

CONATUS: SAMPLE SCENE

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Logline: When three oddly-aligned special forces experts agree to help a peace-loving alien race quell a rebellion that their benevolent A.I. ruler has left them powerless to defend against, they travel across the galaxy and fight for the aliens only to discover that the rebels are actually previously abducted humans.

Scene Logline: Three elite special forces teams collide near a defunct Soviet-era weapons testbed that is suspected of eliminating power to nearly half of the globe, but instead of a revamped super-weapon they find an alien begging for their assistance on its home planet.

Ocala, FL

INT. C-17 CARGO BAY - NIGHT

A team of burly men in mismatched special forces gear line the rear rigger's seat in the dim red light of the cargo bay.

Lieutenant JIM COOPER (32) checks the well-worn barometric altimeter on his wrist.

The glowing needle sits just past the "40".

Jim glances toward the CHIEF (35) next to him as they all stand up and start the final preparations on their gear.

JIM

'Been forever since I've seen you without a rug on your face, Chief.

CHIEF

No kidding L.T. I feel buck-naked without it now.

He points to the oxygen mask hanging from his helmet.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

Wish this thing would seal with it.

A female voice blares over the intercom.

FLIGHT OFFICER (V.O.)

'Got a final intel update over H.F. The Russians appear to have sent their own specops team from Moscow.

Chief looks quizzically at Jim, who shrugs.

FLIGHT OFFICER (V.O.)

Israelis and Chinese were intercepted. A Dutch team also appears to be inserting through waterways despite EU and NATO orders to stay clear.

The team waddles into a single-file line in the center of the bay with duffels full of gear strapped between their legs.

FLIGHT OFFICER (V.O.)

Allure still appears non-operational even though it has obviously been employed. Approaching drop zone; crew perform last chance checks.

CHIEF

Spetsnaz? Isn't this their own damn country? Why not the whole Army?

JIM

It's also weird to use E.M.P. on yourself, isn't it? I'm ready to bet Russia didn't fire the thing. And they know just as little as us.

A YOUNG AIRMAN (19) walks along checking gear but stops at Jim. He points to a disconnected lead on Jim's shoulder.

YOUNG AIRMAN

Sir, your computer isn't connected to your automatic deployer.

JIM

I know.

Jim points to the altimeter on his wrist.

JIM (CONT'D)

I got no problem gettin' help from those doodads. But I'll be damned if I ever let them think for me.

The airman hesitates. Jim just ignores him, straps on his mask, and checks Chief's chute. The airmen moves on.

EXT. ISTRV VILLAGE - NIGHT

VIKTOR PRIMAKOV (42) and his heavily armed team unload from unmarked vans in multicam uniforms and gear. Broken glass and blown transistor parts litter the dark village streets.

The soldier nearest Viktor signals for his attention.

The soldier points to the sky and then to his Night Vision Goggles. Viktor lowers his helmet's NVGs and looks up.

A large aircraft at high altitude tears a bright green streak across the sky through the goggles. He slaps them back up.

VIKTOR

(in Russian)

They are lucky the missile sites are down. Cowboys.

He scans as he calls his squad into position.

INT. C-17 CARGO BAY - NIGHT

The cargo door gapes open to the dark sky while violent wind whips around the bay. The SEALs stand in a neat line as if this happens every day. Jim stands last in line.

FLIGHT OFFICER

Five seconds.

The first SEAL steps up just short of the ramp.

FLIGHT OFFICER (CONT'D)

Mark.

The first SEAL counts five more seconds, sprints down the ramp, and dives out head first into the dark. The rest follow steps behind each other, so Jim leaves only seconds later.

EXT. SKY - CONTINUOUS

Jim, like the rest of the team below him, rolls forward from the egress dive into a back-first free-fall.

He turns back over in the air to see a completely darkened planet spread beneath him.

EXT. ISTRRA RIVER - NIGHT

A gadget-covered diver's mask pops out of the murky water of a suburban drainage waterway.

The diver slides halfway up the bank to get eyes on the checkpoint. His teammates strip their wetsuits, don complex tactical gear, and ready their hi-tech weapons.

LUUK MESMAN (33) climbs the rest of the way out dragging a waterproof sack full of his own gear behind him.

EXT. ISTRRA FOREST - NIGHT

Jim stealthily slides between the trees with his rifle at a low ready. He halts and lowers his helmet-mounted NVGs.

Through the goggles a steady yellowish glint clearly marks an otherwise innocent mound of weeds on the edge of a clearing.

He puts his NVGs up, relaxes his stance, and approaches it.

It becomes clear that it is his well-camouflaged teammates.

Jim kneels next to RADIO SEAL (24), who has a radio box set up and a pair of sophisticated binoculars in hand.

RADIO SEAL  
Looks all clear here, sir.

He holds out the binoculars to Jim.

Jim raises them and sees the mushroom-shaped metal towers of the Istra research facility in the middle of the clearing.

RADIO SEAL (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
The target is five hundred yards  
due south of that main tower.  
Recon's out now.

There's no movement as Jim scans past the larger octagonal tower, with grated decks at every level, at the far side.

Two sets of quick footsteps of someone approaching without regard for stealth noisily crunch the underbrush.

The team's many barrels sharply pop that direction.

CHIEF  
Weapons safe. It's our guys.

A SNIPER SEAL (25) and a SPOTTER SEAL (23) jog up. They look as if they've seen a ghost.

CHIEF (CONT'D)  
You clowns looking to get popped?

SNIPER SEAL  
Chief -- L.T. -- you're not gonna  
believe this shit.

SPOTTER SEAL holds the butt-end of his rifle toward Chief.

SPOTTER SEAL  
You gotta look at these pics.

Chief sets the butt over his shoulder so he can view the scope with the muzzle down, and presses a button on the side.

The monochromatic infra-red scope's white glow flashes on his face as he scrolls through recorded pictures.

Chief flips through a few times in silence.

JIM  
What?

He hands the rifle to Jim without a word.

Jim aligns to the scope the same way.

Crystal clear black and white pictures scroll by, from various angles and distances, of a beautifully streamlined fighter-sized metallic aircraft with no wings to speak of.

The object sits delicately on skids in the center of their target site: the obviously decayed last remnants of the Soviet-era stadium sized dome that once stood there.

SNIPER SEAL  
Russian project, you think?

JIM  
C'mon, you're gonna make me say it?

Chief snaps his head up to listen.

CHIEF  
You hear that?

They freeze. Silence.

Then in the distance: PAP-PAP-PAP. PAP-PAP-PAP.

CHIEF (CONT'D)  
Subsonic. Suppressed. Those trigger-happy Dutchmen are engaging.

The same distance but much louder: BAP-BAP-BAP.

SPOTTER SEAL  
The Spetsnaz. That'll be ugly.

JIM  
We've got a fuckin' UFO on our hands, and what do we do? Shoot at each other. Fuck!

BAP-BAP-BAP.

Jim storms over to the radio and kneels.

JIM (CONT'D)  
(to RADIO SEAL)  
'Scuse me.

He snatches the handset and twists a dial all the way over.

JIM (CONT'D)  
(into handset)  
Cease fire, cease fire! This is Lieutenant Jim Cooper, US Special Operations Command, on Guard.

PAP-PAP-PAP. PAP-PAP-PAP.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Cease fire, damnit!

CHIEF  
Sir, you're really hangin' our nuts  
in the wind here.

JIM  
I know. But good point, Chief.  
(into handset)  
This is not an attempt to localize  
you. Just stop shooting at each  
other for a minute, assholes!

The whole team pauses to listen, no more shots.

JIM (CONT'D)  
I have extremely mission-critical  
intel for all of us. Please have  
your officers in charge meet me at  
the base of that big lighting tower  
thing in fifteen mikes. Copy?

Static spills over the radio.

CHIEF  
Well, at least they're not  
shooting. Maybe it's cuz they've  
got an airstrike inbound on us...

The static breaks.

VIKTOR  
This is Colonel Primakov on Guard.  
I will see you there, Jim.

JIM  
Viktor! Finally a lucky break.  
(to nearby SEALs)  
Africa. Long story.

LUUK  
This is Major Luuk Mesman of the  
Royal Netherlands Korps  
Commandotroepen. Do you expect us  
to come unarmed?

JIM  
I don't care, Major. It's a truce,  
so your conduct is on you. Just the  
three of us is less likely to turn  
into a brawl though.

LUUK  
Copy. I will see you soon.

CHIEF  
I remember him from Afghanistan.  
Kind of a tool but a good guy.

Jim gets to his feet and points at Seal Spotter's scope.

EXT. ISTRATE TESTING FACILITY TOWER - NIGHT

Jim stands casually in the dark at the base of the tower with a small glow-stick lit to show his position. He still scrolls the pics on the scope stripped from Seal Spotter's rifle.

VIKTOR (O.S.)  
Ah, it is good to see you again  
Jim. Though could be better time.

Viktor emerges from the shadows with an outstretched hand.

JIM  
You too, Viktor. You too.

They shake, then Viktor draws a pen light and flicks it on.

VIKTOR  
You take your sniper's scope? This  
just to show how big balls are?

JIM  
Well, since you're first here, I  
guess you get first look, Colonel.

LUUK (O.S.)  
I am here too, Lieutenant.

Luuk emerges from the darkness on the other side and lifts his hand from the grip of his space-age rifle to shake.

Viktor glares at him as they shake out of obligation.

LUUK (CONT'D)  
But I will wait my turn.

JIM  
Thanks, Major.

Luuk's gaze shifts back to Viktor, who clicks madly through the pictures on the scope.

VIKTOR  
This is joke?



JIM

No, sir. Let Mesman have a look.

Victor surrenders the scope to Luuk.

Out of nowhere a true-to-life hologram of a humanoid being that appears to have descended from reptiles, dressed in flowing white robes, appears next to Viktor.

THRASK

Perhaps --

KA-KRACK! In a single moment a sniper's round tears a dust swirl through the hologram's head, Viktor slices a bayonet through at throat level, and Jim and Luuk snap sidearms out.

THRASK (CONT'D)

-- Well it seems our studies of human instincts stand confirmed. But I am here as an ally.

Its mouth moves completely out of sync from its words, but its alien expression somehow exudes calmness.

THRASK (CONT'D)

Please accept that I'm really not of your planet. I'm here because we desperately need the help of some skilled human warriors on mine.

The three men exchange equally incredulous glances.

FADE OUT.