

Pilot Error (Part 1)

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FADE IN:

EXT. 1982. ABANDONED WORLD WAR TWO AIRFIELD - DAY

Spring sun glistens off broken window panes of the flight control tower. Mists breeze up the overgrown runway. Flashes of blue of light emanate from a rusty hanger. The Ghostly figure of a 1940's R.A.F. Man emerges and lights his pipe.

INT. DANIELS HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Daniel Croxley (12) bolts upright from his sleep, he looks out of the window for an answer to the ghostly sound of a Spitfire's Merlin engine.

DANIEL CROXLEY
He's back. Mum, he's back listen.
Did you hear it?

INT. DANIELS HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Daniels mum (Liz) ascends the loft ladder with a box of old wedding photographs. Daniel runs into the hallway almost knocking her off. The box of photos flutter down like confetti.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
For God sake Daniel! Hear what?

DANIEL CROXLEY
The plane, I'm sure its a
Spitfire.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
Look at this mess. What plane?

DANIEL CROXLEY
Everyone knows that the sound of
the plane means the ghost is back.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
What are you on about?

DANIEL CROXLEY
The ghost, over the old airfield.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
A ghost? And where exactly did you
hear about this ghost?

DANIEL CROXLEY
Jimmy, at School, he reckons he's
seen it.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY

Really? And I reckon it's about time you paid more attention to the teachers, and less to Jimmy's yarns.

EXT. ABANDONED WORLD WAR TWO AIRFIELD - DAY

Daniel kicks an old Coke can down the street, stopping at the dilapidated control tower. He runs past as if his life depends on it. Once past he slows, a peak over his shoulder confirms nothing is behind. The school bus pulls up ahead.

SCHOOLBOY
Come on Croxley. What you scared of?

INT. TERRACED HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miss Sandler (41, Heavily pregnant) puts on her ill fitting slippers and makes her way to the toilet. She trips over the worn out carpet.

INT. DANIELS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daniel reads a book "My Battle Of Britain" by John Brown "published in 1950". He looks out of the window at the derelict officers quarters across the road, closes the curtains and clambers into bed.

DANIEL CROXLEY
Night Mum.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
Night Dan, Sleep tight, and no more talk of ghostly planes. You're getting more like that father of yours every day.

INT. DANIELS BEDROOM - NIGHT

The shadowy figure of a man in R.A.F. Uniform with a brown Spaniel dog stands in the corner, the faint smell of pipe tobacco stirs Daniel from his sleep.

GHOSTLY FIGURE (DANIEL'S DAD)
We need the best Dan, time is short.

EXT. ABANDONED WORLD WAR TWO AIRFIELD - NIGHT

Four plain white vans pull up outside the entrance. A soldier jumps out and cracks open the heavily chained gates with bolt croppers.

ARMY OFFICER
Come on, get these gates open.

INT. KITCHEN - DANIELS HOUSE - DAY

Daniels Mum pops bread into the toaster and switches the kettle on. The back door is ajar, she looks outside.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
Daniel?

INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Daniel gets ready for school. He makes his bed. An old black and white photograph of the RAF man and his dog flicks out of the sheets.

DANIEL CROXLEY
Mum. Mum.

Liz rushes in.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
Daniel? What is it?

DANIEL CROXLEY
Look, I've got proof.

DANIEL'S MUM
Proof of what?

DANIEL CROXLEY
The ghost, he was here, last night, I saw him.

DANIEL'S MUM
Give me that. Have you been smoking? .

DANIEL CROXLEY
No, It was him honest...

DANIEL'S MUM
This is how your father was, just before he left. Convinced there was something out there. So let me tell you now Daniel Croxley there is no such thing as ghosts.

DANIEL CROXLEY
But Mum.

DANIEL, S MUM
Enough Daniel.

DANIEL CROXLEY
Is Dad ever coming back?

DANIEL'S MUM
Look sweetheart, no one's seen
him for over seven years. What
I'm trying to say is don't get
your hopes up okay.

INT. KITCHEN - DANIELS HOUSE - DAY

Daniel picks up the black and white photograph and puts it
in his pocket.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY O/S
Don't forget you're staying at
Grandmas for the weekend.

EXT. ABANDONED WORLD WAR TWO AIRFIELD - DAY

TV vans and reporters align the road outside the gate. A
Royal Air force official faces a barrage of microphones
from the eager press. Daniel walks past on his way to the
bus stop.

FEMALE REPORTER
So how did you find out about
the Unexploded bomb?

FEMALE REPORTER #2
Is there any danger of an
explosion?

RAF OFFICIAL
Ladies and gentlemen, please.

FEMALE REPORTER
Will you have to evacuate the
area?

RAF OFFICIAL
The records show that in the
last few days of World war two a
German Heinkel crashed close to
hanger one.....

MALE REPORTER
So why wasn't it cleared up at
the time?

RAF OFFICIAL
The majority of the plane was
buried on impact and wasn't
thought to pose a threat,

however we now believe the plane was carrying a new type of chemical bomb.

FEMALE REPORTER #2
Have you found anything yet?

RAF OFFICIAL
So far nothing has been found.

MALE REPORTER
Does this have anything to do with the Ministry of defence selling the land for property development?

RAF OFFICIAL
Sorry I can not comment on that.

FEMALE REPORTER
So then why come here now?

EXT. TERRACED HOUSE - DAY.

Liz and a female work colleague approach the open front door of number fifty seven. She knocks on the door.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
Hello, Miss Sandler. It's Liz, your midwife. Hello?

She pushes the door open, Miss Sandler is laying at the bottom of the stairs, blood seeping onto the carpet.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY (CONT'D)
Oh my God, call for an ambulance, Miss Sandler can you hear me? Hello? Emma, Emma? She's loosing the baby. I can't find a pulse.

INT. DANIEL'S SCHOOL - DAY

Daniel stares out of the window watching an acrobatic plane manoeuvre in the sky, a chalk rubber lands heavily on his desk.

TEACHER
Looking out of the window at planes will not get you anywhere in this world Croxley, now pay attention.

DANIEL CROXLEY
Yes Sir.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Daniels mum inhales a deep breath from the cigarette shaking in her hand.

DOCTOR
You did all you could.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
That's not the point.

DOCTOR
Without you we would have lost the baby as well.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
Not much of a start for the poor little bugger is it? Let's just hope his grandmother can look after him.

EXT. ABANDONED WORLD WAR TWO AIRFIELD - DAY

Daniel alights the school bus and heads for home. He reaches the old airfield all the TV crews have gone. He starts to run then stops. Pulling the photograph from his pocket he matches the image to the reality in front of him.

DANIEL CROXLEY
Who are you?

SCHOOL CHILDREN
Scaredy cat, Scaredy cat Croxley's a Scaredy cat....

INT. ABANDONED WORLD WAR TWO AIRFIELD - DAY

Daniel pushes aside the rusty corrugated sheet covering the doorway of the old aircraft hanger. He follows a set of footsteps in the dust.

DANIEL CROXLEY
Hello? Hello?

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Daniels mum places her handbag and keys on the kitchen table.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY
Dan. Dan? Daniel, have you packed your bag yet?

She searches the house. The kitchen clock, reads "4.30pm", She picks up the phone and dials, the call is answered.

MRS LIZ CROXLEY (CONT'D)
Hi Mum. You haven't picked up
Daniel yet have you?... No, Okay,
it's just he's not here.

INT. ABANDONED WORLD WAR TWO AIRFIELD - DAY

An old bomb timer lies on the floor, Daniel picks it up, he twists and turns the dials. A bright blue light flashes from a door. His shaking hand turns the rusted door handle. The blue light envelopes his body. The door slams shut.

18 YEARS
LATER

EXT. 2000, ABANDONED WORLD WAR TWO AIRFIELD - DAY

The board outside the building reads "Battle of Britain Museum", A wooden notice board displays the shabby poster of a missing boy (Daniel Croxley) alongside meaningless news. The beveled script of a granite monument echoes the past.

OLD LADY
Morning MR. Brown.

DANIEL CROXLEY
Morning.

Daniel Croxley is now a thirty year old man, he opens the gates to the museum car park of which he is caretaker and curator. A banner reads "1940-2000, sixtieth anniversary".

EXT. HAWKSDOWN HIGH STREET - DAY

Brett Sandler, an eighteen year old heavy metal fan sidles up to a woman, his hand slips into her handbag and removes her purse, he changes direction into a shop doorway and hands it to a Gothic looking girl called Gemma (18).

BRETT
One more.

GEMMA
No Brett, It's too risky.

Brett heads back into the street. Past the statue of a world war two pilot, he bumps into a smartly dressed man in a suit.

MAN IN SUIT
Watch it.

BRETT
Sorry.

INT. GAMING ARCADE - HIGH STREET - DAY

Brett enters gaming arcade, approaches the cash desk and produces a ten pound note from the suit mans wallet.

BRETT
Nuggets please.

One pound coins clink down a slide into a bowl. Brett sits in the pilots seat of a panoramic game called "Dogfight".

BRETT (CONT'D)
Watch this Gem. No one can fly
this thing like me.

Brett eases the joystick back as the 1940's Hawker hurricane on the screens in front of him takes off. Daniel hands the cashier a poster of the museums anniversary.

DANIEL CROXLEY
Would you mind placing this in the
window for me.

CASHIER
Sure. Those boys did a bloody
good job you know,

DANIEL CROXLEY
I know. Who's the boy?

CASHIER
Brett Sandler, always in here
playing that damn thing, no
disrespect.

DANIEL CROXLEY
None taken.

CASHIER
Yeah, pretty good at it too, mind
you I wouldn't trust him, nick
anything he will, his poor Gran's
always got the old bill on her
doorstep, bless her.

DANIEL CROXLEY
Not Sheila Sandler?

CASHIER
Yeah, do you know her?

DANIEL CROXLEY
No... not now anyway.

INT. BRETT'S BEDROOM - SHEILA'S HOUSE - DAY

Posters of "Guns and Roses" cover the walls, music blasts out from a CD player. Gemma watches Brett play another flying game on his playstation.

SHEILA SANDLER O/S
Brett, Brett, turn that racket down. Your friends here.

BRETT
How can she hear that, she's as deaf as a post? Who is it?

SHEILA SANDLER O/S
Everlast.

GEMMA
Who?

BRETT
Duracell. Send him up. Stupid old bat.

GEMMA
Don't speak about your Gran like that.

BRETT
Why not?

GEMMA
Because... What happened to your Grandad anyway?

BRETT
Killed on the old airfield before my Mum was born.

GEMMA
Was he a pilot?

BRETT
Artillery, he was a coward.

GEMMA
What? Because he wasn't a pilot?

BRETT
He was blown to bits during the Battle of Britain, apparently cowering in the women's air raid shelter when he should of been manning the anti aircraft guns. Serves him right.

GEMMA
How do you know that?

BRETT

That's what the papers said, Gran swears different.

GEMMA
So why don't you believe her?

Duracell walks in.

BRETT
Where the bloody hell have you been?

DURACELL
Had to wash my Dads car, what's so important anyway.

BRETT
This.

Brett pulls the poster from the Arcade out of his pocket.

DURACELL
What? You want to go to some old biddy's anniversary.

BRETT
For someone whose nick name is Duracell you only seem to be running on one point five volts. We're going to rob it, well them anyway.

GEMMA
Is there no limit to how low you will go? They're old people, how would you feel if it was you.

BRETT
Well it's not me, is it.

DURACELL
You have to admit Brett, it is a bit much.

BRETT
Come on, just this once. Nothing bad, Jesus, I'm talking about a few wallets and purses, not battering the old dears.

GEMMA
What's wrong with the town?

BRETT
Why chase the town when there's this... What do we have to loose?