

Dr. Strangelove

FADE IN:

INT. BURPLESON AFB

MANDRAKE walks hurriedly through the halls with the portable radio producing another jazz tune, now upbeat. He enters RIPPER'S office.

MANDRAKE

Excuse me, sir, something rather interesting's just cropped up. Listen to that. Music. Civilian broadcasting. I think those fellows in the Pentagon have given us some sort of exercise to test our readiness. Personally, I think it's taking it a bit too far – our fellows will be inside Russian radar cover in about twenty minutes. You listen to that. Traffic block full of stations all churning it out.

RIPPER

Mandrake.

MANDRAKE

Yes sir?

RIPPER

I thought I issued instructions for all radios on this base to be impounded.

MANDRAKE

Well you did indeed sir, and I was in the process of impounding this very one when I happened to switch it on. I thought to myself, our fellows hitting Russian radar cover in twenty minutes, dropping all their stuff, I'd better tell you, because if they do, it'll cause a bit of a stink, won't it?

RIPPER

Group Captain, the officer exchange program does not give you any special prerogatives to question my orders.

MANDRAKE

Well I realize that sir, but I thought you'd be rather pleased to hear the news. I mean after all, well let's face it we...we don't want to start a nuclear war unless we really have to, do we?

RIPPER

Please sit down and turn that thing off.

MANDRAKE

Yes sir. Ah, what about the planes, sir? Surely you must issue the recall code immediately?

RIPPER

Group Captain, the planes will not be recalled. My attack orders have been issued, and the orders stand.

MANDRAKE

Well, if you'll excuse me for saying so, sir, that would be, to my way of thinking, rather...well rather an odd way of looking at it. You see, if a Russian attack was in progress we would certainly not be hearing civilian broadcasting.

RIPPER

Are you certain of that, Mandrake?

MANDRAKE

I'm absolutely positive about that, sir, yes.

RIPPER

And what if it was true?

MANDRAKE

Well, I'm afraid I'm still not with you, sir, because, I mean, if a Russian attack was not in progress, then your use of Plan B, in fact your orders to the entire wing....oh. Well I would say, sir, that there was something dreadfully wrong somewhere.

RIPPER

Now, why don't you just take it easy, Group Captain, and please make me a drink of grain alcohol and rain water and help yourself to whatever you'd like.

MANDRAKE

General Ripper, sir, as an officer in Her Majesty's Air Force, it is my clear duty, under the present circumstances, to issue the recall code upon my own authority and bring back the wing. If you'll excuse me sir.

Mandrake tries the door, finds it locked.

MANDRAKE

I'm afraid, sir, I must ask you for the key and the recall code. Have you got them handy, sir?

RIPPER

I told you to take it easy, Group Captain. There's nothing anybody can do about this thing now. I'm the only person who knows the three letter code group.

MANDRAKE

Then I must insist, sir, that you give them to me.

Ripper reveals a pistol.

MANDRAKE

Do I take it, sir, that you are threatening a brother officer with a gun?

RIPPER

Mandrake, I suppose it never occurred to you that while we're chatting here so enjoyably, a decision is being made by the President and the Joint Chiefs in the war room at the Pentagon. And when they realize there is no possibility of recalling the wing, there will be only one course of action open; total commitment. Mandrake, do you recall what Clemenceau once said about war?

MANDRAKE

No, I don't think I do sir, no.

RIPPER

He said war was too important to be left to the generals. When he said that, fifty years ago, he might have been right. But today, war is too important to be left to politicians. They have neither the time, the training nor the inclination for strategic thought. I can no longer sit back and allow Communist infiltration, Communist indoctrination, Communist subversion and the international Communist conspiracy to sap and impurify all of our precious bodily fluids.

MANDRAKE

Sir?

RIPPER

Mandrake....

MANDRAKE

Yes, Jack?

RIPPER

Have you ever seen a commie drink a glass of water?

MANDRAKE

Well no, I can't say I have, Jack.

RIPPER

Vodka, that's what they drink, isn't it? Never water.

MANDRAKE

Well, I believe that's what they drink Jack, yes.

RIPPER

On no account will a commie ever drink water, and not without good reason.

MANDRAKE

Oh, ah, yes. I don't quite...see what you're getting at, Jack.

RIPPER

Water. That's what I'm getting at. Water. Mandrake, water is the source of all life. Seven tenths of this earth's surface is water. Seventy percent of you is water.

MANDRAKE

Oh, God.....

RIPPER

As human beings, we need fresh, pure water to replenish our precious bodily fluids.

MANDRAKE

Yes....

RIPPER

Are you beginning to understand, Mandrake?

MANDRAKE

Yes.....

RIPPER

Mandrake, have you ever wondered why I drink only rain water, or distilled water, and only pure grain alcohol?

MANDRAKE

Well, it did occur to me, Jack, yes.

RIPPER

Have you ever heard of a thing called fluoridation? Fluoridation of water?

MANDRAKE

Ah, yes, I have heard of that, Jack. Yes.

RIPPER

Well, do you know what it is?

MANDRAKE

No. No, I don't know what it is, no.

RIPPER

Do you realize that fluoridation of water is the most monstrously conceived and dangerous communinst plot we have ever had to face?

SHOTS ring out. Ripper returns fire.

RIPPER

Two can play at that game, Soldier!

More shots, Ripper returning fire again.

RIPPER

That's nice shooting, Soldier!

He tosses the M-16 to Mandrake.

RIPPER

Mandrake, come here!

MANDRAKE

You calling me, Jack?

RIPPER

Get over here and help me return fire!

MANDRAKE

I ah, haven't had very much experience, you know, with these sort of machines, Jack. I only ever pressed a button in my old Spitfire.

RIPPER

Mandrake, in the name of Her Majesty and the Continental Congress, come here and return fire, Boy!

MANDRAKE

Jack, I'd love to come. But, what's happened, you see, is the string in my leg's gone.

RIPPER

The what?

MANDRAKE

The string. I never told you, but, you see, I've got a gammy leg. Oh dear. Gone. Shot off.

The gunfire increases in intensity.

MANDRAKE

Jack, don't you think we'd be better off in some other part of the room, away from all this flying glass?

RIPPER

Nah, we're OK here. Mandrake, do you realize that in addition to fluoridating water, there are studies underway to fluoridate salt, flour, fruit juices, soup, sugar, milk and ice cream? Ice cream, Mandrake. Children's ice cream.

MANDRAKE

Good Lord.

RIPPER

You know when fluoridation first began?

MANDRAKE

No, no I don't Jack. No.

RIPPER

1946. Nineteen hundred and forty six, Mandrake. How does that coincide with your postwar commie conspiracy, huh? It's incredibly obvious, isn't it? A foreign substance is introduced into our precious bodily fluids without the knowledge of the individual and certainly without any choice. That's the way your hard-core commie works.

MANDRAKE

Jack...Jack, listen, tell me, ah...when did you first become aware of, well, develop this theory?

RIPPER

I became aware of it, Mandrake, during the physical act of love.

MANDRAKE

Oh.

RIPPER

Yes, a profound sense of fatigue, a feeling of emptiness followed. Luckily I was able to interpret these feelings correctly – the loss of essence.

MANDRAKE

Yes....

RIPPER

I can assure you it has not recurred, Mandrake. Women.....women sense my power, and they seek the life essence. I do not avoid women, Mandrake, but I do deny them my essence.

MANDRAKE

Heh heh.....yes.

The GUNFIRE cuts out suddenly.

RIPPER

Boys must have surrendered.

MANDRAKE

It's the way it is. Now Jack, listen. While there's still time, I beg you, let's recall the wing.

RIPPER

Those boys were like my children, and now they've let me down.

MANDRAKE

No no, Jack, not a bit of it. No, I'm sure they all gave you their very best. And I'm equally sure they all died thinking of you, every man jack of them. Ah, Jack. Supposing a bit of water has gone off, eh? And certainly one can never be too sure about these sorts of things. Would you look at me now? Do I look all rancid and clotted? You look at me, Jack, eh? Look, eh? And I drink a lot of water, you know. I'm what you might call a water man, Jack. That's what I am. And I can swear to you, my boy, swear to you, that there's nothing wrong with my bodily fluids. Not a thing, Jackie.

RIPPER

Mandrake, have you ever been a prisoner of war?

MANDRAKE

Ah, yes I was, matter of fact, Jack. I was.

RIPPER

Did they torture you?

MANDRAKE

Ah, yes they did. I was tortured by the Japanese, Jack, if you must know. Not a pretty story.

RIPPER

Well, what happened?

MANDRAKE

Oh, well, I don't know, Jack. Difficult to think of under these conditions. But, well, what happened was they got me on the old Rangoon railway. I was laying train mines for the bloody Japanese puff-puffs.

RIPPER

No, I mean when they tortured you, did you talk?

MANDRAKE

Ah, no, I, ah...I don't think they wanted me to talk, really, I don't think they wanted me to say anything. It was just their way of having.....a bit of fun, the swines. Strange thing is they make such bloody good cameras.

RIPPER

You know those clowns outside are going to give me a pretty good going over in a few minutes. For the code.

MANDRAKE

Yes. Well, you may have...you may have quite a point, there, Jack.

RIPPER

I don't know how well I could stand up under torture.

MANDRAKE

Well, of course the answer to that is, boy, no one ever does. And my advice to you, Jack, is to give me the code now. And if those devils come back and try any rough stuff, we'll fight them together, boy, like we did just now, on the floor, eh?

RIPPER

Mandrake, I happen to believe in a life after this one, and I know I'll have to answer for what I've done. And I think I can.

MANDRAKE

Yes, well of course you can, Jack, of course you can. I'm a religious man, myself, you know, Jack. I believe in all that sort of thing, and...I'm hoping, you know, Jack, that you're going to give me the code, boy, that's what I'm hoping. And....

Ripper goes into the washroom.

MANDRAKE

Oh, you're going to have a little wash and brush up, are you? What a good idea. Always did wonders for a man, that, Jack. A little wash and brush up, water on the back of the neck, and... makes you feel marvelous. That's what we need, Jack! Water on the back of the neck and the code. Now, now, supposing I play a little guessing game with you, Jack, boy.....I'll try and guess what the code is.....

A SHOT. Mandrake tries to open the door, but Ripper's body has it jammed shut.

MANDRAKE

Jack? Jack?

FADE OUT