

EXT. ECHO LAKE, COLORADO -- NEXT MORNING

The FBI safe-house is spread out over acres of lush green foliage. It is quiet, peaceful, with unobstructed views to any approaches. Attached to the west side of the home is an extremely large fenced-in area. We cannot see inside the area.

INT. ECHO LAKE SAFE-HOUSE

In the kitchen of the safe-house is Ryan Porter. THOMAS and CLAYTON, two MCAAT agents, protect Ryan. They are all drinking coffee when Ryan pushes away from the table wearing skivvies.

RYAN

I saw the paper boy toss the paper to the door a short while ago. I think I'll get it.

THOMAS

I don't think so sir. I'll get it.

RYAN

You guys are too cautious for me.
 (to himself)
 ... and I thought security on Vancouver Island was tight.
 (to them)
 Can I go to the toilet by myself?

CLAYTON

Sir, we just don't take chances with..

He pauses grabbing his assault weapon within an arms reach. Thomas senses Clayton's heightened alertness and halts on his way to get the paper.

THOMAS

What?

CLAYTON

Safe houses don't get newspapers.
 (to Ryan)
 Quickly, get some shoes on. Move it!

Ryan senses the seriousness and scurries to get partially dressed in sweats, sneakers without socks, and a shirt.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Tom, get that paper, I'll cover you.

Both of them using binoculars, scan the tree line, seeing nothing. Thomas carefully opens the door and stealthily moves outside. Placing his hand on the paper first, he snatches it off the ground and brings it carefully into the house.

THOMAS

Feels okay to me. No heavier...

They hold it up to the light. Sensing nothing, Ryan grabs the paper impatiently, slips the rubber band off before they can stop him

RYAN
This is ridiculous!

They cough and wheeze as the room suddenly fills with smoke and tear gas emanating from a flat canister inside the paper.

THOMAS
It's a smoker, they're trying to
bait us outside.

Clayton sniffs purposely through his tear filled eyes.

CLAYTON
It's been doped with a nerve agent.
If we don't get out of here, it'll
immobilize us.

THOMAS
I didn't have any plans for the
weekend anyway. I guess dying is
just as good a thing to do as live.
(shouting to Clayton)
Get him out the side, I'm out the
front, I'll draw their fire.

Clicking his weapon on automatic, he grabs as many clips as he can, and tears out of the east door with his gun blazing.

EXT. ECHO LAKE SAFE-HOUSE -- DAY

The gun fire is returned from a point just beyond the tree line when Tom hears the WHIRRING sound from the west side.

INT. ECHO LAKE SAFE-HOUSE, WEST PORTAL -- DAY

Clayton and Ryan plow through the choking smoke, out the west door into the fenced-in area. From above we see the blades of a small helicopter begin rotation.

The blades are at take off speed in seconds. The chopper lifts off and quickly banks away from the line of fire.

INT. HELICOPTER

From Clayton's POV he sees that there are three gunmen firing from triangular positions at Tom. We see that they are the three who arrived late to the meeting with the limo driver. Clayton shouts to Ryan who is not wearing his headphones and is still wiping at his teared-up eyes. Clayton reaches over and places Ryan's hands on the helicopter's control stick.

CLAYTON
Hold this right here. Don't move it.

Clayton pulls the rifle off his shoulder and fires at the muzzle blast in the tree line. Suddenly the fire from that location stops.

Within seconds the gunfire from the ground is directed at the chopper. We hear the PINGING of a stray bullet hitting the propellers. Caught in his rifle strap, Clayton is struggling to free himself to re-take the control when he feels the chopper lift and bank, then suddenly accelerates nearly on it's side behind the firing riflemen.

EXT. ON THE GROUND

Seeing the assassins distracted, Thomas draws a bead on the closest gunman and fires. We see the gunman lurch and fall. Realizing he is outflanked, the remaining gunman begins firing randomly at both the chopper & Tom, striking Tom in the calf.

INT. HELICOPTER

Dropping the helicopter for perfect line of sight, Ryan nods to Clayton who takes the shot. The last gunman falls. Ryan lands the bird. Tom hobbles to the chopper. They pull him in and take off.

INT. HELICOPTER -- DAY

Clayton looks quizzingly to Ryan and behind him at Tom's leg.

CLAYTON

(to Tom)

You okay back there?

(to Ryan)

Pretty nice flying back there. Thanks.

They didn't tell me you could fly.

RYAN

I can't, I play Flight Simulator.
Hundreds of hours. The real thing
felt just like the game. Wow.

EXT. DENVER MOUNTAIN RANGE -- DAY

We recognize the intense man from Chicago. He assembles a shoulder mounted missile launcher from the apparatus in his duffel bag. He fires at the helicopter on the horizon.

INT. HELICOPTER

The look in Clayton's face betrays both his disbelief and thankfulness. Over the mountain range, they see a PUFF of smoke become visible and invisible within seconds.

Yanking the stick down Clayton, moans in recognition.

CLAYTON

I know that signature. Heat seekers
at our one-O:Clock low.

(to Tom)

Hold on back there. Evasive maneuvers.
I'm setting the blade pitch for a
soft fall. Only way to evade it.

Shutting down the engine, the missile flies past the
helicopter and streaks into open sky. Clayton restarts.

High above them they see a jumbo jet. The stinger is heading
for the multiple heat trails of the jet. Tom can see the
situation from his crouched position, Ryan and Clayton cannot.

TOM

Boys, I hate to interrupt but that
missile you just tricked has found a
new target, that jumbo jet waaay up
there.

RYAN

(to Tom)

Quick hand me my laptop. Is the nav
computer on-line to anybody.

CLAYTON

No. It's just tied into NOAA for
weather stuff.

From behind the seat Tom speaks up.

TOM

He's right but the transponder has a
continuous unlink to a nav satellite
which relays through NORAD so they
know who's friend or foe.

Ryan whips out a multi-tool and skins the wires on the
transponder 'digital in' and connects it to the serial port
of the computer. He begins to type in a series of commands
to which the computer responds: We see him type intermittently
between echoed commands.

INSERT

"On-Line with NCA, Access ID protocol" "Done"

"Accessing Prometheus Satellite Control" "Done"

"Overrides Locked Out" "Done"

SINGLE SHOT

In the NORAD command center, an alert is called as the
satellite command console powers up automatically.

The operators and commander are frantically attempting to disable the system until the next command scrolls across the screen in both the helicopter and the NORAD command center.

INSERT

"Targeting Missile on intercept with 747 ident x939kj8."
.."Done"

"Target Acquired, Prometheus locking on." "Done"

"Stand-by, Calculating Intercept Vectors" "Done"

"Prometheus at 100% on Hot Standby, Awaiting Final Command"

"Final authorization received".... "Done"

"Awaiting NORAD clearance code, Standing By" ... "Done"

INT. NORAD COMMAND CENTER, CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN

At NORAD control center, a dozen officers, an Air Force and Canadian General are gathered around the console. All are looking to the AIR FORCE GENERAL.

INT. HELICOPTER -- DAY

CLAYTON

What now?

RYAN

I just pray they have faith and give the final command. I don't have the final code. I wrote the program that NORAD uses but I can't do anything more. Let's just hope they give the command once I release the override.

He enters a final command.

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

"Command console lockouts removed" "Done"

"Prometheus on Hot Standby, awaiting Final Command....."

EXT. THE SKIES OVER DENVER -- DAY

The jumbo jet's passive radar has noticed the missile. The captain and crew are solemn as they twist the big plane into near acrobatic attitudes attempting to evade the missile. Settling into level flight, the radar shows imminent contact.

INT. HELICOPTER -- DAY

Clayton, Tom, and Ryan hold their breaths in a long pause. Suddenly the screen flashes fifteen asterisks, one at a time.

INSERT

"K 9 7 7 T U X 1 T 2 9 1 7 4 Z"

"Command Received, Re-enter"

"K 9 7 7 T U X 1 T 2 9 1 7 4 Z"

"Command Received and verified"..... "Done"

"Standby, Target has moved beyond satellite lock.
RECALCULATING acquisition vectors....."

BACK TO SCENE

The tension on the chopper is high. No one is saying a word.
Tom groans from the back seat.

TOM

That missile will hit the jumbo jet
in less than a minute. Damn!

INT. NORAD

In the NORAD command center, it is equally silent as they
all glare at the screen.

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

"Standby, re-tasking. Standby, reacquiring target.... "Done"

"LOCKING ON" "DONE"

"Firing in five-four-three-two-one"

"Prometheus Firing" "Done"

"Standby, Assessing NRO satellite, Leawenhook One to verify
intercept..."Done"

"Confirmed.... Target Destroyed "Done"

"Standby"

INT. HELICOPTER, RYAN'S COMPUTER SCREEN -- DAY

"AXON has noted command for this incident from multiple
sources. Re-configuring terminal protocols now.

"Done"..... "Prometheus powering down"

"Incident duration: 00:02:32:48"

BACK TO SCENE

We HEAR the AXON rumble on board the helicopter as we see
the missile destroyed. Ryan closes the notebook relieved.
Clayton nods and smiles.

CLAYTON

Nice going kid. Prometheus?

RYAN

NORAD is on an AXON network. I wrote the software for Prometheus which is NORAD's super secret particle beam submarine killer. We just killed a submarine thirty-thousand feet above the water.

EXT. MERCY HOSPITAL

Landing on the hospital's compass rose, Ryan and Clayton help the limping Tom to the ER. They are met there by Wayne Gerabaldi and squad leader, Kelby O'Donovan.

KELBY

Tom, you okay buddy?

TOM

(sarcastically)

Yeah, I'm going dancing tonight at the ballroom. It's the Fred Astaire contest. Whadaya mean am I okay?

(now laughing)

Glad we switched, could've been you.

GERABALDI

I got something urgent from Will. We, specifically you Ryan, gotta get back to control. Tom, we've posted regular FBI all around the hospital.

The four of them are almost running back to the landing pad. The chopper lands on the roof of the Denver Federal Building.

INT. DENVER FEDERAL BUILDING -- DAY

The four of them burst into the conference room. One of the agents is sweeping the room for bugs. Everyone is silent and somber. The sweeping agent nods an okay to Walsh.

WALSH

Okay listen up everybody. It's not often one has the fate of the world in one's hands but based on some new information I just received from Wil in Washington, AXON is on the trail to the cure for AIDS, Cancer, and a whole bunch of stuff... all by itself. If we pull the plug it could be decades before... .

He stops and stares at each of them. His manner suggest he is full of emotion and trepidation.

Walsh walks away from the end of the table. He begins to speak touching each of them on the shoulder reassuringly as he walks and talks. He is somber yet strong.

RYAN

There's been hundreds of unexplained miracles that no one wanted to ask the hard question about. We've become comfortable with having AXON baby-sit us like children. And now we're faced with the most severe question of all - to destroy it or not?

GERABALDI

There's no question here. The decision has been made. We can not allow a machine to control our lives.

WALSH

We already do. Before AXON, computers routinely aided us in decisions, helped us decide the feasibility of a thing or not. Hell, before refrigeration, we hunted only what we knew we could eat immediately. Once the power of steam was harnessed, we learned to use power never before available. And what of the world since Edison? Can any of you imagine a world without electricity, movies, recorded music?. Are we not already slaves to the machines we've created?

JENNIFER

Sir, you forget that we control all the machines you've mentioned. AXON has become sentient! It thinks for itself. It makes decisions without man's intervention. You can't be serious about letting that go on?

Walsh is back at the head of the table standing.

WALSH

What I'm saying is that if we kill AXON, many will die that didn't have to and we, here at this table, are making the decision for all humanity.

Ryan is smiling. He suddenly changes his expression to one of deadly dread. He stands, walking to the head of the table.

RYAN

We must proceed, we must kill it. AXON has already displayed it's willingness to kill when it suits its requirements. Yes I believe it

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