

RED MERCURY

Written by

Sam Quo Vadis
tigersi@iname.com
www.studiostar.ca

FADE IN:

EXT. MOZDOK MILITARY BASE; RECREATION CENTER - NIGHT

SUPER: Mozdok Military Base: Russia

TWO DOZEN SOLDIERS lounge on bunks, eat, read, play Russian checkers, dominos, cards, chess, or write letters.

There's the audible THUNK of a locking mechanism. DIMITRI (20s), baby-faced, stares at the steel entrance doors.

Ribbons attached to the air conditioner flutter as it comes on.

Dimitri looks up curiously at a TALL SOLDIER who loads and checks his AK-47 rifle.

TALL SOLDIER
What are you looking at?

DIMITRI
It's curious. It's not warm. Why does the air conditioner come on?

TALL SOLDIER
It's a malfunction. So shut up.

STOCKY SOLDIER

Enjoy yourself, Dimitri. You heard what the Colonel said; this recreation time is a reward.

DIMITRI

But I was on report -

TALL SOLDIER

What do you care? Would you rather be on parade?

One soldier flicks his playing cards at the face of another. Another CURSES at a missed shot and hurls his ping-pong paddle against a wall.

Sweat beads form on the Stocky Soldier's forehead.

STOCKY SOLDIER

It's hot in here. Someone open the door!

The Tall Soldier turns abruptly. His shoulder collides with that of a passing OLDER SOLDIER.

OLDER SOLDIER

Watch where you're going, idiot!

The Tall Soldier draws his pistol and fires several times into the back of the Older Soldier.

A moment of stunned silence in the room and then...

...the Stocky Soldier grabs his AK-47 and pumps bullets into the Tall Soldier's back.

Stray bullets slam into the chest of another soldier, knock him backward and out of his chair. A momentary pause, fear mixed with confusion, then...

...total bedlam as a savage battle erupts: guns, knives, fists, elbows and feet, everything is used...tables and chairs overturn...it's primitive, savage and ruthless. Bullet holes and blood spatter the walls.

Fifteen seconds later the dead and dying litter the floor among scattered game pieces, cups and plates, the paraphernalia of human life, and the final words of men scribbled on cheap white paper and mixed with their own blood.

A soldier chokes. Another MOANS in pain.

The main doors burst open with a THUNDEROUS CLANG.

BORIS VLADIMIROVICH BARABANOV (late-40s), fit, a former KGB officer with the bearing to match, leads a masked SPETSNAZ (Spetsialnoye naznachenie - Russian Elite Special Forces) unit inside. They check the fallen, putting down the wounded with a single bullet to the head.

Dimitri stands precisely as he was before the outbreak. His mouth hangs open in shock; his eyes are filled with fear.

Boris removes his mask, brings a cigarette to his lips as he studies the inquisitive soldier's blood-spattered face.

Boris lights a cigarette. Casually -

BORIS

So, Dimitri...you're still alive.

He blows a cloud of smoke.

EXT. MOZDOK MILITARY BASE - SAME NIGHT

Moonlight filters through a stand of birch trees.

KELLY ZADEK (late 20s), dressed in black, crawls up to the edge of a road. She trains her cool blue eyes through night vision binoculars on a distant barrack, adjusting them so that the wire fence that separates the two become a blur, then focuses on two soldiers standing guard in front of a recreation centre.

She watches as body bags are hauled out of the recreation centre.

Kelly turns her head swiftly toward the road in response to a droning sound. Twin headlight beams bob up and down against the black night.

Kelly flattens herself against the earth as military trucks rumble past. Dust cascades down upon her.

As soon as the trucks are clear she scrambles to her jeep hidden in the brush.

EXT. DIRT ROAD

The jeep emerges from the woods, scatters dirt and gravel as it hits the road flat out.

INT. JEEP: MOVING FAST

With no headlights to guide her, Kelly leans over the steering wheel and squints into the darkness.

As she rounds a bend, another military truck appears. The driver sounds his horn.

Kelly jerks the wheel to one side, skids around the truck, barely holds the road.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK: MOVING

The DRIVER thrusts his head out the window and looks back at the jeep. He's puzzled.

INT. JEEP: MOVING FAST

Kelly looks in the rear view mirror, realizes she's been made. She flicks on the headlights. There's no point in running dark now.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET

The street is deserted. Kelly parks her jeep in front of one of a series of three-story stone buildings.

INT. KELLY'S APARTMENT

Kelly's computer screen comes alive. She types: "Require immediate extraction."

Kelly clicks on "Request confirmation." She moves to the window, checks the clip in her pistol as she looks out.

Her computer DINGS. An incoming message: "Extraction confirmed. Proceed Imperial One Tuvalu."

She types in a destruct code.

As she races out the door a thermite and strontium nitrate bomb burns out her computer in a hail of SPARKS and RED FLAMES.

Sandy bolts for the door.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Sandy slams the door behind her. As she runs down the stairs a SHADOWY FIGURE moves in behind her and pulls a black hood over her head. She struggles, but TWO OTHER MASKED FIGURES abruptly seize her.

A black Volga screeches to a stop. Sandy is forced into the back seat, and then it's away again - leaving the street as silent and empty as it was moments before.

EXT. CALIFORNIA COASTAL ROAD - EARLY EVENING

A silver Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Roadster gleams in the setting sunlight as it glides around the flowing bends of an ocean-hugging cliff.

INT. ROADSTER: MOVING

ALEXANDER ZADEK (ZAY-dek) (30ish), handsome, dressed casually, but stylishly, drops his leather-clad hand to the touch shift and guides the roadster into higher gear. He's confident and in control, the roadster merely an extension of his body.

EXT. CALIFORNIA COASTAL ROAD

From a T-intersection, a Mercedes Benz ML63 AMG SUV kicks up dust as it slides in behind the Roadster.

INT. ROADSTER: MOVING

Alex glances in the rear view mirror and smiles. The game is on.

He taps the gas pedal. The pursuit vehicle fades in the distance. Over a walkie-talkie -

KENNY (FILTER)

Ease off the juice a little, boss.
It's a long way down. And I've got
your mail.

ALEX

I thought you were going to give
me a run for my money.

KENNY (FILTER)

We still on for that "C" note?

Alex grins, slows to let the pursuit vehicle gain ground.

ALEX

Think you can afford it?

EXT. COASTAL ROAD

The contestants jockey for position. On this road there's only one lane, one race, and one winner.

INT. ROADSTER: MOVING

Alex puts the hammer down as he takes on a hill. As he hits the apex, he sees a delivery truck strategically angled across the road.

Alex spins the car 180 degrees on the down slope; the tires bite, dig in, scream, and spin furiously as he races back the way he came.

The SUV crests the hill. They're going head-on! At the last possible moment Alex zigzags around the SUV.

INT. SUV: MOVING

KENNY (30s), buff, hits the brakes hard. Rubber squeals and peels. He and his FOUR NERVOUS PASSENGERS are tossed forward.

KENNY

Are you crazy! What do you call that?!

ALEX (FILTER)

The money move.

KENNY

Hang on, people!

Rubber burns as the vehicle spins around.

EXT. FENCED COMPOUND

The Roadster speeds through an open gate and on to the grounds of a compound housing a number of low, industrial buildings.

INT. ROADSTER: MOVING

Alex navigates between the buildings with a series of quick, precise turns.

He spins the steering wheel hard and darts into an abandoned warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Old crates, metal shelving, and equipment are arranged to create a series of lanes in the massive building.

The SUV charges in behind the Roadster. The two vehicles race over the cement floor toward a wide-open warehouse door.

INT. SUV: MOVING

Kenny grins. He slips a remote from his pocket, aims it and presses a button. The warehouse door starts to drop.

Gloats -

KENNY

Got you now....

INT. ROADSTER: MOVING

Alex knows he won't make it. He shifts gears, turns the wheel, and hits the brake hard. The Roadster slides sideways, skids to a stop centimeters from the door.

The SUV glides up.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Alex rolls down his window as Kenny triumphantly pokes his head out of the SUVs driver's side window.

KENNY

Feel the pain, Alex.

INT. ROADSTER: STATIONARY

Alex looks straight ahead. There's a low clearance under a metal shelf. He steps on the gas, barely scoots underneath.

INT. SUV

Kenny throws the SUV into reverse, strikes a metal shelf. Glass shatters and tinkles against concrete.

EXT. FENCED COMPOUND

The bruised SUV backs out of the warehouse. On its side is a sign that reads "ZADEK INTERNATIONAL BODYGUARD & HOSTAGE RESCUE."

Alex waits...on foot next to his gull-winged car. Five men climb out of the SUV.

ALEX

That, Gentlemen, is what it looks like from the kidnapper's point of view: knowing what he sees is going to help you beat him. Any questions?

A trainee doubles over; retches.

ALEX

Then I'll see you inside.

INT. TRAINING CENTER - SAME DAY

Alex's afternoon class, stiff and in pain, clears out.

ALEX

Good session, guys. We do it again
at seven sharp.

Some the men GROAN.

KENNY

You're going to kill them, Alex.

ALEX

Sink or swim, it's in the
contract.

KENNY

No quarter asked, none given.
Guess that means you won't need a
hand.

Alex grins.

ALEX

Go on. I'll buy you lunch tomorrow.

KENNY

With my fifty. You better take me
someplace nice.

The assistant cocks a finger and strolls toward the door.

Alex turns, straightens some floor mats as HENDERSON (late-
twenties), a little too slick in a custom tailored gray
suit with a patina luster, strolls in.

HENDERSON

Alex! Still shlepping mats for a
living?

ALEX

Looks like the spooks have come
out to play.

Henderson removes his jacket.

HENDERSON

The Company only trains with the
best. You tired - or game?

ALEX

That's the first offer from you
I've ever liked.

They assume combat positions - thrust, parry, block - like
mongoose and cobra.

HENDERSON

I saw your run this morning.
Impressive.

ALEX

It's comforting to know you're
keeping an eye on me, but I hope
you're not planning on recruiting
me.

HENDERSON

We've always wanted you to be part
of the family.

ALEX

What? You're going to invite me to
Thanksgiving dinner? That's when
the knives come out.

Alex throws a kick, double-punch combination.

HENDERSON

Hey, no one feels good about what
happened to your dad, Alex, but he
knew the risks.

Alex attacks again, recklessly this time. Henderson gets a
lock on Alex's arm, slams him up against the wall.

ALEX

So did the company!

Alex twists, slams a forearm into Henderson's face; tosses
him to the mat.

Henderson rolls and regains his feet; shakes it off.

ALEX

You can crawl out the way you came
in.

HENDERSON

Don't be so sure I'll be the one
who's crawling.

Henderson throws a kick and punch combination, knocks Alex
backwards. Another punch...Alex sidesteps it, delivers a
blow to Henderson's mid-section.

Henderson drops to his knees and GASPS for air.

Alex walks away.

ALEX
First lesson is free.

Gasps -

HENDERSON
The state department...sent
me...Kelly's...gone.

Alex turns and stares.