

ECHO STATION

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Draft 11/11/2011
Registered WGA

EXT. SPACE STATION KRIKALYOV 3

The station is a hodge-podge of several different modules from different countries and eras all linked together. Every piece meant to function, not look pretty.

THE CAMERA ARCS around the assembly, revealing light FLICKERING through a window in one hatch.

We draw closer and the CAMERA PUSHES THROUGH the glass into-

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, SPACE STATION KRIKALYOV 3

The small cylindrical chamber is well used and cramped.

AIR FORCE COLONEL JOHN COLE (38), young to have achieved his rank, lies on a narrow bench watching a BASEBALL GAME on a projected screen that hovers above his chest.

His USAF issue space suit lies crumpled on the deck. At the far end of the airlock is a hatch leading into the station.

The PITCHER throws a fastball towards Cole's screen.

Cole swipes his hand across the image. A bat connects with the ball, sending it rocketing into the stands. "FOUL BALL" appears in bright text -- He's not watching a broadcast, he's playing a photorealistic video game.

The pitcher fires off another fastball. Cole swings hard but misses, BANGING his head against the airlock's low ceiling. "STRIKEOUT".

COLE

Shit!

PITCHER (ONSCREEN)

Whoa, language!

The burly, goatee'd pitcher approaches camera.

PITCHER (CONT'D)

Damn, you suck, dad.

Smiling, Cole gestures and the image of the pitcher dissolves to HENRY COLE (11), skater, sitting on a couch. Through the window behind him we see a backyard.

HENRY

Why do you like the classic games?
The graphics are terrible.

COLE
Yeah but at least I have a chance
against you.

Through the window into the station, we see two CREW MEMBERS walking towards the airlock.

Flight officer MARGARET DAVIS (30's), strikingly attractive and doesn't take shit from anyone. Followed by HIROSHI KATSURA (40's), permanently grinning, couldn't have a dark side if he wanted one.

COLE (CONT'D)
Hold on a sec.

Cole stretches towards the airlock window and knocks on the glass, getting their attention.

COLE (CONT'D)
Pretty sure I'm done decompressing.

Hiroshi points towards his ear - can't hear you. Cole taps his watch.

COLE (CONT'D)
Am I coming out soon?!

Hiroshi shrugs. He and Margaret maneuver a LARGE WHEELED CASE.

COLE (CONT'D)
(back to the screen)
Sorry.

HENRY
Time to go to work?

COLE
Almost.

HENRY
Can we play again tomorrow?

COLE
Everyday. I'll have more time up here than when I'm home.

INT. MAIN BAY, SPACE STATION KRIKALYOV 3

Hiroshi and Margaret work the case across the bay.

INT. CONNECTOR

As they pass a doorway, Hiroshi stops and shouts in.

HIROSHI
Delivery guy wants to know how long
til he's out.

INT. RESEARCH MODULE - CONTINUOUS

The small chamber is jam packed full of equipment. Stacks of scientific gear are piled high. There's no room for anything.

VIKTOR "STAS" STANISLAS (40), handsome and pleased to show that he's smarter than you, which he is, stares at a CHESSBOARD perched on a computer tower.

GRIGORI VILADEV (49), a born engineer, knows how everything works -- everything. He sits nearby at a heads-up-display running a series of equations.

HIROSHI
Stas?

STAS
I don't know. Ask Natalie.

HIROSHI
You're the med officer!

STAS
I'm in the middle of a game here.

GRIGORI
(Russian accent)
You two supposed to be moving that?

MARGARET
Why not?

Grigori raises an eyebrow. Hiroshi and Margaret push on.

INT. CONNECTOR

Margaret shouts towards a ladder leading into an upper level.

MARGARET
Natalie!

NATALIE ROUVIER (32), compact and beautiful, even smarter than Stas but keeps it to herself, climbs down the ladder while reading from a DIGITAL TABLET.

NATALIE

What's up?

HIROSHI

Delivery guy wants to know how long until he gets out of the airlock.

NATALIE

How would I know?

HIROSHI

Stas said to ask you.

Natalie misses a rung and staggers, then catches herself.

NATALIE

Shit.

(back to Margaret)

Stas is a jackass.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

By the way, when he gets out I don't think you should call him the delivery guy.

Natalie hops down and grabs another tablet off the case-

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Colonel John Cole, United States Air Force. Brazil War vet.

Hiroshi looks to Margaret.

HIROSHI

Your wife fought in that, right?

Margaret nods slowly. Hiroshi looks confused.

NATALIE

She fought, on the other side.

HIROSHI

Your wife is Brazilian? I didn't know that. She doesn't look Brazilian.

NATALIE

What does a Brazilian look like?

HIROSHI

Well, pretty much bald with like a little strip sometimes.

Margaret can't help but smile. She gives him the finger.

MARGARET

Let's keep going.

NATALIE

Are you guys supposed to be moving that?

INT. RESEARCH MODULE

Natalie barges in. She reaches for an old fashioned egg-timer beside Stas and purposely bumps him.

NATALIE

Two minutes?

STAS

Sounds right.

NATALIE

(to Grigori)

They sent someone different this time?

Grigori flips his glasses up onto his head and pinches the bridge of his nose.

GRIGORI

You are like school children with new student.

(making his voice high)

I wonder if he will use treadmill, did he bring music?

(normal voice)

He bring new lenses, stay to make sure we not spying, then go. That's it.

NATALIE

I don't give a shit if he brought his iPod, I want to know why they sent an Air Force colonel when all the other resupply guys were NASA.

GRIGORI

How would I know? Ask him.

INT. ENGINEERING MODULE

Hiroshi and Margaret wheel in the case. AMIT BEHARI (44), astronomer, head in the clouds -- literally, stands near a massive TELESCOPE.

AMIT

Ah, the new lenses!

Margaret examines the case. There's a latch and DIGITAL KEYPAD on the front. She taps random digits -- ERROR BEEP.

MARGARET

Fucking Air Force. They pay for a guy to fly four days off planet just to type in a pin code.

HIROSHI

If they keep giving us gear for the telescope, I'm cool with whatever.

AMIT

A small price for the ability to see the other end of the universe.

Amit works his way up a ladder to access the telescope.

MARGARET

And it doesn't bother you if they make us turn it around sometimes?

HIROSHI

You're paranoid.

MARGARET

Maybe. But we're up here to map out solar systems, not take surveillance shots.

Amit uses a hydraulic arm to slide a square metal frame out the side of the telescope assembly. A HUGE GLASS LENS four feet in diameter is suspended in the middle of the frame.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I just don't want to be the one to start World War IV. Shit's close enough as is.

Margaret grabs a handheld cutting torch and maneuvers around to the back side of the case. She cuts through the two hinges and pulls the lid open backwards. On the other side, the keypad gives an impotent BEEP.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Bring the arm over.

Amit sets down the old lens and swivels the hydraulic arm. He lowers it into the case and carefully clamps down.

The arm GROANS as it lifts an identical metal frame from the case. This one appears empty, though.

They view the EMPTY FRAME from different angles.

HIROSHI
That's fucking cool.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK

Cole holds up a LEGO ASTRONAUT with a GI JOE gun shoved into its little hand.

COLE
Brought him with me.

Henry rolls his eyes.

HENRY
Dad, I gave you that when I was
like five.

COLE
And it still makes me happy.

Cole tucks the toy into his left breast pocket and pats it.

HENRY
Does that place have any awesome
weapons on it?

COLE
Nope. Just a science station. Deep
space research. Full of PhDs.

Natalie and Stas come into the bay. Cole starts to gather his gear.

COLE (CONT'D)
Here comes some now. I gotta go.
Talk again later?

HENRY
Dad?

COLE
Yeah.

HENRY
Whenever you go up I miss mom
pretty bad.

Cole stops and looks at his son.

COLE

I know, little man, I miss her too.
But you got Aunt Joanie and Grandma
with you, and I'll be right back.

(beat)

I know Joanie lets you do whatever
you want when I'm gone.

Henry smiles wide.

COLE (CONT'D)

You better go to school this time.

Henry gets off the couch and moves toward the camera.

HENRY

Ah, you're breaking up, dad.

COLE

You can't cut school for a month,
Henry. And tell your grandma that
candy is not a legit dinner.

HENRY

What? Can't hear you. Love you,
dad. Talk later.

Henry reaches forward and the video cuts out.

Shaking his head but smiling, Cole picks a tiny black cube up
off his chest and the projected screen disappears into it.

Natalie and Stas get to the hatch. Stas taps into a panel.
The seal cracks and he swings the door open.

NATALIE

Hello.

INT. MAIN BAY

Cole pulls himself out of the airlock.

COLE

Tight fit in there, huh?

STAS

The one with the hot tub is being
cleaned right now.

NATALIE

Natalie Rouvier.

She shakes his hand.

COLE
Colonel John Cole.

NATALIE
I'm primarily R&D Advanced
Computational Systems-

STAS
Supernerd.

NATALIE
Right, supernerd. And today's tour
guide. This is Viktor Stanislas,
Medical Officer.

STAS
Stas is fine.

NATALIE
You bring any music?

COLE
Sorry?

STAS
Let's check his vitals first.

INT. CONNECTOR

They lead Cole further into the station.

COLE
Medical Officer...so you're the
only one up here not doing hard
research?

STAS
I'm researching the researchers.
This far up for this long,
sometimes people start acting a
little funny.

They duck into-

INT. RESEARCH MODULE

NATALIE
This is Grigori Viladev, Chief
Engineering. Top ranking scientist
up here.

Cole extends his hand to Grigori.

COLE
Captain Viladev, Colonel John Cole,
sir, pleased to meet you.

Cole shakes Grigori's hand. He looks at the chess board.

COLE (CONT'D)
I've never seen it played with
actual pieces.

Stas wraps a pressure cuff around Cole's arm.

STAS
I gotta check your vitals.

NATALIE
We don't play games on these
machines.

COLE
Then you'll be happy I brought this-

Cole pulls the black cube out of his pocket. Natalie grabs it from him.

NATALIE
You can't have that up here.

COLE
What do you mean?

Stas shines a pen-light in Cole's eyes, catching him by surprise.

NATALIE
My systems run on auto-query. They
scan for new information and pull
it into their neural net. They're
very curious.

COLE
They're not getting anything off
there. It's D.O.D. encrypted.

Natalie types into the display. A video of his strikeout plays on all the screens.

NATALIE
Shit, you suck at that game.

COLE
So I've been told.

GRIGORI

Why do you think they make us
operate 250,000 miles from earth?
These machines untie military
encryption like shoelaces.

Stas removes the cuff from Cole's arm.

STAS

Your decompression is good.

Natalie drops the black cube into a lead case.

NATALIE

Sorry, we'll have to keep this
offline. My machines'll start
playing and we'll never get any
work done.

COLE

I'm up here for a month.

NATALIE

It's not so bad up here.

(beat)

Can I ask why they sent up an Air
Force colonel?

COLE

They want those lenses to end up
where they're supposed to.
Technically, I need to open the
case and witness the installation
process.

NATALIE

Oh...

INT. ENGINEERING MODULE

Cole follows the others in and sees the opened case.

MARGARET

We wanted to get started.

COLE

(quietly sarcastic)

Awesome.

Margaret shrugs.

NATALIE

This is Colonel John Cole. Margaret Davis, Hiroshi Katsura, Amit Behari.

Cole gives a broad wave. Natalie points to each one.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Astronavigation and flight control, astrophysics, astronomy.

COLE

So you guys are kind of into space then.

HIROSHI

Lil' bit.

Amit thumbs towards the new frame.

AMIT

Want to see it?

Not waiting for an answer, Amit grabs an AEROSOL CANISTER from the case.

He sprays an ultra-fine BLUE MIST into the frame -- a HUGE FLAT DISK is revealed as the spray coats its surface.

HIROSHI

It's optically flawless. Perfect clarity. Can't even see it without the marking spray.

GRIGORI

Best part is variable refraction.

Grigori types in a code on the edge of the frame and the disk warps into a concave lens.

The blue coating fades and the disk is once again invisible, although its new shape now magnifies and distorts what's on the other side.

NATALIE

Amazing.

AMIT

Makes glass look like caveman technology.

MARGARET

Fucker's heavier than glass, though.

NATALIE
(to Cole)
Thanks.

COLE
Thank Uncle Sam, I'm just the
delivery guy.

Grigori types a code. The distortion disappears as the disk returns to a flattened shape.

DAVID BARNES (36), Facilities & Operations Chief, 260 pounds of pure nervous energy, rushes in the door.

BARNES
Colonel, what the hell is going
on?!

NATALIE
This is David Barnes, our Ops Chief-

BARNES
Yeah nice to meet you. What the
fuck is that?

Barnes thumbs towards another part of the ship.

INT. SUPPLY MODULE, SPACE STATION KRIKALYOV 3

Barnes leads them towards a window.

EXT. SPACE STATION KRIKALYOV 3

A LARGE VESSEL drifts into view with the name USS AMARANTH emblazoned in letters across its hull.

The ship looks quite a bit larger than the Krikalyov station. It's tapered and sleek as if designed to cut through the air, even though there isn't any up here.

INT. SUPPLY MODULE, SPACE STATION KRIKALYOV 3

Cole pulls back, confused.

INT. NAVIGATION POD

The crew members are circled around the main window gawking at the Amaranth drifting outside.

Cole is outside the circle, looking at a close-up view of the ship on the navigation console.

HIROSHI

Jesus Christ, man. It's huge.

GRIGORI

Never seen this kind of build.

COLE

In-orbit construction. Exterior welds with no carbon marks.

They turn and look -- Cole is pointing out subtle details in the image on the display.

COLE (CONT'D)

Built in a vacuum, space. Very, very expensive.

GRIGORI

Your tax dollars at work. You been inside?

COLE

I've never seen it before.

MARGARET

Uh-huh. You confirmed the lens is installed. How long until they take over our operation?

It takes Cole a beat to process what she's accusing him of.

COLE

What are you talking about?!

Margaret just crosses her arms.

COLE (CONT'D)

That ship is empty!

GRIGORI

Is right. Watch light sequence.

Grigori points out the window. A bright flash of COLORED LIGHTS strobe in quick succession from the vessel's side.

NATALIE

What does it mean?

GRIGORI

Two blue, empty. Three yellow, abandoned.

STAS
Why would they send it empty?

AMIT
And why did we not pick it up?

HIROSHI
Solar interference maybe? Same
reason comms were out earlier?

Grigori presses his tablet against the window and takes a picture. He waits a second and takes a second picture.

He pulls it back and taps a button -- motion vectors flow between the overlapping pictures as it calculates.

GRIGORI
Is drifting away.

STAS
You thinking what I'm thinking?

HIROSHI
You bet. How's the fuel on the
shuttle?

Amit checks his computer.

AMIT
Twenty-two percent.

HIROSHI
We can make it?

GRIGORI
For the next five minutes.

COLE
Whoa, slow down.

GRIGORI
Not time for slow, time for fast.

Grigori rushes out and the others hurry to follow.

COLE
This is not a good idea, we have no
idea what's on that ship.

Stas turns as he backpedals out the door.

STAS
I know a good way to find out.

Cole and Barnes are the only ones left.

BARNES

Don't worry. You can hang out here
with me. I could use some help
filtering soil samples.

INT. SHUTTLE BAY

Wearing his USAF space suit, Cole runs towards the
Krikalyov's light transport shuttle.

The crew are packed inside, all wearing light pressure suits
including helmets. Margaret is the only one not seated.

She starts to pull the hatch closed when Cole grabs it.

MARGARET

We're out of room, Colonel.

Cole glances behind her at two empty jump seats. He doesn't
let go.

INT. SHUTTLE

Margaret pilots the shuttle. Cole sits in the back.

COLE

I really think you should
reconsider. Think for a second. Why
is it drifting? Why was it
abandoned?

GRIGORI

You think bad idea, why did you
come?

COLE

USS, United States Ship. That's my
government's property.

Cole points -- the docking connector of the Amaranth grows
closer in the windshield.

COLE (CONT'D)

If I can't talk you out of this, I
can at least supervise.

Grigori snorts. He goes back to his tablet.

Amit is hunched forward awkwardly in his seat. He's wearing a thick EXTRA-VEHICULAR-ACTIVITY SUIT and the propulsion vents on the back are in the way. Hiroshi smirks.

AMIT

What?

HIROSHI

You really needed the EVA suit,
huh?

AMIT

Makes me feel safer.

Hiroshi rolls his eyes.

Cole clicks out of his restraints and maneuvers forward to the window.

COLE

Maintenance kit's ajar.

Cole points to a three-foot by one-foot COMPARTMENT on the hull beside the Amaranth's docking connector. Its cover is slightly open.

NATALIE

What does that mean?

COLE

It means they needed tools to force
launch their shuttle. Maybe they
were in a hurry.

AMIT

You're inferring too much from the
data. It only means someone forgot
to close the panel.

Cole squints at Amit.

AMIT (CONT'D)

I'm just saying...

The shuttle closes the last few inches to the empty dock. There's a horrible metal on metal SCREECH-

MARGARET

Shit!

They all brace as the shuttle jerks away from the station. Hiroshi checks a blinking light on the console.

HIROSHI
Starboard fuel tank.

Hiroshi hurries to the right side window -- DROPLETS OF FUEL fan out into space.

HIROSHI (CONT'D)
We got a leak.

MARGARET
Fuck.

Margaret pilots the shuttle back toward the dock. The shuttle CLANGS against the dock and again fails to connect.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
God-fucking-damnit.

The crew is getting uneasy.

COLE
Can I give it a shot?

Margaret stares at him as if he just slapped her.

COLE (CONT'D)
You want to bounce off it til we lose pressure? This'll be my 14th Air Force dock link, how many you done?

Margaret looks at Grigori, he nods. Reluctantly she relinquishes the controls and Cole sits.

The shuttle tilts 10 degrees as Cole brings it in.

It connects with a satisfying CLINK. Gas HISSES from a coupling device. The shuttle locks still.

Amit checks his console and gives a thumbs up. He starts taking off the EVA suit and the others follow his lead.

MARGARET
Sorry, boss.

GRIGORI
It's okay.

MARGARET
But we're still drifting from the Krikalyov. I'm worried we won't have enough fuel to get home.

GRIGORI

Then we send shuttle on auto back to Barnes. He swap with new tank, fill up, send back to us.

COLE

And we stay here?

GRIGORI

Less mass is better.

COLE

And if it doesn't make it back?

GRIGORI

It will. We've done before. You so worried about getting stranded in space, maybe you chose wrong career.

Grigori claps Cole on the shoulder, then pushes past towards the hatch into the Amaranth's decompression chamber.

HIROSHI

Airlock's a four seater.

NATALIE

Guess they didn't expect a lot of guests.

GRIGORI

Can take five easily. Six, no good.

COLE

How 'bout seven?

The crew all look at each other.

NATALIE

I can stay with him and go in the second wave.

Stas shoots her a look.

STAS

We're not gonna leave you with him.

COLE

Who's him?

Margaret smiles.

AMIT

I will stay. I have to program the shuttle's return loop anyway.

Natalie nods. Grigori opens the hatch and they climb into the airlock. Margaret closes the hatch behind her.

EXT. USS AMARANTH

The large ship floats in space. The small shuttle from the Krikalyov looks out of place next to it. Like a rusty Model T tied to a hydrofoil.

INT. SHUTTLE - LATER

Cole stretches and checks his watch.

He glances through the airlock window. He can't hear anything but it looks like Natalie and Stas are arguing. Stas points back towards Cole and Natalie throws her hands up.

Behind them, a GREEN LIGHT blinks on the control panel. Hiroshi gets their attention and they open the hatch leading into the ship.

Stas is the last to exit. He turns and closes the hatch.

COLE

You ready?

Cole opens the hatch and they climb into the airlock.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Amit seals the hatch behind them. There's a loud BEEP and the shuttle disconnects, heading back toward the Krikalyov.

The RED LIGHT on the airlock's control panel blinks.

AMIT

How long were they in for?

COLE

About ninety minutes.

Amit settles in and closes his eyes. Cole looks around. Unlike the Krikalyov's, this airlock is brand new.

COLE (CONT'D)

Your medical officer and computer engineer have something going on?

Amit opens his eyes, tolerating the interruption.

AMIT

You should have seen it when they were married.

COLE

Were?

AMIT

Split a few months before this rotation, actually.

COLE

And they were still allowed to come up together?

AMIT

When you have a successful team you do not disassemble the components. We have all been together for several years now.

Amit closes his eyes again. Cole checks his watch.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH - LATER

Cole is sleeping. The control panel BEEPS and the light blinks green.

AMIT

Cole.

Cole opens his eyes.

AMIT (CONT'D)

I think we are done.

Cole taps the control panel and opens the hatch.

Amit is out the door like a kid at the last bell before vacation. Cole follows, deliberate and cautious.

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR

Cole scans everything as they move down the hallway.

The walls are a smooth gray polycarbonate with a dark blue band running at waist height. No exposed wires, ducts, or panels. Where the Krikalyov looked to be pure function, this place actually has a design to it.

AMIT

Not cheap.

They round a corner.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Several doorways line either side. They head into the first.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Three walls have floor-to-ceiling translucent VIEWSCREENS offset two feet from the wall. Hiroshi gapes at them.

HIROSHI

Dude, this thing is fucking rad!

The interface is spread out among the screens. It looks like it can control everything about the ship and more. Hiroshi steps closer and the interface coalesces around him.

HIROSHI (CONT'D)

It tailors itself to my position.

He reaches and the objects lock in place so he can tap them.

HIROSHI (CONT'D)

Totally intuitive.

Natalie enters carrying four sealed bottles.

NATALIE

Impressive, huh? Nothing in the galley but these.

She tosses a bottle to each of them, then opens hers and drinks. The others watch.

Seeing their looks she gags and clutches her throat, then stops and smiles.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I scanned it. 100% oxygen and hydrogen.

Cole points at the display.

COLE

What can it do?

HIROSHI

That's the problem.

Hiroshi taps -- the system BEEPS and displays ACCESS DENIED.

HIROSHI (CONT'D)
Won't let me in.

Hiroshi walks to a small slot in the wall and waves his hand over it. A metal ring slides out.

HIROSHI (CONT'D)
There must be some kind of physical
key to unlock it.

Natalie examines the ring. Slides her water bottle into it.

NATALIE
That there's a cup holder. The key
is biometric, linked to authorized
users -- not you.

HIROSHI
Fuck me.

NATALIE
You guys should see what else we've
found. Come on.

INT. MEDICAL LAB

Stas stands near a pile of strange medical tools. An empty
drawer lays upended on the deck.

STAS
This one's my favorite.

He holds a large floppy sheet of translucent paper in front
of his arm.

It shows a real-time view of his muscles as he flexes his
hand. He taps a button and toggles between bone, lymphatic
and circulatory view.

NATALIE
Cool.

STAS
Hell, you can even isolate the
dermis if you're looking for
melanomas.

Stas moves the sheet in front of himself and taps again. The
paper changes focus to the skin, revealing the shape of his
six-pack abs. He grins.

STAS (CONT'D)

Nice, huh?

Natalie rolls her eyes.

Stas toggles it to skeletal view and holds it in front of his face. We see a boney hand come up and pick the skull's nose.

INT. RESEARCH LAB

Natalie leans over a machine labeled SYNTHESIZER.

NATALIE

Name a compound.

AMIT

C-ten-H-fifteen-N.

The scientist chuckle, Cole doesn't get it.

She enters C10H15N. The machine WHIRS, then beeps SYNTHESIS COMPLETE. Natalie pops a hatch and removes a test tube filled with a fine whitish powder.

NATALIE

C-ten-H-fifteen-N. You can punch in any basic compound and it'll generate a sample.

Natalie hands Amit the test tube as she heads out. He holds it at arm's length.

AMIT

Shit. I was just joking.

Cole looks questioningly at the tube.

AMIT (CONT'D)

Methamphetamine.

HIROSHI

I'll hold on to that for you.

Amit gives him a reprimanding look then drops the tube into a step bin marked DISPOSAL and follows out after the others.

INT. NAVIGATION ROOM

Margaret sits in front of a giant screen displaying a single massive image -- the void of space.

MARGARET

That's straight ahead. It's a virtual windshield.

AMIT

Why not an actual windshield?

Margaret twists a dial. The exposure lowers and the stars disappear into blackness. The nearby sun, on the other hand, darkens to a middle orange and we can suddenly see how turbulent the surface is. Different intensities of yellow, orange, and red swirl and mix.

MARGARET

That's why. You can adjust the brightness to suit the limited dynamic range of the human eye.

NATALIE

And that's not even the H.U.D.

Margaret taps. A blueish overlay of data appears, giving vital telemetry statistics as well as subtly labeling the more prominent bodies in the starfield. It's beautiful.

COLE

Is there a nav log to see where it came from?

MARGARET

Great idea! How could I have forgotten to look for that?

NATALIE

(to Cole)
I think that's a no.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY

Grigori pores over a CYLINDRICAL DEVICE that he's disassembling.

COLE

Tearing things apart now, huh?

Grigori picks up one piece that has a KEYPAD on it.

GRIGORI

Needs pin code to activate. Was hoping to reverse-engineer from inside out.

COLE
That seems safe.

GRIGORI
I am engineer.

Grigori grabs a tool. At the end of the handle is a C-shaped frame. It looks like a hacksaw missing the blade. A semi-circular mirror extends from the far end.

GRIGORI (CONT'D)
Never seen tools like these.

He flips a switch. A painfully bright LASER BEAM bursts to life from the base and reflects back off the mirror, forming the missing blade.

He twists a dial and the beam bows out in the middle, creating an adjustable curved arc -- a cutting edge made from a laser beam.

AMIT
Uhhh...a laser can not bend.

Grigori gestures to the tool. The evidence speaks for itself.

He grabs a piece of scrap metal. The beam slices through with zero resistance.

AMIT (CONT'D)
Oh, man. We are taking that back with us.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR - LATER

The crew is gathered in the hallway. They look tired.

NATALIE
Our work is years ahead of anything planetside, right?

HIROSHI
At least.

NATALIE
So how the hell is everything here years ahead of us?

AMIT
Good question.

Grigori rubs his eyes.

GRIGORI
How long until shuttle is back?

AMIT
One hour.

GRIGORI
Gather up whatever we can carry. We
can analyze back on Krikalyov.

COLE
Hold on a second. This is US
government property.

GRIGORI
No one home. This is not property.
This is salvage. You want to make
problem, maybe no seat for you on
my shuttle.

NATALIE
Grigori...

GRIGORI
What? He is wasting time again.

Grigori goes to push Cole out of the way. Cole reflexively
smacks his hand away.

There's a loud THWANG -- Grigori yelps and drops to the deck.

HIROSHI
What the fuck?

Grigori rolls over. His arm is punctured and POURING BLOOD.
Stas crouches and tries to staunch the bleeding.

MARGARET
What did you do?!

COLE
I didn't do anything!

Another THWANG -- two of Amit's fingers explode. He screams.

COLE (CONT'D)
Breach!

HIROSHI
What?

COLE
It's a hull breach-

Cole points to the ceiling. Air whistles out a quarter-sized hole. Natalie looks down at a matching hole in the deck.

An ALARM goes off. More THWANGS from distant parts of the ship. A bigger hole gets ripped 15 feet down the corridor.

NATALIE

Oh my god...

COLE

We're going to lose pressure. Get to the airlock.

They run.

The deck erupts beneath Margaret, shredding her leg. Cole turns back and hefts her up into a fireman's carry.

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR

Cole rounds the corner carrying Margaret, followed by the others. Cole's flight suit is slick with blood.

Stas and Hiroshi help Grigori along. Another hole rips in the hull, barely missing Stas. He doesn't even flinch.

The THWANGS pick up frequency.

COLE

Come on!

The ship starts shaking violently.

A piece of debris the size of a baseball tears through the hull in front of Cole and he jerks back to avoid getting hit.

A FLASH OF LIGHT-

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Still moving backward Cole smacks his skull against the bulkhead. The loud THUNK startles Amit.

Cole winces, then moves frantically like an animal in a shaking cage.

AMIT

Are you alright?

COLE

I lost consciousness?!

Cole paws at the hatch controls. Amit grabs his arm.

AMIT

We are still decompressing!

COLE

What the fuck are you talking about?!

Cole tries again to open it.

COLE (CONT'D)

We have to let the others in.

AMIT

You can not open it! We are decompressing!

Cole looks at Amit's hand gripping his suit. He still has all his fingers.

COLE

Your hand...

Amit looks into Cole's eyes -- they're rapidly scanning the inside of the chamber.

COLE (CONT'D)

Why's it so quiet in here?

AMIT

You are disoriented. I think you have decompression sickness.

Cole looks down and grabs at his flight suit. It's clean.

AMIT (CONT'D)

How many pressure transfers did you do before you got onto the Krikalyov?

COLE

Four. Wait, five including Krikalyov.

AMIT

So this is six?

COLE

I just had decomp. Two months ago. It's nothing like this.

AMIT

That recently? That is not good.

Cole squints, not sure of anything anymore.

AMIT (CONT'D)

Just breath slowly. We will get you checked out. Let's just wait for the green light.

INT. MEDICAL LAB

Amit leads Cole in by the arm. Cole looks like he resents it.

STAS

Have a seat.

Cole sits on the examining table. The others filter in.

AMIT

They put him up two months after he had decomp.

MARGARET

What?

Cole stares silently at the people he just watched being ripped apart.

GRIGORI

Of course, they make him. Decomp certification.

She doesn't follow.

GRIGORI (CONT'D)

Can't let a little decompression sickness slow down your trigger finger.

Grigori gestures with his finger for emphasis. Margaret looks disgusted.

Stas shines his pen light into Cole's eyes.

AMIT

Tell them what you told me.

COLE

We all boarded and explored this place for hours. Later there was a hull breach. Multiple hull breaches. There were severe injuries. Margaret...she...I believe the breach was caused by an external source.

The crew looks at Cole in silence.

AMIT

Decompression sickness. He was hallucinating in the tank.

STAS

Cole's right, though. There are no physical signs. His blood gas levels are all normal.

COLE

And it wouldn't explain why the ship is exactly how I recall it.

Cole has a revelation.

COLE (CONT'D)

Stas. I remember you showing us a sheet of refractometric film.

Stas opens the drawer and pulls out the x-ray paper he used to find his veins.

Cole takes it from him and holds it in front of his face. He taps the buttons, revealing his veins, then his skull. The skull starts talking-

COLE (CONT'D)

How did I know it was here?

Amit takes the film and explores it with amazement. Cole hops off the examining table.

COLE (CONT'D)

The room down the hall. Three huge wall interfaces for the ship's computer systems. I haven't been in there yet, right? You've been trying to access them, but it won't log you in.

Hiroshi looks at Amit and Grigori. He nods slowly.

COLE (CONT'D)

I can't explain what happened but I do not have decompression sickness. We should get out of here.

MARGARET

Am I the only one who sees the obvious?

NATALIE

What's that?

MARGARET

He's US military and this is a US ship. He's been on it before. Or helped design it. Or played with the prototype. Whatever. The point is we have limited time and we're wasting it. If it's decomp or just more bullshit to keep us from touching anything, we need to figure out what to do with him, not waste more time following him down the fucking rabbit hole.

GRIGORI

(to Stas)

Would sedation be harmful?

At the word 'sedation' Cole gets tense. On the monitors his signs become elevated.

STAS

Loss of consciousness is not contraindicated for depressurization sickness.

Cole pulls the medical sensors off his arm.

Grigori steps between him and the door. Cole tries to maneuver around and Grigori moves to block him.

COLE

Please move.

Grigori doesn't. Cole's jaw tightens.

Cole steps to Grigori, ready to fight -- behind him, Stas slips a hypodermic into Cole's neck.

Cole wheels on Stas with his fist cocked, but his feet go out from under him. He collapses, head slamming the floor.

CUT TO BLACK.

AN ALARM GOES OFF SOMEWHERE.

FADE IN:

INT. MEDICAL LAB

Cole's eyes flutter open. He's on his back, staring at the ceiling. He sits up and feels the huge lump on his forehead.

THE ALARM IS BLARING and SHOUTING comes from the hallway.

Cole gets off the table on wobbly legs.

AMIT HOBBLER PAST the doorway, shirt splattered with blood.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole hurries to grab Amit, giving him support.

LOUD THWACKS as holes get torn in the hull.

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR

Cole and Amit round the corner. The others are sliding a mangled Hiroshi into the airlock.

Natalie sees Cole pulling Amit along.

NATALIE

Come on!!!

Behind him, sparks erupts from the walls. The entire ship starts to GROAN AND RUMBLE.

They're almost there.

SOMETHING SLAMS INTO THE HULL.

The outer airlock hatch RIPS OFF ITS HINGES. A THUNDEROUS ROAR as air escapes. Anything loose whips towards the hole, including the crew.

It's too loud to hear Cole's scream as we FLASH TO WHITE-

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Cole throws his arms in front of his face. But there's nothing to shield it from.

Looking over, he see's Amit giving him a 'What the fuck?' look. Cole stares for a beat, then pretends he's stretching.

COLE

Damn, I hate being cooped up in these things.

AMIT

How many pressure transfers did you do before you got to the Krikalyov?

COLE

(yawning)

Just one.

AMIT

Direct flight, not bad. Our last R and I guy went through three.

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR - LATER

The airlock hatch opens and they climb out. Cole resets his watch's TIMER.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole peers into the Systems Room, where Hiroshi is gawking at the view screens.

HIROSHI

Dude, this thing is fucking rad!

Amit goes in, but Cole waits outside.

HIROSHI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It tailors itself to my position.
Totally intuitive.

Natalie shows up carrying the bottles.

NATALIE

Hey, welcome aboard.

COLE

Thanks.

Cole grabs a bottle and downs it with no hesitation.

NATALIE

(sotto)

Don't worry, I scanned it.

Natalie moves to enter the room-

COLE

Can I talk to you for a minute?

NATALIE

If this is about keeping us from exploring, that ship has sailed.

COLE

It's not.

INT. RESEARCH LAB

Natalie sets the bottles on the workbench.

NATALIE

So what is it?

COLE

I'm having a bit of a...problem.

She raises an eyebrow.

COLE (CONT'D)

I have the distinct memory that we've done this all before. Multiple times.

NATALIE

Like deja vu?

COLE

No, like I'm actually reliving the same hours over and over. I know what's going to happen before it happens.

He looks at her for a beat, then goes for it.

COLE (CONT'D)

We explore the ship for a while, then it gets hit by some external debris or something. Right as it's getting destroyed, we jump back and do it all over again.

Natalie gives him a patronising nod.

COLE (CONT'D)

I am aware of how this sounds.

NATALIE

OK, just to state the obvious, time travel does not work. Ask Amit, he's studied the theories. It's impossible.

COLE

Maybe now. But what about a breakthrough in the future? You've seen the tech in this place. It's not current. Military tech is advanced, but trust me, not like this.

NATALIE

If that were all true, why would you remember and I don't?

COLE

I don't know. Maybe some holdover military clearance? I don't have an answer, that's why I want your help.

NATALIE

From a strictly scientific standpoint, probabilistically, there's a more likely explanation.

COLE

Which is?

NATALIE

You're fucking batshit crazy.

Cole frowns.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Loss of temporal authenticity, egocentric delusion, they're classic symptoms of decompression. How many pressure transfers did you do before you got on the Krikalyov?

Cole looks at her -- it would be so easy to lie.

COLE

Boarding here was my sixth in about 60 hours.

NATALIE

I'm sorry. Put yourself in my shoes. You're asking me to suspend rational scientific reason and take a leap of faith based solely on your unverifiable subjective experience. What would you do?

COLE
I'd bring you to the medical
officer, by force if necessary, and
probably sedate you.

Natalie puts her hands out -- see?

NATALIE
So what do you expect me to do?

Cole massages his temples, then suddenly looks up.

COLE
Tell me something about yourself I
wouldn't know.

NATALIE
Excuse me?

COLE
You want proof we've had this
conversation before, I'll give it
to you on the next go-round. Tell
me something I couldn't know.

NATALIE
I'm not giving you private details
about myself. I really think we
should see Stas.

Natalie backs towards the door. Cole grabs her arm.

COLE
Wait!

She looks at his hand and he takes it back.

COLE (CONT'D)
Please, just, don't say anything.
I've tried. You're skeptical,
they're a lynch mob.

NATALIE
Cole...

He checks his watch.

COLE
Just give me till we get back to
the Krikalyov, then you can have
Stas do all the tests he wants.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY

Cole enters to see Grigori examining the cylindrical device. He punches digits into the keypad -- ERROR BEEP.

GRIGORI
Know any top secret universal
access codes?

COLE
Uh, nope.

GRIGORI
That was joke. Does not exist.
Defeat purpose.

COLE
You got something to write with?

Grigori hands him a permanent marker.

GRIGORI
Maybe I can disassemble...

Cole surveys the bay and starts sketching the floor plan on his forearm.

INT. INNER CORRIDOR

Cole follows his map. He now has several corridors and modules drawn out.

He stops at a door labeled ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES.

There's no handle, only a wall panel with a keypad. Cole taps the keys -- INVALID PASSCODE.

Stas strolls around the corner.

STAS
Yeah, we saw that earlier. Like
everything else here isn't advanced
enough. Locked tight though. Code
probably cycles, too, depending on
the day.

COLE
Unless it's always the same day.

STAS
What?

COLE
Never mind.

INT. AFT CORRIDOR

Cole is at the far end of his arm map. He ducks into-

INT. OFFICE

The room is stark. Only a chair and a desk with a large display. The room hasn't been personalized. Cole taps the screen and it chimes the too familiar ACCESS DENIED.

INT. AFT CORRIDOR

Cole continues past identical office setups on either side.

At the end, a large set of double-doors are marked B SECTION. The windows are dark. Cole taps the wall panel. The screen blinks to life --

B SECTION: POWER OFFLINE. LIFE SUPPORT OFFLINE.

INT. GALLEY

Cole rifles through the cabinets.

COLE
Not even some goddamn peanuts?

He grabs another water bottle and takes a swig.

There's a THWANG and the ALARM GOES OFF. Cole checks his watch -- 4 hours, 37 minutes. COMMOTION from the corridor.

GRIGORI (O.S.)
Hull breach!

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole peeks out. Chaos. The crew scramble in panic.

GRIGORI
Get to the airlock!

Natalie notices Cole standing calmly. She rushes over.

NATALIE

How did you know this was going to happen?!

COLE

I told you how.

She searches his eyes, thinking it over.

NATALIE

When I was ten I hacked into the servers at my dad's company. I didn't get what I wanted and I spent a week crying to a stuffed turtle.

COLE

Why did you-

She runs after the others, leaving Cole standing alone.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

AMIT

-not to mention the conflict of parallelisms. I published a paper about it. Just one of many reasons time travel is impossible. I could go on all day.

COLE

I'll bet you could.

AMIT

Why do you ask?

COLE

No reason. Shall we?

Cole points to the green indicator light.

INT. RESEARCH LAB

Natalie sits on the workbench with her arms crossed.

NATALIE

And magically you're the only one who knows we're stuck in this recurring slice of time, is that right?

COLE

Yes.

NATALIE

From a strictly scientific standpoint, probabilistically, there's a more likely explanation.

COLE

That I'm batshit crazy.

NATALIE

Couldn't have said it better myself.

COLE

You did. Last time. Then I asked you for personal information I couldn't possibly know to prove we had this conversation before.

NATALIE

Is that a fact?

COLE

Yes, but it didn't make much sense to me. Why did you hack into your father's company's servers? And what was the thing about a turtle?

Natalie is quiet for a long moment.

NATALIE

A fucking time loop, huh?

COLE

A fucking time loop.

NATALIE

So what do you want from me?

COLE

Help me find a way out of it.

INT. NAVIGATION

Margaret sits at the console looking up at Natalie. Cole stands nearby.

MARGARET

Propulsion? Like to get this rig going?

NATALIE

Or any other way to alter our trajectory.

Margaret taps at the console. The huge display barks --

INSUFFICIENT PRIVILEGES: UNKNOWN USER

MARGARET

It's tied into the computer system. We don't have access so we can't change a single damn thing. I can give you all the readouts you want, I just can't alter anything.

COLE

So we're locked out.

MARGARET

Yes, that's the simple version, Ranger Rick. We're locked out.

COLE

(to Natalie)

Can you ask her to be nicer to me?

MARGARET

God could be the one asking, it wouldn't help you.

NATALIE

Thanks for the info, Mags. Keep trying and let me know if you find anything.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY

Grigori is disassembling the cylinder with Hiroshi's help.

GRIGORI

Even if we got comms up, shuttle is not set for remote instruction. Can not recall it halfway. And if we could, still not enough fuel.

COLE

Can we power it with something from here?

GRIGORI

It would require...well, put simply, no. Any other questions, or can I?

Grigori gestures back to his work.

NATALIE

No. We got it. Shuttle's a no-go.

Cole points to the pile of parts.

COLE

I think that's a dead end, by the way.

They head for the door.

COLE (CONT'D)

Friendly group you've got here. Can see why you've stuck together.

INT. RESEARCH LAB

Cole sits on a workbench looking at Henry's toy astronaut.

NATALIE

Seems like some sort of self-defense mechanism. If the ship's going to take critical damage, it jumps back to avoid it.

COLE

Pretty goddamn good defense system.

NATALIE

Genius. But not as good as avoiding trouble in the first place. I wonder why we didn't pick up the debris field back on the Krikalyov.

COLE

The debris hits in the same place every time, so maybe it's looping too. The time jump could have some sort of active radius, so it's bringing some space back with it.

NATALIE

Right, so the debris wouldn't show up on scans until the ship did.

COLE

Yes, and by then you were all racing to get in the shuttle before you were out of range.

NATALIE

Shit.

COLE

What if you could hack into the computer system? Could you unlock propulsion for Margaret?

NATALIE

Theoretically, but I'd need someplace to start. A basic login would do the trick, but we don't even have that. And it might take weeks of work. I'm a little forgetful these days, remember.

COLE

Damn.

Natalie points to the toy.

NATALIE

That you?

Cole catches on. Embarrassed, he puts it away.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

How old?

COLE

11...he gave me it a while ago.

NATALIE

Home with mom?

COLE

He's with my sister. His mom passed a few years ago.

NATALIE

I'm sorry.

COLE

Me too.

Cole tries to shake it off.

COLE (CONT'D)

There must be answers here somewhere.

NATALIE

We looked everywhere.

COLE

I have another idea, but it'll take me time to check out. I might have to skip explaining things next go round, sorry.

Natalie frowns, takes a second to process.

NATALIE

Just promise me you'll fill me in again eventually. It freaks me out imagining I'll always be oblivious, walking around like an idiot.

COLE

I promise.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Cole gets up and goes to the hatch controls.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole and Amit walk down the hall as Natalie comes towards them with the water bottles.

NATALIE

Welcome aboard, fellas.

COLE

Hi.

Cole smiles, but her attention flits to Amit. Cole grimaces.

NATALIE

You should see some of the amazing stuff we've found.

She heads into the Systems Room and Amit follows excitedly.

Cole walks off the other way.

INT. INNER CORRIDOR

Cole stands in front of Advanced Technologies, staring at the keypad. He cracks his knuckles.

He punches in "000000". The keypad beeps INVALID CODE. He tries "000001". And so on...

INT. INNER CORRIDOR - LATER

Cole types "000453". He shakes out his sore hand. Checks his watch.

COLE

Shit.

He resumes tapping. Stas comes around the corner.

STAS

You're seriously going to spend your time trying every single combination?

COLE

Nothing better to do right now.

STAS

It's going to take you 100 hours.

COLE

Unless I'm getting close. Maybe it's five hundred.

STAS

It's not. First digit is a nine.

Cole stops. Looks at Stas.

Stas strolls over and types in "937553". The panel clicks ACCESS GRANTED. Stas pushes the door open.

STAS (CONT'D)

It took me eighty-five freakin' hours.

COLE

Wait...what?

STAS

Think about it...

COLE

You remember the loops too?

STAS

There he goes.

Stas waves for Cole to follow him.

INT. ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES ROOM

STAS

I was looping for weeks before you started.

COLE

Goddamn. Why didn't you say anything?

STAS

You saw how the others reacted. Not the most understanding bunch. Also thought you could use some time to work the 'holy shit' out of your system. Start using the loop to your benefit. You're feeling the weight of it now.

COLE

Why do you and I remember and no one else does?

STAS

No idea. Seems random. For all we know, we've been up here for years.

COLE

Shit. I assumed I remembered from the start. Is anyone else in on it?

STAS

No, unlike you I didn't take their word for it. I tested it. It's the scientist in me.

COLE

Tested it how?

STAS

I approached each person individually and said "Happy Birthday, Grandma!" before punching them in the face. Next loop I did the same thing again. Not a single person flinched. That's shit you'd remember if you could.

COLE

Little excessive.

STAS

Scientists eliminate variables, Cole.

Stas slaps him on the shoulder.

STAS (CONT'D)

Now listen to me very carefully.
It's important we always keep that
door locked. We can't have anyone
touching this --

Stas walks over to a sleek six-foot cube with a greenish ring around the center. It's labeled NOVA CHRONOS. A small panel blinks with indicator lights.

STAS (CONT'D)

This is what's sending us back in
time, away from permanent death by
debris storm. This is our lifeline.

COLE

How do you know this is it?

STAS

Read the name.

COLE

Chronos means time, right?

STAS

Generally, yes. But it's also the
name of the Greek god of time. Nova
is latin for 'new', but it's also a
type of stellar explosion. So Nova
Chronos could mean 'explosion in
time' or 'new god of time'.

COLE

Yep, I'd say that's probably it.

STAS

Someone goes fucking around in
here, say pulls this lever --

Stas indicates a physical switch covered by a translucent protective shield. The label reads MANUAL SHUTDOWN.

STAS (CONT'D)

And we're all severely fucked.

COLE

Copy that.

Stas checks his watch.

STAS
Whoops, we're almost out of time
today. You find a safe zone yet?

COLE
Safe zone?

INT. NAVIGATION

Stas leads Cole in and starts examining the door frame.

STAS
Mags, you seen this?

When Margaret comes over to look, Stas shoves her out the door and slams it closed. He taps a panel, locking it.

COLE
Dude...

STAS
She freaks out. Makes too much
noise. And won't remember any of
this. Obviously.

Stas plops into one of the console's chairs.

STAS (CONT'D)
It's an orbiting debris belt, in
case you were wondering.

Stas works the console and the display lights up with small red squares -- WARNING: COINCIDENT PATH.

Stas puts his feet up. Cole takes the other chair.

STAS (CONT'D)
Not there. That one takes shrapnel.
Left side only.

Stas waves him over. Cole stands awkwardly next to him. The ALARM goes off.

STAS (CONT'D)
First office, aft corridor is good
too. Noisier, though. Also a small
corner of Engineering.

Stas is distracted checking his fingernails. Behind him through the window, the crew scramble frantically.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Cole blinks it off.

Stas opens the hatch and smiles in at him and Amit.

Cole makes his way out and Amit moves to follow, but Stas blocks him.

STAS

Sorry, Amit. System says you're not equalized. Need a little more time in the tank.

AMIT

What? Really?

Stas swings the hatch closed, forcing Amit to hop back in to avoid getting whacked in the face. Stas taps the panel.

STAS

Easiest to just lock him in there. Same questions day after day get tiring, you'll see.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Stas hurries along and Cole follows. Natalie approaches with the bottles.

NATALIE

Welcome aboard. Where's Amit?

Stas shrugs. Natalie gives them a look, heads into Systems.

STAS

The key is to streamline your day. Maximize productivity. Grigori should be especially avoided because you can't get him to go away just by insulting him.

COLE

Wait, so you're saying-

Stas SHUSHES Cole and stops short. They stand there awkwardly for a few seconds.

Grigori appears from around the corner. He frowns at the other two and continues on. Stas follows.

Grigori enters Navigation where Margaret sits at the console. From outside Stas closes the door and locks it, then kicks the control panel, smashing it.

STAS

BAM! Two for the price of one.
They're not going anywhere.

COLE

You do this all the time?

STAS

Hey, to my credit, I used to help them with their research. Guide them in the right direction and what not. Huge waste of time. Always the same results. You're getting the picture, right?

Stas heads down the corridor.

STAS (CONT'D)

Thing that will kill you is boredom. You have to learn how to tweak the variables or the repetition will drive you crazy.

Stas reaches into his pocket and pulls out four marble sized BALL BEARINGS.

He stares at his watch, mouthing the numbers. Then suddenly ROLLS THE BALL BEARINGS down the corridor.

Just as they roll past a far doorway, Hiroshi steps out. HIS LEG WHIPS OUT FROM UNDER HIM. Hiroshi slams the ground.

HIROSHI

Awww...fuck...

STAS

You okay, Hiroshi?!

Natalie comes out and helps him up.

NATALIE

What happened?

STAS

Go to the Med Lab and I'll check you out in a minute.

Stas looks at Cole, shakes his head 'not really'. Hiroshi limps across the hall, examining a ball bearing.

STAS (CONT'D)

Got it down to just four. Used to need ten.

COLE

Cut the shit, Stas. What does any of this have to do with solving our problem?

STAS

Problem?

COLE

That we're stuck here. With apparently no way out.

STAS

You started remembering, so maybe the others will too. Then we can solve the problem together. Until then, take advantage of this opportunity.

COLE

Opportunity for what?

INT. MED LAB

Stas calls up images of cells on the display.

STAS

Margaret doesn't know it, but she has cancer. Early stage. Undetectable. Systems here found it like that.

Stas snaps his fingers.

STAS (CONT'D)

I'm convinced this lab also holds the cure. If I can reverse engineer it, we can bring that knowledge back with us. And that's just what's here in medical. This situation is a gift, Cole.

COLE

What am I supposed to do?

STAS

Whatever you want. But do me a favor.

COLE

Yeah?

STAS

Lay off my wife.

COLE

I thought you're divorced.

STAS

For now. I'm working on it.

COLE

Listen, all I care about is getting back to my son before we jump back to before he's even born.

STAS

Fair enough. Don't worry, there are things we can try. Meet me in Engineering in fifteen minutes.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Natalie taps at the screen -- ACCESS DENIED. She shakes her head. Stas comes in and shuts the door.

STAS

Frustrating, isn't it?

NATALIE

Yeah. I feel like a kid locked out of the toy store, just staring in the front window.

STAS

Yet you'll stand there all day, won't you?

NATALIE

Yep, you know me.

STAS

I never understood how you could find machines more interesting than people.

She shoots him a look.

STAS (CONT'D)

I'm just kidding!

NATALIE
No you're not.

STAS
Okay, maybe not.

They smile at each other.

STAS (CONT'D)
That's what makes us good, though,
like ying and yang.

NATALIE
Stas...

STAS
What?

Her look says 'you know'.

STAS (CONT'D)
Is it that Air Force guy?

NATALIE
I've exchanged like two words with
him. And you think that's why I
don't want to talk about what a
great "ying-and-yang" we are? Stas,
we talked about this.

STAS
Excuse me?

NATALIE
No, it's nothing. You know what,
it's fine.

STAS
Don't you fucking patronize me.

Natalie is taken aback.

NATALIE
I'm not. Why are you so angry?

STAS
Because I'm sick of your bullshit.
Sick of it. Just tell me the
goddamn truth.

NATALIE
Stas, are you okay?

STAS
I said...don't...patronize...me.

Stas turns to leave, then stops.

STAS (CONT'D)
Go fuck yourself, you stuck up
bitch.

He leaves. Natalie is left in a daze.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY

Stas strolls in and flashes Cole a smile.

STAS
Two man job, so I could never do
this before.

Stas heads to a floor hatch and lifts a panel, revealing a
KEYPAD.

STAS (CONT'D)
Same code, in case you're
wondering. They keep it simple for
the military folk.

Cole nods -- 'okay, buddy'. Stas hoists the hatch open,
revealing a ladder descending to a dim corridor below.

STAS (CONT'D)
Engineering sublevel. Not the cozy
part of the ship.

Stas jumps down, foregoing the ladder.

INT. SUBLEVEL CORRIDOR

The floor is actually a slatted catwalk, revealing only
darkness below. Red wall lights illuminate the corridor
unevenly.

Cole follows Stas, hunching to keep from bumping the ceiling.
They angle around a corner.

Cole looks up, then down at his forearm to check the map,
which has of course disappeared. He smirks.

Stas reaches the end and opens a thick steel door into-

INT. REACTOR CHAMBER

A huge REACTOR CORE is flanked by consoles displaying graphs and readouts. The entire area is surrounded by an immensely thick pane of glass with a single translucent door.

COLE

Wow.

STAS

Only one of four cores is active. They must have throttled it down before they left.

Stas points to another array.

STAS (CONT'D)

Manual activation. If we can get another core up, maybe B Section will come online and we can look for more answers there.

COLE

Sounds good.

STAS

You go in and pull the lever.

COLE

Fuck you.

Cole steps up and taps the glass.

COLE (CONT'D)

This is radiation shielding. And they took the suits with them.

Cole thumbs back toward the entrance where a bunch of empty hooks hang on the wall.

STAS

We're in the loop, remember. You'll be good as new after we jump.

Stas pulls a syringe out of his pocket.

STAS (CONT'D)

And this'll eliminate the pain.

COLE

Then you do it.

STAS

Pussy.

Stas unceremoniously jabs the needle into his own chest. He pinches his arm and nods, satisfied.

STAS (CONT'D)
After I get the core up, go
upstairs and see what you can find.
You can debrief me tomorrow.

He heads to the glass door.

COLE
Shit, hold up!

Cole runs for the steel door into the corridor. Stas shakes his head.

INT. SUBLEVEL CORRIDOR

Cole pulls the door shut. He waits, listening. There's a faint voice. He presses his ear to the door.

STAS (O.S.)
Cole!

Cole opens the door.

INT. REACTOR CHAMBER

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GLASS: Stas takes slow steps with hands outstretched. His arms are covered in red blotches.

STAS
I need some direction here, pal.

COLE
What? Why?

Stas turns toward Cole -- his eyes are MILKY WHITE and his face is covered in RADIATION BURNS. Patches of his flesh seem to be pulsing.

STAS
Because I can't see, asshole.

COLE
Fuck. Okay, left thirty degrees.

Stas adjusts and starts walking.

COLE (CONT'D)
Bearing is good. Maybe you should
go faster.

Stas's right leg gives out briefly and he stumbles.

COLE (CONT'D)
Stop, stop. Left sixty degrees.

Stas turns and staggers to the console.

COLE (CONT'D)
Okay, your right hand is close. A
foot to the right.

Stas's hand flits over the surface and finds the lever, but his fingers aren't working. The burnt, cracked flesh leaks fluid all over the console.

STAS
Piece...uff...thhltt.

His words come out as gurgles and a piece of flesh falls off his face. He swings his left hand over pulls the handle, engaging the core.

The display chimes -- CORE TWO ONLINE.

Stas lets out a sound that's maybe supposed to be a laugh. He collapses on the floor in a heap.

COLE
That's fucked up.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole leaves Engineering, heading towards the aft corridor.

He hears something and stops. It sounds like CRYING. He backpedals and looks into-

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Natalie is sitting on the floor against the wall, eyes red. When Cole comes in she quickly tries to hide it.

COLE
You okay?

NATALIE
Fine, yeah. Just tired.

COLE
Lemme guess. Stas?

Natalie shoots him a suspicious look.

COLE (CONT'D)
Who I'm gathering isn't all there
in the head. Come on, I can
explain.

Cole offers a hand.

COLE (CONT'D)
I'm getting good at it by now.

INT. AFT CORRIDOR

They walk towards B SECTION. The lights are on now, revealing
a staircase on the other side of the doors.

NATALIE
So he says whatever the hell he
wants because he thinks I'll just
forget.

COLE
And he's right. You will.

NATALIE
Motherfucker...

Cole hits the panel and the doors whisk open.

INT. B SECTION

It's actually a single long room lined with BUNKS.

COLE
Living quarters. See if you can
find anything useful.

Personal items are shelved above each bunk. Picture frames
reveal the faces of the missing crew.

Cole sees one of those perpetual motion toys with metal balls
that swing back and forth. It's still going click-click-
click. Cole puts his finger in the way, breaking the cycle.

NATALIE
Holy f'ing f.

Cole turns. Natalie is staring at one of the shelves. There's
a picture of a strangely familiar 60 year old man. Natalie
picks up a plaque -- DR. VIKTOR STANISLAS.

COLE

Stas? No goddamn way. That can't be a coincidence. He's going to crew on this rig?

NATALIE

Actually, it's not that unlikely. One-seventy IQ. Accomplished physician. Experienced astronaut. Not a lot of those to choose from. Do you think he knows?

COLE

I have no idea.

Cole checks his watch.

INT. OFFICE

Cole leads Natalie in.

COLE

He said this was safe.

NATALIE

How long?

Cole looks at his watch. Holds up four fingers, then drops them one at a time.

There's a distant THWANG and then the ALARM. Natalie flinches instinctively. Crew yell from somewhere far off.

COLE

Just ignore it.

CRASHING and the SHRIEKING of tearing metal. Natalie starts shaking.

COLE (CONT'D)

Just look at me.

She tries, but the panic is rising in her.

COLE (CONT'D)

Tell me a story. Why did you hack into the server at your dad's company?

Natalie looks up at him and nods.

NATALIE

I was ten and wanted to go to Disney with my dad. I only saw him once a month so it was a big deal. He said he was too busy with work. So I hacked in and added vacation days to his account. I asked him again and he still said no. In my mind, that meant he was lying and just didn't want to see me. Ten years old, you know.

She tries to laugh. There's more banging and the ship starts to shake. She grabs his arms.

COLE

What was the turtle's name?

Her eyes go back to Cole's.

NATALIE

Chamberlain. Good friend.

She smiles at him and closes her eyes, pulling closer.

FLASH TO WHITE-

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Cole sits, lost in thought. Stas knocks at the window.

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR

COLE

It was just bunks. Personal items. Nothing of use. Did find one interesting item, though.

STAS

What's that?

COLE

You.

Stas looks at him, puzzled.

COLE (CONT'D)

One of the bunks belonged to you. There was even a picture. You're going to be Amaranth crew.

STAS
Holy shit, are you serious?

COLE
You didn't know?

STAS
No. That's crazy.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

COLE
Maybe that's why you remembered first.

STAS
Wouldn't explain why you started remembering. I still think it's random. Hold that thought.

Natalie approaches carrying the water bottles.

NATALIE
Welcome aboard. Where's Amit?

STAS
Don't know. Looks like your hands are full there.

Stas grabs her playfully around the waist. She laughs and almost drops the bottles.

NATALIE
Stas!

She squirms free. Stas winks at Cole.

STAS
She's very ticklish.

Cole frowns. Natalie veers into the System Room.

STAS (CONT'D)
I've gotta see it.

COLE
What?

STAS
My bunk. You do the core this time.

COLE

I'm not going in there. Your
goddamn face melted off.

STAS

Jesus-fucking-christ. I thought you
were finally getting it. Fear of
pain and death is unnecessary here.

COLE

I don't give a shit. I'm not
cooking just so you can scout your
bunk.

STAS

You're really not absorbing how
this all works, are you, you dumb
fucking jarhead?

COLE

That's the Marines. I'm a dumb
fucking jet jockey.

Stas stops, annoyed. Cole salutes him and walks off.

Stas looks down at his clenched fist. He opens his hand,
revealing Natalie's IDENTCARD.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Stas slips in and locks the door.

He approaches the massive viewscreens and the interface fades
up. He places his palm against the LOGIN PANE.

WELCOME DR. STANISLAS

The interface comes alive. Stas whisks through the menus. He
knows exactly what he's looking for --

PASSENGERS

There are seven panes, one for each person onboard. The
leftmost contains a picture of 60-year-old Stas. The other
six show BLACK SILHOUETTES. One silhouette is marked GUEST
PASSENGER: COLONEL JOHN COLE.

The other five have question marks. Stas taps one --

IDENTIFY GUEST

Stas holds Natalie's IdentCard against the glass.

IMPORT IDENTCARD BIOMETRICS: DR. NATALIE ROUVIER

Stas clicks CONFIRM. He gestures and the layout disappears.

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR, USS AMARANTH

ANGLE ON: the closed airlock hatch.

AMIT (O.S.)

So a neutron walks into a bar and orders a beer. He asks the bartender how much.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

AMIT

The bartender says, "For you, no charge."

Amit grins. Cole doesn't.

AMIT (CONT'D)

See, he's a neutron-

COLE

Oh no, I got it.

Cole goes to the window -- Natalie and Stas are heading toward him, talking excitedly. Natalie speaks to Cole, but the sound can't get through. Stas hits the intercom for her.

NATALIE

-but I don't know how it's possib-

COLE

Okay, I can hear you. Start over.

NATALIE

You remember doing this before?

COLE

Stas filled you in, huh?

NATALIE

Yeah. What about you, Amit?

AMIT

Huh?

NATALIE

That's a no. So it's just the three of us?

COLE
Wait, you remember now?!

NATALIE
So I'm not crazy then?

COLE
Not about this.

STAS
(to Cole)
You can explain the rest. I have to
take care of Grigori.

NATALIE
What do you mean?

Stas is already off down the hallway.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
What does he mean?

INT. RESEARCH LAB

Stas enters to see Cole, Natalie, and Amit talking.

STAS
You didn't leave Amit in the
airlock?

NATALIE
We're not locking people up, Stas.

Stas glares at Cole.

STAS
Didn't you explain anything to her?

AMIT
Lock me up?

STAS
This is what I'm talking about.
(to Amit)
If you're going to stay, you have
to be quiet.

AMIT
Relax.

STAS
I don't look relaxed?

NATALIE

We were just discussing the best way to proceed. I think Cole's right, unlocking propulsion is our best bet.

STAS

But you said the computers are completely locked down.

NATALIE

Yes, but Cole told me you're a crew member here. Or will be, I should say.

STAS

So I'm told.

NATALIE

So your biometrics might grant access.

STAS

Oh, shit. You may be right. I didn't think of that.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Natalie holds her hand against the display -- ACCESS DENIED.

NATALIE

You try.

They watch eagerly as Stas steps up. He presses his hand against the login pane -- WELCOME DR. STANISLAS.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Yes!

STAS

Wow. Systems in the Med Lab worked for me, but I assumed they were left open for emergencies.

Natalie pushes him aside and dives in.

NATALIE

This is awesome. Design principles I've been advocating for years.

COLE

Maybe you designed it.

AMIT

What do you mean? How could she
have designed it?

STAS

You're a little behind, Amit. You
two keep working. I'll fill him in.

Stas puts a hand around Amit's shoulder and guides him
towards the door.

STAS (CONT'D)

We don't want to slow them down, do
we?

Stas closes the door behind them.

COLE

Can you unlock navigation?

NATALIE

No. Looks like he only has Level 1
access. Readouts, basic upload, but
no execute, modify, delete. We'd
need Level 3 for that.

COLE

So we're stuck?

Behind them out in the hallway, Stas suddenly lunges at Amit,
SNAPS HIS NECK, and drags the body away.

NATALIE

Not exactly. I have shell access
now, so I can start hammering the
runtime to try and get us root.

Cole looks confused. Natalie smiles.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Translation, I've got my hand up
its skirt, so it's only a matter of
time before I get lucky.

Cole nods in appreciation. Natalie resumes exploring.

COLE

I don't trust that guy though. You
really think he never tried this
system before?

NATALIE

I told him it was locked down.

COLE

It's not just that. He's a little...extreme.

NATALIE

Whatever his personal shortcomings, Stas is truly a brilliant scientist. I think he's just stretching the possibilities of the loop. Physically, everything does get reset to square one.

COLE

But I don't get reset. Every day I spend up here is another day away from my son.

NATALIE

I'm sorry.

COLE

I know. Me too. It's just I don't live 250,00 miles from earth and I don't live in the theoretical.

Natalie puts her hand on Cole's shoulder. Stas opens the door, she instinctively pulls her hand back.

STAS

So can you do it?

NATALIE

It's gonna take some time.

STAS

We have an infinite supply of that.

Stas slaps Cole on the back.

STAS (CONT'D)

See, I told you a solution would present itself. Time spent stressing is time wasted, Colonel.

EXT. SPACE

Time-lapse of the USS Amaranth quickly drifting, exploding, then jumping back a dozen times.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole meanders down the hallway. He peeks into Systems.

COLE

Any progress?

NATALIE

Getting there. My changes stick over loops, which is nice.

COLE

How is that possible? Everything gets physically reset.

NATALIE

My guess is the system stores its memory remotely. And I don't just mean off-site. Maybe off-time as well.

COLE

Off-time?

NATALIE

As in sending all its data to a server that's sitting at some specific place at some specific time. Reading it back after the jump. Nothing would surprise me at this point. This is way all ahead of me.

COLE

Way ahead of you? Imagine how I feel. Let me know if you need me to fly something, maybe I can be useful again.

INT. RESEARCH LAB

Cole enters to see Stas snorting something off the workbench. He returns a test tube to the synthesizer.

COLE

Taking a break, huh?

Stas turns, not embarrassed in the slightest.

STAS

If by break you mean sampling pure narcotics, then yes. You want? Health risks are...negligible.

He laughs then sits back on the table, swooning.

COLE
I'm good, thanks.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY

Hiroshi and Grigori are poring over the cylindrical device when Cole comes in.

COLE
Need some help with that?

GRIGORI
I think we can handle.

Cole taps the code in, unlocking the panel.

COLE
Top secret universal access code.

Grigori eyes Cole, then tries the power button. An indicator light blinks GREEN. Suddenly the device, the table it's sitting on, and Grigori all lift slightly off the ground.

GRIGORI
Oi!

Cole grabs Grigori's belt and pulls him back. Grigori's feet drop back to the deck.

COLE
Localized anti-gravity field.
Disrupts the artificial gravity for
anything inside the set radius.

Cole grabs a small device off the shelf.

COLE (CONT'D)
Remote helps.

He clicks a button -- the anti-grav cylinder and table drop back down with a clatter.

COLE (CONT'D)
Makes moving heavy gear a helluva
lot easier.

HIROSHI
Fuck yeah.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Natalie works at the display. It suddenly chimes --

LEVEL 2 PRIVILEGES GRANTED

NATALIE
Alright! Halfway.

New menus pop up, cascading across the display. She moves fast, swinging panels around, smiling. One panel catches her eye -- SECURITY.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Well, hello.

She taps SURVEILLANCE FEEDS. A grid of images fills the entire wall.

DOZENS OF LIVE VIDEO FEEDS from around the ship -- Grigori and Hiroshi in Engineering, Margaret in Navigation, Cole in a corridor...

Natalie notices a timecode counter and controls. She swipes and the counter starts RUNNING BACKWARDS.

Everyone moves in reverse. THE VIDEO IS REWINDING.

ONSCREEN: the crew stroll backwards into the airlock. The video briefly DISTORTS and now they scramble in reverse through the damaged ship.

There's now a "-1" next to the counter.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Holy shit...

She swipes and the video reverses FASTER.

She sees the moment when Stas killed Amit in the corridor. She swallows hard.

She gestures again -- the video REWINDS FASTER AND FASTER.

Her eyes focus on one particular tile -- the crew backing into the airlock over and over. The counter keeps decrementing ...-10...-11...-12...-13...

Something catches Natalie's eye. She taps play and the video goes to NORMAL SPEED.

ONSCREEN: a blur of motion as Hiroshi sprints down a corridor, glancing panic stricken over his shoulder.

CLOSE ON: Natalie's face, now with a look of dread.

INT. AFT CORRIDOR

Natalie catches up to Cole and grabs his arm.

NATALIE

I have to show you something.

COLE

Now? Loop's almost over.

He turns and sees that she's clearly shaken.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Natalie has the security feeds up.

COLE

Three fucking hundred?!

NATALIE

That's just where the recordings stop. Who knows how many we've actually been here.

COLE

We've looped at least 300 goddamn times?

NATALIE

And Stas lied about how long he's been aware. He's been in for all of these. But that's not what bothers me most. It's what he's been doing the whole time.

Natalie hits play. She FAST-FORWARDS.

ONSCREEN: STAS PICKING FIGHTS with various crew members. He holds his own, but gets his ass kicked by Cole. The video scrubs forward through loop after loop.

Stas keeps picking fights, but now he's NO LONGER LOSING.

COLE

What the hell's he doing?

NATALIE

Training. He's using the crew as his personal punching bags.

COLE

He gets better, but we do the same thing every time.

ONSCREEN: STAS is now BRUTALLY EFFICIENT, taking down the crew quickly and ruthlessly.

COLE (CONT'D)
This is bad.

NATALIE
It gets worse.

Natalie scrubs forward.

ONSCREEN: Stas chases Hiroshi down the hallway. He knocks him to the ground and starts PULLING DOWN HIS PANTS.

COLE
Jesus-fucking-Christ.

Natalie fast forwards. When she stops, Stas is in the Med Lab with Grigori tied to a gurney. He approaches with a scalpel as Grigori squirms in terror.

NATALIE
He never researched cancer. He's just a kid burning ants with a magnifying glass.

Natalie turns away from the display in disgust.

COLE
I need to see my first day.

Curious, Natalie turns back to the display.

She scans to the video of Cole flipping out in the airlock.

COLE (CONT'D)
Now the day before. Focus on this room.

She scans backwards. They see Stas come in and access the system. He holds something against the display.

COLE (CONT'D)
Stop. What is that?

Natalie zooms. She steps back several frames until the card is pulled away and we can see its face -- COL. JOHN COLE.

COLE (CONT'D)
My IdentCard.

Cole searches his pocket and pulls out his card.

NATALIE

It's not random at all. He scanned our cards. Of course...

COLE

Why would that do anything?

NATALIE

In order for the system to retain our memories, it would need to save the state of every neuron in our heads. These cards have a copy of our full medical bioscan.

Natalie takes Cole's card and presses it to the display.

The screen fills with all of Cole's medical data.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

This has imagery of every cell in the brain. The computer needs to know where to look to find your memories, this card provides the roadmap.

COLE

Then it saves a snapshot of everything right before we loop.

NATALIE

Correct.

COLE

How would it write that information back?

NATALIE

Fuck...with something that hasn't been invented yet. I don't know.

She skips forward and finds the moment in the video when Stas scanned her card.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna kill him.

COLE

Don't say anything. You've seen how dangerous he is. Tomorrow after Stas logs you in, we'll find the others, brief them, then scan them in together. We can figure this out as a team and no one gets taken advantage of anymore.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY - NEXT LOOP

Everyone's there but Stas. Grigori thumbs towards Cole.

GRIGORI
He is for reals?

NATALIE
For real. Yeah.

COLE
Once Natalie hacks to Level 3,
she'll have full control and we can
pilot the ship free.

NATALIE
And just as important, keep Stas
from getting in our way.

HIROSHI
Why wouldn't he want to get home
too?

MARGARET
Because he'd rather keep fucking
with us. Didn't you hear anything
they said?!

HIROSHI
Don't be mad at me.

Stas walks in and stops short.

STAS
Here you all are. What's going on?

GRIGORI
These two gave us interesting
story.

STAS
They did, did they?

MARGARET
You purposely kept us in the dark,
asshole?

Stas frowns at Cole and Natalie like a disapproving parent.

STAS
What good will this do?

NATALIE

We know about scanning the IdentCards. It's time to bring the others in, too.

STAS

Did you make some progress in the computer and forget to tell me about it?

COLE

We know you've been abusing the crew.

STAS

Fine. You know. Bad for you, though, me not having a reason to be nice anymore.

COLE

Nice?

Cole turns back to the crew.

COLE (CONT'D)

Come on, let's get you guys into the system.

STAS

No one else is coming in.

GRIGORI

Fuck you.

Grigori moves towards Stas.

STAS SPRINGS INTO ACTION. He kicks Grigori in the chest, sending him flying.

The rest is a blur.

Stas floors Cole. Breaks Hiroshi's neck. Jabs a needle into Margaret's chest. Shoves Natalie into the shelves.

Grigori tries to get up. Stas kicks him, then stomps his neck with a CRUNCH. Amit runs for the door.

STAS

I'll get you later!

Margaret stops convulsing on the floor, eyes vacant. Cole spits blood and tries to steady himself. Stas kicks him over.

STAS (CONT'D)

If it makes you feel any better,
you used to kick my ass. You were
by far the hardest to master.

Stas hits him over and over-

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Cole's arms fly up, trying to shield his face.

AMIT

Whoa!

Cole realizes he's back in the airlock.

COLE

Motherfucker-

AMIT

Are you okay?!

Cole senses motion and looks to the window -- Stas is running
towards the airlock.

Cole jumps over to the controls. He unlocks the hatch and
starts to open it.

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR

Stas slams into the hatch, snapping it back shut. He locks it
from the outside.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

COLE

Stas, let me out.

STAS

You need some time to think. I
don't believe I was clear enough
before. This is MY ship. This is MY
loop.

AMIT

What the hell, guys?

STAS

And it's MY rules. There are only
two, so no excuse not remembering.

(MORE)

STAS (CONT'D)

First, don't tell anyone shit.
Second, no contact with Natalie.

COLE

Go fuck yourself, Stas.

STAS

Come on now. Natalie already
agreed.

COLE

Bullshit.

STAS

I told her she can follow my rules,
or she can watch me cut off
Margaret's fingers. I'll do it
every goddamn day if I need to.
Take some time to think about it.

Stas leaves. Amit looks at Cole, confused.

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR - LATER

Silence as we PUSH IN towards the hatch. There's a THWANG and
the ALARM starts blaring.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Air HISSES through a tiny hole.

AMIT

Holy shit, are we losing pressure?!

Amit holds his breath.

COLE

Don't hold your breath. The air in
your lungs will expand and they'll
rupture.

Amit is freaking out while Cole just waits.

NATALIE (INTERCOM)

I know what he wants.

Cole looks up -- Natalie is at the window.

COLE

He know you're here?

NATALIE

Went to a safe zone. First time all day he hasn't been over my ass. Shut up because we don't have much time.

More THWANGS as the debris comes faster.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I checked the logs. He's been trying to delete you from the system. He can add us, but he can't delete us. That's why he wants me hacking. He doesn't want to help us escape. He wants to make us forget.

COLE

And then we won't even know how fucked we are.

The ship starts to shake violently.

NATALIE

We have to delete him first. I can get Level 3 access, but I can't do anything while he's watching. You have to keep him out while I'm-

The outer airlock hatch rips away. Cole and Amit are sucked into space.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Cole goes to the hatch.

AMIT

I don't think we're done yet-

Cole unlocks the hatch and climbs out.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Stas guards the Systems doorway, expecting Cole.

Cole heads towards him. Stas straightens, ready for confrontation. Cole walks right past him.

COLE

I'm not gonna fight a battle I can't win. Just let me know when we're going home.

STAS
See, now that's logical. We can
finally get some work done.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY

Cole places the anti-grav on a HUGE ENGINE BLOCK. He dials it to 95% and powers it on.

He easily tips the two-ton engine and wraps a line around it, strapping the anti-grav tight.

Cole slides the entire rig against the shelves. He powers off the anti-grav and the whole assembly settles with a THUNK. He adjusts the anti-grav's settings.

Cole grabs the laser-blade and makes cuts in the shelf legs.

COLE
Sorry for this, guys.

He uses a marker to write the pin code on the anti-grav right next to the keypad.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole inches towards the Systems Room. He peeks through the window in the closed door -- Stas stares over Natalie's shoulder. Cole moves on.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY

Hiroshi, Grigori, and Amit examine the anti-grav.

HIROSHI
Idiots put the damn code right on
the box.

Grigori punches in the code.

AMIT
What does it do?

Hiroshi shrugs and taps the power button. The whole contraption lifts off the ground along with the three crew members.

HIROSHI
Oh shit!

The shelf and its contents rise too. The cut sections of shelf leg spin away freely, no longer held in place by pressure.

The timer on the anti-grav ticks to zero. Everything drops.

The wall of equipment comes crashing down at them.

INT. SYSTEM INTERFACE ROOM

Margaret bursts through the door. Stas spins defensively.

MARGARET
Amit's fucked up!

STAS
What?

MARGARET
Come quick, he needs medical.

STAS
I'm a little busy.

MARGARET
I'm not fucking around! Come on.

STAS
Okay, explain to me what happened...

Natalie notices Stas sliding his hand into his pocket as he moves toward Margaret.

NATALIE
We had a deal, Stas. Do you want me to keep working on this or not?

Stas turns to Natalie, considering it. He turns back to Margaret and flashes a big smile.

STAS
All right, show me.

MARGARET
You guys are weird.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY

Amit's leg is mangled.

STAS
Help me lift him.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Cole slips in.

COLE
Tell me you're close.

NATALIE
I'm on the last step, attacking the
private key.

Natalie indicates a window streaming code.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Brute force, two to the ten-twenty-
four combinations. Trying every
possible value. Could take five
seconds. Could take five hours.

COLE
Shit. At least give me the feeds.

Natalie calls up the security monitors. Cole looks from tile
to tile -- Stas and Grigori carry Amit into the Med Lab.

INT. MEDICAL LAB

STAS
Quit whining. Jesus, Amit.

AMIT
It fucking hurts, man.

Stas grabs a syringe and unceremoniously jabs Amit. Amit's
jaw drops. He looks euphoric.

STAS
Now be quiet.

HIROSHI
What can we do?

STAS
You can be quiet too.

Stas starts working on the leg. Margaret looks over his
shoulder and winces.

INT. SYSTEM INTERFACE ROOM

The window continues blazing through possible 1024-digit values.

COLE

Come on, come on.

NATALIE

We need to get lucky. You have a plan B?

COLE

Yeah, kill the son of a bitch.

INT. MEDICAL LAB

Stas uses the table's retractable arm to auto-suture a gash in Amit's leg.

STAS

Pretty stupid to move the anti-grav near a shelf of loose gear.

HIROSHI

That's where we found it.

Stas stops the auto-suture.

STAS

You didn't move it there?

Stas suddenly heads for the door.

AMIT

Stas? This does not look done!

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Cole see Stas hurry out on the security monitor.

COLE

Shit shit shit.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Stas peeks in the window to Systems and sees Natalie working.

REVERSE: Cole is ducked down, hiding below the window.

Stas continues towards Engineering.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY

Stas runs his fingers across the cut on a shelf leg. He checks the anti-grav and sees the code written in marker.

STAS
You sneaky fuckers.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Cole hurries to the door.

COLE
Lock this behind me. And make that go faster!

Natalie throws up her hands.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Stas hurries holding a pair of sheet metal sheers. Face twisted in rage.

AROUND THE CORNER: Cole crouched, wielding a METAL ROD.

Stas gets close and COLE SWINGS, CRUSHING STAS'S KNEE. Stas yelps and drops to the deck.

Cole draws the laser-blade, swings for the kill. Stas catches his wrist and twists. Cole's other hand is sliced in two.

Stas tries to get up but his leg collapses.

Cole picks up the rod. He smashes Stas's hand, sending the blade flying.

Grigori, Hiroshi, and Margaret run into the corridor.

GRIGORI
-the hell?!

From the crew perspective -- Cole wielding a weapon over their crippled friend. Stas whimpers as he crawls away.

STAS
Please don't hit me again. Someone help me!

GRIGORI
Motherfucker-

Grigori runs towards Cole.

COLE
No, he's crazy! He's trying to keep
us all-

No time to explain. The huge Russian is almost on him. Cole turns and bashes Stas on the head.

Grigori slams Cole, flooring him.

INT. MEDICAL LAB - LATER

Stas lies on the examining table. Grigori gently slaps him.

GRIGORI
Stas.

Stas's eyes flutter open.

GRIGORI (CONT'D)
What happened?

Stas shakes off the cobwebs and sits up. Cole lies unconscious on the floor, hands tied behind his back.

There's a THWACK and the ALARM goes off.

GRIGORI (CONT'D)
What the hell?

Grigori runs into the hallway.

Stas quickly injects himself and slides off the table. His leg makes a crackling noise that he simply ignores. He grabs a scalpel and limps into the hallway.

Cole stirs.

COLE'S POV: blurry double-vision of Stas lurching out the doorway.

Cole wrestles with his bindings.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Natalie is focused on the screen. Working the big values now. It suddenly chimes --

KEY MATCH

NATALIE
Yes!

Her fingers fly across the interface. Menus flash in succession-

ROOT ACCESS -- USERS -- DR. NATALIE ROUVIER -- SECURITY LEVEL
3 -- PROFILE UPDATED

Behind her, Stas SMASHES THE WINDOW. Natalie screams.

Stas reaches through and unlocks the door. Natalie scrambles to call up Stas's profile.

But Stas is already there. Natalie spins. Stas SLASHES, catching her in the arm.

Natalie backs away, arm streaming blood. Stas is almost on her when-

WHAM! Cole slams into Stas, knocking him sidelong into the screen. Half of it shatters and they both hit the deck.

Stas rolls over. The scalpel sticks out of his chest. Cole thumps down with his bound hands, driving the scalpel fully into Stas's chest.

Stas roars with anger, not pain. He punches Cole, then grabs a shard of broken viewscreen.

Stas slashes Cole's throat. Cole gushes blood as he wrestles with Stas.

COLE
(gurgling)
Delete his ass.

Natalie paws at the cracked display, trying to drag the panel to an unbroken part of the screen.

Stas crawls towards her. Cole tries to hold him back.

Natalie finds Stas's profile and opens it.

Stas kicks, shattering what remained of the display. He smiles up at her, blood streaming down his face.

Natalie looks dumbstruck at the screen fragments in her hand as everything FLASHES TO WHITE-

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Cole leaps to his feet, good as new. He scrambles to open the hatch.

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR

Cole sprints top speed-

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole slides around the corner to see Stas chasing Natalie towards Systems.

NATALIE

HELP!!!

Natalie is almost there when Stas kicks her ankles. Her feet tangle and she slams the ground hard.

Cole attacks. Stas easily counters and head-butts Cole.

STAS

You've both disappointed me.

Cole shakes it off and brings up his fists, ready to fight.

Stas smiles.

They go at it. Cole has heart but he's no match against a fully healthy Stas. STAS PUMMELS HIM. Cole falls to his knees.

Natalie slips into the Systems Room. Stas glances over his shoulder and sees. He turns but Cole snags his pant leg.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Natalie scrambles to log in.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

STAS

Goddamnit.

Stas hits Cole again and again, but Cole won't let go. Stas is practically dragging Cole's bloody mass toward the door.

STAS (CONT'D)

Cocksucker.

Stas stomps Cole's hand, crushing every bone. He kicks Cole in the head, knocking him out. Stas wipes the spatter of blood from his eyes.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Natalie gets Stas's profile open. She reaches for DELETE.

Stas grabs her wrist, yanking it away.

STAS

No you don't.

She flails at him, screaming. She lands a couple glancing blows, but he gathers up her arms.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Stas shoves Natalie into the hallway and slams the door.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Stas takes a deep breath.

STAS

Finally some peace.

Behind him, Natalie pounds on the window, screaming.

Stas closes his profile and opens Natalie's. He casually DELETES NATALIE FROM THE SYSTEM.

Natalie stops pounding. She just stares in shock. Stas turns. He ponders her for a moment, then waves goodbye.

CUT TO:

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Cole wakes with a start. He jumps to the hatch and slams the controls, but it won't unlock. He tries again and again.

COLE

Shit shit shit.

AMIT

Whoa relax, man.

Stas strolls toward the airlock. Cole's face blanches.

STAS

It's pretty cool, once you have total system access, permanently locking doors is easy.

He taps the glass.

STAS (CONT'D)

It's actually kind of funny watching Natalie look around like she's never seen this place before. She has no idea what she's in for.

COLE

Stas. That's your wife.

STAS

Ex-wife. Don't be worried about her. Be worried about you. You're going to be stuck in here for eternity. Aren't you wondering why I didn't wipe your memory?

Cole just stares.

STAS (CONT'D)

If I wiped your memory you couldn't possibly go insane. You'd have no idea how much time is passing. Now you'll really taste it. Enjoy your forever.

With that, he's off down the hallway.

COLE

Stas! STAS!!!

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR

PULLING AWAY from the hatch where Cole pounds at the window.

EXT. USS AMARANTH

Drifting slowly. Time seems to have stopped.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Stas comes in to see Natalie at the display -- ACCESS DENIED.

STAS

Frustrating, isn't it?

NATALIE

Yeah. I feel like a kid locked out of the toy store, just staring in the front window.

Behind his back, Stas removes the cover from a hypodermic needle.

Stas smiles at Natalie. She gives a curious smile back.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Cole is yelling, throwing himself into the window as hard as he can. The only things breaking are his own bones.

He stops, clutches his shoulder, and looks at Amit who has taken cover on the far side the chamber.

COLE

Try again tomorrow.

He looks over to the wall -- there's a big number 4 scratched into the wall of the airlock.

The familiar WHITE FLASH-

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH - NEXT LOOP

Cole goes to the wall and scratches a 5 where the 4 used to be.

He goes to the hatch and runs his fingers along the seam.

AMIT

What are you doing?

JUMP CUTS:

-- Cole kicking the control panel, Amit trying to stop him.

-- Cole examining the ceiling panels.

-- Cole kicking the hatch.

-- Cole's fingers streaming blood as he claws at a screw securing a wall panel.

-- Cole screaming at Amit, shoving him hard.

-- The panel coming loose, nothing but more steel behind it.

-- Cole sitting, head in hands. He looks over at the number 32 on the wall.

AMIT (CONT'D)

A neutron walks into a bar and orders a beer.

COLE
Heard it before.

AMIT
He asks the bartender how much-

COLE
Heard it before! Heard it before!
Shut the fuck up!

AMIT
(sotto)
Asshole.

There's a KNOCK at the window. Cole looks up to see Stas smiling at him.

STAS
If you ask me nicely, I'll delete your profile. You can go back to thinking you're boarding for the very first time. Every day you'll be as eager as Amit here to come join the fun.

Stas cocks his ear towards the window, waiting.

COLE
Go fuck yourself.

STAS
You'll change your mind.

Stas walks away. Cole looks back at the 32. He lashes out, denting the wall.

Amit looks around -- 'did I miss something?'

INT. ENTRY CORRIDOR

Silence. More of the same.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

"94". Cole lies across the benches, eyes half open, muttering to himself.

AMIT
So a neutron walks into a bar and orders-

Cole leaps up and DECKS AMIT, knocking him out. He looks down at his clenched shaking hands.

COLE
Fuck, I'm sorry.

Cole's eyes mist over.

COLE (CONT'D)
Oh God, we're going to be here forever. Wake up, Amit.

Cole shakes him. Amit groans.

AMIT
What the fuck, man?

Cole tries to help him into his seat. Amit pushes him away.

COLE
I'm sorry. I'm going crazy being stuck in here.

AMIT
It's been 20 minutes!

COLE
Feels longer to me.

AMIT
Try the hatch.

COLE
It's locked.

AMIT
That one is not. Be my guest.

Amit thumbs towards the outer hatch. The starfield shimmers outside. Cole goes over and takes a look.

AMIT (CONT'D)
That was a joke.

Cole runs his fingers over the emergency release handle.

AMIT (CONT'D)
Ah...Cole?

Cole grins and jumps over to Amit.

COLE
You are a fucking genius!

Cole wraps Amit up in a big hug.

COLE (CONT'D)

The maintenance kit on the outer hull by the dock! It's open. If I can get to it in time-

AMIT

What are you talking about?

Cole's excited now. He puts a foot up on the seat.

COLE

Grab my foot. I'll need you to pull me back in. We only have 10 seconds till we're out from hypoxia.

Cole pulls out Henry's toy astronaut and kisses it.

He grabs the OVERRIDE LEVER.

AMIT

No! Stop!

COLE

Don't hold your breath!

Cole yanks the lever and shoves the hatch open. Amit grabs the seat and Cole's leg. The auto-gravity disengages and they lift off the floor.

Cole claws his way out and reaches for the maintenance compartment. He fumbles with the panel.

He's too slow -- his movements get sloppy like a drunk and he passes out. They both drift out the airlock.

Cole's skin goes pale mottled with purple as he spins away from ship unconscious.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Cole's eyes blink open.

COLE

Less painful than I thought. Lack of oxygen maybe.

AMIT

Pardon me?

COLE

I need you to grab onto my foot.

AMIT

What are you talking about?

TIME CUT TO:

COLE pulling himself towards the compartment. Just as he pops it open, his legs swing free and he spins away from the ship.

He glances back to see AMIT SPEWING BLOOD FROM HIS MOUTH.

TIME CUT TO:

Cole standing at the hatch.

COLE

And don't hold your breath, for christ's sake!

Cole pulls the lever.

TIME CUT TO:

Cole pops the panel and grabs a large tool. He shouts soundlessly and waves his arm. Amit yanks him back in.

Cole pulls the hatch closed. There's a hissing of air and they drop to the floor.

Amit grabs his elbows and groans in pain.

AMIT

You crazy fuck.

COLE

(teeth gritted)
It's decomp. Lay down and elevate your joints.

AMIT

No shit.

Amit lays across the bench on his back.

AMIT (CONT'D)

What the hell did you do that for?

Cole hefts the tool, a large pronged device.

COLE

The decoupler.

AMIT

(sarcastic)
Oh.

(MORE)

AMIT (CONT'D)

(shouting)

What the hell did you do that for?!

Cole holds up a finger, then goes to the hatch. He jams the decoupler into the seam and pumps the handles.

The tool's forks spread, prying the GROANING metal apart. Internal pins shear with a TWANG and the hatch wrenches open.

COLE

Don't move. You don't want an air bubble reaching your heart. I'll send someone for you.

AMIT

Great. Thank you so much.

COLE

I'm really sorry, Amit.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole slinks down the hallway.

He nears the Med Lab. The door is closed. There's LOUD WHIRRING sound like a circular saw.

Then Grigori's SCREAMING.

Cole winces. He slowly rises and peeks in the window -- Stas's surgical mask is misted with blood. He's leaning over, working on something. The SCREAMS recede to a WHIMPER.

Cole catches something out of the corner of his eye and spins, ducking down.

Hiroshi is standing in the corridor, staring at him.

HIROSHI

Don't interrupt him when he's working.

Hiroshi seems very different. Twitchy is just the start.

They stare at each other, equally confused.

HIROSHI (CONT'D)

Did he let you out?

Hiroshi looks toward the door, starts to move.

Cole pounces. He wraps Hiroshi in a choke hold, hand clasped over his mouth.

INT. RESEARCH LAB

Hiroshi writhes as Cole drags him in.

COLE
You make noise I'm going to knock
you out. Got it?

Hiroshi nods and Cole releases him. Hiroshi backs away. Cole locks the door.

COLE (CONT'D)
You in the loop?

Hiroshi's look of confusion is becoming permanent.

HIROSHI
He brought you in too?

COLE
Yeah. We're good buddies now. What
about Natalie?

HIROSHI
Natalie? No, never Natalie. She'd
never be loyal. I'm the only one
that knows how to be loyal. I'll
even activate the cores when he
wants me to. The others rebel so he
put them all back to blanks. My
advice is to just do whatever Stas
says...

Cole grabs a wrench and CLUBS HIM OVER THE HEAD. Hiroshi collapses in a heap, unconscious.

COLE
Sorry 'bout that.

TIME CUT TO:

Cole ejects a test tube from the synthesizer. He pours BLACK POWDER into a large flask that's already halfway full.

He returns the test tube and initiates another batch.

TIME CUT TO:

Cole checks his watch as he pours the last of a MAGENTA FLUID over the flask of powder.

There's a KNOCK at the window. Cole turns to see --

Stas, pissed off beyond belief. He bounces Amit's head off the glass, cracking it.

STAS
I'm a little impressed, actually.
Open the door.

Cole goes back to what he's doing. Stas punches the glass out.

STAS (CONT'D)
Open this fucking door!

Stas reaches through for the door handle, but it's out of reach. He doesn't seem to care that the glass is slicing into his arm.

STAS (CONT'D)
I don't know what you think you're doing, but it's the last original thing you'll ever do. Gonna scrub your goddamn memory clean.

COLE
You gave me a lot of time to think in the tank. And something occurred to me.

Stas cocks his head -- what's Cole up to?

COLE (CONT'D)
Ever wonder why the loop only jumps back four hours?

Cole flips the laser-blade on.

COLE (CONT'D)
If the ship is trying to avoid it's own destruction, why not go further back? Give us more time to solve the problem?

STAS
Design issue. Maybe four hours is the best it can do.

Cole adjusts the dial, curving the beam.

COLE
Right. Four hours before the destructive event.

Cole holds the cutter poised above the flask.

COLE (CONT'D)
 Whatever the event may be...

Stas gets it. His jaw drops. He reaches for the handle frantically.

Cole SLICES through the flask. The beam hits the powder.

EXT. USS AMARANTH

The right half of the ship EXPLODES.

The screen FLASHES TO WHITE-

INT. SHUTTLE

Cole jolts aware in the shuttle. Ahead of him, the crew is decompressing in the Amaranth's airlock.

We've seen this before. But not for a long time.

Cole dashes forward and locks the shuttle's hatch.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

Stas fumbles with the outer airlock hatch.

GRIGORI
 Stas! You'll screw up our
 decompression!

INT. SHUTTLE

Cole watches them argue from the safety of the shuttle. He presses the intercom and their voices come blaring through.

Cole clears his throat.

COLE
 Amit and I are heading back with
 the shuttle.

AMIT
 We are?

COLE
 Anything you want us to pick up
 while we're out?

STAS

Congrats. You made it out of the loop. Better not come back because I'm erasing you RIGHT-THE-FUCK-NOW.

COLE

Uh huh, I heard that before, you fucking prick. I'm going home to my family. Enjoy your eternity of shit.

Cole hits the console and the SHUTTLE DETACHES.

Stas overrides the inner hatch and climbs into the Amaranth.

AMIT

What the hell, Cole? I thought we were boarding.

Cole grabs the bulky EVA suit that Amit wore on the original trip over and starts putting it on.

COLE

I am.

AMIT

So wait, we are reattaching?

COLE

No. He'll be watching on navs. I need you to pilot this rig away like we're leaving.

AMIT

Who is "he"? What the hell is going on?

Cole zips up the suit.

COLE

Did you notice Stas acted even weirder than I did?

AMIT

That's a toss up. What did he mean about erasing you?

COLE

I don't have time to explain. I'm trying to save your friends' lives and I need you to do one important thing for me. And I need you to do it on time.

INT. SYSTEMS INTERFACE ROOM

Stas calls up COLE'S PROFILE and DELETES him from the system.

EXT. USS AMARANTH

The tiny boosters on the back of the EVA SUIT turn off a moment before Cole slams into the hull.

Cole maneuvers to a MAINTENANCE HATCH. He twists a lever and pops it open.

INT. NAVIGATION

Stas eyes the display -- an icon of the SHUTTLE moves away from the Amaranth.

STAS
Ignorant shit. I had planned so
much for us.

INT. MAINTENANCE POD

Cole slips out of the EVA SUIT and goes into the corridor.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY

Cole grabs the laser-blade from the shelf.

INT. INNER CORRIDOR

Cole types the code into the Advanced Technologies keypad.

INT. ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES

Cole goes straight to the Nova Chronos and pulls the manual shutdown. The lights on the display go dark.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole slinks towards Navigation, laser-blade held ready. The door is closed, but through the window Stas can be seen hunched over the console.

INT. SHUTTLE

Amit kills the boosters and changes course.

EXT. SHUTTLE

The boosters rotate 180 degrees and kick back on.

INT. NAVIGATION

Stas sees the shuttle change course. He smiles.

STAS
Coming back? Really?

Stas turns for the door-

And sees COLE through the window, heading toward him. Stas cocks his head -- the image doesn't compute.

Their eyes meet. Stas gets it and leaps toward the door.

INT. CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Cole gets there faster and LOCKS THE DOOR, then slices the control panel off.

Stas PUNCHES OUT THE WINDOW and reaches, but Cole steps out of range.

STAS
Big mistake, Cole.

Stas pushes his head against the window frame. The broken glass cuts his forehead, which bleeds immediately.

Stas's winks at Cole, then his expression changes to one of total panic.

STAS (CONT'D)
HELP!!! HEEEEELP! HELP ME!

The crew run in to see Cole standing between them and their trapped medical officer, who's putting on an excellent show.

STAS (CONT'D)
He's trying to kill me! He's
fucking crazy!

GRIGORI
What the hell?!

Grigori rushes towards Cole, the others close behind. Cole raises the blade into an attack stance.

COLE

Stay the fuck back!

They slide to a halt. Cole is a lethal barrier between them and Stas.

STAS

It's not military protocol to scuttle the ship with us still on it. Someone tell him!!!

COLE

Stas is sick. Don't listen to him. He's going to say whatever he can to get you to help him.

MARGARET

And it's gonna work.

COLE

Stay calm and I can explain.

NATALIE

Put the cutter down, Cole.

COLE

Listen to my voice. I am calm and rational. I'm not trying to destroy the ship. We have to get to the shuttle and get home. I'm going to tell you exactly why, and Hiroshi is going to confirm what I'm saying.

They look at Hiroshi, who just looks bewildered. Stas reaches through the window, pointing to the wall panel.

STAS

Someone pull the override and get me out!

Cole ignores him.

COLE

This ship is about to get hit by a debris field. But before it's completely destroyed, it's defense mechanism will kick in -- time travel hardware that will jump us four hours into the past. This will happen over and over again.

(MORE)

COLE (CONT'D)

It's happened hundreds of times already. Stas remembers it, I remember it, and Hiroshi remembers it.

Hiroshi catches a glare from Stas.

HIROSHI

I don't know what you're talking about.

STAS

Obviously I don't either.

COLE

Stas doesn't ever want to leave, and he's killed us all countless times to ensure we can't either.

STAS

I'm fucking bleeding here. Someone take him down!

Grigori inches closer. Cole waves the blade.

COLE

Stay back, godammit! I'm not done.

Grigori retreats a step.

COLE (CONT'D)

We had a lot of time stuck in the loop together. Natalie, we talked about your turtle Chamberlain and when you hacked your father's servers.

Natalie looks confused.

COLE (CONT'D)

Grigori, I know the design of the corridors here remind you of the lab where you studied in Kiev.

Grigori squints.

COLE (CONT'D)

Margaret, I don't know anything about you because no matter how many times we loop you're always a bitch. And Hiroshi, you don't have to be afraid of Stas anymore. Amit is almost here with the shuttle.

The whole crew is a little rattled now. Cole turns to Stas.

COLE (CONT'D)

And I destroyed the time machine,
so there's no reason to stay on a
sinking ship.

Stas snorts -- bullshit. Then his expression slowly changes.

Stas dashes to the console. He calls up the security feed of
Advanced Technologies.

The Nova Chronos is CHOPPED TO PIECES. The look on Stas's
can't be described.

Stas SCREAMS and bashes the console. He runs to the window,
so angry his eyes are watering.

STAS

You stupid fuck!!! How could you
give up immortality?! What kind of
man could taste that power and
throw it away?!

The crew look on in shock. Hiroshi turns to the others.

HIROSHI

I'm sorry...I was scared.

Cole extinguishes the cutter. Grigori doesn't move. Cole
checks his watch.

COLE

We're out of time. We have to go.
Right now.

STAS

Don't leave me in here!

COLE

He'll kill us first chance he gets.

Stas tries to compose himself.

STAS

No I won't! It's over. This is real
now, everything's changed.

Stas reaches up and holds the wound on his forehead closed.

COLE

You haven't.

NATALIE

Cole. Even if we believe you, we can't leave him here. We're all alive and healthy. How would we explain this?

MARGARET

You can't sentence him to death.

STAS

That's right, it's murder.

Cole points at Margaret.

COLE

If you refuse to leave without him, then you can be the one to open that door. I've given you the truth and a way out. That's the best I can do.

MARGARET

Fine.

Margaret walks toward the door.

HIROSHI

No!

COLE

Everyone else, get to shuttle. Now.

Hiroshi sprints for his life. His reaction startles Natalie.

MARGARET

Oh, for Christ's sake.

Cole forcibly herds Natalie and Grigori the other way.

Margaret pops the panel and reaches for the override. Stas goes for the corresponding panel inside.

Margaret pulls the lever.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

That do it?

Stas kicks the door open, smashing Margaret in the face. She slams the wall and goes down.

Cole stops. He has to decide.

COLE

Fuck.

Cole shoves Natalie and Grigori on.

COLE (CONT'D)
Don't stop!!!

Cole turns and runs back.

COLE (CONT'D)
Margaret, get up!

Stas charges at Cole, a freight train of pure rage.

Cole swings the cutter. STAS BLOCKS AND STRIKES, flooring Cole.

Margaret staggers towards them, bleary eyed. Blood pouring from her nose.

MARGARET
Stas...

Stas picks up the laser-blade and hovers over Cole. He raises the blade for a killing blow.

GRIGORI GRABS HIS WRIST. Stas looks back.

GRIGORI
Stas. It's over.

Stas stares blankly for a long moment.

STAS
Yes. It is.

Stas shoves back, carving a cross section through Grigori's head. Margaret lets out a blood-curdling scream.

NATALIE
Stas!!!

Stas looks at Natalie and smiles.

COLE KICKS OUT STAS'S FEET. Stas slams the deck. Cole grabs Margaret.

COLE
Go go go!

They run like hell. Stas gets up and chases.

INT. DECOMPRESSION AIRLOCK, USS AMARANTH

They jump in and Cole swings the hatch shut. The shuttle is almost there.

COLE
Goddamnit, Amit! Hurry!

Stas slams into the hatch. He punches the glass, but it doesn't break.

COLE (CONT'D)
He can't punch it out. I've tried.

Stas raises the laser-blade.

COLE (CONT'D)
Oh, shit.

Stas carves through the glass.

NATALIE
Stas, stop!

STAS
I'll stop when you're all in little
bite size pieces.

He slices at the window frame, widening the hole.

There's a BANG-CLICK as the shuttle connects.

STAS (CONT'D)
No!

Stas reaches through and unlocks the hatch. Cole dives over and grabs his wrist. Cole pulls hard, pinning Stas against the hole.

COLE
Go!

Margaret and Natalie pop the outer hatch.

Cole twists a 360, torquing Stas's arm. Ligaments tear. Wristbones snap. Stas screams.

They each brace their feet against the hatch, playing tug-of-war over the mangled arm.

COLE (CONT'D)
Nobody lives forever, asshole.

Cole gives Stas sudden slack, catching him off balance. Then yanks it back hard. Stas's head slams into the hatch. Cole lets go and Stas drops out of view with a THUNK.

INT. SHUTTLE

Cole runs in and pulls the hatch closed. He rushes to the console and slams the controls.

EXT. USS AMARANTH

The shuttle disconnects, drifting from the airlock.

INT. SHUTTLE

Cole braces himself against the console, trying to catch his breath. Natalie wipes blood from Margaret's face.

AMIT

Holy shit.

Cole checks his watch.

COLE

Fuck. No time. Margaret, I need you on that scanner.

MARGARET

Yeah, okay.

Cole hurries around the console into a seat and hits the controls.

EXT. SHUTTLE

The boosters angle and kick on. The shuttle starts rotating away from the Amaranth.

INT. SHUTTLE

Margaret holds her broken nose with one hand and works the console with the other.

MARGARET

What am I looking for?

COLE

Debris field on intersect course.

Margaret works the controls. It starts blinking red warning indicators.

MARGARET

Holy hell.

COLE

Just keep your eyes on it.

Cole adjusts the controls and the shuttle stops rotating.

COLE (CONT'D)

Here we go.

Cole pushes the throttle and the shuttle lurches forward.

Hiroshi runs to the rear viewport and pulls the solar shield back, revealing a view of the Amaranth receding behind them.

COLE (CONT'D)

Are we still on intersect?

MARGARET

30km inside radius, yeah.

The Amaranth gets nailed by the first barrage of debris. Pieces of hull fan out into the void.

HIROSHI

It's started!

Cole pushes the throttle to maximum. The shuttle vibrates.

EXT. SHUTTLE

A piece of debris punches through an external stabilizer.

INT. SHUTTLE

The console blares an ALARM.

MARGARET

5 more kilometers!

There's a THWANG as a piece of debris punctures the cabin. Air rushes out a pea-sized hole.

AMIT

We are losing pressure!

Amit grabs a pressure suit from the deck and shoves it against the hole.

AMIT (CONT'D)
Get those suits on!

Natalie grabs the pile of pressure suits on the deck.

Amit twists to look out the window. The Amaranth has been ripped to pieces.

MARGARET
We're outside the radius.

INT. KRIKALYOV 3 AIRLOCK

Barnes stands in front of the airlock, yawning. The hatch opens and the crew spills out, surprising him.

BARNES
What the fuck?!

Amit pukes and they jump out of the way.

COLE
Let's get your joints up.

BARNES
Holy shit.

INT. MAIN BAY

They help Amit into a bunk.

BARNES
Someone want to tell me what's going on? Where are Stas and Grigori?

COLE
We had a bit of a problem. You'd better call home.

Hiroshi and Barnes head out. Cole checks Margaret's eyes.

COLE (CONT'D)
You have a concussion. You should get bunked too.

Cole helps her into a bunk across from Amit.

MARGARET
Cole...thanks.

They smile at each other. Natalie puts a hand on Cole's shoulder.

INT. NAVIGATION

HIROSHI
Comms up yet?

BARNES
Let's try.

A RED LIGHT on the console starts blinking.

BARNES (CONT'D)
Shit. Life Support A dropped
offline.

HIROSHI
What about B?

BARNES
Still up.

INT. CONNECTOR

Barnes hurries down the connector, Hiroshi close behind.

Barnes suddenly stops -- the bulky EVA SUIT lies crumpled on the deck far ahead.

BARNES
Why is that there?

They move toward it -- and suddenly RISE OFF THEIR FEET.

BARNES (CONT'D)
Whoa!

They drift weightlessly and start to spin.

The ANTI-GRAV floats above them near the ceiling, GREEN LIGHT blinking.

Stas steps out wielding a STEEL PIPE. His other arm dangles. He approaches, pipe outstretched, feeling for the range of the anti-grav.

HIROSHI
Oh God.

BARNES
Stas?

Barnes drifts towards Stas. He's now rotated upside down. Stas steps up and draws the pipe back -- a baseball player waiting for the pitch.

HIROSHI

No!

BARNES

What are you doing?!

Stas SWINGS for Barnes' head. There's a SICKENING CRUNCH.

Barnes's body spins, blood spewing from his head into floating red blobs.

Hiroshi flails, trying in vain to keep away.

HIROSHI

No! Oh God, Stas! Please! I had no choice!

STAS

I know. But I'm going to kill you anyway.

Stas smiles and winds up.

INT. MAIN BAY

Hiroshi's SCREAM echoes through the station. Cole and Natalie look up in shock.

INT. CONNECTOR

Cole and Natalie burst into the connector and stop short at the sight --

Barnes and Hiroshi floating, pumping blood into the air like red cartoon thought-bubbles. Just past them, Stas wielding the pipe.

Natalie covers her mouth in horror, tears already welling.

Stas drops the pipe and pulls the REMOTE from his pocket. He presses a button --

The bodies and blood drop/rain to the deck. The anti-grav clatters down.

Stas pockets the remote and ignites the laser-blade.

Cole forces Natalie back through the hatch.

COLE

Lock it!

Stas casually steps over the bodies. Cole raises his fists.

COLE (CONT'D)

Come on, motherfucker!

STAS

If you only knew how many times
we've done this. It doesn't end so
well for you.

COLE

I'll bet the other times you had
two good arms.

STAS

Not always.

Cole stalks closer, steeling himself for battle -- then TURNS
AND RUNS.

Stas raises an eyebrow, then takes off after him.

INT. CORRIDOR

Stas rounds the corner at speed. He skids to a stop at the
first intersection. Looks both ways.

STAS

I'll find you eventually!

Behind him, Cole lowers himself from the pipework above.

He body-checks Stas into the wall. The blade clatters away.

Cole starts pounding but Stas quickly reverses. For a moment,
they strike back and forth like two masters.

But Stas starts anticipating Cole's moves. Stas pummels him
one-handed. Cole hits the floor, bruised and bloodied.

STAS (CONT'D)

Get up. I want to enjoy this.

Cole rises, a little dizzy. Raises his fists. Looks at them,
then switches to Southpaw stance. Stas just laughs.

Cole shrugs, then TURNS AND RUNS again.

STAS (CONT'D)

Are you serious?

Stas shakes his head and picks up the laser-blade.

INT. CONNECTOR

Cole runs into the engineering module. He slams the hatch behind him.

Stas gets to the hatch and starts slicing off the hinges.

INT. ENGINEERING MODULE, KRIKALYOV 3

Stas kicks the hatch out. Across the room, Cole roots through a toolbox. He turns to face Stas with a measly wrench.

Stas smiles and stalks towards him. He RISES OFF HIS FEET.

Stas notices the anti-grav floating ahead at waist height. He laughs.

STAS

I have the remote, you fucking idiot.

COLE

Shit.

Stas fishes the remote out of his pocket.

TILT UP: a HUGE WASTE TANK floats above Stas's head.

Stas points the remote at the anti-grav. He's just about to hit the button-

Stas pauses. He slowly looks up and sees the waste tank suspended above him.

STAS

Clever.

Stas reaches up and shoves the tank. It spins away. When it's out of the anti-grav's range it crashes to the deck.

COLE

Fuck.

Stas clicks the button on the remote as he spins upright.

The anti-grav drops and Stas lands on his feet in a fighting stance. He smiles.

An instant later Stas's body crumples violently to the deck as if he's been stomped by an invisible elephant.

Blood splatters against the INVISIBLE TELESCOPE LENS that's crushing Stas to the floor. The blood runs in rivulets through the cracks in the lens and across its surface.

Stas twitches in vain. He's pinned.

COLE (CONT'D)

Guess I never did that before, huh?

Stas tries to say something, but can't manage a sound. He goes still.

INT. CONNECTOR

Cole knocks on the hatch window.

Natalie appears brandishing a crowbar. When she sees it's Cole, she drops it and opens the hatch.

NATALIE

Jesus, are you okay?

COLE

I'll heal. Not in four hours, but I'll heal.

She hugs him.

NATALIE

I didn't think it would be you showing up at that window.

COLE

Me neither.

INT. NAVIGATION

Natalie turns from the console.

NATALIE

Pickup in 72 hours.

COLE

Perfect. That's how long I need to sleep.

NATALIE

This is weird. I feel like you know a lot about me but I don't remember telling you any of it.

COLE

Don't worry, it wasn't too personal.

NATALIE

I've never told anyone about hacking my father's servers.

Cole looks up at her.

COLE

You did tell me you had a thing for pilots.

NATALIE

I told you that?

Natalie blushes.

COLE

No. Hopeful guess.

NATALIE

You're gonna keep doing that aren't you?

Cole smiles.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Well if you've got one of those little hats with the wings on it, you should start wearing it.

Natalie smirks and goes back to the console.

Smiling, Cole stretches out and closes his eyes.

CUT TO BLACK.