



# THE KAMENKA EXPERIMENT

(Based on a rumour)

Written by Anthony Straeger

# OVERVIEW

**TITLE:** THE KAMENKA EXPERIMENT

**WRITER:** Anthony Straeger

**GENRE:** Thriller/Horror

**STYLE:** Das Experiment (2001) / Hunger (2005) / Facility (2012)

**FORMAT:** 90 minutes feature

**LOCATION:** North England or similar & Studio

**TIME:** Recent Past

**LOGLINE:** Willing recruits sign up for a drugs enhancement test, but when the experiment goes wrong, dealing with problem becomes a horrific struggle of life death and morals.

**TAGLINE** Who knows what doors are unlocked when you are trapped without sleep.

**SUMMARY:** This story is based on an infamous rumour about a Russian sleep deprivation experiment conducted in the 1940s. But, here in the real world a military test centre owned by Pharmaceutical giants 'PharmoTech' sets up an experimenting on five soldiers. Over 21 day where they will be exposed to the enhancement gas 'Kamenka 194'. What they are part of becomes progressively unnerving as the effects of the gas cause a horrific reaction. The chain of events cannot be undone and placw everyone's life in danger.



# SYNOPSIS

PHARMOTECH is a company that has researched and developed military enhancement drugs. For the last 20 years PHARMOTECH International has been research and developing new military enhancement drugs. Their latest development 'KAMENKA 194' is ready for its final test. The unwitting Guinea Pigs are five carefully selected soldiers. On the promise of a substantial reward and pension they find themselves prepared for their twenty-one day ordeal at the military installation, Ryedale (an old cold war bunker) on the North Yorkshire Moors.

DAY 1: On arrival at the centre they are given a final medical before being escorted to the Test Chamber. Inside, each one has a bed with a CCTV cameras and microphone directed at it. There are no windows, they have all the rations they need and at 9:00am they enter chamber, the door crash shut, and they are entombed. KAMENKA 194 is exchanged for the chamber's oxygen.

Over the next few days little happens, boredom sets in for both the watching scientist and the subjects. By DAY 3, the hours drag by as they start to recount stories of despair and traumatic incidents in their past. DAY 4, their conversations take a dark turn as they no longer look directly at each other. Energetic movement has ceased and all the subjects are observed sitting motionless. By DAY 7, one after another starts to rock back and forth mumbling and complain the volume increases as they became more frantic and frenetic in their actions. They have stopped sleeping.

DAY 9, the cacophony ceases as quickly as it started, the observation team are fascinated unable to decide how much is attributed to isolation, containment, sleep deprivation or Kamenka. Hours pass. The mood of the scientists becomes uneasy, then one-by-one they move over to their personal CCTV and stares through the camera, and then they start incoherent whispering, fast and faster. The scientist frantically analyse the information and realise that each one is trying to win the trust of their observers and betray their comrades. A decision is made to report the findings to Thatcher, the head of PharmoTech.

DAY 11, the pleading stops and the first subjects starts running and screaming the length of the chamber, one side to the other over and over again. He shrieks at the top of his lungs for three hours until his vocal cords are so heavily damaged that he is reduces to an occasional squeak. A second follows suit, followed by the third. Running frenetically around the chamber, screaming as loud as they are able. The two non-screaming captives begin to tear books apart and smear the page with their own faeces, pasting them over every CCTV. Blacked out. Silence. Over the next two days it is hard to believe that they can remain so quiet. Test results show they are consuming three times the amount Kamenka than they should, the same with Oxygen would result in death.

DAY 14, Thatcher decides 'Contact should be made'. His right-hand man Shay reads a pre-planned statement to the captors. No reaction, it is repeated until a voice calmly speaks: "No-one here wants to be freed. Go away. Do not enter."

DAY 16, Shay and four well armed arrive, and upon entry are not prepared for the sight that befalls them. The soldiers are on edge; they see four of the five subjects still alive, barely. There are chunks of meat lying around, four inches of rancid water accumulated on the floor, filled with blood and urine, the 5th dead, all that remains is a disgusting stripped skeleton. The subjects screaming, wailing and beg for them to leave and close the door for fear of falling asleep. Battered by the visual horror, they back out and leave. Thatcher is informed and must see what has happened for himself.

DAY 17, Thatcher arrives with more soldiers. The gas is switched off. The soldiers charge in and end up in a ferocious and bloody fight. Throats are cut, arms broken, smashed spleens, complete carnage resulting in the death of two soldiers and one of the subjects. Regardless of the suffering the subjects beg for more pain, for more gas. Eventually the soldiers and scientist gain the upper hand, sedate the remaining three and take them away for examination. Thatcher enters, dumbstruck by the rank smell of death, urine, blood and faeces fouling the air. Bodies, body parts are strewn around the entire room.

The three remaining subjects are rushed to separate medical rooms in the facility. It's a fight to keep them alive. They whimper for the gas and demand to be kept awake at all cost. The doctors struggle to repair their organs and bodies. Morphine is administered to one and she flat-lines. Over a six-hour procedure the doctors and nurses endure a harrowing experience.

DAY 19, an autopsy is performed on the dead subject, muscles that is still attached to his skeleton is badly torn, and they had numerous broken bones from the struggle. A meeting is held between Shay, Thatcher and the scientists, it is decided that the surviving subjects should be returned to the chamber until the best course of action can be determined.

The last two subjects struggle to stay awake, but and once the door is closed and Kamenka is reintroduced, they relax. The scientist go about their work, checking EEG when, (though most of the time the readings are normal) every now and each subject flat-lines. Eventually, the second subject raises his head and makes a gut wrenching noise. Blood gushing out of every orifice as he strains with every sinew in his body, and he shakes violently, then he stops, smiles, closes his eyes and falls back to his bed, dead.

The panic button is hit and two soldiers join the researchers as they enter the chamber. "Don't cut the gas!" Screams the living subject as he tries to free himself. In that moment, the dead subject reanimates and strangles one of the scientists. One of the soldiers draws his gun and shoots him in the head.

The door to the chamber slams shut. Realising they failed to switch off the gas they panic and try to smash their way out of the tomb. Furious, a soldier draws his gun and shoots the last subject dead. Silence. From outside there is another gunshot, followed by screaming followed by three more gunshots. The chamber is stood alone, inactive and in eerily silent. In the darkness a whisper is heard: "So Close... So nearly free..."

# Anthony Straeger

## STATEMENT

A RUMOUR has circulated on the Internet over the last decade of an account that describing the horrific results of a 'Russian Sleep Deprivation Experiment'. From the first line to the last of the account I was hooked, but the inconsistencies in the story made me question whether there was any truth in it. After a great deal of research, I came to the conclusion that it was nothing more than a modern creepy work of fiction.

**THIS STORY** is set in the recent past and deals with the ethical and sinister development of performance enhancement drugs by the government military. It has been documented by Defense News USA that US Special Operations Command has been developing performance-enhancing drugs to push the abilities and endurance of its forces beyond current human limits. In our story PharmoTech International has been at the cutting edge of developing enhancement drugs for the military for decades and has spent millions on developing a new wonder drug Kamenka 194. It has been designed to make better, strong, faster and more aggressive soldier. The bulk of the action is buried deep underground in a post-war nuclear bunker somewhere under the North Yorkshire Moors. Five soldiers have been bribed and selected to take part in an experiment where they will have to survive for 21 days locked in a hermetically seal chamber. What happens to them psychologically and physically during confinement is shocking.

**THE GENRE** is most definitely horror and is aimed at being a sickeningly graphic example of what happens when man plays God and it goes wrong. The anti-hero of the story is Professor Woodruff, a person who's been buried in their work and research for so long that they don't realise the misgivings and implications of what they have become part. "The Kamenka Experiment" doesn't rely on jump scares to startle the audience, but draws them into the relationship and character development of our five subjects and the horror they endure.

**THE MAIN THEME** centre's around corporate greed and disregard for anything other than profit, where the means justifies the end. The suffering caused through these results in the physical and mental suffering for the victims/ subjects. Eventually, the guilt and suffering endured by our anti-hero Woodruff, results in their ultimate downfall. Living in the modern era we often see that the stakeholder comes first, there is a liberal white washing of people's minds when it comes to feigning care, and to quote Martin Shkreli on the purchase of his life saving drug and selling it for an inflated price.

*"I can see how it looks greedy,  
but I think there's a lot of altruistic properties to it,"*

**THE VISION:** *the setting is claustrophobic, the action intense. This is overall an ensemble cast that needs to deliver dynamic actions and intense performances from start to the end. Via a series of powerful monologues we learn about the subjects difficult backgrounds and how it drove them into the army.*

## THE SHOOTING STYLE

- A sense of cinematic swagger and calm when dealing with PharmoTech
- Hand-held up-close and dirty as we follow the lives of the subjects and watch them unravel
- CCTV big-brother view-point taken from the scientific team as they watch their lab rats

THE VISUAL TONE of the chamber is monochromatic, metallic walls, daylight fluorescent lighting and neutrally toned furnishings. From the point when the chamber is breached the blood and guts spilled will be over saturated to give the greatest impact.

The editing speed will increase as the story picks up pace. The film will be lean and to the point, no time for over deliberation. There are a number of monologues that take place that will be used to create a disturbing soundscape. Music is minimal to zero relying on a real soundscape driven for atmosphere. I have only one song that supplements the feeling and mood of the film and would be used for the credits:

Digital daggers – Can't sleep, Can't Breathe:  
<https://youtu.be/H9GgyXJmzko>

VFX will be minimal and the effects will mainly be live. Concentration will be on actual SFX make-up as we will see a great deal of human internal organs both on the bodies of the subjects and splayed around the chamber. This means that the images have to be anatomically accurate.

*It is my hope not only to scare the audience but to make consider the boundaries man seems desperate to push at any cost.*



# MOOD BOARD



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# MOOD BOARD



# PROJECTED SCHEDULE

Current	Secure financing, solicit pre-sales, distribution interest and vet casting wish lists with core territory ISAs.
<b>SOFT-PREP:</b> Weeks 1- 3	Open bank account (2-signature w/Equity Investor, Line Producer, Anthony Straeger). Retain entertainment lawyer, prepare all legal docs, form LLC. Begin social media campaign, interview prospective social media team members and design website. Break down script. Hire Line Producer & refine the schedule and production budget, research and secure tax credits, location scout, determine shooting locations. Team will establish potential ancillary rights liquidation plan (including retail, web, TV, radio and print promotion), solicit brand/merchandising product placement and/or marketing partners, negotiate soundtrack and music deals. Interview potential department heads.
<b>PRE-PRODUCTION:</b> Weeks 4 & 6	Set up production offices. Hire Department Heads: Interview 1st, 2nd, PAs and interns. Audition and cast, handle Union paperwork. Strategize and plan new Key Art integrating stars. Solicit domestic and international distribution based on talent. Location tech scout and storyboard complicated sequences. Rewrites of the screenplay as necessary. Launch Crowdfunding campaign with one-month Director's Diary, Department Heads' POVs and Talent and Affinity Journals to sustain six-week initial campaign. Lock shooting script, submit any additional information necessary to secure official approval of tax incentives.
<b>PRODUCTION:</b> Week 7	Keys officially hire department crew, cast table read, on-location rehearsals with cast and crew.
<b>PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY</b> Weeks 8 - 12	<i>Estimated: 24-day shoot (fsix 6-day work weeks)</i> Full-time/real time Behind the Scenes Social Media and PR promotion Twitter, Facebook, SnapChat, Instagram, Vine, Pinterest, Periscope, etc.
<b>POST-PRODUCTION;</b> Months 4 - 8	Edit & launch festival/marketing social media campaign, transfer all crowdfunding leads to website and engage on other social media platforms w/one campaign manager/platform expert and at least one cast/crew ambassador per platform (Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Slated, Google Plus, LinkedIn, YouTube)
<b>Distribution Strategies</b> Month 9	<i>(Depending on timing and Distributor/ISA strategy)</i> Distributor or a solid boutique domestic distributor and an International Sales Agent commit and we shoot for a Midnight Madness premier at the Toronto International Film Festival OR a premiere at the Berlin Film Festival/European Film Market; Capital Recoupment and Profit Realized - TBD

# CONCLUSION

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