PART V: THE ACCIDENT

LT (b) (6) [redacted] AND LTJG BAILEY were on an authorized scheduled launch from USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43) to NAS Miramar. At approximately 0017, 17 September LT (b) (6) [redacted] and LTJG BAILEY left the ready room to man their aircraft which was spotted on the number one elevator.

Their aircraft, 151017, was originally scheduled for carrier refresher landings and the aircraft had been partially fueled and partially defueled [illegible] prior to being released for flight. A thorough preflight of the aircraft was performed by LT (b) (6) [redacted] and LTJG BAILEY. One discrepancy noted during preflight was that the gross weight written on the nose was 36,000 lbs. This figure was changed to 41,000 lbs. Preflight was completed with no [illegible]her discrepancies noted. However, the empennage could not [illegible] inspected as it was hanging over the side of the ship.

[illegible] entering the aircraft, LT (b) (6) [redacted] noted that the internal fuel counter indicated 5,800 lbs., and the tape indicated 4000 lbs. After electrical power was applied to the aircraft, the fuel readings remained the same and the Fuel Level Low Indicator Light illuminated. When the Feed Tank Check Switch was actuated, both the tape and counter commenced to spin in a decreasing fuel quantity direction. This spinning continued through an estimated four to five revolutions before stopping with the tape indicating 600 lbs., counter at 5,800 lbs., and with the Fuel Level Low Indicator Warning Light illuminated. LT (b) (6) [redacted] informed LTJG BAILEY of this discrepancy.

After the engines were started and while performing post flight checks, LT (b) (6) [redacted] placed the Internal Wing Transfer Switch to the "Normal" position, the Wings Transfer Pressure Switch in the "Emergency" position, and commenced transferring fuel into the internal fuselage cells. Prior to the catapult launch the tape read 3,000 lbs., the counter approximately 5,400 lbs., and the Fuel Level Low Indicator Light was extinguished.

Taxiing on to the catapult, LT (b) (6) [redacted] noted that the AN/AJB-3A [illegible] not erected and that the "OFF" [illegible] was visible. He immediately requested LTJG BAILEY to push in the AN/AJB-3A circuit breaker and the AN/AJB-3A commenced to erect.

After positioning on the catapult the flight deck Maintenance Checkers discovered a leak in the port external wing tank. The checkers called the Air Officer and told him of this discrepancy and further stated that it was a "Go bird" if the pilot would accept the aircraft with this discrepancy. The Air Officer called LT (b) (6) [redacted] and informed him of this situation and asked if he would accept the aircraft. LT (b) (6) [redacted] replied, "Affirmative. AC2 (151017) is a go bird." At this time the AN/AJB-3A appeared to be erected. LT (b) (6) [redacted] informed LTJG BAILEY the "gyro" had erected.

SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE
WITH PARAGRAPH 66 OF OPNAVINST P3750.6C