

Operation Coldfeet

Written By

Clinton C. West Jr.

Based on true events

8769 Partridgerun Way
Bristow, VA 20136
703.909.6814
clintoncwestjr@gmail.com

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER:

"The battle has been fought on an exotic terrain that covers two-thirds of the globe and is in many ways as challenging and dangerous as outer space. As the Cold War unfolded, these giant undersea fleets arguably became more powerful than any weapons on land or in the air, able to destroy whole nations while escaping retaliations."

- Anonymous submariner

FADE IN:

EXT. ARCTIC OCEAN - DAY

USS Nautilus slides through dark waters, deep beneath the ice shelf. Propellers turn in counter-rotating unison.

SUPERIMPOSE: *USS NAUTILUS (SSN-571)* - ARCTIC NUCLEAR
DETERRENT PATROL - JULY 1962

INT. SONAR ROOM - SAME

A cold gray slot machine-type handle turns.

The ship's CAPTAIN, studious in a clean khaki uniform, storms in with his EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

Two SAILORS in well-worn Navy blue coveralls and black headphones sit at large circular tubed screens.

Black wires spread like spider webs beneath their consoles. Paper strewn about the room.

CAPTAIN

Sonar. We're passive but I hear echo-ranging! What the hell's going on?

SONARMAN 1

It's not us, Captain. We're analyzing. Sounds like someone's tracking us.

CAPTAIN

Impossible. There's no one else up here.

SONARMAN 2

Don't know how those bastards are
doin' it, Sir, but they are.

CAPTAIN

(to Executive Officer)

Draft a note to LANTFLT Intel. We
have a major problem. Tell them if
they don't figure this out soon
we're in deep shit.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - DAY

A dreary day. Light rain pelts a nondescript three-story
white building. A sign in the front of the building states,
"NAVAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU".

INT. NAVAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU - LUKE'S OFFICE - DAY

A submarine acoustics intelligence analyst in his
mid-thirties, LUKE MOFFETT, fit, geeky, worn suit, sits
behind a desk in a cramped one person room. Submarine books
and papers litter his area.

He reaches in his inbox. Pulls out an orange-bordered
folder with diagonally-placed words across it which read,
"TOP SECRET - STRICT NEED TO KNOW INFORMATION".

INSERT - THE INTEL MEMO, which reads:

LUKE (V.O.)

"Apparent attempt to track USS
Nautilus continually during Arctic
nuclear patrol transit. Fifth such
incident involving US Northern
Nuclear Fleet submarines. Suspect
Soviet tracking; however, source
remains unknown. Immediate
countermeasure(s) imperative.
Threat poses grave danger to Arctic
sub ops, potentially entire fleet."

BACK TO ROOM

Luke clasps hands and puts them behind his head.

He leans back in the chair and stares at a large chart on
the wall that shows Soviet North Point (NP) stations in the

Arctic.

A 2x3 photo of his wife and son are taped to the wall next to the map.

LUKE

They did it.

(puts his feet on the desk)

Those fuckers did it. We gotta get in there.

EXT. ARCTIC - NEAR NORTH POSITION BRAVO - DAY

A U.S. Navy Geological Survey airplane on routine patrol.

Cold. Dark gray clouds as thick as chowder. Ice shelves stretch from horizon to horizon.

INT. B-17 FLYING FORTRESS AIRPLANE - SAME

The PILOT and CO-PILOT are at the controls.

Two CREWMEN flip through creased, laminated maps.

They look through large binoculars.

They annotate the location of North Point Station BRAVO with a red grease-marker.

SUPERIMPOSE: *VP-21 BLACK JACKS* - OVER NORTH POINT POSITION BRAVO

A small building stands in the middle of a small

ICE SHELF

PILOT

(in headset)

You got what we need?

Below them waves hit against the island's shelf, precariously close to the station.

CREWMEMBER 1

Yes Sir. Accounted for. We'll notify headquarters once we get back to Resolute.

CREWMEMBER 2

First one we've seen look deserted.

CO-PILOT

Make sure you annotate that in our report.

Engines gather strength and ROAR to life.

Fuselage FLEXES as it makes a slow deliberate turn toward Resolute Bay, Alaska.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. NAVAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU - BOARD ROOM - DAY

The room is panelled in dark red mahogany. Light fixtures house long fluorescent tubes that hang low from the ceiling.

A large oval table is surrounded by silver chairs. A full complement of ANALYSTS that includes Luke sit at the table. Others crowd against the walls in tightly packed chairs.

Cigarette smoke fills the room.

A tan-colored film projector sits on the far end pointed at a yellow stained projector screen which no doubt has sat through too many coffee, cigarette, and cigar smoke-filled meetings.

Deputy Commander In Charge of Operations, Office of Naval Intelligence ADMIRAL WHITWORTH, salt and pepper hair, physically imposing, immaculate uniform.

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH

Lieutenant Bowles. What else is on the agenda?

Admiral Whitworth's Executive Assistant LIEUTENANT BOWLES, young, finely ironed Navy khaki uniform, rifles through the morning operations report agenda.

LIEUTENANT BOWLES

Admiral. Mr. Moffett has a special intel topic.

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH

By all means.

(to Luke)

What do you have Luke?

Luke stands up.

Gathers several papers from his black leather folder.

Draws a pointer from his breast pocket and extends it.

Approaches the PROJECTOR SCREEN

Stands confidently next to it.

LUKE

Thank you Admiral. Numerous operational cables, most recently from USS Nautilus, suggest advanced Soviet tracking of our nuclear subs as they make their patrols in the Arctic.

He places his pointer on a red marker at the last reported position of the USS Nautilus.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Our nuclear subs have also been under active prosecution here, here, and here.

Luke's pointer slaps the projector screen at each location.

LUKE (CONT'D)

The Soviets seem to be using their geologic stations, known as North Point Stations, as acoustic intelligence gathering op centers. Here are the locations of their NPs overlaid on our submarine routes.

He places an overlay that displays the location of the North Point Stations over the locations of the submarines.

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH

They're right on top of us. How credible?

LUKE

Very. We also received radio traffic from our B-17s that suggest NP BRAVO has recently been abandoned.

ANALYST 1

Based on what?

LUKE

From our ongoing analysis over the past year--

ANALYST 1

--and your assumptions. What level of confidence do you place on this? Probable or possible?

(smug)

Or whatever.

LUKE

I call it analysis. No assumptions. Our level is probable.

The ANALYST is taken aback. No expecting Luke to bite.

Director, Operational Planning Office, CAPTAIN CHRIS CALDWELL, mid-forties, tall, fit, highly decorated, sits elbow-to-elbow with the Admiral.

CAPTAIN CALDWELL

(to Admiral Whitworth)

Admiral, this could be our chance to initiate Operation Coldfeet.

LUKE

Sir. I was getting to that, but that would be our recommendation as well.

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH

Lots of variables here. The Soviets might still be there, for one, and of course, funding.

ANALYST 2

(to Luke)

Who's going to pay for this? Mobilizing aircraft, analysts, multiple airbase assistance. They'll all need funding...we have budget constraints--

CAPTAIN CALDWELL

--Admiral. We have contingency dollars, enough to at least make several more fly-by's. Confirm it's abandoned, land, pick up their gear and head home. If it follows like our CONOP sessions have gone, we can easily get in and get out.

LUKE

The runway looks intact, Sir.

Analysts from around the room shake their heads. Jot down notes. Rustle in their chairs. Tension in the room.

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH

The amount of coordination will be difficult, no doubt. But I believe it's worth it, especially given the threat these stations pose only to our sub fleet. I'll talk to Mr. Kelly and the CNO immediately. In the meantime, get our team ready, Chris.

MONTAGE - DISCUSSIONS FOR OPERATION COLDFEET

-- Military officers sit in an elaborate conference room in the Pentagon. Shake their heads. Point in disgust.

-- Analysts in an office. Rub their heads. Frustration all around.

-- Room with navigation charts. Officers in flight suits. Take off glasses. Hand wringing.

BACK TO

EXT. ARTIC - NORTH POINT STATION **BRAVO** - DAY

White powder rolls across the plains. Ice crackles.

The building trembles.

Frigid Arctic water SLAMS against the exterior walls.

SUPERIMPOSE: SOVIET NORTH POINT STATION BRAVO
(70.11N/152.30W)

INT. NORTH POINT STATION **BRAVO** - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PRESSURE builds throughout. Crystal clear water OOZES from cracks in the floor.

Tables and chairs teeter. Then topple.

Walls split open to reveal the turbulent weather outside.
Harsh wind blows in the station. Papers whirl about.

LATER...

Water gushes into the air filling the room.

EXT. NORTH POINT STATION **BRAVO** - CONTINUOUS

Abruptly the station SINKS.

It's swallowed by the loud tortuous pounding of the sea.

EXT. NEAR NORTH POSITION **BRAVO** - B-17 AIRPLANE - DAY

On routine patrol. U.S. Navy Geological Survey mission.
The airplane propellers methodically hum.

Wind blows the clouds steadily across the sky below them.

SUPERIMPOSE: VP-23 *SEAHAWKS* - NEAR LAST KNOWN LOCATION OF
NORTH POINT BRAVO

INT. B-17 - CONTINUOUS

The CREW look through windows. One crewman with binoculars.

The navigator checks and rechecks his charts.

Motions to a crewman. Points to the charts. They both
shake their heads.

He draws an "X" on his map with a DRY-ERASE PEN.

CREWMAN
(to headset)
Sir. Looks like another one's
sunk.

CREWMAN 2
It's toast.

Pulls on the control stick.

PILOT
Roger that. Let's head back home
before we lose anymore daylight.

The aircraft makes a wide and deliberate starboard turn.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. ARCTIC - NORTH POINT STATION **SIERRA** - CONTROL ROOM -
AFTERNOON

COLD grey metal room. Dim, sterile lighting. Massive
computer mainframes stretch along the walls.

Circular and rectangular tubed computer screens illuminate.
Russian writing adorns the panels and the computer screens.

Papers and maps on an oval table in the middle of the room.

Maps of the Arctic on the walls show submarine locations.

SUPERIMPOSE: SOVIET NORTH POINT POSITION SIERRA. TWO WEEKS
LATER IN THE ARCTIC (79.25N/150.44W)

Two SOVIET RESEARCHERS wear thick, dark gray, stained coats.

They stumble around the room gathering and shredding paper.

One of them hits the terminal screen with a hammer.

NOTE: THE DIALOGUE IN THIS SCENE IS SPOKEN IN RUSSIAN AND IS
SUBTITLED IN ENGLISH.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 1
Hit them! Destroy them all!

SOVIET RESEARCHER 2
I'm trying. Stop yelling!
Concentrate on shredding.

Papers FALL to the ground.

Glass SHATTERS as the hammer hits the screens.

CRACK. Shards POP in the air.

SLAM. SLAM.

The hammer breaks into two pieces. Flies across the room.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 2
Damn it!

They are in two pieces now.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 1
 What the hell? What did you do
 that for?

SOVIET RESEARCHER 2
 I didn't mean to. Now what do I
 do?

SOVIET RESEARCHER 1
 We don't have time.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 2
 Fuck it. We've done enough. Let's
 go.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 1
 This place will sink anyway.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 2
 Grab your stuff.

They grab green duffle bags with embossed Soviet lettering
 that reads, "ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE".

INT./EXT. NORTH POINT **SIERRA**

Wind is FIERCE as the door opens.

Papers swirl off the table into the air. Fall to the floor.

EXT. NORTH POSITION **SIERRA** - CONTINUOUS

Cold, bone chilling wind blows them from side to side.

The wind forces them to lean into it forcing them to take
 smaller steps.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 1
 (yells)
 Don't forget to lock it.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 2
 (yells)
 Got it.

It's a shoddy lock. The key slides in.

The key doesn't turn. It remains unlocked.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 2
Head for the ship.

They trudge through a consistent foot of snow.
HOWLING wind rolls through the icy floor.
Each step is difficult.
Blowing snow feels like sandpaper on their exposed skin.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 1
There it is.
(points to the ship)
Faster.

INT. USSR LENIN - GANGPLANK - MOMENTS LATER

Chains along the plank CLANK as they swing from side-to-side. Ice has encased them breaking off as the men take each step.

SUPERIMPOSE: *SOVIET NUCLEAR-POWERED ICEBREAKER USSR LENIN*

They approach the

HATCH

TURN the long silver arm handle down.

INT. BRIDGE - AFTERNOON

The hatch opens to reveal several people at their stations.

They forcefully close the hatch behind them.

The wind stops immediately once they're safely in the ship.

HELMSMAN
It is about time. We need to get out of here. This storm is getting worse by the minute.

SHIP CAPTAIN
Did you take care of the things as instructed, the YEGER-416?

SOVIET RESEARCHER 1
(to Soviet Researcher 2)
Yes. I think so.

Eyes WIDE and unsure.

SOVIET RESEARCHER 2
Of course. Of course. All secure.

SHIP CAPTAIN
Good. I will relay to
headquarters.
(to Radioman)
Tell them all crypto gear has been
destroyed. Area secure. Await
orders to depart. Emphasize
weather deteriorating. We must
depart immediately.

RADIOMAN
(to Ship Captain)
Yes Captain. Be right back Sir.

GRABS his pad and pencil.

RUNS out the room.

EXT. USSR LENIN - SAME

The ship rolls from side to side from the upset sea.
Bone chilling winds whistle through the corridors.

INT. BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

RADIOMAN hustles into the room. Sweat on his brow.

RADIOMAN
(nervous and huffs)
Captain. Confirmation received.
We are approved to depart.

SHIP CAPTAIN
Helmsman. Set course for Murmansk.

HELMSMAN
(to Ship Captain)
Yes Captain.
(to all)
Set course for Drake Passage.

END SUBTITLES

Ship SKIDS from the ice cliff slowly as it pulls away.

The hull screeches against the solidly frozen ice.

The ship bobs up and down with the

WAVES

Ice and snow blow over each inch of the bow. This is the harshest environment on the planet.

INT. NAVAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU - MR. KELLY'S OFFICE -
AFTERNOON

Director, Naval Intelligence Bureau Operations, MR. THOMAS KELLY, a sophisticated, older man, glasses, a born leader in a sharp pin-striped three piece suit, sits in a large, red leather chair behind a finely etched dark-brown wooden desk.

Scattered across the desk are red, orange and blue bordered folders bearing the words TOP SECRET, SECRET and CONFIDENTIAL.

Maps of the Arctic and the Soviet Union, along with photos of various submarines adorn the walls.

Tinted windows stretch from floor to ceiling behind him.

Huge wooden doors open.

LIEUTENANT BOWLES holds a red pin-striped folder.

LIEUTENANT BOWLES

Sir. Do you have a moment? We have just received some intelligence cable traffic from LANTFLEET.

MR. KELLY

Sure son. Come on in.

Walks to Kelly's desk.

Opens a folder.

Places it centered in front of Mr. Kelly.

Stands back at attention.

LIEUTENANT BOWLES

Sir. The cable comes from a very credible source stating that we now

(MORE)

LIEUTENANT BOWLES (CONT'D)

have NP SIERRA abandoned sometime late last week.

MR. KELLY

From who?

LIEUTENANT BOWLES

LANTFLT says a Kremlin source, believed to be Politburo.

MR. KELLY

North Point SIERRA? Gonna have to do better than that Lieutenant Bowles. These stations are always abandoned and quickly sink. Case in point our situation a couple months back regarding BRAVO.

LIEUTENANT BOWLES

Yes Sir. We've taken that into account, but this one is different. its projected drift could allow us to exploit it.

MR. KELLY

Okay, I'll bite. What of the equipment? If it's smashed or burnt we have a similar problem.

LIEUTENANT BOWLES

That's the beauty, Sir. They left in a hurry for some reason. Intel says it's 85 percent intact. And the YEGGER-416 wasn't touched?

MR. KELLY

(rubs his chin)

Your information is credible?

LIEUTENANT BOWLES

From what CI tells us, its very credible.

MR. KELLY

Let's get the senior staff together as soon as possible.

He spins around in his chair. Stares out the window.

MR. KELLY

If we could get it we could practically hide in plain site for

(MORE)

MR. KELLY (CONT'D)

decades.

INT. BOARD ROOM - LATER

The Senior Staff sit at designated seats labeled by placards.

Yellow note pads are placed at each seat.

Cigarette smoke drifts lazily from several ashtrays.

Kelly walks in. Everyone sits up in their chairs. He grabs the top of his chair which incidentally is the tallest and sits down in a hurry.

MR. KELLY

(confident)

Gentlemen. As many of you know, we have yet another unique opportunity. Based on credible intel, it appears that the Soviets have left us a rather sizeable gift in the Arctic. I understand some in this room are skeptical.

(beams across room)

This one is different. For one this gift is a YEGER-416. Let me remind you that getting a 416 could turn the tide. Because of this I received permission to implement Operation Coldfeet...Captain Caldwell will run for us in close coordination with others in the community.

(to Bowles)

Lights please.

Lights fade OUT.

Projector turns on.

The screen shows a map of the Arctic with the location of NP SIERRA.

MR. KELLY

Gentleman, as you can see, NP SIERRA is in a moderately accessible location. The main obstacles is that the runway is buckled and inoperable.

ANALYST 1

Sir. We could get an ice cutter in there. The USS Burton Island our nearest asset.

ANALYST 2

No. Won't work. It's too slow and the ice is too thick.

ANALYST 3

If we get close enough, we can drop a crew off from the nearest ship and they trek in.

ANALYST 1

Way too dangerous. Assuming the minus 40 degree temps don't kill'em, and if they do find a perfectly intact YEGGER, there's no way to get it back.

LUKE

Sir. We could parachute some men near the location and pick them up.

ANALYST 1

(sarcastically)

But the runway's not available.

LUKE

I know someone who's developing a system to extract personnel in situations like this. He calls it Skyhook.

MR. KELLY

Unproven?

LUKE

To my knowledge.

MR. KELLY

Throws another wrinkle in the plan.

He thumbs through the papers in front of him.

MR. KELLY (CONT'D)

(stern)

Can you get in touch with the inventor and provide an assessment? Seems like if we want SEIRRA this is our only option.

LUKE
I'll get in touch and pay him a
visit immediately.

MR. KELLY
(to all)
Any other thoughts?
(to Caldwell)
Set Coldfeet in motion.

The men around the table look at each other.

SILENCE.

INT. CONNECTICUT - DANBURY - DR. FULTON'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

A scholarly man in his 50's, DR. ROBERT FULTON sits behind a dark brown desk, leafs through papers.

Sketch drawings of airplanes and the SKYHOOK contraption attached to the nose of an aircraft line the walls.

INT. LUKE'S OFFICE - SAME

Grabs a pen and a yellow legal pad notebook.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

FULTON
Dr. Fulton.

LUKE
Sir. It's Luke Moffett from NIB.

FULTON
Well, hello Luke. What a surprise.
It's been a long time. How are
you?

LUKE
Good Sir. I'm sorry to be so
abrupt, but do you have time for a
visit in the next couple of days?

FULTON
Actually, Luke, I'm leaving tonight
for El Centro. Can it wait until I
get back?

LUKE

No sir...I don't think so. Maybe I should get to the point so I don't waste your time?

FULTON

Come on Luke. Out with it. What's on your mind?

LUKE

Are you still refining Skyhook?

FULTON

(laughs)

--that's why I'll be in El Centro. We're running final tests. Why do you ask?

LUKE

I can't say over this line...if you understand.

FULTON

Of course. If you like you can visit and see the trials yourself.

LUKE

That sounds great. I will be there in two days.

FULTON

Looking forward to it.

BACK TO OFFICE

Fulton fumbles through papers.

INSERT spreadsheet that shows dollar figures in red next to equipment in black.

SECRETARY (O.C.)

Sir. Do you need any help with your phone call?

FULTON

No. I think we just got what we've been searching for money.

INT. MR. KELLY'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

GAIL, a very business-like dressed woman opens Kelly's

office. Walks in, striking, confident straight as an arrow.

GAIL

Mr. Kelly. Mr. Moffett would like to speak with you if you have a moment.

MR. KELLY

Thank you. Send him in.

LUKE

Sir. I spoke to Dr. Fulton, the developer of Skyhook, and he's in the process of doing trials in El Centro.

KELLY

And?

LUKE

He's open to a discussion.
(fumbles with his papers)
So I want to leave as soon as possible. And, I'm sure he'll need funding.

MR. KELLY

We have money. Do what you must. If this works, it will be worth every penny.

LUKE

One question though, Sir. What if the Soviets are still there?

MR. KELLY

Where? Sierra?

LUKE

Yes, Sir. It's not like our guys can say they made a wrong turn 2000 miles back.

MR. KELLY

I agree. Captain Caldwell and the Coldfeet crew are working on all contingencies. Don't worry, we'll figure it out. In the meantime have the Ops Center send a message to the Canucks asking them to keep a close eye on SIERRA. You just worry about Fulton.

LUKE

I've talked to ops. They're trying
but can't locate it.

MR. KELLY

Well...if they can't find it we
abort.

LUKE

Yes, sir.

MR. KELLY

(beams at Luke)

Good job Luke. Keep it up...we'll
get there.

EXT./INT. ARCTIC - NEAR NORTH POINT SIERRA - CANADIAN DCH-9
CARIBOU AIRPLANE - MORNING

A CREW of four fly over a huge sea of ice shelves. Dark
blue water as far as the eye can see. The plane pierces
through puffy white clouds.

SUPERIMPOSE: *ROYAL CANADIAN DCH-9 GOLDEN HAWKS*, NEAR NORTH
POINT SIERRA

PILOT

This should be it fellas. See
anything?

CO-PILOT

We're looking.

CREWMAN

Sir! I see it! I see it!

PILOT

Finally. I guess the fifth time's
a charm. We'll get as close as we
can.

The plane glides down to within a few hundred feet overhead
of the station.

It ZOOMS past the station.

Wind blows snow from atop its roof. It's harsh out there.

CO-PILOT

Looks abandoned to me. You see
that...the runway's cracked in

(MORE)

CO-PILOT (CONT'D)

several sections.

A crewman grabs a pair of large binoculars.

Looks through the circular

WINDOW

CREWMAN

Sure is. Definitely unsuitable for landing, but the station looks good.

PILOT

Good. Report our findings back to base.

RADIOMAN

Yes Sir. Got it.

PILOT

Let's head back boys.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. NAVAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU - HALLWAY - DAY

Kelly walks at a very fast pace. Papers precariously constricted in his notebook.

Bowles appears from the opening of a nearby door. He carries a red-stripped folder with TOP SECRET written diagonally on the cover.

BOWLES

Sir, sir. You should read this.

MR. KELLY

(slightly annoyed)

Lieutenant, you know better than I, I'm already--

BOWLES

--this is to important.

KELLY

Read and walk. Go!

Bowles pauses for a split second. He looks over his shoulder. Flips open the folder.

INSERT - THE LETTER, which reads:

BOWLES (V.O.)

"Canadian reconnaissance unit reports North Point Station SIERRA abandoned. Runway confirmed inoperable. Station moving westerly at two knots. Calculations suggest station will be approximately 600 miles from Thule, Greenland in two months. Canadian Air Force will provide regular reconnaissance flights of the station, weather permitting."

BACK TO HALLWAY

MR. KELLY

Get me ops.

INT. LUKE'S HOME - EVENING

Luke opens the front door.

Steps into the

HALLWAY

Places his briefcase down.

He turns to his left to see NATHANIEL, a joyful two year old boy with a train set in the center of the

LIVING ROOM

It's a mix of different styles and dark-brown furniture but rings of coziness.

LUKE

Hey buddy!

NATHANIEL

Papa!

Runs to Luke. Gives him a hug. Pulls at his hand.

SYLVIA (O.C.)

Hi babe. Be right there.

LUKE

What is it Nate?

SYLVIA MOFFETT a beautiful mother wearing a yellow apron strides in. Wrings her wet hands on a dish towel.

SYLVIA
He's been waiting all day for you.

LUKE
Ahhh. Sorry bud.

Nathaniel leads him to his train set.

LUKE
Ohhh, I see.

SYLVIA
He misses his head conductor.

Luke grabs the conductors hat on the floor. Puts it on his head.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Don't you want to change?
(to Nathaniel)
Nate let--

Nate hands him several plastic toy people.

LUKE
--no worries babe. I'm good.

Luke pushes the train around the track.

Nate jumps around him. Arms wave.

SYLVIA
You still leavin' tomorrow?

LUKE
Unfortunately.
(eyes dart around Nate)
I hate leavin' this guy.

Rubs Nate's head.

SYLVIA
And what about me?

LUKE
Goes without sayin' how much I'm
gonna miss you.

SYLVIA
Hungry?

LUKE

Starved.

EXT. CALIFORNIA - NAVAL AIR FACILITY - EL CENTRO AIRFIELD -
AFTERNOON

A white and gray B-17 FLYING FORTRESS airplane flies
overhead.

It's propellers beat down on the hot sand.

The bright aluminum fuselage is blinding to all below.

A long orange striped cord stretches 400 feet high attached
to an inflatable garage-sized balloon.

SUPERIMPOSE: Naval Air Facility, El Centro Airfield,
California

INT. FLIGHT TENT - CONTINUOUS

FULTON SCIENTISTS work under a large brown awning, just off
the runway. Electric and other equipment strewn throughout.

Sand blows slightly across the

TARMAC

The heat cooks the thick black surface.

The smell of fuel drifts in and out of everyone's nose.

LUKE

Doc. How are you?

FULTON

Luke, what a pleasant surprise. I
didn't think you would get here so
soon.

LUKE

You have time for a quick chat?

FULTON

Hmmm, it's that kind of visit?

LUKE

I believe so.

FULTON

One last test run and then we can chat.

(to scientist)

Can you get Mr. Moffett a chair?

SCIENTIST

Yes Sir.

The scientist hustles to the near-by truck. Lifts a stiff gray tarp from the bed to reveal several folding chairs.

Pulls out a folding chair. Cranks it open.

SCIENTIST (CONT'D)

Here you go, Sir.

He wipes the top of the chair with his hand.

SCIENTIST

Not the best seat, but its all we have.

LUKE

Thank you very much. It'll do just fine. One quick question.

SCIENTIST

Anything.

Points to the center of the runway.

LUKE

Is that Skyhook?

SCIENTIST

Yes, Sir. We're testing the grab mechanism.

(giddy)

Very exciting.

LUKE

Yes, it is.

EXT. B-17 AIRCRAFT - CONTINUOUS

The B-17 takes a quick turn and adjusts for it's final approach down the runway.

INT. B-17 - COCKPIT - SAME

Test pilot, TOM MCGINNIS, gray hair, experienced, wears a ball cap. He guides the plane with confidence and style.

INT. FLIGHT TENT - CONTINUOUS

A hand set attached to an Army green radio sits on a makeshift old wooden table. Assorted size papers laid out. Their corners flip up as the wind blows.

Fulton grabs the handset and a pen and pad in the other.

FULTON

(to radio handset)

Okay Tom. Bring it down to 350 feet. Make sure the guys get the J-hook properly aligned and the winch is tight and ready to grab.

TOM (V.O.)

Don't worry Doc. Just like we practiced. On your mark.

FULTON

(to scientist)

Is the balloon stabilized?

SCIENTIST

Yes Sir.

FULTON

(to radio)

We're set. Make your final approach. Good luck Tom.

TOM (V.O.)

Roger that.

INT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Dials and switches adorn the dashboard.

Tom's positioned in a slightly worn seat. Fingers tightly grip the U-shaped steering column.

TOM

(to crewman)

J-hook in place?

Pulls on latches and levers. Turns dials.
Crewman snap together the winch cables.

CREWMAN
Ready.

EXT. B-17 - CONTINUOUS

The J-hook lowers. Then SNAPS into place just below the aircraft's belly, like a small umbilical cord.

Wings battered by turbulence causes intermittent vibrations.

INT. COCKPIT

The altimeter decreases in altitude to 400 feet.

Sweat builds on the brows of Tom and the crewman.

TOM
(to headset)
Get ready back there. On my mark.
Five, four, three, two.

EXT. B-17

The orange striped sack jars in the wind on a beeline from the nose of the aircraft.

The B-17 flies perfectly straight.

Aligns just over the orange striped sack.

The J-hook SNATCHES the sack.

INT. CABIN

The winch WHINES as it snags the balloons cord.

CREWMAN
We got it!

The plane JOLTS as the winch STOPS abruptly.

The mount strains and glows orange from heat.

TOM (O.C.)
Yank it up!

The winch mechanics kick into gear and turn.

The stripped colored sack becomes visible as it approaches the belly of the plane.

CREWMAN
We got it! We got it!

The crewman grab it and haul it in.

CREWMAN
All secure.

Places it on the floor.

TOM
Great!
(to Fulton)
Doc. We got it. Smooth as silk!

INT. FLIGHT TENT

FULTON
(smiles)
Bring'er home Tom.

Turns around to Luke. He's excited beyond belief.

FULTON (CONT'D)
Now we can talk.

INT. EL CENTRO AIRFIELD - FULTON'S OFFICE - LATER

The office is littered with drawings of the airfield, winch drives, J-hook attachments, B-17 schematics.

Fulton sits on an wooden backed chair behind a metal desk. Not fit for his status, but he could care less.

Luke stares at the designs in amazement.

FULTON
So...What did you think?

LUKE
Exciting. Very exciting. Pick up
looked perfect. Now what?

Turns around quickly to face his reaction in hopes of something positive.

FULTON
Nothing.

LUKE
What do you mean?

FULTON
We're out of money.

LUKE
You just got here!

FULTON
We did but we only had enough for three runs. You saw the third.

LUKE
But I thought the Agency had already approved it?

FULTON
I wish. If it were I wouldn't be here sweatin' like that pig out there.

Points to the pig pen.

FULTON (CONT'D)
I helped the Agency equip a B-17 through Intermountain Aviation out of Arizona and we were set to use it to recover a pilot in Indonesia. Never panned out though. So, now I'm here.

His eyes light up. His exuberance as a kid at Christmas.

LUKE
If I get you money, can you make it work?

FULTON
Of course. You saw it out there. We had a perfect run. We need to get through human trials though.

LUKE
Okay. If I get you the money tomorrow, when can you begin human trials?

FULTON

I just need to run one more test.

LUKE

I thought you just ran three?

FULTON

I need to make that pig out there fly.

LUKE

Why would you...never mind...I don't want to know. How long?

FULTON

I can have it ready for you by early next week...does that work?

LUKE

That works but when it works, we're gonna need to travel to DC for planning...then we head out.

FULTON

Where?

LUKE

Arctic.

FULTON

Pretty big place wouldn't you say. We have people up there?

Luke stares at him like a stiff politician.

FULTON (CONT'D)

Oh...I get it.

LUKE

I can't say just yet but I'll fill you in soon enough. All we need right now is for you to prove you can pick up two people.

EXT. EL CENTRO AIRFIELD - PIG PEN - MORNING

A full grown pig munches on slop in a makeshift cage under an awning near the operations tent. SNORTS. He rubs his dirty, pink body against the cage.

Nasty raw sewage scents circulate around the work area. It

drifts into the nearby flight tent.

INT. FLIGHT TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Fulton and five other engineers pores over paperwork.

Hot wind blows through intermittently.

A vehicle pulls up. Luke gets out and puts on a hat.

LUKE
(whispers)
Stinks! What's with the pig?

FULTON
Our next pickup.

LUKE
You said human trials.

FULTON
I should've said "live" trials.
Unless you want to volunteer before
Doug over there give it a whirl --

LUKE
Well--

FULTON
(matter of fact)
--then we need Porky.

FULTON
Pigs have nervous systems similar
to ours. If it works on him, then
we know people can take the jolt.
(to engineers)
Get the piggy and tell Tom we're
ready.

EXT. RUNWAY - LATER

Engineers place a harness on the pig and TIGHTEN. They open the gate and guide him to the center of the runway. The pig's clearly agitated. WIGGLES. SNORTS.

A portable helium bottle inflates a dirigible-shaped bright-orange colored balloon. It rises to 450 feet attached to high-strength, braided nylon line.

FULTON
Okay, boys. We're good.

INT. FLIGHT TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Fulton grabs the receiver to the radio.

FULTON
(to radio)
Tom. How's the wind up there?

TOM (O.C.)
Within parameters. J-hook
released. Attachment in place.
We're ready.

FULTON
(to radio)
Make your descent and pick-up.
Remind the crew it's going to be a
jolt to Porky.

TOM (O.C.)
Roger that, Doc.

EXT. B-17 - MOMENTS LATER

The B-17 adjusts, then aligns with the runway at 450 feet.
The bottom flap of the plane opens in anticipation.
The J-hook WHINES as it's lowered. It locks into place.

INT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Sweat builds on the brow of Tom. He glances at the gauges.
Under filthy glass the altimeters red needle gyrates at 400
feet.
Crewmen grab handles in anticipation of the balloons grab.

EXT. B-17

The balloon enters the aircraft's SKYHOOK mechanism like a

mom's arms stretched out to meet her baby.

The bright balloon is hooked and immediately deflates in a streamed line.

Everything SHUDDERS.

EXT. RUNWAY

The rope whizzes. It quickly tightens as hard as a rock.

The pig walks in a small circle. Oblivious to his upcoming roller coaster ride. He continually snorts.

He's SNAPPED up quickly. A loud WOOFFFF comes from his mouth. His fat feet dangle.

He squeals as he ascends upward.

The pull of the rope drives him to rotate UNCONTROLLABLY. It's most certainly disorienting and uncomfortable.

INT. CABIN

Crewmen eagerly wait at the belly of the plane's opening.

One crewman holds the J-hook.

The pig draws closer and closer.

He continues to twirl.

The squeals get louder as he approaches the airplane.

CREWMAN 1

Bring him in. Careful now.

The J-hook reaches out. It snags the cord attached to the pig and drag him in.

CREWMAN 2

Be careful! Be careful!

The pig wrestles with the crew. Kicks wildly.

CREWMAN 1

(hops on the pig)
Got him. Got 'em.

CREWMAN 2
Tie him. Hurry!

They throw a net over him and pull on the ropes to subdue his violent wiggles.

CREWMAN 2
Done.

CREWMAN 1
(to radio)
Tom we got him. We need to get on the ground quick. Unless you want this pig runnin' around the cabin.

TOM (O.C.)
Roger. Down in a few.

EXT. TARMAC - MOMENTS LATER

Fulton, Luke and the SCIENTISTS run joyfully to the plane as it comes to a stop.

The engines grumble as they're cut off. Propellers slowly stop to spin.

The flight crew throw yellow wooden chocks under the wheels.

The rear hatch opens hits the tarmac with a thud.

Tom skips merrily out. Happy as a clam. He flips the bill of his ball cap towards Fulton.

TOM
Whatta ride!

The crew hold the pig with a leash and carefully guide him down the ramp.

The pig jumps around like a bucking bronco.

He breaks away from his restraints.

He SNARLS and makes a bee-line for the crew. His mouth is wide open and drips with saliva. Shakes his huge head.

He lunges toward a scientists leg and bites down.

SCIENTIST 1
(lets go of the leash)
Shit! Shit! Oweee...Oweee.

The pig goes after another morsel. He's PISSED. The CHOMP of teeth are as loud as maracas.

SCIENTIST 1

Run! Run!

The pig sprints off down the runway.

FULTON

He's very upset.

LUKE

Ya think?

FULTON

(to scientists)

Someone please wrangle him up, please.

(to Luke)

Looks like we lost one of our volunteer.

INT. EL CENTRO - WESTERN UNION - DAY

Luke passes a small hand written piece of paper to the clerk.

LUKE

Can you send this to this address as urgent?

TELLER

Yes, Sir. That'll be 65 cents.

Luke digs around in his pocket. Gives her 75 cents.

TELLER

Thank you, Sir.

INT. MR. KELLY'S OFFICE - LATER

The secretary walks into Mr. Kelly's office holding a folder. Hands him the folder.

He flips it open to reveal a telegram.

INSERT TELEGRAM which reads,

LUKE (V.O.)

"Sir. Trials going as planned.
Human trials tomorrow. Fulton
remains confident, has pledged
support as long as funding remains.
Should be ready for ops planning by
next week. Return to DC day after
tomorrow. Respectfully, Luke"

BACK TO OFFICE

MR. KELLY

Lisa. Can you get me Admiral
Whitworth?

INT. EL CENTRO AIRFIELD - FLIGHT TENT - DAY

First Lieutenant DOUG FREEMAN, mid-20's and athletic, stands
perfectly upright in his flight suit. Elbow and kneepads
are affixed to him.

Engineers attach shoulder and waist straps to him.

SCIENTIST

(tightens the strap)

How's that?

Doug takes one step forward from being tugged.

FREEMAN

That's good.

FULTON

Balloon is ready. Gonna get Tom
and the crew, if you're okay.

FREEMAN

(gives him a thumbs up)

Good to go Doc.

FULTON

(to radio)

Tom. We're set. Go ahead.

INT. B-17 - COCKPIT - LATER

TOM
 (to crew)
 Strap in. This is it.

Tom turns dials. Pulls levers.

Suddenly the propellers spin.

The airplane shakes and sputters.

EXT. RUNWAY - LATER

Doug sits, feet spread, in the center of the sandy runway.

Balloon SWAYS above him deployed.

The rope attached to his suit sweeps above him from the light wind that blows across the runway.

FULTON
 How ya feel Doug?

The wind kicks up, blowing sand in his face.

Doug slides a few inches backward. Small pebbles kick out from under him.

He puts his hands down to stop him from moving any further.

FREEMAN
 Good. Wind isn't our friend here.
 (laughs)
 Hopefully I'll have a better ride than Porky.

SCIENTIST (O.C.)
 We got that fixed.

FULTON
 Just like we practiced. Extend your arms as soon as you ascend. Should prevent you from spinning.

SCIENTIST
 Okay.
 (pats him on the shoulder)
 Here comes Tom.

They run to the side of the runway as Tom approaches.

EXT. RUNWAY - MOMENTS LATER

DOUG, a statue as the plane approaches. Looks up.
The aircraft engines become louder as they approach.
Wind blows and moves the

BALLOON

Doug slides another six inches on the hot concrete.

The B-17 zooms eerily close overhead. The propellers
forcefully push down more hot air onto this body.

The balloon is snagged by SKYHOOK.

FREEMAN

Woaahhh!

He's snagged abruptly. His legs wobble like a baby doll.
Stretches out his arms.

A sudden SNAP. The cable goes limp. Then falls like a dead
snake to the ground.

INT. COCKPIT - MOMENTS LATER

CREWMAN 1

(stares out the opening)

Shit.

TOM

(into radio)

What? What happened?

CREWMAN 1

Rope snapped.

TOM

God dammit!

EXT. B-17 - MOMENTS LATER

DOUG slides up to the plane. Wind whipping around him.
Slightly tousling his body. He's smiling from ear to ear.

The CREW hooks him with curved rod.

EXT. RUNWAY

Doug, Tom and the crew step out of the plane. Somewhat defeated.

FREEMAN
That's a bummer.

FULTON
What happened up there?

TOM
Napped the J-hook in half.

FULTON
(hands to his side)
Shit.

FREEMAN
How long to get it fixed, Doc?

LUKE
We haven't the time. We need to
get to DC.

INT. NAVAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU - OPERATIONS PLANNING CELL -
AFTERNOON

The room is packed. Smoke billows from lavender ashtrays.

The large oval table overflows with paperwork marked with different classification types, maps, and charts of the Arctic and schematics of airplanes, a North Point SIERRA conceptual control station drawing and jump-master charts.

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH
Capt. Caldwell, please. Take it
away.

CAPTAIN CALDWELL
Yes Sir. Our agenda. NP SIERRA
status, logistics, Skyhook, and
finally, personnel. I'll have Luke
lead off.

MR. KELLY
Fine.

LUKE
Sir. All indications are that NP
SIERRA remains afloat and in
excellent condition. Both the
Canadians and our planes have
(MORE)

LUKE (CONT'D)

tracked it on a fairly consistent basis.

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH

Fairly consistent? So you don't have continuous track?

LUKE MOFFETT

No Sir. The weather poses many problems --

U.S Geological Service meteorologist, CAPTAIN MARKS. TV anchorman appearance and presence.

CAPTAIN MARKS

--it's almost impossible to predict the weather up there. We could see it one day and lose it the next. Literally the harshest environment on the planet.

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH

And it's moving.

FULTON

Sir, the pure grayness of the area is extreme as well. Just making out the horizon can be a challenge but we intend to immediately switch to instruments once the balloon is deployed to avoid vertigo. I'll describe that more in my section of the briefing.

Room feels more tense. Every word hangs in the air.

LUKE

HUMINT and SIGINT sources confirm that it's abandoned; however, we are unsure if the higher levels of the Soviet Navy to include Fleet Admiral Sergey Gorshkov know what equipment remains. We believe with moderate confidence that the YEGER-416 is there and fully intact. Our intent is to acquire the hard drives and any SOPs they might have left behind.

MR. KELLY

It's functioning though, you think?

LUKE

Ummm...416, Sir? I believe so and we intend to show our jumpers how to turn it on and take pictures of the screens.

MR. KELLY

Can either of them speak or read Russian?

LUKE

Sir--

Caldwell moves in his seat uncomfortably.

CALDWELL

--neither of them do.

Kelly grunts. Shakes his head.

MR. KELLY

Thanks Luke.

CALDWELL

On to logistics.

(to Bowles)

Map please.

(to all)

We will support base ops from Resolute, Alaska. Fulton's crew. Ops/Intel planners. Two B-17s and the Nautilus. The USS Farragut and Bainbridge will also be as near as they can be. They'll have Sea Knights to provide additional support...Dr. Fulton.

FULTON

Sir, our two subjects--

MR. KELLY

--Doc, let me interrupt you for a second. Let's not refer to them as subjects. Makes it sound like a science experiment. I prefer to think of them as simply a team.

FULTON

Yes, sir. Our team will be equipped with their own pick up balloon, helium bottle and tools to quickly deploy Skyhook --

CAPTAIN CALDWELL
 --we'll also drop another package
 that will carry the contents for NP
 SIERRA as well as two days of
 rations.

FULTON
 Once we obtain our objective, our
 crew will follow these procedures.
 Chart please, Lieutenant Bowles.

The Skyhook drawing flash onto the projector screen.

Instruction boxes numbered one through six show step-by-step
 operations of SKYHOOK.

FULTON (O.C.)
 Both men have been trained;
 however, timing prevented our final
 test.

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH
 Timing?

FULTON
 We ran into technical issues.

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH
 How are you making up the gap?

CAPTAIN CALWELL
 Personnel, sir. Our pilots are
 from the Agency, Tom McGinnis, a
 crew of four, Fulton, our jumpers,
 Captain Doug Freeman, call sign
 "STOKE" and Brian Musgrave, call
 sign "WEASEL". STOKE remains at
 the test site.

Kelly turns to Tom and CAPTAIN BRIAN MUSGRAVE, a lean,
 athletic, chiseled jaw military man.

MUSGRAVE AND TOM
 (nod)
 Sir.

MR. KELLY
 I want to go back to our discussion
 about the YEGER and the contents
 inside SIERRA for a minute.

CAPTAIN CALDWELL

Sir? We grab what we can and get out--

MR. KELLY

--your not following me. Please indulge me. If what our analysts have said is true, this could be our last and only opportunity to ever get inside. If that's the case, I want everything. I want us to turn it on.

LUKE

Turn it on, Sir?

MR. KELLY

Yes Luke. Turn it on and make some commands from the terminal. I want us to ping and track a sub if at all possible.

(to Luke)

Would you assume they have an SOP?

LUKE

Yes. I did when I worked at our TF-2 site.

MR. KELLY

416 is a similar design to our TF-2 system, which you operated? Only their controls are in Russian?

LUKE

I believe so.

MR. KELLY

(to Admiral)

We need someone who can understand Russian, has operated an Arctic station, and can figure out a YEGER.

Luke starts to blush. Beads of sweat roll down his temple.

MR. KELLY

(to the Admiral)

Would you agree?

ADMIRAL WHITWORTH

I would.

MR. KELLY
 (to Luke)
 Can you do it?

LUKE
 Ummm...With all do respect Sir,
 uhhh...I'm only an analyst, I --

MR. KELLY
 Luke, it's not something I wouldn't
 ask of anyone else with your quals.

LUKE
 Sir, I agree but I'm still not jump
 qual'd--

CAPTAIN CALDWELL
 (stern)
 --or Skyhook--

MR. KELLY
 --don't you agree it's easier to
 teach someone how to jump out of a
 plane than it is to learn Russian
 and operate a survey ice station?

CAPTAIN CALDWELL
 But, Sir we have--

MR. KELLY
 --it's settled Chris. How long to
 get Luke jump qualified and Skyhook
 ready?

FULTON
 A day or two. He would need to
 experience it once, preferably
 twice.

MR. KELLY
 We're set then. Any issues Luke?

LUKE
 (jokes)
 Uhhh...I don't have a call sign,
 doesn't everyone else?

MR. KELLY
 (laughs)
 Good point. Your call sign is "NO
 SIGN". Good enough?

Luke nods slowly.

Kelly pushes back from the table. He gets up hastily.
Shuts his briefing folder and leaves the
ROOM

The Admiral and Bowles follow Kelly closely.
Luke is left stunned. Stares at his papers.

CAPTAIN CALDWELL
Luke, a moment in my office please.
(to Brian)
You too.

INT. CAPTAIN CALDWELL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Sunlight streams through the large windows. Navy A-6 bomber aircraft memorabilia adorns the office. A-6 tailhook mounted on the wall. It's decorated more than a military pawn shop.

CAPTAIN CALDWELL
What the fuck!

Throws papers on his desk.

Pens, papers, and a stapler fall to the carpet.

Luke and Brian move slowly. Stare in silence at his violent reaction.

CAPTAIN CALDWELL (CONT'D)
What the hell happened in there,
Luke?

LUKE
I don't know. It certainly wasn't
the plan.

CAPTAIN CALDWELL
Wasn't it?

LUKE
You think I want to go up there?
You're crazier than you look right
now Chris.

Adjusts himself in between the two of them.

Caldwell flashes him the evil eye.

BRIAN
 Sir. I'll make this work.
 (points to Luke)
 I can teach anyone to jump, even
 this desk jockey--

CAPTAIN CALDWELL
 --and Skyhook?

BRIAN
And Skyhook. Simple. Doc's a
 professional. We'll get it done--

CAPTAIN CALDWELL
 --we better cause this is our only
 shot. We've been waiting five
 years to get this and I'll be
 damned if this shit is going to
 sink our plans.
 (to Luke)
 COLDFEET can work...with the right
 crew.

BRIAN
 I'll get him ready whether he likes
 it or not.

Luke walks to Caldwell. Confident. Intent to calm the
 situation.

Gets face to face.

Puts his hand on his shoulder.

LUKE
 Chris, I can't guarantee anything,
 but Kelly is right. When I get
 there--

BRIAN
 (laughs)
 --if you get there!

LUKE
 --not only can I grab the YEGER,
 but I can turn it on.

Caldwell checks his watch.

CALDWELL
 Shit.

He grabs his notebook.

CALDWELL
You two figure it out.

Caldwell breezes past Luke. Slightly brushes Luke's shoulder. SLAMS the door.

Brian turns to Luke. Approaches him. Points his finger millimeters from his chest.

BRIAN
Don't fuck this up boy.

LUKE
Calm down.

BRIAN
If we get out there and you drop the ball, there'll only be one of us comin' back.

LUKE
Well, it's up to you to train me then.

BRIAN
Ohhh, don't worry little man. I'm puttin' you through the ringer. Got that?

LUKE
Fine.
(turns around)
Where's this jump training anyway?

BRIAN
(smiles)
Only the greatest place on earth...New Jersey!

SLAPS Luke on the back. Luke steps forward to keep from falling.

Brian rushes out the room.

INT. LUKE'S HOUSE - NATHANIEL'S ROOM - EVENING

Toys are strewn everywhere. Posters of FELIX THE CAT, GUMBY, and SNAGGLEPUSS taped to the walls.

Luke's elbows rest on the side of Nathaniel's top bunk.

Sylvia tip toes into the room. She slowly places her arms around Luke and rests her head on his shoulder.

Luke lets out a long sigh. Closes his eyes. The stress is tremendous.

SYLVIA

Don't worry...it'll all be okay.
You do what you need to do.

Luke moves his hand to touch her head. Rubs his fingers through her hair.

CUT TO

INT. NEW JERSEY - LAKEHURST NAVAL STATION - JUMP TRAINING CENTER - CLASSROOM - MORNING

They sit on scratched, worn metal chairs. Chalkboards line the walls. Pictures of soldiers jumping from airplanes litter areas where there's space. Tech. Sargent SEARS, country boy, expert jump trainer stands near them.

SUPERIMPOSE: LAKEHURST NAVAL STATION, NEW JERSEY - JUMPMaster TRAINING CENTER

BRIAN

So, listen. Normally this takes anywhere from three to four weeks.

Luke shakes his head in disgust.

LUKE

Weeks?

BRIAN

I know. I know. We don't have that much time but we have Sears and any other instructor we want 'round here to get you ready.

LUKE

Is that long enough?

BRIAN

For you? Doubt it--

SEARS

--sir, it'll be fine. You're not trying to begin a new career here. You work out?

LUKE
 No...not really. My workout is
 chasing a two year old round the
 house.

BRIAN
 (laughs)
 He's a little on the small side?

Mike ignores the jabs.

MIKE
 His brains will make up for it.
 The longer we wait SIERRA continues
 to move.

BRIAN
 (hits him on the arm)
 Were'd you go to school anyway?

LUKE
 Brown.

BRIAN
 Owww...an Ivy league boy. Good for
 you.

MIKE
 Okay sir...we don't have much time.

LUKE
 Let's push, we're wasting time.

MIKE
 Okay. Turn your attention to the
 board.

INT. OFFICER LIVING QUARTERS - EVENING

Luke sits at the desk. A picture of family lays against the
 alarm clock. It's the only thing that keeps him going.

Swing Leader Trainer, "MASTER THE MASS EXIT" procedures,
 jump-master and parachute books lay on the bed, table and
 the floor.

He moves from each area of the room to the other. Like a
 final exam he stuffs as much information into his brain as
 possible. He's in his element.

INT. OFFICER LIVING QUARTERS - LATER

Luke lays on the bed. The phone cord is crinkled. He loops the cord around his finger while he talks.

INT. SYLVIA'S KITCHEN - SAME

Sylvia paces from one side to the other.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

LUKE MOFFETT

Hi babe. How goes it?

SYLVIA

He's missin' you. Asks for you every ten minutes.

(laughs)

He doesn't have his loyal train conductor to help him.

LUKE

I know. I miss him. Just tell him I'll be home soon.

SYLVIA

I will. Sooo...how goes the training?

LUKE

It's not complicated but I can't lie. It's a little scary.

SYLVIA

To be expected, babe.

LUKE

I start jumping the day after tomorrow.

SYLVIA

Already!?

LUKE

Not from an airplane.

SYLVIA

You scared me for a second.

LUKE

(laughs)

(MORE)

LUKE (CONT'D)

I go to a 34 foot platform. Then
250 and then the plane.

Nathaniel runs into the

KITCHEN

NATHANIEL (O.C.)

Papa! Papa!

SYLVIA

Can you hear him?

LUKE

Yeah...my little buddy.

SYLVIA

I gotta get him a bath and ready
for bed.

(to Nathaniel)

Say hi to papa.

She bends down and puts the phone to his mouth. He just
stares at it.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Say hi silly.

NATHANIEL

Papa!

He pushes back and runs. As a train in full motion.

LUKE

Okay. I miss you. This is crazy.

SYLVIA

Don't worry. You're doin' the
right thing. We'll be here waitin'
for ya when you get back. I love
you.

LUKE

Love ya too. Bye baby.

EXT. JUMP TOWER - MORNING

Luke uncomfortable in loose fitting camouflage clothing,
stares up at the tower. It's tall and intimidating.

A mass of wooden pylons with one makeshift wooden ladder

leads to the platform.

Ropes hang down like jungle vines from underneath the platform. They sway in the wind.

LUKE

So that's what 34 feet looks like
huh?

MIKE

Sure is. Can't wait for yah to see
the 250 foot tower before we do our
final jump.

LUKE

Yeah. Can't wait.

BRIAN

Come on let's do this.

EXT. SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Luke jumps unsure and awkwardly from the 34 foot tower. Fear in his eyes. Brian laughs as an observer. Intent on making him uncomfortable.

-- Luke prepares and moves to the 100 foot tower. He is more scared then ever. He jumps attached to the gear. Clumsily unhooks his gear. He is clearly out of his element.

INT. FLIGHT READY ROOM - DAY

Brian and Luke don army-green colored flight suits. Parachute gear hangs from pegs on the wall. Helmets and gloves in drawers neatly stacked.

Mike checks his book. Rechecks gear.

BRIAN

(overly exuberant)
Can't wait to get out there.

MIKE

Wish I was goin' with yah two.

Luke struggles with his straps.

LUKE

Damn. This isn't working.

Mike walks up. Grabs his straps and tightens them.

LUKE

Thanks.

BRIAN

(to Mike)

He's gonna need more than that to keep from becoming a splatter mark on the runway.

MIKE

Come on Bri. Give him a break.

BRIAN

Your right. Poor little guy.

LUKE

Let's just do this already.

BRIAN

Ooh...little guys gettin' some balls.

MIKE

Grab the rest of your stuff. Let's go.

INT. FLIGHT WAITING AREA - LATER

Mike, Luke and Brian sit reading magazines. Pace. They are bored as they wait for their ride.

Heroic posters of jumpers litter the walls. It's enough to give anyone courage to jump from a perfectly good airplane.

FLIGHT DIRECTOR

(clipboard in hand)

Sorry fellas. Not going to happen.

BRIAN

What the hell.

LUKE

What's going on?

FLIGHT DIRECTOR

Plane's broke.

Turns to walk out the door.

LUKE

But I have to get this in today.
What's the problem?

FLIGHT DIRECTOR

Cyclones is out.

BRIAN

What the hells a cyclone?

FLIGHT DIRECTOR

(annoyed)

An engine. You need them to fly
geniuses.

LUKE

Well, how long will that take?

FLIGHT DIRECTOR

At least a couple days.

LUKE

We're screwed.
(to Mike)
What do we do now?

MIKE

Well...looks like you're goin' to
the Arctic without a full jump.
Could be worse, you could be
gettin' shot at on your way down.

LUKE

Who says that's not going to
happen?

INT. SOVIET NAVAL AFFAIRS OFFICE - FOYER - AFTERNOON

Polished mahogany wooden accents throughout. Its mostly
bare except for large portraits of FORMER SOVIET ADMIRALS.

Soviet Researcher 1 from NP SEIRRA sits on a hard wooden
chair. He attempts to sit still. It's useless. He knows
his fate.

He wiggles nervously and wrings his hands.

The chair creaks.

Sweat builds on his forehead. His glasses are partially fogged.

SUPERIMPOSE: SOVIET NAVAL AFFAIRS - Vice Admiral Vladamir Ivanov, Commander-in-Chief Assistant Soviet Naval Affairs

INT. VICE ADMIRAL IVANOV OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

IVANOV adjacent to a map of the Soviet Northern Fleet operating areas on the other side of his large desk.

A door knock.

NOTE: THE DIALOGUE IN THIS SCENE IS SPOKEN IN RUSSIAN AND IS SUBTITLED IN ENGLISH.

IVANOV

Come.

CAPTAIN NICOLAI, Commandant of the Soviet Northern Fleet Operations, pale white, and tall walks in carrying a brown leather tattered briefcase.

IVANOV

Sit.

Nicolai sits at attention in a chair perfectly placed in front of Ivanov's expansive desk.

IVANOV

We understand that NP SIERRA and a YEGER-416 remain vulnerable.

NICOLAI

How can that be? It's--

IVANOV

--it places our ability to track the American boomers in jeopardy...something I will not tolerate.

NICOLAI

Sir. What would you have me do?

Ivanov grabs a cut crystal glass from the edge of his desk and takes a sip.

IVANOV

You're asking me?

NICOLAI

Well, I--

Ivanov SLAMS his fist on the table.

IVANOV

--diffuse the situation. Find.
Investigate. Destroy the station.

A large drop of sweat FALLS on the lens of Nicolai's
GLASSES

NICOLAI

I'll scramble the BEARs from
Fedotovo and get the LENIN to
depart from Murmansk. What of the
Americans?

IVANOV

That is for you to figure out.
I've notified KGB. They will
assist.

NICOLAI

We don't need them, Sir.

IVANOV

It was not a suggestion.

EXT. RUSSIA - KOLA PENNINSULA - FEDOTOVO NAVAL
RECONNAISSANCE AIRBASE - TARMAC - MORNING

Two Soviet Tupolov Tu-142 BEAR aerial reconnaissance
aircraft prepare for flight.

Umbilical cord like fuel lines connect to the BEARs. Ground
support equipment surround them.

SUPERIMPOSE: 392nd Independent Long-Range Reconnaissance
Aviation Regiment, Fedotovo Naval Reconnaissance Airbase,
Russia

The BEARs engines roar to life simultaneously. The
thunderous beat of propellers shake the ground. It's an
impressive demonstration of Soviet air power.

EXT. RUNWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Both BEARs rumble down the runway.

Airplane exhaust billows from behind all four engines.

The black and gray exhaust disturbs the air behind them making the sky ripple.

They slowly begin to lift off the ground.

EXT. RUSSIA - MURMANSK NAVAL BASE - USSR LENIN - DAY

Long, thick, mooring lines are attached to the ship from an old dilapidated pier.

Dirty ice forms on the lines and along the ship.

Sailors whisk back and forth from the pier to the ship.

SUPERIMPOSE: *USSR LENIN* (RP-8) - NORTHERN FLEET - MURMANSK NAVAL BASE

INT. SHIPS BRIDGE - SAME

The bridge bustles with activity. Crewman sift through maps and charts.

They turn dials and levers on the navy gray terminals.

SHIP CAPTAIN

How are the preparations?

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Sir. We should be ready within the hour.

SHIP CAPTAIN

(to Comms officer)

Send a message to Moscow. Let them know we leave immediately.

EXT. NEAR NORTH POINT SIERRA - BEAR AIRCRAFT

The plane searches as it flies through a mess of thick bright white cloud layers. Fat rain drops pelt the aircraft as if rocks were hitting the fuselage.

TURBULANCE shoves the plane around with ease.

Visibility is less than 25 percent.

INT. COCKPIT - AFTERNOON

Frustration is clearly on the PILOTS face.

The crew shake their heads as they peek through windows all along the fuselage.

They check and recheck maps. They roll some up and snap rubber bands on the ones they don't need.

PILOT

Heading back. This is impossible.

INT. VICE ADMIRAL IVANOV OFFICE

Ivanov sifts through messages placed in his inbox on his desk. One message is titled, "FEDOTOVO NAVAL RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS CENTER".

INSERT LETTER, which says.

"North Point Station SIERRA remains unlocated. Daily BEAR patrols. USSR LENIN dispatched today. Soviet Air Force currently in the process of widening search."

BACK TO OFFICE

Steam billows from his white etched tea cup.

He takes a sip. Spins around in his

CHAIR

Leans back and stares at the map.

IVANOV

If we can't find it, it is impossible that they could find it.

END OF RUSSIAN DIALOGUE

EXT. ARCTIC - MORNING

Two B-17 aircraft fly in formation.

The hum of engines is constant.

The sky is clear. On the horizon are clouds. An impending storm approaches.

SUPERIMPOSE: NEAR NORTH POINT SIERRA (81.38N/152.19W)

INT. B-17 - CABIN

Fulton talks to the crew. His worn folder overflows with loosely crinkled papers. They check and recheck schematics.

Brian adjusts his gear. He loosens the flight suits front breast pocket. Unknowingly reveals a small caliber pistol.

LUKE

(shooked)

What did you bring that for?

BRIAN

Waddaya mean, what did I bring this for? What if there's some Ruskies still there?

(puts his thumb out)

Like you said we can't stroll on up and say "Hey fellas, we took a wrong turn 2000 miles back that way. Mind if we use your phone a cab?"

LUKE

Are you authorized to have that?

BRIAN

Who cares.

LUKE

And what if the Ruskies are armed?

BRIAN

Then you better get behind me. But just so ya know, I'll be movin' quick.

Luke's face turns stone cold.

Brian goes back to adjusts his suit.

Luke moves down the cabin. Grabs Fulton by the arm.

LUKE

Doc. Did you know he would be
packin'?

FULTON

(stares at him intently)
I had a pretty good idea.
(points to Brian)
Look at 'em.

Brian tugs at his harness.

Checks his 9MM. Places it back in his holster. It's
obvious he's comfortable handling weapons.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

A crewman grabs the outer, long, silver, door
HATCH

CREWMAN

(looks back)
Get ready to get cold.

LUKE

I'm already cold.

The handle slams down. The door slides open.
A hurricane force gush of air fills the cabin.
Loose flaps flutter in the wind.

CREWMAN

You ready, Brian?

BRIAN

Hell yeah!

CREWMAN

Shuffle on over. Just like we
planned. We'll drop you, then
Luke...once clear we'll drop the
gear.

TOM (O.C.)

(over intercom)
Drop in 30 seconds.

BRIAN
 (to Luke)
 This is where it gets good.

LUKE
 (down and out)
 For you maybe.
 (to Fulton)
 If anyone's there I'm gonna --

Luke looks at his family picture one last time. Then stuffs it in his flight suit.

FULTON
 Your gonna do what I would do...run! To where I haven't a clue. What a great story to tell the grandkids someday, but you might not be able to!

LUKE
 What?

FULTON
 Ahhh, I'm just kiddin'.

LUKE
 Well, knock it off, would you? That goddamn contraption of yours better work.

FULTON
 It did for the pig.
 (smiles)
 You two weigh about the same.

LUKE
 That's all you got? We weigh about the same!

TOM (O.C.)
 Okay boys. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

In a micro-second, Brian leaps out. Straight as an arrow.

BRIAN
 Whoohoo!

His parachute deploys in seconds. All is good.

CREWMAN 1
 Luke, let's go! Let's go! Just like Jersey.

Luke stumbles to the edge. Nervous. Unsure.

FULTON
You got this. Go! Go!

Luke pulls back awkwardly.

Shuts his eyes. Then LUNGES forward into the open abyss.

LUKE
(screams)
Shit! Oh god! Oh god!

His gray parachute deploys. He floats down through the gray cloudy sky.

EXT. NEAR NORTH POINT SIERRA - MOMENTS LATER

Luke hits the ground. He rolls onto this back. Creates a snow crater. Relieved and petrified at the same time.

The plane buzzes overhead.

Brian hustles over to Luke. He easily manages the harsh conditions. Smiles from ear to ear.

SUPERIMPOSE: 2 MILES SOUTH OF NORTH POINT STATION SIERRA
(81.55N/153.12W)

EACH CHARACTERS BREATH IS OBSERVED FROM THIS POINT.

BRIAN
What a rush, huh?

LUKE
I guess you could say that.

BRIAN
Who would have thought two months ago you would be on top of the world...literally.

Luke scans the area. Nothing but white rolling hills.

He begins to roll up his parachute.

BRIAN
(waves his right hand)
Forget that. We have mine. Need to get movin' before it gets dark.

LUKE

We close?

Brian whips out his map and compass.

Flips open the cover of the compass with one swift motion.

BRIAN

(points east)

Just a couple clicks that way.

EXT. NEAR NORTH POSITION SIERRA

They trudge through the snow. Thankfully the winds are calm for the moment.

The pace is brisk but manageable for Luke.

SIERRA station becomes visible on the horizon.

Luke gets a sinking feeling. One of anticipation that someone might be there.

LUKE

Looks deserted.

BRIAN

Can't be so sure.

Pats his chest for reassurance of his pistol.

EXT. NORTH POINT SIERRA - LATER

They both kneel in wait just 100 meters from the station.

Their eyes scan the area intently as if to pounce.

Brian pulls a set of binoculars.

from his pack. Looks through them.

LUKE

How's it look?

BRIAN

Nothin'.

LUKE

We need to get moving. They can't make the supply drop until we get

(MORE)

LUKE (CONT'D)

there.

BRIAN

That storm is gettin' closer.

EXT. NORTH POINT SIERRA

Brian takes the lead. Pistol in hand. Confident. He's looking to pick a fight.

Luke moves in unison with Brian. Occasionally places his hand on Brian's shoulder. He is nervous.

The wind kicks up as they get closer.

EXT. CONTROL ROOM

The buildings creaks with every gust of wind. Each sound makes every second nerve wracking.

They stealthily approach the door.

BRIAN

(whispers)

Stay behind me. When I move you move.

Luke nods his head.

Brian faces the door. He slowly grabs the latch.

He pushes it down slowly.

BRIAN

(whispers)

It's open. 3, 2, 1.

They he rushes in.

Gun drawn.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

The door slams open, hits the wall. It comes back at Brian and hits his arm.

A whoosh of cold air engulfs the room.

A bottle on the far end of the room FALLS and crashes to the GROUND

Brian's gun immediately goes to the crash. The hammer of the gun cocks.

LUKE
Wait! Wait! It's a bottle.

BRIAN
Damn it. I was a second away.

LUKE
From what?

BRIAN
Lightin' this place up.

LUKE
From a bottle falling?

BRIAN
Stay here. I'm gonna scope out the other rooms.

He reaches in his backpack to grab a walkie-talkie.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Raider 1. All clear. Drop at your ready.

TOM (V.O.)
Roger that.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Luke stands in the entrance as if he's just landed on the moon. Hands on his hips. Breathes heavily.

LUKE
Okay. Let me see here.

He inspects all four corners of the room.

BRIAN
They sure left in a hurry.

He approaches the large COMPUTER PANELS
Glass CRACKS with each step from his boot.

BRIAN
(points)
Looks like the only thing they
really broke were these two
screens.

Brian swats at the glass shards on the control panels.
He bends down. Picks up the broken metal HAMMER head.

BRIAN
(laughs)
I give 'em an "F" for effort.

Holds up the hammer for Luke to see.

LUKE
(points to broken
screens)
Let's hope we don't need them. We
need power or we're gonna freeze.
Any chance you can kick on the
generator?

BRIAN
Sure. After I throw the flare for
the guys.

LUKE
Sounds good.

BRIAN
Just don't ask me to run
diagnostics on those terminals,
cause my talents are limited.

He grabs his backpack. Slings it over his back and hustles
out of the control room.

EXT. NORTH POINT STATION SIERRA

The hard wind slaps him in the face. It's brutally cold.
Brian clears a path from the control building.

BRIAN
(shakes his head)
Shit. Why can't I be the smart one?

EXT. GENERATOR SHED - MOMENTS LATER

Snow drifts two feet high hug the entirety of the building.

It's obvious there hasn't been a soul here in months.

He grabs the large

SILVER HANDLES

They screech as he attempts to turn them.

BRIAN

Damn it.

The doors feels glued together. He yanks hard.

The door pops open slightly. One foot at a time. The snow gets higher against the door as it swings open. It's just enough room for him to squeeze through.

Wind and powdered snow blows into the room.

INT. GENERATOR SHED - CONTINUOUS

The door SLAMS behind him.

The room is small and crowded with gasoline and oil cans. Tools and frozen greasy rags are scattered around. The tools are in usable condition.

BRIAN

(rubs his hands together
for warmth)

Looks clean.

He moves to inspect the large black generator.

It has a large crank at the bottom.

A large red switch annotated in Russian for ON and OFF.

BRIAN

Please tell me there's gas in this
puppy.

He spins the gas cap. Leans over and peaks inside.

BRIAN

Yes! Thank you Lord.

He jumps back down. Approaches the switch.

In anticipation he flips the switch.

He grabs the crank handle. Winds it in a clockwise motion.

BRIAN
Come on baby.

He cranks harder.

The generator suddenly shakes and shudders. The motor turns and then ROARS to life.

Smoke spits out of the exhaust. It steadily rumbles.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The radio, lights, and areas of the control panel light up.

LUKE
He did it!
(jumps up from his chair)
Let's see what this sucker can do.

He drops to his knees in front of the computer bank.

FLIPS on his back. Crawls under the console.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - LATER

The door breaks open wildly. Brian enters along with a gut wrenching cold draft.

He dusts off the snow from his body. Stomps his feet in the entrance. He's freezing but in good spirits.

BRIAN
You owe me.

LUKE (O.C.)
Sure do.

Luke lays under the largest part of the control station.

BRIAN
What are you doin'?

LUKE
Trying to get this started.

CLANKING of metal.

Wires flop down exposed.

LUKE
Here goes nothin'.

His wrist turns. Then he lets go.

Bulbs of all shapes ignite on the fat monitors.

A small metal fans begins to spin.

LUKE (CONT'D)
How's it look?

Rectangular and circular screens now reflect RUSSIAN LETTERS
and GRAPHICS.

BRIAN
Like it's on.

EXT. NORTH POINT STATION SIERRA - CONTINUOUS

The radar transmitter on the top of the station begins to
turn. Slowly at first. Then steady.

A yellow power light flickers, then stays on permanently.

INT. SOVIET ARCTIC AND ATLANTIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE -
OPERATIONS CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Depressed cold gray room. Arctic drawings litter the walls.
Manuals strewn on each table. Filing cabinets overflow.

SUPERIMPOSE: Arctic and Atlantic Research Institute
Operations Center, Saint Petersburg, Russia

Two SOVIET SCIENTISTS in white dingy robes sit behind
computer screens. One takes off his glasses and rubs his
eyes. The other flips through a large two-inch binders.

Lights BLINK from monitors showing North Point Station.

A dot matrix printer flips on. The printers arm slam from
left to right. The paper tray accelerates to keep up.
Spits out uniformed folded paper on the tile floor.

NOTE: THE DIALOGUE IN THIS SCENE IS SPOKEN IN RUSSIAN AND IS
SUBTITLED IN ENGLISH.

SOVIET SCIENTIST 1
 (hastily puts on his
 glasses)
 What the--

Taps the screen with his middle finger while holding his
 CIGARETTE

SOVIET SCIENTIST 2
 What is it?

SOVIET SCIENTIST 1
 (confused)
 NP SIERRA...just kicked on.

SOVIET SCIENTIST 2
 Impossible. Didn't we abandon it
 over a month ago?

SOVIET SCIENTIST 1
 I thought so. Maybe not...They
 don't tell me anything.

END RUSSIAN DIALOGUE

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Luke scans the interface. His hands float over the blinking
 knobs and dials.

He pulls a small note pad from his back pocket.

LUKE
 (scribbles on the pad)
 It's more intricate than I thought.
 (to Brian)
 Take pictures of the console would
 ya?

BRIAN
 Sure, sure. Let me get the gear.

Brian rustles around in his bag and pulls out a camera.

SNAPS the bulb into place for the flash.

LUKE
 Make sure you get tight on some of
 those displays.

BRIAN

No prob. I'm glad you know how to read this stuff, cause I don't have a clue.

The cameras flash lights up the room like a Christmas tree.

LUKE

Check this out.

(points)

This board over here shows the tracking of our boomers. It's scanning below us...performing diagnostics.

Luke's eyes dart back and forth in amazement.

LUKE (CONT'D)

That's the type of sub...fascinating.

BRIAN

And that's a good thing?

LUKE

More than good. Unbelievable. Had no idea...no one did actually. Can't wait for the Nautilus to get below us.

BRIAN

When are they coming?

LUKE

What time is it?

BRIAN

(flips his wrist over)

1300.

LUKE

Damn. About an hour. Doesn't give me much time.

INT. SOVIET NAVAL AFFAIRS - VICE ADMIRAL IVANOV OFFICE

Ivanov stares out the window as snow flakes drift down to the cold stale ground.

The door slightly opens. His secretary pokes her head in.

NOTE: THE DIALOGUE IN THIS SCENE IS SPOKEN IN RUSSIAN AND IS SUBTITLED IN ENGLISH.

SECRETARY

Sir. A message for you.

She walks to his desk.

He extends his hand. Grabs the paper.

INSERT LETTER, which reads.

IVANOV (V.O.)

"North Point Station SIERRA active. As of 1257Z SIERRA has begun to transmit. Current location is triangulated to be 600 miles from Thule, Greenland. Remains unclear behind it's activation. Request further guidance."

BACK TO ROOM

He drops the paper in amazement. Looks up angrily.

IVANOV

I need to speak with the Ministers. Get Nicolai as well. I want a full report.

INT. VICE ADMIRAL IVANOV OFFICE - EVENING

Ten distinguished older men in dark perfectly tailored suits sit at an immaculate table. Similar in mannerisms, look, and feel. Almost a perfect set of cookie cutter Commies.

Finely etched pitchers of water and clear crystal glasses are at each seat. No one drinks.

IVANOV

Report.

NICOLAI

Our BEAR's have yet to find SIERRA. Lenin departed port along with ECHO subs K-29 and K-35 the day before yesterday.

IVANOV

Damn it. What of YEGER-416?

NICOLAI

It appears active. We are gathering all available resources.

IVANOV

I want a crew ready as soon as possible to parachute in once we find it.

NICOLAI

But sir, we can not extract them. The runway remains inoperable.

IVANOV

Do not worry about incidentals.

NICOLAI

And what of the Americans? What if they are there as we assess?

Ivanov leans forward on his elbows.

IVANOV

They are unlawfully on Soviet sovereign territory. Ensure they are dealt with in an appropriate fashion.

NICOLAI

(unsure)

Sir, I don't follow. What if they're armed? What would we do with them?

IVANOV

(very pointed)

Disarm them. Forcefully, if need be. Capture, kill, detain...makes no difference.

NICOLAI

Uhhh, but sir--

IVANOV

I am clear.

END OF RUSSIAN DIALOGUE

Ivanov takes his cigar and blows smoke harshly into the air.

INT. NORTH POINT STATION SIERRA - CONTROL ROOM

The computer panels start to BLINK and BEEP.

Paper feeds into the printer. It makes notations of the *USS Nautilus*.

LUKE

Look.

(points to the paper)

Speed. Location. Type.

He slides in the chair from each side of the control panels.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Let me see if I can ping them.

Luke flips open one of the manuals. His fingers follow Russian lettering. He mumbles to himself.

He grabs a knob and turns. Pulls on several levers.

LUKE

That should do it. Let's see what happens now.

INT. USS NAUTILUS - SONAR ROOM - SAME

A loud ping rings in the SONARMAN's headset. He grabs his ear muffs and lifts them from his head in irritation.

SONARMAN

Damn, Captain. They have us...loud pings.

The Captain smiles. He knows now that the team's arrived above them. Now comes the time for counter-measures.

CAPTAIN

Didn't think they could do it, but they did. Run as many diagnostics as you can.

(to Executive Officer)

Notify LANTFLT and tell NAV we leave in four hours.

INT. NORTH POINT STATION SIERRA - CONTROL ROOM - MORNING

They sit on blankets against the wall next to a heater

enjoying a much needed break.

Luke reaches into his breast pocket.

Pulls out a beautiful picture of Sylvia and Nathaniel.

LUKE

Any little Musgrave's running around?

BRIAN

Nah, don't have much back home. Just love the adventure. How many people can say they've been to the top of the world?

LUKE

I guess.

BRIAN

Why the hell are you?

LUKE

You were there...not like I could've said no.

BRIAN

Sure you could.

LUKE

Easy for you to say. You didn't have a dozen eyes on you when you were volun-"told".

BRIAN

Ahhh, don't give me that shit. Everyone understands your family situation.

LUKE

Highly doubt that. If it's not your wife and kid does anybody really give a shit?

BRIAN

But still--

LUKE

Bri...the weight of those eyes in that conference room is a powerful thing. In those seconds there was no way in hell I could've said no.

BRIAN

You could have later.

LUKE

Really? No way. The most important thing for anyone is reputation. It's everything. I couldn't chance giving that up. What if we get off this block of ice and get this shit home. We're heros. Great! We move on and people forget sometime down the road about this great escapade.

BRIAN

Gotta--

LUKE

--but, and that's a big but, if this op failed and I wasn't here after being--

(air quotes)

Voluntold...my reputation would be ruined. So when you think about it, I didn't have a choice.

BRIAN

Wow...you thought this thing through.

LUKE

Every night since that conference room--

BRIAN

--and now your here. 3,000 miles from home in the middle of an ice island. Congrats.

The radio crackles. Intermittent STATIC with varying sound.

In unison they turn towards look at the speaker.

RADIO (V.O.)

(in Russian)

North Point Station SIERRA. North Point Station SIERRA.

BRIAN

What are they sayin'?

RADIO (V.O.)
 (in Russian)
 Acknowledge North Point Station
 SIERRA. This is ARII.

LUKE
 (confused)
 They're calling the station.

BRIAN
 This one?

LUKE
 Yes.

Luke sits up as if he was going to salute the radio.
 Places his picture on the top of a four-drawer
 FILING CABINET

BRIAN
 What the hell for?

RADIO
 (in Russian)
 Sergei, are you there?

LUKE
 (shaken)
 Should I answer?

Brian snaps to his feet.

BRIAN
 Fuck, I don't know.

Luke grabs the handset.

LUKE
 Shit.

BRIAN
 Just do it.

RADIO (V.O.)
 (in Russian)
 Again. This is AARI. Have you
 arrived?

Luke turns his head. Clears his throat.

LUKE
 (in perfect Russian)
 (MORE)

LUKE (CONT'D)

This is Sergei, over.

RADIO (V.O.)

(in Russian)
Sergei, very good. We have
confirmation of system activation.

LUKE

(in Russian)
Yes. Yes.

RADIO (V.O.)

(in Russian)
Has either team arrived--

Static fills the speaker.

LUKE

(in Russian)
Say again, station.

RADIO (V.O.)

(in Russian)
--has...members--

The radio goes silent.

Luke hits the handset with his other hand.

LUKE

(in Russian)
AARI acknowledge, over.

SILENCE. They stare in shock at the radio.

BRIAN

What did they say?

LUKE

He asked if the rest have
arrived...I think.

BRIAN

What? Why the fuck would they come
back?

LUKE

Shit...they know we're here.

BRIAN

But how?.

LUKE
Someone must have told them.

BRIAN
We kept this quiet.

LUKE
I guess. When things automatically
get turned on and start
processing...

BRIAN
But--

LUKE
--what? A polar bear got the
generator going? How do we get a
hold of the guys at Resolute? We
need to get the hell out of here.

BRIAN
We don't.

INT. ARCTIC AND ATLANTIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE - OPERATIONS
CENTER - LATER

Two scientists sip coffee. Smoke skinny cigarettes. They
flip through Soviet magazines. Bored as hell.

A MAN walks past the clear glass double doors to the room.

NOTE: THE DIALOGUE IN THIS SCENE IS SPOKEN IN RUSSIAN AND IS
SUBTITLED IN ENGLISH.

SCIENTIST 1
(spits out his coffee)
What? Sergei!

SCIENTIST 2
Sergei's at Sierra you idiot.

SCIENTIST 1
(yells)
Sergei!

Sergei pushes open the door. Cigarette in hand.

SERGEI
What's with all the yelling?

END OF RUSSIAN DIALOGUE

SCIENTIST 2 stumbles for the phone.
Punches the keys wildly.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Luke makes final preparations for their departure. Stuffs hard-drives and electrodes in an Army canvas duffle bag.

BRIAN
It's that time, and the weather
looks horrible.

Brian stares out the small window. Wind blows snow like a sand storm in the Sahara. It's fierce.

LUKE
That bad?

BRIAN
Thick as soup. You can't see 100
yards. Gonna be impossible for
them to find us.

LUKE
(fast)
But the Soviets, they said they're
on their way.

BRIAN
If our guys can't find us, they
can't either.

LUKE
What about the beacon?

BRIAN
You crazy? I'm not deploying that
until we absolutely have to. Then
it's just a matter of time who
finds us first.

Luke shakes his head.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
You stay here. I don't need both
of us out in that shit.

Brian opens the door. A rush of cold swoops into the room.

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

Brian looks up as pellets of snow hit him in the face. Puts his hand just above his eyebrows. Surveys the horizon.

BRIAN

Damn.

He drags the duffle bag with the gear to the runway.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I'm not deploying this thing in this mess.

Pulls his radio off his belt. Puts his back to the wind.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Raider 1. Over.

He stands there intently waiting.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Raider, over. You guys out there, over?

SILENCE.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brian comes back into the room disheveled.

LUKE

Anything?

BRIAN

Nope. Terrible out there.

LUKE

What are we gonna do?

BRIAN

(paces back and forth)

We can't stay here. I'm gonna deploy the beacon.

LUKE

Knew you were going to say that.

BRIAN

They're out there somewhere. Let's just hope they're closer than the other guys.

INT. B-17 - LATER

Crewman study the map. It's futile. A storm blankets a hundred miles wide sheet over the ice shelf.

TOM
Raider 2. Nothing. Anything on
your end?

PILOT (O.C.)
Nothing Tom. If we don't see them
or get a signal in the next 30
minutes, we'll have to head back.

TOM
Agree...fuel.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - LATER

Luke stands and throws papers across the table.

LUKE
Damn it!

BRIAN
Well...we have no choice. We need
to get the fuck out of here.

LUKE
Just do it.

BRIAN
Roger that.

Brian angrily grabs the bright orange beacon on the shelf.

BRIAN
(pissed)
Be right back.

INT. SOVIET BEAR AIRCRAFT - COMMUNICATIONS CABIN - LATER

A circular green tube begins to flash in the top right corner. A bell RINGS.

The RADARMAN's eyes widen. He quickly grabs his headphones and microphone.

SONORMAN
 (in Russian)
 Captain! Captain! We have a
 beacon transmission due west.
 Approximately 40 minutes out.

PILOT
 (in Russian)
 Roger that. Comms, relay to
 headquarters, LENIN and the ECHOs.

INT. SOVIET BEAR AIRCRAFT

The pilots are more determined than ever. They know just up ahead is their greatest enemy.

Spetnaz paratroopers prepare to jump.

A red light blinks and then sounds off.

The JUMPMASTER waves his hand in a circular motion.

JUMPMASTER
 (yells in Russian)
 Prepare for the drop.

They do last second checks of their straps.

Some Ak-47s while others holster Tokarev pistols.

They get up one by one. Line up in formation.

INT. B-17 - COCKPIT

The dashboard lights flash.

CO-PILOT
 Tom. We gott'em. 10 mics out.

TOM
 Raider 2. You see that?

FULTON
 Crew. Make preps for Skyhook.

Crewman jump into action. One trots over to the J-hook while the others take their positions.

TOM
 Get on the radio. See if you can
 (MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)
reach them.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

BRIAN
(smiles)
We'll we've done it.
(slams the door)
We're officially fucked!

LUKE
We have the Commies below us and
now maybe on top of us.

BRIAN
Always the optimist. I'll get the
hard drive bags and manuals if you
can get the cameras.

LUKE
Got it.

BRIAN
Wait.
(puts his hand across
Luke's chest)
Below us?

LUKE
I didn't tell you?

BRIAN
Uhhh. No.

LUKE
Right before I pulled out the 416
it picked up another sub.

BRIAN
Huh...another? Ours right?

LUKE
Nope. Soviet ECHO-class.

BRIAN
Christ, I didn't bring enough
bullets!

LUKE
Now who's the optimist?

INT. RAIDER TWO - SAME

The crew intently look at the radar screens.

Four large red bulbs flash at first. Then continuous.

RADIOMAN

Sir, we have a problem, over.

CAPTAIN

What is it?

RADIOMAN

Four unidentified aircraft
approaching, 30 mics out.

CAPTAIN

Say again?

RADIOMAN

Four aircraft approaching due east.

CAPTAIN

(to all)

Raider 1. Four aircraft
approaching. 30 mics to the east.
Non-friendlies. Repeat
non-friendlies.

INT. RAIDER ONE - COCKPIT - SAME

TOM

What?

FULTON

(snaps his head to Tom)

Did I hear them correctly?

TOM

I think so.

(to radio)

Raider 2, over. Did you say
non-friendlies?

RAIDER 2 PILOT (O.C.)

Roger, that. Make it quick. It's
no welcoming party.

TOM

My Fair Lady. Three minutes out.

FULTON
He's still not answering.

TOM
There's something wrong.

FULTON
(points out the window)
I see the balloon.

TOM
Yeah. So do I. It's really
movin'.

EXT. RUNWAY - LATER

Brian and Luke strap down the duffle bags full of stolen Soviet gear to the balloon harness.

The air pump breathes life into the balloon. It rises from the icy floor.

BRIAN
This is it, bro. Just like we
practiced. Help me strap it down.

The wind is strong but manageable. Gusts pick-up in spirts.

LUKE
Winds okay?

BRIAN
Does it matter? Our guys are
comin'.

LUKE
(laughs)
Suddenly the most popular place on
the planet right now.

They both grab a bag.

BRIAN
You're laughing? Who would've
thought. Love it!

Grabs the silver hooks and straps them together.

BRIAN
Throw the markers. They should be
just over the horizon.

Luke holds the markers like grenades. Pulls the pins.

He chucks them toward the center of the runway.

The bright orange balloon stands out in stark contrast to the all white surroundings. Higher and higher it goes.

BRIAN

They better get here.

On the horizon the hum of engines becomes apparent.

LUKE

(points)

There they are! Thank god!

Luke feels a rush of energy. Steam from his breath becomes prominent. Almost to a point of hyperventilating.

EXT. B-17 - CONTINUOUS

On the horizon two aircraft approach in formation.

SUPERIMPOSE: B-17 FLYING FORTRESS RAIDER 1 (SKYHOOK) AND RAIDER 2 (THE LOOKOUT).

Brian pulls the radio from his pocket. Grips it tight.

BRIAN

(to radio)

MY FAIR LADY to RAIDER over.

LUKE

My fair lady?

BRIAN

(puts hand over the speaker)

It's my favorite movie.

Luke stares at him.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I'm eccentric!

(to radio)

Raiders. First article is deployed and ready.

A huge gust of wind pushes them from behind.

The bags slide a couple feet down the runway. Snow gathers around the bag.

Luke jumps out of the way.

BRIAN
God damn wind.

Brian dives on the bags to keep them from moving further.

TOM (O.C.)
Good to see you LADY. Article in
sight. Pick up in 45 seconds.

BRIAN
(to radio)
Better hurry the fuck up. Winds
are gettin' worse.

The SKYHOOK apparatus is like a giant mouth waiting to eat
its prey.

They back up slowly from the packages.

The plane zooms overhead. The propellers beat down.

The plane hooks the balloon.

The rope slaps to attention. It's straight as an arrow.

The bags SNAP and slides two feet. Then ascends as the
airplane flies away. A perfect snap and grab.

Its straps flap as their lifted off up to the white sky.

BRIAN
One down, two to go. You ready?

LUKE
I'm ready but you first.

The wind kicks up. Sways the both of them.

BRIAN
What?

LUKE
I want to be the last one off this
rock.

Brian stares at him intently.

Luke's eyes are filled with the courage of a lion. Brian
has seen this before. It's one of determination. He never
expected it from someone like Luke but he understands.

BRIAN
 (solemn. pats him on the
 shoulder)
 You got it, brother.

He begins to inflate his balloon. It's a quick operation.
 Wind pulls it down wind slightly inch by inch.

BRIAN
 (to radio)
 My fair lady article two ready.

TOM (O.C.)
 Roger that. 2 minutes.

The wind picks up. Brian leans into the wind to maintain
 his balance and keep from sliding backwards.

BRIAN
 Proud to be here with ya.

LUKE
 Thanks. Means a lot.

BRIAN
 We did something good here.

LUKE
 Couldn't have done it without your
 guidance.

Brian reaches for his BREAST POCKET.

BRIAN
 Shit. I almost forgot.

He takes out his pistol.

Swings it over to Luke. Handle first.

BRIAN
 Take it.

LUKE
 (waves his hands)
 No...for what?

BRIAN
 If you don't get off this rock,
 you'll need it.

LUKE
Doesn't sound very encouraging.

BRIAN
Luke, here. Take it. You never know.

Luke reluctantly reaches out for it.

Grabs it awkwardly.

LUKE
If it makes you feel better.

BRIAN
It does. Remember, Come on, Dover!
Come on, Dover! Move your bloomin'
arse!

TOM (O.C.)
30 seconds.

LUKE
Really? Again with the My Fair
Lady.
(nods)
You're just weird.

BRIAN
Trust me. If the Soviets get here
and you get the opportunity to meet
'em, think about what I said.

LUKE
I hope I don't get that chance.

The airplane zooms right over them. Any closer and Tom could have given them a high-five.

Luke takes a couple quick steps back.

Brian's suddenly jerked up.

BRIAN
(laughs)
Helluva ride Luke Moffett. See yah
on the flip...ohhh!

Luke looks up.

BRIAN
(yells)
Yehaaa!

LUKE

--side.

Luke follows him with his eyes intently.

INT./EXT. RAIDER 1 - CABIN

Brian slides up the rope. The winch GRINDS as it pulls him closer.

The crewman reach for him with the J-hook.

Brian's body is slammed against the fuselage. The crew finally grab his shoulder.

Turn him around. Yank him in.

BRIAN

(excited)

What a ride!

He removes his helmet and mask. Throws it into the cabin.

CREWMAN

Brian? You left Luke down there on his own?

BRIAN

He wanted to be the last one.

CREWMAN

Shit.

(to radio)

Tom, Luke is the last pick-up.

TOM (O.C.)

Say again?

CREWMAN

Luke's the only one left.

TOM (O.C.)

Why the hell did Brian leave him down there?

CREWMAN

You'll have to ask him.

He hands the headset over to Brian.

CREWMAN

Here. Tom wants to talk to you.

Brian grabs them. Places them over his head.

BRIAN
This is Bri.

TOM (O.C.)
Why'd you leave him down there?

BRIAN
He insisted.

TOM (O.C.)
And you let him?

BRIAN
If you saw the look on his face you
woulda done the same.

EXT./INT. BEAR AIRCRAFT - MOMENTS LATER

Spetnaz paratroopers one by one hurl out of the side door.
Immediately their gray and white parachutes deploy.

EXT. RUNWAY - SAME

Luke bends down and unzips the duffel bag. Drags the
balloon out from the bag. Unfurls the launch cord. Hooks
up the compressor to inflate the balloon.

He looks up to notice an airplane on the horizon. He
immediately knows it's not American.

LUKE
Their here.

A rush of fear overcomes him. He's frozen where he stands.

TOM (O.C.)
My Fair Lady. You out there?

SILENCE.

TOM (O.C.)
My Fair Lady. Come in.

Luke comes to. He's shaken. Grabs his radio.

LUKE
(to radio)
(MORE)

LUKE (CONT'D)

This is her, over.

TOM (O.C.)

So you decided to stay?

LUKE

(to radio)

Raider. Question for you.

TOM (O.C.)

Keep our line clean.

LUKE

Rodger. Are we not alone?

TOM (O.C.)

Affirmative. Let's get this over with. Two minutes to catch.

LUKE

(to radio)

Roger. Balloon up. Do you see it?

TOM (O.C.)

Yes.

Luke grabs the hook. Snaps it to his harness. A surprise gust of wind hits his body.

He STUMBLES. Then falls to the ice. Slides five feet and stops at a small crack in the ice.

LUKE

(to radio)

Raider 1. The winds are kicking up on me.

The wind gusts are now in constant 10 second spurts.

TOM (O.C.)

Lady, you're breaking up. Sixty seconds.

LUKE

Damn it.

Pushes himself to his feet. He grips the rope even tighter.

The wind pushes him down again further down the runway.

The radio dislodges from his belt and slides on the slick ice and out of reach.

The balloon moves further down the runway. It's no longer

straight overhead. It's hundreds of feet ahead of Luke.
He begins to slide again. He's totally off track.

INT. RAIDER 1 - COCKPIT

TOM
Damn it. That balloon keeps movin'
around.

FULTON
Don't hook it wrong. If we snap it
we have no way of getting him.

TOM
I know. I know. Took us two days
to find this damn place again.

FULTON
Or the Soviets. That beacon is
just begging the Soviets to find
him.

The balloon is moving ten feet to either side.

TOM
We need to make another pass. This
isn't gonna work.
(to radio)
My Fair Lady. We need to come back
around...Lady, over?

Fulton looks concerned.

EXT. RAIDER TWO - SAME

PILOT
(to radio)
Get him out quick. Those
paratroopers are runnin' at him at
a good clip.

EXT. RUNWAY

Luke's body is dragged slightly along the icy runway.

He looks up. The B-17 takes a hard left.

LUKE
(yells)
Where you guys going?

His stomach drops. He's rethinking his decision now.

The wind grabs the balloon again but harder.

He slides more quickly and farther.

Luke's body is being dragged violently.

The bumps in the runway hit him like a PRIZE FIGHTER.

LUKE
Owww. Damn it!

EXT. RUNWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Luke gathers himself. Steady as possible. Gets to his feet.

LUKE
Get here already!

The airplane is again on the horizon. Makes an approach.

Luke can see the plane for a quick moment as he struggles to stay in line with the balloon.

He slides ten more feet toward a wider crack.

He falls on his back.

LUKE
Shit!

He's dragged feet first toward the crack at a high speed.

LUKE
Ooofff!

He slams into the crack. He manages to wedge his feet in front of him. Implants his feet in the crack.

He fights the fierce wind to keep from being blown over and out of the crevasse in the ice.

The balloon tugs fiercely at him.

LUKE
(yells)
You're not going anywhere.

The airplane gets louder and louder.

In the distance he sees movement. The paratroopers.
They're far enough away but getting closer.

LUKE
Holy shit!

EXT. RUNWAY PARIMETER - SAME

Soviet paratroopers with Ak-47's slog through the dense snow. Fat backpacks show the visit could be a long one.

INT. B-17 - RAIDER 1

The balloon sways from side to side. It's going to be a tight fit in the jaws of Skyhook.

Fulton peers through binoculars.

FULTON
Damn. That balloon must've dragged
him a hundred feet.

Fulton moves the binoculars down the runway. He sees paratroopers as they head toward Luke.

FULTON (CONT'D)
Ohhh, my god.

He sees Luke as he struggles to remain upright. His arms move from side to side with the sway of the cord.

TOM
Steady...steady.

Tom struggles with the flight joystick. The wings flop at the tips like bird wings.

The crew bump against the fuselage and gear.

FULTON
He's holding on. We can't miss.

The turbulence forces the airplane downward.

TOM

I got 'em.

RAIDER 2 PILOT (O.C)

Raider 1. Soviets on the ground!

FULTON

Come on Luke.

EXT. RUNWAY

The hum of the engines give Luke renewed strength.

He leans his head back to see the plane.

The plane roars right over him.

LUKE

Please work.

He feels better saying it out loud.

The balloon swoops to the right of the hook and then slides to the center.

The rope takes hold then stiffens but at its end. The balloon is so far from Luke.

Finally he's yanked from the icy crack and thrown to the ground onto his stomach. Now he's being dragged.

INT. B-17 - RAIDER 1

Crewman hangs partially out of the hatch watching Luke struggle below.

CREWMAN

Tom. Pull up! Pull up! Luke...I mean Lady is being dragged.

TOM

Hold on everyone.

Tom grabs the handles of the joystick and yanks them back.

The plane takes a sharp upward movement, then a move to starboard. Everyone's stomachs moves into their throats.

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

Luke's legs kick wildly as he's dragged with increasing speed. His face-shield slams the ice, burning his cheek and bloodies his nose.

LUKE

Owww!

The plane's engine moans loudly like a dying whale.

Luke is yanked upward like a sack of potatoes.

The front part of his helmet hits the ice like a hammer blow.

A two inch CRACK appears in his helmet. The hit bloodies his nose even more.

Luke blacks out for a second.

Eyes blink uncontrollably. He sees the runway underneath him get smaller and smaller as he's pulled upward towards the plane.

He comes to his senses. He stretches his arms out quickly to keep from spinning.

The Soviet paratroopers are closer than ever. They raise their weapons.

BANG. BANG.

INT/EXT. RAIDER 1

CREWMAN 1

Their shooting!

CREWMAN 2 (O.C.)

(to radio)

He's on his way.

TOM

(pants)

Leveling off. Doc, can you go back there and check on him?

FULTON

Just going.

He unhooks his straps. Jumps to head back.

TOM

Raider 2. Get the hell out of here!

Luke is guided in by the crew.

Fulton pushes the crewman aside to help with retrieving Luke. He wants to see him first.

Fulton grabs him. YANKS him in.

Luke stumbles onboard. Lands on his back. He pants profusely.

Fulton practically jumps on top of him to give him the biggest hug. Grabs his shoulders.

FULTON

What were you thinkin'?

LUKE

(pants)

For once...in my life...

(laughs)

I wasn't.

Fulton and Brian break out in laughter.

CREWMAN

(to radio)

He got 'em.

INT. B-17 CABIN - LATER

Luke stares out the small, circular window. Clouds pass by in spurts. It's cramped. Gear stacked floor to ceiling. NP SIERRA equipment stuffed everywhere.

Crewman scramble about making adjustments.

Suddenly Luke grabs his pocket.

Franticly he looks through his coat and pant pockets.

Grabs his bag. Rifles through it. His notebook, pen, and a scarf drop to the

FLOOR

LUKE MOFFETT

Shit! Shit!

His face turns white.

CREWMAN

Sir. You ok?

INT. NORTH POINT STATION SIERRA - CONTROL ROOM - LATER

Spetnaz paratroopers and a KGB OFFICER barge in. Guns drawn.

A look of disbelief at the condition of the room.

They forcefully search the rooms. Push chairs and anything not nailed down to the ground.

Equipment is clearly missing from computer racks.

Slots empty. Wires dangle from underneath the CONSOLES.

Books with ripped out papers are on the table. Left over food wrappers on the floor.

A small 2x3 photograph lays on the filing cabinet.

A soldier reaches to pick it up.

SPETNAZ PARATROOPER

(in Russian)

Who's this?

Hands it to the agent.

SOVIET KGB AGENT

(in perfect English)

I guess we'll find out.

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER:

"Fulton's Skyhook was continually used by many government agencies as late as 1996 on various aircraft platforms. It also became a movie action scene favorite and has been featured in such films as *The Dark Knight*, James Bond *Thunderball* and in several video games, most recently the popular *Metal Gear Solid* series.

As for the Soviet top secret crypto gear...we'll probably never know."

FADE OUT

END FILM.