

## STORY 1.

This country has committed wrongs for hundreds of years. Time after time again, our people lose confidence in their government, and face severe hardships. There is no one to turn to in Russia in time of need or tragedy. There is no ear to listen to a plea for help. In this country every man must fend for himself. This is a place where only the strong may survive, under the cold harsh oppression of our government.

After months of silence in this locked white room, I realize now that I must speak out and tell people of an injustice that has occurred to myself, and thousands of others in our country. I tell my story in hope that people across the world will listen and force our government to change their ways. I hope that by putting pen to paper I can also encourage others to fight for freedom of speech and individualism in Russia. While I write you my story for these reasons, I must admit that the driving force behind everything was my son's tragic death. I write for my son, in hope of avenging his death and seeking justice for him. There are so many questions still surrounding his death, and it is seeking reasons and answers for his death that keeps me fighting. I know that I will never be at peace with myself until I seek out the truth.

My son Dmitry had always been my pride and joy. He had always been the centre of my universe. He was my sole reason for living. My son was a loving, giving boy and he grew into a wonderful man. He had a desire to help other people, and he never failed to put a smile on some old lady's face. My Dmitry was the kind of son every mother dreamt of. As well as having good personality traits, he was smart and ambitious. He had a thirst to learn everything he could about life. Dmitry had always wanted to travel and see the world, and when he completed his high school education he fulfilled his lifelong dream of joining the Russian Navy. I have to admit that I did not want Dmitry to leave home, and I was also apprehensive about him working with the unstable and manipulative government of our country. As people know our government has lashed out at people for years now, since Stalin nothing much has changed, and one cannot know who to trust. While I had these reservations I also thought of my boy and his need to travel, and I tried to share his happiness with him.

Dmitry was frequently away from home, sailing the seas of the world, but we still kept in close touch. He would often send me postcards and write me letters which were pages long. When Dmitry was on leave he would spend his time at home and tell me about his journeys. It was these times with Dmitry that I treasured the most. The last time that Dmitry came home to stay with me will stick in my mind forever.

When he came home he walked in, planted a kiss on my cheek, lifted me up and spun me around in a little circle. I was so very happy to see him. "Mama", he shouted excitedly, "You are now looking at Lieutenant Captain, Dmitry Popotrov!"

## STORY 1.

I began to weep tears of joy. I knew this new title must have meant much to my son, and I was indeed proud of him. We spent time catching up at our little wooden table, and Dmitry started telling me about his next journey which was to be on the Russian nuclear submarine, "Kursk". For some reason he did not talk with his usual animation about this.

We carried on cheerily for the next week. We chatted, we shared laughter, we enjoyed each others company. I felt the best I had felt in months. All good things must come to an end though. And after the week was up it was time to say goodbye to my son and wish him well on his next journey. After Dmitry kissed me goodbye, he started out the front door, but he turned around and came back. He took off his crucifix chain that I had given him as a graduation present and put it in the palm of my hand. He locked his eyes with mine and said, "For safekeeping Mama." He gave me another long hug and walked out the door again. This was the last time I was ever to see my son alive.

After he left I stood there, feeling as if a part of myself had gone. I looked at the crucifix, and carefully put the chain around my own neck, thinking for a moment that it was strange that he should give it to me.

The day I heard, of the tragedy it was pouring down rain. For as long as I could remember I had not liked the rain. The constant splatter of drops reminded me of a million tears falling from the cheek of a grief stricken mother. I also did not like the grey sky, and dark luminous clouds. To me these dull colours symbolized a disaster waiting to happen. Perhaps my dislike of rainy days was some sort of preminition. Perhaps I had secretly known, that for myself, and many other Russians alike, that a rainy day would bring about one of the most appalling tragedies to happen in our country

I was staring out the window thinking of Dmitry, then I heard something on our old television. The words "Tragedy" and "Kursk", echoed through my mind over and over again. I remember running to the television and turning up the volume as loudly as I could. I still for the life of me cannot believe what I had heard. The newsreader said that all of the one hundred and eighteen men on board the "Kursk", were all presumed dead after an initial blast sank the ship.

My ears could not comprehend what they were hearing. I remember screaming the most piercing scream. My heart felt like it had been ripped out of my body and torn into one thousand little tiny pieces. I reached for Dmitry's crucifix around my neck and prayed, "Dear God, please let my son be alright. Please tell me that this is all a dream."

Tears were pouring down from my eyes, just like the rain in the sky. I hated the world, I wanted for nothing more than to get to that submarine, and die with Dmitry.

## STORY 1.

I don't know what it was, but to this day, I believe I received a special message from Dmitry in my time of grief. For some reason I felt that my son was alive, and that somehow the news report had been wrong. After trying to compose myself so that I was able to talk clearly, I rang a hotline number. I kept being transferred to different people, trying to get them to listen to my premonition. But to no avail. Time after time I was told the same story. "The Vice President has decided that there is not enough time to get any rescue operations underway. We are positive all men aboard would no longer be alive." I was also damn angry at our country's President for not coming home to aid his country in this time of tragedy. He did not want to help the families who had someone aboard the ship. He just dismissed it with a wave of his hand, giving all responsibility to the Vice President. Not only was my son in need of help very quickly, but people were ignoring my pleas for help, and were dismissing me as a senile old woman. In this country, there is nowhere to go and no one to turn to in time of crisis. I felt as if I was tumbling down a tunnel with no light at the end.

The tears were streaming down my face freely and I could not stop the horrible wailing coming from my throat. My attention was drawn to the television again, where I saw a news reporter interviewing someone from the British Navy. The British Navy had been offering their services to come over and rescue the "Kursk", but the Vice President had turned them down. I threw my hands up to the heavens above and screamed, "Why, why, why?"

The next few days, were full of pain and grief, and I had to come to terms with the fact that there was no way at all that my son could be alive anymore. I wanted to be dead, rather than here on earth. I kept asking myself a million questions, "Was his death slow and torturous?" Something in my heart told me that Dmitry did suffer, But my head was arguing that the government and officials had said that everyone would have suffered a reasonably quick death.

I did not want to think of my Dmitry having suffered, and I did not want to think of him lifeless, stuck deep down into the heart of the ocean. I wanted the Russian or the British navy to hurry up and get the bodies out of that ship. I wanted answers as to what exactly went wrong. There was nothing that I could do for myself, except watch news updates to see if there were any new developments and cry and mourn the loss of my son.

I was also angry at the government, for not keeping families updated personally on what was happening to our deceased loved ones. Instead I had to rely only on news updates to find out what was being done to bring up my beloved son's body. It was eventually decided that the navy would recover the bodies from the Kursk. I was so scared, I did not know if I could actually face the reality of seeing my sons body.

## STORY 1.

I can remember sitting there feeling such a sorrowful loss, when I received a rap on the front door. I did not want to speak to anyone, but I willed myself to get up in case the person may have had news about Dmitry. When I opened my door I saw a naval officer his face was contorted with pain. "Ma'am, I'm here to pay my respects, and I'm sorry for your loss. Your son was a great man."

I reached out to him and embraced him, I felt that this fellow somehow understood my deep sense of loss. "Ma'am", the young fellow probed gently, "They have just recovered Dmitry's body. He had a letter with him. The letter was for you."

I could not believe what this young fellow was saying. He went on, "I am here to give you a copy of that letter. The original is still being kept by the officials for the time being."

When I read that letter I stopped breathing. My son had written to me in his cabin in the dark when the Kursk was sinking. He said he and twenty three of his crew were alive after they sought refuge in the rear of the cabin after the explosion. I closed my eyes and braced myself to ask the naval officer a question. "Sir how long had these men suffered, and how did they die?"

"I can't really say at the moment ma'am, at the shortest a few hours, at the longest a day or maybe a little more. They would have died of drowning, hypothermia, or pressure." He reached out for my hand and grasped it tightly.

"Ma'am if you had seen the sights I had seen down there today, you would be thankful that your son did not suffer from being burnt alive," He began to weep just a little then, "There were four men whose bodies I saw. They were charred to the bone. I saw also others as who had been deformed by suffering blows from sharp and blunt objects. Be thankful that Dmitry did not suffer this."

I tried to comfort the man as best as I could, but I must say I was not much of a help. I was a complete mess. I was in complete utter shock, and my body felt numb. I could not bear to know that my baby boy had suffered while nobody tried to help him, and the Vice President turned all help away. Eventually the Officer left, and I was back to grieving alone.

My pain was now doubled, I had told people that my son was still alive, and I had been right. He had suffered, and other young men had suffered. Men with families, with children, with parents. I also knew that Dmitry's letter was sacred, and by writing this letter to me, I knew he was saying goodbye. I looked down at my crucifix and remembered the way he looked at me before he left on his voyage. Did my baby know that this was the last time he was to see me.

A few hours later I was to find that Dmitry was somehow conscious of death. I was looking through his things in his room, and in his draw I found on a piece of paper a simple line, scrawled in his handwriting. "And though the time will come for me to part from this world, I leave behind my love and an imprint of a my shadow." Everything was so painful, I needed to take my anger and hurt

## STORY 1.

out on somebody, and there was no one better to be the object of my anger than the Vice President himself.

The Vice President stood before the thousands of mourners for those aboard the Kursk. He gave a false speech and said he felt our loss. I screamed out at him then, I screamed out in pain and I waved an accusing finger at him, "Why the hell didn't you help them. They were alive. ALIVE!! You could have saved some of them. Why didn't you at least bother to see?"

I will never forget the cold unforgiving stare that the Vice President gave me. He turned his head away from me as though I had not spoken. I yelled out again. "You beast. You cold uncaring man. I have no son anymore. You are partly to blame for my son's death."

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw him nod to someone. The next thing I knew I felt a sharp jab in my arm, like a needle. The next thing I knew, there was nothing, only blackness.

When I awoke I was here in this white room. I have been here for a fair while now, though I am not exactly sure how long. Here I have no sense of time, and no contact with the outside world, except for the doctors that work here. They ignore my pleas, and treat me as though I am an insane old woman. It is obvious that these people have not ever loved, and for that I pity them. There is not a day that goes by when I don't think of Dmitry. I hope that by writing this that there are people out there who will seek justice for my son, and find out why the Vice President did not even try to save his countrymen's lives. I am still trying to come to terms with the fact that Dmitry will never again walk through the door and swing me around in his arms, but I will cling to my precious memories of him forever. I look down now at the crucifix hanging from my neck and I know that somehow, someday I will walk free from this horrid little white room of imprisonment. I have a vow to honour before I die, I will seek the truth, for only then can I be free and come to terms with the demons of the past.

## STORY 2.

The people were chanting, screaming, waving about their protest signs. Some people were crying, others were just shouting out in plain rage. There was not one smiling face amongst the crowd. I was standing quietly with my little brown bag, at the side near the front of the crowd, watching all the commotion. Many people from all walks of life were here, the rich and the poor, united in their grief. Barriers and police were stopping the people from rushing forward and trying to get past the Kremlin Gates, where the Vice President was due to exit from, and address Russia at any moment now. Anyone that tried to move forward was subjugated by the police and their unyielding batons. I tried to keep my eyes towards the front, so that I could block out all of the pain of those around me. I looked down at my watch. Any second now and the Vice President should walk outside of the black wrought iron gate and address these people. I saw the black gate swing open and the cries around me seemed to grow louder. Journalists began to write furiously and there was a constant click and flash of cameras. The Press from all over the world had come to witness this address. People were crying out in heated passion and blazing fury against the actions and decisions that the Vice President had made about the lives of the one hundred and eighteen men aboard the Russian Nuclear Submarine, "Kursk".

The Vice President took his stand at a microphone which was set up for his purpose, but he could not be heard above the crowd. It was a strange feeling for me standing there and watching his lips move but hearing no sound, except for the protests and wails of those around me. I personally agreed with all of the crowd. I too had shed tears for those men who died aboard the Kursk. I had lost a very dear friend, Aleksy Zubov. But I knew better than all the rest. I knew that one should not disagree openly with the government and their policies. I was here to listen to what the Vice President had to say, and try to find reason in his words. I was here to learn precisely why my friend had died

The Vice President motioned to a police officer and cocked his head to one side and whispered something. The officer nodded and walked off and gave orders to the other policemen. The police then began drifting through the crowd silencing people with their batons. Eventually the crowd became quiet enough for the Vice President to be heard.

He looked so calm and collected, so totally in control and sure of himself. He did not share the suffering of those around him. When he spoke his deep voice boomed through the ears of the crowd. He expressed his sympathy at the horrible tragedy which had occurred. He did not speak his words in a voice of compassion. Instead he spoke in a formal voice that was edged with clipped tones. It was like he didn't really give a hoot about the lives of any men who died, nor their melancholy families and friends who were here today. The Vice President did not say the words that we were all longing to hear. All the crowd wanted from him was an apology, an admission of some sort, saying that he had made an error of judgement. Perhaps if he had said one simple word, "sorry",

## STORY 2.

and showed even an ounce of emotion the people could accept that he was not a monster, but a human who made mistakes, like the rest of us.

I was feeling sick inside and I grasped my little brown bag tighter. I willed myself not to display any emotion. I knew that I had to accept what had happened. I realized that no amount of screaming or sobbing or protesting would bring back those men. A woman in front of me turned and looked around of the thousands of people behind her. Her eyes locked with mine for one brief moment. The woman was well aged, like a good wine and she was wearing an old tattered grey coat, which looked almost as old as herself. The woman looked withdrawn, and frail. She had an air about her which gave me the impression that she had endured many hardships throughout her life. The woman turned around again and held up the banner she was carrying for people behind her to see. Her banner read "They Were Alive." Her eyes locked with mine again and I noticed that her eyes, while glistened with tears, still possessed a steely look which told me that this woman had complete mental strength.

The Vice President's voice was like a distant rumble in the background. I had stopped listening to what he was saying. I was blocking his harsh cold words out of my mind. It was the choking guttural scream filled with pain, sounding from right in front of me that caught my attention. It was the old woman. She had dropped her banner to the ground and was now waving her arms around wildly and screaming out at the top of her voice. I cannot remember the words that the woman cried out, I can only remember the sound of deep pain and yearning in her voice. Without thinking I automatically went into my professional doctor's mode. I quickly opened my little brown bag and pulled out a syringe. I quickly opened a small vial containing Nembutal and poured the content into the syringe. I quickly gave the syringe three quick flicks of my finger, and snapped my brown bag shut. I arose just in time to see the Vice President nod toward a police officer who was coming straight toward the woman with his baton. Not wanting the woman to be seriously hurt, I did what any human would have done, and quickly grabbed the woman's upper arm and shoved down her coat and stuck the needle in, as quickly as I could. What happened after that moment seems like a surreal dream.

I did not realize that the woman's outbursts had the cameras flashing upon her. I was not aware that the woman held the complete attention of all of those around her. So when the woman fell limp against me, I found myself staring straight into the blinding lights of the camera flashes, with the syringe still in her arm. I pulled the syringe out of the woman and slowly looked up to see the Vice President nod his head at me in approval. He had a cruel sneer on his face, showing his true sinister nature. The people around me starting hurling things in my direction, and yelling abuse, meanwhile the cameras were still flashing.

## STORY 2.

I was struggling to hold the woman in my arms, but before I could come to terms with everything that had happened, an ambulance had arrived and she was being dragged away. The last view I had of the woman was of her being put onto a stretcher, and shoved in the back of an ambulance. The immense white doors of the ambulance banged shut and with sirens blaring, the vehicle drove away. I too fled from the crowd shortly after. I could not stand the taunts and abuse from people with whom I shared a loss. I could not contrive to think that some people would think that I was working with the government. My stomach churned under all of the attention of the paparazzi. Everything was suddenly too much for me to take.

The days that followed were sheer hell. My face was plastered all over the front cover of newspapers and magazines all across Russia and the world. I could not walk down the streets of St Petersburg without being recognized by somebody. I was the victim of much verbal and physical abuse, and in all honesty I must say that I feared for my life. I became like a snail, afraid to come out from hiding in my little shell. No one would talk to me and no one would listen to my reason. I felt like there was nothing I could do to stop the world from perceiving me as the biggest bitch that there ever was.

I honestly did what I thought was best for the old lady. I'm a doctor and doctors are generally kind, caring, bodies who go out of their way to stop another human from suffering. The woman was in so much pain, and I knew that if I injected her with Nembutal that her pain would go away, even if just for a short time. I knew that if the woman stood there and publically humiliated the Vice President that she would suffer the consequences later. I have seen similar things happen to people so many times, and I did not want the same thing to happen to this woman.

I worked with the Russian Navy as a doctor at the St Petersburg base for some time, and this was where I had come to meet my friend Aleksy. It was because of him that I attended the Vice President's address. Because the navy were linked with the government we often received inside information. It was a well known fact there, that those who openly disagreed with government policies often vanished without a trace. Other people who oppose the government are often convicted of crimes that they do not commit, and therefore spend a large part of their life behind prison bars. This sort of treatment of Russians goes way back. My Grandfather was sent to a concentration camp in Siberia because he defied the orders of the government. He left behind his wife and three children. He was never heard of again. The constant talks of the injustices which had occurred eventually led to my decision to leave the navy and work as a doctor for a general hospital in St Petersburg.

When I injected the woman, I thought that I would be able to get her out of there, from the crowd by myself. I did not expect an ambulance to be there



## STORY 2.

within a matter of seconds, and I did not expect her to be taken from my arms and dragged away by them. At the time I just did not want the police to harm her, and lock her away for expressing her loss. I have since tried to find out where the old woman went. I want to apologize for the extra pain that I may have caused, and I want to know for certain that she is able to cope and deal with her pain. Despite my efforts however, I have not found her. I have rung hospitals and institutions one after another, but to no avail. Everyone I speak to denies knowing anything. It is like the worst has happened and the old woman has vanished from the face of the earth.

I will not stop my search for the woman that I injected. I will continue it until the day I die, if need be. There isn't a moment that passes that I don't regret what happened, although I truly believed that I was acting with the best intentions at the time. I don't want society to judge me, until they have heard my story. I don't want to live in fear for the rest of my life, and know that I am a person who is hated by millions. I want to make a difference to the world. I want to take the pain from people's lives. I want to stop the government from taking advantage of our people. But where does one start?

### STORY 3.

I had been sailing with the English DSRV LR5 for a number of years. Mostly I loved the work. I could travel the seas of the world, in a gigantic powerful vessel. Perhaps a part of me was still very much a child, because early on in my career, I developed a great interest in the latest technology available to us, and I was always to be seen playing around with some gadget or another. I think that was why, at the age twenty-five, I was the training engineering officer, and had the Captain two rank

In early August, 2000, the DSRV LR5 was scheduled for a trip to Norway. When our ship arrived in Norway, plans were made for the Norwegian and English fleets to compare safety equipment, and the overall features of both ships. On August 17th the ships, "The Norwegian Pioneer", and the DSRV LR5 were stationed at Trondheim Port. I had always known that the world wasn't perfect, and that death was inevitable, but a person doesn't really think about this sort of thing, until something happens to make them wake up and taste the bitter salts of life.

It was approximately 12:00 hours and I was in Compartment Three. I was talking to the radio intelligence party when we were alerted to a distress signal. The area of disaster came up on our computer and we were able to find out after making some very brief enquiries, that the ship in disaster was the Russian nuclear submarine, Kursk. Everything seemed to happen so quickly after that. Trondheim Port became a flurry of motion, as the Captains rounded up their crews and sailed for the disaster area. No one was exactly sure of how serious the cataclysm was. Our fleet received information from our base back home, that the situation was classified as heavy critical. We were told that the Russian sub would not have enough air to last it past midday, on the 18th of August. This did not worry our crew, if anything we were all relieved because we knew that we would easily make it to the Kursk before the following day.

Upon arrival at the disaster area, I automatically went about helping set up a plan to get our crew members to dock the emergency hatch, of the ninth compartment of the Kursk. We were practically ready to set our plan into action, when we were ordered to halt our proceedings. We were told that the Vice President of Russia did not want any outside help, and that other Russian Navy were quite capable of handling operations. To be quite frank, this really made me feel inadequate. I could not understand for the life of me, why we couldn't just get those men out of that ship, just in case the oxygen in the air tank ran out before predicted. What the hell did it matter if we were Russian or not? All that mattered to me was that we were here and we could get those men out, and get them out far quicker than the Russians could.

I kept all equipment set up for a rescue. I was so damn proud of all our rescue and safety equipment. I knew that when it came down to it, we probably had the best resources in the world. I knew exactly how to work every device. I wanted

### STORY 3.

to put my knowledge to the test. I wanted to be apart of a real rescue operation. I had never longed to do something so much as I did at that moment of time.

Hours passed, and still no other Russian fleet. Time moved slowly on, and we passed into the 18th of August. At this time the situation was assessed as "supercritical", but the Russian Navy Press centre announced that people would be able to live until the 23rd to the 25th of August should they spare forces and oxygen. I could not believe this statement. I could not believe that they knowingly left men gasping for breath because of shortage of oxygen. I thought about the battle that those men must be enduring. There were concerns from many people about how the men would survive, because the oxygen level was too low, and carbon monoxide would be at a lethal level. I also had a fairly good idea that depressurization would also be a fairly nasty problem for the men aboard.

I waited around for what seemed like an eternity, for an order telling me that I could get my equipment working and go down and try to rescue those Russian fleet members. An order finally came from our commander, telling us that we must dive down and inspect damages. I quickly made sure all the necessary equipment was assembled properly. I gave a final check to the pontoons and grabbed the emerging camera. I felt relieved to finally be able to do something. Without hesitation, myself and ten other men jumped into the water.

I was not prepared for what I was about to come across. I saw that compartments of the Kursk were flooded, and try as I might, I could not open the emergency hatch. With the help of the Captain of first rank, we quickly assessed that flooding would have been almost immediate. We concluded that water must have leaked through depressurized stern-tube glands or defective bulkheads. This in turn led to air bubbles with high pressure arising in compartments. I took photographs of everything that I could, to show the other men.

When all the divers had returned to deck, we each reported our findings. I knew that it was possible for some men, if not all to be alive. Once again my fleet began working on a plan now that we knew the full extent of damage, to rescue any living members. However our plans were once again prolonged by the orders of the Vice President. He said that any rescue attempts would now be futile. We were ordered to sit and do nothing. Moment by moment I began to realize the full meaning of hate. I did not even know Russia's Vice President, but still I felt a deep sense of hatred seething through my bones. Who was this man to hand out the death sentence to his countrymen? I began to build up a picture of him in my mind. I saw him as a cold hearted, indurate, apathetic callous bastard.

When time reached the night of the 20th of August I knew that our fleet should just turn around and leave. We were here for nothing now. It was more than

### STORY 3.

obvious to me that the men aboard the Kursk were dead. We had the chance to save lives, we could have given these Russian men a chance to live, but now we can give nothing.

The following day I knew that Russia had given permission for some Norwegian rescuers to go down and pry their way into the Kursk. Meanwhile, DSRV LR5 was still left there unable to do anything. When the Norwegian rescuers surfaced, they confirmed what I had already known. It was finally made public to the families of those aboard the Kursk, that all men aboard were perished.

At 21:00 hours on the 21st of August, the British and Norwegian fleets having now fulfilled their duties, sailed away from the disaster area. Many men like myself had a strong feeling of despair and loss. There was no cheeriness aboard our ship, gone was the optimism that once echoed throughout. I tried desperately not to think of the events that had taken place over the last few days, but I could not blot them from my mind.

The more that I kept thinking about the past few days, the more sure I was that Kursk was a disaster waiting to happen. The Kursk was seen as the pride of the Russian fleet, it was built to launch nuclear armageddon and silently prowl the oceans. In truth however, Kursk was probably nothing more than a decaying radio active time bomb. Kursk was powered by a nuclear reactor and, as any good naval officer would know, nuclear reactors need to be looked after well, and frequently cleaned. But it is a well known fact that the Russians kept most of their subs tied back on ports, and did not look after their ships in the least. Some say that this is because the Russian government is short of money, but I cannot understand why they would even consider to play around with radio active resources when they cannot afford to.

There isn't anyone in the navy who doesn't know all about the nuclear waste dumped in the ocean, near Russia's Port Murmansk. Only secret government officials are allowed at Port Murmansk. I personally think this is because the secrecy of the Soviet times still lingers on in Russia. I believe that government authorities have tried to hide the information, regarding nuclear waste, because they are afraid that people will make them clean up their waste. This is something which they do not have the funds to do.

I thought that perhaps the Vice President of Russia may have ignored our offer for help, because we may have found something that he did not want us to see. I thought that this theory was actually more than likely. I wanted to see what the Captain thought of my theory, so I went and sought him out.

The Captain agreed with my theory completely. I asked the Captain why the Russian navy officers did not speak out, if they knew that they were putting themselves and others in danger with the nuclear waste, and by not looking after

### STORY 3.

their subs properly. The Captain just shook his head sadly and said, "Son, you do not understand the harsh realities of Russia. The men know that if they speak out, they are likely to get strong cruelty and punishment inflicted upon them. There was once a navy Captain of 1st rank, of the Northern Fleet of Russia. His name was Alexander Ntkin and he was sentenced to jail for fifteen years for disclosing a small amount of information to the Russian public, about the waste at Port Murmansk. Tell me son, what man would gladly give up fifteen or more years of his life for disclosing information like that.?"

I felt deep sympathy for that fellow named Alexander Ntkin, and more hatred towards the government. I felt slightly better when the Captain told me that he and the Norwegian Captain were going to charge Russian military men with deliberate impeding on their attempts to reach the Kursk as soon as possible, and with misinformation. Apparently the information given to the Norwegian side was so inaccurate that it threatened the safety of divers.

Despite knowing that some form of justice may be sought, I still ask myself what is the point of being in the navy, if one is to come across disasters like the Kursk, and not be able to do anything, or warn anybody. I am honestly not sure whether I want to continue my career here. I do not know if I could stand sitting helpless again while men lie dying. I don't think I can work in an environment, where I see selfish bastards like the Russian Vice President sentence other men to death. I know that I need a break away from my job at the moment. I am not sure whether I will continue working for the navy after that, only time will tell.

#### STORY 4.

I was sitting in Vladimir Putin's office, on a soft leather armchair and sipping some red wine. I thoroughly enjoyed being surrounded by things of high monetary value, and I was more than happy to be filling in the shoes for the President of Russia. It was August, 2000 and Putin was away enjoying a holiday on some far off island, he was not due back in Russia for four weeks. He gave me word only to disturb him if there was an emergency, as he trusted my sense of good judgement and my authority.

Whilst I must admit that I wish I held the title of President, instead of Vice President, I must say that Putin is a very good friend indeed. He and I were both in the KGB together and the two of us thought very similarly. For example we both detested people who spoke out against the Russian Government and we both still honour the secrecy of the Soviet Times.

On the 16th of August I received a most bothering telephone call from the head of the Russian Navy, Admiral Vladimir Kuroyedov. "Ilya", he said, "I think we are in plenty of trouble. We have received distress signals for our leading sub, the Kursk. From what I have managed to gather it seems that there is a problem with the oxygen tank."

I wasn't even slightly worried. "Just monitor the situation and make sure no other countries go snooping around." Having said that I instantly hung up the phone and took a sip of wine.

The following day I received another phone call from Kuroyedov. He informed me that matters with the Kursk had become disastrous. He informed me that the navigation room and bow were wrecked. He also told me that the periscope was up.

"Damn damn damn", I cursed.

"Ilya", Kuroyedov said quietly, "The Norwegian and British fleets have also detected an explosion, and are making their way to the disaster area as we speak. They have offered their services, to rescue the men."

At this point I was filled with rage. I did not want the blasted British and Norwegian fleets snooping around. I especially could not allow them to discover all of the nuclear waste dumped at Port Murmansk. I knew I had to turn help away, and fast. "Tell them that our Russian fleet has all the necessary technology to carry out the operation. Do not allow them to do a thing!"

I spent the rest of the afternoon hoping like hell that the British and Norwegian fleets did not try any rescue operation. I had arranged for the Western Russian fleet, and Kuroyedov to sail to the disaster area immediately to deter other countries from stepping in. I thought it was very important that we must show the strength of our fleet. Putin and I have spent much effort trying to build up

our naval resources, and rebuild our once mighty fleet. We had aimed to show the world a newly reinvigorated Russian Navy.

I must say that I was not concerned at all for the men on the ship. I was much more worried because the submarine Kursk is fitted with modern weaponry, never before seen in the West. Both the port and starboard sides of the damaged hull are armed with twenty-four new SS-N-19 shipwreck missiles, which neither the United States or Europe military chiefs have seen before. The twenty-four missiles were each primed with seven hundred and fifty kilos of high explosives, this is the equivalent of two Hiroshima bombs. It was very obvious to me, that the secrecy of these weapons was much more important than any mans life.

On the morning of the 18th of August, I got an important message to Kuroyedov saying that we would blame the disaster on a collision with another vessel. Kuroyedov argued that there was no way that the damage caused had occurred via a collision. I reminded him that his job would be at stake if he did not say what I had told him to. He quickly agreed to put the blame of the disaster on a collision with another vessel. I did not want him telling the press that the damage to the Kursk had probably been caused because we had not spent enough money on maintaining the nuclear reactors by which the Kursk was powered.

I made sure that Kuroyedov had not let any outsiders help. After being assured that he had not I requested that a fax be sent to me, containing the names of the men aboard the Kursk. When I received that list, and found that the Captain of First Rank was Gennadiy Liachin, I became smug. Putin and I had received many threats from this Captain before. He had threatened us both by saying that he would go to the press and tell them about Port Murmansk, and about the way that the Russian Government treated the navy unfairly. He said that he would tell the press the truth about how members of the Russian navy went unpaid for up to six months and were working in dangerous conditions.

“Stupid fool”, I muttered with a sneer on my face. “Who’s going to have the last laugh now?” Ever since Alexander Nitkin, a former Russian Navy captain has spoken out, Liachin has tried to follow in his footsteps.

I had the perfect solution to everything. I would not allow anyone to rescue any of those men aboard. This way it would keep other countries from snooping, it would save the Russian Government money on a rescue operation and it would get rid of that stupid fool Liachin! I rang Putin to get his vote of approval for my plan.

I hung up from talking to Putin with a smile on my face. Everything was going to work out exactly as planned. Firstly I called the Military Intelligence Officer, and Russian Defence Minister Igor Sergeyev and told him to give a public

television appearance, announcing the disaster, and saying that it was presumed that no men aboard the Kursk would be alive. Igor carried out this task willingly.

The people of Russia went into a frenzy when it aired on television that all one hundred and eighteen men aboard the Kursk were presumed dead. I didn't care less. They would get their condolences later when the government has to fork out 1 500 000 rubles to all of the families of the deceased members aboard the Kursk.

On the 21st of August, after having been assured that all men aboard the sub would have either died of drowning, burns or hypothermia, I allowed members of our Russian fleet to go down and make an attempt to discover what had happened. I allowed this, mainly for public appearance, and to ease suspicion of other countries who thought that we were doing nothing to help our own men. On this day I knew I had succeeded with my plan because the British and Norwegian fleets left the disaster area and sailed for home.

The 22nd of August was pronounced a day of national mourning. I wasn't mourning though. I was marveling at how well everything had worked out. I couldn't believe my good fortune. I invited Kuroyedov and Sergeyev for a little celebration in Putin's office. We also discussed recovering the bodies, and decided that this would take place on the 25th of August.

On the 25th of August everything was going as planned, until the body of Lieutenant Captain, Dmitry Popotrov was recovered. With his body was found a letter to his mother. Apparently it claimed that himself and twenty-three other men were alive for hours, or even perhaps days after the disaster had struck. Everything would have continued to sail along smoothly except some stupid officer made a copy of the letter and forwarded it to Popotrov's mother. I will see that that officer pays dearly for his ignorance. Adding salt to the wound, the woman has now told others that her son and other men were alive, and sooner or later, the news will reach the press.

Under Putin's direction it was decided that I would have a press conference and a meeting with the people of Russia, including families and friends of the deceased men. When I walked outside the Kremlin gates there was complete chaos. People shouting out like drunkards and waving petty little banners in the air. I soon commanded the crowds silence however. It irked me to no end, having to stand there in front of those blubbering people. If only they would open up their eyes they would realize what was at stake. It pained me to tell these people that I felt sympathy for them, when nothing could be further from the truth.

When I was halfway through my speech, a piercing shriek interrupted me. Here was this old shabby woman yelling abuse and obscenities at me. My immediate thought was to tell the woman to shut up, and ask her what she was complaining



about, because after all she received money, which it looked like she was badly in need of. I couldn't however publicly humiliate myself by talking to this woman so I just stared hard at her. "How dared this lowlife whining woman embarrass me so", I thought. I nodded to a police officer behind her when the woman suddenly fell limp, and I saw the lady behind her pull out a syringe.

I nodded my head in approval to the woman. "Now here is a loyal supporter of the government", I thought to myself.

I gave instructions to my men that the woman was to be taken away and institutionalized. I will personally make sure that that woman never sees daylight again. I will see that she is treated for the insane old bat that she is.

After I had finished with the rest of my conference I went back to Putin's office and sipped my wine. It was time for a hard earned break. Never will one get away with threatening or humiliating the Government in this country. And never will any other country find out the well embedded, age old secrets that lie here in Russia.

## **Reflection Statement.**

Having finished my English Extension 2 Major Work, I am now able to reflect upon my findings, and that which I have learnt. I am now also able to effectively evaluate my work. In this reflection statement I will address several key issues. I will :

- Summarise the intent of my work and the relationship it has with the extensive independent investigation.
- Identify my intended audience, and the purpose for which my major work was composed.
- Will make reference to my work and explain the relationships of concept, structure, technical and language features, and conventions.
- Will explain the development of concepts during the process of composition, making clear links between my independent investigation and the development of the finished product.
- Indicate how I have realised the concepts in my final product.

The original intent of my major work has developed into something much more complex than I would ever have dreamed when I first started working on this project. The original intent of my work was to complete four short stories based upon the tragedy of the Kursk. Originally I wanted to convey four very different perspectives on the disaster. I aimed to create a different mood for each story, and show how peoples perceptions varied. I also strived to create a different style of writing for each story. I wanted my stories to be very powerful and emotive and leave a lasting impact on the reader. However, as I got more and more involved with my investigation, I found that my intent had changed. After investigating the tragedy of the Kursk I found that much blame was placed upon the Russian Government. I then found myself swept into a world of intrigue, and shock, as I found that realised that the Russian Government was still living in the Soviet times. Showing the injustices which have occurred in Russia was then a major intent of my work My first three stories, show the effects that the government has had on the individual, and the disaster of the Kursk, and my fourth story, based on a possible perspective from Ilya Klebenov carefully links all four stories together. Another major intent of my work was to make readers question their belief in the media. For example, my second story is where I write from a doctor's perspective. The story that I have written, is very different from the cold hearted woman represented by the media. After reading my work, I want the reader to be more open minded, and display a willingness to see more than one side of a story.

The intended audience for my major work ranges from older teenagers to adults, as young children would not be able to grasp the full meaning of what it is that I have written about. They would not understand Communist Russia, and they would most probably find my work a complete bore. I feel that by basing my short stories on a well known event in current affairs, that I have broadened my audience spectrum. Even if the reader of my work is not up to date with current affairs, there is still themes in each stories which everyone can relate to. These are themes such as love, anger, hatred, humanity, greed and power. My major work was composed so as to challenge me, but not to the extent where I would be overwhelmed with information. I composed my work so

that it would allow me to be investigative. My investigation included finding out about the disaster of the Kursk, and reading widely about different theories surrounding the event. My investigation also included finding out about the past and present injustices which are occurring in Russia due to the government. Composing the work the way that I have, has also allowed me to research several different key issues for each of my stories. For example in story three, I found out a lot about navy officers and ranks etc.

My major work was also composed to be imaginative and analytical. Whilst the event that I have based my stories around was an actual occurrence, I have been able to be as imaginative as I like when writing the perspectives shown of the different people that I have written about. My project was also composed to be analytical because throughout my work I had to assess and analyze the role of the Russian Government. Analyzing the Russian Government was a major intent of my work, and this was therefore very important in my composition.

My major work has specific language features and conventions for every story. For example in story one, the mother uses very emotive language. The reader attains the Mother's sense of loss and they grieve with her. In story two, we see a less emotive language. We still see though that the story is written with a depth of sadness, but the doctor does not know how to express grief. The third story is full of technical jargon. It uses a lot of terms which navy officers are familiar with. This creates authenticity for this story. The final story contains very brutal language and thought convention. This allows for the true nature of the Russian Government to be seen. I have written each of the four stories in the first person narrative, because I feel that this structures the stories closer together and makes it easier for the reader to compare and analyze the events taking place.

I had made many drafts for my four stories, before becoming happy with the completed product. After every draft I found that my concepts and ideas had varied slightly. For example when I first began my stories I had so much information that I wanted to put into each one. However when I began writing, I found that I had too much information and had to narrow down my ideas quite a lot to fit in with the six thousand, to eight thousand word limit on the short story/ies. One of the changed ideas in my first story was that the mother would not know that her son was alive. However when I read a newspaper article saying that, one of the officers aboard the Kursk had a premonition about death, I decided that I would change my idea, and by having the Mother "feeling", that her son was alive, and therefore adding to the grief and suspense of the story.

Another changed concept in my story was where I had the Vice President address the people outside of Kremlin House. Originally I had the story set inside, but decided that having the Vice President outside on a platform in a more open wider space would highlight his separation from the people of Russia. It also gives the reader the impression that the Vice President looks down upon these people.

There have been constant changes on different concepts throughout the process of my major work. I would write something down and be happy with what I have written, only to research more on my project later on, and find that gaining more information may have changed my perspective again. After completing this major work I realise that writing is a never ending process. Thoughts may be constantly changing and heading off in a new direction.

I realised the final concepts of my major work only after I had gathered all the information that I could find, and by correlating everything that I considered important in the writing of my stories. The final concept of my work has come after long hours of writing and then rewriting. My concepts have been developed through my extensive reading of newspaper articles, books, webpages etc. It was interesting to note that there were many conflicting stories surrounding the disaster of the Kursk. I have taken different ideas and scenarios from many different stories to put together my own concept and ideas of what may have happened. My ideas on my major work has been influenced by comparing Communist Russia to capitalist countries which have democracy and freedom. I realise that as long as there is different sources and materials to read then ones concepts and thoughts will be forever changing.