

"PILGRIM"

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SURFACE OF MARS - DAY

Tan pinkish sky hangs blankly over a sprawl of salmon colored, sticky ground cover. Boulders here and there. Football sized rocks strewn about; intermixed with small patches of black sand.

A lone surface vehicle - ROVER, makes its way across an open plain. At thirty-five kph, its six large wheels react violently against the rugged Martian surface. The rover resembles a large insect with wheels for legs. The main body is a habitat that can comfortably carry six people. The large head in front is a cockpit that can seat two. At the present moment the cockpit is unoccupied on auto-pilot. The box at the rear houses batteries, water, and supplies.

SUPER: "MARS - Great Adventure Tours - 2083"

INT. ROVER - DAY

Inside the habitat of the rover, four tourists, two men and two women, in their mid-twenties ride in shirt-sleeve comfort. Large windows provide clear views of their surroundings. The constant rocking motion and uninteresting view outside feeds tension inside.

TOURIST ONE is the shorter of the two women.

TOURIST ONE

God. How did I ever let you talk me into this?

TOURIST TWO is her boyfriend.

TOURIST TWO

You wanted this trip and you know it.

TOURIST ONE

No - I didn't. I wanted it - changed my mind, and then I didn't want it! You never hear the "I didn't want it" part.

TOURIST THREE is the other male passenger.

TOURIST THREE

I love being right.

TOURIST FOUR is his attractive female companion.

TOURIST FOUR

Right about what would that be?

TOURIST THREE

I told all of you, and you know it:
"This is really a stupid idea..."

TOURIST TWO

Drop it! We're leaving! You win!
I can't believe being only the third
group of people in history out here
doesn't mean anything to you.

TOURIST ONE

Hallelujah! News flash. Two rich
guys and their girlfriends cruise
Mars because they can.

Inside the habitat section of the rover, windows share space with various electronics and support equipment. In the center, on the deck, is a common area table surface and comfortable seats that swivel to accommodate passengers.

INT. ROVER - INSERT - M-WAVE -- DAY

Nestled in the port bulkhead there is easy access to a microwave-sized brushed metal square door. In the middle of the door is a small square window. To the right of the square door is a rectangle made of the same material with a hexadecimal keypad exposed. One rectangular button has an arrow pointing left, and another button is labeled: XMIT. This device is a MATTER TRANSMITTER (M-WAVE).

A sound CHIMES announcing the arrival of an item. Through the small square window a blue light glows brighter and increases until a final flash, a final CHIME.

TOURIST FOUR

Mail call! This is what I've been
waiting for.

Tourist Three presses a button under the keypad and the square door obediently yawns open. She reaches inside and pulls out a black tri-fold plastic PAD and GOLD PEN.

TOURIST FOUR (CONT'D)

Gimme that.

Tourist Four takes the folder, opens it in her lap.

INSERT - TRI-FOLD IN HER LAP

Illuminated text materializes against the black plastic on the left and middle panels. It is a contract. The right panel has two flowery signatures etched into plastic with room for two more. Along the bottom of the right panel are four squares for thumb prints; two of the four squares are illuminated green.

RETURN:

TOURIST FOUR (CONT'D)

This, is the deal of the century.

Eagerly she takes the PEN and scrawls her signature against the plastic under the other two signatures already there. The plastic is etched, glowing.

TOURIST ONE

Another deal? Isn't it disgusting enough already.

TOURIST FOUR

There's always room for another deal.

TOURIST ONE

To what end?

Tourist Four presses her thumb in the third square. The finger print is scanned, that square turns green. The signature flashes once, remaining etched like the others.

She closes the FOLDER and tosses it and the pen back into the M-WAVE.

TOURIST FOUR

Well, Gert Hustman, Nakito Maia, and I, are buying out none other than the Asteroid Mining Corporation.

TOURIST TWO

AMC! My god! You don't lack balls, that's for damn sure.

Tourist Four pulls a slim plastic card from her crew-suit sleeve pocket and inserts it in a slot on the m-wave.

TOURIST FOUR

So I've been told. And why not?

The ROVER lurches forward as it comes over the top of a ridge. Involuntarily, they grasp their armrests.

TOURIST FOUR (CONT'D)

You would.

EXT. SURFACE OF MARS - DAY

The ROVER crests an abrupt ridge and starts down a long sloping plain. MARS BASE ONE is now within sight.

TOURIST ONE (V.O.)

Crap if I would, I know what's enough.

Over the horizon in the distance great clouds of DUST are arching into the pale sky, suggesting a dust Storm approaching.

Tourist Two gazes out a window staring at nothing in particular. High in the thin Martian atmosphere however, a thin SILVERY RIBBON catches his eye.

TOURIST TWO
Hey, look at that. What is that?

TOURIST ONE
What?

Tourist Four is focused on the M-WAVE. She types a nine-digit hexi-decimal code into the M-WAVE's keypad with her gloved hand; a barely audible humming noise indicates the m-wave is energized and warming up. Below the keypad, a single button is labeled "XMIT." She presses it. The buzzing noise increases. The small square window in the middle of the square door.

INSERT M-WAVE INTERIOR CUBICAL SPACE - DAY

The GOLD PEN and BLACK FOLDER lay on the bottom of the cubical chamber. A blue light quickly saturates the space. Flash, PEN and FOLDER disappear. CHIME indicates process is complete.

RETURN

TOURIST FOUR
That's it. Hustman gets it, I know he's going to sign it, and another deal is historic.

TOURIST TWO
Must be a meteorite or something.

TOURIST FOUR
What are you looking at?

Tourist Four joins the others. They gaze out the same window at the object entering the atmosphere.

TOURIST ONE
Look at that. Is it supposed to be so slow?

TOURIST TWO
See what I'm saying? That right there is worth the price of admission. Who do you know witnesses a meteorite from the surface of Mars?

TOURIST FOUR
You're easily impressed.

The silvery ribbon continues down and strikes the surface in the distance beyond the horizon-line. The dust from a previous strike in that area is still drifting away slowly.

Immediately, a great cloud of Mars dirt expands up and into the atmosphere. Definitely closer than the other one. A shock wave is also headed their way. The sound of the impact reaches them, rattling the rover's windows.

TOURIST ONE
Wow.

TOURIST TWO
Hey...hang on.

They spot a wave of dust and grit racing toward them. It hits. The entire rover, all six wheels, gets tossed a few feet into the air. The low gravity of Mars pulls it back down. The women and one of the men scream.

EXT. LOW MARS ORBIT - ROCK DROPPER -- DAY

A black, mostly cylindrical object slapped together with a variety of trusses and external chemical rocketry hangs above Mars. Out of one end of the ROCK DROPPER emerges a large chunk of solid iron as big as a bus. Girdling the misshapen mass are steel straps with maneuvering jets attached to them. A spit of fire from one of the jets stops its soft rolling, stabilizing the ugly thing.

Suddenly, a girdling steel belt of jets fire "up" sending the mass of iron "down." Quickly picking up speed, its skin builds up heat. Now, hot enough to burn off its straps and jets, it continues heating up, becoming a glowing ball of light which soon grows a long trailing tail.

INT. ROCK DROPPER -- DAY

The rock dropper is manned by two people: ROCK DROPPER OPERATOR and ROCK DROPPER HELPER. ROCK DROPPER OPERATOR is wearing a space suit with his helmet off. He is strapped into a makeshift COCKPIT. The grimy, crazed man, tweaks instrumentation in front of him.

ROCK DROPPER OPERATOR
How many is that?

INT. ROCK DROPPER STORAGE BAY

The main storage chamber is a roughly a huge cylindrical balloon. It is a rubber container crowded with huge chunks of solid asteroid.

House sized boulders held in place with nylon netting and straps. A space-suited figure navigates this chamber like a spider in a web.

ROCK DROPPER HELPER
(into helmet mic)
Five...You can't remember five?

ROCK DROPPER OPERATOR (V.O.)
Mind your tongue! Get it, dammit!
They've gotta know what's up by now.
They're gonna take us out any second.

Rock Dropper Helper attaches a final steel clamp to a strap girdling a beautiful chunk of solid nickel as big as an oak tree. A pneumatic plunger pushes the huge chunk away from the other nested chunks of raw metals, and drifts it out into hard vacuum.

ROCK DROPPER HELPER
There you go. All yours.

INT. ROCK DROPPER COCKPIT -- DAY

Rock Dropper Operator taps a large joystick to the left, then the right.

EXT. LOW MARS ORBIT - ROCK DROPPER - DAY

The huge chunk of nickel moves away from the opening of the storage tank.

Strap-jets fire in spurts; rotating this way, stopping. Fire again to rotate on another axis, getting the girdle strap with jets into position.

INT. ROCK DROPPER COCKPIT

Bent over the joy stick, he decides the gloves on his hands are in the way. He disconnects them and continues.

ROCK DROPPER OPERATOR
Come on, come on, settle up. Six.
Number six. Like the hand of God I
smite thee. I smite thee. Go home.
Go home, or die.

He triggers the joy stick. Outside, again; the jets fire "up," a gleaming chunk of solid nickel heads "down."

EXT. LOW MARS ORBIT - SECURITY DEFENSE SATELLITE -- DAY

Mars is policed with a number of orbiting defense satellites. Their primary purpose is to make sure everyone is behaving themselves.

As soon as one of the defense satellites clears the terminator, resolves and targets the Rock Dropper, it locks on and fires its primary weapon. The satellite starts recharging.

EXT. MARS BASE ONE - DAY

MARS BASE ONE on the surface is a cluster of domes covered with Mars dirt. A few lookouts. Four hangers, four landing zones, antennae. Most of Mars Base One is underground.

INT. MARS BASE ONE - SECURITY

The SECURITY DIVISION is a small compartment populated with a variety of surveillance monitors. Warning ALARMS alert the inhabitants to take cover in lower levels and stay clear of the surface. It is apparent this is no natural phenomenon. People are rushing around haphazardly, never thinking the base would be attacked from orbit by dropping stuff on it.

FEATHER HALL is a medical technician who is helping evacuate people to the sub-surface habitats. She's cool, professional, young, bright-eyed, black woman in her mid-thirties. She comes through the door in a big hurry.

FEATHER

What's happening? What's going on?

MARS ONE SECURITY CHIEF

(not looking away
from the monitors)

There's a vessel in orbit dropping asteroids or something on us. It's gotta be the "Chain." I don't know anyone else with the nerve to pull a stunt like this?

FEATHER

From orbit?

MARS ONE SECURITY CHIEF

Some sort of craft. Folded our radar. Just slipped right in. Can't say how long its been there. He may be on a single pass, never was in orbit. Kamikaze, some "Hail Mary." Just walking asteroids right into us? And here comes another.

(steals a look in her
direction)

What the hell are you doing? Get the fuck out of here.

Feather doesn't have to be told twice. She bolts out the door.

INT. MARS BASE ONE - ADMIN - DAY

She blows through the doors looking for stragglers when a shock wave tosses everything, including her, off her feet.

CRASHING earthquake rumbling noise, accompanied by the CREAKING of the habitat being stressed and buckled. She recovers and gets back to her feet. Admin is empty. A light is flashing at one of the comm panels. Once her ears stop ringing she makes out a plea for help from a speaker. She rushes up to the instrumentation.

COMM STATION (V.O.)

Mars One. Mars One. Do You copy?
We need immediate assistance. Mars
One come in. Do you copy...?

Feather punches an icon on the comm panel.

FEATHER

(into mic)
Identify yourself.

EXT. MARS TERRAIN - ROVER -- DAY

The rover is on its side unable to go anywhere. The cockpit section is ripped off from the body laying in a heap a short distance from the habitat section.

INT. ROVER - DAY

Tourist Two is in shock, the only one able to talk.

TOURIST 2

We need help. I think one of us is dead. He was in the cockpit and it ripped off. Emergency seals activated, rolled down a hill.

FEATHER (V.O.)

We're taking cover. Suggest you do same. No one can help you at this time. You're on your own.

TOURIST 2

That's unacceptable. You gotta get us outta here. You're really good spending our money, but when we...

INT. MARS BASE ONE - ADMIN

Feather checks some of the readouts.

FEATHER (O.S.)
 You're a "Great Adventures" tourist
 Rover? Listen.
 (separating words)
 You - are on - your own!

TOURIST 2 (V.O.)
 I'll have your job!

FEATHER
 Not if I'm dead you won't. Listen -
 next time go to Yosemite. Mars base
 one - admin out.

She fingers a panel and doesn't look back as she exits.
 Freezing now, air's bad. On her way out she stops and pulls
 a comm-card out of her tunic, thumbs it, and yells into it.

FEATHER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 (into comm card)
 Steve! This is Feather. Mars One
 is under attack! Someone's dropping
 rocks like asteroids, from orbit,
 onto the base. It must be the Chain.
 Haven't heard from them for a while.
 We're taking cover below.

She waves the comm card around the room, recording video so
 he can see what's going on.

FEATHER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Do you know what's going on? I figure
 this is what you do now. Chase goons?
 Try a sub-level access m-wave address
 for Mars Base One to get back to me.
 Our surface may be gone when you get
 this. Send it "my eyes only." I
 don't expect you to come to the
 rescue. Just get back to me.

She bolts over to the closest m-wave integrated into admin's
 instrumentation. Tosses in the comm card. Keys in a number
 and punches XMIT. She is gone before the transmit is
 complete.

INT. MARS BASE ONE - SECURITY DIVISION COMM CENTER

MARS ONE SECURITY CHIEF fingers panels in front of him.
 Initiating firing sequences to take a second shot from the
 orbiting defense satellite.

MARS ONE SECURITY CHIEF
 All personnel take shelter below
 until attack is neutralized.
 (MORE)

MARS ONE SECURITY CHIEF (CONT'D)
Standby for further updates. Security
One, Out.

EXT. LOW MARS ORBIT - ROCK DROPPER

A hot blast of molten metal creates a large expanding hole in the midsection of the ROCK DROPPER. A second hole appears and spreads, as the security satellite's particle canon destroys the Chain operatives and their sick agenda.

EXT. MARS TERRAIN - ROVER

All four tourists lay motionless amidst the tossed remains of their ROVER.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ASTEROID BELT

Infinite blackness is specked with billions of pinpoints of indifferent unblinking stars, forever distant. A very lonely minor asteroid bears witness to a passing spacecraft.

SUPER: "ASTEROID BELT"

The spacecraft, USS (United Space systems) asteroid patrol INTERCEPTOR is a small, highly maneuverable armed vessel. Mostly globular, highly articulated,

The exterior is a collection of rotating BANDS that very quickly reorient as needed. One band has maneuvering engines mounted on it. Another band has intimidating weapons installed on it. The outermost and largest band has massive thrusters and fuel tanks mounted on it.

Currently, it is riding a great plume of light, plunging them in one direction.

The crew habitat always stays oriented so the g-forces impact them uniformly as they lay on their backs in g-absorbing couches.

Emblazoned on the stationary inner sphere habitat, the words: BELT PATROL remind everyone within sight and sensor, that this machine is the law, and it will catch you. Nothing is as Maneuverable or carries the Most bang for its size than an interceptor.

It is performing a course change. Thrusters shutdown, the thruster ring rotates the thrusters forward, fires to slow them down. Rotate on a new vector. FIRES and takes off in that direction.

INT. INTERCEPTOR - ASTEROID BELT

Inside the crew habitat of a INTERCEPTOR, three crew members are laid out in couches forming a three-petaled flower. Under tremendous gs, this is the only way they can stay alive and do what they need to do: get to places in a big hurry.

STEVE ARCHER is the commander of a three man crew, including himself. NAV is the "navigator." STO is "storage," which includes weapons and ammo.

STEVE
(he can only speak
commands)
Thrusters off.

In no time at all the g-forces let up and they can again move around the cabin. To interact with the ship's equipment the head of the couch pulls up so that the three men are facing away from each other. The couch transforms into a seat and in this sitting position each man has a wrap around holographic display that allows them to work in a more normal manner.

NAV
Vessel designate Kansas City come
in. Do you copy?

There is no response.

NAV (CONT'D)
Vessel designate Kansas City come
in. This is AMC Patrol Six. You
are in violation of flight plan
protocol. Come in please.

Conspicuous silence fills the air.

STEVE
Pinheads don't give a damn. I'm
gonna love shutting these ass-holes
down. Hopefully they're too stupid
to try anything. They must know
they can't hide out here.

STO
They're having a party or something.
I'm resolving a second craft about
to dock from the far side.

STEVE
What is it?

STO
 One sec. Yep, its a yacht...no less
 than "Sidereal" herself.

A crackling SIGNAL draws Steve's attention to the comm.

STEVE
 (to comm)
 Patrol six, copy.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR (V.O.)
 Patrol Six this is Regional Director -
 Mason Land. Do you copy?

EXT. ASTEROID BELT - MINING PLACER

Extending in all directions, bulbous, sausage-like ducts,
 transport raw ore to various smelters and/or long term
 storage. This loose octopus has ensnared a small asteroid
 and is processing it.

CLOSER IN: Men in space suits carry hand-held POWER CARVERS
 that spit out tongues of plasma and cut through solid metal.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR (V.O.)
 I see you found the party.

EXT. MINING PLACER - ROTATIONAL

A large circular rotating habitat, ROTATIONAL is anchored
 firmly into a large crater. Centrifugal stability for the
 asteroid and sufficient gravity for living and working.

STEVE (V.O.)
 Hey Mason, I see you're still sucking
 on those synthetic dildos you call
 cigars.

INT. REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Regional Director's office is too small for all the stuff he
 has in there. He's sitting at his comm station. Removes
 the fake cigar from between tongue and cheek with V'd fingers
 and moves it across his mouth to the other cheek.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR (V.O.)
 Copy that Patrol Six.

INT. INTERCEPTOR

Steve's wrap-around is alive with charts and graphs
 superimposed over a real-time image from their telescope of
 Kansas City.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR (V.O.)
 You spotted the freighter I see.

Steve is leaning unnecessarily into an unseen mic.

EXT. MINING OPERATION - ASTEROID BELT - SPACE

Snaking balloons, globular tents, trusses, airlocks, observation decks all wrapped haphazard around a sizable asteroid resemble a fever dream of mechanical activity.

STEVE (V.O.)
 Couldn't miss it. Big maroon blip just slid right off the grid, never even looked back. And there's a "yacht" vectoring on them. Looks like SIDEREAL. Its a party all right. Regular soiree.

INT. INTERCEPTOR

Steve is searching for more data on the freighter.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR (V.O.)
 We've been trying to establish contact. They're ignoring us. You are hereby authorized to shut them down. Admin agrees; they've had it with these clowns. Time to set some examples.

STEVE
 Copy that. 'Been looking to throw a little daylight up their skirts for a long time.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR (V.O.)
 Copy that Patrol Six. Keep us in the loop.

STEVE
 Patrol Six out.
 (to Nav)
 Nav, negotiate a lock on their number two landing dock.
 (to Sto)
 Sto, lets warm up everything just in case.

Sto's wraparound displays weapons systems coming on-line.

STO
 Already on it.

STEVE
Anything else? Nav?

NAV
Good to go.

STO
Go.

STEVE
Locking for thrusters - thrusters
initiating.

Their seat/couches assume their thrusting postures, flattening out into the three-petal star.

EXT. INTERCEPTOR - SPACE

All three THRUSTERS fire, increasing in intensity as the Interceptor takes off in a big hurry. Absolutely silent.

EXT. YACHT SIDEREAL - SPACE

SIDEREAL is a 400 foot long privately owned space vessel. Basically a transport for tourists and high-rollers. Its essentially a large space-yacht. The characteristic habitat ring around the middle, reveals the crew enjoys a certain level of comfort and functionality.

Compared to all the other utilitarian equipment operated by the Asteroid Mining Corporation and United Space Systems; SIDEREAL is the exact opposite. She has flowing lines, attractive paint job, a joke by any reasonable standard of space vehicle, and for the hyper-rich, a toy.

Best engines. Best quarters. Best technology. Vulnerable technology. At present she is drifting slowly toward LANDING PORT ONE , starboard side. LANDING PORT TWO is on the port side. Sidereal's maneuvering jets fire to set up the docking procedure.

INT. YACHT SIDEREAL

The evidence of opulence is everywhere. Padded bulkheads, pastels, touch screens and eight men in black flight suits, unshaven, smelly, and not opulent.

The COCKPIT has been taken over by three CHAIN operatives. Three men dressed in black flight-suits. They are monitoring Sidereal's docking with USS (united space systems) KANSAS CITY. The large habitat wheel of the freighter rotates in great sweeps while Sidereal approaches the docking port near the hub.

SIDEREAL PILOT - CHAIN
Switching to auto-dock.

Reaches to an unseen piece of equipment.

SIDEREAL COPILOT - CHAIN
(into mic)
This is it. Saddle up.

The eight black garbed men check each other's equipment. Guns, flares, tools, devices of all sort they believe can get them into Kansas City.

INT. SIDEREAL CARGO HOLD

A weapon as big as a motorcycle is connected by a thick umbilical cord to its power supply, which is as big as a fifty-five gallon oil drum. This is held in place in the zero-g with adjustable braces. Two men in black space suits hang onto either side of the weapon.

BLACK SPACE SUIT ONE
(into helmet mic)
This is going to blow their minds.

BLACKSPACE SUIT TWO
Shut up. You're not supposed to be having so much fun.

BLACK SPACE SUIT ONE
(to Sidereal's Bridge)
We're ready down here.

SIDEREAL COPILOT (V.O.)
Blowing cargo bay. Doors opening.

Lights in the storage bay turn red. The sound of rushing air is soon replaced with the sound of their breathing, their hearts beating. Small jets firing from their shoulder pads help them maneuver in weightlessness.

Dropping onto the spine of the freighter, which holds all the cargo canisters in place. Finding a roomy, shadowed area to hide, they anchor the gun to the freighter.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - KANSAS CITY

CAPTAIN CROSS is a tall white woman in her mid-thirties. She is in uniform watching a view of Sidereal docking gently with DOCKING PORT ONE.

Behind her, Gustav Hustman sits in a large seat with his right hand hanging stupidly in the air.

HUSTMAN
 ...and its the same with your big
 fish and little fish...

CAPTAIN CROSS
 Looks like Sidereal's here already.
 (revisiting topic)
 What are fish?

HUSTMAN
 (eye-balling Captain
 Cross)
 Fish feed the bottom line.

Captain Cross loses interest in Hustman when the bridge calls.

HELM (V.O.)
 Captain, helm, Sidereal is docked.
 Our "guests" should be picking up
 Hustman in a few minutes.

Captain Cross strides to her cabin door. Opens it, steps
 through and leaves. Leaving Hustman to sit alone for a while.

CAPTAIN CROSS (V.O.)
 (into flight-suit mic)
 Navigation. Where is that
 Interceptor?

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR
 Approach on landing platform two.

INT. SIDEREAL COCKPIT

BLACK SPACE SUIT ONE (V.O.)
 Primary Gun's secure.

SIDEREAL COPILOT - CHAIN
 Copy that. Be advised the approaching
 INTERCEPTOR is armed, weapons at the
 ready. If it isn't Smokey to the
 rescue.

SIDEREAL PILOT - CHAIN
 Gun. Do not fire directly at the
 INTERCEPTOR it can trace back onto
 you. Take out landing port two.
 Make 'em suit up if they want to
 come after us. See how motivated
 they are.

EXT. USS KANSAS CITY

Bracing the gun to aim is problematic in zero gs. Aiming
 for the bottom edge of the number two, port side, landing

port coupling ring, he pulls the trigger. No light, No sound, only debris spreading out in all directions from an area that used to be an functional.

A very large piece of the coupling ring is cart-wheeling end over end, headed straight for the port side engine cowling on Sidereal's main thruster array. The two space-suited men at the gun watch, paralyzed. The scythe-like chunk of metal cuts into the cowling, severing a fuel line or something. A mist spreads out from somewhere inside the cowling.

Sure enough, something is hot enough to ignite the fuel. Almost in slow motion, the grey mist flames into a white hot blob of short-lived, but very intense heat. The explosion sends reverberations through the length of Kansas City.

INT. INTERCEPTOR

All three, Steve, Sto, and Nav watch their respective wrap-arounds with interest.

STEVE

(on mic to Kansas City)

Kansas City come in. We've detected an explosive event on Sidereal's port engine assembly. Do you copy? We are unable to dock on platform two.

(off mic)

These bastards are so dead. Suit up. Anyone forces me to suit up-- they have to die.

(to Nav)

You have the conn. Do that magic you do and get us close in to the centerline catwalk.

Steve and Sto are suited up in the airlock of the INTERCEPTOR. Helmets on, waiting.

INT. KANSAS CITY BRIDGE

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR and KANSAS CITY HELM are watching the displays in the pilot house of the Kansas City.

A cluster of black-colored militants storm the open airlock between Sidereal and Kansas City.

Watching one of the monitors; a flurry of black-suited, ugly individuals are pulling themselves along in the zero-g of the freighter's hub.

The port engine assembly of Sidereal is a widening cloud of debris. Sidereal is grounded.

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR punches a colored square on the display in front of him.

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR
(ship-wide - intercom)
Now Hear this. Intruder alert.
Sealing ship, material condition
zebra will be set in one minute.
This is not a drill.

Doors all over the freighter start closing themselves and locking tight.

EXT. KANSAS CITY - CANISTERS

The large canisters in clusters of four, are stacked like pearls on a necklace, and extend from one end of the ship to the other. They stop at the nuclear engine cowling aft and the bull nosed deflector forward. There are external access catwalks (long pipes to pull yourself along).

CLOSER IN BETWEEN CANISTERS

Nav shows off the interceptor's reposition ability, snuggling between two cylinders and reaching one of the spine passageway access doors.

STEVE
(into helmet mic)
Nav.

NAV (V.O.)
Go for Nav.

STEVE
We're on a secure line, correct.

NAV (V.O.)
Correct, we have a closed comm.

STEVE
Something smells. It's too quiet.

Steve opens the door accessing the spine catwalks. He and Sto enter and proceed, pulling and coasting themselves along to the slowly rotating habitat wheel.

INT. SIDEREAL COCKPIT

The CHAIN PILOT and CHAIN Co-PILOT, remain behind, and watch the black-suited invasion of Kansas City on their monitors. They get through door after door, but are stopped at the large door to the ROTATIONAL'S spoke elevators.

INT. KANSAS CITY PASSAGEWAY

The black-suited invaders are pulling themselves along but forget if the guy in front can't open the door, everyone behind will continue to pile into the ones in front. This pile-up of testosterone infuriates them.

This door is different. It is a key security point between the stationary container side of the freighter and the rotating habitat wheel.

Making room they get to work. Among the toys they brought with them to break into Kansas City is a POWER CARVER. Miners use it to cleave rock and break down large pieces into smaller pieces. The plasma torch spitting out the end of it can extend out to four feet, cutting through anything.

Designed for the hard vacuum of space, it is not the right thing to use inside a space vehicle. He fingers the power on and a circular red beam is a laser pointer that shows you where you will make a cut. The low gravity makes it hard to be accurate. Also it helps to read the manual first.

Triggering the POWER CARVER, an intense blinding beam shoots out the front end. The room is heating up really fast and they need to cut through the dead bolts and hinges.

He pushes the torch easily into the bulkhead and starts cutting out one of the heavy hinges. He starts to work on the second hinge, when his foot slips and he rotates away with the POWER CARVER in tow and slices a huge gash along the one side of the door, ripping through the door, bulkhead, and ship's primary control conduits. He manages to kill the power on the thing, but the damage was already done.

INT. KANSAS CITY BRIDGE

Kansas City Navigator stares at the readout to the engine control.

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR
Okay, what the hell just happened?

KANSAS CITY HELM
Where's the engine firing control?

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR
If we're down, its a thirty minute
trek to manual over-ride.

INSERT

Kansas City Helm keys up a view of the problem compartment and sees the black space-suited apes milling around the mess

they made of the starboard side landing port doorway to the hub.

RETURN

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR (CONT'D)

This is all wrong.

KANSAS CITY HELM

What's going on?

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR

Right about...now. We were supposed to have a course correction. Just a nudge to bring us into a slingshot ahead. The thrusters never got the message. These stupid apes cut through it.

KANSAS CITY HELM

And what are you saying?

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR

We're already off the maps. We're falling headlong into uncharted territory. If we miss the one object I see in the way. There's one behind it. If we miss that. We go on forever.

KANSAS CITY HELM

WHAT?!

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR

Or maybe Jupiter will pull us in, in say maybe two hundred fifty years. Either way, we're as good as dead. It was just a matter of time. We don't belong out here. They're willing to kill us to prove it. Insane. Its clear we're too stupid for this.

(into mic)

Captain, bridge, come in.

CAPTAIN CROSS

What's going on Johnson?

GORDON JOHNSON is the EXECUTIVE OFFICER (XO).

XO JOHNSON (V.O.)

(into mic)

Sidereal was a Trojan horse. We've been boarded by hostile forces.

XO JOHNSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Not sure how many. I counted nine
 in the hub. No sign of her crew and
 passengers. They may have been
 spaced.

STEVE is listening in.

STEVE (V.O.)
 Mister Johnson, this is Belt Patrol
 Six, do you copy?

JOHNSON XO (V.O.)
 Shit.
 (into mic)
 Yes. Patrol Six.

STEVE (V.O.)
 So now your radios are working?

CAPTAIN CROSS
 This is Captain Cross. We're going
 to crash nearly head on into a sizable
 piece of asteroid within the next
 two hours.

STEVE
 Why would you do something like that?

CAPTAIN CROSS
 Navigator's checked it five times
 already. Our friends, the idiots.
 Cut through a major data trunk to
 the engines and aft section's
 maneuvering thrusters. Couple power
 conduits. Real mess.

STEVE
 (no sympathy)
 That's why we have maps, keep you
 outta places like this. That's why
 you can't go radio silent. What's
 so important you gotta sail into
 this shit in the first place?

Steve and Sto are coasting along at a pretty good clip through
 the long spine of the ship.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 What's in these containers?

JOHNSON XO (V.O.)
 Unknown.

STEVE (V.O.)

Let me get this straight. You're running radio silent. You're out of bounds. Unscheduled docking event with Sidereal. No flight plan. No inspection logs, no knowledge of what you're moving?... Suicide would be a better option.

CAPTAIN CROSS

Its Gustaf Hustman.

STEVE (V.O.)

(understanding
instantly)

These fucking guys. They think they're above it all. Dammit. This may be career ending, but this guy is getting the book thrown at him.

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR

You don't understand sir. We can't change course. You should get as far away from us as possible. The nuclear engine cores will guarantee no one bothers the crater we're gonna make for many thousands of years.

Steve slows his movement down the catwalk. He signals to Sto to join him by one of the access lids to a storage canister. One canister is roughly forty feet long and fifty feet in diameter.

Steve looks up the access code from his suit PDA.

Inside the containers, straps and nets hold cargo in place, For transport. Steve and Sto drift in weightlessness.

Turning on a flood light, large golden surfaces reflect against each other. With the light moving, it created an undulating wave of shimmering light in all directions; reflections peaking out from the suspension straps.

Veins of gold from a failed planet. Cubic yards of nuggets picked from the remains of an incomplete planet that became the asteroid belt.

STEVE

This is insane. What the hell do you do hoarding gold?
(to NAV)
Are you getting this?

NAV (V.O.)

How much can you guess is in here?

STEVE
You can't add this up. I'm looking
at a solid chunk of gold, at least
ten feet long, six feet wide.

NAV
(updating)
They've decided to talk to us.

STEVE
What about?

NAV
Ship being damaged and crashing?

STEVE
I'm not in the mood.

NAV
Its happening. Their boarding party
tried cutting through a hub door
with a power carver. Stupid fool
slipped. Severed a key conduit to
the engines and thrusters. The
freighter is adrift.

STEVE
Just when you thought it couldn't
get any better. Can the engines
fire manually?

NAV
That window has opened and closed.
I'd evacuate while I still can if I
were you.

Steve sees his helmeted face reflected in a sheet of solid
gold.

STEVE
How much time do we have?

NAV
Couple hours. To impact. But there
is no safe zone. You have to be
gone long before that. One hour.

STEVE
We're gonna check out the next one
down. Get some video if this ever
goes to trial.

INT. KANSAS CITY BRIDGE

CAPTAIN CROSS
Navigation. Where is that
Interceptor?

KANSAS CITY NAVIGATOR
Parked off stack twenty-two. Two
are EVA coming down the spine.

CAPTAIN CROSS
What the hell are they doing in there.
Why don't they dock on the port side
docking port.

KANSAS CITY HELM
Its down.

CAPTAIN CROSS
Right.

HELM
I assumed you knew we lost the port
landing port. Sidereal may be down
too. She suffered an explosion.
Collateral damage from dock two.

CAPTAIN CROSS
Sound general alarm.

Repetitive ALARM signal was soon turned off.

CAPTAIN CROSS (CONT'D)
(into ship-wide comm)
Crew, this is Captain Cross. Abandon
ship. I repeat, abandon ship. We've
lost thrusters and main engines.
(pausing for effect)
Thank the genius that brought a power
carver inside a ship like this in
the first place. Bastard. Get off
this ship. Anyway you can. That's
an order.

INT. STORAGE CONTAINER

Options were few. Steve is positioned over the next canister
access door. He works the code-reader and the door opens.
With torch in hand he drifts into the canister. Again,
massive straps, tightly holding boulders of solid gold.

STEVE
(to Sto)
This is about greed?

STO

Talk about cornering a market.

NAV

I don't think I want to know how many of those canisters are full of...Gold.

STO

Where'd they find all this?

STEVE

Asteroid belt is forever. Almost anything can be found out here. The hard part is knowing where to look, and then how to get to it.

STO

Someone got lucky. They found a mother lode somewhere. Cut it up and stashed it away for a rainy day. Typical hoarding.

STEVE

One of my problems with this is the level of greed they go to.

STO

All the powerful people are fucked up. I've never met a one I respect.

Steve drops the subject.

STEVE

How much time do we have?

STO

Forty five, fifty minutes.

STEVE

We're not going to make it.

STO

What are you gonna do?

STEVE

Get these people off the freighter.

STO

How?

STEVE
 (to Nav on the
 Interceptor)
 Can you patch me through to the
 Captain?

NAV (V.O.)
 One sec. There you go.

STEVE
 (into suit mic)
 Captain. This is officer Steve
 Archer. Belt patrol six. Do you
 copy?

INT. KANSAS CITY BRIDGE

Captain Cross, KANSAS CITY HELM, and KANSAS CITY navigator,
 are huddled around the conn.

CAPTAIN CROSS
 (into mic)
 Archer? We copy. We've developed a
 serious problem here.

STEVE (V.O.)
 You are a master of understatement
 Ma'am.

CAPTAIN CROSS
 We've been under the direction of
 Gustav Hustman. Owner, of Megastar,
 SuperDine? We followed the buck.

STEVE (V.O.)
 I know who he is. Was it worth it?

CAPTAIN CROSS
 Yes, if it'd worked, we all would
 disappear, retire.

STEVE (V.O.)
 Well it didn't work.

CAPTAIN CROSS
 Damn Interceptor.

STEVE
 Damn Chain operatives did this. The
 rest of you are criminals. Do you
 know what is in your containers?

CAPTAIN CROSS
 Sealed cargo. Even to me.
 (MORE)

CAPTAIN CROSS (CONT'D)
I don't care what it is. I care I
get paid. Restricted access.

STEVE (V.O.)
I can access 'restricted access.'

He lets his authority in the matter float for a moment.

STEVE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Try gold.

EXT. FREIGHTER CONTAINER SPINE

CAPTAIN CROSS (V.O.)
Gold.

STEVE
If all these containers are full;
you're sitting on top of the richest
time-bomb in history.

CAPTAIN CROSS (V.O.)
I don't believe it.

STEVE
Your belief is not required. If you
don't get off this ship you're gonna
vaporize against a wanderer in
roughly...forty six minutes.

CAPTAIN CROSS
We were going to use the wanderer to
do a gravity assist for a course
change.

STEVE
What was your destination?

CAPTAIN CROSS
Sealed. We get the coordinates later.
The whole thing was hush hush.
Doesn't matter now. We missed the
burn, that was supposed to nudge us
around. Tricky manoeuvre, but doable.
Moot point now.

(pause)
We can't get off the rotational.
The escape pods are in the hub. Get
out of here, we're finished.

STEVE
We'll get you out of there.

CAPTAIN CROSS

If you had two or three days, maybe.
(pause)

This is a long time in the coming.
If I have to go, I can't think of a
better way. Get the hell out of
here.

STEVE

Can you get to the hub?

CAPTAIN CROSS

What are you! Stupid!?! Shit happens.

STEVE

Yes, but in the rotational side the
gravity is lower near the hub, open
an escape hatch, jump off and we can
catch you.

CAPTAIN CROSS (V.O.)

You are stupid. You catch me, where
you gonna put me? Sidewinder only
holds three. I'm pretty sure.

STEVE

(fully aware of his
stupidity)

Dammit. There has to be a way.
(thinking)

There is a common area under the
cockpit where we eat, change gear,
We can get six people in there.

CAPTAIN CROSS (V.O.)

You know what? If I didn't know
better I'd say I'd made myself a
boyfriend, all the way out here, in
the middle of nowhere.

STEVE

We have to save this. This isn't
happening.

NAV (V.O.)

Yes it is Steve. You don't have
time. We have to leave or no one
comes away from this.

CAPTAIN CROSS (V.O.)

Come on "boyfriend" get the hell
outta here. I'm gonna cheat on you.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN CROSS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'm gonna make sure one fat bastard
is awake and paying attention when
it happens. Captain Regina Cross
United Space Systems Kansas City.
Signing off and going dark.

EXT. USS KANSAS CITY

The Kansas City storage containers slide under the Interceptor as it heads forward to retrieve Steve and Sto. The slowly rotating wheel hub-spoke assembly ahead is mesmerizing.

The main thrusters have been firing to bring the Interceptor to a fixed position near the hub assembly.

STEVE

(into mic)

Kansas City this is patrol six, do
you copy? She's gone off air. This
can't be happening.

NAV

We have to get distance.

Nav brings the INTERCEPTOR over to Steve and Sto and they get back onboard.

Sto is without comment, sitting at his station, in his flight suit. Nav is waiting for Steve to give the word. Steve is thinking and losing. Paralysis encroaching, he gives Nav the go ahead.

STEVE

Alright. Go. Dammit.

EXT. ASTEROID BELT - INTERCEPTOR

The interceptor's thrusters are firing opposite its direction of travel, braking it, coming to a slow drift. They turn on recording devices to catch the biggest show in the solar system.

And here comes the Kansas City. She's an impressive container ship, old school. Kansas City: twenty-two hundred feet long - Wayward asteroid: Four and a quarter miles in diameter. It was over in six-tenths of a second. A great plume of debris radiated outward in a large bowl shape from the asteroid.

INT. INTERCEPTOR

The three of them are all that remains. Freighter gone. Chain Operatives. Sidereal. All gone. They sit speechless.

INSERT

Steve's m-wave is part of his workstation. The familiar CHIME sounds. The small square window, in the square door, of the m-wave flashes blue. Steve pushes a button on the front of the thing and the door opens revealing Feather's comm card.

STEVE

What is this? There's no ID.

Steve inserts the card in the instrumentation in front of him. The image on his wraparound flickers away and he can see the admin offices of Mars Base One, jumping around in smooth swipes and Feather yelling.

FEATHER (V.O.)

(out of breath)

Steve! This is Feather.

Steve grows a crooked smile.

STEVE

(to himself)

Feather. What the hell?

FEATHER (V.O.)

Mars One is under attack!

STEVE

(to the other two)

Check this out.

The recorded video of her environment jumps onto their wrap-arounds.

FEATHER

Mars One is under attack! Someone's dropping rocks, like asteroids, from orbit, onto the base. It must be the Chain. Haven't heard from them in a while. We're taking cover below.

(they watch her pan
the camera)

Do you know what's going on? I figure this is what you do now - chase goons?

(holds it to her face)

Try a sub-level access m-wave address for Mars Base One to get back to me. Our surface may be gone when you get this. Send it "my eyes only." I don't expect you to come to the rescue. Just get back to me.

Steve falls back in his seat.

STEVE

No, this isn't happening. There's no way this is coordinated effort. Kansas City was too much of a cluster fuck to pull that off. They must be everywhere.

STO

We're not supposed to be out here. We're not ready for this. Its imploding.

STEVE

I can't except that. What we're doing is right. We have to get off Earth to save it. How can we be so stupid?

NAV

Its more fun being stupid. Not hard to do.

STEVE

No.

He grabs the comm card and shouts into it.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Release lock on Feather Hall eyes only.

(continuing)

I don't know what's going on. You will be the first to know that we just lost the Kansas City, a freighter smack up against an asteroid. I'm attaching the video and specs.

(pause)

Listen, we go way back. When I was your lab rat. You put me through the mill, its true. I know I told you I was through with clinical experimentation. Maybe if you're lucky this time you'll kill me out right; put me outta my misery.

(pause)

I know you're into exotic research and you could use me. I guess I'm saying I'm yours. But this has to stop. Or we have to pack it in. We can't "do" this, this "space" shit. The Chain may be right: we don't belong out here. Never meant to be out here.

NAV

What are you talking about?

STEVE

She's a medical physicist. She played a large part in the enhancements you received. This shit doesn't fall off trees you know. There's always someone has to take the first step.

STO

So you're leaving Space Systems?

STEVE

Yeah, we, or at least I. I can't do any good out here, like this.

(to Feather)

I think I can do more good back there. Its good to hear from you. It would take ten months for me to get to you from here, good luck. If you're still around, tell me what you want; whatever it is. If you think I can help, tell me.

He thumbs the card comm and the visuals go dark. He scans a list of m-wave location numbers and picks one. He tosses the card comm inside the m-wave and closes the door. He punches "XMIT" and the card is gone.

EXT. ASTEROID BELT

The debris field from the collision has blossomed into a hazy dust cloud. Large and small chunks drifting, mostly away, from a sizable crater with several glowing nuclear embers imbedded in the crater floor. Surrounding a radiating mound of metals, in the walls of the new crater, spectacular slivers of gold glint against the dim sun. Tempting an indifferent universe to take notice.

This calamity recedes into the distance. Asteroid, crater, INTERCEPTOR, reduce to tiny points of light, eventually becoming one with the billions of other points of light.

Among these stars can be heard the sound of a submarine's PINGING sonar. PINGING continues.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 150 FEET BELOW SURFACE OF PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

Dense grey replaces star field. The SONAR continues, then fades. Faint bubbles suggest sea water as the blunt nose of an attack sub emerges from the murky light.

SUPER:

"Four years later - Three miles off the coast of Baja California."

The sub slides heavily through the water.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - SUB - DAY

The SUB CAPTAIN is a man in his mid s. Arms crossed he sits next to his executive officer, male mid 30's. Across from them sits Steve Archer. The small space breeds tension as the two of them watch Steve playing with a strap on his wrist.

SUB XO

Yeah, we got us a man of few words.

Steve stares at the deck.

SUB CAPTAIN

Yeah,

(takes a sip of coffee)

Man who's got ropes. Pluck 'im outta the middle of the ocean like he fell from the sky. Take 'im wherever he wants to go - give 'Im all this shit. No questions asked. What kinda man gets treatment like that?

Steve hears this but ignores it.

SUB XO

Few words man.

SUB CAPTAIN

Yeah, man don't talk must be some kinda big secret soldier super spy or some shit.

SUB XO

Or, maybe the village people we ain't heard about yet.

STEVE

(calmly and directly)

I'm some shit.

Steve speaking suddenly partially startles both of them, embarrassing themselves.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I'm the disposable no-name that gets sent fuck anywhere pinheads like you manage to fuck things up.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

I'm the one everyone forgets about -
until its too late; when things have
already shit its pants. I go in,
fix it, or break it. I'm not a poet.

(looking up but not
at them)

Talking time is over.

They sit in uneasy silence.

WALL SPEAKER (V.O.)

Captain. Bridge. We're there.

They rise from their seats and exit without ceremony.

EXT. SURFACE OF THE OCEAN CONNING TOWER - DAY

The water is calm, sky grey, conning tower a few feet above
the waves. The sub slows but does not stop.

The SUB XO and the SUB CAPTAIN climb out of the conning tower
hatch. They take a quick look around the horizon and sky.
The SUB OX reaches down and lifts a large bag from the hatch
and sets it on the deck.

Steve climbs out of the hatch dressed in a wet suit. He
unzips the bag and pulls a PROPULSION BACKPACK from it.

Steve stuffs his arms into the straps of the backpack while
the Captain and OX scan the horizon with binoculars.

The coast of Baja California is a faint pale line laying
over the Eastern horizon.

Steve tossed the bag in the water and takes an awkward seat
on the edge of the conning tower.

He locks eyes with the Captain for a long moment, then the
XO's for the first time in hours and drops himself into he
water out of sight.

SUB XO

Man of few words.

SUB CAPTAIN

Get us the hell outta here.

EXT. UNDER WATER - DAY

Steve is moving quickly through the water with the propulsion
pack on his back. The bag fitted between his legs minimizes
resistance. He's making good time.

INT. FEATHER'S BAJA APARTMENT - DAY

Feather drinks long from a bottle of water. Throwing water on a towel she wipes her face, and under her shirt to cool herself off. She puts the cloth in a bag and picks up some folders as she reaches for the remote to turn off the TV.

INSERT TV

A paper-thin display appears to float in the dusty air above a dilapidated bedside table. Images of violence, fires, people running.

TV NEWSREPORTER (V.O.)
 ...reports pouring in from around
 the world of bombings and major
 disruption...one hundred dead, One
 hundred thirty wounded...
 (she taps a pen-like
 object in her hand)
 Death tolls from the sinking of the
 Ionian Sea this morning rise as
 rescuers...

Feather taps the pen again and the sound is silenced, she watches for a moment, taps the pen one more time turning off the image in disgust. She picks up a small metallic cube from the table and tosses it in her bag.

Looking one last time around the dusty room she exits.

EXT.FEATHER'S MOTEL - DAY

Stepping into a blast-furnace of Baja heat, she locks the door behind her and rushes into a small solar/hydrogen hybrid vehicle.

INT. FEATHER'S CAR - DAY

Feather starts her car and gets the air-conditioner on as soon as she can. Habitually, she taps the flat panel and classical guitar fills the air. She taps again and the reports keeping coming in.

CAR RADIO (V.O.)
 ...fires burn out of control in London
 as the uprisings continue...
 (taps panel again)
 ...just in. Massive explosions rock
 Denver. The "Chain" have somehow
 sparked sympathetic revolts worldwide.
 (taps again - silencing
 audio)

FEATHER
Stupid bastards.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

The car reaches solid pavement and moves more quickly out of the scrap of a town. The road curves down toward the beach and heads South. The electric motor buzzes contentedly. Wind WHISTLES over the windshield. The ocean from here looks almost blue. The sky, much paler, is cloudless.

Feather thumbs a button on her steering wheel.

FEATHER
Doctor Randall please.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUNTA PRIETA OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE - DAY

Nestled along a rugged coastline are a tan and beige stuccoed complex trying to fit in with the desert environment. Three circular pools reflect sky.

There is a small parking lot to one side. A driveway circles the entire installation. Cacti and boulders dot the surrounding area.

A sign greeting visitors as they turn off the coast road:

INSERT:

Punta Preita Oceanographic Institute.

Smaller print in the lower left corners reads: The Americas Development Corporation.

RETURN

Just beyond the parking lot is a heliport. Small support buildings are all else there is between here and miles of rugged desert and rolling hills to the East.

INT. OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE - DAY

Carpeted hallways in some areas, linoleum in others, exhibits of ocean life include large vistas behind tempered plastic walls for observing the pools.

Hallways have small windowed doors looking very institutional.

Some rooms have people in white lab coats referencing notebooks and looking into microscopes.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - DAY

MARTEN RANDALL is a white, mid-fifties male. Athletic and graying. He's standing in front of electronic equipment in a technologically exotic work area. All around him is a hand-built, cutting edge laboratory.

His communicator goes off in his pocket to the tune of Anchors Away. He lifts it out and taps it once, answering it.

IN HIS HAND

The flat surface comes alive and Feather's image of her in her car snaps into view.

RANDALL (O.S.)
Randall here. Hi Feather. I see you're on your way. We're still a "go." See you soon.

Feather waves two fingers in the air. The phone goes dark.

RETURN

He tucks the phone in his breast pocket. And turns to MARY COREY.

Mary Corey is a petite, mid thirties, white woman. She is seated at a computer display console. Numerous displays reveal rows of streaming numbers and text. She is typing onto a flat-panel keypad.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
(to Mary)
Feather's off.
(to himself)
I know Steve's on-line.

MARY
You've worked with him before.

RANDALL
And Feather. Its been a while. He's a fabulous test subject. He's smart, objective. Feather's recommendation and I couldn't agree more.

MARY
We'll see.

RANDALL
Yup, you bet.

Surrounding them is a laboratory crammed with exotic high tech equipment. On one side of this laboratory is a large 8' by 8' wire-frame cube. It sticks out from the rest of the equipment, looking out of place among the other technologies.

The opposite side of the lab is dominated by a large couch-like area the size of a large coffin. The couch has a cover, not unlike a tanning couch. Out of the top, bottom and sides are tubes, conduits, and machinery that can only be guessed at as to what their functions are.

Behind Marten and Mary, STANLEY WANG comes from the other side of the lab. Stanley is Asian, male, mid-thirties, dressed in one of the ubiquitous lab coats everyone's wearing.

STANLEY

I'm going up to take one last look around.

MARTEN

Good. Keep in touch.

Stanley looks at the back of Mary's head, waiting for her to make a comment. Nothing. Stanley grabs a PDA. He waves his hand over a black plastic square and one of the heavy doors opens, gears and hydraulics gnashing.

Looking back to Marten.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

(to Stanley)

This is as close as we're ever gonna get you know that.

STANLEY

Yeah, I guess I'm mostly worried about the "something gone wrong part."

MARTEN

(sarcastic)

What could possibly go wrong?

MARY

(finally saying something)

You two are funny in the morning.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAJA BEACH - DAY

Steve breaks the surface as a shiny black hemisphere, a pair of goggled eyes scan the coastline.

Leaving the surf, he makes his way up the beach and in between two large rocks above the tide line.

Stripping down, he discards his wet suit and gear, throwing everything but one bag into a pile on the sand.

Opening the bag he saved, he takes out a t-shirt, jeans, sun glasses, tennis shoes, ID and backpack. Emptying the bag on the sand, he tosses the bag in with the other water gear in a pile.

Dressed in the t-shirt and jeans, he stoops down to remove a small vial from the shoulder strap of his backpack. He twists the vial once and tosses it into the pile of equipment.

The vial releases a white vapor that crawls over the pile of equipment. A hissing noise cues Steve to look away as the pile ignites into a white-hot combustion that consumes everything. A white powder remains that drifts away in the wind leaving only a depression in the sand.

Steve faces inland and hikes to the coastal highway.

EXT. COAST OF BAJA - DAY

100 feet above sea level, a sleek, high tech, private helicopter hugs the coastline; taking in the view.

INT. HELICOPTER PASSENGER COMPARTMENT

CONRAD MILLER, an elderly, white, healthy, well fed billionaire sits next to his daughter JANICE MILLER. Janice is an attractive white woman in her mid-twenties. The PILOT is a third person on the craft, he's wearing a flight suit and helmet.

CONRAD

(to Janice)

We'll just stop here for a minute.
I want to see what they're doing
with the aquarium.

JANICE

Aquarium. Boor-ing.

CONRAD

I thought you enjoyed going places.

JANICE

I do but you know I want to go off-
world at some point.

CONRAD

Be careful what you ask for. It's
not what people think it is.

The helicopter enters the oceanographic institutes airspace. It swings wide around the complex in a full circle before positioning itself over the center of the landing area, dropping down, hovering a moment, then lowering, settling on the helipad.

INT. OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

A clean, carpeted, conservative looking area greets visitors to the institute. A few fake ficas and a sitting area.

An attractive woman seated behind a wide desk is talking with LAB TECH ONE a young male, wearing a lab coat. On either side of the desk double doors lead to other areas of the installation.

RECEPTIONIST
She hasn't called.

LAB TECH ONE
You'd tell me.

RECEPTIONIST
I can't wait. Watch you make a fool
of yourself.

The WHISTLING of the helicopter turbines pulls LAB TECH1 ONE's attention away from the receptionist.

LAB TECH ONE strides to a large tinted window. He looks out to the helipad, The WHISTLING of the engines dying away.

LAB TECH ONE
Who's this?

RECEPTIONIST
Beats me. Whoever they are, they're
unscheduled for incoming.
(fingers intercom)
Communications?

Both of them lean in for the response.

INTERCOM (V.O.)
Communications here, go ahead
reception.

RECEPTIONIST
Should I know anything about a chopper
landing outside?

INTERCOM (V.O.)
We just got word. Somekinda bigwig.
Clean up your act. Looks like we're
getting inspected or something.

RECEPTIONIST

Thanks a lot.
(lifts finger from
intercom)
Shit. I hate these rich bastards.

LAB TECH ONE looks on stupidly.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Okay, get lost. They're probably
looking for you.

LAB TECH ONE

Yeah, thanks . . . call me.

She nods to nothing in front of her as he exits through one of the double doors. His little finger and thumb on one hand wobbles in the air unseen. The doors shut behind him.

RECEPTIONIST

(under her breath)
Loser.

Seconds tick by as she sits upright, alone.

The WHISTLING of the chopper outside dies away.

She gets up and walks over to one of the wall size mirrors. She scans her image and decides that nothing can be improved upon.

At the tinted window she looks outside to the landing pad. Conrad and Janice are being helped out of the chopper.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

(to herself)
Shit!

She dashes to the desk and punches the key to the intercom.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Communications. Reception. What's
this guy's name?

INTERCOM (V.O.)

Conrad Miller and his daughter Janice.
Sorry 'bout that.

RECEPTIONIST

Thanks a lot.
(lifts finger, adding
with sarcasm)
Communications.

She sits back down behind the desk, scans an area that needs no tweaking.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
 . . . don't know the meaning of the
 word.

After a moment she decides to get up and greet them at the airlock main doors; separating the air-conditioning from the blast furnace outside.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
 (repeating to herself)
 Conrad Miller, Conrad Miller.

EXT. INSTITUTE FRONT DOORS - DAY

The receptionist comes out into the hot light of day and greets Conrad and Janice who are now wearing sun glasses and hurry to get inside out of the heat. The Receptionist squints involuntarily, raising both hands to her face to protect it from the heat.

Once inside, they drink in the cooler air of the vestibule, Janice looks back and sees the pilot connecting the helicopter to a service receptacles.

RECEPTIONIST
 Welcome to Punta Prieta Oceanographic
 Institute Mister Miller.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

The three emerge from the vestibule into the much cooler air and tinted windows of the reception area.

CONRAD
 (to Janice)
 So much for surprises.
 (to Receptionist)
 I'd like to speak with Branin please,
 is he here?

JANICE
 Yes sir, I'll tell him you're here.
 (gesturing)
 Please. Have a seat. One moment
 please.

Janice and Receptionist scan each other. Conrad looks around, appraising.

RECEPTIONIST
 (fingers intercom)
 Admin, Louis Branin is needed in
 reception please.

ADMIN (V.O.)
 Branin, he's on his way.

JANICE
 (to Conrad)
 Inspection? You said we'd be just a
 minute.

CONRAD
 I didn't say that. Its best to keep
 people on their toes. . . what, you
 have a date somewhere?

Janice settles in, giving up.

The Receptionist reaches for the intercom again, when ROLAND
 BRANIN appears at one set of double doors. Roland is middle
 aged, white, mousy. He's also wearing one of the lab coats.
 He walks over to where they are sitting. Conrad rises to
 greet him. They shake hands.

BRANIN
 Conrad. It's good to see you again.
 You're looking well.

CONRAD
 You look good too, but you may not
 be too happy to see me. This place
 is leaking money. Little curious
 about what you're all doing with it.

BRANIN
 Research sir. Making great
 discoveries.

CONRAD
 (gestures to Janice
 who stands up)
 This is Janice, my daughter.

Janice stands and her beauty makes Branin step back
 involuntarily as though she had a force field around her.

BRANIN
 Yes, welcome. Have you eaten?
 Anything I can get for you?

CONRAD
 We broke fast on the yacht.
 (MORE)

CONRAD (CONT'D)

I'd rather like to have a look around.
Can we get to it, before everyone
knows I'm here. I see radioing in
our approach was a mistake.

BRANIN

If you'll follow me?

CONRAD

Actually, you'll be following us, if
you don't mind.

They all exit through the double doors on the right of the
Receptionists desk. Branin looks back to the Receptionist
shaking his head slowly in doubt.

Receptionist fingers intercom.

RECEPTIONIST

Richard. You down there?

INT. INSTITUTE HALLWAY - SECURITY DESK - DAY

A man seated behind a desk at a guard station is dressed in
a security outfit, checking people into a secured area.

RICHARD

(into intercom)

Yeah, I'm here. What's up?

RECEPTIONIST

Some guy just came through here like
he owns the place on an inspection
or something. Just thought I'd give
you guys a head's up.

RICHARD

Copy that.

A woman in a lab coat walks up to the door at the guard
station's window. Richard recognizes her and buzzes her
though. He gets up and meets her on the other side.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Just got word. Some hot shot is
doing an inspection or something.
Could be here any minute.

WOMAN IN LAB COAT

Health Department?

RICHARD shrugs his shoulders admitting defeat.

RICHARD

Beats me.

As the woman in the lab coat turns to leave, Stanley Wang steps out of the elevator that is right there.

WOMAN IN LAB COAT

(to Stanley)

Stanley. Do you know anything about an inspection today?

STANLEY

What inspection?

WOMAN IN LAB COAT

Someone checking us out?

STANLEY

Health Department?

WOMAN IN LAB COAT

Big wig. Wants to look the place over?

STANLEY

Health Inspector?

WOMAN IN LAB COAT

Don't know. What're you gonna do if they get into that basement of yours?

No response.

WOMAN IN LAB COAT (CONT'D)

(squaring off on him)

You're a bunch of spooks.

STANLEY

You know I can't get into it. Gotta run.

Stanley exits through the security gate, down a hallway, With no one around pulls out his communicator.

INT. RECEPTION AREA FRONT DESK

RECEPTIONIST

Reception.

STANLEY (V.O.)

This is Doctor Wang.

RECEPTIONIST

Hi Stanley.

STANLEY (V.O.)
What's going on up there?

RECEPTIONIST
Mister Conrad Miller just flew in on
a chopper and he wants to have a
look around.

INT. INSTITUTE HALLWAY - DAY

Stanley stops walking, standing alone, talking into the
communicator.

STANLEY
Conrad Miller?

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Yep. And his daughter, Janice.
They took off with Branin.

Stanley starts walking more quickly.

STANLEY
Thanks.
(fingers off his
communicator)
Shit.
(fingers it back on)
Doctor Randall.

INT. SUB BASEMENT LAB

Marten is focused on an array of flat panels when his
communicator goes off. He slips it out of a pocket. Checks
the caller ID.

MARTEN
Yes Stanley, go ahead.
(listening)
Do I know Conrad Miller? Hell yes I
know Conrad Miller. Its his money
we've been burning.

Marten leaps to his feet, mildly startling Mary.

MARTEN (CONT'D)
Here?! Where? Is he alone? His
daughter? Get back down here and
keep them away from here. We're
locked in on this and we can't stop
now.

MARY
Jesus Christ. What the hell?

MARTEN

Conrad Miller is upstairs.

MARY

And?

MARTEN

The cow? Its his money we've basically embezzled to pull this off.

MARY

Are they coming down here?

MARTEN

Listen. Nothing's going to stop this. Wrinkles, just how this fucking universe likes to operate.

(pointing to the huge metal doors)

Those doors, when sealed, no one gets through. Once Stanley gets back we lock down.

MARY

(to Marten)

The universe doesn't have wrinkles. Those are laugh lines.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAJA COAST ROAD - DAY

Feather's little car races along as best it can.

INT. FEATHER'S CAR - DAY

Feather is driving. The radio is off and she is looking out to a scene on the beach.

FEATHER'S POV

A clam fisher and his son, large shade hats wading in the water, working a net. Timeless, except for a row of oil rigs in the distance.

BACK TO SCENE

Tranquility is interrupted by a bright yellow light reflecting off the interior of her car like a sunrise somehow from behind. Suddenly a loud rumble snaps her back to the present.

She pulls to the side of the road and stops. The fishers are pointing to something.

Feather looks and sees an oil rig, gigantic flames feeding a column of black smoke rising into an already sick atmosphere.

Secondary explosions tear the rig apart. The sound coming out of sync with the visuals.

FEATHER (O.S.)
Those poor people. My god.

EXT. BAJA COASTLINE - STEVE - DAY

He takes a long drink of water, as he watches the black smoke rising.

STEVE
(to no one)
Morons.

He drinks again from his water bottle. Stuffs it in his bag laying on a large rock and takes a seat on the bag. He picks up the ENGINE NOISE of an approaching truck.

He gets to his feet and continues hiking down the road.

After a moment of walking, he looks down and sees a scorpion in the middle of the road. Nearby a lizard watches motionless as concret. Steve watches the two of them.

THE SCORPION

As big as a house the scorpion looks alien and monstrous as it has for millions of years: defending its existence, silently, patiently.

THE LIZARD

A monument of with dead eyes. Tongue slowly flicking. The eye sees the scorpion, the sun racing across the sky. It sees the dark figure that is Steve. Like lava it moves into the tire rut of the road.

THE TRUCK

Visible now, crests the ridge and collides down the road through the gravel. A tremendous cloud of Baja dirt, choking dust and noise crash down on steve's little drama.

FARMER DRIVER
(yelling from the
driver's seat)
No quieres un aventon?

Steve shakes his head dumbly.

FARMER DRIVER (CONT'D)
Pos estaras loco, seta haciendo un
caloron.

Steve is blank. The farmer throws the truck into gear and leaves Steve in another cloud of dirt.

Steve looks to where the scorpion and lizard faced off; they're gone.

He removes his sunglasses, squinting in the harsh sunlight he wipes sweat off his forehead, from his eyes.

STEVE
(to himself)
Feather.

CUT TO:

EXT. SURFACE OF THE MOON - DAY

Stark shadows carve huge gashes in a collapsed jumble of crater wall. The bright surfaces wash out the faint stars in the moon's airless sky.

Movement detected near the floor of the crater becomes three space-suited figures, briefly visible, but mostly keeping to the shadows. Hard to see in their black colored suits.

They climb onto a frame-like craft with tanks for air and propellant. The craft lifts them off the surface and moves across the floor of the crater at a low altitude, absolutely silent.

CUT TO:

INT. OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE - DAY

Branin follows Conrad and Janice as they walk past a large underwater view of sea life. Dolphins soar through grey/green sea water. Smaller fish cruise around in groups.

BRANIN
(gesturing to the
dolphins)
The dolphins are quite comfortable
in our environment - many actually
seem to have bonded with members of
the research team.

Janice casts a disbelieving glance at her father who watches them and says nothing. Janice fluffs her hair.

JANICE

Hoo-wee! This is so much cooler in here.

Branin can't help but smile at Janice, attracted to her good looks.

CONRAD

I think we can stick around for a while. I'm not in a hurry to get back out there in that heat.

They stroll on, under the pale blue/green light.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAJA COAST ROAD - DAY

Steve looks for the scorpion and lizard but are nowhere. He finds them a short distance from each other and picks up a stick and slowly advances. He stops and tosses the stick away letting nature take its course. Soon however, Feathers electric engine on her car can be heard shortly before she comes into view over the same crest the truck came from.

Again, the drama in the sand is interrupted by a vehicle.

STEVE

Here we go again.

Feather brakes, the light weight vehicle slides right over the top of the two combatants. Steve comes up to the side of the car, drops to his knees and survey's under her car.

Feather watches him drop from view, slow to respond, she opens her door and the heat slaps her in the face.

FEATHER

Steve! What are you doing?

She dashes around the front of the car.

FEATHER (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Dust settling.

STEVE

(standing)

They're gone again.

(scanning)

Disappeared.

FEATHER

Steve! Let's move...Think you need to get out of the sun. We don't have time for this.

Steve straightens, opens his door and climbs inside. Feather rushes in to the driver's seat, watching her feet.

She turns the air conditioner on full. Her face relaxes from the circulating air. The car lurches forward.

FEATHER (CONT'D)

What on earth are you looking for under the car?

STEVE

Dumb shit lizard was about to get zapped by a scorpion . . . I think.
(staring ahead)
Both times they disappeared.

FEATHER

Both times?

STEVE

How do they move so fast? Damn its good to see you. I'm sorry. Maybe the sun was starting to get to me.

FEATHER

You haven't change a bit.

STEVE

Probably your molecules still at work.

FEATHER

Apparently.
(changing the subject)
Did you see the fire?

STEVE

Atmosphere is dead enough. Bastards.

FEATHER

Have you had a chance to hear the news?

STEVE

I avoid it if possible.

Feather fingers a panel on the dashboard.

CAR RADIO (V.O.)

(filtered)

. . . number of dead rising in Kowloon tramway bombing.

(a moment of silence)

This just in . . . there are now conformations coming in from our late-braking drama in space. . . It has been confirmed that the United Space Systems ore carrier, New Orleans, has been destroyed. Fifty six lost.

(short silence)

Also this just in . . . Large explosions rock the heavily populated Newbury Towers Complex in West Chicago. Thousands feared dead.

FEATHER (O.S.)

(fingers off the radio)

I can't listen anymore.

STEVE

What the hell is going on?

FEATHER

Its far worse than I thought. When I got up this morning, I turned on the news and it is wall to wall. Like the world has finally decided to blow up. Riots, bombings, shootings.

STEVE

Is it all related? The Chain?

FEATHER

Chain is probably the match that lit the fuse. All the sympathetic lunatics see this as a rallying call to action it looks like.

STEVE

Not having a family left may be a good thing.

FEATHER

You're the only "family" I've ever had. Not to put you on the spot.

STEVE

Same here Feather. What's up your sleeve this time?

FEATHER

M-waves.

STEVE

Shit.

FEATHER

We're going to field you into an m-wave buffer and try to break the life-force barrier.

STEVE

I thought that was impossible.

FEATHER

It is.

STEVE

I don't understand.

FEATHER

We think we've been doing it wrong all these years. We're going through the back door. Cheat.

STEVE

Whatever. I trust you to do the right thing.

FEATHER

You're the only one I think can pull this off. Everything we've ever done together brings us to this.

STEVE

I'm all yours.

She takes her hands off the steering wheel and the car goes into auto-pilot. She reaches into her bag and pulls out a vial of liquid and a small metal box and hands them to Steve.

FEATHER

Here take these.

Steve opens the box and sees four small capsules. He tosses two in his mouth, drinks some of the fluid washing them down. He takes the other two, drinks the rest of the fluid and hands the box and vial back to Feather.

STEVE

What was that?

FEATHER

Muscle relaxant.

STEVE

I'm all for relaxed muscles.
(breathing steady)
How does one get into an m-wave field.

FEATHER

Electro-magnetic stasis. I really don't know how they do it, but its a new idea. I'm here to monitor your biologics. They really don't talk about it. We're almost there.

INT. INSTITUTE HALLWAY - DAY

Conrad, Janice, and Branin are exiting from an underground research wing.

CONRAD

This is a busy place.

BRANIN

We're trying to feed a dying planet.

Three people stand silent in mutual acknowledgment.

CONRAD

You're an optimist.

BRANIN

I have a hope.

They come through a door and enter a lunch room. Three tables, chairs, what can only be vending machines. . . and an M-wave.

CONRAD

Do you mind if we can take a break?

Janice looks around the "lunch room" thinking to herself: "you've got to be kidding." Conrad is way ahead of her.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

Is there some other food available here?

BRANIN

Certainly. Of Course. I can have something "real" down here in a minute.

CONRAD

Tell me you have some wine, or something?

BRANIN

Wine. Certainly. I hope its acceptable.

CONRAD

I'm sure it'll be fine. Thank you.

BRANIN

You can relax here. There is a media panel. It has system access. I'll be right back.

Branin exits out swinging double doors. Conrad watches, turns to Janice, pulls a comm-wand out of a pocket.

CONRAD

(into comm-wand)

This is Conrad. Return to this m-wave the floor plan and a master key for Punta Prieta Oceanographic. Get that together as soon as possible.

Conrad tosses the comm-wand into the lunchroom's m-wave.

INSERT:

Closes the door and types in a 12 digit alphanumeric number and fingers XMIT. A blue flash displaces the comm-wand to Conrad's security department.

CUT TO:

INT. CONRAD'S SECURITY DEPARTMENT - DAY

In a communication information center, several people watch flat-screens and monitor Conrad's property.

CLOSE IN:

An m-wave lights up accompanied by the m-wave's peculiar BUZZING sound announcing a transmission is incoming. The small square window glows blue, a CHIME signals a transmission received. He opens the door and pulls out Conrad's comm-wand and taps the end of it. A holographic image projects itself before the security guard's eyes.

COMM IMAGE (CONT'D)

This is Conrad. Return to this m-wave the floor plan and a master key for Punta Prieta Oceanographic. Get that together as soon as possible.

Patric starts typing requests into a keyboard panel. He gets up from his seat and pulls a small comm-sized device out of a cubby from behind a steel door.

He inserts Conrad's comm-wand into a hole in Patric's desk and uploads the requested information. He extracts the comm-wand and tosses it and the key-reader into his m-wave.

He enters a 6-digit number on the m-wave's flat panel and fingers a button labeled with a left pointing arrow - "return."

CUT TO:

INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

Conrad is standing next to the m-wave when a familiar CHIME indicates a transmission is under-way. Out of the square door's square window a blue flash grows and fades. Conrad opens the door and his comm-wand and the key-reader are laying inside. He scoops them up and closes the door. He gestures her to lead the way out the door.

He takes her down a corridor they haven't seen yet. Fingers the wand. An image of an "Anno" logo projects on the wall. Where he points the pen, the image follows.

CONRAD
Project floor plan.

A flickering, and a 3D image reveals the entire institute: compartments, passageways, the entire layout of the surface. The parking lots, helipad. Rows of offices and the subterranean passageways.

CONRAD (CONT'D)
GPS, confirm location.

THE PEN (V.O.)
Location, orientation, altitude,
correct.

Confirm registration with current location. A blue flashing light designates their current location.

CONRAD
I thought so.
(looking down the
dark passageway)
This isn't here...not according to
this. Last time I was here this
lunchroom was the end of this leg,
and there was an elevator.
(he looks at Janice)
These guys are up to something.
Come on.

JANICE
Where are we going?

CONRAD

Can you access this passageway in
your data link?

Janice stares at nothing for a moment.

JANICE

No data of an extension on this
passageway for these coordinates.

CONRAD

You wanted adventure, right? Be
careful what you ask for.

EXT. PUNTA PRIETA OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE - DAY

Feather's car circles around to the back of the institute.
A driveway ends at a garage door protruding from a mound of
desert. The door opens and she drives into a down sloping
ramp to the subterranean areas below the institute.

She drives into a dimly lit area, stopping in front of one
of the ubiquitous steel doors. They get out of her car.
She gives Steve the once over.

FEATHER

You should be feeling the effects.

STEVE

Yeah, copy that.

They go through the doors. They reach another door. Feather
waves her wand over the door; it swings open. They step
inside and there is little more than a bench, a few lockers,
toilet and shower.

FEATHER

Take a shower. Get into this. When
you're done. You've got ten minutes.
I'll be back for you.

STEVE

No problem.

FEATHER

Its really good to see you again.

STEVE

It's been a long time, not seeing
your "funny face."

Feather smiles at hearing his pet name for her, leaves.

INT. INSTITUTE PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Conrad and Janice explore. A door has a sign on it: No Access - Restricted. Conrad tries his key-reader. Noises inside the door release the locks. Door yawns open. They step in and make their way into storage area that is not on Conrad's schematic. He throws a light on some fiberglass containers.

CONRAD

What is all this stuff? Maxon Industries. Tricondrite. Invar? This is expensive stuff. I'm sure it has nothing to do with fish.

He scans a couple more boxes and continues on.

JANICE

(reporting)

These materials accommodate m-wave research. Some of this is quantum processing support material.

CONRAD

No way I authorized all this. Someone's in deep trouble. C'mon.

They continue into the dimly lit storage area.

CUT TO:

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - DAY

Mary and Marten are focused on various displays in front of them.

MARTEN (O.S.)

(to Mary)

Call 'em up.

Mary takes a deep breath. Taps a flat panel. Marten looks on.

INSERT:

Various renditions of Earth's moon flash across her readouts. A cross-hair focuses on a point almost dead center. Readout displays describe a feature known as crater Copernicus.

MARY

Moon Base Bruce; Punta Prieta, do you copy?

MOON TECH ONE
 (seconds swim by)
 Copy Punta Prieta; Moon Base Bruce
 is a go and we're standing by.

MARY
 We are a go, I repeat: we are a go.
 Stand by for system synchronization.

EXT. MOON - BRUCE CRATER - DAY

The moon is a study in contrasts. Bright sunlight reflecting off regolith. Dark shadows, chaotic, cold.

Partially buried Quonset shaped mounds are buried half-under the lunar dust and rock suggests there's more than you can see, under ground. A few vehicles outside. One large dish is pointing straight up to the blue marble, Earth.

INT. MOON BASE BRUCE

Two technicians, MOON TECH ONE and MOON TECH TWO sit among a wide variety of undecipherable lab equipment. Including an eight by eight foot cubical frame, identical to the one on Earth.

INSERT - FLAT SCREEN

Image of Mary at her station on Earth. Her face shares space with other readouts and displays. The animated graphics hint that calculations and data management are taking place.

One section of the display shows rotating views from security cameras mounted around the Moon Base.

Another corner of the display has a countdown timer:
 00:50:12:00 reducing numbers.

BACK TO SCENE

MOON TECH ONE
 We're at fifty minutes, twelve
 seconds, and counting.

MARY
 Copy that, Bruce. Stand by one sec.

MARTEN
 Good morning gentlemen, this is doctor
 Randall. There's a good chance
 humanity is going to be taking a
 giant leap forward today. We all
 have a lot to be proud of your work.
 Top notch. Well done.
 (MORE)

MARTEN (CONT'D)

So, to all, good Luck, and don't screw things up if we can help it. See you on the other side.

MOON TECH ONE (V.O.)

Thank you Doctor Randall. Moon Base out.

MARTEN

Well, we're committed now. Gave a speech.

MARY

Hah, where's Stanley?

MARTEN

Let me see.
 (taps the display in front of him)
 Bio sensors should be on.

Holographic display reveals the passageways and layout of the entire Oceanographic Institute in three-D. The surface, where Stanley is, also indicates the heliport, frontage road, driveways, the helicopter sitting on the landing pad.

All the passageways are rendered in a three-dimensional translucent blue. A flashing blue-green square, represents Stanley.

The receptionist, lab technicians, office workers, everyone operating the world class aquarium; oblivious to the fact that a daring experiment is about to take place beneath them.

Two unknown yellow-orange blips wander where they aren't supposed to.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

(to Mary)

Fucking tourists. Its gotta be Miller. He's probably got some kinda decoder, or master key of some sort. What I hate about these guys is they'll buy whatever they want, to do whatever they want.

(tapping the display)

He can't come snooping around here though. Not today.

The three-dimensional hologram rotates, bringing the storage and personnel lockers into view. A small compartment shows two green figures. One is sitting on a table, the other one's standing before the one.

He taps the image and the room's surveillance camera reveals Feather and Steve prepping for the experiment.

Taps it again and the holographic projection rotates to the two green icons for Mary and himself.

Tapping the display he zooms to Stanley's green icon. Who is on the surface, but heading to an elevator.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

(into mic)

Stanley, do you copy?

INT. OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE MAIN OFFICES - DAY

Four people are monitoring holographic displays for aquarium business. Equipment of unknown function populates the office. There are regular sized m-waves mounted in a couple work stations.

One of the m-waves CHIMES, emits a blue light from its small square window. Another flash of blue, another audible CHIME indicating items received.

Main offices have M-WAVES. The CHIME sounds and an office worker removes various devices and pamphlets.

STANLEY

Who are these people that showed up?
I'm trying to figure out what's going on. Where are they?

At that moment Marten calls Stanley.

MARTEN (V.O.)

Stanley, do you copy?

STANLEY

(to Judy)
One sec.
(taps ear)
Go ahead.

MARTEN

We've got those two people roaming around in section four. Where's Branin?

STANLEY

Unknown.
(taps ear)
Branin do you copy?

BRANIN

Branin here. Checking to see if the cafeteria can whip up something for our guests.

STANLEY

Branin.
(taps ear again)
I have Dr. Randall on-line

MARTEN (V.O.)

Your guests are loose. They ditched you. Took off. Get him out of there. Especially today.

STANLEY

Did you copy that? Get security to help you, if you need it. Apparently this guy has a master key or something.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Steve is sitting on the edge of a table. The drug Feather gave him is starting to take effect, relaxing him. He's wearing a full body suit. Gold/copper mesh enveloping everything. His face will eventually be covered over by the mesh, but right now he can speak and see with the face cover off.

FEATHER

Okay, go over it again.

STEVE

(sluggish)
I'll likely fall asleep. I become aware of Doctor Randall's voice, he'll communicate with me, from inside my mind?

FEATHER

Yep. We've done all this before. First time with you though. First time for this.

STEVE

Something tells me not quite like this.

FEATHER

If I didn't think you were up to it; Listen, I can't think of anyone else I can trust to do this better.

STEVE

I know you've been trying to kill me
for years.

FEATHER

Best guinea pig 'ever worked with.

STEVE

Yup. Light the candles.

FEATHER

You've always been the best.

He props himself upright and lets Feather guide him by the elbow.

FEATHER (CONT'D)

Absolutely unbreakable. Let's go.

They make their way out of the changing room. Walk a short distance down another passageway and come to a set of metal doors. Waves her comm-wand over the door, it unlocks, opening wide so they can enter.

The small room is full of cabinets and closets. She sets Steve on a stainless steel table, opens a nearby cabinet and starts clipping electronic devices onto Steve's metallic suit.

FEATHER (CONT'D)

(close to him)

Again.

STEVE

(out loud to himself)

The key is a disk in my chest.

(memorizing)

Follow the flashing light.

(repeating)

The key is a disk in my chest. Follow
the yellow brick road

(no comment from

Feather)

Kidding.

FEATHER

I know.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - MARTEN'S WORKSTATION

Marten is leaning over a desk full of displays.

MARTEN

(into comm)

Stanley get back here. I can see Conrad and his daughter are headed this way. Steve is still being prepped. If you can get down here before they do. They'll be sealed out till we're done. His key won't work on this door.

STANLEY

Copy that. I'm here at the elevator.

MARTEN

That's good. Real good.

(to Mary)

Okay, initiate the field.

The laboratory comes alive. The large eight foot by eight foot cubicle frame installed at the one end of the lab, lights up. Resting in the middle of this eight foot square space is a mechanical assemblage of four vertical legs attached to a collection of metal boxes. Marten circles the thing waving an electronic device over it. Steps off the m-wave platform.

Mary fingers displays in front of her.

MARY

(into comm)

Bruce. Stand by.

MOON TECH ONE (V.O.)

Copy.

MARTEN

(to Mary)

Standing wave-forms nominal.

MOON TECH TWO (V.O.)

Go ahead. M-wave platform is clear.

Marten steps off the m-wave and gives Mary a thumbs up.

MARY

On my mark then, firing in, three-two-one-Mark.

She fingers a display. In the next moment, the blue glow, spider test bed, are both gone. Almost giving them a yellow after-image.

CUT TO:

INT. MOON BASE BRUCE LAB

The cubical m-wave space in the moon base laboratory flashes blue very quickly a couple times - and goes dark. The spider, four-legged test thingy, has materialized where there where was nothing before.

MOON TECH TWO

My god. This is really major, huge.
Can you smell that? Fish? The
aquarium? If this works, my god.
Its gonna change everything.

EXT. SURFACE OF THE MOON - DAY

RED PAWN ONE is wearing a black space-suit. She stops hiking to monitor a transmission. An m-wave event one of them picked up on her scanner. RED PAWN TWO and RED PAWN THREE look on.

CLOSE IN - RED PAWN ONE - HELMET

RED PAWN ONE is a white, female, stands like a man, or a brick wall if she has to, which ever way you want it. She's hot, and can empathize. May be a little bit Viking too.

RED PAWN ONE

(in helmet mike)

M-wave transmission causes a spike
like that.

(holds out the hand-
held device as if he
can see it)

There's nothing out here.

RED PAWN TWO (V.O.)

No, there's nothing out here. Not
too far from here is where Surveyors
Four and Six came down back in 1967.
People generally leave it alone out
here. Its almost like a shrine.

RED PAWN THREE

Right. Its practically a no-fly
zone by default. As good a place as
any to hide out; right in the open.

(focusing on his heavy
duty PAD)

Bruce.

RED PAWN ONE

Willis.

RED PAWN 2

Crater Bruce, its about three and a half miles in diameter, depressed center. Unless you were right over it, you may not see anything inside.

RED PAWN ONE

Some damn storage unit fuel depot or something. Manned utility shack. How far from here to Bruce.

RED PAWN TWO (V.O.)

We can make it to East rim in thirty, forty minutes. Get a good rhythm going.

RED PAWN ONE

Lets go for it. Something's up for sure. We'll form up on that eastern crater wall.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB

Stanley appears in the main doors to the laboratory. Closing them behind him.

STANLEY

What are we gonna do about this guy?

RANDALL

Where is he?

Stanley watches graphic representations of Conrad and Janice huddled at the lock of another door.

STANLEY

They're at the "T" by the power bays.

INSERT - FLAT SCREEN

On a view panel: The door opens for them and they slip into another dimly lit passageway that leads down to the main doors of the secret lab.

BACK TO SCENE

STANLEY (CONT'D)

They're heading down the outside passageway.

MARTEN

Watch them.

(to Mary)

How's the spectral beacon?

MARY

Ready to go. As best I can tell;
all we need is Steve.

Stanley watches Conrad and Janice at the laboratory double doors on a flat screen.

STANLEY (V.O.)

He's trying his key. Can't get past
the dead bolts. Wait a minute.
He's activated his comm-wand, he's
making a call.

MARTEN

To who?

STANLEY

If he goes over air on this anyone
can pick it up.

MARTEN

Bastard. Shit...Open the door.

STANLEY

But -

MARTEN

Open it. We have to sit on him till
its over. Also, we're shielded in
here. Won't be able to radio in or
out.

MARY

Is that a good idea?

MARTEN

Its a horrible idea. I don't care
who he is or what he'll do to me.
We can't quite stop the "moon" now,
can we? We're coming up on our window
real fast.

Marten feels trapped suddenly.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Fuck it. Let him in. Seal it behind
him.

Stanley works a combination on the main doors to the lab.
Hidden metal slides away as the heavy doors part at the center
revealing Conrad and Janice.

CONRAD

Good morning. What's going on in
here?

Randall gestures Mary to keep on course as he walks over to greet Conrad and Janice.

MARTEN

Conrad Miller. I am Doctor Marten Randall. This is Stanley Wang. Mary Corey. To what do we owe this honor?

CONRAD

You know my name. My daughter Janice. What the hell are you doing?

MARTEN

You've stumbled into an experiment exactly at the wrong time. Its already begun, it cannot be stopped. Make yourself at home, you're going to be here for a while. We can have no communication with the outside, until we're are done.

CONRAD

Marten. Doctor Marten Randall. I know you. What the hell are you doing here? You don't do fish. If I remember correctly you were into that quantum kinetic, Theoretical Metaphysics lunatic fringe, as I recall.

MARTEN

Not funny. This is for real and very important. You're going to stay here and cooperate or be locked away and cooperate...
(gesturing to Stanley)
And without your toys.

Conrad gives up his comm-wand and the key-reader

Stanley takes Janice and Conrad's Pads as well, and hides them in a drawer.

CONRAD

This place is the financial black hole I've been speculating about. You're no more than a common thief.
(collar heating up)
I'm gonna lock you away forever.

MARTEN

After we're done. Until then sit down and shut up.

CONRAD

Now see here! You'll let us out of here now. I'm going to have you placed under arrest.

MARTEN

No you're not! We didn't ask you in here. You broke into secured areas. You're knowingly interfering with and jeopardizing a dangerous and vital experiment. If we throw you out of here you'll have the world at our door. And that can't happen. Not today. Not now.

(to Stanley)

Stanley. You've got tranquilizers in your bag, right?

STANLEY

Of course. Feather's gonna be here in a minute, she can deal with 'em.

CONRAD

Now see here! I will not be "dealt with" you clown.

(raising his voice)

I demand to be let out of here.

Randall strides up to Conrad and Janice facing Conrad square on.

MARTEN

You're gonna find a seat and shut the hell up until we're done. Do you copy?

JANICE

Father. We gotta get out of here.

CONRAD

(trying to comfort her and himself)

You've sealed your fate Randall.

(to Janice so the others can't hear)

Record this.

JANICE

Have been.

CONRAD

Evidence. What's so damn important down here? Can you make any sense out of this stuff?

JANICE

(whispering)

Its expensive. Quantum processing. If I didn't know any better, I'd say that big cube over there? Its an m-wave transceiver.

CONRAD

(controlled whispering)

Impossible. The biggest I've ever seen was about 14" on a side. This thing is too big to be m-wave. It has no crystal linings for walls, it has no walls.

JANICE

Possible. But the only thing that is actually sent, is the "space" the object is sitting in. M-wave doesn't send objects. They swap space. Whatever is in that space, swaps with each other.

CONRAD

(to Marten)

Randall, what are you trying to do here?

ANGLE ON LAB

At that moment Feather comes through a set of double doors with Steve. His gold and copper mesh garment shoots flashes of yellow and orange at odd angles.

He's being steered by Feather to the STASIS COUCH where it, and all the related hardware enabling it, is stuffed to one side of the lab. Overall it looks like a tanning booth from a Flash Gordon movie.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

Doctor Randall. What the hell's going on?

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - STASIS COUCH

Feather steadies Steve, who is getting his groove on, becoming really relaxed. Marten comes over to her.

FEATHER

Who's that?

MARTEN

(loud enough to be
heard)

Un-invited guests.

(moving in to whisper)

They were snooping around upstairs
and actually got all the way down
here. Turns out he owns the place.

FEATHER

I told you you'd get busted.

MARTEN

Keep an eye on them when you can.
Sedate them if you have to. You can
do that right? Right now, I have to
keep them close or unconscious.
I've already threatened to tranquilize
'em.

FEATHER

My god. If it comes to that, I
suppose I can, but...

MARTEN

Only if it comes to that. We can't
turn back. This guy could become a
serious problem.

(to Stanley)

Stanley, you've got that side arm
down here right?

STANLEY

(balks)

What do you want?

MARTEN

(under his voice)

If you have to scare 'em or something,
feel free. He already thinks I'm
crazy. May as well take you with
me, right?

STANLEY

Thanks a lot.

Stanley strides over to a locker and takes out a handgun. He makes sure Conrad and Janice see him doing this. Its the only weapon in the lab. He walks over to Conrad and Janice with the gun in hand, leaving no doubt that there's a gun in the house.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
(waving it impotently)
Stay over here out of the way and be
quiet. Maybe you'll learn something.

CONRAD
Now see here!

MARTEN
Stop saying that!

Feather helps Steve lay down in the tanning booth/stasis
couch which will scan his entire body and hold it in suspended
animation.

Marten comes over to the STASIS COUCH and stands between
Feather and Steve.

MARTEN (CONT'D)
He's been briefed on everything.

FEATHER
As well as I can predict.

MARTEN
Can I talk to him.

FEATHER
Yes, but he'll go under at any moment.

MARTEN
(to Steve)
Steve, this is Doctor Randall. I'm
here with Feather and we're about to
get started. How you feeling?

STEVE
Weak.

MARTEN
I just want to go over protocol once
more.

STEVE
The key . . . in my chest. Follow
the light.

MARTEN
Yeah, you've got it. We'll be able
to communicate more clearly in a
moment - Yes, you're right. Go into
the light. A multi-colored. We're
calling it a "spectral beacon."

STEVE
Spectral Beacon...nice.

FEATHER
That's it Doctor. I have to put him
under now.

MARTEN
(calming)
Very good. That's very good. Let's
get started.

Marten backs away as Feather lays him flat in the couch. The material he lays down in is a blue gel which form fits him perfectly.

Taking a long look at Steve she gently attaches the gold/copper mesh to cover his face. He is now entirely hooked up with the couch encased in a gold/copper conductive mesh.

Feather taps a flat panel and the heavy upper section of the stasis couch lowers over his body. The clam shell stasis couch closes.

Windows in the upper section allow Feather to see inside the chamber. The sound of rushing air and electrostatic charges become noticeable. The lab has been growing in energy level and background buzz.

CONRAD
Randall, what the hell are you doing?

Marten stands erect, walks over to Stanley and takes the gun, turning it and pointing straight at Conrad's head. This startles everyone.

CONRAD (CONT'D)
Now see here!

MARTEN
One of two things are going to happen.
One...you sit here and shut the fuck
up. Or two...we lock you up in
storage.

Seeing Conrad and Janice imitate deer caught in a headlight, Marten hands the gun over to Stanley. The weapon is heavier for Stanley. But he stuffs it into one of his coat pockets.

MARTEN (CONT'D)
(whispers to Stanley)
Don't be afraid to use it. You know
what's at stake.
(MORE)

MARTEN (CONT'D)

(to Conrad)

Its not critical right now, you can talk. What we're doing is fielding Steve's mind slash spirit into an m-wave. We want to send organic energy levels, hence living material over m-waves.

CONRAD

Christ! My god! What?!

MARTEN

(waves in Mary's direction)

Mary may be smart; but even she can't program m-wave. It's quantum holographic. No Heisenberg principle, no frame dragging...

Conrad is listening, Janice is sitting at attention, recording.

MARY

Computers are stupid. There is no AI. Not yet. There's no god computer mind we can ask to figure this out. We're too stupid to figure this out, so we're going to cheat.

Mary thinks she's smarter than anyone else in United Space, her frustration at not being able to "solve" the m-wave and life is epic; but internal. "Out of the loop." No one can bring the spark of organic life to an algorithm. Sometimes all Mary "does" is - stare into the abyss - and listen. Check a fuse now and then.

MARTEN

We may not have the smarts, but what we do have is "memory."

Feather is watching readout on the COUCH, waiting to reach the trigger point. Randall steps over to a set of black steel doors.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Behind here is enough computing power to practically model the infinite.

(realizing he's lecturing)

Infinity may or may not be forever, the cycle from one black-hole to another for example. We don't need all that.

(MORE)

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Just enough to model consciousness.
It wasn't hard once we could identify
it. Its a wave-form; an infinitely
variable wave-form.

Mary's workstation comes alive. Displays rendering avalanches
of data.

MARY

It's Bruce for the return test.

MARTEN

This is a microphone, open mic
directly into Steve's mind. That's
just how the system turned out.
And the interface is tuned to my
voice, so I can only communicate
with him through the system.

(looking at Conrad)

Saving money. That's why we can't
have extra people in here that might
say something when we go on-line
with Steve. We don't know the
consequences of him getting mixed
signals.

CONRAD

I'm not stupid. What are you saying?

STANLEY

We've been able to bottle the energy
which is or what we could call life-
force energy.

CONRAD

Ridiculous.

STANLEY

(ignoring that)

With Steve here, we can halt all
molecular activity in his body with
the stasis couch. The spirit,
electromagnet medium left over,
"soul," or "mind," the thing that
dreams, remembers, contemplates.

(pinching his arm)

It's all beyond physical. We can
direct him from within his "mind" to
carry that energy from a vault below,
to a receptacle on the moon, via
astral projection.

CONRAD

You're insane!!

MARTEN

Once connected, the "pump" is primed. The loop is closed. Anything in a bio-electromagnetic universe should then be able to jump across the m-wave as easily as we can send paper clips. Its quite a mouthful, that's why we don't talk about it much.

Marten comes back beside Feather who is watching readouts.

FEATHER

It won't be long.

MARY

(interrupting)
Coming down Marten.

MARTEN

Go for it.

The eight cubic foot framework at the one end of the lab comes alive. The square deck is awash in blue light. The frame is lined with light that loosely pulsates, then a translucent blue light fills the entire cubical space. Suddenly there is a POP, all light except for the deck platform turns off and the spider test bed they sent up before reappears on the pad.

Marten and Conrad involuntarily approach the glowing platform.

CONRAD

Good god! What the hell...

Janice stands back speechless.

MARTEN

Everybody stand back.

He gestures to Stanley to run his MULTI-FIELD TESTER over the thing. Stanley grabs a device from a nearby shelf and cautiously steps onto the m-wave pad. He waves the device in circles and around the object. Everything checks out. He steps back.

STANLEY

It's all good. The standard signal is in place and operating fine.

MARTEN

(to Mary)
Tell 'em we're five by five and ready to go dark.

Stanley helps Marten fold up the legs of the test bed and remove it to the side.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

We can reanimate him. Instantly, his body will not have missed a beat. He'll be back in it where he belongs and can go on living. We only have to do this once. Once we have the code, we can upload it to any m-wave matrix and send life.

CONRAD

Absolutely incredible. If it works we'll all be rich.

MARTEN

If it works we can end starvation! If it works we get crowd control. The right people where they're needed, to save the world from tearing itself apart.

CONRAD

Well. That too.

MARY

(again to Marten)
Bruce?

MARTEN

Everyone quiet. Put 'em on.

Feather fingers a panel.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

(into mic)
Randall here, go ahead.

MOON TECH ONE (V.O.)

This is Bruce, reading successful reception of test bed. Standing by for two minute count-down to dark.

MARTEN

Very good.
(to Feather)
How long?

FEATHER

Go ahead. I can fire stasis at any time. He's ready. We shouldn't wait.

MARTEN

Bruce. Doctor Randall. We are hereby synchronized and ready to fire stasis and system utilities. We are synchronized on your two minute count-down.

MARY

We are at activation "stand-by" for priming run.

INT. MOON BASE BRUCE

Equipment flutters to life. Moon Tech One and Moon Tech Two, sit on the edge of their seats, looking on.

MOON TECH ONE

Copy that Prieta, and we have hand shake. Activating spectral beacon in three...two...one...beacon activated. Verify beacon activation.

Part of the laboratory is devoted to the generation of the SPECTRAL BEACON. A vessel under the floor of the m-wave will contain the energy field carried from Earth via astral plain.

Behind them a bank of security camera views monitor the exterior surroundings. A dark shadow crosses a patch of light on one of the monitors, but it goes unnoticed.

MARY (V.O.)

Five by five on spectral beacon. Catch you on the flip-side, Prieta out, and dark.

MOON TECH ONE

Flip-side. We are out. We are dark.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB

Marten stands upright, scans the lab one last time. Janice opens her eyes but she remains sitting upright.

JANICE

(to Conrad)

This is not searchable. There is no background. Furious debates. No funding. Underground.

MARTEN

(looking quizzically
at Janice)

Is she a mind tap?

JANICE

I've had a chiplink installed. "Mind tap" is a derogatory term.

STANLEY

Of course. Why waste time going to school? Just install a link to the the Library of Congress direct through your brain. I thought those were illegal.

CONRAD

They are.

Stanley stoops in closer to her to take a closer look, as if she was a robot or something. This annoys Janice.

JANICE

Do you mind getting out of my face.

STANLEY

Sorry.

Marten steps over to a bank of equipment and fingers a panel.

MARTEN

Recorders engaged. This is March 10, 2087. Time is 10:20am. This is the Punta Prieta Lab site and we are conducting an m-wave experiment for the eight foot by eight foot wave grid. Specific goal: Electromagnetic biological organisms. In attendance: Lead scientist, myself, Dr Marten A. Randall. Quantum computer specialist, Mary Corey with Stanley H. Wang, Dr. Feather Hall is medical officer monitoring test subject - Captain Steve Archer. Two unscheduled and untrained witnesses are present, basically because their noses are too big for their own good.

He dictates and saunters near Conrad and Janice.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Mister Conrad Miller, who was basically embezzled by myself and others to make sure this experiment would happen. He's accompanied by his daughter Janice; who, as it turns out is chiplinked, of all things. Hopefully their presence will not become a problem.

He gestures for everyone to find a seat.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

(to Feather)

It's on you. When you're ready -
put 'im under.

Steve's chest slowly rises and falls. He is breathing very shallow. The gold/copper mesh suit flashes yellow light over its surface at the slightest movement. Feather takes a deep breath. Fingering a flat panel.

FEATHER

Okay, go for it.

Marten pulls over the goose-neck microphone. He taps a panel. Lights indicate something activated.

MARTEN

Listen everyone - this is it. This microphone takes my voice, and directly translates it into the Steve's consciousness. I'm leaving it off for the moment. We will now access his signal and listen in.

He presses an icon on the flat plain.

Speakers in the laboratory blare with a cacophony of WHITE NOISE, BROKEN UP WORDS, WARBLING. There were words, but there were hundreds, all jammed together.

Marten taps a panel to turn off the mic.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

What the hell is that?

She lowers the volume a bit.

MARY

That's it. His mind. You're hearing his present moment thoughts.

MARTEN

But shit. I can't work with that.

MARY

No. We have to filter out everything that isn't part of a linear thought process. I have a couple filters. Should take a sec.

CONRAD

(raising a hand)

We can talk?

MARTEN

For now.

CONRAD

What the hell are you doing?

The NOISE, is becoming less so already.

MARTEN

We are trying to communicate with Steve's energy-self. The part outside the flesh. I like to think of it as astral energy. No one can program that.

The NOISE has quieted down greatly.

CONRAD

But why do that at all?

MARTEN

We have to be able to communicate with him in that state.

(to Mary)

And what?

Mary watches displays for a moment.

MARY

Okay, try that.

Marten looks to everyone to stay silent. He taps a panel to turn on the microphone.

MARTEN

Steve. This is Marten. Can you hear me?

STEVE

(weak)

Is anybody there? There, there. Anybody there? Can't wake up.

MARTEN

I'm right here Steve. Can you hear me?

STEVE

Steve hear me. Hear me. Me.

Mary encourages Marty to continue with a gesture of her head.

MARTEN

Steve...

STEVE

Yes...

MARTEN

Do you hear me?

STEVE

Hear me - yes.

MARTEN

(to the room)

My god, its working.

Feather is almost in tears from the excitement.

Mary is nodding "yes" dumbly to herself repeatedly.

Stanley is on the edge of his seat, watching, keeping quiet.

Conrad is focused but frustrated.

Janice doesn't realize her mouth is hanging open.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Steve, its Marten. The experiment.
Do you remember it?

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

Steve feels nothing. He isn't sure which way is up. Dark grey blankness in all directions. In the center of his vision he can make out a fuzzy dark spot. Slowly the spot becomes larger until it is obviously an immense hole. A rapidly approaching hole. He falls into it feeling weightless

MARTEN (V.O.)

(metallic in Steve's
mind)

Steve. Can you hear me? This is
Marten.

(pause)

I can hear you.

STEVE

(lips unmoving)

Hear you, hear me.

The entire area is a dark hole but he can barely make out walls on the sides, they're moving at great speed, suggesting he's falling. Slowly he rotates like a human target for a knife thrower in a circus.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Where the hell am I?

MARTEN (V.O.)
The experiment? Remember? Feather?

STEVE
Feather.

MARTEN (V.O.)
Do you remember the disk in your chest?

STEVE
The key is a disk in my chest.
(pause)
Follow the flashing light.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - STASIS COUCH

Mary almost buckles over from Glee.

MARTEN
You got it buddy, we're doing great.
(pause)
I'm going to activate a device now
and we want you to move to it. Do
you understand?

STEVE
(over lab speakers)
Activate. Move.

Marten taps another flat screen.

MARTEN
There it is. You should be able to
detect a light or concentration of
energy.

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

Steve notices a disturbance in the distance.

STEVE
(to himself)
Concentrate.

MARTEN (V.O.)
That's right Steve, concentrate.

STEVE
I hear you.

MARTEN (V.O.)
That's good. Do you see a light
anywhere around you?

Steve discovers he is able to rotate and sure enough there is a small red light in the distance.

STEVE
I see red light.

MARTEN (V.O.)
Keep that light in your sights. We are going to switch on stasis. We're not sure what will happen. Do you understand?

STEVE
Go for it.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - STASIS COUCH

Feather is out of her seat standing in front of the stasis couch. Watching displays. She looks over to Marten. Marten nods his head in agreement. Feather steps back from the couch, she touches one of the panels there.

Suddenly and loudly jets of water vapor shoot out the bottom of the couch. A metallic echo. Steve is frozen. If anything is left of Steve, it's not a physical body.

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

Steve exploded, if only for a moment. All around him whatever was dark before became less dark. Instead of blackness and shadows, now he can see indigo and maroon. He looks at his hands and arms. He can see right through them. But they are still illuminated somehow from an unseen light source. Rotating around, he is awe struck, by an intense spewing of colors in his direction from out of a tiny ball in the distance. It could be an infinity away, there was no reference to gauge distance.

STEVE
My god.

MARTEN (V.O.)
Go into it. You may experience an energy boost, or surge when you connect.

Slowly he leans his head forward and is able to imagine flying like Superman.

MARTEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It is raw life force. The key in your chest connects to it.

His Superman idea seems to work, making the red light get larger.

MARTEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The big question we don't have an answer to is if or when you do link up with this energy. What exactly will happen?

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB

Everyone is transfixed. Marten is standing at the microphone.

STEVE (V.O.)

(over the lab speakers)

Lets find out.

Everyone sits quiet, waiting. Seconds tick away. Marten reaches for the mic.

Suddenly they think they feel an earthquake.

MARY

Earthquake?

MARTEN

What the hell is that?

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

Steve has the disk in his chest dead center on the red light he was keeping his eye (mind's eye) on. In realty it is a laboratory receptacle, or urn, buried safely beneath the lab.

Inside the urn is the rarest material known to science; an actual plasmic energy the, the stuff that enables life. The problem has always been, it doesn't interact with the real world.

His upper torso is a radiating a red star, but in moments the brilliance dies down and as it dies away, what's left behind is an infinite payne's-grey sky. High in this crystalline (mind's) sky, an intense point of light dominates his (mind's) eye. A million brilliant colors all at the same time fighting for space.

STEVE

(to himself)

Jesus.

MARTEN (V.O.)

Steve. Was that you just now? What's happening?

STEVE

My god. I think I can see forever.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

Absolutely empty sky except for this light flashing all sorts of colors at me. Is that it? The beacon?

MARTEN (V.O.)

That's it. Spectral beacon. You will astral project, whatever you wanna call it, yourself, to the source of that light. That is the matter ballast on the moon. Once you're at that beacon, merge like you just did right now, at the moon and insert the astral from your chest into the red light there.

(pausing)

We didn't know what to call this life force shit that can't interact with material reality. What you're shuffling around right now? Mary suggested "astral" - it stuck.

STEVE

The moon. Astral. I'm thinking about moving out, speed. Trying to think it. Don't know where else to start. Its almost like, if I can project and then follow, repeating that, faster and faster, maybe. How long is this supposed to take?

MARTEN

Using our common time together. My five minutes would be your five minutes. On your own, without a frame of reference, no connection to the physical? No time? You're in the driver's seat. Hopefully for us all, we can wrap this up sooner than later.

INSERT

Graphic on a flat panel compares the "window of opportunity" where the Earth and the moon would stay in range of each other.

RETURN TO SCENE

MARTEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You're beyond any physical restraints, it may be a matter of intention. "Will" yourself into the light.

(MORE)

MARTEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Do what you can, Feather has faith in you. Mary Corey will keep monitoring you. We're right here with you. Talk to her if you want. She isn't able to talk back to you though.

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

Steve has no gold mesh suit, no blue gel, no stasis couch, from his perspective. For him, he exists in his mind's image of himself, which is his face being warmed by a multicolored sphere of radiance. Over his shoulder however, is a singular intense green light that dissolves to blue, dissolves to purple, to violet, to red...he does not notice this light.

INT. SUB BASEMENT LAB

Marten taps a panel to turn off the mic.

MARTEN

We're off mic. Absolutely astonishing. What we have done already could rewrite science as we know it.

CONRAD

"What's going on?"
 (to Janice, but loud enough for the others to hear)
 I keep asking "What the hell's going on?" But I can't get any answers.

JANICE

(afraid to look at the stasis couch)
 What are you doing to that poor man?

FEATHER

He may be poor; but not where it counts.

Janice doesn't have the best people skills.

MARTEN

Right now he is not one moment to the next. When we bring him back to his body, that's when time takes over again, and its all downhill from there.

JANICE

You're saying its better to be frozen
between time?

MARTEN

No.

STANLEY

(to Conrad, answering
his question)

What's going on? We're on our way.
All this? This is "desperation on
parade." We have to crack this life
m-wave thing. It can't be only big
enough for a bag of cat litter. And
dead cat litter at that.

CONRAD

I must finally be going senile.
This huge square monster then is for
what? Hippopotamuses?

Stanley suppresses laughing like an idiot.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

I mean come on. Start with a cat.
Dandello, or something.

MARTEN

(explaining again)

It can only be a perfect cube, or as
close as we can get. What we call
the eight foot format is light-stable
at its actual field size, which is
seven feet, nine and somewhere nine
and a half inches. For some reason
it doesn't work in any other size.

CONRAD

(waving to the stasis
couch)

Fine, but what does he have to do
with it? What do you need a human
body for? Its a little too
Frankenstein, if you ask me.

MARTEN

(being patient)

Steve. Steve is who we've been
talking to. We took him out of his
body and we're talking to his spirit,
his mind, life force,...astral
projection..

(MORE)

MARTEN (CONT'D)

(Checks information
on his flat panels)

We need to talk directly to him in real time. No one has done this before and may never hereafter. He can't call out or hear without being in time and space, and in a body, physical again. In the couch he is removed from both, in stasis. Its like we're talking to his mind. The spirit, the only thing that's left.

CONRAD

I can think of easier ways to turn someone into a ghost.

MARY

Something's wrong.

MARTEN

What? What is it?

MARY

I've been monitoring him and the times he's verbalizing with himself, he seems fatigued now, but also there's some sort of static, distortion in the way.

MARTEN

Put it on speaker.

A rustling, white noise sound fills the air.

STANLEY

What is that?

MARTEN

Listen everybody, I'm going back on open mic. He's only tuned in to my voice. We don't know how tenuous the connection is. Extra sounds might create unknown circumstances, which we have to keep to a minimum.

Marten taps a flat screen and brings the microphone back on-line.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Steve? This is Marten, I'm back.
Can you hear me?

No Response.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Steve. This is Dr. Randall can you hear me?

No response.

Marten looks at Mary. She is without opinion. Stanley looks on. Conrad and Janice are listening; instead of squawking for a change.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Steve, this is Marten, do you copy?

Suddenly Steve's voice fills the room with a phase-shifting static. His words can be heard clearly enough.

STEVE (V.O.)

Yeah. Where the hell've you been? I think I'm making good progress. I feel like I've been slip-streamed into a long narrow tube, or something. If I'm "thinking" my reality, I'm thinking, "get this over with." I'm going a long time and too far and getting nowhere out of it. How long is this supposed to take?

MARTEN

(to the room)

What the hell?

STATIC hisses through the speakers. People are forgetting to breath.

STEVE (V.O.)

Doctor Randall. This is Steve. I thought I just heard you. I heard you say "you're back!" The first voice I've heard in months? I know what you said.

(static)

Can anybody hear me?

(more static)

Can anybody hear me?

SIMULTANEOUS:

Everyone jumps to their feet, jaws dropping.

MARY

Oh my dear god.

MARTEN

(slowly)

What the fuckin' hell?

JANICE

What's happening?

STANLEY

What is this?...Some kind of time-shift? Temporal distortion? What the...?

Sympathetically, Conrad also jumped to his feet, as best an older man can. He's more deeply in thought about Steve being lost, What does that mean? About the future being lost. About all those dollar signs being lost.

RETURN

CONRAD

I know no one's ever done this before, but didn't you think this through?

(stepping toward Steve)

This guy, what? - you just loose him in some god damned machine and call it a day?

FEATHER

When we disengage the stasis. He'll be back in with himself. Back, though I don't know yet in what condition.

CONRAD

(to Marten)

The best you are, out of all of this, is a murderer.

FEATHER

(in Marten's defense)

Steve did this of his own free will. He goes there. He does that. He's smart. He pays attention. He's not suicidal. He's just fearless. Curious. Objective. Trainable. Durable. A survivor. Someone who steps up. Someone who can. That's why I use him. But Steve calls his own shots.

(takes a step toward Marten)

But that doesn't make Marten a murderer.

(pause for effect)

If anyone is a murderer here...Its me.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - STASIS COUCH

Feather steps back to the massive stasis couch, peering through one of the thick view ports, Steve is a human figure wrapped in gold mesh, imbedded in blue gel, frozen out of time and space.

FEATHER
(Thinking to Steve)
I'm still here.

Mary calls up some other information on here holograms and flat panels. She taps away on a display. She turns white.

MARY
(shakily)
Marten. My god. I got it.

MARTEN
Mary? What? What is it?

MARY
The Sun! He's taken the sun for the spectral beacon. We're losing him because he too far away! He's going the wrong way.

MARTEN
He's going into the sun?

MARY
And trying like hell.
(shakes her head)
We've got to get him back here.

MARTEN
Listen up. I agree with Mary's assessment that his astral body and consciousness are somehow headed into the sun and not the target we wanted on the moon, and he doesn't even know it.

Everyone tries to settle down. Marten taps a display in front of him. The microphone is active.

MARTEN (CONT'D)
(into mic)
Steve. We have our first problem here. You're going the wrong way. Somehow you're putting more distance and time in than we are experiencing. We received your response delayed by almost a minute or more.
(MORE)

MARTEN (CONT'D)

(he pauses expecting
a response and nothing
comes)

For us, the experiment has been
running for about ten minutes, Stop
and return immediately. There is
another light you didn't see
activated. What you're going into
is the sun. Turn around.

No one can say a word. The speakers are silent except for
a slowly increasing hiss. The hiss, comforting in a manner
allows everyone to take a breath. They instill quiet,
listening.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Again. Steve, if you can hear this.
Turn around and come back. You are
going the wrong way. You're going
into the "sun."

Marten taps off the mic.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

(to the people in the
lab)

We wait.

He taps the mic on.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Again. Steve, if you can hear this.
Turn around and come back. You are
going the wrong way. You're going
into the "sun."

Taps the mic off. Combs his fingers through his hair.

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

Steve is racing toward oblivion and doesn't even know it.
Behind him, below him, all around and within him he hears
Marten's voice. Its clear, but far away, racing, hissing.

MARTEN (V.O.)

Steve. We have our first problem.
You're taking the wrong direction...
Somehow you're putting more distance
and time in than "we" are. We
received your response delayed by
almost a minute. We have to wait to
respond. Do you copy?

STEVE
Delayed a minute?

MARTEN (V.O.)
For us, the experiment has been
running for only about ten minutes,

STEVE
Ten minutes. Impossible. I feel
like I've been in here forever.

MARTEN (V.O.)
Stop and return immediately. There
is another light you didn't see.
What you're going into, is the sun.
Turn around. Get your ass out of
there.

STEVE
(startled)
No.

He's been rationalizing: reduce resistance, minimize skin area (at least going forward. His body no longer resembled a human's. More like a rubbery chop stick that stretches on forever, hollowed out inside. A straw moving at close to the speed of light. When suddenly it smacks a wall.

Whatever strung out form Steve had become, all of it collides into a big pile which quickly becomes an expanding pie-pan of astral goo.

As soon as he thought: Stop - it happened. Still unable to tell up from down. At least the sun disappeared, leaving behind a hazy light. He tries to look at the backs of his hands. They flow away like smoke in a breeze.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Guys. What did you do? Is anybody
out there? I've got to calm the
fuck down. Is anybody out there?

He thinks to himself "green," Make everything "green." The sky became a cosmic kaleidoscope of green, turning in on itself. "Peaceful, too." He added quickly. Forms reoriented into animated sculpture, slowly taking the shape of a kaleidoscope become larger, turning in on itself, extending from horizon to horizon.

Steve becomes more and more solid. The kaleidoscope tunes partly into an intricate mandala. Looking at his hands again, he can actually see the hairs on their backs. The veins start turning into writhing snakes.

Rejecting that from his mind, he turns rigid and then to stone. He can't move. His eyes, fixed on the backs of his hands. Hands which are frozen solid in front of him. The kaleidoscopic grinding sky is getting closer every second.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB

The equipment pulling this off is raging away.

MARY

Marten. Looks at the processor.

A display array is monitoring the holographic quantum computer. The indicators reveal that it's topping out.

MARY (CONT'D)

I didn't know a quantum processor was possible of crashing.

MARTEN

Its not crashing its crunching numbers.

MARY

Its providing his consciousness what ever fuel it needs to realize itself.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - STASIS COUCH

Feather is seated in front of the couch in a folding chair, standing by. Stanley is over with Mary and Marten, ooh-ing and ahh-ing. Steve is frozen outside of time space and not of this Earth.

STEVE (V.O.)

(over the labs speakers)

Guys. What did you do? Is anybody out there? Something's changed.

Marten reaches for the mic. Taps a flat-panel.

MARTEN

Steve. We hear you. Are you there?

STEVE (V.O.)

Yes. I think I'm back. I can hear you, but I'm stuck. I'm staring at my hands, and I can't seem to look away.

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

He tries to look away and cannot. His hands are morphing, from sandstone, to granite, to marble, to quartz, to Jasper, but his hands are strangely drying out in addition, becoming

brittle. Small flecks becoming chips, becoming chunks; falling apart in front of his yes.

With his hands gone he can look toward the sky, and he's sorry he did. From horizon to horizon, a churning mandala, grinding, gnashing, lowering down on top of him.

STEVE

(looking up)

I can see the sky, different somehow, like a sky. I thought to myself: green, and the sky became full of green shards, turning in on itself, a kaleidoscope of knives.

More and more detail in his green sky, more movement, sharper, larger chunks of green, tearing itself apart. Getting closer. And he's right in the way.

STEVE (CONT'D)

If I'm made out of stone. Is this sky gonna hurt?

BACK IN THE LAB

Janice can't take it anymore.

JANICE

Stop it! Stop it!

Marten dives for the microphone to cut it off.

CONRAD

Janice. Please.

MARTEN

Its okay. I agree with her. We have to stop this.

STANLEY

How?

MARY

Good question.

STEVE (V.O.)

Guys? Shit, Is anybody there?
Guys?

Marten taps on the mic.

MARTEN

Yes, We're on it.

(MORE)

MARTEN (CONT'D)

It appears the main processor is using whatever it needs to feed your consciousness. It has nearly infinite bandwidth. You have to be careful what you ask for.

STEVE

I can't control my thoughts. I tried "centering" and I created a rock eating, green, mandala, kaleidoscope thing, that's blocked up the sky to take me out. I don't think I can think very clearly. I'm sorry.

MARTEN

Can you see the spectral beacon. It should be all colors but one at a time, slow cycling. Can you see it.

STEVE

I don't see no colored lights. I can't focus on anything. It's too much. Get me the hell outta here!

MARTEN

We're working on it. I'll be right here, I'm just going off mic.

He turns to the others, palms up, accepting answers.

STANLEY

So what do we do? Unplug the thing? It doesn't seem to be working out.

MARY

He said it was too much. We can't slow down the processor, but we can diminish it.

MARTEN

Go on.

MARY

Yank out the memory ingots. Whatever energies. Steve represents, they're shadowed by computer.

Knowing thinking too long about it is not an option, Marten and Stanley rush to the double doors of the main processor room and fling them open.

Inside is a fifty foot long passageway. Down either side, plastic walls, seven feet high, run the length of the passageway.

Down the middle between these walls are eight narrow tables.

Walking up to one of the walls. At the same height as the table, in the wall, there are barely perceptible square buttons; that have to be physically pushed in.

Marten presses one of the buttons. Obediently, a long drawer slides out from the wall. Inside the drawer are six glowing objects about three by three by ten inches long, resting in little coffins that interface them with the computer.

Steve pushes another button which opens a nearby cabinet door. Inside is a device for extracting the memory ingots. Quickly, Marten clips on to the first one and pulls it up and out of the computer and lays it bare on the narrow table. He doe this five more times.

MARTEN

(on local intercom)
Mary, can you hear me?

MARY (V.O.)

(from wall speaker)
Yes, go ahead.

MARTEN

I've removed six. Anything?

MARY (V.O.)

Can't tell yet. This may not work at all.

MARTEN

It has to work. I'm coming out there to talk with Steve and see if anything's happening. I'm going to have Stanley continue to remove ingots until we see some results.

Marten hurries out from the processor bay and gets back to the mic at his station. He taps a panel for the mic to Steve. Everyone is on-line with this procedure by now and stays quiet.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Steve come in. It's Marten. Are you there?

STEVE

Yeah, I'm waiting. What gives?

MARTEN

We are backing off our processors. We may have went a little overkill on that side.

STEVE

And what's next?

MARTEN

What's going on? Is anything happening on your side?

STEVE

The sky is not coming down like it was. I don't know what would have happened if it got to me.

Marten cups his hand over the mic and fingers a panel for the lab intercom.

MARTEN

(into intercom)

How many?

STANLEY (V.O.)

Twelve. Keep going? There's two hundred and forty of these.

MARTEN

Yes, keep pulling them until I tell you to stop.

Fingering off the intercom he goes back to the mic and Steve.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

(on mic)

Steve, the spectral beacon is still transmitting. Can you see it around you anywhere? Can you make it out?

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

Steve notices that his fleshy hands have returned.

STEVE

My hands are back. I guess that's something.

(he's able to look behind him)

I see a blue light. Way over there.

The spark of blue is an intense blue and he can't understand why he didn't notice it before. It is blue but changing now to purple.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Yeah. I see it. Now it's changing to purple.

MARTEN (V.O.)

You got it. Make your way into that light. You're looking at a signal from the moon. What's a hundred and eighty six thousand miles to a ghost?

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - PROCESSOR BAY

Stanley is getting into a rhythm. Three of the eight rows of narrow tables have a series of glowing ingots laying outside of the computer. Thirty two of them.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - MARTEN'S STATION.

STEVE (V.O.)

I was wondering when someone would say the words. I've been feeling like a ghost for years. Now I guess it's official.

Cupping the mic again and fingering the comm to Stanley.

MARTEN

How many Stanley?

STANLEY (V.O.)

Thirty two.

MARTEN

Hold it there for a moment, he's acquired the spectral beacon.

STANLEY (V.O.)

Copy that.

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

The sky has quieted down. The kaleidoscope is almost beautiful. Suddenly the kaleidoscope comes apart Green shards falling all around him but where they land, shoots start to sprout. Growing rapidly. Shooting up into a steel-gray sky, the shoots become trees. Trees become backdrop for a continuously expanding sky. And still they grow. At the center of it all is the spectral beacon. A bright orange now.

STEVE

I wish you could see this. The sky fell apart and its pieces are creating plants that turn into trees and they're so high.

Almost beyond sight, there is a canopy of leaves going on forever.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. There's something fuzzy in the way. My god. That's stars, galaxies, how can trees grow larger than space itself?

MARTEN (V.O.)

Steve I wish I could see it. I really do. Can you get to the light, the beacon? Can you fly to it? Move yourself along to it to get the key in your chest into the matter ballast on the moon.

STEVE

I'm trying. I seem to be moving. I'm figuring this out. I've had enough time to figure this out.

MARTEN (V.O.)

Usually how it works, you figure it all out right about when you've finished it.

STEVE

The light is under the canopy of trees, but it looks like galaxies are in the way. Is that right?

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - MARTEN'S STATION

Everyone is hanging on every word. For them, only thirty-five minutes has past, it feels like a lifetime.

MARTEN

(into mic)

Focus on getting to the beacon, I'm going off air for a minute.

STEVE (V.O.)

Copy that.

MARTEN

(to the others)

If we pull this off...

MARY

This a a big day. Maybe the biggest ever.

CONRAD

I'll give you this. You guys are absolutely "out there" to even come up with this.

(MORE)

CONRAD (CONT'D)

But if it works, I'll back you with whatever you need. I want in. But you fail, you're on your own and go to jail.

MARTEN

Wow. Harsh. Don't put anyone under any pressure while you're at it.

(he gives Conrad a sour look)

Do what you have to. This is too important, whatever you think.

STEVE (V.O.)

No! No! I can't. I can't.

MARTEN

What the hell?

(taps on mic)

Steve. It's Randall. What's going on? Talk to me.

STEVE (V.O.)

There's something in the way. Water? Some barrier...

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

The floor of his forest is out of sight. Below him are tremendous tree trunks that seem to go on forever. He can almost see his reflection in the water above him. He reaches into the water with his hand and bubbles stream through and around his fingers.

In slow motion the bubbles around his hand become spheres of light. Going into one bubble he sees there is nothing but stars, galaxies.

MARTEN (V.O.)

Steve. Do you hear me?

STEVE

I can't do this. I see the light but its too far away.

MARTEN (V.O.)

Have you tried walking?

STEVE

Insane. Get me out of here now. I've had it. I can't navigate this shit.

MARTEN (V.O.)
Stand by. We're going to relieve
the processor more. Hang on.

STEVE
You "hang on."

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - MARTEN'S STATION

Marten finger's off the mic.

MARTEN
(on lab intercom)
Stanley, keep pulling ingots, he's
still too hot. There has to be an
appropriate level, but we don't know
what it is. Take out another thirty
or so. If it's too much, maybe we
can put some back.

STANLEY (V.O.)
Copy, pulling ingots now.

MARTEN
(to Mary)
Do we have a chance? How long can
he put up with this?
(to Feather)
Anything? Any ideas?

FEATHER
None. From here, until he comes out
of stasis, I can do nothing.

STANLEY (V.O.)
That's another ten. Continuing.

MARTEN
Everyone quiet.

He fingers back "on" the mic.

MARTEN (CONT'D)
Steve. Any changes? Talk to me
buddy.

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

He is moving forward still. The endless stars have given up
on him. The trees are gone, he's falling, faster and faster.
He looks down and the spectral beacon is below him now. He
believes this has suddenly become much easier.

STEVE

Don't call me buddy, buddy. If I make it outta here I'm gonna wring your neck.

MARTEN (V.O.)

I'll help you wring it, just get your ass back here. Get into that light and get back here.

STEVE

Something's changed. Everything is thinning out. No its leaking, or something.

The light from the beacon that was below him has shot out in front of him as he lands ankle deep in soft sand. The sky - is blue, dark and endless. The stars and space are gone.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I'm in sand. Some kind of soft sand. What are you doing to me?

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB

Marten ignores Steve and calls to Stanley on the lab intercom.

MARTEN

Stop pulling ingots. We may have gone too far now. How many is that?

STANLEY (V.O.)

Forty-six.

MARTEN

Yeah, hold it there for a while. My god.

Marten taps back on to his mic to Steve.

MARTEN (CONT'D)

Steve. We're holding here. How you doing?

INT STEVE'S MIND

Steve is making slow progress through the sand. This is compounded by the fact that with each step he takes, that leg turns to sand and collapses, to be restored in time for him to take the next step. The absolute worst way to take a hike. The sky is casting a sharp shadow of him on the sand but there is no sun in the sky to make it.

STEVE (V.O.)
They don't pay me enough for this
shit.

FEATHER
(under her breath)
That's more like the Steve I know.

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

The revolving colors of the spectral beacon cease and hold on red. Continuing forward there is a big red sphere floating in front of him.

STEVE
What's going on? I'm standing in
front of a large sphere. Red sphere.
Suddenly the beacon went dark and
left this red sphere behind.

MARTEN (V.O.)
Dammit you did it. Steve. The key
in your chest has to be inserted
into the middle of that sphere.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB

Everyone is on their feet, patting each other on the back. Ridiculous grinning taking place. Stanley exits the processor and joins everyone, who are right on the edge of tears.

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUBSPACE

Steve is standing motionless before a large glowing red sphere. He has both arms outstretched in front of him, palms against the sphere. He is pushing but nothing is happening.

MARTEN (V.O.)
. . . with that red zone. Surround
the disk . . .

STEVE
I can't. Something's in the way. I
can't get in.

MARTEN (V.O.)
Keep trying you're right there, come
on for god's sakes, do it.

Steve leans into the red glowing ball but it won't give way.

STEVE
I can't. Something's wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB

Randall says nothing but is praying that Mary pulls out a solution. She shakes her head, morose, she can't see a problem. She's drained.

MARTEN

(into mic)

Try to relax . . . take a minute or two . . .

STEVE (V.O.)

I don't know what is a minute. I can't relax.

MARTEN

We're on it.

STEVE

You're on it - I'm IN it. How do you know I'm not stuck in here, for all time, you bastard.

MARTEN

No!

STEVE (V.O.)

What if there's something else going on here you don't know anything about, something doesn't want us to do this, some unknown barrier or, God! Wait! What if it's fucking aliens or something. I've put up with a lot, but I'm not yet ready for goddam aliens!

MARTEN

No Steve! Think what you're saying.

STEVE (V.O.)

You don't know!

Mary shakes her head sadly.

MARTEN

(grasping at straws)

Try to clear your thoughts, settle down....

STEVE (V.O.)

Wait a minute. Wait a minute.

Everyone stops breathing.

INT. STEVE'S MIND - SUB SPACE

He slowly passes through the outer skin of the glowing red sphere. The portion of his arms that are inside the sphere pulsate and change colors.

STEVE

It's going. I can feel it. I'm going in. Everything's dark what's going on?

His slightly bent over posture, arms outstretched. The disk on his chest centering on the glowing red sphere. At last, the disk is dead center inside the sphere. He is frozen, unable to move, at the end of his journey. Concentric waves of intense light burst from the disk on his chest.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - MARY

Mary's face is unreadable. Raising the remote in her left hand she thumbs it several times, watches graphics on the flat panels rotate information.

MARY

We're there. Its working. Auto-sequencing is initiating . . .
(straightening in her seat)
We should have a code imprint ready to compile. Dammit if he, you, didn't do it.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - STASIS COUCH - STEVE

Steve is frozen in stasis. The light bathing him flickers quickly, his chest begins to move again. His shoulders move slightly, he cautiously tests his body. Feather taps a flat-panel and the massive lid covering his body slowly yawns open. Feather reaches in and peels back the cover over his face.

He has a relaxed peaceful expression, eyes closed, as he was when he went in. On the flip-side, coming back into his body, he quickly collides with the reality of - now.

Startling Feather, he lashes out, flailing arms; running legs going nowhere. He bucks against the connections to his metallic suit. He struggles although he is weak.

STEVE

(shouting, screaming)
What the fuck's going on!

INT. STEVE'S MIND

Flashes of intense color radiate outward into nothing. Way in the distance a horizontal sliver of orange light separates a dome above him and blackness below him and in the sliver it gets dark then light and then a fiery blast of light, a solar flare tries to fill up this empty space.

The solar flare turns into a crack which widens and reveals hard-edges, metallic surfaces, lights - dim and bright, colors, cold. A flash of blinding pain, for Steve, is an intense light, shooting through his head.

RETURN

FEATHER

My god!

Throwing his legs out he tries to stand up but he's still connected to the interface of the couch.

MARTEN

Feather!

FEATHER (V.O.)

(to herself, bracing
Steve by the shoulders)

Steve! You did it. . . Can you hear
me?

Feather grabs him under his armpits to hoist him up to more to a sitting posture along the front edge of the couch. He helps enough she doesn't have to lift all of him. She reaches behind him and starts unsnapping conductors.

STEVE (V.O.)

(to himself)
What?

FEATHER (V.O.)

(to herself)
You did it. You really did it.

STEVE (V.O.)

(lips not moving)
Get me out of this.

Feather freezes in shock. She holds Steve as best she can, trying to recollect what just happened.

FEATHER

(thinking to herself-
not moving her lips)
Can you hear me?

STEVE (V.O.)
Yes. Feather.

FEATHER (V.O.)
The others?

STEVE (V.O.)
Yes, fading. Help Randall. I'm
dying.

FEATHER
No Steve - we're bringing you back.

He stumbles trying to stand up. This does not reflect what's
going on in his head.

STEVE (V.O.)
I can feel it fading away. I love -

FEATHER (V.O.)
Steve. Its gone.

A tear appears from nowhere and rolls down her cheek. Feather
bows her head as if in prayer, trying to retain the moment.
Frozen, trying to hear. It may never come again.

FEATHER - CLOSE UP

Her face is losing color. She turns to MARTEN, who's standing
next to the table where the memory ingots lay exposed.

FEATHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What have we done?

Mary, entirely out of character, assumes total panic. Leaps
out of her chair. Stands fast in place, scared, angry. All
without a word.

MARTEN
(borderline moronic)
What's going to happen?

FEATHER
(back to business)
Uncertain.

MARTEN
He's already out of stasis.
(looks to the couch)
My god. All the voltages are
different, the extensions are gone.
The whole thing is finished.

MARY

(speculating)

I hope he comes out of it. He's back in his body, the hard part is done. He's alive. And then again, maybe all his personality is laying out, in there, on the table.

Randall looks dark, disgust mixed with food-poisoning. Embarrassed by his apparent complete failure to think anymore. He turns away speechless.

After a moment he turns back to Mary. She speaks first.

MARY (CONT'D)

Do you believe in God?

MARTEN

I believe I don't know what to think.

Mary thinks this is funny, or she needed to laugh. She embarrasses herself with a maniacal outburst of LAUGHTER. She rotates back to her instrumentation.

MARY

We're all going to hell.

RANDALL

We got the recordings?

MARY

(focusing)

Everything, all five channels. Holographic, tape, optical, magnetic, square-wave. Its a gold mine.

MARTEN

Shut down and reboot.

MARY

Doctor Marten?

Watching Steve struggling with the knot he wrangled himself into. Feather starts disconnecting conductors. Mostly letting him sit on the edge of the couch.

MARY (CONT'D)

(crying)

But Steve!

MARTEN

(to Feather)

Feather! Keep him plugged in.

(MORE)

MARTEN (CONT'D)

We're going to reload the beginning with the primary recorded m-wave scan, - Reload that. Like a time machine.

(distracted for a second)

Get me the moon.

MARY

I've been trying to establish a comm-link with Bruce, there's nothing there.

MARTEN

What d'you mean, nothing there?

MARY

No carrier wave, nothing.

MARTEN

(to Stanley)

Microwave?

MARY

Microwave down.

MARTEN

Reboot. From the top.

EXT. SURFACE OF MOON - DAY

Three black space-suited figures hop off a SKIMMER and move into the shadows. Lights flood the crater rim wall and the abandoned moon code named: MOON BASE (BRUCE). MOON BASE BRUCE is a cluster of quonsets and silos. Satellite and communication dishes; one pointing straight up to Earth.

RED PAWN ONE

There's someone home all right.
Dish pointed straight up. Talking to Earth.

She cranes her head around to look above her and sees a gibbous blue Earth glimmering silently, except for her breathing. Earthlight blankets the dark shadows with a pale daylight-blue light.

RED PAWN THREE

(into radio)

Occupants of outpost inside Copernicus. Respond please.
Occupants of the outpost inside Copernicus do you copy?

(MORE)

RED PAWN THREE (CONT'D)

We didn't know anyone was out here.
We could use some O2. Can you help
us out? Do you copy?

Three dark figures linger around the main airlock.

INT. MOON BASE BRUCE

Two uniformed lab workers LABTECH ONE and LABTECH TWO, huddle around crowded machinery and lab equipment. At one end of this space however, is a duplicate framed eight foot square cube. Identical to the one in Baja.

Among the wide variety of display screens, an outside view of the exterior airlock door, shows three space-suited individuals.

They choose to not respond to the radio.

RADIO (V.O.)

We're coming in there. I have a
key, Chain technology, opens anything
on the moon. I hope you don't wanna
pick a fight with us. I really don't
want to ruin any perfectly good door
seal activators.

Labtech One has his hand on the mic, frozen, panicked expression on his face. He taps a spot on the display to turn on the mic.

LAB TECH1

(into mic)

We're not open for business.

RED PAWN ONE (V.O.)

Come on - its cold out here. We
won't stay very long. You gotta
have a can'o Dinty Moore around there
somewhere? Been surveyin' long time
out here, whatya say.

Labtech1 touches a pad and turns off the microphone.

LAB TECH2

This is all fucked up. We can't let
them in here.

EXT. MOON BASE BRUCE

The surface of the moon outside the habitat is a study in black and white. At the airlock, about as big as a garage; Red pawn One takes a box from Red Pawn Two. Presses the device against an access panel.

In a few moments the door comes alive, disconnects and slides to the side.

The three black space-suited figures walk in, closing the large airlock door behind them.

INT. MOON BASE BRUCE

Lab Tech One grabs the microphone.

LAB TECH ONE

(into mic)

I repeat, stay out from here, we cannot assist you. We're conducting an experiment. Can't be interrupted.

RED PAWN ONE (V.O.)

I told you we're coming in. Why is it nobody ever listens to me? We can give you a hand with your experiment.

INSERT

Remote camera view of the vestibule-side of the internal airlock door. The door detaches from the bulkhead, then moves under hydraulics to the side, out of the way. Three black space-suited intruders step out of the airlock. Once they clear the heavy door, it shuts behind them.

RETURN

LAB TECH TWO

(off mic)

A fucking comedian.

Looks at the eight foot square m-wave rigging; there is nowhere to hide it. He decides to make an executive decision. The sound of RUSHING AIR can be heard from the pressurizing of an airlock not too far away.

LAB TECH TWO (CONT'D)

Shut it down. Kill the power to the m-wave. Shut everything down. What about Prieta? What happens to the buffer? We don't know where we are.

LAB TECH1

I'm making an executive decision. Kill the power. The buffer will pick up where it left off.

Lights on the m-wave test bed go out. Half the displays in the room go dark. Displays show the three sauntering under the low gravity toward the lab.

There are two doors between them and the lab.

Both lab technicians scramble to shut down the experiment. They rush about turning things off.

LAB TECH2

I hope you know what you're doing.

LAB TECH1

I barely knew what I was all ready doing - I just know our friends out there weren't invited.

The large door at one end of the compartment springs open and the three space-suited individuals come through the door their helmets still on. The one in front of the others is the woman. She is holding a threatening looking weapon.

RED PAWN ONE

(tapping her helmet)

Air guarantee, you understand. Its too easy to vent a compartment. And yes, we are Chain, and damn suspicious.

(scanning the curious equipment)

What the hell is going on in here?

RED PAWN TWO

Which one of you two is in charge?

LABTECH ONE

(slowly raising his right hand)

Me, I guess.

RED PAWN ONE

You - you guess.

(Scans area)

You two sit there and shut up.

(to Red Pawn 3)

Preliminary.

RED PAWN 2

Its m-wave - but Christ! This field generator, if that's what it is, its nearly 8 feet square!

(partially rhetorical)

What are you going to send through an eight foot square m-wave?

(realizing the question was silly)

My god, you could build worlds with a tool like this.

LAB TECH1
We don't answer to you.

RED PAWN ONE
(to Red Pawn Two)
United Space. Sense of loyalty is
entertaining.
(gesturing to the m-
wave cubicle)
Evaluate that.

Red Pawn Three moves over to a bank of strange machinery.
Waves a device over custom made equipment.

RED PAWN ONE (CONT'D)
That's what this is? An overgrown m-
wave?

Lab tech2 looked away to the readout in front of him.

RED PAWN ONE (CONT'D)
(to his team)
These two don't add up. This should
be a big operation. Or, you haven't
sent anything yet. We fucked you
up. Its a prototype.

RED PAWN TWO
It's an experiment.

Behind some lockers Red Pawn Two spots an animal cage.

RED PAWN TWO (CONT'D)
No fucking way!

RED PAWN ONE
What is it?

RED PAWN TWO
A cage for an animal?

Red pawn one gets it instantly.

RED PAWN ONE
(to Lab tech 2)
What is it, a goat?

LAB TECH 2
Yeah.

Lab Tech 1 back hands him, to not give away any secrets.

RED PAWN THREE
Goat?

RED PAWN TWO
 Eat anything, make great fertilizer,
 low maintenance. Great creature for
 space habitats.

RED PAWN ONE
 You have got to be "kidding" me.

RED PAWN TWO
 (letting the pun pass)
 This is bigger than anything.

RED PAWN ONE
 If we weren't out here tooling around,
 this would have gone right past us.
 (pausing for effect)
 Boots on the ground. Cops, soldiers,
 equipment, crowd control,
 cheeseburgers. They're all gonna go
 nuts.
 (to Red pawn three)
 Three!

RED PAWN THREE
 I'm on it. Downloaded executables
 for labeled ballast keys. There is
 the execute line. And copy.
 Untested.
 (looking up)
 We don't know if it works?

RED PAWN ONE
 What's your plan to test this? The
 goat or something?

LAB TECH TWO
 Of course.

LAB TECH ONE
 Without the radio, without the
 security key? Can't synchronize.
 (into mic)
 Prieta, Bruce, do you copy? We were
 in synchronization. Now we're not

LAB TECH TWO
 Its all in the program. Dammit.

The door to the moon supply depot lab opens with no effort.
 Three space-suited figures lumber in under the low G-forces.
 They keep their helmets attached. Without a radio they can
 be heard through the helmets.

RED PAWN THREE

One. Its m-wave gear but this stuff is something else.

RED PAWN ONE

What else?

RED PAWN THREE

I can't get a read on a container under the deck. Its like an m-wave ballast.

Waves his hand-held device over more of the equipment.

RED PAWN TWO

They just shut something down. This is dead. I've never seen....

RED PAWN ONE

Two. Take out the goofy looking one.

RED PAWN TWO is average build, follows orders, a menace. His suit is outfitted with utility pockets holding whatever, and he's also carrying a pellet rifle.

Lab Tech One and Lab Tech Two look at each other to see which one is the more goofy looking.

LAB TECH

Now wait a minute.

RED PAWN ONE

Why not? You're just another bag of water sucking air.

LAB TECH1

Charming.

RED PAWN ONE

Forget it. What the hell are you doing in here?

LAB TECH12

(giving in)

We're in the middle of an m-wave experiment. I think I shouldn't have shut it down though.

RED PAWN ONE

Does it work?

LAB TECH 1

We aborted. Don't know.

RED PAWN ONE

Re-start it. Can you turn it on?
Where is the other m-wave located?

LAB TECH 1

North America. But right now we
can't even make a phone call, let
alone transport goats.

RED PAWN ONE

No. I want to transport food where
its needed. I want to transport
people where they can do the most
good.

LAB TECH 1

Or do the most damage, is really
what you mean.

RED PAWN ONE

Three. Can you interface with what's
going on in here?

RED PAWN THREE

Yeah, we've got component algorithms,
dna mappers. Organic materials
sensors.

(reaches for a touch
screen bringing it
to life)

Main CPU is just beyond that door...

Red Pawn Two moves forward ready to take on the door.

LAB TECH 1

Get off it. I'll do it, before you
fuck it up all together

Red Pawn Three fingers his hand-held remote device. The
base of the m-wave flickers alive, emitting a powder blue,
warm, glowing light.

CUT TO:

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - STASIS COUCH

Steve pushes against Feather but she can easily keep him
subdued. The others look on scared. Steve is struggling to
either sit up, or lay down, and keeping Feather busy trying
to get him back into the couch, while he manages to do both.

FEATHER

Steve wait, you're still connected.

Steve does not hear her. He hears grunts and shouting and its coming from him.

STEVE's POV

Steve sees his arms and legs being pulled in all directions, unable to move. Like a fly in a web but he is the web. He is grasping the edge of the stasis couch for dear life and doesn't know it.

FEATHER (CONT'D)

You've got to stay still so we can fix you. Can you hear me?

Steve dimly sees the lab. More detail flowing, like seaweed. The deck heaving under his feet. The couch shifting slowly. Lab equipment and walls swimming.

INSERT

He gazes at the faces of each person in the lab, one after the other, one blending into another. Few becoming millions of faces blending together into two eyes one nose, one mouth of the universal human.

RETURN TO SCENE

Feather tries to get him to his feet.

STEVE (V.O.)

Am I getting back?

FEATHER (V.O.)

(thinking to herself)

You did it. You're historic.

STEVE (V.O.)

What?

FEATHER

Historic.

She quakes at a realization. (Steve is able to communicate telepathically.)

FEATHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(thinking to herself)

Steve! . . . Can you hear my thoughts?

STEVE (V.O.)

I can?

FEATHER (V.O.)

The others?

STEVE (V.O.)

Yes? Fading. Help Randall. I think I'm dying.

FEATHER (V.O.)

No! We're gonna bring you back. Just hang on.

STEVE (V.O.)

Feather, I...love...

FEATHER (V.O.)

No. Its gone.

She tries to save the moment. Stilling herself, bring back what happened, but its gone.

Janice, which has been an observer up till now, lets out with a blood-shaking scream as she leaps to her feet.

JANICE

I can't take it. Father. Get me out of here. Make them stop it.

Conrad grabs Janice and pulls her to him signaling her to shut up.

CONRAD

Janice. Randall. What the hell? Is he some kind of zombie now?

RANDALL

Unknown. You're not supposed to be in here. Stand aside or we'll lock you away.

(to Mary)

Never show a stupid person the middle of a job.

CONRAD

(out of character)

Fuck you! I'm sick of you.

Steve persists in wrestling with Feather.

RANDALL

Mary. Can we re-initialize the couch or not?

MARY

I don't know.

CONRAD

Is he dangerous?

RANDALL
 (looking to Steve)
 No. I'd say if we can't restore him fully, he may be three or four days in this fugue.

CONRAD
 Three or four days!?

RANDALL
 (ignoring Conrad)
 Feather!

FEATHER
 (backing away from Steve, letting him move on his own)
 He's in shock or something. I can't reach him. He's not all here. Doctor. For a moment I thought I could hear his thoughts?

RANDALL
 What? Jesus Christ.

The large m-wave chamber at the other end of the lab. Is at full power and in stand by.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
 (to Stanley)
 Help her get Steve re-connected.

Stanley and Feather seem to make progress pushing him down into the couch and reconnecting terminals attached to his metallic knit suit.

Trying to get his legs into the couch, Steve's survival instinct forces him to involuntarily kick out against the couch. Throwing him on top of Stanley, both of them on a tangled heap on the deck.

Steve lunges again snapping a last connector and flings him into a wall, collapsing, sitting on the deck with his back to the wall. Feather rushes to his side. Holding him to catch his breath.

Randall is distracted by display activity on the main control station to the lab m-wave.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
 What the hell is going on?

MARY
 I see it. I don't know.
 (MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Looks like they're trying to send something down.

RANDALL

They're running the initiator we just coded. They're sending something.

The large m-wave steps up a notch in brightness.

MARY

Dammit. We're not ready for this. Why are they breaking from procedure? We've got tests to run. What are they thinking?

RANDALL

You still can't raise them?

MARY

Nothing. Something's wrong.

An electrical popping noise gives way to a loud SNAP. A tectonic rumbling can be felt as they sit staring at the m-wave platform. Steve is the only one gazing into nothingness.

Randall steps cautiously toward the m-wave. Sheets of light flash from one end of the cubical space to the other.

For a moment there is a suggestion of three human forms trying to form.

RANDALL

Shit, who the hell? We're not ready.

INT. STEVE'S MIND

Steve is watching the lab dissolve and move in jerks and flows all around him. Bright colors reflect off objects at odd angles.

He closes his eyes and sees a pair of women's green eyes. Clear and piercing. Leathered crow's feet reveal a life lived hard. He looks down in his mind's eye and sees an assault rifle in his hands.

His perception shifts again and the green eyes are replaced by the dark brown eyes of a man. He looks down at his hands and he sees a recording tech device, held in his right hand.

He tries to look away and is met with another pair of hazel eyes, tired eyes. He dares to look down again and he is holding another weapon of some sort. He turns it over in his hands, feeling its weight.

He tries to look closer but focusing is difficult.

RETURN

He fights to open his eyes. He gets out two words -

STEVE
Chain terrorists.

FEATHER
(hearing Steve)
What's that?

STEVE
Chain.

FEATHER
(shouting to the others)
Its Chain Randall! Steve says its
the Chain!

MARTEN
What? Impossible.
(to Mary)
We're recording?

MARY
Yes. I'm on it.

RANDALL
That's right. They wanna raid the
game? They just become guinea pigs.
Make sure we get everything.
(to Stanley)
Get that gun.

Stanley picks up the handgun.

Another loud electrical SNAP draws everyone's attention to
the platform of the m-wave.

CONRAD
Randall? What the hell's happening?

MARTEN
They found the supply depot lab on
the moon. They're already onto us.
They're crafty all right. I didn't
think they were this stupid though.

CONRAD
This can't be happening.

The image of three space-suited figures, flickers two times.
Randall and Conrad saw through the visors of their helmets

enough to make out a woman and two men, one of them black. They are holding something in their hands.

MARTEN

They're wearing space suits?

MARY

There are only two guys in Bruce.

MARTEN

These guys . . .

A final blue flash, a flicker and three hulking, black space-suited, militants appear on the m-wave platform. There is a crash of light, and silence.

Background noises of the lab equipment grow in number.

They react with effort to the heavier gs; the sudden weight making them barely able to stand upright. The man and woman in front carry assault rifles. The big black guy in the back has electronic devices in pouches on his space suit. In his right hand a black box is held in front of him.

Conrad and Randall back away from the m-wave. Janice screams, startling everyone except for the three space-apes and Steve.

Feather pulls her eyes away from the m-wave and looks at Steve. He is oblivious. Awe-struck by something.

M-WAVE PLATFORM

The woman in front pointed her weapon at the oldest lab coat there.

RED PAWN ONE

What in God's creation was that!
What just happened?

They remain motionless, unsure to move. The black guy with the sensors waves his instrumentation around.

RED PAWN THREE

Gravitation 1.0 - 65 feet below sea level. Breathable atmosphere. We're on Earth baby!

RED PAWN TWO

It's not possible!

RED PAWN THREE

This is a subterranean lab, we're off Pacific, Baja, Punta Prieta Oceanographic. I don't smell no fucking fish!

Randall and Mary look on defenseless, and mortified.

Conrad is paying close attention but trying to not draw attention to himself.

Janice is sitting upright again, taking in everything, trying to be invisible.

Feather is kneeling next to Steve. Steve is relaxed and out-of-body.

INT. STEVE'S CONSCIOUSNESS

Like a fly on the wall Steve visits Red pawn one.

RED PAWN ONE (V.O.)

(to herself)

My god. What the? I'm here. I'm here. Did that just happen? My god where am I. What's going on?

Steve could visit the space between Red pawn two's ears, through his helmet, eavesdrop.

RED PAWN TWO (V.O.)

(to himself)

I'm getting too old for this shit. If this is Earth, lets get outta here.

Steve hovers over Red pawn three.

RED PAWN THREE (V.O.)

Goddam! Almost fucking threw up in my helmet. Shit. Is this real? What's going on? This is Earth?

Steve checks out the fox with the old man.

JANICE (V.O.)

(thinking to herself)

My dad is going to go nuts. This is a gold mine. This will be a big mistake. If they don't kill us. Record this, as best I can. What's this world coming to? Where did they get that color?

Steve visits the fat guy in the suit who has no reason whatsoever to be there.

CONRAD (V.O.)

(to himself)

This has to be controlled, its too big for anybody. Its too much. But God, what a growth margin. It'll fuel the economy for decades. Do these guys have any idea what they're sitting on?

Steve visits Mary who is quiet. Spent.

MARY (V.O.)

(to herself)

Nothing. Stolen right from under us. Just isn't fair. What was I thinking? They were going to name it after me? Mary? Mary's an okay name. Bastards.

Stanley was off to the side, but Steve was more interested in Marten.

Steve visiting Marten.

MARTEN (V.O.)

(to himself)

Bastards. Squirming fucking rats. Into everything. Why can't you just leave us alone. You do nothing for fixing the problem. All you can do is break shit. Cavemen.

Steve visiting Steve. With Feather's help, he tries to get up on two feet. He may very well be a zombie by now.

RED PAWN ONE

(muffled through the helmet)

I'm at pressure, I'm removing my helmet. Two?...Three?...Keep yours on.

RED PAWN TWO

10 - 4.

RED PAWN THREE

Copy that.

She releases a clamp holding her helmet to her torso shell. Once her head gets out of it, the bulky extra weight takes it away from her. She lets it drop loudly on the m-wave deck.

RED PAWN ONE

Not used to gravity.

Randall is standing closest to the woman in front with her head sticking out the top of a spacesuit.

MARTEN

Who the hell are you?

RED PAWN ONE

Chain. Patrol. Trying to figure out what's going on outta the East Bruce crater wall. You may be outta the way, but not invisible.

MARTEN

I asked you who you are?

RED PAWN ONE

What? What my mother called me? Late for supper? Susan! What the fuck difference does it make what my name is? Any decay detector can pick up m-wave activity. Stick's out like a sore thumb. We find people pulling all kinds of stunts out here. But this, this is a prize winner.

MARTEN

What do you want? A piece of the pie? Stock options?

RED PAWN ONE

No. We wanna make sure no one profits off this.

MARTEN

We've destroyed Earth. All we do is hide from Earth. No one hangs out on the surface anymore if they don't have to.

RED PAWN ONE

(changing the subject)

Three. What've we got?

RED PAWN THREE

Quantum Holo-memory and processors. Yep, here's the ballast. Good, its holo-scripted. Can take the whole thing on our crystal chips.

RED PAWN ONE

(looking at Mary)

Very exotic. Quantum Holographic processors. This...

(gesturing)

Does it have A.I.?

MARY

No one has A.I. - never will. A.I.
is a myth.

RED PAWN ONE

You gotta get out more often.

MARY

What are you saying?

RED PAWN ONE

Join us. You're cute. We can show
you all sorts of stuff.

Mary was not offended by the thought.

RED PAWN ONE (CONT'D)

Three.

RED PAWN THREE

Almost there.

RED PAWN ONE

You know what I want to do?

MARTEN

What do you want to do?

RED PAWN ONE

Distribute the execute code, ballast
specs. United Space won't profit
outta this. Make all this public
domain. I think things are going to
be speeding up real fast.

Something catches his eye on a stool a short distance away.
The older man in a suit. Red Pawn One steps over to Conrad.
Conrad is looking down, trying to be innocuous.

RED PAWN ONE

(looking down on Conrad)

Who are you?

(She looks at Janice)

You two are related.

(to his cohorts,
remembering)

I know who this is. What are the
odds? Of course, you're the one who
bankrolled this. Miller. Yeah,
Conrad Miller.

(to Janice)

You can't be a hooker.

JANICE

I'm his daughter.

RED PAWN THREE
Way to go, One.

RED PAWN ONE
Grab him.

A chorus of "what's!"

MARTEN
Come on, the moon? What will you do
with him on the moon?

RED PAWN ONE
Who gives a shit where we take a
hostage?

JANICE
Take me instead.

CONRAD
No!

RED PAWN THREE
Why?

RED PAWN TWO
(to no one in
particular)
Now you're talking.

RED PAWN ONE
Two, shut up. Done.

MARTEN
That's crazy. You don't want her.

RED PAWN ONE
Wrong. If you're concerned about
her welfare, you'll supply us on the
other side - "The other side" -
(coining a phrase)
Through the cube - until we can set
up our own.

Red pawn Two is dragging Janice, in her sun dress, onto the m-wave cubicle deck. Her first impulse was adventure, but quickly it begins to terrify her, as she screams for help.

Red Pawn One picks up and reattaches her helmet. Janice is aware that she has no helmet for herself.

Steve is standing on his own now and is free of the couch. He takes one ragged step and then another one, headed toward the m-wave. Ghost-like he moves in closer. Red Pawn Three spots him and does a double-takes on his scanning device.

RED PAWN THREE
Who the hell is that?

RED PAWN ONE
Where?

RED PAWN THREE
Twelve o'clock. Doesn't register on
the bio-scan?

MARTEN
Steve, part of the experiment.

RED PAWN THREE
(off topic)
I'm ready, I think I can send us
back. We've got everything we need.

Janice is held tightly by Red Pawn Two, eyes darting around,
too terrified to scream.

Steve is close to the m-wave, everyone's eyes on him. He
gets brighter somehow. Radiating. Feather reaches out to
him to stop him. She can't grab onto anything or get close
to him. Its as though he's not really there anymore.

INSERT

Memory ingots lay exposed on the workbench glowing
energetically.

RETURN

The three space-suited militants, and Janice; are standing
within the eight foot square platform of the m-wave field
chamber.

RED PAWN ONE
Zombie at twelve o'clock? Three,
get us the hell out of here.
(to Randall and Mary)
This is why you'll never win. You
guys come up with this shit all the
time never thinking twice for
consequences.

Red Pawn Three activates the controller in his hand and the
m-wave comes alive. SOUND and LIGHT fill the platform, the
lab, everyone starts backing away from the m-wave.

No one can interact with Steve. All eyes are on him, an
apparition slowly reaching into the m-wave energy field with
his right hand.

Time freezes. Everyone is incapable of moving until these words are spoken.

STEVE (V.O.)
(echoing)
We - are not the answer.

Time resumes.

A cube of blue light flashes once, after-image of three space-suited figures, a beautiful woman frozen in terror.

The light levels in the m-wave fade away. Steve fades away with it. Feather is spent; and takes a seat. She looks over to Marten. Marten's focused on nothing. Mary sits quietly, thinking to herself.

MARTEN
We are not the answer?
(beat)
What the...? Was there a question?

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LAB - M-WAVE

The eight foot cube comes alive. Quick light show. The shadows of two figures flash briefly. A final flash of blue light and the two lab technicians from Moon Base Bruce wind up standing on the deck of the earth-side m-wave. Knees buckling, they collapse to the deck not used to the pressure and sudden weight gain in earth's gravity.

The taller one faints, the second one growing catatonic. And all he can say is:

LAB TECH TWO
(gasping)
What the world...?

FADE OUT: