Donetsk

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LUBBOCK • AUSTIN • FORT WORTH
EVENTS AT DONETSK
or
REALLY!
Written by Alan Nafzger
This is the story of two eerily similar assassinations — one in Dallas in 1963 and another in Donetsk in 2017.

BLACK:

TITLE CREDITS FLASH:

We faintly hear vehicles moving very slowly. We hear a crowd cheering. We hear three rifle shots. The first two shots are distant and sound to have been fired from the back right of the theater. A distinctly louder shot comes from the back center of the theater. There is little time between the first two shots. The second and third shots are relatively farther apart. The crowd that was cheering is now awed and almost becomes silent. There are a few screams. We hear the vehicle’s motors rev their engines and speed off.

FADE IN:

EXT. PARKLAND HOSPITAL PARKING LOT (DALLAS) — DAY — 1963

There is historical footage of reporters and citizens who gathered in the parking lot after John Kennedy was brought there. They look mortified and in shock. The camera tilts down into the back seat of the car and zooms in on the roses lying in the seat.

END TITLE CREDITS:

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD (MOSCOW) — NIGHT — 1963

In the waiting room, we see a FATHER with his toddler son. The FATHER looks nervous as his wife is having a baby.

The FATHER is a young Communist Party member. He is a sharp suit and tie, nice shoes. He glances at his watch — the nicest Soviet wristwatch.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM HALLWAY (DALLAS) — DAY — 1963

In Dallas, the clock on the wall reads 12:30 pm. A secret-service agent, CLINTON HILL, rushes out of the trauma room and walks rapidly to another room at the far end of the
hall. There is an AGENT at the door, as Lyndon Johnson is inside.

The doctor, ROBERT MCCLELLAND, leaves Trauma Room One (bloody gown) with a defeated look on his face. Several PEOPLE look at him for news. He simply shakes his head “no.” A few NURSES/CLERKS already with tears in their eyes begin to cry.

McClelland looks down the hallway and appears glad he doesn’t have to tell Jackie that her husband and the president are dead. The secret-service are taking care of that.

Down the hall, Clint Hill whispers into the ear of the other agent who is guarding a door. The agent’s eyes grow large at the news. The secret-service agent is allowed through the door.

As the door opens and closes, inside, we get a glimpse of a group of somber men. They are all holding their chins trying to get a grasp on what has happened.

BACK TO:

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD (MOSCOW) - NIGHT - 1963

This Soviet baby has the peculiarity of being born the exact minute President Kennedy lost his life.

Inside the delivery room, the WOMAN giving birth grimaces in pain.

One NURSE gossips to the SECOND NURSE.

NURSE
The FATHER is a fast track diplomat at the Foreign Ministry. The name is Kireyev.

There is a pause in the labor contractions.

DOCTOR
Is this your first child?

WOMAN
No, I have a son. Yegor.
WOMAN
Where is…

Relax, he’s outside with your husband and is that your sister. She looks like you.

Oh, good. That’s good.

The contractions resume, and the pained look on her face returns.

The FATHER is a fast track diplomat at the Foreign Ministry. YEFIM is their second child. We see the FATHER “trying” to hold a rebellious first-born son, YEGOR KIREYEV. YEGOR is two years old and driving his father crazy, trying to escape his grasp.

FATHER
Yegor. You must be still.

YEGOR continues to struggle against his FATHER and lets out a little squeal of displeasure. We see young YEGOR continuing to squirm, demanding to be let down onto the floor.

FATHER
Son, you must sit still while your new brother arrives. We are waiting quietly.

YEGOR’s AUNT shows up in a rush. She immediately takes YEGOR from his FATHER.

AUNT
(to Yegor)
If you can’t sit still, how will you ever be the General Secretary of the Communist Party?

FATHER
(confidently)
He will.
AUNT
(to Yegor)
Do you hear? Your father insists.

The AUNT leads the boy off, holding his hand. The AUNT and YEGOR take a long walk around the hospital.

Of course at the time, no one notices this as a special date.

INT. HOSPITAL RECORDS (MOSCOW) – NIGHT – 1963

The father of the newborn is standing at the desk. The clerk is recording the information onto paper.

FATHER
What time was the birth?

CLERK
Yefim, what a nice name, Kireyev is born in the Soviet Union at 9:30 pm, November 22nd, 1963.

The clerk smiles at the father and hands him the paper to sign. The father proudly signs the birth certificate.

The aunt is in the background holding Yegor’s hand.

FADE TO:

INT. PRAVDA NEWSPAPER (MOSCOW) – DAY – 2017

We see ALYONA YOLKOV (28), a reform journalist, arrive at her desk. She appears late. On the desk is a computer.

An EDITOR from down the hall has followed her and he approaches her desk and hands her an assignment.

She reads it. She makes a face of disapproval.

ALYONA
I have a reputation as a hard-nosed investigative journalist.
EDITOR
By tomorrow’s edition, please. By the Wednesday edition.

ALYONA
So?

EDITOR
It’s the 60-year anniversary of his assassination. November 22nd, 1963.

ALYONA
No one cares anymore. He wasn’t even our president. And most people weren’t even born in 1963.

EDITOR
Please; just do it.

ALYONA
I just can’t.

EDITOR
Look, I like you. You make a lot of trouble, but sometimes you make the paper look good.

ALYONA
Genius. I make the paper looks genius.

EDITOR
I won’t go that far.

ALYONA
Why are you publishing history that has already happened? This is a current events newspaper.

EDITOR
No, people don’t know what happened. No one knows what happened.

ALYONA
I want to write about the man in OUR Kremlin and the wolves around him who are sucking the OUR life-blood.
EDITOR
That is exactly why you have this story. You have a bias against our president.

ALYONA
I don’t.

EDITOR
Yes, you do.

ALYONA
It’s just the facts that lead me in that direction.

EDITOR
Every time I let you loose to investigate the Kremlin, you get into trouble. And you get me into trouble.

ALYONA
I’m accountable. Not you.

EDITOR
Please. I have children who need a working father. Just do the Kennedy story and make everyone happy.

ALYONA
That’s not my job.

EDITOR
Please, I don’t want you to do your job!

ALYONA
You are relegating me to writing obituaries of American politicians 60 years after the fact, that no one will read?

EDITOR
If you don’t want to work here, resign. We’ll both be happier.
ALYONA
I’m a highly trained investigative journalist.

EDITOR
(sarcastically)
Find something there to investigate. For Christ’s sake, Kennedy was a politician.

ALYONA
Maybe in the Soviet Era… but this is the new Russia! There are more important stories to cover.

EDITOR
Include a lot of photos. They were handsome people, him and his wife.

ALYONA
No one cares about this.

EDITOR
Exactly!

The Editor shrugs his shoulders and chuckles a bit. The editor walks away.

ALYONA
I’m an investigative reporter.

She looks around the newsroom.

ALYONA
The only one you have!

Alyona looks at the other reporters who are all staring at her, wondering if she will do the story or refuse. She makes a face, mocking them.

Alyona turns on her computer, and the date flashed there on the screen.

FADE TO:
ALYONA is looking at a succession of internet web pages concerning the life of John F. Kennedy.

The editor brings her a large box of very old newspaper articles and some biographies on Kennedy. There is an article about the PT-109, “Profiles in Courage,” winning the Pulitzer Prize and the birth of a stillborn daughter.

An EDITOR puts the box on her desk.

ALYONA
I’m not enjoying this!

EDITOR
(sarcastically)
You want to investigate a president? Knock yourself out; investigate an American president.

ALYONA
Kennedy would be 106 years old.

EDITOR
What are you saying?

ALYONA
Lenin has been there what, 100 years. Let me write about that. Isn’t it time to bury the man?

EDITOR
Remember what happened the last time you wrote about Lenin?

ALYONA
No.

EDITOR
You were punched in the face.

ALYONA
Oh, yea. I forgot.

EDITOR
And what happened the last time you wrote about Stalin?
ALYONA
The communists hired a bunch of bums to protest outside the building?

EDITOR
Do you know how many security guards we had to hire?

ALYONA
Big deal. They blocked the entrance to the building.

EDITOR
They defecated on my car’s hood.

ALYONA
And so you are punishing me for that?

EDITOR
Trouble; it’s always trouble with you.

ALYONA
That was just a few instances... I’ve investigated 100s of stories for this paper, and most of the time nothing happens.

EDITOR
No, I get a call from the Kremlin or from one of our advertisers and something ALWAYS happens and... it might blow over but, still it’s trouble for longer than I’m comfortable. Understand?

ALYONA
Just think how uncomfortable you would be if my colleagues began to do their work and stopped printing what the Kremlin tells them?

EDITOR
I don’t know about that, but every time you do your job, there’s hell to pay. Please, this assignment is fairly safe. The topic is 60 years in the past and from the other side of the world. What
harm can you possibly do to yourself or to the paper?

ALYONA
The Kremlin sure won’t call about this.
They won’t even read it.

EDITOR
I’ve not had a call from the Kremlin demanding you be fired in what? One week now? And that was President Kireyev himself.

ALYONA
You didn’t tell me that.

EDITOR
He did.

ALYONA
Really?

EDITOR
Yes, he was so mad he didn’t even delegate that to his press office.

ALYONA
(smiling)
Was he really mad?

The editor nods convincingly.

Alyona sits back in her chair and contemplates. A devious and proud smile crosses her face. The measure of her own success is “does she make the politicians sweat”?

Long beat.

She feels everyone in the room still starring at her.

ALYONA
Please raise your hand if you are an actual journalist?

Alyona has a COLLEAGUE and friend near, at the next desk; the colleague shyly raises her hand. The rest of the room,
they simply look at Alyona. Alyona has clearly ruffled a few feathers, both at the Kremlin and in the newsroom.

When the editor is nearly out of earshot... he turns to return. Maybe he forgot to tell Alyona something.

        ALYONA
        (to her colleague)
        Are you a journalist?

        COLLEAGUE
        I’m just as much a thorn in his side as you.

        ALYONA
        (friendly smile)
        In ten years, maybe.

        COLLEAGUE
        I want to be like you.

The editor has returned.

        ALYONA
        (mumbling to her colleague)
        You do know our editor is controlled by the Kremlin.

        EDITOR
        I heard that!

        ALYONA
        Sorry.

        EDITOR
        If the Kremlin controlled me, you wouldn’t work here anymore.

The Kremlin and the Russian President, Yegor Kireyev, doesn’t entirely control the newspaper.

ALYONA continues her work both online and with the research materials in the box. She isn’t excited, but she is a diligent worker, and she needs the paycheck.

FADE TO:
Alyona focuses on a newspaper article about John F. Kennedy’s war record aboard the PT-109.

Alyona’s friend is younger and clearly admires her. Maybe the friend is an intern. She listens to the experienced reporter as she reads.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOLOMON ISLANDS, PACIFIC – NIGHT

We see a short depiction of the wooden PT-109 being hit by a much larger steel Japanese destroyer. The director can use any number of recreations of the PT-109 story. There have been dozens of films made, many are black & white and look historical.

ALYONA (V.O.)
(reading)
The PT-109 was cut in two by a Japanese destroyer.
(summarizing for her friend)
There was a collision at night. Neither ship running with lights and “after the collision, John Kennedy led his men and towed one injured sailor to a Plum Pudding Island.

COLLEAGUE (V.O.)
Plum Pudding?

ALYONA (V.O.)
That’s what it says.

We see Kennedy towing a badly burned sailor to an island.

COLLEAGUE (V.O.)
Well then, he was a hero.

ALYONA (V.O.)
(reading)
Kennedy was an excellent swimmer. John Kennedy, who had been on the Harvard University swim team, used a life jacket strap clenched between his teeth to tow his badly-burned senior enlisted machinist mate. It took four hours of
swimming to reach the island, 3.5 miles away.

BACK TO:

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE – DAY

COLLEAGUE
No wonder he was president. It sounds like a wonderfully heroic event. That is a very long way to swim.

ALYONA
He wasn’t even supposed to be president. He had an older brother, Joseph. Their father was an ambitious man grooming him to be president.

COLLEAGUE
What happened to the older brother?

ALYONA
He was a pilot in the Great Patriotic War lost somewhere over the North Atlantic.

COLLEAGUE
How sad.

Alyona visits http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/Media-Gallery/JFK-Youth.aspx

We see the following photos...

Alyona reads as she views the photos.

Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr. with sons Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. (left) and John F. Kennedy (right). Palm Beach, Florida, 1931.

John F. Kennedy in a policeman’s costume and sister Eunice Kennedy, circa 1925. Brookline, Massachusetts, Naples Road.


Rose Kennedy and her children, circa 1923. L-R: Rose Kennedy, Eunice Kennedy, Kathleen Kennedy, Rosemary Kennedy (seated in foreground), John F. Kennedy, and Joseph P. Kennedy.

John F. Kennedy in his Dexter Academy football uniform.

Palm Beach April 1936 Ted, Jack, Bob.

Letter from John F. Kennedy to his mother asking if he can be his newly born brother Teddy's godfather, 1932.

John F. Kennedy graduates from Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 1940.

John F. Kennedy with dog, Bobby, at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, 1925.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., Brookline, Massachusetts, circa 1919.

John F. Kennedy sits and studies at his desk at Harvard, c. 1939.

John F. Kennedy poses with "Dunker" the dachshund at The Hague, Netherlands, during his tour of Europe.


Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., Kathleen Kennedy, and John F. Kennedy, sons and daughter of United States Ambassador to England Joseph P. Kennedy Sr., arrive at the House of Parliament in London to hear Prime Minister Chamberlain's announcement that a state of war existed between England and Germany, September 1939.
There are also two handsome photos of JFK, while in the navy.

http://www.historyplace.com/kennedy/warhero-navy-ensign.jpg and

Alyona opens her word processor and types, “This year marks the 60th anniversary of the death of American President John F. Kennedy.” She then stops typing. Is it writer’s block or just a crappy assignment from the editor? Her career is in crisis.

Alyona sits and looks at the word processor. She looks at the editor, and then she looks back to the computer screen. Alyona might be reflecting on the life of JFK; she might be brooding over the assignment. She flips to the browser and views the JFK photos again. She looks up from the computer to the editor’s desk again.

LONG SHOT from Alyona’s POV. The telephone on the editor’s desk rings. His eyes become large. He responds nervously; he glances at the newsroom television. The clock on the wall reads, 12:35 pm. The editor nods and hangs up. He walks rapidly past Alyona. Alyona makes a move to rise and follow the editor. The editor points to Alyona.

EDITOR
Do not move from that desk.

Alyona knows a big story is afoot; her journalistic instinct tells her this. She expects to be part of it.

Alyona rotates in her chair and follows the editor with her eyes as he approaches two “lesser” REPORTERS.

The editor leans over the desk of two reporters at the far end of the long room. Judging from the body language, the editor is somewhat discombobulated. Before the editor is finished explaining, the reporters get up from their desks. They gather their jackets, tape recorder, pad and pens, cell phones, and they leave the office in a rush.

The editor walks back past Alyona’s desk.
ALYONA
What is going on?

EDITOR
(passing the desk)
I mean it; do not get up from that desk. You have work to do.

The editor has only walked the length of his newsroom, but he is sweating profusely. He looks nervous, and Alyona notices. Newspapermen are supposed to have nerves of steel, but Alyona chuckles and likes seeing her boss in a bind.

By the time the editor returns to his desk, the phone is ringing again. He picks it up and listens. The editor’s eyes are even larger than with the last call. Again he listens and stands. He nods. He almost salutes as he hangs up the telephone; clearly, it was an important person on the phone.

In a zombie-like daze, he walks toward ALYONA’s desk. His brain seems in shock. He is something like a computer that is frozen.

He arrives at Alyona’s desk, and there is a very long pause.

Alyona leans forward and gestures that she is ready for the assignment.

There is a very long pause.

EDITOR

Alyona is secretly elated and jumps up out of her chair, but she says nothing, trying to process what is happening. She smiles to thank the editor.

ALYONA
Can you tell me what is happening?

The editor is still in shock.

EDITOR
Isn’t it clear you are Russia’s most tenacious investigative journalist?
The editor walks away saying nothing more.

Alyona gathers her things, much like the other reporters, and she speeds out of the office.

Alyona knows that if she is being summoned to the Kremlin, something definitely is wrong! She will not show this fear to her editor. By the time she reaches her car, she looks very worried.

EXT. KREMLIN GATE - SAVIOUR'S TOWER ENTRANCE - DAY

Alyona drives a smoking “junker” of a car; it is an old Soviet-made vehicle and is burning oil.

She searches every frequency on her old analog radio. Nothing but music and meaningless entertainment or sports news. No real news; nothing to warrant all the excitement. She’s frustrated and puzzled.

She speaks to herself as she continues to wait in a line of cars.

    ALYONA
    I’m a very competent reporter.
    (beat)
    And, I’m underpaid.

Long beat.

    ALYONA
    It would be reasonable to assume that
    the reason I’m being invited to the
    Kremlin to … what?…
    (beat)
    They have a real problem.

She arrives at the gate.

She presents her passport to the guard. The guard gives her a very stern look. Perhaps this is because she has been unfriendly to the government. Or perhaps he looks inhospitable to every unimportant looking guest, driving beaters. Mostly the guard is looking perplexed at her old car.
ALYONA
I’ve been meaning to get a new car.

The security seems heightened.

ALYONA
You guys got some new dogs? Bigger dogs? Meaner dogs?

Some of the guards do have seriously angry-looking dogs, but the guard doesn’t respond.

Other guards have mirrors on poles so they can look under vehicles for bombs.

ALYONA
Don’t worry; there isn’t a bomb under there.

The guard gives her a VERY serious look.

GUARD
Please exit the vehicle.

Alyona exits the car, and the guards examine the vehicle - under the hood and the trunk and under the seats.

ALYONA
I’ve been through the Kremlin security before, and it wasn’t this intense.

She is ignored by the guard.

ALYONA
Can you tell me what is going on?

She is ignored by the guard.

She smiles at the guard to reassure him; he doesn’t return the gesture. While the other guards are searching, the main guard is staring at her, watching for any sign of treachery. She turns off the charm; it won’t help. He then looks concerned and even more worried than before.

She cranes her neck to see where the cars in front of her have gone. She’s looking for any clue.
Without a word, the main guard gestures for her to return to her car. Alyona does this. He gestures for her drive into the fort. There is a man, MIKHAIL VOLKOV, in a business suit who gets in her car at the gate.

VOLKOV
My name is Mikhail Volkov. I’m a political aide to the Russian president.

ALYONA
I know who you are.

VOLKOV
You do?

ALYONA
You aren’t with the media office. You are above that, by about a mile.

VOLKOV
Thank you.

ALYONA
So can you tell me what is going on?

VOLKOV
No.

ALYONA
Then what?

VOLKOV
The President wants to see you.

ALYONA
(shocked)
Okay. What about?

VOLKOV
I don’t know, but you look surprised.

ALYONA
I thought I was on his bad list.
VOLKOV
There isn’t any list, but sometimes it is useful to have people think there is. I don’t know about any list you are on.

ALYONA
So, if I’m not here to be killed, what’s going on?

VOLKOV
That’s very funny, but I can’t really say.

ALYONA
Oh, come on. You left your nice warm office to come to the gate for me...

VOLKOV
Yes.

ALYONA
So, I’m about to have a meeting with him?
   (long pause)
   And you can’t tell me what this is all about?
   (long pause)
   He will eat me for lunch.

VOLKOV
He will not eat you for lunch. But let me say the mood is very somber.

Alyona is puzzled. Volkov doesn’t give verbal instructions; he points. Left and right. She drives.

VOLKOV
(pointing)
Stop there.

She stops her vehicle at the entrance to the building. Alyona and Volkov exit the car. A second MAN gets behind the wheel and drives her car a short distance to one of the few parking spaces. Judging from Volkov’s expression, this didn’t happen on her last visit. She turns and looks at her automobile. She looks at the other cars in the parking
spaces next to is. There is a clear contrast; her old car in the middle of many new expensive foreign cars.

Volkov gestures they should move ahead into the building. There is ANOTHER MAN who opens the door for them to enter the building. We see Alyona looking at the OTHER MAN a bit longer than she should. She is clearly a seasoned professional, but all this (all of a sudden) is somewhat intimidating. She’s looking for clues everywhere.

INT. OFFICE OF THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENT – DAY – KREMLIN

The young toddler, from the early Moscow hospital scenes, has grown up to be the President of Russia. YEGOR KIREYEV is brooding at his desk. Kireyev shows a deep unhappiness. Judging from Alyona’s reaction, this is not the Kireyev she is accustomed to.

CUT TO:

Alyona’s collection of memories. She recalls a more outgoing Kireyev comes to Alyona’s mind. Kireyev is shown shaking hands, pointing his finger in debate, boarding airplanes, waving to crowds, eating huge meals, leading tourists on a Kremlin tour, swimming, hunting, and kissing babies. Laughing.

BACK TO:

The Russian president suddenly appears ten years older to Alyona. It appears that Alyona’s expectations have been shattered. She expected him to jump up (and despite their differences) and shake her hand. He doesn’t. He is staring at a box with gloomy eyes. He appears actually darkly menacing. He isn’t generally that dark a figure, but he appears that way this day.

KIREYEV

My brother was assassinated in Donetsk three hours ago.

ALYONA

Admiral Kireyev?

There is a very long pause. Alyona doesn’t know what to say.
She takes out a pen and paper, but halts...

Her humanity returns to her, and she remembers what every person says in this situation.

**ALYONA**

I’m very very sorry. You have my heart-felt condolences.

There is a very long pause. President Kireyev doesn’t know what to say. He is deeply affected by the sudden death. Kireyev is staring at a box on his desk. He breaks the odd silence by pushing the box toward Alyona one inch.

There is another long pause. Alyona doesn’t know whether to approach the desk, she is hesitant but does move forward.

**KIREYEV**

Photographs. And documents.

Alyona opens the box and looks inside. There are ten or twelve family and military photographs of the President’s brother. On the outside of the box there is a label – YEFIM KIREYEV. Also in the box are records and reports, everything she will need to write a feature story. She closes the box, takes the box, and a step back.

**ALYONA**

I’m very very sorry.

Once the box is off the desk, President Kireyev takes a deep breath and stands up. He begins to walk Alyona to the office door.

**KIREYEV**

Do what you journalist do.

**ALYONA**

Yes, of course. I will do a good job and honor his memory. I understand he was a war hero?

**KIREYEV**

Yes. I’ve spoken with your editor. I took back everything I ever said about you.
ALYONA
I understand. Thank you.

As they reach the office’s door...

ALYONA
Again, I’m very sorry.

KIREYEV
Thank you.

INT. HALLWAY – DAY – KREMLIN

Volkov meets Alyona outside the office. It appears they are walking toward the exit.

VOLKOV
You can’t take those.

ALYONA
I’m sorry? He just...

VOLKOV
You can’t take those.

ALYONA
But...

VOLKOV
He is in grief. In shock. Let me scan these photos and photocopy the documents. And we will place this back in the archives.

ALYONA
Okay. Yes. I see. I’m sorry this is all such a shock to him.

VOLKOV
My office is just here.

They stop walking and enter an office. Volkov takes the box and begins photocopying the paper contents of the box. A SECRETARY enters and takes over the job photocopying. While the photocopying is progressing, Volkov sits at a computer and scans the photos. Alyona sits in a chair and waits nervously.
On the back of each photo is a description of the people in the photo and the date and sometimes the location.

ALYONA
Can you please also scan the back of the photos?
   (beat)
For accuracy.

Volkov scans both sides of the photos and is about to email the images to Alyona.

VOLKOV
What is your email address?

Alyona takes out her business card and hands it to Volkov. Volkov then emails Alyona the photographs.

A secretary brings Volkov a typed letter. Volkov glances over it; he seems to know what it says. It looks very official.

VOLKOV
This letter might help you. President Kireyev wanted you to have it.

Volkov hands the letter to Alyona. She reads it, and then Volkov leads her downstairs to her car.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - MOSCOW - DAY

Later, Alyona enters the office and walks directly to her desk. All eyes are on her; the other journalists are curious and looking for a sign what has transpired. IVAN PICHUSHKIN, a “police-looking” FSB man, is in the office speaking with the editor. They have a serious look on their face and Alyona is not about to interrupt.

From her desk, Alyona then looks to the editor and Pichushkin. They aren’t speaking. They are sitting, apparently waiting on.

When the editor notices that Alyona is watching, he waves at her to join them in the office. Alyona doesn’t like the FSB, and of course, it is Russia and she is a journalist. She is afraid of the government. The attentive-public in
the audience will know that numerous Russian journalists
the last ten years have been murdered or disappeared.

EDITOR
Well?

Alyona is baffled by the simple question.

EDITOR
What do you need?

ALYONA
Nothing, I just sent the photos to the
web tech. She is publishing them on the
web site.

EDITOR
What?

ALYONA
I just need time to go through these
documents.

The editor looks concerned at Pichushkin.
Curious.

EDITOR
This is FSB Agent Pichushkin.
(beat)
The Kremlin told me they wanted a full
investigation and that nothing was to
stand in your way.

PICHUSHKIN
You are to accompany me and put out
whatever we discover.

ALYONA
I don’t believe you.

PICHUSHKIN
Money is no object.

ALYONA
Me?
PICHUSHKIN
The President was adamant.

EDITOR
That is what the man said.

ALYONA
President Kireyev? I spoke to him.

EDITOR
What did he say?

ALYONA
Not much. It was a short meeting. He called you?

EDITOR
No, but I assume. It was a political aide. And the aide wanted you specifically.

PICHUSHKIN
You will come with me?

ALYONA
Why me?
(beat)
Aren’t there FSB and military investigators?

PICHUSHKIN
I understand there is a problem.

ALYONA
What sort of problem?

PICHUSHKIN
Who knows?

ALYONA
Now why exactly are you here?

PICHUSHKIN
I imagine that the President respects your work and wants his brother remembered accurately.
ALYONA
Accurately?
(beat)
Accurately? This is Russia!

PICHUSHKIN
It was his brother, and they were very close.

ALYONA
So I gathered.

EDITOR
One moment, please.

The editor calls Alyona out of the room into the hallway.

EDITOR
Don’t go. I can tell him you aren’t reliable. That you’ve been making mistakes lately.

ALYONA
Why would you do such a thing? Are you trying to protect me in some way?

Long beat. The editor looks around to see if anyone can hear. Everyone in the newsroom is watching, but they probably can’t hear.

EDITOR
He explained to me before you arrived; there is something of an anomaly.

ALYONA
An anomaly?

EDITOR
Yes. A second gunman.

ALYONA
Who was the first gunman?

EDITOR
A Chechen man, a loner and something of an idiot, a Filipino wife, probably not
the sort of man that could get this sort of thing done without help.

ALYONA
I see.

EDITOR
He ran into a theater and the other well... they don’t know if there even was a second shooter. It might be just paranoia. But already, and it’s only been hours, there are many that think there was a conspiracy.

ALYONA
Okay. Paranoia and conspiracy that’s not unusual.

EDITOR
What is unusual is they want you involved. In the past...

ALYONA
They... you mean Kireyev.

EDITOR
Why suddenly...

ALYONA
Someone killed his brother. What do you expect?

EDITOR
And he doesn’t trust his own people.

Long beat.

EDITOR
Are you sure you want to go? Clearly, it’s a dangerous assignment.

ALYONA
Yes, the brother of the Russian president in an area recently in a civil war and a “problem” with the FSB and military investigators, of course it is a hazardous assignment.
EDITOR
He wants to put on a plane that leaves in two hours.

The editor hands her some papers.

ALYONA
Sheremetyevo?

EDITOR
You would think they could do better than a commercial flight.

ALYONA
Well, if I fly commercial, then I expect to be paid.

The editor then hands her a large amount of crisp new money in an envelope.

ALYONA
This is a “LOT” of money.

She immediately puts it in her purse.

EDITOR
There is three times that amount in the top left-hand drawer of my desk.

ALYONA
I have a son. He lives with his father. You will please...

Pichushkin knocks on the glass door and then sticks his head out the door looks at them.

EDITOR
The conflict with Ukraine is officially over. The airport has been open for over a week. Email us when you land in Uk ... er... uh... Donetsk.

(beat)
Russia.

ALYONA
(to the editor)
Well, if something happens, you will know what to do?

EDITOR
Yes, of course.

PICHUSHKIN
We should go. I’m taking you to the airport.

The editor enters the office and puts his head in his hands, trying to hold off the headache.

Alyona and Pichushkin look worried. They leave the newspaper.

INT. FIRST FLOOR OF NEWSPAPER BUILDING – MOSCOW – DAY

Pichushkin and Alyona exit the elevator. We see a television on the wall of the lobby. Clearly, it is a breaking news report from Donetsk.

Alyona and Pichushkin stop to observe.

There isn’t any volume; the television on the wall shows video from Donetsk. There are several video clips the television is using to tell the story. Even live streaming. They all seem to have been shot using a cell phone or digital cameras. Perhaps one video is from a professional news journalist who was covering the parade. There are four or five points of view.

In 1963 there was only one camera in the crowd in Dallas, and not enough footage to tell the entire story. In 2023 everyone has a video-capable phone nowadays. And it is a parade to celebrate the end of the conflict, so everyone wants to capture it.

The television station evidently paid a great deal for the videos. One cell phone video is analogous to the Zapruder film from Dallas, 1963. Very similar. Same angle and the same basic content.

We see signs in the crowd that tell us that this is a parade celebrating the end of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, and we see the Admiral in the back of a Zil-41047
convertible. He is waving at the crowd; everyone is cheering.

We see two quick puffs of smoke from a building, high up and from behind the parade and to the right. Several people in the parade turn to look at the building. The ADMIRAL clinches his throat. He leans forward. A CAPTAIN in the same car slumps down in his seat.

There isn’t a third puff of smoke from the window, but the head of the Admiral explodes.

A very pretty FEMALE NAVY OFFICER, in her summer white uniform, sitting beside the Admiral tries to gather pieces of his skull from the trunk of the vehicle, but it is impossible. A MARINE from the car behind the Admiral runs up and puts her back into her seat. The vehicles speed off for the hospital.

Now, certainly, a majority of the audience will see the seminaries between what happened in Dallas. History is repeating itself. The characters, however won’t see the strange circumstance until later in the film.

ALYONA
You don’t need me. I’m a print journalist. As ugly as it is, it’s already been recorded and broadcast.

PICHUSHKIN
Still the President.

Alyona looks around at the sad faces of the people.

Everyone, in the lobby, has stopped doing what they are doing. They put down their magazines and cell phones. They become still and are deathly quiet. What they are watching is tragic and morose. It is yet another Russian tragedy.

Pichushkin and Alyona exit the building onto the street.

The people on the sidewalk have all stopped walking and are streaming the video to their phones. Moscow stops. An idiot walks by; he looks like a drug addict.

IDIOT
What is up with ya’ll fools?
He doesn’t know what has happened and can’t understand why anyone would stop in the middle of the sidewalk.

There is an FSB car and driver waiting for Alyona and Pichushkin.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. DONETSK HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM – DAY – 12:45 PM.

Outside the emergency room, the follow-up vehicle pulls up. It parks only ten meters from the admiral’s car. There are roses on the back seat and blood and brain material all over the entire car.

The ARMY SOLDIERS disembark from the vehicle, and some move slowly over to the admiral’s car to get a better look. An ARMY MAJOR SHUKSHIN notices and begins screaming at them.

SHUKSHIN
Idiots. Form up against your vehicle.

The soldiers form a line, away from the Zil, against the truck they just climbed down from.

Major Shukshin finds Private VSEVOLOD ZHILOV in the line of soldiers.

SHUKSHIN
You! You piece of shit. Incompetent fool?

Shukshin slaps him on the side of the head. When VSEVOLOD then moves slightly forward, Shukshin punches him in the stomach. VSEVOLOD falls and is kicked several times. The other SOLDIERS don’t move or react. VSEVOLOD struggles to stand.

SHUKSHIN
Not a damn word. Anyone. Not a word. Stand here and don’t move. Don’t say a word to anyone. If you have a cell phone on you, I’ll have you shot.

Shukshin looks at VSEVOLOD again. There is a long pause.
Shukshin is enraged but doesn’t punch or kick VSEVOLOD again. Shukshin is clearly contemplating more violence but turns and walks into the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM – DAY – 1:00 PM.

An authoritative looking NAVY OFFICER enters the emergency room; he seems to have been the admiral’s chief of staff.

    NAVY OFFICER
    I’m not calling. It was your man. You call.

    SHUKSHIN
    It wasn’t my man, but I’ll call.

Shukshin picks up a cell phone and calls Saint Petersburg.

    SHUKSHIN
    This is Major Shukshin.
    (beat)
    We have an incident here in Donetsk.
    (beat)
    The Admiral and a Captain have been shot.
    (beat)
    We are at the emergency room at the Donetsk hospital.
    (beat)
    Single gunman, we are searching for him presently.

Shukshin seems to be receiving instructions and hangs up and notices a PRIEST enter the hospital. Shukshin walks outside the hospital to the collection of soldiers there.

A DOCTOR walks out from the trauma room into the hall to the crowd of people in navy uniforms, and we can tell what has happened by the expression on his face. Same scene from Dallas.

Very long beat.

The Navy personnel are staring unbelievably at the Army personnel and especially Shukshin.
NAVY OFFICER
We need a coffin.

Inside the trauma room, an Orthodox PRIEST is praying over the dead body. A blanket is placed over the body. A crucifix is placed on the chest of the admiral.

NAVY OFFICER
There is a helicopter on the way. I want the body placed on it. The autopsy will be in Sevastopol.

The YOUNG FEMALE NAVY OFFICER holds the admiral’s hand as they place him in an Army military coffin. She looks like Jackie Kennedy: brunette, petite, and blood splattered.

The naval officer is supervising the removal of the body. Two SAILORS have the coffin on a cart, and they are wheeling it down the hall. An Army truck that was in the parade is backed up to the emergency room entrance. The soldiers want to load the body on the truck.

NAVY OFFICER
He is a navy admiral. The navy will do the autopsy.

SHUKSHIN
This is a war zone. We have authority.

NAVY OFFICER
The war is over.

SHUKSHIN
Obviously the war is NOT over.
(beat)
Well, he is coming with us.

NAVY OFFICER
We will have that body!

Several Navy personnel step up. There might be a pushing match or a fistfight.

SHUKSHIN
I’m Major Shukshin, and I’m in charge of this sector. And we are taking the
admiral to the nearest army field hospital for the autopsy.

A SECOND ARMY OFFICER turns and whispers into his radio. He summons the soldiers outside.

    NAVY OFFICER
    You are not taking him anywhere. There will be a navy autopsy without interference.

There is a physical altercation.

The Army soldiers run into the hall brandishing weapons. An Army doctor steps forward.

    ARMY DOCTOR
    President Kireyev wants this done.

    NAVY OFFICER
    No. I don’t believe that.

    ARMY DOCTOR
    Now, this is the brother of the President of Russia. Some consideration should be given.

    NAVY OFFICER
    No, that doesn’t matter. This is a Navy man. We are taking him to a Navy Hospital.

Shushkin pulls his pistol and chambers a round and points it at the head of the NAVY OFFICER.

    SHUKSHIN
    Now you move or I’m going to shot you and run this body right past you.

NAVY OFFICER glances around. There are three NAVY OFFICERS (four if you count the grieving mistress). And there are at least 20-25 army SOLDIERS all with weapons drawn.

The Navy Officer swallows hard and steps aside.

The Navy personnel move outside to watch the Army load the body into the back of a truck.
The Army finishes loading the coffin in the truck, and they (with all the soldiers) speed away from the hospital. They are leaving the area as a Navy helicopter lands.

The emergency room doctor has been watching the entire ordeal. We see he is clearly concerned.

The Navy officer looks left and then right. The war has made the city an eyesore.

NAVY OFFICER
What an ugly place to die!

INT. SOUTHWEST RUSSIA - DAY

We see a great deal of military activity. Everything is moving: planes, tanks, troop transports, naval vessels, all changing directions. They were moving East, and now suddenly they are moving West.

INT. BLACK SEA - DAY

We see from above a Russian naval vessel with its rudder hard over, and the wake from above tells us they have made a 180° turn.

INT. TAMBOV - DAY

A special-forces unit has landed at Tambov. But the soldiers don’t emerge from the plane. Only an officer comes out. The plane’s engines aren’t cut off. He is met by another officer. We see them speaking, but we can’t hear what is happening. The special-forces office boards the plane again. The plane taxis and takes off again, presumably back to the Crimea.

Inside the plane, the soldiers look to him for an answer.

OFFICER
We are going back.

EXT. VOLGOGRAD RAIL YARD - DAY

We see a train’s operators, detach the engine from a long line of rail cars loaded with tanks and heavy artillery.
The engine gets on a sidetrack and then hooks up with what was the back of the line of cars. They change directions.

INT. TELEVISION STATION - DAY

REPORTER
In light of the events in Donetsk only hours ago, Russian short and medium ranges missile battalions are again on alert. Submarines and bombers are repositioning themselves. Fighter pilots have scramble and are flying patrol missions again. And from their expressions, they are looking for an excuse. The war, which ended only a week or two previously, could easily resume at any time.

INT. FSB AUTOMOBILE - DAY

PICHUSHKIN
We are going to drop you at the airport.

Pichushkin gestures to the driver. Alyona doesn’t speak. She is watching the assassination a second and a third time on her device.

Pichushkin is getting text updates from his FSB handlers. He reads them but doesn’t share the information immediately with Alyona.

PICHUSHKIN
It isn’t so strange.

ALYONA
What?

PICHUSHKIN
Your stories on corruption.
(beat)
Eleven Mafia bosses in prison. Four oligarchs, three were friends of the President.

ALYONA
What are you talking about?
PICHUSHKIN
The reason you are here.

ALYONA
Okay. Sure.
(beat)
And why are you here?

PICHUSHKIN
I told you. I’m taking you to the airport. But also…

Pichushkin shows Alyona his weapon.

ALYONA
And why do I need protection? It was never necessary before today.

PICHUSHKIN
Well, like I told your boss, and I watched him tell you what funny business might be involved.

ALYONA
Really and you know this?

PICHUSHKIN
I know we don’t know where the body is.

ALYONA
We?

PICHUSHKIN
The FSB.
(beat)
It is was last seen on a Ural 4320 military truck, but we don’t know where it was going.
(beat)
There should be an autopsy.

ALYONA
Someone has stolen the body? Who?

PICHUSHKIN
Who?
(beat)
The Army?

ALYONA
He was Navy. That doesn’t make sense.

PICHUSHKIN
It might make sense.

ALYONA
You mean the army killed the president’s brother?

PICHUSHKIN
Perhaps, but I don’t really know that for a fact.

ALYONA
Get on the phone and find out, please. You are the FSB for Christ’s sake. (beat) Forget that. It isn’t your job.

PICHUSHKIN
I can try.

ALYONA
There are probably 100 FSB agents there already.

PICHUSHKIN
Probably not that many.

They proceed in the car to the airport.

INT. AIRPORT – SHEREMETYEVO AIRPORT – DAY

Alyona simply boards an Aeroflot plane. She sits down and buckles up. She smiles to herself.

PICHUSHKIN
What?

ALYONA
Nothing.
PIRUSHKIN
No what?

ALYONA
I’ve traveled a great deal and even to Eastern Ukraine, by plane. And I’ve NEVER boarded a plane without being interviewed and thoroughly searched.

PIRUSHKIN
(flirting)
You want me to search you?

ALYONA
(polite)
Not at present, but thank you.

INT. POLICE STATION - DONETSK - DAY

In the chief of police’s office, there is a new civilian authority, a Russian POLICE CHIEF.

DIMAA MELNYK enters the office. DIMA is ethnically Ukrainian and nervous about keeping his job. He looks 100 percent competent, but the future of the previous police force is unclear.

Donetsk is now part of Russia. We see a flag and photos of the Russian president in the office.

DIMA
Chief Investigator Dima Melnyk reporting, sir.

POLICE CHIEF
You’re Ukrainian?

DIMA
My father. Yes sir. My mother was Russian.

POLICE CHIEF
Have you been in a fight this morning?

DIMA
Sir, I...
POLICE CHIEF
The President of Russia wants to know your initial...
(beat)
Did you put some ice on your face?
(beat)
... your initial reaction to this. What are the prospects for an early resolution?

DIMA
I am confident we will apprehend all of the criminals involved, sir.

POLICE CHIEF
Yes, yes, yes. I hope for your sake, young man.
(beat)
It's nearly four hours since the incidence. Who did it?

CUT TO:

INT: SIXTH FLOOR - DAY

We see DUQVAAKHA TABARIK fire two shots out the window. Two shell casings are left ejected onto the floor. TABARIK is about to fire a third but isn’t able to do so quickly enough. The parade speeds out of his line of sight.

DIMA (V.O.)
We have a Chechen man who fired two shots from the sixth floor.

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DAY

POLICE CHIEF
Three shots.

DIMA
I’m not so certain.

POLICE CHIEF
There were three shots. I saw it on television.
DIMA
When I arrived, there were only two shell casings.

POLICE CHIEF
The third is still in the weapon?

DIMA
No, sir.

POLICE CHIEF
You are in Russia now, son. You can’t afford to be wrong.

DIMA
I’m very good at my job, sir.

The POLICE CHIEF frowns.

POLICE CHIEF
We shall see. Go on.

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND-FLOOR - DAY

Only a minute after the shots were fired, we see Duqvaakha Tabarik standing in a second-floor break room holding a soda can. A policeman runs past him on his way to the sixth floor. He looks like an employee (computer programmer), so the policeman doesn’t suspect him.

DIMA
(V.O.)
An armed policeman, running through the second-floor café 60 to 90 seconds after the shots, encountered Tabarik. He didn’t appear winded or excited.

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DAY

POLICE CHIEF
And this Chechen was employed there?
DIMA
A low-level computer programmer.

CUT TO:

INT. SIXTH-FLOOR - DAY

We see Investigator DIMA MELNYK enter the sixth-floor office. It appears that he is the first to arrive. He instructs a policeman to stand in the doorway and deny entry to everyone. He slowly methodically surveys the room. He immediately looks out the open window and views the sniper’s point of view. Clearly, this is where the shots were fired. DIMA finds two shell casings near the window. He photographs the casings with his cell phone.

He searches a bit more and finds the rifle partially hidden between two rows of computer server racks. He photographs the rifle with his cell phone. DIMA puts on latex gloves and examines the rifle. He opens the breach and smells. We can see he believes that the gun was recently fired. DIMA replaces the rifle in its original hiding place.

DIMA
(V.O.)
I arrived approximately 5 mins after the incident. The scene seemed undisturbed. I found an Italian M1 Garand. It fired a .30-06 caliber bullet.

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DAY

DIMA
And 5 mins after that, Army investigators arrived.

CUT TO:

INT. SIXTH FLOOR - DAY

The EIGHT RUSSIAN SOLDIERS barge into the sixth floor and a soldier attempts to wrestle with Dima, who was photographing the evidence. The soldiers see two shell casings on the floor and move to pick them up. Dima tries
to block them, and a fight begins. Dima, of course, is the loser. Dima is punched and is finally knocked to the ground. He is kicked several times in the face and ribs. A pistol is put to his head, and he stops resisting.

A creepy soldier, CZAR DRESVYANIN, picks up the two shell casings and puts them in his pocket. There isn’t an effort to preserve evidence or fingerprints. He picks the casings up and puts them in his pocket.

Dresvyanin has a scar across his face. His neck and chin were seriously burned, perhaps his entire upper body was once burned. He is the roughest looking character in the entire Russian Army.

POLICE CHIEF (V.O.)
And that is when you had a fight?

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DAY

DIMA
They took the two shell casings.

CUT TO:

INT. SIXTH FLOOR. - DAY

The Russian soldiers search the room but don’t detect the partially hidden rifle. They give up searching but punch and kick DIMA a few more times for good measure.

DIMA
(V.O.)
They missed the rifle. It was obscured behind some computer servers.

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DAY

POLICE CHIEF
Really?

CUT TO:
INT. SIXTH FLOOR - DAY

Dima, of course, is badly beaten (again) and spits up blood. DIMA is barely able to sit up and then remains still. There is a long pause, and Dima looks depressed.

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DAY

    POLICE CHIEF
    We have the rifle?

    DIMA
    Yes.

    POLICE CHIEF
    Good. Don’t tell anyone this. Right?

    DIMA
    No sir. It is in a safe place.

DIMA puts on a single latex glove and goes to his chief’s filing cabinet and reaches behind it. He doesn’t pick the rifle up but tilts it out to show it to the Russian police chief. There is a long pause.

    POLICE CHIEF
    Good. What happened next?

CUT TO:

INT. DONETSK STREET - DAY

We see Tabarik walking/running down the sidewalk. He looks as guilty as hell. A policeman stops him.

Tipalov only wants to question Tabarik. Tabarik pulls a pistol from his belt and fires. Tabarik runs away.

    DIMA (V.O.)
    The Chechen man killed a policeman. He killed a Ukrainian policeman.

CUT TO:
INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

We see Tabarik run into a theatre without a ticket. The MANAGER of the theater calls the police.

RUSSIAN (V.O.)
And ran into a theatre...

In the dark theater, we see a scuffle as TABARIK resists arrest. Tabarik is beaten rather badly.

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DAY

DIMA
Yes, sir. And was arrested after resisting arrest. His pistol jammed.

RUSSIAN
Well...

DIMA
Sir, you need tell me if the Army is going to investigate. Or am I to proceed?

RUSSIAN
You Ukrainians can be so insolent, but then those days are over. (beat) You better be good at your job.

DIMA feels threatened by the words.

There is a long pause.

DIMA is trying to figure out what the Russian wants and how to keep his job.

RUSSIAN
Don’t just stand there. I need a report to send to Moscow.

EXT. FLIGHT FROM MOSCOW TO DONETSK - DAY

Pichushkin sleeps.
Everyone on the flight is tense. Many try to make eye contact with the other passengers, trying to detect any treachery. Others make no eye contact and sink low in their seats, simply hoping (praying) to arrive safely. There are many obvious security people on board - Russian air marshals. Many are ethnic Russians (war refugees) returning to their homes in what was once Ukraine.

Alyona pulls out her laptop and begins work. Alyona notices the tension and makes a note of it.

Alyona is juggling a computer and a box of documents.

Pichushkin wakes up momentarily.

    PICHUSHKIN
    What are you doing?

    ALYONA
    I’m a actual working journalist. I don’t have the luxury of resting on a plane.

Pichushkin wants to return to his sleep, but she prevents him. She uses him as a sounding board.

She reads a document and produces part of a story. She is talking/reading and typing feverously.

Pichushkin appears to be half-listening.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOSCOW FUTBALL FIELD - DAY

We see YOUNG YEFIM, jump to head a ball into the net. He is interfered with and takes a terrible fall. He bravely gets up, but clearly his back is seriously injured. The OLDER YEGOR runs at the opposition, and wants to fight. YEGOR is restrained. Clearly they are brothers.

    ALYONA
    (V.O.)
    Yefim graduated from high school and entered Moscow State University in 1982, where Yegor was already a
student. Like his older brother Yegor, Yefim played football. Yefim was not as good an athlete as Yegor but he had a lot of determination and perseverance. Unfortunately, one day while playing football, Yefim ruptured a disk in his spine. Yefim never really recovered from this accident, and his back continued to bother him for the rest of his life.

BACK TO:

INT. AIRPLANE – DAY

Alyona continues working.

Alyona reads several official Russian Navy reports, love letters and police reports. We see family photos.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAINT PETERSBURG NAVAL DOCKS – DAY

We see YEFIM KIREYEV’S WIFE and two CHILDREN in Saint Petersburg. He is about to go to sea, and they are saying good-bye.

ALYONA (V.O.)
Admiral Kireyev has a wife and two children (a girl eight and a boy three) in Saint Petersburg.

BACK TO:

INT. AIRPLANE – DAY

ALYONA
There are several photos showing Yefim with various women, actresses, singers, “any women in a skirt.”

There is a long pause as Alyona contemplates what to say about the adultery issue.

PICHUSHKIN
You can’t print that.
ALYONA
Why?

PICHUSHKIN
He’s dead and doesn’t have a chance to deny it or defend himself.

Alyona types into her laptop.

ALYONA (V.O.)
While he was accused at various times in his life of being a serial adulterer, there are documents that suggest he never had an affair and was true to his wife of 10 years.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

We see that in fact that he was a serial adulterer. We see him out in various locations, apparently having an affair with many women. But primarily, he is seen with a high profile film actress. One mistress is eerily a Russian early 2000s version of Marilynn Monroe.

BACK TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Camera zooms in on the documents. Alyona finds an official military account of how “Yefim Kireyev’s spy ship was cut in two by a U.S. destroyer off Karachi” in the 1980s Afghan conflict.

Alyona reads the account of the ordeal. She can see on the photocopy certain phrases were highlighted with a marker. The report includes two important facts “the collision was at night with neither ship running with lights” and “after the collision, Yefim Kireyev towed an injured sailor to Bundle Island."

Alyona notices the strange coincidence. She thinks about it too long. Pichushkin notices she’s halted her research.
PICHUSHKIN
What?

ALYONA
Nothing. Just a coincidence.

And she moves on shifting through the papers.

CUT TO:

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - NIGHT

A Soviet trawler being rammed in the middle of the night, and Yefim Kireyev leading his crew to safety. Xoom in on the documents, “Yefim Kireyev, who had been on the Moscow State University swim team, used a life jacket strap clenched between his teeth to tow his badly-burned senior enlisted machinist mate.”

ALYONA (V.O.)
Soon after graduating, both Yegor and Yefim joined the Navy. Yegor was a flyer and was sent to Europe, while Jack was made Lieutenant (Lt.) and assigned to the Arabian Gulf as commander of spy ship. Yefim had a crew of twelve men whose mission was to listen and spy on American ships delivering supplies to Afghanistan. On the night of August 2, 1988, Lt. Kireyev crew patrolled the waters listening for enemy ships. An American destroyer suddenly became visible. But it was traveling at full speed and headed straight at them. Holding the wheel, Lt. Kireyev tried to swerve out of the way, but to no avail. The much larger American warship rammed the Russian trawler, splitting it in half and killing two of Lt. Kireyev’s men. The others managed to jump off as their boat went up in flames. Lt. Kireyev was slammed hard against the cockpit, once again injuring his back. Pyotr Sizov, one of his crew members, had horrible burns on his face and hands and was ready to give up. In the darkness, Lt.
Kireyev managed to find Sizov and haul him back to where the other survivors were clinging to a piece of the boat that was still afloat. At sunrise, Lt. Kireyev led his men toward a small island several miles away. Despite his own injuries, Lt. Kireyev was able to tow Pyotr Sizov ashore, a strap from Sizov’s life jacket clenched between his teeth. It took four hours to reach the island, 5.6 km away. Six days later, two Pakistani fishermen found them and went for help. The next day, the crew was rescued.

BACK TO:

INT. AIRPLANE – DAY

Alyona continues working.

Alyona finds a citation for a medal.

CUT TO:

INT. Kremlin – DAY

Yefim Kireyev is shown receiving Russia’s highest honor. It appears that GORBACHEV is making the presentation. Yefim’s proud family is there also. There is a mistress or two in the back of the room.

ALYONA (V.O.)
For his extraordinary heroism, Lt. Kireyev was awarded Hero of the Soviet Union.

BACK TO:

INT. AIRPLANE – DAY

ALYONA reads other newspaper articles and book reviews.

CUT TO:
INT. MOSCOW BOOKSTORE – DAY

There is a sign in front of the bookstore, “War Hero and Award-Winning Author.” Inside, a young navy officer is signing books. It is Yefim. An insane person approaches him...

LOON
You didn’t write that. This book award isn’t yours. It belongs to the man your father hired to write it for you.

YEFIM
You were in Afghanistan?

LOON
So what of it?

YEFIM
You need help? I have friends; we can find you help.

LOON
I don’t need your stinking help!

Security comes and removes the man.

ALYONA (V.O.)
In 2003, Captain Kireyev won Russia’s most prestigious book award for writing a history of personal “courage” in the Russian Navy. The book is a volume of short biographies describing acts of bravery and integrity by eight sailors throughout the Russian Navy's history.

BACK TO:

As the plane lands in Donetsk, the tension ends. The passengers sigh in relief and applaud the safe landing. Alyona hits the “send” and emails her preliminary story to her editor.

EXT. AIRPORT – DONETSK – DAY

Alyona looks left and then right. There are four or more planes that have arrived recently. Three are disembarking.
One plane looks to be nearly full of FSB from Moscow. One plane looks to be Navy, probably from St. Petersburg. And there is a chartered plane from Moscow with television journalists. Alyona is on the commercial flight.

**PICHUSHKIN**
We’ve arranged a car. It should be parked out front. A Jeep Grand Cherokee. Red.

Alyona and Pichushkin exit the plane. The passenger terminal is under repair. Construction workers are plastering over bullet holes. There is rather a lot of construction about, but the airport is open for the first time in years.

Pichushkin enters the restroom and never emerges.

**INT. AIRPORT RESTROOM - DAY**

Pichushkin is standing at a urinal, and we see a Russian army knife come across his throat. But, it jerks back, and it only slightly cut on the side of his neck.

Pichushkin fights four or five army specialists, and in the end, it is a standoff. Finally, Dresvyanin enters the room and kills Pichushkin with a silenced weapon.

The army specialists limp out of the airport, holding their wounds, and they get into a red Grand Cherokee.

Dresvyanin seems to be looking for someone (Alyona).

**INT. AIRPORT - DAY**

Alyona waits. Finally, security and then police arrive. There is a commotion. Alyona enters the restroom and is pushed back but not before she sees Pichushkin dead in a pool of blood.

Alyona doesn’t make eye contact with the FSB officers who now have exited their plane and are approaching at the news of a dead man in a restroom.

Alyona walks out front. She spots the red Grand Cherokee but some Army men get in, and it speeds out of the airport.
Alyona walks stealthily a healthy distance to a parked taxi. She doesn’t want to draw any attention to herself.

It is a Turkish TAXI DRIVER. She looks at his information and at the photos of his family.

    ALYONA
    You’re Turkish? And that is your family?

    TAXI DRIVER
    Yes, how did you know?

    ALYONA
    I just do.
    (beat)
    You aren’t involved in any of this bull shit are you?

    TAXI DRIVER
    What bull shit?

    ALYONA
    Politics.

    TAXI DRIVER
    Oh, no. I have a family to care for with no time for that bull shit. And besides I’m a moral man with integrity.

Alyona smiles faintly.

    ALYONA
    I can see that. Thank you.
    (beat)
    I want to see the crime scene.

She climbs into the taxi.

EXT. TAXI - DONETSK AIRPORT - DAY

Alyona enters the taxi and speaks to the driver. As they drive, she points her phone’s camera out the window, and she records what she sees.
ALYONA
Where were you when the shooting took place?

DRIVER
Yes. Here and there for a time. I took some refugees into the city at that time.

Alyona looks out the window. She seems to be gathering in as much information as possible.

DRIVER
I will never forget how slowly the cars were moving -- not because of traffic but because clearly drivers were shocked by the news they were hearing on their car radios. I knew at that moment that the horrible radio bulletin was true.

The traffic is still moving slowly.

CUT TO:

EXT. DONETSK AIRPORT TARMAC - THE DAY BEFORE

The Admiral and some other dignitaries exit a plane. The parade leaves the airport gates and enters the street.

We see the first Zil in the parade full of Russian ARMY OFFICERS.

In the second vehicle, the Zil convertible, we see Russian NAVY OFFICERS, including Admiral Kireyev.

The third spot in the parade is a Ural-4320 truck. The trailer is full of ARMY SOLDIERS.

The fourth vehicle carries VETERANS from the Afghanistan War and one VERY OLD MAN from the Great Patriotic War.

The fifth vehicle is carrying ethnic Russian CIVILIAN LEADERS.
There is a number of vehicles that follow, all are unremarkable, but full of Army soldiers and a few Marines. Tanks and armored personal carriers follow.

    ALYONA (V.O.)
    The parade began here, at the airport?
    (beat)
    The sun was shining? The people were welcoming?

BACK TO: Taxi interior.

    DRIVER
    Some of the people, yes.

    ALYONA
    The top of the Admiral’s limousine was down. Why? Was it that warm yesterday?

    DRIVER
    It had been rainy, but the sun came out before the Admiral's plane. I know the wind was blowing like a mother, and it was about 18° or 19°.

    ALYONA
    I see.

    DRIVER
    Maybe people like to be seen in a parade. Changing borders and annexation is always in the history books. Photographs.

    ALYONA
    And in newspapers.

    DRIVER
    This is a big historical event. And now they said it might necessitate a renewed war.

    ALYONA
    Yes, it might.

Alyona is riding into the city. She is shown looking out various windows (left and right and even the rear window)
trying to judge the weather and the political atmosphere by looking at the people on sidewalks. Also, she is afraid of being followed.

The taxi driver notices Alyona looking behind them, and it causes him to occasionally look in the mirror.

CAR RADIO (V.O.)
Authorities have under arrest a Chechen separatist, Duqvaakha Tabarik, who they suspect, after assassinating Admiral Kireyev, shot Donetsk policeman J.D. Tipalov.
(beat)
A recently fired 9mm pistol was found on Tabarik when he was arrested in the Kinokult Theatre. Authorities are still looking for the weapon that fired the three shots and killed Admiral Kireyev.

ALYONA
Are you listening to this?

TAXI DRIVER
Yes. Of course. They have been saying this news for several hours.

ALYONA
What happened?

TAXI DRIVER
I don’t know, but you are the fifth person from Moscow who has asked me this question today.

EXT. CENTER OF THE CITY – DONETSK – DAY

Alyona has her digital camera, and she is shooting video. She has an omni-directional earset microphone. She is documenting everything as later she will write her newspaper story. She is speaking into the microphone and moving the camera about the location documenting everything.

ALYONA
Kirov Plaza is bounded on the south, east, and north sides by 30+ meter tall
buildings. One of those buildings is a state-owned warehouse, leased out to a computer firm, from which, Tabarik fired a rifle that killed Admiral Kireyev. There is also a grassy knoll on the northwest side of the plaza. At the plaza's west perimeter is a triple underpass beneath a railroad bridge, under which the motorcade raced after the shots were fired.

Alyona, having never visited Dallas, doesn’t realize it yet, but the crime scene is mysteriously similar to Daley Plaza in Dallas. The most astute of a Russian audience will probably notice the similarities.

ALYONA
It all happened here.
(beat)
The parade turned, and it all came to an end here.
(beat)
There is a quite pronounced down gradient.
(beat)
The street sort of snakes along.
(beat)
It would be seriously unusual and difficult terrain, to get two shots off, much less three. There isn’t much time before the parade is out of view.

She puts the camera in her bag. She glances down to her electronic device; she replays the video from the parade. She notices many people in the crowd waving with one hand and a cell phone in the other.

ALYONA
There must have been ten or twenty cell phones recording the entire event.
(beat)
I have to find them.

Several passers-by look at her strangely as she seems to be talking to herself.
ALYONA
Well, let’s go up there first.

She looks to a certain window on the sixth floor of the building.

INT. SIXTH FLOOR – BUILDING – DAY

Alyona arrives at the room on the sixth floor. There was a police tape across the door, but it has been torn down by a previous visitor.

Alyona is recording again with her camera. Alyona slowly edges into the room. The room is almost full of computer servers. She takes a few photos of the room. She goes to the window and looks outside, down to the street; she photographs the view out the window.

Suddenly Alyona realizes there is another person in the room. It is Dima Melnyk, the Ukrainian police detective, still on the force after annexation.

He is sitting in a chair, simply waiting.

DIMA
You’re a journalist?

ALYONA
Yes, how did you...

DIMA
The camera. You are recording everything to write about it later.

ALYONA
And, you are a local detective.

DIMA
How did you...

ALYONA
Your clothes.

Dima looks down at his cheap clothes.

DIMA
We appear to be fairly observant.
ALYONA
What are you doing here?

DIMA
What are you doing here; this is a crime scene?

ALYONA
The police tape...

DIMA
This is chaos.
(beat)
There was a man there guarding the door but he’s disappeared.

ALYONA
You are the chief investigator?

DIMA
I guess it’s my responsibility; I’m the local police. So I can’t let you in here.

ALYONA
Well, this is my responsibility. I’m a reporter, remember?

DIMA
Well, you can’t be here. What if they do come back?

ALYONA
Who?

DIMA
I can’t tell you that.

ALYONA
I was asked here to accompany an FSB agent. I’m sure he would have been the chief investigator.

DIMA
Where is he?
ALYONA
He was killed at the airport.
Apparently taking a piss.

DIMA
I’m aware. He was FSB? He asked you?
You were asked by who?

She smiles and produces the Kremlin’s letter. Dima reads the letter.

DIMA
Your clothes and your device.
(beat)
You look like a Moscow journalist.

ALYONA
So you don’t believe me?

DIMA
Frankly. No.
(beat)
You have a letter requesting cooperation. When did the Kremlin ever need the help of a journalist to investigate a political murder?

ALYONA
When he can’t trust his own people.

Dim is in shock as he staggers back a half step. His mind is racing 100 miles per hours. He replays the assignation cell phone videos in his head. He must sit, and he falls back in his chair.

Finally, he comes to terms with the gravity of the situation, and he stands up.

ALYONA
I’m Alyona Yolkov. Pleased to meet you.

She extends her handshake. DIMA shakes her hand and produces his identification.

DIMA
Dima Melnyk, homicide detective.
ALYONA
Nice to meet you. Maybe you can help me.

DIMA
Maybe you can help me.

ALYONA
So, what are you doing? It looked to me like you were waiting.

DIMA
Yes. Waiting. I’m waiting here.

ALYONA
Waiting for what?

DIMA
The army.

She moves up nearer to look at his bruised face.

ALYONA
It looks like you already found them. Or better they found you.

DIMA
They two shells earlier and I’m thinking they will return for the gun or to plant evidence.

ALYONA
The gun?

DIMA
Oh, I removed it, of course, but the army might not know this. I have photos of the two shell casings.

He shows Alyona his phone.

ALYONA
I see. Aren’t you the sly one. Waiting. Hah. I didn’t think of that.

We hear three distinct gunshots from downstairs in the back of the building. A SOLDIER (Dresvyanin) has fired his
weapon in the air, three times. Alyona and Dima move to the back window, and we see Czar Dresvyanin holding a rifle but picking up three shell casings off the ground.

Alyona and Dima look at each other, trying to understand what has happened and what is about to happen.

Again, there are the sounds of eight soldiers running up the stairs. Dima struggles to stand. Alyona disappears behind a stack of computer servers. She finds a secluded position and pulls out her camera.

It is Czar Dresvyanin again. And again, Dima stands in the way blocking the villain’s advance.

DRESVYANIN
You are still here?

DIMA
This is a crime scene and you...

DRESVYANIN
(sinister chuckle)
I’m the investigator.

DIMA
I can’t let you. Go back and tell your superiors I’m the sheriff and I have it under control.

DRESVYANIN
I don’t think they would think I’m an effective leader if I did that.

Dresvyanin signals for the soldiers to attack Dima.

Dima pulls his weapon, but chooses to take another beating rather than fire on the soldiers. Primarily, Dima doesn’t fire because they are young Russian soldiers just following orders, and secondarily they have weapons and would certainly return fire killing him.

So the soldiers take his pistol and beat Dima again. Other soldiers fan out to search the room more thoroughly.

While Dima is down on the ground, he is taking in clues. He notices that the soldiers have Kalashnikovs AK-12, the
newest assault rifles. But Dresvyanin is carrying a NATO Naval M1 Garand, the one he probably used to obtain the three casings downstairs. Dima is familiar with both weapons, as Eastern Ukraine area has just been the focus of years of war.

**DRESVYANIN**
(to the soldiers)
Make sure the rifle isn’t still here. Search everywhere.

Alyona narrowly escapes detection by climbing on top of a stack of servers. From her hiding loft, she tapes a video of Dresvyanin throwing three shell casings under the shooter’s window.

Dresvyanin pulls out a silenced weapon and is about to kill Dima, who is lying bloody on the floor. Alyona is recording it, and she drops the phone. The soldiers are about to investigate. but a helicopter arrives and then another and another.

One of the soldiers is watching out the windows.

**SOLDIER**
Alpha!

Dresvyanin runs to the window to have a look.

**DRESVYANIN**
That is Alpha.

**SOLDIER**
Do we fight them?

**DRESVYANIN**
Oh, hell no! Down the stairs. Hurry.

As the ALFA GROUP enters the building from the roof, the Army exits the building down the stairs.

The Alpha team enters the sixth-floor room.

An Alpha team soldier points out the Army soldiers exiting the back of the building and running for their lives down the alley.
ALPHA MEMBER
Hunt them?

ALPHA LEADER
No, secure the building. This room especially.

They, of course, have weapons on Dima. He’s nearly unconscious on the floor.

ALPHA LEADER
What are you doing in here?

Weak from the beating, Dima reaches for his identification, but they restrain him and are very cautious. They stand Dima up and interrogate him.

An Alpha group member brings Alyona’s phone to the leader.

DIMA
That’s my phone.

The leader looks pitifully at Dima.

LEADER
What are you doing here? Who are you?

DIMA
Dima Melnyk. I’m the chief investigator.

LEADER
The chief investigator was killed at the airport.

DIMA
Well, I’m the local police homicide detective.

LEADER
Sure you are.

DIMA
And no one has told me otherwise.

LEADER
I don’t believe you.
DIMA
Listen, you will just have to believe me. Those Army thugs just planted evidence, those three shell casings and...

LEADER
Where is Alyona Yolkov?

DIMA
Who?

LEADER
Alyona Yolkov?

DIMA
I don’t know any Alyona Yolkov.

Dima might receive yet another beating, but the leader pulls out a pistol and puts it to Dima’s temple.

ALYONA
That’s me. I’m Alyona Yolkov.

Alyona climbs down from her hiding location.

LEADER
Identification, please.

She immediately shows the leader her identification. And he peruses it. He nods in the affirmative.

LEADER
Are you okay?

ALYONA
Yes.

LEADER
Is this man who he says he is?

ALYONA
Yes.

LEADER
And you want his assistance?
ALYONA
Yes, of course.

The leader of the assault group is satisfied. And he motions for them to leave the room.

The Alpha group leaves the room.

Although severely beaten, Dima still can chuckle and he puts on a latex glove.

DIMA
Thank you.

Alyona shows Dima the video she’s made of the Dresvyanin planting the evidence.

DIMA
I’ve changed my mind about you. You might be useful to me.

ALYONA
I’m not a nurse, and that is what you need.

Dima is something of a bulldog.

DIMA
I’m okay. Did you notice the weapon?

ALYONA
No, but I taped it all.

DIMA
That was a NATO M1, Navy version.

ALYONA
So, help me out; I don’t know anything about guns.

DIMA
So it’s very similar to the M1 that…

ALYONA
It means, they killed the Admiral?
DIMA
I don’t know.

ALYONA
Sure they did. They are up here planting evidence. Evidence that is too accurate.

DIMA
Too accurate?

ALYONA
You said the weapons were very similar. How would they know what gun to use if their man wasn’t up here pulling the trigger?

DIMA
Well, they have the body. An autopsy would probably reveal what weapon was used. More or less.

DIMA collects the planted evidence (three .30-06 casings) and places them in a plastic evidence bag.

ALYONA
And the shells are similar to the ones from the actual weapon used in the assassination?

DIMA
Only I picked up two casings. .30-06, like these.

ALYONA
And there were three shots.

DIMA
Exactly.

ALYONA
Two came from here.

Alyona gestures to the famous window.

DIMA
And one from somewhere else.
Dima pauses and looks Alyona up and down; he is trying to evaluate her and judge her character.

DIMA
A Moscow journalist?
(beat)
With a letter from President Kireyev.

Alyona doesn’t respond but has a curious look on her face.

ALYONA
Wait, isn’t your plaza, where the assassination took place, called Kirov Plaza?

DIMA
Yes.
(beat)
Oh, I hope you aren’t saying what I think you are saying.

Dima is under a great deal of stress... and it shows here.

DIMA
You work for the Kremlin, and now you are saying...

ALYONA
Saying what?

DIMA
You think the government did this?

ALYONA
No, I think the Army did this.

DIMA
It is a very bad analogy. Please tell me you won’t make this argument in your newspaper.

ALYONA
I won’t. I was just thinking about...

DIMA
The enormity of it?
ALYONA
Yes.

DIMA
However, the Kirov assassination lead to seven separate trials.

ALYONA
And you know this...

DIMA
School, of course.

ALYONA
There may be seven separate trials here for this crime.

DIMA
You videotaped the soldier throwing down the casings? Did you send the video to Moscow yet.

ALYONA
Yes. Of course.

DIMA
To the Kremlin?

ALYONA
No, to my boss.

DIMA
With all due respect...

ALYONA
Yes.

DIMA
Did you ever think maybe you should hold on to it until you are out of the area?

ALYONA
This is a big story.
DIMA
Because this was the President’s brother?

ALYONA
The President isn’t our only reader.

DIMA
No. I’m sure.

Alyona wonders about the room conducting her own search. This piques the interest of Dima. He watches her carefully.

ALYONA
Why did they leave three shell casings?

DIMA
These are .30-06 and were fired from a Ukranian soldier’s M1. You just heard those shots just a minute ago.

ALYONA
So? Why?

DIMA
Tabarik fired .30-06 bullets. They took those from me. But I have the gun.

ALYONA
Help me understand. Why leave three casings?

DIMA
Well, I’m only guessing. They have to explain the three shots.

ALYONA
So it wasn’t Tabarik?

DIMA
Not entirely. I’m guessing.

ALYONA thinks. She takes a photo of Dima to document his injuries. She walks to the window again.
DIMA
This Duqvaakha Tabarik, with a western rifle, and he is probably was not good enough a shot to hit a moving target. The television is reporting that the first shot missed the car entirely and hit and pavement.

ALYONA
Maybe he was nervous. I mean, he was shooting at the brother of the President of Russia.

DIMA
I imagine he was.

ALYONA
And, he didn’t fire three shots. There is a video, I saw it before I left Moscow.

DIMA
I saw it too.

ALYONA
Three shots.

DIMA
Yes, but this man only fired twice.

ALYONA
You can confirm this?

DIMA
I was the first in this room and I only found two casings.

ALYONA
There was a second gunman. Correct?

DIMA
It seems clear. Yes.

ALYONA
Who then?
DIMA
You are right about the Army. The army has beaten me up twice today, both times in this room. You saved me from being killed.

ALYONA
The first time they take evidence and then we just saw them return to leave evidence.

ALYONA seems to understand. But she continues to search the room. DIMA notices her legs an attractive feature.

DIMA
I’d sure not want you to be harmed.

ALYONA
Don’t worry about me, dear.

DIMA
And what will you do if the investigation leads to important people.

ALYONA
Important people?

DIMA
Army... The Kremlin even?

ALYONA
I’m not controlled by either.

DIMA
I thought.

ALYONA
Hardly.

INT. POLICE STATION - DONETSK - DAY

When Dima and Alyona arrive at the station, the police chief blocks their progress.

The police chief looks relieved and anxious to tell Dima he’s off the hook.
POLICE CHIEF
Okay, you can relax the FSB is here.
Let them handle everything. A second
FSB man is in there with him now.

The police chief gestures to the interrogation room.

DIMA
This is Alyona, a journalist from
Moscow.

POLICE CHIEF
What is she doing here? No journalists.
You can’t take her inside.

DIMA
(to Alyona)
Show him your letter.

The police chief doesn’t like it. It’s just one more
complication he doesn’t need.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM – DAY

An two FSB INVESTIGATORS are questioning Tabarik. Tabarik
has a cut on his head, a black eye nearly swollen shut, and
a fat lip. His neck is bruised. He is hand-cuffed to the
chair with his hands behind his back.

Tabarik is a small man and a weak man. But, he is adamant
he didn’t do it, but this actor should make him appear so
nervous he would be unable to complete such a task. He is
jumpy and has been beaten, but his hands are very shaky…
anything like marksmanship looks out of the question.

TABARIK
The only thing I have done is carry a
pistol into a movie … I didn’t kill
anybody … I haven’t shot anybody. I
didn’t shoot the admiral or officer
Tipalov.
When the primary FSB investigator sees Dima entering the room, he gets up and they leave the room and speak in the hall.

FSB INVESTIGATOR
He won’t say anything. I’ve mentioned every Chechen group in our files and not only has he denied affiliation he has denied shooting the admiral. Twenty times he’s denied it.

(beat)
You want to know what I think; he was run out of Chechnya. Either he wouldn’t fight or couldn’t he’s a weak-looking little weasel.

DIMA
Why don’t you try the Ukrainian angle?

FSB INVESTIGATOR
The war is over. And he’s not really Ukrainian anyway.

DIMA
How long has he been here?

FSB INVESTIGATOR
Twenty years.

DIMA
Maybe then.

FSB INVESTIGATOR
You’re Ukrainian.

(beat)
Maybe he did it for Ukraine, and it wasn’t over Chechnya. You talk to him.

Dima agrees and enters the room. He gestures for Alyona to follow him inside. Everyone’s eyebrows are raised at this move.

DIMA
I’m Dima. I was born in Kiev. I’m a Ukrainian just like you. Personally, I’m glad you have done this.
TABARIK
I didn’t shoot anyone … I never killed anybody.

DIMA
Relax, you are with a friend. After this war, I’m glad the Russian got what he had coming.

TABARIK
I don’t know anything about what you are accusing me of.

ALYONA
How did you miss entirely with the first shot? But were dead on with the second? How is that?

Tabarik is taken aback. There is a long pause. A question (first) from a woman and (second) about his accuracy.

TABARIK
Who is this?

DIMA
She’s a reporter, from Moscow.

Tabarik lights up in relief.

TABARIK
Listen, these people are gonna kill me. I’m just a patsy.

ALYONA
Did you shot at the Admiral?

TABARIK
No. I have not been charged with that. In fact, nobody has said that to me yet. The first thing I heard about it was when the TV reporters in the hall asked me that question. … I did not do it. I did not do it. … I did not shoot anyone.

ALYONA
You shot twice?
TABARIK
Nobody has told me anything except that I am accused of murdering a policeman. I know nothing more than that, and I do request someone to come forward to give me legal assistance.

ALYONA
But you had a rifle up on the sixth floor?

TABARIK
I didn’t shoot Admiral Kireyev. … I didn’t even know Cpt. Charkov had been shot. … I don’t own a rifle. I didn’t tell anyone anything about curtain rods. … I did carry a package to work. I carried my lunch, a sandwich and fruit … I had nothing personal against the Navy or the Russian government.

ALYONA
I saw you up there on the sixth floor. It’s on four or five video clips. Two shots.

TABARIK
It’s a mistake. I’m not guilty. That Chechen wars was a long time ago.

ALYONA
You are upset about this war? The Annexation? You hate the Russians? The police?

TABARIK
If you ask me about the shooting of Tipalov, I don’t know what you are talking about. … The only thing I am here for is because I popped a policeman on the nose in the theatre, which I readily admit I did, because I was protecting myself. … I haven’t shot a rifle since the Chechen war.
(beat)
You are a reporter?
Alyona nods, yes.

TABARIK
Then report this, 'the Russian people will soon forget the Admiral was killed (brother of the President or not), but I didn’t shoot him.'

DIMA
Come on, Ukraine is thankful just tell us and welcome the credit. You are a national hero!

TABARIK
I did not kill Kireyev or Officer Tipalov. If you want me to cop out to hitting, or pleading guilty to hitting a cop in the mouth when I was arrested, yeah, I plead guilty to that. But I do deny shooting both the admiral and the cop.

Dima and Alyona sit and look at the man.

INT. HOSPITAL – DONETSK – DAY

CAPTAIN CHARKOV is in a hospital bed. A UKRAINIAN DOCTOR is sitting beside him explaining to the FSB investigator the nature of his wounds.

UKRAINIAN DOCTOR
(to FSB investigator)
His wounds included an entry wound in the back near the right shoulder, a broken rib, an exit wound in the chest, a shattered wrist caused by a bullet entering from the dorsal (back) side, and an almost pristine fragment lodged in his thigh.

FSB INVESTIGATOR
Pristine? All that, and it’s still...

UKRAINIAN DOCTOR
Yes, here.
The FSB investigator is taking notes.

UKRAINIAN DOCTOR
You want to see the x-rays?

FSB INVESTIGATOR
Sure.

The doctor leaves the side of Charkov, and they walk into the hallway and then a different room.

The investigator looks suspiciously at Alyona and Dima as they arrive at the room. They stand in the door, hoping to interview Captain Charkov.

Charkov has been seriously wounded but has been taken care of expertly.

ALYONA
You are feeling better?

CAPTAIN CHARKOV
No, not really.

DIMA
Can you tell us what happened?

CAPTAIN CHARKOV
The bullet went in my back and came out about here. Then it goes through my wrist and then into my thigh. Crazy, huh?

Charkov points to his wounds. Dima makes some diagrams.

ALYONA
In the video, you were looking back to the right. You heard the first shot?

Alyona pulls out her device, and shows Charkov the video. It is a profile shot of the event. We see the shadowy figure with a gun in the window. We see two puffs of smoke from the window and, of course, we see the victim in the car. We don’t see a third puff of smoke, but there is a building that obstructs part of the parade. The building blocks a follow-up vehicle with the soldiers.
It is painful for Charkov to watch but he endures it.

CAPTAIN CHARKOV
Yes, that is the way I remember it.
Two quick automatic rounds and then a pause. And then the third round.

ALYONA
(to Charkov)
You shot by the first bullet?

CAPTAIN CHARKOV
First or second.

DIMA
You are sure?

CAPTAIN CHARKOV
I was not shot by the third bullet. I know that I heard the two shots, and felt it, of course. I slumped down and turned to my right to see what was happening. Seeing nothing, I was about to look left, when I saw the third shot struck the Admiral but it didn’t strike me. I just told this to the Army investigator, and I don’t think he believes me.

DIMA
Thank you.

ALYONA
We appreciate your time. Get well soon.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The two, Dima and Alyona, discuss the case. In a different room the FSB investigator and the doctor are going over the X-rays.
DIMA
Something is funny about the Army. They don’t have Tabarik’s gun, and they came back to plant shell casings.

ALYONA
They did this!

DIMA
People don’t act this way unless they, well they’re guilty. At the very least, it appears suspicious.

ALYONA
They want it to look like Tabarik fired all three shots...

DIMA
... because they fired the third.

ALYONA
But why?

DIMA
Continue the war.

ALYONA
Then why chose a Chechen then for that? Why not use am ethnic Ukrainian?

Maybe he was the only idiot available.

ALYONA
Why chose an idiot?

Why fire a third shot after the second shot found it’s mark?

ALYONA
Let’s go ask the doctor if the second shot would have been fatal.

There wasn’t enough time to judge that anyway. It was like... boom, boom.  
(beat)  
Boom.  
(beat)
His gun jammed? So a second shooter took over?

No one has an answer.

INT. RESTAURANT – DONETSK – EVENING

Russian Navy Chief Petty Officer RURIK SHERKOV is at a table with a LOCAL GIRL. Sherkov will contradict the Army’s order of shots. Sherkov is drinking heavily, and the local girl is trying to console him.

SHERKOV
I was right there, I mean the blood was on me.

LOCAL GIRL
It is okay, honey. You’re clean now.

SHERKOV
But.

LOCAL GIRL
You did your job. There isn’t anything you could have done.

SHERKOV
It happened so fast.

Dima and Alyona are eating at the next table. Dima who is nearest responds.

DIMA
Excuse me. (beat) You were at the parade?

LOCAL GIRL
Maybe.

SHERKOV
Yes. I was.

Dima gestures to Alyona.

DIMA
Journalist, police investigator.
SHERKOV
I’m not supposed to talk about it.

DIMA
You spoke to the Army investigator.

SHERKOV
Yes.

DIMA
Yes?

SHERKOV
I was told not to talk to anyone. By them. The army.

ALYONA
You will want to talk to us.

There is a long pause.

Sherkov looks around the restaurant.

SHERKOV
(lowered volume)
I was driving in the Admiral’s car.
(beat)
There was a pop, like a fire cracker. As I turned my head to the right to see what happened, I heard a voice from the back seat. It was the Admiral, “My God, I’m hit.”
(beat)
And I turned around and he has his hands up like this.

Sherkov holds his hands up to his throat.

ALYONA
If that first shot went through his back and throat, how did he say that?

SHERKOV
I don’t know.
DIMA
Maybe the bullet hit the pavement and bounced up and hit him.

ALYONA
Is that even possible?

DIMA
And the second shot is what hit Kireyev and Charkov?

LOCAL GIRL
I saw a bullet bounce off the road.

DIMA
Where were you?

LOCAL GIRL
In front of the building on the sidewalk.

(beat)
As they passed by, I heard a noise, above me. It thought it was a firecracker, and now I think I saw a shot that hit the pavement.

ALYONA
What did it look like?

LOCAL GIRL
I thought it was a firecracker because I could see the sparks coming off it.

DIMA
It is possible that a fragment from this ricocheted bullet hit the Admiral. Yes.

ALYONA
And that is what caused him to say he was hit?

INT. POLICE STATION - DONETSK

The Police Chief comes into a room full of media. There are television cameras and lights. It is chaos with reporters
shouting questions. The chief holds the weapon up to the crowd of journalists. After a short time they become quiet.

POLICE CHIEF
This weapon was discovered in what we are calling the “snipers nest”. It was hidden behind computer servers and was recovered by our investigators.

REPORTER #1
What is it?

POLICE CHIEF
It is a M1 Garand. It is a very old semi-automatic, Most M1 rifles were issued to U.S. forces, though many hundreds of thousands were also provided as foreign aid to American allies. It fires a .30-06 caliber bullet.

REPORTER #2
Can you tell us anything more about the rifle?

POLICE CHIEF
We believe The Ukrainian Army employed this M1 in the recent hostilities against Russian soldiers. Fortunately, they enjoyed little success with this antiquated weapon.

REPORTER #3
How did Tabarik get the weapon?

POLICE CHIEF
Experts have told me it is one of the most mass-produced military semi-automatic rifles in history. And much like the AK-47 it has shown up in various conflicts around the world, despite its age and obsolescence.

REPORTER #4
What is the forensic link to Duqvaakha Tabarik? We know he fired the weapon.
POLICE CHIEF
We have photographs of Tabarik holding the rifle, and there is a palmprint found upon examination of the rifle. His wife has told us that it was his rifle. He failed the paraffin test.

(beat)
On the day the Admiral Kireyev was killed, Tabarik was wearing a shirt of dark blue, grey-black and orange-yellow cotton fibers over a white T-shirt, the same type of fibers that were recovered from the rifle after close examination by experts.

REPORTER #3
Why are you showing us this weapon?

POLICE CHIEF
There are many reports and false news stories that a different weapon (a more modern weapon) with a smaller calibre was used. This is absolutely not true. So we are showing you the weapon we found and we are making photographs of the sniper’s nest taken immediately after the shooting available.

REPORTER #3
The photos you released only shows two casings. Can you explain that when most witnesses and video confirm that there were three shots?

POLICE CHIEF
Mr. Tabarik only fired two shots.

The reporters are in a commotion. There all shout questions at the same time and then reach for their cell phones.

INT. ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL – RURAL AND REMOTE DONBASS REGION

The autopsy is being conducted in a crowded room. It appears to be a former school classroom, but they have wheeled medical equipment into the room. The ARMY DOCTOR is speaking into a microphone, and making drawings on paper. The room is entirely too crowded with Army officers; it is
loud and clearly the autopsy isn’t being conducted correctly.

It is subtle, but the Army non-medical staff in the room is intimidating the doctors.

ARMY DOCTOR
The third obvious wound was a huge defect over the right side of his skull. This defect involves both his scalp and the skull underneath and the brain substance protruding.

(beat)
The wound extends 10-12 cm from front to back, and from just behind the Admiral’s ear to just above his hairline

(beat)
The wound is a total mystery. One bullet pierces the body of two men and emerges almost pristine and in one piece, yet the bullet that hit the admiral in the head explodes in a hail of lead.

(beat)
Why did these bullets perform differently?

The doctor walks to the X-Ray of the skull that is hanging in front of a light.

ARMY DOCTOR
There are numerous minute fragments of radio-opaque material. These tiny fragments are dispersed throughout the brain. There are approximately 30-40 dust-like particles.

There is an ARMY GUARD at the door, and he has instructions, but there are 10 or 12 people in and out of the room. He can’t keep track of who belongs there and who does not. In error, the Guard stops a NURSE who is returning from taking a blood sample to the laboratory, and a NAVY DOCTOR slips into the room. He doesn’t have his uniform on, but is dressed in scrubs.
We see the NAVY DOCTOR looking over the ARMY DOCTOR’s shoulder. This is not standard procedure, but there are many other people in the room also a photographer, numerous military officers (all Army).

NAVY DOCTOR
This is not the work of a full metal jacket bullet.

We see on the Army doctor’s face and expression that suggests he would rather work in private. But still a second man arrives to look over his shoulder, a man who appears to be an ARMY INVESTIGATOR; it’s Dresvyanin.

ARMY DOCTOR
Can I help you.

DRESVYANIN
Continue.

ARMY DOCTOR
I need to know who you are?

Dresvyanin says nothing.

ARMY DOCTOR
You are army I see, but are you an investigator?

Long beat.

DRESVYANIN
Yes.

Dresvyanin doesn’t speak; he only takes notes. Dresvyanin’s body language is somewhat threatening.

When Dresvyanin moves away, the Army doctor covers the microphone with his hand. He doesn’t know the Navy doctor’s identity.

ARMY DOCTOR
(whispers to the Navy doctor)
This is the work of a frangible bullet, designed to explode. Quite different from the other bullet that went through his neck.
The two doctors begin to whisper.

NAVY DOCTOR
And the bullet that went through the Captain?

ARMY DOCTOR
Yes. It was not frangible.

NAVY DOCTOR
Two shooters?

ARMY DOCTOR
Clearly.

NAVY DOCTOR
Yes, why would one shooter use two different kinds of bullets? One bullet goes straight through, and the other one explodes. That just isn’t the way it works.

They walk back to the body. They are looking at the entry wound.

ARMY DOCTOR
(to the microphone)
The entry wound in the right posterior region has a diameter of 6 mm.
(beat)
And the bullet tunnels for 15 mm before fragmenting.
(beat)
The bullet always makes a hole slightly larger than the diameter of the bullet.

NAVY DOCTOR
Who fires such a weapon, say a .30-06?

They look simultaneously at the Dresvyanin, who doesn’t respond. He simply stares at them. Basically, he’s only there to kill anyone what gets out of control.

The NAVY DOCTOR gestures to the Dresvyanin that they (including the Army doctor) should speak in private. They move to a different part of the room.
NAVY DOCTOR
If the head-shot had come from Tabarik’s rifle, the diameter of the entry wound would have to be at least 7.62 mm or bigger. It was not.

Dresvyanin says nothing, but he seems to be transcribing the Navy doctor’s words.

NAVY DOCTOR
It is impossible that Tabarik’s bullet penetrated the admiral’s skull here. This hole in the skull is only slightly larger than 5.45 mm. Tabarik’s gun would have produced a hole at least 7.62 mm.

The Dresvyanin says nothing, but writes in his notebook.

NAVY DOCTOR
If the kill shot didn’t come from Tabarik who did it come from?

The Dresvyanin refuses to speak and continues to write. The Navy doctor realizes that he is wasting his time and he returns to the body.

INT. NAVY INVESTIGATOR’S OFFICE – SEVASTOPOL – DAY

The Russian Navy has illustrated the entire crime on computer. Two NAVY INVESTIGATORS are discussing the crime.

NAVY INVESTIGATOR
Look at the angle. From the sixth floor down to the Admiral’s car it is 16 degrees. And from right to left it was about 6 degrees based on the mid-line of the car.

NAVY INVESTIGATOR #2
That right to left trajectory should have produced an exit wound on the left side of the Admiral’s face or head.

On Navy investigator has obtained a Styrofoam skull from a wig shop. He drills a hole in it where the entrance and
exit wound were located. He places a dowel through the two holes. He replays the video of the shooting and tries to line up the source of the shot.

NAVY INVESTIGATOR
The shot was fired directly from behind the Admiral, but from a much lower angle than the 6th floor.

NAVY INVESTIGATOR #2
It is impossible for the shot to have come from Tabarik.

NAVY INVESTIGATOR
There must have been a second shooter. It doesn’t make sense any other way.

NAVY INVESTIGATOR #2
Basic ballistic science.

NAVY INVESTIGATOR
The shot came from behind the admiral and much lower than a sixth floor.

INT. CAFÉ – DONETSK – DAY

Dima and Alyona are eating a meal. Alyona’s phone chimes. Alyona obtains an electronic copy of the autopsy from Moscow. It comes to her phone. They race back to the hotel to use Alyona’s computer.

INT. HOTEL – DONETSK – DAY

We see various illustrations from the autopsy report. Especially important is that the audiences learn that the entry wound in the back of the admiral’s head is 6 mm.

This is a long voice over, but this will give the audience time take in the technical aspects of the assassination.

ALYONA
(V.O.)
The body is that of a muscular, well-developed and well-nourished adult Caucasian male measuring 72 1/2 inches and weighing approximately 170 pounds. There is beginning rigor mortis,
minimal dependent livor mortis of the dorsum, and early algor mortis. The hair is reddish-brown and abundant, the eyes are blue, the right pupil measuring 8 mm. in diameter, the left 4 mm. There is edema and ecchymosis of the inner canthus region of the left eyelid measuring approximately 1.5 cm. in greatest diameter. There is edema and ecchymosis diffusely over the right supra-orbital ridge with abnormal mobility of the underlying bone.

(beat)
Situated in the posterior scalp approximately 2.5 cm. laterally to the right and slightly above the external occipital protuberance is a lacerated wound measuring 6 mm. In the underlying bone is a corresponding wound through the skull which exhibits beveling of the margins of the bone when viewed from the inner aspect of the skull.

INT. HOME OF UKRAINIAN DOCTOR AND PATHOLOGIST

Alyona and Dima arrive at the home of the Ukrainian emergency room doctor that originally treated the admiral. He leads them into the dining room and they sit at the table. They place the autopsy report in front of him. They show him a graphic video of the shooting.

UKRAINIAN DOCTOR
The entrance wound is misallocated and is much higher, maybe 4 inches higher. The doctors in the autopsy misplaced the entry wound. There can’t be any other explanation.

(beat)
If the shot was from the sixth floor behind and to the right of the admiral, the exit wound would be on the left or in the face. It was on the right. The shot was left to right.

ALYONA
(to Dima)
Who was in the follow up car?

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - DONETSK - DAY

Alyona arrives late and must fight her way to the front to be heard. ALYONA is there to ask questions of the Major Shukshin, Army investigator.

REPORTER #1
Can we speak with the doctors who did the autopsy?

MAJOR SHUKSHIN
We will not allow them to be harassed.

REPORTER #2
Can we see the autopsy report?

MAJOR SHUKSHIN
No, a copy was sent to the Navy and to the Kremlin. The Kremlin has requested that this information be kept confidential.

ALYONA
That is a lie. That’s a lie.

Alyona can’t be heard, she’s too far to the back of the crowded room.

She says to Dima, who is near her...

ALYONA
He’s lying.

REPORTER #3
Is the Army convinced that Tabarik acted alone?

MAJOR SHUKSHIN
Definitely. Tabarik fired three shots and two hit the admiral. One shot missed entirely.

ALYONA
Who were the soldiers riding in the parade car directly behind the admiral?
MAJOR SHUKSHIN
Soldiers of course.
(beat)
Thank you for your time.

Major Shukshin begins to leave the stage.

ALYONA
Did any of them fire their weapons at Tabarik?

Major Shukshin pauses and glances back. He gives Alyona a dirty look.

ALYONA
Was there an accidental discharge?

Major Shukshin looks guilty. The JOURNALISTS are paying attention, and they may now see the conspiracy.

ALYONA
Who were the soldiers in the follow-up car? What weapons did they carry? What caliber were the weapons?

Major Shukshin disappears from sight.

The journalists continue to look at Alyona and wonder what she knows that they don’t know. Alyona contemplates telling them everything that she knows. She does not.

The photo-journalists begin to pack up their equipment. Others begin to leave.

Czar Dresvyanin suddenly appears next to Alyona. He has no personality and certainly isn’t in the army office of public relations. He has a very cold look in his eye. Dresvyanin is a stone-cold killer, and he is there to intimidate journalists.

DRESVYANIN
You are asking interesting questions, but for security purposes we do not disclose this information. You can understand. We have been involved in a
war here, and you are a patriotic person, I believe.

Several journalists standing next to Alyona are privy to the conversation and record it with their cameras.

ALYONA
What gun were the soldiers in the follow-up car carrying?

DRESVYANIN
Each soldier is issued a 9 mm Makarov pistol.

ALYONA
(sarcastically)
Thank you so much. You have been so helpful. Everyone can see in the numerous videos they carry rifles.

DRESVYANIN
No soldier fired or returned fire. But in the future, I can’t promise this.

ALYONA
Are you threatening me?

DRESVYANIN
This is a war zone. Obviously, things happen.

Dresvyanin walks away. Alyona asked the photo-journalist...

ALYONA
Did you get that on tape?

He nods, yes.

ALYONA
In the end, your boss will love you for that.

EXT. CENTER OF THE CITY – DONETSK – DAY

Alyona is out on the sidewalk talking to people and taping their conversations. She approaches a TRAFFIC POLICEMAN and she appears to ask him a question.
TRAFFIC POLICEMAN
I was standing down there near the overpass. I saw the entire thing happen. They drove right past me and when they did I could smell the gunpowder.

ALYONA
You were in the army before you were a policeman?

TRAFFIC POLICEMAN
Yes.

ALYONA
But the wind was blowing from the north. How did it blow the smell in your direction, because you were west of the plaza.

TRAFFIC POLICEMAN
I see what you are saying…. I don’t know.

Dima is also working the street, approaching potential witnesses. Dima brings a woman, Jenica, to Alyona.

DIMA
This is Jenica Blatov.

ALYONA
Nice to meet you.

DIMA
She is the Mayor’s wife. She was in a car four back from the admiral.

ALYONA
Can you tell me what happened?

JENICA
Well, I turned around to say to my husband, “Those were gun shots.” And just as soon as I got the words out, another shot rang out.
ALYONA
Do you remember anything else?

JENICA
I was acutely aware of the odor of gunpowder in the air.

ALYONA
Thank you. Thank you so much.

Jenica walks on, and Alyona and Dima are left to talk.

In the background, we see several shady figures, some in uniforms and some in civilian clothes, but they are all watching Alyona.

ALYONA
Thanks.

DIMA
She has credibility.

ALYONA
(to Dima)
I’ve found ten witnesses that claimed at the time of the shooting they smelled gunpowder at street level.
(beat)
The wind was blowing 35 km per hour in the opposite direction and there is no way they smelled Tabarik’s gun.
(beat)
The wind was blowing away from the traffic cop. Toward Tabarik’s position. So for him to have smelled gunshot residue the shot must have come from the parade cars that drove right by him.

DIMA
I agree. The people at street level and in the motorcade are adamant that they smelled the gunpowder. This could not have come from the sixth-floor window. The wind was wrong for them to smell anything from Tabarik’s position.
(beat)
One final man to see.

INT. VETERAN’S APARTMENT – DONETSK – DAY

A young GRANDDAUGHTER opens the door and lets Dima and Alyona in. She is expecting them. Perhaps Dima called ahead of their visit.

Dima and Alyona enter the apartment and are shown a seat in the front room.

DIMA
This is the most credible man in the entire city. Look at the photos on the wall. From the war. He won the Hero of the Soviet Union medal.

Alyona is recording all this.

The VETERAN still believes in Stalin as there are many symbols still in the room and still a “red” corner.

A very old VETERAN is in a chair. He has many war decorations on his black dress jacket, and we see wartime photos on the wall. One decoration on his chest is the “Hero of the Soviet Union.” It is an ounce of gold in the shape of a star. It gives the man instant credibility. This is the reason they are there. They want a credible witness.

The VETERAN struggles to get up but insists on rising to shake hands. He is nearly 100 years old.

DIMA
You were with the other veterans in the car behind the soldiers?

The vet nods, yes.

DIMA
This is Alyona, and she is a Moscow journalist.

ALYONA
Nice to meet you. What an incredible career you have had? Thank you for your service. I want to talk to you about the war and your life sometime.
VETERAN
I thought you came about the parade. I was two cars back from the admiral’s car.

ALYONA
I did. Can you tell me what you saw or heard?

VETERAN
I hunted wild boars once with Brezhnev once. All my life, and I’ve handled all kinds of weapons. I was in the army. I knew they were rifle shots, and there were three of them. A second or two and I smelled gunpowder.

(beat)
I’m thinking that is strange because I can’t see how I can smell the powder from a rifle in that high a building.

The VETERAN leans forward with conviction, and he looks squarely into ALYONA’s eyes.

VETERAN
You don’t smell gunpowder unless you are upwind from it, and it blows in your face.

ALYONA
How wonderfully put.

VETERAN
I’m not dead yet, you know. Maybe a little deaf but not dead.

ALYONA
The army claims none of their guns were fired that day.

VETERAN
Well, I don’t know about what they say. I can’t say. Ask my grandson. He was there, taking pictures.
ALYONA
Is he here?

VETERAN
Yes.

The young GRANDDAUGHTER goes to knock on a bedroom door. She opens it and we see the GRANDSON sitting at a computer.

GRANDSON
Send her in.

Dima stays in the front room with the veteran. Alyona moves toward the bedroom.

VETERAN
(to Dima)
There was a longer pause between the first and second than between the second and third shots.

Alyona pauses, and tries to think what this information means. Dima writes the statement in his notebook.

Alyona enters the room, and we see the grandson is an accomplished digital photographer. He has a very expensive digital camera on the desk. On the computer, he is looking at hundreds of photos from the parade.

ALYONA
Where were you standing? Can you show me?

ALYONA shows him a map. He points.

ALYONA
Okay, show me what you have.

GRANDSON
Can I get paid?

ALYONA
Show me and we will see.

GRANDSON
The first vehicle.
He shows them six or so frames taken in rapid succession. There is nothing remarkable. It appears the zoom lens is at 100 or 120 mm.

GRANDSON
The second vehicle.

He shows them six or so frames. This is the vehicle with ADMIRAL KIREYEV and CAPTAIN CHARKOV. There is nothing remarkable. The photos were taken only seconds before the shots were fired. The occupants of the vehicle are all Navy; some are waving and have a smile. The grandson pauses on the last of the six photos.

ALYONA
We will buy that one, the admiral waving.

GRANDSON
The third vehicle is a military truck.
(beat)
I almost got the admiral.

ALYONA
I know. Too bad.

GRANDSON
I’d be rich right now.

ALYONA
It’s all about timing. But let’s see what you have.

GRANDSON
Here is where the shooting begins.

The truck is a Russian Army Ural-4320 with flatbed trailer. The soldiers are standing in the trailer.

We see, again, a succession of six photos. One soldier (Vsevolod Zhilov) in the trailer has his AK-47 rifle resting at his side. The second frame shows a strange look on Vsevolod’s face and movement of his hand toward the gun. He looks up and backward to his right. The next five frames show Vsevolod’s bringing up the weapon. The series of photos end just as Vsevolod has brought up the weapon. The
last frame shows the weapon is at an inclination and might be actually pointing at the vehicle in front of them.

**ALYONA**  
We want all six of these.

**GRANDSON**  
How much?

**ALYONA**  
You will have to argue with my editor.

**GRANDSON**  
What about the next six?

Alyona focuses on the screen again.

**GRANDSON**  
Here is where the shooting is over.

The grandson had pulled back from the zoom. And the lens now is at 90 mm. The truck seems to be accelerating rapidly. Many of the soldiers are falling down backward as were progress through the six frames which are progressively from a wider lens, 80, 70, 60 mm. By the last frame the shots are from a 50 mm lens. The last frame shows Vsevolod falling down but maintains his AK-47 pointing forward.

We see the soldiers in the truck, and the crowd, in the background on the sidewalk, are all looking up at the sixth floor. No one seems to be looking at the soldiers in the truck.

While it isn’t totally clear from the photos (we can infer), it seems that after the two shots, Vsevolod reaches for his weapon to return fire at Tabarik.

**ALYONA**  
The photos are in groups of six?

**GRANDSON**  
The camera takes a second or so to record to the SD card before more photos can be taken. We are missing the important frames, because the camera was recording at that moment.
ALYONA
There isn’t a frame with the actual discharge of the weapon or a puff of smoke?

GRANDSON
Who this guy?

He points to Vsevolod.

The grandson flips through the photos again. There are six frames of Vsevolod reaching for his weapon.

And then there are six frames of the truck accelerating and the soldiers falling backward.

GRANDSON
No smoking gun.

ALYONA
Don’t show these to anyone else.

GRANDSON
I need to take them off my website?

ALYONA
Yes, immediately. If you want paid.

The grandson brings up his website program and deletes the post and then deletes the image files.

Alyona immediately takes out her electronic device and begins messaging her boss. Her phone chirps; there is an immediate reply.

Alyona takes out her card. On the back, she writes her editor’s email. She shows him the front of the card with her information.

ALYONA
When he pays you, email these to me. And also to him. Don’t delay use electronic pay... like you young people all do.

She flips the card over and shows him the back.
ALYONA
He will pay you.

GRANDSON
How do I know?

ALYONA
He is in Moscow. Believe me he will pay you. You are going to be famous.

Alyona leaves but stops to speak with the VETERAN.

ALYONA
Your grandson is a marvellous photographer.

VETERAN
I know. I know. He takes so many.

ALYONA
When this is done, I’m going to come back to visit with you.

VETERAN
You better hurry back; I’m an old man.

Alyona chuckles.

ALYONA
Sure.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE VETERAN’S APARTMENT

DIMA
Any detective who has been involved in a number of cases will tell you the best way to solve a crime is through your witnesses. Don’t look too far and keep it on the ground. Keep working your witnesses, and they will solve it for you.

ALYONA
Same for journalists.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF VETERAN’S APARTMENT - DAY
Later, downstairs, the EDITOR calls ALYONA.

EDITOR
We can’t use these photos.

ALYONA
You paid him for them, right?

EDITOR
Yes, that kid was quite happy. But only to keep them from the other papers.

ALYONA
We have proven that the two bullets that hit the admiral did not come from the same gun.
(beat)
We have identified a soldier there in the follow-up car. He is the second shooter.
(beat)
It was an accident. The second bullet hit the Admiral in the back, exited, and then went into the Captain. The third bullet is from the soldier’s gun. He was about to return fire.
(beat)
Look, I sent you the story. I also sent a copy to the Kremlin.
(beat)
Now what are you going to do?

EDITOR
This is highly volatile. The Army!

ALYONA
The President of Russia himself asked me to write that article.

EDITOR
He told you to investigate; he didn’t say anything about publishing it.

ALYONA
It seems if they didn’t want it published they wouldn’t have called.
EDITOR
They called me.

ALYONA
You spoke to the President directly?

EDITOR
An aide.

ALYONA
You must be kidding? Who?

There is silence.

ALYONA
Don’t you see this is all Army and a cover up?

EDITOR
I’m going to sit on this story for a few days and see what shakes loose.

ALYONA
No!

EDITOR
Yes!

ALYONA
There is going to be a second article. I’m about to examine the behaviour of the Army.

EDITOR
Well you can write it but I’m not saying I will publish it.

INT. FSB OFFICE – DONETSK – NIGHT

Nothing fancy. The office is in a partially burned building. The FSB is under a lot of pressure and scrutiny.

These agents aren’t the ones sent from Moscow. They are the local agents. The assassination investigation is obviously wearing on the face of these two agents.
DIRECTOR
Where the hell have you been?

AGENT
I was out doing my job.

DIRECTOR
Doing your job, huh?
   (beat)
What's this?

AGENT
I interview five Ukrainians per day.

DIRECTOR
This one's from Tabarik’s neighbor.

AGENT
I've got 100 of these things.

DIRECTOR
It says that he's afraid his neighbor is going to do something crazy.

AGENT
Three times a week. I hear shit like this.

DIRECTOR
But this was the wife the assassin of the brother of the President!

AGENT
And it has been sitting on your desk for ten days?

DIRECTOR
We had another goddamn delusional Muslim! A nobody.

AGENT
Yeah, well, he's a somebody now!

DIRECTOR
He never said one word about killing the Admiral?
AGENT
Not specifically.

DIRECTOR
This might be, probably is, now that I think about it the biggest screw-up in the history of law enforcement.

The director puts the agents report in the paper shredder, and it is gone.

INT. HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Alyona takes her shoes off and appears exhausted. She sits on the bed and watches television.

TV REPORTER
By all accounts the two hours at the hospital were sheer pandemonium. The lead car and the car carrying the Admiral arrive at the hospital at 12:36 pm, 6 minutes after the shots were fired at the parade.

The TV station has secured new amateur video made on a cell phone. It shows the hospital personnel that are bringing the Captain into the hospital.

CUT TO:

EXT. DONETSK HOSPITAL PARKING LOT – DAY

We see the very old veteran and the other veterans approach the car with the Admiral and Captain. The Captain is helped inside the hospital. The Young female Navy officer is covering the Admiral, and we can’t see the real carnage. Her head is bowed over him. She is weeping uncontrollably.

FEMALE OFFICER
They have murdered him. They have murdered him.

VERY OLD VETERAN
Come on, dear. Let the doctors see him. (beat)
Please.
The old veteran opens the car door, and climbs into the back seat. He hugs the female officer and pats her on the back. It takes a very long time, but we see the old veteran slowly coax her to give up the body. The female officer hugs the old veteran, and the hospital staff now collect the Admiral’s body, and put it on a stretcher.

There is blood covering most of the female officer’s white uniform.

An UNKNOWN VETERAN takes off his coat and puts it over the Admiral’s head.

Hospital personnel quickly cart the Admiral’s body into the emergency room.

In the background, we can see the truck full of SOLDIERS unloading. The soldiers stand in awe. They look dumbfounded in the Zil, until a Major Shukshin begins shouting at them. They line up and we can see one SOLDIER being stuck in the head and then punched in the stomach.

Then, we can hear the Major Shukshin is telling the soldiers not to talk to anyone about the events.

TV ANCHOR
Clearly, this is one of the most tragic days in this long and costly war.
(beat)
Admiral Kireyev leaves a wife and two young children in Saint Petersburg.

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Alyona no longer appears exhausted. She rises from the bed, puts her shoes on again. The investigation receives a second wind. Alyona gathers her camera and recorder and leaves the room.

Alyona is a tenacious journalist, and the television reports only serve to energize her search for the truth.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - DONETSK - NIGHT

The soldiers were out drinking the entire night before.
Alyona is going from bar to bar, asking about the soldiers. The Russian army has been fighting Ukraine and Europe for over 18 months and the end of the war is of course a reason to celebrate.

WAITRESS
The soldiers?

ALYONA
Yes, there were here the night before the parade?

WAITRESS
Sure, they are in here until 4 am every night.

Alyona shows her a photo of the Vsevolod Zhilov. It isn’t a particularly good photo.

WAITRESS
He looks like every other soldier in here. Except for the glasses.

Dima arrives in the night club with an excited look on his face. It is assumed that Alyona phoned him. He reads from his notebook. It is dark in the nightclub, but he manages.

DIMA
The night before the assassination many of the soldiers were out all night. The soldier in question was not with them. They have had problems with alcoholism, drug abuse, and even suicide. But the kid is supposed to be a good kid.

ALYONA
How do you know this?

Dima gestures to a Colonel who is at the other end of the bar.

Dima again reads from his notebook.
DIMA
A number of them were out on the town. They are a close-knit band of brothers. The downside is lots of pressure.

(beat)
The kid was in bed by midnight.

(beat)
The other soldiers were in the company of scantily clad women, or in other words, strippers. The drinking went on until 5 am.

(beat)
Then they went back to the base to clean up for the parade. They started the day at 7 am.

ALYONA
The bar-hopping must have added overtures to the next day. Most of those soldiers were hungover.

DIMA
Some people in the crowd saw Tabarik in the window. Wouldn’t you think if a man went to bed at a reasonably decent hour and hadn’t been drinking before, he would be more alert to see those things?

ALYONA
That didn’t come from the colonel.

DIMA
No, but he is sure no one could have prevented the assassination.

ALYONA
The weapons in the follow-up vehicle could have been more secure.

DIMA
I know his name. I found out who that kid is...

ALYONA
Well?
DIMA
“Vsevolod Zhilov.” He only entered the Army four months ago. He was a driver, he drove a truck. His job was to wash, fuel, check the oil and water and prepare a truck for use.

ALYONA
It is an odd sort of luck, that he was expected to take the AK-47 and return fire at a sniper.

DIMA
They were not instructed about anything, including unloading the weapon.

ALYONA
Can we find this kid?

INT. HOTEL - DONETSK - NIGHT

Alyona wants to meet with an ARMY GENERAL. He, of course, refuses. But she waits in the lobby. When the General arrives she approaches him.

ALYONA
Hello. I’m Alyona Yolkov, and I’m a journalist from Moscow. Can I ask you some questions?

The General looks at Alyona, evaluating her body. He is clearly an arrogant and sexist pig. He smiles, and it appears that he might speak to her.

GENERAL
Certainly, let’s have a drink?

ALYONA
Vsevolod Zhilov. Can we talk to him?

GENERAL
Why? He is a totally innocent boy.

ALYONA
So you know who I’m talking about?
GENERAL
Certainly, let’s have a drink?

ALYONA
No thank you. Has the autopsy been performed?

The General doesn’t respond. He smiles and gestures to the bar.

ALYONA
Has it been done yet? Where was that done?

The GENERAL doesn’t respond. Again, he gestures to the bar.

ALYONA
I’m looking for information. I have a letter.

Alyona shows him the letter from President Kireyev.

The General’s face turns to anger. Instead of opening doors the letter seems to have closed this one.

GENERAL
I’m sorry. I can’t help you. Perhaps if you came up to my room, we can talk.

Alyona politely refuses.

ALYONA
I’m sorry. Thank you anyway.

Alyona walks away and we now see that Czar Dresvyanin has been watching the exchange from across the room. The General gives a stern look at Dresvyanin.

EXT. NIGHT - STREET - DONETSK

Alyona exits the hotel. She is walking on the street. Dima is watching the hotel from a car. Alyona is followed by a MENACING SOLDIER. Dima notices and follows. The Alyona enters a dark section of the sidewalk, followed by the menacing soldier. Dima is nearing the menacing soldier and is about to overtake him, but is attacked by two OTHER SOLDIERS. There is a fistfight. Dima, if not overwhelmed,
is a formidable fighter. The OTHER soldiers begin to lose and pull knives. Dima pulls a pistol.

DIMA
I’m sorry fellows, I’m sure you are just following orders, but I’ve had enough, and I can’t take anymore.

Dima and shoots them each in the leg. They scream out.

Alyona hears and, once alerted, begins to run from the the menacing soldier who is still following her. Dima runs to catch-up. The menacing soldier over takes Alyona and struggles with her. He handcuffs her to a lamppost. The menacing soldier is about to inject her with a syringe. It is meant to be a drug overdose, but Dima arrives to knock the menacing soldier (over the head) at the very last moment.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Alyona and Dima are in her hotel room. Dima pulls the curtains back less than one inch and looks out the window. It is very late and the street is deserted. He looks more fearful than Alyona, who simply turns on the television.

TV JOURNALIST
We're about to wind this up for tonight, because all that could possibly happen in one day has.
(beat)
It has all been shocking. At noon today, Admiral Kireyev was alive as any human being ever gets, young, strong, vigorous, looking forward to a lasting peace.
(beat)
There is no more news tonight, and really no more to say, except that what has happened today has been just too much, too ugly, and too fast.

Alyona and Dima do not speak.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - DONETSK - MORNING

It is Saturday morning, November 23rd, 2023.
There are the traditional questions from the media.

REPORTER #1
What did the FSB know about the links between Tabarik and America?

REPORTER #2
What is known about the FSB aggressively tracking Tabarik's movements?

REPORTER #3
Are the Tabarik backyard photographs authentic?

REPORTER #4
Is it true Tabarik lived in the United States for a time?

ALYONA
Can we talk to private Vsevolod Zhilov?

ARMY INVESTIGATOR
Private Zhilov is on leave.

ALYONA
And how do you know this? You have 80,000 soldiers in this... in the newly annexation areas, and you know personally this soldier by name?

ARMY INVESTIGATOR
We are very close to the enlisted men.

ALYONA
Come on. He was in the follow-up car and discharged his weapon? (beat)
It was photographed!

ARMY INVESTIGATOR
There are a number of faked photos online.
REPORTER #1
The source of those fake photos has been reported to be the Army Cyber-warfare office in Moscow. Did the army alter those photos?

ARMY INVESTIGATOR
No.

REPORTER #2
Why are you trying to confuse everyone?

ARMY INVESTIGATOR
Thank you for coming out, and asking such interesting questions. The investigation is closed, and a report is forthcoming.

The investigator leaves.

Of course, they don’t like being lied to. The journalists are disgruntled and show their disgust. Some journalists laugh at the ineptness of the Army.

REPORTER #2
(to Alyona)
It is almost as if the Army is living in the 19th century and the journalists are living in the digital age. If this is made into a film, it will be seen as a comedy.

EXT. SIDEWALK – DONETSK STREET – DAY
Alyona is emailed the link to an interview. Alyona can’t see for the glare, and the street is noisy. She steps into a women’s dress shop, and watches the video on her smartphone from inside a fitting room.

Tabarik’s mother is being interviewed from a village in Chechnya.

MOTHER
Well, I always knew Duqvaakha was some sort of secret agent. Didn't you?
WESTERN REPORTER
What are you talking about?

MOTHER
They recruited him when he was in America.

WESTERN REPORTER
Who's they? And what possibly for?

MOTHER
They did. The U.S. government did. He was sent on dangerous missions. (beat) The first was to America.

WESTERN REPORTER
Okay, okay, let me get this straight. He has had six jobs in the last two years. Your son, from this village and a low-level computer programmer, is a top-secret government spy?

MOTHER
Yes.

WESTERN REPORTER
Mm-hmm. Do you have any proof?

MOTHER
Duvwaakha is a dangerous fellow. Don’t you watch your own television channel? Duvwaakha Tabarik has done more for peace than any other living human being. (beat) He is a hero. As-salamu alaykum.

Alyona exits the dressing room in awe.

INT. DONETSK POLICE STATION - DAY

Dima is interviewing a YOUNG WOMAN.

YOUNG LADY
The two shots were fired, the soldiers fell down, and the truck took off.
Dima is interviewing a young man.

   YOUNG MAN  
I saw a flash of pink like someone was shooting back at the guy up in the building, and then everyone fell down. They got up about the time the truck was at the overpass.

   DIMA  
The flash of pink could have been a muzzle flash?

   YOUNG MAN  
I also saw a man in the admiral’s car stand up with an automatic weapon.

   DIMA  
Could it have been a soldier in the truck you saw?

   YOUNG MAN  
That is possible. I just have this image in my head of a man looking around with a machine gun.

   DIMA  
It took place very rapidly.

   YOUNG MAN  
I took three pictures but a soldier took my phone.

   DIMA  
Really?

Dima is interviewing a middle-aged WOMAN.

   DIMA  
You were standing right here? About?

DIMA points on a map to a point very near where the admiral was shot. She is on the sidewalk only 7 or 8 meters from the parade.
WOMAN
The Admiral grabbed his throat and fell forward, and I think I saw soldiers shooting back at the terrorist.

DIMA
Why did you think that?

WOMAN
I heard the first two shots, and there was a pause... like the terrorist was reloading or something, flipping that thing on a rifle. Loading it again... and then the third shot. And I thought he was reloading, but I never heard a third shot.

EXT. ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL - DAY

The Ural-4320 truck is parked outside a former school building. The trailer was in the parade but also brought the body of the Admiral from Donetsk to the field hospital for the autopsy. Inside the building is an army field hospital.

A NAVY INVESTIGATOR and the Navy doctor walks past several Army guards and is not challenged. The war is over and things are seriously relaxed. If they even notice, the guards probably assume he is there about the admiral’s death and autopsy.

The Navy doctor walks into the hospital.

The Navy investigator approaches the Ural truck. He climbs aboard the back of the truck and walks to the front. He pulls out a cell phone and photographs a single shell casing. He picks it up with a pencil and places it in a plastic evidence bag.

FADE TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The Navy investigator is on the witness stand.
NAVY INVESTIGATOR
The two of us were present for the autopsy.

PROSECUTOR
Were there any anomalies?

NAVY INVESTIGATOR
A good number.

PROSECUTOR
Like...

NAVY INVESTIGATOR
Generally, an autopsy is conducted with just a small team, but this was different. There were far too many non-medical officers in the room.

PROSECUTOR
You and how many others...

NAVY INVESTIGATOR
Well, to begin with, there were two staff officers that were sent by Army generals. They were taking notes and they have their own photographer.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL - AUTOPSY ROOM

The Navy investigator is near enough to eavesdrop.

ARMY PATHOLOGIST
(to army investigator)
From the outset I can see basic forensic practices being ignored. There are people in here that should be treated as witnesses, and yet they refuse to leave.

The ARMY INVESTIGATOR simply looks at the doctor without response.

ARMY PATHOLOGIST
(to other doctors)
Despite the chaos in this room, I think we can agree that a bullet penetrated the lower region of the admiral’s neck (upper back) just below the collar line at the shoulder. This is a very neat wound.

(beat)
The entry wound is 8 mm in diameter, which suite a 7.62 mm full-metal-jacket round.

(beat)
This wound in the head is a different story. Nothing neat about this.

(beat)
The bullet responsible for this wound clearly hit the Admiral in the back of the head, causing a massive wound 130 mm in diameter.

An X-RAY TECHNICIAN follows the instructions of the doctors conducting the autopsy.

INT. COURTROOM – DAY

The X-ray technician is on the witness stand.

They swear an oath.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL – PHOTOGRAPHIC LAB

After exposing the film, he rushes back to his photographic laboratory to process the exposures and bring them back for the pathologists to review. He is followed by some soldiers who seem to be there to intimidate him.

X-RAY TECH
You can’t go in here.

The soldiers reluctantly wait outside.

Alone inside the dark-room, the X-ray technician hangs up the film in front of a light. He takes out his cell phone and take a digital photograph of each x-ray.
He gathers up the x-rays and returns to the hall. He lectures the soldiers at the return to the autopsy lab.

X-RAY TECH
And there is another thing. You shouldn’t harass the doctors. It is far too loud in the room and all this debate is not your job, you aren’t doctors.

The soldiers are not amused at the lecture.

PROSECUTOR (V.O.)
Is that all?

X-RAY TECHNICIAN (V.O.)
No.

An ARMY MEDICAL ADMINISTRATOR approaches the X-RAY TECH.

MEDICAL ADMINISTRATOR
Keep your mouth shut.

X-RAY TECH
Okay, that is perfectly blunt.

INT. COURTROOM – DAY
The PHOTOGRAPHER is on the witness stand.
They swear an oath.
CUT TO:
INT. ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL – AUTOPSY ROOM
The Army Investigator corners the autopsy photographer.

ARMY INVESTIGATOR
How many photos have you taken?

PHOTOGRAPHER
About 100.

ARMY INVESTIGATOR
Good, that’s enough.
The Army Investigator holds his hand out for the media card.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Hang on, I need several more that the pathologists have ordered specifically.

The Army Investigator is suspicious, and his eyes don’t leave the photographer. The photographer turns his back and pushes a few buttons. He is copying the card onto another. It is a digital camera with two storage cards.

The photographer takes a few more photos and then gladly hands one of the cards to the ARMY INVESTIGATOR.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The Army pathologist is on the witness stand.

They swear an oath.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL - AUTOPSY ROOM

The Army pathologist and doctors are about to remove and weigh each of the organs.

The pathologist is called over to the General.

MAJOR GENERAL
The family of the admiral would not like you to pursue this path any further.

While the pathologist is away, the DOCTORS turn back to the body (with their back to the General) and whisper amongst themselves.

ARMY DOCTOR #1
What are they trying to hide?

ARMY DOCTOR #2
Alcoholism?
ARMY DOCTOR #1
He has a bad back from a football incident; I read that.

ARMY DOCTOR #2
Look plain and simple this autopsy must be done, it doesn’t need to be done properly. It must be done for record purposes only. Finding the facts, forget it. The Army already knows the facts.

ARMY DOCTOR #1
That is so wrong. If everything is on the up and up here, we will have a cause of death in a few hours. There is a full-metal-jacket wound in his neck and an explosive bullet wound in the head.

The Army pathologist returns to the table.

ARMY DOCTOR #2
All the exhibits should be bagged and numbered. The proper continuity and signatures would have been secured. None of this is happening.

ARMY PATHOLOGIST
(whispering)
Do you know how many army officers are in this room? And their boss wants this finished.

BACK TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

ARMY PATHOLOGIST
The autopsy was finished prematurely.
(beat)
The blood sample was handed to a LAB TECH, but it is intercepted by the Army Investigator at the door.
(beat)
The brain of the Admiral fell out of the skull on the table. We placed it in
a container and store it in the refrigerator. It’s since disappeared.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL – AUTOPSY ROOM

The Army Investigator gathers up the microscope slides and the x-rays and everyone leaves the room.

An EMBALMER enters the room. One soldier remains to watch the embalming.

    PROSECUTOR (V.O.)
    His brain is missing? How did that happen?

INT. ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL – HALL WAY

The Army Investigator approaches the pathologist.

    ARMY INVESTIGATOR
    Do you mind if I have a quick word with you.
    (beat)
    We have a delicate situation. The President wants his brother’s brain.

There is a long pause. The Army pathologist contemplates refusing...

    ARMY PATHOLOGIST
    Sure, it is a container in the refrigerator.

They return to the autopsy room, and the brain is turned over to the Army Investigator.

INT. RUSSIAN MILITARY BASE – GUARD HOUSE – DAY

Alyona is interviewing a soldier about the war. She turns on “sexy” and approaches a SOLDIER with a camera and the potential he will be seen as a hero.

    ALYONA
    In the war, how fast were you called on to act?
SOLDIER
You must always be ready.

ALYONA
Your weapon was kept ready?

SOLDIER
Good to go.

ALYONA
What does that mean?

SOLDIER
It means loaded and cocked. You just have to release the safety and fire.

ALYONA
Is that dangerous?

SOLDIER
Sometimes it is more dangerous not to be ready to fire.

ALYONA
War is a fast event?

SOLDIER
It can be.

ALYONA
Is your weapon “good to go” now?

SOLDIER
Yes.

The hostilities are over. The soldier realizes his mistake and removes the bullet form the chamber.

ALYONA
The war is over. There aren’t any hostilities.

SOLDIER
It is more of a habit. I’m afraid once you have been shot at, it is more of a state of mind.
ALYONA
Everyone now has their weapon “good to go”?

SOLDIER
The rookies probably not.

(beat)
I’m sorry that was probably a mistake.
You are right the war is over. I’m just a little nervous still.

ALYONA
That is okay. I understand. I think people understand, you have been at war.

SOLDIER
True.

INT. STREETCAR - NIGHT
The streetcar is empty except for ALYONA and the X-ray technician. It is very late at night or very early morning.

ALYONA
Thank you for emailing me the x-rays.

X-RAY TECH
We are dealing with idiots here.

ALYONA
Why do you say that?

X-RAY TECH
Earlier today, the Army Investigator, he comes to me with tape and some bullet fragments. He wanted an x-ray of the admiral’s bone fragments.

ALYONA
He gave you metal fragments?

X-RAY TECH
Yes, varying sizes and he wanted me to falsify an X-ray.
ALYONA
Did you do it?

X-RAY TECH
Yes. I did.

ALYONA
Why?

X-RAY TECH
Are you kidding?

ALYONA
Oh, okay. You are afraid.

X-RAY TECH
Damn right.

ALYONA
Okay, I didn’t mean to be judgmental. I understand.

X-RAY TECH
I might regret it, but I did it. I’ve been under a little pressure.

(beat)
They told me that no matter if I talked or not, if it got out, I would spend the rest of my life in prison.

ALYONA
He had a call from Moscow and he just told you to tape the metal fragments to the bone?

X-RAY TECH
He came in, and it was the first thing he said, “I want these bone fragments X-rayed with these metal fragments taped.”

ALYONA
Okay, clear. Thank you.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE DONETSK - DAY

It is morning, December 25, 2023. One month later.
Much of the attention has died down.

The ARMY SPOKESPERSON is handing out a report. It is approximately 100 pages and there are only a handful of journalists. It seems like there are twelve reporter and only ten reporters. There isn’t a scrum for the information like at the previous press conference scene.

Dima brings Alyona a copy.

ALYONA
(reading from report)
Each of the soldiers were told to write a statement of their actions on the day of the parade.

She scans down to Vsevolod Zhilov name in the report.

ALYONA
(reading from report)
Vsevolod Zhilov’s statement reads, “The last shot seemed to hit the Admiral in the head and cause a noise at the point of impact which made him fall forward and to the left again. At the end of the last shot, I reach for my weapon. I loaded and cocked it, and I stood up looked around. At this point, we crossed under the overpass and left the scene of the shooting.”
(to Dima)
This is wrong. There are 11 witnesses that say he had the weapon at the time of the third shot. And the photographs prove he’s lying.
(beat)
There aren’t any of the soldiers from the follow-up car in this report. Only the shooter’s statement, which isn’t really a statement at all. The Veteran’s statement isn’t in here.
(beat)
There are eleven people we found who smelled gunpowder at ground level. They aren’t in this report either.
(beat)
Dima, none of your witnesses, the people interviewed in your office.
(beat)
Behind the follow-up truck with the soldiers are twelve other vehicles at the tail of the parade. All but 1 was open topped. They contained members of the press and dignitaries, and they were all facing forward. There are six statements here of all those people. Four of the six smelled gunpowder. Where are the other statements?

Dima gestures like this was to be expected.

ALYONA
This is a document of omission. Witnesses not questioned. Questions that aren’t asked. Evidence that is ignored.

INT. APARTMENT - DONETSK - DAY

Alyona knocks and is let in. There are at least ten teenagers in the apartment. The air is full of marijuana smoke. Five appear to live in the apartment. They seem to be a computer club, perhaps a group of hackers. One young GIRL has a video of the entire shooting.

The young GIRL shows Alyona the video on her computer. We see only Alyona’s reaction. And then the girl GIRL asks everyone to leave the room. Alyona remains.

GIRL
My father bought me this camera for my 18th birthday. He worked hard, built a good, honest life for me.
(beat)
But for so long it was a Russian life.

ALYONA
We'd like to talk to you about making a deal.

GIRL
I wish I never took this film. But now I'm going to have to live with it.
ALYONA
I admire you, you know. I've been to war. Know what it's like to use a camera. You kept shooting.

GIRL
No. It wasn't a war; that has been over. I filmed a murder.

ALYONA
Pravda is just as anxious as you are to give your video a wide audience. Everyone will know what happened. It might avert more war.

GIRL
And I want to say very clearly I know what this is, and what it's done. What it is going to do. So if you want a chance to do the right thing with this film then you're going to have to pay for it.

(beat)
You have to pay to keep it safe from the Army and to protect me.

ALYONA
I think I understand.

(beat)
Do you have a bank account?

GIRL
Yes.

ALYONA
I need those numbers so my editor can wire money from Moscow.

EXT. AIRPORT - DONETSK - DAY

Holiday decorations tell us that it’s nearly New Years Day, the last week in 2024. There are only a few people waiting on flights.

There is freezing rain and the beginnings of snow.
Dima brings Alyona to the airport. It is a small airport shared by the military and Aeroflot commercial flights.

Waiting for a flight to Moscow, Alyona and Dima are standing at the window overlooking the tarmac. They are trying to perhaps have some romantic words. However, a small military plane (Yakovlev Yak-40) taxis up near the terminal.

Inside the terminal, looking outside, we see Dresvyanin there are about four other well-armed soldiers and they seem to be walking an unarmed and handcuffed Vsevolod Zhilov to the plane. Vsevolod looks to have been crying. He looks depressed. The other soldiers are not particularly alert, and some even appear to be boisterous.

ALYONA has been studying the photos and video of the parade and she recognizes Private Vsevolod. Alyona points him out to Dima.

Dima speaks into his radio.

**DIMA**

I need a tactical team at the airport immediately and have the military plane at terminal 3 delayed. Call it a weather delay or something. But don’t let that plane off the ground.

DIMA returns to looking outside. He is simply waiting for other policemen to show up.

**EXT/INT. TARMAC AND PLANE - NIGHT**

When a TEAM OF ARMED POLICEMEN arrive on the tarmac, Dima joins them, and they move to storm the plane. The several members of the AIRPORT SECURITY assist the police.

Alyona sits from inside and begins recording video.

The police draw their weapons and catch the soldiers off guard inside the plane. However, Dresvyanin is armed and pointing it at Dima.

**DIMA**

You can’t take him.
DRESVYANIN
(flashing his weapon)
The hell we can’t.

INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Major Shukshin just arrives to see the situation and sees that weapons are drawn, and it seems to be a standoff inside the plane.

Shukshin draws his weapon and sits beside Alyona. He puts the pistol in her ribs. His coat obscures the pistol.

Alyona begins to lower her camera.

SHUKSHIN
No. No. Continue to record this. It is your job, correct?
(beat)
Who do you think will win?

ALYONA
Neither side will win.

SHUKSHIN
You are probably right.

ALYONA
There must be some room to negotiate an end to this.

SHUKSHIN
You think you can tell the world what happened?

ALYONA
They already know. It is all on countless video cell phones and many more computers.

SHUKSHIN
They will not believe your story.

ALYONA
Some people will always side with the military. The sheep.
SHUKSHIN
You media are traitors to the nation.

ALYONA
How is that?

SHUKSHIN
You are about to threaten the Russian national security. The Russian Army can’t be made to look weak or incompetent. When people think of our great army, they don’t need to think of this private.

ALYONA
You just won a war, you can afford a mistake or two. Russia is very thankful for your service. But this goes too far.

SHUKSHIN
We can’t be made to look this way to outsiders and especially not to the President.
(beat)
What happened here must stay here for the good of Russia.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

Dresvyanin is nervously looking around searching for some sort of advantage; he notices, through one of the plane’s window, Shukshin sitting beside Alyona.

Shukshin nods his head to Dresvyanin, giving him permission.

Dresvyanin raises his weapon and points it at Vsevolod.

The Dima and the policemen fire on Dresvyanin, who has his weapon pointed at Vsevolod. The soldiers drop their weapons and put their hands up. Instead of shooting Vsevolod, Dresvyanin takes a bullet to his shoulder and then takes a wild shot at Dima. He misses, and Dima shots Dresvyanin dead. Vsevolod survives the shot out.
And when Vsevolod and Dima exit the plane, Shukshin runs away, but he is tackled hard in the parking lot by local police who work for Dima.

During the shooting, Vsevolod closes his eyes. Alyona also closes her eyes and doesn’t open them until Dima appears beside her.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE and AIRPORT- NIGHT

Later, we the police taking the soldier from the plane to jail. The police is interviewing everyone and photographing the scene. The coroner’s office takes the body of Dresvyanin off the plane to the morgue. Finally, we see the police locking up Shukshin who has lead them on a long silly chase through the parking lot.

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY OFFICE - NIGHT

They are in a remote and quiet area of the airport. It is a private place in the airport, a security office. We see DIMA and ALYONA, through a window (a long shot) and they are interviewing Vsevolod.

FLASH BACK:

INT. STREET - DONETSK - DAY

It is of course very cold. A HOMELESS MAN is digging through the trash for clothes.

Alyona interrupts his search; she’s looking to interview this homeless man, who is in men’s pants but also wearing a woman’s coat. He is possibly not the most credible witness, but still he helps clarify the story. He may be the only one that wasn’t looking up at the sixth floor after the shots were fired.

HOMELESS MAN
The soldier reached down and grabbed the Kalashnikov to bring it to his shoulder.

BACK TO:
AIRPORT SECURITY OFFICE - NIGHT

HOMELESS MAN (V.O.)
See? He was gonna shot the sniper upstairs, you see? He flipped off the safety, and at that time he fell-over backward because the truck accelerated, and the gun went off.

ALYONA (V.O.)
Accidentally?

HOMELESS MAN (V.O.)
Must have been. It is sad for him, and it is sad for the country. I don’t like the President, but I feel for him.

BACK TO:

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY OFFICE - NIGHT

It is a LONG SHOT, and we can’t hear. Local police are keeping everyone away from the security office but there is a large window. As the homeless man’s voice tells the story we see Vsevolod’s body language tell the store.

We can see Alyona is recording the interview and Vsevolod appears relieved to be talking.

But, Vsevolod is still in fear for his life. He looks around nervously.

Several FSB men appear and seem to be taking over guarding the office. There are two or three FSB men standing around outside the office while Dima and Alyona speak to Vsevolod.

We can observe from Vsevolod’s gestures that he admits firing the fatal shot. He shows them how it happened - how he was going to fire at the sniper on the sixth floor, but the vehicle the truck accelerated, and his weapon discharged.

Alyona hugs Vsevolod. Dima shakes his hand and appears to be saying, “thank you” and “good luck”.

The FSB escort him out to their plane...
INT. KREMLIN STAIRS - DAY

Alyona is climbing the stairs. She is about to speak to President Kireyev. She is apprehensive.

We see a series of one or two-second flashbacks. Alyona is running all these images and complex relationships though her head.

FLASHBACKS:

Tabarik poses in his backyard holding a rifle. His Filipino wife takes the photo.

Russian military parade begins at the airport. The sun is shining. The people are welcoming. Several high-ranking Admirals and Generals arrive on planes from Saint Petersburg and Moscow.

Admiral Kireyev takes a seat in a limousine with the top down. Beside him is a beautiful female Navy officer. She is obviously his mistress and in love with him.

It is revealed that the parade is on the way to a luncheon and military decoration ceremony. A banner above the rostrum reads, “Welcome to Donetsk, Admiral.” We see tables being set and caterers preparing food. There are bomb sniffing dogs and security preparing for the event. There are several civilians, journalists, and veterans in wheelchairs waiting. There is a military band warming up before the event.

We see Tabarik eating in the second-floor lunchroom. He is laughing and joking with other employees. When the other employees leave (to watch the parade) he pulls out his smart-phone and plays a game.

We see the video that Pravda has bought from the girl. We have seen other grainy (fragmentary) cell phone video in this film. This is a different video (High-Definition), and everything is totally clear.

In this new video, we see Tabarik fire two shots, and we see Vsevolod fire the third and fatal shot. It’s all very clear.
The video obtained from the girl is similar to the Zapruder film from Dallas. However, it is shot from the left hand side of the parade, and it reveals everything. We can see clearly all three objects – the sixth-floor window, the Admiral’s car, and the truck with the soldiers.

We see the female navy officer, on the trunk of the car, trying to gather the admiral’s brain material and a particularly large bone fragment.

From another cell phone video, we see the fatally wounded admiral on a gurney with an old retired military coat over his head covering the head-wound. He is being wheeled into the hospital.

At the hospital, the female Navy officer follow the admiral’s stretcher into the Emergency Room. In both hands she is cradling a large section of his skull and brain matter.

We see the female navy officer collapsed and sitting on the floor while the doctors are working on the admiral. When it is over, a Navy officer extends his hand to help her stand.

We see the doctors stop working to resuscitate admiral Kireyev. The doctors and nurses all look very defeated. A young doctor refuses to stop CPR. An older, more experienced, doctor intervenes.

INT. OFFICE OF THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENT – KREMLIN – DAY

President Kireyev is sitting with his palm over his chin. He is contemplating all the stories.

ALYONA
Mr. President. I know you have probably heard three versions of the events – the Army version,

President Kireyev nods.

ALYONA
...the FSB Version,

President Kireyev nods.
ALYONA
...and now my version.
(beat)
I want you to know this is, to be best of my knowledge, what happened.

PRESIDENT KIREYEV
What did happen?

ALYONA
Three shots were fired. The first two by Duqvaakha Tabarik. He first bullet his the road. The second bullet hit your brother in the back, exited and then goes through Captain Charkov.
(beat)
At the sound of gunfire Vsevolod Zhilov turns to look up at the 6th floor. He sees Tabarik.
(beat)
Tabarik’s gun must have jammed.
(beat)
In the follow-up vehicle, Zhilov has picked up his AK-12 and flicks off the safety. As the truck lunes forward, he loses his balance and accidentally pulls the trigger.
(beat)
The admiral was rushed to the hospital, and a massive cover-up began. Look at the heavy-handed part the Army played on the sixth floor, at the hospital and at the autopsy.

There is a very long pause. PRESIDENT KIREYEV doesn’t move.

ALYONA
The shots fired by Tabarik, while one did hit your brother in the neck, it was not fatal. He would have survived. A soldier accidentally killed your brother.

The door to the office is open only inches. The President glances out into a waiting area. We see a very worried Vsevolod wringing his hands. While it isn’t clear, perhaps the FSB has brought him to collaborate the Alyona’s story.
There is another very long pause.

President Kireyev doesn’t move. We don’t know if the president is still in shock or if he is just reasoning and trying to judge the Alyona’s account of events vs. the other accounts.

President Kireyev (like many chief executives) seems isolated.

The pause is so long that the AIDE gestures that they should leave the room. Alyona begins to leave quietly.

Alyona, halfway out of the room, turns.

ALYONA
I’m very sorry.

President Kireyev gives her a very slight nod.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE (MOSCOW) – SUNDAY – DAY

Alyona walks to her desk and puts down some things, her laptop computer. And we see that Alyona’s story is just now published on the newspaper’s web-site.

Her colleague gestures to the computer screen on the colleague’s desk. It is a photo gallery with photos of Kireyev.

There are two nearly identical sets of photos. A gallery of Kireyev photos on her colleague computer. And a gallery of Kennedy photos on her computer. The JFK photos were the last things she was working on before she was sent to Donetsk.

When she sits at her desk, Alyona looks at the JFK photos. She looks over at the page just with Admiral Kireyev’s photos. There is something wrong. The colleague is looking for a reaction.

Alyona has a negative reaction. Something is strange; there is an odd look on Alyona’s face. She turns to a second computer on an adjacent desk. She keeps going back and forth comparing photos.
The web pages are almost identical. The photos are very similar and what is most odd is they are arranged in the exact same order.

Yegor P. Kireyev, Sr. with sons Yegor P. Kireyev, Jr. (left) and Yefim F. Kireyev (right). Odessa, USSR, 1977.

Yefim F. Kireyev in a policeman’s costume and sister Eunice Kireyev, circa 1971. Gorky Park, Moscow, USSR.

Yefim F. Kireyev's 1986 Moscow State University yearbook entry.


Rose Kireyev and her children, circa 1969. L-R: Rose Kireyev, Eunice Kireyev, Kathleen Kireyev, Rosemary Kireyev (seated in foreground), Yefim F. Kireyev, and Yegor P. Kireyev.

Yefim F. Kireyev in his Moscow State futbol uniform.

Yalta, April 1936 Ted, Jack, Bob.

Letter from Yefim F. Kireyev to his mother asking if he can be his newly born brother Teddy's godfather, 1978.

Yefim F. Kireyev graduates from Moscow State University, Moscow, USSR, June 1986.

Yefim F. Kireyev with dog, Bobby, at Sokolniki Park, Moscow, USSR, 1971.

Yefim Filippov Kireyev and Yegor P. Kireyev Jr., Moscow, USSR, circa 1965.

Yefim F. Kireyev sits and studies at his desk at Moscow State, c. 1987.
Yefim F. Kireyev poses with "Dunker" the dachshund at Berlin, East Germany, during his tour of Eastern Europe.


Yegor P. Kireyev Jr., Kathleen Kireyev, and Yefim F. Kireyev, sons and daughter of Soviet Ambassador to England Yegor P. Kireyev Sr., arrive at the House of Parliament in London to hear Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's announcement that a state of war existed between England and Argentina, April 1982.

DIMA
Remember me?

ALYONA doesn't respond. She is comparing the last of John Kennedy and Yefim Kireyev photos. Alyona looks as if she has seen a ghost. She is pale and in a state of shock.

DIMA
I was at the Kremlin. They said you were there as well. I was wondering if you wanted to have dinner? Before I have to return home?

Alyona snaps out of her daze. She turns the screen with the Kennedy photos off.

ALYONA
(to Dima)
What?

DIMA
Diner? You want to have some food with me? I’m going back tomorrow and I thought...

ALYONA
Sure. Now,

DIMA
Yes, if that’s alright.
Alyona rises and gathers up her things. She throws much of the Kennedy material in a brief case and puts on her coat.

Everyone in the office is watching them. Dima and Alyona leave the newsroom office.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEVATOR - NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

They enter the elevator. The door closes to the elevator. There is a long silence. This is an awkward date. Clearly, Alyona is distracted and Dima has no idea how to talk to her. Finally.

DIMA
What do you have in your briefcase?

ALYONA
Huh?

DIMA
You put a lot of papers in there. You’re taking them home?

ALYONA
Oh, I was working on a story before all this happened. Research.

DIMA
You take your work home?

ALYONA
No, not normally.

Long awkward silence.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

There is a short walk down the sidewalk. Silence. Alyona isn’t her normal self.

DIMA
So what was President Kireyev like?

ALYONA
You didn’t see him?
DIMA
No. I talked to an aide. Nothing that couldn’t be done over the phone actually.

ALYONA
Oh. Well, he was resigned. It happened. I don’t think he is depressed or anything. He’s in mourning still.

DIMA
Normal, huh?

ALYONA
Normal.

Finally, Dima flags down a taxi.

INT. TAXI – NIGHT

Inside the taxi, nothing but more awkward silence.

DIMA
Moscow is beautiful.

Long beat.

ALYONA
Yes. It is. Especially this time of year.

DIMA
I wouldn’t mind living here.

Alyona doesn’t respond. She’s occupied in thought. The taxi arrives, and Dima pays. They get out and walk into a restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT – NIGHT

They sit and are given menus. It is a conventional restaurant, but there is television on the wall above the bar. It has the news on, but the volume is turned down.

There is a very long beat.
DIMA
So do you get shy in romantic situations? Me too.

ALYONA
Uh, I’m sorry. I’m a horrible date. I get preoccupied so easily.

DIMA
It’s okay. You live a very complicated life.

ALYONA
That’s not an excuse. Let’s have fun. Order some wine. I promise to forget about everything, but you.

Next to Dima and Alyona’s table is a table with an interesting couple - a MAN and a WOMAN. They are also on a date. The woman is talking up a storm, and the man is trying to listen. The woman is pretty but a little excitable. And he is a skeptic.

WOMAN
I can’t believe I didn’t realize this sooner. This has been in the news and on the internet for a month now. I’m just getting slow.

MAN
I don’t think you’re slow.

WOMAN
I didn’t realize this until just now...

The woman pulls out her phone and shows the man two photos: one of young Yefim while in the navy, and the other one of young Kennedy while in the Navy. She hands the phone to the man, who looks but doesn’t know what to say.

WOMAN
American President Kennedy was the second son. He was assassinated on November 22\textsuperscript{nd} in 1963.

(beat)
Admiral Kireyev was the second son. He was born November 22\textsuperscript{nd} in 1963 and was
assassinated riding in a parade
November 22nd, 2023.

She takes back the phone.

ROLL END CREDITS:

BEGIN POST CREDITS SCENE:

INT. RESTAURANT – NIGHT

WOMAN
President JOHN F. KENNEDY died in
Dallas on Friday, November 22nd, 1963 at
12:30 p.m. CST.

The man is listening and trying to understand. It is
difficult however.

WOMAN
YEFIM KIREYEYV, Russian Admiral, was
born in Moscow, Friday, November 22,
1963 at 9:30 p.m. MSK.

The woman pulls out her phone and pulls up a world time app
-- London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Beijing, Tokyo, Los
Angles, Denver, Dallas...

WOMAN
The exact same time - 12:30 pm in
Dallas is 9:30 pm in Moscow.

MAN
A coincidence.

WOMAN
A death and a birth to the very minute?
And then assassinate exactly 46 years
later? Come on, what are the odds?

MAN
I don’t believe in reincarnation.

WOMAN
You don’t because you weren’t taught to.

(beat)
Half the world does. Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism!

MAN
Like this?

WOMAN
Well, what do they really know how it works?

The man is about to respond but doesn’t.

CUT TO: Dima and Alyona

DIMA
Are you listening to this?

ALYONA
I am.

BACK TO: the man and woman.

MAN
But that’s impossible.

WOMAN
It’s all on the internet.

MAN
There is a lot of loony stuff on the internet. All that could be fabricated.

WOMAN
This is a major news site.

MAN
I… I have to be more realistic.

WOMAN

The man is emotionless.

WOMAN
I’m scaring you?
MAN
No. No. I’m listening.

WOMAN
Both men had beautiful wives, but were serial adulterers. Both wives each had a miscarriage and a stillborn daughter.

Man waves down a waiter.

WOMAN
Do you want to just cut this short?

MAN
Uh, no.

WOMAN
Do you think I’m a nut?

MAN
Not yet.

He smiles. They chuckle.

WAITER
Okay, are you ready to order?

TIME PASSES:

WOMAN
Want more?
(beat)
Both families. Third oldest child, a sister, mentally impaired.
(beat)
Both men entered wars at the same age. The Great Patriotic War and Afghanistan. Both Navy.
(beat)
Christ! The names of their dogs are the same.

MAN
In the American family the second son was President. President Kireyev was the first son.
WOMAN
John Kennedy had an older brother “Joseph” that was killed in the war. Chasing submarines. His plane was shot down over the Atlantic. His father expected “him” to be President.

MAN
So they aren’t identical.

WOMAN
President Kireyev was shot down but survived.

CUT TO: Dima and Alyona

DIMA
Is that true?

ALYONA
Nearly. Do you want to know about it?

DIMA
Sure.

CUT TO: Indian Ocean

ALYONA (V.O.)
During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Yegor Kireyev was the pilot of a plane searching for American submarines in the Indian Ocean. The plane was reportedly tracking a sub. Suddenly, a missile comes from nowhere (probably a U.S. missile destroyer). The plane was seriously damaged, but Kireyev masterfully gets the plane back to Aden, Yemen. When it safely lands... they examine the damage to the plane. It appears a miracle that it could fly at all. There were large sections of the plane missing - half the vertical and half of one of the horizontal stabilizers. He had to steer the plane with thrust from the left and right engines.
BACK TO: the Moscow restaurant.

WOMAN
President Kennedy’s patrol boat was sunk. Admiral Kireyev lost a boat too, cut in two in the middle of the night.

MAN
So what does this mean?

WOMAN
You should know that there was some funny business with Kennedy’s death too. Just like what happened in Donetsk.

MAN
The admiral’s body was whisked away by the army.

WOMAN
Kennedy’s body was whisked away by the secret service and given over to the navy.

MAN
So what do you think happened in Dallas?

WOMAN
Isn’t it 100% clear?

MAN
Well, no.

WOMAN
The same thing that happened in Donetsk.

MAN
Which is?

WOMAN
Some nut shot him in the neck, but the bullet that killed him was an accident.
(beat)
Kennedy was accidentally shot by a secret service man in the car behind him. And Admiral Kireyev, well you know that it’s been on television and in the papers.

(beat)
They were killed in almost the exact same way. The angles and wounds. The politics.

MAN
Politics.

WOMAN
Kennedy to keep the US in Vietnam and Kireyev to keep Russia in the Ukraine.

(beat)
Here let me send you these links. Two feature pieces two weeks apart.

She manipulates her phone.

MAN
This is some coincidence.

WOMAN
Coincidence?

(beat)
I believe and if you will look into it you will probably realize they were killed in the exactly the same way. One in Dallas and one in Donetsk. A mirror.

MAN
The Americans are gonna love you.

WOMAN
Why?

MAN
You did something the greatest American couldn’t do.

WOMAN
What?
MAN
You solved their assassination.

WOMAN
Oh, I guess I did.

The man’s face lights up.

MAN
Wait. What happened to the man that shot Kennedy?

WOMAN
Lee Harvey Oswald? He was shot to keep him quiet.

MAN
So this Chechen fellow...

WOMAN
Well, I don’t know; is he dead?

MAN
Beats me.

WOMAN
Just because it not on television, doesn’t mean he hasn’t been disappeared.

MAN
If your theory is right... shouldn’t...

Man and the woman and also Dima and Alyona turn to the television. The volume is turned down, and people are chatting and eating. But we see the crawl at the bottom of the screen, “Duqvaakha Tabarik suspected terrorist sniper to be moved today.”

CUT TO:

INT. DONETSK POLICE STATION GARAGE

The news cameras are waiting in the garage of the Donetsk police station. They are waiting to get a glimpse of Tabarik. Evidently he is being moved from local police custody to federal custody.
There is a military vehicle with a back door open and waiting for the prisoner.

BACK TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Woman is facing the television, and she glances up at the television as she speaks.

    WOMAN
    This is eerie.
    (beat)
    I’ve seen some weird stuff, but...

The woman pauses... She thinks.

    WOMAN
    You are about to see history repeat itself?

The police are leading a handcuffed Tabarik out to be photographed and to be handed over to the army.

    MAN #1
    Can we get a channel check?

    MAN #2
    Yea.

    MAN #3
    The match is about to be on.

    BAR TENDER
    What channel?

    MAN #4
    One.

As Tabarik comes into the room, a man emerges from the crowd and shots him in the belly with a concealed revolver.

The woman is about to get up and approach the bar and television.

But the bar tender changes channels to a soccer match.
There are about four men at the bar who approve.

FOUR MEN
Thanks, appreciate that.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dima and Alyona make eye contact.

DIMA
Will you take me to the airport in the morning?

ALYONA
Of course.

THE END