

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

by

Stacy W. Thornton

(Based on a true story)

WGAW Registration #989032

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FADE IN:

TITLE: "WASHINGTON D.C."

TITLE: "1932"

SOUND: Bring up BACKGROUND CHANT:

-- WE WON'T GO AWAY, UNTIL WE GET OUR PAY; WE WON'T GO AWAY
UNTIL WE GET OUR BONUS PAY (REPEATING)

BRING UP TITLE CREDITS

-- THREE KNOCKS AT A DOOR

ADMINISTRATOR (V.O.)
Mr. President? The Secretary of
War is here at your request.

PRESIDENT HOOVER (V.O.)
Send him in.

PATRICK HURLEY (V.O.)
Yes sir, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT HOOVER (V.O.)
Hurley, this has been going on for
nearly two months. It is apparent
to me that those resisting eviction
are entirely of the Communist
element. Get word to General
MacArthur to proceed with the plan.

SOUND: WGAW Registration #989032

-- A TYPEWRITER TYPES

-- FAST PACED FOOTSTEPS ECHO IN A HALLWAY

-- BACKGROUND CHANT CONTINUES

INT. CAPITOL/WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

A CLERK hurries down the CORRIDOR.

PRESIDENT HOOVER (V.O.)
It's time. Have the troops proceed
immediately to end the disorder...

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EXT. CAPITAL/WASHINGTON D.C.

Peacefully assembled at the CAPITOL steps, hundreds of BONUS ARMY MARCHERS (WWI VETERANS) LOUDLY CHANT (WE WON'T GO AWAY...ETC.). Some Marchers in uniform, some decorated with medals, some in ordinary clothes, but most are poorly dress in soiled and tattered rags.

Various protest signs: "WE ARE AMERICAN WAR VETERANS;" "GIVE US THE BONUS YOU PROMISED;" "WE DONE A GOOD JOB IN FRANCE, NOW YOU DO A GOOD JOB IN AMERICA;" "WE WON'T GO AWAY UNTIL YOU PAY;" and "HARD TIMES ARE STILL 'HOOVER'-ING OVER US."

INT. CAPITOL

SOUND:

-- BACKGROUND CHANT CONTINUES.

From the corridor, the Clerk enters a room, hands an ENVELOPE marked "URGENT" to a SECRETARY behind a desk.

The Secretary takes it, proceeds through a door to an adjacent room, hands it to GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR.

MacArthur opens it and reads.

END CREDITS. (Based on a true story)

INSERT (of Memo): WGAW Registration #989032

MEMORANDUM FROM THE OFFICE OF
PRESIDENT HERBERT HOOVER
DATE: 2:55 P.M. JULY 28, 1932
TO GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR
...SURROUND THE AFFECTED AREAS AND
CLEAR IT WITHOUT DELAY...
SIGNED: SECRETARY OF WAR, PATRICK
J. HURLEY

EXT. CAPITOL - DUSK

The Marchers' CHANT (WE WON'T GO AWAY...) continues as a LINE OF POLICE OFFICERS form at the top of the steps.

On the perimeter, a CALVARY of HORSE-MOUNTED SOLDIERS appear and stand at attention.

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The back of a DARK-HAIRED, medium-large man, JOHN HARLAN, early 30's, in soiled, tatter threads. He pushes his way through the crowd to the Horse-mounted Soldiers.

A PAPER, "THE DAILY WORKER," protrudes from his back pocket.

A HORSE NEIGHS. Harlan jerks around. Sees FLARING NOSTRILS. He jumps back. Glances up at its rider, General MacArthur.

The General, gloriously mounted high upon the saddle appears in surrealist contrast to Harlan as he sits perched on the magnificent, perfectly groomed horse.

Steel intensity shoots from the General's eyes. From his shiny polished medals of his immaculate uniform down to his glossy black boots, MacArthur personifies a stochastic presence in the radiant afternoon light.

The General kicks the horse's sides. It ignites in a TROT away from Harlan toward the front of the Calvary.

A HAND appears on Harlan's shoulder. Jerks Harlan around. Face of the POLICE OFFICER.

POLICE OFFICER

Identification.

Harlan hands him his I.D.

(Based on a true story)
POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)

(reads)

John Noble Harlan from Philly, P.A.

(checks it to his face)

You a communist?

HARLAN

No sir! I'm a war veteran just trying to get my due.

The policeman snatches Harlan's paper, THE DAILY WORKER.

POLICE OFFICER

Just what I thought.

He grabs Harlan's arm. Reaches for his handcuffs.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)

Seems our red, white, & blue vet must've dropped a couple colors.

This 'commie' paper good reading?

HARLAN

Now, wait. Just look at it.

Flustered, Harlan yanks his arm from the Police Officer's grasp. Points to the PLANE SKETCHES in the margin.

POLICE OFFICER
Downtown, mister!

The Police Officer attempts to handcuff Harlan.

HARLAN
Wait a cotton-picking minute! I
ain't part of no communist party.
I'm a veteran from the world war, I
even flew with Eddie Rickenbacker!

Just then, MacArthur orders "ADVANCE." Swords flash into the sky. A SIREN sounds. The Calvary moves on the crowd. Riotous pushing and shoving breaks out.

The police use CLUBS and BAYONETS. The veterans toss BRICKS at them. A COUPLE OF LOUD GUNSHOTS ring out. Two of the Bonus Marchers fall to the ground.

WHISTLES blow. People scatter. Police chase and arrest men.

The Police Officer struggles to hand-cuff Harlan but he manages to squirm away. Takes off running.

POLICE OFFICER
Damn it.
(Based on a true story)

He pursues.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
Halt! Come back here! You'll be
in bigger trouble if you make me
run after you, mister!

TEAR GAS BOMBS fly. SMOKE fills the area.

Harlan dashes from the smoke with the Officer right behind.

He runs through the MALL. Turns down PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. Passes a MOUNTED MACHINE GUN SQUADRON and SIX WHIPPET TANKS. He ducks down an alley. Runs hard. His dilapidated boots shred apart. He flees barefoot.

Slowly, his feet transform into that of a TEN-YEAR OLD BOY.

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EXT. - FIELD/FORT MEYERS, VA. - DAWN

TITLE: JUNE 1909

In the dim morning light, the bare-feet of a YOUNG JOHN HARLAN, 10, pounds the hard dirt pavement.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Come back here! John! Don't make
me run after you, mister!

Young Harlan runs. A plane approaches behind him.

He glances back. Sees ORVILLE WRIGHT maneuver his PLANE ("The Military Flyer") along the runway. Orville looks over his shoulder at the wing. Sees the boy in its path.

ORVILLE WRIGHT
John, the wing!

Young Harlan dives. Rolls over just as the wing passes over him. His eyes afire, he leaps up. Darts after it.

The WEIGHT drops from the DERRICK TOWER. Catapults the plane high into the air.

Young Harlan joyously SCREAMS. Jumps up and down.

The plane encircles the field as Young Harlan runs-his arms outstretched-mirrors it, soaring like the plane above him.

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INT. PLANE

Two LOUD THUMPS emerge from the plane's engine. Orville shuts it off. The airplane violently shakes. A propeller part breaks. Splits the aircraft rigging.

EXT. FIELD

Young Harlan watches as the plane abruptly drops.

INT. PLANE

Orville struggles to control the plane. Veers toward a THICK PATCH OF TREES.

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EXT. FIELD

Young Harlan chases after the plane heading for the trees.

The GROUND CREW, in dirty overalls, rush across the field.

The plane flies into the trees. Hits the tops. Inverts. CRASHES nose first to the ground.

The Crew and Young Harlan rush up. Orville pops out from the plane, unscathed. He eyes the plane. Glances at the men.

ORVILLE WRIGHT

I can fix it!

He immediately dashes toward the small HANGAR/WORKSHOP, followed by a relieved Crew.

LARGE MAN

I have to admit, I was a little shaken there.

by

SHORT MAN

This job's a heart attack waiting.

THIN MAN

I'm hungry. Do we ever eat around here?

(Based on a true story)

Young Harlan momentarily remains. His eyes scan the mangled plane. Eyes cut to Orville. Eyes cut back to the plane. He confidently beams.

YOUNG HARLAN

Yeah! We can fix it!

INT. HANGAR/WORKSHOP

Young Harlan pushes his way through the Crew as they gather around a table in the Hangar's modest workshop. He SLAMS his upper body down on the table. Beams up at Orville.

YOUNG HARLAN

Come on, let me fly, let me fly. You said I could.

A LARGE MAN with a long ROLLED PARCHMENT approaches.

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Fontana, CA 92331 John, you didn't happened to notice a plane crash around here did you?

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He pops Young Harlan on the head with it a couple of times.

ORVILLE WRIGHT
Maybe later, John.

SHORT MAN
Yea, Harlan. How about in...oh
let's see here...

The SHORT MAN pulls out a watch; it dangles from its chain.

SHORT MAN (CONT'D)
...in about a decade from now?

The Crew CHUCKLE as Orville moves Harlan off to the side.

ORVILLE WRIGHT
Do me a favor, Johnny. Go keep
watch over my plane.

The Large Man flattens out a PARCHMENT of the PLANE DESIGN.
Orville busily draws on it.

Young Harlan slumps. Straggles off to the plane.

EXT. FIELD

A FLOCK OF GULLS SQUAWK overhead. He looks up. Shades his
eyes from the RISING SUN.

YOUNG HARLAN
I'm gonna fly. You'll see.

MONTAGE - WWI EVENTS/IMAGES - MUSIC: "OVER THERE"

--FLOCK OF GULLS transforms to a SKY OF PLANES BACKDROP (for
the following images.)

--NEWSPAPER HEADLINES: WOODROW WILSON DECLARES WAR.

--HAM RADIO USER BROADCASTS FROM NEWSPAPER: "...the United
States has promised to 'darken the skies over Europe with
20,000 allied planes'..."

--PROPAGANDA POSTERS: "Enlist In the Navy" and "Join the Air
Service...Learn-Earn."

--The SKY OF PLANES transform to a SKY OF OFFICER HATS.

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EXT. LOVE FIELD, TX - DUSK

TITLE: 1918

A SKY OF MILITARY HATS float down as WWI UNIFORMED ENLISTEES dash about retrieving them, CHEERING.

A somber Harlan (19) finishes reading his orders. Folds them. Slips them into his breast pocket. He watches his buddy, DONALD HUDSON (early 20's) frantically RIP open and scan through his orders.

DONALD HUDSON

Yeowwhh!

(reads aloud to Harlan)

Mr. Donald Hudson will report at 0600 hours on Monday, the 3rd of March, 1918, for active duty as a FLYING OFFICER for the 95th!

HARLAN

That's great. I'm happy for you. Really. Mr. John Noble Harlan will report to the 95th as 'BOOKKEEPER.'

FIRST GUY and SECOND GUY overhear. Pat Harlan on the back.

FIRST GUY

Tough break, kid.

SECOND GUY

Yeah, sorry man.

DONALD HUDSON

I told him not to score so high on the damn math. But we're together in the 95th!

HARLAN

Yeah, you're right. So, let's get the hell out of here and celebrate.

DONALD HUDSON

Now you're talking!

Teasingly, Hudson places Harlan's head in an arm hold.

DONALD HUDSON (CONT'D)

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You're a young man still. You'll get your chance. For god's sake, you flew with Orville Wright!

Harlan and Hudson dash off.

The two guys give each other suspicious glances.

FIRST GUY
Sure he flew with Orville Wright.

SECOND GUY
Yeah; that's why he's a bookkeeper.

They LAUGH. Head off in the opposite direction.

Harlan and Hudson near a BRIGHT WHITE FORD MODEL T; TWO DAMES wave to them. HONK the horn.

HARLAN
Where we going?

DONALD HUDSON
I got it, all worked out. Since we have the whole week-end...

by

EXT. TRAIN DEPOT

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The SANTE FE sits on the tracks.

DONALD HUDSON (V.O.)
...we'll catch the Santa Fe and be there in time for the party by tomorrow night. Sunday, we head back, with time to spare.

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Passengers board.

HARLAN (V.O.)
Where are you taking me, Hudson?

The SMOKE STACK SPEWS.

DONALD HUDSON (V.O.)
Topeka Kansas...to meet the folks.
Where else?

Train WHISTLES. WHEELS LURCH. It CHUGS. Speeds on TRACKS.

INT. SANTE FE TRAIN

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Harlan sadly peers out the train car WINDOW.

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HARLAN

Great. A wild time with good ol'
Mom and Dad. I'm not sure I can
take anymore excitement, today.

Seated across from him, Donald Hudson's eyes go ballistic.
Huge smile alights. He maniacally LAUGHS.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTDOOR DANCE HALL/TOPEKA, KS - NIGHT

A LAUGHING Hudson clasps Harlan's hand. Yanks him to DANCE
across a huge OUTDOOR GAZEBO DANCE HALL to MUSIC: "I WISH I
COULD SHIMMY LIKE MY SISTER KATE."

Decorations hang from perimeter. (STREAMERS, BALLOONS, PAPER
AIRPLANES, and BANNERS with salutations of "BON VOYAGE" and
"GOOD LUCK" and a huge banner: "GOD SPEED TO TOPEKA KANSAS'S
OWN DONNY HUDSON"). In b.g., the SANTE FE at train depot.

As the two men circle around the floor, various HOMETOWN
PEOPLE celebrate (dancing, drinking, etc.). They HOOT, HOWL,
and YELL, "CONGRATULATIONS" to the whirling men.

The spinning makes them dizzy. They nearly crash into an
elderly couple, DAD HUDSON and MOM HUDSON.

(Based on a true story)

HARLAN

Mr. And Mrs. Hudson! I'm so sorry!
Are you alright?

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Dad Hudson flashes a harsh scowl. Grabs a TALL MUG OF
THICKHEADED BEER from the BAR. Shoves it into Harlan's hand.
Dad Hudson's eyes become crazed.

DAD HUDSON

(maniacally chants)
Chug-a-lug, Chug-a-lug...

MOM HUDSON

Come on Johnny! You wimp or what?

HARLAN

So that's where Donny gets it.

Hudson leans in. Grabs his parents about their shoulders.

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DONALD HUDSON

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Mom, Dad, don't be too hard on him.

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After all, he's still a green horn!

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Hometown People VOICES join in, "CHUG-A-LUG, CHUG-A-LUG."

HARLAN

You people are wild!!

Donald Hudson maniacally LAUGHS. Mom Hudson playfully hits her son upside his head.

DONALD HUDSON

Chug-a-lug, chug-a-lug...

Harlan prepares. Then, in one GULP, drinks beer down. EVERYONE WHOOPS, CHEERS, and APPLAUDS. Dad Hudson gives Harlan a solid WHACK on the back.

DAD HUDSON

Good job, soldier.

MOM HUDSON

Now boys, go have some real fun.

Mom Hudson thrusts them to the Two Dames at the bar's end.

Harlan and Hudson attempt to take the Two Dames for a whirl but the girls are too tipsy. Sitting back down at the bar, Hudson SNAPS his fingers to the MUSIC.

DONALD HUDSON

Hey Harlan...you play, don't ya?
(he motions to the band's
piano on stage)
How 'bout it?

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Harlan refuses. The Two Dames plead. He gives in. Harlan, a bit tipsy, stumbles toward the piano. Hudson assists him.

Hudson clues onlookers he's up to something. Just as Harlan begins to sit, he slips the piano bench out from under him. Harlan, keen to his antics, acts like he doesn't know and pulls a "Charlie Chaplin:"

Harlan tries to sit. Sees the bench is gone. He stands. Turns to see the bench is there. Hudson acting innocent. Harlan shrugs. Turns. Begins to sit again. Third time, Harlan flops down before Hudson can remove it.

The Hometown People LAUGH. APPLAUD.

Harlan solicits REQUESTS. There are SHOUTS of various tunes.

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ONE VOICE

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Everyone APPLAUDS. THE BAND and Harlan play.

Later. Things are quieter. Harlan tickles the ivories with a slower paced jazz tune. Hudson leans on the piano. The two dames are sleeping at a table. The crowd has thinned.

DONALD HUDSON
So tell me, when does a flyer have
time to learn to play piano?

HARLAN
Nawh. It's the piano lessons that
taught me to fly.

DONALD HUDSON
What? You gotta explain that one.

HARLAN
Alright but then it's 'lights out'.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"
DONALD HUDSON
Sleep? You can sleep all day
tomorrow on the train back.

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HARLAN
Tomorrow. Funny thing about
tomorrows. They seem to never fail
to come. But then I guess...
there's no counting on it.
(Based on a true story)

Their eyes meet. They force the fear out from them.

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DONALD HUDSON
Let's not talk about that...

Reminiscently, Harlan fingers PIANO SCALES.

HARLAN
Naah, I'm never afraid of tomorrow.
It's the impending regret of
yesterdays that frighten me.

Hudson CHUCKLES.

DONALD HUDSON
Come on. You're just stalling.
Tell me what piano lessons have to
do with flying.

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DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE/PHILADELPHIA, PA. - DAY

TITLE: PHILADELPHIA, 1909

Young Harlan, sits at the piano and practices his PIANO SCALES in a clean, modestly decorated, LIVING-ROOM.

HARLAN (V.O.)

I was always racking my brain to come up with some scheme to get the money I needed for flying lessons.

He stops. Picks up a NEWSPAPER ARTICLE from the piano top.

HARLAN (V.O. CONT'D)

I was bout 9 years old and there it was, right in front of me...

INSERT of NEWSPAPER ARTICLE:

...ORVILLE WRIGHT ARRIVES AT FORT MEYER, VA...WILL READY HIS FLYING MACHINE, "THE MILITARY FLYER"...

He clutches it tightly in his hands.

YOUNG HARLAN

(whines)

Momma, can I stop now? I've already practiced two times today.

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INT. KITCHEN

HARLAN'S MOTHER, mid 30's, with dark auburn hair, dressed in a house robe, busily washes dishes.

HARLAN'S MOTHER

Well how about making it three times. As I've told you many times, my son, "Three times are a charm..."

INT. LIVING-ROOM

HARLAN'S MOTHER (O.S.)

YOUNG HARLAN

...'three times are a charm.' ...'three times are a charm.'

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Young Harlan folds the paper. Slips it into his back pant pocket. Resumes practicing.

EXT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE

FOUR BURLY MEN appear at the screen door and Young Harlan, stops playing the piano. He presses his finger to his lips. Quietly waves them in.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (O.S.)
Practice, practice, practice!

INT. HOUSE/LIVING-ROOM

Harlan immediately breaks into a TUNE. Without stopping, he pops up from the bench. Smacks it away with the back of his legs. Stands. He signals the men to come in.

EXT. HOUSE

Peeking through the screen-door at Young Harlan, the Burly Men suspiciously glance at each other.

One of the men takes a CIGAR from his breast pocket. Bites off the butt. Spits it out. Pops the CIGAR in his mouth. He lights it as it dangles in his mouth. The CIGAR DANGLING MAN puffs a few times. Shrugs. Leads the others inside.

INT. LIVING-ROOM (Based on a true story)

The Cigar Dangling Man hands Young Harlan a WAD OF CASH.

CIGAR DANGLING MAN
What you going to do with all that dough, kid?

With one hand playing, Young Harlan takes the WAD with the other. He BLOWS AIR through the bills (as if semi counting it). Stops playing. Crams the wad in his front pocket. Pulls out the NEWSPAPER ARTICLE. Points to it.

YOUNG HARLAN
I'm going down south and get me some flying lessons from them Wright Brothers.

The Burly Men CHUCKLE as Young Harlan folds the paper. Puts it back in his pocket.

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HARLAN'S MOTHER (O.S.)
John Harlan! I don't hear anything!

Young Harlan puts a finger to his lips. Begs for silence. Climbs up onto the piano top. Suspended, he dangles his arms down. Plays again while his bare-feet dangle from the end.

CIGAR DANGLING MAN
(to the other men)
We're not paid to ask questions.

The Burly Men shake their heads. Gather around, lift, and move the piano out the door.

INT. KITCHEN

Harlan's Mother notices the PIANO SOUND SOFTENING.

HARLAN'S MOTHER
John?

She peeks her head through the door. Sees the piano gone.

INT. LIVING-ROOM

She rushes through the room.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
(panics)
Oh my Lord. What has that boy done now?

She goes to the screen-door. Peeks out. Sees the Burly Men carrying the piano toward a MOVING VAN and Young Harlan, lying on top, playing away. She SCREAMS. Runs after them.

EXT. HOUSE

She scares Harlan so much that he falls off the piano.

Harlan's Mother's makes several failed attempts to grab at her son; each time he manages to escape.

HARLAN'S MOTHER
John! This is not your piano yet!
You obviously don't understand the meaning of inheritance!

HARLAN
(dodging her, pleads)
I'm sorry, Momma! I need the money to learn to fly.
(MORE)
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HARLAN (cont'd)
 I'll pay it back, every penny.
 Then you can let me inherit that!

Frustrated, his mother tries to grab hold the piano instead.

HARLAN'S MOTHER
 Stop! This piano is not for sale!

CIGAR DANGLING MAN
 Ma'am, my customer's paid. I have
 the legal right to take it.

The Cigar Dangling Man pulls out PAPERWORK.

As Harlan's Mother ARGUES with the Cigar Dangling Man, Young Harlan backs away.

YOUNG HARLAN
 I'm sorry, Momma. I'm sorry!

He turns. Dashes off.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (O.S.)
 John? Where are you going? Come
 back here!

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Young Harlan's bare-feet pound as he runs.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (O.S. CONT'D)
 You'll be in bigger trouble if you
 make me run after you, mister!

Running SMALL BARE-FEET transform into LARGE BARE-FEET.

Harlan (the man) runs. Glances back. He sees his Mother's face transform into the Police Officer's face (from the Bonus March).

EXT. CAPITOL - DUSK

The Police Officer chases after Harlan.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (V.O.)	POLICE OFFICER
Stop! Don't make me run after you, mister!	Stop! Don't make me run after you, mister!

HARLAN'S MOTHER (V.O.)
 John! John! John Harlan!

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DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE STATION/WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

Slumped in a chair, Harlan stares at his bare-feet.

CHIEF O'RILEY (O.S.)
(bellows)
Harlan!

Harlan's head jerks up; his handcuffed hands rest on a large wooden desk before him.

Across the desk, sits CHIEF O'RILEY (40's). He BEATS a pen against a LARGE THICK LEDGER on the desk.

CHIEF O'RILEY (CONT'D)
We can do this quickly or we can
take all night. Your choice.

Harlan straightens up.

CHIEF O'RILEY (CONT'D)
So, as I was saying, left to my
discretion, your prior conviction
is enough to land you in jail.

HARLAN
But it was only one measly Liquor
Law violation, um...
(Based on a true story)

He glances at the NAME PLATE before him on the desk.

HARLAN (CONT'D) #989032
...Chief Kenneth O'Riley. Surely,
you can appreciate that I was
merely providing a service to the
hard-working, tax-paying, American
citizens.

The Chief stands. Paces.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
I don't need to tell you that times
are hard. And Lord knows, we all
need a little relief these days.

Harlan looks around at the officers in the room.

CHIEF O'RILEY
I don't think you understand the
seriousness of being caught 'red'
handed...literally.
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The officers SNICKER.

HARLAN

Now hold on. There's a perfect explanation; I tried to tell him...

Harlan gestures to the Police Officer (that chased him). The Police Officer turns away.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

I was only doodling on it. See, right there.

Harlan points to the PLANE SKETCHES in the paper's margin.

CHIEF O'RILEY

Right. You're some kind of war hero...a great flying ace.

HARLAN

No sir. I said that I flew with a great flying ace.

POLICE OFFICER

Yeah, right, Eddie Rickenbacker.

Several skeptical officers respond with SNICKERS.

O'Riley examines the drawings. Then he picks up the LARGE THICK LEDGER and abruptly SLAMS it onto the desk.

CHIEF O'RILEY

Listen, Harlan. I got no interest in whether you did or you didn't fly in the war over there. And furthermore, I got no interest in whether or not you had a one time citation for bootlegging; but what I do have a great interest in is whether or not you're all American.

Harlan's eyes boil. The Chief's eyes boil back while he opens his LEDGER.

CHIEF O'RILEY (CONT'D)

So, even though I could probably lock you up for a good while, I'm going to give you the choice. Back to the cell or sign here, stating you're not a communist, and put down the name of someone who is.

Harlan's eyes remain intense.

HARLAN

I'll sign my name cos I ain't a communist. But I don't know the name of anyone who is.

CHIEF O'RILEY

Jail cell it is.

The Police Officer grabs hold of Harlan but he doesn't budge.

HARLAN

You can't do this, I'm telling you I ain't no red.

CHIEF O'RILEY

Maybe some more time alone will trigger your memory...
(under his breath)
...fly boy.

Chief O'Riley frowns. Waves Harlan away.

CHIEF RILEY (CONT'D)

I would have figured you'd want to get home to that wife and daughter of yours. Get him out of here.

With his RIOT BATON, the Police Officer TAPS Harlan's chair.

(Based on a true story)
POLICE OFFICER

Don't make me drag you out of that chair, mister.

WGAW Registration #989032

INT. JAIL CELL/POLICE STATION - LATER

A RIOT BATON, held by an OLD GUARD, lightly CLACKS along the JAIL CELL BARS to the beat of RADIO MUSIC. He cuts his eyes at each man he passes until he comes to Harlan's cell.

Harlan, unaware of the Old Guard's presence, stares at the jail ceiling. Makes circular flying motions with his arm.

The Old Guard stops. Cocks his head. After a moment, he continues down to the small desk at the end of the corridor.

A YOUNG GUARD, seated at the desk, sees the Old Guard. Gets up. Gathers his belongings. Turns off the RADIO.

A SIMULTANEOUS GROAN erupts throughout the jail.

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OLD GUARD
What's with the...?

He mimics Harlan's arm motions.

YOUNG GUARD

One of the Bonus Marchers. I think
he was some kind of war flyer.

The Old Guard's eyebrows lift. He expels a "humph."

YOUNG GUARD (CONT'D)

Well, good night.

The Old Guard turns the radio back on.

SWING MUSIC plays. A SIMULTANEOUS APPROVAL ERUPTS.

The Old Guard sits. TAPS his RIOT BATON to the beat.

The Young Guard grins at him. Heads down the corridor.
Passes in front of Harlan's cell. Peeks in.

Harlan, with eyes closed, has both arms in front of him. His
hands fluidly finger out the MUSIC on an imaginary keyboard.

The Young Guard cocks his head. Glances back at the Old
Guard. Motions a crazy circle near his head. Then leaves as
Harlan is lost in the MUSIC.

DISSOLVE TO:

(Based on a true story)

INT. "GOOD TIMES" SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

TITLE: PHILADELPHIA, 1920

Through the window passed the neon sign "GOOD TIMES," Harlan,
21, in his military uniform, plays the PIANO.

Other young veterans in uniform surround him. They drink.
Mumble war stories. Harlan half-listens, LAUGHS some, but
mostly keeps his eye on a pretty dark-haired, big-eyed gal,
DOLLY SMITH, 20, that clears tables.

She makes her way around the room. Leans in between the men
at the piano to grab some glasses.

DOLLY SMITH

Closing time boys.

They MOAN. Slowly begin to disperse.

ONE GUY drops some coins on her tray.

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ONE GUY
 (speaks to Dolly)
 Thanks for the tune soldier...

ANOTHER GUY grabs him. Pulls him toward the door.

Then, One Guy abruptly stops. Blows a huge kiss to Harlan.

ONE GUY (CONT'D)
 Wait. I got that backwards.

ANOTHER GUY
 You're stinking drunk. Come on.

He helps him out the door.

Dolly sees Harlan staring at her.

She averts his stare. Glances at his near empty TIP BOWL. She takes the coins that One Guy put on her tray and throws them in. She gives him a WINK. Heads toward the bar.

Harlan jumps up. Grabs her apron tie. Pulls her backward to him. Harlan moves in close to her. INHALES DEEP, smelling her hair.

Dolly's face squints as Harlan turns her around to face him.

Harlan takes her tray. Sets it down. He sits on the bench, pulls her close, and looks up at her scrunched face.

Finally, she unscrunches her face. Raises her brows.

DOLLY SMITH
 Well?

He just gazes at her. She nervously TAPS her foot.

DOLLY SMITH (CONT'D)
 I'd think you'd be tired of looking at me by now since you've been watching my every move all night.

HARLAN
 How'd you know, unless you were looking at me all night.

A little grin appears on Dolly's face.

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DOLLY SMITH
 So, don't you want to know my name?
 Harlan shakes his head no.

Dolly reacts offended.

HARLAN

(gushes off)

You're Reathia Smith, but everyone calls you "Dolly." You just turned twenty in May. You were born here in Philly; you're a very talented seamstress by day and a waitress by night. But more importantly, you're still just a sweet little girl waiting to be kissed.

Mouth agape, Dolly cuts her eyes at a PLATINUM BLONDE WAITRESS standing near the bar. The Blonde Waitress flashes a guilty grin. Waves goodbye. Slips out the front door.

DOLLY SMITH

Well most of it's correct anyhow.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

HARLAN

Oh really. What part's not?

by

Dolly bats her eyes.

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HARLAN (CONT'D)

(gulps)

So you...you want to...to know anything about me?

(Based on a true story)

She sits next to him. Runs her fingers across the keys.

WGAW Registration #989032

DOLLY SMITH

Your name is John Noble Harlan.

HARLAN

You know my middle name?

DOLLY SMITH

You're 21, born here, you write your mother every week and they say you flew with Eddie Rickenbacker in the war. Your dream is to fly your own air mail planes, but what I really like...is the way you move those hands across these keys.

She slips her hand inside his hand on the keys.

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HARLAN

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Anything else?

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DOLLY SMITH

If you show up here tomorrow night,
I might be able to talk my boss,
Max Hassel, into giving you a job.

HARLAN

(shocked)
The 'Beer Baron' Max Hassel?
(he CHUCKLES)
And what if I'm interested in
something else around here?

He leans in as close as he can to her.

DOLLY SMITH

Well, you got this far anyhow.

She stands, her body an inch from his face. He MOANS. She turns. Casts her eyes over her shoulder at him.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"
DOLLY SMITH (CONT'D)

(sweetly whispers)
It's closing time, mister.

She goes to the BACK-ROOM doorway. Turns off the light.

Harlan, sits alone in the glow of the moonlight. He gets up. Goes to the front door. Then, stops.

(Based on a true story)
HARLAN

(under his breath)
Closing time mister.

WGAW Registration #989032

An idea illuminates his face. He heads to the BACK-ROOM.

INT. BACK-ROOM

Harlan enters the room lit by a single LAMP near Dolly. He watches as she removes her apron.

HARLAN

I'm leaving. But I just couldn't
go before I found out one thing.

Dolly looks at him through the mirror. Powders her nose. Reapplies her lipstick. The intensity increases. Harlan approaches her. She turns to face him. She lifts her eyebrows in anticipation.

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HARLAN

I realized I didn't catch your
middle name?

Dolly reaches behind her and finds the lamp cord.

DOLLY SMITH
(whispers)
Rose.

HARLAN
(whispers back)
I once made a wish upon a rose.

Harlan runs his hand down Dolly's arm to the lamp cord.

DOLLY SMITH
Did it come true?

They simultaneously pull the cord. The room goes dark.

MONTAGE:

--HARLAN MEETS MAX HASSEL "THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"
--HARLAN PLAYS PIANO; CUSTOMERS THROW TIPS IN JAR ON PIANO
--HARLAN AND DOLLY go to MOVIES
--CLIPS OF "THE SHEIK."
--SPEAKEASY CUSTOMERS DRINKING and sordid TRANSGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR
--PROHIBITION SIGNS and PROTESTS.

EXT. ALLEY/"GOOD TIMES" SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

Harlan rests against the wall. Smokes a cigarette.

MAX HASSEL (O.S.)
Even as bad as I need someone to
haul this stuff, you just drink my
profits away. You're fired!

A DOOR SLAMS. An ENGINE STARTS. REVS. A TRUCK speeds past Harlan and out of the alley. From around the corner, MAX HASSEL appears. Sees Harlan.

MAX HASSEL
Hey, kid. You're that fly boy that
plays my piano.

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HARLAN

Yes sir. I'm Harlan, sir, John
Harlan. I just finished my break.

Harlan puts out his cigarette. Shakes Max's hand.

MAX HASSEL

Break? I got a break for you
Harlan. How'd you like to be
making something more than tips?
My main man, Buddy, is in recent
need of a driver to make some
special deliveries.

HARLAN

Sounds risky.

MAX HASSEL

I'd think you'd know about
risk...being a soldier and all.
Son, it's a walk in the park.
Never had no trouble before.

Max straightens his collar. Flashes a big grin.

MONTAGE:

--HARLAN DRIVES THE BOOTLEG TRUCK AT NIGHT

(Based on a true story)

--A HAPPY CUSTOMER RECEIVES A BOOZE SHIPMENT; SLIPS AN
ENVELOPE TO BUDDY AND WAVES BYE TO HARLAN AS THEY DRIVE AWAY

WGAW Registration #989032

--MAX ENTHUSIASTICALLY COUNTS MONEY

--MAX SHAKES HARLAN'S HAND and PAYS OUT HARLAN'S CUT

--COPS CHASE HARLAN IN A TRUCK

--HARLAN PULLS TRUCK OFF ROAD, HIDES IN BUSHES; COPS SPEED BY

INT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Standing behind his mother, Harlan puts a SPARKLING NECKLACE
around her neck. She turns. Kisses him on the cheek.

HARLAN'S MOTHER

You shouldn't have, son.

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She turns back. Admires the necklace in the mirror.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
Those piano lessons are paying off
after all.

Harlan turns away with a guilty expression.

MONTAGE (CONT'D):

--POLICE RAID SPEAKEASY

--POLICE HANDCUFF HARLAN & BUDDY as they step out from the
back of the TRUCK

--HARLAN STANDS BEFORE JUDGE IN COURTROOM

--JUDGE SENTENCES HARLAN TO "ONE MONTH IN JAIL"

--JUDGE'S GAVEL BANGS

--DOLLY FAINTS IN COURTROOM

--HARLAN'S MOTHER, CATCHES DOLLY, ANGRILY EYES HER SON, AND
SHAKES HER HEAD IN SHAME.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

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EXT. YARD/PHILADELPHIA COUNTY JAIL - DAY

A short perky man, ROSCO, 40's, in a JAIL UNIFORM approaches
Harlan and BUDDY, 28, in JAIL UNIFORMS, who sit and smoke.
(Based on a true story)

ROSCO

May I?

WGAW Registration #989032

Harlan hands Rosco a cigarette.

ROSCO (CONT'D)

Thanks. I hear you're short-
timers, in for bootlegging, me too.

Rosco motions to Buddy for a light. Buddy begrudgingly hands
him a shiny SILVER LIGHTER.

ROSCO (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Rosco casually slips Buddy's LIGHTER into his pocket.

ROSCO (CONT'D)

(to Harlan)

I also hear you can fly planes.
Learned in the war. I'm a vet too.
Didn't fly but...

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Buddy gestures for his lighter back.

ROSCO (CONT'D)
Oh right, sorry, about that,
Buddy...is it? I'm Rosco. And
you're, Johnny? It's a pleasure.

They shake hands.

ROSCO (CONT'D)
So any ol' ways, I was bringing
this up because I heard you were in
the market for a plane. And I
thought, maybe I could help you,
maybe you could help me. You see,
my boss, Mr. Siegel, needs to get a
special shipment out to California.

Buddy cuts his eyes at Harlan and Harlan SIGHS.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM/PHILADELPHIA JAIL - LATER

Harlan, Buddy and Rosco sort dirty clothes.

ROSCO (CONT'D)
Well, Bugsy's thinking about
expanding operations out there one
day but what he really wants is to
eliminate a bit of a hindrance.
Specifically, that loser, Waxy
Gordon, of the Philly operation.
Though you might not go spreading
that around in here, considering
the clientele, present company
excluded. But the only way to pull
it off successfully is...

INT. CARPENTRY SHOP/JAIL

In assembly line fashion, Buddy glues, Rosco nails, and
Harlan clamps wood members together.

ROSCO (CONT'D)
See, follow my logic...a truck
takes too long and a train's too
risky. However, a plane would be
ideal. And that's just what Mr.
Siegel said. His exact words to me
was, "a plane would be ideal,
Rosco, ideal." But we ain't got
one.

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(MORE)

ROSCO (CONT'D)

But then he thought of a way we could get one but then we don't got no one who can fly the thing. So then, we were just going to cause a huge accident and blow up the booze and thus, the whole operation. But then Waxy would know for sure it was Buggy, though Buggy don't really care; he'd still rather keep Waxy guessing. Now look it, see, that's where I was thinking you come in, Johnny.

Harlan rolls his eyes.

INT. KITCHEN/JAIL

IN-MATES travel down the CHOW LINE. Working behind the counter, Buddy slops mashed potatoes on a plate. Hands it to Rosco, who drops a meatloaf square on it. Hands it to Harlan who places a roll on top. Hands it back to an In-mate.

ROSCO (CONT'D)

So to make a long story longer, and incidentally, the longer the story the better, I think...

Both Harlan and Buddy roll their eyes.

(Based on a true story)
ROSCO (CONT'D)

...the plan is to steal...
(looks around, changes tactic)
...to procure 'the product' over time, after hours, then transport it to the point of exodus and "wing" it...
(winks at Harlan)
...out to the West Coast. It's ideal. An ideal plan. I think I'll call it, "the plane plan."

Rosco stops. Complete silence. Buddy looks around.

BUDDY

What was that? Silence? Huh!

Rosco eagerly jabs Harlan in the side.

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INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

In the dark, on the top bunk, Harlan stares at the ceiling.

BUDDY (O.S.)
You awake?

HARLAN
Yeah.

Buddy, propped up on his pillow in the bottom bunk, flips his silver lighter around in his hand.

BUDDY
Don't trust that guy Rosco. I don't think he'll ever show you the inside of a cockpit. (beat) Have you thought anymore about going in with Charlie and me?

HARLAN
Well, I do like the idea of having a respectable cafe but, no offense Buddy, it's not where I see myself. Besides, I don't have enough money.

Buddy springs up from the bottom bunk.

(Based on a true story)
BUDDY
Face it Harlan, if you keep on this path trying to earn the money for your plane, the inside of a jail, not a cockpit, is all you're ever going to see.

Buddy settles back into his bunk.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
Besides, you have more money than I do. Did I mention that Charlie and I agreed whoever puts in the most money gets to name the cafe?

Harlan beats his pillow and repositions himself.

HARLAN
I got to get some sleep, now.
Dolly's coming to visit tomorrow.

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BUDDY
Yeah, sure. Dolly...another reason to think about what I said.

INT. VISITING ROOM/JAIL - DAY

Harlan curiously watches an uncomfortable Dolly.

DOLLY SMITH

So, did I tell you, your Mom got me a seamstress position where she works? I really like her.

HARLAN

Yeah? Well, I really like you.

DOLLY SMITH

(angrily)

Oh really. Well that's great.

HARLAN

Okay then, I don't like you.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

DOLLY SMITH

You may like me but how much is that? Really? As much as playing the piano?

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HARLAN

Yeah; I like you more than that.

DOLLY SMITH

Oh terrific. I'm flattered. (beat) How 'bout flying a plane? Do you like me more than a plane?

WGAW Registration #989032

HARLAN

Dolly, what's wrong? You're not yourself.

DOLLY SMITH

Well you got that right. I'm not my-self...I'm actually more like a we-self!

HARLAN

You've definitely lost me, now. You're talking crazy and you're making me crazy, and Dolly, a jail is not a good place to be crazy.

DOLLY SMITH

Typical. Ask a man a few serious questions and poof! They're lost. No where to be found.

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Harlan leans close to Dolly and tries to calm her.

HARLAN

Hey, hey, hey. I've only a couple of days left and then, we'll be as crazy as you want to be.

DOLLY SMITH

Okay. Okay.

HARLAN

But I am crazy. I was saving it 'til later, but, I'm crazy. I'm crazy in love with you.

DOLLY SMITH

You love me? That's good to hear.

HARLAN

I knew it. That's why you're making us crazy. You just wanted me to say it. So, you love me?

DOLLY SMITH

Yes. I do. But I'm not making us crazy because of that.

Harlan moves in as close to her as he can.

(Based on a true story)

HARLAN

(whispers)

Where's my rose? I want to make a wish. As soon as I'm out, I want us to be certifiably crazy in love.

DOLLY SMITH

Well I can already tell you this wish's outcome. As soon as you're out, we'll be crazy alright, because...we're pregnant.

Shock washes over Harlan's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE:

--HARLAN'S SHOCKED FACE TURNS TO BEET-RED HAPPINESS.

--HARLAN AND DOLLY LEAVE CHURCH IN A SHOWER OF RICE.

--BUDDY and CHARLIE SHAKE HARLAN'S HAND; KISS DOLLY

--HARLAN'S MOTHER KISSES HARLAN

--HARLAN AND DOLLY JUMP IN BACKSEAT; CAR PULLS AWAY FROM CHURCH; HARLAN PLOPS DOLLY DOWN, KISSING HER.

--SWEATY DOLLY SMILES UP AT HARLAN WHO HOLDS BABY GIRL

--HARLAN READS BIRTH CERTIFICATE, "REATHIA ELIZABETH HARLAN; JULY 24, 1923 as BABY KICKS AND CRIES IN NURSERY."

--DOLLY TAKES HER SAVINGS FROM BANK; HANDS IT OVER TO HARLAN.

--HARLAN'S MOTHER HOCKS JEWELS; GIVES CASH TO HARLAN.

--HARLAN, BUDDY, and CHARLIE POSE FOR PHOTOGRAPH in front of a small cafe SIGN: "THE HARLAN CAFE."

--The Harlan Café GRAND OPENING INVITATION:

INSERT of Invitation:

--You are cordially invited to attend the GRAND OPENING HARLAN'S CAFE, 1814 Market Street, DECEMBER 13, 1928

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INT. HARLAN CAFE - NIGHT

Buddy on stage, announces the acts in microphone.

(Based on a true story)

BUDDY

For our grand opening show...we have...Harlan's Marine Orchestra...

WGAW Registration #989032

Harlan sits at piano, plays background music, waves with one hand at PACKED HOUSE, then gestures to BAND MEMBERS, who take a bow.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

...the NORMANDIE TRIO...the boys who made Radio famous! JACK THOMPSON, the Silver Voiced Tenor and JACK BAILEY, West Philadelphia's Song Bird!

--HARLAN CAFE CUSTOMERS APPLAUD; DOLLY, CARRYING BABY REA, WALKS AROUND CAFE GREETING CUSTOMERS.

--STOCKMARKET CRASH HEADLINES, 1929.

--THE HARLAN CAFÉ NEARLY EMPTY.

--The NATION IN A DEPRESSION HEADLINES.

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--SEQUENCE END: HARLAN'S MOTHER GREETES HARLAN, DOLLY, and REA (6), AS THEY CARRY LUGGAGE, LAMPS, POSSESSIONS INTO HER HOME.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BACK OFFICE/HARLAN CAFE - DAY

Buddy and Charlie lean over Harlan's shoulder as he calculates, then writes RED NUMBERS in cafe LEDGER.

BUDDY

So it's settled then. We bring in a fourth party.

CHARLIE

I think it's best. Especially, while it's still worth something.

Harlan DRAWS A PLANE in the book's margin with his RED PEN.

HARLAN

Think they can buy me out?

BUDDY

Not that plane again, Harlan.

CHARLIE

Man, you don't want to sell out your share. You'll never get your full return right now.

There is a long silence.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Alright, I'll take care of it.

Charlie leaves. Buddy paces. Harlan calmly sketches.

BUDDY

Does Dolly know what you're doing? Have you even told her you're going on the Bonus March to D.C.?

HARLAN

Just make sure she gets my share.

BUDDY

How is it going to be enough? Your share and then the bonus money... You're the bookkeeper; tell me.

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HARLAN
It's a start.

BUDDY
I'm your friend Harlan and I'm
telling you, you have no clue what
you've got and what you're risking.

Harlan's eyes dare Buddy to continue.

HARLAN
Don't talk to me about risks.

Buddy goes to the door. Stands with his back to Harlan.

BUDDY
You just don't get it. There's no
glory, no flying colors, not for
average guys like us. (beat) Is it
worth ending up all alone?

BUDDY leaves.

by

Harlan glances up at a FRAMED FAMILY PICTURE of Dolly,
himself, and Rea (6) next to a boat on a beach. He becomes
agitated. SCRIBBLES RED all over the book's page until it is
one LARGE RED BLOTCH.

(Based on a true story)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

WGAW Registration #989032

The back of a RED-HAIRED MAN stands in front of Harlan's
Mother. In complete disbelief, she peers at the Red-haired
Man through the slightly ajar SCREEN DOOR.

HARLAN'S MOTHER
You're mistaken, mister.

He hands a receipt to her.

INSERT of RECEIPT:
Harlan Cafe Invoice

HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
(reads)
"Piano Paid in Full? Signed, John
Harlan?" Oh my Lord. Not again.

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She SIGHS. Opens the door. Leads him into the house.

INT. LIVING-ROOM - LATER

Harlan's Mother pours coffee into a CUP held by the Red-haired Man.

Dolly, sitting beside him, hand sews a garment. Sitting at the end of the coffee table, REA (8), colors a picture. She gets up and hands it to Dolly.

HARLAN'S MOTHER

You sure you boys don't want a cup?

TWO OFFICERS stand on the other side of the room.

OFFICER #1

No thank you, Ma'am.

Just then, the front door opens. Harlan enters the LIVING-ROOM, his back to the Police Officers, unaware.

Dolly and Rea go to Harlan. He kisses Rea, but when he tries to kiss Dolly, she pulls away. She leads Rea out the room.

HARLAN'S MOTHER

I am sick of this. You care more about your own needs than your family's needs. You become more and more like your father everyday.

(Based on a true story)

Harlan responds as if she has ripped his heart in half.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

And Lord knows what else you're doing. And you are planning something; I feel it in my bones. It ain't right. And you were taught to know that! I don't know where you think you're heading but I know that jail's where it'll end. My granddaughter deserves better.

(she musters courage)

I want you, *just you*, out of here."

The Red-haired man uncomfortably nods to Harlan.

HARLAN

Momma, please. Let me explain.

Stacy W. Thornton

OFFICER #2

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That's what we're here for.

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Harlan jerks around. Sees the Two Officers staring at him. He shrinks. Looks at his mother. She turns away.

HARLAN

There's no problem officers. I got the money upstairs. I'll get it.

Harlan leaves. They wait in silence. The Two Officers' listen to Harlan's FOOTSTEPS with their eyes until the FOOTSTEPS stop.

INT. BEDROOM/HOUSE

Dolly, eyes glazed, sits on the foot of the bed. She combs Rea's hair. Harlan frantically tosses things from the dresser drawer.

HARLAN

Honey, I've got to do this. It's the veterans due; the government promised us this bonus.

He turns to her. Sees her sour expression.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

And it's for the future vets, too.

DOLLY SMITH

(smugly sarcastic)

Don't think for one minute I don't know what it's really for...your plane, always first and foremost.

His jaw tightens. He continues searching in the drawer.

HARLAN

As soon as the bill is passed, I'll be back. You'll see. The Bonus money will be just what we need.

He finds the WAD OF CASH. Goes to Dolly. Leans over to kiss her. She pulls away.

DOLLY SMITH

What we need is you.

HARLAN

Wish us luck.

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DOLLY SMITH
 Sorry, I'm fresh out of roses.

Her comment sends a pain through him. His eyes squint. Rea leaps up. Grabs Harlan with both arms. Holds tight. Pain emerges from his eyes as he holds his daughter.

As Harlan kisses Rea, Dolly sees deep into his tell-tale watery eyes. Her body quivers. She quietly GASPS.

INT. LIVINGROOM

The Two Officers become fidgety, and their suspicions rise.

OFFICER #1
 Ma'am, may we go and check...?

He gestures out the room. Harlan's Mother nods.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

INT. BEDROOM/HOUSE

by

The Two Officer's enter the room. Dolly somberly rocks Rea in her lap. Almost "zombie-like," she strokes Rea's hair.

REA
 (sobs)
 Pop-Pop, Pop-Pop.
 (Based on a true story)

The Officer's look around. See an OPEN WINDOW with CURTAINS FLAPPING in the breeze.

WGAW Registration #989032

OFFICER #2
 Damn it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

TITLE: WASHINGTON D.C.

CURTAINS FLAP in the window behind Chief O'Riley's desk.

Harlan stares out it. Leans forward to the roses in a vase on the desk. SNIFFS.

The Chief makes his way around the desk to Harlan. Inserts a key into Harlan's handcuffs. Removes them.

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CHIEF O'RILEY

Just put down the name of the fella
that gave you that communist paper.

He places the pen in front of Harlan.

CHIEF O'RILEY (CONT'D)

Then, you're free to go on home to
that sweet little wife and kid of
yours in good ol' Philly P.A.

Harlan rubs his wrists. Stares at the LARGE LEDGER on the
desk. He lifts his leg. Rubs a DEEP SCAR on his ankle.

CHIEF O'RILEY (CONT'D)

That's a nasty looking scar. Maybe
I can manage to spare an extra pair
of nice new boots. Size ten?

Harlan picks up the pen. Signs his name.

HARLAN

All I know is the name of the guy
who gave me the paper. I don't
know if he was a communist or not.

The Chief twists the ledger around, checks it, then smiles.

CHIEF O'RILEY

You've done your country proud
today, John Harlan. Whether you're
a war flying hero or not, you are
certainly a 'hero' in my book.

The Chief SLAMS the book closed; it ECHOES in Harlan's head.

EXT. POLICE STATION/WASHINGTON D.C. - LATER

The door SLAMS behind him. Harlan kicks his boots on the
ground. Admires them. Just then, a man grabs him by the
arm.

ROSCO

Hey, it's the flyer! Johnny
Harlan, right? I figured you'd be
at the March. Remember me; Rosco!

Harlan cocks his head.

ROSCO (CONT'D)

Hey, you ever marry that gal?
How'd that café work out?

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Harlan shakes his hand.

HARLAN
Things don't always work out the
way I plan.

ROSCO
The café, the girl, or the flying?

Harlan just shakes his head. A big grin appears on Rosco.

ROSCO (CONT'D)
Well, today's your lucky day.

MONTAGE:

--ROSCO INTRODUCES HARLAN TO BUGSY SIEGEL, THEY SHAKE HANDS

--ROSCO AND HARLAN IN WAREHOUSE; ROSCO says, "We're still ironing out the details of the Plane Plan so you'll have to drive for now." HARLAN reacts, "That wasn't part of the deal, Rosco."

by

--HARLAN BEGRUDGINGLY GETS IN A TRUCK AND DRIVES.

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--HARLAN CHASED BY COPS; GETS AWAY.

--HARLAN CHASED BY WAXY GORDON'S THUGS; GETS AWAY.

(Based on a true story)

INT. WAREHOUSE/PHILADELPHIA - NIGHT

A TRUCK SQUEALS into the warehouse. The garage DOOR quickly closes behind it. The truck comes to an immediate stop.

A BIG OAF-LOOKING GUY rolls up the truck's door. Hops in.

Rosco, with CLIPBOARD in hand, stands next to the opening. Big-Oaf COUNTS the barrels inside.

Harlan gets out of the DRIVER'S SIDE of the truck. SLAMS the door. Rushes up to Rosco.

HARLAN
I've had it, working for nothing,
cops shooting at me, Waxy Gordon's
thugs chasing me. If they don't
kill me, the cops will, or worse
Bugsy.

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ROSCO
Not now Johnny; we've a deadline.

Harlan grabs Rosco's CLIPBOARD. HEAVES it across the room. Big-Oaf stops counting.

HARLAN

Deadline. You don't know the meaning of a deadline.

Rosco sits on the back of the truck.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

Deadline means something is going to happen. Nothing's going to happen. I'm not waiting for nothing anymore.

Rosco sees Bugsy Siegel approaching Harlan from behind.

ROSCO

Um, Harlan.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

HARLAN

Don't speak to me. I don't want to hear any more about deadlines and especially "the plane plan."

ROSCO

Johnny, you sound like you don't like me much anymore? Well you're going to like me when I tell you, as a matter fact, the plane plan...

HARLAN

Oh, please. It's been over a year of you talking about the plane plan. Me waiting and working for nothing but room and board while you talk and talk about the plane plan. No more talk, Rosco. The plane now! Or some serious cash.

ROSCO

But what I'm trying to tell ya...

HARLAN

No! Where in the hell is my plane?

BUGSY SIEGEL

Well, it's at the Philly Community Airport waiting for its pilot.

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Harlan eases around to see Bugsy standing behind him.

BUGSY SIEGEL (CONT'D)
 And of course the last of this
 shipment, if that's okay with you.

Harlan stands with mouth agape.

BUGSY SIEGEL (CONT'D)
 I guess you would say that the
 deadline's finally here.

Bugsy hands an envelope to Rosco.

BUGSY SIEGEL (CONT'D)
 (to Rosco)
 The slip to the plane as promised;
 have him on his way by sunrise. We
 won't worry with what's left at
 Waxy's place.
 (to Harlan)
 I'm a man who keeps his side of the
 bargain.

BUGSY SIEGEL (CONT'D)
 You've done a great job, Harlan.
 It's a shame you're going to miss
 all the fun when Waxy realizes his
 booze is gone. Shall we say his
 operation's all *dried up*?

Rosco CHUCKLES. Big Oaf SNORTS. (Based on a true story)

BIG OAF
 Good one, Mr. Siegel. WGM Registration #989032

Bugsy shakes Harlan's hand.

BUGSY SIEGEL
 That's all I wanted. Taking the
 booze is just "icing on the cake"
 for me. Better, it's "salt on the
 wound" for Waxy. Hell, it doesn't
 even matter, now!

Bugsy turns to leave. Stops.

BUGSY SIEGEL (CONT'D)
 Oh, one more thing Harlan.

Bugsy reaches in his coat. Harlan cringes. Bugsy pulls out
 a GOLD-PLATED FLASK.

BUGSY SIEGEL (CONT'D)
 A token...for the delay.
 (he taps on the flask)
 My initials. Maybe it'll be worth
 something one day.

He hands it to Harlan. Pats him on the back. Walks away.

HARLAN
 Thank you Mr. Siegel.

BUGSY SIEGEL
 Have a safe flight, Captain.

Harlan shrinks. Sits down next to Rosco.

ROSCO
 I was trying to tell you. You
 wouldn't listen, would you? You,
 Mr. Tight-lips, trying to compete
 with ol' Rosco? I'm the King
 Talker around here...nobody can
 talk like ol' Rosco...ain't that
 right, Big Oaf?

BIG OAF
 You the King Talker, Rosco.

ROSCO
 Yeah, I'm the King Talker.

HARLAN
 Captain. Mr. Siegel called me
 Captain.

ROSCO
 You like ol' Rosco again don't you?
 Hey! Johnny's the Captain and I'm
 the King.

BIG OAF
 So, then, what am I?

ROSCO
 You're the Big Oaf.

They LAUGH.

Stacy W. Thornton
 EXT. AIRFIELD - DAWN
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 Harlan inspects the plane for take off.
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ROSCO (CONT'D)
 Didn't I say you'd like me again?

Harlan takes a moment to admire the plane.

ROSCO (CONT'D)
 She's a pretty thing, isn't she?

He hands Harlan Bugsy's envelope but doesn't let go.

ROSCO (CONT'D)
 So, in a couple of days, you'll get
 the booze to the temporary storage
 I've set up in California. Call me
 when you're at your half-way point
 and I'll give you your contact man.

Harlan yanks the envelope from him.

HARLAN
 Once it's there, it's over, Rosco.
 I'm done with it.

ROSCO
 Out and clear.

Harlan stares at the envelope. Then, lunges. Hugs and gives
 Rosco a big SMOOCH.

Rosco's eyes bulge. He swats at Harlan. Harlan dodges him.
 Hurries onto the plane.

WGAW Registration #989032

EXT. PLANE COCKPIT/AIRFIELD

The plane drastically weaves down the runway.

HARLAN
 (yells out)
 It's okay; just a few jitters.
 It's been awhile. No problem.

ROSCO
 (prays under his breath)
 Lord, I hope that kid knows what
 the hell he's doing.

INT. PLANE COCKPIT

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 Harlan BANGS an instrument panel to release a STUCK NEEDLE.
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HARLAN
 (prays under his breath)
 Please Lord, let me know what the
 hell I'm doing.

EXT. PLANE

The plane taxes down the runway. Picks up speed. Suddenly jerks up. Looses speed. Drops back down.

INT. PLANE

Harlan fumbles with the controls in the cockpit.

EXT. PLANE

The plane lurches forward. Rolls off the runway. It bumps over the mounds of grass.

by

INT. PLANE

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Harlan bounces around in the cockpit.

EXT. PLANE

(Based on a true story)

The plane moves back on the runway. Accelerates. Jerks up and down (like a car with hydraulic shocks). It suddenly turns. Heads back toward Rosco and Big Oaf.

EXT. AIR FIELD

ROSCO

Correct me if I'm wrong but didn't he say, and I quote, 'I'm a *flyer*'?

BIG OAF

Maybe you misunderstood. Perhaps he said, 'I'm a *liar*'.

EXT. PLANE

Harlan turns the plane around. Heads toward the runway. As he passes Rosco and Big Oaf, he pokes his head out.

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HARLAN

(yells)

It's been awhile. Things have changed a bit. No problem.

The plane accelerates with great speed down the runway.

Rosco and Big Oaf cross their fingers.

Finally, the plane lifts off. Soars in the sky. Harlan circles the plane above the men below.

Suddenly, the plane loses altitude. Dives. Rosco and Big Oaf flee from the plane's path, then, drop down. The plane misses them by only several yards.

INT. PLANE

Harlan pulls up. A huge grin appears.

EXT. PLANE

by

The plane soars up. Harlan's LAUGH floats on the wind.

EXT. AIRFIELD

Rosco and Big Oaf get up. Brush off. Mutter a few indiscernible profanities. Head toward their car.

WGAW Registration #989032

ROSCO

You know, Big Oaf, that man flew with Eddie Rickenbacker.

BIG OAF

Oh? Well sure. It's obvious.

Rosco stops. Watches as the plane grows smaller in the sky.

ROSCO

Sure hope the kid makes it okay.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT/PLANE - DUSK

TITLE: NEARING TOPEKA KANSAS

Harlan's face contorts.
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HARLAN

Yooowwwhhh.

Helplessly, Harlan glides the plane in a direct course towards a HUGE FOREST OF TREES.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

I should've known Kansas was a bad half-way point.

With one hand, he quickly TUGS on his seat belt. The trees rapidly fill his view.

HARLAN

Even if you're not drinking, Topeka and booze just don't mix.

The plane CRASHES through the THICK FOREST spewing and breaking off branches, tree leaves, and plane parts.

At the edge of the Forest, the plane finally settles. Precariously dangles inverted in the trees' thick branches.

Upside down, a relieved Harlan, SIGHS. He turns his head sideways to see the main highway only a hundred feet away. Then, the plane CREAKS and slips. Settles again.

Harlan carefully strives to wiggle free then suddenly, then there's a LOUD BOOM, a GROAN. The plane's engine catches on FIRE.

HARLAN

That can't be good.

The plane drops, speeding down the tree trunk to the ground.

EXT. ROADSIDE/TOPEKA KANSAS - LATER

In the PITCH BLACK of the night, the SPEW of a FIRE EXTINGUISHER puts out the FLAMES of the plane's engine.

The sudden flood of a FLASHLIGHT illuminates THICK SMOKE as the sound of COUGHING reveals Harlan. He peers at the plane.

It's nose is buried in the dirt. The tail rests against a partially downed LARGE TREE.

HARLAN

(doubtful)

I can fix it.

In the distance a CAR MOTOR approaches.

Harlan turns. BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS shine on Harlan's oil and dirt smudged face.

He shades his eyes. Makes out a brand new SAND-COLORED FORD V-8 SEDAN. It stops inches from him. IDLES. The motor shuts down. Harlan cautiously approaches. Peeks in. Shines his FLASHLIGHT inside.

INT./EXT. FORD - NIGHT

The BARREL of a PISTOL and RIFLE point directly at him. At the other end of the guns are CLYDE BARROW and BONNIE PARKER.

HARLAN

My eyesight must be going. You two look like...

CLYDE

(coolly to Bonnie)
I'm thinking trade, Bonnie darling.
(congenially to Harlan)
I, Clyde Barrow, will spare your life, for you...for you...mister...

Clyde waves his hand, soliciting for Harlan's name.

HARLAN

Oh. Harlan, John Harlan.

CLYDE

Thank-you...for you, Mr. John Harlan, to give me, something good.

BONNIE

You mean to give us something good. Right sugar?

CLYDE

You know it, darling sweet cakes!

HARLAN

(excitedly)
Um, Mr. Barrow, Ms. Parker, I do! I've got something good! Wait right here.

EXT. ROADSIDE

Harlan rushes toward the plane. GUNS COCK. He freezes in his tracks. Slowly turns.

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HARLAN (CONT'D)

Understood. But I'm sure, as you are well aware, I certainly ain't going no where.

With guns pointed at him, they get out the car. They take a moment to study the mangled plane that still SPEWS SMOKE.

They UNCOCK their guns.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

Thank you. Be right back...Sir, Ma'am.

BONNIE

This place smells like a chug-a-lug party's been going on.

EXT. FORD/ROADSIDE, LATER

Bonnie peers into the plane. Sees broken bottles. Cracked crates all over, inside and outside the plane.

She sets down her gun and purse. She slips off her FUZZY CARDIGAN SWEATER. Spreads it on the ground. Sits down on it next to the plane.

Harlan and Clyde place the last of the BOOZE that survived the crash on a BOOZE CRATE MOUND in the back of the Ford.

Clyde shakes Harlan's hand.

CLYDE

Nice doing business with you, Mr. Harlan. Come on, sugar cakes, let's motor.

BONNIE

But I just sat down, Clyde, honey.

HARLAN

Oh sure, you gotta go. Well, the pleasure was all mine.

Bonnie gets up from sitting next to the plane.

BONNIE

Like hell.

Harlan watches as she brushes off her skirt.

Suddenly, Clyde points his gun directly in Harlan's face.

HARLAN

Mr. Barrow, sir, we had a deal.

CLYDE

Make no mistake; Mr. Harlan, I'm good to my word. This here's a warning; don't get any ideas to sic your gangster friends on me.

HARLAN

I wouldn't dream of it. Believe me I'm done with that. I'll prove it. If I may?

Clyde sizes him up, relaxes some, but keeps his gun on him.

Harlan slowly reaches in his breast pocket. Takes out the GOLD-PLATED FLASK. It glistens in the moonlight.

BONNIE

Oh my! "THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

HARLAN

It was a gift from Bugsy. Look there, his initials.

Harlan hands it to Bonnie. She holds it up. Admires it.

BONNIE

Why I'll be! Look it, Clyde.

Clyde takes the FLASK from Bonnie.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Now, Harlan why would you do a fool thing and give that away?

HARLAN

Let's just say it's a token of my appreciation to you. If you hadn't taken this booze; I'd surely be headed back to jail and I ain't got the stomach for it.

Clyde LAUGHS, puts his arm around Harlan's shoulders. Walks him toward the FORD.

BONNIE

Oh Harlan, you poor sweet thing. It's not the going to jail part you got to worry about. It's the breaking out part that's the key.

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CLYDE

And it's a simple thing, Harlan.

Clyde gets in the driver's seat.

BONNIE

Whoops, I forgot my things.

Bonnie hurries back to the plane.

CLYDE

Follow the water, Harlan. Just follow the water.

Dumbfounded, Harlan shakes his head pretending to understand.

Clyde makes a TOILET FLUSHING SOUND and motion. Then starts the engine. Bonnie skips up with her gun and purse. Climbs into the car through the window. Sits on its sill.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

CLYDE (CONT'D)

You got everything, sweet cakes?

Bonnie cuts her eyes back at the plane. Grins at Harlan. She BLOWS A KISS to him. Slips into her seat.

BONNIE

Let's motor!

Clyde flicks a quick wave with his hand at Harlan. The Ford speeds off into the night.

WGAW Registration #989032

EXT. PLANE/ROADSIDE

Alone and stranded, Harlan bunkers down next to his plane.

He notices on the ground, Bonnie's CARDIGAN SWEATER. He picks it up. Wraps it around himself. Then, notices a small SACK lying on the ground.

He digs into it. Pulls a WAD of CASH out. He BLOWS through the BILLS. Then, clutches it close under the sweater.

HARLAN

I knew she had the hotsy-totsies for me.

He stares at the MANGLED PLANE beside him.

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HARLAN (CONT'D)

You're ugly, but you're mine.

A huge smile appears. His eyes close.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Gritting his teeth, Harlan works on his MANGLED PLANE.

EXT. AIRFIELD - NIGHT

A filthy Harlan continues to work on a less mangled plane.

INT. WAREHOUSE/PHILADELPHIA - DAY

Rosco receives a TELEGRAM.

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY "THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

Harlan works on plane, stops, then approvingly nods his head.

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INT. WAREHOUSE/PHILADELPHIA - DAY

Rosco reads TELEGRAM.

INSERT (Telegram): (Based on a true story)

"PLANE CRASHED...BOOZE
DESTROYED...PILOT OKAY" #989032

ROSCO

That's one lucky kid; sad he
doesn't know it.

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Harlan pulls from the sack (Bonnie left him) a WAD OF CASH
and counts out BILLS to a RENTAL AGENT.

The Rental Agent beams a huge smile. Hands over KEYS.

In the background, barely visible, is a junky TRAILER OFFICE
with an OLD SIGN that vicariously dangles over its door.

As Harlan approaches, the sign falls to the ground.

He turns to the Rental Agent just in time to see his car
speed off into the distance.

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Harlan shrugs. Steps over the sign. Heads for the Trailer.

INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE/PHILADELPHIA

ROSCO shows TELEGRAM to BUGSY.

ROSCO

This came from our fly boy. Seems
he had a little trouble.

BUGSY SIEGEL

Tough break. Eh, just as well.
Now that prohibition's over,
California will just have to wait.

Rosco turns to leave.

BUGSY SIEGEL (CONT'D)

Hey Rosco. How about working me up
another "ideal" plan?

Rosco happily nods.

by

Stacy W. Thornton

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Harlan polishes the surface of the plane as it transforms
into a SHINY PLANE.

(Based on a true story)

Harlan steps back, smiles, and in the SHINY PLANE'S
REFLECTION: A SIGN becomes visible, "HARLAN AIR PARCEL."

WGAW Registration #989032

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAILER OFFICE/SO. CALIFORNIA - DAY

The SIGN, "HARLAN AIR PARCEL" hangs above a freshly painted
TRAILER OFFICE surrounded by PALM TREES on a SMALL AIRFIELD.

TITLE: "CALIFORNIA"

Harlan peeks out the Trailer Office WINDOW. Admires his
SHINY PLANE sitting in the sunshine on the runway.

His TWO MAN CREW loads MAIL PACKAGES and BOXES from a TRUCK
onto the plane.

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INT. TRAILER OFFICE

Harlan polishes the face of a PLAQUE that exhibits a PICTURE OF BONNIE & CLYDE. He re-hangs it on the wall.

INSERT (PLAQUE inscription):

"In Honor of the Generous Donors of
Harlan Air Parcel...
Bonnie & Clyde."

Next to the PLAQUE hangs a NEWSPAPER, dated May 23, 1934. It displays a PHOTO of Bonnie & Clyde's bullet-holed sand-colored FORD SEDAN (the same one he saw them in).

Next to it, on a hook hangs Bonnie's FUZZY CARDIGAN SWEATER and the small SACK (she left with the money in it).

Harlan sits in a chair behind an old wooden desk.

On the desk is a half-written letter. He leans toward a FLOWER VASE. SNIFFS its ROSE.

He peers once again at his SHINY PLANE. Then, his eye wanders to the desk's FRAMED FAMILY PICTURE of Dolly, himself, and Rea next to the boat on a beach.

He picks it up. The satisfied gleam in his eyes fades. He sets it down, then picks up his pen and writes.

INSERT (letter's final paragraph):

"...as I told you on the phone, it wouldn't be breaking your promise to Dolly to tell her I can take care of them now. I want them to come to California. I know I can be the kind of 'Pop' to Rea that I never had.
Love, John."

He folds some TWENTY-DOLLAR BILLS into the letter. Slips it into an envelope. Addresses it to his mother.

The door swings open. In walks the younger man of the Two Man Crew, TOMMY, early 20's, carrying a CLIPBOARD.

TOMMY

Bob says we're good to go, boss.

He sets the CLIPBOARD of PACKING SLIPS, dated JULY 1, 1937, down on the desk.

HARLAN
Thanks, kid.

Harlan rises. Places his letter to his Mother in the OUTGOING MAIL tray. Grabs his gear, CLIPBOARD, and leaves.

TOMMY
You saw I brought in some fresh roses, didn't you?

HARLAN
Yeah, thanks Tommy.

MONTAGE (of days passing):

- Harlan busily checks packing list at work.
- Harlan, Tommy, and Bob receive truck load of parcels.
- Harlan's Mother receives Harlan's letter in mail.
- Harlan, Tommy, and Bob load parcels onto plane.
- Harlan's Mother reads Harlan's letter and shakes her head.
- Harlan closing up shop at night.

EXT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE/PHILADELPHIA, PA. - DUSK
(Based on a true story)

Harlan's Mother stands at her door. Waves bye to Dolly and Rea as they walk down the sidewalk.

HARLAN'S MOTHER
See you tomorrow, girls.

In her other hand she beats HARLAN'S LETTER to her side.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
Oh Dolly?

DOLLY SMITH
Yeah, Momma?

Harlan's Mother, nervously breathes hard.

DOLLY SMITH (CONT'D)
You okay? What is it?

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HARLAN'S MOTHER
Oh sure, sure. I...was just, um...
She slips the letter into her robe pocket.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
 How's the apartment coming along?
 You know if things get tough, you
 can always come back here.

DOLLY SMITH
 Thanks Momma. But it's working out
 good. I thought I told you.

HARLAN'S MOTHER
 Oh yes. That's right, you did.
 Okay then, bye-bye.

Harlan's Mother waves. Retreats into the house.

INT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE

Harlan's Mother closes the door. Goes to the phone table.
 Takes Harlan's letter. Slips it into the table drawer.

INT. TRAILER OFFICE - NIGHT by

Harlan comes in the office, tired, and plops down in a chair.
 Tommy heads for the door.

TOMMY
 See ya tomorrow.

Harlan GRUNTS. Tommy turns. Notices Harlan's exhaustion.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 Go home, Mr. Harlan; you need rest.

He GRUNTS again. Tommy shakes his head. Leaves.

Harlan picks up the day's mail. He anxiously thumbs through
 it. Tosses each down into the basket.

HARLAN
 Bill, bill, bill...

Disappointed, he stares at his FRAMED FAMILY PICTURE.

The PHONE RINGS.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
 Harlan here. Sure, sure, we can
 make that deadline. Name...

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HARLAN (CONT'D)
How many packages?

INT. TRAILER OFFICE - DAY

Tommy hands the CLIPBOARD to Harlan. Harlan thumbs through the orders.

HARLAN
Whoa. Busy schedule. Finally.

Tommy sits at the desk.

TOMMY
You're really looking beat, Mr. Harlan. Maybe you ought to take time off. We can keep it going.

HARLAN
Yeah; who's going to fly the plane?

TOMMY
Bob will be certified soon.

HARLAN
Yeah, well, when "soon" comes, I'll take a break.

He heads for the door. Stops. (Based on a true story)

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Hey, looking at this, I won't be back before closing so see you Monday. Have a good week-end, Tommy.

TOMMY
You too.

Harlan leaves.

The PHONE RINGS.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(answers phone)
Harlan Air Parcel. I'll check.

Tommy gets up. Looks out the window. Sees Bob wave the CHECKERED flag. The plane moves toward the runway.

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TOMMY (CONT'D)

Oh no, sorry ma'am. He's already heading out. Would you like to leave your name and message? It's no trouble. Suit yourself, Bye.

Tommy sits. Looks at Harlan's FRAMED FAMILY PICTURE.

INT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE/PHILADELPHIA, PA. - DAY

Harlan's Mother HANGS up the phone. Holding the letter, she re-reads.

INSERT (of last SENTENCE):

I know I can be the kind of 'Pop'
to Rea that I never had.
Love, John."

She SIGHS. Closes her eyes. "THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

by

EXT. TRAILER - DAWN

Stacy W. Thornton

Harlan, coffee in hand, picks up the NEWSPAPER, dated, JULY 19, 1937. He reads HEADLINES: "Amelia Earhart missing."

INT. TRAILER (Based on a true story)

Harlan sits at desk with the NEWSPAPER. His finger scans through the EARHART ARTICLE. He flips to another page.

A BIRD SQUAWKS.

Harlan looks out. Sees the BIRD settle on the PLANE.

Harlan glances back at the ARTICLE. Then, he closes the NEWSPAPER, but something dawns on him. He opens it again.

He scans a heading, "MYSTERY OBJECT IN SKY OVER PACIFIC."

He reads on, CHUCKLING.

TOMMY comes in. Drops clipboard on desk. Peeks over Harlan's shoulder at paper. Reads. Begins to CHUCKLE, too.

Then, Harlan's CHUCKLE abruptly stops.

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HARLAN
Hold the phone!

Harlan jumps up. Grabs a MAP. Flattens it out on the desk. He glances at Tommy who is holding the phone's receiver.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Tommy, what are you doing?

TOMMY
Holding the phone?

HARLAN
It's just an expression, son.

He refers back to the AMELIA EARHART ARTICLE. Circles an AREA on the MAP. Writes "AMELIA" on it.

Embarrassed, Tommy sets down the phone.

Harlan refers back to the MYSTERY OBJECT ARTICLE. Circles an ADJACENT AREA on the MAP. Writes "OBJECT."

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"
HARLAN
On second thought, hand me that
phone.

Harlan thumbs through the PHONE BOOK. Dials.

OPERATOR (ON PHONE)
Federal Bureau of Investigations.

(Based on a true story)
HARLAN (PHONE)
I'd like to speak to the agent
that's working on the Amelia
Earhart disappearance case.

OPERATOR
Please hold.

Harlan TAPS his pen on the MAP.

TOMMY
What is it?

HARLAN
I think that thing that was seen
flying in the area might be...

OPERATOR
Sir?

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HARLAN

OPERATOR

There is no one working on that.

HARLAN

Oh. Well, as soon as someone's assigned, have them call me.

OPERATOR

You misunderstand. What I am saying is, um, just a moment...(another voice is heard in background)...please hold.

HARLAN

Sure, sure.

The BIRD SQUAWKS again. Harlan looks up to see it resettle on the wing of the plane.

TOMMY

The flying thing might be what?

AGENT TOWNSEND (ON PHONE)

Hello, this is Agent Townsend. To whom am I speaking?

HARLAN (PHONE)

Harlan. John Harlan. I wanted to find out if you guys were aware of that sighting of the...um, Tommy hand me that article.

Tommy jumps up. Grabs at the article. Bashes into the table. Knocks things off. The article floats to the floor.

TOMMY

Whoops, sorry.

HARLAN

Geez, Tommy.

(to Townsend)

Well, anyway, it was some kind of an "unidentified flying object."

Tommy places the things back on the table.

AGENT TOWNSEND (PHONE)

It was a...what did you call it...an "unidentified flying..."

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HARLAN (PHONE)
Yeah, something like that.

Harlan uses his CALIPER to measure the area on the map.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

Now, from my calculation, it was seen approximately 200 miles within the area of Miss Earhart's last whereabouts.

Tommy places SHRIMP BOATS (map markers) on the map at two of the points Harlan specifies.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

This would be very close to her destination...Howland Island.

Tommy places the third marker. Stares wide-eyed at Harlan.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

I'm sure this...this...thing could be easily verified with the U.S. Coast Guard's Itasco. They were right there. If you just contact their commander... by

AGENT TOWNSEND

Excuse me, Mr. Harlan, please. The agency simply doesn't recognize...

HARLAN

Well of course not, Mr. Townsend. You're missing the point. It was probably an aircraft that was seen, and most likely its pilot saw her. I just wanted to make sure you guys knew about it.

AGENT TOWNSEND

Alright. Thank you.

Harlan flashes a huge smile at Tommy.

HARLAN

Sure. No problem. It just may turn out to be a lead for your investigation.

Tommy happily reacts almost knocking things off again.

AGENT TOWNSEND

However.

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HARLAN
 (smile wanes)
 However?

Tommy's smile fades.

TOMMY
 (sickly)
 However.

AGENT TOWNSEND
 Mr. Harlan, the agency is not
 investigating the disappearance of
 the missing aircraft.

HARLAN
 What?

AGENT TOWNSEND
 There is no "Amelia Earhart" case.

There is a long pause.

AGENT TOWNSEND (CONT'D)
 Hello? Mr. Harlan?

HARLAN
 Yes, I was just...I mean, that
 can't be. That young woman is
 a...a, she's an American heroine.
 Certainly, the United States...

AGENT TOWNSEND
 I'm sorry, Mr. Harlan. There's
 nothing more to discuss. Good day.

The phone CLICKS, followed by a DIAL TONE.

Befuddled, Harlan's hand limps. He sets the receiver down.

TOMMY
 What? What? What?

HARLAN
 "There's nothing more to discuss."

Tommy slumps. Plops down in a chair. Bob walks in. Sees
 Harlan and Tommy sulking in silence.

Stacy W. Thornton BOB
 Ethnofilms What? What did I miss?
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 Harlan stares at the BIRD perched on the plane's wing.
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The BIRD SQUAWKS, then flies off. Harlan leaps to his feet.

HARLAN

Well, we'll just see about that.

Worry floods Tommy's face.

BOB

I don't like the sound of that.

INT. TRAILER OFFICE - LATER

TOMMY (ON PHONE)

Yeah well, we're notifying all our customers of the temporary hiatus.

Harlan stuffs items into a LARGE DUFFLE BAG.

INT./EXT. PLANE - DUSK "THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

Bob loads plane with SUPPLIES. by Harlan tosses his DUFFLE BAG into the plane.

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INT. TRAILER OFFICE

Tommy, on phone, peaks out window. Watches Harlan.
(Based on a true story)

TOMMY

(secretively)

I'm telling you, if you want this story, you'll be here at the crack of dawn. This man's for real.

He hangs up the phone. Rests his head in his hands.

EXT. TRAILER OFFICE - NEXT DAY

The sun barely breaks the horizon as Harlan NAILS a sign, "TEMPORARILY CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE" on the trailer.

TOMMY (O.S.)

Of course I'll keep an eye on the place but I ain't taking money.

Harlan tosses the KEYS to Tommy.

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HARLAN

Yes you will.

Tommy catches the KEYS.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Just no raises while I'm gone,
okay?

Tommy CHUCKLES. Then appears uncomfortable.

TOMMY
Harlan, I...I just want to say...

HARLAN
I know, Tommy.

He brushes his hand through Tommy's hair. Backs away toward the plane. Signals him a THUMBS UP. Leaps in.

TOMMY
You have to go right now? Can't
you at least have a "cuppa-joe"
with me before you leave?

HARLAN by
Gotta go, Tommy.
Stacy W. Thornton

Harlan starts the engine.

BOB
Let us know when you reach Hawaii
and again when you reach Howland!

TOMMY
When you coming back? WGAW Registration #989032

HARLAN
A week? Don't know. But not until
I find out about that mysterious
flying thing or the Feds get off
their duffs and do something.
Whatever's first. Wish me luck!

TOMMY
Luck! Damn it. I forgot to bring
in roses today! Wait, let me...

The ENGINE ROAR drowns Tommy out. Harlan cups his hand to his ear. Then flicks a wave to him.

Bob removes the BLOCKS from the wheels. SIGNALS Harlan with the CHECKERED FLAG. Tommy fights back TEARS as he watches.

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TOMMY (CONT'D)
 (sniffles)
 It's the bravest damn thing I ever
 saw. The crazy lonely fool.

The plane speeds off. Lifts off into the western sky.

A REPORTER dashes up to Tommy and Bob.

REPORTER
 Damn! I couldn't find you guys.

TOMMY
 I told you to be here early; some
 reporter you are.

REPORTER
 Did he leave a statement?

BOB
 No, he didn't leave a statement.

TOMMY
 Are you nuts, I didn't let on I
 told you anything.

REPORTER
 I've made a few notes. How's this?

The Reporter flashes his NOTEBOOK to Tommy and Bob. Their
 eyes grow increasingly wider as they read.

BOB
 I really don't think you should
 print that without his okay.

INT. TRAILER OFFICE - DAY

Tommy, wide-eyed, reads from the NEWSPAPER.

TOMMY
 "WWI Veteran and owner, flyer of
 Harlan Air Parcel, John Harlan,
 alone investigates the
 circumstances surrounding the woman
 pilot's disappearance."

Tommy closes the paper.

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TOMMY (CONT'D)
 Alright! That's what I wanted.
 Hope he gets back soon. This will
 surely generate some business now!

Bob continues to read his own copy of the newspaper.

BOB
 Um, you better read a bit further.

TOMMY
 What do you mean?

BOB
 Get this, "Harlan claims
 authorities ignored verifiable
 lead" yadda-yadda-yadda, then,
 "...Harlan believes it's a probable
 FBI cover-up." Man, oh man. Then
 it goes on to say, "The following
 list reveals his suspicions to why
 the FBI won't do anything."

Bob smashes the paper down into his lap. Glares at Tommy.

BOB (CONT'D)
 What the heck did you do?

Tommy shrinks.

(Based on a true story)

INT. FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS BUILDING - DAY

An immaculately dressed AGENT TOWNSEND (40's) stands before
 an EXECUTIVE DESK. Addresses an UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL hidden by
 the back of the DESK CHAIR.

AGENT TOWNSEND
 Since he did not identify himself
 as a pilot, there were no real
 indications to take him seriously.

The Unknown Individual holds NEWSPAPER article of "FBI COVER-
 UP." GRUNTS.

AGENT TOWNSEND (CONT'D)
 It's a small article. Nothing more
 that a temporary thorn. Easily
 removed. I'll make sure of it.

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The Unknown Individual twists in the HIGH-BACK CHAIR.

Finally, the Unknown Individual pulls from the center drawer a THICK DOCUMENT. Tosses it onto the desk. Agent Townsend picks it up. Reads the cover.

INSERT of thick document:

"PROJECT BLUE BOOK."
"TOP SECRET."

Agent Townsend breaks the seal. Opens it. Reads.

AGENT TOWNSEND (CONT'D)
The following document serves as a preliminary outline for "PROJECT BLUE BOOK," a TOP SECRET INVESTIGATION on the phenomenon of "UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS." The nature of the investigation is highly dangerous, objects are believed to be of enemy and or communistic origin. All records must remain under the highest level of security. No exceptions.

A slight wave of illness washes across Agent Townsend's face.

AGENT TOWNSEND (CONT'D)
I am on top of it.

He immediately turns to leave. (Based on a true story)

UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL
Agent Townsend? You better be.

Townsend deeply inhales. Exits.

INT. FBI MEN'S ROOM

Agent Townsend splashes water on his face.

AGENT TOWNSEND
Damn! Why didn't I make the connection?
(into the mirror)
Well, Mr. John Harlan, we'll just see whether you're just a thorn or for real after all.

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INT. PHILADELPHIA SEWING COMPANY - DAY

A SEWING MACHINE loudly HUMS. A garment is expeditiously fed through it by a FEMALE HAND.

Her hair flops in her face as she keeps looking down at a partially hidden NEWSPAPER. She secretly reads the article about John Harlan.

The garment bunches up. She tries to free it. Instantly, she pricks her finger on one of the pins.

DOLLY SMITH

Ouch!

She SUCKS her injured finger.

A LETTER drops down in front of her onto the garment. She looks up. Harlan's Mother stands before her.

HARLAN'S MOTHER

I've had it for some time now.
According to that article, I guess
he was telling the truth after all.
I'm sorry, Dolly.

Dolly hesitates, then picks up the letter.

(Based on a true story)
DOLLY SMITH

Come with me.

Dolly signals the HEAD SEAMSTRESS who takes TWO CARDS and PUNCHES the TIME CLOCK.

Dolly grabs the letter and Harlan's Mother's hand. She leads her across the large SEWING FACTORY ROOM full of WOMEN SEAMSTRESSES busily sewing at their stations.

As Harlan's Mother passes one ELDERLY SEAMSTRESS, she reaches out and pats the woman's hand.

Harlan's Mother casts her a helpless squint.

The Elderly Seamstress exudes a feisty gleam. Gestures support. Watches Dolly and Harlan's Mother enter the BREAK ROOM, enclosed by GLASS WALLS. She continues to sew and occasionally glances up to watch them.

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INT. BREAK ROOM

DOLLY SMITH
Why did you keep this from me?

HARLAN'S MOTHER
You made me promise not to tell...

DOLLY SMITH
...him where I was. I never meant
to imply...

HARLAN'S MOTHER
There's more.

DOLLY SMITH
I don't understand.

HARLAN'S MOTHER
More letters.

by

INT. SEWING FACTORY ROOM

Stacy W. Thornton

The Elderly Seamstress sees Dolly throw up her arms. She
stops sewing. Grits her teeth.

INT. BREAK ROOM (Based on a true story)

DOLLY SMITH
Didn't you think that just
maybe...? Wait.
(she gathers her thoughts)
How long has he been writing you?

HARLAN'S MOTHER
One or two, maybe three...years.

DOLLY SMITH
Oh my god. Oh my god.

INT. FACTORY ROOM

The Elderly Seamstress watches Dolly circle around the tables
and chairs, grabbing her head and stomach.

She sadly shakes her head.

Then, she sees Harlan's Mother assertively step forward and
grab Dolly by the arm and twist her around.

INT. BREAK ROOM

HARLAN'S MOTHER
Now you wait a minute young lady.

Her words strike Dolly to her chair.

INT. FACTORY ROOM

The Elderly Seamstress leans over toward a YOUNGER SEAMSTRESS next to her. Taps her arm. Points to Harlan's Mother.

ELDERLY SEAMSTRESS
That's my gal!

She beams. Resumes sewing.

INT. BREAK ROOM "THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

Harlan's Mother sits in a chair next to Dolly.

HARLAN'S MOTHER
I did just what you asked me to do.
No more, no less.

Dolly turns her head away.

(Based on a true story)

HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
You made me promise *not to tell* him
you and Rea moved to an apartment.
You made me promise *not to give* him
your address or phone number.

The tension builds in Dolly's face.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
And you made me promise *not to*
*interfere...*no matter what. And
when he asked if you still worked
here...I lied. I lied for you.

Dolly gets up. Goes to the COFFEE POT. Harlan's Mother follows.

Dolly nervously puts dirty coffee cups in the sink.

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HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
But, it wasn't all you.
Dolly stops cleaning. Turns away.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
 My dear sweet girl. I just didn't
 want you to go through what I went
 through with my husband.

Harlan's Mother expels a DEEP BREATH. Dolly's eyes
 immediately well with tears.

DOLLY SMITH
 I know. I'm sorry.

Dolly gives Harlan's Mother a long embrace.

INT. FACTORY ROOM

The Elderly Seamstress looks up. Sees Dolly holding Harlan's
 Mother. Her jaw tightens. She pulls a tissue from out of
 her blouse. Dabs her eyes.

The Young Seamstress, mouth agape, places her hand to her
 mouth and then glances at the Elderly Seamstress.

INT. BREAK ROOM

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HARLAN'S MOTHER
 Whatever you do, I support you.
 And I want you to know that deep in
 my heart, I know that my son is not
 like his father. I think he could
 be a good father.

WGAW Registration #989032

Dolly sits. Pulls out the letter. Harlan's Mother heads for
 the door, then stops.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
 I'm not one to always show it but I
 do love my son. Unfortunately, in
 all honesty, I still believe he'll
 probably end up rotting away in
 prison somewhere. Just be careful.

INT. FACTORY ROOM

Harlan's Mother crosses the large SEWING FACTORY ROOM.

She nods at the Elderly and Young Seamstresses. Returns to
 her machine. Readies her garment to sew. Harlan's Mother
 sews. Watches as Dolly reads the letter.

Soon, Dolly looks up at her. She MOUTHS, "THANK YOU."

Harlan's Mother warily SIGHS.

INT. BREAK ROOM

Dolly folds the letter. Slips it into the envelope. Presses it close to her heart. Deep in thought, she nervously bites at her bottom lip. Her eyes dart about. Then finally, she releases her lip. A hint of a SMILE appears.

INT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE/PHILADELPHIA - DAY

Dolly's SMILE FADES as she holds the phone to her ear.

DOLLY SMITH

(on phone)

What does that mean, "out indefinitely?" I've been calling for months now and he's never in.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

INT. TRAILER OFFICE/SO. CALIFORNIA - DAY

Tommy helplessly watches as four FEDERAL AGENTS confiscate the business's documents from the file cabinet and desk drawers and cram them into LARGE BOXES.

He peers down at a FEDERAL WARRANT, dated "November 5 1937" on the desk in front of him and presses the phone to his ear.

TOMMY (PHONE)

Ma'am, I can't really talk right now. There are some federa...

ONE AGENT SLAMS his hand on the desk. Glares at Tommy.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Um...what I mean is some major things are happening and we're still on a temporary hiatus until further notice.

One Agent nods approval. ANOTHER AGENT stands over Bob as he opens the SAFE.

INT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE

Dolly repositions the phone, holds it to her ear with her shoulder, and buttons the back of Rea's dress (now 14).

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DOLLY SMITH (PHONE)
 Has he gotten any of my messages?
 (whispers to Rea)
 Get Grand-momma to do your hair.
 (back into phone)
 What do you mean you think so?
 Certainly you'd know whether you
 gave him messages or not.

INT. TRAILER OFFICE

TOMMY (PHONE)
 Ma'am. I gotta go now. I'll give
 them your message and he'll get
 back to you as soon as he can.

INT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"
 DOLLY SMITH (PHONE)
 Give "them" my message? What are
 you talking about? by

Stacy W. Thornton
 She peeks around the corner. Sees Harlan's Mother styling
 Rea's hair. Then, sits in a chair next to the phone.

DOLLY SMITH (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 Listen, just tell me the truth.
 You're covering for him because
 he's in jail, right?
 WGAW Registration #989032

Harlan's Mother overhears. DEEPLY SIGHS.

INT. TRAILER OFFICE

TOMMY (PHONE)
 No ma'am!
 (re-thinks)
 At least, I don't think so.

One Agent gestures to get off the phone.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry ma'am, but I gotta go
 now. I'm sorry, good bye.

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 INT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE
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 Dolly hangs up. Drops her head in her hands.

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Harlan's Mother frowns. Lifts an eyebrow.

INT. TRAILER OFFICE

Tommy jots down "Call Dolly" on a piece of paper. Hands it to One Agent. Irritated, One Agent stuffs the note into his breast pocket. YANKS the phone's cord from the wall.

Tommy and Bob are escorted out the door by the Agents.

Another Agent motions for the keys and Tommy reluctantly hands them over.

The Agents, throw the LARGE BOXES into the trunks of TWO CARS and the AGENT DRIVER ONE and AGENT DRIVER TWO jump into their perspective vehicles.

AGENT DRIVER ONE
We were never here.

AGENT DRIVER TWO
You never saw anything.

The other two agents jump in. They speed off spewing a huge THICK DUST CLOUD onto a confused Tommy and Bob.

BOB
What the hell was that all about?
(Based on a true story)

Tommy stands silent. Bob paces around him in circles.

BOB (CONT'D)
We're out of job! Man, oh man, we are out of a job!

Tommy WHEEZES.

BOB (CONT'D)
You okay, Tommy?

TOMMY
(blurts between wheezes)
It's all my fault. I thought the article would help stir up some business. I just wanted people to know about a real life hero. And all I did was bring the wrath of the government down on us.

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BOB
Come on now. Catch your breath.

Bob sits Tommy down to calm him.

BOB (CONT'D)
 But, tell me this, Tommy. If they still don't know what happened to that woman flyer, what business does the FBI have with Harlan?

TOMMY
 He had to have found out something.

The men sit in deep depression.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 Man. I wish, I wish, I could take it all back.

BOB
 Sorry, the Feds took the roses too.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO BAY - DAY

by

A large SHEET OF OCEAN SPRAY BLASTS into the air then drops and reveals the GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE in the distance. Another HUGE WATER GEYSER SPRAYS UP as a POLICE WATERCRAFT bounces off the rough waters. It speeds toward the ISLAND.

TITLE: "ALCATRAZ PRISON"
 (Based on a true story)

TITLE: "25 YEARS LATER"

WGAW Registration #989032

INT. JAIL CORRIDOR/ALCATRAZ

A gray-haired John Harlan (62), arms handcuffed, legs shackled, shuffles along as he is escorted by THE GUARD (early 20's) through the PRISON corridor of "B BLOCK."

HARLAN
 (mumbles)
 Possession of a federal aircraft without proper credentials.
 (he stops and glares at the guard)
 Oh I have credentials alright. They're classified. You just can't show classified credentials.

The Guard nudges him forward.
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HARLAN (CONT'D)

And then, the aggravating factors of "priors." We're talking measly liquor law violations, here...

(he stops and glares at the guard, again)

...during Prohibition! Talk about holding a grudge.

THE GUARD

(agitated but calm)

I know. We all know. It's procedure. When you arrived this morning, all correctional officers were informed of your criminal history, as they are of all prisoners on the Rock. Move along.

Harlan shuffles along a few more steps, then stops.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

HARLAN

Oh yeah, then there's disturbing the peace. Well I'll tell you a thing or two about peace. We earned the peace. And believe me, peace needs to be disturbed every now and then!

THE GUARD

Move! (Based on a true story)

Begrudgingly, Harlan continues down the corridor.

HARLAN

But you mark my word, sonny-boy, even though it's been...(thinks) five years since I crashed their damn plane? That means five years tied up in the Federal Court system. Whew! Well, still...it's only a matter of time that the FBI finds me and springs me lickety-split out of this hell hole!

The Guard and Harlan stop at the front of Harlan's CELL. Harlan WINCES at its detestable conditions.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

Do your duty; here's your thanks.

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The CORRIDOR GUARD opens the CELL for them.

INT. JAIL CELL/ALCATRAZ

The Guard nudges Harlan in. Bends down to remove the shackles from his feet.

THE GUARD

I was just wondering. Was that "disturbing the peace" prior for being in the WWI Veteran's Expeditionary Army...the Bonus March? I think it was called.

Harlan stares off. The Guard removes Harlan's hand-cuffs.

THE GUARD (CONT'D)

Well anyway, my grandpa marched.

The Guard goes to the Cell door and stops.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"
THE GUARD (CONT'D)

It's a shame what you guys went through and still ended up short.

HARLAN

Hey boy! It was my honor to do it.

THE GUARD

No offense intended. What I mean is, if it weren't for the guys who demanded their due back then...and in my grandpa's words, all soldiers would die as unsung heroes.

The Guard SLAMS the door shut. Leaves. Harlan listens to The Guard's FOOTSTEPS FADE.

His body weakens. Collapses onto the hard SQUEAKY COT. His back rests against the wall. He stares at the graffiti on the filthy walls opposite him until his vision blurs from exhaustion. His head drops down as the Guard's words "UNSUNG HEROES" echo in his troubled mind.

EXT. AIR FIELD - DAY

TITLE: "FRANCE"

TITLE: "1918"

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Harlan, 19, head hung, stands near a coffin at an open grave.

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He stares at its WOODEN CROSS that reads MAJOR RAOUL LUFBERY.

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Protruding from the ground, small AMERICAN and FRENCH FLAGS FLAP in the breeze.

One by one, A LONG LINE OF UNIFORMED OFFICERS (with various WWI squadron insignia) pass by and place a flower on a HUGE PYRAMID OF FLOWERS, next to the coffin.

SOLDIER ONE

Major Lufbery was the greatest flyer that ever was.

SOLDIER TWO

He was the ace of aces.

SOLDIER THREE

There'll never be another like him.

SOLDIER FOUR

He was a damn hero!

The sincerity of their comments makes Harlan light up.

A BUGLE BLOWS. FIVE FLYERS wearing the INSIGNIA of the 94TH AERO SQUADRON about face. Head in the direction of their NIEUPORT 28 PLANES at center field.

As one of the Flyers passes by, Harlan grabs him by his arm.

The handsome faced Flyer, EDDIE RICKENBACKER (28), turns and inquisitively squints his eyes at Harlan. Then, he intuitively nods his head.

WGAW Registration #889032
EDDIE RICKENBACKER

I know.

He turns to leave but Harlan holds onto his arm.

HARLAN

I don't think you do, Captain Rickenbacker...

(more respectfully)

Sir.

Rickenbacker eyes Harlan's grip, then meets his eyes. Harlan releases Rickenbacker's arm and takes a moment to overcome a lump in his throat.

HARLAN

I was suppose to be a flyer.

Instead, I'm a damn bookkeeper.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

Yeah? Well, I'm a damn chauffeur.

He animatedly shrugs. His bright white teeth flash from a huge grin. Then, he begins to jog backwards from Harlan.

Rickenbacker signals a THUMBS UP to Harlan. Turns. Dashes away after the other Flyers.

Each Flyer boards their respective NIEUPORT 28 PLANES and receives a large BASKET OF FLOWERS from their MECHANICS.

The Flyers start their engines. Line their planes behind Rickenbacker. One by one, they take to the sky.

A tall, scrawny fellow, BRUCE SCHWARTZMAN (25), moves closer to Harlan as he watches the Flyers.

BRUCE SCHWARTZMAN
 Didn't you learn anything today?
 Even the best get killed.

Harlan's pal, Donald Hudson comes up to the two men.

BRUCE SCHWARTZMAN (CONT'D)
 I'm just not that hungry for fame.

Irritated by Schwartzman's comment, Donald Hudson SNICKERS.

HARLAN
 You think a hero cares about fame?
 You think *that's* why they do it?
 (Based on a true story)

DONALD HUDSON
 Harlan, don't waste your breath.

HARLAN
 Look around you, Lieutenant. It's for them. That guy. And that guy there. Not to mention, they do it for all of us. People need people like that. Like Lufbery. But then, a low life yellow belly coward like you could never understand something like that.

Bruce Schwartzman tauntingly grins.

BRUCE SCHWARTZMAN
 Hey, Harlan. If you want it so bad, I'll let you fly in my place.

Schwartzman shrugs. Walks away.

Harlan's teeth grind. His veins bulge on his neck and forehead. His fist tightens.

HARLAN
That's it; he's dead.

Harlan lunges toward Schwartzman.

Donald Hudson grabs hold of Harlan. They struggle while Harlan gets an occasionally punch in on Schwartzman.

BYSTANDERS notice. Congregate near the skirmish.

SOLDIER ONE
What's going on?

SOLDIER TWO
I think Schwartzman's going to get his ass kicked.

SOLDIER THREE
Alright. Finally.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"
SOLDIER FOUR
Hit him once for me, Harlan.
by

Finally Hudson manages to gain control over Harlan.
Stacy W. Thornton

DONALD HUDSON
It's alright. It's alright.

He forces Harlan back toward the grave as Schwartzman disappears into the crowd.
(Based on a true story)

DONALD HUDSON (CONT'D)
WCAW Registration #988032
Now listen to me. Even though, every single one of these guys would love to see you beat the living daylights out of that coward Schwartzman, this is not the place nor the time. Besides, he's got a direct line to the top brass.

The Bystanders disperse.

SOLDIER ONE
(to Soldier Two)
That's one tough bookkeeper.

A FEW MEN pat Harlan on his shoulders and back.

HARLAN
How in the hell does a guy like
Ethnofilms that get to fly?
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DONALD HUDSON
 He'll never get the call. Every
 flyer would have to be..."

The ROAR of the NIEUPOINTS cut Hudson short as the Flyers make their way back toward the AIRFIELD.

The Five Flyers' planes approach in "V" formation.

Led by Rickenbacker, the other Flyers maneuver behind in single formation. They first encircle the site directly overhead.

As the NIEUPOINTS make the turn at the far-side of the AIRFIELD they begin to descend to an altitude of 50 feet and head directly toward the grave site.

Rickenbacker SIGNALS the Flyers, and the planes' engines shut down to SILENCE.

As each Flyer passes over the grave site, they tip to one side and EMPTY THE FLOWERS from their baskets.

Harlan watches as HUNDREDS OF FLOWERS FALL from the sky.

He reaches out. Catches a single ROSE. His face lights up like a little boy. He brings the flower to his nose. BREATHES IN its aroma. Closes his eyes.

(Based on a true story)

HARLAN
 I only ask one wish. Give me my
 chance to fly.

WGAW Registration #989032

INT. JAIL CELL/ALCATRAZ - DUSK

Harlan awakes to the loud CRANK OF THE CELL DOOR opening up.

THE GUARD
 Get to your feet; it's dinner.

HARLAN
 (refreshed)
 It's the only reason I decided to
 stay at this here swank hotel.

Alarmed by Harlan's sudden change in personality, the Guard readies his hand to his baton. Cautiously eyes him.

Stacy W. Thornton THE GUARD
 Ethnofilms Don't be trying anything; I don't
 15218 Summit Ave. Suite 200-213 care if you're nuts or not.
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Harlan wildly gleams.

HARLAN

I'm just hungry, son. Lead on as I
am worthy of your trust.

INT. JAIL CORRIDOR

Harlan follows the line of PRISONERS.

INT. CAFETERIA

With a FULL TRAY OF FOOD, Harlan makes his way from the CHOW
LINE to a seat at a table of THREE SMUG-LOOKING MEN.

Without paying them any mind, he sits. Devours his food.

The three men, FRANK LEE MORRIS (35), and the brothers JOHN
and CLARENCE ANGLIN (early 30's) curiously watch Harlan.

CLARENCE ANGLIN

What ya in for Pop?

Harlan stops eating. Cuts his eyes at him.

HARLAN

(mumbles)

It's all a misunderstanding.

Harlan resumes chewing.

JOHN ANGLIN

Why don't you tell us about it?

HARLAN

(irritated)

For nearly 20 years, I was a flyer
for a FBI top-secret program...

(he looks suspiciously
around)

...called "Project Blue Book,"
investigating UFO's.

He stuffs his mouth with more food.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

As soon as they discover I'm
missing, they'll spring me lickety-
split out of this hell hole.

The men look at each other with disbelief.

JOHN ANGLIN
How long you been missing?

HARLAN
Five years.

CLARENCE ANGLIN
Damn, that's refreshing. Someone
who trusts the government.

JOHN ANGLIN
So, how'd that flying gig come
about, Pop?

Harlan looks up at him with a "James Bond-like intensity."

HARLAN
I'm not your Pop...boy. You may
call me Harlan, John Harlan. Don't
ever call me Pop again.

He pokes his fork into the food. Defiantly lifts it to his
lips. Abruptly, he throws it down onto the plate. Eases
back into his chair.

Stacy W. Thornton

HARLAN (CONT'D)
What the hell. If you must know, I
flew in the Great War. Better
known as World War I for you punks.
(Based on a true story)

FRANK LEE MORRIS
You were a flying ace, huh?
WGAW Registration #989032

HARLAN
No. I was a bookkeeper.

Frank abruptly frowns. Harlan returns to stuffing his mouth.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
(looking at his plate)
Yeah, a bookkeeper who flew with a
chauffeur...
(he glares at them)
Eddie Rickenbacker? Surely, you
hooligans have heard of him.

JOHN ANGLIN
So Pop...uh...
(catching his mistake)
...Harlan, with all due respect,
sir. If you're FBI, what're you
doing here? You crash their plane?

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Harlan thinks about it.

HARLAN
 Yep. Sort of.

The Men CHUCKLE.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
 Three times I've crashed a plane.
 And as my Momma use to say "three
 times are a charm."

CLARENCE ANGLIN
 You mean, third time's a charm.

HARLAN
 Nope, "three times" the way she'd
 say.

JOHN ANGLIN
 I don't understand.

HARLAN
 Well, one, the first crash, I
 nearly got killed in the war. Two,
 the second crash, I nearly
 destroyed the plane Bugsy Siegel
 gave me.

Clarence, in the middle of a drink, SPEWS liquid and CHOKES.

JOHN ANGLIN
 Shut up Clarence. I'm trying to
 hear.

HARLAN
 Well anyhow, a nice young couple,
 Mr. Barrow and Miss Parker...

John's eyes widen.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
 That's right, Bonnie & Clyde.
 Well, they gave me a little cash
 for my plane repairs and I started
 my air parcel biz. But before that
 got going good, I had to go find
 out what happened to Amelia
 Earhart. It took me some time, but
 I figured it out. (beat) You
 probably never heard of her.

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JOHN ANGLIN

Oh. Yeah.

CLARENCE ANGLIN

John, you have no idea who that is!

Frank sits motionless, intensity building in his eyes.

JOHN ANGLIN

Go on, Mr. Harlan.

Both Frank and Clarence glare at John who just shrugs "what?"

HARLAN

Well, as Bugsy Siegel's right hand man, Rosco, used to say, "to make a long story longer"...yeah, he was the King Talker alright...the government didn't want the true story to get out so they had two options-get rid of me or hire me.

CLARENCE ANGLIN

For Project Bl...

JOHN ANGLIN

...Blue book. Geez, keep up.

John grins in a redeeming fashion.

(Based on a true story)

HARLAN

Well, I worked for them, like I told you, and when I got too close to one of them so-called UFO's, well, they shot me out of the sky. Lucky for me, at any point my life became jeopardized, I could walk away-no strings attached. Well, I walked away with scantily a scratch. However, the nature of the confidentiality left me to the discretion of other law enforcement agencies, giving me 20 to 30 and a free ticket to Alcatraz. So, just in case you boys can't count, that'd be three crashes...and "three times's a charm."

Harlan beams at them. In total disbelief, they cut their eyes at each other.

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HARLAN (CONT'D)
 Yep. Rosco would say I'm the "King
 Talker," now.

FRANK LEE MORRIS
 We don't care much for liars,
 Harlan. That'll get a body killed
 in a place like this.

Harlan picks his teeth with his fork.

HARLAN
 We got that in common. In fact...
 (he thinks a moment)
 ...I, John Harlan, swear to you,
 misters...misters...

Harlan waves his hand, soliciting for their names, just like
 Clyde Barrow had done to him.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"
 CLARENCE ANGLIN
 Clarence Anglin.

by
 JOHN ANGLIN
 John Anglin...I'm his brother.

FRANK LEE MORRIS
 Frank Lee Morris.

Harlan rises. (Based on a true story)

HARLAN
 Well Frank, John, and Clarence, I
 swear to you I'm not a liar,
 everything I've said is the truth.
 And not only do I not care for
 liars myself, I never cared much
 for cowards either.

Clarence and John defensively react and Frank fumes.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
 Now that's another story for
 another time. Look here, you boys
 seem like okay fellas to me; if you
 play your cards right, maybe, just
 maybe, I'll tell you how to break
 out of this here joint.

All three lift their eyebrows.

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HARLAN (CONT'D)

A stratagem told to me by Bonnie & Clyde themselves.

He stands tall. Picks up his tray. Winks. Leaves.

CLARENCE ANGLIN

Woo-oo-wee, he's obviously not all there.

JOHN ANGLIN

Maybe we should keep an eye on him.

Clarence hits his brother upside the head.

CLARENCE ANGLIN

This place is making you soft.

JOHN ANGLIN

Ouch, Clarence.

John rubs his head.

by

FRANK LEE MORRIS

Well, I believe him.

The brothers' mouths drop.

FRANK LEE MORRIS (CONT'D)

In fact, I, Frank Lee Morris, swear to you, Clarence and John, to try that Bonnie & Clyde cock-in-bull breakout plan the very minute the Feds spring old Pop...

(imitates Harlan)

"lickety-split out of this hell hole."

The three men SNICKER.

The BUZZER sounds. The PRISONERS rise from their tables. Various PRISON GUARDS begin to clear the men from the room.

INT. JAIL CELL - LATER

Harlan sits on the cot with his back toward the bars.

The Guard peers through the bars over Harlan's shoulder and watches as he sketches plane FLYING MANEUVERS on paper.

THE GUARD

I can get more paper if you like.

HARLAN

I'd rather you call the FBI to get me out of here instead.

The Guard CHUCKLES.

THE GUARD

So, what do you call that one...at the bottom there?

HARLAN

The Retournment.

Harlan turns. Sees the sincerity in the Guard's eyes.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

Basically, it's best done when "Archie's" hot on your tail, getting closer and closer. Then, just at the precise moment, you pull up, it's like slamming on the breaks and your plane shoots up, and "Archie" flies right under. Your pretty girl loops around, down, and...Hello Archie! You're hot on his tail. You move in closer and closer within shooting range, then, the guns fire, Ratta-tatta-tat-tat! Eeearrh, he's out of control! Then, a huge Ka-BOOM! Good bye Archie.

WGAW Registration #989032

THE GUARD

Wow. You ever do that one?

HARLAN

Nope. But I personally witnessed Rickenbacker do it...although, he credited Major Lufbery with creating it. I was always partial to the 'Horizontal Vrille,' myself.

THE GUARD

Lufbery? The French Officer that headed up the American flyers? You flew with him, too?

HARLAN

I'm impressed, boy. Your grandpa must be proud. But no, I didn't get a chance to fly with him. I sure would've liked to.

(MORE)

HARLAN (cont'd)
 It's a sad fact but, Lufbery's
 death is the only reason I got to
 fly at all.

Over the speaker, "LIGHTS OUT" is broadcast. The Guard,
 visibly disappointed, leaves Harlan.

Harlan lies back in his cot. Listens to the jail cell doors
 SLAM throughout the prison.

The lights shut off until only darkness and silence remains.

Harlan goes to the toilet, relieves himself, and FLUSHES.
 His head turns in the direction of the SOUND OF THE WATER
 FLOW. After the water dissipates, he FLOPS down on the cot.

HARLAN
 (mumbles)
 Follow the water, Harlan. Just
 follow the water. God bless you
 Bonnie & Clyde.

He smiles and his BRIGHT WHITE TEETH appear in the darkness.
 by

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/AIR FIELD - DAY
 Stacy W. Thornton

TITLE: FRANCE

TITLE: 1918

(Based on a true story)

Gritting his teeth, Harlan SLAMS a file cabinet. Carries
 some papers to his desk. Drops them down.
 WGAW Registration #989032

He takes a moment to reposition the ROSE in his breast pocket
 as he makes his way around to the chair.

As he sits a LOUD SIREN BLARES. Harlan leaps. Crashes into
 the desk, PAPERS SCATTER. He runs to the door.

EXT. AIR FIELD

Harlan hurries across the field toward the HANGAR.

INT. HANGAR

Harlan approaches a short man, the TELEPHONE SERGEANT engaged
 in a conversation with Bruce Schwartzman.

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TELEPHONE SERGEANT

But Lieutenant, sir, the urgency is that two enemy aeroplanes were spotted over our lines and since all the flyers are out they need to be alerted to the danger!

BRUCE SCHWARTZMAN

It is a danger they're well aware of, Sergeant.

TELEPHONE SERGEANT

But sir, it doesn't change the fact that the French believe the Germans may be wise to our location and are in route to find and observe!

There is a long pause.

TELEPHONE SERGEANT (CONT'D)

(nervously prods)

Sir?

by

BRUCE SCHWARTZMAN

Well, let them observe.

The Telephone Sergeant salutes. Heads toward the door.

He shakes his head in disgust as he passes the plane. Its MECHANIC, who looks on, lightly taps a wrench in his palm.

Suddenly, as if possessed, Harlan lunges at Schwartzman.

He grabs Schwartzman by his FLIGHT JACKET, shoves him to the ground, and the jacket remains in his hands.

BRUCE SCHWARTZMAN

If you think I am going over there to get shot down, you are mistaken.

Harlan turns to see the Telephone Sergeant before he leaves.

HARLAN

Hey, Sergeant! How long ago did the French call in?

TELEPHONE SERGEANT

Just minutes ago, Sir.

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HARLAN

What was their position?

TELEPHONE SERGEANT

Nearing Saint Mihiel on a course southeast toward Nancy. If they continue on, they'll stumble upon us in less than twenty minutes.

HARLAN

(to the Mechanic)
Is this thing okayed for flight?

THE MECHANIC

Yes sir; she sure is.

Harlan slips on Schwartzman's JACKET. Climbs in the plane. Schwartzman climbs to his feet. Brushes off his clothes.

THE MECHANIC (CONT'D)

Listen, Harlan, I can't be privy to this.

Harlan CLICKS HIS FINGERS to the headgear on the nearby rack. The Mechanic grabs the headgear with the initials B.S. on it and hands it to him. Harlan slips the gear on.

HARLAN

Like who's going to tell?
Schwartzman? If anyone asks, you say that all you did was ready Lt. Schwartzman's plane for take-off.

(Based on a true story)

The Mechanic halfheartedly agrees as he watches Harlan take the plane out of the hangar and toward the runway.

WGAW Registration #989032

EXT. AIR FIELD

The Mechanic runs alongside Harlan.

THE MECHANIC

Stay high! Above four thousand!
If they get above you they'll gain the advantage!

Harlan gives the Mechanic a THUMB'S UP. Speeds away.

The Mechanic stops. Bends over to catch his breath.

He then becomes overwhelmed by the moment as he watches the sun glisten off Harlan's plane as it lifts off.

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THE MECHANIC (CONT'D)

Go get those Archies, Harlan!

(thinks bout it, then
sarcastically mutters)

I mean, Lt. Schwartzman.

He cuts his eyes at Schwartzman, who weasels off in the direction of the Office Building.

THE MECHANIC (CONT'D)

No one in their right mind would
ever believe that one.

He kicks hard at the ground in Schwartzman's direction.

INT./EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

Harlan soars high up through the clouds.

He tips his wing to the left. Scans the sky. Sees nothing but endless heavens. He tips to the right. Scans. Sees nothing but the same.

Harlan surveys the sprawling French landscape. Sees the Moselle River meander and shimmer through its lush valley.

Harlan flies northwest toward the town of NANCY, barely visible in the distance (twenty miles away).

The cold air makes Harlan tremble. He becomes aware of his breath materialize as he nervously PANTS. He tightens his jacket around his body.

The plane passes through THICK FOG. Harlan compensates. Dives down to escape its mass. He finds a small clearing. Checks all around.

HARLAN

Where are you? Where are you?

Nothing but clouds. The plane enters the FOG again.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

Damn it. I've got to stay high.

The plane soars up. The FOG thickens. Harlan dives. Dropping his altitude lower and lower.

Finally, the plane sails out of the FOG. Levels out at an altitude of only a couple thousand feet.

Harlan immediately jerks his head all around. Looks side to side, behind and above. He sees a small town before him to the north.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
What is that? Pont a Mousson?

From out of the distant clouds, a small dot emerges.

INT. HARLAN'S PLANE

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Hel-lo.

Harlan, eyes enlarged, turns his plane into its direction.

EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

The dot grows nearer and nearer, larger and larger.

by

INT. HARLAN'S PLANE

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HARLAN (CONT'D)
Who are you? Show me your colors.

INT./EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE (Based on a true story)

Just then, a NIEUPOINT plane dives in from Harlan's left. Crosses just in front of his plane. Harlan veers out of its way.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
What the hell? He's one of us.

Then, a German PFALZ plane dives by and is in hot pursuit tight on the Nieuport's tail. Harlan immediately joins in pursuit of the Pfalz.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
I'm coming buddy.

Harlan pursues the Pfalz until only 200 yards behind him. He presses his trigger. Fires a STREAM OF TRACER BULLETS, peppering the wings of the plane.

The German compensates, falling left. Rolls over. Levels out without losing speed.

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HARLAN (CONT'D)
Whoa! Nice Vrille!

Immediately, flames ignite in the Pfalz's engine. Then, quickly it is replaced with smoke.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
A hit! I think I got a hit!

EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

The SMOKING BULLET-SPRAYED Pfalz speeds toward the ground. Harlan's plane climbs to higher altitude.

INT. HARLAN'S PLANE

He scans the horizon for the other plane.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Where'd you go?

Just then, BULLETS RICOCHET around Harlan's plane.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Here goes nothing!

(Based on a true story)

EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

Harlan turns the plane into a sharp turn. Rolls it over. Then back to its upright position.

INT. HARLAN'S PLANE

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Yeee-haaww!! I love that move!

He checks behind him. Nothing in sight. He looks above.

EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

Another German Pfalz gains on him, closer and closer. As the German nears, he fires his guns. BULLETS bombard the air all around Harlan as he repeats the Horizontal Vrille and flattens out.

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INT. HARLAN'S PLANE

Harlan checks to see that the German plane is gone.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Come on! Where'd you go?

He finally locates the Pfalz.

EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

He sees the Pfalz is back on the tail of the Nieuport.
Harlan takes chase.

INT./EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Come on baby. Give me all you got!

He watches in desperation. The Pfalz gains on the Nieuport.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Climb higher! Don't let him take
the advantage!

The Pfalz gets closer and closer to the Nieuport.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
No!!!
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EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

Just then, the Nieuport appears to stall. It shoots up like
a rocket and out of the Pfalz's way.

The Pfalz speeds by just under the Nieuport.

The Nieuport immediately loops back, down, and is in
immediate pursuit of the Pfalz.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Oh man! That was pretty!!!

The Nieuport gains on the German. Fires. BULLETS rip into
its fuselage, cockpit. The Pfalz EXPLODES into a FIERY BALL
in the sky.

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INT. HARLAN'S PLANE

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Take that Archie! Yeah!

EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

Harlan catches up. Pulls along side of the Nieuport.

EXT. NIEUPOINT

Harlan sees the 94th INSIGNIA on the Nieuport. He positions himself next to its cockpit and flyer.

EXT. NIEUPOINT

The flyer turns his head; it's Eddie Rickenbacker.

by

INT. NIEUPOINT

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Rickenbacker stares in disbelief.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER
No way! Schwartzman? Wait.
You're not...what the...it's the
damn bookkeeper!

Rickenbacker bears a huge grin.

INT. HARLAN'S PLANE

Harlan gives Rickenbacker a THUMB'S UP. Grins wide.

INT. NIEUPOINT

Rickenbacker's expression drastically changes.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER (CONT'D)
Watch out, Harlan!

EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

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Just then, the SMOKING BULLET-SPRAYED Pfalz appears. Rapid-fires bullets down the length of Harlan's plane.

Harlan's plane immediately dives. Flips over and over, out of control, toward the ground.

The Pfalz flees.

INT. NIEUPORT

With a tortured helpless expression, Rickenbacker watches Harlan plummet. Then, Rickenbacker speeds after the Pfalz.

INT. HARLAN'S PLANE

Harlan struggles to stop the plane from flipping.

EXT. PLANE

The engine shuts off.

The plane slows, levels some, then suddenly, its nose drops sending the plane straight down.

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INT. PLANE

Harlan fights to level it out.

(Based on a true story)

EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

The plane lifts slightly. Fluctuates in an unstable glide.

It nears closer and closer to the rolling hills. The plane impacts the top of a hill. Speeds out of control down its slope toward the Moselle River bank.

The engine catches fire. Sparks, smoke, and parts scatter. The plane splashes into the water and bobs afloat.

INT. HARLAN'S PLANE

Unconscious, Harlan slumps in the cockpit.

EXT. HARLAN'S PLANE

The plane sinks.

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EXT. RIVER

A FRENCH FISHERMAN dives from his boat into the water. Swims over to the plane. He frantically dives repeatedly down next to the plane.

Finally, he emerges with Harlan. Swims him to land.

FRENCH PEOPLE gather at the top of the hill. Others run down to the river to the aid of the Fisherman.

FLOWER FARMER
Monsieur? Monsieur?

Harlan opens his eyes.

FRENCH FISHERMAN
Il est Americain.
(to the crowd)
Parle-t-quelqu'un anglais?

The Farmer's wife, FLOWER WOMAN hurries down the hill from her HORSE-DRAWN BUGGY.

FLOWER WOMAN
Oui. Je parle anglais.
(to Harlan)
You'll be alright, monsieur.
L'hospital. Oui?

HARLAN
No, take me to the air field.

FLOWER WOMAN
No, monsieur, you need help.
L'hospital closer. Someone will go
and tell Americains you are there.

HARLAN
You know where the air field is?

FLOWER WOMAN
Oui. Voila l'avions!

She points to the southeast.

HARLAN
Oh, of course. You see the planes.
Okay, then. Now, listen to me,
please. It is very important.
Speak to no one but Lt.

(MORE)

HARLAN (cont'd)
Schwartzman. Only he must know
where I am. And you must hurry.

The Flower Woman nods then looks frantically at her husband.

FLOWER WOMAN
Oui, monsieur. We hurry.

HARLAN
Please, tell no one but Lt.
Schwartzman. Oui?

Harlan reaches out his hand to her.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
My life's in your hands, mon chere.

She puts her hand in his. He kisses it.

FLOWER WOMAN
Oui, monsieur. Lt. Schwartzman.
Et tu? Your name, monsieur?

HARLAN by
Lieutenant Schwartzman will know.
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FLOWER WOMAN
Bien sur. We go.

The Flower Woman and the Flower Farmer hurry to their Buggy.
(Based on a true story)

A FARMER helps Harlan to his feet. Blood gushes from a GASH
on Harlan's ankle.

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A FARMER
No monsieur. Tu peux rester ici.

Several men lift Harlan into a FLOWER CART.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Pardon, who pulled me out?

Harlan points to the river and then to himself.

A FARMER
Le pecheur a epargne. Um, parle
anglais? The fisherman.

The Farmer points to the soaking wet Fisherman.

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HARLAN
Merci, monsieur.
The Fisherman bashfully smiles.

FRENCH FISHERMAN
No, monsieur. Merci Americains!

EXT. AIR FIELD - DUSK

A Nieuport plane lands. A couple of mechanics run up. Tend to the plane.

Its pilot, Eddie Rickenbacker, gets out. Crosses the field in the direction of the FOUR FLYERS that are gathered around a brightly roaring FIREPIT outside the Hangar.

FLYER ONE
The French said the captain got two Huns!

FLYER TWO
I saw him do one of these things...zoom...and all I could see was Archie sitting there staring off in shock. What's going on?

The men LAUGH.

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FLYER THREE
Hey, Captain Rickenbacker!

The men each shake Rickenbacker's hand.
(Based on a true story)

FLYER ONE
Join us, Captain.
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EDDIE RICKENBACKER
Yeah sure. Let me set these things down. I'm freezing.

INT. HANGAR

With a sad face, Rickenbacker hangs his gear on the rack.

FLYER TWO (O.S.)
Yeah, that German's face kind of looked like mine when I heard about what happened to Schwartzman.

Rickenbacker looks up toward the door.

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FLYER ONE (O.S.)
What? What did he do, staple his hand to the desk?

The men LAUGH.

Behind Rickenbacker, a dark figure slips into the shadows. Unknowing, he returns to the men.

EXT. HANGAR

FLYER THREE

No man. He crashed!

The LAUGHS abruptly stop. Rickenbacker glares at Flyer Three.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

Schwartzman? You say that Schwartzman crashed?

FLYER THREE

Yes sir, but he's okay. Lucky guy, not even a scratch.

FLYER TWO

Yeah, some locals came and Schwartzman's Mechanic sent the bookkeeper, um...

FLYER THREE

Harlan. (Based on a true story)

FLYER TWO

Yeah. Harlan went to get him.

Puzzled, Rickenbacker sits. Warms his hands over the fire.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

So Harlan went to get Schwartzman. Not the other way around?

FLYER ONE

Wow. I'm glad I decided not to put my money on that bet.

FLYER THREE

Hey that's right. Thanks for reminding me. Pay up, pay up.

Flyer Two digs in his pocket. Pulls out some cash. The men heckle Flyer Two (with OUCH, OU'S and POOR BABY).

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

I wouldn't be so quick to ante up.

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FLYER TWO

What ya mean?

Flyer Two rapidly puts his money back in his pocket.

FLYER FOUR

Hey Captain? You okay?

Rickenbacker catches a glimpse of the Mechanic around the corner eavesdropping on the men.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

Hey!

He goes into the hangar. Sees the Mechanic hurrying off.

INT. HANGAR

Rickenbacker pursues the Mechanic. The other Flyers follow right at his heels.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

Hey, I'm talking to you. What's this about Schwartzman crashing a plane and Harlan going to get him?

THE MECHANIC

Sir, all I did was ready Lt. Schwartzman's plane for take off.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

I know who I saw in that plane and it wasn't Schwartzman!

FLYER ONE

Yeah!

FLYER FOUR

It wasn't?

FLYER TWO

Then who was in the plane?

FLYER THREE

Harlan.

FLYER TWO

Harlan was in the plane?

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

I want answers, soldier.

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The Flyers rally support behind Rickenbacker. Flyer Four SMACKS his fist in his palm.

FLYER FOUR
I'll get it out of him!

THE MECHANIC
Sir. Please. I'm just a mechanic. All I know is planes. I know them inside and out. Everything about them, what makes them do what they do and then some. That's what I'm good at. But Sir. (beat) I don't know a damn thing about the pilots that fly them.

He walks away then stops.

THE MECHANIC (CONT'D)
Except, I do know one thing. Even though that Harlan fella ain't a pilot, he ought to be.

Eddie turns to his flyers.

FLYER TWO
What are you going to do, Captain?

FLYER THREE
We have to get this guy!

FLYER ONE
Don't Captain. He's got connections to higher ups.

FLYER FOUR
Who?

EDDIE RICKENBACKER
Yep. He's related to the Assistant to the Secretary of War.

The men stand momentarily speechless.

FLYER FOUR
It was the bookkeeper flying Schwartzman's plane?

FLYER ONE
Well, welcome to the conversation.

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The men take it in.
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FLYER TWO

So Harlan was flying after Archie.

The men LAUGH briefly. Then the moment turns heavy-hearted and dispirited.

FLYER ONE

It's not right, Captain.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

No, it's not. But then...

Rickenbacker devilishly grins.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER (CONT'D)

If the Lieutenant wants to be part of our club, we'll just make sure he gets plenty of opportunity.

Facetious gleams and grins appear on the men.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

CROSSCUTTING SEQUENCE: by

Stacy W. Thornton

EXT. YARD/ALCATRAZ PRISON - DAY

The intense eyes and grins of Frank Lee Morris, Clarence, and John Anglin, watch as HARLAN draws FLIGHT PATTERNS on paper.
(Based on a true story)

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE/ALCATRAZ

WGAW Registration #989032

A FBI AGENT hands a FBI BADGE to the WARDEN.

EXT. YARD

A PRISON GUARD, swings his baton as he PASSES Harlan and the men, and suspiciously eyes them.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE

The Warden inspects PAPERWORK. Looks up from his desk.

The FBI Agent works hard to give him a small half-grin.

Behind him stands TWO MORE AGENTS with stiff expressions.

The Warden works up a sour grin in response.

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EXT. YARD

The Prison Guard returns to the men, moves them apart with his BATON. Leans in. Looks at the FLIGHT PATTERNS.

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE

An Administrator's FINGERS TYPE out IMMEDIATE RELEASE on a PRISON FORM in a TYPEWRITER.

EXT. YARD

The Prison Guard examines the drawings. Then, moves on.

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE

On the NAME LINE, one letter at a time is typed until the name, JOHN NOBLE HARLAN appears.

EXT. YARD

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Once the Prison Guard is out of view, Harlan FOLDS the FLIGHT PATTERN paper and reveals a PLUMBING DIAGRAM of CELL BLOCK B.

The Men peer at the map. (Based on a true story)

CLARENCE ANGLIN
 How did you say it, Harlan? "God
 Bless Bonnie & Clyde."

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE

The RELEASE PAPER is folded and inserted into a LARGE ENVELOPE. Sealed. "TOP-SECRET" is stamped on the front.

EXT. YARD

JOHN ANGLIN

So, you're saying we should dig a hole with a make shift drill from the toilet, then, squeeze through the crawl space in the wall and then follow the plumbing out with the sewage into the ocean?

He grins. The men look at each other several times.

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FRANK LEE MORRIS
That ain't gonna work.

Frank's face twitches. He glares at Harlan.
Clarence and John begin to get uncomfortable.
Harlan folds the drawings. Hands them to John.

HARLAN
Okay then, Frank. Find the air
vent, pop it open, run out the top
of the building, and swim for it.

Clarence and John roll their eyes and slump.

FRANK LEE MORRIS
And how do we find the vent?

Clarence and John perk up. Harlan thinks. Grins wide.

HARLAN
Follow the light, Frank. Just
follow the light.

Frank's eyes intensify. He fumes. Reaches into his shirt.
The brothers eyes bulge. They back away.
Suddenly, LOUD STATIC emerges from the yard SPEAKERS.

ANNOUNCEMENT
John Harlan report to Cell Block B
entrance. Harlan, Cell Block B.

The men look around then look at Harlan. Harlan raises his
eyebrows a few times.

HARLAN
Good luck to you, boys.

He hurriedly crosses the yard toward Cell Block B. Frank
starts after Harlan but the brothers grab hold him.

INT. RELEASE AREA

HARLAN carries a box of his personal possessions. The FBI
Agent ESCORTS Harlan outside the gates to a BOAT.

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EXT. YARD

Frank, John, and Clarence watch from the Prison Yard as Harlan's boat speeds away from Alcatraz.

FRANK LEE MORRIS
Well I'll be damned.

CLARENCE ANGLIN
I knew he was for real.

JOHN ANGLIN
Hey, that's what I said!

CLARENCE ANGLIN
You did not.

He hits John.

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"
JOHN ANGLIN
Ouch! Stop doing that, Clarence.

Frank continues to watch Harlan's boat get smaller as it speeds across the expansive bay.

FRANK LEE MORRIS
So follow the light, huh?
(he grins)
God bless you John Harlan.

EXT. BOAT

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On the deck of the boat, Harlan stares off in their direction as Alcatraz grows smaller.

FBI AGENT
Sorry, it took us so long.

HARLAN
I'm free. Retired. Done.
Finished. Out.

FBI AGENT
Yes sir. The program has pretty much served its purpose anyhow.

HARLAN
And I'm taken care of until I die.

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FBI AGENT
Yes sir.

HARLAN

Good. So, what now.

The FBI Agent cocks his head at Harlan. Then reaches into his coat. Pulls out a tattered TELEGRAM.

FBI AGENT

This came some months ago.

Harlan reads it. Then crushes the telegram in his hand.

HARLAN

(sadly)

Momma.

EXT. AIRPORT/PHILADELPHIA - DAY

Harlan walks with his old friend/partner, Buddy (68).

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"
BUDDY

Try to focus on the good things,
John. She lived a full life and
despite what you might think, she
loved you. Stacy W. Thornton

Harlan shrugs. Buddy SMACKS Harlan on the back.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

So where the hell you been since
(Based on a true story)
our Harlan Cafe days?

WGAW Registration #989032

HARLAN

Exactly where Momma probably said I
was.

BUDDY

(cracks up)

You jailbird!

They LAUGH.

INT. BUDDY'S CAR

The day's paper is lying in the front seat. Harlan picks it up. Reads HEADLINES.

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INSERT (HEADLINES):

ALCATRAZ ESCAPE...Frank Lee Morris
and the brothers, John and Clarence
Anglin escape from Alcatraz.

HARLAN
(mumbles)
Hope those fellas made it and get
their lives turned around.

EXT. HARLAN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - LATER

Buddy stops in front of the house. Harlan gets out.

BUDDY
I'll be happy to wait and give you
a ride back to the airport.

HARLAN
Thanks, Buddy, but I got a cab
coming. I've only one thing to do.

BUDDY
Suit yourself.
"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

Harlan shuts the car door.

by

BUDDY
Hey Harlan? You do know that Dolly
tried to get in touch with you many
years ago, don't you? But after
awhile, she gave up.

Harlan shakes his head in disbelief.
(Based on a true story)

BUDDY (CONT'D)
Sorry, man. She left town and
never gave a forwarding address.

HARLAN
If only I had money.

BUDDY
I've heard that one before.

HARLAN
Yeah, but this time I'd spend it
all to find her. Even if it took
the rest of my life.

BUDDY
But what about your Mom's house?
She left it to you right?

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HARLAN

The Catholic Church. And what I gather from her lawyer is, they're building a help center in its place. (beat) They're calling it, Angel's Retreat for the Unsung.

BUDDY

Fitting. Well, good luck to you, John. It was good seeing you.

He drives away leaving Harlan standing in front of the house.

Harlan passes the SOLD sign on the lawn. Heads toward the house. Glances up at the boarded-up windows. Shivers.

Harlan opens the torn screen, hanging crooked on its hinges. Unlocks the door. Gingerly enters the empty house.

He glances around the empty house. He goes into the living room, and approaches the only item left, his mother's PIANO.

He flips up the keyboard cover and "tickles the ivories."

The DOORBELL RINGS. Stacy W. Thornton

He opens the door. Peeks out the screen.

EXT. HOUSE (Based on a true story)

On the porch stands a little boy, HARRY JR. (3) and his father, HARRY SR. WGAW Registration #989032

On the street behind them are a car and A PIANO MOVING VAN with TWO MEN leaning on it, waiting.

HARRY SR.

You John Harlan? I'm Connick. I'm here about that piano you got for sale.

Harlan leads them in.

INT. HOUSE

They stand around the piano.

Stacy W. Thornton HARRY SR. (CONT'D)
Ethnofilms I'll take it only if it's in good
15218 Summit Ave., Suite 300-113
Fontana, CA 92336 condition. It'll be for my
Email: stacy@ethnofilms.com boy...Harry Jr.
Website: <http://www.ethnofilms.com>

Harlan sits. Plays a jazzy FRANK SINATRA tune.

He presses the final key. It CLUNKS. He hits it a second time. Again, it CLUNKS.

HARRY, JR.
(GIGGLES)
Bad key.

Harlan opens the piano back. Pulls out a STACK OF LETTERS.

He thumbs through a few. Sees his mother's mailing address all in his handwriting.

Harlan hits the piano key the third time; it sounds fine.

HARRY, SR.
We'll take it.

INT./EXT. HOUSE - LATER "THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

Harlan stands in the doorway holding the STACK OF LETTERS.

He waves good-bye to Harry Sr. and Jr. as they follow the PIANO MOVING VAN already motoring down the street.

A TAXICAB approaches from the opposite direction. Stops in front of the house. HONKS.

(Based on a true story)

Harlan takes one last peek at the empty house. SIGHS.

WGAW Registration #989032

EXT. HOUSE

Harlan gets into the Taxi.

INT. TAXI CAB

The TAXI DRIVER peers in the REARVIEW MIRROR and waits for Harlan's instruction.

Harlan stares toward his Mother's home.

A HUGE ROAR emanates from above.

He peeks out the window. Watches a COMMERCIAL JET fly through the CLOUDS.

The Driver grows impatient. Turns to Harlan. His mouth opens.

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DOLLY SMITH (V.O.)
Closing time, mister.

Harlan abruptly turns toward the Driver and sees DOLLY'S FACE. He blinks his eyes several times. The Driver's face glares at him.

THE DRIVER
I said, where to mister?

HARLAN
(quietly)
Philly Community Airport.

The Driver takes off. Harlan looks down at the STACK OF LETTERS in the seat beside him.

He slips out a letter from one of the open envelopes. Unfolds it. Several twenty-dollar bills drop into his lap.

His eyes bulge, he opens more, and pulls out cash from all.

He grins. Hope fills his eyes.

He shakes his head in disbelief at all the envelopes, then, one RED ENVELOPE catches his eye.

INSERT of RED ENVELOPE:

"FOR MY SON, JOHN HARLAN."
(Based on a true story)

His grin fades as he opens it and reads.

HARLAN'S MOTHER (V.O.)
Dear Son. I know you're a good man. I only wish you knew you were. Dolly never took your money; like you, she never cared about such things. No doubt, it was your dream that took you far away in the clouds. Perhaps, one day those clouds will clear and your dream will bring you back to us. I pray this letter will find you and you will find what it is you truly seek. Love forever and eternally, Momma.

He folds the letter. Tries to put it inside his jacket but it won't go.

He reaches in and pulls out a folded photo. Unfolds and looks at it.

INSERT of the FAMILY PHOTO (of DOLLY, REA, and HARLAN near the Boat at Beach).

He stares at it and grins.

INT. OFFICE/CALIFORNIA - DAY

A DOOR with a SIGN: FAMILY INVESTIGATION SERVICES opens.

A SECRETARY enters the room. Passes Harlan sitting opposite of a sharp brunette woman, INVESTIGATOR, (30's).

INVESTIGATOR

So if I recall, from our phone conversation, you're seeking the whereabouts of your ex-wife, Dolly Harlan...

HARLAN

Smith. Full name, Reathia Rose Smith; nickname, Dolly. She doesn't use her married name.

The Secretary drops a file in the basket. Lifts her brow at Harlan. Exits.

INVESTIGATOR

And why is that, Mr. Harlan?
(Based on a true story)

She picks up the file. Opens it.

WGAW Registration #989032

HARLAN

I think that should be obvious.

The Investigator glares at him.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

She didn't want me to find her. But that was before. I happen to know that after a while, she was trying to find me.

INVESTIGATOR

And why couldn't she find you, Mr. Harlan? Were you not using your married name?

Though annoyed by her sarcasm, Harlan calmly stands up.

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HARLAN

I told you.

INVESTIGATOR

Right. The top secret stuff.

She looks down at her file, then closes it.

INVESTIGATOR (CONT'D)

Look, Mr. Harlan. I don't think that I can, really, justifiably...

Harlan, WAD of CASH in hand, plops twenties out one by one onto her desk. Her eyes enlarge. Her manner abruptly changes.

INVESTIGATOR (CONT'D)

...possibly refuse this case.

She leaps to her feet. Shakes Harlan's hand.

HARLAN

And you'll let me know as soon as possible what you find. As I said, I don't have much time left.

Harlan heads for the door.

INVESTIGATOR

Yes, Mr. Harlan. And I'm truly very sorry about your news...that you are...

(Based on a true story)

HARLAN

It's okay, you can say it...dying.

Embarrassed, she looks away from his gaze. Harlan reaches for the knob.

INVESTIGATOR

May I ask how...

HARLAN

Long? The cancer's accelerated. I've got three months. Maybe six.

She meets his gaze with sincerity.

INVESTIGATOR

I'll get right on it.

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 INT. BUS/CALIFORNIA - DAY
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Harlan stares out the BUS WINDOW.

INVESTIGATOR (V.O.)
I'm so terribly, terribly sorry.
Your ex-wife passed away less than
a year ago. Heart failure.

Harlan closes his eyes. Clutches a LONG-STEMMED ROSE to his chest.

INVESTIGATOR (V.O. CONT'D)
And I still don't have anything on
your daughter yet. Maybe something
will turn up soon.

The bus stops. Harlan sees the sign: ROSE HILLS CEMETERY.
He tucks the ROSE inside his jacket. Gets off.

EXT. CEMETERY/CALIFORNIA - DAY

Harlan stands with the INFORMATION OFFICER as he points
across the expansive lawn.

Harlan nods. Heads in that direction.

He stops at different rows. Glances down at the paper in his
hand. Refers to its SCRIBBLED PLOT NUMBER.

He counts several rows ahead then heads toward them.

Then, he stops. Squints to make out one headstone's name.

He looks around. Sees the back of a partially graying DARK-
HAired woman, BETTY (39), that kneels a few stones away.

HARLAN
Excuse me, Ma'am? I foolishly left
my glasses. Would you mind reading
the name on this?

Betty stands and reveals a LIGHT-HAired boy, RUSTY (3), that
sits, pushing a TOY PLANE across the grass, in front of her.

BETTY
Rusty, stay here a moment.
(to Harlan)
Sure, I'd be happy to help.

TWO SCREAMING GIRLS pop up from the nearby hillside.

She jerks around to see her two REDHEADED daughters,
ROSEMARIE (15) and PAT (11).

They run and fight over flowers that Rosemarie clutches.

PAT

I want the rose.

ROSEMARIE

No, you got it last time. Here,
you can have all the rest and I'll
put the rose on Nanna-Muss's grave.

Betty continues toward Harlan but never looks directly at
him, distracted by her daughters.

BETTY

Now, Nanna-Muss wouldn't appreciate
that attitude. Shameful-fighting
on your grandmomma's grave.

They jump down and sit next to Rusty.

ROSEMARIE

Sorry, Momma.

Sorry, Momma.

Harlan tries to conceal a grin.

Betty looks down at the headstone.

BETTY

"Donald R. Smith."

(Based on a true story)

HARLAN

No. That's not it.

WGAW Registration #989032

BETTY

No really, it says...

HARLAN

Oh no, I don't doubt you. That's
not the name I told them I was
looking for. They must have
misunderstood me. It kind of
sounds like that name.

BETTY

May I?

Betty takes Harlan's paper.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Suncrest Section. Right. The row
number, right, but which plot is
not clear. It's probably here.

(MORE)

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BETTY (CONT'D)
I'd be happy to help you find it.
How about this one, Nathaniel...

HARLAN
Nope.

He shakes his head. Takes the paper back.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
Sorry for troubling you. Thanks.

He turns. Walks away. Betty, puzzled, watches him. Heads back to her kids.

BETTY
Okay girls, let's place the flowers
on Nanna-Muss's grave.

Rosemarie gives Pat all the flowers but keeps the ROSE.

PAT
No fair! "THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

ROSEMARIE^{by}
It's fair. It's my turn.
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PAT
But Nanna-Muss liked roses best!

Harlan stops in his tracks.
(Based on a true story)

Betty gets down on her knees.

WGAW Registration #989032
BETTY
I know what. Let's all do what
Nanna-Muss always did with a rose.
Do you remember what that was?

The children shake their heads.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Nanna-Muss said, "if you make a
wish...

PAT	ROSEMARIE
"...upon a rose, your wish is bound to come true."	"...upon a rose, your wish is bound to come true."

HARLAN (O.S.)
I once made a wish upon a rose.

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They all turn to see Harlan standing there.
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RUSTY
Did it come true?

Harlan slowly nods.

HARLAN
Please, ma'am. Would you mind
reading just one more inscription
for me?

Getting apprehensive, Betty picks up Rusty.

Harlan moves in closer to the headstone before him. Kneels
down. The muscles in his face strain to read it.

Pat grabs the rose and waves it under Harlan's nose.

PAT
Make another wish.

Harlan nods okay. "THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

BETTY by
Listen, this is my mother's grave.
It can't be the person you're...

HARLAN
Please. Please.

Betty sets Rusty down and reads. (Based on a true story)

BETTY
Here lies Reathia Rose "Dolly"
Harlan, Beloved Mother and
Grandmother. WGAW Registration #989032

Harlan fights to hold back his emotion.

BETTY
No. Didn't you understand what...

He turns to her with tremendous shame in his eyes.

HARLAN
Yes, I did...Reathia Elizabeth.

He reaches in his pocket, unfolds his photo and presents it
to Betty.

Stacy W. Thornton
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She sees it is the FAMILY PHOTO (of DOLLY, REA, and HARLAN
near the Boat at Beach).
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Betty glares at Harlan. Stands in shock.
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Her children go to her.

PAT
What's wrong Mom? Who's Reathia Elizabeth?

ROSEMARIE
That's Mom's real name.

PAT
Mom? Your name's Betty.

BETTY
It is, honey. It's my nickname.
But I, I...

Harlan's eyes well with tears.

HARLAN
Forgive me for taking so long.
"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

BETTY
I don't know what to say to you.

RUSTY
Leave my mom alone!

BETTY
It's okay, Rusty. I'm okay.
(Based on a true story)

With a tough pout, Rusty holds his fists up to Harlan.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Rusty, no.

Harlan nervously INHALES/EXHALES.

Betty kneels down next to him.

He intensely stares at the headstone.

HARLAN
(whispers to grave)
Please forgive me, Dolly.

He pulls the ROSE out of his jacket. Places it before the headstone. With helpless eyes, he turns to Betty.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
I'll never know her answer, Rea.
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BETTY
She always believed in you, Pop.

HARLAN

I loved no other but her.

BETTY

She called you her "unsung hero."

Harlan bows in shame.

BETTY (CONT'D)

She knew this day would come.

She takes a moment to compose herself.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Pop? Her dying wish was for me to tell you that, she knew you did the best you could. She said, "Make him know, I forgive him."

Harlan SIGHS. His shoulders drop. His eyes close.

HARLAN

And you? Can you ever forgive me?

Harlan reaches his hand out to her's.

She sees the wrinkles of his hand and his saddened face.

A long clump of gray hair plops down into his eye.

She slips her hand in his.

WGAW Registration #989032

BETTY

Do you think you can find some peace in being a grand-pop to them?

HARLAN

For whatever you may grant me and for as long as I still breathe.

His words cause her to oddly shiver. She quietly GASPS.

The children crowd in. Peer at them.

BETTY

Kids? Let me introduce you. This is...my Pop-Pop.

PAT

Who's Pop-Pop?

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BETTY

You know who Pop-Pop is. Nanna-Muss's husband, John Harlan.

ROSEMARIE

You mean the one who flew with Eddie Rickenbacker?

HARLAN

You told them that?

BETTY

Of course. You're our family hero.

HARLAN

If I am, it's only because of you.

PAT

Well Mom? Is he?

"THIRD TIME'S A CHARM"

ROSEMARIE

Is he the one?

by

BETTY

(exciting them) Stacy W. Thornton

Yes. He is. And he's my Pop...and he's your Grand-Pop.

The three children yell "Grand-Pop" and jump on Harlan.

(Based on a true story)

The BRIGHT SUNLIGHT filters through the cloudy sky.

Rosemarie TOSSES THE FLOWERS high into the air above them.

WGAW Registration #988032

The flowers seem to float forever down all around them and Harlan's face comes alive.

FADE OUT.

END TITLES:

John Harlan's daughter, "Betty," born Reathia Elizabeth, resided in California, had one marriage of 56 years that lasted until she died in November 2000.

This story is a great embellishment of the tale she left to the grandchildren and great grandchildren that Harlan never knew.

Stacy W. Thornton

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In Memory of Betty Thornton.

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