

# ★ CHAPTER 7 ★

**“THE PRODUCERS WILL  
‘PUNCH IT UP’ IN ANY  
MANNER WE DICTATE”**

The producers of *Jurassic Park III* were having a tough time coming up with a good ending for their movie. The heroes had battled prehistoric dinosaurs on a jungle island throughout most of the film, and now the producers needed an exciting way to rescue them. An early draft of the screenplay simply had the State Department sending a helicopter to pluck them off the island, but that wasn't exciting enough. So the producers decided to call in the navy and the Marines.

“We've been contacted by the producers of 'Jurassic Park III' with a request to use Navy/USMC assets to 'save the day' at the end of the movie,” wrote Cdr. Bob Anderson, head of the navy's film office in Los Angeles, in a December 4, 2000, memo. “Even though it is a short scene, the producers will 'punch it up' in any manner we dictate to make sure the audience knows that we are saving the people threatened by the big lizard!”

In the last version of the script written before the navy and the Marine Corps were contacted, the film ends with Ellie, played by Laura Dern, bringing a helicopter provided by the State Department to rescue her old boyfriend, Dr. Alan Grant (Sam Neill), and his party of stranded adventurers, Paul Kirby (William H. Macy), Amanda Kirby (Tea Leoni), and Eric Kirby (Trevor Morgan), as they make it to the beach just ahead of the rampaging dinosaurs.

In this version of the script, dated November 7, 2000, a helicopter sits

on the beach waiting to rescue the party. As Dr. Grant climbs aboard, he is surprised to see Ellie there to greet him. “Ellie?!” he says in astonishment.

“She didn’t just send help,” the script says. “She came herself.”

Above the whirr of the rotor blades, Dr. Grant asks her: “How did you get here?”

“Good friend in the State Department,” she replies.

After a few more lines of banter, the chopper lifts off and the movie is over.

To make the ending more exciting, the producers wanted the Marine Corps to stage a small-scale amphibious landing on a remote beach in Kauai, Hawaii, where the film was shooting.

No problem, Strub told the filmmakers after reading the script. The Pentagon would agree to loan them two navy SH-60 Seahawk helicopters and their three-man crews, four Marine Corps amphibious assault vehicles, and eighty Marines to storm the beaches for seven days of shooting on the island in January of 2001. And all they had to do in return was add one little line of dialogue to the rescue scene, and to make sure that the navy logo was clearly visible when the helicopters were shown on screen.

“All we ask is that the military men look tactically sound and that there be a line of dialogue that says the Marines are there to take care of the situation or to evacuate our main characters, and that the Navy helicopters are identified,” wrote Capt. Shawn D. Haney, the Marine Corps’ project officer assigned to the film, in a letter to the producers, dated December 19, 2000.

In the next version of the script, dated December 22, 2000—just three days after Captain Haney asked for a new line of dialogue to be added, and just three weeks after Commander Anderson wrote his memo about the producers being willing to punch up the script “in any manner we dictate”—the navy and the Marines were written into the script. In this version, the military saves the day, and all mention of the State Department’s role in assisting in the rescue is eliminated.

At the end of the film in this version of the script, the stage directions read: “We pan to reveal a massive military presence off the coast, half a dozen U.S. Navy warships. A helicopter gunship rests on the beach, rotors still turning. Never before have steel and firepower looked so comforting. Amanda and Paul embrace, then kiss, the moment getting the best of them.”

Laura Dern is no longer waiting in the helicopter waiting to greet them, but we learn that she has sent the military to rescue them. And in the movie, as Dr. Grant and the little boy, Eric, walk toward the military rescue party, Eric tells Dr. Grant: “You have to thank her now. She sent the Navy and the Marines.”

That one little line of dialogue was all the Pentagon wanted: just one little plug to let the audience know who the real heroes are.

And at the end of the movie, as the helicopter lifts off, the navy logo is clearly visible on both sides for the audience to see.

In the movies, when companies pay producers to show their products on screen, it's called “product placement.” But when the government provides incentives to producers to make the military look good in their movies, it's known by a different name. It's called “propaganda.”