NCIS

“Cabin Fever”

Episode #273

Written by
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Directed by Bethany Rooney

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CAST LIST

SPECIAL AGENT LEROY JETHRO GIBBS
SPECIAL AGENT TONY DiNOZZO
PROBATIONARY AGENT ELEANOR “ELLIE” BISHOP
DOCTOR DONALD “DUCKY” MALLARD
FORENSIC SCIENTIST ABBY SCIUTO
SPECIAL AGENT TIMOTHY McGEE
DIRECTOR LEON VANCE

SENIOR FBI AGENT TOBIAS “T.C.” FORNELL
EMILY FORNELL
RUSSIAN COUNSELOR ANTON PAVLENKO
INTERNATIONAL MERCENARY SERGEI MISHNEV

VIRGINIA STATE TROOPER KEYES [X]
VIRGINIA STATE TROOPER JOHNSON [X]
FRANKIE BOULOS
NAZAR BOULOS
PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS JUDY SLOAN

VOICE ONLY:
DIANE STERLING

FEATURED (non-speaking)
EMERGENCY CREW MEMBERS
WOUNDED SEAMEN
DIGNITARIES
UNIFORMED PERSONNEL [X]
SECURITY MAN
PETTY OFFICER THIRD CLASS KATE GOMEZ
NAVY HOSPITAL CORPSMAN
## SET LIST

### EXTERIORS (DAY)
- VIRGINIA STATE POLICE STATION [X]
- USS CORTLAND (DDG 144) (STOCK)
- GIBBS’ CABIN
- URBAN ALLEYWAY
- BACKWOODS POND

### INTERIORS (DAY)
- NCIS HEADQUARTERS
  - SQUAD ROOM
  - ABBY’S LAB
  - CONFERENCE ROOM
  - DIRECTOR’S OFFICE
  - INTERROGATION ROOM
  - OBSERVATION ROOM
- USS CORTLAND (DDG 144)
  - MAINTENANCE BAY
  - MAINTENANCE ROOM HALLWAY
  - WARDROOM
- GIBBS’ CABIN
- HOSPITAL
  - INTENSIVE CARE UNIT
  - ROOM #2
  - ROOM #3 [X]
  - HALLWAY

### EXTERIORS (NIGHT)
- VIRGINIA
  - RURAL INTERSTATE
- VIRGINIA STATE POLICE CRUISER [X]
- GIBBS’ TRUCK
- FOREST ROAD

### INTERIORS (NIGHT)
- NCIS HEADQUARTERS
  - SQUAD ROOM
- VIRGINIA STATE POLICE CRUISER [X]
- GIBBS’ TRUCK
- GIBBS’ CABIN
- GIBBS’ HOUSE
NCIS

“CABIN FEVER”

PREVIOUSLY ON NCIS: Gibbs’ helicopter is shot down over Russia. Sergei Mishnev chases Gibbs and company to a “final” stand-off near the Finland border, as Gibbs shoots Mishnev. Vance tells Gibbs that Mishnev survived. Mishnev resurfaces, killing Diane Sterling on a rooftop. Gibbs nearly strangles Mishnev to death before he’s knocked out. Gibbs and Bishop’s husband, Jake, meet for dinner, as Gibbs asks a favor...

COLD OPEN

FROM BLACK:

FLASH - BLACK-AND-WHITE OF GIBBS AND VANCE, QUITE CURIOUS...

PHOOFF TO BLACK:

FROM BLACK:

1

EXT. RURAL INTERSTATE - VIRGINIA - NIGHT

On a lonely two-lane, a VIRGINIA STATE POLICE CRUISER speeds by...

TROOPER KEYES’ VOICE
Well, you know the deal with them two, don’t you?

2

EXT./INT. VIRGINIA STATE POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

VIRGINIA STATE TROOPER KEYES, 40s, male, drives. VIRGINIA STATE TROOPER JOHNSON, 30s, female, rides. Both enjoy the quiet night and local gossip.

TROOPER JOHNSON
Them two who? Judge McGraff...?

TROOPER KEYES
And Wilson, the D.A. Two of them were college sweethearts.

TROOPER JOHNSON
Is that a fact?

TROOPER KEYES
Check them out next time you’re in court. Little looks between them, smiles. He objects, she sustains. Every time.

(CONTINUED)
TROOPER JOHNSON
Old flame’s still burning, huh?

TROOPER KEYES
I think they’d burn it up right there on the bench if they could.

They chuckle, as they roll up behind a slow-moving CAR...

TROOPER JOHNSON
Keyes, you are bad.

TROOPER KEYES
Not as bad as this yahoo.

The car’s TAILLIGHTS swerve between the yellow line and the curb. Keyes blips the SIREN as Johnson grabs the P.A. mic...

TROOPER JOHNSON
Pull over to the side, please.

EXT. RURAL INTERSTATE - NORTHERN VIRGINIA - NIGHT

The car pulls over, but it pulls too hard, as it jumps the curb before rolling to a stop in the grass.

The cruiser pulls up behind and the Deputies cautiously climb out and flank the car. Johnson FLASHLIGHTS the UNSEEN DRIVER.

TROOPER JOHNSON
How we doing tonight, Sir? License and registration.

DRIVER’S VOICE
Damn brakes don’t want to listen.

Johnson flashlights an open BOURBON BOTTLE in the cup holder.

TROOPER KEYES
And what do we have there?

We now reveal SENIOR FBI AGENT TOBIAS “T.C.” FORNELL at the wheel. His head’s shaved clean, but his face sports two days of stubble and a bleary, wise-ass smile...

FORNELL
S’okay, it’s prescription bourbon.

Neither Trooper smiles back. Fornell drops the act, leaning back with a sad sigh upon his headrest, as WE SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES
The morning sun stings Fornell’s bloodshot eyes, as SPECIAL AGENT LEROY JETHRO GIBBS walks him toward his car in the lot.

Fornell: You know, all fairness to alcohol, I’ve done plenty of stupid things when I’m sober, too.

Gibbs: Glad you think it’s funny.

Fornell: It’s not. But it’s nothing I wanted my daughter or anybody at the FBI making a big deal about either.

Gibbs: So you called me.

Fornell: I figured I could at least count on you for the shortest lecture.

Gibbs: Bourbon, huh?

Fornell: Barely cracked it. It was more the beer I had with dinner, mixed with the pain meds I take for my ‘Gibbs ass wound.’ It still smarts like hell in cold weather, you know.

Gibbs: I saw the police report, Tobias.

Fornell: This isn’t me, Gibbs. It was just a fluke thing I intend to learn from and put behind me. And if you’re my friend, you’ll do the same.

As Gibbs decides whether or not he’ll “do the same,” his CELL PHONE RINGS. CALLER I.D. says “Vance.” He answers...
Hey, Leon...
(listens, darkening)
Where?

What is it?

A parting nod to Fornell, and Gibbs hurries away...

Let me know if you need me, Gibbs. I owe you one!

No you don’t!

Fornell opens his mouth to respond, but nothing comes, as he continues his walk of shame, alone again with his denial...

AERIAL STOCK of a DESTROYER docked in Norfolk, with a lazy wisp of CGI SMOKE streaming from a porthole...

Gibbs enters amid contained chaos, as EMERGENCY CREW MEMBERS carry TWO WOUNDED SEAMEN out on stretchers, while OTHERS help ANOTHER TWO SEAMEN (less wounded) out to the Sick Bay or fresh air outside.

Through the crowd, DIRECTOR LEON VANCE finds Gibbs...

Fire’s out and your team just got here, Gibbs. Wardroom.

Still thinking a gas explosion?

VANCE
Hoping. Galley’s one room over. Figure a leaky stove or oven.

Gibbs eyes a few DIGNITARIES being escorted out by UNIFORMED PERSONNEL.

Who are the suits?

(CONTINUED)
VANCE
Dignitaries from a dozen international agencies. We’d just started boarding when it happened, though there were a bunch of crew members in there setting up.

GIBBS
SecNav?

VANCE
On the West Coast. We were patching her in on closed circuit.

GIBBS
What’s the occasion?

VANCE
Summit on global terror.

As Gibbs double-takes, almost amused. Almost.

GIBBS
No irony there.

VANCE
And I’m not going there, Gibbs. Keep thinking gas explosion.

As Vance checks on the Dignitaries, Gibbs heads down the corridor to...

INT. USS CORTLAND - WARDROOM - DAY

Gibbs enters as SPECIAL AGENTS TONY DiNOZZO, TIMOTHY McGEE and PROBATIONARY AGENT ELEANOR “ELLIE” BISHOP grimly inspect embers of SHATTERED FURNITURE and a three-foot HOLE that’s been blown through the scorched wall between the wardroom and the galley next door.

TONY
(grim)
Welcome to the party, Boss.

GIBBS
Casualties.

MCGEE
Six reported injured. Two taken to sick bay. Two more seriously, being rushed to Norfolk Memorial.

(CONTINUED)
They turn as Bishop shines a Flashlight under a pile of rubble consisting of a smashed Plasma TV and the collapsed Table holding it. Gibbs steps over as Bishop regards the unseen Female Seaman’s body, and it’s not a pretty sight.

BISHOP (cont’d)
Female petty officer. Can’t make out her name tag.

MCGEE
I’ll call Ducky.

As McGee speed-dials his cell, Gibbs closely regards the hole in the wall and is instantly dubious...

GIBBS
No gas explosion.

BISHOP
Yeah, we had our doubts.

GIBBS
Wall’s blown in from here, not out from the galley. No gas smell, just gun powder.

TONY
And then there’s this.

Tony shows Gibbs a cylindrical Metal Fragment he found. It’s like half of a burnt soda can that’s still smoking.

TONY (cont’d)
Bomb fragment?

GIBBS
Grenade. Anti-tank.

Gibbs wipes away soot to reveal Russian lettering beneath.

GIBBS (cont’d)
Russian.

Instantly, our agents make the Russian connection to an all-too-familiar nemesis. Gibbs’ wheels turn fast, as Tony plays the obligatory devil’s advocate.
Tony
Of course, just because it’s
Russian, doesn’t mean it’s...

As Gibbs bolts, unwilling to think otherwise...

INT. USS CORTLAND - MAINTENANCE BAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Gibbs shows Vance the fragment...

Vance
Sergei Mishnev. We knew he wasn’t
done with you, only a matter of
time.

Gibbs
This makes you the target.

Vance
Any friend of yours is an enemy of
his.

As Vance pulls the GUEST LIST from his jacket pocket...

Vance (cont’d)
Let me check the guest list.
Russian ambassador had to cancel,
but they were sending someone here
in his place...

Vance pauses when he sees the name. Gibbs guesses.

Gibbs
Someone we know?

Vance
Another ‘friend.’

Vance hands him the list. Gibbs flattens at the name, but
before he can say it...

Russian Counselor Pavlenko
Director Vance... Agent Gibbs...

As if on cue, RUSSIAN COUNSELOR ANTON PAVLENKO (last seen in
#262 “Choke Hold”) arrives, gesturing for his SECURITY MAN to
stay by the door as he approaches...

Vance
Counselor Pavlenko.
RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Thank goodness you’re all right. I just heard about the explosion.

GIBBS
Interesting, you running late.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Meetings at the embassy. Was anyone hurt? Do we know what happened?

VANCE
We have a pretty good idea.

Vance holds up the grenade fragment. Pavlenko whispers.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
A bomb?

GIBBS
Russian grenade.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
You think Sergei?

GIBBS
Like you don’t?

Pavlenko shudders. Gibbs and Vance aren’t buying it.

VANCE
And here you are, conveniently rolling in after the fact.

Pavlenko straightens, insulted.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Please, tell me we are not about to engage in this farce yet again.

VANCE
What farce is that?

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Where you accuse me, a trusted and dedicated envoy to my country, of complicity with a known terrorist.

VANCE
You have to admit, Counselor...
RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
I admit nothing. In fact, let me
assure you, Director, if Sergei is
behind this, I was his target. Not
you, and not Agent Gibbs. Me.

Pavlenko shudders again, both frightened and furious.

Off Gibbs and Vance, exchanging curious looks...

PHOOOF TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

FROM BLACK:

FLASH - BLACK-AND-WHITE OF GIBBS OFFERING FORNELL A DRINK...

PHOOOF TO BLACK:

FROM BLACK:

INT. USS CORTLAND - MAINTENANCE ROOM HALLWAY - DAY

Continuing their previous conversation in private, Anton Pavlenko pounds the wall before a dubious Gibbs and Vance...

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
I simply cannot believe I am forced to defend myself once again for the actions of a criminal.

VANCE
A Russian criminal, Counselor, with whom you once had a working relationship.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Once, Director. And we paid dearly for that mistake, leaving Sergei now a man without a country.

GIBBS
Freeing you up to play the victim.

As Pavlenko looks Gibbs square in the eye, almost pleading...

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Not a victim, Gibbs. A target, like you. For reasons that make sense only to Sergei.

VANCE
Reasons such as?

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Your helicopter crash. He saw my help in the rescue as a betrayal.

GIBBS
Help?

(CONTINUED)
RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
And now he perceives that I owe my
life to Agent Gibbs for ‘saving me’
from our defector, the scientist.
(to Gibbs)
You shoot Nelly Benin dead and now
we are practically golf buddies.

GIBBS
I don’t golf.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Who has the time, I mean really?

A breath of levity. Pavlenko looks to Gibbs.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO (cont’d)
My sympathy for your loss, Gibbs.
I have suffered a few myself. We
are in this together, I’m afraid.

GIBBS
No. We’re not.

VANCE
All due respect, Counselor, but you
created this monster.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Don’t fool yourself, Director, many
hands went into creating Sergei.

Gibbs rises to go, weary of Pavlenko’s posturing...

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO (cont’d)
Tell me, please, what I can do?
What can I say, Gibbs, to convince
you that I’m on your side here?

GIBBS
Just stay the hell out of my way.

Gibbs storms out. Off Vance and Pavlenko, not much to add...

INT. USS CORTLAND - WARDROOM - DAY

With the rubble removed from the body of PETTY OFFICER THIRD
CLASS KATE GOMEZ, 19, Bishop moves in with her camera...

CLICK-FLASH! - THE PETTY OFFICER’S TWISTED BODY
CLICK-FLASH! - THE BLOODY GASH ON THE SIDE OF HER HEAD

(CONTINUED)
DOCTOR DONALD “DUCKY” MALLARD kneels close beside her, as Tony and McGee continue gathering evidence in the b.g.

DUCKY
Oh dear. A mere child.

BISHOP
Tell me about it.

DUCKY
Eager to serve, to learn, to see the world and experience its many adventures. Until along comes a coward with a bomb.

GIBBS’ VOICE
Update. Where are we?

As Gibbs enters with a head of steam, Ducky snaps...

DUCKY
We’re damn tired of this bastard, Jethro, that’s where we are.

GIBBS
Take a number, Duck. McGee?

MCGEE
So we know for sure that it’s...?

Gibbs’ seething glare is all the answer he or anyone needs.

MCGEE (cont’d)
Okay, we’ve collected the rest of the grenade fragments. Looks like there was only one used.

GIBBS
Get everything to Abby now. Now!

As McGee loads his BAGGED EVIDENCE and starts out...

GIBBS (cont'd)
And I want a list of every delivery the ship’s received in the last forty-eight hours. Bishop?

BISHOP
We’ve ID’d the victim, Petty Officer Third Class Katherine Gomez, nineteen, assigned to the ship only three weeks ago and...

(CONTINUED)
A look between Bishop and Tony. Gibbs simply won’t be distracted by sad details right now. He’s in overdrive.

Well, we were just about to start.

Sick bay just gave us clearance, and we’re still waiting to hear from the hospital...

Then we start in the sick bay, let’s move, let’s go...

Gibbs starts out. Bishop starts to follow, but not Tony.

Boss. We’ll take care of it.

What?

Bishop and I. We’ll handle the interviews. It might be better.

Better how? Spit it out, DiNozzo, what are you saying?

Your bedside manner, Boss, it might not be... You may be too close...

He’s saying take a breath, Jethro. Good advice for us all.

Before Gibbs can disagree with both of them, his CELL PHONE RINGS. CALLER I.D. startles him: “DIANE” (as it did in #271 “We Build, We Fight”). But this time, he knows who it is. Gibbs draws the breath Ducky suggested and answers...

Still using your mom’s phone?

We HEAR EMILY FORNELL on the other end...
EMILY (V.O.)
Only to call certain people. I need to see you right away.

GIBBS
Well, I’m pretty busy right now.

EMILY (V.O.)
Please. It’s important.

Gibbs looks to Tony and Bishop, already heading to the sick bay as Ducky and a NAVY HOSPITAL CORPSMAN start bagging the petty officer’s body. Things are handled here. Off Gibbs...

INT. NCIS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Gibbs enters with EMILY FORNELL (last seen in #244 “Devil’s Triad”), who, now at 14, is still very much her mother’s daughter, even with her school BACKPACK and UNIFORM...

GIBBS
Get you a soda, Emily? Water?

EMILY
No, I just had a low-foam latte and this won’t take long. I’ve got debate quarterfinals in an hour.

GIBBS
High-school debate?

EMILY
I’m varsity captain as a freshman. Arguing’s pretty much in my blood.

Gibbs suppresses a smile: Ain’t that the truth.

GIBBS
Could’ve done this over the phone.

EMILY
No, we couldn’t. I know about you bailing out my dad this morning.

Gibbs pauses, trying not to betray a trust, but...

GIBBS
Wasn’t bailing out exactly. He’s just going through a tough time.

(CONTINUED)
EMILY
Don’t soft-pedal me, Uncle Gibbs. He looks nuts with that bald head.

GIBBS
For some undercover operation.

EMILY
You don’t believe that. Last week, he shaved it twice in one day. Said it ‘helps him feel clean.’

Gibbs gets the implication: Fornell can’t get clean.

EMILY (cont’d)
Since Mom died, he’s been angry, bitter, self-destructive. Oh, and drunk. He’s drinking way too much.

Gibbs nods, hating to admit it.

EMILY (cont’d)
You know what he’s experiencing. I try to help, but he doesn’t listen to me and I’ve got my own grief to work through.

GIBBS
And how’s that going?

EMILY
Some good days, some awful. All compounded by being a teenager, who can’t be expected to maintain a teenage social calendar if I’m too busy worrying about...my dad hurting himself or anyone else.

Despite her superficial reasoning, her love and concern for her father shines through in the tiny crack of her voice.

GIBBS
Okay. I’ll talk to him.

EMILY
No. Help him. Please?

GIBBS
I will.

Emily shoulders her backpack and turns toward the door, but then doubles back to give Gibbs a hug. Off which...
McGee regards the image of a Russian RKG-3 GRENADE on the screen, as FORENSIC SCIENTIST ABBY SCIUTO sifts through the GRENADE FRAGMENTS on a lab tray...

ABBY
It’s an oldie, but a baddy, McGee.

MCGEE
Russian RKG-3 anti-tank grenade. Straight out of a Rambo movie.

ABBY
Dates back even further. And still turning up in Iraq and Afghanistan.

MCGEE
And here. Any shot at tracing it?

ABBY
Who are you talking to? If there’s anything on these fragments leading us to Sergei, I’ll find it.

McGee’s CELL PHONE RINGS...

MCGEE
(into phone)
Yeah, Tony... Already? (beat)
Okay, I’m on my way. (hanging up)
Gibbs wants an update and they barely just got back from the ship.

ABBY
You said yourself Gibbs is on fire.

MCGEE
Like you’ve never seen, Abby.

ABBY
Come on, we’ve all seen.

MCGEE
Not like this. If Sergei gets away again, I’m not sure there’s a level of Hell below where Gibbs is right now.
Then we can’t let him get away.

Bolstered by Abby’s resolve, McGee bolts out to...

INT. NCIS SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Gibbs gazes at the I.D. PHOTO of PETTY OFFICER GOMEZ on the plasma, as McGee joins Tony and Bishop, mid-update...

BISHOP

Petty Officer Gomez was a culinary specialist, setting up a catering station when the bomb went off.

TONY

As for witness interviews, none of the four in the ship’s sick bay could say with certainty where the blast originated.

GIBBS

You show them Sergei’s mug shot?

BISHOP

Them and everyone else on the ship. No one reported seeing him.

FORNELL’S VOICE

Well, hell, it’s not like Sergei would deliver the bomb personally.

They turn to find Fornell entering from the elevator. All air is sucked from the room, as our agents react to the sight of the bloodshot Fornell trying to act natural.

GIBBS

Tobias...

FORNELL

Sorry to interrupt. Just got word about the ship and...

GIBBS

And you’re on leave.

FORNELL

Not anymore. FBI’s here to help. Continue.

Our agents look to Gibbs, trying to gauge what to do with his friend. Tony gives Bishop a nod to keep talking...

(CONTINUED)
BISHOP
There were two other victims taken to Norfolk Memorial. Both still in surgery, but we’ll interview them as soon as they’re able.

Tony looks to McGee to keep it going...

MCGEE
And Abby’s already checking the grenade fragments for prints...

FONSELL
(interrupting)
Grenade fragments?

GIBBS
Let’s get some coffee.

Gibbs closes to Fornell...

FONSELL
No, I’m good. He used a grenade?

GIBBS
I’m not asking.

Gibbs grabs his arm and Fornell pulls it away.

FONSELL
What the hell are you doing?

GIBBS
What are you doing?

VANCE’S VOICE
Gibbs!

All eyes turn to Vance on the upstairs landing...

VANCE
And Fornell. My office now.

Off Gibbs and Fornell...

INT. NCIS DIRECTOR’S OFFICE - DAY

Fornell rigidly pleads his case to Vance, who exchanges surreptitious looks with Gibbs...

(CONTINUED)
Fornell
It’s just lack of sleep, Leon. You
know it better than anybody. Same
with Gibbs. Until Sergei’s dead,
there’s no peace...

Vance
But unlike Gibbs, you’ve let your
demons get the better of you.

Fornell’s stunned silent as Vance gets in his face.

VANCE (cont’d)
I can smell it on you.

Fornell
One Bloody Mary with lunch when I
heard about the bombing. Gibbs and
I were just getting coffee...

VANCE
I need you to wait outside.

Fornell
Look, I deserve a shot at Sergei
more than anyone.

VANCE
And I need a word with Gibbs.
Please. Have a seat outside.

Fornell looks to Gibbs, who leverages him...

Gibbs
You want a shot at him or not?

Fornell goes. And the moment he’s out...

VANCE
We can’t cover for him, Gibbs.

Gibbs
Give us time. Let me talk to him.

VANCE
And say what? Does he look like
he’s listening to anyone right now?

Gibbs
It’s his career on the line here,
Leon, his whole life...

(CONTINUED)
And what about your life? He’s a danger to himself, his fellow agents, and to us. FBI has to know, if they don’t already.

Vance speed-dials as Gibbs’ mind races, formulating a plan.

VANCE (cont’d)
This hurts me, Gibbs, but we can’t look the other way and you know it.
(into phone)
Assistant Director Wilt, please...

CLICK. Vance looks over to see Gibbs has hung up his phone.

VANCE (cont’d)
Have you lost your damn mind?

GIBBS
I’ll take full responsibility. Get Fornell out of the way and leave my team to go after Sergei.

VANCE
Wait, what? Leave your team?

GIBBS
They’re more than capable, Leon, and I’ll be a phone call away.

VANCE
Gibbs, this is Sergei Mishnev we’re talking about.

GIBBS
And maybe I’m too close. Fornell and I both.

VANCE
And you think I’ll just let you.

GIBBS
That or bench me. Or trust me.

Vance can’t believe his ears, trying to make sense of it.

VANCE
Never thought I’d see the day. I mean, where are you going to go, Gibbs? Where are taking him?
15 EXT./INT. GIBBS’ TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

Gibbs steers his TRUCK over rough terrain and puts it in “park,” as Fornell awakens blearily beside him.

FORNELL
Where are we?

GIBBS
Help me unload.

As Fornell realizes what’s in the headlights: Gibbs’ cabin.

FORNELL
Holy Jeremiah Johnson. Are you kidding me?

16 INT. GIBBS’ CABIN - NIGHT

Gibbs and Fornell carry in a BACKPACK, a DUFFEL and some GROCERIES. As Gibbs lights a GAS LANTERN...

FORNELL
This is not what we agreed to. You said we were going after Sergei.

GIBBS
No, you said it. I said let’s go.

FORNELL
Which would imply agreement. What the hell are we doing out here?

Gibbs unlocks a FOOT LOCKER, as Fornell has a scary thought.

FORNELL (cont’d)
Wait a minute. An intervention? Is that what this is?

GIBBS
Think you need one?

FORNELL
No. I mean, sure, last night was bad, but not bad enough to make any kind of New-Age-Come-to-Jesus even remotely necessary.

GIBBS
Good. That’s not what this is.

(CONTINUED)
Gibbs pulls TWO BOTTLES of bourbon from his foot locker.

GIBBS (cont’d)
No more slow-motion suicide, Tobias. You want to kill yourself, let's just get it over with.

As Gibbs pours himself a tall GLASS...

GIBBS (cont’d)
I’ll even come with you.

As Gibbs takes a swig and plops a bottle before Fornell...

PHOOF TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

FROM BLACK:

FLASH - BLACK-AND-WHITE OF VANCE AND TONY, WONDERING IF PAVLENKO ISN’T THE DUPlicitous CREEP THEY THOUGHT HE WAS...

PHOOOF TO BLACK:

FROM BLACK:

INT. NCIS SQUAD ROOM - MORNING

Bishop enters, joining Tony and McGee already at their desks, each eager to get a jump on the day...

BISHOP
Still no word from Gibbs?

TONY
Not a peep since he left last night.

MCGEE
Can’t believe he’d go at a time like this, even to help Fornell.

BISHOP
Family first. Not to mention Tony’s brave suggestion that he might be too close.

TONY
Seriously?

BISHOP
He obviously took it to heart.

TONY
Okay, one, that’s adorable. And two, trust me: Gibbs would never bail on a case, much less a Sergei case, and much much less at my suggestion.

MCGEE
Unless...he has a plan.

Tony and Bishop are struck by that notion, but before they can discuss it, McGee’s DESK PHONE RINGS...

(CONTINUED)
MCGEE (cont’d)
(into phone)
Special Agent McGee. Yes. Oh
great. Thanks for letting us know.
(hanging up)
Hospital. Both victims are awake
and well enough to be interviewed.

As McGee rises to go and Tony and Bishop follow his lead...

BISHOP
Gibbs’s plan, McGee, what do you
think it is?

MCGEE
Oh, I have no idea. All I said is
he’d never leave unless he had one.

TONY
I’m with you there, McTuitive.
Gibbs has to be up to something.

And now Tony’s CELL PHONE RINGS. CALLER I.D. says “Gibbs.”

TONY (cont’d)
And maybe we’re about to find out
what.
(hitting SPEAKER)
Morning, Boss.

INTERCUT WITH:

18
EXT. GIBBS’ CABIN – MORNING

CELL PHONE to his ear and bundled against the cold, Gibbs
sets up LOGS for chopping...

GIBBS
(into phone)
Where are we, DiNozzo?

TONY
Well, you know where we are. What
we don’t know is where you are.

GIBBS
McGee hasn’t pinged my phone yet?

BACK IN THE SQUAD ROOM

McGee shrugs sheepishly.

(continues)
MCGEE
Actually... I did, Boss, yeah.

BISHOP
Really?

TONY
And you didn’t tell us?

They mouth outraged invectives as McGee shrugs again.

MCGEE
I didn’t know if he’d want me to.

BACK WITH GIBBS

GIBBS
(into phone)
I don’t, McGee. And I don’t want anyone coming here when you do tell them after we hang up.

TONY
So...what can we do for you?

GIBBS
You can give me an update.

BISHOP
Well, we’re still combing the ship’s deliveries the last forty-eight hours. Nothing there yet.

TONY
And we were just about to leave for the hospital to interview...

Suddenly, Fornell stumbles out behind Gibbs and DRY-HEAVES into the nearest bush...

BACK IN THE SQUAD ROOM

Our agents exchange looks at the SOUNDS of retching...

TONY (cont’d)
Is that you choking, Boss, or you choking someone else?

GIBBS
Gotta go. Call me back after the interviews.
TONY
Wait, Boss, is that it? Isn’t there anything you need to tell us?

MCGEE
Any, you know, plan of some kind?

BACK WITH GIBBS

Gibbs doesn’t bite.

GIBBS
You need a plan? Catch Sergei.

Gibbs hangs up just as Fornell stumbles back, blinded by the sun and shivering with the cold.

FORNELL
Wait, who was that?

GIBBS
Morning, Tobias.

FORNELL
Was that your team? Any progress?

GIBBS
They’re working on it. Sleep okay?

FORNELL
I hate you, Gibbs, you know that? What the hell are we doing out here? Where’s my cell phone?

GIBBS
How should I know?

FORNELL
Give me yours. Need to call Emily.

GIBBS
Emily’s fine. Staying with friends. I called her.

FORNELL
You called? She’s in on this?

GIBBS
Nope. But she’s okay.

Fornell stink-eyes Gibbs. Knows he’s not getting anywhere.
We’re really doing this?

Gibbs shrugs and Fornell gives in, exasperated.

Fine. You win. What now?

What now what?

What do we do first? Bang drums? Sweat lodge? Squirrel juggling?

Gibbs extends an AX to Fornell.

Really? You think handing me an ax is a good idea right now?

Gibbs nods toward the WOOD PILE...

Cold and getting colder. That ass wound of yours will be acting up. I’ll make coffee.

Milk. Two-percent.

Black.

As Gibbs finds a LOG the size of a baseball bat in the wood pile, flipping it in his hand admiringly...

Right. Any fake sugar? (off his look) Why do I ask?

As Gibbs heads inside with the log, Fornell buries his ax into a log and feels it right in his aching temples, as we...
MCYEE
So you’re not military?

FRANKIE
No, Sir. In fact, it was my first time on a Navy ship.

NAZAR
He was so excited when he left the shop and now look at him.

MCYEE
The shop?

FRANKIE
Video and sound. Navy had us running a satellite feed for anyone who couldn’t attend the breakfast.

NAZAR
(proudly)
Like your Navy Secretary.

MCYEE
SecNav, yeah. Were you there as well, Mister Boulos?

NAZAR
No, I just do the books now. Frankie’s the expert on the new equipment. Which we don’t care about losing, by the way. All that matters is my boy is alive.

MCYEE
Absolutely. Any details you recall before the explosion, Frankie?

FRANKIE
The crew was nice. I was running a sound check and last thing I remember was thinking maybe we’d been torpedoed.

Nazar shudders, kissing his son’s head, as, off McGee...

INT. HOSPITAL - INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - ROOM #3 - DAY

PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS JUDY SLOAN, 23, weak, IV’d and head-bandaged, speaks with Tony...

(CONTINUED)
PETTY OFFICER SLOAN
Just can’t believe Katie’s dead.

TONY
You and Petty Officer Gomez were friends?

PETTY OFFICER SLOAN
She was new, but yeah. Happiest C.S.-Three anyone ever met.

TONY
You were nearby when it happened?

PETTY OFFICER SLOAN
We were setting out pastries, joking about eating them all, and next thing I knew, she...went flying across the room.

As she fights back emotion...

PETTY OFFICER SLOAN (cont'd)
Her parents. She talked about them all the time. Do they know yet?

TONY
Navy’s flying them in now, yeah.

PETTY OFFICER SLOAN
Who would do something like this?

As she gives into tears, Tony’s eyes say “a dead man,” as...

BISHOP
Excuse me, Tony?

Bishop leans in from hall, summoning him out to...

INT. HOSPITAL - INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tony and McGee join Bishop, shaking off their interviews...

TONY
I hate Sergei, have I said that enough?

MCGEE
Yeah, me too.
BISHOP
Me three. But if you don’t mind, I just need to vent about something else for a second.

TONY
Uh-oh, what did we do?

BISHOP
Not you. Jake. He just called. And that dinner he and Gibbs ended up having last week?

MCGEE
The one you and Tony ditched?

TONY
Leaving them to become BFFs?

BISHOP
More than any of us realized. Gibbs apparently asked Jake to share intel. Everything NSA has on Russian-Palestinian relations, Sergei Mishnev, Anton Pavlenko...

MCGEE
He said nothing to us about it.

BISHOP
He didn’t want us or anyone knowing. But how could Jake not tell me?

TONY
Sounds like he just did.

BISHOP
Only because Gibbs called early this morning and told Jake to send us everything he had and we’d know what to do with it.

Tony and McGee exchange a gleeful look.

TONY
Could that be part of...a plan?

BISHOP
(off her smartphone)
The email just came through and it’s a huge file.
As our agents hurry out...

EXT. GIBBS' CABIN - DAY

His head pounding, the agitated Fornell keeps chopping as Gibbs stacks the split wood against the cabin...

FORNELL
So what's the deal here, Abe Lincoln? I keep chopping until you've added a second floor?

GIBBS
Or your arm falls off.

FORNELL
Excuse me?

GIBBS
We got enough for now. You hungry?

FORNELL
Thirsty. What's here to drink?

Gibbs shoots him a look and Fornell doesn't like it.

FORNELL (cont'd)
For thirst, Gibbs.

GIBBS
Just water.

FORNELL
You spoil me.

As Fornell buries the axe and heads inside...

INT. GIBBS' CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Fornell drinks a TIN CUP OF WATER, but opens the foot locker to check for something else, as Gibbs leans in...

GIBBS
I dumped it.

FORNELL
You what?

GIBBS
The bourbon. All gone.

Fornell slams the foot locker and gets in Gibbs' face.

(CONTINUED)
FORNELL
Dammit, Gibbs, what are you trying to prove? I’m a grown man! I don’t need you monitoring my intake!

GIBBS
Looks to me like you do.

FORNELL
I don’t! And I don’t need this!

GIBBS
Me neither, but here we are.

FORNELL
Enough! I’m done!

GIBBS
Done what? Embarrassing yourself?

Fornell stops cold.

GIBBS (cont’d)
Or your badge maybe? You’re doing a helluva job at both.

POW! Fornell punches Gibbs square in the face. Gibbs staggers back into the table, and comes up almost smiling...

GIBBS (cont’d)
That all you got, Alice?

Fornell swings again, but Gibbs leans away, sending Fornell stumbling past him.

GIBBS (cont’d)
Another embarrassment. You’re batting zeroes, Tobias.

Fornell charges Gibbs, who steps aside like a matador, and Fornell flies out the door to...

EXT. GIBBS’ CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Fornell hits the ground HARD, the wind is knocked from him. As Gibbs leans in the doorway, an ABRASION on his cheek...

GIBBS
Feel better?
As Fornell gradually sits up, drawing labored breaths...

Fornell
We should be back in DC looking for Sergei.

Gibbs
Not in this condition. And forget Sergei. What’s really bugging you?

Fornell
Don’t be playing Freud now, you’re not qualified.

Gibbs
You know what I’m asking.

Fornell
Back the hell off!

Gibbs
You blame me.

Fornell
Gibbs...

Gibbs
It’s okay. I blame me. I’m the one that got her killed.

Fornell wilts, unable to stave Gibbs off anymore...

Gibbs (cont’d)
If Diane wasn’t on that roof, she’d be alive. And you wouldn’t have to be walking around pretending it wasn’t me who put her there.

Fornell
So it’s all about you.

Gibbs
It is about me. And you. And her. The drinking, all of it.

Fornell
No, Gibbs. It’s just me. I killed her. Nobody to blame but myself.

As Fornell rises and heads back to the cabin...
OFF GIBBS...

INT. NCIS SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Vance comes down from his office as Tony, McGee and Bishop pour through Jake’s NSA INTEL on their computers...

VANCE
That NSA intel give us anything?

BISHOP
We’re just getting started, Director, and there’s a whole lot to comb through.

TONY
Stuff in here about the Soviets in Afghanistan, the mujahideen...

MCGEE
Actually, I’ve got something about Sergei and that Russian Counselor Pavlenko...

VANCE
Our ‘friend’ Anton. What is it?

MCGEE
They go way back. College. Competed at Saint Petersburg University in the biathlon.

BISHOP
Isn’t that the one where they cross-country ski and shoot rifles?

TONY
As random Olympic sports go, why not bullfighting on a trampoline?

VANCE
Explains a lot though. Go on.

MCGEE
They were friendly rivals for a while, contending for the Soviet Olympic team.

(MORE)
When neither made the cut, Pavlenko went to law school and Sergei discovered the Afghan heroin trade.

VANCE
Explains even more.

BISHOP
Like his soft spot for an old college buddy gone bad.

TONY
Making Pavlenko less of a cold, duplicitous creep, and more a sentimental, duplicitous creep.

Off Vance, considering this...

EXT. URBAN ALLEYWAY - DAY

Pavlenko turns off the street and walks alone between dumpsters, glancing nervously between them before lighting a CIGARETTE.

One puff and he’s grabbed from behind and slammed hard against a wall by INTERNATIONAL MERCENARY SERGEI MISHNEV (last seen in Ep. #269 “Check”)...

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Sergei...

Sergei puts a hand over Pavlenko’s mouth while pulling open his shirt and frisking him for a wire. Pavlenko frees his mouth...

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO (cont’d)
(in Russian)
Stop, I am not wired.

SERGEI
(in Russian)
English, Anton...
(in English)
This is America, speak English.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
We are quite alone, I assure you.

SERGEI
And the last time you assured me, I lost good men in the Kola Peninsula.

(CONTINUED)
RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
That was no assurance, it was a warning. To stay away from NCIS. You chose to ignore it and where are you now? Setting off hand grenades and hiding in alleys.

SERGEI
It’s not how you fall, Anton, it’s how you rise. Remember that one?

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Which is why I called. To help you rise. With a proposal on behalf of the Russian government.

SERGEI
A government that wants me dead.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Not anymore. I’ve convinced them to offer you asylum. Full immunity on one condition.

SERGEI
This should be good.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Kill Gibbs.

Sergei’s stunned, certain he heard him wrong.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO (cont’d)
This vendetta of yours has dragged on long enough and we’d like it put to an end.

Sergei moves quickly from stunned to suspicious.

SERGEI
So now I have your blessing? Why now? Why the sudden change of heart? You owe Gibbs your life.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
I know you believe that, as I once did, but new details have come to light recently that...

As Pavlenko searches for words to a complicated story...
SERGEI
That what? Tell me. Convince me.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Nelly Benin.

SERGEI
The scientist.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
She’s alive. Gibbs killing her to save me was a ruse. An elaborate sleight of hand to help her defect. As you know, we don’t like defectors. And I don’t like being played for a fool.

SERGEI
Gibbs. Hard not to admire him.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Not for me. Dispose of him, Sergei, quickly and quietly. And you can live out your days in peace in Mother Russia.

SERGEI
Is there a timetable?

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Now. Today. My people know where he is and it’s a rare opportunity we cannot miss. I can have you there in a matter of hours.

As Sergei considers the offer, a smile creasing his face...

Off the very duplicitous Pavlenko, we...

PHOOOF TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FROM BLACK:

FLASH - BLACK-AND-WHITE OF GIBBS WEIGHING HIS NEXT MOVE...

PHOOF TO BLACK:

FROM BLACK:

27  EXT. BACKWOODS POND - DAY

Gibbs and Fornell fish off a small BOAT, their LINES cast in the frigid water. Though both are bundled up, Fornell shivers with cold sweats...

FORNELL
This is insane. I’m sure I saw cans of tuna in those grocery bags.

GIBBS
Can’t beat fresh catfish.

FORNELL
Ugly bottom-feeders. How does anything actually live down there?

GIBBS
You never fished as a kid?

FORNELL
In the summer, sure. Finger Lakes.

In his weakened condition, Fornell grows wistful...

FORNELL (cont’d)
Loved it. Should get back to it, but... Lot of things I don’t do enough of anymore. Get outdoors. Work with my hands...

Before his regrets can plunge him back into melancholy, Fornell’s rod is nearly jerked out of his hands...

FORNELL (cont’d)
Whoa, whoa, look at this...

GIBBS
Reel her in steady...

After a brief fight, Fornell reels in a flailing foot-long STRIPED BASS. As Gibbs scoops under it with a net...

(CONTINUED)
FORNELL
Whoa... Beauty.

GIBBS
Just big enough for two.

FORNELL
I’m not sharing this baby, Gibbs.
Come on, let’s get you one.

As Gibbs BUCKETS the fish, relieved to see Fornell forget
himself momentarily as he casts his line out again...

INT. NCIS SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Vance paces, reading a PRINTOUT from Jake’s intel, comparing
notes with Tony, Bishop and McGee at their computers.

VANCE
Am I reading this right? Sergei’s
originally from Israel?

MCGEE
Born 1965. Father Dimitri was a
Russian officer stationed there.
Nothing here about his mother.

TONY
This report says she was a doctor,
a Saudi national with roots in
Palestine.

This lands like a bomb on Vance, Tony and McGee, who exchange
stunned looks, as Bishop fills in her portion of the intel...

BISHOP
Apparently, the father took Sergei
back to Russia when he was ten,
leaving his mother behind...

As Bishop looks up, now seeing their pale gazes...

BISHOP (cont’d)
Birth of some issues right there.
(beat)
What? Am I missing something?

MCGEE
Is that really what’s driving him?

TONY
No wonder the guy’s pissed off.

(CONTINUED)
BISHOP

VANCE
Your predecessor at that desk. Ziva David had a half-brother...

BISHOP
Ari Haswari. Same father. I know the story.

TONY
Ari’s mother was also a doctor with Palestinian roots.

MCGEE
So it’s quite possible that Sergei and Ari were...

TONY
Half-brothers.

VANCE
Shedding even more light on the depth of his hatred for Gibbs.

As it now sinks in to all of them...

BISHOP
Should we call him?

MCGEE
Not sure what he’d do with that information at the cabin other than punch out a grizzly bear.

TONY
But it does open up a new world of possible allies for Sergei.

As they consider other possibilities, McGee’s DESK PHONE buzzes. He puts it on SPEAKER...

MCGEE
Hey, Abbs, we’re kind of in the middle of...

ABBY (V.O.)
Which one of you wants to be Gibbs Gibbs?

Off Vance and our agents...
Still waiting on fish number two, Gibbs listens as Fornell’s wistfulness continues, losing himself in a memory...

FORNELL
And it wasn’t a bad little table.
I mean, Diane would always stick a matchbook under one leg to remind me I’d measured wrong. But she never got rid of it. Probably just to torture me, but still...

GIBBS
Or she liked that you built it.

FORNELL
Well, you know she was a pushover for that manly man stuff. God knows it worked for you.

GIBBS
Don’t know about that. You’re the one she was remarrying. Not me.

Fornell darkens on this and stops reeling his line...

GIBBS (cont’d)
Right?

Fornell reels his line in fast and changes the subject.

FORNELL
What the hell are we doing? One fish is enough. Where’s your team with those updates?

As Fornell shuts down, grabbing the oars to start paddling ashore. Off Gibbs...

INT. ABBY’S LAB - DAY

Abby shows Vance and McGee the multitude of grenade fragments she’s combed through, spread out on the evidence table.

ABBY
Twenty-six individual grenade fragments and not a single print on any of them. Not even a partial.

VANCE
So what’s the urgency, Miss Sciuto?
The urgency is that this type of grenade doesn’t go off by itself, Director. You twist the handle and throw it and then boom. But the way this one went off required a detonator of some kind.

Which we never found.

Yes, you did. Or at least a piece of a detonator. This baby here.

Abby lifts a small melted BLOB OF PLASTIC from among the fragments and displays it on her RUBBER-GLOVED hand.

Looks like a blob of plastic.

That’s exactly what it is. But before it melted, it was a highly sensitive paper-thin plastic sheet that vibrates at certain sound frequencies to trigger whatever device it’s attached to.

A light goes on for McGee...

The A/V guy. Frankie Boulos. He said the grenade exploded while he was doing a sound check. Could his voice have set it off?

Depends on his voice. It’s most sensitive to high-pitched frequencies. Unless the device was like super close to the sound equipment. Or even planted inside.

As Vance and McGee exchange a look: Inside the equipment?

Gibbs forks GRILLED FISH from the fire and sets it on a PLATE between him and Fornell, who sits in a very dark place.
Gibbs
Pretty great, huh?

Fornell
What? Oh. Yeah.

Gibbs breaks off a hunk of bread from a loaf and extends it to Fornell. He takes it but quickly loses interest.

Gibbs
Gotta eat.

Fornell
Later, maybe. Not that hungry.

Gibbs takes a bite, regards him for a beat.

Gibbs
You gonna make me ask you again?

Fornell sighs deeply. Resistance is futile.

Fornell
You mentioned before about Diane and me getting remarried.
(off his nod)
In the end... she wasn’t so sure.

Gibbs
Natural to get cold feet.

Fornell
Wasn’t that, Gibbs.

As Fornell pushes his plate aside and rises, pacing...

Fornell (cont’d)
We were arguing one night over something stupid. Don’t even remember what. And in a fit of anger, I said us being together, our rekindled romance, was a big mistake. And I stormed out.
(beat)
Next day, she called. I was in a classified briefing, so she left a voicemail. It’s why I hope I haven’t lost my phone. Only way I can still hear her voice.

Gibbs now reaches into his pocket and pulls out Fornell’s phone. Fornell’s too relieved to be truly angry.

(CONTINUED)
Fornell (cont'd)
Didn’t I ask where it was?

Gibbs
I’d have given it back eventually.

Fornell takes it and plays the message. As we hear the voice of Diane Sterling...

Diane Sterling (V.O.)
Hey, baby, it’s me. Look, can we just forget last night? Between Jethro’s wife Number Two in town and... I don’t know, let’s hit rewind or delete or whatever. I don’t think we’re a mistake at all, Tobias, and I pray you don’t either. I haven’t felt this good about anything in years and I know we can work through the petty stuff. Jethro just texted me to meet him, but call me back as soon as you can, okay? I love you, Tobias, and I always will.

Click. The message ends and Fornell swallows hard...

Fornell
Every word. I agreed with every word she said. But instead of calling her right back... I chose to play small. Petty. Let her twist in the wind a while. Serves her right. (beat)
And then she was gone. Died thinking it might be over between us. Not truly knowing just how much I loved her.

Gibbs
She knew.

Fornell (shakes his head)
‘We’re making a big mistake.’ Last thing she ever heard me say, Gibbs. And for that, I can’t forgive myself. Could you?

Gibbs seems unable to summon an answer, until...

(Continued)
GIBBS
If I had a daughter, yeah.
(off his look)
Her daughter. You want Diane to know you loved her, Tobias, that’s the only way you’ve got left.

Off Fornell, drinking this in, emotions churning...

INT. HOSPITAL - INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - ROOM #2 - DAY

Frankie Boulos awakens from a nap, startled to find Tony, McGee and Bishop around him...

FRANKIE
Oh. Hey.

MCGEE
Sorry to wake you, Frankie.

FRANKIE
This I.V. drip packs a kick. Everything all right?

MCGEE
Just forgot one thing in our interview this morning. A photo.

Bishop steps up with Sergei’s MUG SHOT.

BISHOP
Before the bomb went off yesterday, do you recall seeing this man?

As Frankie vaguely recognizes Sergei...

FRANKIE
I don’t know. He looks kind of familiar.

TONY
Kind of?

NAZAR’S VOICE
What is this?

As Nazar enters with a TRAY OF SNACKS from the cafeteria...

NAZAR
My son needs his rest. How many times are you going to disturb him?

(CONTINUED)
MCGEE
   Sorry, Mister Boulos, we...

Nazar spots Sergei’s mug shot and DROPS THE TRAY on the floor. He stands awkwardly for a moment, then looks to his son...

NAZAR
   What did you tell them?

Frankie doesn’t know what to say. Tony does.

TONY
   Not as much as you’re about to tell us.

Off Nazar, devastated as Tony pulls his HANDCUFFS...

INT. GIBBS’ CABIN - DAY

Fornell sits alone at the table, regarding a PHOTO OF DIANE on his phone. With a reflective breath, he sets it aside and takes a bite of fish, his appetite restored. Unburdened. Lighter somehow. Until he hears Gibbs outside...

GIBBS’ VOICE
   Wait, say it again. I lost you.

Gibbs enters, trying to get his cell signal back...

GIBBS
   (into phone)
   DiNozzo? Can you hear me?

Gibbs enters with a load of FIREWOOD, checking his cell...

Fornell
   DiNozzo? What’s going on?

Gibbs
   They’ve got a suspect, but we got cut off. Lost my signal.

Fornell
   A suspect? Not Sergei?

Gibbs
   No, but there’s a connection. They’re bringing him in for questioning now. Check your phone.

As Fornell checks his phone...

(CONTINUED)
Fornell

Gibbs
Go?

Fornell
If it concerns Sergei, you and I should be asking the questions.

Gibbs
But it’s not Sergei. It’s someone else. And we’re not done here yet.

Fornell
What? Yes, we are. I’m done.

Gibbs
You think so?

As Gibbs starts tending the fire, Fornell pleads his case...

Fornell
I know so. I was just sitting here, feeling not lousy for the first time in I don’t know when. And I appreciate it, Gibbs. The little wake-up call to my liver. Getting to say things out loud I never thought I’d say. I may not be whistling rainbows just yet, but I got the message. One night was enough and, you’re right, I need to see my little girl.

Gibbs checks his dead cell phone, then rises to the window.

Gibbs
Not yet.

Fornell
What do I need here, a safe word? Gibbs, what’s going on?

Gibbs stays at the window, eyes on the surrounding woods...

Fornell (cont’d)
There’s something else, isn’t there? What aren’t you telling me?

Wheels turning, Gibbs looks back at Fornell...

(Continued)
FORNELL (cont’d)
What, Gibbs? What is it?

There is something. And Gibbs is ready to tell Fornell.

Off Gibbs, weighing his next move...

PHOOOF TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

FROM BLACK:

FLASH - BLACK-AND-WHITE OF GIBBS AND VANCE, RELIEVED...

PHOOF TO BLACK:

FROM BLACK:

34 INT. NCIS INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

As Tony and Bishop grill a contrite Nazar Boulos...

NAZAR
Sergei is no friend. We played together as boys in Palestine and reconnected as young men in Kabul.

TONY
Reconnected as he was making his name in the heroin trade?

NAZAR
Which I wanted no part of. I came to this country to pursue the American dream. I’ve been doing just that for years, until Sergei walked into my shop last week.

BISHOP
Had to be a surprise.

NAZAR
Not a happy one. He knew we’d been contracted by the Navy and insisted that I help him deliver a package.

TONY
A ‘package’?

NAZAR
His threat to my family was clear. I could not say no. He placed it inside a speaker and assured me that my son would be safe.

BISHOP
How’d your son feel about it?

(CONTINUED)
NAZAR
I could not tell him. And my deceit nearly cost his life.

BISHOP
Someone else wasn’t so lucky.

TONY
Where do we find him?

NAZAR
I wish I knew. When I saw him today, I wanted to kill him myself.

Bishop and Tony exchange a look, as we...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NCIS OBSERVATION ROOM - SAME

Vance and McGee look on...

VANCE
He saw Sergei?

TONY
You saw him today?

BACK IN INTERROGATION

NAZAR
He had the nerve to call, pretending to be concerned for my boy, then demanding a device.

BISHOP
What kind of device?

NAZAR
I keep only one in stock for the proper authorities to use. It’s a transmitter that blocks cell-tower reception...

BACK IN OBSERVATION

Intuitively, Vance is already speed-dialing Gibbs...

BISHOP
A cell-phone jammer.
PORTABLE, LONG RANGE, VERY EXPENSIVE. AND HE JUST TOOK IT.

COME ON, GIBBS, PICK UP...

AS VANCE GETS A LOUD RAPID BUSY SIGNAL ON HIS PHONE...

EXT. GIBBS’ CABIN - DAY

FROM A DISTANCE, WE SEE THE CABIN WITH A THIN BILLOW OF SMOKE WAFTING FROM ITS CHIMNEY. A GORGEOUS SETTING, BUCOLIC AND PEACEFUL, UNTIL WE REVERSE ANGLE TO SEE WHOSE POV WE SHARE:

IT’S SERGEI, MOVING STEALTHILY BETWEEN TREES, ARMED WITH A RIFLE AND SIDEARM AS HE CLOSES UPON THE CABIN.

INT. GIBBS’ CABIN - CONTINUOUS

SERGEI SNEAKS IN, READY TO OPEN FIRE ON GIBBS, BUT INSTEAD FINDS ONLY FORNELL STOKING THE FIRE, HIS BACK TO THE DOOR.

MAYBE YOU WERE RIGHT, GIBBS. ONE MORE NIGHT MIGHT DO SOME GOOD...

SERGEI LOOKS AROUND. NO GIBBS. FORNELL RISES AND STOPS COLD, STUNNED BY THE RIFLE IN HIS FACE AND WHO’S HOLDING IT.

MISHNEV.

NOT GIBBS, BUT...SPECIAL AGENT FORNELL, IS IT? WE’VE YET TO BE FORMALLY INTRODUCED.

I KNOW YOU, YOU MURDERING SON OF A BITCH.

YES, MY APOLOGIES. I MEANT ONLY TO HURT GIBBS. NEVER REALIZING JUST HOW MUCH MISS STERLING GOT AROUND.

SERGEI SMILES. FORNELL DOESN’T.

WHERE IS HE?

(CONTINUED)
FORNELL
Like I’d ever tell you.

SERGEI
I took your child’s mother. Do you think I’d hesitate to make that pretty girl an orphan altogether?

Fornell SPITS at his feet. Sergei cocks his rifle.

SERGEI (cont’d)
Suit yourself.

Sergei’s about to squeeze the trigger, when...

CRACK! Something heavy swipes across the base of his skull. Hitting the floor, he stares up to see Gibbs looming over him with the log he found earlier.

As Sergei quickly succumbs to the hit and BLACKS OUT...

INT. NCIS SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

Tony, McGee and Bishop work the phones, as Vance regards the plasma with a MAP of the area around GIBBS’ CABIN. As Tony slams his phone down...

TONY
Enough with the mockingbird dial tone already. I’ll be hearing that in my sleep.

BISHOP
Same with Fornell’s phone. There’s no getting through, Director...

As Abby races in and grabs the REMOTE...

ABBY
And it’s not just their phones. It’s the whole area...

She taps the remote and the map reflects what she reports, with a TRIANGLE forming between distant cell towers...

ABBY (cont’d)
Three new cell towers reporting a complete loss of service, covering over twelve square miles.

VANCE
Bishop, local law enforcement?

(CONTINUED)
BISHOP
Already called, Sir, but they’re getting slammed right now...

TONY
We’ve got to get out there.

As McGee hangs up his phone and rises to Vance...

MCGEE
You got it, Tony. Chopper’s gassed up on the helipad. It can have us there in twenty minutes.

VANCE
Get on it, all three of you!

As our agents scramble out, they cross frame to BLACKOUT...

EXT. FOREST ROAD - NIGHT

FROM BLACK, our POV blinks awake to the sight of distant HEADLIGHTS through a haze of dust, silhouetting a LONE FIGURE standing before them. WE REVERSE ANGLE to reveal...

Sergei waking up in the middle of the road, rubbing his aching neck. His rifle’s gone, but his sidearm is still on his belt. Glancing around at the dark forest, a sense of déjà vu overwhelms him.

Sergei spots the lone figure and assumes it’s Gibbs. It’s a near recreation of their first meeting months ago, a mile from the Russia-Finland border (from Ep. #259 “Twenty Klicks”). As Sergei rises to his feet, feigning amusement.

SERGEI
(to himself) *
Feels familiar. *
(calling out) *
Out to rewrite history, Agent Gibbs? Turn back the clock?

FORNELL
If only that were possible.

Sergei now realizes it’s Fornell before him and not Gibbs.

SERGEI
Where is Gibbs? This is between me and him, and no one else.

(CONTINUED)
The unseen Gibbs calls out from the trees between Sergei and Fornell.

GIBBS’ VOICE
Oh, I’m here, Sergei! Is this uncomfortable for you?

Sergei’s unnerved to not see Gibbs. He looks around warily, trying to stay cool, but he’s cracking.

Fornell
This is between us now, Sergei.

Sergei
Perhaps you don’t know, Agent Fornell, what Gibbs took from me.

Fornell
I know about your family tree, Sergei. But I have a family of my own. This is for Diane!

Sergei
And this? What is this?

Fornell
Seems you got three options. You could unbuckle that sidearm, put up your hands and surrender...

Sergei
Not exactly my style.

Fornell
You could run. Make us hunt you down. See how that feels...

Sergei
Again, you know better.

Fornell
I was hoping you’d say that.

Fornell assumes a gunfighter’s pose as Sergei continues searching the shadows for Gibbs. Fornell and Sergei now stand face-to-face bathed in the glow of headlights. Fornell doesn’t flinch. A tense beat between them. Open hands hovering beside weapons. Eyes locked. And on this, Sergei draws his sidearm, raises it fast and CLICK! Sergei’s sidearm misfires. Or did it?

As a look of panic washes over Sergei...

(CONTINUED)
Fornell draws, takes careful aim and -- BANG! -- puts a clean shot through Sergei’s forehead. Almost exactly where Diane was hit. But this time, totally justified and deserved.

Sergei collapses in a heap as Fornell stands frozen with his SIG extended. He trembles a bit, awash in conflicting emotions, until Gibbs emerges from the darkness. He gently rests his hand on Fornell’s still-outstretched arm as if to comfort him. Fornell lowers his gun and Gibbs continues toward Sergei. Fornell follows.

Gibbs checks Sergei’s pulse. Fornell approaches.

FORNELL (cont’d)
I got him.

GIBBS
Yeah.

They just stand there staring down as the THUP-THUP-THUP of a CHOPPER approaches overhead, along with distant SIRENS of local LAW ENFORCEMENT.

GIBBS (cont’d)
Feel better?

FORNELL
Not even close.

As Gibbs and Fornell exchange a look...

FORNELL (cont'd)
Well, maybe a little.

But neither man smiles, as Fornell is suddenly hit with a wave of emotion. He leans on Gibbs.

INT. NCIS SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

In the immediate aftermath, Gibbs sits exhausted at his desk, checking messages, alone with his thoughts, until...

VANCE
Gibbs...

Vance comes down from his office...

VANCE (cont’d)
Just heard back from DiNozzo and McGee. Mishnev’s still dead.
GIBBS
That supposed to be a joke?

VANCE
He’s fooled us before.

GIBBS
Not this time.

VANCE
That’s for sure.

And what a relief, as Fornell emerges from the men’s room...

FORNELL
Man, I really do look like hell.

GIBBS
You think we were all lying to you?

FORNELL
Wasn’t thinking much at all, I guess.

GIBBS
Or too much.

VANCE
Nothing a hot shower can’t fix.

FORNELL
Amen to that, Leon. Followed by a piping hot meal with my daughter.

BISHOP’S VOICE
Well then, our timing’s perfect.

As Bishop escorts Emily Fornell from the elevator...

EMILY
And I was thinking more of sushi?

Emily’s teenaged cool and contained happiness gives way to emotion the moment she meets eyes with her father. A long look between them, before Emily folds into his arms...

EMILY (cont’d)
Or a steak, Dad, if you need one.

FORNELL
Whatever you want, kid. Whatever you need, it’s yours.

(CONTINUED)
With Emily in his arms, Fornell looks to Gibbs with a look of gratitude he can’t put words to. Just as well, as far as Gibbs is concerned. No thanks necessary. It’s understood.

FORNELL (cont’d)
Well then... Good night.

GIBBS
Night.

As Emily and Fornell head for out, Bishop lingers, but it’s clear Vance needs a moment with Gibbs.

BISHOP
And unless you need anything else from me, Gibbs or Director, Jake’s waiting on me. We have much to discuss.

GIBBS
Go easy on him.

Bishop smiles and goes.

Vance looks to Gibbs, studying him a beat, knowing there had to be a plan of some kind, but...what?

GIBBS (cont’d)
What?

VANCE
Nothing, just...glad you’re okay.

GIBBS
Fornell too.

VANCE
You bet. He’s lucky to have a friend like you.

GIBBS
Yeah well...anything else?

VANCE
No, not unless there’s anything I should know. Any detail I missed that you might need to tell me.

Gibbs thinks a beat and shrugs.

Vance smiles a nod, knowing there’s more to it, but letting it go as he goes. Off Gibbs...
Gibbs cracks a BEER and collapses onto his couch in front of the fire. He takes a swig, and after a beat, a KNOCK at the door. Gibbs doesn’t budge.

GIBBS
It’s open.

Anton Pavlenko enters.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Open. Why am I not surprised?

GIBBS
Come on in, Anton.

Pavlenko walks in...

GIBBS (cont’d)
Don’t have any vodka, but there’s cold beer in the fridge.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
You are thoughtful, but I cannot stay.
I understand we had some success.

GIBBS
Could say that.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
I admit I was nervous. He was quite suspicious at first, but you were right. I told him you faked Nelly Benin’s death and he bought it. Completely.

Gibbs smiles subtly: He lied to Pavlenko with the truth.

GIBBS
People believe what they want to.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
Had he not, we might not be having this conversation right now.

GIBBS
But here we are.

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
All your planning...isolating yourself...setting the trap...
(MORE)
Life will be easier for everyone concerned, Gibbs. Nice to finally be on the same side.

GIBBS
For now.

As Pavlenko turns for the door...

RUSSIAN COUNSELOR PAVLENKO
(in Russian)
Thank you, Gibbs.

GIBBS
(in Russian)
Spa-see-ba VOM, sah-VET-neek.
[Thank you, Counselor.]

Pavlenko closes the door behind him.

Off Gibbs, gazing into the fire, alone with his beer and his secrets, we...

PHOOF TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW