overhead, snapping CLIPBOARD GEEK out of his reverie.

The other two geeks call to him to resume his duties. Clearly, they are annoyed. Two planes have already passed overhead, and he hasn't recorded them.

CLIPBOARD GEEK looks again down the dirt road. LARRY's SUV has reached the end. It turns onto the paved highway and speeds away.

CLIPBOARD GEEK shakes his head, like waking up from a dream. The other geeks call to him, and he responds this time, returning to his station. The two geeks reel off numbers, and CLIPBOARD GEEK writes them down. Things look like they were in the beginning, but something subtle has changed in the CLIPBOARD GEEK. He seems distracted.

He looks down at his t-shirt.

Then he looks over at his Jeep.

As another plane passes overhead, we...

CUT TO BLACK

THE END