

FADE IN:

INT. BEACH HOUSE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

A bachelor pad that has never seen a Merry Maid.

Covering the walls are dozens of framed National Geographic covers. The photographer, JOEL TAYLOR, packs cameras into metal cases while cradling a phone on his shoulder.

TAYLOR

LA to ChristChurch, New Zealand. Departs
at 3:45. I've got the tickets right here.

Outside the window, a UPS van pulls up. The DELIVERY MAN jogs up the driveway with a package, checking his clipboard against the house number.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Bev. Bev! I'm a big boy. I've been doing
this for a little while now. Thank you.
Yes. I'll email you as soon as I arrive in
ChristChurch. Bye. I'm hanging up now.
Bye. Goodbye!

Exasperated, Taylor hangs up the phone and checks his wristwatch. The doorbell chimes. Cursing, he opens the door.

The delivery man flashes a smile, tips his hat, and turns the clipboard toward Taylor.

DELIVERY MAN

Joel Taylor? Sign here, please.

Taylor does so and hands back the clipboard, then takes the package.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Do you have company?

TAYLOR

What? No. Why?

DELIVERY MAN

Just checking.

Before Taylor can react, the delivery man whips out a stun gun and blasts him.

He casually drags Taylor's spasming body into the house, and closes the door behind him.

CUT TO:

The sound of metal GRINDING against ice.

An oil derrick, painted bright blue, rises above the frozen plateau. At its top, an American flag flaps against a clear blue sky.

The GRINDING grows louder.

A circle of quonset huts surround the rig. Inside this man-made valley, the sound is thrown back on itself, echoed and distorted. Empty black windows reflect only the rig and the ice.

A man is visible through the spiderweb of steel beams at the base of the rig. He is wrapped around the barrel as if trying to stop it from drilling. His once bright red parka is filthy, his unshaven face caked with frozen breath as he strains against the turning steel.

The barrel keeps churning, unaffected.

The GRINDING is DEAFENING.

Blood begins to pour out of the hole at the man's feet. He tries to wipe it from his clothes and hands as he tries to run. A tangle of steel columns stops him in his tracks. They support the control tower looming far above the ground. He can only watch in horror as the tower collapses.

He is buried in an avalanche of steel and glass. But he's not killed, and now stands amongst debris far larger than it possibly could be.

The GRINDING morphs into a thousand voices crying out in pain.

He slams his hands over his ears. SILENCE.

Dropping his hands, the grinding has been replaced by a barely audible HEARTBEAT. Stumbling in the direction of the heartbeat, he spots a child's hand hanging limp from a pile of debris. Trying to find a handhold on a large slab of concrete, he struggles to lift it off the child. It finally moves, and falls away.

INT. MCMURDO STATION ANTARCTICA DORM ROOM

The man from the dream, GARRETT CLAYTON, lies shivering on a cot in the dark, deep in sleep. His eyes suddenly flash open.

He hears the beating again. It's someone at his door.

MAN

Clayton! You in there, Clayton?

Pulling himself upright, he runs his fingers through dark, greasy hair. He stumbles to the door, knocking over a nearly empty fifth of whiskey on his way. Opening the door, he flinches against the subzero cold and blinding white glare of the ice.

A young MAN in a heavy parka looks him up and down.

MAN

Christ, Garrett. You were supposed to relieve me an hour ago.

GARRETT

Sorry, overslept.

MAN

The tool push is gonna have your ass if you don't get on the rig, like, NOW. We've still got six hundred feet to go. I'm going to bed.

He storms off before Clayton can reply. Shuffling to the window, Clayton pulls back the curtain and stares at the bright blue oil rig and tower in the distance. Both are still in one piece.

Men and women hussle around the area, some on foot, some on snow mobiles.

Closing the curtain, he searches for the nearly empty fifth and finishes it.