

SILO

Feature-length Thriller (based on actual events)

by Tom Freyer

LOGLINE:

In 1980, a Titan II missile armed with a nuclear warhead develops a fuel leak. Sgt. Jeff Kennedy possesses the necessary repair skills, but the incompetent base commander forbids him entering the silo. If the missile explodes, ten million Americans will be vaporized.

SYNOPSIS:

In a missile silo at an air base near Damascus, Ark., a maintenance worker accidentally drops an 8 lb. socket from his wrench. It falls 80 feet, bounces off a support, pings around an enclosed space, and pierces the Titan II missile's fuel tank. A white vapor — rocket fuel—oozes, then hisses, quickly fogging and beginning to fill the silo. Even worse, mounted on the missile is a 9 megaton nuclear warhead. If it blows, America's Eastern Seaboard is history.

When word of the accident reaches the inexperienced base commander, he unleashes a shit storm of conflicting instructions — wasting valuable time as the fuel fills the silo. The silo monitors sound and a big digital clock begins a countdown — in four hours, the empty fuel tank will collapse, crush the oxygen tank and launch the missile. And the 9 megaton nuclear warhead.

On duty at the silo are Air Force Technical Specialist Sgt. Jeff Kennedy, an avowed atheist, and his partner, Sgt. David Lee Livingston, a devout Christian. Constantly arguing about God, between them they have 20 years of experience with Titan II missile operations — but no one's listening to them. Instead of taking swift action, the problem gets kicked up to a Brigadier General attending a fundraiser with Governor Bill Clinton in Little Rock, a mere 45 miles away from the silo base. He calls Strategic Air Command in Omaha, who take command and debate the problem.

With time running out, Kennedy takes matters into his own hands. Opposing his partner's preference to seal off the base. Kennedy wants to neutralize the warhead while they still have time, but the orders from SAC come down. They are to enter the silo — in cumbersome protective gear — and turn on an electric fan to vent the chamber. Kennedy is sure the spark from the fan will ignite the fuel and launch the warhead, but no one at SAC will listen to him. Even Livingston, who knows better, plans to follow their orders even if it puts him in harm's way.

While Livingston enters the vault to enter the silo and open the vent, an act Kennedy knows will kill him and perhaps cause a thermonuclear explosion, he ignores the order and does the only thing he can — enters the silo to unscrew the nuclear warhead, so that if it launches it won't explode. Time is running out, and ten million lives hang in the balance. As Livingston flicks the switch, the unthinkable happens. The missile explodes. Livingston is disintegrated in a fireball that rises five miles high, but the warhead lands harmlessly in a field. Kennedy awakens in a hospital, severely wounded. When he learns that the warhead did not detonate, and that his friend Livingston is dead, Kennedy undergoes a profound spiritual transformation.