

"Battlefield Earth"

Screenplay by

Corey Mandell

FIRST DRAFT
OCTOBER, 1998

EXT. BARREN MOUNTAINOUS REGION -- DUSK

The sky glows deep crimson as the sun starts to sink below the horizon, casting shadows over...

A small group of native people, clad in animal skins, congregates outside a remote cave. Their heads reverently bowed, while--

PARSON STAFFER

And the monsters descended from the sky,
raising a great cloud of dust killing
all men, but for a very few...

His gaze sweeps across the youngsters, drilling into their heads

PARSON STAFFER (cont'd)

As survivors, we must dedicate our lives
to pleasing the gods, so they may return
and drive away the monsters.

Turns a sharp eye back to Jonnie, but still addressing the child

PARSON STAFFER (cont'd)

And arrogance does not please the gods.

His rugged frame clothed in a puma hide, a kill-club hanging from his belt. And although only nineteen, JONNIE, already has the look of someone who has already overcome a lifetime's worth of adversity. He immediately turns to Chrissy.

PARSON STAFFER

Finishes chanting up to the heavens.

PARSON STAFFER

...May you chase away the monsters and
lead us back to the lands of plenty.

The clan closes their eyes in silent prayer. All except for--

CHRISSEY

Her teenage countenance offset by the maturity in her strong dark eyes.

EXT. CAVE -- A LITTLE LATER

The parson shakes his head as Jonnie secures an animal-skin sleep roll and extra kill-clubs to his snow-white horse, WINDSPLITTER.

PARSON STAFFER

This is not what your mother wanted.

The parson's ancient face burns with religious fury as he drills his stare into Jonnie.

JONNIE

My mother wanted what was best for the
tribe. And as long as we stay here,
there will barely be enough to eat.

JONNIE (cont'd)

While there may be other places we could live where the food is more plentiful.

PARSON STAFFER

It is true that food is scarce, and everyone appreciates your desire to help, but I can't help wonder if there isn't more to why you want to go out there...

He lets that hang there, then gives Jonnie a pointed look--

PARSON STAFFER (cont'd)

But all it would take is for one monster to see you, and follow you back, and we would all be struck down.

Jonnie meets his rage with calm determination.

JONNIE

Have you ever seen a monster?

He turns to the rest of the clan, challenging--

JONNIE (cont'd)

Has anyone here ever seen a monster?

And if he has any doubt in his voice, Jonnie does a good job of hiding it. He hops onto Windsplitter and takes off--

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF THE RAVINE -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie heads down the hill, turning a bend, where--

CHRISSY

Sits waiting for him on her horse, which like Windsplitter, is loaded with an animal-skin sleeping roll and kill-clubs.

Jonnie smiles, impressed by Chrissy's mettle. But shakes his head.

JONNIE

(finishing his thought)

--I think you can handle yourself better than most men... Which is why you must stay and look after your younger brothers.

Chrissy looks at him, chagrined. It's hard to argue with that. A tough beat. Nothing left but to say good-bye...

And finally, struggling to keep her face a mask, Chrissy removes a shiny MEDALLION hanging from her neck.

CHRISSY

This was given to me by my father when he died. He received it from his father.

(trying to hold back the emotions)

I'm not giving it to you. I'm lending it. So, you better not let anything happen to you out there...

She places the medallion around his neck, their bodies close but not touching. So much not being said...

The tribe's children race alongside Jonnie, excited by the adventure he's going on. But secretly terrified by the death they've been taught awaits him...

The young ones obediently stop at the bridge. They will not cross it. But Jonnie does, leaving the tribe behind.

Chrissy's mask starting to crack as she watches him disappear. The first of the tears escaping down her cheeks.

EXT. VALLEY -- DUSK

As night falls, Jonnie rides across wide open plains. His eyes tense, searching the gathering darkness for the first sign of

And he suddenly freezes. Seeing his first ever...

STAR

Hovering majestically overhead. Soon joined by other stars. Jonnie stares up in wonderment at these heavenly lights.

EXT. PRAIRIE -- SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Jonnie steals through the grass, throwing his kill-club with blurring speed at an unsuspecting ANTELOPE.

EXT. FOREST -- DAYS LATER

Jonnie rides through a grove of conifer trees, the strips of dried meat now hanging from his sleeping roll, when he suddenly stops Windsplitter and silently dismounts--

Careful not to make the slightest sound, Jonnie slips behind a

ROCK FORMATION

Pulling his kill-club, Jonnie carefully peers out through a thicket of brush,

EXT. TOWN -- DAY

Jonnie and Windsplitter move through a deserted housing development passing TREES which grow up through the sidewalks and streets.

A faded piece of PAPER flutters by. Jonnie picks it up.

He can just make out a picture of a woman in a bra. The first time Jonnie has seen a photo, let alone women's undergarments.

More paper litters the ground nearby. Jonnie heads to them, passing a rusted TRAIN abandoned on its tracks.

Windsplitter abruptly stops. Nostrils flaring. Eyes on a HOUSE. The door knocked off its hinges. Windows shattered. Jonnie pulls his kill-club and silently shoos Windsplitter away.

Kill-club at the ready, Jonnie cautiously approaches the house, when suddenly--

A GRIZZLY BEAR

Rockets out the front door, barreling after--

Jonnie, who bolts away, desperately trying to outrun his de
pursuer. Seeking higher ground, Jonnie races to the--

Train, and scrambles up the side of a rail car, then spins

EXT. RAIL CAR ROOF -- CONTINUOUS

The grizzly has stopped chasing him and turns back to her C
who scamper out of the house to play in the front yard.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Good thing she already had her lunch--

Jonnie whirls around with club raised. Coming face to face

TWO MEN

The one doing the talking, CARLO, is wiry and intense-looking
In contrast to his 'built-like-a-brick-shithouse' companion,
we'll call ROCK for obvious reasons.

But the thing Jonnie probably notices first about the men are
SPEARS they both have aimed at his chest.

Carlo motions to the kill-club in Jonnie's hand.

CARLO (cont'd)

We mean you no harm, if you mean us no
harm.

Jonnie slowly lowers his weapon, but remains on guard.

Rock silently directs his partner's attention to--

WINDSPLITTER

Who grazes near the train, waiting for Jonnie. Both men tak
note of the antelope-meat Windsplitter carries.

Carlo turns a friendly eye back to Jonnie.

CARLO

You have been fortunate in the hunt.
You should thank the gods.

JONNIE

If I ever see one, I will.

EXT. GROUND -- NEXT TO THE TRAIN -- MOMENTS LATER

Jonnie hands strips of dried meat to Carlo and Rock, who
reverently bow their heads, holding the food up to the heaven

CARLO

The monsters like to hunt in the dark.
We better find shelter...

EXT. SHOPPING MALL -- A LITTLE LATER

The snow really coming down now. Windsplitter follows our trio through a white carpeted parking lot, taking shelter inside a--

INT. SHOPPING MALL -- CONTINUOUS

A brightly decorated plastic CHRISTMAS TREE stands among the real trees growing up through the floor. A CD of SILENT NIGHT loops endlessly from the few speakers in the mall that still work.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE -- SECOND FLOOR -- A LITTLE LATER

Our trio head into a department store, but Carlo and Rock freeze their tracks with sickened expressions.

CARLO

...Whatever those poor bastards did,
they must have really angered the gods.

Rock silently nods, appalled by the sight of--

MANNEQUINS lying broken on the floor. Many of these 'frozen people' missing limbs, not to mention their genitalia. Nearby..

Jonnie stands, curious, in front of a large plate-glass window that makes up an entire wall. Outside, he can see the snow falling, but when he tries to touch it, an 'invisible force' keeps stopping him.

KABLAM!

In a sudden flash of light, Carlo is hurled back off his feet. His body crashes hard to the ground, twitches once, then falls deadly still.

And out of the shadows behind Rock steps a truly nightmarish figure. Like the parson's drawing of the monster, but worse...

Over nine feet tall with glowing amber eyes. Razor sharp talons on his claws. Thick bone-like structures for eyebrows and lips. The PSYCHLO aims his BLAST-GUN dead center on Rock and fires--

As Jonnie's KILL-CLUB flies through the air--

Knocking into the firing weapon, causing the shot to go wide.

Jonnie and Rock take off through the store, bolting through a maze of aisles which lead them through a doorway--

INT. STAIRWELL -- CONTINUOUS

Our guys sprint up the stairs. The sound of deadly pursuit getting louder behind them as they burst out onto--

EXT. ROOF -- CONTINUOUS

The only way off the two-story building is to jump. And the frozen ground below doesn't make this too appealing an option.

But with the Psychlo rushing through the doorway behind them, Jonnie and Rock throw themselves off the side of the building--

EXT. SNOW COVERED GROUND -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie hits the ground, rolling to his feet--

Rock isn't as fortunate and lands at a bad angle, SNAPPING his on impact. He tries to climb to his feet, but the broken leg buckles, sending him collapsing back to the snow.

Jonnie turns back to help him--

He gives a loud whistle and...

EXT. SHOPPING MALL -- CONTINUOUS

Windsplitter gallops out of the mall. Hooves churning up a fl of snow as he races to Jonnie--

The Psychlo pauses to look down at...

ROCK, who trembles in terror. Pleading to the stars overhead--

ROCK

...Help me please. I have lived a devoted life...

But the twinkling lights seem indifferent to his plight.

Jonnie watches helplessly as the Psychlo slams down a lever on the side of the gun, then aims it down at Rock. KABLAMI!

A gaping hole blown through Rock's chest.

Jonnie struggles to control Windsplitter. He finally gathers the reins, and leaps into the saddle. Ready to ride.

And then he sees what looks like insect. Thirty feet long and ten feet high, twelve feet side to side. And smooth. Sitting squarely in the middle of the wide path.

Jonnie, turns Windsplitter and runs for open country.

There's an earsplitting roar!

Jonnie glances back, to where the thing rises three feet above the ground. And moves forward.

Jonnie passes one corner, then another. The thing falling behind.

He swerves Windsplitter up a sidestreet, reaches another corner and again turns. He heads for the open country.

He can hear the roaring of the thing somewhere beyond the rubble. He listens, holding his breath. The position of the roar changing. Shifting to the right.

The thing somehow blocks the street ahead of him and then goes on, planning to come up behind him.

He is trapped. There is no panic in him now. He slows the hard pounding of his heart. The thing to do is wait until the monster is right in the street behind him-then go over that barricade a fallen building had become.

He sidles Windsplitter back to get a good run.

The thing is roaring down the side path behind him. Now it is turning. He glances back. There it is, wisps of smoke coming out of its nostrils.

Jonnie put the heel to Windsplitter. He yanks on the lead rope.

And sprints at the barricade. Rough and full of loose stones. Dangerous.

Up they scramble. Rubble slides. But up they go. All the way to the top. One glance back shows...

...the thing rolling up to the very bottom of the barricade.

But he's over the barricade. He hits the street before him at a run and keeps running.

Jonnie swerves through a checkerboard of paths, edging to the open country.

Further and further. The buildings thinning. Open country between two structures to his right. He skids down off the embankment and races for freedom. Windsplitter puffing.

He strains his eyes, watching.

There it is!

It slides out from among the buildings and starts straight toward him.

And suddenly, there's a SHEET OF FLAME. Ahead of him the right-hand building explodes apart. Its top slides slowly down and into the street ahead, blocking it. Spattered with dust, Jonnie hauls up short.

He puts the horse up to a run.

The thing not only closes the distance but starts to pass.

Jonnie swerves at right angles.

The thing banks into a turn and flashes by him, well ahead, turns and blocks his way.

Jonnie pulls up. He turns around and began to run away from it.

It let out a blasting roar, scorches by him and again stops, blocking his way.

Jonnie's face tightens into determination.

Thong solid on his wrist.

Walking Windsplitter, he moves up ahead of the thing. It doesn't move. He goes about a hundred feet in front of the thing. It doesn't move. He carefully spots the position of a slitted eye.

And whirls the kill club. And puts a heel to Windsplitter. They race straight at the thing.

The kill club, carried with the full speed of the running horse, whooshes down straight at the slitted eye.

The crash of impact is deafening.

Jonnie slows beyond the thing. It had not moved.

He trots Windsplitter back to the original position, a hundred feet in front of the thing. He turns and makes ready for a second run.

He touches a heel. Windsplitter plunges forward.

And then a great gout of yellow blooms out from between the eyes.

Jonnie is struck a blow like all the winds of Highpeak rolled into one.

Windsplitter catches the full force of it. Up into the air go horse and rider. Down they come with a shuddering crash, against the earth.

IN THE DARKNESS:

There's an ethereal, almost otherworldly WAILING. Then a stab of light and--

EXT. ABOVE THE MALL -- DAWN

The shopping mall falls away below as we rise higher and higher above it. Like a soul returning to heaven...

But for some reason, we're looking down through prison-like BARS.

REVERSE ANGLE TO:

Jonnie's face, as he starts to come to. Disorientated, he looks around. A handful of men stare back at him, each one trying to hide how terrified they are. And PULLING BACK we can see...

Jonnie and the men are imprisoned in a cargo cage suspended from the underbelly of a--

EXT. PSYCHLO AERIAL TRANSPORT VEHICLE

Which climbs up vertically into the sky with engines wailing, then rockets forward with impressive speed.

INT. CARGO CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

An icy wind blasts through the cage. But the cold is the least of Jonnie's concern as he spots Carlo lying motionless in the corner

A pair of young, scrappy-looking twins, MICKEY and SAMMY, give Jonnie a reassuring look. They shout to be heard over the howling wind-

MICKEY

If the monster's fire-stick doesn't make a hole in you, you go to sleep.

SAMMY

But you wake-up--

And sure enough, Carlo groggily begins to stir. Relieved to see Jonnie. But then he looks around for Rock...

INT. COCKPIT -- AERIAL TRANSPORT VEHICLE -- LATER THAT DAY

The Psychlo banks the transport vehicle around a mountain, revealing a massive TRANSPARENT DOME covering a large city below.

Getting closer, we can see Mile High Stadium. And behind it, the distinctive design of Denver International Airport...

EXT. DOME -- A LITTLE LATER

The vehicle hovers down, and with the sound of a magnetic field disengaging, deposits the cage into the back of a flatbed truck.

INT. CARGO CAGE -- MOMENTS LATER

The Psychlo lumbers in with box-shaped AIR-FILTRATION UNITS, each with a thin tube attached to it. He starts to slide one of these tubes into Jonnie's nose, but Jonnie knocks the creature's paw away.

The Psychlo growls, hurling Jonnie viciously across the cage--

JONNIE

Slams into the bars, sliding down to the floor, where the Psychlo unceremoniously jams the tube up Jonnie's nose.

EXT. DOME -- A LITTLE LATER

The Psychlo drives the flatbed transport truck with the cargo cage, it through an ENTRY PORT, complete with mammoth air-lock chambers. Jonnie studies everything with the trained eye of a skilled hunter.

INT. DOME -- CONTINUOUS

The dome covering Denver is so enormous, it has its own weather. And right now, a dark drizzle falls onto the city, which looks much like it does today, save for two things...

A grimy layer of mining soot covers the place. And for some reason, most of the buildings have been painted purple.

INT. TRUCK -- DRIVER'S CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

The Psychlo removes the tube from his own nose and leans out the window, taking a deep, contented breath...

INT. CARGO CAGE -- BACK OF THE TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie experiments with removing his own tube... But he immediately has trouble breathing. Eyes going glassy. He replaces the tube as fast as he can. Carlo gives him a pointed look.

EXT. DENVER STREET -- A LITTLE LATER

The sounds of HEAVY INDUSTRY fill the air as the truck turns down street, passing a shift of PSYCHLO LABORERS trudging off with lunch pails to go work in the mines and smelting plants.

INT. WAREHOUSE COMPLEX-- A LITTLE LATER

The Psychlo backs the truck up to a loading dock and HONKS. Several GUARDS head over with a PROCESSING CLERK as the Psychlo "Human-Slave Wrangler" swings open the cargo cage.

And now we can see that while this Psychlo is an imposing figure at nine feet tall, he's actually a bit of a runt. The other Psychlos are all a good foot or two taller...

Including the clerk, who takes one look at Jonnie and the others and drills a hard stare into the undersized Psychlo "wrangler".

PSYCHLO CLERK

You're gone three days and you only
caught six of them?!

INT. CARGO CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie studies the monsters closely, but from his P.O.V., all he
hears is an unintelligible machine-like clicking sound of their
alien language. He turns a questioning eye to Carlo...

INT. CARGO CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

And even though Jonnie doesn't know what the Psychlos are arguing
about, he knows one thing. They're not paying him any attention.
So he moves like a streak out the cage door. Carlo right behind.

INT. WAREHOUSE COMPLEX -- CONTINUOUS

But the wrangler isn't about to lose any more of his 'cargo' and
whirls, snatching Jonnie, then lunges for Carlo--

But Carlo manages to twist out of reach of the creature's talons
sprint away through the warehouse. The wrangler pulls his gun.

PSYCHLO CLERK

Don't kill it! We can't use it if it's
dead--

The wrangler gives him a snide, 'How stupid do you think I am?',
look. Jonnie watches from the ground as--

The Psychlo slides a lever above the blast-gun's trigger-guard
into an up position, then takes aim and FIRES--

Carlo is knocked flat as the blue-bolt slams into him. His body
lies motionless, but intact, on the ground.

The Psychlo holsters his fire-arm and scoops up Jonnie. Starts
to toss him back into the cage but--

Suddenly realizes he's no longer in possession of his gun.

Jonnie has the weapon. And is pointing it straight at him. The
wrangler sniggers. The same reaction from the other Psychlos...

It's like a 'horse' has somehow picked up a gun with its hooves.
Only, Jonnie slides the weapon's lever into the down-position.

The wrangler is no longer laughing. He reaches down, coaxing
Jonnie as if he was some kind of errant pet...

PSYCHLO WRANGLER

Come on, boy... Give me the gun...

But Jonnie doesn't. So the wrangler lunges for it--

KABLAM!

The Psychlo Wrangler stares, stunned at the--

FIST-SIZED HOLE

Blown through his chest. He collapses, dead before he hits the ground. The other Psychlos freeze in stunned silence. Then...

Burst out in hysterical laughter. That has got to be the goddam funniest thing they've ever seen.

With the monsters busy laughing, Jonnie makes a break for it. Charging through the warehouse complex and out a doorway--

EXT. STREET -- OUTSIDE WAREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Where he barrels straight into--

TERL

Who unlike the Psychlo laborers, wears a senior officer's uniform adorned with impressive gold epaulets, denoting "Chief of Security".

His ever present assistant, KER, can't help but snicker at the man whose collision has splattered over his boss's perfectly pressed attire.

But Terl doesn't seem to find it amusing. He shuts Ker up with a quick look, then rips Jonnie off his feet--

INT. WAREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Holding the filthy 'man-animal' out at arm's length, Terl marches inside the warehouse, demanding to know--

TERL

Who is responsible for allowing this man-animal to run around unsupervised?!

The clerk immediately points to the dead wrangler.

CLERK

The man-animal shot the wrangler and--

TERL

--I'm a little pressed for time. Save the 'going-away' jokes for later.

CLERK

No joke, sir. I swear.. The man-animal somehow got his gun.. And when he reached for it, the man-animal shot him.

The other Psychlos nod, backing this up. Terl considers this, then picks the blaster-gun up from the ground...

And calmly hands the weapon to Jonnie.

TERL

(to the clerk)

Show me.

CLERK

...Sir?

TERL

Reach for the gun.

CLERK

But sir. It might shoot me.

TERL

Sure. It 'might'. And I 'might' suddenly grow a third arm.

CLERK

But I swear, sir, it shot--

Rapidly losing patience, Terl snaps--

TERL

--Any reports filed today still have my name on it. And you're out of your skull if you think I'm going to write "Shot By Man-Animal" as the cause of death in the Security Field Report, unless I see it with my own eyes.

(end of discussion)

This isn't a request, it's an order.

Knowing he's treading on dangerous ground, the clerk stares at Terl

CLERK

...But with all respect, sir, if I follow that order, I may get killed.

Terl returns his stare without blinking.

TERL

The regulations are quite clear.

(dead serious)

If you refuse to obey the order, it's a certainty that you will be killed

The clerk swallows hard, then turns to Jonnie and...

Lunges for the gun, trying to grab it before--

KABLAM!

Jonnie blasts a hole through the clerk's chest

Terl stares in disbelief. But Jonnie's not finished. A bigger Psychlo leaps up and charges. Roaring.

Jonnie stumbles backward.

An enormous paw blurs in the air, coming at him. Talons rake the side of his face.

Jonnie has the gun in position, and fires at the huge chest. He punches blast after blast into it, driving him back.

Terl jerks the gun from Jonnie's hands, and sends a swipe across his chest that sends him crumbling to the ground.

TERL

...Well, I'll be damned.

INT. EMPLOYEE RECREATION HALL -- A LITTLE LATER

A lively joint where a bunch of Psychlo laborers let off steam playing LASER-BASE. Others consume libations while slapping and pinching the asses of the female Psychlo wait-staff who pass by.

Terl plops onto a stool at the bar, but before he can order, he's served a saucer full of KERBANGO, a thick oily beverage.

BARTENDER

When the best security chief this planet ever had is leaving, the least I can do is buy him a pan of kerbango on the house.

Terl's eyes slit in suspicion. The bartender shrugs, keeping his voice casual as he continues...

BARTENDER (cont'd)

And, of course, I'm sure our little agreement is still in effect...

(making sure)

Now that you're leaving, that little unfortunate incident won't somehow 'magically' appear in my file.

Terl helps himself to a shot of kerbango, then explains--

TERL (cont'd)

As long as you provided me useful information, I wouldn't file the report.

(matter-of-fact)

But now that I'm leaving this pitiful excuse for a planet, you will no longer be providing me with useful information.

The color drains from the bartender's face. Terl strolls off chuckling, quite pleased with how fun that was.

INT. INDIGENOUS LABOR PROCESSING CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

A PSYCHLO TECHNICIAN, wearing rubber gloves and a germ mask over face, uses laser-scissors to cut the animal skins off of Jonnie.

The skins get tossed into an INCINERATOR. The technician then reaches over and yanks Chrissy's medallion from Jonnie's neck.

Jonnie tries to grab it back, but the technician swats him away like he was an insect, then holds up the object to see what was so damn important to the man-animal...

And we can now see Chrissy's 'shiny' medallion is a SILVER DOLLA

PSYCHLO TECHNICIAN

Anyone want this primitive little trinket?

Nobody does. So the technician tosses it into the incinerator.

As Jonnie watches Chrissy's medallion get consumed by the flames something deep and dangerous burns in his eyes.

EXT. DENVER MINING SITE -- CONTINUOUS

A long line of humans, chained to stakes like leashed dogs, hunc a massive conveyor belt spewing out a constant discharge of crus rocks. The humans separate out the OAR, which they place into--

Psychlo-sized BASKETS, which wouldn't be too difficult for a Psychlo to carry, but it's back-breaking work for the humans hauling them across a large field to a...

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM

Psychlo Guards use rod-like devices to prod the slower slaves al with sinister blasts of raw electricity.

A GROUND CART

Glides by with Ker at the wheel.

Terl is in the rear, gazing at the humans with the indifference someone might have driving past a dairy farm full of cows.

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- THAT DAY

With the platform loaded with baskets of ore, an ALARM sounds an the Psychlos immediately don protective goggles and ear-plugs. The humans have no such gear to protect them as...

The HUM of large generators starts to fill the air. Growing louder as they work-up to full power and there's suddenly--

An EAR-SPLITTING explosion of sound and BLINDING FLASH of light as all the baskets of ore on the platform vanish.

A brief moment of quiet respite. Then the deafening roar and blazing light happens again. And this time...

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- MOMENTS LATER

Hundreds of PSYCHLO LABORERS suddenly appear on the platform, along with--

DISTRICT MANAGER ZETE

Who wears the finest of silk suits and carries a solid gold briefcase. Terl and Ker quickly greet him...

TERL

Welcome, your Excellency. As this planet's senior security officer, it would be my pleasure to expedite your on-planet clearance through security--

But the District Manager isn't listening. He's staring confused through the transparent dome at the snow-capped Rocky mountains.

DISTRICT MANAGER

Does all of Earth look like this?

TERL

...I'm afraid so.

DISTRICT MANAGER

I was told this planet was ugly...

He peers up at a fluffy cloud drifting across a clear blue sky.

DISTRICT MANAGER (cont'd)

But it's got to be the ugliest crap-hole in the entire universe!

TERL

I couldn't agree more, sir. Now if you'll please follow me...

He finally manages to get the District Manager through security, then seizes the opportunity to introduce Ker.

TERL (cont'd)

This is Executive-Assistant Ker. He's been fully trained to take-over as Security Chief, so there'll be no disruptions with my transfer--

He takes one last sickened look at the humans, declaring--

DISTRICT MANAGER

We'll be doing the universe a favor by exterminating the whole lot of them once we finish mining-out their miserable little planet.

INT. INDIGENOUS LABOR IDENTIFICATION STATION -- CONTINUOUS

A pair of Psychlo guards hold Jonnie down on a steel table as an IDENTIFICATION TECHNICIAN presses a--

SEARING--HOT IRON

Into Jonnie's arm, branding him with an ID number. Jonnie stares the technician in the eye, refusing to acknowledge the pain.

Amused, the technician digs the burning iron harder into Jonnie's flesh. Jonnie's eyes bulge, but he remains steely silent...

The guards release Jonnie and shove him toward the next station, then turn and grab the next human slave in line, which is--

MICKEY. The guards drag the young twin, kicking and screaming, to the branding table and pin him down as the technician lowers the iron toward the trembling youngster's exposed flesh--

Only the iron is no longer in his hands.

Wielding it like a weapon, Jonnie knocks the stunned guards away from Mickey, then pivots with blurring speed--

Plunging the glowing-hot iron into the technician's chest.

JONNIE

How Do You Like It--

As the technician howls in pain, a mass of guards swarm Jonnie, viciously clubbing him to the ground.

INT. BANK OF DENVER -- LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

PLANETSHIP'S VOICE (O.S.)

--I'm honored by your visit, your Excellency.

The obese PLANETSHIP waddles over, flanked by his smarmy-looking ASSISTANT. They shake paws with the District Manager, then lead him across the lobby. Terl and Ker follow.

DISTRICT MANAGER

...How do you stand it?

He motions out a window at a tree-filled park.

DISTRICT MANAGER (cont'd)

Having to spend each day looking out at all that green. And a blue sky.

PLANETSHIP

Oh no. We make the support staff take the offices with the views.

(winks)

While we get the good digs.

He ushers everyone into an elevator

INT. ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

And pushes the button for the BASEMENT. The elevator lurches down.
The Assistant Planetship seizes the opportunity to...

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP

I'm sure you'll find it interesting to know, sir, that we were able to use the planet's indigenous power-generation systems. That way we didn't have to build our own. It was actually my idea.

(basks in the glory of)

And unless I'm mistaken, my idea has already saved the corporation well over six-hundred thousand credits--

DISTRICT MANAGER

--I'm afraid you're mistaken.

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP

...Sir?

DISTRICT MANAGER

I don't find it interesting at all.

The Assistant Planetship, crushed, manages a polite nod. Terl suppresses a smile. He likes the District Manager's style.

INT. INDIGENOUS LABOR PROCESSING CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie, bloody and bruised, but alive, hobbles down a steel hallway with the other now branded slaves, when--

The Psychlos open up with HIGH POWERED HOSES.

A solid stream of water savagely blasts into the defenseless humans as the Psychlos hose down the dirty man-animals.

INT. BASEMENT -- LATER THAT DAY

Terl and the other Psychlo executives sits around a conference table in a windowless dungeon of a room which has been painted purple.

DISTRICT MANAGER

...I will approve additional labor resources be sent here by end of the quarter-cycle. And I believe that does it, except for your long overdue transfer.

He turns and offers Terl a friendly smile.

DISTRICT MANAGER (cont'd)

You must be looking forward to getting off this disgusting excuse of a planet.

TERL

I just want to serve the corporation in whatever way they deem best, sir.

DISTRICT MANAGER

Very admirable. And you've done a first-rate job here as interim security chief.

TERL

(modestly)

Thank you, sir. I've done my best--

DISTRICT MANAGER

--We've decided to keep you here for another fifty cycles.

(turning the 'dagger')

With endless options for renewal. The options, of course, being at Home Office's discretion. Not yours.

Terl reacts like he was just given a death sentence. The District Manager leans forward, giving him a knowing look--

DISTRICT MANAGER (cont'd)

The senator has a lot of friends.

EXT. MINING SITE -- A LITTLE LATER

Jonnie, Carlo and the rest of the new 'abductees' are issued baskets and shoved into line with the rest of the slaves.

Concerned by his friend's battered condition, Carlo admonishes..

CARLO

There's no point in trying to fight these things. At least not if you want to keep on living.

JONNIE

Look around you. This ain't exactly living--

In the background, a ground cart passed by.

INT. ELECTRIC CART -- CONTINUOUS

Ker chauffeurs at the wheel. In the back seat, Terl lowers his voice, so only the District Manager can hear.

TERL

...Would you please explain to the senator that if I even had an inkling it was his daughter, I never would have--

DISTRICT MANAGER

--The senator's exact words to me were, and I'm quoting, "If that blasted Terl tries to talk his way out of it, have him vaporized on the spot".

Leaving Terl with that thought, the District Manager strides up the platform, relieved to be leaving this crappy little planet.

INT. EMPLOYEE RECREATION HALL -- A LITTLE LATER

The place is packed and loud. The newly arrived Psychlo workers getting plastered on kerbango while losing money paw-over-fist i laser bash and other assorted rigged games of 'chance'.

Terl storms up to the bar. The bartender looks up, surprised.

BARTENDER

You're still here.

And something suddenly snaps deep inside Terl. He grabs Ker, pulling him close, the words coming fast and furious--

TERL

I can assure you I was not groomed since birth to get some 'cushy job' that even a moron like you could perform! While you were trying to learn to spell your name, I was being trained how to conquer galaxies! And doing anything less is a disgrace to my entire family line--

EXT. DENVER ZOO -- THAT NIGHT

Psychlo guards patrol the Denver Zoo, keeping an eye on the mass humans locked-up for the night. Inside one of the many cages...

INT. CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie, Carlo and several dozen men crowd around a small fire as GAS TRUCK pulls up. A Psychlo guard inserts the truck's giant hose through the bars, but instead of pumping out petrol...

The hose discharges a green sludge-like food substance into a trough. Jonnie starts over to the 'dinner', but is stopped by FLOYD, a hulking brute of a man almost as large as a Psychlo.

FLOYD

You're new, so let me explain how things work. I eat first. Then my men eat.

His GANG steps forward. All big and dangerous looking.

EXT. ZOO CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The Psychlo finishes discharging the food and retracts the hose. From his P.O.V., Jonnie and Floyd's confrontation is unintelligible like animals "talking" to each other in a zoo, as...

INT. ZOO CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

With his gang backing him up, Floyd explains to Jonnie--

FLOYD

After we're done, if there's any food left, you can have it with the others.

Given how malnourished the 'others' look, it doesn't appear that there's usually much food left.

JONNIE

That's how it used to work.

With blinding speed, Jonnie scoops up a flaming log from the fire, and before Floyd can react--

Jonnie SLAMS the club-like wood, full-force, into Floyd's face, dropping him hard to the ground. Only a moment later...

Floyd is already back up on his feet.

And other than a bloody nose, he shows no effect from the shot he just took. Jonnie smashes him again--

But this time the big brute is ready for it, so all it seems to do is just piss him off. He grabs Jonnie by the throat and begins to choke the life from him.

Jonnie desperately tries to break-free, but Floyd is too strong. He holds Jonnie out at arm's length, preventing Jonnie from getting at him as he continues to brutally strangle Jonnie.

And with his attacker finally close enough to reach, Jonnie's hand rockets out, pulling the breathing-tube from Floyd's nose.

Floyd staggers back, struggling to breath. With his eyes going g. Floyd releases Jonnie and focuses on reinserting the tube as--

Jonnie locks his hands together and swings them like a baseball bat, delivering a tremendous blow to Floyd's jaw.

Floyd falls to the ground. And this time he stays there, out for the count. Jonnie takes mercy on the big man and sticks the tube back into his nose, then heads over to the trough...

But realizes everyone else is holding back, respectfully letting him eat first. Jonnie shakes his head, declaring--

JONNIE

Everyone eats at the same time.

The men all rush the trough...

The slop might be disgusting, but at least it's sustenance. And PULLING BACK, we realize we're watching this on...

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

A wall full of MONITORS showing live feeds from all over the dome city. On an adjacent wall--

A sign reads: YOUR CHIEF OF SECURITY IS...

Ker despondently removes his picture from under the sign, and with an audible sigh, hammers Terl's picture back up.

And PULLING BACK yet again, we realize we're watching this on...

INT. TERL'S LIVING QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

A lone monitor perched next to a bed, where Terl opens a large--

FOOTLOCKER

All neatly packed for what should have been his return home.

Terl almost looks like he's going to cry as he starts to unpack. But he suddenly stops. Sensing it...

His eyes instinctively going to the monitor, which shows--

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Ker peering out the windows, making sure no one is watching, before reaching into his..

DESK

Inside the hidden false bottom of a drawer, Ker pulls out of a SURVEILLANCE PHOTO of a mountain range, and...

TERL'S DESK

Deposits the document at the bottom of an "In-Basket" on Terl's desk but suddenly freezes as he can hear someone approaching the door--

Ker dives across the room back to his own desk, snatching-up a crossword puzzle, which he pretends to be working on as...

Terl marches in and heads straight to his desk, where he grabs the surveillance photo. Ker tries to play it cool.

KER

I was wondering when you were going to look at that. It came in last week and I put it straight in your--

TERL

If you're going to lie to me, at least have the decency to do a credible job.
(dead serious)

So, I don't look like a complete idiot for having tried to train you.

He sharply jabs a talon toward Ker's secret hiding place. Ker's face goes death-white. How could Terl possibly know?

But then Ker suddenly realizes. His eyes probing the room as--

KER

You said we use picto-cameras to spy on other offices. But under no circumstance do we spy on our own office!

TERL
That's right. We don't.
(matter-of-fact)
I do.
(re: the photo)
Start talking.

Given the look in Terl's eyes, Ker decides his best chance is to come clean, and to do it fast--

KER
The photo's from last week's recon drone. It shows a glacier that just split open. It exposed a gold vein...

Terl glances at the photo, then gives Ker a knowing look.

TERL
And you were going to wait until after I transferred to turn it in, so you could get all the credit for it, yourself.

KER
(sheepish nod)
I didn't think you'd mind.

He regrets it the moment he said it. Braces himself for the punishment he knows must be coming. But surprisingly...

TERL
I don't mind. Go ahead and turn it in.
(hands Ker the photo)
But first, pretend you're not a complete imbecile and check the compo-gradients.

Ker looks down, studying a miniature row of color bars at the very bottom of the photo. His face falls as he realizes...

KER
The mountain's full of uranium. No Psychlo can get near it without their breath-gas exploding.
(despondent)
There's no way to mine the gold--

A HAMMER suddenly nails Ker in the back, dropping him to the fl Terl swings again. This time harder. Savagely beating Ker--

TERL
--But What I Do Mind Is That You Betrayed Me Over A Lousy Recon Photo!

KER
But It's Worthless! You Just Said So Yourself!

TERL
Yes! But You Didn't know It Was Worthless--

He raises the hammer with lethal intent. And without hesitatio

Only Ker manages to scramble out of the way at the last minute. He grabs the hammer from Terl and scrambles to his feet--

But freezes as Terl pulls his BLAST-GUN.

KER (cont'd)

You can't shoot me! It's against regulations. I'm not just some man-animal you can kill for sport--

But Terl reaches for the trigger and... Stops. Staring at the gun, his mind racing...

Terl's eyes snap to the surveillance photo... Then to a monitor showing humans working in the mines... Then back to the gun...

And it suddenly connects for Terl.

Ker mistakes all of this for some cruel pause before his inevitable execution and continues to plead--

KER

Please! I'll Make It Up To You, I Swear! Don't Shoot Me--

Terl looks shocked by the very suggestion.

TERL

Shoot you? My most trusted colleague?

He holsters his gun and throws a friendly arm around Ker.

TERL (cont'd)

Of course not. We've got work to do.

Ker clearly has no idea in hell what Terl's talking about, but as long as it involves not getting shot, he's all for it.

TERL (cont'd)

Tomorrow morning, we have to warn the Planetship about the "mutiny".

KER

...What "mutiny"?

TERL

The one you're going to pretend is in the works, like your life depended on it...

(dead serious)

Because it does.

EXT. RAVINE -- DUSK

The setting sun casts a shadow over CHRISSEY, who sits on a rock, keeping a hopeful eye on the far side of the ravine. We get the feeling she spends a lot of time on that rock, watching and wait:

A WITHERED HAND grips her shoulder. She turns around to face the Parson, who gives Chrissy a concerned look--

PARSON

He's been gone over three months.

(the grim reality)

If the monsters didn't get him, he would
have been back by now--

Chrissy whirls back to the ravine with a relieved smile. But
there's nothing there. Only now we can here it...

The faint sound of GALLOPING HOOFS. Growing louder as--

A flash of white is now visible on the far side of the canyon.
Rocketing up the incline and over the drawbridge and...

Chrissy's smile instantly evaporates as she realizes Windsplitter
is returning riderless.

INT. DENVER SHOPPING MALL -- THE NEXT MORNING

The Planetship and his Assistant are stretched-out on CHAISE-
LOUNGES. But right now the Planetship looks anything but relaxed

Across from him, Terl and Ker sit on a chaise-lounge next to a
sun-lamp. Terl and Ker have concerned looks on their faces.

TERL

...And if this worker revolt takes
place, my informants tell me the first
order of business will be to separate
you from your head.

PLANETSHIP

Which is why there will be no mutiny!
(panic in his voice)
I'm authorizing you to use whatever
means necessary to stop it.

Terl nods, so far so good. Then continues...

TERL

Our best chance to prevent this mutiny is
to increase profits. So we don't have to
keep cutting the worker's pay.

PLANETSHIP

Production equals profits. And I'm
already bringing in as many new workers
as possible to boost production.

TERL

But we have to pay those new workers.

The Assistant Planetship gives Terl a snide look.

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP

Maybe you were absent the day they
taught economics at the academy, Terl.
(scoffs)
But nobody works for free.

TERL

Man-animals do.

A WAITRESS in low-cut garb slinks over with a tray of drinks, but the Planetship waves her off, keeping his attention on Terl.

TERL (cont'd)

We already use them for manual labor...
What if we could train them to take-on
certain additional duties? Like
operating mining machines.

(quickly adds)

That way we can boost production
without increasing expenses.

The Planetship and his Assistant wait for the punch-line. But there isn't one. So they roar with laughter.

PLANETSHIP

Man-animals operate a machine?! Have
you blown a head-gasket?!

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP

It's hard enough to keep them from
peeing on the carpet. But mining?!

PLANETSHIP

I'd be the laughing stock of the entire
universe.

Exactly what Terl was hoping he'd say.

TERL

Which is why you should have me take
some man-animals and equipment out to a
remote area. It's better you don't know
where... And I'll try to train them.

(nonchalant shrug)

Have them do some test-mining. That way,
if it doesn't work out, no one will know.

PLANETSHIP

And if it does work, I'll be vaporized.
It's against the law to train an--

TERL

--According to Regulations: Volume 989,
Article 34-A, Paragraph 19... A
Planetship faced with a profit-
threatening situation, such as a mutiny,
is relieved of any and all lesser
ordinances in the pursuit of protecting
said profits.

The Planetship chews on this. He can't argue with the logic.
But shakes his head anyway, abruptly declaring--

PLANETSHIP

We stick to the original plan! Bring in
more workers and they go on half-pay as
soon as they arrive. And that's final!

And before anyone can say anything--

The Planetship JUMPS OFF the third floor railing. And nobody seems the least bit surprised by this. Probably because...

The first two floors have been turned into a Psychlo-sized swimming pool. But instead of water, it's filled with an oily fluid. The Planetship rubs the sludge into his fur, squirming in delight.

EXT. RAVINE -- CONTINUOUS

Under the glow of first-light, Chrissy rides Windsplitter down to
THE DRAWBRIDGE

Which the sentries hold in a raised position, preventing her from leaving. They do this under the supervision of the Parson.

She throws the club with perfect aim, knocking open--

THE CATCH

On the pulley mechanism allowing the rope to unwind, lowering the bridge. And before anyone can react--

Chrissy gallops Windsplitter like a shot across the bridge, disappearing at full-tilt down the hillside.

EXT. DENVER STREET -- THE NEXT MORNING

A cold and brutal Psychlo march song plays over loudspeakers as a long line of exhausted and freezing humans are escorted at gun point out to the mines. In the rear of the procession...

The young twins, Mickey and Sammy, work their way over to Jonnie.

SAMMY

We hear you're planning a break-out.

MICKEY

Count us in--

A Psychlo thrusts Jonnie forward with the butt of a gun, keeping him moving with the parade of human misery passing by--

TERL AND KER

Who enjoy their breakfast out on the heated patio of the Senior Officer Mess Hall.

TERL

I did some research on man-animals last night. They actually possessed certain primitive technical abilities...

(beat)

Surprisingly, they even managed to fire a crude probe into space.

He slaps a picture of PIONEER ONE onto the table. Ker shovels yellow meat into his mouth as he eyes the photo, dubious.

KER

How do we know it came from *man-animals*?

TERL

Because they were stupid enough to put a plaque on it with pictures of themselves. One of our deep-space recons picked it up. And here's the kicker...

He points to the plaque visible in the photo.

TERL (cont'd)

The plaque was made from a rare metal that's worth a clanking fortune. And in addition to their pictures, the *man-animals* also included full directions to their planet. That's how we came here...

(loves this part)

They invited us.

Ker cracks-up, finding this hysterical. Terl leans forward, giving him a conspiratorial wink.

TERL (cont'd)

...And of course, all this means the plan has a good chance of working.

Terl gets up and heads out. Confused, Ker chases after him...

EXT. STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

Catching up to Terl, Ker shakes his head.

KER

But the plan can't work if the Planetship doesn't order us to train *man-animals*--

TERL

--The Planetship's hiding something. All we have to do is figure out what it is, and we'll have leverage over him.

KER

(getting it)

And then we can get the gold--

TERL

---What do you mean we? It's my plan.

And before Ker can respond, Terl heads into--

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

And settles in behind his desk. Ker follows on his heels.

KER

Please, sir. You got to let me in on it. I barely make any credits in this lousy job. And I've got five wives to support.

Terl leans back in his chair, rubbing a talon over his lips, pretending to be thinking this over. And finally...

TERL

I don't want to partner-up with an idiot.
(challenges)
How do I even know you understand the plan?

Still reclining in his chair, Terl discreetly reaches under his desk and pushes a GREEN BUTTON. This isn't seen by--

Ker, who rising to the task, holds up the surveillance photo of the mountain range.

KER

We train man-animals, who don't need breath-gas, to mine the gold for us.

TERL

But Home Planet owns this planet. The gold belongs to them.

Ker nods, eager to prove he understands the whole plan.

KER

That's the beauty of it. Home Office doesn't even know the gold exists. So those corporate crap-heads will never know we stole it. It's the perfect crime.

He waits for Terl's praise... But instead Terl looks shocked. And in the gravest of voices:

TERL

Putting aside the serious violations of teaching mining to an inferior race and insulting corporate superiors, each one in themselves punishable by death, you just advocated deliberate theft of company resources...

(resigned sigh)

So my duty requires me to report you, even though you will be vaporized and I'll have to train a new assistant.

Ker's jaw is practically on the floor. Terl promptly pushes a RED BUTTON under his desk before--

KER

But it was your stinking idea!

TERL

Which is why it's a good thing I now have a recording of you laying out the plan, and me reprimanding you for it.

KER

What are you talking about?! We don't have any recorders planted in here...

(realizes)

Let me guess. We don't. But you do.

Terl saunters over to a--

VAULT

Where he carefully positions his body to shield a KEYPAD from Ker's view, as he punches in numbers.

TERL

Consider it part of your education.

KER

...Education?!

The vault swings open. Terl reaches in past a shelf of Blast-Gu and spare air-tanks, popping a disc from a RECORDING MACHINE.

TERL

Never engage in a criminal activity until you set-up a patsy to pin everything on in case you're found out.

KER

Thank-you. That's great advice! But why do I have to be the patsy?!

TERL

So you won't be getting any bright ideas about getting rid of 'ole Terl in order to keep all the gold for yourself.

KER

But I would never double-cross you!

TERL

Of course not. Because I'm going to set it up that if any 'unfortunate accident' were to befall me...

(re: the disc)

This goes straight to Home Office.

He files the disc away within a collection of other such recordings housed within the vault, then shuts and locks the ste door.

Ker isn't happy about this, but what can he do? And to make things worse, he realizes...

KER

Your whole plan depends on getting leverage over the Planetship.

(shakes his head)

But since there's no way to smuggle a picto-recorder into his office without it being detected, how are we going to find out what he's hiding--

TERL

--You're the only qualified E-3 Level Support Executive on this planet other than the Assistant Planetship.

(matter-of-fact)

So if something were to 'accidentally' happen to him...

KER

(catching on)

...I'd be the only qualified candidate to replace him. Good thinking, sir!

(rubs his paws together)

So how do we bump the bastard off?

TERL

Don't worry about that. We'll do it in an appropriate style... But right now, we have a more pressing concern.

EXT. GUARD'S TOWER -- ABOVE A MINE SITE -- THAT DAY

Terl and Ker enjoy their lunch up in a guard tower overlooking the humans slaving away below. Between mouthfuls, Terl motions down to JONNIE, who struggles with a heavy load of ore.

With almost a sense of begrudging respect, Terl explains...

TERL

...While that one does seem to be unusually intelligent and resourceful, at least for a man-animal, it also seems rather defiant. Which is why we'll need leverage over it.

KER

Leverage over a man-animal?

Terl gives him a sharp look. Hasn't he been paying attention?

TERL

The only way it's going to be able to operate a mining machine is if it can read Psychlo. Which means we have to educate it on a learning machine.

Ker looks at Terl like he's off his rocker.

KER

But if anyone found out--

TERL

--That's why we need leverage on it, you moron! So, no one finds out.

Ker stares down at Jonnie, exhausted by the idea.

KER

We need leverage on the Planetship. And now we need leverage on the man-animals. I don't know about this plan of yours...

(mutter)

It's like we need leverage on everyone.

TERL

That's what makes it so much fun.

INT. KITCHEN FACILITIES -- LATER THAT DAY

Psychlo COOKS mix a disgusting green slop in giant tubs.

COOK

...We feed them a combination of grass, reclaimed fluid wastes, and whatever animal carcasses we can find.

TERL

Yes, but what would man like to eat?
(clarifies)
What would they consider a treat?

COOK

Wow the crap should I know?!
(quickly adds--)

Sir.

EXT. DENVER STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

Ker dejectedly kicks a rock as he follows Terl up the street.

KER

So much for your "Positive-Forcing".

TERL

It's called Positive-Reinforcement.

KER

Whatever. It still sounds like a pretty primitive way to get leverage.

TERL

Man is a primitive species.

Ker can't argue with that, but still shakes his head.

KER

But we have no idea what the damn things like...

INT. DENVER ZOO -- CAGE -- THE NEXT MORNING

Ker barges into the cage, and without warning, throws Jonnie, Carlo and Floyd into a--

TRANSPORTABLE CARGO CAGE.

Mickey and Sammy, trying to stay close to Jonnie, start to scramble into the cage, but Ker swats them away.

EXT. TRANSPORT TRUCK -- MOMENT LATER

Ker secures the cargo cage to the back of a flatbed truck and tosses HEAVY JACKETS to our guys.

INT. TRANSPORT TRUCK -- DRIVER'S CABIN -- THAT MORNING

Ker, wearing a breath-tube now that he's outside the dome, drives the flatbed truck up a windy mountain road away from Denver...

INT. CARGO CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Our guys huddle in their jackets as the cold Colorado air blows through the cage. Floyd shrugs, guessing...

FLOYD

...Must be a mining site out here.

Carlo looks to Jonnie for his take on the situation. But Jonnie's attention turns to the cargo cage door as--

The truck hits a small bump, causing the door to swing open a crack, betraying that it's not locked.

EXT. THE NEXT BEND -- MOMENTS LATER

The flatbed truck rounds a bend, carrying a NOW EMPTY cage.

EXT. BACK AROUND THE BEND -- CONTINUOUS

Our guys pick themselves off the road from where they jumped, and race away in escape, sprinting up a mountain path.

INT. DENVER -- SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Terl and Ker, reclining in chairs with their feet up on desks, watch a TRIO OF MONITORS showing our guys huffing and puffing up the mountain.

KER

They sure are slow. And it looks like they're slowing down even more.

TERL

That's the whole point of this--

EXT. MOUNTAIN PATH -- CONTINUOUS

Our guys make it up over a small rise, where Floyd suddenly casts a hopeful eye at a CABIN-LIKE BUILDING half-buried up ahead in the

FLOYD

Might be some food in there.

JONNIE

We don't have time. The monsters are going to be coming after us.

FLOYD

We gotta eat.

JONNIE

Our best chance of hiding is up in the tree-line. We'll look for food there--

Carlo hates to take Floyd's side, but...

CARLO

If I don't eat now, I'm not sure I'm going to make it to the tree line.

Jonnie starts to respond, but one look at Carlo and Floyd and it's clear they're both on the brink of exhaustion.

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- MOMENTS LATER

Terl proudly points to the monitors, which show our guys forcing open a door and heading into the snow-covered building.

TERL

observe them in their natural habitat.

INT. SNOW COVERED BUILDING -- MOMENTS LATER

The building is a long-abandoned SKI CHALET, caught frozen in time. A thick layer of dust covers everything. In the corner..

The SKELETAL REMAINS of some people are scattered near a Christmas Tree slumped over a pile of presents for a holiday never celebra

But Jonnie suddenly freezes. Grabs a CHAIR.

FLOYD

What is it--

JONNIE

...Lunch.

He launches the chair straight at the--

CHRISTMAS TREE

Sending RATS scurrying out from among the presents. Jonnie dives onto one of the larger rodents. Carlo and Floyd do likewise.

INT. SKI CHALET -- MOMENTS LATER

Carlo and Floyd rip branches from the Christmas tree for kindling

JONNIE

We don't have time for a fire.

FLOYD

We don't have a choice. We gotta cook the rats--

JONNIE

--We have a choice.

Carlo looks up in dread as he realizes what Jonnie's thinking.
Jonnie summons up every ounce of willpower he's got and ...

Forces himself to take a bite of raw rat.

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Ker shakes his head, nauseated.

TERL

Get off your fat ass! We got the info
we needed, let's go round 'em up.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD -- THAT DAY

Our guys sprint up the road, when they begin to hear an ominous
MECHANICAL ROAR behind them. Getting louder as...

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD -- BELOW OUR GUYS -- CONTINUOUS

An armored Psychlo MARK II GROUND CAR hurtles above the ground as
it comes screaming up toward--

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

Our guys, who charge past a faded 'Welcome to Aspen' sign on their
way around a bend--

But as they top the hill, they run straight into one of
Terl's backup vehicles. Psychios piling out.

Jonnie goes berserk!

The first two Psychlo guards stood no chance. With one
backward stride, Jonnie is behind them. He sends them
slamming together like egg shells.

He catches the gun of one, as that Psychlo goes down and
stamps his heel into the side of his skull.

He reverses the gun and batters the other Psychlo with shots
from a range of three inches.

Jonnie drops on one knee, and blows the two last Psychlos who
have exited the craft to bits.

Five other Psychlos fire in his direction.

Jonnie's gun is empty. He throws it down and picks up the other one. Flips the switch to kill.

Totally unmindful of the shots ripping up the ground, running low and firing as he goes, Jonnie races on. The others scattering around him.

He kneels behind a Psychlo body and sends a storm of shots into the five. They crash back.

Jonnie pounds them into rolling balls of dead flesh. Running, firing as he goes.

EXT. TOP OF A GORGE

Where they abruptly run out of ground. Standing at the brink of a massive chasm where a--

BRIDGE

Used to be. But neglect and repeated winter storms have washed it away into the bottom of a canyon almost too far down to see.

And to make matters worse, our guys are surrounded on all sides by sheer vertical mountain face, impossible to climb. They're trapped

FLOYD

What the hell do we do now?!

CARLO

Don't even think about it--

This is directed at the look in Jonnie's eyes as he stares across the gorge...

CARLO (cont'd)

There's no way you're going to make that jump!

And in fact, the far side of the ravine does seem like an awfully long distance away. But Jonnie backs up, getting as much running room as possible.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD -- BEHIND OUR GUYS -- CONTINUOUS

The Psychlo Ground Car hurtles around the last bend and comes screaming out onto the clearing as--

EXT. TOP OF THE GORGE -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie takes off on a dead sprint, going like hell for the edge of the cliff. Carlo looks away, can't bear the sight.

Jonnie doesn't let-up. In fact, he goes faster. Every muscle straining as he races straight for the edge and--

EXT. CANYON -- CONTINUOUS

A PSYCHLO FIGHTER PLANE rockets up from the depths of the canyon, blocking Jonnie from jumping--

INT. COCKPIT -- PSYCHLO FIGHTER PLANE -- CONTINUOUS

Terl maneuvers the fighter plane to push Jonnie away from the edge of the gorge.

EXT. TOP OF THE GORGE -- A LITTLE LATER

Terl locks our guys into the rear of the ground car as...

Ker stares across the canyon to the other side, trying to figure something out. And then it finally dawns on him.

KER

They must be able to fly.

Terl sighs, unlocks the cage and grabs Floyd and tosses him over the side of the canyon.

FLOYD

Screams in helpless anguish as he plunges to his death.

INT. DENVER WAREHOUSE -- THAT DAY

The remains of a sizable meal are scattered over a giant table next to a steel slab, where the ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP partakes in a nap.

A door bursts open and Ker marches inside and salutes.

KER

I need your approval to get some man-animal labor units to do some painting and cleaning work.

He extends a REQUISITION FORM, which the still half-asleep Assistant Planetship signs, but then snidely instructs--

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP

You tell Terl, that unlike 'certain individuals', I hold an important job. So next time he has a request, have him send it through proper channels instead of disturbing me when I'm busy.

Ker nods, then trots out with the signed form. The Assistant Planetship scratches himself, then returns to his snooze.

INT. EMPLOYEE RECREATION HALL -- CONTINUOUS

The place is packed with its usual drunken debauchery. In the back, Terl and the bartender engage in a private conversation--

TERL

Given that it looks like I'll be sticking around for a while, perhaps we should be discussing the terms of our new deal...

BARTENDER

(resigned sigh)

...What do you want?

INT. EMPLOYEE RECREATION HALL -- LATER THAT AFTERNOON

The Assistant Planetship finishes a pan of kerbango when a DOZEN more pans of the narcotic root are placed in front of him.

BARTENDER

Congratulations. You're our one-thousandth customer of the month!

EXT. ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP'S LIVING QUARTERS -- THAT NIGHT

The Assistant Planetship, now smashed out of his mind, stumbles into his room to sleep off the kerbango...

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- THAT NIGHT

A recording of the Assistant Planetship plays on a monitor:

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP (ON MONITOR)

You tell Terl, that unlike 'certain individuals', I hold an important job--

Ker watches as Terl pauses the recording, then expertly imitates the Assistant Planetship's voice:

TERL

"You tell Terl, that unlike 'certain individuals', I hold an important job."

KER

(genuinely impressed)

How do you do that, sir? You sound just like him.

TERL

There are benefits to a first-class education.

Terl hits play again, mimicking the Assistant Planetship's expressions and gestures playing on the monitor.

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Terl masterfully applies prosthetics and make-up to his face, thickening his eye bones and darkening the fur on his cheeks...

Until if we didn't know it was Terl, we'd swear it was the Assistant Planetship.

INT. PSYCHLO RESEARCH CENTER -- A LITTLE LATER

Terl, disguised as the Assistant Planetship, shakes his head.

TERL (AS ASSIST. PLANETSHIP)

...When Terl gave this suggestion in the meeting, I ridiculed it. Know why?

The RESEARCH CLERK doesn't really care, but politely asks:

RESEARCH CLERK

No, sir. Why?

TERL (AS ASSIST. PLANETSHIP)

I'm no fool. I'm going to steal Terl's idea for myself... Because that Terl is exceptionally brilliant, don't you think?

RESEARCH CLERK

I haven't noticed. He always seemed like an arrogant jerk to me.

Terl's eyes slit, but he forces himself to stay in character.

TERL (AS ASSIST. PLANETSHIP)

...Well, if you got to know him, I'm sure you wouldn't think that.

The Research Clerk shrugs, returning to the business at hand.

RESEARCH CLERK

You want discs on basic Psychlo Language. Research Compendium on Man-Animals. Mineral and Ore Mining Techniques. And Door-Bomb Explosives...

(beat)

If I may ask, sir, what's that one for?

Terl signs a check-out slip, expertly forging the Assistant Planetship's signature, then...

Making a big production of looking around, making sure no one's listening, Terl leans in with a conspiratorial whisper...

TERL (AS ASSIST. PLANETSHIP)

...Can you keep a secret?

INT. DENVER ZOO -- CAGE -- THE NEXT MORNING

Ker barges in and snaps a LEASH around Jonnie's neck. Carlo gets same treatment. And as Ker reaches out to grab some more humans-

Mickey and Sammy, discreetly slip forward, positioning themselves to be selected.

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- A LITTLE LATER

Ker hands Psychlo-sized paint-brushes to Carlo, the twins, and BEYWOOD, an older man with a friendly face.

Pointing to giant buckets of purple paint, Ker barks something in Psychlo, which the humans obviously can't understand.

MICKEY

How we supposed to know what he wants?

HEYWOOD

They've made me do this before. Just follow what I do and you'll be fine.

He dips his brush into a bucket and goes to work painting a wall. Carlo and the twins copy his movements.

INT. BACK ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Terl roughly deposits Jonnie and the chair in the center of the room, then grabs a DISC from a pile and slides it into--

A LEARNING MACHINE

Which unlike the utilitarian design of most Psychlo machinery, is elegantly designed with sleek simplicity.

And once the disc is inserted, the machine emits a holographic image of a CHINKO, which bows twice and puts its six sets of paws over its six eyes, then talks in English, albeit with a strange accent:

CHINKO VOICE (FROM THE MACHINE)

Excuse me, but I am your instructor if you will forgive such arrogance, for I do not have the honor to be a Psychlo. I am but a lowly Chinko Language Slave in the Department of Culture and Ethnology.

The holographic image bows again, then...

CHINKO VOICE (FROM THE MACHINE)

Please forgive my pretension as I try to educate you in Psychlo, the Noble language of Conquerors...

An intense bright shaft of BLUE LIGHT shoots out of the machine, striking Jonnie in the eyes...

CHINKO VOICE (FROM THE MACHINE)

This machine is designed for pan-species communication, and utilizes subconscious absorption, allowing for instantaneous comprehension.

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- LATER THAT DAY

A somber Psychlo war song plays from speakers as Carlo, Heywood and the twins paint the walls a fresh coat of purple.

Terl happily hums along to the music as he attaches some kind of RED-SQUARE to a choke collar. Ker is camped-out at his own desk, looking through some holographic pornography.

INT. BACK ROOM -- A LITTLE LATER

The blue light beaming at Jonnie's eyes clicks off. And staying in Jonnie's P.O.V.:

Terl leans down to Jonnie, speaking very slowly, extra-enunciating each syllable...

TERL

Hello...There...Do...You...Understand...
What... I'm... Saying?...

Jonnie can understand, but feigns a blank expression, pretending he doesn't. Terl dangles a DEAD RAT in front of Jonnie's eyes.

TERL

Are...You...Hungry...Little...Guy?..

But Jonnie keeps up his blank-face routine.

Terl continues to 'tease' him with the rodent for a few beats, then pulls it away and restarts the machine, turning to Ker.

TERL (cont'd)

Obviously, this is going to take a while. We might as well go get ourselves some lunch.

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Terl and Ker head out the door. The moment they're gone, Carlo charges into--

INT. BACK ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

And tackles Jonnie out of the chair, 'saving' him from the blue beam bombarding his eyes.

CARLO

Told you your attitude was going to get you into trouble. That's why the monsters singled you out for the torture machine.

JONNIE

I'm not sure what it is, but it's not torture. It's like sleeping. But when you wake-up, you somehow know things...

(explains)

Like I can now understand what the monsters are saying when they speak.

Heywood appears in the doorway with a concerned look.

HEYWOOD

...What's going on?

Carlo points to the Learning Machine with religious awe.

CARLO

It's a god-machine that the monsters must have stolen. It makes you know things.

JONNIE

I don't know if it's a god-machine, but I do know I'm going to use it to learn as much as I can, so I can figure out how the hell we're going to get out of here.

Before Heywood can protest, Jonnie reassures him--

JONNIE (cont'd)

If you can keep an eye out and give me a little bit of warning before the monsters come back, I won't be putting any of you in danger.

Heywood is concerned, but moves back to a window, keeping a vigilant eye on the street outside as...

Jonnie inserts a new disc into the Learning Machine.

INT. DENVER ZOO -- CAGE -- NIGHT

In the corner of the cage, out of view of the others, Jonnie uses a stick to fervently work out mathematical equations in the dirt.

Carlo, Heywood and the twins watch, trying to make sense of the foreign symbols.

SAMMY

...So, that's what the monster's language looks like.

Jonnie shakes his head, his eyes shining with the rapture of pure knowledge as he explains...

JONNIE

This is mathematics. The unifying language of the entire universe. Look.

EXT. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESS HALL -- THE NEXT DAY

Ker shrugs between mouthfuls of his lunch.

KER

...So it's taking a bit longer with the man-animals than we thought. But they can't be completely brainless if they were able to fire a probe into space--

TERL

---I'm not sure the man-animals did fire that probe into space.

KER

But you said there was a plaque on it with the man-animal's picture.

Terl slowly sips a pan of kerbango as he explains.

TERL

What if there was a species on a different planet that detested man-animals, and it's easy to see why they would... And this other species, wanting man-animals exterminated, sent the probe to us with directions to the man-animal's planet.

KER

(beat)

I hadn't thought of that. It's very clever, sir.

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie watching Terl and Ker on a monitor, while reading through a Psychlo FIELD OPERATIONS MANUAL.

In the rear of the room, the rest of the guys push and pull at the handle to the massive VAULT.

JONNIE

(translating from the manual)

The Security-Chief should secure the field vault with an eight-digit combination code of his selection. He should not write this code down, or tell it to anyone else. And he shouldn't simply use his Employee ID number, but be more clever than that.

Carlo gives Jonnie a hopeful look.

CARLO

You don't think...?

Jonnie digs through Terl's desk, coming up with a FORM.

JONNIE

The monster in charge is named Terl.

(beat)

His employee number is on this requisition form...

He returns Carlo's look with a shrug.

JONNIE (cont'd)

It's worth a shot.

EXT. KEYPAD -- BANK VAULT -- MOMENTS LATER

Jonnie punches Terl's employee Id-Number into the vault's keypad. An entry light blinks red and the door remains locked.

MICKEY

Guess he was more clever than that.

Jonnie nods, but then--

JONNIE

But the question is, how clever? Let's try putting the numbers in reverse order

He inputs Terl's employee Id-Number in reverse order. A beat, the the entry light blinks green and the vault swings open.

Our guys enter. Jonnie's attention is drawn to the RECORDING MACHINE, while Carlo, Heywood and the twins check-out the Blast-Guns and spare Breath-Gas Tanks.

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- LATER THAT DAY

Terl and Ker march past Heywood, Carlo and the twins, who are all busy painting the walls, and head straight into...

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET -- CONTINUOUS

This time, Terl dangles two dead rats in front Jonnie.

TERL

Do...You...Want...Lunch?...

But Jonnie keeps up his blank-face routine. And is rewarded for it by being picked-up by the head and launched out into--

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie skids across the floor, slamming into a wall. Terl impatiently marches over to him, pulling his Blast-Gun.

TERL

It's obviously asking too much of these man-animal things to grasp a language as sophisticated as Psychlo.

But Ker isn't willing to give-up hope of the gold and tries to sound convincing as--

KER

What if this one is particularly stupid? Why don't we try to train another one--

TERL

--We don't have time!

He storms over and grabs a series of surveillance photos from his desk. Jonnie discreetly signals across the room to...

Carlo, who holds his breath, praying he doesn't get caught as...

He slowly reaches between Terl's legs and pushes the GREEN BUTTON, recording as...

TERL

I can't keep hiding the recon-photos from Home Office, forever. Plus, at the rate the glacier is melting, the gold's about to fall into the ravine.

KER

...So, we'll get it then.

TERL

We'd have to use explosives. Home Office would detect them and send down a survey team, which means we wouldn't be able to keep the gold for ourselves.

He takes one last forlorn look at the photos, then lashes out in anger, delivering a vicious kick to Jonnie.

TERL (cont'd)

And this damn thing's been on the machine for two full days now, and still can't even speak one word! It's hopeless.

(mind made up)

We terminate the operation and cover our tracks.

He points his blast-gun down at Jonnie and--

JONNIE

What word would you like me to speak?

Terl stares at Jonnie in amazement. The man-animal just spoke Psychlo. But to make sure he's not imagining this...

TERL

...What did you just say?

JONNIE

You heard me. I asked you what word...

CARLO, HEYWOOD AND THE TWINS P.O.V

The rest of the guys can't understand what Jonnie's saying, but they're shocked to realize...

He's speaking to the monsters in their machine-like language, as

TERL

In an unprecedented public display of joy, hops up and down, pumping his arms in victory.

TERL

It speaks! It actually speaks!
(as if Jonnie
was a toy)

Go on. Say something else.

JONNIE

Okay. How's this? You're going to stay here as our prisoner...

(instructs Ker)

While you go and bring back a truck.

Terl, more amused than anything, clarifies...

TERL

Just because I taught you how to speak Psychlo, you're still the inferior race... Which means I give you orders. You don't give me orders. Understand?

JONNIE

I understand that if you don't do exactly what we tell you to do, we'll have no choice but to kill you both.

TERL

Oh, really? And how exactly do you plan to do that--

Jonnie gives the signal. With a sudden flurry of movement--

Carlo, Heywood, and the twins pull BLAST-GUNS from behind their paint buckets. Jonnie keeps his attention on Terl.

JONNIE

The next time you chose an access code, you might want to be a bit more clever than just using your ID number in reverse.

But Terl's only reaction is to chuckle.

TERL

You sure they even know how to use those things--

A COLLECTIVE CLICK as our guys slam the levers down on their gun to kill position. Ker immediately throws his arm up in surrende

And Terl is no longer chuckling. He looks around at the guns pointed at him and buries his head in his paws, and begins to...

Howl with laughter. Convulsing so hard, tears run down his face

TERL (cont'd)

Can you imagine the official report?

(gasps for air)

Head of Security killed by *man-animals*!

Still laughing hysterically, he rears back to smack Jonnie. But Mickey jumps forward and FIRES his gun at Terl--

Only there's nothing but a CLICK. The weapon doesn't fire.

Sammy leaps forward and fires his Blaster. CLICK. His gun doesn't work either. Carlo and Heywood get the same result.

HEYWOOD

...Uh-oh.

Terl, still laughing, follows through on his swing, sending Jonn flying across the room. Then explains to him with a smirk.

TERL

If you rat-brains knew anything about
firearm safety, you'd know one doesn't
store loaded weapons.

Then he turns to take care of the others. Goes to smack Sammy--

But Mickey protectively grabs a LETTER-OPENER from a desk, and with
blinding speed, plunges the blade straight for Terl's chest--

Only as fast as Mickey is, Terl is faster, and he deflects the
blow with his arm, sustaining a small cut in the process.

Terl then promptly relieves Mickey of the letter-opener and seizes
the trembling twin by the throat, holding him firmly in place as--

TERL

Next time you want to stab someone, let
me show you how to do it right--

He raises the sharp blade high above Mickey's chest--

JONNIE

(steel in his voice)

You hurt him, I won't mine your gold!

Terl pauses to consider this. Then turns and convincingly bluffs

TERL

Then I'll vaporize you and get someone
else to mine the gold--

JONNIE

--You don't have time. You can't keep
hiding the recon-photos from Home Office,
forever. And the glacier is melting.

In that one moment, Terl's whole world is turned upside down.
Jonnie gives Terl a dangerous smile.

JONNIE (cont'd)

Man getting leverage over a Psychlo.
That would be the day, wouldn't it?

Rage burns openly in Terl's eyes, but he lowers the weapon and
calmly turns to Ker.

TERL

...I think it's time we showed our
little friend here a thing or two.

EXT. DENVER LIBRARY -- THAT DAY

A Mark II Ground Car is parked in front of the library. Locked
in a cage in the rear of the vehicle--

INT. CARGO CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Carlo, Heywood and the twins watch with concern as Terl drags
Jonnie by a leash across the street and up marble steps.

INT. DENVER LIBRARY -- CONCOURSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Terl's usual deep throated voice sounds even more ominous as it echoes eerily in the library's expansive entryway.

TERL

As long as you cling to the feeble hope that you can get the better of me, you'll be distracted from the important work which needs to be done. Which is why I share the following with you...

He gives the leash a good hard jerk, yanking Jonnie down a--

INT. CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Terl moves at his normal gait, forcing Jonnie to run to keep up.

TERL (cont'd)

When we attacked your planet, all your soldiers, using your best military technology, were only able to put-up a measly nine minute fight before we exterminated them, along with all but a few of the six billion humans polluting this planet.

He snaps the leash, whiplashing Jonnie into--

INT. CENTRAL RESEARCH ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The shelves lining this cavernous tomb of a room are stacked full of books. An endless variety of subjects and titles.

TERL (cont'd)

Everything you humans knew is in here.

He makes a big production of letting go of the leash, giving Jonnie full run of the place.

TERL (cont'd)

And you can look at anything you want. Because there's nothing that can help you.

He watches amused as Jonnie takes him up on his offer, pulling books from shelves. Terl can't resist calling after him--

TERL (cont'd)

But I'm sure you'll find a lot of recipes on how to prepare raw rat.

Terl cracks-up, finding this particularly entertaining.

INT. CARGO CAGE -- REAR OF GROUND CAR -- LATER THAT DAY

Mickey pensively shakes his head, fearing the worst.

MICKEY
Think he's still alive?

HEYWOOD
If he is, he probably wishes he wasn't...

A darkness hangs over the cage as everyone continues to stare up at the library, where--

INT. DENVER LIBRARY -- CENTRAL RESEARCH ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Terl is filing his talons. Across from him, Jonnie finishes looking through a large stack of books.

TERL
Satisfied?

JONNIE
Yes.

As Jonnie heads for the door, Terl steals a peek at the book he was just looking at. It's the Declaration of Independence.

But Terl can't read English. Unconcerned, he just shrugs, swatting the book across the room.

EXT. DOMED CITY -- EDGE OF A FIELD -- A LITTLE LATER

On a rise overlooking the domed city, a herd of grazing cows cast curious stares across the field as the Mark II Ground Car pulls

Terl emerges from the vehicle, followed by Jonnie.

TERL
You will soon be relocated to a new mining site. And if any of you get any bright ideas about escaping, keep in mind that while you rat-brains may not know anything about firearms, I certainly do. I just happened to be top marksman of my graduating class. And I can kill any of you at well over a thousand paces...
(to Jonnie)
Tell them what I just said.

JONNIE
(relays to the others)
If we try to escape, he'll shoot us.

Terl waits for Jonnie to continue. And when he doesn't...

TERL
That's it?

Jonnie nods. Terl is surprised, but shrugs and continues with the subject at hand. He pulls his Blast-Gun, explaining--

TERL (cont'd)

Allow me to demonstrate.

He turns and FIRES into the middle of the--

GRAZING COWS

Killing several of the animals. The others take off in a panicked stampede of churning hooves. Terl continues to calmly fire--

Blasting the legs clean off the fast-moving animals. Sending them collapsing to the ground, BELLOWING in anguished torture.

Terl shows off with some trick shots. From behind the back. With his eyes closed. All with the same horrific result...

The field littered with a bloody sea of suffering animals thrashing around helplessly. Sensing something behind them, Jonnie turns--

EXT. ACROSS THE FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

A GRIZZLY BEAR emerges from an abandoned building. Nostrils flaring at the smell of blood. And with a growl, he charges at--

EXT. EDGE OF THE FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

Terl, who is too busy with his shooting demonstration, to notice.

But he does note the look in Jonnie's eyes as Jonnie starts back away. And misreading it as revulsion to the carnage on the field

TERL

Don't you know your own history? Mankind was the only animal on this planet that hunted other animals for sport...

(has to admit)

Which means there might be some hope for your species after all--

The GRIZZLY slams into Terl from behind--

The fierce impact jars the gun from Terl's grasp as he's violently MAULED down. And with the grizzly on his back, pinning him down, Terl is unable to get his own talons up at--

THE BEAR

Who is starting to do damage. Powerful claws savagely slashing into Terl's flesh as Terl remains unable to defend himself.

Jonnie scoops up the gun, switches it to stun position and FIRES. Knocking the grizzly flat by the shot. Carlo can't believe it.

CARLO

What are you doing? Let the bear rip him to shreds--

Jonnie raises the weapon on Terl, who bloodied and bruised, sits himself up and gives Jonnie a friendly smile.

TERL

Look, we can work out a deal. There's more than enough gold to go around--

JONNIE

--You're in no position to be making a deal.

He switches the gun into kill position.

CARLO

(now understanding)

You're right. It's better we kill him.

And for the first time, there is terror in Terl's eyes. He braces himself, waiting for the shot. He doesn't have to wait long...

KABLAM!

Terl's eyes open wide in shock.

He hasn't been hit. The shot was directed at one of the suffering cows behind him, as Jonnie humanely ends the animal's misery.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Jonnie does the same with the rest of the herd. Terl has to smile at the irony of it...

TERL

You've learned more Psychology than I ever thought possible.

JONNIE

What are you talking about?

TERL

To toy with me like this before you kill me. I'm impressed...

(genuinely)

You honor me.

He closes his eyes, bows his head, ready for his execution.

Jonnie stands there, the gun now sighted on Terl. His finger aching to pull the trigger. But he doesn't...

CARLO

What are you waiting for?! Kill him!

JONNIE

If I kill him, then what do we do?

MICKEY

Get the hell out of here!

JONNIE

To what kind of life?! Always looking over our shoulders, waiting for another monster to come hunt us down...

TERL can't understand what the man-animals are babbling about. But his eyes remain focused on the gun in Jonnie's hand, waiting for a chance to grab it--

But Jonnie keeps the weapon leveled on Terl's chest, as he continues to address the others...

JONNIE (cont'd)

...And what about the others back at the mining camp?

CARLO

There's nothing we can do about them.
(resigned)

Only the Gods can free them.

JONNIE

Those lights we see in the sky at night. They are not Gods watching down on us.

CARLO

...What are you talking about?

JONNIE

I learned our history, today. Our ancestors built flying machines that went up into the heavens. I saw the pictures with my own eyes...

(re: the stars)

Those are planets. Like this one. They are not gods waiting to come and save us.

He waits a long beat for everyone to digest this, then...

JONNIE (cont'd)

And the great villages weren't built by gods. They were built by people, just like us. Men and women who cherished one thing above all else. Freedom.

(impassioned)

It meant so much to them, they'd fight to the death for it if they had to. In fact, many of them did.

Inspired, Mickey immediately steps forward.

MICKEY

You're right...

His voice is a bit impulsive, but full of conviction.

MICKEY (cont'd)

We can't run away from the monsters. We have to fight them!

His brother, Sammy, immediately joins him. Heywood also steps forward in solidarity. But Carlo isn't so sure...

CARLO

How the hell are we going to fight them?

JONNIE

I'm not sure, yet. But I do know we're not ready. We need to learn more about them. Like their weaknesses.

(concedes)

And we're going to have to learn other stuff as well. I mean, we didn't even know the guns weren't going to work.

A long beat, then with the look of a man who knows he's going to regret this, Carlo steps forward, joining the others with a sigh

CARLO

...Which is why we have to go back.

Terl watches as the damnedest thing happens...

Jonnie turns to him, returning the gun to him, explaining it with

JONNIE

Surely someone as smart as you has some secret plan to stop me from shooting you. If I tried, you would have killed me.

In the blink of an eye, Terl shifts his demeanor back to his old caustic self--

TERL

Damn right I would have, rat-brain!
(chortles)
That's the first intelligent thing you've said, yet.

He points Jonnie to the far edge of the field.

TERL (cont'd)

Rest-break's over. There's something else you need to see--

EXT. FAR EDGE OF THE FIELD -- OVERLOOKING DENVER -- A LITTLE LATE

Terl proudly points down to the domed city below.

TERL

That entire city doesn't even equal one block in one of the hundreds of thousands of cities on the great Home Planet of Psychlo. And from there, we control countless outposts all over the universe. Each one much larger than this. One of those outposts used to be the Chinko's planet.

Terl stares Jonnie straight in the eye, making sure he understands

TERL (cont'd)

The Chinkos were the ones who designed the Learning Machine. They were far more advanced than you rat-brains. And when they tried to revolt, we sent down our gas drones, and within minutes every last one of them was exterminated.

(sure of this)

So get it through your little excuse for a brain. There is no way a species as primitive as yours could ever defeat us.

He lets Jonnie chew on that for a beat, then concedes...

TERL (cont'd)

But you were right about one small thing. If you refuse to mine the gold, I may not have enough time to train anyone else. Which is why it is imperative that you are properly motivated--

A SECOND Mark II Ground Car pulls up. Ker emerges from the vehicle and opens the trunk, pulling out--

CHRISSEY.

Relief floods her eyes when she sees Jonnie. At least he's alive

But as hard as it is to do, Jonnie gives Chrissy an emotionless vacant look. Like she means nothing to him...

And Chrissy senses enough to duplicate this look. Terl watches Jonnie very closely.

TERL

...You don't know her?

He pulls out Chrissy's charcoal drawing of Jonnie.

TERL (cont'd)

This was on her when she was collected.

Jonnie tries to hide the fear in his eyes at what Terl might do. He doesn't have to wait long to find out...

Terl holds up a CHOKE-COLLAR with a red square on it.

TERL (cont'd)

This collar has enough explosive to easily remove her head from her body.

He secures the collar to Chrissy's neck, then pulls a REMOTE CONTROL.

TERL (cont'd)

And this remote can activate the explosive from anywhere on the planet. So if you ever disobey me, let me show you exactly what will happen.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD -- A LITTLE LATER

Ker secures a second red-squared collar around Heywood's neck.

JONNIE

Listen, you win! I'll mine your gold.
And I know you don't owe me any favors...
But please, don't kill him!

Terl stares at Jonnie. A long beat. Then he finally relents...

TERL

Fine... As a gesture to our new working relationship, I will grant you this one request. I won't kill him. But you can never ask for anything else again.

JONNIE

I won't. And thank-you--

Terl nonchalantly tosses the remote to Ker.

TERL

As I said, I won't kill him...

Ker gives Jonnie an evil grin, then slowly pushes the button--

KABLAM!!

Heywood is no longer among the living. Terl and Ker laugh their asses off at the shocked betrayal on Jonnie's face.

TERL

...Stupid humans.

EXT. DENVER ZOO -- THAT NIGHT

Returning the humans to their cage for the night, Terl stares at Mickey and Sammy. Impossible to tell the twins apart...

The two young brothers watch with growing concern as Terl motions to them, while asking Jonnie something in Psychlo.

SAMMY

...What did he say?

JONNIE

He wants to know which one of you tried to stab him.

A look of knowing terror in Mickey's eyes.

MICKEY

Why? What's he going to do?

JONNIE

Unfortunately, there's no way of telling.

Mickey nods, accepting his fate, whatever it may be. He turns--
But Sammy has already stepped forward, sacrificing himself to Terl. Mickey, stunned, tries to stop him--

MICKEY

What are you doing?! I'm the one who--

SAMMY

--You were just trying to protect me.

Terl grabs Sammy and Jonnie and marches away.

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- A LITTLE LATER

Terl straps Sammy to the teleportation platform, then calmly drags Jonnie down to--

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER -- MOMENTS LATER

Terl punches commands into a console. Over the hum of the generators coming to life, Terl explains to Jonnie...

TERL

Now that you and I have our little agreement straight, I want you to watch this, so you can tell the others what'll happen to them if any of you ever disobey me.

He points Jonnie's attention to a monitor, beaming back images of teleportation platforms on the HOME PLANET OF PSYCHLO as...

AUTOMATED VOICE (FROM CONSOLE)

Teleportation in five... In four... In three... In two... In one...

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

With a THUNDER-CLAP of sound and a BLINDING FLASH of light... Sammy disappears from the platform--

EXT. PLANET PSYCHLO -- TELEPORTATION CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

And appears on one of the countless teleportation platforms stretched out under a radiant purple sky.

Sammy can't breath the air. Starting to suffocate.

Panicking, the youngster desperately undoes the strap tethering him to the platform and tries to run to safety, but--

The much larger planet's immense gravitational pull crushes him to his knees. His eyes bulging, he stares out at a--

NIGHTMARISH SKYLINE

Endless rows of factories belching fire crammed between office buildings thousands of times taller than the World Trade Center.

SAMMY

Lets out a gasping plea for help as his spine starts to crack under the atmospheric weight. And the last thing he sees are...

PSYCHLO WORKERS

Crowding around him in curious amusement. As if observing an insect cooking in a microwave. Until...

The young twin literally **IMPLODES**. His body caving in on itself mercifully ending the suffering.

INT. EARTH -- TELEPORTATION CONTROL BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie rips his eyes away from the abominable scene playing on the monitor. In contrast...

Terl views it to its bitter end, clucking the whole time with enjoyment.

INT. EMPLOYEE RECREATION HALL -- CONTINUOUS

A bunch of Psychlos crowd around the bar, consuming kerbango, including the **RESEARCH CLERK** that Terl checked out the discs fro

Ker joins the group, shaking his head despondently.

KER

I just got the worst news. My cousin Numph got vaporized...

Everyone is surprised by Ker's un-Psychlo like grief.

KER (cont'd)

...The bastard owed me over a thousand credits! Now I'll never get it.

The group nods, now understanding.

KER (cont'd)

But it's the idiot's own fault. He knew about a planned mutiny attempt, but failed to report it.

The Psychlos give a collective 'He got what he had coming,' shrug, then return to their kerbango as...

The research clerk leans over to Ker, nonchalantly inquiring:

RESEARCH CLERK

Just wondering. How exactly did they find out he knew about the mutiny?

KER

He was on a remote rim star planet, not unlike this one, where just like here, they secretly record and archive all conversations.

This is news to the research clerk.

KER (cont'd)

So, if there was ever a mutiny, we'd obviously review every recording...

(dark laugh)

And I'd sure hate to be the poor bastard who knew about it, but didn't report it.

INT. DENVER ZOO -- CAGE -- THAT NIGHT

A guard tosses Jonnie back into the cage. Mickey tentatively approaches him, afraid to ask the question, but has to...

MICKEY

What happened to my brother?

Jonnie stares at him. A long, difficult beat. Then finally--

JONNIE

The monster sent him up to their home planet...

Before he can continue, Mickey exhales, relieved.

MICKEY

...Thank god, because I thought for sure he was going to kill him.

Jonnie continues to stare at Mickey, his heart breaking. But for the life of him, he just can't bring himself to tell him the rest

INT. DENVER HOTEL -- CONTINUOUS

Terl hurries down a hallway. A pair of GUARDS snap a salute and immediately open a door, allowing him into--

INT. PLANETSHIP'S LIVING QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Ker and the research clerk are in the room with the Planetship.

TERL

You wanted to see me--

PLANETSHIP

--It's my assistant! He's the bastard planning the mutiny.

Terl does an impressive job of acting shocked by the news.

INT. ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP'S LIVING QUARTERS -- A LITTLE LATER

The Assistant Planetship doesn't have to act. He is shocked.

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP

Why the hell would I want to do that?!

Terl slips a disc into a machine, playing a recording of...

INT. RESEARCH CENTER -- ON THE MONITOR

Terl, convincingly disguised as the Assistant Planetship, leaning in with a conspiratorial whisper to the Research Clerk.

TERL (AS ASSIST. PLANETSHIP)

...Can you keep a secret?

RESEARCH CLERK

I'd like to think so.

INT. ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP'S LIVING QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

The Assistant Planetship shakes his head, pointing to the person who looks just like him on the monitor.

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP

That's not me! I never said that!

PLANETSHIP

Oh shut up! We know it's you. You were stupid enough to sign your own name--

He holds up the sign-out sheet, bearing Terl's perfect forgery of the Assistant Planetship's signature. ON THE MONITOR...

INT. RESEARCH CENTER -- ON THE MONITOR

Terl, in the guise of the Assistant Planetship, looks around, making sure no one's listening, before 'confiding'...

TERL (AS ASSIST. PLANETSHIP)

...Why the hell should we put up with reduced pay and no vacations, all because our incompetent Planetship has no idea how to properly run this place?

RESEARCH CLERK

I don't think the fat-ass could run any planet--

INT. ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP'S LIVING QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

The Research Clerk immediately turns to the Planetship, insisting.

RESEARCH CLERK

I only said that, sir, to trick him into telling me the plan, so I could immediately come and warn you of it!

The Planetship gives a gruff nod and continues to watch as...

INT. RESEARCH CENTER -- ON THE MONITOR

ON THE RECORDING, Terl continues...

TERL (AS ASSIST. PLANETSHIP)
All it would take is one strategically
placed door-bomb and I'd be in charge.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE SUITE -- A LITTLE LATER

The Assistant Planetship stands alone in front of a door to the Planetship's office. He nervously calls down the hall--

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP
But what if there is a door-bomb?

Terl, Ker and the Planetship watch from behind a protective blast shield positioned a safe distance down the corridor.

PLANETSHIP
I thought you said you didn't put one
there!

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP
I didn't. But maybe someone else did!

TERL
If you refuse to cooperate with this
investigation, I'm afraid regulations
would require me to vaporize you for the
charge of high treason...

The Assistant Planetship sighs. Then closes his eyes and braces his body, as if that could somehow protect him from an explosion.

And he slowly cracks open the door. Nothing happens.

ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP
See, I told you I didn't put a--

A flash of light and a deafening blast as a CATAclysmic EXPLOSION blows the Assistant Planetship and much of the hall into oblivion.

EXT. STREET -- OUTSIDE EXECUTIVE OFFICES -- MOMENTS LATER

Psychlo workers hose down the last of the fire from the explosion. Ker follows behind as the Planetship strolls by with Terl, who is adamantly shaking his head, pretending to be distraught.

TERL
But you can't take Ker! He's the best
assistant I ever had--

PLANETSHIP
--You're out of your skull if you think
I'm going to wait for Home Office to
process a requisition for a new E-3
Level Executive Assistant!

Terl and Ker share a secret look of victory.

INT. DENVER ZOO -- CAGE -- THE NEXT MORNING

Jonnie sits alone in the corner, For the first time, he looks defeated. He doesn't even bother to look up as...

Terl cheerfully strides up, snaps a leash around Jonnie's neck and yanks him to his feet.

TERL

You've got a busy day ahead of you, rat-brain. You'll start with discs on mining techniques, core sampling, and machine operations.

He dangles a handful of dead rats in front of Jonnie's face.

TERL (cont'd)

Then after lunch, it's on to drilling and flying simulators.

Jonnie nods numbly. There's no more fight left in him.

INT. ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP'S OFFICE -- LATER THAT DAY

Ker, in his new office, struggles through a crossword puzzle. He quickly hides it as the Planetship sticks his head into the room

PLANETSHIP

Quitting time. Want to get some food?

KER

Thanks, sir, but I'm going to stay and get some more work done.

The Planetship nods, both surprised and impressed...

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

And heading down the hall, the Planetship mutters to himself.

PLANETSHIP

...Should have had my assistant vaporized a long time ago.

He heads into an elevator and the doors close with a bing--

INT. ASSISTANT PLANETSHIP'S OFFICE -- DAY

As soon as Ker hears the noise, he immediately steals into the adjoining office--

INT. PLANETSHIP'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

And goes to work, snooping through the Planetship's personal files

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie half-heartedly pushes buttons on control panel to a HOLOGRAPHIC FIGHT SIMULATOR. But all he manages to do is...

Crash into a simulated mountain.

TERL

(growls)

Crash one more time, and your little friend is no longer among the living.

He holds up the REMOTE to Chrissy's explosive collar, then restarts the simulator.

INT. DENVER ZOO CAGE -- THAT NIGHT

Jonnie is back to sitting alone with a despondent look.

Carlo and Mickey slowly approach. Nothing is said for the longest time. And finally, Jonnie looks up at Carlo.

JONNIE

You were right. I should have shot the monster when I had the chance...

(quietly)

That way, Sammy and Heywood would still be alive.

CARLO

You didn't kill them.

JONNIE

No, the monster did. And I didn't kill the monster when I could have.

(tortured whisper)

Which means it's my fault.

MICKEY

You didn't kill the monster for a reason.

Jonnie gives him a haunted look--

JONNIE

That's the point. If we try and fight them, more of us will end up getting killed. Maybe even everyone...

(barely audible)

All because of me.

Carlo shakes his head, trying to hold back the anger.

CARLO

This isn't just about you. Remember what Heywood said. It's about all of us...

MICKEY

And we need you. You speak the monsters' language. You know things about them.

Jonnie looks around at the others in the cage, who are now staring at him. And he sees something on their faces he's never seen before. Hope. The longest of beats, then...

JONNIE

Everyone has to know. If we do this, there's a good chance that not one of us will be alive by the time it's over.

But not one person is deterred. Carlo gives Jonnie's words back to him--

CARLO

Look around. This ain't exactly living. And even if we could escape and go back to our villages, we'd always be looking over our shoulder, waiting to be hunted down by the monsters.

(pointed)

And that ain't exactly living either.

MICKEY

(fierce resolve)

So if you can help us figure out a way to fight the monsters, no matter what it is, count us in.

A VOICE (O.S.)

Count us in too--

EXT. NEXT CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

This voice belongs to one of the human slaves pressed against the bars of the next cage over, listening to what's going on in Jonnie's cage. And from the next cage over from that...

ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)

What's going on?

The human slave turns and calls to the second voice--

HUMAN SLAVE

Someone in that cage knows how to speak the monsters' language. And he's going to help us fight them--

Someone from the next cage asks what's going on...

EXT. NEXT CAGE OVER -- CONTINUOUS

And the news is met with the same ardent reaction. We PULL BACK t

EXT. DENVER ZOO -- CONTINUOUS

The message passing from cage to cage, until the whole zoo erupts a DEAFENING ROAR. The battle-cry resounding defiantly in the night

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- THE NEXT DAY

It's a whole different Jonnie. Attentive and focused as his fingers fly over the simulator's control panel.

Terl watches, impressed. Then holds up the remote to Chrissy's explosive collar, gloating...

TERL

Never underestimate what a little leverage can do, rat-brain.

Jonnie nods, letting Terl believe what he wants to.

EXT. DENVER ZOO -- CAGE -- THAT NIGHT

Everyone in Jonnie's cage crowds around him as he draws letters in the dirt, teaching the others to read and write. Jonnie passes the stick to Carlo, who carefully starts to write letters of his own.

INT. PLANETSHIP'S OFFICE -- THE NEXT MORNING

The Planetship strolls into his office, but freezes in his track. What the hell are Terl and Ker doing in his inner-sanctum..:

But then he sees the files all neatly laid out on his desk. He looks at them, the life draining from his eyes.

TERL

Isn't it interesting you've been keeping two sets of books... And while you've told the workers that this planet's operating at a loss, it's actually quite profitable.

The Planetship shakes his head, feebly trying to explain...

PLANETSHIP

I only claimed it's running at a loss to try and motivate everyone to work harder.

TERL

Of course you did...

(knowing smile)

And it had nothing to do with how it allows you to cut everyone's pay, so you keep all the extra credits for yourself.

PLANETSHIP

Oh, that? I can explain that--

But Terl drops a heavy tome onto the desk with a resounding clang

TERL

--I'm afraid company regulations requires me to vaporize you.

TERL (cont'd)

But I can see how someone in your position, faced with growing old and no future, might be forced to find creative ways to solve your financial problems.

PLANETSHIP

...You can?

TERL

And it's not in any of our interests for you to stop being the Planetship... But it may be prudent for you to start sharing some of your authority.

Ker hands the Planetship a huge sheaf of requisition and order forms, along with a pen to sign them.

PLANETSHIP

But these forms are blank. And undated.
(shakes his head)
If I sign them, you could put anything you want on them. You'd be running the entire planet! I'd be nothing but a puppet--

TERL

--If you don't want to do it this way, we could always do it by the book.

He pats his Blast-Gun, underscoring the threat.

INT. MINING SUPPLY WAREHOUSE -- THAT DAY

A SUPPLY CLERK stares incredulously at a requisition form.

SUPPLY CLERK

What the hell does the Planetship need with all this mining equipment?!

TERL

That's not even the crazy part.
(holds up an
order form)

He's ordered me to take a group of man-animals with the equipment out to a remote area to see if they can be trained to mine. Can you imagine that?!

SUPPLY CLERK

Man-animals being able to mine?! The old Psychlo's gone completely insane.

TERL

Tell me about it. But what can I do...
(helpless shrug)
An order's an order.

INT. CARGO CAGE -- LATER THAT DAY

A HOWLING WIND cuts through a large steel cage containing Carlo, Mickey, and some twenty other men, along with an assortment of mining machines and equipment. The cage is suspended from the underbelly of a--

PSYCHLO CARGO-TYPE AIRCRAFT

Which hurtles over the majestic Rocky Mountains. Following behind, Ker is at the helm of a smaller fighter-plane.

INT. AIRCRAFT -- COCKPIT -- CONTINUOUS

Terl keeps a careful eye on Jonnie, who is piloting the aircraft. An ALARM suddenly blares through-out the cockpit--

AUTOMATED VOICE (OVER SPEAKERS)

Warning! External sensors indicate
dangerous radiation levels ahead--

Blue sparks are starting to pop throughout the cockpit.

For the first time, there is genuine fear in Terl's eyes. He immediately points to a meadow visible below--

TERL

What are you waiting for?! Land the
damn craft. This is as far as I can go.

Jonnie punches buttons on the control panel, landing the aircraft.

EXT. MEADOW -- MOMENTS LATER

Terl motions Jonnie to the cargo cage as Ker lands the fighter in the meadow nearby.

TERL

Meet me back here in fourteen days with
at least half of that cage full of gold,
or I'll 'terminate' your entire
operation.

As the threat hangs there, Terl checks his time-piece.

EXT. MEADOW -- A LITTLE LATER

The men have been assembled out on the meadow, when there's an ethereal, almost otherworldly WAILING from above as--

A PSYCHLO RECON DRONE

Hurtles overhead. One of the drone's high-tech CAMERA-LENS rotates to stare down at our guys.

INT. FIGHTER PLANE -- MOMENTS LATER

A TRANSMISSION RECEIVER spits out a SURVEILLANCE PHOTO taken from the recon drone, depicting Jonnie and the others staring up into the sky. Ker hands it to--

EXT. MEADOW -- CONTINUOUS

Terl, who gives the surveillance photo to Jonnie.

TERL

Tell them that even though I won't be at the mining site, I'll be able to keep an eye on you...

(admonishes)

And anyone who isn't working hard will be 'replaced', if you know what I mean.

He pats his blast-gun, making sure Jonnie understands, then turns and climbs into the fighter as Ker pilots it up and away.

Jonnie and the men start back to the cargo aircraft, but Jonnie instantly whirls. Eyes scanning the underbrush in the tree line

He grabs a PICK-AX from the mining equipment, holding it up as a weapon. Following his lead, the rest of the men do likewise as.

The bush moves. And out from behind it steps--

A wild-eyed figure with the look of someone who has survived a long time alone in the wilderness. Ignoring the array of weapons pointed at him, the ROGUE stares at Jonnie in complete awe.

ROGUE

How'd you do it?

JONNIE

...Do what?

ROGUE

Make that monster go away without killing you.

Jonnie gives him a friendly smile.

JONNIE

I'm afraid it's a long story.

CARLO

And sorry, pal, we'd love to fill you in, but we don't have a lot of time--

The rogue sizes up Jonnie and the rest of the men, then nods as he's reached some important decision, and returns Jonnie's smile

ROGUE

The name's Mason, and I've got nothing but time...

EXT. MINING SITE -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Jonnie lands the cargo-aircraft at the mining site, and our guys now including MASON, begin hauling the equipment into the shelter of a cave.

Carlo looks up from the list he's been studying with a worried expression--

CARLO

If we work around the clock, we'll be lucky to mine enough gold to fill half that cage... There's no way we're going to be able to do that and get all this stuff done we need for the revolt.

JONNIE

I've got worse news. There's only gonna be about half of you digging.

(off their looks)

I'm gonna be looking somewhere else for it.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL -- THAT NIGHT

The cargo aircraft lands on top of the shopping mall where Jonnie and Carlo were first captured by the Psychlo wrangler.

Jonnie and a small group of men emerge and race inside the building.

INT. RADIO SHACK -- THE NEXT DAY

Jonnie and a group of his men move through the store, scavenging WALKIE-TALKIES and RECHARGEABLE BATTERIES, while--

INT. GUN AND AMMO SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Mickey and Sammy lead a separate team through a gun shop, collecting weapons, and--

INT. HARDWOOD STORE -- CONTINUOUS

Carlo and a third squad scrounge up supplies, including SPOOLS OF THIN WIRE.

INT. MINING SITE -- CAVE -- THAT DAY

Jonnie shows his group basic engine mechanics as he rebuilds the motor on a small, gas-powered generator. Nearby...

Mickey and Sammy's team assemble crude, but effective-looking homemade bombs from the mining equipment.

INT. MINING SITE -- CAVE -- A LITTLE LATER

With the generator, now reassembled, Jonnie fires it to life.

The men burst out in applause as electricity flows to a line of battery rechargers.

INT. PSYCHLO AIRCRAFT -- COCKPIT -- DAY

Jonnie pilots the aircraft. Carlo is in the navigator's seat. Behind him, Mickey shakes his head--

MICKEY

...Hey, what's that?

Jonnie banks the aircraft around. And now, staring at them through the cockpit window is...

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

Watching over a completely empty harbor.

EXT. MANHATTAN -- CONTINUOUS

The same with the city of Manhattan. The entire island is a literal ghost town. Nothing moves. Hovering overhead--

INT. AIRCRAFT -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie studies the map, realizing.

JONNIE

We're here. Over New York.

EXT. MINING SITE -- CONTINUOUS

A wailing sound grows louder as the RECON DRONE passes overhead, cameras spying down on the mining site, where...

INT. CAVE -- CONTINUOUS

Hidden from view in the cave, two of Jonnie's men have stayed behind and now pull on a series of thin wires, which run through a pulley system and out to...

EXT. MINING SITE -- CONTINUOUS

Twenty DEPARTMENT STORE MANNEQUINS, all decked out in mining gear and holding shovels and pick-axes. As the wires are pulled...

The mannequins move like marionettes, looking like they're hard at work mining the gold.

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Terl grabs the surveillance photo as soon as it spits out from the transmission receiver. He gives a satisfied nod.

TERL

That's what a little leverage can do for you. See them all slaving away.

KER

Well, with my share, I'm going to fire all my wives and buy new ones. Maybe even a pretty one... What about you?

TERL

Bribe my way off this god-forsaken planet and get assigned a real position that's worthy of my talents and training.

That has got to be the stupidest thing Ker has ever heard.

KER

You're going through all this trouble, just so you can get a job!

TERL

Not a job... Respect.

The fierce desire is palpable in his voice.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. -- LIBRARY OF CONGRESS -- THAT DAY

The cargo aircraft is parked next to the Library of Congress.

INT. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS -- CONTINUOUS

Books on uranium are spread across a table as Jonnie unfolds a RADIOACTIVE-SITE Map of the United States. He traces his finger to a mountain in Colorado which bears the radiation symbol of a triangle inside a circle...

JONNIE

Here's where we're supposed to be mining the monster's gold. That symbol means radiation. Which is caused by uranium.

He moves his finger to an area in New Mexico.

JONNIE (cont'd)

And here's where my tribe is located.

MICKEY

...It has the same symbol.

JONNIE

(looks up at them)

Do you guys know the names of the places where you're from?

MICKEY

A village called Los Alamos...

CARLO

An island in what used to be the country of Pennsylvania...

JONNIE

Which island?

CARLO
Three Mile Island.

Jonnie finds Los Alamos and Three Mile Island on the map. And sure enough, they both have the radiation symbol.

Carlo and Mickey don't understand. Jonnie explains...

JONNIE
From what I've been able to figure out, many years ago, the monsters attacked our planet with a deadly gas. Almost everyone died, except a few who made it into underground shelters. When the air cleared, these people came out, but were then hunted down by the monsters.
(points to the map)
Only a few must have made it to the safety of these remote areas with radiation where the Psychlos couldn't go. And we're descendants of those people.

Mickey nods, realizing this is good news.

MICKEY
So even if we fail to take over the planet, our people will be safe as long as they stay in areas with this radiation thing?

JONNIE
They'd be safe from the monsters.
(the bad news)
But radiation isn't good for humans, either. That's why a lot of people in our villages get sick and don't live as long as they should.

He stares at them, making sure they understand.

JONNIE (cont'd)
So if we don't take back our planet, our people can't leave these areas or they'll be hunted down. But if they stay in these areas, over time, more and more of them will get sick and die...
(the grim reality)
Either way, the last of humanity will slowly but steadily become extinct.

EXT. LOUISVILLE KENTUCKY -- FORT KNOX -- LATER THAT DAY

The aircraft lands next to FORT KNOX. Our guys emerge, carrying large Psychlo equipment cases, and head into the building...

MICKEY
If gold's so valuable to them, how come the monsters haven't already taken it out of here?

JONNIE

From what I read in the library, the gold here is stored in lead-lined vaults to protect it from the radiation in case of a nuclear war...

(beat)

And that lead would keep the monsters from detecting the gold.

INT. FORT KNOX -- GOLD DEPOSITORY -- A LITTLE LATER

Our guys stand in front of an imposing vault.

CARLO

...You sure we're going to be able to get through this?

Jonnie and Mickey fire-up a Psychlo LASER-DRILL.

JONNIE

One thing you got to give those monsters, their mining equipment is highly effective.

They attack the vault with the high-tech drill.

It cuts through, like a hot knife through butter.

As the screaming bit, is pulled smoking from the hole, a gold light streams out.

EXT. MINING SIGHT

HIGH ANGLE

Jonnie and the others descend over the mine area. But it looks very different.

INT. AIRCRAFT - DAY

There are looks of concern on their faces.

JONNIE

Looks like an avalanche.

EXT. MINE - DAY

A light shines down from the present edge and confirms it. The fissure, thirty feet back from the old edge, had simply opened and fallen into the gorge.

Jonnie races back to the hundred feet deep shaft edge. He looks around, flashing his light.

Jonnie approaches the hole more closely. Until he sees the slide marks of the cross timbers that had supported the hoist cage over the hole.

A light shines down from the present edge and confirms it. The fissure, thirty feet back from the old edge, had simply opened and fallen into the gorge.

Jonnie races back to the hundred feet deep shaft edge. He looks around, flashing his light.

JONNIE

Avalanche.

Jonnie approaches the hole more closely. Until he sees the slide marks of the cross timbers that had supported the hoist cage over the hole.

LATER

The place is broadly lit now with lamps the relief crew had put on poles. Carlo and the others pay out the line of a bucket rigged to crane cable...

...Jonnie and three others are lowered to the bottom of the hole.

They swing picks at the rocks, filling buckets that are instantly shot aloft to be replaced by empty ones.

LATER

The crew has been changed. Twice. But Jonnie is still down there.

They work in a blur of speed.

Another crew arrives. Jonnie stays.

Finally, he hears a distant whisper of sound. He holds up his hand for silence.

VOICE

(very faintly)

...air hole...

Jonnie grabs a LONG MINE DRILL. He socks the rock drill point into it, and signals the man on the drill motor.

They buck the drill into it with the pressure handles. And with a high scream the drill goes through.

JONNIE

Air hose!

LATER

The place is broadly lit now with lamps the relief crew had put on poles. Carlo and the others pay out the line of a bucket rigged to crane cable...

...Jonnie and three others are lowered to the bottom of the hole.

They swing picks at the rocks, filling buckets that are instantly shot aloft to be replaced by empty ones.

LATER

The crew has been changed. Twice. But Jonnie is still down there.

They work in a blur of speed.

Another crew arrives. Jonnie stays.

Finally, he hears a distant whisper of sound. He holds up his hand for silence.

VOICE
(very faintly)
...air hole...

Jonnie grabs a LONG MINE DRILL. He socks the rock drill point into it, and signals the man on the drill motor.

They buck the drill into it with the pressure handles. And with a high scream the drill goes through.

JONNIE
Air hose!

They feed the hose through the drill hole and turn the air compressor on. Air from the drift squeals back past the sides of the hose and into the rescue crew's faces.

LATER

They have managed to clear the top of the rockfall and drag men out.

Passing them to the top, silently in the hoist buckets.

A dust- and sweat-covered Jonnie is the last one up.

The salvages crew are bundled up, sitting in the snow, most of them drinking something hot.

CARLO
We lost the lode.

JONNIE
That's alright.

INT. AIRCRAFT - DAY

Jonnie yanks the cover from the stacks of gold bars, harvested at Fort Knox.

EXT. MEADOW -- NIGHT

Jonnie stands next to a cargo cage half-full of GOLD BARS as he waits for Terl to land his aircraft and climb out.

Terl is impressed, but also instantly suspicious.

TERL

Why is it in bars?

JONNIE

We figured someone of your stature wouldn't want something as coarse as raw ore.

Terl doesn't look convinced until he runs a hand-held COMPOSITION ANALYZER over the gold. It checks out as the real thing.

Hiding his glee, Terl turns back and growls at Jonnie--

TERL

I obviously need to adjust the schedule. Since you rat-brains had enough extra time to smelt the gold into bricks, I will now expect the rest of the gold in seven days.

Not bothering to wait for a response, Terl loads the glorious gold into his aircraft.

INT. MINING SITE CAVE -- NIGHT

Jonnie and the rest of the men have reassembled back at the cave.

CARLO

So, if we don't give him the rest of the gold in seven days, he'll kill us. But if we do give him the gold...

MASON

...He no longer needs us.

CARLO

Which means he'll kill us.

But Jonnie doesn't look the least bit concerned.

JONNIE

All this means is that our deadline's been moved up a bit. We now have seven days to take back our planet.

The group nods, trying to match Jonnie's confidence as Jonnie gets down to business, opening a MAP of Denver. He points to the ZOO in the middle of the city.

JONNIE

According to the monster's Field Manual, even a large-scale escape of human slaves from the zoo would only constitute a stage-one alarm.

MICKEY

To the monsters, it'd be like a bunch of horses escaping.

No one seems too happy about the comparison. But Jonnie nods...

JONNIE

Because the monsters only see us as harmless animals, they won't be wearing battle-gear when they come to round us up...

(a gleam in his eye)

Which means they won't have on their breath-masks.

Mickey excitedly jumps in again, beating Jonnie to the punch-lir

MICKEY

And any monsters outside a building without a breath-mask won't be able to breath once Carlo blows up the dome.

All eyes spin to Carlo, who gives a confident thumbs-up.

CARLO

Piece-of-cake!

MASON

...What about the monsters that are inside the buildings when the dome blows?

JONNIE

They'll survive. And we can expect them to come at us in a second assault. But that's where you guys come in...

His eyes sweep the group as he explains...

JONNIE (cont'd)

Everyone's going to train how to use the monster's weapons. Then we'll sneak you in to blend in with the rest of the people who escaped from the zoo...

(beat)

So when Carlo takes out the first wave of monsters, you guys'll jump out and grab their weapons, then set-up an ambush for the second wave of monsters who will be wearing breath-masks.

CARLO

Plus, I'll be flying overhead, raining explosives down on the bastards.

Excitement spreads through the group. The plan actually has a chance of working. But then Jonnie adds...

JONNIE

But everyone needs to understand. The moment we blow the dome, or fight back in anyway, this becomes a stage-two alarm.

MICKEY

And that's the one thing we can't let happen, right?

JONNIE

Right. A stage-two alarm means the monsters alert their Home Planet. And moments later, thousands of troops and gas drones will be teleported here.

(levels with them)

There's no way we could fight that. We'd all be dead within seconds.

The group's excitement instantly turns to confusion.

MASON

...Then what the hell's the point of killing all the monsters on this planet, if we're all going to get wiped out?

JONNIE

Because before this thing gets to a stage-two alarm...

(matter-of-fact)

We're going to destroy their Home Planet.

Everyone stares at him. He must be joking. But he isn't.

EXT. TEXAS -- FORT HOOD -- THE NEXT DAY

Jonnie and a handful of men emerge from a Strategic Weapons Vault carrying out crates of conventional explosives, as well as...

A Cruise-Missile NUCLEAR WARHEAD.

INT. FORT HOOD -- NUCLEAR TRAINING FACILITY -- A LITTLE LATER

Mickey restlessly pokes around, exploring the classroom as Jonnie and Carlo huddle over a tech-manual.

The nuclear warhead sits on a table in front of them.

JONNIE

According to this, we have to make-sure the firing-mechanism is--

MICKEY'S VOICE (O.S.)
--Hey, look at these guys! Something
must be wrong with their heads.

In the back of the room, Mickey points to an old PHOTO of
a BATTALION OF CADETS, all with their hands to their foreheads.

JONNIE
Nothing's wrong. They're saluting. It's
a sign of respect.

He salutes, showing Mickey, then gets back to the business at
hand, continuing to read from the manual--

JONNIE (cont'd)
...Make-sure the firing-mechanism is
properly in place and operational.

Jonnie and Carlo both take deep breaths, then pick up tools and
gingerly go to work on the warhead--

INT. DENVER -- MORGUE -- CONTINUOUS

Terl rips the lid off of a coffin and yanks out the dead Psycho
dumping the corpse to the ground and kicking it out of his way.

He repeats the process with another coffin, unceremoniously
flinging the corpse to the ground, then fires up a LASER DRILL
and blasts away, carving FALSE BOTTOMS into the caskets.

INT. FORT HOOD -- NUCLEAR TRAINING FACILITY -- THAT DAY

With the nuclear warhead now partially dismantled, Jonnie and
Carlo carefully remove a lead plate with surgical precision.

JONNIE
(re: the manual)
...No matter what, we can't touch the
auto-sensor.

CARLO
What's the auto-sensor look like?

JONNIE
The illustrations are in Appendix-A
(before Carlo can ask)
We couldn't find Appendix-A.

CARLO
And if we touch this auto-sensor?

JONNIE
The bomb will detonate.

CARLO

Great.

INT. DENVER -- MORGUE -- CONTINUOUS

Still whistling his war song, Terl begins filling the false bottoms in the coffins with his beloved gold.

INT. MINING SITE -- CAVE -- THAT NIGHT

Everyone congregates around the map of Denver one last time as Jonnie finalizes the battle plan...

JONNIE

Once the prisoners escape from the zoo, Chrissy will lead them here to the Civic Center Park... That's where you guys will be waiting to blend in with them... And when the guards are sent to round all of you up, it should leave minimal resistance here at the teleportation platform--

He points to a section of the city away from the park.

JONNIE (cont'd)

Which is when we'll move in and secure the platform, and teleport the nuclear weapon up to their planet.

Mason points to the nuclear warhead.

MASON

...And you're sure that thing will be enough to take-out their entire planet?

JONNIE

Radiation explodes their breath gas. Which is exactly the same as their planet's atmosphere...

Mickey slowly raises his head. A darkness in his voice.

MICKEY

With all respect, sir, I'd like to be the one who goes up and detonates the weapon.

JONNIE

It's brave of you to offer. But it's my plan, so I go--

MICKEY

--You don't understand. I want to go.
(determined)
So, I can see my brother again.

Jonnie stares at Mickey, his heart breaking. But this time, Jonnie has no choice. He has to tell him.

JONNIE

There's no point in you going. No human can breath on their planet. Plus, the gravity is too strong. I'm sorry.
(soft)
But your brother was dead within moments of being there.

Mickey returns Jonnie's look without blinking.

MICKEY

I know. That's why I want to go.
(quietly)
So, I can be with him again.

A long beat. Then Jonnie finally nods, giving Mickey his wish.

EXT. DENVER -- EMPLOYEE RECREATION HALL -- THAT NIGHT

Ker comes strolling out of the bar, when a figure suddenly steps out of the shadows in front of him. It's JONNIE--

JONNIE

There's no way Terl's going to share any of the gold with you.

KER

What the hell are you talking about?
And what are you even doing here, you're supposed to be mining--

JONNIE

--Think about it. Terl went through all that effort to trick you, so he could record you into laying out the plan. It was more than just making you the patsy.
(beat)

Terl got leverage on you so he wouldn't have to share the gold.

KER

How the blast do you know about the recording?!

JONNIE

It sure is interesting some of the discs one can find in Terl's personal vault.

Ker's eyes light-up at his sudden good fortune. He pulls his blast-gun and orders--

KER

Give the disc to me!

JONNIE

I'm afraid I don't have it with me.

CU

EXT. DENVER ZOO -- CRISSY'S CAGE -- A LITTLE LATER

As Jonnie leads Ker to the cage, Chrissy holds up the DISC.

KER

Tell her to give it to me--

JONNIE

--I'm afraid we can't just give it to you. But you can trade for it.

Ker, chuckling at Jonnie's stupidity, re-pulls his Blast-Gun.

KER

I don't think so, crap-brain! Because if you don't give me the disc, I'll--

At Jonnie's signal--

INT. CRISSY'S CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

CRISSY immediately hands the disc to someone in her cage, who in turns hands it off to another person, this continues until...

The disc reaches someone at the edge of the cage, who pitches it through the bars into--

INT. NEXT CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Ker tries to point his gun at the humans in warning, but the process is repeated too fast for him to follow as...

EXT. DENVER ZOO -- CONTINUOUS

A human chain moves the disc from hand to hand, cage to cage, until before Ker knows it, the disc disappears from view around a corner.

EXT. CRISSY'S CAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Ker turns back to Jonnie with a friendly smile.

KER

...What kind of trade?

INT. CHRISSEY'S CAGE -- A LITTLE LATER

Ker uses a special tool to remove the explosive collar from Chrissy's neck, then trades the collar for the disc.

JONNIE

How about we make another trade.
(motions to the
zoo cage KEY)

As a male member of your species, you can understand why I would want to come and 'visit' with her--

KER

--Forget it, crap-head! You just keep your mind on getting the rest of the gold!

JONNIE

Too bad...

(holds up a SECOND DISC)

Because the gold is almost ready and I thought you might want some incriminating evidence on your friend, Terl.

Ker doesn't have to think about it. He immediately trades the zoo key for the second disc. As soon as Ker is gone...

Chrissy gives Jonnie a confused look.

CHRISSEY

Won't the monster in charge be able to see I'm no longer wearing the collar.

JONNIE

(hands her the key)

After tonight, it won't matter much either way.

There's an unspoken tension between them. The first time they've alone since he left their village. Chrissy tries to cover it with

CHRISSEY

I know you don't believe in fate, but I've always known you were destined to do something great...

JONNIE

...We're going to do something great.
All of us, together.

She nods, but there's still something not being said. The longest of beats. And finally, Jonnie struggles to find the right words.

JONNIE (cont'd)

And we need to do this not only for our own freedom, but for the possibility of a life for the children.

Chrissy looks at him and starts to ask something, but doesn't. He returns her look, clarifying...

JONNIE (cont'd)

A life for our children.

(quickly adds)

Of course, only if you'd be willing to take an 'arrogant greener' as your husband.

CHRISSY

I don't know...

(warm smile)

I think I could live with that.

They embrace. Each of them knowing it might be the last time.

INT. SECURITY HEADQUARTERS -- THAT NIGHT

Terl comes strolling into the office, but suddenly stops in his tracks. EVERY MONITOR in the room is playing a recording of--

TERL (ON THE MONITORS)

...We'd have to use explosives. Home Office would detect them and send down a survey team, which means we wouldn't be able to keep the gold for ourselves.

Ker smugly pauses the disc, FREEZING the guilty evidence.

KER

I've been thinking. Eighty-twenty is a pretty fair distribution of the gold...

(loving every moment of this)

But I should get the eighty per cent.

Terl stares at him. And without hesitation:

TERL

Congratulations! I knew there was a true Psychlo in you somewhere!

Ker remains on guard. He's not about to fall for any traps. But Terl seems genuinely happy, if not downright ecstatic.

TERL (cont'd)

You finally figured out how to get proper leverage on someone.

(MORE)

TERL (cont'd)

Which means I haven't wasted my time
trying to train you!

Ker can't believe it. This is going much better than he thought.

KER

You're not upset?

TERL

Don't be crazy! You don't know how long
I've been waiting for this day. And I
know just the perfect way to celebrate--

He pulls his Blast-Gun and slides it into kill position--

KER

What are you doing?! You can't kill me!
(explains)

I made a copy of your disc and gave it
to someone for safe keeping. And if
anything happens to me, they'll turn it
into the authorities.

A frozen beat. Then Terl has to lower the gun with a sigh.

KER (cont'd)

It's your own fault, sir.
(good-natured)

You were just too good of a teacher.

TERL

And how about giving the old teacher a
clue as to who this person might be?

KER

You insult yourself, sir. You taught me
better than to fall for that one.

TERL

Well, then how the hell am I supposed to
know who it is. I mean, it could be
anyone on this damn planet... It could
be one of the mechanics. It could be a
concubine. It could be someone in the
communications office. Hell, it could
even be...

Terl opens his desk drawer and calmly pulls out--

THE BARTENDER'S SEVERED HEAD

TERL (cont'd)

Our friendly bartender!

Ker's face immediately goes death-white. Terl tosses the head to K

TERL (cont'd)

You know, you really should chose your friends a bit more carefully...

Ker looks from the head to the desk drawer to Terl, realizing Terl had this planned all along. His body slumps in defeat.

Terl raises his blast gun.

KER

Don't shoot! You win! I'll go back to being the patsy!

He fumbles a disc out of his pocket and hands it to Terl.

KER (cont'd)

See? That's the disc of me laying out the plan. You can have it back. Which means I'm back to being the patsy. And you can't kill the patsy, right?!

TERL

Here's your final exam. Try real hard to pass it... When committing a crime, how many patsies does one need?

As Ker chews on this, Terl reminds him--

TERL (cont'd)

And while you're thinking, remember all the hard work we put into getting leverage on the Planetship. A process, I might add, that you were quite resourceful in helping with.

The life drains from Ker as...

KER

The Planetship ordered us to train the man-animals to mine the gold. So, if anyone found out, he'd be responsible.
(practically crying)
And you only need one patsy.

TERL

Very impressive. You pass the exam with highest marks.

KABLAM! Terl shoots a fist-sized hole through Ker's face.

TERL (cont'd)

But I'm afraid you failed the course.

Ker is dead long before he hits the ground.

EXT. DENVER ZOO -- CONTINUOUS

A pair of sentries make their usual nightly rounds, when they hear a strange noise. Turning, they catch a glimpse of--

A LONE HUMAN SLAVE

Racing away up a path and disappearing around a corner.

ZOO GUARD

How the hell did that one get out...

The other guard shrugs, unconcerned. After all, man-animals aren't that fast. So they calmly walk-jog after the escapee--

EXT. AROUND THE BEND -- A LITTLE LATER

With the escapee now in tow, the guards head back to the zoo. One of them shakes his head in amusement--

ZOO GUARD

Not only are these man-animals slow, but they've got to be the stupidest things.
(jeering laugh)

It didn't even have the sense to hide. It just stood there, letting us--

The words freeze in his throat as they turn a bend and...

EXT. DENVER ZOO -- CONTINUOUS

Every single cage is empty. Not a human in sight. The only sound the eerie creaking of open cage doors swaying gently in the night.

EXT. DENVER -- A LITTLE LATER

KLAXON HORNS crank-up, wailing into the darkness.

INT. MORGUE -- CONTINUOUS

TERL finishes loading the coffins full of his precious gold onto a cart as he barks into his radio--

TERL (INTO RADIO)

...Then send all available guards to round them up! I'm busy, you don't have to bother me with every little detail

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- MOMENTS LATER

The TELEPORTATION SUPERVISOR hangs up from a radio call--

TELEPORTATION SUPERVISOR
Those security guys at the zoo have got
to be the biggest crap-heads! What did
they do, leave all the man-animal cages
wide open?!

(point to several
of the guards)
All non-essential personnel are to go
over and help with the round-up.

The selected guards grumble about having to go, and...

EXT. DENVER -- STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

Join the steady flow of other Psychlos responding to the call.
But no one's in too big of a rush. It's just a man-animal escape.

EXT. CIVIC CENTER PARK -- A LITTLE LATER

Chrissy and the escaped humans watch as the Psychlos move in on
them with ROPES, ELECTRIC PROD-STICKS, and NETS.

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

The supervisor instructs one of the two remaining guards.

TELEPORTATION SUPERVISOR
Go haul those two new guys out of the
crapper and send them too--

The guards share a knowing chuckle.

FIRST GUARD
Mozzontom's revenge.

SECOND GUARD
Until you get used to the water, blasted
local parasites will get you every time--

Still chuckling, he shuffles off to a SQUAT BUILDING.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM -- CONTINUOUS

Keeping a careful eye out the window, Mickey keys a RADIO.

MICKEY (INTO RADIO)
There's three monsters remaining...
Two are staying at the platform. One is
heading into a building to the east--
(checks his map)
Which is the latrine.

EXT. MINING SITE -- CONTINUOUS

Across from the teleportation platform, Jonnie whispers to Mason.

JONNIE

I'll take the two at the platform. You
take the one in the latrine--

Mason nods and they silently divide up, slipping through the
night like shadows.

INT. SQUAT BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

The guard heads inside the latrine, hollering to the occupied stall

TELEPORTATION GUARD

Time to earn your pay--

One of the stall doors opens and a Psychlo stumbles out, pulling
up his pants. He looks more than a little green.

NEW PSYCHLO

I knew coming to one of these remote
rim-star planets was a mistake.

A second Psychlo emerges from another stall, not looking any
better. They trail after the guard, who heads back for the door.

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

The supervisor shakes his head, complaining to the remaining guard.

TELEPORTATION SUPERVISOR

...If any of the man-animals get broken
in the round-up, you just know the brass
will use it as an excuse to justify
cutting our pay again--

A KILL CLUB flies through the air, smashing into his head.

The fierce impact jars the Psychlo forward, but doesn't kill him.
He spins around to see what the hell just hit him as a--

PICK-AX

Slams blade-first between his eyes. Instant death. And before
the first guard can react, Jonnie pulls a--

HUNTING KNIFE

And slits his throat.

EXT. TOP OF THE DOME -- CONTINUOUS

Carlo lands the aircraft on the apex of the dome and jumps out with an armful of EXPLOSIVES.

EXT. LATRINE -- CONTINUOUS

The second guard comes strolling out of the latrine as a--

PICK AX-BLADE

Slams deep into his chest. Mason pulls his knife to finish the monster off, but freezes at the unexpected sight of--

TWO OTHER PSYCHLOS

Heading out of the building. One of the Psychlos immediately pulls his blast-gun and FIRES at--

Mason, who tries to leap out of the way. But the shot blows off half of his leg. Sending him crumpled helpless to the ground as...

The Psychlo aims his gun dead center between Mason's eyes and--

JONNIE'S KNIFE

Screams through the air, imbedding deep in the Psychlo's throat.

An enormous paw blurs in the air, coming at him. Talons rake the side of his face.

Jonnie has the gun in position, and fires at a huge chest. He punches blast after blast into it, driving him back.

INT. LATRINE -- CONTINUOUS

The first guard, pick-ax still buried in his chest, clings to life as he manages pulls his radio...

PSYCHLO (INTO RADIO)

We're under attack. From man-animals with weapons. They've already killed--

Jonnie flashes inside, knocking away the radio, then slits the Psychlo's throat.

INT. COMMUNICATION HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

An ALARM suddenly goes off on a long console. A COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER checks it, then spins to his SUPERVISOR--

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Sir, I have unconfirmed reports of a
'man-animal' revolt. And motion sensors
have just been set-off on top the dome--

The supervisor hurries over.

EXT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM -- MOMENTS LATER

From his look-out position, Mickey spots a group of armed
Psychlos sprinting toward the teleportation platform.

MICKEY (INTO RADIO)

Five Monsters Approaching! Heavily
Armed! From The South--

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie hurries to apply a make-shift field tourniquet to Mason's
leg, then drags him behind the relative safety of--

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie pulls his blast-gun, waiting for the Psychlos to come into
range. As they do, he OPENS UP FIRE--

EXT. MAIN ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

One of the Psychlos goes down. And another. The remaining three
scramble for cover, returning fire--

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER

BLASTER-FIRE screams all around Jonnie, pinning him down as
Carlo's voice suddenly comes over the radio--

CARLO'S VOICE (FROM RADIO)

The explosives are set! How long 'till
I can blow the dome--

JONNIE (INTO RADIO)

--Hold on! I'm afraid we've got a
little situation here.

EXT. TOP OF THE DOME -- CONTINUOUS

Carlo finishes planting five sets of explosives in a DIAMOND-
SHAPE around the dome's apex, when he whirls as--

A PSYCHLO CRAFTLLands on the dome behind him.

CARLO (INTO RADIO)
Okay, But Don't Make It Too Long! I've
Got Company Up Here--

EXT. TELEPORTATION FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

The three Psychlo Guards run from cover to cover, working their way to set-up a cross-fire on Jonnie. From one of their radios--

COMMUNICATION OFFICER (FROM RADIO)
Please report! What is the security
status of the teleportation platform--

One of the Psychlo's pulls his radio to respond--

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie tries to draw a bead on him, but the shot is obstructed. So Jonnie grabs a ROCK and throws it behind--

EXT. TELEPORTATION FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

The Psychlo, who keys his radio--

PSYCHLO
This is Response Team Leader at the
teleportation field--

He instinctively turns toward the sudden NOISE of the rock landing behind him, inadvertently stepping out of his cover--

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

Which is all Jonnie needs. KABLAM! He drops the Psychlo. The other two monsters open up fire on--

Jonnie, who returns their fire, but his gun suddenly runs dry with a revealing CLICK...CLICK...CLICK...

EXT. TELEPORTATION FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

Hearing this, the two Psychlos immediately charge the bunker.

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie desperately searches for another weapon. But all he has is his knife. Which won't do much good against...

The two Psychlos storming into the bunker, turning their blast-guns on him at point-blank-range--

JONNIE

Are you sure you want to kill me without first checking with your superiors?

The Psychlos FREEZE. Not so much at what Jonnie said. But because--

A PSYCHLO

It speaks Psychlo!

Jonnie nods, speaking a little slower than usual.

JONNIE

That's right... Which should make it obvious that I've been trained as part of a secret high-level operation...

The two Psychlos exchange a look, then pull their radios.

JONNIE (cont'd)

Although, before you radio your superiors, maybe there is one other thing you should be more concerned about.

A PSYCHLO

And what the hell is that--

KABLAM!! One Psychlo goes down in a bloody heap as--

Jonnie has stalled them long enough for MICKEY to sneak down into position. The remaining Psychlo turns his gun on the young twin--

But Jonnie jumps the Psychlo from behind, slashing its throat with his hunting knife.

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- MOMENTS LATER

Jonnie and Mickey load the NUCLEAR WARHEAD onto the platform, then--

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie races over and enters the activation sequence into the console. The high-pitched HUM fills the air as the generator-dynamos start winding up. Growing louder as...

AUTOMATED VOICE (FROM CONSOLE)

Teleportation Sequence Initiated.

(a buzzing sound)

Teleportation in twenty... In nineteen...

EXT. TOP OF THE DOME -- CONTINUOUS

A heavily armed PSYCHLO SECURITY RESPONSE TEAM has deployed from the aircraft and is firing at--

Carlo, who is forced to dive back into his own--

INT. AIRCRAFT -- COCKPIT -- CONTINUOUS

And take off. One hand gripping a DETONATOR, Carlo watches as the Psychlos move to investigate the explosives set around the dome's apex below.

CARLO (INTO RADIO)
If I Don't Blow The Dome Now, I'm Not
Going To Be Able To--

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

The drumming of the generators reverberates through the air as the automated voice finishes the countdown to teleportation...

AUTOMATED VOICE (FROM CONSOLE)
In five... In four... In three...

Jonnie turns, double-checking that Mickey, the nuclear detonator in hand, is on the platform along with the warhead.

JONNIE (INTO RADIO)
Go Ahead And Blow The Dome!

CARLO'S VOICE (FROM RADIO)
Thought You'd Never Ask--

AUTOMATED VOICE (FROM CONSOLE)
In two... In one...
(a buzzing sound)
Teleportation Sequence Canceled.

And before Jonnie can react--

TERL presses a Blast-Gun against the side of his head.

TERL
Hope I'm not interrupting anything.

An eerie stillness as the generator-dynamos slowly fall silent.

EXT. TOP OF THE DOME -- CONTINUOUS

The Psychlos on the dome have already disarmed one set of the explosives surrounding the apex, and are removing another as--

INT. AIRCRAFT -- COCKPIT -- CONTINUOUS

Carlo hits the detonator--

EXT. TOP OF THE DOME -- CONTINUOUS

KABBOOM!!! The Psychlos are blown to bits. But with only three of the five explosive packages in place, the dome SPIDER-WEBS...

But doesn't collapse.

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- MOMENTS LATER

Keeping his gun trained on Jonnie and Mickey, Terl keys his radio.

TERL (INTO RADIO)

This is Security Chief, Terl. I've personally taken care of the situation at the teleportation field. There is no need to send additional guards

COMMUNICATION OFFICER'S VOICE (FROM RADIO)

Yes, sir... And should we continue rounding-up the man-animals in the park?

Terl locks eyes with Jonnie as he calmly responds--

TERL (INTO RADIO)

Negative. Our boys have been working hard and deserve a little fun. Tell them to set their weapons to kill position and happy-hunting.

(grins)

Exterminate all the man-animals at will.

Jonnie returns the stare in helpless anguish'as--

EXT. CIVIC CENTER PARK -- MOMENTS LATER

A collective roar of enthusiasm goes up from the Psychlos as the orders are relayed. They toss down their nets and ropes and draw their blasters, setting them into KILL-POSITION, then--

Fire on the unarmed humans. Chrissy urgently pulls her radio.

CHRISSY (INTO RADIO)

They're Opening Up Fire On Us! What's Going On With The Dome--

CARLO'S VOICE (FROM RADIO)

--Hold On, I'm taking It Out!

INT. AIRCRAFT -- CONTINUOUS

Carlo pilots the aircraft, sending it screaming full-speed right for the spider-web of cracked glass surrounding the dome's apex--

EXT. TOP OF THE DOME

The aircraft BLASTS straight into the dome. The jarring impact causing the high-tech glass to BUCKLE...

But the dome's structural integrity remains intact.

EXT. CIVIC CENTER PARK -- CONTINUOUS

The blood bath continues as the Psychlos blast down the unarmed humans like targets in some amusement park game.

Chrissy desperately grabs a BRANCH from the ground and throws it like a kill-club--

The impact knocks the Blaster-Gun out of the paw of a Psychlo, who is surprised a man-animal was able to do that...

Let alone a female man-animal. Chrissy and the Psychlo both dive for the weapon.

KABLAM!

Chrissy's the one who comes up with it, blasting a hole through the monsters chest, then spins, firing on another Psychlo.

One of Jonnie's trained men springs forward out of the crowd, grabbin the weapon from the fallen Psychlos, then joins Chrissy in firing on--

The other Psychlos, who realizing they're under attack, aggressively return fire, catching the rebel fighter in a cross-fire, tearing him to shreds. The Psychlos then turn their weapons on Chrissy, as--

INT. AIRCRAFT -- CONTINUOUS

Carlo tries to reverse the aircraft, but the engine impotently grinds, mortally damaged in the collision.

The TORTURED SCREAMS of people dying below can be heard over the radio. And Carlo knows he has no choice...

He reaches behind him to an impressive collection of EXPLOSIVE DEVICES and grabs a GRENADE, pulling the pin.

CARLO (INTO RADIO)

The dome will be blown in five...four...

He tosses the grenade back with the other explosives and stares ahead with grim determination, continuing the countdown to his own death.

CARLO (INTO RADIO)

Three... Two... One--

The grenade DETONATES. Setting-off the rest of the explosives--

EXT. TOP OF THE DOME -- CONTINUOUS

The aircraft EXPLODING in a MASSIVE FIREBALL. The powerful blast is finally enough to completely shatter the weakened dome--

EXT. CIVIC CENTER PARK -- CONTINUOUS

Chrissy is under intense fire from all directions. She's forced back against a side of the building, trapped as the Psychlos move in for the kill, firing relentlessly at her, when from above...

A sky-full of snowflake-sized pieces of glass rain down, shimmering like ethereal spirits dancing in the night air.

But as beautiful as it is, the result is deadly to the Psychlos. Without breath-masks, they drop to the ground, convulsing--

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

In contrast to TERL, who calmly pulls a breath-mask from his pocket. As he secures the mask, he explains to Jonnie with a smirk--

TERL

If I were you, and thank-Psychlo I'm not, blowing up the dome would have been my move as well...

EXT. CIVIC CENTER PARK -- CONTINUOUS

The rest of Jonnie's men grab the weapons from the now dead monsters and join Chrissy in taking position to ambush the second wave--

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

Terl keeps his gun trained on Jonnie and Mickey, while calmly keying his radio--

TERL (INTO RADIO)

Uplink a red-alert to Home Planet.

(matter-of-fact)

It's time we eradicate these pitiful man-animals once and for all.

COMMUNICATION OFFICER'S VOICE (FROM RADIO)

With pleasure, sir--

Terl plucks the NUCLEAR WARHEAD off the teleporter and nonchalantly tosses it into the field behind him...

Then loads the coffins full of his precious gold onto the platform.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS HEADQUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

The Communications Supervisor finishes punching an authorization code into the console and slams a KEY CARD into a slot and turns it--

EXT. PLANET PSYCHLO -- CONTINUOUS

Under a perpetual purple sky, the Home Planet's automated response system immediately goes to work. Towering ROBOTIC ARMS load--

MASSIVE GAS DRONES

Onto a teleportation platform as--

THOUSANDS OF SHOCK TROOPS

All in full-on battle gear, swarm onto the platform.

EXT. EARTH -- TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

Terl finishes loading his gold onto the platform, then keeping the gun on Jonnie...

TERL

Even though you're just a rat-brain, I must admit you gave me quite a sporting challenge. And you'll make a hell of an interesting conversation piece once you're stuffed and hanging on the wall at the Academy Alumni Club.

With the weapon trained on Jonnie, Terl backs up to the control bunker. Mickey can't keep the panic from his voice.

MICKEY

What are we going to do?! He sent the red-alert--

JONNIE

--We're going to let him start-up the teleportation sequence...

(fierce resolve)

Then no matter what happens to me, just make sure you and the nuclear weapon are on the platform.

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

The high-pitched HUM of the generators start to fill the air as--

Terl punches in the last of the commands for teleportation.

AUTOMATED VOICE (FROM CONSOLE)
Teleportation Sequence Initiated.
(a buzzing sound)
Teleportation in twenty...

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie charges off the platform. Terl spins and FIRES at him--

But Jonnie manages to dive clear of the shot, then pivots with blurring speed and throws his--

HUNTING KNIFE

Through the air, sending it straight at--

TERL

Who tries to twist out of the way, but the knife slams deep into his shoulder. Terl pulls it out as--

JONNIE

Launches himself like a possessed demon straight into him.

Fueled by primal rage, Jonnie is able to knock the much-bigger Psychlo to the ground, jarring the gun from Terl's grip.

But Terl is bigger and stronger. He pins Jonnie down and savagely tears into him with his razor-like claws--

Jonnie lunges up and grabs Terl's wounded shoulder with both hands. Squeezing and twisting as hard as he can, Jonnie wrenches Terl off of him. But the victory is short lived as...

Terl rolls over and is now able to get back onto his feet.

But Jonnie hangs on and stays focused on the monster's weak spot. Digging one hand into Terl's wounded shoulder, while PUMMELING at it in a mad blur with the other, inflicting what damage he can--

Hissing in pain, Terl swats Jonnie back to the ground then grabs his blast-gun and stands, towering over--

Jonnie, who can see behind Terl, where...

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

Mickey struggles with all his might, just managing to boost the nuclear warhead back onto the platform.

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

AUTOMATED VOICE (FROM CONSOLE)
Teleportation in twelve... In eleven...

EXT. TELEPORTATION FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

Jonnie locks eyes with Terl, trying to keep him from noticing Mickey scrambling onto the platform with the nuclear weapon.

JONNIE

Look, I know you're going to kill me.
But I have one last request.

Terl aims the gun straight down between Jonnie's eyes.

TERL

I'm afraid you're in no position to be
making requests--

JONNIE

--I know. But I'm begging you.

(pleads)

With the gas drones coming, is there any
way to spare one human life... Because
you were right about the young lady
you put the collar on. I do know her.

(quietly)

She was to be my wife.

Terl can't believe Jonnie's stupidity. Chuckles with glee.

TERL

Thanks for reminding me, rat-brain.

(pulls the REMOTE
to Chrissy's collar)

Before you die, you should have the
pleasure of knowing what happens to your
little "wife" to be.

Terl raises the remote with one paw, the other pointing the
blast-gun down at Jonnie, who stares him straight in the eye.

JONNIE

Trust me. You don't want to do that--

TERL

Trust me. I want nothing more--

Terl plunges the remote's button. Obviously not realizing that--

When Jonnie grabbed his shoulder, he had clasped the explosive
collar from Chrissy under one of the gold epaulettes and--

KABOOM

Terl blows off his own arm. Blood gushing from his shoulder where it used to be connected to an arm.

Terl is too stunned to react as--

Jonnie dives to the ground, grabbing the blaster-gun still connected to what's left of Terl's arm.

EXT. CONTROL BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

The humming of the generators grows louder.

AUTOMATED VOICE (FROM CONSOLE)

In five... In four... In three...

EXT. TELEPORTATION FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

Keeping the blast-gun on Terl, Jonnie turns to check on--

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

Mickey pulls out the nuclear detonator. A sense of deep pride at the mission he's about to perform. As the countdown finishes--

Mickey turns and gives his friend Jonnie a SALUTE.

EXT. TELEPORTATION FIELD -- CONTINUOUS.

Jonnie salutes Mickey back with eyes full of respect. The field suddenly rocked by a DEAFENING ROAR and BLINDING LIGHT, and--

Mickey, the warhead, and coffins disappear from the platform.

EXT. PLANET PSYCHLO -- TELEPORTATION CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

With the GAS DRONES and shock troops all loaded for earth, the countdown for teleportation is at...

AUTOMATED VOICE (FROM CONSOLE)

Teleportation in five... In four...

At the far end of a seemingly endless row of platforms--

EXT. PLANET PSYCHLO TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

MICKEY appears, along with Terl's coffins and the nuclear weapon.

The Psychlo workers in the vicinity laugh at Mickey's fate. But Mickey stares at them without blinking--

MICKEY

I know I'm going to die...

The Psychlos obviously don't speak English and have no idea what he's saying. But they crowd around in morbid curiosity as...

The planet's overwhelming gravity crushes Mickey to the ground. The young twin's eyes bulging, he announces to the crowd--

MICKEY (cont'd)

But so are you--

This cracks up the others. With his final moment of life, Mickey pushes the detonator button...

EXT. TELEPORTATION PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

As the countdown to earth's destruction finishes--

AUTOMATED VOICE (FROM CONSOLE)

In two... In one--

KKKAAABBBBBLLLLLLAAAAAAMMMMMM!!!!!!!!!!!!

The GAS DRONES and SHOCK TROOPS vaporized into oblivion--

Along with everything else in the path of the mushroom cloud slamming through the city like a tidal wave of pure destruction.

Blasting apart countless Psychlos and their buildings. And after the initial blast subsides, the radiation reacts with the air--

Causing the AIR TO EXPLODE in an instantaneous chain-reaction spreading out faster than the eye can see, as...

The atmosphere is literally burnt away from the planet.

EXT. SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

A blinding white flame expanding out until it surrounds the mammoth planet. Burning with searing intensity until--

THE ENTIRE PLANET EXPLODES INTO NOTHINGNESS!!!

SLOW FADE :

EXT. FORT KNOX -- DAY

An aircraft lands at the fort, and Jonnie and Chrissy emerge. Mason, sporting a finely-crafted wooden leg, steps up to greet them.

MASON

We're all but done here. The painters just finished yesterday.

Jonnie nods as they head into the fort.

JONNIE

Good. Because now that we've got everyone out of the contaminated areas, we're going to need your help organizing a summit with the clan leaders.

INT. FORT -- LOWER LEVEL -- MOMENTS LATER

Mason leads Jonnie and Chrissy down a long armored hallway and through a thick vault door, to where--

INT. INNER VAULT -- CONTINUOUS

Terl, a stump where his arm used to be, downs a shot of kerbango in his new 'living quarters', which have been painted purple for him. He stares at Jonnie through the steel bars.

TERL

What kind of barbaric species are you rat-brains? Either put me to work as a slave or have the decency to vaporize me.

(with revulsion)

But to imprison me--

JONNIE

--Oh, we'll put you to work, don't worry.

(explains)

You told me yourself, Earth isn't the only planet that you Psychlos colonized.

CHRISSY

...And those other Psychlos out there probably aren't too pleased about what happened to their Home Planet.

Terl stares at her in amazement, then eyes Jonnie.

TERL

She speaks Psychlo.

CHRISSY

We all do...

JONNIE

We figure it might come in handy if those other Psychlos ever decide to come by for a little 'visit.

TERL

One could only hope.

JONNIE

Which make you useful to us. After all,
you did graduate top of your class.

CHRISSEY

So you must have some understanding of
Psychlo battle tactics and strategy.

TERL

(snide laugh)

And why the hell would I ever help you?!

JONNIE

I'm just guessing that you wouldn't want
the other Psychlos to know that it was
your greed and corruption that allowed
us to destroy their home planet.

Terl stops laughing. His eyes narrowing into slits as Jonnie
holds up a DISC.

JONNIE (cont'd)

I may be a rat-brain, but I was smart
enough to figure out how to make a copy
of this before I gave it to Ker.

On Terl's look of complete and utter defeat, we...

FADE TO

THE END