

THE RED EYE

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Thanksgiving weekend approaches. Taxis, limos, commuter buses competing for a piece of the asphalt ribbon. TRAFFIC POLICE WHISTLES mix with TAXI CAR HORNS. Anxious passengers coming and going. Flight crews gather at the curb waiting for the hotel bus to whisk them off for a night's rest.

CONCOURSE C - GATE 41--

Conspicuous. Across the tarmac sits the old International terminal. Empty. Hallow. Stripped. A tribute to misguided projections. The cold-gray structure is now a mausoleum to travel memories of the past.

Strings of dollies line the perimeter of gate. A single belt-loader is parked in position to work the bulk bin compartment of the incoming BOEING 767. A glassy sheen covers the tarmac as the rain falls relentlessly.

CUT TO:

INT. CONCOURSE C - BREAKROOM - NIGHT

Bad florescent lighting drenches a large nondescript room. The DRONE of the EVENING NEWSCAST is interrupted by the POUNDING of DOMINO TILES on the cafeteria style table. A row of black and white monitors list the departures and arrivals that will make up the evening schedule.

ON THE MONITORS--

Flight 219. Delayed. Flight 1088. Delayed. Every flight. Delayed.

WIDEN--

To include two RAMP AGENTS in full rain gear staring up at the discouraging information on the monitors. Water begins to form puddles as it drips off their sleeves. They both have their earmuffs pulled down around their necks.

DON, late 50's, a veteran who has been on the ramp since high school. He checks his wrist watch. He's been through this before.

IVAN, mid-twenties, new on board. His orange safety vest is tucked in his side pocket. Hot shot. Always working he angles.

Don wishes he was more like Ivan. Ivan wishes he was more like Don.

DON
(re: the delays)
Goddamn "flow-control."

IVAN
We ain't getting out of here until
3:30 this morning.

Beat.

IVAN
Fuck'n 384 hasn't even left yet.

Beat.

DON
It'll be here.

IVAN
How can you be so sure?

Don tilts his head back to the breakroom tables where a couple of UNIFORMED ARMED SECURITY GUARDS sit by themselves. They prisoners to their job. Stuck.

DON
Go pull up the load for 384.

Ivan WALKS to a computer terminal in the OPS ROOM and starts typing on the keyboard. With one final stroke, the printer starts to grind out the load sheet for flight 384.

IVAN MOVES TO THE PRINTER and tears the load sheet from the printer and hands it to Don.

IVAN
What the?

DON
All twenty four positions...

IVAN
...M.T.'s

DON
Bet you never saw a load sheet
like that in training.

Beat.

DON
A whole flight full of LD-3's, and
not a thing in them. No bags. No
freight. No mail. No comat.

Beat.

DON
Nothing.

IVAN
I don't get it.

DON
What'da bet one of those cans
isn't empty.

A COMMANDING VOICE emanates from the RADIO attached to
Dons belt.

VOICE
Flight 84 is ready to go. Don
they need you to push back 84.

Don pulls the radio from the holster around his waist.

DON
(into the radio)
Roger that. I'm on my way.

Don returns the radio to it's holster and flips the hood
of his rain slicker over his head...grabs his rain soaked
safety vest from a wall hook...then EXITS the breakroom.

Ivan still stares up at the monitors.

Beat.

Ivan repeats Don's routine and HUSTLES OUT of the
breakroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. - CONCOURSE C - NIGHT

Don is walking down the long corridor from the breakroom.
Passing by the even numbered gates. Planes being loaded
with bags. Flight maintenance rushing down the stairs
from the jetway to the tarmac.

Tug drivers racing back to the bagroom to check for late arrivals from the ticket counter.

We SEE IVAN in the b.g. emerging from the breakroom and RUNNING to catch up with Don.

IVAN

So, c'mon, what's coming off that flight?

Don waves him off.

DON

I don't want you to get any crazy ideas in that head of yours.

Beat.

DON

I know how you think.

IVAN

Please?

Don STOPS.

DON

Okay, but you didn't hear this from me.

Ivan stands silent. Anticipating.

DON

Twice a month the treasury sends out cash to the Federal Bank, since we now have the contract to move the mail, we now carry this too...

Beat.

DON

...nobody knows how much it is, or whether it's paper or coin or both.

IVAN

Holy shhhhhh...

DON

Now you know...and now you should forget it. Because, if you don't, it'll eat at you like nothing else. So just let it go.

Ivan stands transfixed.

DON
Ivan!

IVAN
Huh...ahhh...yeah.

DON
(very deliberately)
Let...it...go.

Ivan slowly TURNS AWAY and heads back to the breakroom.

Don CONTINUES to the gate where his JET TUG is waiting for him. He puts his radio headset on and checks the microphone to the cockpit. Still thinking about Ivan, he shakes his head disapprovingly.

As Don starts the PUSH BACK TUG a plume of smoke belches leout and we--

CUT TO:

INT. CONCOURSE C - OPS - NIGHT

The heartbeat of the operation. Two desks with full leather chairs. Normally reserved for the senior agents on day shift. Computer terminals, monitors, printers, papers stacked everywhere. The back wall is full of manuals and briefing notes.

IVAN--

Sound asleep. Both feet propped up on the desk. Reclining in the Supervisor's chair. His head slowly bobs as he SNORES SOFTLY.

We HEAR the exchanges between the CONTROL TOWER and PILOTS from a SPEAKER mounted high on the far corner of the office.

CONTROL TOWER (V.O.)
Flight 384, cleared to land,
runway 19 left.

PILOT
Roger that. 19 left...thanks.

CONTROL TOWER (V.O.)
384. Welcome to SFO. Contact
ground control and proceed to
concouse Charlie, gate 41.

Ivan's head lists back a little too much and he starts to fall back out of the chair. Ivan SNAPS to ATTENTION just in time to keep the chair from tumbling backward.

Ivan shakes the cobwebbs. His heart is racing from coming out of a deep sleep. He looks out from the office into the breakroom.

IVAN'S POV--

He surveys the breakroom. The TELEVISION is playing a late night INFOMERCIAL. Newspaper scattered. No one is moving. Everyone is sleeping. Maintenance. Ramp crew. The gate agent. Even the two Security Guards!!

Ivan looks at his watch...3:45...everything is shut down.

BACK ON IVAN--

He stands at the doorway. After a beat, Ivan JUMPS back into the chair in the office. He grabs the microphone on the desk.

IVAN

Flight 384, this is operations.
Do you copy?

PILOT

384. Go ahead.

Ivan starts to type furiously at the keyboard on the desk.

IVAN

Be advised that we are changing
your gate to 48. Do you copy?

PILOT

Gate 48. 10-4.

Ivan slips his raincoat on and quietly slips out of the Ops office and exits the breakroom.

MOVING WITH IVAN--

As he exits the breakroom he grabs a steak knife from a plastic tub that Cabin Service uses to deposit dirty dishes and glasses from the First Class Cabin.

Ivan takes a couple of RAMP LIGHTS off the seat of a tug parked outside the breakroom.

He RUNS the length of the concourse. Out in the rain. Away from the terminal. Past parked planes, jet tugs, belt loaders.

Ivan reaches GATE 48 just as flight 384 is leaving the turning off the taxiway and is heading towards him.

He turns both FLASHLIGHTS ON and methodically signals the 767 into the gate.

The pilot steers the plane onto the long yellow line that extends from the terminal out to the taxiway. Ivan puts his hands down by his sides, then slowly raises them up above his head and forms an "x" with the lights.

The nose gear stops at the yellow mark labeled "767".

Ivan grabs a long rubber chock and shoves it behind the wheel. Takes the by-pass pin from his pocket and inserts it into the nose-gear, then grabs the plug of the Ground Power Unit, pops open the access door and plugs it into the receptacle.

Ivan runs out from the plane and raises his hands above his head, pointing his thumbs towards each other signaling to the pilot that the plane is secured.

We HEAR the ENGINES SPOOL DOWN.

Ivan runs to the stairway of the jetway and quickly scales the stairs to the access door. He punches the four digit code to the jetway.

Ivan climbs behind the steering wheel of the jetway and maneuvers it to the door of the 767. He parks the jetway and waits for the young, female, FLIGHT ATTENDANT to open the door..

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

(to Ivan)

Good morning.

Ivan offers the reason for the gate change. No need to arouse suspicion.

IVAN

High. Sorry about the gate change, but we had a tug breakdown at 41 and spilled a bunch of transmission fluid.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Thanks. I'll pass it along to the Captain.

Ivan turns and barges out the door of the jetway. He slides down the stairs. Skipping two at a time.

Ivan JOGS to a BELT LOADER that is parked in between gates 48 and 46. He starts it, raising the belt up as he drives it to the door of the bulk bin of flight 384.

He parks the belt loader. The engine is still running. Ivan CLIMBS out of the seat and RUNS UP the belt loader arm to the bulk bin door.

Ivan opens the door to the bulk bin. He reaches in and pull the cargo safety door to him and fastens it to the spring latch.

He locates the interior light switch and flips it on. We SEE the bulk bin. Empty. A few blankets and pillows from the interior cabin are in one corner. A nylon cargo rope is laying on top of a bag of extra the safety netting.

Ivan gets to his feet and starts unsnapping the curtain that separates the bulk bin from the main cargo section.

He looks in. A long row of LD-3's.

IVAN
(to himself)
The motherload.

Ivan GRABS two blankets from the back and then slides past curtain into the main cargo bin. He TAPS each LD-3 with the butt end of his flashlight. TAP. Empty. TAP. Empty. TAP. Empty. TAP. FULL.

Ivan KNEELS down and undoes each of the four velcro straps that secures the curtain to the container. He rolls the curtain up and lays it on top of the LD-3.

Inside, he can SEE for neatly stacked blocks wrapped in a heavy black plastic. Ivan takes the STEAK KNIFE from his back pocket and SLICES the PLASTIC. The plastic opens like a gutted fish.

Ivan PULLS the plastic apart to reveal--

IVAN'S POV--

Neatly stacked UNITED STATES CURRENCY--

BACK ON IVAN--

As he PULLS stacks of cash from the bundle and TOSSES them into the blanket on the floor. He TIES the corners of the BLANKET together. He repeats this with the second blanket.

Ivan RISES. GRABS each blanket and WADDLES back to the bulk bin. He can see outside that the rain is still coming down. He notices a red leather COMAT bag in the corner of the bulk bin and starts TRANSFERRING his loot into it.

He's almost finished. His concentration is broken when WE HEAR--

SECURITY GUARD #1 (V.O.)
HOLD IT! RIGHT THERE MOTHERFCKER!

Ivan FREEZES.

SECURITY GUARD #1 (V.O.)
Yeah. You heard me.

Ivan slowly looks up to see--

SECURITY GUARD #1--

Kneeling in the doorway of the bulk bin. He is a tiny man with a badge. A dweeb. His high pitched voice defies puberty. All Ivan sees is the gun that the Security Guard has drawn on him.

SECURITY GUARD #1
Now, put your hands up.

Beat.

SECURITY GUARD #1
Up! Asshole.

Ivan straightens up from his crouch and RAISES HIS HANDS. His right hand unwittingly hits the metal lever that holds the cargo safety door up.

The DOOR comes CRASHING DOWN and lands squarely on the back of Security Guard #1's head. A LOUD THUD is heard.

The Guard is knocked out cold. He FALLS FORWARD into the bulk bin. Ivan grabs the gun and quickly empties the clip.

Ivan DRAGS the Guard into the bulk bin. He pokes his head outside to see if anyone has witnessed his recent exchange.

Ivan grabs the nylon rope and hog ties the Security Guard. He STUFFS one of the mini-pillow cases into his mouth to keep him quiet. Ivan takes the cover from the other pillow and pulls it over the Security Guard's head.

Ivan spots a MAIL CART parked at the next gate. IVAN SPRINTS down the belt loader ramp across the tarmac to the mail cart. He THROWS the CURTAIN OPEN.

Ivan GRABS a PRIORITY MAIL bag that is nearly empty and stuffs the envelopes into an EXPRESS MAIL bag next to it.

Ivan returns to the bulk bin carrying the empty bag. As Ivan ducks back into the bulk bin we--

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - GATE 48 -
NIGHT

We see IVAN STRUGGLING to load the PRIORITY BAG that is stuffed full with the Security Guard into the MAIL CART. He can't seem to get a good grip on the nylon fabric. With one final thrust he chugs it into the cart. MUFFLED GROANS emanate from the BAG.

Ivan SLIDES the mail cart curtain CLOSED. He turns to grab the COMAT bag at the end of the belt loader.

IVAN
(to himself)
The guys at the Post Office are
never going to believe this...

Ivan takes a look around for any passers-by, then walks across to an abandoned CART TUG at the next gate. He places the bag behind the seat next to another COMAT bag that is being used to store a set of ramp lights.

Ivan STARTS the TUG and backs it to an string of empty containers and starts towing them over to the MAIL CART.

Ivan parks the TUG and walks to the tongue of the MAIL CART. The rain makes it difficult to hook the cart to the string of containers.

Suddenly the cart moves with ease as we HEAR a voice from BEHIND the cart--

JOHN (V.O.)
Hold on. I'll help you.

The STORM WIND and TUG ENGINE make it difficult to hear.

IVAN and JOHN slowly pull the MAIL CART into position and Ivan drops the pin into the hole that connects the CART and the CONTAINER string.

JOHN WALKS to the front of the MAIL CART where IVAN is standing.

JOHN
Why the change?

IVAN
(coy)
What change?

JOHN
You know...384...why is it here?

IVAN

Oh that...fuck'n belt loader was
leaking diesel fuel...didn't
really have time to clean it up...

John is sceptical.

JOHN

(re: the string of
dollies)

So what are you doing with these?

IVAN

Just cleaning up the gate for a.m.

Beat.

IVAN

You know how they bitch every time
the ramp isn't perfect for them.

JOHN

Yeah...talk about the pot calling
the kettle black.

John walks over to the BELT LOADER and LOWERS the BELT
ARM, puts it in gear, then DRIVES it next to where Ivan
is standing.

JOHN

By the way, there looking for one
of the security guards...you
haven't seen him roaming the
halls?

Ivan shrugs.

JOHN

Well if you see him, call me.

IVAN

Okay...but...

JOHN

You taking these back to the
boneyard?

IVAN

Yeah. Then I'm going to drop the
mail cart off at the post office.

John SEES the two COMAT BAGS behind the seat in Ivan's
tug.

JOHN
 (grabbing on of the
 bags)
 I need a set of lights.

Ivan tries to give John the comat bag with the lights in it but John grabs the comat bag with the cash.

JOHN
 Hurry back. We need to finish
 before day shift gets here.

Ivan's jaw drops. His thoughts are racing. He knows he's fucked.

IVAN
 Yeah, sure...whatever you say.

Ivan JUMPS into the TUG. As he SPEEDS AWAY we--

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - MORNING

Employee bus stop 18. Last one before the employee parking lot. Away from the terminal. A handful of CABIN SERVICE workers are waiting to go home. IVAN EMERGES from around the corner of the AIR CARGO building.

An EMPLOYEE BUS APPROACHES. Nearly full. The DOORS SWING OPEN. A lone passenger EXITS. IVAN PEEKS at him as he waits to board the bus. IT'S JOHN. Ivan's eyes BULGE. HE STOPS in his tracks.

Beat.

Everybody's boarded except Ivan. The doors stay open. Moment of truth.

IVAN WAVES the Driver on.

The BUS PULLS AWAY from the CURB. They STAND MOTIONLESS. John has his RAIN JACKET slung over his shoulder.

CLOSE ON JOHN--

He SLOWLY RAISES his RAIN JACKET to reveal the--

COMAT BAG--

Bulging with cash.

BACK ON BOTH--

Ivan gradually sports a grin. John throws a grin back at him. Ivan has become more like John.

John has become more like Ivan. The next employee bus
PULLS TO THE CURB. The BUS DOORS OPEN. As IVAN and
JOHN climb on board.

FADE OUT.