

THE NANO SAPIENS

Screenplay by
KEITH DAVIDSON

613.722.9230
keith@keithdavidson.com

FADE IN:

A SEA OF STARS

The silence of space is broken by high-frequency BEEPING, growing louder as the transmission heads for

EARTH

targeting a tiny isolated island off the Florida coast.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

Towering over the forest canopy, a giant parabolic antenna scans the skies.

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - DAY

At a monitoring station, a headphoned COMM TECH is engrossed in a MENSA puzzle book. He snaps alert, listening... then lunges for the phone.

INT. QUARANTINE CELL #1 - DAY

A dark room, lit only by a huge glass cylinder of glowing amber liquid. It contains something grotesque; something that might have once been human. A glimpse only.

Staring in dismay is COL. JACK HUNT (30s, rigid, commanding presence). A "Ride of the Valkyries" ring tone snaps him out of it. He whips out his cell phone.

COL. HUNT

Hunt.

COMM TECH (OVER CELL)

Colonel, we've received another message from Spirit.

He snaps his phone shut and hurries out.

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - DAY

A RADAR TECH joins the Comm Tech as the Colonel marches in.

COL. HUNT

What have you got?

He sees fear on the Tech's face. Checks the screens.

COL. HUNT

My god...

EXT. EARTH FROM SPACE

An oily black PRISM flares up as it hits the atmosphere.

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - DAY

The RADAR PROXIMITY TRACKER starts beeping as a fast-moving blip enters the screen.

COMM TECH

It can't be the Spirit! Rovers
can't just fly back!

RADAR TECH

Whatever it is, it's coming in hot!
Thirty thousand... Twenty-five
thousand... Trajectory confirmed --
it's coming down right on top of
us!

COMM TECH

Contacting NORAD!

He grabs the phone.

COL. HUNT

Negative!

COMM TECH

We could be under attack!

RADAR TECH

Ten thousand... Five thousand...

COL. HUNT

If we are, it's already too late.

EXT. EARTH - DAY

The Prism punches through clouds, plummeting straight for the island. A parachute explodes open. Wind resistance tears it to ribbons, and the Prism plunges into the ocean.

INT. BASE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - DAY

The Comm Tech pinpoints the landing area.

COMM TECH

Point of impact... three miles
south-southeast.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

A Sea Hawk anti-sub helicopter sweeps low over the water.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

The pilot, CAPTAIN QUAID (20s, a cocky adrenaline junkie with a perma-grin), spots the floating parachute.

QUAID
Thar she blows!

He banks sharply, then hovers over the chute at sixty feet.

COL. HUNT
Give me sonar.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

On the weapons pylon, next to a Tomahawk missile, a cable unspools, sending a dipping sonar plummeting into the water.

An amphibious cargo boat and a large Zodiac arrive. In a flurry of activity, scientists retrieve the parachute -- but the lines are no longer attached to anything. They lower an EM-300 multibeam sonar array onto the surface.

INT. SEA HAWK HELICOPTER - DAY

The Colonel watches three techs work the wall-to-wall equipment. The SONAR TECH rips off his headset.

SONAR TECH
Sonar is negative.

COMM TECH
No reply to our signal.

The Sonar Tech brings up a colorful 3-D map of the seafloor topography and adds the object's trajectory. The object stops on a black scar that winds through the other colors.

SONAR TECH
Sir, trajectory indicates it sunk into the rift.

QUAID
Then we're screwed. We don't have a sub that goes that deep. No one does.

But something in the Colonel's expression says otherwise.

EXT. UNDERWATER REEF - DAY

A school of manta rays glide gracefully through the reef. One appears different -- it's a man.

Wearing a unique dry-suit with futuristic propulsion vents, and breathing through a small apparatus clenched in his teeth, is NEIL "DOC" ADAMS (30s, English accent, flippant genius). He glides and turns with the rays.

A shadow on the surface draws his attention -- a low-flying helicopter. His expression sours.

EXT. YACHT - DAY

The Sea Hawk briefly touches down on a floating platform with an antique wooden yacht moored to it. The Colonel hops out and waves the helicopter away. He steps aboard the boat.

COL. HUNT

Doc?

No response. He runs his hand along a large telescope. He's drawn to a framed picture of a woman. He stares, saddened. A noise behind him -- it's Doc, in his dripping dry-suit.

COL. HUNT

Hello, Doc.

(turning the telescope)
Still watching the skies?

DOC

Get off my boat, you pirate.

COL. HUNT

That's a fine welcome after --
what's it been, a year?

DOC

Well, now that the happy reunion is
over, take a walk.

COL. HUNT

I need your help.

DOC

Hearing you say that warms the
cockles of my heart. I don't even
know what cockles are, but I feel
them warming as we speak.

COL. HUNT

You'll do just fine in prison, Doc.
I hear sarcasm goes over real well.

Doc doesn't blink.

COL. HUNT

You were the last person I suspected.

DOC

Well, you never were that clever.

COL. HUNT

For Christ's sake, it was your own work.

DOC

Which you were perverting for military use! Why is it every time I come up with a new nanotech innovation to benefit mankind, some war-mongering sonofabitch finds a way to weaponize it?

COL. HUNT

(swallowing his anger)

Well this isn't military.

DOC

It's always military, ultimately.

COL. HUNT

Did you know there's no statute of limitations for sabotage against the government? I looked it up.

DOC

Well, bully for you. If you came all this way just to threaten me --

COL. HUNT

I'm not here to threaten you. I'm here to offer you a pardon.

DOC

Do I sense some Faustian bargain in the offing?

COL. HUNT

You can keep your soul, Doc, it's your sub I want. Just for a few days.

Doc isn't buying.

COL. HUNT

NASA lost an experimental rocket in the Teslan Rift.

(MORE)

COL. HUNT (CONT'D)

Assuming you weren't bragging, your sub is the only one that can reach it.

DOC

Working for NASA now? Why, because you got passed over for General? Or are you hoping to turn the Kepler telescope into a death ray?

COL. HUNT

You're looking at twenty years in Leavenworth, Doc. You won't do well.

DOC

While you were looking up the statute of limitations, did you also happen to look up "international waters"? Of course you did, or you'd have dropped by sooner.

COL. HUNT

I didn't need anything from you until now. Do you really think a technicality will stop me from putting you away? I thought you knew me better than that.

Doc's confidence wanes. The Colonel pulls out his cell and checks the horizon. A flash of concern from Doc as he spots the helicopter hovering in the distance.

COL. HUNT

You can have your life back, Doc. I'm putting a Get Out Of Jail Free card on the table. I think you're just smart enough to take it.

He gives Doc a moment to consider, then slowly starts punching numbers into his cell. With each little BEEP, Doc sweats more over the decision. The Colonel puts his cell to his ear, opening his mouth to speak --

Doc hits a switch. A hatch opens beside them. The Colonel peers down at rungs descending into darkness. He smiles.

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Just visible under the yacht, the ghostly image of a submarine sinks from sight.

[Contact Keith Davidson to read the entire screenplay.]