

EXT. EXOTIC JUNGLE - DAY

Thick, rubbery trees and shrubs. Their leaves and branches stretch out in every direction, obscuring our view. These are not normal plants. Some of them are purple. A CACOPHONY of bizarre, unseen ANIMALS scream in the distance.

A COLANDER

Moves INTO FRAME. It stops. Spins one direction. Then the other. CAMERA CRANES DOWN to the BOY who has the colander on his head. His name is MAX. He is 12. He's small and scrawny. He could pass for 11, but not 13.

Max peers over one shoulder. Then the other. Suddenly-

He throws himself against a viney tree. Clutches a lethal-looking laser blaster, his finger on the trigger. Max grabs the brim of the colander and hisses into it.

MAX

Alpha tango bravo! Encore! Encore!
The coast is clear! Over!

A nearby shrub SHAKES VIOLENTLY. Moments later, a MAN emerges. His faded, rusty DOG TAGS JINGLE as he moves. He does a shoulder roll across the forest floor and crouches down next to Max. His face is covered in a mix of dirt and 7PM stubble. He is FLOYD KLINGER. He is 58.

KLINGER

Roger roger! Proceed with caution!

Max and Klinger slowly peek around opposite sides of the tree trunk. Laser blasters shaking in their hands. Eyes widen. They retreat to the far side of the trunk.

MAX

I counted six!

KLINGER

There's more. They're in the trees... I can smell 'em.

MAX

C'mon- let's move out! I've got your back!

KLINGER

Not yet. We have to call for space support.

MAX

There's no time. We've got to move!

Klinger's eyes are as wide as dinner plates.

KLINGER

That's what they want you to do,
kid! They're in your head!

He jabs his finger into his temple for emphasis.

Max will have none of it. He points at his colander.

MAX

Look! I'm the superior officer of
this unit, and I saw we- hey!

Klinger snatches the colander and places it on his own head.
He grips the brim and speaks into it.

KLINGER

Come in Spaghetti, this is Kumquat,
over. Spaghetti, come in.

Max fumes. The CRACKLY VOICE of a COMM OFFICER responds.

COMM OFFICER (V.O.)

Spaghetti here, go ahead Kumquat.

KLINGER

Requesting orbital strike,
coordinates zero-tango-niner-
foxtrot, sector gummy bear.

COMM OFFICER (V.O.)

Roger roger. Orbital strike
incoming-

Max makes a grab for the colander. Klinger hangs on to it and
darts away.

MAX

What's the big idea? There's barely
any of them! Let's just go!

KLINGER

No! We wait for the space support.
Then we carefully work our way
around that ridge.

Max looks. Off in the distance, we see a dense patch of
jungle, a tangled mass of trees and vines, rising up the side
of a hill.

MAX

But- that'll take hours!

KLINGER

That's the point. We go in slow and careful. We come out alive.

Max sighs and stares up the ridge.

MAX

It's so far! How are we going to get up there?

KLINGER

One step at a time. Patience. It's like my friend Frank once said, 'Things look tough when you haven't started, but once you do, it's often hard to-'

A beat. Max raises an eyebrow.

KLINGER

Well, that was it. Charlie got 'im after that. Whole place lit up like the Fourth of July.

Suddenly, the JUNGLE EXPLODES! Enemy laser blasts tear at the tree trunks! Max and Klinger dive for cover as the tree they're leaning against SHATTERS into a thousand pieces!

Max runs, keeping his head low. He jumps over roots and ducks under branches. Puffs of dirt POP behind his feet. He turns, and sprays the jungle with his laser blaster. BLAM! BLAM!

He looks around. Klinger is gone. He's all alone. The DIN of battle has been reduced to a single FFFT FFFT FFFT! of an alien machine gun. It's getting closer. FFFT FFFT!

Suddenly, a sticky purple goo slaps into his face as we-

SMASH TO:

EXT. KLINGER'S BACK YARD - EVENING

Max stands behind Klinger's modest house. Chipped, plastic siding. The only exotic plants are weeds. The grass is uncut and matted.

Clear, harmless water drips down Max's face. His laser blaster is now a Super Soaker. The sprinkler system continues its regular FFFT FFFT FFFT.