

Scene 1

(ANATOLE AND LEO ARE ASLEEP ON THE BUNK BEDS. ANATOLE IS RESTLESS - CLEARLY DREAMING. AFTER A MOMENT A SIREN GOES OFF AND THEY LEAP OUT OF BED AND RUSH ABOUT IN A FRENZY. THEY BUMP INTO EACH OTHER. EVENTUALLY THEY GET TO THEIR CONSOLES AND INSERT THE KEYS THAT ARE STRUNG FROM CHAINS AROUND THEIR NECKS)

TANNOY Missile launch procedure to commence.

ANATOLE Are you ready?

LEO I am ready.

ANATOLE Stand by for sequence.

LEO Standing by for sequence.

ANATOLE/
LEO One. Two. Three. Four. Five.

ANATOLE Turn the keys.

TANNOY Launch codes are 2 7 5 8 3 0

LEO *(TYPES AT KEYBOARD)* Launch codes input. Missile armed and ready for launch.

ANATOLE Here we go *(PUSHES LAUNCH BUTTON)*

(SIREN RUNS DOWN AND MISSILE SOUNDS FADE)

TANNOY This has been an exercise. Launch codes are abort only. Repeat. Abort only.

ANATOLE *(ADDRESSING THE LOUDSPEAKER)* Another bloody test. You'd think we'd done enough. That's three in the last month.

LEO Why do they always have to do it when we're in bed, or eating lunch, or in the washroom. Stand by to remove keys.

ANATOLE/
LEO One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Remove keys.

(THEY PULL THEIR KEYS OUT TOGETHER)

LEO We sit about here for weeks on end with nothing to do then just as we're having a nice doze, off goes the bloody siren

ANATOLE Oh God, I've just remembered. Bastards. Bastards. Bastards. Bastards.

LEO What's the matter?

ANATOLE I can't believe they would do this to me. It is unbelievable.

LEO What? Do what?

ANATOLE My dream. What have they done to my dream? What have they done to my beautiful dream?

LEO What dream? What are you talking about.

ANATOLE I was having this dream. I was in bed with Pamela Anderson.

LEO Lucky man. She is a very beautiful woman. That body! And not only that, everyday she saves swimmers from drowning.

ANATOLE No. No. It's a television show, Leo. She's not really a lifeguard.

LEO Maybe she saves swimmers from drowning on her day off.

ANATOLE No. No. Shut up Leo. Just listen will you. *(BEAT)* So. We were completely naked.

LEO Naturally

ANATOLE Apart from a pair of little stripey socks.

LEO Who had the little stripey socks: you or her?

ANATOLE She did. She did. When did you ever see me wearing little stripey socks.

LEO They could be symbolic.

ANATOLE *(IRRITATED)* This is a dream. It's not Battleship Potemkin. She... She was wearing the socks. Alright?

LEO Alright. Alright.

ANATOLE We have not yet had sex.

LEO No?

ANATOLE Not yet. So she says to me 'Anatole, I have this friend who is a prostitute and she has taught me this little trick, and I would like, if you don't mind, to practice this trick on you. It involves some Olive Oil, a piece of soap, a glass of ice water and a lemon'.

LEO A lemon!

ANATOLE Or was it a melon. I can't remember. Lemon and Melon are very similar words. Lemon. Melon. Lemon. Melon. In fact, come to think of it, lemon is a palindrome of melon.

LEO No it's not. That would be nolem. Sounds Jewish!

ANATOLE No, not a palindrome. The other thing. An anagram, Anyway it doesn't matter. I'm in bed with Pamela Anderson, naked except for her little stripey socks.

LEO So what happened?

ANATOLE O.K. Anyway, this trick was so wonderful, so sexy, that it made a man *explode*.

LEO Explode! I don't like the sound of this trick, comrade.

ANATOLE Not explode. Pkkkkkkk (*GESTICULATES AN EXPLOSION*). I mean explode (*DEMONSTRATES AN EXPLOSION OF PASSION*) Explode with passion.

LEO You don't mean...

ANATOLE I do. I do. It can make a man... explode so violently that he can hit a dart board on the other side of the room.

LEO This is not physically possible...

ANATOLE It is, my friend. Right across the room. Bang. Think of it. She said that on one occasion a customer hit the bullseye..... and died.

LEO` What a way to go!

ANATOLE What a way to come!

LEO So. What was the trick?

ANATOLE The trick? Oh yes, the trick. First she squeezes the lemon on her... (*HE INDICATES HIS CHEST*) on her... on her.... on her

LEO On her front.

ANATOLE Correct. Now. She spreads the soap on her hands like this. Then she takes a mouthful of ice water and holds it until her mouth is completely numb...

LEO O.K. O.K. Then what?

ANATOLE I don't know.

LEO What do you mean you don't know - what happens next?

ANATOLE I don't know what happens next.

LEO What does she do with the Olive Oil. I can't see where it fits in.

ANATOLE I don't know what she does with the olive oil. Because just as she got to the bit about the ice cubes, the siren goes off. Nyyyeeehhh. I wake up. Finish.

LEO Bastards. (*PAUSE*) Bastards. Bastards. Bastards. Now we shall never know.

ANATOLE Pamela. Oh Pamela. What was the olive oil for my darling? Why was your mouth so numb?

LEO Look. Supposing you went back to sleep. Maybe you could get the dream back.

ANATOLE I can't go back to sleep now.

LEO You could try.

ANATOLE Anyway you never get a dream back do you. It's lost. My coitus has been completely and permanently interrupted. We are just going to have to face it. We are never going to know.

LEO Perhaps we could work it out. It can't be that complicated.

ANATOLE What's the use? I can't even remember if it was a melon or a lemon. I am going to spend the rest of my life wondering how to hit the dartboard.

LEO You practice enough as it is.

ANATOLE I do no such that thing.

LEO What is that squeaking noise every night then.

ANATOLE It is a mouse.

LEO It must be a very frustrated mouse.

ANATOLE I do not wish to discuss this further. I'm going to make some coffee. So. What day is it?

LEO Monday.

ANATOLE Really. Ah, weekend over already. Why does it always go so quick?

LEO I don't like Mondays. I am going to be shooting the whole place down. Isn't that what Bob said?

ANATOLE Bob who?

LEO Bob Geldoff.

ANATOLE I hate Bob Geldoff. Capitalist lackey. (*PAUSE*) What time is it?

LEO 9.30.

ANATOLE 9.30 in the morning or 9.30 at night.

LEO In the morning.

ANATOLE How do you know?

LEO Because it's light outside.

ANATOLE Right. (*PAUSE*) Wait a minute. Wait a minute. It's always light outside. 24 hours a bloody day it's light outside.

LEO The light is different in the morning.

ANATOLE You just imagine that. One long bloody sunset. I used to like sunsets till I came here. Gilda and I used to go up to the lake and watch them. Now I never want to see a sunset again. (*PAUSE*) How do you know it's Monday.

LEO Because yesterday was Sunday.

ANATOLE How do you know?

LEO We had chicken. We always have chicken on a Sunday.

ANATOLE True. True. (*THINKING IT THROUGH*) ... except - we could have had chicken on the wrong day.

LEO We always have chicken on Sunday.

ANATOLE But we don't know what day is Sunday. We could have had chicken on a Wednesday.

LEO Chicken on a Wednesday. Disgusting.

ANATOLE We don't even know it was chicken. The stuff in those tins all tastes the same.

LEO It is chicken because it says 'chicken' on the label.

ANATOLE And how do we know the label is right? Those people in the tinning plant are drunk all day. Look how many bottle tops we found in the corned beef.

LEO I know it was chicken.

ANATOLE How.

LEO Chicken is chicken.

ANATOLE In the Soviet Union, my friend, chicken is only chicken when it's covered in feathers and going (*IMITATES CHICKEN*) Otherwise it could be anything. Ask about how they keep the rats down in the tinning plant. (*SILLY VOICE*) 'There are no rats in our tinning plant, comrade'. (*NORMAL VOICE*) Of course there aren't. 'cause they're all in the chicken tins.

LEO Look on the calendar. See (*INDICATES*) It is Monday. All the other days are crossed off.

ANATOLE Maybe you forgot to cross off Sunday. If you forgot to cross off Sunday that means today's Tuesday.

LEO I never forget. I cross off day every morning at exactly half past ten.

ANATOLE How do you know whether it's half past ten in the morning or half past ten at night.

LEO Ah!

ANATOLE You don't do you?

LEO I'm sure I only do it once a day.

ANATOLE And how do you know the clocks are right for that matter?

LEO They are electric clocks. Electric clocks are accurate to one tenth of a second.

ANATOLE Tell me Leo. What do those clocks run on?

LEO Electricity.

ANATOLE And what produces that electricity?

LEO The generators.

ANATOLE And how often do the generators break down.

LEO Every couple of days.

ANATOLE And who's job is it to reset the clocks after a breakdown.

LEO Your job.

ANATOLE *(SHAKES HIS HEAD)*

LEO My job.

ANATOLE *(NODS HIS HEAD).*

LEO Ah

ANATOLE So. We don't know what time it is. We don't know if it's night or day. Whether it is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. My God, we probably don't even know what month it is.

LEO We do.

ANATOLE How?

LEO/
ANATOLE I cross them off on the calendar.

(ANATOLE GIVES HIM A LOOK)

LEO There's nothing to worry about. I'll radio headquarters.

ANATOLE You're not allowed.

LEO You are. In an emergency.

ANATOLE What emergency?

LEO We don't know what month it is.

ANATOLE Yes, Yes, Leo, why don't you do that. Why don't you radio headquarters.
(MIMES WINDING UP THE RADIO AND SPEAKING INTO THE MICROPHONE) 'Anatole and Leo, here. You know, the ones in charge of the

hundred ton inter-continental ballistic missile with the capacity to flatten Belgium

- LEO I thought Belgium was already flat
- ANATOLE So. 'Can you tell me what month it is, please comrade?'
- LEO I wouldn't put it like that.
- ANATOLE The Soviet Union does not put madmen in charge of nuclear missiles. Never. Chernobyl, Maybe. Missiles, never.
- LEO We have to know what day it is.
- ANATOLE What does it matter? All the days are the same aren't they?
- LEO We won't know when it's the weekend.
- ANATOLE Weekends are the same as weekdays. What's the difference. The nearest Discotheque is in Finland. Have you ever been in a Finnish Discotheque. It would take ten days to get there and Finnish women are the ugliest in the world.
- LEO If we don't know what the date is - we don't know how long to go before the relief comes. I thought we'd been here two months and there was only a month to go. We might not even be half way through. Did I ever tell you about my what my boss said... about coming out here, I mean
- ANATOLE Do you mean just today, or in the last week?
- LEO He said. 'Leo I have good news. And I have bad news. Which do you want first?'
- ANATOLE And you said, 'The good news'
- LEO And I said, 'The good news'. And he said. 'I want you to go away for a couple of days. I have a little job for which you will earn 6 month's wages'.
- ANATOLE And you said 'What's the bad news'.
- LEO And he said. 'The job is in Severnaya...
- ANATOLE And in Severnaya...
- ANATOLE/
LEO ...every day lasts six months'.
- LEO How we laughed. Have I told you that one before, Anatole?
- ANATOLE Oh no, no, no. Never. Do you want to tell it again right away or shall we wait ten minutes?
- LEO So. You're not in a good mood today.

ANATOLE I am in a perfectly good mood. Here I am stuck in the wilderness for six months. The only female you ever see is one with a herring down its throat. Look at me. I'm dancing on air.

LEO It's no good, Anatole. I have to know what day it is. We have to use the red telephone.

ANATOLE What red telephone?

(THE RED TELEPHONE IS LIT)

LEO The emergency red telephone.

ANATOLE We never use the emergency red telephone. The handbook clearly states 'The emergency telephone must never be used because there are no emergencies in the Soviet Union'.

LEO What's it for then?

ANATOLE I don't know.

LEO Please ring it Comrade Anatole.

ANATOLE Very well. You go out and check the generator and I will speak to headquarters.

LEO But I want to listen. Why do I have to go and check the generator?

ANATOLE I'm not really sure. But I do know I can't pick up that phone until you go and check the generator.

LEO *(LOOKS BEMUSED)* I'd better go then *(LEO EXITS. HE WILL RETURN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY WITH A DIFFERENT HAT, AS NICOLAI. ANATOLE PICKS UP THE PHONE AND WE HEAR IT RINGING. NICOLAI ANSWERS THE PHONE)*

NICOLAI Hello. This is Nicolai Vrestacovich. This is not the missile command emergency phone number.

ANATOLE It's not?

NICOLAI No.

ANATOLE What is it then?

NICOLAI There are no emergencies in the Soviet Union, comrade. *(BEAT)* I have not been drinking vodka. The slur in my voice is due to a minor stroke last month. Over.

ANATOLE Yes. Yes. This is Anatole here from Missile Silo 248.

NICOLAI Please wait while I check. *(HE CHECKS A LIST)* Yes I have you. Is Leo alright? Over.

ANATOLE Yes.

NICOLAI He is not dead or anything like that? Over.

ANATOLE Comrade, this is a telephone. It is not necessary to say 'Over'.

NICOLAI Apologies, Comrade. I am not used to this modern technology. It's just this phone doesn't ring very often. In fact, it has never rung once since Comrade Breznev became glorious leader (*BEAT*) So you have not murdered him?

ANATOLE Who?

NICOLAI Leo.

ANATOLE No.

NICOLAI And there hasn't been a terrible accident such as Leo tripping over and accidentally stabbing himself to death with a breadknife.

ANATOLE No. (*BEAT*) Is that what people generally ring up about?

NICOLAI If there **was** an missile command emergency phone number and, if it **ever** rang, I imagine that would be exactly the sort of thing they'd report.

ANATOLE I haven't murdered anyone

NICOLAI Excellent news comrade. This means that Yearly Missile Silo Partner Homicide Quotient has been reduced from 8% to well under 7% in the last 12 months.

ANATOLE Yes. Good. (*BEAT*) But that **is** quite a lot of murders.

NICOLAI No, no, comrade. It is only 6%.

ANATOLE Yes but that's still 36 murders a year.

NICOLAI No, no, comrade it's **only** 36 murders per year. That's an entirely different thing. (*BEAT*) So, Leo is not dead. Good. Now. When did you last see the missile?

ANATOLE I'm standing next to it.

NICOLAI Are you sure?

ANATOLE Yes

NICOLAI It has not been stolen then?

ANATOLE No.

NICOLAI Even better news Comrade Anatole. I will celebrate with this very small glass of water I keep here by the phone (*HE GULPS WHAT IS CLEARLY A SHOT OF VODKA*) Now we must do the missile count. According to my records you have **one** missile.

