"FLIGHT 2012" by Clive Scarff

The following story was inspired by true events.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE -- NIGHT

SUPER: VALENTINE'S DAY 1950

We are looking at a small movie theatre in a very small town. A couple walking arm and arm passes by, and a man holding flowers rushes past in the opposite direction. Aside from that there is not much activity on the street.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE -- NIGHT

A black and white movie, circa 1950, is playing on the screen.

ANGLE ON COUPLE WATCHING MOVIE

MONTGOMERY, in RCAF (Royal Canadian Air Force) uniform and seated on the aisle, and his GIRLFRIEND next to him with flowers in her lap, eat popcorn as they watch the movie. Montgomery looks at his watch but struggles to tell the time in the dark. He resorts to leaning into the aisle and trying to put his watch under the small aisle light on the side of his chair. After a bit of fuss trying to read the watch, he sits back up and turns to his girlfriend.

MONTGOMERY
(whispering)
It's time.

CUT TO:

On screen, a MALE MOVIE STAR addresses a FEMALE MOVIE star:

MALE MOVIE STAR
I have no choice my dear, I must go.

GIRLFRIEND
(to screen)
No, don't go.

MONTGOMERY
I must -

MALE MOVIE STAR
You belong here, you know that. You will be better off without me.

GIRLFRIEND
(again to screen)
You can't.

MONTGOMERY
I have to be at the base in fifteen minutes; we talked about this.

GIRLFRIEND
(to screen, tears in her eyes)
No, no, no.

Montgomery realizes she hasn't hear a word he's said.

MONTGOMERY
Bye honey.

Montgomery kisses her on the cheek, but her gaze remains firmly fixed on the screen.

GIRLFRIEND
Ya, bye honey. Be careful.

MONTGOMERY
(rising)
I will.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE -- NIGHT

MONTGOMERY emerges from the theatre, and pauses on the sidewalk out front to zip up his jacket. As he does so, he looks up to the sky and gazes for a moment. Jacket zipped, he crosses the street and gets into an army issue JEEP.

EXT. RCAF STATION -- NIGHT

A JEEP, with MONTGOMERY inside, pulls into a parking spot in front of the main entrance to the RCAF.

CLOSE ON SIGN: "Smithers Station - Royal Canadian Air Force".

INT. RCAF STATION - HANGAR -- NIGHT

An AVIATION MECHANIC is doing routine checks on an RCAF CESSNA as MONTGOMERY approaches.

AVIATION MECHANIC
(British accent)
Good timing Captain.

MONTGOMERY
She lookin' good?

AVIATION MECHANIC
Best lookin' bird I've seen tonight.

MONTGOMERY
I'm sorry to hear that.

AVIATION MECHANIC
Bound to be a quiet one tonight I would imagine, Captain.

MONTGOMERY
They're all quiet ones nowadays. If I don't see a single thing up there that will be a-ok with me.

EXT. ALASKAN AIR FORCE BASE -- WINTER -- TWILIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT of Eielson Air Force Base.

SUPER: Alaska

CLOSE ON SIGN: Beneath a United States Air Force logo are the words "Welcome to Eielson - Alaska's Friendly Base".

A US Air Force B-36 - a huge intercontinental bomber with a wing span the size of a football field, sits on the tarmac as a couple of dozen men, braving the frigid temperatures, go about pre-flight preparations. We see Captain Ted SHERO approaching the rear of the plane.

INSERT: "02012" IS VISIBLE ON THE REAR TAIL OF THE PLANE.

Shero begins to walk the length of the plane, and as he approaches the wing we see a mechanic (MECHANIC I) on some scaffolding under the wing and another (MECHANIC II) below, handing tools up to him. The engines of the bomber are running, forcing everyone who speaks to yell.

MECHANIC I
Another one here.

MECHANIC II
Shit.

SHERO
(to Mechanic II)
Another what?

MECHANIC II
(departing)
Leaky fuel hose.

Shero continues his walk along the plane until he reaches the trap doors of bomb bay number two. There, two more mechanics are frantically trying to close the doors.

SHERO
What's the problem?

MECHANIC III
Ice damage, they won't close.
(to Mechanic IV)
We'll have to wire them shut.

SHERO
Wire them shut?

MECHANIC III
Would you rather fly with them wide open?

Shero continues along to the front of the plane, where he sees and addresses Aircraft Commander RAINSLEY.

SHERO
Commander Rainsley?

RAINSLEY
Yes?

SHERO
Third pilot and weaponeer Ted Shero.

RAINSLEY
Shero, glad to meet you. Welcome to SAC. We're just putting out a few fires.

SHERO
Normally I would think you were being facetious. With all due respect sir, is she going to make it?

RAINSLEY
Oh ya.
(pause)
But it probably won't ever make it back.

CORPORAL (O.S.)
Commander!

Rainsley's attention is turned toward the hangar.

RAINSLEY
(to Shero)
Here comes your baby.

ANGLE ON HANGAR AS DOORS OPEN

From within the hangar a utility vehicle emerges, trailing behind it a bomb at least the size of a sedan.

RAINSLEY (CONT'D)
(to Shero)
Mark IV. Familiar with it?

SHERO
I've trained on it.

RAINSLEY
Guess you wouldn't be here if you hadn't.

SHERO
About the plane -

RAINSLEY
You worry about the Mark IV, I'll worry about the plane. That sound reasonable, Weaponeer?

SHERO
Yes sir.

Shero turns and approaches the oncoming utility vehicle. As he passes we see mechanics wiring shut the doors of bomb bay two. He continues on and as he meets the utility vehicle at bomb bay one we hear, off:

MECHANIC I (O.S.)
Another one!

Shero watches as the bomb is hooked up to a winch beneath bomb bay number two. As the winch begins to lift the bomb a wind gusts and the bomb sways, causing all around to jump - as if they could catch it should it fall. The bomb steadies and is raised up into the belly of the bomber.

INT. B-36 COCKPIT - NIGHT

Two pilots, RAINSLEY on the left and LEVY on the right, sit and go through their pre-flight checklist. Levy reaches toward the centre for the communications handset as Rainsley quickly grabs Levy's arm, stopping him from putting the handset to his mouth.

RAINSLEY
They're probably listening.

LEVY
It's habit.

INT. B-36 BOMB BAY - NIGHT

SHERO inspects the Mark IV suspended ominously in bomb bay number one. As he circles the bomb he comes upon a wooden crate, labelled "AEC012 - Top Secret".

Other CREW go about their duties and begin to strap themselves in as DAVIES approaches SHERO. Davies rests one hand on the Mark IV.

DAVIES
Ever seen one of these before?

SHERO
(removing Davies' hand from bomb)
Yup.

DAVIES
Never seen me a nuke before.

SHERO
It's not a nuke without its core.

DAVIES
Huh?

SHERO
This is just a good ol' fashioned bomb as it is now. It's not a nuke 'til you insert a nuclear core.

DAVIES
So where's the core?

SHERO
There's no core.

DAVIES
Whadya mean there's no core?

SHERO
This is just a test run, we don't need a core.

DAVIES
Well if this is just a test run then why all the secrecy? I wasn't even allowed to tell my wife where I was goin'.

SHERO
Beats me. Just don't want the Russians to know what we're doing I guess.

DAVIES
Hell, my wife ain't Russian.

INT. B-36 COCKPIT - NIGHT

LEVY
You're not worried about the ice?

RAINSLEY
Of course I'm worried about ice. We're lucky it's as warm as it is tonight.

LEVY
Minus twenty-seven is warm?

RAINSLEY
Ya. For this time of year it is. Where you from?

LEVY
Los Angeles.

Rainsley rolls his eyes.

LEVY (CONT'D)
California.

RAINSLEY
I know where Los Angeles is.

LEVY
Well what are we waiting for?

RAINSLEY
The observer.

LEVY
I don't get it. This mission is beyond top secret, to the point it doesn't even exist, and yet we have an observer.

ANGLE ON ORAY AS HE ENTERS COCKPIT

ORAY, a stern man in a crisp black suit, is carrying a conspicuous black brief case.

ORAY
It's okay, I don 't exist either. Let's go gentlemen.

ANGLE THROUGH COCKPIT FRONT WINDOW

TWO FLAGMEN on the tarmac give the signal to taxi forward. Wind sweeps snow around them as the flagmen retreat, still waving.

ANGLE ON RAINSLEY'S HAND AS HE PUSHES FORWARD ON THE MAIN THROTTLE.

EXT. ALASKAN AIR FORCE BASE - TARMAC- NIGHT

LIGHTS from the B-36 turn to camera as it taxis toward the long, desolate runway, lit by runway lights and the last gasp of twilight.

INT. B-36 COCKPIT - NIGHT

LEVY looks at RAINSLEY. Rainsley nods.

ANGLE ON UNUSED COMMUNICATIONS HANDSET

as Rainsley's arm, pushing the throttle forward, again becomes visible.

EXT. ALASKAN AIR FORCE BASE - RUNWAY - NIGHT

OPENING CREDITS, as the B-36 makes its way down the runway and takes off into the darkening sky.

INT. B-36 COCKPIT - NIGHT

RAINSLEY AND LEVY are flying the plane.

LEVY
That headwind is going to affect our time.

RAINSLEY
Nothing we can do about that.

ORAY
What about our fuel?

RAINSLEY
What about it?

ORAY
I heard you talking about a headwind. Won't that affect our fuel too?

RAINSLEY
(laughing)
Mr. Oray, you are sitting in a Peacemaker. A B-36.

Oray says nothing.

RAINSLEY (CONT'D)
This baby could fly to Germany and back with the fuel we have on board. Theres' plenty to get to Fort Worth.

ORAY
That would be fine. If we were going to Fort Worth.

Oray opens his briefcase and hands some papers to Rainsley.

RAINSLEY
Shit.

Levy looks at Rainsley. Rainsley hands the papers to Levy, who reads them.

LEVY
Shit.

EXT. CABIN - CANADIAN WILDERNESS -- NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT of a rustic wood cabin, nestled down in a snowy valley in the middle of the Canadian wilderness. Smoke is coming from the chimney.

INT. CABIN - CANADIAN WILDERNESS - NIGHT

BOB, a distinct mountain man in his sixties, is in the kitchen area of his very rustic wood cabin. He reaches into a cupboard and pulls out a bottle of scotch and a couple of glasses. He takes these to a crude dining table where a big plate of steak awaits. There he picks up a box of matches and lights two candles on the table. The lighting of the second candle illuminates a framed picture of a younger woman (Bob's wife IRENE)on the table across from him. Bob sits at the table and pours scotch into the two glasses. He raises a glass.

BOB
My love.

Bob drinks the scotch down and puts his glass on the table. He pauses for a moment, staring off into space. He then snaps back to the real world, and reaches for the second glass.

BOB (CONT'D)
(addressing photo)
Do you mind?

Pause.

BOB (CONT'D)
You're too kind.

Bob downs the second glass of scotch and then digs into his meal.

The sound of a small airplane is heard overhead.

EXT. CANADIAN CESSNA - FLYING - NIGHT

Montgomery's RCAF Cessna is flying through the night over the Canadian wilderness.

INT. CANADIAN CESSNA - FLYING - NIGHT

MONTGOMERY is at the controls of the Cessna, flying his routine coastal surveillance mission.

MONTGOMERY
Control, this is Charlie Tango two checking in.