

Concrete

by

Paul Chadwick & Larry Wilson

Based on characters created by Paul Chadwick

FIRST DRAFT
7-24-92

FADE IN:

INT-NSA CORRIDOR

We dolly ahead of HUGE STONE FEET walking along the corridor. Smaller human feet (in shoes) dance around them to stay ahead -- perhaps running away -- we can't be sure. The stone feet turn off in an OPEN DOOR. This is all played AGAINST THE URGENT STACCATO STRAINS OF CLASSIC HORROR MOVIE MUSIC.

INT-NSA CONFERENCE ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

There's nothing in frame to define the space and all is stillness. THEN A SINGLE SPOTLIGHT illuminates THE CENTER OF A MAKESHIFT STAGE -- wooden planks on a metal frame. AN OFFSCREEN AUDIENCE OF ABOUT SEVEN begin to MURMUR and then GASP.

ON STAGE --

seen from the chest up is A ROCK COATED GIANT. For all we know, he could be there to devour his unseen audience whole. Then he brings his MASSIVE ROCKY HAND into view. He's holding a set of index cards -- SPEAKER'S NOTES. This is no monster but Ronald Lithgow in his Concrete persona. His voice is that of a fortyish, well-educated white American male, RESONATING THROUGH A STONE CHAMBER.

CONCRETE

Yes, I exist. It amazes me too. But with the time I've had to get used to it, I've started to think of what I might do. Consider this: I could stand comfortably naked on the slopes of Everest. I could pick through the wreckage of the Titanic with only a flashlight. I could enact every idle dream I had in my former life -- of escaping my harried urban existence and wandering the wild places of the world. My dreams seem to be within my grasp...

To emphasize, he slowly closes that massive hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT-NIGHT-"NIGHTBEAT" GREEN ROOM

Ronald Lithgow, in his human form, (appealing enough, if a little fleshy and pale from too much desk work), preps his boss SENATOR MARK DOUGLAS for an appearance on this "Nightline" type program. Ron waves his note cards with the same nervous tic we saw in Concrete, suggesting they are one in the same. Douglas, gray-haired and patrician, reviews the note cards Ron is giving him.

DOUGLAS

Ron, don't give me applause lines. This is an interview, not a stump speech.

RON

All right. Just hammer at the main point: America can't get rich making high-tech weapons systems, only by making products people need.

It's unclear whether Douglas has registered this point because as Ron speaks Douglas reacts warmly to DR. DAVID MATTINGLY, another grey eminence, entering the room with his associate DR. MAUREEN VONNEGUT. She's prepping Mattingly just as Ron is trying to do with Douglas. Mattingly is sneezing into a hankerchief.

MAUREEN

...and don't forget to compare the usefulness of civilian computer technology to military...

DOUGLAS

(interrupting
Maureen)

Dave! It's been ages! And look at us here, pushing for the same thing.

The two old friends shake hands, as Ron and Maureen both wait impatiently.

MATTINGLY

Mark. Hope you're in good form tonight. This isn't an easy sell.

A Nightbeat producer enters.

PRODUCER

We'd like to seat you gentlemen.

Douglas and Mattingly are led to the set, along with another STANDOFFISH GUEST.

Ron and Maureen settle uncomfortably on chairs. Visible on CAMERA MONITORS in the room, Douglas and Mattingly chat and receive dustings of makeup. Ron takes a deep breath and finally really looks at Maureen -- auburn hair, with a kind of serious practical beauty, she's enough to distract Ron from the monitors.

RON

We haven't met. I'm Ron Lithgow. I write Senator Douglas' speeches, for the most part. You work with Dr. Mattingly?

MAUREEN

I'm his assistant research director. Maureen Vonnegut.

RON

Any relation to the writer?

MAUREEN

No. Not the physicist, either.

ON A MONITOR

A stage hand signals one-minute to air. Maureen agonizes because it seems Mattingly is going to forget the paper collar protecting his clothing from the makeup. Mercifully, it's snatched from around his neck.

RON

Do you do research at the NSA?

She looks at him with startling force.

MAUREEN

Not anymore.

Ron is taken aback but determined to be charming.

RON

(to Maureen)

You say that like there's a story behind it.

ON ANOTHER MONITOR

Mattingly is starting to make disturbing facial expressions. Maureen watches with concern.

MAUREEN

Forgive me, but I'm watching this.

ON THE AIR sign lights. On another monitor, the NIGHTBEAT HOST starts speaking.

HOST

They call it "economic conversion." According to some, America has had a militarily-driven economy since World War Two...

An off-camera sneezing fit interrupts the host's introduction.

Maureen looks at THE MONITOR FEATURING MATTINGLY, who's now sneezing uncontrollably.

Maureen winces as if she's been struck.

MAUREEN

I knew it.

Mattingly is handed tissue, but suffers a second bout of sneezing. As the host pushes through his introduction, Mattingly is led off-stage.

RON

Don't take it so hard. At least he didn't vomit.

Maureen isn't amused. Mattingly enters, dabbing with a tissue.

MATTINGLY

They benched me. I agreed, actually.

MAUREEN

Are you all right?

MATTINGLY

Yes, but let's get out of here.

They start to leave. Mild alarm passes over Ron's face. It's now or never.

RON
Would you be interested in
having dinner with me Thursday
or Friday?

There's a moment of uncertainty about whom he's addressing.
Then Mattingly looks at Maureen, his eyebrows raised.

MAUREEN
I'm afraid I couldn't.

MATTINGLY
Oh, go on. Ron's been Mark's
right hand for ages. He's a
good guy. Have dinner. That's
an order.

MAUREEN
(with forced grace)
Delighted.

Ron looks uncomfortable for her, but he'll take what he can
get.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Ron and Maureen are having their dinner. The food is just
arriving. Ron is served a plate of some SMALL BLACK THINGS
that might be mushrooms.

RON
Is this what I ordered?

The WAITER gives Ron a curt nod, then departs. There's a long
silence between Ron and Maureen. These are two socially awkward
people.

RON
You were going to tell me why
you don't do research any more.

MAUREEN

I don't like going over this. I was studying the nervous system of leeches, developing ways for staining neurons and tracing how they send messages. Then one of your boss's esteemed colleagues held me up as an example of wasteful government spending, since I had a federal grant.

RON

(way too loud)

You're the leech lady!!

The other restaurant patrons turn and stare, and both Ron and Maureen are instantly embarrassed.

RON

Sorry.

MAUREEN

Leech neurons are exactly like human neurons, only there're fewer and arranged in a simpler structure. That work might have applied to schizophrenia treatment, strokes, a lot of things. But I was just the kook studying leech brains.

RON

The humorous capper to the evening news.

MAUREEN

Exactly. Anyway, I couldn't get funding to save my life after that. So I closed up shop and took this administrative job.

Ron is picking at his food now. He SPEARS one of the black mushroom things with his fork -- its resemblance to a leech is startling. His appetite is gone.

RON

Well, you must be making contacts there. Something will turn up.

MAUREEN

I hope so. Still, I've lost seven years.

Another embarrassing silence ensues. The clicking of utensils becomes oppressive. Finally, Ron brightens.

RON

I'm going on a camping trip next week. Five days without a phone.

MAUREEN

I thought I might get in on the human genome project, but it seems to be pretty sewn up.

RON

It's partly so Lisa can move her last few things out of our apartment. She got the weekend house. She can write there.

MAUREEN

Lisa?

RON

My wife. My ex-wife.

MAUREEN

She's a writer?

RON

An academic, actually. European history. It was one of our "issues." I have so many demands on my time, she felt I wasn't supporting her work.

MAUREEN

I was never able to find a man who could abide my commitment to my work.

RON

(grasping the significance)
Oh?

MAUREEN

It was everything to me.

Ron glumly pops a forkful of leech-mushrooms into his mouth.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CLIFF FACE. DAY.

Ron now clings to the THE STEEP ROCK FACE OF A CLIFF. His friend MICHAEL MAYNARD is laughing slightly above him.

MICHAEL

So what finally happened?

RON

(breathless)

A "thank you for dinner", a handshake -- goodbye.

Ron heaves himself up to the ledge where Michael is. They're HIGH ABOVE A SMALL MOUNTAIN LAKE; an impressive climb. The day is glorious -- a soul restorer.

MICHAEL

Sounds classic.

RON

(expansive from his exertions)
You know there are just nine mountains in the world over eight thousand meters? They call them the 8000'ers. I thought, as a teenager, that it'd be cool to climb all the 8000'ers.

MICHAEL

Doesn't sound like the Ron I know.

RON

Yeah. Still, I'm not that old. I could change my life. I mean they make you do that when you get divorced, don't they?

As Ron's been talking, he's pulled out his wallet and removed A PICTURE OF LISA -- an attractive woman in her mid-30's. He shows it to Michael.

RON

We had a great thing once but now it's on with the new.

With more joy than malice, he flings the picture out to flutter slowly down to the lake below.

RON
Free...and...a-live....

Ron starts to lose his balance but is hauled back by Michael.

RON
Thank you.

MICHAEL
Shall we continue?

They start again, making their way up the rocks.

CLOSE ON CLIFF FACE

Unnoticed to Ron, when he lifts his foot, A SMALL OPENING appears where it was, revealing an OPTICAL SENSING DEVICE.

EXT. CAVE OPENING. CONTINUOUS.

Michael reaches it first.

MICHAEL
You were right. It is a cave.
Good eyes.

RON
You...you don't think anything
could live in there, do you?

MICHAEL
A mountain goat, maybe.

RON
A bear?

MICHAEL
What would it eat up here?

RON
Hikers?

MICHAEL
Come on, let's look. (joking)
Look! A skull!

They enter the cave and are swallowed by darkness. The camera PULLS BACK, as if leaving them to their fate.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE--ABDUCTION

Quick cuts of surreal horror. Rocky HANDS grab arms, tearing fabric, snapping bones. A flashlight smashes on rock. Ron's scream is cut off by a mechanical device SNAPPING onto his face. Saws cut skulls. Brains and eyes are extracted. Machine, flesh and rock textures are jumbled and confused.

INT. WHITE ROOM.

A ROCKY MAN-SHAPED CREATURE awakens. Incisions and attached devices wreath his head. We know who it is when he speaks.

RON

Michael?

A similar figure answers across the room.

MICHAEL

Over here.

Ron and Michael stare at each other -- their new rock faces fully express their horror.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE--ALIEN TESTING

The pair are prodded, scanned, burned with beams and plunged into fluid. OTHER ROCKY FIGURES, always in shadow, manipulate strange contraptions of machine and living animal tissue. A rocky hand has SMALLER HANDS on each of its fingers, performing delicate manipulations on an eye.

CUT TO:

INT. SHOCK ROOM.

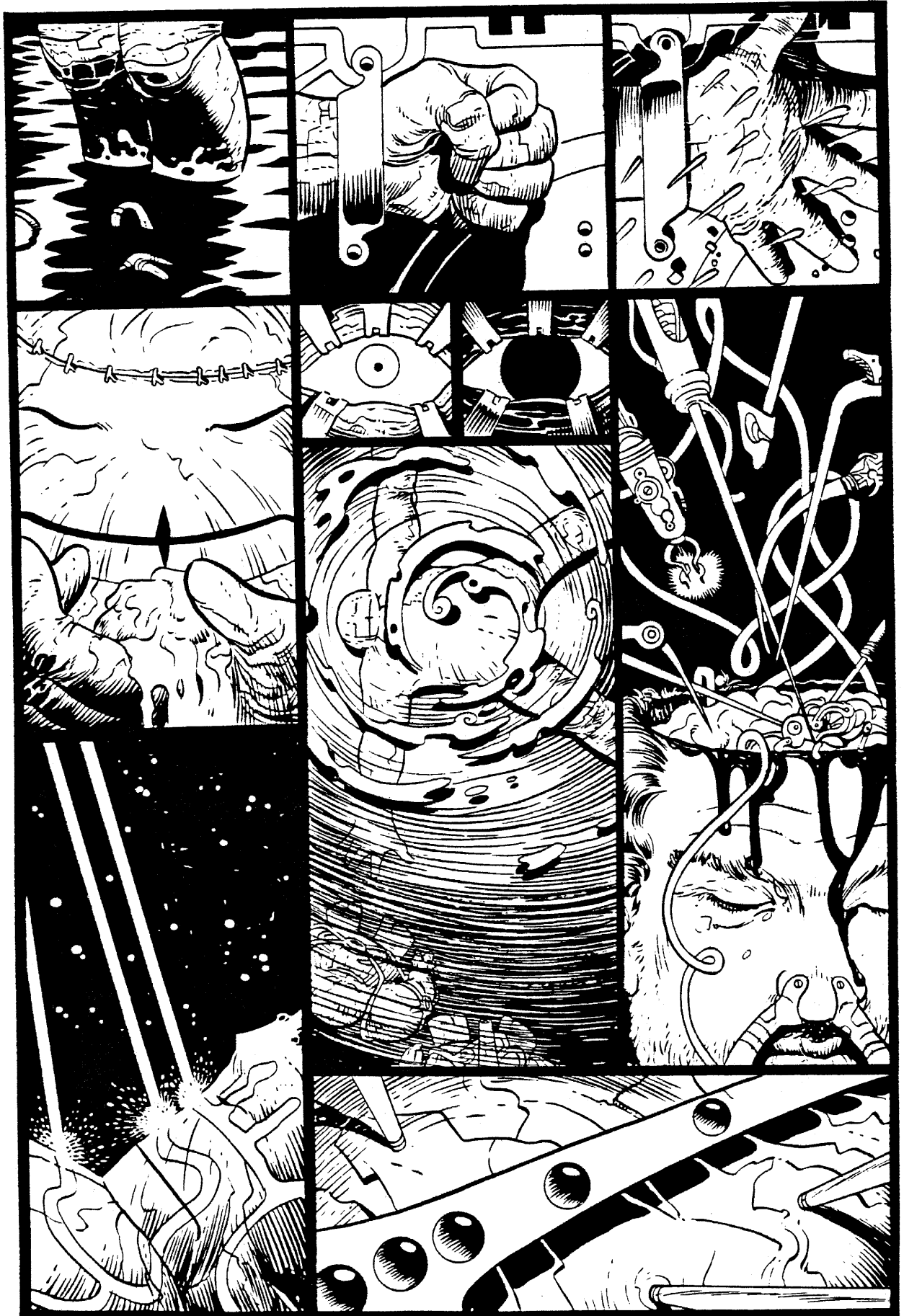
Ron and Michael--and a THIRD SUBJECT with the same rock body -- are strapped to heavy, vertically sliding devices like the "test your strength" weights at a carnival, their feet in water. Shocks are sent through the water which they can only escape by jumping. Michael looks up at an OBSERVATION WINDOW above them.

MICHAEL

Ron! Look!

IN THE WINDOW --

are THEIR OLD HUMAN BODIES--animate and alert, but bruised and lacerated. Optical devices are implanted where their eyes would be, but otherwise they're naked. Next to them is a



after page

BEAR with the same devices in place of eyes. They're overseen by ANOTHER ROCKY FIGURE, who stays in shadow.

THE THIRD SUBJECT --

next to Ron and Michael, GROWLS LIKE A BEAR and TEARS FREE. He LEAPS to the window, smashing it. He has a grip and is pulling himself up through the observation window.

Then the rocky figure steps out of the shadows and DISCHARGES A WEAPON. The third subject FALLS at Ron's and Michael's feet, smashed and burned and dead. Beneath THE ROCK COATING IS CHARRED, SMOKING FLESH.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE ROOM.

Ron and Michael EAT OUT OF A VAT containing a stew including rocks, which they devour without hesitation. They exchange glances, and Michael nods. Ron starts SCREAMING AND FLAILING AROUND, throwing the vat. Then Ron picks up Michael, HURLING HIS MASSIVE FIGURE into a wall near a portal. Michael sinks, limp and unmoving. An ARMED ROCKY FIGURE enters, shouts something unintelligible at Ron, brandishing his weapon.

Michael suddenly JUMPS HIM, wrests away the weapon, and BLASTS HIM APART. Dying, he unleashes an otherworldly scream -- panther/child/shearing metal. Michael is stunned, but Ron grabs his arm.

RON
It's gonna get worse, too.
Come on.

They run.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDORS.

An IMPRESSIONISTIC CHASE ensues. They blast through obstacles, confrontations, finally finding the cave by which they entered. It's NIGHT outside.

RON
It's the cave! We are still on
Earth!

They dash toward freedom.



EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE. CONTINUOUS.

Moonlight bathes them. They rush to the edge, hesitate.

MICHAEL

I'm going to hold them off
until I see you're safe. Jump.

He aims the weapon into the cave.

RON

No! Together!

He reaches for Michael, but a RAY LANCES OUT of the cave, BLASTING Michael. Ron TEETERS a moment, then falls off the ledge.

Like Lisa's photo, Ron FALLS forever, accompanied by a few fragments of his dead friend. THE LAKE LOOMS BELOW. A constellation of splashes appears on its surface -- prelude to Ron HITTING the lake with a mighty SPLASH.

EXT. LAKE FLOOR. CONTINUOUS.

Ron descends in a cloud of bubbles, sinking as fast as the proverbial stone. He looks up.

THE LAKE SURFACE FROM BELOW. (RON'S POV).

A RAY is piercing the water, probing for him.

LAKE FLOOR

Where the ray hits, the lake floor is churned up violently. The ray is headed for Ron. He dodges it, leaps into the trench it has left.

EXT. LAKE. CONTINUOUS.

A projectile arcs down from the cave entrance into the lake.

EXT. LAKE TRENCH. CONTINUOUS.

Ron is BURIED in the trench by the silt from a MASSIVE EXPLOSION.

LAKE FLOOR

Ron's arm emerges from the mud. The water is turbid, almost opaque.

EXT. LAKE SURFACE.

It's still roiling from the explosion. Smoke is everywhere. Flaming trees, seen in reflection, paint the water orange. Ron emerges, stumbling. He slogs to shore. He looks back at the cave, high on the mountain.

EXT. MOUNTAIN. (RON'S POV)

It ERUPTS, giving violent birth to the huge SPACESHIP hidden in it, which soars off and is lost in the stars.

EXT. LAKESIDE.

Ron watches it go with a shell-shocked expression. He looks around hesitantly. What now? The burning trees crackle. He walks through the muddy aftermath of the explosion into the woods.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAILHEAD. NIGHT.

Ron and Michael's RENTAL CAR is ticketed, covered with A MONTH'S WORTH OF PINE NEEDLES, but still there. Ron can barely manipulate the KEYS with his now-massive hands. He can't fit into the DRIVER'S SEAT at all, so he TEARS it out. He clumsily unfolds the tent and drapes himself in it, squeezes in the gutted interior, and drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT.

Ron's car comes up on another car. Ron starts to pass.

INT. RENTAL CAR. CONTINUOUS.

Ron TUGS THE TENT DOWN so the other driver can't see him. He notices something on the dashboard.

FUEL GAUGE (RON'S POV)

It's nearly empty.

RON --

looks around for a gas station.

RON
(sarcastic)

GREAT.

His fist reflexively clenches, bending the right side of the STEERING WHEEL nearly in two, causing the car to SWERVE. Ron gets the car going straight again, then manipulates the steering wheel with only the tips of his huge fingers -- looking absurdly dainty.

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION. NIGHT.

Ron pulls in to the outermost SELF-SERVE PUMPS with his driver's door away from the office. Completely covered by the tent, he gets out and starts to fill up.

EXT. GAS STATION OFFICE. CONTINUOUS.

From the window the lone ATTENDANT watches the tent-draped figure with increasing curiosity. He goes out the door.

He takes a few tentative steps toward Ron.

ATTENDANT

Hey (beat). Hey, what's the deal?

RON

confined in the tent, scurries twenty feet into the DARKNESS in baby steps.

THE ATTENDANT

walks to the pump and disengages the nozzle.

ATTENDANT

What's the deal?

Ron reaches a decision. He strides back into the glow of the flourescents, drops his hood, and faces the attendant.

RON

This is the deal.

The attendant reacts with genuine terror and runs off into the night. Ron leans down to look at his REFLECTION in the car windshield.

RON

I don't blame him.

He runs a hand across his face --realizing that's the first

impression he going to make for the rest of his life.

CUT TO:

INT. GAS STATION OFFICE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Ron punches the phone with a pencil, snapping the pencil but completing dialing his number. He tosses the broken pencil to the floor. THE PILE OF BROKEN PENCILS attest that this isn't his first try.

RON

Senator Douglas. It's Ron...
I don't know where I've been...
I mean I do and I don't...what
day is it? My...God...
(verging on hysteria)
I...I don't know what to do!

Something his boss says snaps him out of it, and for a moment we see the obedient aide again.

RON

Yes, sir. It's a gas station,
I don't know...wait. They have
maps here. Let me get one.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NATIONAL SCIENCE AGENCY FACILITY\ MAIN ROOM. DAY.

A VAN backs up through this VAST STERILE WHITE SPACE filled with PLASTIC BIOLOGICAL BARRIERS and PEOPLE IN CLEAN-SUITS.

Dr. Mattingly, the scientist from Nightbeat, supervises.

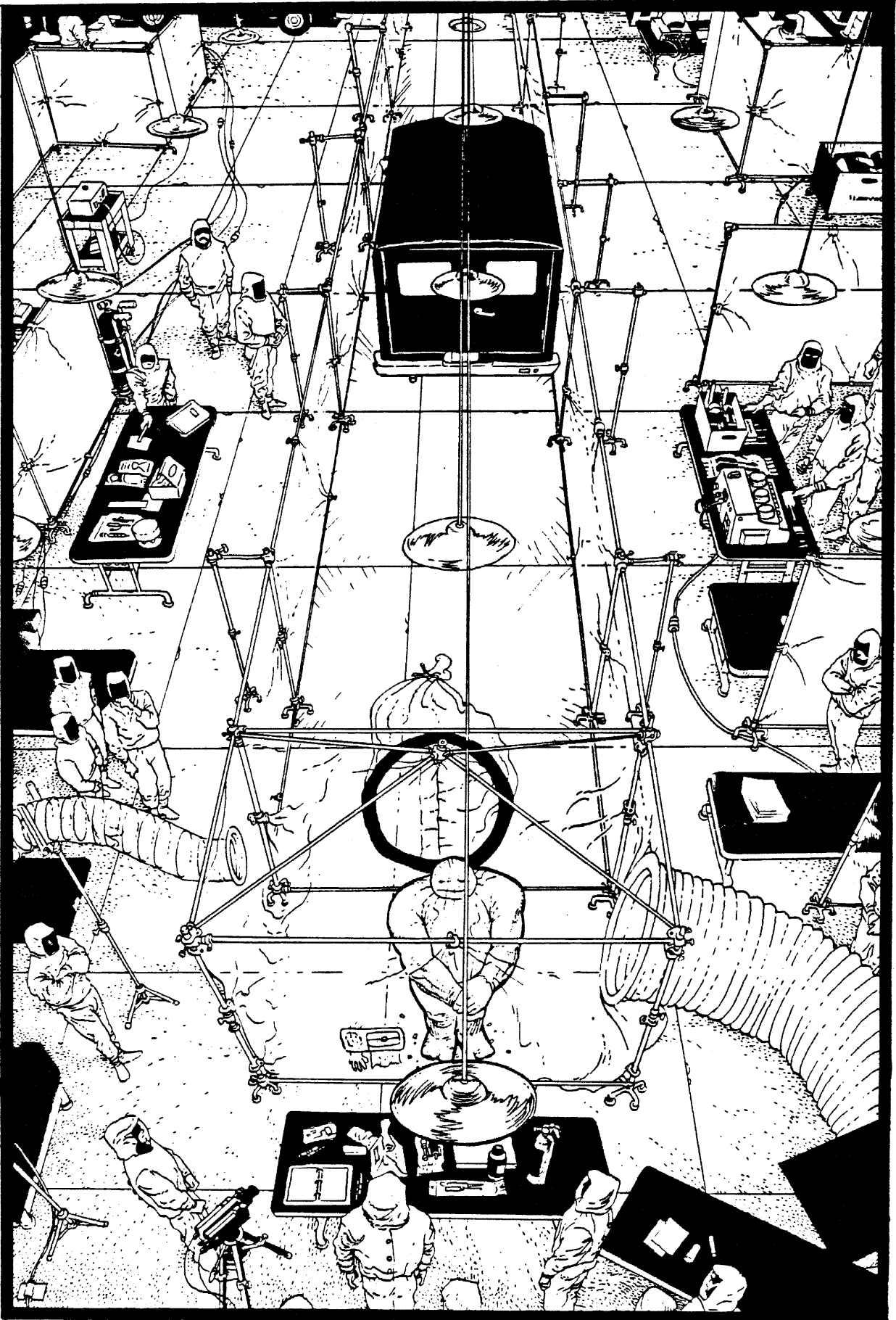
When the van reaches A CENTER OF THE SPACE, the rear doors open and Ron steps out of the van, provoking a general vocalization of awe.

Ron looks at the suited people staring at him. It's a pregnant moment.

RON

Where's Senator Douglas?

This sets off an even louder babble--an alien asking for a Senator! Dr. Mattingly, taking charge, cuts it off.



MATTINGLY

Quiet please! Let's all remain calm. We have a protocol for this situation which Dr. Vonnegut is on her way with right now.

(to an aide)

See what's keeping her!

The aide runs off, almost knocking over a VIDEO CAMERA which, its red telltale glowing, is recording the proceedings. This oppressive presence appears in every scene throughout Ron's stay at the NSA.

MATTINGLY

(to everyone)

Stay in your work teams and be ready for your call.

(to Ron)

Mark is suiting up right now. In fact, here he is.

SENATOR DOUGLAS --

emerges from an airlock and walks toward Ron.

Before he's quite there, JOE STAMBERG, still making the last closures on his suit, RUNS from the airlock to intercept him. Even in the bulky clean suit, Stamberg moves with military precision. Beneath his plastic face plate, we see his angular sun-creased, 50-ish face, eyes narrowed in annoyance.

Reaching Ron, Senator Douglas stares in wonder.

DOUGLAS

(fatherly)

Ron, what the hell have you gotten yourself into?

STAMBERG

Just a moment! Who here knows the identity of this thing?

Mattingly and Douglas lift their hands in acknowledgement.

RON

Man.

Completely ignoring Ron, Stamberg confronts and Douglas.

STAMBERG

Henceforth the thing will be referred to as "John Doe" in all communication, including casual conversation.

Then he turns his attention to the whole room.

STAMBERG

I needn't remind everyone that the secrecy of this matter will be strictly enforced!

Ron leans in to whisper in Mattingly's ear.

RON

Who is this jerk?

MATTINGLY

Joe Stamberg, the security officer assigned to us. I'm afraid we have to do what he says.

RON

Then he better say it right.

A VIDEO SHOT --

Ron suddenly looms in front of Stamberg.

We see this tableau from the angle of the video camera. Next to a time code that's already there, A SUBTITLE appears, letter by letter, typed by someone offscreen: JOHN DOE-DAY 1

RON

Not thing. Man.

BACK TO SCENE --

Stamberg is looking Ron up and down with mild revulsion.

STAMBERG

(with a sneer)

Jesus...

He turns away from Ron, then is startled to find Ron's hand on his shoulder.

RON

Did you hear me?

STAMBERG

Get your hand off.

The whole room tenses. Then...

MAUREEN VONNEGUT

arrives with the aide Mattingly sent. They're burdened with fat, bound computer printouts.

MAUREEN

My God! He's magnificent!

Ron recognizes her voice, even though filtered by her clean suit mask. Forgetting Stameberg, he turns to face Maureen.

There seems to be something like rapture in her eyes. Seeing Maureen here, in these circumstances, showing this reaction, leaves him speechless. The confrontational tension is completely broken.

She juggles the print-outs.

MAUREEN

(to Mattingly)

I'm sorry, these things are huge. Can we start?

Mattingly nods. Maureen opens the first volume and reads.

MAUREEN

Welcome. Can you speak english?

Ron, Mattingly and Douglas share an amused look.

RON

Like a native.

MAUREEN

Great! We just skipped two hundred and forty pages!

She finds the proper page.

MAUREEN

Do you have any physical needs we can attend to?

A wistful smile crosses Ron's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE--NSA TESTING

Testing of every type. Ron might as well still be trapped in the alien cave. Ron is measured, weighed on a freight scale and while suspended in a sling underwater. His strength is tested: lifting, jumping (he clears seven feet), and bending an iron bar--which, joking aggressively, he tries to place over Stamberg's shoulders. The video camera is ever-present, and occasional video views indicate the passage of time ("JOHN DOE--DAY 10," etc.). Clean room precautions are eventually dropped. Ron eats rocks, wood, human food. Ron's surface is marked with a grid, and samples of his crust chipped and drilled from every square.

As a technician DRILLS Ron's flank.

RON

Yes it is hurting yes YES!
YESS!!

Ron, when he concentrates, can focus with MICROSCOPIC VISION AND TELESCOPIC VISION. Out loud, HE READS AN ASPRIN BOTTLE ACROSS THE ROOM; But particularly, he uses his enhanced vision highly-telescoped glimpses of Maureen -- he lovingly examines her gorgeous, serious face. She's the one saving grace for Ron.

INT. NSA MAIN ROOM. DAY 20.

Electrodes are on Ron's legs, connected to a rheostat device controlled by a technician. Maureen and Mattingly look on dubiously.

TECHNICIAN

Tell us when you can feel this.

MAUREEN

(to technician)

When he does you cut it off
instantly.

INT. NSA VIDEO SURVEILLANCE ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Stamberg watches the testing with his aide, ALAN WU. Young, in a stylish suit, WU entered intelligence work out of an Ivy League school. But his pedigree doesn't make him any less cold and calculating than Stamberg.

STAMBERG

Too bad he doesn't have any
nuts for this test.

INT. NSA MAIN ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Ron unhappily endures the application of more electrodes.

RON
(to Maureen)
How much more of this is there?
I mean, is there an end?

Maureen looks at Mattingly with concern. The rheostat is turned.

MAUREEN
You have a lot to teach us,
John. There's never been
anyone like you.

Three things happen at once. Ron SCREAMS; the technician nervously LAUGHS; Maureen SHOUTS.

MAUREEN
Turn it off!!

RON
Michael!!

Maureen's and the technician's hands slap the cutoff simultaneously. Ron is shuddering, the technician mortified, Maureen mad as hell she ever stood for this test.

MAUREEN
This was so stupid. Are you
hurt?

RON
(shaken)
N-no. Didn't hurt--but they
did this to us. In the cave.

MAUREEN
You remember now? What
happened to you there?

RON
Some of it. Oh Jesus,
Michael...

Ron leans over and THROWS UP onto the floor, then passes out.

INT. NSA VIDEO SURVEILLANCE ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Stamberg reacts to all this and rushes out.

INT. NSA MAIN ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Ron's bile, highly acidic, sizzles and burns into the floor. Maureen leans over Ron, actually STROKING his forehead with concern. Stamberg enters the main room and sees this -- reacting coldly to Maureen's feeling gesture.

CUT TO:

INT. NSA DIM ROOM.

Mattingly, Stamberg, Douglas and a PSYCHOLOGIST wait as Maureen administers a tranquilizer with a flexible syringe deep in Ron's mouth.

MAUREEN

This is the same dose as last night. You'll just feel very relaxed.

STAMBERG

Thank you, Dr. Vonnegut. You can leave.

Maureen is wounded by this dismissal. She looks at Mattingly, who shrugs, palms up.

MAUREEN

(to Stamberg)

May I ask why I have to leave.

STAMBERG

Security reasons.

MAUREEN

That's no answer.

STAMBERG

It's the only one you're going to get.

She angrily walks out. Ron half-follows all this.

RON

(drugged)

She can stay...

But he is ignored. Stamberg gives the psychologist the go-ahead.

PSYCHOLOGIST

As we discussed, Ron, the memories are there. You simply have too much emotion associated with them to face them. But under hypnosis...

Ron drifts into a hypnotic sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. NSA DIM ROOM. LATER.

Douglas sits with the now conscious Ron.

RON

Can you get me out of here?
Could I go back to work?

DOUGLAS

That's a tough one. I'm not sure Stamberg would go for that.

Ron gets angry -- his voice rumbling.

RON

It seems to me that you're the Senator. You should be able to do something. Doesn't it piss you off to have that two-bit fascist ordering you around?

DOUGLAS

(stern)

The orders are coming from the top, Ron. No-one, from the President on down, wants you to go public.

Ron is ashamed of himself -- never in his life would he have dreamed of talking to the Senator like that. But life has changed.

RON

Can you get me my things? From my apartment? My books?

DOUGLAS

I'll try.

The Senator leaves a despairing Ron.

CUT TO:

EXT. NSA FACILITY. DAY.

The facility is now ringed by SOLDIERS -- a response to the growing restiveness of the stone prisoner inside.

INT. NSA MAIN ROOM. SAME TIME.

Ron's walking a treadmill, (measuring) electrodes on his chest. Some technicians are FILLING THE BILE HOLE WITH PATCHING CEMENT. Maureen minds the monitoring equipment. The technicians talk as if Ron can't hear them, though he certainly can.

TECH ONE

No more spicy food for the big guy!

TECH TWO

I was going to invite him out for a few beers, but not after this.

MAUREEN

That's enough! Just get out of here! Do that later!

They depart. Maureen and Ron exchange glances.

RON

Comedians. Thank you.

MAUREEN

I try to be serious about my work. It means a great deal to me.

RON

Yeah, you said that during dinner.

Maureen stares at him, startled. Yet it's as if she knew it all along. She looks at THE VIDEO MONITOR. Ron gets off the treadmill, walks over and tears the cord out of the device.

INT. NSA VIDEO SURVEILLANCE ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Wu sees the screen blink out. He leaps to his feet with a sour expression on his face.

INT. NSA MAIN ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Ron gently pulls Maureen close.

RON

We've got maybe two minutes, I figure. Yeah, it's me, Ron. You had to wonder about Douglas coming around here.

Maureen nods, still full of wonder.

RON

I had my brain grafted into this body. Had to be aliens, crazy as it sounds...I don't understand why you've been cut out of this. I wanted you to know.

Stamberg and Wu storm in.

STAMBERG

Know what!?

RON

About the aliens. The transplants.

STAMBERG

God damn it. Did you tell her your name?

RON

No. Can I?

STAMBERG

Absolutely not!!

Stamberg stands there fuming, sizing up the situation. Ron and Maureen unwisely share a glance of shared amusement.

STAMBERG

You tell her your name, or pull a stunt like this again, she'll be washing beakers in some sub-basement somewhere! Understand?

The way their faces fall, he knows he's called this one correctly.

RON

Yes. Sorry.

Wu reactivates the video camera. Ron glares in its direction -- it's a hated intruder.

CUT TO:

INT. NSA MAIN ROOM. LATER

Ron sits in a CHAIR they've made for him out of CINDERBLOCKS. A technician sets down the last of a dozen boxes, then departs. Ron grimaces as he sees THE "INSPECTED" TAPE on all of them. He glances up at the video camera, taping from atop a high rollable stand. He moves around the pile of boxes and sits.

INT. NSA VIDEO SURVEILLANCE ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Wu watches THE MAIN ROOM VIDEO MONITOR -- there's something reptilian in his ability to stare endlessly at Ron's limited movements. Ron moves partly offscreen, only his foot visible. Wu sighs with annoyance, removes his headphones, ready to go chastise Ron. Then he's handed a food carton. Momentarily torn, he decides to eat his lunch rather than taking action just yet.

INT-NSA MAIN ROOM

Ron opens a box. It has items from his bathroom. He takes out A RAZOR, realizes it's now useless. He tosses it into a metal waste can where it makes a CLANG. A TOOTHBRUSH, COMB, AND HAIR DRYER make similar clangs. A HAND MIRROR gets a longer inspection; Ron has never had a clear view of his current face before -- only more vague glimpses reflected in windows, plastic surfaces and the like.

He stares for a long hard moment, then BREAKS the mirror against the RIDGE of his forehead. Expression opaque, he tosses the SHARDS into the waste can.

CLOSE ON THE CAN

More items fly in, and for a moment it sounds like bells tolling for the dead.

INT. NSA MAIN ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Preparing some equipment, Maureen hears the clanging and goes to investigate. She comes upon Ron unnoticed, and watches silently as he pulls a FRAMED PICTURE OF LISA -- the ex-wife -- from another box. A certain tension comes to Maureen's features, as Ron stares at the photo for a long moment. Then the tension fades when Ron tosses it in the can.

INT. NSA VIDEO SURVEILLANCE ROOM.

Stamberg is looking at the screen with Wu. Only Ron's foot is visible (Maureen is completely off camera).

WU

Technically, he's still on camera.

STAMBERG

He's screwing with you.
Goddamn hunk of rock...

Angered, Stamberg runs out purposefully.

INT. NSA MAIN ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Ron has out A YELLOW LEGAL PAD AND A PEN. For the first time since opening the box, he's smiling.

RON

(to himself)

At least I can write. They didn't take that.

But when he tries, he can barely hold the pen. Then he breaks it. He's just too clumsy--in despair, he crumbles the pad as if it was tissue. Everything he was is gone. He puts his head in his hands, then starts to tear hysterically at his face. Bits of rock and grit are knocked off and hit the floor. Maureen sees this -- deeply disturbed. Feeling like another hated voyuer in Ron's life, she withdraws.

She moves around testing setups and almost RUNS INTO Stamberg.

MAUREEN

(loud, so Ron can hear)

Hello Stamberg. Going to see
John Doe?

Stamberg, sensing she's warning Ron, runs off toward him. But when he arrives, Ron is composed. They eye each other coolly. Stamberg adjusts the video camcorder stand so that Ron is again in view.

STAMBERG

See this? Stay in view.
You're our star.

RON

Who're you, my manager?
(suddenly serious) I have a
question for you.

Stamberg waits for it.

RON

What's my ex-wife been told?
Does she know what's happened
to me?

For perhaps the only time, Ron and Stamberg share a sympathetic moment. Stamberg speaks with apparent compassion.

STAMBERG

She thinks you're dead. That
you and and your friend fell
into the lake while rock
climbing. Haven't been able to
recover your body. I talked
with Douglas about this. It's
best this way. That part of
your life is over.

Ron nods, looking at the boxes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A CHAPEL. DAY.

Douglas stands uncomfortably as people file in for Ron Lithgow's memorial service. At his side is LISA LITHGOW, the woman in the photographs. When everyone is in, she touches Douglas on the arm.

DOUGLAS

Lisa, I'm not sure I can do this.

LISA

Please. Just a few words. He worshipped you.

Douglas reluctantly starts for the podium, then turns back to LISA, AS SHE BEGINS TO CRY.

DOUGLAS

Lisa...

LISA

I'm ok...It's just...well...Ron rock climbing. He never would've thought of it before the divorce...It's crazy but I feel like I helped kill him.

DOUGLAS

That is crazy.

He puts a hand on her shoulder. She pulls herself together.

LISA

Go ahead. We should start

Douglas mounts the podium and realizes that Lisa is going to be sitting right in front of her. He angles his body so he's not looking directly at Lisa, then begins...

DOUGLAS

I suppose if we can take any comfort in the circumstances of Ron and Michael's...deaths...

He can barely get the word out, knowing it's a lie.

CUT TO:

INT. NASA MAIN ROOM. LATER.

Ron sits on his cinderblock chair, brooding.

MAUREEN

I have something for you.

From her coat pocket she takes A STYROFOAM BALL WITH A FELT-TIP PEN stuck all the way through it.

MAUREEN

I know you've had trouble with fine-muscle motor control. Until you get a handle on that, I thought you could use this...if you wanted to write. Just push it back down like so if it gets pushed up.

Ron takes it, wide-eyed. He tries writing on Maureen's clipboard. It's not elegant, but he can write. In this context, it is a life-saving act to Ron. He's nearly speechless.

RON

Thank you.

Maureen smiles, watching Ron test his ball-pen. He writes another note on Maureen's clipboard, then furtively gives her a glimpse of it -- like a kid passing notes in school. It reads: I'M A PRISONER HERE, AREN'T I?

The look in Maureen's eyes is the only answer Ron needs.

CUT TO:

INT-NSA CONFERENCE ROOM

Stamberg leads a meeting including Mattingly, Maureen, the psychologist and a few others.

MAUREEN

He's simply tired of being confined. Anyone would be.

STAMBERG

For obvious reasons, that must continue. Any ideas?

PSYCHOLOGIST

We could focus on stress reduction. Meditation, hypnosis.

MAUREEN

There's a better way of handling it. We could get him back in the world.

MATTINGLY

What do you mean?



MAUREEN

If it's the aliens that are the problem, we could just say we built him. He's a cyborg, a man with a mechanical body.

STAMBERG

Oh, come on. Nobody's gonna believe...

MAUREEN

It isn't any harder to believe than aliens!

MATTINGLY

I suppose she has a point. We could probably work up fairly plausible technical material in support of the story.

STAMBERG

Forget it. (to Maureen) You know it wouldn't hurt if you wore something nice for him now and then.

MAUREEN

Oh, please...

STAMBERG

A little skirt or something. Believe me, it'll cheer him up. He has a thing for you.

The meeting breaks up. Mattingly approaches Maureen, who is throwing daggers with her eyes at Stamberg.

MATTINGLY

He's just baiting you. He's been trying to get me to remove you from the John Doe case. He thinks you have too much influence.

MAUREEN

Do you?

MATTINGLY

Of course not. But my own position is precarious. Bringing in these new specialists may firm things up a bit, though. How's your presentation coming?

MAUREEN

I'll be ready.

CUT TO:

EXT. NASA MAIN ROOM. THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON.

Ron strides for the EXIT DOOR, reviewing his note cards, getting ready to give the speech we saw open the film.

He reaches the door and nearly collides with the psychologist.

RON

We starting?

PSYCHOLOGIST

Dr. Vonnegut's making her presentation. There's time for a stress reduction excer...

RON

This is her moment! I want to be there!

He pushes him out of the way and heads for the meeting.

INT. NSA CONFERENCE ROOM. SAME TIME.

An intimidating GROUP OF EXPERTS looks on skeptically as Maureen speaks in front of a projection screen. Mattingly looks at them anxiously, and Stamberg wears an odd smirk.

MAUREEN

(nervously)

...we're calling him John Doe.
Here's a picture of him...

But THE SLIDE IS OF A CHART. Maureen frowns. The experts look at each other. Their anticipation over seeing Ron makes them even more annoyed with Maureen's bungled presentation.

INT. NSA CORRIDOR. SAME TIME.

Ron's feet pound toward us -- A REPRISE OF THE OPENING SHOT.

INT. NSA CONFERENCE ROOM. SAME TIME.

Maureen clicks through the slides -- out of order, backwards, upside down -- a total mess.

MAUREEN
I'm sorry. These were in order
this morning. I don't know...

A visiting scientist SIGHS, annoyed. Mattingly WINCES.

INT. NSA CORRIDOR. SAME TIME

Ron barrels along, turning a corner. He's almost there.

INT. NSA CONFERENCE ROOM.

As Maureen (off screen) clicks desperately; the experts fidget and Mattingly grows increasingly upset.

MAUREEN (O.S.)
...this should...no, this is it.

Stamberg enjoys this. He leans over to Mattingly...

STAMBERG
Pretty impressive show.

MATTINGLY
(angry)
That's quite enough, Maureen.
Let's bring in John Doe!

ON THE PODIUM --

Maureen is mortified, unable to speak. But a glance at Stamberg's smug countenance tells her who did this. She exits almost COLLIDING with Ron. He looks after her preplexed, then goes to the podium. For an eerie moment he walks past the screen, which SHOWS A SLIDE OF HIM STANDING NEXT TO A GROUP OF NSA PEOPLE, who provide scale. Their HUMAN FACES FLOW OVER HIS NEARLY BLANK STONE FACE, underlining his loss of identity. The slide clicks off.

INT. PROJECTION ROOM. SAME TIME.

Maureen furiously tries to reorder the slides in the carousel, she gives up. Ron is visible in the window beyond her, speaking.

CUT TO:

INT. NSA CONFERENCE ROOM. SAME TIME.

Ron's on stage. The moment the movie began, now in context.

RON

I could enact every idle dream
I had in my former life...of
escaping my harried urban
existence to wander the wild
places of the world. My dreams
seem to be within my grasp.

STAMBERG --

doesn't like the drift of this at all. He leans over,
whispering to Mattingly.

A lone scientist claps, then stops in embarrassment. Stamberg
rises to his feet.

STAMBERG

(to scientists)

Of course, this is all sometime
in the future. Research and
security considerations must
take precedence. Mr. Doe will
be available here for a good
time to come.

Ron's doubly angry, both at this news and for having his
speech truncated.

RON

And how long is that?

STAMBERG

As long as necessary.

Ron LEAPS off the stage, coming towards Stamberg. The
security man looks a little scared.

RON

Months? Years?

MATTINGLY

Lunch, everybody! We'll resume
at 1:30.

Ron continues right past Stamberg. He STALKS towards the
scientists, footsteps THUDDING. They push and shove to get out
his way. Ron barrels past them, crashing through the
conference room door, as if it weren't there.

INT. HALLWAY. CONTINUOUS.

The FRESH FACED YOUNG SOLDIER/GUARDS are knocked down by the crashing door. Ron turns back to them and they cower.

RON

Are you hurt?

GUARD #1

No sir.

RON

Then get up for pity's sake.

Ron continues down the hall, as Stamberg makes his way through the splintered door.

STAMBERG

(to Guard #2)

Give me your radio, soldier.

He takes the soldier's walkie-talkie and starts after Ron, while calling in an alert.

STAMBERG

(radio)

We've got a Condition Red...

DOWN THE HALL --

Ron turns a corner, finding Maureen leaning against the wall. She's been crying. She looks at Ron with surprise.

MAUREEN

What are you doing?

RON

It's my coming out party.

ALARM SIRENS sound throughout the complex.

RON

Goodbye, Maureen.

He touches her face with his massive hand then continues on. Maureen chases after him.

MAUREEN

You're escaping!

He picks up his pace and Maureen struggles to keep up with him.

MAUREEN

Wait! Ron!

RON

Don't try to stop me!

MAUREEN

To hell with stopping you. I'll help you.

Ron turns to her.

MAUREEN

I've got an idea.

Ron looks over Maureen's shoulder -- Stamberg and the two guards turn the corner. He picks Maureen, carrying her under one mighty arm.

RON

You talk. I'll run.

He runs down the hall, footsteps VIBRATING THE WALLS.

CUT TO:

INT. NSA LOBBY.

Ron pounds through the lobby -- alone now --Maureen left behind somewhere.

He goes outside.

EXT. NSA COURTYARD. CONTINUOUS.

It's AN ENCLOSED AREA with only one vehicle access to escape through. Between it and Ron, SOLDIERS ARE RAPIDLY ASSEMBLING, then doing something quite incredible: linking arms and fixing their hands together with twists of nylon rope. Ron looks at them, truly baffled. Their COMMANDER approaches.

COMMANDER

Take a good look, Mr. Doe. You aren't getting out of here unless you tear these boys' arms out of their sockets. From what I hear, you're not the violent type.

Ron hesitates. It's true.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMPLOYEE EXIT. SAME TIME.

Maureen walks through the now UNGUARDED EMPLOYEE EXIT -- completely unnoticed. She nervously JINGLES A SET OF KEYS in her hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD. SAME TIME.

Ron still hesitates.

COMMANDER

Let's say we go inside and talk this over. I'll bet there's a compromise you could live with.

Ron turns and goes back in. He props the door open. The commander (not to mention the men!) heave a sigh of relief. But Ron comes out RUNNING FULL FORCE and LEAPS OVER the double line of men. Landing with a thud, he continues as the line breaks up behind him.

AN ARMORED VEHICLE drives into the vehicle access, effectively blocking it--unless Ron climbs over the top. He continues toward it. The commander calls forward a soldier with a tear gas launcher.

COMMANDER

Mr. Doe! We're going to use tear gas! It isn't pleasant, but it won't hurt you! You'll be blinded for twenty minutes!

Suddenly, Stamberg appears wielding a GRENADE LAUNCHER.

STAMBERG

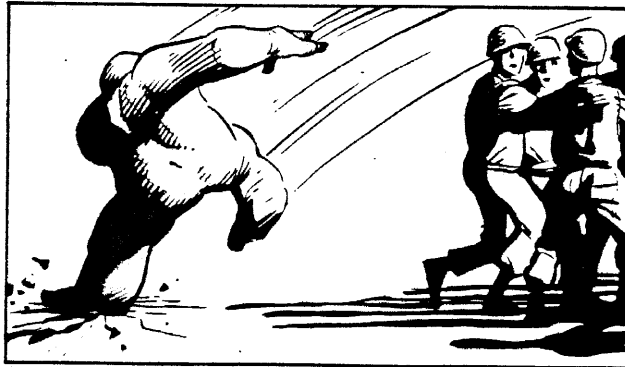
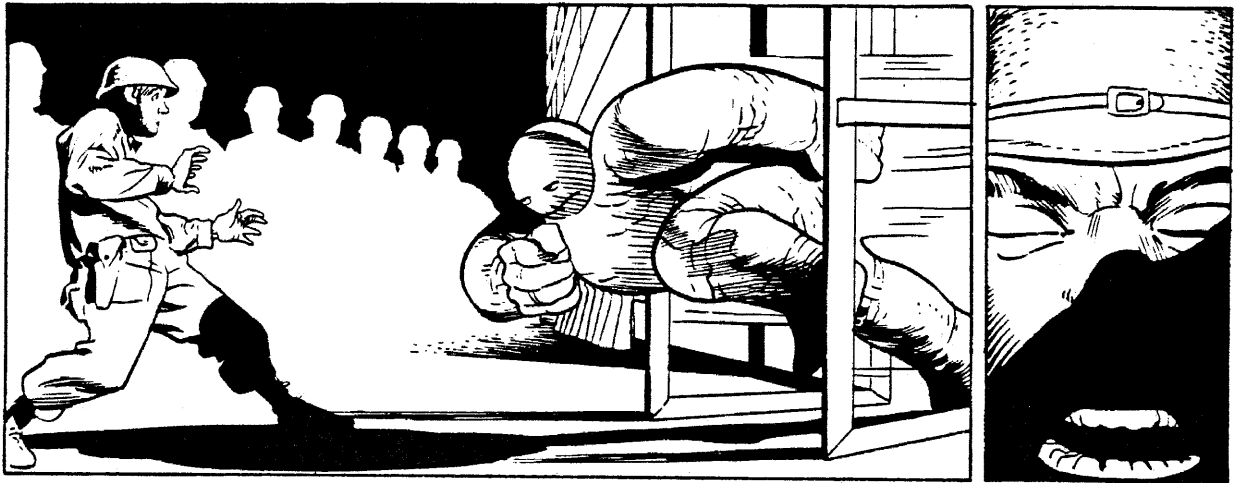
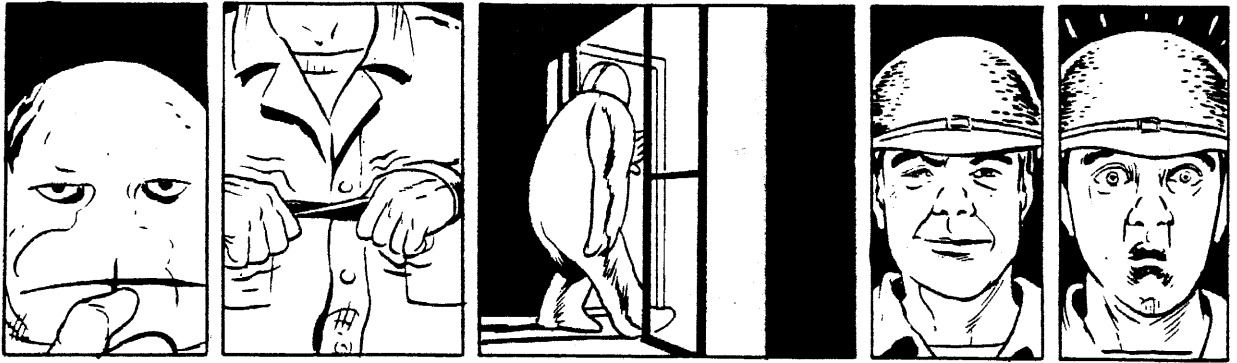
Save your ammo.

Stamberg fires. It HITS next to Ron, the EXPLOSION knocking him down. His side is spiderwebbed with cracks, and A CHUNK is gone from his leg, revealing a bizzare interior structure. But he leaps up on the armored vehicle. Stamberg FIRES AGAIN, hitting the vehicle, starting a small fire and disabling the engine. Ron is beyond it and LIMPING into the night.

The armored vehicle DRIVER pops out of a hatch with a fire extinguisher.

DRIVER

What turd-brain did that?



All eyes go to Stamberg.

STAMBERG

Everybody out through the
garage! If he reaches the
river we've lost him!

The commander starts after Ron, gesturing for his men to follow.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING LOT. SAME TIME.

Maureen is driving out of the parking lot in AN INSTITUTE VAN.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERFRONT PARK. NIGHT.

Maureen waits next to the institute van. She impatiently checks her watch. Her face fills with joy as Ron emerges from the shadows -- then falls as HIS WOUND becomes visible. She runs to him and looks at it, concerned.

MAUREEN

How much pain is there?

RON

Scale of ten? Six, maybe.
I'll live. Let's go.

MAUREEN

I guess we don't have much
choice. We have until 11:00.
We should just make it.

She closes Ron into the truck and drives off in a grinding of gears.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHTBEAT GREEN ROOM. 10:30.

Three ECONOMISTS sit in the background as the host approaches the producer.

HOST

Any word from your scientist?

PRODUCER

She has another half hour.

HOST

They found her on file. She's an expert on leech brains. Doesn't sound like the story of the decade to me.

PRODUCER

I'll keep the economists ready.

CUT TO:

INT. WASHINGTON THOROUGHFARE. NIGHT.

The institute van is trapped in a snarl of traffic.

INT. VAN. CONTINUOUS.

Maureen is talking over her shoulder.

MAUREEN

There's an accident or something. It's hopeless. We're going to have to continue on foot.

Ron is crammed INTO THE BACK OF THE VAN. He hops out.

EXT. THOROUGHFARE. CONTINUOUS.

Ron accidentally lands on THE HOOD OF THE FAMILY CAR BEHIND THE VAN, crushing the hood into the engine. THE FAMILY OF FOUR stares back at Ron -- petrified, expressionless. Ron looks down at the damage he's caused, shrugs his apology, then leaps from the car. Maureen joins him and they run down the thoroughfare.

CUT TO:

INT. NSA VIDEO SURVEILLANCE ROOM. SAME TIME.

Stamberg and Wu are both on phones.

STAMBERG

Keep the watch on his ex-wife's house. He may go there. And find out where Douglas is, too.

WU

(to Stamberg)
He's been sighted.

He pulls over a map and taps the street. Stamberg looks at it.

STAMBERG

What's around there? What's he doing?

WU

Isn't one of the networks near there?

They look at each other.

STAMBERG

Shit.

Stamberg bolts for the exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET NEAR NEWS HEADQUARTERS. NIGHT.

PEOPLE RUN SCREAMING as Ron and Maureen lope up the street.

RON

Maybe I should change my mouthwash.

A MOTHER --

lets go of her SMALL CHILD'S hand and runs in panic from Ron. With one mighty stride, Ron is upon the child. He holds her up and shouts after the mother:

RON

Hey lady!

With another LEAP Ron is in front of the mother.

RON

You forgot your baby!

He hands the mother her child.

MAUREEN--

shouts at him from across the street.

MAUREEN

We only have five minutes!



after page

He bounds over to Maureen and they hurry up the street, THEN...

POLICE CARS --

screech to a halt at the intersection.

RON

You go ahead. Out of the line of fire. Try to clear the way.

She runs ahead as Ron walks with his HANDS UP. A COP has his REVOLVER steadied on his car door, classic form. Ron approaches.

RON

(soothing)

It's okay. It's okay. It's okay...

The cop hesitates just long enough and Ron takes the gun.

RON

Don't worry. I'm a taxpayer.

Suddenly, a SHOTGUN FIRES. Dust and chips spray off Ron's Head. He narrows his eyes, Concrete Eastwood, squinting at A COP who holds the offending shotgun.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWS HEADQUARTERS. MOMENTS LATER.

Ron walks up to the building. The disarmed cop is reluctantly riding on Ron's shoulders. He looks miserable. Police cars and SWAT types follow them, a lethal, cherry-flashing parade.

INT. NEWS HEADQUARTERS LOBBY. CONTINUOUS.

Maureen has gotten into the lobby and is trying to stop the guards barricading the door.

MAUREEN

Let him in! It's all right!

She is completely ignored by them, but not by reporter TAWNY HILL, who strides towards the barricade with cameraman, VIC. Tawny has a whippet's body, a stunning if sharp-featured face, crowned by an extraordinary mane of blonde hair.

CAMERAMAN VIC --

gets one look at Ron, beyond the glass doors, and freezes in his tracks.

TAWNY

Move it, Vic! Come on!

General Patton couldn't have done it better. Though frightened, Vic hops to. Tawny grabs some sound equipment.

MAUREEN --

looks at Ron through the LOCKED GLASS DOORS and throws up her hands in frustration. Ron waves her back, sets down the cop.

Ron SMASHES THROUGH the doors, sending the desks and chairs SKIDDING. Ron and Maureen EMBRACE. Tawny and Vic capture it all.

RON

Which way?

MAUREEN

Follow me.

They dash up the stairs, followed by Tawny and Vic, past a clock reading 11:00.

CUT TO:

INT. STAMBERG'S CAR. NIGHT.

Stamberg and THREE BEEFY AGENTS speed to the network.

CUT TO:

INT. "NIGHTBEAT" GREEN ROOM. 11:25.

It's a zoo: Ron and Maureen telling the producer how they want to proceed; economists being shooed away; the host throwing away his questions; Vic and Tawny getting it all on tape. Suddenly, Stamberg and his men BURST IN, GUNS DRAWN. Silence falls instantly.

RON

What're you gonna do, shoot up the place?

Stamberg sees that he's being video taped and orders:

STAMBERG
(to his men)
Put the guns away.

RON
You aren't gonna get this
toothpaste back in the tube,
Stamberg. We win.

STAMBERG
(considers this, then:)
Everyone out except these two.

Everyone but Ron, Maureen and Stamberg exit. However, on her way out, Tawny SECRETLY ACTIVATES THE INTERCOM FUNCTION on a phone. A red light on the phone glows.

STAMBERG
I want a deal.

RON
I'm listening.

STAMBERG
We go with the cyborg story...

Stamberg notices the red light on the phone, punches the button by it (it goes out) and lifts the receiver.

STAMBERG
Hello?

He hangs up.

INT-"NIGHTBEAT" SET. SAME TIME.

Tawny hangs up the phone with a disappointed sigh. A STAGE TECHNICIAN sees this.

INT-"NIGHTBEAT" GREEN ROOM. SAME TIME.

Ron is counting points on his fingers.

RON
...Maureen stays with me, she gets full cooperation with her research, I live where I want to live, I go where I want to go.

STAMBERG

But I'm with you too. Until I'm satisfied you're going to live up to this deal. And you take P.R. cues from me.

There is POUNDING on the door.

PRODUCER (O.S.)

Thirty seconds!!!

RON

All right.

THEY OPEN THE DOOR AND RON IS HUSTLED TO THE SET.

INT. BACKSTAGE. CONTINUOUS.

Maureen follows Ron to give moral support. Stamberg starts to follow, but diverts to speak to the stage technician.

STAMBERG

That phone in there has an intercom. Who was I talking to?

The technician points to Tawny, who avoids catching Stamberg's eye. "On the Air" signs FLASH ON.

ON THE SET --

The normally imperturbable host is decidedly nervous sitting next to Ron. He clears his throat:

HOST

I've interviewed them all ladies and gentlemen, from Presidents to Popes but I guarantee you I've never done an interview like this. (to his stage manager) Do we have a two-shot?

The host checks THE ON-AIR MONITOR as a two-shot of Ron and himself appears.

HOST

Here It is, ladies and gentlemen. You can see I wasn't...

RON

He...

HOST

Excuse me.

RON

Not It. He.

HOST

"He". First of all, sir, do you have a name? The production people here are just referring to you as "that concrete guy."

STAMBERG

gets in Ron's sightline and mouths "No names", then draws a finger across his throat for emphasis. Ron takes the hint.

RON

Well...I guess that's descriptive...

HOST

All right then, we'll be back with our guest...(punching it) Concrete...right after this.

The stage technician approaches Stamberg.

TECHNICIAN

There's a call for Concrete's agent. It's Mattel Toys.

Stamberg just stares at him.

TECHNICIAN

You can take it in the Green Room.

Stamberg heads back to take the call.

CUT TO:

INT. STAMBERG'S WASHINGTON OFFICE. THE FOLLOWING DAY.

Newly rented as a home for "CONCRETE CENTRAL".
A TEMP answers the constantly ringing phone, while in...

INT. AN INNER OFFICE. SAME TIME.

Concrete, Maureen and Stamberg watch a portable T.V. On screen is...

TAWNY'S NEWS REPORT --

Tawny is standing in front of the DOORS to the network building that Concrete barged through, (they're now being repaired). This is Tawny's day-after report; for her gumption she's been made a network correspondent with the Concrete beat.

TAWNY

It was a dramatic debut by any standard.

VIDEO --

of Concrete smashing through the network doors -- from the tape Vic shot last night.

TAWNY (V.O.)

But when the creature who calls himself Concrete made it upstairs to the "Nightbeat" studios, he only raised more questions. For instance, who is this man?

VIDEO --

of Stamberg and his henchmen bursting in.

CONCRETE

What're you gonna do, shoot up the place?

TAWNY --

on camera.

TAWNY

His name is Joe Stamberg, and today he's calling himself Concrete's personal manager. But is this how a personal manager acts?

VIDEO --

Stamberg and his goons herding everyone from the green room,

TAWNY (v.o)

Last night, he acted more like a political handler, or a Mafia goon.

INT. CONCRETE CENTRAL. CONTINUOUS.

Concrete turns to Stamberg.

CONCRETE

I think you come across as very sympathetic.

Stamberg gives him the finger and turns up the sound with the remote control.

INT. SENATOR DOUGLAS' HOUSE. SAME TIME.

Senator Douglas is watching Tawny's report.

NIGHTBEAT HOST

What can you tell us about this cyborg research program?

CONCRETE

It was a flop. I was the only success and it was bad policy anyway. America can't get rich making cyborgs. Only by making products people need.

Senator Douglas smiles -- proud of Ron.

INT. LISA'S HOUSE. SAME TIME.

Lisa's making dinner, occasionally glancing at the TV.

TAWNY (V.O.)

Bizarrely, Concrete returned to this budget issue repeatedly while avoiding talking about his wounds and just what went on before he became public.

Lisa's no more interested than any curious viewer.

INT. CONCRETE CENTRAL. SAME TIME.

Stamberg taps a pencil in agitation. Concrete and Maureen pay more attention to him than the report on the T.V.

TAWNY (V.O.)

Clearly, he's hiding secrets beyond the technologies that make him work. Perhaps in the weeks to come, he'll come out and tell the whole truth. In the meantime, it is this reporter's opinion that Mr. Concrete is stonewalling us. Tawny Hill, A.B.S. News, Washington.

STAMBERG

She's trouble. But I got a plan... What do you know about the Ninja Turtles?

CONCRETE

Not much.

STAMBERG

Well my kids loved them.

CONCRETE

(incredulous)

You have children?

STAMBERG

You sound just like my ex-wife. I've got two boys.

He again starts agitatedly tapping that pencil.

STAMBERG

I wanted joint custody but this stupid-ass appeals judge... But don't you worry. When I get finished with him...

MAUREEN

You're digressing, Stamberg.

Stamberg actually flushes -- he hates displaying his emotions.

STAMBERG

What I'm telling you is that my boys were crazy about those Turtles. They had to have the toys, the cereal, the underwear for Chris'sakes. Spent a fortune.

MAUREEN

And?

STAMBERG

And then one day they wake up and they don't like 'em anymore. All that Turtle junk goes straight into the closet. Forgotten...it's over.

CONCRETE

You want to turn me into a Ninja Turtle?

STAMBERG

I don't want to. They want to. Look at the phone sheet.

He produces a phone sheet a mile long.

STAMBERG

Mattel, General Mills, the Gap. On and on and they all want a piece of your rock ass.

MAUREEN

You'd deliberately overexpose Ron?

STAMBERG

Call him Concrete, even in here.

MAUREEN

(acquiescing)

Concrete.

STAMBERG

Overexpose is exactly what I'd do. Why I bet in a year, John Q. Public won't be able to stand the sight of him. Tawny Hill's story will be gone.

CONCRETE

I don't know. It's like making me into a joke. I've got bigger plans for myself.

STAMBERG
(explodes)

Hey!
(to Maureen with attempted calm)
Would you excuse us for a minute,
please?

MAUREEN
I think Concrete has a point. He
can achieve greatness...

STAMBERG
Get out!

He grabs Maureen by the arm and bodily escorts her out the door,
slamming it behind her. Then he turns back to Concrete.

CONCRETE
I won't have you manhandling
Maureen like...

STAMBERG
Shut up!

He paces back and forth in front of Concrete.

STAMBERG
I'm gonna tell you a story, Stoney,
and you better pay close attention
'cause your life depends on it.

Concrete is silent.

STAMBERG
There was once an old C.I.A. spook
-- middle-aged, middle-level, too
quick with his tongue and too quick
on the trigger. Washed up.

CONCRETE
You?

STAMBERG
Me. So the agency decides to put
the old spook out to pasture.
Gonna give him the mother of all
bullshit assignments. The N.S.A.
is claiming they got some rock
coated alien they want to keep a
lid on. What a joke, huh?

CONCRETE

The C.I.A. didn't believe I really existed?

STAMBERG

Can you blame them? But they do now. And I've already let you escape once. I'm not just washed up anymore, I'm in deep shit, and I don't like it! Now comes the moral of the story.

Stamberg gets face to face with Concrete.

STAMBERG

You're gonna do things my way from now on or someone's gonna get hurt -- big time. Maybe you, maybe your girlfriend out there. But you're not causing me anymore grief. I want you to be a toy line, you become a friggin' toy line. No ifs, ands or buts or this story's gonna have a very unhappy ending.

Of course Concrete could break Stamberg in two, but it's Ron's pacifist soul inhabiting the mighty stone body. He's cowed by Stamberg's intimidation. Stamberg knows he's won.

STAMBERG

Cheer up, Stoney. You're gonna be a celebrity.

He chucks Concrete under his rock chin.

CUT TO:

EXT. A ROCKY DESERT. DAY.

A Joshua Tree-like setting.

A CLAPBOARD --

is in front of Concrete's face.

CREWMEMBER

"Rock of Gibraltar" -- first verse.
Take One.

The Clapboard is removed and the driving rhythm of the pop-rock song -- "Rock of Gibraltar" -- kicks in over MONITOR SPEAKERS.



A LONGER SHOT --

reveals THE BEAUTIFUL YOUNG POP DIVA who is singing this song. (Lyrically, the song is the Diva's fantasy about a man who is as strong and faithful as the Rock of Gibraltar).

The Diva SINGS THIS SONG TO CONCRETE, who sits perched on a boulder -- the "Concrete Campaign" has obviously begun in earnest.

As she sings the first verse, the Diva moves provocatively towards Concrete, then sits on his lap. AS THE CHORUS KICKS IN, Concrete begins LIP-SYNCHING the back up vocal. He and the Diva leap to their feet and DANCE. Then the director yells:

DIRECTOR

Cut!

As the crew resets, Concrete sits. Unselfconsciously, the Diva sits in his lap, enjoying his shade.

DIVA

I've got a confession...

Concrete says nothing.

DIVA

When my record company first suggested working with you, I was scared. But you're so nice.

She scoots down a little in Concrete's lap to use his chin to shade her face. Resonating from that stone chamber is THE SOUND OF CONCRETE NERVOUSLY CLEARING HIS THROAT.

"ROCK OF GIBRALTAR" FILLS THE SOUND TRACK -- background for...

CONCRETEMANIA--A MONTAGE.

Rows of Concrete dolls, toys, pet rocks, rock candy, comics and other ephemera flash by, ending with a TALKING CONCRETE DOLL. Concrete pulls its string:

CONCRETE DOLL

America can't get rich making cyborgs. Only by making products people need.

A SATURDAY MORNING CARTOON --

Over-the-top Ren and Stimpe style. "Concrete" (with another actor's voice) is holding a black ball cartoon bomb with a sizzling fuse. A cartoon bear and robot cower in fear.



Sly Stallone pinches Oprah Winfrey: surreal thrill

People

He looks mean, but CONCRETE is, really a softie

CONCRETE HAPPY SEAT

CONCRETE IS ALL REE

BACK AGAIN PET ROCKS

CARTOON CONCRETE

Don't panic. I'll take care of this.

He eats the bomb. He explodes into fragments, leaving only his eyes and a jagged piece around his mouth floating in the air.

CARTOON CONCRETE (MOUTH)

Okay, so I blew it. So what?

CUT TO:

EXT. VENTURA FREEWAY. DAY

Concrete rides in the back of a RED PICK-UP TRUCK WITH MONSTER WHEELS, driven by Stamberg. OTHER DRIVERS honk and wave. Concrete manages desultory waves in return -- like a beauty queen who's been in one parade too many.

They pass A DISTINCTIVE ROCK OUTCROPPING and a "WELCOME TO EAGLE ROCK, CALIF." SIGN.

EXT. A WAREHOUSE. DAY.

The red pickup is parked in front. A "rented" sign hangs below a realtor's sign.

INT. WAREHOUSE. SAME TIME.

It's a cavernous space mostly empty except for shafts of sunlight streaming from skylights. ONE WORKMAN constructs another cinderblock chair and desk for Concrete. His pace is sluggish. Broken floors and dented walls attest to this being Concrete's CORNER.

ACROSS THE WAREHOUSE --

It's another story -- a beehive -- as workers install some very expensive, Italian, white office furniture for Stamberg. They're supervised by A HIGH-STRUNG ITALIAN DECORATOR.

Stamberg's on the phone. He wears his L.A. Gear levi jacket with the Concrete logo front and back, (\$110 at all the hipper stores), his Concrete baseball cap (\$25), and his Concrete shades (\$42).

STAMBERG

That figure is an insult to my client. We're not asking for script approval, not for any approvals. His good name, his image, his dignity are all in your hands. All we're asking is that you pay dearly for that. Yeah, call me back.

Stamberg hangs up, lifting his speaker phone up from HIS TEMPORARY DESK as his streamlined new ITALIAN DESK is put in front of him.

He puts the phone down and gets the feel of sitting behind this very expensive piece of furniture.

CONCRETE --

nearby, picks through an assortment of CONCRETE MERCHANDISE on a door-on-sawhorses table. He tries to open a CONCRETE COMIC BOOK, but just rips it in two. He drops it in annoyance.

CONCRETE

When does Maureen come?

STAMBERG

She's putting together a portable lab. A month, maybe.

Concrete sighs. It sounds like an eternity.

STAMBERG

(to the Designer). I don't know about this white...Are you sure it's ah...(to Concrete) What's the word I'm looking for, Stoney?

CONCRETE

Intimidating...

STAMBERG

Yeah. You sure it's intimidating enough?

The Designer is a bit disconcerted by the question.

CONCRETE

(to the Designer)

Mr. Stamberg likes to give the impression that he might kill you at any second. I think he's afraid that white undercuts that image.

Now, the Designer understands.

DESIGNER

(very Italian)

No, no. Now that you and Concrete Man are in the show biz, you want to give the impression that you love everybodys and will only kill them if they screw you.

Stamberg runs his hand across the surface of the desk.

STAMBERG

And that's white?

DESIGNER

Very white.

Stamberg nods, satisfied, testing the drawers of the desk. The Designer goes back to yelling at his crew.

Concrete pulls the string on "THE NEW!" CONCRETE TALKING DOLL -- it comes off in his hand.

CONCRETE

Either I'm getting stronger, or this stuff is junk.

STAMBERG

What do you care? The public can't get enough of it...yet. Come on, I want to get to Beverly Hills before the traffic hits.

They leave, but not before Concrete picks a letter off a stack of mail by the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY. DAY.

Ron rides in the back of the pick-up truck, as it speeds along the freeway. He reads the letter he took from the stack, torn roughly from the envelope (the only way he can).

LETTER WRITER #1 (V.O.)

Dear Mr. Concrete; I had high hopes for you when you first appeared. You seemed to have a political conscience. Since then, you have done everything you could just to turn a fast buck. If you love nature, as you claimed on one talk show, why aren't you sitting down in front of the bulldozers now plowing under the wilderness? Or going to...

The truck LURCHES to the side and Concrete drops the letter to grab the edge of the truckbed. The letter is blown away. Concrete watches with telescopic clarity as a car runs over it. But the wound it makes stays with him.

Stamberg rolls down his window and sticks his head out.

STAMBERG

Check it out, "Rock of Gibraltar"! Number One!

He cranks up the stereo so Concrete can hear.

CUT TO:

INT. A PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO.

A FASHION PHOTOGRAPHER -- a lovely blonde with an open engaging manner -- is shooting a special spread for Vanity Fair, featuring Concrete -- a group of designers have created special versions of their latest lines to fit Concrete.

At the moment, Concrete is being helped into a Calvin Klein ensemble -- blazer and khaki pants -- by TWO WARDROBE ASSISTANTS.

Stamberg observes while talking on his portable phone.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I think I like it better with the tie loose.

WARDROBE ASSISTANT #1 loosens Concrete's tie, then steps back for the photographer's approval.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Let me fool with it.

She goes to Concrete and tries to get the tie just right.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Could you bend down a little please?

Concrete kneels, so he's looking right into the photographer's pretty face. As she fusses with the tie, she makes conversation.

PHOTOGRAPHER

So, you're everywhere these days. Where did I see that headline -- "The Year of Concrete"?

CONCRETE

That was the cover of Advertising Age.

PHOTOGRAPHER

That's right...

CONCRETE'S POV --

As the photographer continues to talk, Concrete uses his microscopic vision to isolate her features. First her perfect mouth. Then in his memory A FLASH OF MAUREEN'S MOUTH.

PHOTOGRAPHER

...what did it say -- fifty different endorsements?

THEN --

her lovely blue eyes. Then FLASH -- Maureen's eyes.

CONCRETE

One hundred and fifty...

THEN --

her graceful slender neck. FLASH -- Maureen's neck.

PHOTOGRAPHER

My God. How do you find the time?

CONCRETE

I don't need much sleep.

PHOTOGRAPHER

There...That should do it.

She steps back, her face framed in Concrete's vision in a perfect close-up.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Ready?

Silence -- Concrete seems hypnotized -- a reverie.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Are you ok?

CONCRETE

(snapping out of it)

Yeah. Yeah. Show Time.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF STYLISH FASHION PHOTOS --

Concrete modeling his Calvin's.

CUT TO:

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO. LATER.

The photographer gets one last shot of Concrete in a double-breasted suit by some Paris designer.

PHOTOGRAPHER

That's a wrap. You were wonderful!

She gives Concrete a pat on the cheek. He smiles, utterly disarmed by this woman.

STAMBERG --

holds up A CONCRETE-SIZED PAIR OF BOXER SHORTS -- a hundred little Concrete faces making the pattern on the shorts.

STAMBERG

What about these?

PHOTOGRAPHER

I don't like them. They're too silly. They'll make Concrete look foolish.

Stamberg gives Concrete a nasty smile.

STAMBERG

Ah, he won't mind. Will ya,
Stoney?

PHOTOGRAPHER

I don't want to shoot it.

STAMBERG

Listen...

He reads the label in the underwear.

STAMBERG

...Ruffio of Rome payed us good
money for Stoney to wear their
underpants. So, he's gonna wear
them and you're gonna shoot it,
or I'm going to withdraw our
permission to use any of the
photos, understand.

CONCRETE

Come on, Stamberg.

STAMBERG

A contract's a contract.

Concrete storms towards Stamberg, footsteps shaking the floor.
We think he might level Stamberg, but then...he snatches the
boxers from his hand.

CONCRETE

Give 'em!

He takes the underwear, then starts to remove the double-
breasted suit -- so roughly that he splits the seams of the
jacket and tears a gaping hole in his shirt. Then, he starts
to remove his pants. He glances warily at the photographer.
A strange feeling of modesty overtakes him. He's been without
clothes since the aliens' cave but now that he's wearing them
again, he feels embarrassed about taking his pants off. The
photographer senses his embarrassment.

PHOTOGRAPHER

There's the changing room...

CONCRETE

Thanks

He starts for the changing room, giving Stamberg one last enraged look. Stamberg is oblivious, fooling with his portable phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE. MORNING.

Concrete opens the door, gingerly ducking under the lintel. However, when he closes it he pulls off the doorknob. Annoyed, he places it on the ground by the door, and strides off.

EXT. WAREHOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Concrete passes a fenced-in yard in which TWO KIDS are playing with Concrete masks and Concrete guns. The two kids run towards the fence, screaming hellos to Concrete and zapping him with death-ray sounds. Concrete waves feebly, wishing he were on some other planet, away from Concretetmania. Unnoticed by him, TWO OLDER KIDS nod to each other and follow him when he turns the corner.

EXT. CORNER MARKET. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Concrete's fumbling stone hands take a Times off a stack and he takes it in to pay for it. The kids wait at a discreet distance.

INT. CORNER MARKET. CONTINUOUS.

As Concrete starts to enter the store, his shoulder catches the corner of THE SLIDING GLASS DOORS. Unfeeling and unaware, Concrete's about to pull the door from the frame when THE STORE MANAGER spots him. He starts waving his hands and whistling at Concrete.

MANAGER

Hey! Hey! Mr. Concrete! Watch
it! Easy!

Concrete follows the Manager's pointing and sees that he's buckling the door. He turns sideways and enters the store, grimacing when he sees that the sliding door is now jammed, dancing goofily back and forth on its track.

INT. CORNER MARKET. MOMENTS LATER.

Concrete painstakingly--it's a real effort--takes quarters out of the little bag hanging on a string around his neck. Gum cards and other Concrete ephemera are for sale, to his further dismay. He can't escape it.

CONCRETE

(indicating the broken glass of a display) Do you have a bill for this yet?

STORE MANAGER

Glass guy comes today.

CONCRETE

Get me the bill for the door also.

STORE MANAGER

I will. Believe me.

Concrete squeezes through the check-out counter, unknowingly knocking over the candy display, lots of CONCRETE GOODIES spilling to the floor.

EXT. CORNER MARKET. CONTINUOUS.

Concrete emerges, reading the paper. One of the older kids approaches him, offering a pen stuck through a slurpee cup and some paper.

FIRST KID

Could I have your autograph?
I'm your biggest fan...

Concrete takes it and obliges. Unknown to him, THE OTHER KID is behind him, doing something we can't quite see.

FIRST KID

I got your "Sidewalk Slayer" skateboard, your "Rock Slide" Nintendo game...hey, thanks!

He takes the autograph and runs by Concrete. Concrete turns to look at him, seeing his friend for the first time. They're looking at him, laughing as they walk away. Concrete shrugs and departs.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Concrete enters the knobless door, ducking again carefully. We see he has the nicknames "FISH + LENNY" spray-painted on his backside. At this moment, a Van passes the warehouse.

INT. VAN. CONTINUOUS.

Vic drives Tawny.

TAWNY

Concrete goes shopping. Christ he's getting boring. I need a new angle.

VIC

Any ideas?

TAWNY

I'd sure like to see what goes on inside that warehouse...

Vic nods -- he would too.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE. LATE AFTERNOON.

Concrete is on his hands and knees, while Stamberg scrubs the graffiti from his rear end with a wire brush and turpentine. Stamberg keeps a lid on it but he's enjoying Concrete's humiliation immensely.

STAMBERG

Maybe the kid is on to something. We rent you out as a billboard.

Concrete looks up and sees...

MAUREEN --

at the door, radiantly backlit. The lintel above her is broken -- Concrete clearly forgot to duck this time. Moving men are opening a van behind her. Concrete gets to his feet, giving one quick glance to make sure his backside's paint free, then hurries to Maureen, finding it hard suppress his joy.

CONCRETE

Good to see you. Really good.

MAUREEN

Have you been all right? Our Mr. Stamberg must be a joy to be with.

CONCRETE

He's thriving here. Spies and Hollywood agents must have similar souls. What's all that?

Stamberg comes over to join them.

STAMBERG

Talking about me? My ears are burning. How're you doing, Dr. Vonnegut?

MAUREEN

Excited about going to back to work with Ron.

Stamberg makes a finger pistol and points it at Maureen.

STAMBERG

Concrete.

Maureen returns the finger pistol gesture.

MAUREEN

Concrete.

STAMBERG

Well...got to run. Sure you don't want to have dinner at Le Dome?

CONCRETE

They hate me at Le Dome. I break all their chairs.

He gives Concrete a little chuck under the chin.

STAMBERG

There you go, Stoney -- bein' sensitive again. Well, bye.

Concrete and Maureen watch Stamberg strut towards the door.

MAUREEN

Stoney?

CONCRETE

I know, I know...I don't want to talk about it.

Concrete looks for a way to change the subject. He sees that Maureen's moving men are hauling in crate after crate.

CONCRETE

Wow -- a lot of stuff.

MAUREEN

Don't worry. It's just my lab equipment. I'm not moving in with you .

CONCRETE

...Wouldn't be so terrible.

Maureen misses the implications.

MAUREEN

Since they're paid by the hour, I guess we ought to start unloading.

CONCRETE

Can I help?

MAUREEN

Well...maybe we should let them do it. Some of it's pretty delicate.

A little hurt, Concrete withdraws to his chair. He reads ANOTHER LETTER from the pile of mail as moving men bring in tables, chairs, cabinets, a freight scale, boxed microscope and other equipment. Maureen directs them, happily setting up her nest.

LETTER WRITER #2 (V.O.)

Dear Concrete--I dreamt about you last night and I had to write. It was a delicious dream. We were on a beach, the only ones there. It was late afternoon. I was wearing my black bikini-- well almost wearing it...

Concrete looks at Maureen. With unselfconscious sensuality, she's stretching her stiff back.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS. DAY

Stamberg leads Concrete down the sidewalk to an appointment. They pass a TRENDY ART GALLERY. Concrete catches sight of an explicitly erotic painting visible through the art gallery window. He goes in.

STAMBERG

What're you doing?

Stamberg hesitates, then follows.

CUT TO:

INT. ART GALLERY. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Concrete stands by, admiring the painting as THE ART DEALER puts a "sold" sticker over the price card.

STAMBERG

You could get a Playboy for three bucks, you know.

CONCRETE

This is a work of art. I can afford it.

Concrete takes a step back to admire his purchase.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE. DAY.

The erotic painting's installed above Concrete's cinderblock chair. He's leaning on the chair back, looking at it, as Maureen OPENS A TRAP DOOR in his leg where Stamberg blew a chunk out of it. She pokes a syringe into a valve inside and draws fluid out.

CONCRETE

What do you think of it?

MAUREEN

(uncomfortable)

Well...it's rather bold, isn't it? Are you having...those sorts of feelings?

CONCRETE

Oh, no. Just a whim. My adieu to the world of flesh.

MAUREEN

You know, the most incredible things are happening in your body. There are things like Flagellata in your bloodstream, transporting mineral particles. Like swimmers carrying stones. I'm thinking of naming them after Sisyphus.

CONCRETE

That's the guy who rolled the rock up the hill?

MAUREEN

Right.

CONCRETE

But it always rolled down when he got near the top. One frustrated fellah.

MAUREEN

Do you not like it?

CONCRETE

No, it's perfect.

He looks down at Maureen, as she kneels below him, her cleavage revealed as she leans forward to take another fluid sample.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE BOOKSTORE. DAY.

Tawny stands in front of a display promoting "CONCRETE'S DIET BOOK", doing a newscast. Concrete's in the background, having a signing at the bookstore. Stamberg is off to the side, watching Tawny's report with a scowl.

TAWNY

What does a cyborg, beneficiary of a mysterious, no doubt costly, technology do? Well, he writes a diet book...

She gestures back to Concrete, who's signing books.

TAWNY

...licenses toys and comics. But just what did America pay for this half-ton talk-show guest? Let's hear what the beneficiary has to say.

Tawny comes closer to Concrete -- her video crew following.

TAWNY

Concrete, the country's still in the dark about this so-called cyborg program. When exactly did your construction start and how much did you cost?

CONCRETE

(trying to be charming)
Oh, Tawny, you ask the best questions.

TAWNY

Do you care to answer it?

CONCRETE

I'm signing autographs. Here, have a free book. Excuse me now.

He thrusts a book into Tawny's hands then ignores her to sign books. Tawny tosses the book back on the display table, then turns back to the video camera, wrapping her report.

TAWNY

As the last few months have proved, Concrete will talk about anything, as long as he's very well-paid. The only subject he stays silent about is himself. So the rumors fly. Is he a cyborg?

Tawny takes a step to her right -- now standing beside a book standee for AN ALIEN ABDUCTION BESTSELLER.

TAWNY

Is he a space alien? The only thing for certain is that Concrete isn't talking. Tawny Hill -- ABC news.

Stamberg watches Tawny -- that space alien reference making his jaw clench nervously.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOOKSTORE PARKING LOT. DAY.

Tawny is striding towards the news van when she's startled by Stamberg.

STAMBERG

Concrete said you forgot your book.

He holds out a copy of the Concrete's diet book.

TAWNY

I've got enough crap on my shelves.

STAMBERG

Come on...He autographed it especially for you.

He opens the cover of the book so Tawny can see the inscription. It reads: WATCH IT! CONCRETE -- in a good approximation of Concrete's pen/ball handwriting.

Tawny grabs the book and studies the inscription, coming to a slow boil. Then, she sees Concrete climbing into the back of the pick-up truck. She runs over to him.

TAWNY

You think you can threaten me, you gravel-headed bastard!

She flings the book into his face and storms away. Concrete picks up the book, opens it and sees his so-called autograph.

Then, Tawny returns.

TAWNY

I changed my mind. Give me that.

Like a kid with a guilty conscience, Concrete reflexive swallows the book whole.

TAWNY

You just made the biggest mistake
of your life, mister.

She again storms away.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY. DAY.

The pick-up truck barrels down the freeway, a livid Concrete ranting, trying to shout into Stamberg's open window.

CONCRETE

Of all the idiotic, dispicable,
bullshit tricks!

STAMBERG

(unconcerned)

I can't hear you.

Like a battering ram, Concrete pokes his head through the truck's back windshield, so he's part way in the cab.

INT. CAB. CONTINUOUS.

CONCRETE

Can you hear me now!

Stamberg is indignant.

STAMBERG

Hey, jerk-off! That smoked glass
costs a fortune.

CONCRETE

Next time you threaten someone, use
your own name!

STAMBERG

I'm not the two-ton beast. I don't
have your clout.

CONCRETE

As if you can scare someone like
Tawny Hill. She's only going to be
more relentless.

STAMBERG

She doesn't know from relentless.
But I could teach her.

Stamberg's malevolence makes Concrete nervous.

CONCRETE

I'm not going to be a party to any
of your dirty tricks.

STAMBERG

You're damned delicate for a hunk
of rock.

Stamberg notices shards of broken glass on his \$200 linen pants.

STAMBERG

Shit. You're paying for the
repair.

He plucks the glass gingerly from his pants.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE. NIGHT.

Concrete steadies himself on the chair as Maureen draws fluid from his leg valve, as before. He seems to be fighting the impulse to look down at her, and casts his eyes upward.

CONCRETE'S POV OF SKYLIGHT

Through the skylight Tawny and Vic are visible, videotaping the proceedings below.

CONCRETE

points up at them.

CONCRETE

Hey! What's the idea? Hey!

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF. CONTINUOUS.

Tawny and Vic crouch, underlit by the glow from the skylight.

TAWNY

Keep rolling.

VIC

Uh oh.

There's the percussive sound of gunshots and the skylight
EXPLODES INTO FRAGMENTS. The pair roll backwards
instinctively.

INT. WAREHOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

Glass rains down and Concrete automatically takes Maureen into his arms, shielding her. Stamberg is EMPTYING A GUN at the skylight. The roar momentarily halts as he changes clips.

CONCRETE

Are you insane? They're news people!

STAMBERG

(rushing outside)

I don't think I got 'em.

MAUREEN

Ron, he really meant to kill them!

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF. CONTINUOUS.

The pair have some glass cuts, but aren't shot. Tawny picks a glass sliver out from above Vic's free eye.

VIC

Am I hit? Am I bleeding?

TAWNY

You're all right. Calm down.
Oh shit--

Stamberg is clambering onto the roof from the ladder Tawny and Vic set up. He leads with his gun. Tawny assumes a fighter's crouch, circling around him. But Stamberg heads for Vic. Tawny runs up.

STAMBERG

Concrete's gonna break your necks.

TAWNY

Leave him alone!!

Stamberg CUFFS her with his free hand and she falls, then, scrambling for a handhold, SLIDES OFF THE ROOF, SCREAMING.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

CONCRETE CATCHES TAWNY. Unhurt but winded, she realizes she's face to face with the brute, at his mercy. She DRAWS IN

BREATH TO SCREAM--and freezes.

TAWNY
Please--don't kill me.

Totally taken aback, he sets her down. Tawny staggers away.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF.(VIDEO) CONTINUOUS.

Stamberg advances on Vic, finally putting the muzzle of his gun to the lens.

STAMBERG
(intense)
I think...you should
lift...your camera!

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF.CONTINUOUS

Vic holds the camcorder away from his head and Stamberg FIRES, destroying it in a BLAZE OF ELECTRICAL SPARKS.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

Vic frantically descends the ladder, nervously glancing at Concrete and Maureen, who stand astonished by this bizarre scene. Stamberg yells down at him, gloating.

STAMBERG
Send us a bill for it!

Tawny screeches up in her car, the door open. Vic jumps in.

EXT. WAREHOUSE AND STREET. CONTINUOUS.

In a bird's-eye view, Stamberg is visible on the roof, hurling abuse at Tawny's retreating car. His words echo eerily in the night.

STAMBERG
You don't know how lucky you
are, you bastards! Next time
you're dead meat! Dead!! Just
try me!

CONCRETE AND MAUREEN

Look at each other with real fear. They believe him.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE. LATER.

Stamberg is dealing with POLICE OFFICERS summoned by Tawny, who stands in the background with Vic. The officers examine Stamberg's security documents.

STAMBERG

(to the police)

They were trespassing on our roof. I look up and see a barrel-shaped object aimed at Concrete. Damn right I opened fire. My job is to protect him.

Stamberg's story is good. Tanwy knows she's lost this round.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE

There are a couple of new erotic paintings on the walls. Concrete reads the last page of Absolution -- the "captured by aliens" tome we saw at the bookstore. He uses a table knife to turn pages. Maureen is working at a table. Concrete closes the book.

CONCRETE

Guy's got chutzpah to sell this as non-fiction.

MAUREEN

I eliminated that one pretty quickly.

CONCRETE

You've read this?

MAUREEN

When you showed up, we reviewed all the UFO literature. It's a sorry field, I must say.

CONCRETE

Anything like what happened to me?

MAUREEN

Nothing credible. Whenever anyone gets detailed it departs radically. It's so strange, Ron but I don't think the aliens had been here before. I think you and Michael were the first.

Concrete ponders this.

CONCRETE

Maureen, should I be trumpeting this to the world? Warning people? Maybe I caved in to Stamberg too easily.

MAUREEN

At this point I doubt you'd be believed.

CONCRETE

It's like being struck by lightning or something. My life--is blasted, totally bizarre.

MAUREEN

But you still have it.

CONCRETE

Such as it is.

Stamberg enters.

STAMBERG

You haven't forgotten about the party.

CONCRETE

I'm dreading it.

STAMBERG

It's two grand for two hours work. You go. That's it.

Concrete smoulders, but he finally sighs and gets up to go with Maureen.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY. DAY.

Maureen drives the red monster truck as Concrete speaks through the cab's rear window from the truckbed.

CONCRETE

This lady implied this was a party of beautiful people. What am I going to say to them? My stomach's in knots.

MAUREEN

Actually, we don't think you have a stomach. But don't worry. I'll be there with you. It can't be scarier than breaking out of the NSA facility.

CONCRETE

I wasn't as sure as I looked, you know. I was losing my nerve until you showed up. (shyly) You made the difference, to be honest.

MAUREEN

That's funny. I was working myself up to quit. Then you fired them. (smiling, remembering) We did okay, didn't we?

CONCRETE

We did, but we're in a new cage, now.

MAUREEN

I know.

CONCRETE

Something's got to happen. And soon.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARTY NEIGHBORHOOD. A SHORT WHILE LATER

The truck turns up a residential street near the Silverlake district -- modest homes dotted between the better homes.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE. CONTINUOUS

The most humble on the block. An economy subcompact is parked in front of the garage. Balloons are tied to the driveway lamppost. Concrete and Maureen get out.

CONCRETE

Not quite what I envisioned.

They walk around to the back where some noise is coming from. When they turn the corner, A HORDE OF EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS in party hats MOB Concrete. He's astonished; MRS. GRACE, looking on, looks quite amused. A "Happy Birthday Andre" banner dominates the decorations.

KIDS

Concrete!

CONCRETE

Mrs....Grace?

GRACE

So pleased to meet you.

CONCRETE

This isn't the sort of party I was expecting. Are you sure you can afford...what was talked about?

GRACE

Frankly, no. I won't be able to pay you, except maybe gas money. I'm terrible, I know. But Andre so loves you. All the kids do.

KIDS

(rehearsed for this moment)
We love you, Concrete!

GRACE

I know I played a lousy trick but could you stay just a little? It would mean so much to them.

Concrete looks at Maureen, at the kids, at Mrs. Grace. He's furious at this humiliation, but...

GRACE

Besides, aren't you a teensy bit embarrassed you were going to take money just because you're famous?

Concrete heaves a sigh.

CONCRETE

So who's the birthday boy?

ANDRE

I am!!

MONTAGE-BIRTHDAY PARTY

A boom box plays the new dance remix of "Rock of Gibraltar".

Concrete carries an inverted picnic table with the kids on it atop his back. Andre calls out directions as they ride, happily screaming, around the yard. Concrete kicks a ball far, far into the sky. It comes down in the food. Concrete poses for a polaroid with the kids, to which we return as it slowly develops. A kid smashes a plate of cake into Concrete's face. He scrapes it off, eats it plate and all. He jumps fifteen feet with a child under each arm. Kids pigpile on Concrete.

CONCRETE

Help! I'm buried alive!

INT. PARTY HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

Mrs. Grace speaks on the phone. The kids are CHEERING in the back yard.

GRACE

Oh, he's terrific. They're good sports once you get them here. Who should we try next year? Oh, not HIM...

KIDS (O.S.)

Goodbye Concrete! Thank you!

GRACE

Oh, he's leaving. I've got to go.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

Mrs. Grace rushes out the front door to say goodbye to Concrete, who's getting into the truck.

GRACE

Thanks so much. I'm so
naughty, I know, but it was
fun, wasn't it?

CONCRETE

It certainly was. I'll never
forget it.

Maureen puts the truck in gear and starts to pull out.

CONCRETE

And I imagine you won't either.

We travel with the truck as it leaves just far enough to see down the driveway. Mrs. Grace's SUBCOMPACT is now on THE GARAGE ROOF, placed there courtesy of Concrete. Andre's in the driver's seat honking the horn for the laughing kids.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. LATE AFTERNOON.

The truck pulls in and parks. Maureen gets out, but Concrete remains sullenly crouched in the back.

MAUREEN

Aren't you coming in?

Concrete doesn't respond.

MAUREEN

Let me see. You're mad at Mrs.
Grace, you're mad at yourself,
and you think your life is
ridiculous.

Concrete glances at her without moving.

MAUREEN

Believe me, I know the feeling.
I'm the "leech lady", remember?

Maureen places a comforting hand on his back. Realizing he can't feel it, she presses harder. He still can't. She HITS him, but he's oblivious. Her face shows she is sharing his despair, or is anguished at being unable to reach him, to help him. Her hands scrape down his back like scraping a blackboard.

She leaves him and enters the warehouse. Traffic sighs by. Birds chirp. A palm tree shivers in the wind. Concrete remains motionless.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE. LATER.

Stamberg has gathered Concrete and Maureen in front of his BIG SCREEN TV. He's putting a tape in the VCR.

STAMBERG

You're going to love this,
believe me.

He hurries back to his white leather chair with the caster wheels, makes himself comfortable, props his stocking-clad feet on his desk and turns on the TV and VCR with his remote control.

ON TV --

JIMMY MACK, a wise-ass stand-up comedian, is in the middle of his opening monologue for his HBO special.

JIMMY MACK

Ok, quick show of hands here.
How many of you are sick of
Concrete?

CONCRETE --

raises his hand.

CONCRETE

Me.

STAMBERG

Sssh.

ON TV --

Jimmy Mack's Concrete bashing is getting a big reaction.

JIMMY MACK

I mean how many of you want this
big stone son-of-a-bitch to GO
AWAY!

Cheers and hoots from the audience.

MAUREEN --

tries to gauge Concrete's reaction to this but his expression is opaque.

ON TV --

Jimmy Mack continues the attack.

JIMMY MACK

See, I think Concrete is a terrible influence on the boys of America. I'm talkin' about your sons, America! Check it out. Every time you see Concrete he's posing with some beautiful babe, right? Last night I turn on my T.V. and there's Concrete with the Swedish Bikini Team. They're hangin' all over him... Lookin' at him like "I vant you Concrete, I vreally vreally vant you." Now, excuse me! Concrete has no dick!

MAUREEN --

gives a little gasp of embarrassment.

STAMBERG --

brays with laughter.

CONCRETE --

pounds a fist on his leg, stone against stone throwing sparks.

CONCRETE

Turn it off, Stamberg!

Stamberg is wiping the tears of laughter from his eyes.

STAMBERG

What?! This guy's hilarious!

CONCRETE

I said turn it off!

Concrete stamps his foot so hard that he rocks the room, sending Stamberg's wheeled chair flying and Stamberg crashing to the floor. As Stamberg scrambles to his feet:

STAMBERG

What the hell is wrong?! You should be happy! The public's had it with you!

Concrete starts for the big screen tv -- Jimmy Mack's leering face NOW IN CLOSE-UP on the screen.

STAMBERG

He's doin' our work for us, Stoney.

Concrete picks up the big screen tv, ripping out all the connections.

STAMBERG

Hey, hey, hey! Watch it there!

Concrete looks like he might drop the tv on Stamberg's head.

CONCRETE

Don't ever call me Stoney again.

Concrete starts for the warehouse doors with Stamberg's tv. Stamberg is hot on his heels.

STAMBERG

What're you going to do?! Put that down!

Maureen starts to follow . Then the PHONE RINGS. She stops to answer it.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE. MOMENTS LATER.

Stamberg stands amid the SHATTERED REMAINS OF HIS TV. He looks back at Concrete with rage, and something else--a certain hard-bitten respect, even fear. He knows their relationship has just changed, and not in a way he likes.

CONCRETE --

glares back, chewing on one of the tv's CIRCUIT BOARDS -- a look of grim satisfaction on his face.

Maureen emerges from the warehouse holding out the cordless phone to Concrete. He finishes swallowing, then:

CONCRETE

Tell them I'm busy.

MAUREEN
It's Senator Douglas.

Concrete takes the phone.

INTERCUT --

INT. DOUGLAS' S OFFICE. SAME TIME.

The Senator is surrounded by frantic activity.

DOUGLAS
Ron. I need your help. It's
life and death.

EXT. WAREHOUSE

Concrete is galvanized by these words, which strike to the core of his relationship with Douglas, and offer escape from his current, absurd existence. He speaks with a voice full of desperate hope.

CONCRETE
What can I do?

CUT TO:

EXT. APPALACHIAN HILL COUNTRY. NIGHT.

A HELICOPTER POV --

of A MINE COMPOUND -- scene of a cave-in. It's hard to tell if there are more emergency personnel or news people swarming about.

INT. HELICOPTER. SAME TIME.

Concrete, Douglas, Maureen and Stamberg sit in the military chopper.

DOUGLAS
They'll brief you about what to do. But first it'd be nice if you said a few words to the cameras with me.

CONCRETE
Sure.

STAMBERG

This is idiocy. You shouldn't do this. This could make you a real hero.

CONCRETE

Good.

STAMBERG

We just got you off the front pages!

CONCRETE

Right, a stale joke. A celebrity fool. So now it's time to do something real, save real lives, damn it! Maybe this is what I really am.

STAMBERG

He's just using you for his re-election campaign, you know.

Douglas winces a bit, since this is partially true.

MAUREEN

It's his life, let him live it!

The helicopter lands, precluding further conversation.

EXT. MINING COMPOUND. CONTINUOUS.

The four debark from the helicopter. A throng of TV news people receive them -- Tawny and her cameraman Vic prominent among them. Stamberg and Tawny exchange looks, Tawny defiant.

DOUGLAS

Concrete has to get right to work, but I'll be around to answer any questions I can.

CONCRETE

I'll just say I'm glad Senator Douglas asked me here, and I'll try my best to get those miners out.

TAWNY

Did Senator Douglas support the Cyborg program? How do you know each other?

CONCRETE

Excuse me now.

Concrete moves away and is joined by MINE OFFICIALS, leaving Senator Douglas to fend with Tawny.

DOUGLAS

I called Concrete because I thought he could help save lives. That's what he's here for that's what I'm here for -- period.

Stamberg and Maureen have been watching all this. Stamberg rolls his eyes.

STAMBERG

Politicians.

EXT. OUTSIDE PIT HEAD. MOMENTS LATER.

The foreman, STRADLEY, goes over A DIAGRAM OF THE MINE for Concrete.

STRADLEY

There's some question about where they are. There are fourteen down there, in either this tunnel, this one, or both. You'll be relieving the team here.

There's a sob, and as Stradley continues, Concrete looks up to see WOMEN AND CHILDREN, obviously the trapped miners's families, in great distress.

STRADLEY

They've got air lines down there, so if they're not buried, there's a good chance. You know how to dig so you don't cause a new cave-in?

CONCRETE

No.

STRADLEY

We'll get you started down there, then. I don't wanna be around when you start throwing back the debris, though.

A MEMBER OF THE RESCUE TEAM STRAPS A LAMP on Concrete's head and they head into the shaft. The wives and kids look on, desperate, hopeful.

INT. MINE SHAFT. MOMENTS LATER.

They descend on a conveyance on steep tracks, deep into the ground.

INT. MINE. MOMENTS LATER.

A STRING OF BULBS LIGHTS the tunnel. WATER SPRAYERS on the shearer keep the dust down, creating a layer of water on the floor. Debris is loaded on a CONVEYOR BELT leading to an ELECTRIC CAR. The exhausted RESCUE TEAM clears out to make way for Concrete.

STRADLEY

What you want to do is move small amounts at a time, but fast and steady. No power blows. Chip away at it.

CONCRETE

Gotcha.

STRADLEY

When you need us to clear debris, come all the way out to the main entry. We want to be sure you've stopped.

CONCRETE

All right. Give me an all clear.

He waits as they slog back to the end of the corridor and turn the corner.

STRADLEY (O.S.)

All clear!

Concrete DIGS like a dog, throwing the debris between his legs. Some goes on the conveyor, but much SPLASHES in the water, SHATTERS bulbs, and SMASHES into the BOLTED PLATES HOLDING UP THE ROOF. One of them shifts an inch after a particularly strong hit.

CUT TO:

EXT. MINE COMPOUND. SAME TIME.

Tawny has cornered Maureen.

TAWNY

Was this what these cyborgs were designed for, doctor?

MAUREEN

I really don't care to be interviewed, thank you.

TAWNY

Is this why he has the rocky coating?

Maureen looks thoughtful. What did the aliens have in mind?

MAUREEN

It does seem well suited, doesn't it?

TAWNY

It does. Perhaps the aliens thought of it...

Stamberg intervenes, hustling Maureen away.

STAMBERG

Just don't talk to her. That isn't your thing.

He glances back at Tawny, murder in his eyes.

INT. MINE. SAME TIME.

Concrete UNDERMINES THE PILE OF RUBBLE, and it starts to shift. He stops digging and hastily steps back. A SMALL AVALANCHE covers his legs up to his knees, then stops. He extricates himself and starts digging again.

EXT. OUTSIDE PIT HEAD. SAME TIME.

The miners' families continue their vigil. One miner's wife comforts another, who is quietly crying. Small kids play, oblivious. Maureen kneels, holding a little girl's hand and trying to reassure her. Two older kids start to FIGHT, which is stopped by one of the mothers. After breaking up the fight, the woman starts to sob hysterically -- her emotions over the brink now.

TAWNY AND VIC --

head toward the mining families, attracted by the woman's sobs.

VIC

Should I get some of this?

Tawny battles reflex, then pulls Vic away.

TAWNY

No. Let her grieve in private.
Don't tell the network I said
that, though.

A commotion breaks out AT THE PIT HEAD. Tawny grabs Vic when she realizes what it is. Concrete is CARRYING TWO MEN, both alive. It's JUBILANT CHAOS lit by TV lights. Wives and kids run to their men; other wives look on desperately.

MINER

Somebody give me a Bud!

A foaming bottle is slapped in his hand.

WIFE

Where are the others?

CONCRETE

Just these two so far!

She turns away in disappointment. With one eye on camera position, Senator Douglas fights his way through the throng to congratulate Concrete.

DOUGLAS

Good work!

Concrete glows with pride. Maureen catches his eye and gives him a grin. Could life get any better than this?

STRADLEY

You want to try the other tunnel, or continue on this one? There're twelve more down there.

CONCRETE

Which one are they most likely in?

STRADLEY

These two didn't know. It's a tossup.

CONCRETE

Since they were in this one, I'll finish it first.

He heads back down.

CUT TO:

INT. MINE SHAFT. LATER.

Concrete digs. With his success, he's become carelessly exuberant, throwing the coal between his legs. More coal smashes into the bolted ceiling plates. A bolt starts to LOOSEN. More coal, then the ceiling bolt SNAPS and the roof COLLAPSES. Concrete turns and is ENGULFED IN BLACKNESS.

EXT. OUTSIDE PIT HEAD. A SHORT WHILE LATER

Stradley rises up in the conveyance to grimly face the crowd.

STRADLEY

We need B crew down there again. Concrete's been buried.

Maureen gasps. Douglas seems to age a few years. Stamberg shakes his head, his argument against this now vindicated. Tawny looks concerned, but the wheels are turning: this is developing into quite a story.

INT. MINE. SAME TIME.

AN "ANT FARM" VIEW

of Concrete buried in the shaft In the dim light, he's INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THE ROCK COMPLETELY SURROUNDING HIM; a stone among stones. Then, HE MOVES AN ARM, giving a clue to what we're seeing.

EXT. THE GROUND. NIGHT.

A spotlit patch on the surface. The soil trembles, and Concrete BURSTS OUT of the ground -- then his ROCKY FORM BURSTS OPEN, revealing a fleshly Ronald Lithgow. A fantasy; his dearest wish.

CUT TO:



after page



after page

INT. MINE. REAL TIME.

Concrete's trapped in the same position as before. He starts to move his arm, and perhaps shifts the material he's buried in a little.

EXT. MINE COMPOUND. SAME TIME.

Maureen grips Douglas's arm.

MAUREEN

Tell them not to give up. He held his breath a full hour when we tested him.

Douglas checks his watch.

DOUGLAS

That'll give him until 1:30. I'll tell the foreman. We can't lose Ron like this.

MAUREEN

Please, tell them now.

Douglas walks off to the pit head, not noticing Tawny, who has overheard all this from the other side of a vehicle.

INT. MINE. SAME TIME.

Miners dig furiously.

EXT. MINE COMPOUND. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Maureen sits, taut with anxiety, at the table where the miners' families hold vigil -- one of them now. She checks her watch, then goes back to scraping wax off a paper cup with her fingernail. The little girl she comforted earlier pats Maureen's hand in sympathy. Maureen gives her a sad smile. Then there's a commotion from the pit head that sends Maureen and the rest hurrying in that direction.

EXT. OUTSIDE PIT HEAD. SAME TIME.

People rush up as the conveyance rises to the opening. The crowd blocks Douglas's and Maureen's view. They strain to see to no avail. Then the crowd parts. MEN CARRYING STRETCHERS, EACH WITH A DEAD MINER ON IT, FILE PAST. A collective howl of grief rises from the families.

CUT TO:

EXT. MINE COMPOUND. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

A grim, haggard Stradley is being interviewed by Tawny.

TAWNY

What about Concrete?

STRADLEY

We're still trying to reach him. He's in a different tunnel.

TAWNY

I don't understand. He was digging in the wrong tunnel?

STRADLEY

(not realizing how it will be taken) Well, from those dead men's standpoint, yes, he picked wrong.

EXT. MINE COMPOUND. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Other reporters surround Douglas.

REPORTER #1

Do you regret bringing Concrete here, given his failure?

DOUGLAS

It wasn't a total failure. He saved two...

REPORTER #1

But twelve died! He wasn't even digging in the right tunnel!

DOUGLAS

I'm sure he dug where they told him...

REPORTER #2

Do you consider yourself responsible for the men's deaths, or for Concrete's?

The look on his face tells us he does.

INT. MINE. LATER.

The miners dig, but with less energy. After fingering the dangling, SEVERED AIR LINE, Stradley calls a halt.

STRADLEY
It's 2:00. Everybody's beat.
We'll get the body out
tomorrow.

They file out, piling tools on the conveyor. As the last man leaves, A LITTLE RUBBLE STIRS. The man notices at the last instant.

MINER
Hey. HEY!!

They rush back and grab their tools. Soon CONCRETE IS STANDING-- shaken, gasping, but alive.

CONCRETE
Thanks...I'm all right...I
guess we should...carry on.

STRADLEY
No, the other men are all out.

CONCRETE
(delighted)
Really!? That's great!

STRADLEY
All dead.

Everybody looks at the ground, not knowing what to say next.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT-DOUGLAS' S COUNTRY HOUSE

ON TV --

Tawny, at the site of the mine disaster.

TAWNY
Still, the image persists of
Senator Douglas, perhaps hoping
to score political points,
bringing in a well-meaning but
bumbling superman.

VIDEO FOOTAGE --

of Concrete being helped from the shaft by the rescue team.

TAWNY (V.O.)

A bumbling superman whose origins, identity and true purpose are unanswered questions this tragedy has made current once again.

CONCRETE, MAUREEN, STAMBERG AND DOUGLAS --

watch the report in Douglas's weekend retreat.

TAWNY (ON TV)

Tawny Hill, ABS News,
Fentonville.

Douglas mutes the television with the remote.

STAMBERG

This has done everything we didn't want. We had you there, a showbiz goofball, part of the landscape. Now you're a political issue again.

CONCRETE

It was idiotic. You were right.

DOUGLAS

You saved two of them, God damn it! Everybody's ignoring that.

CONCRETE

I shouldn't try that sort of thing. I'm still me under this body.

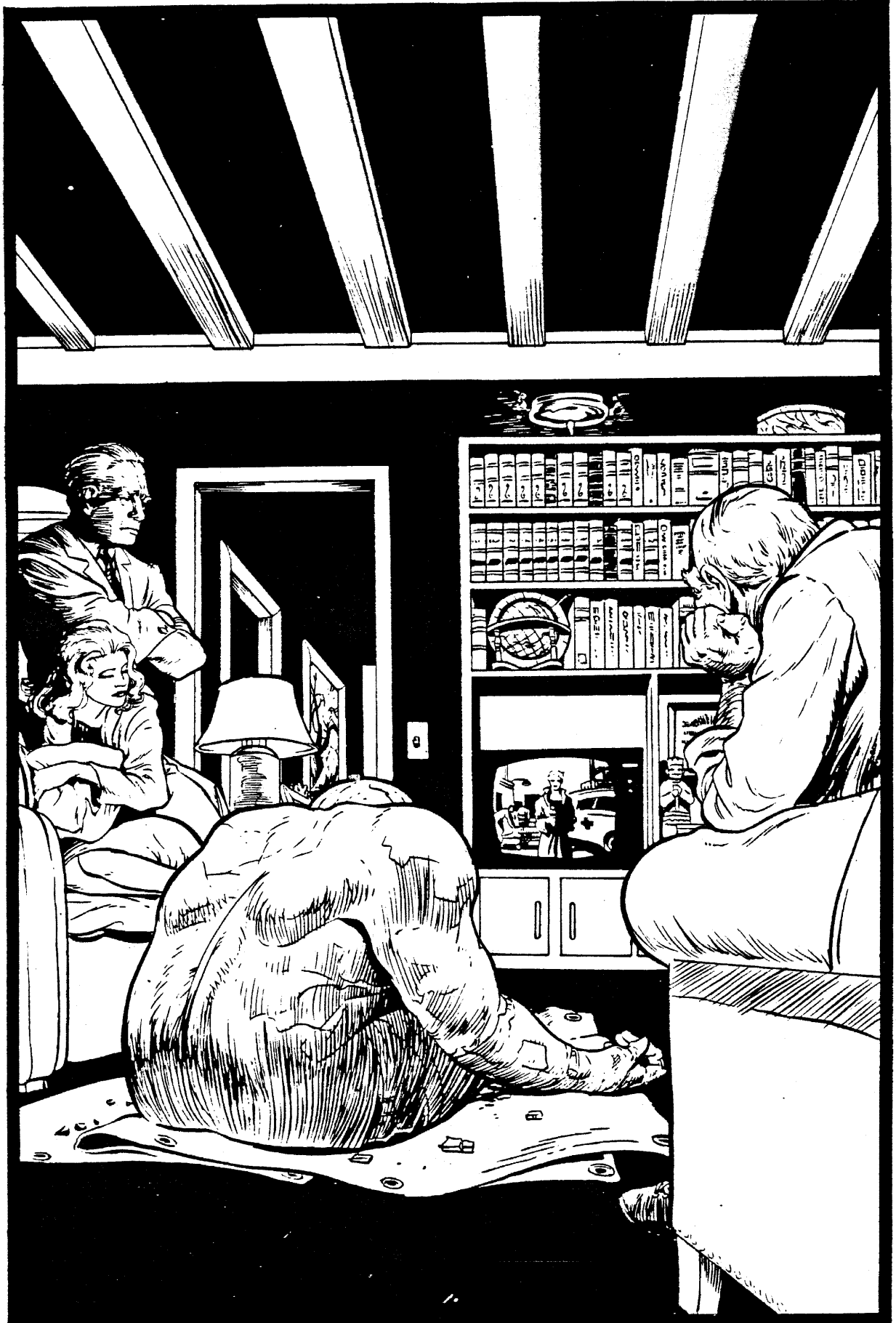
Concrete goes out to the back yard. Maureen gives a look urging Douglas to talk to him. Douglas follows him. Stamberg turns to Maureen.

STAMBERG

I've got to go to Washington tomorrow -- my people are blaming this fiasco on me.

MAUREEN

I'm sure you've wriggled your way out of tighter spots.



STAMBERG

I'm tired of getting reamed for Stoney's bad behavior. I'll be back by nightfall but you make sure he's here. No more big ideas, no more heroics.

MAUREEN

He asked you not to call him Stoney.

STAMBERG

I could give a shit.

Stamberg starts for the door.

EXT. BACK YARD. SAME TIME.

Concrete and Senator Douglas are in the backyard. Among other things, there's A WOODPILE COVERED WITH A BLUE TARP.

CONCRETE

I don't know how you do it. Being a public figure.

DOUGLAS

You get a thick skin. Look at the advantage you have in that department.

They stand silent a moment, just looking at the landscape.

CONCRETE

Could I come back? Come write for you again?

DOUGLAS

Ron, if you need something to do, we'll accommodate. I owe you that much. But you know it won't be the same.

CONCRETE

Anything would be better than what I'm doing now.

DOUGLAS

What about your dreams? Climbing mountains, writing books?

CONCRETE

I'd probably wind up killing someone. Or getting killed. I'm just not the type.

DOUGLAS

Don't take that line. You can be a lot of things, now, if you want to.

But Concrete is barely listening, lost in self-pity.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSROOM. DAY.

Tawny sorts through A FAT FILE OF CLIPS ON SENATOR DOUGLAS. She comes across A PICTURE OF DOUGLAS WITH RON BY HIS SIDE. She notices Ron's name in the picture caption, and after a thoughtful moment, TYPES IT INTO HER COMPUTER (a very tight shot of the letters RON appearing explains the connection she's made), starting a search. The search yields one item: RONALD LITHGOW'S OBITUARY.

INT. MICROFICHE ROOM. DAY.

Pages fly by on the microfilm screen. Tawny finds the article: "Senate Aide Presumed Dead."

TAWNY

Less than two months before.

CUT TO:

EXT. LISA'S HOUSE. LATE AFTERNOON.

The house is a well-maintained rustic sanctuary in a forest clearing. It's surrounded by a low stone wall.

TAWNY

pulls up in a car. She's wearing sunglasses. She sizes up the house, hurdles the low stone wall and knocks on the door.

INT. LISA'S HOUSE. CONTINUOUS

Lisa jumps at the knock; she's edgy about something. She gets up from her writing goes to the door and looks through the peephole.

LISA'S POV-THROUGH PEEPHOLE (FISHEYE)

Tawny's adjusting her coat, looking almost as if she's concealing a weapon.

EXT. OUTSIDE LISA'S HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

Lisa answers the door, not unlatching the chain.

LISA
Hello. What do you want?

TAWNY
Mrs. Lithgow? Do you have a husband named Ronald Lithgow?

LISA
Not anymore. We divorced.
Plus, he's dead.

Half out of nervousness, Tawny laughs skeptically, sounding unintentionally sinister.

TAWNY
That's what I want to talk with you about. Could I come in?

LISA
I don't know who you people are, but the police know about this and I'm going to call them again right now!

TAWNY
No, no--don't do that! I just want to talk--

Lisa slams the door. Tawny looks puzzled a moment, then puts her card through the slot.

TAWNY
If you change your mind, here's how to reach me!

She walks to her car, shaking her head.

INT. LISA'S HOUSE. MOMENT'S LATER.

Lisa's holding the card as she punches a number on the phone.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DOUGLAS' S HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

The phone rings and Douglas answers. Concrete and Maureen are also in the room.

DOUGLAS

Hello?

LISA

I'm sorry to bother you, Senator Douglas. It's Lisa Lithgow.

DOUGLAS

Lisa! What occasions this?

Concrete perks up at this.

LISA

Well, something very peculiar is going on, and I hope you can help. A couple of months ago some men came here asking if I'd seen Ron. When I told them he was dead they acted as if they didn't believe me.

DOUGLAS

Uh-huh...

Senator Douglas can't help a worried glance towards Concrete.

LISA

Just now a woman appeared, asking about Ron. I thought she was with them, and cut her off pretty rudely, I'm afraid. I'm still not used to living alone. I guess I'm not quite over everything. Anyway, she left her card. She's a reporter with one of the networks. Tawny Hill is her name.

DOUGLAS

Tawny Hill. Yes, I've heard of her.

This gets a reaction from Concrete and Maureen.

LISA

Can you tell me what's going on? Was Ron involved with something?

Douglas pauses to think.

DOUGLAS

I'll tell you what, Lisa. I'll look into this. Don't do anything now -- don't talk to Ms. Hill just yet. Call the police if you like, have them keep an eye on the house. But let me see what I can come up with. I'll call you in a day or two. Right, goodbye.

Douglas hangs up and turns to Concrete.

CONCRETE

Is Lisa all right?

DOUGLAS

Shaken, I'd say. Tawny was asking about Ron Lithgow, as if he were alive.

CONCRETE

Lisa knows?

DOUGLAS

Not yet.

CONCRETE

I can't let her hear this on the evening news.

MAUREEN

Maybe her contacting Lisa was a stab in the dark...

CONCRETE

Come on. Haven't you seen enough of Tawny Hill to know better than that!? She's on to me.

Maureen is hurt by Concrete's outburst.

MAUREEN

I'm sorry.

CONCRETE

No, I'm sorry. It's just all such
a...nightmare.

He puts his head in his hands, rubbing his stone face.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK YARD. DUSK.

Maureen sits on a patio chair, troubled by developments. Concrete emerges to join her. Sensing he's going to talk about it, she puts up a hand in warning.

MAUREEN

You know that Stamberg's
returned, don't you?

CONCRETE

Yes. He's with Douglas. We're
not telling him about Tawny --
God knows what he might do.

MAUREEN

I'm more interested in what
you're going to do.

CONCRETE

Stamberg isn't going to like
that either.

MAUREEN

What?

CONCRETE

I'm going to go to Lisa. Tell
her who I am.

Stamberg chooses this moment to come out on the patio. An
uneasy silence falls over them.

STAMBERG

I've met with my people. I
seem to have placated them, no
thanks to you. We've got a
flight back to L.A. tomorrow.

CONCRETE

On top of everything, I've
hampered your meteoric career.

STAMBERG

We lay low for a couple of months, then ease back into the showbiz thing, at sort of a "has-been" level.

CONCRETE

Nice to have something to look forward to.

Stamberg chooses to ignore the sarcasm, and reenters the house. They wait to be sure he's out of earshot.

CONCRETE

I've got to be the one to tell Lisa. To just let it happen would be...cowardly.

MAUREEN

You still care for her.

CONCRETE

We didn't divorce because we hated each other. Marriage is just, well, very hard. Hell -- maybe the way I am now solves some things. We could even be friends. Especially since I may be moving back here, working for Douglas again.

Maureen nods, looking none too happy about what he's saying.

CONCRETE

It's several miles, but I can make it on foot. I have an idea how to slip away without being noticed.

Concrete looks towards the house, fear in his eyes, more intimidated by Stamberg than he admits.

CUT TO:

INT. DOUGLAS' S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Stamberg looks out the window.

STAMBERG'S POV --

Concrete has taken the blue tarp off the woodpile and draped it over himself as he sits out on the back lawn.

STAMBERG

What's with him?

MAUREEN

He's just feeling a bit out of sorts.

Concrete doesn't move, as the wind rustles the tarp.

EXT. BACK YARD. LATER.

Looking back at the house, we see that the blue tarp now NO LONGER CONTAINS CONCRETE, but similar BULK OF FIREWOOD. In AN UPSTAIRS WINDOW Stamberg is visible, checking to see Concrete hasn't moved. He shakes his head and withdraws.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. NIGHT.

Concrete walks by fields, woods, under the stars. Cicadas grind away. A dog is barking. A lone streetlamp glows ahead. This long wordless sequence is dreamlike, with a sense of symbolic portent in small things.

CONCRETE

Looks upward, his dilated pupils huge, filling his eyes.

CONCRETE'S POV OF SKY

Fully three times the normal number of stars are visible, so powerful is his vision.

CONCRETE

Looks down. He has come to a puddle at the edge of the light cast by the streetlamp.

CONCRETE'S POV OF PUDDLE

In his reflection, his hand touches his face. No question--he really is Concrete. A piece of grit is scraped off, making rings when it drops into the water. We FLASH ZOOM IN to

CONCRETE'S MICROSCOPIC POV OF PUDDLE

PROTOZOA swim in the murk. An offscreen ENGINE ROAR grows rapidly. They tiny animaculules seem to react anxiously.

CONCRETE

looks up and is frozen like a deer in the glare of ONCOMING HEADLIGHTS. His eyes reflect them like a deer, too -- two luminous green circles.

WIDER

At the very last moment, Concrete JUMPS OVER the oncoming car, a low-slung MG sports convertible. It races right through the puddle, spraying water, as Concrete TURNS A SOMERSAULT and lands in what's left of the puddle.

THE CAR

races down the road, as if Concrete wasn't even seen. On a dip, it bottoms out, creating a brief spray of sparks.

CONCRETE

watches the car disappear, twin red taillight reflections shrinking to nothingness in his eyes.

WIDER

Concrete turns and continues on his night trek. Distant dogs bark.

EXT. FOREST. A SHORT WHILE LATER/STILL NIGHT.

Concrete picks his way through the undergrowth like a grey stone bear. A distant, intermittent, electrical "zapping" is audible.

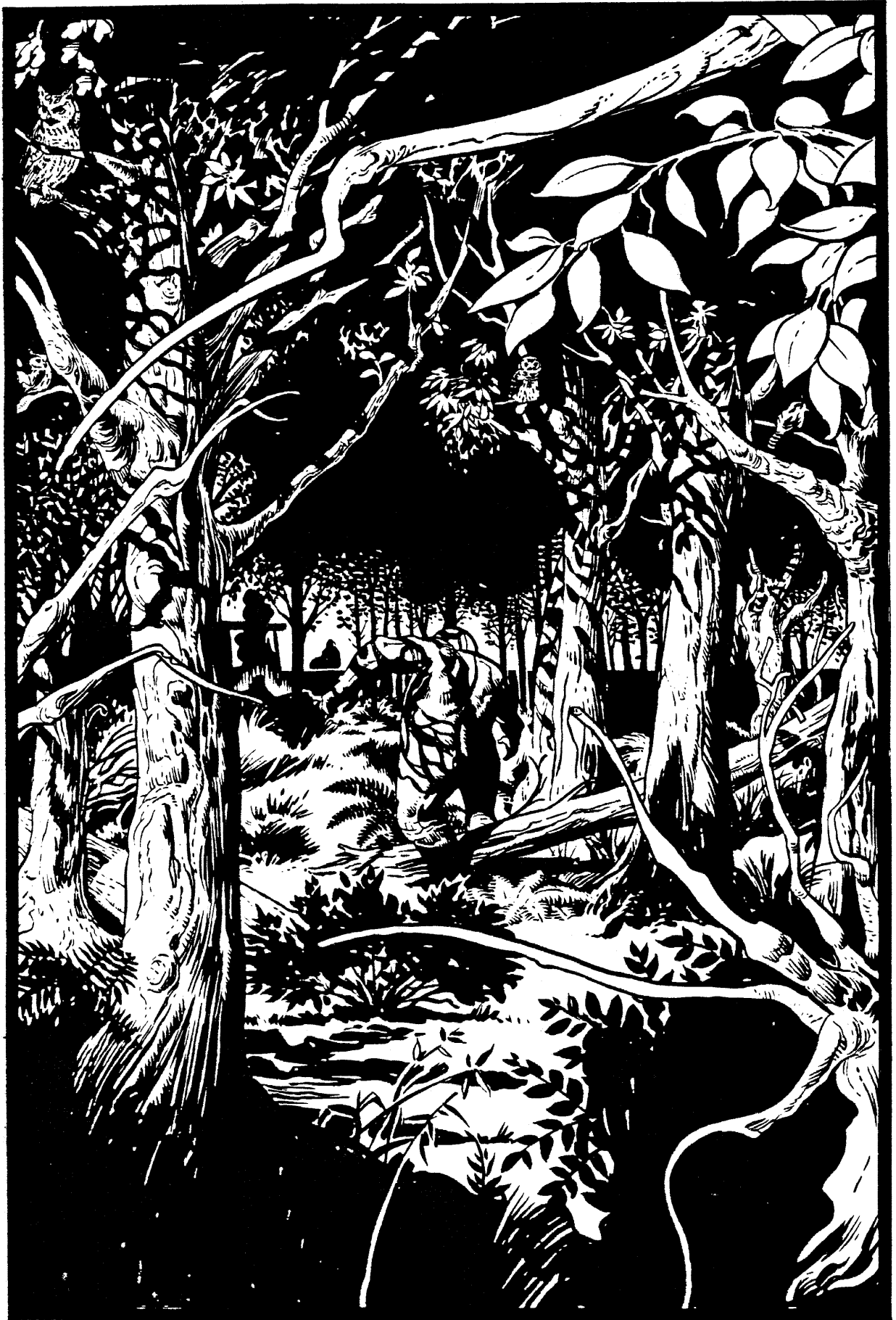
CONCRETE'S POV OF FOREST

It's almost as dark as it would be to human eyes, but somehow clearer. Edges are sharper, leaf movement highlighted, textures enhanced. As he moves along lights become visible coming from a fenced back yard. The zapping becomes louder as he approaches...

A FENCED YARD.

Concrete looks over the fence. A glowing, violet BUG ZAPPER electrocutes moths when they fly into it.

TWO COUPLES PLAY CARDS AT A TABLE, one couple rather plain, even nerdy. THE OTHER WOMAN AND MAN ARE STUNNING. The woman could be a model, and the man resembles an idealized Ronald Lithgow -- more handsome, more at ease with himself. The kind of guy Ron might have hated in high school--a winner, a hero.



The hero wins the hand.

HERO

Straight flush. Luck seems to
be with me.

The others howl, but his wife kisses his cheek.

CONCRETE

watches with narrowed eyes a man who has everything he hasn't.

NERDY MAN

(jocular)

I hate you. I hate you!

Concrete couldn't agree more.

HERO

That's what he said when he saw
what my Microsoft shares had
done. Tried to tell him...

NERDY WOMAN

Horace, you didn't tell me
about that.

The hero drains his beer.

HERO

Anybody want another?

NERDY MAN

Me. If I drink enough of your
beer, it'll offset my losses.

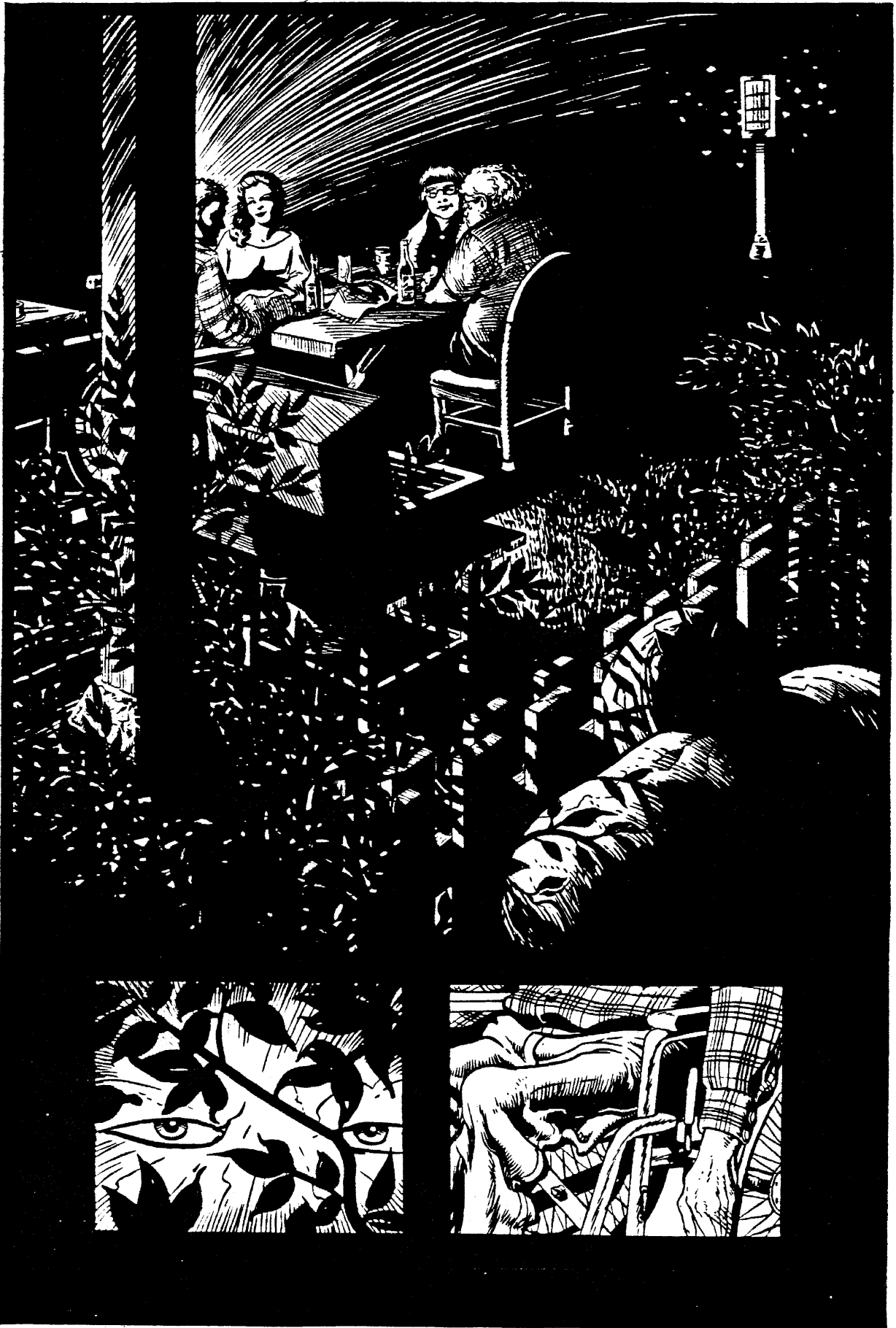
NERDY WOMAN

Or dull the pain. Nothing for
me. I'm driving.

The hero's wife shakes her head no and the hero WHEELS HIS
WHEELCHAIR, which was not visible until now, up the ramp into
the house.

THE HERO'S LEGS

are atrophied, nearly skeletal. He hasn't walked in a long
time, and he never will again.



CONCRETE

walks backward, passing out of the circle of light. His reflective eyes stay visible a little longer, then they too are gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LISA'S HOUSE. NEAR DAWN.

Concrete approaches from up the hill. Lisa's windows are lit. Ron's pace slows, then he stops. He looks at the front door.

CONCRETE'S POV OF THE FRONT DOOR

A spider creeps across it, something only Concrete could see from this distance, in the dark.

CONCRETE

takes another hesitant step, stops again. He looks at his hands, frowns. He looks at the house. He is torn about what to do.

WIDER

Concrete stands immobile a distance from the house, hidden from it by some shrubbery. He does not move as the SUN RISES and THE NEXT DAY AND NIGHT PASS IN TIME LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY. The sun of THE SECOND DAWN comes up.

CONCRETE

stands, still frozen in indecision. How long is he going to stay there?

CLOSER

Concrete blinks. It's a start.

wider

He moves his arms, stretches a moment, then turns and walks away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOUGLAS'S HOUSE. DAY.

Douglas hands Maureen the phone.



DOUGLAS
It's for you. Ron.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. PAY PHONE. SAME TIME.

CONCRETE
Can you speak freely?

MAUREEN
Yes, in fact Stamberg charged
out of here just as the phone
rang.

CONCRETE
Does he miss me?

MAUREEN
He's livid, Ron. It's not
funny. He's getting scary.

CONCRETE
I'll take care of Stamberg.

INT. STAMBERG'S CAR. SAME TIME.

Stamberg sits in his car, parked in front of Senator Douglas' home. He's TAPPED the Senator's phone and is LISTENING to Ron's and Maureen's conversation. He grimaces at the notion of Concrete "taking care" of him.

INT. SENATOR DOUGLAS'S HOUSE. SAME TIME.

Maureen continues her conversation with Concrete.

MAUREEN
You've been at Lisa's house all
this time?

CONCRETE
Yeah.

MAUREEN
I guess...you had a lot to talk
about.

CONCRETE
Pick me up and I'll you about
it. We have to meet Tawny Hill
at Eagle's Point by noon. I
don't want to be late.

MAUREEN

Tawny Hill?

CONCRETE

Yeah. We made a sort of deal.
We're meeting to work out the
fine points.

INT. STAMBERG'S CAR. SAME TIME.

At the very mention of Tawny's name Stamberg's eyes go cold.

INT. SENATOR DOUGLAS' HOUSE. SAME TIME.

Maureen continues the call.

MAUREEN

You're telling her the truth?

CONCRETE

It's the only way to do
something I want to do. Can I
give you directions here?

MAUREEN

All right.

She looks for a pen.

INT. STAMBERG'S CAR. SAME TIME.

Stamberg slowly twirls a CONCRETE AIR FRESHENER dangling from his
rearview mirror as he listens to Concrete give Maureen directions.

CUT TO:

INT. SENATOR DOUGLAS' HOUSE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Maureen is ready to leave to meet Concrete. Senator Douglas is
with her at the door.

DOUGLAS

Call me if I can do anything.

Maureen pauses at the open door.

MAUREEN

Tell me...Ron's ex-wife.
What's she like?

DOUGLAS
 She's nice. Quite an
 intellect. A little like you.

MAUREEN
 Thanks. Goodbye.

She exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR GRAVEYARD. DAY.

Maureen pulls up in AN OPEN-BED RENTAL TRUCK to THE FIELD BEHIND THE GAS STATION from where Ron called. It's strewn with VEHICLES that will never run again, but provide shelter for nests of small animals. Maureen gets out, searching for Concrete.

MAUREEN
 Ron?

ONE END OF A CAR RISES --

and Concrete rolls out like a sleeper from under a blanket. He drops it and a bird flaps out.

CONCRETE
 That was fast. Nobody
 followed?

MAUREEN
 Not that I saw. Where's
 your... Lisa? This can't be
 where she lives.

CONCRETE
 I never saw her.

Maureen flares with anger -- surprisingly possessive.

MAUREEN
 Then what have you been doing for
 the last two days!?

CONCRETE
 Standing.

MAUREEN
 Just standing?

CONCRETE

And thinking.

MAUREEN

About what?

CONCRETE

That I wanted to see Lisa for all the wrong reasons. That I wanted her to feel sorry for me. To feel that no matter what she's been through, it's not as bad as living inside of this.

He pounds his stone chest.

CONCRETE

Rotten, huh?

MAUREEN

Human. But you didn't go through with it.

CONCRETE

Couldn't. I realized that looking after my delicate feelings isn't her job anymore.

MAUREEN

You're right. It's not. That's what a divorce is for, I think.

CONCRETE

I think so, too. So I made this deal with Tawny. I'll tell her the whole truth about Concrete -- the aliens, the cover-up, everything -- if she leaves Ron Lithgow out of it. That way Lisa never needs to know.

MAUREEN

Won't Lisa find out if you go back to work for Senator Douglas?

CONCRETE

That was madness. That part of my life is over. I'm Concrete now. Ron Lithgow is dead.

Maureen's relief is almost tangible. It moves her to uncharacteristic openness. She takes Concrete's hand.

MAUREEN

I hope that's okay. I like Concrete.

CONCRETE

I guess it's up to me to learn to myself. At least I have interesting bugs in my blood.

MAUREEN

It's more than that...though that's important. You may not be the man of my dreams, Ron, but you are a dream come true. I want to learn from you the rest of my life. You don't know how lucky I feel that along with everything there's a brain in there that's smart and funny and kind.

Maureen falters, as the logical next three words would be not exactly wise nor true. There is a stirring in one of the cars. A RACCOON emerges.

MAUREEN

There's so much you can do if I can convince you to have faith in yourself.

CONCRETE

That doesn't sound too bad. I am a weak reed at times, aren't I?

MAUREEN

Everybody needs help. We all lose our way sometimes.

CONCRETE

I suppose that kind of--partnership--is a better deal than a lot of people find in life. Look.

He points to the raccoon. Startled, it runs off.

CONCRETE

We'd better get going. Tawny wants to meet me up in the mountains. She didn't want Stamberg busting in again, I guess.

They get in the truck and drive off. The raccoon watches from some tall grass.

CUT TO:

EXT. EXPRESSWAY. DAY.

The truck speeds by a roadkill.

Concrete speaks to Maureen through the sliding rear window.

CONCRETE

It'll take a while to die down, but if the aliens don't return, it will eventually. Though I'll always have a cult of conspiracy buffs on my case, I bet. (sarcastic) That'll be lovely. But I should be able to do things. I'm thinking about calling that guy who found that Spanish treasure ship.

Maureen BRAKES HARD, causing Concrete to bump into the glass, cracking it.

In front of the truck is a DEER, standing in the middle of the expressway, frozen in terror. With the high fences, it's hard to see how it got on the expressway -- or how it could get out.

CONCRETE

Do we have any flares?

Maureen fumbles in the glove compartment and finds some. Concrete takes them.

CONCRETE

Move slowly. Keep it from bolting. I'll set these.

They get out of the truck. With great caution, Maureen BLOCKS THE DEER from running past the truck while Concrete SETS THE FLARES. Another CAR comes; Concrete waves it down.

CONCRETE
(to driver)

Come help us. Get out slowly.

THE DRIVER does, and Concrete creeps up to the outside fence.

THE DEER

Starts, begins to back up nervously.

MAUREEN
Easy now. Easy, pretty girl.

CONCRETE

after glancing at the deer TEARS DOWN a section of the fence.

OTHER MOTORISTS

have exited their cars, and, directed by the first driver, FORM A LINE preventing the deer from running back along the expressway.

CONCRETE

moves down the road past the doe, then comes back, trying to HERD HER out the opening. She's getting increasingly nervous, liable to bolt at any minute.

CONCRETE
It's all right. Off the road,
now. Come on.

The doe TROTS OUT THE OPENING and into the woods. The motorists APPLAUD Concrete and themselves. Concrete lifts the fence back into place, a rough, temporary repair. He allows himself a quiet smile.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TRUCK. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Concrete and Maureen glow with this small success as they speed on their way.

MAUREEN
See what you can do? And it'll
never be on the news.

CONCRETE
That's fine by me.

Concrete allows himself to give Maureen a gentle stroke on the shoulder. She doesn't seem to mind at all.

CUT TO:

INT. STAMBERG'S CAR. DAY.

As he weaves DOWN A WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD, Stamberg speaks to someone sitting next to him offscreen.

STAMBERG

You have to be thorough. The face and the fingertips are removed and burned. And the teeth need to be extracted with pliers to avoid dental I.D. Then the body is weighted at more than one point--the neck as well as the ankles, so that it will stay submerged even if it breaks apart.

WIDER

Tawny is not taking this coolly. She's hyperventilating, clearly terrified by her impending murder. Her wrists are bound with strapping tape.

TAWNY

I can't believe they'd let you do this.

STAMBERG

They will never even know.

TAWNY

Concrete will get you!

STAMBERG

Ha! Head of rock and feet of clay -- that's my Stoney. When you don't show up, he'll blame me all right. But what can he prove?

TAWNY

He'll just go to another reporter.

STAMBERG

And take a chance of getting them killed. Not Stoney. You'll be on his conscience for the rest of his miserable life. He wouldn't dare talk to anyone else.

He roughly pushes her down toward the passenger door.

STAMBERG

Too bad the job market's so soft, Ms. Hill, or I might let you live. But I got bills -- child support. You wouldn't want me to neglect my kids would you?

The expression on Stamberg's face is so coldly lunatic, it's impossible to tell if he's kidding.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD. SAME TIME.

Maureen and Concrete's truck CLIMBS THE S-CURVE as Stamberg's car HEADS DOWN. With the sun visor down and Stamberg's sunglasses, it's likely Maureen won't recognize him.

INT. STAMBERG'S CAR. CONTINUOUS.

Stamberg hunkers down, tilts his head forward. Tawny PRESSES THE BUTTON TO LOWER THE WINDOW.

INT. TRUCK. CONTINUOUS.

Maureen's brow furrows.

MAUREEN

Was that Stamberg?

CONCRETE

Faces backward and sees...

CONCRETE'S POV OF STAMBERG'S CAR

Tawny is STRUGGLING OUT THE WINDOW.

CONCRETE

Turn around!!!

THE TRUCK

SPINS AROUND and heads after Stamberg's sedan. By chance, Stamberg has to slow down for a curve and they close the gap.

CONCRETE

Pull even with them! I'll grab her!

INT. STAMBERG'S CAR. CONTINUOUS.

Tawny's furiously kicking at him. He's trying to pull her back in. He loses control and veers to the left.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD. CONTINUOUS.

The truck pulls even with the car. Concrete almost has Tawny's bound hands. They're both straining, reaching...

STAMBERG

throws the wheel to the right. Tawny sees she's going to be crushed.

THE TWO VEHICLES

SMASH TOGETHER, only an instant after Tawny pulls back into the car. Maureen struggles to control the truck, now in an intermittent skid.

Concrete LEAPS onto Stamberg's trunk. The car bottoms out. Sparks cascade out from under it. The car SKIDS, ROTATES; Concrete is THROWN OFF. The car slides sideways to a stop.

Concrete GETS UP AND RUNS after it. Stamberg restarts the car before Concrete reaches it and speeds away.

CONCRETE

bounds forward on his mighty legs, quickly picking up enough speed to be RUNNING ALONGSIDE the car. He reaches through the window and WRENCHES OFF THE DOOR, but is thrown off balance. He falls tumbling and rolling, unable to control his bulk. Stamberg speeds away.

Maureen has stopped the truck further down the hill. Concrete finally rolls to a stop nearby.

CONCRETE

Follow them!!

Concrete gets up and LEAPS INTO THE BACK of the accelerating truck, his huge weight giving the truck such a jolt that Maureen bumps her head on the cab roof.



after page

STAMBERG' S CAR

is slowed by A CRUMPLED REAR FENDER rubbing against a tire. It's smoking. There's also LEAKING GAS spraying behind.

Maureen PULLS UP EVEN with Stamberg again. To her horror, she sees that Stamberg is POINTING A PISTOL at her. His hand is directly in front of Tawny's face and she BITES IT as he FIRES.

Maureen's window SHATTERS. Concrete LEAPS ON STAMBERG'S TRUCK AGAIN, SMASHING through the rear windshield. He's half on, ONE FOOT DRAGGING. Maureen falls behind in the truck.

CONCRETE' S FOOT

digs a little groove in the road, and is itself BEING GROUND AWAY.

STAMBERG

decides to cut and run, and SHOVES TAWNY OUT. She catches the doorframe, but her head is hanging out inches from the pavement.

TAWNY' S POV OF ONRUSHING PAVEMENT

Clearly, her soft flesh will fare poorly compared to Concrete's foot.

STAMBERG

rains blows on Tawny with his bleeding pistol hand.

TAWNY' S HANDS

slip to a fingertip grip.

CONCRETE

seems to roll off the car.

TAWNY' S HANDS

LET GO.

TAWNY

SCREAMS.

CONCRETE

launches himself, A HUGE STONE SLED, beneath Tawny. She lands on Concrete and they SKID DOWN THE HILL. They finally come to a stop.

Beyond them, Stamberg's car screeches around another curve down the mountain.

CLOSE ON TAWNY

as she opens her eyes and SCREAMS AGAIN.

TAWNY' S POV

of Maureen's truck SKIDDING TO A STOP just before it runs over them.

TAWNY --

collapses in Concrete's arms.

CONCRETE

(to Maureen)

Take care of her!

He gets up and RUNS DOWN THE SLOPE in hopes of catching Stamberg at the next S-curve. He looks down...

A STEEP MOUNTAIN SLOPE

...realizing that Stamberg's car will come around the curve at the bottom of this slope.

CONCRETE

runs down THE BOULDER-STREWN INCLINE, dislodging rocks in his haste.

A BOULDER

knocks into a cluster of downslope rocks, dislodging them.

STAMBERG' S CAR

continues down the road, smoking and skidding.

STAMBERG

looks in his rearview, then with shock to his right.

CONCRETE

is running toward camera with a FULL-OUT ROCK AVALANCHE FOLLOWING HIM.

CLOSER

Concrete looks over his shoulder.

THE AVALANCHE

advances thunderingly. Trees go down under the onrush.

CONCRETE

puts on a burst of speed. But when he reaches the road, he TRIPS AND FALLS. Stamberg's car is bearing down on him. It's going to run right over him.

STAMBERG

tenses for the moment of impact. He glances right.

STAMBERG' S POV

Rocks BOUND IN through the car's open doorframe.

STAMBERG' S CAR

is SWEEPED OFF THE ROAD BY THE AVALANCHE before it reaches Concrete. Concrete's PRONE FORM is buried.

ON THE SLOPE ABOVE -

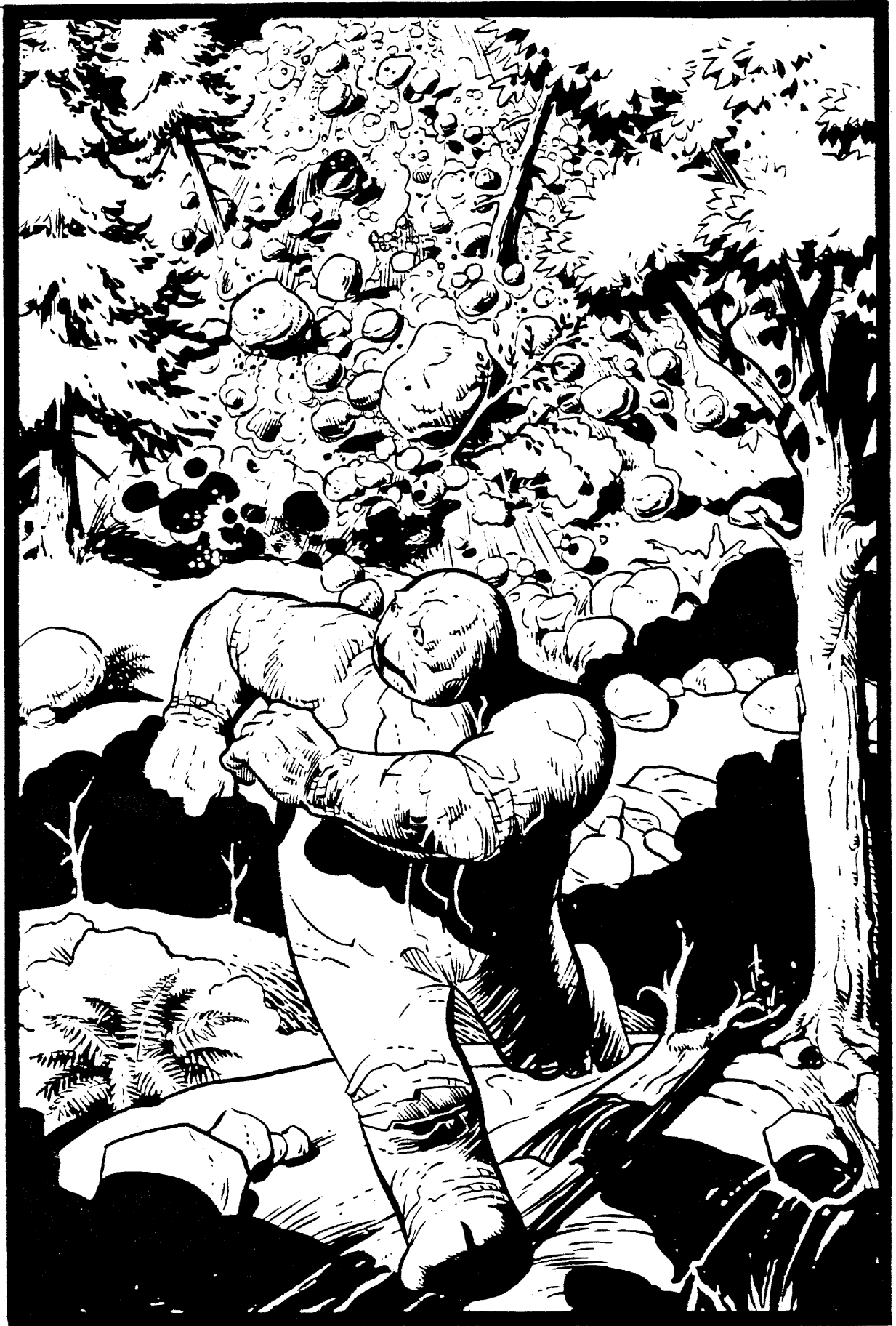
Maureen holds up Tawny, who has broken her ankle. They look down the mountain in horror at this spectacle.

THE ROCK BLANKETED ROAD

The air is filled with dust. A few rocks still tumble here and there. At ONE SPOT some rocks stir, then fall away as Concrete slowly stands up -- a bit like his fantasy when buried in the mine. He looks around. He climbs over the rubble to the downhill side of the road.

CONCRETE

Stamberg?



after page

When he reaches the lip he sees a MUFFLED EXPLOSION toss out a few more rocks -- Stamberg's car somewhere beneath the rubble. Black smoke pours out. He looks up the hill, then back at the fire. He sits down.

DISSOLVETO:

EXT. EXPRESSWAY. LATER

Concrete and Tawny are in the bed of the truck as it speeds along. Tawny's ankle is swollen to the size of a softball.

CONCRETE

Maybe I'm taking advantage, but
I need a better deal.

TAWNY

Let's hear it.

CONCRETE

I need your silence. I want to be
free to live my life with all this
behind me. If the day comes I have
to tell my story, I'll tell it to
you first. But for now I want you
to let it lie.

TAWNY

The world is waiting to hear the
truth about Concrete.

CONCRETE

Please help me keep them
waiting.

Tawny winces, perhaps from pain or just from losing a great story.

TAWNY

All right. You have my word.
But the cyborg thing--it
doesn't make sense.

CONCRETE

There was no cyborg program. I
was a surprise package. In
particularly ugly gift
wrapping, I guess.

TAWNY

Then how--?

CONCRETE
Maybe someday. Relax now.
We'll be there soon.

She leans back Concrete offering his arm as a headrest.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LISA'S HOUSE. DAY.

Lisa waits for her phone machine to finish its answering cycle.
The machine beeps.

TAWNY (ON MACHINE)
(cheerful)
Ms. Lithgow, this is Tawny Hill, who bothered you the other day. I'm so sorry about that, and you know what? I had your husband mixed up with somebody else! I'm just awfully embarrassed, and again I'm sorry I bothered you.
Goodbye!

Lisa shrugs in mild exasperation. It was all a mistake!?
Sheesh!

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Concrete stands next to a television monitor hooked up to a VCR. SEVERAL SECURITY TYPES, INCLUDING ALAN WU, Stamberg's assistant, look on uncomfortably.

CONCRETE
Copies of this tape are placed with six different law firms, each of which will mail multiple copies to the media should I fail to contact them at the specified intervals. Needless to say I consider my agreement with the late Mr. Stamberg null and void.

Concrete presses "play" on the tape deck.

CONCRETE

Hands off me, hands off my friends, gentlemen, if you want to keep your precious secrets.

CONCRETE (ON TV)

My actual name is Ronald Lithgow. I was a speechwriter for Senator Mark Douglas when, fantastic as it sounds, my friend Michael Maynard and I were kidnapped by extraterrestrials...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAIN BASE CAMP. MORNING.

Concrete tightens an apparatus on his foot with a wrench.

WIDER

He stands up. He's outfitted with improvised mountain-climbing gear made of steel and secured with lug-nuts: crampons for his feet, ice-biting spikes on his forearms, glacier goggles. A wrench dangles from a cord on his wrist to adjust everything. He has an iceaxe made from a pickaxe head welded to an iron pipe. A walkie-talkie is secured with yards of duct tape to his shoulder.

Maureen, in a parka, stands by smiling.

CONCRETE

I guess that's it. I'm all set.

MAUREEN

You want to record something right off?

CONCRETE

Yes, let's.

Maureen runs to a domed tent.

INT. TENT. CONTINUOUS.

Maureen switches on a wireless transceiver.

MAUREEN

Come in.

CONCRETE (ON WIRELESS)

I'm getting you loud and clear.

Maureen switches on a tape recorder patched to the the wireless.

MAUREEN

Roger, you're also clear. Tape is on.

CONCRETE (ON WIRELESS)

Thanks. I'm setting out from base camp at--what time is it? Over.

MAUREEN

Six thirty-five. Over.

CONCRETE (ON WIRELESS)

Six thirty-five under clear skies.

EXT. BASE CAMP. CONTINUOUS.

Concrete walks away from camera toward THE LOOMING MOUNTAIN.

CONCRETE

Description notes: clanking of equipment, wrench makes a musical tone when it knocks against me. Spindrift coming off the ridge up there. Moderate wind. Maureen, I'm nervous.

MAUREEN (ON WALKIE-TALKIE)

You're going to do great. I'm so proud of you. Over.

CONCRETE

Well, it's not like it's an 8000'er or something. I'll check in at seven o'clock, okay? Over.

MAUREEN (ON WALKIE-TALKIE)

Roger, that's seven o'clock. Happy Trails. Over and out.

Concrete continues walking away, appearing smaller and smaller in front of the mountain.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN SLOPE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Concrete is on the slope, singing "Rock of Gibraltar" in a booming, giddily unselfconscious voice -- "He's a rock, a rock of Gibraltar". He glances back down at the base camp, Maureen just a speck, but visible below. He shouts for joy, loosening A TINY DRIFT OF SNOW just above him. The snow smacks him, an icy PIE IN THE FACE. But Concrete brushes it away -- nothing can spoil this day. Singing, he presses on -- the brain and soul of Ron Lithgow, trapped forever in a thousand pound body of stone -- and free at last.

FADE OUT.

