

THE SKY KING

Based on the events of August 10, 2018

EXT. OFFICE - HORIZON AIR - SEA-TAC - DAY

Four makeshift offices lined in a row.

INT. OFFICES - HORIZON AIR - SEA-TAC - DAY

Small. Cagelike. Each room and inside activity, the same.

A desk separates the RAMPER (AIRPORT GROUND WORKERS) from an FBI AGENT.

Each Ramper wears the signs of their labor...streaks of grease on their clothes and the faint odor of jet fuel cling to their uniforms.

AGENT HARRIS

What can you tell us about Rich?

RAMPER VINNIE

Pretty Quiet. Always had a book in his hand when he wasn't working.

AGENT JOYCE

Did he ever talk about his plans?

RAMPER VINNIE

He barely talked.

RAMPER NICK

Surprised it was him. One way to tell the company to go fuck themselves, I guess.

RAMPER KUN HAO

He'd pick up extra shifts. Traveled a lot. Always smiled.

RAMPER HACKMAN

Dude was super chill. Read a ton of books. Didn't bother anyone or let anything bother him.

AGENT HARRIS (O.S.)

What would bother him?

Ramper Five does a quick appraisal of his surroundings.

RAMPER HACKMAN

Nothing, but when Horizon would pull their stunts and screw us over, everyone would get upset and bitch. He didn't. It was just the way he handled things.

He drifts off in memory.

INT. TERMINAL - SEA-TAC - DAY (FLASHBACK)

TIFFANY, a young AFRICAN-AMERICAN GIRL, age 6, navigates her finger along the glass window that separates her from the ramp below. Ever curious, she surveys the...

EXT. RAMP - SEA-TAC - DAY

Rampers hauling bags from the cargo hold in a feverish pace.

A young MAN, RICHARD "BEEBO" RUSSELL, handsome, with boy-next-door features and freckles bridged across his nose, the voice of motivation to his crew mates.

RICH
Last one, last one.

The final bag is lifted almost ceremoniously as the sweat falls from their faces.

Walking from the plane, Rich glances towards the terminal and locks eyes with Tiffany. Her face, pressed against the glass, staring, waving apprehensively.

He returns the gesture, offering a smile and YELLS--

RICH (CONT'D)
Guess what time, guess what time?!
It's that time!

Gutch, 50s, resembling an over-the-hill biker who has seen it all, looks on with disapproval.

GUTCH
Don't start that shit.

RICH
It's going down whether you like it
or not in three, two, one.

Rich works his Electric Slide groove to a beat close to The Pretender's "Brass in Pocket."

RICH (CONT'D)
Come on, come on, we got a fan. At
least I got a fan. Don't know about
the rest of you jokers.

Rich extends his arms in a jet-like fashion and serpentine around the crew.

GUTCH
Knock if off.

Rich tugs on the vest of a Ramper, who lifts his arms and chases behind him. And a third, fourth, fifth Ramper join the armada and adjust their arms.

RICH
Can't you not ever be miserable?

Gutch peers at Tiffany, all smiles and innocence.

He lifts his arms and joins the crew.

INT. TERMINAL - SEA-TAC - DAY

Tiffany jumps up and down, stunning her preoccupied PARENTS.

MOTHER
Baby...Tiff?
(to husband)
What is that girl doing?

The MOTHER taps her husband on his shoulder as they observe TIFFANY, hands on the glass, kind of swaying, arms raised, eyes glued to the action.

FATHER
Tiffany?

Tiffany ignores the call out as the Mother lifts her...

MOTHER
I know you heard me.

...and looks towards the ramp.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
OH MY GOD.

Which grabs the attention of the other TRAVELERS who approach the window to witness...

EXT. RAMP - SEA-TAC - DAY

A sea of Rampers moving in a awkwardly synchronized scene, arms extended, not a Busby Berkeley, or flash mob take, but a community theatre version of human jets moving about.

Rich glances at the terminal.

RICH
Showtime! Slow it down, slow it
down... Donut, donut.

Rich breaks from the figure eight and runs in a circle.

RICH (CONT'D)
Even numbered guys stay in place.
Odd guys, follow me.

Rich leaves the circle as the odd-number men follow.

INT. TERMINAL - SEA-TAC - DAY

Phones out, momentary troubles forgotten, the crowd builds,
faces pressed against the glass, all wearing smiles.

EXT. RAMP - SEA-TAC - DAY

The Rampers, full of sweat, slightly gasping.

GUTCH
Now what?

Rich looks up at Tiffany.

RICH
Line up formation.

They break into a single file row.

RICH (CONT'D)
Wave. And take a bow.

The Rampers, hard guys and gals, proudly grin and bow.

INT. TERMINAL - SEA-TAC - DAY

Tiffany waves her hands. The travelers applaud.

EXT. RAMP SEA-TAC - DAY

The Rampers fall out of line and head towards the lounge.
Rich, laughing, places his arm around Gutch.

RICH
That was some viral shit, huh old
man?

A TEAM CAPTAIN runs onto the ramp, ready to blow a gasket.

TEAM CAPTAIN
What in the Hell were you guys
doing out there? Who's responsible?

Rich pumps his fist into his shoulder like a Roman Gladiator.

RICH
I am. Spartacus.

GUTCH
You get that he died in the end?

RICH
Not about how he died, but how he
lived.

TEAM CAPTAIN
You're literally paid to empty
other people's shit...not to dance!

RICH
The dance was free.

Laughter breaks out.

TEAM CAPTAIN
Maybe there's no shift for the
smart-ass for the rest of the week.

Rich moves past Vern, ignoring him.

RICH
Plane got loaded on time, no safety
violations committed, no plane is
due for thirty minutes. I got a
hundred fans with phones going
viral up there. What excuse can you
invent to dock me?

The Team Captain turns to the crowd, still applauding, phones
pointed in his direction.

INT. OFFICE - HORIZON AIR - SEA-TAC - DAY

The interrogation continues.

RAMPER HACKMAN
The guy would give you the shirt
off his back.

GUTCH

We moved 50 millions bags last year
and they pay most of us twelve
dollars an hour. That'd piss me
off.

AGENT JOYCE(O.S.)

You pissed?

GUTCH

Not enough to steal a thirty
million dollar plane.

EXT. SEA-TAC INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY - 2018

Pacific Northwest. A strip of land buttressed by blue lakes,
rugged mountains, and suburbia.

EXT. RAMP - AIRPORT - SEA-TAC - DAY

An unforgiving sun fries the concrete.

The Rammers, outfitted in ear protection and reflective
vests, walk the airfield under the cacophonous roar of
machinery and airplane flight activity.

They take their position on the ramp, scanning the sky like a
race car pit crew, tracking...

EXT. RUNWAY - SEA-TAC - DAY

A Boeing 737-800 as it touches down.

RICH

(on walkie talkie)

Seven twenty four is on the
ground...going to gate five.

EXT. RAMP - SEA-TAC - DAY

Rich is perched on the threshold of the taxiway marshaling
the aircraft.

He waves two orange wands at the fifty-ton craft that moves
on him like a bull targeting a matador.

He moves the wands across his throat, signaling for the pilot
to cut the engines.

The Rammers scurry around the plane to unload the craft.

EXT. RAMP - SEA-TAC - DAY

A PILOT, quarterback handsome, maneuvers down the plane's stairs with luggage in tow.

FEMALE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS, hair in place, lipstick flawlessly applied, follow.

Rich watches the Attendants hang onto the Pilot's every word.

He dips his hand into his cargo shorts and pops a handful of Swedish Fish candies, grinding away in envy.

He's tapped on the shoulder by a Team Captain.

TEAM CAPTAIN

Earth to Russell. What's it gonna be...work or a write-up? Your call.

Rich turns, jaw clenched, and eyes the boss...

RICH

You ever think you're the reason
God created the middle finger?

TEAM CAPTAIN

One day Russell...

RICH

Yeah, but till then...

He joins the Rammers as they grab-and-tag luggage from a conveyor and offload the bags onto carts.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - HORIZON AIR - DAY

Stained carpet, discarded jackets and debris are strewn atop hand-me-down furniture.

The sweat-drenched Rammers gulp their beverages to cool off.

Rich draws on a notebook that contains a sketch of the body of a Dash-8 Q400 aircraft with propellers.

He writes "R-U-S-S-E-L-L" over the plane's fuselage and "H-U-S-T-L-E" across the wings.

Gutch navigates through the furniture and bodies of Rammers.

GUTCH

Anyone want to pick up a shift next
Wednesday?

Rich, consumed with his drawing, raises his hand.

RICH
I'll take it.

GUTCH
Thanks, Rich.

The Team Captain storms into the room.

TEAM CAPTAIN
That delayed Boeing from Chicago
just landed. Let's get on it.

Rich continues sketching.

RICH
This count as overtime?

TEAM CAPTAIN
Start time, not when you finish.
You know the rules.

RICH
You changed the rules so we won't
meet our bonus numbers.

TEAM CAPTAIN
Company decision.

GUTCH
Surprised they haven't asked us to
shit diamonds.

Gutch rises to his feet.

GUTCH (CONT'D)
Let's do what we do, people.

The Rammers grumble on their way out the door.

Rich follows in line, his drawing abandoned on the desk.

EXT. RAMP - DAY

The Rammers disperse as Rich hops atop a push tug and drives off.

He speeds down a lane, foot pressed hard on the accelerator. His eyes, no longer soft, but hyper-focused, almost hypnotic as he scours the field ahead to see...

Waves of heat ripple from the scorching pavement distorting every object in sight.

But it's there...beckoning...summoning...seducing...

A shiny fleck of white metal on a black sea of concrete comes into focus.

EXT. CARGO AREA - DAY

A plane glowing in the evening sun.

It's not just any plane, but a TWIN-ENGINE DASH-8 Q400 TURBOPROP AIRPLANE, 93-foot wingspan, propellers, and 108-feet of sleek metal. The same plane in Rich's drawing.

Rich completes two passes around the craft to ensure he's not being followed.

He stops the tug in front of the Dash-8's nose and connects the tow bar to the landing gear.

Rich pulls the chocks from under the wheels and returns into the craft.

INT. COCKPIT - DASH-8 - DAY

He flicks the levers of the overhead control panel, turning on the flight's electrical system.

EXT. CARGO AREA - DAY

The blades of the propellers churn into a spinning blur.

In rapid succession...

Rich dashes from the cockpit.

He boards the push tug.

Driving the tug, he turns the Dash-8 180 degrees towards the airfield.

He abandons the tug.

He disengages the tow bar and boards the Dash-8.

INT. COCKPIT - DASH-8 - DAY

Rich jumps in the pilot seat and slides on a headset as beads of sweat pimple across his face.

He searches through the chamber and locates the flow chart and studies the list.

Rich stares at the intricate array of instruments and endless series of controls.

He toggles knobs, punches numbers into the keypad, initializing the plane's start-up sequence.

The navigation display springs to life, spitting out computerized code.

Staring out the window, he observes his co-workers grinding away in the sweltering sun.

RICH
Let's do this.

He lowers the throttle.

EXT. TAXIWAY - DAY

The nose of the Dash-8 thunders forward.

INT. TOWER (AIR TRAFFIC) - DAY

An AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER identifies the Dash-8's as it rolls onto the runway.

CONTROLLER ONE
Aircraft on Charlie, lineup on
runway 1-6-C. Say your call sign?

No response.

CONTROLLER ONE (CONT'D)
The Dash-8 on runway 1-6-C. Say
your call sign?

White noise.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

The wheels of the Dash-8 grind to halt.