

FIREFOX

1st Draft Screenplay Revised

by

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Based on the Novel by
Craig Thomas

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EXT. HIGH WILDERNESS -- ALASKA -- EARLY MORNING

Far below, a small lake shimmers like an emerald. Forest-covered mountains soar up from the waters' edge and then disappear in the clouds.

TITLE OVER: THE CHUGACH MOUNTAINS/ALASKA

A lodge, and an ancient wooden dock, can be made out on the far bank.

CLOSER -- LODGE AND DOCK

An old pontoon-plane rocks gently off the end of the dock, its engine-housing exposed.

MITCHELL GANT lifts his head out of the engine and scans the dock for a part. A RADIO plays softly from a tool-shed located half-way down the dock. A sign above its door reads NORTHSTAR CHARTERS/M. GANT, PROP.

Having found what he wants, GANT clambers back onto one of the pontoons and disappears under the engine again.

A half-breed huskie is sprawled on the dock, sleeping peacefully. Suddenly his head cocks, and he sniffs at the air. He looks to his master.

GANT does not hear it at first, over the RADIO: the dog gets to his feet and WHINES. GANT's head emerges from the engine.

There is a low THROBBING in the air, faint, far away. GANT's eyes narrow; he steps back onto the dock, listening.

The SOUND is growing louder, echoing off the hills now. The dog is looking into his face, not comprehending. GANT is backing up, his eyes searching the sky--

GANT

Go in the house, now...
(the dog does not move)
Go on, get!

The huskie scampers off towards the lodge. GANT has reached the shed and is groping for something just inside the door, his eyes still trained on the sky. He snaps the radio off and brings a shotgun up beside him.

Suddenly a helicopter ROARS out of a valley at the far end of the lake, banks down across the water and heads this way. It is a military-brown Bell LOH-6.

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GANT's face drops. He ducks behind the shed and scrambles quickly to the other side, hidden from view. The chopper comes in right over the shed, its big rotors making the shed walls HUM violently.

GANT clings to the wall, his hair sucked and blown, his eyes staring up in terror. Then the chopper sidles off towards the lodge, inspecting the area for movement.

But GANT can neither hear it nor see it anymore-- his eyes have glassed over, and he is sliding slowly, helplessly down the wall. He remembers just enough to put out his hands-- to break the fall-- and his shotgun CLATTERS away down the dock.

In the distance, the chopper sets down on the bank. FOUR MEN in civilian clothes jump out and begin running towards the lodge.

GANT has ended up in a sitting position, his back set rigidly against the wall of the shed, his legs stretched out in front of him uselessly. His eyes are wide open, but unseeing.

EXTREME CLOSEUP -- GANT'S FACE

The beat of the ROTORS suddenly evaporates into a WHISPER. Now, other NOISES begin to jump in and out of the SOUNDTRACK. They are coming from some far off place, located in Gant's past. His eyes flicker with the SOUNDS, his face seemingly crushed by their weight: the distant, pulsating WAIL of an air-raid SIREN; commands, SHOUTED over and over in Vietnamese; the shrill, unmuffled WHINE of a jet engine; then a string of CONCUSSIONS-- like footsteps-- coming closer, closer, closer; and then the searing, earshattering explosion that ends it all. A RINGING, ECHOING VOID, and GANT's eyes stare out helplessly as SOMEONE, somewhere, calls out his name--

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP -- BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH

Silence.

The grain is large, the image having been blown-up through several generations. CAMERA PULLS BACK, allowing a complete VIEW. It is a slide of a satellite photograph, projected on a screen.

BRITISH MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(over a microphone)
This was taken Friday. It is the
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRITISH MAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (Cont'd)
secret complex at Bilyarsk. If
you'll look up at the right hand
corner, you can make out the main
hangar.

The slide on the screen snaps to a closer blow-up. A red
arrow indicates a shadowy triangular shape now visible next
to the hangar.

BRITISH VOICE (O.S.) (Cont'd)

This is a detail of that section.
Take a good look, gentlemen. We
have every indication that you
are looking at the "Firefox".

TITLE OVER: CIA HEADQUARTERS/LANGLEY, VIRGINIA

KENNETH DE VERE AUBREY is visible in the darkness, speaking
from a podium off to the side of the screen. He resembles
a distinguished Oxford professor: he is, nevertheless, the
chief architect behind Great Britain's Soviet espionage
program.

AUBREY (Cont'd)
When the first rumors of the
Bilyarsk project began to filter
out of the Soviet Union--some
three years ago-- our theoret-
ical weapons strategists stood
before NATO Command and
explained-- with much confi-
dence-- that it would take the
Soviets a minimum of ten years
to produce a thought-controlled
aircraft. I am standing before
you today to explain-- with much
regret-- that they were wrong.

A bank of overhead fluorescent lights stammer on now, revealing
TWENTY-EIGHT OFFICIALS seated at a giant oval table. Included
are representatives of the CIA, the Air Force, the Office of
Naval Intelligence, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the
National Security Council and the British SIS. The chamber
is an ultra-modern, totally secure room five stories beneath
Virginia.

AUBREY (Cont'd)
At 0400 hours Thursday, we were
stunned by the encoded trans-
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUBREY (Cont'd)
mission that sits in front
of you...General Rodgers?

GENERAL JOHN RODGERS (SAC) rises from the U.S. Military delegation's side of the table. He walks up to the screen. A map of the Euro-Soviet border regions appears.

GEN. RODGERS
(with a pointer)
Emergency surveillance planes were flown up Saturday, over the Turkish-Soviet border, roughly here, and over the Finnish-Soviet border, here. Based on Mr. Baranovich's information regarding the time and flight path of the "Firefox", we were able to monitor the arena formed by these coordinates, here...

He cordons off a zone just West of the Urals, about six hundred miles East of Moscow--

GEN. RODGERS (Cont'd)
...and here, with our most sophisticated radar devices. Except for a flock of cranes heading south, nothing entered this airspace all day.

GEN. RODGERS sits. The room is utterly still.

AUBREY
We checked immediately with our source in Bilyarsk. The "Firefox" flew, and flew at the exact time and within the specified coordinates given to us by Dr. Baranovich.

(pause)

We are left with only one possible explanation. It is inescapable... The Soviets have developed some sort of anti-radar capability for the aircraft. The "Firefox" is, for all intents and purposes, invisible.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSEUP -- GANT'S EYES (INT. LODGE/ALASKA)

GANT's face and hair are bathed with perspiration. His eyes

(CONTINUED)

are closed. He is lying on top of a bed.

The dream is leaving him now. It can be HEARD, like a fluttering of WINGS, disappearing in the distance. Soon, the room is silent.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(softly)
...Mitchell?

GANT's eyes open weakly. He cannot move yet.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Mitchell... Can you hear me?

GANT'S eyes blink. The voice is right next to him.

LODGE BEDROOM

A dark-haired, well-muscled MAN in his late forties is seated on a footlocker next to the bed. His name is BUCKHOLZ. GANT looks around the room, confused.

GANT
...How...did I get here?

BUCKHOLZ
(shrugs)
We found you out on the dock.
You were out cold.

GANT relaxes his grip on the headboard and stares up at the ceiling.

BUCKHOLZ (Cont'd)
Sorry we had to surprise you like that.
(softly)
It...looked like a bad one.

GANT does not answer. After a moment, BUCKHOLZ rises and touches him on the shoulder.

BUCKHOLZ
Just rest for awhile... I'm making coffee.

BUCKHOLZ walks out into the kitchen. GANT sits up stiffly, putting his fingers to his eyes. The CLATTER of BUCKHOLZ rummaging around in the kitchen hurts his ears. He stands, braces himself, and slowly follows--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITCHEN

He sits down at the table as BUCKHOLZ goes about finishing a pot of coffee. GANT looks out the window-- the helicopter is gone.

GANT

Where are your friends?

BUCKHOLZ

It's just you and me, Mitchell.

GANT stares at the tabletop, the memory of his last moments before the dream very clear now. He shakes his head, looks up at BUCKHOLZ, and exhales wearily.

GANT

Okay, Buckholz... you came 5,000 miles for this, let's hear it.

BUCKHOLZ

(smiles)

Couldn't I just be dropping in to say hello?... It's been, what-- three years now?

He pours two cups and brings them over to the table.

BUCKHOLZ (Cont'd)

I see you're staying in shape, that's good. A lot of people miss you back home, Mitchell. They still talk about you everywhere you put in... The guys in the Aggressor Squadron think you must have sprouted wings and flown away.

GANT just sits there, staring at him. When BUCKHOLZ speaks again, the friendliness in his voice has disappeared.

BUCKHOLZ (Cont'd)

We had one hell of a time track-you down...

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. CRISIS CHAMBER (CIA HQ, LANGLEY)

MAJ. GEN. H.T. WOODS is using a comparison chart as he speaks.

MAJ. GEN. WOODS

There is no real disagreement with-
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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MAJ. GEN. WOODS (Cont'd)
in the advanced fighter aircraft communities: The drop-off in performance between the NATO and Warsaw Pact's top of the line attack-interceptor models is insignificant. Basic parity, across the board. Maximum speed, Mach 2.2. Power plants, all in the 25,000 lb. thrust class. Combat ceiling, right around 60,000 feet. Maneuverability, basically equal. Payload, the same...

He looks out at the oval table and lifts the huge page to reveal a final data and picture chart. He backs away from it, staring at it in silence.

MAJ. GEN. WOODS (Cont'd)
...Until now. Look at these figures. Thrust, 50,000 lbs. per. These Turmanskys deliver an increase of fully 100%. Combat ceiling, 120,000 feet plus. Look at this, gentlemen; again, a full 100% increase in capability. Speed: in excess of Mach five, even Mach six, and able to maintain it. Gentlemen, our body design begins to melt at Mach 3...

He stares out at the table, his eyes locking with an OLDER FIVE-STAR GENERAL'S.

MAJ. GEN. WOODS (Cont'd)
(softly)
To paraphrase General Lewis' conclusion-- it's off the board...
Dr. Schuller?

A pale, sharp-featured man, DR. EMIL SCHULLER is the head of the Fielding Research Institute in Bethesda, Maryland.

DR. SCHULLER
I think it should be clear now why the Soviets were willing to risk using a man like Baranovich-- a genius in theoretical physics, yes, but still a prisoner and a dissident. The weapons system is, as far as we can ascertain, the most advanced system ever con-
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. SCHULLER (Cont'd)
ceived. It couples radar and infrared detection devices with a thought-guided, thought-controlled arsenal on board the plane. The pilot's actual brain emissions are translated into a central computer through sensors in his helmet. Whatever target he chooses is destroyed instantly, without his even pressing a button. Or, as quickly as his eye can detect a threat, either visually or on one of his scopes, his thought impulses are guiding a missile to that threat.

(pause)

What that amounts to is a two to three second's speed advantage, in reaction and attack time, to any defense system we have today. If the Soviets can mass-produce it-- and our information tells us that there are factories for its production already under construction-- then it will change the structure of our world.

He gathers his papers and sits back down. AUBREY rises, staring out at the table from over his half-crescent speaking glasses.

AUBREY

We at the SIS have been working on the pipeline into Moscow, and on to Bilyarsk, for the better part of the last two years. The mechanics of that phase are ready to be implemented. I understand from Rear Admiral Pearson that your Navy's phase of the operation can be functional within thirty days. Am I correct on that, Admiral?

ADMIRAL PEARSON

(from the other end of
the table)

That is correct, sir.

AUBREY

(softly)

Good. Then let's have at it...

CROSS CUT TO:

TIGHT ON BUCKHOLZ (INT. GANT'S KITCHEN -- ALASKA)

BUCKHOLZ

We need you, Mitchell. We need
you to fly again.

GANT has been standing at the screen door, looking out. He
turns his head slowly back to the room--

BUCKHOLZ (Cont'd)

(quickly)

Don't say anything until you've
heard me out. I know it's a
tender area to broach with you;
I've read your P.O.W. file, I know
what the doctors say, I just saw
you for myself. But it's--

GANT

--Hold it, hold on!

(glares at him for a
moment)

You just wasted a lot of money,
Arthur-- buzzing your goddamned
helicopter around up here. I'm
not Air Force anymore, you go
back home and tell 'em that.

BUCKHOLZ

It's not Air Force, Mitchell.

GANT

But you want me to fly, right
Arthur?

BUCKHOLZ

Yes, we want you to fly...

(measuring his words)

We want you to fly the greatest
warplane ever built.

GANT is momentarily thrown by this. Then he shoves the screen
door open--

GANT

Bullshit.

He is out the door and down the steps, heading for the dock.

EXT. LAKEFRONT AND DOCK

TRACK with GANT as BUCKHOLZ follows behind him, in no great
hurry to catch up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUCKHOLZ

What's the fastest you've ever flown-- the F-15? What if I were to tell you this plane does Mach 5-- even Mach 6?

GANT reaches the dock and keeps walking, out towards his plane.

GANT

Come on Buckholz. Save the science fiction.

BUCKHOLZ

(following onto dock)

It's not science fiction. It exists... You're a great pilot, Mitchell. This is a great plane.

They come to an abrupt halt next to Gant's plane. GANT rummages around for a tool, jumps out onto the pontoon, and disappears under the engine. BUCKHOLZ stares at GANT's powerful back.

BUCKHOLZ

Okay... If that's not enough of an inducement for you, there's a very comfortable financial package being worked out. Very comfortable.

He walks the last few feet to the end of the dock and gazes out at the lake.

BUCKHOLZ (Cont'd)

Look at this place. This is valuable real estate, Mitchell. Seems to me it'd be wise to buy it, maybe expand your charter business...?

His hand is running along the side of the old plane. GANT'S head lifts slowly out of the engine, facing away. He is vulnerable.

GANT

(quietly)

How do they expect me to fly, Arthur? You've seen me.

BUCKHOLZ

We're not overly concerned about that. We've got three months to train you. It's... getting you
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

CONTINUED:

BUCKHOLZ (Cont'd)
there that's the problem.

GANT thinks this over, then realizes what BUCKHOLZ has just said.

GANT
...Where is it?

Now BUCKHOLZ looks away.

BUCKHOLZ
It's... in Russia. You've got
to steal it.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. CRISIS CHAMBER (LANGLEY)

An argument has erupted at the table. BRIG. GEN. BROWN (Air Force Intelligence) is on his feet, redfaced, having apparently just exploded. WILLIAM SALTONSTALL, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, rises.

SALTONSTALL
(trying to soothe)
We didn't expect you to be happy
with it, General. We're aware
of his health record. But, he
speaks the language. How many
combat pilots do we have that
can do that?

BRIG. GEN. BROWN
You're asking me to put our
resources and the Navy's--
Admiral Pearson I'm sure would
concur-- on the line for some-
body who's never been on an
intelligence mission, and who's
subject to these kind of... of...
seizures--

SALTONSTALL
(calmly)
--Delayed Stress Syndrom is very
common among our vets. It mani-
fests itself in civilian life,
not battle conditions.

BRIG. GEN. BROWN
(stubbornly)
Well, I don't choose to mount an
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIG. GEN. BROWN (Cont'd)
operation this way. What about it,
Clarke?

He looks down the table to J. Clarke Walters, Head of
Division Twelve, CIA.

J. CLARKE WALTERS
It's our opinion, General, that
we could never train one of our
men to be proficient enough in
this amount of time. Especially
in a plane he's never even seen.
I feel we have to trust the Air
Command people on this one.

AUBREY
(rising)
Could I interrupt? We at the SIS
have been working with our Soviet
operatives around the clock. I
have every confidence that they
can place a man in successful
proximity with the plane. As
far as I am concerned, we require
only two things of him-- that he
speak the language; and that he
fly like the Devil himself.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. DOCK (ALASKA)

GANT
This is suicide, Buckholz.

BUCKHOLZ
One the face of it-- maybe. And
that's precisely why it'll work.
They'll never expect it-- it's
too unthinkable for them to
ever defense... We're committed
to it. We've got a network
already set over there. We'll
train you, we'll take care of
you. We've got operatives who'll
be with you every step of the way.
They'll get you on the plane.
All you've got to do is fly it.

GANT is speechless for a moment. Then he shakes his head
and starts to laugh, looking at BUCKHOLZ as if he were crazy.

GANT
You guys are amazing...

BUCKHOLZ
(intense)
We need you Mitchell. You're
the best we've got.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

There are other pilots, Arthur.
There are guys in the Aggressors
who can fly that plane.

BUCKHOLZ

Not who speak the language. And
not who can fly like you.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. CRISIS CHAMBER (LANGLEY)

MAJ. GEN. ROBERT "BUDDY" ELLIS, Tactical Air Command and an
ex-fighter pilot, is glaring across the table at BRIG. GEN.
BROWN.

MAJ. GEN. ELLIS

...and he has to be able to fit into
a NASA-style pressure-suit, tailor-
made by the Soviets ten thousand miles
from here. Now, we sure as hell can't
duplicate the technology that went
into that suit-- but we can match
their test pilot's size.

BRIG. GEN. BROWN

(droll)

I see. The entire operation is
reduced to a decision like this--
that he fits the pressure-suit.

SALTONSTALL (DIA)

(from his seat)

Without that, General, we don't
have an operation.

MAJ. GEN. ELLIS

I'd like to remind everybody of
one thing. If any of us had
gone through what he went through--
and survived-- we might have a
problem or two ourselves. The
man is one hell of a pilot.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. LAKESIDE (ALASKA)

GANT and BUCKHOLZ are walking along the water's edge, the
dock visible through the trees.

GANT

Train somebody else in the
language. You've got three
months.

BUCKHOLZ

You trained on their planes.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUCKHOLZ (Cont'd)
You've flown in combat against
them. Don't forget, this is a
plane nobody's ever seen.

GANT
...What makes you think I'll
be able to do it, then?

BUCKHOLZ
If you can't do it, I'll guarantee
you this-- nobody can.

GANT thinks that over for a moment, and then smiles a little
mischievously.

GANT
Sounds like you guys got a problem.

BUCKHOLZ
(looking away)
I didn't want to have to do
this, Mitchell.... But you're
giving me nowhere to go.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. CRISIS CHAMBER (LANGLEY)

BRIG. GEN. BROWN listens as the final assessments come in.
From the crooked half-smile on his lips, one would never
guess that he had just been defeated.

J. CLARKE WALTERS (CIA)
...The decision is made then,
gentlemen. I'm afraid you have
no other choice.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. LAKESIDE IN TREES (ALASKA)

GANT turns from the lake slowly, his eyes probing BUCKHOLZ'--

GANT
...I don't?

BUCKHOLZ
(softly)
No. It's already been set in
motion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT looks back out at the lake for a long moment. The implied threat in BUCKHOLZ's voice is loud and clear.

GANT
What you're saying is... you're looking for a "volunteer".

BUCKHOLZ
That'd make it a lot easier.

GANT shakes his head wearily. BUCKHOLZ looks at his watch.

BUCKHOLZ (Cont'd)
My chopper's due back here in...
eight minutes. Can you get ready?

HOLD ON GANT, staring out at the lake, and--

SLAM CUT TO:

INT./EXT. THROUGH WINDSCREEN -- TACTICAL STRIKE AIRCRAFT
AT LOW ELEVATION -- NIGHT

Tiny patches of lights pop up in the darkness: towns, villages, streak by like meteors and disappear.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SHOW--

--MITCHELL GANT, alone, the glow of the cockpit dash reflected in his visor. He is like a dancer, fixed in his concentration, the smallest movement purposeful, an expression.

Suddenly he chops the throttles, pulling the stick back and over into a zoom climb. The altitude ball on the instrument panel (all gauges in RUSSIAN and METRIC) begins to rotate rapidly. A shrill electronic BEEPING commences. GANT ignores it. Several orange lights flash on in warning. GANT ignores them. A recorded VOICE cuts in--

RECORDED VOICE
Caution. You are approaching stall point. Caution. You are approaching stall point.

GANT peels the plane hard to the left and throws it into a dive, his right hand snapping several buttons on the panel as the darkness rushes up--

CAMERA PULLS BACK FURTHER, REVEALING SEVERAL FIGURES STANDING

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEHIND GANT, WATCHING HIM INTENTLY.

They are members of his training staff, and this is not a jet fighter, it is a simulator. As the CAMERA PULLS BACK EVEN FURTHER, out the rear doorway of the giant metal drum and back into the dark hangar housing the computer-run mockup, MANY MORE FIGURES are revealed on the floor. The simulator sways and dips hydraulically in the background, suspended fifteen feet above the floor like some kind of SCREAMING, space-age Trojan Horse.

TITLE OVER: CAMP PARRY/VIRGINIA

CAMERA settles on a computer console surrounded by TECHNICIANS. A row of AGENCY and AIR FORCE OFFICIALS stand behind them, watching in awe. Finally, the Commander of the base shakes his head and speaks.

BRIG. GEN. BROWN

Okay, I've seen enough.

The TECHNICIANS begin hitting buttons to shut the simulator down.

TECHNICIAN

(into microphone)

--That'll be it for today, Major.
Thank you.

As the ROAR of the simulator begins to die down, BRIG. GEN. BROWN walks away with his Commanding SERGEANT from Air Force Intelligence. As they near the exit door, BUCKHOLZ enters and turns to say something to them. BROWN looks in the direction of the simulator and then back at BUCKHOLZ, nods, and walks out.

GANT

descends from the simulator, helmet under one arm, and is ushered away by his training crew.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

GANT is seated at one of several classroom-style desks in his off-hours pilot's jumpsuit. Suddenly the door opens and TWO MEN stride to the front of the room. GANT stares up at them, startled.

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CONTINUED:

ESPIONAGE INSTRUCTOR
(MAJ. VOLCKERS)

Today, we begin the ground phase of your training. You will now be told the specifics of your mission, as far as you are to know them, for your first thirty-six hours in Russia.

(pauses)

Major Dietz' and my efforts will be devoted solely to getting you from Moscow, to Bilyarsk, in one piece. We'd like to think of you as a piece of luggage: Once it's been delivered to the target area, it can be unlocked... But if somebody tries to open it beforehand, it's our job to see that they're in for one hell of a surprise... Now, we understand you're making good progress in your flight training. That's fine. But it won't help you here.

CUT TO:

INT. SCREENING ROOM

The screen flickers with the jiggly, hand-held image of an airport customs area. It could be any airport in the Western world: the film is 16mm B&W, shot from a hidden camera. A tall, darkish-blond haired MAN is followed as he enters from the tarmac, carrying two leather suitcases, and approaches the line.

BEHAVIORAL INSTRUCTOR (O.S.)
(MAJ. DIETZ)

As you probably guessed by now, you're not going to be waltzing into Moscow as Mitchell Gant. You're going to get to know that man in front of you, and you're going to get to know him pretty damn well. His name is Leon Sprague, and he's an independent businessman from Nevada. He's been flying in and out of Moscow over the last few months, from his overseas factory in Marseilles, selling our well-to-do comrades a highly-efficient little carburetor part for their outboard motors. But I bore you, right Gant?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT ignores the sarcasm, his eyes taking in every detail on the screen. The MAN, SPRAGUE, could resemble Gant vaguely, except that he wears a moustache and a pair of prescription-tinted sunglasses. He is dressed in an expensive three-piece suit.

MAJ. DIETZ (O.S.) (Cont'd)

What he's really been doing is defiling the Soviet youth with large quantities of high-grade heroin. He's a drug smuggler; an enemy of the Soviet people... At least, that's what the KGB has been led to believe. Mr. Sprague doesn't know it yet, but what he's actually been doing is blazing the trail for you.

(pausing; then, in admiration)

Look at that face... Would you believe me if I told you he was carrying five pounds of heroin right there?... He looks like he's on a weekend to Acapulco. Could you be that cool, Gant?

GANT

I'd like to try a dry run first...

DIETZ

(laughing)

Oh, you'll be doing more than that, I'll guarantee you... When we're through with you, you will be Leon Sprague. You will look and act so much like him, his wife wouldn't be able to tell the difference.

CUT TO:

HEAD ON WITH AN F-15

--taxiing towards CAMERA in TELEPHOTO, the heat from its twin exhausts warping everything behind it, its NOISE level deafening. Several BASE OFFICERS and AGENCY OFFICIALS cover their ears as the sleek fighter taxis to a halt next to them. The canopy rises and several GROUNDCREW MEN rush a ladder to the plane.

GANT descends the ladder, removes his helmet, and sees

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUCKHOLZ hurrying towards him. GANT scowls and walks right past him.

GANT
You asshole...

BUCKHOLZ
What?

GANT
(still walking)
You told me I was here to
fly an airplane.

BUCKHOLZ
(catching up)
That's right. Plus a little
survival training thrown in--

GANT
--Survival training, my ass!
They're training me to be a
Russian spy.

CUT TO:

GYMNASIUM

--as GANT circles CAMERA wearily, staring directly into it, his sweats stained with perspiration. Suddenly he leaps towards it--

POV GANT

--as his foot slams into a lifelike dummy suspended from the ceiling. The dummy rocks violently and GANT plummets to the mat.

GANT'S CLOSE-COMBAT INSTRUCTOR steps up and extends a hand. He begins his "critique" as GANT struggles to his feet.

CUT TO:

INT. LANGUAGE LAB

--GANT, hunched over in a booth, eyes closed in concentration, speaking into a pair of headphones.

ALEXANDER LEBEDEV, a ruddy-faced man in civilian clothes, listens in on another set of headphones at the front of the room. A blackboard behind him is filled with Russian.

CUT TO:

EXT. OVER THE VIRGINIA COAST -- DAY

An F-111 flashes out over the water and leaves the coastline behind in a matter of seconds.

INT. COCKPIT F-111

GANT lowers his visor and stares at the radarscope. He is closing on two green blips at the top of the screen.

GANT
(into microphone)
--Red Flag One to Base. ETA sub
escorts fifteen seconds and
counting. Missiles armed and
ready...

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR -- BASE (CAMP PARRY)

BUCKHOLZ is walking quickly down a corridor, a look of concern on his face. He reaches a door marked "Air Force Intelligence/BRIG. GEN. BROWN". He pauses, and enters.

INT. BRIG. GEN. BROWN'S OFFICE

BUCKHOLZ walks in and looks around, surprised-- the room is filled with Gant's INSTRUCTORS and various MILITARY and AGENCY OFFICIALS. Standing to the right of BROWN'S desk is J. CLARKE WALTERS (recognizable from the crisis meeting at Langley).

BUCKHOLZ
Clarke?

WALTERS
Hello Art.

BUCKHOLZ looks at him questioningly.

WALTERS (Cont'd)
I'm afraid we've brought some
bad news with us... The trials
have been moved up. We go in
eight days.

BUCKHOLZ stands there, totally taken back. He doesn't know where to go with this one.

WALTERS (Cont'd)
...Can you get him ready?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUCKHOLZ doesn't answer right away. He looks around the room, searching the faces of Gant's various INSTRUCTORS--DIETZ, VOLCKERS, others. Their mood is sober.

BUCKHOLZ
...We'll get him ready.

WALTERS nods. He knows BUCKHOLZ is going out on a limb.

WALTERS
We can take it one step at a time. Once he's in, we'll still have several points where we can abort-- if something goes wrong... Our contacts would be able to disappear.

BUCKHOLZ
What about Gant?

WALTERS looks at BUCKHOLZ without saying anything.

BUCKHOLZ (Cont'd)
...I didn't realize that was part of the bargain.

WALTERS
We can't risk exposing the network... for one man.

BUCKHOLZ is silent for a moment.

BUCKHOLZ
I understand... Well, he'll just have to succeed, won't he?

He turns abruptly and walks out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. GANT'S QUARTERS -- LATE NIGHT

It is raining tonight. A drainpipe is OVERFLOWING somewhere outside. GANT is sitting at his desk, under a solitary light, studying a thick notebook of the Soviet Tactical Air Defense System.

There is a soft KNOCK on the door, and BUCKHOLZ pokes his head in.

BUCKHOLZ
I saw your light on from my quarters. Can you take a break?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT
(closing the book)
Sure. Come on in.

BUCKHOLZ closes the door and crosses to the edge of GANT'S bunk. He is carrying two bathroom glasses and a bottle of Red Label.

BUCKHOLZ
(pouring)
How do you like your Scotch--
straight up, or neat?

GANT
Straight up'll do.

BUCKHOLZ
Good, 'cause that's all we got.
(handing him the glass)
Cheers.

They raise their glasses in a silent toast.

BUCKHOLZ (Cont'd)
So, how're you feeling?

GANT
...Not so good.

BUCKHOLZ nods.

BUCKHOLZ
I know, eight days-- it's a hell
of a bad break.

GANT
(his thoughts somewhere
else)
I'm supposed to show up at some
bridge in the middle of the night,
with the KGB on my tail, and meet
three people I've never even seen
before. And then, that's it...
That's all they'll tell me.

BUCKHOLZ is quiet for a moment.

BUCKHOLZ
You can't know... it's for your
own protection.

GANT
(cynical)
My protection...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUCKHOLZ
(softly)
I know it's difficult to
swallow. I'd probably react
the same way... But you're
just going to have to trust us.

GANT sits there for a long moment. Finally, he looks
BUCKHOLZ straight in the eyes.

GANT
None of you think I have a chance
of pulling this off, do you?

BUCKHOLZ
You think we'd be going through
all of this if we thought that?

GANT
Come off it, Arthur. I can see
it in your faces-- all of you.

BUCKHOLZ is silent.

GANT (Cont'd)
(barely a whisper)
Well, I've got a little surprise
for you all... I'm going to go
over there, just like you ask,
and I'm going to bring your
goddamn plane back.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRING RANGE -- DAY

A human silhouette pops up suddenly.

GANT whirls, crouches and squeezes off two shots from a
Walther P-38. The hollow CRACK-CRACK is followed instantly
by two metal TWANGS. The target disappears.

GANT stands and turns back around, stonefaced. His
INSTRUCTOR activates another target, and GANT is whirling
again, crouching, firing--

CUT TO:

LANGUAGE LAB

--GANT, standing across from LEBEDEV. They are engaged in a
role-playing, dialogue situation in Russian. D_ETZ, BUCKHOLZ,
BROWN are all present, looking on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEBEDEV
(in Russian)
...You say that you work in
the warehouse?

GANT
(in Russian)
Yes, it is in my papers.

LEBEDEV
(in Russian)
We are aware of that. But we
have telephoned the warehouse--
and they do not have a record of
you, comrade.

GANT
(in Russian)
Then, telephone them again. It
is all in my papers.

LEBEDEV suddenly breaks character. He smiles at GANT and
speaks in English.

LEBEDEV
(to Gant)
That is good. Very good.

LEBEDEV now looks over at the OTHER MEN.

LEBEDEV
As long as his dialogue is kept
to a minimum, he should be fine...
(turning to GANT, his
eyes twinkling)
...and knowing Mr. Gant, that
should not be a problem. He
has come along very well.

CUT TO:

INT. TACTICAL FIGHTER WEAPONS CENTER

--GANT, seated before a giant projection map of the Central/
Northern Soviet Union. Several tiny dots light up on the
Barents Sea coastline.

GANT
--Trawler fleet. One of them
will be a listening vessel,
unarmed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The lights flick off. Several more replace them to the West over an isthmus.

GANT (Cont'd)
 --Wolfpack squadron. Equipped
 with air to air missiles. Avoid
 visual sighting.

Another row of lights appears, inland.

GANT (Cont'd)
 --Ground to air missile implace-
 ment. Scramble to the South at
 low elevation.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON GANT'S FACE

--contorted with G-forces beneath his helmet-visor, the WHINE of his F-15 earsplitting. The earth suddenly appears outside the cockpit-- coming from the top of the SCREEN and rolling off to the side--

WIDE ON SKY

to show Gant's F-15 in mid-roll, hurtling downwards with two F-4E Phantoms in hot pursuit.

POV -- COCKPIT OF 1st PHANTOM

--as the PILOT tries to follow GANT'S plummeting, rolling F-15 in his windscreen missile sight. He loses him. The SOUNDTRACK is filled with CHATTER from the two Phantoms and a ground station.

PILOT/1st PHANTOM
 (into headphones)
 I've lost him. He's coming
 up behind us at--
 (MORE)

INT. AIR COMBAT MANEUVER STATION (ON GROUND)

A large audience of TECHNICIANS, INSTRUCTORS and BRASS watch in the darkness of the ACMI bunker as a row of monitors reveals the dogfight going on far above them. The PILOTS' CHATTER is piped out over speakers so everyone can hear; the three combatants show up on the computer screens in blue, green

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

and red. Gant's F-15 is red, and it is now moving up quickly behind the Phantoms.

PILOT/1st PHANTOM (O.S.; Cont'd)
(over speakers)
--seven o'clock. He's going for
the up-sun!

The CHATTER between the two Phantom pilots is growing urgent as they sense their "destruction". BUCKHOLZ, BRIG. GEN. BROWN and several other OFFICIALS watch in awe.

With cold precision, Gant's red F-15 unleashes its computerized (mock) missiles. They blip across the screen. The blue and green lights signifying the Phantoms suddenly start to strobe. They have been hit.

A great CHEER explodes from the WATCHERS. Everyone is laughing and congratulating each other.

BUCKHOLZ looks over at BROWN, a big smile on his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALKWAY OUTSIDE OFFICERS BUILDING - MORNING

GANT is walking towards the building. He is wearing a suit, sunglasses and is carrying his bags. The wind is high today.

TWO PILOTS spot him as they are crossing the street. ONE of them hails him, GANT pauses, and the TWO PILOTS cross towards him.

1ST PILOT
You leaving us, Major?

GANT
It looks that way.

WINDOW -- OFFICER'S BLDG.

BUCKHOLZ is standing with BRIG. GEN. BROWN, looking down at GANT and the TWO PILOTS through the window.

BUCKHOLZ
Well, General, I guess we're off.

Both look back out at GANT. A small military shuttlebus has pulled up to the curb. GANT shakes hands with the TWO PILOTS, picks up his bags and walks towards the rear of the bus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIG. GEN. BROWN
(studying BUCKHOLZ)
Arthur, just between you and me...
Do you think he can pull it off?

A gust of wind swirls down the street outside; the SOUNDS and MUSIC of the coming continent begin to SWELL--

BUCKHOLZ
(looking out at Gant)
General, I have no idea...

DISSOLVE TO:

LONDON AT NIGHT, IN A DRIVING RAIN--

--the SOUNDS of the Thames Harbor: the CLANGING of BELLS, a low-throbbing ENGINE, VOICES SHOUTING over the downpour; LORRIES and CABS swish through the rain, FIGURES and SHAPES moving eerily up dim-lighted streets, all of it

DISSOLVING INTO:

EXTREME CLOSE-UP OF GANT'S EYES

--shrouded by the fog of a smoke- and men-filled hotel room, his eyes seeming far, far away as he listens to a British-clipped VOICE, AUBREY'S VOICE, floating from behind a row of blinding lights.

ANGLE -- FROM BEHIND GANT'S HEAD

--showing him to be seated in a chair in the center of the room, a make-up artist's HANDS visible as they put the final touches to his blond hair, to his as yet unseen face; the SHAPES of other MEN discernible in the darkness beyond the lights, moving and talking in hushed tones, the tension in the room suffocating--

AUBREY'S VOICE (O.S.)
...will have cameras on you from the moment you step off the plane. Expect that. You will be watched, constantly. You can not slip from this identity for one second. Your suite will be bugged, we think even the mirrors may be looking-glasses. They know your habits-- you are trafficking in heroin, and they have been following you for months.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUBREY'S VOICE (O.S.; Cont'd)

Any slip in character will be noticed. It would be lethal...

AUBREY steps from behind the lights and into GANT'S VISION. He is dressed in black-tie.

AUBREY (Cont'd)

I cannot stress this next point enough... In the hotel, on the way to the bridge, you must not let them lose you. Consider it a game. You are not a tourist, and they know that. They are following you, and you know that. As long as you relax, they relax... Remember, we are playing on their only real weakness. Because of its very size, the KGB is sometimes slow to awaken. It is like a monster-- if you can walk by carefully enough, it may just raise its eyelid and sniff at you. But, if you awaken it....

AUBREY'S eyes blaze at GANT'S. There can be no misunderstanding as to what he means.

AUBREY (Cont'd)

You have but one objective. You must reach the Krasnokholmskiy Bridge, at precisely ten-thirty, with your KGB tail in tow. They will see you make your rendezvous, and then you must trust the people you meet-- completely. Whatever they tell you to do, you do.

AUBREY continues to stare at GANT until he is satisfied that the information has been passed on. Then he nods to the MAKE-UP MAN, dismissing him for the moment.

AUBREY (Cont'd)

(addressing someone behind the lights)

Mr. Cunningham?

A MAN steps forward and hands AUBREY a pocket-sized transistor radio. AUBREY holds it up for GANT to SEE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUBREY (Cont'd)

This, to any Soviet policeman inspecting it, will appear to be a cheap transistor. It will--

(clicks it on; MUSIC blares out)

--even pick up the local radio stations...

(clicks it back off)

In actuality, this is your life up in the air. Because, once you are airborne, you have just two objectives. Avoid their tracking systems, and find your re-fueling point. This little radio is an unmonitorable, highly complex one-way homing device. It will be scanning the airwaves, seeking a complicated set of alternating frequencies coming from Mother-One. The Soviets will be listening for any transmissions up in the air-- trying to locate you-- so this will be your only link to the outside. Once it picks up the signal, you will know you are within one hundred miles of your refueling point. You will then follow it home.

He hands it to him.

AUBREY (Cont'd)

It must never leave your person. If you lose it, if it is confiscated, you will never make it out of Russia. You will run out of fuel and die in the Arctic Ocean.

AUBREY pulls a handkerchief out and dabs at his forehead. The MAKE-UP MAN turns the row of lights off and nods.

AUBREY (Cont'd)

You'd better get up and walk around. Let's see how it looks.

GANT, his back to the CAMERA, rises and looks uncomfortably around the room. Everyone is staring at him. He pulls a pair of prescription-tinted glasses from his breast pocket, crosses the suite to the balcony's glass doors and looks out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUNNINGHAM
(suddenly looking at
his watch)
Sir, we have to get you back to
the theatre. We've only five
minutes before the curtain...

One of the MEN in the room is offering AUBREY his topcoat,
but he does not notice. He is looking at GANT.

AUBREY
Well, Mr. Sprague?

GANT turns slowly to face him. He is Leon Sprague. Everyone
in the room is watching, marvelling at the completeness of
Gant's new persona.

AUBREY
...Can you be comfortable with
it?

GANT
Yes.

AUBREY
Good. Bloody damn good.

The AIDE helps AUBREY with his coat. BUCKHOLZ steps forward
from a group of MEN and interjects softly--

BUCKHOLZ
The flight recorder...

AUBREY
Ah yes! I nearly forgot. Thank
you...
(to GANT)
One last thing. We just learned
this from Baranovich. There
will be a recording device in
the cockpit, a "black box", I
believe you Americans call it.
It is voice-activated, a micro-
phone inside the helmet will pick
it up. It has been installed for
their test pilot. We would like
you to use it, in the event that...
(does not finish the
sentence)

If this were to happen, and we
were somehow able to salvage the
aircraft, it might be possible to
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUBREY (Cont'd)
re-construct enough from your...
diary, as it were... to be helpful.

CUNNINGHAM looks pained.

CUNNINGHAM

Sir.

AUBREY

Yes, yes, I'm coming... Well, Mr.
Gant, I guess this is the end of
the road for us. Actually, let
me re-phrase that.

(extending his hand)

Let's call it the beginning.

He smiles and walks towards the door. CUNNINGHAM is holding
it open for him.

AUBREY

(turning back)

Good luck, Mr. Gant... We'll have
a bottle on ice waiting for your
return.

AUBREY and CUNNINGHAM are out the door. GANT turns slowly and
steps out onto the balcony. BUCKHOLZ motions for the OTHERS
in the room to busy themselves, then follows him out.

EXT. BALCONY

GANT is standing there, staring out at the rain. The down-
pour is soothing to him.

BUCKHOLZ

(softly)

I'll be with you every step of
the way, Mitchell...

GANT does not look at him. The rain is coming down in torrents.
The SOUND of it is slowly beginning to rise; the ROAR of the
RAIN suddenly becomes the ROAR of a JET AIRLINER cutting its
engines for touch-down--

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. POV - FROM BEHIND UNDERCARRIAGE/AEROFLOT SOVIET AIRLINER --
LATE AFTERNOON

The runway rushes up at the CAMERA, the wheels slam down, and

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

a cloud of burning rubber engulfs the SCREEN momentarily.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT'S VOICE (O.S.)

(heavy Russian accent)

We are landing at Cheremetievo Airport, Moscow. The time is now 3:45 P.M., the temperature outside is 7 degrees Centigrade. The Captain requests that you remain in your seats until we have stopped moving completely...

EXT. VARIOUS ANGLES -- AIRLINER AND CHEREMETIEVO AIRPORT

--as the flight attendant's VOICE segues into SEVERAL VOICES, in several foreign languages; the disjointed announcements overlapping each other in waves-- the SOUNDS of jet ENGINES THUNDERING and SCREAMING over it all.

EXT. TARMAC

The WHINE of the Aeroflot's ENGINES is just beginning to die as the PASSENGERS are allowed to disembark, filing across a long, windswept tarmac towards the terminal in the distance. The VOICES continue OVER--

CLOSE ON GANT (AS LEON SPRAGUE)

--as he steps out of the plane and braces himself against the cold. He nods at an ATTENDANT, descends the steps.

He begins the long walk towards the terminal, lowering his head to shield himself from the gusts.

ANGLE ON GANT -- THROUGH A STILL CAMERA'S TELEPHOTO LENS

--as the SOUND of a SHUTTER SNAPS and the frame FREEZES momentarily. GANT'S motion continues; as he turns this way to avoid the flying dust from the tarmac, another picture is SNAPPED.

INT. DISEMBARKATION LOUNGE

The glass doors slide open and GANT walks in. The lounge is filled with PEOPLE from various countries-- Africans, Arabs, Orientals-- swirling around their designated custom's areas. GANT makes his way across the floor, his eyes casually searching for--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUSTOMS DESK -- FLIGHT 191/ARR. MARSEILLES

GANT walks up to the back of the line and sets his airline carry-bag down on the counter. He looks over at the conveyor belt. His luggage has not come down as yet.

A WOMAN CUSTOMS OFFICER approaches him across the counter and motions coldly for his papers.

GANT smiles and hands them across to her-- when he notices TWO MEN IN SUITS stepping out of a small room behind the counter. GANT pretends not to notice, looking instead at his two pieces of luggage as they come sliding down the belt. One of the MEN in suits casually steps forward and lifts them clear.

GANT stares at the MAN, puzzled now, as the MAN carries his bags over to a table and slams them down.

Now a 2nd CUSTOMS OFFICER appears, whispers briefly to the WOMAN, and takes Gant's passport.

2nd CUSTOMS OFFICIAL
(coughs; stalling for time)
Yes... Mr. Sprague. What is the
nature of your visit to Moscow?

GANT
Business.

2nd CUSTOMS OFFICIAL
Yes. What business, specifically?

GANT
(starting to get offended)
Carburetors. It's all in my papers.
Would you mind telling me what he's
looking for?

The AGENT has emptied the suitcases; Gant's belongings are strewn all over the table.

2nd CUSTOMS OFFICER
(ignoring GANT'S question)
You have been to the Soviet Union
several times in the past few
months-- is that correct, Mr.
Sprague?

GANT
(through clenched teeth)
I've been here a half a dozen times,
and nothing like this has ever
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT (Cont'd)
happened. Just what the hell is
going on?

The CUSTOMS OFFICER turns and looks at the searcher's PARTNER. He steps forward now, takes GANT'S passport and visas, and smiles stiffly.

2nd KGB OFFICIAL
We apologize for the delay, Mr. Sprague. But, as you must be aware, every international airport has its own set of... unique problems.

He looks down at Gant's carry-bag and pulls it toward him, his eyes looking questioningly at GANT'S. He unzips it. GANT tenses. He leans threateningly into the AGENT'S face and lowers his voice--

GANT
I've been through every major airport in the world, and I've never been insulted like this. I'm a businessman, I do a lot of business with your superiors.

2nd KGB OFFICIAL
Are you threatening me, Mr. Sprague?

The OFFICIAL is holding the transistor radio in his hand. GANT pauses. He shakes his head.

GANT
No...

The OFFICIAL'S eyes have never left GANT'S. He raises the radio slowly and looks at it. GANT stares blankly at him, trying to still the adrenalin rushing through his body.

2nd KGB OFFICIAL
And why... do you bring this?
Perhaps you are hoping to receive
your Stock Market report in Moscow?

He jabs it on; STATIC, and then a RUSSIAN VOICE, blares out. He snaps it off, flips it over and stares at the back. GANT'S hands clench in his pockets. The OFFICIAL tugs the back open and stares inside. He holds it up to the light and twists it so he can see every detail.

GANT turns away, trying with every muscle to act bored. Finally, the OFFICIAL crams the set back together, stuffs

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

it into the carry-bag and glances at his partner in defeat. He turns back to GANT, tosses his papers across the counter to him, and stalks away.

CLOSE ON GANT'S FACE

--trying not to look a wreck, stuffing his belongings angrily back in the suitcases. He snaps them shut, yanks them away from the table, and strides through the gates.

OFFICE BEHIND CUSTOMS DESK

The 2nd KGB AGENT watches GANT disappear into the concourse and then lifts the telephone.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE TERMINAL

GANT steps outside and looks for the taxi stand. A black taxi suddenly materializes at the curb next to him, the DRIVER jumping out and taking his suitcases. GANT steps in, knowing full well that he must not appear suspicious.

INT. BLACK TAXI

The DRIVER slides in.

GANT
Hotel Moskva, please.

GANT catches the DRIVER glancing at the rear-view mirror. Then, the taxi pulls away. GANT looks out at the dark afternoon sky. As the cab pulls up onto the motorway, he slips a glance at the mirror.

POV GANT -- REAR-VIEW MIRROR

A black, vividly-chromed sedan pulls up onto the motorway behind them a hundred yards back.

GANT

forces himself to look back out the window and settle in for the ride. The game has begun.

DISSOLVE TO :

SERIES OF SHOTS -- MOSCOW/THROUGH TAXI WINDOWS

--as the bleak new high-rise complexes on the outskirts of the city give way to the ancient, eternally gray center of Moscow.

FINAL DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. HOTEL MOSKVA -- LATE AFTERNOON

GANT walks in through the revolving glass doors of this ornate 19th Century hotel and strides through the foyer.

FRONT DESK

GANT places his papers on the counter and waits to be checked in. His eyes flick out to the boulevard: there, already parked under the hotel's portico, is the black sedan, its TWO OCCUPANTS standing outside the car smoking.

GANT'S eyes return to the lobby. FACES are scattered throughout, but he notices one, a MAN-- seated off the central foyer; overcoat thrown over his chair-- glancing up at him from his copy of Pravda.

GANT turns back to the desk, averted by the level of surveillance assigned to him.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE -- 12th FLOOR

A PORTER sets Gant's luggage down. He takes his tip, without a word or a look, and walks out.

GANT turns to survey the small suite. He removes his glasses, ruffles his hair casually, and slips out of his tie. He hefts his suitcases up onto the bed, snaps them open, and looks disgustedly at the mess that is his clothes.

He is careful not to react to the huge mirror mounted on one wall. It pervades every action, every moment in the room; GANT has to drag his eyes away from it. He walks over to the drinks trolley, pours himself a Scotch, and strolls to the floor-length window.

GANT AT WINDOW (OVERLOOKING RED SQUARE)

In the far distance, the towers and domes of the Kremlin are visible under the gathering gloom of evening. GANT stands there, looking out. He twists his wrist subtly so that he might read his watch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE ON WATCH

It is 5:30 P.M.

GANT

swallows a healthy portion of Sprague's drink. He has five hours.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. DZERZHINSKY SQUARE -- EVENING

A giant, turn-of-the-Century building occupies most of the square, its lights all ablaze. A helicopter is coming in for a landing on the roof.

TITLE OVER: KGB HEADQUARTERS/DZERZHINSKY SQUARE

ROOFTOP HELIPAD

The helicopter sets down and MAJOR VIKTOR LANYEV jumps out. SEVERAL GROUND-CREW MEN salute him as he hurries by, but he does not notice.

INT. OFFICE OF THE 2ND CHIEF DIRECTORATE/INDUSTRIAL SECURITY SECTION -- "M" DEPARTMENT OFFICE

COL. MIHAIL KONTARSKY, head of KGB Security for the Mikoyan project, stares out his window at the square below, worried. He turns impatiently, his lean, aging features highlighted by a single lamp in the room.

KONTARSKY

He's late.

DMITRI PRIABIN looks up at him from a chair in the corner. Kontarsky's bright young lieutenant out of Lenin University is on the telephone.

PRIABIN

(patient)

He is arriving now, Colonel.

KONTARSKY looks at his watch, still not satisfied. Remembering something, he snaps a small MEMO up from off his desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KONTARSKY

Oh, I didn't tell you. We have more worries...

He hands the memo to PRIABIN and returns to his vigil at the window.

PRIABIN

(looking up; surprised)
Chairman Andropov and the First Secretary?

KONTARSKY

(nodding out at the darkness)
Have decided to grace us with their official party at the trials. Pleasant news, wouldn't you say?

PRIABIN

(studying the memo further)
Are you going to fly down with them, sir?-- it could be a wonderful opportunity.

KONTARSKY

I realize that would be politic... But I have already declined the offer. I'm flying down tomorrow morning instead. I want to take over command a full twenty-four hours beforehand, just to be--

There is a brief KNOCK at the door. MAJ. LANYEV strides through briskly and salutes.

KONTARSKY (Cont'd)

You're late. How was Bilyarsk?

LANYEV

Cold, Comrade Colonel. It's good to be back in Moscow.

KONTARSKY

(seating himself at his desk)
Unfortunately, your visit is a short one. You will be returning tonight.
(reaching out with expectancy)
Let's see it...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LANYEV lifts a thick folder from his courier pouch and hands it across the desk to KONTARSKY, who sets about reading it immediately.

LANYEV

The GRU Support Troops were moving into position as I left this evening. Bilyarsk should now be totally secure. As of my departure, there had been no unaccountable arrivals in the town during the last forty-eight hours. The only trip out was made by the grocier-- Dherkov-- and his van was searched thoroughly on his return.

KONTARSKY is absorbed in his perusal of the report.

LANYEV (Cont'd)

"S" Service has a recommendation, sir.

KONTARSKY

Yes?

LANYEV

They recommend we pick up Dherkov. He is scheduled to make a grocery run to Moscow tonight. They suspect he may be sending another message.

KONTARSKY

What message can he possibly send? That the trials are in forty-eight hours? The British know that. The Americans know that. There is nothing they can do now... No. Tell them to let him make his run. Search his vehicle when it returns, of course-- but under no circumstances are they to frighten him off. We can afford to play a little, as long as I know Bilyarsk is secure.

LANYEV

Rest assured, Comrade Colonel. An airborne division could not penetrate Bilyarsk now...

(smiles confidently)

It is secure.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE IN DARKNESS (MONTAGE)

The SHOWER is running. The bathroom door is ajar, spilling light and steam out into the bedroom. Gant's evening clothes are laid out neatly on the bed.

PASSAGE OF TIME

The suite's room are silent. GANT stands before a bedroom dressing mirror, his hair combed wet, buttoning his shirt. He turns, lifts his tie from the bed, and begins the knot.

FURTHER PASSAGE OF TIME

GANT is lying on the bed fully dressed, his eyes closed. A glass of scotch is held loosely in his lap. His eyes come open; he glances at his watch. It is time. He slides his legs off the bed slowly, and remains seated for a moment.

HALLWAY NEXT TO ELEVATORS

GANT, his dinner jacket on now, his overcoat thrown over one arm-- the elegance of Leon Sprague-- drifts casually down the hall and presses the elevator call button.

The elevator arrives, the doors open, and CONVERSATION ceases as he steps into the crowded car. The doors slide closed over his face.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. "M" DEPARTMENT OFFICE -- DZERZHINSKY SQUARE -- 9 P.M.

The meeting is just breaking up. LANYEV rises and begins folding a large diagram of the Bilyarsk complex together. KONTARSKY and PRIABIN rise also, KONTARSKY looking much more confident than before.

KONTARSKY

(finishing a thought)

I agree, Dmitri. We can't be too cautious at this late point in time. You will pass that on as soon as you arrive, Viktor?

LANYEV

Consider it done, sir. It will make a fine complement to the dog patrols.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KONTARSKY

Good. Now... Tell me, Viktor.
Where will our traitors be, in
the hours before the flight?

LANYEV

The three scientists will be
inside the hangar itself, sir.
Baranovich himself will be
working on the weapons system
during the night.

KONTARSKY

Ahh... He will be working on the
aircraft until it takes off?

LANYEV

Yes, Comrade Colonel.

KONTARSKY

What of the others?

LANYEV

Kreshin and Semelovsky will be
concerned with the fueling, and
the loading of the missiles. Also,
the Rearward Defense Pod. They
are most familiar with the
systems, sir, and not easy to
replace.

KONTARSKY

I understand. Let them continue
working. Your men, I trust, will
be ready?

LANYEV

Our informers will be shoulder-to-
shoulder with them throughout the
night. They will be armed and
issued with communicators.

KONTARSKY

(jovially)

As long as they recognize attempted
sabotage when they see it...

KONTARSKY smiles broadly and ushers LANYEV towards the door.

LANYEV

(smiling at the joke)

They do, Comrade Colonel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KONTARSKY

Very well, Viktor. Have a good flight back.

LANYEV salutes, turns, and strides from the room.

KONTARSKY (Cont'd)

(glances at PRIABIN)

Dmitri... I want the Moscow end of their pipeline arrested, at dawn tomorrow. We wait until then-- I don't want our friends in Bilyarsk to get wind.

PRIABIN

Very well, Colonel. I shall have their warehouse watched from tonight-- and move in on your orders.

KONTARSKY

Good. I should like to see them before I myself fly down to Bilyarsk-- to see their faces.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM/HOTEL MOSKVA -- NIGHT

MITCHELL GANT is dining alone at a corner table. His dinner dishes are still in front of him, but his interest is in a tourist map spread ostentatiously out over the tablecloth.

GANT runs his finger along the map, pretending to note a place of interest. He is acutely aware of the KGB AGENT sitting at a table across the room, looking up at GANT between bites.

GANT takes a sip from his scotch and scans the room for his WAITER. The WAITER sees him and GANT nods-- the WAITER bringing the check to the table. GANT signs it and casually glances at his watch.

CLOSE ON WATCH

It is 9:50 P.M.

GANT

dabs his mouth with the napkin. He must leave now-- but casually. He folds the map together and stuffs it in his

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

coat pocket. He takes out an after-dinner mint, puts it in his mouth, and rises.

He strolls over to the coat-rack, pulls his overcoat on. Across the room the AGENT is quickly rising from his table.

FOYER/HOTEL MOSKVA

GANT strolls up to a Tobacco-Stand off the main lobby and inspects the various brands offered.

GANT
I'll take your best Havana, please.

CLOSE ON KGB AGENT

--watching from across the lobby as GANT strikes a match, lights the cigar, and casually walks out through the revolving glass doors.

EXT. HOTEL MOSKVA -- NIGHT

GANT descends the steps and starts walking slowly towards Red Square, looking very much a tourist out for an evening's stroll. The TAIL appears on the steps behind him, a gas-lighter flaring as he lights a cigarette.

In front of GANT, a FIGURE detaches itself from the side of a large black car and gets in.

GANT puffs on the cigar as he turns the corner into the Square proper. The car ENGINE coughs to life behind him; the headlights flicker on. GANT'S pace quickens involuntarily.

EXT. RED SQUARE -- NIGHT

GANT pulls the collar of his overcoat up around his ears. The wind blowing through the square is freezing. There are few MUSCOVITES out tonight, window-shopping or just strolling along the sidewalks.

SERIES OF SHOTS -- FROM FAR AWAY

--as GANT walks through the vast Square in the lamplight, his overcoat and plumes of smoke always identifying him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOSKVA RIVER/MOSKVORETSKI MOTOR BRIDGE -- NIGHT

GANT stops about half-way across the bridge and stares over the parapet, looking down into the black water below. Upriver about a half a mile away, a second bridge is visible, much smaller than this one, its shape outlined by tiny lights.

GANT studies it; then, out of the corner of his eye, he catches SOMEONE pausing further down the parapet. The only other FIGURES are walking swiftly, tugged and pushed by the wind. He turns and glances down at the road paralleling the river across the bridge. The black car is parked there, its headlights off, waiting.

GANT forces himself to resume walking.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOSKVA RIVER -- OZERKOVSKAIA QUAY

GANT is walking along an embankment by the river's edge. He suddenly hears the FOOTSTEPS of his tail clattering down a flight of stone steps fifty yards behind him. It is no longer a single tail; there are at least three of them now. GANT'S face is white. He tugs at the cigar and pushes himself on. He only hopes that they will let him get there.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. QUAY -- FURTHER ON

GANT pauses under the shadows of a high wall. The wind is abated here. He looks down at his watch.

CLOSE ON WATCH

10:20.

GANT

inhales softly. Calm. Remain calm. He listens for the car-- he HEARS it above him now, engine idling. He looks upriver. The second bridge is much closer now, perhaps three-hundred yards away. It is lined with a row of gaslamps.

GANT walks on. A YOUNG COUPLE strolls by him, arm-in-arm, as if in some other world. GANT listens as their FOOTSTEPS recede, and HEARS the heavier, more purposeful STEPS of his pursuers.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KRASNOKHOLMSKIY BRIDGE

GANT climbs the steps of the embankment to this second bridge, a stone bridge, and crosses it without seeming to hurry. He waits, and then descends a flight of steps back down to the other side of the Moskva.

After several seconds, he HEARS the car's engine on the bridge above, and VOICES WHISPERING urgently under the gas-lamps. He looks at his watch.

CLOSE ON WATCH

It is 10:30, precisely.

GANT

waits by the water's edge until he HEARS TWO PAIRS of FOOT-STEPS cautiously descending the steps behind him. One pair stops; only ONE TAIL is following now.

GANT walks slowly towards the shadows under the bridge. The FOOTSTEPS behind him are staying a good distance back.

GANT'S eyes try to penetrate the blackness ahead of him. He scans the area nervously, fear gnawing at his stomach-- and suddenly THREE SHADOWS materialize, coming down the flight of steps from the quay beyond the bridge. They move towards him, cautiously encircling him as he stands under the bridge.

MAN'S VOICE

(softly)

Mr. Sprague?

GANT

Yes.

A flashlight blinds him momentarily, then blinks off. The VOICE speaks again, its accent recognizably American.

AMERICAN'S VOICE

It's him.

The tallest of the THREE-- a massively built MAN with a sporty beret on his close-cropped blond hair-- speaks next, in a thick Russian accent.

PAVEL

How many followed you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

Three men on foot, and a car.
It's up on the bridge.

PAVEL

Good.

GANT stares at the AMERICAN, who is standing next to him in the tight circle. He has the same build as GANT, and his hair and moustache are blond. He smiles at GANT, as if in encouragement, and pulls a pair of glasses from his identical overcoat. It is the real SPRAGUE.

SPRAGUE

(putting the glasses on;
with bravado)

What are they doing, Pavel?

PAVEL

The one on the steps has returned to the car. The short one is wondering what to do, since there are four of us now... I think he is frightened.

SPRAGUE

They'll call for assistance. We better get him out of here.

PAVEL glances around quickly and hisses at SPRAGUE--

PAVEL

Take his cigar.

SPRAGUE

What?

PAVEL

His cigar. Smoke it.

SPRAGUE looks at PAVEL in confusion. PAVEL grabs GANT'S cigar and hands it to him. SPRAGUE takes it, looks dumbly at PAVEL, and puts it to his lips.

PAVEL

Smoke it!

SPRAGUE puffs on it tentatively, and looks at GANT as if to say the Russian is crazy.

Suddenly there is a blur of motion next to GANT, and SPRAGUE is no longer smiling at him. The cigar has flown from his

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

lips and SPRAGUE is speechless, his forehead caved in, his glasses dangling from his face as PAVEL clubs him a second time with a heavy wooden truncheon, and then he is on the ground, moaning, and PAVEL is bringing the club down across SPRAGUE'S face, again and again--

--GANT reels backwards, his mind screaming that this is not happening, and still the sickening THUDS continue, battering SPRAGUE'S lifeless face into unrecognizability.

A POLICE WHISTLE scratches across GANT'S awareness, then seems to accelerate and slide up the scale. The KGB TAIL is calling for reinforcements.

PAVEL
Your papers-- quickly!

PAVEL is bent over the body, removing the dead man's papers from his overcoat. GANT stares at SPRAGUE'S face, hypnotized.

PAVEL
Your papers!

GANT pulls his passport and movement visas from his breast pocket as if he were in a trance. The THIRD MAN grabs them and stuffs them into SPRAGUE'S coat, and then the TWO RUSSIANS are lifting the body and rolling it to the edge of the embankment. It slides down into the black, swift waters of the Moskva. The overcoat billows, the man's arms become a crucifix, and it floats away in the current.

PAVEL is shaking GANT and whispering in his ear--

PAVEL
Quickly! Follow us-- to the
Pavolets Station, the Metro!

OTHER WHISTLES are answering the summons from the KGB MAN fifty yards away. GANT'S feet begin to move, a hundred miles away beneath him, and he is stumbling up the steps onto the quay, following PAVEL and the other RUSSIAN. WHISTLES shrill behind him, FEET gallop echoing along the embankment.

QUAY

PAVEL and the THIRD MAN are running far ahead of GANT, drawing away--

PAVEL
(yelling over his shoulder)
Quickly!

BELOW BRIDGE

The short, stocky KGB TAIL and a taller AGENT are dragging Sprague's BODY up onto the bank. The SHORT MAN bends over it, fishing in the overcoat for his papers. The TALLER AGENT beams his flashlight from the soggy U.S. passport to the ruined face--

STOCKY KGB AGENT

--I knew it! I warned them at the Center about this-- he didn't have any drugs on him at the airport, he was unable to meet their demands! They've killed him, Stechko... His smuggling friends have killed Mr. Leon Sprague!

CUT TO:

WIDE -- METRO ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

GANT and the TWO OTHERS appear out of the darkness, streaking towards the huge facade.

INT. ESCALATOR/METRO

The THREE MEN lunge onto the empty escalator, GANT spaced purposely in between the two RUSSIANS. The smaller RUSSIAN, in the lead, motions for them to stifle their heavy breathing, to act normal, as they descend toward the platform.

INT. PAVOLETS STATION -- PLATFORM

GANT steps onto the monstrous platform. He does not look back. A half dozen PASSENGERS are scattered along benches or standing against the walls. The high ceilings, the grandiose architecture, the quiet, gives the place the strange aura of a museum.

GANT takes a position on the platform's edge, trying to appear calm, his nervous system like loose wires underneath his clothes. Suddenly PAVEL is next to him, slipping a bundle of documents into GANT'S hands.

PAVEL

(under his breath)

Your name is Michael Lewis now.
You are a tourist staying in the
Warsaw Hotel. It is all arranged,
do not worry.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAVEL (Cont'd)

(passes him a small bottle)
This will take out the dye. There
is a washroom behind you, go and
change. You have three minutes
before the train... Remember, they
are not looking for an American.
Just stay calm.

PAVEL strolls away down the platform. GANT quickly slips
the documents into his coat pocket and looks around to see
if anyone might have noticed.

INT. WASHROOM

GANT bursts through the door, pauses-- it appears empty. He
hurriedly pulls the documents out of his pocket and opens the
U.S. passport to its photo.

CLOSE ON PHOTO

--An athletic looking American male with slicked-back brown
hair, no moustache, no glasses.

BACK TO GANT

--as he whips off his coat, a look of panic on his face. He
turns on the faucets in the sink and slips off his glasses.
Looking at himself in the mirror, he begins to tug at his
cosmetic moustache--

PLATFORM OUTSIDE

--PAVEL is standing against the wall, looking at the tunnel
hole. He looks down at his watch. The THIRD MAN, VASSILY,
is some distance away, sitting on a bench. PAVEL allows
his eyes to wander casually towards the washroom.

Suddenly, a train swoops into the station with hardly a
sound. The doors slide open. PAVEL looks nervously over
to the bathroom. No Gant. VASSILY rises and walks to
the nearest car. He enters. PAVEL struggles with himself.
There is no more time to wait. He walks towards the open
door. He hesitates and then enters the car. He grabs an
overhead stirrup. He turns around and looks out the window.

CLOSE ON WINDOW OF TRAIN

as PAVEL looks out. His expression is intense--

BACK TO PLATFORM

--as GANT suddenly steps out of the bathroom. His hair is its natural color again, slicked back. There is no more moustache.

GANT spots PAVEL through the glass and bolts for the train. The doors are beginning to shut as GANT'S body bangs against them. He manages to squirm his way on as the train begins to move--

INT. METRO CAR

--GANT tries to collect himself just inside the doors. SEVERAL PASSENGERS look at him curiously. GANT ignores them and looks casually around the car.

CAMERA FOLLOWS GANT

as he walks through the connector into the next car. PAVEL is sitting down about half way back, reading a newspaper, his legs stretched out into the aisle. He does not look at GANT. GANT walks down the aisle and takes a seat somewhat across from PAVEL. GANT looks out his window.

INT./EXT. WINDOW OF TRAIN

The darkness rushes by, punctuated by small flashes of light.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER CAR

VASSILY is standing, his hand clinging to an overhead stirrup. He puts a cigarette to his mouth and pulls out a lighter. A HEAVY-SET WOMAN tugs at him from her seat and mumbles something. VASSILY scowls, pulls the cigarette out of his mouth and stuffs it back into his pocket.

CUT BACK TO:

GANT'S CAR

GANT is looking out his window as the train begins to slow. Sweat droplets bead his forehead. Suddenly a lighted station opens up ahead.

The train SIGHS to a stop. SEVERAL PASSENGERS stand and

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

head for the doors. GANT scans the faces of the NEW ARRIVALS as they begin to board: no one glances in his direction.

GANT looks across the aisle. PAVEL is no longer reading his newspaper. He is staring intently at something outside the windows. GANT follows the direction of his gaze.

POV GANT -- THROUGH WINDOWS OF THE TRAIN

At the far end of the platform, SEVERAL MEN in overcoats are hurriedly descending the stairs, blocking the gateway to the escalators, corralling the PASSENGERS just descended from the train.

BACK TO GANT

as he looks over at PAVEL. PAVEL is staring at him. PAVEL nods slightly, and then looks back out the window. KGB. The search is beginning.

Suddenly, the train pushes forward and they are in the darkness of the tunnels once more.

CUT TO:

LIGHTED SQUARE IN FRONT OF KOMSOMOLSKAIA METRO STATION

TWO black automobiles SCREECH to a stop in front of the station. The doors open and FOUR KGB slide out of each car. They fall into pairs, smoothly, almost deceptively, and flow into the entrance of the building.

CUT TO:

INT. METRO -- MOVING

PAVEL rises and grabs onto an overhead stirrup. He does not look back at GANT.

Suddenly the train begins to slow. The darkness outside the windows gives way to the harsh lighting of KOMSOMOLSKAIA STATION.

GANT gets to his feet. A NUMBER of PASSENGERS stand up around him. The doors open, and PAVEL is out of the car.

INT. PLATFORM

GANT steps down onto the platform and falls into the flow of

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PASSENGERS heading for the exit stairs. He looks for PAVEL but doesn't see him. Up ahead, GANT can see TWO MEN, KGB, stopping the train's PASSENGERS, as MORE AGENTS CLATTER down the stairs.

GANT quickly pulls his new passport out, glancing at it as he walks. Suddenly a hand presses his arm and PAVEL is next to him, staring at him without saying anything, trying to reassure him. Then he slips back into the CROWD behind GANT.

GANT reaches the clot of PASSENGERS and tries to quell the pounding of his heart. Suddenly a KGB MAN'S face looms in front of him, his sharp, powerful eyes taking GANT in, motioning for him to step forward.

GANT stumbles forward and hands the MAN his documents. The MAN looks at GANT quizzically and opens the passport.

KGB AGENT
(in English)
Mr. Lewis. You're American...

GANT nods, his voice suddenly gone. The AGENT looks down at the photo and back up at GANT'S face.

KGB AGENT
(smiling)
You don't look like yourself in
this photograph.

GANT feels like he is about to explode.

GANT
(weakly)
I... was heavier, then.

The AGENT looks at him. He looks back down at the photo. He thumbs through the other papers.

KGB AGENT
St. Louis is a fine city, I
understand.

GANT
Yes... nice summers.

GANT cannot believe his own remarks.

AGENT
You do not appear to be in the
best of health, Mr. Lewis?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

No. Stomach problems. The food, you know...

GANT smiles stupidly. The AGENT pencils the number of Gant's passport on a tablet and hands the documents back.

AGENT

The food at the Warsaw-- it is not good?

GANT

Yes, fine-- just a little too rich for me.

AGENT

Ah. Thank you, Mr. Lewis.

GANT nods and steps past the AGENT. He exhales a deep breath as he reaches the stairs and begins to climb them. His face is a wreck.

INT. FOYER -- KOMSOMOLSKAIA STATION

Just off the stairs, a large map of the metro system adorns one wall. GANT pretends to study it. He has no idea of his next move; several KGB are guarding the main entrance. Suddenly, a hand falls on his shoulder and Gant whirls--

PAVEL

You look terrible, Mr. Lewis. I watched your performance-- it was not very convincing.

GANT

You just killed a man-- you dump a cover on me with no warning--

PAVEL

(coldly)

Go and make yourself sick. Hide yourself in the toilets... There will be more KGB on the way. We shall leave the station only when they are confident we have been searched three or four times. Go!

He has spat the last word out. GANT stares at PAVEL for a long moment, turns his back and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. WIDE -- WASHROOM

The SOUND of a toilet FLUSHING.

INT. CUBICLE

GANT stands, doubled over inside the cubicle. He has just thrown up. He tries to straighten up; his head is aching, he is dizzy. NOISES begin to jump in and out of the SOUND-TRACK: The JET ENGINE again, the AIR-RAID SIREN, an urgent VOICE over a set of headphones--

VOICE OVER RADIO (O.S.)
--Missile tracking! It's on your
tail at three o'clock! Take evasive
action--

GANT clasps his head in his hands. He is determined not to let it happen. He turns and sits slowly on the toilet seat, locking the door. He leans his head back against the wall. He begins to inhale, exhale.

INT. FOYER/METRO

PAVEL is walking across the foyer when he spots VASSILY sitting alone in a small restaurant, drinking coffee and eating pastry. VASSILY nods to him; PAVEL continues walking.

The huge, ornate foyer is kinetic with KGB activity. A hastily erected barrier has been thrown across the main entrance. AGENTS are inspecting the papers of all departing and arriving PASSENGERS. Another TEAM is opening all the luggage lockers, set against the far wall. Still MORE AGENTS wander the mosaic floor at large, stopping PASSENGERS at random, questioning them, bullying them.

PAVEL tries to remain as unobtrusive as possible as he moves along the far wall, keeping the stairway descending to the men's washroom in a constant line of sight.

A disturbance breaks out at the main entrance. A MAN gesturing animatedly is suddenly thrown against the wall by TWO KGB AGENTS. Handcuffs are slammed on. PAVEL stops for a moment and watches the arrest.

PAVEL'S eyes shift back towards the washroom stairs. Instantly, they narrow-- AN AGENT is descending the steps. PAVEL quickly follows:

PAVEL is almost to the steps when another AGENT hollers out--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT
(in Russian)
One minute, sir! Hold on.

PAVEL pretends not to hear him.

AGENT
(in Russian)
Your papers!

PAVEL knows it won't work. He turns toward the AGENT calmly, pulls his papers slowly out of his pocket--

INT. CUBICLE/WASHROOM

--GANT is still sitting on top of the toilet, his head against the wall, when he hears the door to the washroom GROAN, and FOOTSTEPS echo across the tile floor. He looks up, panicked. The FOOTSTEPS stop just outside his cubicle. A fist BANGS on the door--

VOICE
(in Russian)
--In there. Your papers, quickly.

GANT
(English)
I'm... I'm on the toilet.

VOICE
(now in English; thick
accent)
American? State Security. Your
papers please.

GANT
Can you-- wait a minute?

VOICE
Very well. Quickly.

GANT'S face is sweating. He looks around the cubicle, tears some paper from the roll, crushes it noisily, and flushes the toilet. He rattles the buckle on his belt and the loose change in his pocket, and then slides the bolt back.

WASHROOM

The KGB AGENT stares coldly at GANT. He is heavily muscled and appears to be of low rank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT

Your papers please. You are--
ill?-- or, maybe, frightened?

GANT

No... stomach.

The AGENT looks at him suspiciously, and then sifts through the papers, slowly, deliberately.

AGENT

(looking up; a sardonic
smile)

Your papers... are not in order.

GANT hesitates. He does not want to show fear. He tries to remember his training.

GANT

They are in order. Look at them
again.

AGENT

No. They are not in order.
Where have you--

GANT cannot control it-- his eyes dart towards the door. The AGENT'S hand goes for his pocket. GANT reacts instinctively-- he bulls against the MAN, his hand grasping the AGENT'S hand in his pocket, struggling for the gun.

The TWO BODIES stagger across the floor and crash against the wall. GANT struggles frantically, trying to keep the MAN'S hand on his revolver from rising. He eyes a roller towel cabinet above the MAN'S head. He brings a knee slamming up into the AGENT'S groin. The MAN lets out a GASP and sags against the wall. GANT yanks at the towel, trying to free enough of it. He keeps yanking, the MAN now biting his other shoulder. GANT manages to free a loop of towel and tries to wrap it around the MAN'S head. He claws it down across the MAN'S face. He yanks. The AGENT'S hand suddenly clutches the towel, his eyes desperate. He knows what GANT is trying to do. He struggles with the tightening fold-- his eyes are bulging now, his face is swelling, a noise is struggling to get out of his open mouth-- GANT keeps pulling and twisting the towel. His eyes are blurry, he has lost all reason in the fury of the moment. He keeps pulling, harder, harder. Suddenly GANT is turned bodily and something explodes across his face--

--PAVEL towers over him, his hand raised and ready to explode again. PAVEL'S expression is cold, ruthless fury.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAVEL
You stupid animal! You've
killed him!

GANT stares down at the AGENT. He is twisted on the floor,
his eyes wide open.

GANT
He went for his gun-- he knew.

PAVEL
He was KGB-- do you understand
what that means? Do you?

PAVEL looks quickly to the door. He lifts the BODY under the
armpits and drags it across the floor into a cubicle. He
tucks the legs inside the door, and closes himself inside.

PAVEL'S VOICE
Is it clear?

GANT
Yes.

PAVEL climbs over the door of the cubicle and drops to the
floor.

PAVEL
Now, go up the stairs and make
your way quickly to the entrance.
If anyone stops you, obey them.
Show them your papers, and
pretend you're ill, as before...
understand?

GANT nods.

GANT
(quietly)
He said my papers weren't in order.

PAVEL
You damned fool-- you killed him
for that? They are in order! I
was stopped, by the KGB. But my
papers also were in order...

PAVEL pushes GANT ahead of him out the door.

PAVEL
(intense)
Now, quickly... When they find
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAVEL (Cont'd)
out about this, no one will be
allowed to leave the station.

PAVEL waits as GANT ascends the steps to the foyer.

FOYER

GANT reaches the foyer and looks around. There are AGENTS everywhere. GANT puts his head down and moves along the wall, in the direction of the main entrance. He senses, rather than sees, an AGENT heading in his direction. GANT strolls into a small

MAGAZINE SHOP

--and picks up a magazine, not even realizing that it is in Russian. He waits a second and then looks up-- the AGENT has been diverted to someone else.

FOYER

GANT looks across the floor towards the entrance. A CROWD of PASSENGERS is stalled at the barrier. GANT lowers his head and crosses towards them--

--He reaches the fringe of the CROWD and glances back towards the bathroom--

--A KGB AGENT is descending the stairs.

GANT pushes into the CROWD. PEOPLE look around in irritation and surprise as he bumps into them, forcing his way towards the barrier. GANT just keeps his head down and bulls forward--

BARRIER

One of the AGENTS behind the barrier looks up and notices GANT stepping out of the CROWD, much to the dismay of those around him. He walks boldly towards the barrier. The AGENT stares at him in disbelief--

KGB AGENT
(in Russian)
Hey! You there! What do you
think you are doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT
(in English)
What?... Ah, I'm American, I
don't know what I'm supposed
to do.

The KGB AGENT looks at a FELLOW AGENT and says something to him in RUSSIAN. The FELLOW AGENT has been examining a MAN'S papers. He looks up, and stares at GANT.

FELLOW AGENT
(in English)
You are American? What are you
doing out of line?

GANT
(approaching the barrier)
I didn't know... what I was
supposed to do.

The FELLOW AGENT hands the papers that he was examining to the FIRST AGENT. He beckons to GANT.

FELLOW AGENT
Your papers, please.

GANT steps up to the barrier and hands his papers across. The FIRST AGENT has watched this, and now picks up the task of handling the OTHER MAN.

FELLOW AGENT
(examining Gant's passport)
You must wait in line, Mr.--
Lewis. You have been most...
(hunts for the proper
word)
...uncooperative in your behavior.

GANT stares at him, panicked--

GANT
I'm sorry, I didn't...

AGENT
(smiles; nods)
Well, let us see what we have here.
We do not want to delay you unneces-
sarily, do we?

GANT
No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT'S eyes wander back across the floor to the washrooms.

INT. WASHROOMS

The AGENT walks across the floor, surveying the room. He notices the closed door to the cubicle. He walks over and knocks. Receiving no answer, he knocks again.

AGENT
(in Russian)
State Security... Your papers
please.

The AGENT waits, puzzled. He slowly draws his gun and crouches on all fours. He twists his head underneath the door. His body jerks, and he SHOUTS in surprise. He jumps up and rams his foot into the door--

BARRIER

--The AGENT looks up from Gant's papers. He is agonizingly slow.

KGB AGENT
You are staying at the Warsaw
Hotel? I wonder if we should not
call them-- to find if someone
knows you there?

GANT stares at the AGENT, his hopes fading. He SEES PAVEL to his right, walking through the barrier without a backward glance.

KGB AGENT (Cont'd)
(after much deliberation;
smiling benevolently)
...No, I think we shall trust you.
Your papers appear to be in order.
I apologize for any delay, we are
engaged in a search for...criminals,
shall we say? But, you are now free
to resume your nocturnal sightseeing
tour of our city.

The AGENT smiles proudly at his vocabulary and hands GANT his papers, extending his hand. GANT shakes hands with him and smiles weakly as he passes through the barrier. He walks as steadily as he can to the outside of the building.

EXT. STATION -- NIGHT

GANT steps outside into the cold and immediately heads away from the sightline of the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAVEL steps out of the shadows.

PAVEL

Good...

GANT

Let's get the hell out of here.

PAVEL

(pointing)

You go ahead of me, down the
Kirov Street.

GANT nods. A whistle SHRIEKS inside the station.

GANT

They've found it--

PAVEL

Go! Begin walking.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE -- OFF A SMALL, DARK COMMERCIAL STREET -- NIGHT

A large aluminum door slides open and an OLD MAN peers out.
SIRENS WAIL in the distance.

OLD MAN

(in Russian)

Quickly!

PAVEL and GANT step inside.

INT. WAREHOUSE

The OLD MAN slides the door shut and looks anxiously up at
PAVEL.

PAVEL

(in Russian)

He killed a KGB back there in
the station.

The OLD MAN stares at GANT in disbelief. Then he looks back
at PAVEL--

PAVEL

(in Russian)

They won't connect it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD MAN
(in Russian)
He must change.
(to GANT, in English)
Come.

CUT TO:

INT. DISPATCH OFFICE (WAREHOUSE) -- LATER

A lock of hair drops to the floor. SNIP. Another lock of hair. ANGLE widens, REVEALING GANT seated in a chair in a pair of faded overalls and workboots. PAVEL towers over him with a pair of cutting shears, reducing GANT'S hair to a Russian worker's cut.

The dispatch office's window looks out on the warehouse garage. In the dim light, lavatory bowls and cisterns can be SEEN stacked high against the walls: several delivery trucks are parked in the darkness.

PAVEL
Your name is Boriz Glazunov...
You are married, and you have
two children-- a boy, three,
and a little girl, four years
old. You have a flat on the
Mira Prospekt, and you work
for this company-- you are my
driver's mate...

GANT
Does this... Boris Blazunov die
for the cause too?

PAVEL
Boris Glazunov stays home today.
You will take his place.

GANT
Like I took the place of Leon
Sprague?... Does he die like
Leon Sprague?

PAVEL stops cutting for a moment.

PAVEL
(evenly)
Mr. Sprague served a purpose... You
must remember-- Mr. Sprague was a
smuggler in heroin. He was not
one of us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly a pack of SIRENS rushes by on the street just outside. PAVEL and GANT listen for a moment--

PAVEL

--They would not look here.

PAVEL walks over to a desk and lays down the shears. He picks up a packet of documents and hands them to GANT.

PAVEL

Study these... You must know everything about Glazunov.

PAVEL walks towards the door. He stops, and turns back to GANT.

PAVEL

Gant... Can you fly that plane-- really fly it?

PAVEL'S big frame seems somehow shrunken, standing awkwardly in the doorway; GANT stares up at him, knowing that he needs to hear this.

GANT

(softly)

Yes. I can fly it... I'm the best there is.

PAVEL looks into GANT'S eyes for a long moment. Then he nods and walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. 14th FLOOR FLAT/MIRA PROSPEKT -- MOSCOW -- DAWN

BORIS GLAZUNOV and his WIFE look up from their bed in horror. Their apartment door is BREAKING OPEN in the next room. TWO YOUNG CHILDREN begin to WAIL and HEAVY FOOTSTEPS flood in. BORIS GLAZUNOV'S WIFE leaps from the bed, her mother instinct compelling her to protect her children.

SEVERAL KGB AGENTS intercept her in the hallway and throw her back into the bedroom. ONE of them looms over the bed, where BORIS GLAZUNOV has not moved.

KGB AGENT

Boris Glazunov?

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE/BLOCK OF APARTMENTS

DMITRI PRIABIN smiles into the barely awake, deeply frightened

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

faces of GLAZUNOV and ANOTHER MAN as they are led past him towards the waiting sedans. He dips his head into the passenger window of his own sedan--

PRIABIN

Quickly, to the warehouse!
Let's get Pavel Upenskoy.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE GARAGE --DAWN

PAVEL and the OLD MAN are struggling to load a stack of cisterns into the rear of the biggest delivery truck-- when the wall telephone suddenly begins to RING. They both look up, startled. Their eyes meet. The telephone RINGS a second time. PAVEL'S eyes close in dread. The telephone does not ring again.

The OLD MAN is already hurrying towards a window on the street side of the garage. PAVEL vaults down from the truck, adrenalin pumping through his system. The OLD MAN turns from the window--

PAVEL

(whispering; in Russian)
--How many?

OLD MAN

(whispering; in Russian)
One car-- three men inside!

PAVEL

Keep watching!

PAVEL swings the doors of a small van open--

INT. VAN

GANT bolts up from a small mattress as PAVEL leans in--

PAVEL

Gant-- we must leave now.

GANT

(disoriented)
What?

PAVEL

They are here-- they are out front. Quickly!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT'S eyes widen. He scrambles out of the van. PAVEL is already heading for the back of the delivery truck.

GANT

They know?

PAVEL

No! These are not the ones who followed you last night-- these are KGB assigned to the plane. They are coming for me.

He slams the delivery truck's rear doors shut and hurries around to the front.

GANT

(bewildered)

They're coming for you?

PAVEL

They know about me! Quickly now, before the others come!

PAVEL clambers up into the cab. GANT, speechless, follows suit. The OLD MAN is standing by the sliding door, waving them forward. PAVEL throws on the ignition, reaches into his overalls, and thrusts something into GANT'S hand--

PAVEL

You can use this? It is like your own .38...

GANT stares at a Makarov automatic pistol.

GANT

Yes...

PAVEL

Good. Don't-- unless it's absolutely necessary.

PAVEL shifts into gear and the big truck RUMBLES across the floor. The OLD MAN looks up at them, smiles bravely, and throws the door open.

INT./EXT. BLACK SEDAN/PARKED OFF KIROV STREET -- DAWN

The THREE OCCUPANTS of the sedan sit up in surprise as the truck appears, rolling out of the warehouse a half block away. It shifts gears NOISILY and lumbers away down the street. The AGENT in command is already on the telephone--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BORKH
 (into receiver)
 --M Department, and quickly.
 (pause)
 --Give me the Colonel!
 (another pause)
 Comrade Colonel. They have just
 left-- two of them, in a delivery
 truck. What do you wish us to
 do, Colonel?

KONTARSKY'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Priabin hasn't arrived yet?

BORKH
 No, Colonel-- it's just us!

KONTARSKY'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Hell!... Stay with them, but do
not close up! I'll check with
 Priabin.

BORKH
 Yes, Colonel!

The sedan lurches into a U-turn.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CAB OF DELIVERY TRUCK -- MINUTES LATER

PAVEL pulls the truck up onto the heavily-trafficked Sadovaya
 ring road and glances in the side mirror.

POV -- MIRROR

The sedan appears about a quarter of a mile away, switching
 lanes in the morning traffic.

CAB

PAVEL looks back over at GANT and nods grimly.

GANT
 What if they stop us?

PAVEL
 If we are stopped, there are
 other arrangements.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT
Other arrangements? We've got
six hundred miles to go today...

PAVEL
(softly)
I am ordered to die, if necessary,
to insure that you get away free...

GANT is silent.

PAVEL (Cont'd)
Do not worry-- we shall not be
stopped now until we reach the
circular motorway. There,
another vehicle will be waiting.
Should we-- encounter trouble,
they will collect you...

The sun is just rising in front of them, to the East over
Moscow.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. SEDAN -- MINUTES LATER

The truck is a distant black lump on the motorway-- its
blinkers signalling a right turn-- as the telephone RINGS
in the sedan.

BORKH
(picking it up)
--Yes Colonel!

KONTARSKY'S VOICE (O.S.)
(ice-cold)
Priabin just-picked up Boris
Glazunov at his flat, Borkh...
Who is that in the truck with
Upenskoy?

BORKH
...I do not know, Colonel. It
should be Boris Glazunov.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. "M" DEPT. OFFICE

KONTARSKY is pacing anxiously behind his desk, addressing
the voice box--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KONTARSKY

Exactly! It should be Glazunov, should it not? If Upenskoy is making a delivery... should it not?

BORKH'S VOICE (O.S. SPEAKER)

--Yes Colonel! Colonel-- the truck has turned onto the Eastern Motorway now-- it is definitely heading out of the city. Shall we pick them up as Priabin ordered?

KONTARSKY

(deep in thought)

This is most... curious.

(to the box)

Borkh-- where is Upenskoy scheduled to deliver?

BORKH'S VOICE (O.S.)

I do not know, Colonel-- but we can certainly find out.

KONTARSKY

No... I want you to stay back. He will have to report to travel control, we can find out then. Follow them until they reach the checkpoint. Priabin is bringing Glazunov and the other Jew in-- perhaps they can tell us something...

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. SEDAN

The line clicks dead.

DRIVER

(staring ahead at truck)

I think they've spotted us...

The truck is changing lanes up ahead to turn again.

BORKH

Not necessarily. He's picking up the Gorky road-- see, I thought so-- he's on his way to Gorky, all right.

DRIVER

...And to Kazan-- and then to....?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BORKH

Maybe-- maybe. That's for our
Colonel to worry about.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAVEL CONTROL CHECKPOINT -- OUTSIDE MOSCOW

PAVEL and GANT stand beside their truck, waiting in the infield area across from a row of concrete huts. A line of trucks and autos waits behind them, on deck. PAVEL takes a drag from his cigarette.

PAVEL

(quietly)

Your photograph is being taken
now. Do not smile-- they'll
wonder what you're trying to
hide.

GANT stares idly at the circular motorway above them, watching the vehicles THUNDER by. PAVEL'S eyes glance at the hut nearest them-- a MAN in civilian clothes is standing in the doorway, conferring with the MILITARY GUARD who has their papers.

PAVEL (Cont'd)

The KGB is in the door. The car
I spoke of is behind you now--
if you have to run for it...

PAVEL moves away, leaving GANT suspended. GANT cups his hands, blows into them, and catches the eyes of the KGB OFFICER staring out at him. The OFFICER nods, and the GUARD begins walking back out with their papers. PAVEL strolls up beside GANT, smiles at the GUARD, and accepts their papers.

INT./EXT. CAB OF TRUCK

PAVEL switches on the engine. The red and white barrier slides up, and they are passed through.

PAVEL

(after a moment)

There is something I think you
should know. Boris Glazunov
was picked up this morning.
We were warned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

...I thought I was Boris Glazunov.

PAVEL

You were. Not anymore.

GANT

(incredulous)

What?

PAVEL

Considering your performance last night, I decided it was best that you not know this. And you did fine.

GANT

(the realization hitting him)

You mean-- you let me go through that checkpoint-- knowing I had a blown cover?

PAVEL nods.

GANT (Cont'd)

(exploding)

Jesus! I could've had my balls chopped off!

PAVEL

...Your...balls?

GANT hesitates, then realizes PAVEL doesn't understand.

GANT

(cynically)

My reproductive organs.

PAVEL

Ah, yes... That was a distinct possibility.

GANT stares at PAVEL in disbelief. Finally, he turns and glares out at the highway.

GANT

Then why did they let me through? They had to know I wasn't Boris Glazunov.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAVEL

Oh yes, they knew. The KGB man knew. I was waiting for the end, back there. I didn't know how it would be played. But it is clear now-- they want to study you. Moscow is curious: they want to know who you are. Your picture will be at the Center by this afternoon.

GANT

Then what?

PAVEL

Then, let us hope they want to play a waiting game. They are very confident, at Bilyarsk.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE -- MOSCOW POLICE HQ -- AFTERNOON

WILLIAM RICE HOSKINS, ostensibly Trade Attaché to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, leans forward and peeks down at the bludgeoned face of LEON SPRAGUE, laid out on a table beneath a white sheet. He nods, and then has to look away.

HOSKINS

(after a moment;
softly)

Yes... as far as I can tell,
that's Leon Sprague.

POLICE INSPECTOR ALEKSEI TORTYEV drops the cloth back over SPRAGUE'S head, his eyes having watched HOSKINS' reaction very carefully.

TORTYEV

You could not be mistaken, Mr.
Hoskins?

HOSKINS

(still collecting
himself)

I-- don't think so, Inspector...
There's quite a bit of damage,
of course.

TORTYEV

Yes, indeed... Almost as if his
former associates did not want
him to be recognized...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOSKINS' eyes appear a little baffled; he knows TORTYEV is watching.

HOSKINS

But-- why?

TORTYEV

I don't know, Mr. Hoskins-- nor do you, I suppose?

TORTYEV is smiling. He is another of the university graduates appearing increasingly in the frontline of the KGB; young, charming, ruthless.

HOSKINS

I wish I could help you, Inspector, but I'm afraid we're as much in the dark as you are...

TORTYEV

Yes. Yes, indeed. It appears that there is no light for either of us, is there? But come, Mr. Hoskins, I'm sure you could do with a drink.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERVICE STATION/HIGHWAY OUTSIDE OF GORKY - LATE AFTERNOON

A LONE SERVICE ATTENDANT is filling the delivery truck with gasoline in this outpost station. PAVEL and GANT are stretching their legs, walking along the bank of the highway.

The Russian Steppe is endless, the sweep of plain on both sides of the highway stretching far as the eye can see.

PAVEL comes alongside of GANT.

PAVEL

(as they walk)

I have a wife-- did I tell you that, Gant?

GANT

No. I don't think you mentioned it.

PAVEL

She is a Jew. She is educated. And, still she married me... She has been in prison for twelve years for demonstrating against the invasion of Czechoslovakia...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT looks over at PAVEL. PAVEL is looking at something far away.

PAVEL (Cont'd)
They do not treat her well in prison... I have spent the last twelve years trying to be worthy of her...

PAVEL looks at GANT, knowing that he understands now.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON WIREPHOTO OF GANT (AS GLAZUNOV)

--taken this morning at the travel control checkpoint outside of Moscow.

KONTARSKY'S VOICE (O.S.)
...Then who is this man?

INT. "M" DEPT. OFFICE/DZERZHINSKY STREET -- LATE AFTERNOON

KONTARSKY turns from his window, where the day outside is darkening, and thrusts the photograph towards BORKH, seated on the other side of the desk. PRIABIN stands in the b.g.

BORKH
We are still checking, Colonel.
The Computer and Records Directorate
is giving it priority, sir.

KONTARSKY
Is it? Is it, indeed? And why
them?

PRIABIN
(stepping forward)
We are assuming that this man is
a foreign agent, sir. British
or American, perhaps.

KONTARSKY
Mm... Is that likely?

BORKH
Why don't we stop the truck and
ask him, Colonel?

KONTARSKY whirls angrily--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KONTARSKY

Idiot! And alert the others?
They would disappear like mice...
I want all of them-- everyone
who is responsible!

(calming himself; to
PRIABIN)

What of the interrogations?

PRIABIN

Nothing, so far. The old one--
from the warehouse-- took a
poison. The others are holding
out.

KONTARSKY

Holding out, Dmitri?

PRIABIN

Yes, sir.

KONTARSKY

You showed Glazunov a photograph
of someone pretending to be him--
was he not outraged?

PRIABIN is used to his superior's sense of humor. He does
not smile.

PRIABIN

Colonel... I believe he does not
know who is in the truck.

KONTARSKY sighs, wanting answers, action. This inactivity
is killing him.

KONTARSKY

(looking out the window
again)

The truck is heading for Bilyarsk,
this much we can assume. There
would be no point in coming merely
to spy, to photograph. So this man--
whoever he is, from wherever he comes--
must be a saboteur... But what can
one man do to the Mig-- that cannot
be done by our three traitors?...
Nothing. So, we have time, gentle-
men. To play with this for awhile...
What kind of operation could this
be?... If we knew who he was, then
we might net ourselves something...
very useful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KONTARSKY turns back to the room, his mind made up. He has decided upon a course of action--

KONTARSKY (Cont'd)
I shall delay my flight to Bilyarsk. Borkh, alert Security there concerning the truck. Dmitri, I want you to take over the interrogations-- personally. Ask them once more-- WHO IS THIS MAN?!

His fist pounds on the photograph for emphasis--

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CAB OF TRUCK -- NIGHT

The headlights slash out at the dark forest road in front of them. GANT beams a flashlight on a small map opened on his lap, and glances at the side mirror.

GANT
Can you see them?

PAVEL
No. I think they are far enough back... Semelovsky should have passed through the guardpost minutes ago.

GANT
You're sure?

PAVEL
He was at the gasoline station in Kazan. I didn't speak to him, but he was there.

GANT
He'll be waiting for me after the turnoff?

PAVEL
Yes, on that road.

GANT
Then it's time for me to say goodbye. The first good place up ahead, I'm going to jump for it.

PAVEL peers into the darkness up ahead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAVEL

I will try not to let them over-
take me for as long past the
guardpost as possible...

GANT

Don't get yourself caught.

PAVEL

Not if I can help it... Ready
yourself!

GANT strains to see up the road. He grabs the handle of the
door, stuffs the map in his pocket, and looks over at PAVEL.

PAVEL

Don't say anything. Your words
would be useless-- maybe even
insulting. Just fly the damn
thing.

They are in the row of trees. GANT pushes the door open
against the wind and steps out onto the running board. He
HEARS PAVEL'S last command--

PAVEL

Now! Good lu--

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD

GANT'S body hurls down into darkness, rolling and tumbling,
PAVEL'S last words lost as the truck ROARS away. GANT rolls
to a stop at the bottom of a grassy embankment, clutching
at his chest, the wind knocked out of him. He gasps, and
strains to hear above him. The tail-car HURRIES by a few
seconds later.

GANT struggles to his feet and listens. Silence. He climbs
the embankment, looks both ways down the dark road, and
scrambles towards the trees on the other side.

CUT TO:

INT. MOSCOW POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- EVENING

POLICE INSPECTOR TORTYEV is seated in his office, alone,
studying with some puzzlement a pair of men's shoes. He
picks them up, apparently for the dozenth time, and
shakes his head.

They are not a matched pair: the left shoe is black,
waterlogged; the right one is brown, shiny, barely worn--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

and fully two sizes smaller than the other.

There is a brief KNOCK and POLICE DET. STECHKO enters.

STECHKO

You buzzed, sir?

TORTYEV looks up from the shoes, his mind still far away. He rises, picking up a list from the desk as he moves across the room to several pieces of luggage. Gant's luggage.

TORTYEV

Stechko... there is an item missing from Mr. Sprague's luggage here, it was listed when he came through Customs... a radio... Have you seen it anywhere?

STECHKO

Why, no sir. Is there something wrong?

TORTYEV

Oh yes, Stechko... There is something most disastrously wrong.

He points distractedly behind him towards his desk--

TORTYEV (Cont'd)

One of those shoes came from Mr. Sprague's luggage. The other came from the body in the river...

STECHKO

(lost)

...Sir?

TORTYEV

They are not from the same man, Stechko... Mr. Leon Sprague is still alive!

CUT TO:

EXT. BILYARSK JUNCTION -- NIGHT

A guard station stands just off the highway, blazing with lights. A forest road beyond it leads Northeast, up into the foothills of the Urals (A SIGN IN RUSSIAN-- TO BE SUB-TITLED-- PROCLAIMS: "BILYARSK-14 KILOMETERS-ACCESS FORBIDDEN").

Several GRU SOLDIERS look up from beside the guardpost as Pavel's truck ROARS by on the highway. Then, second's later,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

a black sedan flies by in its wake, its light off. The COMMANDER of the guardpost looks after the two vehicles-- somewhat quizzically-- and reaches for the telephone.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- NIGHT

GANT stands motionless in the trees, watching as a MAN tinkers under the hood of a little Moskvitch sedan below him. The only light is from a half-risen moon

MAN (suddenly)
So-- how long have you been
watching me?

GANT
Semelovsky?

The MAN emerges from beneath the hood, wiping his hands on an oily rag. He turns and glares up at GANT. He is a small man; intense, balding. He wears a drab suit and spectacles.

SEMELOVSKY
You're late.

GANT
(descending the hill)
It was a long walk...

SEMELOVSKY slams the hood shut.

SEMELOVSKY
It's a question of the guards...
A little longer, and one of the
guardposts would have sent
someone to discover where I was.
It is almost an hour since I
checked through the first guard-
post-- which is why my car has,
to all intents and purposes,
broken down.

SEMELOVSKY walks around to the back of the car and throws the trunk open. He looks back at GANT, who has followed.

SEMELOVSKY
I'm sorry that I can't be more
accomodating.

GANT
Won't they search it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEMELOVSKY
(impatiently)
It was searched at the junction.
Thoroughly. They do not, as a
rule, change functions... Now,
we must hurry!

GANT looks unappetizingly down at the small space, and then
climbs in.

GANT
Okay...

GANT'S POV -- FROM TRUNK

SEMELOVSKY
Do you know, there were more than
a dozen guards jammed into the
guardpost at the junction?
(smiling brilliantly)
They must be expecting trouble,
of one kind or another!

--The door of the trunk slams down.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM/DZERZHINSKY ST. -- NIGHT

BORIS GLAZUNOV'S eyes stare deliriously out from beneath
his swollen, broken face. He is strapped into a chair under
a fierce light, his INTERROGATOR leaning over him, the black
leather fist poised to strike again.

GLAZUNOV'S eyes widen suddenly, and a vein in his neck goes
into spasm. The INTERROGATOR-- fear flickering in his eyes--
glances sideways at KONTARSKY, who is standing outside the
cone of light.

KONTARSKY
(sensing something wrong)
What is it?

INTERROGATOR
Well, sir... I'm not...

KONTARSKY leans into GLAZUNOV'S face and then stares up at
the INTERROGATOR angrily--

KONTARSKY
You've killed him!

The INTERROGATOR draws backwards--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INTERROGATOR

You pressed me--

KONTARSKY slaps him viciously across the face. The INTERROGATOR recoils in surprise, blood appearing on his lip. PRIABIN steps forward from the darkness.

PRIABIN

(quietly)

He knew nothing, sir.

KONTARSKY

What the hell do you mean by that?

PRIABIN

He was ordered to stay home today, sir, that's all he knew. He would have told us under the pentathol... if he had anything to tell.

KONTARSKY glares at PRIABIN and the INTERROGATOR, then at the limp form of GLAZUNOV. He lowers his head in thought, shakes it, and then looks up.

KONTARSKY

Very well, Dmitri. Pick up the phone. Get in touch with the tail-car, and have the truck stopped.

PRIABIN

(moving to telephone)

Sir.

(into telephone)

--Give the order to pick up Upenskoy and the other man, immediately. What is the last position of the truck?

KONTARSKY

Tell them to request whatever assistance they need from the guardpost at the Bilyarsk junction. How many men in that car?

PRIABIN

(to KONTARSKY)

Three...

(listening to VOICE on telephone; then)

...Sir, the last position of the truck showed it to have passed

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIABIN (Cont'd)
the junction to Bilyarsk-- it
didn't slow down, and it didn't
stop.

He holds the phone up loosely in his hand, awaiting KONTARSKY'S
reaction. It is rage.

KONTARSKY
Then they must stop it now! I
want to know if that second man
is still aboard!

CUT TO:

EXT. . GUARD POST/ENTRANCE TO BILYARSK - NIGHT

SEMELOVSKY slows the car as he approaches the gates within
the high wire fence. The Moskvitch's little engine is
misfiring badly. A powerful searchlight mounted on one of
the guard-towers, fifty yards away, swings to pick him up.

SEMELOVSKY is momentarily blinded. He shields his eyes, and
pulls forward a few more feet. Now, he can see TWO GUARDS
approaching from the hut. He recognizes one of them.

SEMELOVSKY
(trying to be light)
Ah, Feodor-- I see you have some
new toys to play with, eh?

A second searchlight has beamed down on the car, from a GRU
truck parked nearby.

FIRST GUARD
Dr. Semelovsky-- where have you
been? You were checked through
the guardpost more than an hour
ago.

The FIRST GUARD seems to be conscious of his FELLOW standing
behind him. SEMELOVSKY holds up his oily hands and smiles.

SEMELOVSKY
Damn car broke down. Much as the
latest Five-Year Plan has achieved,
it has not solved the problem of
the Moskvitch-- eh?

SECOND GUARD
(coldly)
--Turn on your engine, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEMELOVSKY looks at the FIRST GUARD, and then shrugs. He switches on the engine and revs it loudly.

SECOND GUARD

Your hood.

SEMELOVSKY releases the hood and the SECOND GUARD ducks under it. SEMELOVSKY continues to rev it, making certain that the missing cylinder is apparent.

SEMELOVSKY

(leaning out the window)

Any idea what it is?

Suddenly the SECOND GUARD slams down the hood and walks toward him.

SECOND GUARD

That engine's filthy! You're a scientist-- you should take more care.

The TWO study each other.

SEMELOVSKY

They keep us too busy...

The SECOND GUARD turns and stalks towards the guard-hut. He waves at the OFFICER who is lounging in the doorway. The OFFICER waves a hand nonchalantly, and the gates swing apart. The FIRST GUARD nods almost apologetically to SEMELOVSKY and waves him through.

INT./EXT. THROUGH WINDSHIELD -- BILYARSK -- NIGHT

SEMELOVSKY pulls into a small circle. Except for a large military administration building to the left of him, the circle is fronted with shops, bars, and a cinema. There is some life on the street-- but mostly it is SOLDIERS, in vehicles and on foot, and KGB patrols.

SEMELOVSKY turns off the circle, giving no attention to the guard-jeep streaking by him, headed in the opposite direction.

SERIES OF SHOTS

as SEMELOVSKY passes down several residential streets that look monotonously similar, with their one-story wooden houses and small lawns-- to turn into the drive of a house in the middle of the street.

INT. GARAGE

SEMELOVSKY pulls the car to a stop inside the garage and shuts off the engine. He sits there for a moment and looks into his side mirror.

MIRROR -- SEMELOVSKY'S POV

A surveillance car sits under the light of a streetlamp across the street.

BACK TO SEMELOVSKY

who smiles and gets out of his car. He walks casually to the back of the car and slides down the garage door-- shutting out the street. Now, he opens the trunk.

GANT looks up, his eyes squinting.

SEMELOVSKY

You are here, Mr. Gant.

GANT groans and then struggles to get out. He has trouble standing. At this moment, a door from the house opens and a striking MAN with white hair and beard appears. He looks angrily at SEMELOVSKY, who is oblivious to GANT'S condition, and then reaches out to steady him.

WHITE-HAIRED MAN

Let me help you, Mr. Gant...

GANT looks up at him, trying to focus.

WHITE-HAIRED MAN (Cont'd)

I am Pyotr Baranovich.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CAB OF TRUCK -- MOVING -- NIGHT

PAVEL UPENSKOY stares into the side mirror of his truck as it rounds a bend and comes out into a straightaway.

POV PAVEL -- SIDE MIRROR

A pair of headlights rounds the bend in the darkness a hundred yards behind him, and begins to close the gap.

PAVEL

sighs softly; he knows his time is up. Without slowing, he

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

takes one hand from the wheel, unzips his jacket, and tugs an old service automatic from his waistband. He lays it gently on the passenger seat, the butt towards him.

The car is flashing its lights now, as if to overtake.

PAVEL

(shouting; in Russian)

You want me?...

He smiles grimly and presses his foot to the accelerator.

PAVEL (Cont'd)

...Then come and get me!

MIRROR

The headlights drop back as the truck gains speed. They are on a two-lane stretch of road, bordered by trees. The headlights zoom forward now, flashing furiously.

PAVEL

presses his foot all the way to the floor, his smile etched insanelly on his face.

MIRROR AND PAVEL

as the headlights fall back again and then rush forwards, nosing out into the other lane. PAVEL'S hands are white, clutching at the wheel. He glances down at the gun, and then at the road ahead. The trees are a blur.

The headlights suddenly leap forward, catching him by surprise. The car draws quickly alongside PAVEL'S cab--

--and PAVEL swings the wheel viciously. The truck swerves across the road, and there is a violent WRENDING NOISE. The truck shudders, PAVEL fights to keep it on the road, and the headlights veer off into the darkness. There is a split second's pause, and then the SOUND of impact as the tailcar plows into the trees.

PAVEL takes his foot from the accelerator and tries to brake the big truck. It SQUEALS and GROANS to a halt. He rolls the window down quickly and listens, his heart pounding--

--Silence.

PAVEL grabs the gun up, jumps down from the cab.

EXT. ROADSIDE/WRECKAGE -- NIGHT

PAVEL trots cautiously back towards the wreck. The rear wheels are spinning madly. One headlight shines crazily up into the trees. TWO BODIES lay twisted across the hideously smashed-in hood.

PAVEL stops suddenly. The rear door has fallen open and a dark SHAPE has slumped out onto the glass-strewn road.

PAVEL listens tensely, watching for movement--

--and then, as if they were coming from another world-- shockingly out of place to PAVEL-- two pinpricks of light flare from the dark SHAPE.

PAVEL is torn backwards, then the flat CRACK-CRACK of the gun reaches his ears, and he is himself firing, two LOUD BOOMS. The dark SHAPE lurches, and then lies still.

PAVEL stares down at his left side, his eyes beginning to mist over with pain. His whole shoulder is leaking; he can't see his back, but he knows that the exit wound is probably monstrous.

He turns and stumbles back towards the truck, his arm swinging uselessly at his side. He mounts the step and falls into the cab.

With one arm, he throws the truck into gear and grabs the wheel. It lurches, gears GRINDING, and then stalls. He tries again. The gears WHINE in protest, the wheel spins away from him.

PAVEL slumps over the wheel, laughing at the ridiculousness of it all. Tears are streaming down his face. He sits up, staring at the forest to the side of the road. With a super-human effort, he puts the truck into first gear, twists the wheel all the way over, and steps on the gas.

The truck bounces off the road. PAVEL fights to steer it through the trees, jolting and crashing over the ground, until it finally heaves down into a rut and stalls. He puts his gun in his waistband and falls out of the cab. He glances back down at the road, about fifty yards away. The truck will not be visible, unless someone knows where to look.

PAVEL turns and stares at the forest ahead of him.

PAVEL
(whispering; in Russian)
I'm coming, Marya, I'm coming...
Just give me a little more time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He crashes off into the darkness like a big, wounded bear.

CUT TO:

INT. KRESHIN'S HOUSE (BILYARSK) -- NIGHT

GANT is sitting at a small dining table, finishing a meal. NATALIA, young KRESHIN'S achingly beautiful mistress, stands over GANT expectantly.

NATALIA
(broken English)
You would like more?

GANT
No. Thank you. I'm fine.

She nods, and then pours more coffee into his cup.

GANT
Thank you.

KRESHIN is leaning against the doorway that leads to the bedroom. BARANOVICH is sitting on the living room sofa, smoking a pipe. They are both looking at GANT. GANT rises from the table and takes his coffee into the living room. KRESHIN watches this and then, without a word, disappears into the bedroom.

BARANOVICH
How well have you been briefed?

GANT hesitates. His eyes shift towards the front wall and then back to BARANOVICH.

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)
Don't be afraid, you can speak.
They are listening, yes, but we
have devised some pre-recorded
tapes for them this evening...
(he smiles)
Television noise, innocuous talk...

NATALIA comes out from the kitchen and stands before BARANOVICH.

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)
Thank you, Natalia.

She looks at GANT suddenly-- and in that instant, he understands his role in their sacrifice. He is to be the deliverer. Then she is gone, shutting the bedroom door behind her. BARANOVICH looks back at GANT and smiles sadly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARANOVICH

They will make love now. We
do not have many hours.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

The living room is dark now. The only light is from a directional lamp in the dining room. BARANOVICH and GANT are hunched over the table, intent on a large, spreadout drawing.

BARANOVICH

...There is another fence, electric
and guarded by these watchtowers...
inside the perimeter fence. There
is only one other gate in this fence--
over here...

BARANOVICH'S finger taps a red cross.

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)

...on the other side of the air-
strip. That is used only by
security personnel-- it is the
one you will use.

GANT

How, for God's sake?

BARANOVICH

With bravado, naturally-- and a
little help from myself and the
others. Don't worry about it...
Do you smoke?

GANT

No. Not any more.

BARANOVICH reaches into his pocket and pulls out a pack of unfiltered American cigarettes. He hands them to GANT.

BARANOVICH

Learn again-- now.

GANT

They're not Russian...

BARANOVICH

Foreign cigarettes, in the mouth
of the person you will be, will
prove as convincing as anything
else-- even your papers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT slips the pack into his pocket. BARANOVICH returns to the drawing.

BARANOVICH

From this gate, you will make your way to this area here, on the far side of the runway. This building is the main hangar, where the final work is being done. You see this?

CLOSE ON DRAWING

BARANOVICH'S FINGER is tracing a route on a floor plan of the buildings.

BARANOVICH'S VOICE (Cont'd; O.S.)

You go upstairs, along this corridor. These are the pilots' rooms.

BACK TO BARANOVICH AND GANT

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)

Get yourself to the pilot's dressing room as soon as you can. Your pilot, Lt. Col. Yuri Voskov, will arrive some hours before the flight. You must be ready for him.

GANT

What about visitors? I could be there for three, four hours.

BARANOVICH

Conceal the body... There are a number of lockers, metal ones, all with good locks.

GANT stares at BARANOVICH, aware for the first time that he must kill the pilot.

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)

As for yourself, since you do not appear to be very much like Voskov, except in general build-- you will be taking a shower.

GANT

For three hours?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARANOVICH

You will appear to be taking a shower... We will be downstairs in the main hangar working on the airplane. Once it nears the time for our little-- diversion to occur, you will dress, and the visor of the helmet will conceal your features.

GANT

What is this diversion?

BARANOVICH

You need not worry. You will have a very small radio device which will tell you when to come down to the hangar-area. What you will see there will enable you to enter the cockpit and roll the aircraft out of the hangar.

GANT walks away from the table. He looks at the walls. He turns back, troubled.

GANT

What happens to you people, after I lift out of there?

BARANOVICH

...It does not matter.

GANT

(exploding)

The hell it doesn't! Hell! You people, all of you-- you're so damn willing to die, I don't understand.

BARANOVICH

I don't expect you to understand.

GANT

Don't you resent those guys in London, ordering your deaths?

BARANOVICH

You are an American, Mr. Gant. You are a free man. I am not. There is a difference... If I resent the men in London who

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)
are ordering me to die, then
it is a small thing when com-
pared with my-- "resentment"
of the KGB.

BARANOVICH looks down at the table. He is fighting back
emotion.

GANT
...I'm sorry.

BARANOVICH
Nonsense. Now, please smoke. We
don't want you coughing amateurishly
at the gate, do we?

GANT looks at him. He pulls the cigarettes out of his pocket.
BARANOVICH hands him a lighter and GANT lights his first
cigarette in four years. GANT'S eyes mist momentarily.

GANT
(exhaling smoke)
...The anti-radar... you need to
tell me about that.

BARANOVICH
About that, I know nothing. It
is the most secret aspect of the
whole project.

GANT takes another drag on the cigarette.

GANT
But, could they switch it off
when I'm airborne, or could I
switch it off by accident?

BARANOVICH
As far as I have heard from
rumors, the anti-radar seems not
to be mechanical at all. It is
something-- perhaps a skin, even
a low-friction paint of some kind--
so that the radar-beam flows over
the surface of the aircraft, and
passes on... No, I do not think
it can be switched off.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. KGB HELICOPTER (IN FLIGHT) -- 11 P.M.

COL. MIHAIL KONTARSKY lights a cigarette and glowers out the windshield, trying to look his arrogant best. Below, past the helmeted heads of the MIL MI-8's TWO KGB PILOTS, an occasional, tiny pair of headlights can be SEEN crawling across the darkness of the Russian Steppe.

The KGB RADIO OPERATOR-- one of only THREE OTHERS in the luxurious, twenty-eight seat passenger compartment-- suddenly turns from the console and slips his headphones off--

RADIO OPERATOR
They've located him, sir. He's
in Computer and Records.

KONTARSKY
(rising quickly)
Computer and Records...?

The OPERATOR hands him the headphones.

KONTARSKY (Cont'd)
(putting on headphones)
Dmitri...? Where have you been?
What are you doing in Records?

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(far away; through
static)
--Comrade Colonel, we have had
news... It is not good.

KONTARSKY
Speak up-- what news?

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Sir, they found the tailcar one
hour ago, twelve kilometers past
the Bilyarsk turnoff. The...
agents were killed.

KONTARSKY'S face tightens, the air sucked right out of his lungs.

KONTARSKY
What of the truck, tell me...?

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)
...They have not located it yet.

KONTARSKY
--Upenskoy? And the second man?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)

They are hunting them, sir.
Blood was found at the site,
one of them is believed to have
been shot. I am running down
the second man's identity now,
through the computer.

KONTARSKY

(not hearing him)
Yes...?

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(in answer)
We have no one else to ask, Comrade
Colonel-- there is no one left
alive. We must rely on the
computer.

KONTARSKY senses the OTHERS in the helicopter watching.
He must put on a show for them.

KONTARSKY

Good. Very good.

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Sir...? Have you understood me?
We believe he is on foot, and
very likely on his way to
Bilyarsk...

KONTARSKY

(snapping viciously)
Then you'd better find out who he
is, hadn't you?!

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. COMPUTER AND RECORDS/DZERZHINSKY SQUARE (MOSCOW)

DMITRI PRIABIN HEARS the connection go dead. He stares at
the receiver-- bewildered-- and slowly hangs it up.

He returns his attention now to POLICE INSPECTOR ALEKSEI
TORTYEV, who is standing impatiently across the softly-
lit waiting room from him, glaring through an inner
window at the computer center below.

PRIABIN lets out a deep sigh and sinks back in his chair.

PRIABIN

Anyway, Aleksei... You must tell
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIABIN (Cont'd)
me-- what on earth brings you
here in such a state?

TORTYEV turns immediately and takes a seat. He is clutching a sheaf of photographs.

TORTYEV
(lowering his voice)
I am on the trail of a foreign
agent. Something very strange
is happening...

PRIABIN
I... can see that. But what has
a foreign agent to do with
police work?

TORTYEV
We did not realize he was a
foreign agent-- until tonight.

PRIABIN stares at him, trying to piece this together, when the door opens and a white-coated PROGRAMMER steps in.

PRIABIN
Ah, here he is...
(addressing PROGRAMMER)
If my colleague here were to submit a few photographs, would it delay our priority search?

PROGRAMMER
No sir. The computers can accommodate it.

PRIABIN smiles at TORTYEV, who hands the photographs over to the PROGRAMMER.

PRIABIN
Very well. As a favor to an old
classmate, please tell us who
that man might be.

The PROGRAMMER nods curtly and closes the door behind him.

PRIABIN (Cont'd)
Anyway... You were saying,
Aleksei?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TORTYEV

Yes. I was saying... that we did not realize he was an agent until tonight. This man came to our attention as a drug-smuggler, several months ago... The drugs, we now know, were only a device to blind us to the truth. You see, this man-- who died at the hands of his own associates-- or so we believed-- is not the same man who arrived at Cheremetievo Airport two days ago!

PRIABIN

But Aleksei... how does that make him a foreign agent?

TORTYEV

Don't you see? The man who arrived two days ago is a substitute-- covering his tracks with the smuggler's dead body!

PRIABIN turns away so that TORTYEV will not see his smile. Suddenly the door bursts open and the PROGRAMMER steps back in--

PROGRAMMER

--Sir, I think you should take a look at these photographs!

PRIABIN looks down at a picture of Gant as Leon Sprague.

PROGRAMMER (Cont'd)

(nodding at TORTYEV)

--These are his photographs, sir.

PRIABIN takes the photograph in disbelief.

PROGRAMMER (Cont'd)

Look closely-- it is the same man we are hunting, is it not?

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDEN BEHIND KRESHIN'S HOUSE (BILYARSK) -- 12 MIDNIGHT

KRESHIN appears out of the darkness-- there are no lights on anywhere-- and silently approaches the rear door of his house. He slips a key out of his overcoat and pauses to see if anyone is following.

INT. STOOP

The door CLICKS open softly. KRESHIN eases it shut behind him and passes through the darkness of the kitchen into the

LIVING ROOM

BARANOVICH and NATALIA look up from their chairs with a start.

KRESHIN

(urgently)

The guard on the gate has been reinforced.

BARANOVICH

What about the perimeter fence?

KRESHIN

The watchtowers are filled to overflowing-- and there are dog patrols inside the fence every ten minutes now.

BARANOVICH looks away for a moment, the tension visible on his face. GANT is struck for the first time by his age. GANT is standing across the room in full GRU uniform, complete with cap, leather boots, and razor-short hair.

BARANOVICH

(looking at Gant)

You must understand... this was not an element we had counted on. The added security is a show, for the First Secretary. He is coming for the trials tomorrow, we learned of this only yesterday. Now... it will be that much more difficult.

GANT

But... it can be done?

BARANOVICH stares at his hands.

GANT (Cont'd)

Well, I'm sure as hell not walking back.

BARANOVICH nods, forcing a smile.

BARANOVICH

(looking up at KRESHIN)

What else, Ilya?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRESHIN

(to GANT)

There is a lot of light at the gate itself. You will be seen from some distance as you approach. There are two gates there-- an outer gate, and an inner one-- and you must show your papers at both.

GANT

(softly)

...They will open up?

KRESHIN

They will open up. Your papers are in order.

KRESHIN, as if signalling that he is through, slips out of his overcoat and squats down behind NATALIA. BARANOVICH looks at GANT and motions to a chair.

BARANOVICH

Please, Mr. Gant, sit down.

GANT takes a seat and stares at BARANOVICH. He senses a new tension, and pulls a cigarette from his silver case.

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)

You have not been told this... But there is a second prototype in the hangar, identical to the one you will fly. It is not to be used in this trial-- it is not armed. It is, however, fully-fueled and in a state of preparedness at all times. It could be weaponed and sent up in perhaps... an hour.

GANT looks at BARANOVICH, considering this.

GANT

You mean it could overtake me...?

BARANOVICH

Precisely. It is the one thing that can. And it can be refueled in the air, where you can not.

GANT

Go on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARANOVICH glances over at KRESHIN.

BARANOVICH

In our... little diversion...
we must take the plane out.

GANT

How?

BARANOVICH

Fire. We are going to set a
fire in the hangar. The fuel
lines to the second prototype
must catch.

GANT

(white)

Oh, shit...

BARANOVICH

So, you can see now that you will
only have a few seconds. As
soon as you hear the first
signal--

He flips a switch on a small transmitter. A tiny, wireless
receiver begins to BLEEP on the table.

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)

--you will know the diversion has
begun.

He flips the switch again. A continuous, penetrating CRY
now emits from the receiver.

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)

When you hear the second signal,
you must come down immediately.
Ignore whatever you see in the
hangar-- just get your plane out.
A fire is not very predictable.

GANT stares at him in stunned silence.

BARANOVICH

(suddenly looks at
his watch)

It is past twelve, you have less
than an hour. Kreshin and I do
not report until two-thirty,
but you must go by one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hands a slip of paper across to GANT.

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)
These are the coordinates you
are to feed into the inertial
navigator. Yes?

GANT takes the piece of paper and begins to study it.

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)
The first set of coordinates will
bring you in contact with the
commercial flight from Moscow.
Once they have made visual sighting
of you-- and it appears that you
are heading South-- feed in the
second set.

GANT
What if I'm late?

BARANOVICH
You won't be-- if we time it
correctly... The second set will
take you East to the Urals. You
must be extremely cautious with
your speed during this phase.
There are numerous listening
installations-- "Big Ears", we
call them-- equipped to detect
a supersonic footprint... You
look tired, Mr. Gant.

GANT
No, no, I'm fine.

BARANOVICH
(shakes his head)
No, you have been burdened enough.
Learn the coordinates, then you
may rest. You have an hour.

EXT. KGB HQ/DZERZHINSKY STREET -- 12:55 A.M.

The entrance and the square swarms with activity-- vehicles
and PERSONNEL alighting in a steady stream, like angry
hornets summoned to protect their nest.

INT. CORRIDOR/5TH FLOOR

CAMERA FOLLOWS DMITRI PRIABIN and ALEKSEI TORTYEV as they

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

stride out of an elevator and down the hall. Around them swirls the human tide of galvanization; the massive effort of the KGB to hunt down and stop one single man.

TORTYEV

(under his breath)

They should have been arrested months ago, Dmitri-- how could you let him continue with this madness?

PRIABIN

If you had arrested the Jews, Aleksei, would not others have sprung up in their place? Then where would you be-- your enemy unknown to you? This way he could watch them, know them--

TORTYEV

--He was a fool, Dmitri, seeking a spectacle! His gamble failed. Disassociate yourself from him-- unless you would like to go down with him!

A KGB STAFF OFFICER is hurrying towards them. PRIABIN sees him coming, and whispers one last line at TORTYEV--

PRIABIN

Do not worry for my sake, Aleksei-- in the heat of battle, there will be time for new heroes...

(snapping at OFFICER)

Yes, what news?

KGB STAFF OFFICER

Sir! We have word from the manhunt. They found the truck, and the driver's tracks leading into the hills. He is bleeding badly, they believe they will have him in a matter of hours.

PRIABIN

Do not let him die-- tell them that. We must be able to speak to him!

KGB STAFF OFFICER

(saluting)

Yes sir!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TORTYEV watches PRIABIN; he can see the mantle being passed over to PRIABIN, right before his very eyes.

PRIABIN
(nodding towards a
doorway)
Shall we, Aleksei?

A GUARD throws the door open and PRIABIN strides through--

INT. COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

The room is BUZZING with VOICES and MACHINES. There are communications linkups with the various Soviet embassies in Western Europe and Washington D.C., as well as a direct line to Bilyarsk. A COMMUNICATION'S OFFICER looks up at PRIABIN and shakes his head--

COMMUNICATION'S OFFICER
We have been in contact with
Washington, London, Bonn-- even
Tel Aviv. No one matching this
man's description was seen arriving
in the last six months.

JUNIOR OFFICER
If this was as covert an operation
as it appears to be-- we can expect
the same results everywhere.

PRIABIN bristles at this JUNIOR OFFICER'S wisdom--

PRIABIN
Continue anyway! Contact the senior
operative in every embassy mission.
He will appear somewhere. He has to.

COMMUNICATION'S OFFICER
We have tied in with the First
Directorate's computer in the
meantime. Perhaps they will
have something on file.

TORTYEV begins to say something-- then falls silent.
PRIABIN, sensing his own new leadership, prods him.

PRIABIN
Yes, Aleksei... you have a
suggestion?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TORTYEV

...Possibly. It is far-fetched, but... Because the man's been clever, we've assumed that he's a very good agent-- one of their top men. Which means we should have found him by now, yes?

JUNIOR OFFICER

He could be new, or he could have been held back for this one job-- it's big enough to warrant that.

PRIABIN turns a wilting stare on this OFFICER.

PRIABIN

Go on, Aleksei...

TORTYEV

Well... what if he were not an agent, after all?

The suggestion is met with lowered glances. Only PRIABIN knows his old classmate's brilliance enough to ignore them.

PRIABIN

(patiently)

Yes... but then how do you explain the lives they've thrown away? Our British and American friends would not expend their operatives so carelessly...

TORTYEV

No-- I don't mean he's not working for them, just that he's been recruited from some other field... Say, from their aerospace industry. An expert, sent not to damage the project, or to blow it up-- but to witness it first-hand. Someone capable of knowing what to look for, what questions to ask...

There is a gleam in PRIABIN'S eyes.

PRIABIN

(to anyone)

Would the First Directorate's computer have these kinds of people in its banks?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUNIOR OFFICER

Yes sir. But you'd have to have an order of preference-- there could be thousands of names. We'd have to be more specific, simplify the choices, before we could use the computer-index.

PRIABIN is just about to explode at this man's insolence when TORTYEV'S face illuminates from within--

TORTYEV

They sent a young, fit man-- with brains. Why not an astronaut? One of our own cosmonauts would know what to look for, wouldn't he? He has to possess some of the qualities of a commando, and some of a scientist. The NASA astronauts are the most highly-trained people in the world. Why not?

PRIABIN

Mm... I wonder...

TORTYEV

It's almost one o'clock, Dmitri-- you don't have too much time in which to wonder.

PRIABIN

(his mind racing)

Stop! Let me think... How many files would there be-- relating to astronauts, to air force pilots, and the like?

JUNIOR OFFICER

Hundreds-- perhaps thousands.

PRIABIN

Then we will need help. A staff to monitor the index-- and select any possible candidates.

(turning to COMM. OFFICER)

Give the order to the First Directorate-- and hurry! Tell them I'm on my way.

(to TORTYEV)

Come, Aleksei. We will go together.

CUT TO:

EXT. PERIMETER FENCE/BILYARSK -- 1 A.M.

GANT is fifty yards from the gate when the white glare of a searchlight picks him up. He squints, shades his eyes studiously, and looks up at the massive tower inside the fence. SEVERAL GUARDS peer down at him; GANT throws them a cursory wave. Suddenly a dog leaps at him from inside the fence, snarling angrily. GANT jerks involuntarily and then looks over. A KGB GUARD is trying to rein the dog in.

GANT
(recovering; angry--
in Russian)
Not me, you idiot!

GUARD
(in Russian)
I'm sorry, Sir...
(to dog)
No!

GANT'S legs struggle to keep walking. He forces himself to stare directly into the light, as if it were an insult.*

VOICE (O.S.; in Russian)
Identify yourself!

GANT tries to see in the glare. A GUARD materializes behind the gate, aiming a rifle in his direction.

GANT
(in Russian)
Identify yourself-- sir!

The GUARD softens immediately.

1ST GUARD
(in Russian)
Identity, please-- sir.

GANT slips out his papers, hands them across, and reaches for his cigarette case. He is aware of MANY KGB GUARDS standing in various postures along the fence, frozen in the harsh light. There are two guardhuts, one on either side of the barrier, a SOLDIER standing on the doorstep of each.

The 1ST GUARD and ANOTHER KGB MAN are studying his papers from behind the barrier.

1ST GUARD
(in Russian)
Why were you outside the wire--
sir?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT pauses, deliberately picking a piece of tobacco from his tongue.

GANT
(in Russian)
You have your orders, soldier--
I have mine. You know that a
suspected agent is in the
vicinity... Or perhaps you don't?

1ST GUARD
(in Russian)
...Yes, sir-- we have been alerted.

GANT
(in Russian)
Good. Then I suggested you get a
dog out here, and look at that
line of trees regularly during
the next few hours.

The GUARD hesitates. GANT'S authority has overpowered him.

1ST GUARD
Yes, sir. Good idea, sir.

The GUARD signals and the barrier swings up. GANT steps through, nodding to one of the KGB. A GUARD in the first hut signals to the second.

GANT walks across the gravel to the second gate, flashes his ID card, and this GUARD opens a small door set in the fence. GANT tosses down his cigarette, crushes it with his boot, and steps through.

EXT. RUNWAY

Once inside the fence, GANT begins the long walk across the runway. He does not look back, sensing the stares of the KGB behind him. His shirt is soaked with perspiration. He keeps his focus on the main hangar across the field.

A chopper rips by overhead, the downdraft plucking at his cap and jacket. GANT holds onto his cap and looks up, giving the abrupt officer's wave. The chopper circles overhead and a FACE smiles; a hand waves back. The chopper pulls away.

The hangar looms in the distance only a hundred yards away now, like a giant pleasure palace with its warm light spilling

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

out onto the concrete from the entrance doors, the metal ECHOES from within, the GUARDS out front. GANT'S steps quicken, and then he is passing by the entrance. He turns to look--

POV GANT -- MAIN HANGAR

There, lit brilliantly in the middle of the floor, he catches his first glimpse of what he has come thousands of miles to fly. He is mesmerized, his character as the arrogant Captain gone.

It is magnificent-- its elongated nose tilted up and towards him, its silver fuselage gleaming, the two monster intakes, its wings edge-on. FIGURES buzz around it like insects. The whole place is alive-- NOISE, electronics, fork lifts moving to and fro. GANT can see the second prototype sitting in the rear of the hangar, identical to the first. Somehow, though, it appears less awesome, less glamorous. This one before him is the Firefox-- this is the plane he will fly.

GANT catches himself and looks away. He saunters casually towards the door to the KGB building-- the security headquarters attached to the hangar-- when the TWO GUARDS in front of it suddenly snap to attention. GANT hesitates. He hadn't expected this when--

--the door swings open and GANT is face to face with COL. MIHAIL KONTARSKY. GANT is frozen. Behind KONTARSKY is an AIDE. GANT snaps to attention, saluting.

KONTARSKY

(staring at Gant;
in Russian)

Yes, Captain?

GANT

(thinking quickly; then,
in Russian)

Sir-- I have, without your permission, ordered a dog for the guards on security entrance three... to search the belt of trees, thoroughly.

KONTARSKY looks at GANT for a moment. His mind is elsewhere.

KONTARSKY

(in Russian)

Good thinking, Captain-- my thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KONTARSKY touches the peak of his cap and walks on. The AIDE nods at GANT and follows. GANT salutes them and passes through the door.

INT. HALLWAY/KGB BUILDING

GANT sags against the wall in relief. He is breathing heavily and doesn't notice a GUARD staring at him.

GUARD
(in Russian)
Are you all right, Captain?

GANT looks up, startled. His face is white.

GANT
(in Russian)
I'm fine.

He straightens up abruptly, adjusts his jacket, glares at the GUARD, and strides down the corridor. The GUARD salutes after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF BILYARSK -- 2:21 A.M.

BARANOVICH and KRESHIN stand on a streetcorner, bundled in heavy overcoats, waiting as SEMELOVSKY crosses to join them. They exchange silent greetings-- their breaths crystallizing in the cold-- and then fall in with the flow of WORKERS streaming up the hill for the night shift. A giant light blazes at the top of the hill like a beacon.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR/2ND FLOOR (KGB BLDG.) -- 2:55 A.M.

LT. COL. YURI VOSKOV turns into the hallway from the stairs. He passes by the open doorway of the Officers' Mess and waves casually to a group of GRU OFFICERS.

GRU OFFICER
(in Russian)
Have a good flight, Colonel!

VOSKOV smiles to himself as he turns the corner and passes through the plush pilots' lounge. He opens the door to the locker room.

INT. PILOT'S LOCKER ROOM

It is dark inside. VOSKOV'S hand reaches along the inside wall for the lightswitch.

CLOSE ON LIGHTSWITCH

VOSKOV'S hand scrapes another hand covering the switch. Before he can react--

BACK TO SCENE

--a fist explodes behind his ear, knocking him half-way across the room. GANT steps quickly into the light of the doorway and pushes it shut. He switches on the light.

He bends over the unconscious pilot, watching him for signs of life. VOSKOV is still breathing. GANT looks up at the door-- listening-- and then raises his fist to deliver the killing blow. He stares at VOSKOV'S face. He is older, rather handsome, and the same height and build as GANT. GANT forces himself to study VOSKOV'S neck, looking for the windpipe.

Instead, GANT lets out a sigh and shakes his head. His fist unclenches.

GANT

Hell... You didn't do anything.

ANGLE ON LOCKERS (PASSAGE OF TIME)

GANT lifts Voskov's pressure-suit and helmet out of their locker and drapes them carefully over a bench. He reaches down for the unconscious VOSKOV-- his arms and legs bound tightly behind his back, his mouth taped shut with adhesive-- and hoists him into the locker. He turns, glances at the clock over the shower-room entrance: 3:04 A.M. Quickly, he begins shedding his GRU uniform, tossing it in after VOSKOV.

CUT TO:

INT. KGB FIRST CHIEF DIRECTORATE COMPUTER CENTER (OUTSIDE MOSCOW) -- 4:15 A.M.

A task force of First Directorate computer OPERATORS has been roused from their beds and rushed here to oversee the electronic hunt for Gant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON ROW OF COMPUTER TERMINALS

--as the OPERATORS punch up possible candidates. A computerized photograph-- say, of a USAF pilot-- will appear on a screen, his vital data printed out next to him. The OPERATOR then presses another button, and the photograph undergoes a metamorphosis-- appearing in any possible disguise short of surgery.

DMITRI PRIABIN stares up at the clock and rubs his temples. He looks over at TORTYEV, whose head is bowed in his hands. Suddenly they both look up with a start-- the outer door has opened, and a RADIO OPERATOR is striding towards them.

PRIABIN

--Yes?

RADIO OPERATOR

The manhunt reports that they are closing in, sir. The dogs have picked the driver's scent up again.

PRIABIN

They reported that two hours ago! How can one man elude a whole division?!

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLS ABOVE KRASNY YAR -- 4:20 A.M.

PAVEL UPENSKOY stands on the crest of a hill, staring off at the distant lights of a communal farming village. Forest stretches behind him under the low moon.

He is listening for the far off sounds of his pursuers. The WAIL of bloodhounds reaches him, and he glances at his watch. He still has several long, painful hours left to endure. He sucks in a lungfull of air and lumbers off, away from the village.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN HANGAR (BILYARSK) -- 5 A.M.

BARANOVICH is standing atop a ladder, staring down into the cockpit of the Firefox. A mechanic, GROSCH, is doubled over inside the pilot's couch, checking the circuits within the weapons-guidance system. GROSCH suddenly holds a thin plastic circuit board up in BARANOVICH'S face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GROSCH

Looks like the power transistor,
Comrade Director Baranovich.

BARANOVICH smiles at GROSCH'S mocking civility.

BARANOVICH

Mm. Scrap it then. Get another.

GROSCH

From the experimental technical
stores, Comrade Director?

BARANOVICH

Yes, Grosch.

GROSCH smiles and nods. At this moment, BARANOVICH catches SEMELOVSKY'S eye-- SEMELOVSKY working on the tail of the aircraft. He is looking down at BARANOVICH intensely. BARANOVICH understands, and turns slowly towards the hangar's entrance--

There, standing just inside the entranceway, is KONTARSKY.

BARANOVICH rubs his arm across his eyes, as if fatigued, and then peers back down into the cockpit.

CLOSE ON KONTARSKY

--as he continues to stare at BARANOVICH, his eyes smoldering. Ordinarily, KONTARSKY loves this little game. At this moment, he hates it.

He turns at the SOUND of a helicopter CHATTERING over the runway, and stares ruefully at the night. He begins walking out onto the tarmac.

A jeep careens over the terrain, its headlights picking KONTARSKY up and veering towards him. It SCREECHES to a halt and MAJ. VIKTOR LANYEV jumps out.

MAJ. LANYEV

(breathless)

Comrade Colonel! I have just come
from security gate number three.
The guards there remember
admitting a GRU officer almost
four hours ago-- who matches
one of the composite photographs!

KONTARSKY reaches for the identikit photo LANYEV is

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

holding out. It is a computer composite of what Gant would look like as a GRU officer.

MAJ. LANYEV (Cont'd)
The guards have made a positive identification. They say he ordered a dog patrol for the forest bordering the fence, and he was--

KONTARSKY
(staring at photo)
--Wait... Wait a minute... I have seen this man-- he confirmed those same orders to me... Where was it I saw him...?

LANYEV
Sir-- what if--

KONTARSKY
--He was entering the security building! Yes, he--

LANYEV
--It was just searched, Colonel.

KONTARSKY
Then search it again, dammit!
He's here-- somewhere. Search the hangar--
(peering at the ring of buildings)
--search every closet, every storeroom, in every building!
He's here, I know it!

CUT TO:

INT. SHOWERS/PILOTS LOCKER ROOM -- 5:28 A.M.

The ROAR and steam from a shower engulfs the room. A white bathrobe hangs from a hook nearby.

INT. SHOWER CUBICLE

GANT is straddling a chair, wearing only his shorts, Baranovich's bleeper device taped under his left armpit. His head is resting on the back wall, his eyes are shut. A large scar is visible across his chest.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

The door opens and a detail of KGB GUARDS looks around. They HEAR the SOUND of the shower and one of them moves towards it. He stops in the doorway to the showers and looks across to the cubicle in use.

CLOSE ON GANT

--as his eyes come open. He springs to his feet, careful not to scrape the chair on the floor.

GANT
(in Russian)
--Yes?

VOICE (O.S.; in Russian)
Security check, Colonel-- important.

Through the curtain, GANT can see the shadow of the GUARD standing in the doorway.

GANT
(in Russian)
What do you want?

VOICE (O.S.; in Russian)
Your identification. It's an
emergency condition, sir.

GANT is caught-- he doesn't have Voskov's papers. He must come up to it again.

GANT
(loudly; in Russian)
I am having a shower, whoever
you are. What do you mean by
disturbing me with your stupid
questions?

VOICE (O.S.; in Russian)
Sorry Colonel, but a saboteur
is on the loose. We're certain
of it.

GANT
(in Russian)
This is your idea, of course--
soldier? It is not Colonel
Kontarsky's direct order that I
be questioned, is it?

VOICE (O.S.; in Russian)
I-- orders, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT hesitates, hoping to God the bluff will work: he throws as much arrogance into his voice as he can--

GANT

(in Russian)

Well, I am not the enemy, am I?
And, I must fly the plane-- so
get out, before you find yourself
reported.

The GUARD is silent. He looks back at his DETAIL. ONE of them shakes his head and motions towards the door-- leave the pampered pilot to his shower.

GUARD

(after a moment; in
Russian)

Sorry, sir-- of course. But, be
careful sir. The Colonel issued
us with instructions to kill--
the man's dangerous. Good luck
with the flight, sir.

GANT'S eyes close, his breath coming in short gasps. He hears the FOOTSTEPS, and the DOOR closing. He waits another moment, and slides the curtain open. He feels dizzy. He steps across the floor to the robe. He reaches for the pocket and pulls out the Makarov automatic.

His hands are shaking. His legs are rubbery underneath him. He must sit down on the bench.

And, suddenly, the SOUNDS are coming on him again. GANT sags to the bench, the gun dangling between his legs, his body dripping wet. The muscles in his legs tighten into knots. He raises the gun and slashes it across his thigh, but it is no use. He tries to move but cannot. In agony, his head sinks back against the wall--

GANT'S DREAM (THROUGH WINDSCREEN -- USAF PHANTOM -- DUSK)

The SOUNDS short out suddenly, leaving behind them a dark, ominous PRESENCE. Sloping dark hills and patches of jungle slide by below. A distant fire rages on the horizon.

Gant's CO-PILOT, seated directly behind GANT, computes the distance-to-target and flips the bomb pre-release switch.

CO-PILOT

(into mask mike)

Twenty seconds to target.
Coordinates in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT
(nodding)
Give me the VR. We're going in
low.

His CO-PILOT scans the target information packet-- when suddenly a VOICE breaks in over the radio, along with the SHRIEK of the ECM warning system.

VOICE OVER RADIO (O.S.)
--SAMS, nine o'clock! Squadron
take evasive action!

GANT'S eyes sweep to the radarscope-- missiles are already leaping up the screen. GANT drops the Phantom quickly and stares out in horror-- tracer-fire is snaking across the nose, and suddenly the plane jolts. There is a THUD, then an electrical fire directly behind him, and the CO-PILOT is screaming.

GANT turns to see his CO-PILOT writhing in agony, his compartment sizzling with juice and flames.

GANT
Drop the load! Duane!?

GANT unfastens himself and squirms over his seat, his gloved hands fumbling with the CO-PILOT'S panel; he finds the bomb release switch and flips it. The Phantom lurches upwards, freed of its load, and then starts diving.

GANT
I'm sending us out! Hold
on!
(into mask mike)
Alert Rescue units-- we're going
down.

He fastens himself in again-- the Phantom eating itself alive in flames, the jungle rushing up-- and presses the eject button.

The twin cockpits release with a BOOM, and then everything is suddenly topsy-turvy, wind and plexiglass showering into the night sky--

--DRIVING RAIN. AN OPEN DELTA. Grass swirling. GANT staggering knee-deep through a paddy, his flying suit torn and singed, his parachute harness dangling behind him. He bends over his CO-PILOT, twisted in his parachute, his face lit by the flames of the Phantom a quarter-mile away and engulfing a row of trees in burning fuel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The CO-PILOT is staring up at GANT, in deep shock, his helmet running with rainwater and blood. He looks at GANT and tries to say something, then points weakly at him.

GANT looks down at himself. He opens his flying suit where a deep tear is evident; his eyes close. His chest is heaving and pumping blood from a huge gash. He sinks slowly to his knees.

THE ROAR OF A CHOPPER: RAIN STILL COMING DOWN, NIGHT. GANT yanked to his knees, staring into the faces of V.C. REGULARS. A searchlight circling, beaming down on the row of trees where the Phantom went in; then the chopper is moving over the paddy, its light combing it for survivors. A VOICE calling for Gant over the chopper's speaker, and the V.C.s throw him to the ground, a rifle barrel jammed in his ear. The CO-PILOT starts to SCREAM for help next to him, and GANT SEES the CO-PILOT'S eyes open in surprise, a machete thrust all the way in to the hilt.

GANT'S face is forced down into the water, the ROAR of the CHOPPER deafening overhead--

CUT TO:

INT. FIRST DIRECTORATE HQ/COMPUTER CENTER (MOSCOW) -- 6:09 A.M.

DMITRI PRIABIN bolts upwards with a start-- someone is SHOUTING to him. TORTYEV is already looking towards the center of the room.

Several PROGRAMMERS are rushing towards the NOISE. PRIABIN and TORTYEV jump up and push through the crowd. They glance at a terminal screen. The OPERATOR at the console is gesturing at it, his eyes wide.

CLOSE ON SCREEN

Mitchell Gant's face stares out at them, his vital data printed next to him.

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Get Bilyarsk on the phone-- quickly!

CUT TO:

INT. HANGAR (BILYARSK) -- 6:10 A.M.

Several uniformed KGB GUARDS are arranged in a line a short distance from the plane. The three scientists-- BARANOVICH, KRESHIN, and SEMELOVSKY-- stand at a small coffee table at the side of the aircraft itself, trying

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

to eat their last meal with some vestige of dignity. They are isolated, and it is obvious.

BARANOVICH smiles at KRESHIN, who is trembling as he sips his coffee. SEMELOVSKY, on the other hand, needs no encouragement-- he is glaring at the GUARDS from behind his spectacles, arrogant to the last, munching on a sandwich.

BARANOVICH

(under his breath)

The Rearward Defense Pod-- is it completed, Maxim Ilyich?

SEMELOVSKY

(smiling innocently)

I completed work on it two hours ago, Pyotr... I've just been stalling.

BARANOVICH looks up at the tail of the Firefox: there, a deadly-looking cylindrical unit is nestled at the end of the fuselage, resembling a streamlined, mini intake-exhaust system.

BARANOVICH'S VOICE (O.S.)

Good. Good. He will need it, God help him...

Suddenly BARANOVICH notices the other TECHNICIANS beginning to return from the cafeteria across the hangar. He glances at his watch--

BARANOVICH

You must go now. You have two minutes.

SEMELOVSKY

Mm. Very well. I shall excuse myself, and make for the toilets. If a guard accompanies me, so much the worse for him.

BARANOVICH

Only if necessary are you to kill the guard. We don't want you hurt.

SEMELOVSKY

(a sudden smile)

Not before I start the fire-- eh?

BARANOVICH

No, not before... Just make it big and bright.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEMELOVSKY
(bridling)
I don't need to be told how to
start a fire, Pyotr Vassilyevich!

The WORKERS are streaming towards them.

BARANOVICH (Cont'd)
--Go, Maxim Ilyich!

SEMELOVSKY
(under his breath)
Pyotr. Thank you.

BARANOVICH nods, his eyes beginning to mist.

BARANOVICH
Good luck, my friend.

SEMELOVSKY tosses his sandwich down and walks abruptly from the table. One of the GUARDS steps forward to intercept him.

KGB GUARD
Where are you off to?

SEMELOVSKY
Toilet. Your food makes me ill.

The GUARD falls in behind SEMELOVSKY, who looks back at BARANOVICH for an instant-- a wry smile on his face. The WORKERS have now returned, and are fitting their work aprons around their waists. BARANOVICH looks over at KRESHIN. There are tears in KRESHIN'S EYES.

BARANOVICH
(softly)
You love her very much then?

KRESHIN
...Yes.

BARANOVICH
I-- am sorry for that. That
will make it very hard for you.

CUT TO:

INT. DUTY ROOM (KGB SECURITY BLDG. -- BILYARSK) -- 6:11 A.M.
CLOSE ON a telephone as it begins to RING shrilly.
An AGENT in shirtsleeves picks it up. COL. KONTARSKY,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

supervising a team of AGENTS across the room, sees the AGENT signalling towards him--

AGENT ON PHONE

--Colonel. It's Moscow.

KONTARSKY breaks away from the group with one last command--

KONTARSKY

--Then send the dogs out. He might be hiding in the hills.

He strides towards the telephone when a GRU OFFICER bursts through the door, stopping him--

GRU OFFICER

(out of breath)

Sir! The control tower was just put on stand-by. The First Secretary's plane is landing in twelve minutes.

KONTARSKY

(stunned; looking up at clock)

What...? He wasn't to arrive until nine...

GRU OFFICER

They took off from Moscow two and-a-half hours early, sir. No explanation.

KONTARSKY'S eyes close in disbelief. He is searching for words, for explanation, when the AGENT holding the phone interrupts--

AGENT ON PHONE

Colonel, Moscow says it's important.

KONTARSKY reaches numbly for the receiver, puts it to his ear.

KONTARSKY

...Yes?

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.; over telephone)

Colonel-- we've got him. He's been identified... Colonel, are you there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KONTARSKY

Quickly, Priabin-- tell me?

Several heads look up at the sound of KONTARSKY'S choked, quiet whisper.

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)

He's a pilot... Mitchell Gant, an American...

KONTARSKY

(mechanically)

American?

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Yes. A member of their Agressor Squadron, the one they built to train their pilots in combat with Russian machines...

KONTARSKY

Go on, Priabin-- Why him?

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Obviously, sir, he knows our aircraft as well as anyone. He'd be a good choice for sabotage, or for analysis of information. Perhaps he intends a-- close inspection of the Mig-31?

There is a silence on both ends of the line as the truth, huge and appalling, strikes both men at the same moment--

KONTARSKY

He-- he can't be here for that...?

PRIABIN'S VOICE (O.S.)

No sir, surely not. They couldn't hope to get away with it!

KONTARSKY

(voice trembling)

Thank you, Dmitri-- Thank you. Well done.

He gently puts the receiver down and stares at the upturned faces.

KONTARSKY

Arrest Baranovich and the others-- now. And let no one near that aircraft-- no one, understand?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly an ALARM goes off, hideous, urgent--

KONTARSKY (Cont'd)

--NO!

CROSS CUT TO:

ANGLE ON COCKPIT (MAIN HANGAR) -- 6:12 A.M.

BARANOVICH whirls-- an ALARM WAILS, rhythmic, angry. A VOICE shouts out. Another VOICE is shouting. MEN in the booth upstairs are wild, pointing through the glass.

GROSCH is up, staring into BARANOVICH'S face--

GROSCH

What could it be, Comrade Director?

Suddenly, a BLAST rocks the hangar, and flames belch up thirty feet into the air behind Prototype Two. BARANOVICH looks back at GROSCH.

BARANOVICH

I don't know, Grosch.

BARANOVICH flips the switch on the little transmitter and bounds down the ladder, a smile on his face. PEOPLE are flooding towards the rear of the hangar. There are ORDERS, SHOUTS, mayhem-- WORKERS and KGB alike crashing into one another, confused. BARANOVICH reaches inside his laboratory coat and pulls out an automatic as he runs. He spots a GUARD moving towards KRESHIN and fires. The GUARD goes down at KRESHIN'S feet.

BARANOVICH runs in a ducking crouch, and a bullet sails over him into the fuselage--

VOICE

(O.S.; SHOUTING)

--Don't fire! You'll hit the Mig!

BARANOVICH pushes against the immobile, frozen KRESHIN--

BARANOVICH

(shouting into his ear)

The fire! We must move towards the fire!

BARANOVICH pushes them into the surge of BODIES running towards the fire. His gun hidden again, BARANOVICH wants them in the safety of other BODIES-- drifting in and

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

out of the movement and confusion. And then a small, WHITE-COATED FIGURE waltzes crazily across the floor from behind Prototype Two. The MAN is in flames-- it is SEMELOVSKY. BARANOVICH watches in horror--

CUT TO:

GANT'S DREAM (POV--EXT.--THROUGH BAMBOO CAGE -- DAY)

The SOUNDS of FEET CRUNCHING in the mud, as the IMAGE of a North Vietnamese village bobs up and down in the distance-- growing closer.

Suddenly, there are VOICES and a swell of PEOPLE-- North Vietnamese VILLAGERS-- filling the road ahead.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SHOW GANT lying at the bottom of the cage-- carried along by four V.C. SOLDIERS. GANT'S chest is primitively bandaged, his arm in a crude sling. He crouches with animal fear, watching the surge of VILLAGERS. They are SCREAMING obscenities and gesturing in hatred-- trying to get near the cage. TWO of the SOLDIERS fire warning shots. The CROWD does not heed.

The SOLDIERS are panicked now, speaking rapidly in Vietnamese.

Suddenly, the VILLAGERS are on them-- BODIES flinging themselves against the cage.

The SOLDIERS drop the cage and shield themselves from human claws and hatchets.

Then, a deep, thunderous concussion-- at some distance. Then another, closer. Then, another. Close. The VILLAGERS are running in all directions, GANT'S cage toppling down off the road into a ditch, GANT twisted and bleeding, stunned. He looks up. Explosion after explosion-- ripping up the earth in a line. It is a B-52 strike. He covers his ears and curls into the foetal position.

SCREAMS and the SIZZLE of fire, and GANT SEES a PEASANT running by his cage-- his body in flames. GANT closes his eyes in anguish. His hands are cupped in prayer, his mouth is moving. An air raid siren is WAILING--

CUT TO:

INT. SHOWER ROOM

--GANT is slumped against the wall, unable to move, but beginning to have an awareness of the bleeper. It is a

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

signal-- a BLEEP, not an air raid siren. The SOUND of the flames is the SOUND of the shower-- still running in the cubicle.

GANT'S eyes begin to flicker. His face and body are awash with sweat. His eyes open and he stares blankly at the wall across from him: The SIGNAL is clear now and strong, but GANT has no idea where he is. And then, suddenly the pulsing bleeper switches to an insistent, continuous CRY. And GANT remembers everything--

GANT
(a hoarse whisper)
Signal...

GANT'S eyes stare dully at the receiver taped under his arm. He tries to move. At first, it is impossible-- his legs rigid, asleep. He tries again. His body slowly rises from the bench. The room spins in front of him, out of focus. It is too soon to move after the dream, but he must move. He stumbles across the floor to the doorway and hangs onto it for support.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

GANT pushes himself into the locker room, staggering awkwardly across the floor, the bleeper WAILING continuously all the while. He reaches the row of lockers and sags down on the bench. The pressure-suit is laid out where he left it. Now he is aware of another NOISE, an alarm. He looks up-- it is coming from downstairs. He fumbles with the suit, panicked, struggling to fit into the stiff garment--

CUT TO:

INT. HANGAR

The mouth of the hangar has opened and several yellow fire engines are THUNDERING in. Hoses are being dragged across the floor-- all the while, the SNARL of the alarm making it impossible to hear. BARANOVICH and KRESHIN are hidden among the CROWD, swaying backwards from the heat of the flames. The first jets of foam sail into the air.

BARANOVICH looks around. Over the heads of the CROWD behind him, he suddenly SEES a SECURITY FORCE forming a ring around the Firefox. His mouth drops open.

BARANOVICH
(shouting into KRESHIN'S
ear)
They know! They know now!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRESHIN looks around-- MAJ. LANYEV is visible directing the ring of GUARDS. BARANOVICH looks anxiously towards the door of the KGB building-- no Gant. A loudspeaker BLARES--

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER (O.S.)

Back up immediately! Back away
from the aircraft, everyone!

The CROWD begins to back up, allowing the firetrucks to push through. Flames spill across the floor of the hangar like lava. BARANOVICH pulls out his automatic and shouts to KRESHIN--

BARANOVICH

Now! We must draw them away!

KRESHIN pulls an automatic out of his coat. The TWO begin running-- amidst the retreating crowd-- towards the Firefox. Suddenly, as if by some communal awareness, the CROWD seems to disappear, to drift to either side of the two Jews. BARANOVICH and KRESHIN are alone, marked men as they run. LANYEV has spotted them. A GROUP of GUARDS is advancing towards them-- pulling out of the security ring. LANYEV raises a loud-hailer to his lips.

MAJ. LANYEV

Put down your weapons-- now, or
I will order them to open fire.
Put down your weapons!

The semi-circle of GUARDS keeps moving towards them-- in total silence. The whole thing is like a dream-- this silent moving flank in contrast to the raucous activity of the fire trucks behind them. And then, KRESHIN suddenly opens fire next to him. A GUARD drops from the flank, ANOTHER falls sideways. It happens so quickly that BARANOVICH has not even managed a shot. He whirls, and KRESHIN'S body lurches violently away from his side. The rifles flame again, then BARANOVICH is hit, and hit again. He spins across the floor, his balance gone, and sits untidily down like a child. His body rolls sideways from the waist, his head slaps the floor. It is in that last moment that he sees him-- GANT, in the dull-green pressure-suit, walking through the door. A smile begins to form on BARANOVICH'S lips, and he dies.

CLOSE ON GANT'S FACE

as he strides through the smoke-filled hangar, his eyes barely visible under the helmet's pulled-down sunvisor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POV GANT (MOVING)

He can see two white-coated FIGURES sprawled lifelessly on the concrete, surrounded by SOLDIERS. The far wall is still licking with flames; several fire engines are battling the blaze near the second prototype, which is being wheeled away by a tractor now, covered in foam.

Thirty yards from him is the Firefox, attended by only a few stray GUARDS. The ALARM is hideously loud. Suddenly GANT hears a string of dull concussions as several fuel-drums start to explode. The new spurts of flame cause everyone to rear back.

GANT'S pace quickens; he jogs the last steps to the Firefox. The pilot's ladder Baranovich had stood on is still in place. GANT reaches it, begins to climb it, hoping no one will question him in the new confusion.

JUNIOR KGB OFFICER
(in Russian)
--Colonel Voskov?

GANT looks around, half-way up the ladder, and waves to the OFFICER standing below him. He keeps climbing. The OFFICER looks confused, raises his pistol--

JUNIOR KGB OFFICER
Colonel Voskov! Stop! I must see
your identification!

GANT reaches the top and swings a leg over the cockpit sill. The OFFICER gestures for him to stop, his VOICE drowned in the MAYHEM. He fires a warning shot-- and GANT freezes. GANT points angrily at the fire behind them, and motions for the OFFICER to clear a path to the door. Then he drops into the pilot's couch.

INT. COCKPIT

GANT immediately starts going through his pre-flight checks, his hands racing over the gauges; plugging in his radio and communications equipment, the connection from his helmet to the weapons system, his oxygen supply-- his eyes half on the panel and half on the OFFICER below. The OFFICER looks perplexed. He is shouting at a group of GUARDS near the hangar doors, and suddenly he starts climbing the ladder.

GANT reacts swiftly. He stands, unfastens the ladder

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

beneath the sill, and just as the OFFICER'S face appears, pushes the ladder away. The OFFICER topples backwards, his face panicked, falling the twenty feet to the concrete.

GANT sits back down, fastens himself into the couch and the parachute-eject system. His gaze sweeps to the hangar door--

--There stands KONTARSKY, his face white, his finger pointing hysterically in GANT'S direction, several MEN at his side. GANT quickly presses the hood control, and automatically the hood swings down, locking electronically. Bullets SLAP harmlessly off the reinforced plastic.

He checks the cockpit air-pressure and switches in the anti-G device. Air rushes in through a lead just below the suit's left knee, the suit expanding around GANT.

Then, he gang-loads the ignition switches, switches on the starter-motors, and presses the starter-button.

Twin EXPLOSIONS and two sooty puffs of smoke roll away from behind the engines. KONTARSKY is gesturing at his MEN to close the hangar doors. The giant doors begin to roll automatically towards each other.

GANT opens the throttles and releases the brakes. The Firefox skips forward. The doors are closing, but far too slowly. The aircraft ROARS past the firing guards, who leap away to save themselves from the engines' exhaust. The plane bounds through the doors into the dawn's light.

CLOSE ON KONTARSKY

--screaming at the top of his lungs--

KONTARSKY
Shoot the tires! The tires!

GUARDS stream out onto the tarmac, levelling their rifles at the quickly-retreating Firefox, sparks flying off the pavement beneath its wheels as they try to flatten the tires. But the Firefox is already several hundred yards away, skipping diagonally across the field in a blast of exhaust and dust.

INT. COCKPIT

GANT wheels the plane around at the far end of the runway, boosts the RPM up in a swift motion-- and then in a

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

deafening ROAR he is off.

WIDE -- HANGAR AND AIRSTRIP

The ROAR is like thunder as the mass of KGB PERSONNEL watch from the hangar doors helplessly. The wheels leave the ground-- the undercarriage retracts-- and the Firefox lifts away in a steep climb. And then it is gone.

KONTARSKY suddenly becomes aware of VOICES shouting to him, and several GUARDS pointing towards the other end of the runway. He looks-- and his face sags in total misery. There, coming in for a landing, is the First Secretary's Tupelov jetliner.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRASSY FIELD (FIFTEEN MILES TO THE SOUTH) -- 6:20 A.M.

The SOUND of a jet plane THUNDERS in the distance, growing closer.

PAVEL struggles to look up, his huge, bloodsoaked body twisted in the high grass. Behind him, about a quarter of a mile away, KGB TROOPS are visible on top of a rise. They release their dogs, who bolt forward, BARKING, skittering down the hill in PAVEL'S direction. PAVEL looks back for an instant and then twists his anguished face towards the heavens. The sky is exploding overhead. Tears begin rolling down his cheeks-- the Firefox streaks by, unseen, still climbing. PAVEL nods. He twists the barrel of his automatic into his mouth-- and FIRES.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. MINISTRY OF DEFENSE BUILDING -- 5 AM (LONDON TIME)

A newspaper truck RUMBLES past on the wet, deserted boulevard. It is still an hour before dawn here.

TITLE OVER: MINISTRY OF DEFENSE/LONDON

INT. M.O.D. OPERATIONS CENTER

The darkened center looks and sounds like a theater before showtime-- the room's seats and consoles all facing a giant projection map on one wall, the crowd ABUZZ with pre-curtain jitters. The HUM of computers, the HISS of radio static, and the huge map of European Russia, the Barents Sea, and the regions north into the Arctic Ocean-- indicate quite clearly the nature of the coming show.

Sweeps of yellow ribbon loop upwards towards the northern border, signifying the Russian DEW-line. Below this line, the map bristles with lines of tiny pins: Red marking fighter bases, blue denoting missile sites. Above these three lines, dotting the sea itself, are clusters of black flags; the Red Banner Northern Fleet-- submarines, spy trawlers, missile cruisers. Occasional faces in the room stare up at the map, each in unspoken awe.

CAMERA MOVES IN ON COMMUNICATIONS CONSOLE

--As an RAF RADIO OPERATOR suddenly bends forward and clamps his headphones tight. He begins writing furiously on a pad in front of him, his head nodding quickly, his eyes widening. A circle of PEOPLE appears behind him, AUBREY and BUCKHOLZ in the front, their faces tense--

RAF RADIO OPERATOR

(while still listening)

--Airborne Early Warning Radar reports signs of a staggered sector scramble, Northern and Southern border squadrons Red Air Force... Strike Command is monitoring signs of heavy code-communications between Bilyarsk and the Red Banner Fleets, Northern and Southern... Predicted activity indicates a definite lift-off...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The circle of faces, mostly British, look at each other in silent congratulations, trying their best to suppress an outpouring of emotion. BUCKHOLZ and his fellow AMERICANS cannot contain theirs so well--

BUCKHOLZ

He's up! Holy Mother of God, he's up!

The dour faces of their British hosts put an immediate stop to the round of back-slapping and hand-shaking. AUBREY looks blandly over at BUCKHOLZ, the slightest of smiles on his lips--

AUBREY

My dear Buckholz, you could do us a big favor now... You could tell Washington to alert Mother One.

BUCKHOLZ

(grinning)

My pleasure...

(shouting)

He's done it!

He turns to his aide, ANDERS, and they hurry off towards the U.S. communications scrambler.

AUBREY shakes his head and slowly moves off by himself to the center of the room. He stares up at the massive defense system-- his eyes clearly moist with emotion.

AUBREY

(to himself)

Yes, he's done it... Damned if he hasn't actually done it...

BUCKHOLZ appears quietly beside him after a moment, the message on its way. He too stares up at the giant map, his eyes faraway.

BUCKHOLZ

(softly)

I sure wish I could be there with him...

AUBREY

Yes... that would be nice...

(covering his emotions;

looking down at his watch)

Yes, well, he'll be making his

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUBREY (Cont'd)
rendezvous with Flight 901 any
moment now. Let's get back to
work.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CABIN AND FLIGHT DECK -- AEROFLOT JETLINER -- 7 A.M.
(MOSCOW TIME)

The FLIGHT ENGINEER stares out his starboard windshield, bored, listening to the muted CHATTER going on behind him in the flight deck. There, the PILOT and his NAVIGATOR are engaged in conversation with a STEWARDESS who has just brought them coffee.

The FLIGHT ENGINEER notices a glint of sunlight way off to starboard and stares out at it, puzzled. He glances down at the radarscope. It is empty. He looks back up again, and his jaw drops--

FLIGHT ENGINEER
(in Russian)
Captain...

The CAPTAIN and the NAVIGATOR turn at the tone in his voice. The FLIGHT ENGINEER is pointing out the starboard windshield--

FLIGHT ENGINEER
(in Russian)
I'm not showing anything on radar,
but I'm seeing something!

The CAPTAIN has climbed into his seat and is staring at the shiny blur, scrambling for his headphones and barking into them--

CAPTAIN
(in Russian)
--901 to--

The words have barely left his lips when the Firefox screams over the nose in a flash of silver. The FLIGHT ENGINEER has banked the plane hard to port to avoid a collision-- there are SCREAMS from the passenger cabin behind, CRASHES of breakfast trays, and scalding coffee flying in the cockpit--

CAPTAIN
(screaming into headphones;
in Russian)
Flight 901 to Volgograd! Report
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN (Cont'd)
near collision with unidentified--

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT is in a downward Mach-descent, listening in on the Russian airline FREQUENCY as the panicked Aeroflot captain SHOUTS in his wake.

GANT brings the Firefox out of its descent and levels off at 15,000 feet. He raises his tinted sunvisor and allows himself a smile. He looks around the cockpit. He does not know where the flight recorder is located, but he knows it's somewhere close by. He begins to speak, a little self-consciously at first.

GANT

Well, I guess that should establish my route South... I, ah, maybe cut it a little close-- I suppose you heard as much by now-- anyway, they sure as hell saw me... I, ah... this is kind of making me feel, ah... I'll keep it short.

(becomes very businesslike)
Twenty-one minutes since lift-off, no sign of missile or search activity in that time. Cruising manual south-southwest at six-five-zero airspeed, will now engage homing device.

GANT reaches down into the pressure-suit's left thigh pocket and pulls the transistor radio out. He snaps the back open, slides the innards out, and affixes the small black object to the panel by its magnetic strip.

GANT (Cont'd)

Homing device engaged. Will activate upon reaching the northern coast if all goes well... Reporting that contacts at Bilyarsk were, as far as could be ascertained, all eliminated. Could not ascertain extent of damage to Prototype Two, it appeared to have been--

A surge of STATIC suddenly pours from the UHF channel; the radio CRACKLES to life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT (Cont'd)
(hurriedly)
This'll be Bilyarsk contacting
me, they're a little late. Should
be Air Marshal Kutozov...

MAN'S VOICE (RADIO; O.S.)
(in English; heavy Russian
accent)
...I am speaking to the individual
who has stolen the property of the
U.S.S.R. Can you hear me, Mr.
Gant?

GANT'S eyes narrow as he lifts the UHF microphone from the
panel. He does not speak into it yet--

GANT
Looks like they're giving me the
royal treatment. It's not Kutozov,
it's the First Secretary himself...
(activating microphone)
Go ahead-- I'm listening.

1ST SECRETARY'S VOICE (RADIO; O.S.)
Are you enjoying your ride, Mr.
Gant-- you like our new toy?

GANT
(laconically)
It could be improved...
(MORE)

CUT TO:

EXT. RUNWAY -- BILYARSK -- MORNING

The First Secretary's Tupelov TU-144 sits out on the runway
like a giant whale-- purposely isolated from the rest of
the complex-- dwarfing the support vehicles and TROOPS
busy beneath it.

1ST SECRETARY'S VOICE (O.S.)
Ah-- your expert opinion, Mr. Gant?

GANT'S VOICE (over radio; O.S.)
You could say that... Aren't
you going to threaten me,
or something?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

INT. TUPELOV -- WAR COMMAND CENTER

The frenzy of activity in the Military Command section-- aft of the passenger accommodation-- goes on unnoticed by the Communist Party's FIRST SECRETARY as he sits before a transmitter, intent on his conversation with Gant.

1ST SECRETARY (Cont'd)
I will do so, if that is what you wish. But first, I will merely ask you to return what does not belong to you.

GANT'S VOICE (O.S.; radio)
...And then you'll forget the whole thing, huh?

The 1ST SECRETARY laughs softly. ONE of a team of RADIO OPERATORS pushes a flimsy in front of his gaze, detailing the radio fix they have obtained on Gant: indicating Gant's position-- to the South of them-- on a map. The 1ST SECRETARY nods, taking it in while still charming his quarry.

1ST SECRETARY
I don't think you would believe that, Mr. Gant-- would you? No, of course not. All I will say is that you will live, if you return immediately. It is calculated that no more than forty minutes flying time would be required before we could sight you back over Bilyarsk.

GANT'S VOICE (O.S.)
(after a silence)
...And the alternative?

1ST SECRETARY
You will not be allowed to hand over the Mig-31 to the security services of your country. We could not allow that to happen.

CUT BACK TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - FIREFOX

GANT
I understand... I'm sorry, sir, but I can't do that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

1ST SECRETARY'S VOICE (Radio; O.S.)
 I see... Mr. Gant, as you will be aware, I am not interested in the life of one rogue pilot with a poor health record-- I was merely hoping to save the billions of rubles poured into the development of this project. I see that you won't allow that to happen. Very well. You will not, of course, make it to wherever you are going. Goodbye, Mr. Gant.

GANT flicks the UHF off and smiles to himself. He punches in a set of coordinates on the inertial navigator display, flips his visor down, and whispers a last comment to the recording device--

GANT
 Okay, the bait's been swallowed.
 Let's head for the Urals.

He throws the throttles forward, banks hard to the East, and drops like a stone.

INT. WAR COMMAND CENTER (TUPELOV/BILYARSK)

The 1ST SECRETARY rises from the transmitter, his eyes cold with fury. Behind him, his JOINT CHIEFS of STAFF are seated around the circular command table, waiting to begin their council of war. The 1ST SECRETARY'S Tupelov is, in fact, the equivalent of U.S. 1; Armageddon could commence from here.

Supreme Air Marshal KUTOZOV speaks as the 1ST SECRETARY takes a seat at the table. KUTOZOV has survived cancer of the throat; his voice is a tired, dry whisper--

AIR MARSHAL KUTOZOV
 You have considered, First Secretary, that this might be some kind of supreme bluff by the Americans-- to distract us from looking northward while this single aircraft attempts to escape to the south?

1ST SECRETARY
 No, Marshal Kutozov. This is a CIA venture-- with the backing of
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

1ST SECRETARY (Cont'd)
the office of the President, and
the Pentagon, no doubt. They are
simply paying the price for too
many years of softness. Paying
with an act of desperation such
as this one.

KUTOZOV
You are certain?

1ST SECRETARY
I am certain. They know the potential
of the plane. They know what it
means.

(a faint, wry smile)
I... would imagine, if the roles
had been reversed, that we would
have acted similarly...

(the smile disappears)
They will have arranged a refueling
point for this madman somewhere:
once we have destroyed it, and
recovered the Mig, we will hear
no more of the matter.

He suddenly turns a baleful glare on KGB CHAIRMAN ANDROPOV.

1ST SECRETARY (Cont'd)
Chairman Andropov-- the security
for this project was unforgivable!

ANDROPOV'S head nods slowly, the strip-lighting of the cigar-
shaped room glinting off his spectacles.

ANDROPOV
Yes-- unfortunately, First Secretary.

MARSHAL KUTOZOV
(hissing)
The Americans knew far too much!

The 1ST SECRETARY raises his hand quickly, to stop the
internecine squabble between the military and the KGB.

1ST SECRETARY
--There is no time now for recrimi-
nations. That will come later.
It would appear, from the Chairman's
initial inquiries, that his Colonel
played a lone hand-- and failed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

1ST SECRETARY (Cont'd)

Now, it is up to us to stop this American...

(glaring around the table)

...How?

KUTOZOV

(glancing over his shoulder)

Give us the "Wolfpack" map of the U.S.S.R., quickly!

A console OPERATOR punches several buttons in instant obedience. As the MEN at the command table withdraw their hands, and packets of cigarettes and cigar-cases, the surface of the table lights up with a projection-map of the Soviet Union.

KUTOZOV (Cont'd)

Vladimirov?

GENERAL MED VLADIMIROV, commandant of the tactical strike arm of the Soviet Air Force (designated "Wolfpack"), rises. A tall, lean-faced officer with prematurely gray hair and deep blue eyes, he is the definition of confidence, ruthlessness, as he sweeps a hand over the map-- now glowing with clusters of tiny, multi-colored dots.

GEN. VLADIMIROV

(addressing 1ST SECRETARY)

We have ordered a staggered sector scramble, First Secretary, in two areas. We are putting up as many planes as we can, along our southern and northern borders, in order to form a blanket-- a net-- in which the American will be caught. All our "Wolfpack" and "Bearhunt" squadrons know this sequence clearly: It leaves no holes, no gaps. We merely have to wait until the plane is sighted again, visually. It appears, in fact, that he is heading direct south; we should sight him within the hour...

1ST SECRETARY

Why would he fly only north or south, Vladimirov?

GEN. VLADIMIROV

(remembering that he is speaking to a layman)

Ahh... Because, First Secretary, if
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEN. VLADIMIROV (Cont'd)
he headed east, he would run out of fuel-- long before he reached China... And no pilot would risk the Moscow defenses, however invisible he might be.

1ST SECRETARY
I see... what is the range of the aircraft?

GEN. VLADIMIROV
Three thousand miles, maximum.
His refueling vessel will be waiting for him, presumably either in the deserts of Turkey, here, or Greece...
(looking back up)
Sir, we will need to know only one thing from you-- what do you wish done when the Mig is sighted?

1ST SECRETARY
...Obliterate it. Completely.

CUT TO:

INT. M.O.D. OPERATIONS CENTER (LONDON)

USN ADMIRAL EUGENE CURTIN is explaining a set of weather satellite photographs to AUBREY and BUCKHOLZ. The photographs, a dozen of them, are arranged in time-sequence to depict the weather pattern in the Barents Sea for the last twelve hours.

ADM. CURTIN
And that's the latest-- six a.m. your time. Still all clear.

AUBREY
Good... What's the track of Mother One?

CURTIN
Constant-- temperature minus thirty-one and holding.

They are startled by AUBREY'S chief of staff, SHELLEY, suddenly appearing from the Code Room holding a sheet of flimsy.

SHELLEY
--Communications picked this up only minutes ago. Plain language. Picked up by the operator listen-
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELLEY (Cont'd)
ing in on the Soviet airline
frequency.

AUBREY
(anxiously)
And--?

SHELLEY
He was spotted north-west of
Volgograd-- almost tore the
nose off the airliner before
they lost sight of him. The
pilot was screaming his head
off before someone told him to
keep quiet!

AUBREY
(pouring over the message)
Good... show...

BUCKHOLZ is staring over AUBREY'S shoulder, as if needing to...
be convinced--

BUCKHOLZ
So far, so good?

AUBREY
Yes, my dear Buckholz-- so far,
so good. The Russians are
scrambling everything they have
to the south of him...
(his eyes wandering up
towards the projection map)
I'm still bloody worried about
his sound-trail, though-- he must
be making a frightful amount of
noise running for the Urals...

During this last, CAMERA has MOVED IN on the giant relief
map, CLOSING ON the southern tip of the 2,000 mile-long
mountain range--

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. AERIAL SHOT -- TRACKING LOW OVER FOREST-COVERED TERRAIN

--as the ground hurtles by and then suddenly drops away with
a sickening, roller-coaster surge, like falling off a cliff.
The NOISE is AWESOME. CAMERA TILTS, STRAIGHTENS, and the
landscape returns below.

In the far distance now-- magnificent, beckoning above the
clouds-- appear the first snowcapped peaks of the Ural chain.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

The horrendous noise is just a SHRILL WHISPER inside. GANT stares out the perspex at the sight before him and breathes a sigh of relief--

GANT

There they are... Cloud-cover looks good, I'm switching over to auto-pilot and taking her in.

GANT snaps a series of buttons and the Terrain Following Radar scope comes to life-- the mountains ahead registering bright green against a black grid. Every inch of his journey through the mountains will be watched over by radar now, the plane steered by computer.

GANT

Cruising Mach 2.4, no sign air or ground activity; easing down to sub-sonic, setting course due north... I'll be talking to you again when I come out.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. WAR COMMAND CENTER (TUPELOV TU-144/BILYARSK)

GEN. MED VLADIMIROV sits in a corner lounge with Gant's file open before him, oblivious to the machinations of the hunt for Gant to the south going on behind him. He is trying to make sense of something in the file, pouring over the same pages again and again, shaking his head.

GEN. VLADIMIROV

(still absorbed; to himself)
He would not have made such an error...

Inadvertently, he has spoken loudly enough to have caused every face at the command table to turn--

1ST SECRETARY

(irritated)
General Vladimirov, you had something to add?

GEN. VLADIMIROV

(embarrassed; rising)
I'm sorry, First Secretary, I didn't mean to interrupt--

1ST SECRETARY

--Perhaps you find us a hindrance--
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

1ST SECRETARY (Cont'd)
and you would prefer to continue
on your own?

VLADIMIROV stares at the floor in silence. KUTOZOV intercedes
on his officer's behalf--

AIR MARSHAL KUTOZOV
Well, Vladimirov-- are you going
to share with us what you have
found, or not?

VLADIMIROV
Sir. I have discovered... what I
believe may be a flaw in our
tactics. If the American's record
is accurate, then he is a fine
pilot-- perhaps even their best.
Based on this record, and the
probability that he was trained
on a simulator built for this
mission-- we must assume that he
would have seen the airliner on
his radar in plenty of time to have
avoided a sighting... I believe now
that he was deliberately seen
heading south, in order to mislead
us.

The reaction at the table is stunned silence. This is heresy.
The 1ST SECRETARY'S voice comes, barely above a whisper--

1ST SECRETARY
But was it not your plan, General--
to order this "net" to the south?

VLADIMIROV
I believe now that he is a better
pilot than we first assumed.

KUTOZOV
(incredulous)
Then where is he heading, Vladimirov--
if not south?

VLADIMIROV
I... do not have that information
yet.

There is a sharp KNOCK at the door, startling everyone.
The 1st Secretary's KGB BODYGUARD opens it, accepts a sheaf

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

of papers from SOMEONE in a WHITE COAT, and hands them to the 1ST SECRETARY.

1ST SECRETARY

Thank you.

(glancing at them briefly;
passing them to KUTOZOV)

Tell me what they mean.

KUTOZOV slips on a pair of old, wire-rimmed glasses and shuffles through the papers.

KUTOZOV

It is a damage report on the second Mig, First Secretary, as you are aware... It would appear that the dissidents failed to put the aircraft out of commission.

He passes the papers across to GEN. LEONID BOROV. The 1ST SECRETARY speaks, his voice unsettled with excitement--

1ST SECRETARY

How soon-- how soon can it be ready to fly?

GEN. BOROV

(consulting papers)

Perhaps an hour, perhaps less. It must be cleared of foam first, then pre-flighted and armed, First Secretary.

1ST SECRETARY

Yes, yes, I know that-- what about the pilot?

KUTOZOV

He is standing by, sir. He insists that he can still fly.

VLADIMIROV suddenly moves away from the electric atmosphere surrounding the command table, struck by something. He listens with half an ear to the flow of decoded reports issuing from the teams of OPERATORS, rubbing his chin with a harsh motion, his mind racing. He is trying to remember something; in his effort to shut out the room around him, the VOICE coming from a COMMUNICATIONS OPERATOR does not register at first--

COMMUNICATIONS OPERATOR

--Positive sound-trace, installation at Orsk...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIMIROV does not see the upturned face of the OPERATOR staring at him with expectancy. The whole command table is watching VLADIMIROV now, but still he does not notice. KUTOZOV is suddenly beside his shoulder, staring at him--

VLADIMIROV

(his eyes clearing; to the
OPERATOR)

Yes? What did you say?

COMMUNICATIONS OPERATOR

General-- there has been an unidentified sound trace from a low-flying aircraft traveling at more than Mach-2, picked up on the mobile unit west of Orsk.

VLADIMIROV

(softly)

Yes... Yes, of course. We have him now.

He strides to the command table and stares down at the glowing squares of color, a man possessed.

1ST SECRETARY

What is the matter, General Vladimirov?

VLADIMIROV waves a hand dismissively in the direction of the voice--

VLADIMIROV

(barking it out)

Replace this-- give me a projection of the Urals, and of as much to the north as you can-- now! And get me a confirmation of that report, quickly!

The map dissolves and then re-forms; the Urals appear like a livid scar, snaking up towards the deepening blue of the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean. VLADIMIROV slowly traces his finger upwards along the map; starting at Orsk in the southern tip of the Urals and moving up the chain, into the sea; pausing over Novaya Zemlya; finally pushing on in an arc to the north-west, into the Arctic Ocean.

COMMUNICATIONS OPERATOR

--Trace confirmed, sir. Aircraft, which refused to answer a demand
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COMMUNICATIONS OPERATOR (Cont'd)
for identification, heading north-
east into the mountains. They lost
the trace in thirty seconds, but
they confirm heading and speed.

1ST SECRETARY
(ice-cold)
Well, General Vladimirov...?

VLADIMIROV
If you will look at the map, First
Secretary, I will explain my
deductions... He is indeed heading
north, not south, along this track
here... He is utilizing the eastern
slopes of the Urals, apparently in
an effort to mask himself from
visual and sound detection as he
goes. Quite clever, if I may say
so... But if he follows the Urals
to their northernmost point, here,
then he will have to take a visual
sighting somewhere before altering
course for his rendezvous-- most
likely the Gulf of Ob, or the
Gulf of Kara to the west.

(looks up; calmly)
And there, we can track him, sir--
despite his radar immunity.

There is a moment's silence, in which KUTOZOV glances at
VLADIMIROV in dismay.

ANDROPOV
(arrogant)
How?

VLADIMIROV
By heat-source... his exhaust.

ANDROPOV
(still arrogant)
Yes...?

VLADIMIROV
(dismissing him; to a
CODE OPERATOR)
Alert "Wolfpack" border squadrons,
north coast; alert all missile sites
along the First Firechain. Instruct
them to train their infra-red weapons
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIMIROV (Cont'd)
aiming systems ahead of the American's
expected path, in a cone, and await
further orders.

(looking to 1ST SECRETARY)
First Secretary... the infra-red
guidance system is not the most
accurate means of aiming. It...
may be necessary for a Soviet
aircraft to act as a target for
the missiles... Will you give
that order?

VLADIMIROV hears KUTOZOV'S indrawn breath from somewhere
beside him. He keeps his eyes on the 1ST SECRETARY--

1ST SECRETARY
Of course.

VLADIMIROV
Very well, First Secretary-- then
the American is about to enter the
most powerful trap ever sprung.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - FIREFOX -- MORNING

The plane is set on auto-pilot, floating through the mists.
GANT sits motionless, his visor up, staring out his windscreen.
Icy shapes, like grey ghosts, twist and sleepwalk by the plane.
The TFR screen sketches out the invisible topography below,
the sole reminder that there is something down there. GANT
is silent, the cabin is silent, the world is null and void.

GANT'S eyes glance down to his panel gauges. The fuel needle
has just dipped below the half-tank marking. The airspeed
indicator shows six hundred knots, well below supersonic.
GANT'S eyes shift back to the endless mists. Shafts of light
are beginning to appear in the grey-- bright for a moment,
then disappearing-- sunlight, a strobe effect. GANT squints
through the windshield, hoping to see something. He
takes hold of the throttle.

GANT
I should be reaching the Gulf
of Kara by now... Visibility's
pretty bad, I'm going to have
to take her down...

The altitude needle begins to drop. The floating mists
begin to thin. GANT reaches for the homing device and
flips the switch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

I just turned you guys on. I
hope it works...

A stretch of mountains opens up for an instant far below him. The Firefox keeps dropping closer to it-- the rolls and folds of it clearly visible now beneath the clouds. The TFR screen registers a small town away to port. GANT looks out and nods. On the horizon there is a break in texture, a shimmering-- the Gulf of Kara, the sea. And then he notices the radar scope.

A large green blip has appeared on the edge of the screen.

GANT

I've got company... Single aircraft,
higher and away to starboard.
Looks like a reconnaissance plane,
probably Badger-class.

GANT pushes in the throttles.

GANT

I'm going to take her up-- I doubt
she'll see me.

The Firefox begins to climb back into the mist. GANT watches the screen. The green blip continues to move towards the center. Then, almost with disbelief, three bright orange spots register on the bottom edge of the screen, glowing, climbing, nearing--

GANT

(staring at the screen;
paralyzed)

--Holy shit... They've spotted me--
I've got three missiles tracking
me, they're homing on my exhaust.

GANT continues to stare at the screen, his mouth open, motionless. The cluster of orange spots enlarges, inches up the screen. Suddenly, GANT snaps into action. He chops the throttles, pulls the stick back and over for the climb.

GANT

--Contact-time fourteen seconds.

The Firefox surges ahead in response, the airspeed indicator needle jumping forward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

I've got one chance-- make the
Badger hotter than me.

The large green blip is readjusting on the screen. The cluster of orange spots also readjusts on the lower half of the screen-- still closing towards center.

GANT

--Contact-time nine seconds.

GANT pushes open the throttles even more, still climbing. The anti-G suit tightens round him, then relaxes. The three orange blips slip across the screen and then center again. The green blip enlarges as GANT continues to close on the Badger. GANT flicks the "Weapon Arming" switch on the console to his left.

GANT

Weapons armed-- Five seconds to
contact.

He flicks on the thought-guided system.

GANT

Four seconds-- helmet-firing
system locked in!

GANT stares at the ECM (Electronic Counter Measures) screen-- the distance-to-target read-out suddenly flashes green, indicating optimum-firing moment.

GANT fixes his gaze on the green blip on the screen.

GANT

(a whisper)

Now...

A missile suddenly launches from the wing, a brilliant light flickering briefly outside the cockpit. GANT throws the Firefox sharply to port and into a dive, staring at the screen--

CLOSE ON SCREEN

GANT (V.O.)

Two seconds!

The orange track of Gant's missile leaps across the homing bars, then seems to merge with the single green blip.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly the screen lights up, the Badger igniting in the center like a flower opening, a huge flower, orange, the hottest part of the sky. The cluster of orange blips veers towards it, heading right into the maelstrom--

GANT (V.O.)

It's going to wor--!

The whole screen suddenly flashes, and there is a high-pitched electronic SHRIEK as the system overloads momentarily. The cockpit rocks from the shockwave, GANT'S VOICE is lost in the jolt and the SCREAM of his equipment around him--

CUT TO:

INT. WAR COMMAND CENTER (TUPELOV/BILYARSK)

There is jubilation inside the Tupelov. The 1ST SECRETARY is up and beaming.

1ST SECRETARY

It is a moment for congratulations, gentlemen. We have done it-- we have brought down the American.

The 1ST SECRETARY looks over at the smiling ANDROPOV.

1ST SECRETARY

Are you feeling better now, Yuri?

ANDROPOV

Indeed I am, First Secretary.

The 1ST SECRETARY shifts his attention to a brooding VLADIMIROV, who leans over the circular table staring at the map.

1ST SECRETARY

What is the matter, General Vladimirov? You must learn to accept success with more aplomb.

VLADIMIROV looks up, a thin smile on his face.

VLADIMIROV

I wish I could be certain, First Secretary-- much as I fear my mood must displease you, I am not certain...

1ST SECRETARY

You are unhappy that we have lost the Mig-31?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIMIROV

No, First Secretary. I wonder whether we could kill this man Gant quite so easily...

(to the MAP OPERATOR)

Could you give me the Barents Sea map, and bleed in current naval dispositions in the area, together with trawler activity and Elint vessels.

The 1ST SECRETARY glares out one of the windows, his mood changing quickly.

CHAIRMAN ANDROPOV

But it was your plan we followed Vladimirov-- you have doubts about it now?

VLADIMIROV

I was never certain of its success, Chairman. This man is a very clever pilot...

1ST SECRETARY

(turning; coldly)

Very well... what do you propose?

Slowly, the map is beginning to take shape on the table-- various colored lights begin to twinkle across the board, signifying the positions of Soviet ships and submarines.

VLADIMIROV

Find the refueling aircraft, or ship, or whatever it is, that must be waiting for him...

VLADIMIROV looks up. The entire ASSEMBLAGE is quiet, watching him.

VLADIMIROV (Cont'd)

(to OPERATOR)

What are the reports of the search for wreckage of the plane?

RADIO OPERATOR

Nothing so far, sir-- air-reconnaissance reports no indications of wreckage other than that of the Badger... the ground search parties have not yet arrived, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIMIROV'S teeth are set.

VLADIMIROV

Give me a report on the search
for the refueling craft.

SECOND OPERATOR (O.S.)

Negative, sir. No unidentified
surface vessels or aircraft in
the area the computer projected.

VLADIMIROV looks back down at the map, his face flushed
with anger.

VLADIMIROV

(more to himself)

Where is it...?

1ST SECRETARY

Where is what?

VLADIMIROV

(snapping)

The refueling ship... or aircraft.
He cannot land on an aircraft
carrier.

The 1ST SECRETARY pauses, studying VLADIMIROV.

1ST SECRETARY

You are convinced that he is still
alive?

VLADIMIROV

(looking at him; softly)

Yes, First Secretary, I'm afraid
I am.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUSSIAN TRAWLER/BARENTS SEA

The sea is choppy, grey, and cold. A LONE SAILOR is on
the foredeck, emptying a barrel of slops over the side.
Suddenly he whirls, looking up, his pail clattering to
the deck--

--A flash of silver streaks across the deck, no more than
a hundred feet above, and disappears-- the ROAR exploding
in its wake. The SAILOR stares after it in awe, and
then starts running towards the bridge.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT stares at the ECM register.

GANT

Great. I just hit a spy trawler--
passed right over their heads.

The ECM register indicates radar emissions from a source directly behind him, and close.

GANT

Yeah, they've spotted me!

GANT immediately pushes the stick forward. The nose of the Firefox dips, the wrinkled grey sea lifting towards him threateningly.

GANT

I'm taking her down tight to avoid
an infrared fix.

GANT levels off at fifty feet and looks at the fuel gauge. The needle is hovering near the quarter-tank marking.

GANT

Fuel, one-quarter... I'm going
to make a run for it...

GANT pushes the throttles open. The Firefox bursts forward--

GANT

Course heading, still Novaya
Zemlya...

Mach 1.8, 1.9... The Firefox is a blur across the water.

CUT TO:

INT. WAR COMMAND CENTER (TUPELOV/BILYARSK)

1ST SECRETARY

(furious)

It is you who is responsible,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

1ST SECRETARY
General Vladimirov-- you who has
failed in bringing down the
Mig-31!

VLADIMIROV stands across the table from the 1ST SECRETARY,
white-faced.

VLADIMIROV
(softly)
I... I am trying, First Secretary.

1ST SECRETARY
(still hammering)
It was your plan-- this "trap"
as you called it-- and it failed,
General.

VLADIMIROV looks around the room. EVERYONE is staring at
him. Only the old Air Force Marshall, KUTOZOV, has any
sympathy in his eyes. The 1ST SECRETARY sits back down,
allowing his icy calm to return.

1ST SECRETARY
We must proceed...

VLADIMIROV nods and looks back down at the table map.

VLADIMIROV
Could you amplify the position of
the "Riga" and her escorts, please...

VOICE (O.S.)
Sir.

A scarlet dot-- signifying a naval vessel-- lights up in a
position below the Arctic's permanent pack. Two smaller
dots light up, one on either side of it.

VLADIMIROV
Now give me the computer projection
of the new heading-- based on the
sighting.

A directional arrow lights up on the board above the islands
of Novaya Zemlya. VLADIMIROV stares at it, realizing that
it will pass very close to the three scarlet dots.

VLADIMIROV
Instruct the "Riga" to hold her
present position, and inform her
two escorts to surface immediately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE (O.S.)

Sir.

VLADIMIROV

Send a general alert to all ships of the Red Banner Fleet. Prepare them for an alteration of Gant's suspected course. Give them that course.

VOICE (O.S.)

Sir.

VLADIMIROV

What is the prediction of Gant's fuel supply?

2ND CODE OPERATOR

The computer predicts less than two hundred miles left, sir.

VLADIMIROV

How accurate is that forecast?

2ND CODE OPERATOR

An error factor of thirty percent, sir-- no more.

VLADIMIROV looks back down at the map.

1ST SECRETARY

(coolly)

What are your thoughts, General?

VLADIMIROV looks up.

VLADIMIROV

I am thinking, First Secretary, that he has not enough fuel to reach the polar pack. He will have to fly very low, and at a greatly reduced speed, in order to conserve fuel. On his present course, he should pass within visual range of the missile-cruiser "Riga" and her two hunter-killer submarines.

CUT TO:

INT. MINISTRY OF DEFENSE -- LONDON

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUCKHOLZ

Well, that's it... We might
as well all go home.

AUBREY

We don't know that...

BUCKHOLZ

(exploding)

The hell we don't! You tell
me-- an explosion over the Kara
Gulf... Wycombe hears it, our
reconnaissance planes report it...

AUBREY

We don't know he's lost...

BUCKHOLZ

Really? Then what in the hell
was all that coded stuff we
picked up between Bilyarsk and
the Firechain stations? They got
him, Aubrey-- blew his ass
right out from under him.

AUBREY

(pauses)

...I don't know-- it could have
meant they didn't get him.

AUBREY looks at BUCKHOLZ with sympathy. The big man-- the
self-confident BUCKHOLZ-- has been the first one to crack.
BUCKHOLZ seems to sink back into his chair.

AUBREY (Cont'd)

(glancing at USN ADM. CURTIN)

Admiral, I think we ought to notify
Mother One-- tell her to begin
transmitting the signal.

ADMIRAL CURTIN

(nodding)

Right, it's time...

(looking over to
BUCKHOLZ)

Arthur?

BUCKHOLZ nods reluctantly, and shrugs.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

CLOSE ON FUEL-GAUGE

The needle registers deep in the red.

GANT

--shifts his eyes away from the gauge and back to the perspex. A long ice-floe slips by underneath the belly of the Firefox, dazzlingly white against the bitter grey of the sea. The cabin is silent; the homing device sits on the panel-- silent.

GANT

I'm on reserve tanks now--
switched in a few minutes ago.
I don't know how much time I
have left... not much, I
suppose.

GANT looks down at the radar screen. It is empty of activity.

GANT

Your Mother One... never made
it.

He takes a deep breath and looks sadly towards the homing device... then back to the sea.

GANT

Well, let's just say... we gave
it a hell of a try...

He glances absently back down at the radar screen. His eyes fix--

CLOSE ON SCREEN

--A large green blip has registered at the top of the screen; a surface vessel of mammoth proportions. Even as he watches, two smaller blips appear, one on either side of the larger one--

BACK TO GANT

--as he stares passively at the screen, seemingly unable to move.

GANT

Missile cruiser-- and two escort
subs. Contact... dead ahead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT'S eyes shift to the ECM register. The read-off indicates a time of one minute to target. GANT glances back down at the fuel gauge. A bitter smile begins to form on his lips. His eyes take on a strange, cold quality--

GANT

Can't take evasive action, I'm out of fuel.

(snapping buttons hurriedly)

'Might as well see what this thing can do-- I'm going in. Contact time, fifty sec--

--A SHRIEK breaks the silence of the cockpit, continuous, pulsing, maddening. GANT looks stunned. He stares down at the homing device-- an orange light is flashing on its face. It ceases, and suddenly the digital display readout comes to life. Numbers cascade over each other, finally clicking in at 142 and counting down.

GANT

(angry)

Now you come, you assholes...
Homing device just activated--
Mother One, whatever it is,
one-four-zero miles out.

GANT scans the ECM register.

GANT

ECM picking up infrared detection beams-- they've got me locked on.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. "RIGA" MISSILE CRUISER

A SIREN wails in staccato blasts across the massive decks; SAILORS scramble to prepare four Kamov hunter-killer helicopters for lift-off on the aft quarters of the ship. One is lifting and swooping away, ready for battle. Another is lifting--

INT. FIRE - CONTROL CENTER/"RIGA"

TECHNICIANS are crowded around the various ECM and computer screens in the dull red glow of the bridge. A CODE OPERATOR is barking into a phone, coordinating the two escort subs as he watches Gant's heat-source closing on the infrared screen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CODE OPERATOR
(into phone)
Target still on contact-course;
altitude holding zero-two-zero.

The FIRE-CONTROL CHIEF whirls and shouts to the CAPTAIN--

FIRE-CONTROL CHIEF
Target does not appear to be taking
avoiding action, Captain!

CAPTAIN
He will.
(to CODE OPERATOR)
Instruct escorts to stand by
until he initiates avoiding
action.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT'S face is tense, alert. The momentary despair has left him. He is gearing for the fight of his life.

GANT
I'm coming in at twenty feet.
I think I can neutralize the subs
until I'm by-- they won't risk
firing around the cruiser's
engines.

He flips the "Weapons Arming" switch.

GANT
Weapons armed... speed, four-five-
zero...

He reaches overhead and snaps two switches marked in red letters (SUBTITLED: REARWARD DEFENSE POD)

GANT
Tail-unit engaged... It better
burn up the sky. Contact time,
nineteen seconds--

Suddenly, he SEES it-- the "Riga", far in the distance, a low shape emerging on the horizon.

GANT
There she is...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His eyes sweep to the radar screen-- several small blips are rising away from the cruiser.

GANT

I'm picking up choppers now--
I'm going to take one out.

He snaps the helmet visor down over his face and lowers the couch into battle position: the gladiator going in against the lions--

GANT

Here we go... fourteen, thirteen,
twelve-- now.

A brilliant light flashes away from under the left wing as a missile unleashes--

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. FIRE CONTROL CENTER -- "RIGA"

The MEN are staring at the screens before them in disbelief--

FIRE-CONTROL CHIEF

Captain, he's coming straight in!

TECHNICIAN

(pointing to screen)
Missile launched!

The CAPTAIN'S eyes dart to this screen-- an orange trail is closing on one of the helicopters with frightening speed--

CODE OPERATOR

--Captain! Escorts requesting
permission to fire!

CAPTAIN

No! They'll hit our turbines--

2ND CODE OPERATOR

Kamov-Two, missile launched on
your direction!

CROSS CUT TO:

INT./EXT. KAMOV HELICOPTER

--as the PILOT stares at his screen, horrified. The GUNNER beside him tries to unhitch his harness and bail out--

EXT. ANGLE ON KAMOV HELICOPTER

--as it veers sharply, swooping away from the cruiser in an attempted evasive maneuver. Suddenly a streak of light ENTERS FRAME and the helicopter explodes in a flash over the water--

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. FIRE-CONTROL CENTER/"RIGA"

The MEN are in a frenzy-- an orange flower is opening on all the screens where the helicopter was. All systems are SHRIEKING electronically--

CAPTAIN

(shouting to be heard)

--Launch forward missiles!

CROSS CUT TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

The Firefox hurtles towards the "Riga", the sky glowing with fire off to its right a half-mile away. GANT'S teeth are bared behind his mask--

GANT

(eyes on radar screen)

They took the bait-- two SA missiles launched from bow...

CLOSE ON RADAR SCREEN

Two orange pricks of light streak away from the cruiser's decks, converging towards center screen--

ANGLE ON GANT/CRUISER PASSING OUTSIDE COCKPIT

GANT shoves the throttles forward, sliding the Firefox by the ship's plates with his underbelly exposed to starboard. He is by it in a split second.

CLOSE ON RADAR SCREEN

The orange pricks deviate from their original track and close on Gant's heat-trail with frightening speed--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE ON GANT

as he stares intently at the screen. The ECM tail-unit registers optimum firing moment--

GANT

Now...

EXT. TAIL OF FIREFOX

A white-hot, incandescent flare detaches itself from the tail-unit, explodes, and fills up the sky--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT shoves the throttles all the way forward. The Firefox bursts ahead with an incredible thrust--

CLOSE ON SCREEN

The decoy flare lights up the screen to Gant's rear. The two orange pricks disappear in its glow-- and suddenly the whole screen is a ball of fire, so brilliant that it hurts GANT'S eyes behind his visor.

GANT

Bingo--

INT. FIRE-CONTROL CENTER/"RIGA"

FIRE-CONTROL CHIEF

(staring at screens; puzzled)

Sir-- missiles appear to have detonated prematurely...

CAPTAIN

(flying into a rage)

What--? What happened?!

FIRE-CONTROL CHIEF

(still staring at screens)

There was an explosion-- we don't know-- we're still tracking him on infrared...

CODE OPERATOR

(listening on headphones)

Escorts have a bearing, sir!
Awaiting order to fire!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN
Fire!

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTER/V-CLASS SUBMARINE ESCORT (THREE MILES TO STARBOARD)

A similar group of TECHNICIANS is hovered around a smaller version of the cruiser's computerized weapons-system screens. The CODE OPERATOR looks up from his station--

SUB'S CODE OPERATOR
(to CAPTAIN)
--Permission to fire granted!

SUB'S FIRE-CONTROL CHIEF
--Tracking...

SUB CAPTAIN
--Fire!

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN'S SURFACE/SUBMARINE TOWER VISIBLE IN B.G.

--as a turbulent funnel spreads out away from the sub. It continues to race forward under water, now joined by a mate. Suddenly, like two birds, the missiles erupt out of the water and take to the air--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT is streaking across the water at Mach 1.6-- below him is a blur. The homing device continues to SHRIEK.

CLOSE ON RADAR SCREEN

Two orange pricks appear, moving up the screen. Now, another patch of light appears on the port side of the screen-- two more orange dots converging--

GANT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Here they come.

GANT eases the throttles back, slowing the aircraft drastically. The four orange dots react instantly, seeming to leap forward towards him, overhauling him. GANT'S eyes remain fixed on the screen, his hands on the throttles, watching the dots

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

home in closer, closer...

--And then he punches the throttles, the Firefox leaping ahead like a startled bird.

GANT
(bracing himself)

--NOW!

The tail-unit discharges another decoy flare behind him and almost instantly the missiles detonate, the SHOCK of the explosion slamming into the Firefox, shoving it forward. The sky is an inferno. GANT fights for control, his instruments blinking on and off, SCREECHING as they try to maintain function, and suddenly he is out of the maelstrom.

GANT flips his visor up and glances around the cockpit, checking for instrument damage. Sweat is pouring down his forehead, his hands are trembling, his face is white. After a moment he lets his breath out, sinks back on the couch, and eases the throttles down to 170 knots.

GANT
(hoarse)
Jesus, but this is a machine...

CUT TO:

INT. WAR COMMAND CENTER (TUPELOV/BILYARSK)

LT. COL. YURI VOSKOV, the right side of his face bruised and swollen, stands in front of the 1ST SECRETARY. He is wearing a pressure suit and he is quiet. He is the focus of the entire room.

1ST SECRETARY
You do not need to be reminded of
the absolute crisis we face here.
The price of failure, Col. Voskov...
for you, for many in this room...
would be great.

VOSKOV is tense. He doesn't answer at first. He is looking for something deep inside of himself.

VOSKOV
The American... is a dead man,
First Secretary.

The 1ST SECRETARY allows a smile. He nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

1ST SECRETARY

Good...

(looking over to the
CODE OPERATOR)

Pass the order to the tower.

LT. COL. VOSKOV salutes the 1ST SECRETARY and walks quickly from the room. VLADIMIROV watches him leave, his face sympathetic. The 1ST SECRETARY looks over to the CODE OPERATOR.

CODE OPERATOR

They are on standby now, sir.

The 1ST SECRETARY gets up from the table and walks over to a window. He peers out at the runway and then looks back at VLADIMIROV.

1ST SECRETARY

You do not seem... to be in agreement with the sending of the second prototype, General Vladimirov.

VLADIMIROV

I... I am in agreement, First Secretary...

1ST SECRETARY

Then, what then? Your cruiser and her two escort submarines are in... direct line, I believe you said... Are they not, General? Perhaps, you are so confident that they can destroy the Mig...?

VLADIMIROV

No, First Secretary. I am not that confident...

1ST SECRETARY

Then, what are you confident of? Surely, there must be something that you are wont to do.

CODE OPERATOR

(interrupting)

--Sir. Message from the "Riga"..

VLADIMIROV looks to the CODE OPERATOR, tense.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIMIROV

What is it?

CODE OPERATOR

Contact made with unidentified aircraft. Missiles fired, infra-red type, from the cruiser in one group of two, and from submarine escorts in two groups of two.

VLADIMIROV

Well?

CODE OPERATOR

The aircraft appeared to be carrying some kind of drone tail-unit which detached and ignited...

The CODE OPERATOR pauses and looks uneasily around the room.

CODE OPERATOR (Cont'd)

The Mig-31, sir, was already over all radar horizons before the contact time of the missiles... The Captain would like clarification of the type and capability of the aircraft he attempted to destroy, sir.

VLADIMIROV is staring at MARSHAL KUTOZOV. His breath is gone, he cannot speak. The FIRST SECRETARY interrupts the silence of the room.

1ST SECRETARY

(quiet)

So... what do you intend to do now, General Vladimirov?

VLADIMIROV

(weakly)

The first priority, First Secretary, is to order the take-off of the Mig.

The 1ST SECRETARY nods-- like a parent.

1ST SECRETARY

Yes. That is done, General, and-- next?

VLADIMIROV crosses to the map-table and glares down at it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIMIROV

Order the "Riga" and her submarine escorts to alter course and head north in the wake of the Mig at all possible speed.

Behind him, the keys of the encoding console begin CLICKING almost at once.

1ST SECRETARY

Good. And, what else?

VLADIMIROV

Scramble the Polar Search squadrons immediately. Instruct them to proceed to the predicted landfall of the Mig on the permanent ice pack. Order them to begin searching for any possible landing sites or fuel dumps.

1ST SECRETARY

The permanent pack, General?

VLADIMIROV

Yes, First Secretary. It is the only place he can possibly re-fuel now. There... is no mother-vessel.

CODE OPERATOR

(interrupting)

--Sir. The Mig is approaching take-off.

The 1ST SECRETARY turns eagerly to look. Several OTHERS cross to the windows. The ENGINES can be heard running up outside. The ROAR suddenly increases ten-fold-- vibrating the Tupelov's walls like a drum-skin-- as the Mig begins its race down the runway. VLADIMIROV does not move. He keeps his eyes on the 1ST SECRETARY, who is enthralled with the take-off. Then there is the THUNDER of lift-off, the climb, and it is gone.

The 1ST SECRETARY turns, finally, a thin smile on his lips.

1ST SECRETARY

Let us hope... we are more successful this time.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX (BARENTS SEA)

The homing device's maddening CRY is the only sound in the cabin. GANT sits silently in his couch-- like a condemned man-- staring from the empty fuel gauge to the "Deaf Aid's" digital display readout. His gaze shifts to the inertial navigator's calculator. He punches something up on it, frowns when the answer comes back. He punches it up again, stares at the same answer, and exhales--

GANT

Contact, ninety-two miles... and
I'm flying on air. Estimated
ditch-point, maximum-- sixty
miles.

GANT is debating something. He scans the gauges on his panel. The radar screen is quiet. Slowly, he pushes the throttles in, pulls back on the column, and the nose of the Firefox begins to lift.

GANT

I don't know if I have the
fuel for it... but I'm taking
her up. I'm going to try and
glide in.

Gingerly, GANT begins to accelerate, easing the nose up into a zoom climb, tensely watching the altimeter.

GANT

(quiet)

Fourteen thousand and climbing...

GANT gently increases the thrust of the turbojets. The altimeter seems to leap in response, almost by the second rising as the Firefox soars higher. GANT is rigid in his couch, watching the altimeter-- fearing the sudden jolt, the loss of fuel... 32,000 feet... 44,000 feet... GANT closes his eyes. A few more seconds, and he opens them-- 59,000 feet. The sky is a deep, dark blue now.

GANT eases the column forward, levelling the plane, then throttles all the way back on the engines. They fall silent.

GANT

(hoarse)

...Just cut power. Sixty-thousand
feet and beginning the glide.
Polar-pack in sight now...

GANT is staring out the perspex. Ahead of him-- far beyond the tiny, silent grayness of the northern limits of the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Barents Sea; far beyond a layer of cloud buildup at least fifty miles away-- shines an edge of whiteness on the horizon's curve. The polar-pack.

CUT TO:

INT. M.O.D. OPERATIONS CENTER (LONDON)

USN ADMIRAL CURTIN walks quickly from the Code Room, his face tense. He scans the darkened operation's theater, looking for someone.

BUCKHOLZ, sitting by himself near the top of the theater, senses something and glances down towards the floor. He is just in time to see AUBREY disappearing into the Code Room after CURTIN.

BUCKHOLZ
(suspecting the worst)
Oh, no...

He gets to his feet.

CODE ROOM

AUBREY is staring at a sheet of flimsy.

CURTIN
(hushed, urgent)
We just received it. Transmitted
with their latest weather report.

AUBREY
(softly)
Dear God, he must be flying
on vapor...

BUCKHOLZ suddenly appears in the doorway, looking quite belligerent.

BUCKHOLZ
...Well?

AUBREY shoots a brief, conspiratorial glance at CURTIN before turning. His eyes give away nothing.

AUBREY
My, but you're the optimist...
(suddenly breaking into
a smile)
We're releasing the decoys into
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUBREY (Cont'd)
the North Cape area. Mother-One
just sent word-- they spotted him
five minutes ago.

BUCKHOLZ
...He's alive?

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT-FIREFOX

GANT stares out at the cloud-stack looming inexorably up
towards him, ready to swallow the Firefox at 22,000 feet.
It stretches as far as the eye can see now.

GANT
We've got a little problem here...
Four minutes to target, and I'm
not showing anything but water down
there. I'm just about into the
stack, a visual sighting's gonna'
be out of the--... Shit...

The Firefox has just passed into the clouds, dropping into
the grey silence with the helplessness of a stone. GANT
checks the TFR screen again-- empty except for the green,
broken shapes of ice-floes slipping by. He scans radar-- it
too is empty. Yet the homing device continues its pulsing
CRY; the distance-to-target readout continues to descend--
12... 11... 10...

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM/USS "PEQUOD" (NUCLEAR CLASS SUBMARINE)

The EXECUTIVE OFFICER is on the phone, relaying a message
from the radar room to the CAPTAIN--

CAPT. SEERBACKER
--Where is he now?

EXEC. OFFICER FLEISCHER
(listening to phone; shouting)
Four miles, sir!-- height a little
over thirteen thousand feet!

SEERBACKER
Is he still on the same bearing?

FLEISCHER
--Sir!

SEERBACKER
Can he see the floe?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLEISCHER

He will in a second, sir--
cloudbase is thirteen-and-one-
half thousand!

SEERBACKER

Then let's surprise him, gentle-
men. Blow all tanks-- hit it!

CROSS CUT TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT'S eyes are riveted to the homing device as he floats blindly down through the cloud-stack, trying to stifle the growing claustrophobia, the panic of missing his target in the clouds--

--when suddenly, and with no warning, he is out of them. The bitter gray sea opens up below him again, littered with ice.

GANT

(with great relief)

We've got visibility again-- thank
you, London...

(his eyes searching ahead)

...I'm still not showing any-
thing down there, either
visually or on instruments.
Distance to target, three miles!

His eyes sweep his panel; the homing device clicks down to 2... and still there is nothing on radar.

GANT

Looks like I'm gonna' be doin'
some swimming...

Suddenly, the homing SIGNAL begins to emit a broken, bleeping CALL-- two to the second-- as if an echo of itself. GANT bolts forward, startled, his eyes widening--

ANGLE -- WESTERN EDGE OF A TWO-MILE-LONG ICE FLOE

The ice has begun to buckle, straining and SCREAMING from underneath, curling at the water's edge. It CRACKS upwards in a deafening EXPLOSION, and the reinforced tower of a nuclear submarine emerges, ice spinning away from it as

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

the "Pequod" surges to the surface.

Immediately a bright orange balloon bobs upwards from the tower and an orange streamer of smoke spurts into the air.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT

I don't believe it...

He is grinning from ear to ear. Gently, he eases on power. The Firefox shoves forward, and he drops the nose.

EXT. FORWARD DECK -- USS "PEQUOD"/ICE FLOE

A hatch pops open, dislodging a shard of ice. CAPT. SEERBACKER and LT. FLEISCHER clamber topside and train their binoculars to the south. And then they see it-- the Firefox, dipping its wings and slip-sliding in over the water, coming in directly upwind.

FLEISCHER

(looking through binoculars)

He's coming in an awful hurry, sir...

The rest of the CREWMEMBERS are pouring out of the other hatches, dropping onto the ice, pulling and yanking hoses and equipment from various holds.

SEERBACKER

He must know what he's doing...

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT drops the undercarriage and the panel lights glow on, registering wheels "locked" (RUSSIAN: to be SUBTITLED). He slows to 220 knots, levels the wings, and suddenly the floe is speeding towards him, the grey, wrinkled waves ahead of it reaching up at the Firefox hungrily. He chops the throttles and the Firefox seems to sag tiredly in the air. The floe slips underneath the wings now, GANT pulls the stick back into the flare-out position and, on full flap, he drops her down.

A dazzling whiteness rushes up towards him-- and suddenly the plane jolts as the rear wheels bite into the surface snow. The nose wheel slams down and immediately a spume of snow lashes the windshield. GANT flicks on the de-mister and the forward screen begins to clear. The tower of the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

sub suddenly flashes by to port. GANT cranes forward to see the end of the floe looming five hundred yards ahead--

GANT
Can't use the brakes-- it's
gonna' be close!

EXT. "PEQUOD" -- CREWMEMBERS WATCHING

--as the Firefox closes the gap with the icy gray waters much too quickly. The tail parachute bobs helplessly behind it, the wing flaps creating a swirl of snow around the plane--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT'S teeth are bared as he watches the water looming towards him-- three hundred yards away now-- but slowing. He is helpless. Two hundred yards, slowing. One hundred, slowing-- fifty, forty, thirty... twenty... and it comes to a stop. GANT wheels the plane around quickly, flips his visor up, and unlocks the hood latch. Freezing arctic air rushes in.

GANT
(a choked whisper)
Simple...

CUT TO:

INT. WAR COMMAND CENTER (TUPELOV/BILYARSK)

VLADIMIROV
When were they sighted-- exactly?

CONSOLE OPERATOR
The submarines appeared seven minutes ago, sir, steaming south out of Spitzbergen. The airplanes were just now sighted.

1ST SECRETARY
(nodding; to the table
at large)
Then there can be no question...
They have shown us their hand.

The entire room is gathered around the command table, watching tensely as a chain of lights blink further towards the North Cape region, appearing to converge out of the Arctic Ocean on an area four hundred miles to the west of Gant's last sighting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIMIROV stares at the lights, bewildered. He turns to a CODE OPERATOR--

VLADIMIROV

What is the latest report from the Polar Search Squadrons?

CODE OPERATOR

Still negative, sir. No landing sites or fuel-dumps reported on the permanent pack.

The 1ST SECRETARY turns towards VLADIMIROV, amused. ANDROPOV smiles thinly at the 1ST SECRETARY'S shoulder, like an echo.

1ST SECRETARY

(lightly)

Come, come, Vladimirov, is it so difficult to accept? You were simply matched against inferior minds-- and you have won...

(mocking)

There is no runway carved out of the ice; there is no mystical beast waiting to save the American.

(jabbing his finger at the map)

They are here! Now, order all units into the North Cape area-- everything you have!

VLADIMIROV nods quickly, not wanting to upset the 1ST SECRETARY any further.

VLADIMIROV

(to CODE OPERATOR)

Scramble "Wolfpack" squadrons in the North Cape sector through to Archangelsk sector. Staggered Sector Scramble for all units. Order the "Otlitnyi" and the "Slavny" to alter course at once for North Cape and proceed at utmost speed.

CODE OPERATOR

Sir!

VLADIMIROV

Order all submarines on the Barents Sea map to alter course
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLADIMIROV (Cont'd)
and proceed to the Cape at top
speed.

CODE OPERATOR
Sir!

VLADIMIROV
Order the "Riga" to put up her
helicopters at once-- order them
to proceed at top speed to the
Cape.

CODE OPERATOR
Sir!

The 1ST SECRETARY'S eyes have not left VLADIMIROV. He is
waiting. When VLADIMIROV turns to him at last, the 1ST
SECRETARY just smiles slyly.

1ST SECRETARY
...Aren't you forgetting something,
Vladimirov?

VLADIMIROV
(flushed)
She-- sir, she wouldn't be able
to reach the North Cape in time--
to effect the outcome.

1ST SECRETARY
Nonsense. I know what you're
doing... Did you really think I
could be fooled so easily,
Vladimirov? Me, a politician?...
But you can have her, Vladimirov.
You can send your "Riga" off
looking into the blue. Does that
please you?

VLADIMIROV
(now very embarrassed)
It is just a precautionary measure,
First Secretary. In case--

1ST SECRETARY
(dismissing him with a wave)
Oh, leave us alone... If your
"Riga" finds any polar bears
filled with fuel, do please
let us know.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICE FLOE

A thick grey mist has descended over the floe; shadowy FIGURES can be made out rushing around and SHOUTING in it like men at the scene of some desperate, frozen fire. Hoses snake across the ice from the "Pequod", pumping their precious load of kerosene into the wing hatches of the Mig-- its dark, wicked shape squatting beside the sub like a giant bird of prey.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN ("PEQUOD")

Inside, GANT is eating in the warmth of Seerbacker's cabin. It strikes GANT as strange-- to be sitting in a U.S. submarine, in the middle of the Arctic Ocean, floating on some Godforsaken ice floe with the whole of the Soviet Air Force looking for him-- and here he is, calmly eating a bowl of chili, listening to some New Yorker talking as if they'd just won a Sunday softball game.

SEERBACKER

(laughing)

...So, we finally locate the damn thing-- after four days of going around in circles, checking their goddamned satellite photos against what we can see through the periscope-- and then we find out it's too thin! The damn thing's moved south faster than their predictions, it's starting to break up, and there's no way you can land with less than eight-foot thickness. So, we contact our base back in Norfolk, wondering what in hell kind of backup floe they've--

There is a sudden KNOCK at the door and LT. FLEISCHER bursts in--

FLEISCHER

(out of breath)

Captain, we've got three sonar contacts to the south of us along the Major's flight path-- eighty miles out and heading this way!

SEERBACKER

(jumping to his feet)

What in-- do you have any idea who they are?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLEISCHER

No sir. Range is too far for a computer image.

GANT

(calmly)

Ah, that'll be the cruiser and her escorts.

SEERBACKER

(whirling)

It can't be! They're supposed to be heading into the decoy area!

GANT

Well, maybe that's what they're supposed to be doing... I don't know. But there's somebody in Bilyarsk who's been breathing down my neck this whole trip. Looks like maybe he's on to me again...

SEERBACKER

Well, shit. There goes the neighborhood... If we can see them, then they can damn well see us.

CUT TO:

INT. WAR COMMAND CENTER (TUPELOV/BILYARSK)

A CODE OPERATOR suddenly bolts upwards in his seat. He looks to GEN. VLADIMIROV--

CODE OPERATOR

(listening to headphones)

Sir-- the "Riga" is picking up a sonar-contact... which they believe to be too strong to be an ice floe... They are showing it to be short of the permanent pack, but in a direct line with the American's last reported flight path-- and are awaiting your orders!

VLADIMIROV stares at the 1ST SECRETARY, a vast effort of will keeping him from showing his contempt. He looks to KUTOZOV, seeking in his eyes his support, his intervention. KUTOZOV nods, and begins in his harsh whisper--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHAL KUTOZOV

In my estimation, First Secretary,
this contact is worth investigation.

1ST SECRETARY

(softly)

In... your estimation?

Everybody in the Command Center-- from ANDROPOV down to the most junior radio-operator-- understands that VLADIMIROV is making his final move. The atmosphere is tense with apprehension.

VLADIMIROV

(slowly; picking his words)

I-- I believe I understand now,
how they intended to refuel the
Mig at sea... They have used--
are using-- a large ice-floe
as a runway; and the refueling
vessel is undoubtedly a submarine.
That is the sonar-contact the
"Riga" has made.

1ST SECRETARY

The aircraft has landed, Vladimirov?

VLADIMIROV

Yes, First Secretary. The aircraft
has landed.

The 1ST SECRETARY gazes, almost idly, down at the map table. The "Riga" and her escorts seem to have become three solitary lights as the scene of Soviet surface and air activity has vacated to the west. The 1ST SECRETARY looks up at VLADIMIROV, and for a brief, fleeting instant, VLADIMIROV sees stark, naked fear in the 1ST SECRETARY'S eyes. Then it is gone.

1ST SECRETARY

And how... would you choose to
investigate this sonar-contact,
Vladimirov?

VLADIMIROV

Recall the "Riga's" helicopters
at once, First Secretary, and send
them immediately to the contact's
source-point. It would take--
twenty minutes.

The 1ST SECRETARY seems to be debating this-- when a RADIO
OPERATOR'S voice cuts through the silence--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADIO OPERATOR

--Lt. Col. Voskov reporting, sir!
He has made contact with the
refueling tanker over Novaya
Zemlya and is awaiting further
orders!

VLADIMIROV

Put him on.
(into microphone)
Voskov-- Vladimirov.

Static CRACKLES over the console speaker, and a faint VOICE
responds--

VOSKOV'S VOICE (O.S.; speaker)

Voskov-- over.

VLADIMIROV stares at the 1ST SECRETARY--

VLADIMIROV

(imploring)
He could be there in two minutes,
First Secretary!

1ST SECRETARY

No! You may send the helicopters
after this-- this-- highly dubious
sonar-contact-- but not the Mig!
He is to proceed to the North Cape--
at once!

VLADIMIROV recoils from the shrill, shouted orders, and nods
his head tiredly. He picks up the microphone--

VLADIMIROV

...Vladimirov to Tretsov--
(MORE)

CROSS CUT TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- 2ND FIREFOX

VOSKOV stares out his perspex at the giant refueling plane's
tail above him, his own nose-probe buried deep inside the
mother-plane's abdomen. The sea shimmers far below.

VLADIMIROV'S VOICE (O.S. Radio; Cont'd)

--Proceed to the North Cape area as
soon as refueling is completed.

VOSKOV glances down at the radio, bewildered by the change in
plan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOSKOV
(into microphone)
North Cape-- repeat your message,
please.

VLADIMIROV'S VOICE (O.S.; radio)
(angrily)
I said North Cape!

CUT TO:

EXT. ICE FLOE/"PEQUOD"

GANT is strolling alongside SEERBACKER, watching the frenzied activity under the direction of the CHIEF ENGINEER, PECK. He is a burly taskmaster, and MEN jump at the sound of his voice. Besides the fuel lines running from the "Pequod", two additional hoses are spraying an anti-icing fluid onto the wings and fuselage of the Mig in order to keep it free of ice. Several MEN are struggling to lift an ANAB missile into place under the left wing, where one has been fired.

GANT
...Buckholz didn't miss a thing,
did he?

SEERBACKER
They thought you might need some
replacements.... Your bosses got
those off a Mig-25 they stole
from Syria...
(into his walkie-talkie)
Fleischer, what's the news on
our friends?

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)
(over walkie-talkie)
Course and speed appear to be
exactly the same, sir-- straight
for us.

SEERBACKER
How much time have we got?

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)
Twenty-four minutes, sir, subject
to a ten percent error in the sonar
contact.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEERBACKER

(sarcastic)

Thanks alot, Fleischer. You're giving me alot of time.

SEERBACKER shakes his head and continues walking. PECK is heading towards them.

SEERBACKER

What's it look like?

PECK

Eight, maybe nine minutes.

SEERBACKER

You've got "Harmless" to do yet.

PECK

I know, Chief.

Suddenly FLEISCHER'S VOICE cuts through on the radio again, urgent--

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)

--Captain, we've got trouble!
Radar contact-- two aircraft heading this way.

SEERBACKER

Oh no--

INT. CONTROL ROOM - "PEQUOD"

GANT and SEERBACKER are standing behind a row of TECHNICIANS, intent on the radar screen.

FLEISCHER

There's no exhaust, Captain. Judging by their speed, they've got to be choppers. They were heading west into the decoy area when we noticed them.

GANT

Yep, somebody's on to us... They're probably the ones I saw with the missile cruiser.

SEERBACKER

You know how to make trouble for me, Gant-- you really, really do.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEERBACKER (Cont'd)
How long before they get here?

FLEISCHER
Eight minutes-- tops.

SEERBACKER
(to RADIO OPERATOR)
Shit. Give me the blower...
(into mike)
Hear this-- this is the Captain.
It's operation "Harmless"
procedure, on the double. We
have about eight minutes, maybe
less. Get the lead out of your
asses and move!

CUT TO:

INT. WAR COMMAND CENTER (TUPELOV/BILYARSK)

VLADIMIROV slams his hand down on the map table in a rage.

VLADIMIROV
The contact is confirmed, First
Secretary!

1ST SECRETARY
(turning; icily)
Vladimirov, calm yourself...

VLADIMIROV
(shrill, hysterical)
Calm-- calm myself?

1ST SECRETARY
Yes-- calm yourself.

VLADIMIROV
How can I be calm when your--
stupidity-- stupidity-- is losing
that aircraft to the Americans?
You know what this man Gant is--
he could land that aircraft on an
ice floe and take off again! You
must act, First Secretary!

The 1ST SECRETARY is taken back momentarily. Rage is apparent
on his face, but he quickly controls it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

1ST SECRETARY
Very well, Vladimirov. If you
are so ready to-- spoil things
by your behavior-- I can do
no more than humor you...
What is it you require?

VLADIMIROV hesitates. There is no turning back now.

VLADIMIROV
The immediate recall of the
second Mig from the North Cape
rendezvous.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMPANIONWAY/"PEQUOD"

GANT and SEERBACKER are hurrying down a companionway in the
interior of the sub.

GANT
What the hell is Operation
"Harmless"?

SEERBACKER
It's like a pair of sunglasses--
it's our little attempt to hide.

SEERBACKER enters his cabin and motions for GANT to lock the
door.

SEERBACKER
Quickly.

He cranks the dial on a small wall-safe and yanks the door
open. He pulls a cellophane packet out and hands it to
GANT.

SEERBACKER
If you get out of here, you're
going to need this.

GANT opens the packet-- his new orders. He surveys the
list of map coordinates, times. SEERBACKER watches him
for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEERBACKER

Well?

GANT

(nodding)

Got it.

SEERBACKER places a large steel ashtray on the table. GANT slips the packet back into the wrapper, grounds the heel of his hand on the acid capsule contained inside, and sets it in the ashtray. Almost instantly, the packet begins to dissolve.

SEERBACKER

(into walkie-talkie)

--Fleischer?

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)

--Still closing, Captain. ETA
six minutes thirty seconds.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICE FLOE

GANT does a double-take as he steps out onto the ice with SEERBACKER-- the submarine and the surrounding ice floe has been transformed into an arctic weather station. A bright orange weather-balloon is hovering above the "Pequod". Another is farther up in the sky. A small hut has been erected with crude furniture inside. MEN are running in and out of it, carrying maps, charts, equipment. Holes are being drilled in the ice, and thermometers are being lowered.

SEERBACKER

(gesturing to GANT)

Operation Harmless...

(into walkie-talkie)

--Fleischer!

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)

--ETA five minutes forty seconds,
sir.

SEERBACKER

(into walkie-talkie)

This is it. Alright, Fleischer,
call me exact speed and distance
every thirty seconds.

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)

Sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At this moment, PECK is running up to them, out of breath.

PECK

We've finished the refueling,
Captain!

GANT

You're going to have to steam
a runway for me now... Starting
at the southern tip and taking
it as far as you can. Can you
do that in three minutes?

PECK looks at him, speechless.

PECK

Three minutes-- that's fucking
impossible. Why, Major?

GANT

Surface snow-- I can't be held
back by the surface resistance.

SEERBACKER

Get to it, Peck!

PECK

(pissed)

Aw, shit.

(bellowing at his MEN)

Alright, I want steam hoses
up here on the double!

SEERBACKER is now on edge, watching the snail-like approach
of the MEN and the hoses.

SEERBACKER

Hell-- they'll never make it.

GANT

(calm)

They will.

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)

Sir! They're calling-- want
identification immediately, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEERBACKER
(into walkie-talkie)
The hell they do! You know
the routine, it's written down.
Stall them.

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)
They want to speak to you, sir.

SEERBACKER
Well, tell 'em I'm busy-- I'm
out taking fucking temperature
readings!

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY OVER WATER -- TWENTY MILES TO THE SOUTHWEST

A pair of blue Kamov hunter-killer helicopters hurtle past
the CAMERA, travelling at a 200 mph clip--

INT./EXT. 1ST KAMOV HELICOPTER -- OCEAN RUSHING BY BELOW

The RADIO OPERATOR looks around at his LIEUTENANT and shakes
his head angrily--

RADIO OPERATOR
(back into his mike;
thick Russian accent)
--We are asking for your cooperation!
We want proper identification--
from the superior office, please!

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (over radio; O.S.)
(cloyingly polite)
I'm sorry, sir, but as I said,
the Captain is involved in an
important experiment at the other
end of the floe.

The LIEUTENANT mutters something and glares at the radio-set
in impotent rage.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICE FLOE

PECK is bellowing at SEVERAL MEN as they drag the steam hoses
back across the ice to the "Pequod". The activity on the
floe is near panic--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PECK

Move it! Come on, move your asses--

SEERBACKER is pacing in front of the Firefox, waiting nervously as another TEAM hoses down the ice in front of it with steam. He looks around at GANT, who is removing his parka.

SEERBACKER

You've gotta' go now, Gant...

GANT

(nods)

I'm going. I'm a little worried about you guys, though. They're gonna be watching for my heat-trail-- you know that, don't you?

SEERBACKER nods grimly.

SEERBACKER

Don't you worry about us. We're in international waters-- so as long as you're gone when they get here, they can't do a thing. You can get out of here, can't you?

GANT

So far away, you wouldn't believe it.

SEERBACKER

You better be right, mister.

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)

(from walkie-talkie)

--ETA two minutes thirty seconds. They keep asking for you, sir. They want convincing-- I don't think I've done a very good job.

SEERBACKER

(into walkie-talkie)

To hell with that, Dick. Keep stalling!

(to GANT)

Can the de-icing team go?

GANT nods.

SEERBACKER

(to the de-icing team)

Okay, move it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT
(handing the parka to
SEERBACKER)
So long, Seerbacker-- and thanks.

SEERBACKER
(smiling; awkward)
Get out of here, you bum.

GANT swings his feet into the pilot's ladder and climbs up and into the cockpit. SEERBACKER runs towards the MEN still hosing the ice.

SEERBACKER
Come on, you've got thirty more seconds!

CLOSE ON GANT (INT. COCKPIT)

--as he tugs on the integral helmet, plugs in the oxygen, the weapons control jackplug, and the communications equipment. He begins the systems checks. He plugs in the anti-G suit automatically and presses the hood control. The hood swings down over him and locks.

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (radio; O.S.)
(from small hand-set on Gant)
--ETA two minutes!

SEERBACKER'S VOICE (O.S.)
(from hand-set)
You hear that Gant? Good luck, fella.

GANT gang-loads the ignition, switches on the starter motors, and turns on the high-pressure cock. The SOUND of the double explosion comes, and then the turbines begin to build. GANT eases open the throttles and the r.p.m. gauges begin to move-- building, quickly up to fifty-five percent rpm. GANT releases the brakes--

--The Firefox doesn't move. GANT hauls back the throttles and applies the brakes. He opens the hood and tugs open his face mask.

GANT
(yelling into hand-set)
Seerbacker-- get those hoses over here-- on the double!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEERBACKER'S VOICE (O.S.)
(from hand-set)
What in the hell is it, Gant--?

GANT
(into hand-set)
The wheels are stuck-- they're
frozen in!

SEERBACKER'S VOICE (O.S.)
(from hand-set)
Oh shit! Peck!

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)
(from hand-set)
ETA one minute thirty seconds!

GANT sees PECK and his MEN running back towards him with some hoses. The steam billows immediately from under the Firefox as they address themselves to the wheels. GANT waits anxiously, peering out the side of the cockpit. Suddenly, PECK looks up, giving him the "thumbs up" sign.

GANT returns the "thumbs up" and closes the hood again.

Outside, SEERBACKER screams at PECK and his MEN--

SEERBACKER
--Get those hoses aboard ship!

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (radio; O.S.)
ETA one minute!

SEERBACKER looks at the Firefox-- it is finally rolling forward, heading down the floe.

SEERBACKER
(under his breath)
Get out of here, Gant...

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT hurries through a last-minute flight-check as he trundles down the floe. He looks up, searching for the runway, sees it ahead and to port. He quickly hauls the plane in a semi-circle and comes up onto it with speed. He smiles at PECK'S work-- five-hundred feet of narrow, glassy runway, pointing due

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

north-- and hits the throttles. The RUMBLE is deafening--

--The banks of snow pass beneath the wings, slowly at first-- then faster, faster, until they are a blur--

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (from hand-set; O.S.)
--ETA thirty seconds!

SEERBACKER'S VOICE (hand-set; O.S.)
--Good luck! Can't stop to talk,
we've got visitors!

GANT throws the throttles open all the way, the speed leaps to 150. The end of the runway is approaching fast, a bank of snow rushing towards him. He pulls back on the stick, speed now 170. Then the snow is on him and passing under his belly. He is lifting, lifting-- and suddenly the plane seems a prisoner of the snow-- squatting nose-high for an agonizing second-- and then, like a foot tearing itself free from mud, the Firefox springs upwards. It is climbing, free of the floe.

EXT. "PEQUOD"/ICE FLOE

PECK and SEERBACKER are running across the floe, hollering instructions to the MEN--

SEERBACKER
Let's look alive, men! We are
a weather party.

PECK
(running towards some men)
Don't just stand there-- do
something! Take some readings,
you assholes!

SEERBACKER
(approaching the hut)
Royster, you're inside working--
Stewart, McNeil, we are the
greeting party.

FLEISCHER'S VOICE (O.S.)
(from hand-set)
--ETA five seconds!

SEERBACKER and the MEN look up to the sky. Suddenly two specs appear in the horizon to the South.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEERBACKER

(tense)

Here they come. Alright, we're friendly. You're going to wave, Stewart.

STEWART

Wave?

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY ABOVE CLOUDS

The Firefox punches through the cloud-layer at 60,000 feet-- into a dazzling blue sky-- climbing steeply.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- FIREFOX

GANT

Sixty-thousand feet, new coordinates punched in. I'm taking her up to a hundred-twenty, speed Mach 3.5... Estimated rendezvous with civilian liner over Gulf of Finland, one hour.

He scans the radar scope; it is totally empty.

GANT

Radar shows all clear. Nothing can touch us now...

GANT looks out the windscreen. For the first moment in a long time, he feels an exhilaration, a lifting-free of a giant weight.

GANT

(sitting back; smiling)

Guess I'll be talking to you guys in a couple hours. That, ah, bottle better be ice cold... Over for now.

EXT. WIDE ON SKY

Looking down from high above, Gant's vapor-trail can be SEEN rising steeply, the glint of sunlight on metal at its tip like a comet streaking far above the clouds. The beauty of the world from up here is literally breathtaking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And then, floating lazily down into FRAME not twenty feet from the CAMERA-- as if dropped from some other world-- comes the SECOND FIREFOX.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- 2ND FIREFOX

LT. COL. YURI VOSKOV stares down at the vapor-trail far below him, his mind working like surgical steel.

VOSKOV
(in Russian)
The American is in sight.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

GANT is totally relaxed as he climbs through 70,000 feet. The ECM, the radar scope-- everything is harmonious and quiet. GANT gazes out at the sky and breathes deeply, almost as if he were out there in it.

Suddenly, a horrendous BLEEPING tears through his earphones. GANT lurches forward in his couch, stunned. He cannot believe it-- the ECM device is flashing and BLEEPING in alarm, and two orange blips are sliding up the ranging bars-- right behind him and closing with ferocious speed.

GANT
Oh no-- missiles!

GANT chops the throttles instinctively, yanking the stick back and over into a zoom climb. The engines SCREAM in response--

--And then he quickly drops the nose and rolls the aircraft to the right. His pressure-suit clamps tight around his legs and stomach, the G-effect blurring vision as he follows the sharp curve which will bring him under the line of the missiles' paths--

POV GANT

The panel is narrowing into a dark blur. His eyes seek out the G-meter-- he is pulling 8 G's.

RADAR SCREEN

The orange blips suddenly and violently alter in position on

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

the screen, sliding harmlessly past center and out into the blue.

CLOSE ON GANT

--as he eases back on the stick, his breath coming in short gasps. He stares at the screen, his vision returning. There is nothing on it.

GANT
(still fighting for breath)
Missiles avoided-- where'd they
come from?

Sweat pours down his face, his heart pounding in his ears.

GANT (Cont'd)
--I don't know what it is...
I'm a sitting duck--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- 2ND FIREFOX

VOSKOV'S eyes are narrowed-- he is furious. He is flying in GANT'S heat-cone, five hundred yards behind him and holding steady.

VOSKOV
(in Russian)
He still hasn't seen me-- I'm
in his tail cone... The first
missiles were errant--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

GANT suddenly catches something in his rear-view mirror-- the sharp glint of sunlight off a metal surface. GANT looks back down at the screen-- still nothing. The realization hits him in the stomach like a fist--

GANT
(a whisper)
The Firefox...

The glint flashes in his mirror again, closer. GANT shoves the throttles savagely. The Firefox bolts forward, GANT'S body slamming back against the couch--

EXT. WIDE ON SKY

GANT'S Firefox banks sharply to the left. VOSKOV'S Firefox banks with him-- cutting inside of him-- closing the range. Two furious birds tearing across the sky at Mach 4--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

GANT keeps his eye on the mirror, pulling even more sharply left-- then suddenly straightens out with a burst. His body jolts forward, his helmet banging against the cockpit--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- 2ND FIREFOX

--VOSKOV'S body slams forward as he too straightens out--

EXT. WIDE ON SKY

VOSKOV'S Firefox stays right with him, a mirror-image of GANT'S every move.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

GANT
(looking in mirror)
Shit!

GANT drops his couch into "battle" position, flattening him almost to horizontal.

He flicks the plane to the right and into a barrel-roll-- tumbling over and over, bracing himself against the G-effect. His vision is narrowing, dizzying--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- 2ND FIREFOX

--VOSKOV follows into the dive, and suddenly he unleashes a barrage of cannon-fire, puffs of mist spitting out from his wings-- but GANT'S Firefox has ducked out of range--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

Spinning, tumbling, GANT holds the roll through another ninety degrees. He is on instinct now-- his whole body reacting against the effects of the G-force, his blurred vision seeking the G-meter-- plus-9.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT
(screaming to release
the pressure)
Aahhhh!

He tears the stick back-- and the Firefox comes out of the roll. His vision begins to clear. And there-- five hundred yards in front of him-- is the second Firefox. GANT is now in Voskov's tail-cone.

GANT
(staring at his scope)
Now!

Two Anab missiles are launched. GANT guides the missiles home on Voskov's exhaust--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- 2ND FIREFOX

--VOSKOV is staring down at his screen, stunned. He chops his throttles, pulls the aircraft up and into a roll to the right-- the same maneuver GANT pulled--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

--GANT watches the screen in horror-- his missiles slide past the brighter orange spot of Voskov's Firefox-- and out into space.

GANT
The thought control-- doesn't
work without radar!

GANT hits his throttles, shoving his plane into a roll, trying to stay behind VOSKOV.

The earth is spinning outside the cockpit-- the ocean suddenly surging over his head, then off to the side of him. GANT eases the controls and suddenly he sees a reflection of light in the mirror--

GANT
Oh no--!

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- 2ND FIREFOX

VOSKOV
(in Russian)
I've got him--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOSKOV opens his throttles, bursting forward for the certain kill now--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

--GANT trods the left rudder, smacks the stick hard over, pulling the Firefox to the left. A BLEEP crys out in his helmet-- and he SEES the orange track of another missile climbing up his ass on the screen, this time at point-blank range. GANT wrenches the column back--

GANT
Missile tra--!

The plane suddenly shudders through its length in response, kicking GANT deep into the couch. The Firefox plunges into a flat spin. VOSKOV'S missile is left targetless high above him-- but GANT'S nose is now pitching fatally out from under him--

EXT. WIDE ON SKY

GANT'S Firefox drops like a leaden leaf, fluttering out of control, plummeting helplessly down towards the sea--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

GANT'S head is pinned to his chest from the G-forces, the horizon tumbling over and over outside the cockpit. The G-meter mounts through 8, then through 9-- and suddenly there is a furious CLCIKING in his headphones as the automatic igniters take over to prevent a flame-out in the turbines--

ANGLE -- EXHAUST/TAIL

Blue-white flames flash inside as the engines flame-out and re-ignite every half-second--

TIGHT ON GANT'S FACE

--his eyes straining to stay open, his flesh literally recoiling across his cheeks, his mouth moving in a silent scream--

INSTRUMENT PANEL

All the needles on the rpm gauges are flickering-- the G-counter

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

passes through 10-- the altitude ball is spinning madly through thousands of feet--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- VOSKOV'S FIREFOX

VOSKOV follows the American's plane down, totally in control, waiting to finish him off.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

GANT works desperately-- he is blacking out-- jockeying the column, the stick, the throttles-- and still the altitude ball plummets, down to 20,000 now, the sea tumbling up towards him. He reaches out in one final, last-ditch effort before blacking out-- and hits the undercarriage button.

ANGLE -- BELLY OF GANT'S FIREFOX

--The wheels drop into place, and instantly the plane tugs upwards, the extra drag of the undercarriage straightening it, bringing it out of the spin--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

GANT fumbles for the controls, dragging them towards him in instinctual self-preservation, and then he sags lifelessly forward, his head lolling like a broken doll's.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- VOSKOV'S FIREFOX

VOSKOV nods his head in admiration, then touches a gloved hand to his helmet in a final salute. And then he closes for the kill.

TIGHT ON GANT'S FACE

--as his eyes come open slowly, trying to remember where he is. A glint of silver in his mirror-- what did that mean?

--And then he remembers, and in a violent sweeping of his arms he shoves his throttles in, thrusting the Firefox to port. Ragged puffs of smoke appear in the mirror-- cannon-fire from the attacker's wings-- and GANT is screaming--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT
 (in agony)
 I've got nothing to hit him
 with back there!
 (searching the panel
 hysterically)
 Give me something!

--Instantly then, there is a blinding light in the rear-view mirror--

EXT. TAIL UNIT OF GANT'S FIREFOX

--as another incandescent flare detaches itself and widens brilliantly in the sky--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- VOSKOV'S FIREFOX

--VOSKOV stares through the windscreen in horror. He is heading right into the decoy-- and suddenly his left engine's intake sucks the flare hungrily down its throat--

EXT. WIDE ON SKY

--a horrific explosion--

INT./EXT. COCKPIT -- GANT'S FIREFOX

--as GANT holds the Firefox in a tight turn. The sky behind him is a ball of fire and then black, oily smoke, fragments of glistening metal tumbling downwards from it.

GANT is flooded with emotion. His whole body is shaking as he realizes what has happened.

GANT
 (stunned)
 It thought... the defense pod.
 The plane thought it...

Suddenly, he is going to be sick. He pulls back his visor and tears the oxygen mask off. He leans over, starting to vomit-- choking it back. He grabs the oxygen mask and clamps it over his mouth again. He starts to breath-- deep, and long. After a few seconds, he recovers enough to switch into auto-pilot. His hand still shaking, and with a vast effort of memory, he punches in his new coordinates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT
(with difficulty)
Coordinates in... I'm coming
home.

HOLD for a moment, as GANT sinks back into the couch and closes his eyes.

EXT. SKY BEHIND

The Firefox becomes a small dot in the distance, the SOUND of its engines FADING into the SOUND of the WIND at 100,000 feet.

END CREDITS