

"TOP GUN" - Scene 1

By Rob Biesenbach

CAST

Master Instructor Hardwood - tough-but-glamorous woman instructor

Jester - wacky "character" actress, big gestures

Mustang - hotshot, cocky, not a team player

Ice-cool - brooding narcissist, Mustang's chief rival

Moose - big, loveable dolt, a physical comic

Tigress - hot, oppressed woman improviser

(First day of class, instructor
talking with students.)

HARDWOOD

Welcome, students. I'm Master Instructor Hardwood. Congratulations on making it into the elite improv training program. You're the cream of the crop. You've got that special something that few others have.

(Pause) Speaking of which, your tuition checks are due today. Now let's introduce ourselves.

(Jester leaps forward and uses big physical movements, facial expressions and voices when playing her characters.)

GLEENDA

Howdy, teach! I'm Glenda! Stage name, "Jester." I do characters - the full range, from (in character) Crazy Old Lady to (different voice) Frenetic Monkey Girl!

(Silence. A cricket chirps.)

ICE-COOL

Yo, they call me, "Ice-cool."

(Mustang, wearing aviator shades, steps forward.)

MUSTANG

Do us all a favor, just call him "Ice." (Pause) I'm Charlie - stage name, "Mustang." Don't get too attached - I'll be on SNL while the rest of these "yes-anders" are playing "Big Booty" in the Skybox.

ICE-COOL

(Cough)-bullshit!-(Cough)

MUSTANG

You got somethin' to say, Ice?

ICE-COOL

Mustang, your ego's writing checks that your improv skills can't cash.

MUSTANG

Oh yeah? You've been living off the same damned "Jeff Goldblum" impression for 5 years now!

ICE-COOL

(Doing Goldblum) Hey, the, uh, the Goldblum, uhhhhh ... thing, was timely and relevant in the '90s and it's still a, uhhhhh ... good, solid, bit today. Y'see.

HARDWOOD

Break it up, you two! Mustang, Ice, you're going to have to work as a team for now on - especially if we have to go up against the Russians in the International Improv Tournament. Now remember: there's no "I" in Improv!

ICE-COOL

(Scoffing) The Russians! Last I heard they were still answering a phone like this (holds hand with thumb to ear and pinky to mouth) and firing a gun like this (does pointed finger gun).

HARDWOOD

And I'm telling you, they're not to be trifled with. Our intelligence indicates they've got a secret weapon: a double-blind freeze tag with an alphabet game insertion and a time-jump twist.

ALL BUT MUSTANG AND HARDWOOD

(Various expressions of disbelief) No way! / (Gasp) / Get out!

MUSTANG

It's true, they do!

HARDWOOD

Oh? And how do you know that, Mustang? That's classified information.

MUSTANG

Because I was there. In Vladivostok. For "Vladi-prov '89."

HARDWOOD

That was you?

(“Take My Breath Away” music comes up as spotlight isolates Hardwood and Mustang. She removes glasses, tosses her hair sexily, he approaches her, they have a moment. Music stops, lights come back up.)

HARDWOOD

(Clears throat) Okay ... class ... let's get on with the introductions.

MOOSE

Uh, hi, I'm Moose? I usually play the frat-boy, or the drunk guy in the bar - on account of my ... well, you know ...

MUSTANG

(Laughing) HE'S FAT!

MOOSE

I was gonna say because of my ... Farley-esque proportions. But yeah, I'm fat. Whenever we need someone to take a spill on stage or do a header into the audience, well, I'm yer guy, chief.

HARDWOOD

Thank you, Moose -

MOOSE

By the way, here's a picture of my girlfriend, Darlene? We were high school sweethearts. Someday we're gonna get married and have a great life together. (Pause) You know, barring any unforeseen tragedies ...

HARDWOOD

Oh, what could possibly happen? Next?

TIGRESS

I'm Tigress, and I'm hot. But it's my curse. A good looking improviser is like finding a table at Corcoran's on a Friday night ...

HARDWOOD

(Pause) I'm sorry, I'm not from here ...

TIGRESS

It's rare, okay? It doesn't happen. Anyway, in every scene I get tagged as the wife or the hooker. Just once, I'd like to be a doctor or a scientist or something.

MUSTANG

(Imitating a P.A. system) Dr. Jugs to surgery, paging Dr. Jugs ...

HARDWOOD

Okay, enough! Let's do some scene work, people. And let's keep it simple - I don't want to see any pool tables or other hotshot maneuvers. Mustang, Jester, Tigress, why don't you start us off? Can we get a location?

MOOSE

A hospital!

HARDWOOD

You're in a hospital. Go!

(Jester starts running around the stage like a crazed chicken as the other two observe a moment.)

TIGRESS

As a doctor, I recognize this condition, and I would prescribe ...

MUSTANG

Bullshit, Sally, go turn your tricks somewhere else, you drug-addled crack whore. I'll take care of this.

(He pantomimes firing a shotgun at Jester.)

BANG!

(He starts to walk off, while Jester and Tigress stand surprised and angry.)

You're dead!

JESTER

Master Instructor Hardwood! Mustang just denied me!

MUSTANG

Well, what the hell was that, Jester?

JESTER

That was my Chicken Lady, as if you didn't know!

MUSTANG

I'm NOT doing a scene with a freakin' (do Tom Cruise's 'freak out' move, where he jumps/kicks his legs into the air) CHICKEN, okay?

TIGRESS

And he pimped me! I mean, literally! I was playing a doctor and he made me a hooker!

ICE-COOL

That's Mustang for ya - always in it for himself!

MUSTANG

You got a problem, Ice?

ICE-COOL

No, you're the problem! (Do Val Kilmer's "bite" move.) I don't like improvising with you. You're dangerous!

MUSTANG

That's right, I am dangerous!

(It erupts into chaos as they argue
among each other.)

HARDWOOD

All right, people, let's calm down! Now, we've got exactly four weeks
until our first show. We've got to get it together!

(Lights out.)