

# SENTIENT

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A TV pilot

by

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**TEASER**

FADE IN

1 EXT. SYDNEY HARBOUR - MORNING 1

A Zodiac boat buzzsaws through the chop.

Five members of the Royal Australian Navy's, CLEARANCE DIVER TEAM ONE, kitted-up and ready to dive, swing wide to pull alongside the Mine hunter vessel, HMAS HUON.

A second Zodiac with another DIVER waits alongside.

Broad shoulders, savage eyes, Koori, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MICHAEL DOWD grabs a rope ladder strung from the HUON and calls out to the waiting Diver.

DOWD  
Who's on?

DIVER  
Lachy and Ozark.

Dowd grabs a VOX com, (voice underwater communication).

DOWD  
Lachy.

HUNT (V.O.)  
Go ahead.

DOWD  
Sit rep?

2 EXT. SYDNEY HARBOUR. BENEATH THE SURFACE - MORNING 2

Six fathoms deep.

Visibility poor.

The Zodiacs and Huon float above, silhouette against the azure.

Clearance Divers, Petty Officers LACHLAN HUNT and PETER OZARK hover over a long cylindrical mine lying on the seabed.

Hunt runs his fingers over the mine.

HUNT  
Feels like...

He reaches the warhead.

OZARK  
Steady.

HUNT

It's a Chinese EM-52 but its cased  
in a, like, old yank ordinance.

OZARK

Clever bastards.

DOWD (V.O.)

Did the Huon register any other  
signatures?

HUNT

Just the one.

Ozark points to the time on his dive watch.

HUNT (CONT'D)

Wudji, we're out of time.

DOWD (V.O.)

Understood, tag the location.  
Return to surface.

HUNT

Copy that.

3 EXT. SYDNEY HARBOUR - MORNING

3

A SEAMAN from the HUON makes his way down the rope ladder.

SEAMAN

Lt. Commander Dowd.

Dowd looks up. The Seaman offers him a Satellite phone.

SEAMAN (CONT'D)

Vice Admiral Frank.

Dowd spots a massive passenger vessel making its way towards  
their position.

DOWD

What's her story?

SEAMAN

She is the MS Noordam. A Vista-  
class cruise ship, sir.

Dowd takes the phone, his eyes, locked-on to the approaching  
cruise ship.

DIVER 2 taps him on the shoulder.

DIVER 2

See you down.

DOWD

Go.

DIVER 2 and three other DIVERS go over the side.

4 INT. HMAS KUTTABUL NAVY BASE. WAR ROOM - MORNING 4

The formidable figure of VICE ADMIRAL J. DEAKIN FRANK stands before a widescreen TV.

On the widescreen, the CHINESE PREMIER speaks to a military rally in Beijing.

CHINESE PREMIER

(in Chinese; English V.O.)

Their children watch a movie, 'How to train your dragon.' Perhaps they believe a dragon can be trained. A dragon cannot be trained.

Applause from the rally.

CHINESE PREMIER (CONT'D)

(in Chinese; English V.O.)

China embraces peace. We welcome trade but will no longer tolerate interference.

More applause from the rally.

CHINESE PREMIER (CONT'D)

(in Chinese; English V.O.)

There is only one China. Foreign powers who continue to challenge China's sovereign right to unification will discover at their peril, this dragon's resolve.

Thunderous applause erupts from the Chinese military.

The screen cuts back to an Australian TV NEWS' ANCHOR. A split-screen shows a Chinese fleet that fills the horizon.

TV NEWS' ANCHOR

With a massive Chinese flotilla now en route to the tiny independent nation of Taiwan, the President has warned China, any hostile act against Taiwan will be deemed an act of war against the United States and warrant a full retaliatory response.

The Admiral's ADJUTANT hits a button on the room's conference call phone.

ADJUTANT  
Admiral, Lt. Commander Dowd.

FRANK  
Michael, this is serious.

DOWD (V.O.)  
Sir.

FRANK  
What's the hold up?

Frank looks out the window to Fleet Base East's Garden Island Dockyard and the Amphibious assault ship, HMAS ADELAIDE.

Families crowd the gangplank entrance saying their goodbyes to the departing sailors.

DOWD (V.O.)  
If Commodore Freisler had advised the Harbour Master to shut down the port, we'd be finished by now.

COMMODORE KATHRYN FREISLER, strident, striking, steps up to the phone. Frank stays her with a raised hand.

Behind them, a bustling operational room is revealed packed with NAVY PERSONNEL.

FRANK  
The Commodore was waiting upon you to verify the threat.

DOWD (V.O.)  
Verified sir. The threat is real.

FREISLER  
Have you seen the mine Mr. Dowd?

DOWD (V.O.)  
Our team has Commodore.

FREISLER  
Have you seen it with your own eyes?

DOWD (V.O.)  
No Commodore, I haven't seen it with my own eyes.

FREISLER  
Then do that. Do that and verify it. I am not shutting down the entire port based on one diver's report, certainly not one from Clearance Diver Team One.

A long silent pause.

The Admiral takes control of the call from the Commodore, giving her a look, 'there will be a conversation afterwards.'

FRANK  
Michael.

DOWD (V.O.)  
Sir.

FRANK  
The Commodore and I are headed to Penguin. I'll expect your brief A-SAP.

5 EXT. SYDNEY HARBOUR - MORNING

5

Dowd completes the call.

DOWD  
Sir.

Dowd hands back the phone to the Huon's Seaman.

The commander of the HMAS HUON, LT COMMANDER WERNER leans over side.

WERNER  
Lt. Commander Dowd.

Dowd looks up.

WERNER (CONT'D)  
Are you familiar with the USS Barry?

DOWD  
I am. She sails out of Yokosuka.

WERNER  
She just sank in Tokyo Bay. The Americans are going apeshit.

Dowd looks to the approaching passenger liner and grabs the VOX.

DOWD  
This is Dowd, I'm on my way down.

6 EXT. SYDNEY HARBOUR. BENEATH THE SURFACE - MORNING

6

Dowd plunges into the water and begins his descent.

FADE TO:

TITLE:

**SENTIENT**

ACT ONE

7 INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. HOSPITAL. BARO CHAMBER - DAY 7

Dowd shock-wakes in a hyperbaric recompression chamber, his vision blurred, his head swimming.

He raises himself up to discover the chamber door open and a pulsating light illuminating the room outside.

8 INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. HOSPITAL. BARO ROOM - DAY 8

Dowd emerges naked.

A shiver races through his body.

Shaky on his feet, saturated in sweat, he moves into the room, looking for someone, anyone to help.

Outside, a howling wind rakes the building with a hail of shrapnel.

Every car alarm in the city is going off.

Dowd spots a pile of blankets.

Next to it, the source of the pulsating light.

A mobile phone lies on the floor, glowing, and humming like a Tibetan singing bowl.

Dowd wraps one of the blankets around his waist and reaches for the phone when...

**THUD!**

Something lands on the door, outside in the corridor.

Dowd makes his way to the door, pauses then turns the handle.

A body collapses onto him.

Both drop back onto the floor.

A mobile phone flies across the floor.

Dowd flails about wildly, pushing the body away and jamming himself up a cluster of man-sized oxygen cylinders.

LIEUTENANT SYMES, a Navy Nurse, her bun of long red hair unfurled, lies lifeless on the concrete floor.

Dowd makes his way over to her on all fours.

Dried blood has pooled around her eyes, nose and mouth.

Dowd grabs at her hands, looking for a response.

DOWD  
(Wheezing)  
Hey, hey.

He paws at her name tag.

DOWD (CONT'D)  
Symes!

He opens her mouth, places his head sideways next to her face and rests his hand on her chest.

Nothing.

Dowd looks to the darkened corridor.

DOWD (CONT'D)  
(Wheezing)  
Help.

Dowd grabs at his throat. He can't get any volume.

He grabs a defibrillator off the wall and drops next to Symes.

He rips open her shirt, attaches two defib pads either side of her chest and presses the power button.

Nothing. Dowd stabs at the button. It's dead.

He tosses it, raises himself and presses down repeatedly on her chest, over and over until his arms fold, flopping him over the dead nurse.

Trembling, dripping with sweat and still in the throes of recompression, he cannot summon the energy to bring her back.

Then, his eyes are then drawn to her phone.

It's glowing and resonating in-sync with the other.

Dowd looks again to the dark corridor.

9 INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. HOSPITAL. CORRIDOR - DAY 9

Dowd staggers into the corridor.

The power's out.

A flickering red emergency light shows the way.

He points back to the dead nurse.



DOWD  
 (Still wheezing)  
 Need some help here!

He turns towards a darkened exit sign, gaining momentum as he goes until Dowd stops dead in his tracks.

A pile of bodies, stacked to the ceiling, obscures the swing-door to the exit.

Each body's phones within the pile glows and hums in-sync.

Dowd rolls-back one of the bodies. It's Navy Doctor, CAPTAIN EUGENE.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

10 INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. HOSPITAL. FOYER - MORNING 10

Swing doors fling open.

Lt. Symes the Navy Nurse, the Navy Doctor Captain Eugene and Clearance Diver Petty Officer Lachlan Hunt, still in his wetsuit, wheel Dowd in on a stretcher.

Dowd, his wetsuit cut away, writhes in pain with the bends.

The Nurse reaches out to steady him.

Commodore Freisler taps the brakes on the stretcher.

FREISLER  
 If you live, you'll wish you  
 hadn't.

Dowd grabs the Commodore's lapel, dragging her face to his.

DOWD  
 If I live, I'm coming for you  
 Commodore!

RETURN TO PRESENT

11 INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. HOSPITAL. CORRIDOR - DAY 11

Shrapnel from the storm **smashes a window** off the corridor.

Dowd snaps back to the present.

The door to the room **creaks-open**.

A gust of wind accompanies it, rattling the corridor, blowing discarded papers along the floor.

Dowd gently releases Captain Eugene's body and stares into the abyss behind him.

A figure appears, silhouette against the ghostly red emergency light.

Dowd rises.

It's Lt. Symes, the nurse.

DOWD

Symes?

Symes doesn't respond.

Stars begin to fill the corridor.

Dowd stands, squinting to gain focus.

What looks like a STAR CONSTELLATION in the shape of CANCER hovers next to Symes, in the darkness of the hall.

It's captivating.

The room begins to vibrate.

A **hum** manifests just like the mobile phones.

Dowd slowly approaches Symes and the floating stars.

He reaches out to touch the mini constellation when an electric blue burst, ripples over a humanoid shape.

A life-form is behind it. The constellation is its face.

It's right there in front of him!

Dowd, freaked, wrenches back his arm and backs into a glass-paned office door.

The door flings back.

12 INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. HOSPITAL. OFFICE - DAY 12

Dowd backs inside then slams it shut.

He spots a nearby chair and jams it up against the handle. It's the wrong size, he can't secure it.

He tosses the chair and backs away from the closed door.

Dowd grabs a fire extinguisher from the wall and raises it as a weapon. The warrior in him rouses. It's fight or die.

He's shaking head to toe.

He waits, weapon raised, ready to strike.

A haunting red glow seeps through Venetian blinds, filling the room behind him.

**BREATHING.**

Something else is in the room.

Dowd swings-round, fire extinguisher raised to strike.

DR AMON TEICHER, a bald scientist wearing a Hazmat protective suit minus the headgear, comes faces to face with a man about to smash his skull in with a fire extinguisher.

Teicher raises a finger to his lips to hush Dowd.

TEICHER

Shhh.

Teicher's eyes pan to the door. There's movement.

Dowd turns back to the glass-paned door.

A figure approaches from the other side.

Dowd and Teicher wait and watch.

The figure comes to the door.

It turns to face them, peering through the misty glass pane.

Dowd raises the extinguisher, ready to strike.

They wait.

It moves away.

The exit swing-doors outside, squeak-open, swing back and forth, then gradually slow to a stop.

Dowd, panting hard, approaches the door.

He places his hand on the doorknob then looks back to Teicher.

Teicher shakes his head, 'Don't you do it.'

13

INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. HOSPITAL. CORRIDOR - DAY

13

Dowd wrenches open the door and bursts into the corridor, extinguisher raised, ready for battle.

Nothing.

He scans the darkness.

The corridor rattles with the wind.

He makes for the swing-door exit, gaining pace with each step.

Dowd, again, stops dead in his tracks.

The bodies piled up against the exit doors have disappeared.

Dowd discards the fire extinguisher.

Teicher joins him.

The same haunting red glow from the office now seeps under the swing exit doors.

Teicher looks in the direction of Dowd's stare.

They stand together.

DOWD  
What did you see?

TEICHER  
I don't know what I saw. I know the  
dead don't walk.

Dowd staggers towards the swing doors.

The storm beyond the doors is deafening.

He grabs the swing doors with both hands to open.

TEICHER (CONT'D)  
Lt. Commander Dowd!

Dowd turns.

TEICHER (CONT'D)  
Wait.

Teicher rushes back into the office and returns with Dowd's Navy uniform on a hook along with boots and socks. It's a Clearance Diver's disruptive Khaki operational uniform. A note is bobby-pinned to the shirt, 'LT. COMMANDER DOWD.'

Dowd drops the blanket and dresses.

DOWD  
Who are you?

TEICHER  
Amon Teicher, Chief Scientist,  
Senninger Defense Industries.

DOWD  
The bio warfare lab?

TEICHER  
Defense lab.

DOWD  
Is this your work?

TEICHER

What?

DOWD

Is this some kind of mind-fuck  
weapon cooked up in that hole  
downstairs?

TEICHER

No!

DOWD

Because I'm seeing things that just  
can't be!

TEICHER

What if you're not? What if  
everything you're seeing is real?

Teicher pushes open the doors to reveal the foyer, the base  
and the harbour. Sydney is engulfed in a savage red storm,  
swirling with menace and deafening with its noise.

14 INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. HOSPITAL. FOYER - DAY 14

Dowd and Teicher enter the foyer. Before them, the  
apocalyptic red storm.

Dowd staggers towards the foyer exit. Teicher follows. Blood  
streams from their eyes and nose. They cover their eyes with  
they hands.

Each step, like wading through cement.

TEICHER

(yelling)

Where are you going?

Dowd drives himself forward.

TEICHER (CONT'D)

(yelling)

You can't go out there.

DOWD

(yelling)

It took our people. I'm getting  
them back.

Dowd opens the glass exit door to the storm.

TEICHER

(yelling)

Commander!

Dowd looks back. A flying STOP sign hurtles through the glass  
exit doors spraying them both with shards.

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

15 EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. ROAD - DAY 15

The base emergency siren and the din of the city's car alarms compete with the roar of the storm.

LIEUTENANT GRANT in summer whites and shorts, battles his way forward.

He turns a corner only to lodge one of his shoes in an open drain.

The Lieutenant frantically tries to dislodge the shoe.

In the distance, a crowd of people queue around the entry to a bunker.

ABLE SEAMAN CHE AMIRI, a red cross Medic patch on her shoulder, fronts.

She takes one look at the situation then makes for a nearby construction site.

GRANT  
Don't leave me!

AMIRI  
Hold up Sir.

16 CONSTRUCTION SITE 16

Scaffolding fronting the building groans and shudders under the heaving wind.

The site is littered with barrels and building materials displaced by the storm.

Amiri searches the tray of a ute (utility truck).

The ute rocks back and forth wildly, crabbing its way sideways at her.

She steps back, pauses, then makes her move, grabbing a crowbar out of the tray.

17 EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. ROAD - DAY 17

Amiri crosses the road back to the Lieutenant and plunges the crowbar into the adjacent storm drain cover. She dislodges it, gets down on all fours and unties the Lieutenant's shoelace.

AMIRI  
Lose the shoe!

Grant rips out the socked foot then bolts for the bunker.  
He's not looking back.

Amiri looks up to see the 'crabbing sideways' ute, flip, lose  
its tools then slam into the wall, tray-side to her.

The ute tray flaps back and forth, wildly against the wall.

18 BEHIND THE FLAPPING UTE TRAY 18

Amiri, crouched, is trapped in the tray space.

From the gap, she spots the Lieutenant running for his life.

AMIRI  
You've got to be shitting me!

Dowd and Teicher make their way past the flapping ute towards  
the crowd. Amiri spots them.

AMIRI (CONT'D)  
Sir! Sirs!!

Dowd and Teicher look around but can't find the voice.

AMIRI (CONT'D)  
In here!!!

Dowd crouches to spot her then runs over. The flapping ute  
tray blocks his way.

Dowd disappears from view.

AMIRI (CONT'D)  
Hello!

Dowd and Teicher reappear rolling a drum from the  
construction site towards the gap between the flapping ute  
tray and the wall.

19 EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. ROAD - DAY 19

Dowd and Teicher time the push of the barrel to the slap of  
the ute tray.

DOWD  
Three, two...

**POP, POP! POP, POP!** Rivets take flight, spraying the street  
and slicing through a window as the scaffolding from the  
construction site collapses onto the street.



With it, a band of long steel reinforcing rods, splay and slam into the ground.

Flipped end to end by the whip of the storm, the steel rods career down the road narrowly missing Dowd and Teicher before bouncing skyward to slice through two of three overhead power lines.

Sparks fly from the sliced lines.

The third of the power lines resists the last of the rods, slingshotting it back through the air, straight through the underbelly of the ute.

20 BEHIND THE FLAPPING UTE TRAY 20

A steel rod spears the ute tray lodging in the wall between Amiri's arm and hip.

Amiri sniffs the air.

21 EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. ROAD - DAY 21

Teicher smells it too then looks to the underbelly of the ute. The steel rod has speared the ute's tank.

TEICHER

LPG!

AMIRI (O.S.)

Get me out of here.

Dowd rolls the drum into the space between the ute tray and the wall.

DOWD

Jump!

Amiri springs out into Dowd's arms. He swings her around, and the three, Dowd, Teicher and Amiri make for the bunker.

The two severed power lines, their own Medusas, lash the ground before them.

They run for their lives.

**IGNITION!**

The three are blown to the ground.

Every window in proximity shatters spraying the road with glass shards around the smoking wreck of the ute.

The offending rod simultaneously snaps in two and rebounds back into the air before it javelins into the ground, centimetres in front of the three.

22

EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. THE BUNKER - DAY

22

A concrete bunker fronted by a blast door.

The Admiral's eye is drawn to the LPG explosion, then to the thing above it.

A supercell, a black, swirling inverted mushroom cloud moves into place over Sydney.

The crowd lose it, baying for entry inside.

Frank wipes the blood streaming from his nose then jams his palm, repeatedly into a security entry pad, followed by a passcode. There's no response. The entry door is dead.

Overhead, a security video monitor peers over the crowd.

FRANK

Remain calm! We'll work through this.

Dowd, Teicher and Amiri arrive on the periphery of the crowd.

Frank spots them.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Michael! Get over here.

Dowd cuts his way through the crowd. Amiri and Teicher tail him.

The storm's intensity grows, tearing roofs off nearby buildings.

DOWD

Sir.

Frank grabs his hand and plants it palm first onto the security panel.

FRANK

Enter your security code.

DOWD

I'm not cleared sir.

FRANK

Yes you are, you are Michael.

Dowd, taken aback, enters his code then steps away.

The entry remains sealed.

Dowd shakes his head.

Teicher steps up to the panel and fishes about inside.

TEICHER

This panel is connected to the external mains. They're being disrupted. It's not.

Teicher points to the security camera.

FRANK

They can't open the door.

DOWD

And we can't either.

As the storm's eye passes over them, eclipsing the light, the street lights flicker and spark to life but not for the long.

The base emergency siren quits. The car alarms stop. The street lamps flicker, spark then burst.

Suddenly, silence.

AMIRI

(A whisper)

What's happening?

That hum, like a Tibetan singing bowl, one note, grows and intensifies. The ground shakes, the buildings shake.

The panicked crowd cover their ears in pain then...

**WHOOSH**, a stream of particles ascends into the heavens, accompanied by the horrified screams of those being torn apart, limb by limb.

The crowd is vaporized.

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF ACT TWO**

ACT THREE

23 EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE - DAY 23

A descent through the clouds.

The storm has subsided.

A resonance like a Tibetan singing bowl hums in the background and an eerie red haze shrouds the harbour.

24 INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. NAVAL POLICE OFFICE - DAY 24

POLICE COXSWAIN - LEADING SEAMAN JASAR EID staggers towards the glass fronted reception portal.

Eid picks up a landline phone and speed dials a number. There's no tone. He replaces the handset, grabs a bin and throws up.

POLICE COXSWAIN - LEADING SEAMAN IGOR BABIC lumbers in toting his dead mobile phone.

BABIC

Have you got...

Babic gags.

BABIC (CONT'D)

What is that stench?

A bloody hand **SLAPS** onto the glass front of the reception shocking them both.

Commodore Kathryn Freisler, her mane of long black hair matted and strewn, her face covered in blood, stands before them on the other side of the glass.

FREISLER

The door.

Babic squeezes the button for the electronic door. It won't release. Eid tugs at the handle then squats down to inspect the lock.

EID

Is there a override?

BABIC

Where's the manual?

Eid stands to discover Freisler has now joined them on the other side of the door.

FREISLER

Move.

Eid and Babic step aside.

Freisler kicks in the door.

She steps inside and picks up the landline. It's still dead. She replaces it then looks to the men.

FREISLER (CONT'D)

Get your sidearms, then on me.

25

EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. BUNKER - DAY

25

Dowd wakes, his vision hazy, his senses dulled.

A stream of smoke and mist wafts through the buildings.

It's eerily quiet except for the...

**BANG, BANG, BANG.**

Dowd looks up to see Admiral Frank hammering his shoe heel, Nikita Khrushchev style, against the bunker door.

VICE ADMIRAL J. DEAKIN FRANK

Open this door!

Dowd gets to his feet and makes his way over.

Broken glass crunches under-foot.

Amiri sits huddled, her arms wrapped around her knees.

Dowd kneels down next to her.

DOWD

(To Amiri)

Are you Ok?

Amiri, tears streaming down her cheeks, her eyes black dots riveted forward, wipes her tears and scrambles to her feet.

AMIRI

Good to go, sir.

They come upon Teicher, staring at the bunker wall.

Teicher's head tilts-ajar, absorbed by the vision before him, a Hiroshima-like human shadow burnt into the wall.

Teicher reaches out to touch it. The shadow dissolves, scattering to the wind.

DOWD

Mr Teicher.

TEICHER

Doctor.

DOWD

Doctor Teicher. Are you OK?

TEICHER

How is it we're still alive?

**BANG, BANG, BANG.**

Dowd and Amiri turn to the Admiral.

VICE ADMIRAL J. DEAKIN FRANK

Open this door!

DOWD

Admiral.

**BANG, BANG, BANG.**

DOWD (CONT'D)

Admiral.

Frank turns.

The once formidable figure of the Admiral has been replaced by a disheveled old man. His hands shake. His eyes are hollowed. Dowd is shocked by his appearance.

Blood drips from an open wound on the Admiral's hand. He goes back to hammering the door with his shoe.

**BANG, BANG, BANG.**

DOWD (CONT'D)

You're bleeding.

VICE ADMIRAL J. DEAKIN FRANK

They won't open the door!

DOWD

Let me have a look at that.

Dowd reaches for his hand.

Frank raises his shoe ready to clobber Dowd.

Frank becomes manic, crazed.

Dowd raises his hands and takes a step back.

DOWD (CONT'D)

It's Michael.

Frank doesn't recognize him.

FREISLER (O.S.)  
What wrong with him?

Dowd turns surprised to discover Commodore Freisler flanked by Police Coxswains - Leading Seaman Jasar Eid and Igor Babic.

Freisler and Dowd stare off.

Dowd instinctively gets between Freisler and the Admiral.

AMIRI  
He's in shock.

FREISLER  
Mr Eid.

EID  
Yes, Ma'am.

FREISLER  
Did you bring cuffs?

EID  
Yes Ma'am.

FREISLER  
Arrest Mr Dowd.

Babic is surprised by the order.

BABIC  
What is the charge Ma'am?

**BANG, BANG, BANG.**

VICE ADMIRAL J. DEAKIN FRANK (O.S.)  
Open this door!

FREISLER  
Striking a superior officer, for a start.

DOWD  
What are you doing Kathryn?

EID  
Ma'am, if the power's fried, the cell door won't lock.

FREISLER  
(To Eid)  
There's a metal-grate cleaning cupboard next to the armoury. Do you know it?

EID  
Yes Ma'am.

DOWD  
 (To Freisler)  
 You want to do this now?

FREISLER  
 (To Eid)  
 It has a padlock.

Dowd gestures to the red haze, broken glass and scattered debris.

DOWD  
 (To Freisler)  
 Look at this.

FREISLER  
 (To Eid)  
 There's a key in the top draw of  
 the desk.

DOWD  
 (To Freisler)  
 What do you see?

**BANG, BANG, BANG.**

VICE ADMIRAL J. DEAKIN FRANK (O.S.)  
 Open this door!

FREISLER  
 (To Eid)  
 Lock him in.

DOWD  
 (To Freisler)  
 That, whatever that was, was a  
 first strike. You know what comes  
 next.

Amiri looks to Teicher.

TEICHER  
 Invasion.

FREISLER  
 Do it now Mr Eid.

Eid steps towards Dowd

DOWD  
 We are at war Commodore!

FREISLER  
 Not you, you're going to the brig.

**BANG, BANG, BANG.**



VICE ADMIRAL J. DEAKIN FRANK (O.S.)  
Open this door!

EID  
Show me your hands.

Dowd stands defiant.

Eid amused, removes his Glock and takes aim.

EID (CONT'D)  
(Whispered)  
Come on, you're not the first boong  
to go to lock up.

Dowd let's the racial slur hang in the air then joins his arms, palms face to the sky and offers them to Eid.

Eid reaches for his cuffs.

Dowd sideswipes the Glock, latching onto the top of the barrel.

A round dispatches into the wall.

Dowd delivers a short sharp backhand to Eid's front teeth, knocking him senseless.

Dowd collects Eid's Glock then empties the spent cartridge.

Babic goes for his sidearm.

Dowd catches Eid as he staggers back then spins him around to face Babic.

Eid's Glock is now pointed at Babic.

Babic struggles to get his sidearm out of the holster.

Finally,

BABIC  
(To Dowd)  
I'll shoot. I'll do it.

DOWD  
Got a good beed on me?

BABIC  
Yes sir I do.

DOWD  
Here's the thing, my safety's off,  
yours isn't.

Babic looks down at his gun then back to Dowd.

He's looks back into the eyes of a stone-cold killer.

Babic places his weapon on the floor and raises his hands.

Dowd gently lowers Eid to the ground then casually walks up to Babic, gun lowered.

He kicks Babic's Glock to Amiri. She traps it under her boot.

AMIRI

What are we doing, sir?

DOWD

Do whatever you think is the right thing, Able Seaman.

Dowd spots a tote bag on Babic.

DOWD (CONT'D)

I'll take the tote too.

Babic hands it over.

DOWD (CONT'D)

And I'll have your sidearm Commodore.

FREISLER

Come and get it.

Dowd stows Eid's Glock, safety on, in his pants and makes his way over.

Freisler's hand is dangerously close to her holster.

They maintain constant eye contact.

Dowd gets into kissing distance with Freisler, reaches down slowly then takes her weapon out of its holster.

It's unclear whether they want to kill each other, fuck or both.

Amiri, bends down to collect the Glock.

FREISLER (CONT'D)

Able Seaman, did you know Mr Dowd was responsible for the death of 37 innocent Afghans in Kabul?

Dowd doesn't flinch at the accusation.

FREISLER (CONT'D)

And that he is responsible for the death of his own team this morning.

But Dowd is shocked by this new information.

FREISLER (CONT'D)  
 (To Dowd)  
 Your life is over Michael.

Amiri looks at the weapon and ponders.

FREISLER (CONT'D)  
 Consider the fate of your family  
 Able Seaman. Any visa applications  
 would be immediately discarded,  
 residency and even citizenship  
 cancelled. Think upon that.

Dowd turns to see Amiri pointing the gun at him.

He turns to Teicher.

DOWD  
 Doctor, the thing we saw.

TEICHER  
 The Pied Piper.

DOWD  
 Yeah, the Pied Piper.

He throws Babic's tote bag to Teicher.

Teicher considers the offer.

TEICHER  
 Alright.

Dowd turns to Amiri.

He doesn't say a word.

Amiri, applies the safety and lowers the weapon.

FREISLER  
 You'll be joining Mr Dowd in the  
 same cell Able Seaman.

AMIRI  
 Where to, sir?

26 INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. BUNKER - DAY

26

A pitch black room.

A monitor, the only light.

A blackened FIGURE studies the monitor, displaying an image  
 of Dowd, Amiri and Teicher leaving.

Freisler looks up to the monitor.

27 EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. CDT1 OPERATIONAL AREA - DAY 27

Dowd leads Amiri and Teicher down a long set of stairs to the RAN Clearance Diver - Team One - Operations area.

DOWD  
Watch your step.

AMIRI  
Sir, what's the Pied Piper?

TEICHER  
If the Commander tells you that,  
you may not be so keen to join us.

AMIRI  
Why's that?

Dowd seeks to divert her attention.

DOWD  
I recognize you, don't I?

AMIRI  
Sir?

DOWD  
You were a famous rugby league  
player.

AMIRI  
No sir, pretty sure that was you.

DOWD  
No, you played reserve grade for  
Souths as Five-eighth. I saw you in  
a semi finals match. You won the  
game for them. You placed a chip  
over the head of this, what was  
she, Maori?

AMIRI  
Samoan, if it's the girl I think  
you mean.

DOWD  
Samoan fullback, she was a brick  
shit house.

AMIRI  
Yeah.

DOWD

I swear, I thought you were gone for all the money but you put on that left step, the ball bounced up just right for you, then their winger came at you, she wanted it, but you sorted her out.

AMIRI

Damn straight.

DOWD

You put it right under the black dot then converted it yourself. I was really impressed. In fact, I tried the same move myself.

AMIRI

How'd it work out?

DOWD

My Samoan was faster than yours. I still have a loose tooth from that tackle. Why did you join the Navy?

AMIRI

I wanted to be a Clearance Diver.

Dowd slows his pace.

He takes the time to look her in the face.

DOWD

But they wouldn't let you apply.

AMIRI

Women aren't welcome sir.

Dowd stops at the bottom of the stairs, just before a blue line marked in the cement.

DOWD

(Very formal)  
Able Seaman.

AMIRI

Sir.

DOWD

Do you see this line?

AMIRI

Yes, sir.

DOWD

This line marks where the regular Navy ends and where Clearance Diver Team One begins.

Dowd proceeds forward then looks back to Amiri.

Amiri crosses the line.

28 EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. ARMOURY - DAY

28

Eid and Freisler wait outside.

Babic emerges through the door.

BABIC

The armoury door is seized. We're  
going to have to get an  
electrician.

FREISLER

Where else can we get weapons on  
Penguin?

BABIC

Ma'am, what is the priority here?

FREISLER

The priority here is whatever I say  
it is Leading Seaman.

EID

I know where we can get weapons.

**END OF ACT THREE**

ACT FOUR

29 EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. CDT 1 OPS BUILDING - DAY 29

Dowd, Amiri and Teicher arrive at the Clearance Diver Team One Operations building, (CDT 1 OPS).

The door is wide open.

30 INT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. CDT 1 OPS BUILDING - DAY 30

Dowd enters slow and silent.

Amiri and Teicher follow.

They make their way down a corridor, checking at each room as they pass.

Nothing, until they arrive at the showers.

The sound of water running.

31 SHOWERS 31

Dowd enters.

Teicher and Amiri follow.

Dowd follows the sound of the water to a shower cubicle.

Petty Officer Lachlan Hunt, the diver who discovered the Chinese sea mine and wheeled Dowd into the hospital, sits on the floor. The top half of his wetsuit is peeled to his waist. Water pours over him.

Dowd reaches over to turn off the tap.

DOWD

Lachy?

HUNT

What the fuck are you doing out of hyperbaric?

DOWD

Early release for good behaviour.  
Where is everybody?

HUNT

We're it.

The news saddens Dowd. He offers Hunt a hand up.

DOWD

Did I fuck up?

HUNT

No the fuck you did not! The EM-52 lit up when it registered the passenger liner. Why the fuck wasn't the harbour closed?

DOWD

You'll want a word with Commodore Freisler about that.

HUNT

Oh aye, I'll have a fucking word with her high and mightiness but she won't see me coming.

DOWD

What about Zarky?

HUNT

The first blast cracked the back of the Noordam. That set off two other mines in the harbour. The compression waves, well you know all about the compression waves.

Hunt's tough veneer begins to crack.

DOWD

Thanks for getting me out.

HUNT

The Zodiac got blown so high, I flew past the bridge of the Huon. I thought, this must be my HALO training. I stopped laughing when I saw Zarky slam headfirst into the Huon's bow. I landed 'bout nine metres away. I swam straight at him but, I could already taste the metal on the back of my throat from that far away, and I knew.

Dowd takes Hunt's hand and forms a fist with his.

HUNT (CONT'D)

This is fucked up.

DOWD

We're you here for the storm?

HUNT

What the fuck was that?

AMIRI

What the fuck was that?



HUNT

Who are these two?

DOWD

Doctor Teicher works for Senninger and this one is Amiri. The Able Seaman wants to become a Clearance Diver.

HUNT

Really? It just so happens that a vacancy has become available but there seems to be one thing missing from your resume Able Seaman.

AMIRI

A cock?

DOWD

(To Hunt)

She's got your number.

32

REC ROOM

32

Amiri joins Teicher, looking at photos of Navy diver heroes past, on the wall.

AMIRI

What was that storm?

TEICHER

What do you think it was?

AMIRI

A WMD.

TEICHER

A targeted biological weapon delivered in a weather event. No one has that technology Able Seaman.

AMIRI

And the Piper?

TEICHER

An old German myth. A man is hired to catch rats. The locals don't pay their bill. The rat catcher hypnotizes their children and leads them into the river.

AMIRI

What's that got to do with the storm?

TEICHER

Yes. Good question.

Hunts turns up carrying two M4 assault rifles and a spare Glock.

Hunt is now dressed in a Clearance Diver's disruptive Khaki operational uniform, like Dowd's.

HUNT

Where's Wudji?

AMIRI

Who?

HUNT

The boss.

AMIRI

He went to use yours coms.

HUNT

Wudji!

DOWD (V.O.)

What?

HUNT

The coms don't work!

DOWD (V.O.)

I can see that!

AMIRI

Why do you call him Wudji?

HUNT

(To Amiri)

That's the name of his mob.

(To Dowd)

Wudji! What do you call your mob?

Dowd turns up carry a stash of magazines, grenades and webbing.

DOWD

Wiradjuri, you ignorant white bastard.

HUNT

Wudji for short.

DOWD

Not even close.

Dowd dumps the webbing and kit on Hunt and makes his way over the fridge.

Dowd opens the fridge and looks for something to drink.

HUNT  
The fridge is broke-dick too.

Dowd drinks from an open pitcher of water then looks to Teicher and his tote bag.

DOWD  
(To Teicher)  
What's in the tote?

Teicher looks into the tote bag taken from Babic.

He pulls out a canister.

Hunt and Dowd crowd around him.

TEICHER  
This is...

DOWD  
Gas.

Dowd takes it and gives it to Hunt.

Teicher pulls another item out.

DOWD (CONT'D)  
A flashbang.

Dowd tosses the flashbang to Amiri.

TEICHER  
And a few magazines.

DOWD  
For the Glocks.

Dowd tosses those to Amiri too.

HUNT  
What's the plan?

DOWD  
One of their scouts took our people.

HUNT  
The PLA is already here!?

DOWD  
It's not the Chinese.

HUNT  
The mines were EM-52s Wudji!

DOWD  
I don't doubt it bloke but this is  
something else.

HUNT  
Who?

DOWD  
We'll get to that.

HUNT  
How many?

DOWD  
Just the one. So, this is what  
we're going to do. We're going to  
get our people back then we're  
going to round up every hardbodied  
killer we can find and take the  
fight to the enemy.

(To all)  
Are you all up for that?

	AMIRI		HUNT
Hell yes sir.		Yes sir.	

HUNT (CONT'D)  
Where to?

TEICHER  
(To Dowd)  
The Pied Piper lead the town's  
children to the river.

DOWD  
The wharf it is.

**END OF ACT FOUR**

ACT FIVE

33 EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. CDT1 TRAINING AREA - DAY 33

Dowd, Hunt and Amiri make a cracking pace through the area towards the wharf. Teicher struggles to keep up.

Dowd waits for Teicher.

A clear view of the ocean presents itself to the East.

Hunt points out a catamaran, beached on the shore by the storm.

HUNT

Ooi.

Dowd takes in the view.

DOWD

I know that cat. It belongs to one of the locals.

HUNT

They won't be happy.

DOWD

They certainly won't be happy with us requisitioning it.

Amiri continues into the mist.

Light shafts from the late afternoon sun pierce through a wall of rising steam and settling red mist.

Amiri cuts straight through it.

Teicher, panting, catches up to Dowd and Hunt.

HUNT

Keep up Doctor.

DOWD

Where's Amiri?

They look to the wall of steam and mist.

She's nowhere to be seen.

DOWD (CONT'D)

Able Seaman!

34 DIVE POOL

34

Amiri struggles to find her way forward.

AMIRI (V.O.)

Sir.

DOWD

Hold up! There's a dive pool there.

AMIRI

Where?

Too late.

Amiri walks straight over the edge and into, SPLASH!

35 DIVE POOL - UNDER THE WATER

35

Amiri goes straight to the bottom.

Amiri looks up.

Bodies!

The pool is full of bodies, floating face down in the water.

An electric blue ripple passes over them.

ALL EYES OPEN, fixed on Amiri.

Amiri freaks.

She shoots to the surface, claws her way through the bodies and searches for the edge. She can't find it.

Amiri thrashes back and forth, panicked.

A yellow rescue buoy flies through the air and lands next to her. She grabs hold and gets reeled in like a fish.

36 DIVE POOL - POOLSIDE

36

Dowd appears at the end of the rope.

Amiri reaches the side.

Dowd and Hunt offer her a heave-to out of the pool but Amiri is so freaked, she scrambles over the edge and straight into a cement wall. **THUD!**

Amiri flies backwards onto the concrete. Lights out.

Dowd goes to her aid.

Hunt keeps watch.

DOWD

Able Seaman?

Amiri rouses. Dowd cushions her head with his hand.

AMIRI  
Our people!

DOWD  
What?

AMIRI  
They're in the pool!

HUNT (O.S.)  
What the fuck is that!!!?

Dowd turns to spot Hunt, his M4 rifle trained on the PIED PIPER.

A creature, humanoid, translucent black and bearing the constellation of Cancer as its face, appears in the shallow of the pool, arms spread, poised ready to strike.

Everything that can vibrate is humming in its presence.

Its back, bristles, a rolling shudder, up and down its body, vibrating the water.

Hunt takes aim.

Teicher steps in.

TEICHER  
Don't shoot!

Dowd joins Hunt poolside, weapon raised and targeted at the Piper.

DOWD  
Give me a reason Doctor!

TEICHER  
Listen!

Teicher edges closer towards the pool to look at the bodies.

TEICHER (CONT'D)  
The hum. It's the same sound we heard just before the base was vaporized. It will kill you. It will kill us all!

Dowd looks over the side of the pool.

DOWD  
Our people are in the water Doctor!

TEICHER  
Whatever your people were, they're dead to us now.

An object flies through the air towards the Piper.

AMIRI  
Flashbang!

Dowd, Hunt and Teicher drop to the ground and cover their ears.

The weapon explodes shocking the Piper and sending it reeling in pain. Dowd and Hunt open up with their M4s.

**TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP.**

They empty their entire mags then draw their Glocks. Amiri joins them firing on the Piper until its down.

Teicher staggers towards the water's edge and looks over the side. He picks up a discarded uniform then looks at the name tag, 'Lt. Symes.'

TEICHER  
Shoot the bodies.

DOWD  
What?

TEICHER  
It's not eating them. It's transforming them.

DOWD  
Into what?

TEICHER  
Into it!

Dowd takes Symes uniform from Teicher then looks to the pool.

DOWD  
No. I won't do that. We won't do that.

37 EXT. HMAS PENGUIN NAVY BASE. BEACH - DUSK

37

Dowd, Hunt, Teicher and Amiri run for the catamaran.

The tide is taking it out to sea.

DOWD  
We're going to have to swim for it.

AMIRI  
Where are we going sir?

DOWD  
HMAS Watson.



AMIRI  
Sir, I can't swim all that way.

DOWD  
Can you make it to the cat?

AMIRI  
(Relieved)  
Yes, sir!

DOWD  
Watson has secure coms and power.  
Command needs to know what we're up  
against. That cat's our ride.

They head for the water.

Out of nowhere, two barking Dobermans cross their path,  
racing past them and out of sight, towards the shoreline.

The dogs attack an unseen victim.

The attack is brought to a brutal end. The harrowing sounds  
of the dogs' deaths set everyone on edge.

Dowd turns to Hunt, Amiri and Teicher.

DOWD (CONT'D)  
Stay here.

HUNT  
My arse.

DOWD  
Stay!

Dowd's resolve shocks Hunt.

Dowd disappears into the mist.

38

THE WATERLINE

38

Dowd paces through the wet sand.

His face is drawn, his eyes pooled with blood.

A hum, like a Tibetan singing bowl resonates through the  
harbour.

Dowd comes upon the two dead Dobermans on the shoreline;  
their bodies eviscerated, their eyes exploded in their heads.

A woman, unseen, **screams**.

Dowd runs towards the guttural cry.

Runs hard and fast to...

REBECCA KAY, a forty-something businesswoman in a pinstripe suit, kneeling in the sand.

Tears stream down her cheeks.

A clenched fist secures two dogs leashes.

Her eyes are locked onto...

SAMMY, a slip of a teenage girl in a summer dress.

Sammy's face is serene. Her presence surreal.

Another person nearby, HEIDI FISK, a mess of long blonde hair in shorts and worker's boots, pleads with Sammy.

HEIDI

Sammy, baby, please come back.

There's fear in Heidi's voice.

She dare not go closer.

Then Dowd sees it.

Another creature, humanoid, translucent black and filled with stars, crouches on the sand before Sammy.

Steam rises from its body. It's panting like a dog and bleeding from a bite mark to its leg.

Sammy reaches out to touch it.

The creature looks up.

An electric blue arc passes between Sammy's fingers and the creature's body.

The creature assembles itself, bones cracking into position, rising to tower over Sammy.

Petty Officer Lachlan Hunt runs out of the mist at breakneck speed.

HUNT

(To Dowd)

Leaving! Now!!

Dowd looks to Hunt then to the harbour. The water is alive.

Thousands of the creatures make their way ashore.

The Police Coxswain - Leading Seaman Igor Babic fronts with a new M4 assault rifle and takes aim at Dowd.

BABIC

Mr Dowd! This time my safety is off.

Then to his horror, Babic discovers the creature.

The creature looks to Babic. It splays its arms. Its back bristles.

An intense hum.

Everything begins to vibrate.

Babic fires a short burst from the M4 at it.

The bullets shatter mid air.

Done with the bullets, the creature then turns its attention to Babic.

A short sonic pulse, creates a visible distortion in the air and travels to Babic, shattering his eyes and his teeth.

Babic howls in agony. His knees give way.

He collapses to the ground then grabs the left side of his chest just before his heart bursts dropping him, face forward into the sand.

The creature then turns to Dowd.

Kaye screams.

Heidi, Hunt, Sammy and Kaye watch Dowd raise his M4, take aim and.

FADE OUT.