

Crimson tide and the aspects of leadership



The film is based on the time period when there was imbalance in Russia. Russian rebel truehearted to their leader had obtained dominance over the installation of some nuclear missile and they are threatening thermonuclear warhead if the Russian government or Americans tried to confront him. In attempt to watch over the delegation, the United States ordered the USS Alabama: a nuclear submarine to be ready to take any action to sustain the strike. Among the Alabama submarine crew was Captain Frank Ramsey, who was the commanding officer and among the very few commanders remaining in the Navy with experience in combat. He chooses Lieutenant Commander Ron Hunter, who was highly educated when it comes to military history and maneuver, however had no experience regarding combat as the Executive Officer (Second in Command).

During their embark at sea, latent hostility arose between Ramsey and Hunter due to indifferent personalities, Hunter was more analytic and conservative towards his mission and the men and as for Ramsey, he was more hotheaded, fly-by-the-seat-of-his-pants go about. A satellite report came through to the Americans that the Russians who got the nuclear installation were fueling the missiles, and the Alabama was ordered to plunge its missiles to those Russians. A second message came through for Alabama to disable their missiles, but unfortunately the message was not received by the crew after the communication unit was badly destroyed by the Russian submarine attack. The Alabama was too deep to restore communication and had just been hit and there was an outstanding order to launch the missiles, thus Captain Ramsey opted to continue with the order they had at the time which was authenticated. Hunter on the other hand was

against the missile launch and tried to win over support from Ramsey to confirm the second message before proceeding with the launch, because he had hope that it was possibly an abjuration of the previous command. Hunter argued that even if they launched the missiles later than expected other US submarines in the area would proceed with the mission as per the fleet's redundancy protocol measures.

As the situation in the command became intense, Ramsey presents Hunter as an upstart graduate from Harvard who does not honor his place in the chain of command. There came a point where Ramsey wanted to excuse Hunter from being a Second in Command, just because Hunter was still against the launch of the missiles. Instead Ramsey was arrested in the attempt to outsmart the protocols regarding the launch of the nuclear. The Chief of the Boat agreed with Hunter and proceeded with the arrest of Ramsey though they were old friends, and he was taken from the Con and locked in his bedroom. Though the Alabama crew was shaken order was retained.

The Russian submarine re-emerged just as Hunter was undertaking the effort to corroborate the second message concerning the missile launch. An underwater combat resulted and the Russian submarine was destroyed, and unfortunately the Alabama got damaged badly. The ship lost its communications, deaths of several crew members were encountered, and the boat nearly sank past its crush depth which resulted from the water which had entered into the boat after the hit from the combat with the Russians. As Hunter was waiting for the communications to be reestablished, some officers who were loyal to the Captain left the Con altogether. With the

help of the loyal officers, Ramsey managed to get out of the place where he was held in attempt to present Hunter with charges of rebellion, placing the Executive Officer and officers who served with him under arrest. The launching of the missiles was nearly successful hadn't it been for the weapon officer who was persuaded to stall or delay Ramsey, while Hunter was in the mission of recapturing the bridge, among him was his main drafted staff officers. In the end, a tie resulted, thus the officers who had disputes agreed to wait until the last potential second to plunge the missiles.

At long last the communications were up to speed and it was discovered that the Russian army had stabilized the situation and the Russian rebellions had been subjugated, thus no need to continue with the order of launching American's missiles.

At the end of the movie, a review took place at Pacific Fleet headquarters in Hawaii where various admirals conveyed serious concerns about the collapse of command which took place in the Alabama and during the wartime concerning the launching of the nuclear missiles. Ramsey finally decided to withdraw from the Navy and advocated Hunter for the command. The two men (Hunter and Ramsey) settled their disputes at the end of the film.

WHO IS/ARE THE LEADERS IN THE MOVIE

There are two main leaders namely:

Gene Hackman playing Captain Frank Ramsey: an old white male, navy veteran, probably in his fifty's.

Denzel Washington playing Lieutenant Commander Ron Hunter: a young African-American male fresh off Harvard University.

THE LEADER (S)'S ROLE IN THE MOVIE

Lieutenant Commander Hunter played a number of roles in the Crimson tide film which included him being in the submarine to make sure that Captain Ramsey made the correct choices, for example, the launching of the nuclear missiles. Looking at the situation, Ramsey was going to go ahead and launch the missiles without confirming the second message which was interrupted by the damage from the Russian rebels. Going through with the launch of the missiles would have caused a nuclear warhead which was prevented due to Hunter's judgment. Also Hunter played a role of being a complementary leader towards Ramsey, that is, he provided certain leadership aspects which Ramsey lacked. Those aspects includes, Hunter being a motivator, in the film we concluded that Ramsey was a strict and arrogant leader who never motivated his crew, but with the influence from Hunter, Ramsey gave a motivational speech after the crew restored all operations after the Russian attack. The other aspect that Ramsey lacked was compassion towards his crew, but Hunter stepped in and showed compassion to his fellow submariners after a few crew members lost their lives in the lower compartment in the boat. Last but not least, Ramsey was impatient, he could not wait for the communication unit to restore their systems for the second message to come through and insisted on proceeding with the missile launch, whereas Hunter possessed that ability and was willing to put on hold the idea of going ahead with the order at hand (of launching the nuclear missiles). Hunter's choice to wait turned out to be the best choice because if

it has not been for him, the Alabama attack would have caused the start of a nuclear war.

On the other hand, Ramsey's roles included testing the loyalty of the boat's crew, that is, had he not been there none of the conflicts between him and Hunter would not have arisen, and there would not have been a time where the officers in charge had to choose sides over the boat's authority. Officers choosing sides made confirmation on who was following the right protocol in the launch of the nuclear missiles, for example, the crew under Ramsey just followed the protocol to some extent and ignored the one which was to confirm what the second command said before going ahead with the previous order, whereas the ones under Hunter did everything but the books. Also Ramsey's purpose was to make sure that everyone was prepared in case of a combat with the rebels. To support that, he carried down a number of drills in the boat during their journey at sea to ensure that everyone stayed focused no matter what, also before they left the base and while they were on the ship he made a few speeches about the situation at hand, and one of the speeches was like this, " we are here to preserve democracy, not to practice it".

EXPLAIN THE CONTEXT FOR EACH INCIDENT RELATING TO LEADERSHIP ASPECTS IN THE SYNOPSIS

INCIDENTS WITHING THE MOVIE INVOLVING THE LEADER(S)

There were a number of incidents that took place during the mission to Russia within the USS Alabama's crew that involved either Hunter or Ramsey or both of them, below are some of those incidents:

There was a time when two of the crew members got into a fight over comic books, at the time Hunter was only a few feet away from the two men but could see what was happening. When the two were stopped by one of the crew members, Hunter pulled the other one involved in the fight (the supervisor) aside and tried to understand the cause of the fight, and when he fully understood what the quarrel was all about he advised the supervisor that in cases of quarrels he should know how to handle the situation since he was also a leader and should lead by example. The supervisor promised to handle disputes better next time, and was once again calm and proceeded to his assigned post.

The other incident involving one of the leaders was when Hunter rushed down to the kitchen during the fire to try and sustain the situation. This is a sign that he does not interact with the crew during times of issuing commands only, he came to an aid of his followers whereas Ramsey was busy launching a drill and not caring about what Hunter had to say about the fire downstairs.

INCIDENTS AND THE LEADER(S)'S INTERACTION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE MOVIE

Ramsey was a blind follower, he did almost everything without questioning whereas Hunter was the opposite of that (he followed orders but he did question the authority where he felt it necessary). One example which comes to mind is where they were discussing about war, Ramsey felt that when it came to war if there was a threat made, the only action or measures to be taken was to attack first, he was more of a shoot first and ask questions later type of person. On the other hand, Hunter thought that attacking the opposition party in war would make the situation worse, as he believed that, “ in a nuclear world, true enemy cannot be destroyed as the true enemy is war itself”.

The second incident where the two leaders interacted was when the Alabama was hit and the second message which was to be received aboard from the headquarters was interrupted. When the boat was stable from the hit, Captain Ramsey wanted to proceed with the order at hand which was to continue with the launching of the nuclear missiles. But Hunter being the Executive Officer he refused to concur the order because they were unsure of what the incoming message said and a huge argument arose. The argument led to Ramsey wanting to relieve Hunter of his duty, but due to some regulations, Hunter managed to turn the tables and had Ramsey removed from the Con to his stateroom by the Chief of the Boat. This incident shows that both men are firm in what they each believe in. For example, Ramsey is more concerned about the worst that could happen if they are not able to continue with the missile launch well on time, i. e. before

the Russian rebels launch the attack, while Hunter is concerned about the worst that could happen if they actually do proceed with the launching while there is no longer a threat from the Russian rebels. Both men were not about to be deterred from their logic regarding the matter, in which both were respectively right in their own ways.

Last but not least, was the incident which took place in the kitchen. There was a fire in the kitchen and while Hunter was busy maintain the situation downstairs, Ramsey decided on carrying out a drill, and Hunter being the second in command had to rush back upstairs to the Con to repeat the order. When he got there he tried to explain to the Captain that is not a good time to be running the drill as the situation in the kitchen was still in the process of being fully contained, but captain being a suborn man, he dismissed Hunter's complaint and continued with the drill. He later met with Hunter at his stateroom and told him that the next time he wanted to question him, he should not do it in front of the crew, that he should wait for the right time (when they are alone) to present the matter at hand. But later on Ramsey shouted at Hunter in front of the crew in the Con, which shows that Ramsey only comply by the books where the rules favors him only. Also, this shows that Ramsey show little or no concern over his crew members as he carried out the drill though there was fire downstairs.

KNOW YOUR LEADER(S)'S BEHAVIOUR AND CHARACTERISTICS

In this part we will be looking at the different and similar leadership characteristics that Hunter and Ramsey possess either bad or good.

Commander Hunter

Caution: this can be defined as showing careful forethought. This is illustrated in the film where Hunter gave Rivetti the keys to the officers' stateroom and other cabins in case Ramsey and his men were to lock them up, and it did happen. Hunter and his officers were arrested and Rivetti came to their rescue.

Optimistic: is expecting or presenting the best possible outcome in a given solution. Hunter displays this characteristic when the second message was interrupted. He refused to agree with Ramsey to continue launching the nuclear missiles because he was expecting the good news from the headquarters, and indeed the results came up positive, that they should abort the previous mission.

Naïve: Not initiated; deficient in relevant experience. Ramsey and other officers who were loyal to him believed that Hunter was not experienced enough to make the decisions regarding the combat. Well, partly that was true because he had no practical experience in the field; all he knew was what he read in the military books. Nevertheless, he managed to sustain all the possible distractions in the boat.

Ambitious: Having a strong desire for success or achievement or requiring full use of your abilities or resources. This is true for Hunter because he wanted to know what the second message was saying, and he made sure that he did. He made it his number one priority to make sure of it, he kept calling Vossler to confirm the progress on the communications. He had hardship in making sure that those communications were working, he was

even hit by Ramsey but he did not give up on the communication, at long last Ramsey gave them a time frame to fix the communications. At long last a transmission came true and the message was received and a new order/mission was read which was to stop the missile launch.

Captain Ramsey

Overconfident: it is a good sign for a leader to be confident (being positive), but as for Ramsey he happen to be very confident which happens to be a bad aspect because overconfident can blind a leader's ability to think twice. This is illustrated in the film, where he did not give a second thought to stopping the missiles, even after Hunter presented him with many reasons not to continue with the order at hand; he ignored then and went ahead with the launch. Hadn't he had been overconfident; he would have took the time to review Hunter's suggestions.

Impatient: can be defined as full of eagerness, Captain Ramsey was a very impatient man, he was keen to proceeding with order or anything he felt was right at the time. For example, even after the fire in the kitchen he was eager to proceed with the drill even after being told of the situation downstairs, just because he had planned for that drill and did not want to wait until the situation with the fire was fully maintained. The other incident was when he just wanted to continue with the nuclear missile launch, even after the boat had just been hit and the incoming message was interrupted. He wanted to proceed with the launch with confirming the second message.

Unpredictable: Not capable of being foretold. With Ramsey no one could actually tell what his next step would be. For example, first time he met with

Hunter it was like the two would get along just fine, but when they got to the ship his attitude towards Hunter changed from time to time until the time he made it clear that he was not keen of him because he did not have any experience about the combat, and because unlike him, he had to work hard to obtain that position while Hunter got it because he was a Harvard graduate. The other example is when lost his temper towards Hunter and shouted at him in front of the crew, meanwhile he asked Hunter not to address him in front of the crew.

Strict: Incapable of compromise or flexibility. Captain Ramsey was not keen to any suggestions or advises, he wanted to do things his own way only.

DESCRIBE AND DISCUSS WHY THE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR WAS EFFECTIVE OR INEFFECTIVE

Effective: Exerting force or influence

Ineffective: Lacking the ability or skill to perform effectively; inadequate

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS

TASK ORIENTED

A task-oriented leader is focused on accomplishments and if the leader is able to show the skills and commitment to his followers, obtaining a specific task won't be a difficult matter. That is, if the supervisor was to lead by example in doing a task I believe his followers would not hesitate to do the same, for example, during the fire in the kitchen, Hunter rushed there in an attempt to save the personnel that were inside and others did likewise. If he had not been there no one would have risked his life to go into the fire especially after they were told by others that it was too hot, but nevertheless Hunter just went right inside.

Another example is when Lt Paul Hellerman was ordered to close the hatch.

There was a time when he was hesitating to follow the order, but Hunter paused and put himself in Hellerman's shoes (how he must have felt thinking about leaving his man to die down there) and tried to talk to him bravely that if he did not close the hatch, the whole crew would go down with the submarine rather than if he close the hatch and only a few are lost. After a short period of time Hellerman decided to close the hatch to save others so as for them to continue with the mission.

RELATION ORIENTED

A relationship oriented leaders focus on the relationships among the team's members. This can be indicated in the film where Ramsey talked to his officer to gather other officers so they could go and restore control over the Con. Another example is when Hunter was lenient toward Rivetti after his encounter with another crew member , just being lenient made Rivetti to

have respect towards Hunter and trust him, which was why he came to Hunter's rescue (because of the relationship they just built during that short time). In general Commander Hunter had a friendly relationship with almost half of the boat's crew, and with those relationships they all helped him to accomplish his mission, hadn't he been friendly and understanding none of them would have come to his rescue.

PARTICIPATIVE ORIENTED

A participative oriented leader relies mostly in the leader being/ operating as an implementer rather than just issuing order or making assignments. If we look at the Captain we could conclude that he was not a participative leader because there is not even one incident where he actually got involved in any of the tasks carried out in the boat.

CHANGE AGENT CAPABILITIES

Reflecting back to the movie, I would say both leaders did not have any change capability because both men had strong believes in their actions, they were firm in what they each believed in. neither Ramsey nor Hunter wanted to change his way of operating. One of the examples is when Hunter thought it would be best if the Captain acknowledged the crew for their hard work and commitment in obtained order after the hit, but the captain gave a speech he would give any other day., which shows that he was not willing to change his style just for a minutes. Another example involves Hunter, as mentioned above, he was keen to questioning authority where he felt necessary but there were a few occasions when Ramsey wanted him to just perform orders at hand without questioning, but due to the fact that he was not used to that, he refused to accommodate that thought. With this kind of

attitude we could conclude that the leaders were ineffective because they could not agree in one aspect, they always wanted things to be done their ways, they never compromised.

IDENTIFY AND EXPLAIN ATLEAST TWO DIFFERENT INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE SAME LEADER(S). IF THE INCIDENTS INVOLVE TWO INDIVIDUALS/ A GROUP MAKING A DECISION, LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR BY THE DIFFERENT INDIVIDUAL CAN BE IDENTIFIED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE TWO DIFFERENT SELECTED INCIDENTS

The two incidents that have been chosen are when a group of officers met outside the weapon unit on how they were going to rescue the captain from his hold-up place, and the one where Hunter and his officers were locked up in the officers' cabinet.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE SELECTED LEADER(s) WITHIN THE INCIDENT AND MAKING DECISION WITHIN THE TEAM, GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL

Regarding the case where Hunter and other officers were locked up, Hunter was involved in the decision making that took place in the cabinet which was how to get full control over the Con. He planned for Rivetti to come and rescue them, and after that he asked him to gather a number of trusted crew members who would help in their mission. After the gathering and acquiring of the weapons and uniforms, he drew up a strategic way of how they could access the Captain Key and stop the launch of the missiles without being disrupted.

In the second incident, Captain Ramsey had a conversation with one of his trusted officer to help him escape from his stateroom and obtain back his post from Hunter. They concluded that the best option was to recruit a few officers involving Webs who was a friend to the Commander. The officer carried out the order and the 4 officers helped the captain escape and selected the few that were loyal to Hunter and put all of them under arrest.

CHARISMATIC AND TRANSFORMATIONAL ROLES

Hunter had a way of attracting and making crew members change their minds on certain aspects, and this was all because he had good interpersonal skills which helped him deal with others well despite their authority level. For example, he was able to convinced Webs to stall the captain from launching the missiles even though Webs had helped in his arrest, as he himself went after the captain key. Another example is when he got the captain arrested, even though Cob was Ramsey's old friend, after Hunter had explained the outcomes of launching the missiles without confirming the second message and the stating the regulations Chief of the Boat agreed with him to relieve Ramsey of his duty.

CRITICALLY ANALYZE EACH OF THE TWO/ MORE INCIDENTS AND CONSIDER OTHER OPTIONS THE LEADER(S) COULD HAVE CONSIDERED AND MADE MANAGERIAL TRAITS AND SKILLS

This topic deals with the responsibilities and abilities of a leader. One of the leaders (Ramsey) was impatient, and he being impatient could have led to a start of a nuclear warhead, he could have just given the communication unit some time to restore the boat's systems before he could engage in the

launching of the missile, which could have prevented an outbreak between him and Hunter. Secondly, a leader should learn to minimize his confidence level as overconfidence could enable them to think twice before handling a situation. If Ramsey was able to lower his confidence he could have listened to Hunter's concerns and thought through the idea of launching the missile.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, there are two main types of management styles in Crimson Tide film: one leader who did things his own way (Ramsey) and the other one did things but the book (Hunter). And the two leaders had to make serious decisions and neither made it easy for the other one, despite the many disputes that arose when they were aboard in the USS Alabama they reconciled at the end. The reconciliation shows that they were good leaders because a good leader should be able to admit to his mistakes owning to them.