

R&D FL★G

BY

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THERE'S NO SUCH THING
AS A FORMER KGB MAN.

VLADMIR PUTIN
RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

RED FLAG

FADE IN:

EXT. ARCTIC OCEAN - DAY

500,000 tons of OIL TANKER plows through the icy seas.

TITLE: Arctic Ocean, 100km off the coast of Siberia, Russia.

On the ship's bow is its name in Cyrillic, the Russian Federation flag and a corporate logo for oil and gas.

TITLE: Russian Krusneft Corporation oil tanker, BALTAZAR.

INT. BRIDGE

DECK OFFICERS in uniform chat while monitoring the autopilot.

Urgent electronic ALERTS draw their attention. WARNING LIGHTS flash. Pressure and temperature monitors are FLUCTUATING.

INT. SHIPS CORRIDORS

EMERGENCY ALARMS sound as crew scramble. They pause to salute their passing CAPTAIN, a hardened sea veteran.

INT. BRIDGE

The Captain surveys the monitors. Officers stiffly report the situation. He sees readings in RED everywhere.

CAPTAIN

...Impossible.

Everyone is rocked by an EXPLOSION.

EXT. OIL TANKER

A series of BLASTS rip open the hull from inside. Bulkheads collapse as PRESSURIZED FLAMES rush throughout the ship.

INT. BRIDGE

The Captain and Officers have a moment to contemplate the WALL OF FIRE bursting up the deck towards them.

THE BRIDGE IS ENGULFED IN A ROARING BLAZE.

EXT. LOW ORBIT ABOVE

The explosion of the Baltazar is a tiny yellow flare amidst the vast black blue of the Arctic Ocean.

Thin wisps of cloud float between it and the camera eye of a RUSSIAN SATELLITE.

INT. SATELLITE IMAGERY RECONNAISSANCE CENTER

ON A WALL OF MONITORS

RUSSIA, the largest country in the world, seen from orbit. It stretches from the Baltic to the Pacific, the Caspian Sea to the Arctic Ocean.

The live satellite feed is being viewed in a room of military imagery analysts. A grim Russian GENERAL stands before the screen - a section is enhanced to show the crippled Baltazar.

A DATA TECHNICIAN reads from his computer station.

DATA TECHNICIAN

Krusneft oil tanker, Baltazar,
exporting from Murmansk to Rotterdam.

GENERAL

Get me State Energy and the Ministry
of Security.

The General turns to a screen plotting the orbits of other satellites passing Russia, each marked with a foreign flag.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

How long before the others pick it
up?

INT. MOSCOW BAR - THAT NIGHT

A crowded Old-World mahogany bar with embassy clientele and foreign nationals.

An American businessman, PAUL RICHARDS (30'S), sits reading the New York Times. He answers his RINGING cell phone and reaches for his drink.

At the bar, the eyes of an UNREVEALED MAN watch as the drink goes to Richard's lips...

LATER

Closing time. Everyone gone except Richards hunched over his drink, surrounded by empty glasses. His cell phone RINGS, showing missed calls. He stares at it, dazed and confused.

The barman tries to move him, but Richards resists. Two policemen enter.

EXT. DESERTED MOSCOW STREET

The police support Richards across the street while he mumbles protest. It is winter, everything is carpeted in white. The policemen part, leaving Richards unsteady in the middle of the road.

From nowhere -- a CAR SMASHES into him -- and speeds off.

Richard's body rolls to the kerb. The street is empty.

INT. RUSSIAN BATHS - SAME NIGHT

An athletic Asian businessman, ERIC TAKASHI (30's), confident, capable, exits a locker room wrapped in a towel.

IN HIS OPEN LOCKER

Left behind, his cellphone starts to RING.

STEAM ROOMS - MINUTES LATER

Takashi emerges. Goes to a nearby PLUNGE POOL. Drops his towel. Steps onto the dive board. He sees the reflection of a man behind him -- turns -- is CLUBBED across the head.

Takashi SPLASHES UNCONSCIOUS into the pool. A FORENSIC-GLOVED hand touches blood from his headwound and wipes it on the corner of the diving board.

Takashi floats face down in a growing cloud of blood.

EXT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - SAME NIGHT

A heavy German man, HEINRICH KARLOFF (40's), unlocks his apartment for TWO RUSSIAN PROSTITUTES. Karloff is on his cellphone.

KARLOFF/PHONE

Well there is nothing to do about it tonight. Ya. Tomorrow.

He ends the call and returns to his escorts.

PROSTITUTE #1

What is it you do again?

KARLOFF

I speculate.

PROSTITUTE #1

What is that?

KARLOFF

Say you want to sell me something.

He pulls her to him. She laughs. The second prostitute drinks from a bottle of vodka.

KARLOFF (CONT'D)

But I can get it elsewhere.

He lets go of her and kisses the second prostitute who exchanges vodka from her mouth to his.

KARLOFF (CONT'D)

I decide if the price is worth paying.

He wipes his mouth and enters a security code. He swings open the door and watches them walk in ahead of him.

KARLOFF (CONT'D)

I have a very good eye for quality.

INT. PENTHOUSE BATHROOM

Karloff shouts to the women while standing over the toilet.

KARLOFF

Your vodka for instance. Is very good. Not as good as German beer, but very good.

INT. BEDROOM

He smiles when he sees the girls lying out on the bed with silk scarves.

Karloff swigs from the bottle as they tie him up.

KARLOFF

Only last week I drink too much. They pump my stomach, you know.

UNREVEALED MAN (O.S.)

We know.

Startled, Karloff tries to see the man behind him, but he is tied securely to the bedposts. The 'prostitutes' quickly leave. The man's face remains hidden throughout.

Wearing the same white forensic gloves, he reveals an I.V. POUCH - a plastic bag of yellow MUCOUS and green BILE.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)

We thought it would come in useful.

The Man holds Karloff's head between his knees and FORCES a TUBE down his throat.

KARLOFF

(choking)

No! Wait! I can-

Karloff GAGS and KICKS as the bile is SQUEEZED down the tube. VOMIT bubbles from his nose and mouth as he CHOKES TO DEATH.

Eventually his body stops thrashing.

The Unseen Man checks Karloff's pulse. He withdraws the tube. Unties the silk scarves. Places the bottle in the Karloff's hand.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)

This is the price we pay.

Karloff lies in a pool of sick. The door is heard closing.

EXT. FSB HEADQUARTERS - EVENING - TWO NIGHTS LATER

An imposing nine-story brick building dominates Lubyanka Square - the infamous 'Big House' of the K.G.B. Muscovites tend to quicken their step when passing it.

TITLE: Federal Security Service (FSB) headquarters, Moscow.

INT. FSB CORRIDORS

Shadowy corridors with frost-windowed doors. One of the offices is still lit. On its glass is Russian cyrillic.

TITLE: Chief Col. Yuri Kozlov, Internal Security Directorate.

INT. YURI'S OFFICE

A large, neatly-kept office steeped in darkness. In the light of a desk lamp, a figure works alone at a computer.

YURI KOZLOV (50's), a graying, balding man with deep-lined eyes, jabs at a keyboard with his index fingers. Yuri leans back wearily. One of several desk phones ring.

He reads the caller I.D. and smiles. He turns off an automatic red recording light and answers.

YURI/PHONE

Larisa!

LARISA/PHONE (V.O.)

(pause)

Yuri.

YURI/PHONE

How are you?

INT. LARISA'S APARTMENT (INTERCUT)

On the other end of the phone, a WOMAN'S FULL LIPS curl cynically. LARISA AKHMATOVA (20's) has the blue eyes and high cheekbones of a Slavic beauty, but has an American accent.

LARISA/PHONE

This is my new number. How did you-

YURI/PHONE

We both like knowing who we're talking to. How are you?

Larisa puts the phone on speaker as she types at a laptop.

LARISA/PHONE

Colonel, I'm calling to ask if the F.S.B. will comment on the recent deaths of Paul Richards, Eric Takashi and Heinrich Karloff.

YURI/PHONE

Straight to business, Larisa? This must be your Pulitzer.

Yuri looks at his screen. Already open are the files, surveillance photos and newspaper obituaries of the three men. Richard's file flashes 'C.I.A.'

YURI/PHONE (CONT'D)

How can we comment if we don't know who these people are?

LARISA/PHONE

They're oil inspectors for foreign energy groups. Two days ago, all three suffered fatal accidents.

Yuri calls up a British man's file, which warns 'M.I.6' beside an article reporting a hotel fire. Another file reports a woman breaking her neck falling down an elevator shaft. A third report, places a 'MOSSAD' agent in a lethal car crash.

YURI/PHONE

Three does not make a conspiracy.

LARISA/PHONE

I'm working on other names. What will five make? A miracle?

YURI/PHONE

Don't blaspheme.

LARISA/PHONE

Sorry. Yuri, these people all died within twelve hours of one another.

Yuri grimaces annoyed.

LARISA/PHONE (CONT'D)

I'm calling as a courtesy. This is going to print.

YURI/PHONE

This isn't Washington, Larisa.

LARISA/PHONE

And this isn't a police state, not anymore.

YURI/PHONE

You've been gone a long time.
Accidents happen, Larisa. You of
all people know this.

Larisa reacts surprised and hurt. She types.

LARISA/PHONE

'A senior officer in the F.S.B.
insists the deaths are mere
coincidence.'

YURI/PHONE

What exactly would your story say?

LARISA/PHONE

Someone always benefits from
'coincidence'. I'll find out who;
let people draw their own conclusions.

YURI/PHONE

Let me look into it.

LARISA/PHONE

Six hours, then it goes to press.

YURI/PHONE

Take care, Larisa.

LARISA/PHONE

Yuri.

Larisa hangs up, surprised by his concern.

YURI (V.O.)

What have you got me into?

INT. MOSCOW COFFEEHOUSE - ONE HOUR LATER

Yuri approaches a booth where VLADISLAV OREKHOV (40's), a
muscular, shaven-headed colonel, sits with two coffees.
Apart from them, the cafe is empty. Orekhov is in full
uniform. His voice is hoarse from field command.

OREKHOV

Death by misadventure.

YURI

In one night?

OREKHOV

We knew you could get it done.

YURI

I followed orders. Now tell me why.

OREKHOV

Corporate spies; none of them aware
of each other. No one will suspect.

YURI

A journalist is already investigating.

This gets Orekhov's attention.

OREKHOV

Who?

YURI

Who authorized it? Berezovsky and
who else?

OREKHOV

If you have to ask...

Yuri is taken aback. He is out of the loop.

OREKHOV (CONT'D)

Yuri, you ever wonder why you were
made Chief of Internal Security?
You have no friends. You accept no
favours. And you ask too many
questions.

YURI

These were foreign operatives. There
will be investigations. This will
hurt us all. Whatever you're running
on the side-

OREKHOV

How else can I get things done around
here?

Yuri sips coffee while reconsidering his friend.

YURI

Vlad, there's a shop below where I
live. You know the one. The
shopkeeper, Filipenko, he is a friend
of mine; a hard-working man. I tell
him, "Your shop assistant, I see him
stealing from you, why don't you get
someone you can trust?"

Orekhov hold Yuri's gaze.

YURI (CONT'D)

He says; "Because I know this man.
With someone else, how would I know
how much they'd steal from me?"

A beat. Yuri smiles. Orekhov does not.

YURI (CONT'D)

The people have limits.

Inexpressive, Orekhov stands and silently leaves. Halfway out, he relents and turns.

OREKHOV

Let me find out what I can tell you.

YURI

We have four hours.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK - LATER

Yuri leaves work. Walks through a deserted office car park. His steps echo around the cold concrete space.

He glances at a CCTV camera bubble watching the area.

He crosses between shadowy pillars to get to his car.

Angles on everything he does. Close ups of every move.

He reaches for the door handle. Pulls it open. Gets in.

He inserts his keys in the ignition. Twists the key.

The engine starts. He reverses.

Rosary beads and a medallion of Saint Nicholas swing from his rear view mirror.

INT. CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

Yuri stops his car at the security barrier. F.S.B. stare at him through his windscreen. One of them reaches into a booth.

The barrier lifts up.

Yuri drives out and presses PLAY on the car's CD player.

Russian sopranos sing a SOARING CHORAL PIECE.

EXT. RED SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Yuri drives past the Kremlin, Red Square and St. Basil's striped cathedral spires.

EXT. MOSCOW STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Everywhere is dead. Silent except for Yuri's passing music.

He waits at a red light. A van draws alongside him.

Another pulls up on the other side.

Yuri LUNGES FOR HIS GLOVE COMPARTMENT.

The two van doors pull back -- MEN IN BALACLAVAS open SILENCED AUTOMATIC FIRE -- The car's glass SHATTERS.

Yuri -- crouched -- WRENCHES into reverse -- STAMPS on the accelerator. The men are still firing -- riddling the car with holes as it SPEEDS backwards --

It SMASHES through a wall -- FALLS -- CRASHES onto an underpass.

Above it, the vans speed around -- searching for a way down.

EXT. UNDERPASS - MOMENTS LATER

They SKID to a stop beside the crumpled car. Six men stream out and take positions around it.

The driver's door is yanked open - YURI IS GONE.

The medallion and beads are swinging, SPLASHED with BLOOD.

EXT. MOSCOW ALLEYWAYS

Yuri, CLUTCHING HIS INSIDES, stumbles through cobblestone back streets. BLOOD DRIPS with every agonizing step.

He hears the SQUEAL OF TIRES behind him -- van doors opening.

Yuri recognizes a street sign -- turns down a narrow lane.

EXT. MOSCOW LANE - CONTINUOUS

Yuri staggers forward, pale, with clothes drenched RED.

Army boots POUND the streets behind him.

Yuri falls into a recessed doorway -- THUMPS on its door.

INT. SAFEHOUSE

CLOSE ON a security monitor showing Yuri's desperate face.

EXT. MOSCOW LANE

The door BUZZES open -- Yuri falls in. The door closes.

The armed men appear, tracking the blood trail.

INT. SAFEHOUSE HALLWAY

Out of the darkness, VALENTIN TREPASHKIN (30's), a taut, predatory man, looms, pointing a silenced automatic.

VALENTIN

Yuri!

YURI

Val.

Val catches Yuri as he collapses. He quickly assesses Yuri's wounds -- desperately tries to stem the bleeding. But Yuri's face says it all. He struggles for breath through punctured lungs. Val cradles him helplessly.

Yuri seizes hold of Val --

YURI (CONT'D)

Larisa. Akhmatova.

Val does not understand. The light leaves Yuri's eyes. Angry, confused, Val turns towards the door.

EXT. MOSCOW LANE

The men shed their balaclavas and civilian jackets to reveal bulletproof vests beneath. They pull on shielded helmets and attach silencers to their machine guns.

These are SPETSNAZ, Russian Special Forces.

One spetsnaz lifts his visor and listens up against the door.

His head is BLOWN OPEN from a SHOT through the spyhole.

The other spetsnaz BLAZE AGAINST THE ENTRANCE.

INT. SAFEHOUSE HALLWAY

Bullets STIPPLE the inside of the steel-reinforced door.

EXT. MOSCOW LANE

One of the spetsnaz unshoulders a pressurized DOOR RAM -- it builds with compressed air -- a red light turns on.

INT. SAFEHOUSE HALLWAY

The door is PUNCHED off its hinges. The spetsnaz pivot in, guns pointing. They see Yuri and STAIRS going up into darkness. One of them checks Yuri -- nods.

They silently ascend.

The lead spetsnaz rises up level with the landing --

LANDING POV

The top of his head comes into view. A silenced SHOT KNOCKS his helmeted head back -- a SECOND bursts his exposed throat. He tumbles back down the stairs.

The other four FIRE back blindly.

Lying inside a doorway, VAL rolls out of sight. The empty landing is RIPPED by gunfire into clouds of wood and plaster.

Then silence.

The men step over their dead colleague and ascend -- gun-sights pressed to their eyes.

INT. SAFEHOUSE LANDING - CONTINUOUS

The spetsnaz advance, two moving to either side of the open door. One holds a small surveillance mirror up to the edge.

- A small, bare apartment.

They pull on GAS MASKS and toss smoking TEAR GAS canisters inside -- wait -- then STALK in.

INT. SAFEHOUSE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The clouded kitchen is empty with two rooms leading off.

The spetsnaz snap around on corners and slowly spread out.

An open laptop is ignored on the kitchen table.

CLOSE ON the laptop's built-in WEBCAM.

EXT. UNDISCLOSED LOCATION

CLOSE ON a HANDHELD CELLPHONE showing the webcamera's POV.

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM

Two spetsnaz burst in -- sparse and empty.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM

The other two kick the door in -- empty.

They check the bed, window, wardrobe. Nondescript male clothes. No personal items. The men look to one another.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN

The four regroup in the kitchen.

HANDS BREAK THROUGH a window, GRAB and PULL a man OUT.

The other three turn and SHOOT OUT the glass and frame.

CLOSE ON the laptop's webcam watching the men silently reposition around the window.

A silenced MUZZLE FLASH from a second window -- and the third spetsnaz slumps to the floor, shot through the neck.

The remaining two turn and fire -- VAL CRASHES in through the first window. He SEIZES and uses the nearest spetsnaz as a human shield. The other SHOOTs at VAL -- hitting his colleague's body armor.

Val SHOOTs him in the crotch -- then SHOOTs up under the visor of his human shield. Val kicks the gun from the other man who has fallen to his knees.

Val pulls the man's helmet off and points his gun at him.

VALENTIN

F.S.B?

SPETSNAZ #1

Fuck y-

Val's shoots him -- eyes cold and unflinching.

He searches the four bodies - nothing to identify them by.

Val goes to his laptop and types into a government search program: 'Larisa Akhmatova, journalist, Moscow Gazeta'. A file and photograph shows her recent addresses.

Val stares at the image, ejects his spent clip and reloads.

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