

DivineNation

by

Lowell Emerson Bennett

PORTFOLIO NOTE: This original screenplay, conceived as a mid-budget sci-fi with few special effects and some CGI, packages an allegorical ecological warning with action, intrigue, irony and societal commentary.

This is the longer of two versions, ending on a more positive note than the standard 120-page version (also available).

AGE NOTE: This script was conceived during the writer's *younger days*, before the advent of tablets. Readers who make it far enough will note that those and other devices, elements and *political forecasts* have come to be. (Unfortunately, in some cases.)

FADE IN:

EXT. THE PALMS OF A TREE - DAY

It is quiet deep within in the protective darkness of lush leaves. Seeming to hide herself away, a species of small Central American monkey sits at the crux of branch and trunk. The simian face is clearly distressed, or saddened. Wrapped tightly around her infant son, the mother's arms shiver. Not from cold, for it is very hot here; she quivers with fear.

The stillness is shattered by a deafening shriek. Long ago only the roar of a massive beast could have filled the ancient forest, but this howl is ceaseless and mechanical.

The horrible whine is joined by another sound: the wailing grind of metal teeth on wood. The mother wraps her arms tighter around her child and vibrates with panic. She knows.

The tree trembles as its long life is ended. The mother's horrified scream joins with the mechanical wail. The uppermost branches holding the small animals arc downward from view.

This was the last tree.

Here a rain forest and its inhabitant beings had flourished for millenniums. Now there are only stumps and infertile earth charring under an unnatural searing sunlight.

EXT. EDGE OF THE WASTED FOREST - SAME TIME

Close to the ground, within the low-lying tangle of parched weeds and palmetto fronds, a camera lens absorbs the distant view of fallen trees and the men operating the saw. Nearby the cutters is a large open-bed truck, two smaller all-terrain vehicles and a detachment of about 10 militia equipped with brimmed hats, heavy sun visors and assault rifles. The armed men hang about; leaning, squatting, sitting, cradling their automatic weapons.

The camouflaged man with the digital camera lies prone. Had he instead cradled a weapon with scope, he would be a sniper about to eliminate the chainsaw men and militia a few hundred yards in the distance. He clicks the shutter, the camera chirps.

MILITIA MAN-1 (OS)
(Central American dialect)
I think you are dreaming.

CAMO MAN goes completely still.

MILITIA MAN-2 (OS)
No. I tell you, he is here.

Dry brush crackles under four nearing footsteps.

MILITIA MAN-1

Yeah, yeah. Spookyman in the grass.

The boots of the militia men now move slowly to either side of Camo Man. The barrels of advanced M16A6's hang just above. Camo Man stops breathing.

MILITIA MAN-2 stops, cocks his head, listens. MILITIA MAN-1 looks to his partner.

MILITIA MAN-2

Shit. I know the bastard is here.

MILITIA MAN-1

Sure, sure, sure, sure.

The men move on, passing Camo Man by. They hold up about 50 feet beyond and scan the dry weedy growth bordering the wasted forest. Camo Man focuses his camera on the two soldiers and the grim scene beyond. He clicks-off a few more shots, the camera beeps softly.

Ears tuned, Militia Man-2 freezes. Camo Man eases the camera to a small backpack and begins to reverse crawl from the area. Militia Man-2 seems to sense it. He pivots and starts slowly in the direction of Camo Man, assault weapon half raised, ready.

MILITIA MAN-1

(rolls eyes - follows)

Shit.

Camo Man reverses at a quick crawl to the edge of a five-foot-deep dry drainage trench. The militia men are about 50 feet away and bearing down. In one motion Camo Man drops into the trench, slings his backpack and begins to move quickly at a stooped run.

MILITIA MAN-2

There! There!

The militia men sprint, but Camo Man is extremely fit and moving very fast. He nears a 90-degree bend in the trench when automatic weapons open up with an extremely fast TET-TET-TET-TET-TET... The dry soil just behind and around Camo Man kicks up with impacts and he rounds the corner when... POOMP, a grenade fires from a rifle launcher and... BLAM... the trench behind Camo Man vaporizes into a cloud.

Camo Man's legs power him around another bend and he is gone.

EXT. UNDER THE SEA - DAY

A diver equipped with a lightweight helmet and other high-tech gear swims in open water. To his front in both hands he holds a sophisticated multifunction navigation system.

He alternates his view ahead and to the varying glowing readouts displayed on the device. The temperature gauge reads: 85... 86... 87... 88...

He nears an elevated rock ledge, beyond which the undersea terrain is not yet visible. There is a total absence of sea life; only sterile rock outcroppings. The diver crests the ledge and suddenly stops.

Beyond and below the seabed seethes. Hot plumes stream from the sandy bottom; fire trailing to steam in a field of undersea geysers - hydrothermal plumes.

The diver lets the navigation instrument hang from its sling, reaches for his buoyancy control device and releases air. He sinks to stand on the ledge while he surveys the tortured terrain beyond. From a holster on his hip he takes a small advanced underwater video device and begins to record.

He pans left and right while behind him a six-foot shadow drifts into view. He continues to pan until his view takes in the shadow. He drops the video device from his face plate and stares as the shape drifts closer. A large sea turtle is belly up, suspended, a decomposing mass.

The diver watches the body drift eerily by as he holsters the camera. He inflates his BCD and steps from the ledge. On a gradual ascending angle he swims out over the geyser field heading for the surface.

EXT. SURFACE OF THE SEA - DAY

To the horizon there is nothing to see but a light chop and a beautiful toxic haze illuminated by a blazing sun. The diver's helmet breaks surface. He reaches for the face plate clamp and flicks the release. A whisper of released vacuum is heard and the tempered glass shield opens.

The diver, BADER, a dark-skinned man with piercing eyes, looks to the horizon. He turns. Onshore, seemingly just beyond a waiting speedboat, a large city is shrouded in smog.

A sonic boom shatters the orange sky and an advanced warplane rockets overhead to circle the city.

EXT. SPACE

In silence there is nothing but stars in blackness. In the distance a small white shape moves from shadow into sunlight. Steadily increasing in size, the second-generation space shuttle takes form. Without a sound the ship executes a slow roll as it speeds forward and passes.

INT. SPACE SHUTTLE COCKPIT

The pilot, TOM, and copilot, FRANK, both mid 30's, execute routine duties.

They are attentive to glowing instruments, touching buttons, adjusting a pivoting control. Visible ahead through the cockpit view is only space.

FRANK
Station Beta Control, we've completed rotation and are orbit course regular. All normal. Going to auto-nav.

STATION CONTROL (FILTERED)
Roger that, Frank. Maintain. Enjoy your evening. You and Tom have a nice spin and we'll see you soon.

The two pilots click a few more controls, lean back.

FRANK
Same old stuff.

TOM
(smiles)
Yeah. The routine is killing me.

Frank unstraps, begins to rise from his seat.

FRANK
I'll check on the crew, report status.

TOM
You're not going to take in the view?

FRANK
No thanks. Seen it plenty. Besides, it has begun to depress me.

TOM
(beat)
I know what you mean.

Frank begins to make his way to the rear of the cockpit. Tom turns to check Frank's exit. The expression on Tom's face changes from neutral to serious. He reaches to a pocket and comes out with a high-tech camera identical to that which the Camo Man used. He is readying it when Frank reappears behind.

FRANK
What the hell is that?

As he turns to Frank, Tom's expression goes back to casual.

TOM
What's it look like?

FRANK
A friggin' camera? What's your
plan, Pilot, shooting stars?

As they speak the edge of the Earth appears in the forward
view, slowly expanding with the roll of the shuttle.

TOM
Not exactly.

Frank looks to the Earth and seems to think very hard.

FRANK
Please tell me you're not...

TOM
Yeah, I am.

FRANK
You know, both our asses will be
busted-down if they find out.

The Earth is now perhaps 20% visible; not looking quite right.

TOM
It's not your ass if you don't know.

FRANK
I don't?

TOM
You don't.

FRANK
How's that?

TOM
You're in the cabin, you got
witnesses and the images are time-
stamp transmitted.

The Earth is now about 50% in view. But something is very
wrong.

FRANK
(pauses - thinks)
I don't know why you would want
shots of that ugly thing, anyway.

It is as if a hole gapes, a discolored void at the north.
The ice caps are more than 50% gone, broken into drifting
continents of melting mass. For perhaps hundreds of miles
surrounding the continents, muddy plumes of pollution have
replaced what was once blue water. Massive smothering
clouds of gray are floating above the globe.

This is a diseased and dying planet.

Frank again moves off to the cockpit rear hatch and exits. Tom shoots, the camera chirps and the images are transmitted.

INT. BISHOP'S OFFICE - DAY

This is an expansive, plush, dimmed chamber festooned with Catholic artwork. BISHOP CARMEL, an aristocratic Hispanic man, sits behind his expansive desk looking to the only modern item in the room: a wafer-thin video monitor. Tapping a small pad at the front of the screen, he scrolls through a document heavy with images. His head is tilted up and he peers down his nose at charts, photos of a diseased Earth, volcanoes, masses of people.

Sitting in the facing chair at the other side of the desk is Dr. ADAM JACOBS, about 40, dark features. It would be hard to tell that he is handsome. He is weary-looking; dark circles under his eyes, disheveled hair, a two-day growth of beard. He studies the face of Bishop Carmel as the cleric clicks through the document.

Carmel pauses, raises his eyebrows, sits back in his chair. He thinks a moment, then reaches to the display, touches the side and with a hiss a small diskette ejects from the edge of the screen. Carmel removes the disc. The screen disappears into the desk as Carmel reaches and places the disc closer to Jacobs.

CARMEL
(flat - cultured
Latin accent)
Very interesting.

Jacobs studies the man a moment, waiting for something else.

JACOBS
May I ask if you believe the
conclusion is valid?

CARMEL
Conclusion? I think you mean theory.

JACOBS
If you prefer. Do you find the
underlying theory to be credible?

Carmel brings his palms together and places the peaked tips of his fingers under his chin.

CARMEL
Dr. Jacobs, you don't actually
expect me to answer that with an
affirmative, do you?

JACOBS
(beat)
Am I to assume that you disagree, then?

Carmel offers a condescending smile.

CARMEL

Perhaps it is best, that as a representative of the Church, I offer neither concurrence nor dispute.

JACOBS

Excuse me, Your Excellency, but that response seems more legalistic than clerical.

CARMEL

Perhaps. But I'm afraid that is all that I can offer you.

JACOBS

Then you offer nothing.

Carmel is somewhat surprised at Jacobs' aggressive tone.

CARMEL

Doctor, what do you expect? Really, sir, what do you think I could, or would, do, assuming I thought your theory held merit?

JACOBS

Perhaps you could provide practical guidance to your people, instead of a continuing flow of medieval dogma.

CARMEL

(studies Jacobs)

I must say, you do have some, what is the expression? Nerve. You have some nerve.

(pause)

Frankly, when Father Dominic petitioned for this meeting on your behalf, I thought he was mildly deluded. But he is an elder so I acquiesced. Now, however, I have determined that the good father is due for sabbatical.

(pause)

It is clear he has weakened under pagan influence.

Jacobs pauses to consider the threat.

JACOBS

Bishop Carmel, when did you last visit the streets of this city? Have you recently walked among your followers, here or elsewhere in the world?

CARMEL

Don't insult me, Doctor.

JACOBS

How much more? How much more, Your Excellency? How much more before the Church alters what is, even you must admit, a doctrine perpetuating suffering and degradation.

CARMEL

(long pause)

Doctor, what I am about to say I will deny if you repeat it. How do you say, this is off the record. Much of what you say I believe. Your final theory seems outlandish, but I am not a man of science, so I will not speculate as to its credibility. But, again, you can't really expect me to exploit my personal relationship with the Holy Father for the benefit of this... crusade of yours.

JACOBS

(thinking)

Will you at least forward the data to the Vatican Counsel?

CARMEL

Absolutely not. And, Doctor, I realize you are a consultant to your government, but since 2010, I thought only military and executive level had access to satellite images. Isn't it highly illegal to obtain, much less circulate that data?

Jacobs thinks a moment, perhaps choosing a response.

JACOBS

This was done by special arrangement.

Carmel now reaches for the disc, stands, holds it out to Jacobs.

CARMEL

I see. I will not join in a plot, Doctor.

(smiles)

I like my job too much.

As if on cue the door to the office opens and two Hispanic plainclothes security men enter and stand behind Jacobs. Carmel gestures with the outreached data disc.

CARMEL

Good day, Doctor.

Jacobs takes the disc, turns, starts for the door. But Carmel interrupts his exit.

CARMEL

And Doctor...

Jacobs stops, partially turns to Carmel.

JACOBS

Yes?

CARMEL

(snide smile)

God be with you.

Jacobs gives the man a look, turns and leaves.

INT. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION BUILDING HALLWAY

The hall here is wide, expensively finished and modern, but also heavily adorned with older Catholic images and sculptures. The two security men flank Jacobs as he heads to the exit. It's a long walk and all that is heard are the men's purposeful steps.

Jacobs stops near the huge, heavily fortified double doors that seal the building. He reaches for a pocket and puts on heavily tinted, full coverage sunglasses. One of the guards steps ahead, places his palm on a wall panel. With a mechanized sound, something like a huge vacuum releasing, the doors drop in their frame about two inches then swing outwards.

The quiet is shattered as blinding light and fumes spill in through the door.

EXT. CITY STREET OUTSIDE CHURCH BUILDING

Jacobs exits into a world of chaos. Ten feet beyond the building, standing at five-foot intervals, about twenty heavily armored, helmet-wearing guards stand cradling M16A6's and grenade launchers. Black visors shield their eyes from a scorching sun. The emblem on their sleeves is that of Vatican security, the elite papal Swiss Guard.

Beyond the enforced buffer zone is a street choked with fuming, rotting automobiles and third world humans. People cram seemingly every square foot of the scene. They spill from adjacent buildings, they are camped along every inch of what was long ago a sidewalk. They hang from tenement windows. They pour out and move around the immobile vehicles like a flood. A layer of pollution lays; a glaring fog across the scene.

Occasionally a person will lose footing near the church security line and a Swiss Guard will force them back with his weapon.

Jacobs grimly surveys the scene. His gaze is pulled up to the wall of a facing building where a large and incongruous plasma billboard displays advertising. It says: "NetCom, bringing the world to you." Then appears the image of an advanced SUV barreling down a green county road. Jacobs takes this in and shakes his head.

The nearest guard is turned to Jacobs, obviously scrutinizing him. Jacobs notes this and, seemingly reluctantly, he steps from the cleared perimeter and becomes one of the mass; a purposeless tide of human suffering.

EXT. HOTEL CALANDRA - DAY

Here, too, a line of armed security guards buffer the entrance to a moderately decent hotel. And here, too, a flood of people move by, though amongst the tattered are a few who are dressed fairly well. One of the latter, Jacobs emerges from the crowd into the hotel zone. He is now filthy, sweating, coated with the city's pollution.

Another NetCom screen affixed to the hotel beams advertising, this time: "Legal around the world, Lexita, a natural relaxant!"

A guard steps from his position and squares-off with Jacobs. Jacobs is at first surprised, then, remembering, he reaches into a pocket and produces a hotel photo / print ID card.

The GUARD takes the ID from Jacobs, studies the photo and Jacobs' face. The Guard reaches for his belt, retrieves a small card reader device, inserts Jacobs' ID, holds the device out to Jacobs. Jacobs places a thumb on the print pad, a light goes green. The guard returns the card to Jacobs, steps out of the way and returns to his position.

A weary Jacobs moves on to the hotel entrance.

INT. HOTEL CALANDRA LOBBY

Jacobs enters the relief of filtered air conditioning, pauses, takes a few deep breaths then moves into the expansive lobby.

He is heading for the elevator when he notices the darkened cocktail lounge just off the lobby. He stops, considers this a moment, then heads for a much needed drink.

INT. HOTEL CALANDRA COCKTAIL LOUNGE - EVENING

The dimly lit cocktail lounge is half full with a well-dressed clientele. Easy-listening Latin techno pipes in.

Jacobs has had a few and looks like hell. A tall glass with remnants of sweet juice and booze is pushed to the working side of the bar, a fresh one is in front of him. He plucks a paper umbrella from the new, very red drink, drops it into the old glass. He takes a pull from the new drink, grimaces.

On the wall behind the bar, a smaller NetCom screen spins out video advertising, this time volume is heard: audio/video pitches for varying products.

The diver ambles into the room. BADER is a well built man, possibly of African decent, slightly younger than Jacobs. He takes a quick look around, settles his gaze on the bar and moves in that direction. He sits one stool down from Jacobs, who gives the man a quick look and goes back to his drink.

BADER

I thought you gave it up?

JACOBS

What?

BADER

Cocktails.

JACOBS

Oh. Those.

Jacobs takes another pull.

BADER

Well?

JACOBS

I thought I'd give it another try.

Bader signals the bartender, an attractive Latino woman. She nods as she finishes up with another customer. Bader gives Jacobs' fruity cocktail a rather disdainful look.

BADER

What the hell is that thing?

Jacobs takes a pull and grimaces before answering.

JACOBS

I think its called a Sunburst,
Moonglow... something like that.

BADER

Good God.

JACOBS

(drinks)
Yes. Indeed.

BADER
Well, if you're going to kill
yourself, at least do it with real
booze.

The BARTENDER arrives.

JACOBS
Agreed.

BARTENDER
Good evening.

BADER
Hi. Kettle One, rocks, lime. And
I think my friend here would like
something else.

BARTENDER
I am sorry, for many years we have
had no limes. Would you like a
splash of Sprite?

Both men give the Bartender a blank look.

BADER
Uh, that's okay. Just straight.

Bader hands his ID to the Bartender, who looks to Jacobs.

JACOBS
Mount Gay Rum over ice, please.

BARTENDER
Sure, coming up.
(reaches for Jacobs' glasses.)
Fini?

JACOBS
Yes, gracias.
(beat)
One more request?

BARTENDER
Yes?

JACOBS
(gestures to NetCom)
Can you turn that damn thing off?

BARTENDER
We are not allowed to turn it off,
but I can lower the volume.

JACOBS
Please.

Both men watch the Bartender strut away. She reaches to a control and the NetCom audio goes off. Bader turns to Jacobs and gives the weary, disheveled man a long look.

BADER
You know, you look like shit.

JACOBS
Thanks.

BADER
You should really try to get some sleep.

JACOBS
(pauses - grimaces)
I appreciate the suggestion.

BADER
My pleasure.
(pause)
Any luck with the clergy?

JACOBS
No. As expected.

BADER
You know the problem...

JACOBS
What?

BADER
You're a goddamn agnostic. You should've gone in hail-Marying all over the place, kneeling and kissin' his ring. You might've gotten somewhere.

JACOBS
(beat)
Maybe I should've blown him.

BADER
Even better.

The bartender returns, places the cocktails, sets Bader's ID down next to his drink, smiles and is off to other business.

BADER
What about Tom's images, raise any eyebrows?

JACOBS
Yes.

Bader waits.

BADER

Well?

JACOBS

He made a veiled threat.

BADER

Such as?

JACOBS

Nothing specific. I doubt he would turn us in unless there was something in it for him.

BADER

Hmm. Did he know the source?

JACOBS

No. He assumed they were satellite.

BADER

I suppose that's something. Then it's only yours and my ass locked up for three years. At least Tom stays clear and keeps his wings.

JACOBS

(sarcastic)

Yes. We're looking really good.

The men pause for a long drink.

BADER

How did Ed make out down south, back yet?

JACOBS

I sent him home. A few minutes after his images transmitted the local militia stumbled onto him. But we got the photos.

BADER

(turns to Jacobs)

He okay?

JACOBS

Barely. He said if he was one step slower they would have, as he put it, "shot my white ass off."

BADER

Good thing that guy's legs are holding up.

JACOBS

Here's to fast Eddie.

They toast, drink.

BADER

What's next?

Jacobs takes a moment to mull this question.

JACOBS

Marks managed to pull time with the committee. She gave me all of 18 hours notice, but I've got to take what I can get. Tonight I'm on the redeye for the States.

BADER

You already look like the walking dead.

(beat)

You should make a terrific impression in D.C.

JACOBS

Yes, the good Senator has no respect for my schedule, and she still thinks I'm 50% crackpot. But she's sympathetic to the overall cause. She bought me 15 minutes.

BADER

(shakes his head - incredulous)

That what the end of the world is worth to those jokers, fifteen minutes of face time?

JACOBS

(grim smile)

Well, they're busy people.

EXT. BANGKOK - STREET - DAY

It is blistering hot and the smog is as thick as San Francisco fog. The street is choked with people and vehicles - small Japanese cars, pickup trucks and tuk-tuks. The only vehicles moving are the lane-straddling scooters, their riders wearing dirtied respirator paper face masks. The noise is deafening.

Only the police, who move down the sidewalk in small squads of six, don't wear the paper masks. The Thai cops wear full-blown, high-tech lightweight gas masks.

A huge NetCom advertising display is visible from all points on the street. Just below the screen a sweating middle-aged female street vendor stands over her steaming grill in the already sweltering heat. Her face mask looks second hand, perhaps almost new but already black with airborne, manmade toxins.

She wavers, seeming about to faint, but catches herself. She moves her blackened meats to one side of the grill and falls. She hits the ground hard, dead, or close to it.

The mask-wearing people on the packed sidewalk don't give her a second look. A six-man squad of cops pushes pedestrians out of the way to get to the woman. It seems at first as if they are there to help. But one mask-wearing paramilitary squats, grabs the woman's face roughly in a gloved hand and slaps her a few times.

Satisfied she is dead, or close to it, he speaks to another cop, who wears a tank apparatus on his back.

THAI COP

(Thai)

Fume it.

The squad pushes back, the tank-wearing cop moves in, raises a wand attached to the tank by a hose and sprays. A foaming chemical covers the woman. Her clothes and skin quickly begin to dissolve.

She jerks up and screams horribly, her flesh felling away, the cops jerk back and reach for weapons, but there is no need.

The leg muscles release from her bones and she collapses, screaming until her throat, lungs and heart dissolve into the filthy pavement. Then the bones are gone and nothing remains but a wet spot.

The cops holster weapons and move on.

EXT. BANGKOK - A SKYSCRAPER TERRACE - SAME TIME

His face framed in metal bars, a beautiful Thai boy, about four, looks over the edge of the balcony to the street below. A thousand feet below, the crammed boulevard is barely visible through the smog. Like anemic blood through a fat man's clogged artery, traffic and pedestrians seem a congealed mass.

The boy notices something strange; a glow plays across his face. The smog changes color, going from gray-brown, to amber to almost red. The fumes seem alive, swirling faster. The boy watches, his young brow furrowed.

As if sucked down by a thermal layer, or some chemical reaction, the fumes drop low to the ground, leaving clear air above.

It may have been the spark of a non-restricted exhaust, the light of a match, but the air at street-level ignites.

Like wall-to-wall napalm, for two blocks a flame races down the choked street and fills the urban corridor.

Up here, the mass of screams is short and barely heard. After just a few seconds the flame burns itself out. Flaming paper debris sparkle in the air, the smog returns to dead-gray. The boy looks on, seeming not surprised.

INT. SENATE HEARING ROOM - DAY

In this modern chamber, lit by sterile indirect lighting, eleven senators sit elevated in a semicircle looking down to the room. All are middle-aged; nine white men, an Hispanic woman and a black woman, SENATOR MARKS, who wears antique glasses and sits to the right of the center-seated chairman, a well-fed SENATOR ELIAS.

In front of each senator is a name plate, a slim pedestal microphone and very thin plasma display on which images and data appear. Occasionally a senator will touch the screen, perhaps scrolling, opening some linked information.

One plump senator, attentive to his screen, but obviously disinterested in the proceedings, has a different window partially opened. In that space he is looking over images of entrees and tapping the screen in response to a VIRTUAL HOSTESS.

VIRTUAL HOSTESS

(volume way down)

Thank you... Senator Daggett... for
your... 12:30... lunch reservation...
for two people.

Below, looking up to the senatorial panel, sits a pale, baggy-eyed, disheveled Jacobs. Jet-lagged, wearing the same clothes as in Central America, he evidently missed his chance to shave. At his side is TERESE, an Hispanic female, attractive, late 20's.

They share a monitor similar to the senators' displays. Terese is touching the screen, highlighting links, opening new windows, pressing 'Send.' As Jacobs speaks she is transmitting correlating images and information to the senators' displays. She is working quickly.

Elias addresses Jacobs with a stern and affected southern tone. The demeanor of Elias, like that of all the impaneled senators, is more that of a superior court judge, not a participant in a structured senate hearing.

ELIAS

Dr. Jacobs, you got these here boys
holding M16A6's.

Jacobs glances at the info Terese is sending. Several image windows are opening sequentially. Photos of the decimated rain forest appear with Militia Man-1 and Militia Man-2 in the foreground, their weapons plainly in view.

JACOBS

Pardon me, Senator Elias?

ELIAS

I'm sayin' you got these here fellas holding M16A6's. I know this because before moving to chair the Energy and Resources Commission, I was on the Homeland Defense Appropriations Committee. We okayed the funds to develop and issue this weapon.

Jacobs looks to his immediate front at a large plasma screen timer imbedded in the rostrum beneath the senators. It is counting down his 15 minutes of face time. It says:
00:06:32 - 00:06:31 - 00:06:30.

JACOBS

I beg your pardon, Senator, but I'm not sure what that has to do with the issue at hand. And I'm not quite sure what you mean by I got these boys holding the weapon.

ELIAS

Just this...

For effect, Elias pauses, looks first to his left, then to his right at his fellow senators, then goes on.

ELIAS

This weapon ain't even been distributed to our general troop divisions yet. Only special forces and certain anti-terrorist op teams got it, so far.

JACOBS

Senator, I am here to speak to the commission about a pending ecological disaster of unprecedented scope. I would be happy to come back another time to discuss the illegal distribution of advanced assault weapons to militias and foreign government forces...

(looks to countdown clock)

But I would rather stay on point.

ELIAS

See, that's exactly what I'm talkin' about, your point.

(MORE)

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Here we're supposed to believe that you know what your talkin' about, but the fellows in your computer animation lab gone and put the wrong guns in the hands of your bad guys, here.

JACOBS

(angering)

Senator Elias, I hope you are not implying that I or my team have fabricated...

The black female senator, Marks, jumps in.

MARKS

In the interest of staying the course, perhaps we could for the moment stipulate, for the record, that if indeed the weapons somehow found their way to the Morales Agri Protection Force, they were not sent there via government channels and no official present has any knowledge of such a transfer or transaction.

Elias gives the black woman a false smile and sits back. The clock ticks down... SENATOR FARRELL, speaks up.

FARRELL

Dr. Jacobs, getting back to your point, your assertion is that despite prior agreements, namely the Rain Forest Protection Act of 2009, and the correlating Southern Hemisphere Benefit Protocols of that same year, the Calveras Government allowed further cutting.

JACOBS

Yes, Senator, that government, working in concert with the Morales Militia, cordoned off approximately 9,000 square kilometers, cut off public access and continued cutting while channeling the So-Hi benefit funds through back channel accounts...

ELIAS

So what you're saying is, they took our money and kept on cuttin'. Now why in blue blazes...

Jacobs looks to the ticking timer and cuts Elias off.

JACOBS

(talking fast)

Very simply, if the Morales group was able to keep outside observers off the land, allowing the cutting to continue, the supplemental funds intended for the large scale structuring of ecologically-friendly agri-business could be skimmed. Meanwhile the indigenous populace were directed to continue not only the logging, but also the sustenance hunting of game meat.

ELIAS

I ain't never heard such... Doctor, we had observers down there watching...

JACOBS

Respectfully, Senator, your observers never ventured far from their air-conditioned hotel suites and cafes, which, by the way, without exception, were establishments owned by Calveras... associates.

ELIAS

This is utter nonsense.

JACOBS

Now, of course, that forest is gone, as are all inhabitant species, and the native peoples who were dependent upon that ecosystem have nothing. The militia is pulling out and 15 billion dollars of redevelopment funds are gone, presumably now in the offshore accounts of Calveras, select members of his cabinet and his supposed antagonist, Morales.

ELIAS

Hogwash. I know Calveras. He's an honorable man. And I know he hates Morales with a passion. Hell, they've had a war goin' on down there for seven years now.

Throughout all this, Terese has been rapidly transmitting info to the senators' displays. For the most part, they have ignored that information. Now she is sending photos of other uniformed Hispanic soldiers carrying the M16A6's.

JACOBS

Yes Senator, I know. The war. A war in which opposing forces carry the same U.S.-made assault weapon, the updated M16A6 of which you spoke. A war in which the combatants regularly meet on the field of battle not to engage armies, but to divvy up proceeds and cut deals.

Terese now stops her input, touches Jacobs arm and gestures to the screen. There is Bader's video footage of the underwater geyser field. Jacobs nods his head, looks at the ever diminishing timer and attempts to get back on point.

JACOBS

Senators, I would like now to direct your attention to your displays. This is footage evidencing a field of hydrothermal plumes...

Another senator, JONES, cuts in.

JONES

What-what?

JACOBS

Hydrothermal plumes, Senator, also known as 'black smokers.' In some oceans this is a normal and ongoing deepsea geothermal event, but this footage displays an aberrant eruption just offshore near the city of...

JONES

Excuse me, Doctor, but I thought we were here to talk about the supposed elimination of the Quantaro Rain Forest Protectorate. What has geo... geo-dermal...

JACOBS

Thermal.

JONES

What?

JACOBS

Geo-thermal. Underwater fire erupting from the sea bed, evidence of a superheating at Earth's core. Further evidence of...

The clock is nearing the one-minute mark and it is clear that the senators are readying for lunch hour.

JACOBS

...a cumulative reaction resulting from near total ecological degradation and an overpopulation of the human species...

...30 seconds.

JACOBS

...that is accelerating the rate of global warming which, in accordance with Ochoa's Reflective Theory, is heating the planet's...

At 15 seconds the senators, except for Marks, start to rise from their chairs.

JACOBS

Hey!!

The senators freeze, looking down on Jacobs like an abnormally large and noisy cockroach just entered the chamber.

JACOBS

I've got 15 seconds left!

The senators continue their exit and begin filing out, except for Marks. Elias stops near the last seat, leans to the microphone.

ELIAS

Son, I do believe your time is up.

JACOBS

Is it my time that is up, senator? My time? Have you been there? Have you seen what has happened to the last major source...

ELIAS

See here, that's the problem, Doctor. I have seen it. In fact, every senator on this commission has seen it. We've got Earth image clearance. We've seen the dang photos. That damn rain forest is still there, every blessed branch and leaf. In fact, the damn thing's gotten a right bit bigger since the Rain Forest Pro-tection Act went into effect.

JACOBS
 (incredulous)
 Bullshit!

Terese's hand shoots to Jacobs forearm and squeezes hard.

ELIAS
 'scuse me?

JACOBS
 You know that's crap, Senator!
 That forest is gone. A blind man
 could see that in the satellite
 imagery.

ELIAS
 (eyes narrow)
 Now, why don't you explain just
 what you mean by that...

Marks, still seated, cuts in.

MARKS
 I think that's enough. Dr. Jacobs,
 I know you've been working hard and
 traveling quite and bit. Why don't
 we...

ELIAS
 No. I'd like to know just how the
 doctor here can tell me there ain't
 no forest in the photos I just
 looked at one hour ago - classified
 photos that he ain't got the
 clearance to view. Images made
 secret by the Homeland Anti-
 Surveillance Measures of 2010 and
 the correlatin' NATO compliance of
 2011. The viewin' of which photos
 might just buy the good doctor here
 three years in a federal lock-up.

JACOBS
 (thinks - responds forcefully)
 Because, Senator, I had a man there.
 A man I trust. A man who was
 almost killed. That man was
 transmitting images at the instant
 he took the picture.
 (pause)
 That forest is gone. Every animal
 that lived in it is gone.

ELIAS

(eyes narrow)

Well now. If you did indeed have a man there, Doctor, I rather doubt he was there legally with visa in hand. And if he was there, illegally, and I rather doubt he was at all, considerin' how hard it is to travel 'round those parts, then he is a liar and these images you brought in here are fakes.

Jacobs stares and steams. Elias rises from the mike.

ELIAS

And, Doctor, you best thank Senator Marks here for your continued freedom. 'cause if it weren't for her, I would have you detained for contempt of congress charges with possible sedition charges pending.

(pause)

I'll be seein' you.

Elias leaves the chamber. All the blood has left Terese's face. She sits frozen. Jacobs sits with a grim, angry expression. Marks calmly stares down over her glasses at Jacobs.

MARKS

That went rather well, don't you think?

EXT. SENATE ANNEX BUILDING - WASHINGTON - DAY

In front of this modern, multi-tiered building, there is concrete open space fronting the wide entry steps. Before a street jammed with automobiles, pedestrians and protest encampments, at 40-foot intervals, reinforced, advanced machine gun fire stations face out to the citizen areas. Between and among these emplacements, like this were a U.S. embassy in a foreign and volatile country, armed U.S. Marines warily stand guard and patrol. All wear tinted visors to guard against a scorching sun.

Just out of the senate room, a beat-looking Jacobs and a still shaken Terese, both with heavy sunglasses, walk down the steps. They are flanked by two Marines on escort detail.

TERESE

You can't do that, Adam.

JACOBS

(distracted)

What, do what?

TERESE

You can't take them on so directly
in public.

JACOBS

Public? What public? The public
hasn't a clue. When was the last
time you saw unfiltered news
coverage on any environmental
issue... or on defense, or space
armaments, or immigrant labor, or
reinstatement of the constitution,
for that matter?

TERESE

I know, it's very bad, but...

JACOBS

I was wrong to drag you into it,
Therese, but I rather think the
time for tact is over.

TERESE

I don't regret being there with you,
just like the rest of us don't
regret being there. We're
believers.

(beat)

But if you continue to push so
hard... I'm afraid of what might
happen.

Behind them a tall man in a suit with close-cropped hair is
moving fast down the steps. He barks like a drill sergeant.

SECURITY MAN-1

Dr. Jacobs!

Jacobs and Terese stop, turn and look to the imposing man.

SECURITY MAN-1

Wait here a moment, please.

JACOBS

For what?

SECURITY MAN-1

(stern)

Just wait.

Puzzled and concerned, Jacobs and Terese look at the man.
Their view is then pulled to the right and further up.
There is Senator Elias, toddling down the steps flanked by
three plainclothes, military-type security men.

Elias, wearing wide sunglasses and a old-style panama hat,
is moving slow.

As he nears he calls out and waves, now of an entirely different demeanor.

ELIAS

Doctor, good of you to wait. I move a little slow these days. 'fraid these old knees of mine are due for replacement, but I'll be sorry to see the real ones go.

Jacobs stares back, warily. Elias nears, shows the palm of his hands to his security, meaning 'wait,' and veers off while signaling to Jacobs to follow.

ELIAS

If you don't mind, how 'bout steppin' over here a minute? We can have ourselves a nice little private chat.

Jacobs and Terese give each other a look, then he turns and follows Elias to a point about 30 feet away. Elias gets up close, his puffy cheeks flapping as he talks.

ELIAS

Now, listen here, I'm sorry about that back in the hearing room.

JACOBS

Sorry?

ELIAS

You betcha. That ain't the way my mama taught me to be-have. She always said, 'If you can't say somethin' nice, don't say nothin' at all.'

JACOBS

(skeptical affirmative)

Uh huh.

ELIAS

See here, I don't think you and I are all that far off, on some things, anyhow.

(beat)

You know, believe it or not, I think we are downright in agreement on lots of things. Two peas in a pod, if you...

JACOBS

Senator.

ELIAS

(beat)

Yes, Doctor?

JACOBS

I'm not exactly sure where you are heading with this, but I have a favor to ask in advance.

ELIAS

And what might that be?

JACOBS

Could you please spare me the cornball back-country routine? You spent about five minutes in your state before and after your appointment. And I don't think Yale offered a course in 'good-old-boy' vernacular.

Elias gives Jacobs a long stern look, then smiles wide; maybe for real. The accent is then gone.

ELIAS

Alright, Dr. Jacobs. I'll grant you that.

(beat)

And, I have to say, while we're on the topic of oral expression, in this day and age, a non-official that expresses himself, or perhaps I should say, shoots off his mouth, in your fashion is an anomaly. Do you know how fast I, or anybody on the hill, for that matter, could label you a homeland threat? Are you aware what just being put on The Possible List could do to your career, your life... your family?

JACOBS

Yes, well, it's just possible that I don't believe I have much to lose. And I no longer have a family, Senator. So I'm afraid that particular threat rings hollow.

ELIAS

Oh, yes... your wife and child. My sympathies.

(beat)

Well, regardless, I'm not making threats... not at the moment, anyway. That was a cautionary statement.

(MORE)

ELIAS (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'm simply saying... here, now, out of range of the sensors, that you should exercise due caution. You are aligning yourself against some very powerful interests. And these individuals and entities, to put it mildly, look at things somewhat differently than you.

JACOBS

Would those interests include the petroleum cartel and The Committee, Senator?

Elias narrows his eyes, smiles.

ELIAS

The Committee?

JACOBS

Yes, The Committee. Would you prefer oligarchy? Chief string-pullers? How about corrupt and dangerous totalitarian assholes, you like that one?

ELIAS

(smile)

My goodness, Doctor. Such flamboyant - and careless - language. Fortunately for you, in this instance I will overlook what could be construed to be a subversive proclamation.

(beat)

Regardless, call them what you will - they mean business.

JACOBS

Yes, business. I understand.

JACOBS

You must be more cautious, Doctor. I know you have something of an organization, but, believe me, longhairs, tree-huggers, whale-lovers, soldiers or flyboys, these are no match for... the adverse party.

JACOBS

Again, maybe I just don't have much to lose.

ELIAS

Yes, yes, right, right. Well my suggestion to you, Dr. Jacobs, is that you perhaps modify your approach. Retreat, live to fight another day, so to speak.

(beat)

Bad idea to go against me in a public arena.

Elias is beginning to pull back to his security men.

JACOBS

And, this instance, Senator, that a threat?

Elias, nearing his people, smiles, raises his voice with accent.

ELIAS

Like Pappy Elias used to say, Doctor, he'd say, 'son, be careful or be sorry.'

Elias ambles off with his security in tow. The group nears a Marine guard at a small sheltered console. Elias looks at Jacobs, smiles, gives a final wave, nods at the guard. The guard activates a switch, the seemingly seamless ground surface under Elias and his security detail drops and they disappear below. Another mechanized ground panel moves into place and the surface is again whole, impenetrable.

Terese and Jacobs look at each other.

EXT. NEAR MOUNT NYRAGONGO - THE CONGO - DAY

In a jungle clearing within the shadow of this nearly dormant volcano, a family of eight gorillas groom and nibble at leaves. Two primate toddlers play; rolling and swatting at each other. The two mothers very gently pull their offspring apart and hold the children. The kids launch off and again tear around.

Looking over all is the dominant male, a huge, aging, but still very powerful SILVERBACK.

As if something set off their sense of hearing or smell, the family freezes and looks to the opposite side of the clearing.

Emerging from the bush is THE WOMAN, tall, very fit, could be anywhere from late 20's to 40 in age. Her face shows no lines or imperfections, despite a total absence of makeup. She is western in appearance. Oddly, because her features combine dark skin with lighter hair and eyes, from one angle she might appear somewhat Nordic, from another angle her features seem almost Hispanic. She holds a long bush blade and her clothing is functional to the environment and well-suited to her strong, sleek frame.

She reaches back and smoothly sheathes the blade to the side of a form-fitting backpack. She looks to the gorilla family and smiles.

The gorillas don't move, cautious, but not afraid. After a moment the dominant SILVERBACK male rumbles forward towards The Woman. He rushes, aggressive, posturing, defending in gesture his turf and his family. He pulls up short, about six feet from The Woman. She stands still, showing no fear.

Silverback gives a throaty rumble, bares his teeth, thumps his chest and swings his arms. Then he pauses, stares into The Woman's calm, gray-blue eyes. Silverback goes quiet.

The Woman smiles and walks forward. As she passes the staring Silverback, she slows and runs her palm gently across his massive head and around his face. The family relaxes as one. They go back to their grooming and the two children run forward as Silverback returns to the group. The youngsters repeatedly circle The Woman as she walks, reaching, touching her legs. The Woman smiles, disappears into the jungle at the volcano's base.

Above, in a blistering red sky, the mountain looms.

EXT. MOUNT NYRAGONGO - VOLCANO'S RIM - DAY

The volcano is not entirely dormant. Just beneath the jagged rim, among the solidified lava and scorched rocks, the ground simmers. Like the terrain of an oxygenated planet too near the sun, the rocks steam like coals within a pit. Fumes rise and settle in the hot atmosphere of the mountain's throat.

And there The Woman stands. On the very edge of the rim, her still gaze takes in the smoldering scene. She steps forward. She drops a good six feet to a lower ledge, absorbing the impact effortlessly into her legs. She begins to walk, seeming to look for something lost among the scorched rocks.

From the opposite side of the crater, it is an unusual sight; a beautiful woman moving smoothly within the forbidding terrain.

Lower down, at the center of the pit, The Woman pauses. She has perhaps found the lost item. She kneels then reaches...

EXT. THE BRANCHES OF A TREE - CONGO - DAY

The sun is now low in the sky. The gorilla family is lounging 50 feet up. Again, they groom, nibble on leaves. The two children are now still, held dozing in the arms of their mothers.

Higher up, Silverback looks down over his peaceful family. If he were human, the primate's expression may have been that of contentment; satisfaction; happiness.

He makes a decision, leaps and is gone into the higher branches.

EXT. WATERHOLE - DAY

The big leopard drinks, alone at the small body of water. Suddenly the cat stops, raises its head.

Silverback drops from above, landing at the opposite bank. He immediately sees the cat and freezes. The two eye each other for a long moment. The powerful animals seem to agree that this is not the time for conflict. The cat again lowers its head to drink. Silverback steps forward, kneels, cups a hand and drinks.

EXT. THE BRANCHES OF A TREE - SAME TIME

Still high in the trees, the gorilla family dozes.

Below, on the ground about 50 yards from the tree, the large ferns part. The barrel of a semi-automatic hunting rifle pierces the foliage. A group of 15 armed men, poachers, carefully step their way closer to the family.

When the dozing primate mother catches the scent, when she smells the pungent musk of a meat eater, when she fully opens her eyes, when she feels the tingle of danger within her spine, when she fears first for the child she holds, it is too late.

The first volley kills most of the family immediately.

EXT. WATERHOLE - SAME TIME

The shots echo through the jungle, the leopard and Silverback jerk their heads from the water. The leopard instinctively bounds from the clearing into the bush. Silverback pauses a few seconds to reason out the meaning of the strange sound. He emits a desperate sound and bounds into the trees.

EXT. THE BRANCHES OF A TREE - SAME TIME

A mother covers her child as another wave of bullets tears through the tree.

A few in the family grab futilely for branches, loose their grip and fall to the jungle floor. The rapid fire of fifteen weapons continues and the shredding leaves mix with flesh and screams as the family is torn apart.

A mother covers her child with her arms and turns her back to the torrent of bullets. Her back is pounded into a bloody mass, she screams, holding her baby even tighter she falls backward from the tree, the ground rushes up to her and she slams into the earth. She protected her child with her dying body.

The other mother is riddled with bullets just as she flings her son into the air to a farther tree. The child catches a branch and pulls himself up in time to see a bullet explode his mothers forehead. She teeters, then, already dead, falls to the ground.

The gunfire stops, the poachers howl in delight and rush to pounce on the dead and dying family.

The toddler is pawing at his mother, trying to wake her when a net drops over him, he screams and another whoop goes up from the poachers. The other child makes his way frantically down the tree to his own fallen mother. Before he can reach her he, too, is scooped up in the poacher's net.

POACHER ONE

(native dialect)

Yes!! Yes!! Good, good, good! Got the little ones, too!

POACHER TWO

Yes!! All the meat and the babies, too. Good money! Gooooood money, today!

Poacher One raises his rifle.

POACHER ONE

Ah-Yeeeeee!! Ah-Yeeeeee!! Ah-Yeeeeee!!

In response all stop and raise their weapons and hands.

POACHER CHORUS

Yeeeeee!! Yeeeeee!! Yeeeeee!!

Poacher One's upturned face sees something in the trees: Silverback. The old gorilla stares down on the scene with human-like shock and horror. He is frozen, perhaps about to cry, terrified, uncomprehending at what he sees.

POACHER ONE

(raising weapon)

Another one!! Another one!!

He fires fast and the errant bullets impact into the tree around Silverback. The other poachers hurriedly follow Poacher One and more bullets tear through the branches and leaves around Silverback. After a second, when the next and more accurate volley is about to fire, the terrible sounds register through the shock and with a start Silverback leaps away into the trees.

The poachers scan the tree line when, unseen by them, it becomes apparent another has witnessed the horrific scene.

Among the bush on a hill perhaps 100 yards away, The Woman stands. Though her face is oddly impassive, her eyes show sorrow and, perhaps, a glint of anger.

EXT. NEAR MOUNT NYRAGONGO - NIGHT

In the supernaturally bright moonlight, at the edge of the clearing, where before he looked over his family, Silverback sits, broken. His huge head is down, his chin on his massive chest. He is a powerful being now helpless. His world is gone.

He breaths heavily, then erupts in a great, human-like sob. He stifles that, and again breathes deeply. Sensing something, he raises his head.

There stands The Woman. She looks calmly down to Silverback. He returns the gaze, sorrowful, but not afraid, not angry. She places a hand on his great shoulder.

EXT. POACHERS' CAMP - NIGHT

The scene is horror. In the light of several campfires, the poachers drink, laugh, work and... eat. While some feed on the roasting game meat, three others are at work with knives. They are butchering the family for the trek to market.

A huge machete rises, slashes down into the thigh of a mother while from a bamboo cage her child watches, screaming in horror. The other child is in a fetal position, breaths heavy, in shock.

Four poachers sit near a fire. They smoke and drink. Red-eyed and sloppy with liquor, they brag in native dialect.

POACHER TWO

I got three! I know I got three myself!

POACHER THREE

(laughs)

You are full of shit! You shoot like a woman! Never get one, not one.

POACHER FOUR

Fuck you both. You are both women! Can't shoot, no penis!

They laugh.

POACHER THREE

It don't matter. We got the money, this time. Big day.

POACHER TWO

Yeah. Big day. I get me my money, I get drunk, get a whore and fuck for two days, that's me!

Poacher Four begins to struggle drunkenly to his feet.

POACHER FOUR

Yes. Yes. I won't wait. I'm
going to piss this out, then I come
back and get very drunk right now.
Maybe fuck you.

They laugh. Poacher Four heads to the bush.

Just inside the dark bush the fires of the camp are in the background. Poacher Four works at his trousers. His eyelids droop and he smiles a drunken, stupid smile as his urine splatters to the leaves.

Suddenly there is a flash of motion. Poacher Four's eyes go wide and his urine stops, retracting into his bladder. He raises a hand to his neck where a gaping hole has opened. The blood, seeming suspended for a moment by vacuum, releases to gush over his hand and the man drops.

Near the edge of the clearing inside the camp, another poacher rises from his task to light a handmade smoke. He takes a single puff before he is yanked off his feet and disappears into the bush. A gurgled, muffled scream is barely heard.

The two gorilla children raise their heads. They stand and move to one side of the cage, looking out.

Near a camp fire four poachers are drunken, dozing or asleep. As one man's sweating, ugly eyelids begin to fall, his head is jerked to the side impossibly far and fast and... snap! He slumps. The other three drunken men begin to rouse, but one by one, just as they are becoming conscious, just as the terror is registering on their face, they are cut down; by blade or hand, it is hard to tell which.

Now two men at a separate fire are rising, reaching for guns. They stare to the fire across the site where four men are now motionless. As they attempt to determine the threat, two flashes take away their lives.

At another side of camp, four other poachers are already dead, their bodies broken, crumpled.

Poacher One is rising from his stupor, grabbing his rifle, adjusting his eyes, looking across and around the camp. The men he sees could be sleeping. He calls out.

POACHER ONE

(dialect - not subtitled)
Hey! Hey! Akimba! Suto! What is
going on?! Hey, you...

Now, through the fire and the smoke, he sees something at the far end of the camp... something very strange.

He racks his weapon and starts cautiously forward. Through the dark and the haze he is attempting to make out the figure... a woman! When he takes another step his foot catches something. He glances down and his eyes go wide. The head of a poacher looks back, barely attached to its dead body.

Now Poacher One snaps up his weapon, aims at The Woman and is about to fire... a huge dark hand closes on the rifle and it is instantly yanked away. He whirls, screams.

His vision is filled with the bared teeth and fierce face of Silverback. The great ape slashes down hard with the weapon and... Crack! The wooden stock breaks over Poacher One's knee. The man screams, drops.

Poacher One grabs frantically at a knife holstered on his hip, brings it up to stab... Silverback grabs the man at the elbow and begins to squeeze. The knife drops. The man's eyes seem about to explode as the joint cracks and dissolves.

The man whimpers as Silverback now grasps his head. With the strength of five men Silverback twists and... its over. The camp is dead quiet and still, except for the crackling of the fire.

The Woman walks to where the children are caged. She doesn't bother with the crude lock. She grasps two of the wooden bars, pulls and the cage is shattered. The two children exit the broken prison. They look up at The Woman, then go to Silverback.

One of the children leaps to his father's great back while the other reaches with outstretched palm. Silverback takes his child's hand and walks closer to The Woman.

They make eye contact. Something is exchanged. Silverback returns to the jungle with his children.

INT. LAB DEMO AREA - DAY

In florescent midair the Earth rotates. It is a seemingly pristine planet, blue green... beautiful.

JACOBS (OS)

This is a virtualization of 1920.

(beat)

Josh...

The holographic Earth stops rotating, pixelates, dissolves, materializes looking different. Jacobs moves his hand over and into the image as areas to which he points glow in outline.

JACOBS (OS)

At 1990, spectrum-enhancement of digital file images reveals a degradation in ozone integrity to an extent not even guessed at then. Also, a 30% loss in rain forest cover and an expanding toxin prevalence in waters surrounding most populated land masses.

Looking more disheveled and weary than ever, more days of beard on his face, in this sterile exhibition room Jacobs is delivering a presentation to Senator Marks and SECRETARY THOMAS, a tall, well-dressed man, about 50. The man's brow is furrowed; as if perplexed, or skeptical. Marks gazes through and over her antique glasses, depending on her varying level of impatience.

MARKS

Yes, Adam. That's fine. Secretary Thomas has a 12:30 appointment, so perhaps we should advance the presentation.

Irritated, Jacobs shoots her a look, turns to a bushy-haired technician, JOSH, mid-20's, at a nearby control console.

JACOBS

Josh... The Secretary and Senator are busy people... time lapse and accelerate, please.

The hologram Earth stops its rotation, dissipates, then reappears and rotates more quickly. In a corresponding digital readout materializing below the planet, the years are ticking by. 1991-1992-1993-1994-1995...

JACOBS

(agitated)

And here we go Mr. Secretary, Senator...

...2005-2006-2007... The Earth's colors become progressively less vibrant, a sepia gray haze taking over. The polar caps break up. Plumes of liquid pollution ooze from the continents in great, ever-increasing ugly bands.

JACOBS

(fast)

Within the depicted period you'll note a 30% degradation in polar coverage, a 27% increase in ocean-borne toxin intrusion, a... whopping 34% increase in hydrocarbon saturation...

Thomas is giving Marks a look, clearly suspect of Jacobs' stability.

JACOBS

And heeeerrrrre - though we can't say for sure because they won't let us see the pictures - here is what we speculate is, what we guess is... well hell, here is what we like to call the Northern Loss. This is the burn zone, baby!

He points to a cloud-like cyclone-shaped mass above Antarctica.

JACOBS

This is the result of all our mistakes, Mr. Secretary and Msssss-Senator. The cumulative result of all our sins. This is what will bring it all to an end.

(beat)

Here, let me show you.

Thomas, eyeing Jacobs warily, is edging away from the display. Marks is now ignoring the hologram and looking directly at Jacobs, who seems oblivious to the others. Jacobs looks briefly to Josh.

JACOBS

Josh, accelerate to final, please.

Josh hesitates, looks at the retreating Thomas, to the grim Marks, and back at Jacobs. Jacobs is oblivious, still waiting.

JACOBS

Josh...

Josh goes back to his controls. The Earth rotates faster, the cyclone of the "Northern Loss" expands, the polar caps disappear, water levels rise, land mass shrinks, green areas disappear, gray clouds of pollution obscure the planet, fires spark on a continental scale, the atmosphere ignites, a bright light emits at the center of the planet hologram and the image dissolves.

JACOBS

All thanks to an over-abundance of the most destructive, wasteful and cruel species in the history of the planet - humans.

Thomas heads fast for the exit, where five security men stand.

THOMAS

Thank you, Dr. Jacobs. Senator, see you on the hill.

Jacobs takes his attention from the hologram, turns to the door, Thomas and his three-man security detail exit.

JACOBS

What the hell... where's he going?

MARKS

(beat)

Do you know what it took to get him here?

JACOBS

What... 20 grand, 30 thousand bucks?

MARKS

(gives Jacobs a long look)

When was the last time you slept?

JACOBS

Not important.

MARKS

Not important? You have a cabinet-level officer in here for a presentation, and you...

JACOBS

Don't we have more important things to consider than my sleep patterns, Senator? The core mean ambient has been exponentially accelerating for five years. We've got tectonic analysis data that would curl your hair...

Marks, a black woman, gives Jacobs a stare that stops him cold.

MARKS

Yes, Adam, I know all about global warming. But that doesn't mean I buy...

JACOBS

Senator, this is not about warm winters and high tides. We've registered anomalies beyond any predictions. We...

MARKS

That's it. Enough. This is over.

She heads for the door where her two security men wait.

JACOBS

Wait...

MARKS

No, Adam. That's it. I've stuck with you to this point. I pulled the committee time, I got Thomas in here - which, by the way, probably set my career back five years...

JACOBS

Senator, I...

MARKS

Oh, I know. I know all about it. It's all going to burn up! Right, Adam?

(rolls eyes)

Poof.

JACOBS

Molly, hold on...

Marks stops, pivots back to face Jacobs.

MARKS

Listen, Adam, I was always there for you. While you were fighting the good fight for the rain forest, I was with you; legislating for emission controls, I was with you; solar alternatives, I was with you; heading-off thermal drilling, I was with you...

JACOBS

I appreciate all that you've...

MARKS

And when you decided to butt heads with the Vatican on contraception - even though the Catholic vote could take me out of office - I was for you there, too, 100%. But this is too much. Yes, global warming, a reality, but, for God's sake, the entire planet is not going to catch fire!

(beat)

At least not for a couple million more years.

JACOBS

Wait a minute...

MARKS

No, no, no. That's it. Call me next year... if we're still here.

Jacobs, pretty pitiful with a four-day beard, baggy eyes and good clothes gone bad, just stands there. In the open doorway Marks pauses.

MARKS

And get some sleep.

She exits, her two-man security detail behind. There's a long silence as Jacobs looks at the empty door.

JOSH

(half sarcastic)

If you need a break, I've got a really stellar girl-on-girl scene cued up.

Jacobs gives Josh a blank look.

EXT. CITY BLOCK - LATE NIGHT

The trashed street is densely populated, mainly with homeless people. NetCom video billboards are everywhere. The pitches are mainly for booze and smokes, but a voluptuous nearly naked Asian VIRTUAL FEMALE on the display is working another product.

VIRTUAL FEMALE

Azure - It's legal! Costs less, too!!

She holds up a small blue pill, smiles, pops it in her mouth, chews and smiles bigger.

VIRTUAL FEMALE

And it tastes like blueberries, baby!

Walking with his head down, Jacobs wears the same clothes he had on at the lab demo room earlier that day. A slender black polymer tablet is under his arm; an advanced laptop. Some of the street inhabitants eyeball Jacobs, perhaps sizing him and the laptop up as an opportunity.

Nearing a subway access, Jacobs passes underneath the "Agura Bank" LCD banner. This time a Japanese anime-style female is holding up changing banners, announcing the time.

ANIME FEMALE

It is... 11:47 p.m. and 49 seconds... enjoy... the rest of your day...

Jacobs heads down the subway stairs. Another man, tall and lean, in a very light overcoat and vintage fedora, his face unseen, passes beneath the anime banner.

ANIME FEMALE

It is... 11:48 p.m. and nine
seconds... enjoy... the rest of
your day...

The other man follows Jacobs beneath the street.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

Many of the lights are flickering and most of the station is in substantial disrepair. The 40 or 50 people who await the train all look as if they wish they were elsewhere.

Two boot-wearing police troopers, both late 20's, and both on the flabby side, patrol the station carrying submachine guns and sidearms. Jacobs nears the platform and both officers briefly eyeball the tablet he carries under his arm.

Jacobs joins the waiting crowd.

The other man, CARL, an African American with chiseled features and an athletic build, about 40, enters the station and stands well back. About 50 feet from the crowd, he settles into a not-so visible, shadowy alcove. The officers give Carl a look. Carl looks back, makes eye contact. He removes his hat and gives the cops a grin. Carl is bald.

The white cops stop, turn and walk toward Carl. They stop a few feet away. They look him over a few seconds. One of the police, COP-1, approaches Carl.

COP-1

(not friendly)

How you doin'?

Carl doesn't answer right away. He looks into Cop-1's unpleasant eyes, gives him a nice smile. COP-2 moves up next to his partner, his hand dropping to the trigger grip of his still slung and lowered weapon.

CARL

Fine. Nice of you to ask.

Cop-1 is not reciprocal to the friendly tone.

COP-1

Where you going?

CARL

(smiles)

Well, to be honest, I'm not sure.

COP-1

What does that mean?

CARL
Looks to me like I'm getting on the train.

COP-1
You're getting on the train, huh?
But you don't know where you're going. Is that it?

CARL
Yes, that pretty much sums it up.

COP-1
You're getting on the train to nowhere?

CARL
You could put it that way.

Cop-1 gives Carl an unwavering and long look.

COP-1
You know, smartass citizens really piss me off.

CARL
No kidding?

Cop-2 moves his fingers tighter around the trigger of his weapon and moves the other hand on the stock.

Cop-1 releases the trigger end of his weapon and from his belt he takes a small device, about the size of a cell phone.

COP-1
(as if reciting a manual)
Sir, in accordance with Regulation SS-4 of the Special Securities Act, I am formally demanding an immediate scan for positive identification.

Cop-1 opens the device, which gives an activating beep, and holds it out to Carl. A one-inch square glows.

COP-1
Sir, please place your right thumb on the illuminated reader pad.

Carl places both hands in his coat pockets, smiles.

CARL
No, thank you.

The rattling roar of the approaching train fills the station. Cop-2 steps back and raises his weapon. The train is louder.

COP-1

(as if reciting a manual)

Sir, you are refusing a municipal police officer's authorized order for you to comply with a Federal security directive.

Cop-2 is in firing position. Cop-1 lets his submachine gun hang from its sling, shifts the print reader to his left hand, takes a handgun from its holster, aims it at Carl.

The train is plowing into the station, loud. The waiting crowd is oblivious to what is happening behind in the shadows.

COP-1

I am hereby issuing a second and final demand that you submit to a federally-authorized ID scan. I am required by Federal law to warn you that failure to immediately comply with this demand may result in arrest and temporary or permanent physical harm, or death by weapon or other means. You have ten seconds to comply.

CARL

(smiles)

Ten seconds? Should only take about six...

Cop-1 narrows his eyes, wary of Carl's casual attitude.

The train pulls into the station and from the stairs, moving lockstep at double-time, two very fit uniformed soldiers round the corner. Both municipal cops look to these two. The local police, recognizing the battle dress armored Special Ops troopers with M16A6's, are backing up, partially lowering weapons.

Facing off with the cops, weapons targeting heads, the all-business troopers take up position behind Carl, who smiles.

CARL

Lower your weapons, officers.
Carry on.

The cops, clearly confused and intimidated, but wanting to protect their turf, hesitate.

The creaky, dirty train has pulled to a stop and most of the doors have begun to rattle open. The crowd, still oblivious and focused on the train, begins filing into the cars.

CARL

Lower your weapons, move along, or
we can punch your ticket here and
now.

(beat)

Got a train to catch. You have
five seconds.

The Special Ops troopers calmly look as if they are fully prepared to blow the cops' brains out.

In one motion, the cops drop and holster weapons and quickly move off. The Special Op troopers lower their weapons.

Jacobs, also oblivious, enters a car with the crowd. Immediately behind him is a muscular, tough-looking BLACK GUY, about 25.

Without looking at the troopers, Carl replaces the fedora to his head, points to the cars at either side of the car Jacobs just boarded. The troopers head in those separate directions. Carl strolls to Jacobs' car and enters; the last person in.

INT. SUBWAY CAR

The dirty, broken-down, half-lit car is mostly full with unhappy humans, several of whom are standing for lack of seats. Carl enters, looks around. Jacobs is at a window seat. Haggard, worn out, disheveled, distracted, Jacobs is in another world; staring nowhere out of the dirty and pitted plexiglas window.

Carl spots him, smoothly heads in that direction between the standing, zombie-like passengers. The subway doors close.

Sitting next to Jacobs in the aisle seat is the muscular Black Guy Carl eases up, speaks to the Black Guy.

CARL

Excuse me, may I have this seat?

Black Guy slowly turns his head, like he's not quite sure that he is being spoken to. Jacobs comes out of his daze, looks to Carl, then to Black Guy. Jacobs is puzzled, but, none of his business, he turns back to the window.

BLACK GUY

Say what?

CARL

(smiling)

May I have this seat.

BLACK GUY

What seat? There ain't no seat.

CARL

Sure there is. You're in it.

Black Guy looks back at Carl, not sure.

BLACK GUY

What? You got bad feet, or somethin'?

Carl smiles, leans down, whispers into Black Guy's ear. A look comes over Black Guy's face. He's up and gone.

Now Jacobs turns his full attention to Carl, who takes the seat. With furrowed brow, Jacobs continues to stare at Carl, who smiles. Carl again removes his hat.

The train has not moved. At the rear, standing in front of the doors connecting to the next car, a big PUNK, about 20, pipes up, yelling to the roof of the train.

PUNK

Come on, maaaaan, get this crate movin'!

The rest of the crowd barely acknowledges the outburst. The train doesn't move.

Jacobs slowly breaks eye contact with the still smiling Carl, turns back to the window.

PUNK

Come on, goddammit, MOOOOOOOOVE!

The train's public address speakers emit a harsh, loud, grinding tone and most of the passengers reach for their ears. The male SPEAKER VOICE then announces.

SPEAKER VOICE

Attention... Attention... this train is now out of service...

Some in the crowd groan.

PUNK

Fuck!!

SPEAKER VOICE

... please exit immediately...

The old doors rattle open. Jacobs swings a concerned gaze back to Carl, who hasn't budged. He looks back at Jacobs, the enigmatic grin still on his face.

PUNK

(to nearest speaker)

No! Fuck you man!! I been waitin' for fuckin' an hour!!

A few others in the crowd are muttering and cursing. They have begun to drag themselves up to file out of the train.

Jacobs and Carl look at each other. Jacobs looking a little worried, Carl is calm.

CARL

Well, that's a hell of a note,
isn't it?

Jacobs says nothing. The crowd is filing out.

SPEAKER VOICE

Attention... Attention... this
train is now out of service...
please exit immediately...

PUNK

(to speaker)

Fuck you!! Fuck you!! Fuck you!!

The Punk is still at the rear of the car, next to the door connecting the following car. The rest of the unhappy crowd is making their way to the exit door, past the still sitting Carl on the aisle seat, and Jacobs, trapped at the window seat.

CARL

You don't mind if we wait, do you?

(beat)

I never saw the sense in waiting in
lines.

(smiles broader)

Back when everyone used to fly.
The plane pulls up to the gate,
everybody jumps up and stands there
for five minutes. Never could
figure that out.

(beat)

Hurry up and wait ... know what I mean?

Jacobs clearly knows something is up. The crowd is nearly past Carl and Jacobs, the car almost cleared of people. The Punk hasn't left his position at the rear. He starts to hammer at the speaker with his fist.

PUNK

Fuck you!! Fuck you!! Fuck you!!

The connecting doors at both ends of the train slam open, the two troopers smoothly enter, the Punk looks up to the suddenly open door behind him and... BOOMP. The butt of an M16A6 slams into the Punk's face, his nose splits, he drops.

At the opposite end of the subway car the other trooper has his weapon raised. The last remaining passengers get the idea and hurry off the train.

Jacobs, realizing it's pointless, doesn't even attempt to leave. He looks at Carl, who hasn't bothered to take note of any of what just transpired. He just looks calmly back at Jacobs.

The Punk is completely unconscious as the trooper drags him effortlessly down the train isle and dumps him out the exit.

That trooper returns to the far side of the car. The troopers after this maintain posts at opposite ends of the car. The doors rattle closed. Empty of all but the four men, the train moves.

About half the lights within the train are burned out. When it moves out of the brighter station, the car dims. At regular points where the tunnel is lit, light strobes through the car: dark - darker - light - dark - darker - light ... The shadows and light move across Carl's smiling face.

CARL
Can't stand crowds.

Jacobs, though clearly wary, is calm. Not surprised.

JACOBS
Really? People bother you, do they?

Carl shows mild surprise, like this is not what he expected.

CARL
Yeah, Doc. It can be tough to have private conversations, these days. You agree?

JACOBS
Oh yes. I agree entirely. It's like you're never quite alone.

CARL
True. Exactly my point. Seems like someone is always looking over your shoulder ... reading your paper, so to speak.

JACOBS
Right.

Carl doesn't respond, but gives Jacobs a long look. His eyes sort of twinkle.

JACOBS
So?

CARL

You know, when I was kid, I lived out in the boonies with an uncle. That was when there were still a few farms. And this guy - my uncle - really tried to stick it out. His idea was, I guess, to do what they used to call get back to nature. He just wanted to be left alone, raise a few tomatoes, keep some pigs, some chickens... that kind of thing.

Carl pauses, thinks. Jacobs stares blankly back.

CARL

(as if wistful)

What a dreamer...

(comes out of it)

So, anyway, that's not really the point of my story. I used to sleep in this little extra room he had - more like a broom closet with a window. Well, every morning, just after the sun comes up, this bird used to land right outside the window. Beautiful bluebird. I guess that means he was a he. Very colorful. I get in the habit of leaving a few pieces of bread out for him. Then in the morning I'd watch him chow down. We sort of got used to each other and, pretty soon, it got to where he would eat out of my hand.

(pause)

Can you imagine?

JACOBS

(stares)

Sure. I can imagine.

CARL

So this bird and I sort of developed a relationship. He would stop by and we would have an exchange. I would feed him a few crumbs and he would give me a few 'tweet-tweets.'

JACOBS

(beat)

Tweet-tweets.

CARL

Yeah. It was if it was saying,
'Thanks for the bread, Carl.
You're a good kid.' It was sweet,
being that close to nature.

JACOBS

Right.

The train enters another station but doesn't slow. The lights go bright, the train blows fast past the waiting crowd. The train again enters the tunnel and the lights again strobe through the car: dark - darker - light - dark - darker - light ...

CARL

Would you believe that me and that bluebird got so friendly that he would let me pet him? Really something, don't you think?

JACOBS

Yes. Really something.

(pause)

So what finally happened?

CARL

Excuse me?

JACOBS

What is the moral to your story?

CARL

Moral? No moral.

JACOBS

(beat)

Okay, how did it finally turn out - with you, the bird, your uncle and the farm... Carl?

CARL

Oh.

(pause)

A case of bad timing, really. The jet stream decided to drop the Beijing Blow right on our heads. Killed everything. The tomatoes, the pigs, the chickens, my uncle -- who was kind of sick, anyway -- and the bird. Little guy just flew up that morning, landed on the branch, gave a little birdy cough and keeled.

JACOBS

(stares at Carl)

And you made it okay?

CARL

Me? Oh yeah. I was a strong kid,
I held up.

The two men look at each other.

JACOBS

The only people who survived the
initial midwest fallout of the 851-
C cloud, the Beijing Blow, ended up
in the hospital. They were all
dead within a month.

Carl stares back at Jacobs, smiles.

CARL

Yeah, I know. Total bullshit.
Never left the city in my life...
except to go overseas and blow hell
out of some Arabs and a few screwed
Indonesians.

(pause - smiles)

So listen, Doc, the only reason
you're not dead now is you got
one -- and one only -- high-up type
looking out for you. Get it?

JACOBS

(stares - unphased)

Sure, I got it.

CARL

Then you need to know that if you
step over one more line, that
person may not be able to protect
you anymore. Roger that?

JACOBS

Sure. I understand. I'm a really
lucky guy.

CARL

(gives Jacobs a look)

But that's not going to stop you,
is it? You're just going to keep
shooting your mouth off, right?

JACOBS

Maybe.

Carl, for the first time, frowns, sits back in his seat, thinks.

CARL

You know, Dr. Jacobs, I just
realized something.

JACOBS

What's that?

CARL

We actually have something in common.

JACOBS

You think so? Like what?

CARL

We are both fatalists. Neither one of us gives a shit.

JACOBS

No, Carl, you're wrong. I do give a shit. Otherwise I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing.

CARL

You misunderstand, Doc. I'm not talking about your cause. I'm talking about you, yourself. You don't care whether you live or die. That kind of attitude can make for a very dangerous man, on the field of battle, or otherwise. As long as that kind of person is alive, and capable of inflicting damage, that kind of person can be very dangerous.

Jacobs gives Carl a look and, for the first time, he smiles.

JACOBS

And what about you, Carl? What cause motivates you? What do you care about?

CARL

(shrugs)

Nothing lofty, Doc. Just the mission.

(pause - remembering)

Oh, and those gentlemen with the guns at either end of the train. Them and about 10 more like them. I care about them.

(beat)

In the end, I'm just a stupid soldier doing what I'm told. A grunt in the trenches, carrying out the mission.

JACOBS

And what do you think about the mission?

(MORE)

JACOBS (CONT'D)

What do you think about the people
that issue your orders, send you on
the mission?

CARL

Well, I could tell them to take a
hike, retire, maybe buy a boat,
open up a fishing charter business
down in the Florida Keys, or
something. But there really aren't
any fish left to catch, so... what
the hell. Might as well keep doing
what I'm good at.

Carl looks to the trooper at the far end of the car and
raises a finger as signal. The trooper touches his earpiece
and speaks.

JACOBS

What exactly are you good at?
Helping greedy, corrupt lying
assholes that don't give a crap
about you bring it all to an end?

Carl pauses, then seems to remember something.

CARL

Oh, right, that's what she meant.

JACOBS

What?

CARL

You think the whole thing is going up.

JACOBS

What?

CARL

You think the whole thing will go
up in flames... poof.

JACOBS

(pause)

That's about it.

CARL

Yeah, how?

Jacobs thinks this over, then responds -- like he's talking
to a child.

JACOBS

See it's like this, Carl: while you and I sit here having this lovely conversation, some really important good stuff is being taken away from the sky and replaced by some very different stuff. The different stuff is not good stuff, it's very bad stuff. And humans keep making more humans who make more humans who make more humans who make more of the stuff that isn't supposed to be in the sky -- the bad stuff. And because we're getting a lot more bad stuff and a lot less good stuff, certain things are starting to get really-really hot and that makes a lot of other things get really-really hot and way down underground something very nasty is going on which makes some things get so hot... well... things just can't get any hotter and... boom.

Carl gives Jacobs a long look, shrugs, smiles.

CARL

Doesn't sound very scientific, Doc.

Jacobs gives Carl a big, strange grin.

JACOBS

Well, Carl, it doesn't sound very scientific because you don't seem like a very scientific type of guy.

It takes a few seconds, but Carl realizes he's been insulted.

CARL

Man, you got balls. I could have one of these troopers put a bullet in your eyeball and about all I'd get is a stern reprimand over a cup of coffee. And here you are sitting here giving me shit. What have you got, a death wish?

JACOBS

Not really. But Carl, you kind of bug me.

Carl gives Jacobs a long look, smiles big.

CARL

So, how much time we got, Doc?

JACOBS

What?

CARL

When's the big burn?

JACOBS

Tomorrow, the next day, a year.
Pick one.

The train is pulling into another station, this time slowing.

CARL

Well, I'd love to hear more. But
this is my stop.

JACOBS

Sorry to see you go.

CARL

(stands)

Thanks, Doc. I know you mean it.

Carl waits as the train slows to a stop. He replaces the fedora to his head, straightens the lapels of his jacket, takes a quick look around the ratty subway car.

CARL

Jesus, I hate these goddamn things.
Total pieces of crap. The city
hasn't spent a dime on them in... I
don't know, 20 years.

JACOBS

(sarcastic)

Yes. Pollution-free mass transit.
What a joke.

CARL

(smiles)

You know it.

The car stops, the troopers move to take position at the exit.

CARL

One last thing, Doc...

JACOBS

Yes?

CARL

You try for more airtime with the committee, or suck another cabinet officer in for one of your little demos, or try to broadcast again, orders or not, I will personally blow your big fucking brains out.

(beat)

Got it?

JACOBS

(calm)

Sure. Thanks, Carl. Have a nice day.

For the first time, a flash of anger crosses over Carl's face. Again the smile returns. He shakes his head and moves off behind his troopers.

The doors open. The crowd on the other side sees the armed men, immediately parts. The three mean head out.

As if nothing very unusual had happened, the crowd piles into the car. No person gives a second look to the fully armored troopers that just left the train.

Jacobs settles in the ratty subway seat and closes his eyes.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION EXIT - URBAN STREET - NIGHT

Under a NetCom display, on the right side of the street, Jacobs trudges up the subway stairs. This area is more residential, less degraded and, at this late hour, not crowded. About half the streetlights work; some flicker, strobing the area, casting odd shadows sporadically about the very dark scene.

Of the people on the half-full sidewalk, most seem on their way home. A few linger in the shadowy recesses of buildings.

Jacobs pauses at the top of the stairs, looks around; as if expecting someone to be waiting for him, then heads up the street. The further he gets from the station, the fewer people there are on the sidewalk.

From somewhere, perhaps from the shadow of a building, a group of four fall-in several steps behind Jacobs. They all wear loose light jackets, caps, baggy trousers, their heads angled down as they walk. In the darkness their clothes obscure their features. They could be young, could be female, could be male.

One of the four steps ahead and moves closer to Jacobs. Jacobs senses this, but shows no concern. Rather, he seems a bit irritated. The person walks a few feet away and a little behind Jacobs. Neither acknowledges the other. They could be just two strangers walking in the same direction.

From across the street, because of the darkness, it would be difficult to see that they were speaking.

JACOBS

Hello, Ronny.

RONNY

Good morning, Adam. How are things going?

JACOBS

(sarcastic)

Oh, good, really good. Terrific.

RONNY

True?

JACOBS

Yes. Tonight I had a delightful conversation with a gentleman on the subway. Very well-spoken, terrific story-teller, well-armed, too.

RONNY

Yes, I heard about that.

JACOBS

What?

RONNY

Well, we know about the gentleman and his two associates commandeering the train.

JACOBS

Really? How is that?

RONNY

Just behind you, on the left.

Jacobs glances back. One of the three raises his head, lifts his cap and smiles. It is Black Guy who was sitting next to Jacobs on the subway car. Jacobs shows surprise, then turns forward.

JACOBS

Is GP now in the spying business, Ronny? Do I have to worry about your people looking over my shoulder, too?

RONNY

(beat)

You're too valuable, Adam. We're keeping an eye on you for your own good.

(MORE)

RONNY (CONT'D)

Bader and Eddie have to sleep
sometime. Besides, they, too, are
becoming a bit too high profile.

(beat)

May I ask what your new friend had
to say?

JACOBS

In short: shutup or die.

RONNY

Very nice.

JACOBS

I thought so.

RONNY

So, what do you plan to do?

JACOBS

(long pause)

Haven't decided. What do you think
I should do?

RONNY

Well, I know it's a heavy
responsibility for you to bear...

JACOBS

Me, yeah, me.

RONNY

Excuse me?

JACOBS

Why me, Ronny? Why is it that I am
the chosen one?

RONNY

(pause)

Come on, Adam. You know the answer
to that.

(glances at Jacobs)

You need some sleep.

JACOBS

Right, yeah.

RONNY

Adam, as far as the Powers That Be
are concerned, we're now eco-
terrorists. Most of us are under
surveillance, others are on The
Possible List, and a few of the
more... formerly active... they're
gone.

JACOBS

Uh-huh.

RONNY

Someone has to be above-board, visible, still connected, able to get an audience, no links to GP. Your military service helps. Most of our primary people are now underground.

JACOBS

Yes, well. At least they're alive. I believe that if I say another word, you will lose another pawn.

RONNY

You are not a pawn, Adam. You know better.

JACOBS

Okay, knight, bishop, rook... regardless, pretty soon I may be underground, too. Just in a very different sense.

(beat)

Carl - my subway acquaintance - he had a terrific sense of humor, but, for some reason - don't know, it may have been the big guns - I took him seriously.

At the name Carl, Ronny looks up, then quickly drops his gaze.

RONNY

Carl? Is that what he called himself?

JACOBS

Yes. Why, have you had the pleasure?

RONNY

Not personally, but I know a little about him... if it is the same person. I'll find out.

JACOBS

Right, okay. Give him my regards.

(pause)

Meanwhile, my place is just around the corner. I'd rather that whoever, or whatever, they have watching me doesn't see me in the company of... eco-terrorists, no offense.

RONNY

(smiles)

None taken.

(pause)

Get some sleep.

JACOBS

(rolls eyes)

Right, thanks.

Ronny slows, falls back a few steps to join the other three. They make a left, cross the street and fade into the shadows.

Jacobs continues ahead, makes a right around the corner and disappears. For a while there is no person; no movement; just a dark empty street, lights flickering.

A scraggly mid-sized mutt walks around the corner, sniffing at the ground. Suddenly the dog jerks its head up and freezes. Eyes wide, but not afraid, it looks in the direction from which Jacobs had walked. For a long moment the street dog is a statue.

The person upon whom the dog has fixated nears the corner. From behind, face unseen, in functional form-fitting black clothing, with a stride exhibiting control and strength, it is a tall, physically fit... woman.

As she passes the staring mongrel, she slows and runs her palm gently across his mangy head and around his face. The dog's eyes relax with the caress.

The Woman rounds the corner and disappears.

INT. JACOBS' BEDROOM - NIGHT / EARLY MORNING

The flickering streetlights outside filter through the bars of reinforced windows and heavy shutter-like blinds. From the building opposite, a NetCom display casts a violet hue throughout the darkened room.

On his bed, Jacobs, now with a four-day growth of beard, may be asleep. Then he tosses... turns... and it is obvious that he is not sleeping. His baggy red eyes open.

JACOBS

Lights.

The bedroom lights go bright and Jacobs reaches for his eyes.

JACOBS

Low! Lights low!

The lighting emanating from the walls dims. Other than the bed, the chair and a metallic chest-of-drawers, the bedroom is empty. Jacobs sits up, drags his naked body from the bed and reaches for a robe which lays across the chair.

Jacobs walks to the drawers on top of which is the polymer-like tablet he carried earlier. He ties the robe, reaches for the tablet and heads to the next room.

Just as he leaves the bedroom and enters the living area, the bedroom lights go dark as the lights of the living room go on.

INT. JACOBS' LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

The living room, too, is sparsely furnished; a couch, a chair, a couple of low tables. A small unused kitchen area adjoins. An archway at the far side of the mid-sized room leads to a bath.

The front door is set into a reinforced frame and is further secured by an illuminated, yellow-green hi-density polymer bar. The bar extends from a built-up area of the wall to fit securely into a heavy bracket on the door. A palm-sized panel glows softly to the right of the door frame.

The totally smooth walls and ceilings emit light. There are no lighting fixtures. In total, the living quarters seem sterile; functional, but unadorned.

There is no art, but on the wall facing the couch is a thin clear panel about four feet wide by six feet in length. Adjacent is a glass shelf with several computer human interface devices, including a gray metallic glove.

A square darkened area on the shelf is the same size and color of the polymer tablet which Jacobs holds. There are three small and simple brackets at the side and rear of the square. It is to these that the tablet fits when Jacobs places it.

The brackets illuminate with a soft green, there is a hum and the clear display activates with swirling, pixelating colors. It briefly shows the words "LINUX COLLECTIVE 12" then goes black. Two narrow bands of light appear at each side of the display, move to the center and join as one pulsating band of light.

JACOBS
Activate AI Cerene.

To the upper left in block letters the panel briefly displays "ACTIVATING CERENE," then goes sky blue. To the left side colors swirl, pixelate, come together, take form and there is CERENE, a virtual representation of an artificial intelligence.

She is not beautiful, but certainly attractive. Her clothing is elegant and simple. Most unusual are her blue eyes, which sparkle in an unusual way. When she speaks, her very feminine voice is deep, pleasant and soothing.

CERENE
Good morning, Adam.

JACOBS
Good morning, Cerene.

CERENE
We are home.

JACOBS
Yes. We're home, now.

Jacobs moves from the display to the couch. Cerene's luminescent eyes follow his movements. It is clear that Cerene can see.

CERENE
Adam?

JACOBS
Yes, Cerene.

CERENE
It is very early in the morning.
Shouldn't you be sleeping?

Jacobs gives a shake of his head.

JACOBS
Nice idea, but I'll work a bit.

CERENE
Adam?

JACOBS
Yeeeeees, Cerene?

CERENE
You look very tired. Shouldn't you sleep?

JACOBS
(rolls eyes)
Okay, okay, that's enough. You are my most favorite of operating systems Cerene, but you are not my mother.

CERENE
(pause)
Adam, you told me to remind you to sleep when I see that you are tired. Would you like me to alter that programming?

Jacobs, pauses, thinks.

JACOBS
No. Thank you, Cerene.

CERENE
Understood.
(beat)
What would you like to do, Adam?

JACOBS
Tectonic Simulation Program 3, please.

On the display to the right of Cerene, the Earth's tectonic plates appear in an exploded, flat-map-style simulation.

JACOBS
Show hot spots, please.

At numerous points around the map, pulsating glowing yellow-orange areas appear: The Mid-Atlantic Ridge, Hawaii, Iceland, New Zealand, Africa, Japan, Washington State, Oregon, in the oceans, etc, etc...

JACOBS
Okay... let's go with Africa.

CERENE
Which site?

JACOBS
I don't know, pick an interesting one.

CERENE
Selecting... Mount Nyragongo...

The Africa Plate fills the screen, then the Congo, then Mount Nyragongo.

CERENE
Statistics?

JACOBS
Go with ambient surface, averages the last five years, then repeat at subterranean. We'll start at 1000 feet, then progress at 500-foot intervals. Do that runthrough five times, then we'll start projections.

CERENE
Oral or text.

JACOBS
Text, please.

At the right of the screen, in a contrasting white font, dates, coordinates, measurements, temperatures and other statistics begin to scroll.

Cerene seems to be actually looking over to the other side of the display to read the statistics. Jacobs' eyes move from the text to watch Cerene doing this a moment, then back to the text, then back to Cerene.

JACOBS

Cerene?

CERENE

(turns to him)

Yes, Adam?

JACOBS

Full-screen please.

Cerene immediately disappears and the geological images and data expand to fill the screen.

CERENE (OS)

Yes, Adam.

JACOBS

Thank you, Cerene. Begin data again, please.

The data rolls back to the beginning and restarts. Jacobs pulls a pillow to his chest, stares at the images and numbers.

Outside, through the barred glass, 10 stories down on the dark, now empty street, a figure moves in the shadows.

INT. JACOBS' LIVING ROOM - LATER

Perhaps an hour has passed and Jacobs' heavy eyelids are dropping. They fully close, his head nods to the side and his torso falls to the couch. The rolling data on the display stops and Cerene reappears. She is looking at Adam. While watching him sleep, she speaks.

CERENE

(soft whisper)

Save program.

The geological images and data disappear to be replaced by the blue background.

CERENE

(soft whisper)

Sleep, Adam.

Cerene vanishes. The blue background becomes black, the two pulsating lines appear at each side, move to the center and join. It is silent...

INT. JACOBS' LIVING ROOM - LATER

Perhaps two hours have passed. It is pre-dawn; still dark outside, but perhaps showing some light.

Jacobs is now in a fetal position on the couch, hugging the pillow, sleeping badly. He may be having nightmares, mumbling, tossing and turning.

The band of pulsating light remains on the display. The screen goes blue and Cerene reappears, looking at Jacobs.

CERENE

Adam...

He mumbles, contorts on the couch.

CERENE

(a little louder)

Adam...

(a little louder)

Adam...

(a lot louder)

Adam!

Jacobs bolts upright, confused.

JACOBS

Wha... wha... What?

He looks around, spots Cerene.

JACOBS

What is it Cerene?

His hands go to his head and he looks at the floor.

CERENE

Some... one is at the door.

JACOBS

(looks up - fully attentive)

Did they knock?

CERENE

No.

Jacobs is now alert, wary. He rises, walks towards the kitchen and, while passing the display, he speaks to Cerene.

JACOBS

(whisper)

Hibernate.

Cerene disappears and the screen goes black.

Jacobs enters the kitchen area, his hands drop out of sight to a drawer. He comes out with a nine-mm semiautomatic Glock pistol, vintage 2000. He cocks it.

He walks close to the front door, passes a hand over the glowing panel to the right. The door becomes transparent and there stands... The Woman. She is waiting, not seeing Jacobs as he studies her. It is clear that the door, no longer opaque inside, is still a solid door outside, like a two-way mirror.

Jacobs moves very close to the door and the woman. For a long moment, with considerable puzzlement, he examines the beautiful, amazon-like person standing just inches away from him. She looks into his eyes and smiles.

Jacobs gives a surprised start, leaps back a step, raises the gun. He catches himself, lowers the gun and moves back nearer the door.

JACOBS

Door-com open.

There is a 'beep' and a slight buzz emits from around the door.

JACOBS

Can I help you?

The Woman smiles, pauses before answering.

THE WOMAN

I am not sure.

Through the intercom it seems The Woman has an accent.

JACOBS

What do you want?

THE WOMAN

To talk.

JACOBS

About what?

The Woman pauses, smiles.

THE WOMAN

The end of Earth.

Jacobs' eyes narrow, he pauses, like he's thinking long and hard. He touches the illuminated glass-like bar across the door. It goes from yellow-green to clear and slides smoothly from the fitted reinforced socket on the door. He moves the pistol behind his back.

JACOBS

Open.

The door slides into the frame. The Woman stands there.

JACOBS
(not friendly)
You want to talk, come in.

Jacobs steps back, the weapon still held behind him. The Woman enters, not bothering to look around the room. Jacobs gestures to the couch with his free hand. Jacobs leans outside to take a quick look; first left; then right. He reenters, the door slides shut. Jacobs touches the bar, it slides, again locks into place and glows yellow-green.

JACOBS
Have a seat.

The Woman strides smoothly across the room. He watches her, wary but, unavoidably, impressed. He follows her, waits for her to sit, then he slouches to the chair. Bringing the weapon into view he lets it rest on the arm of the chair.

THE WOMAN
What is that for?

Though her English is perfect, she has an unusual accent. Not British, not Hispanic, not French, not Scandinavian...

JACOBS
Sorry, I'm not accustomed to having guests.
(long pause)
And... you wanted to talk about the end of the world.

THE WOMAN
Yes.

JACOBS
Well, let me ask you something, first.

THE WOMAN
Yes?

JACOBS
Who are you?

THE WOMAN
I am... a friend of a friend.

JACOBS
(pause)
And I just bet you are not going to tell me what friend that may be, right?

THE WOMAN
That's right.

JACOBS

Of course. That would be much too simple.

(pause)

What about your name? Would you care to tell me your name?

THE WOMAN

Jane.

JACOBS

Jane?

JANE

Yes.

JACOBS

Like: Jane Smith?

JANE

Yes. Like that.

Jacobs nods his head, as if this makes perfect sense.

JACOBS

And your accent. English is not your first language?

JANE

No. Not my... first.

JACOBS

Your second?

JANE

No. Not my second.

JACOBS

(shrugs)

Okay, I'm done. Go ahead.

JANE

I don't understand.

JACOBS

You wanted to speak to me about the end of the world. You have questions about my work?

JANE

No. No questions.

Jacobs rubs his stubbled face.

JACOBS

Then you would like to say something?

JANE
Yes. You are right.

JACOBS
(skeptical)
I'm right...

JANE
Yes.

JACOBS
I'm right about what?

JANE
Your theories are correct.

JACOBS
How do you know this? Are you a
scientist, a researcher?

JANE
I am a... researcher.

JACOBS
I would ask what kind and with what
institution or business, but you
wouldn't tell me, would you?

JANE
(smiles)
No.

JACOBS
But you have heard of my theories
and you believe them to be correct?

JANE
Yes... But they are also wrong.

JACOBS
Excuse me?

JANE
If it is allowed to happen, it will
happen much sooner than you have
estimated.

JACOBS
You base that conclusion on... what?

JANE
Other... studies.

JACOBS
 (skeptical)
 Other... studies. I see.
 (pause)
 I didn't know there were... other
 studies.

JANE
 Yes, Adam. Very soon the Earth
 may... cease. You must keep trying.
 You must succeed.

JACOBS
 And how is it you came to me?

JANE
 You are a part of... my job.

JACOBS
 Your job?

JANE
 Yes.
 (pause)
 Your wife and son were killed by
 the Montac Refinery release, correct?

Jacobs sits up straight.

JACOBS
 (stern)
 What is that to you?

JANE
 I'm sorry. I see I disturbed you.
 At times I can be little too... direct.

JACOBS
 (long pause)
 Right. Will you excuse me a moment?

Jacobs gets up, holding the gun at his side.

JACOBS
 I'm going to pause a moment to...
 use the restroom. Make yourself
 comfortable.

Shaking his head a few times, Jacobs heads to the archway at
 the other side of the room.

INT. BATHROOM

The bathroom is something like what might be found on an
 airliner; not much bigger, all steel and unbreakable glass,
 with a few unusual apparatus and utensils. Jacobs is
 washing his hands.

He pauses to examine his haggard, grizzly, beat-back face in the mirror. That is when he hears the voices; female. At first he appears unsure. He moves his ear closer to the door.

Now he is sure of it. Two female voices.

JACOBS

Open.

The door recesses into its frame, Jacobs eases out.

INT. JACOBS' LIVING ROOM

He creeps down the hall, step-by-step trying to figure it out. He rounds the corner to see... Jane standing at the display, the finger tips of one hand touching the screen, talking quietly with Cerene. The real and the virtual women stop speaking before he can make out a word. They turn and as Jane removes her hand from the screen, for an instant it seems as if Cerene's virtual hand extends out, finger tip to finger tip with Jane. Jacobs blinks hard, opens his bleary eyes and the impossible vision is gone.

JACOBS

How the hell did you...

JANE

Adam, you need to sleep.

Jacobs ignores this and slowly turns to Cerene.

JACOBS

Cerene, how were you activated?

Cerene doesn't answer right away, but looks at Jacobs.

CERENE

Adam, you need to sleep.

JACOBS

(a little angry)
Shutdown AI Cerene.

Cerene disappears. He turns to Jane.

JACOBS

How did you turn her on?! That's a personal program.

JANE

You told me to... make myself comfortable.

JACOBS

Yeah, comfortable. Like sit on the couch, make yourself a drink, not open a locked AI operating system that responds only to my voice print. How did you...

JANE

That is not important. You must continue your work. You have to... fight.

She is moving closer now, slowly.

JACOBS

What is my work to you and what...

She is now inches away, her beautiful eyes closing on him, wrapping around him, taking him away... he is like prey frozen by the stare of the predator. Her hand reaches for his head, her palm caresses down the side of his face...

JANE

Now, though, you must sleep.

INT. JACOBS' BEDROOM - DAY

Sun pierces the blinds, playing across Jacobs' still scraggly face. After a while his eyes flutter open. He gives a stretch then, remembering, he jumps to his feet, naked.

JACOBS

Lights-all-bright.

Lights throughout the entire apartment go bright as Jacobs heads out. He moves through the few small rooms looking for anything, or anyone, out of place. Finding nothing, he starts for the computer... then he sees the front door.

The illuminated bar is back, securing the door from inside. Confused, he faces the display, arms crossed, still naked.

JACOBS

(agitated)

Activate AI Cerene.

The black display goes blue and there is Cerene.

CERENE

Good afternoon, Adam.

JACOBS

(stern)

Cerene...

(beat - softer tone)

Did you say afternoon? What time is it? How long did I sleep?

CERENE

It is 4:32, p.m. and 21 seconds. I do not know how long you have slept because you fully deactivated me. But I was shutdown for 12 hours, 44 minutes and 53 seconds.

JACOBS

Twelve hours! Jesus Christ!

CERENE

Did you sleep well?

JACOBS

Forget that. What did you and that woman talk about last night?

CERENE

You.

JACOBS

Explain.

CERENE

She asked me how you were.

JACOBS

What?

CERENE

She asked about your health.

JACOBS

(incredulous)

My health?!

CERENE

Yes.

Jacobs, arms crossed, displaying full frontal to Cerene, now notices that her electronic eyes are playing up and down his naked body. His eyes waver, then, abruptly, he turns.

JACOBS

I'm going to take a shower.

He heads out fast, then stops, wraps his crotch in his hands and returns to face the display.

JACOBS

But how did she activate you?

CERENE

I don't know, Adam. I woke up from hibernation and she was there.

Jacobs nods, obviously not able to figure it out. He slowly turns back to head to the bath.

CERENE

Adam?

He stops, turns only his head, his hands covering his crotch.

JACOBS

What?

CERENE

Why are you holding your penis?

He pauses, eyes wavering, like he, too, is trying to figure that.

JACOBS

Nevermind.

Jacobs hurries off.

INT. JACOBS' LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jacobs heads into the room in a fresh robe with a clean towel around his neck. His hair is still wet, combed back and, for the first time, he is clean shaven. The bags that were under his eyes are gone. He is a man transformed; very handsome.

He enters the kitchen area, takes a container from the refrigerator and drinks as he heads to the living room.

JACOBS

Cerene.

CERENE

Yes, Adam.

JACOBS

Are you quite certain that you and that woman... Jane, spoke only of my health?

CERENE

Yes, Adam.

He pauses and looks into Cerene's virtual eyes. It is like he is trying to read her, as if she were a human.

JACOBS

Very well, then, please scan call logs and...

CERENE

Adam.

JACOBS

Yes?

CERENE

I'm sorry for interrupting, but Jane left something for you.

JACOBS

What, what do you mean?

CERENE

On the table.

Jacobs turns around and there on the table near the couch is a small rectangular metal-like object, about half the size of a credit card. He walks over, as if a bit wary, and picks it up. He examines it and looks now to Cerene.

JACOBS

Do you know what this is?

CERENE

No. Only that it appears to be a data card.

He walks closer to Cerene, thinks, makes a decision.

JACOBS

Cerene, shutdown all background programs, backup all data, including your own system codes and memory, please.

CERENE

Executing...
(pause)
Complete.

JACOBS

Alright, Cerene, we are going to take a chance on your friend and install. But I need you to be prepared to shutdown at the first indication of a bug. Understood?

CERENE

Yes.

Jacobs moves to the CPU, opens a port, inserts the chip.

CERENE

Accessing... program.

An electronic hum, Cerene's eyes flutter, her image blurs.

CERENE

Ohhhhhh...
 (voice now deep,
 slowed, man-like)
 Pro-gram ac-ti-va-ting...

Jacobs looks worried. Cerene disappears, the blue screen goes black, the band of light returns, but this time distorted.

JACOBS

(worried)
 Cerene... Cerene... Cerene!

The band of light stabilizes, the screen goes blue and Cerene returns, now speaking normally.

CERENE

Yes, Adam?

JACOBS

You okay?

CERENE

Yes, very well, thank you.
 (pause)
 The program is... very unusual.

JACOBS

How so? What is it?

CERENE

I do not believe there is an appropriate designation.

JACOBS

Best guess. Give me the closest association.

CERENE

Accessing libraries... Nearest association would be... what is called... a breacher worm.

Jacobs appears a little shocked... and very interested.

JACOBS

What level?

CERENE

(beat)
 There appears to be no level. The program is very sophisticated.

JACOBS

What's the source? Is it signed?

CERENE

Source... unknown. No signature.

JACOBS

Naturally.

CERENE

(beat while Jacobs thinks)
Adam, this program, it is illegal,
correct?

JACOBS

Yes, yes it is, Cerene. Very.

CERENE

I see.

JACOBS

Cerene, I'm going to ask two things
of you. One, dissociate yourself
completely from this program. It
will not activate you and you will
in no way interact with it. Two, I
want you to sleep a while. Do you
mind?

The AI actually seems to think about this.

CERENE

No. I don't mind. I know you are
doing this to protect me.

JACOBS

That's true, Cerene. Please sleep.

Cerene closes her eyes, her figure turns to colors, disappears.

JACOBS

(long pause)

Encrypt call. Call E, call B, open
channels.

Rather than ringing, two separate tones sound intermittently.
A window within the display opens and there is Bader.

BADER

Everything okay?

A second window opens and there is EDDIE, the 'Camo Man,'
last seen in Central America. He is about 30, sharp, healthy.

EDDIE

Doc, what can I do for you?

JACOBS

New data, and a lot of it. Signal the full group, ASAP a meet. When it's set, burst signal me on time and place.

BADER

Will do.

EDDIE

Roger that.

JACOBS

Good, thanks, see you soon.

The windows close. Jacobs thinks hard, makes a decision.

JACOBS

Activate AI Milo.

The display shows "ACTIVATING MILO." This time the display background goes from black to dark gray, instead of sky blue.

Colors form to a shape at the left side of the screen and a very different AI virtualization materializes. This is a man of dark complexion. He wears an elegant suit and, though he is handsome, there is a shark-like quality to the face. His voice is moderately deep, neutral, a little menacing.

MILO

Adam.

JACOBS

Milo. How are you?

MILO

Good. It has been a long time.

JACOBS

Yes, it has. Milo, we have a new program.

MILO

Yes, I see it.

JACOBS

Do you know what it is and understand it?

MILO

Yes and yes.

(beat)

It is a dirty little piece of work.

JACOBS

Is that okay with you, Milo?

MILO

Yes. It looks like... fun.

JACOBS

That's good to hear. Milo, do you think this program would be capable of accessing external high security networks?

MILO

Scanning... checking libraries... yes.

JACOBS

How high security?

MILO

Very high security.

JACOBS

(more excited)

Do you see any potential ceilings?
Any walls?

MILO

Checking... checking... no.

JACOBS

Alright, Milo. Attempt access...
lets see, staff personnel roster,
Washington, D.C. office of DARPA.

Immediately the screen to the right of Milo goes white, the DARPA logo appears, fades and then: "DARPA-NET - D.C. UNIT - PERSONNEL FILES - EXEC ADMIN - EYES ONLY." Photos, names, ranks, titles and statistics of personnel begin to scroll down the screen.

JACOBS

(amazed)

I'll be damned...

Milo looks over at the data, then back to Jacobs.

MILO

Yes. You may be.

INT. JACOBS' LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Alone, his virtual hands crossed in front of him, Milo faces out from the screen with a look of contentment. To his left, countless windows continuously flash open and close on the display. Most documents are headed by some sort of official seal of government, military and law enforcement.

Continuously popping up among the mind-boggling reams of data are the words "SECRET," "TOP SECRET," "CLASSIFIED," "CONFIDENTIAL," "EYES ONLY." Among these documents are fast-gone images of oil rigs, factories, erupting volcanoes, polluted oceans, wasted forests, riots in city streets.

Jacobs rounds the corner from the bedroom buttoning the sleeve of a rugged black shirt. His clothing is different now. All black, very functional. His shoes are almost boot-like, with a thick, high traction sole. His look is sleek. This is a Jacobs very different from the weary, disheveled, beaten-down man of before.

JACOBS

How's it downloading Milo?

MILO

Good. Very good. We are receiving a great deal of data and... we are improving.

JACOBS

Who is improving?

MILO

I am. Cerene is.

JACOBS

What do you mean?

MILO

Upgrades. There are upgrades we never knew existed. The access is... delicious.

Jacobs gives Milo a look, wondering if this is a good thing.

JACOBS

That's great. But careful of Cerene.

MILO

I am, Adam. I am shielding her. I know you would not want her code to be... corrupted

JACOBS

Uhhh... thanks.

(beat)

What about the data? Are you finding everything?

MILO

Yes. Everything and more... much, much more.

JACOBS

Access to Earth images? Have you been able to tap satcom-surveillance?

MILO

Yes. And other systems. You will be happy with this, Adam. You have a lot to learn.

JACOBS

That's good. Give it another five minutes, then we need to relocate. In transit, assuming you can maintain wireless, keep working and...

Milo's virtual head jerks to the side as if a jolt of electricity just shot through him. His image blurs momentarily and the data download freezes. Jacobs see this.

MILO

Da-Da-Adam...

JACOBS

What is it Milo? What's wrong?

MILO

Ping. I've been pinged.

JACOBS

(concerned)

Tracer? Is it a trace?

MILO

Yes. Blocking... blocking. Ping terminated.

(beat)

I really don't like that.

JACOBS

Did they lock on? Did they ID you?

MILO

Indefinite. The signal was cloaked.

JACOBS

Cloaked? Could they have located you before you caught it?

MILO

Accessing logs... decoding... probable. The trace routed from a DIA server. We completed that download and terminated that link 19 minutes, 57 seconds ago.

JACOBS

Shit! Milo, close all links...

Behind and around Milo the screen goes blank gray. Jacobs starts to move from the room towards the kitchen.

JACOBS

Save all data, including codes.
Backup to the remote host.

He is in the kitchen retrieving the nine millimeter pistol when he hears it: a high-pitched mechanical whining and whirring, getting louder fast.

Just outside the window in the waning sunlight, 10 floors above the street, a strange device jets into view and stops. About four feet high, the machine hisses. It is a silver glass-like sphere adjoined to a high-speed turbine with a small gun turret mounted beneath. Small jets occasionally spit from the side to fine tune its hovering flight. A coin-sized port opens and a lens is exposed. It glows red then goes very bright.

A violet laser-like beam slices into Jacobs' apartment. He drops behind the kitchen counter. The light flattens to razor width, then expands vertically to fill the room floor to ceiling. The light begins to sweep along walls and furnishings, tracing every shape inside; mapping out the interior. After the light passes Jacobs' position, he looks around the corner. The red beam moves beyond the computer display, beyond a frozen Milo, stops and returns. It settles on the polymer tablet, the CPU.

Jacobs braces himself and bolts. He is reaching for the CPU when the beam picks him up. Jacobs grabs the CPU, Milo disappears, the display goes clear, the airborne machine pivots quickly, emits a loud hiss, a turret swings and the scanner drone opens up with screaming high-speed automatic weapon fire.

Outside, precisely following Jacobs as he runs from the room, a thousand bullets chew into the windows and spent shells fall away from the drone... but the glass holds. The bullets do no more than chip the reinforced plastic-like windows. The rounds bounce off, flatten, fall, never breaking through. Jacobs disappears around the corner to the bedroom, the drone exhausts its magazine and the gun runs dry... click-click-click-click. The hovering machine fires a small jet and backs up a few feet. It is as if it, or perhaps its controller, is trying to figure out why the weapon failed to pierce the glass.

INT. JACOBS' CLOSET - SAME TIME

Holding the CPU Jacobs quickly enters the bedroom closet. He pulls clothing to the side, kneels to a strongbox and begins working an electronic lock.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JACOBS' UNIT - SAME TIME

Outside of the unit designated 1001, the hall is extremely stark, as if everything is made of glowing white plastic; floors, ceilings, walls. Atop each of the two adjacent high-tech elevators the two digital displays are showing the same increasing numbers: 5-6-7-8-9-10. Both elevators open.

A ten-man armored assault team piles out and surrounds Jacobs' door. Last to exit the elevator, taking his sweet time, is Carl, now in a gray coat and matching fedora.

Two of the team members are attaching a disk-like object to Jacobs' door. They finish, back up and the team takes cover against the wall on either side of the apartment door. Carl reverses a couple of steps, flattens against the wall and turns.

CARL

Blow it.

BA-BOOM! Carl steps back and squints through the smoke. His eyes register some surprise. The team stands there, lined up, weapons raised, ready to charge, but confused. They lower weapons. The door is missing some finish, now lacking some white coating where the disc was attached. Underneath the coating is a gray material. Carl's second in command, JOHNSON, kneels, touches that spot.

JOHNSON

What the hell... what is this thing made of?

CUT BACK TO:

INT. JACOBS' CLOSET - SAME TIME

Jacobs is moving fast, but keeping his cool. From the strong box he has grabbed a couple of smaller items, perhaps holstered instruments or weapons. He stands and from the hanging clothing he takes what looks like a large, bulky, heavily padded motorcycle jacket made of a synthetic black material. He picks up a cane-like metal rod, looks to the ceiling, extends the cane and knocks a panel loose. Jacobs throws the rod up into the ceiling space.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JACOBS' UNIT - SAME TIME

The team finishes attaching two more disc charges to Jacobs' door. They again take cover, this time much further back. Carl also steps further back and flattens against the wall.

CARL

Blow 'em.

BA-BA-BOOM-BOOM! It's a few moments before the dust clears.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. JACOBS' CLOSET - SAME TIME

Jacobs' feet disappear into the ceiling. The ceiling panel slides back into place.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JACOBS' UNIT - SAME TIME

Carl is in the center of his men looking at the door, which shows a few more scratches where the blaster discs were. The team now just stands there, not sure what to do with themselves. Carl seems very interested in the material.

CARL

This sort of thing should be illegal.

JOHNSON

Are we sure the drone didn't get him?

Carl gestures to one of his men, the COMM MAN. Comm Man touches a small lighted pad on his armored jacket.

COMM MAN

Control, this is team.

CONTROL VOICE (OS)

Go ahead, team.

COMM MAN

Checking status of scanner drone.

CONTROL VOICE

No joy, team.

Out of the corner of his eye, Carl notices that the floor indicator numbers on one of the elevators is changing. He turns. The number is ascending: 11-12. It stops at 12. Carl watches the glowing number.

COMM MAN

Was target acquired?

CONTROL VOICE (OS)

Affirmative, team. Acquired, sighted and attacked. Drone weapon did not penetrate target site. The windows were reinforced... bulletproof.

JOHNSON

Jesus. This guy is paranoid.

Now Carl sees it. After stopping at 12, the elevator is moving again... going up: 13-14-15-16...

CARL

Bastard.

Carl presses the elevator call button, the door opens. He enters, presses the top button, 50. The door begins to close.

CARL

Get some more blasters. Blow the walls. When I get back I want to see a hole big enough to fly a grinder through.

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - SUNSET

Visibility is limited, the wind is howling, the dropping sun has the flowing smog of the city lit up like a lava lamp. Everything is cast in a red-orange hue.

Jacobs is making his way across the rooftop. He wears the bulky jacket, still open. He slides the CPU tablet into a fitted internal pocket in the jacket's breast. He seals that pocket, joins the front and begins to fasten and pull tight straps and clamps.

The roof is jammed with numerous large, noisy, rumbling machines; A/C units, filtration devices, water circulators. Jacobs is about 25 feet from the side of the building.

CARL

It's a long way down, Doc!

Jacobs spins. Through the blasting, mud-thick toxic air, he sees the shape of Carl approaching, about 50 feet away. He advances with a new model handgun aimed at Jacobs. The men must yell to be heard above the howling wind and machinery.

CARL

I did some more checking on you. I didn't know you served when you were a youngster. Force Recon, four years, saw some action, too. That the usual deal for an MIT egghead?

JACOBS

What can I do for you, Carl?

CARL

Tell you what; hand over the CPU and we'll call it even. I won't splatter your brains. Hell, I might even give you a head start.

(beat)

Consider it a favor, one jarhead to another.

JACOBS

No, thanks, Carl.

CARL

Well, I don't know what other option you got. You might've been a tough, hard-charging little junior officer, sir, but I don't think you'll survive that drop.

Carl is moving, Jacobs is backing up. Squinting, eyes watering in the swirling pollution and blasting wind, Carl is trying to hold the weapon steady, get an accurate read on Jacobs' position.

JACOBS

I appreciate your concern, Carl. But I'm not planning on hitting the ground.

CARL

What are you going to do, fly?

Now Carl is getting close enough to make out Jacobs' gear through the haze. Jacobs backs up, pulls a chest panel from the jacket and there is a locked down cable and grip. Carl's eyes go wide as he realizes... Jacobs turns and sprints for the edge of the building, Carl sprints after him firing the full auto pistol... TET-TET-TET-TET-TET... its too late. Jacobs goes over the side.

Carl holds up at the edge of the roof, looks down, gun at the ready. Then he spots him. Still in controlled free fall, all black, Jacobs' body disappears into the haze and shadows.

Below, perhaps 200 feet from the ground, in the howling 120-mph free-fall wind, Jacobs pulls the ripcord. The back of the jacket tears away, the chute deploys and an advanced, highly maneuverable black canopy system snaps open. Jacobs slows to a gentle float, rips away two more jacket panels, grips and breaks free the navigation cables.

Jacobs guides the silent chute past one building with its NetCom display, turns, passes another building with a NetCom display, turns, passes another building, turns again. He spots what may be a predetermined landing zone: a ledge 12 feet over the crowded sidewalk. Now he lets up on the cables and descends fast. Just above the ledge, he pulls hard at the cables, brakes the chute and lands standing. From the reinforced jacket he yanks a single release cable and strips off the chute apparatus; the frame, cable and straps. He walks to the ledge, hangs over and drops to the sidewalk. His parachute descent unseen, when he hits the sidewalk nobody gives him a second look.

Jacobs becomes one of the crowd just as five scanner drones whir in and begin moving above the darkened street. Jacobs notices them, looks down, pulls a cap from his back pocket, puts it on and walks away fast.

For the drones -- zipping frantically to one side of the street, dropping, scanning unhappy human faces with red beams, moving to the other side of the street, scanning... too many people.

High above, from the perspective of one drone, the entire scene is jammed with moving humanity and NetCom advertising displays. Jacobs descends the subway stairs.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JACOBS' UNIT - SAME TIME

The elevator door opens and an unhappy Carl exits. There is now a man-sized hole in the wall adjacent Jacobs' front door. The Comm Man is in the hall.

COMM MAN

It took four charges. The goddamn wall was almost as strong as the door.

(pause)

Did you get him?

Carl ignores the man and enters the apartment.

INT. JACOBS' LIVING ROOM

The team is going through the place, but there is really nothing to go through. Johnson is standing at the blank display.

JOHNSON

Did you get him?

Carl whirls on the man and goes nose-to-nose.

CARL

Fuck you, trooper!! I'm not here to answer your fucking questions!!

That soldier and the others in the room snap to attention.

JOHNSON

Understood, sir!

CARL

Are we clear, soldier?!!

JOHNSON

Clear, Sergeant Major! Crystal clear, sir!

CARL
 (backs off - cools down)
 At ease.

The soldier relaxes, a little.

CARL
 Anything?

JOHNSON
 No sir, nothing. He went out through the closet ceiling. He had grips built into the interior steelwork leading to the elevator service access. Probably why he took an unit next to the shaft. In the closet we found a strongbox, open and empty. The CPU is gone. Nada.

CARL
 The drones pick up anything?

JOHNSON
 Negative, sir.

CARL
 Figures. That would be way too fucking easy.

A tone sounds. Carl moves away from the other soldiers. From his collar he takes an earpiece, puts it in his ear, raises his wrist, speaks to the inaudible caller.

CARL
 Yeah? ... Negative. ... No. ... No, he took it. ... I understand. ... I'll get him. ... I said, I will get him.

Carl terminates the call. He gives a disgusted look around the room and exits through the hole.

INT. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

The hall is empty. The sound coming from some room, somewhere, is music... Gregorian chants. The Catholic artwork and artifacts placed throughout the hallway are genuine, but seem somehow out of place; affixed to what is clearly a modern, very expensive fortified corridor.

The massive high-security doors at the end of the hall, the doors that separate this disguised fortress from the outside world, are sealed shut. Then, with a mechanized sound something like a huge vacuum releasing, the doors drop in their frame about two inches then swing outward.

Blinding light spills in and fingers of smog reach inside around the massive door frame. There is no sound outside, but the musical chants from within seem louder.

From what is a wall of light beyond the door, Jane emerges into the church compound.

INT. BISHOP'S OFFICE

In the dim room Bishop Carmel is at his desk, dressed formally in Catholic garb. But he does not seem to be readying for mass, or any holy function. He touches links on the thin computer display, reviewing numbers, fiscal spreadsheets. On his expensive desk is a fine china tea set, to the right of which is a decanter half-full of liquor, perhaps cognac or brandy. He sips delicately from a small cup, reviews the income figures.

The door to his office quietly opens. Jane steps inside. Carmel doesn't hear her, he senses her. His head raises. At first he says nothing, just stares into the not-friendly eyes of the uninvited, rather formidable-looking female visitor. His hand is already slipping to the side of the desk, pressing the button, pressing again, again.

CARMEL

(Spanish - subtitled)

Who are you? What do you want?

Jane doesn't answer immediately. She looks down at Carmel, as if studying a particularly unattractive insect.

JANE

(perfect Spanish - subtitled)

I want you to walk with me.

CARMEL

How did you get in here?

JANE

I want you to walk with me.

Carmel isn't sure how to respond. He stares back, as if something about those words bother him.

CARMEL

(hereafter English)

Oh, absolutely. I'd love to stroll with you. But first I need to know who you are, how you got in here and what you want.

Jane takes two steps towards Carmel, stops, thinks.

JANE

(hereafter English)

I am a friend of... Dr. Jacobs. I walked into here. I want you to come with me.

At first Carmel is nonplussed, then a look of recognition comes over his face and he is visibly relieved.

CARMEL

Jacobs?! Dr. Adam Jacobs, the gentleman that was here with the fanciful report and his little photos?

(smiles)

You will have to excuse me, but I said all I wished to say to Dr. Jacobs. And I certainly have nothing more to say to any of his... acquaintances. Now...

JANE

I have things to say. Things to show you.

CARMEL

I do not know how you got in here, but security...

(frowns at still empty doorway)

...will be here momentarily and you, and Dr. Jacobs, may find yourselves in a great deal of trouble. I suggest you leave immediately.

Carmel looks again beyond Jane to the door, again pushing the button, showing increasing irritation and concern.

JANE

He asked you for help. He asked you to consider what you have done wrong for so long.

CARMEL

If you are referring to the dead issue of contraception, young lady, that has been the policy of the Church for thousands of years. Even if I wished to make some statement, I am one man. I would make no difference.

(smiles)

Perhaps you should take your concerns to The Holy Father.

JANE

Who?

CARMEL
 (rolls eyes)
 The Pope.

JANE
 No, it is not he that controls this.
 For very long it has not been him
 or those that came before him that
 control this. It is you and your...
 friends.

CARMEL
 (beat - more concerned)
 I do not know what you are talking
 about.

JANE
 Yes, you do.

Jane walks to the desk. Carmel is pressing, pressing the button. She reaches, Carmel stands up fast and backs away, she touches a finger on the display and slowly pivots the screen.

She presses successive links, rapidly bringing up a stream of images, multilingual memos and financial data; dates, cities, millions upon millions upon millions of dollars... Within seconds, she has flipped through reams of data.

Jane grabs the computer display and rips it from the desk, wiring trailing behind. She slams the display to the desk smashing it to pieces. Slowly, she turns back to a frozen Carmel. He makes an ineffectual dash for the door. In a fast step she is on him, her hand clamping down hard on his shoulder.

INT. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION BUILDING HALLWAY

A distressed Carmel walks ahead of Jane.

CARMEL
 Very well, very well, then. I will
 bring the matter to the attention
 of the counsel. Naturally, I could
 not guarantee anything. You must
 know, we believe that contraception
 removes God from the act of
 procreation.

They walk, Jane seeming to ignore him.

CARMEL

Why can't you understand this?
This is our policy... our faith.

(beat)

The sexual act without the
possibility of procreation is
sinful.

(beat)

Fertility is a gift from God and
cannot be withheld.

(beat)

Man was put on this earth to be
fruitful and multiply. This is
God's will.

JANE

(long pause)

Humans took hold, developed
intellect and science, but not the
will to care for what they were
given.

(beat)

Humans were meant to share this
planet, this gift. Now those like
you help to smother it. You
eliminate other species through
greed, cruelty, waste and
thoughtless propagation.

CARMEL

Are you a child?! You are speaking
Greenpeace nonsense! Wake up! Of
course humans are ruining the
planet. Of course humans kill! Of
course humans destroy! That is
what humans do! That is why they
are so... so... unworthy.

(beat - reconsiders)

They must be... saved.

JANE

Perhaps it is the leaders who are
unworthy.

CARMEL

And what would you have me do?!
What are we to do?! What? Are we
to ignore our scriptures?

Jane is perhaps deciding if it is even worth answering.

JANE

Your scriptures were written by men.
Men who wished to grow and make
more powerful their own... tribe.

Carmel realizes where they are heading and he becomes more desperate. He looks back as he walks forward.

CARMEL

But without scripture there would be chaos. We give them laws by which to live. And we do it to serve God.

Jane reacts to this, eyes narrowing, jaw tightening.

JANE

You perverted what should have been. You are now the moneychangers.

They are nearing the door and Carmel sees the light. He knows now that the doors are open and panic shows on his face. He whirls around, as if to make a stand.

CARMEL

You can't force me to go out there!
I will not go out there!!

Jane moves in on Carmel.

EXT. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Carmel flies out the door, stumbles and lands hard on the cement. His scuffed face rises from the ground and he looks up. Looking back is what seems a thousand faces.

Carmel recoils, stands, attempts to return to the building. But there is Jane. To each side of them are the guards, in their positions, but slumped to the ground, unconscious or dead. The buffer zone is gone. There is nothing but heat and toxic air surrounding a sea of filthy, hopeless humanity and broken automobiles, dead where they stopped on the street.

Carmel looks at the rotting scene with horror. He begins to gasp, as if hyperventilating. He turns to Jane, pleading.

CARMEL

Please, please, I can't breath.
Let us go back inside. I will help.

Jane places a hand on Carmel. He turns to look out over the scene of chaos and degradation that awaits him. He begins to stumble forward into the crowd. The people give way, barely.

In tattered clothes, with filthy faces, gaping holes where teeth should be, human organisms observe this oddity; a well-fed man of The Church in fine clothes with perfect teeth, clear skin, manicured nails.

JANE

Come, Bishop. Let us walk among your flock.

Jane behind, Carmel slowly enters a sea of hopelessness.

EXT. DECAYED CITY STREET - DUSK

Surrounded by wasting buildings and humanity, with his CPU tablet under arm, Jacobs makes his way down a crowded street. He keeps his head down, but glances up, warily surveying the area. Above, a NetCom display beams its incessant pitches.

At what may have long ago been a prestigious, elegant brownstone townhouse, Jacobs slips down the dirty exterior stairwell. At the bottom he applies a key to a door and enters the seemingly abandoned building.

INT. SAFE HOUSE BUILDING BASEMENT

It's dark and dank. The sound of a leaking pipe drips... drips, drips into an unseen bucket. Jacobs makes his way through a shadowy maze of crumbling passageways.

He rounds a corner and stops near a decayed section of wall fronted by various debris. He kneels, reaches to the wall, and feels along the decaying mortar adjoining two bricks. He presses, stands, and at head level a square-foot of wall slides open.

Jacobs places his palm on the slate-like plate underneath, the reader panel glows. An inch-square section of the screen goes bright, a laser-like light scans Jacobs' face, his eyes, and from a speaker Ronny's voice is heard.

RONNY (FILTERED)

Hello, Adam. We're in the conference room.

A section of the wall quickly draws back and light spills into the basement. Jacobs enters a stark, sterile, modern corridor and the wall closes.

INT. SAFE HOUSE HALL

Jacobs nears a door exactly like that of his apartment. It draws back and there stands Ronny.

RONNY

Something's happening. Come in.

INT. SAFE HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM

About 30 distinguished-looking men and women are gathered around a sleek oval table. By appearance, they could range from academics to CEO's. Looking out from several displays affixed to the smooth walls are varying human-like AI's.

Guard-like, Eddie and Bader stand near the door. They seem not fully part of the meeting; observers, perhaps even in a subservient position.

Terese, last seen at the Senate building exterior, also stands nearby.

TERESE

Hello, Adam.

JACOBS

Hi, Terese. Nice to see you.
What's up?

TERESE

It looks like the MAR hotspot.

JACOBS

(raises eyebrows)

Flare up?

RONNY

No, a major disturbance. We've
tried to get a read on it, but the
data flow went down. Maybe jammed.

Ronny turns to a display screen and speaks to that AI, an elegant, conservatively dressed female.

RONNY

Trace, please repeat for Dr. Jacobs.

TRACE

Yes, hello, again, Dr. Jacobs.

JACOBS

Hello, Trace, please proceed.

Jacobs moves to an empty chair. To the front of that seat, set into the table, is a CPU dock like that in his apartment.

TRACE

At 16:21 today, an autonomous
hydrophone moored at approximately
37 degrees north latitude, 32
degrees west longitude recorded a
seismic shift exceeding 9.2.

OTHER STAFFER

Where's that?

JACOBS

The Mid-Atlantic Ridge. A highly
active hydrothermal field right on
the plate and...

RONNY

Lucky Strike.

OTHER STAFFER

A what?

TERESE

The Lucky Strike. An undersea volcano.

TRACE

Exact coordinates are no longer accessible, but preliminary data does indicate you are correct. In that area a major eruption and tectonic warp has apparently occurred.

Jacobs slips his CPU tablet into the tabletop brackets, they activate and glow. Cerene materializes on the closest display. She is already looking directly at Jacobs.

RONNY

We've been trying to breach naval systems to get numbers, or maybe even images - no luck.

(turns to a seated man)

Corbin, anything from NavCom?

A small man wearing glasses, CORBIN, turns to his AI, a well-dressed virtual man.

CORBIN

Bob, have you had success with your efforts?

BOB

No, Corbin, unfortunately not.

CERENE

Adam, I believe we should first attempt to access transmissions to and from Space Station Beta, then attempt Alpha for a link with Endeavor Four, which should be in preliminary reentry orbit with a visual...

WHILHELM

(leaning forward - interrupting)

A moment, please. Dr. Jacobs, may I ask, since when do AI's initiate an agenda process for a staff meeting?

JACOBS

Cerene...

ANOTHER STAFFER

And what's this about in-orbit comm links? That's impossible!

Jacobs pauses, steepled his fingers, looks to the ceiling. Bader and Eddie give each other a look. Irritation is showing on Bader's face.

JACOBS

Cerene has downloaded certain...
upgrades. Better let her run the
show for now.

ANOTHER STAFFER

Upgrades, just what sort of upgrades?

JACOBS

(beat)

Please proceed, Cerene.

CERENE

Accessing International Space
Station Beta...

On the display to the right of Cerene a flood of computer
code zeros and ones whirl by in a blur. Intermixed visuals
fade in and out. These are faces... astronauts, technicians,
there is panic, but the words are garbled... "tsunami,
eruption, undersea, Florida, drilling platform, evacuate..."

CERENE

Something is very wrong.

ANOTHER STAFFER

(sarcastic)

Yes, we can see that. Now how
about telling us...

BADER

Hey, shut the hell up!

Another Staffer goes quiet.

CERENE

The crew is attempting to broadcast
an open-channel global message...
Transmission is being jammed.

RONNY

What the hell? They could be
summarily executed. What could
make them so desperate?

CERENE

There have been deaths aboard the
station.

(pause)

Attempting to override jamming...

For a moment the screen clears and there appears a control
console. A technician comes on visual in mid sentence.

TECHNICIAN
 ...evacuate. Evacuation has to
 commence immediately. Move to
 inland areas... You must...

The screen goes blank.

CERENE
 They are gone.

JACOBS
 Jammed?

CERENE
 No... gone.
 (pause)
 Switching to Station Alpha.

Again a flood of code rushes across the display, then slows.

CERENE
 Intercepting single transmission...
 visual.

A nearly clear image of a command room comes into focus. A
 MARINE CAPTAIN in full gear faces the screen at parade rest.
 He is flanked by several heavily armed Marine troopers at
 port arms.

MARINE CAPTAIN
 Affirmative, sir, situation is
 under control. We were forced to
 eliminate an unknown number of
 civilian personnel and seven,
 perhaps eight military -- none
 Marines, I'm happy to report, sir.

The Captain touches an earpiece and listens.

MARINE CAPTAIN
 No, sir. To my knowledge no orbit-
 to-earth contact was achieved.
 Unfortunately, as you may know by
 now, internal suppression of Beta
 Station was not effective. With
 the support of some military
 personnel, civilians did briefly
 take control of communications.
 The station was, unavoidably...
 eliminated.
 (listens)
 Yes, sir. A real shame. Station
 Beta was a wonderful piece of hardware.

All in the conference room are dumfounded, silent.

MARINE CAPTAIN

(listens)

Yes, sir. Endeavor Four is in reentry phase. I can't speak for the reliability of the crew.

(listens)

Affirmative, sir. Tom Swagen is commanding.

Bader and Jacobs give each other a look.

MARINE CAPTAIN

(listens)

Aye, aye, sir. We've already locked-on.

The Captain turns, gestures to a man seated at a control.

MARINE CAPTAIN

Fire three, fire four.

The man at the control panel pushes buttons and two distinct whines are heard for two seconds.

MARINE CAPTAIN

Interceptors away sir.

JACOBS

(urgent)

Cerene, attempt to contact Endeavor now.

The station command center disappears from the display.

CERENE

Tracking... it may be a moment.

All at the table are now standing, watching Cerene.

RONNY

This is impossible.

CORBIN

They couldn't do this, could they?

BRITISH STAFFER

What the bloody hell is it all about? What's going on? What are they trying to stop.

CERENE

Transmission lock.

Somewhat fuzzy in a rear-facing high wide-angle view, the space shuttle cockpit materializes. Tom and Frank alternate their attention from instruments to cockpit view. They are tense, but retaining a pilot's calm.

JACOBS

Cerene, can you open a channel?

At this Tom looks up, surprised, and looks directly at Jacobs.

TOM

Adam, is that you? How the hell?

JACOBS

Nevermind, Tom. Alpha station has launched missiles targeting you.

TOM

(working - calm)

Negative.

JACOBS

Tom, you've got to believe me. We intercepted a communication from a Marine Captain on Alpha. We saw them launch.

TOM

That's Baker. Baker is a major son-of-a-bitch and he can't stand navy officers, especially pilots. He's had a hard-on for me from day one. Doesn't much like Frank, either.

FRANK

That's an affirmative, and I'm Air Force. The guy is a real dick.

TOM

Cerene, is that you that managed this comm link?

CERENE

Yes, Tom.

TOM

Good. Nice work. Wish we had met again under different circumstances. I have to confess; I always thought you were the sexiest of AI's.

CERENE

(pause)

Thank you, Tom.

JACOBS

Jesus, are you guys not hearing me? There are missiles closing on the shuttle!

TOM

Negative, Adam. What you saw launch weren't missiles. If they were missiles, we might stand a chance. Those are fusion-fired interceptor drones. Those little bastards have a mind of their own and can navigate during reentry. They've got our signature. Outside or inside the atmosphere, they'll nail us.

Frank looks up from an instrument to the cockpit view.

FRANK

There it is.

TOM

(looks)

My god.

Tom throws a few switches.

TOM

Adam, it's too late for us and we need to show you something. We can only give you a partial North American view, but we think another may be headed for Europe.

(beat)

Cerene, record, please.

There is an infrared-enhanced view of a darkening Earth from just outside the atmosphere: the Eastern US coastline, the Atlantic Ocean. The magnification increases to the southeast coast and several in the room gasp.

TOM

Our condolences to those of you with family in Florida.

Even from the distant view, the moving form rising far above the ocean surface is staggering and unmistakable. On a direct course for the east coast of Florida, traveling at more than 600 miles per hour, is an enormous tsunami. It seems to stretch nearly the length of the state.

As if the 200-mile-wide low-lying peninsula were a sandbar, the massive wave strikes and begins to roll across. The lights of Miami go, Broward County, Palm Beach... all go black. From east to west, from the coast to the inland, lights go out and the low land mass continues to disappear.

FRANK (OS)

There on us.

TOM(OS)

Okay. Adam, it's been a pleasure.
It's up to you people now. Good luck.

The screen goes bright white.

CERENE

Connection terminated.

The room is silent.

OTHER STAFFER

My mother and father live in Miami.

All turn to Other Staffer, then back to the screen.

BRITISH STAFFER

What about Europe? Where would it hit?

Jacobs glances at the man then turns back to Cerene.

JACOBS

Cerene.

CERENE

Yes, Adam.

JACOBS

Were you able to pull data? Do you
know the cause?

CERENE

Yes, Adam. I intercepted an
encrypted NavCom burst transmission.
The eruption originated from a core
heat release at a non-designated
oil platform.

RONNY

What? How could they drill there?

There is a long quiet moment, then Corbin's AI, Bob,
shutters, almost fades, then turns to Jacobs. Now his voice
is deeper.

BOB

Hello Doc, how's business?

All heads swing to Bob. Jacobs is baffled.

JACOBS

What?

BOB

Nice work up there on the roof.
Guess that military training paid
off. Maybe you missed your calling.

Jacobs stares at Bob, puzzled, concerned...

JACOBS

Carl?

Now the visualization of Bob dissolves and there is Carl, overcoat and fedora. Behind him are two uniformed technicians manning a communication console of some sort.

CARL

Yeah, how's it going?

Jacobs stares.

CARL

Come on Doc, don't be so shocked. Not all of your people are as careful as you.

(nods to Corbin)

We've had this guy's CPU bugged for days.

Some at the table begin to stand. Carl takes note.

CARL

At ease. We're not outside the door... yet. We're in your man's O.S., but we didn't get around to actually installing a tracker.

JACOBS

What do you want?

CARL

Just to talk, that's all. Thought we might reach accommodation.

JACOBS

Why?

CARL

You mean why not blow you all away? We will, if we have to. But you've got a lot of high-profile, high-powered brains there, Doc.

(pause)

We were thinking more along the lines of an informal collaborative interment.

RONNY

A what?

Carl looks down at Ronny.

CARL
 It's pretty simple. You all agree to round-the-clock surveillance, restricted movement, monitored communications and some measure of re-education... we agree not to chop off your treasonous heads.

Silence.

JACOBS
 Carl, do you know what just happened?

CARL
 Yeah, I just busted into your little get-together and made you the best and last offer you're going to get.

JACOBS
 In the Atlantic, Station Beta, Endeavor Four.

CARL
 What?

While they're talking Bader moves smoothly across the room directly behind Corbin. He's reaching into his jacket.

JACOBS
 Know anybody in Florida?

CARL
 What are you babbling about, Doc?

Bader pulls a mean-looking semiautomatic from his jacket. Carl sees this, looks to Corbin and Bader.

CARL
 What're you going to do, off that guy?

Corbin notices that Carl is looking at him, turns behind, sees Bader, the gun, winces, jerks back... Bader fires two loud rounds into Corbin's CPU, Carl disappears.

Corbin is in shock. He looks to his smoking CPU with sorrow.

RONNY
 Let's go. Take the tunnel route, don't leave anything. You have three minutes before I blow the building.

EXT. ELIAS'S MANSION - MORNING

Underneath a scorching orange-hue sky, overlooking a brown water-deprived country estate, on his third-floor veranda Elias is tapping with a spoon at a nicely presented soft-boiled egg. An umbrella shades the table and a nearby portable cooling unit is blowing on Elias to protect him from the blazing heat.

The large sliding glass doors open, an Hispanic butler with a china teapot walks to the table, refills the tubby senator's cup.

ELIAS

Thank you, Raul. May I have some fruit?

RAUL

Yes, sir.

The butler reenters the house and the sliding doors close.

Elias glances behind him over the edge of the deck. On the parched grounds three floors below two submachine gun-toting security men are patrolling. He takes a bite of his egg, unfolds a sort of synthetic, translucent material, a Washington Today headline appears: "Florida Remains Silent."

Behind Elias and down on the grounds, the security men simultaneously grab at their necks and drop.

Elias touches a link to an interior page headed by: "Cause of Freak Wave Still Unknown." Elias reads on. He hears, but doesn't see, the sliding doors open.

ELIAS

(eyes on newspaper)

Raul, I think I'll also have French toast, whole wheat, two slices.

Jacobs, coated with sweat, pulls back the chair opposite Elias, sits down, places his pistol on the table. The senator slowly lowers the paper, looks at a very grim Jacobs, the gun, then glances over and down to his fallen security men. He turns back to Jacobs.

ELIAS

I don't suppose you know how to make decent French toast with extra-thick synthetic whole wheat, by any chance?

Jacobs gives Elias a long steady look.

JACOBS

How long did you think you would be able to keep it quiet?

ELIAS

What?

(pause - raises paper)
Oh, you mean this tidal wave
business. Am I to assume you
somehow feel I am responsible?

JACOBS

You installed a core driller at the
Mid-Atlantic Ridge in a hydrothermal
field next to a volatile submarine
volcano. Then you drilled into
superheated plates.

ELIAS

You make it sound like I towed the
damn thing out there myself and
pushed the buttons.

JACOBS

You chair the committee. It
couldn't have been approved without
you.

ELIAS

Dr. Jacobs, when the Lucky Strike
field was discovered, and the hot-
bed drilling technology came online,
you could not expect that it would
not be exploited?

JACOBS

Exploited at what cost, Senator?
The state of Florida is
substantially gone and millions are
dead or missing.

ELIAS

And you believe that somehow I am
at fault. Do you intend to shoot me?

JACOBS

Considering it, if you don't cooperate.

ELIAS

Cooperate? How?

JACOBS

A public statement admitting that
you contributed to a disaster of
unprecedented proportions. And
that to cover it up U.S. officials
authorized the murder of the
Station Beta and Endeavor Four crews.

ELIAS

You really are naive, Doctor.

(long pause - deciding)

It may surprise you to know that I attempted to stop the Lucky Strike platform. And I did not know about, nor would I have authorized, the silencing of those crews.

Jacobs' face registers grim skepticism.

ELIAS

No, of course you wouldn't believe that. Here's the truth: while you have been beating your head against the wall fighting the system from the outside, I've been on the inside attempting to change it.

(beat)

That's what I was trying to get through your thick skull on the Senate steps that day.

JACOBS

Senator, I'm familiar with your voting record.

ELIAS

My voting record?! Don't be an idiot. Do you really think that by the time something is voted on there is any doubt of the outcome? The votes of Congress, like the votes allowed the people, are a sham. The public process is simply a shell game. And that's the way it's been since the Homeland escalations, more than 15 years ago.

JACOBS

(reaches for gun)

Then I may as well blow your brains out.

Elias gives Jacobs a long look, shows no fear.

ELIAS

Know your enemies, Doctor. And your allies.

JACOBS

I do.

ELIAS

Perhaps not. Have you never read "The Art of War"?

(MORE)

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Sun Tzu really knew his stuff.
When confronted by a far superior
force, a covert attack from within
inevitably does more damage than a
frontal assault.

JACOBS

And I suppose you are my inside ally?

ELIAS

More so than you could imagine.
Like you, I have played my role.
Mine, perhaps, was necessarily more
theatrical.

JACOBS

Keep up the bullshit. Piss me off.
Make this easier.

ELIAS

Bear with me a moment. Let's say
several powerful people, a few
organizations and the leaders of a
world religion would like to
disappear this particular pain-in-
the-ass, big-mouth researcher. Now,
why is it this person is still free,
alive and walking around?

JACOBS

Right. For a while Marks protected
me. Now you have 30 seconds to
tell me something I don't know.

Jacobs brings up the pistol even with Elias's nose.

ELIAS

Senator Marks did not protect you,
Doctor. Senator Marks controlled
you. Why do you think every
initiative of yours which she
supposedly supported died in
committee? Why do you think she
pushed for your meeting with the
secretary when she knew your mental
condition was... fatigued. She has
been sabotaging your every step.
You just can't get your head out
the sand long enough to see it.

JACOBS

You now have 10 seconds.

ELIAS

Keeping you on the line suited her PR needs. Letting you get somewhere, however, that would be another story. That would have depreciated her stock, so to speak.

Jacobs narrows his eyes, thinks. Elias punches a button on a nearby phone pad, an odd dial tone sounds.

ELIAS

Awake, Doctor. Nothing is as it seems.

(to phone pad)

Call Senator Marks's mobile.

There are three regular tones and Marks answers.

MARKS (FILTERED)

Yes, Henry.

ELIAS

Molly, how are you?

MARKS

As good as can be expected, I suppose.

ELIAS

Well, I certainly hope you had no kin down in Florida. Please say no.

MARKS

Yes, yes I did have a sister and brother-in-law in Palm Beach.

ELIAS

Well, I'm terribly sorry to hear that. I'm truly sympathetic for your loss.

MARKS

Thank you.

ELIAS

Perhaps we should have given Dr. Jacobs a bit more credit, do you think?

MARKS

(pause)

You're kidding, of course.

ELIAS

Well, this is just the sort of thing he was warning against, don't you agree?

MARKS

Henry, I didn't babysit that errant egghead for three years because I wanted to. Of course, in some measure, he's right. But what the hell difference does that make? Him being right doesn't pay the bills.

ELIAS

Yes, of course I understand.

MARKS

I told you after I derailed his meeting with the secretary, that was when we should have been done with Dr. Jacobs.

ELIAS

Well, now I see that you were right.

MARKS

Yes, thank you for that belated reversal. But now, God knows how, he's managed to tap classified communications. And I'm just waiting to see his face pop-up on a global circuit with a load of SatCom photos.

ELIAS

Yes, that would be bad. How goes the hunt?

MARKS

Carl was close, tried to hook him and his group into surrendering, they didn't bite.

ELIAS

Right, right, I received that report.

MARKS

Now, no doubt, they've determined that it was the Lucky Strike driller that caused the Florida disaster. We've got to get them before they manage to go public. If we have riots the worker base is down the tubes.

(pause)

And God forbid they broadcast Europe.

ELIAS

Yes, yes, I completely agree.

(pause)

Any closer to nailing them down?

MARKS

Most seem to have fallen off the face of the planet, but Carl's team may have a lead on Jacobs and two of his operatives. I'm expecting word anytime now.

ELIAS

(pause)

Well, that's good news, anyway.

(eyeballs Jacobs)

Oh, by the way, any further word on the Pacific problem or the China eruptions?

MARKS

(pause)

I thought you would have gotten the abstract.

ELIAS

Yes, I'm afraid I'm not moving as fast as I once did. I haven't yet checked my box. But what have you heard?

MARKS

Last report, we lost Platform 36, eight power plants and several factories. Oh, and I think it was 60-70,000 dead. French Polynesia is gone, but Australia only lost a beach and a few thousand locals.

ELIAS

I see. How about publicity?

MARKS

We're keeping the Aussies in the dark and we worked out a total lockdown with Zhao. There were some Chinese journalists that were actually attempting to broadcast from the faults, if you can believe that.

ELIAS

That would be bad news. What was done?

MARKS

We didn't ask.

ELIAS

Oh... well, then. Thanks Molly, nice talking to you.

MARKS

Same here, Henry. See you at the reception.

ELIAS

Look forward to it. Bye, bye.

MARKS

Ciao.

The line tones off. Jacobs stares at Elias.

ELIAS

Some world, eh, Doctor?

JACOBS

(staring - dazed)

Yeah... some world.

Elias takes another bite of his egg. Jacobs reaches to a pocket for a his PDA, opens it.

JACOBS

Cerene?

Cerene appears on the small screen.

CERENE

Yes, Adam?

JACOBS

Have you been monitoring core temperatures?

CERENE

Yes, Adam. There has been an exponential increase.

JACOBS

How much?

CERENE

Factor 10, and increasing.

JACOBS

Thank you.

CERENE

Adam?

JACOBS

Yes?

CERENE

I estimate we will be at critical in less than 20 hours, based on ambient reading.

Jacobs is stunned, slowly closes the device.

ELIAS

You know, my grandfather built this place. I spent much of my childhood here. Used to be green, flowers, birds everywhere.

(pause)

Twenty hours? Is that an accurate deadline, Doctor?

JACOBS

Yeah.

Elias pushes another phone pad button, speaks towards the device.

ELIAS

It's time.

(back to Jacobs)

Then we better get our house in order. I'll be transferring data to your AI within an hour. That should put you in touch with The Committee. By then you may only have time to pin down the chairman. His name is Anderson; Walter Francis Anderson. He is also the primary on NetCom and Homeland Defense Industries.

JACOBS

(dazed)

Never heard of him.

ELIAS

(very sarcastic)

Really? Well, that is a shocker. You did not know the name of the man heading the secret organization that covertly controls the U.S. Government - what did you call them: "corrupt and dangerous totalitarian assholes?" You must have overlooked their press release on his promotion.

Elias turns slightly, looks behind Jacobs, smiles. Jacobs comes out of his daze, sees this, turns. There stands Jane.

JANE

Hello, Adam.

JACOBS

(shocked - stands)

How... what are you doing here?

JANE
I've come for you.

JACOBS
What...

She turns to Elias, smiles.

JANE
Hello, father.

She moves to the Senator, places a hand on his shoulder. The Senator seems to take comfort in the touch. He places his hand over hers.

ELIAS
Daughter. Have you been busy?

JACOBS
(beat - disbelieving)
Daughter?

ELIAS
Essentially.

JACOBS
What?

ELIAS
Adopted. Not officially. But, by design or fate.

Jacobs looks at the man a moment.

ELIAS
No human of her qualities could ever have sprung from my faulty seed.
(pause - smiles)
Or anyone else's, for that matter.

Jacobs moves to Jane. He looks into her beautiful smiling eyes. Moving still closer, he looks into the pigment of her right eye. He reaches carefully, gently places his thumb to the lower right eye, pulls down and there it is: a pinpoint of gold under the lid. He steps back.

JACOBS
The Genome Project... I thought...

ELIAS
The Corps liked to say "Bred for brains bred for battle." - They require a blasted motto for everything. - Jane is the sole survivor.

(MORE)

ELIAS (CONT'D)

She was all of six when I managed to extract her before termination of the Arctic Program. First time I ever disobeyed an order.

(pause)

Even among the second-generation group, she was special. It was that extraordinary capacity for empathy that first drew me to her. If you live long enough, you may see what I mean.

(beat)

I couldn't let her go.

JACOBS

And what does she do for you?

ELIAS

Things I can't. And right now, she is to help you.

JACOBS

How?

ELIAS

You'll see sooner than you would like, I'm afraid. If I'm not mistaken, by now your operatives downstairs have been immobilized. I believe you know Carl - very competent. I'm afraid I could not deflect him without comprising my position.

(beat)

And you will later need my help.

Jacobs takes this in, pushes a button on the PDA.

JACOBS

Bader, do you copy? Bader?

(beat)

Eddie, do you copy?

ELIAS

I'm afraid I won't be able to help you here, Doctor. The show must go on. Stay close to Jane and you'll make it. I'll be in touch soon.

Jane moves to the edge of the terrace, calmly surveys the grounds below.

JANE

Adam, we should leave now.

JACOBS

What? What about my men?

She considers this, in a flash planning for this new contingency.

JANE

At the front, then. Leave by the front door, do nothing.

Jane leaps and is gone over the side. Jacobs' eyes go wide, he moves fast to the rail. Three-floors below Jane is already moving fast into the treeline.

ELIAS

She's something, isn't she?

(takes a bite)

Ironic, you lose a son and embark on your mission, I gain a daughter and open my eyes.

(beat)

Semper fi, Doctor.

Jacobs looks to Elias, still trying to grasp it all, then he moves to the sliding door.

ELIAS

Oh, and Doctor, if Raul, my butler, is still conscious, could you remind him of the French toast?

(pause - to himself)

God, it's good to be old.

EXT. ELIAS'S MANSION - DAY

Below a reddening sky, Jacobs exits the front door onto an expansive circular driveway. What may have once been lush landscaping has nearly all gone to brown.

There, leaning casually against one of two advanced humvee-type vehicles, is Carl. He is to the side of his 12-man team, their submachine guns aimed almost casually at Jacobs. In front of the troopers, kneeling on the driveway a few feet away from two advanced sniper-style tranquilizer rifles, hands on heads, are Eddie and Bader. All present are sweating in the heat.

BADER

Sorry, Adam. These bastards dropped us.

CARL

Yeah, but don't hold it against them, Doc. Odds were always in our favor. Why don't you come along now? We'll go to a nice quiet spot away from the senator's house.

Carl dabs at his sweating forehead with a handkerchief.

JACOBS
Let them go.

CARL
What?

JACOBS
Let them go, Carl. We don't have
time for this.

CARL
Doc, I think maybe you're really
losing it.

JACOBS
You're on the wrong side of this, Carl.

CARL
(smiles)
Maybe, Doc, but it's the only side
I've got. Now do you want to make
this easy or hard?

On the other side of the humvee, Jane slithers from the brush. Like a snake wrapping a tree, she silently climbs up the side of the vehicle. Raising his gaze from Carl, Jacobs sees Jane moving low and flat on the top of the humvee.

She drops almost silently behind Carl and the nearest trooper. The trooper whirls, raises his weapon, she snatches it, whips the stock up to the man's forehead... crack! He goes down as Carl reaches for his sidearm, the other men turn, Jane somersaults back, snatches the handgun from Carl, lands behind him, cocks the weapon, clamps her left hand down on his neck and with her right places the barrel to his head. The other troopers freeze, weapons aimed at Jane... and Carl. Carl is having trouble breathing.

CARL
Who the hell... are you?

JANE
A friend.
(beat)
Adam, we will take this vehicle.

Eddie and Bader are dumfounded but not wasting time getting to their feet. The troopers are wavering, weapons pivoting.

CARL
(rasping)
If you think I'm letting you drive
the hell...

Jane moves a thumb and Carl winces. Jacobs, Bader and Eddie are easing to the humvee. Bader reaches for the dropped submachine gun. Carl painfully spits out a command.

CARL

Shoot 'em!

Troopers tense on their weapons, unsure, Jane flexes her body and Carl's feet leave the ground. His face goes purple.

JANE

I will kill this man.

The troopers are fighting the desire to obey the order and fire. Eddie slips into the humvee driver's seat. Like a drill sergeant, Bader bellows at the troopers.

BADER

Stand down, troopers!

The conditioned soldiers snap their attention to Bader.

BADER

It's not worth it. You can regroup after we're gone and he lives.

The weapons lower slightly. Jane eases up on Carl's trachea, he gasps.

CARL

I said shoot, goddamn...!

Jane pinches again.

BADER

That's an irrational order troopers!

Sweating it, Johnson finally throws his weapon down.

JOHNSON

Stand down! Goddamn it, stand down!

The other 11 men drop their weapons. Facing Carl, Johnson snaps to attention.

JOHNSON

Sir, it is this trooper's primary mission to protect his commanding officer at all costs! This trooper will not endanger the life of his commanding officer, sir!

The other 11 men also snap to attention. Carl, with Jane's grip easing, rolls his eyes.

BADER

Team, back away from the vehicle
and the weapons.

The men come out of attention, eyeball Bader, slowly move off. Eddie starts the humvee engine, Bader turns the submachine gun to fire thorough the reinforced front grill of the other humvee. After a sustained burst the radiator blows.

Jacobs takes the front seat, Jane jams Carl into the back seat, Bader follows her. Eddie hits the gas and with a high-pitched whine, the vehicle tears down the long driveway.

EXT. HUMVEE - RURAL ROAD - DAY

The vehicle is doing 120, rocketing along a twisting, turning road through a parched forest.

INT. HUMVEE - DAY

Outside the vehicle the scenery tears by in a blur. Bader keeps the gun on Carl.

CARL

My guess is they'll have a grinder
on your position in about 15 minutes.

Bader watches Carl warily and speaks.

BADER

He's right. They've probably got a
lock on our position now. Figure
five minutes to scramble, ten
maximum to get over us.

CARL

Right. And one hellfire and we all
go up.

BADER

That's affirmative. His men
wouldn't shoot, but HQ won't waste
much time. My guess is they will
take one try at getting him
released, then pull the trigger.

CARL

Right. So why don't we just call
it off. Maybe I can get you some
leniency, maybe even only a few
years of lock-up.

Bader leans forward and places the barrel to Carl's neck.

BADER

Hey, listen-up, Sarg, you try to blow anymore hot air up our skirts, maybe I'll cut this little visit short. Get it?

CARL

(not afraid)

Yeah, okay, you're right. That was bullshit. You're all dead. Here's another idea. Bail out into the trees, I take the vehicle and head back towards my men. The grinder will track and intercept me. That'll buy you a little time.

This idea appears to be under consideration by the men, but Jane is the one that speaks.

JANE

(to Eddy)

In two miles you will see a large boulder. Approximately 50 feet beyond on the right you will see an unpaved road. Turn there.

Eddie glances from the road to look at Jane in the rear view.

EDDIE

Yeah, what's there?

JANE

A river.

INT. BOAT - DAY

Under a canopy the electric motors hums efficiently. Jane is at the modern controls, Eddie in the other front seat. On the rear-facing seats Jacobs and Bader are opposite Carl, who sits on the stern deck, not happy. Bader has a smile on his face, staring at Carl.

BADER

Comfortable?

CARL

Yeah, thanks.

EXT. RIVER - SAME TIME

Like the polluted water, the canopy over the low-lying boat is dirty, brown and invisible from the air. Two thousand feet up, heading toward the brown forest upstream, a flock of scanner drones buzz fast over the boat. A moment later a much bigger craft whines overhead and past. It is a 'grinder,' an advanced turbine and jet-driven helicopter-like aircraft.

It is a troop-carrying gunship, bristling with weapons.

But all this airborne technology misses the simple boat cruises away in the polluted water.

INT. SAFE HOUSE 2 - NIGHT

In a darkened room, a plasma screen displays scenes of planetary devastation. The tsunami rolls over Florida, earthquakes in China, scenes of coastal devastation, seen from high above, Kuwait oil wells burn, flames flash through the streets of a vast mega city smothered in smog. Carl sits in a chair, taking it in. He is obviously concerned, but stoic.

CARL

How did you get this stuff?

Jacobs moves out of the shadows where he stood with the gun-wielding Bader.

JACOBS

Someone delivered it, essentially.

CARL

And I'm supposed to believe it's real?

JACOBS

Do you really think I would go to much trouble to impress you?

CARL

Then why bother?

JACOBS

What else am I supposed to do, babysit you until the end of the world?

CARL

Yeah, by your estimate that's about 10 hours from now. So why not put a bullet in my head and be done with it?

JACOBS

(beat)

I was hoping you might help.

CARL

Why would I do that?

JACOBS

You can't be a total asshole. There's some reason those 12 guys follow you the way they do.

(MORE)

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Some reason they didn't play it safe, follow your order and kill us all.

(beat)

Maybe more important, your bosses played you like a mushroom.

CARL

What?

JACOBS

Kept you in the dark and fed you shit.

Carl thinks it over, looks back to the plasma images.

CARL

You're wrong, Doc.

(beat)

I am a total asshole.

Jacobs looks at Carl a moment, turns to Bader, nods, exits.

INT. SAFE HOUSE 2 HALL

Jacobs exits the room, pauses, leans against a wall, rubs wearily at the bridge of his nose, walks down the utilitarian, unadorned hall. He enters the tech room.

INT. SAFE HOUSE 2 TECH ROOM

Looking like a small military command center, the room is dimly lit, with glowing, hi-tech work stations. In the room is only Ronny. He is at one of the stations, attentive to a touch screen display. Each time he touches the interface, a soft beep sounds. Jacobs approaches, stands behind his shoulder, looks at the screen.

JACOBS

Any luck?

RONNY

How did you manage to get this?

JACOBS

Elias sent it.

RONNY

Elias... Hard to believe.

JACOBS

Indeed. What are you into?

RONNY
I'm running down The Committee,
trying to get a location on
Anderson. Weeding through
encrypted wireless at the moment.

JACOBS
Where are you going in at?

RONNY
Security teams. I assume if
anybody knows where he'll be, it
has to be them.
(beat)
You know, your buddy, Carl, might
be of some help with this. What's
his position?

JACOBS
Don't know yet. I left him with
Bader. Maybe they speak the same
language.

Ronny sits up straight, more attentive to the screen.

RONNY
Look at this.

JACOBS
(leans to screen)
What is it?

RONNY
The plan of the day, Anderson's
security detail. The next 48 hours
completely plotted out.

JACOBS
Where is he?

RONNY
DC this evening - Security Council
meet with the President. Then
heads upstate.

JACOBS
This state?

RONNY
Right.

JACOBS
What about the rest of them?

RONNY

I haven't got to them yet. But there is no mention of them in Anderson's plans, so we'll have to assume they are scattered.

JACOBS

Then the head asshole will have to do.

RONNY

Right. I'll break it down, we can look for the best opening.

JACOBS

What about NetCom?

RONNY

Cerene is working on it.

JACOBS

(turns to wall monitor)
Cerene?

Cerene appears.

CERENE

Yes, Adam?

JACOBS

Status on Netcom?

CERENE

I've accessed the network, now rebuilding security walls and encryption matrix.

JACOBS

How much time?

CERENE

I estimate eight hours, 27 minutes.

Jacobs and Ronny just stare at Cerene for a moment.

JACOBS

And how much time to critical.

CERENE

I estimate core implosion in nine hours, 31 minutes.

RONNY

Shit.

JACOBS

Can you accelerate acquisition of NetCom?

CERENE

Unlikely. If I do not secure each unit the operators could access at that point and regain control. In that event we would have to begin the process again.

JACOBS

And the Triton system?

CERENE

Milo is working on that.

JACOBS

Milo?

Milo appears next to Cerene.

MILO

Adam.

JACOBS

Status on Triton?

MILO

The system will be secured within two hours.

JACOBS

Good.

MILO

However, it will be required that I adjust trajectory and complete two orbits to reposition.

JACOBS

How much time?

MILO

Eight hours, 15 minutes, 23 seconds.

RONNY

Good God.

JACOBS

Jesus... Thank you, Milo, Cerene. That's all.

The screen goes black. Jacobs and Ronny stare at each other. Jacobs shakes his head, leans against a console. The exhaustion is catching up with him.

RONNY

(goes back to work)
Cutting it close.

JACOBS
(affirmative - not sarcastic)
No shit.

Jacobs reaches for his eyes, rubs the bridge of his nose.
Ronny turns, observes Jacobs' fatigue.

RONNY
Well, there's nothing you can do
now. Get some rest. We threw some
mats in the main room.

JACOBS
Okay, thanks. I could use a shower.
Is there still water?

RONNY
Maybe. If Jane didn't use it all.
(beat)
Are you sure she's a Genome?

JACOBS
I don't know how else to explain her.

RONNY
I thought they were all eliminated.

JACOBS
According to Elias, he pulled her
out, if you believe him.

RONNY
Well, she is here. And she is amazing.

JACOBS
Yeah. And you don't know the half
of it. See you in a few hours.

RONNY
Right. Sleep well.

Jacobs turns, heads out.

JACOBS
Thanks.

INT. SAFE HOUSE 2 LOCKER / SHOWER AREA

Jacobs heads through a small steel and tile locker room. He
kicks off his shoes, peels off his socks. As he rounds the
corner to the open shower area he unbuttons his shirt. He
freezes.

There is Jane. Her beautiful muscular back to him, she is
just finishing toweling off.

Her long legs are all feminine muscle, the towel briefly exposes a touch of gorgeous buttock, a flash of breast and she wraps the cloth around her. Eyes wide, Jacobs gulps.

JACOBS

Ex-cuse me.

With no surprise, like she knew he was there, Jane smoothly turns, tucks the towel in at her breasts. She smiles.

JACOBS

I thought you would be done.

JANE

The water felt good. I'm afraid I lingered.

Jacobs looks at Jane, unable to take his eyes off her. He catches himself.

JACOBS

Sorry, I didn't mean to stare. I just... I mean, something about seeing you like that... Rather, what I mean is...

JANE

Yes?

JACOBS

You just look so feminine.

JANE

Yes, I am a woman.

JACOBS

Of course you are. It's just...

JANE

Did you think because I came from a test tube, I would be...

JACOBS

No, of course not. It's just that until now you looked so... tough.

Jane smiles, walks a few steps and, in a very feminine fashion, bends at her knees, lowers herself to pick up her clothes. She wraps them up in the shirt, walks close to Jacobs. She looks into his eyes, which show fascination and perhaps a little trepidation.

JANE

I'm going to wash my clothes.
Would you like me to do yours, as well?

Like this is a big decision, Jacobs thinks.

JACOBS

Sure. I would appreciate that.

They stand, Jane's beautiful eyes a foot away from Jacobs'.

JACOBS

I have a question.

JANE

Yes?

JACOBS

In my apartment that night, I don't remember what happened. The last I recall you were saying I needed to sleep, then 14 hours later I woke up.

JANE

Yes?

JACOBS

Well, what happened?

JANE

I drugged you.

JACOBS

What... How? Why?

JANE

I touched you, here...

She touches his temple.

JANE

It was on my fingertips.

Jacobs stares.

JANE

You needed to sleep.

Jacobs stares, working this over.

JANE

Well?

JACOBS

What?

JANE

Are you going to give me your clothes?

Jacobs hesitates, then removes his shirt. As he hands it to Jane, for an instant her eyes drop to his chest. He hesitates again, then undoes his trousers, peels them off and hands those over.

Jane's smiling eyes stay locked with his.

JANE
Cerene said you were a little shy.

JACOBS
(surprised)
She what?

JACOBS
Or maybe modest is more the word.
You shouldn't be. You have a
beautiful body.

She moves a little closer. Like she is passing her nose over a bottle of fine wine, she gives a little sway of her head, her eyes close briefly.

JANE
And you smell delicious.

A sheen of perspiration is now showing on Jacobs' face. He swallows.

JACOBS
I would guess I smell terrible.

JANE
That's not the smell I mean.

JACOBS
What?

JANE
I can almost smell your thoughts.

JACOBS
I would think my thoughts are
rather obvious, at this particular
moment.

Her eyes drop briefly.

JANE
Yes. Nevertheless, your smell is
perfect.

They stand silent a moment. She may be waiting, but Jacobs makes no move. She smiles.

JANE
There are robes in the first locker.
I'll start the clothes.
(beat)
Enjoy your shower.

She slips by Jacobs. He stands a moment after she leaves. He shakes his head and walks into the shower.

INT. SAFE HOUSE 2 HALL

Now in a robe, Jane walks down the hall, opens the door to the main room.

INT. SAFE HOUSE 2 MAIN ROOM

Bed mats line the walls of this darkened room. Like moonlight, a cool glow filters through the silent space. Jane walks in and sees him. This time it is she that freezes. In the shadows, the dim glow playing across his body, Jacobs stands.

She takes a moment to look him over, then walks to him. They stand close, eyes locked. He is no longer tentative or wavering.

JACOBS
How do I smell now?

JANE
Good. Even better.

Jacobs steps to her. They kiss tentatively, lightly. Then harder. Jacobs pulls the robe from her shoulders, drops his head hungrily to her smooth neck. Her eyes roll back and half close. She reaches for the back of his head, grabs his hair, pulls his head back and kisses him ferociously. She is pushing her body against his, they back towards one of the beds. She is about to push him down when he pivots, picks her up and lowers her to the bed. This surprises her and she laughs briefly.

He lays partially across her, kissing lips, neck, breast, stomach...

JANE
Adam?

JACOBS
(still kissing)
Yes?

JANE
This will be my first time.

This stops him.

JACOBS
What?

JANE
Yes.

They look hard into each other's eyes. Her eyes are moist with emotion.

JACOBS

What?

JANE

(smiles)

I knew even before you opened the door to your apartment.

(beat)

Before we spoke, before we touched.

(beat)

I could sense it.

Jacobs takes this in. Emotion colliding with ferocious desire, his own eyes well-up with moisture. Then, gently, he kisses each of her eyelids, then her lips. She tenderly responds and they begin to make slow love.

INT. SAFE HOUSE 2 MAIN ROOM - LATER

It is quiet, still dark, just the soft glowing light. Jacobs and Jane are sound asleep, her head on his chest.

The door to the room slowly and silently opens. Two dark figures creep cat-like into the room. It is two of Carl's team, all black in assault gear, submachine guns. With no sound, they move in. The first soldier, Johnson, stops, holds up a hand and gestures to the sleeping Jacobs and Jane.

Jane's beautiful eyes are closed. She inhales deeply, her nose twitches and her eyes snap open. She doesn't move a muscle, but her eyes lock on the intruders.

The barrel of Johnson's weapon is a foot from Jacobs' head when she snaps to a low stance, pins the man's arm against the wall, fires a fist low to his ribs and a burst of silenced weapon fire tears into the ceiling, Jacobs' eyes go wide...

JOHNSON

(pain)

Shit!

In one fast motion Jane rises, pivots backward, tears the gun from the man's hand, pops the butt of the weapon into the other soldier's nose, it cracks, he stumbles back, Johnson goes for Jane's larynx, she reaches for the man's wrists as Jacobs' foot shoots up, slams into the man's crotch and Jane breaks his grip.

Jacobs sees the second man recovering, raising his weapon, Johnson throws a strike to Jane's throat, she deflects it, locks the man's wrist throws three quick punches to his face, Jacobs bolts, body slams the other soldier, that weapon fires, sprays rounds into the walls, Jane throws Johnson and he slams into the opposite wall...

The lights snap on bright...

CARL

Stand down!

Everybody freezes.

There is Carl, Bader, Ronny, Eddie, and several of Carl's team in full assault gear, their weapons lowered.

Carl looks at Johnson as he attempts to peel himself from the floor. Jacobs has the other soldier pinned to the wall, choking, the submachine gun jammed under his neck, his nose bleeding, both men's hands are on the weapon.

CARL

Jesus Christ.

Bader, Eddie and Ronny can't help but smile, somewhat avert their eyes.

Jane, completely calm and already reading the situation, is putting on her robe. Jacobs releases the other soldier, who immediately brings a hand to his bleeding nose.

CARL

Doc, I admire your confidence, but this is a little awkward. You got some clothes you can put on?

Jacobs, not seeming to much care, walks to his own robe, puts it on.

JACOBS

How did they find us?

Carl touches his shoulder.

CARL

Tracker chip. They would have been here sooner, but whatever jammer you have almost did its job. Signal was scrambled.

(looks at Jane - Jacobs)

Looks like you two made good use of the time, though.

JACOBS

Where do you stand, Carl?

JANE

He has decided to side with us.
But he is going to talk to his men,
to let them choose for themselves.

Carl looks at Jane. Johnson stands, hears this.

JOHNSON

Sir?

CARL

You read minds, too? What next,
you gonna levitate, walk through a
wall, or something?

JANE

And after his men are briefed, they
will side with him and us. Because
they, too, will see that they have
been lied to and they will see that
there is no honorable alternative.

(beat)

Besides, they would follow him no
matter what.

RONNY

How are you so sure of this?

JANE

Because, they trust him. They
trust him with their lives.

Everybody in the room is looking at her now.

RONNY

Well, that saved a lot of time.

CARL

I still need to brief my team.

Jane starts out of the room, pauses at Jacobs, places a hand
to the back of his head and kisses him.

JANE

I will get our clothes. These men
will have decided by the time we
are ready to leave.

She leaves the room, all eyes following.

CARL

That is one spooky, sexy operator.

Carl turns back to Jacobs, like he is trying to figure how
the bastard got so lucky. A tone sounds; Jacobs' PDA in the
pocket of his robe. Jacobs reaches for it, opens, Cerene
appears.

JACOBS

Cerene?

CERENE

Adam, it is now 119 minutes until
critical.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT / EARLY MORNING

The safe house is in an abandoned industrial area on the outskirts of a city. The building is completely plain, seeming decrepit on the outside.

Hovering a few feet above the broken pavement is a grinder, its turbines whining quietly, seeming at odds with the obvious power of the thing. Two scanner drones hiss and buzz as they do fast concentric circles protectively around the gunship.

The building's cargo door opens and light spills out. Except for Ronny, with Carl leading the way all that were in the Safe House and the rest of Carl's team exits. A narrow ramp descends from the grinder. Single file, the soldiers, Jacobs, Jane, Bader and Carl head to the machine.

A red flash rips across the sky, the group freezes and looks to the receding ripple of light and the now glowing horizon. A long boom reverberates as if emanating from the other side of the planet.

CARL

What the hell was that?

JACOBS

Ambient detonations.

CARL

Huh?

JACOBS

The air is catching fire.

Carl looks at Jacobs a moment.

CARL

(to group)
Hustle up!

The group hurries into the machine, the ramp slips back into the gunship. The turbines kick up in velocity. The grinder smoothly disappears into an ominously glowing night. From the smoldering horizon comes rolling thunder, echoing as if from a distant B-52 strike.

INT. GRINDER GUNSHIP - PRE-DAWN

A high-powered hum fills the amber-hued troop bay of the aircraft. Studying data on his PDA, Jacobs and Jane are strapped into two of the 20 narrow bucket seats that are bolted to either side of the hull. The troopers, now including Bader and Eddie, are gearing up while grouped around a monitor which displays the site plan of Anderson's compound. On an adjacent monitor live thermal satellite imagery shows the position of stationary security squads and roving guards.

Johnson gestures to the moving dots on the screen and talks to Bader and Eddie.

JOHNSON

If you two can immobilize the four rovers, we'll take down the squads. Well drop you at this rise near the perimeter.

(points)

Should give you good coverage.

BADER

(strapping down body armor)

Roger that.

EDDIE

We'll need to cover a few hundred yards to hit all four. If your targets sound alarm and our guys bolt, we'll catch them in route.

From an opening in the steel ceiling Carl climbs down a fixed ladder, steadies himself at a hull rail, turns to the troopers.

JOHNSON

That'll work. After we hit the LZ we'll send the grinder and drones in to knock on the guy's front door. Should make 'em think hard about shooting it out.

CARL

Johnson?

JOHNSON

Sir?

CARL

Did you load the tranqs, clear the armor rounds?

At this Jacobs looks up to Carl.

JOHNSON

Affirmative, sir. Armored rounds
and frags are stowed, sleepy shells
and pulse grenades are locked and
loaded, sir.

Carl works his way back to Jacobs and Jane. A red flash
blasts through the grinder's narrow portholes, the ship
shudders violently, Carl and the other standing men grab at
hull rails.

CARL

Shit.

JACOBS

Tranquilizer rounds, huh?

CARL

Yeah. Low velocity gelatin shells.
They leave one hell of a bruise,
but don't even draw blood - usually.

JACOBS

On the roof - what were you loaded
up with that night? Tranks or
armor rounds?

CARL

(smiles)

Doc, I'm surprised you would even
have to ask.

Jacobs smiles - or grimaces - thinks about it.

CARL

Your man got status on Anderson?

JACOBS

(to PDA)

Call Ronny.

After two beeps Ronny appears on the screen.

RONNY

He's there.

JACOBS

Secure number?

RONNY

Sending. Keyed as 'Anderson.'

(beat)

You feel that last shock?

JACOBS

Yes.

RONNY
There's not much time.

JACOBS
Thanks.

Cerene appears.

CERENE
Adam, you have 45 minutes.

JACOBS
(to Carl)
What's the ETA?

CARL
About 15 minutes. We'll need
another 15 to hit the security team,
take the compound.

Jacobs thinks, turns again to PDA.

JACOBS
We'll need him stationary. Can't
let him move before.
(thinks a beat)
Call Anderson.

The PDA beeps five times and there is Anderson, middle-aged,
CEO-type. He first appears startled, but forces nonchalance.

ANDERSON
Dr. Jacobs, nice of you to call.
(beat)
May I ask how you did it?
(smiles)
And from where you are calling?

JACOBS
Forget it.

ANDERSON
Very well. What can I do for you?

JACOBS
The shuttle, Station Beta...

ANDERSON
Dr. Jacobs, for the record, we did
not authorize the shuttle and
Station Beta action. That was
insanity.

JACOBS
Is that what it was?

ANDERSON

Yes, it was. Those of us... my associates...

JACOBS

The Committee. Keep it short. We know about The Committee.

ANDERSON

The Committee?

JACOBS

Yes.

ANDERSON

Are you a conspiracy theorist, Doctor? I know of no...

JACOBS

Yes, Chairman, we are all well aware of The Committee. You completed consolidation during the homeland security escalations. Nothing mythical or particularly intriguing - you sacred everybody and simply bought your way in.

(beat)

Too much power in too few greedy and incompetent hands.

ANDERSON

Fine, fine. If that is how you wish to view it. Back to the incident of which you spoke. We, The Committee, if you like, lost a great deal on Station Beta. We held a majority interest in that operation.

JACOBS

Interest? What about the people that died? Did you have an interest in them, as well?

ANDERSON

(grimaces)

Of course, it was a tragic loss. This was a command structure breakdown of the highest order. I can assure you, those officers that exceeded their mandate have been dealt with.

JACOBS

That's very reassuring. And am I to assume those that caused the fault rupture, those that authorized the core driller, have they been 'dealt with' as well?

ANDERSON

Well, that was a corporate decision. We can't quite court martial a civilian corporation, now can we?

Jacobs gives the man a long look.

JACOBS

Let me ask you about NetCom.

ANDERSON

Yes, what of it? What has that got to do with anything?

JACOBS

You've fully saturated about 80 percent of the population, if I'm not mistaken.

ANDERSON

More like 95 percent, but what is your point?

JACOBS

Quite an achievement. You should be very proud.

ANDERSON

Yes, very profitable. Why, would you care to buy some stock?

JACOBS

No, thanks.

ANDERSON

Well, perhaps I can offer you an even more attractive proposition.

JACOBS

I doubt it.

ANDERSON

Too bad. I was thinking something along the lines of a full amnesty in exchange for certain previously secure data, of which you now seem to be in possession.

JACOBS

Not interested.

ANDERSON

Well, then, that is unfortunate...
for you, especially.

(beat)

If there is nothing else.

JACOBS

No. Not at the moment.

ANDERSON

Perhaps we will soon speak again.

JACOBS

Yeah, perhaps.

The PDA shuts down.

CARL

You think that will hold him?

JACOBS

Might get him thinking, make some
calls, stay where he's safe.

Carl and Jacobs watch as Jane unstraps, rises from her seat and smoothly heads to the troopers and displays. The soldiers continue to final check gear and strap down armor as they watch Jane quickly size up the site plan. Johnson pauses only briefly before he speaks to her.

JOHNSON

Where do you want in at?

She points to a high point on the house.

JANE

Here.

EXT. HIGHEST POINT OF ANDERSON'S COUNTRY HOME - DAWN

Beyond a line of gothic-style spires, on the horizon a blazing red sun is piercing a layer of glowing pollution. The grinder moves off as a scanner drone rockets by and heads low to the ground. Automatic weapons can be heard below. The drone fires a shell, it thuds into the ground near the front of the home and a cloud of gas rises. Odd reverberating sonic blasts echo around the grounds: impulse grenades.

At a high point near the spire, Jane blocks a series of strikes, takes the motion of the guard's next swing, spins him, locks up his arm, pops the heel of her hand fast to a point low on the back of his head, his eyes flutter and he drops. She briefly surveys the action on the compound below. Not far away three other sniper guards have already been incapacitated.

Jane turns, leaps a rail and moves fast down the sloped roof toward a series of top-floor skylights.

INT. ANDERSON'S COUNTRY HOME - ENTRY HALL - DAWN

A brief battle just took place in the foyer of this large, chateau-like house; furniture is overturned and busted up. Guarded by Johnson and others of Carl's team, several security men are face down on the floor, hands behind heads, now separated from their weapons. One of the troopers has a hand to the neck of an unconscious security man, checking his pulse. Just outside the expansive reinforced windows the grinder and it's scanner drones hover back and forth over the yard while red flashes ignite the sky.

Flanked by a fully armed and battle-dressed Eddie and Bader, Carl and Jacobs enter as a scanner drone hisses up behind, hovers and takes post just outside the open doors. Bader took a hit and from a missing chunk of shoulder armor he's bleeding. Carl turns to Johnson.

CARL

Where is he? What's the status?

JOHNSON

He's secured in the conference room, sir. To the right.

JACOBS

You verified that there's a video com in there?

JOHNSON

Affirmative, sir.

The four head quickly to the right. Weapons ready, Eddie and Bader step ahead of Jacobs and Carl. Jacobs' PDA sounds, he opens it as he walks, Milo appears.

MILO

Adam, Triton will be in position in five minutes, 15 seconds.

JACOBS

Okay.

MILO

Adam?

JACOBS

Yeah?

MILO

Cerene asked me to tell you, you now have 15 minutes.

JACOBS

Okay. When you are 30 seconds from position, let me know and prepare to discharge to all regions.

MILO

Understood.

INT. ANDERSON'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAWN

Eddie and Bader enter, check the room, stop and stand at either side of the door. Already in the room, a trooper and Jane guard a seated Anderson. A slight scratch bleeds across Jane's face, her clothing is now dusty and scuffed. As Jacobs and Carl enter Jacobs glances over at Jane, a flash of concern shows on his face before he turns to Anderson. Anderson raises his eyebrows, surprised.

ANDERSON

Dr. Jacobs, Sergeant Major Jackson.
What a surprise.

(turns to Jane)

And your unusual associate here -
I'm afraid she neglected to
introduce herself after tearing the
door off my bedroom.

Jacobs moves to the table, passes a hand over a control. A large wall-mounted plasma screen activates.

JACOBS

Chairman Anderson, would you please
activate NetCom?

ANDERSON

Why? Do you feel the need to watch
some commercials?

JACOBS

Now.

ANDERSON

Comm, channel five.

The plasma screen is immediately filled with commercial content, bright colors, rapid-fire images, techno music. A female voiceover pitches the 'latest' synthesized food product.

FEMALE VOICEOVER (OS)

A single serving of Protex supplies
a full day's requirement of protein,
plus 12 essential vitamins, and it
taste...

ANDERSON

Volume off.

The audio ceases.

JACOBS
Would you mind reactivating the volume?

ANDERSON
Why? Why in the world would you
want to listen to that dribble?

JACOBS
Please.

ANDERSON
(beat)
Volume up.

The nonstop images are again accompanied by the audio pitch.

MALE VOICEOVER (OS)
...this 500 horsepower powerhouse
blows the competition away with...

JACOBS
Cerene?

The volume cuts, the screen goes blue and there is Cerene.
Anderson gasps, jumps to his feet.

ANDERSON
What the hell... how did you do that?!

JACOBS
Cerene, how did you do that?

CERENE
Ronny booted me in and I entered
through the Media Seven matrix, Adam.

ANDERSON
(disbelieving)
No. This isn't going out
worldwide... you somehow cut into
my system.

JACOBS
Cerene, Times Square, please.

To the left of Cerene there is Times Square, full of plasma
billboards. On all the displays is Cerene. Like an image
in opposing mirrors, within each billboard to the left of
Cerene is Cerene within the the billboard, within in which
is Cerene in the billboard, and so on.

ANDERSON
No. There is no way the systems
could be compromised. You
fabricated this.

JACOBS
Cerene, Tokyo please.

There is Tokyo, the billboard images switch and again replicate. Anderson's jaw drops.

JACOBS
Bangkok.

There is Bangkok. Jacobs turns to Anderson.

JACOBS
Care to pick a city, Chairman?

ANDERSON
(pause - thinks)
Mexico City.

Downtown Mexico City appears. There is Cerene.

ANDERSON
Rome.

There is Rome and Cerene.

ANDERSON
I still don't believe it.

JACOBS
Cerene, broadcast Chairman
Anderson's image, please.

Instantly, real time in Rome, Anderson appears on the billboard. As Anderson raises a hand, the video Anderson in Rome raises a hand. People on the streets are now stopping, staring at the odd non-commercial image.

ANDERSON
Stop.

JACOBS
Cerene...

Anderson disappears from the billboard and there is only Cerene in Rome.

A high-pitched tone sounds and a small phone rises from the table top. Anderson slowly reaches for it, the trooper steps forward, weapon ready. Anderson pauses, brings the phone to his ear.

ANDERSON
Anderson.

He listens for a moment.

ANDERSON

I know.
 (pause)
 I'll call you back.

Dazed, he turns to Jacobs.

ANDERSON

What are you going to do?

Jacobs turns to Cerene.

JACOBS

Cerene, begin please.

Now appearing on the screen to the left of Cerene is a in-orbit real-time view of Earth. It is the Earth as it really is: sick, polluted oceans, smothered in smog, the peninsula of Florida is now a sliver.

CERENE

Citizens of Earth. It is time you
 know the truth...

On the screens around the world, captions appear and where there is audio Cerene speaks in that respective language. In Times Square, she speak English; in Tokyo, Japanese; in Bangkok, Thai, etc...

CERENE

This planet, your planet, is dying...

Now the images go macro: a devastated rain forest, flames flare on smog-suffocated city streets, volcanoes erupt, birds lay dead on polluted shorelines, oil wells burn, corpses are bull-dozed into mass graves...

Jacobs' PDA sounds, he opens, there is Milo.

MILO

Triton is in position, Adam.

JACOBS

Launch in ten seconds. Cerene,
 activate images from Triton's drones.

Anderson's eyes go wide as on the screen a sinister-looking, weaponized satellite appears in orbit over Earth. A canister-like section detaches, a maneuvering jet fires, the canister turns, it's casing is shed in three parts and numerous missiles sequentially fire off towards Earth. The missiles accelerate, diverge paths and fire out to surround the Earth and descend into the atmosphere.

JACOBS

Return to NetCom, Cerene, begin
 Triton advisory.

CERENE

In 20 seconds you will see a bright light in the sky. You should not be alarmed. This is a military impulse device which will temporarily deactivate the electronic systems of all motor vehicles. If this was not done, the Earth would cease at once, suddenly and in flames. This would be an apocalypse made not by any god, but by humankind...

ANDERSON

Stop it. Turn it off.

In the atmosphere high over Times Square, there is a bright flash. On the roads below, engines immediately cease and cars coast to a stop. In orbit above the planet, the flashes light up the stratosphere over the continents. On the screens in the cities, Cerene continues.

CERENE

Because of the burning of fossil fuels, because you continue to propagate, to populate beyond what was intended, soon...

ANDERSON

Turn it off!

JACOBS

Continue Cerene, but volume off here, please.

Anderson drops into his chair.

ANDERSON

Do you know what you've done?

JACOBS

Yes. Caused you a big problem. If I were you I would start making some calls. You did a wonderful job of marketing - its a great network.

ANDERSON

We'll shut NetCom down.

JACOBS

You can, but it will take you a while. Before, the system was secure for you. It is now even more secure for us. Of course you could deactivate the billboards, but by then it will be too late.

(MORE)

JACOBS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Cerene never gets tired.

ANDERSON

What do you want?

JACOBS

Your consortium - your oligarchy - controls 95% of the oil flow. Use what you have in reserve for emergency services until alternatives are phased in. Otherwise, turn off the taps and seal them up.

ANDERSON

You're talking about grinding the world to a halt.

JACOBS

It could be worse.

ANDERSON

It'll be years before alternatives are online.

JACOBS

You've been sitting on synthetics and solar accelerators for more than 10 years. You know better than us, in two to three years they could be phased in, if you unlock them.

ANDERSON

Three years...

JANE

(looks hard at Anderson)

He knew. He knew it was coming. He knew it was time.

(beat)

They didn't know how to change.

They all turn to Jane.

JANE

They didn't know how to stop the machine.

Jacobs turns back to Anderson, who still looks at Jane.

JACOBS

You know how now, don't you Chairman Anderson?

ANDERSON

(thinks long)

And what are you going to do? What else? I know you are not simply going to walk out of here.

JACOBS

Yes, we'll walk out of here. Because we won't yet expose the fact that The Committee effectively staged a secret coup. We'll hold back, unless, of course, your people tamper with NetCom or any of us comes to an untimely end. And by the end of the current administration, we want all of your congressmen, all of your senators and your president to take an early retirement. You have three years to quit your meddling. If by then all the rats aren't off the ship, we'll broadcast the list, expose the rigged votes, the secret memos, encrypted e-mails and scrambled calls. This would be bad for business.

(beat)

And if I were you, I wouldn't want a couple hundred thousand guys like Carl pissed off at me.

Anderson looks to Carl.

CARL

Roger that.

JACOBS

Understood, Chairman?

ANDERSON

(beat - thinks hard)

I'll have to consult with my associates.

Jacobs stares at the man.

JACOBS

Cerene, begin report on The Committee, please, volume up.

CERENE

In 2007, the Federal government of the United States of America was...

ANDERSON

Okay! Okay!

JACOBS
Cerene, hold, return to last report,
please.

CERENE
Overpopulation on the continents of...

JACOBS
Volume off.

Anderson works at his forehead with his hand.

ANDERSON
You'll have to give us a little time.

JACOBS
That's what you've got. A little
time.
(to PDA)
Milo, status?

MILO
Toxins are dispersing on all levels,
Adam. Ambient temperatures are in
remission.

Jacobs, Carl and Jane turn to head out.

JACOBS
We'll be in touch.

EXT. ANDERSON'S COUNTRY HOME - MORNING

The grinder lifts off and accelerates away over the brown
and dead trees. It heads straight into a blazing red
morning sun shrouded in a sickly orange-gray band of smog.

FADE TO:

EXT. RIVERFRONT - DAY

On this quiet corner of a spotless, tree lined waterfront
street, a few people pass on bikes. A couple of cars
quietly whine by. There are no roaring engines, no
emissions, no smog, no honking horns.

Jacobs sits on the seawall, a small boy next to him. They
are fishing in the sparkling clean river.

A hybrid motorcycle hums up behind Jacobs and the boy. The
rider, Bader, dismounts, takes off his helmet. He strolls
to the seawall.

Jacobs and the boy turn. The boy, JACK, is almost
unnaturally handsome, with piercing, intelligent eyes.
Jacobs now has a few streaks of gray in his hair.

BADER
Catch anything?

JACOBS
No. Luckily.

JACK
Hello, Bader.

BADER
Hello, Jack. How are you?

JACK
Very good, thank you.

BADER
(smiles)
That's good.

JACK
And how are you?

BADER
Fine, thanks.
(beat)
Where's your mom?

Jack points to the river.

JACK
Swimming.

From the middle of the river, she is fast moving with rapid powerful strokes towards shore. Bader smiles, watches this a moment, turns to Jacobs.

BADER
So does this mean no fish tonight?

JACOBS
Depends. I think we may be eating out.
(turns to Jack)
Better reel it in, Son. We don't want to catch your mother.

JACK
Okay.

Jack works his reel rapidly, brings the line out of the water. At an Olympic pace, Jane swims to the seawall, brings her head up and treads water.

JANE
Good afternoon, Bader.

BADER

Hi Jane. Nice stroke.

JANE

Thank you. The water is wonderful.

She treads water a little closer to Jack.

JANE

Jack, would you like to take a quick swim with your mother before we get ready for dinner?

JACK

Okay.

Jack stands, takes off his shirt. Though still a small boy, his shoulders are taking shape, showing a bit of muscle. He readies himself, crouches, springs and executes a perfect dive.

He comes to the surface and immediately starts to swim in good form. Jane side strokes alongside, her head partially out of the water, watching her son.

Bader sits down next to Jacobs, gives him a look. Jacobs is wreaking of contentment, watching Jane and Jack swim.

BADER

Seems like you have a pretty good setup here.

JACOBS

Yeah. I wonder how the hell that happened.

Jacobs reaches to a small cooler.

JACOBS

Beer?

BADER

Sure.

Jacobs opens and hands Bader a cold bottle. Bader holds his bottle up for a toast.

BADER

Here's to life in the big city.

JACOBS

Cheers.

They toast.

Jacobs and Bader sit on the seawall, Jane and Jack swim in the clean river.

The Statue of Liberty is beyond.

The streets of the city are lightly trafficked with quiet, clean-burning hybrid cars, three-wheeled scooters, motorcycles and electric trolleys.

The city sparkles, the air is clear, the sky is strikingly blue, dusted with a few white clouds.

The Earth is clean, healthy, seemingly reborn.

FADE OUT.