

R E W I N D

A screenplay for a short film

by

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FIRST DRAFT

"REWIND"
BY
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FADE IN:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

NEIL CALLAWAY -- 34, handsome, but roughed-up, with bruises on his face -- sits tied to a chair.

An evil-looking BALD MAN crouches before him, rifling through A LEATHER BAG. He looks up at Callaway as he extracts A SMALL CIRCULAR TAPE REEL (from a reel-to-reel tape player) from the bag. He smiles thinly at Callaway.

CALLAWAY
The paper will come looking for me.

The bald man stands. Moves over to a table. On the table is A STEEL CASE. The bald man pulls A SYRINGE from it.

BALD MAN
No they won't, Mr Callaway.

CALLAWAY
What about Danny --

BALD MAN
He is already dead, Mr Callaway.

Callaway sighs, winces.

BALD MAN
No. I am afraid that you have seen --
and heard -- just a little too much.
May you rest in peace.

The syringe goes into Callaway's immobilised arm. Callaway watches -- terrified -- as the bald man depresses the plunger. The contents of the syringe go into his bloodstream.

CALLAWAY
No! -- No!! -- NO!!!!!!!

His scream carries over as we --

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

An ominous-looking building, surrounded by high fences and razor wire. Super the legend:

ONE HOUR EARLIER.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A dark, foreboding place. Endless aisles. Wooden crates and boxes fill the shelves.

NEIL CALLAWAY, looking a lot fresher and more alive, SLAMS back-first into a shelf, breathing hard. He looks at A SLIP OF PAPER in his hand by the light of a penlight. The slip of paper reads:

BOX 26/A-1

Callaway moves down a narrow aisle, peering at the boxes on the shelves by the light of his small flashlight.

THE FLASHLIGHT'S BEAM reveals a stencil on one of the boxes:
26/A-1.

Looking fearfully about himself, Callaway hurriedly rips open the box. He extracts --

A BULGING ENVELOPE.

He rips open the envelope. In it is THE CIRCULAR TAPE REEL. Callaway pockets the tape reel and takes off.

CUT TO:

INT. CALLAWAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A reel-to-reel tape player plays the mysterious reel.

Neil Callaway stands at the window, peering out, while behind him, his friend, DANNY SMITH, listens to the reel through a pair of STEREO HEADPHONES. Danny's mouth is falling open at what he hears.

He stops the reel-to-reel machine. Pulls off the headphones.

DANNY SMITH

Neil. This stuff is fucking dynamite --

It's at that moment that the door behind Callaway is violently kicked in.

CUT TO BLACK:

Super the legend:

3 DAYS EARLIER.

INT. FBI OFFICE - DAY

TWO MIDDLE-AGED MEN stand around a desk. One wears single-breasted suit with an WHITE HOUSE ID on his pocket; the second man wears a heavily-decorated US Navy uniform.

On the desk before them: A BRIGHT ORANGE REEL-TO-REEL PLAYER.

WHITE HOUSE MAN

The President is concerned. Has the situation been resolved?

THE DOOR to the office opens and in rushes a young NAVY TECHNICIAN. He carries an identical REEL-TO-REEL PLAYER.

YOUNG NAVY TECHNICIAN

Same make. Same model. And now, same serial number. The unit's been sealed and a new reel is inside.

WHITE HOUSE MAN

Can you get it out to the crash site?

SENIOR NAVY MAN

No problem. We'll get one team to lay it and another team -- who knows nothing -- to find it.

CUT TO:

A TELEVISION SOMEWHERE - DAY

The news. A FEMALE NEWSREADER speaks to camera.

NEWSREADER

And in breaking news, the black box flight data recorder from doomed British Airways Flight 455 was recovered today by US Navy divers.

The TV SCREEN shows a diver getting out of the water holding the BRIGHT ORANGE REEL-TO-REEL PLAYER we just saw in the office. It is a FLIGHT DATA RECORDER.

NEWSREADER (V.O.)

Investigators are hopeful that the black box will shed some light on the tragic incident...

CUT TO:

ANOTHER NEWSCAST.

A MALE NEWSREADER this time.

MALE NEWSREADER

Investigators looking into the BA Flight 455 aeroplane disaster today revealed the contents of the doomed airliner's flight data recorder.

A "sound screen" comes up. It is one of those screens you see on the evening news when a paragraph of words is displayed while the speaker's voice is supered over it. In this case WE HEAR the garbled voice of a pilot:

PILOT'S VOICE

... New York Air Traffic Control, this is BA 455, we are experiencing complete system breakdown...oil pressure has been lost, electrical systems have failed, hydraulic wing controls have been lost...If anybody can hear this, we are going into a dive...

The male newsreader comes up again.

MALE NEWSREADER

The crash of the British Airways Boeing 777 has been linked to a similar crash of a Malaysian Airlines Boeing 777 in 1997. In that incident, complete system breakdown occurred due to faulty wiring in the cockpit circuitry --

NEW ANGLE. WE ARE in:

INT. MOBILE COMMAND CENTRE - NIGHT

The White House Man is watching the coverage on the TV in near darkness.

The Senior Navy Man comes alongside him.

SENIOR NAVY MAN

There's been a leak.

WHITE HOUSE MAN

One of yours?

SENIOR NAVY MAN
No. Yours. One of your aides told a reporter about the switch. Gave him the location of the real tape.

WHITE HOUSE MAN
Who?

SENIOR NAVY MAN
The leak has been taken care of. The reporter's name is Callaway.

WHITE HOUSE MAN
Can he be erased with minimal disturbance?

SENIOR NAVY MAN
By the right person. Yes.

The Navy Man turns his head and WE PAN TO REVEAL behind him --

THE EVIL-LOOKING BALD MAN

waiting patiently in the shadows.

CUT TO BLACK:

Super the legend:

THREE DAYS EARLIER

INT. MOBILE NAVY COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

A caravan-type vehicle. Cramped. Dark.

A BRIGHT ORANGE FLIGHT DATA RECORDER slams down onto the table. It glistens with wetness.

THE WHITE HOUSE MAN from before is here, as is the SENIOR NAVY OFFICER.

WHITE HOUSE MAN
Nobody knows...?

SENIOR NAVY MAN
It was found by a specialist unit operating outside the publicised search area.

(beat)
The media don't know we've got it.

INT. MOBILE NAVY COMMAND CENTER - LATER

WIRES are plugged into the FLIGHT DATA RECORDER. The SENIOR NAVY MAN hits a switch and the reels start to rotate.

Garbled hash.

SECOND OFFICER'S VOICE
(on tape)
Moving to 24,000 feet, sir, all systems normal.

PILOT'S VOICE
Good work, Number Two. Take us up.

The two senior government men stare intently at the black box flight recorder.

PILOT'S VOICE
Say, anyone hear what the score was in the Mets game?

FIRST OFFICER'S VOICE
Jesus, what the fuck is that?

PILOT'S VOICE
What the --

And then tangle of frantic voices:

SECOND OFFICER'S VOICE
Is that what I think it is?

FIRST OFFICER'S VOICE
It's coming toward us, Captain.
(beat)
Jesus Christ --

PILOT'S VOICE
Number Two, get on the radio, see if there are any Navy ships down there. Tell them to abort!

SECOND OFFICER'S VOICE
Attention any US Navy vessels in grid sector 675. This is British Airways Flight 455, we are a civilian airliner and we have a visual on a --

A NEW VOICE comes over the line. Harsh. Suspicious.

NEW VOICE

British Airways Flight 455, this is US
Navy ship Liberty, what are you doing
in this area?

SECOND OFFICER'S VOICE

(frantic)

US Navy vessel Liberty, we are a
civilian airliner in international
airspace, and we have visual contact on
a missile of some sort, heading in our
direction and we ask that you
immediately abort its flight --

FIRST OFFICER'S VOICE

Too late!!!

PILOT'S VOICE

NO!!!

The tape explodes to hash. The sound of static fills the mobile
command center.

THE TWO SENIOR MEN look at each other. They are like stone.
Unmoved by the drama they have just heard. The WHITE HOUSE MAN
pulls out a cellular phone, steps over to a corner.

He speaks into the phone in hushed tones. The Navy man doesn't
watch him. The White House man returns, looks seriously at the
Navy man.

WHITE HOUSE MAN

Take appropriate action. Make it go
away.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END