

DEAD AIR

(EXTRACT)

by

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An Original Screenplay

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FADE IN:

1

EXT. MOUNTAIN SLOPE - DAY

1

Bright afternoon sun beams down on the peaceful icy landscape. Birds chirp from snow-laden trees. Mountains stretch as far as the eye can see flaunting a deadly beauty.

SWOOSH

A snowboarder flies through the air. He grabs his board with one hand the other held high. Four more follow in quick succession. They land one by one, shoot off down the mountain.

Running with the pack as they intertwine at great speed. All baggily clad with goggles and hats. They carve smooth turns kicking up snow that glistens in the sunlight.

They approach a small hut set into the slope, roof covered in snow. They spread out to take it one at a time.

The first races up flying clean over the whole structure. He skids to a halt, lifts his Oakley goggles. This is EDGE, clean cut, American, a natural leader. He looks back to see...

A rider sliding perpendicular along the handrail that runs from the door. She pulls up flamboyantly, not to be outdone. JIB is determined and serious. The two bump fists.

SHIFTY is in midair board twisted one way body the other. She lands with a whoop. Lighthearted, a smile never far away.

Close behind, another girl lands perfectly off big air. STOMPER is Spanish with temperament to match.

Finally, a big guy soars right over the others before landing in a spray of snow. HOTDOG, adrenaline junky.

HOTDOG

Bustin'!

He jumps up really pumped but realises that everyone is gazing in awe at a distant peak. A couloirs runs from the top it's glassy sides glinting in the sun. Steep, icy, daring.

EDGE

That is slack against what we came here for. Two thousand eight hundred metres of descent, twelve clicks long, open just two days a year.

SHIFTY

The dream of every rider in the  
northern hemisphere.

EDGE

The Death Pipe.

Jib flinches at the words, unnoticed by the others. She unconsciously touches a thick chain and pendant around her neck.

JIB

In two days we ride it.

Their reverie is broken by a flurry of snow thrown across them from three skiers stopping above. The closest is BONER, death metal on skis, his nose pierced with a bone.

BONER

Hey Jib, enjoy the view while you can. Once it's open you won't see any fresh snow up there, 'cos you'll be tagging behind the master.

He knocks fists with the guy next to him.

JIB

Fantastic. Who invited you Boner?

BONER

Unless of course, you don't make it to the bottom.

EDGE

What's that supposed to mean?

BONER

Edge, sorry mate didn't see you there. You know the curse. It's not called the Death Pipe for nothing.

Jib's reaction is quick, perhaps too quick.

JIB

That's bullshit.

BONER

Bullshit that you should know all about Jib. People get hurt here every year, or is that just bad luck?

JIB

A ski legend to keep idiots away.

Boner skis between them followed by his stooges.

BONER

Like I said, be careful.

As he passes Edge he suddenly knocks him. Caught unawares, Edge falls to the ground.

BONER

You can always do it on your  
arse.

Their laughter fades as they race off down the slope. Edge stares after them the anger boiling behind his eyes.

2

EXT. MOUNTAIN OVERHANG - DAY

2

Two guys squat on the snow their boards sticking up behind them. One peers through a video camera on a tripod, hair flops over his face and goatee. The classic snowboarder, RIDER.

RIDER

A rodeo five is brutal. You've  
got mad inversion and spin.

The other sits behind concentrating on the job in hand: rolling a joint with three Rizzlas, the spliff reflected in his Oakley shades. This is SKUNK, always a problem with something.

SKUNK

But a cab nine annihilates it  
man. Shaun White was out of hand  
at the X, that run was  
ridiculous.

RIDER

Travis Rice should've won. He  
nailed it.

SKUNK

Not what the judges said.

RIDER

I respect White, he's got a huge  
bag of tricks. I'm just saying  
Rice destroyed it with that five.

Skunk lights up the joint, takes a big toke. Rider pans across the fantastic scenery.

RIDER

Take a look at those mountains.  
Awesome virgin riding.

SKUNK  
I still say the cab nine creams  
it.

BEEP-BEEP

Skunk pulls out his mobile phone, they both look at a video message. Shifty is on the small screen.

SHIFTY  
Rider, Skunk, get that camera  
primed it's show time.

She blows a kiss goodbye.

RIDER  
I don't see them.

Shifty flies over the top of them in an inverted spin, before landing with a yell of delight.

RIDER  
Shit.

Panicking, he spins the camera towards the lip of the overhang, but he has missed Edge and Jib. He fumbles his glove off, presses the red record button.

Hotdog is already in the air in a double backspin. Rider whips the camera around, but is too late. He catches Hotdog just as he lands and then wipes out big style.

SKUNK  
Classic Hotdog.

They all cheer. Hotdog brushes the snow off unhurt. Rider packs the camera into a bag. They slide down to the others.

SHIFTY  
Rider, did you get it?

RIDER  
Every moment.

HOTDOG  
How'd I look?

SKUNK  
Hotdog man, what can I say? Big  
air...

RIDER  
Huge elevation...

SKUNK  
Enormous spin...

RIDER  
You totally bailed.

Skunk and Rider laugh and high five. Hotdog cusses.

SHIFTY  
I can edit.

EDGE  
Sick day. How about a cruise to  
the DP Bar?

RIDER  
I wanna throw down some more  
rides before beer o'clock.

JIB  
I'm up for it.

HOTDOG  
Somebody say beer?

Edge kisses Jib.

EDGE  
Take it easy babes.

JIB  
You know me.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. MOUNTAIN SLOPE - DAY

3

Long shadows chase two boarders caning it down the mountain. Rider leads, his expertise clear, Jib behind matching him turn for turn.

They drop into the shadow of a gully, swinging from side to side in unison. Another boarder appears on the lip, sun behind distorting any clear view, just a silhouette, watching.

In a flash the figure DROPS into the channel...CUTS across the front of Jib just missing her...she has no time to react... struggles to stay upright...SKIDS to a messy stop.

The figure disappears over the opposite lip.

Rider pulls up.

JIB  
What a snag!

RIDER  
You OK Jib?

JIB

Yeah.

RIDER

People need to get in tune. That  
snake should chill.

JIB

Did he seem familiar to you?

She searches the slope but there's nobody to be seen.

JIB

Let's cut this ride. You up for  
some tree action?

Jib leads them out of the gully and into a wood. The snow  
is deep, branches glancing off their jackets as they bounce  
and turn between the trunks.

Rider glimpses flashes of a figure between trees on one  
side.

RIDER

(shouting)

Let's go Jib.

Jib steps up the pace turning on instinct, ploughing a  
route through the forest.

Rider glances over his shoulder. The figure is behind him.  
Rider turns this way and that in an attempt to lose him.

The figure closes in. Dressed in a BLACK SUIT with BLACK  
BALACLAVA and MIRRORED GOGGLES covering his face.

Ahead, Jib takes a SHARP left turn...

Rider isn't quick enough and FORKS right...

The figure cuts the corner, his BLACK SNOWBOARD parting the  
snow easily.

Rider TURNS again...

The figure SMACKS into him...

Rider LOSES control.

He crashes through the branches of a tree, his face raked,  
tumbling over and over before disappearing over a ridge.

QUIET

The forest momentarily shocked by the intrusion.

Rider slowly sits up, covered...the abominable snowman. He pats his body knocking snow free before struggling to get upright on his board. He flexes, nothing broken.

In the trees above, a FLASH of the figure.

Rider hears movement but can see nothing beyond the ridge.

The figure RACES out of the trees, taking off...a SKULL decorates the underside of the black board.

The figure pirouettes in the air...

Rider turns...he has no time...

The figure's body TWISTS...the board spins with an enormous WHIPPING motion...the edges are shiny chrome, RAZOR sharp...

The board accelerates...

SCHPLATT

The sound of a machete through a watermelon. Bright red BLOOD sprays across the snow. Rider's head THUMPS to the ground.

His body stands for a moment, as though in shock, before it topples forward.

The figure lands perfectly, not even breaking speed, disappears into the woods.

Ten metres below, Jib slides to a stop. She searches the trees above her but cannot see or hear anything.

JIB  
(calling)  
Rider? Rider?

She turns to the large, remote, Alpine chalet set in the trees behind her. It is welcoming and homely, smoke drifting gently from the chimney. She removes her board, lumbers inside.

4 INT. CHALET BOOT ROOM - DAY

4

Jib collapses onto the bench lining one wall. Her snowboard leans against the row of wooden lockers that continue around the corner of the L-shaped room. She removes her boots.

She hears a CLUNK from the other end of the room.

JIB  
Rider?

She rises, takes tentative steps, rounds the corner...

BUMPS into a man. She is startled.

JIB  
Mr Valchek!

VALCHEK is middle aged, worn with a permanent leering expression. He is dressed in black and sweating. Jib recoils

JIB  
Have you seen Rider?

He shakes his head. Jib hangs her boots on the rack.

VALCHEK  
A good day?

JIB  
Frosty.

Off his blank reaction.

JIB  
Well cool.

VALCHEK  
Yes, well far too busy for me. We need less people on the slopes. It seems to get worse every year. I remember when--

JIB  
Will the sauna be on?

VALCHEK  
As it always is at this time. Will anyone else be joining you?

JIB  
Later.

Jib heads for the door.

VALCHEK  
Miss Jib?

She stops, turns. Valchek indicates her board.

VALCHEK  
It will be safer in a locker. Although I take every precaution, one never knows.

JIB  
Whatever.

She bundles her board into a locker and leaves. Valchek follows slowly behind.

The black nose of a snowboard can be seen poking out from beneath the bottom of his locker.

5 INT. CHALET SAUNA ROOM - DAY

5

Jib, dressed in a big white bathrobe, descends the stairs into the tiled room. It is clean and quiet. Two wooden beds make up the relaxing area with adjacent showers.

She slips out of her bathrobe revealing a bright bikini, steps into the shower.

Hot water cascades over her as she brushes her hair away from her face. She rubs the water into aching limbs, enjoying the pleasures of a steamy shower after a hard day on the slopes.

The BANG of a door.

JIB

Rider?

She steps out of the shower picking up a towel from the pile. She looks around but the room is empty. She moves to the sauna, checks the temperature gauge.

We see her from behind through voyeur's eyes. As she swings the door open, we step back behind a cupboard. The door SLAMS shut.

We move slowly toward the sauna door...peer through the window.

Inside Jib adjusts a wooden headrest and lays out her towel. She lies down, gets comfortable, obviously enjoying the heat warming her to the bone.

The pendant around her neck is a silver snowboarder grabbing his board. She fondles it absent-mindedly as she relaxes.

Oblivious to any company, she reaches behind her back and undoes her bikini top. It falls away...

Outside, distant VOICES break the silence...the rest of the crew returning. We look towards the stairs before turning back to the sauna...but the view is obliterated by billowing steam.

CUT TO: