

Project Necronaut

Enter the Afterlife

Pitch

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The Pitch:

In two hours, a nuclear bomb will destroy downtown Los Angeles.

Only one person knows where it's hidden.

He was just shot dead.

Now the Navy's top SEAL-Team is sent to retrieve him from a place no one has ever returned from:

The Afterlife...

„Project Necronaut“ is a hard-hitting action-adventure taking us on a „Fantastic Voyage“ to the Afterlife – and beyond...

The Characters:

Colonel Jeff Tracy, 33

The gruff and tough leader of the Navy's best SEAL-Team. He definitely is all he can be – except happy.

Jeff Tracy never wanted to become a soldier. Instead he followed his dream to play music. It was only after the tragic death of his wife and young son in a car crash that out of desperation he joined the army. The rigorous discipline, the physical strain and the single-minded focus on his training kept him sane and alive. But over the years it also numbed him down. Turned him into a machine. Designed to kill.

His body was alive but his heart was dead.

With the death of his family Jeff also lost his faith in God and any kind of afterlife. He never dreamed he would have a chance to see his wife and son again.

That all changes of course when he learns that the afterlife does exist. That heaven and hell are real. But now it seems that the cruel joke is on him as his violent life as a soldier has seemingly destined him to go to hell while his family will be forever out of reach in heaven...

Diana Jones, 29

The feisty and witty assistant of Dr. Aldous McKenna – and the only one who has ever come back from the afterlife without losing her mind.

The crazy world of quantum physics has fascinated Diana Jones from the moment she watched an old Albert Einstein interview in school. A whirlwind career through the leading institutions of science led to her fateful meeting with Dr. McKenna.

Although impressed by her academic credentials it was her score at a battery of tests designed to measure psychic abilities that led McKenna to hire her as his assistant. While exploring the activation and enhancement of psychic abilities in an obscure research division of the US Army, Diana took a powerful psychedelic drug and died – only to return to life and tell Dr. McKenna all about her journey to the afterlife.

From then on they've both dedicated their lives to researching man's real "Final Frontier." With Diana becoming so obsessed with the afterlife that she forgets to live in the real world...

Professor Aldous McKenna, 58

Best described as Albert Einstein meets "The Dude" McKenna is the brilliant scientist behind "Project Necronaut", a drug that enables anyone to travel to the afterlife and back.

Originally part of some obscure military research facility McKenna's discovery turns out to be the last hope to avert a nuclear terrorist strike only to become the agent that might trigger an even bigger disaster: The end of the world.

Stan Liman, 39

A crazy son of a bitch who leads a cult that wants to usher in the biblical Apocalypse and who gets much closer to his goal than he could've ever imagined.

An old Chinese proverb says, "When opportunity knocks. Open the door."

Stan Liman would add: "To hell!"

His original plan for "Apocalypse Now" was bad enough. But at least the nuclear device hidden somewhere in L.A. would've "only" killed a few million people. However after he is shot dead and chased through the afterlife by Colonel Tracy and his team, he stumbles upon a way to really bring on TEOTWAWKI...¹

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The end of the world as we know it.

How it works:

Just a quick note on the rules of Afterlife travel:

Basically think “The Matrix” or “Inception”. Whoever enters the Afterlife must die in this world, meaning his or her body stays behind while the soul travels to the hereafter.

Once there, the mind of the deceased quickly recreates their body, clothes, weapons, etc. because of habit and attachment to one’s earthly life.

Upon your return from the afterlife you wake up back in your body. Unless something goes wrong and the villain takes over your identity. First in the hereafter and then in our world...

The Plot:

Teaser:

„Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.“

Psalm 23:4

As the stark light of the midday sun shines down on a military funeral, a priest speaks those ancient words of comfort to the attending guests, most of them gruff and tough looking – even the few women lining the open grave.

Meet our heroes: the Navy’s top SEAL Team fighting terrorism wherever it rears its ugly head.

Used to beating the bad guys, the loss of one of their own during their last mission has been a heavy blow for the team. Especially for their leader, *Colonel Jeff Tracy*, 33, who blames himself for his best friend’s death, and for *Corporal Lisa Blunt*, 32, who’s mourning the loss of her secret lover.

But their mourning is cut short, when the funeral is interrupted by their next assignment: Take down a group of religious fanatics that has planted a nuclear device in downtown Los Angeles. Their goal: to usher in the biblical apocalypse.

A tense action sequence in the L.A. harbor ends in a massacre - and the death of *Stan Liman*, 39, the terrorist group’s leader. The only one who knows the location of the bomb.

A bomb that is going to detonate in two hours...

Act 1:

As all measures are being taken to find the bomb, it quickly becomes clear that the chances of stopping the detonation are getting slimmer.

But maybe the measures taken are not extreme enough.

Colonel Tracy and his team are whisked away to a Top Secret facility in the Nevada desert. What sounds like Area 51 doesn’t hide Aliens and UFOs, but a program to explore the real “final frontier” of mankind.

The Afterlife.

Led by *Dr. Aldous McKenna*, 58, a brilliant scientist best described as “The Dude” meets Albert Einstein, “Project Necronaut” allows a person to die for one hour, enter the afterlife and be resurrected again - at least in theory.

So far the project has only been partially successful. McKenna and his team have indeed established that the afterlife is a “place” where everyone who dies goes. But not much more is known about the strange and dangerous realm beyond death’s door. Mostly because even though a lot of test subjects have indeed come back from the dead, only one of them has returned with her sanity intact. Her name is *Diana Jones*, 29, and aside from being a brilliant scientist, she also claims to possess psychic abilities – whatever that means.

Dr. McKenna is confident that he has tweaked his process enough to ensure a safe return for the members of the SEAL-Team. Because their mission is:

Die!

Find Liman, the dead terrorist, in the afterlife.

Learn the location of the nuclear bomb from him and get back – to life.

Of course Colonel Tracy and his team believe all of this to be a load of bull. They have all seen “The Men who Stare at Goats” and know full well that even the military harbors its share of lunatics.

The hard-nosed crew is certainly willing to die in battle but not on the slab of some mad scientist in a bathrobe and his psychic hotline lady. Only Lisa Blunt considers taking the risk, however, hiding her true motivation: To be reunited with her secret love.

The SEAL Team has to find out, though, that their superiors aren’t interested in their opinion.

They are knocked out, strapped into Dr. McKenna’s device – and killed.

Only when they wake up, naked and confused, do our heroes realize what happened.

Even though their bodies are lying on a slab in Dr. McKenna’s lab. Their souls have entered the land of the dead...

Act 2:

...which at first glance looks a lot like – what else – Death Valley.

(Note: the final look and feel of the Afterlife is obviously dependent on the budget of the film. If someone coughs up a few million Dollars for otherworldly vistas and upside down laws of physics we'll gladly go into imagination overdrive. For now though we'll try and restrain ourselves.)

Outraged about the betrayal Colonel Tracy vents his anger on Diana Jones, the one person in the group who's not on his team. Although she claims she didn't have anything to do with their forced journey into the afterlife, Colonel Tracy would love to kill her right here, right now – if they weren't already dead.

But he also needs her, as Diana is the closest they have to a guide in this strange place.

And strange it is, as Tracy, Lisa Blunt and their teammates (one of course a Hispanic named Jesus) soon find out.

Clothes and weapons suddenly appear on their bodies, a whole city “grows” out of the ground around them, new arrivals stumble around confused and some veterans of the realm (though no one can tell how long they have really been here) warn our heroes of “them”, a terrifying force bound to take them sooner or later...

At first though it seems that the most dangerous enemies are the other recently deceased. Confused and afraid some of them attack Colonel Tracy and his team, leading to a brutal firefight in a deserted part of the “city.”

With survival reflexes kicking in, it's only after the fight that Tracy and his team ask themselves the obvious questions. Why fight? Why be afraid of dying when you are already dead?

The answer swoops down from the sky immediately.

An abominable creature right out of a Hieronymus Bosch painting grabs Jesus. Takes the screaming man away and vanishes into something resembling a black hole in the sky.

That was obviously one of “them”. But who are they? And why did they take only Jesus?

It's only after their next encounter with the denizens of the afterlife that Tracy and his team realize the full answer.

With help of Diane's psychic powers, the team is able to track down their target, Stan Liman, to an abandoned movie theatre. After a fierce foot chase, Liman manages to shake his pursuers - except *Winslow*, the youngest member of the SEAL Team.

But just as Winslow almost catches Liman, the terrorist distracts him by blowing up a truck. Without hesitation Winslow sacrifices himself to save a woman about to be crushed by the falling debris.

Again a weird shape appears in the sky. Races down. But this time it's not a nightmare made real, but the most beautiful angelic vision you can imagine. The "Angel" picks up a beatific Winslow and vanishes with him into a white light.

And now Tracy and the remaining members of his team realize what this place really is.

It's Purgatory.

Turns out that your whole life on earth is barely a preparation for the final "test" in the Afterlife. A test that will determine if your soul enters heaven or hell. If you pass the test, an angel appears and takes you to heaven. If you fail, the spawn of the devil will grab you and throw you into hell.

Jesus had shot an unarmed man during their first fight and obviously failed his test while Winslow, sacrificing his life without further thought, had passed it.

Unfortunately, for the rest of the team, their personal tests will not turn out to be as clear cut as those we've seen and even if they were, we all realize that knowing what the right thing to do and actually doing it are two very different things.

With the stakes now literally involving the fate of their immortal souls, it's no surprise that the rest of the SEAL Team demands to get back to our world. Unfortunately, that's not up to them as they can only be brought back from someone on our side. As time moves much slower in the afterlife, they have more than six hours to go till that's going to happen. So they might as well try and get their job done and catch Liman.

But that task has just become a lot harder. By now Liman has not only realized where he's ended up, but he knows that someone is coming after him. Someone who knows a way back to life. And Liman is determined to catch a ride...

Rallying up some of the other men and woman, aimlessly wandering purgatory, with the promise of returning to life, Liman prepares an attack on the SEAL-Team. An attack that at first looks likely to fail, but will soon turn out to be a triumph for our villain in an unexpected way.

Meanwhile, the reality of life after death starts to sink in with the members of the SEAL Team. Faced with the fact that their often murderous actions have eternal consequences and that their final test, their personal "Judgment Day" may happen any moment, the team dreads every second they have to stay in this

place. But there is an upside. If they get out of here, they may have a chance to change their lives in order to avoid hell. But do they really want to and isn't it too late anyway? A question that is especially valid for Colonel Tracy whose family is waiting in heaven while he seems destined for hell...

Before things turn into a PBS-Special on philosophy though, Liman and his recruits launch their attack.

It's a fierce battle in which Colonel Tracy and Diana Jones learn that they can rely on each other and Liman learns that he and his goons stand no chance against the trained soldiers. Liman is caught by Colonel Tracy.

With their target finally secured, Colonel Tracy now only needs to get the location of the nuclear bomb out of him. But how do you threaten someone who's already dead and whose eternal fate seems already sealed? Turns out you can't. That's where Diana Jones comes in.

Her frowned upon "psychic powers" are not only real, but in the phantasmal world of the afterlife they seem to be greatly enhanced. By performing something similar to a Vulcan mind meld, Diana hopes to get the information they need, whether Liman wants to share it or not.

However, the so far untested procedure turns out to be much more stressful and exhausting than Diana thought. Both Diana and Liman collapse before anyone can know if it was successful.

And that's when the spawns of the Devil appear.

It looks like the battle between the SEAL Team and Liman and his followers was their final test as half a dozen creatures swoop down on the group and grab the panicked men and woman now destined for eternal damnation. Running or fighting is futile. The only way out, at least for the Necronauts: Back to life.

Fortunately, their time in the hereafter is almost up. If Colonel Tracy and his team can just fend off those bastard creatures long enough, they just might make it back.

Good thing they are some bad motherfuckers.

Still, some are not bad enough. And after a screaming Liman is grabbed by the Devil's Spawn, it even looks like Colonel Tracy can't outrun them. But just as one of the creatures is about to get him, Tracy is swept up by an unseen force, catapulted through a tunnel of light back into darkness...

...waking up with a start back in the lab of Aldous McKenna. Back in his body.

Thank god he's not the only one. Diana, Lisa Blunt and three other members of his team made it as well. Visibly shaken but alive. Only now do we find out that Diana's mind meld was indeed successful. She knows where the nuclear device is hidden. There's just one catch: With the fragmented information she got out of Liman's mind she can't tell them the location, she has to take them there.

Colonel Tracy is not happy about a civilian joining such a dangerous mission, much less someone he learned to care for during their fantastic voyage to the afterlife. And something else is bothering him: When Liman was taken by the devils, he was screaming Jeff's name even though the terrorist didn't even know it. Tracy almost buys into Diana's explanation that it was a side effect of the mind meld when he recognizes a tic in Diana's face. A tic he's seen only once before.

In Stan Liman's face.

In an instant Tracy realizes what happened: Instead of melding minds they somehow switched them.

It is Liman's soul that returned to Diana's body and Diana's soul is...

...in hell!

Realizing Tracy knows the truth, Liman tries to escape. No chance. Tracy is faster, and stronger – but Liman has one more ace up his sleeve. He ("Diana") screams for help.

Just as Tracy vows to get the real Diana back and Liman offers the enigmatic response that if he's lucky and Diana went to hell, she will come back soon – along with everybody else..., Tracy's teammates barge in. Misjudging the situation and believing their team leader is suffering a breakdown from his trip to the afterlife they knock him out and lock him up.

Having no idea that they have a traitor in their midst, the remaining members of the SEAL Team are joined by a second SEAL Team and set off with "Diana" to find the nuclear bomb...

Act 3:

When Tracy wakes up in a holding cell, he desperately tries to convince Dr. McKenna of the identity switch. But only when all contact with the SEAL Team is suddenly lost, just as they were reaching the nuclear device, does the Doctor start to believe him. And when Tracy tells him about Liman's promise that Diana

would be back, along with everybody else in hell, McKenna, to his horror, realizes the true nature of Liman's terrifying plan.

Liman wants to open the gates to hell.

Explaining to a stunned Tracy that the energy of a nuclear detonation combined with a focused quantum event could easily rip open a hole into the fabric of reality, allowing this world and the hereafter to merge.

A focused Quantum event? WTF?

You could also call it focused intention. Or a wish made by someone caught between the two realms in the moment of the nuclear explosion.

But how does Liman know all that?

That's easy. Diana was McKenna's assistant for eight years. She knows everything he does and after the mind meld all of her knowledge is now in Liman's head.

The only upside to this: The process works both ways. Diana also should know everything that Liman knows. Including where he would hide the bomb.

The catch: Diana is in hell.

The solution: Tracy has to get to her.

After quickly improvising a mobile lab in one of the SEAL Team's trucks, McKenna kills Tracy one more time and sends him back to the afterlife.

While McKenna is racing the truck with Tracy's dead body towards L.A., Tracy wakes up in purgatory. This time the Devil's Spawn appears almost instantly, obviously picking right up where they left off. And this time Tracy doesn't fight back, but willingly let's them take him to hell.

And indeed "...so evil is this place to stay in" (Qu'ran 38:60) (*The less evil the Budget, the more evil it will look of course. ☺*) and it takes everything from Tracy to find Diana in a wasteland of pain and fear. But how do you get out of hell?

You don't.

Unless you don't belong here in the first place.

Which is certainly true for Diana but what about Tracy?

He has to stay.

Forever.

After Tracy breaks her out of hell, a shocked Diana finds herself back in our world. Or more precisely on top of an L.A. skyscraper still in construction. To her (and our) surprise she's back in her body and she's not alone.

Liman is here. He's back in his body as well and he's got the bomb.

Turns out that after luring the SEAL Team into a deadly ambush by his loyal followers, Liman wanted to prove to his people that he knows a way to travel to the afterlife and back.

By using McKenna's drug, Liman ventured back to the afterlife and returned to his own body lying in a nearby morgue. *(Remember, only a few hours have passed since Colonel Tracy shot Liman in the film's teaser. His body is close by and still fresh.)*

With the bomb ticking and Liman readying himself with McKenna's drug to open the gates of hell, it's up to Diana to stop him. But how?

A desperate attempt to fight Liman turns out to be futile. Diana is no match for Liman and his crew. The big bad seems to have won.

The nuclear bomb detonates...

...and the screen turns white.

But instead of evaporating the city, the bomb's energy is channeled through Liman. Being suspended between worlds he's using it to open a portal to hell.

Too bad that someone's already waiting at the gate:

Colonel Tracy.

It's a fight not to death but to eternity. An epic battle between good and evil during which Liman tries to lure Tracy to his side reminding him he is his only ticket out of hell.

But Tracy would rather stay in hell than bring hell to earth. And he makes sure Liman keeps him company.

With his energy waning, and the fight against Tracy distracting him, Liman can't keep the portal open much longer.

With a last-gasp attempt he summons the denizens of hell for help, and Lisa Blunt, who wants her lover back is there as well, but Colonel Tracy manages to fend them all off until the portal closes forever.

The world is saved. The cosmic balance preserved.

And Colonel Tracy is trapped in hell.

Or is he?

While Liman taunts Tracy with the fact that they will both be suffering together forever, one of the Angels appears. Pulling Tracy away into the light.

Turns out all of this was Colonel Tracy's final test. And he passed it with flying colors. Finally being reunited with his wife and son in heaven...

Liman of course stays where he belongs.

And Diana?

With the world saved and a new dawn breaking, she realizes that her time's not come yet. And she wants to live. In the real world...

THE END