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/eptember/
October 2022





- When looking at the cover above, please turn *THIS* music on, “Ave Tatho” from “Reveries Of The Solitary Walker”, by Nikola Kodjabashia.
- On the cover: a collage by Leonid Vishnevskiy, images from the public domain, including an *image* by Andrei R. Popescu from Unsplash.

Hello everyone!

Welcome to the sixteenth issue of Astra News!

We wish your Halloween to be full of good times and good treats!

Enjoy the issue!

To the stars!

*Yours,
Max and Leonid*

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◀ *Saint Peter's Square in front of St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. Image [source](#).*

About Impressions

A review suggests an objective view aiming to be impersonal to a certain degree, meant not to share your favorite movie or book (in fact the reviewer could dislike the movie/book he is writing about), but rather to rate the movie/book. Astra News suggests to you a free hand of writing reviews, meant to share what you like, in which you set your criteria. From here comes the name “Impressions”. The word “text” is purposely omitted, because why limit ourselves to text? And why limit ourselves to movies and books?

In This Issue

For this Halloween Leonid Vishnevskiy is making a movie impression of Jordan Peele’s recent movie “Nope” (2022).

Please, note that the movie is rated R. We adjusted the impression to fit the magazine’s younger teen audience.

There will be spoilers.

IMPRESSIONS





nope

***Would you notice if a
cloud remained motion-
less for six months?***



“And make you a spectacle”

“Nope” starts with a verse from the prophet Nahum (3:6):

**I will cast abominable filth upon you,
Make you vile, And make you a spectacle.**

Nahum refers to the city of Nineveh and foretells its downfall, as it is a sinful city.

Does this mean that “Nope” uncovers sin and its consequences? At first glance, it appears to be the only way. But is it?

We cannot and should not be unaware of recent events any more than we should know of or learn about the prophet Nahum. Nineveh was built on the bank of the Tigris River, within the borders of what is now Mosul, Iraq. When ISIL seized control of Nineveh’s ruins in the mid- 2000s, they vowed to destroy its historical heritage, and they did much damage to it. It was all over the news, and it still gets mentioned now and then.

Maybe the underlying idea is not so straightforward in the film. Even if its director doesn’t refer to recent events, and even though (or perhaps this is exactly why) a warning comes from an opposing force, it’s difficult to dismiss.

However, before quoting the prophet, the camera sets us in a train going in an unknown direction and then in front of its vestibule’s doors. Why aren’t lobsters or those who bring them permitted?

What genre does this movie belong to? It’s described as a horror, sci-fi, western, and dark comedy movie. It’s also a cool movie that came out just in time for Halloween of 2022.



“Bad Miracle”

In “Nope” a “bad miracle” happens. One day, a man is struck by an iron hail. It happens to be OJ’s father.

OJ’s family, which also includes his sister Emerald, claims to be direct descendants of the unnamed jockey featured in Eadweard Muybridge’s images of a rider and a horse*.

OJ’s family owns Haywood Ranch, where they train horses for the film industry. The business struggles without the father’s entrepreneurial spirit, and OJ begins selling horses to the neighboring, recently opened “Jupiter’s Claim” Western theme park.

Ricky “Jupe” Park, a former star child, runs it. Ricky’s breakthrough role was in the film “Kid Sheriff.” Following that, he was cast in the successful, yet short-run sitcom “Gordy’s Home!”

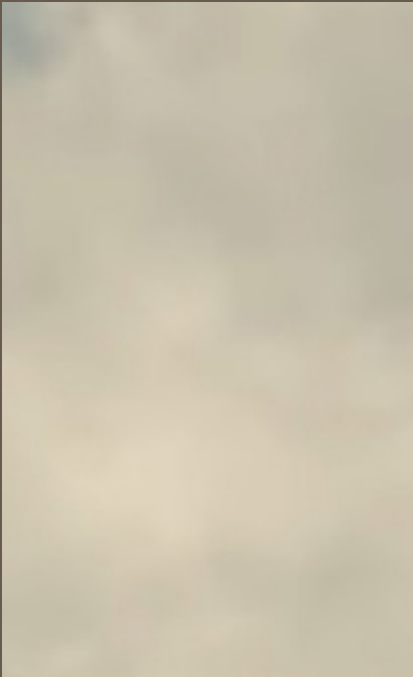
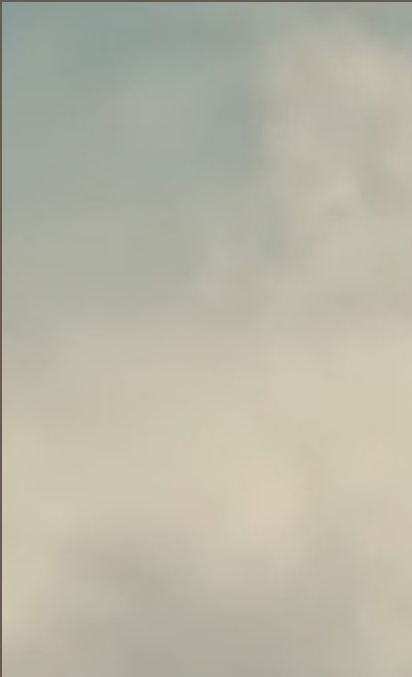
Six months after the hail, Emerald arrives to help her brother keep the business afloat. However, she discovers that almost all of the horses had already been sold and suggests betting on a bad miracle to create a spectacle that could bring them a fortune.

* Eadweard Muybridge pioneered chronophotography of animal locomotion and invented the machine that could project many images on a screen, called the zoopraxiscope. He became known as the father of motion pictures by giving the first presentation of projected moving pictures.



Just as no one would notice a motionless cloud because it's too perfectly good to be noticed, they won't be able to make a spectacle out of a bad miracle, because

“(…) if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you.”
- *Friedrich Nietzsche*



After failing with both the newest film camera packed with electronics and a fully manual film camera, one last hopeless attempt is made by Emerald to profit from a bad miracle.



Before becoming a spectacle herself.

*I will cast abominable filth upon you,
Make you vile, And make you a spectacle.*

The person who started it all, Emerald, not only misses her chance to make a fortune by filming a bad miracle, but she also becomes a spectacle. The TV crew arrives and captures what she is experiencing.

Though it doesn't appear that there was a total breakdown and the prophecy was thus fulfilled. All of "her" crew--aside from the one who chose the opposite fate for himself--have survived, after all. However, similar to Ricky's "Jupe" Park story, it's possible that this isn't the spectacular finale.



Ricky's "Jupe" Park story

Ricky "Jupe" Park - is the name of one of the film's main characters. We don't know much about the film "Kid Sheriff" that made him famous, but we know a little about the sitcom "Gordy's Home!" he landed in because of his fame. He is also the owner of the "Jupiter's Claim" Western theme park.

The sitcom was based on a story about a family living on one of the planets, most likely Jupiter, together with Gordy, a loyal chimpanzee companion of the family. This plot might not be so simple to think of from the movie "Nope" directly, but a "**Jupiter's Claim**" park has been set up online where you can watch the sitcom's **trailer** (you will need to wait for the background to be night for the trailer to show).

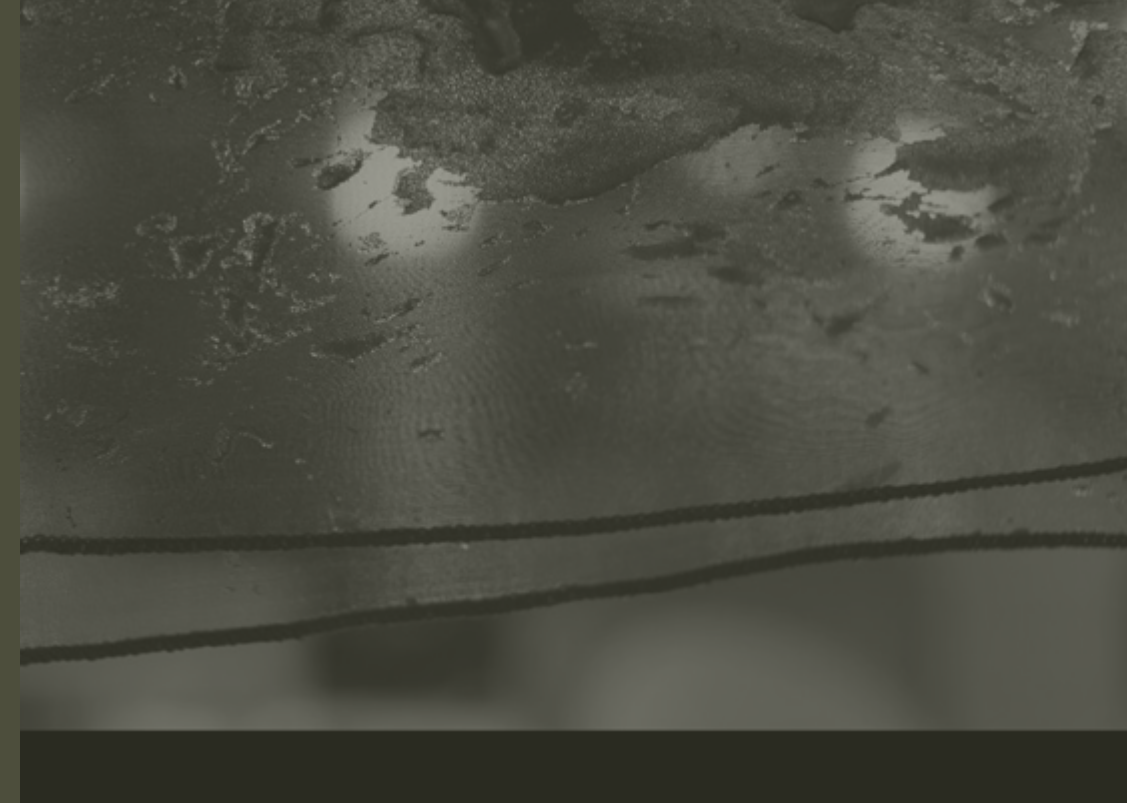
Gordy raged while filming one of the episodes and Ricky was the only person who was unaffected by the subsequent attack. Years later, he opened "Jupiter's Claim," dedicated to the "Kid Sheriff" film, but in the heart of it, in the secret room, he established the "Gordy's Home!" museum where the sitcom is playing nonstop. The memory of the attack pursues and fascinates him.

Ricky notices something in the sky above the park can be lured by horses. So he starts buying more from OJ's family struggling business. He undoubtedly sacrifices them to this something in the sky, but has no idea what is going on and is likely unaware of what happens to the horses afterward. He is about to open the "Star Lasso Experience" to make a hit out of this miracle when we first meet him.





Ricky's "Jupe" Park's tragic memory pursues and fascinates him.



The "Star Lasso Experience" didn't go well.



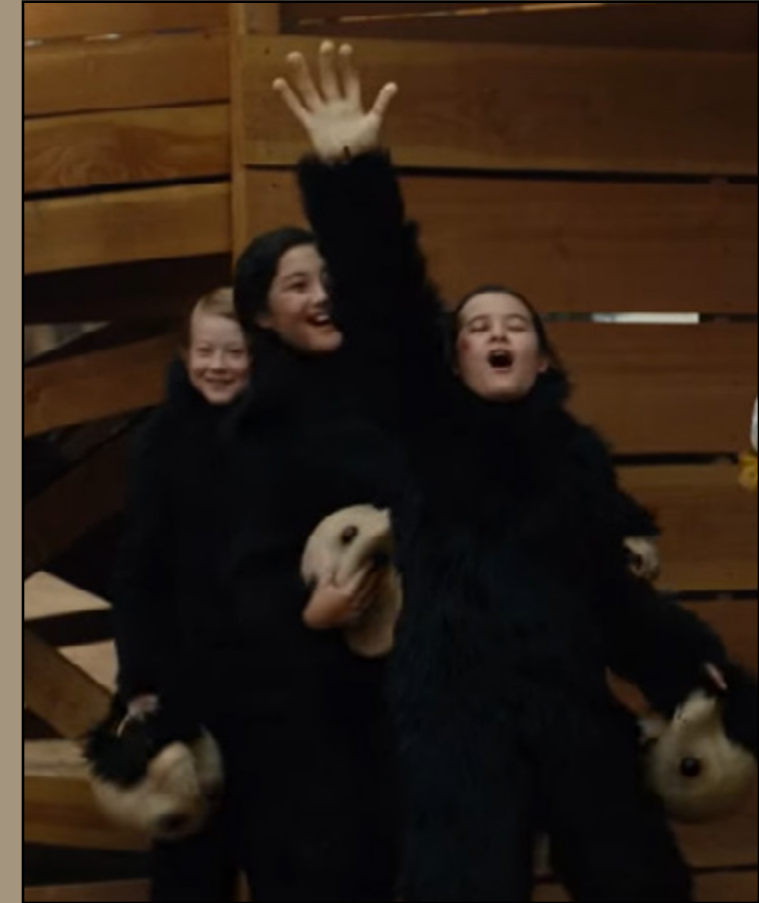
"We do not deserve the impossible."

Each character in the film chases a bad miracle for their own reason. Antlers Holst is a well-known cameraman whose lifelong mission is to capture the impossible on film. Not only does he succeed, but he is the only one in "Nope" who recorded the bad miracle--however, no one would ever see this film. His final words are, "We do not deserve the impossible." Whatever it means, camera shooting takes on a literal sense here.



The story will continue for the film's other characters who are not as involved in the nature of cinema. Will their story end like Ricky "Jupe" Park's? It would likely depend on what fascinates them the most. And perhaps there is no divine prophecy at work here in the end, just the simple vital fact that violence breeds violence, and there is only one way to stop it.

NOPE



René Magritte
The False Mirror
Paris 1929



Send your surreal collages, drawings, or photos for people to imagine stories around.

the name of this rubric is "the hill that dug itself out".

if someone wants to share a story they came up with, we would love to publish it!



Edward Hopper

"House by the Railroad", 1925

Image from "Psycho" (1960)

Image [source](#)

Image [source](#)



The InVISible Man Visits



The Solo- mon Guggenheim Museum

Image from "The Invisible Man Returns (1940)". Image source. ▲

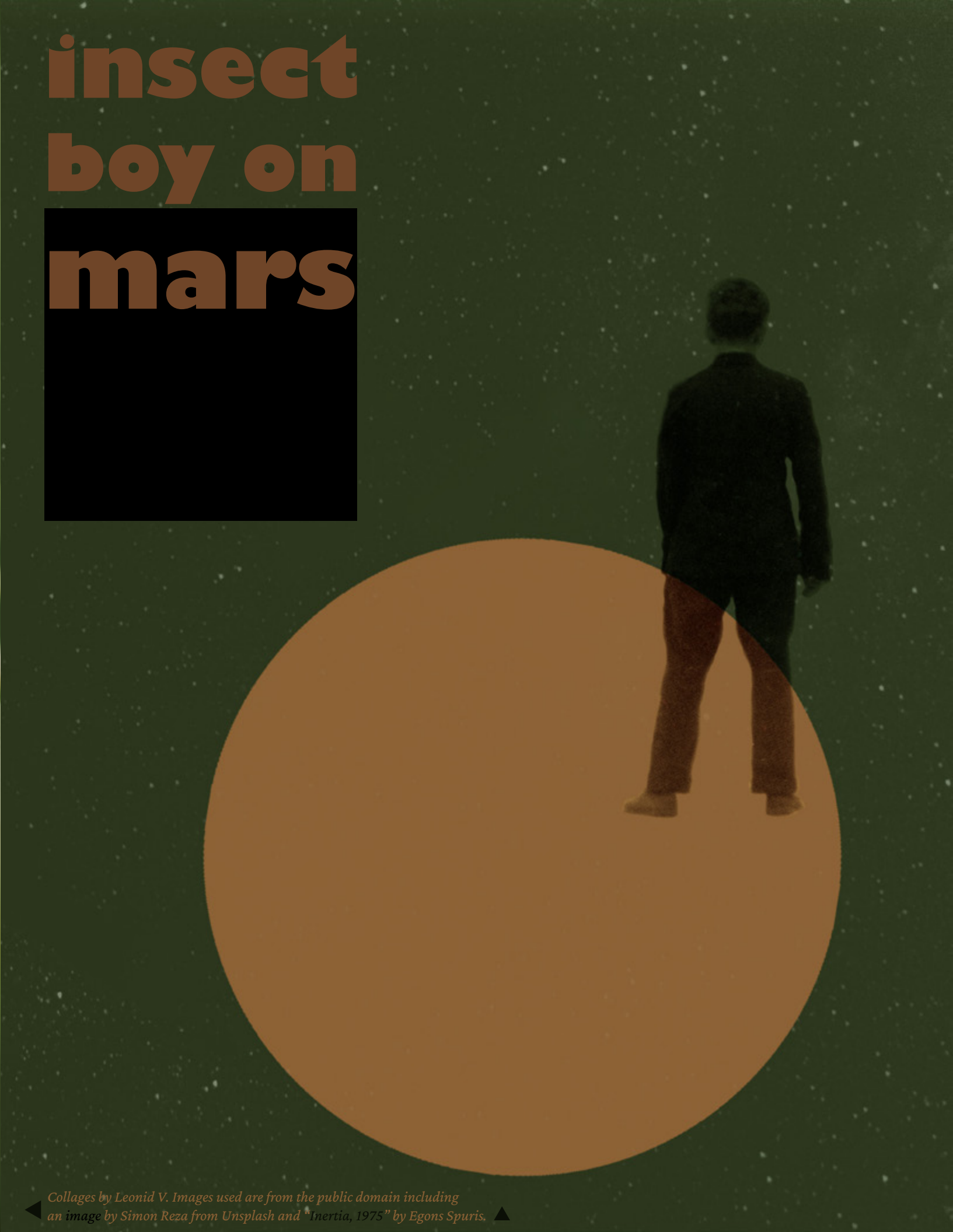
Collage by Leonid Vishnevskiy Images used are "Union Member Distributing
"Steel Labor" (...). Aliquippa, 1941. Jack Delano", ISBN-13: 978-0271022529
and images by Claudia Lorusso and by eberhardgross from Unsplash. ◀



*a little bit afraid
of the **UN***

known

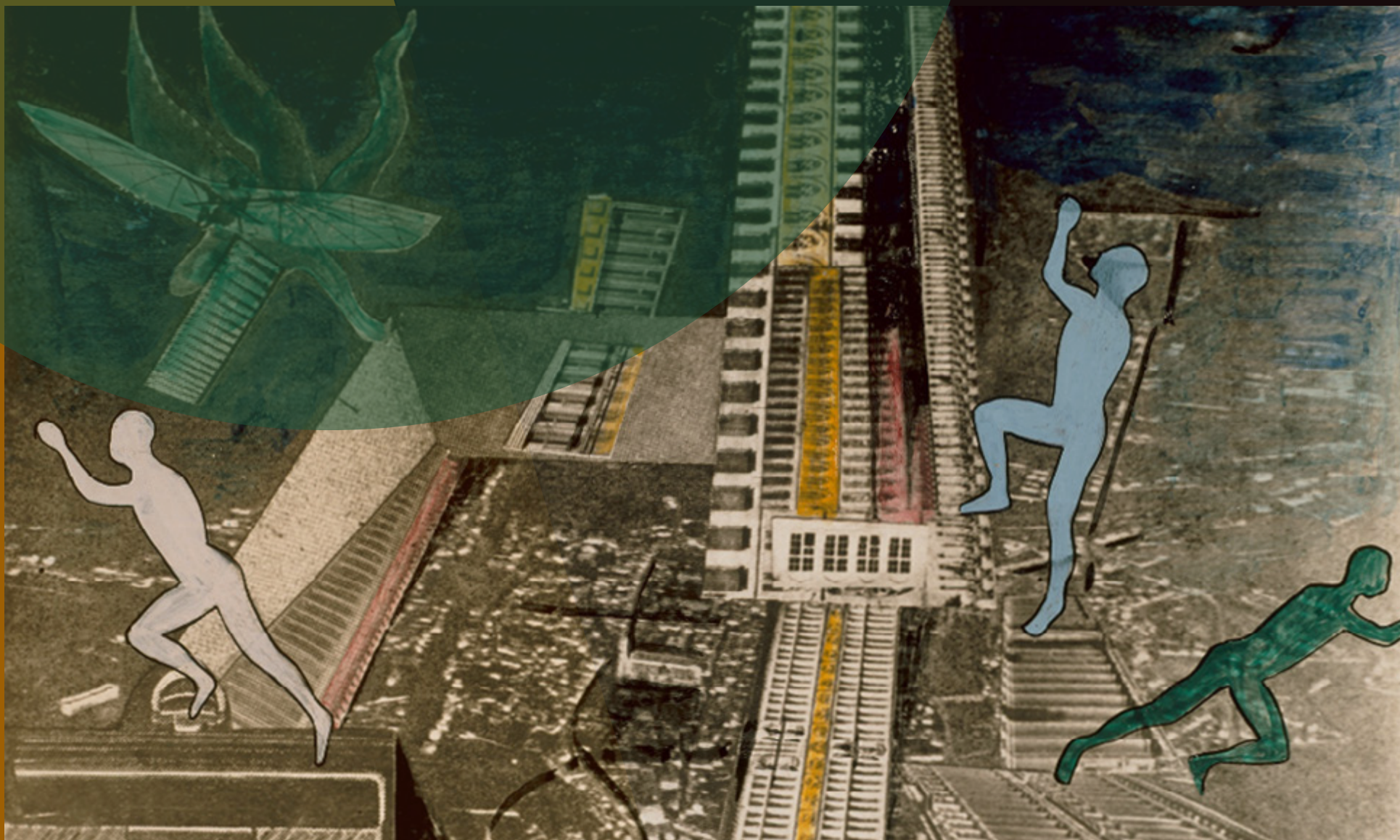
insect boy on mars





Light Effect

◀ Collage by Leonid Vishnevskiy. Images used are from the public domain including the *image* "1895: Wilhelm Roentgen is working in his laboratory in Würzburg when he accidentally discovers the X-ray" and an *image* by Jack Chen from Unsplash.

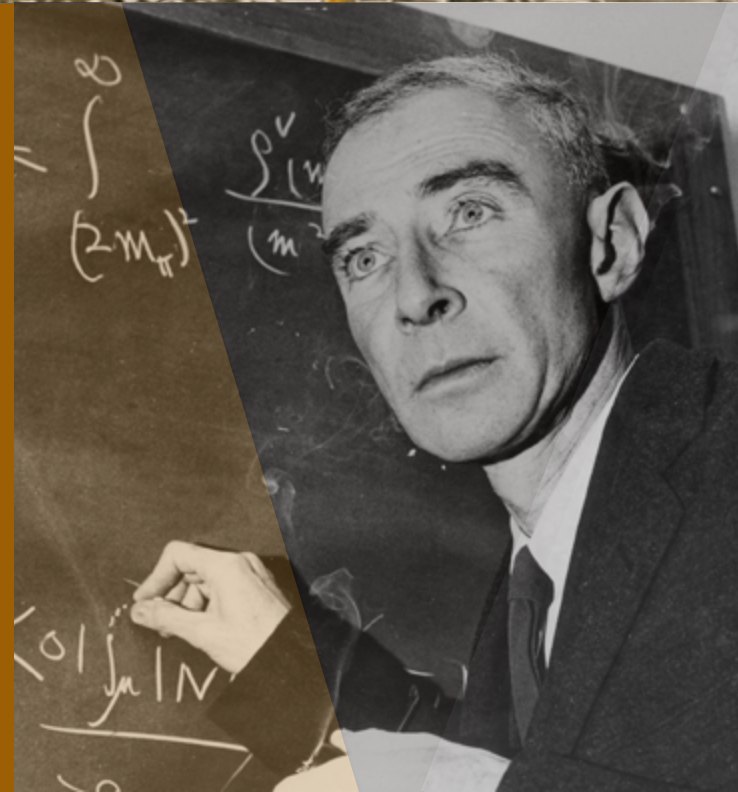


ABOUT THE VITRUVIAN MAN SERIES

Stories about people who took
their part in exploring space.

IN THIS ISSUE

Two men who saved the world from
nuclear war. Vasiliy Arkhipov (27 Oc-
tober 1962) and Stanislav Petrov (26
September 1983).



THE VITRUVIAN man

A collage "The Massacre of the Innocents" by Max Ernts and an image of Robert Oppenheimer, "the father of the atomic bomb", were used for this page design.

MEN WHO DID NOT PUSH THE NUCLEAR BUTTON

by Leonid Vishnevskiy

Introduction

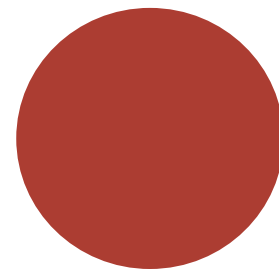
As you might know, the Third Reich's military demands played an important role in laying the groundwork for space exploration. It runs counter to the basic reason why scientists and visionaries want to advance space research, but since governments saw the advancement of space as something beneficial politically, they started exploiting it in their own interests, one of the main ones being for the military. That is why in this rubric I've included a story about how two people, at two separate times, averted nuclear war.

We live in a world where we have created a weapon capable of destroying all life on Earth. Never before in our history could we think that humanity would depend on just one man. We might think of this person as the one who would press the “red button”, as it is called, in retaliation. On the contrary, I'd like to tell you about two people who, by not doing so, saved the world.

I hope that if the world does continue to be on the brink of military esca-

tion, there will be someone who will not press the button for the sake of billions of innocents.

One of the highest forms of humanity is not to respond with a nuclear strike. Would this be a watershed moment in human history, our new, most authentic religion, in which a man, not a god, sacrifices his “son” for the salvation of humanity and billions of innocents? Would this finally break our vicious cycle of violence? None of us know the answer. But is having an answer needed? As if there is a chance for this to happen, we should do the maximum to allow that chance.



A-Bomb Test Site,
Nevada, 1955
Image source ►



VASILIIY ARKHIPOV. 27 OCTOBER 1962

Yesterday was the 60th anniversary of the time we almost came to nuclear war. Vasiliy Alexandrovich Arkhipov was the person whose actions stopped a nuclear catastrophe. Arkhipov may come to mind as one of the characters of the film "K-19: The Widowmaker", if you've seen it. But very few people are aware of what took place on the submarine B-59 on October 27, 1962.

It happened during The Cuban Missile Crisis, also known as The October Crisis of 1962. Until recently, this Crisis was regarded as the most dangerous period of confrontation between the two superpowers. It reached a critical point when the United States began a naval blockade of Cuba to force the USSR to remove medium-range nuclear missiles stationed there. Any armed incident could serve as a pretext for starting a nuclear war.

American warships and aircraft patrolled the Atlantic Ocean near the Cuban coast in search of potential enemy submarines. Soviet submarines were forced to dive deep. The Americans began to act aggressively in order to force them to the surface.

There were four Soviet submarines in total. Each of them was carrying a nuclear torpedo with the same destructive power as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Furthermore, the commander of each submarine had the authority to deploy the torpedos without direct orders from Moscow if they were threatened.

Americans were unaware of this "special weap-

on" and the powers of the commanders.

Washington informed Moscow that they had begun to drop explosives to force the submarines (it seems unknown how many--however one of them was B-59) to the surface, but they didn't know that Moscow had no communication with their submarines for a long period of time at this point to avoid having American ships trace the signals (according to some sources, U.S. anti-submarine warfare forces also had active sonars, the powerful pulses of which jammed communications; so, whatever cause(s), there was no communication between Moscow and the Soviet subs).

All of the information available to Soviet submariners about what was happening in the world came from what they could observe. And they saw how the American fleet "encircled" them, how they were fired upon rising to the surface and bombarded with explosives and depth charges when they dived, how guns were targeted at the submarine and destroyers cut in front of them. Additionally, the conditions for survival on the submarine deteriorated while the Americans furthered their physical and psychological abuse by engaging in what is called "passive torture."

On the night of October 27, 1962, when the submarine surfaced to charge its batteries, the commander of the Soviet submarine B-59, upon hearing the sounds of bombs exploding around the submarine's entire perimeter and plane flybys just above the submarine's conning tower, seeing powerful searchlights, and so on, decided they were under final attack and that the war with the United States had

already begun. He gave the command to dive and launch a nuclear torpedo. Vasiliy Arkhipov argued that it wasn't an attack to sink B-59.

Since in extreme cases, the commander of each submarine could give the order to use nuclear torpedo without coordination with Moscow, its launch could only take place with the mutual consent of the submarine commander and his political officer. Both had a part of a key to the trigger. It could be unlocked only by connecting them. On B-59, such people were the submarine commander Valentin Savitskiy and the deputy commander for political affairs Ivan Maslennikov, and they agreed. But the B-59 submarine was an exception - the senior on board was not the commander, but chief of staff of the 69th submarine brigade captain Vasiliy Arkhipov, who had the right to veto.

Vasiliy Arkhipov, who retired with the rank of Vice Admiral, died in 1999. For many years, the details of the campaign of the Soviet submarines near Cuba were kept classified.

This case was only told in 2002, during a conference in Havana dedicated to the 40th anniversary of the Crisis. Former US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, based on declassified documents, admitted that the start of a nuclear war was much closer than many thought. Thomas Blanton, director of the National Security Archive, clarified what McNamara meant: "The lesson from this is that a guy called Vasiliy Arkhipov saved the world."

In 2012, a film was made dedicated to this event in the PBS series "Secrets of the Dead". It's called "The Man Who Saved the World".

[Here](#) is the official page where you can watch the trailer. The entire movie is also posted on YouTube. Please, [watch it](#) to learn more about Arkhipov and The Cuban Missile Crisis.



Vasiliy Arkhipov with his wife. Image [source](#).



Vasiliy Arkhipov. Image [source](#).

STANISLAV PETROV. 26 SEPTEMBER 1983

On the evening of September 26, 1983, the world once again stood on the brink of nuclear war. Stanislav Yevgrafovich Petrov is the name of the person who prevented a nuclear apocalypse.

This time the decision was not made under continuous stressful conditions, but if Vasiliy Arkhipov could have reasonably anticipated that things on the submarine might start to spiral out of control, what happened at the command center of the early detection system for ballistic missile launches was a shock that required an immediate decision.

Were these two Soviet officers the only ones who saved the world from a nuclear disaster? Unfortunately, no, which means that more of these incidents took place. To put it simply, these are among the most dangerous events we are aware of while also knowing quite a lot about how they went. I assume that if the Soviet Union had not collapsed, we would still not have known the names of Vasiliy Arkhipov and Stanislav Petrov.

How much information is still classified and will remain so? Look at this [List of Nuclear Close Calls](#) and keep in mind that it could be only part of the whole picture.

So, how did things unfold in 1983?

March 8

On March 8, 1983, U.S. President Ronald Reagan delivered the "Evil Empire" speech to the

National Association of Evangelicals in Florida. He questioned whether the United States and the Soviet Union could be equally responsible for the Cold War and the ongoing nuclear arms race between the two countries; rather, he argued that the conflict was a battle between good and evil and that the Soviet Union was an evil empire. As such, Ronald Reagan basically declared the beginning of a crusade against the Soviet Union. This speech sparked a new round of tension.

March 29-April 17

As the rhetoric between Washington and Moscow heated up, the US conducted FleetEx 83, a series of fleet exercises in the Northwest Pacific close to the Soviet Union's coast. 40 ships from the United States Navy and Coast Guard, as well as the Royal Canadian Navy, including 300 aircraft and 23,000 crew members, participated in what was known at the time as "the largest fleet exercise conducted by the Pacific Fleet since World War II." One of the purposes of the mission was to provoke the Soviet Union into responding so that the US forces could study their response, tactics, and capabilities.

Spring-Summer

US Navy and Air Force reconnaissance planes repeatedly violated Soviet airspace, prompting the Soviet Air Force to dispatch fighter planes to intercept them. By the time Soviet planes took off, the Americans would have already left the USSR and be on their way back to their base. This increasingly tense cat-and-mouse game, among other things, led to one of the most tragic episodes of the Cold War.

September 1

On September 1, 1983, Korean Air Lines flight 007 to Seoul was supposed to fly over the neutral waters of the Pacific Ocean, but it instead entered Soviet airspace, passing over a number of military bases. The Soviet Union shot down the Korean Boeing without knowing that it was actually a civilian flight and carried US citizens among its passengers. Afterward, it turned out that the aircraft had problems, which led to a deviation from its planned course by more than 500 kilometers. The disaster magnified the already tense relations between the USSR and the United States at the time.

September 26



Stanislav Petrov. Image source: Internet resources.

On the night of September 26, 1983, Stanislav Petrov was on duty at the command post of the missile attack early warning system. At 0:15 a.m., the computer gave the signal that a ballistic missile was launched from US territory,

and its target was the USSR. A nuclear strike did not appear improbable in the political climate of September 1983.

Right away he tested all systems, one-by-one, to see if they worked properly. To his horror, they all did. The duty officer is required to notify higher authorities right away in the case of a missile strike, he has no authority to evaluate the situation. The chain of data then comes to an end with the nation's leadership, opening the "nuclear briefcase".

And then another missile was "launched" after another siren. The words "Missile Attack" were displayed on the scoreboard following the third. There were five "attacks" that occurred one after another. What Petrov did do? He reported to higher authorities about a malfunctioning computer and false alarm.

Information about the "attack" came from the "Oko" space early warning system. It was created so that the USSR leadership had more time to decide on a retaliatory strike - about 10 minutes more. If the missiles did fly, they should have been detected by the second echelon of the defense system - radars that report a missile strike about 20 minutes before the warheads hit the territory of the USSR. Thus, the rockets were supposed to explode on USSR territory in half an hour (though some sources say 40 minutes, it's unclear how it's distributed).

Petrov would later recall: "It seemed to me that my head had turned into a computer — a lot of data, but not formed into a single whole I could trust. I called on the phone two minutes later

and said that the alarm was false, the computer had failed, although I was only fifty percent sure I was right. Now I have to sit and wait until the missiles, if they really were launched, invade our airspace and pick up radar. It should have happened in 18 minutes, but it didn't."

What prompted Petrov to make such a decision? Partly due to intuition, and mainly due to professionalism. Among some other things, the officer noticed that the radar recorded the launch from only one base, which shouldn't have happened during a massive missile attack. The warning system, on the other hand, on which Petrov had worked on himself among others, showed no signs of failure. In one of his interviews, he said: "I knew that computers could not be smarter than their creators, and I was one of the creators". So, he trusted himself. One might wonder, with all the advancement we have achieved up to this point, if such words could still be true? But let's get back to the topic.

The following investigation revealed that space satellites mistook the reflection of the sun from high-altitude clouds for rocket strikes.

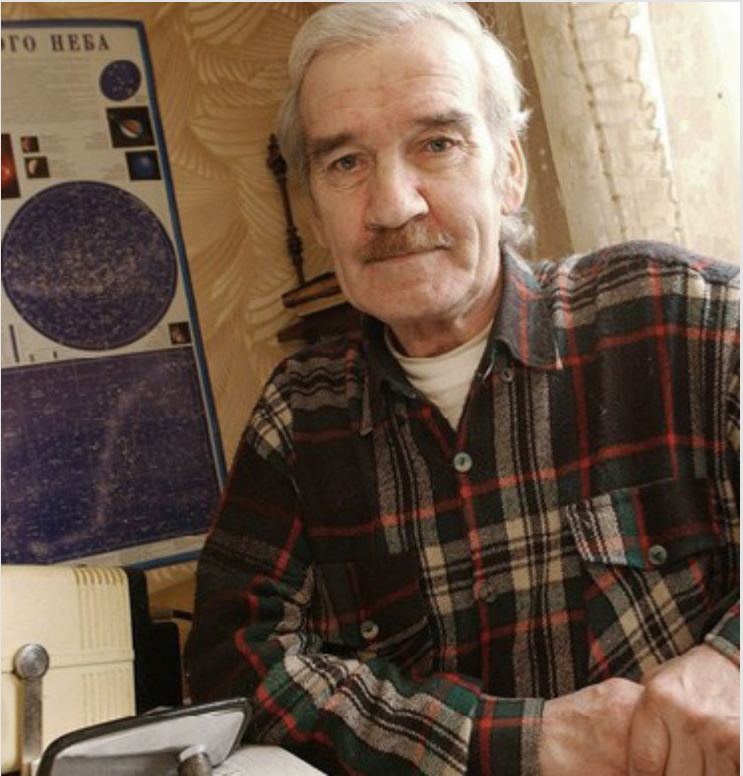
This dangerous episode involved a fortunate circumstance that stopped it from turning into a nuclear war. Another officer was supposed to be on duty that night, a "purely military man" who would not question the computer's operation but would simply follow orders and send the attack signal further down the chain. That night, however, that man asked Petrov to fill in for him. Petrov, on the other hand, not only had a military engineering education, but he also liked programming and analytics and knew it well enough to take on such respon-

sibility as questioning the operation of a computer. As a result, we were all saved in the end.

Every Day on the Brink of Nuclear War

When we talk about the fact that the world is on the brink of a nuclear war, we tend to mean just another conflict involving superpowers. And while this is definitely pushing the world even closer to a dangerous line, look how the most ordinary accidents play the same role. Since we have not yet crossed this line, it means that so far these have been happy accidents. But what if Vasily Arkhipov was on one of the other four submarines? What if it wasn't Stanislav Petrov who was on duty that night? It is definitely time to stop relying on luck--in other words, we must stop playing a cat-and-mouse game. Because otherwise we are on the brink of a nuclear war every single day.

To see and listen to Stanislav Petrov, follow this [link](#). It's part of one of his interviews.



Stanislav Petrov. Image source: Internet resources.

"The World Cannot Be Ruled."

You might know "Pink Floyd" and their album "The Wall". It was the bassist Roger Waters who envisioned "The Wall". Less known is their album "The Final Cut" released in 1983, for which in 1982 Roger Waters wrote a song "The Gunner's Dream". And from here I am giving Roger Waters the floor to continue. All of the text below and a new version of the song Waters posted on [YouTube on Jan. 18, 2021](#). It is a song worth listening to.

Last night I watched the 2013 documentary film "The Man Who Saved The World". The man's name is Stanislav Petrov. The year before Stanislav saved the World. In the year 1982. I wrote a song "The Gunner's Dream".

It's weird to think that had Stanislav not been in the right place at the right time none of us would be alive, no one under the age of 37 would have been born at all.

It is acknowledged by all but the cretins amongst us that nuclear arms have no value. It is also acknowledged that they are a ticking bomb and we ignore them at our peril. Accidents happen. The Stanislavs of this world are a rare breed. We've been extraordinarily lucky.

If I ruled the world, I would heed the words of the wise. I would get rid of nuclear weapons. First thing tomorrow morning. On Dr. King's name day.

*Of course no-one can rule the world.
The world cannot be ruled.
It can only be loved and respected and shared.*

If we're still here in the morning.

So here is a new recording and video of "The Gunner's Dream" as a gift from me and my lovely band and our friends.

To you,

*With our love
R.*





THE REPUBLIC OF MARS

For this rubric I made a collage called "The Geometry of Space Conquest", and together with Max we made a short movie titled "Look Up".

For the film's musical score we chose "The Blue Danube Waltz" from [the docking scene](#) in the movie "2001: A Space Odyssey". It was written by Johann Strauss, performed by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and conducted by Herbert von Karajan.

Please click the [link](#) to watch "Look Up", and remember that if you ever feel like you're losing faith in humanity, there are always people in space ready to give you a hug!

Look up!

Yours,

Max and Leonid