

THE DRAUGHTSMAN, THE SMUGGLER AND THE DIAMONDS

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FADE IN:

EXT. NAMIBIA. SOUTHWEST COAST - DAY

A strip of sand straddled between the crashing surf of the Atlantic Ocean and three hundred foot high sand dunes.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)

The exclusion zone includes two hundred miles of pristine beach running along the coast from Oranjemund to fifty or so miles north of Lüderitz. In 1908, the German colonials stamped their authority and called it Sperrgebiet... the Forbidden Area.

A blanket of dense ocean fog, the *Cassimbo*, cloaks the sea and sands.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)

It's probably the most unspoilt stretch of land on the planet. To the outsider, barren... hostile. Certainly remote. For non-employees of De Beers who now share the region with the government, totally off-limits. Get caught trespassing on that stretch of real estate... well, you're looking at a very long stretch in Windhoek prison.

Through the *Cassimbo*, at the base of a towering dune, a corroded merchant ship.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)

Almost exclusively, De Beers rely on men from the Ovambo tribe to harvest the diamonds. They stay in high-security, prison like barracks provided by the company.

As the fog lifts, a work party of AFRICAN MEN become visible. They crawl on their hands and knees.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)

When their six month tour is up, and before being allowed to leave the complex, the tribesmen are subjected to a full body search as well as an x-ray inspection.

With military-like precision, the men advance along the beach, crawling on their hands and knees, sifting the sand grains.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)  
 Understandable... ten percent of  
 Namibia's economy, about two-point-  
 five billion dollars, comes from  
 the governments share of the money  
 collected from selling the sea  
 diamonds to cutters and polishers  
 from London, Antwerp and Tel Aviv.

Occasionally, a tiny rock is picked-up, examined and either  
 discarded or dropped into a receptacle.

THE SMUGGLER (V.O.)  
 These sea diamonds... what makes  
 them so special?

The Draughtsman CHUCKLES.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)  
 Well, they've taken a ninety  
 million year waterborne journey...  
 a peaceful jaunt, starting from an  
 inland riverbank in South Africa,  
 before eventually being washed  
 ashore in Namibia.

THE SMUGGLER (V.O.)  
 Peaceful?

EXT. AFRICAN SKY - NIGHT

A moonless, star-studded sky.

A turboprop aircraft flies at altitude on black light.

*(Note: Black Light is a military term - an aircraft devoid of  
 navigational lights.)*

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)  
 Yes. Let me explain... as far as  
 geologists can determine, beginning  
 sometime during the Jurassic Age,  
 the diamonds that wash up in  
 Namibia were pushed to the surface  
 by Kimberlite Pipes about eight  
 hundred kilometres to the east,  
 along what's now the Orange  
 River... the river that forms the  
 border between South Africa and  
 Namibia.

INT. AIRCRAFT - CONTINUOUS

The sound of LABOURED BREATHING through an oxygen mask.

GREEN TACTICAL LIGHTING saturates the fuselage.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)

The biggest, heaviest diamonds were gradually pulled down the river by currents and then eventually, dragged out to sea and into Namibian coastal waters.

THE SMUGGLER, mid 40s, dressed in black and equipped for a High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) parachute jump is seated.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)

Sea currents over tens of millions of years gradually polish these rough stones to a state of unusual quality and brilliance...

A second man trailing safety webbing, the LOADMASTER, also breathing oxygen through a mask, checks over the smugglers equipment.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)

... and as day follows night, the tides slowly but surely push the rocks back to land.

A RED warning light FLASHES on a panel.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)

The result, the diamonds that are washed ashore are particularly prized because on average they are larger and higher quality than those dug out of the ground.

The parachutist disconnects a hose leading to the aircraft's oxygen supply and hitches it to his own source, a chest mounted cylinder.

The LM hits a control. The rear ramp lowers. A howling WIND engulfs the aircraft.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)

There is no more tranquil, low-tech, nor more valuable mining going on anywhere in the world.

The smuggler stands. A military rucksack, a Bergen, attached to his harness via webbing, rests behind his thighs.

The parachutist shuffles - penguin like - towards the rear ramp. The LM follows.

Nearly five miles below, ocean surf can be seen breaking into dark mass; the Namibian desert.

THE SMUGGLER (V.O.)

And you trust the Ovambo?

A GREEN light FLASHES.

The loadmaster points towards the abyss.

The smuggler leaps into the night sky.

THE DRAUGHTSMAN (V.O.)  
They've never let me down in over  
fifteen years...

EXT. SKY OVER NANIBIA - NIGHT

A pollution free African sky containing an abundance of stars!

The smuggler gains stability, allowing him and his payload to plummet in a safe mode.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) The smuggler falls at 120 mph -- terminal velocity.

B) Far below, an occasional light can be seen.

C) He periodically checks his altimeter.

D) The parachute is deployed.

E) The CRACK as the silk opens.

F) The smuggler is suspended under a pale grey square rig. Below him, attached by a length of webbing, hangs his Bergen.

THE SMUGGLER'S POV

He glances at a chest mounted navigation system.

He plots his route, adjusting his rig via controls attached to the harness risers.

CONTINUOUS

The parachutist lands on the strip of sand hemmed between the ocean and the gigantic dunes.

EXT. NAMIBIA. SOUTHWEST COAST - DAY

Through the morning Cassimbo we can make out the silhouette of the rusty merchant ship.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) The surf crashes onto the beach.

B) Seals bask.

- C) Sun-bleached animal bones litter the sand.
- D) A second, smaller rusting wreck, is grounded offshore.
- E) A lone jackal trots along the shore.
- F) Sand is whipped into the air by the offshore wind.

INT. SHIPWRECK. ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURE. A CABIN - DAY

An upper deck -- below the ship's bridge.

From his Bergen the smuggler removes a smaller rucksack. He opens it and takes a cursory look.

The pack is full of wads of one hundred US dollar bills -- more money than most people have ever seen.

The smuggler closes the rucksack.

INT. SHIPWRECK. THE BRIDGE - DAY

The smuggler removes a rusted grill from an air vent. He stretches in and pulls out a small backpack.

He unties an inner sac and peers in. He smiles, then closes the backpack.

He places the cash filled second rucksack in the vent.

The smuggler replaces the grill.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Strung between two bulkheads is a mesh hammock.

The smuggler sits on the floor, staring out of a porthole, eating from a ration pack. Within reach lays an automatic pistol fitted with a suppressor.

He takes a swig from a bottle of water. As he replaces the screw-top, his attention is drawn to...

EXT. SEASHORE - CONTINUOUS

...through the lifting fog, a scraggy desert lion, approaches the sea. Seals BARK and scurry into the surf.

The lion takes a few licks of the saltwater then pulls back and looks about.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The smuggler smiles.

LATER

He lays in the hammock... sleeping.

LATER

The operator stows his kit.

EXT. SHIPWRECK. UPPER DECK - DUSK

The smuggler unfolds a satellite dish.

INT. SHIPWRECK. ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURE - NIGHT

The smuggler sits with his back against a bulkhead, a laptop on his legs. He taps on the keyboards.

EXT. SHORE - NIGHT

The smuggler wears a harness. Clipped to it, webbing... which in turn is attached to his Bergen.

The operative prepares a Surface-To-Air Recovery System (STARS).

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) The smuggler clips a cable attached to a large deflated balloon, to his harness.

B) He inflates the balloon from a helium canister.

C) The distant sound of approaching ENGINES.

D) The inflated bomb-shaped balloon is released. It rises into the night sky, pulling behind it the cable.

EXT. AIRCRAFT - NIGHT

The cargo aircraft is on its reciprocal - though much lower - route. Attached to its nose, a pair of horns... of sorts.

INT. AIRCRAFT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The PILOTS wear Night Vision Goggles (NVGs) and survey the night sky.

PILOTS NVG - POV

The helium balloon FLASHES -- revealing its presence.

Below that, a second INDICATOR, also visible through NVGs.

The trim of the aircraft is adjusted to snare the guide -- a mere one hundred and thirty metres above the desert.

EXT. SHORE - CONTINUOUS

The smuggler braces himself for the... JOLT!

He's yanked into the air, his Bergen trailing after him.

EXT. NAMIBIAN NIGHT SKY

The smuggler dangles from the cable. A distance above him we can see the aircraft.

Its ramp is down. The loadmaster peers over the edge.

INT. AIRCRAFT HOLD - CONTINUOUS

The LM is laying flat on his belly, overseeing the winching-in of the operative, spinning below him.

A second LOADMASTER operates winch controls.

Slowly, the smuggler and his Bergen are pulled towards the aircraft... closing with every rotation of his body.

CONTINUOUS

Thirty metres behind the aircraft, the smuggler streamlines.

The winching continues... until with the aid of the loadmaster the smuggler is pulled over the lip of the ramp... and into safety.

The second LM slams a control. The ramp door closes.

The three men reach for seating and buckle in, as the aircraft...

EXT. NAMIBIAN NIGHT SKY - CONTINUOUS

...dives towards the deck and continues its exodus on a terrain hugging flight.

INT. AIRCRAFT HOLD - DAWN

International airspace. The aircraft cruises at altitude.



The smuggler reaches into his Bergen and pulls out the smaller backpack retrieved from the vent in the shipwreck.

He delves into the inner sac and salvages a chunky, glass looking stone.

He holds it up, just as the first rays of light are shining through a fuselage window.

The trio smile in unison.

The smuggler opens the flap of the backpack and drops the stone back into a mass of uncut sea diamonds.

FADE OUT.