

"Cowboy Bebop"

by

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Based on the 1998-1999 Japanese anime series, directed by
Shinichiro Watanabe

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PITCH BLACK

Slowly, the sun peeks around a small planetoid, weak as a miner's lantern, farther away than we've ever seen it.

A SUPPLY SPACECRAFT

wends through an ice field in nearby space. The sun shines weakly on its logo, *ANGEL FOOD MINISTRIES*, as we hear a patchy radio connection with the control tower.

TOWER (V.O.)

Access code?

INT. SUPPLY SPACECRAFT - CONTINUOUS

At the controls is ASIMOV (40s). With bloodshot eyes and grinding teeth, he looks as if he hasn't slept for weeks.

TOWER (V.O.)

*This is the tower at New Alcatraz.
We've got your approach on latitude 9.
Access code?*

Four COMPUTERS cycle random numbers, hacking the code.

From an EYE DROPPER, Asimov drips a solution onto his eyeballs. His pupils dilate; angry veins rise up.

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

Access code?

His eyes shift manically, watching four monitors at once. He reacts *immediately* as a computer locks onto the code.

ASIMOV

66 Alpha 19 Foxtrot.

TOWER (V.O.)

Roger and clear. What's for dinner?

EXT. PLUTO'S ORBIT - CONTINUOUS

As the supply ship descends, the surface of the planetoid is visible, *blistered* with translucent white domes: a massive, canopied PRISON COMPLEX.

ASIMOV (V.O.)

Freeze-dried chili.

TOWER (V.O.)

*Mystery meat. You're clear to land at
area 6. Enter at 11.5 Degrees.*

INT. "DIRTY ICE" MINE SHAFT - CONTINUOUS

Twenty prisoners are shackled together in protective suits, which provide oxygen and heat - since the temperature outside is 38 Kelvin (-390 F.)

The prisoners seem to be engaged in the age-old labor of *crushing rocks*. But, in fact, they're chipping away blocks of METHANE ICE to fuel the prison. Timed to their swinging picks, they sing an old *spiritual*, echoing in their helmets. PAN ACROSS TO:

VICIOUS (late-30s), idle, as his partner works steadily beside him. Even in the standard-issue suit, he's different: tall and regal, with long hair and intense eyes. He whispers an oath.

VICIOUS

"When I reach the gate of Han, I will acknowledge my sworn brothers. If I fail to hear their calls..."

Something's about to go down. He checks the nervous eyes of other convicts: "BROKEN TEETH" TOMMY (30s), WANG LONG (40s) and UDAI TAXIM (50s, black).

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

"...I will die by their swords."

Across Vicious' visor passes a STREAK, like a meteor.

INT. PRISON PLANTATION - WORK COLONY - CONTINUOUS

Under the dome, another CHAIN GANG picks hydroponic crops. A WARDEN sweats under the blazing halogen lamps.

INT. SUPPLY SPACECRAFT - CONTINUOUS

In flurries of frozen nitrogen, Asimov sets down beside a track, where MINING CARTS run between the dome and the mines. He readies a CRATE with grooved wheels on its bottom. Taking stock, he opens it to reveal -

EXPLOSIVES. FLUORINE TANKS sit beside octanitrocubane, an explosive that needs no oxygen.

ASIMOV

(into transceiver)

Suiting up for cargo delivery.

TOWER (V.O.)

Don't forget those mittens.

Once Asimov has sealed his helmet, he opens the BAY DOORS onto gusting winds. THREE WORKERS approach in suits.

INT. "DIRTY ICE" MINE - CONTINUOUS

VICIOUS watches his partner kneel to gather chunks of ice. To the left, he sees the SUPPLY SHIP.

VICIOUS

"I shall never betray my sworn brothers..."

Suddenly, Vicious swings his pick and drives it through his partner's hand, puncturing the glove.

The prisoner screams, fogging his visor. An emergency device inflates his sleeve, forming a tourniquet. But his hand has been exposed.

FOUR GUARDS rush over. While the prisoner goes into convulsions, they're forced to unlock the shackles connecting him to Vicious.

CLOSE ON: THE PRISONER'S HAND

His fingers petrify as the cold spreads down his arm. Delirious, the prisoner takes his pick and

shatters his own hand like glass.

The guards are stunned. Taking his cue, UDAI TAXIM steps up behind a GUARD and buries an ice pick into his back. He wrests the electromagnetic rifle away from his dying hands, and fires at the other guards, forcing them to take cover in the mine. Alarms sound in the distance.

As VICIOUS strides away, his accomplices shoot through their shackles. The fortified guards draw their guns and warn Vicious through bullhorns in their suits.

GUARD

Prisoner K-152. On your *knees*.

But Vicious steps onto the TRACKS, following the ties.

VICIOUS

"If I cause the arrest of my brothers, I must free them at any cost."

His surviving group catches up through the icy spindrift. The GUARDS fall in behind him, shouldering their rifles.

GUARD

Vicious! We're going to fire!

EXT. SUPPLY SPACECRAFT - NEAR MINING TRACK - CONTINUOUS

Asimov locks the CRATE onto the mining track, and launches it toward Vicious, approaching through flurries.

Vicious steps out of the cart's way. It speeds toward the mines and *detonates*, burning like a sparkler. The guards watch the flame approach, with time only for one last gasp. The cart rolls into the MINE as FLUORINE TANKS burst, thawing and reacting with the methane.

The explosion spreads through underground tunnels, as if a volcano were erupting. Some prisoners are incinerated; others on the perimeter freeze into screaming statues.

Out of the steam of thawing ice, VICIOUS follows the track and finishes his oath.

VICIOUS

"I shall honor the history of the father and the five ancestors."

Vicious sees Asimov and climbs into the supply ship. The others catch up just as it begins to rise.

INT. SUPPLY SPACECRAFT - CONTINUOUS

As the CARGO DOOR closes, Wang Long and Tommy take off their helmets, showing PRISONER BAR-CODES on their necks.

VICIOUS

We're not finished. Keep the door open and hover by the plantation.

(a beat)

Let the *salvage* teams figure out who escaped.

Asimov appears hesitant.

VICIOUS (CONT'D)

I thought those eye-drops made you *faster*. Go.

Asimov assumes the controls. As the CARGO DOOR hangs open, wind swirls into the ship. Vicious grabs the RIFLE from Udai and crouches at the opening.

WANG LONG

We've got allies in there, sir.

While the supply ship hovers, Vicious takes aim at the DOME, green crops visible inside. As prisoners rush to the glass, Vicious *fires on them*.

INT. PRISON PLANTATION - WORK COLONY - CONTINUOUS

Shots chip through the canopy, and the cold surges in. The fertilized water freezes at the feet of the WARDEN, while crops wilt and die around him. Within seconds, the prisoners turn to fossils in the cold.

I/E. SUPPLY SPACECRAFT - CONTINUOUS

Sickened, Asimov hits the thrusters and launches them upward, closing the bay door. Far below, the entire complex ices over and turns dark.

The ship sparks in the atmosphere, a falling star in reverse. Then it reaches the vast silence of open space.

Vicious removes his helmet, long hair now swarming in zero-G. The others are in a cowed silence.

WANG LONG

Vicious, the other families will hear.
Their people were in there.

Vicious begins peeling off his suit. Over his heart is a *brand*: a DRAGON devouring its own tail.

ASIMOV

I was at the wheel. That's a murder rap for me, too. Maybe there's no trace of you, but I'm in the hyperspace logs. Every checkpoint from here to the rocks. Why d'you have to kill everybody?

Ahead, a massive RING floats in space: an ASTRAL GATE.

VICIOUS

It's how I say goodbye.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The SUPPLY SPACECRAFT passes through the gate and accelerates rapidly out of view, fast as a bullet.

DARKNESS

A radio plays, with the crackle of vast distances.

NEWSCASTER

*This is ISBC Light Speed Radio,
broadcast at 20 trillion photons per
second. Here's your news.*

EXT. "THE BEBOP" - THE ASTEROID BELT

Its name on the hull in faded paint - *The Bebop* is a dented old bucket of a cruiser, passing slowly through the clutter of ASTEROIDS beyond Mars. Jupiter shines orange in the distance, the size of a marble.

NEWSCASTER

A prison break in the Kuiper Belt has left the entire colony dead.

The ship's BELLY revolves like the tank on a cement mixer - to simulate gravity with centripetal force.

INT. BEBOP - SPIKE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

With the churning motion, stars appear to rotate in the window. We hear a violent sound: heavy blows.

NEWSCASTER

Authorities believe a "Dirty Ice" Mine of frozen methane was ignited by exposure to fluorine. Forensic chemists say the combination is explosive without oxygen.

EIN, a Welsh Corgi, sits on his haunches in the doorway. With a tilted head, he watches:

A SILHOUETTE, moving in front of the stars. The figure works a punching bag, executing TORNADO KICKS, the style a distant evolution of "Jeet Kune Do." The dog whimpers.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

The identities of the escaped prisoners remain unknown.

The shadow stops. As he moves into the light beside the radio, we see him: SPIKE SPIEGEL (late 30s), a tall, rangy man, with shaggy hair and a three-day growth. He turns up the radio.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

But experts speculate that members of the Red Dragon Syndicate may have been involved.

His fighting posture dissolves; his shoulders droop. As if the news is his own personal burden, Spike sits onto the edge of his bunk. Only the dog is privy to his strong reaction.

Spike looks up, revealing something strange about his left eye. His pupil pulses like a heartbeat. Images, nearly subliminal, flash by:

A blade swings; a shotgun fires; a surgeon's gloves are drenched with blood.

Whatever the vision, it's causing Spike terrible pain. His hands tremble as he massages his temples. EIN whimpers slightly, bringing Spike out of a trance.

SPIKE
 (to the dog)
 None of your business.

Hanging its head, Ein turns and scampers away.

NEWSCASTER
*In other news, fuel prices hit a high
 of fifty-thousand a barrel, as oil
 drilling stalled on Titan.*

FOLLOW EIN TO:

INT. BEBOP - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Frozen green peppers sizzle in a wok, as JET BLACK (40s), reads a cookbook and listens to a restored *Blues* recording. He's a big, intimidating man with a CYBERNETIC ARM, a beard like a werewolf, and male-pattern baldness. But his fearsome look is undermined by the apron cinched around his thick waist.

JET
 (reading a cookbook)
 "...two teaspoons of paprika."

He grunts at the spice rack: nothing but NUTMEG.

JET (CONT'D)
 Maybe I could substitute.

Ein whines, trying to communicate; but Jet doesn't notice. So the dog heads away down:

INT. BEBOP - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

A steel mesh walkway appearing stationary against the motion of the gravity gyroscope.

EXT. BEBOP - ASTEROID BELT - INTERCUTTING IN AND OUT

A single chip of an ASTEROID caroms off the ship.

Ein stops, growling at the noise. He's the only one to notice the grating sound as the ENGINE BELT slips off its spool, and the GYROSCOPE slowly... stops... spinning....

Ein begins *floating into the air*, short legs scrambling.

SPIKE'S CABIN

Spike finishes a roundhouse kick into the heavy bag, just as he begins *lifting off the ground in zero gravity*.

SPIKE

Jet? Jet!

INT. BEBOP - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The ingredients from his wok swarm amid knives, spoons and spatulas. Jet swims toward the MAIN CABIN.

SPIKE (O.S.)

Jet, why are we *weightless*, man?

JET

I'm dealing with it.

(to himself)

I'm always dealing with it.

INT. FAYE'S ROOM - BEBOP - CONTINUOUS

Spike climbs to the threshold and looks in.

FAYE VALENTINE (20s) lies asleep on her back, draped in a sheet, levitating. She's beautiful, but this is the only time we'll see her *peaceful*. Her hair rustles, with its dyed streaks of violet. Spike is amused that she's still asleep. He smiles, until...

ITEMS dislodge from hiding places around her room: coins, food packets, a jeweled ring, a stolen wristwatch, hidden aces from decks of cards. From below her bed, hundreds of COFFEE PACKETS float upward like a school of fish.

SPIKE

No wonder we're always out of coffee.

A music box twirls past and opens, playing a faint tune as it releases a HARMONICA. Spike snatches it.

INT. BEBOP - GYROSCOPE - CONTINUOUS

With a screwdriver, Jet tries to pry the partly shredded engine belt back onto its spool.

JET

(muttering)

No, really - you want your bed turned down? Maybe a *mint* on your pillow?

With a grunt, he gets the belt back into place. It begins spinning at high velocity, knocking tools loose. The screwdriver tumbles away in midair, until -

Simulated gravity kicks in, and it clanks to the ground.

THE CORRIDOR: The corgi drops with a squeak.

THE KITCHEN: Dinner splatters; pots and pans crash down.

FAYE'S CABIN: She thuds onto the bed, waking on impact.

She looks around her messy room, stolen objects exposed. Disoriented... then furious... she turns to Spike.

FAYE

What are you doing in my room, Spike?

He plays the harmonica, as guilt crosses her face.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

With chopsticks, Spike eats rapidly from a bowl, while Jet cycles through the "BIG SHOT" BOUNTY NETWORK. It's a database that projects HOLOGRAMS of WANTED MEN, with information scrolling around them in thin air.

Jet flips past: "Twinkle" Maria Murdoch, eco-terrorism; "Chessmaster" Hex, Hyperspace Tollboth robberies.

SPIKE

(eating, scowling)

What's in this stuff, Jet?

JET

Nutmeg.

(a beat)

And whatever was on the ceiling.

He flicks past another BOUNTY: Domino Walker.

FAYE

You go so fast. What about him?

JET

Bounty's not even enough for a fuel rod, let alone an engine belt.

SPIKE

The bottom feeders can have those nobodies.

FAYE

I sure roll with some *sophisticated* bounty hunters.

The next is Roco Bonnarro: rare "produce" smuggling.

FAYE (CONT'D)

There. Three-mil. That'll cover us.

JET

We can't deadhead all the way back to Io. By the time we get through...

FAYE

Whatever *I* say, you're both going to find something wrong with it.

Jet flips past dozens of bounties, like channel-surfing.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Can I please have the clicker? You don't even stay on them long enough to see who they are.

JET stops surfing through the database - pausing on:

ASIMOV SOLESAN

recognizable from the prison break, despite the younger mugshot. Spike looks up immediately, recognizing him. The hologram triggers something in his eye, dilating it.

He drops his bowl and it shatters.

A FLICKER OF IMAGES: A *sizzling drip into an eyeball; SEMTEX exploding.*

One image lingers just a bit longer: A *YOUNG ASIMOV, in a corridor with low gravity. He hits a detonator on a REMOTE DEVICE. In deep space, a SHIP EXPLODES SILENTLY, fracturing apart across the atmosphere of a moon.*

Jet, Faye, and Ein watch Spike closely.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Where does he go when he drifts off like that?

JET

Another headache, Spike?

He nods, rubbing his temples.

JET (CONT'D)

I asked you if we should go *after* this guy. He's only a half-mil, but he's known to hang out here in the rocks.

Spike studies ASIMOV'S hologram with pure hatred.

JET (CONT'D)

Wanted for "questioning" about a prison break.

Spike just keeps staring down the revolving mugshot.

FAYE

Do you know this guy, Spike?

JET

Rule number two, Faye.

FAYE

Oh, you and your stupid rules.

JET

"No talking about the past."

(a beat)

What do you say, Spike? You ready to go back to work for a while?

EIN licks up the spilled food from Spike's shattered bowl, working his tongue into the steel mesh floor.

Spike studies the rotating hologram of Asimov, conflicted in a way they don't understand.

SPIKE

(sighing)

I know I'm ready for a decent meal.

CUT TO:

THE ASTEROID BELT

MINING COLONIES cover the misshapen asteroids, tall derricks, mine shafts, cranes littering the starry skies.

The BEBOP floats toward "TIJUANA," a town under a dingy canopy, built on a rock as flat as a skipping stone.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

MONITORS display the landing site, as computers plot a crooked course through the asteroid belt.

INT. LANDING VESSELS (MONO CARRIERS) - INTERCUTTING

Faye, now dressed in a gown, secures the gun in her garter as she sits into her "Mono Carrier" - *THE REDTAIL*.

In the opposite dock, now dressed in a sleek suit, Spike climbs into his carrier, *THE SWORDFISH II*.

As an airlock seals off the pressurized area above, another opens below. Spike peers down at a two-mile drop to the rocky surface. Jet's voice comes onto a speaker.

JET (V.O.)

Gravity on this rock is only a third of a G. So you're going to feel pretty light on your feet.

(static)

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

Remember, this one's got to be alive
or we don't collect.

FAYE (V.O.)

Up for a side wager, Spike? Half my
cut against half yours. Whoever grabs
him first.

SPIKE

I always feel bad taking your money.

JET (V.O)

Dropping you in three, two, one.

THE SWORDFISH II drops like an anvil. The astonishing
fall does nothing to Spike, even as Faye howls in his
speaker, like a loud date on a roller coaster.

Simultaneously, their thrusters ignite and they fly
together briefly. But **SWORDFISH II** twists away, as the
REDTAIL rockets onward.

TIJUANA ASTEROID - ACTIVE SECTOR - MOMENTS LATER

A local woman walks alone on an empty street, carrying a
grocery bag. **MARIA** (20s). From beneath awnings, men
whistle at her, while her footsteps stir dust like silt
at the bottom of a pond. There's a murky, swimming
quality to every movement. She passes "KEEP OUT" and
"HAZMAT" signs into a tunnel.

INT. SALOON - TIJUANA ASTEROID - CONTINUOUS

Spike slips into the bar. Far across the room, **THREE OLD
MEN** play **POKER**, dressed in old-style Ponchos (despite
their mostly Chinese ethnicity). They're grousing about
the state of the recession.

He starts to move toward them, when **FAYE** enters from the
other doorway, not seeing him.

FAYE

I was wondering if any of you could
help me find a man.

OLD MAN

I'm your man, Señorita.

Spike sits quietly at the bar, keeping an eye on Faye.

SPIKE

(to the bartender)
Tequila.

BARTENDER

You want to wait fifteen minutes?

SPIKE

Why?

BARTENDER

This asteroid rotates every two hours.
Which means it's almost Happy Hour
again.

SPIKE

I don't have fifteen minutes.

The bartender pours him a drink, sliding it to him.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

What if I need something *stronger*?

BARTENDER

It's a smuggling town. You don't have
to look far.

Spike glances over at Faye. She can't help herself:
she's joining a hand of poker.

SPIKE

Something to speed up my reflexes.

BARTENDER

Gunslinger, huh?

SPIKE

You know, the average person's got a
reaction time of two-tenths of a
second. A blink. That means you're
always just *that far* from the present,
trying to catch up.

(a beat)

In that sense, we're all living in the
past.

Across the barroom, a HOODED BEGGAR walks among the
patrons, trying to sell small WIND-UP TOYS.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Red Eye. It gets rid of the delay. I
got a feeling there's some around.

BARTENDER

I'll make a call. It's a "century"
for the drink.

Spike drops a hundred coin onto the bar. It spins for a
very long time in the weaker gravity.

The beggar approaches, an OLD WOMAN blind with cataracts.

OLD WOMAN

An ancient talisman from the motherland. It'll bring you good fortune in your journey.

She puts a plastic WIND-UP MONKEY onto the bar, doing back flips at five-second intervals.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

An antique. Made on earth. In Ancient China.

Spike stares at it. Finally, he flips another coin. It spins in the air a long time, before clanking on the bar. The old woman snatches it and scurries away.

The bartender is on the phone. He writes info on an order pad, and slips it to Spike.

Spike downs his drink and heads out, with a last check on Faye. She's got a huge pile of money in front of her.

FAYE'S POV - REVERSE ANGLE

As Spike exits, she peeks up from her cards. She's been watching him, secretly. Now she gathers her winnings.

FAYE

Well, that's about enough for me.

THREE REVOLVERS surround her face, hammers pulled back.

OLD MAN

You got to give us a chance to win our money back, *Señorita*?

FAYE

Who's got *that* kind of time?

She smiles with the guns on her, an alluring expression.

FAYE (CONT'D)

I tell you what?

She beckons one man forward and whispers in his ear. He's smiling, toothless, excited by the offer. Suddenly -

- she yanks his chair out from under him. His gun goes off into the KNEE of the player across from him, while -

- she swings the chair across their faces. They drop their guns.

As they look up again, dizzy, Faye has two pistols drawn.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Now I'm going to walk out of here just like I came in. Except a little richer.

(a smile)

And you boys paid for a lesson in etiquette. You don't pull a gun on a lady.

As she backs out, one man cradles his shattered knee. Another turns over her cards on the table. Among four aces, one is her calling card, with a message typed out: "You've been played by Poker Alice."

INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - MORNING

The sun rises in a stained glass window above SPIKE. Out of the bright double doors, amid swarming dust, MARIA walks in and sits into the pew behind him.

MARIA

Heard you want to live in the *moment*.

SPIKE

Or get out of the past. You selling?

MARIA

All of it. We're trying to liquidate and get to Mars. Ever been there?

SPIKE

Born there.

MARIA

Sunlight, fresh water. Citrus groves. It's a paradise, I hear.

SPIKE

It's got its bad elements.

MARIA

It's not cheap, what we're talking about.

SPIKE

Get me a price and a time.

MARIA

How do I know you're not a cop?

SPIKE

Do I look like one?

She stares at him a long time. No.

MARIA

5-mil.

(a beat)

I'll be in the tunnel at sundown.

EXT. GHOST-TOWN SECTOR - CONTINUOUS

Past the hazard signs, Maria carries more groceries, a hopeful spring in her step. There's a bright bandana tied over her nose and mouth.

Through the tunnel, she enters the dusty air of a smaller dome. Here, the original mining colony has been left to rust. As Maria heads into an abandoned HOTEL...

REVERSE ON:

Spike *follows*, leaping rooftop to rooftop in low gravity.

He hunkers down atop an eyesore with a crumbling PARAPET. He takes out DUCT-TAPE from his coat pocket, and finds a place where the parapet has eroded to the rebar.

SWISH PAN TO:

FAYE, watching Spike from under an awning.

FAYE

You always follow the *pretty* ones.

INT. BEBOP - JET'S BONSAI GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Jet sits under a halogen lamp, with reading glasses on, Ein at his feet. To deal with the tension of waiting, he's trimming his BONSAI GARDEN, listening to a restored Coltrane album. He makes a clip, then sighs, irritated.

JET

I'm *butchering* it.

INT. ABANDONED HOTEL - HALLWAY/2ND FLOOR ROOM - DUSK

The place has the worn, gilded quality of an old bordello. Maria carries GROCERIES up the stairs. She opens the door to the apartment and -

She's punched in the face. The groceries drop, a PINEAPPLE rolling across the floor.

Quick as a rattlesnake, ASIMOV helps her pick up the spilled groceries, then drags her into the dim room.

MARIA
 (rubbing her mouth)
 I got you a real pineapple, Asimov.
 On the black market.

Asimov is seething, eyes nearly bulging out of his head.

ASIMOV
 You stupid bitch, you led him right to
 us. A *Bounty hunter*.

He puts the pineapple onto a table full of *grenades*.

In stripes through the shutters, we see that he's rigged
 the entire room with EXPLOSIVES. A trip-wire connects to
 the door, strung to SEMTEX filling the walls. Field
 mines are laid across the warped floorboards.

At the window, he pokes out a small DIGITAL PERISCOPE.

MARIA
 I made us a deal. The money will get
 us off "Tijuana" for good.

ASIMOV
 There's nowhere to hide.

THROUGH THE PERISCOPE: Asimov sees Spike crouching on the
 rooftop.

ASIMOV (CONT'D)
 (not believing it)
 I'm paranoid, right? The Red Eye.
 I'm seeing things...

The periscope is too small for Spike to see from such a
 distance. Unaware, he just peers ahead from behind a
 parapet wall. Asimov rears away from the scope, stunned.

MARIA
 What? What is it?

Rapidly, as if gathering Easter eggs, he fills his
 pockets with GRENADES.

ASIMOV
 You don't know the kinds of people up
 there. You've never seen anything but
 "The Rocks."

MARIA
 (sad)
 No.

ASIMOV
 It can't be him.

Asimov glimpses back into the PERISCOPE, aiming it.

THROUGH THE PERISCOPE: Beside a time-code, Spike peeks over the wall. Asimov magnifies the image and hits "RECORD." As he does, Spike stands upright to study Maria's tracks in the dust.

ASIMOV (CONT'D)

We *killed* that son of a bitch.

Asimov drops back into the striped darkness, replaying the RECORDED PORTION on his periscope screen.

ASIMOV (CONT'D)

Somebody's messing with my head - there's no way. No way.

He hits SEND, and we watch a "progress bar" as the recorded image of Spike is UPLOADED and sent to someone.

ASIMOV (CONT'D)

See what you think of *that*. Tell me I'm crazy. Please.

MARIA

Asimov, who are you talking to?

He looks up, surprised it's *her*.

ASIMOV

Find some cover, *mamacita*. This is going to get ugly.

EXT. GHOST-TOWN SECTOR - MOMENTS LATER

Faye follows Maria's deep footprints in the dust. Suddenly, a GUNSHOT echoes from the rooftops. She takes cover in an empty storefront.

ASIMOV'S POV: He rushes to the window. Spike seems to have fired from his rooftop perch.

Another shot comes - and Asimov's brain works so quickly that he actually *watches* the bullet speed at him before the sound comes. He dives away from the shutters as they splinter, the bullet screaming past.

Sweating, he loads a clip into his long-range rifle.

ASIMOV

Next time he sticks his head out, it's coming off.

Maria climbs into the BATHTUB with the pineapple.

ON THE MUZZLE OF SPIKE'S PISTOL: It *fires* again.

ASIMOV'S SCOPE: He opens fire, blowing chunks out of the building. But he doesn't have a bead on Spike.

ON THE MUZZLE OF SPIKE'S PISTOL: Unmoved. After a precisely measured increment of time, it *fires again*.

ASIMOV breaks off shutters and fires like crazy. He launches a grenade, which sprays debris hundreds of feet in low gravity. The pistol still doesn't budge.

FAYE: ducks as bullets plunge into the storefront. In disbelief, she sees SPIKE moving in another direction across the rooftops.

FAYE

Then *who's* shooting?

PULL BACK TO:

SPIKE'S PISTOL is duct-taped into a nook in the crumbled parapet, affixed to the exposed steel rebar.

Against the trigger, Spike has taped the WIND-UP TOY, so that, instead of doing back flips, when the spring releases, its feet press the trigger.

SIX BUILDINGS AWAY: Spike leaps forty feet to the ground, landing in a splash of dust. He emerges, heading toward the HOTEL, where Asimov's rifle now *hangs* out.

ANOTHER GUNSHOT fires from the roof; and Asimov unloads, engaged in a furious gunfight with a wind-up toy.

Spike scales the brick façade of the HOTEL, using the low gravity to his advantage. Up the awning, off a frieze, and along the architraves over each window, he free-climbs a diagonal course around Asimov's rifle, to the THIRD FLOOR, where he rolls through an open window.

INT. ABANDONED HOTEL - THIRD FLOOR

Spike positions himself right above Asimov.

THE WIND-UP TOY is running out of juice. The spring tenses, the legs flex, just pushing the trigger...

INT. ABANDONED HOTEL - INTERCUTTING BETWEEN FLOORS

Finally, a *last shot* echoes. Spike hears Asimov unloading a grenade launcher below, so he fires SIX SHOTS into the floor, aiming at the sound.

There's a pause.

Then a STORM OF BULLETS spray up through the floor.
Spike runs as wood and plaster erupt in his trail.

ASIMOV: Bleeding from his shoulder, he feeds an entire bandolier into a machine gun, unloading into the air.

Then silence. The veins in Asimov's neck are throbbing.
He paces to a crack in the ceiling.

ASIMOV

How did you get up there?

SPIKE talks through the bullet holes in the floor.

SPIKE

The problem with no reaction time, you
tend to overreact.

ASIMOV goes pale as a ghost.

ASIMOV

So it *is* you.

SPIKE

Fluorine and methane - that sounds
like your chemistry set. Was it
Vicious? Did you bust him out?

ASIMOV

I thought you *died*.

SPIKE

Is he out?

ASIMOV

He's out.

SPIKE

You're just a bomber. So who planned
it? Who financed it?

Just as he asks, Asimov fires, forcing Spike back.

ASIMOV

Spike Spiegel is a *bounty hunter* now?
Unbelievable.

In the bathtub, Maria listens, holding the pineapple, now
the most valuable thing she owns.

SPIKE

He put your neck on the line, Asimov.
He killed *everybody* so there wouldn't
be any record of who escaped and who
died. Not until the salvage teams can
sort it out. That means you're the
only witness.

ASIMOV

He finds out you're still alive...

SPIKE

That's what I'm here to ask. What
does he know?

Spike leans forward to the space in the floor. Just as his face becomes visible from below --

Asimov fires, and Spike leaps away.

After Asimov strafes it, the ceiling begins to sag.

Suddenly, Spike *drops through* in a cascade of plaster. Out of a cloud, he emerges and *whips* Asimov with a strip of floorboard.

Asimov retreats and hits the TIMER on a detonator in the SEMTEX. It counts down 1:00... :59... :58...

With the MACHINE GUN, Asimov fires at Spike. But Spike vaults off the walls, running in a circle around the room. He maneuvers behind Asimov and kicks his legs out from under him, MACHINE GUN still firing.

MARIA, in the tub, screams the ceiling crumbles onto her.

Spike kicks away Asimov's gun, then sees: A SINGLE GRENADE, spinning on the floor, pin pulled.

Spike grabs Asimov and leaps, *as the grenade goes off.*

INT. ABANDONED HOTEL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They fly through the front door, as the blast rips it from its hinges, launching them into the hallway.

THE TIMER: :45, :44, :43...

ASIMOV takes off down the stairs, *eight* at a stride.

As Spike looks up -- he's *kicked in the face by a woman's boot.*

MARIA stands over him. She's got a shaking gun pointed at his face, and the PINEAPPLE cradled like an infant. It's cut up with shrapnel, drooling juice.

SPIKE

That's a nice pineapple.

MARIA

Grown on Mars. Sixty-thousand on the black market. I've never tasted one.

She looks at the juice dribbling on her arm.

MARIA (CONT'D)

It's *bleeding*.

Her gun is shaking. Spike rises, betting she won't fire. With his back to her, he pauses.

SPIKE

Just so you know, Mars isn't all sunshine and citrus groves.

She fires, *missing*, dropping the pineapple. Spike leaps for the stairs - *but she grazes his shoulder* as he descends.

THE TIMER: :11, :10, :09... Wiping tears off her dusty face, Maria notices, then leaps out the smashed window.

INT. LOBBY - ABANDONED HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

As Spike *falls* down the last part of the staircase, Asimov seizes on him with *fast* kicks into his stomach.

Just then - *the SEMTEX* detonates.

EXT. HOTEL - TIJUANA ASTEROID - CONTINUOUS

Outside, MARIA turns back to witness the TOP FLOORS explode, casting debris up into protective canopy.

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A massive chandelier collapses onto an ancient piano. As the dust cloud dissipates, we see that the STAIRCASE now leads to nowhere. The pineapple rolls downhill.

ASIMOV continues battering Spike until - suddenly - his right arm grows heavier. He looks down and realizes: *Spike has handcuffed their wrists together.*

SPIKE

We were just having a *conversation*.

Spike draws a hidden SNUB-NOSED COLT from his pocket and holds it against Asimov's kneecap. Asimov's bloodshot eyes change from anger to fear to *pleading*.

ASIMOV

I won't make it in the joint, Spike.
Somebody will get to me.
(breathing heavy)
Just let me go - I'll tell you
whatever you want.

ASIMOV (CONT'D)

There's a group inside the Syndicate pushing against your father: wanting to force him out. Vicious is their man; they paid to get him out. He's going to do something, something big - make a statement. If your father won't step down, he'll take him down. He's not going to wait for him to die.

SPIKE

Does he know I'm alive?

ASIMOV

He'll go after Julia.

Spike's jaw drops. His shock seems angry at first; then his face softens, into something like longing.

SPIKE

Julia survived?

Asimov smiles, savoring the surprise.

ASIMOV

Yeah. And she's just -

- BANG! -

Blood splatters across Spike's face from an exit wound in Asimov's chest.

PULL BACK TO:

FAYE, at the entrance to the lobby, pistol smoking.

Asimov falls on top of Spike. Faye's mouth drops, as she realizes what she's done.

FAYE

Shit, I was aiming low.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Ein and Jet watch as Spike and Faye carry ASIMOV into the room. Faye sweeps a table clean, shattering a glass; then they throw Asimov onto the surface.

JET

What happened?

SPIKE

Faye killed another bounty.

FAYE

He was going to kill Spike.

SPIKE

We were just talking.

JET
How many times did I say it? We don't
collect on a *stiff*.

Ein barks, as Asimov convulses on the table.

FAYE
He's not dead. See. He's fine.
(to Asimov)
Come on, you creep, hang in there.

Asimov's eyes roll back in his head. His mouth froths.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Oh, he's dead again. Help him, Jet.
Do CPR. Doesn't anybody know CPR?
What good are you people?

Seized by frustration, Jet *thumps* hard onto his chest,
slamming his fist onto his sternum.

Asimov winces, then drifts out of consciousness again.
So Jet begins pounding on him like a punching bag.

SPIKE
That doesn't look like CPR.

FAYE
Come on, you big baby, fight for it!
Don't go *into the light!*

Jet pounds him a last few times.

EXT. ASTEROID BELT - CONTINUOUS

The BEBOP drifts through the miles of floating rocks.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - AN HOUR LATER

All three bounty hunters sit in chairs around Asimov,
heads bowed as if at a wake.

JET
What a waste.

FAYE
A half-mil.

JET
It's no way to run a business.

Spike flinches, a searing pain in his head. We see
subliminal shots, some repeating: *The blade swings; the
shotgun fires; a surgeon's gloves.* But next:

A WOMAN'S FACE is in the window of a SPACECRAFT as it drifts away. Her BLONDE HAIR swarms in zero gravity.

FAYE
Spike?

SPIKE
(recovering)
The bounty was a joke. He should have been eight-mil, at least.

FAYE
I knew it! I knew you knew him.
That's how you got to him so fast --
you knew his habits.

SPIKE
For him to be in the network, at this price, it doesn't make sense.

Faye and Jet watch Spike, curiously. He notices their scrutiny, and tries to deflect it.

SPIKE (CONT'D)
I'm just saying... I heard about that jail break. Everybody in the colony died. This guy was the only one who could finger the prisoners. And their financing source.

(a beat)
That alone is worth more than a half-mil.

Now even Jet looks suspicious, certain that Spike knows more. To avoid their eyes, Spike just searches Asimov's pockets, finding TWO GRENADES.

JET
Well, if he is *somebody*, we should be able to collect on him "Dead or Alive." Let's get to the nearest outpost... see if we can get him upgraded. Posthumously.

EXT. BEBOP - AN ASTRAL GATE

The BEBOP pauses, waiting to merge with the passing streaks inside floating rings. Then the thrusters fire and it *enters the gate*, speeding out of sight.

INT. BEBOP - SPIKE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Spike lies on his cot with gauze on his bleeding shoulder, and a damp wash cloth of his head, ice thawing. On his table sit GRENADES and THE MANGLED PINEAPPLE.

Faye's shadow comes into the doorway, lit by the strobe-light of hyperspeed rings in the window.

FAYE

Your migraines are getting worse.

She kneels beside him on the bed, touching his forehead.

SPIKE

What do you want, Faye?

FAYE

Every time I'm nice to you, you think it's a scam.

SPIKE

Why do you figure that is?

He opens his left eye. His entire iris has turned black.

SPIKE'S POV: Faye's appearance rewinds through the years he's known her. Her hair and fingernails shorten and lengthen like a tide in time-lapse photography. She's cycling through hundreds of hairstyles. Her clothes flicker around her. Every moment he's known with her is compressed into seconds. Finally:

She's a blackjack dealer, dealing off the bottom of the deck. He's got a pile of chips, and bets them all.

FAYE (V.O.)

Spike? Penny for your thoughts?

The image is gone, and she's petting through his hair.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Would anything help?

SPIKE

Not talking. Not talking would help.

FAYE

Mmmmm. That's the one thing I'm no good at.

EXT. THARSUS CITY - MARS - DAY

It's bustling terra-formed city of glass buildings reflecting rusty-colored sunlight. As if Percival Lowell had been *right*, Mars has been made habitable by *canals*, fed by melted polar ice. They're filled with gondolas and water buses. The narrow streets are reminiscent of Bangkok or Jakarta: scooters, Tuk Tuks, and Samlors.

Passing through is an ARMORED LIMOUSINE. Street children scramble to see their reflections in the tinted windows; but it pushes past into a TUNNEL heading underground.

INT. DRIVEWAY - UNDERGROUND RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Attendants open the limo doors for VICIOUS and Udai.

INT. CATACOMBS - RED DRAGON SYNDICATE - DAY

Built into the remnants of iridium mines during the first colonization days, this is an underground FORTRESS. The RED DRAGON SYMBOL covers the floor and walls. VICIOUS passes, as men bow to him.

INT. UNDERGROUND MEETING CHAMBER - SYNDICATE - DAY

It's an impressive ceremonial room, with the "Dragon Council" occupying seats on a balcony. Vicious steps onto the DRAGON SYMBOL on the floor.

The room is crowded with lower-caste members, a hierarchy evolved from the triads: "Vanguards", "Red Poles", "Straw Sandals". The doors begin to close on the "Blue Lanterns" forbidden from entering. Slipping through *is* a HOODED FIGURE. It's obvious from the way the Lanterns part that this is a person of high status.

Vicious bows his head in respect to the elders.

Above sits MAO YENRAI (78), leader of the RED DRAGON SYNDICATE and his adoptive father. He has the sallow complexion and thinning hair of a man battling cancer.

MAO YENRAI

The oath, Vicious. I don't think you've said it in a long time.

VICIOUS

I said it every day.

INT. BEBOP - SPIKE'S CABIN - INTERCUTTING

Letting out tension, Spike is destroying the punching bag. Ein watches, whimpering at each brutal kick.

VICIOUS (V.O.)

"When I reach the gates of Han, I will acknowledge my sworn brothers."

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - SYNDICATE - CONTINUOUS

VICIOUS

"I shall honor the history of the father and the five ancestors."

MAO YENRAI

So you can recite it. From rote.

VICIOUS

You don't seem happy to see your son.

MAO YENRAI

Because the sons of our allies were in that prison with you, Vicious. And all of them are gone now.

VICIOUS

Maybe you've made too many allies.

MAO YENRAI

The turf wars are over, and -

VICIOUS

What I won at war, you've bargained away during nine years of peace. You let the Russians control the pipeline, you gave away the spice trade, you lost the black market everywhere but your own back yard.

(a beat)

You're an old man afraid of his maker. I'm your son, Mao. You're only living heir. And I come here to make a simple request.

MAO YENRAI

You don't share my blood.

VICIOUS

Neither did he. You adopted two sons, and trained us the same. Why should a *memory* be worth any more than the man who stands here now?

(a beat)

The oil tankers off Titan pay everyone but us. I'm here to promise the council I will take it *all* back. We'll collect our protection money from the pipeline. And anyone who fails to pay will answer to *me*.

ELDER #2

You said it in the oath, Vicious: "I shall not appoint myself master without authority."

MAO YENRAI

We're not going to return to those
bloody years over money and pride.

MAO YENRAI smolders, his face coloring with anger.

VICIOUS

I broke out with the help of brothers
and sisters as *disgusted* as I am.
They've watched you haggle away an
empire. So I came to ask a simple
thing. Since you have fallen in love
with peace, *step down...*

(a long beat)

...peacefully.

There's a stunned murmur through the crowd.

The HOODED FIGURE pushes to the front and removes the
hood. It's JULIA (late-30s), the blonde we've glimpsed
in Spike's vision. She's older, with worry lines around
her eyes; but there's an austere beauty to her face.

MAO YENRAI

You won't even wait for me to die.

VICIOUS

There's no reason to.

INT. BEBOP - SPIKE'S CABIN - INTERCUTTING

Spike, stooped, tired, eats the rest of the stolen
pineapple.

MAO YENRAI (V.O.)

Your brother is the reason.

Ein stares him, hungry. So Spike *growls* at the dog.

INT. UNDERGROUND MEETING CHAMBER - SYNDICATE

There's a moment of silence, as another ELDER crosses the
walkway above to *whisper in Mao's ear*. Mao nods,
knowing, having held this information for a while.

MAO YENRAI

You're not *first* in line for my job.

Mao nods to SHIN (20s), down on the floor.

SHIN

(bowing low)

This message was intercepted off a
communications satellite, coming out
of the *asteroid belt*.

He clicks a button on a PORTABLE DATABASE, bringing up a hologram onto the floor.

It's SPIKE, the exact footage taken through Asimov's periscope, recorded and sent.

Julia pushes forward urgently to get a glimpse. Vicious stares at the image, floored, as it dissipates like smoke.

VICIOUS

I don't see anything but a ghost.

MAO YENRAI

(standing)

Then this ghost is not stepping down.

Vicious watches him go with murderous eyes; then he storms out of the chamber, Udai and Wang Long flanking him. As the crowd parts, Vicious catches Julia's eyes.

VICIOUS

(to Udai)

It's what I expected. Go ahead. Show them we're serious.

EXT. ASTRAL GATES - LATER

A small DRONE, spiky like an enlarged speck of pollen, drifts through open space near the mouth of the gates. One by one, TANKER TRUCKS emerge with their hauls of oil.

INT. SPIKY SHIP - CONTINUOUS

At the unmanned controls, a TIMER FLICKS ON, counting down from :30.

PAN BACK TO:

THE CARGO AREA is wired and packed with explosives, the octanitrocubane Asimov used in the prison break.

EXT. ASTRAL GATES - CONTINUOUS

The DRONE comes up alongside the path of TANKER SHIPS, moving to an EXIT GATE. It drifts gracefully into the midst of a massive convoy, as we hear a timer beeping down, 3... 2... 1... and...

BOOM!

It explodes right into a PASSING TANKER SHIP, ripping open the payload and spilling oil across deep space.

For miles in opposite directions, flashing alarms go off on the ASTRAL GATES, as -

- the oil slick expands, globular and thick. The ruined TANKER drifts off-course, a piece of twisted wreckage, caroming off another ship.

Just then, out of the mouth of the ASTRAL GATE - the BEBOP emerges from hyperspeed and soars past.

EXT. ISSP OUTPOST - CERES DIVISION - LATER

A POLICE STATION orbits Ceres. From it, a powerful movie projector casts WANTED POSTERS onto nearby asteroids.

Through a massive wave of traffic (flying police cruisers, paddy wagons, and SWAT ships) the Bebop heads toward a loading bay.

INT. ISSP OUTPOST - CERES DIVISION - MOMENTS LATER

The hallways are chaotic with deportees, bail bondsmen, citizens claiming impounded vehicles. The lines spill out of offices, arguing voices everywhere, as more and more cops suit up and run down the hall.

Pushing through the crowd, Faye, Jet, and Spike trundle a huge FREEZER BAG, obviously containing a body.

FEMALE COP (O.S.)

Look, sir, we are undermanned at the moment - so if you could please hold.

In the next office:

ADMINISTRATOR

No, our officers are on an emergency call.

Our group comes to the end of the LONGEST LINE, filled with ornery characters. One man hasn't bothered to take off his space suit; while another doesn't even wear a shirt. All of them escort live BOUNTIES, in chains or shackles, tied or duct-taped.

FAYE

This is Bounty claims adjustments?

SHIRTLESS BOUNTY HUNTER

Get in line, legs.

A few bounty hunters wave to Jet. One of them is ANDY (30), dressed in white with a ten-gallon cowboy hat.

ANDY

Howdy, Jet.

Jet nods, ashamed of the bag at his feet. They all avoid eye contact.

FAYE

Oh God. Andy. Don't say anything to him, he'll brag for hours.

Andy smiles smugly and gestures to the FREEZER BAG.

ANDY

Got yourself a cold one, huh?

Jet blushes with anger and embarrassment.

INT. BOUNTY CLAIMS OFFICE - AN HOUR LATER

They finally reach the front of the line. Jet knows the desk cops and shakes hands. Out of an alcove comes DETECTIVE JOHN "FAD" MCFADDEN (55), an even-tempered old friend, who greets Jet with an effusive hug and back pat.

MCFADDEN

Still in this racket, you old dog?
Why didn't you say you were here? You could've cut in line.

JET

Don't want any special treatment.

Hearing this from his office is SHERIFF DONNELLY (60s), Fad's crotchety, acerbic boss.

SHERIFF

Still the stickler for the rules, huh?
(re: the freezer bag)
Looks like you bent them a little for this slob.

MCFADDEN

Wish the rest of the fellas were here. We had to send out everybody. Tanker ship blew outside the gates. God-awful mess.

INT. ISSP OUTPOST - FAD'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

"Fad" unzips the FREEZER BAG and pulls out a lifeless arm. The SHERIFF studies the watch, checking his own.

Fad finds the faded PRISONER BAR CODE on Asimov's neck, scanning it with a magnetic reader.

MCFADDEN

Looks like he paid to have his rap sheet de-magnetized.

FAYE

That's expensive work.

JET

Run his DNA.

Fad takes scissors off his desk and clips Asimov's hair. He drops it into the slot of another machine.

The SHERIFF studies the screen, as the hair is magnified thousands of times. As a DOUBLE HELIX becomes clear, the computer highlights an allele, and hones in.

SHERIFF

Well, you guys can rest a little easier. If you didn't get him, the cancer would've.

FAYE

What about his record?

MCFADDEN

Still looking. If he's as dangerous as you say, it should be coded into his DNA, but...

Fad scans the genome for info and begins to see something. Faye stays riveted on Spike, as if reading his face at a poker table. He knows something, but won't say it.

MCFADDEN (CONT'D)

Okay. There's a couple priors coded on the fifth chromosome. Nuclear smuggling, distribution of *Ebola*.

FAYE

So he's worth something?

SHERIFF

Worthless piece of crap, if you ask me.

JET

What would a guy like that be doing in the system for a nickel ante like this?

MCFADDEN

You know, Jet, I've got to coordinate the database with two million jurisdictions. Things fall through the cracks.

SHERIFF

Look fellas, maybe you stumbled upon a genuine son of a bitch here. But I'm sorry. I can't change his price retroactively. If I did, everybody would be dragging bodies in.

Fad glances at Spike, who's leaning against the doorjamb.

FAYE

(goadng)

Spike knows who he is. Don't you, Spike?

Spike looks away, irritated.

SPIKE

I just know... you put somebody in the system too cheap... and they attract really sloppy bounty hunters.

Faye looks away, stung and embarrassed.

SHERIFF

Look, all I can do is take care of his remains. I'll make sure this fellow gets a decent funeral. On my honor.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

ASIMOV'S BODY is ejected from an airlock into deep space. He THUDS off the BEBOP as it accelerates away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT - THARSUS CITY - MARS - DAY

With plants and birds, there's a serene quality. JULIA pours a drink and sits across from an obsidian wall, pulsing with faint streaks of electricity. When she turns it on, we realize it's a TV SCREEN.

While Julia's looking for something else, the news plays - a weather report from Jupiter's moon of TITAN. In a space suit, a plucky weatherman stands in front of a methane storm, an endless stretch of derricks and a lake of pure crude stretching behind him.

METEOROLOGIST

Titan's methane storms have intensified to a Category 4, forcing oil production to shut down in the southern hemisphere. That means you and I will be feeling it at the pump.

Julia finds her PHONE/PORTABLE DATABASE. Information rises off its surface, glowing green on thin air: phone numbers, to-do lists, picture files.

METEOROLOGIST (CONT'D)

Politicians have used this latest storm season to renew the debate about drilling in the disputed Arctic region of earth. Others claim that the move would ignite old hostilities.

Julia finds what she needs on her P.D.

METEOROLOGIST (CONT'D)

Titan supplies 99% of the System's energy, and earth's small reserves are believed to be largely controlled by Crime Syndicates like the Red Dragons.

(a beat)

In other news, forensic scientists are investigating a mysterious oil spill along the pipeline...

Julia clicks her device at the screen, and a RECORDED IMAGE comes up. *It's the footage of Spike on the roof.*

Julia leans forward, raptly watching it in a loop.

Suddenly, the screen fades to black, and Vicious' picture comes up, with the sound of a phone ringing through.

She clicks another button - and Vicious appears on screen.

VICIOUS

Thought I'd tell you, there was an oil spill yesterday. They lost a few hundred million worth. Those tankers... they're going to need more protection out there.

Julia finds it hard to face him.

JULIA

You'll split the syndicate. You won't have the power you think: you'll be fighting a civil war for years.

VICIOUS

You must have known about *him*, Julia.

JULIA

I didn't.

VICIOUS

Where did the footage come from?

JULIA

I'm analyzing it now. Whoever sent the transmission, Syndicate hackers picked it up before it touched the atmosphere.

VICIOUS

Have you been in touch with him?

JULIA

Of course not. He died that day, Vicious. And I never looked back.

VICIOUS

You've gotten to be an even better liar since I've been gone. I'll find him. You know that, right?

With a sad look, she finishes her drink.

VICIOUS (CONT'D)

I'll do whatever it takes.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Furious, brooding, Spike flips through *hundreds* of HOLOGRAMS for wanted men. He grimaces at each new face he recognizes. It's like a family photo album now. Dai Lau: Commodities Fraud; "Black Tiger" Yamamoto: money laundering; "Skittles" Koslowski: Regicide.

Across the room, Jet and Faye play strip poker. Faye is fully dressed; Jet is naked to his boxer shorts.

FAYE

Straight flush beats your ladies.

JET

I don't want to play anymore.

The info on each bounty says: RED DRAGON SYNDICATE.

JET (CONT'D)

Never seen so many Dragons in there.

(thinking)

Maybe they're manipulating the system to settle old scores.

Spike gives him that *thousand-yard stare*, pinning Jet to his seat. Jet meets his eyes for a long time, then shrugs, apologetic.

JET (CONT'D)

It's just a theory, Spike.

EXT. BEBOP - SPACE - CONTINUOUS

With the ISSP Station's traffic in the background, the BEBOP heads toward open space. As we REVOLVE AROUND IT, catching a flare of sunlight, we see:

A SMALLER SHIP, with a long spar - a "bowsprit" extending from the front. A SOLAR SAIL unfolds. Thousands of panels light up in the sun, forming the pattern of a skull and crossbones. The rush of new energy accelerates the ship to *ramming* speed...

...and the bowsprit jams into the Bebop.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The force sends the deck of cards across the room.

FAYE

What now?

EXT. BEBOP - CONTINUOUS

Magnetic *grappling hooks* connect from the PIRATE SHIP to the Bebop, pulling it closer. A door slides open, and FOUR BOUNTY HUNTERS emerge in black space suits, tethered to their ship with elastic cables. They glide across space, as if on the mizzen stays swinging across the sea.

Their GLOVES and BOOTS are magnetized, so they're able to cling around the hull of the Bebop.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

At the monitors, Jet sees the PIRATE SHIP.

JET

Bounty Hunters. Robbing us, I guess.

FAYE

Us? We're broke.

EXT. BEBOP - CONTINUOUS

BOUNTY HUNTERS spider along the hull. One wields an "anhydrous hydrazine" BLOWTORCH, which burns without air.

INT. BEBOP - STARBOARD CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Sensing a presence, EIN growls. Suddenly, SPARKS begin to cut through the hull. He barks like crazy, as alarms sound. Inert gasses steam over each doorway.

Spike picks up a SHOTGUN and walks calmly through a closing airlock, toward Ein's barking. The BLOWTORCH SPARKS rain into the steel mesh.

CLICK-CLICK, Spike chambers a bullet and nods to Ein.

SPIKE

Lie down.

The dog drops onto his belly. Spike watches the chemical blowtorch flame cut a wide arc.

He *unbuckles his belt* and pulls it out a few loops. Then he re-buckles it AROUND THE RAILING to strap himself in.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

A warning light flashes on the console in front of Jet.

JET

We lost cabin pressure.

INT. BEBOP - STARBOARD CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Through the breach there's suction as strong as a hurricane. SPIKE is held in place by his belt around the railing. EIN can't grip the mesh any longer. As he's about to be yanked into space, SPIKE *hooks his foot* under EIN'S COLLAR, picking him up.

A portion of the hull PEELS OPEN. As the BOUNTY HUNTERS climb in, SPIKE fires, knocking them back out. As oxygen dissipates and pressure drops, his face is turning red, then purple. He guns down another BOUNTY HUNTER, who clogs up the breach, lessening the suction.

Holding Ein, Spike uses the BELT as a HARNESS along the hallway. He hits an emergency button, unbuckles, and *dives through the airlock*.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Furniture tumbles toward him across the room. Spike hits a button, re-sealing the airlock, just as a *flying chair* hits him in the face.

INT. BEBOP - GUN TURRETS - CONTINUOUS

JET AND FAYE strap into GUN TURRETS flanking the bridge. With mounted machine guns, they tear apart the sail.

FAYE

They must think we're someone else!

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

SPIKE lies in a daze. We see *flickering* images:

The blade. VICIOUS walks along a row of hostages, their faces down. He fires into helpless bodies.

JULIA'S FACE is framed in the spaceship's window, as it breaks apart around her.

Suddenly, Spike comes to... with EIN licking his face. Spike spits, disgusted - and pushes the dog away.

Beside him on the messy floor lie ASIMOV'S GRENADES, pulled loose by the de-pressurization. He scans the debris to his CABIN, where a RED SPACE SUIT has been pulled from his closet.

INT. BEBOP - FAYE'S GUN TURRET - CONTINUOUS

FAYE is firing at the SOLAR SAIL when there's a LOUD KNOCK on her turret. She jumps.

SPIKE'S FACE lowers in front of her. He's in his space suit, spelunking along the outside of the ship.

FAYE

I almost shot you, lunatic!

EXT. BEBOP - DEEP SPACE - CONTINUOUS

SPIKE pushes off and drifts. Jet's voice comes onto the radio in his helmet.

JET (V.O.)

What are you doing out there, Spike?

Spike glides toward the PIRATE SHIP, with an OPEN PANEL DOOR on the side.

As TWO BOUNTY HUNTERS emerge, Spike *bowls* a GRENADE across empty space. In pure silence, it floats past the spacewalkers, their faces horrified behind glass visors.

It floats right through the open airlock - and *into* the PIRATE SHIP. Three... two... one...

The PIRATE SHIP *cleaves* apart in silence, a mass of fracturing wreckage spreading in all directions.

Spike smiles, until - reflected in his visor - the wreckage of the ship tumbles closer and closer, the force of the blast stronger than he expected.

He's swamped, a piece of the hull striking him, and the stream of debris whisking him off like a current.

INT. BEBOP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jet steers through the wreckage, trying to find Spike. Faye runs into the room, breathless.

JET
He finally did it. He blew himself
up.
(into the radio)
Spike? Are you dead?

FAYE
Why isn't he answering his radio?

Jet searches the console, finding the signal light.

JET
His transmitter's on. He must be
unconscious.
(in the transceiver)
Spike? You're floating out of range.

Faye is genuinely worried, but she tries to hide it from Jet. She walks to the window where she see a RED FIGURE, floating toward the horizon of Mars.

FAYE
Oh God! He's going into orbit. He
must be freaking out.

JET
Spike? Spike!?

ON SPIKE

Snoring. Stars reflected on his visor.

FAYE (V.O.)	JET (V.O.)
<i>Spike! Can you hear us!?</i>	<i>Hang on. We're coming.</i>

SPIKE
(yawning)
Take your time. That's the most peace
and quiet I've had in years.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - LATER

Spike sits with an ice pack on his head, while Faye is combing meticulously through the BOUNTY DATABASE.

FAYE

Did they think we cheated them out of a bounty?

(scanning holograms)

Maybe somebody's trying to collect my debt?

SPIKE

It's all about you, Faye.

She comes across something new in the database. Spike can't see it, but he notices her face go pale.

He stands up to see. Rotating, the HOLOGRAM is:

SPIKE SPIEGEL

a little younger, a little less cynical in the eyes. But he's in the same blue suit, smirking. The information scrolls: "For Undisclosed Crimes: 400,000,000 W."

Faye's jaw drops. Spike looks on with a nostalgic sigh.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Hard to believe I was ever that young.

FAYE

Four *hundred* million? That's got to be a *typo*.

Jet comes into the room and does a double-take, looking between the HOLOGRAM and SPIKE.

JET

That's why they came after us. We're going to have every bounty hunter on the network after *that* reward.

FAYE

Four hundred million on his head! It's the biggest I've ever seen. What the hell did you *do*, Spike?

JET

Faye.

FAYE

Oh God, Jet, Rule Number Two. This is an emergency. There aren't any rules in an emergency.

JET

There are even *more* rules in an emergency.

Spike sits again, returning the ice pack to his head. Faye flips rapidly through more bounties.

FAYE

No one is even *close* to that price.

SPIKE

Drop me off at the next station.

Faye, Jet, and Ein glance over at him, but he doesn't look up.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

You're going to be targets as long as you're with me.

JET

Spike... look, buddy, *whatever* you did...

SPIKE

We've worked together nine years, Jet. What do you think I did?

Jet's thinks it over for a while.

JET

How do I know what I do in your free time?

Faye studies a new HOLOGRAM, just off-camera.

FAYE

The only one even *close* to that price is blondie here.

Spike bolts upright. It's JULIA. Wanted for "Undisclosed Computer Fraud. 40-million."

JET

It might be a bad idea for you to take off solo right now, Spike. It's probably a mix-up. I can sort this out with ISSP.

Spike can't hear him. His visions come too fast to process: *Julia, a flash of bare skin, a sad expression, a room full of birds.*

She's in the window of the spacecraft, drifting further away.

As Julia shrinks, she's now in Spike's pupil as the rotating hologram.

SPIKE

(locked on Julia)
I'll stay for one last bounty.

JET

Now you're talking sense.

But Faye is suspicious, noticing every nuance of his sad, nostalgic expression. It's hard to believe he intends to hunt this woman down for the price on her head.

FAYE

Sure. Pretty girl, 40-mil. Why not?

SPIKE

Head towards Mars.

FAYE

Is she another old friend, Spike?

SPIKE

Just get us there, Jet. Inbound.

Faye looks over at Jet, troubled. Even jealous, perhaps.

JET

Okay. But we're not getting anywhere until we fix the hole in this bucket.

INT. SPIKE'S CABIN - BEBOP - LATER

Spike's doing PULL-UPS in his cabin. EIN watches him.

As FAYE steps into the room, Spike stops, feeling her eyes on him. He just hangs in place.

FAYE

Don't stop on my account.

SPIKE

(dropping)

You make a *noise* when you think about money, Faye.

FAYE

I'm just watching you, that's all. Can't I *watch* you exercise?

SPIKE

You never cared before.

FAYE

I'm just... well, I'm impressed.

He drops and sits on a bench, staring up at her.

FAYE (CONT'D)

I mean, four-hundred mil. That's the highest bounty I've ever seen.

FAYE (CONT'D)

You've really got to be *somebody* to get a price like that on your head.

SPIKE

Thanks.

FAYE

And it's "Dead or Alive."

There's something like a schoolgirl crush in her eyes.

SPIKE

It would pay off *your* debts.

FAYE

How can you say that? I'm just...

(a beat)

Why don't you trust me, Spike?

SPIKE

I trust you. I trust you to do whatever works for yourself.

FAYE

We're on the same team.

SPIKE

For now.

FAYE

God, we're such a mess. All of Jet's rules. Rule Number Two, no talking about our pasts. And Rule Number One. Which is even more patronizing.

Now Spike looks *really* cautious.

SPIKE

Why are you in my room talking about Rule Number One?

She leans against the door jamb, an *incredibly* sexy woman... but a swindler through and through.

FAYE

Don't tell me you've never *thought* about it.

EIN glances back and forth as if it's a tennis match.

SPIKE

Oh, I've thought about it.

She smiles, surprised, a little disarmed.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

I think about *everything* that might
kill me.

She's appalled and angry; but he just turns to his heavy bag. After ten straight uppercuts, she just walks away.

INT. STARBOARD CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Jet has just welded TWO BENCHES over the breach, crossing like giant steel Band-aids. He knocks on it, certain it's not going to hold.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN

Jet passes out of the corridor, still carrying the lit blowtorch. He glances into FAYE'S CABIN. She's prone on her bed, just out of the shower (a towel wrapped over her hair), writing fanatically into her *journal*.

JET

What are you writing? A ransom note?

She keeps scribbling rapidly.

FAYE

The shower is messed up. No hot water. That's the fourth time this week.

He sags, his cybernetic arm twitching oddly.

JET

Yeah, and the handle on the faucet is broken.

FAYE

Well, if you know it's broken, why don't you *fix* it?

She looks over at him and notices that his BLOWTORCH is burning a hole into his CYBERNETIC ARM.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Jet!

He realizes and turns off the flame. Surprisingly, there's affection in Faye's eyes.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Jet? You didn't feel it at all?

He's embarrassed by her concern.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Why don't you get reconstructive surgery on your arm, Jet?

JET

With what?

FAYE

It's not that expensive anymore.

JET

This ship is my ship. This arm is *my* arm. I don't take *instructions*.

He heads away. She throws down her pen.

INT. BEBOP - JET'S BONSAI GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Putting on small reading glasses and turning on halogen lamps, Jet prepares to tend to his forest of small trees. As he's about to sit, he remembers... there's no BENCH.

STARBOARD CORRIDOR: He welded it over the breach.

EXT. BEBOP - DEEP SPACE

It cruises past, listing, dented badly on the hull.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PORT - GANYMEDE - NIGHT

Jupiter dominates the sky.

A shadow walks down an alley, and ducks into a small dive, where jazz plays in the background.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

The shadow sits down beside another man, a heavy-set, middle-aged Russian mobster known as CONSTANTINE POPOV (50s).

REVERSE ON: VICIOUS, sitting. Udai takes the table behind him, and his other henchmen fill up the empty spaces in the club.

VICIOUS

Thanks for meeting on short notice.

POPOV

I should kill you right now. Your temper tantrum cost me a fortune.

It's clear that other men around the tables are Popov's men, and they show guns in their belts. In the background, a piano and a stand-up bass fill up a narrow stage.

VICIOUS

This is nothing. You have no idea what I'm prepared to do if you don't cut the Syndicate back in.

POPOV

This was dealt with years ago. Talk to your superiors. I don't negotiate with *underlings*.

VICIOUS

Yenrai isn't calling the shots. You want to do business, you do it with me.

(a beat)

You collect protection money for every drop of oil coming off Titan. As of now, that money's ours. I'll let you have a ten-percent collection fee, and another five for keeping the wells warm while I was away.

Popov looks around at his men, incredulous.

POPOV

I don't have to listen to this.

Popov's men draw their guns; but Vicious just waits, unimpressed.

VICIOUS

No, you do have to listen. The drone that knocked off an oil tanker, I've got one fifty times the size. Six hundred mega-tons of explosives orbiting the oil fields. I give the word, and it hits Titan's atmosphere.

He looks over at Udai, then back at Popov.

VICIOUS (CONT'D)

A late friend of mine, a chemist... he taught us this. Fluorine will react with the methane. Titan will burn like a new star.

(a beat)

But it's lights out for everyone else.

Popov is amazed, and gestures for the others to put their guns away.

POPOV

You're insane.

VICIOUS

We've got our own oil supply.

POPOV

On earth? There's hardly anything left. Not enough to fuel the System.

He eyes Vicious for a long time, searching him.

POPOV (CONT'D)

You're bluffing. It would kill everyone.

VICIOUS

Everyone who isn't ready.

Spooked, Popov gets up and gestures to his men. All of them begin to hustle out.

VICIOUS (CONT'D)

Don't take long to think about it.

INT. BEBOP - JET'S BONSAI GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

While Jet sits on a crate, trimming his trees, Faye enters.

FAYE

Can I ask you a question, Jet?

He just grunts.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Haven't I brought in almost as many bounties as he has?

JET

I'd have to check the records.

FAYE

I can only get treated like garbage around here for so long. Then I'm going to leave, and you're going to miss me. You're going to miss the money I bring in.

JET

I miss it already.

She plops down onto the ground, long legs twisted awkwardly. Jet continues clipping his tiny elm.

JET (CONT'D)

Did something happen between you and Spike?

FAYE

Whatever happened, it's in the past. And we don't talk about the past. Remember? We don't talk about *anything*. Ever. All you do is clip your midget trees, and all he does is kick a stupid punching bag. It's a big, floating *Halfway House*.

JET

There's a reason for that rule. If we knew too much, we couldn't work together.

He puts down his clippers and takes off his reading glasses, looking over at her.

JET (CONT'D)

You ever tell him I told you anything, I'll beat you to death. I don't care if you're a girl. I'll snap that skinny neck with my one good hand.

FAYE

Deal.

JET

Long time ago, I was ISSP.

FAYE

You were a cop, Jet? No wonder you're such a *tight-ass*.

He just stares at her, silent.

EXT. PORT - GANYMEDE - NIGHT - TEN YEARS AGO

Jet crawls through his own blood on the ground, as other cops run past him.

JET (V.O.)

I quit the force. I was never one for departmental politics.

-- A younger JET (with a shiny new cybernetic arm) flies the "Bebop" through deep space.

JET (CONT'D)

I took what I had and bought this ship. Used contacts, caught bounties.

-- In DEEP SPACE, Spike floats in an ESCAPE POD, half-dead. Blood droplets swarm in zero gravity.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I don't know how long Spike had been
out there when I found him.

-- JET picks up the SOS beacon on his instrument panel.

-- THE ESCAPE POD, looking like a transparent coffin,
glides into an opening airlock of the BEBOP.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He's been shot in three places.
Someone had gouged out his eye.

-- Jet lifts Spike from the pod and lies him on a gurney.

-- In a SUPPLY ROOM of medical supplies and robotics, Jet
keeps him alive with a glucose IV.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I took him to the doctor who did my
arm.

-- THE SUN emerges from around Jupiter, shining bright
over the Bebop's path. The glare becomes...

-- A DOCTOR'S LIGHT, as A CYBERNETIC EYE is surgically
implanted into Spike's head. Again, we see the image of
the BLOODY SURGEON'S GLOVES.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Simple procedure. Implant the eye,
attach a microchip to the optic nerve.

-- THE EYE looks almost normal, except for the expanding
and contracting pupil, like the aperture of a lens.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Works without a hitch 99 times out a
hundred.

-- IN THE "SWORDFISH II", Spike descends to Europa,
toward the Ice City along the cracks of the frozen sea.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Spike promised he'd pay back any
medical he owed. Said he wasn't one
to leave a debt.

- Spike pummels TWO BOUNTIES with an athletic display of
"Jeet Kune Do" karate.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Paid me back within a month, with
interest. Then he just stayed on.

- Spike fights Abdul Hakim, a Seven-Foot fugitive, cutting him down like a redwood with a leg sweep.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Got a taste for the work, I guess.

- PANNING ACROSS THE BEBOP, it's now packed with ELEVEN BOUNTIES, duct-taped or chained to various spots.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Maybe he found it...

- Swordfish II swoops over a Cadillac El-Dorado, racing along a causeway. Spike chases, looking possessed.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...cathartic.

- As the BEBOP drifts through empty space, Spike plays his HARMONICA beside a fired-up Hibachi. Jet sits across from him, roasting something on a stick.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But, as good as he was...

- Spike wakes up suddenly, gasping.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Spike was having bad dreams. He never said a word, but I could tell they were getting worse. Then one day...

- AT AN OUTER COLONY REST STOP, Jet and Spike hammer out a dent on the BEBOP. When Jet reaches back, wanting a rivet gun, Spike seems frozen. Jet notices Spike's LEFT EYE, the PUPIL expanding and contracting, out of control.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I could see that the dreams weren't just at night. Whatever he saw, it was in that eye. All the time.

- Spike wails on the punching bag. SWISH PAN TO: JET on the video-phone with the DOCTOR.

JET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Doc had a theory. He said Spike's brain had re-wired itself around that microchip.

INT. BEBOP - STARBOARD CORRIDOR - THE PRESENT

JET
The part that transfers short term memories to long term.

FAYE

The hippocampus.

JET

Whatever. It formed new connections to the chip. Spike wasn't dreaming. He was literally seeing the past. Still is. All the time.

(a beat)

He's got one eye looking forward... one eye looking back.

EXT. DEEP SPACE

As the Bebop passes, listing like a ship taking on water, we see flashing lights in the distance. A sign reads, next services: 1.6 Million Miles. Then, out of nowhere, there appears:

The "LITTLE JUPITER TRUCK STOP," a massive floating piece of kitsch, with bright billboards and tickers advertising showers, repairs, fuel, and an "All-U-Can-Eat Buffet."

Suddenly, shooting past the BEBOP are giant OIL TANKERS, covered with bumper stickers and the flags of different outposts. We hear the murmur of CBs.

JET (V.O.)

Breaker, breaker, can I get a 10-13 between the Rocks and Big Red?

CB VOICE

Solar flares and comet dust. But not a Smokey from here to the Wasteland.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

JET

(on the CB)

10-4. 'Preciate it.

As he turns, he's got MCFADDEN on a video monitor.

JET (CONT'D)

Fad, I been working with him nine years... and, yeah, sure, we've bent the rules bringing in a few guys, but -

MCFADDEN

(on the monitor)

It's coming from over my head, Jet. Our sources say he's a Red Dragon, pretty much as high up the chain as they go.

JET

Who's financing that reward?

MCFADDEN

Beats me. All I know is it's high priority. You must have seen all of the other Dragons in Big Shot. ISSP considers them a priority.

JET

Yeah, but Spike hasn't gone near them.

MCFADDEN

Everybody's got a history, Jet, and it *always* catches up to 'em.

As he signs off, Jet's startled to see Spike in the doorway.

JET

(covering up)

There's a mechanic at the truck stop. We need to seal that breach.

Spike studies the truck stop out the window. It's surrounded by a network of loading docks and rigs.

SPIKE

You don't figure they have a bounty drop here, do you?

Jet's head whips around, stung by the comment.

JET

No, there's no place to turn in a bounty. In fact, cowboys aren't too welcome around here.

SPIKE

Tough break.

JET

You were on your last breath when I found you. And now here I am, hauling you across The System with a hole in my ship. I deserve better.

SPIKE

Four-hundred mil might buy you a decent ride.

JET

Get out of here before you piss me off.

Spike hovers in the doorway.

SPIKE

Whatever you're planning, these mechanics better be fast. It won't take long before word gets around.

JET

They'll work as fast as you eat.

SPIKE

They have a diner?

JET

With a Breakfast Special.

INT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - "LITTLE JUPITER" - CONTINUOUS

With glowing batons, men in space-suits lead the Bebop into the dock. Repairs are being done all around, with the panorama of open space beyond them.

INT. BEBOP - CARGO BAY

Through the hatch, they enter a tunnel. Jet talks to the MECHANIC through a window, separating them from the depressurized area.

JET

Patch her up. Check the heat shields. Maybe the left thruster could use a look, too.

MECHANIC

Cash or credit?

Jet groans and puts a credit card into a sliding drawer. The Mechanic shines an INFRARED LIGHT onto it. Like a genie, Jet's hologram rises off it, to protect against identity fraud.

JET

Going to max this one out, too.

INT. DINER - "LITTLE JUPITER" - MOMENTS LATER

The 1950s-theme diner has survived deep into the future, despite only a vague recollection of it now. Beyond the jukeboxes, pie rotisseries, and checkerboard floor, this diner has an added touch.

The WAITERS and HOSTESSES are the 3-D projections of real 1950s actors, assembled from film archives.

MARILYN MONROE (from "The Seven Year Itch") winks at them as she passes, JAMES DEAN (from "Giant") leans against the wall, while JOHN WAYNE (from "The Searchers") talks to truckers in the corner.

TRUCKER

Where's that side of bacon I ordered?

JOHN WAYNE

"We'll find 'em in the end, I promise you. We'll find 'em. Just as sure as the turnin' of the earth."

Their HOSTESS is DORIS DAY from "Pillow Talk."

JET

You got room for two?

DORIS DAY

"This may come as a surprise to you, but there are some men who don't end every sentence with a proposition."

JET

We'll sit at the counter.

INT. DINER - AT THE COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

Jet and Spike sit nervously. There's nothing unusual to them about the PROJECTIONS roaming around. Spike is more suspicious of the truckers slumped along the bar.

Across from them is a PIE ROTISSERIE and a CONVEYOR BELT upon which each meal glides past, encased in glass.

SPIKE

Faye's not hungry?

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

With her journal in her lap, Faye perches on the bench and glowers at JULIA'S HOLOGRAM. Another computer scrolls through everything she can find in the public records.

ON FAYE'S JOURNAL - IN HER LAP

She's written: "Dear Spike, *HOW DARE YOU*. I am so disappointed that you would - " and **CROSSED IT OUT**.

Below begins her calm research: "JULIA. 36. Last seen: Mars. Syndicate Communications Analyst. Served 2 YRS in Ceres on HACKING charges." Her pen taps anxiously for a moment, as she studies something new.

ON THE COMPUTER

A picture, from twelve years ago. At a fund-raiser on Mars, Julia stands arm-in-arm with a younger VICIOUS. But she's looking over at someone else, just off the edge of the frame. Whoever it is, there's undeniable longing in her face.

Faye *magnifies* the picture, until she can see just the sliver of the other person - a sleeve, a collar, some shaggy hair, the edge of a face. It's *Spike*.

FAYE

(quietly)

What the hell do they see in you?

INT. DINER - AT THE COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

Spike and Jet sit in total silence at the counter, watching meals glide by on the conveyor.

JET

Maybe we'll... bring her back a salad or something.

Suddenly, a heavy FEMALE TRUCKER begins yelling at them from across the counter island, on the other side of the revolving pies. She's V.T. (40s).

V.T.

Anybody smell trash? I sure do.

Spike and Jet just glance at each other.

The waitress (MARILYN MONROE) comes over and nods to Jet.

MARILYN

"Hey, did you ever try dunking a potato chip in champagne?"

JET

Just coffee for me.

SPIKE

And the breakfast special.

As she trails off...

V.T.

Nobody else smells it? It's the smell of garbage! Low-class.

Spike and Jet finally realize she's talking to them, and they just stare back across the conveyor, nonplussed.

V.T. (CONT'D)

Everywhere you look, it's *cowboys*.
More damn bounty hunters. Sucking up
the air. Why don't y'all get a real
goddamn job?

Spike and Jet aren't going to dignify it with a response.
They just grab a METAL COFFEE POT it comes down the belt.

V.T. (CONT'D)

There's three things I hate!
(counting fingers)
Dirt, bounty hunters, and *dirty bounty*
hunters.

JET

Lady, nobody is talking to you.

SPIKE

Maybe we should get a booth.

Jet turns and looks for the waitress, but MARILYN is
standing in place with a breeze blowing up her skirt.

JET

Looks like our waitress is
malfunctioning.

V.T.

This place used to be for *families*.
Colonists, settlers. Now it's nothing
but bottom-feeders like y'all.

Spike's face quickly goes from indifference to *concern*.

SPIKE

(to the lady)
Who else?

V.T.

Huh?

SPIKE

What other bottom feeders? Who else
did you see?

As she stammers, Spike glimpses MOVEMENT reflected in the
silver coffee pot.

He grabs Jet and rolls over the top of the counter, just
as *bullets fly* from behind them, blowing apart the coffee
pot, and shattering two plates like *clay pigeons*.

REVERSE ON:

DOZENS OF GUNMEN fire *through the holograms of the 50s*, which continue their algorithmic routines. The truckers drop around the counter stools and under tables.

BEHIND THE COUNTER: Spike draws his pistol. Bullets shriek overhead, blowing up the pie rotisserie, ricocheting off pans in the kitchen.

Spike waits for a lull. Then, as plates continue to pass overhead on the CONVEYOR BELT, he reaches up and grabs some BACON, eating.

ON THE TRUCKERS: As the shootout intensifies, most escape across the diner. But V.T. stays in a crouch beside the stools, muttering to herself.

JET: reloads below the counter. Suddenly, a SHOT rips through the barrier and punctures *through his leg*,

JET

Ahhhh... *hell*.

Furious, Spike rises up and fires rapid shots, taking down three shooters spaced out across the room.

As he drops back, A GUNMAN LEAPS OVER THE COUNTER. Spike raises his pistol, about to fire, but he sees -

IN HIS EYE: a younger version of the SAME GUNMAN.

Spike pauses on the trigger. The gunman is SHIN (from the Syndicate meeting), equally as stunned to see Spike.

SPIKE

Shin?

SHIN

You really are alive.

Someone leaps over the counter and SHIN *fires* right past Spike's face, killing the BOUNTY HUNTER. Spike winces as a spray of gunpowder burns his cheek. His ear rings.

JET drags himself toward the short-order kitchen.

SHIN (CONT'D)

I don't know how you got into the database, but all we had to do is follow the Bounty Hunters to you.

SPIKE

Who sent you? Vicious?

SHIN

No. Mao. I was supposed to see if it was true.

SHIN (CONT'D)

They had footage of you - but some people said it was doctored. Just a ploy to slow down Vicious.

SPIKE

So he's taken over?

SHIN

The council won't approve him if you're still alive, Spike.

SPIKE

He'll just kill them.

SHIN

Then he'll never unite the entire Syndicate. They'll be fighting a civil war for years. He wants to take back the lost territory... to go after the Russians.

SPIKE

And Mao?

They point their guns in opposite directions, holding off the onslaught as more gunmen reach the island.

JET: finds an apron and cinches it around his leg as a tourniquet.

V.T.: cowers on the ground beneath her stool.

SHIN

He hasn't got long. He's sick. He prayed that you were still alive, but...

They stop another wave of kamikazes leaping over.

SPIKE

But the news will kill him either way.

SHIN

Why, Spike? Why d'you just vanish? It's always been your destiny to take over.

Slowly, more BOUNTY HUNTERS move in, surrounding them.

SPIKE

That's the thing about destiny...

He fires fast shots, forcing a them to retreat.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

It doesn't give you any room to breathe.

Worried, Shin nods to this...

SHIN

I'll guard your escape.

As SHIN fires through the counter, into the knees of all the approaching bounty hunters... Spike grabs Jet and helps him to his feet.

On their way out, they see V.T. hiding among the stools.

SPIKE

Come on, lady. I'm starting to hate Bounty Hunters as much as you do.

With no choice, she rises up and hustles away beside Spike and Jet. They pass JOHN WAYNE, stuck in a three-second loop of gunfighting.

INT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

They part ways in the loading tunnel, V.T. stomping off toward her rig.

SPIKE

You're welcome.

V.T.

If you expect a "thank you" for that disaster...

(out of breath)

...then you weren't raised right.

Spike helps Jet into the BEBOP, then pauses, thinking about what she just said.

SPIKE

She's got a point.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN/BRIDGE - TRACKING SHOT

Ein whimpers at the sight of Jet's blood. As Spike helps him inside, Faye rises, stunned.

SPIKE

Don't just stand there... help him.

While Spike closes up the hatch, Faye leaps up and helps Jet across the Bebop and into the Captain's seat in the Bridge. Jet grimaces, getting on the P.A. with the mechanics.

JET

Guys, we're in a hurry. Better tighten those lugnuts and set us loose.

EXT. BEBOP - MECHANIC'S BAY - CONTINUOUS

As the engine starts, the MECHANICS scramble away from the lowering hydraulic lifts, pulling off hoses and closing panels in a mad dash.

INT. DINER - "LITTLE JUPITER"

SHIN stands up and bullets rip through him.

INT. LOADING TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Twenty bounty hunters rush down the tunnel after them.

INT. BEBOP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jet can see the bounty hunters on the monitors.

JET

I can't move my leg, Faye.

The dog tilts his head, listening. Bounty hunters begin to crawl onto the exterior of the Bebop.

FAYE

Do you want me to fly the ship?

JET

No.

FAYE

I can fly the ship, Jet.

JET

No.

FAYE

You could be *dying* and you wouldn't let me help you.

JET

Because it's *my* ship.

With one hand, Jet takes controls. In agony he tries to straighten his leg. Ein whimpers in sympathy.

Finally, frustrated, Faye straightens his leg *for him*. Jet turns pale, as his foot hits the gas...

...launching the ship, breaking it loose from the pressurized LOADING TUNNEL.

As the *Bebop* rips free, bounty hunters cling to the outside of it.

A BOUNTY HUNTER: tumbles into open space *without a suit*.

It's a desperate way to die. Saliva boils on his tongue due to "ebullism" (in which a drastic drop of pressure causes bodily fluids to boil.) Next, he freezes; then he cooks, his skin changing color in the extreme ultraviolet rays, as he drifts off motionless toward the sun.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jet has gone ashen with pain, a single droplet of sweat running down the side of his face.

Just outside the windows... he recognizes the BOUNTY HUNTER as he tumbles past the window outside.

JET

Ah, hell. There's Andy.

(a beat)

Remind me to send flowers to his mother.

Spike enters and tosses Jet a BOTTLE. Jet catches it and nods. He unscrews the top and takes a swig.

JET (CONT'D)

(wincing)

Wow, that's some *strong* hooch. Where'd you pick that up?

SPIKE

It's *disinfectant*. For your leg.

Jet nods, thinks about it, then takes another swig.

Faye scans the radar and sees DOZENS of blinking lights - BOUNTY HUNTER SHIPS, coming off the docks and closing in.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

They're everywhere out there.

JET

There's three-hundred thousand registered bounty hunters... and we got every *high-roller* on us now. If I can't get you to Mars, I'm sorry.

Spike gazes out the window at a *ring* of debris in the distance, glowing with sunlight.

JET (CONT'D)

We had one hell of a run, though. Didn't we?

FAYE

Jet. Up ahead.

EXT. WASTELAND SECTOR - CONTINUOUS

It's the equivalent of a *land-fill* in deep space. For thousands of miles, tons upon tons of dense human trash clings together with its own cumulative gravity: metal, oil drums, bottles, cans, discarded Porto-Johns and the wreckage of lost ships.

SPIKE (V.O.)

The wasteland.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

JET

The *Bebop's* pretty nicked up. I don't know....

Jet's clearly more worried about his ship, as he glances at the radar. A million pieces of junk flash on the screen, making the instruments useless.

Suddenly, a tire *thunks* off the window at high speed. Jet glances past the first sparse wave of trash, to see:

FIFTEEN BOUNTY HUNTER SHIPS, pursuing them along a shaft of sunlight. He looks out the other window and sees:

EXT. BEBOP - THE WASTELAND - CONTINUOUS

TRASH, growing denser, as far as the eye can see.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jet is talking quietly, sweating at the controls.

JET

Come on, honey. Going to be okay.

Jet pats the controls.

JET (CONT'D)

Just *hold* together. I won't ask *another* thing.

E/I. WASTELAND - INTERCUTTING IN AND OUT OF "THE BEBOP"

Plexiglas, heat-shields, engine manifolds. The mess thickens as they go deeper. The ship burrows through *millions* of plastic bottles, clumped together loosely.

FAYE

Doesn't anybody recycle around here?

Next comes the bilge from the septic tanks of CONVOY TRUCKS. The murky liquid splatters against the Bebop.

JET

You're both washing that off.

They emerge from the sewage into a field of old ship frames, spent canisters and fuel rods, thudding off them. A lone COUCH tumbles past.

SPIKE

Now who would throw away a perfectly good couch like that?

Suddenly, a CANNON FIRES from nearby and the COUCH shatters into pieces, twirling off. A BOUNTY HUNTER SHIP is following them into the wreckage.

JET

Junkyard dogs.

SPIKE

There's one at 6 o'clock.

ANOTHER dips into view, firing, shattering the solar panels of old ships passing between them.

JET

Get to the tailguns. And careful: any one of these pieces of junk could slice right through us.

ON SPIKE: He gets to the gun turret just as - *SPLOTCH* - something *black and sticky* covers his view.

ON FAYE: She winces, as more dark blotches hit the windshield, covering her view.

JET (CONT'D)

We're hitting an oil slick!

EXT. WASTELAND - CONTINUOUS

Millions of oil droplets float in viscous balls, forming a black cloud in space.

They stick onto the Bebop, tarring it. The other Bounty Hunter ships pull back, as the BEBOP heads into the thickest portion of the spill.

INT. BEBOP - INTERCUTTING BETWEEN TURRET AND BRIDGE

It's silent, like in a submarine deep underwater. They push through dense oil, all visibility gone, the radar cluttered with lights.

JET

(calling)

They might not follow us in here!

ON SPIKE: The turret is covered with oil now. He watches it ooze around him in lava-lamp patterns.

SPIKE

Why not?

JET

Because not too many people are as *stupid* as us.

SPIKE

Don't relax. They'll find us when we come out the other side.

JET (O.S.)

Don't worry. I'm *not* relaxed.

Blind and without instruments, Jet begins tuning through frequencies on the CB. First he hears Russian: *Ya ne znayoo, Ya ne znayoo.*

JET (CONT'D)

Russians.

He moves the dial slightly, picking up Arabic with an African accent, mixed with "Garre."

JET (CONT'D)

And Somalis.

The frequency blurs over, until he hears furious Spanish: *No podemos ver en esta mierda!*

JET (CONT'D)

And the Columbians. None of them can see us.

Suddenly, Ein begins to growl at the instrument panel.

Jet turns and sees A HUGE BEEPING LIGHT on the radar, pushing through other small dots. It's *ten times the size of the other bounty hunter ships*, and it appears to be eating through the smaller blips on the screen.

JET (CONT'D)

What in the name of...?

ON SPIKE: The oil begins wiggling with gravity on the Plexiglas around him. He can feel the *rumble* of something massive out there.

SPIKE

Jet? Hey, Jet? What's *that*?

JET (O.S.)

I don't know! I've never seen anything so big!

ON THE RADAR SCREEN: The new BEACON takes up almost the entire MONITOR, as it approaches the flashing *light* representing the Bebop.

JET (CONT'D)

It's coming for us. Strap in!

FAYE

What is it?

JET

It's...

Jet's mouth falls open. He's astonished at the size of it - as some kind of powerful *suction* begins to pull the oil off the windows around him. Jet's mouth drops open as he sees:

A GARBAGE SWEEPER

It's a gigantic *scow*, with a vacuum mouth that recovers lost oil by *sucking up trash* into filters like baleen.

Car-frames, bottles, trash bags, they all net in the filters as the oil pours through.

In a disorienting sweep, like the ocean churning beneath a massive wave -

THE BEBOP is sucked right into its jaws, ripping through the filters, and tumbling with the swallowed trash down into hull.

CUT TO:

DARKNESS

Like a single match, a search light flares up on the outside of the BEBOP. It's swamped inside of -

INT. GARBAGE SWEEPER - CONTINUOUS

Within the ribbed hull, The Bebop floats in a river of reclaimed oil, amid wreckage from across the solar system.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

SPIKE

Garbage sweeper. Sifting through the wasteland. Selling the oil.

Jet sighs, relieved.

JET

Wonder if this scavenger even *knows* we're in here.

He flips on monitors, checking the readings of the ship. Suddenly a face comes onto the video screen:

V.T. - the bigoted trucker the *Little Jupiter*.

V.T.

Comfortable back there?

Jet and Spike look at each other, surprised.

V.T. (CONT'D)

I can give you a lift to Mars' orbit, but that's as far as I go.

JET

(smiling)

That'll do just fine, ma'am.

Spike steps forward, eyeing her in the monitor.

SPIKE

Thank you. We're... much obliged.

EXT. WASTELAND - SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The enormous GARBAGE SWEEPER breaks out of the oil spill, smashing past tumbling debris. All around are trolling BOUNTY HUNTER SHIPS, but the sweeper passes...

...unnoticed.

INT. ASTRAL GATES - CONTINUOUS

The glowing gates flicker past, as a LUXURY SHIP travels at massive speed, a *security* convoy around it. We drift through the ship's tinted window, onto:

VICIOUS

scanning through the BIG SHOT DATABASE, smiling as he comes across Spike's WANTED HOLOGRAM.

He flips ahead, and comes upon Julia. He's amused by the sight of her.

VICIOUS
(to his attendants)
That picture is ten years old.

After a beeping sound, Vicious activates a MONITOR for the ship's phone. Onto the screen comes UDAI TAXIM.

UDAI
Sir? The deadline's passed for the Russians. Still no word.
(a long pause)
Should we give them an extension?

Vicious thinks for just a moment, then rises to see the astral gates passing outside.

VICIOUS
No.

EXT. TITAN

A small, hazy moon, with Jupiter beyond it.

VICIOUS (V.O.)
It's time.

OUR POV passes through a DENSE CONVOY of oil tankers and work trucks, armadas of floating refineries, oil drums, and transfer stations.

As the moon revolves into daylight, we see that it's LITTERED WITH DERRICKS, so big they can be seen from space.

Around the horizon floats a single DRONE. There's GRAFFITI on its side: "FOR ASIMOV, '49 - '89."

INT. DRONE - CONTINUOUS

It's wired with all of the SAME EXPLOSIVES that we saw with Asimov, but in exponentially larger quantities.

UDAI (V.O.)
Stay on the line. Orbiting the target, ten seconds to daylight.

Thousands of police sirens orbit the planet.

The COMPUTERS receive a message, and slow the drone's orbit, dipping toward Titan, beginning into the atmosphere... the fumes of methane gas like a fog.

UDAI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Descending into range.

FROM BELOW

On the surface of Titan, thousands of OIL WORKERS labor in protective suits around lakes of pure crude. It's pumped and scooped into loaders - a conveyor reaching straight up into the sky.

The sky rains liquid methane.

A few workers look up at a rare sight. A ship cutting a hard jet trail across the orange sky.

VICIOUS (V.O.)
Now.

THE DRONE *detonates.*

FLAMES spread out across the sky, catching the methane in the atmosphere. Within seconds, the expelled fluorine reacts with it, forming a massive, expanding cloud of smoke. The raining methane becomes a storm of fire.

FROM SPACE

The fire spreads out across the entire moon, swallowing the oil fields, rising upward.

ON THE SURFACE

Fire overwhelms everything: derricks, stations, mountain ranges, lakes of oil.

FROM SPACE

THE POLICE CRUISERS in the atmosphere are incinerated. Titan lights up like the birth of a new star, as a few straggling OIL TANKERS gust past, their payloads bursting.

INT. SPACE CRUISER - AT HYPERSPEED - CONTINUOUS

Vicious watches the grainy image on a MONITOR, freezing and skipping as it travels long distances.

On the other screen, UDAI TAXIM looks scared for the first time.

The moon smolders, and goes dark on the monitor.

VICIOUS
That's it. Lights out.

EXT. SPACE - GARBAGE SWEEPER - HOURS LATER

With Mars in the distance, the hulking, oil-slathered ship drifts ahead.

RADIO (V.O.)
*This is a ISBC One. Good morning.
Our top story: an act of industrial
sabotage has shut down oil production
on Titan. Workers on all platforms
are believed dead...*

MOVING IN SLOWLY, we pass through the hull.

INT. SCOW - THE BEBOP - CONTINUOUS

The BEBOP sits crookedly on a shore of oil and trash. Echoing from inside is the sound of restored Robert Johnson, overwhelming the news broadcast.

INT. BEBOP - SPIKE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Spike hears the news as he's working out, but he can barely decipher it over Jet's music.

RADIO (V.O.)
*...after a device detonated in the
methane atmosphere. This leaves only
earth's ARCTIC OIL FIELDS in
operation....*

INT. BEBOP - KITCHEN

Leaning on a crutch, Jet's cooking the last batch of frozen bell peppers... as he drowns his pain with loud blues. Limping to the refrigerator, he has a stab of pain and drops his spatula.

FAYE (O.S.)
Turn that ancient shit off!

On the ground, Ein begins licking it up.

Faye storms in and shuts off his music, turning up the radio.

RADIO (V.O.)

In a trading frenzy today, the Mars Industrial Average was off over 50,000 points, with oil skyrocketing to over a million a barrel.

Jet just stares ahead, appalled.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone meets in the central area.

JET

If we land anywhere, there's no guarantee we got enough fuel to get back off again... not at these prices.

(a beat)

We'll need the full bounty on the blonde just to fill the tank.

Faye paces, her face skeptical.

SPIKE

I've got a half-a-tank left in the Swordfish, and -

FAYE

He's not going after any bounty.

(a beat)

Why don't you tell him, Spike?

SPIKE

Tell him what, Faye?

FAYE

She was Vicious' girl, but she fell for you. The poor idiot. Maybe you're both in the system to make sure you never have some kind of devil spawn children.

SPIKE

(angry)

I've made you both a lot of money these past years.

FAYE

So after all this, all we've been through, you're going to run off with her, and just... wait out the end of the world with some *fantasy*. You're going to leave us with an empty tank, a starving mutt, and a cripple!

JET

Easy, Faye.

Spike gets up and walks away, toward his cabin.

FAYE

I'm telling you something, Spiegel!
Either you bring the bitch in, or I
will.

EXT. MARS ORBIT - MOMENTS LATER

It's hub for all interplanetary travel. Space-ports float past, swarmed by SHUTTLES full of commuters. Billboards litter the sky above the planet, flickering with ads for casinos, colonies, and pharmaceuticals.

Out of an ASTRAL GATE emerges the GARBAGE SWEEPER. A NOZZLE OPENS, *spitting out* THE BEBOP, slathered with oil.

INT. BEBOP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jet crutches his way up the mesh stairs and into the room, where VT on the video phone monitor.

JET

Thanks VT. You ever get a speeding ticket, you go ahead and tell 'em you know Jet Black.

V.T.

Oh, don't worry about me. I've been watching oil prices go up all day. I'm a rich woman now.

INT. BEBOP - SPIKE'S CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Spike lies on his back in his bunk, staring upward. In his window, he notices the SIRENS of passing Police Cruisers. He doesn't look over as Faye comes into his doorway, her face lit by the flashing red lights.

FAYE

You know the story of Poker Alice?

There's something conciliatory in her tone.

SPIKE

Nope.

FAYE

Nobody knows how old she really is. She was in a cryogenic freeze bank, one of a million unclaimed stiffs.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Maybe she was even born on earth,
parents put her in before the
Destruction. One of those years when
that was trendy.

Spike squints. He's curious, despite himself.

FAYE (CONT'D)

One day, a man came and thawed her
out. An old man, said he married her
fifty years before. It's ninety-mil
just to bring somebody out of deep
freeze - plus, he had debts of his
own. Another hundred-five. He was a
gambler, and not much of one.

(a deep breath)

Well, they had their reunion. Only
problem was... Alice never remembered
anything from before she was frozen.

Spike watches more and more traffic in the window.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Turns out... he was never her husband
at all. He just transferred his debts
to her... and disappeared. Slipped
off into the casino crowd.

SPIKE

That's where you worked. It's where I
met you.

FAYE

She worked a few years, dealing off
the bottom of the deck. Whoever she'd
been in a previous life, she was good
with her hands. And so she starting
chipping away at the debt, day by day.

Spike finally rises up and faces her.

SPIKE

Until she made off with millions in
casino money. It's you. I didn't
know, Faye. I didn't know that.

FAYE

Just as well we never talk about the
past. But at least you have one.

He stands and walks to the window, concerned by the
droves of flashing POLICE SIRENS.

SPIKE

I've never seen heat like this.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jet sees that they're moving into oncoming traffic and he pulls them away from it, wincing in pain.

As Spike enters, he sees LUXURY SHUTTLES moving side by side with police escorts.

SPIKE

Mobsters and cops, side by side.

JET

Maybe there's a fight at the garden.

Spike sees a few ARMORED LIMOUSINE SHIPS sail past in massive security convoys.

SPIKE

Every mob boss in the System, with his own security force.

(a beat)

It's an emergency summit.

EXT. MARS - ORBIT - CONTINUOUS

The Bebop, slimed with oil, unidentifiable, passes through HUNDREDS of SECURITY CONVOYS, ranging from the hazy top layers of Mars to miles of open space above. As they round the dark horizon, they see:

"THE PERCIVAL LOWELL HOTEL AND CASINO"

High in orbit, it's made to look like a spinning ROULETTE WHEEL.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jet is frantically searching through several computers.

JET

Look, I need to get the ship fixed up. There's no way we survive any re-entry with that hole, and...

Spike stares meditatively out the window.

JET (CONT'D)

I can get us into the casino's body shop, and nobody will know you're there.

Jet HACKS into the CASINO'S WEBSITE on his central computer... scrolling through the mechanic's schedule.

JET (CONT'D)

There's one hell of a line. Maybe I can cheat us up front. Lot of fancy ships, that's for sure.

Spike begins to get curious.

JET (CONT'D)

God, just look at some of the reservations in this place. The master suite is going for three-times its normal price.

Suddenly, there's a BEEPING on Jet's panel, with a message: "REQUEST TO BOARD."

JET (CONT'D)

Ah, hell - are you *kidding* me?

Two POLICE CRUISERS have pulled up alongside them. Jet changes frequencies on his transmitter.

JET (CONT'D)

Listen... we have got a significant hull breach, and we're docking for emergency repairs.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)

You have been selected for a random security search.

JET

Contact ISSP Deputy *McFadden* - and he'll clear us.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)

If you would like to speak to an operator, say 'operator.'

JET

Operator! You damn robot.

EXT. VALET PARKING PORT - LOWELL HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

There's a long line of vessels waiting for the open dock. The BEBOP moves parallel to the structure of the casino. Glass elevators glide past, like monorails along the surface. Then the BEBOP cuts into:

INT. SERVICE ENTRANCE - LOWELL CASINO - CONTINUOUS

It lands amid the chaos of a post-modern bazaar. Food ships unload LOBSTER TANKS, BANANA CLUSTERS, and OSTRICHES. Spice dealers haggle with reps from the casino. ARMORED SHUTTLES unload currency and gold.

Movers trundle past workout equipment and faux-Grecian sculptures.

But CASINO SECURITY still notices the unauthorized ship, covered with grime.

INT. BEBOP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jet, Ein, Faye and Spike hover in the dim bridge, watching as SECURITY surrounds them, wincing at the smell of the ship. One GUARD gestures, speaking into a microphone, his voice broadcast onto their speakers.

GUARD (V.O.)

Nah, nah, pal, you're all messed up.
This is the service entrance here.
You got to back it out and head all
the way around.

Faye goes through his computer.

FAYE

The Red Dragons are here: they've got
an entire wing. They're meeting with
the Big Four. Every other crime
family out to Saturn. Mao Yenrai
himself...

Spike looks at her, struck. She studies his face.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Will she be here, Spike?

SPIKE

I need to get inside.

JET

I don't think that's a good idea.

SPIKE

I have to.

Jet looks over at Faye for answers.

FAYE

You heard the man. He needs to get
inside. Destiny calls!

JET

Well, there's no way through security.
You're a wanted man and there's every
crooked cop and mob boss in the System
in there.

GUARD (V.O.)

Moron! This is a restricted area.

Faye steps forward to the window, where she sees DOZENS OF SECURITY GUARDS approaching the ship, annoyed.

FAYE
Tell them you want the head of security.

Jet frowns at her, confused by her resolute tone.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Tell him you're *casino* bounty hunters.
(a long beat)
And you're bringing in *Poker Alice*.

She turns and winks at Spike.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Don't say I never did anything for you.

EXT. ORBITTING CASINO - MOMENTS LATER

Spike has FAYE handcuffed to him, as they ride the elevator, open space beyond the glass.

FAYE
Kind of nice being cuffed together for once, huh?

SPIKE
Try to stick to the plan.

The elevator heads upward, to the casino floor.

FAYE
I get butterflies every time I'm back.

GLASS DOORS slide open onto:

INT. CASINO - CONTINUOUS

It's decked out like a tropical garden, a waterfall in the center. Birds of Paradise and banana trees thrive under halogen lights. Gamblers are everywhere, their slots clattering beneath the gentle sound of a piano bar.

SECURITY GUARDS meet the elevator, surrounding them...

As soon as they step out, FAYE'S FACE freezes into a photograph.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SECURITY CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Her picture is on the largest screen, analyzed by the entire NERVE CENTER of SECURITY GUARDS.

ANALYST

It's her, all right. "Poker" Alice. '77 through '79 she embezzled over nine-mil altogether. Wanted by the CHIPPEWA CASINO off Io, and three more in the inner system, counting into decks and running scams.

Pan across the multitude of SECURITY MONITORS to:

MAO YENRAI, moving with an entourage down a corridor.

INT. CASINO FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Faye remains cuffed to Spike.

SPIKE

I don't give her up until I see my reward.

The guards come forward and frisk Spike, taking away four pistols and two grenades.

GUARD

There's a no weapons policy in this casino, bro. Everything's tasers here. It's the safest four square miles in the Solar System.

SPIKE

That's what I hear. You guys must be getting pretty soft.

Secretly, Faye pulls loose the handcuffs between them: they weren't locked.

GUARD

(smiling)

Nah, we go through refresher courses every twooo --

SMASH! Faye kicks him in the mouth.

Faye and Spike break apart and unleash a barrage of spinning kicks and disabling punches, cutting a path through the bewildered guards.

As Spike knocks one guard unconscious, Faye steals his TASER and zaps two others, dropping them like sacks.

Within moments, they've immobilized an entire UNIT.

SPIKE

I don't know how long I'll need.

FAYE

Take your time. I know my way around.

As he drifts away, she glances up at a SECURITY CAMERA.

Moving away down an aisle of slot machines, she pauses. She drops a COIN into one and pulls the hammer. As the wheels spin, *she tases the slot machine...* with perfect timing, so that it short-circuits and stops on the THREE LEMONS in a row.

She pockets her winnings and takes off through the crowd.

INT. SUITE - CASINO - CONTINUOUS

With the pocked red surface of Mars in the window, MAO YENRAI is on the phone in a plush suede chair, attended by bodyguards, nurses, and a personal physician.

EXT. CORRIDOR - CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Outside, four more rough-looking BODYGUARDS cover his room, bantering about *black jack odds*.

Suddenly, *Spike* appears around the corner. All four draw guns, pulling back the hammers.

SPIKE

Thought there were no guns allowed in here.

Spike just stands, hands raised slightly, waiting.

One by one, we see the expressions of the guards change, from murderous to *shocked*. The TEAM LEADER lowers his gun.

The YOUNGEST still has his gun raised, perplexed by the behavior of the older three.

YOUNGEST GUARD

What? What's the matter? What are you doing?

LEAD GUARD

Spike.

SPIKE

Sun. You put on some weight.

The guard nods. Spike points to the jittery younger guard, aiming his gun, on the verge of firing.

SPIKE (CONT'D)
That's not Jimmy Flowers' kid?

LEAD GUARD
Yeah, put your gun down, sport. This
guy here goes way back.

INT. SUITE - CASINO - CONTINUOUS

The doors open, and in comes Spike, attended by guards.

Mao Yenrai is in the midst of an oxygen treatment, and it takes him a moment to look up. When he does, his eyes widen, and there's a smile inside the steaming face mask.

He takes it off, and regards Spike for a long time.

MAO YENRAI
You look like a common thief.

SPIKE
That's funny. I stopped stealing a
long time ago.

MAO YENRAI
We buried you, Spike. When I heard
you might be alive out there, I was so
hopeful.

(a breath of oxygen)
I didn't imagine that the grief would
be just as bad. Why did you hide from
us for so long?

A FLASH IN SPIKE'S EYE: It's a training session between two children - SPIKE and VICIOUS - battling with Kendo sticks, as Mao stands by.

Spike sits down, shame-faced, unable to answer.

MAO YENRAI (CONT'D)
What happened to your eye?

SPIKE
How can you tell?

MAO YENRAI
It's seeing something else.

SPIKE
Just... memories. Old memories.

MAO YENRAI
You were the one who understood our
traditions... our code of honor. It's
painful to see you like this.

SPIKE

Like *what*? I've had more "honor" in the past nine years than in all my life before it.

Worried, Mao eyes the guards around the room, respectfully out of earshot. He takes off his mask.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

There's nothing special about shaking down merchants.

MAO YENRAI

You both were supposed to learn the business from the ground up. So you saw all of its ugliness, all of its hypocrisy.

SPIKE

That's right.

MAO YENRAI

It made you a cynic. It made *him* a monster.

(thinking)

I changed when you died. I saw that it was time for the Syndicate to wash the blood off its hands. I understood what we were. No matter how unsavory, we *kept an order*. And I saw that all that power could become something of real use. I financed the terra-forming of the southern pole. I built schools and churches in orbit. I started the hospital in the rocks, for the miners. But none of it will come of anything now...

(a beat)

Mankind *will not survive* another crime war, Spike. When the earth fought over its last resources, it was only colonization that saved us. Vicious has brought us right to the brink again.

SPIKE

I know.

MAO YENRAI

He's commanding a small splinter army - but they're growing in strength and numbers. He's betting that he can use the oil reserves on earth to survive. If and when Titan production can be restored, he'll control it exclusively. He's taken all of us hostage, Spike. Everyone alive.

MAO YENRAI (CONT'D)

(a beat)

If you had stayed...

Spike grimaces and walks away. There's too much accusation and guilt in his father's voice.

SPIKE

I couldn't stay. My life was over.

MAO YENRAI

But you came back, Spike. You came home.

SPIKE

I came back to find Julia.

Mao's face drops. He's disappointed, and needs to recover before going on.

MAO YENRAI

She isn't anything that you remember. That life, whatever you think it would have been - it's gone.

SPIKE

I need to know that.

MAO YENRAI

The Four Families are here for a crisis summit. Everyone has to work together - there's no other way. This is between *light* and darkness now.

(a beat)

I'm an old man, Spike - and I can't win this war against Vicious.

Spike is shaking as he looks out at Mars.

SPIKE

If my loyalists know you're alive, they will fight for you until the end. You are the rightful heir. It will give them hope. But to think they'll be fighting for nothing. A *name*.

IN SPIKE'S EYE: MAO YENRAI rapidly grows younger. The wrinkles smooth out of his face; his hair thickens. His eye brighten and shine.

MAO YENRAI (V.O.)

A *memory*.

Now in his 40s, Mao stands out of his chair into a vast space that's transformed into a TRAINING ROOM.

MAO YENRAI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A *child they knew. With promise.*

ROTATE AROUND MAO to VICIOUS (8) and SPIKE (9), forced to spar in the middle of the open space, a mix of Jiu Jitsu and Thai Boxing. Spike is more skilled; but Vicious is a charging bull.

Vicious spins for a series of TORNADO KICKS. Upon each revolution, he's FIVE YEARS OLDER, until, after a last pivot....

I/E. DEEP SPACE MERCHANT VESSEL - IN TOTAL SILENCE

...Vicious whirls around and kicks the face of a TRAVELING MERCHANT.

Neptune's moons are clear in the distance, with ice volcanoes erupting. Drifting past, the COLLECTIONS SHIP moves parallel to the Merchant Ship. We can see JULIA in the control window, staring out across empty space.

Everything is in PURE SILENCE: just images stored in Spike's brain.

Along the hallway, the CREW OF THE SHIP lies face-down on the ground, guarded by a younger ASIMOV SOLESAN.

Two women beg for mercy at Vicious' knees, but he kicks them out of the way, following a trail of blood past a dead body... to a TEENAGE BOY duct-taped into a chair.

The women are sobbing to Spike now, getting to him. (We can now hear SPIKE'S BREATHING, from the present.)

Vicious holds his gun to the teenager's head, pausing to give a last, challenging look to Spike.

Spike raises his gun at Vicious, yelling at him to stop.

OFF-CAMERA, Vicious fires. The women scream and sob.

(We now hear SPIKE'S HEARTBEAT.)

In the midst of the shakedown, Spike goes after Vicious. They fight brutally, the silence punctuated only by the SPEEDING HEARTBEAT.

In the midst of the struggle, one of the CREWMAN crawls across the floor.

He hits a PANIC BUTTON, calling the police. Alarms flash all around the ship, as Vicious pulls back - furious and betrayed. Asimov is panicking.

Spike comes forward, but Vicious pulls out a BLADE, slashing it across his eye.

DOWN THE CORRIDOR

As Spike retreats away, bleeding through his fingers, VICIOUS steps behind him and fires three shots.

INTO AN ESCAPE POD

Spike drops, and struggles to find the controls, his blood covering the panel. As Vicious approaches down the hall, his overcoat blowing outward, Spike -

- cuts loose, dropping off into deep space in the pod.

As he covers his destroyed eye socket, he glances at the outside of the MERCHANT SHIP.

POLICE SIRENS are approaching from all across Neptune... surrounding Vicious and Asimov on the inside.

Asimov hits a DETONATION REMOTE...

And JULIA'S SHIP begins coming apart, silently spraying outward, across the orbit of the moon.

FROM THE POD

Spike locks on her face... seeing Julia panic behind the glass as he ship crumbles. He's screaming and she's screaming - but there's only silence. Deep Space.

PULL OUT TO:

Spike's dilated pupil, Mao's reflection rising up.

MAO YENRAI

Let go of your past, and all the ugliness you've seen. Put aside your cynicism, and believe in something bigger than yourself. There is still power in the Syndicate, power to rebuild, power to stop him.

SPIKE

Maybe I just didn't have the stomach for killing innocent people.

MAO YENRAI

That's why, Spike. That's why it has to be you.

He reaches out his hand. Spike takes it for a moment. Mao squeezes, strong as he can... then he lets him go. Spike turns and walks out of the room.

INT. CASINO FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

FAYE moves through the casino floor, knowing every camera is on her.

As she emerges from an aisle of clattering slots, she sees the RUSSIAN MOB BOSS cross the floor with his team.

FAYE

Constantine Popov?

She backs down another aisle of video poker machines, to where she spies a MEXICAN DON, with his army.

FAYE (CONT'D)

And Sergio Rodriguez?

She's impressed by the power in the room, crossing the casino floor. Then she sees SECURITY, coming after her.

FAYE (CONT'D)

You idiots have got the entire underworld, and you're after me. Money talks, I guess.

She ducks behind a herd of OLD LADIES with buckets full of coins, following, then she slips out beside the CRAPS TABLE. As she sidles up to the table, avoiding cameras, hiding her face, she bumps into:

JULIA, in a dark overcoat and sunglasses.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Julia's talking on her PHONE (PORTABLE DATABASE).

PIT BOSS

Ma'am - no PDs at the table please.

Julia puts up a finger, stalling him, then hangs up the phone, tucking it into her overcoat.

An OLD WOMAN shakes up the dice across the table. She flings them and they unroll to... SNAKE EYES.

VOICE

Everybody's a loser.

As her money is pulled away, Julia sighs. She seems disengaged, watching the action across the casino.

JULIA

(to Faye)

I wouldn't get your hopes up too much.

Faye is startled as Julia addresses her.

JULIA (CONT'D)

This table's ice cold.

FAYE

Been here a long time?

JULIA

Long enough to know.

FAYE

Then you're due for a little luck.
 (under her breath)
 Either that, or you used it all up
 when you were young.

Julia suddenly looks over at Faye, eyeing her up and down, a little haughty, a little offended.

Suddenly she glances across the casino at -

VICIOUS

- moving ahead with his entourage.

Faye sees the eye-contact between them.

Just as the old lady shakes and throws, Julia wins her bet; but she's already walking away from the table to join Vicious.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Hey. Excuse me. You just won.

Julia pauses, a little irritated to be delayed. Faye picks up her chips and very carefully hands the stack to her, showing her that they're all there.

JULIA

Thank you. You're... an honorable person.

Faye nods, and Julia heads off, following Vicious across the casino.

Once she's out of view, Faye smiles and reveals: **JULIA'S PHONE (PORTABLE DATABASE)**, pickpocketed. Faye tosses it into the air and catches it.

IN THE CONTROL ROOM: SECURITY finally pinpoints her.

ANALYST

She's by the craps table now. How did she get over there?

On a MONITOR SCREEN, she's just breaking away again through the crowd.

INT. SERVICE ENTRANCE - LOWELL CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Jet is washing the ship amid unloading catering vans, elaborate ice sculptures being carried past. Through the open CARGO DOOR, he hears Faye's voice on the speaker.

FAYE (V.O.)

Jet? Is Spike back out of there yet?

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jet limps into the intercom, and answers her, suds still on his hands.

JET

Not yet, why?

FAYE (V.O.)

Because I think this is an ambush.

INT. CORRIDOR - CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Vicious walks at the head of a small army.

Mao's vastly outnumbered guards panic as they see his group round the corner. They draw guns and block the door.

Vicious signals and his henchmen fire, taking down the guards in one sweep. With assault rifles they blow the door to pieces. Vicious walks over the spent shell casings and kicks the last scrap of the door off its hinge, entering:

INT. SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Mao sits in the light suede chair across the room. Vicious steps to him, signaling the guards to stay back.

MAO YENRAI

I was waiting for you.

Vicious unsheathes a sword and kneels. With the blade across his knee, he puts his face to the steel and appears to say a quiet oath.

VICIOUS

You raised me as a father, and I will always love you. But it is now my time.

Mao is surprised, and there's a flash of fatherly tenderness on his face. He starts to speak, but Vicious springs up suddenly with the sword.

MAO YENRAI

Your brother...

REVERSE ANGLE - FROM BEHIND THE CHAIR

MAO YENRAI (CONT'D)

...he's here.

Enraged, Vicious slashes the blade. Blood splashes from around the chair.

Then, as Vicious stands looking down, blood runs down the legs of the chair, then seeps through the light suede, saturating it all the way through.

INT. BOARD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

With the surface of Mars outside, the major CRIME LORDS greet each other. The Russian mob boss, the Columbian, Italian, and Israeli. They shake, bow, exchange pleasantries until -

- double doors swing open and VICIOUS enters, his army around him. THIRTY GUNS rise across the room, slides pulled back, fingers on triggers. But Vicious just smiles, holding his ground.

VICIOUS

It turns out we're here to mourn the passing of a great man. Mao Yenrai, my father.

He scans the room, at the guns all pointing at him.

VICIOUS (CONT'D)

Our treaties expired the moment he died.

(a beat)

Put your guns down. The Syndicate now controls the only energy source left in the System... and you know now that I'll destroy even *that* if I have to.

The guns lower, and the men watch him, curiously.

VICIOUS (CONT'D)

This is a hostile takeover, my friends. All four families will now answer to *me*.

Popov pulls back the hammer on his gun, and -

Vicious henchmen open fire, throwing his body against the window. The bullets ricochet off the Spectra-shield on the glass, as more mobsters fire - a shootout in a board room.

Vicious exits calmly, as bullets pock the walls.

The shootout leaves many of the crime lords and Syndicate Rebel soldiers dead...

...but Vicious continues away, undaunted, down the corridor.

VICIOUS (CONT'D)

(to his men)

Find Spike. If he's really here, he can't get out of this casino alive.

INT. CASINO FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Spike heads along the artificial waterfall, shaken, regaining his calm. He stops suddenly, as he sees a wave of SECURITY GUARDS run past in full riot gear.

He pivots and follows them, around the slots and tables, past a spinning roulette wheel.

Just as he comes down an alley of flickering slot machines, he comes face to face with:

JULIA

They stand frozen. He sees his own reflection in her sunglasses, and hardly recognizes his own astonished posture.

She takes off the glasses and looks at him with big, wistful eyes.

JULIA

Spike.

SPIKE

I was looking for you.

JULIA

I hoped you were. But..

(a deep breath)

You have to go. It's not safe here... you'll be surrounded any second.

He takes her hand. She winces as if it hurts her.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Spike, please. You won't survive. And I won't be able to live with myself. It was hard enough once.

SPIKE

I was mourning for you for nine years. I'm not going to walk away now.

JULIA

(looking down)

Then you know where to meet me. Get out of here, and I'll be there. I'll be there waiting for you this time.

(a long time)

I promise.

She breaks away, fingertips lingering just a moment... just as -

A SHOTGUN BLAST blows through the slot machines behind him. Spike sees:

VICIOUS' HENCHMEN coming from one direction, CASINO SECURITY coming from the other.

He runs straight ahead, right through the decorative fountain, and to the other side of the casino.

ACROSS THE CASINO

Faye is taking shelter from the gunshots beneath the roulette table. She sees Spike scamper across her view, and she goes after him.

INT. SPORTS BOOK - CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Hundreds of big-screen 3-D TVs show exotic sports from all over the solar system. Low-gravity drag car racing. Lunar golf.

As Spike enters, Faye cuts him off.

FAYE

Come on. It's World War Five in here.

Just as she says it, VICIOUS' MEN fill up the room and draw their weapons at Spike.

Faye and Spike put their hands up, scanning the large army.

FAYE (CONT'D)

These don't look like bounty hunters.

The men close in on them, guns drawn.

FAYE (CONT'D)

(whispering)

You got a piece, Spike?

SPIKE

Nothing. You?

As the muzzles of the guns approach their faces, Faye shakes her head.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Maybe we can borrow one of theirs.

Just as they're completely surrounded, guns within an arm's reach - Spike and Faye throw simultaneous roundhouse kicks, taking out a few guards, and ducking under the crossfire as it erupts.

They don't manage to get a weapon; but they've unleashed a torrent of gunfire, shattering screens and spraying glass all around them.

Together, they dive over a bench and scramble on their hands and knees along the counter. But the aisle is a dead end. They look at each other in a panic.

INT. SERVICE ENTRANCE - LOWELL CASINO - CONTINUOUS

As Jet hoses off his ship, the lather dribbling down the grates... he hears a SCREAMING from inside the ship.

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Ein is barking, worried.

The screaming grows louder, as Jet limps through the main cabin and into the bridge. Faye is on the speaker again.

FAYE (V.O.)

Jet, please! Help! Help!

The sound of loud gunshots echoes through the ship.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Jet, we're pinned down!

JET

Oh, boy.

(in the transceiver)

Faye! Calm down. You got to tell me where you are... exactly.

FAYE (V.O.)

We're in the sports book! There's at least forty people on both sides of us! Syndicate and security.

Jet is rapidly going through the computer consoles. As a MAP OF THE CASINO COMES UP, he locates the spot.

He turns around and looks at Ein. The dog makes a whimper, and Jet is at a loss. He limps past Ein to:

INT. BEBOP - CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

Jet struggles to the raised catwalk above Faye's REDTAIL CARRIER. He checks his revolver: empty. He looks at his knee: stiff and bleeding through the gauze.

His eyes just happen to rest on THE REDTAIL. He takes a deep breath.

EXT. SERVICE ENTRANCE - LOWELL CASINO

Delivery men and workers flee, as the REDTAIL *flies* out of the BEBOP, *inside* the enclosed area.

It slams through crates and shatters a row of ice sculptures, as it flies *two inches off the ground*, into the casino.

INT. CASINO - SPORTSBOOK - CONTINUOUS

AS Faye and Spike stay down, the GUNMEN stand up from their secure positions in the melee. The last screens still flicker behind them, displaying games on cracked glass.

Another spray of gunshots, the killers surround them.

INT. SERVICE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The REDTAIL tears through a narrow hallway, *barely* wide enough for it. Jet flies with a half-inch of clearance around the wings, gouging massive trenches along the wallpaper.

ON JET: Sweating, he spins into an alcove and heads for the massive steel mesh doors of a FREIGHT ELEVATOR.

THE REDTAIL smashes through the mesh door and cuts *upward into a huge elevator shaft...* The left wing rips off partly in the narrow space, so that Jet has to hit the thrusters *harder* to keep his momentum.

JET

Now what *floor* am I on?

INT. CASINO - SPORTSBOOK - CONTINUOUS

A gunman steps right up to the bench over Spike and Faye. Fast as a rattlesnake, Spike rises up and punches him. He kicks his gun from his hand and Faye scrambles for it, firing to force the others back.

As they return to their spot...

FAYE

It's out of bullets already.

(a beat)

If you're going to die, you might as well tell me... are you next in *line* for the Syndicate?

SPIKE

Why are you asking me if you've already figured it out?

A massive blast blows a hole in the bench beside them.

FAYE

Oh... just making *conversation!*

Another GUNMAN comes ahead with a machine gun.

INT. CASINO FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Fire alarms are going off everywhere, sprinklers raining over the crowd of gamblers, who scream and take cover.

Out of the KITCHEN AREA, the REDTAIL busts through a wall and begins uprooting tropical foliage.

Jet hits the wide open space of the casino, and accelerates, knocking over craps tables and wet bars. He hits a row of slot machines, which explode into a shrapnel of coins.

The gamblers hit the deck, as the battered REDTAIL blasts through, its stabilizing *THRUSTERS* burning a black trail in the plush carpet.

INT. SPORTS BOOK - CONTINUOUS

Faye and Spike sit on the ground together, moping, as assassins wend toward them over the shattered glass from TV screens.

Faye stares off at GREYHOUND RACES on a cracked screen. "DOGPATCH" pulls ahead on the track, as Faye looks down and begins searching through lost betting tickets.

SPIKE

You're actually thinking about gambling right now, aren't you?

FAYE

I'm going to meet me my maker with a clean slate. Zero debt.

The gunmen surround them and raise their pistols. Slowly, Faye and Spike stand up, hands raised. Faye has her eyes closed, as if it's a firing squad. Suddenly -

- *THE REDTAIL* smashes through the large glass screen behind them, clipping a few guards and crushing others.

As Spike pulls Faye out of the way, Jet fires the REDTAIL'S CRUISE MISSILE across the room, blowing up a wall and forcing all of the gunmen to drop.

JET

Come on!

Faye and Spike *leap* onto the RIGHT WING of the carrier... as Jet hits reverse thrusters and *blows flames* over the *gunmen*.

Faye and Spike hang on, as he smashes through walls in reverse.

INT. CASINO FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

As the REDTAIL speeds up in reverse, a GUNMAN steps right into its path, firing at Spike and Faye. Jet cranes his neck around, steering toward him and -

- *clotheslining* him with the wing.

But Jet can't maintain control through the tight spaces in reverse. A wing clips the faux-rocks around a waterfall, tipping the REDTAIL so that the other wing rips up the floor.

Spike and Faye hang on as they splash through the fountain, over the elevated lounge - crushing the piano and finally coming to a stop an island-themed patch of palmettos and coconut trees.

The gamblers look up from the floor, stunned - as Vicious' men rush after the crashed carrier.

Spike and Faye help Jet out of the cockpit and toward the GLASS ELEVATORS...

...as the army gains on them.

INT. GLASS ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

They reach the elevator with their pursuers ten yards behind them. Faye pushes the button over and over, moaning with nerves.

The glass doors close. For a single, excruciating moment the three of them are encased in glass. Spike looks straight through the glass door, surprised to see:

VICIOUS

He stands at the front of his army, staring right back at his brother. The effect through the glass is almost as if they're looking into a mirror.

For a moment, they're both still. Then, as the elevator begins to sink, Vicious raises a rifle and fires...

...blowing glass chunks all around them.

INT. BEBOP - DOCKING BAY - CONTINUOUS

EIN watches as the THREE OF THEM move together, arms around Jet, one six-legged creature rushing through the bazaar.

As they enter, EIN hits an EMERGENCY BUTTON, closing the BAY DOOR just as gunshots begin ricocheting off it.

Jet is moaning in pain, his leg in agony... unable to climb out.

But Spike rushes to:

INT. BEBOP - THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

...where he fires up the controls... and TAKES OFF, straight toward the closing airlock.

INT. BEBOP - DOCKING BAY - CONTINUOUS

JET
Better floor it, or we'll never get
past the airlock.

POV: THE BEBOP

It accelerates toward the closing airlock... faster... faster...

EXT. ORBITTING CASINO - CONTINUOUS

...and it bursts out at the last possible second, the top stabilizing wing sheared off and heat shields shedding off into space.

The thrusters explode, and the rickety old bucket heads through the swerving traffic. It enters the ASTRAL GATE and rockets off... *right toward the distant sun.*

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

As the Bebop makes ominous creaking noises at hyperspeed, the group recovers from exhaustion and injury. Faye is pulling a *shard of glass* out of her shoulder; and Jet pours sizzling disinfectant onto his leg.

FAYE

You owe me a new mono-carrier.

JET

You owe me your life.

FAYE

Fine. Call it even.

Spike looks deeply affected by the sight of his father and brother. There's a wash of pain passing over him - a *discernible grief.*

JET

(to Spike)

Problem is... we're going to be out of fuel soon. We come out of hyperspeed, we got one stop, and that's it. Can't change course now. Where are we headed anyway?

SPIKE

Earth.

Jet and Faye look at each other, horrified.

FAYE

Spike. Why? For her?

SPIKE

There's an arctic station - you can fuel up there. You don't have to stay with me. It's just something I have to do.

FAYE

Spike. She *isn't* waiting for you.

(a beat)

You're wrong when whenever you think your old girl is pining for you.

SPIKE

You're wrong to assume all women think like you.

FAYE

If you find her - you better *bring her in*.

SPIKE

I'm not a bounty hunter anymore.

He heads out of the room, and Jet just stares at Faye.

JET

I wish he'd told us that earlier.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OLD SHANGHAI - DAY

Acid rain falls from a yellowish sky onto the massive, abandoned skyline of Shanghai. Sea levels have risen dramatically, so that the ocean has swept over the city up to the fifth floors. White caps blow among the open windows and I-beams of crumbled buildings. The tide washes in and out of a warehouse district.

Except for thousands of birds nesting in the office buildings, fluttering out of shattered windows, the city seems to be completely empty. But...

EXT. OLD SHANGHAI - OVERHEAD SHOT - DAY

...along a catwalk that connects the rooftop gardens of skyscrapers, we see JULIA, walking in a hood.

The figure enters a greenhouse, distorted behind translucent glass. She crosses into -

INT. COMMUNICATIONS AREA - CONTINUOUS

- a greenhouse filled with RECEIVING DISHES, TELESCOPES, and DATABASES. She charges up a generator, and slips headphones into her ears, listening to the crackling sound of a message coming from deep space.

Julia stands and looks up at the sky, a few meteors streaking over the horizon.

FROM JULIA, we rise upward, past the greenhouse glass, the rain sizzling on its surface. We rise *higher and higher*, through clouds, into the exosphere...

...past beeping satellites, and into a murky orbit covered with FLOATING MINEFIELDS: spiked medieval maces, connected to chains. Earth's orbit looks like the oceanic minefields laid out for U-boats in the 1940s.

INT. SWORDFISH II - DOCKED - CONTINUOUS

Through the abandoned mine fields, Spike is looking straight down at earth, from inside the cockpit of his mono racer. The hatch below him is open, and the airlock above is sealed.

SPIKE
(into his mic)
Drop me, Jet. Let's go!

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Spike and Faye play poker, somber.

JET
To hell with him.

FAYE
Not our problem anymore.

Spike's voice plays loud from the speakers in the Bridge.

SPIKE (V.O.)
Jet! Drop me!

JET
He wants to be dropped, I'll drop him.

FAYE
Drop him hard.

INT. SWORDFISH II - DOCKED - CONTINUOUS

Finally, Spike *drops* - the Swordfish arcing right through the minefield, setting off a few in its wake.

EXT. SHANGHAI - CONTINUOUS

From the rooftops of an abandoned city, JULIA sees the meteor shower of MINES going off in the atmosphere. Then... a ball of fire crosses the sky.

EXT. OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

The SWORDFISH II hits a tidal marsh, landing in a spray of water and slowing.

It passes a MASSIVE ABANDONED OIL FIELD in the water: thousands of twisted derricks and abandoned rigs.

Then it heads toward the city of Shanghai in the distance, not a single light against the dimming horizon.

EXT. MARSH - CONTINUOUS

The Swordfish II motors its way into the shallows, then settles crookedly into the mud. Raindrops boil on its surface.

The HATCH DOOR rises open. Spike climbs onto the surface and turns toward the abandoned city.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Jet and Faye play cards, as one of Jet's scratchy, restored records plays in the background. This time, they're gambling for SPIKE'S BELONGINGS. As usual, Faye has most everything.

JET

I see Spike's harmonica... and I'll raise you all of Spike's clothes.

FAYE

I'm going to come clean, Jet. I hate this music. Always have.

JET

Then I'm going to come clean, too.
(a long pause)
I don't give a shit.

EXT. OLD SHANGHAI - CONTINUOUS

Through the rain, Spike walks into the abandoned city. There are rope bridges and planks that connect the buildings over the flooded streets.

Spike crosses from one ruined floor to another... through the financial district of the ancient metropolis.

INT. OLD OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Spike leaves a stairwell and turns down a dark hallway.

He takes a deep breath at the door. It seems almost like first-date jitters... but we realize, he's not without his suspicion for Julia, either. He checks the clip in his gun - makes sure it's loaded.

Then he knocks on the door. It opens immediately... and they're face to face.

JULIA

I knew you would come.

She steps to him, hugging him, her face to his chest. Cautiously, he puts one arm around her.

CROSS FADE TO:

INT. JULIA'S HIDEOUT - MOMENTS LATER

A Samovar boils on an old-fashioned woodburning stove. Spike sits at a small table, watching the rain fall outside, down onto an alley of deep, dark water.

The place is filled with birds and shade foliage; but Spike looks beyond Julia to a COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, where surveillance equipment, satellite phones, video monitors, and computers all sit idle without power.

Julia hovers by the steaming samovar.

JULIA

There's only enough oil at the poles to last a few months. Vicious will control it. He's betting that it'll be enough to rebuild Titan... and he'll own the new pipeline when it's done. Until then... everyday people, they'll starve. Without heat, without fuel for the colonies... there won't be many left. It's like he's creating an ice age that he knows he can survive.

She take the kettle off and pours the tea in a METAL TEA CUP, placing it before him.

JULIA (CONT'D)

There are still holdouts. People waiting for...

(a beat)

Well, for someone else.

She puts the steel cup in front of him, as he keeps his back to her, staring out the window, melancholy.

JULIA (CONT'D)

It was raining the last time we were supposed to meet.

SPIKE

I know.

A FLASH IN HIS EYE: Spike waits at his mother's funeral. He sees Julia with Vicious across the burial site.

He watches her step into a limousine with him and pull away...

JULIA (V.O.)
 He would have killed me if we left
 together. You know that. He would
 have found us eventually.

SPIKE (V.O.)
 I was willing to try.

*Spike is waiting alone, in the rain, at a rendezvous
 spot. Julia isn't showing up.*

*Now we see the repeating shot: Julia's ship blowing
 apart, as she drifts away.*

RESUME: Spike sits, facing outside, watching the pigeons
 flutter out of the building and into the chasm of the
 alley, the sound of their wings echoing.

With his back to Julia, Spike glances at his METAL
 TEACUP. He sees:

JULIA has drawn her gun. She steps in behind him, about
 to blow his head off.

Spike remains still, pretending he doesn't see. He picks
 up the teacup, losing the reflection, sipping. Behind
 him, she's on the verge of tears, unable to pull the
 trigger.

SPIKE (CONT'D)
 I haven't had a real cup of tea in
 years.

She lowers the gun, gritting her teeth to stop the tears.

JULIA
 Mint leaves. I grew them upstairs, in
 the greenhouse.

SPIKE
 I'd love to see it.

Julia tucks the gun away and recovers herself.

JULIA
 Let's leave this place, Spike. Let's
 get out of here... too many people
 know where I am. You know how to hide
 from them, Spike. For nine years you
 stayed away.

He slurps his tea again.

SPIKE
 I'm finished running.

Julia leans back against the door, a little surprised, her ego a little bruised.

JULIA

Then why did you come back here?

A pause. He understands much more than she expected.

SPIKE

Why don't you show me your greenhouse?

She's shaking, overcome with mixed emotions. He *knows* something, but she can't gauge what it is.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Spike's belongings cover the table now... Faye has won his nun-chucks, his knives, his boots, his suits.

Jet is sorting through cards.

JET

So you met her then?

FAYE

I met her.

JET

What's she like?

FAYE

Ordinary. Perfectly ordinary.

He sizes up Faye. Her purple-tinged hair is matted down slightly, and her very short skirt is hiked up, a pistol in her garter. She's got gun powder burns on her arms, and bruises on her legs from the gunfight.

JET

Maybe that's his type.

FAYE

It's all about *history*, right?
Everybody and their histories.
Well... I got that bitch's *history*
right here.

She takes out JULIA'S STOLEN PHONE (P.D.) and drops it hard onto the table between them.

As she does, it activates...

AUTOMATED VOICE

You have one unheard message.

...flashing up a HOLOGRAM OF VICIOUS. The hologram flickers with bad reception.

VICIOUS

Julia... this may not be a good connection. We're passing inbound through the gates.

(static)

Keep him there, Julia. Just keep him there, - and I'm right behind you.

FAYE

It's a trap.

JET

And I'll bet everything I got left...

Jet gets up with a groan and leans onto his crutches. He begins ahead toward the Bridge, looking relieved to understand Spike's purpose again.

JET (CONT'D)

...that Spike already *knew*.

ON JET

He reaches the controls and checks the minefield sprawling across the atmosphere.

JET (CONT'D)

He's bringing them all right to him.

He locates the SWORDFISH II on a monitor, satellite beacon pulsing.

JET (CONT'D)

Hang on, Faye. We're going to see how many heat shields we got left.

EXT. SHANGHAI - OVERHEAD SHOT

Spike and Julia move along the catwalk between the rooftops. After a few hundred yards, they enter a PLEXIGLAS TUNNEL connecting rooftop greenhouses.

In the sky, another fireball transects the horizon.

INT. ROOFTOP GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She begins showing him around a *beautiful* garden of vegetables... but her voice is cracking with fear as she gives the tour.

JULIA

The cherry tomatoes are fetching two-grand each on the black market. It'll only get higher after this.

(a beat)

And those are green bean vines... they're...

(shaking)

...they're not quite ripe yet.

He eats one and grimaces slightly. As he chews, mulling them for a long time, he watches her begin to cry.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Spike. Spike... I'm sorry.

After a bitter swallow, he draws his gun and nods.

JULIA (CONT'D)

My back was to the wall. Vicious used an *Inside Man* to put his rivals into the BOUNTY HUNTER DATABASE. It was just a purge... everyone who stood in his way.

SPIKE

An inside man, huh?

JULIA

He put *me* in the system, too. Because he knew you would come for me. I was nothing but...

SPIKE

You put yourself in the system, Julia.

JULIA

...bait.

SPIKE

You financed Vicious' jailbreak. You paid Asimov, then got him killed. And you bought your way into the BIG SHOT system. Because Mao was going legit... and you didn't agree.

JULIA

If you knew, why did you still come?

Spike is just looking at her, waiting... Then she *points up at the sky with a single finger*. Spike looks up to see:

FEET, on the GREENHOUSE CANOPY.

He scans the dome and sees - MORE FEET, crossing the other side. BOOT TREADS pass right over their heads, as an entire ARMY covers the outside of the dome, ready to shoot down into it.

There's a pause, as Spike and Julia look at each other. Then Spike aims his pistol with a smile.

SPIKE

I had to put the past behind me.

Suddenly, MACHINE GUN FIRE lights up.

FROM ABOVE

Two-dozen SYNDICATE HENCHMEN fire *straight down through the canopy, cracking the Plexiglas like an eggshell.* Hundreds of sparrows burst out around them.

IN THE GREENHOUSE

Spike and Julia slide down under a row of plants.

Spike fires up the shadows of feet. He hits an assassin, who falls through the compromised Plexiglas, skewering himself on a trellis.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Vicious is here, Julia. Don't lie to me. Tell me where he is. Now.

He rises up suddenly, firing in precise shots around the dome. He hits the figures above, sending them SLIDING OFF, falling.

A HENCHMAN tumbles right over the edge of the canopy and falls forty stories down into the ravine-like alley, vanishing into the fog below.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Get up. Hurry.

She gets up, and they run straight across the dome, into a connective tunnel, an ENCLOSED BRIDGE, like a skywalk.

INT. CONNECTIVE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

As they cross the space between rooftops, the drop is visible through the Plexiglas below their feet.

Five henchman follow *on top of the structure.* They fire downward, compromising the BRIDGE.

Spike fires upward with two well-placed shots. Blood covers the Plexiglas, and a GUNMAN drops off the edge.

Julia is looking ahead, stunned.

The rest of the assassins fire at the connective joists supporting the bridge. Julia and Spike are moments away from dropping.

CUT TO:

THE BEBOP

Plummets into the bay. The splash is like a comet hitting, sending out a storm surge in all directions.

After a few moments, it surges up, a heap of smoldering, steaming wreckage.

EXT. BEBOP - TIDAL MARSH - MOMENTS LATER

The hatch opens and steam pours out, as if from an oven.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - DUSK

Faye, Jet, and Ein lay in a heap around the benches. The sound of crickets sounds rich and deep outside, as the sun sets.

JET

Why does my body hurt so bad?

FAYE

Bone loss. You haven't been at full gravity in years.

He pushes himself up to a sitting position, joints creaking.

JET

If I die, will you do me a favor?

FAYE

Oh, God. Here we go.

Faye gets up and begins loading pistols.

JET

Plant my bonsai trees out there. In the motherland.

(a beat)

Good soil. Partial shade. Afternoon sunlight would be best.

She slips one gun into her garter, another onto her belt.

FAYE

How 'bout I plant them on your grave.

Jet drops onto his back, smiling.

JET

Ah, good. Good idea.

EXT. CONNECTIVE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

As the gunman continue to rip apart the enclosed bridge, Spike climbs up through a puncture. Emerging through the Plexiglas like a hole in the ice, he fires rapidly, pitching three assassins into the ravine.

SPIKE

You're clear. Run!

He runs on top of the tunnel; Julia runs below, the two of them staying parallel.

Just as the connective tunnel fractures like a thawing icicle, they leap onto the other roof and roll to safety.

EXT. EXPOSED ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

They lie on the ground, catching their breath.

Spike peeks over a parapet and sees the remaining ASSASSINS on the other side, retreating.

Julia stands, reaching out her hand for him.

JULIA

Come on. I know a way around them.

Just as he takes her hand --

A SNIPER'S BULLET splashes through her chest.

When she drops, BIRDS scatter upward from around the rooftop and the top floor windows.

Spike scans the skies, unable to locate the origin of the shot. Then he kneels over her, even as bullets begin ricocheting off the parapet around him. He looks down at Julia, blood on her lips.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I made the wrong choice, Spike.

Another bullet splashes stone dust around them. Spike stands and fires in a random circle. As he rotates, he sees: EVERY ROOFTOP and SHATTERED PENTHOUSE WINDOW is filled with snipers and long-range rifles.

He drops back down to Julia, devastated despite it all.

SPIKE

Don't die. Make a million bad choices, just make a good one now. Stay alive.

JULIA

Go, Spike. He's already here. I wanted my place at the throne. All the money, all the power. And I just realized... it's all... useless.

Her eyes drift off, glazing over. As bullet fly, Spike closes eyelids, even as the rooftop shreds around him.

After hovering for a moment of grief, he's ready.

In a crouch he runs along the parapet. He *fires* ten rapid shots, shredding a STEEL DOOR to the STAIRWELL, then smashing through the rusted metal.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

He hears the calling of the assassins below him, climbing floor to floor. He shambles down a few flights, then cuts off into:

INT. ABANDONED OFFICE BUILDING - 22ND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

With all of the windows blown-out, the walls gutted, and the floors rotting from years of rain, this open floor is now mostly a breeding ground for pigeons and rats.

As Spike passes the gutted windows - *more bullets shred across the rebar*. He sees SCOPED SNIPER RIFLES filling up the windows of office buildings across the alley.

He hears men coming up the stairwell, howling. He takes a deep breath, and looks down.

TWENTY-TWO STOREYS BELOW

High tide has washed though Old Shanghai.

As the assassins burst into the room, Spike smiles at them, salutes, and --

JUMPS.

He drops like a dart, his arms crossed over his chest. The fall is spectacular, as he keeps his eyes open and punctures the fog below, finally -

- *piercing* the surface at terminal velocity, and -

EXT. OLD SHANGHAI - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

- sinking in a storm of bubbles into the remains of the Shanghai shopping district.

In the murky depths are abandoned car frames, storefronts that have long since become reefs.

Spike recovers his equilibrium, then swims into the FIRST FLOOR WINDOW of a long-lost SHOPPING CENTER.

INT. UNDERWATER SHOPPING CENTER - CONTINUOUS

As he swims past an undersea world of wrecked mannikins and cash registers, display cases lined with urchins, and an escalator swarmed with schools of pinfish...

...he sees a LAYER OF SILVER along the ceiling. It's a pocket of *trapped* air, like you might see below an overturned raft.

He breast-strokes for it, and - *GASP!* - he's able to fill his lungs.

EXT. OLD SHANGHAI - NEAR JULIA'S - CONTINUOUS

We see the light of the PORTABLE DATABASE, like a single lantern in the night. Moving slowly, Faye and Jet are following the SCREEN, looking through files to find the location. Ein trots ahead of them, sniffing a trail.

Along a walkway, they see blood. Further down, there are DEAD BODIES strewn along broken Plexiglas.

FAYE

I think we're getting closer.

JET

Looks like a hell of a reunion.

They turn and head down into the dark stairwell, thunderclaps outside.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Finally Faye comes to a door...

FAYE

I think this is it.

THE DOOR has already been kicked off its hinges. Both Faye and Jet draw their PISTOLS. Ein growls.

Gently Faye taps open the door with her foot.

INT. JULIA'S HIDEOUT - CONTINUOUS

Standing at the kitchen is a lone SYNDICATE GUNMAN, with his mouth full, a partially eaten sandwich on the counter beside him.

He pauses, stunned, then fumbles for his gun.

Faye and Jet both draw on him, and he freezes, mouth stuffed, unable to chew anymore. They don't shoot him because he's *choking*. He's turning red, gesturing to his throat, losing oxygen.

FAYE

You know the Heimlich?

JET

I used to.

Faye fires, dropping him.

FAYE

I couldn't bear to watch that.

INT. JULIA'S HIDEOUT - COMMUNICATIONS AREA - CONTINUOUS

Jet settles before the array of equipment, puzzled.

JET

Don't even know how to unlock it.

Faye takes Julia's PHONE (PORTABLE DATABASE) and aims it at the system like a *clicker*. Lights come on all over the room, with the whirring sound of a generator.

The birds begin rustling all around the apartment, as images of MISSED CALLS come up on the communications equipment.

Jet stares ahead, stunned. The message is from:

HIS OLD FRIEND: MCFADDEN.

MCFADDEN

Julia. We've got an internal investigation and I need to talk to you...

Faye takes the rifle off the counter and checks the clip: loaded.

FAYE

You okay here for a while?

JET

No. I'm depressed.

(a beat)

And this humidity is killing my leg.
I'll probably get gangrene and die.
My ship will rust and my dog will
starve, and my body will decompose in
this weird apartment.

FAYE

Good. At least morale is high.

EXT. OLD SHANGHAI - UNDERWATER

Spike remains in his one pocket of air - but the tide continues to rise, closing it to only a sliver of barnacles, now washing over his nostrils and drowning him. He's down to only tiny gasps of air.

He swims back out the shattered window.

EXT. OLD SHANGHAI - WAREHOUSES - SEA LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

A dozen soldiers hold positions around the water's edge and along the sixth floor, waiting.

Suddenly, Spike's head pokes up, and there's a torrent of gunfire, splashing around the water.

As he ducks back down, there's silence. Then the men laugh and call to each other across the wide, echoing space.

ON A SOLDIER

He waits, amused, laughing and showing gold teeth.
Suddenly -

- a single shot comes from above, a bullet splashing right through him.

ON THE GROUND

Two other soldiers look up toward the skyscrapers.

POP! POP! Bullets tear through them. The remaining men panic and begin running toward the cover.

WANG LONG

He's in the building! He got up into
the building!

They run after him, vacating the area.

Just as they do, Spike bursts out of the water, his lungs on fire, crawling ahead.

He looks around, confused, hearing only the distant chatter of gunfire.

In the distance, THREE BODIES fall out off the eleventh floor, hitting the water in awful, lifeless belly flops.

Spike watches in disbelief, too winded to speak.

There's a long pause, and then... a distant, echoing voice...

FAYE (O.S.)

You're welcoooooome.

Spike drops onto in the shallow water, exhausted. Slowly, a smile forms over his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - NIGHT

Faye helps him ahead, through the dark streets.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

As an owl hoots somewhere in the rafters, Faye lights an old kerosene lantern across the wide open space. She runs a rag under a spigot, and kneels beside him, cleaning him up. The silence is filled only with crickets.

She comes forward to Spike as he lies supine on the concrete, spent.

FAYE

Was she everything you remembered?

Spike just shakes his head. He's exhausted, staring at her. She leans down and... gently grazes his lips with hers.

FAYE (CONT'D)

See. And you still got your wallet.

He rises up, as if to scold her for it. But instead, he kisses her back. *Hard.*

When he finally pulls away, Faye is speechless for the first time.

SPIKE

She put herself in the system, trying to trap me.

FAYE

You didn't plan on living through this, did you?

SPIKE

We're near the ancient headquarters. I've got to go there now.

FAYE

That place really exists?

SPIKE

Vicious believes in all of it now: every bit of ceremony. He'll anoint himself and try to re-unite the syndicate. He's going to stand on six-thousand years of Syndicate history.

FAYE

So what's *your* plan?

SPIKE

To end it.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATE NIGHT

Spike walks along an abandoned elevated highway that just skirts the water's edge. The dark silhouettes of buildings loom, ignited by streaks of lightning.

Farther along, the water at high tide laps along the edge of a SUBWAY STATION. Spike takes a deep breath, then heads down the stairs... into TOTAL DARKNESS.

INT. SHANGHAI METRO - NIGHT

As SPIKE moves deeper, the darkness gives way to flickering light. Torches line the greasy, stone walls.

The RED DRAGON SYMBOL is everywhere, at first with graffiti, then... carved into the stone.

Spike follows the ancient SUBWAY TRACK, past elaborate stone carvings. Eventually, gravel gives way to a clean granite floor.

He comes to a gate, sealed and locked.

SPIKE

(whispering an oath)

"When I reach the gates of Han, I will
acknowledge my sworn brothers..."

Spike draws a pistol and fires through the lock. He
pushes the gate open, slipping through.

He hears rustling. He sees EYES watching him. But it's
a CROW that flutters away, further down the tunnel.

INT. SECURITY ROOM

Guards sit around watching MONITORS recording Spike with
Infra-red light. VICIOUS lurks in the background.

VICIOUS

Let him come all the way in.

ON SPIKE: As he passes another corridor, crows are
perched all around in the flickering light. He just
touches his gun inside his coat.

One by one, the torches go out. In weak light, he sees:
SHADOWS. Ten guards coming down the tunnel, guns drawn.

UDAI

On your knees, Spike. Hands behind
your head.

Quietly, Spike gets onto his knees, looking up at them.
But, gently, he rolls something perfectly along a groove
in the stone floor.

THE GUARD'S POV

As they come forward, they glimpse... a single grenade...
rolling.

GUARD

Get back!

The grenade blows, spraying debris and sending a
detonation cloud of dust in both directions along the
tunnel. The last torches are blown out.

But Spike fires a SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN, using the flashes of
gunpowder to glimpse the positions of the guards. With
each shot, he *takes down one guard* and pinpoints another.

ON VICIOUS

The night vision on the Security Monitors has been thrown
off by the cloud of hot dust.

VICIOUS

Damn it. Go, block him off.

As another wave of guards lock and load... Vicious begins gathering his own weapons. From across the room, a crow flies over and perches on his shoulder.

ON SPIKE

He passes through the dark tunnel into:

INT. CEREMONIAL CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The *original* headquarters, upon which the martian room was modeled, it's a massive, carved fortress, with a stone staircase leading upward, and statues carved into the bedrock. Around the circular walls, there are hundreds of ANCIENT SWORDS preserved behind glass.

As Spike enters, SIX GUARDS come rapidly down the steps.

He fires buckshot, taking them down. But -

- *he's struck*, right through the right shoulder, with a Teflon-coated bullet that throws him back. He gasps, about to throw up, the wind knocked from him.

He pushes all of his weight back against a stone wall, pushing up to his feet, leaving a streak of hot blood.

He continues ahead, up the stairs, over bodies.

At the top, he stands beside a massive, forty-foot high cloth of the RED DRAGON SYMBOL. He yanks a torch off the wall... and sets the crest on fire.

INT. JULIA'S HIDEOUT - CONTINUOUS

Jet scrolls through computers. Holograms flicker past, a whole history of felons. It's the entire ISSP database, and Jet is immersed. Ein makes strange whimpering noises as he tilts his head and watches.

JET

She had access to everything.

He pauses, surprised, still muttering to Ein.

JET (CONT'D)

My file.

His image flickers up, rotating... the information scrolling past: "THE BLACK DOG," Retired 5.4.77.

JET (CONT'D)

The Black Dog. Once I got something
in my teeth I never let it go.

He looks over at Ein, who lowers his head, submissive.

Jet scrolls through his file, floating in midair beside
Faye: *INTERNAL INVESTIGATION HALTED. SETTLEMENT REFUSED.*

JET (CONT'D)

Somebody on a Syndicate payroll...
tried to get me killed that day.

With greenish letters on thin air... *documents float*
past. We settle finally on: "REQUEST SUSPENSION OF
PENSION FOR JET BLACK."

The signature: "JOHN MCFADDEN."

JET (CONT'D)

Fad. He's been on the Syndicate
payroll for twenty years...

Jet just stoops over, covering his face, distraught.

INT. CEREMONIAL CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Through the smoke, Spike emerges, firing into a huge
PHALANX of guards. Fire has spread across the carpets
and walls, up the wooden support beams.

FROM THE ENTRANCE TO ANOTHER PASSAGE

A guard comes out with an AUTOMATIC RIFLE and fires a
hundred whistling shots into the thickening smoke.

Spike vanishes into cloud, his face masked with a
bandana.

ON VICIOUS: watching the monitors.

VICIOUS

Go in after him.

FOUR GUARDS rush toward blinding smoke, seeing nothing.

Spike drops into the clean air beneath the clouds and
fires shots into their knees.

He crawls ahead, stopping at a SYMBOL carved deeply into
the stone floor. It's a DRAGON, devouring its own tail.

Spike stands up on it, as the smoke thickens.

Spike fires through protective glass over the ancestral swords, and pulls one out. Then he faces a SECURITY CAMERA.

SPIKE

We were pitted against each other all our lives, Vicious.

(a beat)

A man who believes in symbols as much as you do... you can't let your men kill me in the dark.

SECURITY MONITOR - INTERCUT BETWEEN SPIKE AND THE SCREEN

SPIKE (CONT'D)

You're here to justify a *coup* with all the history you can dig up. You wouldn't dare let some bodyguard do your work. They'll know I'm the true heir to the Syndicate. And I'll beat you every night in your sleep.

Spike waits, raising the sword. More and more GUARDS begin to gather around him, not firing.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

They'll fight for you out of fear or greed... but never love or loyalty. Never out of respect. Not unless you come out here and kill me with your own hands.

In the circle of men, Spike meets eyes with UDAI and WANG LONG, who both seem struck by his words.

Suddenly, the crowd parts... Vicious steps into the room, drawing a *sword*.

IN SPIKE'S FLASH: It's the blade that destroyed his eye.

The crow flaps off Vicious' shoulder and perches on the banister.

Vicious lowers his head. Spike's bow has the feeling of a *moment of silence*.

VICIOUS

I'm glad you want me to *prove* something to you, Spike. I will.

Vicious comes at him in a rage, lunging out with the blade. Spike parries, kicking him as he backs away.

As the FIRE begins to pour out of the corridor, catching the banners that run up the walls -

- they fight intensely, with spinning kicks, deft displays of swordwork - both at the tops of their skills. We see many of Spike's moves that he practiced so meticulously on his punching bag.

Vicious comes at him too recklessly, and Spike *jabs him* in the stomach, just slashing across his clothes, leaving a streak of blood around the RED DRAGON BRAND.

This angers Vicious even further. He charges ahead with the sword. Spike dodges it, *grabs his passing arm*, and DISLOCATES THE ELBOW.

Vicious hangs onto the sword, but screams and staggers back. He looks up with hatred. He switches hands, swiping at Spike.

Spike drops into a TORNADO kick, spinning, clipping Vicious' hand with his heel. The sword drops loose...

Vicious sits on his knees, facing him.

Then, from his trench coat, he draws a GUN, shooting Spike right through the leg.

Spike drops, in agony.

FROM ABOVE

Spike's BLOOD pours from his leg in the grooves of the RED DRAGON SYMBOL carved into the floor, coloring it red.

Smiling maniacally, Vicious walks ahead. His arm hangs limp, but the gun in his other hand is loaded. He's confident in the men around him.

SPIKE

This is your leader. And he belongs down here with the rats.

Vicious stands over Spike, about to kill him, as his followers close in.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

You had everything, and now you're here with him.. *in the dark*. Go ahead, bow to him. Bow to six-thousand years of history. Because you're going backward right *into it*.

Vicious raises his pistol... about to kill Spike.

Suddenly, FIFTEEN GUNS are cocked and drawn on Vicious.

UDAI

Drop it, Vicious.

The guards call out Spike's name from around the smoky room. Vicious reels, astonished.

In unison, the guards begin chanting the oath...

GUARDS

"I will acknowledge my Han brothers when they identify themselves. If I ignore them... I will be killed by their swords..."

They help Spike up, and place his sword into his hand.

GUARDS (CONT'D)

"I shall forever honor the history of the five ancestors."

UDAI

(whispering)

Take him, Spike. The throne is yours. No one believed you were alive. These men will follow you: you're the rightful heir.

WANG LONG

Kill him!

GUARDS

"If I betray my customs, I will be killed by the sword..."

Spike raises his sword, pausing...

UDAI (CONT'D)

Kill him, and the Syndicate is yours.

Spike is waiting... waiting... as smoke fills up all around the room.

WANG LONG

We'll follow you out of the dark.

Spike is waiting... waiting...

EXT. SHANGHAI METRO - DAWN

Just as the sun breaks over the abandoned city, Jet, Faye, and Ein reach the entrance to the tunnel. Smoke is spewing out of it, heavily now, like a dragon's lair.

Suddenly, a figure appears ahead, coming out of the smoke, blackened and charred.

It's SPIKE. He drags Vicious behind him, limp.

He stops in front of his group of bounty hunters, with a grudging smile that shows his appreciation. Then he glances back at Vicious on the ground.

JET

I used your girlfriend's computers to get him into *Big Shot*: highest-paying bounty of all time.

(looking at him)

Wasn't sure if I should make it *Dead* or *Alive*, though.

Vicious groans, fading in and out of consciousness.

SPIKE

Good. 'Cause I sort of left him somewhere in between.

EXT. TIDAL MARSH - MOMENTS LATER

As they walk through the puddles of low-tide out of town, Spike DRIPS A TRAIL OF EXPANDING BLOOD.

INT. ISSP STATION - BACK ROOM - TWO DAYS LATER

All of the BOUNTY HUNTERS step aside, *amazed*, as FAYE and SPIKE lead ahead *Vicious*, limp and defeated, in shackles.

They lead him all the way to SHERIFF DONNELLY.

SHERIFF

Boy, you two won the lottery with this scumbag. But where's Jet?

Spike and Faye look back at the door.

SPIKE

He's got another bounty.

INT. ISSP STATION - HALLWAY

By a shackle around his neck, Jet drags in a *terrified* DETECTIVE "FAD" MCFADDEN, past cage after cage of felons looking ready to eat him alive. Jet is banged and bandaged-up, leaning on a crutch.

INT. ISSP STATION - BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jet drops Fad onto the ground at the feet of Donnelly.

SHERIFF

Well, I can pay a piece now, but we're not going to be able to cover all the reward at once. Times are tough, you know, energy prices being what they are. Until they finish rebuilding those wells.

Faye, Spike, and Jet just stare back, in disbelief.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Jet, you know what I mean. You know what it costs to fill up a tank these days.

There's a long pause as Faye and Spike look over at Jet, wrapped in gauze, his mangled cybernetic arm clutching his crutch.

JET

Yeah. Arm and a leg.

EXT. DEEP SPACE

The Bebop soars past, cleaner than we've ever seen it.

INT. BEBOP - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Jet and Faye play cards around the central table, while Spike eats from a bowl with chopsticks.

Suddenly, his eye dilates. Spike looks up at them playing cards and -

EVERYTHING rewinds. In a speeding flash, he sees: His fight with Vicious, Faye's kiss, Julia, the casino, Mao, the truck stop... stopping finally on...

The two of them playing cards, Jet now with his shirt off after a losing hand. They both look over at him, mildly concerned.

FAYE

You okay, Spike? Headache?

For a moment, Spike's not sure if this is the past or the present. He closes the eye and rubs it. Then looks back at them again, his left eye as black as an owl's.

Jet is fretting at his cards; Faye is obviously cheating.

JET

What's wrong, Spike? Memories?

SPIKE

It's just...

He closes both eyes.

BLACK SCREEN

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

Ancient history.