

THE WEAPON

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. NORTHWEST RUSSIA - KOLA PENINSULA - SNOW SWEEPED FIELD - NIGHT**

**SUPER LEGEND:** "NORTHWEST RUSSIA - TWENTY YEARS AGO"

SOYKA, an adventurous 11-year-old native Sami girl, dressed for the brutal winter weather in a long coat of reindeer skin and fur, trudges through the darkness away from the outdoor cooking fires of her village.

She looks up, following an unusually bright Aurora Borealis pathway in the sky.

Vivid white trails of meteors crisscross through the Aurora before they quickly burn up. A few saucer-shaped silver dots race from horizon to horizon.

Between patches of ice and snow, Soyka discovers the frozen carcass of a long-dead reindeer protruding from a patch of freshly-thawed permafrost.

She pulls a sturdy Sami knife from under her long coat.

With a few hefty chops, she hacks off a hunk of reindeer meat and stuffs it and her knife back under her coat.

She turns and trudges back toward the cooking fires twinkling in the distance.

Far behind her, the lights of a large truck click on, illuminating an unidentifiable team tossing similar carcasses into the bed of the truck.

**SAMI VILLAGE - LATER**

Outside her family dwelling, Soyka sneaks her reindeer meat onto the grill of the cooking fire, among strips of seal.

**INT. SOYKA FAMILY LAVVU - NIGHT**

Soyka sits in the family's meal circle, feasts on her half-cooked reindeer meat while her middle-aged MOTHER and FATHER and her younger brother, EDO, 7, eat seal.

**LATER**

While her family sleeps, Soyka, covered in sweat, tosses and turns on her bed of alpine willow twigs and reindeer calfskin.

She stifles cries of pain as black pustular sores form on her body. She stiffens then shakes uncontrollably.

**INT. SOYKA FAMILY LAVVU - DAY**

Edo awakens first, crawls over to his sister whose body faces away from him.

He nudges her.

She doesn't move.

He pulls her arm, rolls her over.

Screams.

EDO

Mommy, Daddy, Soyka's hurt.

Wide-open unblinking eyes stare up at Edo. Dime-sized black sores cover Soyka's face and arms. A dark stain of still-soft blood marks a wide trail from her nostrils and lips down her face. She's dead.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. ALASKA - ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE AREA 1002 - BROOKS RANGE - CRESTED NOTCH ENTRANCE TO THE VALLEY OF DEATH - DAY**

Four teams of eight Siberian Huskies pull dog-sleds over the snowy notch into the valley. Each carries two geographic researchers tasked to locate, map, and explore this legendary valley.

**SUPER LEGEND: "ALASKA - TEN YEARS AGO"**

The leader of the team, RUSS RYAN, 40 years old, curt and crusty for his age, drives the first sled. A storm whistle hangs from his neck on a lanyard.

Volcanic vents spew puffs of noxious gas around them as they descend into the valley.

The frozen remains of birds and small mammals litter the snow-covered ground.

They pass groves of white spruce, dripping with icicles like transparent daggers.

**HALF WAY DOWN**

In a windy clearing, Russ blows the LOUD STORM WHISTLE, raises an arm to signal the others.

The dogs slow to a stop.

He shouts over the sound of the WIND to his entire team.

RUSS  
Gentlemen. Behold, I give you the  
fabled Valley Of Death.

He turns to INUKSUK, the stoic 20-something Inupiat guide who shares his sled, and speaks in a more intimate voice.

RUSS (CONT'D)  
Thank you my friend, job well done.

RUSS (CONT'D)  
(to the others)  
Now, let's get those sleds unloaded  
so we can set up camp and begin our  
exploration and mapping of this God-  
forsaken place.

CHAZ CHEZOSKY, a jittery 25-year-old cartographer just out of school, dismounts from another sled.

RAY SKINNER, a short-tempered 38-year-old veteran seismologist, dismounts behind Chezosky.

Both struggle to untie a large sheet of canvas covering the back half of their sled, to reveal equipment and large boxes stenciled with the words "U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY."

CHEZOSKY  
I never liked that name: Valley of  
Death. Gives me the creeps.

Chezosky picks up, unloads a portable seismograph, staggers backward a few feet, drops it into the snow.

SKINNER  
Jeez Chezosky, watch it. Now I'll  
have to recalibrate my seismograph.

CHEZOSKY  
Sorry.

SKINNER  
(muttering, slightly  
mocking)  
What if I stepped on one of your  
delicate lidar drones and broke a  
rotor? You wouldn't be able to draw  
your precious maps of this "Valley  
of Death."

He marks the words Valley of Death with air quotes.

The other Researchers murmur among themselves as they dismount, strap on snowshoes, and unload the rest of their gear.

As they unload cartons of dried food, Skinner snatches up and holds a pouch of people food in one hand - labeled "Chicken with Rice," a packet of "Husky Kibble" in the other. He grumbles to no one in particular.

SKINNER (CONT'D)

(grumbling)

I don't think I can stomach this shit another night. The dog food probably tastes better.

Russ overhears, takes offense.

RUSS

Hey Skinner, I don't think I can stomach your complaining shit another night. Question: Whose fault is it we haven't seen any game for the last fifty miles? Answer: it's nobodys' fault!

Chezosky stares at a huge bank of snow-ice along the base of a cliff at the edge of the clearing.

CHEZOSKY

What's that over there?

He points.

Skinner takes a few steps towards the cliff, breaks a grin.

SKINNER

Dinner!

#### **CLIFF/SNOW BANK**

They all gather around the frozen body of a porcupine caribou half-buried in the snow.

SKINNER (CONT'D)

(chuckling)

Looks like he didn't outrun the avalanche.

CHEZOSKY

Think it's safe to eat?

SKINNER

As safe as the meals on wheels we just unloaded.

(MORE)

SKINNER (CONT'D)

(beat)

And I don't really care. It's fresh frozen meat.

RUSS

Hold on. We can't assume anything about the meat. Inuksuk may know something. He may have found one of these before.

Inuksuk snarls at the others.

INUKSUK

Do not think of it. My people in the east speak of the death that comes to those who eat meat they do not kill.

SKINNER

(to Inuksuk)

Do your people tell tales of old wives?

(to the others)

I say we get the shovels and dig it out.

Inuksuk scowls at Skinner.

INUKSUK

My people are warriors and hunters. We do not speak of our wives.

The shadow of a large triangular-shaped aircraft passing silently overhead, a hundred feet above tree-top level, interrupts the squabble.

Higher in the sky, several similar craft sail onward toward the horizon in the same direction.

The craft closest to the team glides down the valley, over the wilderness, and crashes into the South Beaufort Sea at the opposite end.

The Group abandons the carcass, rush back to their sleds.

The Team on their sleds race toward the crash site.

#### **CRASH SITE**

They reach the shore, watch the aircraft sink beneath the ice-filled sea water.

No big bloops of air bubbles rise from the spot. However, a multitude of small gas bubbles from underwater vents float to the surface, all around the sinking craft.

CHEZOSKY

Shouldn't we try to rescue any poor souls trapped inside?

RUSS

It's too far offshore.

SKINNER

We can't go in there without dry suits. We'd freeze to death.

RUSS

Skinner's right. We don't have any recovery equipment.

CHEZOSKY

What do you suppose it is?

RUSS

Looked experimental, like one of those new spy planes that replaced U2s.

Skinner hums the opening bars of the *Xfiles* theme.

SKINNER

Well gentlemen, I'd say we just witnessed the crash of an alien spacecraft. What are you going to do about it, Russ? You're our leader.

RUSS

File a report with the sponsor.

SKINNER

The good old Department of the Interior.

(beat)

You do that - later tonight. I say first we dig out dinner.

**INT. ARLINGTON VIRGINIA - PENTAGON - DAY**

The building shines like a crown of white fire in the noon-day sun.

**INT. PENTAGON - HALLWAY - DOOR - DAY**

The lettering on the frosted glass door reads: "Department of Defense - Office of the Advanced Aviation Threat Identification Program."

**INT. CENTRAL OFFICE AREA - DAY**

Crammed with modern data-processing equipment, ringed by doors to smaller side offices.

A lone Intelligence Officer (IO), WINNIE LIU, 24, a no-nonsense transgender Army career woman who looks and acts more like a man, sits at the only desk.

**SUPER LEGEND:** "PRESENT DAY"

She touch-types keys on a PC.

**PC SCREEN**

The following words appear as she types: "DOI Database Inquiry > Reports > last 10 years..."

A prompt appears: "Report Subject:"

She types some more: "unidentified aerial phenomena"

Colonel RAMON RODRIGUEZ, 50s, Winnie's superior, an ex-warrior and explorer who resents being permanently chained to a desk, pops his head out of a side office.

RODRIGUEZ

Winnie, I need all hits on my desk  
this afternoon, an hour before the  
Disclosure Committee meets.

WINNIE

Almost there. Searching the last  
year now.

Winnie taps another key. She leans back, eyes wide open.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Sir, listens to this.

She leans in towards her PC, licks her lips, reads the screen.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Ten years ago a geographic research  
team were exploring a place called  
The Valley of Death in northern  
Alaska. They watched a silent odd-  
shaped object crash just offshore in  
the South Beaufort Sea.

Rodriguez perks up, steps out of his office.



WINNIE (CONT'D)

(continuing to read  
off her screen)

The object was triangular, windowless,  
metallic. Approximately forty feet  
in diameter.

RODRIGUEZ

Wow! Big hit! Who called it?

She runs her index finger across the screen.

WINNIE

It's signed by a civilian. A Russ  
Ryan. It carried a ten-year Top Secret  
classification by the CIA, one M.  
Edwards, that just aged-out.

(beat)

There's also an audio file attached  
to the report. It looks like a  
satellite call from Ryan to Interior.

RODRIGUEZ

Play it.

WINNIE

She taps a key.

The recording plays through Winnie's pc speakers:

RUSS'S TEAM

MEMBERS (V.O.)

(groaning and howling  
in pain)

Help Me

(overlapping)

It hurts

(overlapping)

Do something!

SLED DOGS (V.O.)

(growling, howling)

**EXT. ALASKA - VALLEY OF DEATH - TEAM CAMP SITE - NIGHT -  
(FLASHBACK)**

Under the blaze of a full moon, sled dogs growl and howl -  
not at the moon - but at the ground,

Each other, and

Team Members.

Half-dressed team Members roll in the ice and snow, pressing  
bare skin covered with black pustular sores into the cold.

Blood flows freely from nostrils and mouths.

They cough, groan, howl.

They hold their guts and pound arms and legs.

A scowling Inuksuk steadies Russ as the team leader struggles to stand upright and hold his satellite phone to his glistening sweat-drenched face.

RUSS

(sound synched through  
Winnie's PC speakers -  
whispering - gasping  
for breath)

We're dying...My Team is dying...My  
dogs are dying...Send help...  
Immediately...Ohhhh...It hurts so  
bad...BLAARGH!!!

(Russ vomits)

Russ slips through Inuksuk's arms, drops his phone on the way down, ends up in his own puddle of puke.

#### **BACK TO SCENE**

Through Winnie's speakers:

THUD!

Russ's cell phone hits the hard snow-covered ground.

Then

SILENCE and STATIC.

It's the end of the recording.

RODRIGUEZ

(swallowing hard)

That's it?

Winnie Nods.

RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

Print the report.

She taps another key. The report spools out of a printer.

She hands it to Rodriguez who looks it over, frowns.

RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

We've got to follow this one up. I  
want you to be our point person.  
Keep the CIA in the loop. Send a  
copy of this report and the audio to

(MORE)

RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)  
 agent Matthew Edwards. Oh, and make  
 sure it appears at the top of the  
 list for the disclosure committee  
 meeting.

**INT. RODRIGUEZ'S OFFICE - DAY**

At his desk, Rodriguez opens a folder labeled "Connor Dunn."

A passport-sized photo of a handsome mid-50s man, CONNOR DUNN, drops out.

He paper-clips it back onto a corner of Connor's resume as he dictates into his cell phone.

RODRIGUEZ  
 Recommendation: Connor Dunn...previous  
 contract experience on secure projects  
 ...specialty: lost aircraft recovery  
 ...geographic experience: Bermudan  
 and Mongolian Triangles...Devil's  
 Sea...Matlock Dales...Antarctica...and  
 domestic experience: Areas fifty-  
 one, fifty-two, and fifty-three.

**EXT. CONNOR DUNN'S BACKYARD - DAY**

An immense swimming pool dominates the space behind an upscale ranch-style house.

A rock-solid Connor Dunn stands on the side of the pool wearing a Speedo.

He adjusts the gill-like underwater breathing mask that covers his face, then jumps in.

**UNDERWATER**

Connor breathes deeply as he swims. With each exhale, air bubbles from his mask float to the surface.

Underwater speakers carry a loud RING-TONE of the "Stars and Stripes Forever" through the water to Connor.

**POOLSIDE**

Connor taps the screen of a cell phone, raises it to his ear.

CONNOR  
 (into phone)  
 Rodriguez? What's up, Buddy?

He fluffs his hair with a towel.

RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)  
 (through the phone)  
 Are we secure?

Connor stops running the towel through his hair, drops it onto a plastic chair.

CONNOR  
 Same Iridium phone that you gave me last time.

RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)  
 I got a possible sighting of an unknown downed craft in the waters off Alaska. It has international implications. We need an Above Top Secret investigation. Interested?

CONNOR  
 You know I am.

RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)  
 The crash site's above the Arctic Circle. This unknown craft went down ten years ago. We're holding the other details close until we know you're onboard. We want to keep it off the radar of any of our birdwatching friends.

**EXT. RUSSIA - CHUKOTKA AUTONOMOUS OKRUG - ANADYR - UGOLNY AIR FORCE BASE - GRU OUTPOST BUILDING - DAY**

The sun peeps over the horizon illuminating piles of drifted snow, which almost swallow a concrete block building and several dish-shaped satellite antennae surrounding it.

**INT. GRU OUTPOST BUILDING - HALLWAY - DOOR - DAY**

The Cyrillic lettering on the gray metal door reads: "Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravlenie."

**INT. GRU OFFICE - DAY**

Crammed with modern electronic communications equipment.

A flashing red light synched with a loud beeping interrupt the wide yawn of the seated very bored, yet very intelligent, 44-year-old Intelligence Officer, YEVGENY YEVTUSHENKO.

He jumps to his feet, flips a few switches, pushes several buttons on the equipment. An OVERHEAD SPEAKER SQUAWKS then broadcasts the conversation between Rodriguez and Connor.

**TRIPLE SPLIT SCREEN - RODRIGUEZ'S OFFICE/GRU OFFICE/CONNOR'S POOL**

Yevgeny takes notes as he listens in on the conversation between Rodriguez and Connor.

RODRIGUEZ

The crash site's above the Arctic Circle. This unknown craft went down ten years ago. We're holding the other details close until we know you're onboard. We want to keep it off the radar of any of our birdwatching friends.

CONNOR

Count me in.

RODRIGUEZ

Great! Got something to write on?

Connor picks up a small notebook and pen from under his towel on the plastic chair.

CONNOR

Go ahead.

RODRIGUEZ

We searched our records and radar reports. Nothing! No reports from militaries or governments when it went missing either. CIA were the only folks interested - for awhile. We've classified it as unidentified aerial phenomena.

CONNOR

Another UFO?

RODRIGUEZ

I've checked up the chain and all agreed we want you to find it. He're the approximate location coordinates: seventy degrees seven minutes five seconds North by one hundred forty three degrees forty minutes zero seconds West.

**END TRIPLE SPLIT SCREEN**

**SPLIT SCREEN - GRU OFFICE/CONNOR'S POOL**

Connor and Yevgeny both write them down:

"70° 7' 5" N by 143° 40' 0" W"

**END SPLIT SCREEN**

**CONNOR AT POOLSIDE**

RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)

(through the phone)

Time is of the essence. The generals are upset that this one slipped through our fingers. Project Moon Dust should have caught it ten years ago. We want you to start immediately. The paperwork'll catch up later... By the way, as usual, you are to consider your mission, you, and your men, never existed. We anticipate that if the UAP is of earthly origin and if the country of origin discovers you're looking for it, they may try to reclaim it by force. The last thing we want out of this is an international incident. We won't be able to render aid or support. You'll be on your own.

Connor ends the call.

His wife, MIDGE, 30s, high strung, jealous, flirty, insecure - and a real beauty - think: a younger more moderate Glenn Close in Fatal Attraction clad only in a bikini - joins him.

She carries a cocktail in one hand. With the other, she picks up his towel and begins to dry his hair again.

MIDGE

(sipping her drink)

Is that your secure phone?

CONNOR

Yep.

MIDGE

Another "project?"

CONNOR

Yep.

MIDGE

Let's go for a swim.

CONNOR

Not now. I'm thinking.

MIDGE

You're always thinking.

CONNOR

How many times do I have to tell  
you, it's my job.

MIDGE

It's always your job. When will you  
have time for me?

He looks away.

MIDGE (CONT'D)

What ever happened to all the quality  
time we were going to have - doing  
what loving husbands and wives do  
together?

CONNOR

We've been through this before---

MIDGE

---And we're not getting any younger.  
Don't take this one. Please, don't  
take this one.

She downs her drink and stares at him expectantly.

CONNOR

(slowly)

Midge, you know this is my life's  
work, what I was born to do. I want  
to find something that proves to  
everyone we're not alone. Just believe  
in me, will you? This time I'm close.  
Real close. I can feel it. This one  
will be it. It'll be worth all the  
near misses I've had over the years.  
You'll see.

**EXT. IRANIAN DESERT - DAY (FLASHBACK)**

Connor and several fully armed RANGERS in desert camos walk  
around a saucer-shaped craft half-buried in an endless sea  
of sand.

Connor wears a Colt Buntline Special in a unique holster on  
his hip.

**SUPER LEGEND: "IRAN - FIVE YEARS AGO"**

The words "Israeli Air Force - Air and Space Arm" appear in  
Hebrew characters stenciled on the far side of the craft.

**SUPER BOTTOM LEGEND IN ENGLISH: "ISRAELI AIR FORCE -  
AIR AND SPACE ARM"**

In frustration, Connor slams his 'Indiana Jones' fedora into the sand.

CONNOR  
Damn it! Israeli again.

**END FLASHBACK**

**POOLSIDE**

Connor yanks the towel out of Midge's hands, wraps it around his waist, walks into the house without saying another word.

**INT. CONNOR'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT**

The time on his digital clock reads "4:15 AM."

It sits on a center-piece bookshelf, next to a mounted Colt Buntline Special, and

A hand-written anniversary card, whose cover reads "Happy Anniversary Future Father."

Other bookshelves surround this one.

All of these display miniature models of soldiers, tanks, aircraft, helicopters, ships and other weapons of war and exploration.

Connor sits at an angle to his desk, his back to the office door. He taps keys on a notebook computer. A pile of file folders blocks a view of the screen.

He glances at a hand-written list of items on a yellow pad. The first item has a line drawn through it: "~~U.S. Military and Official - All Levels.~~"

He stops typing, picks up a pencil, lines off the next item on the list: "~~Foreign Military and Official - All Known Levels.~~"

Several more items still to be crossed off remain further down: "U. S. Private, Commercial, and Charter," "Foreign Private, Commercial, and Charter," "Unidentified Encroachments on U.S. Air Space."

He types again. Stops again. Yawns. Massages his face and temples. Stretches.

CONNOR  
(to himself)  
Just five minutes.

He lays his head down on his desk, tucks an arm underneath.



**LATER**

His Cell phone erupts with the "Stars and Stripes Forever"  
RING-TONE.

The time on his digital clock reads "6:20 AM."

Connor stirs, answers his phone.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
(into the phone, barely  
awake, irritated)  
Hello?

WINNIE (V.O.)  
(through the phone)  
I'm sorry. I forgot all about the  
time difference.

CONNOR  
Well, I'm talking now. What's up?

WINNIE (V.O.)  
The Colonel left a note on my chair.  
He wanted me to call you as soon as  
I got in, see how far along you are  
with prep.

CONNOR  
For Christ's Sake, he knows my  
routine. I've got a few items to go.

WINNIE (V.O.)  
What are you doing now?

CONNOR  
Looking for clues in the files you  
sent me.

WINNIE (V.O.)  
Why are you doing that? We've already  
combed them.

CONNOR  
I'm looking for things you missed.

WINNIE (V.O.)  
He'll think you're wasting our time.  
I can help, you know. I've located  
R. Ryan, the leader of the geo  
expedition who filed the original  
report. His first name is Russel.  
Seems he's an expert on the Arctic,  
spent most of his professional life  
(MORE)

WINNIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
in the Wildlife National Refuge. Now  
he lives alone up in Seattle. I'll  
send over his contact info.

CONNOR  
WOW! Thanks.

Connor pretends to flirt with Winnie. It's a little game  
they play.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
I forgive you for waking me up.

WINNIE (V.O.)  
(pretending to flirt  
back)  
When and where can we meet? - To go  
over your plan?

Midge steps into his office, carrying two large mugs of  
steaming coffee. She wears a babydoll nightgown. She pauses  
just inside the door as she notices her husband on the phone.

CONNOR  
Winnie, Winnie, Winnie, I need to  
take care of details first. Let's  
meet in two weeks, S.F.O.? At our  
usual place in Chinatown?

He nods a few times, then ends the call.

MIDGE  
You didn't come to bed last night.  
Startled, Connor wheels around in his chair.

MIDGE (CONT'D)  
And who is Winnie?

Her hands shake.

CONNOR  
She's Colonel Rodriguez's assistant.

MIDGE  
You bastard!

BANG!

She slams one of the mugs onto his desk splashing coffee all  
over his papers.

**EXT. CRAFTSMAN HOUSE - BACK PORCH - DAY**

A cold gray morning.

Connor sits at an A-Frame picnic table. Russ (now 10 years older) backs out through a screen door from his home, hands full with two cups and a coffee pot.

RUSS

Coffee?

Connor shuffles the coffee-stained papers in front of him.

CONNOR

No thanks.

Russ sits down opposite Connor, pours himself a cup.

RUSS

You know I'm the only survivor of that expedition you asked about. The day after that Thing crashed, all of us except for Inuksuk, our guide - God knows where he is now - got violently ill. We had the sweats and black sores all over our bodies, had to call in the air cavalry and get airlifted out. The others all died.

Connor takes notes.

RUSS (CONT'D)

All our dogs died too. I can still hear them screaming, howling, crying. Loud at first. Then, whimpering softer and softer. Hour after hour. All night long. I'll never forget their cries. I wanted to help them and my men too But, there was nothing I could do. Nothing.

Russ stares off into space.

Connor shudders, stops writing, regains composure.

CONNOR

How close did you come to the Thing?

RUSS

I know what you're thinking. Radiation. Am I right?

CONNOR

It's been reported before.

RUSS

I thought of it too. Everybody was dead before we hit the ground in Fairbanks. But I completely recovered. Do your radiation reports mention anything like that?

CONNOR

No. What did the doctors say?

RUSS

The doctors who checked me and did autopsies on the others thought it was some kind of infection. They told me I might have had partial immunity because I was sick a lot when I was a kid - all kinds of infections. They thought maybe I had built up a range of antibodies.

He stares down into his coffee.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Or, maybe it just wasn't my time.

He knocks twice on the wooden table. Look up at Connor.

RUSS (CONT'D)

In any event, we never had time to map the exact location of the valley or the crash site.

CONNOR

I'm sorry about your team. As I mentioned on the phone, we're going back to take another look at the Thing. I need information about the conditions at and around the crash site.

RUSS

Sorry, I don't remember very much. It was cold and there was a lot of snow. That's all I remember.

CONNOR

Try harder, Russ. Please. Our mission comes straight from DOD. There are a lot of not-so-friendly foreign governments and terrorist groups who'll launch their own teams to recover the craft and anything that's in it. Could be advanced weaponry they'd be willing to die for.

Connor pulls a realistic miniature soldier, armed to the teeth, out of his jacket pocket. He places it on the table in front of Russ.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

So far, we've got the jump on them.  
We want to get there first. We need  
your help.

RUSS

I don't know...I...I...can't give  
you any more help.

CONNOR

We want you to go with us. Guide us.

RUSS

Now wait a minute. I never want to  
go back to that God damn---

CONNOR

(interrupting)

---You wait a minute. You know that  
the location of the craft may have  
shifted because of the movement of  
the polar ice cap and underwater  
currents. We've got it down to within  
a hundred miles of shoreline. But,  
where do we start looking? Where do  
we dip our toes into the South  
Beaufort Sea?

Russ' hands shake. He knocks over his mug of coffee.

Connor scoops up his papers, moves them out of the way of  
the mini-tsunami of coffee rolling toward them.

RUSS

I don't care what you say. I've seen  
the Arctic take too many friends,  
Connor. They're dead. Connor, they're  
dead. I can't see them, talk to them,  
touch them anymore.

Connor reaches over and lays a hand on Russ' shoulder.

CONNOR

Did you ever see the movie 'War of  
The Worlds?'

Russ squints, puzzled.

RUSS

Yeah. So what?

CONNOR

You remember what killed the aliens?

RUSS

Bugs?

CONNOR

Microbes. Suppose the craft you saw has alien bodies inside and the bodies have alien microbes on them. They could contaminate the earth. Kill everyone.

RUSS

I never thought---

CONNOR

(interrupting again)

---Or, think of this - the craft could contain deadly weapons not of this earth. Or invasion tactics to be used against the entire human race.

Connor takes his hand off Russ' shoulder, leans forward until his face is only a foot away from Russ' face, looks directly into Russ' eyes.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

You're the only one who can lead us there. Do it for the friends you lost. Do it for the rest of us. I promise I won't let anything happen to you. What do you say?

Russ nods his head a little, his lips move as if he's talking to himself. Then

RUSS

Okay.

**SPLIT SCREEN - INT. CONNOR'S HOME OFFICE/PENTAGON -  
CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Connor closes, locks his office door.

A molded scale model of The Valley of Death and the shoreline of the South Beaufort Sea covers the top of a small office table next to Connor's desk.

The remains of three other location models, from Connor's three most recent recovery expeditions, sit on the floor underneath and beside the table.

Connor sits down at his desk, turns on his notebook. Winnie's image displays on her side of the screen.

**ON THE SCREEN**

Winnie sits at a conference table behind her notebook computer. A big screen monitor hangs on the wall behind her, displays a map of Alaska.

On it, two military bases, Fort Wainwright near Fairbanks and the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) near Anchorage are clearly identified, as is the hazy target region along the shoreline of South Beaufort Bay.

**BACK TO SCENE**

CONNOR

Good morning, Winnie.

WINNIE

Right on time, Connor. Let's get started. It's only a ten-week window.

She presses a key on her notebook, revealing a text slide on the huge monitor: "Concerns: 1. Transportation 2. Shelter 3. Survival 4. Security"

The same slide pops up on Connor's screen.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Go.

Connor reaches over to a shelf, picks up four miniature Blackhawks, and carefully sets them down on the shore line of the scale model of the valley. He moves them around like chess pieces until he's sure they're in the 'right' positions at the bottom of the valley near the shore.

CONNOR

(while setting the  
helicopters in place)

I've been talking to the airboys at Elmendorf. They've got a couple of Blackhawks available for the next few months.

WINNIE

What model?

CONNOR

U H dash sixty em E S S S.

Winnie taps a few more keys on her keyboard.

The big screen behind her displays a photo of a UH-60M ESSS Blackhawk and its stats.

CONNOR

It's got the range and load cap to get in and out. And a pair of swivel mounted M60s.

WINNIE

What about extra fuel - in case of weather?

CONNOR

Covered. It can refuel in-flight and JayBer has a few extra fuel pods laying around. Speaking of weather, it's gonna be damn cold.

WINNIE

Then you're gonna need some damn good tents to keep your people warm.

CONNOR

I found something better.

Connor gingerly removes two miniature inflated Concrete Combat Shelters from a shelf and places them between the Blackhawks.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

These Inflatable Concrete Combat Shelters are light enough and small enough to carry in on the Blackhawks. It's YOUR stock number A.M.D.S. dash 23246588 Q.

Winnie types on her notebook keyboard. Interior and Exterior views of a fully inflated shelter display on the big screen.

WINNIE

Looks cozy. But---

CONNOR

(interrupting)  
---it's fully insulated and can withstand small arms fire---

Winnie raises her hand to shush him.

WINNIE

---What I was going to say is I think you should authorize winter duty snow camowear for everyone.



CONNOR

Oh. Good catch. We'll be outdoors more than indoors and we'll want to blend into the snow. What do you have?

More typing. An array of snow camouflage winter duty wear appears on Winnie's screen.

WINNIE

Pick out what you think will work.

The big screen cuts dark. Winnie fusses with her notebook keys to try and fix it.

Winnie's half of the split screen also cuts dark. Connor still hears her audio.

WINNIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(through Connor's notebook)

I'm sorry, Connor. We've had tech problems all day. Talk tomorrow? Same time?

CONNOR

Shit.

**SPLIT SCREEN - INT. CONNOR'S HOME OFFICE/PENTAGON - CONFERENCE ROOM - NEXT DAY**

Winnie and Connor are in their same places as yesterday, but today they wear different clothes.

The big screen works. It displays the four categories as at the start of yesterday's session. Only today, penciled lines run through the first three. Only "Security" remains unlined.

CONNOR

We're agreed then that you can rec a thirty day supply of M.R.E.s for everybody on the team?

WINNIE

I'll do my best. I can hear Rodriguez yelling "You're busting my budget again!"

CONNOR

Too bad. And don't forget the generator, compressor, pump, towing cable, winch, and a half dozen Gravity assault suits from the Navy.

He checks these items off in his notes as

WINNIE

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And yeah.  
(looks up)  
You're really stretching it with  
those suits.

CONNOR

Can we move on to nail down Security  
and Personnel now? They're our most  
important topics.

WINNIE

Yeah. Rodriguez has really blown his  
wad over them. Every day, he gets  
two or three messages from up the  
chain about them. What's up with  
that?

CONNOR

You know that other world powers  
regularly monitor our communications?

WINNIE

So? It's just a U.A.P.?

CONNOR

So, They'll want it. We can expect  
them to launch their own teams to  
recover the craft. Things could get  
rough.

WINNIE

Did you look at the files I sent  
you?

Connor looks at his notes.

CONNOR

I like that special ops tactical  
team out of the first Stryker Brigade  
Combat Force. Fort Wainwright,  
Fairbanks. They're up-to-date. Trained  
on all the cutting-edge tools of  
modern warfare.

He moves ten miniature soldiers in combat gear and armed to  
the teeth from a shelf to the model, placing them facing the  
mountain, in front of the shelters and Blackhawks.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

I think it's led by a Captain John,  
or "Jack," Middleton. He's seen  
combat, was on Obama's terrorism  
task force, and has quite a fruit  
salad on his chest. His dossier also  
states he's a real patron of the  
arts. That true?

WINNIE

I heard he can whistle "Ride of the Valkyries."

CONNOR

I like a well-rounded person. They make better decisions.

Winnie types and a photo of Captain JACK, a mid-40s G.I. Joe, handsome and buffed, speckled-red African-American with light-colored Obama-style hair appears on the screen. His name appears underneath. He wears an Army dress uniform with enough ribbons and medals to earn the designation of having a fruit salad on his chest.

**INT. BLACKHAWK HELICOPTER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)**

Jack and twenty NAVY SEALS from Seal Team Six sit strapped in, as the copter descends onto Osama bin Laden's Pakistani compound. Jack speaks with a light South Carolina accent.

JACK

I know you got the jitters, so do I.  
Just keep the mission plan in mind  
and you'll do okay.

Several SEALS nervously shift in their seats

JACK (CONT'D)

In one minute, we'll hover over the  
compound's yard where you'll fast-  
rope to the ground.

Jack looks out the open bay doors.

JACK (CONT'D)

After you ground, you'll enter the  
house from the ground floor.  
(pointing)  
Over in the northeast corner Copter  
Two will deploy Cairo and his handler,  
our interpreter, and four operators  
to secure the perimeter.

Jack clears his throat.

JACK (CONT'D)

And remember...It doesn't matter if  
you bring back Osama dead or alive.

**END FLASHBACK**

CONNOR

Didn't Middleton lose his wife a few  
years back?

WINNIE

Cancer.

CONNOR

Ooooh, sorry to hear.

WINNIE

We all were. Let's move on. So, who else?

Connor studies his notes.

CONNOR

We're gonna need some engineers to go in first and put up our shelter buildings. I was impressed with your Corps construction team led by Captain Robert "BOB" Barker. He's over at JayBer, Anchorage. The Northern Alaska Region Headquarters.

Connor transfers six miniature soldiers from a shelf to the model, placing them around the shelters, facing them.

Winnie types again, a photo of Captain Bob flashes onto the screen, with name underneath. He's also mid-40s, built like the half-ton pickup trucks that he commands, with his own fruit salad,

**INT. NEW ORLEANS SUPERDOME - ENTRANCE - DAY (FLASHBACK)**

A YOUNGER BOB wears a FEMA vest over his day uniform as he stands off to the side. A twelve-man team of similarly-dressed WORKERS carry in tool boxes. He points across the stadium floor to locations for each man.

YOUNGER BOB

(to the Workers)

Go, go, go! Start where I've marked the floor with tape. We only have a few hours to get the cots assembled and lined up before the next storm surge hits. Then, we've gotta move that line of people out there inside.

Bob watches the Workers double-time in the directions he points.

As a stream of army cargo trucks roll into the Superdome behind the workers, he directs traffic, pointing them to follow individual workers to various corners of the stadium.

WINNIE (V.O.)

You know he's in demand because he's worked on so many massive Disaster Reconstruction projects, like at the New Orleans Superdome during Hurricane Katrina. After the job was done, he commanded the security team outside.

**END FLASHBACK**

CONNOR

That's why I picked him. I want a winning team.

WINNIE

Okay! You got him.

(she taps a key)

Now I'm gonna suggest, no, I'm gonna pull rank and REQUIRE you to add somebody that could make a difference. Dr. Meghan Murphy. Call her 'Megs.' She's a disease specialist. I don't want you guys to end up like Russ's DOI team.

She taps a few more keys and MEGS an attractive, mid-30s white-coated doctor appears on the screen. She looks clinical, no-nonsense, yet slightly clumsy in a girl-next-door way.

What her photo doesn't show is her deep loneliness because her life has been her work.

**EXT. WEST AFRICA - MEDICAL TENT - DAY (FLASHBACK)**

Through the tied-back tent-flap, an early 20s MEGS and TWO DOCTORS wear white scrubs and neon-blue ID armbands that contain the letters W.H.O. and a red cross.

They hover over a thin 6-year-old African MALE CHILD, bleeding from his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth.

WINNIE (V.O.)

She's at the C.D.C. and on the W.H.O. research team for worldwide virus recovery. As an intern, she cut her teeth on the Ebola pandemic in West Africa.

**END FLASHBACK**

**YEARS LATER**

**EXT. WASHINGTON, DC - SENATE OFFICE BUILDING - OFFICE OF  
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER - DAY (FLASHBACK)**

A cut-open but taped business envelope sealed inside a clear plastic envelope sits on a table. The inside envelope is sprinkled with a dark powder.

Megs wears a P.P.E. mask, swabs the nasal cavity of a FIDGETING SEATED MAN in a business suit. SEVERAL OTHER CLEAN-CUT 'SUITS,' CIA or FBI, surround the pair.

MEGS

Sir, please sit still. I know this hurts. But, it's the only way we can tell if you've been infected.

WINNIE (V.O.)

As her first government assignment, she was on the FBI profile team during anthrax attacks on Government Officials.

**END FLASHBACK**

WINNIE (CONT'D)

After all, your destination is nicknamed The Valley of Death.

CONNOR

We won't need need her as a Medic. Stryker Brigade covers that. They're all qualified. But, if you're gonna insist, I'll take her.

**END SPLIT SCREEN**

**INT. PENTAGON - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Winnie taps the keys, one last time.

The photos of the Jack, Bob, and Megs line up across the big screen.

CONNOR (V.O.)

(through Winnie's  
laptop)

Make sure everyone understands this assignment may put them in harms' way.

**INT. UGOLNY AIR FORCE BASE - GRU OUTPOST BUILDING - HALLWAY -  
DOOR - DAY**

GRU COLONEL (POLKOVNIK) ALEXI ANTIPOV, 60s, carrying a leather briefcase, resplendent in his dress uniform and super-sized

fruit salad, abruptly powers his way through the GRU office door like an unstoppable tank.

**INT. GRU OFFICE - DAY**

As Antipov bursts into the room, the seated Yevgeny snaps to attention.

Antipov ignores him, continues his curt march through the outer office to the conference room door.

**INT. GRU CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Antipov explodes into the room as if he owns it.

A metal conference table fills the room. THREE MIDDLE-AGED OFFICERS in the uniform-of-the-day and THREE MEN IN SUITS sit jammed between the table and the wall. They struggle to rise to their feet.

ANTIPOV

Comrades, be at ease. I have constructed plan to capture mysterious craft for which Americans search, so we can add to others we have collected.

He digs through his briefcase, comes up with six copies of his plan, hands one to each person at the table.

ANTIPOV (CONT'D)

You see, I find native guide of team who see crash. For American dollars, he agrees to lead us to site.

One of the Suits interrupts.

SUIT NUMBER ONE

But Polkovnik Antipov, isn't site on American soil? How will we---

ANTIPOV

(cutting him off)

---They will not expect us. I will let them do heavy work. They will find craft while we await their discovery high on mountainside. Our two-squad fire team will then descend upon them on snowmobiles and relieve them of their burden.

Antipov glares at Suit Number One with the unmistakable message in his eyes of Do Not Ask Anymore Questions.

ANTIPOV (CONT'D)

As I was speaking, we will neutralize Americans, take possession of their equipment, their helicopters, mysterious aircraft, and its cargo.

The three Officers whisper to each other. Two speak up.

OFFICER NUMBER ONE

Your plan is all well and good. But, how will you go in?

OFFICER NUMBER TWO

More importantly, how will you get out?

ANTIPOV

I have arranged for air drop of our men and equipment from false-flag cargo plane.

SUIT NUMBER TWO

You realize, of course, your plan could easily become international incident?

SUIT NUMBER THREE

Does Kremlin know of this?

ANTIPOV

At highest levels.

Officer Number Three studies the plan while the others talk.

OFFICER NUMBER THREE

Your plan calls for use of one of our L.S.D.s from Chukchi Sea to disguise as commercial factory fishing trawler and to anchor safely just beyond American Economic Zone one hundred nautical miles offshore from their Area One Thousand Two. How is this be possible?

ANTIPOV

Ah, exit plan. It only now becomes possible because of treaty our leader, President Putin, negotiated with former American President Trump. We will use captured American helicopters to take us and our prize to ship, which will carry us back to Russian soil.



**EXT. VALLEY OF DEATH - CRESTED NOTCH ENTRANCE TO THE VALLEY - DAY**

**ON THE RIDGELINE**

Antipov, Inuksuk, TWO SQUAD LEADERS, and SIXTEEN MEMBERS OF THE RUSSIAN FIRE TEAM, wearing snow-patterned 'KLYAKSA' winter camos, sit astride camo-painted snowmobiles hidden among the trees.

**SUPER LEGEND: "TEN WEEKS LATER"**

Each, except Inuksuk, carries an AK-74M automatic combat rifle slung over a shoulder.

They watch two UH-60M ESSS Blackhawk helicopters with U. S. Army markings land in the valley below - forty yards apart - near the shore of the South Beaufort Sea.

**BLACKHAWK LANDING SITE**

Bob and his squad of a dozen ARMY ENGINEERS, and Russ, dressed in winter duty uniforms, disembark from one of the copters.

From the other copter, Bob's Engineers unload two large Inflatable Concrete Combat Shelters, an electrical generator, several gasoline containers, a four-inch diameter air hose and compressor, a huge reel of three-quarter inch industrial water hose, and a pump.

**BETWEEN THE COPTERS - LATER**

Two of the Engineers attach one end of the air hose to the air compressor and the other end to the inflation valve on one of the Shelters.

As they work, they talk.

**ENGINEER NUMBER ONE**

Why do you think we're really here?  
I get back from leave and BAM, we're heading out. Nobody told me nothing.

**ENGINEER NUMBER TWO**

Rumors back at the base say a UFO went down just offshore and we're here to recover it.

Engineer Number Two switches on the compressor and the building lazily inflates before their eyes.

**LATER STILL**

Both inflated shelter buildings stand eight feet high, large enough to billet thirty personnel with thirty days worth of

supplies, and to contain ample storage space for the cargo of the mysterious craft.

A long section of the water hose runs from the pump to the sea. Engineer Number One holds a shorter section capped with a nozzle.

He points the nozzle at one of the inflated shelters.

ENGINEER NUMBER ONE

I wonder if we'll see any alien bodies?

Engineer Number Two turns on the pump. Water spews out of the nozzle.

ENGINEER NUMBER TWO

If we do, they'll really be alien-ugly after soaking in sea water for years.

Engineer Number Two adjusts the nozzle to a fine spray and wets the shelter from the top down to set its concrete surface.

He raps his knuckles on the concrete. A SOLID SOUND answers back.

#### **ON THE RIDGELINE**

Squad Leader SERGEANT GEORGI IVANOV, late 40s, an impatient bull of a man, sporting a name tag on his camo which reads "IVANOV," guns his engine as if he is the animal itself pawing the dirt before he charges his opponent with the cape.

Inuksuk whispers something to Colonel Antipov.

ANTIPOV

(in a muted voice to Ivanov and his men)

Do not shoot. These Americans are only support people. We will wait until their leaders arrive and they find what we are looking for.

IVANOV

(growling)

But, Polkovnik---

ANTIPOV

---We have high ground to easily defeat Americans---

IVANOV

(growling back)

---I hate Americans.

**FLASHBACK - SYRIA - DAY**

Blinding Flash

Ivanov's son, URI, 21, staggers backward, falls down in the sand, face up, eyes frozen open, a gaping wound in his forehead. The name tag on his chest reveals his name:  
"IVANOV."

**BACK TO PRESENT DAY**

IVANOV (CONT'D)

They kill my son in Syria---

ANTIPOV

(coldly)

---When time is right, we go. Not before.

**HELICOPTERS LANDING SITE**

Engineer Numbers One and Two attach hand-lettered signs above the door of each of the shelters.

They step back to admire their work.

The signs read: "SAUNA #1," and "SAUNA #2."

ENGINEER NUMBER ONE

Saunas in the Arctic - something I've always wanted in this cold-ass wasteland.

ENGINEER NUMBER TWO

Why not? Captain Barker said we could name them anything we wanted.

A dull ROAR rapidly increases in volume.

The Engineers look up.

Two more Blackhawks crest the mountains from behind the ridgeline.

The birds swoop down the valley, land between the other copters and the shelter buildings.

Connor, Jack and the TWELVE MEMBERS OF HIS TWO COMBAT SQUADS in winter camo fatigues each with an M16 assault rifle slung over a shoulder, jump down from the copters.

Again, Connor wears his Colt Buntline Special on his hip.

Jack motions to Megs, still on the copter, to throw down her bulky bag of medical equipment and supplies.

She does

Just as he looks away.

THUD!

The bag bounces off his head.

She hides a giggle behind a gloved hand.

JACK

Ow!

She jumps down, trips, stumbles.

He catches her off balance.

MEGS

Sorry, Jack. I never was too good at throwing bags.

JACK

Why's it so heavy? Feels like you've got everything in here but a kitchen sink.

MEGS

You never know what we'll run into. We've got to be prepared for anything.

She zips up her parka as far as she can, flaps her arms, sticks her hands and gloves in the armpits of her camo.

#### **ON THE RIDGELINE**

Ivanov guns his engine again, roars down the slope into the snow-covered valley. The eight members of his squad follow him.

Antipov purses his lips, stares after Ivanov, raises the side of one hand to his throat.

#### **ON THE SLOPES**

Ivanov's squad, AK-74s blazing, open fire on the Blackhawks and the soldiers on the valley floor.

#### **THE LANDING SITE**

Tracer bullets rain down like a curtain of smoke and fire on the American team. Everyone scrambles for cover.

Two rounds slam into two bright red gas canisters sitting on the ground, which just seconds ago, were offloaded from a Blackhawk.



MEGS  
(meekly)  
Thank you for saving me.

**EXT. BEHIND A BLACKHAWK**

Connor and Russ scan the mountainside with binoculars.

**THROUGH CONNOR'S BINOCULARS**

A red star patch on one of the Russian soldiers' uniforms comes into focus.

CONNOR (O.S.)  
A Russian fire team.

Inuksuk talks with Antipov.

RUSS (O.S.)  
Inuksuk - there on the ridgeline.

**BACK TO SCENE**

Jack's team, from positions of cover behind the Blackhawks and the shelter buildings, return automatic rifle fire.

**ON THE SLOPES**

Blood Explodes

From the camos of four of the attacking Russians, before they're half-way down.

One snowmobile and its wounded rider careens into a tree, bursts into flame.

Another skids sideways into a massive boulder, shatters into pieces.

A third and fourth crisscross on the slopes, slam into each other, explode, eject their riders. They fly through the air like burning human cannonballs.

**EXT. FORWARD BLACKHAWK**

Its M60 machine guns lay down an impenetrable carpet of fire just ahead of the remaining snowmobiles.

**ON THE SLOPES**

The surviving snowmobiles pull U-turns, speed up the slopes and out of site over the top of the ridge.

**BEHIND A BLACKHAWK**

Jack joins Connor and Russ.

CONNOR

It looks like the Russians are gone.

JACK

Not for long. They'll be back.  
Russians have a thing for U.A.P.s.

CONNOR

Then we'd better get on with it.

Connor's satellite cell phone RINGS. He digs it out of his jacket pocket, answers.

CELL PHONE

(through the phone -  
broken heavy female  
breathing, a CLICK,  
then a DIAL TONE)

The CALLER ID reads: "MIDGE"

**EXT. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIDGE - DAY**

Ivanov and what's left of his squad pull up and stop in front of Antipov and the other Russians whose snowmobiles (aerosanis) are lined up in formation.

Ivanov dismounts and trudges slowly toward his commander.

IVANOV

(looking down)

My Polkovnik, I am truly sorry for acting on my own and showing our presence. I also weep for the loss of my squad members.

He looks up again into Antipov's face. Fire returns to his eyes.

IVANOV (CONT'D)

If we had brought Gull mortars, R.P.G.s, bazookas, we could easily destroy Americans from up here.

ANTIPOV

(growing angry, tries  
holding it in)

Why did we not also drop in Armata tank or two? It is because we did not need any! But now?

(MORE)

ANTIPOV (CONT'D)  
 (momentarily gritting  
 his teeth, then  
 whispering)  
 We must change plan.

Ivanov recognizes his superior's anger, looks down again

ANTIPOV (CONT'D)  
 (quickly relaxing his  
 face)  
 Do not worry. It is understandable.  
 I too hate Americans. We will deal  
 with this later. Now bring your  
 aerosani and your squad into  
 formation. I have something to say  
 to all.

IVANOV  
 (turns to his squad)  
 Rasstanovka!

As his squad joins the formation, Ivanov fully turns, takes two steps toward his aerosani.

Antipov unholsters his automatic pistol.

BLAM!

He shoots Ivanov in the back of the head.

As Ivanov sinks to the ground, he twists half-around, stares into Antipov's eyes as if asking "Why?"

ANTIPOV  
 Izmenik!

**SUPER LEGEND AT BOTTOM OF FRAME IN ENGLISH: "TRAITOR!"**

**EXT. SOUTH BEAUFORT SEA - SHORE - DAY**

Jack and his combat team stand guard on shore, while

Russ and Connor, a fierce wind at their backs, push and pull to launch an inflated clear-bottom boat into the choppy waves,

They paddle out to clear water.

**FORTY YARDS OFF SHORE**

**THROUGH THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT**

A broad sand bar, inches from the surface.



**BACK TO SCENE**

They paddle

**FURTHER OUT TO SEA****THROUGH THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT**

An undersea shelf, twenty feet down,

Completely bare! Nothing on it!

**BACK TO SCENE**

RUSS

I don't understand. This is where I  
saw the Thing sink.

The boat drifts to

**THE LIP OF THE SHELF****THROUGH THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT**

A dark drop-off into a seemingly bottomless trench looms  
menacingly on the seaward side of the shelf.

**BACK TO SCENE**

CONNOR

Unless it's down there.

**THROUGH THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT**

Volcanic vents spew a continuous stream of noxious gas bubbles  
out of the trench and from cracks in the shelf.

**BACK TO SCENE**

The wind and current pick up, carry the boat along the lip  
of the shelf.

RUSS

(dejected)

We'll never find it down there. Might  
as well turn back before we rip out  
to sea.

CONNOR

(softly)

Not yet. I want to see where the  
current takes us.

**THROUGH THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT**

The shelf widens,

**BACK TO SCENE**

                                  CONNOR  
                          (excited)  
          Look!

Something up ahead: a dark mass under the water.

                                  RUSS  
          I knew I was right!

The boat drifts over the dark mass.

**THROUGH THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT**

Strange and frightening-looking, a dark triangular craft lies thirty feet below in a depression on the widest portion of the shelf.

Bubbles of volcanic gas assault it from all sides.

No identification or markings are visible on the outside.

**BACK TO SCENE**

                                  CONNOR  
          No markings. Very strange. Anyone can claim it.

                                  RUSS  
          Where do you think it's from?

Connor doesn't answer, just stares at the craft.

Suddenly

**THROUGH THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT**

An eye ring - on one of the three corners of the craft - the one closest to the landward side of the shelf.

                                  CONNOR (O.S.)  
          An eye ring. That's it!

**ON SHORE**

With the help of Russ, Bob, and Jack, Connor struggles against the wind to pull on and secure the final pieces of a Bare X-mission Evolution Drysuit: boots and gloves.

CONNOR

(to Bob)

I'll need about two hundred yards of towing cable capped on one end with a swivel snap hook - it's all in the back of bird number two.

Bob signals two of his Engineers standing behind him.

BOB

(to the Engineers)

Go.

CONNOR

When I get down to the Thing, I'll snap-hook the end of the cable through the eye ring. You guys will fire up the generator and winch the craft up off the shelf onto the sandbar. Any questions?

RUSS

That sounds pretty complicated. Why don't you use one of the Birds to tow it, instead of the winch?

BOB

Uh, Russ, no can do in this wind. A Bird isn't very good at pulling horizontally. It's better at lifting something UP into the air.

RUSS

Don't Birds carry hooked cargo horizontally?

BOB

Yeah, but first they have to lift it up. Anything the Bird lifts up in this wind, will spin around. This'll create tremendous torque on the cable. Could easily cause it to snap.

CONNOR

We don't know how much the Thing weighs either. That's another factor.

BOB

From what little we do know, the best and safest method is to keep the cable as close to a horizontal pull as we can.

RUSS

All right. You've convinced me.

CONNOR  
Any more questions?

Everyone shakes their head "NO."

Bob's Engineers rush up with the roll of towing cable.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
Ok, Russ. Let's go.

Connor coils several feet of the snap-on end of the cable around his right forearm.

With his left hand, he picks up his underwater breathing mask and fins.

Like a giant seal, he waddles to the clear-bottom boat.

Russ follows.

The cable unspools.

#### **OFFSHORE**

They paddle out to sea.

They drift with the current over the resting place of the craft.

Connor pulls on his fins and clips the mask recovery strap to his dry suit.

He dons and adjusts his mask, gives Russ a "thumb-up," drops backward over the side into the water.

Russ paddles back to shore.

#### **UNDERWATER**

Connor swims through the thick under-surface currents to the craft.

Curious, he swims around it, fighting the currents to explore its surface.

He feels its smoothness with his hands.

He sees no windshield, no windows, no door, just a black equilateral triangle six feet in height.

Connor fights the currents to get to the eye ring corner.

The currents buffet him to-and-fro, as much back away from the ring as he is able to swim toward it.

He reaches out to snap the snap-on end of the cable through the eye ring; and

Misses!

The snap-on end slips out.

The currents carry it just beyond his reach.

He kicks after it.

The currents carry him past it.

He grabs it at the last second; and

Fights his way back to the ring.

He tries to snap the cable on again; but

Misses again!

The currents carry the cable end away a second time.

Exhausted, all Connor can do is watch it go, the cable still wrapped around his arm but the end just out of reach.

Suddenly

The sea becomes still. The currents evaporate.

The end floats gently back to Connor.

He SNAGS it, turns gently toward the eye ring, when the

Full force of the undersea waves return, striking Connor,

Knocking him for a loop.

The currents entangle Connor in the towing cable before he can attach it.

In the process, they buffet him against the craft and the rock of the undersea shelf.

They tear his mask from his face.

He inhales a lung full of sea water.

#### **ON SHORE**

Russ pulls the boat onto the sand and pebble beach.

He hears the thrashing of the towing cable spanking the side of the boat.

He dives for the cable. Pulls it as hard as he can.

#### **UNDERWATER**

Connor's eyes close. His body falls limp.

#### **POV CONNOR - SYNCOPIC VISION**

His field of vision fills with colored lights, streaming and twinkling.

Out of their midst a figure emerges.

It's Midge, pregnant. She's never looked more beautiful.

She reaches out to him.

#### **ON THE SURFACE**

Connor pops to the surface, gasping for air.

#### **ON SHORE**

Before anyone else can react, Russ slams the control lever on the winch to "ON."

It sputters. It coughs. It spasms and jerks.

It Starts!

It pulls the cable and Connor to the beach and safety.

Connor lies sprawled on the beach.

Russ frantically yet rhythmically compresses Connor's chest

Connor coughs, pants. Water spurts from his mouth with each compression.

Connor opens his eyes,

CONNOR

Ow. That hurts.

(grins)

But thanks, Buddy. I don't think I could have made it without you.

#### **A HALF HOUR LATER**

Connor sits up beside Russ, adjusting the mouthpiece on his mask.

He looks up at the sun hanging low on the horizon.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

We'll be losing light soon. I've got to go back down.

RUSS

You're kidding. Look at you, Not today.

CONNOR

Got to. We don't know when we'll be entertaining the Russians again.

Bob walks up.

BOB

Hate to say it, but we don't have much spare gas left for the generator. Between the two cans we lost in the first firefight and your last dive, most of what we brought is gone. I've checked the tanks on all the Birds too. They only have enough to get us home.

CONNOR

Then we'd better get on with it.

ON THE SURFACE OVER THE CRAFT

Connor gives Russ his "thumbs-up" sign again and drops backwards over the side of the boat.

**UNDERWATER**

The currents toss Connor around even more violently as he fights them on his swim down to the craft.

**AT THE EYE-RING TRICORNER**

Connor struggles to pull the end of the cable close to the ring.

**ON SHORE**

Bob pours the last trickle of gas from a bright red gas canister into the winch's tank.

BOB

(to Russ)  
That's it.

RUSS

Now we wait.

**UNDERWATER**

Connor hangs onto the ring with one hand, snaps the end of the cable through it with his other.

**ON THE SURFACE**

Connor shoots out of the water, waves his arms shoreward.

**ON THE SHORE**

Russ slams the control lever on the winch to "ON."

The winch Starts.

It pulls the cable taut.

The spool freezes! Starts to smoke.

**ON THE SURFACE**

Connor sees the puff of smoke from the winch.

He dives.

**UNDERWATER**

Bracing his back against the escarpment running from the sandbar to the ledge, Connor strains to lift the landward side of the craft.

After a few attempts, using all his strength and might, he lifts it several inches above the shelf.

**ON SHORE**

The spool engages again. The winch winds in cable.

**UNDERWATER**

The craft creeps up the escarpment from the ledge toward the sandbar.

**ON THE SURFACE**

The craft breaks water.

**ON SHORE**

The winch coughs, sputters.

The spool turns slower...slower.



**ON THE SURFACE**

Connor kicks up a storm, shoves the craft the last few feet.

It rests on the sandbar, stable.

Connor collapses, exhausted. Floats on the surface.

He drifts out toward the open sea!

**ON SHORE**

The winch dies. Out of gas.

Russ runs to the clear bottom boat.

Dives in, launching it at the same time.

He paddles furiously towards Connor.

**ON THE SURFACE**

Russ pulls an exhausted Connor into the boat.

**ON SHORE**

Jack stands next to Bob, breathes a sigh of relief.

JACK

(to Bob)

I'm going to post a half dozen men  
here overnight in case the Russians  
try something.

**EXT. SAND BAR - NEXT DAY**

Connor, Russ, Bob, and Jack encircle the craft.

They wear neoprene cold water camo waders with their camo  
fatigues. Over their hands: three-fingered diving gloves.

In knee-high rolling surf, they run their gloves over every  
inch of the hull, searching for a hidden entry mechanism.

Reaching under the craft, Bob finds and presses a form-fitting  
push-latch that seamlessly blends into the hull.

BOB

Found it. Watch out.

A previously solid section of the hull swings up into an  
open gull-wing hatch.

Bob stumbles backward as a torrent of sea water pours out.

All four crowd the opening, peer into the craft.  
It's dark, foreboding. No details are visible.  
Their eyes tear and burn as they search the blackness.  
The four burst into fits of choking and coughing.

JACK  
It stinks in there.

CONNOR  
Volcanic gasses. Most likely hydrogen  
sulfide and methane.

BOB  
Careful. Probably carbon monoxide  
too. Wait 'till it clears.  
(yelling to his  
Engineers back on  
shore)  
Bring us some light.

**INT. CRAFT - HATCH - DAY**

The four creep inside. Connor goes first. Jack enters last.  
One hand holds their pulled-up neck gaiter tightly over their  
mouth and nose, while the other grips a bright LED lantern.  
Connor slowly pulls down his gaiter.

CONNOR  
Air's better. We'll live.

The lanterns illuminate the interior.  
They look around.

JACK  
Where are the pilots?

BOB  
And crew?

RUSS  
Nobody's here.

CONNOR  
Unmanned.

**COCKPIT AREA**

Across one corner, a panel of display screens, levers, knobs, and buttons stretches from one side of the interior to the other. All are color-coded.

No language or symbols appear anywhere on the panel or inside the cockpit.

**CARGO AREA**

Opposite the cockpit area, huge tarps displaying strange unknown logos, cover four mysterious four-foot cubes.

Connor lifts a tarp.

All gaze at the dark cube underneath: individual bricks on pallets. Each pallet sealed inside a tight, see-through, Mylar-like covering.

Sealed inside each brick by the same mylar-like material: a dark frozen substance.

CONNOR

Whoever taped these up did a damn good job. Looks like the water never touched the stuff inside.

He holds his lantern closer.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Looks like some sort of biological material.

RUSS

It looks like shit.

CONNOR

(to Jack)  
Get Megs in here.

**EXT. CRAFT - DAY**

Jack and Megs wade through the surf. Jack carries her bag.

MEGS

This water is toooo cold.

JACK

You'll get used to it.

She glares at him as if to say, "No I won't."

**AT THE HATCH**

With one hand on her ass, Jack boosts Megs into the opening.

She seemingly ignores his hand.

He swings her bag up into the craft.

**INT. CRAFT - CARGO AREA - DAY**

The Men crowd around Megs, who on one knee, peers through the mylar-like sealed covering on the exposed cube.

She looks up at Jack.

MEGS

(to Jack)

Be a doll and hand me the laser scanner that's in my bag.

JACK

I would if I knew what it looked like.

MEGS

Oh Silly, it's the thing with the blue handle that looks like a big forehead thermometer,

Megs presses the barrel of the scanner against the see-through covering and pulls the trigger.

A harsh BUZZING SOUND emanates from the scanner.

A big red light on the back blinks off and on.

Megs reads the small display screen,

**INSERT - SCREEN**

"ANTHRAX"

**BACK TO CARGO AREA**

She jumps back.

MEGS (CONT'D)

Everybody back! It's Anthrax, a deadly poison.

Megs pulls a box of latex gloves and a plastic bag of M94 masks from her bulky bag.

She hands a pair of gloves and a mask to everyone.

MEGS (CONT'D)  
Put these on. NOW!

They hesitate.

MEGS (CONT'D)  
Come on. This is serious. You know  
how to use them. They're what you  
had to wear everywhere during the  
Covid-19 pandemic.

As she hands a pair of gloves and a mask to Connor:

CONNOR  
How deadly is this anthrax?

She pauses for a moment.

MEGS  
If what's in these bundles is dropped  
into enough water supplies, it'll  
kill the populations of a dozen major  
cities without causing any other  
damage.

CONNOR  
What a weapon. It kills without  
destroying infrastructure. An enemy  
could deploy it, march right in,  
then after a little cleanup, operate  
the city as its own.

He hurriedly pulls on his gloves and mask.

JACK  
Way to go, Girl. You and that scanner  
just saved all our lives.

MEGS  
(smiles)  
Oh, shut up and put your mask on.

She finally pulls on her own mask and gloves.

As she repacks her bag, she hums a few bars of "Summertime"  
(from PORGY AND BESS) through her mask

Jack stops in his tracks. Listens.

JACK (V.O.)  
Emily...That was Emily's favorite.

**INT. SAUNA #2 - DAY**

Connor speaks into his satellite cell phone.

CONNOR  
 (into the phone)  
 Hi Winnie. Connor here. Got some  
 great news and some not so great.  
 What do you want to hear first?

WINNIE (V.O.)  
 (through the phone)  
 Um...How about the great news?

CONNOR  
 We found the craft. Raised and  
 explored it.

WINNIE (V.O.)  
 Woohoo! What did you find?

CONNOR  
 That's the not so great part. No  
 occupants, no data, but a heavy cargo  
 of Anthrax. I need you to get  
 instructions from Rodriguez for what  
 to do with it and the craft.

WINNIE (V.O.)  
 Oh, my God---

STATIC drowns out Winnie.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Connor looks at a display of the "CONTACTS" on his phone.

He presses an on-screen "CALL" button next to the name  
 "MIDGE."

He holds the phone to his ear, hears through the phone  
 RINGING.

No one answers the call.

**INT. RUSSIA - ANADYR - GRU OFFICE - DAY**

Yevgeny presses a button on his communications panel.

Through an overhead loudspeaker a telephone RINGS.

CLICK. The phone is answered.

ANTIPOV (V.O.)  
 (through the speaker)  
 Zdrah-stoi-tee?

YEVGENY

My Polkovnik. It is I, Sergeant Yevtushenko, I have news of Americans. They have found and raised craft.

ANTIPOV (V.O.)

This I can see.

YEVGENY

But, do you know what they found on craft?

ANTIPOV (V.O.)

I listen.

YEVGENY

Please excuse, my Polkovnik, I speak too slowly. Cargo was pure Anthrax, enough to kill many thousands people.

ANTIPOV (V.O.)

It could be very valuable to us.

YEVGENY

Very valuable indeed. I have some experience in subject. When I was young, I was stationed on Kola Peninsula. At night, we collect frozen animals pushed up through permafrost. Their bodies full of Anthrax. We put in warehouse to be used in war to end all wars against Motherland's enemies. My instructions from Kremlin are to tell you it is valued treasure and to recover for Mother Russia.

**EXT. VALLEY OF DEATH - BEACH - DAY**

Low tide.

The beach is exposed up to and around the sandbar and craft.

Jack's Men stand down their security but keep an alert active presence.

Bob's Engineers unroll a path of Aluminum Marsden Matting - from the high water mark on the beach to the door of the craft.

**AT THE CRAFT**

Small pods of Engineers, in masks and gloves, pass a sealed pallet of anthrax bricks - in bucket brigade style - through the door and down onto the matting.

One of the Engineers slips a hand truck into the slots under the pallet.

He guides the hand truck down the path toward the shelter buildings

Others walk on either side of the pallet to steady the load.

**INT. SAUNA #2 - DAY**

The Engineers place the sealed pallet next to three others lined up against the far wall of the building.

Engineers and Combat Team Members, all in masks and gloves, swarm the pallet.

They check every square inch of the sealed covering for rips, tears, holes, leaks.

They flash a thumbs-up signal to Bob who stands off to the side with Megs.

BOB

(to Megs)

No leaks. The covering's still secure.

MEGS

Alright then, we won't need masks or gloves.

**EXT. SAUNA #1 - NIGHT**

**ENTRANCE**

Heavy winds and snow whip around and between the shelter buildings and Members of the expedition who crowd the entrance.

The Members enter the building in ones and twos, nervously chattering among themselves.

ENGINEER NUMBER ONE

What the hell have we gotten into?

ENGINEER NUMBER TWO

It's bad. Worse than anything we thought of before.

**INTERIOR - MOMENTS LATER**

The Team Members talk among themselves as they stand, lean, and sit on luggage, folding chairs, and cots, shared with Members' clothing and gear, pushed against the walls.



Connor, Russ, Jack, Bob, and Megs confer around a work table in the center.

Connor breaks away and addresses the room.

CONNOR

We'll give it to you straight.  
Everything we know.

Instantly, the Team grows silent, lean toward Connor.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

The craft was filled with a deadly biological agent. Anthrax. It kills if you touch it. It kills if you breathe it. It kills if you swallow it. There's enough to kill all of us and half of North America. We've offloaded it to Shelter Building Number Two. There's no danger at present to any of us from the anthrax.

RUSS

It has high value to our country and to other countries. But, we've got to get it out of here, take it back to the lower forty-eight ASAP - before the Russians get their hands on it...and on us. And to that regard, Captain 's men will stand security twenty-four hours around the camp. Okay, let's have your questions.

All around the room Team Members' hands fly up.

Connor points at Team Members one-by-one, takes their questions. With each answer, a murmur rises from the group.

ENGINEER NUMBER ONE

Where did the anthrax come from and where was it going?

CONNOR

There was no such info on the craft.

COMBAT TEAM MEMBER ONE

What was the target?

CONNOR

We have no idea.

ENGINEER NUMBER TWO

When was an attack going to take place?

RUSS

The thing went down ten years ago.  
The world was a different place then.

COMBAT TEAM MEMBER TWO

What are we going to do about the  
Anthrax...and the Russians? What's  
the plan?

CONNOR

We don't have one yet. Magnetic  
interference has disrupted uplink  
communication from the Pentagon.  
We've been trying to reestablish all  
day. I'll let you know as soon as we  
can put one together with Washington.  
Meanwhile, if any of us requests  
something from you, please do not  
hesitate to comply.

**SPLIT SCREEN - INT. SAUNA #2/PENTAGON - WINNIE'S OFFICE AND  
DESK - DAY**

Connor paces in front of the pallets of anthrax, holds his  
cell phone to his ear.

Winnie's laptop screen displays the message "Incoming call -  
Connor Dunn..."

She uses her mouse to press the on-screen "Accept" button.

CONNOR

(into the phone)

I've been trying to reach you since  
yesterday.

WINNIE

What can I say? Tech troubles. We  
can't seem to scrub our systems.

CONNOR

Any word from The Command?

WINNIE

They've been speculating a lot. Some  
think the anthrax might have been  
part of a Quebec Separatist plan to  
attack western cities in Canada. The  
movement was very popular around the  
time the craft went down.

CONNOR

What about a Russian attack on the  
Pacific Northwest of the United  
States?

WINNIE

Not likely. Our major problem at the time were isolated terrorist groups scattered around the world. The question that bothers the command seems to be is there any more of this stuff around? If so, where are its storage facilities, the locations of additional anthrax?

CONNOR

That's all well and good for them to get all philosophical about this, but I've got a more immediate problem. What do I do with the anthrax and with the Russians?

WINNIE

I'll push Rodriguez as hard as I can and get back to you.

**END SPLIT SCREEN**

**INT. RUSSIA - ANADYR - GRU OFFICE - DAY**

Yevgeny listens to the end of the call between Connor and Winnie.

WINNIE (V.O.)

(through the  
loudspeaker)

I'll push Rodriguez as hard as I can and get back to you.

**INT. SAUNA #2 - DAY**

Connor presses his phone's on-screen "CALL" button next to the name "MIDGE."

He holds the phone to his ear, hears through the phone

RINGING.

CONNOR

(into the phone)

Hi. It's Connor.

MIDGE (V.O.)

(through the phone)

Oh Connor. Please don't call me again.

CONNOR

(staring at the pallets  
of anthrax.)

What? Why?

MIDGE

I'll talk to you when you're back -  
if you come back - if I'm still here.

CLICK!

**INT. RUSSIA - ANADYR - GRU OFFICE - DAY**

Yevgeny stares at the loudspeaker. He hears the loud

CLICK!

Yevgeny presses a button on his communications panel.

Through the loudspeaker a telephone RINGS.

CLICK. The phone is answered.

YEVGENY

My Polkovnik. It is I, Sergeant  
Yevtushenko, I have more news of  
Americans.

**INT. SAUNA #20 - DAY**

Connor

Punches

The wall of the Shelter Building as hard as he can.

He looks at his fist.

Blood runs down his hand from his knuckles.

**INT. RUSSIA - ANADYR - GRU OFFICE - DAY**

YEVGENY

So I say Americans do not know what  
they will do. And their leader has  
problems with wife, Midge. I think  
she has affair and will soon divorce  
him. I also have other news from  
Kremlin. Americans have spotted your  
exit ship by satellite imagery. U.S.  
Coast Guard plans informational  
intercept in two days. Our leaders  
say you must complete mission before  
opportunity is lost. Then, there is  
matter of your order for special  
equipment. It is approved, It is in  
airdrop today.

ANTIPOV (V.O.)  
(through loudspeaker)  
Please to tell our leaders I will  
attack tonight with special equipment.  
It is only choice.

**EXT. SAUNA #1 - LATE AFTERNOON**

**ENTRANCE**

Jack steps outside into a curtain of snow flurries.

He plods through snow over to one of his Men standing security watch.

JACK  
Any activity from Ivan?

Just as his Man is about to reply, they both hear the ENGINE of a large low-flying aircraft hidden above the snow clouds.

They scan the sky, watch as an unmarked cargo plane breaks cloud cover.

As the wind bounces the craft around, two large parachute bundles float down behind the mountain to the Russian position.

**INT. SAUNA #1 - DAY**

**CENTER WORK TABLE**

**MOS**

Connor and Bob rummage through a pile of topographical maps on the table.

Jack rushes to Connor, talking excitedly. No words are heard.

Connor looks at Jack, picks up his cell phone from the table.

**BACK TO SOUND**

JACK  
It means the Russians are coming soon.

Connor holds his cell phone to his ear.

CONNOR  
(into the phone)  
Winnie, we have a new development.

**MOS**

Connor talks for several moments without a sound heard.

**BACK TO SOUND**

WINNIE (V.O.)

(through the phone)

Rodriguez said you should take all necessary precautions but do what you have to do.

(beat)

Then he said don't worry about causing an incident. The Russians are on our soil.

CONNOR

We'll do our best.

WINNIE (V.O.)

There's another factor you should plan for. I've been following the forecasts. A blizzard's on its way.

CONNOR

Just my luck.

Connor puts down his phone.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Bob, Jack, it's time to do what we all agreed to do if it came to this.

They both nod, zip up their cold weather camo jackets, and leave the Sauna #1.

As they exit, a strong gust of wind blows a small mountain of snow inside.

**EXT. SAUNA #S 1 AND 2 - EARLY EVENING**

Jack and Bob strain against the thick blowing snow as they trudge back toward SAUNA #1, past a knot of Jack's Men standing security.

At the last moment, Jack splits off from Bob, enters Sauna #2.

**INT. SAUNA #2**

Jack, now in a tight-fitting t-shirt and shorts, does pullups on a ceiling bar, facing away from the entrance.

Megs enters, carrying her bag.

She walks past him on the other side of the room.

As she heads towards the pallets of Anthrax, she sneaks a peek at his ripped physique.

For a few moments, walking backwards, she can't take her eyes off him.

#### **AT THE ANTHRAX**

Megs sheds her parka, speaks to Combat Team Member Two who stands guard over the Anthrax.

MEGS

Take a break, Sergeant, I've got a little more testing to do. It'll take about half an hour.

The Sergeant looks over to Jack.

COMBAT TEAM MEMBER TWO

Captain, okay to take a break?

#### **AT THE CEILING BAR**

Jack breaks his work out concentration, looks over at his Sergeant, notices Megs' presence for the first time.

He smiles awkwardly, drops down from the bar.

JACK

Uh, yeah, Sergeant. Go ahead.

He picks up his towel off the floor, slings it over his shoulder, walks over to join Megs.

#### **AT THE ANTHRAX**

JACK (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Mind if I sit with you - to help guard the anthrax?

She doesn't answer in words. Just smiles back at him.

He pulls up two folding chairs.

They sit side-by-side close to the pallets of anthrax.

Megs rummages through her bag, comes up with a clip board, her laser scanner, a pen, and a roll of clear plastic sealing tape.

As Jack watches, she tears off a piece of plastic tape with her teeth and slaps it over the bullet hole in her bag. Then, lays the roll down on top of the bag.

Next, she scans the bricks of anthrax on the cube closest to her, writes down numbers on her clipboard. She continues this through the first part of her conversation with Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)

I heard you humming "Summertime" before. It was my wife's favorite song.

MEGS

Wife? Was?

He looks down.

JACK

She died five years ago.

She stops working, looks at him.

MEGS

I'm so sorry.

Jack clears his throat, and the subject.

JACK

So what does the song mean to you?

MEGS

I grew up in Charleston. It was always summertime there. I never had cold hands.

JACK

Not South Carolina?

MEGS

Oh yeah. On the mainland across from the Sea Islands.

JACK

Wow. What a coincidence. I come from James Island. I met Emily there. In grade school.

MEGS

You were childhood sweethearts?

JACK

I guess so.

MEGS

I never had a childhood sweetheart.

JACK

(smiling)

Now I feel sorry for you. No one to plan to grow old with. To share hopes and dreams with.

He looks down.

She looks down.

Without looking up, in a soft, halting voice she admits:



MEGS

I've always wanted that. It's why I like the song so much. It always gave me hope that someday my life could be like summertime.

JACK

Do you know what the song is really about?

MEGS

No. Tell me. It always sounded so perfect.

JACK

Do you know the words?...Can you sing it for me?

She nods shyly.

MEGS

(singing softly)

*Summertime*

*And the living is easy*

*Fish are jumping and the cotton is high.*

*Oh, your daddy's rich and your ma's good-lookin'*

*So hush, little baby, don't you cry.*

*One of these mornings you're gonna rise up singin'*

*And you'll spread your wings and take to the sky.*

*But till that mornin', there ain't nothin' can harm you*

*With daddy and mommy standin' by.*

She breaks into prose

MEGS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, that's all I know.

Jack clears his throat again.

JACK

You did just fine. Summertime is the opening song from PORGY AND BESS, a tragic love story. The first thing you need to know is that the whole song is about something that doesn't exist.

Megs looks at him quizzically, like she doesn't believe him.

MEGS

What do you mean?

JACK

Bess is a prostitute and coke addict who sings it to her illegitimate newborn son moments before she gives him away. Her baby's crying and the first verse is meant to comfort him so he'll stop crying and the couple who take him won't think he's a child full of trouble. This verse describes the smooth life she wants for him with his new parents. A life she can't give him.

MEGS

(softly)

That's so sad.

JACK

PORGY AND BESS is all about the dark side of the Gullah, my people.

MEGS

But you're not like that. Are you?

JACK

I escaped. That's another theme that runs through Porgy and Bess. The second verse of "Summertime," the one that Bess sings to her son about him spreading his wings and taking to the sky. That's her hope for him. She hopes that after his new parents raise him right he'll escape the life she's trapped in.

MEGS

Can't she escape it too?

JACK

She tries. For the longest time she tries. Finally, she does - for the better life she thinks she'll have in New York City. But she has to give up the only man who truly loves her. That's Porgy, a crippled beggar.

MEGS

I don't understand.

JACK

Eventually, Porgy frees Bess by murdering the pimp that enslaves her. He's thrown in jail. While he's there, his memory of her is the only

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

thing that keeps him going. Meanwhile, Bess leaves for New York. When Porgy gets out, he can't find her. He searches and searches. He can't understand why she left him. He sings a song in the last act that's now my favorite. I paid it no mind until Emily died. Please forgive my Gullah accent.

From memory, he emotionally recites (not sings) *Oh, Where's My Bess?* from PORGY AND BESS.

JACK (CONT'D)

*I ain' axin' yo' opinion.  
Oh, Bess, oh where's my Bess?  
Won't somebody tell me where?  
I ain' care what she say,  
I ain' care what she done.  
Won't somebody tell me where's my Bess?  
Bess, Oh, Lawd.*

*My Bess! I want her now.  
Widout her I can't go on.  
I counted da days dat I was gone  
Till I got home to see her face.  
Won't somebody tell me where's my Bess?  
I want her so. My gal, my Bess.  
Where is she?  
Oh Gawd, in yo' big Heav'n  
Please show me where I mus' go.  
Oh give me de strength, show me de way!  
Tell me de truth, where is she?  
Where is my gal?  
Where is my...*

His voice drops to an almost imperceptible level

JACK

(whispering)

Emily?

Tears form in his eyes.

She dabs his eyes with his towel.

MEGS

I never felt that way about anybody.

JACK

Some day when the right man comes  
along you will.

MEGS

Thank you for saying that. My life's always been about science. When I was a girl, my mother sent me to all girls schools. I hated them. I had nothing in common with the other girls. I couldn't wait to go home and play with my chemistry set or catch bugs in our yard and dissect them. When I got older, I taught myself calculus from library books. That was the fun in my life.

JACK

Why science?

MEGS

My daddy's a scientist, A biologist. Teaches at the Medical University of South Carolina. I wanted to be a scientist just like my daddy.

JACK

I've heard of Med U. When I was at Fort Jackson combat training duty I met some great bones from Med U. Did you go there too?

MEGS

No, I went to Clemson. Undergrad in Biology - went there to get away from home. Then, would you believe it, daddy shows up as a visiting professor in a course I had to take. He gave me a "B." Only "B" I ever got. Made me determined to work harder.

JACK

What I really meant was weren't there guys there that you dated? Fell in love with?

MEGS

Dated? Sort of. Fell in love with? No. As soon as guys found out I was a science major, they disappeared. These "Southern Gentlemen" found me intimidating. Thought I might be smarter than they were. Even the ones I liked the most. Same thing happened in grad school and at work. After it happens again and again,

(MORE)

MEGS (CONT'D)

you just give up. You put men in the back of your mind and try to go on without them.

JACK

The army used to be like that. We found out the hard way we need everybody - men, women, black, white, gay, straight - everybody has something to offer.

Megs smiles. She thinks maybe Jack is different.

JACK (CONT'D)

After Emily came back from college, I thought she might be smarter than me 'cause I never went. I was really nervous on our first couple of dates when we were getting reacquainted. But, she could sense it. It was almost like she would read my mind. She told me in no uncertain terms to wise up and make that leap of faith that we could love each other like we did when we were teenagers. So, I did. I jumped right in. I'm glad I did. But like Bess left Porgy, Emily left me - I believe now for something better.

He glances up as if he's looking toward heaven, tightens his lips.

JACK (CONT'D)

I've been lost ever since.

A tear forms in Megs' eye. She reaches out, takes his hand.

He holds hers for a moment, then clears his throat, pulls his hand away.

He looks down, then up at Megs,

JACK (CONT'D)

The Russians will strike soon. I'm glad we had this chance to talk before they do.

They lock eyes. He reaches out toward her.

**EXT. GROVE OF WHITE SPRUCE NEAR THE BOTTOM OF THE MOUNTAIN - NIGHT**

A blizzard swirls around the trees, the remaining fifteen-man Russian fire team in cover behind them, and the American camp below.

ANTIPOV  
(shouting over the  
wind)  
Let us get attention!

He sprays a burst from his AK-74 in the direction of the American camp.

His fire team sprays bursts from their weapons in a similar pattern.

Antipov flicks the thumb-switch on a hand-held microphone.

A loud feedback SQUEAL pours out from an array of loudspeakers set up on the side of his position. It cuts through the snow and echoes across the valley.

ANTIPOV (CONT'D)  
(through the  
loudspeakers)  
Attention Commander Connor! I am Colonel Alexi Antipov of Eastern Military District of Russian Federation. We have observed you have found weapons craft belonging to Federation. According to international law we demand you immediately surrender craft and its contents. We also know you have urgent reasons to return home to solve problems with wife. If you give up weapon, abandon it to us, you and your people may fly from here home so you go back to Meedge before she leaves with lover. Do not resist. It is futile. You are surrounded. We have superior force. I give you twenty-four hours after this taste.

**INT. SAUNA #1 - NIGHT****CENTER WORK TABLE**

Connor bites his lip.

**EXT. SAUNA #S 1 AND 2**

Blinding beams of spotlights, emanating from the Russian position, cut through the night and the blowing snow to create a dizzying dance across the face of the Sauna buildings and Jack's Men standing guard.

A new sound, somewhere between the scream of a jet engine and the roar of a competition formula one race car, reverberates through the valley.

The source of the sound flies into view: six Russians wearing jet packs soar toward the American position.

Although buffeted by the wind, they circle the Saunas, strafing members of Jack's combat team standing guard below.

In their first volley

Blood Explodes

From the cold weather camo jackets of two of Jack's Men

who crumple, drop their M16s, and thrash about, creating crude snow angels in the white ground covering.

Another Guard

Gushes Blood

From the thigh area on one leg of his cold weather camo pants.

He goes down screaming, holding his wound.

WOUNDED GUARD

My leg! My leg! It hurts! MOTHER  
FUCK!

Jack crashes out of the entrance to Sauna #2. His cold weather jacket and pants partially pulled on, held in place over his workout clothes by one hand. His boots untied, laces flailing.

He snatches an M16 from one of his downed Men. His pants fall down.

He pulls back on the rifle's charging handle, and

Along with his remaining Guards, sprays the air with 3-round bursts in the direction of their flying enemy.

Jack's bullets rip open a bloody red zipper pattern across the body of one hapless airborne Russian.

Flyer and jet pack separate, spiral down into the snow next to each other, creating twin explosions of white and a loud pair of

WUMPS!

Jack pulls up his pants.

An unusually strong blast of wind knocks the other five Flyers off balance.

They fight to retain control, while a change in the wind flips two of them upside down.

After a few seconds, they recover wobbling vertical stability.

Another gust drives the three other Flyers away from the Sauna buildings.

They attempt to steer back toward their targets but the wind has become a brick wall that leaves them hanging, rocking in place, unable to return from whence they came.

A few moments later they turn tail, flying back toward the cover of the trees and the Russian position.

Just as the other two formerly upside-down Flyers join the retreat, one of them tosses a lime green hand grenade toward the entrance of Sauna #2.

The other follows up with a volley of automatic fire in the same direction.

#### **SLO-MO**

The grenade bounces off the roof, slides down the front of the building, and

Explodes

against the frame of the Sauna #2 entrance, blasting a small hole in the stiff concrete.

Two Russian rounds strike the concrete exterior of the building and bounce off.

A third round enters the building through the hole created by the grenade

#### **INT. SAUNA #2**

#### **AT THE ANTHRAX**

The bullet ruptures the water-tight plastic covering over the cube closest to Megs.



A small cloud of toxic spores from one of the anthrax bricks inside the cube spurts into the air.

**END SLO-MO**

Off to the side, Russ and Jack push open a side door from the outside.

A gust of wind from the outside blows the cloud of spores toward Megs.

Jack runs towards Megs to push her off her chair out of the way of the cloud.

But, he's too late. He trips. Falls short.

Megs breathes in the deadly spores, gags, collapses to the floor.

Russ rushes into the cloud, tries to wave it away with his hands.

He grabs the roll of sealing tape off the top of Megs' bag, bites off a piece, presses it over the bullet hole in the cube's plastic covering, sealing it.

Then, crashes to the floor.

The cloud dissipates.

Small black skin sores form on both Russ and Megs, quickly growing larger.

More so on Russ.

Jack drops to the floor beside Megs, holds her hand.

MEGS

(gasping, slipping  
into incoherency,  
looking at the sores  
on her hand)

It's mutating so fast.

Megs recognizes Jack.

MEGS (CONT'D)

(to Jack)

In my bag, a vial of Cipro - and  
syringes. Inject a full syringe into  
each of us.

As she loses consciousness:

MEGS (CONT'D)

At last...my hands...I Feel warm  
again, Jack...like summertime.

Jack fumbles through her bag, comes up with a plastic baggy  
of syringes and a vial of injectable liquid.

He holds the vial up, reads the label:

"CIPRO."

Jack flips off its cap with his thumb, jabs the needle point  
of a syringe into the rubber dam of the vial.

**LATER**

**ANOTHER CORNER OF SAUNA #2 - DAY**

**AWAY FROM THE ANTHRAX**

Megs and Russ lie on cots, each wears a mask and is covered  
with a blanket pulled up to their chin.

Combat Team Member Two and Connor sit masked, next to Russ,  
who thrashes from side to side.

Sweat breaks out on Russ' forehead,

Connor wipes it dry with a towel.

Russ relaxes, grows still.

Jack sits next to Megs, holding her hand. He too wears a  
mask.

Beads of sweat form on her forehead, collect on her upper lip.

JACK

She's burning up.

MEGS

(in delirium)

auuuuuooooowww...

RUSS

(in delirium, rising  
then falling)

ttttoo many people...ggggo  
away...wwwwhat's wrong...wwwwhat's  
wrong...wwwwhat's wrong...

MEGS  
 (in delirium, barely  
 audible)  
 bbbbirds...bbbblack crows...wwwwhite  
 crows... sssmell the  
 ssssmoke...dddaddy...

RUSS  
 (in delirium)  
 wwwwoot...hhhheaah...wwwwoot...

MEGS  
 (in delirium)  
 wwwwhere's my Jack...

JACK  
 I'm right here, Megs. I'm right here.

**NIGHT - HOURS LATER**

Jack and Connor look exhausted, drooping in their chairs, masks drooping on their chins. Yet they still sit vigil over the unconscious Megs and Russ.

The two on the cots look worse: hair mashed and matted beyond repair, masks, blankets, and clothes sweat-stained as if they've just been pulled in from a hurricane, and skin transformed into human versions of pelts most like those seen on exotic spotted animals.

CONNOR  
 We're losing them.

Jack looks closely at the vial of Cipro.

JACK  
 There's only enough for one more  
 injection.

Connor grabs the vial out of Jack's hand, examines it himself.

CONNOR  
 (agonizing)  
 How can I choose?

Jack turns away from Connor.

JACK  
 Please Connor. Oh, I'm no good at  
 this...begging. But please save Megs.  
 I...we...can't lose her.

CONNOR

(to Russ)

Hey, Buddy. We've been in this together all along...we planned the expedition together...we came here together...we fought the Russians side by side...we found your Thing together...

Images of Connor's near drowning quickly flash through his mind.

**SERIES OF SHOTS - RUSS SAVES CONNOR FROM DROWNING - FLASHBACKS**

Quickly appearing and disappearing:

- Undersea waves knock Connor for a loop
- The currents entangle Connor in the towing cable.
- They buffet him against the Thing and the undersea shelf.
- They tear his mask from his face.
- He inhales a lung full of sea water.
- Connor pops to the surface, gasping for air.
- Russ pulls the boat onto the shore.
- Russ slams the control lever on the winch to "ON."
- It sputters. It coughs. It spasms and jerks. It starts!
- It pulls the cable and Connor to the beach and safety.
- Connor lies sprawled on the beach.
- Russ frantically, rhythmically compresses Connor's chest.
- Connor coughs, pants. Water spurts from his mouth with each compression.
- Connor opens his eyes,

**BACK TO SCENE**

CONNOR (CONT'D)

I owe you my life.

He gently shakes Russ' shoulder.

Russ stirs.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Hey. Buddy. I promised I wouldn't let anything happen to you. I've got one last dose of medicine...

Russ opens his eyes, struggles to prop himself up.

RUSS

(straining to talk)

Don't worry about me. I've lived my life. This time, it is my time. Give Megs the medicine. She's young. She has her whole life ahead of her and she has Jack. Give them the chance.

He falls back, lies still, eyes still open.

Connor leans over, closes Russ's eyes.

Tears form in his own eyes.

CONNOR

Goodbye, Buddy.

He injects the last of the drug into Megs.

A grateful Jack nods to Connor as he places a wet compress on Megs' forehead. His mask slips down.

Megs stirs, opens her eyes. Her mask slips down. She mouths the word "Jack."

Jack leans down to better hear her voice.

She pulls up her mask.

MEGS

(straining to talk)

Pull up your mask.

She reaches up, embraces him.

JACK

(whispering)

Don't leave me, Megs. Don't leave me.

Russ spasms. A smile slowly forms and freezes on his face. He lies still for a last time.

#### **EXTERIOR - LATER**

The storm continues to rage. Snow and wind swirl around the building at full blizzard strength.

A few of Jack's Men huddle together, still standing guard.

**INTERIOR**

Jack and Connor sit a few feet away from the cots. Jack has pulled up his mask.

Connor slumps, stares at the floor.

Jack glances at Megs.

She sleeps deeply under her blanket. Her black sores have grown smaller. Her skin is dry.

Jack shifts his gaze to Russ' cot.

It's empty.

JACK

I've watched a lot of men die. This was the worst. I'm sorry, Connor. Russ was a good man.

Jack studies Connor.

JACK (CONT'D)

You could've saved him. Thanks for saving Megs. I keep thinking, maybe... Just maybe...We could...We could have saved them both, if only...If only...I hadn't tripped.

Connor looks up at Jack.

CONNOR

Hey. Stop beating yourself up. You did the best you could.

Jack shakes his head.

JACK

I never felt this way about anyone since Emily.

He picks at an invisible thread on his pant leg.

JACK (CONT'D)

I don't know what I'd do if I lost her again. Five years is a long time to be alone.

CONNOR

I know. I've been married five years to Midge. And, we've both felt alone most of the time.

He stands up. A sudden look of comprehension spreads over his face.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
Because I've been so damned obsessed  
with finding a damn UFO.

He paces.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
I was never home - always on an  
expedition.

He speaks directly to Jack, as if trying to convince him of that which he's trying to convince himself.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
She deserves a normal life, with a  
normal husband, in a normal marriage.  
I envy you.

JACK  
You sound like you've given up. You  
shouldn't.

CONNOR  
I'd like to sit down with Midge and  
have a good heart-to-heart talk with  
her, like maybe you've had with Megs?

JACK  
We were just getting started.

CONNOR  
I'd tell her how much she means to  
me.

He sits down again, looks down. His voice falters.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
But, I'm afraid it's too late.

He stares at his hands.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
She won't talk to me.

JACK  
That's nonsense. It's never too late.  
Unless...

He glances at Meg's still form on the cot.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Unless...

**EXTERIOR - MORNING**

The wind, and with it the driving snow, has died down.

The five remaining jet pack Russians, and the remainder of their ground fire team on aerosanis, charge across the valley toward Sauna #s 1 and 2, Ak-74s blazing.

Five more of Jack's men fall dead - including Combat Team Members One and Two - at the foot of the two shelters,

The Russians take up ground positions fifty yards from the buildings.

Antipov presses buttons on his cell phone.

Connor's name appears on the screen.

He presses the Call icon next to Connor's name.

**INTERIOR**

Connor's phone

RINGS.

He answers.

CONNOR  
(into the phone)  
Connor here.

ANTIPOV (V.O.)  
(through the phone)  
It is I, Colonel Antipov.

CONNOR  
How did you get this number?

ANTIPOV (V.O.)  
Is simple. Our superior technology intercepts your calls and shows us number to call you. Enough of little talk. Do you accept offer? Give us weapons craft and contents and your people leave unharmed.

CONNOR  
I haven't talked with my officers yet. We've had problems here.

ANTIPOV (V.O.)  
I put hold on you. Talk now.



**EXTERIOR**

Antipov presses the Hold Icon on his phone's display.

ANTIPOV

(to his Men)

After Americans give us craft, kill them.

**INTERIOR**

Connor covers the mouthpiece of his phone with his hand.

CONNOR

(to Jack)

It's Antipov. He repeated his demands, then put me on hold. He wants the craft and the anthrax. Says then he'll let us go.

JACK

If there's one thing I've learned about Russians, it's that you can't trust them.

CONNOR

Any strategic suggestions?

JACK

Let's see, given the weather and my knowledge of Russian tactics, they probably didn't hold any men in reserve. So, if all their forces are outside now, we're probably equal in manpower and firepower. I think we can take them.

He pulls a small two-way personal radio out of a pocket.

JACK (CONT'D)

Besides, we've got one last trick up our sleeve.

Antipov presses Connor for a decision.

ANTIPOV (V.O.)

I ready for answer, Connor. Tell now.

CONNOR

Nuts. Go fuck yourself.

Connor clicks off, ending the conversation.

**EXTERIOR**

Antipov looks puzzled, speaks to his translator, MIKAEL, standing beside him.

ANTIPOV

Tell me, Mikael, you know of English better than I, what does American mean when he say "Nuts" and tells me to go fuck myself?

Mikael laughs.

**INTERIOR**

Jack pushes the "PRESS TO TALK" button on his personal radio to call Bob.

JACK

(into the radio)

Come in Storm Surge. This is Hamburger.

The radio SQUAWKS.

BOB (V.O.)

(through the radio)

Go ahead, Hamburger.

JACK

The time is NOW!

**EXTERIOR****FROM BEHIND THE BLACKHAWKS**

Bob and his Engineers round the shelters with their M16s on fire. Six of them wear jet packs of their own - the Gravity Assault suits.

**IN OPEN GROUND**

In dog fights, they down three of the airborne Russians via aerial combat:

Two flying Engineers lock onto the tail of an unlucky Ivan, one overhead and one underneath.

The ill-fated Russian target looks back over his shoulder at the wrong time.

Bullets from above and below rake body and jet pack, sending man and machine crashing to the ground.

Another member of Bob's team rams a Russian Flyer, sending him tumbling over the roof of Sauna #1.

A third in-flight American Warrior hovers above a Russian, then lowers himself until he's almost sitting on his adversary's head.

The Russian points his AK-74 up at the American, who promptly kicks it out of his hands.

The American's next kick, delivered to the Russian's head, knocks him unconscious, causing him to flutter to the ground.

The last two Russian Birdmen circle Jack.

They close in on him from two sides in what looks to be Jack's certain annihilation.

At the last moment, as they swoop in for the kill, Connor rushes out from behind Sauna #2 and blasts both out of the sky with his Colt Buntline Special.

JACK

That was awesome shooting. Thanks.  
Or, should I thank your weapon? I've  
never seen one like it. What is it?

As Connor blows on the barrel to speed its cooling:

CONNOR

It's a Colt Buntline Special. Wyatt  
Earp was rumored to have used it in  
the gunfight at the OK Corral. I  
don't believe it's the original. All  
I know for sure is that Wyatt carried  
one like it because he said the ten-  
inch barrel was phenomenally accurate.  
That was good enough for me.

JACK

And for me.

The M60s on the Blackhawks and the remainder of Jack's Men lay down a blanket of covering fire, as Bob's Birdmen force the Russians on their aerosanis, back across the valley.

#### **AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAINS**

BOB

Fire above them. Further up the  
mountain into the snow.

He fires his weapon in three-shot bursts into huge knobs of snow piled on top of and overhanging rock ledges.

Others batter the same fluffy white clumps with rounds from their weapons.

Enormous clusters of snow break free and fall.

They roll down the mountainside.

Pick up more snow as they go, growing ever larger.

Join together into a massive

Avalanche!

But it rolls the wrong way.

The now Tsunamic wall of snow ROARS directly toward Bob and the Americans.

Suddenly

It smashes into a

Rock outcropping that breaks its path,

Forcing it to switch directions, and like

Vesuvius' entombment of Pompeii,

Bury the Russian forces instead.

**INT. SAUNA #2 - DAY**

**MONTAGE - MEGS HEALS**

**MOS**

--She sits up on her cot. Jack feeds her tea, brushes her hair. Her black skin sores have shrunk.

--Jack reads to her. She talks to him. He washes her face. Her black skin sores are small and pale.

--She stands and walks. She holds hands with Jack. Her skin is clear.

**END MOS**

**END MONTAGE - MEGS' HEALED**

**INT. SAUNA #1 - DAY**

**CENTER WORK TABLE**

Connor and Bob sit, talking on their satellite phones with Rodriguez.

CONNOR

(into the phone)

So you can't send any additional support to help us transport the anthrax or the craft out of here?

RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)

(through the phones)

Wish I could. Command seems to have lost interest in the project. They tell me to tell you to use what you have. Load as much as you can into your Blackhawks and---

BOB

(into the phone)

---Now wait a minute, Rodriguez. We were cramped coming up here. We don't have space for the craft. It doesn't weigh all that much, but that's not the point. The anthrax is damn dangerous. We can't afford to have it shift in flight when my men are aboard---

CONNOR

---Can we sling it underneath?

BOB

Are you crazy? With the winds we've seen lately?

RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)

Look, I don't care what you do. You're the engineer, Bob. Just get it down here some way. Figure it out.

A low RUMBLE

Interrupts the conversation.

It grows louder,

Drowns out the speech of those at the table.

CONNOR

(shouting)

Hang on, Rodriguez!

RODRIGUEZ (V.O.)

(also shouting through the phone)

What's happening?

The table and everything else in Sauna #1 trembles. A little bit, at first. Then, more and more.

Connor and Bob grip the table.

The table and the Men and their chairs skid across the floor.

Sauna #1 bounces a few inches into the air.

Connor and Bob stare at each other with panic in their eyes.

CONNOR AND BOB  
(together)  
Earthquake!

Connor picks his cell phone up off the floor.

He hears

DIALTONE.

CONNOR  
We lost Rodriguez.

#### **EXTERIOR**

Connor and Bob look toward the ocean.

Waves, twenty feet tall, slap back and forth, to and from the beach.

CONNOR  
Come on. We need to check on the craft.

BOB  
It's too dangerous. We don't know what the aftershocks will be like. Besides, there's nothing we can do whatever happens to the craft. It's better if we wait until things calm down.

A merciless HOWLING wind drives them back inside Sauna #1.

#### **INTERIOR - NEXT DAY**

#### **CENTER WORK TABLE**

Connor sits, drinks coffee, puts his phone down on the table.

Bob enters, sits opposite Connor.

BOB  
I checked out the craft.

CONNOR

And...?

BOB

It's worse than we thought. The underwater currants wiped out most of the sandbar.

CONNOR

And The craft?

BOB

No trace.

CONNOR

Shit.

BOB

Near as I can tell, it slipped into the underwater canyon where we can't get to it.

CONNOR

My worst fear just came true. What's the use in trying anymore? Something always happens.

BOB

It's most likely lost forever. We'd have to bring up a salvage barge to get it out of there.

CONNOR

I just talked to Command about another recovery attempt. They don't want it. They want us to come home.

BOB

I'm sorry, Connor. We worked so hard.

CONNOR

The big loss is we'll never know where it came from.

Connor reads notes from a sheet of paper.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Bob, they gave me notes for you. They need you back at JayBer. Command wants you to take two of the Birds, the anthrax, your equipment, your remaining men, and the dead with you. They're waiting for all of it. I'm going to stay here with Jack and

(MORE)

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
 his men, and Megs - until she  
 recovers.

**INT. SAUNA #2 - A WEEK LATER - DAY**

A Completely healthy Megs packs her clothes, hums  
 "Summertime."

**EXT. BLACKHAWK - DAY**

On a bright sunny spring day the remaining team members stand  
 in line to board one of the remaining two copters.

Connor waits at the end of the line to board.

Megs and Jack stroll up behind him.

Megs shows Connor a bouquet of Alaskan spring wild flowers  
 she holds behind her back.

MEGS  
 Jack gave me these. Aren't they  
 beautiful?

Connor smiles weakly.

Megs pulls a hand-written card out of a pocket.

MEGS (CONT'D)  
 And he gave me this with them.

She hands the card to Connor.

The writing on the cover of the card Connor holds:

"The most beautiful flowers  
 For the most beautiful woman."

**MORPHS**

Into:

"Happy Anniversary Future Father"

It's the writing on the cover of Midge's hand-written  
 anniversary card on the center-piece bookshelf of Connor's  
 office,

**FLASHBACK:** Connor opens the card and sees Midge's hand-written  
 note inside.

"Five years seems like yesterday,  
 but our biological clocks keep ticking.  
 Next year, let me give you the most  
 Wonderful present I can. A son."

**BACK TO SCENE**

Megs takes Jack's hand and



Announces to Connor.

MEGS

There's been a small change of plans.  
I'm not going back to the lower forty-  
eight.

Jack pipes up.

JACK

She's staying with me in Fairbanks,  
in spite of the cold.

MEGS

He tells me the Army can use someone  
with my skill-set there. After all,  
who knows what frozen microbes and  
their diseases will rise up out of  
the ground and infect soldiers when  
global warming thaws them out of the  
permafrost.

JACK

We don't know what the future holds  
for us but we both agree we have to  
give it a try.

He squeezes her hand tighter,

JACK (CONT'D)

I'll hold her hands to keep them  
warm. And the minute we land in  
Fairbanks, I'm going to buy her a  
big bouquet of red roses. They're  
her favorite flowers.

Connor grins broadly and

wishes them well.

CONNOR

I certainly hope everything works  
out. I'm rooting for you.

Connor drops back a few paces, lets them board before him.

As Megs and Jack board, they pinch each other, twist away  
from the pinches, laugh, giggle.

A look of sadness spreads over Connor's face.

**INT. FORT WAINWRIGHT - SMALL OFFICE - NIGHT**

Winnie sits behind a desk taking notes.

Connor sits opposite.

His mission debriefing in progress.

WINNIE

So what did you do with the bodies  
of the Russians?

CONNOR

Most of them are buried under several  
tons of snow. Why? Do you want them?  
(smiles)

WINNIE

No.

(laughs)

We've got good recordings of all  
their conversations. We also picked  
up a brand new Russian LSD spy ship  
disguised as a fishing trawler that  
was part of Antipov's getaway plan.  
It'll be a great bargaining chip for  
Biden should Putin act up again.

CONNOR

What about the craft? Any change in  
attitude at command?

WINNIE

You know. I can't figure that out.  
Why they dropped the project like a  
hot potato. Maybe it has something  
to do with the Disclosure Project  
we've all been working on day and  
night.

CONNOR

Why would they care?

WINNIE

Congress has been on our ass ever  
since we missed their first two  
deadlines. Now, our top brass wants  
to give them as little intel as  
possible. I think they're afraid  
Congress will go over it with a fine  
tooth comb looking for every little  
excuse to criticize our investigative  
and security procedures. Then release  
our data and their criticisms to the  
public giving the military another  
undeserved black eye.

CONNOR

Sounds like you got your hands full.  
I'm glad it's not me.

WINNIE

Anyway, that's all I have, Connor.  
You can consider your debriefing  
officially over. But, don't leave  
yet. Rodriguez sent something up  
with me, he said it was your favorite.

Winnie puts her note pad and pen into her briefcase.

She pulls out two shot glasses and a bottle of Johnnie Walker  
Black Label,

Pours two generous shots.

Slides one to Connor.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Cheers!

Connor chugs his shot of liquid courage.

Winnie slams her empty glass down on the desk.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Sorry Connor. Got to go and a flight  
to catch, Maybe next time?

Connor responds with a insincere wink.

**EXT. SMALL OFFICE - HALLWAY WINDOW - NIGHT**

Connor watches Winnie board a military plane that will take  
her home.

She turns, waves to Connor

Connor takes his cell phone out of his pocket.

Pushes a few buttons.

"MIDGE" appears on the screen.

He pushes the "CALL" icon next to her name.

RINGING

Through the phone.

MIDGE (V.O.)  
(groggy, through the  
phone)  
Hello?

CONNOR  
(into the phone)  
Midge, the project's over. I'm coming  
home.

MIDGE (V.O.)  
I've been worried sick about you -  
again. When I called you before, I  
had a feeling you were in trouble.  
But you answered. I heard your voice.  
I knew you were okay. So, I hung up.  
I worry about you like this every  
time you go off on one of your God  
damn projects.

CONNOR  
This was my last one.

MIDGE (V.O.)  
Do you remember you told me that  
when you were off exploring the  
Mongolian Triangle? You were looking  
for some sacred stone that supposedly  
had the history of a tribe descended  
from aliens carved on it? Your camel  
kicked you in the head and you spent  
three months in a Mongolian hospital  
that had no phone lines. I thought  
you were dead.

CONNOR  
I found the sacred stone, Midge, but  
the Mongolian government wouldn't  
let me take it out of the country.

MIDGE (V.O.)  
What about the pirates who kidnapped  
you in the middle of the Devils Sea  
when you were diving to find an  
ancient mother ship of the Dogu.  
They were going to kill you unless I  
paid your ransom.

CONNOR  
But you didn't have to pay and they  
didn't kill me. I don't ever want to  
go through that again either.

MIDGE (V.O.)

Then there was the time you almost suffocated in the Dartmoor Bogs trying to locate a scout ship that was rumored to have crashed in that slimy mess.

CONNOR

I thought I was going to die in those bogs.

MIDGE (V.O.)

I can't go on like this. I can't stand the worrying, the waiting, never knowing whether you'll come back at all.

CONNOR

I don't want you to live that way. And I don't want to live that way anymore either. When I get home, I want to work things out so you won't have to worry anymore.

MIDGE (V.O.)

(sniffling, fighting  
back tears)

You've said that before. So many times before.

CONNOR

This time I mean it.

MIDGE (V.O.)

I wish I could believe you.

CONNOR

Please believe me. But, I need to know if you'll be there when I get home. Or, if you'll be with someone else.

MIDGE (V.O.)

(sobbing openly)

I'm sorry, I can't promise anything.

CLICK!

His cell phone RINGS with the by now familiar opening strains of the "Stars and Stripes Forever."

Connor answers.

CONNOR  
(into the phone)  
Connor here.

DOCTOR SHAMUS (V.O.)  
(through the phone)  
Hello Connor. My name is Shamus.  
Doctor Albert Shamus. I'm calling  
from Washington at the National Center  
for Research in Disease Prevention  
and Control. I want to thank you for  
providing us with the ample supply  
of mutated anthrax.

CONNOR  
So that's where it ends up.

DOCTOR SHAMUS (V.O.)  
Of course. We're best prepared to  
handle it. We've got great plans for  
it. Here at the Center we'll use it  
as vaccine material to combat  
antibacterial resistance in a variety  
of strains of anthrax and other gram-  
positive bacterial infections, such  
as Pneumonia, MRSA, Diphtheria,  
Listeriosis, Meningitis, Botulism,  
and even Tuberculosis.

Connor smiles, as the belief rolls over him that his  
expedition, maybe, just maybe, was not a failure, but that  
it benefited mankind.

DOCTOR SHAMUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The multiple mutations of the anthrax  
you recovered rendered it so much  
more useful for the development of  
new vaccines. The noxious gases from  
the volcanic vents, hydrogen sulfide,  
methane, and carbon monoxide, were  
the probable catalysts for the  
mutations.

CONNOR  
But the anthrax was sealed in  
waterproof plastic.

DOCTOR SHAMUS (V.O.)  
Gases can easily penetrate waterproof  
sealant, seawater can't.

CONNOR  
Did the mutations also kill my friend?  
I promised I wouldn't let anything  
happen to him.

DOCTOR SHAMUS (V.O.)

I'm sorry you lost your friend. The mutations probably did kill Russ, even though he had partial immunity when he ate the infected caribou meat on his earlier expedition. Remember, the anthrax you recovered had ten years to mutate further, to grow stronger and to overcome Russ' partial immunity.

CONNOR

What about my other team member, Doctor Murphy? She almost died.

DOCTOR SHAMUS (V.O.)

If Doctor Murphy had no prior history of infection, perhaps her exposure to the mutated anthrax only served to sensitize her to it.

CONNOR

I can't help believing Russ' deaths were somehow my fault

DOCTOR SHAMUS (V.O.)

Nonsense Connor. You performed a noble service to the future of your country.

Connor, relieved, exclaims:

CONNOR

Thank God...the anthrax...is not a Weapon!

**INT. WASHINGTON, D.C. SUBURBS - LARGE FORTRESS STYLE WAREHOUSE - DAY**

**WIDE CORRIDOR BETWEEN A HEAVY INTERIOR DOOR AND A HEAVY EXTERIOR DOOR**

A PAIR OF MEN IN UNIFORM stand guard at each door. They wear no identifying insignia.

A MAN, 40s, wears a protective Haz-Mat suit, holds a cell phone to his ear,

CONNOR (V.O.)

(relieved, through  
the phone)

The anthrax...is not a Weapon!

The Man ends the call.

"MATTHEW EDWARDS, CIA" is printed on a name tag attached to the outside of his Haz-Mat suit

Edwards speaks to a HIGH-RANKING UNIFORMED MILITARY COLLEAGUE standing beside him wearing an identical Haz-Mat suit.

EDWARDS

That should take care of our team problem. You have to hand it to him, Connor found our drone and recovered our Anthrax before our international friends. My job is done here.

He turns and walks toward the heavily fortified exterior door.

As he walks, behind him a well organized and sophisticated operation is revealed through the open interior door,

#### **THROUGH THE INTERIOR DOOR**

Loaders and forklifts move the sealed pallets of anthrax recognizable from the craft into various staging areas where workers in Protective Haz-Mat suits cut open the cubes and place the bricks on conveyor belts and into bins on

Other specialized equipment that load them into canisters on pallets labeled with the names of Russian, Chinese, and Middle Eastern Cities.

#### **OUTSIDE THE INTERIOR DOOR**

On the outside of the door that swings shut behind Edwards, a sign reads:

"Hazardous Area  
Do Not Enter  
Biological Weapons Of Mass Destruction"

#### **EXT. CONNOR'S HOUSE - STREET END OF THE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT**

The pool lights behind the house and other lights inside and out glow. Somebody's home.

A taxi pulls up, stops behind a late model expensive sedan parked at the curb between this driveway and the next driveway on the street.

Connor climbs out of the back seat, leaves the door open.

The DRIVER, a young 30s, walks back to the trunk, opens it, pulls out a large well-worn leather suitcase on wheels.

Connor walks around the sedan, studying it closely.



After he completes his walk-around, he digs into a pocket, comes up with a fistful of bills, hands them to the Driver.

DRIVER

Thanks, Mr. Dunn.

(he notices Connor  
staring at the sedan)

Nice car, eh? I'm gonna get me one  
of those after I make my first  
million.

CONNOR

(with a forced smile  
and gritted teeth)

You do that.

Connor reaches into the taxi, pulls an unseen something out with one hand, closes the door with the other.

The Driver climbs back into the driver's seat.

As Connor pulls up the handle on his suitcase with his free hand, the taxi pulls away.

#### **POV CONNOR**

For a split second, reflected in a window of the taxi, Connor sees the saucer shape of a UFO in the night sky behind him.

#### **END POV**

He quickly whirls around.

Nothing.

Whatever it was, it's gone. Or, it never was.

His eyes search the sky from horizon to horizon. Still nothing but roof tops, tree tops, and suburban light pollution.

He trudges up the driveway toward his house, shoulders slumped, head down, pulling his suitcase behind him with one hand.

Shielded by his body, his other hand holds something in front of him.

He counts the cracks in his driveway to keep his mind from wandering to more unpleasant thoughts.

CONNOR

(softly, to himself)

One...two...three four...five...

**POV CONNOR**

As he walks, just ahead of him, driveway lights automatically click on one-by-one, creating a lighted path leading to the front door.

CONNOR  
six...seven eight...nine...

His suitcase hand reaches out, opens the door.

**END POV****INT. CONNOR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM**

Midge nervously fidgets as she sits on the living room sofa. Her eyes red, as if she's been crying.

Connor walks into his home carrying something in one hand hidden behind his back.

Midge rises, tentatively approaches him, not quite knowing what to expect.

He drops to one knee, stretches out his hand carrying a bouquet of red roses, offering the scarlet blooms to Midge.

Shocked, she takes them. Doesn't know what to say. Blurts out the first words that come to mind.

MIDGE  
They're beautiful.

CONNOR  
I love you, Midge. I always have.  
I've just forgotten it too many times.

She pulls him to his feet, wraps her arms around him.

MIDGE  
(whispers in his ear)  
Oh, Connor.

CONNOR  
Let's go away on a vacation, to  
someplace beautiful, someplace warm,  
someplace where we can make a baby,

MIDGE  
Yes! Yes!! Yes!!!

CONNOR  
My project days are over.

His satellite cell phone

RINGS.

It's "Stars and Stripes Forever" again.

Awkwardly, he pulls the phone from a pocket, looks at the screen.

The CALLER ID display reads

"RODRIGUEZ"

He pushes the "DISMISS" button on the screen. Rodriguez's name fades out.

**FADE TO BLACK**

**THE END**