

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

COMMANDO II

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FADE IN:

A BRIEF PROLOGUE:

EXT - BEACH - DAY.

At first we don't know we're on a beach, because all we see is swirling smoke and ROARING FLAMES -- destruction all around us.

A MAN emerges from the smoke like a Wagnerian myth made flesh; a tall, muscled warrior in modern combat gear, covered with greasepaint and blood. He has the heart and soul of a lion. His name is JOHN MATRIX, and he carries his daughter JENNY.

GENERAL FRANKLIN KIRBY awaits him, flanked by armed troops.

KIRBY
Leave anything for us?

MATRIX
Just bodies.

KIRBY
I'd like you to start up your old unit again, John. All it would take is your coming back.

MATRIX
This was the last time.

Matrix and his daughter walk past, heading for a waiting seaplane bobbing in the surf. Kirby calls after him:

KIRBY
Until the next time.

TIGHT ON MATRIX

as he turns back. Eyes smoldering.

MATRIX
No chance.

And as he utters these words we

SMASH CUT TO:

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE (Best read while listening to "The Brazilian" by Genesis, so if you have the Invisible Touch album, toss it on and crank up the volume.)

CREDITS ROLL AS:

A HELICOPTER POV (DAY)

tilts the world and the audience dizzily on its ear, racing breathlessly low over whitecapped waves below.

(CONTINUED)

The waves give way to breakers crashing against ragged rocks. We hurtle up a deserted coastline so fast and low we get whiplash just thinking about it.

TWO HELICOPTERS

rage up the coast at full throttle, flying in loose formation, an angry pair of matte black Huey gunships with no markings whatsoever. They might as well be surfing; their landing skids fairly dance across the waves.

DIZZY TIGHT SHOTS provide an exhilarating quick-cut montage of visual details:

ROTORS thrumming a DEEP BASSO ROAR beneath sound baffles.

PILOTS faceless and grim behind high-tech helmets, heads gleaming like exotic insects, black polarized lenses reflecting the racing waves below.

ASSAULT TROOPS inside the helicopters. Helmeted and faceless. Black body armor. Automatic assault rifles. A VOICE shouts over the noise of ROTORS AND RUSHING WIND:

VOICE

Lock and load!

AMMUNITION CLIPS slap home.

WEAPONS are cocked, safeties thrown off.

THE WAVES rush by, an incredible blur of reflected sunlight.

CUT TO:

TITLES AND MUSIC CONTINUE AS:

EXT - FEDERAL MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON - DAY

A armored bus RUMBLES through a set of heavy security gates.

MOVING POV FROM INSIDE BUS

We are swallowed within the confines of the impossibly-high stone walls. Guard towers loom against the sky.

RIFLE-TOTING GUARDS

are lined atop the wall, peering down, their presence telling us that a V.I.P. (Very Important Prisoner) is arriving.

IN THE PRISON YARD

Even the convicts are gathering for a look, drawn from all over the prison to see the new arrival.

(CONTINUED)

THE BUS

shudders to a stop. The door slams open with a HYDRAULIC WHOOSH. TWO GUARDS step down, taking up positions on either side of the door.

CAMERA ROCKETS UP TO THE DOOR to reveal NESTOR PEDROSA. His eyes are flinty and hard, his features dark and Latin, his manner aristocratic. He descends from the bus, hands shackled, squinting at the daylight.

Pedrosa is escorted through another security gate and into the prison yard proper. All eyes are on him, and he knows it. He moves with slow ease, making it clear these proceedings are beneath his dignity.

The convicts part before Pedrosa, revealing:

THE WARDEN

stands waiting to greet the new arrival. Pedrosa is brought before him. The Warden favors him with a gloating smile.

WARDEN

Welcome to Hell, you sorry sack of
shit.

Pedrosa's eyes flash in momentary anger...but then, incredibly, he smiles. Faintly at first, then wider, his smile growing. His teeth are perfect, pearly white, rimmed in gold.

Pedrosa starts to laugh. The Warden's smugness fades. This is the last reaction he expected. Pedrosa keeps laughing, louder and louder.

The Warden looks around nervously, because now Pedrosa's laughter no longer sounds like laughter, it sounds like the throaty WHUMP WHUMP WHUMP of helicopter rotors, which it is because --

THE TWO UNMARKED BLACK HUEYS

ROAR into view like sudden thunder, swooping mere feet over the prison walls. Several guards are swept SCREAMING off the wall by the rotor wash, arms and legs windmilling as they plummet into the yard.

The helicopters bank into a power turn as the DOOR GUNNERS open up with their .30 cal.

GUARDS

are chewed up by bullets and blown off the prison walls even as they try to scramble into firing positions.

(CONTINUED)

THE PRISON YARD

is turned into a maelstrom of fleeing and dying men, bullets grinding up everything in sight. The Warden hurls himself to the ground as a guard right next to him is blown off his feet.

Pedrosa throws his shackled hands around the cowering Warden's neck and drags him choking to his feet, using him as a shield.

HUEY #1

The door gunner is suddenly hit, torn apart by bullets. He flops lifelessly in his safety harness like a shattered puppet.

ANGLE ON GUARD TOWER

reveals a guard BLASTING AWAY on the tower machine gun.

HUEY #1

pivots neatly around in a dead-perfect hover and FIRES A MISSILE. A WHITE HOT STREAK shoots through the air and --

THE GUARD TOWER

simply vanishes in a huge concussive FIREBALL, catapulting the flaming body of the guard through the air.

HUEY #1

pivots and FIRES AGAIN, taking out another guard tower as --

HUEY #2

lays down smoke and lands in the yard, whipping up a hurricane of flying dust and debris. Troops disembark, faceless men in black firing GUNBURSTS in all directions.

The assault troops reach Pedrosa, who still has a stranglehold on the Warden. Lightning-quick, Pedrosa yanks a pistol from a soldier's holster and jams it into the Warden's stomach.

PEDROSA

Hell welcomes you, not me.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! The Warden crumples. The troops grab Pedrosa and hustle him into the Huey. It lifts into the air, rotors kicking up a storm of dust, door gunner still chattering away on his .30 cal.

HELICOPTER POV

rising into the air, revealing the full extent of the carnage below: bodies strewn everywhere...survivors buffeted by a hurricane of rotor wash as they stumble blindly among the dead...

(CONTINUED)

THE HELICOPTERS

join up in formation, pivot around as gracefully as a pair of ballet dancers performing a pas de deux, and vanish over the wall as abruptly as they appeared.

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE ENDS as we

CUT TO:

INT - GALLERIA - ESTABLISHING - DAY

The same shopping mall from COMMANDO I. Crowded and busy.

INT - VIDEO & MUSIC EMPORIUM

TIGHT ANGLE ON a display of television sets. Most of the TV screens show an ANCHORWOMAN delivering the news:

ANCHORWOMAN
...death toll has yet to be confirmed, but observers are calling the airborne terrorist assault the most daring and violent prison break in U.S. history.

A photo of Pedrosa appears behind her. ANGLE WIDENS OUT to reveal a store full of browsing customers ignoring every word.

ANCHORWOMAN
Nestor Pedrosa reputedly runs the Panamanian arm of the Medellin Cartel, the infamous Colombia-based drug empire. He was in this country illegally when he was arrested last year in connection with the single biggest shipment of illegal narcotics ever to cross our borders...

ANGLE SHIFTS to reveal JENNY MATRIX browsing the video rental shelf, a Walkman on her ears. Now in high school, she's grown into quite a lovely young lady. She moves down the row, bent low, frowning in concentration as she tries to make a choice.

She almost bumps into a figure blocking her way. She looks up and sees:

BRAD HANLEY

grinning down at her. Eyes of blue, shades by Vuarnet, a high school senior guaranteed to cause palpitations in even the stoniest of female teen hearts.

Jenny straightens up, flustered but covering nicely. She removes the Walkman and gives him a shy, beautiful smile.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

Oh. Hi Brad.

BRAD

You're looking real good, Jenny.

He pauses, allowing her a moment to just bask in his presence.

BRAD

Listen, some of us seniors are getting together for a little party tonight. You interested?

Jenny blinks. This is too good to be true.

JENNY

Me? You're asking me?

BRAD

(flashes that grin)

You got something against seniors?

JENNY

Uh, no.

BRAD

So how about it?

She wrestles with this, shooting a glance across the store at her father. He's engrossed browsing the music cassettes.

JENNY

I'd have to ask my dad. We were gonna watch a movie at home tonight.

BRAD

You spend Saturday night at home with your old man? That's a little Leave it to Beaver, isn't it?

MATRIX

is delighted to find a certain music cassette. He looks around for Jenny and notices the slick dude chatting her up. His smile fades to a frown.

JENNY AND BRAD

BRAD

Look, just shine the old man and come party with the Bradster.

He moves closer, crowding her space, fingering a U2 button on her jacket lapel.

(CONTINUED)

BRAD

Daddy's little girl has to grow up
sometime, you catch what I'm saying?

Jenny shakes her head, unsure -- growing more uncomfortable.

BRAD

C'mon, if you're gonna learn to party,
learn with the best, am I right?

He opens his jacket, directing her attention down.

BRAD'S JACKET LINING

is an elaborate pharmaceutical warehouse. Coke, crack, weed,
ups, downs -- you name it, the Bradster's got it.

JENNY

(her heart sinks)

Oh my God. Is that what I think it
is?

BRAD

It ain't my Care Bear collection. I
got shit in here Nancy Reagan never
even dreamed of.

(leans in, sotto)

You fly with me, you fly for free.
You fly solo, you pay. How about
it, baby? Beats watching "Bambi."

JENNY

I don't think so.

She tries to push past him, flushed and angry, but he crowds
her against the shelf.

BRAD

What's your problem?

JENNY

Just let me go.

BRAD

Or what? You gonna holler for
Daddy?

(snickers)

I bet he even looks like Ward
Cleaver.

Suddenly a giant hand enters frame and grabs Brad by the back
of the neck.

MATRIX (O.S.)

That's right.

(CONTINUED)

TIGHT ON BRAD

as the giant hand turns him slowly around and he finds himself gazing up into the very pissed-off face of Colonel John Matrix. Brad's eyes bug out over the tops of his cool shades.

MATRIX

In fact, when I wear a sweater, you can barely tell us apart.

MEZZANINE LEVEL

Matrix drags Brad from the Music Emporium by his ear, scattering shoppers right and left. Jenny trails behind. Brad is hollering, arms windmilling:

BRAD

Get him off'a me! He's crazy!

TWO SECURITY GUARDS (whom we recognize from COMMANDO I) race up the stairs, see Matrix, and skid to a sudden stop.

GUARD #1

Oh shit! It's him again!

GUARD #2

(into walkie-talkie)

Better call SWAT. Godzilla's back.

Matrix sees them and hustles Brad over. The guards cower at Matrix' approach.

MATRIX

I want this scum arrested!

GUARD #1

For what?

MATRIX

Trying to push drugs to my daughter!

Brad wrestles out of Matrix' grasp, emboldened now that the guards are here.

BRAD

It's your word against mine, asshole, and your word doesn't mean shit! I should know, my old man's a lawyer! These peons can't touch me! Not without probable cause!

MATRIX

(squints at the guards)

Probable cause?

(CONTINUED)

GUARD #2

I'm afraid he's right.

Matrix glowers at Brad. Brad gives him a nasty smirk.

Matrix grabs Brad and lifts him into the air. He spins him upside down and starts shaking him by the ankles like a bag of laundry. Brad screams and flails helplessly as drugs of all description come cascading out of his clothes and onto the floor. The pile grows and grows.

Matrix pauses and turns to the guards.

MATRIX

Probable enough?

The guards exchange a glance, then look back at Matrix.

GUARD #1

(grins)

Works for us.

Matrix drops Brad to the ground. The guards move in and cuff him.

JENNY

looks around, mortally embarrassed, wishing she were invisible. All the teenagers in the place are staring at her, mouths gaping.

CUT TO:

EXT - FREEWAY - DAY

Matrix drives his jeep, which is loaded down with groceries. Jenny rides beside him, agitated:

JENNY

I am so mortified. Everybody I know was there. Wait till word gets around that my father narked out Brad Hanley, only the most popular guy in school.

MATRIX

Is that what it takes to be popular? Drugs?

(Jenny shrugs morosely)

You think I should have stood there and done nothing?

JENNY

No. I just wish you'd done it a little more quietly, that's all.

(pause, sadly)

I used to think he was so nice.

(CONTINUED)

Matrix sees that she's heartbroken.

MATRIX
I'm sorry if I embarrassed you.

JENNY
(shoots him a look)
You're not gonna do that to every
senior that asks me out, are you?

Matrix laughs. She finally thaws and laughs too, digging into the Music Emporium bag...

JENNY
What's this new tape you bought?

MATRIX
It's one of the first rock and roll
albums I ever heard back in East
Germany. I can't believe I found it.

Jenny unwraps it and pops it into the cassette player. "Gimme Some Lovin'" by the Spencer Davis Group BLARES from the speakers. Matrix boogies behind the steering wheel, enjoying himself immensely.

MATRIX
What do you think?

JENNY
(no use being polite)
It's a little prehistoric.

Matrix glares at her as we

CUT TO:

EXT - MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Matrix' jeep comes into view, winding up the hill, "Gimme Some Lovin'" BLARING into the wilderness.

JENNY
This is the fourth time we've heard
this. How many more times are you
going to play it?

MATRIX
Until you learn to like it.

A HELICOPTER

suddenly CLATTERS into view from behind a ridge and wheels about after the jeep -- a Bell Jet Ranger in light gray, sporting a corporate logo on the side: "McCarren Defense Industries."

(CONTINUED)

The chopper ROARS overhead and drops to the side, pacing them. GENERAL FRANKLIN KIRBY snaps off a salute from the passenger side of the cockpit. Neither Matrix nor Jenny look thrilled.

EXT - MATRIX CABIN

The jeep pulls to a stop. Matrix and Jenny watch the Jet Ranger come in for a perfect landing -- right in the flowerbed. Kirby emerges and waves to them. They get out of the jeep and walk over. Matrix and Kirby shake hands warmly.

KIRBY

John. You're looking fit.

MATRIX

So are you, General.

KIRBY

Hello, Jenny. You're growing into quite a young lady.

JENNY

You're on Dad's begonias.

KIRBY

I beg your pardon?

JENNY

He spent all summer growing those begonias, and you just landed your helicopter on them.

MATRIX

Jenny, don't be rude to our guest.

VOICE (O.S.)

Sorry! My fault!

ANGLE ON HELICOPTER

reveals PACO LOPEZ swinging down from the pilot's seat. He wears fingerless gloves and a faded Hawaiian shirt over a green Army tank top. He flips up the tinted lenses of his aviator specs, a big grin under his bushy mustache.

LOPEZ

I remember lots of times we couldn't be so picky about our LZ, right Colonel?

MATRIX

Paco? Paco Lopez?

LOPEZ

It is I, the one and only.

(CONTINUED)

They sweep into a bear hug and roar with laughter.

MATRIX
How long has it been? Angola?

LOPEZ
At least. This your little girl?
(Matrix nods proudly)
I got a boy about her age. We ought
to get 'em together.

Jenny huffs and rolls her eyes. There is no dignity.

JENNY
I'll put the groceries away and get
dinner started.

She wrestles groceries out of the jeep and heads toward the house. Matrix looks Lopez up and down, eyes his Hawaiian shirt.

MATRIX
You're out of uniform, soldier.

LOPEZ
Watch who you're calling "soldier." I
haven't drawn Army pay in a long time.

MATRIX
Civilian?

LOPEZ
(nods)
I'm an independent contractor. I
freelance around.
(cocks a thumb at Kirby)
Today I get to play taxi for
McCarren Industries.

Matrix shoots Kirby a questioning look.

KIRBY
John, we need to talk.

MATRIX
The answer is no.

KIRBY
Hear me out first. You owe me that.

Beat. Matrix nods. Lopez does a graceful fade:

LOPEZ
I'll help with the rest of the
groceries. Let's get together soon,
John. Suck down some brews.

(CONTINUED)

Matrix and Kirby stroll up the mountain path, moving out of earshot of the house.

MATRIX

What's this about McCarren Industries?
You moving into the private sector?

KIRBY

Hell no, I've got khaki running in my veins, you know that. But we're working with them. A joint venture of sorts.

MATRIX

Why?

KIRBY

Andrew McCarren is much more than just a businessman -- he's a true American patriot. And McCarren Industries is much more than just defense -- worldwide, their intelligence network is second only to the C.I.A.'s.

(stops, faces Matrix)

John, we've got a situation brewing. It's very sensitive, potentially explosive. You're the best team leader I ever had. I could use you back, now more than ever.

MATRIX

What is this "situation?"

KIRBY

I'm sorry, that's on a need-to-know basis -- and frankly, if you turn me down, you don't need to know.

(beat)

I will tell you this. Our cause is sacred.

Matrix gazes off and sees Jenny walking from the house to the jeep. She wrestles more groceries into her arms and gazes up in her father's direction.

MATRIX

When her mother died I promised I'd never go away again.

KIRBY

Damn it, John. You're a soldier. You have a duty.

MATRIX

I'm a father first. My duty is to her.

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY

What about your country?

MATRIX

(eyes flash)

I left my share of blood on foreign soil. I won't break my promise to Jenny. Not even for you. I'm sorry.

Kirby shakes his head, sighs.

KIRBY.

I am too, John. More than you know.

Kirby takes Matrix' hand in a firm goodbye clasp and speaks with an eerie note of finality:

KIRBY

Farewell, my friend.

And with that, Kirby turns and strides down the path.

CUT TO:

KIRBY'S HELICOPTER

ROARS into the sky and skims away at treetop level. TILT DOWN to Matrix watching it go, shielding his eyes from the sun.

Jenny emerges from the house and comes to his side, worried but putting on a brave face. He senses her concern.

MATRIX

I'm not breaking my promise. Not now, not ever. You read me?

JENNY

(smiles, relieved)

Loud and clear, Colonel.

He hugs her. She returns the hug fiercely. Together, they start back toward the house.

MATRIX

Now, what's for dinner?

CUT TO:

EXT - JUNGLE - PRE-DAWN

Foliage fills the screen. Lush and green, moist and rotting. It's barely light enough to see, and early morning mist obscures our view.

SUPER TITLE: "Costa Rica."

(CONTINUED)

We soon begin to notice subtle movement in the foliage. An odd shift of color here, a shadow moving there...

...and we soon realize that there are men in the bush. They become gradually perceptible, like one of those "Find the Indians" picture puzzles we used to do in grade school -- only these "Indians" are three dimensional and armed to the teeth.

VARIOUS TIGHT ANGLES

show us glimpses of the camouflaged troops...assault rifles held at the ready...faces obscured by shadow and greasepaint...

The Commando team deploys itself, taking up vantage points and settling in. Grim. Determined. We hear WHISPERED COMMANDS, some in English, some in Spanish.

We now hear the RUMBLE OF APPROACHING ENGINES.

ANOTHER ANGLE

reveals three trucks meandering up a muddy dirt road in a ragtag column, bouncing over the ruts. The vehicles are ancient and utilitarian, sides covered with canvas.

The trucks get closer. Closer still. Almost upon us now.

The Commando team bursts from the bush and storms the road. WARNING SHOTS are fired into the air.

VOICE

(subtitled Spanish,
over bullhorn)

You are under arrest!

The trucks lurch to a stop. Cut off, surrounded. Troops closing in from all sides. A fait accompli? Well, no, because --

THE CANVAS SIDES

of the trucks drop away, revealing a Quad 50 on each truck bed, manned by heavily armed teams.

A brief aside: A .50 caliber machine gun is one of the nastiest conventional weapons ever devised -- it will cut a man entirely in half. You can go more high-tech, but you certainly can't go more brutal. Well, imagine four .50 caliber machine guns mounted as a single unit on the bed of a truck and you have one Quad 50. Multiply that by a factor of three, one for each truck, and you have some idea of the incredible sheer brute destructive power of this ambush. Like they used to say in Nam, Quads don't just kill the enemy, they rearrange the fucking landscape. So modify your maps of Costa Rica, because --

(CONTINUED)

THE COMMANDO TEAM

is virtually vaporized -- not just cut down by bullets, mind you, but blown to red dust before our very eyes, shredded to pulp by a huge invisible thresher. There's no place to run, no place to hide. The surrounding jungle is turned into a clearing, with nothing left standing.

The firing ceases. Abrupt silence.

As if this utter devastation hadn't been enough, the trucks now open up with flame throwers -- wide sweeping arcs of flaming gasoline turn the killing ground into a blazing inferno.

NESTOR PEDROSA

emerges from the lead truck to survey the devastation. He smiles and nods, satisfied, and gets back in the truck.

THE TRUCKS

pull out, vanishing into the early morning mist. They leave nothing to mark their passing but a scorched hole in the jungle.

CUT TO:

INT - DARKENED ROOM - TIGHT ON TV - NIGHT

A news item is being read over a shaky image of body bags being loaded onto a military transport plane.

ANCHORMAN

...resulted in the tragic massacre of the entire team. It is confirmed tonight that the cooperative effort between U.S. and Costa Rican forces had been an attempt to recapture escaped drug lord Nestor Pedrosa as he re-entered his native country of Panama.

A file photo of General Franklin Kirby now pops up as:

ANCHORMAN

The body of General Kirby is being flown back to the United States under military escort. Kirby, a veteran of both the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts, held the Congressional Medal of Honor, and was twice recipient of the Medal of Valor.

(beat)

We'll be right back after this.

(CONTINUED)

REVERSE ANGLE

John Matrix sits in his darkened living room, slumped in his chair and nursing a beer, his face an impenetrable mask in the dim glow of the TV.

TV PITCHMAN (O.S.)
What's the matter, Sally Thompson?
Pain and itch of hemorrhoidal
tissue getting you down?

Matrix hits the mute button. Jenny appears behind him, lays her hand on his shoulder.

MATRIX
If only I'd been there...he'd be alive.

JENNY
Or you'd be dead.

Matrix says nothing. In his silence, and in the set of his eyes, we read his unshakable conviction that he let a friend die.

Jenny exits, leaving her father to stare at the silent flickering image on the TV.

CUT TO:

EXT - MILITARY CEMETERY - DAY

SEVEN SOLDIERS raise their M-16s to the slate gray sky and fire off three CRISP SHOTS, for a total of 21. "Taps" begins playing.

AN AMERICAN FLAG

is folded into a neat, tight bundle.

MATRIX

stands among the crowd of mourners. Paco Lopez is with him. Matrix salutes as the casket is lowered.

CUT TO:

EXT - MCCARREN DEFENSE INDUSTRIES - DUSK

The headquarters of the largest defense contractor in the world is a striking glass and steel office building, surrounded by a sprawl of lesser annex buildings. Situated in the industrial zone at the edge of downtown Los Angeles, the entire complex is surrounded by a formidable wall topped with infra-red sensors. Their logo: "Our Business is America."

TILT DOWN to reveal John Matrix arguing with A UNIFORMED GUARD:

(CONTINUED)

GUARD

Look pal, for the last time, we don't allow visitors off the street. You wanna see Mr. McCarren, you go through proper channels.

MATRIX

What are the proper channels?

GUARD

If you don't know, you don't belong here.

The guard starts back toward the booth, but Matrix grabs him by the arm.

MATRIX

Look, just call his office and tell him that John Ma--

CLICK-CLACK! Matrix freezes. CHARLIE DORRIT, Chief of the uniformed guards and damn proud of it, steps from the booth with a pistol-grip shotgun. He's black, muscular, and brooks no nonsense.

DORRIT

Sir? Either you remove that arm, or I'll remove it for you.

Matrix' gaze narrows. But before this can get any uglier --

A LIMOUSINE

turns in and rolls up to the gate. The rear window comes down, McCarren peers out.

MCCARREN

What's the problem here?

DORRIT

Nothing we can't handle, Mr. McCarren.

MATRIX

Mr. McCarren? My name is Matrix. I was a friend of General Kirby's.

McCarren gestures for Dorrit to stand by.

MCCARREN

Yes, John Matrix, isn't it? General Kirby always spoke highly of you. What can I do for you?

MATRIX

What went wrong in Costa Rica?

(CONTINUED)

MCCARREN

I'm not entirely sure what you mean.

MATRIX

Don't bullshit me. Your people coordinated that operation.

MCCARREN

Mr. Matrix, I can appreciate the fact that you're upset. But you must appreciate the fact that I can't discuss a sensitive operation with the public. It's a matter of security.

MATRIX

Security? Your security sucks. Kirby walked right into an ambush. There must be a leak in your organization.

A HUGE MAN leans into view beyond McCarren. JORDAN GUNTHER has no sense of humor and is not to be taken lightly.

GUNTHER

Back off, cowboy.

MATRIX

Who are you?

GUNTHER

Jordan Gunther. Head of Security for McCarren Industries.

MATRIX

(back to McCarren)

I still say your security sucks.

Gunther is ready to lunge from the car, but McCarren reins him back with a gesture. McCarren gives Matrix a steely gaze.

MCCARREN

Prove it.

He waves the driver to proceed. The limo proceeds into the complex and the gate closes.

Matrix turns and walks away, followed by the hostile stares of the guards. He's fuming...but we can see an idea forming. He glances back at the guard booth.

As soon as he's out of their line of sight, he cuts around the corner and sprints into the darkness.

(CONTINUED)

INT - MCCARREN LOBBY - NIGHT

McCarren and Gunther enter at a brisk pace to find MELINDA TAFT waiting with her briefcase. She's legal counsel for McCarren Industries, brainy and beautiful, looks great in glasses.

MCCARREN
Counselor, sorry to keep you
waiting. Are you ready for me?

MELINDA
(nods)
I have those merger proposals ready
for your signature.

MCCARREN
Excellent. Let's go up to my
office, shall we?

They head for the elevators.

OUTSIDE THE COMPLEX - NIGHT

Matrix is on the move, hugging the shadows, scanning the high wall. How to get over? Suddenly, headlights wash over him as a security PATROL CAR comes around the corner, pinning him with its lights. The car surges forward to cut him off.

VOICE (over P.A.)
Freeze right there!

MATRIX

grins. Perfect. He runs straight at the oncoming car. The driver slams on his brakes. Matrix bounds up onto the hood, then the roof -- but he doesn't stop there, he springboards off the roof of the car and vaults sideways over the top of the wall, his body breaking the thin red line of the sensor. The guards inside the car are left gaping up at the ceiling as --

OTHER SIDE OF WALL

-- Matrix lands inside the complex and rolls to his feet in a cat-like crouch. He takes off running as ALARMS START WAILING and security spotlights start snapping on all over the complex.

Matrix comes to an annex building, sees a huge power transformer on the roof. He cuts around the corner and comes to a door, ducking back as it opens. A GUARD peers out, flashlight extended like an invitation -- Matrix grabs his arm and yanks him out, spinning him into an akido hold.

MATRIX
Do you have good workman's comp here?

(CONTINUED)

GUARD

Huh? Well, yeah, I guess--

Matrix slams him against the building, knocking him cold.

MATRIX

Good.

Matrix snatches up the flashlight and dives through the door into the power bunker.

INT - SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

ARTHUR TRENT is plainclothes security, Jordan Gunther's right hand man. He and the UNIFORMED GUARDS stationed at this post are frantically scanning an electronic map of the McCarren complex as hell breaks loose across the board -- blinking lights are coming to life, spreading rapidly.

TRENT

(into walkie talkie)

--right, right, we have a breach on the south wall...intruders moving into sector four -- they're in the main quadrangle!

EXT - QUADRANGLE - NIGHT

reveals a team of GUARDS lead by Charlie Dorrit himself.

DORRIT

(into walkie-talkie)

Negative, negative! We're in the quadrangle! You're reading us!

INT - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

McCarren, Melinda, and Gunther are riding up in the elevator.

GUNTHER

(on walkie-talkie)

Trent, this is Gunther! What is intruder strength? How many aggressors are we dealing with?

All react as the elevator suddenly loses power and jerks to a stop. The lights cut out.

TRENT (filtered)

We just lost power to the board!

INT - POWER BUNKER - NIGHT

Matrix cuts the last of the main breaker switches, plunging the entire complex into darkness. He vaults up the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

EXT - COMPLEX - NIGHT

A scene of mounting confusion. Teams of GUARDS race around, trying to pinpoint the intruder.

MATRIX

fades into the shadows at the mouth of an inclined alley between buildings. He pauses, looking up at:

THE MAIN BUILDING

Matrix' ultimate goal. Getting there means crossing a lot of open ground.

MATRIX

scopes the area -- looks good. He bursts from cover and charges into the open -- but GUARDS unexpectedly come around the corner!

GUARD

There he is!

Matrix spins to go the other way -- but another team of GUARDS suddenly appear from there too! Cut off from both sides!

Matrix spins around and vanishes back into the alley, charging up the ramp into darkness.

The guards converge at the mouth of the alley, snapping their weapons up and CLICK-CLACKING rounds into chambers.

DORRIT

(into walkie-talkie)

Intruder is contained in access ramp, Building G. All security units respond.

ROOKIE GUARD

(panicky, whispering)

Do we go in after him?

DORRIT

Screw that. We've got him trapped. There's no way out but past us. Let him try.

A sound from the darkness -- a FAINT METALLIC SCRAPING. The guards tense up, staring into pitch blackness, ready to kill anything that moves.

The SCRAPING now grows louder -- rapidly becoming a DEEP RUMBLE -- and then a DEAFENING ROAR! Something's coming out of that darkness like a beast out of Hell! The terrified guards open fire, a wild volley of crashing GUNFIRE!

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

ROARS from the inclined alley riding inside a runaway trash dumpster, ducking low as bullets SPARK off the metal! He plows through the guards like an express train, sends them sprawling like ten pins!

But Matrix got more than he bargained for because there's no stopping a hurtling trash dumpster once it gets going and --

ANOTHER ANGLE

-- the dumpster tears through the railing with a SHRIEK OF METAL and an EXPLOSION OF CONCRETE and sails through the air to land on a lower level, still going like a bat out of hell on a rocket sled! And now things really gets hairy, because --

SECURITY CARS

are converging on the scene just as Matrix and his dumpster hurtle into their midst. In an incredible tour-de-force of choreography, cars begin hitting their brakes and spinning out, with the dumpster slamming into and rebounding off of each car in turn. Several cars flip and roll. Mr. Toad's Wild Ride had nothing on this. Matrix and the dumpster get bounced around like a giant pinball, finally slingshotted across the quadrangle and --

INT - MAIN BUILDING

-- right into the building he was trying to reach in the first place, EXPLODING through the plate glass! The dumpster tears through a row of potted plants, upends, and dumps Matrix elegantly into a long slide across the floor. Before his momentum ends he's on his feet and running.

INT - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Gunther is trying to force the doors while McCarren hollers into the walkie-talkie:

McCARREN

God damn it, where are those backup generators?

Gunther gets the doors partially open -- they see that they're about five feet below the next floor. There's just enough space at the top to crawl out.

McCARREN

You first, Ms. Taft.

OUTSIDE THE ELEVATOR

Melinda is boosted into view by Gunther.

(CONTINUED)

MELINDA
Hey! Watch those hands!

GUNTHER (O.S.)
Sorry.

MELINDA
(muttering)
Sorry my ass.

INT - SECURITY ZONE - NIGHT

Matrix hurls a chair through a pair of glass doors marked "NO UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY." He charges through and finds himself in —

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Two levels, very slick, with drafting tables, computers, the works. Matrix is on the upper level. He sees a row of "TOP CLEARANCE ONLY" filing cabinets near the railing. Without breaking stride, he leaps like a karate kick boxer and SLAMS into one with both feet.

The filing cabinet flips over the railing and plummets to the lower level, SMASHING into the floor and splitting its seams on impact. Top secret documents geyser into the air.

Instead of using the stairs, Matrix slides down the banister, laughing like a mischievous kid. He snatches documents off the floor at random and moves on.

INT - MAIN BUILDING - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Confusion. Searching guards.

INT - HALLWAY

McCarren, Gunther, and Melinda race up the hallway. Gunther hollering into the walkie-talkie:

GUNTHER
I want a status report now!

They react as the lights suddenly start coming back on all over the building, stuttering to fluorescent life.

VOICE (filtered)
We got our electricity back!

MCCARREN
(muttering)
No shit. Give that guy a raise.

(CONTINUED)

INT - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Xeroxes, modems, telex and fax machines. Matrix rushes in, goes to a wall chart listing Telex and fax numbers for McCarren operations around the world.

ANGLE TIGHTENS as Matrix' finger goes down the column of in-house fax numbers -- stopping at McCarren's personal office number and fax code.

MATRIX

grins and rips the cover sheet marked "TOP SECRET" off the document. He grabs a marker, jots something on the page, then spins to a fax machine. He punches in a code and hits a button marked "Transmission Delay."

INT - TOP FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

McCarren, Melinda, and Gunther hustle down the hallway toward McCarren's office, surrounded now by a horde of UNIFORMED GUARDS and PLAINCLOTHES SECURITY.

MCCARREN

What do you mean you lost them!

TRENT

Well, we think they're in the building --

MCCARREN

You think? I don't want to hear that crap! I want them found!

McCarren enters his office and --

INT - MCCARREN'S OFFICE

-- is astonished to find John Matrix kicked back with his feet up on the desk, helping himself to McCarren's stash of expensive cigars.

MATRIX

Not "them" -- just little old me.

Weapons snap up in Matrix' direction. Matrix puffs a cigar to life and blows a smoke ring at the ceiling.

MATRIX

I breached your complex ten minutes ago. Long enough to steal important documents and transmit them to your competitors, or to unfriendly nations, anywhere in the world.

(CONTINUED)

MCCARREN

Bullshit! Now listen, you lunatic --

Matrix holds up a finger, asking for silence. He peers at his watch, silently counting down the last few seconds until...

McCarren's PHONE RINGS. Matrix smiles at McCarren.

MATRIX

It's for you.

Glaring, McCarren snatches up the phone and hears:

ROBOT VOICE (filtered)

Incoming transmission...Incoming
transmission...

Puzzled now, McCarren turns to his fax machine and switches it on. A page WHIRS out and McCarren grabs it.

INSERT - THE FAX PAGE

A facsimile of the "TOP SECRET" cover sheet, along with Matrix' handwritten addition: "Like I said, your security sucks."

MCCARREN

considers this carefully -- very carefully.

MCCARREN

Mr. Matrix, I don't know whether to
have you shot...prosecuted...or put
on payroll.

MATRIX

(glances at his watch)

You already owe me for eleven minutes.

Beat. McCarren smiles.

MCCARREN

I'd like you all to say hello to
John Matrix...

(pointed glance at Gunther)

...our new security consultant.

MATRIX

leans back in McCarren's chair, puffing leisurely on the cigar.

MATRIX

Now, shall we talk about Costa Rica?

CUT TO:

EXT - MCCARREN COMPLEX - SAME NIGHT

Matrix and McCarren walk through the quadrangle, where crews are cleaning up after the evening's festivities. A forklift is putting a flipped car back on its wheels, and broken glass is being swept up everywhere.

MCCARREN

(chuckles)

You do have a remarkable technique with job interviews.

MATRIX

I didn't come here for a job.

MCCARREN

(turning serious)

No, of course not. You came to discuss the leak in my organization.

(beat)

Drug enforcement and military personnel from both countries were involved. It was their show, mostly. All we did was broker some information and logistics. The leak could be anywhere...on their end, or mine. Either way, I intend to find that leak.

MATRIX

And then?

MCCARREN

I'm going to plug it. Decisively and mercilessly.

(faces Matrix)

If you want in, just say the word. Kirby was a friend of yours, and I can't think of anybody better qualified.

MATRIX

I may have a problem there.

(off McCarren's look)

Personal reasons.

MCCARREN

My boy, you're a consultant. If you choose to remain in that capacity when the time comes, that will be entirely your decision.

(beat)

Right now let's turn our attention to more immediate concerns...

(CONTINUED)

WE GO INTO A MONTAGE SEQUENCE AS:

Matrix peers at an elaborate scale model of the McCarren complex. ANGLE WIDENS as he points out various weak points to Gunther, Trent, and SEVEN OTHER PLAINCLOTHES SECURITY MEN. (These seven CIA-types are Gunther's "boys," and are not to be confused with the uniformed guard staff of McCarren Industries. Their names are MILES, LINDER, BOWDEN, SCUDDER, BURROUGHS, JENNINGS, and PATTERSON. Dangerous, humorless men.)

McCARREN (V.O.)

You're a man of rare resource and initiative, John. You've made it clear how vulnerable we really are. Like the logo says, our business is America...and that makes us a target for every lunatic fringe and terrorist group around the world...

EXT - GROUNDS - DAY

Matrix is walking the perimeter with engineers and security men. He has a clipboard, jotting notes as he studies the sensors atop the wall. He points out a design flaw -- the engineers nod, but Gunther just glowers.

McCARREN (V.O.)

As security consultant, you will revamp all security systems and procedures, bring them up to snuff. And what you implement here will be duplicated at my plants worldwide...

INT - MATRIX HOME - NIGHT

Matrix is at the dinner table, reading glasses on his nose, poring over sales manuals and specs for such prosaic items as the "Automated Laser Intercept System."

McCARREN (V.O.)

Think of me as an open checkbook, John. Whatever you need, just ask...

Jenny finally yanks the manual from his hands and pushes his plate in front of him. Eat.

INT - MATRIX HOME - NIGHT

Matrix is working on his personal computer into the wee hours of the morning. He rubs his eyes, exhausted.

TIGHT ON COMPUTER SCREEN

A computer-graphic recreation of the McCarren plant revolves slowly on the screen. ANGLE WIDENS to reveal us in the McCarren

(CONTINUED)

Computer Room. Matrix is in mid-demonstration -- HIGHLIGHTED AREAS appear on the screen as he manipulates the keyboard:

MATRIX

Power to the complex will be below ground, completely independent. That way nobody can knock it out.

McCarren nods, pleased. Gunther nods too...sort of. Matrix shifts the highlights, this time illuminating the elevator and stairwell shafts.

MATRIX

And finally, you'll be able to seal all the elevators and stairways -- and pump the shafts full of gas.

MCCARREN

Gas? Lethal or non-lethal?

MATRIX

You'll be equipped with both.

MCCARREN

Excellent. Looks like you've got all the bases covered.

MATRIX

I haven't started on the most important thing.

MCCARREN

Which is?

MATRIX

Your men.

(off McCarren's look)

All this high-tech won't do you any good if your men lack training.

EXT - TRAINING FIELD - DAY

Matrix paces like a drill sergeant, shouting encouragements as the assembled GUARDS are put through an exhausting series of calisthenics. There's a lot of huffing and puffing going on. He pauses, glancing down at the belly of an OVERWEIGHT GUARD doing jumping jacks.

GUARD

Too much linguini.

MATRIX

I'll give you my low cal recipe.

(CONTINUED)

INT - CLASSROOM - DAY

Matrix is lecturing an assembly of guards in an amphitheater-style classroom. Written in chalk on the blackboard is the subject of today's discussion: "Psychology of Infiltration."

INT - MAIN BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Matrix supervises workmen who are installing high-tech laser heads in the walls, up near the ceiling. The walls are ripped out, crumbled drywall everywhere. McCarren appears, polishing an apple on his lapel, and hands Matrix an envelope.

MCCARREN

First week's pay. I think you'll find it adequate.

Matrix pulls a check from the envelope. His eyes go wide.

MATRIX

(grins)

I think I like being a consultant.

McCarren tries to go down the hallway -- but Matrix grabs his arm and stops him.

MATRIX

I wouldn't go this way just now.

MCCARREN

Why not?

Matrix takes McCarren's apple and tosses it underhand down the corridor -- one of the lasers in the wall BLASTS the apple right out of the air, like a gunslinger shooting a coin.

MCCARREN

I'll wait.

EXT - TRAINING FIELD - DAY

Matrix running hand-to-hand drills with groups of GUARDS wearing green fatigues. One guard attempts a defensive move, but Matrix puts him down -- then helps him right back up.

MATRIX

No, no -- try again. Don't block up, block out, my momentum will take care of up.

The guard grins, getting the hang of it. He still goes down, but not quite as easily.

MATRIX

Better!

(CONTINUED)

EXT - FIELD - SHORTLY LATER

Matrix leads the guards across the field toward a "Hogan's Alley" firing range. The mood is amiable, loose. The guards have taken a real liking to Matrix, especially Chief Guard Charlie Dorrit:

DORRIT

Hear tell you're quite a hero.

(Matrix shrugs it off)

Me, I did two tours in the Nam. I was at Khe Sahn when the shit hit. Walked away with a silver star and a purple heart.

MATRIX

Sounds to me like you're the hero.

DORRIT

(grins)

Hell, no, Colonel. I was just trying to keep my ass attached.

Matrix laughs.

EXT - HOGAN'S ALLEY FIRING RANGE - SHORTLY LATER

Junked cars, building facades, etc. Smoke grenades are drifting smoke through the scene. Matrix leads the guards up the street with weapons at the ready.

MATRIX

Concentrate on your own field of fire, not your neighbor's. Do your job, and let him do his.

Wooden silhouettes with painted figures begin popping up on the course. The men BLAST AWAY as they move up the street.

THE POP-UP FIGURES

Killers. Bank robbers. Terrorists. Shredded by bullets. Now a nun pops up, and a little kid -- they also get BLOWN AWAY.

MATRIX

Cease fire! Cease fire!

The shooting stops. The guards look a little contrite.

MATRIX

Your job doesn't mean killing bystanders! You have to pick your targets!

GUNTHER (O.S.)

You think you could do better?

(CONTINUED)

ANOTHER ANGLE

reveals Gunther on the sidelines, surrounded by his dark-suit entourage. His challenge hangs in the air as we go to:

HOGAN'S ALLEY - MINUTES LATER

The course is reset, new smoke laid down. The smoke parts and Matrix is revealed standing like a gunslinger in a Western (is it our imagination, or do we hear a snatch of Morricone's theme from "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" on the soundtrack?) The only difference between Matrix and Eastwood is our hombre doesn't pack six-guns -- he packs twin Uzis.

THE GUARDS

are watching from the perimeter. There's a lot of whispering going on -- and skeptical shaking of heads. Suddenly, Paco Lopez appears behind them, aviator specs gleaming in the sun.

LOPEZ

I got a hundred bucks says my man
kicks ass. Any takers?

Nope. No takers. None except for --

GUNTHER

You're on.

He glances over at the Hogan's Alley OPERATOR.

GUNTHER

Give him everything you got.

MATRIX

moves up the street, eyes darting, Uzis swiveling, cigar stub in mouth.

Suddenly, Hogan's Alley comes to life with a vengeance! From utterly still to utterly frenetic in the blink of an eye:

Wooden figures thrust out of doors and windows faster than the eye can blink, some alone, some in groups, some holding hostages -- and Matrix takes the course like the Tasmanian Devil doing a speed-freak ballet, a whirlwind of motion, spitting GUNBURSTS in all directions, followed by more GUNBURSTS. Feinting, dodging, spinning, diving and rolling and coming up for more, while all around him --

WOODEN FIGURES

are sheared in half or split head to toe, but only the bad guys. All hostages and bystanders are left untouched, while the terrorists are surgically blown to fragments beside them.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

gets to the end of the course. Completely out of bullets. A final terrorist pops up from behind a car, holding a gun to a little girl's head. Whizzzzzz--THUNK! Matrix' commando knife is now buried to the hilt between the terrorist's painted eyes.

THE GUARDS

applaud, stunned and delighted at this showmanship. Gunther looks pissed.

OPERATOR

Damn. Perfect score. Never seen anything like it.

LOPEZ

Looks like you owe me a C-note.

GUNTHER

Stuff it.

The guards crowd around Matrix, congratulating him. Gunther steps up, not ready to let this go just yet:

GUNTHER

You're hot shit with plywood figures -- but how are you in a standup fight?

Matrix glares at him, eyes narrowing.

MATRIX

(dangerous)

Too bad there's no way to find out.

GUNTHER

(nasty grin)

Well, maybe someday, huh?

Gunther walks away, trailed by his dark-suit entourage. The guards are shaking their heads -- they don't like Gunther and his boys any more than we do.

LOPEZ

Pendejo.

(off Matrix' look)

Know what that means?

MATRIX

Spanish for "walking hemorrhoid."

They crack up as we

CUT TO:

INT - MATRIX HOME - NIGHT

Jenny paces indignantly as Matrix puts chips and dip on the coffee table.

JENNY

A blind date?! Dad, come on, like gimme a break!

MATRIX

It's not blind, and it's not a date. They're just coming over to watch the game.

JENNY

But I was gonna go to the Galleria with Tina!

MATRIX

Forget about the Galleria. I should have knocked the whole thing down when I had the chance.

(doorbell RINGS)

Now stop complaining and get the door.

Jenny crosses to the door, grumbling the entire way:

JENNY

What is this, the old country? Next he's gonna trade me for a cow and some pigs! I'm mortified, just mortifi--

EXT - FRONT DOOR

Jenny opens the door. Lopez stands waiting with his son TONY -- and if you're a teenage girl, guys don't get any cuter than Tony. Beat. Eye contact. Jenny's "mortified" segues into:

JENNY

-i-i-Hi there! We're so glad you could make it, we've been expecting you! I'm Jenny!

TONY

(great smile)

Hi. I'm Tony.

They shake hands. She practically yanks him in.

JENNY

Don't stand out in the cold, come on in! Hi, Mr. Lopez! Thank you for coming, can I get you anything? A beer? Something to eat?

(CONTINUED)

She slams the door, shutting us out as we

CUT TO:

INT - MCCARREN MAIN SECURITY STATION - TOP FLOOR - DAY

The system is activated. The security nerve center blinks to life, tied in to the network of sensors and cameras blanketing the complex.

Matrix hefts an innocuous-looking Haliburton case onto the counter and opens it -- inside is a computer/screen/keyboard gizmo worthy of James Bond. McCarren peers at it, intrigued.

MATRIX

Here's the best part. A microwave locator -- it bounces a signal off a satellite and --

He activates the gadget and a schematic of the entire complex pops up on screen. McCarren does a double take from the gadget to the Big Board on the wall -- they are identical, both showing a computer graphic layout of the McCarren complex.

OPERATOR

(grins)

That's right, it's a miniature version of that. You'll be able to coordinate a counter-offensive without even being here.

Matrix pins a new security badge on McCarren's lapel.

MATRIX

Every employee gets one of these. Each badge has a microchip encoded with the person's identity.

He points to the screen -- the nametag shows up as tiny white dot (an identical white dot floats on the Big Board).

MATRIX

See? That's what we look like with our nametags. But an intruder would show up as a red dot -- that way we can tell the good guys from the bad guys and your men don't run around like the Keystone cops.

(pats the locator)

I just have to finish programming in all the employee codes.

MCCARREN

Amazing...just amazing.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

(grins)

It should be. Your company
manufactured it.

McCarren laughs, then goes to examine the Big Board, getting a guided tour from the ENGINEERS. Various SECURITY PERSONNEL and OFFICE STAFF mill around, checking things out.

Trent takes the opportunity to sidle up to Matrix:

TRENT

Say listen, boss, how about I knock
off for the evening?

(adjusts his snappy-
looking threads)

Got a date with a dynamite lady and
I don't want to keep her waiting.

MATRIX

Go ahead, Trent. See you tomorrow.

(Trent turns to go)

Oh, here -- don't forget this.

He slips Trent's new name tag into the breast pocket of his jacket. Trent snaps off a jaunty salute and hurries off.

No sooner is Trent gone than Charlie Dorrit approaches Matrix with a clipboard and attached form.

DORRIT

Colonel, you seen Mr. Trent?

MATRIX

He just walked out.

DORRIT

I'll see if I can catch him.

MATRIX

What's the problem?

DORRIT

We just got this in. There's a
shipment of video gear going through
customs, and somebody's gotta sign
for it. Mr. Trent placed the order.

MATRIX

(takes the clipboard)

Tell you what, let me handle it.
Trent's...uh, busy with something
else tonight.

CUT TO:

EXT - AIRPORT CARGO AREA - NIGHT

A truck with the McCarren logo pulls through the gate, heading into the customs area.

INT - TRUCK

The DRIVER glances over at Matrix, who has the Haliburton-like microwave locator perched on his lap. He's engrossed working the keyboard, entering employee codes.

EXT - CUSTOMS/LOADING AREA

An AERO MEXICO cargo jet is being unloaded with forklifts. The truck pulls in and Matrix gets out. He crosses to some CUSTOMS OFFICERS and hands them his form.

MATRIX

We're here for a shipment.

OFFICER

(glances at truck)

McCarren Industries, right?

(examines form)

Right. Video equipment. It's already been pre-cleared. Sign here.

(Matrix does)

We're offloading now. Be just a few minutes.

MATRIX

Thank you.

Matrix heads over toward a coffee machine.

A HIGH LEVEL FORKLIFT

chugs up to the jet's cargo bay and slips its forks under a cable-wrapped tier of crates marked: "McCarren Defense Industries--Electronic Equipment--Handle With Care."

MATRIX

drops a coin in the coffee machine. Suddenly, the SOUND OF CRACKING WOOD makes him look up.

THE FORKLIFT

A dangling section of cable from the crates has snagged, spinning the whole load off center. A corner of one crate collapses with a CRUNCH, teetering the whole forklift off balance.

The forklift operator does the worst thing he can do, which is hit the brakes. The whole load goes with its momentum and does a major dive, SMASHING to smithereens on the concrete.

(CONTINUED)

CUSTOMS OFFICIALS

whirl around with "oh shit, I'm gonna have to fill out a form" expressions -- expressions which turn to sudden curiosity...

MATRIX

His expression also changes...he steps forward, puzzled...

THE SMASHED CRATES - HIGH ANGLE

Instead of the shattered electronic guts we expect, hundreds of plastic bags of white powder have exploded in all directions on the floor. CAMERA BOOMS DOWN to Matrix as he goes to one knee -- he puts his fingers in the powder, rubs it between his fingers and smells it tentatively. PUSH IN on his face as:

MATRIX

(softly)

Son of a bitch.

Suddenly he is SLAMMED to the ground! Customs agents are all over him. He gets a knee in the neck, a revolver in the ear.

CUSTOMS

Freeze scumbag!

MATRIX

Wait! There's been a mistake!

CUSTOMS

And you made it, shithead! Don't move!

Matrix is brutally frisked and cuffed as we

CUT TO:

INT - CITY JAIL - NIGHT

Matrix paces angrily in a holding cell as a TURNKEY taunts him:

GUARD

Boy. Some hero. Real tough guy,
pushing drugs to school kids.
Know what I think?

MATRIX

The suspense is killing me.

GUARD

I think they oughtta skip the trial
and just put you up against the
fucking wall and--

A CLANG and COMMOTION draws their attention.

(CONTINUED)

ANOTHER ANGLE

reveals the PRECINCT CAPTAIN and other men coming this way -- and leading the group at a brisk pace, briefcase and writ in hand, looking great in a tailored suit, is:

MELINDA TAFT
Captain, I hope you heard those
derogatory and libelous statements
spoken by an officer in your command.
You can verify them to the judge.

She holds a micro-cassette recorder to her lips and adds:

MELINDA
Memo: Investigate police
harassment of client...

MATRIX

reacts, at first startled, then with growing respect and amusement as --

CAPTAIN
Honey, the man was just stating facts.

MELINDA
I am not your honey, I am an
officer of the court--

She points the recorder like a weapon. The captain flinches.

MELINDA
--and am I now to understand that
you agree with the statement that
without benefit of due process my
client should be, ah--

GUARD
(trying to be helpful)
--put up against the fucking wall
and shot--

CAPTAIN
Bender, shut up!
(to Melinda)
And don't you start putting words
in my mouth, Missy.

MELINDA
How can I with your foot in the way?
(snaps the writ in his face)
Now open the cell!

CUT TO:

EXT - JAIL - NIGHT

Matrix and Melinda emerge to find themselves in an onslaught of REPORTERS and TV CREWS. Camera lights snap on amidst a BABBLE of shouted questions:

REPORTERS

(ad-lib, chaotic)

Colonel Matrix, is there any connection between your arrest and alleged CIA drug activity?...Is it true you were caught trying to board a plane?...Colonel, why were you attempting to flee the country?

Matrix and Melinda elbow their way unceremoniously through the crowd -- Matrix is pretty good with his elbows, but Melinda's hell-on-wheels with her briefcase. They get to her car, a red Mercedes convertible, and duck inside.

INT - CAR

Melinda fires up the engine. She puts it in reverse and backs out of the space as reporters crowd around, still shouting questions. She notices Matrix grinning at her.

MELINDA

(archly)

What are you smiling at?

MATRIX

You really told them off in there.

MELINDA

"Told them off?"

(slams car into drive)

I kicked their asses.

She floors it. Reporters scatter, barely escaping with their lives.

INT - MELINDA'S CAR - DRIVING

MELINDA

I signed for your personal effects.
They're in back. Wallet, keys...

Matrix twists around to the back seat and hauls his stuff forward, including the Haliburton-like microwave locator. He perches it on his knees and opens it.

MELINDA

...and that thing. What is it?

Matrix activates it -- the system BLINKS AND WHINES to life.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

Pac Man.

His fingers start flying over the keyboard.

MATRIX

Thanks for getting me out. Maybe
I can repay the favor someday.

MELINDA

Look, Matrix, let's get one thing
straight. I'm not here because
we're pals, I'm here because I'm on
retainer to McCarren Industries.
I'm just doing my job, that's all.

Beepity-beep -- the microwave locator flashes a message on the
screen: SATELLITE LINK ESTABLISHED.

Matrix smiles and types: "Isolate employee code."

The computer comes back with: EMPLOYEE NAME AND DIVISION?

Matrix types: "Trent, Arthur. Security division."

The computer starts clicking off grids and coordinates,
flashing sections of city maps on the screen like an electronic
Thomas Brothers. Matrix keeps working the keyboard.

MATRIX

You haven't asked me if I'm
innocent.

MELINDA

Everybody's innocent until proven
guilty. I read that somewhere.

MATRIX

So you do think I'm innocent.

MELINDA

I didn't say that.

(off Matrix' look)

Even filthy drug-running scum are
entitled to due process. It's my
job to make sure you get a fair
trial before you're put up against
the fucking wall and shot.

MATRIX

(dryly)

Thanks.

MELINDA

Don't mention it.

(CONTINUED)

The computer locks in on a BEEPING WHITE DOT, narrows the field of search down to a specific street.

MATRIX

Turn left up ahead.

MELINDA

I look like a taxi to you? We're going straight to McCarren, he's waiting for us.

MATRIX

That's fine. I just have to make a quick stop first.

She shoots him a suspicious look. He comes back with his biggest and sincerest Boy Scout smile.

MATRIX

Trust me.

TIGHT ON COMPUTER SCREEN

The white dot keeps FLASHING as we

CUT TO:

INT - CLUB LITHO DISCO - NIGHT

TIGHT ANGLE EMPHASIZING Trent's brand new security badge -- it sits with his cigarettes on the tabletop, a silent beacon for Matrix. ANGLE WIDENS to reveal Trent playing grab ass with his DATE, who's pretending she's not that easy.

EXT - CLUB LITHO DISCO - NIGHT

Melinda pulls her Mercedes to the curb. She and Matrix get out, braving the trendy crowd of West Siders hoping to get in.

MELINDA

(indicates club)

If I knew you were going to take me dancing, I'd have worn my nice dress.

He ignores her sarcasm, looks her up and down.

MATRIX

You look very nice.

THE CLUB ENTRANCE

A slick DOORMAN in a sharkskin suit decides who goes in and who doesn't. In other words, any jerk who slips him some money gets a pink door pass and is waved right in, but the rest of the pleasant-looking hopefuls get a constant stream of abuse:

(CONTINUED)

DOORMAN

Get outta here, asshole, go back to the Valley...take that dweeb with you...Honey, stuff some Kleenex in that bra and try again tomorrow...

(accepting a twenty)

Evening Mr. Laden...

(sees Matrix approaching)

Nice outfit, pal. USO dance is down the block...

Matrix brushes past him and continues his inexorable march toward the door. The guy sidesteps, blocking him.

DOORMAN

Hey tall, dark and gruesome -- you need an engraved rejection, or what? These boots are made for walking, adios, amscray --

Lightning fast, Matrix grabs him by the throat with one hand and squeezes -- his eyes and tongue bug out like a squeeze toy and he makes a soft choking sound: "urk!"

MATRIX

A guy could get the feeling he's unwelcome. You don't want me to feel unwelcome, do you?

The doorman tries to speak, but all he can manage is "urk--urk!" He digs into his jacket and comes out with a single pink door pass. Matrix takes it, glances at the crowd.

MATRIX

I brought a few friends. You'd like to make them feel welcome too, wouldn't you?

Frantic nodding. Urk urk. He yanks a double handful of passes from his jacket. Matrix takes them with his free hand and tosses them to the crowd. They CHEER, snatching them up and swarming inside.

MATRIX

(big smile)

Thank you for your hospitality.

Matrix lets the guy go, leaves him gasping.

INT - CLUB

Matrix and Melinda enter.

MELINDA

All you had to do was tip the guy!

(CONTINUED)

Matrix looks around, dourly assessing the place -- pulsating lights, overpriced drinks, paralyzingly loud MUSIC, and a capacity crowd of party people. He moves through the club, eyes sweeping the place like radar, trailed by Melinda.

MELINDA

Matrix? Are you listening to me?

CAMERA RISES above the crowd, BOOMING UP to reveal Trent on the upper level (which a sign informs us is for "Charter Members Only") as a COCKTAIL WAITRESS brings a phone to the table.

WAITRESS

Mr. Trent? Call for you.

TRENT

(to his date)

Excuse me, babe. They don't call me unless it's something important.

She giggles appreciatively at his "importance." He snatches up the phone.

TRENT

Trent here.

Beat. Beat. His face sags, the color draining away.

TRENT

What? That shipment wasn't due for three days!

Trent listens, getting more shook up by the moment. He grabs for his scotch and soda.

TRENT

Matrix? Holy shit! Where is he now?

He's taking a big swallow of scotch as he looks down and catches sight of:

MATRIX

casing the bottom level.

TRENT

chokes on his scotch in mid-swallow.

TRENT

Never mind, I found him. Listen, I gotta call you back.

He slams the phone in its cradle, mind racing. His gaze falls on the security badge, and he realizes how Matrix found him.

(CONTINUED)

Trent motions for the HEAD BOUNCER, a big bruiser standing nearby at the top of the stairs, carding people. He sees Trent's signal and comes over, impeccably courteous.

HEAD BOUNCER

Problem, Mr. Trent?

TRENT

That big guy down there in the camouflage jacket? He's been bothering me all day.

(showing his member's card)

Charter members shouldn't be bothered. It affects the size of their tips.

He dexterously shifts his fingertips, revealing a fifty dollar bill behind the card. The bouncer takes it, smiles.

BOUNCER

We certainly wouldn't want that, sir.

MATRIX

sweeps his gaze up and finally spots his quarry.

MATRIX

(to Melinda)

Wait here.

He moves through the dancers, heading for the stairs.

INSERT - BY THE FRONT DOOR

The doorman, rubbing his throat, is pointing Matrix out to THREE MORE BOUNCERS. They nod, move out.

MATRIX

comes to the stairs leading to the upper level -- just as the Head Bouncer comes down, blocks his way.

HEAD BOUNCER

(jerks a thumb upstairs)

Private member wants you out of here.

MATRIX

(doesn't budge)

Then I guess we have a problem.

HEAD BOUNCER

No. You have a problem.

The other three bouncers suddenly materialize at the compass points, encircling him. Matrix glances around.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

I have no argument with you.

HEAD BOUNCER

I've got one with you. Now make
like smoke and drift away.

He gives Matrix a shove for emphasis.

MATRIX

(dangerous)

That's a bad idea.

HEAD BOUNCER

Oh yeah?

(shoves him again)

Why's that?

MATRIX

Smoke gets in your eyes.

WHAM! Matrix lets the guy have it right between the eyes with a stunning blow. The bouncer hits the wall so hard the light fixture above his head BURSTS! He shakes his head to clear his vision, showering bits of glass off his head.

HEAD BOUNCER

Mister. You just made the
endangered species list.

And the fight is on! The four enormous bouncers tackle Matrix at once, momentum carrying them through the dancers on the floor and beyond -- people scatter, SCREAMING, as the combatants plow through the tables, drinks cascading through the air.

MELINDA

is stunned as people stampede around her.

TRENT

takes this opportunity to get the hell out of there. He snatches up his stuff and jams a twenty into his date's hand.

TRENT

Sorry babe, gotta book. Here's
cab fare home.

DATE

What?

TRENT

Past my bedtime.

And with that he's gone, tearing down the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

THE FIGHT

rages on, with Matrix the eye of the hurricane. He deftly dispatches one bouncer just in time to meet the charge of another, spinning him into the wall. Another guy jumps him from behind -- Matrix goes with the momentum and flings him over his head, right through the front window --

EXT - CLUB

Pedestrians scatter as the bouncer EXPLODES through the window and hits the sidewalk in a shower of glass.

INT - CLUB

Matrix peers out, glances over at Melinda.

MATRIX

I don't know why they call them bouncers. They don't bounce.

An attacker flies into Matrix, taking him right out of frame. Melinda sighs, raises her micro-cassette to her lips.

MELINDA

Memo: try to meet some sensitive men.

THE BARTENDER

ducks some flying debris as he dials 911.

TRENT

reaches the bottom level and fights his way through the crowd toward the exit. Matrix tosses a bouncer aside and goes after Trent like a heat-seeking missile. He catches up to him and grabs the back of his jacket.

MATRIX

What's your hurry, Trent? Let me buy you a drink.

He swings Trent around like a "crack-the-whip" and sends him flying -- Trent sails over the bar and bodily demolishes the bottles lining the shelves (not to mention the shelves).

The bouncers regroup and come at Matrix from behind, trying to drive him to the floor with their combined weight just as --

TRENT

pops up from behind the bar, bloody, crazed, and soaked with booze. He whips out a revolver and starts FIRING WILDLY.

(CONTINUED)

THE BOUNCERS

don't much care for this new wrinkle -- they dive for cover.

MATRIX

tips a table up and drags Melinda down behind it -- as BULLETS CRASH into the wood, throwing splinters in the air.

TRENT

makes for the fire exit, plowing through screaming, cowering patrons. He crashes through the doors and finds himself in --

A STAIRWELL

The outer doors are heavily chained. Shit. He heads up to the roof, taking the stairs two at a time.

INT - CLUB

Matrix pauses long enough to check on Melinda:

MATRIX

Are you all right?

MELINDA

How do you manage to antagonize so many people? I mean, have you ever met anybody that didn't try to kill you on sight?

MATRIX

(shrugs)

My mother loves me.

He bounds over the table and goes after Trent. Melinda realizes that people are staring at her. She looks around self-consciously.

MELINDA

I just can't take him anywhere.

EXT - ROOF - NIGHT

A jumble of air-conditioning ducts and housings. Trent bursts from the stairwell and runs like hell across the roof, twisting and turning through the maze -- but then he jams on the brakes, skidding to a wild stop because --

ANOTHER ANGLE

-- he's at the very edge of the roof, teetering on the brink of a four story drop to the alley below. He backs up, heart thudding in his chest, and looks wildly across at:

(CONTINUED)

THE NEIGHBORING BUILDING

You know, the one that's always within jumping distance? Well, forget it, because this one ain't. There isn't a human being in the world who'd try it -- it's thirty feet away and a full story shorter.

As if to discourage him from even considering it, Nancy Reagan's face smiles at Trent from a huge brightly-lit billboard that reads: "JUST SAY NO."

TRENT

hears the stairwell door THUMP SHUT. Panicked, he tears himself away from Nancy and circles for advantage, gun leveled.

He hears a CREAK off to the left -- he spins and FIRES, the bullet SPANGS off the metal of a fan housing.

Matrix suddenly steps into view, advancing ominously.

MATRIX

Missed. Try again.

Trent levels the gun, aims right at Matrix' heart. Matrix just keeps coming. Trent pulls the trigger and --

-- a HOLLOW CLICK. Trent looks at his empty gun, eyes wide. Matrix grabs him by the tie and drags him choking to his tippy-toes, glaring eyeball to eyeball.

MATRIX

People who use revolvers should learn how to count to six.

He propels Trent wildly by the tie to the edge of the roof and leans him out past the edge of his balance. Trent teeters over the terrifying drop, arms flailing, his tie the only thing between him and certain death. The toes of his wingtip shoes are scraping the edge of the roof, desperate for purchase. POLICE SIRENS SWELL in the distance. Getting closer.

Throughout the scene, the tie keeps slipping incrementally through Matrix' grasp:

TRENT

Matrix! Don't do anything crazy!

MATRIX

Like what? Drop you? Turn you into a puddle of grease on the pavement?
(tie slips an inch)
Why would I want to do that? Just because you're the leak in McCarren's organization?

(CONTINUED)

TRENT
(tie slips another inch)
--no--ho!

MATRIX
You're responsible for the massacre
in Costa Rica! Good men died because
of you! General Kirby came home in
a bag--

(tightens the tie, choking
Trent with each word)
~~because--of--you!~~...

TRENT
(gasping)
Matrix--stop--please!

MATRIX
What were those lives worth, Trent?
How many pieces of silver did the
drug lords pay you for each pound
of flesh?

TRENT
No, Matrix, you got it all wrong!

MATRIX
Then set me straight. But do it
quick -- my palm's getting sweaty.

His palm is getting sweaty -- the tie slips another inch.

TRENT
I can't!

Suddenly, we hear a SOFT RIPPING SOUND -- Trent's tie is
splitting, the fabric tearing. He goes goggle-eyed with terror.

MATRIX
Cheap material.

TRENT
For Christ's sakes, Matrix! He'll
kill me if I talk!

MATRIX
Somebody scares you more than me? Who?

Another RIP -- the tear is growing, widening...

TRENT
McCarren--McCarren!

Matrix reacts. Astonishment. Disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

McCarren? He's a patriot!

TRENT

It's true, I swear! There is no
leak! McCarren arranged the ambush
in Costa Rica!

Riiiiiiip! Trent gazes in horror at his ever-disintegrating
tie. A soft whine escapes his throat.

TRENT

Matrix, please. Save me. Don't let
me fall. Pull me up. For the love
of God. pull me up!

Matrix considers it. He glances over at --

NANCY REAGAN

smiling pleasantly at him from the billboard, urging him to
"Just Say No."

MATRIX

takes Nancy's advice, turns back to Trent, and Just Says:

MATRIX

No.

He releases the tie. Trent topples backward, arms flailing, and
vanishes over the edge.

TRENT

falling through empty space, SCREAMING all the way down.

He hits an awning, RIPS through it, CRASHES into a trash-filled
dumpster. Garbage ERUPTS, geysering into the air.

We hear a soft GROAN. The garbage shifts, revealing Trent very
much alive, covered with muck and coffee grounds.

ON THE ROOF

Matrix peers down, impressed:

MATRIX

Good aim.

Suddenly, POLICEMAN burst from the stairwell, swarming onto the
roof with weapons drawn.

COP

Freeze it right there!

(CONTINUED)

Matrix is in no mood to cooperate -- he runs hell bent along the edge of the roof as BULLETS tear up the tarpaper at his feet, and --

Holy shit, there was one human being who would try that jump across to the next building! Matrix leaps through the air --

THE BILLBOARD

-- and catches an overhanging light fixture, which SNAPS under his weight, SPARKING AND SIZZLING, the change in leverage and his momentum SLAMMING him right through the billboard and out the other side where --

OTHER SIDE

-- he CRASHES through the wooden supports, SNAPPING them like match sticks -- they beat the hell out of him but also help break his fall, and then he's spun out diagonally and hits --

-- the roof! Matrix jumps to his feet and keeps running.

THE COPS

just stand there, gazing numbly across at:

NANCY REAGAN'S SMILING FACE

which now has a huge hole in it -- a hole in the unmistakable shape of John Matrix. Wile E. Coyote, eat your heart out.

CUT TO:

EXT - MCCARREN ESTATE - NIGHT

A fancy gated estate in an exclusive section of Los Angeles. Expensive cars are pulling up the long driveway to a team of uniformed valets. A black tie party is in progress.

INT - MCCARREN'S PRIVATE STUDY

Dark wood, antiques, a reek of old money. A TV screen shows a REPORTER standing in the rubble of the Club Litho Disco. The sound is MUTED, but the message is clear -- especially when the image cuts to a file photo of John Matrix.

ANGLE TO McCarren staring at the screen. Melinda paces the room in agitation, while Gunther stands by.

MELINDA

And before you could say
"aggravated assault," there were
bodies flying everywhere, guns
going off, people screaming...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELINDA (cont'd.)
I'm telling you, this guy has no future in public relations. He definitely brings out the worst in people.

MCCARREN
His behavior hardly reflects well on McCarren Industries, does it?

MELINDA
I know how loyal you are to your employees, but a man in your position can't be associated with somebody like Matrix. He's simply too...

MCCARREN
...unstable?

MELINDA
I think the legal term is "stark raving bugfuck."

A thought strikes her. She raises the micro-cassette.

MELINDA
Memo: explore mental disturbance as possible grounds for defense --

CRASH! She jumps, the recorder flies from her hand as --

THE FRENCH DOORS

EXPLODE inward, kicked off their hinges, showering glass and wood! Matrix BURSTS into the room, entering off the veranda.

Gunther goes for his gun, but McCarren quickly gestures him to ease off. Gunther does -- but keeps his hand in his coat, waiting for the slightest wrong move.

MELINDA
(eyeing Matrix)
Well, if it isn't the Prince of Property Damage.

MATRIX
(to McCarren)
I've come to talk.

MCCARREN
Counselor? Why don't you wait in the next room? Mingle with my guests. This won't take long.

(CONTINUED)

MELINDA

You boys have a nice meeting.
(glances at Matrix)
Try not to break anything.

And with that she's gone, closing the door behind her. Matrix circles ominously into the room.

MCCARREN

John, about that fiasco at the airport -- I'm as upset as you are, believe me. All that cocaine, wasted...

MATRIX

Cut the bullshit, McCarren. You betrayed General Kirby. Give me one good reason I shouldn't kill you.

McCarren shakes his head, crosses to the bar to fix a drink.

MCCARREN

You're a hothead, John. A loose cannon on the deck. I thought if I gave you a job, I could keep my eye on you -- keep you on a short leash.
(sips his bourbon)

I can see now I was wrong. I made a tactical error, I admit that. A loose cannon is a loose cannon, no matter how you try to strap it down. I suppose now all we can do is try to pick up the pieces.

MATRIX

Pick up the phone instead. Tell the police the truth.

MCCARREN

And just what is this "truth" you so passionately wish the police to know?

MATRIX

That you're a filthy slime who poisons children with drugs...a murderer responsible for the massacre in Costa Rica...a hypocrite and a traitor who wraps himself in the flag and calls himself a patriot.

MCCARREN

(dangerous)

You may question many things, Colonel...but don't question my patriotism. That I do not allow.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX
(incredulous)
"You do not allow?"

MCCARREN
There are circumstances here you
can't possibly guess...more levels
to this than you know.

MATRIX
You son of a bitch --

He moves toward McCarren. Gunther is suddenly there, spinning
Matrix around -- each man throws an AWESOME BLOW which rocks
the other's head --

A KNOCK at the door. McCarren gestures both men to back off.

MCCARREN
Come in.

The door opens and a PERSONAL SECRETARY pokes her head in. She
discreetly ignores the mess.

SECRETARY
Mr. McCarren? There's a Mr. Trent
here to see you, he insists it's
quite urgent...

MATRIX
He's running home to bark to his
master.

MCCARREN
(to Gunther)
Take care of him.
(Gunther hesitates,
glances at Matrix)
I'll be fine.

Gunther walks out the door. We can see Melinda in the hallway
beyond, trying to peer into the room, dying of curiosity -- and
beyond her, we see Trent pacing the hallway, face bandaged, arm
in a sling. The door shuts, leaving McCarren alone with Matrix.

MCCARREN
Surprised we're alone? Don't be.
I'm not afraid of you, John. I was
helping presidents get elected
while you were still picking
turnips back in East Germany. I
have real power. I don't need a gun
or a knife -- I just have to pick
up the phone, and I can destroy you
and your whole family.

(CONTINUED)

Matrix smashes the drink from McCarren's hand, grabs him by the shirtfront, slams him back against the wall hard enough to make the picture frames rattle.

MATRIX

Don't ever threaten my family...

MCCARREN

That's right, beat my brains out. Get my blood on the walls -- right here, next to these pictures of me shaking hands with every president from Kennedy to Reagan. Go ahead, break my arm -- it'll make a big impression when you go to trial.

Matrix eases off, gets control of himself.

MCCARREN

That's better. Now, let me suggest an alternate scenario. You plead guilty to the drug charge. With my connections, you'll get five to seven, tops. With time off for good behavior, you'll be out in thirty months. I'm sure we can even arrange one of those country club prisons. What do you say?

MATRIX

I'll take my chances in court.

McCarren sighs, shakes his head.

MCCARREN

I urge you to reconsider. The system does work, John...but it works my way.

MATRIX

We'll see.

Matrix turns and exits, vanishing into the night.

McCarren goes to the door and opens it. Melinda waits just outside, consumed with curiosity. He gestures her in.

MCCARREN

You were right. Matrix is insane. I'm taking your advice and washing my hands of him. He's fired, and you no longer represent him.

(beat)

Now if you'll excuse me, I have guests to attend to.

(CONTINUED)

MELINDA

Of course. I'll just get my things.

McCarren walks down the hall. Melinda goes to the sofa and grabs her purse, then roots around for her lost recorder. She finds it behind the cushion where it fell, and starts to put in in her purse when she notices --

TIGHT ON RECORDER

The spindles are turning -- it's been recording all this time.

MELINDA

reacts with curiosity and apprehension. She glances around guiltily, clicks the recorder off, and jams it in her purse.

INT. - MANSION

McCarren joins the party, grabs a glass of champagne off a passing tray. Gunther appears at his side.

MCCARREN

We've got two big problems.

GUNTHER

I know...Trent and Matrix.

He also grabs a glass of champagne. Smiles at McCarren.

GUNTHER

I just took care of both.

Off McCarren's questioning look, we

CUT TO:

INT - MATRIX' JEEP - NIGHT

Matrix drives home, angry with himself, angry at the world. A storm lashes torrents of rain against the windshield as the wipers SLAP-SLAP-SLAP against the downpour.

EXT - MATRIX HOME

The jeep pulls up, cuts its lights and engine. Matrix gets out, jacket over his head, and starts toward the house when --

BLAZING LIGHTS

kick on all around him, encircling him, blinding him. Matrix turns slowly around, hands raised. POLICE are all around him, shadowy forms in the downpour and the glare. Disorienting, jarring, nightmarish...

(CONTINUED)

VOICE

John Matrix?

MATRIX

What's the meaning of this?

VOICE

Please move to the rear of your
vehicle and open the tailgate!

Matrix does as he's told, moves toward the rear of the jeep.

INT - HOUSE - JENNY'S BEDROOM

Jenny groggily peers out the window at all the commotion, her
expression turning to alarm and surprise.

EXT - JEEP

Matrix fumbles with the keys, trying to open the tailgate. The
lock seems jammed. The cops look jumpy as hell.

VOICE

Sir, open the tailgate.

MATRIX

It's jammed! Somebody's been
fooling with --The tailgate drops, and a blanket-wrapped form tumbles out onto
the ground. A dozen flashlights fall on the object, revealing --

TRENT

lies in the mud, gazing up into the rain with sightless eyes,
throat slit from ear to ear.

HANDHELD CAMERA

turns things even more nightmarish as the cops close in,
adrenalin flying, confusion and chaos in the rain and glare.

VOICE

Face down on the ground and hands
above your head!

MATRIX

I don't know anything about this!

VOICE

On the ground, goddamn it! Now!

JENNY

bursts from the house, splashing through the storm.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

STOP IT!

MATRIX

spins toward her --

MATRIX

Jenny! Go back!

PANICKED COPS

also spin, taken by surprise, blinded by rain -- A SHOT IS FIRED!

JENNY

takes the hit and recoils, arms flying up as she hurls back to land in a crumpled heap in the mud.

THE COPS/MATRIX

A stunned, endless moment...eternities passing in the space of mere heartbeats...

COP #1

Jesus Christ, it's just a kid!

COP #2

I thought I saw a gun!

Matrix lets loose an earthshaking shaking cry of anguish --

MATRIX

NOOOOOOOO!

-- and hurls the cops aside, rushing to Jenny's side.

TIGHT ON MATRIX

as he goes to his knees in the mud, scoops his daughter up in his massive arms, tears of anguish mingling with rain.

MATRIX

Jenny...oh, Jenny...

Suddenly, the butt of a shotgun SLAMS into the back of Matrix' head with brutal force! Jenny falls from his grasp and he topples forward --

CLOSEUP - MATRIX - SLOW MOTION

-- to land facefirst in the mud, out like a light. --

FADE TO BLACK

INT - HOLDING CELL - COURT BUILDING - NIGHT

TIGHT ON Matrix. He sits shackled to a steel chair, hands cuffed, face a mask of stone, not really listening to:

VOICE (O.S.)

Listen pal, you're getting arraigned in an hour. You can't stroll in there with some crazy story about getting framed. I know this judge, he's got no sense of humor.

ANGLE WIDENS to reveal the COURT APPOINTED LAWYER, a ferret who's taste runs to plaid:

LAWYER

Face it, you ain't got a prayer of making bail. There's a hundred witnesses from the nightclub who swear you tried to kill the victim not two hours ago. It's pretty overwhelming evidence --

MELINDA (O.S.)

It's circumstantial horseshit.

MELINDA

briskly enters the scene, heels CLICKING on the tile. Matrix is flabbergasted to see her.

LAWYER

Who the hell are you?

Melinda cocks a thumb at Matrix.

MELINDA

His legal representative.

LAWYER

Now wait just a minute! I've been appointed by the court!

MELINDA

I'm un-appointing you. Piss off.

The lawyer grabs his stuff and storms off, leaving Melinda alone with Matrix. He gives her a long stony look.

MATRIX

Tell McCarren I won't cut any deals. In fact, the only thing I'll cut is his fucking heart out.

(CONTINUED)

MELINDA

McCarren didn't send me. I'm here
on my own. I want to help you.

MATRIX

(wry, angry)

Why? I'm a filthy drug running
scum, remember?

She glances around -- the guards are out of earshot. She pulls
the micro-cassette from her pocket and CLICKS it on.

MCCARREN'S VOICE (filtered)

...fiasco at the airport -- I'm
as upset as you are, believe me.
All that cocaine, wasted...

She CLICKS it off. Matrix looks at her with growing respect.

MELINDA

McCarren doesn't know it yet, but I
don't work for him anymore -- I can't,
not if I'm going to represent you.
It's called conflict of interest.

MATRIX

(finally smiles)

I could get to like you.

MELINDA

Look, don't get all mushy. I don't
think my heartstrings can take the
tugging. Fact is, we're both in
deep shit and you know it.

MATRIX

(nods at tape)

Play that in court.

MELINDA

Matrix, this is just an arraignment,
the trial comes later. Besides,
this is dynamite -- we have to
handle it carefully or it'll blow
up in our faces.

MATRIX

(getting angry)

I have to get out of here. I
have to find out about Jenny.

MELINDA

(softening)

Your daughter?

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

(nods, furious)

They haven't told me anything. They won't tell me if she's alive or dead! I'm her father!

MELINDA

I'll try to find out what I can. In the meantime, let's see about getting you out of here.

MATRIX

(bitterly)

How?

MELINDA

(beat, smiles)

Trust me.

CUT TO:

INT - JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

JUDGE BOYLE stares at Melinda:

JUDGE BOYLE

Release him on bail? You can't be serious! He's a danger to the public!

MELINDA

Your Honor, I've come into possession of certain evidence that conclusively proves my client's innocence.

Boyle reacts, stunned. He holds his hand up to silence her.

BOYLE

Counselor, you're not a first year law student. You know better than to discuss evidentiary matters with me prior to an arraignment.

MELINDA

I know it's highly irregular --

BOYLE

It goes beyond that. It's a matter of legality, of ethics. I could hold you in contempt for this tactic -- possibly even have you disbarred.

MELINDA

Yes sir. I realize that.

Pause. Boyle steeples his fingers, considers the ramifications.

(CONTINUED)

BOYLE

Not that we ever had this discussion, mind you -- but theoretically speaking, what might the nature of this evidence be?

She pulls the micro-cassette from her jacket pocket.

MELINDA

I accidentally recorded a conversation between my client and the party responsible for framing him.

Boyle buries his face in his hands. Instant headache.

BOYLE

Oh God, I had to ask. The admissibility alone...

MELINDA

I fully intend to corroborate this by the time we go to trial. In the meantime, my client should not be held without bail. He's innocent. It would be a terrible injustice for him to rot in jail until his trial date comes up.

The judge sags visibly -- and gives a reluctant nod.

HALLWAY - OUTSIDE JUDGE'S CHAMBER

Melinda exits the judge's chamber. The moment the door closes, her sober facade vanishes and she breaks into a huge grin!

MELINDA

'atta girl!

She spins on her heel and hurries down the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT - MCCARREN'S STUDY - NIGHT

Gunther holds the phone out to McCarren.

GUNTHER

It's for you.

MCCARREN

(grabs the phone)

Yes?

(listens)

I see. Are you absolutely sure?

(CONTINUED)

INT - JUDGE BOYLE'S CHAMBERS

TIGHT ON Judge Boyle speaking into the phone:

BOYLE

She just walked out here with the
tape in her pocket...

INT - MCCARREN'S STUDY

MCCARREN

I'll get back to you.

McCarren hangs up. CAMERA GOES IN TIGHT as he looks up, demonic
rage boiling just below the surface.

MCCARREN

She had that recorder in here.
The bitch.

CUT TO:

INT - COURT ROOM - NIGHT

The place is packed -- a real media circus. Matrix is led into
the courtroom under POLICE GUARD. Melinda goes to his side.

MELINDA

They took Jenny to Angel of Mercy.
She went through surgery -- they
list her as critical.

MATRIX

Is she conscious?

MELINDA

(hesitates)

No. She's in a coma.

Matrix nods, grateful for her honesty. They both take their
place at the defendant's dock.

BAILIFF (O.S.)

Oyez, oyez, Night Court of Los
Angeles is now in session, the
honorable Willis Boyle presiding.

MELINDA

Don't worry about a thing. We'll be
out of here in no time.

(off his questioning look)

I pulled a big move.

Judge Boyle takes his place on the bench, RAPS his gavel for
silence. Melinda approaches the bench.

(CONTINUED)

MELINDA

Your Honor, if I may, I'd like to start by familiarizing the court with the defendant's background --

BOYLE

(cuts her off)

No, Counselor. You may not. Defendant's background has no bearing on these proceedings.

Melinda is stumped -- this is the last thing she expected.

BOYLE

I see no reason to prolong this. Charges include murder, narcotics, assault, battery, resisting arrest...I see sufficient cause here. I order defendant held without bail, pending trial.

A buzz goes through the courtroom. Boyle raps his gavel for silence. Matrix and Melinda exchange a glance -- something is going horribly wrong here.

BOYLE

Furthermore, Counselor, I cite you for contempt of court -- on grounds of improper conduct and attempting to tamper with the judicial process. I sentence you to sixty days in County jail, pending disbarment proceedings.

Another buzz goes through the courtroom. Matrix mutters:

MATRIX

Your big move?

Melinda gives a weak nod. Matrix glances over and sees:

GUNTHER

stands at the courtroom entrance. He gives Matrix a nasty smile, tosses off a jaunty salute.

MATRIX

reacts, realizing the extent of the corruption around him. He turns back to the judge, who is POUNDING his gavel for silence.

MATRIX

Your Honor! May I say something?

Silence descends, all eyes on Matrix.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

My family came to this country
because it represented something...
a way of life...a promise. But
that promise is hollow...and this
country means nothing...if men
like McCarren can buy men like you!

The courtroom EXPLODES! Flashbulbs popping, people shouting!

BOYLE

(slamming his gavel)
Bailiffs will remove the prisoner
from the courtroom!

Matrix' bailiffs grab him. Boyle motions to TWO NEW BAILIFFS
who are standing at the courtroom entrance near Gunther.

BOYLE

Special bailiffs shall remove
Council and escort her to booking!

The two bailiffs come get Melinda -- they grab her, dragging
her up the aisle through the chaos.

MATRIX

is being wrestled away. He turns toward Melinda and suddenly
realizes --

MELINDA'S BAILIFFS

aren't bailiffs at all -- they're Burroughs and Jennings, two
of Gunther's men dressed in bailiff's uniforms!

MATRIX

punches one of his guards clear across the aisle. The other guy
goes for his gun, but Matrix grabs his wrist and wrenches his
aim toward Melinda and her abductors --

BLAM! One of the "bailiffs" (Jennings) takes the round in the
chest even as he tries to draw his sidearm, blown back over the
seats in a spray of blood. Melinda spins to Matrix in horror --

MELINDA

Matrix, Jesus, it's only a contempt
citation!

-- but the other "bailiff" (Burroughs) throws his arm around
her and drags her up the aisle -- as he draws his sidearm and
FIRES WILDLY at Matrix!

Utter chaos in the crowded courtroom. People screaming, diving
for cover. Burroughs and Gunther drag Melinda from the courtroom.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

tries to go after them, but legitimate bailiffs come at him from all sides. Matrix takes them on, tossing them about like dirty linen in a Chinese laundry.

One guy levels his sidearm -- Matrix leaps onto the judge's desk, kicking the weapon up -- the SHOT blows out an overhead light in a shower of glass.

Matrix vaults up and over the desk, grabbing Boyle and dragging him out of his chair. He uses him as a shield as cops and bailiffs take aim for all corners of the room.

BOYLE

Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

INT - COURTHOUSE

Gunther and Burroughs fly down the stairs, dragging Melinda, scattering bystanders in all directions.

INT - COURTROOM

Matrix has Boyle in a stranglehold, all weapons on him. He's cut off, no hope of getting to the exit. He glances at a window nearby -- thick glass inset with heavy gauge steel mesh.

BOYLE

Give it up, Matrix. You'd need a battering ram to get through that.

MATRIX

(beat)

You're right.

EXT - WINDOW

Judge Willis Boyle (aka "The Human Battering Ram") is thrown through the window with incredible force, hitting the terra cotta tile roof in a storm of glass and twisted metal.

Matrix dives out the window after him, bullets TEARING chunks from the window frame -- he hits the tile roof, rolls to his feet, keeps running.

EXT - PARKING LOT

Gunther and Burroughs struggle to get Melinda into the back of a sedan -- Gunther slaps her brutally, then shoves her in.

INT - CAR

The DOOR LOCKS SLAM SHUT as Melinda tries vainly to get out. Gunther and Burroughs pile into the front seat, with Gunther at

(CONTINUED)

the wheel. He peels out, veering crazily through the parking lot, barely avoiding half a dozen collisions as Burroughs leans over the back of his seat and struggles with Melinda. High volume, screaming intensity:

GUNTHER

Does she have it? Is it on her?

BURROUGHS

Give it up, bitch!

EXT - COURTHOUSE ROOF

Matrix races across the roof, leaping from one terra cotta level to another -- as Gunther's car SCREECHES through a series of turns in the parking lot below, heading toward the street.

Matrix cuts in another direction, leaping to another level, trying to run an intercepting course.

He keeps moving, eyes riveted to the car, and leaps to yet another level -- only to find that it isn't there! He falls onto a steeply angled gable below, tumbling and sliding wildly, like an out of control ride down a water slide --

MATRIX

Shiiiiiiit!

-- and hits another gable, sliding ass-and-elbows in an entirely new direction as --

INT - CAR

Burroughs finally gets the micro-cassette away from Melinda and twists back around in his seat. A triumphant shout:

BURROUGHS

GOT IT!

THE CAR

BLASTS out of the parking lot into the street, scattering traffic as --

MATRIX

sails off the edge of the roof into empty space, hurtling in a barely controlled fall that lands him --

INT/EXT - CAR

-- right onto the hood of Gunther's speeding car! The occupants SCREAM and the car swerves wildly, Matrix riding the front like a giant pissed-off hood ornament.

(CONTINUED)

Matrix HOWLS with righteous fury, draws his arm back -- and puts his fist right through the windshield, grabbing Burroughs by the throat! Gunther instinctively SLAMS on the brakes and --

MATRIX

sails off the front of the car as the tires lock up -- but he doesn't let go of Burroughs! Burroughs ERUPTS through the windshield and both men hit the pavement in a storm of safety glass!

MELINDA'S MICRO-CASSETTE

skids wildly across the pavement, spinning into traffic.

MATRIX AND BURROUGHS

don't waste any time -- they're on their feet and duking it out as traffic SCREAMS wildly around them.

INT - CAR

Melinda and Gunther are stunned -- Gunther goes for his gun and tries to leap from the car, but Melinda's all over him from the back seat, fighting him like a wildcat!

MATRIX AND BURROUGHS

go at it, a brutal flurry of martial arts moves that almost sends each man into the path of wildly swerving cars.

Burroughs gets his gun out of its holster -- but Matrix grabs his wrist, keeping the gun at bay. Both men have each other in a hold, grunting and straining for advantage, trying to beat the other guy's leverage. Burroughs grins through bloody teeth:

BURROUGHS

Ever have a .44 enema, Matrix? I'm gonna stick this gun up your ass and pull the trigger.

Matrix flicks his eyes up and sees:

A CITY BUS

ROARING up the street toward them.

MATRIX

gives Burroughs a grim smile.

MATRIX

Lend me a hand, will you?

(CONTINUED)

Matrix snatches the handcuffs off Burroughs' uniform belt, CLICKS it shut around his gun hand -- and with a smooth pivot, locks the handcuff onto the bus as it hurtles past! Burroughs slams off the side of the bus and is spun around!

THE BUS

rumbles away.

BURROUGHS

stands gazing numbly after the bus -- then raises his arm into view, gazing in horror at the ragged stump where his hand used to be!

MATRIX

What? No applause?

He nails Burroughs with a flying kick to the chest, propelling him back into the path of another bus coming from the opposite direction. The bus SLAMS into him, dragging him under.

INT - CAR

Gunther subdues Melinda with a vicious elbow to the face, slams the car into drive, and hits the gas.

MATRIX

dives aside as the car ROARS by, barely missing him. He rolls to his feet just in time to catch a glimpse of Melinda's terrified face pressed against the glass -- then the car spins through a wild turn and SCREECHES off into the night.

Matrix runs across the lanes of traffic and scoops Melinda's micro-cassette off the pavement. POLICE SIRENS SWELL.

PUSH IN on Matrix as he looks up, gazing after the car. His expression is fierce, unyielding. He turns and races off into the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - STREET/PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

DOLLYING SLOWLY to Matrix in a phone booth.

MATRIX

I have a tape, McCarren. You really should hear it.

MCCARREN (filtered)

What do you propose?

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

A trade. The tape for the girl.

MCCARREN (filtered)

Be here at sun up. We'll be ready
for you.

MATRIX

(grim smile)

I know you will.

Matrix hangs up as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT/INT - ANGEL OF MERCY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Pretty much deserted at this time of night. Empty corridors...

INT - JENNY'S ROOM

Dimly lit. She lies unconscious, her breathing shallow, wires
and tubes hooking her up to machines. Long beat...

A shadow looms over her fragile form.

MATRIX

stands over her, his fatherly heart breaking. He sits down,
and is silent for a time. PUSH IN SLOWLY as he speaks:

MATRIX

We thought this would be a good
place to raise a child...your
mother and I. So we came to this
country.

(beat)

Jenny...you find it so easy to
forgive. I find it so difficult.
You are the best and gentlest part
of me. If you die, I will have no
gentleness left...

(intense)

...and then God help them. God help
them all.

We realize that Matrix -- so immovable, so fierce -- is holding
back tears. He takes her small hand tenderly in his.

MATRIX

I promised you I'd never go back to
war. But a war has come to me.

(beat)

I have to break my promise. Please
forgive me.

(CONTINUED)

Matrix leans over her, gives her a gentle kiss, and whispers fiercely in her ear:

MATRIX

I'll be back.

Matrix tears himself away from her and moves to the door. He gives her one last look, then he's out the door and gone.

CAMERA PUSHES SLOWLY IN on Jenny, MOVING IN TIGHT...her eyes flutter open...a faint whisper:

JENNY

Daddy...?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - MCCARREN INDUSTRIES - DAWN

Modern glass and steel, glinting in the early morning sun. BOOM DOWN to reveal Matrix standing in the street, gazing up at it.

He walks to the gate. It WHINES open before him.

Matrix enters the complex. GUARDS are positioned in strategic locations, sniper rifles pointed in his direction.

Charlie Dorrit steps up to Matrix, runs a metal detector up and down his body. The man looks pained, almost embarrassed.

DORRIT

Colonel. We don't know what's going on...but we have our orders.

MATRIX

What are they?

DORRIT

We make sure you walk straight from the gate to the front door. If you deviate at all, we shoot to kill. Once you're inside, we're supposed to stay at our posts...no matter what happens.

MATRIX

They don't want any witnesses.

DORRIT

(pained, sincere)
Colonel, I...we're sorry. All of us.

MATRIX

(at Main Building)
Who's in there?

(CONTINUED)

DORRIT
(doesn't hesitate)
McCarren, Gunther...and the rest of
those CIA-looking motherfuckers.

MATRIX
(nods, grateful)
You're good men, all of you. You
follow your orders to the letter,
understand?

DORRIT
Yes sir, Colonel.

Matrix walks from the gate to the Main Building, the eyes and
weapons of dozens of men trained on him.

The front door unlocks with an automated THUMP, slides open
hydraulically. Matrix enters. The doors slides shut behind him.

INT - LOBBY SECURITY POST

Four of Gunther's men are waiting for him -- Miles, Linder,
Bowden, Scudder. Dressed in black fatigues and aiming Uzis.

MATRIX
Where's McCarren?

Miles presses a button on the board. Monitor screens wink to
life -- one reveals McCarren's face -- another Gunther's -- and
still another shows Melinda bound and gagged, eyes feverish
with terror...as Patterson, the last of Gunther's men, holds an
automatic pistol to her head. (Patterson also has handgrenades
dangling from his chest -- this boy's been reading Soldier of
Fortune.) They're on the top floor, main security station.

MATRIX
(glances up)
Why don't you come downstairs,
McCarren? Say hello in person.

MCCARREN
I'm fine right here, thanks.
You said you had a tape?

Matrix nods. Slips the cassette from his shirt pocket.

MCCARREN
Matrix...did it occur to you that
you might be walking into a trap?

MATRIX
Of course. You can't afford to let
us leave here alive, me or the girl.

(CONTINUED)

MCCARREN

Then why did you come?

MATRIX

A question of honor. Something you wouldn't understand.

MCCARREN

Don't goad me, Matrix.

(nods at Melinda)

No need to worry about her...she's joining me on a little trip. As for you...let's just say you're dying for your country.

Miles takes the tape from Matrix and inserts it into the security panel. He flicks a series of toggles, slides the volume lever up. His finger hovers over the PLAY button, awaiting the order.

MCCARREN

Let's hear it.

Miles hits the play button. An extended moment of TAPE HISS, and then...

"Gimme Some Lovin'" by the Spencer Davis Group BLARES through the corridors at full volume, triggering an eruption of split-second mayhem:

Matrix grabs the nearest man, Bowden, spins him into a hold as --

-- the other three men OPEN FIRE --

-- and the hapless Bowden becomes a "human shield," taking all the hits, SCREAMING and shuddering under the impact of the bullets, REFLEX-FIRING his Uzi into the air --

-- and Matrix, holding him from behind, grabs Bowden's wrist and "puppets" his arm at the other men, raking the weapon back and forth and BLOWING AWAY Miles and Linder like tin ducks in a shooting gallery, their bodies shredding as they fly back in a helter-skelter tangle, cartwheeling over the security panel.

Scudder dives out the door and escapes as bullets chew the doorjamb to pieces.

MATRIX

runs the clip dry. Abrupt, stunning silence.

Matrix takes the Uzi, tosses Bowden's corpse aside, and strides to the security board. McCarren stares at him from the video screens, pale and stunned.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

I said I'd bring a tape. I didn't say which tape.

He pulls an ammunition clip off of Linder's body lying across the security board. Slaps the clip into his weapon. Cocks it.

MATRIX

I never told you the most important rule of security, McCarren...

He takes half a step back; raises the Uzi --

MATRIX

Never invite the enemy through your front door.

-- and BLASTS the bank of video monitors to sparking fragments.

INT - MAIN SECURITY STATION - TOP FLOOR

McCarren watches his video screens go blank.

MCCARREN

Activate the hallway lasers.

GUNTHER

As soon as Scudder gets clear.

His eyes are riveted to another video feed -- on the screen, we see Scudder race up the hallway and get safely around the corner.

GUNTHER

(into headset)

Scudder, hold your position there.
We're activating laser intercept.

Gunther punches up the command. The computer screen starts flashing a message: AUTOMATED LASER INTERCEPT NOW TRACKING.

INT - HALLWAY OF LASERS - GROUND FLOOR

Panels near the ceiling HISS open -- dozens of laser heads WHINE from their hiding places and snap into position, swiveling like high-tech cobras searching for prey. A gauntlet of death from one end of the hallway to the other.

Matrix peers cautiously around the corner. He ducks back as the nearest laser pivots and SPITS A STREAK OF RED LIGHT that misses him by inches and carves a SMOKING HOLE in the wall opposite. He glances around, mind racing --

MATRIX

Laser interceptors. Me and my great ideas.

(CONTINUED)

He goes back the way he came, and dashes into --

THE MEN'S ROOM

Typical public restroom -- white tile, urinals, stalls, a row of large mirrors above the sinks. Matrix steps to the door marked "UTILITIES" and tries the knob. Locked. A SHORT BURST from the Uzi solves that. Matrix roots around inside, pulls out a roll of duct tape and a rolling janitor's cart.

He now steps to the row of mirrors above the sinks -- heavy duty mirrors in steel frames. He jams a commando knife behind the first one, levers it out, and rips the mirror from the wall in an explosion of plaster.

INT - SECURITY STATION - TOP FLOOR

McCarren and Gunther are riveted to the board, looking for any sign of movement on the laser corridor's video feed.

McCARREN

What the hell's he doing down there?

GUNTHER

Don't sweat it. He can't get up that hallway alive.

(into headset)

Scudder? Any sign of him?

INT - HALLWAY OF LASERS - GROUND FLOOR

Scudder edges into view at the opposite end of the hallway -- and ducks back as a LASER BEAM tries to fry him.

SCUDDER

Fuck.

(into headset)

Negative. No sign. I haven't seen him since --

He pauses, listening. A SQUEAKING SOUND is coming from Matrix' end of the hallway -- getting closer...

SCUDDER

Wait a minute. I think I hear something...

MATRIX

suddenly bursts around the corner riding the bottom of the janitor's cart -- the top of the cart has been covered with bathroom mirrors duct-taped together in an umbrella-like jumble! Matrix propels the whole shebang wildly up the hallway, pumping his leg like a kid on a scooter!

(CONTINUED)

THE LASER HEADS

are targeting automatically, tracking him up the hallway and BLASTING AWAY.

MATRIX AND THE CART

run the gauntlet, LASER BLASTS deflecting off the mirrors and ricocheting in all directions, searing long grooves in the walls and even destroying some of the lasers themselves.

McCARREN, GUNTHER

gape at the video screens, watching Matrix hurtle from one end of the hallway to the other.

MATRIX AND THE CART

sail from the Hallway of Lasers, careening through a wild turn and SMASHING into the wall -- Matrix goes flying in an explosion of broken mirrors, but rolls instantly to his feet. Scudder tries to fire, but Matrix slams him back against the wall and the BURST goes up, chewing into the ceiling.

Matrix bounces Scudder off the wall with a brutal flurry of blows -- then yanks him over his head with a hip throw, slamming him flat on his back onto the janitor's cart.

Before Scudder can recover, Matrix wheels him around the corner and shoves him hurtling back into the Hallway of Lasers!

Scudder SCREAMS as he sails helplessly up the hallway on the janitor's cart -- and the lasers converge on him. BLASTING him into smoking fragments!

MATRIX

(peers after him)

Shouldn't smoke. Bad habit.

He scoops up Scudder's weapon and runs up the corridor.

INT - MAIN SECURITY STATION - TOP FLOOR

McCarren heaves a deep sigh, rubs his eyes. Migraine.

McCARREN

Seal all the elevators and stairwells.
Start the gas flowing into the shafts.

GUNTHER

Lethal or non-lethal?

McCARREN

Lethal, of course.

(CONTINUED)

Gunther grins and punches up the command.

INT - STAIRWAY/ELEVATOR SHAFTS - VARIOUS

All the doors seal with a RESOUNDING CLANG. Gas starts HISSING into all the shafts from hidden nozzles.

INT - MAIN SECURITY STATION - TOP FLOOR

Gunther's attention suddenly goes to a NEW WARNING LIGHT.

GUNTHER

He's gotten into the armory.

MCCARREN

Wonderful.

(to Patterson)

Go to the roof and warm up the helicopter. We may have to leave a little earlier than I thought.

(gestures at Melinda)

Take her with you.

Patterson grabs Melinda, yanks her to her feet. She kicks and shouts, furious -- it's just as well her mouth is taped, or our ears would be ringing.

MCCARREN

(long-suffering)

Counselor, please. We're all having a bad day.

Patterson exits, dragging Melinda with her.

INT - GROUND FLOOR ARMORY

Matrix is grabbing up weapons: an assault rifle with attached grenade launcher...a Browning 9mm pistol jammed in his belt...and last but not least, a one-shot LAWS rocket launcher.

INT - MAIN SECURITY STATION - TOP FLOOR

McCarren is on the radio phone:

MCCARREN

No, you listen to me! Read my lips! The son of a bitch has killed most of my men and he's still in the building. I don't care what this does to your precious timetable, I need you here now.

(beat)

See that you do!

He slams the phone in its cradle, turns to Gunther:

(CONTINUED)

MCCARREN

They're on their way.

But Gunther is slapping a clip into an assault rifle and heading for the door.

MCCARREN

Where do you think you're going?

GUNTHER

If he makes it up here, I'll be waiting for him.

MCCARREN

You're not getting paid to take a Pepsi challenge with Matrix.

GUNTHER

No, I'm not. This one's F.O.C...
(grins)
...free of charge.

Gunther is out the door and gone. McCarren goes to the board.

INT - GROUND FLOOR HALLWAY

Matrix comes to a door marked "STAIRS." He braces his feet, levels the assault rifle...and pauses, taking a series of deep breaths, like a diver preparing to hold his breath for an extended time. He FIRES the grenade launcher, RIPPING AN ENORMOUS HOLE in the door --

INT - STAIRWELL

-- and leaps through as soon as the debris settles, charging up the stairs through a fine gas mist. Gas is still HISSING into the stairwell from all the nozzle ports. Matrix takes the first landing, charges up toward the second floor.

This is the most grueling thing we've ever seen, a superhuman test of endurance -- Matrix holds his breath as he pounds up the steel stairs, FOOTSTEPS CLANKING, going up flight after flight, passing one floor and continuing to the next, pushing himself beyond all limits, lungs screaming for air...

By the time he reaches the door marked "5th FLOOR," his face is turning purple and his cheeks are puffed out like Dizzy Gillespie performing a particularly exotic riff. He FIRES the grenade launcher without even breaking stride and hurls himself through the EXPLODING DOOR --

INT - FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY

-- into the hallway to land in a wild sprawl of hurtling debris and choking dust. A part of the ceiling actually collapses on

(CONTINUED)

him, burying him even further. We hear a SOFT GROAN...the debris shifts slightly...Matrix' raises his head from the rubble, dazed and weak...

GUNTHER

steps into view, staring down at Matrix. He cocks his assault rifle, raises it slowly, takes careful aim.

GUNTHER

(relishing the moment)

Say goodbye, Matrix.

Matrix pokes the LAWS rocket from the debris --

MATRIX

Goodbye.

-- and pulls the trigger! WHOOOOSH!

GUNTHER

has no time to react (except for widening eyes) before the rocket catches him full in the chest and rips him off his feet, propelling him back, a SIZZLING HUMAN COMET traveling the entire length of the hallway, SCREAMING all the way, blasting through an office door and hitting the building's outer wall --

EXT - BUILDING

The EXPLOSION ERUPTS from the side of the building. A HUGE TONGUE OF FLAME rains debris (and fragments of Gunther) all over the complex.

The GUARDS react, minds blown. Some of them race toward the building, but:

DORRIT

You heard the order! Stay at your posts!

The men do as he says. PUSH IN on Dorrit as he gazes up at the giant flaming hole in the top floor.

INT - TOP FLOOR

Or what's left of it. Matrix digs his assault rifle from the debris, pumps another grenade into the chamber, and levels it at the door marked: MAIN SECURITY STATION.

INT - MAIN SECURITY STATION

The door EXPLODES off its hinges! Matrix enters, look around. Empty. He runs for the stairs to the roof.

(CONTINUED)

EXT - ROOF - DAY

McCarren races across the roof toward the waiting Jet Ranger.
Matrix lunges from the stairway.

MATRIX

McCarren!

Matrix sends GUNBURST into the air. McCarren freezes, turns.

MATRIX

You're not going anywhere.

MCCARREN

Now that's where you're wrong...

He gestures over his shoulder. Inside the helicopter, Patterson yanks Melinda against the cockpit glass and presses a gun to her head. Matrix takes careful aim -- right at McCarren's heart.

MATRIX

Go ahead. Tell him to pull the
trigger...if she dies, you die.

A long frozen moment. Suddenly --

A familiar matte black Huey gunship with no markings rises enormously into view from below roof level. Yes, this is one of the slicks that busted Nestor Pedrosa out of prison.

MATRIX

gazes up, stunned...as behind him. Huey gunship #2 also rises into view. Matrix finds himself bracketed on both sides.

MCCARREN

I'd love to stand here all day
playing guts-poker, but I really do
have a schedule to keep.

He dives into the back seat of the Jet Ranger and the chopper lifts into the air, skimming toward the edge of the roof --

But Matrix isn't ready to fold his hand just yet -- he charges wildly after the departing Jet Ranger as --

THE HUEY DOOR GUNNERS

OPEN UP, raking .30 caliber death at Matrix --

MATRIX

is chased across the roof by twin trails of MACHINE GUN FIRE,
bullets CHEWING at his heels --

(CONTINUED)

THE JET RANGER

skims away from the edge off the roof just as --

MATRIX - SLOW MOTION

-- takes a mighty leap off the edge of the building, hurtling through empty air, arms and legs pumping wildly as if trying to swim against gravity --

THE JET RANGER

-- and grabs onto the Jet Ranger's landing skid. He tries to pull himself up, but is dismayed to find that the round landing skid is polished metal and slick as glass -- it's all he can do just to keep his grip.

INT - JET RANGER

Patterson and Melinda are in front, McCarren is in back. All react as the copter veers crazily. Patterson fights the stick and regains control. McCarren presses against the window.

McCARREN

He's on the skid!

(whirls forward)

Shake him loose!

AERIAL SEQUENCE

Matrix dangles wildly off the skid as the Jet Ranger banks tightly in one direction, then another, trying to shake him loose. It's the world's hairiest trapeze act -- 'cause this trapeze ain't nailed down, it's tear-assing all over the sky.

Downtown Los Angeles whirls crazily below us -- I'm talking a tour de force of motion and vertigo guaranteed to make half the audience reach for the Dramamine. Matrix is too busy hanging on for dear life to do much of anything but go along for the ride.

The Hueys bank in, skimming from side to side, chasing the Jet Ranger all over the sky, staying tight on its tail -- a full-throttle roller coaster ride without the rails.

HUEY #1

maneuvers in, pulling alongside the Jet Ranger. A HELMETED FIGURE (we can't see his face behind the polarized visor) leans into view on the passenger side of the cockpit and peers at Matrix. He raises a microphone and thumbs a toggle -- his words BLARE FROM THE P.A. SPEAKERS like the Voice Of God:

VOICE (over P.A.)

JOHN! JOHN MATRIX!

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

gazes across at the figure, frowning. There's something about that figure...that voice...something oddly familiar...

VOICE (over P.A.)
YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW DISAPPOINTED I
AM TO SEE YOU HERE, JOHN.

And suddenly it hits Matrix like a bolt of lightning: he knows who that figure is --

THE FIGURE

slides his helmet visor back -- it's General Kirby. In the flesh, very much alive.

KIRBY (over P.A.)
I WANTED YOU BACK IN THE FIGHT,
JOHN -- BUT I WANTED YOU ON MY
SIDE. I HOPE YOU APPRECIATE THE
AWKWARD POSITION YOU'VE PUT ME IN.

MATRIX

is glowering in utter rage and betrayal -- if looks could kill, the Huey would be knocked right out of the sky.

KIRBY (over P.A.)
IT STILL ISN'T TOO LATE. I DON'T
WANT TO KILL YOU -- BUT YOU HAVE TO
AGREE TO REJOIN THE UNIT AND PUT
YOURSELF ENTIRELY UNDER MY COMMAND.
I WANT A SOLEMN OATH OF LOYALTY,
JOHN. ON YOUR HONOR.

HELICOPTERS -- AERIAL SHOT OVER L.A.

Matrix dangling from the Jet Ranger, the Hueys pacing.

KIRBY (over P.A.)
YOU'RE NOT IN MUCH OF A BARGAINING
POSITION. DO YOU AGREE TO MY TERMS?
GIVE ME A SIGN, JOHN. ANY SIGN AT ALL.

MATRIX

gives him a sign all right -- the middle finger extended in the age-old salute.

KIRBY

shakes his head and sighs. Genuine regret.

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY (over P.A.)
I'M SO SORRY IT HAD TO END THIS
WAY, JOHN. SO VERY SORRY.

He motions to the PILOT, who banks the Huey away.

The door gunners OPEN FIRE, trying to pick Matrix off the Jet Ranger's skid -- but air-to-air gunplay is hardly an exact science, and before you know it they've succeeded in putting a few rounds in the tail rotor fuselage.

INT. - JET RANGER

McCarren on the radio, screaming himself hoarse:

MCCARREN
You idiots! You're hitting us! Hold
your fire! Hold your fire!

The firing stops.

HUEY #1

Kirby gets on the headset and talks to the other Huey, motioning for it to maneuver downward.

HUEY #2

The pilot nods, acknowledging. He takes the Huey into a dive, dropping his altitude until he's below the Jet Ranger.

MATRIX

hangs helplessly from the skid, watching Huey #2 come up from below, ROTORS CUTTING THE AIR like the world's biggest meat slicer. Matrix gulps -- it is the world's biggest meat slicer, and he's the meat!

The rotors get close -- too damn close! Matrix yanks his legs up, doing frantic chin-ups on the landing skid.

MATRIX
Whooooa!

HELICOPTERS - ANGLE FROM ABOVE

The choppers are ROARING over the Harbor Freeway interchange, rush hour traffic crawling like ants hundreds of feet below.

HUEY #2

comes up below the Jet Ranger again and again, ROTORS SLASHING the air, trying to surgically remove Matrix from the skid but missing him by inches. Needless to say, Matrix keeps doing the "chin-up boogie" for all he's worth.

(CONTINUED)

INT - JET RANGER

McCarren is at a hysterical pitch. He leans forward and yanks Patterson's automatic from its holster, jacks a round into the chamber. He grabs the radio hand mike and screams at Kirby:

MCCARREN

Watch this, bright boy, I'll show you how it's done! Nothing fancy, just a bullet between the eyes!

KIRBY (filtered)

Negative, negative! Just hold your position!

But McCarren tosses the hand mike aside and whirls to the side door. He unlatches it, kicks it open into the wind --

EXT - JET RANGER

Matrix is still dealing with the Huey below when the door bursts open above his head. He looks up as McCarren appears, holding onto a seatbelt to keep from falling. He leans out and points the gun straight down, aiming between Matrix' eyes. He starts to pull the trigger --

Matrix thrusts up with one arm, takes hold of McCarren's sleeve, and yanks him clean out of the helicopter.

SCREAMING, McCarren sails past Matrix and goes headfirst into the Huey's ROTORS below -- SPLAT!

INT - HUEY COCKPIT

An EXPLOSION OF RED engulfs the canopy, reducing visibility instantly to zero.

PILOT

(fighting the controls)

Jesus Christ!

He hits the windshield wipers and peels off.

MATRIX

is holding onto the skid with one hand, frantically grabbing for the flapping door with the other...

INT - JET RANGER

Melinda (mouth still taped) is craning toward the back seat, wondering where the hell McCarren went -- her eyes go wide as Matrix hauls himself into the chopper and slams the door shut.

(CONTINUED)

Patterson is fighting the controls, SCREAMING into his headset:

PATTERSON
Where's McCarren?

MATRIX
He went to pieces.

Patterson instinctively grabs for his gun -- but finds an empty holster (his gun went out the door with McCarren). Matrix pulls the Browning 9mm from his belt and jams it in Patterson's ear.

MATRIX
Now listen to me and do what I say --

PATTERSON
Fuck you, Matrix. I read your file,
I know everything about you. Like
the fact that you don't know how to
fly a helicopter, for instance.
(glances at Matrix, grins)
I figure that makes me a pretty
valuable commodity at the moment.
So stick that popgun back in your
pants, 'cause there's no way you're
gonna pull the trigger. Am I right?

Matrix considers it. Melinda is frantically shaking her head, telling him not to do it. Beat. Matrix lowers the pistol.

MATRIX
You're right. I won't pull the
trigger.

Melinda rolls her eyes, lets out a huge sigh of relief -- just as Matrix leans over Patterson and yanks the pins out of the handgrenades dangling from his chest.

MATRIX
Why get the seats messy?

Melinda's eyes go wide and she lets out a LONG MUFFLED SCREAM under her tape. Patterson gazes down in horror at his own handgrenades -- and starts fumbling to yank them off his chest.

Matrix leans past him, throws his door open, and shoves him out of the helicopter.

AERIAL SHOT - PATTERSON

SCREAMING as he tumbles in a wild freefall toward the city below -- and abruptly EXPLODES.

(CONTINUED)

INT - JET RANGER

Matrix vaults into the pilot's seat, slams the door, and grabs the stick. The chopper is spiraling in wild corkscrews, completely out of control.

Melinda leans from the passenger seat, SCREAMING AND HOLLERING MUFFLED WORDS at him under her tape -- we don't understand what she's saying, but we know she's pissed.

Almost against his better judgment, Matrix reaches over and tears the tape off her mouth. She instantly hollers in his ear:

MELINDA
WHAT ARE YOU, SOME KIND OF COFFEE
ACHIEVER?

Matrix flinches from the volume and mutters to himself:

MATRIX
I knew I should've left the damn
tape on.

MELINDA
What are you doing?

MATRIX
(gives her a nasty look)
Rescuing you, what do you think?

MELINDA
You do know how to fly this thing,
don't you?

MATRIX
Sort of.

MELINDA
"Sort of?" Is that like "sort of"
being dead?

MATRIX
Just relax!

MELINDA
Do you or don't you know how to fly
a helicopter?

MATRIX
Well...no.
(tries to be encouraging)
But I've ridden in them lots of times.

Melinda's attention goes suddenly to the windshield -- she points and SCREAMS! Matrix reacts, yanking the stick back as --

(CONTINUED)

THE JET RANGER

comes within inches of plowing into a skyscraper, but responds to Matrix' commands and heels over, skimming along the side of the building. The rotor tips take out a whole floor of windows, disintegrating them in sequence, revealing suite after suite of startled SECRETARIES and gaping OFFICE WORKERS.

INT - JET RANGER

Matrix wrestles the controls, fighting for their lives -- as Melinda proceeds to totally wig out:.

MELINDA

Oh God! I'm stuck in a helicopter
with a student driver!

MATRIX

I always meant to learn...never got
around to it...

MELINDA

At least I know what to get you for
your birthday, assuming we live...
(screams in his ear)
...FLYING LESSONS!

THE JET RANGER

careens crazily among the skyscrapers, totally out of control, missing buildings by inches. The Hueys are hot on its tail, banking wildly from side to side. The miniguns OPEN FIRE.

INT - JET RANGER

MATRIX

I think we're losing altitude.

MELINDA

You think? You think?

A SHOWER OF BULLETS RIPS through the helicopter, blasting the controls into SPARKING confetti! The copter goes into a dive.

MATRIX

We're definitely losing altitude!
Happy now?

ANOTHER SHOWER OF BULLETS -- the overhead rotors give off a huge cloud of black smoke, WHINING AND CLATTERING.

MELINDA

I had a VW in college that made that
sound when I stripped the gears!

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

Where were they taking you?

MELINDA

Panama!

MATRIX

Panama? In Central America?

She shoots him a disgusted look.

MELINDA

No, the one in Disneyland.

(shouting)

OF COURSE IN CENTRAL AMERICA!

MATRIX

What else did you find out?

MELINDA

All I know is they busted Nestor Pedrosa out of prison and got him out of the country! I don't know why, but McCarren said something about "re-establishing the supply lines!"

MATRIX

Supply lines? What does that mean?

MELINDA

Don't ask me, ask your friend Paco Lopez! He's flying the first shipment out of Boyer Air Force Base today!

MATRIX

First shipment of what?

MELINDA

I don't know!

(pointing)

OH MY GOD!

THE JET RANGER

is coming in fast and low, trailing smoke -- heading right for a billboard! Matrix somehow manages to hop over it, then runs a crazy slalom course with a row of palm trees.

The Hueys stick to the Jet Ranger like a bad habit, miniguns BLAZING AWAY and shearing the tops of the palm trees clean off.

Traffic on the street scatters in all directions, cars slamming on their brakes and spinning out.

(CONTINUED)

ANOTHER ANGLE

reveals the Jet Ranger heading straight for MacArthur Park.
People in the park run for their lives.

MATRIX

We're going in! Get ready to jump
when I tell you!

MELINDA

Jump? God, Matrix, you're crazier
than I thought!

MATRIX

We're heading for the lake! Just do
what I tell you, goddamn it!

MELINDA

What about you?

The Jet Ranger hurtles over the lake --

MATRIX

No time for discussion! JUMP!

Melinda hurls herself out the door and --

EXT - LAKE

-- plummets from the helicopter to land in the water with a huge
SPLASH! She comes up, gasping for air, just in time to see:

THE JET RANGER

plows into the water at the far end of the lake, cartwheeling
and flipping, rotors breaking up. The copter EXPLODES! A HUGE
FIREBALL pushes into the sky, raining debris.

MELINDA

(stunned)

Oh my God...Matrix...

THE HUEYS

come in low, hovering over the lake, assessing the wreckage.

No sign of Matrix.

Huey #1 breaks off and comes after Melinda, dipping down until
its landing skids are touching the water. Before you know it,
helmeted troops in black body armor drag Melinda from the water
and into the Huey.

The Huey rises into the air and rejoins its twin. The copters
wheel about, banking into a power turn and ROARING OFF.

(CONTINUED)

THE JET RANGER WRECKAGE

burns furiously in the lake. Long beat...

Matrix rises from the water lapping in the foreground, gazing after the departing Hueys. Really pissed.

CUT TO:

EXT - BOYER AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

Located in the high desert north of Los Angeles. A road leads up to the main gate. M.P.'s are stationed at the booth.

A column of military trucks approach the gate. BOOM DOWN to reveal Matrix crouched in the roadside ditch, concealed by scrub brush.

The trucks stop at the gate, blocking the booth from view. Matrix bursts from cover and runs across the road to the last truck in line. He flattens against the back of the truck, lifts the flap of canvas, and peers inside...

THE M.P.'s

are at the first truck. A SERGEANT examines the driver's papers.

SERGEANT

Check the trucks.

His men go to the back of the first truck and throw the canvas flap aside, peering in. Empty.

They go down the line, checking each truck in this manner until they get to --

THE LAST TRUCK

The one that Matrix is hidden on. They throw the canvas flap aside and -- nothing. Empty.

PRIVATE

(hollers forward)

All clear!

The sergeant hands the driver his papers back, waves them through. The trucks RUMBLE forward as --

ANGLE UNDER TRUCK

reveals Matrix clinging like a giant spider to the underside of the truck, driveshaft ROARING just inches above his face. He glances over at the soldiers' boots as the truck pulls away.

(CONTINUED)

EXT - BASE - VARIOUS ANGLES

The trucks travel across the busy base.

ANGLE UNDER TRUCK

Matrix keeps hanging on with fingertips and toes, but the strain is beginning to show. The pavement whizzes by inches beneath him -- if he lets go, he'll be ground to hamburger. How much longer can he hold on?

Finally, the truck lurches -- and begins to slow...

THE TRUCKS

stop at an intersection to let a SQUAD OF RECRUITS go by -- the men are jogging up the road at double-time, shouting a sing-song cadence with their DRILL INSTRUCTOR.

LONG LENS - MATRIX

Through the legs of the jogging recruits, we see Matrix roll out from under the last truck and make a dash for the nearest building.

INT - HANGAR

Matrix enters through a large corrugated metal door and finds himself in a darkened hangar. He glances around and spots a row of mechanic's coveralls hanging from the wall. He quickly grabs one off the peg as we

CUT TO:

EXT - HANGARS - DAY

Matrix, wearing coveralls and carrying a clipboard, wanders through the busy activity outside the hangars. He comes to a C-130 transport plane being loaded with cargo and fueled for flight. He looks around and sees:

PACO LOPEZ

waits at the hangar entrance, but it's Lopez as we've never seen him before -- he's wearing the flight suit of an Air Force captain, and his unruly mustache has been carefully trimmed to military specifications.

MATRIX

quickly joins the activity around the C-130, doing whatever he can to blend in. He even helps the fuel truck back up, giving the driver hand motions. He ducks around the side of the plane, sees an open door, and dashes up the stairs. Suddenly --

(CONTINUED)

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey! What are you doing up there?

ANOTHER ANGLE

reveals a GROUND CHIEF standing below Matrix.

MATRIX

Checking this door latch. We had a complaint.

GROUND CHIEF

Well, make it quick! This plane's gotta go!

The Ground Chief hurries away. Matrix breathes a sigh of relief, then ducks inside the plane.

INT - C-130 CARGO BAY

Matrix closes the door, latches it shut. He tries the latch, jiggling it.

MATRIX

Works fine.

He turns and vanishes among the crates as we

CUT TO:

EXT - C-130 TRANSPORT - DUSK

TIGHT ON PROPELLERS as the engines throttle up, ROARING.

WIDER ANGLE

The plane taxis down the runway, picking up speed -- and lifts smoothly into the air, banking into a turn over the setting sun.

INT - COCKPIT

Lopez levels the plane off at cruising altitude. Suddenly, a hand reaches over his shoulder and switches on the automatic pilot. Lopez whips around in alarm -- just as Matrix grabs him and bodily yanks him out of his seat.

LOPEZ

JOHN!

Matrix drags Lopez out of the cockpit and into --

THE CARGO BAY

-- where he slams him against the wall.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

A civilian impersonating a military officer -- that's a felony offense, isn't it?

Matrix digs Lopez' papers from the pocket of his flight suit, glances them up and down.

MATRIX

"Captain O'Neil?" Funny, you don't look Irish.

LOPEZ

Oh man, you're in way over your head on this. You never should have pushed it this far, John. You should have just let it go.

MATRIX

I want some answers.

LOPEZ

I'm just a small cog in a big machine. I fly where they tell me and I don't ask too many questions.

MATRIX

We go back a long way, Paco...but my daughter's lying in a hospital and I've lost my sense of humor.
Now talk to me.

Beat. Paco nods. Matrix cocks his head, indicating the cargo.

MATRIX

What is this shipment?

LOPEZ

Medical supplies to Panama.

(knowing smile)

At least that's what the log says.

Matrix turns to a crate and splits the lid off with an upward thrust of his hand. He digs into the packing material -- and pulls out a brand-spanking-new M-16A1 automatic assault rifle, wrapped in plastic and cosmoline.

MATRIX

This'll cure a headache.

LOPEZ

Guns for the Contras, man. All this shit's gonna wind up in Nicaragua, so the homeboys can fight the good fight. That's what this is all about...

(CONTINUED)

He pulls another M-16 from the crate, holds it up.

LOPEZ

...we're exporting democracy to the Third World. Dig it.

MATRIX

How does General Kirby fit in?

LOPEZ

Man, he invented this, it's his baby. When Congress cut military aid, Kirby wouldn't give up the cause. He took his act underground and made some deals.

MATRIX

With Nestor Pedrosa?

LOPEZ

(nods)

Pedrosa got our guns into Nicaragua, and we got his cocaine into the United States. Kirby took a percentage of the drug profits and used it to buy more guns. But then Pedrosa got himself busted and the supply lines dried up.

MATRIX

So Kirby and McCarren arranged an early parole.

LOPEZ

To further the cause of world democracy. Three cheers for the red, white and blue.

Matrix gazes at the cargo, dazed and stunned.

MATRIX

My God. It's madness.

LOPEZ

It's business.

MATRIX

Not to me. And not to Kirby.

LOPEZ

Yeah, well, you'll just have to take that up with him.

MATRIX

I will. As soon as we land.

(CONTINUED)

Lopez goes pale as Matrix starts unwrapping the M-16.

LOPEZ

Uh uh, no way, just forget it.
Pedrosa's got half the goddamn
Panamanian National Guard on his
payroll. If you step off this
plane, there's gonna be a bloodbath.

MATRIX

That's the idea.

LOPEZ

Look, I know you're pissed, but I'm
not looking to die here. Don't make
my boy an orphan, John. Do me that
one favor? For old times' sake?

Matrix considers it. He pulls a parachute off the wall.

MATRIX

Get me into the country and drop me
within hiking distance. After that
I'm on my own. All debts paid in
full. Amigo.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - C-130 - AERIAL SHOT - NIGHT

The plane flies through the night.

INT - C-130

Matrix is huddled in the freezing cargo bay, cradling his newly
acquired M-16 and wearing a fresh-from-the-box flak vest. He
speaks softly over a headset to Lopez, who is up in the cockpit.

MATRIX

Paco?

LOPEZ

Yeah?

MATRIX

You worry about your boy? About
raising him right?

LOPEZ

Yeah. Sure.

MATRIX

I worry about my Jenny. I want her to
be healthy and strong. But there are
so many bad influences...like drugs...

(CONTINUED)

LOPEZ

You know what your problem is?
You're a crusader. You think you
can take on the world...change the
way things are. You know what that
makes you?

Pause. Softly:

MATRIX

Dangerous.

CUT TO:

EXT - COSTA RICAN HIGHLANDS - MORNING

Magnificent and mountainous, green and misty as far as the eye
can see. The C-130 DRONES over the landscape.

A figure leaps from the plane and plummets toward the earth. A
square chute pops open, spiraling the figure gently on the breeze.

ON THE GROUND

Matrix descends on the parafoil, maneuvering in for a perfect
upright landing. He wrestles the collapsing chute to the ground
and shrugs out of the harness.

Suddenly, he hears something -- he whips his M-16 off his
shoulder and goes into a crouch.

He listens carefully -- and frowns, puzzled. Is he really
hearing FAINT MUSIC in the distance?

VARIOUS ANGLES

MUSIC GROWS LOUDER as Matrix follows the sound to its source.
He emerges from the brush and finds himself on the outskirts of
a peasant village. It is a very humble village indeed, a
thatched roof/corrugated metal/chickens-in-the-dirt type of
place. He moves through the narrow streets, finally coming to:

THE VILLAGE SQUARE

VILLAGERS move through the square in a solemn wedding march. A
PRIEST leads the procession, carrying a wooden cross. Behind
him are the BRIDE and GROOM, and behind them are the MUSICIANS.

The villagers see Matrix. Everybody freezes in their tracks,
staring at the huge gringo. Matrix grins.

MATRIX

Ola.

CUT TO:

EXT - PEDROSA'S VALLEY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Pedrosa's private valley is a huge cocaine plantation several miles long, bracketed on all sides by mountainous ridges and forests. Thousands of acres of coca plants are being cultivated in the fields. Dirt roads connect various sectors, which include a sprawl of barracks to house the troops, a cocaine processing plant, etc.

The most prominent feature of the plantation is Pedrosa's villa, a palatial mansion situated on the hill at the end of the valley. It stands like a sentinel overlooking the empire. Vehicles dot the huge driveway leading to the front door.

A landing strip sits on the floor of the valley, running straight toward the base of the hill below the villa. The runway looks like a giant arrow pointing to the house.

Kirby's pair of matte black Hueys sit off the runway.

EXT - FOREST

An enormous automatic pistol edges slowly into view from behind a tree. Pedrosa peers around the trunk, wearing goggles. His khaki uniform is spotless, immaculately pressed.

A SOLDIER creeps stealthily down the path, tense and on guard, alert for any signs of movement. He seems unaware that he's walking into Pedrosa's trap.

Pedrosa gets the drop on him and FIRES. The soldier is blown off his feet and lands in a heap. Pedrosa strides over to his vanquished foe and gazes down at him.

The "dead" soldier grins up at Pedrosa. His chest and goggles are spattered with blue paint.

SOLDIER

(subtitled Spanish)

You are like a shadow, mi General!
I never knew what hit me!

Pedrosa smiles arrogantly, smugly satisfied, then presses on.

VARIOUS ANGLES

Pedrosa dashes through the woods, fighting his "paint" war. At first we think he has superior talent, because he keeps getting the drop on his opponents and blowing them away --

-- but it soon becomes painfully obvious that his men are letting him win: they blunder into his path, making themselves obvious targets, very slow to react -- and they purposely blow every opportunity they have to nail him. The rule of this game seems to be: LET THE BOSS WIN!

(CONTINUED)

ANOTHER ANGLE

Pedrosa comes down a path, smug and invincible. A YOUNG SOLDIER is hiding behind a tree in the foreground. Apparently, the soldier doesn't quite grasp the subtleties of the game -- for he foolishly pivots from behind the tree and SHOTS Pedrosa.

Pedrosa looks down at the red paint dripping off his immaculate shirt, incredulous that someone shot him. He glares up at the young soldier, who laughs and gives him a "thumbs up."

Pedrosa abruptly yanks his real pistol from his holster and BLOWS the kid away.

INT - VILLA

An enormous main room filled with antiques. We've seen smaller ballrooms than this. Melinda sits in a Louis the 14th. Kirby paces before her, reflective and moody. They are surrounded by ARMED TROOPS, mostly Kirby's black-fatigued mercenaries.

KIRBY

Your involvement in this is highly regrettable. You've added a difficult wrinkle.

MELINDA

What are you going to do -- "iron me out?"

KIRBY

I've yet to make a determination.

MELINDA

I was unaware that the American military was in the habit of kidnapping...or murdering...United States citizens.

THE DRONE OF AN APPROACHING PLANE draws Kirby to a row of huge floor-to-ceiling picture windows that afford a dramatic view of the entire valley. The C-130 is coming in over the mountains, descending into the valley. Kirby turns to one of his men.

KIRBY

Where's Pedrosa?

SOLDIER

In the woods...

(snickers)

...playing cowboys and Indians.

Kirby freezes him with a look.

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY

You will maintain a respectful tone
of voice at all times. Understood?

SOLDIER

(snapping to)

Yes sir!

KIRBY

(cocks his head at Melinda)

Watch her. The rest of you come
with me.

Kirby exits, escorted by his troops.

EXT - LANDING STRIP

The C-130 comes in for a landing on the hardpack dirt runway.
The engines throttle down, then cut out altogether.

Forklifts chug to life and move in. Pedrosa's troops swarm
around the plane to offload.

Lopez exits the plane as Kirby and his men pull up.

KIRBY

Everything go smoothly?

Lopez shrugs, hiding his nervousness.

LOPEZ

Yeah, no sweat.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Pedrosa and his men arrive in jeeps, returning from their
"paint war." The body of the young soldier is laid out on the
back of a truck, staring sightlessly at the sky. Troops arrive
to remove the body.

PEDROSA

No. Leave him there and let the
buzzards feast on him for a few
days. He'll be an example to the
workers in the fields to be
conscientious in their duties.

KIRBY

Is that really necessary?

PEDROSA

Discipline, Senor. Without it,
there is only chaos and communism.

(CONTINUED)

Pedrosa strolls away. Lopez gives Kirby a sickened look.

LOPEZ

Get me loaded up and fueled. I
wanna get the fuck out of here.

CUT TO:

EXT - VILLAGE CHURCH - DAY

The church is adobe and straw, as humble as the village itself. Matrix sits at a rough wooden table outside, an unexpected guest at the wedding feast. Needless to say, he's the object of a great deal of attention and curiosity. The little children seem to love him most of all; they're crawling all over him.

PRIEST

In the big cities Pedrosa builds schools and soccer fields. He buys power and influence, and gets his picture in the paper. But out here, he shows his true face. He uses us like beasts in the field, to grow the cocaine. We are slaves, Senor...and Pedrosa is the devil.

MATRIX

I'm here to put him out of business.

PRIEST

And where is your army, Senor?

MATRIX

No army. Just me.

The priest turns to his people and translates this into Spanish. The villagers greet this news with laughter. An OLD MAN mutters something to the priest, who in turn translates for Matrix:

PRIEST

He says the village will sing of your bravery when you die.

MATRIX

Thanks, but dying isn't on my agenda for today. I just have to get into Pedrosa's valley without being seen.

PRIEST

The night-eyes will see you. The soldiers will know you are coming, and they will kill you before you get close.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

Night-eyes? You mean sensors?

PRIEST

They protect the valley. Pedrosa sees everything, day or night. A mouse cannot get in without Pedrosa knowing. So tell me, Senor...what do you propose to do? March up the main road in broad daylight?

Matrix mulls the problem. He glances over at the bride and groom, then turns back to the priest.

MATRIX

Exactly.

CUT TO:

EXT - DIRT ROAD - DAY

The peasant wedding procession marches slowly up the main road, looking just as before -- priest leading the way, musicians playing, etc. However, the more observant audience members might notice that the veiled bride now looks unusually large. In fact, she seems to have grown about a foot and a half.

The procession approaches a formidable roadblock of Pedrosa's SOLDIERS. A truck-mounted Quad 50 (one of the three from the massacre) is parked across the road.

The soldiers regard the villagers with amusement. An OFFICER steps into the road to block the procession, while his men form a loose ring around them. (NOTE: The following dialogue is delivered in subtitled Spanish.)

OFFICER

What are you doing here, priest?
You know this road is forbidden.

PRIEST

A simple wedding. We mean no offense.

One soldier nudges another, indicates at the bride.

SOLDIER #1

Now here's a bride for you.

SOLDIER #2

A fine woman, built like an ox.
Perfect for working in the fields
and bearing children.

They step up and try to cop a few feels. The hulking bride evades them, coy and skittish.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST
Please. We'll turn back.

OFFICER
Not so fast.

He crosses to the bride, peering intently at the white veil. Is he suspicious? The villagers exchange uneasy glances.

OFFICER
(grins at his men)
Not before we've all had a chance
to kiss the blushing bride, eh
amigos?

This brings a nasty round of laughter. The officer grabs the bride around the waist and pulls her roughly to him. He throws her veil back and --

CLOSEUP ON "BRIDE".

Matrix glares from beneath the veil, a stogie clenched in his teeth.

MATRIX
Pucker up, asshole.

WHAM! He nails the officer with a roundhouse punch between the eyes that literally sends him flying -- and before the others can react, an M-16 whips up from the folds of the wedding dress and the "blushing bride" BLOWS THEM AWAY with rapid BURSTS OF GUNFIRE. The soldiers are dead before they hit the ground.

EXT - LANDING STRIP - DAY

The C-130 is being loaded with crates of cocaine for the return trip to the States. Everybody pauses at the DISTANT SOUND OF GUNFIRE. Pedrosa gazes across the valley, listening.

KIRBY
More of your "discipline," Senor?

PEDROSA
Perhaps.

He motions to a soldier, who hands him a field telephone.

EXT - ROADBLOCK - DAY

The field telephone on the back of the truck starts RINGING. Annoyed, Matrix raises his M-16 and BLASTS it to fragments. He then swings up onto the truck bed and tosses the bridal bouquet to the crowd (one lucky girl actually catches it).

(CONTINUED)

INT - TRUCK CAB

A villager throws the door open and lean inside. He turns the key in the ignition and the engine kicks over with a diesel ROAR. He straps the steering wheel in place, tying it down.

EXT - TRUCK

Matrix kicks a dead soldier off the truck and mans the Quad 50. The priest calls up to him:

PRIEST

Are you a Christian, my son?

MATRIX

Yes, Father!

PRIEST

Then say an act of contrition as you go to your death, so that God may forgive you your sins!

MATRIX

(grins)

Don't worry, Father! God and I have an understanding!

(hollers forward)

Do it!

INT - TRUCK CAB

The villager wedges a two-by-four against the gas pedal, jamming it to the floor. He jumps back as --

THE TRUCK

surges forward, driverless, bucking wildly as it leaves the road and ROARS toward the cocaine fields. Matrix desperately hangs on, riding the Quad. The villagers beat a hasty retreat.

EXT - LANDING STRIP

Pedrosa looks worried -- his men aren't answering. He hangs up, turns to his nearest soldiers.

PEDROSA

Check on them.

(looks around)

The rest of you keep working! The cocaine will not load itself!

EXT - COCAINE FIELDS

The truck plows into the fields, an unstoppable juggernaut. Peasants toss their farm tools aside and run for their lives.

(CONTINUED)

SOLDIERS

scramble into position, raise their weapons and OPEN FIRE.

THE TRUCK

just keeps coming as bullets take out the windshield and headlights.

MATRIX

jams the trigger home -- the Quad VOMITS FLAME AND THUNDER as the four .50 caliber machine guns fire simultaneously.

THE SOLDIERS

are blown through the air like weeds uprooted in a gale-force wind, bodies shredding to pieces.

EXT - LANDING STRIP

A major alert. Soldiers scrambling into their jeeps and peeling out. Kirby runs for his Hueys, hollering to his men:

KIRBY

Let's get in the air! Now!

INT - VILLA

Melinda goes to the window and gazes out.

MELINDA

Matrix?

EXT - MOVING TRUCK - MATRIX

Mr. Bad News himself. He FIRES the Quad in wide swinging arcs, carving huge furrows in the fields, wiping out attacking troops.

Another Quad speeds into view, coming in from the side. Matrix reacts instantly, swinging around, GUNS BLAZING. The other truck is shredded to pieces, cartwheeling and flipping as the body is sheared from the chassis.

EXT - LANDING STRIP

The Hueys take to the air, ROARING off across the field toward the battle.

EXT - FIELDS - THE BATTLE

Matrix rides the truck, laying a huge swath of destruction up the entire length of the valley. Attacking vehicles and jeeps are BLASTED into cartwheeling fragments. Barracks are instantly disassembled before our very eyes. Soldiers are cut down

(CONTINUED)

wholesale like wheat before a thrasher...

The Wrath of God has come to Pedrosa's valley in the form of John Matrix.

INT - HUEY #1

as we swoop over the mounting devastation below. Kirby rivets his binoculars to the truck -- and sees Matrix.

KIRBY

Son of a bitch!

(into headset)

Attack formation! Fire at will!

THE HUEYS

bank in, miniguns BLAZING AWAY.

THE TRUCK

TRACER BULLETS savagely chew up the length of the truck, obliterating the radiator in an explosion of steam and sending the hood spinning off like a Frisbee.

MATRIX

ducks as TRACERS pound his gunshield into new and interesting shapes, the heavy armor plate wilting like tin under a jackhammer.

THE HUEYS

sweep overhead and bank into a turn, coming around for more.

MATRIX

is bleeding from dozens of shrapnel cuts as he pops back into view and swings the Quad around.

HUEY #2

wheels about and comes back at full throttle, flying dead-on, miniguns BLAZING.

MATRIX

OPENS FIRE and --

HUEY #2

is literally taken apart in mid-air, shredded instantly into a flying scrap heap, throwing off fragments like a feverish lover throwing off clothes, rotors breaking up and whickering through the air like deadly boomerangs.

(CONTINUED)

The flying carcass plows nose-first into the field and EXPLODES! A FIREBALL thrusts skyward.

INT - HUEY #1

banks wildly as the fireball buffets them. Shrapnel peppers the canopy, crazing the glass.

THE TRUCK

is little more than a carcass itself, hurtling through the rows of coca plants, steam geysering from the ruptured radiator, black smoke funneling from the blasted engine. It's a miracle (and largely a function of momentum) that the truck is still in motion.

Huey #1 comes back around, FIRING ROCKETS. EXPLOSIONS stride across the field, chasing the truck.

Bull's-eye! A rocket SLAMS into the truck cab, ripping it clean off the truck. The EXPLOSION spins the vehicle like a top and flips it onto its side in a burning heap.

THE HUEY

comes in for a landing. Assault troops pour out, led by Kirby. They fan out, surrounding the Quad wreckage.

Matrix is gone. Kirby looks around, scanning the surrounding fields.

KIRBY

Shit!

He whips a walkie-talkie to his lips.

KIRBY

He's gotten into the fields!

EXT - LANDING STRIP

PEDROSA

(into walkie-talkie)

Then we shall have ourselves a fine hunt.

He gestures to his men. ANGLE WIDENS as a gorgeous white horse is brought to him and he saddles up. A dozen of his men are also on horseback. All are armed to the teeth.

PEDROSA

Vamos!

The hunting party rides out.

(CONTINUED)

LOPEZ

watches them go, his face a torment of angry emotions.

LOPEZ
God damn you, Matrix.

EXT - FIELDS

Matrix crouches low and scurries through the rows of coca plants as the searching Huey ROARS overhead.

SOLDIERS

are beating the fields, hunting Matrix.

KIRBY AND HIS TROOPS

move cautiously among the rows, tense and ready to kill at the slightest sign of movement.

A SOLDIER

catches a glimpse of Matrix dashing between the rows.

SOLDIER
There he is!

Everybody OPENS FIRE on full auto, a BLAZING VOLLEY of gunfire tearing the coca plants to pieces.

MATRIX

charges wildly up the row as plants are SHREDDED BY GUNFIRE all around him. He hurls himself flat as the crop is decimated just inches above his head. Suddenly --

MATRIX POV - LOW ANGLE

Pedrosa and his horsemen gallop full-tilt out of nowhere, right on top of him!

MATRIX

rolls aside a mere instant before the horse's hooves would have pounded him to jelly, and vanishes into the plants.

PEDROSA AND HIS MEN

plow furiously through the field on horseback, searching for Matrix, galloping in wild circles, hooves trampling everything flat. Pedrosa is SHOOTING into the field with his pistol.

(CONTINUED)

MATRIX

suddenly lunges up into view and yanks Pedrosa clean out his saddle. The horse keeps going, the gun goes flying, and Pedrosa hits the ground hard.

Matrix drags Pedrosa to his feet, yanks a gleaming foot-long bowie knife from Pedrosa's boot, and jams the point against Pedrosa's throat.

MATRIX

Back off or I'll cut his throat!

PEDROSA

Do as he says! Stay back!

SOLDIERS

close in from all sides, surrounding them, taking up positions...

KIRBY

Hold your positions!

MATRIX

finds himself hopelessly surrounded. Pedrosa dangles in his grasp, gasping and wild-eyed with terror.

Kirby steps into view and approaches them. He's calm, smiling.

KIRBY

(gestures around)

Pretty valley, isn't it? Did you know that thirty percent of the cocaine brought into the United States is grown right here? Impressive, don't you think?

MATRIX

That's close enough.

Kirby stops, spreads his hands as a truce gesture.

KIRBY

John. You're like a bad habit I can't seem to shake.

MATRIX

Persistence in battle. That's a lesson you taught me.

KIRBY

I used to find your persistence an asset. Now I find it tiresome.

(CONTINUED)

Matrix gives him a look filled with fury and speculation -- and digs the knife point deeper into Pedrosa's skin.

MATRIX

I hear you've added drug runner to your list of accomplishments.

KIRBY

I'm a soldier. I see what's necessary, and I do it.

MATRIX

"Necessary?"

KIRBY

(impassioned, fierce)

Necessary, yes! Those spineless turds in Congress almost gave the whole fucking show away! They can't see that Nicaragua is an unacceptable loss! If it falls to the communists, all of Central America follows! We can't give Ivan a foothold in this region, or we'll live to see the day when Soviet tank divisions sweep up through Mexico and cross the Rio Grande into the United States!

MATRIX

You're crazy.

KIRBY

No. I see with pristine clarity. This is where the balance of world power will be decided once and for all, right here in Central America. No price is too great. McCarren knew it. He was a true patriot, and he died for his country.

MATRIX

(dryly)

Just like you died for your country?

KIRBY

(smiles, shrugs)

There was a senate investigation brewing. The country couldn't afford another Iran-Contra affair, so I had to drop out of sight. Permanently. Can't very well investigate a dead man, can they? If Ollie North had any brains or balls, he'd have done the same thing.

(CONTINUED)

LOPEZ

works his way through the field, sneaking up behind Matrix. He draws an automatic pistol from his military-issue holster.

MATRIX

senses the movement behind him. He angles the bowie knife, glancing into the reflection of the blade.

MATRIX' POV

Lopez is reflected in the knife blade, creeping up some ten yards behind him.

MATRIX

pretends to be unaware and keeps talking:

MATRIX

You're poisoning America with drugs! People are dying!

KIRBY

notices Lopez, and is anxious to keep Matrix distracted:

KIRBY

Only the weak, and the worthless. Why shed a tear? Their decadence saps our will and weakens us as a nation. They're soulless animals, so let them poison themselves and die...and while they're at it, they'll finance a military victory in this region.

MATRIX

How far up does this go? The White House?

KIRBY

All the White House cares is that we're achieving our goals here...they don't want to know how.

MATRIX

What the President doesn't know can't hurt him?

KIRBY

A painful lesson we learned with Nixon. We took it to heart, believe me. Look at Reagan.

(CONTINUED)

Matrix shakes his head in dismay. Pedrosa struggles in his grasp.

KIRBY
Let him go, John.

MATRIX
Fine. Just bring me the girl and we'll fly out of here.

KIRBY
I can't allow that, and you know it.

MATRIX
Then I'll just have to kill this bastard.

KIRBY
You'll die with him. Look around you, John. You're surrounded by a hundred men. Not even you can get out of this one.

LOPEZ

lunges into view behind Matrix, gun leveled.

LOPEZ
JOHN!

Lopez FIRES! Matrix takes the round in the back -- he arches and SCREAMS as a huge ragged hole erupts between his shoulder blades in a spray of blood!

Pedrosa scrambles to safety.

Matrix turns to Lopez, eyes swimming with pain and shock and betrayal. He totters on his feet, a dying man refusing to go down. Lopez takes aim again.

LOPEZ
I told you amigo. You got in way over your head. You should'a just let it go.

Matrix whips the bowie knife up and charges at Lopez. BLAM! Matrix takes the round high in the chest. A geyser of blood.

Matrix bellows in pain and rage -- and just keeps coming. Lopez FIRES TWICE MORE, blowing him off his feet. Matrix hits the ground.

A breathless hush in the field. All we hear is the sound of the breeze whispering through the coca leaves.

Matrix is dead.

(CONTINUED)

Soldiers begin rising from their positions.

KIRBY

walks to Matrix' corpse, gazing down with sadness. Pedrosa pushes him aside and hurls himself on the body, beating and pounding it with hysterical rage. He snatches up the bowie knife and is about to plunge it into Matrix when --

TIGHT ON PEDROSA

-- a pistol enters frame and jams against his temple. Pedrosa looks up. Lopez stands over him, glowering with anger and ready to pull the trigger.

LOPEZ

Back off, you piece of shit.

PEDROSA

How dare you! I'll have you shot!

LOPEZ

(intense)

He was a soldier. He was my friend.
I won't have him desecrated by
dogs. Now back off.

Pedrosa backs off. Lopez turns to Kirby.

LOPEZ

Help me load his body onto the
plane. I'll dump him somewhere
over the jungle.

KIRBY

Yes. Of course.

Lopez holsters his weapon and spits on the ground in contempt.

LOPEZ

This was my last trip. And you owe
me a hell of a bonus.

CUT TO:

EXT - C-130 - DAY

TIGHT ON PROPELLERS as they throttle up, ROARING.

EXT - LANDING STRIP

The plane hurtles down the runway, picking up speed and taking to the air. ANGLE TO to Kirby and Pedrosa watching it go.

(CONTINUED)

PEDROSA

That pendejo humiliated me in front
of my men.

KIRBY

That pendejo saved your life.

Kirby turns and gets into his jeep.

KIRBY

Coming?

Fuming, Pedrosa joins him. The DRIVER hits the gas, taking them
back up to the villa.

INT - C-130

Lopez is at the controls. Matrix' blood-spattered corpse lies
on the floor beside him. Lopez glances down at it. What do we
read in his impassive face? Sadness? Regret?

LOPEZ

Oh, man. You should'a seen the
looks on their faces when I pulled
the trigger and blew you away. All
that screaming and yelling, blood
flying everywhere...

MATRIX

opens his eyes and gives Lopez a dour look.

MATRIX

Thanks a lot. I'll never get this
shit out of my air.

Lopez starts laughing hysterically.

LOPEZ

Oh man, it was priceless! I wish I
could have taken a picture!

Groaning, Matrix sits up and yanks the automatic from Lopez'
holster to examine it.

MATRIX

Paint pistol? Where the hell did
you get this?

LOPEZ

Borrowed it from one of Pedrosa's
men.

MATRIX

He didn't mind?

(CONTINUED)

LOPEZ

He was dead.

MATRIX

Then I guess he didn't mind.

Matrix plops into the co-pilot's seat.

LOPEZ

I really had the drop on you, didn't I? C'mon, admit it! I nailed Mr. World Class Commando himself!

MATRIX

I heard you coming a mile away. And I saw you reflected in the knife.

LOPEZ

(stunned)

And you let me sneak up on you?

MATRIX

I knew you had something in mind.

(off Lopez' look)

We're both fathers. You wouldn't make my Jenny an orphan any more than I'd make your boy an orphan. Us dads gotta stick together.

LOPEZ

(grins)

Yeah, well, you were in a pretty tight spot, so I figured I'd bail your ass out one last time.

MATRIX

I appreciate it. But there were a half a dozen ways I could have done it on my own.

LOPEZ

(shoots him a look)

If I'd known that I wouldn't have stuck my neck out.

(shrugs)

Fuck it. We both got our asses out in one piece. Let's go home.

MATRIX

Sure thing. We just have to make a quick stop first.

Matrix reaches across the control panel, yanks a handle marked "FUEL DUMP" -- and breaks it clean off!

(CONTINUED)

EXT - C-130 - FUEL DUMP PORTS

Aviation fuel cascades from the plane, spraying into the air.

INT - COCKPIT

Lopez goes white as a sheet as WARNING LIGHTS FLASH.

LOPEZ

What are you, nuts?

MATRIX

Keep circling over the fields until we're out of fuel.

LOPEZ

And then?

MATRIX

We'll think of something.

EXT - C-130 - AERIAL SHOT

The plane starts banking around, fuel pouring out in torrents.

EXT - COCAINE FIELDS

Soldiers start running and hollering as aviation fuel pours from the sky like rain, drenching them and the crops.

INT - C-130

Matrix yanks an emergency kit off the wall and opens it. He pulls out a Very pistol and loads a flare into it.

LOPEZ

John? Are you doing this for Truth, Justice, and the American Way...or for your daughter?

MATRIX

Same difference.

LOPEZ

(muttering)

That's what I was afraid of.

EXT - COCAINE FIELDS

Thousands of acres of coca plants are drenched by a downpour of fuel. Soldiers are panicking and running for their lives.

An OFFICER grabs a radio and starts HOLLERING in rapid-fire Spanish as the C-130 ROARS overhead, drenching everything in sight.

(CONTINUED)

INT - VILLA

Pedrosa is listening on the radio phone. He shouts to Kirby:

PEDROSA

The plane is coming back, raining
fuel all over the valley!

They rush to the window, staring in horror as the C-130 circles in the distance, dumping tons of fuel on the crops. Kirby snatches up a radio.

KIRBY

Lopez? What the hell's going on up
there?

INT - C-130

LOPEZ

(mutters)

I'm scared shitless, that's what's
going on up here.

He reacts as a WARNING BUZZER SOUNDS. The plane starts to buffet and shudder. He turns to Matrix.

LOPEZ

That's all she wrote! We're dry as
a bone and cruising on fumes! Now
what?

MATRIX

Now we land.

KIRBY (filtered)

Lopez, answer me!

Lopez snatches up the radio.

LOPEZ

Uh, General, I seem to have
developed a serious problem here.

KIRBY (filtered)

What is the nature of your problem?

Matrix takes the radio from Lopez and raises it to his lips.

MATRIX

Me.

INT - VILLA

CAMERA ROCKETS IN TIGHT on Kirby. He gazes out the window, stunned.

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY
(whirls to Pedrosa)
Block the runway! Don't let them
land!

EXT - LANDING STRIP

Trucks and forklifts ROAR to life. Vehicles pour onto the runway. The drivers jump out, running for their lives.

C-130 POV - AERIAL SHOT

Flying over the valley toward the now-unusable runway. At the end of the runway is the hill, and on the hill is Pedrosa's villa.

INT - C-130 COCKPIT

LOPEZ
There goes our runway! Any more
bright ideas?

An engine sputters, feathers out, dies. Another starts to cough and sputter...losing altitude fast...

LOPEZ
Where the hell are we gonna land?

MATRIX
There!

He points straight ahead at:

PEDROSA'S VILLA

The huge driveway leading up to the house.

CONTINUING

LOPEZ
That's a fucking driveway!

MATRIX
Think of it as a short runway.

Matrix ducks into the cargo bay and throws a door open into the rushing wind.

INT - VILLA

Kirby and Pedrosa watch the plane come in, heading right at them. Soldiers start panicking. Melinda goes pale.

MELINDA
Oh my god...is he that crazy?

(CONTINUED)

Everybody OPENS FIRE at the oncoming plane, rockin' and rollin' on full auto, an enormous VOLLEY OF GUNFIRE straight through the picture windows!

INT - C-130 COCKPIT

Lopez ducks as the windshield is blown out and the cockpit is strafed by bullets.

EXT - C-130

Matrix leans out the open door -- and FIRES the flare gun over the cocaine fields!

THE FLARE

arcs into the valley, a drifting pinpoint of incendiary light --

FLASHCUT INSERTS

Soldiers in the fields are ripped off their feet and hurtled through the air as the world goes NUCLEAR WHITE --

LONG LENS - THE C-130

-- and Pedrosa's entire valley goes up in the BIGGEST EXPLOSION ever captured on film! The oncoming plane tilts wildly from side to side as a MILE-WIDE WALL OF FLAME rises up behind it, ERUPTING into the sky as if Hell itself had punched up through the floor of the valley and launched itself toward God!

INT - VILLA

The picture windows IMplode! Pedrosa and Kirby are thrown back, instantly lacerated by a hurricane of flying glass!

THE C-130

is breaking up as it hits the driveway on a rush of superheated air, coming in for the hairiest landing you've ever seen. The landing gear shears off as the plane skips over a limousine and belly-flops onto the pavement, skidding toward the villa in a huge shower of sparks!

INT - VILLA

The C-130 ERUPTS through the picture windows into the house, plowing through the walls in a storm of hurtling debris and flying glass, wings tearing off and spinning away!

PEDROSA

is SCREAMING and FIRING ON FULL AUTO -- and is killed instantly in a head-on collision between man and plane.

(CONTINUED)

THE C-130

grinds to a stop -- and settles groaning in the debris.

EXPLOSIONS RIP through the house as the fumes in the wings ignite, BLASTING FLAME in all directions.

There is no movement, no sign of life. Just spreading flames and choking dust. Devastation.

A DOOR

in the twisted fuselage of the plane is kicked open, revealing Matrix. He helps Lopez from the burning wreckage. They pause, surveying the devastation all around them.

MATRIX

(calls out)

Somebody here order a planeload of cocaine?

A soldier staggers from the dust and smoke, raising his M-16. Matrix puts the guy down with a vicious flurry of karate blows and snatches up his weapon.

The SOUND OF COUGHING draws their attention. They find Melinda huddled under what used to be a couch. She glares up at Matrix.

MELINDA

You're not the most subtle man I ever met -- but you do know how to make an entrance.

Soldiers rush in behind her. Matrix shoves her to the ground and BLOWS THEM AWAY. He turns to Lopez.

MATRIX

Get her out of here.

LOPEZ

What about you? This place is going up like a furnace!

MATRIX

Go!

Lopez drags Melinda outside, taking her to safety.

Matrix moves cautiously through the burning villa, shying from the flames and choking smoke, searching for Kirby.

MATRIX

General?

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY

struggles to his feet amidst the flaming rubble. One side of his face is caved in, his eye blinking through a mangled mask of blood. His cheek is torn away, giving him a Sardonicus grin. His arm and shoulder are shattered and virtually useless.

But there's still plenty of fight left in him. In fact, he's like a wounded animal -- more dangerous than ever. One-handed, he jams a fresh clip into an assault rifle and wrestles the weapon into a hip-fire position.

MATRIX (O.S.)

General Kirby?

Kirby FIRES in the direction of Matrix' voice.

MATRIX

dives and rolls as bullets chew into the flaming wall behind him. He comes up, squinting into the smoke and flames for any sign of movement.

MATRIX/KIRBY

stalk each other through the flaming ruins of the mansion, a deadly cat-and-mouse game between old friends, each trying to pinpoint the other by the sound of his voice.

KIRBY

Pretty neat trick, pretending you were dead!

MATRIX

I learned it from you.

KIRBY

That's why I can't believe I fell for it!

(savage chuckle)

See John? You're still learning from the master! You always were an apt pupil!

Kirby strafes the room with GUNFIRE.

MATRIX

You're shooting blind! Wasting ammo!

Both men keep circling, moving, stalking. Kirby coughs up blood, spits it out.

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY

Tell, me John. How did we come to this? We're both patriots, you and I. We laid our lives on the line all around the world for the country we both so desperately love. So how'd we wind up here, in this flaming shithole, fighting on opposite sides?

MATRIX

Because I believe in the words and you don't.

KIRBY

Words?

MATRIX

The Constitution of the United States. I first read it when I was a boy back in East Germany, a handwritten black-market copy. The words carried greater meaning for me than any I'd ever seen. They spoke to my heart! They're pure and simple, noble and strong! The finest words I know! And you pissed on them!

Kirby rattles off an extended BURST, emptying the clip.

KIRBY

Fuck you!

He tosses the useless assault rifle aside, draws his pistol, and laboriously jacks a round into the chamber.

KIRBY

A lot of good words are going to do us when the Soviets parade down Pennsylvania Avenue!

MATRIX

We're supposed to be the good guys!

KIRBY

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO WIN!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! He sprays three rounds into the smoke and flames.

MATRIX

Let the American people decide!
Come back with me and stand trial!

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY

Sure, I can see me now! Standing in front of a senate committee, wearing my medals on my chest like a trained monkey, raising my right hand and looking sincere for the TV cameras! Telling lies and half-truths, because the American people can't handle reality!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! Three more rounds into the smoke and flames.

ANGLE ON MATRIX

listening to Kirby's voice, trying to pinpoint his position and outflank him.

KIRBY (O.S.)

After my sentence in commuted, I'll write a best seller! Get on Oprah and Donahue! Maybe a few guest shots on Miami Vice!

CAMERA TRACKS WITH MATRIX as he stealthily maneuvers through the rubble. Kirby slowly comes into view as Matrix edges around a flaming timber.

KIRBY

Forget it, John! I'm not cut out for the dog and pony show! I'm not a clown, like North and Liddy! I'm a soldier! If I go out, I'll go out on my feet...in a standup fight!

Matrix pivots into view, rifle aimed.

KIRBY

freezes, knowing he's been outflanked. Matrix has the drop on him. Kirby turns slowly, pistol held loosely at his side.

MATRIX

You can't beat me. Don't even try.

KIRBY

(shrugs)

I always liked shitty odds.

MATRIX

You'll die.

CLOSEUP - KIRBY

His features stretch out into a chilling grin. He drools a rope of blood from his ruined jaws. Softly:

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY

You know what, John? I'm not at all
sure I give a fuck anymore.

He abruptly raises the automatic, jams it in his own mouth, and
pulls the trigger. His head EXPLODES, raining brains and blood
all over the room.

MATRIX

lunges toward Kirby --

MATRIX

NOOOOOO!

-- and catches him as he falls. He lowers him gently to the
floor and cradles his ruined body.

ANGLE WIDENS SLOWLY OUT as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - VILLA - DAY

ANGLE PULLS SLOWLY BACK. Lopez and Melinda are huddled in the
driveway as the villa burns.

Matrix emerges from the flaming ruins of the house. He walks
over to them and helps Melinda to her feet.

MELINDA

What now?

MATRIX

Now we go home.

ANGLE CONTINUES WIDENING, PULLING BACK INTO AN AERIAL SHOT as
the three of them limp down the driveway.

LOPEZ

Gonna be a long walk.

MATRIX

It'll be worth it.

CAMERA FLOATS AWAY...until the entire valley is merely a
scorched hole on the face of the planet...and our survivors are
mere specks in a flaming landscape...and a pall of black smoke
obscures the horizon...

FADE OUT

THE END