

30 ASSAULT

John Royan

johnkroyan@gmail.com
johnroyan.com

FADE IN:

A stark desert plain peppered with stars.

Low mechanical rumbling rolls across the sands, coming toward us, all around us, until it hits like a wind and a Junker 52 transport plane roars into frame and takes off, up and away from a bustling military AIR STATION.

SUPER:

TOBRUK, NORTH AFRICA - OCTOBER, 1942

A PROPELLER

Buzzes to life.

German airmen load cargo into the belly of a JUNKER. A pilot under the wing performs a preflight inspection of the plane. Headlight beams hit him. He shields his eyes and looks.

A desert-camouflaged Daimler Benz staff car speeds along the dirt runway, a beige cloud of dust in its wake.

It swerves to a stop and an ITALIAN OFFICER steps out of the back. Handsome, fit, a briefcase handcuffed to his wrist.

He makes for the plane. Confident. Purposeful. Moving like a panther, all grace and power.

A column of British prisoners pass by in front of him, dust-covered men in bandages and tattered uniforms.

A young Brit missing a leg looks at the Italian, holds his gaze, a compassionate shade in the Italian Officer's eyes.

The column passes by and the Italian moves on and boards.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The Junker 52 in flight.

INT. JUNKER 52 - REAR COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

The Italian sits on a bench across from two SS officers. Jostled by turbulence. Besieged by the HUM of the engines.

He eyes the SS officers, their Death's Head insignia. Shoulder holsters. Walther P38 sidearms.

One of them turns and the Italian looks away, around the plane, his eyes coming to rest on a

Small wooden crate marked with a stamped British flag and stenciled lettering that reads: "Fragile: Gyroscopes".

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The German transport hums along.

INT. JUNKER - SAME

The SS officers sleep. The Italian studies them, making sure. He checks his watch: 0200.

Uncuffs the briefcase, glances at the flight deck curtain, then weaves his way over to the Germans.

SS OFFICER #1

Comes awake. The Italian standing over him, smiling.

ITALIAN OFFICER/CROSS
Mornin', Fritz.

THUMP! The stunned German looks down at a knife in his chest. His eyes roll.

SS OFFICER #2 stirs.

And British agent COMMANDER JAMES CROSS slaps a hand over the German's mouth and stabs. Another silent death.

Cross checks the flight deck - nothing. Against the sound of the engines no one heard a thing.

He slips the blade into an ankle sheath. Heads for the gyros.

Ties them and a PARACHUTE to a packed inflatable raft.

Opens a jump door. Reaches for another chute

When WHAM! The co-pilot hurtles into frame and slams him against the fuselage, launching a wild slugfest that carries around the compartment, near the open jump door and through the curtained doorway onto the

FLIGHT DECK

Where they tumble in, in a heap.

The shocked pilot draws a Luger.

Cross kicks it. It fires, BOOM! Into the windshield!

Blowing it apart. Filling the cockpit with a sudden vortex of flight plans, light equipment and broken glass.

A shard strikes the pilot's face. He CRIES OUT! Falls on the wheel.

Puts the plane into a dive that sends Cross and co-pilot out the blown windshield onto the

NOSE

Where they hang on for dear life. Cross gripping the windshield coaming, the co-pilot clinging to his legs.

THE PILOT

Wipes blood from his eyes and pulls up on the wheel.

AND THE JUNKER

Rises. Higher and higher. Up out of the dive.

CROSS AND CO-PILOT

Fighting Gs as the plane soars.

Co-pilot reaching upward. Cross pushing down on his face. Pulling a leg free, nailing co-pilot with a kick that sends him cartwheeling into the wing propeller.

CO-PILOT

Nein!

PHFTTT! Blood and clothing splatter across the wing.

PILOT

Looks out at his bloodstained plane. Turns back as Cross leaps onto him through the blown-out windshield.

They hit the floor. Fight to their feet.

Bump the wheel and put the plane into a climb that sends them rolling into the BACK COMPARTMENT, the Luger skittering in after them.

They come off the floor a few meters apart.

THE JUNKER

Soaring. Leveling off. Cresting a parabola.

And for a few seconds everything in the plane becomes WEIGHTLESS. Cross, the pilot, bodies and cargo all float around the cabin like feathers in a breeze.

The Luger floats before the pilot. He grabs it. SHOOTs!

Bullets ZIP and PING around the plane. Clip Cross's ear!

When WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! Gravity's back and everything drops at once and slides towards the nose.

Cross tumbling down the fuselage. Past a net which he grabs.

The pilot rolling by, FIRING! Missing Cross. Crashing into a bulkhead. Recovering. Aiming...

at Cross, who whips out his knife and lets it fly! End over end into the pilot's throat!

THE NOSE OF THE JUNKER DIPS

The dive angle steepens.

JOLTING CROSS

Who pulls himself hand over hand up the net to the jump door.

He hauls up the gyros attached to the parachute and packed inflatable raft. Heaves them out one by one.

Grabs another chute caught in the net. Concentrates. Intensely. Strapping on the chute, ignoring the shimmering blackness of the sea rising up to meet him.

Coming closer and CLOSER as Cross fastens the chute and bails!

TWO WHITE PARACHUTES DRIFT AWAY

from the plane as it spirals into the sea and EXPLODES!

CROSS

Floats down, eyes locked on the inky surface of the sea. He times the impact, unhooks his shoot and plunges in the water.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN SEA - NIGHT

Cross surfaces.

Swims to the raft and drags himself over the side.

Hauls in the gyroscopes by the cord.

Checks the crate - intact, everything A-okay.

Cross pulls a small flashlight out of his pocket.

Signals in each direction - north, west, south, east.

In the east, a deck-mounted searchlight comes to life. It flashes an answer - we are here.

INT. DR GRIEVE'S OFFICE - SIS HQ (LONDON) - DAY

MATCH CUT to a pen-light. Shining. Going out.

Leaving behind the glum face of DOCTOR GRIEVE, a bespectacled elderly physician.

Doctor Grieve examines Cross. Checks the scrape on his ear.

DR GRIEVE

Hmm, another centimeter and your head would've popped like a melon.

He makes a popping sound with his mouth. Cross is not amused.

DR GRIEVE (CONT'D)

Apologies, Commander. Black sense of humor - a hazard of the trade.

Doctor Grieve clears air bubbles from a shot. Jabs Cross.

CROSS

Heyyy!

DR GRIEVE

Tetanus. Filthy things those German bullets.

Doctor Grieve fills out a chart as Cross gets dressed.

DR GRIEVE (CONT'D)

So how are you feeling?
(off a look from Cross)
I have to ask; it's on the questionnaire.

CROSS

What does advanced battle fatigue get me?

DR GRIEVE

A pep talk.

Dr Grieve hands Cross his medical clearance.

DR GRIEVE (CONT'D)

You're cleared for leave, Commander. God knows you've earned it. Where to?

CROSS

Edinburgh. I'm flying up there this afternoon.

DR GRIEVE

Good God, whatever for? The place
is an icebox this time of year.

CROSS

It certainly is. But they've got
the world's best Scotch, beautiful
redheads and it's so damn cold none
of them ever want to get out of bed.

Cross cracks a sly grin and leaves.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Rain. A war-torn London street: barrage blimp overhead,
residential buildings, one side of the street in rubble.

A cab pulls up. Cross steps out. Totes his duffel bag and
enters his building.

INT. LOBBY - CROSS'S BUILDING - DAY

Takes mail from a box and walks upstairs.

INT. CROSS'S FLAT - SAME

Steps into a spartan room. Drops his bag and sifts through
the mail.

Handwritten letters embroidered with feminine touches, return
addresses from Belfast, Liverpool... Stockholm.

Cross smells this one, not bad.

He drops them all in a waste basket, removes his coat and
falls on the bed.

LATER

Cross sits on the edge of the bed in his undershirt, smoking
a cigarette, staring out at nothing. A faded, poorly-inked
tattoo on his shoulder. It reads: "Orbis non sufficit".

He turns to a SCRATCHING SOUND.

A gray mouse scurries along the floorboards by the wall.
Ducks into a small hole in the plaster.

Cross smiles faintly. Holds the cigarette in his lips and
goes to a desk. Takes out a bit of moldy cheese.

Knocks off the mold and sets the small chunk outside the
hole. Goes back and sits.

Looks again at the hole. The cheese is gone.

CROSS
Your welcome, Mickey.

Cross gazes with faraway eyes out the rain-streaked window.

CROSS (CONT'D)
(muted with melancholy)
Good to be home.

He takes a drag. Blows a veil of blue smoke at the dreary skyline of London.

LATER STILL

Cross puts on his uniform. Picks up a hotel brochure.

CLOSE ON the brochure - "The Highlander", a picturesque Scottish inn.

EXT. CROSS'S STREET - DAY

Cross stands on a wet sidewalk holding a travel bag, a smoke in his mouth. A cab pulls to the curb.

Before he can get in a jeep arrives and a BRITISH SERGEANT alights from the vehicle.

BRITISH SERGEANT
Commander Cross?

Cross stops, knows what's coming and doesn't like it.

BRITISH SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Admiral Godfrey wants to see you.

Cross gazes right through the sergeant. Pulls his travels papers from his jacket and looks at the brochure, the picturesque Scottish inn.

Tosses the lot into a street-side rubbish can.

The cabbie flips the meter and drives off.

Cross takes a last drag on his cigarette, flicks it away. Climbs in the jeep.

THE DRONE RHYTHMIC PURR OF A SUBMARINE PROPELLER RISES TO A ROAR, DROWNING OUT ALL OTHER SOUND AS WE SMASH CUT TO:

The sleek black body of a SUB POWERING THROUGH THE DEEP

AND CROSS

in the cramped confines within. On a bunk, his face five inches from the cot above, his hands clasped behind his head.

Waiting. Thinking. His eyes SEEING...

SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIS) HQ - FRONT GATE - DAY

The jeep pulls up to a gate. MPs. A compound of buildings.

Cross steps out of the jeep ducking the rain.

Shows a pass to an FSP Military Policeman, the green-capped MPs of the Intelligence Services.

ENTERS SIS HEADQUARTERS

A brick monolith beside the Thames.

Steps from an elevator into a catacomb-like BASEMENT where an MP mans a table.

Cross flashes an ID. Walks down a mole's passage - a dim HALLWAY in the bowels of the building.

To a door, a sign above the jamb:

"30 ASSAULT UNIT"

He enters the crack commando unit of the SIS.

CROSS - ON THE SUB

Awake in his berth. He looks around at the other cots.

The dim rounded shapes of three men sleeping.

Betty Garble in a one-piece taped to a bulkhead. Looking over her shoulder, smiling.

CROSS REMEMBERING...

An attractive SECRETARY turns to Cross as he steps into an OFFICE. Smiles with something more than familiarity and points to a side door.

SECRETARY

They're in there. You're late.

Cross goes to the door, stops and turns.

CROSS

Thank you, ma'am.

SECRETARY

I'll ma'am you all right.

Cross cracks a roguish grin then steps into a

CONFERENCE ROOM

Where his eyes meet those of REAR ADMIRAL JOHN GODFREY (54), one of Special Intelligence Services top brass. He sits on a table with one leg on the floor. Been waiting.

ADMIRAL GODFREY

Good of you to join us, Commander.

Cross slides into the nearest seat.

Up front, another officer, a COMMODORE glares at the late arrival. Approaches and drops a file on Cross's lap.

Cross regards him with casual indifference. The Commodore looks critically at Cross and moves on.

Takes mission files to three other men:

French Army CAPTAIN ALAIN ROYAN - middle-aged, dark featured, has an air of grand experience about him.

MAX KAUFMAN (25), a blonde Teutonic bull, handsome, crisply dressed, could be a poster-boy for Aryan propaganda.

And CORPORAL STANLEY OWENS, maybe thirty, British, spruce and stringy, better suited for a lab coat than a uniform.

Admiral Godfrey stands, glances at Cross.

ADMIRAL GODFREY (CONT'D)

Now that we've all seen fit to be present, I'll get started.

He walks to the front of the room. Pulls down a screen.

ADMIRAL GODFREY (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, I'm sure you're wondering what all the fuss is about. Why the big rush to get you here...

(at Cross)

the canceled leaves, the selection of four men who've never worked before as a team?

The agents trade glances, curiosity stirred.

ADMIRAL GODFREY (CONT'D)

Well, it can't be helped. This is a priority one mission. For it, I need German-speaking agents with experience behind enemy lines; our best men, and you four fit the bill.

He nods to the Commodore who hits the lights and uses a projector to put a circa 1942 map of Germany on the screen.

ADMIRAL GODFREY (CONT'D)
A short notice mission, gentlemen;
short on intel, planning and time.

ALAIN
(sotto voce to Cross)
And any chance of success.

Cross grins at Alain, shares his cynicism.

A photo of a fortified coast line appears on the screen.

ADMIRAL GODFREY
You will enter enemy territory by
submarine here at Cape Arkona. From
the coast you'll make your way to
Berlin, to the...

Another slide: a rectangular mansion five stories high.

ADMIRAL GODFREY (CONT'D)
Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Physics.
Once there, you will infiltrate,
retrieve a German scientist and make
your way home.

Max raises his hand.

ADMIRAL GODFREY (CONT'D)
Max?

MAX
Sir, our escape route?

ADMIRAL GODFREY
Back to the coast, to the drop point.
That's with a twenty-four hour
turnaround.

CROSS
And if it takes twenty-five?

ADMIRAL GODFREY
Just see that it doesn't. But if
needed we've planned for alternate
escape routes through France and
Switzerland. They're in your mission
file.

Silence. Slides off. Lights on.

CUT TO:

SUB CABIN

Suddenly illuminated. A young NAVAL OFFICER, torso through the hatchway, hand on a light switch.

NAVAL OFFICER

Sir, we're nearing the drop point.

CROSS

Acknowledges with a nod.

A KNIFE

Slips into an ankle sheath as Cross secures it to his ankle. Zips up his wet suit.

ALAIN, MAX AND OWENS

Stand around him half in and out of their wet suits, loading black equipment bags with German uniforms, canteens, weapons - Lugers and Schmeissers, everything Wehrmacht issue.

MAX

Pulls a steel box out from under a cot. Takes out plastic explosives and timing devices, hands them to Alain. Who places them carefully in a black equipment bag.

CROSS

Watching him, REMEMBERING.

ALAIN - AT THE BRIEFING

His arms crossed on his chest, a sly grin on his face.

ALAIN

Okay, Admiral, another happy holiday into the Third Reich. But why all the fuss over one lousy le boche?

The word "boche" draws a look from Max.

Admiral Godfrey turns to the Commodore.

COMMODORE

His code name is X. I know, not terribly original, but this chap's something of a mystery: Our only contact with him is through telegrams he sends to our Swiss embassy.

(MORE)

COMMODORE (CONT'D)

We know that he's a scientist, anti-Nazi, and holed up in this Institute, unable to leave. We aren't sure why. And we haven't a clue what he looks like, just a name, "Doctor Mueller" But we do know that he wants out, and that he works in the most sensitive of German operations.

Admiral Godfrey nods to Owens who stumbles out of his seat and stands before the others.

OWENS

Gentlemen, what do you know about nuclear fission?

The dull looks on their faces is answer enough.

OWENS (CONT'D)

Theoretically, nuclear fission is the splitting of an atom, creating a chain reaction that releases enormous amounts of energy.

He pauses for effect.

MAX

A bomb?

OWENS

A very big bomb, large enough to destroy an enter city. If the Jerrys can make one, or if we do, it could decide the outcome of the war.

COMMODORE

So far no one's been able to make it work, but we think the Germans are about two years ahead of us, and--

ADMIRAL GODFREY

And this Doctor Mueller has information that can close that gap.

Admiral Godfrey gives the Commodore a look, it was all they needed to know.

Cross flips through his mission file.

CROSS

So let me get this straight, we've got no photo, no description and we think he's held up in this Institute.

ADMIRAL GODFREY
That's about the size of it,
Commander.

CROSS
What lunatic dreamt this one up?

COMMODORE
Commander Cross, that's quite enough.
You have your orders.

Cross looks to Admiral Godfrey.

ADMIRAL GODFREY
Corporal Owens here will be your
guide. He's a physicist. As a
civilian he spent some time at the
Institute before the war. His job
is to get you in. Yours is to find
Mueller and bring him to me.

Admiral Godfrey locks eyes with Cross, the other men - no
questions.

ADMIRAL GODFREY (CONT'D)
Well, that's it.
(checks his watch)
You've got two hours to make your sub.

The men rise, file out. Admiral Godfrey motioning to Cross
to remain behind. Talks to him after the others have gone.

ADMIRAL GODFREY (CONT'D)
Sorry about your leave, but you're
the only man for the job.

CROSS
(overlapping)
...man for the job.

Admiral Godfrey and Cross share a look, an understanding,
something more than just mutual respect passing between them.

ADMIRAL GODFREY
(takes a grave tone)
James, there's one other thing.
This Doctor Mueller claims to have
made some sort of breakthrough. Our
technical guys are falling all over
themselves wondering what it can be,
but they agree on one thing: under
no circumstances can he be left in
German hands. Understood?

The admiral's words hang in the air.

CROSS
Yeah, understood.
(embittered)
The things we do for king and country.

ADMIRAL GODFREY
Every bloody day.

CROSS'S REACTION

his eyes cold as ice... MATCH-CUT TO:

CROSS - IN THE SUB

scrutinizing a map. Absorbing every detail.

CLANG!! An ammo magazine hits the steel deck. An embarrassed Max picks it up, smacks it into an MP40 machine pistol.

ALAIN

observes Max, measuring him. Looks at Cross. More than a meeting of eyes, Alain has doubts about Max.

Owens struggles to put on his dive tank and Alain stops him.

ALAIN
Not here.
(points fore)
Wait 'til the torpedo room.

Owens, abashed, removes his tank.

CROSS
Hey, Owens, how did they rope you
into this?

OWENS
I volunteered.

The others turn, amused.

OWENS
My fiancée didn't much care for it,
but what can you do when they tell
you "You're the only man for the job?"

Cross and Alain trade looks, where've they heard that before.

OWENS (CONT'D)

(sprightly)

A week ago I was a Grade 3 civilian teaching physics. Today I'm a corporal off to save his country from the bloody Hun. Mum and Dad were beside themselves with pride. Gave me a super send off, they did.

ALAIN

I got the super send off from a barmaid in Picadilly. Small world.

Owens catches his meaning, grins sheepishly.

Two sailors enter with a PHONEY SEA MINE. They unzip it and put the equipment bags inside. Carry it out of the cabin.

Cross checks his watch.

CROSS

Well, gentlemen, now all the fun starts.

ALAIN

It's what I live for.

He turns to Owens. The young man looks pale, edgy.

ALAIN (CONT'D)

Hey, don't worry, Volunteer, it's going to be a piece-of-pie. We'll just march into a bunch of Germans and pluck out the smartest one.

Alain gives him a reassuring pat on the back. Moves forward. Owens following.

OWENS

Cake, the saying is "cake".

They pass Max. He stands sweating, motionless, taut with apprehension. Alain can't contain himself.

ALAIN

What the hell's the matter with you? You act like it's your first time out.

Cross checks Max.

CROSS

What is it, Max?

MAX

It's just a touch of nerves. It'll pass.

Alain expels air through pursed lips, a scoffing commentary.

MAX (CONT'D)
I'll do my goddamn job, Frenchy!

ALAIN
Yeah, but for which side!

Max drops his gear, shoves Alain.

ALAIN (CONT'D)
Sale boche!

Alain launches into Max. They scuffle. Cross intervenes.

CROSS
Knock it off!

The two men separate, fuming.

CROSS (CONT'D)
Whatever it is, drop it, right now.
You!
(points at Alain)
Back off. And you...

Cross stares at Max at a loss for words.

CROSS (CONT'D)
Pick up your gear. C'mon, move out.

Max quickly gathers his equipment and moves forward with Owens. Alain lingers.

CROSS (CONT'D)
What was that all about?

ALAIN
How well do you know him?

CROSS
I don't. But if Godfrey chose him
that's good enough for me.

Alain looks candidly at Cross, a comment on the tip of his tongue. He checks it.

ALAIN
What's the difference? He's here.

Alain starts to leave. Cross detains him.

CROSS
Look, Captain Royan--

ALAIN

Alain.

CROSS

All right, Alain, if there's something I should know, I want it now.

Alain looks at Max and Owens out of earshot, donning their dive tanks. He lowers his voice and confides in Cross.

ALAIN

Okay, Commander. Max Kaufman is an Austrian expatriate who has been on three team missions behind enemy lines. Three. And we've gotten better intelligence from an Alsace grape-picker.

CROSS

Not every mission goes as planned.

ALAIN

Oui. But on all three missions only he came back.

Alain shoulders his gear and moves off. Cross looks ahead to Max, a seed of doubt in his eyes.

EXT. GERMAN COAST - NIGHT

A rocky coastline dotted with obstructions: Belgian Gates, concrete pilings, barbed wire.

Offshore dozens of black mines bob up and down in the water.

A sentry patrols the beach, his flashlight cutting a swath through the night.

IN THE WATER

One mine drifts purposefully around the others.

UNDERWATER - MINE FIELD

The four agents swim ashore, a lead man towing the fake mine.

BEACH

The fake mine floats in the surf, behind it Cross's face mask breaks the surface. He scans the beach.

The sentry moves out of sight and the agents, carrying the mine, race quickly, silently, out of the water and up the beach into a line of trees.

EXT. HILLTOP - CAPE ARKONA - NIGHT

Cross, in a Wehrmacht colonel uniform, kneels in brush atop a hill monitoring a highway with field glasses. The others stacked up behind him dressed as Wehrmacht NCOs.

POV - THROUGH FIELD GLASSES

A Daimler-Benz staff car cruises a pine-clad country road, headlight beams reaching into the night.

The car turns onto a side road at the base of the hill. Up a driveway leading to a dimly lit country chalet.

INT. CHALET - NIGHT

A log is added to a fire.

A BEAUTIFUL BRUNETTE in a sheer negligee walks from the fireplace to a window. Looks out at the car and driver - a rugged sergeant next to the Daimler-Benz smoking a cigarette.

He stares at the woman. Smiles rudely. She snaps the curtain closed. Turns and goes.

Enters a BEDROOM where a fat OLD GENERAL sits in bed drinking a glass of wine. The woman comes to his side, flaunts her considerable assets before his delighted eyes.

OUTSIDE - THE DRIVER

Drops his cigarette. Puts it out with his boot. Suddenly his leg stiffens, quivers.

REVEAL ALAIN

behind him, the tip of his knife deep in the driver's back.

Alain lowers the driver silently to the ground. Removes keys from his pocket. Owens emerging from the trees behind him. Together they drag the driver out of sight.

BEAUTIFUL BRUNETTE

looks down on the general, his hand sliding up her thigh. She takes his wine. Drains it. Turns abruptly and leaves.

(IN GERMAN - SUBTITLED)

OLD GENERAL
What now, angel?

BEAUTIFUL BURNETTE
I want more wine.
(MORE)

BEAUTIFUL BURNETTE (CONT'D)
 (under her breath, disgusted)
 Who wouldn't.

She leaves the bedroom passing Cross and Max hiding on either side of the doorway.

She senses them. Turns. Max grabs her and clamps his hand over her mouth.

Cross pivots into the room, silencer raised. PHFFFT! PHFFFT!

Two bullets slam into the general's forehead.

Cross checks the bedroom - bathroom - clear. He goes to a window. Waves Alain and Owens inside. Returns to Max still holding the woman with his hand over her mouth.

MAX
 What do we do with her?

Alain and Owens enter and observe the woman, the situation.

Cross weighs what to do. He looks at Alain... Max... settles on the woman, her pleading eyes.

CROSS
 Kill her.

Max looks stunned. Ditto Owens and Alain.

ALAIN
 Commander.

Cross shoots him a look. Firm. Certain. Whatever Alain had to say, he checks it. Knows Cross is right.

ALAIN (CONT'D)
 (takes Owens's arm)
 C'mon, help me with the equipment.

A shocked Owens breaks free of Alain.

OWENS
 (approaching)
 Commander, you can't mean it. That's cold-blooded murder! She's a civilian for God's sake!

CROSS
 (calm and cool)
 Put the equipment in the car, Corporal. Now.

Owens looks at the woman. Anguished for her, for himself, his part in this. He pulls away, turns to go.

The woman panics. Bites Max's hand, breaks free and bolts out of the room.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Stop her!

Max goes after her, into the house.

Alain, out the front door to cut off a back door escape.

Cross pins Owens with an icy stare.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(points at front door)

Go on! Cut her off!

Owens hurries out the front door.

And Cross takes off after Max.

PICKUP BEAUTIFUL BRUNETTE

fleeing through the kitchen. Past a butcher's block where she scoops up a knife and goes lurching out a back door.

Max rushing into the kitchen in hot pursuit.

EXT. CHALET - NIGHT

Beautiful Brunette arrives outside. Quickly pushes down a wooden shelf next to the door. Blocks the exit.

Dashes into the forest and disappears.

Max pushes the door open. Halfway. Gives it a mighty shove and knocks the fallen shelf aside. He steps out. Looks around.

The woman now nowhere in sight.

Cross arrives behind Max. Luger drawn, eyes raking the trees for any sign of the woman.

Alain and Owens appear from around the side of the chalet.

ALAIN

Where is she?

Cross points to the trees and the men fan out. Enter the

WOODS

Max moves quietly through trees, easing branches out of his way, releasing them gently back into place.

Alain steps over a log, stops and listens, the shadowy form of Owens visible to his left.

Cross, silencer in hand, stalks the woman.

CRACK! A sound in the woods ahead of him, a flash of a white negligee among the trees.

Cross takes off after her.

PICKUP BEAUTIFUL BRUNETTE

running breathlessly from tree to tree. Hiding. Listening. The knife in her hand. Beads of sweat on her pale cheeks.

Footsteps CRUNCH leaves behind her. Coming closer, CLOSER, right up to the tree.

She lunges out. Jabs the knife in Owen's arm.

OWENS

(cries out)

AHHH!

He drops his weapon and clutches his arm.

Beautiful Brunette picks up his gun. Aims!

PHFFFT! A bullet slams into her chest. She freezes, stunned, Owen's machine-pistol falling from her hand.

Blood blooms on her white negligee. She drops to her knees. Looks at...

Cross holding the Luger, smoke rising off the barrel, drifting before his eyes - pitiful eyes, hollow with regret.

Beautiful Brunette grimaces then goes perfectly still and relaxes as if giving herself over to death.

She keeps her eyes on Cross as the lights go out and she drops face first into the leaves.

ALAIN AND MAX

arrive on the scene.

Max's eyes go from the woman to Cross - where they're met by a cold unspoken rage.

BLINDING HEADLIGHTS

Fill the screen. The Daimler Benz pulls away from the chalet.
Turns onto the COUNTRY ROAD.

EXT. RUGEN ISLAND BRIDGE - CAPE ARKONA - NIGHT

Drives over a bridge leading from Cape Arkona's Rugen Island to the mainland.

INT. DAIMLER BENZ - NIGHT

Alain at the wheel. Cross up front beside him.

CROSS

(turns)
How is he?

Max lifts a bloody handkerchief off Owens's arm.

MAX

It's a deep cut, nearly down to the bone, but she missed the artery.
Can you move your arm?

Owens moves it gingerly.

CROSS

Owens?

OWENS

I'm all right, sir. She didn't hit anything vital...
(forcing a smile)
just my pride. But it stings like mad.

MAX

(awkwardly)
You were lucky.

Max binds Owens's wound, catches Alain glaring at him in the rearview mirror.

EXT. GERMAN ROAD - NIGHT

A quiet forest road. SNOW. Suddenly headlights appear out of the dark, illuminating the flakes as the Daimler Benz rushes by.

INT. DAIMLER BENZ - NIGHT

Uncomfortable silence. Cross looks at his watch, the face is cracked. He taps it, broken. Max shifts in his seat, eyeing Cross.

MAX
Commander. I'm sorry, I ah--

CROSS
Forget it.

ALAIN
No, let's hear it. How the hell did
she get away from--

CROSS
I said forget it.

Alain stews, concentrates on the road. He lights a cigarette and offers the pack around. Owens takes one, draws a light off Alain's smoke and coughs.

ALAIN
German cigarettes, toughest part of
our cover.

Owens's hand shakes as he smokes. Cross eyes his uniform soaked with blood.

CROSS
How's that scratch?

OWENS
The bleeding's stopped, I think.
It's a bit numb.

Cross digs into a bag and comes up with a jacket.

CROSS
Here. You've just been promoted
to...
(reads the jacket
insignia)
sergeant.

Owens takes the jacket, smiles through the pain.

OWENS
Super.

Cross and Alain exchange looks, impressed with Owens.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Daimler Benz speeds down a highway. Past a sign: "BERLIN
80 KILOMETERS".

INT. DAIMLER BENZ - LATER

Cross draws their identity papers from an equipment bag and hands them out. Alain checks his as he drives.

ALAIN

These are excellent forgeries.

CROSS

They ought to be, our German friend sent originals.

Max watches the others, isolated. He speaks up too obviously trying to reconnect with the group.

MAX

That should get us in.

No one answers: a cool condemnation. After a long moment Cross thinks it's enough.

CROSS

Sure, Max. Trick is, getting out.

EXT. CHECKPOINT - KAISER WILHELM INSTITUTE - DAY

A beautiful morning, everything glistening and white from the snowfall the night before. The Daimler Benz winds along a densely forested road to a checkpoint marked with a sign:

"KAISER WILHELM INSTITUT FUR PHYSIK".

INT - DAIMLER BENZ

Cross notes the electrified fence, Dobermans, guards in machine gun nests. Whatever's in there, it's damned important.

A guard steps up to the car. Cross hands him orders.

The guard checks them, scans the occupants, noticing Owens looking off pale and sweaty.

He takes a closer look at Owens, who turns calmly toward him. Satisfied, the guard returns the orders, steps back and snaps a salute.

The gate opens and the Daimler Benz rolls in.

INSTITUTE ROAD/BRIDGE - DAY

The agents travel along a winding road. Over a suspension bridge.

INSIDE THE BENZ

Alain peeks over the side of the bridge and quickly looks away, apparently he doesn't care for heights.

Max takes in the view of a spectacular gorge where in the distance a waterfall plummets from a cliff.

MAX

(awed)

Look at that... It's a winter paradise.

CROSS

Yeah, a regular kraut Garden of Eden,
replete with the snakes.

A troop of Waffen SS march toward them from across the bridge.

EXT. KAISER WILHELM INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS - DAY

The agents' car turns into a driveway before a huge rectangular mansion. Tires crunching through snow.

INT. INSTITUTE - DAY

The Institute's great hall: A large room with chandeliers, fine carpets and works of art. Once the perfect setting for a ball, now the administrative hub of the Institute.

Cross and the others enter through a main door then move out of the flow of foot traffic into a quiet corner of the room.

Owens nudges Cross, directing his gaze toward a

SECURITY TABLE

Near the back of the hall. Two German officers step up to the table and produce RED BADGES then head downstairs.

Owens shows Cross some badges: BLUE BADGES.

OWENS

I'm afraid our intel is a bit dated.

Cross looks around, disconcerted.

CROSS

You're sure he's downstairs?

OWENS

No.

Cross turns sharply.

OWENS (CONT'D)

(adds quickly)

He could be anywhere. But the most sensitive work is conducted on the lower levels. And if he's half as important as Godfrey claims he is, he's there.

ALAIN

Commander.

Cross turns. Alain indicates with his eyes four German soldiers wearing red badges strolling into a hallway.

CROSS

(to Owens)

Take a seat. And keep your head up.

Cross, Max and Alain follow the Germans.

INSTITUTE'S GREAT HALL - LATER

Owens waits by a fire, clutching his arm, watching the hallway for any sign of the others. A pretty German girl passes and Owens turns to admire the view.

When he turns back Cross is beside him adjusting a red badge on his uniform looking after the same girl.

CROSS

I guess there's a good side to this country after all.

Alain and Max walk up with red security badges on their chest.

OWENS

That was quick.

Cross slips him a red badge.

OWENS (CONT'D)

Where the Jerrys?

CROSS

Skiing a garbage shoot. C'mon.

Cross leads them to the

SECURITY TABLE

Stopping before a CORPORAL busy with paperwork. The corporal glances up and waves them through.

Owens stops.

(IN GERMAN - SUBTITLED)

OWENS

Corporal, is Doctor Mueller working today?

CORPORAL

Doctor Mueller works everyday, Lab 7.

Owens nods, turns and bumps his wounded arm into a German officer. Owens grimaces, holds up.

OWENS

Excuse me.

The officer doesn't even turn his face, he just continues on as if nothing had happened, unaware of a SPLOTCH OF BLOOD smeared on his uniform.

OWENS (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

Bloody rude.

He joins the others waiting on the stairs.

OWENS (CONT'D)

(softly to Alain)

Now that was a piece of cake.

INT. INSTITUTE CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

The agents walk down a corridor. Owens stops and checks an Institute plan on the wall.

OWENS

Lab seven's one level below. This way.

He leads them to a stairs and stops, weak on his feet.

CROSS

Owens, you all right?

OWENS

(grips his arm)

Just dizzy. Must be those bloody German cigarettes.

He smiles bravely, braves it out and leads on.

LOWER CORRIDOR

The agents exit the stairs and enter a hall lined with doors. Passing "Laboritorium 4, 5, 6"... They stop outside Lab 7.

Cross and Alain draw Lugers. Max pulls the parts of his machine pistol from his coat and snaps them together.

Cross motions for Max and Owens to wait outside. He checks Alain. Opens the door and steps into

LAB 7

A room cluttered with strange instruments, lab tables and stacks of files. Off to one side, a small bald man, a scientist, works with his back to them.

CROSS
Doktor Mueller?

The man turns, removes his pince-nez and stares, dumbstruck.

CROSS (CONT'D)
(German, subtitled)
We're here to get you out.

Just then a BEAUTIFUL BLONDE in a white lab coat enters from a side room. She stops in her tracks and gasps. Stasis.

The woman looks at Cross and Alain, at their guns. Cross looks from the scientist to the woman.

The scientist's hand slips under the table.

BEAUTIFUL BLONDE
Nein!

The scientist pushes a button and a klaxon sounds.
BAHRUUGAAA! BAHRUUGAAA!

Alain fires, drops the scientist.

The woman throws off her coat and races toward the door. Cross stops her.

CROSS
(German, subtitled)
Where's Doctor Mueller?

BEAUTIFUL BLONDE/SIGRID
(speaks English)
I'm Doctor Mueller!

Cross is taken aback.

SIGRID (CONT'D)
Don't look so shocked, Colonel.
Come now, let's go!

Cross throws open the door, pulls SIGRID MUELLER into the

CORRIDOR

where they join a startled Max and Owens. Cross looks back the way they came.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

No, not that way! We'll never get out up top.

(points the other way)

There's an emergency exit, but we must hurry.

Suddenly two German soldiers round the corner behind them.

The agents fire.

The Germans fall.

And everyone takes off with Sigrid guiding them.

Through CORRIDORS.

Around CORNERS.

And down more STAIRS, fending off the German pursuit in a vicious firefight on the run.

They round a corner, bullets tracking after them, digging into the wall, kicking up chunks of cement.

Cross stops and tosses back a grenade. Runs on.

WHAM! Smoke and flames fill the corridor. Pursuing Germans bounced off the walls, dead before they hit the ground.

Cross catches up with the others at a steel door. Entering a

CAVE

filled with the turbines and electrical equipment that powers the Institute's machinery. Cross bolts the door and shuts out the BLARING ALARM. Takes hold of Sigrid's arm.

CROSS

Hey, hold on! Where are you taking us?

Sigrid points across the cave to another steel door.

SIGRID

There! It's the only way out.

Cross checks it. Out of options. He motions her forward. And Sigrid leads on, guiding them along a steel walkway that winds around the perimeter of the cave.

CAVE DOOR

The Germans reach the steel door. Bash on it with their guns.

INT./EXT. CAVE/CLIFF - DAY

Sigrid brings the team to the door at the end of the walkway. Which opens onto a

DIZZYING PANORAMA

An expansive snow-covered landscape that sweeps before them: clusters of forest, open fields, roads, and in the distance the hazy outline of outer Berlin.

They step outside onto a sheer cliff where a THUNDEROUS WATERFALL descends from above.

CROSS

Now what?

Sigrid points out a METAL LADDER at the side of the falls.

Alain peers over the edge, swoons.

ALAIN

We're going down there?

SIGRID

It's the only way.

Cross looks back through the open door.

Across the cave the steel door dents and buckles from the German assault. The sound of metal on metal reverberating around the cave.

Cross shuts the door and ushers the others forward.

CROSS

Come on, move!

Sigrid climbs onto the LADDER, then Max assisting Owens. Alain hesitates and Cross gets on the ladder.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(to Alain)

You all right?

ALAIN

I can't stand heights!

CROSS

Fine time to tell me.

Alain waves him down and climbs onto the ladder.

They descend slowly, hampered by wind, snow and ice.

Hands clutching tightly. Boots slipping on the icy rungs.

Sigrid comes to a wet portion of the ladder where the falls is close. The splash soaks her, makes for a slick hold on the metal rungs. She slips, catches herself.

Max shelters Owens inside his grip. Owens working his way down with one arm.

Alain moves down the ladder, steps on Cross's hand.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Hey! Watch it!

Alain glances at Cross then turns quickly back to the rungs, eyes shut, breathing, fighting the vertigo.

Farther down Max and Owens come to the wet portion of the descent. Suddenly Owens slips and Max grabs him, just in time, holding him by one hand as Owens dangles over the falls.

Sigrid looks up. Cross looks down. Even Alain peeks.

As Max tries to swing Owens back to the ladder.

Owens reaches, but his hand slips on the wet metal rung. Tries again, slips again and the strain on Max is tremendous, but he's a bull and he holds.

Then Owens reaches once more, and... he's got it! Max releases him. A relieved Owens catches his breath, smiles up at Max, then misplaces his foot and falls to his death.

MAX

NOOOOOOOOOO!

Alain and Cross watch

Owens vanish into the falls.

Sigrid turns away.

Max squeezes the ladder, anguished over the mishap.

Suddenly sparks fly off the ladder next to him. Tufts of ice and rock spew into the air, as the Germans, having broken through the door, appear above them firing weapons.

Everyone climbs quickly down the ladder, one by one passing a point where the cliff bends and the ladder moves out of sight of the German guns.

Cross stops, takes out a tube of plastic explosive and sticks it to the ladder. Moves to the side to let Alain pass.

SIGRID

Comes to the end of the ladder, to a landing halfway down the falls. Off to her right a NARROW TRAIL into the trees.

Max and Alain scramble down the ladder. As soon as they land they draw weapons and fire up at the Germans.

CROSS - LIGHTS A FUSE

Hurries down the ladder then slides the last few feet by the rails. He lands and leads everyone down the trail.

THE PURSUING GERMANS

Climb down the ladder, the lead SOLDIER seeing the explosives.

LEAD SOLDIER

(German, subtitled)

Up! Back up!

Too late. KA-BOOM! A huge explosion rips a chunk out of the cliffside and a half-dozen Germans fall to their death.

EXT. WATERFALL WOODS - CONTINUOUS

The explosion resounds around Cross, Max, Alain and Sigrid who race down the snowy trail through the trees.

EXT. STREAM - DAY

The agents and Sigrid emerge from trees onto a clear blue stream in the woods then enters a CAVE at the base of a cliff.

Along the banks are three boats moored to posts in the mud.

Alain gets in a boat and offers a hand to Sigrid who slips in the mud and fails to notice a fob watch that falls out of her pocket. She gets to her feet and climbs in the boat.

Max machine-guns other boats and gets in behind Cross who cranks the motor to life.

SIGRID

(spotting her watch)

No! Wait!

Sigrid climbs out of the boat and goes after her watch as the GERMAN come out of the trees.

CROSS

Come on!

Sigrid grabs the watch and gets back in the boat and Cross speeds away.

The Germans chasing along the bank, FIRING as they come. Heaving grenades!

That EXPLODE short of the boat that slips safely into the cave out of harm's way.

INT. ABWHER II HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY - DAY

A German LIEUTENANT hurries through a guarded door marked: "ABWEHR II" (Subtitled: GERMAN COUNTER INTELLIGENCE).

Rushes down a hall to a door marked: "GRUPPENFUHRER VOGEL".

INT. VOGEL'S OFFICE - SAME

The lieutenant enters. GENERAL HERMANN VOGEL sits at his desk, a middle-aged, blue-blooded Prussian with stevedore shoulders and a matador's glare.

LIEUTENANT
(German, subtitled)
General, Doctor Mueller has escaped.

EXT. UNDERGROUND RIVER - DAY

The agents' boat rushes downstream.

Max lights the way with a flashlight from the bow, Alain and Sigrid between him and Cross at the tiller. A rocky ceiling encroaching on their heads.

CROSS
Where does this lead?

SIGRID
It taps into a network of underground streams.

MAX
Look out!

A large rock pops out of the dark and Cross steers around it.

CROSS
Any idea where they come out?

SIGRID
Not a clue.

Cross avoids another jagged rock that extends into the stream. Notices Sigrid shivering.

Cross takes off his coat and offers it to Sigrid.

CROSS
Here, better get out of those wet clothes.

SIGRID
I'll be fine.

CROSS
Take it. Your modesty will get you pneumonia.

Sigrid takes the coat. Changes.

Cross avoids staring, but can't help notice a CONCENTRATION CAMP NUMBER tattooed on her forearm and a UGLY SCAR running across her lower abdomen.

Alain notices too and exchanges a look with Cross.

INT. ABWEHR CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Vogel stands before the lieutenant and a half dozen other officers seated around a table.

(IN GERMAN/SUBTITLED)

VOGEL
So they are in the caves.

LIEUTENANT
Ja, General.

The lieutenant spreads out a map of the underground streams. Vogel looks it over.

VOGEL
Wherever they come out, it's going to be far south of us. Lieutenant, have my car brought up.

The lieutenant leaves. Vogel turns to the others.

VOGEL (CONT'D)
Notify our field agents. Find them. Track them. But do so quietly, I don't want Gestapo getting wind of this and muddling things up.

INT. GESTAPO CENTRAL OFFICE FOR REICH SECURITY - DAY

An office setting. Nazi flags. Pictures of Hitler, Himmler and other high-ranking party officials on the walls.

Off in a corner Gestapo MAJOR FRANZ EFFLER works at his desk. 40, dull-looking, a man so forgettably plain he could rob a bank in the morning and cash a check there that afternoon.

He sits among several other desks, a handful of SS NCOs working around him.

A teletype springs to life.

Effler tears it off. Reads.

"MESSAGE INTERCEPT. ENEMY ACTIVITY AT KWI-PHYSIKS. GENERAL VOGEL ORDERS ABWEHR AGENTS TO TRACK FOUR MEN AND A WOMAN: DOCTOR SIGRID MUELLER. INVESTIGATION ADVISED. OBERSTFUHRER BEHRENS -- SD SIGNAL INTERCEPT STATION 9."

HALLWAY

Effler walks down a hallway to a glass-enclosed office. Looks in on two GESTAPO GENERALS sitting on either side of a desk. Gestapo General 1 waves him in.

GENERAL'S OFFICE

(IN GERMAN - SUBTITLED)

GESTAPO GEN. 1
(mid-conversation)
...I'll believe that when I see a
second front.

Effler hands him the teletype.

EFFLER
An Abwehr II intercept, sir.

The general reads, shakes his head.

GESTAPO GEN. 1
Enemy agents under our noses and General
Vogel tries to keep it from us.

He passes the teletype to the other general.

GESTAPO GEN. 2
Hermann Vogel wouldn't involve Gestapo
if he had paratroopers under his bed.

He reads the teletype and lays it back on the desk. Gestapo General 1 turns to Effler.

GESTAPO GEN. 1
See what we have on this Doktor Sigrid
Mueller.

EFFLER

Yes, General.

Effler leaves.

GESTAPO GEN. 2

Who is that man?

GESTAPO GEN. 1

That is Major Franz Effler.

GESTAPO GEN. 2

I thought so - your rising star.

GESTAPO GEN. 1

My replacement, if he has his way.

INT. GESTAPO HQ - FILE ROOM - DAY

Effler enters. Searches file cabinets. Comes up with nothing and leaves.

GENERAL'S OFFICE

Effler re-enters.

EFFLER

General, there are no files on Doktor Sigrid Mueller.

GESTAPO GEN. 1

Are you certain?

EFFLER

Ja, General. None at all. No Institute clearances, no SD reports, no investigations, nothing.

General 1 mulls this over, looks to the other general.

GESTAPO GEN. 1

What do you make of that?

GESTAPO GEN. 2

With Vogel, who knows? The Fuhrer's pet is always sticking his wet nose in where it doesn't belong.

GESTAPO GEN. 1

(to Effler)

Look into it. I want to know the scope of the enemy operation. And find out who this Doktor Mueller is.

EFFLER

Ja, General.

Effler turns to leave.

GESTAPO GEN. 1

Major Effler.

Effler stops.

GESTAPO GEN. 1 (CONT'D)

Make sure you keep yourself up wind of
General Vogel; he's not one to trifle with.

EFFLER

Of course, General.

Effler snaps a salute, leaves.

EXT. UNDERGROUND RIVER - DAY

Cross, Sigrid, Max and Alain huddle in the boat. The stream
has widened, slowed, the tunnel's larger here, breathable.

Max shines the flashlight off the bow. He turns to Alain.

MAX

Want to give me a break?

ALAIN

You're doing fine.

CROSS

Alain.

Alain looks back at Cross, clearly pissed. But he still
switches places with Max.

Sigrid picks up on the tension between Alain and Max, turns
uneasily to Cross.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(softly to Sigrid)

Don't worry about it.

She shrugs it off, looks around. Stalactites. The requisite
soaked rat clinging to a branch.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Hey.

Sigrid looks back at Cross.

CROSS (CONT'D)

You could have told us you were a woman.

SIGRID

I didn't think it important. Do you?

Cross, bemused, smiles faintly and steers the boat.

EXT. ABWEHR HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Vogel and the lieutenant enter a waiting 770 Grosser Mercedes. The long black car pulls out into traffic.

EXT. SERIES OF SHOTS: BERLIN/HIGHWAYS/COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Vogel's car travels through BERLIN.

Onto the AUTOBAHN.

Along a FOREST ROAD.

INT. VOGEL'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Vogel, alone in the back seat opens a file marked: "SIGRID MUELLER". Takes out some photos inside:

Sigrid as a concentration camp prisoner; a close-up of her tattooed arm. Her KWI ID photo. And a group photo of Sigrid and other scientists outside the Institute.

Vogel sets the photos aside and looks out at the sunset.

CLOSE ON: One of the photos - Sigrid on her wedding day, arm-in-arm with a German naval officer.

MATCH CUT TO:

A smaller version of the same photo in Sigrid's watch.

Sigrid rides in the boat through the CAVES, cleaning mud off the watch by the reflected glow of the flashlight.

CROSS

What time have you got?

SIGRID

I've no idea.
(raising the watch)
It doesn't work.

CROSS

You were going to get us killed over a broken watch?

Sigrid shows Cross the photo of her in the arms of her naval officer groom.

SIGRID

It was my husband's. He gave it to me before he shipped out on his submarine.

She handles the watch, reminiscing.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

He promised to repair it when he came home.

CROSS

Where is he now?

SIGRID

Somewhere at the bottom of the Atlantic.

Sigrid looks coolly at Cross and snaps the watch closed.

EXT. ABWEHR HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

A black 500k Mercedes pulls up to Abwehr Headquarters.

Effler steps out.

INT. ABWEHR HEADQUARTERS - FOYER/CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Effler walks briskly down a corridor to a guarded door. He presents ID to a guard and enters the offices of Abwehr II.

He moves down a quiet hallway, scanning office doors until he comes to Vogel's office. He checks for observers, then takes out skeleton keys and swiftly picks the lock.

VOGEL'S OFFICE

Effler steps in and withdraws a pen-light.

He searches in the dark. Through file cabinets. A desk, where he finds bottles of cognac, vodka and schnapps.

He takes a swig of vodka and notices a key in the drawer.

MANLY VOICES come from the hallway. FOOTSTEPS. Effler grabs the key and clicks off the pen-light.

The men pass and Effler continues to search.

Behind a painting he finds a small safe. He opens it with the key and withdraws files:

"OPERATION: SPANISH STEPS" - "OPERATION: PERFIDY" - "SIGRID MUELLER". (Written in German with subtitles)

Effler opens Sigrid's file and riffles through it, coming across the same photos Vogel had in his car plus a new one of GENERAL VOGEL HOLDING SIGRID IN AN AVUNCULAR EMBRACE.

EXT. STREAM - NIGHT

The boat drifts out of the mouth of a cave down a steel blue stream deep in a woods. Moonlight shimmers on the water surface, cracked ice laps against the shore.

Everyone sits in silence, low in the boat, eyes on the trees. Max and Alain with weapons cradled in their arms.

EXT. STREAM - FARTHER ON

Cross steers the boat through the dark.

Sigrid watches the riverbank, an endless run of pines and cedars. Something in the trees catches her eye:

A CABIN with a truck out front.

SIGRID
(turns to Cross)
Look, there's a truck.

Cross spots the vehicle and steers for the bank.

RIVERBANK

They unload from the boat. Max offers Alain a hand. Alain slaps it away.

ALAIN
Go to hell.

Max explodes, lunges at Alain, who takes him on and they fight in the snow.

ALAIN (CONT'D)
I'll kill you! I swear!

CROSS
All right, stop it!

Cross yanks Alain off of Max and throws him aside and the Frenchman just lies there, boiling mad.

ALAIN
That sonofabitch killed Owens!

MAX
I tried to save him!

ALAIN
You let him fall!

MAX
That's a lie!

CROSS
Knock it off! Both of you.

He looks from one man to the next.

CROSS (CONT'D)
I don't give a goddamn if you two
hate each other, kill each other,
but for the rest of this mission you
stow it! Is that clear?!

Both men give him a look, nods, they've got it.

Cross motions them forward.

CROSS (CONT'D)
Go on, move out.

Alain and Max tramp off through the snow.

Sigrid walks past Cross.

SIGRID
(mutters cynically)
Just one big happy family, huh. And
I put my life in your hands?

Cross watches her go, no retort. She has a point.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Alain and Max eye the cabin from behind a bank of snow.
Cross brings Sigrid up and joins them, scans the area.

A wisp of smoke from a chimney. A truck out front loaded
with petrol barrels. Not a soul in sight.

CROSS
Max, keep an eye on her.

Max starts to object, then just nods looking like the last
guy picked for basketball.

Cross draws a Luger and attaches a silencer.

CROSS (CONT'D)
(to Alain)
Let's not wake the neighbors.

Alain fixes his own silencer then nods to Cross, ready.

They break for the cabin, Alain veering off toward the front, Cross to a window.

EXT./INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Cross peeks in the window and sees

The boots of a German soldier propped up on a table. Another soldier eating fruit from a can, swaying to MUSIC that drones from a radio.

Cross locks eyes with Alain and holds up two fingers.

Alain creeps to a corner and peers around at the front door.

IN WOODS NEAR THE CABIN

A third German soldier fills a canteen in a rivulet.

Heads back to the cabin. Stops in his tracks and ducks low.

Ahead of him, Alain kneels a few steps from the cabin door.

Third German unslings his rifle and stalks Alain.

OUTSIDE THE CABIN - CROSS

Holds a silencer to his cheek. His other hand raised, holding Alain in place, timing their assault.

Cross drops his hand.

And Alain rushes up, kicks in the door and opens fire.

Cross pops up shooting through the window.

Bullets slam the two Germans, who twist and fall.

Alain's eyes scan the room, a wisp of smoke rising from his silencer. BLAM! A bullet shatters the door beside his head.

He whips around.

The third German stands twenty yards away, clearing the chamber, aiming his rifle for another shot.

Alain freezes, a sitting duck when

PHFFTT! PHFFTT! Two bullets slam into the German soldier and he falls over dead.

Revealing Max behind him holding a silencer.

Alain and Max look at each other. A glimmer of thanks in the Frenchman's eye.

EXT. BERLIN - NIGHT

Effler's Mercedes winds along a frosty city street.

INT. EFFLER'S CAR - NIGHT

Effler reads a map. Up front is HANS, 60, his driver.

(IN GERMAN - SUBTITLED)

EFFLER

Tell me, Hans, if you wanted to escape Germany which way would you go?

HANS

Starting from Berlin?

EFFLER

Ja.

HANS

To the coast, if I had transport over the sea.

EFFLER

Otherwise?

HANS

No question, Switzerland.

Effler drifts off, lost in thought.

EFFLER

So would I.

HANS

Major, can you tell me what this is all about?

EFFLER

Opportunity, Hans. A little detour of opportunity.

Hans looks at the Major in the mirror, speaks lightly.

HANS

I trust nothing that could land me on the Russian front. At my age I am quite comfortable in Berlin.

EFFLER

I'm not concerned with your comfort, Corporal.

Awkward silence. Hans is in his place. Effler thaws, looks sympathetically at Hans, like a scolded pupil.

EFFLER (CONT'D)

You've been my aide since I was a green lieutenant, Hans. And you'll be at my side when I'm a Reichsfuhrer. You just need a bit more steel in your spine. Ja?

Hans smiles weakly in the mirror.

EFFLER (CONT'D)

One cannot advance without taking risk, Hans. Try to remember that.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Cross searches the cabin. Alain at a table cleans weapons by the glow of a lantern. Sigrid beside him drinking coffee.

She eyes a pack of cigarettes in Alain's coat pocket.

SIGRID

May I have one of those?

ALAIN

(tosses the pack)
Take them all. Save me.

SIGRID

A bit harsh, yes?

ALAIN

Worse than your winters.

SIGRID

They're an acquired taste, like escargot.

Alain cracks a "touche'" grin at Sigrid. Cross joins them, lays some weaponry on the table.

CROSS

A rusty Schmeisser and three lousy grenades. I've gotten more out of a French convent.

ALAIN

They weren't expecting company.

Sigrid puts a cigarette in her mouth and looks expectantly at Cross. He pushes the lantern toward her. Sigrid grins ironically and lights herself off the lantern.

Cross opens his belt, takes a small roll of paper from a slit on the inside and unrolls a map. Sigrid watches, amused.

ALAIN (CONT'D)

Can we make it?

Cross studies the map, shakes his head.

CROSS

Not a chance.

SIGRID

Make it where?

CROSS

We were going to rendezvous with a submarine later tonight. But our little river trip has taken us too far south.

Max walks in shaking off the cold.

MAX

The truck's in good shape, and the bed's filled with barrels of petrol.

ALAIN

Great, I vote we sell it and bribe our way out.

CROSS

And the bodies?

MAX

They won't find them till spring.

Max goes for coffee. Sigrid stands, starts for the door.

CROSS

Where do you think you're going?

SIGRID

To relieve myself. Do you mind?

Looks all around.

ALAIN
I'll take her.

CROSS
No, finish that. I'll go.
(to Sigrid)
C'mon.

Cross and Sigrid step outside.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Cross leads Sigrid around the side of the cabin. Walks with her stride for stride.

SIGRID
I'm a big girl, Colonel. I can manage
by myself.

CROSS
I'm sure you can.

Cross stops, gestures at the trees.

CROSS (CONT'D)
Make it quick.

SIGRID
In this weather, is there any other way?

Sigrid moves out of sight behind a tree. Cross waits.

SIGRID (CONT'D)
(from out of the dark)
This is mortifying.

Cross smiles, appreciates her pluck. Sigrid comes back.

SIGRID (CONT'D)
It's much too crisp for that sort of
thing.

Cross starts to head back inside.

SIGRID (CONT'D)
Mind if I take some air?

Cross takes out a cigarette and lights it, consent to remain outside. Sigrid shares a quiet moment with Cross, looks out at the stars and the snow-covered trees, the serene quiet.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

It's hard to imagine there's a war
on in a place like this.

She looks over at Cross, studies his features.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

You know you're rather dark for an
Englishman.

CROSS

You mean my features or my disposition?

SIGRID

Both.

CROSS

Well, I'm not English, I'm Scottish.

SIGRID

I see. A Highlander or a Lowlander?

CROSS

Highlander. I'm surprised you know
the difference.

SIGRID

I met another Scotsman once, a
Lowlander, a chemist from Glasgow
who wasn't a thing like you.

CROSS

I'm not sure how I should take that.

SIGRID

Oh, it's a compliment, believe me.
He was thin as a girl and covered
with freckles, poor thing.

This draws a smile from Cross. After a moment.

CROSS

Those numbers on your arm, a
concentration camp?

SIGRID

Ja. I spent six months in Dachau,
until the Nazis found a better use
for me.

CROSS

That must have been rough.

Sigrid looks at Cross.

CROSS (CONT'D)
 Hey, I don't mean to pry.

SIGRID
 Pry, Colonel? You just watched me
 relieve myself, we're old friends.

CROSS
 (points to her waist)
 They give you that scar?

Sigrid nods, an old pain in her eyes.

SIGRID
 The Nazi doctors took practice on
 some of the women. Experiments.
 For a time I was the camp record:
 Eighteen minutes for a hysterectomy.

CROSS
 I'm sorry.

SIGRID
 Don't be, others had it much worse.

EXT. FUEL STATION - NIGHT

Vogel's car stops before a barrier in the road. A guard
 peers in, sees his rank and waves him through.

Beyond the barrier is the small fuel station. Vogel's driver
 pulls in. Out front are several staff cars, armored vehicles,
 motorcycles, a petrol pump.

Vogel, the lieutenant and their driver exit the car and an
 attendant snaps to attention.

VOGEL
 Petrol.

The attendant hops to it and Vogel heads into the building.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Alain gathers up the cleaned weapons. Gives the Schmeisser
 to Cross. Hands the MP40 to Max then brushes past him and
 heads outside.

Cross goes to Sigrid resting on a cot.

CROSS
 C'mon, get up. We're moving out.

Sigrid rolls over and looks up at Cross from within a corona
 of blonde hair, her bright blue eyes gazing up at him.

Dreamy. Breathtakingly beautiful.

SIGRID
Oh, but I just laid down.

For a moment Cross is spellbound by her beauty.

CROSS
Let's go, now. Take your beauty
sleep in the truck.

Sigrid comes to her feet and drags herself outside.

SIGRID
Beauty sleep? Now he mocks me.

EXT. FUEL STATION - NIGHT

Effler's Mercedes pulls up to the fuel station barrier. The guard checks papers. Waves them through.

They park and get out and head into a SMALL BUILDING.

General Vogel, the lieutenant and the driver come out of the building and walk past them.

Effler and Hans salute Vogel who just goes to his car. Effler staring after the general with recognition in his eyes.

HANS
(German/subtitled)
Come, Major, let's get out of this
cold.

Effler turns from Vogel. Heads into the building with Hans.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - NIGHT

The fuel truck rolls along a forest road.

INT. FUEL TRUCK BED - NIGHT

Max sits among the fuel barrels gazing out at the snow-covered pines and an orchard of stars - a tranquil moment amid the turmoil of war.

INT. FUEL TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

Alain drives, Sigrid and Cross beside him.

SIGRID
You mind telling me where you're
taking me?

Alain looks at Cross for permission to say. Cross has no problem with it.

ALAIN

South. Switzerland, if our luck holds out.

SIGRID

You mean we've been lucky so far?

Alain smiles at Sigrid, he likes this gal.

Sigrid's thigh brushes against Cross and he pulls his leg away. Sigrid notes it. Thinks.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

Colonel?

CROSS

I'm not a colonel.

SIGRID

Well, you're posing as one. So what are you, a general?

CROSS

I'm a naval commander.

SIGRID

Oh, I see, a sailor. That explains your exquisite manners.

Cross looks at side-eyed at Sigrid.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

Well, *Commander*, do mind if I ask you something?

CROSS

Whenever a woman says that I never really have a choice.

SIGRID

And one woman is much like another?

CROSS

I think so. In all the ways that count.

Sigrid takes a moment to study Cross, intrigued by this attractive, hard as nails man.

SIGRID

Do you have a woman?

CROSS
Nothing regular.

SIGRID
Nothing regular? I've never heard it
put that way before.

CROSS
No? So how do you Germans put it?

SIGRID
You say "Germans" as if we were a
four letter word.

CROSS
It is to me...
(turns to Sigrid)
and most of the world.

SIGRID
I understand why people hate the
Nazis. Who wouldn't? But please
don't confuse every German with the
criminals who have taken over my
country.

CROSS
What are you kidding?

SIGRID
No, I don't kid. Why are you here,
Commander? Hmm? Are you doing your
duty for your country? Well, I love
my country and I would do anything
to save it. Anything. And there
are thousands of Germans who feel
just as I do. Have you ever heard
of the White Rose student movement?
The Oster circle? Many people in
Germany are trying to resist, but
you, like most foreigners, indict
the entire German people without the
slightest idea of the true situation.

Cross and Alain exchange a look.

SIGRID (CONT'D)
Tell me, Commander, why do you think
Hitler needs the Gestapo and an army
of SS? Hmm? To clean the streets?
To make the trains run on time? My
country's been hijacked by gangsters
and madmen and the only choice they
give you is to obey or die.

A silence fills the cab and Alain looks over at Cross.

ALAIN
Give it up, Commander. You're in
over your head.

CROSS
(piqued)
Shut up and drive.

THE TRUCK ROLLS DOWN THE ROAD

Around a bend. Up ahead the fuel station comes into view.

INT. FUEL TRUCK - NIGHT

Alain eases the truck to a stop before the road barrier. He looks at Cross, his foot on the pedal.

ALAIN
Commander?

CROSS
Easy. Just take it slow.

Cross withdraws orders and a grenade from his coat.

EXT. FUEL STATION - NIGHT

The guard approaches the truck. Behind him, a group of German soldiers huddle around a drum fire.

Alain hands their forged orders to the guard.

Effler and Hans come out of the station building.

The major notices the truck, a blond woman between two men in the cab. He comes towards them.

The guard returns the orders and motions to a soldier to raise the barrier.

Effler picks up the pace. Makes eye contact with Sigrid. Recognizes her.

SIGRID

Grabs Cross's arm.

SIGRID
Commander!

Cross looks and sees

Effler trotting toward the truck drawing a luger.

EFFLER
(German/subtitled)
Stop that truck! Stop them!

Cross pulls the pin and throws the grenade.

Alain slams the gas and the truck smashes through the barrier.

Shots RING OUT, to and from the truck as Max unloads on the Germans as they pull away.

The Germans rallying, unslinging Schmeissers. When BOOM!
The grenade explodes and guards flipped through the air.

Effler and Hans diving for cover.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - NIGHT

The fuel truck barrels down the snow-covered road.

ALAIN DRIVING

With both hands on the wheel, charged with adrenaline.

CROSS
(to Sigrid)
Keep your head down.

Cross opens the door and climbs back into the truck bed.
Max helping him over the rails.

EXT. FUEL STATION - NIGHT

A parade of German vehicles take off after the agents.

Effler and Hans rush to their car and join the chase.

INT. FUEL TRUCK - ESCAPING - NIGHT

Alain whips around a turn. Sigrid bracing against the dash.

CROSS AND MAX

Behind fuel barrels in the bed, ready with their guns.

THE GERMAN VEHICLES - CHASING

Two sedans, an armored car, a truck and a motorcyclist all flying down the icy road in hot pursuit.

THE FUEL TRUCK

Takes another turn. Cross watching the road behind them - nothing so far. He moves to Alain's window.

CROSS
Know where you're going?

ALAIN
No idea.

Alain checks his mirror, sees... headlights.

ALAIN (CONT'D)
But they do.

Cross looks back as one set of headlights after another comes around the last bend in the road.

He goes to over to Max behind the fuel barrels.

CROSS
Here they come.

THE GERMANS

Close in on the agents' truck.

Effler's car bringing up the rear.

CROSS AND MAX

Take aim. Waiting, waiting...

Suddenly a SCHMEISSER BARKS from the lead German car.

And the bullets WHIZ by. Puncturing barrels. Spilling fuel.

Cross and Max return fire!

Shattering the car windshield. Killing the driver.

The car arcing off the road into a tree. EXPLODING IN FLAMES!

ALAIN

Looks at the fire and back at the road.

ALAIN
Oh, yeah! Vive La France!

Sigrid stares at him like he's half out of his mind.

Alain grins, floors it and bangs on the wheel, urging the truck to pick up speed as the firefight continues

Down the road. Around a turn.

And along a straightaway with

CROSS AND MAX

Firing at the enemy.

THE GERMANS

Chasing, firing as they come, and

ALAIN

Driving. Intensely. Wildly. Too fast around a turn!

The truck slides across the icy road straight toward a tree.

SIGRID

Look out!

Alain cranks the wheel.

Ice and snow spray from under the wheels as the truck skirts the tree and rolls on.

CROSS AND MAX

Spill in the truck bed.

Cross starts to rise when bullets WHIZ past his head and PING off the cab.

Cross puts his shoulder against one of the drums. Max does the same and together they shove two drums onto the road.

THE DRUMS

Bounce over the ice straight into the lead German car.

WHAM! The car explodes. Spins. Gets hit by a truck and the two vehicles tumble across the road in a FLAMING HEAP!

The armored car weaving around the crash.

A gunner up top manning an anti-tank gun. Aiming. Firing!

BOOM! BOOM! Shells fly!

AND ALAIN

Takes a turn just in time!

The shells WHIZ by and EXPLODE in the trees! Throwing a spinning tree trunk spinning into the road!

THE TRUCK

Hits it! Bounds over it and

CROSS

Goes airborne in the bed, up and over the rails!

Max goes after him.

Finds Cross hanging from the truck, his feet skipping off the icy road.

Max lifts him with one arm, a Herculean pull.

When TWANG! TWANG! TWANG! Bullets clatter off the barrels. Sparks fly! And Max drops Cross who tumbles off the road into the snow.

Max ducking the gunfire. Looking back at Cross, devastated.

CROSS

Comes up out of a snowbank and crouches out of sight as an armored car and two Mercedes race by.

Then the motorcyclist appears down the dark.

Cross picks up a tree branch, times his move. THWACK! He clotheslines the rider.

Recovers the bike and takes off after the others.

THE FUEL TRUCK

Rounds another turn. Giving Max a brief break from the German guns. He scrambles to the cab.

MAX

We lost the Commander!

Alain checks his mirror.

THE EVER-PRESENT HEADLIGHTS

taking the last bend in the road.

WHILE CROSS

chases on the motorcycle.

He catches the second Mercedes.

Lobs a grenade in the window.

And BOOM! The vehicle explodes, crashes!

Cross speeding away.

ALAIN - COMES AROUND A CURVE

and suddenly a HUGE GORGE looms before them.

He slams the brake!

The truck slides. Stops. Stalls. Right up against the edge of the gorge.

Alain looks at Sigrid who's had enough.

SIGRID

C'mon, you crazy Frenchman, get us out of here!

Alain starts the truck.

Pulls away from the gorge.

MOMENTS LATER

The armored car negotiates the turn, just barely.

Then the last Mercedes, coming way too fast!

It sails over the side.

Falls endlessly to the bottom of the gorge where it explodes in a FIREBALL!

PICK UP CROSS

Hitting the turn, skirting the edge of the cliff, hot on the trail of the armored car.

ALAIN

Spots a bridge spanning the gorge in the road ahead.

He turns sharply into the portal only to realize too late that it's not a road but a TRAIN TRESTLE!

ALAIN

Hold on!!

SIGRID

No!

Alain drops the gears, cuts his speed, and tries to steer along the narrow tracks!

MAX

Bounced around in the truck bed nearly a mile high.

THE ARMORED CAR

Sliding to a stop in front of the trestle.

The gunner tracking the truck.

Aiming. FIRING! BOOM! BOOM!

.20MM shells slam into the bridge and blow a hole in the track just behind the truck!

FLAMES SOAR! Splintered wood blasted every which way!

ONE PIECE SPIKING A TIRE

causing the truck to tilt to one side!

SENDING SIGRID ONTO ALAIN

Who knocks open his door over a thousand foot fall.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

Alain!

Sigrid pulls Alain back in the truck and he shuts the door. Cranks the wheel and stays on the tracks.

BACK ON THE ROAD

Cross speeds past the armored car and throws another grenade!

VOOOO! The BLAST engulfs the vehicle.

Cross stops the bike and looks around. Sees...

The burning train trestle with a hole in the track.

The fuel truck limping toward the other side.

German vehicles coming through the trees.

Cross weighs his options. Takes off into the woods.

Reappears a moment later racing at full speed!

Out onto the trestle, to the fiery break, where he soars over the breach in an INCREDIBLE JUMP!

Cross soars over the flames!

Lands on the track. Bounces. Wobbles.

Then sails over the side!

Through the air again, before finally crashing into the snow-covered CLIFF on the far side of the trestle.

Cross and the bike slide down the snow.

Over a LEDGE into the gorge! Where Cross grabs a rock and stops his fall! Then just hangs there totally spent.

After a moment, snow trickles onto his face and he looks up at Alain, Max and Sigrid staring down from above.

CUT TO:

A FLAT TIRE

Punctured by a piece of wood.

Cross and Max standing in the snow next the truck.

CROSS

Do we have a spare?

MAX

Yeah, two, but they're all shot to hell.

CROSS

All right, search the truck, take anything we can use.

Max goes to the cab to search the truck. While Cross walks past Sigrid sitting on a log holding a cigarette.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Put that out.

SIGRID

It isn't lit.

Sigrid, irked, flicks the cigarette after Cross who enters a

THICKET

where he kneels down in the snow and next to Alain and looks across the gorge.

CROSS AND ALAIN'S POV: FAR SIDE OF THE TRESTLE

Vehicles arrive. Soldiers search the area. FAINT COMMANDS heard on the wind.

ALAIN

They're checking the bottom of the gorge.

Alain points out soldiers with flashlights rappelling down the cliff on the other side of the gorge.

Cross taps Alain's shoulder.

CROSS

C'mon.

AT THE FUEL TRUCK

Max comes out of the cab with a canteen, some field glasses and a radio transceiver.

Meets Cross and Alain emerging from the brush.

MAX

Look what I found!

CROSS

See if you can reach London?

Max sets the transceiver on the truck bed. Cranks the callup and dials in a frequency.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Golden Fleece to Talos. Do you read?
Golden Fleece to Talos. Do you read?
Over.

STATIC.

ALAIN

Maybe out of this gorge we can pick up a signal.

CROSS

Yeah, maybe.

Sigrid looks up at Cross from her seat on the log.

SIGRID

So what now, Commander?

CROSS

Now we walk.

Cross moves off. Sigrid sighs then comes to her feet and follows Cross.

Max has trouble putting the radio on his back. After a moment, Alain gives him a hand.

Max turns to thank Alain but he walks off and Max looks after him trying to figure him out.

EXT. TRAIN TRESTLE - NIGHT

Effler's car pulls up. He steps out and looks around at

The burning armored car. The smashed trestle. Rappelling ropes hung over the side of the cliff.

He goes to a CAPTAIN directing the German efforts.

(IN GERMAN - SUBTITLED)

EFFLER

Kapitan.

The captain turns, salutes.

CAPTAIN

Heil, Hitler.

EFFLER

Any sign of them?

CAPTAIN

My men are searching the bottom of the gorge but it looks as though they may have made it to the other side.

INT. EFFLER'S CAR - NIGHT

Hans waits, watching the major speak with the captain.

Major Effler appears vehement, he berates the captain then storms back to the car.

EFFLER

Corporal, find me a way around this gorge. And be quick about it!

EXT. ALPINE WOODS - TRAIN TRACK - NIGHT

A FREIGHT TRAIN rolls through a wintry woods.

Suddenly four dark figures come out of the trees and run swiftly toward the train.

They catch it and board, one person helping the next through the sliding boxcar door.

EXT. TRAIN TRESTLE - NIGHT

The German search still in progress. Vogel's car arrives and he steps out and weaves through the commotion looking for someone in charge.

He walks by the still burning armored car, a smoking, charred body laid out in the snow.

The captain approaches.

(IN GERMAN - SUBTITLED)

CAPTAIN
 Enemy agents, General. They ran a
 roadblock. We pursued them here.

VOGEL
 How many?

CAPTAIN
 Three men and a woman in a truck.
 There's no sign of them below. We
 believe they made it across.

Vogel looks across the gulch.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
 Major Effler told me to contact the
 Division at Garmisch, sir. They'll
 conduct the search from the far side.

VOGEL
 Major Effler?

CAPTAIN
 Ja, General. He said he was here under
 your orders. You are General Vogel?

VOGEL
 I am, but I don't know any Major Effler.

CAPTAIN
 He's Gestapo.

Vogel looks puzzled, thinks.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
 He said you ordered them shot on sight.

VOGEL
 He did what? Damn! Why didn't you
 confirm the order!

Vogel storms back to his car.

VOGEL (CONT'D)
 (to the lieutenant)
 Get me the Division at Garmisch.
 Then put a call through to Berlin.
 Now, Lieutenant!

INT. BOXCAR - NIGHT

Cross, Sigrid and Max sit around the empty boxcar. Alain
 keeping watch by the door, looking out at the

Night sky and a downhill run through the high white FOREST.

ALAIN

We're heading out of the Alps.

MAX

Ja, this train's probably going to Friedrichshafen; there's a major depot there.

CROSS

That's on Lake Constance, isn't it?

ALAIN

Oui, one of our escape routes.

CROSS

Max, check it out.

Max removes a tiny paper from a compartment in his boot heel.

SIGRID

(watching him)

What's next, a change of underwear?

Max smiles at Sigrid and unfolds a paper with two columns of text. Studies it as Cross and Alain gather round.

MAX

Ja, here.

Max moves his finger down a list of locations to "Lake Constance". Across the page: a set of coordinates and a code word - "Silver Star".

ON CROSS

CROSS

We'll jump train before the lake and radio in a pick-up.

SIGRID

You plan to cross Lake Constance, Germany's swimming pool.

CROSS

Got a better idea?

Sigrid just shakes her head.

INT. VOGEL'S CAR - NIGHT

A transceiver CRACKLES to life. The lieutenant puts a headset to his ear then hands it back to Vogel.

(IN GERMAN - SUBTITLED)

LIEUTENANT

General, your call to Berlin has
come through.

Vogel listens in the headset.

VOGEL

Ja, General, Major Effler... That is
right... I don't care if you asked
him to look into this. I want him
called off.

INT. GESTAPO HQ - NIGHT

Gestapo General 1 and a radio operator at a long range radio.

GESTAPO GEN. 1

General Vogel, need I remind you
that any enemy infiltration is a
concern to the Gestapo.

VOGEL (V.O.)

This search is an Abwehr II operation.
You will recall Major Effler
immediately.

GESTAPO GEN. 1

I'll do nothing of the kind. And do
not presume to give me orders, General.

RESUME VOGEL

VOGEL

I presume nothing. And I'll not
argue with you. Call Reichsfuhrer
Himmler yourself if you have to...
That's not my concern... Then wake
him up and do as you're told!

He flings the headset up front.

EXT. ALPS - NIGHT

The train snakes through a beautiful mountain pass.

INT. BOXCAR - NIGHT

Cross takes watch at the boxcar door. Max and Alain dozing
nearby. Sigrid sits in the dark and takes out a cigarette.

SIGRID

Do you have a light?

Cross takes out a match and holds it up.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

Throw it here.

CROSS

It's my last one. What if you lose
it in the dark?

Sigrid weighs her fatigue against her drive for nicotine.
She comes and stands over Cross.

SIGRID

Have you been in command very long?

CROSS

Long enough. Why?

She kneels beside him.

SIGRID

You seem to relish it, the sign of a
neophyte.

Cross grins. Lights her. Meets Sigrid's eyes in the glow
of the flame, their fingers touching. Sigrid takes a drag
and sits down beside Cross.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

Thank you.

For a moment they sit quietly before a moonlit ALPINE VISTA.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

Beautiful, isn't it?... This is my
favorite place in all Germany. I
used to ski here as a girl for hours
on end. My father had to practically
drag me off the slopes.

Cross takes in Sigrid with some warmth in his eyes, sees her
as something more than just the object of his mission.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

They don't have places like this in
England... I'm in a strange way,
Commander. Everything I believed in,
everything I know has been upended.
And try as I might I can't seem to
look forward to anything... and I don't
dare look back.

CROSS

You want to tell me what this is all
about? Why you're so important?

SIGRID

Am I, so important? I didn't realize.

CROSS

We're here, and half the German command wants to get their hands on you.

Sigrid looks Cross in the eye, silent and obscure, taking a long drag on her cigarette.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Classified?

SIGRID

Yes, highly, but that's not it.

The unexpected answer draws a look from Cross. Sigrid stuffs out her smoke.

SIGRID (CONT'D)

I doubt that you'd understand it.
Besides, I don't trust you.

EXT. TRAIN TRACK - LAKE CONSTANCE - NIGHT

The train rounds a turn in the track and comes upon a PANORAMIC VIEW OF LAKE CONSTANCE, a black, shimmering finger-shaped body of water reaching to the horizon.

INT. BOXCAR - NIGHT

Sigrid, Alain and Max line up behind Cross at the boxcar door. Weapons strapped to their backs. Max with the radio.

Cross watches the track, the degree of slope off the rails.

He times the jump and one by one they all leap from the train. Cross and Sigrid jumping last.

Rolling in the snow and coming back to their feet. Moving swiftly into the woods.

EXT. LAKE CONSTANCE WOODS - NIGHT

Cross leads them through a winter wonderland.

Down a steep incline where Sigrid gets a hand from Alain.

They come to a clearing and rest.

CROSS

Max, try the radio.

Max cranks the callup, dials in a signal.

Alain offers Sigrid a canteen and she takes a drink.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Go easy with that; I don't want you
cramping up. You're enough trouble
as it is.

Cross leaves Sigrid. Goes over to Max on the radio.

SIGRID

(to Alain)

Your Commander has such a way with women.

ALAIN

Oh, yes. If only I had his touch.

Alain smiles slyly at Sigrid.

SIGRID

Don't be ridiculous; not on my last day.

CROSS

Takes the radio mic.

CROSS

Talos, this is Golden Fleece. Talos,
this is Golden Fleece, over.

RADIOMAN (V.O.)

Golden Fleece, this is Talos. We
read you.

CROSS

Golden Fleece, requesting Victory.
Repeat, Victory. Over.

INT. RADIO ROOM - SIS HQ - NIGHT

A small room filled with radio operators in cubicles. A
RADIOMAN turns to the Commodore from the briefing.

CUT BETWEEN CROSS IN THE WOODS and his HANDLERS.

RADIOMAN

It's Golden Fleece, sir. They're
ready for extraction.

COMMODORE

(scuttling from the room)

Tell them to hold on!

RADIOMAN

Roger, Golden Fleece. Can you hold?

CROSS

Not long. Most urgent, Victory to Silver Star. Repeat. Victory to Silver Star.

Admiral Godfrey enters the RADIO ROOM and takes the microphone, the Commodore right behind him.

ADMIRAL GODFREY

Golden Fleece, this is Big Ben. Are you tired?

CROSS (V.O.)

Negative, Big Ben. I am drunk. Repeat, drunk.

ADMIRAL GODFREY

They've got him.

CROSS

Victory to Silver Star, understood?

The radioman runs his finger down a list of code words, stopping at "Silver Star". Across the page, it reads - "Lake Constance 0300". He shows Admiral Godfrey.

ADMIRAL GODFREY

Understood, Golden Fleece. Silver Star. Good luck. Over and out.

Admiral Godfrey turns to the Commodore.

ADMIRAL GODFREY (CONT'D)

Lake Constance. God help them.

HERE ENDS MY WEBSITE EXCERPT OF 30 ASSAULT. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY REACH OUT TO ME AT johnkroyan@gmail.com. THANKS FOR CHECKING OUT MY WORK. I HOPE YOU ENJOYED IT.