The Lieutenant has a problem with Commanders!

 [Charles Nangle](https://www.facebook.com/charles.nangle?fref=ufi) The Lieutenant (me) at 0442 taxiing aboard USS Kitty Hawk 200 miles south of Chabahar Iran. My jet went down on the cat and now I'm being parked in front of the frensel lens before the recovery begins. I'm pointed toward the left side of the ship, lights out as usual. While I'm smack dab in the middle of the landing area the Commander in the tower turns the landing area lights. No-no No. 1.

The Commander in Carrier Air Control Center CATCC (The carrier's approach control) waves off the first two aircraft because the Lieutenant (I) am in the way. He sees the landing area lights have been turned on and figures the Commander in the tower knows something he doesn't so he allows the third aircraft, an A-7, to continue. No-no No. 2.

The Commander flying the A-7 sees the landing area (but not the Tomcat... lights out..) and "calls the ball (tells the landing signal officer (LSO) he's ready to land, but receives no reply. The LSO doesn't reply because he is not there. He's still below deck. There is a Tomcat (mine) fouling the landing area.

Instead of taking a MANDATORY waveoff, for having received no reply from the LSO, the Commander in the A-7 CLAIMS he took his hands off the stick and throttle to check his radio connection (200 feet above the water, night time full landing configuration and speed behind the carrier even though he had just heard his own previous radio transmission... lying sack of shit..) and figures "awww it'll be okay and continues his approach. No-no No.3.

The Lieutenant (me) watches as his suddenly wide eyed taxi director (who is looking aft) runs from the left side of the jet to the right... and keeps on running... and running... The Lieutenant (I) cannot figure out why. The Lieutenant's (my) eyes are now forward. The jet is still pointed toward the left side of the ship.

The Commander in the tower frantically calls to the LSO to wave the A-7 off. Twice... but the LSO is not there. He's still below deck. There's a Tomcat (mine) fouling the landing area.

The Commander in the A-7 is now four seconds from touchdown. The Commander in the tower screams into the radio "WAVE OFF WAVE OFF WAVE OFF!!!"... on departure frequency. The Commander in the A-7 is on arrival frequency. The Commander in the tower had selected the wrong frequency. But the Lieutenant (me) IS on departure frequency and hears it and, being and LSO himself, knows that means "don't land". (??!!??)

The Lieutenant (me) looks back over his left shoulder and sees an A-7 Corsair 2-3 seconds from touching down in the very landing area he now occupies. After a quick "holy fuck" he turns on the all the exterior lights (it's just one switch on the throttle) and firewalls the engines to get the hell out of the way. The Lieutenant soon remembers that his Tomcat is powered by POS TF-30 engines with a spool up time in excess of 5 seconds. He ain't going nowhere fast.

The Commander in the A-7 sees the Christmas tree of a Tomcat that wasn't there (well... visible) a moment ago and finally decides to take his own wave off. Alas the A-7 is powered by the equally POSy TF-41 engine (a derivative of the POS TF-30) and gets engine performance similar to the Tomcat's.

The Lieutenant (me) decides there is no future in staying with a Tomcat loaded with 20K of JP-5 and 5 air to air missiles being landed upon by an A-7 carrying two Rockeye bomlet pods. He braces up, says a quick goodbye to everyone and everything in general and pulls the lower ejection seat handle as the A-7 crosses the ramp waiting for it's POS engine to spool up... about 1 second out.

The F-14 canopy blows off and strikes the underside of the A-7, and bounces off the flight deck behind the Tomcat. . 04 seconds the rear seat fires. Fortunately the POS TF-3 30 engines, still spooling up, move the Tomcat forward far enough to position the back seater out from under the A-7s left wing tip by about two feet. 0.4 seconds the rear seat fires. The A-7 collides with the Tomcat as the back seater rockets up past the A-7's left wing tip. The Lieutenant (me) is still in the Tomcat. 0.5 later the front seat fires as the A-7 knocks off the Tomcat's rudders and bounces of the top of the Tomcat. The Lieutenant (I) did not have time to reduce the power on the POS TF-30 engines before he was rocketed out of the Tomcat torquing severely from the impact with the A-7. The two POS TF-30 finally spool up to Mil power, take the 400 lb canopy and launch it across the flight deck into a crowd of sailors who are already being blown across the deck like a colony of ants by the same two POS TF-30 engines. One sailor is killed by the canopy and dozens more are injured. The canopy continues on to cause major damage to two A-6 Intruders. The F-14 goes over the left side of the ship still at full power and into the Indian Ocean.

The Lieutenant's (my) ejection trajectory is a cork screw and his ejection seat kicks him out early and his parachute opens while he is still traveling up. So he looks UP and sees the ship.. and promptly goes full mind dump.

The Commander in the A-7 bounces off the Tomcat and flies away. His undercarriage and tail hook are severely damaged. He tanks and orbits until dawn and makes a barricade arrestment. The Lieutenant (me) gets his chute washed over him by the ship's wake and dragged underwater when the same chute gets caught up in the turbulence of the the ship's 4 25 ton screws. The Lieutenant (me) spends about 90 seconds being held 15 feet underwater trying to find and remove the shroud lines that are holding him down there. The Lieutenant (me) is finally successful and floats to the surface. The Lieutenant (me) and his back seater are eventually located and picked up by the SAR helo and spend the entire ride back to the ship hugging each other (no homo) happy that the other one wasn't dead....

The "results"...?? The Commander in the tower, the Commander in the CATCC and the Commander in the A-7 receive non punitive letters of reprimand that are not sent out of the command and are removed from their service jackets when they transferred out of their respective commands. "We" didn't, after all, want to hurt their careers... Tell that to the widow fuck buckets...

Now... had the Lieutenant landed on the Commander...

After the Accident Board convenes (what happened and how do we prevent it from happening again?) the JAGs (who do we BLAME) show up. After "careful" investigation a JAG O-6 confidently declares that the accident was entirely the Lieutenant's (my) fault for taxiing around the flight deck at night with my lights off.

Our O-5 CAG (Woodie Sprouse), who sat in on all JAG proceedings, promptly shits down the Captain's throat, calls him a "worthless, piss ant cubicle fuck, and has him escorted off the ship. Bless that man...

For those of you interested I have enclosed a freeze frame of the moment of impact taken by the deck mounted Plat camera. The big mouth intake of the A-7 is above the time character 42 in the top left quadrant defined by the Plat camera centerline and glide path reference lines in a nose high wave off attitude but still descending. The A-7s left wing tip is just below the 63 and F characters in the upper right quadrant. The two 45 degree lines are the leading edges of the Tomcats rudders. The A-7's left main mount is between the rudders. The fucker couldn't even find the centerline.. (A blessing since the back seater would have otherwise hit the A7s wing and died) The two lights on the far right side of the pic are the Tomcat's right wing root position lights. The whitish area between the 000 and 25 characters in the upper right quadrant is the rocket blast of the back seater's ejection seat.

The Lieutenant (I) was not allowed to punch any of the Commanders in the face.

Christ I still get agitated thinking about this.... What a night...