

Winter Terrorland

by David Watkins

Of all the government secrets revealed by Wikileaks, there was one that is very close to my heart. Primarily because I lived it.

In a plot straight out of an Austin Power's movie, the old Soviet Union had devised a plan to wipe out the upper echelon of our government. A super secret organization hidden deep within the KGB had bred sharks that, instead of swimming in water, could swim through deep snow. Their plan consisted of flying a cargo plane full of these super mutated sharks over the north pole toward Washington, DC. It would arrive in the middle of a heavy snowstorm. The sharks would parachute onto the Capitol grounds where they would hunt and eat members of Congress as well as the President and his cabinet.

During the depth of the winter of 1969 a terrible blizzard descended upon North America. Everything was going according to the Soviet's plan until Mother Nature decided to be uncooperative. Before their plane reached the United States a gigantic winter vortex caught the plane, throwing it off course and toward the small Texas Panhandle town of Phillips. There, the raging blizzard had already dropped 20 inches of snow. The vortex would drop another 20.

I had walked to school that morning uphill through the deep blowing snow, with the icy cold wind blowing into my face and ice cycles hanging from my runny nose. It was so cold inside the school they sent us outside for an early recess.

It was then that the Russian cargo plane made an emergency landing on Phillips Avenue, just a hop, skip, and a jump from Phillips Elementary. As the plane skidded to a stop the ravenous sharks escaped from their pens, devoured the plane's crew, and swam toward the school and us unsuspecting elementary school students.

The first sign of trouble was when I saw the twins, Billy Bob and Bobby Bill, disappear under the snow. We wouldn't find their shredded rubber snow boots until the spring thaw. After they disappeared someone screamed out "SHARKS!" I thought, "that doesn't make any sense, unless they were SNOW SHARKS!" Sure enough, their pure white fins almost blended in with the snow as they swam toward us.

We struggled through the neck deep snow toward Groundskeeper Sally's shed. Unfortunately we lost Bobby Sue and her brother Suey Bob on the way. We fell inside the shed but before we could slam the door shut a shark bit off the door knob. We grabbed some wood and nails to nail it shut but we couldn't find a hammer. Thinking outside the box, er the shed, I opened the window. As one of the sharks swam past I reached out and grabbed it. Using the shark we were able to nail the door shut. Once the door was secure I threw the hammer head shark out the window.

We thought we could wait out the attack until the blizzard ended. However, the "not so great white sharks" began biting holes in the sides of the shed. These sharks are slightly inferior to a great white shark, but don't let them hear you say that, it hurts their feelings and makes them even more voracious.

We climbed out a window and onto the top of the shed, hoping beyond hope that we would survive until someone could rescue us. We could see the fin tips of the rapacious sharks as they circled the

shed. Every once in a while a shark would leap out of the snow and onto the shed roof. We would have to swing a third grader around to knock the shark back into the snow. I know, a little cruel but hey, we were fifth graders, at the top of the elementary school pecking order. Most of the sharks just circled, biding their time and waiting for the not-so-great white sharks to bite through the walls. Already the shed was becoming wobbly. It was just a matter of minutes if not seconds until we were dumped into the snow. The resulting feeding frenzy would put a group of teenage boys at a Golden Corral buffet to shame.

Our time was running out I when had a brainstorm, or maybe it was a brain snow storm. I was able to reach into the shed and grab Groundskeeper Sally's super bright gopher hunting spotlight and a magnifying glass. I focused the bright light through the magnifying glass onto the snow surrounding the shed. The focused light was hot enough to melt the snow. With the snow melted the sharks were left floundering on the ground, which is pretty embarrassing for a shark, to be caught acting like a flounder.

Finally, members of the High School ROTC arrived. They took care of the sharks with their high powered, fully automated BB guns. As we climbed down from the shed we could see Lunch Lady Doris dragging the deceased sharks into the school's cafeteria. Every time I eat a fish stick I get a little choked up, over the memory of my lost classmates that is.

Of course, this happened a long time ago. The town of Phillips now exists only as a memory. But on the outskirts of that tiny town, up in the Texas Panhandle, over 600 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, you will see a small bronze statue of a shark commemorating those who lost their lives during the Winter Terrorland of 1969.